
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**VIRGINIA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO ATTEMPTING TO PROVIDE MATERIAL
SUPPORT TO ISIL**

WASHINGTON – Haris Qamar, 26, of Burke, Virginia, pleaded guilty today to attempting to provide material support and resources to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), a designated foreign terrorist organization.

The announcement was made by Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security Mary B. McCord, U.S. Attorney Dana J. Boente for the Eastern District of Virginia and Assistant Director in Charge Paul M. Abbate of the FBI's Washington Field Division, after the charges were unsealed.

"Mr. Qamar attempted to help ISIL encourage lone wolf attacks in our nation's capital," said U.S. Attorney Boente. "Ensuring the safety of our community is the top priority of my office, and we will continue to work with our law enforcement partners to locate, identify and prosecute those who choose to engage in terrorist activities."

"This case demonstrates the reach terrorist organizations have through social media and the threat that they pose to our national security," said Assistant Director in Charge Abbate. "When Qamar could not travel overseas he attempted to assist ISIL's propaganda campaign for the purpose of inspiring lone wolf attacks in the Washington, D.C. area. Qamar operated over numerous social media accounts where he proselytized ISIL's message and praised the terrorist group when they committed gruesome acts. Today's plea is the result of the hard work of the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force working around the clock to protect this country from those who seek to do us harm."

According to the statement of facts filed with the plea agreement, on May 26, Qamar and the FBI confidential witness (CW) discussed ISIL's need for photos of possible targets in and around Washington, D.C., for use in a video that ISIL purportedly was making to encourage lone-wolf attacks in the Washington, D.C., area. Qamar offered the CW ideas of where to take these photographs, including the Pentagon and numerous landmarks in Arlington and Washington, D.C., which could be targeted for terrorist attacks.

On June 3, a conversation was audio and video recorded when the CW picked up Qamar in a vehicle and they drove to area landmarks on the list Qamar had developed. Qamar said "bye bye DC, stupid ass kufar, kill'em all." Qamar and the CW met again on June 10 and drove to a location in Arlington to take additional photos for the ISIL video.

According to the statement of facts, during numerous conversations with the CW, Qamar expressed his interest and excitement in the extreme violence ISIL is known for. Qamar said he loved the bodies, blood and beheadings, and he recalled watching a video of a Kurdish individual being slaughtered, and liked the cracking sound made when the individual's spinal cord was torn.

On several occasions, Qamar said he could slaughter someone and described how he would do it. Qamar also stated he admired lone-wolf attackers because they love Islam so much that they are willing to die as martyrs for Islam. In the same conversation, Qamar and the CW discussed suicide bombings. The CW said he did not believe in suicide bombings, but Qamar responded “I believe in it 100 percent.”

According to the statement of facts, on Sept. 11, 2015, terrorists connected with ISIL posted a “kill list” to the internet containing the names and addresses of U.S. military members. A few days later, Qamar told the CW that the residences of several service members who appeared on the “kill list” were near Qamar’s own home, and that Qamar had observed undercover police cars near those residences. On Sept. 16, 2015, Qamar tweeted his prayer that Allah “give strength to the mujahideen to slaughter every single US military officer.”

According to the statement of facts, on Sept. 25, 2015, Qamar told the CW that he tried to join the ISIL in 2014, and he purchased a plane ticket from Newark, New Jersey, to Istanbul, Turkey. However, Qamar did not show up for the flight because his parents prevented him from going by taking away his passport. Qamar said his parents threatened to notify law enforcement and said he fought with his father and called his father a traitor to Islam. On Nov. 18, 2015, the CW asked Qamar whether he would join ISIL if Qamar’s father gave him back his passport, and, in response, Qamar said if that happened, “I’m done, I leave.”

Qamar faces a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison when sentenced on Jan. 6, 2017. The maximum statutory sentence is prescribed by Congress and is provided here for informational purposes, as the sentencing of the defendant will be determined by the court based on the advisory Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Gordon D. Kromberg of the Eastern District of Virginia is prosecuting the case with assistance from the National Security Division’s Counterterrorism Section.

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