



# Department of Justice

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## **Man Sentenced for Conspiracy to Provide Material Support to Terror Organization**

### ***Aided Tamil Tiger Terrorists in the Attempted Purchase of Surface to Air Missiles, Night Vision Devices, Machine Guns and State of the Art Firearms***

BALTIMORE, MD -- U.S. District Judge Catherine C. Blake sentenced Haniffa Bin Osman, age 57, a citizen of the Republic of Singapore, today to 37 months in prison followed by three years of supervised release for conspiracy to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization and money laundering, announced United States Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein said, "Haniffa Bin Osman conspired with others to provide material support to the Tamil Tigers, a designated foreign terrorist organization, and attempted to illegally export arms, including state of the art firearms, grenade launchers, night vision devices, surface to air missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles. We will use all available legal tools to prevent terrorism, including undercover operations targeting people who attempt to obtain military weapons in violation of American law."

According to the plea agreement, from April to September 29, 2006 Osman conspired with Haji Subandi, Erick Wotulo and Thirunavukarasu Varatharasa to provide state-of-the-art firearms, machine guns and ammunition, surface to air missiles, night vision goggles and other military weapons to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Tamil Tigers) operating within Sri Lanka, to be used to fight against Sri Lankan government forces. The conspirators contacted an undercover business in Maryland about the sale of military weapons, requesting price quotes and negotiating the purchases. Subandi sent an itemized list of 53 military weapons, including sniper rifles, machine guns and grenade launchers that he wanted to acquire for the Tamil Tigers. Subandi advised the undercover business that Osman would inspect the weapons for the Tamil Tigers. Wotulo also advised that the chief of Tamil Tigers requested that he and Osman travel to Baltimore to meet with the undercover agents.

In July 2006, Osman met with undercover agents in Baltimore and stated that the weapons were for the

Tamil Tigers from Sri Lanka. Osman said that he was not a Tamil Tigers member but was helping them obtain weapons. The agents showed Osman a number of weapons, ammunition and night vision devices.

While in Baltimore, Osman discussed the illegality of the transfer of the arms to the Tamil Tigers and provided navigational coordinates for a delivery in the Indian Ocean. Osman stated that if the first transfer of the weapons were successful, the second order could be worth as much as \$15 million. Osman also inquired about pricing for unmanned aerial vehicles, and test-fired several weapons, including machine guns and sniper rifles. Osman discussed the commission he would receive for the arms sale and stated that Varatharasa would inspect the weapons and travel on the boat which was to carry the weaponry to the delivery point. He also raised the possibility that members of the Sea Tigers, the Marine Unit of the Tamil Tigers, would also escort the weapons to their final destination.

On August 1, 2006, Osman told the undercover agents that the Tamil Tigers wired a deposit of \$250,000 as a down payment for the purchase of the weapons. Indeed, the next day \$250,000 was wired from Malaysia to an undercover bank account in Maryland. Later that month Osman requested that the undercover business provide photographs and technical specifications for surface to air missiles.

Osman arrived in Guam on September 26, 2006 and inspected various machine guns, sniper rifles and ammunition. He also inspected two surface to air missiles and agreed to communicate with others within the Tamil Tigers about the availability and pricing of the missiles. After the inspection was completed, Osman agreed to arrange for the transfer of additional monies into an undercover bank account in Maryland as further payment for the arms and munitions. On September 28 an additional \$452,000 was wired from Malaysia to the undercover account in Maryland as a further down payment on the \$900,000 worth of weapons ordered by the Tamil Tigers.

On September 29, 2006, Wotulo arrived in Guam and met with Osman and undercover agents to discuss the ship-board loading of the arms and munitions. They also discussed current and future sales of weapons to the Tamil Tigers with undercover agents. They were then arrested.

"This case demonstrates the cooperative and relentless efforts of U.S. law enforcement agencies to pursue terrorist organizations and their illicit supporters." said Scot Rittenberg, Acting Special Agent in Charge of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Baltimore. "ICE will continue to do everything we can to keep sophisticated U.S. weapons from falling into the hands of terrorists."

"Terrorist organizations continue to seek a sophisticated range of military-grade weaponry and equipment from transnational dealers which can be utilized in furtherance of violent campaigns," said James R. Ives, Special Agent in Charge of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service's Mid-Atlantic Field Office.

"Individuals who knowingly provide support to these groups fuel global insecurity; they are as culpable as those who use the illicit weapons and equipment to carry out vicious attacks. The results of this investigation are indicative of the Defense Criminal Investigative Service's commitment to working with the Department of Justice and law enforcement partners to bring criminals seeking to profit from illegal munitions sales to justice."

Thirunavukarasu Varatharasa, age 38, a citizen of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 57 months in prison for the conspiracy and attempted arms exportation.

Subandi, age 71, a citizen of the Republic of Indonesia, pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 37 months in prison for conspiracy to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization, money laundering and attempted exportation of arms and munitions.

Wotulo, age 60, a citizen of the Republic of Indonesia, and a retired Indonesian Marine Corps General, pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 30 months in prison for the conspiracy and money laundering.

Founded in 1976, the Tamil Tigers has advocated the violent overthrow of the Sri Lankan government, employing acts of violence, including suicide bombings, against both civilian and military targets. Approximately 200 such attacks have been attributed to the Tamil Tigers to date. The Tamil Tigers relies heavily upon supporters throughout the world to raise and launder money, acquire intelligence and purchase military use technology. The U.S. Department of State designated the Tamil Tigers as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in 1997. As such, the Tamil Tigers cannot legally raise money or procure operational equipment in the United States.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein praised the investigative work performed by U.S Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Defense Criminal Investigative Service, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Baltimore City Police Department. Mr. Rosenstein thanked Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Maryland James G. Warwick, who prosecuted the case.

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