

Department of Justice
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Sayfullo Saipov Charged With Terrorism and Murder in Aid of Racketeering in Connection With Lower Manhattan Truck Attack

<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/sayfullo-saipov-charged-terrorism-and-murder-aid-racketeering-connection-lower-manhattan>

Today, a grand jury returned a twenty-two count Indictment against Sayfullo Habibullaevic Saipov, 29, of Paterson, New Jersey, in connection with Saipov's alleged terrorist attack in lower Manhattan on Oct. 31, which killed eight people and injured twelve more.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions, Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security Dana J. Boente, Acting U.S. Attorney Joon H. Kim for the Southern 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 made the announcement.

The Indictment charges Saipov with eight counts of murder in aid of racketeering, twelve counts of attempted murder in aid of racketeering, one count of providing and attempting to provide material support to the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) and one count of violence and destruction of a motor vehicle resulting in death. This case has been assigned to U.S. District Judge Vernon S. Broderick.

Saipov was initially arrested on a Complaint and presented before the Honorable Barbara Moses on Nov. 1. He was ordered detained and has been in federal custody since his arrest.

"As alleged in this indictment, Sayfullo Saipov murdered eight innocent people and injured many more in a calculated act of terrorism in the heart of one of our great cities," said Attorney General Sessions. "People have a right to safety walking down a sidewalk or riding a bike, and we will not change our resolve to confront these threats both at home and abroad. I am especially proud today of the law enforcement officers who acted quickly and courageously to respond and to protect people from further harm. We continue to offer our assistance, our support and our prayers to the victims of this attack and to all the people of New York City."

"Consumed by hate and a twisted ideology, Sayfullo Saipov allegedly barreled down a pedestrian walkway and bicycle path on a sunny afternoon on the West Side of Manhattan, killing eight innocent people and injuring at least a dozen others," said Acting U.S. Attorney Kim. "As the scores of videos and images on his cellphone showed, Saipov's depraved use of a rental truck as a weapon of terror was allegedly in support of the terrorist organization ISIS. As of today, Saipov stands indicted of material support of terrorism, as well as eight counts of murder and 12 counts of attempted murder in aid of racketeering. Like many terrorists before him, Saipov will now face justice in an American court. And like New York City's response to his alleged attack, we expect that justice in this case will be swift, firm, and resolute."

"When Sayfullo Saipov carried out his brutal attack last month, his intentions were to inflict significant damage, death and injury to innocent victims and terrorize this city," said Assistant Director in Charge Sweeney. "We announce today's indictment with the understanding that nothing can ever reverse the unfortunate events of that day, or alleviate the pain and sorrow of the victims' families. Today's indictment should be a signal though that the rule of law will always prevail and we are dedicated to holding this perpetrator and anyone else who threatens to disrupt our most basic freedoms accountable for their criminal actions."

As alleged in the Indictment and the Complaint:

Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham

ISIS is a foreign terrorist organization based in the Middle East and Africa whose publicly stated purpose is the establishment of an Islamic state or caliphate based in the Middle East and Africa that encompasses all Muslims worldwide. ISIS has pursued its objective through, among other things, indiscriminate killing and deliberate targeting of civilians, mass executions and extrajudicial killings, persecution of individuals and communities on the basis of their religion, nationality, or ethnicity, kidnapping of civilians, forced displacement of Shia communities and minority groups, killing and maiming of children, rape and other forms of sexual violence. ISIS has recruited thousands of foreign fighters from across the globe to assist with its efforts to expand its so-called caliphate in Iraq, Syria and other locations in Africa and the Middle East and has leveraged technology to spread its violent extremist ideology and for incitement to commit terrorist acts around the world.

ISIS, including its leadership, membership and associates, constitutes an “enterprise,” as that term is defined in Title 18, United States Code, Section 1959(b)(2) — that is, a group of individuals associated in fact, although not a legal entity, which is engaged in, and the activities of which affect, interstate and foreign commerce. ISIS members and associates make and have made public statements and issued public declarations, which, among other things: (i) proclaimed and acknowledged acts of violence had been committed by ISIS; (ii) threatened future acts of violence if ISIS’s demands were not met; and (iii) were intended to promote and foster the prestige and standing of ISIS.

ISIS has specifically distributed propaganda designed to encourage ISIS followers to commit acts of violence using vehicles as weapons. For example, the July 2016 issue of Dabiq, ISIS’s then-official magazine, praised the “brother” who answered “the Islamic State’s calls to target nations participating in the Crusader coalition fighting the Caliphate” by “killing more than 80 people and injuring more than 300 others” with a truck in an attack that occurred in Nice, France on or about July 14, 2016. In September 2016, ISIS changed the name of its official magazine from Dabiq to Rumiya. In November 2016, ISIS released Rumiya, Issue 3, which has an article titled “Just Terror Tactics,” which again focused on a vehicle attack as a primary attack weapon with a secondary attack using a knife or gun to maximize death and terror.

