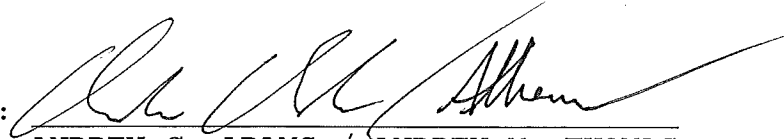


Approved: 
ANDREW C. ADAMS / ANDREW M. THOMAS
Assistant United States Attorneys

Before: THE HONORABLE HENRY B. PITMAN
United States Magistrate Judge
Southern District of New York

17 MAG . 4235

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA : SEALED COMPLAINT
- v. - : Violations of 18 U.S.C.
NIKOLOZ JIKIA, and : §§ 371, 924(c)(1)(A)(i),
BAKAI MARAT-UULU, : 1958 & 2.
Defendants. : COUNTY OF OFFENSE:
NEW YORK

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SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, ss.:

BRUCE A. TURPIN, a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), being duly sworn, deposes and states:

COUNT ONE
(Murder for Hire Conspiracy)

1. From at least in or about May 2017, up to and to and including on or about June 7, 2017, in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere, NIKOLOZ JIKIA and BAKAI MARAT-UULU, the defendants, and others known and unknown, unlawfully and knowingly did combine, conspire, confederate, and agree together and with each other to travel in and cause another to travel in interstate commerce, and to use and cause another to use the mail and a facility of interstate commerce, with intent that a murder be committed in violation of the laws of a State and the United States as consideration for the receipt of, and as consideration for a promise and agreement to pay, a thing of pecuniary value, to wit, JIKIA and MARAT-UULU arranged to murder an individual believed by JIKIA and MARAT-UULU to be in possession of over \$1,500,000 worth of stolen merchandise, in exchange for a percentage of the value of that merchandise and other remuneration, which arrangements would depend in part upon

travel from New Jersey to New York, as well as communications through a facility of interstate and foreign commerce.

(Title 18, United States Code, Section 1958.)

COUNT TWO

(Possession of Firearms in Furtherance of a Crime of Violence)

2. On or about June 3, 2017, in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere, BAKIA MARAT-UULU and NIKLOZ JIKIA, the defendants, during and in relation to a crime of violence for which they may be prosecuted in a court of the United States, namely, the murder-for-hire conspiracy charged in Count One of this Complaint, did use and carry firearms, and, in furtherance of such crime, did possess firearms, and did aid and abet the use, carrying, and possession of firearms.

(Title 18, United States Code, Sections 924(c)(1)(A)(i) & 2.)

COUNT THREE

(Conspiracy to Sell Firearms to a Felon)

3. From at least in or about November 2015, up to and including in or about June 2017, in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere, NIKOLOZ JIKIA and BAKAI MARAT-UULU, the defendants, and others known and unknown, willfully and knowingly did combine, conspire, confederate and agree together and with each other to commit offenses against the United States, to wit, to violate Title 18, United States Code, Sections 922(d)(1).

4. It was a part and an object of the conspiracy that NIKOLOZ JIKIA and BAKAI MARAT-UULU, the defendants, and others known and unknown, knowingly would and did sell and otherwise dispose of a firearm, to wit, a High-Point Firearms 45 ACP pistol, to a person whom JIKIA and MARAT-UULU knew, and had reasonable cause to believe, had been convicted in a court of a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year.

5. In furtherance of the conspiracy and to effect the illegal objects thereof, the following overt acts, among others, were committed in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere:

a. On or about November 19, 2015, in Brooklyn, New York, NIKOLOZ JIKIA and BAKAI MARAT-UULU, the defendants, in exchange for approximately \$600, sold a Ruger Service Six .38 caliber revolver to a confidential source working at the direction

of the FBI ("CS-1"), whom JIKIA and MARAT-UULU knew to be, and had reason to believe was, in fact, a convicted felon.

b. On or about May 31, 2017, in New York, New York, JIKIA and MARAT-UULU met with CS-1 to discuss the sale of a firearm to CS-1, at which time JIKIA and MARAT-UULU agreed to sell a firearm to CS-1 and jointly accepted \$500 as payment for that firearm.

c. On or about June 3, 2017, in Brooklyn, New York, JIKIA and MARAT-UULU met with CS-1 and provided CS-1 with a Hi-Point Firearms 45 ACP pistol, for which CS-1 had previously paid \$500 to JIKIA and MARAT-UULU.

