



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on January 11, 2010

Detroit Bomber Arraigned in Federal Court; Pleads Not Guilty to All Charges

Wearing the typical garb of a federal prisoner, Umar Abdulmutallab entered the courtroom wearing khaki trousers, a plain white t-shirt, and shackles on his ankles. The defendant was flanked by his attorney, a federal public defender, Miriam Siefer. Abdulmutallab was arraigned Friday in a Detroit federal court and the 23-year-old Nigerian stood before a magistrate, and Siefer plead not guilty all charges on behalf of her client.



On Wednesday, a federal grand jury indicted Abdulmutallab on six charges, including attempted murder and attempted use of a weapon of mass destruction. The charges are the result of Abdulmutallab's actions on Christmas Day aboard Northwest Flight 253 from Amsterdam to Detroit. Abdulmutallab secreted about 80 grams of powdered explosives onto the plane by hiding it in his underwear. He attempted to detonate the explosives using a liquid accelerant carried in a syringe. The syringe malfunctioned and Abdulmutallab was apprehended by two fellow passengers and members of the flight crew.

The courtroom in the Theodore Levin United States Courthouse was filled to capacity with the curious and the concerned, including rows of reporters. Lawyers Maryam Uwais and Mahmud Kazaure were also present, claiming to represent the family of the accused. One passenger from Flight 253 was also in attendance, Hebba Aref, a lawyer from suburban Detroit who works mostly in Kuwait.

The hearing was presided over by Magistrate Mark Randon who repeatedly asked Abdulmutallab if he specifically understood the charges that were being made against him and whether he understood the purpose and process of the proceedings generally. In a voice barely audible, Abdulmutallab responded in the affirmative and in response to a question regarding his present state of mind, he informed the judge that he had taken painkillers, but was otherwise lucid and not under the effects of any medication.

As the last piece of perfunctory procedure, Abdulmutallab's lawyers agreed to waive a formal reading of the charges and consented to their client's continued confinement in the Federal Corrections Institute Milan, a low-security facility located about 45 miles south of Detroit, Michigan.



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In all, the hearing lasted about five minutes, and at the conclusion Abdulmutallab, his shaved head bowed, was escorted from the courtroom by federal law-enforcement officers in the company of his attorneys.

Meanwhile, the government's top lawyer, Attorney General Eric Holder, reported that life imprisonment is the maximum penalty for the crimes of which Abdulmutallab has been charged. Holder also said that Abdulmutallab was cooperating with federal investigators and was providing detailed information about the al-Qaeda branch in Yemen that is reckoned to have trained and equipped Abdulmutallab in advance of his Christmas Day attack.

Abdulmutallab's family reported that in the months prior to visiting Yemen under the pretense of studying Arabic, their son was becoming increasingly devoted to what he called "pure Islam." This perceived fascination with extremism was reported to Nigerian authorities as well as to the American embassy in Nigeria. It was the failure of U.S. authorities to properly pass along this information to sister security and intelligence agencies that is blamed for Abdulmutallab's ability to board a plane in Amsterdam bound for Detroit, carrying enough explosives to bring down the plane and kill its nearly 300 innocent holiday travelers.

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