



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2017

NSD
(202) 514-

2007

WWW.JUSTICE.GOV

TTY (866) 544-5309

TWO NEW YORK CITY RESIDENTS PLEADED GUILTY TO ALL CHARGES IN TERRORISM CASE

WASHINGTON – Earlier today, Munther Omar Saleh, 21, of Queens, New York, pleaded guilty at the federal courthouse in Brooklyn, New York, to all charges in an indictment charging him with conspiring and attempting to provide material support to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), a designated foreign terrorist organization, and with assaulting and conspiring to assault federal officers. Saleh’s co-defendant, Fareed Mumuni, 22, of Staten Island, New York, pleaded guilty yesterday, on Thursday, February 9, to conspiring and attempting to provide material support to ISIL, assaulting and conspiring to assault federal officers and attempted murder of federal officers. Saleh faces up to 53 years of imprisonment at sentencing, while Mumuni faces up to 85 years of imprisonment at sentencing. Saleh’s and Mumuni’s guilty pleas were accepted by U.S. District Judge Margo K. Brodie, who has scheduled both sentencing hearings for May 16.

The announcement was made by Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security Mary B. McCord, U.S. Attorney Robert L. Capers for the Eastern District of New York, Assistant Director in Charge William F. Sweeney, Jr. of the FBI’s New York Field Office and Commissioner James P. O’Neill of the New York City Police Department (NYPD).

“Munther Omar Saleh and Fareed Mumuni conspired to provide material support to ISIL and devised a plan to conduct an attack in New York. During his arrest, Mumuni stabbed an FBI agent numerous times, but thankfully the agent’s body armor protected him from the defendant’s attack and the defendant was safely apprehended by law enforcement,” said Acting Assistant Attorney General McCord. “Counterterrorism is the National Security Division’s highest priority. We will continue to seek justice against any individuals who conspire to provide material support to designated foreign terrorist organizations, and those who attempt to harm the brave law enforcement officials who risk their lives to protect us.”

“In the name of ISIL’s false and hateful ideology, these defendants attacked the law enforcement officers who work tirelessly to preserve the safety of our communities,” stated U.S. Attorney Capers. “We are especially grateful that an FBI Special Agent survived the violent attack perpetrated by Fareed Mumuni, who repeatedly stabbed the agent in the chest during the execution of a search warrant in a terrorism investigation. We and our partners on the Joint Terrorism Task Force remain ever-vigilant in our efforts to protect our citizens and allies and by bringing terrorists to face justice. Today’s convictions will help incapacitate these defendants

and sends a strong message to those who would follow in their footsteps.” Mr. Capers thanked the West Midlands Police in the United Kingdom for their assistance in providing evidence related to foreign coconspirators.

“Today’s guilty pleas show just how close the threat of homegrown terrorism exists for New York City. From their respective homes in Queens and Staten Island, Saleh and Mumuni conspired to place a pressure cooker bomb in the New York metro area on behalf of ISIL. Mumuni even attacked an FBI agent when a court-authorized search was being conducted by the Joint Terrorism Task Force at his home in Staten Island. Threats like this are exactly why protecting the United States from a terrorist attack remains the FBI’s number one priority,” stated Assistant Director in Charge Sweeney.

“Saleh and Mumuni engaged in plotting attacks against New York City in the name of ISIL. They received instructions from senior ISIL leaders in Syria. They were committed to violence. When the arrests were made the defendants were armed. One attacked an FBI agent with a large knife. The detection and disruption of these plots is a credit to the partnership between the FBI-NYPD Joint Terrorism Task Force and the NYPD’s Intelligence Bureau,” said Police Commissioner O’Neill.

As alleged in the indictment and in other court filings, Saleh and Mumuni conspired to support ISIL by helping their co-conspirators attempt to travel to ISIL-controlled territory in order to join ISIL, and by plotting to use a pressure-cooker bomb to conduct a terrorist attack in the New York metropolitan area on behalf of ISIL. As part of their support for ISIL, Saleh and Mumuni, together with other co-conspirators, assisted New Jersey resident Nader Saadeh’s planned travel to ISIL-controlled territory. Saleh personally accompanied Saadeh to John F. Kennedy International Airport where Saadeh departed on a flight for Jordan in the first leg of a planned trip to ISIL-controlled territory. Saadeh was subsequently apprehended and pleaded guilty in the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey to conspiring to provide material support to ISIL. Working with ISIL fighters located overseas, Saleh and Mumuni also coordinated their plot to conduct a terrorist attack in New York City. Saleh sought and received instructions from an ISIL attack facilitator to create a pressure-cooker bomb and discussed with the same ISIL attack facilitator potential targets for a terrorist attack in New York City.

As detailed in court documents, Saleh informed ISIL fighters that his co-conspirators, five individuals located in New York and New Jersey, had confronted law enforcement officers who were continuously surveilling them. Saleh also sought and received religious authorization from an ISIL fighter permitting Mumuni to conduct a suicide “martyrdom” attack by using a pressure-cooker bomb against law enforcement officers who were following the co-conspirators and thus preventing them from traveling to join ISIL.

On June 13, 2015, Saleh and another individual were arrested in Queens after they charged at a federal officer who was performing physical surveillance of Saleh. Saleh and the other individual were armed with knives. Following his arrest, Saleh admitted to agents that he had discussed with Mumuni physically attacking the law enforcement officers who were surveilling Mumuni. On June 17, 2015, during the execution of a search warrant at his residence in Staten Island, Mumuni was arrested after he repeatedly stabbed an FBI agent in the torso with

a large kitchen knife. Fortunately, the knife did not penetrate the agent's protective body armor and he sustained only minor injuries.

During a search of the vehicle used by Mumuni, investigators recovered a second large knife. In his post-arrest interview, Mumuni admitted that Saleh had informed him that an ISIL member had sanctioned Mumuni's planned suicide attack on law enforcement and that Saleh and Mumuni had discussed using a pressure-cooker bomb to carry out the attack. Mumuni further admitted that he had kept the knife he used to attack the agent wrapped in a t-shirt in his bed, as well as the knife recovered from the vehicle, specifically for use in an anticipated confrontation with law enforcement officers.

The government's case is being prosecuted by the Office's National Security & Cybercrime Section. Assistant United States Attorneys Alexander A. Solomon, Douglas M. Pravda and Ian C. Richardson for the Eastern District of New York are in charge of the prosecution, with assistance provided by Trial Attorneys Justin Sher and Robert Sander of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section.

###

17-175

DO NOT REPLY TO THIS MESSAGE. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, PLEASE USE THE CONTACTS IN THE MESSAGE OR CALL THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AT 202-514-2007.