

# GW EXTREMISM TRACKER

## TERRORISM IN THE UNITED STATES

Program on Extremism

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY



**221** INDIVIDUALS HAVE BEEN CHARGED IN THE U.S. ON OFFENSES RELATED to the Islamic State (also known as IS, ISIS, and ISIL) since March 2014, when the first arrests occurred. Of those:

Their activities were located in **32** states and the District of Columbia



**90%** are male

**28** the average age of those charged.

**160** have pleaded or were found guilty

**13.2\*** the average length of sentence in years.

\*Uses 470 months for life sentences per the practice of the U.S. Sentencing Commission

**39%**

were accused of attempting to travel or successfully traveled abroad.

**31%**

were accused of being involved in plots to carry out attacks on U.S. soil.

**58%**

were charged in an operation involving an informant and/or an undercover agent.

★ indicates law enforcement operation



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### Disclaimer

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## IS Arrests

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### HAWAZEN SAMEER MOTHAFAR

NOV 5 31  OR

Hawazen Sameer Mothafar, a 31-year-old resident of Troutdale, Oregon, was arrested and charged in the District of Oregon with conspiring, providing, and attempting to provide material support to the Islamic State (IS), as well as with making false statements on an immigration application and making false statements to a government agency. According to the indictment, Mothafar produced, edited, and distributed propaganda and recruiting materials on behalf of IS, which he coordinated with official IS media operatives overseas. Some of Mothafar's reported publications include instructional materials related to conducting knife attacks and using explosive devices, and he supported IS officials overseas with technical assistance for online activity. While engaged in his activities in support of IS, Mothafar is alleged to have made false statements on immigration documents and to government officials, in which he denied having any links to designated terrorist organizations.

Sources: [DOJ Press Release](#), [Mothafar Indictment](#), [Mothafar Release Order](#), [Oregon Live](#)

## Apprehensions & Charges for Other Jihadist Groups

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### MARIA BELL

NOV 25 53  NJ

Maria Bell, a 53-year-old resident of Hopatcong, New Jersey and former U.S. Army service member, was arrested and charged in the District of New Jersey with concealment of terrorist financing to the al-Nusra Front (ANF) and Jabhat al-Nusra, also known by

other aliases including Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS). In 2017, Bell allegedly began communicating through encrypted messaging applications with a self-identified member of HTS. According to the criminal complaint, Bell made "18 payments totaling approximately \$3,150 to several WU Accounts" used by the HTS fighter or his associates. The government alleges that Bell attempted to travel to Turkey in November 2018 to join the HTS fighter in Syria but was stopped by the FBI. Prior to her arrest, Bell reportedly purchased a round trip ticket from New York to Istanbul for November 25th, which she canceled for unknown reasons on November 23rd.

Sources: [DOJ Press Release](#), [Bell Criminal Complaint](#), [NJ.Com](#)

## Legal Proceedings (IS & Other Jihadist Groups)

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### SAMANTHA MARIE ELHASSANI

NOV 9 35  AL

Samantha Marie Elhassani, a 35-year-old resident of Elkhart, Indiana, was sentenced in the Northern District of Indiana to 78 months in prison for terrorism financing. Between 2014 and 2015, Elhassani made multiple trips to Hong Kong with over \$30,000 in undisclosed cash and gold assets that she deposited with intermediaries of IS. The funds were intended for her family's use after they joined IS in Syria in 2015. Elhassani and her children were later arrested by the Syrian Democratic Forces and transferred to U.S. custody in July 2018 before being repatriated to the United States.

Sources: [DOJ Press Release](#), [Elhassani Judgment](#), [Voice of America](#), [Chicago Tribune](#)

## SHAHIDUL GAFFAR & NABILA KHAN



Shahidul Gaffar (40) and Nabila Khan (35), both residents of Pennsylvania, pleaded guilty in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania to conspiring to provide material support to IS. In pleading, both Gaffar and Khan admitted to providing and attempting to provide support to two of Khan's brothers who traveled to Syria to join IS. In January 2015, Khan asked her sister, a resident of Bangladesh, to sell some of Khan's gold and give the proceeds to their brother to help him travel to Syria to join IS. Later in 2015, Gaffar began sending international money transfers to another of Khan's brothers in Bangladesh, partly in order to help him travel to Syria to join IS.

Sources: DOJ Press Release, Gaffar & Khan Information, Gaffar Change of Plea Memorandum, Khan Change of Plea Memorandum, The Philadelphia Inquirer

## KRISTOPHER SEAN MATTHEWS



Kristopher Sean Matthews, a 34-year-old resident of Elgin, South Carolina, pleaded guilty in the Southern District of Texas to conspiring to provide material support to IS. In pleading, Matthews admitted that he and co-conspirator Christopher Molina, a resident of Cost, Texas, conspired to share bomb-making instructional material with supporters of IS. Matthews admitted that they used encrypted messaging applications to share instructional material related to explosives in order to help facilitate domestic and foreign attacks on behalf of IS.

Sources: DOJ Press Release, Matthews Memorandum and Recommendation for Plea