

## **Uzbek man sentenced to 25 years on terror-related charges**

By KEITH RIDLER, Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — An Uzbek refugee authorities say had an unwavering commitment to kill personnel at a military base or civilians at crowded Fourth of July celebrations in downtown Boise, Idaho, has been sentenced to 25 years in prison.

Fazliddin Kurbanov received the sentence Thursday that includes three years of supervised release and a \$250,000 fine. He will also face deportation proceedings after serving the prison sentence.

A federal jury in August convicted Kurbanov of conspiracy, attempting to support a terrorist organization and possession of bomb-making components. Kurbanov has maintained his innocence.

"Your honor," Kurbanov told U.S. District Judge Edward J. Lodge through an interpreter, "I'd like to say that I'm not a terrorist. I've never been a terrorist."

But Lodge in handing down the sentence said Kurbanov "intended to commit jihad against the United States."

Prosecutors say the 33-year-old Russian-speaking truck driver who fled Uzbekistan in 2009 downloaded jihadist and martyrdom videos from a terrorist website and communicated with a terrorist organization, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Authorities monitored his communications and arrested him in 2013.

Besides targeting Boise, authorities said, Kurbanov also discussed with a confidential FBI source targeting military bases, in particular West Point Military Academy in New York.

Kurbanov received 15 years each on the first two counts to be served concurrently and 10 years on possessing the bomb-making components to be served after completing the 15-year sentences.

Defense attorney Chuck Peterson asked Lodge for a sentence in the 13-year range, noting Kurbanov hadn't actually harmed anyone and would be deported after prison.

"That's punishment enough for what he did," Peterson said.

U.S. Assistant Attorney Aaron Lucoff asked Lodge to sentence Kurbanov to 35 years in prison.

"Society needs to be protected from this defendant," Lucoff told Lodge. Lucoff said Kurbanov wanted to strike Americans on U.S. soil to avenge U.S. military action in central Asia.

Prosecutors called four witnesses at the sentencing hearing, one an FBI agent and explosives expert and three jail workers at the Ada County Jail. They also showed videos of Kurbanov in the jail spitting on a jail deputy and spitting on a camera and other areas of a special holding cell. One of the jail workers testified that Kurbanov soaked paper towels with his urine and threw it into another inmate's cell.

Lodge said he was "taken aback" by the videos and testimony. He also said Kurbanov lacked an appreciation for a system of government that would spend more than \$1 million on his defense on the foundational idea that anyone accused of a crime is innocent until proven guilty.

"The lengthy term of imprisonment imposed by the Court ensures that this defendant, who by his words and acts was intent on taking American lives, does not and will not pose any further threat to the safety and security of our community," said U.S. Attorney Wendy Olson in a statement after the sentencing.