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NEW YORK MAN SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS FOR CONSPIRING TO PROVIDE MATERIAL SUPPORT TO ISIL IN CONNECTION WITH PLANNED NEW YEAR'S EVE ATTACK

WASHINGTON – Emanuel L. Lutchman, 26, of Rochester, New York, was sentenced to 20 years in prison and 50 years of supervised release for conspiring 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, Acting U.S. Attorney James P. Kennedy, Jr. of the Western District of New York and Special Agent in Charge Adam S. Cohen of the FBI's Buffalo, New York Division made the announcement. Chief U.S. District Judge Frank P. Geraci of the Western District of New York handed down the sentence.

"Emanuel Lutchman conspired with an ISIL member located overseas and planned to kill innocent civilians on U.S. soil in the name of the terrorist organization," said Acting Assistant Attorney General McCord. "Countering terrorist threats remains the highest priority of the National Security Division, and we will continue our efforts to bring to justice those who conspire to provide material support to foreign terrorist organizations. I want to thank the many agents, analysts and prosecutors who contributed to the disruption of this deadly plot."

"This defendant was in direct personal communication with an individual who was an external attack planner and influential recruiter for ISIL in Syria," said Acting U.S. Attorney Kennedy. "That individual is now deceased, but, while living, he acted essentially as a terror trainer to Emanuel Lutchman and others. Together the two discussed the defendant's plan to conduct a murderous attack within the City of Rochester essentially as a means of establishing his value as a future terrorist for ISIL in Syria. Viewed in this context, it would be hard to overstate the danger that Lutchman presented." Mr. Kennedy emphasized that, "As prosecutors, a significant part of the role we play is to protect the citizens in our community from the threats they face. This sentence accomplishes that."

"Just over a year ago, we arrested Emanuel Lutchman. It was a good day for Rochester, and for people everywhere who would felt the impact of Lutchman's violent acts," said Special Agent in Charge Cohen. "The days preceding Lutchman's arrest were full of apprehension after Lutchman accepted a directive from Abu Issa Al Amriki – a known ISIL leader – to kill multiple

Americans. Today ends the judicial process for this case, but the FBI continues to work hard to protect our communities.”

Lutchman admitted that he conspired with an individual known as Abu Issa Al-Amriki, a now-deceased ISIL member in Syria, and planned to conduct an attack against civilians using knives and a machete on New Year’s Eve in 2015. Lutchman admitted that he intended to conduct an attack that could be claimed by ISIL and that could also help him gain membership into ISIL when he thereafter traveled overseas to join the terrorist organization.

According to court documents, Lutchman posted on social media expressions of support for ISIL, including images, videos and documents relating to ISIL and violent jihad. Lutchman also downloaded and watched terrorism-related videos, including videos relating to ISIL and the now-deceased terrorist Anwar al-Awlaki. The defendant also maintained a digital collection of documents relating to terrorism and terrorist groups. This included all of the issues of Inspire magazine and other documents designed to provide guidance to individuals seeking to travel overseas to engage in violent jihad or engage in “lone wolf” terrorist attacks in the U.S. and elsewhere.

In December 2015, Lutchman obtained an online document written by an ISIL member in Syria, in which the ISIL member provided guidance to supporters who were seeking to travel overseas to join ISIL, including advice about preparation for violent jihad; the use of security measures while traveling to avoid apprehension by law enforcement authorities; instructions for killing non-believers and infidels, or “kuffar”; and contact information for the ISIL member and Al-Amriki.

On Dec. 25, 2015, Lutchman initiated online contact with Al-Amriki, who identified himself as an ISIL member in Syria. In a series of subsequent communications, Al-Amriki told Lutchman to plan an attack on New Year’s Eve and kill a number of kuffar. Al-Amriki advised the defendant to write something before the attack and give it to the ISIL member so that after the attack the ISIL member could post it online to announce Lutchman’s allegiance to ISIL. Al-Amriki told Lutchman that whatever Lutchman sends to ISIL, they would keep it until the attack was complete and then post it and publicize the attack on the Internet. Al-Amriki emphasized that Lutchman is “behind enemy lines,” that Lutchman was the closest person to their most hated enemy and that Lutchman has the chance to do things that ISIL wishes it could do.

Lutchman ultimately told Al-Amriki that he has a couple of “brothers” that want to make hijra and plan an attack. Al-Amriki encouraged Lutchman to complete an attack and stated that, if the Syrian borders open and the attack does not succeed, he would help Lutchman and his “brothers” make hijra. Al-Amriki told Lutchman to show ISIL how serious he is, stating, “New years is here soon. Do operations and kill some kuffar.” Lutchman told Al-Amriki that he hates it in the U.S., that he wants to join the ranks of ISIL and that he is ready to “give everything up” to be in Syria with ISIL. Al-Amriki told Lutchman, for the time being, to do what he can in the U.S.

In late December 2015, Lutchman was communicating with other individuals (referred to as Individuals A, B, and C in the plea agreement) who, unbeknownst to Lutchman, were

cooperating with the FBI. In these communications, Lutchman made statements expressing his strong support of ISIL and his desire to travel overseas to join ISIL. He also discussed in detail his online communications with Al-Amriki and the ISIL member. In subsequent communications, Lutchman referred at various times to Individuals A, B and C as “brothers” who would be involved in the New Year’s Eve attack.

Lutchman admitted that on Dec. 27, 2015, he and Al-Amriki discussed potential targets, and Al-Amriki told Lutchman to find the most populated area and kill as many people as possible. Al-Amriki reiterated that, after the operation was done, he would vouch for Lutchman and the other participants in the attack, and he would start sending “brothers” to ISIL in Libya, to which Lutchman agreed.

Lutchman admitted that he met with Individual C on Dec. 28, 2015, and indicated that he wanted to target a club or bar and proposed that they kidnap a couple of people and kill them. Lutchman stated that they would have to wear masks during the operation in order to avoid getting caught by law enforcement authorities. As they drove by a particular restaurant/bar in Rochester, Lutchman identified it as the target of the attack.

Lutchman admitted that on the evening of Dec. 29, 2015, Lutchman and Individual C went to a store in Rochester to purchase weapons and supplies for the attack, including two black ski masks, two knives, a machete, zip-ties, duct tape, ammonia and latex gloves. Lutchman told Individual C that “the operation is a go,” and noted that many victims would have to be killed. The defendant and Individual C discussed making a video before the operation, at Al-Amriki’s direction, in which they would explain their rationale for the attack and swear bayah (allegiance) to the leader of ISIL, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Lutchman said that he planned to release the video after the completion of the attack.

Lutchman admitted that on Dec. 30, 2015, he made a video pledging allegiance to ISIL and al-Baghdadi, and stated that ISIL was going to establish the caliphate in the land of Islam. In reference to the planned New Year’s Eve attack, Lutchman stated, “the blood that you spill of the Muslim overseas we gonna spill the blood of the kuffar,” and asked Allah to “make this a victory.” In the video, Lutchman covered all of his face except for his eyes and he held one index finger in the air, which is a sign commonly used by ISIL members and supporters. Immediately thereafter, law enforcement agents arrested Lutchman and recovered the items purchased by Lutchman and Individual C the previous day from Lutchman’s residence.

Lutchman has been detained in federal custody since his arrest on Dec. 30, 2015 by members of the FBI’s Rochester Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF).

The investigation was conducted by the FBI’s Rochester JTTF. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Brett A. Harvey of the Western District of New York, with the assistance of Trial Attorney Larry Schneider of the National Security Division’s Counterterrorism Section.

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