

Sheffield Lake man indicted for providing material support to ISIL

U.S. Attorney's Office, Northern District of Ohio

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<http://www.justice.gov/usao-ndoh/pr/sheffield-lake-man-indicted-providing-material-support-isil>

A 28-count indictment was filed charging a Sheffield Lake man with providing material support to Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), as well as firearms and narcotics violations.

Assistant Attorney General for National Security John P. Carlin, U.S. Attorney Steven D. Dettelbach of the Northern District of Ohio and Special Agent in Charge Stephen D. Anthony of the FBI's Cleveland Division made the announcement.

Indicted is Amir Said Rahman Al-Ghazi, 38, also known as Robert C. McCollum. He was arrested last month after he attempted to buy an AK-47 from an undercover agent.

"The charges in this case should remind us that ISIL does not simply present a far-away threat," U.S. Attorney Dettelbach said. "Through social media and other means, ISIL and its mantra of violence can seek to radicalize people of all backgrounds in prisons and communities right here in Ohio. We must keep up our guard."

"This indictment demonstrates law enforcement's number one priority -- to keep our communities and our nation safe," said Special Agent in Charge Anthony. "It is clear that no area is immune from the influence of ISIL and its supporters. We hope this indictment will serve as a strong message to others who may consider providing support to terrorists. The FBI and our Joint Terrorism Task Force partners are committed to identifying and stopping these individuals."

Al-Ghazi, who changed his name from Robert McCollum earlier this year, is alleged to have pledged his support to ISIL and Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi via social media in 2014. From July 2014 to June 2015, Al-Ghazi made multiple statements trying to persuade others to join ISIL. He also expressed his own desire to perpetrate an attack on the United States and had attempted to purchase an AK-47 assault rifle. Al-Ghazi has communicated with individuals he believed to be members of ISIL in the Middle East and took steps to create propaganda videos for ISIL, according to court documents.

Count one of the indictment charges Al-Ghazi with attempting to provide material support to ISIL. Counts two and three charge Al-Ghazi with being a felon in possession of a firearm. Counts four through 28 pertain to his sale of marijuana from February 2014 through last month.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Matthew W. Shepherd and Christos N. Georgalis following an investigation by the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force.

If convicted, the defendants' sentences will be determined by the court after a review of the federal sentencing guidelines and factors unique to the case, including the defendant's prior criminal record (if any), the defendant's role in the offense and the characteristics of the violation.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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