

# Islamist Terrorism

The British Connections

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Robin Simcox | Hannah Stuart | Houriya Ahmed

# **ISLAMIST TERRORISM**

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## **THE BRITISH CONNECTIONS**

**Robin Simcox | Hannah Stuart | Houriya Ahmed**

2010

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# ABOUT THE CSC

The CSC is a non-partisan think-tank that studies issues related to community cohesion in the UK. Committed to the promotion of human rights, it is the first think-tank in the UK to specialise in studying radicalisation and extremism within the UK. The CSC is headquartered in London, and was founded in 2007 to promote human rights, tolerance and greater cohesion among the UK's ethnic and religious communities and within wider British society.

## CSC publications

*Hate on the State: How British libraries encourage Islamic extremism* (2007)

*Crimes of the Community: Honour-based violence in the UK* (2008)

*Virtual Caliphate: Islamic extremists and their websites* (2008)

*Islam on Campus: A survey of UK student opinions* (2008)

*Victims of Intimidation: Freedom of speech within Europe's Muslim communities* (2008)

*The West and the Future of Islam: A debate between Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Ed Husain* (2009)

*The Beth Din: Jewish law in the UK* (2009)

*A Degree of Influence: The funding of strategically important subjects in UK universities* (2009)

*The BNP and the Online Fascist Network* (2009)

*Hizb ut-Tahrir: Ideology and Strategy* (2009)

*Blood & Honour: Britain's Far-Right Militants* (2010)

*Radical Islam on UK Campuses* (2010)

*Control Orders: Strengthening National Security* (2010)

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Al-Qaeda and al-Qaeda inspired terrorism remains the biggest threat to the UK's national security. The Security Service estimates that over 2,000 people in the UK pose a terrorist threat and in March 2005 it was estimated that there were up to 200 al-Qaeda trained operatives in the UK. The British-based threat does not only affect the UK: a number of British Muslims have been convicted in foreign courts or have fought for (or trained with) terrorist or extreme Islamist groups abroad.

*Islamist Terrorism: The British Connections* aims to present an overview of Islamism-inspired terrorism with significant connections to the UK. The report is a collection of profiles of Islamism-inspired terrorist convictions and attacks in the UK between 1999 and 2009 and a statistical analysis is drawn from the data collected. The report also examines the scope of British-linked Islamism-inspired terrorism threats worldwide since 1993, including convictions, training and suicide attacks abroad, as well as terrorism extradition cases from the UK. Connections between significant individuals and groups have also been charted.

## SIGNIFICANT INCIDENTS & PRECEDENTS

*Islamist Terrorism* presents significant incidents and precedents, which include:

- In 1996 Khalid Shahid is said to have become Britain's first suicide bomber. While fighting jihad in Afghanistan, he asked members of the Taliban to hide grenades in his jacket, which he could detonate when the Northern Alliance tried to arrest him.
- In March 1999 Amer Mirza was the first member of al-Muhajiroun (a group now proscribed in the UK) to be convicted of Islamism-related terrorism offences. He had attempted to petrol bomb a Territorial Army base in West London.
- In January 2002 Moinul Abedin was the first person convicted in UK courts for planning an Islamism-inspired terrorist attack.
- In April 2002 Iftikhar Ali became the first person convicted of inciting racial hatred with an Islamic religious text. Ali was distributing al-Muhajiroun leaflets which called for a holy war against Jews.
- In April 2003 Brahim Benmerzouga and Baghdad Meziane became the first people convicted of funding Islamist-related terrorism through conspiracy to defraud. Al-Qaeda was among those that they had funded.
- In July 2005 Mohammad Sidique Khan, Shehzad Tanweer, Hasib Hussain and Germaine Lindsay became the first suicide bombers to attack the UK.
- In November 2005 Abbas Boutrab was the first person to be convicted of Islamism-related terrorism offences in Northern Ireland.
- In May 2007 Syed Hashmi became the first person to be extradited from the UK to the United States of America on Islamism-related terrorism charges.
- In July 2007 Younes Tsouli was the first person to be convicted of inciting murder for terrorism purposes overseas over the internet.
- In November 2007 Abdul Rahman became the first person to be convicted of disseminating terrorist information under the Terrorism Act 2006.
- In February 2008 Mohammed al-Figari, Mohammed Hamid, Kader Ahmed, Mohammed Kyriacou, Kibley da Costa, Atilla Ahmet, Yassin Mutegombwa and Mustafa Abdullah were the first people convicted of providing or attended terrorist training in the UK under the Terrorism Act 2006.
- In March 2008 Bilal Mohammed was convicted solely of disseminating terrorist material. This was the first time that section 2 of the Terrorism Act 2006 had been used independently.



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- In April 2008 Simon Keeler became the first British Caucasian Muslim convert to be convicted of Islamism-inspired terrorism charges: he was found guilty of inciting murder for terrorist purposes overseas and fundraising for terrorist purposes.
- In June 2008 Yeshiemebet Girma became the first woman to be convicted of Islamism-related offences. She had assisted one of the conspirators of the failed 21/7 suicide attacks in London in 2005.
- In August 2008 Hammaad Munshi became the youngest British citizen to have been convicted of Islamism-related terrorism offences. Munshi was aged 16 when charged and 18 when convicted.
- In December 2008 Rangzieb Ahmed and Habib Ahmed became the first people in the UK to be convicted of membership of proscribed Islamist organisations. The organisations in this case were al-Qaeda and Harakat ul-Mujahideen.
- In February 2009 Shella Roma became the first woman in Britain to be convicted of distributing terrorist publications.

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

*Islamist Terrorism* profiles 124 individuals who committed suicide attacks or were convicted for Islamism-related terrorism offences in the UK between 1999 and 2009. There were a combined total of 127 convictions and attacks, which will collectively be referred to as Islamism related offences (IROs).

### Age and gender

Analysis of IROs confirms that Islamism-inspired offences have been most commonly carried out by young men.

- Only five women have been convicted, three of whom were convicted of offences that involved concealing information after an offence and/or assisting an offender rather than violent acts or active participation in a terrorism plot.
- While the age at time of charge ranged from 16 to 48, just over two-thirds of all IROs were committed by those aged under 30. Many of the remaining third were convicted of offences related to their roles as facilitators and/or ideologues.

### Education and employment

Analysis of individuals who committed IROs in the UK does not support the assertion made by some that there is a correlation between terrorist activity and low educational achievement and employment status.

- Where known, the most common level of education achieved at the time of the IRO was study for a higher-education qualification. Including graduates and postgraduates, therefore, a minimum of 31% of those who committed IROs had at some point attended university or a higher education institute.
- A total of 42% of IROs were perpetrated by individuals either in employment (32%, n=41) or full-time further or higher education (10%, n=13) at the date of charge or attack.

### Nationality, origin and place of residence

IRO analysis supports the theory that the UK faces a threat from 'home-grown' terrorism.

