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District of New Jersey

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, January 24, 2023

Sussex County Woman Sentenced to 34 Months in Prison for Concealing Terrorist Financing to Syrian Foreign Terrorist Organizations

NEWARK, N.J. – A Sussex County, New Jersey, woman was sentenced today to 34 months in prison for concealing her attempts to provide material support to Syrian foreign terrorist organizations, U.S. Attorney Philip R. Sellinger, Assistant Attorney General Matthew G. Olsen of the U.S. Department of Justice's National Security Division, FBI-Newark Special Agent in Charge James E. Dennehy, and FBI Assistant Director for Counterterrorism Timothy Langan announced.

Maria Bell, aka "Maria Sue Bell," 55, of Hopatcong, New Jersey, previously pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge John Michael Vazquez to an information charging her with one count of concealing attempts to provide material support to designated foreign terrorist organizations. Judge Vazquez imposed the sentence today in Newark federal court.

According to documents previously filed in this case:

Bell admitted that from February 2018 to November 2018 she knowingly concealed and disguised the nature, location, source, ownership and control of the attempted provision of material support and resources to fighters based in Syria who were members of Jabhat Fath al-sham, also known as Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (JFS) and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS). Bell admitted that she knew JFS and HTS were designated foreign terrorist organizations, that JFS and HTS has engaged or engages in terrorist activities. She admitted the offense to which she pleaded guilty involved the concealment of the attempted provision of funds or other material support or resources with the intent, knowledge, or reason to believe they were to be used to commit or assist in the commission of a violent act.

In addition to the prison term, Judge Vazquez sentenced Bell to five years of supervised release.

U.S. Attorney Sellinger credited special agents of the FBI and task force officers of the Joint Terrorism Task Force, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Dennehy, and special agents of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Homeland Security Investigations, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Ricky J. Patel in Newark, with the investigation leading to today's sentencing.

The government is represented by Joyce M. Malliet, Chief of the U.S. Attorney's Office's National Security Unit and Trial Attorneys Brenda Sue Thornton and Kathleen Campbell of the U.S. Department of Justice's Counterterrorism Section of the National Security Division.

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