

## News Release

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### **Illinois men charged with tax crimes in Minnesota**

**ST. PAUL, Minn.** – The Minnesota Department of Revenue announced that the Washington County Attorney’s Office recently charged Mohamad Tlaib, from Palos Hills, IL, and Hamdi Nimer, from Tinley Park, IL, with one count each of felony aiding and abetting possession of untaxed tobacco products.

According to the complaint, a Minnesota State Trooper stopped a rental truck occupied by Mr. Tlaib and Mr. Nimer for bypassing an open weigh station in November 2017. After pulling the truck over and escorting it to the weigh station for a commercial vehicle inspection, inspectors found a large quantity of tobacco products in the cargo area. Neither Mr. Tlaib nor Mr. Nimer was a licensed tobacco distributor or sub jobber, the complaint states, and they were unable to produce any invoices or paperwork for the tobacco products. According to the complaint, Mr. Tlaib, the driver of the truck, told the trooper during the traffic stop that he had been hired to transport the tobacco from a warehouse in Menomonie, WI to a tobacco store in Oakdale, MN. Later, Mr. Tlaib reportedly changed his story to say that he was taking the tobacco to Hudson, WI and had missed his exit.

Once a search warrant was obtained, Department of Revenue staff assisted in removing and itemizing the tobacco products found in the truck. The department’s investigator determined that the retail value of the contraband tobacco products seized was nearly \$53,000, which indicated that nearly \$51,000 in Minnesota tobacco taxes should have been paid, according to the complaint.

Each tax-related felony charge carries a maximum penalty of 5 years in prison, a \$10,000 fine, or both. Defendants are presumed to be innocent unless and until proven guilty.

This case is another example of the department’s ongoing efforts to uniformly enforce the state’s cigarette and tobacco laws. For more information on the tax laws related to tobacco products in Minnesota, [visit our website](#).

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Although most taxpayers comply with tax laws voluntarily, the Minnesota Department of Revenue takes enforcement action against noncompliant taxpayers to ensure that tax laws are administered fairly.

The Minnesota Department of Revenue has a 24-hour tip line for anyone who suspects that a person or business is violating Minnesota tax laws. Local callers may dial 651-297-5195 or call toll-free by dialing 1-800-657-3500. Tips can also be submitted to the department via email at [tax.fraud@state.mn.us](mailto:tax.fraud@state.mn.us). Tipsters may choose to remain anonymous.

Get the latest news and updates from the Minnesota Department of Revenue by following the department on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) or by signing up for our [email subscription list](#).

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