

# News

## Jury to Hear Case Against Queens Man Accused of Supplying al-Qaida

[by Ailsa Chang](#)

NEW YORK, NY April 27, 2010 —The trial of a former Queens student accused of sending equipment to al-Qaida fighters begins Wednesday in Lower Manhattan. Syed Hashmi, 30, faces four counts of providing support to the terrorist organization.

A federal judge ruled Monday that the jury for Hashmi will remain anonymous and receive special protection from U.S. Marshals because of the seriousness of the charges and intense media interest in the case.

Shayana Kadidal is an attorney with the Center for Constitutional Rights, which has been organizing support for Hashmi and says granting anonymity to jurors will make them more likely to believe Hashmi is guilty.

“It just creates this impression that: ‘Boy, this must be a really important bad guy if they're putting all these restrictions in place to protect our identities,’” Kadidal says.

Hashmi has spent almost three years in solitary confinement. He is accused of permitting a guest to store raincoats and waterproof socks in his London home that were later delivered to an al-Qaida leader in Pakistan. Hashmi also allegedly loaned the guest his cell phone and gave him money to buy a plane ticket to Pakistan.

Hashmi’s brother, Faisal Hashmi, says his brother has been arrested because of his outspoken political activism.

“My brother and I were both part of the melting pot of Flushing. And we were cultivated to understand that America supposedly allows free speech, allows the fostering of ideas, the discourse, but the harsh reality we had learned was that's selective,” Faisal Hashmi says.

The government said in court papers that it will likely present evidence that Hashmi was active in an Islamic fundamentalist organization known as Al-Muhajiroun and led a protest by the group in Manhattan in 2002.

Hashmi studied political science at Brooklyn College and was a graduate student in London when he was arrested in 2006.