

**Department of Justice**  
Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Tuesday, July 16, 2019

**Department of Justice Announces Extradition of Iranian National and  
Unsealing of Charges against Two Other Men for Exporting Carbon Fiber  
from the United States to Iran**

Assistant Attorney General for National Security John C. Demers, U.S. Attorney Geoffrey S. Berman for the Southern District of New York, Assistant Director John Brown of the FBI's Counterintelligence Division and Assistant Director in Charge William F. Sweeney Jr. of the FBI's New York Field Office announced the extradition of Behzad Pourghannad and the unsealing today of a three-count indictment charging Pourghannad, Ali Reza Shokri and Farzin Faridmanesh with exporting carbon fiber from the United States to Iran. Pourghannad, an Iranian national, was arrested on those charges on May 3, 2017, in Germany and was extradited to the U.S. Pourghannad arrived in the Southern District of New York yesterday, and was presented today in White Plains federal court before U.S. Magistrate Judge Judith C. McCarthy. Shokri and Faridmanesh remain at large.

"Pourghannad is alleged to have sought to procure for Iran large amounts of carbon fiber — a commodity that can be used in the enrichment of uranium," said Assistant Attorney General Demers. "U.S. sanctions exist to prevent behavior, like this, which endangers our country, and the Department is committed to vigorously enforcing them. Pourghannad and others who would attempt to thwart these laws need to know that their actions, which benefit Iran's destabilizing efforts and make Americans less safe, will not go unpunished."

"Carbon fiber has many aerospace and defense applications, and is strictly controlled to ensure that it doesn't fall into the wrong hands," said U.S. Attorney Geoffrey Berman. "Pourghannad and his co-defendants allegedly went to great lengths to circumvent these controls and the United States' export laws. Together with our law enforcement partners, we will continue to protect our nation's assets and protect our national security."

"This case shows the FBI aggressively pursues those who break the law and violate sanctions against Iran," said Assistant Director Brown. "Iran remains determined to acquire U.S. technology with military applications, and the FBI is just as determined to stop such illegal activity. The charges against these three Iranian nationals, and the extradition of Mr. Pourghannad, demonstrate we take Iran's actions extremely seriously and will work with our partners to defeat them."

"Iran's continued pursuit of technology and materials to advance its nuclear program remains a threat to the US and the rest of the world," said Assistant Director in Charge Sweeney. "The FBI New York and SDNY will continue to pursue these illicit proliferation activities, and bring the full investigative and law enforcement capabilities of the U.S. to bear on those who would help Iran advance its dangerous agenda. If you aid Iran in its efforts, you will be held accountable."

According to the allegations contained in the Indictment, unsealed in White Plains federal court<sup>[1]</sup>:

Between 2008 and July 2013, Pourghannad, Shokri and Faridmanesh lived and worked in Iran. During that period, they worked together to obtain carbon fiber from the U.S. and surreptitiously export it to Iran via third countries. In particular, Shokri worked to procure many tons of carbon fiber from the U.S.; Pourghannad agreed to serve as the financial guarantor for large carbon fiber transactions; and Faridmanesh agreed to serve as the trans-shipper. Carbon fiber has a wide variety of uses, including in missiles, aerospace engineering, and gas centrifuges that enrich uranium.

In late 2007 and early 2008, Shokri and a Turkey-based co-conspirator (CC-2) successfully arranged for the illegal export and trans-shipment of carbon fiber from the U.S. to an Iranian company associated with Shokri (Iranian Company-1). Specifically, CC-2 contacted a U.S. supplier of carbon fiber, who in turn enlisted a third individual (Individual-1) for assistance with the transaction. Through Individual-1, CC-2 purchased carbon fiber from the U.S. supplier and arranged for the shipment of the carbon fiber from the U.S., through Europe and Dubai, United Arab Emirates, to Iranian Company-1, operated by Shokri, in Iran.

In May 2009, Pourghannad and Shokri attempted to arrange another illegal purchase and trans-shipment of carbon fiber from the U.S. to Iran. Specifically, Individual-1 returned a signed contract to Pourghannad for Shokri's purchase of a large quantity of carbon fiber. Individual-1 then purchased the carbon fiber from a U.S. supplier and arranged for the carbon fiber to be exported from the U.S. to a third country (Country-1), en route to Iran. Country-1 authorities, however, interdicted the carbon fiber shipment before it could be trans-shipped to Iran.

In 2013, Pourghannad, Shokri, and Faridmanesh again attempted to illegally procure and export carbon fiber from the U.S. to Iran. In the 2013 transaction, Shokri and Pourghannad negotiated with Individual-1 for the purchase and trans-shipment to Iran of more than 5 tons of carbon fiber. Faridmanesh and Pourghannad further agreed with Individual-1 that the carbon fiber would be trans-shipped from the U.S. to Iran through Tbilisi, Georgia, with Faridmanesh to serve as the trans-shipper. Faridmanesh specifically instructed Individual-1 to change the shipping labels on the carbon fiber to reference "acrylic" or "polyester," rather than "carbon fiber." Pourghannad provided Individual-1 with the bank guarantee that was to serve as surety for a portion of the carbon fiber. In June 2013, Individual-1 informed Pourghannad, Shokri, and Faridmanesh that the carbon fiber would soon be shipped from Manhattan and that Individual-1 would replace the carbon fiber labels with shipping labels referencing "acrylic" to evade U.S. export controls.

No one involved in these transactions obtained permission from the U.S. Department of Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control, to export the carbon fiber from the U.S.

\* \* \*

Pourghannad, 65, Shokri, 61, and Faridmanesh, 48, all of whom are Iranian citizens, are each charged with one count of conspiracy to violate the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison, and two counts of violation and attempted violation of IEEPA, each of which also carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. The maximum potential sentences in this case are prescribed by Congress and are provided here for informational purposes only, as any sentencing of the defendants will be determined by the judge.

Mr. Demers and Mr. Berman praised the outstanding investigative work of the FBI, and thanked the New York Field Office of the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs, the U.S. Marshals Service, Homeland Security Investigations, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement for their assistance. Mr. Demers and Mr. Berman also thanked German law enforcement for their assistance in the arrest and apprehension of Pourghannad.

This case is being handled by the Office's Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit, with assistance from the Counterintelligence and Export Control Section of the National Security Division. Assistant United States Attorney Gillian Grossman is in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

---

[1] As the introductory phrase signifies, the entirety of the text of the Indictment and the descriptions of the Indictment constitute only allegations, and every fact described should be treated as an allegation.

**Topic(s):**

Counterintelligence and Export Control  
National Security

**Component(s):**

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)  
National Security Division (NSD)  
USAO - New York, Southern

**Press Release Number:**

19-769