



# Department of Justice

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## **FLORIDA RESIDENT CHARGED WITH PLOTTING TO BOMB LOCATIONS IN TAMPA**

TAMPA – Robert E. O'Neill, U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Florida; Lisa Monaco, Assistant Attorney General for National Security; and Steven E. Ibson, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Tampa Division announced today that a 25-year-old resident of Pinellas Park, Fla., has been charged in connection with an alleged plot to attack locations in Tampa with a vehicle bomb, assault rifle and other explosives.

Sami Osmakac, a naturalized U.S. citizen who was born in the former Yugoslavia (Kosovo), was arrested Saturday night. He is charged in a criminal complaint in the Middle District of Florida with one count of attempted use of a weapon of mass destruction (explosives) and is scheduled to make his initial appearance today at 2:00 p.m. in federal court, before U.S. Magistrate Judge Anthony Porcelli, in Tampa. If convicted, Osmakac faces a maximum sentence of life in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The arrest of Osmakac was the culmination of an undercover operation during which Osmakac was closely monitored by law enforcement officials for several months. The explosives and firearms that he allegedly sought and attempted to use were rendered inoperable by law enforcement and posed no threat to the public.

“The perseverance and diligence of law enforcement caused this investigation to conclude in a successful manner,” said U.S. Attorney O'Neill. “I would like to commend them for their hard work. This investigation was also predicated, in part, by assistance from the Muslim community. I would like to thank them as well.”

“The facts as alleged in this case underscore the need for continued vigilance both at home and abroad. Thanks to a coordinated law enforcement effort, this alleged plot was thwarted before anyone was harmed,” said Assistant Attorney General Monaco. “I applaud the many agents, analysts and prosecutors who worked together to ensure this matter was resolved safely.”

“The Tampa FBI Division has always considered its relationships with regional community groups throughout Central and Southwest Florida extremely important. In this case, we are grateful for the Muslim community’s continued support. This incident clearly demonstrated how citizens can help law enforcement keep our neighborhoods and our nation safe,” said FBI Special Agent in Charge Steven Ibison.

According to the complaint affidavit, in September 2011, the FBI received information from a confidential human source (CHS) indicating that Osmakac had asked for al-Qaeda flags. In November 2011, Osmakac and the CHS discussed and identified potential targets, in Tampa, where Osmakac intended on carrying out violent attacks. Osmakac allegedly asked the CHS for help in obtaining firearms and explosives for the attacks. The CHS indicated that he/she knew someone who might be able to provide firearms and explosives and introduced Osmakac to an undercover FBI employee.

The complaint alleges that Osmakac met with the undercover FBI employee, in person, on December 21, 2011, and stated that he wished to acquire an AK-47-style machine gun, Uzi submachine guns, high capacity magazines, grenades and an explosive belt. In a subsequent meeting, Osmakac allegedly provided the undercover FBI employee with a \$500 down payment for an AK-47, multiple homemade explosive grenades and the explosive belt.

According to the complaint, Osmakac also asked the undercover employee whether he/she could build bombs that could be placed in three different vehicles and detonated remotely, near where Osmakac would conduct a follow-up attack using the other weapons he requested. The undercover employee said he/she could possibly provide explosives for one vehicle. Osmakac also allegedly said that he wanted an explosive belt constructed to kill people.

During a subsequent meeting with the FBI undercover employee on January 1, 2012, Osmakac allegedly described his attack plans by stating that he wanted to obtain a hotel room; park the vehicle with the bomb in it at his target; leave the area; detonate the car bomb, and then retrieve the weapons and explosives from the hotel room. Among Osmakac’s alleged bomb targets were night clubs in the Ybor City area of Tampa, the Operations Center of the Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Office in Ybor City, and a business in the South Tampa area of Tampa, Florida.

The complaint alleges that, as part of the second portion of his planned attack, Osmakac told the undercover FBI employee that, after the car bomb was detonated, he wanted to use the explosive belt to “get in somewhere where there’s a lot of people” and take hostages. He allegedly stated that he would then make demands of the FBI to release some prisoners. According to the criminal complaint, when discussing law enforcement officers that might respond to the scene, Osmakac allegedly stated, “once I have this . . . they can take me in five million pieces” in an apparent reference to the explosive belt that would be attached to his waist.

During the January 1<sup>st</sup> meeting, the undercover FBI employee noted that Osmakac could change his mind and back out of the plot. According to the complaint, Osmakac immediately shook his head in the negative and stated, “We all have to die, so why not die the Islamic way?”

On January 7, 2012, FBI agents arrested Osmakac after he took possession of the explosive devices and firearms, that had been rendered inoperable by law enforcement. The complaint alleges that, shortly prior to his arrest, Osmakac made a video of himself explaining his motives for carrying out the planned violent attack.

This investigation is being conducted by the FBI Tampa Division and the Tampa Joint Terrorism Task Force. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Sara Sweeney from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida, with assistance from Trial Attorney Clem McGovern of the Counterterrorism Section in the Department of Justice's National Security Division.

The charges contained in the criminal complaint are mere allegations. As in any criminal case, the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

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