

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, August 17, 2018

Alaska Resident Sentenced to Life in Prison in Connection with Shooting at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport

MIAMI, FL - Esteban Santiago-Ruiz (Santiago) was sentenced today to life in prison by United States District Judge Beth Bloom, after previously pleading guilty to charges of committing acts of violence at an international airport resulting in five deaths and serious injuries, in connection with the mass-shooting at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport on January 6, 2017.

Benjamin G. Greenberg, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, Robert F. Lasky, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Miami Field Office, and Scott Israel, Sheriff, Broward County Sheriff's Office (BSO), made the announcement.

"While nothing can ever heal the wounds inflicted by the defendant's unspeakable and horrific acts of violence, we hope that the life sentence imposed today provides at least some sense of justice for the victims and their loved ones," said U.S. Attorney Benjamin G. Greenberg. "Though we all hope that such tragedy never again occurs, law enforcement remains committed to making our community safer and caring for victims of crime when tragedy strikes."

"My thoughts are with the victims, their loved ones and everyone affected by this senseless and cowardly act of violence," said Robert F. Lasky, Special Agent in Charge, FBI Miami. "While this sentence cannot erase what happened, may it serve to demonstrate society's commitment to honor and remember those who suffered that day."

"Since this horrible tragedy first occurred, my prayers have remained with the families," Sheriff Scott Israel said. "Though this sentencing won't change the outcome, I hope everyone affected by this killer's heinous actions can find a way to move forward and heal."

On May 23, 2018, Santiago pled guilty to five counts of committing acts of violence at an international airport causing death (Counts 1-5) and six counts of committing acts of violence at an international airport causing serious bodily injury (Counts 6-11), all in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 37(a)(1). Judge Bloom sentenced Santiago to five consecutive terms of life imprisonment on Counts 1-5, and consecutive terms of 20 years imprisonment on Counts 6-11.

According to court documents, shortly before 1 p.m. on January 6, 2017, Santiago carried out an armed attack on newly-arrived passengers retrieving their luggage in the Terminal 2 baggage claim area of the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Santiago pulled out a handgun and started shooting at numerous victims, aiming at the victims' heads and bodies until he was out of ammunition. Santiago killed five people and seriously wounded six more. Moments later, Santiago was confronted by a BSO deputy. He dropped his handgun on the ground and was arrested by BSO deputies. The FBI investigated the case along with the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Mr. Greenberg commended the investigative assistance of FBI and BSO in this matter. This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Ricardo A. Del Toro and Lawrence D. LaVecchio.



Court documents and information related to this case may be found on the website of the District Court for the Southern District of Florida at www.flsd.uscourts.gov or on <http://pacer.flsd.uscourts.gov>.

Topic(s):
National Security

Component(s):
USAO - Florida, Southern

Updated August 17, 2018