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## Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Saturday, January 29, 2022

# American Woman Who Led ISIS Battalion Charged with Providing Material Support to a Terrorist Organization

A criminal complaint filed in 2019 in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, which is now unsealed, alleges that Allison Fluke-Ekren, a United States citizen, organized and led an all-female military battalion on behalf of the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), and charges Fluke-Ekren with providing and conspiring to provide material support to ISIS, a designated foreign terrorist organization.

Fluke-Ekren was previously apprehended in Syria and transferred into the custody of the FBI yesterday, at which point she was first brought to the Eastern District of Virginia. She is expected to have her initial appearance at the federal courthouse in Alexandria on Monday at 2:00 p.m.

As alleged in the criminal complaint, Allison Elizabeth Fluke-Ekren, aka "Allison Elizabeth Brooks," aka "Allison Ekren," aka "Umm Mohammed al-Amriki," aka "Umm Mohammed," and aka "Umm Jabril," 42, a former resident of Kansas, traveled to Syria several years ago for the purpose of committing or supporting terrorism. Since her departure from the United States, Fluke-Ekren has allegedly been involved with a number of terrorism-related activities on behalf of ISIS from at least 2014. These activities allegedly include, but are not limited to, planning and recruiting operatives for a potential future attack on a college campus inside the United States and serving as the appointed leader and organizer of an ISIS military battalion, known as the Khatiba Nusaybah, in order to train women on the use of automatic firing AK-47 assault rifles, grenades and suicide belts. Additionally, Fluke-Ekren allegedly provided ISIS and ISIS members with services, which included providing lodging, translating speeches made by ISIS leaders, training children on the use of AK-47 assault rifles and suicide belts and teaching extremist ISIS doctrine.

The complaint details the eyewitness observations of six separate individuals who collectively observed Fluke-Ekren's alleged terrorist conduct from at least 2014 through approximately 2017. For example, Fluke-Ekren allegedly told a witness about her desire to conduct an attack in the United States. To conduct the attack, Fluke-Ekren allegedly explained that she could go to a shopping mall in the United States, park a vehicle full of explosives in the basement or parking garage level of the structure, and detonate the explosives in the vehicle with a cell phone triggering device. Fluke-Ekren allegedly considered any attack that did not kill a large number of individuals to be a waste of resources. As alleged by the same witness, Fluke-Ekren would hear about external attacks taking place in countries outside the United States and would comment that she wished the attack occurred on United States soil instead.

The complaint further describes Fluke-Ekren's alleged leadership role in the Khatiba Nusaybah. According to a witness, in or about late 2016, the "Wali" (or ISIS-appointed mayor) of Raqqa, Syria, allegedly permitted the opening of the "Khatiba Nusaybah," which was a military battalion comprised solely of female ISIS members who were married to male ISIS fighters. Shortly thereafter, Fluke-Ekren allegedly became the leader and organizer of the battalion. Fluke-Ekren's alleged main objective in this role was to teach the women of ISIS how to defend themselves against ISIS' enemies. According to another witness, ISIS allegedly mandated women who were staying in Raqqa during the 2017 siege to attend the training. The siege was launched by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) against ISIS with an aim to seize

Raqqa, the former de facto capital of ISIS in Syria. The battle began on or about June 6, 2017 and concluded on or about Oct. 17, 2017, at which point the SDF regained control of Raqqa.

The members of Khatiba Nusaybah were allegedly instructed on physical training, medical training, Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) driving courses, religious classes and how to pack and prep a “go bag” with rifles and other military supplies. According to eyewitness accounts, some of these classes were allegedly taught by Fluke-Ekren. One witness in particular allegedly observed that the leaders of ISIS and the other members of the military battalion were proud to have an American instructor. Fluke-Ekren also allegedly trained children on the use of automatic firing AK-47 assault rifles, grenades and suicide belts.

U.S. Attorney Jessica D. Aber for the Eastern District of Virginia; Assistant Attorney General Matthew G. Olsen of the Justice Department’s National Security Division; and Assistant Director in Charge Steven M. D’Antuono of the FBI’s Washington Field Office made the announcement.

Fluke-Ekren is charged with providing and conspiring to provide material support or resources to a foreign terrorist organization. If convicted, she faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison. Actual sentences for federal crimes are typically less than the maximum penalties. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after taking into account the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

First Assistant U.S. Attorney Raj Parekh and Assistant U.S. Attorney John T. Gibbs from the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of Virginia are prosecuting the case, with assistance from the National Security Division’s Counterterrorism Section.

*A complaint is merely an allegation, and all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.*

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**Attachment(s):**

[Download Fluke-Ekren Complaint](#)

[Download Fluke-Ekren Memorandum in Support of Detention](#)

**Topic(s):**

Counterterrorism

National Security

**Component(s):**

[Federal Bureau of Investigation \(FBI\)](#)

[National Security Division \(NSD\)](#)

[USAO - Virginia, Eastern](#)

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