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District of Massachusetts

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Massachusetts Man Re-Sentenced to 30 Years in Prison for Conspiring to Murder U.S. Citizens, Including Police, on Behalf of ISIS

BOSTON – An Everett man was re-sentenced yesterday to 30 years in prison for conspiring to murder U.S. citizens, including police officers, on behalf of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

David Daoud Wright, a/k/a Dawud Sharif Abdul Khaliq, a/k/a Dawud Sharif Abdul Khaliq, 31, of Everett, Mass., was re-sentenced by U.S. Senior District Court Judge Douglas P. Woodlock to 30 years in prison and a lifetime of supervised release. In December 2017, Wright was sentenced to 28 years in prison after a federal jury convicted him of conspiracy to provide material support to ISIS, conspiracy to commit acts of terrorism transcending national boundaries, conspiracy to obstruct justice and obstruction of justice. In August 2019, the First Circuit Court of Appeals vacated count one (conspiracy to provide material support to ISIS) and affirmed the other counts. The case was remanded to the district court for re-sentencing, which took place yesterday.

“Mr. Wright is a homegrown terrorist who plotted to kill innocent Americans on behalf of ISIS, including specifically targeting police officers,” said United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling. “He radicalized himself and others, pledged allegiance to a terrorist organization, and conspired with his now-deceased uncle to kill police officers with a combat knife. This case is a reminder of the persistent terrorism threat to our citizens and law enforcement officers.”

“ISIS soldier David Wright betrayed his country and forfeited his freedom when he conspired with others to attack and murder innocent civilians and police officers in support of a sworn, barbaric enemy of the United States. This sentence ensures they remain worlds apart,” said Joseph R. Bonavolonta, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Boston Division. “Identifying and disrupting terrorist plots, both foreign and domestic, is the FBI’s top priority, and the round-the-clock teamwork of our partners within our Massachusetts Joint Terrorism Task Force saved innocent lives, and kept Wright’s endgame of martyrdom out of reach.”

Beginning in at least February 2015, Wright began discussing ISIS’ call to kill non-believers in the United States with his uncle, Usaamah Abdullah Rahim, and co-defendant Nicholas Alexander Rovinski. Specifically, Wright created a “martyrdom” operation cell in Massachusetts. In April 2015, Wright created a Twitter page for the “Lions of America” and published a document entitled, Internal Conquest, on the internet in which Wright called on Muslims living in the United States to kill their fellow citizens.

Wright also plotted with Rahim and Rovinski to behead U.S. citizens at the direction of ISIS, and identified a New York woman as the first beheading target. Rahim purchased three knives for this plot. In addition, Wright's ISIS cell was in direct communication with ISIS recruiter and attack facilitator, Junaid Hussain, who provided Rahim with an encrypted document containing details about the intended victim. In August 2015, Hussain was killed in an airstrike in Raqqah, Syria.

In preparation for their attack, Wright conducted extensive research on weapons, knives, machetes, bombing making components and methods to subdue their victims. Wright also conducted research on "what tranquilizer put humans to sleep instantly" and "how to start a secret militia in the United States."

On June 2, 2015, Wright caused a terrorist attack in Massachusetts and caused his uncle, Rahim, to be killed. Rahim was shot and killed after he attacked law enforcement officers with a large fighting knife in a Roslindale, Mass., parking lot. Two hours before Rahim attacked the police, Wright directed and encouraged Rahim to pursue martyrdom by attacking the "boys in blue." Within minutes of learning of his uncle's death from a family member, Wright deleted data from his laptop computer by restoring it to factory settings and deleted call logs on his cellphone that showed that he had spoken to Rahim that morning. Wright also instructed Rahim to destroy his electronic devices before attacking the police officers.

U.S. Attorney Lelling and FBI SAC Bonavolonta made the announcement. This investigation was conducted by the Boston Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF); Boston Police Department; Massachusetts State Police; Everett Police Department; and Customs and Border Protection. The Suffolk District Attorney's Office and police in the United Kingdom also provided valuable assistance. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney B. Stephanie Siegmann, Chief of Lelling's National Security Unit prosecuted the case.

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