

Former Indiana Resident Pleads Guilty to Concealing Terrorism Financing

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<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/former-indiana-resident-pleads-guilty-concealing-terrorism-financing>

Samantha Marie Elhassani, aka Samantha Sally, 34, formerly of Elkhart, Indiana, pleaded guilty yesterday to a one-count Information charging her with concealment of terrorism financing in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2339C. Assistant Attorney General for National Security John C. Demers, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Indiana Thomas L. Kirsch II, FBI Assistant Director of the Counterterrorism Division Mike McGarrity, and FBI Special Agent in Charge of the Indianapolis field office Grant Mendenhall made the announcement.

"Elhassani admitted that she traveled overseas and pre-positioned over \$30,000 in cash and gold, knowing that the funds would be used by her husband and brother-in-law to join and support ISIS in Syria," said Assistant Attorney General for National Security John C. Demers. "The National Security Division is committed to identifying and holding accountable those who support foreign terrorist organizations. I want to thank the agents, analysts, and prosecutors who are responsible for this result."

"Samantha Elhassani pled guilty to providing financial support to individuals who desired to support ISIS, a terrorist organization that has committed acts of violence against Americans," said U.S. Attorney Thomas L. Kirsch II for the Northern District of Indiana. "She traveled with her husband and brother-in-law to Syria, both of whom became ISIS fighters, putting the lives of her children at risk. Yesterday's guilty plea to federal terrorism charges reflects the seriousness of her criminal conduct. My office is committed to prosecuting those who provide support to terrorist organizations. "

"The charges that the defendant in this case has plead guilty to are a reminder the FBI will never relent in ensuring that Americans who abandon their country to further the heinous goals of a designated terrorist organization like ISIS see justice for their betrayal" said Assistant Director Mike McGarrity. "I am proud of the work of the FBI's Indianapolis Field Office on this case and grateful for the assistance of our many international and interagency partners."

"Ms Elhassani knowingly engaged in the concealment of resources which were intended to support future ISIS fighters whose intent is to harm her fellow Americans and others, and her plea should serve as a strong reminder that these actions have serious consequences and will not be tolerated," said Special Agent in Charge Grant Mendenhall, FBI Indianapolis. "The defendant also exposed her young, impressionable children to an environment of hatred and violence with no regard to the harm she was causing them."

In November 2014, Elhassani was informed by her husband that he and his brother wanted to travel to Syria to join ISIS, which she knew was a terrorist organization that engaged in terrorist activities. Between November 2014 and April 2015, Elhassani helped the two men join ISIS by making multiple trips to Hong Kong and transporting more than \$30,000 in cash and gold from the United States and depositing it in a safe deposit box in Hong Kong. Elhassani melted down the gold to look like jewelry and did not disclose the cash and gold on customs declaration forms. At the time Elhassani transported the money and gold, she knew that her husband and brother-in-law had expressed an interest in joining ISIS and that they intended to use these resources to support ISIS.

In July of 2018, Elhassani was transferred from the custody of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) to U.S. law enforcement custody.

U.S. District Judge Philip P. Simon presided over the plea hearing and set sentencing for March 5, 2020.

The case was investigated by the FBI's Indianapolis Division and Joint Terrorism Task Force. The case is being prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Indiana and the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section.

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