



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

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**MANHATTAN U.S. ATTORNEY CHARGES
INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRAFFICKER
WITH NARCO-TERRORISM CONSPIRACY**

PREET BHARARA, 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"), today announced that JAMAL YOUSEF, a/k/a "Talal Hassan Ghantou," an international arms trafficker, was charged with participating in a narco-terrorism conspiracy. The charges stem from a plot by YOUSEF and co-conspirators to sell military-grade weapons to the Colombian terrorist group Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (the "FARC"), in exchange for nearly one metric ton of cocaine.

According to the Superseding Indictment unsealed today in Manhattan federal court:

YOUSEF is a former member of the Syrian military. From July 2008 until his arrest on the charges unsealed today, YOUSEF and co-conspirators in Honduras negotiated to sell military-grade weapons to the FARC in exchange for 938 kilograms of cocaine. However, unbeknownst to YOUSEF and his co-conspirators, the purported FARC representatives they were dealing with were, in fact, confidential informants working with the DEA. During the negotiations, YOUSEF's co-conspirator described the weapons as including 100 AR-15 assault rifles, 100 M-16 assault rifles, 10 M-60 machine guns, C-4 explosives, 2,500 hand grenades, and rocket-propelled grenades. YOUSEF's co-conspirator also offered

to sell 17 to 18 surface-to-air missiles to the FARC, and e-mailed the confidential informants photographs of some of the weapons.

With the full cooperation and assistance of Interpol, YOUSEF was transferred to the United States after his release from a prison sentence served in Honduras. YOUSEF arrived today in New York and is expected to be arraigned in Manhattan federal court this afternoon.

The Superseding Indictment charges YOUSEF with one count of narco-terrorism conspiracy, which carries a mandatory minimum sentence of 20 years in prison and a maximum sentence of life in prison. The case is assigned to United States District Judge JOHN F. KEENAN.

Mr. BHARARA praised the outstanding investigative work of the DEA, including its Special Operations Division Bilateral Investigations Unit and the Bogota, Colombia, Country Office. Mr. BHARARA also thanked Interpol and the Department of Justice National Security Division and Office of International Affairs for their assistance.

The prosecution of YOUSEF is being handled by the Office's International Narcotics Trafficking Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys JEFFREY A. BROWN and REBECCA MONCK RICIGLIANO are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Superseding Indictment are merely accusations and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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