

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Abdullahu Admits Supplying Guns and Ammunition to Illegal Aliens Charged with Planning Attacks on Military Personnel

(More)

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CAMDEN, N.J. – Agron Abdullahu pleaded guilty today to conspiring to provide firearms and ammunition to illegal aliens who allegedly plotted to kill U.S. soldiers at various installations, including the Fort Dix Army base in New Jersey, U.S. Attorney Christopher J. Christie announced.

Abdullahu, 25, of Buena Vista Township in Atlantic County, N.J., pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Robert B. Kugler to a one-count Superseding Information. Judge Kugler continued the defendant's detention and scheduled sentencing for Feb. 6.

Abdullahu was arrested on May 7, 2007, along with five others – three of them brothers – and charged in an alleged plot to kill as many soldiers as possible. At that time, Abdullahu was charged with aiding and abetting the illegal possession of firearms by illegal aliens.

At his plea hearing, Abdullahu admitted that from Jan. 3, 2006, to May 7, 2007, he and Serdar Tatar, 23, of Philadelphia, provided firearms to brothers Eljvir Duka, 24, Dritan Duka, 28, and Shain Duka, 26, who Abdullahu knew were illegal aliens. (All of the Duka brothers are from Cherry Hill, N.J.)

Abdullahu admitted that on at least two occasions he provided the Dukas and others with firearms and ammunition for them to possess and use at a firing range in Gouldsboro, Pa.

In January 2006, Abdullahu provided a Beretta pistol and the Yugoslavian semiautomatic rifle to the Dukas for their use at a firing range in Gouldsboro, he admitted. During the week of Jan. 3, 2006, while in Gouldsboro, Tatar provided the Dukas and others with his Beretta CX4 Storm 9-millimeter-caliber rifle and a newly purchased Mossberg 12-gauge shotgun for use at a firing range, Abdullahu admitted.

According to the Superseding Information, in August 2006, Tatar transferred ownership of his two guns to an individual identified only as Individual #1, who kept the firearms at his residence in Philadelphia.

On Jan. 31, 2007, Abdullahu and Shain Duka took possession of the shotgun and the Beretta rifle from Individual #1, Abdullahu admitted. On that same day, Abdullahu brought the shotgun and Beretta rifle to Eljvir Duka and Dritan Duka for the Dukas to use at the firing range in Gouldsboro, he admitted. On Feb. 1, 2007, Abdullahu brought the Beretta pistol and Yugoslavian semiautomatic rifle to the Dukas for use at the firing range, he admitted.

Abdullahu also admitted that he purchased approximately 2,500 rounds of ammunition to be used by the Dukas and others. In early February 2007, after having used the four firearms at the firing range in Gouldsboro, the Dukas returned the firearms to Abdullahu,

he admitted. Abdullahu kept those firearms at his residence in Atlantic County until they were seized by federal agents.

The trial for the Dukas, Tatar and Mohamad Ibrahim Shnewer, 22, of Cherry Hill, on the five-count Indictment returned on June 5, 2007, is scheduled before Judge Kugler on Jan 15, 2008.

The charge of conspiracy to possess firearms and ammunition by illegal aliens carries a maximum penalty of 5 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000.

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Kugler will consult the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Christie credited Special Agents of the FBI's Philadelphia Division and the FBI South Jersey Joint Terrorism Task Force, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge J.P. Weis, in Philadelphia, for investigation of the case.

Christie and Weis also thanked investigators with member agencies of the FBI South Jersey JTTF, which is comprised of the Camden County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of the Acting Prosecutor Joshua M. Ottenberg, N.J. State Police, under the direction of Col. Joseph "Rick" Fuentes, Superintendent, the Delaware River Port Authority Police, under the direction of Chief Vincent Borrelli, Philadelphia Division of ICE, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge John P. Kelleghan.

The government is represented by Deputy U.S. Attorney William E Fitzpatrick and Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael A. Hammer, Jr.

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Defense Attorney: Richard Coughlin, Esq. Federal Public Defender