

New York Resident Charged With Providing Material Support to ISIS, Extradited to United States

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<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/new-york-resident-charged-providing-material-support-isis-extradited-united-states>

An indictment was unsealed today charging Mirsad Kandic, 36, a legal permanent resident of the United States who left the United States in 2013, with one count of conspiring to provide material support and resources to the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), a designated foreign terrorist organization, resulting in death, and five counts of providing and attempting to provide material support and resources to ISIS, including personnel, equipment and false documentation and identification, including one count resulting in death. The defendant was extradited to the United States from Bosnia and Herzegovina yesterday and is scheduled to be arraigned at 2:00 p.m. before U.S. District Judge Nicholas G. Garaufis at the federal courthouse in Brooklyn, New York.

Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security Dana J. Boente, Acting U.S. Attorney Bridget M. Rohde for the Eastern District of New York, Assistant Director in Charge William F. Sweeney, Jr., of the FBI's New York Field Office and Commissioner James P. O'Neill of the NYPD announced the extradition and charges.

"As part of his support for ISIS, the defendant traveled overseas and, while abroad, recruited and facilitated the travel of foreign fighters to join the terrorist organization," said Acting Assistant Attorney General Boente. "The National Security Division will continue to use all its tools to disrupt the flow of foreign fighters and bring to justice those who provide material support to foreign terrorist organizations."

"As alleged, defendant Kandic abandoned the United States, his adopted country, and joined ISIS, a violent terrorist organization opposed to the U.S. and its interests," stated Acting U.S. Attorney Bridget M. Rohde. "From Turkey, he proceeded to recruit others to join ISIS, swelling their ranks and helping them commit terrorist acts such as suicide bombings. Together with our law enforcement partners, we will continue to prosecute ISIS members, as well as other terrorists, to the fullest extent of the law." Ms. Rohde thanked the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the FBI Legal Attaché's Office in Sarajevo, and the Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs, for their assistance in the investigation and effecting the defendant's extradition.

"As alleged, at the same time Kandic lived freely among us in New York, he expressed a desire to travel overseas to kill or maim U.S. military forces," stated Assistant Director in Charge Sweeney. "Kandic eventually put his desire in action when he traveled to Turkey to join ISIS, and from there he set about recruiting others, including Jake Bilardi, to support his cause. Just prior to Bilardi successfully detonating a suicide bomb in Ramadi, Kandic told Bilardi he hoped Bilardi's victims' organs would 'implode,' and just after the attack, Kandic publicized it on Twitter. Kandic is now back in New York, no longer living freely among us, but rather in federal custody to face justice."

As alleged in the indictment and other court filings, prior to November 2013, while living in the Bronx and Brooklyn, Kandic expressed the desire to travel overseas to engage in "jihad" against U.S. military forces to obtain martyrdom. In December 2013, Kandic traveled to Istanbul, Turkey, and joined ISIS. From there, Kandic recruited individuals from the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and elsewhere, to travel to ISIS-controlled territory in Syria and Iraq and serve as foreign fighters. In online communications with an associate, Kandic stated he worked in ISIS's Border Office in Turkey and was part of a team that conducted background checks of foreign fighters seeking to join ISIS in Syria. Kandic told associates that he traveled to and from ISIS-controlled territory, including Raqqa, Syria, in connection with his work with ISIS. In a recorded voice memo from Kandic to an associate, Kandic stated, "I have a lot of Mujahideen in Europe, a lot," and "I sent out over 20,000 brothers . . . to Sham." "Mujahideen" refers to fighters. "Sham" is frequently used by ISIS members to refer to the region of the Levant, including Syria.

One of the individuals Kandic assisted was Jake Bilardi, an 18-year-old Australian citizen who traveled from Melbourne, Australia, to Istanbul, Turkey, in August 2014. A few days before Bilardi flew to Turkey, Kandic sent Twitter messages instructing Bilardi to stand in a particular section of an airport in Istanbul. Kandic informed Bilardi that he would send someone to meet him there. From Turkey, Bilardi traveled to ISIS-controlled territory in Syria and Iraq. Kandic continued to communicate with Bilardi and encouraged him to follow through with his plan to commit a suicide attack in Iraq. In early March 2015, Bilardi informed Kandic via Twitter that he “just went to look at my target today for my operation.” Kandic replied, “May Allah reward you immensely.” Kandic later added: “May Allah make there [sic] inner organs implode.” On March 11, 2015, Bilardi committed a suicide bombing in Ramadi, Iraq. Kandic publicized the attack via Twitter.

Kandic also worked to further ISIS’s media and propaganda operations. Kandic set up and used over 100 Twitter accounts to provide updates about ISIS attacks and territorial gains, which announcements were close in time to when the events occurred.

If convicted, Kandic faces a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. The charges in the indictment are allegations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Trial Attorneys Jennifer Levy and Jolie Zimmerman of the National Security Division’s Counterterrorism Section, and Assistant U.S. Attorneys Saritha Komatireddy, Tiana A. Demas and J. Matthew Haggans of the Eastern District of New York are prosecuting this case.

Attachment(s): Download Kandic Indictment <https://www.justice.gov/opa/press-release/file/1008001/download>

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