The Oct. 31, Truck Attack

On Oct. 31, at approximately 3:00 p.m., Saipov drove a rented flatbed truck (the “Truck”) from New Jersey over the George Washington Bridge into New York City. After Saipov entered New York City, he proceeded in the Truck to the West Side Highway and began traveling southbound. Once Saipov was in the vicinity of Houston Street in Manhattan, he drove the Truck onto the bike lane and pedestrian walkway of the West Side Highway. Saipov then drove down the walkway for several blocks, striking numerous civilians. Saipov eventually collided with a school bus, which was carrying occupants in the vicinity of West Street and Chambers Street, at which point the Truck came to a halt.

After Saipov collided with the school bus, he exited the driver’s door of the Truck with two objects in his hands that appeared to be firearms. Moments after Saipov got out of the Truck, he yelled, in substance and in part, “Allahu Akbar,” which is an Arabic phrase that translates to “God is Great.”

Saipov was shot by a law enforcement officer and taken into custody. Law enforcement officers subsequently recovered in the vicinity of the Truck, among other things, a paintball gun, a pellet gun, a stun gun and three knives. Law enforcement officers also recovered, approximately ten feet from the driver’s door of the Truck, a document that contained, among other things, the Arabic text for “No God but God and Muhammad is his Prophet” and “Islamic Supplication. It will endure.” “It will endure” is commonly used to refer to ISIS. Cellphones recovered from the Truck contained, among other things, videos and images of ISIS propaganda and internet searches for truck rentals and for Halloween in New York City.

After Saipov was taken into custody, he was transferred to Bellevue Hospital, where he made statements to law enforcement officers after waiving his Miranda rights. During that interview, Saipov stated, among other things, the following:

- Saipov was inspired to carry out the Truck attack by ISIS videos he had watched on his cellular phone.
- Approximately one year ago, Saipov began planning an attack in the United States. Approximately two months ago, he decided to use a truck to inflict maximum damage against civilians. On or about Oct. 22, Saipov rented a truck so he could practice making turns in advance of his attack.
- Saipov planned to use the Truck to strike pedestrians in the vicinity of the West Side Highway and then proceed to the Brooklyn Bridge to continue to strike pedestrians. Saipov wanted to kill as many people as he could. Saipov chose Oct. 31, Halloween, for the attack because he believed there would be more civilians on the street for the holiday.
- Saipov wanted to display ISIS flags in the front and back of the Truck during the attack, but decided against it because he did not want to draw attention to himself. Saipov requested to display ISIS's flag in his hospital room and stated that he felt good about what he had done.

Eight individuals died from the injuries they sustained as a result of the Truck driving on the walkway and at least twelve additional individuals were injured.

* * *

Saipov was initially arrested by the NYPD on Oct. 31. The defendant is charged with:

- Counts 1-8: Murder in Aid of Racketeering with a maximum sentence of life imprisonment or death on each count.
- Counts 9-20: Attempted Murder in Aid of Racketeering with a maximum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment on each count.
- Count 21: Providing and Attempting to Provide Material Support to a Designated Foreign Terrorist Organization Resulting in Death with a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.
- Count 22: Violence and Destruction of Motor Vehicles Resulting in Death with a maximum sentence of life imprisonment or death.

The charges contained in the Indictment are merely accusations and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. The maximum potential sentences in this case are prescribed by Congress and are provided here for informational purposes only, as any sentencing of the defendant will be determined by a judge.

Attorney General Sessions, Mr. Boente, and Mr. Kim praised the outstanding investigative efforts of the FBI, the NYPD and the Department of Homeland Security Homeland Security Investigations (HSI). Saipov's arrest is the result of the close cooperative efforts of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force — which consists of law enforcement officers of the FBI, NYPD, HSI and other agencies — and the U.S. Department of Justice's National Security Division. Attorney General Sessions, Mr. Boente, and Mr. Kim also thanked the U.S. Department of Justice's Organized Crime and Gang Section, Office of Enforcement Operations and Capital Case Section for their exceptional assistance.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Andrew D. Beaty, Amanda Houle and Matthew Laroche of the Southern District of New York, and Trial Attorney Rebecca Magnone of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section.

Attachment(s):

[Download Saipov Indictment](#)

Topic(s):

Counterterrorism

Component(s):

[National Security Division \(NSD\)](#)

[USAO - New York, Southern](#)

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