

Police planted evidence: Terrorists' arrest in Toronto was a sting operation

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No evidence suspects planned to attack US

WASHINGTON: The three tonnes of ammonium nitrate found with the Toronto terrorism suspects was planted by the police in an elaborate sting operation.

According to Toronto Star, "Sources say investigators who had learned of the group's alleged plan to build a bomb were controlling the sale and transport of the massive amount of fertiliser, a key component in creating explosives. Once the deal was done, the RCMP-led anti-terrorism task force moved in for the arrests." At the news conference held by the police, there was no mention of the sting operation. Among the intended targets of the group, one report said, was the Parliament in Ottawa and the headquarters of Canada's premier spy agency.

The 12 adults charged are: Fahim Ahmad, 21; Jahmaal James, 23; Amin Mohamed Durrani, 19; and Steven Vikash Chand, 25, all of Toronto; Zakaria Amara, 20; Asad Ansari, 21; Shareef Abdelhaleen, 30; Ahmad Mustafa Ghany, 21; Saad Khalid, 19; and Qayyum Abdul Jamal, 43, all of Mississauga; and Mohammed Dirie, 22 and Yasin Abdi Mohamed, 24. Six of the 12 suspects lived in the Toronto suburb of Mississauga, four came from Toronto and two from the town of Kingston in Ontario. The last two are already in custody on a gun smuggling charge.

The police also arrested five youngsters but their identities or names have not been made public. At a court hearing in Toronto on Saturday, all the suspects were produced and Canadian newspapers published photographs of head-to-toe, black burqa clad group of women said to belong to the one or more of the families of the men arrested. One whose face was visible looked like a Pakistani. Several of the men, photographed as they were being brought in police cars, were bearded.

The charges include participating in or contributing to the activity of a terrorist group, including training and recruitment; providing or making available property for terrorist purposes; and the commission of indictable offences, including firearms and explosives offences for the benefit of or in association with a terrorist group.

According to the Toronto Star report, "Anser Farooq, a lawyer who represents five of the accused, pointed at snipers on the roof of the courthouse and said, "This is ridiculous. They've got soldiers here with guns. This is going to completely change the atmosphere. I

think the police cast their net far too wide," he said.

According to the Globe and Mail, defence lawyer Rocco Galati, who was representing some of the suspects, protested the intense security measures at the court. Galati later scoffed at the allegations. "I've seen fertiliser for the last eight years," he said.

Aly Hindy, a Toronto imam, said he knew several of the accused because they prayed at his mosque but said they were not terrorists. "The charges are to keep George Bush happy, that's all," he added sardonically. The Globe and Mail did not mention that all incriminating evidence had been planted on the suspects.

AP adds: US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said there was no indication that the arrested were trying to plan an attack in the United States. "We certainly don't believe that there's any link to the United States, but obviously we will follow up," said Rice. "I think we will get whatever information we need," she said. "But it's obviously a great success for the Canadians. They're to be congratulated for it."

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