

Department of Justice

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FEDERAL JURY CONVICTS THREE MINNESOTA MEN FOR CONSPIRING TO JOIN ISIL AND COMMIT MURDER IN SYRIA

Nine Members of the Conspiracy Convicted of Terrorism Charges in Largest Multi-Defendant ISIL-Related Case in United States

WASHINGTON – Guled Ali Omar, Abdurahman Yasin Daud and Mohamed Abdihamid Farah were convicted by a federal jury today of conspiring to commit murder in Syria on behalf of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and to provide material support to the designated foreign terrorist organization. Omar was also convicted of one count of attempted financial aid fraud, and Farah was also convicted of one count of perjury and providing a false statement.

The convictions were announced by Assistant Attorney General for National Security John P. Carlin, U.S. Attorney Andrew M. Luger of the District of Minnesota and Special Agent in Charge Richard T. Thornton of the FBI's Minneapolis Division.

“In the first multi-defendant ISIL-related trial, Mohamed Farah, Abdirahman Daud and Guled Omar were convicted of conspiring to provide material support to the foreign terrorist organization and other federal offenses,” said Assistant Attorney General Carlin. “The defendants conspired with a larger group of individuals to travel to Syria to fight on behalf of ISIL. Countering terrorist threats remains the highest priority of the National Security Division. We will continue to work to disrupt the recruitment and radicalization of Americans by terrorist organizations, and bring to justice those who conspire to provide material support to terrorists. I would like to thank the many agents, analysts and prosecutors who worked tirelessly to secure these convictions.”

“The evidence in this case made clear that the defendants made a deeply personal and deliberate decision back in 2014,” said U.S. Attorney Luger. “They wanted to fight for a brutal terrorist organization, kill innocent people and destroy their own families in the process. This trial should serve as a wake-up call that it will take the entire community to stop terror recruiting in Minnesota.”

“These verdicts affirm the FBI's investigative efforts,” said Special Agent in Charge Thornton. “The FBI will not induce people to break our laws. However, the FBI, through all

legal means at its disposal, will investigate and pursue those who aim to bring about harm to others.”

Between May 2014 and April 19, 2015, the three defendants and their co-conspirators made multiple attempts to join ISIL in Syria.

In May 2014, some members of the conspiracy, including Omar and co-conspirators Abdi Nur and Abdullahi Yusuf, traveled or attempted to travel to Syria to join ISIL. To facilitate the travel of his co-conspirators, Daud provided contact information for an ISIL member in Turkey to Nur and Yusuf so that they could gain assistance crossing the border from Turkey into Syria. Nur succeeded in his plan, joining ISIL in Syria in June 2014. Yusuf was stopped at the Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport and was later arrested.

Omar and two other members of the conspiracy also made an attempt to join ISIL by traveling across the U.S.–Mexico border near San Diego in May 2014, but failed when members of Omar’s family prevented his travel.

In October 2014, members of the conspiracy communicated with “Antar,” a self-described member of ISIL in Syria, about how best to travel to Syria to join ISIL. Members of the conspiracy met with one another to discuss routes, methods and the timing of leaving the United States to join ISIL in Syria.

Omar again attempted to join ISIL in Syria on Nov. 6, 2014, by flying from Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport to San Diego, crossing the border into Mexico and traveling onward to Syria. Before he could board the flight in Minnesota, Omar was stopped at the airport and prevented from boarding the plane. In order to fund this second attempt to join ISIL in Syria, Omar intended to use federal financial aid provided to him by the U.S. Department of Education to attend college.

Also in November 2014, Farah and three of his co-conspirators, Zacharia Abdurahman, Hanad Musse and Hamza Ahmed, took a bus from Minneapolis to New York City and attempted to board flights to Europe with an eventual destination of Syria. Federal agents in New York prevented the four from traveling abroad.

In April 2015, Daud and Farah drove from Minneapolis to San Diego, where they intended to purchase fake passports, cross the border into Mexico and travel to Syria to join ISIL. Unbeknownst to them, the individual from whom they purchased the fake passports was a law enforcement officer and both were arrested by federal agents immediately after obtaining the phony travel documents.

Ten Minnesotans were charged as part of this conspiracy to provide material support to ISIL. The men are all associates and friends of one another. Six defendants pleaded guilty before trial and Nur remains a fugitive.

This case is the result of an investigation conducted by the FBI-led Joint Terrorism Task Force. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Andrew R. Winter and John

Docherty of the District of Minnesota with assistance provided by the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section. The department would also like to thank the FBI's San Diego and New York Field Offices and the U.S. Attorney's Office of the Southern District of California for their contributions.

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