

**Cyrus R. Vance, Jr.**

*District Attorney, New York County*

For Immediate Release

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<http://www.manhattanda.org/press-release/first-terrorist-convicted-state-terror-charges-sentenced-decade-prison-2011-plot-attac>

## **FIRST TERRORIST CONVICTED ON STATE TERROR CHARGES SENTENCED TO DECADE IN PRISON FOR 2011 PLOT TO ATTACK MANHATTAN SYNAGOGUES**

Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus R. Vance, Jr., today announced the sentencing of AHMED FERHANI, 28, to 10 years in state prison after his guilty plea to terror-related charges for plotting to target New York synagogues. The defendant pleaded guilty on December 4, 2012 in New York State Supreme Court to Attempted Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the First Degree as a Crime of Terrorism, Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the Second Degree as a Crime of Terrorism, Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the Third Degree as a Crime of Terrorism, Criminal Sale of a Firearm in the Third Degree as a Crime of Terrorism, Conspiracy in the Fourth Degree as a Crime of Terrorism, and Conspiracy in the Fourth Degree as a Hate Crime.

FERHANI was arrested in May 2011, following an eight-month undercover operation conducted by the New York City Police Department (NYPD) and an investigation by the Manhattan District Attorney's Office. The defendant's guilty plea marked the first time a terrorist had been convicted on state terror charges since the New York Anti-Terror Laws were passed shortly after September 11, 2001.

"Today's sentencing marks an important first for local law enforcement officials in New York State," said District Attorney Vance. "This defendant was convicted and sentenced under anti-terrorism laws that enabled local police and prosecutors to protect our communities from terrorist threats. Violent plots like Ahmed Ferhani's endanger all New Yorkers. Fortunately, as a result of the collaboration between state prosecutors and local police, we prevented him from carrying out his violent plan against our City."

NYPD Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly said: "Ferhani posed a real threat to New York's Jewish community, eagerly purchasing a hand grenade, two guns, and 150 rounds of ammunition from an undercover officer as part of Ferhani's stated intention to attack and then 'blow up a synagogue in Manhattan, and take out the whole entire building.' He was exposed as a result of the dedicated diligence of the NYPD Intelligence Bureau. I commend District Attorney Vance and his staff for their pioneering work in this case that resulted in a guilty plea and the imprisonment of a dangerous man."

According to the defendant's guilty plea and documents filed in court, between October 2010 and May 2011, FERHANI conspired to bomb synagogues in Manhattan to send a message of violence to non-Muslims, including Americans, Christians, and Jews. In mid-April 2011, FERHANI repeatedly discussed with an undercover detective his desire to blow up the biggest

synagogue in Manhattan, and said that he was selling drugs to fund his plan. He told undercover detectives that he wanted to buy guns and grenades, and that grenades could be thrown two at a time into a synagogue. He also said he wanted to use grenades to blow up churches. At one point, the defendant instructed an undercover detective not to use the word “synagogue” on the phone, in case authorities were listening to their calls.

According to court documents, FERHANI asked the detective to contact someone about how to make a bomb, and suggested a plan to dress up as Jewish worshippers, attend a service at a synagogue, and leave a bag containing a bomb inside the synagogue before departing. On May 5, 2011, the defendant and the detective met in Manhattan with a second undercover detective whom FERHANI believed was a weapons dealer. During the meeting, FERHANI said that he wanted to buy grenades, and would pay several hundred dollars to purchase two guns.

According to the defendant’s guilty plea and court documents, on May 11, 2011, FERHANI and a co-conspirator again met with the undercover detective and discussed their plan to purchase three firearms and a grenade. The defendant said, among other things, that he wanted to blow up buildings in New York City, and handed over \$100 as payment for the guns. He said he would pay the balance later, and announced his desire to purchase additional weapons and devices in the future for “the cause.” These included a silencer, bulletproof vests, a police radio interceptor, and a box of grenades.

FERHANI was arrested on May 11, 2011, in Manhattan, after purchasing two operable Browning semi-automatic pistols, one operable Smith and Wesson semi-automatic pistol, ammunition, and one inert grenade that had been previously disabled by the NYPD.

Assistant District Attorney Gary J. Galperin, Senior Investigative Counsel of the Rackets Bureau and former Assistant District Attorney Margaret Gandy prosecuted this case under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Eric Seidel, Chief of the Organized Crime Unit, Daniel Brownell, Chief of the Rackets Bureau, and then-Executive Assistant District Attorney Adam S. Kaufmann, Chief of the Investigation Division. Trial Preparation Assistant Willimina Bromer assisted in this case.

District Attorney Vance thanked Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly, Deputy Commissioner David Cohen, and the NYPD Intelligence Division.

#### Defendant Information:

AHMED FERHANI, D.O.B. 01/14/1985  
Queens, NY

#### Convicted:

- Attempted Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the First Degree as a Crime of Terrorism, a class B violent felony, one count
- Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the Second Degree as a Crime of Terrorism, a class B violent felony, four counts
- Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the Third Degree as a Crime of Terrorism, a class C

violent felony, one count

- Criminal Sale of a Firearm in the Third Degree as a Crime of Terrorism, a class C violent felony, two counts

- Conspiracy in the Fourth Degree as a Crime of Terrorism, a class D violent felony, one count

- Conspiracy in the Fourth Degree as a Hate Crime, a class D felony, one count

Sentenced:

- 10 years in State Prison

- 5 years of post-release supervision