

# Spotting the Signs: Identifying Vulnerability to Radicalisation Among Students

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Emma Webb



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## Foreword

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I was in a hurry, rushing to catch the bus that's perpetually crowded and noisy. As I caught my breath, I looked out of the window and could not help but feel stunned and perplexed as the events from the past weeks replayed in my head. Then my phone rang.

It was my son, Rasheed. As he spoke, I detected a rasp in his voice. He was out of breath and wheezing while describing his attempts to evade and seek cover from a drone missile. I inhaled deeply and closed my eyes as I felt my head start to spin. I repeatedly told myself to fight my own feelings and just be his mum. So I nagged Rasheed to visit a doctor and reminded him to keep his inhaler with him. It was obvious to me that the heat and dust from the arid environment he was in had triggered his asthma symptoms. My concerns weren't just about Rasheed's health; they were mostly for his life. After we said our goodbyes, I pinched myself because of the surreal situation. This was the beginning of a disparate and arduous relationship with my teenage son, who was now a so-called ISIS fighter.

May 29, 2015, will forever be etched in my memory. It was the day my life changed eternally in ways I could have never imagined or anticipated. Everything that I thought I knew about my life would never be the same again.

The day started like every other ordinary day. The only difference was that I did not know it would be the last time I would ever see my son. I feel positive that Rasheed had little understanding of the catastrophic consequences that his actions would have on his family. On this day, in a matter of seconds, I was violently thrown into a nightmare I would have never imagined. I had never felt this level of fear, desperation and disbelief. My emotions did not just tip the scales; they broke them. Like many other Muslim families at the time, I had little awareness or understanding of radicalisation. I never believed that this could affect me.

As a mother, all I wanted was for the nightmare to end. I just wanted my son to return to the safety of his home, where I could love and protect him from harm, like I had always done. As the unfathomable events played out, nothing made sense to me anymore. My world was turned upside down and shaken. This was the most traumatic and surreal event of my life. My orderly, logical world suddenly disappeared. My sense of control was instantly lost as I prepared myself for the worst—my son's inevitable death.

I could have remained angry with Rasheed for the decisions he made, and risk that he would never contact me again. I could reject him out of fury. Or I could try to remain calm, hold onto him, and keep our relationship alive in the frantic hope that he'd ultimately see sense. I chose the latter and desperately tried to win the psychological battle and my child's heart and mind.

As I communicated with my son in Syria over the following months, I tried to cling onto the bond we once had. The boy I raised was physically gone. Yet, emotionally, through our long-distance communications, Rasheed still seemed to be with me. He never stopped calling me "Mama."

I simultaneously longed for and dreaded his calls. I waited for the phone call to tell me my son was no longer here. On November 10, 2015, I received that very call. It was short, blunt, and vague. The individual on the line simply told me that my son was killed in an airstrike somewhere close to the border between Iraq and Syria. There was no last goodbye. No body. No burial. No shared grieving. No closure. All that was left was a lonely void filled with questions.

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In the months that followed, I grieved in silence behind closed doors, clutching on to my feelings of disbelief and denial. Questions and regret constantly ran through my mind. How could this have happened? If I had just...I could have prevented this. If I had only...my life would be normal and I would feel safe. Looking for answers was how I tried to make sense of the situation. I thought that if I could regain some type of control, I might not feel so helpless and scared.

My perception of safety, my sense of the world I lived in and my beliefs all came into question. The ground I walked on no longer felt solid. Tired of the dark shadow of secrecy and shame that I carried, I began breaking down the innermost barriers that guarded my deepest, most vulnerable thoughts, feelings and emotions. I no longer cared about the possibility of judgement or about being at the mercy of others. The worst had already happened to me.

Being unable to bear the burden of the secret I felt unable to share, I found it increasingly difficult to look at my daughters without feeling responsible. I did not want them to inherit the veil of guilt and shame attached to the taboo of radicalisation, as this would render them powerless, strip them of their voices, and keep them from living their lives freely.

A year after my son's death, the pain of living with the secret became greater than the pain of speaking out and telling the world about who I really was. The only way for me to begin healing was to turn my unacceptable reality into an opportunity for positive growth, which I could do by helping others. This cause gave my life a new meaning and made me feel optimistic that a future free of all forms of extremism was possible. As a result, I decided to speak openly about my experiences in the hope that my story would give others the courage to take action and prevent future tragedies. Opening up about my situation ultimately helped me through the grieving process, freed me of unanswered questions, and finally allowed me to let go and say "Goodbye."

After acquiring a deeper level of understanding of the process a family endures in the face of extremism, I founded Families for Life, an organisation that provides counselling services in a non-judgemental space. Here, families and individuals feel heard and understood. They may speak without fear of prejudice, judgement or shame. Through the organisation, I hope to empower others to combat the shame of radicalisation and provide a platform for their voices to be heard. I wholeheartedly support research efforts that seek to have a greater understanding of extremism and its implications.

Faced with the increased complexities of radicalisation in the 21st century, The Henry Jackson Society has taken the bold step of highlighting some of the delicate issues that practitioners, families, and societies face. Rather than single out certain pathways that lead to extremism, the think tank set out to analyse and summarise the various components that lead to it. The group did not narrow its research by focussing on simple theory evidence. Instead, it provides a perspective that highlights the broader interconnections of variable factors. Moreover, The Henry Jackson Society recognises that, although the presence of the Internet is a significant factor because of its mass global reach, urbanisation, and the ability to bring about the swift movement of people and ideas due to its 24-hour accessibility and global presence, strong social and emotional components are also involved. The researchers underline the need to consider real-world relationships as being an important factor when seeking answers about self-styled bedroom radicals.

The study explores a range of influences that could contribute to the radicalization of an individual and poses questions such as, "Could educational and religious institutions do more?" It is sensitive in its approach and invites the reader to question and explore without assigning sole responsibility to any singular component. At the same time, it provides an open platform that encourages real discussion, exploration and critical thinking regarding the difficulties faced in modern-day Britain.

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The Henry Jackson Society's comprehensive research allows for a deeper understanding of the factors that can lead a young person, such as my son, down the path of radicalisation and makes suggestions regarding where intervention could be effective. With this knowledge to hand, families and those in positions of influence do not have to feel powerless or discouraged as they deal with unimaginable situations they never fathomed having to face. However, if we remain ignorant to the realities in our own homes and communities, this would surely be one of the greatest sources of failure and oppression and a barrier to a future filled with hope.

## Executive Summary

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- Many of those who have travelled from the United Kingdom (UK) to join terrorist organisations in Syria and Iraq had recent connections to higher education, or were students at the time of travel. These individuals pose a potential risk to the UK, as those who have fought or trained abroad have been disproportionately involved in the most serious Islamist terrorist offences in the UK, and may continue to recruit vulnerable individuals.
- In response, the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (CTSA) introduced a statutory duty for public bodies, including further and higher education institutions, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. Reliably identifying the signs of radicalisation (as described in the government’s Channel Vulnerability Assessment Framework (2012) and Channel Duty Guidance (2015) has proven difficult, however, with only one student having been referred to Channel.
- This report approaches these difficulties by examining the cases of 29 students who travelled, or attempted to travel, to work with extremist groups or fight for armed Islamist groups in Syria and Iraq. Through profiling and analysis of the cases it aims to provide a supportive tool to assist with understanding how indications of radicalisation, or vulnerability to radicalisation, manifest in real cases.
- The cases conformed to trends found by recent Henry Jackson Society research into Islamic State’s European networks, which shows the significance of family relationships and friendships. In many cases, individuals had face-to-face contact with other extremists, with 18 out of 29 part of a friendship group connected to extremism. In addition, 11 out of 29 were linked to an extremist family member and six had both family and friends involved, while 16 had contact with an extremist, cleric or fighter suggested as a source of their radicalisation.
- While many of the students engaged in online extremist activity, this was often subsidiary to real-world relationships, facilitating personal connections. Networks formed in Portsmouth, Cardiff, Manchester and Coventry were in contact with each other before, during and after they travelled, as well as being in contact with students who travelled from outside those areas.
- Religious and educational institutions are sectors recognised by the government as vulnerable to extremist misuse, but also provide potential opportunities for intervention. While the small number of institutions directly accused of involvement in an individual’s radicalisation by family members cannot be proven to have played a role, the institutions in question may have functioned as spaces in which extremists could socialise with each other and form relationships. Nine out of 29 students had some connection with a mosque or an imam suggested as one driver of radicalisation, or had been involved with a mosque attended by other extremists, while six students attended schools attended by other extremists or which had been accused of having a problem with extremism.
- Finally, in a significant number of cases, behaviour indicative of potential vulnerability to radicalisation was noticed among many of the students profiled, as was the sudden appearance of behaviour associated with increasing religious observance and expression of extreme political views. While the government rightly recognises that expressions of faith in the absence of other indicators of vulnerability are not indicators of extremism, the appearance of behaviour associated with increasing religious observance was noticed in the cases of 14 out of 29 students, and viewed as a positive development in at least two cases.



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- The importance of personal and localised relationships alongside the prevalence of personal behaviour changes suggest that the perception that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for friends, family, neighbours and public sector staff to recognise the signs of radicalisation may be overstated. They also add some support to the underlying theories of “socialisation into terrorism” used to develop UK government understandings of radicalisation detailed in the Channel Vulnerability Assessment Framework and Channel Duty Guidance, though the small sample size makes it difficult to draw any wider conclusions.

## Introduction

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Of the 850 people estimated to have travelled from the United Kingdom to join terrorist organisations in Syria and Iraq,<sup>1</sup> many had “recent connections to higher education”<sup>2</sup> or were in further or higher education (FE/HE) at the time of travel. Such individuals pose a risk to the United Kingdom, both through their potential involvement in acts of terrorism upon their return,<sup>3</sup> and through the recruitment of others.<sup>4</sup> In response to this risk, the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 made it incumbent on a number of specified public bodies, including FE/HE institutions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.<sup>5</sup>

The contact between students and educational institutions can provide indispensable opportunities to intervene in this regard. However, identifying indications of radicalisation can prove difficult, not least because there is no single profile or route into terrorism.<sup>6</sup> It is therefore vital to understand how signs of radicalisation, as outlined in the Channel Vulnerability Assessment Framework (2012) and Channel Duty Guidance (2015), manifest in real cases. To this end, this report profiles 29 students who travelled, or attempted to travel, to work with extremist groups or fight for armed Islamist groups in Syria and Iraq between 2013 and 2016.

The following analysis considers the difficulties in identifying signs of radicalisation, provides evidence for the reliability of government guidelines, draws out the most prominent common features across the students profiled, and identifies potential mistakes made in identifying the students’ radicalisation. It also makes practical suggestions for various stakeholders, including those providing training to public sector staff and local authorities tasked with providing safeguarding support, in order to ensure any lessons from these 29 cases can be learned.

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Who are Britain’s jihadists?’ *BBC News*, 22 February 2017, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Maher, S., ‘ICSR Insight: British Foreign Fighters in Syria’, The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, 15 October 2013, available at: [www.icsr.info/2013/10/british-foreign-fighters-in-syria/](http://www.icsr.info/2013/10/british-foreign-fighters-in-syria/), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Stuart, H., ‘Understanding CAGE: A Public Information Dossier’, The Henry Jackson Society, March 2015, available at: [www.henryjacksonsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Understanding-CAGE.pdf](http://www.henryjacksonsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Understanding-CAGE.pdf), last visited: 6 March 2017, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Both Raphael Hostey and Aqsa Mahmood, two students who travelled abroad, are thought to have become key recruitment figures. See: ‘British jihadi recruiter reported dead in Syria drone strike’, *Daily Telegraph*, 2 May 2016, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/02/british-jihadi-reported-to-have-been-killed-in-syria/](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/02/british-jihadi-reported-to-have-been-killed-in-syria/), last visited: 6 March 2017; ‘From Scottish teen to ISIS bride and recruiter: the Aqsa Mahmood story’, *CNN*, 24 February 2015, available at: [www.edition.cnn.com/2015/02/23/world/scottish-teen-isis-recruiter/](http://www.edition.cnn.com/2015/02/23/world/scottish-teen-isis-recruiter/), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>5</sup> ‘Revised Prevent Duty Guidance: For England and Wales’, HM Government, 2015, available at: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/445977/3799\\_Revised\\_Prevent\\_Duty\\_Guidance\\_\\_England\\_Wales\\_V2-Interactive.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445977/3799_Revised_Prevent_Duty_Guidance__England_Wales_V2-Interactive.pdf), last visited: 6 March 2017, para. 1; ‘Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015’, HM Government, 12 February 2015, available at: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/section/31/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/section/31/enacted), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>6</sup> ‘Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism’, HM Government, 2015, available at: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/425189/Channel\\_Duty\\_Guidance\\_April\\_2015.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/425189/Channel_Duty_Guidance_April_2015.pdf), last visited: 6 March 2017, para. 54.

## Methodology

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### Criteria for inclusion and structure

- The 29 students included in this report were enrolled, or are reported to have been planning to enrol, in a Higher/Further Education (HE/FE) institution in the United Kingdom when they travelled, or attempted to travel, to work with extremist groups or fight for armed Islamist groups in Syria and Iraq.
- Part one of the report profiles the students, recording data relevant to their biography, radicalisation and extremist activity. Information, where available, is provided on the following: gender, place of birth, nationality, ancestry, place of residence, family/living circumstances, education, means of travel, age at time of travel, network (with whom they travelled), known links to proscribed organisations, known associates, whether they were known to the authorities (through crime or extremist activity), and their current status (such as deceased or imprisoned).
- Part two of this report analyses the information provided in the profiles, bearing in mind the government's Channel Vulnerability Assessment Framework (2012) and Channel Duty Guidance (2015), as well as the theories behind the Extremism Risk Guidelines (ERG 22+) on which the guidelines are based.

Potential sources of the students' radicalisation and the students' backgrounds were categorised on the basis of the information contained within the profiles. While the categories were defined on the basis of the profiles, independently of pre-existing frameworks, there are significant overlaps with Channel Duty Guidelines and the Vulnerability Assessment Framework. Where relevant, these are highlighted.

The potential sources of radicalisation categories were defined as follows:

- **Online Activity:** Includes passive consumption of extremist propaganda and communication with other extremists. The potential for individuals to be influenced over the internet is also recognised by Channel Duty Guidance.<sup>7</sup>
- **Sibling/Family Member:** Includes students who had a family member explicitly suggested as a source of radicalisation, or involved in extremist or terrorist activity. Channel Duty Guidance and the Vulnerability Assessment Framework on the basis of the ERG 22+ similarly recognise this factor as an indicator of vulnerability.<sup>8</sup>
- **Friendship Groups:** Includes instances where a student had friends involved in extremist or terrorist activity, or where those friends were suggested as a source of radicalisation. Friends supportive of/engaged in extremism are recognised by Channel Duty Guidance and the Vulnerability Assessment Framework on the basis of the ERG 22+ as an indicator of vulnerability.<sup>9</sup>
- **Mosque or Religious Institution:** Includes students for whom a mosque, an Islamic centre or an imam associated with a mosque was suggested as a source of radicalisation, or who

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<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, para. 36.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, para. 51.a; 'Channel: Vulnerability assessment framework', HM Government, October 2012, p. 2, available at: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/118187/vul-assessment.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118187/vul-assessment.pdf), last visited: 10 March 2017; Lloyd, M. and C. Dean, 'The Development of Structured Guidelines for Assessing Risk in Extremist Offenders', *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management* 2.1, 2015, p. 46.

<sup>9</sup> 'Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism', HM Government, 2015, para. 51.a; 'Channel: Vulnerability assessment framework', HM Government, October 2012, p. 2; Lloyd, M. and C. Dean, 'The Development of Structured Guidelines for Assessing Risk in Extremist Offenders', p. 46.

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attended a mosque with extremist associations. This includes institutions with a history of extremist speakers or extremist attendees, in the past or at the time of the student's attendance.

- **Recruited by an Extremist:** Includes students believed to have been influenced by someone fighting abroad, those who had already joined terrorist organisations, and those involved in non-violent extremism at home, including extremist clerics.
- **Islamic Organisation/*Dawah* Group:** Includes students for whom an Islamic or *Dawah* group was specifically suggested as a source of radicalisation.
- **School:** Includes those who attended a school alleged or known to have had a history of problems with extremism, or had other extremist students in attendance, in the past or at the time of the student's attendance.
- **After Travel:** Includes students who were believed to have been radicalised during a period abroad and returned to the United Kingdom showing signs of radicalisation.

The background characteristics categories were defined as follows:

- **Domestic Abuse:** Any case of alleged violence or abuse within the family of the student.
- **Broken Home:** Students with any history of a disrupted or difficult upbringing, including, for example, the separation of parents, the absence of a parent (e.g. living abroad or because of imprisonment) or a rootless upbringing.
- **Poverty/Deprived Area:** Students who came from impoverished families or had a deprived and impoverished environment explicitly mentioned in their case.
- **Criminality:** Students who were known to the authorities for being involved in criminal activity or delinquent behaviour, including involvement in gangs, violence or theft.
- **Studious:** Those described as studious or who had a good academic record.
- **Well-adjusted/Integrated:** Those specifically described as having been well-integrated into society and generally well-adjusted in the period immediately preceding travel or attempted travel.
- **Happy:** Those specifically described as being happy in their personal and family life.
- **Moderate Family:** Those whose families were said to be “moderate” or not particularly religious. A student's family was defined as moderate if this was explicitly mentioned, irrespective of whether they had an extremist family member.
- **Family Intervention:** Students whose families attempted to intervene to prevent travel (such as through the removal of passports and the checking of mobile phones) or reported their absence to the police.
- **Lonely/Isolated/Vulnerable:** All students who were described as lonely or socially isolated, and those who were defined as vulnerable as a result. This category falls within the remit of the Vulnerability Assessment Frameworks engagement indicator “susceptibility to indoctrination”.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> ‘Channel: Vulnerability assessment framework’, HM Government, October 2012, p. 2.

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- **Mental Difficulties/Immature/Naive:** Those whose vulnerability was described as a result of mental difficulties, including a low IQ, immaturity or naivety. Like the above category, this falls within the remit of “susceptibility to indoctrination”.<sup>11</sup>
- **Sudden Expression of Strong Political Views:** All those whose background included increasing politicisation recognised by others. This includes strong emotional reactions, expressing political grievances, and supporting political goals such as the establishment of a Caliphate. This features in Lloyd and Dean (2015) and encompasses expressions of “them and us” thinking as an indication of intent according to the Vulnerability Assessment Framework.<sup>12</sup>
- **Appearance of behaviour commonly associated with increased religious observance:** Those of whom the appearance of behaviour associated with increasing religious observance was recognised by one or more witnesses. This category makes no claims about the content of belief or thought of the individuals, but merely refers to external signs commonly associated with increasing religious observance.
- **Changes in Behaviour Noticed:** Those who showed changes in behaviour associated with radicalisation. This includes those showing sudden behaviour potentially associated with increased religious observance, politicisation and social withdrawal, and is counted among the engagement factors described in the Channel Duty Guidance.<sup>13</sup>

### Sources and sample

- All of the information used in this report is open source, including media sources and court documents. The use of open source material was necessitated by the nature of most cases, as the majority of those profiled were not involved in court proceedings. As a result, the views of witnesses are included, even when contradictory. All instances where witness reports contradict one another are clearly highlighted and considered.
- The limitation of the sample owing to its size is recognised, and the degree to which findings can be seen to be representative is carefully considered. The sample is naturally limited owing to the information publically available and provides a snapshot of the issue which fits within and expands pre-existing research. Its conformation to the trends of this broader research indicates a level of validity and applicability despite the limitations of the sample size, and its relation to this body of research is clearly indicated throughout.

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<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> ‘Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism’, HM Government, 2015, para. 51.b-d.

## Profiles

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### YUSUF ZUBAIR SARWAR

Yusuf Sarwar was a part-time Computer Science student at Birmingham City University.<sup>14</sup> He was convicted alongside his childhood friend Mohammed Nahin Ahmed in July 2014 of preparation for acts of terrorism in relation to his travel to Syria in an attempt to fight for al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra (JN).<sup>15</sup> He was sentenced to 12 years and eight months in prison in December 2014.<sup>16</sup>

Sarwar and his siblings were raised in a “moderately religious” household. According to his parents, Sarwar became increasingly religious after he began studying at Birmingham City University in September 2011, and soon stopped attending lectures. His mother said he began to pray five times a day, grew a beard and began attending his mosque, and also said that “he was a bit more withdrawn, more reserved ... he became a lot more serious”.

During this period, Sarwar also spent an increased amount of time online in his room and exercising with Mohammed Nahin Ahmed.<sup>17</sup> Analysis of his computer revealed that during this time he became increasingly radical, and searched for terms such as “Koran jihad”, “rape”, “jihad”, “Jabhat al-Nusra”, “al-Qaeda training” and “weapons shop”. Ahmed had discussed travelling abroad to fight with Sarwar as early as 2012, and had been in contact with extremists in Syria since March 2013.

After deciding to travel, the two men travelled by coach to London on 14 May 2013.<sup>18</sup> The following day they flew to Turkey and later crossed into Syria.<sup>19</sup> It is not clear with which groups the men were involved, but it is likely they were associated with Katibat al-Muhajireen (KaM), which was operating in the Aleppo area where Ahmed and Sarwar were assessed to have been.<sup>20</sup> KaM was also linked to Kateeba al-Kawthar (KaK), a group led by a British fighter to which a Swedish contact of Ahmed said his associates had changed allegiance in April 2013.<sup>21</sup> Sarwar’s mother found a letter informing his family that he had travelled to fight, and reported it to the police.<sup>22</sup> After being persuaded by their families to return home, both men were arrested on 13 January 2014 at Heathrow Airport.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> “Two Birmingham men plead guilty to Syria jihad”, *Channel 4 News*, 8 July 2014, available at: [www.channel4.com/news/two-birmingham-men-plead-guilty-to-syria-jihad](http://www.channel4.com/news/two-birmingham-men-plead-guilty-to-syria-jihad), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>15</sup> “R v Yusuf Sarwar and Nahin Ahmed – cases concluded in 2014”, Crown Prosecution Service Counter-Terrorism Division, available at: [www.cps.gov.uk/publications/prosecution/ctd\\_2014.html#a01](http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/prosecution/ctd_2014.html#a01), last visited: 10 March 2016; R v Sarwar & Anor [2015] EWCA Crim 1886, 9 December 2015, available at: [www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Crim/2015/1886.html](http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Crim/2015/1886.html), last visited: 6 March 2017, para. 10.

<sup>16</sup> “Two Britons jailed for 13 years for joining jihadi group in Syria”, *Guardian*, 5 December 2014, available at: [www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/dec/05/two-britons-jailed-13-years-joining-jihadi-group-syria](http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/dec/05/two-britons-jailed-13-years-joining-jihadi-group-syria), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>17</sup> “I turned my son in. Now I feel betrayed”, *The Times*, 28 March 2015, available at: [www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/magazine/article4390696.ece](http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/magazine/article4390696.ece), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>18</sup> “Two Birmingham men plead guilty to Syria jihad”, *Channel 4 News*, 8 July 2014.

<sup>19</sup> “R v Yusuf Sarwar and Nahin Ahmed – cases concluded in 2014”, Crown Prosecution Service Counter-Terrorism Division.

<sup>20</sup> “Two British men admit to linking up with extremist group in Syria”, *Guardian*, 8 July 2014, available at: [www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/08/two-british-men-admit-linking-extremist-group-syria](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jul/08/two-british-men-admit-linking-extremist-group-syria), last visited: 6 March 2017; Batal al-Shishani, M., “Obligated to Unite under One Banner”: A Profile of Syria’s Jaysh al-Muhajireen wa’l-Ansar, *The Jamestown Foundation*, 19 April 2013, available at: [www.jamestown.org/program/obliged-to-unite-under-one-banner-a-profile-of-syrias-jaysh-al-muhajireen-wal-ansar/](http://www.jamestown.org/program/obliged-to-unite-under-one-banner-a-profile-of-syrias-jaysh-al-muhajireen-wal-ansar/), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>21</sup> “Two Birmingham men plead guilty to Syria jihad”, *Channel 4 News*, 8 July 2014; “CAGE still has questions to answer about Mohammed Emwazi (‘Jihadi John’)”, *Kyle Orton*, 3 April 2015, available at: [www.kyleorton1991.wordpress.com/2015/04/03/cage-still-has-questions-to-answer-about-mohammed-emwazi-jihadi-john/](http://www.kyleorton1991.wordpress.com/2015/04/03/cage-still-has-questions-to-answer-about-mohammed-emwazi-jihadi-john/), last visited: 6 March 2017; British Childhood Friends Mohammed Nahin Ahmed And Yusuf Zubair Sarwa Admit Fighting For Al-Qaeda Group In Syrian War, *Huffington Post*, 8 July 2014, available at: [www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/07/08/british-childhood-friends-mohammed-nahin-ahmed-and-yusuf-zubair-sarwa-admit-fighting-for-al-Qaeda-group-in-syrian-war\\_n\\_5567425.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/07/08/british-childhood-friends-mohammed-nahin-ahmed-and-yusuf-zubair-sarwa-admit-fighting-for-al-Qaeda-group-in-syrian-war_n_5567425.html), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>22</sup> “Birmingham terrorist’s mum handed his ‘goodbye’ martyr letter to anti-terror cops”, *Birmingham Mail*, 9 July 2014, available at: [www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/yusuf-sarwar-mohammed-ahmed-birmingham-7394132](http://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/yusuf-sarwar-mohammed-ahmed-birmingham-7394132), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>23</sup> R v Sarwar & Anor [2015] EWCA Crim 1886, 9 December 2015, para. 3; “Two British men jailed after Syria terror trip”, *BBC News*, 5 December 2014, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-30348153](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-30348153), last visited: 6 March 2017; “Two Birmingham men plead guilty to Syria jihad”, *Channel 4 News*, 8 July 2014, available at: [www.channel4.com/news/two-birmingham-men-plead-guilty-to-syria-jihad](http://www.channel4.com/news/two-birmingham-men-plead-guilty-to-syria-jihad), last visited: 29 March 2017.

## SPOTTING THE SIGNS: IDENTIFYING VULNERABILITY TO RADICALISATION AMONG STUDENTS

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**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** Yes [r. Handsworth Wood]<sup>24</sup> [DOB 6 June 1992]<sup>25</sup>

**Nationality:** British<sup>26</sup>

**Ancestry:** British-Pakistani<sup>27</sup>

**Place of residence:** Antrobus Road, Handsworth Wood, Perry Barr, Birmingham, West Midlands<sup>28</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Living at family home [parents, two foster siblings]; has three older sisters and an older brother who had left home<sup>29</sup>

**Education:** Studied Information Technology<sup>30</sup>/Computer Science,<sup>31</sup> Birmingham City University [enrolled part-time September 2011, stopped attending classes];<sup>32</sup> Holyhead School, Soho, Ladywood, Birmingham [with co-accused Ahmed]<sup>33</sup>

**Means of travel:** Travelled by coach to London [14 May 2013];<sup>34</sup> travelled by plane to Istanbul, Turkey [15 May 2013] and later crossed into Syria.<sup>35</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 20<sup>36</sup>

**Network:** Two-person Syria traveller cell<sup>37</sup>

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Jabhat al-Nusra [JN]<sup>38</sup>

**Known associates:** Mohammed Nahin Ahmed [co-accused];<sup>39</sup> Ali Begovic [Swedish people-smuggler (into Syria)]<sup>40</sup>

**Known to the authorities:** No

**Status:** In detention

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<sup>24</sup> 'British terrorists from Birmingham bought "Islam for Dummies" book before travelling to Syria to join rebel fighters in jihad', *Daily Mail*, 9 July 2014, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2684714/I-tell-I-m-going-jihad-Lol-I-ll-arrested-What-British-terrorist-Birmingham-told-childhood-friend-travelled-Syria-join-rebel-fighters.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2684714/I-tell-I-m-going-jihad-Lol-I-ll-arrested-What-British-terrorist-Birmingham-told-childhood-friend-travelled-Syria-join-rebel-fighters.html), last visited: 6 March 2017; "I turned my son in. Now I feel betrayed", *The Times*, 28 March 2015.

