

Albanian National Sentenced to 16 Years for Attempting to Support Terrorism

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Agron Hasbajrami, 31, an Albanian citizen and resident of Brooklyn, New York, was sentenced to 16 years in prison for attempting and conspiring to provide material support to terrorists. Pursuant to the terms of his plea agreement, Hasbajrami will be removed from the United States at the conclusion of his sentence. The sentencing proceeding was held before U.S. District Judge John Gleeson of the Eastern District of New York.

Assistant Attorney General for National Security John P. Carlin, Acting U.S. Attorney Kelly T. Currie of the Eastern District of New York, Assistant Director in Charge Diego G. Rodriguez of the FBI New York Field Office and Commissioner William J. Bratton of the New York City Police Department (NYPD) made the announcement.

As stated during the guilty plea and sentencing proceedings, and according to court filings, in September 2011, Hasbajrami attempted to travel to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan (the FATA) for the purpose of joining a radical jihadist insurgent group. In addition, he sent over \$1,000 in multiple wire transfers abroad to support terrorist activities in Pakistan and Afghanistan. In pursuing his goal of fighting jihad, the defendant exchanged email messages with an individual in Pakistan who said he was a member of an armed group that had murdered American soldiers and kidnapped Westerners. In one email message, Hasbajrami stated that it was difficult to ask for money from fellow Muslims because they became apprehensive "when they hear it is for jihad." In another email, he stated that he wished to travel overseas, using jihadist rhetoric to describe his desire to die as a martyr.

On Sept. 5, 2011, Hasbajrami purchased a one-way airline ticket to travel to Turkey the following day. Based on Hasbajrami's email communications, he intended to travel from Turkey to the FATA to join a jihadist group. On Sept. 6, 2011, the defendant was arrested at John F. Kennedy International Airport. At the time of his arrest, he was carrying a tent, boots and cold weather gear. A search of the defendant's residence revealed, among other items, a note reading "Do not wait for invasion, the time is martyrdom time."

"This case, like many others before it, has shown that the application of lawful surveillance can allow the United States government to detect and neutralize a terrorist in the United States," said Acting U.S. Attorney Currie. "The sentence imposed today leaves no question as to the defendant's role in a very serious offense and helps ensure that he will no longer pose a threat to the United States and our allies."

"Hasbajrami is yet another individual in the U.S. who was inspired to commit acts of violence in the name of jihad," said Assistant Director in Charge Rodriguez. "He used technology to propagate terrorist messages and create a plan to attack U.S. interests. Due to the excellent collaboration and work of all our law enforcement partners on the Joint Terrorism Task Force, we stopped his travel abroad to fight with a foreign terrorist organization. These threats remain among the highest priorities for the FBI and the Intelligence Community as a whole. Through his guilty plea and today's sentence, once completed, he will no longer be able to remain in the U.S. while trying to harm us."

"The sentence imposed today sends a clear message: members of Manhattan-based Joint Terrorism Task Force will work tirelessly to uncover and stop any efforts to provide material support to organizations built to kill Americans," said Commissioner Bratton.

Assistant Attorney General Carlin joined Acting U.S. Attorney Currie in thanking the federal, state and local law enforcement agencies who participate in the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force in New York.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Seth D. DuCharme, Saritha Komatireddy, Peter Baldwin and Matthew Amatruda of the Eastern District of New York, and Trial Attorney Danya Atiyeh of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section.

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