



Department of Justice

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

AUSA VICKIE E. LEDUC or

MARCIA MURPHY at 410-209-4885

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MONEY REMITTER SENTENCED FOR MONEY LAUNDERING CONSPIRACY

Baltimore, Maryland - U.S. District Judge Marvin J. Garbis sentenced Mohammad Ahsan, age 40, of Laurel, Maryland, today to three years in prison followed by three years of supervised release for conspiring to launder money, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein. Judge Garbis also ordered Ahsan to forfeit \$1,716.

According to his guilty plea, Ahsan was born in Pakistan and became a lawful permanent resident of the United States in 1990. He operated a money remitter business in the District of Columbia known as Pak Exchange Services. A cooperating witness, acting at the direction of law enforcement, held himself out to Ahsan and his associates to be involved in large scale international drug trafficking. From November 2004 to March 22, 2007, the cooperating witness gave Ahsan and his associates a total of \$520,000 in government funds in order to transfer the monies abroad through an informal money transfer system called a "hawala," using a network of persons and/or businesses to transfer money across domestic and international borders without reliance upon conventional banking systems and regulations. The cooperating witness represented that the monies were the proceeds of his purported illegal drug activities and Ahsan laundered these funds believing they were to be used to support those activities. Ahsan instructed the cooperating witness to keep their money transactions a secret, and to use purported business accounts as a means by which to legitimize the money transfers.

Ahsan met with the cooperating witness five times to accept monies ranging from \$20,000 to \$200,000 for hawala transfers to Pakistan, England, Spain, the Netherlands and Canada. Ahsan retained a commission, on average, of about five percent of the amount sought to be transferred. To hide such funds, Ahsan didn't file currency transaction reports, which are required to be submitted for all cash transactions involving the payment, receipt or transfer of over \$10,000. All the funds transferred abroad were picked up by cooperating individuals and returned to the Government.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein thanked U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation for their investigative work. In addition, Mr. Rosenstein thanked our international partners, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the London Metropolitan Police, the Spanish National Police, and the Dutch National Police for their help.

Mr. Rosenstein commended Assistant United States Attorney Christine Manuelian who prosecuted the case.

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