



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

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**BROOKLYN MAN PLEADS GUILTY IN MANHATTAN
FEDERAL COURT TO PARTICIPATING IN SCHEME
TO BRIBE A GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and ROSE GILL HEARN, the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced that the second of two Brooklyn men charged with paying bribes for a lease to a government-owned commercial property pled guilty to bribery today in Manhattan federal court. ALI HASSAN ZINDANI pled guilty before U.S. Magistrate Judge FRANK MAAS. His son, BASHIR ZINDANI, previously pled guilty to bribery in May 2010 in connection with the same scheme.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA said: "Ali Hassan Zindani and his son wrongly assumed that a government employee with the New York City Housing Authority was for sale, and now they are paying the price. Today's guilty plea should send a message to those who think bribery is a way to game the system that they are wrong. We thank our partners at the New York City Department of Investigation for their diligent work in this important case."

DOI Commissioner ROSE GILL HEARN said: "This defendant and his son thought payoffs were the key to landing a City Housing Authority lease. Little did they know that the government employee they gave thousands of dollars to was an undercover DOI investigator. Now, this defendant has pleaded guilty and his son was previously sentenced to a prison term proving that bribery is no way to succeed in business. I thank the City Housing Authority for immediately reporting this conduct to DOI, the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and our law enforcement partners, whose joint efforts led to this successful result."

According to documents previously filed in Manhattan federal court and statements made at the plea proceedings:

In January 2010, BASHIR ZINDANI contacted the New York City Housing Authority ("NYCHA") and expressed an interest in renting a property in Brooklyn being offered for lease by NYCHA, a government agency created by New York State law. When a NYCHA employee returned the call, BASHIR ZINDANI offered to pay \$20,000 to obtain a lease to that property.

A DOI investigator acting undercover subsequently contacted BASHIR ZINDANI and identified himself as housing authority employee. BASHIR ZINDANI offered to pay the investigator \$10,000 for help obtaining a lease to the property he sought. During that conversation, BASHIR ZINDANI described the payment as "under [the] table" and as "just between me and you." BASHIR ZINDANI agreed to bring \$5,000 to an initial meeting with the investigator and to give the investigator an additional \$5,000 when he received the lease for the property.

On February 1, 2010, BASHIR ZINDANI and ALI HASSAN ZINDANI met with the undercover DOI investigator at the location of the property that BASHIR ZINDANI had asked to lease. ALI HASSAN ZINDANI indicated that he was the father of BASHIR ZINDANI, and said that he was aware of the phone conversation that had occurred between BASHIR ZINDANI and the investigator. At the meeting, ALI HASSAN ZINDANI gave the investigator \$2,000 in cash, and BASHIR ZINDANI gave the investigator a check for \$3,000.

At a subsequent meeting attended by both BASHIR ZINDANI and ALI HASSAN ZINDANI on February 12, 2010, ALI HASSAN ZINDANI gave the investigator an additional \$2,000 in cash. ALI HASSAN ZINDANI also expressed interest in renting another property from NYCHA and said that he would give the investigator \$20,000 to obtain a lease for the second property.

After ALI HASSAN ZINDANI and BASHIR ZINDANI paid the final installment of the \$10,000 bribe for the NYCHA property to the DOI investigator on March 25, 2010, ALI HASSAN ZINDANI and BASHIR ZINDANI were arrested by law enforcement agents.

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BASHIR ZINDANI was sentenced to five months in prison and five months of house arrest in September 2010. ALI HASSAN ZINDANI is scheduled to be sentenced by U.S. District Judge SIDNEY H. STEIN on May 10, 2011.

Mr. BHARARA praised the work of DOI in this investigation. He also thanked HUD-OIG for its assistance.

Assistant U.S. Attorney RACHEL P. KOVNER is in charge of the prosecution.

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