<sup>25</sup> 'Two Birmingham men plead guilty to Syria jihad', *Channel 4 News*, 8 July 2014.

<sup>26</sup> 'Two Britons jailed for 13 years for joining jihadi group in Syria', *Guardian*, 5 December 2014.

<sup>27</sup> 'British terrorists from Birmingham bought "Islam for Dummies" book before travelling to Syria to join rebel fighters in jihad', *Daily Mail*, 8 July 2014.

<sup>28</sup> 'Birmingham men jailed for Syria-related terrorism offences', West Midlands Police, 5 December 2014, available at: <http://www.west-midlands.police.uk/latest-news/news.aspx?id=2165>, last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>29</sup> "I turned my son in. Now I feel betrayed", *The Times*, 28 March 2015; 'Birmingham terrorist's mum handed his "goodbye" martyr letter to anti-terror cops', *Birmingham Mail*, 9 July 2014.

<sup>30</sup> "I turned my son in. Now I feel betrayed", *The Times*, 28 March 2015.

<sup>31</sup> 'Two Birmingham men plead guilty to Syria jihad', *Channel 4 News*, 8 July 2014.

<sup>32</sup> "I turned my son in. Now I feel betrayed", *The Times*, 28 March 2015; 'Two Birmingham men plead guilty to Syria jihad', *Channel 4 News*, 8 July 2014.

<sup>33</sup> 'Handsworth jihadist's letter revealed his Syria terrorism plans', *Birmingham Mail*, 8 July 2014, available at: [www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/handsworth-jihadists-letter-revealed-syria-7390338](http://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/handsworth-jihadists-letter-revealed-syria-7390338), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>34</sup> 'Two Birmingham men plead guilty to Syria jihad', *Channel 4 News*, 8 July 2014.

<sup>35</sup> 'R v Yusuf Sarwar and Nahin Ahmed – cases concluded in 2014', Crown Prosecution Service Counter-Terrorism Division.

<sup>36</sup> 'Two Birmingham men plead guilty to Syria jihad', *Channel 4 News*, 8 July 2014.

<sup>37</sup> 'R v Yusuf Sarwar and Nahin Ahmed – cases concluded in 2014', Crown Prosecution Service Counter-Terrorism Division.

<sup>38</sup> R v Sarwar & Anor [2015] EWCA Crim 1886, 9 December 2015, para. 4.

<sup>39</sup> 'R v Yusuf Sarwar and Nahin Ahmed – cases concluded in 2014', Crown Prosecution Service Counter-Terrorism Division.

<sup>40</sup> "I turned my son in. Now I feel betrayed", *The Times*, 28 March 2015.

## SPOTTING THE SIGNS: IDENTIFYING VULNERABILITY TO RADICALISATION AMONG STUDENTS

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### FLAMUR SHALAKU (ABU SA'AD)<sup>41</sup>

Flamur Shalaku studied Architecture at the University of Greenwich.<sup>42</sup> In spring 2013, Flamur travelled to Syria with his younger brother, Fatlum.<sup>43</sup> After the brothers travelled they were in intermittent contact with their family, and they told their parents that they were distributing aid.<sup>44</sup> In March 2015, Flamur was killed while fighting in Iraq.<sup>45</sup>

Shalaku came from a Muslim family who were described as “not religious” and who lived a secular lifestyle.<sup>46</sup> An old schoolfriend said that Flamur had previously been known to drink and socialise, didn't have a beard and was popular with women, and that his radicalisation appeared to have taken place overnight.<sup>47</sup> After becoming noticeably more religious “a year into his degree”, he was regularly seen worshipping and attending Ladbroke Grove Mosque. It has been suggested that he became radicalised before his younger brother, and had been involved in the latter's radicalisation.

Other men who would become fighters in Syria had been among the congregation at Ladbroke Grove Mosque,<sup>48</sup> including: Abdel-Majed Abdel Bary, a former rapper from Maida Vale who travelled to Syria to fight for Islamic State in 2013;<sup>49</sup> Hamza Parvez, who travelled to fight for Islamic State in May 2014; Mohammed Nasser, who travelled to fight for Islamic State in May 2014 with Parvez<sup>50</sup> and was killed in June 2014;<sup>51</sup> Mohammed el-Araj, who fought for Jabhat al-Nusra and was killed in August 2013;<sup>52</sup> Choukri Elkhilifi, who fought for Jabhat al-Nusra and was killed in August 2013 alongside el-Araj;<sup>53</sup> and alleged Islamic State prison guard, Aine Davis.<sup>54</sup>

Flamur was a former student of Holland Park School, Kensington, where his brother was studying for his A levels when the pair travelled. Mohammed Nasser, Hamza Parvez and Mohammed el-Araj had also been students at the school.<sup>55</sup> Another former student was Amal el-Wahabi, jailed for tricking a former Holland Park School schoolfriend into delivering money to her husband, Aine Davis, in

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<sup>41</sup> ‘What happened to “Man like Fatlum?” – The inside story of the British suicide bomber of Ramadi’, *MENA etc*, 22 July 2015, available at: [www.tamhusein.co.uk/2015/07/what-happened-to-man-like-fatlum-the-inside-story-of-the-british-suicide-bomber-of-ramadi](http://www.tamhusein.co.uk/2015/07/what-happened-to-man-like-fatlum-the-inside-story-of-the-british-suicide-bomber-of-ramadi), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>42</sup> ‘Brainwashed Muslim children aged five think Christmas is banned, warns Scotland Yard commander’, *Daily Mail*, 24 May 2015, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3095423/Brainwashed-Muslim-children-aged-5-think-Christmas-banned-warns-Scotland-Yard-commander.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3095423/Brainwashed-Muslim-children-aged-5-think-Christmas-banned-warns-Scotland-Yard-commander.html), last visited: 6 March 2017; ‘Architecture Works, 2012’, *University of Greenwich*, 2012, archived by The Henry Jackson Society.

<sup>43</sup> ‘Flamur Shalaku – Who are Britain's Jihadists’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/special/2015/newsspec\\_10259/content/english/dead.html?v=6.6.356](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/special/2015/newsspec_10259/content/english/dead.html?v=6.6.356), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>44</sup> ‘What happened to “Man like Fatlum?” – The inside story of the British suicide bomber of Ramadi’, *MENA etc*, 22 July 2015.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid.*; ‘Two new members of Jihadi John's Beatles terror cell are revealed: Including a 32-year-old QPR fan from west London who went on an aid convoy with George Galloway’, *Daily Mail*, 7 February 2016, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3435947/Second-member-ISIS-Beatles-QPR-fan-west-London-Alexandra-Kotey-32-identified-spies-group-four.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3435947/Second-member-ISIS-Beatles-QPR-fan-west-London-Alexandra-Kotey-32-identified-spies-group-four.html), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>46</sup> ‘What happened to “Man like Fatlum?” – The inside story of the British suicide bomber of Ramadi’, *MENA etc*, 22 July 2015.

<sup>47</sup> ‘Five former pupils from same prestigious west London school killed fighting for Isis’, *Independent*, 24 May 2015, available at: [www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/british-isis-suicide-bomber-in-ramadi-offensive-revealed-as-fatlum-shalaku-the-fifth-former-pupil-of-10272944.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/british-isis-suicide-bomber-in-ramadi-offensive-revealed-as-fatlum-shalaku-the-fifth-former-pupil-of-10272944.html), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>48</sup> ‘What happened to “Man like Fatlum?” – The inside story of the British suicide bomber of Ramadi’, *MENA etc*, 22 July 2015.

<sup>49</sup> ‘Abdel-Majed Abdel Bary: British jihadist “deserts Isis in Syria and goes on the run in Turkey”’, *Independent*, 12 July 2015, available at: [www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/abdel-majed-abdel-bary-british-jihadist-deserted-isis-in-syria-and-is-on-the-run-in-turkey-10384099.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/abdel-majed-abdel-bary-british-jihadist-deserted-isis-in-syria-and-is-on-the-run-in-turkey-10384099.html), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>50</sup> ‘Joining ISIS: Hamzah Parvez and Mohammed Nasser’, *Huffington Post*, 1 November 2014, available at: [www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/tam-husein/isis-british\\_b\\_5745354.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/tam-husein/isis-british_b_5745354.html), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>51</sup> ‘Mohammed Nasser – Who are Britain's jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>52</sup> ‘Mohammed el-Araj – Who are Britain's jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>53</sup> ‘Choukri Elkhilifi – Who are Britain's jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>54</sup> ‘Jihadi John “associate” believed to be one of the British prison guards nicknamed “The Beatles” is held in Turkey’, *Daily Mail*, 13 November 2015, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3317560/Turkish-authorities-detain-London-petty-drug-dealer-turned-Jihadi-John-associate-Aine-Davis.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3317560/Turkish-authorities-detain-London-petty-drug-dealer-turned-Jihadi-John-associate-Aine-Davis.html), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>55</sup> ‘Five pupils from west London comprehensive dubbed “the socialist Eton” are killed waging jihad in Syria and Iraq’, *Daily Mail*, 24 May 2015, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3094904/Five-pupils-west-London-comprehensive-dubbed-socialist-Eton-killed-waging-jihad-Syria-Iraq.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3094904/Five-pupils-west-London-comprehensive-dubbed-socialist-Eton-killed-waging-jihad-Syria-Iraq.html), last visited: 6 March 2017.



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November 2014.<sup>56</sup> The brothers were friends with Nasser,<sup>57</sup> and Fatlum Shalaku has been reported as being “close” to him.<sup>58</sup> A year after the brothers travelled they were joined by Nasser and Parvez.<sup>59</sup>

Both brothers were reportedly recruited by Alexandra Kotey,<sup>60</sup> listed as a “Specially Designated Global Terrorist” in January 2017. A member of the Islamic State cell led by Mohamed Emwazi known as “the Beatles”, Kotey was described by the US State Department as “responsible for recruiting several UK nationals to join the terrorist organization”.<sup>61</sup>

**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** Unspecified

**Nationality:** Unspecified

**Ancestry:** Unspecified-Kosovan-Albanian<sup>62</sup>

**Place of residence:** Unspecified, West London<sup>63</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Unspecified

**Education:** Architecture, School of Architecture, Design and Construction, University of Greenwich;<sup>64</sup> formerly, Holland Park School, Kensington, London<sup>65</sup>

**Means of travel:** Unspecified [spring 2013]<sup>66</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 20-21<sup>67</sup>

**Network:** Holland Park School Network<sup>68</sup>

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Jabhat al-Nusra [JN];<sup>69</sup> Islamic State [IS]<sup>70</sup>

**Known associates:** Fatlum Shalaku [brother; travel companion]; Mohammed Nasser [IS fighter;<sup>71</sup> former pupil of Holland Park School, Kensington];<sup>72</sup> Hamza Parvez [IS fighter;<sup>73</sup> former pupil of Holland Park School, Kensington];<sup>74</sup> Alexandra Kotey [IS recruiter]<sup>75</sup>

**Known to the authorities:** No

**Status:** Deceased [killed March 2015]<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> ‘Woman jailed for funding Syria jihad’, *BBC News*, 13 November 2014, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-30041625](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-30041625), last visited: 6 March 2017; ‘Five pupils from west London comprehensive dubbed “the socialist Eton” are killed waging jihad in Syria and Iraq’, *Daily Mail*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>57</sup> ‘Five pupils from west London comprehensive dubbed “the socialist Eton” are killed waging jihad in Syria and Iraq’, *Daily Mail*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>58</sup> ‘What happened to “Man like Fatlum?” – The inside story of the British suicide bomber of Ramadi’, *MENA etc.*, 22 July 2015.

<sup>59</sup> ‘Five pupils from west London comprehensive dubbed “the socialist Eton” are killed waging jihad in Syria and Iraq’, *Daily Mail*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>60</sup> ‘Two new members of Jihadi John’s Beatles terror cell are revealed: Including a 32-year-old QPR fan from west London who went on an aid convoy with George Galloway’, *Daily Mail*, 7 February 2016.

<sup>61</sup> ‘State Department Terrorist Designation of Alexandra Kotey’, *US Department of State*, 10 January 2017, available at:

<https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/266771.htm>, last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>62</sup> ‘Flamur Shalaku – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> ‘IS-inspired plot ringleader “had links to Jihadi John’s British terror cell”’, *ITV News*, 23 March 2016, available at: [www.itv.com/news/2016-03-23/is-inspired-plot-ringleader-had-links-to-jihadi-johns-british-terror-cell/](http://www.itv.com/news/2016-03-23/is-inspired-plot-ringleader-had-links-to-jihadi-johns-british-terror-cell/), last visited: 6 March 2017; ‘Architecture Works, 2012’, *University of Greenwich*, 2012, archived by the Henry Jackson Society.

<sup>65</sup> ‘Five pupils from west London comprehensive dubbed “the socialist Eton” are killed waging jihad in Syria and Iraq’, *Daily Mail*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>66</sup> ‘Flamur Shalaku – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> ‘Five pupils from west London comprehensive dubbed “the socialist Eton” are killed waging jihad in Syria and Iraq’, *Daily Mail*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> ‘Two new members of Jihadi John’s Beatles terror cell are revealed: Including a 32-year-old QPR fan from west London who went on an aid convoy with George Galloway’, *Daily Mail*, 7 February 2016.

<sup>71</sup> ‘Joining ISIS: Hamzah Parvez and Mohammed Nasser’, *Huffington Post*, 1 November 2014.

<sup>72</sup> ‘Five pupils from west London comprehensive dubbed “the socialist Eton” are killed waging jihad in Syria and Iraq’, *Daily Mail*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>73</sup> ‘Joining ISIS: Hamzah Parvez and Mohammed Nasser’, *Huffington Post*, 1 November 2014.

<sup>74</sup> ‘Five pupils from west London comprehensive dubbed “the socialist Eton” are killed waging jihad in Syria and Iraq’, *Daily Mail*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>75</sup> ‘Two new members of Jihadi John’s Beatles terror cell are revealed: Including a 32-year-old QPR fan from west London who went on an aid convoy with George Galloway’, *Daily Mail*, 7 February 2016.

<sup>76</sup> *ibid.*

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### FATLUM SHALAKU (ABU MUSA AL-BRITANI)<sup>77</sup>

Fatum Shalaku was an A level student at Holland Park School, Kensington.<sup>78</sup> In spring 2013, Fatum travelled to Syria with his older brother Flamur.<sup>79</sup> After the brothers travelled they were in intermittent contact with their family, and they told their parents that they were distributing aid.<sup>80</sup> In May 2015, Fatum was killed along with five other suicide bombers during an attack on government buildings in Ramadi, Iraq.<sup>81</sup>

Shalaku came from a Muslim family who were described as “not religious” and who were reported to live a secular lifestyle.<sup>82</sup> One of his former schoolfriends claimed his radicalisation was “gradual”, and that everyone was surprised by his decision to travel, whereas his older brother, Flamur, had undergone an “almost overnight transformation”.<sup>83</sup> Fatum reportedly was not very active on social media, but was “popular” and “friendly” at school.<sup>84</sup>

Holland Park School, where Fatum studied, saw a number of former pupils go on to be involved in Islamist terrorism,<sup>85</sup> including: Hamza Parvez, who travelled to fight for Islamic State in May 2014; Mohammed Nasser, who travelled to fight for Islamic State in May 2014 with Parvez<sup>86</sup> and was killed in June 2014;<sup>87</sup> Mohammed el-Araj, who fought for Jabhat al-Nusra and was killed in August 2013;<sup>88</sup> and Amal el-Wahabi, jailed for tricking a former Holland Park School schoolfriend into delivering money to her husband, Aine Davis, in November 2014.<sup>89</sup> The Shalaku brothers were friends with Nasser,<sup>90</sup> and Fatum Shalaku was “close” to him.<sup>91</sup> A year after the brothers travelled they were joined by Nasser and Parvez.<sup>92</sup>

A number of factors have been suggested which may have played a role in Fatum Shalaku’s radicalisation. It has been claimed his older brother, Flamur, became radicalised first, and may have been a force in Fatum’s transformation, while his close relationship with Muhammed Nasser and connection with Hamza Parvez may also have played a role. The effect that images of the conflict in Syria had on young people in the area in which the brothers lived, and the potential radicalising impact this had, has also been raised, as has the relative deprivation of the area in which they lived. Finally, Shalaku is believed to have been in contact with an extremist convert in the area, described as “charismatic and confrontational”, who recruited others using Whatsapp.<sup>93</sup>

Both brothers have also been reported as having been recruited by Alexandra Kotey,<sup>94</sup> potentially the convert described. Kotey was listed as a “Specially Designated Global Terrorist” in January 2017. A

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<sup>77</sup> ‘Fatum Shalaku – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016, available at:

[www.bbc.co.uk/news/special/2015/newsspec\\_10259/content/english/dead.html?v=6.6.356](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/special/2015/newsspec_10259/content/english/dead.html?v=6.6.356), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>78</sup> ‘Five pupils from west London comprehensive dubbed “the socialist Eton” are killed waging jihad in Syria and Iraq’, *Daily Mail*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>79</sup> ‘Fatum Shalaku – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>80</sup> ‘What happened to “Man like Fatum?” – The inside story of the British suicide bomber of Ramadi’, *MENA etc.*, 22 July 2015.

<sup>81</sup> ‘Five pupils from west London comprehensive dubbed “the socialist Eton” are killed waging jihad in Syria and Iraq’, *Daily Mail*, 24 May 2015; ‘Five former pupils from the same prestigious London school killed fighting for Isis’, *Independent*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>82</sup> ‘What happened to “Man like Fatum?” – The inside story of the British suicide bomber of Ramadi’, *MENA etc.*, 22 July 2015.

<sup>83</sup> ‘Five former pupils from same prestigious London school killed fighting for Isis’, *Independent*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>84</sup> ‘What happened to “Man like Fatum?” – The inside story of the British suicide bomber of Ramadi’, *MENA etc.*, 22 July 2015.

<sup>85</sup> ‘Five pupils from west London comprehensive dubbed “the socialist Eton” are killed waging jihad in Syria and Iraq’, *Daily Mail*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>86</sup> ‘Joining ISIS: Hamzah Parvez and Mohammed Nasser’, *Huffington Post*, 1 November 2014.

<sup>87</sup> ‘Mohammed Nasser – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>88</sup> ‘Mohammed el-Araj – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>89</sup> ‘Woman jailed for funding Syria jihad’, *BBC News*, 13 November 2014; ‘Five pupils from west London comprehensive dubbed “the socialist Eton” are killed waging jihad in Syria and Iraq’, *Daily Mail*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>90</sup> ‘Five pupils from west London comprehensive dubbed “the socialist Eton” are killed waging jihad in Syria and Iraq’, *Daily Mail*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>91</sup> ‘What happened to “Man like Fatum?” – The inside story of the British suicide bomber of Ramadi’, *MENA etc.*, 22 July 2015.

<sup>92</sup> ‘Five pupils from west London comprehensive dubbed “the socialist Eton” are killed waging jihad in Syria and Iraq’, *Daily Mail*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>93</sup> ‘What happened to “Man like Fatum?” – The inside story of the British suicide bomber of Ramadi’, *MENA etc.*, 22 July 2015.

<sup>94</sup> ‘Two new members of Jihadi John’s Beatles terror cell are revealed: Including a 32-year-old QPR fan from west London who went on an aid convoy with George Galloway’, *Daily Mail*, 7 February 2016.

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member of the Islamic State cell led by Mohamed Emwazi, known as “the Beatles”, Kotey was described by the US State Department as “responsible for recruiting several UK nationals to join the terrorist organization”.<sup>95</sup>

**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** Yes<sup>96</sup>

**Nationality:** British<sup>97</sup>

**Ancestry:** British-Kosovan-Albanian<sup>98</sup>

**Place of residence:** Ladbroke Grove, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, West London<sup>99</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Unspecified

**Education:** A levels, Holland Park School, Kensington, London<sup>100</sup>

**Means of travel:** Unspecified [spring 2013]<sup>101</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 17-18<sup>102</sup>

**Network:** Holland Park School Network<sup>103</sup>

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Jabhat al-Nusra [JN];<sup>104</sup> Islamic State [IS]<sup>105</sup>

**Known associates:** Flamur Shalaku [brother; travel companion]; Mohammed Nasser [IS fighter;<sup>106</sup> former pupil of Holland Park School, Kensington];<sup>107</sup> Hamza Parvez [IS fighter;<sup>108</sup> former pupil of Holland Park School, Kensington];<sup>109</sup> Alexandra Kotey [IS recruiter]<sup>110</sup>

**Known to the authorities:** No

**Status:** Deceased [May 2015]<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> ‘State Department Terrorist Designation of Alexandra Amon Kotey’, *US Department of State*, 10 January 2017.

<sup>96</sup> ‘Isis fighters complaining of “Saudi nepotism” on group’s waiting list for suicide bombers’, *Independent*, 26 May 2015, available at: [www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-fighters-complaining-of-saudi-nepotism-on-groups-waiting-list-for-suicide-bombers-10275690.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/isis-fighters-complaining-of-saudi-nepotism-on-groups-waiting-list-for-suicide-bombers-10275690.html), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *ibid.*; ‘Fatlum Shalaku – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>99</sup> ‘Five pupils from west London comprehensive dubbed “the socialist Eton” are killed waging jihad in Syria and Iraq’, *Daily Mail*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>100</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> ‘Fatlum Shalaku – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>102</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> ‘Five pupils from west London comprehensive dubbed “the socialist Eton” are killed waging jihad in Syria and Iraq’, *Daily Mail*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>104</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> ‘Two new members of Jihadi John’s Beatles terror cell are revealed: Including a 32-year-old QPR fan from west London who went on an aid convoy with George Galloway’, *Daily Mail*, 7 February 2016.

<sup>106</sup> ‘Joining ISIS: Hamzah Parvez and Mohammed Nasser’, *Huffington Post*, 1 November 2014.

<sup>107</sup> ‘Five pupils from west London comprehensive dubbed “the socialist Eton” are killed waging jihad in Syria and Iraq’, *Daily Mail*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>108</sup> ‘Joining ISIS: Hamzah Parvez and Mohammed Nasser’, *Huffington Post*, 1 November 2014.

<sup>109</sup> ‘Five pupils from west London comprehensive dubbed “the socialist Eton” are killed waging jihad in Syria and Iraq’, *Daily Mail*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>110</sup> ‘Two new members of Jihadi John’s Beatles terror cell are revealed: Including a 32-year-old QPR fan from west London who went on an aid convoy with George Galloway’, *Daily Mail*, 7 February 2016.

<sup>111</sup> ‘Fatlum Shalaku – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

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**ANIL KHALIL RAOUFI (ABU LAYTH,<sup>112</sup> ABU LAYTH AL-KHORASANI, ABU LAYTH AL KHURASANI)<sup>113</sup>**

Anil Khalil Raoufi was studying Mechanical Engineering at Liverpool John Moores University<sup>114</sup> when, in October 2013, he travelled to Syria to join Islamic State alongside Mohammad Javeed.<sup>115</sup> The two were supported in their journey financially by Mohammad's brother, Jamshed Javeed, who also drove the pair to the airport.<sup>116</sup> Once in Turkey, they met up with a third friend, Raphael Hostey, and travelled on to Syria together.<sup>117</sup> Raoufi was reported to have been killed in Aleppo in February 2014,<sup>118</sup> during a firefight with Syrian government forces.<sup>119</sup>

Raoufi's family are believed to have moved to the UK from Afghanistan in around 2004.<sup>120</sup> His family were described by someone who knew them as not "really religious at all", and his mother was described by a neighbour as "completely part of the street's life, not at all isolated, since the day they arrived".<sup>121</sup> A woman who knew Raoufi said that he had been a "normal" teenager who was friendly and played football with another child on the street, but around 2011 had dramatically changed and began to wear an Islamic robe and would not greet her as others would.<sup>122</sup>

It has been suggested Raoufi's behaviour began to change around the age of 17, before which he had many non-Muslim friends to whom he reportedly stopped talking after becoming more religious. One witness described the change as "quite dramatic". The cause of this change is unclear. According to one source, his family were unaware that he had travelled to Syria to fight. Individuals who worked at Didsbury Mosque claimed that he was not well-known at the mosque, and they believed he had been radicalised online through contact with other Islamists.<sup>123</sup>

Raoufi was associated with a broader network of individuals from Manchester and Portsmouth connected to Islamic State. The group he travelled with have been described as having been brought into the "orbit" of Ifthekar Jaman, an Islamic State fighter from Portsmouth.<sup>124</sup> Ifthekar Jaman had been in contact online with the three Manchester travellers as well as a group who travelled to Islamic State from Portsmouth. Once in Turkey, Jaman allegedly guided the two groups together at Reyhanli, on the Turkish side of the Syrian border.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> 'Terror teacher Jamshed Javeed's brother and friend already believed dead after travelling to Syria', *Manchester Evening News*, 27 October 2014, available at: [www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/terror-teacher-jamshed-javeeds-brother-8004268](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/terror-teacher-jamshed-javeeds-brother-8004268), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>113</sup> 'Anil Khalil Raoufi - Who are Britain's jihadists?', *BBC News*, 10 October 2016, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>114</sup> 'British amateur boxer "killed fighting jihad in Syria"', *Daily Telegraph*, 13 February 2014, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/10636842/British-amateur-boxer-killed-fighting-jihad-in-Syria.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/10636842/British-amateur-boxer-killed-fighting-jihad-in-Syria.html), last visited: 6 March 2017; 'John Moores University students may be fighting with ISIS in Syria', *Liverpool Echo*, 4 March 2015, available at: [www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/john-moores-university-students-fighting-8768174](http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/john-moores-university-students-fighting-8768174), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>115</sup> 'John Moores University students may be fighting with ISIS in Syria', *Liverpool Echo*, 4 March 2015.

