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## **ARIZONA MAN SENTENCED TO 30 YEARS FOR CONSPIRACY TO SUPPORT ISIL AND OTHER FEDERAL OFFENSES**

WASHINGTON – Abdul Malik Abdul Kareem, 45, of Phoenix, Arizona, was sentenced today to 30 years in prison, and lifetime supervised release following his conviction on numerous offenses. On March 17, 2016, Kareem was found guilty by a federal jury of conspiring to provide material support to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (“ISIL”), a designated foreign terrorist organization; conspiring to transport firearms and ammunition in interstate commerce with the intent to commit murder and aggravated assault; transporting firearms and ammunition in interstate commerce with the intent to commit murder and aggravated assault; making false statements to the FBI; and being a felon in possession of a firearm.

The announcement was made by Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security Mary B. McCord, Acting U.S. Attorney Elizabeth A. Strange for the District of Arizona and Special Agent in Charge Michael DeLeon of the FBI’s Phoenix Field Office. The sentence was handed down by U.S. District Judge Susan R. Bolton.

“Following the first jury trial in the country involving a homeland attack committed in the name of ISIL, today’s sentence holds Abdul Kareem accountable for conspiring to provide material support to the foreign terrorist organization and other federal offenses,” said Acting Assistant Attorney General McCord. “The defendant conspired with Elton Simpson and Nadir Soofi to provide material support to ISIL and to transport firearms in interstate commerce with the intent to commit murder and aggravated assault. Thanks to the response of brave law enforcement officers at the scene, no innocent lives were lost when Simpson and Soofi attacked the Curtis Culwell Center in Garland, Texas. The National Security Division will continue to prosecute to the fullest extent of the law those who conspire with others to support foreign terrorist organizations and to commit acts of violence in our country.”

“Today’s sentence, in the country’s first trial involving a homeland terrorist attack committed in the name of ISIL, demonstrates the commitment of the United States to hold accountable any person who participates in or aids in any way acts of terrorism against our citizens,” said Acting U.S. Attorney Strange. “I want to thank the FBI for the tremendous effort that went into the underlying investigation, as well as the brave law enforcement officials in Garland whose quick action during the attack prevented a much larger tragedy.”

“The sentencing of Kareem is significant and sends a strong message to those who support terrorism,” said Special Agent in Charge DeLeon. “Unfortunately, some people who do not believe in the American way of life are plotting to do us harm. The protection of U.S. citizens and our communities remains the FBI's number one priority. This can only be accomplished through the joint and coordinated efforts of our law enforcement, our intelligence community, and our vigilant citizens. I would like to commend our federal, state, and local law enforcement partners, to include the Joint Terrorism Task Force, for their role in this case.”

The evidence at trial showed that beginning around June 2014, Kareem and two friends, Elton Simpson and Nadir Soofi, began conspiring to support ISIL. Their conspiracy focused on supporting ISIL by attacking targets in the U.S. Over the course of the conspiracy, Kareem, Simpson and Soofi considered attacking military bases, individual military service members, shopping malls, the Super Bowl and the “Muhammad Art Exhibit and Contest.”

On May 3, 2015, the morning of the contest, Simpson and Soofi drove from Arizona to Texas, stopped their car near the contest, got out and began firing assault rifles at security personnel and law enforcement officers. A security guard was injured by one of their bullets, and Simpson and Soofi were shot and killed by police officers in the firefight.

Additionally, the evidence at trial showed that Kareem’s role in the conspiracy included assisting the other two men with firearms training, providing money to purchase some of the weapons and ammunition used in the attack, instruction on how to care for and maintain their weapons, taking Simpson and Soofi shooting in the desert, hosting Simpson and Soofi in his home and providing a meeting location to plan the attack. The evidence also showed that Kareem supported ISIL and knew that Simpson and Soofi supported ISIL. Kareem did not travel to Texas and was not injured during the attack. During an interview with FBI agents soon after the attack, Kareem lied about having prior knowledge of the attack and the contest.

This case was investigated by the FBI, and the prosecution was handled by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Joseph Koehler and Kristen Brook of the District of Arizona, with assistance provided by Trial Attorney Rebecca Magnone and Deputy Chief Matthew Blue of the National Security Division’s Counterterrorism Section.

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