

## INDICTMENTS NAME 9 IN KALASHO DRUG RING ARRESTS MAY 'CRIPPLE' GROUP, PROSECUTOR SAYS

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The **Harry Kalasho** cocaine ring -- reputedly one of the Detroit area's largest and most ruthless drug gangs -- was rocked by the indictments and arrests of the group's alleged upper echelon, state and federal authorities said Wednesday.

Indictments handed down by an Oakland County citizens grand jury charging nine persons with drug conspiracy were announced by Prosecutor Richard Thompson.

The gang, according to the indictment, ran a major cocaine wholesale operation with ties to Florida drug suppliers. At its peak, the gang numbered about 200 and moved about 100 kilograms a week, Thompson said.

The organization is reputed to be a major importer, as opposed to notorious street-level dealers of Detroit's past such as Young Boys Inc., Richard (White Boy Rick) Wershe Jr. and the Chambers Brothers.

The Chambers Brothers drug organization at its peak in 1987, reportedly moved \$1 million of the drug a week.

The drug conspiracy charges -- which carry mandatory life sentences without parole upon conviction -- should "permanently cripple the Kalasho organization," Thompson said.

But James Howarth, a lawyer for Kalasho-Akrawi family members, said the charges amounted to "rounding up the usual suspects. It's a rewriting of the same old story we've been hearing all along. Only this time they've moved from federal court in state court, where the charges carry the life sentence."

The indictments, the product of a joint federal and local investigation, were returned a week ago, but not announced until a series of arrests late Tuesday and Wednesday in West Bloomfield Township and Detroit.

The three men arrested in the raid were ordered held under cash bonds ranging from \$2.5 million to \$6 million.

Among those arrested was family patriarch Louis Akrawi, who for a year has challenged authorities to bring charges against the family in court.

Five other alleged gang members were already in custody on a variety of charges and one, Saad Bahoda, 21, of Detroit, is being sought.

According to the indictment, the group was put together by **Harry Kalasho** in 1985 and quickly

grew to pre-eminence in the Detroit area drug market.

Kalasho was gunned down in 1989, allegedly in retaliation for killings he had ordered.

Raed Jihad was charged with Kalasho's killing, but was acquitted by a Recorder's Court jury. His father, Adnan Jihad, was killed outside a Detroit coffee house, allegedly at the orders of Kalasho's cousin, Ray Akrawi.

Ray Akrawi, charged in the Oakland County drug indictment, was twice charged with the Adnan Jihad killing but the case was dismissed both times.

After Kalasho's killing, control of the gang passed to underlings who tried to maintain his network of suppliers and distributors, authorities said.

#### NAMED IN INDICTMENT

Here are the alleged members of the **Harry Kalasho** cocaine organization indicted by an Oakland County grand jury on drug conspiracy charges:

- \* Louis Akrawi, 42; arrested at the West Bloomfield Township home of Basima Kalasho, who is his sister and the mother of the late **Harry Kalasho** . He is subject of deportation proceedings to his native Iraq. No felony convictions.
- \* Rageed (Ray) Akrawi, 21, Detroit. Sentenced to two years' probation after firearms conviction in August 1989. Now serving 18-month sentence for a firearms violation.
- \* Saad Bahoda, 21, Detroit. At large. Under investigation for allegedly obtaining U.S. citizenship by fraud. No felony convictions.
- \* Atheer Gappi, 19, Detroit. No prior convictions.
- \* Issam Hermiz, 27, Detroit. Convicted in Tampa, Fla., of conspiracy to distribute cocaine, he was sentenced Tuesday to 17 years.
- \* Basam Jarges, 26, Southfield. Convicted July 31, 1989, of conspiracy to launder money. Sentenced to 33 months.
- \* Najah Konja, 28, Southfield. Convicted in Tampa, Fla., federal court of conspiracy to distribute cocaine, he was sentenced Tuesday to 20 years.
- \* Basil Mezy, 27, Detroit. Convicted in Tampa in April of conspiracy to distribute cocaine.
- \* Hatim Jamil Zakar, 28, Southfield. No prior convictions.

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