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## Department of Justice

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# American Woman Who Led ISIS Battalion Sentenced to 20 Years

## Allison Fluke-Ekren Provided Military Training to Over 100 Women and Young Girls in Syria on Behalf of ISIS and Committed Numerous Other Terrorist Acts

A U.S. citizen was sentenced to 20 years in prison today in the Eastern District of Virginia for organizing and leading an all-female military battalion in Syria on behalf of the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), a designated foreign terrorist organization.

According to court documents, Allison Fluke-Ekren, aka Allison Ekren, aka Umm Mohammed al-Amriki, and aka Umm Mohammed, 42, a former resident of Kansas, traveled overseas and, from in or about September 2011 through in or about May 2019, engaged in terrorist acts in multiple countries, including Syria, Libya and Iraq. Fluke-Ekren ultimately served as the leader and organizer of an ISIS military battalion, known as the Khatiba Nusaybah, where she trained women on the use of automatic firing AK-47 assault rifles, grenades and suicide belts. Over 100 women and young girls, some as young as 10 years old, received military training from Fluke-Ekren in Syria on behalf of ISIS.

During the sentencing hearing, the Court incorporated into the record two separate letters submitted by Fluke-Ekren's adult daughter and adult son, both of whom wrote about being abused by Fluke-Ekren, beginning in Kansas and continuing overseas when they were minors. The government also played audio recordings of January 2021 phone conversations between Fluke-Ekren and her daughter, where she instructed her to delete messages shared between them to ensure Fluke-Ekren could continue to evade capture in Syria, and encouraged her daughter to leave the United States and return to Syria. Additionally, Fluke-Ekren's adult daughter delivered a victim impact statement in court today describing the severe abuse that Fluke-Ekren inflicted upon her in Syria, including coercing her to marry an ISIS fighter, who then raped her, when she was only 13 years old. Fluke-Ekren's adult son also delivered a statement in court describing attempts by Fluke-Ekren to convince him to leave the United States and travel to Syria to prevent him from approaching authorities with any information that could compromise her.

In or around 2008, Fluke-Ekren departed the United States and moved to Egypt with her second husband, a now-deceased former member of the terrorist organization Ansar al-Sharia. Fluke-Ekren resided in Egypt until in or around 2011, at which point she moved to Libya. Near the end of 2011, Fluke-Ekren resided with her second husband, among others, in Benghazi, Libya. In the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2012 terrorist attack on the U.S. Special Mission and CIA Annex in Benghazi, Fluke-Ekren's second husband claimed that he removed at least one box of documents and at least one electronic device from the U.S. compound in Benghazi. He brought the items to the residence where he resided with Fluke-Ekren and others at that time. Fluke-Ekren assisted her second husband with reviewing and summarizing the contents of the stolen U.S. government documents. The stolen documents and electronic device, along with the summaries that Fluke-Ekren helped prepare, were provided to the leadership of Ansar al-Sharia in Benghazi.

In or around late 2012, Fluke-Ekren, her second husband and others traveled from Libya to Turkey. Shortly thereafter, they traveled from Turkey to Syria. After approximately six weeks, Fluke-Ekren returned to Turkey while her second husband remained in Syria. Fluke-Ekren's second husband ascended through the ranks of ISIS and ultimately became

the “emir” (leader) of ISIS snipers in Syria. In or around mid-2014, Fluke-Ekren and others were smuggled back into Syria. While residing in Syria, Fluke-Ekren told a witness about her desire to conduct an attack in the United States. To conduct the attack, Fluke-Ekren 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 also spoke about learning how to make bombs and explosives. Fluke-Ekren further said that she considered any attack that did not kill a large number of individuals to be a waste of resources. Fluke-Ekren would hear about external attacks taking place in countries outside the United States and would comment that she wished the attack had occurred on United States soil instead.

In 2014, ISIS officials sent a female member of ISIS, who traveled from Central America, to Ablah, Syria, where she resided in an adjoining residence to Fluke-Ekren for approximately 18 days. This witness visited Fluke-Ekren at her residence in Syria on multiple occasions. During those visits, Fluke-Ekren discussed ideas for an attack involving the use of explosives on the campus of a U.S.-based college in the Midwest.

In or around 2015, Fluke-Ekren, her second husband and others moved from Syria to Mosul, Iraq, where they temporarily resided inside an ISIS-controlled compound within the University of Mosul. When Fluke-Ekren arrived in Mosul, she met with ISIS personnel who were in charge of homes for widowed women whose husbands died while fighting for ISIS. Fluke-Ekren assisted the ISIS personnel by providing ideas for how the homes should function and operate.

In or around mid-2016, Fluke-Ekren led and organized an effort to establish a Women’s Center in Raqqa, Syria. Fluke-Ekren obtained authorization from the “Wali,” the ISIS-appointed mayor of Raqqa, in order to establish the Center. There, Fluke-Ekren and others provided medical services, educational services about the Islamic State, childcare and various training to women and young girls. As the Center’s leader, Fluke-Ekren also provided and assisted other female ISIS members in providing training to numerous women and young girls on the use of automatic firing AK-47 assault rifles, grenades and explosive suicide belts.

In or around late 2016, the ISIS “Wali” of Raqqa approved the creation of the “Khatiba Nusaybah” – a military battalion to be comprised solely of female ISIS members. The Khatiba Nusaybah began operations on behalf of the terrorist organization in or around February 2017. Fluke-Ekren’s main objective as the leader and organizer of the Khatiba Nusaybah battalion was to teach female ISIS members how to defend themselves against ISIS’s enemies, including helping male fighters defend ISIS-controlled Raqqa. Fluke-Ekren sought to motivate her trainees by explaining how female fighters can ensure the Islamic State is kept alive by “helping ISIS expand and to remain” through the use of weapons, including automatic firing AK-47 assault rifles, grenades and suicide belts packed with explosives. In addition, witnesses with first-hand knowledge stated that the Khatiba Nusaybah also provided certain members with instruction on physical training including martial arts, medical training, VBIED driving courses, ISIS religious classes and how to pack and prep a “go bag” with rifles and other military supplies.

In 2018, Fluke-Ekren informed another witness that she had instructed an individual in Syria to send a message to one of her family members stating that Fluke-Ekren was dead so that the U.S. government would not attempt to locate her. Fluke-Ekren informed this same witness that it was important to kill the “kuffar” (disbelievers) and die as martyrs on behalf of ISIS in Syria. Fluke-Ekren was located outside the United States since on or about Jan. 8, 2011, until she was transferred in custody to the Eastern District of Virginia on Jan. 28, 2022.

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 Washington Field Office made the announcement after sentencing by U.S. District Judge Leonie M. Brinkema.

First Assistant U.S. Attorney Raj Parekh and Assistant U.S. Attorney John Gibbs for the Eastern District of Virginia prosecuted the case, with assistance from the Justice Department’s National Security Division.

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