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Enforcement and Removal

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ICE removes Pakistani national convicted of felony firearms charge

ALEXANDRIA, La. — A Pakistani national who served nearly five years in federal prison for illegally possessing a military-style rifle in Texas was removed from the United States Wednesday by officers with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO).

Syed Maaz Shah, 26, was convicted of being an alien in possession of a firearm in September 2007 in Houston federal court, a federal felony charge. U.S. District Judge Melinda Harmon subsequently sentenced Shah to 78 months in federal prison. ICE took him into immigration custody July 30, 2012, following his release from prison.

ERO officers removed Shah to Karachi, Pakistan, Wednesday via commercial aircraft that departed Alexandria International Airport.

"ICE will continue to focus its enforcement operations on identifying, arresting and removing dangerous criminals who pose the greatest risk to our communities," said ERO New Orleans Acting Field Office Director Michael W. Meade.

According to court documents, during Shah's trial, the prosecution displayed photographs of Shah illegally holding and firing an Armalite M-15A4, .223 caliber, semi-automatic rifle, during firearms training sessions held over the weekends of Jan. 13 and March 10, 2006, on private property near Willis, Texas.

In fiscal year 2013, ICE conducted 368,644 removals nationwide. Nearly 60 percent of ICE's total removals had been previously convicted of a criminal offense; 82 percent of individuals removed from the interior of the United States had previously been convicted of a criminal offense.

In addition to convicted criminals, the agency's enforcement priorities include those apprehended while attempting to unlawfully enter the United States, illegal re-entrants – individuals who returned to the United States after being previously removed by ICE – and immigration fugitives. In fiscal year 2013, 98 percent of ICE removals met these priorities – a record high.

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