

**Two California Men Arrested on Charges of Conspiring to Provide Material Support to ISIL**  
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<http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/two-california-men-arrested-charges-conspiring-provide-material-support-isil>

WASHINGTON—Two California men, one of whom attempted to travel to the Middle East to allegedly join ISIL, have been arrested on charges of conspiring to provide material support to the designated foreign terrorist group the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), announced Assistant Attorney General for National Security John P. Carlin and Acting U.S. Attorney Stephanie Yonekura of the Central District of California.

Muhanad Badawi, 24, and Nader Elhuzayel, 24, both of Anaheim, California, were arrested late Thursday afternoon by the FBI. Badawi and Elhuzayel were charged in a criminal complaint filed today in U.S. District Court of the Central District of California, and both men are expected to make their initial court appearance this afternoon.

The affidavit in support of the criminal complaint outlines a scheme in which Badawi and Elhuzayel used social media to discuss ISIL and terrorist attacks, expressed a desire to die as martyrs and made arrangements for Elhuzayel to leave the United States to join ISIL.

According to the affidavit, on May 3, 2015, Elhuzayel saw a tweet from Elton Simpson, one of the two gunmen who were killed trying to attack a conference in Garland, Texas. In this tweet, Simpson stated that he and his “bro” had pledged allegiance to the leader of ISIL. In response, Elhuzayel tweeted his support for the attempted attack and praised Simpson as a “martyr.”

In recorded conversations last month, Badawi and Elhuzayel “discussed how it would be a blessing to fight for the cause of Allah, and to die in the battlefield,” and they referred to ISIL as “we.” When Badawi expressed concerns about ISIL struggling due to airstrikes by Coalition forces, Elhuzayel responded that they had to be patient and “can you imagine when al-Qaeda joins with Islamic State”? According to the affidavit, Badawi responded: “We will be huge.” The two men also discussed local Muslim leaders and Elhuzayel complained that these leaders were not “legitimate” because they believed in democracy and were not fighting for an Islamic State.

The men discussed where in the Middle East they would rather be, and Elhuzayel said he wanted to fight and did not want to be in the United States, according to the conversations recounted in the affidavit.

On May 7, Badawi allowed Elhuzayel to use his credit card to purchase a one-way airline ticket for travel from Los Angeles to Tel Aviv, Israel, via Istanbul, Turkey, on a Turkish Airlines flight scheduled to depart on May 21. Badawi indicated that he would be traveling to the Middle East in the future, according to the affidavit.

Elhuzayel was arrested at Los Angeles International Airport. According to the allegations in the complaint, Elhuzayel admitted after being read Miranda rights that he planned to disembark in Istanbul to join ISIL and did not intend to travel on to Israel.

If convicted of the charge in the criminal complaint, Badawi and Elhuzayel each would face a statutory maximum sentence of 15 years in prison for conspiring to provide material support to ISIL.

A criminal complaint contains allegations that a defendant has committed a crime. Every defendant is presumed to be innocent until and unless proven guilty in court.

The investigation in this case was conducted by members of the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force in Orange County, California.