<sup>116</sup> 'Science teacher Jamshed Javeed jailed for plot to fight alongside Isis in Syria', *Manchester Evening News*, 5 March 2015, available at: [www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/jamshed-javeed-jailed-syria-isis-8776723](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/jamshed-javeed-jailed-syria-isis-8776723), last visited: 6 March 2017; 'Mother's plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2980918/Chemistry-teacher-gave-job-Syria-join-brother-fighting-ISIS-jailed-six-years.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2980918/Chemistry-teacher-gave-job-Syria-join-brother-fighting-ISIS-jailed-six-years.html), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>117</sup> 'Mother's plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>118</sup> 'Anil Khalil Raoufi - Who are Britain's jihadists?', *BBC News*, 10 October 2016, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>119</sup> 'Anil Khalil Raoufi killed in Syria "was jihadist"', *BBC News*, 13 February 2014, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-26181501](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-26181501), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>120</sup> 'British amateur boxer "killed fighting jihad in Syria"', *Daily Telegraph*, 13 February 2014.

<sup>121</sup> 'Police question family of British student, 20, shot dead while fighting for rebels in Syria', *Daily Mail*, 13 February 2014, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2558914/Police-question-family-British-student-20-shot-dead-fighting-rebels-Syria.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2558914/Police-question-family-British-student-20-shot-dead-fighting-rebels-Syria.html), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>122</sup> 'British amateur boxer "killed fighting jihad in Syria"', *Daily Telegraph*, 13 February 2014.

<sup>123</sup> 'Police question family of British student, 20, shot dead while fighting for rebels in Syria', *Daily Mail*, 13 February 2014.

<sup>124</sup> 'From Portsmouth to Kobane: the British jihadis fighting for Isis', *New Statesman*, 6 November 2014, available at: [www.newstatesman.com/2014/10/portsmouth-kobane](http://www.newstatesman.com/2014/10/portsmouth-kobane), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>125</sup> 'On the Trail of Britain's Homegrown Jihadis', *Newsweek*, 15 January 2015, available at: <http://europe.newsweek.com/jihadis-299505?rm=eu>, last visited: 10 March 2017.

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A fourth man, Nur Hassan, attempted to join the group in late November 2013,<sup>126</sup> and intended to travel with Jamshed Javeed.<sup>127</sup> Hassan was reportedly also helped to travel by Mohammad Javeed and Abdullahi Jama Farah. Farah helped to put Hassan in contact with Raoufi after their departure, with the intention that they would fight together. During Farah's sentencing in 2016, the judge described the group as "a closely knit group of friends from Manchester who developed and shared the same extremist ideological beliefs and supported the use of extreme violence to create an Islamic State".<sup>128</sup>

Raoufi was married with a child when he travelled.<sup>129</sup> He went on to be a key recruiter of other British fighters for Islamic State<sup>130</sup> and reportedly died in Aleppo in February 2014,<sup>131</sup> during a battle with Syrian government forces.<sup>132</sup> Friends posted eulogies for Raoufi, including, "Legendary lion may Allah accept him", on his older brother's Facebook page.<sup>133</sup>

**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** No [b. Afghanistan]<sup>134</sup> [DOB 1994]<sup>135</sup>

**Nationality:** British<sup>136</sup>

**Ancestry:** Afghan<sup>137</sup>

**Place of residence:** Brooklawn Drive, Didsbury, Manchester, North West England<sup>138</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Living at family home<sup>139</sup>

**Education:** Mechanical Engineering, Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool<sup>140</sup>

**Means of travel:** Travelled by plane to Istanbul, Turkey, from Manchester [6 October 2013]; crossed into Syria from Reyhanli, Turkey<sup>141</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 19<sup>142</sup>

**Network:** Manchester Islamic State travellers<sup>143</sup>

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Islamic State [IS]<sup>144</sup>

**Known associates:** Mohammad Azzam Javeed [Manchester IS traveller]; Raphael Hostey [Manchester IS traveller]; Nur Hassan [Manchester IS traveller];<sup>145</sup> Jamshed Javeed [Mohammad Javeed's older brother; convicted for attempting to travel to join IS;<sup>146</sup> helped to fund Raoufi's travel];<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> 'Mother's plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>127</sup> 'Cambridge politics graduate who was massive fan of the Twilight saga disappears after her jihadist husband is banned from the UK for joining ISIS in Syria', *Daily Mail*, 29 October 2014, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2812222/Cambridge-politics-graduate-disappears-teaching-job-Manchester-jihadist-husband-banned-UK-travelling-Syria-join-ISIS.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2812222/Cambridge-politics-graduate-disappears-teaching-job-Manchester-jihadist-husband-banned-UK-travelling-Syria-join-ISIS.html), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>128</sup> 'Schoolboy Jihadi gets seven years for helping ISIS terror cell', *Court News*, 26 August 2016.

<sup>129</sup> 'Secret Islamic State Files: 64 with Links to UK', *Sky News*, 12 March 2016, available at: <http://news.sky.com/story/secret-islamic-state-files-64-with-links-to-uk-10203096>, last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>130</sup> 'Police question family of British student, 20, shot dead while fighting for rebels in Syria', *Daily Mail*, 13 February 2014.

<sup>131</sup> 'Anil Khalil Raoufi - Who are Britain's jihadists?', *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>132</sup> 'Anil Khalil Raoufi killed in Syria "was jihadist"', *BBC News*, 13 February 2014.

<sup>133</sup> 'British amateur boxer "killed fighting jihad in Syria"', *Daily Telegraph*, 13 February 2014.

<sup>134</sup> 'A shocking jihad UK league table is revealed by The Sun today', *The Sun*, 25 August 2014, available at: [www.thesun.co.uk/archives/news/1054610/british-isles-2/](http://www.thesun.co.uk/archives/news/1054610/british-isles-2/), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>135</sup> 'Secret Islamic State Files: 64 with Links to UK', *Sky News*, 12 March 2016.

<sup>136</sup> 'Anil Khalil Raoufi killed in Syria "was jihadist"', *BBC News*, 13 February 2014.

<sup>137</sup> 'British amateur boxer "killed fighting jihad in Syria"', *Daily Telegraph*, 13 February 2014.

<sup>138</sup> 'Terror teacher Jamshed Javeed's brother and friend already believed dead after travelling to Syria', *Manchester Evening News*, 27 October 2014.

<sup>139</sup> 'British amateur boxer "killed fighting jihad in Syria"', *Daily Telegraph*, 13 February 2014.

<sup>140</sup> *ibid.*; 'John Moores University students may be fighting with ISIS in Syria', *Liverpool Echo*, 4 March 2015.

<sup>141</sup> 'Mother's plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>142</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>143</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> 'Secret Islamic State Files: 64 with Links to UK', *Sky News*, 12 March 2016.

<sup>145</sup> 'Mother's plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>146</sup> 'Teacher Jamshed Javeed jailed for Syria "jihad" plan', *BBC News*, 5 March 2015.

<sup>147</sup> 'Mother's plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

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Abdullahi Ahmed Jama Farah [close friend];<sup>148</sup> A level student jailed in August 2016 for helping Nur Hassan travel to Syria;<sup>149</sup> Ifthekar Jaman [IS fighter from Portsmouth]; Muhammad Hamidur Rahman, Mamunur Roshid, Asad Uzzaman, Mehdi Hassan, Mashudur Choudhury [Portsmouth IS travellers]<sup>150</sup>

**Known to the authorities:** No

**Status:** Deceased [3 February 2014]<sup>151</sup>

### MOHAMMAD AZZAM JAVEED

Mohammad Azzam Javeed was either due to begin studying or had enrolled on a Chemical/Mechanical Engineering course at Liverpool John Moores University when he travelled to Syria alongside Anil Khalil Raoufi to join Islamic State in October 2013.<sup>152</sup> The two were supported in their journey financially by Mohammad's brother, Jamshed Javeed, who also drove the pair to the airport.<sup>153</sup> Once in Turkey, they met up with a third friend, Raphael Hostey, and travelled on to Syria together.

Mohammad Javeed's radicalisation appears to have been driven in part by his older brother, Jamshed. In an argument recorded by his sister and passed on to the police, Mohammad's parents were angry with Jamshed for providing support to Mohammad, and about his own plan to travel to Syria. Javeed admitted that he had helped his brother, but insisted that Mohammad was doing "the right thing".<sup>154</sup>

Mohammad Javeed was also associated with a broader network of individuals from Manchester and Portsmouth connected to Islamic State. The group he travelled with have been described as having been brought into the "orbit" of Ifthekar Jaman, an Islamic State fighter from Portsmouth.<sup>155</sup> Ifthekar Jaman had been in contact online with the three Manchester travellers as well as a group who travelled to Islamic State from Portsmouth. Once in Turkey, Jaman allegedly guided the two groups together at Reyhanli, on the Turkish side of the Syrian border.<sup>156</sup>

A fourth man, Nur Hassan, attempted to join the group in late November 2013,<sup>157</sup> and intended to travel with Jamshed Javeed.<sup>158</sup> Hassan was reportedly also helped to travel by Mohammad Javeed and Abdullahi Jama Farah. Farah helped to put Hassan in contact with Raoufi after their departure, with the intention that they would fight together. During Farah's sentencing in 2016, the judge described the group as "a closely knit group of friends from Manchester who developed and shared the same extremist ideological beliefs and supported the use of extreme violence to create an Islamic State".<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> 'Schoolboy jihadi gets seven years for helping Isis terror cell', *Court News*, 26 August 2016.

<sup>149</sup> 'A-level jihadi Abdullahi Ahmed Jama Farah jailed for helping friend go to Syria', *ITV News*, 26 August 2016.

<sup>150</sup> 'On the Trail of Britain's Homegrown Jihadis', *Newsweek*, 15 January 2015.

<sup>151</sup> 'Mother's plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>152</sup> 'Science teacher charged with terror offences linked to Syria', *Channel 4 News*, 13 March 2014; 'John Moores University students may be fighting with ISIS in Syria', *Liverpool Echo*, 4 March 2015.

<sup>153</sup> 'Science teacher Jamshed Javeed jailed for plot to fight alongside Isis in Syria', *Manchester Evening News*, 5 March 2015; 'Mother's plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>154</sup> 'Mother's plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>155</sup> 'From Portsmouth to Kobane: the British jihadis fighting for Isis', *New Statesman*, 6 November 2014.

<sup>156</sup> 'On the Trail of Britain's Homegrown Jihadis', *Newsweek*, 15 January 2015.

<sup>157</sup> 'Mother's plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>158</sup> 'Cambridge politics graduate who was massive fan of the Twilight saga disappears after her jihadist husband is banned from the UK for joining ISIS in Syria', *Daily Mail*, 29 October 2014.

<sup>159</sup> 'Schoolboy Jihadi gets seven years for helping ISIS terror cell', *Court News*, 26 August 2016.

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**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** Unspecified

**Nationality:** British<sup>160</sup>

**Ancestry:** Unspecified – suspected Pakistani<sup>161</sup>

**Place of residence:** Levenshulme, Manchester, North West England<sup>162</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Unspecified

**Education:** Disputed: due to begin/studying at time of travel, Chemical/Mechanical Engineering degree, Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool;<sup>163</sup> Parrs Wood High School, Didsbury<sup>164</sup>

**Means of travel:** Travelled by plane to Istanbul, Turkey, from Manchester [6 October 2013]; crossed into Syria from Reyhanli, Turkey<sup>165</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 18–19<sup>166</sup>

**Network:** Manchester Islamic State travellers<sup>167</sup>

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Islamic State [IS]<sup>168</sup>

**Known associates:** Anil Khalil Raoufi [Manchester IS traveller]; Raphael Hostey [Manchester IS traveller]; Nur Hassan [Manchester IS traveller];<sup>169</sup> Jamshed Javeed [older brother; helped to fund Javeed's travel];<sup>170</sup> Ifthekar Jaman [IS fighter from Portsmouth]; Muhammad Hamidur Rahman, Mamunur Roshid, Asad Uzzaman, Mehdi Hassan, Mashudur Choudhury [Portsmouth IS travellers];<sup>171</sup> Abdullahi Ahmed Jama Fara [social media contact];<sup>172</sup> A level student jailed in August 2016 for helping Nur Hassan travel to Syria;<sup>173</sup> Ahmed Halane [brother of Zahra and Salma Halane; al-Shabaab; IS (alleged)]<sup>174</sup>

**Known to the authorities:** No

**Status:** Missing [presumed deceased]<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> 'UK student Mohammed Azzam Javeed missing in Syria', *BBC News*, 20 February 2014, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-26262832](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-26262832), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>161</sup> Source describes Javeed's older brother as of "Pakistani heritage". 'Science teacher Jamshed Javeed jailed for plot to fight alongside Isis in Syria', *Manchester Evening News*, 5 March 2015.

<sup>162</sup> 'UK student Mohammed Azzam Javeed missing in Syria', *BBC News*, 20 February 2014.

<sup>163</sup> 'Science teacher charged with terror offences linked to Syria', *Channel 4 News*, 13 March 2014; 'John Moores University students may be fighting with ISIS in Syria', *Liverpool Echo*, 4 March 2015.

<sup>164</sup> 'Terror teacher Jamshed Javeed's brother and friend already believed dead after travelling to Syria', *Manchester Evening News*, 27 October 2014.

<sup>165</sup> 'Mother's plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>166</sup> 'UK student Mohammed Azzam Javeed missing in Syria', *BBC News*, 20 February 2014.

<sup>167</sup> 'Mother's plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>168</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>169</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>170</sup> 'Science teacher Jamshed Javeed jailed for plot to fight alongside Isis in Syria', *Manchester Evening News*, 5 March 2015; 'Mother's plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>171</sup> 'On the Trail of Britain's Homegrown Jihadis', *Newsweek*, 15 January 2015.

<sup>172</sup> 'Schoolboy jihadi gets seven years for helping ISIS terror cell', *Court News*, 26 August 2016.

<sup>173</sup> 'A-level jihadi Abdullahi Ahmed Jama Farah jailed for helping friend go to Syria', *ITV News*, 26 August 2016.

<sup>174</sup> 'Manchester terror suspect "living freely in Denmark"', *BBC News*, 21 May 2015; 'Twin girls who ran away to Syria were star pupils with 28 GCSEs between them', *Manchester Evening News*, 9 July 2014.

<sup>175</sup> 'Mother's plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

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### RAPHAEL HOSTEY (ABU AL QAQAA AL BRITANI)

Raphael Hostey was studying Graphic Design at Liverpool John Moores University<sup>176</sup> when he travelled to join Islamic State in October 2013. Hostey travelled in coordination with a group from Manchester, meeting up with Anil Khalil Raoufi and Mohammad Javeed in Turkey and travelling on to Syria with them.<sup>177</sup> He was reported to have been killed in a drone strike in April 2016.<sup>178</sup>

Hostey was described by neighbours as having been an “innocent-looking” child obsessed with football. At the time of travel he had a wife and child,<sup>179</sup> but became increasingly radical as a result of watching online videos from Syria.<sup>180</sup> Hostey was also associated with a broader network of individuals from Manchester and Portsmouth connected to Islamic State. The group he travelled with have been described as having been brought into the “orbit” of Ifthekar Jaman, an Islamic State fighter from Portsmouth.<sup>181</sup> Ifthekar Jaman had been in contact online with the three Manchester travellers as well as with a group who travelled to Islamic State from Portsmouth. Once in Turkey, Jaman allegedly guided the two groups together at Reyhanli, on the Turkish side of the Syrian border.<sup>182</sup>

A fourth man, Nur Hassan, attempted to join the group in late November 2013,<sup>183</sup> and intended to travel with Jamshed Javeed.<sup>184</sup> Hassan was reportedly also helped to travel by Mohammad Javeed and Abdullahi Jama Farah. Farah helped to put Hassan in contact with Anil Khalil Raoufi after their departure, with the intention that they would fight together. During Farah’s sentencing in 2016, the judge described the group as “a closely knit group of friends from Manchester who developed and shared the same extremist ideological beliefs and supported the use of extreme violence to create an Islamic State”.<sup>185</sup>

Hostey’s father, Ibraheem, was a close friend of Islamic State fighter Jamal al-Harith who killed himself in a suicide attack in Iraq in February 2017. In 2009, the two men had travelled to Gaza on an aid convoy. Hostey knew al-Harith and trained at the same gym. A former boxer who trained men at the gym told the *Guardian*, “I know Raphael’s family, they are ordinary and I suspected absolutely nothing.”<sup>186</sup>

Hostey became a propagandist for Islamic State, and was described as part of a “five-strong” team of Islamic State online recruiters.<sup>187</sup> He reportedly became a “senior Islamic State commander” who was

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<sup>176</sup> ‘British jihadi recruiter reported dead in Syria drone strike’, *Daily Telegraph*, 2 May 2016, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/02/british-jihadi-reported-to-have-been-killed-in-syria/](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/02/british-jihadi-reported-to-have-been-killed-in-syria/), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>177</sup> ‘Mother’s plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them’, *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>178</sup> ‘British jihadi recruiter reported dead in Syria drone strike’, *Daily Telegraph*, 2 May 2016.

<sup>179</sup> ‘Unmasked, jihadi chief who’s a British rapper with an afro: Student revealed as “senior commander” responsible for recruiting fellow Brits for ISIS’, *Daily Mail*, 16 March 2015, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2997904/Unmasked-jihadi-chief-s-British-rapper-afro-Student-named-senior-commander-responsible-recruiting-fellow-countrymen.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2997904/Unmasked-jihadi-chief-s-British-rapper-afro-Student-named-senior-commander-responsible-recruiting-fellow-countrymen.html), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>180</sup> ‘British jihadi recruiter reported dead in Syria drone strike’, *Daily Telegraph*, 2 May 2016.

<sup>181</sup> ‘From Portsmouth to Kobane: the British jihadis fighting for Isis’, *New Statesman*, 6 November 2014.

<sup>182</sup> ‘On the Trail of Britain’s Homegrown Jihadis’, *Newsweek*, 15 January 2015.

<sup>183</sup> ‘Mother’s plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them’, *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>184</sup> ‘Cambridge politics graduate who was massive fan of the Twilight saga disappears after her jihadist husband is banned from the UK for joining ISIS in Syria’, *Daily Mail*, 29 October 2014.

<sup>185</sup> ‘Schoolboy Jihadi gets seven years for helping ISIS terror cell’, *Court News*, 26 August 2016.

<sup>186</sup> ‘Small part of Manchester that has been home to 16 jihadis’, *Guardian*, 25 February 2017, available at: [www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/feb/25/small-part-of-manchester-that-has-been-home-to-16-jihadis](http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/feb/25/small-part-of-manchester-that-has-been-home-to-16-jihadis), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>187</sup> ‘Senior British ISIS recruiter “is a sex pest who steals girls from fellow fighters and only helps the prettiest would-be jihadi brides who contact him on Skype to go to Syria” [sic], *Daily Mail*, 23 June 2015, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3134678/Senior-British-jihadi-recruiter-sex-pest-forces-ISIS-brides-veil-Skype-choose-prettiest-ones-steals-girls-fellow-fighters.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3134678/Senior-British-jihadi-recruiter-sex-pest-forces-ISIS-brides-veil-Skype-choose-prettiest-ones-steals-girls-fellow-fighters.html), last visited: 6 March 2017.



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instrumental in attracting British recruits,<sup>188</sup> and boasted that he had recruited Zahra and Salma Halane.<sup>189</sup> His death in a drone strike in 2016 was described as “a significant loss” for Islamic State.<sup>190</sup>

**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** Yes [b. Manchester] [DOB 1992]<sup>191</sup>

**Nationality:** British<sup>192</sup>

**Ancestry:** British-unspecified<sup>193</sup>

**Place of residence:** Moss Side, Manchester, North West England<sup>194</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Unspecified

**Education:** Graphic Design, Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool<sup>195</sup>

**Means of travel:** Disputed: Travelled by plane to Istanbul, Turkey, from Manchester [5 or 6 October 2013] and met up with Raoufi and Javeed before crossing into Syria from Reyhanli, Turkey, or crossed in October after six weeks of travel.<sup>196</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 22<sup>197</sup>

**Network:** Manchester Islamic State travellers<sup>198</sup>

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Islamic State [IS]<sup>199</sup>

**Known associates:** Anil Khalil Raoufi [Manchester IS traveller]; Mohammad Azzam Javeed [Manchester IS traveller] Nur Hassan [Manchester IS traveller];<sup>200</sup> Jamshed Javeed [Mohammad Javeed’s older brother; convicted for attempting to travel to join IS;<sup>201</sup> helped to fund Hostey’s travel];<sup>202</sup> Ifthekar Jaman [IS fighter from Portsmouth]; Muhammad Hamidur Rahman, Mamunur Roshid, Asad Uzzaman, Mehdi Hassan, Mashudur Choudhury [Portsmouth IS travellers];<sup>203</sup> Abdullahi Ahmed Jama Fara [social media contact;<sup>204</sup> A level student jailed in August 2016 for helping Nur Hassan travel to Syria];<sup>205</sup> Anosh/Abu Dujana al-Britani [IS fighter from Manchester; recommended by Hostey];<sup>206</sup> Jamal al-Harith [family friend; Islamic State fighter]<sup>207</sup>

**Known to the authorities:** No

**Status:** Deceased [April 2016]<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> ‘Unmasked, Jihadi chief who’s a British rapper with an afro: Student revealed as “senior commander” responsible for recruiting fellow Brits for ISIS’, *Daily Mail*, 16 March 2015.

<sup>189</sup> ‘Teenage “terror twins” who fled Britain to join ISIS tried to recruit their whole family telling brothers: “We might seem evil to you, but we will all be happy in the afterlife”’, *Daily Mail*, 4 October 2015.

<sup>190</sup> ‘British jihadi recruiter reported dead in Syria drone strike’, *Daily Telegraph*, 2 May 2016.

<sup>191</sup> @AmarAmarasingam, *Twitter*, 1 May 2016, available at: [www.twitter.com/AmarAmarasingam/status/726867472306069505?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw](https://www.twitter.com/AmarAmarasingam/status/726867472306069505?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw), last visited: 6 March 2017; ‘Secret Islamic State Files: 64 with Links to UK’, *Sky News*, 12 March 2016.

<sup>192</sup> Baby-faced rapper who fled Britain to join ISIS is “killed in Syria”, *Daily Mirror*, 2 May 2016.

<sup>193</sup> @AmarAmarasingam, *Twitter*, 1 May 2016, available at: [www.twitter.com/AmarAmarasingam/status/726866583671414788](https://www.twitter.com/AmarAmarasingam/status/726866583671414788), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>194</sup> ‘Unmasked, Jihadi chief who’s a British rapper with an afro: Student revealed as “senior commander” responsible for recruiting fellow Brits for ISIS’, *Daily Mail*, 16 March 2015.

<sup>195</sup> ‘British jihadi recruiter reported dead in Syria drone strike’, *Daily Telegraph*, 2 May 2016.

<sup>196</sup> ‘On the Trail of Britain’s Homegrown Jihadis’, *Newsweek*, 15 January 2015; ‘Secret Islamic State Files: 64 with Links to UK’, *Sky News*, 12 March 2016;

‘Mother’s plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them’, *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>197</sup> ‘Raphael Hostey – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 22 December 2016.

<sup>198</sup> ‘Mother’s plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them’, *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>199</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>200</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>201</sup> ‘Teacher Jamshed Javeed jailed for Syria “jihad” plan’, *BBC News*, 5 March 2015.

<sup>202</sup> ‘Mother’s plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them’, *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>203</sup> ‘On the Trail of Britain’s Homegrown Jihadis’, *Newsweek*, 15 January 2015.

<sup>204</sup> ‘Schoolboy jihadi gets seven years for helping ISIS terror cell’, *Court News*, 26 August 2016.

<sup>205</sup> ‘A-level jihadi Abdullahi Ahmed Jama Farah jailed for helping friend go to Syria’, *ITV News*, 26 August 2016.

<sup>206</sup> ‘Secret Islamic State Files: 64 with Links to UK’, *Sky News*, 12 March 2016.

<sup>207</sup> ‘Small part of Manchester that has been home to 16 jihadis’, *Guardian*, 25 February 2017.

<sup>208</sup> ‘British jihadi recruiter reported dead in Syria drone strike’, *Daily Telegraph*, 2 May 2016.

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MOHAMMED MEHDI HASSAN (ABU DUJANA AL BRITANI)<sup>209</sup>

Mohammed Mehdi Hassan had completed but was repeating his A levels<sup>210</sup> and is believed to have had a place at the University of Surrey<sup>211</sup> when he travelled to Syria to join Islamic State alongside five other men from Portsmouth in October 2013. The five men were Assad Uzzaman, Muhammad Hamidur Rahman, Mamunur Mohammed Roshid and Mashudur Choudhury.<sup>212</sup> All but Choudhury, who returned to the UK in 2013 and was later jailed for four years,<sup>213</sup> have since been killed.<sup>214</sup> Hassan was killed fighting for Islamic State in Kobani in October 2014.

Hassan's mother claimed to have been unaware of her son's extremism, describing him as a studious, "loving, gentle, kind boy".<sup>215</sup> She suggested he had found new friends because he was not attending college full-time,<sup>216</sup> and claimed he had been affected by images of the Syrian conflict, in particular the actions of the Syrian President, Bashar al-Assad.<sup>217</sup> Hassan's mother also speculated that his radicalisation had been the result of a mixture of online activity and his social interactions, and recalled that he had spent a lot of time on his laptop while at home.<sup>218</sup> His uncle described him as a "lovely boy ... educated ... a very intelligent boy", and said the young men who travelled from Portsmouth were "impressionable boys" and "so naïve they didn't think in a balanced way".<sup>219</sup> His mother also pointed out that those who travelled to fight are not necessarily from "dysfunctional" families, because her son had a "beautiful, prosperous future ahead of him" and came from a middle-class family.<sup>220</sup>

Hassan was taking a gap year before going to university when he became associated with the men with whom he travelled.<sup>221</sup> The group worshipped at the Jami Mosque in Portsmouth,<sup>222</sup> and some, including Hassan, were members of a *Dawah* group.<sup>223</sup> The committee chairman of the mosque said the men were not well known at the mosque and also worshipped elsewhere. He speculated that the men had been radicalised online, because the mosque had reportedly advised its congregation against travel to Syria, and concluded that their radicalisation must have resulted from an "outside influence".

The group were in contact with well-known fighter Iftheekar Jaman, who was Uzzaman's cousin and who had travelled to Syria in spring 2013.<sup>224</sup> Jaman had also been a member of the *Dawah* team the men had been involved with before he travelled to Syria.<sup>225</sup> Once in Turkey, Hassan and the Portsmouth travellers met with Anil Khalil Raoufi, Mohammad Javeed and Raphael Hostey before Jaman allegedly guided both groups to Reyhanli, on the Turkish side of the Syrian border.<sup>226</sup> The group were also aided

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<sup>209</sup> 'Muhammad Mehdi Hassan - Who are Britain's jihadists?', *BBC News*, 10 October 2016, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>210</sup> 'Family of teenage jihadist Muhammed Mehdi Hassan speak of devastation', *ITV News*, 27 October 2014, available at: [www.itv.com/news/2014-10-27/family-of-teenage-jihadist-mehdi-hassan-speak-of-devastation-uncle-and-mother-talk-exclusively-to-itv-rageh-omaar/](http://www.itv.com/news/2014-10-27/family-of-teenage-jihadist-mehdi-hassan-speak-of-devastation-uncle-and-mother-talk-exclusively-to-itv-rageh-omaar/), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>211</sup> 'Fourth man from Portsmouth dies in Syria', *Sky News*, 25 October 2014, available at: <http://news.sky.com/story/fourth-man-from-portsmouth-dies-in-syria-10385071>, last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>212</sup> 'How the "Pompey Lads" fell into the hands of Isis', *Guardian*, 27 July 2015, available at: [www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/27/pompey-lads-isis-deluded-british-recruits-died-syria](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/27/pompey-lads-isis-deluded-british-recruits-died-syria), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>213</sup> 'Jihadist dad from Portsmouth jailed for four years', *Portsmouth News*, 5 December 2014, available at: [www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/crime/jihadist-dad-from-portsmouth-jailed-for-four-years-1-6458920](http://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/crime/jihadist-dad-from-portsmouth-jailed-for-four-years-1-6458920) last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>214</sup> 'How the "Pompey Lads" fell into the hands of Isis', *Guardian*, 27 July 2015.

