

New York man pleads guilty to helping Hezbollah TV station -- from Staten Island

Contributed by CNN
Tuesday, 23 December 2008

A Staten Island man pleaded guilty Tuesday to providing satellite television transmission services to the Lebanese militant movement Hezbollah, which the United States has branded a terrorist organization, legal authorities said.

In exchange, Javed Iqbal, also known as John Iqbal, received thousands of dollars, according to Lev L. Dassin, acting U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York.

Dassin said Iqbal admitted he had provided material support and resources to Hezbollah's television station, Al Manar, which means "The Beacon."

Hezbollah uses the station to attract support, including raising funds and recruiting volunteers for attacks, according to the criminal complaint against Iqbal and statements he made in federal court.

Iqbal said he operated the satellite TV service known as HDTV Limited, or HDTV Corp., between about September 2005 and August 2006, and stored some of its equipment at his home.

Under the plea bargain, Iqbal, who is 45, could spend up to 15 years in prison. Sentencing is set for March 24 in Manhattan federal court.

Iqbal's plea agreement releases him from further prosecution by Dassin's office, Dassin said.

The U.S. State Department has designated Hezbollah a foreign terrorist organization; the Treasury Department lists both the organization and Al Manar as global terrorists.