



Department of Justice

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SECOND CALIFORNIA MAN WHO PARTICIPATED IN CONSPIRACY TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO ISIL SENTENCED TO 30 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON

WASHINGTON – Muhanad Elfatih M.A. Badawi, 25, of Anaheim, California, was sentenced to 30 years in federal prison for conspiring with another man to provide material support to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), a designated foreign terrorist organization.

The announcement was made by Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security Mary B. McCord, U.S. Attorney Eileen M. Decker of the Central District of California and Assistant Director in Charge Deirdre Fike of the FBI's Los Angeles Office. The sentence was issued by U.S. District Judge David O. Carter.

At the conclusion of a trial in June, Badawi was found guilty of conspiring with another man to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization, as well as aiding and abetting his codefendant's attempt to provide support to ISIL, and for federal financial aid fraud designed to generate funds for the scheme.

Three weeks ago, Judge Carter sentenced Badawi's codefendant – Nader Elhuzayel, 25, also of Anaheim, California – to 30 years in prison.

"Defendant Badawi was a radicalizer, recruiter and facilitator, and like codefendant Elhuzayel, defendant Badawi aspired to die a martyr fighting jihad for ISIL," prosecutors wrote in a sentencing memorandum filed with the court.

"With this sentence, Muhanad Badawi is being held accountable for conspiring to provide material support to ISIL and other federal offenses," said Acting Assistant Attorney General McCord. "The National Security Division's highest priority is countering terrorist threats, and we will continue to work to stem the flow of foreign fighters abroad and bring to justice those who conspire to provide material support to designated foreign terrorist organizations."

"The lengthy sentence imposed today results from the defendant's acceptance of ISIL's murderous ideology and his participation in a scheme designed to betray the United States," said U.S. Attorney Decker. "Badawi and Elhuzayel wanted to fight for ISIL, desired to become so-



called martyrs, and supported ISIL's terrorist activities. Prosecutions such as this are critically important to our national security."

"The defendant, like his co-conspirator, pledged his allegiance to a terrorist organization instead of the United States, as he attempted to recruit and radicalize others to support the group, which calls for the murder of Americans," said Assistant Director in Charge Fike. "The investigative efforts by Joint Terrorism Task Force partners are commendable and the significant sentence the defendant received illustrates the gravity of this crime and the threat the defendants posed to the United States."

The evidence at trial showed Elhuzayel and Badawi used social media to discuss ISIL and terrorist attacks, repeatedly expressed support for ISIL and made arrangements for Elhuzayel to leave the U.S. to join the terrorist organization. In recorded conversations, Elhuzayel and Badawi 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." Badawi maintained a Facebook account on which he made posts that supported ISIL and violence aimed at non-Muslims. Badawi used social media to communicate with ISIL supporters to distribute pro-ISIL propaganda.

According to the trial exhibits, on Oct. 21, 2014, Badawi made a video of Elhuzayel swearing allegiance to the leader of ISIS and pledging to travel to join ISIS to be a fighter for the organization.

Badawi and Elhuzayel were arrested on May 21, 2015, as Elhuzayel attempted to board a plane at Los Angeles International Airport in California to travel to Turkey to join ISIL. Badawi purchased Elhuzayel's one-way ticket on Turkish Airlines for Elhuzayel to travel to Israel, with a layover in Istanbul, Turkey. In an interview with the FBI, Elhuzayel admitted that he intended to deplane in Turkey and seek contacts to facilitate joining ISIL.

Badawi and Elhuzayel have been held in federal custody without bond since their arrests.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force in Orange County, which includes the Anaheim Police Department, the California Highway Patrol, the Orange County Sheriff's Department, the Orange County Intelligence Assessment Center, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations, the U.S. Secret Service, IRS Criminal Investigation, the City of Orange Police Department, the Irvine Police Department, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, the Orange County Regional Computer Forensics Laboratory, the U.S. Attorney's Office and the FBI. The Department of Education's Office of Inspector General provided significant assistance in the investigation and at trial.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Judith A. Heinz and Deirdre Z. Eliot of the Terrorism and Export Crimes Section, and Julius J. Nam of the General Crimes Section. Trial Attorney Michael Dittoe of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section provided substantial assistance.