

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, December 17, 2015

NEW YORK MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO ATTEMPTING TO PROVIDE MATERIAL SUPPORT TO ISIL

Mufid A. Elfgeeh, 31, of Rochester, New York, pleaded guilty today to attempting to provide material support and resources to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), a designated foreign terrorist organization, before U.S. District Judge Elizabeth A. Wolford of the Western District of New York.

The plea was announced by Assistant Attorney General for National Security John P. Carlin, U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul Jr. of the Western District of New York and Special Agent in Charge Adam S. Cohen of the FBI's Buffalo Division.

"Mufid Elfgeeh pleaded guilty to attempting to provide material support to ISIL through his various efforts to recruit individuals, raise funds and coordinate logistics for the designated terrorist group," said Assistant Attorney General Carlin. "ISIL's horrific violence is waged against men, women and children, as well as against Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The National Security Division will continue to vigorously investigate and prosecute anyone who seeks to provide material support to the designated foreign terrorist organization."

"Thanks to today's convictions, one of the first ISIL recruiters ever captured in this country stands convicted of terrorism related charges," said U.S. Attorney Hochul. "While our case against this defendant will conclude with a very long jail sentence, our ongoing efforts to defeat ISIL and other terrorist groups will continue until all are brought to justice. As it did in this case, the public should continue to report to law enforcement any suspicious individuals or activities and thereby hasten the demise of these killers."

"Mufid Elfgeeh failed because law enforcement used its best weapon – unity," said Special Agent in Charge Cohen of the FBI's Buffalo Division. "Our success in this case is directly linked to the notion that we are stronger and more formidable working in concert with our community than standing alone. This approach, which has been embraced by our law enforcement counterparts and the intelligence community, must continue for us to prevail."

According to the plea agreement and other court documents, Elfgeeh used social media to receive and disseminate information about foreign terrorist groups and their activities in Syria and other countries; to declare his support for violent jihad, ISIL and other foreign terrorist groups; to inspire and encourage others to engage in violent jihad and/or pledge allegiance to ISIL and other foreign terrorist groups; and to seek financial contributions to assist jihadist fighters.

From December 2013 through May 31, 2014, Elfgeeh actively recruited and attempted to send two individuals – referred to as Individuals A and B, both of whom were cooperating with the FBI at the time – to Syria to join and fight on behalf of ISIL.

Elfgeeh sent anti-American ISIL propaganda videos to Individual B and arranged for an English-speaking ISIL contact to communicate with Individual B over Facebook about the state of affairs in Syria. In addition, Elfgeeh paid more than \$240 for Individual B to obtain a copy of his birth certificate, passport photographs and an expedited passport. Elfgeeh also purchased a laptop computer and a high-definition action camera for Individuals A and B to take to Syria. The defendant provided guidance to Individuals A and B about traveling so that they could avoid detection and the vetting process involved in joining ISIL. In May 2014, Elfgeeh arranged for an overseas contact to coordinate the logistics of the trip and the admission of Individuals A and B into ISIL-controlled territory in Syria.

According to the plea agreement and other court documents, Elfgeeh also sent \$600 to an individual in Aden, Yemen, in an effort to assist that individual in traveling from Yemen to Syria for the purpose of joining and fighting on behalf of ISIL.

In addition, in March 2014, Elfgeeh communicated with a Syrian national who purported to be the military commander of a battalion of fighters located in Homs, Syria. At the time, the battalion was blockaded in Homs and needed military support, including ammunition, mortar shells and explosives that could penetrate armored vehicles, to break out. Elfgeeh facilitated communication and coordination between the battalion commander and ISIL leadership for the purpose of the commander and his battalion pledging their allegiance to and joining ISIL.

The charges carry a maximum penalty of 30 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine and lifetime supervised release. Elfgeeh's sentence will be determined by the court after review of factors unique to this case, including the defendant's prior criminal history, if any, the defendant's role in the offense and the characteristics of the violation. He has been detained in federal custody since his arrest on May 31, 2014. Sentencing is scheduled for March 17, 2016, in front of Judge Wolford.

The case is being investigated by the FBI's Rochester Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF). The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Brett A. Harvey and Frank H. Sherman of the Western District of New York, with the assistance of Trial Attorney Paul Casey of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section.

 [Elfgeeh Plea Agreement](#)

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