



***United States Attorney
Southern District of New York***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**TWO ADDITIONAL ARRESTS MADE OF MEMBERS OF VIOLENT
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME GROUP**

***Albanian Government Aide Arrested; Newly Unsealed Indictment
Charges 17 Defendants With Murder, Kidnapping, and Other
Racketeering Offenses***

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, JANICE K. FEDARCYK, the Assistant Director-in-Charge of the New York Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), and RAYMOND W. KELLY, the Police Commissioner of the City of New York, announced the arrests of FLORIAN VESHI and ALMIR RRAPO for their roles in a racketeering enterprise that engaged in murder, kidnapping, narcotics trafficking, extortion, robbery, arson, obstruction of justice, and interstate transportation of stolen goods. VESHI and RRAPO are charged in a new superseding 13-count indictment unsealed yesterday which supersedes charges previously filed against 15 other individuals, including charges of kidnapping, narcotics trafficking, robbery, and firearms crimes.

VESHI was arrested yesterday in New York City by members of the New York Joint Organized Crime Task Force, which includes agents of the FBI and detectives of the NYPD, and was detained following a court appearance in Manhattan federal court. ALMIR RRAPO was arrested by the Albanian National Police on July 2, 2010, at the request of the United States. At the time of his arrest, RRAPO was employed as the Senior Administrative Assistant to the Deputy Prime Minister of Albania.

Ten co-defendants -- BRUNO KRASNIQI, SAIMIR KRASNIQI, ERKLIANT SULA, SKENDER CAKONI, a/k/a "Neri," GJOVALIN BERISHA, a/k/a "Cuz," NAZIH NASSER, a/k/a "Naz," PLAURENT CELA, GENTIAN NIKOLLI, a/k/a "Genti," SHKELZEN BALIDEMAJ, and ALBERT TAMALI, a/k/a "Berti," a/k/a "Daniel Weiss" -- were arrested in June 2010 on the prior indictment in this case. GENTIAN CARA, MARJAN TAMALI, and JOANNA PAKULSKI, each residents of Canada, were arrested by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police based on requests for their provisional arrest in connection with a prior Indictment; CARA was extradited to the United States on August 6, 2010, and U.S. extradition requests for MARJAN TAMALI and

PAKULSKI remain pending. Two other defendants -- DUKAJIN NIKOLLAJ, a/k/a "Duke," and VISI LNU -- remain at large.

As alleged in the Indictment unsealed yesterday in Manhattan federal court and other documents filed in the case:

BRUNO KRASNIQI, SAIMIR KRASNIQI, ALMIR RRAPO, ERKLIANT SULA, FLORIAN VESHI, and others participated in a racketeering enterprise (the "Krasniqui Organization") led by brothers BRUNO KRASNIQI and SAIMIR KRASNIQI, which operated in New York, Michigan, Connecticut, and elsewhere. The Krasniqui Organization sought to enrich its members through various criminal schemes, including the trafficking of more than 1,500 pounds of marijuana, and used firearms and violence to protect its power and territory, as well as to instill fear among rival drug dealers and victims.

Members of the Krasniqui Organization are charged with two separate homicides. First, as a result of a turf battle with a marijuana dealer whom the Krasniqui Organization had robbed, various members of the Organization, including BRUNO KRASNIQI, SAIMIR KRASNIQI, and ALMIR RRAPO, murdered ERION SHEHU in a drive by-shooting outside a Queens café on July 17, 2005.

Second, approximately six months later, while driving on the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway on January 14, 2006, BRUNO KRASNIQI and SAIMIR KRASNIQI shot ERENICK GREZDA twice in the head at point-blank range and dumped his body on the side of the highway. The shooting was the result of the KRASNIQIS' belief that GREZDA had set up BRUNO KRASNIQI to be kidnapped by a group of Albanian marijuana dealers from whom the Krasniqui Organization had stolen approximately \$250,000 worth of marijuana. Following the murder of GREZDA, FLORIAN VESHI and ERKLIANT SULA drove the SUV in which GREZDA was killed to New Jersey, where they set fire to it.

In addition to these murders, various members of the Krasniqui Organization are charged with two separate kidnappings. One kidnapping occurred in or about June 2005, when BRUNO KRASNIQI, SAIMIR KRASNIQI, ALMIR RRAPO, and other members of the Organization kidnapped a rival drug dealer ("Victim-2") at gunpoint, pistol-whipped him, and placed the muzzle of a firearm in his mouth, threatening to kill him if he did not disclose the locations of other members of his narcotics crew. A second kidnapping occurred in Michigan in or about 2003, when members of the Krasniqui Organization kidnapped an individual ("Victim-3") at gunpoint and threatened to kill him in a co-conspirator's residence, because they believed that Victim-3 had disrespected another member of the Krasniqui Organization.

In addition to these charges, the defendants are also charged with having conspired to distribute more than 100 kilograms of marijuana, a drug robbery, extortions, firearms possession and use, and obstruction of justice, among other offenses.

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The attached table summarizes the charges and potential penalties. The case is assigned to U.S. District Judge RICHARD J. HOLWELL.

Mr. BHARARA praised the outstanding investigative work of the FBI and NYPD in the Joint Organized Crime Task Force. He added that the investigation is continuing.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA stated: "Today, nearly five years after the brutal murders of Erion Shehu and Erenick Grezda, we announce the indictment of individuals allegedly responsible for these heinous crimes. This case reminds us that, despite the increasingly global nature of organized crime, its dangers are right here on our city streets. I applaud the unwavering commitment of and cooperative efforts of local, federal, and international law enforcement partners to dismantle international organized crime groups wherever they may be found."

