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**MARYLAND MAN CHARGED FOR ALLEGED SUPPORT OF THE ISIL  
TERRORIST ORGANIZATION**

*Defendant Allegedly Received Money from Individuals Overseas to be used for  
“Operational Purposes” in the United States; When Confronted by the FBI the Defendant  
Allegedly Lied to the FBI and Concealed his Support for ISIL*

**Baltimore**, Maryland – Mohamed Elshinawy, 30, of Edgewood, Maryland, was arrested on Friday, December 11, 2015, on a federal criminal complaint charging him with attempting to provide material support to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), a designated foreign terrorist organization; obstruction of agency proceedings; and making false statements and falsifying or concealing material facts. Elshinawy is scheduled to have his initial appearance at 2:45 p.m. today before U.S. Magistrate Judge Beth P. Gesner of the District of Maryland in Baltimore.

The criminal complaint was announced by U.S. Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein of the District of Maryland; Assistant Attorney General for National Security John P. Carlin; and Special Agent in Charge Kevin Perkins of the FBI’s Baltimore Division.

“This case demonstrates how terrorists exploit modern technology to inculcate sympathizers and build hidden networks, but federal agents and prosecutors are working tirelessly and using every available lawful tool to disrupt their evil schemes,” said U.S. Attorney Rosenstein. “The affidavit alleges that Mr. Elshinawy initially told the FBI that he was defrauding the terrorists, but further investigation showed that Mr. Elshinawy was supporting the terrorists and misleading the FBI.”

“According to the allegations in the complaint, Mohamed Elshinawy received money he believed was provided by ISIL in order to conduct an attack on U.S. soil,” said Assistant Attorney General Carlin. “When confronted by the FBI, he lied in order to conceal his support for ISIL and the steps he took to provide material support to the deadly foreign terrorist organization. He will now be held accountable for these crimes. The National Security Division’s highest priority is counterterrorism and we will continue to pursue and disrupt those who seek to provide material support to ISIL.”

The affidavit filed in federal court alleges that in June 2015, the FBI became aware of an individual located in Egypt who was attempting to send money to the United States, possibly for nefarious purposes. The investigation revealed that on June 28, 2015, that individual wire transferred \$1,000 to Elshinawy. The FBI interviewed Elshinawy on July 17, 2015. The affidavit alleges that Elshinawy first claimed that his mother had sent him the money, and then that the money was to purchase an iPhone for a friend. Later, he admitted that a childhood friend

had contacted him a few months earlier to connect him, through social media, with an unidentified member of ISIL (referred to in the complaint as the “unidentified ISIL operative”). Elshinawy began communicating with the unidentified ISIL operative through a method of communication used by ISIL. The defendant also admitted that he understood the individual in Egypt who wire transferred the money on June 28, 2015, also to be an ISIL operative (referred to in the complaint as the “Egyptian ISIL operative”).

Elshinawy said that he had received a total of \$4,000 in two payments –\$1,000 through Western Union and \$3,000 through PayPal – and that the ISIL operative instructed Elshinawy to use the monies for “operational purposes,” which Elshinawy understood to mean causing destruction or conducting a terrorist attack in the United States. Elshinawy stated that ISIL instructed him that if he ever came under surveillance by law enforcement, he should stop whatever activities he was doing in connection with executing an attack. Elshinawy claimed, however, that he never intended to carry out an attack and was only trying to get money from ISIL.

The affidavit further alleges that during a second interview with the FBI on July 20, 2015, Elshinawy stated emphatically that he received no other funds from ISIL other than the \$4,000 he had previously disclosed. Later, however, Elshinawy said that he remembered receiving another payment of \$1,200 from ISIL through Paypal, from the same unidentified ISIL operative, by order of a man in Syria. In this instance, Elshinawy explained that in order to receive the transfers from the unidentified ISIL operative, he engaged in a scheme by which he pretended to sell printers on eBay that would serve as a cover for the payments he received from ISIL.

A review of PayPal records indicates that Elshinawy allegedly concealed at least \$3,500 of \$7,700 that he received from ISIL operatives through his PayPal account between March and June 2015, specifically, \$1,500 on March 23; \$1,000 on April 16; \$1,000 on May 1; \$3,000 on May 14; and \$1,200 on June 7. In total, Elshinawy allegedly received at least \$8,700 from individuals he understood to be associated with ISIL.

According to the affidavit, Elshinawy used social media, multiple email accounts and “pay as you go” phones subscribed to him under various aliases to communicate with the individuals he understood to be associated with ISIL.

The social media communications between Elshinawy and his childhood friend were in Arabic, and many contained jihadist rhetoric found in ISIL- and other terrorist-related propaganda.

The investigation revealed that on Feb. 17, 2015, Elshinawy pledged his allegiance to ISIL and asked his childhood friend to deliver his message of loyalty. He stated that he was a soldier of the state, a common reference to ISIL, but temporarily away. Elshinawy also stated that his soul was over there with the jihadists and that every time he saw the news, he smiled. At the time of this conversation, ISIL recently had conducted a series of attacks and gained territory in Iraq. On Feb. 16, 2015, a video was publicly released showing the execution of 21 Egyptian nationals in Libya by ISIL extremists.

Also on Feb. 17, 2015, the childhood friend told Elshinawy to seek God's help and not tell anyone his plans for a terrorist attack. Elshinawy agreed and acknowledged that it is a crime in the United States. He further declared his allegiance to committing jihad.

The investigation also revealed that on April 27, 2015, Elshinawy told his brother that he had pledged allegiance to ISIL and that he had received money from ISIL and expected to receive even more. In further communications with his brother in May 2015, Elshinawy stated his desire to die as a martyr for the Islamic State (ISIL), and in August 2015, he directed his brother to take steps to conceal their communications and any communications with the childhood friend, because Elshinawy believed his relationship with ISIL had been compromised.

Elshinawy's sentence will be determined by the court after review of factors unique to this case, including the defendant's prior criminal history, if any, the defendant's role in the offense and the characteristics of the violation. The maximum sentence of imprisonment for attempting to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization is 15 years; for obstruction of agency proceedings is eight years; and for making material false statements is eight years.

A criminal complaint is not a finding of guilt. An individual charged by complaint is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

United States Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein commended the FBI for its work in the investigation and thanked Assistant U.S. Attorney Christine Manuelian who is prosecuting the case, with the assistance John Gibbs of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section.