<sup>215</sup> 'Family of teenage jihadist Muhammed Mehdi Hassan speak of devastation', *ITV News*, 27 October 2014.

<sup>216</sup> *ibid.* [video: 0:30].

<sup>217</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>218</sup> *ibid.* [video: 2:06].

<sup>219</sup> 'Family of Brit teen jihadist Mehdi Hassan "blame UK government"', *The Sun*, 28 October 2014, available at: [www.thesun.co.uk/archives/news/456874/family-of-brit-teen-jihadist-mehdi-hassan-blame-uk-government/](http://www.thesun.co.uk/archives/news/456874/family-of-brit-teen-jihadist-mehdi-hassan-blame-uk-government/), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>220</sup> 'Family of teenage jihadist Muhammed Mehdi Hassan speak of devastation', *ITV News*, 27 October 2014.

<sup>221</sup> 'How the "Pompey Lads" fell into the hands of Isis', *Guardian*, 27 July 2015.

<sup>222</sup> 'Portsmouth under strain after death of fourth jihadi from city', *Guardian*, 26 October 2014, available at: [www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/oct/26/portsmouth-jihadi-city-mehdi-hassan](http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/oct/26/portsmouth-jihadi-city-mehdi-hassan), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>223</sup> 'How the "Pompey Lads" fell into the hands of Isis', *Guardian*, 27 July 2015.

<sup>224</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>225</sup> 'British "celebrity jihadi" and chef dies in Syria', *Daily Telegraph*, 17 December 2013, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/10524179/British-celebrity-jihadi-and-chef-dies-in-Syria.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/10524179/British-celebrity-jihadi-and-chef-dies-in-Syria.html), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>226</sup> 'On the Trail of Britain's Homegrown Jihadis', *Newsweek*, 15 January 2015.

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in their travel by two of Ifthekar Jaman's brothers, Tuhin Shahensha and Mustakim Jaman. Both men were jailed for six years for their role in November 2015.<sup>227</sup>

**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** Yes<sup>228</sup>

**Nationality:** British<sup>229</sup>

**Ancestry:** British-Bangladeshi<sup>230</sup>

**Place of residence:** Portsmouth, Hampshire, South East England<sup>231</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Unspecified

**Education:** International politics, University of Surrey [place accepted];<sup>232</sup> A levels, unspecified sixth-form college;<sup>233</sup> St John's College, Hampshire<sup>234</sup>

**Means of travel:** Travelled from Guildford to Gatwick Airport and met fellow travellers before flying to Antalya, Turkey [8 October 2013]; travelled on to Reyhanli, Turkey, and crossed into Syria<sup>235</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 18–19<sup>236</sup>

**Network:** Portsmouth Islamic State travellers<sup>237</sup>

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Islamic State [IS]<sup>238</sup>

**Known associates:** Ifthekar Jaman [IS fighter from Portsmouth];<sup>239</sup> Assad Uzzaman, Muhammad Hamidur Rahman, Mamunur Mohammed Roshid, Mashudur Choudhury [Portsmouth IS travellers];<sup>240</sup> Anil Khalil Raoufi [Manchester IS traveller]; Mohammad Azzam Javeed [Manchester IS traveller]; Raphael Hostey [Manchester IS traveller];<sup>241</sup> Tuhin Shahensha, Mustakim Jaman [aided travel of Portsmouth travellers]<sup>242</sup>

**Known to the authorities:** No

**Status:** Deceased [October 2014]<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> 'Syria conflict: Portsmouth brothers jailed for terrorism offences', *BBC News*, 18 November 2015, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-34847044](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-34847044), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>228</sup> 'Family of teenage jihadist Muhammed Mehdi Hassan speak of devastation', *ITV News*, 27 October 2014 [video: 2:25].

<sup>229</sup> 'From Portsmouth to Kobane: the British jihadis fighting for Isis', *New Statesman*, 6 November 2014.

<sup>230</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>231</sup> 'Family of teenage jihadist Muhammed Mehdi Hassan speak of devastation', *ITV News*, 27 October 2014.

<sup>232</sup> 'How the "Pompey Lads" fell into the hands of Isis', *Guardian*, 27 July 2015.

<sup>233</sup> 'Family of teenage jihadist Muhammed Mehdi Hassan speak of devastation', *ITV News*, 27 October 2014.

<sup>234</sup> 'How the "Pompey Lads" fell into the hands of Isis', *Guardian*, 27 July 2015.

<sup>235</sup> 'From Portsmouth to Kobane: the British jihadis fighting for Isis', *New Statesman*, 6 November 2014; 'How the "Pompey Lads" fell into the hands of Isis', *Guardian*, 27 July 2015.

<sup>236</sup> 'Muhammad Mehdi Hassan – Who are Britain's jihadists?', *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>237</sup> 'Family of teenage jihadist Muhammed Mehdi Hassan speak of devastation', *ITV News*, 27 October 2014.

<sup>238</sup> 'How the "Pompey Lads" fell into the hands of Isis', *Guardian*, 27 July 2015.

<sup>239</sup> 'Muhammad Mehdi Hassan – Who are Britain's jihadists?', *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>240</sup> 'How the "Pompey Lads" fell into the hands of Isis', *Guardian*, 27 July 2015.

<sup>241</sup> 'On the Trail of Britain's Homegrown Jihadis', *Newsweek*, 15 January 2015.

<sup>242</sup> 'Syria conflict: Portsmouth brothers jailed for terrorism offences', *BBC News*, 18 November 2015.

<sup>243</sup> 'Muhammad Mehdi Hassan – Who are Britain's jihadists?', *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

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### NUR HASSAN

Nur Hassan claimed to have been a student of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Leeds<sup>244</sup> when, on 21 November 2013, he attempted to travel by plane to Turkey but was stopped, before being allowed to fly the following day.<sup>245</sup>

Hassan is originally from Kotka, Finland. His father fled Somalia and moved to Finland, and then to England in 2005.<sup>246</sup> At the time Hassan travelled he was living with his wife,<sup>247</sup> and a police source has claimed that his wife demonstrated “wilful blindness” to his extremist opinions and hid them from his family.<sup>248</sup>

Hassan was associated with Anil Khalil Raoufi, Mohammad Javeed and Raphael Hostey, though it is unclear whether he met them in person before travelling to join the group in late November 2013. He had intended to travel with Jamshed Javeed, who paid for his flights on 21 November.<sup>249</sup> He was also reportedly helped to travel by Mohammad Javeed and Abdullahi Jama Farah. Farah helped to put Hassan in contact with Raoufi after their departure, with the intention that they would fight together. During Farah’s sentencing in 2016, the judge described the group as “a closely knit group of friends from Manchester who developed and shared the same extremist ideological beliefs and supported the use of extreme violence to create an Islamic State”.<sup>250</sup> In addition, Hassan was an associate of Ahmed Halane, Zahra and Salma Halane’s older brother and Abdullahi Jama Farah’s cousin.<sup>251</sup>

After Hassan travelled to Syria, the Treasury froze his assets under the Terrorist Asset-Freezing Act 2010.<sup>252</sup> He has since been banned from the United Kingdom<sup>253</sup> and will be extradited to Finland if he attempts to return.<sup>254</sup> In August 2016, it was reported that he was “thought to be living in Denmark”.<sup>255</sup>

**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** No [b. Finland]<sup>256</sup>

**Nationality:** Finnish [suspected]<sup>257</sup>

**Ancestry:** Finnish–Somali [suspected]<sup>258</sup>

**Place of residence:** Moss Side, Manchester, North West England<sup>259</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Living with wife<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> @Nurou, *Twitter*, undated, available at: [www.twitter.com/Nurou/with\\_replies](http://www.twitter.com/Nurou/with_replies), last visited: 6 March 2017; @Nurou, *Twitter*, 22 August 2012, available at: [www.twitter.com/Nurou/status/238260927433150464](http://www.twitter.com/Nurou/status/238260927433150464), last visited: 6 March 2016. Screenshots of all activity archived by the Henry Jackson Society.

<sup>245</sup> ‘Mother’s plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them’, *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>246</sup> ‘Terror suspect from Manchester has financial assets frozen’, *Manchester Evening News*, 21 November 2014, available at: [www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/terror-suspect-manchester-financial-assets-8146138](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/terror-suspect-manchester-financial-assets-8146138), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>247</sup> ‘Mother’s plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them’, *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>248</sup> ‘Cambridge politics graduate who was massive fan of the Twilight saga disappears after her jihadist husband is banned from the UK for joining ISIS in Syria’, *Daily Mail*, 29 October 2016.

<sup>249</sup> ‘Mother’s plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them’, *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016; ‘Cambridge politics graduate who was massive fan of the Twilight saga disappears after her jihadist husband is banned from the UK for joining ISIS in Syria’, *Daily Mail*, 29 October 2014.

<sup>250</sup> ‘Schoolboy jihadi gets seven years for helping ISIS terror cell’, *Court News*, 26 August 2016.

<sup>251</sup> ‘Manchester terror suspect “living freely in Denmark”’, *BBC News*, 21 May 2015; ‘Schoolboy jihadi gets seven years for helping ISIS terror cell’, *Court News*, 26 August 2016.

<sup>252</sup> ‘Terror suspect from Manchester has financial assets frozen’, *Manchester Evening News*, 21 November 2014.

<sup>253</sup> ‘Cambridge politics graduate who was massive fan of the Twilight saga disappears after her jihadist husband is banned from the UK for joining ISIS in Syria’, *Daily Mail*, 29 October 2016.

<sup>254</sup> ‘Terror suspect from Manchester has financial assets frozen’, *Manchester Evening News*, 21 November 2014.

<sup>255</sup> ‘Schoolboy jihadi gets seven years for helping ISIS terror cell’, *Court News*, 26 August 2016.

<sup>256</sup> ‘Jihad husband of brainbox Brit banned’, *The Sun*, 29 October 2014, available at: [www.thesun.co.uk/archives/news/460611/jihad-husband-of-brainbox-brit-banned/](http://www.thesun.co.uk/archives/news/460611/jihad-husband-of-brainbox-brit-banned/), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>257</sup> ‘Terror suspect from Manchester has financial assets frozen’, *Manchester Evening News*, 21 November 2014.

<sup>258</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>259</sup> ‘Jihad husband of brainbox Brit banned’, *The Sun*, 29 October 2014.

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**Education:** Mechanical Engineering, University of Leeds [suspected]<sup>261</sup>

**Means of travel:** Attempted to travel by plane to Turkey [21 November 2013], but stopped. Flew to Turkey the following day [22 November 2013]<sup>262</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 21<sup>263</sup>

**Network:** Manchester Islamic State travellers<sup>264</sup>

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Islamic State [IS]<sup>265</sup>

**Known associates:** Anil Khalil Raoufi [Manchester IS traveller]; Mohammad Azzam Javeed [Manchester IS traveller]; Raphael Hostey [Manchester IS traveller];<sup>266</sup> Jamshed Javeed [Mohammad Javeed's older brother; convicted for attempting to travel to join IS;<sup>267</sup> helped to fund Hassan's travel];<sup>268</sup> Abdullahi Ahmed Jama Fara [aided Hassan's travel];<sup>269</sup> A level student jailed in August 2016 for helping Hassan];<sup>270</sup> Ahmed Halane [Brother of Zahra and Salma Halane; al-Shabaab; IS (alleged)]<sup>271</sup>

**Known to the authorities:** Yes [stopped at airport on 21 November and laptop seized]<sup>272</sup>

**Status:** Believed to be living in Denmark<sup>273</sup>

### AQSA MAHMOOD (UMM LAYTH)<sup>274</sup>

Aqsa Mahmood was studying Diagnostic Radiography at Glasgow Caledonian University<sup>275</sup> when she travelled to join Islamic State in November 2013.<sup>276</sup> She travelled through Turkey accompanied by a Canadian woman known as "Umm Haritha",<sup>277</sup> and is now believed to be working for the al-Khansaa brigade, an all-women group enforcing Sharia law for Islamic State.<sup>278</sup>

A former schoolfriend of Mahmood's said, "She wasn't different. She got on with everybody,"<sup>279</sup> while her parents described her as "well integrated into society".<sup>280</sup> Mahmood attended the all-girls Craigholme School, a private school in Glasgow.<sup>281</sup> According to her friends, she was interested in pop music and Harry Potter, and became more involved with religion at around 15.<sup>282</sup> During this period she "began wearing the hijab... [and] ... buying religious books", as well as attending religious classes and discussing Muslim thought online.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> 'Mother's plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>261</sup> @Nurou, *Twitter*, undated; @Nurou, *Twitter*, 22 August 2012. Screenshots of all activity archived by the Henry Jackson Society.

<sup>262</sup> 'Mother's plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>263</sup> 'Nur Hassan - Who are Britain's jihadists?', *BBC News*, 10 October 2016, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>264</sup> 'Mother's plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>265</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>266</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>267</sup> 'Teacher Jamshed Javeed jailed for Syria "jihad" plan', *BBC News*, 5 March 2015.

<sup>268</sup> 'Mother's plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>269</sup> 'Schoolboy jihadi gets seven years for helping ISIS terror cell', *Court News*, 26 August 2016.

<sup>270</sup> 'A-level jihadi Abdullahi Ahmed Jama Farah jailed for helping friend go to Syria', *ITV News*, 26 August 2016.

<sup>271</sup> 'Manchester terror suspect "living freely in Denmark"', *BBC News*, 21 May 2015; 'Twin girls who ran away to Syria were star pupils with 28 GCSEs between them', *Manchester Evening News*, 9 July 2014.

<sup>272</sup> 'Nur Hassan - Who are Britain's jihadists?', *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>273</sup> 'Schoolboy jihadi gets seven years for helping ISIS terror cell', *Court News*, 26 August 2016.

<sup>274</sup> 'Aqsa Mahmood - Who are Britain's jihadists?' *BBC News*, 10 October 2016, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>275</sup> 'Scottish schoolgirl abandons university course to join fanatical Islamic State jihadists fighting in Syria', *Daily Record*, 2 September 2014, available at: [www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/scottish-schoolgirl-abandons-university-course-4150066](http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/scottish-schoolgirl-abandons-university-course-4150066), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>276</sup> 'Target list of British Islamic state jihadis', *Sky News*, 13 November 2015.

<sup>277</sup> 'Aqsa Mahmood: how did Scot become jihadi bride in Syria?' *The Week*, 4 September 2014, available at: [www.theweek.co.uk/people/islamic-state/60274/aqsa-mahmood-how-did-scot-become-jihadi-bride-in-syria](http://www.theweek.co.uk/people/islamic-state/60274/aqsa-mahmood-how-did-scot-become-jihadi-bride-in-syria), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>278</sup> 'Target list of British Islamic state jihadis', *Sky News*, 13 November 2015.

<sup>279</sup> 'Scottish schoolgirl abandons university course to join fanatical Islamic State jihadists fighting in Syria', *Daily Record*, 2 September 2014.

<sup>280</sup> 'Aqsa Mahmood: how did Scot become jihadi bride in Syria?' *The Week*, 4 September 2014.

<sup>281</sup> 'Parents urge "bedroom radical" Aqsa Mahmood to return home', *Channel 4 News*, 3 September 2014 [video: 1:28-1:32], available at: [www.channel4.com/news/aqsa-mahmood-parents-syria-terrorism-islamic-state-glasgow-isis](http://www.channel4.com/news/aqsa-mahmood-parents-syria-terrorism-islamic-state-glasgow-isis), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>282</sup> 'Aqsa Mahmood: how did Scot become jihadi bride in Syria?' *The Week*, 4 September 2014.

<sup>283</sup> 'Scottish schoolgirl abandons university course to join fanatical Islamic State jihadists fighting in Syria', *Daily Record*, 2 September 2014.

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After beginning her degree, Mahmood began dressing more conservatively and asked if she could wear a niqab. Her mother said while she forbade it, she was not concerned because she was happy her daughter was not interested in parties or boys.<sup>284</sup> Mahmood also reportedly spent time in her bedroom communicating with others on extremist forums.<sup>285</sup> In an official statement released around a year after her disappearance, her parents described her as a “bedroom radical” who had become “brainwashed and deluded”. According to the family’s solicitor, no clerics or family members could have influenced her,<sup>286</sup> and her parents were only aware that their daughter was “angry and frustrated at the loss of innocent life in the Middle East”.<sup>287</sup>

However, following the February 2016 conviction of Adeel Ulhaq for helping Aseel Muthana travel to Syria to join his brother,<sup>288</sup> Mahmood’s family claimed Ulhaq had groomed and radicalised Mahmood over the internet before she went to university. After her parents discovered the contact between Ulhaq and Mahmood her father intervened, telling Ulhaq to cease contact, but Mahmood ran away to see Ulhaq. The two families met at Huddersfield Central Mosque, where Aqsa told them she wished to marry Ulhaq before agreeing to return home. Subsequently her mother took measures, confiscating her children’s phones overnight and checking Mahmood’s phone, but she did not know how to access her daughter’s social media accounts. When Mahmood went missing in November 2013, her parents were told by a university friend that Mahmood had travelled to Syria.<sup>289</sup>

Once in Syria, Mahmood married an Islamic State fighter.<sup>290</sup> She wrote a guide advising female recruits on what they should bring to Syria and has been described as “one of the main recruiters” of women for Islamic State.<sup>291</sup> Shemima Begum, one of three young girls from Bethnal Green who left for Syria, reportedly contacted Mahmood through social media.<sup>292</sup> Mahmood has also used her Twitter account to encourage terrorism,<sup>293</sup> and was placed on the UN sanctions list in September 2015.<sup>294</sup>

**Gender:** Female

**Born in UK:** Yes [b. Glasgow, Scotland] [DOB: 11 May 1994]<sup>295</sup>

**Nationality:** British<sup>296</sup>

**Ancestry:** British-Pakistani<sup>297</sup>

**Place of residence:** Pollockshields, Glasgow, Scotland<sup>298</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Living at family home<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> ‘Heartbroken and hopeless: Parents of Scottish jihadi bride Aqsa Mahmood tell of their devastation at losing her to ISIS brainwashing’, *Daily Mail*, 22 February 2016, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3457741/Heartbroken-hopeless-Parents-Scottish-jihadi-bride-Aqsa-Mahmood-tell-devastation-losing-ISIS-brainwashing.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3457741/Heartbroken-hopeless-Parents-Scottish-jihadi-bride-Aqsa-Mahmood-tell-devastation-losing-ISIS-brainwashing.html), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>285</sup> ‘Aqsa Mahmood: how did Scot become jihadi bride in Syria?’ *The Week*, 4 September 2014.

<sup>286</sup> ‘Parents urge “bedroom radical” Aqsa Mahmood to return home’, *Channel 4 News*, 3 September 2014.

<sup>287</sup> ‘Aqsa Mahmood: how did Scot become jihadi bride in Syria?’ *The Week*, 4 September 2014.

<sup>288</sup> ‘Three men found guilty of helping teenage jihadi travel from UK to Syria’, *Guardian*, 10 February 2016.

<sup>289</sup> ‘Heartbroken and hopeless: Parents of Scottish jihadi bride Aqsa Mahmood tell of their devastation at losing her to ISIS brainwashing’, *Daily Mail*, 22 February 2016.

<sup>290</sup> ‘Aqsa Mahmood: how did Scot become jihadi bride in Syria?’ *The Week*, 4 September 2014.

<sup>291</sup> ‘Runaway British Jihadi bride writes shocking suitcase checklist for schoolgirls wanting to join ISIS’, *Daily Mirror*, 2 August 2015, available at: [www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/runaway-british-jihadi-bride-writes-6179441](http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/runaway-british-jihadi-bride-writes-6179441), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>292</sup> ‘ISIS: Scots jihadi Aqsa Mahmood’s parents call her a “disgrace” over claims she helped recruit missing girls to Islamic State’, *Daily Record*, 21 February 2015, available at: [www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/isis-scots-jihadist-aqsa-mahmoods-5206508](http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/isis-scots-jihadist-aqsa-mahmoods-5206508), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>293</sup> ‘Target list of British Islamic state jihadis’, *Sky News*, 13 November 2015.

<sup>294</sup> ‘Glasgow jihadist Aqsa Mahmood on UN sanctions list’, *Scotsman*, 29 September 2015, available at: [www.scotsman.com/news/politics/glasgow-jihadist-aqsa-mahmood-on-un-sanction-list-1-3901304](http://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/glasgow-jihadist-aqsa-mahmood-on-un-sanction-list-1-3901304), last visited: 6 March 2017.

<sup>295</sup> ‘Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/1815’, European Commission, 8 October 2015.

<sup>296</sup> ‘Runaway British Jihadi bride writes shocking suitcase checklist for schoolgirls wanting to join ISIS’, *Daily Mirror*, 2 August 2015.

<sup>297</sup> ‘Parents urge “bedroom radical” Aqsa Mahmood to return home’, *Channel 4 News*, 3 September 2014.

<sup>298</sup> ‘ISIS: Scots jihadi Aqsa Mahmood’s parents call her a “disgrace” over claims she helped recruit missing girls to Islamic State’, *Daily Record*, 21 February 2015.

<sup>299</sup> ‘Runaway British Jihadi bride writes shocking suitcase checklist for schoolgirls wanting to join ISIS’, *Daily Mirror*, 2 August 2015.

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**Education:** Diagnostic Radiography, Glasgow Caledonian University; Shawlands Academy; Craigholme School, Glasgow<sup>300</sup>

**Means of travel:** Unspecified, entered via Turkey [November 2013]<sup>301</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 20<sup>302</sup>

**Network:** Two-person travel cell<sup>303</sup>

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Islamic State [IS]<sup>304</sup>

**Known associates:** “Umm Haritha” [Canadian woman; travel companion; IS];<sup>305</sup> Adeel Ulhaq [former boyfriend, convicted in February 2016 for helping Aseel Muthana travel to Syria]<sup>306</sup>

**Known to the authorities:** No

**Status:** Unknown<sup>307</sup>

### NASSER MUTHANA (ABU MUTHANNA AL YEMENI)<sup>308</sup>

Nasser Muthana was a student at St David’s College in Cardiff<sup>309</sup> and was either studying, or had been offered a place to study, Medicine at university<sup>310</sup> when he travelled to Syria to join Islamic State in November 2013.<sup>311</sup> He was later filmed alongside 16 other fighters beheading Syrian soldiers,<sup>312</sup> and featured in a propaganda video alongside fellow jihadists Reyaad Khan and Ruhul Amin.<sup>313</sup> He was wrongly reported to have been killed in May 2015, and his current status is unknown.<sup>314</sup>

Muthana’s father claimed his son had been radicalised at a local mosque,<sup>315</sup> and both Muthana and Reyaad Khan (who had been in the same year as Muthana at Cathays High School<sup>316</sup>) attended the al-Manar Centre in Cardiff.<sup>317</sup> A frequent speaker at the mosque was Muhammed Mustafa al-Muqri, allegedly connected to the proscribed terrorist organisation *al-Gamaa al-Islamiya*.<sup>318</sup> Mohammed al-Arifi,

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<sup>300</sup> ‘Scottish schoolgirl abandons university course to join fanatical Islamic State jihadists fighting in Syria’, *Daily Record*, 2 September 2014.

<sup>301</sup> ‘Parents urge “bedroom radical” Aqsa Mahmood to return home’, *Channel 4 News*, 3 September 2014 [video: video 1: 11–1:20].

<sup>302</sup> ‘Aqsa Mahmood – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’ *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>303</sup> ‘Aqsa Mahmood: how did Scot become jihadi bride in Syria?’ *The Week*, 4 September 2014.

<sup>304</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>305</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>306</sup> ‘Extremist’s “gay” chat kept secret to protect his rights: Lawyers tried to ban mention of “Welsh Cutie” because they feared he could be killed by ISIS over his sexuality’, *Daily Mail*, 10 February 2016, available at: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3440506/Muslim-trio-face-jail-helping-17-year-old-jihadi-follow-big-brother-Cardiff-Syria-fight-ISIS.html>, last visited: 7 March 2017; ‘Three men found guilty of helping teenage jihadi travel from UK to Syria’, *Guardian*, 10 February 2016.

<sup>307</sup> ‘Aqsa Mahmood – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’ *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>308</sup> ‘Nasser Muthana – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’ *BBC News*, 10 October 2016, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>309</sup> ‘Claims Cardiff jihadi Nasser Muthana has been killed fighting for IS in Syria are “categorically untrue”’, *Wales Online*, 7 May 2015, available at: [www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/reports-cardiff-jihadist-nasser-muthana-9199678](http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/reports-cardiff-jihadist-nasser-muthana-9199678), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>310</sup> ‘Extremist’s “gay” chat kept secret to protect his rights: Lawyers tried to ban mention of “Welsh Cutie” because they feared he could be killed by ISIS over his sexuality’, *Daily Mail*, 11 February 2016; ‘The brilliant brothers who left British suburb for jihad in Syria’, *Daily Telegraph*, 21 June 2014, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/10917357/The-brilliant-brothers-who-left-British-suburb-for-jihad-in-Syria.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/10917357/The-brilliant-brothers-who-left-British-suburb-for-jihad-in-Syria.html), last visited: 7 March 2016.

<sup>311</sup> ‘Nasser Muthana – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’ *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>312</sup> ‘Extremist’s “gay” chat kept secret to protect his rights: Lawyers tried to ban mention of “Welsh Cutie” because they feared he could be killed by ISIS over his sexuality’, *Daily Mail*, 11 February 2016.

<sup>313</sup> ‘Teenager who boasted of “dying for the cause” after joining his brother in fighting for ISIS in Syria becomes fifth British jihadi added to UN sanctions list’, *Daily Mail*, 1 October 2015, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3255770/Teenager-boasted-dying-cause-joining-brother-fighting-ISIS-fifth-British-jihadi-added-sanctions-list.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3255770/Teenager-boasted-dying-cause-joining-brother-fighting-ISIS-fifth-British-jihadi-added-sanctions-list.html), last visited: 7 March 2016.

<sup>314</sup> ‘Claims Cardiff jihadi Nasser Muthana has been killed fighting for IS in Syria are “categorically untrue”’, *Wales Online*, 7 May 2015.

<sup>315</sup> ‘Target list of British Islamic State jihadis’, *Sky News*, 13 November 2015, available at: <http://news.sky.com/story/target-list-of-british-islamic-state-jihadis-10339712>, last visited: 7 March 2016.

