

Beat: Miscellaneous

Alleged al-Qaeda member charged with plot to bomb U.S. diplomatic buildings

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USPA News - A Saudi-born man was secretly indicted last year while detained in Italy, accusing him of being an al-Qaeda operative who fought alongside extremists in Afghanistan and plotted to bomb U.S. diplomatic facilities in Nigeria, U.S. prosecutors revealed on Wednesday. Ibrahim Suleiman Adnan Adam Harun, 43, is accused of joining al-Qaeda shortly before the group carried out its attack on the United States on September 11, 2001. He allegedly traveled from Saudi Arabia to Afghanistan where he received military-type training at al-Qaeda training camps to fight U.S. and coalition forces.

Harun, who was known to fellow extremists as "Spin Ghul", a Pashto pseudonym meaning White Rose, was secretly indicted in the United States in February 2012. He was in Italian custody at the time after being arrested in June 2011 when he assaulted officers boarding the Italy-bound refugee ship he was traveling on. He had been released by Libyan authorities days earlier after being detained there in 2005. Court documents claim Harun, who was born in Saudi Arabia but claims citizenship in Niger, used guns, explosive devices, grenades, missiles, and other weapons as he fought against coalition troops in Afghanistan. Prosecutors believe he killed American soldiers there between 2002 and 2003, but it is unclear how many. According to the indictment, Harun received further al-Qaeda training in 2003 when he traveled to neighboring Pakistan. He then traveled to a number of African countries where he allegedly conspired with other al-Qaeda operatives to bomb U.S. diplomatic and consular facilities in Nigeria, although the attack never took place after he and a co-conspirator were arrested in January 2005. "As alleged in the indictment, the defendant was a prototype al-Qaeda operative, trained by al-Qaeda in terrorist tradecraft, deployed to fight American servicemen, and dispatched to commit terrorist attacks throughout the world," said Loretta Lynch, the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York. "Whether they try to attack our servicemen on the battlefield or scheme to kill our diplomats and citizens in embassies abroad, terrorists will find no refuge." In July 2012, after being indicted by the U.S. five months earlier, the Naples Court of Appeals found Harun extraditable to face the charges against him in U.S. federal court. Italian Justice Minister Paola Severino ordered the extradition in September 2012, and U.S. federal agents flew Harun to New York the following month. "Vowing allegiance to al Qaeda and training to commit violent jihad are not the worst of Harun's alleged crimes," said FBI Assistant Director George Venizelos. "The allegations include actually attacking U.S. troops and plotting to use explosives to kill U.S. diplomats. As alleged, Harun not only intended to, but did, commit acts of terrorism against Americans. Now he is subject to the American justice system." Harun has been charged with conspiring to murder U.S. nationals, conspiring to bomb U.S. government facilities, conspiring to provide material support to al-Qaeda, providing material support to al-Qaeda, using firearms in furtherance of crimes of violence, and using explosives in furtherance of one or more felonies. He faces up to life in prison if convicted of all charges. New York City Police Department (NYPD) Commissioner Raymond Kelly praised the work of the agencies involved in the investigation, calling it an important case. "As more al-Qaeda operatives continue to be flushed from hiding, the NYPD remains vigilant to the fact that terrorists have repeatedly since 9/11 plotted to return here to kill more New Yorkers," he said. "We are determined not to let that happen." The 9/11 attacks happened on Sept. 11, 2001 when nineteen al-Qaeda terrorists hijacked four passenger planes before crashing two of them into the World Trade Center in New York and another into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. The fourth, United Flight 93, crashed into a field in Stonycreek Township near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Nearly 3,000 people were killed.

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