- 69% of IROs were perpetrated by individuals holding British nationality.
- South-central Asia features prominently among origins of ancestry, accounting for almost half (46%) of all places of origin by region of ancestry. Furthermore, over a quarter (28%) of those who committed IROs have some Pakistani heritage, of whom at least 80% (n=29) were British nationals with Pakistani origins.
- The most common origin, after British Pakistani (23%) and those of unspecified origins (9%), is Somali, which was the origin of ancestry for eight of those convicted for IROs (6%).
- Among UK residences, London features most prominently, with just under half (n=61, 48%) of IROs being committed by individuals living in London. The boroughs of Waltham Forest and Newham within North

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East London were together home to 30% of London-based perpetrators (n=18). Outside of London, the two most common regions were the West Midlands (13%) and Yorkshire and the Humber (9%).

### **Charges, sentences, legislation and appeals**

Analysis of the 122 IRO convictions (excluding suicide bombers) reveals a spread of severity of charges and length of sentence.

- The most common sentence received for an IRO, given 39 times, was between 13 months and four years (32% of all sentences). Sentences totalling ten years or longer were given 25 times (20% of all sentences) and a life sentence or an indefinite sentence for public protection was given on 23 occasions (19% of all sentences).
- In 44% of IROs, the individual pleaded guilty and in 55% of cases the individual pleaded not guilty.
- 60% of convictions were secured under anti-terrorism legislation, three quarters of which were under the Terrorism Act 2000.
- Of the 119 individuals convicted of IROs, a minimum of 25 successfully appealed their sentences; three had their sentences increased by the Court of Appeal; and a minimum of 29 were either refused leave to appeal or unsuccessfully appealed their conviction or sentence.

### **Links to proscribed organisations**

- The majority (68%) of individuals who committed IROs had no direct link to any organisations currently proscribed by the UK government; 40 individuals (32%) did, the two most prevalent being al-Muhajiroun (15%, n=19) and al-Qaeda (14.5%, n=18).
- Just under a third (30%, n=11) of the 37 cell members involved in the eight major terrorism plots had direct links to al-Qaeda, making it disproportionately well represented as an associated organisation among cell members.
- 77.5% (n=31) of those with links to proscribed organisations are British. However, in over half (52.5%, n=21) of all these cases the individual's place of origin of ancestry is in South-central Asia: of these, all of whom are British citizens, 62% (n=13) are British Pakistanis and 19% (n=4) are British Bangladeshis.

### **Attendance at terrorist training camps**

- The majority (69%) of all individuals who committed IROs had not attended terrorist training camps, while just under a third (31%) had attended one or more, the most common location being Pakistan (17%).
- 55% (n=21) of the 38 individuals who attended one or more training camps trained in Pakistan and six of the eight major terrorism cells include members who attended camps there.
- Seven of the eight terrorist cells contained individual members who had attended terrorist training camps and cell members were much more likely to have attended terrorist training camps than all those who were involved in IROs (51% and 31% respectively).
- The proportion of cell members who trained in Pakistan (38%, n=14) or Afghanistan (11%, n=4) is approximately double that of all individuals involved in IROs (17% and 6% respectively).
- The majority (68%, n=26) of those who attended terrorist training camps are British.
- Just over half (53%, n=20) of those who attended terrorist training camps are of South-central Asian origin and just under a quarter (24%, n=9) are of East-African origin. Of these individuals, the majority (85%, n=17) of those of South-central Asian origin are British citizens, while over half (56%, n=5) of those of East-African origin are non-British citizens.

### **Proscribed organisations and terrorist training**

- Half (50%, n=19) of the 38 individuals who attended training camps were linked to one or more proscribed organisations, of which al-Qaeda is the most common (32%, n=12). Just over two thirds (68%, n=13) of

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these were also involved in the major terrorism plots.

- Two thirds (68%, n=13) of the 19 individuals who had received terrorist training but were not directly linked to a proscribed organisation were not involved in the major terrorism plots.
- Seven of the eight major cells contained individual members who had direct links to al-Qaeda, of which five involved cell members who had trained in Pakistan: 7/7; the 'fertiliser bomb' cell; the 'dirty bomb' cell; the 'shoe bomb' cell; and the transatlantic 'liquid bomb' cell.

# METHODOLOGY

*Islamist Terrorism: The British Connections* aims to present a holistic view of Islamism-inspired or related terrorism with significant connections to the UK. The report is a collection of profiles of Islamism-inspired terrorist convictions and attacks in the UK between 1999 and 2009; a statistical analysis of the data collected has also been performed. The report also examines the scope of British-linked Islamism-inspired terrorism threats worldwide over the last fifteen years, including convictions, training and suicide attacks abroad, as well as terrorism extradition cases from the UK. Connections between significant individuals and groups are also included.

## STRUCTURE

The report is structured in two parts, comprising a number of sub-sections as follows:

### **PART 1 – ISLAMIST TERRORISM IN THE UNITED KINGDOM (1999-2009)**

- **Section 1(1) Convictions:** A comprehensive list of Islamism-inspired terrorism convictions in UK courts – including British and foreign nationals.
- **Section 1(2) Suicide attacks:** All Islamism-inspired suicide attacks in the UK.
- **Section 1(3) Statistics:** Statistical analysis of trends found in section 1(1) and 1(2), including: background information; charges and sentences; connections to proscribed terrorist groups; and the frequency with which the individuals profiled received terrorist training.
- **Section 1(4) Maps:** Maps indicating the distribution of places of residence for all individuals in sections 1(1) and 1(2), including a breakdown of London sub-regions and Birmingham constituencies.<sup>1</sup>

### **PART 2 – ISLAMIST TERRORISM WORLDWIDE (1993-2009)**

- **Section 2(1) British nationals convicted abroad:** British nationals convicted of Islamism-inspired terrorist offences abroad.
- **Section 2(2) Foreign nationals convicted abroad:** Foreign nationals with significant connections to the UK, who have been convicted of Islamism-inspired terrorist offences abroad.
- **Section 2(3) Combatants abroad:** British and foreign nationals with significant connections to the UK, who have been inspired by extreme Islamism to fight or commit suicide attacks abroad against civilian or military personnel.<sup>2</sup>
- **Section 2(4) Extraditions:** Individuals extradited from the UK for Islamism-inspired terrorism offences who are either awaiting or facing trial abroad, or are being held in British jails awaiting or appealing against extradition from the UK. Also included are those individuals who have been successfully convicted abroad following their extradition from the UK.<sup>3</sup>
- **Section 2(5) Networks:** Diagrams showing the worldwide connections between the individuals, terrorist groups, and British-based Islamist groups mentioned in the report.

**NB.** Part two should not be seen as a comprehensive list of Islamism-inspired terrorism convictions, activities abroad, or extradition cases. Instead, it is intended to provide a sample of the British linked Islamism-inspired terrorist threat worldwide, while acknowledging that a complete analysis is beyond this report's remit.

