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Department of Justice

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Third and Final Defendant Pleads Guilty to Conspiring to Provide Material Support to ISIS

Today, Mohamed Haji, 28, of Lansing, Michigan, pleaded guilty to conspiring to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization, namely the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, aka ISIS. In January 2020, his co-defendants Muse Muse and Mohamud Muse pleaded guilty to the same offense.

According to court documents, between December 2018 and January 2019, co-defendant Muse Muse coordinated with an individual he believed to be a Somali ISIS fighter to wire funds to be used to purchase airline tickets for travel to Mogadishu, Somalia, where he believed he would meet an ISIS representative. All three defendants: picked up money to provide Muse Muse the funds to travel to join ISIS, pledged allegiance to ISIS in recorded videos, and submitted their videos to individuals they believed were associated with ISIS. Additionally, throughout the conspiracy, all three defendants participated in numerous discussions regarding traveling overseas to join ISIS and even adopted fighter aliases by which they would be known when fighting for ISIS.

On Jan. 21, 2019, special agents of the FBI and members of its Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) arrested defendant Muse Muse at the Gerald R. Ford International Airport in Grand Rapids, after he checked in for a flight to the first of a series of destinations on his way to Mogadishu with the goal of joining ISIS. Shortly thereafter, his brother Mohamud Muse and cousin Mohamed Haji were arrested as co-conspirators.

Muse, Mohamud Muse and Haji were indicted by a federal grand jury on multiple charges, including conspiracy to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization. This federal offense required the government to prove that Haji: (1) agreed with one or more individuals to provide material support or resources (which includes personnel) to ISIS, a foreign terrorist organization; (2) knew that ISIS was a designated foreign terrorist organization or had engaged or engages in terrorist activity; and (3) is a U.S. national or some part of the offense occurred in the United States. Haji admitted each of those elements of the crime. He is scheduled to be sentenced on Sept. 22 and faces a maximum of 20 years in prison. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Assistant Attorney General John C. Demers of the Justice Department's National Security Division and U.S. Attorney Andrew Birge for the Western District of Michigan made the announcement.

The FBI is investigating the case, with valuable assistance provided by the Michigan State Police, Kent County Sheriff's Office, Eaton County Sheriff's Office, Michigan State University Police Department, Lansing Police Department, Grand Rapids Police Department, Grand Rapids Airport Police, the U.S. Marshals Service, and the Department of Homeland Security's Transportation Security Administration, Federal Air Marshals, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Trial Attorney David Smith of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section and Assistant U.S. Attorneys Clay M. West and Christopher M. O'Connor of the Western District of Michigan are prosecuting the case.

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