



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CRT

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2008

(202) 514-2007

WWW.USDOJ.GOV

TDD (202) 514-1888

NORTH CAROLINA MAN PLEADS GUILTY AND IS SENTENCED

FOR FEDERAL HATE CRIMES

WASHINGTON – A North Carolina man pleaded guilty today to federal civil rights charges for threatening employees of the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) and the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) because of their race and national origin, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division Grace Chung Becker and U.S. Attorney George E.B. Holding for the Eastern District of North Carolina announced today.

Christopher Szaz, a resident of Raleigh, pleaded guilty to two federal hate crime charges for sending threatening emails to NCLR and CAIR, in an effort to interfere with their employees' federally protected right to enjoy employment without intimidation based on race or national origin. After pleading guilty, Szaz was sentenced to 45 days of imprisonment, followed by one year of post-release supervision.

The two-count information charged that on June 8, 2007, Szaz sent two e-mail messages threatening to bomb the CAIR office in Washington, D.C. The information further charged that on July 27, 2007, Szaz sent an email to the NCLR office in Washington, D.C., stating that he would kill employees of that organization. In his hearing, Szaz admitted sending these emails in an effort to intimidate the employees and that his actions were motivated by racial and ethnic bias.

The case was investigated by Special Agent Greg Bristol of the District of Columbia Field Office of the FBI. It was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Frank Bradsher and Denise Walker of the Eastern District of North Carolina, as well as the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division Trial Attorney Cyra O'Daniel.

Prosecuting the perpetrators of bias-motivated crimes is a top priority of the Justice Department. Since 2001, the Civil Rights Division has charged 197 defendants in 132 cases involving bias-motivated crimes.

#

08-873

DO NOT REPLY TO THIS MESSAGE. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, PLEASE USE THE CONTACTS IN THE MESSAGE OR CALL THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AT 202-514-2007.