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1 For more details see Place of Residence methodology on page xv

2 When not obtainable from news sources, personal information on some cases in section 2(2) has been taken from jihadist-sympathetic websites, such as Caravan of Martyrs, available at [www.caravansofmartyrs.atspace.com](http://www.caravansofmartyrs.atspace.com)

3 Also included is Ibrahim Hussein Abdel-Hadi Eidarous, who died in July 2008 while awaiting extradition to the US.

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## CRITERIA

In order to be included in this report, individuals must have: been convicted for terrorism-related offences; committed suicide attacks in the UK; been convicted, fought or committed suicide attacks abroad and possessed significant links to the UK (having been educated there, lived there for an extended period of time or been radicalised there); or been involved in extradition cases from the UK. In addition they must have been motivated primarily by a belief in Islamism.

Acknowledging that there are no universally accepted definitions of terrorism and Islamism, the authors have used the following definitions as working criteria for inclusion.

- **Islamism:** A political ideology, whose key tenets include:
  - Belief that Islam is not a religion, but a holistic socio-political system;
  - Advocacy of Sharia (Islamic) law as divine state law;
  - Belief that a transnational Muslim community, known as the Ummah, should unite as a political bloc;
  - Advocacy of an 'Islamic' state, or Caliphate, within which sovereignty belongs to God.

Adherents are known as Islamists. The spectrum of Islamism ranges from entry-level Islamists (e.g. the Muslim Brotherhood) and revolutionary Islamists (e.g. Hizb ut-Tahrir) to militant Islamists, or jihadists (e.g. al-Qaeda), who are prepared to use violence to achieve their aims. While differing in methodology, all Islamists share the same core ideology.<sup>4</sup>

In order to be included in this report, individuals must be motivated primarily by a belief in Islamism, identified by any of the following:

- A self-proclaimed Islamism-inspired motive i.e. suicide video or letter
  - An Islamism-inspired motive identified and proven as such during trial
  - Possession (at time of arrest) of inflammatory Islamist material
  - Membership of an Islamist organisation
  - Evidence of foreign travel to join and/or fight for an Islamist organisation
- **Terrorism:** Throughout this report the authors utilise the interpretation found in Section 1 of the Terrorism Act 2000, specifically:

The use or threat [of action] designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public or a section of the public [...] for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.<sup>5</sup>

**Part 1** – Offences in the UK which have been profiled are limited to those contrary to UK anti-terror legislation, namely the Terrorism Act 2000 and the Terrorism Act 2006, as well as other offences such as incitement to racial hatred that meet the aforementioned criteria.

**Part 2** – Convictions abroad and extradition cases are limited to those based on offences which are either contrary to that country's domestic terrorism legislation or otherwise meet the aforementioned criteria. Combatants abroad have been included when they have travelled abroad to join an Islamism-inspired

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4 To legitimise terrorism as a tactic, militant Islamists utilise the writings of popular theorists of modern Islamism, such as the intellectual ideologue for the Muslim Brotherhood, Sayyid Qutb; the founder of Hizb ut-Tahrir, Mohammed Taqiuddin an-Nabhani; and founder of the Islamic revivalist party Jamaat-e-Islami, Syed Abul A'ala Maududi. Al-Qaeda, for example, justify mass casualty attacks against civilians by combining Nabhani's call to implement an expansionist Islamist state with Qutb's classification of all Muslim and non-Muslim societies as *jahaliya*, or ignorance. See *Al-Qaeda Training Manual, The Al-Qaeda Documents* – downloadable from the United States Department of Justice, [www.usdoj.gov/ag/manualpart1\\_1.pdf](http://www.usdoj.gov/ag/manualpart1_1.pdf)

5 Office of Public Sector Information, Terrorism Act 2000 (c.11), Section 1, available at [www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/ukpga\\_2000011\\_en\\_2#pt1-l1g1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/ukpga_2000011_en_2#pt1-l1g1)

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insurgency and demonstrated willingness to commit attacks against civilians and military personnel without the sanction of their own state.<sup>6</sup>

**Cases omitted:** There have been terrorist convictions in the UK in which the perpetrators may appear to have pursued typical Islamist causes, but where Islamist motivation cannot be proven. The individuals involved may have been motivated by nationalist causes; significant mental health issues prevented the identification of a clear motive; or the inspiration behind the offence was simply unclear.

The following cases are examples of such cases, all of which have been omitted from this report:

- In 1985, Mohammed Baalbaki, a Lebanese national, was involved in a failed bomb attack in front of the Syrian embassy and Swiss Centre in London, allegedly organised in protest against the arrests of two terrorist suspects in Switzerland who had been preparing to attack Libyan and Syrian interests in Geneva. Following their arrests a statement from ‘the Martyrs of Tal al-Zaatar’ was sent to the Swiss embassy in London threatening reprisals. Baalbaki pleaded guilty to the attempted attack in March 1995 and sentenced to seven years. There was no proven Islamism-inspired motive.<sup>7</sup>
- In July 1994, Palestinian and Lebanese nationals Jawad Botmeh and Samar Alami were involved in a bomb attack against the Israeli embassy and Balfour House [offices of the Joint Israel Appeal and Zionist Federation] in London. Both imprisoned for 20 years, they belonged to the Palestine Resistance Jaffa Group, a breakaway British cell from the Marxist-aligned Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). It was never clarified during their trial (or after) whether they were acting under orders from the PFLP, or whether they were a self-motivated group. There was no proven Islamism-inspired motive.<sup>8</sup>
- In March 2003 Mohammed Abdullah Azam, a British national, was convicted for possessing books on terrorism, bomb making and using firearms. He said he was willing to use this knowledge in an attempt to overthrow the Algerian government; however, it has not been possible to determine whether Azam was inspired by nationalism or Islamism.<sup>9</sup>
- In February 2008, Malcolm Hodges was convicted for publishing statements intending to recklessly encourage terrorism. Hodges sent letters to mosques throughout the UK in November 2006 encouraging their members to undertake terrorist acts against accountancy bodies. Hodges claimed that he was a follower of Osama bin Laden, encouraged ‘jihad’ and said that Israel needed to be ‘wipe[d] from the map’. However, the judge accepted that Hodges had ‘some form of personality disorder’. Hodges had previously sent threatening letters to accountants and it appeared that borrowing Islamism-inspired idioms was the latest manifestation of his vendetta.<sup>10</sup>

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6 Some cases involve individuals who fought in Bosnia from 1992–1995. The authors acknowledge the difficulty inherent in defining this activity as terrorism as per the report’s criteria and the conflict was clearly not an ideological Islamist conflict from the outset. However, some ‘mujahideen’ units were involved in the conflict and the war as a whole was an important development in the Islamist narrative of Muslim/non-Muslim conflict in the modern world. There is good evidence that the individuals mentioned joined these ‘mujahideen’ units and similarly, many non-indigenous fighters involved in the conflict were motivated by relatively simpler, non-ideological religious reasons. The presence of these individuals in the conflict does not confirm Islamist intentions in their true sense. But the adoption of some ideals, perceived by many to be Islamist ideals, is likely i.e. physical fighting for the concept of Ummah. Additionally, these men’s deaths and contribution to the ‘mujahideen’ cause have subsequently been hijacked by Islamism/jihadism-inspired narratives of the Balkans conflict. In summary, the cases (all of which come from a jihadist-supporting website) have been included to demonstrate the phenomena discussed above rather than to indicate the ideological disposition of those subjects and, therefore, are not typical of the cases included.

