



# Department of Justice

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## YASEIN TAHER PLEADS GUILTY TO PROVIDING MATERIAL SUPPORT TO AL QAEDA

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** - Attorney General John Ashcroft, Assistant Attorney General Michael Chertoff of the Criminal Division, and U.S. Attorney Michael Battle of the Western District of New York announced today that Yasein Taher of Lackawanna, N.Y., has pleaded guilty to providing material support to al Qaeda, a designated foreign terrorist organization.

Taher was one of six defendants charged in a two-count indictment in the Western District of New York last October with providing material support or resources to a foreign terrorist organization, based on their attendance at an al Qaeda-affiliated training camp. Taher pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge William M. Skretny at federal court Buffalo this afternoon to Count Two of the indictment, which charges a violation of 18 USC Section 2339B.

Taher's plea agreement, the fifth in the Buffalo cell case, requires the defendant to cooperate fully with the government's ongoing investigation in this and other terrorism probes.

"With today's conviction, the Department of Justice continues to build on its strong record of prosecuting those who provide material support to our terrorist enemies," said Attorney General John Ashcroft. "The cooperation we secure from defendants who trained side by side with our enemies in Afghanistan and elsewhere is valuable as we continue to wage the war on terrorism."

In today's plea agreement, Taher admits that in April 2001, he agreed with co-defendants Yahya Goba, Shafal Mosed, Faysal Galab, Mukhtar Al-Bakri, Sahim Alwan and others to attend the al Farooq military-type training camp in Afghanistan. According to the plea agreement, Taher, Mosed and Galab arrived in Pakistan on or about April 29, 2001.

In his plea agreement, Taher admits traveling with Galab and Mosed to Quetta, Pakistan, where they stayed at a guest house believed to be associated with Usama bin Laden and al Qaeda. Taher admits traveling with Galab and Mosed to a guest house in Kandahar, and viewing a movie or videotape on the attack on the U.S.S. Cole. In the plea agreement, Taher admits traveling with Galab and Mosed to the al Farooq training camp, and working under the direction and control of members of the al Qaeda organization by receiving and taking orders from instructors at the camp.

In the plea agreement, Taher admits receiving training and instruction on the use of weapons while at al Farooq, including a Kalishnikov rifle, 9mm handgun, M16 automatic rifle, and a rocket-propelled

grenade launcher, along with training on explosives and tactics. The agreement states that all persons at the camp, including Taher, were required to perform guard duty as part of their training.

According to the plea agreement, one trainee at the camp asked for volunteers to sign up for suicide missions. The plea agreement states that Usama bin Laden visited al Farooq while all six defendants were at the camp, and spoke about missions against the United States and Israeli interests, as well as the virtues of patience as it applied to the jihad.

The plea agreement states that Taher left al Farooq shortly after the bin Laden speech and before completing all of the training that was available.

Taher faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison, a fine of \$250,000, or both at sentencing, which will be scheduled at a later date.

Defendant Alwan pleaded guilty last month to providing material support to al Qaeda, admitting in court that he attended the al Farooq training camp, met with Usama bin Laden and transported videotapes from Kandahar, Afghanistan, to Karachi, Pakistan. In March, defendants Goba and Mosed also pleaded guilty to providing material support to al Qaeda. In January 2003, Galab pleaded guilty to contributing funds and services to specially designated terrorists, in violation of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act.

Like Taher, the other four defendants who have pleaded guilty are required to cooperate fully with government investigations.

The charge Taher pleaded guilty to prohibits anyone from knowingly providing or conspiring to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization, as designated by the State Department. Al Qaeda was first designated an FTO in October 1999; that two-year designation was renewed in October 2001.

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