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F.# 2017R01183

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

- against -

PARVEG AHMED,

Defendant.

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FILED UNDER SEAL

**AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT
OF ARREST WARRANT**

Cr. No.
(T. 18, U.S.C., § 2339B(a)(1))

EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, SS:

JACQUELINE ROSS, being duly sworn, deposes and states as follows:

**ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE MATERIAL SUPPORT
TO A DESIGNATED FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATION**

Upon information and belief, in or about and between October 2014 and June 16, 2017, both dates being approximate and inclusive, within the Eastern District of New York and within the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the United States, the defendant, PARVEG AHMED, together with others, did knowingly and intentionally attempt to provide material support and resources, as defined in 18 U.S.C. § 2339A(b), including personnel, including AHMED himself, to a foreign terrorist organization, to wit: the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham ("ISIS"), which has been designated by the Secretary of State as a foreign terrorist organization, pursuant to Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

(Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2339B(a)(1) and 3551 et seq.)

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

The source of your deponent's information and the grounds for his belief are as follows:¹

1. I am a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation's ("FBI") New York Joint Terrorism Task Force ("JTTF"). I have been an FBI Special Agent since 2015. As a Special Agent, I have investigated national security matters, and I have conducted physical surveillance, executed court-authorized search warrants and used other investigative techniques to secure relevant information. As a result of my training and experience, I am familiar with the tactics, methods and techniques of terrorist networks and their members, including the use of computers, cellphones, social media, email, and the Internet in connection with criminal activity. My responsibilities include investigation of terrorist activity by various designated foreign terrorist organizations such as ISIS.

2. I have personally participated in the investigation of the offense discussed below. I am familiar with the facts and circumstances of this investigation from: (a) my personal participation in this investigation; (b) interviews with witnesses; (c) my review of records and reports generated by other law enforcement agents in the United States and elsewhere; (d) my review of communications recovered during the investigation; and (e) information provided to me by other agents and law enforcement officials. Where statements

¹ Because the purpose of this complaint is to provide only probable cause to arrest, I have not described all the relevant facts and circumstances of which I am aware.

of others are set forth, except as otherwise noted, they are set forth in sum and substance and in part.

A. Background on ISIS

3. JTTF is investigating PARVEG AHMED (“AHMED”), and others known and unknown, for providing, conspiring to provide, and attempting to provide material support and resources to the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (“ISIS”).

4. ISIS is a foreign terrorist organization that, since 2013, has claimed credit for numerous terrorist activities, including seizing Mosul, a city in northern Iraq, launching rocket attacks on eastern Lebanon in March 2014, the November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris, France, and the March 2016 suicide bombings in Brussels, Belgium, among many others. These terrorist activities are part of ISIS’s broader goal of forming an Islamic state or “caliphate”² in Iraq and Syria. On or about October 15, 2004, the United States Secretary of State designated al- Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), then known as Jam ‘at al Tawid wa’ al-Jahid, as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) under Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist entity under section 1(b) of Executive order 13224. On or about May 15, 2014, the Secretary of State amended the designation of AQI as an FTO under Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist entity under section 1(b) of Executive Order 13224 to add the alias Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) as its primary name. The Secretary of State also added the following aliases to the FTO listing: The Islamic State of

² “Caliphate” is a term that can be used to refer to ISIS’s self-proclaimed system of religious governance, with Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as the caliphate’s self-proclaimed leader.

Iraq and al-Sham (“ISIS” – which is how the FTO will be referenced herein), The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, ad-Dawla al-Islamiyya fi al-Iraq wa-sh-Sham, Daesh, Dawla al Islamiya, and Al-Furquan Establishment for Media Production. On September 21, 2015, the Secretary added the following aliases to the FTO listing: Islamic State, ISIL, and ISIS. To date, ISIS remains a designated FTO.

B. Background on AHMED

5. PARVEG AHMED is a 22 year-old male who resides in Queens, New York.

6. On or about and between October 13, 2014 and March 3, 2015, AHMED posted statements of support for ISIS on publicly accessible social media accounts. For example:

a. On or about October 13, 2014, the social media account associated with AHMED (the “AHMED Social Media Account”) wrote, “Who are Jihadis? Muslims who fight to establish the Sharia IN THEIR OWN LANDS, wanted by MAJORITY of the people. USA are the real terrorists.”³

b. On or about February 21, 2015, the AHMED Social Media Account stated, “The side of Good is Islam & the Caliphate If you’re not with the Muslims, you’re ignorantly, irrelevantly, & arrogantly on the side of Evil.”

c. On or about March 3, 2015, the AHMED Social Media Account tweeted, “The war on the Islamic State is a war of the ideologies:

³ All citations to electronic communications and postings include original spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

Democracy/Capitalism v. Shariah Media propaganda/lies villifying the enemy 'ISIS'" and also sent a message to another user of the social media platform, stating "that's what secularism will get you. The only country still working in reverence to the Almighty is the Islamic State."