(Title 18, United States Code, Section 371.)

The bases for my knowledge and for the foregoing charges are, in part, as follows:

6. I am a Special Agent with the FBI, and I am one of the agents with primary responsibility for the investigation of this case. I have been employed as a Special Agent with the FBI since in or about 2016. During my time as a Special Agent for the FBI, I have participated in investigations of racketeering enterprises, firearms trafficking, firearms offenses, and violent crimes, among other things, and have conducted or participated in surveillance, the execution of search warrants and cellphone location-tracking orders and warrants, debriefings of informants, and reviews of taped conversations. This affidavit is based upon my own observations, my conversations with other law enforcement agents and others, and my examination of reports and records. Because this affidavit is being submitted for the limited purpose of establishing probable cause, it does not include all the facts that I have learned during the course of my investigation. Where the contents of documents and the actions, statements and conversations of others are reported herein, they are reported in substance and in part, except where otherwise indicated.

BACKGROUND TO INVESTIGATION OF THE DEFENDANTS

7. Since in or about 2014, the FBI has been investigating a particular organized criminal group operating in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere (the "Enterprise"). The Enterprise pursues a spectrum of criminal activity, including the transportation and sale stolen property, illegal gambling operations, extortion of debtors to its gambling operation, and the use of false identification.

documents and counterfeit credit cards in order to illegally purchase merchandise.

8. The Enterprise is controlled by a "vor v zakone." Vor v zakone is a Russian phrase translated as "thief-in-law" and refers to high-level criminal figures associated with the former Soviet Union. Traditionally, vors receive *obskchak*, or tribute, from criminals and laypersons within the vor's protection, license criminal activity by others, and resolve disputes between members of the criminal community. With respect to the Enterprise, the vor is an individual not named herein ("the Vor").

9. In the course of investigating the Vor, the FBI has relied, in part, on information obtained and provided by confidential sources. One of these confidential sources, CS-1, was previously arrested in connection with a murder-for-hire plot involving Russian organized crime. CS-1 was convicted and served approximately 6 years in prison for this offense. Since CS-1's release, CS-1 has been working at the direction of the FBI as a paid source. CS-1 has proven reliable, and has been corroborated by visual surveillance, recordings, and toll analysis.

CS-1'S INITIAL DEALINGS WITH MARAT-UULU AND JIKIA

10. From my conversations with CS-1, as well as my review of reports prepared by other agents of the FBI regarding operations involving CS-1, and my review of consensually recorded conversations involving CS-1 and others, I have learned, among other things, that:

a. On or about November 6, 2015, CS-1, at the direction of the FBI, met with BAKAI MARAT-UULU, the defendant, in the vicinity of Cropsey Avenue, in Brooklyn, New York, at which time MARAT-UULU stated, in substance and among other things, that:

i. MARAT-UULU had previously worked with the Vor, and that MARAT-UULU believed that the Vor would be willing to meet with, and demonstrate respect for, CS-1 due in part to CS-1's criminal history.

ii. MARAT-UULU, in partnership with approximately five other individuals, could obtain and sell firearms, including assault rifles and handguns, as well as heroin in kilogram quantities. MARAT-UULU would charge CS-1 \$1,000 for an

assault rifle with sixty rounds of ammunition, and \$500 for handguns.

b. On or about November 19, 2015, CS-1, at the direction of the FBI, met with MARAT-UULU in the vicinity of Cropsey Avenue, in Brooklyn, New York, and inside a vehicle controlled by CS-1 ("Vehicle-1"). MARAT-UULU, using a cellular telephone, placed several calls to arrange for the sale of a handgun to CS-1. Shortly thereafter, NIKOLOZ JIKIA, the defendant, entered Vehicle-1, where JIKIA provided CS-1 a Ruger Service Six .38 caliber revolver ("Firearm-1") in exchange for \$600. During this transaction, JIKIA stated, in substance and in part, that Firearm-1 was not traceable to any prior crime and that JIKIA could sell CS-1 additional firearms upon request.

c. On or about November 20, 2015, CS-1, at the direction of the FBI, met with MARAT-UULU in the vicinity of East 4th Street, Brooklyn, New York. CS-1 provided MARAT-UULU with approximately \$500 for the purpose of purchasing a second firearm through MARAT-UULU. Shortly thereafter, MARAT-UULU returned to CS-1 and provided him with, among other things, a Hi-Point Firearms 40SW semi-automatic pistol ("Firearm-2"), and approximately 20 rounds of .40 caliber ammunition.

