

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Eastern District of New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, August 29, 2017

Queens Man Charged With Attempting To Provide Material Support To ISIS

Defendant Attempted to Travel to Syria to Join ISIS

Yesterday, Parveg Ahmed of Queens, New York, a United States citizen, was arrested on charges of attempting to provide material support to the Islamic State of Iraq and al Sham (ISIS), a foreign terrorist organization. The defendant is scheduled to make his initial appearance this afternoon at the federal courthouse in Brooklyn before United States Magistrate Judge James Orenstein.

The charges were announced by Bridget M. Rohde, Acting United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, Dana J. Boente, Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security, William F. Sweeney, Jr., Assistant Director-in-Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), New York Field Office, Angel M. Melendez, Special Agent-in-Charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), and James P. O'Neill, Commissioner, New York City Police Department (NYPD).

“As alleged, Ahmed sought to take up arms with violent terrorists who have killed numerous innocent victims, including Americans,” stated Acting U.S. Attorney Rohde. “This Office and our law enforcement partners will continue to work tirelessly to arrest and prosecute extremists before they are able to threaten the United States and its allies.” Ms. Rohde extended her grateful appreciation to the FBI’s Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), which comprises a large number of federal, state, and local agencies from the region. Ms. Rohde also thanked the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection for their assistance.

“As we allege, Parveg Ahmed attempted to travel to Syria aligning himself with ISIS instead of his fellow Americans. Like others before him who chartered a similar path to join this violent terror group, Ahmed now finds his journey ends the same way - in a New York courtroom answering for his actions,” stated FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge Sweeney. “The FBI New York Joint Terrorism Task Force has a global reach and remains vigilant to the type of threat we allege was posed by Ahmed. I would like to thank all of our partner agencies for their continued vigilance. I would also encourage the community to notify law enforcement when they spot suspicious activity and behavior which helps the JTTF disrupt individuals aiming to conduct violence.”

“This man betrayed his own country to allegedly take up arms against it in the name of ISIS,” stated HSI Special Agent-in-Charge Melendez. “The JTTF’s proactive identification of individuals, like the defendant before any harm could be done against our nation, highlights the very principles on which the task force was founded.”

“As alleged, the defendant traveled to the Middle East in an effort to join ISIS. Mr. Ahmed also took extraordinary measures to destroy the electronic foot print he created,” said Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill. “This type of work goes on every day at the nation’s first Joint Terrorism Task Force here in Manhattan. My thanks to the detectives, agents, and prosecutors whose investigation resulted in today’s arrest and charges.”

As alleged in the complaint, the defendant traveled to Saudi Arabia in June 2017, purportedly to celebrate an Islamic religious holiday. Upon his arrival in Saudi Arabia, the defendant attempted to travel to Syria to enter ISIS-controlled territory. The defendant was detained in a Middle Eastern country bordering Syria.

Previously, the defendant had repeatedly expressed support on social media for ISIS and for individuals who provided support to the foreign terrorist organization's mission of violent extremism. On July 17, 2017, JTTF agents obtained a search warrant for the defendant's personal computer, and learned, among other things, that the defendant had viewed or listened to recordings of radical Islamic clerics Anwar al-Awlaki, a United States-born cleric and prominent leader of the foreign terrorist organization al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, who was killed on or about September 30, 2011, and Abdullah el-Faisal, a Jamaican-born 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. On August 28, 2017, JTTF agents obtained a search warrant for electronic devices found in the defendant's possession when he was detained attempting to travel to Syria. Examination of the devices revealed, among other things, the following:

- Messages sent to third parties expressing a desire to travel to ISIS-controlled territories.
- A message explaining that the defendant planned to join ISIS in Syria to wage violent jihad stating, “[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.”^[1]
- An internet browser history that indicates the defendant was researching maps of ISIS-controlled locations.

The defendant was deported to the United States on August 28, 2017, and he was arrested at John F. Kennedy International Airport.

If convicted, the defendant faces a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. The charge in the federal complaint is merely an allegation, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

The government's case is being handled by the Office's National Security & Cybercrime Section and the Justice Department's National Security Division. Assistant United States Attorneys Alexander A. Solomon and Craig R. Heeren are in charge of the prosecution, with assistance provided by Trial Attorney Joshua D. Champagne of the Counterterrorism Section of the National Security Division of the Department of Justice.

The Defendant:

PARVEG AHMED
Age: 22
Queens, New York

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 17-MJ-766

[1] Spelling is in original, and bracketed words and letters are added for clarity.