7 ‘Seven years’ jail for Lebanese who attacked Syrian embassy’, *Agence France-Presse*, 9 March 1995

8 ‘Middle-class woman “planted embassy bomb”’, *Independent*, 8 October 1996, available at [www.independent.co.uk/news/middleclass-woman-planted-embassy-bomb-1357328.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/middleclass-woman-planted-embassy-bomb-1357328.html); ‘Caught in the blast’, *Guardian*, 21 October 2000, available at [www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/2000/oct/21/weekend7.weekend1](http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/2000/oct/21/weekend7.weekend1); ‘Palestinian bombers resume UK appeal’, *BBC News*, 16 October 2001, available at [www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/1602587.stm](http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/1602587.stm)

9 ‘Britain Charges Computer Programmer Under Anti-Terror Laws’, *Fox News*, 18 September 2002, available at [www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,63468,00.html](http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,63468,00.html); ‘Six arrests in London after anti-terrorist raid’, *Guardian*, 20 September 2002, available at [www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2002/sep/20/september11.britainandseptember11](http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2002/sep/20/september11.britainandseptember11); ‘Bomb books suspect is held’, *Daily Express*, 20 September 2002; ‘Political plotters and extremist violence – the history of town that harboured terror’, *Express on Sunday*, 4 April 2004

10 ‘“Jihad on accountants” man jailed’, *BBC News*, 19 February 2008, available at [www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/7253780.stm](http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/7253780.stm); ‘Man urged terror attacks on accountancy institutes – 10 years after failing professional exams’, *Daily Mail*, 19 February 2008, available at [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-516448/Man-urged-terror-attacks-accountancy-institutes--10-years-failing-professional-exams.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-516448/Man-urged-terror-attacks-accountancy-institutes--10-years-failing-professional-exams.html)

# ISLAMIST TERRORISM

## PROFILES

Each individual has an entry which details their case and background as well as indicating affiliations to groups and associates where known. The following sub-headings are used to standardise the information presented:

**NAME:** The name of the individual as appears on court documentation. Where unavailable, the name most commonly used to refer to the individual has been cited. Where possible the authors have reproduced all aliases outside of those natural differences that occur when translating names from Arabic into English. Commonly used aliases and the names adopted by those converting to Islam are included.

**CHARGE:** All charges the individual has been convicted of. UK convictions include the act and sub-section of UK legislation the offence was contrary to. For courts abroad, the precise wording of the charges is often unknown and the information has been taken from news sources. The following headings have also been used where applicable:

**Outcome:** Section 1(2) Suicide attacks, Section 2(3) Combatants abroad – whether the individual profiled fought abroad, carried out a suicide attack, or was killed fighting abroad.

**Country of conviction:** Section 2(2) Foreign nationals convicted abroad – the country in which the individual profiled was convicted.

**Destination:** Section 2(4) Extraditions – The country that applied for the extradition of the individual profiled.

**DATE OF CHARGE:** All convictions are listed by date of charge. Where date of charge could not be determined, the date of arrest is indicated instead. Where date of charge is not applicable the following headings have been used:

**Date of outcome:** Section 1(2) Suicide attacks, Section 2(2) Combatants abroad – the date or dates that the individual profiled fought abroad, carried out a suicide attack, or was killed fighting abroad.

**Date of arrest & date of extradition:** Section 2(3) Extradition cases – The dates that the individual profiled was arrested and, where applicable, subsequently extradited.

**DATE OF CONVICTION:** The date the defendant was either found guilty or admitted guilt. This can differ from the date of sentencing, which is commonly the following day.

**PLEA:** Whether the individual pleaded guilty or not guilty to the charge(s) they were convicted of.

**SENTENCE:** The time to be served in jail or in a young offender institute; the sum the individual was fined; or how many hours community service they were sentenced to.

**TARGET:** Where applicable, the specific individual, group, building, or institution that was explicitly intended to be the subject of the intended attack.

**NETWORK:** Known links to cases, plots or cells; links to known terrorist networks or groups, most of which are proscribed by the UK Home Office (see glossary of organisations); and links to known extreme Islamist groups that are not currently proscribed by the Home Office. Other networks the authors have chosen to include are explained below:

**Al-Muhajiroun** – After the group formally disbanded in 2004, it operated under the names al-Ghurabaa (AG) and the Saviour/Saved Sect (SS). Following the two group's proscription in 2006, former members founded Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'aah (ASWJ). Al-Muhajiroun reformed in 2009 after leading ASWJ members were released from prison, and was subsequently proscribed in January 2010. All those involved in terrorist cases that were members of any of the three groups are referred to as members of al-Muhajiroun in both the networks and associates sections.

**Finsbury Park Mosque [Abu Hamza's network]** – Abu Hamza al-Masri was imam of North Central London Mosque (aka Finsbury Park Mosque) between 1997 and 2003. Finsbury Park Mosque at this time is categorised as a network because under his control it became a centre of radicalisation, extremism, and a

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base for planning terrorist activities.<sup>11</sup> Many of the individuals profiled were also radicalised while attending Abu Hamza's extremist sermons there.

**Malakand training camp, July 2003** – Malakand, in Pakistan's North West Frontier Province, was the site of a terrorist training camp organised primarily by Omar Khyam, leader of the Crawley cell responsible for the 'fertiliser bomb' plot in the UK. Attendance during July 2003 has been included as a network because of the large number of individuals profiled in this report who trained there at the same time – including members of both the 'fertiliser' and the 7/7 cell as well as individuals convicted abroad – and who knew one another.

**Tablighi Jamaat** – Tablighi Jamaat, or literally 'the group that propagates the faith', is a primarily apolitical, religiously conservative, Sunni-Deobandi movement which operates in over 150 countries and has an estimated 70-80 million members. Founded in India during the 1920s, Tablighi Jamaat aims to revive religious practices which are in line with a conservative interpretation of Islam. Membership of the group, however, does not indicate an affinity with Islamism, nor does it indicate links to Islamist or terrorist organisations. It has been included as a network because of its non-ideological connections to Islamism-inspired terrorism. For example, federal investigators in the US have evidence of al-Qaeda operatives using the movement's global reach and its history of travelling missionaries in order to travel without attracting suspicion.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, some analysts have claimed that Tablighi Jamaat's literal interpretation of Islam has, on occasion, served as a precursor towards developing an ideological, Islamism-inspired interpretation of Islam.