MARAT-UULU'S ARREST IN ILLINOIS AND CS-1'S DEALINGS WITH JIKIA

11. From my review of criminal history records for BAKAI MARAT-UULU, the defendant, I have learned, among other things, that MARAT-UULU was charged in a credit card "skimming" case filed in Cook County Illinois in or about December 2015.

12. From my conversations with CS-1, as well as my review of reports prepared by other agents of the FBI regarding operations involving CS-1, and my review of consensually recorded conversations involving CS-1 and others, I have learned, among other things, that:

a. On or about December 15, 2015, CS-1 received a telephone call from BAKAI MARAT-UULU, the defendant, during which MARAT-UULU stated, in substance and in part, that MARAT-UULU had been arrested for "skimming" automatic teller machines (*i.e.*, using hidden electronic devices to record victims' credit card information for use in creating counterfeit credit cards with stolen account information) in the vicinity of Chicago, Illinois. MARAT-UULU further stated, in substance and in part, that CS-1 could contact a coconspirator not named herein ("CC-1") for assistance in arranging a meeting with the Vor.

b. In or about February 2016, NIKOLOZ JIKIA, the defendant, placed a call to CS-1 in order to arrange a meeting with CS-1.

c. On or about February 18, 2016, CS-1, at the direction of the FBI, met with JIKIA in the vicinity of Cropsey Avenue, Brooklyn, New York. During that meeting, JIKIA stated, in substance and in part, that:

i. JIKIA had obtained CS-1's telephone number from a member of the Enterprise, and that JIKIA had explained to a member of the Enterprise that JIKIA had previously sold a firearm to CS-1 (*i.e.*, Firearm-1).

ii. JIKIA offered to sell three additional firearms to CS-1, which JIKIA would obtain from a third-party. JIKIA further stated that JIKIA would purchase a firearm at the same time from the same dealer.

iii. JIKIA referred to prior instances in which JIKIA had used firearms to shoot at other people.

d. On or about February 26, 2016, CS-1, at the direction of the FBI, provided approximately \$500 to JIKIA as payment for a firearm that JIKIA had previously promised to deliver to CS-1, as described above.

e. On or about May 13, 2016, CS-1, at the direction of the FBI, met with MARAT-UULU and JIKIA in the vicinity of Kings Highway, Brooklyn, New York. During that meeting, JIKIA stated, in substance and in part, that JIKIA had not consummated the proposed firearm sale discussed with CS-1 on or about February 18, 2016, because JIKIA had heard from another individual that CS-1 was cooperating with law enforcement, and that the length of CS-1's prior prison sentence suggested that CS-1 was, in fact, cooperating with law enforcement.¹ During the same meeting, MARAT-UULU offered, among other things, to connect CS-1 with a heroin dealer in Newark, New Jersey, to facilitate CS-1's purchase of

¹ During this meeting, CS-1 denied being a law enforcement informant, and demanded that JIKIA introduce CS-1 to the person who had alleged as much to JIKIA in order for CS-1 to confront that person. JIKIA responded, in substance and in part, that CS-1 did not need to worry about the allegation. As described in more detail below, JIKIA continued conducting business with CS-1, including the sale of firearms and, ultimately, an agreement to commit murder-for-hire.

heroin; CS-1 responded, in part, that CS-1 required a firearm before re-engaging in narcotics sales. MARAT-UULU responded, in substance and in part, that MARAT-UULU would provide CS-1 with a firearm.²

f. On or about early 2017, MARAT-UULU contacted CS-1 via telephone to discuss continuing business with CS-1, including the possibility of CS-1's participating in a credit card fraud scheme. Thereafter, on or about May 28, 2017, CS-1 received a telephone call from MARAT-UULU, during which MARAT-UULU offered, in substance and in part, to connect CS-1 with an unnamed individual who could provide firearms to CS-1. CS-1 asked MARAT-UULU the price for these firearms, to which MARAT-UULU responded, in substance and in part, that MARAT-UULU would not discuss that detail on the telephone. Finally, CS-1 requested that MARAT-UULU arrange a meeting among CS-1, JIKIA and MARAT-UULU, for the purpose of discussing the robbery of an individual from whom CS-1 had claimed to obtain contraband cigarettes. MARAT-UULU agreed to arrange that meeting.

