



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
Eastern District of New York*

*United States Attorney
District of Hawaii*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 26, 2010

Contact:

**Robert Nardoza
United States Attorney's Office
Eastern District of New York
(718) 254-6323**

**Elliot Enoki
United States Attorney's Office
District of Hawaii
(808) 541-2850**

PRESS RELEASE

**HAWAII RESIDENT CHARGED WITH MAKING FALSE STATEMENTS
IN A MATTER INVOLVING INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM**

A criminal complaint was unsealed yesterday in the Eastern District of New York charging Abdel Hameed Shehadeh, age 21 and a U.S. citizen and resident of Hawaii, with making false statements in a matter involving international terrorism. Shehadeh was arrested on Friday, October 22, in Honolulu, Hawaii. At his initial appearance yesterday at the United States Courthouse in Honolulu, Shehadeh was ordered detained and consented to being removed to the Eastern District of New York for further proceedings.

The charges and arrest were announced by Loretta E. Lynch, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York; Florence T. Nakakuni, United States Attorney for the District of Hawaii; Janice K. Fedarcyk, Assistant Director-in-Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office; Raymond W. Kelly, Commissioner, New York City Police Department; and Charlene B. Thornton, Special Agent-in-Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Honolulu Division.

According to the complaint, in early 2008, Shehadeh, at the time a resident of Staten Island, New York, devised a plan to travel to Pakistan in order to join the Taliban or a similar fighting group. In furtherance of his plan, on June 13, 2008, Shehadeh flew on a one-way airline ticket from John F. Kennedy International Airport in Queens, New York, to Islamabad, Pakistan. Upon landing in Pakistan, Shehadeh was denied entry into the country by Pakistani officials, and he returned to the United States. He was questioned by FBI agents and NYPD detectives on multiple occasions about the purpose of his trip to Pakistan, and he told them that he had traveled to Pakistan in order to visit an Islamic university and to attend a friend's wedding. The complaint alleges that Shehadeh subsequently admitted to FBI agents in Hawaii that the true purpose of his trip to Pakistan was to join a fighting group such as the Taliban. The complaint also alleges that Shehadeh attempted to recruit another individual to join him for this purpose immediately after the two discussed a sermon by the cleric Anwar al-Awlaki.

According to the complaint, several weeks after Shehadeh was denied entry to Pakistan, he attempted to enlist in the United States Army at the Times Square recruiting station in New York City. Shehadeh's application was denied when it was discovered that he had concealed his prior trip to Pakistan. Although Shehadeh claimed that he attempted to enlist for career opportunities and benefits, the complaint alleges that his true motive was to deploy to Iraq, where he intended to desert and fight against the United States military alongside Iraqi insurgent forces.

In addition, the complaint alleges that Shehadeh created and administered multiple web sites dedicated to spreading violent jihadist ideology. The content of these web sites included, among other things, speeches from known al-Qaeda leaders such as Abu Yahya al-Libi and Ayman al-Zawahiri.

"As this case demonstrates, we and our partners in law enforcement are committed to preventing terrorist acts before the plots can be set in motion," stated United States Attorney Lynch. "We will spare no effort, and will deploy all available resources, to accomplish this mission." Ms. Lynch extended her grateful appreciation to the FBI and NYPD, the agencies responsible for leading the government's investigation.

United States Attorney Nakakuni stated, "We must remain vigilant to address activities in our own community which have connections to investigations and prosecutions in other areas. This case is an example of the necessary and successful cooperation among authorities separated by a six-hour time difference and over 5,000 miles."

FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge Fedarcyk stated, "As charged in the complaint, Shehadeh lied about the purpose of his travel to Pakistan, then he lied in his attempt to join the U.S. military, and lied about why he sought to enlist. The real purpose, it is alleged, was not to join U.S. forces, but to wage war against them. Stopping one prospective terrorist can prevent untold numbers of casualties."

NYPD Commissioner Kelly stated, "In sharing information developed by the NYPD's Intelligence Division with our federal partners, the Police Department worked hand-in-glove with the FBI to curtail an alleged terrorist threat in the making."

FBI Special Agent-in-Charge Thornton stated, "The Honolulu FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force worked closely with our New York counterparts throughout this investigation. It is important to note that at no time was there any evidence of a terrorist plot targeting the Hawaiian Islands in this case."

If convicted of making false statements in a matter involving international terrorism, Shehadeh faces a maximum sentence of eight years' imprisonment.

The government's case is being prosecuted in the Eastern District of New York by Assistant United States Attorneys James P. Loonam and Ali Kazemi, with assistance provided by

the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Hawaii and the Counterterrorism Section of the Department of Justice.

The public is reminded that a complaint contains mere allegations, and a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

The Defendant:

ABDEL HAMEED SHEHADEH

Age: 21