

**Department of Justice**  
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**Al Qaeda Spokesman Sulaiman Abu Ghayth Sentenced in Manhattan Federal Court to Life in Prison for Conspiring to Kill Americans, Providing Material Support to Terrorists**

*Sulaiman Abu Ghayth Appeared with Usama Bin Laden and Ayman Al-Zawahiri Immediately After September 11, 2001, Threatening Additional Attacks Against the United States*

United States Attorney General Eric Holder, United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York Preet Bharara, Assistant Attorney General for National Security John P. Carlin, Assistant Director-in-Charge George Venizelos of the New York Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and New York City Police Commissioner William J. Bratton announced that Sulaiman Abu Ghayth, aka “Salman Abu Ghayth,” Usama Bin Laden’s son-in-law and the former spokesman for al Qaeda at the time of the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks, was sentenced today in Manhattan federal court to serve life in prison by U.S. District Judge Lewis A. Kaplan. Abu Ghayth, who was arrested overseas on Feb. 28, 2013, and first appeared in this district on March 1, 2013, was found guilty on March 26, 2014, following a three-week jury trial, of conspiring to kill U.S. nationals, conspiring to provide material support to terrorists and providing material support to terrorists.

“Justice has been served,” said Attorney General Holder. “This outcome ensures that Sulaiman Abu Ghayth, a senior member of al Qaeda and an associate of Usama bin Laden, will never again set foot outside a prison cell. From beginning to end, this trial, conviction and sentencing have underscored the power of America’s Article III court system to deliver swift and certain justice in cases involving terrorism defendants. We will continue to rely on this robust and proven system to hold accountable anyone who would harm our nation and its people. And we will never waver, and never relent, in our pursuit of violent extremists.”

“As the face and voice of al Qaeda in the days and weeks after the 9/11 attacks, Abu Ghayth conspired with Usama Bin Laden and others and announced to the world al Qaeda’s deadly intentions to continue to attack America,” said Assistant Attorney General Carlin. “For his role in al Qaeda’s plot to kill Americans, Abu Ghayth will now spend the rest of his life in prison. This case highlights our resolve to find and bring to justice - no matter how long it takes - those who plot to attack our citizens and our interests around the world. I want to thank all of the agents, analysts, and prosecutors who are responsible for this result.”

“Sulaiman Abu Ghayth was the mouthpiece of murder and menace for al Qaeda,” said U.S. Attorney Bharara. “Hours after the 9/11 attacks, Abu Ghayth, Usama bin Laden’s propaganda minister, was exhorting others to pledge themselves to al Qaeda in the cause of murdering more Americans. It has been 13 years since that terrible day, but from the day Abu Ghayth was brought to the United States 19 months ago, justice for him has been swift and fair. Today, having been afforded a fair and impartial trial in an American civilian court at which a jury unanimously convicted him of material support to al Qaeda and conspiring to kill Americans, Abu Ghayth has been sentenced to life in prison. No sentence can restore what was taken from the families of al Qaeda’s victims. But today’s sentence ensures that Sulaiman Abu Ghayth will never be free to incite or support mass murder again.”

“As the spokesman for al Qaeda, Abu Ghayth espoused messages of terror, hate and fear to motivate others to harm our country, underestimating the resiliency of the United States to stand strong in the face of violence and adversity,” said FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge Venizelos. “Today’s sentence is the culmination of years of hard work and cooperative efforts among law enforcement professionals to seek justice for those who lost their lives in the 9/11 attacks. Along with its law enforcement partners, the FBI’s Joint Terrorism Task Force will vigorously pursue those who support this radical terrorist agenda.”

“Sulaiman Abu Ghayth was a key spokesman for al-Qaida and had access to the terrorist group's senior leadership as he took to the airwaves and threatened further attacks as our city was recovering from the horror of 9-11,” said NYPD Commissioner Bratton. “His capture, trial and conviction is a reminder that the NYPD detectives and FBI agents of the Joint Terrorist Task Force will follow leads anywhere in the world to bring terrorists to justice.”

