

Member of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula Pleads Guilty to Terrorism Charges

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<http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/member-al-qaeda-arabian-peninsula-pleads-guilty-terrorism-charges>

Minh Quang Pham, aka Amin, 33, pleaded guilty today in the Southern District of New York to terrorism charges based on Pham's efforts in support of al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), a designated foreign terrorist organization. Pham was arrested in the United Kingdom on June 29, 2012, and was extradited to the United States on Feb. 26, 2015. Pham pleaded guilty to one count of providing material support to AQAP, one count of conspiring to receive military training from AQAP and one count of possessing and using a machine gun in furtherance of crimes of violence.

The plea was announced by Assistant Attorney General for National Security John P. Carlin, U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara of the Southern District of New York and Assistant Director in Charge Paul M. Abbate of the FBI's Washington Field Office.

"Minh Quang Pham provided material support to al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and received explosives training from Anwar Aulaqi while in Yemen. With his guilty plea, he will be held accountable for his terrorist activities," said Assistant Attorney General Carlin. "Counterterrorism is the National Security Division's highest priority, and we will continue to bring justice to those who seek to aid designated foreign terrorist organizations in their efforts to wage violent attacks against the United States and our allies."

"As he has now admitted in an American court of law, Minh Quang Pham swore a terrorist's oath to wage jihad for AQAP," said U.S. Attorney Bharara. "Pham traveled to Yemen to receive terrorist training, including instructions in bomb-making by the now-deceased senior AQAP leader Anwar Aulaqi. Vowing to wage violent jihad and brandishing a Kalashnikov rifle, Pham provided material support to the highest levels of AQAP. Now, all that awaits him is sentencing for his admitted acts of terrorism."

"Defendant Minh Quang Pham sought and received military-style training from an al Qaeda affiliate with the intent to martyr himself and inflict harm on behalf of the group," said Assistant Director in Charge Abbate. "He also attempted to inspire others toward violence through the preparation and dissemination of terrorist propaganda. This case and the subsequent extradition of Pham underscores the unwavering resolve of the FBI and our international law enforcement partners to relentlessly pursue and capture dangerous terrorists anywhere in the world and bring them to face justice in the United States."

According to the indictment, extradition materials and court filings, and statements made at related court proceedings, including today's guilty plea:

In December 2010, after informing others that he planned to travel to Ireland, Pham traveled from London, where he resided, to Yemen, the principal base of operations for AQAP. Pham traveled to Yemen in order to join AQAP, to wage jihad on behalf of AQAP and to martyr himself for AQAP's cause. After arriving in Yemen, he swore an oath of loyalty to AQAP in the presence of an AQAP commander.

While in Yemen in 2010 and 2011, Pham provided assistance to and received training from Anwar Aulaqi, a U.S.-born senior leader of AQAP. Aulaqi personally taught Pham how to create a lethal explosive device using household chemicals and directed Pham to detonate such an explosive device at the arrivals area of London's Heathrow International Airport following Pham's return to the United Kingdom in 2011.

During his time in Yemen, Pham also assisted with the preparation and dissemination of AQAP's propaganda magazine, Inspire. Pham worked directly with a now-deceased U.S. citizen who was a prominent member of AQAP and responsible for editing and publishing Inspire. In addition, AQAP trained Pham in the use of a Kalashnikov assault rifle and provided him such a rifle, which he used in furtherance of his activities on behalf of AQAP in Yemen.

On July 27, 2011, Pham returned to the United Kingdom. Upon his arrival at London's Heathrow International Airport, U.K. authorities detained Pham, searched him and recovered various materials from him, including various electronic media that contained computer files forensically identical to those possessed by a cooperating witness who had previously reported sharing electronic documents with Pham while they were in Yemen with AQAP. In addition, Pham was found to be in possession of a live round of .762 caliber armor-piercing ammunition, which is consistent with ammunition that is used in a Kalashnikov assault rifle.

Pham was arrested in the United Kingdom on June 29, 2012, pursuant to a provisional arrest warrant obtained by the U.S. Attorney's Office of the Southern District of New York, which then requested his extradition. Pham then challenged his extradition to the United States. On Feb. 3, 2015, a court in the United Kingdom denied Pham's challenge and ordered him extradited to the United States. Pham arrived in the Southern District of New York on Feb. 26, 2015.

Pham faces a mandatory minimum sentence of 30 years in prison and a maximum sentence of life in prison. The maximum potential sentence is prescribed by Congress and is provided here for informational purposes only as the final sentence will be determined by the judge. Pham is scheduled to be sentenced on April 14, 2016.

Assistant Attorney General Carlin joined U.S. Attorney Bharara in praising the extraordinary investigative work of the FBI's Washington Field Office. They also expressed their gratitude to the New York Joint Terrorism Task Force for the critical role it played in the investigation and prosecution. Assistant Attorney General Carlin and U.S. Attorney Bharara also thanked the Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs for their significant assistance, as well as the Metropolitan Police Service and the Crown Prosecution Service for their cooperation in the investigation, prosecution and extradition.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Anna M. Skotko, Sean S. Buckley, Shane T. Stansbury and Ian McGinley of the Southern District of New York and Trial Attorneys Kelly Harris and Rebecca Magnone of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section.

Pham Plea Agreement <http://www.justice.gov/opa/file/811941/download>

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