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PRESS RELEASE

Saudi Arabian National Charged with Illegally Exporting Rifle Barrels

Monday, December 19, 2022

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For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, Northern District of Ohio

CLEVELAND – A Saudi Arabian national residing in Cleveland Heights was charged in a one-count indictment with attempting to export more than 50 automatic and semi-automatic rifle barrels from the United States since April 2022.

Abdulrahman Zalah, 30, was charged with one count of smuggling goods from the United States.

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According to court documents, in October 2022, federal authorities with the Cleveland Division of the FBI were contacted by a firearms manufacturer regarding the suspicious purchasing behavior of an individual later identified as the defendant.

Based on the information, authorities began an investigation into the matter and determined that the defendant, beginning in April 2022, had fraudulently exported and attempted to export and send more than 50 automatic and semi-automatic rifle barrels from the United States.

Court documents state that the defendant did not obtain an export license from the United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) as required by law to export commodities, including firearms and firearm components, originating in the United States.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

If convicted, the defendant's sentence will be determined by the Court after a review of factors unique to this case, including the defendant's prior criminal records, if any, the defendant's role in the offense, and the characteristics of the violation. In all cases, the sentence will not exceed the statutory maximum; in most cases, it will be less than the maximum.

This case was investigated by the Cleveland Division of the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Duncan T. Brown.

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