

US prosecutors file for extradition of Kim Dotcom

March 5 2012

(AP) -- Federal prosecutors in the United States have filed papers in New Zealand seeking the extradition of Megaupload founder Kim Dotcom and three of his colleagues, whom they accuse of making a fortune by helping Internet users share files illegally.

New Zealand justice officials say papers were filed Friday in Auckland's North Shore District Court. The court is not releasing the papers at this time.

U.S. prosecutors accuse the four men of breaching copyright by facilitating millions of illegal downloads through their website, enriching themselves at the expense of [movie makers](#) and songwriters. They are accused of a number of offenses including racketeering, which carries a maximum prison sentence of 20 years.

As well as Dotcom, prosecutors are seeking the [extradition](#) from New Zealand of Finn Batato, Mathias Ortmann and Bram van der Kolk, each of whom held senior positions at Megaupload before authorities shut it down in January.

Dotcom and his colleagues remain under [house arrest](#) in Auckland. An extradition hearing has been scheduled for August.

[Dotcom](#), who was born in Germany and legally changed his name from Kim Schmitz, has said U.S. authorities cherry-picked emails and other evidence in a way that was "misleading and malicious." He said some

Megaupload workers were tasked with taking down any material that might infringe copyright, but U.S. authorities say they only deleted individual links, without removing pirated material.

The U.S. has also charged three men in Europe in the case. One of those men, Andrus Nomm, was arrested by Dutch police in January.

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