

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
EASTERN DISTRICT *of* NEW YORK

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Department of Justice

U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, December 14, 2022

Four Defendants Charged with Conspiring to Provide Cryptocurrency to ISIS

**Defendants Collected and Transferred Approximately \$35,000 through
Cryptocurrency and Other Electronic Means to Bitcoin Wallets and Accounts They
Believed to Be Funding ISIS**

A criminal complaint was unsealed today in federal court in Brooklyn charging Mohammad David Hashimi, Abdullah At Taqi, Khalilullah Yousuf, and Seema Rahman with conspiring to provide material support to the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham ("ISIS"). Hashimi, Taqi, and Rahman were arrested this morning in Virginia, New York, and New Jersey, respectively. Yousuf was also arrested this morning in Canada by Canadian law enforcement pursuant to a provisional arrest request from the United States. [Taqi and Rahman made their initial appearances earlier today in federal court in Brooklyn before Chief United States Magistrate Judge Cheryl L. Pollak.](#) Hashimi made his initial appearance in federal court in Alexandria, Virginia before United States Magistrate Judge Ivan Davis and was ordered held pending trial.

Breon Peace, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, Matthew G. Olsen, Assistant Attorney General of the Justice Department's National Security Division, and Michael J. Driscoll, Assistant Director-in-Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, New York Field Office (FBI), announced the arrests and charges.

"As alleged, this crowdfunding network used cryptocurrency, Bitcoin wallets, GoFundMe, and PayPal to collect and raise blood money to support ISIS, not for needy families as they falsely claimed in their attempt to deceive law enforcement," stated United States Attorney Peace. "I commend our prosecutors and the FBI's New York Joint Terrorism Task Force for piercing the veil of secrecy to identify the perpetrators of this scheme, reveal the true evil nature of these virtual money transfers, and bring to justice those who seek to enable acts of violent extremism."

"As alleged, the defendants deliberately participated in schemes to raise funds for ISIS in support of the group's barbaric aims and actions. The FBI New York's Joint Terrorism Task Force and our law enforcement partners remain relentless in our determination to protect our nation from those willing to support the scourge of international terrorism," stated FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge Driscoll.

As set forth in the Complaint, Hashimi and Yousuf were members of a group chat (referred to in the Complaint as Group Chat-1) on an encrypted social media and mobile messaging electronic communication service that facilitated communication between and among supporters of ISIS and other groups that adhered to similar violent jihadist ideologies. In early April 2021, members of Group Chat-1 discussed posting donation links that purported to be for humanitarian causes but were in fact intended to help the “mujahideen,” an Arabic term that translates to “holy warriors” that is used by ISIS supporters to refer to ISIS fighters. Yousuf provided a link to a specific Bitcoin address and another member of Group Chat-1 posted a link to a PayPal campaign, both of which were controlled by an individual identified in the Complaint as Facilitator-1.

In conversations with a confidential source, Taqi and Facilitator-1 discussed giving money to support ISIS fighters. When the confidential source asked Facilitator-1 for proof that the money being donated was going to support ISIS, Facilitator-1 sent the confidential source screenshots and a video depicting tactical gear, ammunition, and grenades on top of an ISIS flag. An image of one of the photographs is depicted below.



Facilitator-1 also told the confidential source that the charitable descriptions in the fundraising campaigns were in fact a “deception for the infidels” and the “words that are in the link are fake in order to deceive.”

Between February 2021 and July 2022, the defendants raised and contributed more than \$35,000 to Facilitator-1 via a combination of cryptocurrency and other sources. The defendants contributed more than \$24,000 to Facilitator-1’s Bitcoin address, with Yousuf contributing \$20,347.89, Taqi contributing \$2,769.35, and Rahman contributing \$927.51. The defendants also sent more than \$1,000 to the PayPal account associated with Facilitator-1, with Rahman contributing approximately \$550, Taqi contributing approximately \$480, and Hashimi contributing \$55. In addition, both Yousuf and Rahman created multiple GoFundMe fundraising campaigns purporting to collect money for charitable causes. Hashimi contributed \$364 and Taqi contributed \$200 through the Yousuf-created GoFundMe campaigns, while Rahman raised approximately \$10,000 through the GoFundMe campaigns that she created, and then wired the proceeds, approximately \$10,024, to individuals connected to Facilitator-1 via Western Union.

Hashimi has also made statements suggesting his desire to die in combat or in a terrorist attack on behalf of a foreign terrorist organization. For example, in November 2020, Hashimi told another confidential source over encrypted communications that “I have made up my mind I want to make Hijra to Afghanistan. To join dawla,” in other words, travel to join ISIS. In or about September 2021, Hashimi told another individual through a direct message that “I just want Jannah,” i.e., paradise or the after-life, “And to die on the battlefield.” Hashimi also provided financial support for numerous individuals who have been charged with

or convicted of federal crimes of terrorism. Between December 2021 and October 2022, Hashimi gave more than \$2,000 to a terrorism defendant through JPay, an inmate funding service.

The charges in the complaint are allegations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

The government's case is being handled by the Office's National Security and Cybercrime Section. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Douglas M. Pravda, Ian C. Richardson and Nina Gupta are in charge of the prosecution, with assistance provided by Trial Attorneys Daniel Gardner and Alexandra Hughes of the Counterterrorism Section of the Department of Justice's National Security Division.

The Defendants:

MOHAMMAD DAVID HASHIMI

Age: 35

Potomac Falls, Virginia

ABDULLAH AT TAQI

Age: 23

East Elmhurst, Queens, New York

KHALILULLAH YOUSUF

Age: 34

Ontario, Canada

SEEMA RAHMAN

Age: 25

Edison, New Jersey

E.D.N.Y. Docket No. 22-MJ-1323

Topic(s):

Counterterrorism

National Security

Cybercrime

Component(s):

USAO - New York, Eastern

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