



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
SOUTHERN DISTRICT *of* NEW YORK

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, October 12, 2021

U.S. Attorney Announces Arrest Of Iranian Large-Scale Heroin Trafficker

Malek Mohammad Balouchzehi Is Charged with Conspiring to Sell Multi-Hundred Kilogram Quantities of Heroin for Distribution in New York City

Damian Williams, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and Anne Milgram, the Administrator of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA"), announced today the arrest of MALEK MOHAMMAD BALOUCHZEHJI, a/k/a "Malek Khan," for conspiring to import heroin into the United States and distributing heroin for importation into the United States. BALOUCHZEHJI, a citizen of Iran, was taken into custody by Kenyan authorities expelled to the United States from Kenya on October 9, 2021.

BALOUCHZEHJI was presented before United States Magistrate Judge Sarah Netburn earlier today.

U.S. Attorney Damian Williams said: "From thousands of miles away, Malek Balouchzehi allegedly arranged the importation of massive quantities of heroin into the United States with seemingly little regard for the devastation that highly addictive opiates cause after landing at our shores. Balouchzehi's expulsion to the United States is a direct result of this Office's successful ongoing partnership with the D.E.A., and we commend the outstanding work of the agents both here and abroad who made today's charges possible."

D.E.A. Administrator Anne Milgram said: "This investigation demonstrates our collective resolve to pursue criminals who traffic in these dangerous, addictive substances. For decades, DEA's partnerships with our law enforcement partners around the world have been the key to bringing to justice those threatening our communities. DEA will continue to bring all that we have to bear to combat and defeat the criminal drug traffickers putting Americans' safety and health at risk."

According to the allegations contained in the Complaint charging the defendant,[1] which was unsealed today in Manhattan federal court:

BALOUCHZEHJI is an Iran-based drug trafficker who distributes methamphetamine and manufactures and distributes heroin. In or about September 2019, BALOUCHZEHJI and his associate began communicating and meeting with individuals whom BALOUCHZEHJI believed were heroin traffickers interested in large quantities of heroin for importation into the United States, as well as methamphetamine for distribution in Australia. Those individuals were, in fact, a confidential source working at the DEA's direction, and an undercover DEA agent posing as a New York-based heroin distributor. In December 2019, BALOUCHZEHJI caused a sample of approximately two kilograms of heroin to be delivered in Mozambique, with the

understanding that those drugs would be transported to the United States for testing and sale. Following this sample shipment, BALOUCHZEHI planned to supply larger quantities of heroin for importation to and distribution within the United States, and in December 2019, BALOUCHZEHI discussed providing as many as 400 kilograms of heroin for importation to the United States in the next transaction.

* * *

BALOUCHZEHI, 38, a citizen of Iran, is charged with one count of conspiring to import heroin into the United States and one count of distributing heroin intending that the narcotics would be imported into the United States. Both counts carry a maximum sentence of life in prison and a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in prison. The statutory minimum and maximum sentences are prescribed by Congress and are provided here for informational purposes only, as any sentencing of the defendant will be determined by a judge.

Mr. Williams praised the outstanding investigative efforts of the DEA's Special Operations Division, Bilateral Investigations Unit and New York Field Division; the DEA's Nairobi, Maputo, Pretoria, Bucharest, and Jakarta Country Offices; the Kenyan National Police, Directorate of Criminal Investigations; the Mozambique National Criminal Investigation Services; and the Western Australia Police Force. Mr. Williams also thanked the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs for its assistance.

The case is being prosecuted by the Office's Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Michael D. Lockard and Kimberly J. Ravener are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Complaint are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

[1] As the introductory phrase signifies, the entirety of the text of the Complaint and the description of the Complaint set forth below constitute only allegations and every fact described should be treated as an allegation.

Attachment(s):

[Download u.s. v. malek mohammad balouchzehi complaint signed.pdf](#)

Topic(s):

Drug Trafficking

Component(s):

[USAO - New York, Southern](#)

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