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Rally in Support of the Fort Dix 5 – Five Muslim Men Targeted by Preemptive Prosecution

Philadelphia, PA — A rally to support the Fort Dix 5 and their families will be held on Tuesday, **June 1 at noon at the U.S. Court House, 601 Market Street, Philadelphia.** The rally will focus attention on the terrible injustice done to these five Muslim men, in the hope that the Appeals Court will realize that there is no evidence at all that these men are terrorists.

Many people believe that the Fort Dix 5, from Cherry Hill, New Jersey—Dritan, Eljvir, and Shain Duka, Mohamad Shnewer, and Serdar Tatar—were preemptively prosecuted by the use of a long and costly FBI “sting” operation that resulted in their convictions and long prison sentences (four men received life plus 30 years). Preemptive prosecution is a new practice by the government in the war on terror, whereby mostly Muslims are entrapped, arrested, charged, and often convicted *before* they commit any crime. The legality of this practice under the Constitution is debatable.

All five men are incarcerated in prisons hundreds of miles from their families. Three of the men, Dritan, Eljvir, and Shain Duka, are serving their sentences at the ADX “Supermax” prison in Colorado, where they spend 23 hours a day in tiny cells. Mohamad Shnewer is in a special Muslim prison, the Communication Management Unit, at the U.S. penitentiary in Marion, Illinois. Serdar Tatar is in the US Penitentiary, Tucson, AZ. Appeals in their case will be filed shortly.

In January 2006, a store clerk in New Jersey gave the FBI a videotape of some young men riding horseback, having a pillow fight, shooting guns at a firing range, and shouting Islamic phrases. The men had given the videotape, which had been shot during their vacation together in the Pocono Mountains, to the clerk to copy. The FBI decided that the group was suspicious and sent in two agents provocateur (criminals who had been convicted of serious crimes and were willing to cooperate with the government in exchange for leniency) to try to entrap the young men in criminal activity.

The provocateurs showered attention on the young men and used money and manipulation to build up their interest in jihad. They showed the young men jihadist videos, taunted the men about their lack of resolve to take action, and followed them around with a hidden recording device to tape every word they spoke in passion or anger. By May 2007, the provocateurs had persuaded one of the men, when the others were not present, to discuss a possible attack on the military base at Fort Dix, New Jersey. Another man gave the provocateur a map of the base in response to the latter’s demands. The provocateurs then persuaded the men to buy some automatic weapons, supposedly for target shooting. At this point, the five young men were arrested and charged with conspiracy, even though no definite plan had been made to attack anything, and most of the men had never had a conversation with the provocateur about any plan to attack Fort Dix.

These young men were foreign-born, but they had grown up American. Three of them ran a roofing business and took vacations together with their friends and families in the Poconos. They wanted the guns so that they would not have to wait in line at the firing range. None of them had ever been involved in terrorism, and it does not appear that any of them would have been involved, save for the long and expensive effort of the U.S. government to entrap them.

All of the defendants are vouched for by a community of supporters who know the character of the defendants, know that they are not terrorists, know that they had no intention of hurting anyone, and know that the FBI’s “evidence” is trickery, lies, and manipulation. The Fort Dix 5 are men with families who love America and who supported their communities. They had everything to lose and little, if anything, to gain by becoming involved in the FBI plot. #