



United States Attorney's Office District of Connecticut Press Release

**March 3, 2008 NEW YORK MAN SENTENCED TO 16 MONTHS IN FEDERAL PRISON
FOR ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL MONEY LAUNDERING SCHEME**

Kevin J. O'Connor, United States Attorney for the District of Connecticut, announced that AMER RAMZI CHAHAL, 47, of Forest Hills, New York, was sentenced on Friday, February 29, by United States District Judge Stefan R. Underhill in Bridgeport to 16 months of imprisonment, followed by three years of supervised release, for his role in an international money laundering scheme. CHAHAL also has forfeited a sum of money in the amount of \$13,200. On September 18, 2007, CHAHAL pleaded guilty to one count of money laundering conspiracy, one count of making false statements to law enforcement and one count of conspiring to defraud the Internal Revenue Service.

According to documents filed with the Court and statements made in court, CHAHAL assisted in the laundering of hundreds of thousands of dollars that Fares Khraisat made as a result of a bribery scheme by arranging for the money to be delivered to an account in Jordan for a fee. In doing so, CHAHAL utilized various international accounts, including ones located in Hong Kong.

Khraisat owned and operated *Zam-Zam Telecard, Inc.*, a Bridgeport-based phone card company. On February 11, 2008, Khraisat pleaded guilty and admitted that he paid more than \$400,000 in bribe payments to Jonathan Kaplan, a co-defendant, in order to receive favorable treatment from Kaplan's company.

CHAHAL also made false statements to federal law enforcement agents in connection with the seizure of \$50,000 in cash in Connecticut on October 26, 2006. Although the cash belonged to Khraisat and was intended to be transmitted to Jordan, CHAHAL and a co-defendant told authorities that they brought the cash to Connecticut from New York and that they possessed it for the purpose of purchasing used cars.

On November 14, 2007, Jonathan Kaplan pleaded guilty to one count of wire fraud and one count of tax evasion. Khraisat and Kaplan await sentencing.

This case has been investigated by the United States Secret Service; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigation Division; the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement; the United States Department of State, Diplomatic Security Service, and the Connecticut State Police. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney David A. Ring.

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