**KNOWN ASSOCIATES:** Includes known links to others individuals listed in this report; links to other known terrorists; links to senior figures in extreme Islamist groups; and links to terrorist suspects placed under government control order in the UK. Associates are grouped according to network or case affiliation. If the individual profiled was part of a terrorist cell, then other members of that cell are also listed as known associates, even if they may not have had personal interaction with fellow cell members. When this is the case, the notes section will specify who exactly knew whom within the cell. Affiliations are denoted in square brackets and separated by semi-colons.

**GENDER:** The sex of the figure profiled.

**AGE AT TIME OF CHARGE:** The age of the individual profiled when charged with the crime that led to their inclusion in the report. Where the date of charge could not be determined, the age at time of arrest has been used instead.

**AGE AT TIME OF CONVICTION:** The age of the individual profiled when convicted of the crime that led to their inclusion in the report.

**Age at time of extradition:** Section 2(3) Extradition cases – The age of the individual profiled when extradited to face trial for the crime that led to their inclusion in the report.

**NATIONALITY:** The status of belonging to a particular country by birth or naturalisation.

**ORIGIN:** The cultural roots of the figure profiled, indicating ethnic heritage as well as place of birth. For example an individual born in the UK to parents who had emigrated from Pakistan is described as British Pakistani; an individual born in Ethiopia who subsequently gained British nationality is described as Ethiopian. When an individual is described as Asian, this refers to the Oxford English Dictionary's definition of the term in the UK, namely 'people who come from (or whose parents came from) the Indian subcontinent'.

**PLACE OF RESIDENCE:** The town or city and county the individual lived in at the time of arrest, as indicated on their court record sheet for British convictions. For London addresses the information is listed by ward where known, London borough, and London sub-region.<sup>13</sup> For Birmingham addresses the information is listed by ward

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11 For more information see Sean O'Neill and Daniel McGrory, *Suicide Factory: Abu Hamza and the Finsbury Park Mosque* (Harper Collins, 2006)

12 'A Muslim Missionary Group Draws New Scrutiny in U.S.', *New York Times*, 14 July 2003, available at [www.nytimes.com/2003/07/14/national/14ISLA.html?pagewanted=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/14/national/14ISLA.html?pagewanted=1); for more information on Tablighi Jamaat see Graham Fuller, 'The Future of Political Islam', *Foreign Affairs*, Mar.-Apr., 2002, p. 49, article available at [www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/57806/graham-e-fuller/the-future-of-political-islam](http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/57806/graham-e-fuller/the-future-of-political-islam)

13 The authors have used the most recent London sub-regions, defined in The London Plan: Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London, Greater London Authority, February 2008, available at [www.london.gov.uk/thelondonplan/docs/londonplan08.pdf](http://www.london.gov.uk/thelondonplan/docs/londonplan08.pdf)



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where known and Birmingham constituency.<sup>14</sup> The individual's place of birth or place where the individual was raised is included in brackets where known.

**OCCUPATION:** The job held at time of charge or at time of arrest. Previous jobs held are also included where known.

**EDUCATION:** Level of educational attainment at time of charge, and the institutions the individual attended are included, where known. When this includes undergraduate and postgraduate study, the degree subject is listed when known.

**NOTES:** Description of the case and activities the individual has been involved in, providing relevant information to compliment the entry. Accordingly, notes vary in length.

**SOURCES:** All sources used. The information in section 1(1), Islamism-inspired convictions in UK courts, and Section 2(4), extradition cases from the UK, has been obtained largely from court records (gained through personal correspondence), Court of Appeal documents, the Crown Prosecution Services (CPS), the Home Office, and news archives. Information reported in the media does not always match the court and government records. Conflicting information was also reported inter-governmentally, between Home Office, CPS and court records. When this has occurred, official court records have been given precedence as the authoritative source. When information has only been available from news sources, and there are discrepancies in the way this information is reported, it is noted within the text.

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<sup>14</sup> See 'Birmingham constituencies', Birmingham City Council website, available at [www.birmingham.gov.uk/constituencies](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/constituencies)

# GLOSSARY

## GROUPS & ORGANISATIONS

*The following is a list of organisations mentioned in this report and proscribed by the Home Office. The complete list of proscribed organisations can be found at:*

<http://security.homeoffice.gov.uk/terrorist-threat/proscribed-terrorist-orgs/proscribed-terrorist-groups/>

**Abu Sayyaf:** The aim of the Abu Sayyaf group is the establishment of an autonomous Islamist state in the Southern Philippine island of Mindanao.

**Al-Gama'a al-Islamiya:** The aim of this group is to overthrow the Egyptian government and replace it with an Islamist state. The group believes in using all means, including violence, to achieve its aims. Some members also want to see the removal of Western influence in the Arab world.

**Al-Ghurabaa:** A splinter group of al-Muhajiroun (see below) and based in the UK, the group has disseminated materials that glorify acts of terrorism. Its aims are the same as al-Muhajiroun, namely the removal of secular regimes and the establishment of an Islamist state in the UK.

**Al-Muhajiroun:** Founded in the UK in 1996 by Omar Bakri Mohammed, al-Muhajiroun is also known as al-Ghurabaa, Saviour/Saved Sect, Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'aah and Islam4UK. The group, currently led by Anjem Choudary, calls for the removal of secular regimes and the establishment of an Islamist state in the UK. In January 2010, the Home Office confirmed that al-Muhajiroun is a proscribed organisation, as the group is an alternative name for al-Ghurabaa and Saviour/Saved Sect – groups banned in 2006. **Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'aah**, also mentioned in this report, was formed in the UK in November 2005 by former leading members of al-Muhajiroun, after that organisation was disbanded in 2004. Like its predecessors, this group calls for the establishment of an Islamist state in the UK. However, after some of its leading members were jailed in 2008, the name is no longer used.

**Al-Shabaab:** Based in Somalia, the group aims to establish an Islamist state in the country using both military and political tactics. Controlling parts of Somali territory, the group has used violence against the Somali Transitional Federal Government and African Union peacekeeping forces since 2007. The Home Office proscribed the group in March 2010.

**Al-Qaeda:** The aims of al-Qaeda are to create an Islamist state governed by Islamic law; the expulsion of Western forces from Saudi Arabia; the destruction of Israel; and the end of Western influence in the Muslim-majority countries. The group is inspired and led by Osama bin Laden.

**Ansar al-Islam:** This is a Sunni Salafi group from Halabja, northeast Iraq. The group is anti-Western, and opposes the influence of the US in Iraqi Kurdistan. The group has been involved in operations against Multi-National Forces-Iraq.

**Armed Islamic Group (Groupe Islamique Armée):** The aim of this group is to create an Islamist state in Algeria. It will use all necessary means, including violence, to achieve its aims.

**Egyptian Islamic Jihad:** The aim of this group is to overthrow the Egyptian government and replace it with an Islamist state. In September 1998 the group's leadership allied itself to al-Qaeda.

**Hamas Izz al-Din al-Qassem Brigades:** The military wing of the Palestinian group Hamas, its stated aim is to end Israeli occupation in Palestine and establish an Islamist state.

