PRESS RELEASE

Four More Oath Keepers Sentenced for Seditious Conspiracy Related to U.S. Capitol Breach

Friday, June 2, 2023

For Immediate Release

U.S. Attorney's Office, District of Columbia

WASHINGTON – Four members of the Oath Keepers were sentenced this week on seditious conspiracy and other charges for crimes related to the breach of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. Their actions and the actions of others disrupted a joint session of the U.S. Congress that was in the process of ascertaining and counting the electoral votes related to the presidential election.

Roberto Minuta, 39, of Prosper, Texas; Joseph Hackett, 53, of Sarasota, Florida; David Moerschel, 45, of Punta Gorda, Florida; and Edward Vallejo, 64, of Phoenix, Arizona, were sentenced in U.S. District Court in the District of Columbia, by the Honorable Amit P. Mehta.

Minuta was sentenced June 1, 2023, to 54 months in prison and 36 months of supervised release.

Vallejo was sentenced on June 1, 2023, to 36 months in prison and 36 months of supervised release (including the first 12 months to be served on home confinement).

Moerschel was sentenced on June 2, 2023, to 36 months in prison and 36 months of supervised release.

Hackett was sentenced on June 2, 2023, to 42 months in prison and 36 months of supervised release.

The four defendants were found guilty on January 23, 2023, of seditious conspiracy, conspiracy to obstruct an official proceeding, obstruction of an official proceeding, and conspiracy to prevent Members of Congress from discharging their official duties. Hackett was also found guilty of destruction of evidence. The verdicts followed a seven week trial.

According to the evidence, in the months leading up to January 6, the defendants and their co-conspirators plotted to oppose by force the lawful transfer of presidential power, including by amassing an armed "quick reaction force" on the outskirts of the District of Columbia. Beginning in late December 2020, via encrypted and private communications applications, the defendants and various co-conspirators coordinated and planned to travel to Washington, D.C., on or around Jan. 6, 2021, the date of the certification of the electoral college vote. The defendants made plans to bring weapons to the area to support the operation. The co-conspirators then traveled across the country to the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area in early January 2021, with paramilitary gear and supplies including firearms, tactical vests with plates, helmets, and radio equipment.

The defendants conspired through a variety of manners and means, including: organizing into teams that were prepared and willing to use force and to transport firearms and ammunition into Washington, D.C.; recruiting members and affiliates to participate in the conspiracy; organizing trainings to teach and learn paramilitary combat tactics; bringing and contributing paramilitary gear, weapons, and supplies – including knives, camouflaged combat uniforms, tactical vests with plates, helmets, eye protection, and radio equipment – to the Capitol grounds; breaching and attempting to take control of the Capitol grounds and building on Jan. 6, 2021, in an effort to prevent, hinder and delay the certification of the electoral college vote; using force against law enforcement officers while inside the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021; continuing to plot, after Jan. 6, 2021, to oppose by force the lawful transfer of presidential power; and using websites, social media, text messaging and encrypted messaging applications to communicate with co-conspirators and others.

The case is being prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia and the Department of Justice's National Security Division and Criminal Division. Valuable assistance was provided by numerous U.S. Attorney's Offices across the country.

The case is being investigated by the FBI's Washington Field Office, as well as the Metropolitan Police Department, with significant assistance provided by the FBI's New York, Dallas, Tampa, and Phoenix Field Offices. Valuable assistance was provided by the United States Capitol Police and the United States Secret Service.

In the 28 months since Jan. 6, 2021, more than 1,000 individuals have been arrested in nearly all 50 states for crimes related to the breach of the U.S. Capitol, including more than 320 individuals charged with assaulting or impeding law enforcement. The investigation remains ongoing.

Anyone with tips can call 1-800-CALL-FBI (800-225-5324) or visit tips.fbi.gov.

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Topic

VIOLENT CRIME

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District of Columbia

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