

Virginia Man Sentenced to More Than 11 Years for Providing Material Support to ISIL

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Ali Shukri Amin, 17, of Manassas, Virginia, was sentenced today to 136 months in prison to be followed by a lifetime of supervised release and monitoring of his internet activities for conspiring to provide material support and resources to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), a designated foreign terrorist organization.

Assistant Attorney General for National Security John P. Carlin, U.S. Attorney Dana J. Boente of the Eastern District of Virginia, Assistant Director in Charge Andrew G. McCabe of the FBI's Washington, D.C., Field Office and Chief Stephan Hudson of the Prince William County, Virginia, Police Department made the announcement after sentencing by U.S. District Judge Claude M. Hilton of the Eastern District of Virginia.

"Ali Shukri Amin is a young American who used social media to provide material support to ISIL," said Assistant Attorney General Carlin. "ISIL continues to use social media to send their violent and hateful message around the world in an attempt to radicalize, recruit and incite youth and others to support their cause. More and more, their propaganda is seeping into our communities and reaching those who are most vulnerable. The Department of Justice will continue to use all tools to disrupt the threats that ISIL poses, and our efforts will be furthered by parents and other members of our community willing to take action to confront and deter this threat wherever it may surface."

"Today's sentencing demonstrates that those who use social media as a tool to provide support and resources to ISIL will be identified and prosecuted with no less vigilance than those who travel to take up arms with ISIL," said U.S. Attorney Boente. "The Department of Justice will continue to pursue those that travel to fight against the United States and our allies, as well as those individuals that recruit others on behalf of ISIL in the homeland."

"Today marks a personal tragedy for the Amin family and the community as we have lost yet another young person to the allure of extremist ideology focused on hatred," said Assistant Director in Charge McCabe. "Amin's case serves as a reminder of how persistent and pervasive online radicalization has become. The FBI, through our Joint Terrorism Task Forces, remains dedicated to protecting the United States against the ongoing violent threat posed by ISIL and their supporters."

"Observations made by school staff and subsequent follow-up by the School Resource Officer were some of the earlier indicators of suspicious behavior regarding this individual," said Chief Hudson. "Those observations were quickly relayed to our partners with the JTTF who acted upon this information very quickly. We greatly appreciate that these observations were observed and reported to the proper authorities proved to be instrumental in the overall investigation in stopping a dangerous network such as ISIL from further infiltrating our community."

Amin pleaded guilty on June 11, 2015. According to court documents, Amin admitted to using Twitter to provide advice and encouragement to ISIL and its supporters. Amin, who used the Twitter handle @Amreekiwitnes, provided instruction on how to use Bitcoin, a virtual currency, to mask the provision of funds to ISIL, as well as facilitation to ISIL supporters seeking to travel to Syria to fight with ISIL.

Additionally, Amin admitted that he facilitated travel for Reza Niknejad, an 18-year-old Prince William County resident who traveled to Syria to join ISIL in January 2015. Niknejad was charged on June 10, 2015, in the Eastern District of Virginia with conspiring to provide material support to terrorists, conspiring to provide material support to ISIL and conspiring to kill and injure people abroad.

This case was investigated by the FBI's Washington Field Office. Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael P. Ben'Ary and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Caroline H. Friedman of the Eastern District of Virginia prosecuted the case, with substantial assistance provided by Trial Attorney Stephen Sewell of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section.

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