

## **Colorado Woman Sentenced for Conspiracy to Provide Material Support to a Designated Foreign Terrorist Organization**

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<http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/colorado-woman-sentenced-conspiracy-provide-material-support-designated-foreign-terrorist>

Assistant Attorney General for National Security John P. Carlin, U.S. Attorney John Walsh of the District of Colorado and Special Agent in Charge Thomas Ravenelle of the FBI's Denver Division announced that Shannon Conley, 19, of Arvada, Colorado, was sentenced today by U.S. District Court Judge Raymond P. Moore to serve 48 months in federal prison, followed by 3 years on supervised release with 100 hours of community service, for conspiracy to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization. Conley, who appeared at the hearing in custody, was remanded at its conclusion.

Conley was first charged by criminal complaint on April 9, 2014. She was indicted by a federal grand jury in Denver on Sept. 10, 2014.

According to court documents, including the stipulated facts in the plea agreement, from about February 2014 and continuing through April 8, 2014, Conley and a co-conspirator unlawfully worked together and with other individuals to provide and attempt to provide material support and resources to a designated foreign terrorist organization, specifically Al-Qaeda (AQ) and Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), aka the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), aka the Islamic State of Iraq and Al Sham (ISIS), aka the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

The conspiracy was accomplished, in part, when Conley met the co-conspirator on the Internet. During their communications, they shared their view of Islam as requiring participation in violent jihad. The co-conspirator communicated to Conley that he was an active member of a group fighting in Syria known as ISIS. The two then decided to become engaged and worked together to have Conley travel to Syria to join her new fiancé. Before traveling to Syria, Conley refined and obtained additional training and skills in order to provide support and assistance to any AQ and/or ISIS fighter. Conley also intended to fight if it became necessary to do so.

In furtherance of the conspiracy, Conley joined the U.S. Army Explorers (USAE) to be trained in U.S. military tactics and in firearms. She traveled to Texas and attended the USAE training. She also obtained first aid/nursing certification and National Rifle Association certification. Conley knew that ISIS was a designated foreign terrorist organization. In fact, on numerous occasions, Special Agents with the FBI met with her in attempts to persuade her not to carry out her plans to travel overseas to provide support to a foreign terrorist organization and to engage in violent jihad. On March 29, 2014, the co-conspirator, together with others, arranged for an airline ticket to be purchased for Conley to travel to Turkey, departing from Denver on April 8, 2014. On April 8, 2014, Conley traveled to Denver International Airport and attempted to board the flight to Turkey. She was then arrested by FBI agents.

A subsequent search of Conley's home revealed DVDs of Anwar Al-Awlaki lectures and a number of books and articles about AQ, other terrorist groups and jihad. Agents also recovered shooting targets labeled with the number of rounds fired and distances.

"Conspiring to providing material support to a foreign terrorist organization is a serious federal crime," said U.S. Attorney John Walsh. "The defendant in this case got lucky. The FBI arrested her after determining that she had been radicalized and planned to travel to Syria to support the brutal foreign terrorist organizations operating there. Had she succeeded in her plan to get to Syria, she would likely have been brutalized, killed or sent back to the United States to commit other crimes. Today's sentence underscores the seriousness of defendant's conduct, but pales in comparison to the penalty she would have paid had she not been stopped."

“This sentencing highlights the rapidly changing, shrinking nature of the world and the implications for law enforcement and public safety,” said Special Agent in Charge Thomas Ravenelle. “Terrorist groups now have the ability to directly attract and even recruit U.S. residents to commit violence or provide other support on their behalf. Anyone in our community who takes deliberate steps to commit federal crimes in support of a declared terrorist organization will have those steps disrupted and will be arrested and prosecuted whenever appropriate and necessary in order to preserve the safety of our community.”

This case was investigated by the FBI and the Arvada Police Department.

The defendant was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Greg Holloway of the District of Colorado, with the assistance of Jennifer Levy of the National Security Division’s Counterterrorism Section.

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