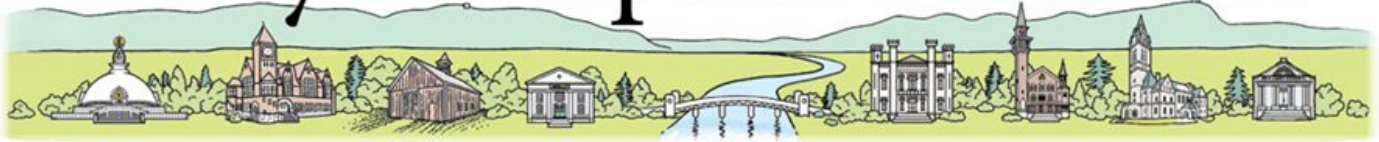


# Daily Hampshire Gazette



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## Man who spoke of flying bombs sentenced

Staff

Last modified: Wednesday, November 12, 2014

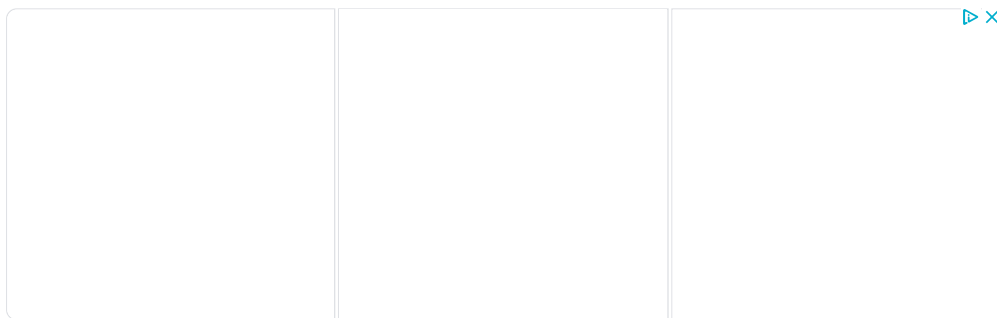
NEW HAVEN, Conn. (AP) — A Moroccan man who told people he wanted to fly bombs on remote-control planes into a federal building and into Harvard University was sentenced on Wednesday to two years in prison.

U.S. District Judge Janet Hall in New Haven also ordered El Mehdi Semlali Fathi, 27, deported to Morocco after he finishes his prison sentence.

Fathi, who was living with friends in Bridgeport, pleaded guilty in July to perjury in connection with a bogus refugee application. Federal prosecutors said Fathi's guilty plea and his willingness to be deported played roles in his avoiding a potential terrorism charge for his statements about wanting to bomb the federal building in Hartford and Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Fathi's public defender, Paul Thomas, declined to comment after the sentencing. He said in court documents that Fathi wasn't serious about carrying out the bombings and didn't have the means or motive to do so.

"His statements were nothing more than far-fetched, foolish and false," Thomas said in a sentencing brief, adding that Fathi "should not be punished for the stupid things he said to the (government) informant."



Charlotte Tilbury

But federal prosecutors said they were unsure whether Fathi planned to carry out the attacks. Authorities said Fathi also talked about having been trained in Afghanistan and knowing how to make bombs. Prosecutors said, at best, Fathi's comments were misguided and caused authorities to divert resources to investigate him and, at worst, he was intent on causing harm.



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Facing deportation and wanting to remain in the U.S., Fathi submitted a bogus refugee application, under penalty of perjury, falsely claiming he would be persecuted by Morocco officials because of his political opinions and membership in a social group.

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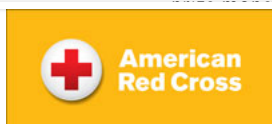
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