



PRESS RELEASE

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FORMER LAS CRUCES BASKETBALL COACH INDICTED
ON FEDERAL CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CHARGES

ALBUQUERQUE – Yesterday, a federal grand jury indicted Erik Bilal Khan, 32, of Las Cruces, N.M., on child pornography charges, announced U.S. Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales and Acting Special Agent in Charge Dennis A. Ulrich, II, Homeland Security Investigations.

The three-count indictment charges Khan with distributing, receiving and possessing visual depictions of minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct. According to the indictment, Khan allegedly distributed child pornography on April 21, 2012; received child pornography on Feb. 28, 2012; and possessed child pornography between Feb. 2010 and May 2012. The three offenses allegedly were committed in Doña Ana County, N.M. An arraignment date for Khan has yet to be scheduled.

The distribution and receipt of child pornography charges each carry a maximum penalty of imprisonment for not less than five years and not more than 20 years upon conviction. The possession of child pornography charge carries a maximum penalty of ten years of imprisonment upon conviction.

Khan was employed as a basketball coach at a Las Cruces middle school when he was arrested on May 30, 2012, on a criminal complaint. He has been in federal custody since that time. According to the criminal complaint, the investigation that led to Khan's arrest was initiated in Sept. 2011, when law enforcement authorities learned that an Internet Protocol (IP) address that appeared to be used to distribute, receive and possess child pornography was subscribed to Khan's residence. On May 9, 2012, officers executed a state district court search warrant at the residence and seized external hard drives from Khan's bedroom that allegedly contained hundreds of images and videos of child pornography.

The case against Kahn was investigated by Homeland Security Investigations, the Las Cruces Police Department and the New Mexico Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Ravi Sinha and Marisa A. Lizarraga of the U.S. Attorney's Las Cruces Branch Office as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice (DOJ) to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by United States Attorneys'

Offices and DOJ's Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.justice.gov/psc/.

The case also received support from the New Mexico ICAC Task Force, whose mission is to locate, track, and capture Internet child sexual predators and Internet child pornographers in New Mexico. There are 64 federal, state and local law enforcement agencies associated with the New Mexico ICAC Task Force, which is funded by a grant administered by the New Mexico Attorney General's Office. Anyone with information relating to suspected child predators and suspected child abuse is encouraged to contact federal or local law enforcement.

Charges in indictments and criminal complaints are only accusations. All criminal defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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