

**Alleged Al-Qaeda Member Extradited to U.S. to Face Charges in Terrorism Conspiracy
Defendant and Others Planned Suicide Bomb Attack Against Americans in Europe**

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WASHINGTON—Nizar Trabelsi, a Tunisian national, has been extradited to the United States to face charges in federal court in the District of Columbia stemming from a conspiracy to carry out a suicide bomb attack against Americans in Europe.

Trabelsi was arrested in Belgium on Sept. 13, 2001, before he carried out the planned attack. After 12 years in custody there, where he served time on Belgian charges, Trabelsi was extradited and transported today to face charges in the United States. Trabelsi was indicted in 2006 by a grand jury in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, and a superseding indictment was filed the following year. The charges were unsealed today.

The indictment alleges that Trabelsi personally met in the spring of 2001, with Osama bin Laden to volunteer for a suicide bomb attack against U.S. interests. Preparations unfolded over the next several months, according to the indictment, with Trabelsi allegedly obtaining chemicals in Europe and subsequently joining others to scout a potential target: a military facility that was used by the United States and the United States Air Force.

The charges were announced by Ronald C. Machen Jr., U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, John P. Carlin, Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security, and Valerie Parlave, Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Washington Field Office.

Trabelsi, 43, is charged with conspiracy to kill U.S. Nationals outside of the United States; conspiracy and attempt to use weapons of mass destruction; conspiracy to provide material support and resources to a foreign terrorist organization; and providing material support and resources to a foreign terrorist organization.

According to the indictment, Trabelsi was residing in Germany in 2000, when he met with other conspirators and made preparations to travel to Afghanistan to train for jihad.

In the spring of 2001, the indictment alleges, he met with bin Laden in Afghanistan, and offered to carry out a suicide bomb attack. According to the indictment, he later spoke with Muhammed Atef, a high-ranking member and chief military planner of al-Qaeda, at bin Laden's direction. Additionally, the indictment states, he met with others with whom he was to form a cell for the purpose of carrying out a suicide attack.

According to the indictment, Trabelsi and other conspirators discussed various possible targets for a suicide bomb attack and he undertook training in how to place explosives. In June 2001, the indictment states, Trabelsi traveled to Pakistan, where he obtained money from an al-Qaeda associate for use in carrying out his mission. The following month, he rented an apartment in Brussels, Belgium. While in Belgium, Trabelsi bought quantities of chemicals to be used in manufacturing a 1,000-kilogram bomb, the indictment alleges. Additionally, according to the indictment, he traveled at night with conspirators to scout the military base.

The investigation into this matter was conducted by the FBI's Washington Field Office. The Department of Justice, Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs provided significant assistance in this matter. The Department of Justice expressed appreciation to the government of Belgium and the Belgian Federal Police for their assistance. The prosecutors handling the case are Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jonathan M. Malis and Opher Shweiki of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia and Trial Attorney Mara Kohn of the Counterterrorism Section of the Justice Department's National Security Division.

If convicted of the charges filed in the indictment, Trabelsi faces a maximum sentence of life in prison. An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has violated a criminal law. All defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.