7. On or about January 27, 2016, investigating agents interviewed AHMED at John F. Kennedy International Airport ("JFK Airport"), upon his return on an international flight from Bangladesh. AHMED told the agents the following, in sum and substance and in part:

- a. AHMED acknowledged that the AHMED Social Media Account described above belonged to him and was used by him;
- b. AHMED initially denied ever posting statements in support of ISIS or in support of Jihadist movements;
- c. After being confronted with some of the specific statements found on the AHMED Social Media Account, AHMED responded that he knew these statements would get him into trouble;
- d. AHMED claimed that he was drawn to materials supportive of ISIS by a Canadian who AHMED believed had gone to fight for ISIS. AHMED further claimed that the statements were made at a low-point in his life and at a time when he was smoking a large amount of marijuana;

8. Based on my training and experience, I know that statements expressed on social media in support of an FTO are relevant to an individual's knowledge of the FTO, and

their intent to provide material support to that FTO. Accordingly, I believe that AHMED's statements are consistent with his knowledge and intent to provide material support to ISIS.

C. AHMED Travels to the Middle East and Attempts to Join ISIS

9. On or about June 1, 2017, AHMED traveled to Saudi Arabia, together with two other individuals (INDIVIDUAL-1 and INDIVIDUAL-2) and a friend (CC-1), ostensibly to celebrate Ramadan.

10. On or about June 9, 2017, AHMED informed INDIVIDUAL-1 and INDIVIDUAL-2 that he and CC-1 were going to stay inside while INDIVIDUAL-1 and INDIVIDUAL-2 left for service at a mosque, because AHMED did not feel well. INDIVIDUAL-1 and INDIVIDUAL-2 later returned to discover that AHMED and CC-1 had disappeared.

11. On or about June 14, 2017, AHMED spoke to another individual, and stated in sum and substance that he was coming back to INDIVIDUAL-1 and INDIVIDUAL-2's location, and that his phone was not working.

D. The Search of AHMED's Computer

12. On or about July 17, 2017, the Honorable Steven L. Tiscione, United States Magistrate Judge for the Eastern District of New York, authorized the execution of a search warrant for the contents of a laptop computer previously used by AHMED in his residence in Queens (the "Computer").

13. A search of the Computer by law enforcement is ongoing. However, the review has already revealed that the Computer used by AHMED contains propaganda material associated with ISIS.

14. Specifically, AHMED viewed recordings of sermons by Anwar al-Awlaki. Anwar al-Awlaki was a United States-born radical Islamic cleric and prominent leader of the foreign terrorist organization al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, who was killed on or about September 30, 2011. The sermons that AHMED viewed included Al-Awlaki stating: "Jihad must continue and fighting must go on until the Final Hour comes. Fighting is only increasing as prescribed by Allah- now it is time to carry the battle to further lands outside of Arab countries."

15. The Computer associated with AHMED also included a lecture by Abdullah el-Faisal, entitled "The 9 Reasons Why the Kuffar Hate the Believers," as part of AHMED's online bookmarks. Abdullah el-Faisal is a Jamaican-born radical Islamic cleric, who was found guilty in the United Kingdom of, among other things, solicitation to commit murder, for preaching to followers to kill individuals, including Americans, because he deemed them to be enemies of Islam. See R. v. El-Faisal (Abdullah Ibrahim), Reasons for Dismissal of Appeal, No. [2004] EWCA Crim. 456, 2004WL413053 (United Kingdom Court of Appeal (Criminal Division)).

16. The lecture bookmarked on the Computer included numerous statements in support of ISIS, jihad, traveling from one's home country to join ISIS, condemnation of Western countries as evil, and justification of violence against those who are deemed to be nonbelievers of Islam. For example, the lecture included the statements "Caliphate is mandatory. If you live without a Caliphate for more than three days, you are living in sin" and that the "correct term" for ISIS "is simply IS = Islamic State" because

“We are Mujahideen⁴ sans frontiers, Sans = without, Frontiers = borders, but Islam sees no borders.” The lecture also claimed that “the evidence for killing apostates” is supported by a verse in the Quran.

17. Similar to AHMED’s statements on social media, the evidence obtained from the Computer are consistent with his knowledge of ISIS and intent to provide material support to ISIS.

18. Additionally, the ongoing search of the Computer has revealed that AHMED researched and reviewed materials describing a method to erase data on the Computer, including his internet search history. This search was conducted on the same day that AHMED traveled from the United States to Saudi Arabia, as described above. AHMED also researched and reviewed materials that described how to delete an instant messaging application, how to delete a social media platform, and Internet-based application that allows users to share photos either publicly or privately.

E. The Interview of CC-1

19. The investigation has revealed that AHMED and CC-1 were detained in a Middle Eastern country bordering Syria (the “Country”) – soon after AHMED and CC-1 abandoned INDIVIDUAL-1 and INDIVIDUAL-2 in Saudi Arabia.

