



NJOHSP *at a glance*

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ISIS: CENTCOM Confirms Death of Top Propagandist, Recruiter in US Airstrike

A spokesman for the US Central Command (CENTCOM) has confirmed that an Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) cyber and social media operative was killed by a US military airstrike in Raqqa, Syria, on August 24. Colonel Patrick Ryder said that Junaid Hussain (a.k.a. Abu Hussain al-Britani) (see photo), age 21, of Birmingham, England, was involved in recruiting ISIS sympathizers in the West to conduct “lone wolf” attacks. He had significant technical skills, and he expressed a strong desire to kill Americans. Ryder noted that Hussain was also responsible for releasing the personal information of about 1,300 US military and government personnel, and “sought to encourage” attacks against them.



We assess that Hussain was deeply involved in ISIS’ Twitter/social media propaganda campaign, and thus was seen as one of the group’s most influential and effective recruiters. He was likely one of the most tech-savvy members of ISIS, and given his young age and British origins, he was highly valuable in connecting with and relating to young Western Muslims. Open-source reporting indicates that he and his wife – Sally Jones, a 40-year-old Muslim convert from the UK – played a major role in ISIS recruiting efforts.

The release of the personal information described by the CENTCOM spokesman did not result from a sophisticated hacking operation, but was simply information that was readily available online. This serves as a reminder to military and government personnel to be cautious regarding the personal details that they post on their social media sites and to review the privacy settings on their accounts.

This item is produced jointly by OHSP and the NJ Cybersecurity & Communications Integration Cell (NJCCIC).

ISIS: Arizona Man Indicted for Helping New York Student Travel to Syria for Training

On August 27, Ahmed el Gammal, age 42, of Avondale, Arizona, was indicted for providing material support to ISIS, by helping a 24-year-old New York City college student travel to Syria to receive military training. The student contacted Gammal on social media, after seeing a posting by Gammal that expressed support for ISIS. After numerous social media exchanges, Gammal traveled to Manhattan in October 2014, met with the student, and gave him contact information for an ISIS facilitator in Turkey. In January 2015, the student traveled to Istanbul, Turkey, where Gammal continued to communicate with him. The student then traveled to Syria, where he received religious and military training from ISIS.

This case is an illustration of ISIS’ use of social media for recruiting and facilitation, even among individuals in distant locations. The criminal complaint also indicates that Gammal, the student, and the facilitator in Turkey used additional communications platforms that allowed them to evade detection by law enforcement.

Law Enforcement: Investigators Seek Motive in “Execution-Style” Shooting of Texas Deputy

Investigators are seeking indications of the motive for the “execution-style” shooting of Deputy Sheriff Darren Goforth (see photo), a 10-year veteran of the Harris County Sheriff’s Office, in the Houston area. Deputy Goforth was fatally shot multiple times on August 28, while pumping gas into his patrol car. Shannon Miles, age 30, who has been charged with capital murder, has made no statements indicating his motive. Sheriff Ron Hickman said that Miles had no previous contact with Deputy Goforth, and the attack was unprovoked. He said that at this early stage of the investigation, the assumption is that Deputy Goforth was targeted simply because he wore a police uniform.



Contact Information

Any agency with information or comments/questions on this or other analytical products, please contact the NJOHSP Analysis Bureau at analysis@njohsp.gov or 609-584-4000.

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