

Multiple Jurisdictions Pose Problems In Terror Prosecution

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As charges mount against Ahmad Khan Rahami in connection with bombings in Manhattan and New Jersey, one thing could make the job of prosecutors and defense lawyers more complicated—charges have been brought against the defendant in three jurisdictions.

The U.S. Attorneys' Office for the Southern District of New York charged Rahami in connection with a bombing in the Chelsea section of Manhattan, and their New Jersey counterparts charged him with a bombing at a charity road race in Seaside Park and the attempted bombing of a train station in Elizabeth. Meanwhile, the Union County Prosecutor's Office has also brought charges against Rahami in connection with a shootout that left two Linden police officers injured.

Resolving the case in one action would be advantageous for the defendant, said Scott Christie of McCarter & English in Newark and a former Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of New Jersey.

"If you're facing criminal charges that involve the same or related conduct in multiple jurisdictions, your goal is definitely to wrap it up all at once. TO the extent that is possible, I am sure [Rahami's] public defender in the Southern District of New York would work with his public defenders elsewhere to come up with a package deal, but that presupposes that he's inclined to plead guilty or resolve it short of trial," Christie said.