

Two Iranians charged in US over hacking defense materials

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Two Iranian men have been indicted for hacking a Vermont-based defense contractor and stealing weapons design software, and then distributing the software to Iran

Two Iranians were indicted Monday in the United States with hacking a defense contractor and stealing sensitive software used to design bullets and warheads, according to the Justice Department.

According to the newly unsealed indictment businessman Mohammed Saeed Ajily, 35, recruited Mohammed Reza Rezakhah, 39, to break into companies' computers to steal their software for resale to Iranian universities, the military and the government.

The two men—and a third who was arrested in 2013 and handed back to Iran in a prisoner swap last year—allegedly broke into the computers of Vermont-based Arrow Tech Associates.

The indictment said they stole in 2012 the company's Prodas ballistics software, which is used to design and test bullets, warheads and other military ordnance projectiles.

The material stolen from Arrow Tech was protected by US controls on the export of sensitive technologies, and its distribution to Iran was banned by US sanctions on the country.

The two men were charged in the Rutland, Vermont federal district court, which issued arrest warrants for the two, who are believed to be in Iran.

In 2013 the US secured the arrest in Turkey of a third Iranian in the case, Nima Golestaneh, 30, who was extradited to the United States.

In December 2015 he pleaded guilty to charges of wire fraud and computer hacking.

One month later he was freed as part of a prisoner exchange with Tehran, which returned four Americans in exchange for seven Iranians who had been arrested in separate schemes to obtain and smuggle to Iran sensitive US technologies.

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