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California Man Arrested for Allegedly Sending Funds to ISIS; Explosives Found at Residence

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Federal authorities have arrested a 28-year-old man in Long Beach, California, for allegedly attempting to provide financial support to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), a designated foreign terrorist organization. Mark Lorenzo Villanueva, a lawful permanent resident originally from the Philippines, now faces a federal charge of attempting to provide material support to terrorism—a felony that carries a potential prison sentence of up to 20 years.

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of California, Villanueva made 12 financial transfers totaling \$1,615 over a five-month period to two intermediaries with connections overseas. The payments were traced through Western Union records, and officials allege the funds were intended to assist ISIS fighters with weapons and equipment.

The FBI's Los Angeles Field Office confirmed that Villanueva used social media platforms to communicate with individuals who identified themselves as ISIS members. In those exchanges, he expressed his ideological alignment and a willingness to join the terrorist group in combat. "It's an honor to fight and die for our faith. It's the best way to go to heaven," he allegedly stated in one conversation. He also wrote, "Someday soon, I'll be joining."

Authorities say Villanueva told one of the individuals that he possessed knives and an explosive device. During his arrest on Friday morning, agents with the Joint Terrorism Task Force seized what appeared to be a bomb from his bedroom. The device is now in the custody of federal law enforcement.

"Mr. Villanueva is alleged to have financially supported and pledged his allegiance to a terror group that targets the United States and our interests around the world," said Patrick Grandy, Acting Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Los Angeles Field Office. He credited the Joint Terrorism Task Force for its role in safely detaining Villanueva and disrupting any further efforts to advance ISIS operations.

Villanueva reportedly asked one of his ISIS contacts if the money he sent would help purchase weapons and equipment, and he arranged to send the payments through

intermediaries to mask the transaction origins. Court records detail these exchanges, which were part of the evidence leading to his arrest.

As the investigation continues, federal prosecutors have not yet disclosed whether additional charges will be filed or if others were involved. The case underscores continued efforts by federal authorities to monitor and disrupt domestic support for international terrorist organizations.