**Harakat ul-Jihad ul-Islami:** The group aims to achieve the accession of Kashmir to Pakistan. It uses violent means to attack India and has targeted Indian security positions in Kashmir.

**Harakat ul-Mujahideen:** Based in Pakistan, this group seeks independence for Indian administered Kashmir. The leadership was signatory to Osama bin Laden's 1998 fatwa, which called for worldwide attacks against US and Western interests. The group was previously known as **Harakat ul-Ansar**, which is mentioned in this report. It formed as a result of a coalition between Harakat ul-Mujahideen and Harakat ul-Jihad ul-Islami in 1993. However, in

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1997 the group renamed itself again as Harakat ul-Mujahideen.

**Islamic Army of Aden:** The group aims to overthrow the Yemeni government and establish an Islamist state.

**Jaish-e-Mohammed:** Based in Pakistan, the group seeks the 'liberation' of Kashmir from Indian control as well as the 'destruction' of America and India. It has also stated that it aims to unify various Kashmiri militant groups. The group was founded in 2000 and is a splinter group of Harakat ul-Ansar.

**Jemaah Islamiyah:** A Southeast Asian militant group that aims to create an Islamist state unifying Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Southern Philippines.

**Lashkar-e-Taiba:** Founded in 1990 and based in Pakistan, the group seeks independence for Kashmir and the creation of an Islamist state unifying Muslim-majority countries using violent means. It considers India, Israel and the US to be enemies.

**Libyan Islamic Fighting Group:** The group seeks to replace the Libyan government with an Islamist state. The group has mounted several operations inside Libya, including a 1996 attempt to assassinate Mu'ammar Qadhafi. Until September 2009, the group was also part of the wider global Islamist extremist movement, inspired by al-Qaeda. The group has now publicly renounced the use of violent tactics to achieve its stated aims. However, according to the list of proscribed organisations provided by the UK government, it is still banned.

**Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (Groupe Salafiste pour la Predication et le Combat):** The group aims to create an Islamist state in Algeria using all necessary means, including violence. The group aligned itself with al-Qaeda's global jihad in 2004. It has now been renamed itself as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.

**Saviour Sect, aka Saved Sect:** A splinter group of al-Muhajiroun and based in the UK, the group has disseminated materials that glorify acts of terrorism. Its aims are the same as al-Muhajiroun and al-Ghurabaa, namely the removal of secular regimes and the establishment of an Islamist state in the UK.

**Lashkar-i-Jhangvi:** The group's aim is to create an Islamist state in Pakistan using violent means. The group sees Muslims belonging to the Shia Islamic sect as infidels and also aims to destroy other religions. The group has links to al-Qaeda and is a splinter of Millat-E Pakistan, which renamed itself in April 2003 from Sapha-i-Sahaba Pakistan.

*The following organisations are not proscribed by the Home Office but are mentioned in this report. Groups include those that have used terrorist tactics, or are aligned with al-Qaeda as well as non-violent Islamist groups.*

**Advice and Reform Committee:** The Committee was the London media liaison office for Osama bin Laden, which was opened by Khalid al-Fawwaz in 1994 and operated until 1998. The Committee advocated the ousting of the Saudi Arabian monarchy and its replacement with a strict Islamist regime that would end any Western influence and military involvement in the country and other Muslim majority countries.

**Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade (Fatah):** The group emerged from a Fatah linked coalition of militias. They comprise of local units that largely act independently but are united in their alliance to Fatah and are often seen as the group's military wing. They emerged in 2000 at the beginning of the second Palestinian intifada, seeking to establish a Palestinian state and drive Israeli forces out of Palestinian territories. Initially they focussed on settlements and military outposts, but in 2002 began targeting Israeli civilians. The group was thereafter designated as a terrorist group by the US.<sup>15</sup> Unlike the Hamas Izz al-Din al-Qassem Brigades, the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade is inspired by a nationalist and not an Islamism-related cause.

**Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights:** The Committee is an exiled Saudi Arabian opposition group founded in 1993 with the aim of overthrowing the ruling Saudi family and replacing it with a more 'pure' Islamic state. Headed by Mohammed al-Massari, its headquarters moved to London in 1994.

**Hizb ut-Tahrir:** Founded in Jordan in 1952, this revolutionary Islamist group seeks to overthrow governments in Muslim-majority countries – peacefully or via a military coup – and establish an Islamist state that would eventually expand and annex or colonise all existing countries. The group claims to be a non-violent political party.

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<sup>15</sup> See State Dept. Updates List of Terrorist Individuals and Groups, America.gov, 15 October 2002, available at <http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2002/October/20021015160910ddenny@pd.state.gov0.9141504.html>

## GLOSSARY

**Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (Groupe Islamique Combattant Marocain):** The group aims to establish an Islamist state in Morocco and supports al-Qaeda. Established during the 1990s, it comprises mainly Moroccan recruits who attend training camps in Afghanistan. The group is also believed to have been involved in planning the 2003 Casablanca bombings and Spanish authorities are investigating possible links to the 2004 Madrid bombings.

**Muslim Brotherhood:** Founded in Egypt in 1928, the Brotherhood aims to establish an Islamist state by using entry level tactics – political participation – as a means to advocate social and political reform. Through this, the Brotherhood hopes to gradually Islamise societies through grassroots activism. The group claims to be a non-violent political party.

**Jama'at Al-Tawhid Wal-Jihad:** Led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the group eventually became known as al-Qaeda in Iraq. The group's initial aim was the replacement of the Jordanian Monarchy with an Islamist government. They also focussed on training militants in Afghanistan and Iran.

**National Movement for the Restoration of Pakistani Sovereignty:** A now defunct Pakistani based terrorist group that claimed to be behind the beheading of American journalist Daniel Pearl. The group sought the release of Pakistani prisoners held by the United States at Guantanamo Bay. According to the Australian government, this group belongs to Jaish-e-Mohammed.<sup>16</sup>

**Riyadus-Salikhin Reconnaissance and Sabotage Battalion of Chechen Martyrs:** Led by Shamil Basayev, this group is an Islamist Chechen separatist outfit, engaged in guerrilla operations against Russian forces and pro-Russian Chechen forces, as well as Russian and Chechen non-combatants. The group was designated as a terrorist organisation by the United States in 2003.<sup>17</sup> In 2004, Basayev claimed the group was responsible for the Beslan school hostage crisis.

**Salafia Jihadia:** A group affiliated with al-Qaeda that is active in North Africa and Spain.

**Supporters of Shariah:** Founded in the UK in 1994 and headed by Abu Hamza al-Masri, this group rejected 'man-made' laws and regarded Islamic law as sovereign. Believing that Western influences need to be purged, as they pose a threat to Islam, the group encouraged Muslims to take up armed jihad as an obligation. The group operated out Finsbury Park Mosque in London when Abu Hamza controlled the mosque.

**Takfir-wal-Hijra:** Originating in Egypt in the 1960s as an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, the group has now allied with al-Qaeda, and has members and supporters in several countries.

