

Denmark awards ex-spy \$27,000 in PTSD claim

COPENHAGEN

Former Qaeda jihadist who became an informant faced 'dangerous events'

BY MARTIN SELSOE SORENSSEN

Describing his work as an undercover agent among a group of heavily armed Qaeda terrorists, Morten Storm said his job as a jihadist turned informant was dangerous and grueling.

Spy agencies never acknowledged his secret service. But now a Danish state agency, in a breakthrough ruling for Mr. Storm, has awarded him \$27,000 in damages for loss of work because of post-traumatic stress disorder, which he said in his claim was a result of his undercover role for the Danish and other intelligence agencies.

Labor Market Insurance, a government board, concluded that he had experienced "exceptionally dangerous events" during his tenure, the newspaper Jyllands-Posten reported on Monday.

A future review will decide to what extent he may still be able to work, and could award additional compensation.

The payout is, in effect, the first formal recognition by the government of his undercover work; it has never been acknowledged by the Danish Security and Intelligence Service, or by other Western intelligence agencies, which generally refuse to comment on secret sources.

Hans Jorgen Bonnichsen, a former chief of operations of the Danish intelligence service, said he was stunned when he heard of the decision to compensate Mr. Storm. Agencies that conduct their work in secret are put in a tough spot when former operatives talk publicly about their work, Mr. Bonnichsen said, but the intelligence service usually maintained its silence "until hell freezes over" to protect its current employees.

Mr. Storm's lawyer said the compen-

sation case was "a little peculiar," though he said the size of the initial award was fairly standard.

Mr. Storm had no pay slip or contract to show for his work, and the intelligence agency refused to submit any corroboration.

"In regular work-damage cases both the injured and the employer offer information," said the lawyer, Brian Bruun Hansen. But the agency "chose to be completely silent."

In an email message, a press officer said the agency "generally does not confirm or deny whether a person is working or has worked as a source."

Instead of documents proving his relationship with state intelligence agents, Mr. Storm submitted voice recordings and proof of Western Union money transfers that included the names of agency operatives. His past claims about his undercover work have been taken seriously by the international news media and by Atlantic Monthly Press, which published his 2014 memoir, "Agent Storm: My Life Inside Al Qaeda and the C.I.A." A New York Times review called his account "highly credible."

Before he joined with militant Islamists, Mr. Storm, now 43, was an armed robber and, at 21, a prospective member of a criminal biker gang. In 1997, in his early 20s, he converted to Islam and moved first to Britain, and then to Yemen to learn Arabic. There, he befriended senior members of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

In 2006, according to his account, he lost faith in jihadism and turned on his terrorist comrades to become an informer for the Danish intelligence service, as well as for agencies in Britain and the United States.

Mr. Storm claims that information he provided helped lead to the drone killing of the American cleric and Qaeda recruiter Anwar al-Awlaki in Yemen in 2011 and also to the arrest that year of Ahmed Abdulkadir Warsame, a Somali aiding Al Shabab, a terrorist group in Somalia, and Al Qaeda in Yemen. His claims have never been publicly confirmed by the C.I.A.