

# TERRORISM IN THE U.S.

Program on Extremism

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

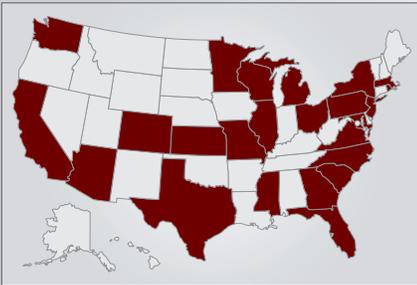
March 2016 Update

## ISIS IN AMERICA

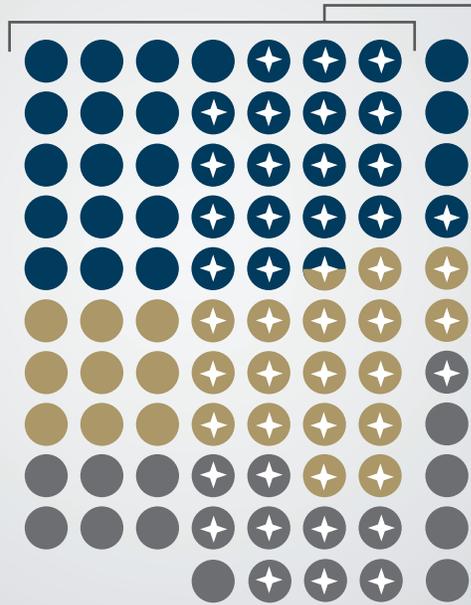
**85** INDIVIDUALS HAVE BEEN CHARGED IN THE U.S. with offenses related to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) since March 2014, when the first arrests occurred. Of those:

The average age of those charged is **26**

Their activities were located in **24** states



Approximately **38%** are converts to Islam



**87%** are male

**45%** were accused of attempting to travel or successfully traveled abroad

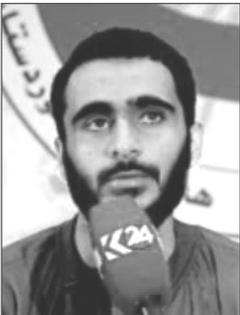
**32%** were accused of being involved in plots to carry out attacks on U.S. soil.

**54%** were charged in an operation involving an informant and/or an undercover agent.

★ indicates law enforcement operation

**34** HAVE PLEADED OR BEEN FOUND GUILTY

## ISIS-Related Apprehensions/Charges in March



### MOHAMAD JAMAL KHWEIS\*

MAR. 14

26



Mohamad Jamal Khweis\*, a 26-year-old Virginia resident, was apprehended by Kurdish forces near Sinjar, in northern Iraq. According to media reports, Kurdish forces initially thought Khweis was a suicide bomber until he called out in Arabic and English that he wanted to surrender. When he was apprehended, Khweis was allegedly carrying three cell phones, a few thousand dollars in mixed currency, and his Virginia driver's license. If verified, Khweis would be the first American ISIS fighter known to have surrendered in the field. Source: [New York Times](#)



### ABDUL RAHEEM HABIL ALI-SKELTON

MAR. 22

23



Abdul Raheem Habil Ali-Skelton, a 23-year-old Minnesota resident, was charged with making false statements to FBI agents. According to the legal documents, during a July 2015 interview

\*Not included in ISIS in America numbers.

Ali-Skelton told agents that his last contact with Syria-based members of ISIS “was in May or early June 2015, when in fact the defendant well knew that he had been communicating with such individuals as recently as July 4, 2015.” A spokesman for the Minnesota U.S. Attorney’s Office said Ali-Skelton was not being charged in connection with a larger ISIS-related conspiracy case involving ten Minnesota men. On March 27, Ali-Skelton was arrested for communicating threats of violence after threatening to “kill everyone” at a local Walgreens. Ali-Skelton was expected to plead guilty to the false statements charge. Source: [Ali-Skelton Information](#), [Fox 9](#), [MPR News](#), [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#)

