



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

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**MANHATTAN U.S. ATTORNEY CHARGES TWO BROOKLYN
MEN IN SCHEME TO BRIBE GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE
TO OBTAIN LEASE TO PROPERTY**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and ROSE GILL HEARN, the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced that BASHIR ZINDANI and ALI HASSAN ZINDANI were arrested today on charges that they bribed someone they thought was a government employee in order to obtain a lease to New York City Housing Authority ("NYCHA") commercial property. BASHIR ZINDANI and ALI HASSAN ZINDANI, both of Brooklyn, were arrested today in Manhattan by agents of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Inspector General ("HUD-OIG") and DOI. The defendants are expected to be presented this afternoon before United States Magistrate Judge GABRIEL W. GORENSTEIN in Manhattan federal court.

According to the Complaint unsealed today:

In January 2010, BASHIR ZINDANI contacted the New York City Housing Authority and expressed an interest in renting a particular property in Brooklyn being offered for lease by NYCHA, a government agency created by New York State law. When a NYCHA employee returned the call, BASHIR ZINDANI offered to pay \$20,000 to obtain a lease to that property.

A DOI investigator acting in an undercover capacity subsequently contacted BASHIR ZINDANI and identified himself as working for the housing authority. BASHIR ZINDANI offered to pay the investigator \$10,000 for help obtaining a lease to the property he sought. During that conversation, BASHIR ZINDANI

described the payment as "under [the] table" and as "just between me and you." BASHIR ZINDANI agreed to bring \$5,000 to an initial meeting with the investigator and to give the investigator an additional \$5,000 when BASHIR ZINDANI received the lease for the property.

On February 1, 2010, BASHIR ZINDANI and ALI HASSAN ZINDANI met, at the location of the property that BASHIR ZINDANI had asked to lease, with the DOI investigator who had identified himself as a housing authority employee. ALI HASSAN ZINDANI indicated that he was the father of BASHIR ZINDANI, and said that he was aware of the phone conversation that had occurred between BASHIR ZINDANI and the investigator who had identified himself as a housing authority employee. At the meeting, ALI HASSAN ZINDANI gave the investigator \$2,000 in cash, and BASHIR ZINDANI gave the investigator a check for \$3,000.

At a subsequent meeting attended by both BASHIR ZINDANI and ALI HASSAN ZINDANI on February 12, 2010, ALI HASSAN ZINDANI gave the investigator an additional \$2,000 in cash. In addition, ALI HASSAN ZINDANI expressed interest in renting another property from NYCHA and said that he would give the investigator \$20,000 to obtain a lease for the second property.

If convicted of the bribery count with which they are charged, BASHIR ZINDANI, 20, and ALI HASSAN ZINDANI, 55, each face a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a maximum fine of \$250,000.

U.S. Attorney BHARARA stated: "When the Zindanis allegedly tried to cut the line to rent a New York City Housing Authority commercial property, they crossed the line into criminal activity. Bribing government employees is illegal for good reason, as a fair process requires wheels that turn without grease. We will continue to partner with the New York City Department of Investigation and work with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to stop those willing to game the system with illegal payments."

Commissioner GILL HEARN stated: "These two defendants offered thousands of dollars to a City employee in a brazen and failed attempt to acquire a prime retail spot in a City housing development, according to the criminal complaint. The good news is that the Housing Authority immediately alerted DOI and a swift undercover investigation exposed and stopped the charged crime. DOI will continue to work with the City Housing Authority and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York to drive home the message that bribery is not the way to do business

in New York City."

Mr. BHARARA praised the work of DOI in this investigation. He also thanked HUD-OIG for its assistance.

Assistant United States Attorney RACHEL P. KOVNER in charge of the prosecution.

The charge contained in the Complaint is merely an accusation, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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