



# Department of Justice

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Northern District of New York

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## PRESS RELEASE

UNITED STATES ATTORNEY RICHARD S. HARTUNIAN announced that TAYFUN O. OKATAN, age 51, of Amherst, Massachusetts, was convicted on Wednesday, November 9, 2011, of charges stemming from his attempt to bring an illegal alien to the United States. The conviction of OKATAN of three felony counts of alien smuggling was the culmination of a three day-long jury trial before United States District Judge Mae A. D'Agostino in Albany, New York. Sentencing for OKATAN is scheduled for March 8, 2012 in Albany, New York. As a result of the convictions, OKATAN faces a maximum sentence on each count of 10 years imprisonment, supervised release of up to 3 years, and a maximum fine of up to \$250,000.

Evidence presented during the trial showed that OKATAN, a United States citizen born in Turkey, and a German citizen named Munir Uysal drove together to the Lewiston Port of Entry near Buffalo, New York at 1:15 a.m. on October 13, 2010, seeking admission into the United States. OKATAN was admitted, but Munir Uysal was refused admission into the United States. OKATAN returned to Canada with Uysal. At 8:25 a.m. on October 14, 2010, OKATAN arrived at the Champlain Port of Entry alone, but with luggage that belonged to Uysal. OKATAN told Customs and Border Protection officers in substance that he had left Uysal in Quebec, that he did not know where Uysal was, and that he was returning to his home in Amherst, Massachusetts. OKATAN was admitted into the United States, but Homeland Security Agents monitored his car and observed it drive across Lake Champlain into Vermont and then

back to New York, where they followed OKATAN south on Interstates 87 to the vicinity of Ausable, New York. At approximately 3:30 p.m., Munir Uysal was encountered and arrested as an illegal alien in Mooers, New York. At approximately 4:30 p.m., OKATAN was arrested ten miles away at the Beekmantown rest area on Southbound I-87 just below Exit 41. Munir Uysal was convicted of the misdemeanor offense of entry without inspection and sentenced to time served by Magistrate Judge Kudrle on October 28, 2010.

The investigation was conducted by the United States Border Patrol, Champlain Station, Customs and Border Protection Champlain and Lewiston, New York, and Homeland Security Investigations, Rouses Point, New York.

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