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Department of Justice

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Northern District of New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Iraqi Citizen Sentenced for Lying to U.S. Immigration Officials About His Membership in Middle Eastern Paramilitary Group

Chasib Hafedh Saadoon Al Fawadi Will Serve Four Years in Federal Prison and be Removed from the United States

SYRACUSE, NEW YORK - Chasib Hafedh Saadoon Al Fawadi, age 36, an Iraqi citizen residing in Geddes, New York, was sentenced today to serve 48 months in federal prison for his convictions for making false statements in a U.S. immigration application for permanent residence, and making false statements to U.S. Immigration officials during an oral interview for permanent residency, announced United States Attorney Carla B. Freedman, Janeen DiGuseppi, Special Agent in Charge of the Albany Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and Matthew Scarpino, Acting Special Agent in Charge, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Buffalo, New York Field Office. The sentence imposed today included a stipulation for a court order for Al Fawadi's removal from the United States without further immigration proceedings following his release from federal prison.

As part of his guilty plea, Al Fawadi admitted that in a written application mailed to United States Citizenship and Immigration Services in Syracuse, New York, on June 8, 2017, he falsely denied being a member of any group engaged in violent activities. Al Fawadi's statement was false because since after his 26th birthday, while living in Iraq, he was a member of and affiliated with As'ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH), an Iranian-backed Shiite militia and paramilitary organization. Also, as part of his guilty plea, Al Fawadi admitted that he falsely reaffirmed his previous written statements during an in-person oral interview with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services in Syracuse on April 9, 2019.

Al Fawadi's participation in AAH—a group which since has been formally designated as a “foreign terrorist organization” by the United States Department of State—included travel to Syria in 2013. The purpose of the travel was apparently to engage in combat operations in support of the Syrian regime that, less than a month before Al Fawadi arrived, killed over 1,400 of its own citizens in the Ghouta chemical weapons attack. Al Fawadi concealed his travel to Syria, Iran, and Jordan when he applied for refugee classification and again in his application for permanent resident status.

United States Attorney Carla Freedman said, “Immigration applicants must disclose their ties to any group engaged in violent activities, and will be prosecuted when they fail to do so. Thanks to this prosecution and

the diligent work of our law enforcement partners, a dangerous person has been removed from our community and will no longer be able to reside in the United States.”

Janeen DiGuseppi, Special Agent in Charge of the Albany Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) said, “Mr. Al Fawadi lied to authorities to conceal his membership in a violent paramilitary group. The FBI’s top priority remains protecting our national security and we will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to ensure dangerous individuals do not have the opportunity to jeopardize the safety of Americans.”

“Due to the dedication of our special agents and law enforcement partners, Al Fawadi is no longer able to hide his affiliation with a violent paramilitary group,” said HSI Buffalo acting Special Agent in Charge Matt Scarpino. “HSI will continue to remain vigilant in its mission to protect the homeland and dismantle terrorist organizations that pose a threat to the United States.”

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the United States Department of Homeland Security-Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), and was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven D. Clymer, with assistance from the Onondaga County District Attorney’s Office, as well as the Counter Terrorism Section of the National Security Division of the Department of Justice [“DOJ”] and the Human Rights and Special Prosecutions Section of the Criminal Division of DOJ.

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