



UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
Southern District of New York

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**MANHATTAN U.S. ATTORNEY ANNOUNCES EXTRADITIONS OF
TWO DEFENDANTS CHARGED WITH CONSPIRING TO PROVIDE
SUPPORT TO HIZBALLAH**

*One of the Defendants Allegedly Agreed to Acquire \$9.5 Million Worth of Surface-to-Air
Missiles and Other Weapons for Hizballah*

Preet Bharara, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced the extraditions of SIAVOSH HENAREH and CETIN AKSU from Romania, on charges of conspiring to provide narcotics and, in the case of AKSU, material support to Hizballah through an individual whom they believed to be an associate of Hizballah, but who was in fact, a United States Drug Enforcement Administration (“DEA”), confidential source. HENAREH, 57, a citizen of Iran, and AKSU, 49, a citizen of Turkey, arrived in the Southern District of New York today. They will be presented this afternoon in Magistrate Court and then arraigned before U.S. District Judge Jed S. Rakoff.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara stated: “As alleged, Siavosh Henareh and Cetin Aksu agreed to provide massive amounts of heroin to individuals they believed to be associated with Hizbollah – a terrorist organization. Aksu is also charged with agreeing to buy a deadly laundry list of weapons on behalf of an associate of Hizballah. As we said when we first announced these charges, this case provides fresh evidence of the growing nexus between drug trafficking, weapons trafficking and terrorists, a nexus with the potential to threaten our national security. This Office, along with the DEA and our international law enforcement partners, remains committed to proactively addressing this threat.”

According to the Superseding Indictment:

Beginning in June 2010, HENAREH had a series of meetings in countries including Turkey, Romania, and Greece with DEA confidential sources (the “CSs”), at least one of whom represented himself/herself as an associate of Hizballah. During those meetings, and in a series of telephone calls, HENAREH agreed to arrange the sale of hundreds of kilograms of high-quality heroin to the CS’s. The CSs represented to HENAREH that the profits from the sale of the heroin in the United States would be used, among other things, to purchase weapons for Hizballah. In April 2011, the CSs received a one-kilogram sample of heroin from a co-

conspirator of HENAREH's in Bucharest, Romania, in order to inspect its quality, and in anticipation of a subsequent, multi-hundred kilogram load.

As a result of their meetings with HENAREH, the CSs were subsequently introduced to AKSU and another individual, Bachar Wehbe. Beginning in February 2011, in Romania, Cyprus, Malaysia, and elsewhere, AKSU and Wehbe agreed to purchase military-grade weaponry from the CSs on behalf of Hizballah. In those meetings, and in telephone calls and email messages, AKSU and Wehbe discussed the purchase of American-made Stinger surface-to-air missiles ("SAMs"), Iгла SAMs, AK-47 and M4 assault rifles, M107 .50 caliber sniper rifles, and ammunition, from (among other places) an American military base in Germany. On June 13, 2011, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, AKSU and Wehbe signed a written agreement for the purchase of 48 American-made Stinger SAMs, 100 Iгла SAMs, 5,000 AK-47 assault rifles, 1,000 M4 rifles, and 1,000 Glock handguns, for a total price of approximately \$9.5 million. During the course of the weapons negotiation, Wehbe stated that he was purchasing the weapons on instructions from Hizballah. Shortly thereafter, Wehbe and others caused approximately \$100,000 to be transferred to the CSs as a down payment for the weapons purchase.

In coordination with Romanian authorities, HENAREH and AKSU were arrested in Bucharest, Romania on July 25, 2011. That same day, in coordination with authorities in the Republic of the Maldives, Wehbe was arrested and was subsequently transferred to United States custody to face the charges alleged in the same Superseding Indictment, in which HENAREH and AKSU are also charged.

The Superseding Indictment charges HENAREH and AKSU with the following counts:

- Count One charges HENAREH and AKSU with conspiracy to distribute one kilogram or more of heroin, knowing or intending that the heroin would be imported into the United States, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 959 and 963;
- Count Two charges AKSU with conspiracy to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization – namely, Hizballah – in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2339B; and
- Count Three charges AKSU with conspiracy to acquire and transfer anti-aircraft missiles, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2332g.

The maximum and, where applicable, mandatory minimum penalties for these offenses are as follows:

- Count One of the Indictment – life in prison, with a mandatory minimum term of 10 years in prison;
- Count Two of the Indictment – 15 years in prison; and
- Count Three of the Indictment – life in prison, with a mandatory minimum term of 25 years in prison.

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Mr. Bharara praised the outstanding work of the Special Operations Division of the DEA and the DEA Country Offices in: Istanbul, Kuala Lumpur, Copenhagen, New Delhi, Athens, Cyprus, and Kabul. Mr. Bharara expressed his gratitude to the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative Regional Center for Combating Trans-Border Crime, the Romanian National Police, the Turkish National Police, the Malaysian National Police, the Greek Hellenic Police, the Cyprus National Police, and the Maldives Police Service. He also thanked the Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs, its National Security Division, and the Department of State for their ongoing assistance.

This case is being handled by the Office's Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Benjamin Naftalis and Adam S. Hickey are in charge of the prosecution.

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