**Taliban:** An extreme religious and political group that governed Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001, enforcing an extreme interpretation of Islamic law. Headed by Mullah Mohammed Omar, it has a strong insurgency movement in Pakistan and Afghanistan, fighting against those countries' current governments and allied NATO forces there.

**Tunisian Fighting Group:** Sometimes known as the Tunisian Combat Group, the Fighting Group is an offshoot of the Tunisian Islamic Front. Formed in the summer of 2000, their ultimate goal is to establish an Islamist state in Tunisia. They aim to attack both Tunisian and Western interests in the country and abroad. They have had ties with al-Qaeda and the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat.

### TERMS USED<sup>18</sup>

**Fatwa:** an authoritative statement on a point of law from an Islamic scholar.

**Jihad (lit. struggle):** interpretations range from a personal effort to live according to Islam to defending Islam by means of an armed struggle and physically fighting in the way of Allah to establish Islam. In the context of this report jihad should be taken to mean armed struggle.

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<sup>16</sup> See Australian National Security, Australian Government, available at [www.ag.gov.au/agd/WWW/nationalsecurity.nsf/Page/What\\_Governments\\_are\\_doing\\_Listing\\_of\\_Terrorism\\_Organisations\\_Jaish-i-Mohammed](http://www.ag.gov.au/agd/WWW/nationalsecurity.nsf/Page/What_Governments_are_doing_Listing_of_Terrorism_Organisations_Jaish-i-Mohammed)

<sup>17</sup> See State Department Briefing, America.gov, 28 February 2003, available at <http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2003/February/20030228182135ross@pd.state.gov0.704632.html>

<sup>18</sup> Taken primarily from Aisha Bewley, *Glossary of Islamic Terms* (London: Ta-Ha Publishers, 1998)

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**Kafir (pl. kuffar):** usually translated as 'non-believer' – referring to non-Muslims – the term can also be used derogatorily to suggest a person (Muslim or non-Muslim) who rejects Islam.

**Madrasa:** a traditional place of Islamic study and learning.

**Mujahid (pl. mujahideen) (lit. struggler):** a person who takes part in jihad as armed struggle.

**Ramadan:** the Muslim holy month of fasting.

**Sharia/Shariah (lit. road):** a range of diverse traditions and interpretations of Islamic jurisprudence, from strict rules to broad principles and objectives.

# BACKGROUND

## CURRENT THREAT LEVEL

Al-Qaeda and al-Qaeda inspired terrorism remains the biggest threat to the UK's national security. In January 2010 the terror threat level was raised from 'substantial' to 'severe', meaning an attack is 'highly likely'. The Security Service estimates that over 2,000 people in the UK pose a terrorist threat and in March 2005 it was estimated that there were up to 200 al-Qaeda trained operatives in the UK.<sup>19</sup>

The British-based threat is not limited to the UK: a number of British Muslims have been convicted in foreign courts or have fought for terrorist or extreme Islamist groups abroad. Furthermore, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) claims that America's most likely terrorist scenario comes from a British-born extremist entering the US under the visa waiver programme – 40% of its operations aimed at disrupting terrorism plots against the US are conducted against targets in the UK.<sup>20</sup>

## ISLAMISM-INSPIRED TERRORISM CONVICTIONS IN THE UK

The Intelligence and Security Committee enquiry into the 7/7 London bombings, published in May 2009, found that basic data on terrorist convictions in the UK had not been compiled. It concluded:

The Committee is both disappointed and concerned that such a simple, yet essential, piece of the evidence base – the successful conviction of terrorists – was not only unused, but was not even available. This is basic information that should have been being analysed to assess how well aspects of the strategy were working and what changes needed to be made – particularly in terms of legislation.<sup>21</sup>

During the course of writing this report the Crown Prosecution Service began to compile an online resource cataloguing high profile convictions for terrorism offences since 2007.<sup>22</sup> In November 2009 the Home Office released statistics about the number of arrests under the Terrorism Act 2000 between 11 September and 31 March 2009 and their outcomes.<sup>23</sup> Within this time 1,661 people were arrested; 920 of those were released without charge; 379 were charged;<sup>24</sup> 217 were convicted;<sup>25</sup> and in a further 143 cases alternative action was taken.<sup>26</sup> The Home-Office statistics also include background information on all 'terrorist/extremist prisoners in Great Britain at 31 March 2009', but does not distinguish between Islamism-inspired and non-Islamism-inspired offences. There are three categories of data: Terrorist legislation or terrorism-related; Domestic extremist/separatist; and Historic terrorist cases.<sup>27</sup>

## BRITISH MUSLIMS FIGHTING ABROAD

Reports on the numbers of British Muslims who have fought for terrorist or extreme Islamist groups abroad vary.

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19 'Chief Constable warns terror fight will take decades', *BBC News*, 8 February 2010, available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/8503409.stm>; "200 Osama-trained fanatics" in the UK', *Daily Mail*, 7 March 2005, available at [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-340390/200-Osama-trained-fanatics-UK.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-340390/200-Osama-trained-fanatics-UK.html)

20 'CIA warns Barack Obama that British terrorists are the biggest threat to the US', *Daily Telegraph*, 7 February 2009, available at [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/barackobama/4550144/CIA-warns-Barack-Obama-that-British-terrorists-are-the-biggest-threat-to-the-US.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/barackobama/4550144/CIA-warns-Barack-Obama-that-British-terrorists-are-the-biggest-threat-to-the-US.html)

21 *Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented?: Review of the Intelligence on the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005*, Intelligence and Security Committee, May 2009, p.88-89, available at [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/210852/20090519\\_77review.pdf](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/210852/20090519_77review.pdf)

22 Prosecuting terrorists – Counter Terrorism Division, CPS website, available at [http://www.cps.gov.uk/your\\_cps/our\\_organisation/ctd.html](http://www.cps.gov.uk/your_cps/our_organisation/ctd.html)

23 'Operation of police powers under Terrorism Act 2000 and subsequent legislation: Arrests, outcomes and stops and searches, Great Britain 2008/9', Home Office Statistical Bulletin, 26 November 2009, available at <http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/hosb1809.pdf>

24 249 were charged under terrorism legislation, which includes The Terrorism Act 2000, The Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001, Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005, and The Terrorism Act 2006; and a further 130 were charged other terrorism related criminal offences.

25 112 were convicted under terrorism legislation; and 105 were convicted under non-terrorism legislation considered as terrorism related.

26 Alternative action includes a caution, transfer to immigration authorities or the Police Service of Northern Ireland or the use of mental health legislation.

27 The Home Office bulletin does not define the remit of the first category. Domestic extremists are defined as individuals who belong to groups or causes that originate in the UK, and include extreme left- and right-wing groups, animal rights activists and domestic (or 'lone wolf') bombers. Historic cases are defined as those imprisoned pre-2001 following a terrorist organisation and include members of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, the Democratic Revolutionary Movement for the Liberation of Arabistan and domestic bombers.

