



Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney Barbara L. McQuade
Eastern District of Michigan

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, JULY 6, 2016
WWW.JUSTICE.GOV/USAO-EDMI

GINA BALAYA
(313) 226-9758

MAN FACING AL-QAEDA TERRORISM CHARGES INDICTED FOR PLOTTING TO MURDER FEDERAL JUDGE PRESIDING OVER HIS CASE

WASHINGTON – A Toledo, Ohio, grand jury returned a three-count indictment against Yahya Farooq Mohammad today, charging him with soliciting the murder of a federal judge, announced U.S. Attorney Barbara L. McQuade for the Eastern District of Michigan.

McQuade was joined in the announcement by Special Agent in Charge Stephen D. Anthony of the FBI's Cleveland Field Division and U.S. Marshal Peter J. Elliott of the Northern District of Ohio.

Mohammad, 37, from the United Arab Emirates, was charged with attempted first degree murder of a federal officer, solicitation to commit a crime of violence and use of interstate commerce facilities in commission of murder for hire.

Mohammad was indicted last year on charges of conspiring with three other men to travel to Yemen to provide thousands of dollars to Anwar Al-Awlaki in an effort to support violent jihad against U.S. military personnel in Iraq, Afghanistan and throughout the world. That case remains pending and is assigned to U.S. District Judge Jack Zouhary of the Northern District of Ohio.

In the most recent charges, Mohammad is accused of soliciting someone to kidnap and murder Judge Zouhary.

On April 8, Mohammad allegedly told another inmate in the Lucas County Corrections Center in Toledo that he wanted Zouhary kidnapped and murder. That inmate then introduced Mohammad to an undercover FBI employee, according to the indictment.

The indictment alleges that Mohammad told the inmate that he was willing to pay \$15,000 to have Zouhary killed. Mohammad also allegedly told the undercover employee that he could send a down payment through a mail courier or that the undercover could meet Mohammad's wife in Chicago to pick up the money. When asked when he wanted the murder

committed, Mohammad stated: “The sooner would be good, you know,” according to the indictment.

On May 5, Mohammad’s wife, identified in the indictment as N.T., met the undercover agent at a post office in Bolingbrook, Illinois, and provided \$1,000 in cash inside a white envelope, according to the indictment.

On May 11, Mohammad informed the inmate that the rest of the money for the murder was coming from Dubai to Texas to Chicago to N.T., and then to the undercover agent, according to the indictment.

According to the indictment, on May 16, the undercover agent and N.T. met, and the undercover agent showed N.T. a photograph that purported to be of Zouhary’s dead body. The undercover agent told N.T. he needed the rest of the money owed to him. N.T. said she would contact Mohammad and then she would contact the undercover agent, according to the indictment.

“According to the charges in the indictment, this defendant not only attempted to have a federal judge murdered, but he did so to obstruct justice in a terrorism case against him,” said U.S. Attorney McQuade. “This prosecution seeks to hold the defendant accountable for attempting to victimize the judge and for trying to undermine our criminal justice system.”

“Conspiring to have a judge killed is not the way to avoid being prosecuted - now Mohammad will be held accountable for additional serious federal charges,” said Special Agent in Charge Anthony. “The FBI will continue to work with our partners to ensure the safety of those that uphold the rule of law. “

“Protecting the federal judiciary is our highest priority,” said U.S. Marshal Elliott. “This is an example where we were able to work with our law enforcement partners to protect a judge and bring charges against a dangerous individual.”

The case is prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Michael Freeman and Matthew Shepherd of the Northern District of Ohio following an investigation by the FBI. The U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio has recused herself from this case.

If convicted, the defendant’s sentence will be determined by the court after review of factors unique to this case, including the defendant’s prior criminal record (if any), the defendant’s role in the offenses and the characteristics of the violations. Counts one and two of the indictment carry a maximum statutory penalty of 20 years in prison and count three carries a statutory maximum penalty of 10 years in prison.

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.