

## **Staten Island Man Convicted of Making False Statements in a Matter Involving International Terrorism**

*Defendant Attempted to Travel to Pakistan to Join a Violent Jihadist Group*

U.S. Attorney's Office March 25, 2013 Eastern District of New York (718) 254-7000

Abdel Hameed Shehadeh, a United States citizen and former resident of Staten Island, was convicted today of making false statements in a matter involving international terrorism. The jury's verdict followed a week-long trial in United States District Court in Brooklyn, New York before the Honorable Eric N. Vitaliano. The conviction was announced by Loretta E. Lynch, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York.

According to court filings and the evidence introduced at trial, in early 2008 Shehadeh devised a plan to travel to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan in order to join al Qaeda or the Taliban. In furtherance of his plan, on June 13, 2008, Shehadeh flew on a one-way airline ticket from John F. Kennedy International Airport to Islamabad, Pakistan. After Pakistani officials denied him entry, Shehadeh told investigators from the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) that he had traveled to Pakistan to visit a university. However, the true purpose of Shehadeh's trip was to wage violent jihad against United States military forces.

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 Manhattan. Shehadeh's application was denied when it was discovered that he had concealed his trip to Pakistan on his application. Though Shehadeh claimed that he had tried to enlist for career opportunities and benefits, his true motive was to deploy overseas, where he would commit treason by defecting and fighting alongside insurgent forces. Over the next several months, in subsequent interviews with members of the JTTF, Shehadeh continued to lie about the true purpose of his travel. However, in 2010 Shehadeh confessed to FBI agents that he had sought to join a jihadist fighting group. Shehadeh was arrested in Honolulu, Hawaii, in October 2010.

"Time and again, Shehadeh sought to travel overseas to wage violent jihad against U.S. military forces, going so far as to attempt to infiltrate the U.S. Army," stated United States Attorney Lynch. "When confronted with his attempts to join a terrorist group and kill American soldiers, he repeatedly lied about his actions and his intentions. Due to the tireless work of our law enforcement partners, the defendant did not succeed in his jihadist goals. We will continue to be vigilant in bringing those who seek to commit terrorist acts to justice." Ms. Lynch thanked the FBI's New York and Honolulu Field Offices, as well as the New York City Police Department, for their substantial contributions to the multi-year investigation that led to the defendant's arrest and conviction.

When sentenced, Shehadeh faces a maximum sentence of 21 years' imprisonment.

The government's case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Alexander Solomon, David Sarratt, and James Loonam.

***Defendant:***

Abdel Hameed Shehadeh

Age: 23