



THE UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT *of* JUSTICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2017

**TEXAS RESIDENT PLEADS GUILTY TO PROVIDING  
MATERIAL SUPPORT TO ISIS**

WASHINGTON – Asher Abid Khan, 23, of Spring, Texas, pleaded guilty today to providing material support to the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), a designated foreign terrorist organization.

Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security Dana J. Boente, Acting U.S. Attorney Abe Martinez and Special Agent in Charge Perrye K. Turner of the FBI's Houston field office made the announcement.

The investigation began in 2014 when Khan and his friend, who was living in South Texas, devised a plan to travel to Turkey and then to Syria for the purpose of fighting on behalf of ISIS. Khan had been living with a relative in Australia.

Prior to leaving for Turkey from there, Khan told Mohamed Zuhbi, a Turkish-based foreign terrorist fighter facilitator, that he wanted to join ISIS.

Khan provided instructions to his friend on travel and how to reach him once Khan arrived in Turkey. During this part of the planning phase, it was Khan - not his friend - who was in touch with Zuhbi. On Feb. 24, 2014, Khan and his friend met in Istanbul, Turkey. At that time, Khan gave his South Texas friend money, knowing he intended to travel to Syria and join and fight with ISIS.

Khan then departed from the Istanbul Airport in Turkey and returned to the United States after his family tricked him into coming home to Houston because of an alleged hospitalization of his mother.

As soon as Khan returned to the U.S., he contacted Zuhbi with the purpose of introducing him to his friend so he could enter Syria and join ISIS as a fighter with Zuhbi's help. Khan then provided to his friend a Turkish cell phone number for reaching Zuhbi. The following day, Khan's friend sent an electronic message to Khan indicating he had "been delivered :)," by Zuhbi, but that he was not with ISIS yet. Over the next few months, the friend attended fighter training camps and stayed in touch with Zuhbi and Khan. During that time, Khan offered his friend money and instructed him to try to get to ISIS.

On Aug. 11, 2014, the friend finally made it to ISIS with Khan and Zuhbi's assistance. After September 2014, he had ceased all forms of communications.

On Dec. 25, 2014, the friend's mother received an electronic message explaining that her son had died while fighting.

Zuhbi is still at large and is believed to be residing in either Turkey or Syria. There are pending criminal charges in the Southern District of Texas against Zubhi. Anyone with information about his whereabouts is asked to contact the FBI at 713-693-5000.

U.S. District Judge Lynn N. Hughes accepted the guilty plea today and has set sentencing for March 5, 2018 at 1:30 p.m. At that time, Khan faces up to 15 years in federal prison and a maximum fine of \$250,000. The maximum statutory sentence is prescribed by Congress and is provided here for informational purposes. If convicted of any offense, the sentencing of the defendant will be determined by the court based on the advisory Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

The FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force conducted the investigations. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Carolyn Ferko, Alamdar Hamdani and Steve Mellin of the Southern District of Texas are prosecuting the case with the assistance of the Counterterrorism Section of the Justice Department's National Security Division.

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