

U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney

Southern District of Florida

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NEWS RELEASE:

Two South Florida Residents Charged With Terrorism Violations

Two residents of Oakland Park, in Broward County, Fla., have been charged with conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists and conspiracy to use a weapon of mass destruction (explosives), announced Wifredo A. Ferrer, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida; Michael B. Steinbach, acting Special Agent-in-Charge of the FBI Miami Division (“FBI”); and members of the South Florida Joint Terrorism Task Force (“JTTF”).

Yesterday, **Raees Alam Qazi**, a 20-year-old naturalized U.S. citizen from Pakistan, and his brother, **Sheheryar Alam Qazi (Sheheryar)**, a 30-year-old naturalized U.S. citizen from Pakistan, were taken into custody by FBI agents in Fort Lauderdale executing probable cause arrests. Both defendants were charged today in a two-count indictment alleging that they conspired to provide material support to terrorists and conspired to use a weapon of mass destruction.

The Qazi brothers made their initial appearance at 2:30 p.m. today in federal court in Fort Lauderdale. The charge of conspiring to provide material support to terrorists carries a maximum potential sentence of 15 years in prison. The charge of conspiracy to use a weapon of mass destruction carries a maximum potential sentence of life in prison.

U.S. Attorney Ferrer stated, “Since September 11, 2001, the top priority of the Department of Justice and this U.S. Attorney’s Office has been to deter and prosecute acts of terrorism. This mandate will not change. There is simply no higher purpose than defending our nation from those who seek to do us harm. We owe a great debt of gratitude to the agents and prosecutors who worked so hard to keep us safe. Any potential threat posed by these two individuals has been disrupted.”

“The FBI’s number one priority is counterterrorism and we continue to work with our partners to protect the U.S. and its people from harm,” said acting Special Agent in Charge Steinbach of the FBI’s Miami Division. “To be clear, this is not an indictment against a particular community or religion. Instead, today’s indictment charges two individuals for conspiring to provide material support to terrorists and to use a weapon of mass destruction.”

According to the indictment, from at least July 2011 through Nov. 29, 2012, the defendants conspired to provide material support and resources – including property, services, funding, lodging, communications equipment, personnel and transportation – knowing and intending that this support be used in preparation for and in carrying out a violation of law – namely, a conspiracy to use a weapon of mass destruction. The indictment further alleges that during this time frame the defendants conspired to use a weapon of mass destruction (explosives) against persons and property within the United States.

The case is being investigated by the FBI’s South Florida Joint Terrorism Task Force. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Karen E. Gilbert, of the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of Florida, with assistance from the Counterterrorism Section of the Justice Department’s National Security Division.

The public is reminded that an indictment contains mere allegations. Defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.

A copy of this press release may be found on the website of the United States Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of Florida at www.usdoj.gov/usao/fls. Related court documents and information may be found on the website of the District Court for the Southern District of Florida at www.flsd.uscourts.gov or on <http://pacer.flsd.uscourts.gov>.