<sup>316</sup> ‘British jihadi may have been radicalised by terror plot neighbours in Cardiff’, *The Times*, 23 June 2014, available at: [www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/article4127485.ece](http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/article4127485.ece), last visited: 7 March 2016.

<sup>317</sup> ‘Revealed: The British jihadist who swapped boozing for terror – and the schoolboy charity fundraisers who are waging war for ISIS’, *Daily Mail*, 23 June 2014, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2666421/British-jihadist-swapped-boozing-football-terror-fresh-faced-schoolboys-grew-call-Sharia-law-Iraq-Syria.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2666421/British-jihadist-swapped-boozing-football-terror-fresh-faced-schoolboys-grew-call-Sharia-law-Iraq-Syria.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>318</sup> ‘The British jihadist who swapped boozing for terror – and the schoolboy charity fundraisers who are waging war for ISIS’, *Daily Mail*, 23 June 2014; ‘Proscribed Terrorist Organisations’, Home Office, 16 December 2016, available at: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/578385/201612\\_Proscription.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/578385/201612_Proscription.pdf), last visited: 7 March 2017, p. 6.

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banned from the UK in June 2014,<sup>319</sup> also spoke at the al-Manar Centre in 2012.<sup>320</sup> Muthana's father believes Nasser and his brother, Aseel, were "brainwashed" after attending the centre. Another source with knowledge of the community claimed the young men were "groomed" at the centre and attended lessons which facilitated their recruitment.<sup>321</sup>

Muthana's father has also suggested the two brothers had attended "pop-up" meetings held in Cardiff at venues such as a local leisure centre. He claimed extremists were distributing leaflets to Muslims in Cardiff in order to encourage young men to travel to Syria, and were holding meetings in restaurants and private houses.<sup>322</sup> According to an investigation by *The Sunday Times*, Nasser and Khan were involved with Supporters of Tawheed, a front group for the proscribed organisation al-Muhajiroun. After concerns were raised by local Muslim leaders in January 2012, Cardiff City Council and South Wales Police stopped the group from meeting in a community hall.<sup>323</sup>

According to leaked Islamic State documentation, Nasser Muthana was recommended by Omar Bakri Mohammed,<sup>324</sup> the former leader of al-Muhajiroun.<sup>325</sup> Muthana continued to contact people from Cardiff while he was in Syria, with children from the Muslim community receiving messages from him via Whatsapp.<sup>326</sup> He was also apparently part of a broader group, and two friends of his were arrested on suspicion of receiving terrorist training after they were thought to have returned from Syria, and then were released without charge.<sup>327</sup>

Despite these claims, a former Cardiff councillor has denied that men in Cardiff were radicalised in mosques but rather that their recruitment occurred online. According to the imam of South Wales Islamic Centre, the two brothers were "normal teenagers" who went through a "strange period". During this period the two brothers, particularly Nasser, began to express "political views".<sup>328</sup> A trustee of the Centre claimed that the internet was responsible for the men becoming brainwashed, and insisted that the mosque was against people travelling to Syria and becoming involved in violence.<sup>329</sup>

**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** Yes [b. Cardiff, Wales] [DOB: 29 April 1994]<sup>330</sup>

**Nationality:** British<sup>331</sup>

**Ancestry:** British-Yemini<sup>332</sup>

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<sup>319</sup> 'Britain bans Saudi cleric who supports jihad in Syria', *Reuters*, 25 June 2014, available at: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-islam-saudi-cleric-idUKKBN0F024R20140625>, last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>320</sup> 'The British jihadist who swapped boozing for terror - and the schoolboy charity fundraisers who are waging war for ISIS', *Daily Mail*, 23 June 2014.

<sup>321</sup> 'Banned cleric preached at mosque where jihadi brothers worshipped', *Daily Telegraph*, 23 June 2014, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/10919216/Banned-cleric-preached-at-mosque-where-jihadi-brothers-worshipped.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/10919216/Banned-cleric-preached-at-mosque-where-jihadi-brothers-worshipped.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>322</sup> 'British teenager, 17, fighting jihad in Syria with his brother "was leader of gun-toting gang which terrorised white children on streets of Cardiff"', *Daily Mail*, 23 June 2014, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2665707/British-teenager-17-fighting-jihad-Syria-brother-leader-gun-toting-gang-terrorised-white-children-streets-Cardiff.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2665707/British-teenager-17-fighting-jihad-Syria-brother-leader-gun-toting-gang-terrorised-white-children-streets-Cardiff.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>323</sup> 'Cardiff jihadis: new police raids over suspected Syria links', *Daily Telegraph*, 28 June 2014, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/10933250/Cardiff-jihadis-new-police-raids-over-suspected-Syria-links.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/10933250/Cardiff-jihadis-new-police-raids-over-suspected-Syria-links.html), last visited: 7 March 2017; 'Welsh jihadists had links to banned groups', *The Times*, 26 June 2014, available at: [www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/crime/article4130605.ece](http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/crime/article4130605.ece), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>324</sup> 'Nasser Muthana - Who are Britain's jihadists?' *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>325</sup> 'Cleric Bakri barred from Britain', *BBC News*, 12 August 2005, available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4144792.stm>, last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>326</sup> 'Banned cleric preached at mosque where jihadi brothers worshipped', *Daily Telegraph*, 23 June 2014.

<sup>327</sup> 'British jihadi may have been radicalised by terror plot neighbours in Cardiff', *The Times*, 23 June 2014.

<sup>328</sup> 'British teenager, 17, fighting jihad in Syria with his brother "was leader of gun-toting gang which terrorised white children on streets of Cardiff"', *Daily Mail*, 23 June 2014.

<sup>329</sup> 'Banned cleric preached at mosque where jihadi brothers worshipped', *Daily Telegraph*, 23 June 2014.

<sup>330</sup> 'Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/1815', European Commission, 8 October 2015, available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32015R1815>, last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>331</sup> 'Syria drone strike: My sons will be next, says father of two British jihadists Nasser and Aseel Muthana', *Daily Telegraph*, 8 September 2015, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/11851000/Syria-drone-strike-My-sons-will-be-next-says-father-of-two-British-jihadists-Nasser-and-Aseel-Muthana.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/11851000/Syria-drone-strike-My-sons-will-be-next-says-father-of-two-British-jihadists-Nasser-and-Aseel-Muthana.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>332</sup> 'The Hit List: Names in the Frame', *Independent*, 9 September 2015.



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**Place of residence:** Cardiff, South Glamorgan, Wales<sup>333</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Living at family home<sup>334</sup>

**Education:** Medicine, unspecified university [disputed – attended or place offered];<sup>335</sup> St David's College, Cardiff; St Mary the Virgin Church in Wales Primary School, Butetown, Cardiff<sup>336</sup>

**Means of travel:** Travelled by train from Cardiff to Coventry, and then to Gatwick airport; travelled by plane to Istanbul, Turkey; crossed into Syria [November 2013]<sup>337</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 20<sup>338</sup>

**Network:** Cardiff Islamic State travellers<sup>339</sup>

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Islamic State [IS];<sup>340</sup> al-Muhajiroun<sup>341</sup>

**Known associates:** Aseel Muthana [younger brother; IS];<sup>342</sup> Reyaad Khan [former school friend; IS]; Ruhul Amin [IS];<sup>343</sup> Sajid Idris [Supporters of Tawheed – al-Muhajiroun; suspected]<sup>344</sup>

**Known to the authorities:** No

**Status:** Unknown<sup>345</sup>

### ASEEL MUTHANA (ABU FARISS)<sup>346</sup>

Aseel Muthana was studying for his A levels at Fitzalan High School in Cardiff<sup>347</sup> when he followed his older brother, Nasser, to Syria to fight for Islamic State in February 2014.<sup>348</sup> Aseel Muthana was able to leave despite his parents hiding his passport, and lied about his age to procure another.<sup>349</sup> Once in Syria, Aseel Muthana became a prolific recruiter,<sup>350</sup> and he and his brother were added to the United Nations sanctions list in September 2015.<sup>351</sup>

According to their father, Nasser and Aseel began to behave differently after they started to attend the al-Manar Centre. Their father said, "Some of it must be on the internet, but it must also be the radical sheikhs who come to Britain to do this."<sup>352</sup> A frequent speaker at the mosque was Muhammed Mustafa

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<sup>333</sup> 'British teenager, 17, fighting jihad in Syria with his brother "was leader of gun-toting gang which terrorised white children on streets of Cardiff"', *Daily Mail*, 23 June 2014.

<sup>334</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>335</sup> 'Extremist's "gay" chat kept secret to protect his rights: Lawyers tried to ban mention of "Welsh Cutie" because they feared he could be killed by ISIS over his sexuality', *Daily Mail*, 11 February 2016; 'The brilliant brothers who left British suburb for jihad in Syria', *Daily Telegraph*, 21 June 2014.

<sup>336</sup> 'Claims Cardiff jihadi Nasser Muthana has been killed fighting for IS in Syria are "categorically untrue"', *Wales Online*, 7 May 2015.

<sup>337</sup> 'The brilliant brothers who left British suburb for jihad in Syria', *Daily Telegraph*, 21 June 2014; 'Nasser Muthana – Who are Britain's jihadists?' *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>338</sup> 'Nasser Muthana – Who are Britain's jihadists?' *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>339</sup> 'The British jihadist who swapped boozing for terror – and the schoolboy charity fundraisers who are waging war for ISIS', *Daily Mail*, 23 June 2014.

<sup>340</sup> 'Nasser Muthana – Who are Britain's jihadists?' *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>341</sup> 'Welsh jihadists had links to banned groups', *The Times*, 26 June 2014.

<sup>342</sup> 'Extremist's "gay" chat kept secret to protect his rights: Lawyers tried to ban mention of "Welsh Cutie" because they feared he could be killed by ISIS over his sexuality', *Daily Mail*, 11 February 2016.

<sup>343</sup> 'Teenager who boasted of "dying for the cause" after joining his brother in fighting for ISIS in Syria becomes fifth British jihadi added to UN sanctions list', *Daily Mail*, 1 October 2015.

<sup>344</sup> 'Cardiff jihadis: new police raids over suspected Syria links', *Daily Telegraph*, 28 June 2014.

<sup>345</sup> 'Claims Cardiff jihadi Nasser Muthana has been killed fighting for IS in Syria are "categorically untrue"', *Wales Online*, 7 May 2015.

<sup>346</sup> 'Aseel Muthana – Who are Britain's jihadists?' *BBC News*, 10 October 2016, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985), last visited: 7 March 2016.

<sup>347</sup> 'A council has rejected former teacher's claims children are being radicalised at Cardiff secondary school', *Wales Online*, 17 May 2016, available at: [www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/fitzalan-radicalised-cardiff-school-teenager-11303295](http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/fitzalan-radicalised-cardiff-school-teenager-11303295), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>348</sup> 'Extremist's "gay" chat kept secret to protect his rights: Lawyers tried to ban mention of "Welsh Cutie" because they feared he could be killed by ISIS over his sexuality', *Daily Mail*, 11 February 2016; 'Aseel Muthana – Who are Britain's jihadists?' *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>349</sup> 'British jihadi may have been radicalised by terror plot neighbours in Cardiff', *The Times*, 23 June 2014.

<sup>350</sup> 'Teenager who boasted of "dying for the cause" after joining his brother in fighting for ISIS in Syria becomes fifth British jihadi added to UN sanctions list', *Daily Mail*, 1 October 2015.

<sup>351</sup> 'UK jihadist Aseel Muthana added to UN sanctions list', *BBC News*, 30 September 2015, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-34408406](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-34408406), last visited: 7 March 2016.

<sup>352</sup> 'British jihadi may have been radicalised by terror plot neighbours in Cardiff', *The Times*, 23 June 2014.

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al-Muqri, allegedly connected to the proscribed terrorist organisation *al-Gamaa al-Islamiya*.<sup>353</sup> Mohammed al-Arifi, banned from the UK in 2014,<sup>354</sup> also spoke at the al-Manar Centre in 2012.<sup>355</sup> Muthana's father believes Nasser and Aseel were "brainwashed" after attending the centre. Another source with knowledge of the community claimed the young men were "groomed" at the centre and attended lessons which facilitated their recruitment.<sup>356</sup>

Aseel has been described as a "senior member" of a Cardiff-based gang that was involved in violent attacks, allegedly sometimes selecting victims based on race.<sup>357</sup> A former teacher at Fitzalan School reported an atmosphere of extremism, in which girls were "bullied into wearing ... hijab" and teenagers were afraid to listen to Western music. The teacher claimed students at the school with more extreme Muslim views saw terrorists as heroes and their victims as deserving.<sup>358</sup> The school has rejected this description, and the mother of one pupil has said, "I do not know and have not experienced any difficulties being swept under the carpet," and that she did not know of anyone who had witnessed the behaviour described by the former teacher.

The school was attended by Kristen Brekke,<sup>359</sup> however, who was convicted along with two other men in February 2016 for helping Muthana travel to join Islamic State. The two teenagers had worked together at an ice-cream shop in Cardiff. Brekke allowed Muthana to use his computer to carry out research relating to his travel and bought combat clothes for him.

The two other men were Adeel Ulhaq and Forhad Rahman. Rahman and Aseel reportedly met in London, and Rahman provided him with the contacts required to get to Syria.<sup>360</sup> The two developed an "intense friendship", leading to the prosecution moving to prevent publication of messages which may have left Aseel's sexuality "open to interpretation".<sup>361</sup> Aseel was introduced to Ulhaq by Rahman, who was connected to the Portsmouth network which included Tuhin Shahensha and Mustakim Jaman, the brothers of Islamic State fighter Ifthekar Jaman. Although the two never met in person, Ulhaq also provided Aseel with contacts and practical assistance to help him enter Syria.<sup>362</sup>

**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** Yes [b. Cardiff, Wales] [DOB: 22 November 1996]<sup>363</sup>

**Nationality:** British<sup>364</sup>

**Ancestry:** British-Yemeni<sup>365</sup>

**Place of residence:** Cardiff, South Glamorgan, Wales<sup>366</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Unspecified

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<sup>353</sup> 'The British jihadist who swapped boozing for terror - and the schoolboy charity fundraisers who are waging war for ISIS', *Daily Mail*, 23 June 2014; Home Office, 'Proscribed Terrorist Organisations', 16 December 2016, p. 6.

<sup>354</sup> 'Britain bans Saudi cleric who supports jihad in Syria', *Reuters*, 25 June 2014.

<sup>355</sup> 'The British jihadist who swapped boozing for terror - and the schoolboy charity fundraisers who are waging war for ISIS', *Daily Mail*, 23 June 2014.

<sup>356</sup> 'Banned cleric preached at mosque where jihadi brothers worshipped', *Daily Telegraph*, 23 June 2014.

<sup>357</sup> 'British teenager, 17, fighting jihad in Syria with his brother "was leader of gun-toting gang which terrorised white children on streets of Cardiff"', *Daily Mail*, 23 June 2014.

<sup>358</sup> 'Shocking story of extremism in class: I taught jihadis at Cardiff school where Rigby's killer is called a hero', *Daily Mail*, 13 October 2016, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3579077/Shocking-story-extremism-class.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3579077/Shocking-story-extremism-class.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>359</sup> 'A council has rejected former teacher's claims children are being radicalised at Cardiff secondary school', *Wales Online*, 17 May 2016.

<sup>360</sup> 'Three men found guilty of helping teenage jihadi travel from UK to Syria', *Guardian*, 10 February 2016, available at: [www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/feb/10/kristen-brekke-adeel-ulhaq-forhad-rahman-guilty-aseel-muthana-syria-isis](http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/feb/10/kristen-brekke-adeel-ulhaq-forhad-rahman-guilty-aseel-muthana-syria-isis), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>361</sup> 'Extremist's "gay" chat kept secret to protect his rights: Lawyers tried to ban mention of "Welsh Cutie" because they feared he could be killed by ISIS over his sexuality', *Daily Mail*, 11 February 2016.

<sup>362</sup> 'Three men found guilty of helping teenage jihadi travel from UK to Syria', *Guardian*, 10 February 2016.

<sup>363</sup> 'Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/1815', European Commission, 8 October 2015.

<sup>364</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>365</sup> 'Syria drone strike: My sons will be next, says father of two British jihadists Nasser and Aseel Muthana', *Daily Telegraph*, 8 September 2015.

<sup>366</sup> 'Nasser Muthana - Who are Britain's jihadists?' *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

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**Education:** A levels, Fitzalan High School, Cardiff; Cathays High School, Cardiff; St Mary the Virgin Church in Wales Primary School, Butetown, Cardiff<sup>367</sup>

**Means of travel:** Travelled by coach from Cardiff to Gatwick Airport;<sup>368</sup> travelled by plane to Larnaca, Cyprus [21 February 2014]; crossed into Syria<sup>369</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 17<sup>370</sup>

**Network:** Cardiff Islamic State travellers<sup>371</sup>

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Islamic State [IS]<sup>372</sup>

**Known associates:** Nasser Muthana [older brother; IS];<sup>373</sup> Kristen Brekke, Adeel Ulhaq, Forhad Rahman [convicted of helping Aseel travel to Syria]<sup>374</sup>

**Known to the authorities:** Unknown [allegedly involved with gang in Cardiff;<sup>375</sup> father claimed his family were being observed by police before Aseel travelled]<sup>376</sup>

**Status:** Unknown<sup>377</sup>

### MOHAMMED JAKIR ALI (ABU HAMZA AL-BRITANI)<sup>378</sup>

Mohammed Jakir Ali had studied Law for only one term at the University of Westminster when, in December 2013, he travelled to join Islamic State in Syria. According to leaked Islamic State documents, Ali asked to become a fighter and suicide bomber. He is thought to have died in a suicide attack around two months after his arrival, and his father was contacted by police in June 2014 to be informed that his son's death had been announced on social media.

According to his father, Ali had mentioned his desire to "join the Syrian people" several times. Growing up he had been interested in football and designer clothing, and reportedly dressed in Western attire. He had grown a beard around the age of 17, before he began attending university.<sup>379</sup> His mother stated after his death that "he had previously told me that many students from his university had gone to Syria or were thinking of doing so".<sup>380</sup>

**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** Unspecified

**Nationality:** British<sup>381</sup>

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<sup>367</sup> 'A council has rejected former teacher's claims children are being radicalised at Cardiff secondary school', *Wales Online*, 17 May 2016; 'The British jihadist who swapped booing for terror - and the schoolboy charity fundraisers who are waging war for ISIS', *Daily Mail*, 23 June 2014.

<sup>368</sup> 'Three men found guilty of helping teenage jihadi travel from UK to Syria', *Guardian*, 10 February 2016.

<sup>369</sup> 'Extremist's "gay" chat kept secret to protect his rights: Lawyers tried to ban mention of "Welsh Cutie" because they feared he could be killed by ISIS over his sexuality', *Daily Mail*, 11 February 2016.

<sup>370</sup> 'Nasser Muthana - Who are Britain's jihadists?' *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>371</sup> 'The British jihadist who swapped booing for terror - and the schoolboy charity fundraisers who are waging war for ISIS', *Daily Mail*, 23 June 2014.

<sup>372</sup> 'Teenager who boasted of "dying for the cause" after joining his brother in fighting for ISIS in Syria becomes fifth British jihadi added to UN sanctions list', *Daily Mail*, 1 October 2015.

<sup>373</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>374</sup> 'Three men found guilty of helping teenage jihadi travel from UK to Syria', *Guardian*, 10 February 2016.

<sup>375</sup> 'British teenager, 17, fighting jihad in Syria with his brother "was leader of gun-toting gang which terrorised white children on streets of Cardiff"', *Daily Mail*, 23 June 2014.

<sup>376</sup> 'Welsh jihadists had links to banned groups', *The Times*, 26 June 2014.

<sup>377</sup> 'Nasser Muthana - Who are Britain's jihadists?' *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>378</sup> 'Mohamed Jakir - Who are Britain's jihadists?', *BBC News*, 10 October 2016, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>379</sup> 'British Isil suicide bomb recruit studied at Jihadi John's university', *Daily Telegraph*, 11 March 2016, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/islamic-state/12191715/British-Isil-suicide-bomb-recruit-studied-at-Jihadi-Johns-university.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/islamic-state/12191715/British-Isil-suicide-bomb-recruit-studied-at-Jihadi-Johns-university.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>380</sup> 'Toasting his A-Levels, the British boy who signed up for Islamic State and died just weeks later', *Daily Mail*, 12 March 2016, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3489609/Toasting-levels-boy-signed-dream-job-suicide-bomber-British-teenager-named-Islamic-State-files-handed-MoS.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3489609/Toasting-levels-boy-signed-dream-job-suicide-bomber-British-teenager-named-Islamic-State-files-handed-MoS.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>381</sup> 'British Isil suicide bomb recruit studied at Jihadi John's university', *Daily Telegraph*, 11 March 2016.

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**Ancestry:** Unspecified

**Place of residence:** Unspecified

**Family/living circumstances:** Living at family home [with parents]<sup>382</sup>

**Education:** Law, University of Westminster<sup>383</sup>

**Means of travel:** Travelled by plane to Turkey; crossed into Islamic State territory [21 December 2013]<sup>384</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 18<sup>385</sup>

**Network:** None

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Islamic State [IS]<sup>386</sup>

**Known associates:** None

**Known to the authorities:** No

**Status:** Deceased [January 2014]<sup>387</sup>

### DAVID SOUAAN

David Souaan was a student of Global Politics and International Relations at Birkbeck, University of London.<sup>388</sup> He was arrested at Heathrow Airport on 31 May 2014 before he could board a flight to Serbia,<sup>389</sup> and was convicted of preparing for acts of terrorism in relation to his intention to travel to Syria. He was sentenced to three years and six months in a young offenders' institution followed by deportation.<sup>390</sup>

Souaan was raised by his Serbian mother and Syrian father, and though raised a Muslim, he only began to practise his religion seriously when he was 17.<sup>391</sup> In December 2013 he travelled with his father to Dier Ezzor, Eastern Syria, to collect the possessions of his grandfather who had been displaced by the conflict.<sup>392</sup> However, the police investigation into Souaan concluded that he had also claimed to have been involved in fighting during these visits.<sup>393</sup>

After his return from Syria, Souaan showed signs of becoming increasingly radicalised. Students in his halls of residence said he showed them pictures of himself in Syria, talked of those he knew who had died in battle, told them of the need to establish an Islamic State,<sup>394</sup> and became judgemental, criticising

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<sup>382</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>383</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>384</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>385</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>386</sup> 'Toasting his A-Levels, the British boy who signed up for Islamic State and died just weeks later', *Daily Mail*, 12 March 2016.

<sup>387</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>388</sup> 'London student jailed over Isis terror plot', *Guardian*, 3 February 2013, available at: [www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/feb/03/london-student-jailed-isis-terror-plot-syria-david-souaan](http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/feb/03/london-student-jailed-isis-terror-plot-syria-david-souaan), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>389</sup> 'Jail for the sobbing Jihadi', *Court News*, 3 February 2015; 'UK student who fought in Syria is jailed', *Daily Mail*, 4 February 2016, available at: [www.pressreader.com/uk/daily-mail/20150204/281629598686953](http://www.pressreader.com/uk/daily-mail/20150204/281629598686953), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>390</sup> 'Student David Souaan jailed for Syria jihad plan', *BBC News*, 3 February 2015, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-31117843](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-31117843), last visited: 7 March 2017; 'UK student who fought in Syria is jailed', *Daily Mail*, 4 February 2016.

<sup>391</sup> 'Student posed with guns because it was cool', *Court News*, 8 December 2014.

<sup>392</sup> 'Student wanted to see black flag of Islam flying in Downing Street', *Court News UK*, 2 December 2014; 'Student posed with guns because it was cool', *Court News*, 8 December 2014.

<sup>393</sup> 'Man found guilty of preparing for acts of terrorism', Metropolitan Police, 3 February 2015, available at: <http://crimeandjustice.co.uk/2014/12/17/man-found-guilty-of-preparing-for-acts-of-terrorism/>, last visited: 7 March 2017; 'London student in terror trial posed with guns to "look cool"', *Evening Standard*, 8 December 2014, available at: [www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/london-student-in-terror-trial-posed-with-guns-to-look-cool-9911581.html](http://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/london-student-in-terror-trial-posed-with-guns-to-look-cool-9911581.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>394</sup> 'UK student who fought in Syria is jailed', *Daily Mail*, 4 February 2016.

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Muslims who consumed alcohol and calling non-Muslims *kuffar* (a derogatory term).<sup>395</sup> Before his arrest he had also begun to distribute *Dawah* [proselytising] leaflets.<sup>396</sup>

Soua'an also attended at least four demonstrations organised by Anjem Choudary when al-Muhajiroun was operating under the name Need4Khilafah.<sup>397</sup> Soua'an filmed himself at a demonstration attended by Choudary, and recorded himself calling for the "flag of Tawheed", referring to the banner which has since become associated with Islamic State, to fly over London.<sup>398</sup> Soua'an was, however, not known to the authorities until he was reported by fellow students.<sup>399</sup> During his trial, Soua'an's defence team argued that he was naive, vulnerable, lonely and isolated, while the judge concluded that Soua'an was immature and "vulnerable to extremist views".<sup>400</sup>

**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** No [b. & r. Serbia;<sup>401</sup> a. UK, September 2012 (visitor's visa extended into a three-year student visa, October 2013)]<sup>402</sup> [DOB 16 June 1994]<sup>403</sup>

**Nationality:** Serbian<sup>404</sup>

**Ancestry:** Serbo-Syrian<sup>405</sup>

**Place of residence:** University of London College Hall student accommodation, Malet Street, London Borough of Camden, Central London<sup>406</sup>

**Family/living circumstances** Living in student accommodation;<sup>407</sup> parents living in (mother's home country) Serbia;<sup>408</sup> extended family (on Syrian father's side) displaced by conflict in Syria and living in Turkey<sup>409</sup>

**Education:** Studying Global Politics and International Relations, Birkbeck, University of London, Camden<sup>410</sup> [disputed start date – September 2012<sup>411</sup>/October 2013];<sup>412</sup> attended an international school in Serbia<sup>413</sup>

**Means of travel:** Unspecified [travelled with his father; December 2013]<sup>414</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 19 [at time of first travel];<sup>415</sup> 19 [age at time of arrest prior to planned travel]<sup>416</sup>

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<sup>395</sup> 'Student who planned to fight for IS jailed', *Sky News*, 3 February 2015, available at: <http://news.sky.com/story/student-who-planned-to-fight-for-is-jailed-10372859>, last visited: 7 March 2017; 'Syria took pics of bodies for "bragging rights"', *Court News*, 4 December 2014.

<sup>396</sup> 'Syria took pics of bodies for "bragging rights"', *Court News*, 4 December 2014.

<sup>397</sup> 'UK student who fought in Syria is jailed', *Daily Mail*, 4 February 2016.

<sup>398</sup> 'Muslim student who wanted black flag of ISIS to fly over Downing Street and had beheading video on his phone is jailed for three and a half years', *Daily Mail*, 3 February 2015, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2937988/Muslim-student-wanted-black-flag-ISIS-fly-Downing-Street-beheading-video-phone-jailed-three-half-years.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2937988/Muslim-student-wanted-black-flag-ISIS-fly-Downing-Street-beheading-video-phone-jailed-three-half-years.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>399</sup> 'Student David Soua'an jailed for Syria jihad plan', *BBC News*, 3 February 2015.

