

**Federal Grand Jury Indicts Iraqi-Born US Citizen For Making False Statement To The FBI
Defendant Allegedly Lied About Pledging Allegiance to Self-Proclaimed Leader of ISIL**

US Attorney's Office, Northern District of Texas
June 11, 2015

http://www.justice.gov/usao/txn/PressRelease/2015/JUN2015/JUN11Abood_indict.html

DALLAS – A Mesquite, Texas man, Bilal Abood, 37, has been charged in a federal indictment with one count of making a false statement to a federal agency, announced Assistant Attorney General for National Security John P. Carlin, Acting U.S. Attorney John Parker of the Northern District of Texas and Special Agent in Charge Thomas M. Class Sr. of the FBI's Dallas Field Office.

Abood has been in federal custody since his arrest last month by special agents with the FBI on a related criminal complaint.

According to the indictment, on March 29, 2013, Abood attempted to depart the United States from Dallas Fort Worth International Airport, but was not allowed to board the flight. While at the airport, FBI agents asked Abood about his planned travel, and he initially advised agents that he was merely planning to travel to Iraq to visit family. During a subsequent interview, agents asked Abood again about his attempted travel — specifically asking if he intended to go to Syria to fight, and Abood stated that was not his intent. Later in that interview, however, Abood admitted that his intent on March 29, 2013, was to go to Syria to fight against the Assad regime, claiming he wanted to fight with the Free Syrian Army (FSA).

On approximately April 29, 2013, Abood left the United States through Mexico and traveled through various countries into Turkey. Upon Abood's return to the United States on Sept. 16, 2013, the FBI interviewed him again. In that interview, Abood admitted traveling to Syria through Turkey, and claimed that he went there to fight with the FSA and that he had stayed in an FSA camp. Abood stated that he became frustrated with a lack of action and wanted to return to the United States. He denied ever providing financial support to al-Nusrah Front (ANF), the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) or any other terrorist organization.

A review of Abood's computer on July 9, 2014, pursuant to a federal search warrant, revealed Abood pledged an oath to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of ISIL, on June 19, 2014. The search warrant also revealed that Abood had been on the internet viewing ISIL atrocities such as beheadings, and had used his twitter account to tweet and retweet information on al-Baghdadi.

On April 14, 2015, FBI agents went to Abood's residence to return his computer that was seized in the 2014 search warrant. Abood admitted to the agents that he knew it was a crime to lie to an FBI agent, and Abood denied to the agents that he had ever pledged allegiance to al-Baghdadi.

An indictment is an accusation by a federal grand jury and a defendant is entitled to the presumption of innocence unless proven guilty. However, if convicted, Abood faces a maximum statutory sentence of eight years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The case is being investigated by FBI's Dallas Division. The prosecution is being handled by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Texas, with assistance from the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section.