

Couple Accused of Trying to Join ISIS on Honeymoon

A Mississippi couple, accused of seeking to join the militant Islamic State group on a planned honeymoon trip, remained in custody on Tuesday after being denied bond in federal court.

Jaelyn Delshaun Young, 20, and Muhammad Oda Dakhlalla, 22, were charged with conspiring and attempting to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization, the U.S. Department of Justice said on Tuesday.

According to prosecutors, the former Mississippi State University students were planning to travel to Syria to join the group. They were arrested over the weekend before boarding a flight at an airport in Columbus, Mississippi.

If convicted, the couple faces up to 20 years in prison in the latest case in a recent wave of U.S. prosecutions involving individuals accused of trying to aid Islamic State, also known as ISIS or ISIL.

A New Jersey man was arrested on Monday on charges of conspiring to support Islamic State, becoming the sixth person arrested in New York and New Jersey since June as part of what authorities have said is a broader plot.

Federal officials have said they are investigating such cases in all 50 states.

In the Mississippi case, Young discussed her plans to marry Dakhlalla with undercover FBI agents, explaining that "our story will be that we are newlyweds on our honeymoon," prosecutors said in a criminal complaint.

In social media posts, she celebrated the killing of five U.S. servicemen last month at a military training center in

Chattanooga, Tennessee, in an attack by a gunman who was later fatally shot, according to the court records.

Attorneys for the couple noted in court that they had no weapons nor military training, and would not pose a threat to others if released on bond.

Prosecutors, however, contended that they represented what is seen as a growing threat of attacks on U.S. targets by homegrown “lone wolves” inspired by Islamic State or other militant groups.

U.S. Magistrate Judge S. Allan Alexander noted that they appeared to have been raised in a sheltered environment by parents who sought to give them every opportunity.

“I honestly believe the relative life of privilege has insulated them from the actual reality of what they were doing,” she said.

© 2015 Thomson Reuters. All rights reserved.