

Friday, 19 April 2013

Moroccan teenager denies involvement in Boston blasts



A Moroccan teenager said late Thursday that he was scared for his life after his photo was released by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) as one of the two suspects involved in the Boston bombings.

The Associated Press reported one of the two suspects, 17-year-old high school track runner Salah Eddin Barhoum, was very disappointed to see his photo as a suspect circulating Facebook, which led him to visit the police station early Thursday to clear his name.

Barhoum said he was at the marathon with his friend Yassine Zaim, who was portrayed as the second suspect, hoping to run a portion of the Boston Marathon and ended up at the finishing line, where he decided to stay and watch the race end.

Barhoum's father, El Houssein Barhoum, who moved his family from Morocco five years ago, said he was worried his son will be shot and feared for his wife and two young daughters.

The photos show Barhoum with a black Nike athletic bag, wearing a blue and black track suit. Zaim is carrying a black backpack, wearing a white cap and black track clothes.

Men with bags at the marathon have been a focus of Internet scrutiny, because officials believe that was how the bombers carried in the explosives.

Barhoum told the Associated Press that he was feared walking in public and, on Thursday, he ran back to his high school after a track meet when he saw a man in a car staring at him, talking on the phone. He said he did not feel safe until the bombers were caught.

Media reported later Thursday that the pair were not considered suspects, and the FBI has since identified two other men as suspects in Monday's bombings that exploded in the crowded streets near the finish line, killing three people and injuring more than 180.

Early Thursday, the FBI asked for public help in identifying the suspects and said the men were both armed and dangerous.

“Someone out there knows these individuals,” FBI Special Agent Richard DesLauriers said at a news conference.

President Barack Obama said those behind the blasts will be held “accountable,” adding the U.S. will not “cower in fear.”

The incident raised alarms that terrorists might have struck again in the United States.