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Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

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Queens Man Pleads Guilty to Attempting to Provide Material Support to ISIS

Awais Chudhary Planned to Commit Knife Attack in Queens on Behalf of ISIS

Awais Chudhary, 22, a naturalized U.S. citizen born in Pakistan and residing in Queens, pleaded guilty today in federal court in Brooklyn to attempting to provide material support to the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), a designated foreign terrorist organization.

According to court filings, in August 2019, after watching violent terrorist propaganda videos, Chudhary pledged his allegiance to ISIS's then-leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and began planning for a knife or bomb attack as a lone wolf ISIS supporter. Chudhary identified targets, including the pedestrian bridges over the Grand Central Parkway and the Flushing Bay Promenade, where he intended to carry out the attacks. Chudhary sought guidance from individuals whom he believed to be ISIS supporters, including what type of knife to use and how to prevent detection from law enforcement by not leaving "traces of finger prints [or] DNA." Chudhary also sent a screenshot of a document from an ISIS propaganda magazine that included a diagram of the human body depicting where to stab victims with a knife. Chudhary conducted several reconnaissance trips to these locations and made video recordings of the areas he intended to attack.

Chudhary ordered items online that he intended to use to commit a terrorist attack, including a tactical knife, a mask, gloves, and a cellphone chest and head strap – to facilitate his recording of the attack, which he hoped would serve as inspiration to other ISIS supporters. Chudhary was arrested as he attempted to retrieve the items from an online retailer's locker in Queens.

When sentenced, Chudhary faces up to 20 years in prison.

Assistant Attorney General Matthew G. Olsen of the Justice Department's National Security Division; U.S. Attorney Breon S. Peace for the Eastern District of New York; and Assistant Director in Charge Michael J. Driscoll of the FBI's New York Field Office made the announcement.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jonathan Algor and Ellen Sise are in charge of the prosecution, with assistance from Trial Attorney Kevin Nunnally of the Department of Justice's Counterterrorism Section.

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