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FORMER ARMY NATIONAL GUARD MEMBER PLEADS GUILTY TO ATTEMPTING TO PROVIDE MATERIAL SUPPORT TO ISIL

WASHINGTON – Mohamed Bailor Jalloh, 27, of Sterling, Virginia, a former member of the Army National Guard, pleaded guilty today to charges of attempting to provide material support to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), a designated foreign terrorist organization.

Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security Mary B. McCord, U.S. Attorney Dana J. Boente for the Eastern District of Virginia and Assistant Director in Charge Paul M. Abbate of the FBI's Washington Field Office, made the announcement after the plea was accepted by U.S. District Judge Liam O'Grady.

"Jalloh attempted to provide material support to ISIL by transferring funds intended for use by ISIL, taking steps to join and assist others in joining ISIL, and attempting to obtain a weapon that he believed would be used in an attack on U.S. soil in the name of ISIL," said McCord. "Counterterrorism remains our highest priority and we will continue to hold accountable those who attempt to provide material support to foreign terrorist organizations."

"Attempting to provide material support to terrorists is a very serious crime," said Boente. "Jalloh attempted to help facilitate what he believed would be a terrorist attack here in Virginia. The FBI once again displayed their investigative expertise and commitment to keeping our citizens and communities safe from violent extremists. National security remains the top priority of this office and we will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to investigate these cases and prosecute those involved to the fullest extent of the law."

"Mohamed Bailor Jalloh purchased a weapon following multiple attempts to procure assault rifles and handguns, believing they would be used in an ISIL-directed attack on U.S.

soil,” said Abbate. “Jalloh also provided money on multiple occasions to support ISIL after attempting to join the terrorist group. The FBI and our partners within the Joint Terrorism Task Force are dedicated to preventing any and all acts of terrorism and relentlessly pursuing and disrupting anyone who poses a risk of harm directly or by providing material support to a terrorist group.”

According to the statement of facts filed with the plea agreement, in March 2016, a now-deceased member of ISIL brokered an introduction between Jalloh and an individual in the U.S. who actually was an FBI confidential human source (CHS). The ISIL member was actively plotting an attack in the U.S. and believed the attack would be carried out with the assistance of Jalloh and the CHS. Jalloh met with the CHS on two occasions and told the CHS that he was a former member of the Virginia Army National Guard, but that he had decided not to re-enlist after listening to online lectures by Anwar al-Awlaki, a deceased leader of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). Jalloh had recently taken a six-month trip to Africa, where he had met with an ISIL facilitator in Nigeria and first began communicating online with the ISIL member who later brokered his introduction to the CHS. During their meeting, Jalloh also told the CHS that he thought about conducting an attack all the time, and that he was close to doing so at one point. Jalloh claimed he knew how to shoot guns and praised the gunman who killed five U.S. military members in a terrorist attack in Chattanooga, Tennessee, in July 2015. Jalloh also stated that he had been thinking about conducting an attack similar to the November 2009, attack at Ft. Hood, Texas, which killed 13 people and wounded 32 others.

According to the statement of facts filed with the plea agreement, during the May 2016 meeting, Jalloh asked the CHS about the timeline for an operation and commented that it was better to plan an attack operation for the month of Ramadan, and stated that such operations are, “100 percent the right thing.” Jalloh also asked if the CHS could assist him in providing a donation to ISIL. Ultimately, Jalloh provided a \$50 gift card and a prepaid cash transfer of \$500 intended for use by ISIL to a contact of the CHS that Jalloh believed was a member of ISIL, but who was in fact an undercover FBI employee.

According to the statement of facts filed with the plea agreement, in June 2016, Jalloh travelled to North Carolina to obtain firearms. On July 2, Jalloh went to a gun dealership in northern Virginia, where he test-fired and purchased an assault rifle. Unbeknownst to Jalloh, the rifle had been rendered inoperable before he took custody of it. Jalloh was arrested the following day and the FBI seized the rifle.

Jalloh faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison when sentenced on February 10, 2017. The maximum statutory sentence is prescribed by Congress and is provided here for informational purposes, as the sentencing of the defendant will be determined by the court based on the advisory Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Assistant U.S. Attorney John T. Gibbs and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Brandon Van Grack are prosecuting the case, with the assistance of Jolie Zimmerman of the National Security Division’s Counterterrorism Section.

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