



The United States Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WWW.JUSTICE.GOV/NEWS

FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2020

LONG ISLAND WOMAN SENTENCED TO 13 YEARS' IMPRISONMENT FOR PROVIDING MATERIAL SUPPORT TO ISIS

WASHINGTON – Earlier today, in federal court in Central Islip, Zoobia Shahnaz was sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment by United States District Judge Joanna Seybert for providing material support to a foreign terrorist organization, specifically more than \$150,000 to the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), and attempting to travel to Syria to join ISIS. Shahnaz pleaded guilty in November 2018.

John C. Demers, Assistant Attorney General for National Security, Richard P. Donoghue, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, William F. Sweeney, Jr., Assistant Director-in-Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office (FBI), and Dermot F. Shea, Commissioner, New York City Police Department (NYPD), announced the sentence.

As set forth in court filings and facts presented at the sentencing hearing, between March 2017 and July 2017, Shahnaz defrauded numerous financial institutions to obtain money for ISIS, including a loan for approximately \$22,500. Shahnaz also fraudulently obtained more than a dozen credit cards and used them to purchase approximately \$62,000 in Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies online. Shahnaz then made multiple wire transfers totaling more than \$150,000 to individuals and entities in Pakistan, China and Turkey that were fronts for ISIS.

Shahnaz accessed ISIS violent jihad-related websites and message boards, and social media and messaging pages of known ISIS recruiters, facilitators and financiers. She also performed numerous internet searches for information that

would facilitate her entry into Syria. Court-authorized search warrants executed at Shahnaz's residence on Long Island resulted in the seizure of terrorist and jihad-related propaganda, including a photograph of a suicide belt of explosives and a night vision scope.

On July 31, 2017, Shahnaz was arrested at John F. Kennedy International Airport in Queens, New York, while attempting to board a flight with a layover in Istanbul, Turkey – a common point of entry for individuals travelling from western countries to join ISIS in Syria.

The government's case is being handled by the Office's National Security and Cybercrime Section and Long Island Criminal Division. Assistant United States Attorney Artie McConnell is in charge of the prosecution, with assistance provided by Trial Attorney Joseph Attias of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section.

The year 2020 marks the 150th anniversary of the Department of Justice. Learn more about the history of our agency at www.Justice.gov/Celebrating150Years.

###

NSD

20-318

Do not reply to this message. If you have questions, please use the contacts in the message or call the Office of Public Affairs at 202-514-2007.