



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of Ohio

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ohio man charged with aiding and abetting plot to murder former President

COLUMBUS, Ohio – An Iraqi citizen living in Columbus, Ohio, has been charged federally with an immigration crime and with aiding and abetting a plot to murder former United States President George W. Bush.

Shihab Ahmed Shihab Shihab, 52, was arrested by FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force agents this morning and appeared in federal court here at 2:30pm. His case was unsealed at that time.

Shihab originally entered the United States in September 2020 on a visitor visa, and in March 2021, he filed a claim for asylum with United States citizenship, which is pending review. He lived in both Columbus, Ohio, and Indianapolis and worked at markets and restaurants in both cities.

It is alleged that Shihab exchanged money with others in an attempt to illegally bring foreign nationals to the United States.

For example, in August 2021, Shihab allegedly intended to help who he thought was another Iraqi citizen enter the United States for a fee of \$40,000. Shihab provided specific instructions on how he would smuggle the person into the United States after 60 days. In October and December 2021, Shihab accepted tens of thousands of dollars for the purported smuggling. In reality, the individual was fictitious, and the interaction was coordinated under the direction of the FBI.

The charging document also alleges that Shihab planned to smuggle four additional Iraqi foreign nationals into the United States for the purpose of killing former President George W. Bush in retaliation of Iraqi deaths during "Operation Iraqi Freedom." Shihab then allegedly planned to smuggle the four out of the United States via the United States/Mexico border after they carried out the assassination.

In furtherance of the assassination plot, Shihab allegedly traveled to Dallas in February 2022 to conduct surveillance of locations associated with the former President. In March 2022, it is alleged Shihab met with others in a hotel room in Columbus, Ohio, to look at sample firearms and law enforcement uniforms.

Attempting to illegally bring an individual into the United States is a federal crime punishable by up to 10 years in prison. Aiding and abetting the attempted murder of a former United States Official carries a

potential prison sentence of up to 20 years in prison.

Kenneth L. Parker, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio; Matthew G. Olsen, Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, National Security Division; J. William Rivers, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Cincinnati Division; and Jaime Carazo, Special Agent in Charge, United States Secret Service, announced the charges. Assistant United States Attorney Jessica W. Knight and Trial Attorney Frank Russo from the Department of Justice's National Security Division are representing the United States in this case.

A criminal complaint merely contains allegations, and defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law.

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Topic(s):

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National Security

Component(s):

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