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The Ministry of Defence, for example, has stated that, 'it is too complicated to go into estimating numbers for this type of thing'.<sup>28</sup> An associate of radical preacher Abu Hamza al-Masri – who recruited British Muslims to fight abroad throughout the 1990s – has also said that the figure is unknowable.<sup>29</sup> There have, however, been a series of figures and destinations reported:

## **Pre 9/11**

According to one UK-based newspaper, between 1997 and 2000, 200 British Muslims fought in countries such as Chechnya, Kashmir and Afghanistan, with a number being killed.<sup>30</sup> Salman Abdullah – a British Muslim who fought in Kashmir in the late 1990s and who was a regular at Finsbury Park Mosque when Abu Hamza al-Masri was the imam – estimates that approximately fifty Muslims from that mosque alone were killed fighting abroad.<sup>31</sup> In 2000, then head of al-Muhajiroun, Omar Bakri Mohammed, claimed that approximately 1800 British Muslims were recruited at mosques and universities to take part in 'military service' every year.<sup>32</sup> It is likely, however, that this claim was exaggerated for propaganda purposes.

## **Supporting the Taliban**

Following the invasion of Afghanistan by the US in October 2001, one UK-based newspaper reported that 'no more than a few dozen' British Muslims had travelled there to fight for the Taliban.<sup>33</sup> That month, however, Abdul Rahman Saleem, then al-Muhajiroun spokesman in Pakistan, claimed that 'between 500 and 700' British Muslims had arrived to fight for the Taliban.<sup>34</sup> Also in October, a source described as 'al-Muhajiroun's spokesman in Pakistan' claimed to have, 'personally met almost 1,000 British mujahideen [fighters] in the last few weeks', estimating that British recruits constituted, 'about 60 per cent of the total', number of Muslims from the West fighting with the Taliban.<sup>35</sup> In response, British government officials said that while they were aware of the problem of British Muslims travelling to Afghanistan via Pakistani to fight for the Taliban, the figure of 'thousands' was likely to be an exaggeration.<sup>36</sup> In January 2009 a British military officer described the presence of British Muslims in Afghanistan as, 'not big numbers, but they are there, definitely'.<sup>37</sup> Intercepted Taliban communications have also shown that British Muslims are fighting in southern Afghanistan.

## **'British brigade' in Iraq**

Iraq has been another destination for British Muslims inspired to fight by Islamism. For example, in June 2005, senior security sources revealed that approximately 70 British Muslims were fighting against coalition troops in Iraq, with at least three having been killed.<sup>38</sup> In 2006, security sources said that between 120 and 150 British Muslims had travelled to Iraq to fight coalition troops. Labelled the 'British brigade', they were thought to have operated under the now deceased Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, formerly head of al-Qaeda in Iraq.<sup>39</sup>

## **ATTENDING TERRORIST TRAINING CAMPS**

### **Afghanistan**

Evidence presented to the Special Immigration Appeals Commission in 2002 showed that, 'upwards of a thousand individuals from the UK are estimated on the basis of intelligence to have attended training camps in Afghanistan in the last five years,' and that, 'the backgrounds of those detained show the high level of involvement of British citizens

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28 'British brigade of Islamists join Al-Qaeda foreign legion', *The Times*, 4 June 2006, available at [www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article671510.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article671510.ece)

29 Sean O'Neill and Daniel McGrory, *Suicide Factory: Abu Hamza and the Finsbury Park Mosque*, p.80

30 'Family in fear as son joins terrorists', *The Times*, 22 January 2000

31 O'Neill and McGrory, *Suicide Factory*, p.93

32 'Suicide bombing reveals UK link to terror', *Yorkshire Post*, 29 December 2000

33 'We will replace the Bible with the Koran in Britain', *Guardian*, 4 November 2001

34 'The British prepared to die fighting the British', *Yorkshire Post*, 30 October 2001

35 'Brainwashed' Britons killed in rocket attack', *Daily Telegraph*, 29 October 2001, available at [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1360816/Brainwashed-Britons-killed-in-rocket-attack.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1360816/Brainwashed-Britons-killed-in-rocket-attack.html)

36 'Britons who join Taliban to face trial Jail threat to those "who return alive"', *Daily Telegraph*, 30 October 2001

37 'British Muslims fighting alongside Taliban, commanders claim', *Daily Telegraph*, 2 January 2009, available at [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/4076591/British-Muslims-fighting-alongside-Taliban-commanders-claim.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/4076591/British-Muslims-fighting-alongside-Taliban-commanders-claim.html)

38 '70 British Muslims join Iraq fighters', *The Times*, 26 June 2005, , available at [www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article537577.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article537577.ece)

39 'British brigade of Islamists join Al-Qaeda foreign legion', *The Times*, 4 June 2006

## BACKGROUND

and those otherwise connected with the United Kingdom in the terrorist networks'.<sup>40</sup> In July 2005 Sir John Stevens, the then Metropolitan police commissioner, claimed that approximately 3,000 British-born or British-based Muslims had attended training camps in Afghanistan over the past decade.<sup>41</sup>

### **Pakistan**

The most common country of heritage for Britain's Muslim population, in recent years Pakistan has been a popular site for terrorist training. Osama Nazir, formerly a senior member of the Pakistani terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammed and associate of 7/7 bomber Shehzad Tanweer, said that between 2001 and 2005 he believed over 300 British Muslims of Pakistani origin had visited Pakistan to attend training camps and enrol for suicide bomb missions.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, in November 2008 the Security Service revealed that over 4,000 British Muslims had attended terrorist training camps in Afghanistan and Pakistan.<sup>43</sup>

### **Somalia**

Following al-Shabaab's alignment with al-Qaeda in 2007, Somalia has become another base for British militants. In September 2009, it was reported that the numbers going to fight or attend terrorist training, 'has more than quadrupled to at least 100 since 2004'.<sup>44</sup> Other analysts have warned that the actual figure will be, 'much higher'.<sup>45</sup>

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40 Judgments – A (FC) and others (FC) (Appellants) v. Secretary of State for the Home Department (Respondent), House of Lords, 16 Dec 2004, available at <http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/ld200405/ldjudgmt/jd041216/a&oth-2.htm>

41 'Radical Muslim youth who aspired to be UK's first suicide bombers: British connection', *Guardian*, 13 July 2005

42 'A Search for Roots Goes Bad', *TIME Europe*, 24 July 2005, available at [www.time.com/time/europe/html/050801/tanweer.html](http://www.time.com/time/europe/html/050801/tanweer.html)

43 'British Muslims have become a mainstay of the global "jihad"', *Independent*, 29 November 2008, available at [www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/british-muslims-have-become-a-mainstay-of-the-global-jihad-1040232](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/british-muslims-have-become-a-mainstay-of-the-global-jihad-1040232)

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**Pages 1–511 are not included in this preview**

## Islamist Terrorism

### The British Connections

Al-Qaeda inspired terrorism is the greatest national security threat facing the UK. *Islamist Terrorism: The British Connections* presents the most comprehensive ever overview of the UK's connections to violent Islamism worldwide.

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