

Ohio Man Sentenced to 75 Months in Prison for Scheme to Send Money to Hizballah

U.S. Attorney's Office May 21, 2012 Northern District of Ohio (216) 622-3600

CLEVELAND—Hor I. Akl was sentenced to more than six years in prison today after previously pleading guilty to criminal charges related to a scheme to send hundreds of thousands of dollars to Hizballah, a designated foreign terrorist organization, announced Steven M. Dettelbach, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio; and Stephen D. Anthony, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI's Cleveland Division.

Akl, 39, of Toledo, Ohio, pleaded guilty to a total of five counts: conspiracy to provide material support and resources to a designated foreign terrorist organization, conspiracy to violate money laundering statutes, perjury, and two counts of bankruptcy fraud.

He was sentenced to 75 months in prison by U.S. District Judge James G. Carr, to be followed by 10 years of supervised release.

Hor Akl's wife, Amera Akl, 39, is currently serving a 40-month prison sentence. She previously pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to provide material support and resources to a designated foreign terrorist organization.

"Money is the lifeblood of terrorist organizations, and stopping the flow is a key component to choking off these organizations," said U.S. Attorney Dettelbach.

"This case demonstrates the continued effort by the FBI and our Joint Terrorism Task Forces to deny financing and support to those terrorist organizations that present a threat to the United States," said Special Agent in Charge Anthony.

The Akls met multiple times between August 2009 and June 2010 with a confidential source who was working on behalf of the FBI. During those meetings, the Akls discussed ways to secretly send money to Hizballah leaders in Lebanon, according to court documents.

Amera Akl told the confidential source during a meeting in Toledo on August 30, 2009 that she dreamed of dressing like Hizballah, carrying a gun, and dying as a martyr, according to court documents.

Hor Akl, in the presence of his wife, told the confidential source during a September 10, 2009 meeting in Toledo that he understood the money was being transported to "terrorists." He also stated he understood the funds would be sent to a designated terrorist organization and used to target Israel, according to court documents.

Eventually, the Akls agreed to send the money by secreting it inside a 2004 Chevrolet Trailblazer, which they planned to send to Lebanon via a container ship.

On June 3, 2010, the confidential source delivered \$200,000 to the Akls at their home in Toledo and told them he would return later in the day with more money. Shortly thereafter, the Akls were observed inside their residence wearing latex/rubber gloves, in close proximity to various automobile accessories, plastic wrap, duct tape, latex/rubber gloves, and fragrant insect repellent sticks. Hor Akl had prepared a portion of the money for concealment into the auto accessories, wrapped it in plastic, and taped into a bundle, according to court documents.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys for the Northern District of Ohio Justin E. Herdman, Duncan Brown, Thomas E. Getz; and Trial Attorney S. Elisa Poteat of the Counterterrorism Section in the Justice Department's National Security Division following an investigation by the FBI (through its Joint Terrorism Task Force in Toledo) and the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation Division.