

ICE officials pick up former USF student

by UPI

TAMPA, Fla. -- U.S. immigration officials detained a former University of South Florida student who recently was acquitted of explosives charges in a federal court.

Youssef Megahed, an Egyptian who is a permanent resident of the United States, was arrested by federal immigration officials Monday in a Tampa, Fla., Wal-Mart parking lot, the man's attorney told the St. Petersburg Times.

"We're completely disappointed with this action by the government," said Adam Allen, Megahed's public defender. "My understanding is that they have arrested him to seek to deport him based solely on the same grounds for which he was acquitted."

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement spokesman James Judge said in a statement Megahed was arrested for "civil violations of the Immigration and Nationality Act."

Megahed was placed into "removal proceedings," Judge said, and was in ICE custody pending the outcome of his case before an immigration judge.

A federal jury Friday acquitted Megahed of illegal transport of explosive materials and illegal possession of a destructive device. Megahed and a friend were arrested in South Carolina with what prosecutors said were pipe bombs in their car's trunk.

Ramzy Kilic, executive director of Tampa's chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, called Megahed's arrest "outrageous," The Tampa Tribune reported.

"It seems to me after being judged by a jury of his peers, 12 people found him not guilty in federal court almost on the same allegations it seems like immigration officials are making against him," Kilic said.

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