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[What's New](#) | [Sitemap](#) | [Search](#)

About BIS
News
Press Releases
Speeches
Testimony
Publications
Electronic FOIA
Archives
Policies And Regulations
Licensing
Compliance And Enforcement
Seminars And Training
International Programs
Defense Industrial Base Programs

[Home](#) > [News](#) > DOJ Press Release



U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney's Office

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FOUR INDIVIDUALS CHARGED IN THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK WITH EXPORTING VARIOUS GOODS FROM THE UNITED STATES TO IRAN AND CHINA

Two Iranian Nationals Have Been Arrested, Including One on Charges of Exporting Carbon Fiber – a Product That Can Be Used for Uranium Enrichment

Preet Bharara, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, George Venizelos, the Assistant Director-in-Charge of the New York Field Division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), James T. Hayes, Jr., the Special Agent-in-Charge of the New York Field Office of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations ("HSI"), and Sidney Simon, the Special Agent-in-Charge of the U.S. Commerce Department, Bureau of Industry and Security's Office of Export Enforcement New York Field Office ("DOC"), today announced charges against four individuals for exporting various goods from the U.S. to Iran and China. These goods include carbon fiber, which has a wide variety of uses, including in gas centrifuges that enrich uranium and in military aircraft and strategic missiles. The four individuals charged are HAMID REZA HASHEMI, a dual U.S. and Iranian citizen who resides in Iran, PETER GROMACKI, a U.S. citizen and a resident of Orange County, New York, AMIR ABBAS TAMIMI, an Iranian citizen and a resident of Iran, and MURAT TASKIRAN, a Turkish citizen. HASHEMI, GROMACKI, and TAMIMI are in custody in the U.S.

HASHEMI is alleged to have violated the International Emergency Economic Powers Act ("IEEPA") by working with others, including TASKIRAN, to arrange for the export of carbon fiber from the U.S. to his company in Tehran, Iran.

HASHEMI was arrested at John F. Kennedy International Airport as he entered the U.S. on December 1, 2012, and was arraigned in federal court in White Plains on December 4, 2012, before U.S. Magistrate Judge George A. Yanthis. U.S. District Judge Vincent L. Briccetti is assigned to the case.

GROMACKI is alleged to have violated IEEPA by using his company in Orange County, New York, to export carbon fiber from the U.S. to China. He was arrested this morning at his residence in Orange County, and was arraigned in federal court in White Plains before U.S. Magistrate Judge George A. Yanthis this afternoon.

TAMIMI is alleged to have violated IEEPA by working to export helicopter component parts from the U.S. to Iran, through South Korea. He was arrested at John F. Kennedy International Airport as he entered the U.S. on October 5, 2012, and was arraigned on October 9, 2012, in federal court in Manhattan before U.S. District Judge J. Paul Oetken.

U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara said: "The embargo and export laws that all four of these defendants are alleged to have violated are critical to protecting the national security of the United States and its citizens. Carbon fiber in the wrong hands poses a serious threat to that security, and two of these defendants are charged with arranging its export to Iran, where it most assuredly had the potential to end up in the wrong hands. The law enforcement actions we announce today should make clear that, together with our law enforcement partners, we will work tirelessly to enforce the laws that protect our country."

FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge George Venizelos: "The law prohibits the exportation of goods to Iran and certain goods to China. Whether motivated by greed or otherwise, these defendants allegedly violated the law, including by arranging for the export of carbon fiber that can be used in uranium enrichment. The FBI takes very seriously its responsibility to ensure that strategically important goods and technology do not end up in the wrong hands."

HSI Special Agent-in-Charge James T. Hayes, Jr. said: "We are engaged in a daily cat-and mouse game with individuals who will go to great lengths to circumvent U.S. Customs law to export sensitive military grade technology to countries like Iran and China. If in the wrong hands, carbon fiber can be used to manufacture dangerous products that threaten our national security and the security of other nations. HSI works closely with federal law enforcement partners and foreign governments to prevent the illegal exportation of this sensitive technology."

DOC Special Agent-in-Charge Sidney Simon: "Today's arrests and charges demonstrate our resolve to work hand-in-hand with our law enforcement partners to pursue export violators anywhere in the world."

The following allegations are based on the Indictments and the Complaint:

From 2007 until his arrest, HASHEMI lived and worked in Iran, and operated a company in Tehran (the "Iranian Company"), which procured carbon fiber from various brokers. TASKIRAN was the Managing Director of a company in Turkey (the "Turkish Company"). For example, in March and April 2008, HASHEMI, TASKIRAN, and a Europe-based broker ("Individual-1"), successfully arranged

for the shipment of carbon fiber from the U.S. to the Iranian Company. Specifically, Individual-1 bought carbon fiber from a U.S. supplier, and arranged for the supplier to export it from the U.S. to Europe. Individual-1 then used a European freight forwarder – a private company that handles large overseas exports – to send the carbon fiber from Europe to United Arab Emirates (the “UAE”), and arranged for the carbon fiber to be sent from the UAE to the Iranian Company operated by HASHEMI.

From 2006 until his arrest, GROMACKI lived and worked in Orange County, New York. In June 2007, GROMACKI arranged for the export of more than 6,000 pounds of carbon fiber from the U.S. to Belgium, which was then shipped to China. In addition, and in connection with this export, GROMACKI made various false statements on a shipper’s export declaration form, concerning: the ultimate consignee of the shipment; the ultimate country of destination of the shipment; and whether an export license was required for the shipment.

Beginning in November 2011 and until his arrest, TAMIMI attempted to arrange for the export of helicopter component parts from the U.S. to Iran, through South Korea. The components were for a particular helicopter that can be used for military purposes, including for reconnaissance, tactical insertion, and as a missile platform.

None of the participants in any of the transactions described above obtained the requisite approval from the U.S. Department of Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control, or DOC.

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HASHEMI, 52, has been charged with one count of conspiracy to violate IEEPA, and two substantive IEEPA violations. He faces a maximum penalty of 60 years in prison.

GROMACKI, 48, has been charged with one count of conspiracy to violate IEEPA, one substantive violation of IEEPA, and one count of making false statements in a matter within the jurisdiction of the U.S. He faces a maximum penalty of 30 years in prison.

TASKIRAN has been charged with one count of conspiracy to violate IEEPA and one substantive IEEPA violation. He faces a maximum penalty of 40 years in prison.

TAMIMI, 40, has been charged with conspiracy to violate IEEPA and one substantive IEEPA violation. He faces a maximum penalty of 40 years in prison.

Mr. Bharara praised the extraordinary investigative work of the various law enforcement agencies involved in this investigation, including the New York Offices of the FBI, HSI, and DOC. Mr. Bharara also thanked the U.S. Department of Justice’s National Security Division and its Office of International Affairs.

The case is being handled by the Office’s Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Christopher L. Lavigne and Jason P.W. Halperin are in

charge of the prosecution.

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

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