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## Department of Justice

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### **Saudi Citizen Sentenced to More Than 12 Years in Prison for Concealing Attendance at Al Qaeda Training Camp and Visa Fraud**

Naif Abdulaziz M. Alfallaj, 35, a citizen of Saudi Arabia and a former resident of Weatherford, Oklahoma, has been sentenced to 151 months' imprisonment for making a false statement to the FBI about his attendance at an al Qaeda training camp in Afghanistan in late 2000, as well as for visa fraud.

"The U.S. Government identified the defendant after finding his fingerprints on an application to join al Qaeda that the U.S. military had gathered from the battlefields of Afghanistan," said Assistant Attorney General John C. Demers of the National Security Division. "We were able to match those fingerprints with fingerprints taken for his U.S. visa application and to determine that he had made false statements in that application in order to conceal his attendance at an al Qaeda training camp in 2000. With the sentence imposed today, he will be held accountable for his crime and removed from the country. I want to thank the military personnel, agents, analysts and prosecutors whose dedication is responsible for this case."

"This case required thorough investigation and careful coordination among agents and prosecutors in a matter that is our highest priority—terrorism," said U.S. Attorney Downing for the Western District of Oklahoma. "We are fortunate to have dedicated, effective federal law enforcement looking out for potential threats to public safety in Oklahoma."

"This investigation highlights the ongoing efforts of the FBI's Oklahoma City Joint Terrorism Task Force. Together with our federal, state, and local law enforcement partners, the FBI is committed to defending the American people against potential acts of terrorism. Today's sentencing is a reminder that protecting the United States from the threat of terrorism remains the FBI's number one priority," said Special Agent in Charge Melissa Godbold of the FBI's Oklahoma City Field Office.

"Our ongoing fight against terrorists depends upon our partnerships with many law enforcement agencies and sometimes takes years," said HSI Special Agent-in-Charge Ryan Spradlin. "However, the United States has the resources, the will and the patience to identify and pursue terrorists — despite the lies they tell to hide themselves. Homeland Security Investigations frequently plays a key role in identifying and locating terrorists in our midst."

On Feb. 5, 2018, Alfallaj was taken into custody by the FBI without incident, based on a criminal complaint signed in the Western District of Oklahoma. According to the complaint, the FBI found 15 of Alfallaj's fingerprints on an application to an al Qaeda training camp, known as al Farooq, which was one of al Qaeda's key training sites in Afghanistan leading up to the attacks of September 11, 2001. The document was recovered by the U.S. military from an al Qaeda safe house in Afghanistan and included an emergency contact number associated with Alfallaj's father in Saudi Arabia.

Alfallaj first entered the U.S. in late 2011 on a nonimmigrant visa based on his wife's status as a foreign student. He answered several questions on his visa application falsely, including whether he had ever supported terrorists or terrorist organizations. Alfallaj has been detained in federal custody since his arrest.

On Feb. 6, 2018, a grand jury in Oklahoma City returned a three-count indictment against Alfallaj. Count One alleged that from March 2012 to the present, he possessed a visa obtained by fraud. Count Two alleged he used that visa in

October 2016 to apply for lessons at a private flight school in Oklahoma. Count Three charged him with making a false statement to the FBI in an investigation of an offense involving international terrorism by denying, among other things, that he had ever visited Afghanistan.

Alfallaj pleaded guilty to Counts One and Three on Dec. 14, 2018. In particular, he admitted he possessed a nonimmigrant visa from March 2012 to early 2018 that he obtained by fraud. He also admitted he falsely told federal agents during the December 2017 interview that he had never visited Afghanistan or participated in religious, tactical, or military training outside Saudi Arabia, and otherwise affirmed falsely that all of the answers on his nonimmigrant visa application were true and correct. As part of his plea agreement, Alfallaj consented to the entry of a stipulated judicial order of removal from the United States at the end of any prison term.

Today, U.S. District Judge Scott L. Palk sentenced Alfallaj to 151 months' imprisonment. This consists of 120 months—the statutory maximum—for visa fraud and 96 months—also the statutory maximum—for making a false statement. The court announced that 31 months of the false-statement sentence will run consecutive to the visa-fraud sentence, for a total incarceration period of 151 months. In reaching this sentence, the court took into account Alfallaj's pattern of deceptive statements and his inquiry on an online forum in 2013 about participating in fighting in Afghanistan or Chechnya, in which he used his nickname from the al Farooq camp. At the conclusion of the hearing, the judge signed the stipulated order of removal.

This case is the result of an investigation by the FBI-Oklahoma City Joint Terrorism Task Force, which includes members from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Secret Service, the Transportation Security Administration, the Oklahoma Highway Patrol, the University of Oklahoma Police Department, the Oklahoma City Police Department, and the Edmond Police Department. Assistant U.S. Attorney Matt Dillon of the Western District of Oklahoma and Trial Attorneys David C. Smith and C. Alexandria Bogle of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section prosecuted the case.

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