

U.S. Court of Appeals Affirms Conviction and Sentence of Khalid Aldawsari

Saudi Student was Sentenced to Life in Prison for Attempted Use of Weapon of Mass Destruction

U.S. Attorney's Office

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DALLAS—The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in New Orleans, Louisiana, issued a nine-page published opinion yesterday affirming the conviction and sentence of Khalid Ali-M Aldawsari, announced U.S. Attorney Sarah R. Saldaña of the Northern District of Texas.

Aldawsari was convicted on June 27, 2012, on an indictment charging one count of attempted use of a weapon of mass destruction in connection with his purchase of chemicals and equipment necessary to make an improvised explosive device (IED) and his research of potential U.S. targets, including persons and infrastructure. He was lawfully in the U.S. on a student visa and enrolled at South Plains College, near Lubbock, Texas.

In its opinion, the court rejected each of Aldawsari's arguments, holding that (1) the district court properly denied his motion to suppress evidence gathered pursuant to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act; (2) the district court correctly instructed the jury on the crime of attempt; and (3) Aldawsari's sentence is reasonable. The opinion was released less than two months after the three-judge panel heard oral argument in the case.

"The successful resolution of this case would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of many dedicated public servants," said U.S. Attorney Saldaña. "I commend their efforts."

Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew J. Kacsmayk was the lead appellate counsel, and he was assisted by Senior Department of Justice Appellate Counsel John F. De Pue. The district court case was investigated by the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force, which includes many federal, state, and local partners, with assistance from the Lubbock Police Department and the Texas Tech Police Department. The trial prosecution was handled by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Jeffrey R. Haag, Denise Williams, and Matthew J. Kacsmayk and Trial Attorney David Cora from the Counterterrorism Section of the Justice Department's National Security Division.