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Former Iraqi Terrorists Living in Kentucky Sentenced for Terrorist Activities

Defendants Attempted to Ship Weapons and Money from U.S. to Iraqi Insurgents Defendants Admitted to Extensive Terrorist Activities Against U.S. Soldiers in Iraq

Two Iraqi citizens living in Bowling Green, Ky., who admitted using improvised explosive devices (IEDs) against U.S. soldiers in Iraq and who attempted to send weapons and money to Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) for the purpose of killing U.S. soldiers, were sentenced today to serve federal prison terms by Senior Judge Thomas B. Russell in U.S. District Court for the Western District of Kentucky.

The sentences was announced Lisa Monaco, Assistant Attorney General for National Security; David J. Hale, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Kentucky; and Perrye K. Turner, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Louisville Division.

Mohanad Shareef Hammadi, 25, a former resident of Iraq, was sentenced to life in federal prison, and Waad Ramadan Alwan, 31, a former resident of Iraq, was sentenced to 40 years in federal prison, followed by a life term of supervised release. Both defendants had pleaded guilty to federal terrorism charges.

"These two former Iraqi insurgents participated in terrorist activities overseas and attempted to continue providing material support to terrorists while they lived here in the United States. With today's sentences, both men are being held accountable," said Assistant Attorney General Monaco. "I thank the dedicated professionals in the law enforcement and intelligence communities who were responsible for this successful outcome."

"These are experienced terrorists who willingly and enthusiastically participated in what they believed were insurgent support operations designed to harm American soldiers in Iraq," stated U.S. Attorney Hale. "The serious crimes of both men merit lengthy punishment, and only the value of Alwan's immediate and extensive cooperation with law enforcement justifies our recommendation of a reduced sentence for him. Bringing these men to justice is the result of a comprehensive law enforcement effort. The FBI agents of the Louisville Division, along with the federal and local law enforcement members of the Joint Terrorism Task Forces here in Kentucky, including the Bowling Green Police Department, and our many other partners, are to be commended."

"Protecting the United States from terrorist attacks remains the FBI's top priority," said FBI Special Agent in Charge Turner. "Using our growing suite of investigative and intelligence capabilities, FBI agents and analysts assigned to our Bowling Green office were able to neutralize a potential threat. Our local Joint Terrorism Task Force, comprised of FBI Agents and other local, state and federal agencies from across the Commonwealth, remains committed to dismantling extremist networks and cutting off financing and other forms of support provided by terrorist sympathizers, whether they are operating in Kentucky or worldwide."

"Today, the sentencing of Alwan and Hammadi represents the culmination of the extensive, effective and focused efforts of the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Kentucky Division of the FBI for their roles in the investigation and prosecution of

these would-be terrorists. I want to thank U.S. Attorney David Hale, the Kentucky Division of the FBI and the members of the FBI Bowling Green local office for their individual and collective efforts in bringing Alwan and Hammadi to justice for their crimes against the people of Kentucky and the United States,” stated Chief Doug Hawkins, Bowling Green Police Department.

Alwan, whose fingerprints were found on an unexploded IED found in Iraq, pleaded guilty earlier in the case on Dec. 16, 2011, to all counts of a 23-count federal indictment. He pleaded guilty to conspiring to kill U.S. nationals abroad; conspiring to use a weapon of mass destruction (explosives) against U.S. nationals abroad; distributing information on the manufacture and use of IEDs; attempting to provide material support to terrorists and to AQI and conspiring to transfer, possess and export Stinger missiles.

Hammadi pleaded guilty on Aug. 21, 2012, to a 12-count superseding indictment. Charges against him included attempting to provide material support to terrorists and to AQI; conspiring to transfer, possess and export Stinger missiles; and making a false statement in an immigration application. At today’s sentencing, at the request of the United States, Alwan received a reduced sentence due to his cooperation with federal law enforcement. The United States asked for no reduction of Hammadi’s sentence.

According to information presented by the United States in connection with today’s sentencings, Hammadi and Alwan both admitted, in FBI interviews that followed waiver of their Miranda rights, to participation in the purported material support operations in Kentucky, and both provided the FBI details of their prior involvement in insurgent activities while living in Iraq. Both men believed their activities in Kentucky were supporting AQI. Alwan admitted participating in IED attacks against U.S. soldiers in Iraq, and Hammadi admitted to participating in 10 to 11 IED attacks as well as shooting at a U.S. soldier in an observation tower.

Court documents filed in this case reveal that the Bowling Green office of the FBI’s Louisville Division initiated an investigation of Alwan in which they used a confidential human source (CHS). The CHS met with Alwan and recorded their meetings and conversations beginning in August 2010. The CHS represented to Alwan that he was working with a group to ship money and weapons to Mujahadeen in Iraq. From September 2010 through May 2011, Alwan participated in ten separate operations to send weapons and money that he believed were destined for terrorists in Iraq. Between October 2010 and January 2011, Alwan drew diagrams of multiple types of IEDs and instructed the CHS how to make them. In January 2011, Alwan recruited Hammadi, a fellow Iraqi national living in Bowling Green, to assist in these material support operations. Beginning in January 2011 and continuing until his arrest in late May 2011, Hammadi participated with Alwan in helping load money and weapons that he believed were destined for terrorists in Iraq.

Documents filed by the United States describe in detail the material support activities of the men in Bowling Green. Without Hammadi present, Alwan loaded money and weapons he believed were being sent to Iraq on five occasions from September 2010 through February 2011, handling five rocket-propelled grenade launchers, five machine guns, two sniper rifles, two cases of C4 explosive and what he believed to be \$375,000. After Hammadi joined Alwan in January 2011, the two men loaded money and weapons together on five occasions from January to May 2011. Together, on these five occasions, they loaded five rocket-propelled grenade launchers, five machine guns, five cases of C4 explosive, two sniper rifles, one box of 12 hand grenades, two Stinger surface-to-air missile launchers and what they believed to be a total of \$565,000. Alwan and Hammadi were recorded by video during these operations.

In speaking with the CHS, Alwan spoke of his efforts to kill U.S. soldiers in Iraq, stating “lunch and dinner would be an American.” Hammadi told the CHS that he had experience in Iraq with “Strelas” (a Russian made, portable, shoulder-fired surface-to-air missile launcher) and discussed shipping “Strelas” in future operations.

According to the charging documents, Hammadi entered the United States in July 2009, and, after first residing in Las Vegas, moved to Bowling Green. Hammadi and Alwan were arrested on May 25, 2011, in Bowling Green on criminal complaints. Both defendants were closely monitored by federal law enforcement authorities in the months leading up to their arrests. Neither was charged with plotting attacks within the United States. All of the weapons, including Stinger missiles, had been rendered inert before being handled by Hammadi and Alwan. The weapons and money handled by the men in the United States were never provided to AQI, but instead were carefully controlled by law enforcement as part of the undercover operation.

This case was investigated by the Louisville Division of the FBI. Assisting in the investigation were members of the Louisville and Lexington Joint Terrorism Task Forces, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Marshals Service, U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and the Bowling Green Police Department.

The prosecution was handled by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Michael Bennett and Bryan Calhoun from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Kentucky and Trial Attorney Larry Schneider from the Counterterrorism Section of the Justice Department's National Security Division.

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