

Brooklyn Man Sentenced to 27 Years in Prison for Conspiring to Kill U.S. Soldiers Abroad and Attempting to Provide Material Support to al Shabaab

U.S. Attorney's Office
March 02, 2012

• **Eastern District of New York**
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Betim Kaziu was sentenced today to 27 years' imprisonment for conspiring to kill U.S. soldiers abroad and related terrorism charges. On July 7, 2011, following a two-week trial before United States District Judge John Gleeson in Brooklyn federal court, the defendant was convicted of conspiring to commit murder overseas, conspiring to provide material support to terrorism, attempting to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization, and conspiring to use a machine gun in furtherance of those crimes.

The sentence was announced by Loretta E. Lynch, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York.

The evidence at trial established that the defendant traveled from Brooklyn to Cairo, Egypt in February 2009 in order to wage violent jihad against United States troops in the Middle East and the Balkans. While in Cairo, the defendant also attempted to acquire automatic weapons and to travel to Somalia to join al Shabaab, a Somali terrorist organization allied with al Qaeda. Ultimately, the defendant traveled to Kosovo in an effort to target American troops stationed there or to travel onward to Pakistan to join al Qaeda. The defendant also recorded a martyrdom video on the Albanian coast of his "last few moments" before he expected to depart for *jannah*, or paradise, reserved for martyrs. Shortly thereafter, on August 27, 2009, the defendant was arrested in Kosovo by the Kosovo Police Service. He was then transferred to the custody of agents and detectives of the New York Joint Terrorism Task Force to face terrorism charges filed in the Eastern District of New York. At the time of his arrest, the defendant had already purchased a ticket to travel to Pakistan on September 15, 2009.

Testimony at trial established that Kaziu had been radicalized, in part, by Internet speeches by Anwar al-Awlaki and propaganda videos produced by al Qaeda and al Shabaab. The government also introduced at trial evidence from the defendant's social networking website, including quotes by Osama Bin Laden.

United States Attorney Lynch thanked the New York Joint Terrorism Task Force, the government of Kosovo, the U.S. State Department, the Department of Justice Office of International Affairs, and the New York City Police Department for their assistance.

The government's case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Shreve Ariail, Seth D. DuCharme and Ali Kazemi, with assistance provided by Joanna Baltes of the National Security Division.

The Defendant

BETIM KAZIU
Age: 23

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