Ex-UN Employee Charged With Making False Statements to Cover Up Sexual Assaults: Feds

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A former United Nations employee was charged with two counts of making false statements to federal agents in an effort to conceal his drugging and sexual assault of multiple women while he worked for the intergovernmental organization, according to federal officials.

Audrey Strauss, the Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and William F. Sweeney Jr., Assistant Director-in-Charge of the New York Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, jointly announced Wednesday that Karim Elkorany, 37, a former communications specialist with the United Nations in Iraq, was charged in an indictment in Manhattan federal court. Elkorany, of West Orange, was arrested in New Jersey Wednesday. He is expected to be presented before the court in the afternoon.

If found guilty, the two counts of making false statements to federal law enforcement agents carries a maximum sentence of five years each in prison.

Attorney information for the accused was not immediately known.

According to the indictment unsealed in Manhattan federal court, the charges stem from incidents that took place while he worked for the organization a few years ago.

Over the years, starting in 2005, Elkorany worked in international aid, development, and foreign relations for the UN. He also worked for the UN Children’s Fund in Iraq. From about July 2016 up to about April 2018, Elkornay worked as a communications specialist for the UN in Iraq.

According to the indictment, around November 2016, Elkorany drugged and sexually assaulted a woman (known as “Victim-1” in court documents) in Iraq, where he was working for the UN. Victim-1 allegedly had food and alcoholic beverages with Elkorany at a restaurant before he brought the woman to his apartment. Allegedly, while at the apartment, Victim-1 was rendered unconscious.  As Victim-1 regained consciousness for brief periods, she observed Elkorany sexually assaulting her but was physically unable to stop him, the indictment says.

The woman subsequently reported the sexual assault to the UN around December 2016. The UN started an investigation and subsequently informed Elkorany of the allegations brought against him, according to the indictment. In March 2018, Elkorany resigned.

According to the indictment, federal agents later uncovered evidence that Elkorany engaged in a pattern of similar conduct involving other women. In each instance, Elkorany allegedly drugged the victim before sexually assaulting or attempting to sexually assault the victim while she was unconscious or partially conscious.

Allegedly, between 2009 and 2016, Elkorany sexually assaulted or attempted to sexually assault at least five victims after the victims were rendered unconscious after consuming alcoholic beverages prepared by him.  When some of the victims regained consciousness, some or all of their clothing had been removed. In some instances, after they awoke, Elkorany informed the women that they had sexual intercourse, oral sex, and/or anal sex with him, according to federal officials.

On Nov. 3, 2017, special agents working with the New York Field Office of the FBI conducted a voluntary interview of Elkorany outside of his residence in New Jersey.  During that interview, he allegedly expressed familiarity of the allegations made by Victim-1 to the UN, but said the allegations made to the UN were false.  Elkorany also said that he had not used drugs with Victim-1 or provided her with any drugs.

“Karim Elkorany, a former United Nations communications specialist, was accused of furtively drugging and sexually assaulting several women.  When questioned by the FBI, Elkorany compounded his alleged unconscionable conduct by making false statements to the special agents investigating the assaults," Strauss said in a statement.

Meanwhile, Sweeney called Elkorany's alleged conduct "abhorrent."

“Investigated by UN officials for allegedly drugging and sexually assaulting a woman in Iraq in 2016, Elkorany caught the eye of the FBI.  Elkorany’s conduct, as detailed in today’s charges, is abhorrent, and the false statements made to the FBI Special Agents conducting this investigation are federal offenses," Sweeney said.

Authorities urge any individuals who may have information concerning Elkorany or any similar conduct to please contact the FBI at 1-800-CALL- FBI or tips.fbi.gov.