



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on September 21, 2011

Britain Collars Seven In Terror Plot

Authorities in the United Kingdom have arrested seven suspects in connection with a terror plot. British intelligence raided more than a dozen homes and collared six men and a woman between midnight and about 7 a.m. Monday, according to news reports. They are connected, the New York Times reported, to “Islamic militancy,” which describes yet another plot by “British citizens” who are really “Asians” or of another nationality. Typically, those words are media code for Muslims.



No Surprise: The Name Is Mohammed

Police raided five neighborhoods in [Birmingham](#) to net the half-dozen suspects, who ranged in age from 25 to 32. The woman is 22.

[According to](#) the *Times*:

A West Midlands police official, who requested anonymity because he was discussing an unfolding operation, said initial speculation that the arrests were linked to Irish republicanism was unfounded. The official declined to confirm the BBC report that those arrested were Islamic extremists, but said the operation was “linked to international cases as much as local.”

The men were arrested “on suspicion of preparing or instigating an act of terror,” the [Times reported](#), quoting British officials. The paper did not divulge names.

London’s [Daily Mail](#) provided more detail about the plot, reporting that police raided 13 homes and one business in the neighborhoods of Moseley, Sparkbrook, Sparkhill, Ward End, and Balsall Heath.

As is typical with terror arrests in Britain, the suspects were “homegrown,” as the media oft describes the children of immigrants who turn to crime: “Acting on intelligence from [MI5](#),” the [Mail reported](#), “counter-terrorism police in Birmingham arrested six men and a woman, who were all born in Britain and hold UK passports.”

Two of the suspects are “Mohammed Irfan, 34, and Mohammed Rizwan, who preach at a mosque,” and the *Mail* describes them as “Asian.”

Irfan was jailed for four years in February 2008 after admitting being part of plot to behead a Muslim soldier as warning to other Muslims about joining the British Army. He was released on licence in October 2009.

Those under arrest were said by neighbours to include a nursery nurse and two brothers. One of the addresses was an imposing five-bedroom detached home occupied by a taxi driver and his five sons. A neighbour said two of the sons had been seen firing an air rifle at a target in the garden on Sunday.

The arrests were carried out across the largely Asian inner-city neighbourhoods of Alum Rock, Sparkbrook, Ward End and Moseley, a suburb popular with students and young professionals.



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The woman, Salma Kabal, was “arrested at 7:00 a.m. on suspicion of failing to disclose information contrary to the [Terrorism Act 2000](#).”

The [Mail quoted](#) neighbors as saying that Kabal’s family is “moderate.”

She married two years ago but was said to have divorced her husband six months ago. One neighbour said: ‘He moved in with her and wore a long Islamic beard.’”

”He didn’t seem to work, but was more extremist than his wife. I understand they split up because he wanted to take her to live in a madrassa in Karachi in Pakistan.” The husband was believed to be Ashiq Ali, who was arrested with his brother Bahader, 28, who runs a gym.

Other Plots

[Officials told](#) the *Mail* that the plot in Birmingham is the “the biggest in numbers and scale” since December, 2010, when [authorities arrested](#) a dozen men, including five Bangladeshis, for plotting to attack major sites in London.

On September 10, [Swedish authorities arrested](#) four person who were planning to attack an art exhibition center in Göteborg.

[According to](#) the Associated Press, “The four were arrested in the west coast city of Göteborg and were suspected of plotting terrorism, said Sara Kvarnstrom, spokeswoman for the Swedish security police, SAPO.”

She declined to give details on the arrests and wouldn’t say whether they were linked to the 10-year anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the United States.

Kvarnstrom said SAPO saw no reason to raise its terror alert level, which has been at “elevated” since October.

“Our assessment is that there is no reason for public concern at the moment,” she told The Associated Press.

Authorities would not say, [AP reported](#), whether the plotters planned their strike for the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States.

The Swedes don’t seem too concerned about terror, [AP reported](#). The threat “remains low,” said terror expert Magnus Norell, who did not want to ponder about the motive for the planned attack. He added of the low threat level, “It was low in December 2010 as well — but at the same time Sweden is a part of the world and a global context,” [he told](#) AP.

As well, [AP reported](#), the Swedes are more worried about “right wing” terrorism because of the attack by Anders Breivik in Norway:

Scandinavia has largely been focused on Islamic terrorism since Sept. 11, but in the wake of Norway’s terrorist attack by a right-wing anti-immigrant Norwegian, the European police agency said it was setting up a task force of more than 50 experts to help investigate non-Islamist threats in Scandinavian countries.

The last terror attack in Sweden was that of suicide bomber [Taimour Abdulwahab al-Abdaly](#), who attacked Christmas shoppers in Stockholm.

[The BBC interviewed](#) the head of an Islamic center in England, who pronounced himself mystified by the attack:



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He was pushing across the ideas that most violent radical Muslims hold, pronouncing other Muslims to be disbelievers, encouraging rebellion against the Muslim lands and Muslim leaders. Although we found his beliefs reprehensible, there was nothing to suggest he was about to commit a criminal act.

Photo: A police officer searches a commuter's identity and bags at London Bridge train station: AP Images



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