g. On or about May 31, 2017, CS-1, at the direction of the FBI, met with MARAT-UULU and JIKIA in the vicinity of 45th Street, New York, New York. During that meeting, which was consensually recorded by CS-1, the following conversation took place:³

i. CS-1 described the target of a robbery plot, to MARAT-UULU. Specifically, CS-1 described a warehouse in New Jersey where an individual, whom CS-1 described as CS-1's business partner (the "Victim"), stored large trucks filled with contraband

² On or about June 17, 2016, CS-1, at the direction of the FBI, met with MARAT-UULU in the vicinity of Shore Parkway, Brooklyn, New York, at which time MARAT-UULU stated, among other things, that MARAT-UULU was concerned that MARAT-UULU was under investigation for narcotics sales and that MARAT-UULU intended to avoid involvement in illegal activity for the following several weeks in order to avoid the possibility of arrest, but that MARAT-UULU would nevertheless continue to seek out firearms for sale to CS-1. The firearm sale discussed on or about May 13, 2016, was never completed, although MARAT-UULU and JIKIA later sold an additional firearm to CS-1, as described below.

³ The conversation recounted in this subparagraph is provided in substance and in part, unless otherwise denoted by the use of quotation marks. Statements provided in quotation marks are taken from an initial transcript of the recording of this meeting, which was largely conducted in, and translated from, Russian.

cigarettes. CS-1 stated, among other things, that in the following days, the Victim would have approximately \$1,500,000 worth of cigarettes at a warehouse in New Jersey, as well as an unspecified amount of cash. CS-1 offered MARAT-UULU and JIKIA a percentage of the resale value of those contraband cigarettes in exchange for MARAT-UULU and JIKIA's assistance in robbing and killing CS-1's purported business partner, the Victim.

ii. In the course of this conversation, both MARAT-UULU and JIKIA agreed to assist in this robbery and murder plot in exchange for a percentage of the resale value of the stolen cigarettes. In particular, JIKIA expressly clarified that CS-1's references to harming the Victim were, in fact, references to killing the victim ("To 'fuck' [as CS-1 had stated to MARAT-UULU and JIKIA] that's to kill, right?"). Immediately after JIKIA's requested clarification, and prior to any response from CS-1, MARAT-UULU stated, in part, "very well—I am ready to do it—I am ready to do it. I can fire the first one."

iii. In the continued course of this conversation, CS-1 stated, in substance and in part, that CS-1 required another firearm in order to commit the robbery-murder of the Victim, to which JIKIA responded that JIKIA would provide CS-1 with another firearm.

iv. In the continued course of this conversation, both MARAT-UULU and JIKIA discussed the means and logistics of disposing of the corpse of the Victim following the murder of the Victim. For example, JIKIA suggested, among other things, that "maybe you [CS-1] should disappear it [sic]," and more specifically referred to the use of "acid" to dissolve the corpse. MARAT-UULU suggested, among other things, covering the corpse with lime and burying it, so that "in a year, there won't be a hair."


v. At the conclusion of this meeting, CS-1, at the direction of the FBI, provided MARAT-UULU and JIKIA with \$1,000 each as an initial payment for the planned robbery-murder of the Victim, and provided MARAT-UULU with an additional \$500 for the purchase of another firearm.

h. On or about June 3, 2017, CS-1, at the direction of the FBI, in the vicinity of Cropsey Avenue, Brooklyn, New York, met with MARAT-UULU and JIKIA, at which time JIKIA provided CS-1 with a Hi-Point Firearms 45 ACP pistol, for which CS-1 had previously paid \$500 to MARAT-UULU and JIKIA, as described above. During the same meeting, CS-1, MARAT-UULU, and JIKIA continued their discussion of the robbery-murder of the Victim, and MARAT-

UULU and JIKIA each expressly stated their intention to shoot the Victim in furtherance of that plot.

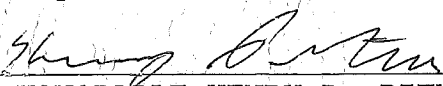
CONCLUSION

WHEREFORE, I respectfully request that BAKIA MARAT-UULU and NIKOLOZ JIKIA, the defendants, be imprisoned or bailed, as the case may be.



Bruce A. Turpin
Special Agent
FBI

Sworn to before me this
5th day of June 2017



THE HONORABLE HENRY B. PITMAN
United States Magistrate Judge
Southern District of New York