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Nine Contractors Indicted for Allegedly Bribing Superintendents at New York City Housing Authority Developments for “Micro Purchase” Contracts

New York City Department of Investigation began Undercover Probe after NYCHA Employees Reported Allegedly Being Offered Bribes and Unlawful Gratuities

Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez, together with New York City Department of Investigation Commissioner Margaret Garnett, today announced that nine contractors have been variously charged in multiple indictments with bribery, giving unlawful gratuities, offering a false instrument for filing and conspiracy for allegedly offering NYCHA employees bribes in exchange for “micro purchase” contracts.

District Attorney Gonzalez said, “These defendants allegedly tried to seek favors from NYCHA superintendents by offering them bribes, corrupting a process meant to ensure contracts are fairly awarded. I commend the employees who came forward to report the bribe offers, kicking off this investigation. My Office will continue to work closely with DOI to make sure that bribery schemes and other forms of corruption are investigated and prosecuted.”

Commissioner Garnett said, “Bribery is one of the oldest and most blatant forms of public corruption. But, as this investigation shows, corruption cannot take root when honest employees step forward and report it. DOI commends the NYCHA employees who embraced the affirmative obligation that all employees of the City of New York have to report wrongdoing to DOI. Their willingness to report helped reveal these vendors’ charged conduct, which placed taxpayer-funded business up for sale to the highest dishonest bidder. This investigation is a prime example of why combatting corruption is so important – it supports equity in this City and defends government’s ability to do its job honestly and place the public interest above personal advantage. DOI thanks the Brooklyn District Attorney’s Office for their partnership on this important investigation and also thanks NYCHA for its cooperation.”

The District Attorney identified the defendants as Lakhwinder Kumar, 47, and Kumar Construction Corp., of South Ozone Park, Queens; Charanjit Singh, 58, Satbir Singh, 71, and Fine Touch Construction, of Floral Park, Queens; Davinder Singh, 45, Nishan Singh, 56, Yuvi Development Inc., and NB Builders, of Hicksville, New York; Surinder Singh, 59, Guriqbal Singh, 28, A. Peter Luger Construction, PKG Contracting Corp. and Heera and G. Builders, of South Richmond Hill, Queens; Jaswant Banga Singh, 57, and Khushi Construction Inc., of New Hyde Park; and Bakhshish Chand, 68, and Amar Contracting, of Richmond Hill, Queens. The defendants are variously charged in multiple indictments with third-degree bribery, first-degree offering a false instrument for filing, giving unlawful gratuities and fifth-degree conspiracy. They are being arraigned today before Brooklyn Supreme Court Justice Danny Chun and released without bail.

For larger construction projects and repairs to be performed by an outside vendor, NYCHA generally solicits multiple bids before awarding a contract. For smaller repairs involving contracts up to \$10,000, NYCHA implemented the micro purchase process which does not require multiple bids. Instead, the superintendent or assistant superintendent of a housing development has the discretion to choose a vendor and request an estimate.

The District Attorney said that, according to the investigation, in November 2018 defendant Lakhwinder Kumar allegedly told an assistant superintendent at a NYCHA development in Brooklyn that he appreciated the jobs he received and offered him money. That

employee reported the bribe offer to DOI, which then equipped him with audio and video recording devices. A month later the defendant was recorded allegedly handing that assistant superintendent \$450 in exchange for a micro purchase job at the development.

The following year, in July 2019, in an unrelated incident, defendant Surinder Singh, allegedly handed \$600 cash to the superintendent of another NYCHA development in Brooklyn. The employee tried to return the money, but Singh allegedly refused to take it. The superintendent then reported the matter to DOI. A few weeks later, he allegedly left cash in the employee's office who again reported it to DOI, which then equipped the employee with audio and video recording devices.

Starting in Spring 2019, DOI placed undercover investigators posing as assistant superintendents at the Red Hook Houses West and Lafayette Gardens in Clinton Hill. Over a period of many months, the undercover at Red Hook allegedly recorded a number of contractors including Charanjit Singh and Satbir Singh, who are partners; Davinder Singh and Nishan Singh, who are brothers; and another contractor, Guriqbal Singh, discussing jobs at the development on numerous occasions and handing the undercover amounts of cash ranging from \$500 to \$1,000 in exchange for micro purchase jobs.

The undercover at Lafayette Gardens allegedly recorded Kumar, Charanjit Singh and another contractor also allegedly giving cash bribes to the undercover.

As the investigation continued, it expanded to capture recordings of Surinder Singh allegedly paying additional bribes to a NYCHA employee at a NYCHA development in Brooklyn and Jaswant Banga Singh and Bakhshish Chand allegedly giving cash bribes to an employee at a NYCHA development in Queens.

It is alleged that between December 2018 and May 2021 the defendants paid bribes or unlawful gratuities to NYCHA employees or undercover investigators totaling about \$20,000 in cash, in addition to two \$500 gift cards and four bottles of Johnnie Walker scotch with a total approximate value of \$115 in exchange for various jobs such as tile work, installation of tub enclosures, installation of a chain link fence, and repairing windows.

The case was investigated by DOI Confidential Investigator Delcine Doscher, Chief Investigators Enio Bencosme and Louis Vega, and Assistant Inspector General Robin Jacknow, under the supervision of Deputy Inspector General Gregory DeBoer, Inspector General Ralph Iannuzzi, Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominick Zarrella and First Deputy Commissioner Daniel Cort.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Adam Libove, Deputy Chief of the District Attorney's Public Integrity Bureau, and Senior Assistant District Attorney Sara Walshe, also of the Public Integrity Bureau, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Laura Neubauer, Bureau Chief, and Assistant District Attorney Michel Spanakos, Deputy Chief of the Investigations Division, and the overall supervision of Assistant District Attorney Patricia McNeill, Chief of the Investigations Division.

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An indictment is an accusatory instrument and not proof of a defendant's guilt.

[Note: copies of the indictment and of materials shown during the press conference can be viewed [here](#)]