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NINE MINNESOTA MEN SENTENCED FOR PROVIDING MATERIAL SUPPORT TO ISIL

WASHINGTON – The last three of nine men were sentenced this week in U.S. District Court in Minneapolis for conspiring and attempting to provide material support to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), a designated foreign terrorist organization, and for conspiracy to murder outside the U.S.

Guled Omar, 22, of Minneapolis, Minnesota, was charged with one additional count of attempting to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization and one count of attempted financial aid fraud. Omar was sentenced to 35 years in prison. Mohamed Abdihamid Farah, 22, of Minneapolis was charged with one additional count of attempting to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization, one count of perjury and one count of making a false statement. Farah was sentenced to 30 years in prison. Abdirahman Yasin Daud, 22, of Minneapolis was sentenced to 30 years in prison. All three defendants were also sentenced to lifetime supervised release.

The announcement was made by Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security Mary B. McCord, U.S. Attorney Andrew M. Luger for the District of Minnesota and Special Agent in Charge Richard T. Thornton of the FBI's Minneapolis Division.

“This case -- culminating in the sentencings of nine young men in the last three days -- demonstrates our commitment to disrupting those who would conspire to travel to Syria to fight with ISIL,” said Acting Assistant Attorney General McCord. “Counterterrorism is the National Security Division’s highest priority and we will continue to work to stem the flow of foreign fighters abroad and to bring to justice those who seek to provide material support to designated foreign terrorist organizations.”

“ISIL remains one of the most dangerous terror organizations in the world,” said U.S. Attorney Luger. “The defendants sentenced today remind us that this ideology ruins the lives of those who ascribe to it. Omar, Daud and Farah will spend the next several decades in prison because of their unbreakable desire to kill on behalf of ISIL. I commend the agents and officers of the FBI-led Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) for continuing to keep Minnesotans safe.”

“The sentences handed down today reflect the true gravity of the defendants’ crimes to betray their country, travel overseas and ultimately join a terrorist organization dedicated to the murder of innocent people,” said Special Agent in Charge Thornton. “We hope these sentences will serve as a strong message that those who support terrorism will face justice. The FBI, through our Joint Terrorism Task Force, remains dedicated to working with our community partners to disrupt threats posed by ISIL and their supporters.”

As proven at trial, between May 2014 and their arrests on April 19, 2015, these three defendants and their co-conspirators made multiple attempts to join ISIL in Syria. In May 2014, defendant Omar and two other members of the conspiracy made an attempt to join ISIL by traveling across the U.S. – Mexico border near San Diego. This planned failed when members of defendant Omar’s family prevented his travel.

Omar again attempted to join ISIL in Syria on Nov. 6, 2014, by first flying from the Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport in Minneapolis to San Diego, California. Again, defendant Omar planned to cross the United States – Mexico border near San Diego and travel onward to Syria to join ISIL. Before he could board the flight in Minnesota, Omar was stopped at the airport and prevented from boarding the plane. In order to fund this second attempt to join ISIL in Syria, Omar intended to use federal financial aid provided to him by the U.S. Department of Education to attend college.

Also in November 2014, Farah was one of four co-conspirators to take a Greyhound bus to New York, New York, and attempt to board a flight to Europe. Farah’s ultimate destination was Syria, where he planned to join and fight with ISIL. Federal agents in New York prevented defendant Farah and his three co-conspirators from traveling.

In April 2015, Daud and Farah drove from Minneapolis to San Diego, where they intended to purchase fake passports, cross the border into Mexico and travel to Syria to join ISIL. Unbeknownst to them, the individual from whom they purchased the fake passports was a law enforcement officer and both were arrested by federal agents immediately after obtaining the phony travel documents.

Eleven Minnesotans have been charged as part of this conspiracy to provide material support to ISIL. The men are all associates and friends of one another. Six defendants pleaded guilty before trial and two, Abdi Nur and Mohamed Roble, joined ISIL in Syria.

This case is the result of an investigation conducted by members of the FBI-led JTTF. JTTF includes members from the following departments: the U.S. Marshals Service, Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, Bloomington Police Department in Minnesota, St. Paul Police Department in Minnesota, Ramsey County Sheriff’s Office in Minnesota, Hennepin County Sheriff’s Office in Minnesota, Federal Air Marshals Service, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Defense, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Minneapolis Police Department, Burnsville Police Department in Minnesota, Department of State, the Airport Police, IRS-Criminal Investigation Division and the FBI.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Andrew Winter, John Docherty and Julie Allyn of the District of Minnesota, with assistance from the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section.

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