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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Western District of Washington

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, June 1, 2021

Seattle man charged with attempting to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization

Arrested at Sea-Tac airport as he prepared to travel to join ISIS

Seattle – A Seattle man was arrested on Friday, May 28, at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport on criminal charges related to his alleged efforts to join Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), a designated foreign terrorist organization, in order to engage in violent acts of terrorism in the Middle East or the United States.

According to court documents, Elvin Hunter Bgorn Williams, 20, of Seattle, was arrested as he prepared to board an international flight following a lengthy investigation into his efforts to join ISIS.

“As alleged, Williams was determined to support ISIS either by traveling overseas to join and fight with the terrorist organization, or by conducting an attack here in the United States,” said Assistant Attorney General John C. Demers for the Justice Department’s National Security Division. “The FBI was just as determined to stop him, and he was intercepted as he tried to make his way abroad. The threat of terrorism at home and abroad remains, and the National Security Division is committed to holding accountable those who would provide material support to foreign terrorist organizations. I want to thank the agents, analysts, and prosecutors who are responsible for this case.”

“This defendant proved persistent in his efforts to join ISIS – speaking with enthusiasm about acts of horrific bloodshed in the Middle East and here at home,” said Acting U.S. Attorney Tessa M. Gorman for the Western District of Washington. “I want to commend those citizens who contacted law enforcement – including his family and faith community - expressing concerns about the defendant’s radicalization. Their courage to speak up and work with law enforcement was important to ensure public safety.”

“This individual self-radicalized, pledged loyalty to ISIS, and became consumed with activities to join the cause overseas,” said Special Agent in Charge Donald M. Voiret of the FBI Seattle Field Office. “We are grateful for the concerned citizens and family members who reported his behavior on multiple occasions and all of the law enforcement agencies who worked tirelessly on this case. These combined efforts no doubt saved lives.”

In November 2020, a member of a Seattle-area mosque contacted the FBI with concerns about Williams. The mosque had attempted to provide support and guidance to Williams, but members became aware he was deeply involved in ISIS propaganda. Williams was using mosque-provided electronic devices to engage

in online chats with ISIS radicals and to view ISIS propaganda videos of beheadings and other acts of violence. In November 2020, Williams allegedly swore an oath of allegiance to ISIS.

Using confidential sources close to Williams, the FBI monitored his activity and became aware of his efforts to travel to the Middle East and join ISIS. Williams expressed to his associates that if he could not travel overseas, he would commit an attack in the U.S. on behalf of ISIS. Williams began communicating with those he believed were ISIS recruiters who could get him to an ISIS terror cell in the Middle East or other parts of the world.

In early May 2021, Williams booked airline travel from Seattle to Amsterdam and on to Egypt to join ISIS. On Friday May 28, 2021, he went to Sea-Tac Airport to catch the first leg of his international flight. Williams was arrested at the departure gate.

Williams is charged with attempting to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization. If convicted, he faces up to 20 years in prison. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

The case is being investigated by the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force in Seattle with assistance from the King County Sheriff's Office; U.S. Customs and Border Protection; Homeland Security Investigations; Federal Air Marshals; U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services; U.S Marshals Service; U.S. Postal Inspection Service; Transportation Security Administration; Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; Naval Criminal Investigative Service; Seattle Police Department; Bellevue Police Department; and Port of Seattle Police Department.

Assistant United States Attorney Todd Greenberg of the Western District of Washington's Violent Crimes and Terrorism Unit, and Trial Attorney Andrew Sigler of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section are prosecuting the case.

A complaint is merely an allegation and all defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

[williams_complaint_0.pdf](#)

Attachment(s):

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Topic(s):

Counterterrorism

Component(s):

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Contact:

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