According to the evidence presented at trial, statements made during other public proceedings including today's sentencing, and other court documents:

Since around 1989, al Qaeda has been an international terrorist organization, dedicated to opposing non-Islamic governments with force and violence. Usama Bin Laden served as the leader, or “emir,” of al Qaeda until his death on or about May 2, 2011. Members of al Qaeda typically have pledged an oath of allegiance, called *bayat*, to Bin Laden and to al Qaeda.

The core purpose of al Qaeda, as stated by Bin Laden and other leaders, is to support violent attacks against property and nationals, both military and civilian, of the United States and other countries. Between 1989 and 2001, al Qaeda established training camps, guest houses, and business operations in Afghanistan, Pakistan and other countries for the purpose of training and supporting its agenda of violence and murder. Members and associates of al Qaeda have executed a number of terrorist attacks, all in furtherance of the organization's stated conspiracy to kill Americans, including the attacks on the United States on Sept. 11, 2001, in New York, Virginia and Pennsylvania, which killed approximately 2,976 people.

From at least May 2001 up to around 2002, Abu Ghayth served alongside Bin Laden, appearing with Bin Laden and his then-deputy and now the declared leader of al Qaeda, Ayman al-Zawahiri, speaking on behalf of al Qaeda and in support of Bin Laden's terrorist objectives, recruiting young men to join al Qaeda and its murderous mission against the United States, and warning that attacks similar to those of Sept. 11, 2001, would continue.

In particular, around May 2001, Abu Ghayth urged young al Qaeda recruits at a guest house in Kandahar, Afghanistan, to swear *bayat* to Bin Laden, shortly before these men were brought to an al Qaeda training camp. On the evening of Sept. 11, 2001, immediately after the terrorist attacks on the United States, Bin Laden summoned Abu Ghayth and asked for his assistance, which Abu Ghayth agreed to provide. On the morning of Sept. 12, 2001, Abu Ghayth appeared with Bin Laden, Zawahiri, and another al Qaeda leader, and spoke on behalf of al Qaeda in a speech that would be disseminated around the world, warning the United States and its allies that “[a] great army is gathering against you” and called upon “the nation of Islam” to do battle against “the Jews, the Christians and the Americans.” Also, after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Abu Ghayth delivered speeches in which he addressed the then-U.S. Secretary of State and warned that “the storms shall not stop, especially the Airplanes Storm,” and advised Muslims, children, and opponents of the United States “not to board any aircraft and not to live in high rises.” At this time, in Afghanistan, Bin Laden and others within al Qaeda were plotting to detonate shoe bombs aboard flights within or en route to the United States.

Abu Ghayth continued to speak on behalf of al Qaeda as the terrorist organization's spokesperson through 2002, repeatedly working to drive more young men to al Qaeda. Also in 2002, Abu Ghayth arranged to be, and was, successfully smuggled from Afghanistan into Iran, where he was later arrested with other al Qaeda leaders.

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In addition to a prison term of life, Abu Ghayth was ordered to forfeit all foreign and domestic assets derived from, involved in, and used and intended to be used to commit terrorism against the United States, its citizens and residents, and their property, and was ordered to pay a \$300 special assessment fee.

Abu Ghayth's conviction is the result of the close cooperative efforts of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force – which consists of law enforcement officers of the FBI, NYPD, United States Marshals Service, and other agencies – and the National Security Division of the U.S. Department of Justice. The Justice Department's Office of International Affairs and the U.S. Department of State also provided assistance.

The prosecution is being handled by Assistant United States Attorneys John P. Cronan, Nicholas J. Lewin and Michael Ferrara of the Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, with assistance from Trial Attorney Jolie Zimmerman of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section, Tara M. LaMorte of the Civil Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, and Diane Gujarati, Deputy Chief of the Criminal Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York.