

Two Members of Syrian Electronic Army Indicted for Conspiracy

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ALEXANDRIA, Va. – A federal grand jury returned an 11-count indictment today charging two Syrian men with offenses relating to their participation in a conspiracy to engage in computer hacking as members of the “Syrian Electronic Army” or “SEA.”

Ahmad ‘Umar Agha, who is known online as the “The Pro,” and Firas Dardar, who uses the nickname “The Shadow,” were indicted on conspiracy charges and multiple counts of aggravated identity theft.

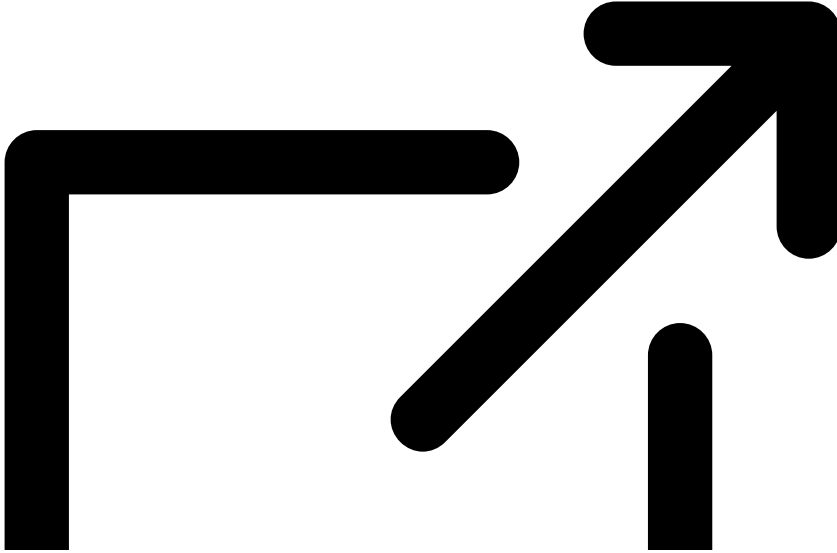
According to allegations in the indictment, under the name “Syrian Electronic Army,” the conspirators focused on spearphishing U.S. government, military, international organizations, and private-sector entities, including the Executive Office of the President, the U.S. Marine Corps, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Public Radio, the Associated Press, Reuters, The Washington Post, The New York Times, CNN, The Onion, USA Today, The New York Post, Time, Human Rights Watch, and scores of other entities and individuals. Agha and Dardar would research targets and then engage in dedicated spearphishing attacks on victim organizations. When the conspiracy’s spearphishing efforts were successful, Agha and Dardar allegedly would use stolen usernames and passwords to deface websites, redirect domains to sites controlled or utilized by the conspiracy, steal electronic mail, and hijack social media accounts.

The alleged offenses of conspiracy and conspiracy to commit wire fraud carry maximum prison terms of 5 and 20 years in prison, respectively, and the alleged aggravated identity theft charges carry a collective mandatory prison term of 2 years in prison and a maximum 18 years in prison. Actual sentences for federal crimes are typically less than the maximum penalties. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after taking into account the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

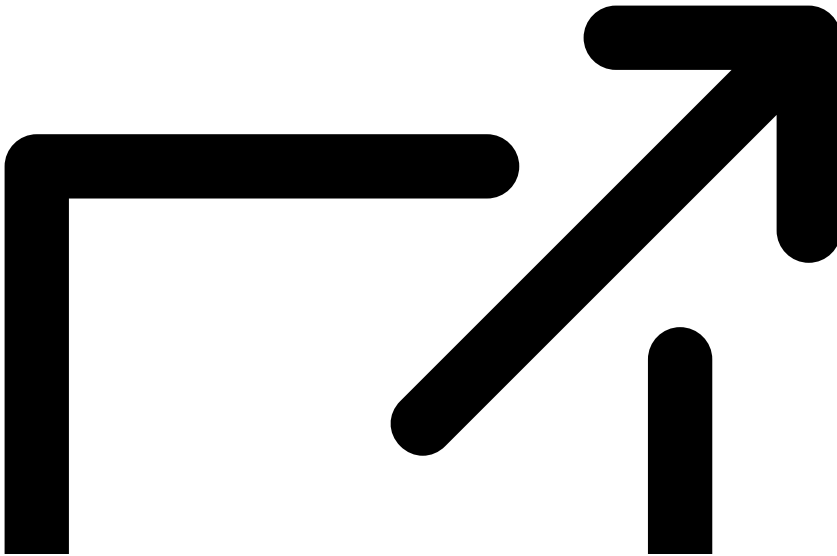
Tracy Doherty-McCormick, Acting U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, John C. Demers, Assistant Attorney General for National Security, and Nancy McNamara, Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI’s Washington Field Office, made the announcement after the indictment was returned.

The case was investigated by the FBI’s Washington Field Office with assistance from other law enforcement agencies including the NASA Office of the Inspector General. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jay V. Prabhu and Maya D. Song, and Trial Attorneys Scott McCulloch, Nathan Charles, and Brandon Van Grack of the Justice Department’s National Security Division are prosecuting the case.

A copy of this press release is located on the website of the [U.S. Attorney’s Office](#) for the Eastern District of Virginia. Related court documents and information is located on the website of the [District Court](#)



for the Eastern District of Virginia or on [PACER](#)



by searching for **Case No. 1:18-cr-221**.

An indictment contains allegations that a defendant has committed a crime. Every defendant is presumed to be innocent until and unless proven guilty in court.

Source: <https://www.justice.gov/usao-edva/pr/two-members-syrian-electronic-army-indicted-conspiracy>