

Former Irish soldier Lisa Smith jailed for 15 months for IS membership

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Former Irish soldier Lisa Smith has been sentenced to 15 months in prison at the Special Criminal Court for membership of ISIS, the Islamic State terrorist organisation.



The 40-year-old mother of one is the first person to be convicted in an Irish court of membership in another country of an Islamic terrorist organisation. The court rejected her claims that

she had gone to Islamic State simply out of a sense of religious obligation and for the innocent purpose of living under Sharia law and raising a family in a Muslim state.

It found her not guilty of a second charge of funding terrorism, saying that it is reasonably possible that she sent €800 to an Isis fighter and propagandist John Georgelas in May 2015 for his personal use or for "humanitarian reasons", after he had been injured during fighting in Syria.

Mr Justice Tony Hunt said today it was a serious matter for an Irish citizen and former defence forces member to take up allegiance to a foreign terrorist organisation. Smith, he said, "followed rather than led" but knew precisely the nature of the organisation. . . The court accepts that Smith suffered domestic violence at the time of her marriage in Syria and is the mother of a young child.

"The custodial sentence threshold has been passed," he said, which will underline the gravity of the offence and deter others. He also said there was "insufficient mitigation for fully a suspended sentence".

The court also rejected an application by Smith to be allowed remain on bail pending an appeal. Mr Justice Hunt said the court had "considered the application" and there was "no basis for the application". "We have imposed sentence," the judge said, "determined the verdict and backdated the sentence to 21 June."