

PRESS RELEASE

# Brothers Sentenced to More Than 35 Years Combined for Manufacturing and Distributing Machineguns Intended for ISIS

Wednesday, December 13, 2023

## For Immediate Release

Office of Public Affairs

Moyad Dannon, 26, of Fishers, Indiana, was sentenced today to 200 months, equivalent to 16 years and eight months, in federal prison followed by a lifetime of supervised release, after pleading guilty to attempting to provide material support or resources, namely, firearms, to a designated foreign terrorist organization. His brother, Mahde Dannon, was sentenced to 20 years in prison in October 2021, after pleading guilty to the same charges.

"The defendants in this case fused together two grave threats to Americans' security by attempting to support a brutal terrorist organization through the illicit manufacture of ghost guns," said Deputy Attorney General Lisa O. Monaco. "Just as we've done in the fight against terrorism, the Justice Department is committed to prevention — stopping gun violence before it happens by cracking down on the illegal production and trafficking of ghost guns."

"The defendant showed an absolute disregard for the rule of law and is being held accountable for his actions," said FBI Deputy Director Paul Abbate. "Working with his brother, the defendant produced large caches of privately made firearms and attempted to place them in the hands of ISIS members overseas to be used against U.S. service members and allies. The FBI and our partners worked tirelessly to prevent the weapons from reaching their intended destination, and ensured these defendants faced justice for their attempts to support a foreign terrorist organization. We will continue to aggressively investigate anyone who tries to help terrorists and endangers the lives of others."

"Violent extremists inspired by events abroad continue to pose a threat to our local communities and to our national security. Indiana is not immune from the poison of radicalization, fueled by terrorist propaganda available online," said U.S. Attorney Zachary A. Myers for the Southern District of Indiana. "For nearly a year, these defendants worked persistently to arm murderous terrorists with deadly, illegal weapons. Cases like this demonstrate the need for law enforcement agencies to use all available lawful means to identify, disrupt, and prosecute national security threats here at home. Thanks to the tremendous efforts of the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force and the Fishers Police Department, these dangerous men have been held accountable for their actions and our communities will be safe from them for many years."

According to court documents, in June 2018, the Dannon brothers devised a scheme to deliver stolen firearms to a convicted felon who was cooperating with the FBI.

Between July 2018 and December 2018, the Dannon brothers sold a number of illegally obtained firearms to the cooperating individual. Around the same time period, the Dannon brothers also began to manufacture untraceable "ghost guns" by purchasing firearms parts online and assembling those parts into fully-functioning, .223 caliber semi-automatic rifles, which they sold to an FBI undercover agent.

In late 2018, the Dannon brothers began manufacturing untraceable, fully automatic, .223 caliber rifles, using much the same process they used to manufacture the semi-automatic rifles, and selling those to the undercover agent and confidential informant (CI).

Shortly thereafter, Moyad Dannon accompanied the undercover agent to a location near the U.S. southwest border in an effort to market that rifle, and additional fully-automatic rifles, to a potential buyer who was also cooperating with the FBI. During that trip, Moyad Dannon learned that the potential buyer sought to ship the weapons to a location in the Middle East, where they would be used by ISIS. ISIS is a designated foreign terrorist organization pursuant to Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Despite learning of the ultimate destination of the weapons, the Dannon brothers agreed to manufacture and sell at least 55 additional fully automatic "ghost guns" to the buyer from the American southwest border, believing those weapons would be shipped to the Middle East, to ISIS and its members.

On May 15, 2019, the Dannon brothers manufactured five untraceable, fully automatic, .223 caliber rifles from parts they had purchased online. At that time, the Dannon brothers were fully aware that the plan was to send the five automatic rifles overseas to

ISIS. After building the fully automatic rifles, the Dannon brothers sold all five weapons to undercover FBI agents posing as employees of the buyer from near the southwest border. The Dannon brothers were arrested immediately thereafter by the FBI.

Between February and May of 2019, Moyad Dannon had numerous and extensive conversations with an undercover agent who he believed was a member of ISIS then fighting in Syria. During those conversations, Moyad expressed his desire to travel from Indiana to ISIS-controlled areas of Syria, where he sought to utilize his knowledge of firearms and other skills to provide direct military assistance to ISIS in its fight against the United States and Syrian government.

In a search following his arrest, FBI agents located a flash drive on Moyad's keychain containing approximately 16 gigabytes of ISIS propaganda, including graphically violent videos depicting ISIS fighters beheading civilians and hostages, and ISIS snipers killing U.S. military personnel. Identical ISIS propaganda videos were discovered on a laptop computer.

The FBI's Indianapolis Field Office's Joint Terrorism Task Force and the Fishers, Indiana, Police Department investigated the case.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Matthew Rinka, Kate Olivier, and Kelly Rota for the Southern District of Indiana and Deputy Chief Paul Casey and Trial Attorney Kevin Nunnally of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section prosecuted this case.

*Updated December 13, 2023*