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## Department of Justice

Office of Public Affairs

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# Akayed Ullah Convicted for Detonation of a Bomb in New York City

Akayed Ullah, 28, of Brooklyn, New York, and a lawful permanent resident from Bangladesh, was convicted today on all six counts of the Indictment, which charged him with offenses related to the detonation and attempted detonation of a bomb in a subway station near the New York Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York City on Dec. 11, 2017. Ullah, who faces a possible sentence of life in prison, is scheduled to be sentenced on April 5, 2019, by the Honorable Richard J. Sullivan, who presided over the one-week trial.

Assistant Attorney General for National Security John C. Demers and U.S. Attorney Geoffrey S. Berman for the Southern District of New York made the announcement.

“Less than a year ago, Ullah constructed a pipe bomb and detonated it in a mass transit hub in the heart of New York City to harm and terrorize as many people as possible, all on behalf of ISIS. His crime reminds us that the threat of radical Islamist terrorism remains real,” said Assistant Attorney General Demers. “This guilty verdict holds Ullah accountable, and he faces a potential life term in federal prison for his crimes. I want to thank all the agents and prosecutors whose outstanding work made this result possible.”

“Late last year, Akayed Ullah detonated a bomb during the bustle of morning rush hour under the Port Authority Bus Terminal,” said U.S. Attorney Berman. “Ullah’s sinister purpose was to harm and terrorize as many innocent people in his path as possible, by using deadly violence to make a political statement. Ullah’s conviction by a unanimous jury of New Yorkers falls on Election Day, which fittingly underscores the core principles of American democracy and spirit: Americans engage in the political process through votes, not violence. Today, Ullah stands convicted, he faces a potential life sentence, and his purpose failed. New York City remains a shining symbol of freedom and hope.”

As set forth in the Complaint, Indictment, and the evidence presented at trial:

### Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham

ISIS is a foreign terrorist organization based in the Middle East and Africa whose publicly stated purpose is the establishment of an Islamic state or caliphate based in the Middle East and Africa that encompasses all Muslims worldwide. ISIS has pursued the objective of an Islamic state through, among other things, killing and deliberate targeting of civilians, mass executions, persecution of individuals and communities on the basis of their religion, nationality, or ethnicity, kidnapping of civilians, forced displacement of Shia communities and minority groups, killing and maiming of children, rape, and other forms of sexual violence. ISIS has recruited thousands of foreign fighters from across the globe to assist with its efforts to expand its so-called caliphate in Iraq, Syria, and other locations in Africa and the Middle East, and has leveraged technology to spread its violent extremist ideology and for incitement to commit terrorist acts.

### The Dec. 11, 2017 Attack

On Dec. 11, 2017, at approximately 7:20 a.m., Akayed Ullah detonated an improvised explosive device (“IED”) inside a subway terminal (the “Subway Terminal”) in or around the New York Port Authority Bus Terminal located at West 42nd

Street and Eighth Avenue in New York, New York (the “December 11 Attack”). Shortly after the blast, members of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Police Department (“PAPD”) located Ullah lying on the ground in the vicinity of the explosion. Surveillance footage captured Ullah walking through the Subway Terminal and detonating his IED.

Ullah was taken into custody by law enforcement. During the course of Ullah’s arrest, law enforcement officers located on his person and in the surrounding area what appeared to be the components of an exploded pipe bomb (the “Pipe Bomb”). Specifically, law enforcement located, among other items, (i) a nine-volt battery inside Ullah’s pants pocket; (ii) wires connected to the battery and running underneath Ullah’s jacket; (iii) two plastic zip ties underneath Ullah’s jacket; (iv) several fragments of a metal pipe, including pieces of a metal end cap, on the ground; (v) the remnants of what appeared to be a Christmas tree lightbulb attached to wires; (vi) metal screws; and (vii) pieces of what appear to be plastic zip ties, among other items.

After Ullah was taken into custody, he was transferred to Bellevue Hospital, where he made statements to law enforcement officers after waiving his *Miranda* rights. During that interview, Ullah stated, among other things, the following:

- Ullah constructed the Pipe Bomb and carried out the Dec. 11 Attack. Ullah was inspired by ISIS to carry out the Dec. 11 Attack, and stated, among other things, “I did it for the Islamic State.”
- Ullah constructed the Pipe Bomb at his residence in Brooklyn (“the Residence”).
- The Pipe Bomb was composed of a metal pipe, which Ullah filled with explosive material that he created. Ullah used Christmas tree lights, wires, and a nine-volt battery as a trigger to detonate the Pipe Bomb. Ullah filled the Pipe Bomb with metal screws, which he believed would cause maximum damage. Ullah used zip ties to secure the Pipe Bomb to his body.
- Ullah carried out the Dec. 11 Attack in part because of the United States Government’s policies in, among other places, the Middle East. One of Ullah’s goals in carrying out the Dec. 11 Attack was to terrorize as many people as possible. He chose to carry out the attack on a work day because he believed that there would be more people present.
- Ullah’s radicalization began no later than approximately 2014. Ullah viewed pro-ISIS materials online, including a video instructing, in substance, that if supporters of ISIS were unable to travel overseas to join ISIS, they should carry out attacks in their homelands. He began researching how to build IEDs on the Internet approximately one year prior to the attack.
- On the morning of Dec. 11, 2017, shortly before carrying out the attack, Ullah posted a statement on his Facebook account referring to the President of the United States, stating, in substance, “Trump you failed to protect your nation.” Ullah also posted a statement that he believed would be understood by members and supporters of ISIS to convey that Ullah carried out the attack in the name of ISIS.

#### **Items Recovered from Ullah’s Residence**

On Dec. 11, 2017, law enforcement agents searched the Residence pursuant to a judicially authorized search warrant. Law enforcement agents recovered, among other items, (i) multiple pieces of metal pipes; (ii) pieces of wire and fragments of what appear to be Christmas tree lights; (iii) multiple screws consistent with the screws recovered at the scene of the Dec. 11 Attack; and (iv) a passport in Ullah’s name with multiple handwritten notations, including: “O AMERICA, DIE IN YOUR RAGE.”

\* \* \*

Ullah was convicted of one count of provision of material support and resources to a designated foreign terrorist organization, which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison; one count of using and attempting to use a weapon of mass destruction, which carries a maximum sentence of life in prison; one count of bombing and attempting to bomb a place of public use, which carries a maximum sentence of life in prison; one count of destruction of property by means of fire or explosives, which carries a mandatory minimum sentence of five years in prison and a potential maximum sentence of 20 years in prison; and use of a destructive device in furtherance of a crime of violence, namely, the use and attempted use of a weapon of mass destruction, which carries a mandatory minimum consecutive sentence of 30 years in prison and potential maximum of life, all in connection with Ullah’s alleged detonation of an explosive device in New York City.

The maximum potential sentences in this case are prescribed by Congress and are provided here for informational purposes only, as any sentencing of the defendant will be determined by Judge Sullivan.

Mr. Demers and Mr. Berman praised the outstanding investigative efforts of the FBI, the NYPD, the Department of Homeland Security, Homeland Security Investigations (“HSI”), and the PAPD. Ullah’s conviction is the result of the close cooperative efforts of the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York, the FBI’s Joint Terrorism Task Force – which consists of law enforcement officers of the FBI, NYPD, HSI, PAPD, and other agencies – and the U.S. Department of Justice’s National Security Division.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Shawn G. Crowley, Rebekah Donaleski, and George D. Turner of the Southern District of New York are in charge of the prosecution, with assistance from Trial Attorney Jerome J. Teresinski of the Counterterrorism Section of the Justice Department’s National Security Division.

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