<sup>400</sup> 'London student jailed over Isis terror plot', *Guardian*, 3 February 2013.

<sup>401</sup> 'London student David Soua'an jailed after plotting to fly ISIS flag over Downing Street and join ISIS in Syria', *Christian Today*, 4 February 2015, available at: [www.christiantoday.com/article/london.student.david.soua.an.jailed.after.plotting.to.fly.isis.flag.over.downing.street.and.join.isis.in.syria/47387.html](http://www.christiantoday.com/article/london.student.david.soua.an.jailed.after.plotting.to.fly.isis.flag.over.downing.street.and.join.isis.in.syria/47387.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>402</sup> 'Student who "wanted jihadi flag flying over Downing Street" had horrific video of throat-slitting on his phone', *Daily Mail*, 2 December 2014, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2857552/Student-wanted-jihadi-flag-flying-Downing-Street-horrific-video-throat-slitting-phone.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2857552/Student-wanted-jihadi-flag-flying-Downing-Street-horrific-video-throat-slitting-phone.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>403</sup> 'Man found guilty of preparing for acts of terrorism', Metropolitan Police, 3 February 2015.

<sup>404</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>405</sup> 'London student jailed over Isis terror plot', *Guardian*, 3 February 2013.

<sup>406</sup> 'Student posed with guns because it was cool', *Court News*, 8 December 2014.

<sup>407</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>408</sup> 'Student David Soua'an Jailed after Trying to Join ISIL in Syria', *Daily Telegraph*, 3 February 2015, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/11386271/Student-David-Soua-an-jailed-after-trying-to-join-Isil-in-Syria.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/11386271/Student-David-Soua-an-jailed-after-trying-to-join-Isil-in-Syria.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>409</sup> 'Student posed with guns because it was cool', *Court News*, 8 December 2014.

<sup>410</sup> 'London student jailed over Isis terror plot', *Guardian*, 3 February 2013.

<sup>411</sup> 'Student who "wanted jihadi flag flying over Downing Street" had horrific video of throat-slitting on his phone', *Daily Mail*, 2 December 2014.

<sup>412</sup> 'Not such a tough guy now: Radical Muslim student, 20, who posed with guns and wanted to fly black flag of Islam over Downing Street cries as he is found guilty of planning to fight Jihad in Syria', *Daily Mail*, 17 December 2014, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2877433/Radical-Muslim-student-20-wanted-fly-black-flag-Islam-Downing-street-cries-jury-finds-guilty-planning-fight-Jihad-Syria.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2877433/Radical-Muslim-student-20-wanted-fly-black-flag-Islam-Downing-street-cries-jury-finds-guilty-planning-fight-Jihad-Syria.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>413</sup> 'London student in terror trial posed with guns to "look cool"', *Evening Standard*, 8 December 2014.

<sup>414</sup> 'Student who planned to fight for IS jailed', *Sky News*, 3 February 2015.

<sup>415</sup> 'Man found guilty of preparing for acts of terrorism', Metropolitan Police, 3 February 2015; 'Student who planned to fight for IS jailed', *Sky News*, 3 February 2015.

<sup>416</sup> 'Man found guilty of preparing for acts of terrorism', Metropolitan Police, 3 February 2015; 'Jail for the sobbing Jihadi', *Court News*, 3 February 2015; 'UK student who fought in Syria is jailed', *Daily Mail*, 4 February 2016.

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**Network:** Lone traveller

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Al-Muhajiroun [AM]<sup>417</sup>

**Known associates:** None

**Known to the authorities:** No [brought to attention of police by fellow students]<sup>418</sup>

**Status:** Community licence/deportation<sup>419</sup>

### JAFFAR DEGHAYES

Jaffar Deghayes was a student of City College in Brighton when he travelled to Syria on 26 January 2014 alongside his brother Abdullah and his eldest brother's best friend, Ibrahim Kamara.<sup>420</sup> Kamara, Abdullah and Jaffar Deghayes all followed the eldest Deghayes brother, Amer, who had travelled to Syria in October 2013 on an aid convoy to join Jabhat al-Nusra.<sup>421</sup> Jaffar Deghayes was later killed in a gun battle with Syrian government forces in October 2014.<sup>422</sup>

Jaffar Deghayes and his brothers faced a number of challenges growing up. Leaked police reports claimed the brothers were abused by their father, Abubaker Deghayes, although he denies the accusations. A child protection case conference in November 2010 concluded the four brothers were "subject to actual, emotional and physical harm", but they later retracted their statements and their father claimed the accusations were part of a racist campaign against him.<sup>423</sup>

Abubaker Deghayes has also suggested that the brothers may have developed their extreme views after obtaining information from social media.<sup>424</sup> In 1997, allegations were made that he had been preaching content that could "incite racial unrest" and "reflected strong al-Qaida sympathies",<sup>425</sup> and he is alleged to have fought in the Libyan uprising and travelled to Syria on aid convoys.<sup>426</sup> The brother's uncle, Omar Deghayes, was arrested as an enemy combatant in Pakistan and detained in Guantanamo Bay before being released without charge. On this account, the family were allegedly targeted by racist groups, experiencing bullying, vandalism and assaults. In 2012, social services reported that the racism experienced by the family had eroded their "coping capacities".<sup>427</sup>

Jaffar Deghayes and his brothers became involved with gang crime and had significant contact with social services. While his 2012-2013 school report described him as "well-adjusted", he was later excluded from school and sent to Brighton's Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) following violent behaviour. In 2012, his behaviour deteriorated further, and he was arrested for assault and robbery. In the same year, aged 14, Jaffar was found drunk in the centre of Brighton shouting sexist and threatening abuse,

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<sup>417</sup> 'UK student who fought in Syria is jailed', *Daily Mail*, 4 February 2016.

<sup>418</sup> 'Student David Souaan jailed for Syria jihad plan', *BBC News*, 3 February 2015.

<sup>419</sup> 'UK student who fought in Syria is jailed', *Daily Mail*, 4 February 2016.

<sup>420</sup> 'From Brighton to the battlefield: how four young Britons were drawn to jihad', *Guardian*, 31 March 2016, available at: [www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/mar/31/brighton-to-battlefield-how-four-young-britons-drawn-to-jihad-syria](http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/mar/31/brighton-to-battlefield-how-four-young-britons-drawn-to-jihad-syria), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>421</sup> 'British jihadist Jaffar Deghayes, 17, killed in Syria', *Daily Telegraph*, 28 October 2014, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/11192283/British-jihadist-Jaffar-Deghayes-17-killed-in-Syria.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/11192283/British-jihadist-Jaffar-Deghayes-17-killed-in-Syria.html), last visited: 7 March 2017; 'From Brighton to the battlefield: how four young Britons were drawn to jihad', *Guardian*, 31 March 2016.

<sup>422</sup> 'Jaffar Deghayes - Who are Britain's jihadists?' *BBC News*, 10 October 2016, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>423</sup> 'From Brighton to the battlefield: how four young Britons were drawn to jihad', *Guardian*, 31 March 2016; 'What makes a bunch of teenagers from Brighton go to Syria?' YouTube, 31 March 2016 [4:28], available at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1I6oBmcP00](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1I6oBmcP00), last visited: 27 March 2017.

<sup>424</sup> 'The Rise of British Jihadists in Syria', *Vice*, 27 June 2014 [3:25], available at: [www.vice.com/en\\_uk/video/the-rise-of-british-jihadists-in-syria-454](http://www.vice.com/en_uk/video/the-rise-of-british-jihadists-in-syria-454), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>425</sup> 'From Brighton to the battlefield: how four young Britons were drawn to jihad', *Guardian*, 31 March 2016.

<sup>426</sup> 'A few hundred pounds and a passport got Briton from Brighton seafront to the battlefield in Syria', *ITV News*, 27 June 2014, available at: [www.itv.com/news/2014-06-27/a-few-hundred-pounds-and-a-passport-got-briton-from-brighton-seafront-to-the-battlefront-in-syria/](http://www.itv.com/news/2014-06-27/a-few-hundred-pounds-and-a-passport-got-briton-from-brighton-seafront-to-the-battlefront-in-syria/), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>427</sup> 'From Brighton to the battlefield: how four young Britons were drawn to jihad', *Guardian*, 31 March 2016; 'What makes a bunch of teenagers from Brighton go to Syria?' YouTube, 31 March 2016 [4:10].

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including, “Allah will seek his revenge for me,” and, “Do what you want to me. See what happens when judgement day comes. You will all go to hell.”

However, by 2013 Deghayes’ behaviour had changed. He had begun taking Arabic classes and watching religious lectures online, and had observed Ramadan for the first time. He also allegedly developed strong political views after visiting family in Libya and, according to a youth offender officer, became distant. When he was asked about events in Libya, he replied that “all Americans” were “terrorists”, and was referred to Channel. However, City College, instructed to report any signs of radicalisation, reported that Deghayes appeared to be popular and respectful of women.

In November 2013, it was decided he would not enter the Channel process. In December 2013, police identified a Facebook account associated with him which contained extremist material and images of a gym at the mosque he attended, but this was not investigated further. Just a month later, Deghayes travelled to Syria.<sup>428</sup>

**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** Yes<sup>429</sup>

**Nationality:** British<sup>430</sup>

**Ancestry:** British-Libyan<sup>431</sup>

**Place of residence:** Brighton, East Sussex, South East England; Saltdean, East Sussex, South East England<sup>432</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Unspecified

**Education:** City College, Brighton; Varndean School, Brighton<sup>433</sup>

**Means of travel:** Travelled from Luton Airport to Istanbul, Turkey [26 January 2014]; travelled by bus to Antakya, Turkey; used Bab al-Hawa crossing to enter Jabhat al-Nusra controlled territory, Syria<sup>434</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 16<sup>435</sup>

**Network:** Brighton Syria Travellers Network<sup>436</sup>

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Disputed – Islamic State [IS];<sup>437</sup> Jabhat al-Nusra [JN]<sup>438</sup>

**Known associates:** Amer Deghayes [brother; JN]; Abdullah Deghayes [brother; JN,<sup>439</sup> IS]<sup>440</sup> Ibrahim Kamara [friend, JN]<sup>441</sup>

**Known to the authorities:** Yes [known to social services and the police for petty crime and violence]<sup>442</sup>

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<sup>428</sup> ‘From Brighton to the battlefield: how four young Britons were drawn to jihad’, *Guardian*, 31 March 2016.

<sup>429</sup> ‘A few hundred pounds and a passport got Briton from Brighton seafront to the battlefield in Syria’, *ITV News*, 27 June 2014.

<sup>430</sup> ‘British jihadist Jaffar Deghayes, killed in Syria’, *Daily Telegraph*, 28 October 2014.

<sup>431</sup> ‘A few hundred pounds and a passport got Briton from Brighton seafront to the battlefield in Syria’, *ITV News*, 27 June 2014.

<sup>432</sup> ‘Jaffar Deghayes – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’ *BBC News*, 10 October 2016; ‘From Brighton to the battlefield: how four young Britons were drawn to jihad’, *Guardian*, 31 March 2016.

<sup>433</sup> ‘From Brighton to the battlefield: how four young Britons were drawn to jihad’, *Guardian*, 31 March 2016.

<sup>434</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>435</sup> ‘British jihadist Jaffar Deghayes, killed in Syria’, *Daily Telegraph*, 28 October 2014.

<sup>436</sup> ‘From Brighton to the battlefield: how four young Britons were drawn to jihad’, *Guardian*, 31 March 2016.

<sup>437</sup> ‘Jaffar Deghayes – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’ *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>438</sup> ‘From Brighton to the battlefield: how four young Britons were drawn to jihad’, *Guardian*, 31 March 2016.

<sup>439</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>440</sup> ‘Abdullah Deghayes – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’ *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>441</sup> ‘From Brighton to the battlefield: how four young Britons were drawn to jihad’, *Guardian*, 31 March 2016; ‘Ibrahim Kamara – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’ *BBC News*, 20 October 2016.

<sup>442</sup> ‘From Brighton to the battlefield: how four young Britons were drawn to jihad’, *Guardian*, 31 March 2016.

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**Status:** Deceased [October 2014]<sup>443</sup>

### **RASHED AMANI (ABU MASSOUD AL-KHURASSANI, ABU BAKR AL-KHURASSANI)**

Rashed Amani was studying Business at Coventry University<sup>444</sup> when, in March 2014, he travelled with two friends, Ali Kalantar and Mohammed Hadi, to join Islamic State.<sup>445</sup> His father claimed that family members had travelled to the Turkish-Syria border to find Amani and his travel partners, but they were unable to find them.<sup>446</sup> Amani was reported to have been killed in a drone strike in December 2014.<sup>447</sup>

Amani was raised in Coventry, where he was childhood friends with Kalantar and Hadi. He and Kalantar attended Barr Hill School and Community College in Coventry together.<sup>448</sup> A university friend of Amani's stated that he had shown no signs of radicalisation, had a British girlfriend and never spoke about Islamic State, and that he had seemed normal even in the week before he travelled.<sup>449</sup> However, before Amani travelled, other sources suggest that he had become more religious, grew a beard and regularly prayed at the mosque.<sup>450</sup> His father speculated that Amani had been "brainwashed" by another individual.<sup>451</sup>

Ali Kalantar's sister believed that the imam at the local mosque had told the three Coventry Islamic State travellers to travel to "fight jihad".<sup>452</sup> At least two of the group attended the local mosque where the imam is believed by their parents to have played a role in their radicalisation.<sup>453</sup> However, in leaked Islamic State files, none of the three travellers had filled in the field identifying who had recruited them.<sup>454</sup> After the three men had travelled to join Islamic State, another man who knew them, Zakariya Ashiq from Foleshill, Coventry,<sup>455</sup> attempted to join the group, but was stopped and convicted of preparing for acts of terrorism in May 2015.<sup>456</sup>

**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** No [b. Afghanistan – suspected]<sup>457</sup>

**Nationality:** British<sup>458</sup>

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<sup>443</sup> 'Jaffar Deghayes – Who are Britain's jihadists?', *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>444</sup> 'Second British jihadi from Coventry "is killed by American air strike while fighting for ISIS in Kobane"', *Daily Mail*, 11 December 2014.

<sup>445</sup> 'Second Coventry jihadist reportedly dies in Syria fighting with Isis', *Daily Telegraph*, 11 December 2014, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/11288139/Second-Coventry-jihadist-reportedly-dies-in-Syria-fighting-with-Isil.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/11288139/Second-Coventry-jihadist-reportedly-dies-in-Syria-fighting-with-Isil.html), last visited: 7 March 2017; 'Father: Teenager fighting in Syria was "radicalised by imam"', *BBC News*, 24 June 2014 [video 2:25–4:00], available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-27989893](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-27989893), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>446</sup> 'Father: Teenager fighting in Syria was "radicalised by imam"', *BBC News*, 24 June 2014 [video 2:44–3:13].

<sup>447</sup> 'Rashed Amani – Who are Britain's jihadists?', *BBC News*, 10 October 2016, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>448</sup> 'Second British jihadi from Coventry "is killed by American air strike while fighting for ISIS in Kobane"', *Daily Mail*, 11 December 2014.

<sup>449</sup> 'Leaked ISIS files reveal 3 young men fighting in Syria may have been radicalised in UK city', *Daily Mirror*, 4 May 2016, available at: [www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/leaked-isis-files-reveal-3-7894712](http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/leaked-isis-files-reveal-3-7894712), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>450</sup> 'Father: Teenager fighting in Syria was "radicalised by imam"', *BBC News*, 24 June 2014 [video 3:43].

<sup>451</sup> *ibid.* [video 3:32].

<sup>452</sup> 'Leaked ISIS files reveal 3 young men fighting in Syria may have been radicalised in UK city', *Daily Mirror*, 4 May 2016.

<sup>453</sup> 'Father: Teenager fighting in Syria was "radicalised by imam"', *BBC News*, 24 June 2014 [video 2:05–2:15].

<sup>454</sup> 'Leaked ISIS files reveal 3 young men fighting in Syria may have been radicalised in UK city', *Daily Mirror*, 4 May 2016.

<sup>455</sup> 'Bungling jihadi complained he was forced to "walk across Europe" to reach Isis', *Daily Telegraph*, 27 May 2015, available at:

[www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/11633434/Bungling-jihadi-complained-he-was-forced-to-walk-across-Europe-to-reach-Isil.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/11633434/Bungling-jihadi-complained-he-was-forced-to-walk-across-Europe-to-reach-Isil.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>456</sup> 'Zakariya Ashiq trial: Guilty of trying to join Islamic State', *BBC News*, 26 May 2015, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-coventry-warwickshire-32883230](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-coventry-warwickshire-32883230), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>457</sup> 'Leaked ISIS files reveal 3 young men fighting in Syria may have been radicalised in UK city', *Daily Mirror*, 4 May 2016; 'British ISIS fighter nicknamed Osama bin Bieber seriously injured after deadly airstrike leaves him disabled in Iraq', *Daily Mail*, 27 February 2015, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2972064/British-ISIS-fighter-Osama-bin-Bieber-seriously-injured-air-strike-leaves-disabled-Iraq.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2972064/British-ISIS-fighter-Osama-bin-Bieber-seriously-injured-air-strike-leaves-disabled-Iraq.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>458</sup> 'Second British jihadi from Coventry "is killed by American air strike while fighting for ISIS in Kobane"', *Daily Mail*, 11 December 2014.



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**Ancestry:** Afghan<sup>459</sup>

**Place of residence:** Foleshill, Coventry, West Midlands, England<sup>460</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Unspecified

**Education:** Business, Coventry University; formerly, Barr Hill School and Community College, Coventry.<sup>461</sup>

**Means of travel:** Travelled from Coventry to Birmingham; travelled by plane to Frankfurt and from Frankfurt to Istanbul, Turkey; crossed the border into Syria and travelled to Aleppo [March 2014]<sup>462</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 17-18<sup>463</sup>

**Network:** Coventry Islamic State travellers<sup>464</sup>

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Islamic State [IS]<sup>465</sup>

**Known associates:** Ali Kalantar [travel companion; Coventry IS traveller];<sup>466</sup> Mohammed Hadi [travel companion; Coventry IS traveller];<sup>467</sup> Zahra Halane [IS; lived in the same house in Manbej, Syria, and married to Ali Kalantar]; Salma Halane [IS; lived in the same house in Manbej, Syria];<sup>468</sup> Zakariya Ashiq [A level student from Foleshill, Coventry, convicted for attempting to join Rashid and friends in Syria]<sup>469</sup>

**Known to the authorities:** No

**Status:** Deceased [December 2014]<sup>470</sup>

### ALI KALANTAR (ALI AL FARSI)<sup>471</sup>

Ali Kalantar was studying for his A levels at Barr Hill School and Community College in Coventry<sup>472</sup> when, in March 2014, he travelled with two friends, Rashed Amani and Mohammed Hadi, to join Islamic State.<sup>473</sup> He and Amani had been childhood friends, and both had attended the same school, although Amani had since moved on to Coventry University, where Kalantar also aspired to attend.<sup>474</sup>

Kalantar's parents claimed he had received five university offers,<sup>475</sup> and that he had at one time attempted to become a model before becoming increasingly religious.<sup>476</sup> His sister recalled that he had changed and had begun to pray five times a day, but his family had not suspected that he was becoming radicalised. She alleged that he was radicalised by the imam at the mosque which he attended, who had told the three Coventry Islamic State travellers to travel to "fight jihad".<sup>477</sup>

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<sup>459</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>460</sup> 'Leaked ISIS files reveal 3 young men fighting in Syria may have been radicalised in UK city', *Daily Mirror*, 4 May 2016.

<sup>461</sup> 'Second British jihadi from Coventry "is killed by American air strike while fighting for ISIS in Kobane"', *Daily Mail*, 11 December 2014.

<sup>462</sup> 'Father: Teenager fighting in Syria was "radicalised by imam"', *BBC News*, 24 June 2014 [video 2:25]; 'Second Coventry jihadist reportedly dies in Syria fighting with Isis', *Daily Telegraph*, 11 December 2014.

<sup>463</sup> 'Father: Teenager fighting in Syria was "radicalised by imam"', *BBC News*, 24 June 2014.

<sup>464</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>465</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>466</sup> *ibid.* [video 2:25].

<sup>467</sup> 'Leaked ISIS files reveal 3 young men fighting in Syria may have been radicalised in UK city', *Daily Mirror*, 4 May 2016.

<sup>468</sup> 'Second British jihadi from Coventry "is killed by American air strike while fighting for ISIS in Kobane"', *Daily Mail*, 11 December 2014.

<sup>469</sup> 'Coventry pair arrested on suspicion of Syria-related terrorism offences re-bailed by police', *Coventry Telegraph*, 10 March 2016; 'Bungling jihadi complained he was forced to "walk across Europe" to reach Isis', *Daily Telegraph*, 27 May 2015.

<sup>470</sup> 'Rashed Amani - Who are Britain's jihadists?', *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>471</sup> 'Ali Kalantar - Who are Britain's jihadists?', *BBC News*, 10 October 2016, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>472</sup> 'Second British jihadi from Coventry "is killed by American air strike while fighting for ISIS in Kobane"', *Daily Mail*, 11 December 2014.

<sup>473</sup> 'Second Coventry jihadist reportedly dies in Syria fighting with Isis', *Daily Telegraph*, 11 December 2014; 'Father: Teenager fighting in Syria was "radicalised by imam"', *BBC News*, 24 June 2014 [video 2:25].

<sup>474</sup> 'Second British jihadi from Coventry "is killed by American air strike while fighting for ISIS in Kobane"', *Daily Mail*, 11 December 2014.

<sup>475</sup> 'IS Files: From Coventry to Jihadist Fighters', *Sky News*, 3 May 2016, available at: <http://news.sky.com/story/is-files-from-coventry-to-jihadist-fighters-10268472>, last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>476</sup> 'Father: Teenager fighting in Syria was "radicalised by imam"', *BBC News*, 24 June 2014 [video 3:57].

<sup>477</sup> 'Leaked ISIS files reveal 3 young men fighting in Syria may have been radicalised in UK city', *Daily Mirror*, 4 May 2016.

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Kalantar's father also believed that he had been influenced by an imam at the mosque where he attended classes and prayers.<sup>478</sup> After he travelled, Kalantar's family found photographs on his computer in which he was shown carrying out mock executions,<sup>479</sup> which had been taken at the place where he attended religious lessons.<sup>480</sup>

At least two of the Coventry Islamic State travellers attended the local mosque in question,<sup>481</sup> but in leaked Islamic State files, none of the three travellers had filled in the field identifying who had recruited them.<sup>482</sup> After the three men travelled to join Islamic State, another man who knew them, Zakariya Ashiq, from Foleshill, Coventry, spoke to Kalantar on Whatsapp.<sup>483</sup> He later attempted to join the group, but was stopped and convicted of preparing for acts of terrorism in May 2015.<sup>484</sup>

Kalantar asked his parents for his passport, telling them that it was for paperwork relating to university, and borrowed £1,000 from one of his brothers. He claimed this was for a new computer, but instead used it to buy his flights. After joining Islamic State, Kalantar is believed to have married Zahra Halane.<sup>485</sup> He was killed in December 2014, according to one jihadist source, at Tikrit University in Iraq in a French air strike.<sup>486</sup>

**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** No [b. Afghanistan]<sup>487</sup>

**Nationality:** British<sup>488</sup>

**Ancestry:** Afghan<sup>489</sup>

**Place of residence:** Foleshill, Coventry, West Midlands, England<sup>490</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Unspecified

**Education:** A levels, Barr Hill School and Community College, Coventry<sup>491</sup>

**Means of travel:** Travelled from Coventry to Birmingham; travelled by plane to Frankfurt and from Frankfurt to Istanbul, Turkey; crossed the border into Syria and travelled to Aleppo [March 2014]<sup>492</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 17-18<sup>493</sup>

**Network:** Coventry Islamic State travellers<sup>494</sup>

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Islamic State [IS]<sup>495</sup>

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<sup>478</sup> 'Father: Teenager fighting in Syria was "radicalised by imam"', *BBC News*, 24 June 2014 [video 1:26].

<sup>479</sup> 'Leaked ISIS files reveal 3 young men fighting in Syria may have been radicalised in UK city', *Daily Mirror*, 4 May 2016.

<sup>480</sup> 'Islamic State recruitment files provide fresh evidence Coventry fighters were radicalised in the city', *Coventry Telegraph*, 4 May 2016, available at: [www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/coventry-news/islamic-state-recruitment-files-provide-11280959](http://www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/coventry-news/islamic-state-recruitment-files-provide-11280959), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>481</sup> 'Father: Teenager fighting in Syria was "radicalised by imam"', *BBC News*, 24 June 2014 [video 2:05].

<sup>482</sup> 'Leaked ISIS files reveal 3 young men fighting in Syria may have been radicalised in UK city', *Daily Mirror*, 4 May 2016.

<sup>483</sup> 'Bungling jihadi complained he was forced to "walk across Europe" to reach Isis', *Daily Telegraph*, 27 May 2015.

<sup>484</sup> 'Zakariya Ashiq trial: Guilty of trying to join Islamic State', *BBC News*, 26 May 2015.

<sup>485</sup> 'British jihadist who married one of the 16-year-old Manchester "terror twins" is "killed fighting for ISIS in Iraq"', *Daily Mail*, 6 December 2014, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2863521/British-jihadist-married-one-16-year-old-Manchester-terror-twins-Syria-killed-fighting-ISIS-Iraq.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2863521/British-jihadist-married-one-16-year-old-Manchester-terror-twins-Syria-killed-fighting-ISIS-Iraq.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>486</sup> 'Ali Kalantar - Who are Britain's jihadists?', *BBC News*, 10 October 2016; 'Second British jihadi from Coventry "is killed by American air strike while fighting for ISIS in Kobane"', *Daily Mail*, 11 December 2014.

<sup>487</sup> 'British ISIS fighter nicknamed Osama bin Bieber seriously injured after deadly airstrike leaves him disabled in Iraq', *Daily Mail*, 27 February 2015.

<sup>488</sup> 'British jihadist who married one of the 16-year-old Manchester "terror twins" is "killed fighting for ISIS in Iraq"', *Daily Mail*, 6 December 2014.

<sup>489</sup> 'Father: Teenager fighting in Syria was "radicalised by imam"', *BBC News*, 24 June 2014 [video 0:25].

<sup>490</sup> 'Leaked ISIS files reveal 3 young men fighting in Syria may have been radicalised in UK city', *Daily Mirror*, 4 May 2016.

<sup>491</sup> 'Second British jihadi from Coventry "is killed by American air strike while fighting for ISIS in Kobane"', *Daily Mail*, 11 December 2014.

<sup>492</sup> 'Father: Teenager fighting in Syria was "radicalised by imam"', *BBC News*, 24 June 2014 [video 2:25]; 'Second Coventry jihadi reportedly dies in Syria fighting with Isis', *Daily Telegraph*, 11 December 2014.

<sup>493</sup> 'Father: Teenager fighting in Syria was "radicalised by imam"', *BBC News*, 24 June 2014.

