

JUSTICE NEWS

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Justice Department Secures First Denaturalization As a Result of Operation Janus

On January 5, Judge Stanley R. Chesler of the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey entered an order revoking the naturalized U.S. citizenship of Baljinder Singh aka Davinder Singh, and canceling his Certificate of Naturalization, the Justice Department announced.

Following Judge Chesler's order, Singh's immigration status reverted from naturalized citizen to lawful permanent resident, rendering him potentially subject to removal proceedings at the Department of Homeland Security's discretion.

Singh's denaturalization is the first arising out of a growing body of cases referred to the Department of Justice by United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) as part of Operation Janus. The action against Singh was filed contemporaneously with two other Operation Janus cases, as announced by the Justice Department on Sept. 19, 2017.

A Department of Homeland Security initiative, Operation Janus, identified about 315,000 cases where some fingerprint data was missing from the centralized digital fingerprint repository. Among those cases, some may have sought to circumvent criminal record and other background checks in the naturalization process. These cases are the result of an ongoing collaboration between the two departments to investigate and seek denaturalization proceedings against those who obtained citizenship unlawfully.

"The defendant exploited our immigration system and unlawfully secured the ultimate immigration benefit of naturalization, which undermines both the nation's security and our lawful immigration system," said Acting Assistant Attorney General Chad Readler of the Justice Department's Civil Division. "The Justice Department will continue to use every tool to protect the integrity of our nation's immigration system, including the use of civil denaturalization."

USCIS dedicated a team to review these Operation Janus cases, and the agency has stated its intention to refer approximately an additional 1,600 for prosecution.

"We appreciate the dedication of our Justice Department partners as we work together to ensure the integrity of our nation's legal immigration system," said USCIS Director L. Francis Cissna. "I hope this case, and those to follow, send a loud message that attempting to fraudulently obtain U.S. citizenship will not be tolerated. Our nation's citizens deserve nothing less."

Baljinder Singh aka Davinder Singh, 43, a native of India, arrived at San Francisco International Airport on Sept. 25, 1991, without any travel documents or proof of identity. He claimed his name was Davinder Singh. He was placed in exclusion proceedings, but failed to appear for his immigration court hearing and was ordered excluded and deported on Jan. 7, 1992. Four weeks later, on Feb. 6, 1992, he filed an asylum application under the name Baljinder Singh. He claimed to be an Indian who entered the United States without inspection. Singh abandoned that application after he married a U.S. citizen, who filed a visa petition on his behalf. Singh naturalized under the name Baljinder Singh on July 28, 2006. Singh has been residing in Carteret, New Jersey.

This case was investigated by USCIS and the Civil Division's Office of Immigration Litigation, District Court Section (OIL-DCS). The case was prosecuted by Counsel for National Security Aaron Petty of OIL-DCS's National Security and Affirmative Litigation Unit, with support from Deputy Chief Patrice Rodman of USCIS's Office of the Chief Counsel, Northeast Law Division and Immigration Services Officer Caroline D'Angelo of USCIS's Field Operations Directorate.

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