

Press release: Airline directors grounded with 7 year disqualifications

Haitham Sabrah of London and Jihad El Saleh of Sierra Leone have been disqualified from acting as directors following an Insolvency Service investigation.

They acted as directors for Fly Salone Airlines Limited which operated flights from London to Sierra Leone. The company traded for four months, from 11 December 2015 to 17 March 2016. On entering liquidation, £2,072,180 remained outstanding to the company's creditors.

The directors were disqualified for failing to keep sufficient business records to identify whether payments from the company from 2 February 2016 to 17 March 2016, totaling £170,913, were genuine company expenditure.

The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy accepted an undertaking from Haitham Sabrah effective from 8 September, and Jihad El Saleh effective from 28 September.

Commenting on the disqualification, Martin Gitner, Deputy Chief Investigator of Insolvent Investigations, Midlands & West at the Insolvency Service, said:

Directors have a duty to ensure proper accounting records are maintained, preserved and, following insolvency, delivered up to the insolvency practitioner.

By failing to do this, the public can not be sure that all funds received by the company were used for legitimate purposes.

The Insolvency Service will take action against directors who do not take their obligations seriously and abuse their position of trust.

Fly Salone Airlines Limited (Company No. 09738343) was incorporated on 18 August 2015.

Mr Sabrah's date of birth is 17 November 1969 and he resides in London. He was appointed as a director on 18 August 2015.

Mr El Saleh's date of birth is 29 November 1967 and he resides in Freetown, Sierra Leone. He was appointed as a director on 18 August 2015.

On 18 August 2017, the Secretary of State accepted a disqualification undertaking from Haitham Sabrah for a period of 7 years effective from 8

September 2017.

The matters of unfitness, were that he failed to ensure that Fly Salone Airlines Limited maintained or preserved, or in the alternative, failed to deliver up sufficient accounting records on behalf of Fly Salone Airlines Limited for the period 2 February 2016 to 17 March 2016. As a result it has not been possible to ascertain or verify:

- whether payments made to him, totalling £116,470 relate to genuine company expenditure
- whether payments made to third parties in the last week of trading, between 11 March 2016 and 17 March 2016, totalling £54,443 relate to genuine company expenditure

On liquidation, £2,072,180 remained outstanding to creditors and the company had no assets.

On 7 September 2017, the Secretary of State accepted a disqualification undertaking from Jihad El Saleh for a period of 7 years effective from 28 September 2017.

The matters of unfitness, which Mr El Saleh did not dispute in the Disqualification Undertaking, were that he failed to ensure that Fly Salone Airlines Limited maintained or preserved, or in the alternative, failed to deliver up sufficient accounting records on behalf of Fly Salone Airlines Limited for the period 2 February 2016 to 17 March 2016. As a result it has not been possible to ascertain or verify:

- whether payments made to Haitham Sabrah totalling £116,470 relate to genuine company expenditure
- whether payments made to third parties in the last week of trading, between 11 March 2016 and 17 March 2016, totalling £54,443 relate to genuine company expenditure

On liquidation, £2,072,180 remained outstanding to creditors and the company had no assets.

A disqualification order has the effect that without specific permission of a court, a person with a disqualification cannot:

- act as a director of a company
- take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion, formation or management of a company or limited liability partnership
- be a receiver of a company's property

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings.

Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of other restrictions](#). The Insolvency Service, an executive agency sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), administers the insolvency regime, and aims to deliver and promote a range of investigation and enforcement activities both civil and criminal in nature,

to support fair and open markets. We do this by effectively enforcing the statutory company and insolvency regimes, maintaining public confidence in those regimes and reducing the harm caused to victims of fraudulent activity and to the business community, including dealing with the disqualification of directors in corporate failures.

BEIS' mission is to build a dynamic and competitive UK economy that works for all, in particular by creating the conditions for business success and promoting an open global economy. The Criminal Investigations and Prosecutions team contributes to this aim by taking action to deter fraud and to regulate the market. They investigate and prosecute a range of offences, primarily relating to personal or company insolvencies. The agency also authorises and regulates the insolvency profession, assesses and pays statutory entitlement to redundancy payments when an employer cannot or will not pay employees, provides banking and investment services for bankruptcy and liquidation estate funds and advises ministers and other government departments on insolvency law and practice.

Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is [available](#).

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