

**Department of Justice**  
Office of Public Affairs

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, April 3, 2017

## **New Jersey Resident Pleads Guilty to Attempting to Provide Material Support to Terrorists**

Today, Santos Colon, Jr., 17, of Lindenwold, New Jersey, pleaded guilty as an adult to an information charging him with one count of attempting to provide material support to terrorists.

Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security Mary B. McCord and Acting U.S. Attorney William E. Fitzpatrick made the announcement. The plea was entered before U.S. District Court Judge Noel L. Hillman in Camden federal court.

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court, Colon, a U.S. citizen, admitted that from June 30, 2015, to Aug. 14, 2015, he devised a plan to conduct an attack during the September 2015 papal visit in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The plot involved utilizing a sniper to shoot the Pope during his Papal mass and setting off explosive devices in the surrounding areas.

Colon engaged someone he believed would be the sniper, but in reality was an undercover FBI employee. Colon engaged in target reconnaissance with an FBI confidential source and instructed the source to purchase materials to make explosive devices. FBI agents arrested Colon in 2015.

Acting Assistant Attorney General McCord and Acting U.S. Attorney Fitzpatrick credited Special Agents of the FBI's South Jersey Resident Agency, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Michael Harpster in Philadelphia, with the ongoing investigation leading to today's guilty plea.

Colon faces a maximum of 15 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000, or twice the gross amount of any financial gain or loss from the offense. The maximum statutory sentence is prescribed by Congress and is provided here for informational purposes. If convicted of any offense, the sentencing of the defendant will be determined by the court based on the advisory Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

No date has been set for sentencing.

This case is being prosecuted by Attorney in Charge R. Stephen Stigall of the Camden Branch Office of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey; Assistant U.S. Attorney

Patrick C. Askin of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of New Jersey; and Trial Attorney  
C. Alexandria Bogle of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section.