



*United States Attorney  
Southern District of New York*

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**MANHATTAN U.S. ATTORNEY ANNOUNCES EXTRADITION OF SENIOR  
AIDE TO ALBANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER CHARGED WITH MURDER,  
KIDNAPPING, AND OTHER RACKETEERING OFFENSES**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and JANICE K. FEDARCYK, the Assistant Director-in-Charge of the New York Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), announced the extradition of ALMIR RRAPO from Albania for his involvement in a racketeering enterprise that engaged in murder, kidnapping, narcotics trafficking, extortion, robbery, arson, obstruction of justice, and interstate transportation of stolen goods. 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.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA said: "Shortly after ALMIR RRAPO allegedly participated in the brutal murder of Erion Shehu, RRAPO fled to Albania in an effort to escape the American criminal justice system. With the assistance of our international law enforcement partners, we will continue to ensure that individuals involved in international organized crime face justice in the United States, wherever they may be hiding."

FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge JANICE K. FEDARCYK said: "Today's cooperation in the extradition of Almir Rrapo should be a stern message to the murderers, kidnappers, and drug dealers who try to flee prosecution: you can run, but you cannot

hide. The FBI will continue to track down these hardened criminals wherever they may be. I am thankful for the cooperation of the Albanian National Police and for all of our law enforcement partners across the globe who work tirelessly to put criminals behind bars, where they belong."

According to the 13-count superseding Indictment and other court documents:

ALMIR RRAPO participated in a racketeering enterprise (the "Krasniqi Organization") led by brothers BRUNO KRASNIQI and SAIMIR KRASNIQI, which operated in New York, Michigan, Connecticut, and elsewhere. The Krasniqi 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. For example, RRAPO and other members of the Krasniqi Organization kidnapped a rival drug dealer 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. RRAPO and other members of the Krasniqi Organization also murdered ERION SHEHU in a drive by-shooting outside a Queens café as a result of the Krasniqi Organization's ongoing turf battle with that other narcotics crew.

RRAPO and other members are charged with homicides, kidnapping, conspiring to distribute more than 100 kilograms of marijuana, drug robbery, extortion, firearms possession and use, and obstruction of justice, among other offenses.

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RRAPO is charged with two counts of racketeering, which carry a potential penalty of life in prison; one count of murder in aid of racketeering, which carries a potential penalty of life in prison; one count of kidnapping in aid of racketeering, which carries a potential penalty of life in prison; two counts of narcotics conspiracy, each of which carries a potential penalty of 40 years in prison; one count of Hobbs Act robbery, which carries a potential penalty of 20 years in prison; and two counts of possession and use of a firearm, one of which includes a firearm with a silencer which carries a potential penalty of life in prison with 30 years to run consecutively with any other sentence of imprisonment.

The case is assigned to U.S. District Judge RICHARD J. HOLWELL.

Mr. BHARARA praised the outstanding work of the FBI and NYPD in the Joint Organized Crime Task Force in the investigation. He also thanked the Office of International

Affairs, United States Department of Justice Criminal Division; the U.S. State Department; and the Albanian authorities. He added that the investigation is continuing.

Assistant United States 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.

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