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U.S. Charges Detainee in 2002 Attack on Journalists

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An Afghan man suspected of being an al Qaeda terrorist was formally charged yesterday in connection with a March 2002 grenade attack in Afghanistan that wounded three journalists.

Abdul Zahir, who also was charged with paying other members of al Qaeda to conduct terrorist attacks against coalition forces, became the 10th detainee at the U.S. prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to be charged with criminal offenses that will lead to an eventual military trial.

Zahir was charged with conspiracy, aiding the enemy and attacking civilians.

According to the charges, Zahir operated in Afghanistan from 1997 until his capture in July 2002. He allegedly was paid to work as a money courier and translator, funneling money to members of a terrorist cell in Kabul. He was allegedly entrusted with more than \$50,000 to fund terrorist attacks.

He also was charged with producing anti-American leaflets to recruit Afghans living near the U.S. Embassy in Kabul and near U.S. military bases in Afghanistan to commit terrorist attacks against American soldiers.

Zahir was arrested about four months after the grenade attack. He is charged with working with two other terrorists in the attack, in which a grenade was thrown through the window of a vehicle carrying journalists traveling toward Gardez.

In that attack, a Canadian reporter for the Toronto Star was seriously wounded. Two other journalists and a driver were also in the car.