



THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT *of* JUSTICE

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AL-QAEDA OPERATIVE SENTENCED TO LIFE IN PRISON FOR TERRORISM OFFENSES TARGETING AMERICANS OVERSEAS

WASHINGTON – Earlier today, Al-Qaeda operative Ibrahim Suleiman Adnan Adam Harun, aka Spin Ghul, 47, was sentenced to life in prison following his March 16, 2017 trial conviction of multiple terrorism offenses, including conspiracy to murder American military personnel in Afghanistan, conspiracy to bomb the U.S. Embassy in Nigeria, and providing material support to al-Qaeda.

Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security Edward O’Callaghan, U.S. Attorney Richard P. Donoghue for the Eastern District of New York, Assistant Director in Charge William F. Sweeney, Jr. of the FBI’s New York Field Office and Commissioner James P. O’Neill of the NYPD made the announcement. The sentence was issued by U.S. District Judge Brian M. Cogan.

“With the sentence handed down today, our justice system has once again held accountable an al-Qaeda operative for his terrorist activities, ensuring that he will spend the rest of his life in prison,” said Acting Assistant Attorney General O’Callaghan. “The evidence presented at trial established that the defendant and other jihadists attacked a U.S. military patrol in Afghanistan, resulting in the death of two American soldiers and the serious injury of others. Working with our partners in the law enforcement and intelligence communities, the National Security Division will continue to vigorously pursue and disrupt terrorists who target Americans and American facilities around the world. Thank you to the many agents, analysts and prosecutors whose hard work and dedication made this result possible.”

“This case demonstrates our commitment to bringing to justice those who target American citizens serving their country abroad. We will be relentless in our efforts to hold terrorists like the defendant accountable for their crimes,” said U.S. Attorney Donoghue.

“Justice has been served on behalf of the victims of Spin Ghul’s grisly attack on U.S. military patrol members in 2003,” said Assistant Director in Charge Sweeney. “This al-Qaeda operative will no longer pose a threat to society. The FBI’s Joint Terrorism Task Force in New York is committed to working with our

partners here and abroad to bring terrorists to justice.”

“Harun was a dedicated and early soldier in Bin Laden’s al Qaeda, joining just weeks before the September 11th attacks,” said Commissioner O’Neill. “He launched attacks against U.S. service members in Afghanistan in 2003, killing two and injuring many others . After, he attempted to bomb the U.S. Embassy in Nigeria, among other western targets. Harun will rightfully spend the rest of his life behind bars. This department — with our partners in law enforcement — remains deeply committed to combating terrorism from New York to Nigeria — and everywhere in between.”

As proven at trial, Harun traveled from Saudi Arabia to Afghanistan weeks before Sept. 11, 2001, where he joined al-Qaeda, trained at al-Qaeda training camps, and eventually swore allegiance to Usama bin Laden. Harun, also known by the nom de guerre “Spin Ghul,” a Pashto name meaning “White Rose,” then traveled with other al-Qaeda jihadists to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan, where he operated under Abdul Hadi al-Iraqi, one of bin Laden’s deputies and a senior al-Qaeda military commander.

On April 25, 2003, Harun and fellow al-Qaeda jihadists ambushed a U.S. military patrol near the Afghan-Pakistan border. Harun fired machinegun rounds and threw grenades at American soldiers and allied Afghan Militia Forces while shouting “Allahu Akhbar” or “God is Great.” Two U.S. servicemen were killed in the attack — Private First Class Jerod Dennis, 19, of Oklahoma, and Airman First Class Raymond Losano, 24, of Texas — and several other soldiers were seriously wounded.

After the ambush, Harun met with senior al-Qaeda officials — including Abu Faraj al-Libi, then al-Qaeda’s external operations chief — to express his desire to commit acts of terror against U.S. interests outside Afghanistan. He specifically sought to carry out attacks similar to the 1998 al-Qaeda bombings of the U.S. Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, which resulted in more than 200 deaths and 4,000 injuries.

In the summer of 2003, senior al-Qaeda leaders dispatched Harun from Pakistan to Nigeria to bomb the U.S. Embassy in Abuja. Harun’s al-Qaeda handler directed him to obtain one ton of explosives for the bombing operation and to target Americans — whom he described as “the head of the snake” — at embassies, hotels and other “places where they gather for fun.” Upon arriving in Nigeria, Harun recruited accomplices, scouted the Embassy and other potential Western targets, and sent an accomplice to find explosives. He also met with local terrorist leaders to expand al-Qaeda’s terrorist network in West Africa.

In 2004, Harun directed a coconspirator to courier information and materials from Nigeria to al-Qaeda leaders in Pakistan. After learning that the coconspirator had been arrested in Pakistan, Harun fled Nigeria to Libya, from where he planned to enter Europe to carry out terrorist attacks against Western

interests. In early 2005, however, Harun was arrested by Libyan authorities and held in custody until his release in June 2011. Harun was arrested in June 2011 by Italian authorities. He was indicted on terrorism charges in the United States in February 2012 and extradited from Italy to the United States later that year.

Mr. O'Callaghan and Mr. Donoghue expressed their grateful appreciation to the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force, the Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs, the Department of Defense Army investigators, the Office of Military Commissions, the Italian Ministry of Justice, the Prosecutor's Office in Palermo, Italy, the Italian National Police, Guardia di Finanza and Carabinieri authorities for their support and assistance.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Shreve Ariail and Matthew J. Jacobs of the Eastern District of New York, and Trial Attorney Joseph N. Kaster of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section are in charge of the prosecution.

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