20. On August 25, 2017, FBI agents conducted an interview of CC-1, while CC-1 was still in the Country’s custody. The interview was audio recorded. After waiving

⁴ Based on my training, experience, and open source information, I know that “Mujahideen” is a term that typically refers to individuals that engage in jihad, including individuals who support and fight on behalf of ISIS.

his Miranda rights orally and in writing, CC-1 made the following statements, in sum and substance, and in part. CC-1 repeatedly claimed that, shortly before his arrest, he and AHMED had travelled by cab from Saudi Arabia to the capital of the Country; upon arriving at a hotel, AHMED called for a cab to Idlib – an area in Syria presently under insurgent control. According to CC-1, AHMED actually meant to say Irbid – a city in Jordan. While generally disclaiming any intention of joining ISIS, CC-1 made the following statement about AHMED:

[H]e told me that they're good and I should follow, like, you understand I was new to Islam? You understand that, right? Ok, so basically . . . I just want . . . we all came from somewhere, right? And I'm not judging you if you - I don't like to judge people, like say I don't know your religion, if you are a Christian, I don't want no killing, you understand that right? So . . . I just wanna be, I just wanna be good, I wanna continue learning.

I believe CC-1 was discussing AHMED's pro-ISIS proselytization of CC-1 (“[H]e told me that they're good and I should follow”) (“I don't want no killing, you understand that right?”). The FBI learned that CC-1 and AHMED spent at least the night before CC-1's interview together in a holding room for non-residents. Based on this information, I believe it is possible that AHMED and CC-1 would have had the opportunity to coordinate their stories in advance of any possible interviews with United States law enforcement.

F. The Search of CC-1's Phones

21. Investigating agents learned that, at the time they were taken into custody by government authorities for the Country, AHMED was found to be in possession of two mobile phone devices, while CC-1 was in possession of two mobile phone devices and a sim card.

22. On August 27, 2017, an FBI Special Agent Forensic Examiner copied the contents of the mobile phone devices and a sim card found in AHMED and CC-1's possession onto a hard drive and a CDR disc (the "Forensic Images"). On the same date, the Honorable Peggy Kuo, United States Magistrate Judge for the Eastern District of New York, authorized a search warrant as to the Forensic Images.

23. A search of the Forensic Images by law enforcement is ongoing. However, the content of one of the phones possessed by AHMED (the "AHMED PHONE") reveals that, at the time of their apprehension, AHMED and CC-1 were attempting to travel to ISIS-controlled territories in Syria in order to wage violent jihad:

a. Agents found images associated with ISIS and violent jihad, such as a picture of five men hanging by their necks with the caption "Gay men to be hanged," text justifying attacks on the World Trade Center, and a picture of the leader of ISIS, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

b. On June 9, 2017 – the day AHMED and CC-1 left INDIVIDUAL-1 and INDIVIDUAL-2 in Saudi Arabia – agents discovered a message sent by the user of the AHMED PHONE to a third party, "In Saudi looking for hijra," meaning that the user was in Saudi Arabia ("Saudi") seeking to emigrate to ISIS-controlled territories ("looking for hijra").

c. On June 14, 2017, the user of the AHMED PHONE sent multiple messages to third parties asking whether he could communicate with them through encrypted messaging applications. To one of these interlocutors, the user

wrote, "Looking to make hijra akh [brother]," that is, the user was seeking to emigrate ("make hijra") to ISIS-controlled territories.

d. Agents located a message that had been composed but not yet sent, dated June 15, 2017. In the message, the user of the AHMED PHONE wrote, "[W]e have made it to Dawlatul Islam [ISIS] in Syria. In sha Allah [God willing] we will join the Jihad very soon and in Sha Allah [God willing] we will then join the ranks of the Shuhuda [martyrs]. The West has invaded the land of the Muslims and is constantly attacking it."

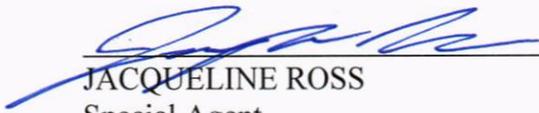
e. Agents found a note of farewell to two of AHMED's family members, also dated June 15, 2017 ("Forgive me if I was harsh/overbearing. Please remember all that I tried to teach you."). I believe that AHMED intended to send this message after he and CC-1 crossed the border into Syria.

f. The Internet browsing history includes a visit on June 16, 2017 to a BBC news article entitled "Islamic State and the crisis in Iraq and Syria in maps," and a visit on June 17, 2017 to website for an ISIS "live" map. I know that a map depicting areas currently under ISIS control would be useful to a foreign fighter seeking to join ISIS.

24. Earlier this morning, AHMED was deported from the Country and is scheduled to arrive at JFK Airport later today.

WHEREFORE, your deponent respectfully requests that an arrest warrant be issued for the defendant PARVEG AHMED so that he may be dealt with according to law.

It is further requested that this affidavit, arrest warrant, and other papers submitted in support of this application be sealed until further order of the Court so as to prevent notifying the defendant and his associates of the pending warrant, which might result in the destruction of evidence and the flight of coconspirators, with the exception that the complaint and arrest warrant shall be unsealed for the limited purpose of disclosing the existence of or disseminating the complaint and/or arrest warrant to relevant United States, foreign, or intergovernmental authorities, at the discretion of the United States and in connection with efforts to prosecute the defendant or as otherwise required for purposes of national security.


JACQUELINE ROSS
Special Agent
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Sworn to before me this
28th day of August, 2017


THE HONORABLE JAMES ORENSTEIN
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK