Beat: Politics

Benghazi attack suspect pleads not guilty in U.S. court

-, 29.06.2014, 13:18 Time

USPA News - A Libyan man accused of being a key participant in the September 11, 2012, attack on the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi - which killed a U.S. ambassador and three other Americans - arrived in the United States on Saturday and pleaded not guilty during a first court appearance, officials said. Ahmed Abu Khatallah, who is approximately 43 years old, slowly walked into the courtroom and appeared subdued as he was indicted by a federal grand jury with a single count of conspiracy to provide material support and resources to terrorists while knowing and intending that these would be used in preparation for and in carrying out a killing in the course of an attack on a federal facility, and the offense resulted in death.

Khatallah was captured on the night of June 15 when U.S. military commandos supported by FBI agents and drones carried out a covert nighttime raid at a villa on the outskirts of Benghazi. There were no casualties. Khatallah was then taken on board the U.S. Navy warship USS New York, which arrived offshore of the United States on Saturday. He was then flown to Washington, D.C. by helicopter. During Saturday`s court hearing, which lasted only about 10 minutes, Khatallah wore a long-sleeved black shirt and black pants instead of a typical jail uniform. He spoke in Arabic but only uttered two words: "yes" to say whether he swore to tell the truth and "no" when asked whether he had any difficulty understanding what was being said. But the suspect`s public defender, Michele Peterson, entered a not guilty plea on Khatallah`s behalf to the one-count indictment. U.S. prosecutors are expected to file additional charges at a later date, and Khatallah was remanded into custody until the next hearing scheduled for July 2. "Now that Ahmed Abu Khattalah has arrived in the United States, he will face the full weight of our justice system," U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder said after Saturday`s court appearance. "We will prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, the defendant`s alleged role in the attack that killed four brave Americans in Benghazi." FBI Director James Comey said capturing Khattalah and bringing him to the United States to stand trial for his alleged involvement in the Benghazi attack was a "major step forward" for the ongoing investigation. "Our work, however, is not over. This case remains one of our top priorities and we will continue to pursue all others who participated in this brazen attack on our citizens and our country," he said. The Obama administration has long faced criticism - much of it from Republicans - for being "too slow" to find those responsible for the attack, but Ronald Machen Jr., the U.S. Attorney for District of Columbia, said Khatallah`s prosecution marked the first step to bring those responsible to justice. "We will be steady, deliberate, and relentless in seeking to hold accountable all who were responsible for this deadly act of terror," he said. Khatallah was initially charged in a criminal complaint that was filed under seal on July 15, 2013, and which became public on June 17. It was followed by the initial one-count indictment on Thursday, though it was not unsealed until Saturday. The U.S. government has also offered a $10 million reward since January 2013 for information leading to the arrest or conviction of any individuals involved in the consulate attack. The Benghazi attack happened in 2012 when militants believed to have ties to al-Qaeda affiliates attacked the U.S. consulate in the Libyan port city of Benghazi. It took place on the anniversary of the 2001 attacks on the United States and marked the first time in more than three decades that a U.S. Ambassador was killed as a result of hostile action. The Obama administration initially blamed the attack on protests against a 14-minute English-language amateur movie that depicts Islam`s Prophet Muhammad as a fraud and feckless philanderer who approved of child sexual abuse. That explanation later backfired with Republicans accusing the Obama administration of misleading the public just weeks before the presidential election.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-2368/benghazi-attack-suspect-pleads-not-guilty-in-us-court.html

Editorial office and responsibility:
V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement):

Exemption from liability:
The publisher shall assume no liability for the accuracy or completeness of the published report and is merely providing space for the

submission of and access to third-party content. Liability for the content of a report lies solely with the author of such report.

Editorial program service of General News Agency:
UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619