

# NEWS

---

United States Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney, District of New Jersey  
970 Broad Street, Seventh Floor  
Newark, New Jersey 07102

---

---



---

---

***Paul J. Fishman, U.S. Attorney***

---

---

***More Information?*** Call the Assistant U.S. Attorney or other contact listed below to see if more information is available.

***News on the Internet:*** News Releases, related documents and advisories are posted short-term at our website, along with links to our archived releases at the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. **Go to:** <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nj/press/>

---

---

Assistant U.S. Attorney:  
DAVID A. BOCIAN  
609-989-2190

sala0218.rel  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Feb. 18, 2010

---

Former City of Newark Deputy Mayor  
Indicted on Corruption Charges

---

(More)

---

---

Public Affairs Office  
J. Gregory Reinert, PAO

973-645-2888  
856-757-5233

Breaking News (NJ) <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/nj/press/index.html>

---

---

NEWARK – Ronald Salahuddin, former Deputy Mayor for Public Safety for the City of Newark, today was charged by a federal grand jury in a five-count Indictment with corruptly using his official position and influence to advance the business and financial interests of his business partner and himself in connection with City of Newark demolition business, U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

Also named in the Indictment is Sonnie L. Cooper, owner and president of S. Cooper Brothers Trucking, Inc. (“Cooper Trucking”), a company that engaged in the business of conducting demolition, waste-hauling and street sweeping, for both municipal governments and private entities in Essex County and elsewhere. The Indictment alleges that Salahuddin and Cooper had an ongoing financial relationship that Salahuddin took steps to conceal, including a partnership in a waste-hauling business. In addition to their relationship as business partners in waste hauling, Salahuddin had provided financial backing to Cooper.

An arraignment for Salahuddin, 59, of East Orange, and Cooper, 67, of Springfield, will be scheduled by the U.S. District Judge to whom the case will be assigned.

The Indictment describes a scheme in which Salahuddin conspired with Cooper and others from July 2006 to December 2007 to have Salahuddin use his office to steer demolition contracts in Newark to an individual, who was cooperating with federal authorities (referred to in the Indictment as the CW). Salahuddin agreed to do so in exchange for the CW’s agreement to give Cooper and his company a portion of demolition business that the CW’s company was to receive from the City of Newark and other entities, including the New Jersey Devils hockey team. In exchange for his efforts to get business for the CW, Salahuddin also solicited and accepted charitable contributions from the CW to organizations supported by Newark officials and encouraged the CW to give concealed political contributions.

“The conduct alleged in the Indictment shows a brazen effort by Salahuddin to corrupt his city office for his own personal financial gain and to benefit his business partner,” said U.S. Attorney Paul Fishman.

Kevin Cruise, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the FBI's Newark office stated, “The FBI will continue to send a crystal clear message that if you hold a public office and you abuse your position and the public trust, you will be caught and you will face the strong possibility of prison. This is neither for show nor statistical accomplishment. Rather, we intend to rid New Jersey of corruption and pay-to-play practices by making the risk outweigh the reward.”

The Newark Mayor’s Office and the New Jersey Devils have been cooperating in the investigation.

The Indictment charges that in 2006 an individual referred to in the Indictment as the Consultant initially arranged for Salahuddin and Cooper to meet the CW. The Consultant

advised the CW that the Consultant had met with Salahuddin, and that Salahuddin would be able to help the CW obtain Newark demolition work, but that a portion of the work would need to be given to Cooper.

On numerous dates between September 2006 and December 2007, Salahuddin met or spoke with the CW to discuss steering both public and private demolition contracts, including demolition contracts involving the Prudential Center development in Newark, and that Salahuddin took many steps to fulfill their arrangement.

The Indictment further details Salahuddin's plan to exclude other contractors from receiving Newark demolition work in order to "reciprocate" on the arrangement with the CW.

The Indictment further charges that Salahuddin received approximately \$45,000 from Cooper between May and August 2007, including a \$5,000 check that was funded from proceeds of a check for demolition work that Cooper had received from the CW. The Indictment alleges that Salahuddin caused that \$5,000 check to be deposited into his own bank account on July 23, 2007

The Indictment further alleges that Salahuddin represented that contributions by the CW to organizations supported by City of Newark officials, including Salahuddin, would enable the CW to receive more demolition business. The Indictment specifically alleges that in December 2006 Salahuddin accepted a \$5,000 check to a charitable organization supported by City of Newark officials from the CW and later encouraged the CW to use nominees to structure the CW's political contributions in Newark.

Count One charges both defendants with conspiracy to obstruct commerce by extortion under color of official right, which carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Count Two charges both defendants with attempt to obstruct commerce by extortion under color of official right, which carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Counts Three, Four and Five charge one or both defendants with soliciting, accepting and agreeing to accept things of value to influence and reward a local government agent, each count carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Despite Indictment, every defendant is presumed innocent, unless and until found guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

Fishman credited Special Agents of the FBI, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge Kevin B. Cruise, in Newark; and IRS Criminal Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge William P. Offord, for the ongoing investigation leading to the Indictment.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney David Bocian of the U.S.

Attorney's Office Criminal Division in Trenton and James B. Nobile, Chief of the Special Prosecutions Division.

– end –

Defense Attorneys:

Salahuddin - Thamas R. Ashely, Esq. And Henry Klingeman, Esq. Newark

Cooper - Alan L. Zegas, Esq. Chatham