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## Mounties mum on fourth terror arrest as Idol contestant appears in court

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OTTAWA —

The Mounties wouldn't confirm reports a fourth person was arrested Friday in connection with an alleged Ottawa-based terror plot, but a spokesman did say "something happened this morning."

RCMP Sgt. Marc Menard wouldn't provide details beyond that, but Ottawa police said they assisted the Mounties in an "activity" early Friday.

"We are just in the process of gathering the information from our teams," Menard said.

Reports quoted prosecutor David McKercher as saying a fourth person was arrested Friday but not charged.

Word of a fourth arrest came as the third suspect to face terrorism-related charges appeared in court following a year-long investigation by police and security services.

Khurram Syed Sher, 28, of London, Ont., is charged with conspiracy to facilitate terrorist activity in the case in which police say they seized more than 50 circuit boards intended to remotely detonate bombs.

Sher is a McGill University graduate and an anatomical pathologist at St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital in St. Thomas, Ont., just south of London.

The bearded father of three and avid hockey player appeared nervous during the brief court appearance, where a justice of the peace ordered him to return Sept. 1 via video feed.

Anser Farooq, the lawyer representing Sher, told reporters his client had just been flown to Ottawa on an RCMP aircraft and was anxious to return to his family.

"He's okay. I mean, he's just been brought over, separated from his family," Farooq said.

"We're hoping to address the main concern, which is getting into the court and hear the concerns the Crown has, and get him back to his family as soon as possible."

Sher is shown in an online video auditioning for TV's "Canadian Idol" in Montreal two years ago, moonwalking, doing the robot dance and singing a deliberately woeful version of Avril Lavigne's "Complicated."

Farooq said he had seen the video, quipping "I don't know if he wants to try again."

The others charged are Hiva Mohammad Alizadeh, 30, and Misbahuddin Ahmed, 26, both of Ottawa. They appeared in court on Thursday.

The charges say the conspiracy was carried out in Ottawa, Iran, Afghanistan, Dubai and Pakistan.

Police say an attack was likely still months away when they pounced on the plot, but they moved because they feared the men were about to start sending money to other terrorists in Afghanistan.

Besides the arrests, police seized the circuit boards, terrorist literature and bomb-related documents.

All those arrested are Canadian citizens.

Ahmed is an X-ray technician at an Ottawa hospital. Alizadeh studied English as an additional language and electrical engineering technology at Red River College in Winnipeg.

The Mounties described the three as members of a home-grown terrorist group, although they said Alizadeh is a member of another terror group with links to the Afghan war.

Alizadeh is charged with conspiracy, committing an act for terrorism purposes and providing or making available property for terrorism purposes.

He is also charged with making or having "an explosive substance" with the intent to endanger life or cause serious damage to property. Police said the circuit boards are considered an explosive substance under the Criminal Code.

Ahmed faces the same charge as Sher — conspiracy to facilitate terrorist activity.

Documents filed in provincial court in Ottawa say the men plotted with three others to "knowingly facilitate terrorist activities" in Canada and abroad.

The additional alleged conspirators named in the court documents are James Lara, Rizgar Alizadeh and Zakaria Mamosta. It is not clear where these men are. The charges say the conspiracy was carried out in Ottawa, Iran, Afghanistan, Dubai and Pakistan.

Ahmed recently told family members he wanted to move to Saudi Arabia, sources said.

The investigation, known as "Project Samossa", continues, with the Mounties refusing to provide anything but bare-bones details of the case. Connections among the three charged, their motives, their targets and whether they are linked to either the Taliban or al-Qaida will have to come out in court.

"This group posed a real and serious threat to the citizens of the National Capital Region and Canada's national security," RCMP Chief Supt. Serge Theriault told a news conference Thursday.

He also said the plot went beyond the capital.

"Anywhere where these individuals would travel would be a concern of mine," he said. "It wouldn't be limited to Ottawa."

He said investigators seized "schematics, videos, drawings, instructions, books and electrical components designed specifically for the construction of improvised explosive devices or IEDs."



RCMP investigators remove evidence boxes from a home in London, Ontario, Thursday, August 26, 2010. A resident of the house was taken into custody earlier this morning. Police have charged three suspects in what police and court documents say was a terrorism plot that ranged from Canada to Iran, Afghanistan, Dubai and Pakistan. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Dave Chidley

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