<sup>494</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>495</sup> 'Ali Kalantar - Who are Britain's jihadists?', *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

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**Known associates:** Rashed Amani [travel companion; Coventry IS traveller];<sup>496</sup> Mohammed Hadi [travel companion; Coventry IS traveller];<sup>497</sup> Zahra Halane [wife; IS; lived in the same house in Manbej, Syria]; Salma Halane [IS; lived in the same house in Manbej, Syria];<sup>498</sup> Zakariya Ashiq [A level student from Foleshill, Coventry, convicted for attempting to join Rashid and friends in Syria]<sup>499</sup>

**Known to the authorities:** No

**Status:** Deceased [December 2014]<sup>500</sup>

### MOHAMMED HADI (MOHAMMED ISMAIL, ABU YAHYA AL-KURDY)<sup>501</sup>

Mohammed Hadi was a student at Sidney Stringer Academy in Coventry<sup>502</sup> when, in March 2014, he travelled with two friends, Rashed Amani and Mohammed Hadi, to join Islamic State.<sup>503</sup> After training in Syria with Amani and Kalantar, Hadi separated from the group to join Islamic State in Iraq and work as a police officer for the group before he was seriously injured in an air strike.<sup>504</sup>

Hadi has been described as “an ordinary youngster” who then began expressing “strong views” about the Syrian conflict.<sup>505</sup> His friends claimed that he began to show signs of radical views and had visited extreme mosques and religious schools.<sup>506</sup> His school had in the past been associated with extremist behaviour, and in 2010 an incident was reported in which a group of Muslim students had threatened to attack another student with knives and knuckledusters for writing an online tribute to British soldiers on Armistice Day. One of the students in the group had identified himself as “a terrorist”; another was pictured online holding an assault rifle and posted a poem about hijacking a plane on his Facebook account. The school made the police aware of the incident.<sup>507</sup>

At least two of the Coventry Islamic State travellers attended a local mosque which their parents blamed for their radicalisation.<sup>508</sup> Hadi’s mother has since claimed that he did not have the financial means to fund his own journey and suspects that he was funded by religious leaders.<sup>509</sup> However, in leaked Islamic State files, none of the three travellers had filled in the field identifying who had recruited them.<sup>510</sup> After the three men travelled to join Islamic State, another man who knew them, Zakariya Ashiq, from Foleshill, Coventry, spoke to Hadi on Whatsapp.<sup>511</sup> He later attempted to join the group, but was stopped and convicted of preparing for acts of terrorism in May 2015.<sup>512</sup>

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<sup>496</sup> ‘Father: Teenager fighting in Syria was “radicalised by imam”’, *BBC News*, 24 June 2014.

<sup>497</sup> ‘Leaked ISIS files reveal 3 young men fighting in Syria may have been radicalised in UK city’, *Daily Mirror*, 4 May 2016.

<sup>498</sup> ‘Second British jihadi from Coventry “is killed by American air strike while fighting for ISIS in Kobane”’, *Daily Mail*, 11 December 2014.

<sup>499</sup> ‘Coventry pair arrested on suspicion of Syria-related terrorism offences re-bailed by police’, *Coventry Telegraph*, 10 March 2016; ‘Bungling jihadi complained he was forced to “walk across Europe” to reach Isis’, *Daily Telegraph*, 27 May 2015.

<sup>500</sup> ‘Ali Kalantar – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>501</sup> ‘Mohammed Ismail – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>502</sup> ‘From a Coventry schoolkid to Isis warrior in Iraq’, *The Sun*, 22 June 2014, available at: [www.thesun.co.uk/archives/news/921437/from-a-coventry-schoolkid-to-isis-warrior-in-iraq/](http://www.thesun.co.uk/archives/news/921437/from-a-coventry-schoolkid-to-isis-warrior-in-iraq/), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>503</sup> ‘Second Coventry jihadist reportedly dies in Syria fighting with Isis’, *Daily Telegraph*, 11 December 2014; ‘Father: Teenager fighting in Syria was “radicalised by imam”’, *BBC News*, 24 June 2014 [video 2:25].

<sup>504</sup> ‘Could Coventry jihadist Mohammed Hadi be a target for the SAS?’, *Coventry Telegraph*, 10 November 2016.

<sup>505</sup> ‘Father: Teenager fighting in Syria was “radicalised by imam”’, *BBC News*, 24 June 2014 [video 4:00].

<sup>506</sup> ‘From a Coventry schoolkid to Isis warrior in Iraq’, *The Sun*, 22 June 2014.

<sup>507</sup> Schoolboy who received death threats from Muslim gang after supporting British troops “will not return to school”, *Daily Mail*, 18 November 2010, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1330810/Facebook-death-threats-Teenager-return-school.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1330810/Facebook-death-threats-Teenager-return-school.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>508</sup> ‘Father: Teenager fighting in Syria was “radicalised by imam”’, *BBC News*, 24 June 2014 [video 2:05].

<sup>509</sup> ‘British jihadist who married one of the 16-year-old Manchester “terror twins” is “killed fighting for ISIS in Iraq”’, *Daily Mail*, 6 December 2014.

<sup>510</sup> ‘Leaked ISIS files reveal 3 young men fighting in Syria may have been radicalised in UK city’, *Daily Mirror*, 4 May 2016.

<sup>511</sup> ‘Bungling jihadi complained he was forced to “walk across Europe” to reach Isis’, *Daily Telegraph*, 27 May 2015.

<sup>512</sup> ‘Zakariya Ashiq trial: Guilty of trying to join Islamic State’, *BBC News*, 26 May 2015.

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**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** No [“Kurdish-born”]<sup>513</sup>

**Nationality:** British<sup>514</sup>

**Ancestry:** Unspecified-Kurdish<sup>515</sup>

**Place of residence:** Foleshill, Coventry, West Midlands, England<sup>516</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Unspecified

**Education:** Sidney Stringer Academy, Coventry<sup>517</sup>

**Means of travel:** Travelled from Coventry to Birmingham; travelled by plane to Frankfurt and from Frankfurt to Istanbul, Turkey; crossed the border into Syria and travelled to Aleppo [March 2014]<sup>518</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 19<sup>519</sup>

**Network:** Coventry Islamic State travellers<sup>520</sup>

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Islamic State [IS]<sup>521</sup>

**Known associates:** Rashed Amani [travel companion; Coventry IS traveller]; Ali Kalantar [travel companion; Coventry IS traveller];<sup>522</sup> Zakariya Ashiq [A level student from Foleshill, Coventry, convicted for attempting to join Hadi and friends in Syria]<sup>523</sup>

**Known to the authorities:** Yes [in contact with police after telling an imam he wanted to travel to the Middle East]<sup>524</sup>

**Status:** Unknown [believed to be in Syria or Iraq]<sup>525</sup>

### SALMA HALANE

Salma and her twin sister, Zahra, attended or were due to attend Connell Sixth Form College, Beswick, Manchester.<sup>526</sup> On 26 June 2014, the girls went missing and their family informed the police that the sisters had run away during the night.<sup>527</sup> With an unnamed adult couple and a child,<sup>528</sup> the sisters flew from Manchester to Turkey and crossed the border into Syria.

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<sup>513</sup> ‘Islamic State recruitment files provide fresh evidence Coventry fighters were radicalised in the city’, *Coventry Telegraph*, 4 May 2016.

<sup>514</sup> ‘British ISIS fighter nicknamed Osama bin Bieber seriously injured after deadly airstrike leaves him disabled in Iraq’, *Daily Mail*, 27 February 2015.

<sup>515</sup> ‘Second British jihadi from Coventry “is killed by American air strike while fighting for ISIS in Kobane”’, *Daily Mail*, 11 December 2014.

<sup>516</sup> ‘Leaked ISIS files reveal 3 young men fighting in Syria may have been radicalised in UK city’, *Daily Mirror*, 4 May 2016.

<sup>517</sup> ‘From a Coventry schoolkid to Isis warrior in Iraq’, *The Sun*, 22 June 2014.

<sup>518</sup> ‘Father: Teenager fighting in Syria was “radicalised by imam”’, *BBC News*, 24 June 2014 [video 2:25]; ‘Second Coventry jihadist reportedly dies in Syria fighting with Isis’, *Daily Telegraph*, 11 December 2014.

<sup>519</sup> ‘Mohammed Ismail – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>520</sup> ‘Father: Teenager fighting in Syria was “radicalised by imam”’, *BBC News*, 24 June 2014.

<sup>521</sup> ‘Second British jihadi from Coventry “is killed by American air strike while fighting for ISIS in Kobane”’, *Daily Mail*, 11 December 2014.

<sup>522</sup> ‘Father: Teenager fighting in Syria was “radicalised by imam”’, *BBC News*, 24 June 2014 [video 3:38–4:08].

<sup>523</sup> ‘Coventry pair arrested on suspicion of Syria-related terrorism offences re-bailed by police’, *Coventry Telegraph*, 10 March 2016; ‘Bungling jihadi complained he was forced to “walk across Europe” to reach Isis’, *Daily Telegraph*, 27 May 2015.

<sup>524</sup> ‘From a Coventry schoolkid to Isis warrior in Iraq’, *The Sun*, 22 June 2014.

<sup>525</sup> ‘Mohammed Ismail – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>526</sup> ‘Twin Manchester schoolgirls who ran away to Syria “have married ISIS fighters and mainly stay indoors and read the Qur’an unless their jihadi husbands take them out”’, *Daily Mail*, 24 July 2014, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2703792/Twin-Manchester-schoolgirls-ran-away-Syria-married-ISIS-fighters-mainly-stay-indoors-read-Quran-unless-jihadi-husbands-out.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2703792/Twin-Manchester-schoolgirls-ran-away-Syria-married-ISIS-fighters-mainly-stay-indoors-read-Quran-unless-jihadi-husbands-out.html), last visited: 7 March 2017; ‘Twin girls who ran away to Syria were star pupils with 28 GCSEs between them’, *Manchester Evening News*, 9 July 2014, available at: [www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/salma-zahra-halane-twin-girls-7394173](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/salma-zahra-halane-twin-girls-7394173), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>527</sup> ‘British twins who fled to Syria were top students: report’, *New York Daily News*, 9 July 2014, available at: [www.nydailynews.com/news/world/british-twins-fled-syria-top-students-report-article-1.1860303](http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/british-twins-fled-syria-top-students-report-article-1.1860303), last visited: 7 March 2017; ‘Twin girls who ran away to Syria were star pupils with 28 GCSEs between them’, *Manchester Evening News*, 9 July 2014.

<sup>528</sup> ‘Teenage “terror twins” who fled Britain to join ISIS tried to recruit their whole family telling brothers: “We might seem evil to you, but we will all be happy in the afterlife”’, *Daily Mail*, 4 October 2015, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3259363/Teenage-terror-twins-fled-Britain-join-ISIS-tried-recruit-family-telling-brothers-evil-happy-afterlife.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3259363/Teenage-terror-twins-fled-Britain-join-ISIS-tried-recruit-family-telling-brothers-evil-happy-afterlife.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

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Salma and Zahra were both high-achieving students, and were described by friends and neighbours as “quiet, smart and ‘deeply religious’”.<sup>529</sup> They came from a large family and had previously lived in Denmark as refugees.<sup>530</sup> One of their siblings has been alleged to have fought for Islamic State and al-Shabaab.<sup>531</sup> While the girls reportedly wanted to be doctors and were well integrated,<sup>532</sup> a former neighbour of the family said their parents did not allow the girls to mix with other children, and that they were strict, the sisters wearing headscarves before they were teenagers. A fellow student said that the sisters did not appear to have extremist beliefs.<sup>533</sup>

Soon after the girls’ disappearance, local media reported fears that they had been targeted on internet forums, with their trip funded by Islamic State fighters.<sup>534</sup> It has since been suggested that the sisters may have been radicalised online by their brother, Ahmed Halane. Ahmed is believed to have travelled to Somalia in September 2013 to join al-Shabaab, and in February 2016 was reported to be based in Copenhagen, Denmark.<sup>535</sup> The girls are also suggested to have been “inspired” by their brother’s radicalisation and become increasingly radical after engaging with online extremist material.<sup>536</sup>

In December 2013, Salma was found to have been watching online Islamic State propaganda at her sixth-form college. This included images of Raphael Hostey, an Islamic State recruiter who later boasted that he had recruited the two sisters.<sup>537</sup> The sisters’ cousin, Abdullahi Ahmed Jama Fara, an A level student from Manchester, was in contact with Anil Khalil Raoufi, an associate of Hostey’s,<sup>538</sup> and was later jailed for seven years in August 2016 for helping a friend travel to Syria.<sup>539</sup>

Since travelling to Syria, the two sisters have reportedly become involved in recruitment for Islamic State,<sup>540</sup> and attempted to recruit other members of their family.<sup>541</sup> Both girls married Islamic State fighters who were later killed.<sup>542</sup> There was speculation over whether Salma Halane had married Rashed Amani, an Islamic State fighter from Coventry, or whether they may have lived in the same house with Zahra Halane and her husband, Ali Kalantar, a friend of Amani’s.<sup>543</sup> In July 2014, the twins’ mother travelled to Syria to try to rescue her daughters, but she was unsuccessful after she was seized by Islamic

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<sup>529</sup> ‘British twins who fled to Syria were top students: report’, *New York Daily News*, 9 July 2014.

<sup>530</sup> ‘Teenage “terror twins” who fled Britain to join ISIS tried to recruit their whole family telling brothers: “We might seem evil to you, but we will all be happy in the afterlife”’, *Daily Mail*, 4 October 2015.

<sup>531</sup> ‘Manchester terror suspect “living freely in Denmark”’, *BBC News*, 21 May 2015, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/32405092/manchester-terror-suspect-living-freely-in-denmark](http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/32405092/manchester-terror-suspect-living-freely-in-denmark), last visited: 7 March 2017; ‘Brother of “jihadi bride” twin sisters from Chorlton who fled for ISIS in Syria reported to be in Denmark’, *Manchester Evening News*, 21 May 2015, available at: [www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/brother-jihadi-bride-twin-sisters-9307415](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/brother-jihadi-bride-twin-sisters-9307415), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>532</sup> ‘Teenage “terror twins” who fled Britain to join ISIS tried to recruit their whole family telling brothers: “We might seem evil to you, but we will all be happy in the afterlife”’, *Daily Mail*, 4 October 2015.

<sup>533</sup> ‘Twin Manchester schoolgirls who ran away to Syria “have married ISIS fighters and mainly stay indoors and read the Qur’an unless their jihadi husbands take them out”’, *Daily Mail*, 24 July 2014.

<sup>534</sup> ‘Twin girls who ran away to Syria were star pupils with 28 GCSEs between them’, *Manchester Evening News*, 9 July 2014.

<sup>535</sup> ‘See the women who have fled the UK to join ISIS’ brutal regime in Syria’, *Daily Mirror*, 17 February 2016, available at: [www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/sec-women-who-fled-uk-7386048](http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/sec-women-who-fled-uk-7386048), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>536</sup> ‘Twin Manchester schoolgirls who ran away to Syria “have married ISIS fighters and mainly stay indoors and read the Qur’an unless their jihadi husbands take them out”’, *Daily Mail*, 24 July 2014.

<sup>537</sup> ‘Teenage “terror twins” who fled Britain to join ISIS tried to recruit their whole family telling brothers: “We might seem evil to you, but we will all be happy in the afterlife”’, *Daily Mail*, 4 October 2015.

<sup>538</sup> ‘Cousin of “terror twins” jailed for running ISIS WhatsApp communications centre from bedroom in his mum’s house’, *Manchester Evening News*, 26 August 2016, available at: [www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/isis-communications-cell-longisght-bedroom-11804711](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/isis-communications-cell-longisght-bedroom-11804711), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>539</sup> ‘A-level jihadi Abdullahi Ahmed Jama Farah jailed for helping friend to go to Syria’, *ITV News*, 26 August 2016, available at: [www.itv.com/news/2016-08-26/a-level-jihadi-abdullahi-ahmed-jama-farah-jailed-for-helping-friend-go-to-syria/](http://www.itv.com/news/2016-08-26/a-level-jihadi-abdullahi-ahmed-jama-farah-jailed-for-helping-friend-go-to-syria/), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>540</sup> ‘See the women who have fled the UK to join ISIS’ brutal regime in Syria’, *Daily Mirror*, 17 February 2016.

<sup>541</sup> ‘Teenage “terror twins” who fled Britain to join ISIS tried to recruit their whole family telling brothers: “We might seem evil to you, but we will all be happy in the afterlife”’, *Daily Mail*, 4 October 2015.

<sup>542</sup> ‘British terror twins widowed after “BOTH husbands killed fighting for Islamic State” in Iraq’, *Daily Mirror*, 6 December 2014, available at: [www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/british-terror-twins-widowed-after-4761655](http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/british-terror-twins-widowed-after-4761655), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>543</sup> ‘Second British jihadi from Coventry “is killed by American air strike while fighting for ISIS in Kobane”’, *Daily Mail*, 11 December 2014.

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State and her daughters refused to return.<sup>544</sup> However, the sisters kept in contact with their family, and in May 2015 it was reported that they wanted to return from Syria.<sup>545</sup>

**Gender:** Female

**Born in UK:** No [b. Somalia]<sup>546</sup>

**Nationality:** British<sup>547</sup>

**Ancestry:** Somali<sup>548</sup>

**Place of residence:** Chorlton, Manchester, North West England<sup>549</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Living at family home<sup>550</sup>

**Education:** Disputed – attended or due to attend Cornell Sixth Form College, Beswick, Manchester<sup>551</sup>

**Means of travel:** Travelled by plane from Manchester to Turkey [26 June 2014]; crossed the border to Syria<sup>552</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 16<sup>553</sup>

**Network:** Travelled with sister and an unnamed adult couple and a child<sup>554</sup>

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Islamic State [IS]<sup>555</sup>

**Known associates:** Zahra Halane [sister; travel companion; IS]; Ahmed Halane<sup>556</sup> [brother; al-Shabaab;<sup>557</sup> IS fighter (alleged)];<sup>558</sup> Raphael Hostey [IS recruiter; recruited the sisters (alleged by Hostey);<sup>559</sup> d. April 2016];<sup>560</sup> Rashed Amani [Coventry IS traveller; lived in the same house in Manbej, Syria]; Ali Kalantar [Coventry IS traveller; lived in the same house in Manbej, Syria, and reported to have married Zahra Halane];<sup>561</sup> Abdullahi Ahmed Jama Farah [cousin; jailed August 2016 for helping a friend travel to Syria];<sup>562</sup> Unnamed fighter [alleged husband; described as a “young afghan”; IS];<sup>563</sup> Jamal al-Harith [associate; Islamic State fighter]<sup>564</sup>

**Known to the authorities:** No

**Status:** Unknown

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<sup>544</sup> ‘Isis grabs mother trying to rescue twins’, *Sunday Times*, 1 November 2014, available at: [www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/public/article1478765.ece](http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/public/article1478765.ece), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>545</sup> ‘I.S. sisters flee warzone’, *The Sun*, 13 May 2015, available at: [www.thesun.co.uk/archives/news/218425/i-s-sisters-flee-warzone/](http://www.thesun.co.uk/archives/news/218425/i-s-sisters-flee-warzone/), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>546</sup> ‘“Terror twins” who fled UK to join ISIS “tried to get family to join them”’, *Daily Mirror*, 5 October 2015, available at: [www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/terror-twins-who-fled-uk-6576393](http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/terror-twins-who-fled-uk-6576393), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>547</sup> ‘British schoolgirl twins who fled UK to be “jihadi brides” may be on the run from Isis in Syria’, *Independent*, 14 May 2015, available at: [www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/british-schoolgirl-twins-who-fled-uk-to-be-jihadi-brides-may-be-on-the-run-from-isis-in-syria-10250131.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/british-schoolgirl-twins-who-fled-uk-to-be-jihadi-brides-may-be-on-the-run-from-isis-in-syria-10250131.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>548</sup> ‘British Female Jihadist, Zahra Halane, And Her Islamic State Militant Husband Fall Out Over Lost Kitten’, *Huffington Post*, 10 September 2014, available at: [www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/09/10/british-female-jihadist-zahra-halane\\_n\\_5796382.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/09/10/british-female-jihadist-zahra-halane_n_5796382.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>549</sup> ‘Teenage “terror twins” who fled Britain to join ISIS tried to recruit their whole family telling brothers: “We might seem evil to you, but we will all be happy in the afterlife”’, *Daily Mail*, 4 October 2015.

<sup>550</sup> ‘Twin Manchester schoolgirls who ran away to Syria “have married ISIS fighters and mainly stay indoors and read the Qur’an unless their jihadi husbands take them out”’, *Daily Mail*, 24 July 2014.

<sup>551</sup> *ibid.*; ‘Twin girls who ran away to Syria were star pupils with 28 GCSEs between them’, *Manchester Evening News*, 9 July 2014.

<sup>552</sup> ‘British twins who fled to Syria were top students: report’, *New York Daily News*, 9 July 2014.

<sup>553</sup> ‘Zahra and Salma Halane: Missing twins “now in Syria”’, *BBC News*, 9 July 2014, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-28230931](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-28230931), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>554</sup> ‘Teenage “terror twins” who fled Britain to join ISIS tried to recruit their whole family telling brothers: “We might seem evil to you, but we will all be happy in the afterlife”’, *Daily Mail*, 4 October 2015.

<sup>555</sup> ‘Twin girls who ran away to Syria were star pupils with 28 GCSEs between them’, *Manchester Evening News*, 9 July 2014.

<sup>556</sup> ‘See the women who have fled the UK to join ISIS’ brutal regime in Syria’, *Daily Mirror*, 17 February 2016.

<sup>557</sup> ‘Manchester terror suspect “living freely in Denmark”’, *BBC News*, 21 May 2015.

<sup>558</sup> ‘Twin girls who ran away to Syria were star pupils with 28 GCSEs between them’, *Manchester Evening News*, 9 July 2014.

<sup>559</sup> ‘Teenage “terror twins” who fled Britain to join ISIS tried to recruit their whole family telling brothers: “We might seem evil to you, but we will all be happy in the afterlife”’, *Daily Mail*, 4 October 2015.

<sup>560</sup> ‘Baby-faced rapper who fled Britain to join ISIS is “killed in Syria”’, *Daily Mirror*, 2 May 2016, available at: [www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/baby-faced-rapper-who-fled-7879540](http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/baby-faced-rapper-who-fled-7879540), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>561</sup> ‘Second British jihadi from Coventry killed by American air strike while fighting for ISIS in Kobane’, *Daily Mail*, 11 December 2016.

<sup>562</sup> ‘A-level jihadi Abdullahi Ahmed Jama Farah jailed for helping friend to go to Syria’, *ITV News*, 26 August 2016.

<sup>563</sup> ‘British jihadist who married one of the 16-year-old Manchester “terror twins” is “killed fighting for ISIS in Iraq”’, *Daily Mail*, 6 December 2014.

<sup>564</sup> ‘Small part of Manchester that has been home to 16 jihadis’, *Guardian*, 25 February 2017.

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### ZAHRA HALANE

Zahra Halane and her sister, Salma, attended or were due to attend Connell Sixth Form College, Beswick, Manchester.<sup>565</sup> On 26 June 2014, the girls went missing and their family informed the police that the sisters had run away during the night.<sup>566</sup> With an unnamed adult couple and a child,<sup>567</sup> the sisters flew from Manchester to Turkey and crossed the border into Syria.<sup>568</sup>

See Salma Halane profile for more details.

**Gender:** Female

**Born in UK:** No [b. Somalia]<sup>569</sup>

**Nationality:** British<sup>570</sup>

**Ancestry:** Somali<sup>571</sup>

**Place of residence:** Chorlton, Manchester, North West England<sup>572</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Living at family home<sup>573</sup>

**Education:** Disputed: attended or due to attend Cornell Sixth Form College, Beswick, Manchester<sup>574</sup>

**Means of travel:** Travelled by plane from Manchester to Turkey [26 June 2014]; crossed the border to Syria<sup>575</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 16<sup>576</sup>

**Network:** Travelled with sister and an unnamed adult couple and a child<sup>577</sup>

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Islamic State [IS]<sup>578</sup>

**Known associates:** Salma Halane [sister; travel companion; IS]; Ahmed Halane<sup>579</sup> [brother; al-Shabaab;<sup>580</sup> IS fighter (alleged)];<sup>581</sup> Raphael Hostey [IS recruiter; recruited the sisters (alleged by Hostey);<sup>582</sup> d. April 2016];<sup>583</sup> Ali Kalantar [husband; IS fighter, d. December 2014];<sup>584</sup> Rashad Amani [Coventry IS traveller; lived in the same house in Manbej, Syria];<sup>585</sup> Abdullahi Ahmed Jama Farah

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<sup>565</sup> <sup>47</sup> ‘Twin Manchester schoolgirls who ran away to Syria “have married ISIS fighters and mainly stay indoors and read the Qur’an unless their jihadi husbands take them out”’, *Daily Mail*, 24 July 2014; ‘Twin girls who ran away to Syria were star pupils with 28 GCSEs between them’, *Manchester Evening News*, 9 July 2014.

<sup>566</sup> ‘British twins who fled to Syria were top students: report’, *New York Daily News*, 9 July 2014; ‘Twin girls who ran away to Syria were star pupils with 28 GCSEs between them’, *Manchester Evening News*, 9 July 2014.

<sup>567</sup> ‘Teenage “terror twins” who fled Britain to join ISIS tried to recruit their whole family telling brothers: “We might seem evil to you, but we will all be happy in the afterlife”’, *Daily Mail*, 4 October 2015.

<sup>568</sup> ‘British twins who fled to Syria were top students: report’, *New York Daily News*, 9 July 2014.

<sup>569</sup> <sup>44</sup> ‘Terror twins’ who fled UK to join ISIS “tried to get family to join them”’, *Daily Mirror*, 5 October 2015.

<sup>570</sup> ‘British schoolgirl twins who fled UK to be “jihadi brides” may be on the run from Isis in Syria’, *Independent*, 14 May 2015.

<sup>571</sup> ‘British Female Jihadist, Zahra Halane, And Her Islamic State Militant Husband Fall Out Over Lost Kitten’, *Huffington Post*, 10 September 2014.

<sup>572</sup> ‘Teenage “terror twins” who fled Britain to join ISIS tried to recruit their whole family telling brothers: “We might seem evil to you, but we will all be happy in the afterlife”’, *Daily Mail*, 4 October 2015.

<sup>573</sup> <sup>47</sup> ‘Twin Manchester schoolgirls who ran away to Syria “have married ISIS fighters and mainly stay indoors and read the Qur’an unless their jihadi husbands take them out”’, *Daily Mail*, 24 July 2014.

<sup>574</sup> *ibid.*; ‘Twin girls who ran away to Syria were star pupils with 28 GCSEs between them’, *Manchester Evening News*, 9 July 2014.

<sup>575</sup> ‘British twins who fled to Syria were top students: report’, *New York Daily News*, 9 July 2014.

<sup>576</sup> ‘Zahra and Salma Halane: Missing twins “now in Syria”’, *BBC News*, 9 July 2014.

