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Tuesday, February 27, 2018

U.S. Citizen Charged in Brooklyn Federal Court with Attempting to Provide Material Support to ISIL

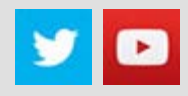

Defendant Attempted to Travel to Libya to Join ISIL

Earlier today, a complaint was unsealed charging Bernard Augustine, a United States citizen, with attempting to provide material support to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), a foreign terrorist organization. The defendant is scheduled to make his initial appearance this afternoon at the federal courthouse in Brooklyn before United States Magistrate Judge Vera M. Scanlon.

Richard P. Donoghue, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York; John C. Demers, Assistant Attorney General for National Security; William F. Sweeney, Jr., Assistant Director-in-Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), New York Field Office; and James P. O'Neill, Commissioner, New York City Police Department (NYPD), announced the charges.

“As alleged in the complaint, Augustine sought to travel to Libya to join a violent terrorist organization,” stated United States Attorney Donoghue. “This Office and our law enforcement partners will continue to work tirelessly to arrest and prosecute aspiring terrorists before they are able to threaten the United States and its allies.” Mr. Donoghue extended his grateful appreciation to the FBI’s Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), which comprises a large number of federal, state and local agencies from the region.

“Augustine, a U.S. citizen, traveled halfway around the world with the intent of joining ISIS. Today, that journey ends in a US courtroom to face the justice system for his

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alleged support for a terrorist organization,” stated FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge Sweeney. “The FBI New York Joint Terrorism Task Force remains dedicated to bringing terrorists to justice wherever they are. I would like to thank all of our partner agencies for their continued vigilance.”

“Today, as is too often the case, another person was arrested for attempting to provide material support to ISIS,” stated NYPD Commissioner O’Neill. “Terrorism, violence, and murder is not a pathway to martyrdom. We will continue to arrest anyone who attempts to join or help a terrorist organization. My thanks to the many detectives, agents, and prosecutors whose work on the original Joint Terrorism Task Force here in Manhattan made today’s arrest and charges possible.”

As alleged in the complaint, the defendant traveled to Tunisia in February 2016. Upon his arrival in Tunisia, the defendant attempted to travel to Libya to enter ISIL-controlled territory. The defendant was arrested in Tunisia before he was able to travel into Libya.

After Augustine completed his term of imprisonment in Tunisia, he was subject to expulsion and Tunisian authorities transferred the defendant to the custody of the FBI.

Prior to his departure from the United States, Augustine repeatedly expressed support for ISIL and for individuals who provided support to the foreign terrorist organization’s mission of violent extremism. In March 2016, JTTF agents obtained a search warrant for the defendant’s laptop computer. In reviewing the contents of the defendant’s laptop, agents found evidence that, in the months prior to his departure, the defendant had viewed numerous videos that depicted ISIL leaders and fighters, including fighters engaged in acts of violence. There was also evidence on the laptop that, during the same period, the defendant viewed videos depicting well-known figures who were public supporters of ISIL, or of engaging in violent acts against Westerners, including, among others, Usama Bin Laden and Anwar al-Awlaki. In addition, the defendant’s Internet search history information revealed that, in the months leading up to his departure from the United States, the defendant actively searched for information on ISIL, how to join ISIL, radical jihadist propaganda and firearms. Finally, the investigation revealed that, in the weeks leading up to his travel from the United States, the defendant made numerous postings in online forums expressing support for ISIL and violent jihad.

If convicted, Augustine faces a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. The charge in the federal complaint is merely an allegation, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

The government’s case is being handled by the Office’s National Security & Cybercrime Section and the Justice Department’s National Security Division. Assistant United States Attorney Peter Baldwin and Raj Parekh of the Counterterrorism Section of the National Security Division are in charge of the prosecution.

The Defendant:

BERNARD AUGUSTINE



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E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 16-MJ-1107

Attachment(s):

[Download augustine_complaint_.pdf](#)

Topic(s):

Counterterrorism

Component(s):

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
USAO - New York, Eastern

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