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Two Indicted for Conspiracy to Provide Material Support to Terrorists

WASHINGTON – Ali Charaf Damache, an Algerian man who resided in Ireland, and Mohammad Hassan Khalid, a Pakistani citizen and U.S. lawful permanent resident who resided in Maryland, have been charged with conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists in a superseding indictment returned today in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

The charges were announced by Lisa Monaco, Assistant Attorney General for National Security; Zane David Memeger, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania; and Mark Giuliano, Executive Assistant Director of the FBI's National Security Branch.

Damache, aka "Theblackflag," 46, is charged in the superseding indictment with one count of conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists and one count of attempted identity theft to facilitate an act of international terrorism. Damache was arrested by authorities in Ireland in March 2010 where he is currently being held on unrelated charges. The United States intends to seek his extradition from Ireland to stand trial in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. If convicted of the charges against him in the superseding indictment, Damache faces a potential sentence of 45 years in prison.

Khalid, aka "Abdul Ba'aree 'Abd Al-Rahman Al-Hassan Al-Afghani Al-Junoobi W'at-Emiratee," 18, is charged in the superseding indictment with one count of conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists. Khalid was arrested in Ellicott City, Md., on July 6, 2011, and is currently in custody in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. If convicted of the charge against him in the superseding indictment, Khalid faces a potential sentence of 15 years in prison.

"Today's indictment, which alleges a terrorist conspiracy involving individuals around the globe who connected via the Internet -- including a teenager and two women living in America -- underscores the evolving nature of violent extremism," said Assistant Attorney General Monaco. "I thank the many agents, analysts and prosecutors who helped bring about this case."

"Protecting the citizens of the United States from acts of terrorism is one of the highest priorities of the Department of Justice," said U.S. Attorney Memeger. "This case demonstrates that we must remain vigilant within our communities to make sure that we bring to justice those terrorists, of any age or background, who seek to do great harm to our citizens."

"This investigation highlights the diverse threat environment we face today," said FBI Executive Assistant Director Giuliano. "As revealed in this case, individuals used the Internet to further their radicalization and contribute to the radicalization of others. The FBI is committed to disrupting individual and group plots and doing so in close coordination with our law enforcement, intelligence and private sector partners."

The indictment alleges that, from about 2008 through July 2011, Damache and Khalid conspired with Colleen R. LaRose, Jamie Paulin Ramirez and others to provide material support and resources, including logistical support, recruitment services, financial support, identification documents and personnel, to a conspiracy to kill overseas. LaRose, aka "Fatima LaRose," aka "JihadJane," pleaded guilty in February 2011 in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania to conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists, conspiracy to kill in a foreign country, false statements, and attempted identity theft. Ramirez pleaded guilty in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania in March 2011 to conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists.

According to the indictment, Damache, Khalid and others devised and coordinated a violent jihad organization consisting of men and women from Europe and the United States divided into a planning team, a research team, an action team, a recruitment team and a finance team; some of whom would travel to South Asia for explosives training and return to Europe to wage violent jihad.

The indictment alleges that Damache, Khalid, LaRose and others recruited men online to wage violent jihad in South Asia and Europe. In addition, Damache, Khalid, LaRose and others allegedly recruited women who had passports and the ability to travel to and around Europe in support of violent jihad. The indictment further alleges that LaRose, Paulin-Ramirez and others traveled to and around Europe to participate in and support violent jihad; and that Khalid and LaRose and others solicited funds online for terrorists.

For example, the indictment alleges that in July 2009, Damache sent an electronic communication using the username "Theblackflag" to Khalid, asking Khalid to recruit online "some brothers that can travel freely . . . with eu passports . . . [A]nd I need some sisters too." Damache also allegedly advised Khalid that "sister fatima will be charge of other sister care [W]e have already organized every thing for her. . . ." The indictment further alleges that Paulin-Ramirez married Damache on the day she arrived with her minor child in Europe to live and train with jihadists, even though she had never met Damache in person, and that, while living together in Europe, the couple began training Ramirez's minor child in the ways of violent jihad.

Among other things, the indictment further alleges that, in July 2009, Khalid posted or caused to be posted an online solicitation for funds to support terrorism on behalf of LaRose and later sent electronic communications to multiple online forums requesting the deletion of all posts by LaRose after she was questioned by the FBI. In August 2009, Khalid allegedly sent a questionnaire to LaRose in which he asked another potential female recruit about her beliefs and intentions with regard to violent jihad. In addition, Khalid allegedly received from LaRose and concealed the location of a U.S. passport that she had stolen from another individual. This case was investigated by the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force in Philadelphia, and the FBI Field Divisions in New York, Denver, Washington, D.C., and Baltimore. Authorities in Ireland also provided assistance in this matter.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jennifer Arbittier Williams, in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, and Matthew F. Blue, Trial Attorney from the Counterterrorism Section of the Justice Department's National Security Division. The Office of International Affairs in the Justice Department's Criminal Division also provided assistance.

The charges contained in an indictment are mere allegations and defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.