## Legal Proceedings (ISIS and Other Jihadist Groups) in March

### TAIROD NATHAN WEBSTER PUGH

MAR. 9 48

Tairod Nathan Webster Pugh, a 48-year-old American citizen and veteran of the U.S. Air Force, was found guilty of attempting to provide material support to ISIS. Pugh, who lived in Egypt for a year prior to his arrest, was arrested in January 2015 after unsuccessfully attempting to travel to Syria via Turkey. At the time of his arrest, Pugh was carrying a laptop, four USB thumb drives, solar power chargers, compasses, and a black ski mask. Pugh is the first individual convicted at trial on ISIS-related charges. Source: [DOJ Press Release](#)

### MUHAMMAD ODA DAKHLALLA

MAR. 11 22 MS

Muhammad Oda Dakhalla, a U.S. citizen from Mississippi, pleaded guilty to conspiring to provide material support to ISIS. At the time of his arrest in August 2015, Dakhalla was 22 years old and planning to start graduate school in the fall. Dakhalla and his wife, Jaelyn Delshaun Young, planned to travel to Syria to join ISIS, where Dakhalla would assist with propaganda before becoming a martyr. The couple was arrested at a local airport as they began their journey; Young pleaded guilty on March 29, 2016. Source: [DOJ Press Release](#), [Dakhalla Factual Basis](#), [ISIS in America report](#)

### MOHAMED SAEED KODAIMATI

MAR. 14 25 CA

Mohamed Saeed Kodaimati, a 25-year-old man from California with dual American and Syrian citizenship, was sentenced to 8 years in prison after pleading guilty to making false statements in an international terrorism

investigation. In his October 2015 plea agreement, Kodaimati acknowledged that he knew members of ISIS; was involved with Jabhat al Nusra (JN); and participated in combat against Syrian regime soldiers in coordination with JN. Kodaimati was arrested in March 2015. Source: [DOJ Press Release](#), [ISIS in America report](#)

### JUSTIN SULLIVAN

MAR. 14 19 NC

State prosecutors announced that they will seek the death penalty in the case against Justin Sullivan, a 19-year-old U.S. citizen charged with an array of ISIS-related offenses. The announcement came after a Burke County, North Carolina, grand jury indicted Sullivan in the murder of his neighbor, John Bailey Clarke. Sullivan was first linked to Clarke’s murder in a federal indictment filed last month. Sullivan is the first American arrested on ISIS-related charges to face the death penalty.

Source: [The State](#), [The Charlotte Observer](#)

### AMIR SAID RAHMAN AL-GHAZI

MAR. 16 39 OH

March 16: Amir Said Rahman Al-Ghazi (aka Robert McCollum), a 39-year-old U.S. citizen, pleaded guilty to one count of attempting to provide material support to ISIS and two counts of possessing firearms as a felon. According to the affidavit, Al-Ghazi pledged his support for ISIS and allegiance to Abu Bakr al Baghdadi via social media in 2014. From July 2014 to his arrest in June 2015, Al-Ghazi attempted to recruit others to ISIS on multiple social media platforms, expressed a desire to conduct an attack in the U.S., and attempted to create a propaganda video for ISIS. In the two decades prior to his June 2015 arrest, Al-Ghazi was convicted of a number of drug trafficking and weapons offenses in Ohio.

Source: [DOJ Press Release](#), [Al-Ghazi Affidavit](#)

## MUFID ELFGEEH

MAR. 17

32



Mufid Elfgeeh, a 32-year-old U.S. citizen, was sentenced to 270 months (over 22 years) in prison for attempting to provide material support to ISIS. From approximately December 2013 until his arrest, Elfgeeh recruited and attempted to facilitate travel for individuals expressing an interest in joining ISIS in Syria. According to the affidavit, Elfgeeh coordinated communication between one individual and an English-speaking ISIS contact in Iraq, provided money to expedite at least three individuals' travel, and arranged for a contact to coordinate the individuals' entrance into ISIS-controlled territory. The affidavit also indicates that Elfgeeh coordinated the Green Battalion of the United Rebels of Homs-Al-Murabitun's pledge of allegiance to ISIS in March 2014, serving as a middleman between the battalion commander and ISIS. Elfgeeh was arrested in May 2014 and is one of the first ISIS recruiters brought to justice in the U.S.

