



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on April 26, 2013

Britain Sentences Bomb Plotters Who Had “Blessing of Al Qaeda”

Irfan Naseer, the leader of a terrorist suicide  bomb plot from Birmingham, England, was sentenced to life imprisonment on April 26, with several of his co-conspirators receiving lesser sentences.

Naseer, a British-born pharmacy graduate, learned his bomb-making skills in Pakistan and sent four of his followers there for training, reported the [Independent](#), a British newspaper. However, another report said that the four sent to Pakistan had second thoughts after going there and dropped out of the plot.

An AFP report carried by Singapore-based [AsiaOne](#) stated that a total of 11 British Muslims were sentenced at Woolwich Crown Court in southeast London, with Naseer’s right-hand man, Irfan Khalid, sentenced to 18 years and co-conspirator, Ashik Ali, given a 15-year sentence. Khalid had boasted that the plot would be “another 9/11.” The group’s chief financier Rahin Ahmed, was sentence to 12 years.

Seven other members of the terrorist cell were also sentenced, including Ashik Ali’s older brother Bahader, who received six years, and Mohammed Rizwan and Mujahid Hussain, who were given four years each. The four who had traveled to Pakistan and then dropped out were given lighter sentences of 40 months after pleading guilty to engaging in conduct in preparation for terrorist acts.

“Your plot had the blessing of al Qaeda and you intended to further the aims of al Qaeda,” Judge Richard Henriques told the plotters.

“The only barrier between [Naseer’s] team and mass murder was the intervention of the authorities.”

Henriques explained his reason for giving the heavier sentence to Nasser: “Irfan Naseer was the leader, driving force and man in charge and he alone must take responsibility for sending four young men to Pakistan for terrorism training.”

During the trial, reported AFP, it was revealed that the conspirators posed as street collectors for a Muslim charity and raised £12,000 (\$18,500) to fund their plot. However, Rahin Ahmed lost £9,000 (\$13,900) of that amount speculating in foreign currency markets.

Much like the Boston Marathon bombers, the British plotters intended to place their bombs in backpacks and leave them in public places, possibly using timers. A [Reuters report](#) noted that the plotters intended to initiate an attack more deadly than the four suicide bombings on London’s transport system on July 7, 2005, which killed 52 people on underground trains and a bus.

A report in the [Los Angeles Times](#) said that during the 4-1/2-month trial, the prosecution based its case on painstaking evidence taken from anti-terror police and MI5 surveillance. Authorities used listening devices planted in the men’s cars and heard them boast as they drove around that they were “the suicide bombers ready to take on England” and that their attack would be “another [9/11](#).” They had vowed to turn Birmingham into a “war zone.”

Naseer was said to be influenced by Anwar Awlaki, the U.S.-born extremist cleric killed by an American drone strike in Yemen in 2011.



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Assistant Chief Constable Marcus Beale of West Midlands police, who arrested Naseer in 2011, told the [British Broadcasting Corp.](#) (BBC) that he was pleased at the sentences.

The *Times* reported that Beale said his decision to make an arrest at an early stage of the investigation has proved to be correct by the evidence presented at the trial. Judge Henriques, said Beale, “concluded that Naseer was an expert bomb-maker who came with a real specific intent to commit the sort of murder that we heard.”

During the [July 7, 2005 bombings in London](#), four Islamic terrorists detonated four bombs, three in London Underground trains, and the fourth aboard a double decker bus in Tavistock Square. The attacks killed 52 innocent people and the four bombers. More than 700 people suffered injuries.

The four bombers, all of whom, as noted, were killed in the bomb blasts, were Mohammad Sidique Khan, 30; Shehzad Tanweer, 22; Germaine Lindsay, 19; and Hasib Hussain, 18. All except Lindsey, who was born in Jamaica, were born in England.

Before the bombings, Khan recorded a video explaining his motivation, which was broadcast posthumously by Al Jazeera on September 1, 2005. The tape also featured statements from al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, for whom the U.S. State Department has issued a \$25 million reward.

Khan said in the video:

I and thousands like me are forsaking everything for what we believe. Our drive and motivation doesn't come from tangible commodities that this world has to offer. Our religion is Islam, obedience to the one true God and following the footsteps of the final prophet messenger. Your democratically-elected governments continuously perpetuate atrocities against my people all over the world. And your support of them makes you directly responsible, just as I am directly responsible for protecting and avenging my Muslim brothers and sisters. Until we feel security you will be our targets and until you stop the bombing, gassing, imprisonment and torture of my people we will not stop this fight. We are at war and I am a soldier. Now you too will taste the reality of this situation.

It should be noted that Khan's remarks represent the most extremist views among Islamists.

Photo is of passengers trapped in an underground train of the London bombings of July 7, 2005



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