FBI New York Assistant Director-in-Charge JANICE K. FEDARCYK stated: "Florian Veshi was arrested this morning for allegedly carrying out a laundry list of crimes. His co-conspirators were arrested months ago and this puts an end to the Krasniqi Organization's criminal operations. The Brooklyn neighborhood where Veshi lived will now be a safer place with him off the streets."

New York City Police Commissioner RAYMOND W. KELLY stated: "This case illustrates the nexus between marijuana trafficking and deadly violence, with rivals reverting to kidnapping and intimidation to control the market. I commend the NYPD detectives and FBI agents for their work in successfully apprehending these violent felons."

This case is being handled by the Office's Organized Crime Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys AVI WEITZMAN and MICHAEL FERRARA are in charge of the prosecution.

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

United States v. Bruno Krasniqi, et al.

Defendant	Age	Residence
BRUNO KRASNIQI	26	Staten Island, New York
SAIMIR KRASNIQI	29	Staten Island, New York
ALMIR RRAPO	27	Tirana, Albania
FLORIAN VESHI	26	Brooklyn, New York
ERKLIANT SULA	25	Staten Island, New York
SKENDER CAKONI	44	Queens, New York
GJOVALIN BERISHA	30	Bronx, New York
DUKAJIN NIKOLLA	26	Bronx, New York
JNAZIH NASSER	35	Queens, New York
GENTIAN NIKOLLI	33	Queens, New York
SHKELZEN BALIDEMAJ	39	Branford, Connecticut
PLAURENT CELA	29	Brooklyn, New York
ALBERT TAMALI	32	Detroit, Michigan
GENTIAN CARA	37	Toronto, Canada
MARJAN TAMALI	35	Toronto, Canada
JOANNA PAKULSKI	36	Toronto, Canada

Ct	Charge	Defendant	Maximum Penalty
1	Racketeering	BRUNO KRASNIQI SAIMIR KRASNIQI ALMIR RRAPO ERKLIANT SULA FLORIAN VESHI	Life imprisonment; 3 yrs. supervised release; \$250,000 fine or twice the gain or loss from the offense
2	Racketeering	BRUNO KRASNIQI SAIMIR KRASNIQI ALMIR RRAPO ERKLIANT SULA FLORIAN VESHI	Life imprisonment; 3 yrs. supervised release; \$250,000 fine or twice the gain or loss from the offense

Ct	Charge	Defendant	Maximum Penalty
3	Narcotics Conspiracy	BRUNO KRASNIQI SAIMIR KRASNIQI ALMIR RRAPO SHKELZEN BALIDEMAJ PLAURENT CELA SKENDER CAKONI GENTIAN CARA ALBERT TAMALI MARJAN TAMALI GJOVALIN BERISHA DUKAJIN NIKOLLAJ NAZIH NASSER GENTIAN NIKOLLI JOANNA PAKULSKI	40 years' imprisonment with a mandatory minimum term of 5 years; \$2,000,000 fine or twice gross gain/loss from the offense; mandatory min 4 years' supervised release with a maximum term of life supervised release
4	Hobbs Act Robbery Conspiracy	BRUNO KRASNIQI SAIMIR KRASNIQI ALMIR RRAPO	20 yrs. imprisonment; 3 yrs. supervised release; \$250,000 fine or twice the gain or loss from the offense
5	Narcotics Conspiracy	BRUNO KRASNIQI SAIMIR KRASNIQI ALMIR RRAPO ERKLIANT SULA FLORIAN VESHI SHKELZEN BALIDEMAJ DUKAJIN NIKOLLAJ GENTIAN NIKOLLI	40 years' imprisonment with a mandatory minimum term of 5 years; \$2,000,000 fine or twice gross gain/loss from the offense; mandatory min 4 years' supervised release with a maximum term of life supervised release
6	Use And Carrying Of A Firearm	BRUNO KRASNIQI SAIMIR KRASNIQI FLORIAN VESHI ALMIR RRAPO ERKLIANT SULA	life imprisonment with 30 years to run consecutively with any other imprisonment; 5 years' supervised release; \$250,000 or twice the amount of criminal proceeds
7	Kidnapping in Aid of a Racketeering Enterprise	BRUNO KRASNIQI SAIMIR KRASNIQI ALMIR RRAPO	life imprisonment; 5 years' supervised release; \$250,000 or twice the amount of criminal proceeds

Ct	Charge	Defendant	Maximum Penalty
8	Use And Carrying Of A Firearm	BRUNO KRASNIQI SAIMIR KRASNIQI ALMIR RRAPO	life imprisonment with 7 years to run consecutively with any other imprisonment; 5 years' supervised release; \$250,000 or twice the amount of criminal proceeds
9	Use And Carrying Of A Firearm	PLAURENT CELA SKENDER CAKONI VISI LNU	life imprisonment with 5 years to run consecutively with any other imprisonment; 5 years' supervised release; \$250,000 fine
10	Murder in Aid of a Racketeering Enterprise	BRUNO KRASNIQI SAIMIR KRASNIQI ALMIR RRAPO	death or life imprisonment; 5 years' supervised release; \$250,000 or twice the amount of criminal proceeds
11	Murder in Aid of a Racketeering Enterprise	BRUNO KRASNIQI SAIMIR KRASNIQI	death or life imprisonment; 5 years' supervised release; \$250,000 or twice the amount of criminal proceeds
12	Conspiracy to Obstruct Justice	BRUNO KRASNIQI SAIMIR KRASNIQI FLORIAN VESHI ERKLIANT SULA	20 yrs. imprisonment; 3 yrs. supervised release; \$250,000 fine or twice the gain or loss from the offense
13	Obstruction of Justice	BRUNO KRASNIQI SAIMIR KRASNIQI FLORIAN VESHI ERKLIANT SULA	20 yrs. imprisonment; 3 yrs. supervised release; \$250,000 fine or twice the gain or loss from the offense