Source: [DOJ Press Release](#), [Elfgeeh Affidavit](#)

## ABDUL MALIK ABDUL KAREEM

MAR. 17

44



Abdul Malik Abdul Kareem, a 44-year-old Phoenix, Arizona, resident, was found guilty by a federal jury of conspiring to provide material support to ISIS; conspiring to transport and transporting firearms and ammunition in interstate commerce with the intent to commit murder and aggravated assault; making false statements to the FBI; and being a felon in possession of a firearm. Evidence at trial showed that Kareem discussed traveling to Syria and conducting terrorist attacks against a number of targets with his roommates, Elton Simpson and Nadir Soofi. One of these targets was the May 2015 "Muhammad Art Exhibit and Contest" in Garland, Texas, where Simpson and Soofi were killed by security personnel while attempting to attack the event. Kareem was arrested in June 2015. Source: [DOJ Press Release](#)

## AWS MOHAMMED YOUNIS AL-JAYAB

MAR. 17

23

Aws Mohammed Younis Al-Jayab, a 23-year-old Iraqi refugee, was indicted in Illinois for attempting to provide material support to acts of violence overseas. According to the criminal complaint, Al-Jayab concealed from immigration officials that from approximately Novem-

ber 2013 to January 2014 he was in Syria fighting with a number of terrorist organizations, including Ansar al-Islam, a designated foreign terrorist organization. The indictment contends that Al-Jayab told immigration officials he was in Turkey visiting his grandmother during the period he was in Syria. Al-Jayab was arrested in January 2016 on charges of making a false statement involving international terrorism. Source: [DOJ Press Release](#), [Al-Jayab Criminal Complaint](#), [Al-Jayab Indictment \(Illinois\)](#)

## JOSEPH HASSAN FARROKH

MAR. 18

28



Joseph Hassan Farrokh, a 28-year-old U.S. citizen, pleaded guilty to conspiring to provide material support to ISIS. Beginning in approximately August 2015, Farrokh conspired with Mahmoud Amin Elhassan—a 25-year-old permanent resident of the U.S.—to travel to Syria to join ISIS. According to the Statement of Facts, Farrokh provided Elhassan with \$600 for his travel expenses, and the two agreed that Farrokh should tell his family he was going to Saudi Arabia to study. Farrokh was arrested on January 16, 2016. Source: [DOJ Press Release](#), [Farrokh Plea Agreement](#), [Farrokh Statement of Facts](#), [Farrokh Criminal Complaint](#)

## JAELYN DELSHAUN YOUNG

MAR. 29

30



Jaelyn Delshaun Young, a U.S. citizen from Mississippi, pleaded guilty to conspiring to provide material support to ISIS. At the time of her arrest in August 2015, Young was a 19-year-old sophomore at Mississippi State University. Young and her husband, Muhammad Oda Dakhlalla, planned to travel to Syria to join ISIS, where Young wanted to provide "medical aid" and "raise little Dawlah [ISIS] cubs" while "under the protection of Allah." According to federal court records, Young acknowledged "her role as the planner of the expedition" in a farewell letter she left for her family. The couple was arrested at a local airport as they began their travel; Dakhlalla pleaded guilty on March 11, 2016. Source: [DOJ Press Release](#), [Young Plea Agreement](#), [Young Criminal Complaint](#), [Dakhlalla Factual Basis](#), [ISIS in America report](#)

CONTINUES >

## Attacks in March

**FAISAL MOHAMMAD**

MAR. 17

18



In an update on the investigation into the November 4, 2015, attack at University of California–Merced, the FBI announced that the perpetrator, Faisal Mohammad, was likely inspired by ISIS. Mohammad, an 18-year-old student at UC Merced, stabbed four people before he was shot and killed by a UC Merced police officer at the scene. According to the update, Mohammad’s computer contained pro-ISIS propaganda and his Internet search history in the weeks prior to the attacks included visits to a number of extremist websites. At the time of the attack, Mohammad was carrying a backpack with a handwritten note detailing his intentions, a photocopy of an ISIS flag, and materials necessary for the attack. Investigators believe Mohammad self-radicalized, as “no ties to co-conspirators or foreign terrorist organizations have been found.” Source: FBI Update on Investigation