



# Department of Justice

United States Attorney Loretta E. Lynch  
Eastern District of New York

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## **NEW YORK MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO ATTEMPTING TO BOMB NEW YORK FEDERAL RESERVE BANK IN LOWER MANHATTAN**

### **Defendant Attempted to Strike New York's Financial District on Behalf of al-Qaeda**

BROOKLYN, N.Y. – Earlier this afternoon, at the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York, Quazi Mohammad Rezwanul Ahsan Nafis, 21, pleaded guilty to attempting to detonate what he believed to be a 1,000 pound bomb at the New York Federal Reserve Bank on Liberty Street in lower Manhattan's financial district. The charge to which Nafis pleaded guilty, attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction, carries a sentence of up to life imprisonment.

The guilty plea was announced by Loretta E. Lynch, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York; Lisa Monaco, Assistant Attorney General for National Security; George Venizelos, Assistant Director-in-Charge, FBI, New York Field Office; and Raymond W. Kelly, Commissioner, New York City Police Department (NYPD).

According to today's guilty plea and documents filed in the case, defendant Nafis, a Bangladeshi national, traveled to the United States in January 2012, intending to fight violent jihad. Nafis attempted to recruit multiple individuals to form a terrorist cell inside the United States. He brought with him digital media containing bomb-making instructions and speeches by Anwar al-Awlaki, a now deceased leader of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Nafis also actively sought out al-Qaeda contacts within the United States to assist him in carrying out an attack. Unbeknownst to Nafis, one of the individuals he attempted to recruit was a source for the FBI. During their subsequent investigation, FBI agents and NYPD detectives working with the Joint Terrorism Task Force closely monitored Nafis as he attempted to implement his plan.

Nafis proposed several targets for terrorist attack, including a high-ranking U.S. official and the New York Stock Exchange. Ultimately, Nafis decided to conduct a bombing operation against the New York Federal Reserve Bank. In a written statement he devised to claim responsibility for the terrorist bombing of the Federal Reserve Bank on behalf of al-Qaeda, Nafis wrote that he wanted to "destroy America" and that he believed the most efficient way to

accomplish this goal was to target America's economy. In this statement, Nafis also included quotations from "our beloved Sheikh Osama bin Laden" to justify the killing of women and children that Nafis expected would result from the attack.

During the investigation, Nafis came into contact with an FBI undercover agent who posed as an al-Qaeda facilitator. At Nafis's request, the undercover agent supplied Nafis with 20 50-pound bags of purported explosives. Nafis then worked to store the material and assemble the explosive device for his attack. Nafis purchased components for the bomb's detonator and conducted surveillance for his attack on multiple occasions in New York City's financial district in lower Manhattan. Throughout his interactions with the undercover agent, Nafis repeatedly asserted that the plan was his own and was the reason he had come to the United States.

On October 17, 2012, the day of the planned attack, Nafis met the undercover agent and traveled in a van to a warehouse located in the Eastern District of New York. While en route, Nafis explained to the undercover agent that he had a "Plan B" that involved conducting a suicide bombing operation in the event that the attack was about to be thwarted by the police. Upon arriving at the warehouse, Nafis assembled what he believed to be a 1,000 pound bomb inside the van. Nafis and the undercover agent then drove to the New York Federal Reserve Bank. During this drive, Nafis armed the purported bomb by assembling the detonator and attaching it to the explosives. Nafis and the undercover agent parked the van next to the New York Federal Reserve Bank, exited the van, and walked to a nearby hotel. There, Nafis recorded a video statement to the American public which he intended to release in connection with the attack. During this video statement, Nafis stated: "We will not stop until we attain victory or martyrdom." Nafis then repeatedly, but unsuccessfully, attempted to detonate the bomb, which had been assembled using the inert explosives provided by the undercover agent. JTTF agents arrested Nafis immediately after he attempted to detonate the bomb.

"As today's guilty plea shows, the defendant came to this country not to further his studies, but to advance the goals of jihad. Once here, he devoted his energies to refining his plan to disrupt the U.S. economy and kill Americans, and attempting to recruit others to join him. Ultimately, he resolved to commit mass murder in downtown Manhattan through an attack on the New York Federal Reserve Bank, a symbol of America's economy. With diligence and determination, Nafis attempted to carry out his plan in the name of al-Qaeda. We are committed to protecting the safety of all Americans, including the hundreds of thousands who work in New York's financial district. We will not wait for our enemies to attack us before using the tools at our disposal to discourage, disrupt, and ultimately, detain them with lengthy terms of incarceration," stated U.S. Attorney Loretta E. Lynch. "I would like to thank our partners at the FBI, NYPD, United States Secret Service, Immigration and Customs Enforcement/Homeland Security Investigations, New York State Police, the other agencies who participate in the JTTF, and the Department of Justice's National Security Division for their hard work on this important investigation. I would also like to thank the security teams at the New York Federal Reserve Bank and the New York Stock Exchange for their assistance."

"Rezwanul Nafis today admitted that he came to America for the purpose of conducting terrorist attacks, that he tried to recruit others into his plans, and that he ultimately concocted and attempted to carry out an attack against the New York Federal Reserve Bank. Thanks to a

coordinated undercover law enforcement effort, his plot was thwarted. I applaud the many agents, analysts and prosecutors who helped bring about today's successful outcome," said Lisa Monaco, Assistant Attorney General for National Security.

FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge George Venizelos stated, "Nafis admits he came to the U.S. intent on committing jihad, assembled a bomb for that purpose, and attempted to detonate it. Thankfully, among those who stood between him and his goal were a source and an undercover FBI agent. In order to stop those committed to terrorism from conspiring with others who would actually help them, we will continue to use all available tactics, including the use of undercover agents. There is no more important mission."

NYPD Commissioner Kelly stated, "Nafis is just one of the more recent examples of individuals charged in terrorist plots against targets in New York City. There have been 16 plots against the city that we know of since the World Trade Center Twin Towers were destroyed in 2001. Time and again, individuals intent on making a violent terrorist statement select New York City as their venue. That's why, as in many other cases, the NYPD cooperated closely with federal prosecutors and the Joint Terrorism Task Force of the FBI to bring Nafis to justice."

The defendant faces a statutory maximum sentence of life. His sentencing is scheduled for May 30, 2013, at 10:00 AM, before Chief Judge Carol B. Amon, at the federal courthouse in Brooklyn.

The government's case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys James P. Loonam and Richard M. Tucker, with assistance from Trial Attorney Bridget Behling of the Justice Department's Counterterrorism Section.

**The Defendant:**

Quazi Mohammad Rezwanul Ahsan Nafis  
Age: 21  
Jamaica, New York

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