



The Office of Intergovernmental and Public Liaison's Department of Justice Newsletter

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Newsletter from the Office of Intergovernmental and Public Liaison

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Attorney General's Farewell Ceremony



Attorney General Mukasey delivered farewell remarks on January 8, 2009 in the Great Hall.

Highlights from the Attorney General's Speech:

"It has been an eventful 14 months. We helped to set up an institutional framework that will protect our national security while preserving our nation's commitment to civil rights and civil liberties. We helped to update the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act to address modern forms of communication used by our enemies, and to plug other intelligence gaps. And we put in place new, consolidated guidelines for domestic FBI operations. Those guidelines will help the Bureau to remain the first-class crime solving agency it always has been. They also will continue its transformation into a first-class intelligence-gathering organization and a full-fledged member of the intelligence community that has helped assure that this country has not suffered a terrorist attack since September 11, 2001."

"It would take all of my remaining days in office to list the accomplishments and successes you have achieved. It would take even more time for me to thank individually each person in the Department who deserves it. So let me say to everyone listening: If, as I said and as I believe, the Department is thriving today, with both spirits and standards high, it is because of the talent and dedication of each of you, many of whom served long before I got here and many of whom – thankfully – will continue to serve long after I have left."

"May God bless each of you, this great Department, and this wonderful country."

Three Staten Island, NY Men Indicted on Federal Hate Crime Conspiracy

The Department of Justice announced on January 7, 2009, the unsealing of an indictment charging three Staten Island, New York men with conspiring to assault African-Americans in retaliation for President-Elect Barack Obama's election victory.

Ralph Nicoletti and Michael Contreras, both 18, and Brian Carranza, 21, were arrested on January 6, 2009, and are scheduled for arraignment before U.S. Magistrate Judge Roanne L. Mann in Brooklyn. As alleged in the indictment and other court filings, on the night of November 4, 2008, shortly after learning of Barack Obama's election victory, the group, along with a fourth friend, decided to find African-Americans to assault.

"It is shocking and sobering that allegations of racial violence continue in this day and age," said Acting Assistant Attorney General Grace Chung Becker. "The Justice Department takes these allegations very seriously and the Civil Rights Division, working with U.S. Attorneys Offices across the country, will continue to use federal laws to prosecute individuals who conspire to commit such acts of violence and intimidation."

The charges announced are merely allegations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. If convicted, each faces a sentence of up to 10 years in prison.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum



Attorney General Mukasey delivers remarks at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. on December 16, 2008.

On December 16, 2008, Attorney General Mukasey delivered remarks at a ceremony announcing the transfer of records to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum from the Department's Office of Special Investigations. Since 1979, the Office of Special Investigations has been investigating and prosecuting cases against alleged perpetrators of World War II Nazi crimes of persecution who immigrated to the U.S.

Highlights from the Attorney General's Speech:

"It's an honor to be here in such distinguished company and to be at this extraordinarily important museum. It is gratifying as well because of the reason we are here: to mark the Justice Department's donation of more than 50,000 pages of records of World War II-related denaturalization, extradition, and removal cases."

"It is our hope that this donation will help both to advance our understanding of those who perpetrated the horror of the Holocaust, which will strengthen our ability to resist such people, and to deepen our knowledge of the Holocaust's victims, which will help preserve their memory. As an institution founded to study and to memorialize the Holocaust and its victims, this Museum is a fitting destination for these records."

More Than \$1 Billion Recovered by Justice Department in Fraud and False Claims in Fiscal Year 2008

The United States secured \$1.34 billion in settlements and judgments in the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, pursuing allegations of fraud against the federal government. This brings total recoveries since 1986, when Congress substantially strengthened the civil False Claims Act, to more than \$21 billion.

"Now, more than ever, it is crucial that taxpayer dollars aren't lost to fraud," said Gregory G. Katsas, Assistant Attorney General for the Department's Civil Division. "The billion dollars collected this year is only part of the story. By rooting out fraud and vigorously pursuing it, the Department, with the help of concerned citizens who report fraud in hotline calls and in qui tam complaints, undoubtedly saves the country many times that amount in aborted schemes and misconduct."

For additional details on significant recoveries by the Department, please visit <http://www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2008/November/08-civ-992.html>.

Five Radical Islamists Convicted of Conspiring to Kill Soldiers at Fort Dix

On December 22, 2008, a jury convicted five men of plotting to kill members of the U.S. military.

After five and a half days of deliberations, which began December 17, 2008, the jury convicted Mohamad Ibrahim Shnewer, brothers Dritan Duka, Shain Duka and Eljvir Duka, and Serdar Tatar on count one of the seven-count superseding indictment that charged them with conspiracy to murder members of the U.S. military. The jury acquitted each of the defendants of count two, which charged attempt to murder members of the U.S. military.

"[The] verdicts underscore the need for continued vigilance against homegrown terror threats," said Patrick Rowan, Assistant Attorney General for National Security. "While these defendants were not members of an international terrorist organization, their involvement in weapons training, their surveillance of domestic targets and their discussions of killing U.S. military personnel posed a serious threat that required the law enforcement disruption and the prosecutions upheld by the jury."

"These men planned, trained and ceaselessly talked unambiguously about their intention to ambush and kill U.S. soldiers," said Acting U.S. Attorney Ralph Marra. "The word should go out to any other would-be terrorists of the homegrown variety that the U.S. will find you, infiltrate your group, prosecute you and send you to a federal prison for a very long time."

