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Southern District of New York

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Manhattan Man Pleads Guilty To Attempting To Provide Material Support To Terrorist Organization

Jesus Wilfredo Encarnacion Attempted to Travel Overseas to Join Lashkar e-Tayyiba

<https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/manhattan-man-pleads-guilty-attempting-provide-material-support-terrorist-organization>

Geoffrey S. Berman, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and John C. Demers, the Assistant Attorney General for National Security, announced today that JESUS WILFREDO ENCARNACION, a/k/a "Jihadistsoldgier," "Jihadinhear," "Jihadinheart," "Lionofthegood," pled guilty to attempting to provide material support to Lashkar e-Tayyiba ("LeT"), a Pakistan-based designated foreign terrorist organization responsible for multiple high-profile attacks, including the infamous Mumbai attacks in November 2008. ENCARNACION pled guilty today before United States District Judge Ronnie Abrams.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney Geoffrey S. Berman said: "As he admitted today, Jesus Encarnacion plotted to travel abroad to join and train with the terrorist organization Lashkar e-Tayyiba, infamous worldwide for their brutal jihadist murder of innocent civilians, and to carry out shootings, bombings, and beheadings on their behalf. Thanks to the excellent work of the FBI and the NYPD, Encarnacion was intercepted before his deadly plot could take flight, and he now awaits sentencing for his crime."

Assistant Attorney General for National Security John C. Demers said: "Encarnacion admitted to attempting to travel to Pakistan to join a foreign terrorist organization and conspired over the internet with another individual, who's already pled guilty, to provide that organization with material support. The National Security Division is committed to identifying and holding accountable those who seek to join and support designated foreign terrorist organizations."

According to the criminal Complaint, Indictment, and other documents filed in the case, as well as statements made during the plea proceeding:

In November 2018, ENCARNACION expressed his desire to join a terrorist group in an online group chat, where he met another individual ("CC-1"). CC-1 introduced ENCARNACION to an individual who, unbeknownst to CC-1 or ENCARNACION, was in fact an undercover FBI employee ("UC-1"). ENCARNACION repeatedly expressed, in the course of recorded communications through a social media service with CC-1 and through an encrypted messaging service with UC-1, his allegiance to and support for LeT, which, since approximately 2001, has been designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization by both the United States Secretary of State and the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Over several months, ENCARNACION discussed his desire and plans to join LeT overseas so that he could receive training and participate in violent acts of terrorism. For example, ENCARNACION told UC-1 that he was "ready to kill and die in the name of Allah" and sought UC-1's assistance to help ENCARNACION travel abroad to serve as an "executioner" for LeT, stating, "I want to execute. I

want to behead. Shoot.” ENCARNACION further stated that he aspired to commit terrorist attacks (“a bombing and shooting”) in the United States, but lacked “guidance” and “guns” to do so.

By early 2019, ENCARNACION and UC-1 agreed on a plan that ENCARNACION believed would allow him to join LeT in Pakistan. ENCARNACION told UC-1 that he had made arrangements to travel to a particular city in Europe (the “European City”), as the first step in traveling to Pakistan to join LeT. ENCARNACION purchased an airline ticket for a flight scheduled to depart on February 7, 2019, from John F. Kennedy International Airport (“JFK Airport”) to the European City. On February 7, 2019, ENCARNACION traveled to JFK Airport, where he was arrested by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”) after he attempted to board that flight.

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ENCARNACION, 30, of New York, New York, pled guilty to one count of attempting to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization, which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. The maximum potential sentence in this case is prescribed by Congress and is provided here for informational purposes only, as any sentencing of the defendant will be determined by a judge.

ENCARNACION is scheduled to be sentenced by Judge Abrams on April 24, 2020, at 11:30 a.m.

Mr. Berman praised the outstanding efforts of the FBI’s New York Joint Terrorism Task Force, which principally consists of agents from the FBI and detectives from the New York City Police Department. Mr. Berman also thanked the Counterterrorism Section of the Department of Justice’s National Security Division, as well as the New York Office of U. S. Customs and Border Protection.

This prosecution is being handled by the Office’s Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys David W. Denton Jr. and Kimberly J. Ravener are in charge of the prosecution.

Topic(s):
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