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York County native gets 31/2 years for helping Hamas

By NICHOLE DOBO
For The Evening Sun

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A 33-year-old York County native was sentenced Thursday morning to prison for aiding a group the United States designated as a terrorist organization.

Richard David Hupper, originally from York Township, was sentenced to 3 1/2 years in federal prison for aiding Hamas, a Palestinian military and political organization.

Hupper faced up to 15 years in prison. He admitted to giving about \$20,000 to Hamas while working in Israel with the International Solidarity Movement, a non-governmental organization.

The prison sentence will begin after Hupper finishes a prison term for a related passport fraud charge, said Neal Lewis, Hupper's Florida-based defense attorney. That sentence is to end in November.

The new sentence, handed down by a federal judge in the Southern District of Florida, was not a surprise to Hupper, Lewis said. The defense attorney had asked for home confinement.

In the courtroom for Hupper's sentencing was his father, former Southern York County Supt. Richard Hupper, Lewis said.

There is hope Hupper will be sent to a North Carolina prison because he is in need of specialized surgery for a back problem, Lewis said. After that, it's possible Hupper would be sent to finish his prison term in a prison closer to York, but that is up to federal authorities, Lewis said.

Hupper, a Dallastown Area High School graduate, became involved with the conflict in the Middle East after watching international newscasts. The machinist watched

the TV shows while recovering from a work-related injury at his

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Alabama home, his lawyer has said.

Hupper traveled to the Gaza Strip, where he worked with the International Solidarity Movement to aid Palestinians, according to court documents. He was eventually deported by Israeli authorities, according to court documents.

To return to Israel, Hupper applied for a passport in Florida using false information, according to court documents. He pleaded guilty to passport fraud charges more than two years ago. He is finishing his 24-month federal prison sentence for those charges.

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