Ongoing Global Enforcement Effort Targets Child Pornographers

On December 12, 2008, Attorney General Mukasey, speaking after a joint U.S.-EU ministerial meeting, highlighted "Operation Joint Hammer" – the U.S. component of an ongoing global enforcement operation targeting transnational rings of child pornographers. The operation already has led to the arrest of more than 60 people in the United States involved in the trade of child pornography; a number that the Attorney General remarked was likely to increase. Thus far, 11 child victims have been identified through Operation Joint Hammer.

"It should come as news to no one that crimes against children have been an area of special focus for the Department of Justice, and an area of great success," said Attorney General Mukasey. "Through initiatives such as Project Safe Childhood, we have increased prosecutions of those who abuse and exploit children by over 30 percent in the last two years. Through a series of national media campaigns, we have made great strides in making parents and young people aware of the dangers. And most important, through cooperation with other law enforcement agencies such as our partners in the European Union, we have identified – and in many cases, saved – hundreds of children depicted in images and videos of sexual abuse."



Attorney General Mukasey delivers remarks highlighting "Operation Joint Hammer" after a joint United States and European Union ministerial meeting at the Department of Justice.

Nation's First Conviction on Narco-terror Charges

A member of an Afghan Taliban cell was sentenced on December 22, 2008, in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to two terms of life in prison on drug and narco-terrorism charges.

Khan Mohammed, 38, was ordered by U.S. District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly to serve the two life sentences concurrently as well as 60 months of supervised release, served consecutively, for each of the two counts of conviction following the prison term. Mohammed was convicted on May 15, 2008, after a seven-day jury trial on one count of distribution of one kilogram or more of heroin knowing and intending that it be imported into the United States and one count of narco-terrorism, or the distribution of a controlled substance (in this case heroin and opium) in order to provide something of pecuniary value to a person or group that has engaged or is engaging in terrorist activity. Mohammed is the first defendant convicted in U.S. federal court under the narco-terrorism statute, enacted in March 2006.

"A violent jihadist and narcotics trafficker, Khan Mohammed sought to kill U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan using rockets," said Acting Assistant Attorney General of the Criminal Division Matthew Friedrich. "[The] life sentences match the gravity of the crimes for which he was convicted."

Supporting State and Local Law Enforcement

For the last eight years, the Department of Justice has provided innovative leadership to federal, state, local and tribal justice systems, disseminating state-of-the-art knowledge and practices, and providing grants for their implementation. The Department has supported law enforcement agencies at all levels as they adapt to new challenges in public safety, including threats to the homeland posed by terrorists and transnational crimes such as human trafficking and cybercrimes. The Department's leadership and support in areas such as information sharing, DNA and forensics, and intelligence-led policing are preparing law enforcement to meet the demands of a global enforcement community. By promoting these state and local partnerships, the Department ensures that everyone works together towards a common goal: reducing crime and supporting programs that enrich communities and protect citizens.

Major accomplishments have been achieved in the areas of combating terrorism; keeping neighborhoods safe from gun, gang, and violent crimes; combating human trafficking; protecting communities from dangerous sex offenders; protecting children from abduction; supporting public safety officers; reducing crime in Indian Country and supporting Tribal law enforcement; and advancing justice through DNA technology. To read more about these successes, please visit <http://www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2008/November/08-opa-993.html>.

Board of Immigration Appeals

On December 15, 2008, Attorney General Mukasey administered the oath of office to five new members of the Board of Immigration Appeals.

Amber Alert Awareness Day

The Justice Department commemorated the 13-year anniversary of the AMBER (America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response) Alert program on January 13, 2009, by outlining its tremendous success and announcing the latest tool to aid in the search for missing persons. The Department's National Missing and Unidentified Persons System Initiative consists of a missing persons database and a database of unidentified remains which will ultimately interconnect to search and match records later this year.

The PROTECT Act, which President Bush signed into law in April 2003, statutorily established the national AMBER Alert Coordinator role within the Department of Justice.

On January 13, 1996, Amber Hagerman was abducted while riding her bicycle and then brutally murdered. The AMBER Alert network was created after her tragic death to provide emergency broadcast messages to the public when law enforcement determines that a child has been abducted. For more information, please visit <http://www.ojp.gov/newsroom/pressreleases/2009/oaag09015.htm>.

10 Major Drug Defendants Extradited from Mexico to the United States

On December 31, 2008, the Mexican government extradited 10 major drug defendants to the U.S. Those 10 defendants are accused of being associated with some of the most notorious Mexican drug trafficking organizations, including the Gulf Cartel, the Arellano Felix Organization and the Sinaloa Cartel. The defendants arrived in Texas and will face criminal proceedings in the Southern District of Texas, the Southern and Central Districts of California, and the Northern District of Georgia.

Attorney General Mukasey said, "The courageous action of the Mexican government in extraditing these 10 defendants – each of whom is accused of major drug offenses or other serious federal felonies – shows the unrelenting commitment of Mexican President Calderon to break the power of the Mexican drug cartels. Today's extraditions demonstrate that the cartels cannot operate with impunity, and that Mexico and the U.S. will work together ceaselessly to defeat them."

The charges announced are merely allegations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

The extradition of these 10 defendants brings the total number of extraditions from Mexico to the United States to 95 for 2008, the highest yearly number of extraditions from Mexico to date, surpassing last year's record number of 83.

For a complete list of charges, please visit <http://www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2008/December/08-ag-1158.html>.

This is the final Department of Justice (DOJ) newsletter under the leadership of Attorney General Mukasey. Thank you for your partnership and for your continued attention to the many crucial issues entrusted to DOJ and its leadership.