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## Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

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# Manhattan Man Sentenced to 15 Years in Prison for Attempting to Provide Material Support to Terrorist Organization

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

The Department of Justice announced today that Jesus Wilfredo Encarnacion, a/k/a “Jihadistsoldgier,” “Jihadinhear,” “Jihadinheart,” “Lionofthegood,” was sentenced to 15 years in prison for 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. In addition, Encarnacion was sentenced to a lifetime term of supervised release. Encarnacion pleaded guilty on Jan. 22, 2020, before United States District Judge Ronnie Abrams, who also imposed today’s sentence.

“Unfortunately, individuals continue to attempt to travel to foreign countries to support terrorist organizations. Encarnacion’s sentence reflects the seriousness with which the justice system takes these efforts,” said Assistant Attorney General for National Security John C. Demers. “The National Security Division remains committed to identifying and holding accountable those who seek to join and support designated foreign terrorist organizations.”

“Jesus Encarnacion plotted to travel abroad, to join and train with Lashkar e-Tayyiba, infamous worldwide for the jihadist murder of innocent civilians, and to carry out shootings, bombings, and beheadings in behalf of that terrorist organization,” said Acting U.S. Attorney Audrey Strauss for the Southern District of New York. “Thanks to the FBI, the NYPD, and the Joint Terrorist Task Force, Encarnacion has been sentenced to a lengthy prison term for his crime.”

According to the criminal complaint, indictment, other court filings, and statements during court proceedings:

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 Feb. 7, 2019, from John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK Airport) to the European City. On Feb. 7, 2019, Encarnacion traveled to JFK Airport, where he was arrested by the FBI after he attempted to board that flight.

In addition to the prison term, Encarnacion was also sentenced to serve a life term of supervised release.

Assistant Attorney General Demers and Ms. Strauss 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. Ms. Strauss 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, with assistance from Bridget Behling of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section.

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