

ISIS Matchmaker Gets 18 Years in First Trial Under N.Y. Terrorism Law

From the [New York Times](#)

After ISIS promised in 2014 that the world would “hear and understand the meaning of terrorism,” fervent western support came from a Jamaican preacher once imprisoned in Britain for urging violence, and later expelled from Kenya by officials fearing he would encourage radicalism.

Over the next three years, according to the Manhattan district attorney’s office, the preacher, Abdullah el-Faisal, helped ISIS any way he could, praising its ideology in lectures, publishing propaganda online and even acting as a marriage broker for its fighters.

On Thursday, Justice Maxwell Wiley of State Supreme Court in Manhattan sentenced Mr. Faisal to 18 years in prison, saying he had “continually advocated for murder, kidnapping and other violent crimes.”

Mr. Faisal’s trial marked the first time a defendant had faced a jury after being charged under state antiterrorism laws adopted in 2001, a week after the destruction of the World Trade Center. A handful of others have been charged under those laws and pleaded guilty.

Mr. Faisal was not accused of planning violence in New York City and had not set foot there during the period covered by his indictment. But undercover police officers with the Intelligence Bureau . . . exchanged messages with him from Manhattan, establishing jurisdiction for prosecutors.

A prosecutor, Gary Galperin, on Thursday asked Justice Wiley

to impose the maximum sentence for the five counts on which Mr. Faisal was found guilty, calling him "one of the most influential and vitriolic English-speaking terrorists of our time."

But one of Mr. Faisal's lawyers, Michael Fineman, asking for leniency, said Mr. Faisal had not committed violence, and "there is no evidence that Mr. Faisal ever planned any specific act of terrorism."

Faisal was born Trevor William Forrest in Jamaica and took his Muslim name after converting to Islam as a teenager. In 2003 he was convicted in Britain of inciting racial hatred and soliciting murder after encouraging the killing of Hindus, Jews and Americans. He visited Kenya for a preaching tour after his release from prison in Britain but was deported in 2010.

During Mr. Faisal's trial, prosecutors played lectures in which he called for violence and promoted ISIS. In one, called "Jihad Aims and Objectives," Mr. Faisal stated that Muslims who meet nonbelievers should "make the earth warm with their blood." In another lecture, Mr. Faisal urged listeners to join ISIS.

Prosecutors said that Mr. Faisal also acted as a recruiter for ISIS. . . among his contacts, prosecutors added, was the ISIS fighter in Syria, Luqmaan Patel. When Mr. Patel wrote "We just kill these rats" and "leave them for dust" Mr. Faisal replied: "It's best u don't take prisoners."