

Department of Justice

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NEW YORK MAN ARRESTED FOR ATTEMPTING TO PROVIDE MATERIAL SUPPORT TO ISIS

WASHINGTON – Saddam Mohamed Raishani, a/k/a “Adam Raishani,” 30, of the Bronx was arrested last night at John F. Kennedy International Airport (“JFK Airport”) in Queens, New York. Raishani was charged by a criminal Complaint earlier today with attempting to provide material support to the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (“ISIS” or the “Islamic State”), a designated foreign terrorist organization. Raishani is expected to be presented later today before Magistrate Judge James L. Cott in Manhattan federal court.

Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security Dana Boente, Acting U.S. Attorney Joon H. Kim for the Southern District of New York, Assistant Director in Charge William F. Sweeney Jr. of the FBI’s New York Field Office, and Commissioner James P. O’Neill of the NYPD made the announcement.

“According to the complaint, Raishani attempted to travel overseas to join ISIS and to provide material support to the designated terrorist organization,” said Acting Assistant Attorney General Boente. “The National Security Division’s highest priority is countering terrorist threats, and we will continue to work to stem the flow of foreign fighters abroad and bring to justice those who attempt to provide material support to designated foreign terrorist organizations. I would like to thank all of the agents, analysts and prosecutors who are responsible for this case.”

“As alleged, Saddam Mohamed Raishani, a Bronx man, plotted to travel to Syria to join and train with the terrorist organization ISIS,” said Acting Manhattan U.S. Attorney Kim. “Having already helped another man make that trip to ISIS’s heartland, Raishani allegedly acted on his own desire to wage violent jihad, planning to leave his family and life in New York City for the battlefields of the Middle East. Thanks to the excellent work of the FBI and NYPD, Raishani’s alleged plan to support this deadly terrorist organization was cut short at the airport and now he will face federal terrorism charges.”

“This case is another alleged instance of the nature of the terrorism threat and its reach into communities here at home,” said Assistant Director in Charge Sweeney Jr. “It is also a great example of the coordination which exists among local and federal law enforcement partners who work together to stop these alleged threats and interdict individuals allegedly determined on joining a terrorist organization intent on conducting violence around the globe. The FBI’s JTTF will continue to work with our partners, both here and abroad, to prevent acts of terrorism.”

“As we have seen many times before, allegedly attempting to join a designated terrorist organization usually has one outcome: arrest,” said Commissioner O’Neill. “Thank you to the NYPD detectives and FBI agents who, through the original Joint Terrorism Task Force, remain relentless in their focus to keep New York City safe.”

As alleged in the criminal Complaint,^[1] filed today in Manhattan federal court:

In January 2017, Raishani contacted an individual who was, unbeknownst to Raishani, a confidential source working at the direction of law enforcement (the “CS”). During a meeting with the CS, Raishani told the CS that Raishani had a friend (“Person-1”), who had left New York to join the Islamic State some time ago.^[2] Raishani told the CS that prior to Person-1’s departure, Raishani took Person-1 shopping to buy supplies to bring to the Islamic State. Raishani also said to the CS that, on the day of Person-1’s departure, Raishani gave money to Person-1 and drove Person-1 to JFK Airport. In later meetings with the CS, Raishani expressed his regret at not having traveled with Person-1 to join ISIS. Raishani also indicated his desire to wage jihad and his belief that the Quran can be read to justify the violence, including beheadings, engaged in by ISIS.

As part of the investigation, the CS introduced Raishani to an undercover law enforcement officer (“UC-1”), who was posing as an individual who wanted to travel abroad to fight for ISIS. During meetings with the CS and UC-1, Raishani expressed his desire to travel abroad to join ISIS. For example, Raishani stated that he had been in contact with other ISIS supporters and no longer felt comfortable in the United States. He also showed UC-1 a video that appeared to depict ISIS supporters discussing their desire to travel overseas to join ISIS and its ongoing fight. Raishani further showed the CS and UC-1 an ISIS video that appeared to depict ISIS members in Yemen killing civilians who did not support ISIS.

In addition, Raishani advised the CS and UC-1 as to how they could avoid detection by law enforcement. For example, Raishani advised the CS to cover the camera on the CS’s computer and turn off the computer’s microphone when watching pro-ISIS videos online. Raishani also advised the CS to use a particular Internet browser (the “Browser”) to hide their online activity, and explained that he used the Browser to watch ISIS and jihadi videos online. Furthermore, Raishani himself put on gloves when using a laptop and viewing pro-ISIS and pro-jihadi videos online. Moreover, Raishani told UC-1 that if they traveled together to join ISIS, Raishani, a home health aide, could pose as a nurse and UC-1 could pose as a refugee aid worker, in order to cross international borders without being stopped and questioned by authorities. Finally, Raishani told the CS and UC-1 that he (Raishani) had to be careful because he believed that federal authorities were monitoring his activities.

By April 2017, Raishani was actively planning to travel abroad to join ISIS. The CS told Raishani that, through a family acquaintance, the CS might be able to obtain contact information

^[1] As the introductory phrase signifies, the entirety of the text of the Complaint and the description of the Complaint set forth below are only allegations, and every fact described should be treated as an allegation.

^[2] Communications and conversations discussed herein are described in substance and in part.

for an ISIS affiliate capable of facilitating travel to join ISIS. In reality, the purported facilitator was an FBI employee acting in an undercover capacity (“UC-2”). In May 2017, Raishani contacted UC-2 and said that he had previously helped another individual travel to join ISIS. Raishani further told UC-2 that he was seeking guidance for his own “hijrah,” an Arabic term normally used to refer to migration, but which is also used by ISIS supporters to refer to traveling overseas to join ISIS and engage in jihad. In subsequent conversations with the CS, UC-1, and/or UC-2, Raishani stated that he aspired to travel to Syria to join ISIS and that he aimed to travel before the end of Ramadan, an Islamic holy month that runs from approximately May 26 through June 24 this year. He indicated that he would be in contact with UC-2 about his travel. Raishani also stated that if he is “locked up,” he will not care, as “Allah will reward [him] for attempting jihad.”

In June 2017, Raishani told the CS that he was making preparations to leave, including paying off his remaining debts. Subsequently, Raishani and UC-1 purchased clothing that they intended to wear for their training with ISIS. Earlier this week, Raishani revealed to UC-2 his (Raishani’s) intention to meet an ISIS member in Turkey in the next few days, who would facilitate Raishani’s joining the terrorist organization. Raishani also purchased an airline ticket for a flight scheduled to depart on June 21, 2017, from JFK Airport to Istanbul, Turkey, via Lisbon, Portugal. On June 21, 2017, Raishani traveled to JFK Airport, where he was arrested by the FBI after he attempted to board that flight to Lisbon.

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Raishani, is charged with one count of attempting to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization, which carries a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. The maximum potential sentence in this case is prescribed by Congress and is provided here for informational purposes only, as any sentencing of the defendant will be determined by a judge. The charges contained in the Complaint are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Mr. Kim praised the outstanding efforts of the FBI’s New York Joint Terrorism Task Force, which principally consists of agents from the FBI and detectives from the NYPD, and the NYPD’s Intelligence Division. Mr. Kim also thanked the Counterterrorism Section of the Department of Justice’s National Security Division.

This prosecution is being handled by the Office’s Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys George D. Turner, Sidhardha Kamaraju, and Jane Kim are in charge of the prosecution, with assistance from Trial Attorney Kevin C. Nunnally of the National Security Division’s Counterterrorism Section.

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