

Canadian Sentenced to 3+ Years in Prison for Conspiracy to Export Restricted Goods and Technology to Iran

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<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/canadian-sentenced-3-years-prison-conspiracy-export-restricted-goods-and-technology-iran>

Ghobad Ghasempour, 38, a Canadian national, was sentenced on Aug. 20, in U.S. District Court in Seattle to 42 months in prison for conspiracy to unlawfully export U.S. goods to Iran.

Assistant Attorney General for National Security John C. Demers, U.S. Attorney Jessie K. Liu for the District of Columbia and U.S. Attorney Annette L. Hayes for the Western District of Washington made the announcement.

“This sentencing exemplifies the outstanding investigative work by HSI special agents in conjunction with other law enforcement and government partners locally and abroad,” said HSI San Diego Special Agent in Charge Dave Shaw. “The illegal export of U.S.-origin items to prohibited countries is harmful to U.S. national security and will not be tolerated. HSI will continue to aggressively pursue those that seek to violate these laws and jeopardize our nation’s safety.”

Ghasempour was arrested on March 28, 2017 as he entered the United States at Blaine, Washington. An investigation led by Homeland Security Investigations in San Diego, California, revealed that Ghasempour had used front companies in China and co-conspirators in Iran, Turkey and Portugal to illegally export restricted technology products to Iran.

At the sentencing hearing U.S. District Judge James L. Robart noted that Ghasempour was solely motivated by greed and money, and that the unlawful export of goods and technology was to the “the Department of Defense for Iran -- the very group that would be the most harmful to the United States.”

According to records filed in the case, between 2011 and 2017, Ghasempour and his co-conspirators illegally exported and attempted to export goods and technology to Iran that have both military and non-military uses. Ghasempour exported a thin film measurement system, manufactured by a California company, that is essentially a microscopic tape measure for liquid coatings and parts that are used in cell phones and missiles; he attempted to export an inertial guidance system test table, manufactured by a North Dakota company, used to test the accuracy of gyroscopes that assist in flying commercial and military airplanes; and the conspirators exported two types of thermal imaging cameras, manufactured by an Oregon company, that can be used in commercial security systems and military drones. Some of the items Ghasempour sought to export were intercepted by law enforcement. The conspirators falsified shipping documents and lied to U.S. manufacturers by claiming that the restricted items were being shipped to customers in Turkey and Portugal, knowing that the true destination of these goods was Iran. The Iranian customers paid the Chinese front companies owned by Ghasempour and a co-conspirator.

Ghasempour pleaded guilty in April 2018.

The case was investigated by Homeland Security Investigations. The criminal case was originally filed in the District of Columbia in Washington D.C., but was resolved in the Western District of Washington. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Frederick Yette for the District of Columbia, Assistant U.S. Attorney Marie Dalton for the Western District of Washington, and Trial Attorney Amy Larson, of the National Security Division’s Counterintelligence and Export Control Section.

Component(s):
National Security Division (NSD)
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