

Alleged al Qaeda Operative Charged in New York for Terrorism Offenses Against Americans Overseas

Defendant Charged with Plotting to Kill U.S. Servicemen in Afghanistan and Bomb U.S. Diplomatic Buildings in Nigeria

U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of New York(718) 254-7000

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<http://www.fbi.gov/newyork/press-releases/2013/alleged-al-qaeda-operative-charged-in-new-york-for-terrorism-offenses-against-americans-overseas>

BROOKLYN—A six-count indictment was unsealed today in United States District Court for the Eastern District of New York charging Ibrahim Suleiman Adnan Adam Harun, also known as “Spin Ghul,” with conspiracy to murder American military personnel in Afghanistan, conspiracy to bomb American diplomatic facilities in Nigeria, conspiracy to provide material support to al Qaeda, providing material support to al Qaeda, and related firearms and explosives counts. The indictment was returned under seal by a federal grand jury sitting in Brooklyn, New York on February 21, 2012, and relates to Harun’s alleged activities in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Africa beginning in 2001.

The charges were announced by Loretta E. Lynch, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York; John Carlin, Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security; George Venizelos, Assistant Director in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office; and Raymond W. Kelly, Commissioner, New York City Police Department.

According to court documents, Harun, who was born in Saudi Arabia but claims citizenship in Niger, was extradited from Italy to the United States on October 4, 2012, and arraigned in a sealed proceeding in federal court in Brooklyn, New York on October 5, 2012. The case is scheduled for a public status conference before United States District Judge Edward R. Korman at the United States Courthouse, 225 Cadman Plaza East, Brooklyn, New York, on March 22, 2013, at 2:30 p.m.

Harun is charged with crimes related to his alleged terrorist activities on behalf of al Qaeda beginning in 2001. According to the indictment and other court documents, beginning in 2001, the defendant traveled from Saudi Arabia to Afghanistan with the intent to fight violent jihad. He arrived in Afghanistan shortly before the September 11, 2001 attacks. He then joined al Qaeda, received military-type training at al Qaeda training camps, and ultimately fought against United States and Coalition forces in Afghanistan with an al Qaeda fighting group based in Pakistan. According to the indictment, Harun allegedly attempted to kill United States military personnel in Afghanistan between 2002 and 2003. In 2003, in Pakistan, Harun received further al Qaeda training and traveled to Africa with the intent to conduct attacks on United States diplomatic facilities in Nigeria. While in Nigeria, Harun allegedly conspired with others to bomb such facilities.

According to the indictment and other documents, after the arrest of a co-conspirator, the defendant traveled to Libya, en route to Europe, but was apprehended in early 2005. The defendant then remained in Libyan custody until June 2011, when he was released by the Libyan government. He was then arrested by Italian authorities after assaulting officers on board a refugee ship bound for Italy. As noted, the defendant was indicted in the United States on February 21, 2012, and charged with (1) conspiring to murder United States nationals; (2) conspiring to bomb United States government facilities; (3) conspiring to provide material support to al Qaeda; (4) providing material support to al Qaeda; (5) using firearms in furtherance of crimes of violence; and (6) using explosives in furtherance of one or more felonies.

On July 5, 2012, the Naples Court of Appeals found the defendant extraditable to face the charges in the indictment pending against him in U.S. federal court, pursuant to the bilateral extradition treaty between the United States and Italy. On September 14, 2012, the Italian Minister of Justice ordered the defendant extradited. Federal agents took the defendant into custody in Italy on October 4, 2012, and he arrived in the United States on that same day.

If convicted of all the charges in the indictment, Harun faces a maximum possible sentence of life in prison.

“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 United States Attorney Lynch. “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. The United States will use every tool at our disposal to protect our nation’s security and stop terrorist attacks before they happen.” Ms. Lynch expressed her gratitude to the law enforcement personnel who took part in the investigation, including Department of Defense Army investigators. She also thanked the Italian Ministry of Justice, the Prosecutor’s Office in Palermo, Italy, and other Italian police authorities in their support of the investigation and extradition of the defendant.

“The indictment unsealed today seeks to hold accountable an alleged al Qaeda operative who targeted U.S. personnel and diplomatic facilities across two continents. His arrest and extradition to the United States are important milestones in our ongoing counterterrorism efforts. I thank the many agents, analysts, and prosecutors who brought about this significant case,” said Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security Carlin.

FBI Assistant Director in Charge Venizelos said, “Vowing allegiance to al Qaeda and training to commit violent jihad are not the worst of Harun’s alleged crimes. 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. We remain committed to protecting the safety of Americans and our national security.”

Police Commissioner Kelly said, “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 kill more Americans. We are determined not to let that happen. I want to commend our federal partners and the U.S. Attorney in the prosecution of this important case.”

The government's case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys David Bitkower, Shreve Ariail, and Amanda Hector of the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York. Assistance was provided by Alamdar Hamdani, Joseph Kaster, and Annamartine Salick of the Counterterrorism Section of the Justice Department's National Security Division and by William Nardini of the Justice Department's Office of International Affairs.

The charges contained in the indictment are merely allegations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Defendant

Ibrahim Suleiman Adnan Adam Harun, also known as "Spin Ghul"

Age: 43