

Two Suburban Chicago Men Charged with Conspiring to Provide Material Support to the Islamic State

CHICAGO — Two men from a north suburb of Chicago were arrested today on a federal complaint charging them with conspiring to provide material support to the Islamic State.

JOSEPH D. JONES, also known as “Yusuf Abdulhaqq,” 35, of Zion, and EDWARD SCHIMENTI, also known as “Abdul Wali,” 35, of Zion, are charged with conspiring to knowingly provide and attempt to provide material support and resources to the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS). Jones and Schimenti were arrested this morning. They are scheduled to make an initial appearance today at 3:00 p.m. before U.S. Magistrate Judge M. David Weisman in Chicago.

Also today, authorities executed a search warrant at Jones’ residence in Zion.

The complaint and arrests were announced by Joel R. Levin, Acting United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois; Mary B. McCord, Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security; and Michael J. Anderson, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The case was investigated by the Chicago Joint Terrorism Task Force, which is comprised of FBI personnel and representatives from numerous federal, state and local law enforcement agencies. The Zion Police Department provided valuable assistance.

According to a complaint and affidavit filed in U.S. District Court in Chicago, Jones and Schimenti pledged their allegiance to ISIS and advocated on social media for violent extremism in support of the terrorist group. In the fall of 2015 the pair befriended three individuals whom Jones and Schimenti believed were fellow ISIS devotees. Unbeknownst to Jones and Schimenti, two of the individuals were undercover FBI employees and the third individual was cooperating with law enforcement and was not an ISIS supporter, the complaint states.

Over the next several months Jones and Schimenti met the undercover FBI employees and the cooperating source on numerous occasions, during which Jones and Schimenti discussed their devotion to ISIS and their commitment to Islamic State principles, the complaint states. Some of the meetings took place in Waukegan, Zion, Bridgeview, North Chicago, Highland Park and Chicago.

At one point, Jones and Schimenti shared photographs of themselves holding the Islamic State flag at the Illinois Beach State Park in Zion, according to the complaint. In a recorded conversation with the cooperating source, Schimenti commented that Schimenti would like to see the ISIS flag “on top of the White House,” the complaint states.

Earlier this year Schimenti engaged in physical training exercises with the cooperating source at a gym in Zion, the complaint states. Schimenti believed the cooperating source intended to travel overseas to fight for ISIS, and Schimenti commented that the exercises would “make you good, you know, in the battlefield,” according to the complaint.

Last month the pair furnished several cellular phones to the cooperating source, believing they would be used to detonate explosive devices in ISIS attacks, the complaint states. On April 7, 2017, Jones and Schimenti drove the cooperating source to O’Hare International Airport in Chicago with the understanding that the source would be traveling to Syria to fight with ISIS, the complaint states. Schimenti told the source to “drench that land with they, they blood,” according to the complaint.

The public is reminded that a complaint is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The charge in the complaint is punishable by up to 20 years in prison. If convicted, the Court must impose a reasonable sentence under federal statutes and the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Barry Jonas and Rajnath Laud of the Northern District of Illinois, and Trial Attorney Lolita Lukose of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section.