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PHOENIX MAN CONVICTED OF CONSPIRACY TO SUPPORT ISIL AND OTHER TERRORISM-RELATED OFFENSES

WASHINGTON – Abdul Malik Abdul Kareem, 44, of Phoenix, was found guilty today by a federal jury of one count each of the following five crimes: conspiracy to provide material support to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), a designated foreign terrorist organization; conspiracy to transport firearms and ammunition in interstate commerce with the intent to commit murder and aggravated assault; transporting firearms and ammunition in interstate commerce with the intent to commit murder and aggravated assault; making false statements to the FBI; and being a felon in possession of a firearm.

The verdict was announced by Assistant Attorney General for National Security John P. Carlin, Acting U.S. Attorney Elizabeth Strange of the District of Arizona and Acting Special Agent in Charge Justin Tolomeo of the FBI's Phoenix Division.

“In the first jury trial in the country involving a homeland attack committed in the name of ISIL, Abdul Kareem was convicted of conspiring to provide material support to the foreign terrorist organization and other federal offenses,” said Assistant Attorney General Carlin. “The defendant conspired with Elton Simpson and Nadir Soofi to provide material support to ISIL and to transport firearms in interstate commerce with the intent to commit murder and aggravated assault. Thanks to the response of brave law enforcement officers at the scene, no innocent lives were lost when Simpson and Soofi attacked the Curtis Culwell Center in Garland, Texas. The National Security Division will continue to prosecute to the fullest extent of the law those who conspire with others to support foreign terrorist organizations and to commit acts of violence.”

“Today’s guilty verdict, in one of the country’s first trials involving terrorist acts committed in the United States by ISIL supporters, demonstrates our office’s deep commitment to combatting terrorism,” said Acting U.S. Attorney Strange. “I want to thank the FBI for the massive effort that went into the underlying investigation, as well as the brave law enforcement officials in Garland whose quick action during the attack prevented a much larger tragedy.”

“This verdict sends a strong message to those who support terrorists,” said Acting Special Agent in Charge Tolomeo. “People who are plotting to harm America and Americans are no

longer a world away. Our agents and analysts will continue to confront this threat with a strong and coordinated effort as we work to protect all Americans. The FBI would like to thank the U.S. Attorney's Office as well as our federal, state and local law enforcement partners of the Joint Terrorism Task Force for their assistance in this case."

The evidence at trial showed that, beginning around June 2014, Kareem and his two roommates, Simpson and Soofi, began conspiring to support ISIL. Their conspiracy focused on supporting ISIL by attacking targets in the United States. Over the course of the conspiracy, Kareem, Simpson and Soofi considered perpetrating an attack against military bases; individual military service members; shopping malls; the Glendale, Arizona, Super Bowl; and the so-called "Muhammad Art Exhibit and Contest," which was to take place in Garland. On May 3, 2015, the morning of the contest, Simpson and Soofi drove from Arizona to Texas. Simpson and Soofi stopped their car near the contest's location, got out of their car and began firing assault rifles at security personnel and law enforcement officers. A security guard was injured by one of their bullets, and Simpson and Soofi were shot and killed by police officers in the firefight. Kareem did not travel to Texas and was not injured during the attack. During an interview with FBI agents soon after the attack, Kareem lied about having prior knowledge of the attack and the contest.

The case was tried over the span of several weeks before U.S. District Judge Susan R. Bolton of the District of Arizona. Kareem is being detained pending sentencing, which is currently scheduled for June 27, 2016, before Judge Bolton. Kareem's counts of conviction carry a potential sentence of at least 45 years in prison.

The case was investigated by the FBI, and the prosecution was handled by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Joseph Koehler and Kristen Brook of the District of Arizona, with assistance provided by Trial Attorney Rebecca Magnone of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section.

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