



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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
December 13, 2007**

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**UNITED STATES ANNOUNCES HISTORIC EXTRADITION OF  
IRANIAN HEROIN TRAFFICKER TO NEW YORK**

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and MICHELE M. LEONHART, the Acting Administrator of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA"), announced the extradition today from Austria to New York of HUSSEIN KARIMI, a/k/a "Hussein Karimi Rikabadi," a/k/a "Hossein Salim Khani," an Iranian national previously living in Romania, on charges relating to the importation of heroin into the United States from Afghanistan and Pakistan.

According to the Indictment filed in Manhattan federal court: Since 1998, KARIMI led an international heroin-trafficking organization (the "Rikabadi Organization") responsible for the worldwide distribution of thousands of kilograms of Southwest Asian heroin. The Rikabadi Organization purchased heroin from suppliers in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and arranged for the heroin to be transported through various countries including Iran and Turkey. The Rikabadi Organization's heroin was imported into the United States, Canada, and Western European countries and sold for hundreds of millions of dollars. KARIMI controlled the heroin-trafficking activities of his organization from locations in Romania.

KARIMI was arrested in March 2007 while attempting to cross from Austria to the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The extradition announced today was the result of the

cooperative efforts of the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, the DEA, and the United States Marshals Service, working together under the auspices of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force ("OCDETF"), in close coordination with Romanian law enforcement authorities. This extradition arises from the first-ever international narcotics enforcement operation on which United States and Romanian law enforcement authorities jointly collaborated.

Mr. GARCIA praised the investigative work of the DEA. Mr. GARCIA also thanked Romanian law enforcement authorities, including the Romanian Frontier Police, for their assistance in the investigation.

"KARIMI's extradition demonstrates yet again how effective international law enforcement cooperation can be in the effort to eradicate global drug organizations," said United States Attorney MICHAEL J. GARCIA.

"For nearly a decade, Hussein Karimi Rikabadi ran an international drug conglomerate suspected of distributing heroin in the Middle East, Western Europe and North America," said DEA Acting Administrator MICHELE M. LEONHART. "His organization moved hundreds of millions of dollars worth of heroin from Pakistan and Afghanistan through Iran and Turkey. Now this globetrotter's journeys have taken a detour to a courtroom in the Southern District of New York where he will face American justice."

If convicted, KARIMI faces a maximum sentence of life in prison and a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years in prison. KARIMI is expected to be presented in Manhattan federal court tomorrow.

Assistant United States Attorneys BOYD M. JOHNSON III, JOCELYN STRAUBER, ANJAN SAHNI, and DAVID O'NEIL 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.

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