

PRESS RELEASE

Pakistani National Charged for Plotting Terrorist Attack in New York City in Support of ISIS

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For Immediate Release

Office of Public Affairs

Muhammad Shahzeb Khan, also known as Shazeb Jadoon, Attempted to Enter the United States to Carry Out a Mass Shooting at a Jewish Center in New York City

<https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/pakistani-national-charged-plotting-terrorist-attack-new-york-city-support-isis>

A Pakistani citizen residing in Canada, Muhammad Shahzeb Khan, 20, also known as Shahzeb Jadoon, was arrested on Sept. 4 in Canada in connection with a complaint filed in the Southern District of New York. Khan was charged with attempting to provide material support and resources to a designated foreign terrorist organization (FTO), the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS).

"The defendant is alleged to have planned a terrorist attack in New York City around October 7th of this year with the stated goal of slaughtering, in the name of ISIS, as many Jewish people as possible," said Attorney General Merrick B. Garland. "Thanks to the investigative work of the FBI, and the quick action of our Canadian law enforcement partners, the defendant was taken into custody. As I said to Canada's Minister of Public Safety yesterday, we are deeply grateful to our Canadian partners for their critical law enforcement actions in this matter. Jewish communities — like all communities in this country — should not have to fear that they will be targeted by a hate-fueled terrorist attack. The Justice Department will continue to work closely with our domestic and international partners to aggressively counter the threat posed by ISIS and other terrorist organizations and their supporters."

"The defendant was allegedly determined to kill Jewish people here in the United States, nearly one year after Hamas' horrific attack on Israel. This investigation was led by the FBI, and I am proud of the terrific work by the FBI team and our partners to disrupt

Khan's plan." said FBI Director Christopher Wray. "The FBI will continue to work closely with our partners to investigate and hold accountable those who seek to commit violence in the name of ISIS or other terrorist organizations. Fighting terrorism remains the FBI's top priority."

As alleged in the complaint, Khan, who resided in Canada, attempted to travel from Canada to New York City, where he intended to use automatic and semi-automatic weapons to carry out a mass shooting in support of ISIS at a Jewish center in Brooklyn, New York. Khan began posting on social media and communicating with others on an encrypted messaging application about his support for ISIS in or about November 2023, when, among other things, Khan distributed ISIS propaganda videos and literature. Subsequently, Khan began communicating with two undercover law enforcement officers (collectively, the UCs).

During those conversations, Khan confirmed that he and a U.S.-based ISIS supporter (Associate-1) had been planning to carry out an attack in a particular U.S. city (City-1). Among other things, Khan said that he had been actively attempting to create "a real offline cell" of ISIS supporters to carry out a "coordinated assault" in City-1 using AR-style rifles to "target[] Israeli Jewish chabads . . . scattered all around [City-1]." During subsequent conversations, Khan repeatedly instructed the UCs to obtain AR-style assault rifles, ammunition, and other materials to carry out the attacks, and identified the specific locations in City-1 where the attacks would take place. Khan also provided details about how he would cross the border from Canada into the United States to conduct the attacks. During these conversations with the UCs, Khan emphasized that "Oct 7th and oct 11th are the best days for targeting the jews" because "oct 7 they will surely have some protests and oct 11 is yom.kippur."

On or about Aug. 20, Khan changed his target location from City-1 to New York City. After initially suggesting certain neighborhoods in New York City to the UCs, Khan decided to target Location-1, a Jewish center located in Brooklyn, New York. Khan told the UCs that he planned to carry out this attack on or around Oct. 7, 2024 — which Khan recognized as the one-year anniversary of the brutal terrorist attacks in Israel by Hamas, a designated FTO, which, on Oct. 7, 2023, launched a wave of violent, large-scale terrorist attacks in Israel. In support of his choice of New York City as his target location, Khan boasted that "New york is perfect to target jews" because it has the "largest Jewish population In america" and therefore, "even if we dont attack a[n] Event[,] we could rack up easily a lot of jews." Khan proclaimed that "we are going to nyc to slaughter them," and sent a photograph of the specific area inside of Location-1 where he planned to carry out the attack.

Thereafter, Khan continued to urge the UCs to acquire AR-style rifles, ammunition, and other equipment for his attack, including “some good hunting [knives] so we can slit their throats.” Khan repeatedly reiterated his desire to carry out the attack in support of ISIS, and discussed planning for the attack, including by identifying rental properties close to Location-1 and paying for a human smuggler to help him reach and cross the border from Canada into the United States. During one communication, Khan noted that “if we succeed with our plan this would be the largest Attack on US soil since 9/11.”

On or about Sept. 4, as Khan said he planned to do in connection with his attack, Khan attempted to reach the U.S.-Canada border. To do so, Khan used three separate cars to travel across Canada towards the United States, before he was stopped in or around Ormstown, Canada, approximately 12 miles from the U.S.-Canada border.

Khan is charged with one count of attempting to provide material support and resources to a designated foreign terrorist organization. If convicted, he faces a maximum sentence 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.

The FBI New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles Field Offices are investigating the case. The Justice Department is grateful to Canadian law enforcement for their actions in this matter. The Office of International Affairs of the Department of Justice’s Criminal Division is seeking the extradition of Khan from Canada.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Kaylan E. Lasky and David J. Robles for the Southern District of New York and Trial Attorney Kevin C. Nunnally of the Justice Department’s National Security Division’s Counterterrorism Section are prosecuting the case.

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

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