<sup>577</sup> ‘Teenage “terror twins” who fled Britain to join ISIS tried to recruit their whole family telling brothers: “We might seem evil to you, but we will all be happy in the afterlife”’, *Daily Mail*, 4 October 2015.

<sup>578</sup> ‘Twin girls who ran away to Syria were star pupils with 28 GCSEs between them’, *Manchester Evening News*, 9 July 2014.

<sup>579</sup> ‘See the women who have fled the UK to join ISIS’ brutal regime in Syria’, *Daily Mirror*, 17 February 2016.

<sup>580</sup> ‘Manchester terror suspect “living freely in Denmark”’, *BBC News*, 21 May 2015.

<sup>581</sup> ‘Twin girls who ran away to Syria were star pupils with 28 GCSEs between them’, *Manchester Evening News*, 9 July 2014.

<sup>582</sup> ‘Teenage “terror twins” who fled Britain to join ISIS tried to recruit their whole family telling brothers: “We might seem evil to you, but we will all be happy in the afterlife”’, *Daily Mail*, 4 October 2015.

<sup>583</sup> ‘Baby-faced rapper who fled Britain to join ISIS is “killed in Syria”’, *Daily Mirror*, 2 May 2016.

<sup>584</sup> ‘British terror twins widowed after “both husbands killed fighting for Islamic State” in Iraq’, *Daily Mirror*, 6 December 2014.

<sup>585</sup> ‘Second British jihadi from Coventry killed by American air strike while fighting for ISIS in Kobane’<sup>585</sup>, *Daily Mail*, 11 December 2016.

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[cousin; jailed August 2016 for helping a friend travel to Syria];<sup>586</sup> Unnamed fighter [alleged husband of Salma Halane; described as a “young afghan”; IS];<sup>587</sup> Jamal al-Harith [associate; Islamic State fighter]<sup>588</sup>

**Known to the authorities:** No

**Status:** Unknown

### EDNANE MAHMOOD

Ednane Mahmood enrolled as a student of Arabic at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN) in September 2014 after returning from an attempt to travel to Syria.<sup>589</sup> He was convicted in November 2015 of preparing for acts of terrorism in relation to his intention to travel to Syria, as well as disseminating terrorist publications,<sup>590</sup> and sentenced to four years in prison.<sup>591</sup>

Mahmood’s interest in Islamic State, jihad and travelling to Syria is believed to have developed from 2012 onwards.<sup>592</sup> He spent increasing amounts of time at home playing video games and on the internet from early 2014,<sup>593</sup> and analysis of his search history revealed that he had searched for terms such as “ISIS”, “Anjem Choudary” (the then-leader of al-Muhajiroun), “jihad”, “Bulgaria” and “Turkey”.<sup>594</sup> In the months before he travelled these searches became “increasingly acute”,<sup>595</sup> and the judge in his case suggested that his radicalisation was fuelled by his online activity.

On 18 September 2014 he travelled from Manchester to Turkey via Bulgaria with the intention of entering Syria.<sup>596</sup> He was unsuccessful and returned to the UK on 21 September after communicating with his family through Twitter.<sup>597</sup> He enrolled at university, and between his enrolment and arrest in November 2014 sent extremist material, including lectures by the al-Qaeda cleric, Anwar al-Awlaki, to a university friend and to his nephew.<sup>598</sup>

**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** Unspecified [DOB 19 July 1996]<sup>599</sup>

**Nationality:** British<sup>600</sup>

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<sup>586</sup> ‘A-level jihadi Abdullahi Ahmed Jama Farah jailed for helping friend to go to Syria’, *ITV News*, 26 August 2016.

<sup>587</sup> ‘British jihadist who married one of the 16-year-old Manchester “terror twins” is “killed fighting for ISIS in Iraq”’, *Daily Mail*, 6 December 2014.

<sup>588</sup> ‘Small part of Manchester that has been home to 16 jihadis’, *Guardian*, 25 February 2017.

<sup>589</sup> ‘Teenager “left Lancashire for Islamic State”, court hears’, *Lancashire Evening Post*, 30 October 2015, available at: [www.lep.co.uk/news/crime/teenager-left-lancashire-for-islamic-state-court-hears-1-7545309](http://www.lep.co.uk/news/crime/teenager-left-lancashire-for-islamic-state-court-hears-1-7545309), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>590</sup> ‘Blackburn student convicted of terrorism offences’, *BBC News*, 10 November 2015, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lancashire-34766462](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lancashire-34766462), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>591</sup> ‘Blackburn student jailed for terrorism offences’, *BBC News*, 11 December 2015, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lancashire-35069746](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lancashire-35069746), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>592</sup> ‘Teenage Muslim who jetted off for Syria in a bid to join ISIS after telling his family he was swapping home comforts for a “true life in the hereafter” is jailed for four years’, *Daily Mail*, 11 December 2015, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3356233/Teenage-Muslim-jetted-Syria-bid-join-ISIS-telling-family-swapping-home-comforts-true-life-jailed-four-years.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3356233/Teenage-Muslim-jetted-Syria-bid-join-ISIS-telling-family-swapping-home-comforts-true-life-jailed-four-years.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>593</sup> ‘Blackburn terror accused “wanted to help suffering Syrians”’, *BBC News*, 29 October 2015, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lancashire-34670986](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lancashire-34670986), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>594</sup> ‘R v Ednane Mahmood – cases concluded in 2015’, Crown Prosecution Service Counter-Terrorism Division, undated, available at: [www.cps.gov.uk/publications/prosecution/ctd\\_2015.html#a11](http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/prosecution/ctd_2015.html#a11), last visited: 7 March 2017; ‘Radical preacher Anjem Choudary behind bars as police reveal his links to 500 Isis jihadists’, *Daily Telegraph*, 17 August 2016, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/08/16/radical-preacher-anjem-choudary-behind-bars-after-drumming-up-su/](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/08/16/radical-preacher-anjem-choudary-behind-bars-after-drumming-up-su/), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>595</sup> ‘Student, 19, jailed for bid to join IS in Syria’, *Daily Mail*, 11 December 2015, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-3356101/Student-19-jailed-bid-join-IS-Syria.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-3356101/Student-19-jailed-bid-join-IS-Syria.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>596</sup> ‘Teenage Muslim who jetted off for Syria in a bid to join ISIS after telling his family he was swapping home comforts for a “true life in the hereafter” is jailed for four years’, *Daily Mail*, 11 December 2015.

<sup>597</sup> ‘R v Ednane Mahmood – cases concluded in 2015’, Crown Prosecution Service Counter-Terrorism Division.

<sup>598</sup> ‘Teenager “left Lancashire for Islamic State”, court hears’, *Lancashire Evening Post*, 30 October 2015.

<sup>599</sup> ‘Man charged following counter terrorism investigation’, Greater Manchester Police, 8 April 2015, available at: [www.gmp.police.uk/content/SocialTwitterFeed/5CF4B462D5D610E680257E210037C16B](http://www.gmp.police.uk/content/SocialTwitterFeed/5CF4B462D5D610E680257E210037C16B), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>600</sup> ‘British Muslim student wrote shocking letter to family after jetting off to become ISIS terrorist’, *Daily Mirror*, 13 November 2015, available at: [www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/british-muslim-student-wrote-shocking-6822829](http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/british-muslim-student-wrote-shocking-6822829), last visited: 7 March 2017.



## SPOTTING THE SIGNS: IDENTIFYING VULNERABILITY TO RADICALISATION AMONG STUDENTS

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**Ancestry:** Unspecified

**Place of residence:** Plane Street, Bastwell, Blackburn, Lancashire, North West England<sup>601</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Living at family home [parents, siblings including brother]<sup>602</sup>

**Education:** Studying Arabic (degree), University of Central Lancashire [enrolled in September 2014 after returning from Turkey];<sup>603</sup> Witton Park Academy; Pleckgate High School; Daisyfield Primary School<sup>604</sup>

**Means of travel:** Travelled by plane from Manchester to Bulgaria [18 September 2014], by bus to Turkey with the intention to cross into Syria;<sup>605</sup> attempted to contact individuals within Syria,<sup>606</sup> but was unsuccessful<sup>607</sup> [returned to the UK 21 September 2014]<sup>608</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 18<sup>609</sup>

**Network:** None

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** No

**Known associates:** None

**Known to the authorities:** No [family reported him missing to the police, 18 September 2014;<sup>610</sup> subject of police counter-terrorism investigation after being stopped at Manchester Airport returning from Turkey, 21 September 2014]<sup>611</sup>

**Status:** In detention

### SAMYA DIRIE

On 24 September 2014, Samya Dirie, a college student from South London, travelled to Syria via Istanbul. She had told her parents that she was going on a trip to visit a university with her college but they later discovered that she had run away. She is believed to have flown to Turkey from Heathrow airport with 15-year-old Yusra Hussien from Bristol.

Dirie was described by a family friend as someone who did not go out often, but she seemed happy and aspired to be a lawyer.<sup>612</sup> A relative said that Dirie was a moderate Muslim and showed no signs of radicalisation, while her mother was unaware of her daughter's extreme views.<sup>613</sup> She was described by

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<sup>601</sup> 'Man charged following counter terrorism investigation', Greater Manchester Police, 8 April 2015.

<sup>602</sup> 'Teenager "left Lancashire for Islamic State", court hears', *Lancashire Evening Post*, 30 October 2015.

<sup>603</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>604</sup> 'Blackburn teen charged with terrorism offences', *This is Lancashire*, 9 April 2015, available at: [www.thisislancashire.co.uk/news/12877069.UPDATED\\_Blackburn\\_teen\\_charged\\_with\\_terrorism\\_offences/](http://www.thisislancashire.co.uk/news/12877069.UPDATED_Blackburn_teen_charged_with_terrorism_offences/), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>605</sup> 'Teenage Muslim who jetted off for Syria in a bid to join ISIS after telling his family he was swapping home comforts for a "true life in the hereafter" is jailed for four years', *Daily Mail*, 11 December 2015.

<sup>606</sup> 'R v Ednane Mahmood – cases concluded in 2015', Crown Prosecution Service Counter-Terrorism Division.

<sup>607</sup> 'Teenage Muslim who jetted off for Syria in a bid to join ISIS after telling his family he was swapping home comforts for a "true life in the hereafter" is jailed for four years', *Daily Mail*, 11 December 2015.

<sup>608</sup> 'R v Ednane Mahmood – cases concluded in 2015', Crown Prosecution Service Counter-Terrorism Division, undated.

<sup>609</sup> 'Man charged following counter terrorism investigation', Greater Manchester Police, 8 April 2015.

<sup>610</sup> 'Blackburn student convicted of terrorism offences', *BBC News*, 10 November 2015.

<sup>611</sup> 'Man charged following counter terrorism investigation', Greater Manchester Police, 8 April 2015.

<sup>612</sup> 'Father of second missing British teenage girl thought to have been radicalised online before travelling to Syria pleads for her to come home', *Daily Mail*, 7 October 2014, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2783393/Father-British-teenage-girl-Samya-Dirie-thought-Syria-pleads-come-home.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2783393/Father-British-teenage-girl-Samya-Dirie-thought-Syria-pleads-come-home.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>613</sup> 'London "jihadi" girl's dad begs for her to return home from Syria', *Evening Standard*, 7 October 2014, available at: [www.standard.co.uk/news/london/london-jihadi-girl-s-father-begs-for-her-to-return-home-from-syria-9779533.html](http://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/london-jihadi-girl-s-father-begs-for-her-to-return-home-from-syria-9779533.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

## SPOTTING THE SIGNS: IDENTIFYING VULNERABILITY TO RADICALISATION AMONG STUDENTS

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relatives as studious and as someone who rarely attended the mosque,<sup>614</sup> while her family was “large and close knit” and “friendly and normal”.<sup>615</sup>

Dirie and Hussien are believed to have met on the internet, where they were both influenced by extremists.<sup>616</sup> Her father suggested that she may also have been radicalised by extremist material online.<sup>617</sup> Her travel partner, Hussien, was thought by police to have been groomed over a dating site called “Jihad Matchmaker”.<sup>618</sup> Both girls were also allegedly mentored online by British jihadists.<sup>619</sup> Dirie has been encouraged to return to the UK by her father, who claims that she is afraid of being arrested if she does so.<sup>620</sup>

**Gender:** Female

**Born in UK:** Unspecified

**Nationality:** British<sup>621</sup>

**Ancestry:** Unspecified–Somali<sup>622</sup>

**Place of residence:** Stockwell, London Borough of Lambeth, Central London<sup>623</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Living at family home [with her parents]<sup>624</sup>

**Education:** College student<sup>625</sup>

**Means of travel:** Travelled by plane [an indirect flight] from Heathrow Airport [alleged] to Istanbul, Turkey<sup>626</sup> [24 September 2014];<sup>627</sup> believed to have travelled on to the Syrian border in Eastern Turkey;<sup>628</sup> escorted to Syria from Turkey<sup>629</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 17<sup>630</sup>

**Network:** Two person travel cell<sup>631</sup>

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Islamic State [IS – suspected]<sup>632</sup>

**Known associates:** Yusra Hussien [travel companion; IS – suspected]<sup>633</sup>

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<sup>614</sup> ‘Girl, 17, who travelled to Syria with Yusra Hussien “fears arrest” on return to Britain’, *Daily Mirror*, 6 October 2014, available at: [www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/girl-17-who-travelled-syria-4392062](http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/girl-17-who-travelled-syria-4392062), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>615</sup> ‘London “jihadi” girl’s dad begs for her to return home from Syria’, *Evening Standard*, 7 October 2014.

<sup>616</sup> ‘Father of second missing British teenage girl thought to have been radicalised online before travelling to Syria pleads to come home’, *Daily Mail*, 7 October 2014.

<sup>617</sup> ‘Girl, 17, who travelled to Syria with Yusra Hussien “fears arrest” on return to Britain’, *Daily Mirror*, 6 October 2014.

<sup>618</sup> ‘“ISIS runaway” Yusra Hussien may have been lured to Syria by jihadi dating site’, *Daily Mirror*, 1 October 2014, available at: [www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/isis-runaway-yusra-hussien-been-4361896](http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/isis-runaway-yusra-hussien-been-4361896), last visited: 20 December 2016.

<sup>619</sup> ‘Three London schoolgirls who fled to Syria “have joined fearsome all-female ISIS militia renowned for savage beatings and forcing children as young as nine to marry”’, *Daily Mail*, 21 April 2015, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3043859/Three-London-schoolgirls-fled-Syria-joined-fearsome-women-ISIS-militia-renowned-savage-beatings-forcing-children-young-nine-marry.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3043859/Three-London-schoolgirls-fled-Syria-joined-fearsome-women-ISIS-militia-renowned-savage-beatings-forcing-children-young-nine-marry.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>620</sup> ‘Father of second missing British teenage girl thought to have been radicalised online before travelling to Syria pleads for her to come home’, *Daily Mail*, 7 October 2014.

<sup>621</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>622</sup> ‘Father appeals for return of missing Saniya Dirie’, *BBC News*, 6 October 2014, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-29515336](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-29515336), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>623</sup> ‘Father of second missing British teenage girl thought to have been radicalised online before travelling to Syria pleads for her to come home’, *Daily Mail*, 7 October 2014.

<sup>624</sup> ‘London “jihadi” girl’s dad begs for her to return home from Syria’, *Evening Standard*, 7 October 2014.

<sup>625</sup> ‘Father of second missing British teenage girl thought to have been radicalised online before travelling to Syria pleads for her to come home’, *Daily Mail*, 7 October 2014.

<sup>626</sup> ‘London “jihadi” girl’s dad begs for her to return home from Syria’, *Evening Standard*, 7 October 2014; ‘Father of second missing British teenage girl thought to have been radicalised online before travelling to Syria pleads for her to come home’, *Daily Mail*, 7 October 2014.

<sup>627</sup> ‘Girl, 17, who travelled to Syria with Yusra Hussien “fears arrest” on return to Britain’, *Daily Mirror*, 6 October 2014.

<sup>628</sup> ‘“ISIS runaway” Yusra Hussien may have been lured to Syria by jihadi dating site’, *Daily Mirror*, 1 October 2014.

<sup>629</sup> ‘Revealed – hundreds of desperate British women have proposed marriage to Isis extremists online after eight schoolgirls followed “jihadi bride trail”’, *Daily Mail*, 23 February 2015, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2965495/Revealed-EIGHT-British-schoolgirls-left-follow-jihadi-bride-trail-hundreds-desperate-women-proposed-marriage-Isis-extremists-online-thanks-jihadmatchmaker.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2965495/Revealed-EIGHT-British-schoolgirls-left-follow-jihadi-bride-trail-hundreds-desperate-women-proposed-marriage-Isis-extremists-online-thanks-jihadmatchmaker.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>630</sup> ‘Father of second missing British teenage girl thought to have been radicalised online before travelling to Syria pleads for her to come home’, *Daily Mail*, 7 October 2014.

<sup>631</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>632</sup> ‘Hundreds of desperate British women have proposed marriage to Isis extremists online after eight schoolgirls followed “jihadi bride trail”’, *Daily Mail*, 23 February 2015.

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**Known to the authorities:** No

**Status:** Unknown

### SHABAZZ SULEMAN (ABU SHAMIL AL-MUSLIM)

Shabazz Suleman had completed his A levels at High Wycombe Royal Grammar School and had a place to study International Relations at Keele University<sup>634</sup> when he travelled on holiday to Turkey with his parents before he disappeared.<sup>635</sup> His parents reported his disappearance to the British and Turkish authorities, and Suleman claimed he had been stopped at the Syrian border by the security services. He later claimed he was given the choice between deportation or partaking in an Islamic State prisoner swap,<sup>636</sup> and was subsequently transferred to Iraq<sup>637</sup> and handed over to Islamic State.

Suleman was described by the headmaster of the Royal Grammar School as an “engaging and amiable” student who “fitted in well” and worked hard at his studies.<sup>638</sup> A statement from the school described him as often active in class discussions, with a good work ethic, but reserved and quiet.<sup>639</sup> However, Suleman’s fellow students said that he had expressed support for the Caliphate established by Islamic State.

Suleman attended the Muslim Education Centre, High Wycombe, which has a history of extreme attendees.<sup>640</sup> A decade earlier it was attended by two individuals who were involved in the transatlantic liquid bomb plot. More recently, Thomas Evans, who travelled to fight for al-Shabaab, attended the Centre,<sup>641</sup> and his mother claimed he had become radicalised after meeting a group of men at the gym and attending a local mosque.<sup>642</sup>

It has also been suggested that Suleman may have been radicalised when he travelled to Aleppo, Syria, as part of an aid convoy in 2013.<sup>643</sup> Suleman, meanwhile, has claimed he was radicalised by “jihadi scholars” with whom he was in contact on Twitter.<sup>644</sup> His journey to join Islamic State took place within a wider context in High Wycombe which saw high numbers of young men disappearing. One of Suleman’s neighbours claimed eight students of the Wycombe Islamic Society mosque were missing and believed to be in Syria, and that their parents “didn’t realise their children were going to do this”.<sup>645</sup>

Suleman claimed to have been visited twice by Turkish intelligence services after being held on the border with Syria, saying they fined him and told him that he would be deported. He was held in

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<sup>633</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>634</sup> ‘Grammar School jihadist claims Turkish police fed him Domino’s pizza in jail before handing him over to ISIS in prisoner exchange which has caused diplomatic storm’, *Daily Mail*, 15 January 2015, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2911196/Grammar-school-jihadist-claims-Turkish-police-fed-Domino-s-pizza-jail-handing-ISIS-prisoner-exchange-caused-diplomatic-storm.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2911196/Grammar-school-jihadist-claims-Turkish-police-fed-Domino-s-pizza-jail-handing-ISIS-prisoner-exchange-caused-diplomatic-storm.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>635</sup> ‘Jihad terror plots – the High Wycombe connection’, *Daily Telegraph*, 9 November 2014, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/11218551/Jihad-terror-plots-the-High-Wycombe-connection.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/11218551/Jihad-terror-plots-the-High-Wycombe-connection.html), last visited: 7 March 2017; ‘Grammar School jihadist claims Turkish police fed him Domino’s pizza in jail before handing him over to ISIS in prisoner exchange which has caused diplomatic storm’, *Daily Mail*, 15 January 2015.

<sup>636</sup> ‘Grammar School jihadist claims Turkish police fed him Domino’s pizza in jail before handing him over to ISIS in prisoner exchange which has caused diplomatic storm’, *Daily Mail*, 15 January 2015.

<sup>637</sup> ‘British grammar school jihadist returned to Islamic State warns of MORE terror attacks’, *Daily Express*, 15 January 2015, available at: [www.express.co.uk/news/world/552119/Islamic-State-IS-British-jihadist-Shabazz-Suleman-terror-attacks-West-warning](http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/552119/Islamic-State-IS-British-jihadist-Shabazz-Suleman-terror-attacks-West-warning), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>638</sup> ‘Jihad terror plots – the High Wycombe connection’, *Daily Telegraph*, 9 November 2014.

<sup>639</sup> ‘Grammar School jihadist claims Turkish police fed him Domino’s pizza in jail before handing him over to ISIS in prisoner exchange which has caused diplomatic storm’, *Daily Mail*, 15 January 2015.

<sup>640</sup> ‘Jihad terror plots – the High Wycombe connection’, *Daily Telegraph*, 9 November 2014.

<sup>641</sup> ‘Jihadist’s link to liquid bomb plotter’, *The Sunday Times*, 22 June 2014, available at: [www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/uk\\_news/National/Terrorism/article1425534.ece](http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/uk_news/National/Terrorism/article1425534.ece), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>642</sup> ‘Buckinghamshire mum says she hopes her terrorist son is “burning in hell”’, *Get Bucks*, 12 October 2015, available at: [www.getbucks.co.uk/news/local-news/buckinghamshire-mum-says-hopes-terrorist-10240858](http://www.getbucks.co.uk/news/local-news/buckinghamshire-mum-says-hopes-terrorist-10240858), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>643</sup> ‘Jihad terror plots – the High Wycombe connection’, *Daily Telegraph*, 9 November 2014.

<sup>644</sup> ‘British grammar school jihadist returned to Islamic State warns of MORE terror attacks’, *Daily Express*, 15 January 2015.

<sup>645</sup> ‘Jihad terror plots – the High Wycombe connection’, *Daily Telegraph*, 9 November 2014.

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Sanliurfa, on the Turkish–Syria border, with other Islamic State fighters,<sup>646</sup> before being exchanged in a prisoner swap with Turkey in September 2014.<sup>647</sup>

**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** Unspecified

**Nationality:** British<sup>648</sup>

**Ancestry:** Unspecified

**Place of residence:** High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, South East England<sup>649</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Living at family home<sup>650</sup>

**Education:** International Relations, Keele University, Staffordshire (offered place; did not enrol);<sup>651</sup> A levels (History, Economics and Psychology), Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe<sup>652</sup>

**Means of travel:** Travelled to Turkey on holiday with his parents; attempted to cross border into Syria before being arrested; transferred to Syria as part of Islamic State prisoner swap<sup>653</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 18<sup>654</sup>

**Network:** None

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Islamic State [IS]<sup>655</sup>

**Known associates:** None

**Known to the authorities:** No

**Status:** Unknown [believed to be in Syria]<sup>656</sup>

### ABDULRAHMAN SHARIFF

Abdulrahman Shariff was a student at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLAN)<sup>657</sup> when he travelled with his older brother, Khalif, to join Islamic State in Syria in November 2014. The family reported the brothers' absence to police,<sup>658</sup> and Abdulrahman was reported to have been killed in April 2016.<sup>659</sup>

The family, who are of Somali descent, moved to the UK from Kenya around 20 years ago.<sup>660</sup> A family friend who knew both brothers, but claimed to have been closer to Khalif, stated that neither of the

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<sup>646</sup> 'Grammar School jihadist claims Turkish police fed him Domino's pizza in jail before handing him over to ISIS in prisoner exchange which has caused diplomatic storm', *Daily Mail*, 15 January 2015.

<sup>647</sup> 'UK jihadist prisoner swap reports "credible"', *BBC News*, 6 October 2014, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-29504924](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-29504924), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>648</sup> 'British grammar school jihadist returned to Islamic State warns of MORE terror attacks', *Daily Express*, 15 January 2015.

<sup>649</sup> 'Grammar School jihadist claims Turkish police fed him Domino's pizza in jail before handing him over to ISIS in prisoner exchange which has caused diplomatic storm', *Daily Mail*, 15 January 2015.

<sup>650</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>651</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>652</sup> 'Jihad terror plots – the High Wycombe connection', *Daily Telegraph*, 9 November 2014.

<sup>653</sup> *ibid.*; 'Grammar School jihadist claims Turkish police fed him Domino's pizza in jail before handing him over to ISIS in prisoner exchange which has caused diplomatic storm', *Daily Mail*, 15 January 2015.

<sup>654</sup> 'Shabazz Suleman – Who are Britain's jihadists?', *BBC News*, 10 October 2016, available at [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>655</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>656</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>657</sup> 'Ex-UCLAN student allegedly killed fighting for ISIS', *Pulse Media*, 5 April 2016, available at: [www.pulsemedia-online.co.uk/ex-uclan-student-allegedly-killed-fighting-for-isis/](http://www.pulsemedia-online.co.uk/ex-uclan-student-allegedly-killed-fighting-for-isis/), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>658</sup> 'Old Trafford brothers believed to be dead "after fleeing to Syria to fight with ISIS"', *Manchester Evening News*, 4 April 2016, available at: [www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/old-trafford-brothers-believed-dead-11137829](http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/old-trafford-brothers-believed-dead-11137829), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>659</sup> 'Abdulrahman Shariff – Who are Britain's jihadists?', *BBC News*, 10 October 2016, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>660</sup> 'Old Trafford brothers believed to be dead "after fleeing to Syria to fight with ISIS"', *Manchester Evening News*, 4 April 2016.

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brothers showed any signs of extremism. Likewise a family friend, Manchester United footballer Sadiq El Fitouri, said that “there was never any sign” of extremism in the brothers.

**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** Unspecified

**Nationality:** British<sup>661</sup>

**Ancestry:** Unspecified – suspected Somali<sup>662</sup>

**Place of residence:** Manchester, North West England<sup>663</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Unspecified

**Education:** University of Central Lancashire [enrolled autumn 2014];<sup>664</sup> Loreto Sixth Form College, Manchester; Stretford High School, Manchester<sup>665</sup>

**Means of travel:** Unspecified [November 2014]<sup>666</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 18<sup>667</sup>

**Network:** Two person cell<sup>668</sup>

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Islamic State [IS]<sup>669</sup>

**Known associates:** Khalif Shariff [older brother, IS]<sup>670</sup>

**Known to the authorities:** No

**Status:** Deceased [April 2016]<sup>671</sup>

### KHALIF SHARIFF

Khalif Shariff was studying Law at Lancaster University when he travelled with his younger brother, Abdulrahman, to join Islamic State in November 2014. The family reported the brothers’ absence to police, but Khalif was reported missing and presumed dead in April 2016.<sup>672</sup>

See Abdulrahman Shariff profile for more detail.

**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** Unspecified

**Nationality:** British<sup>673</sup>

**Ancestry:** Unspecified – suspected Somali<sup>674</sup>

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<sup>661</sup> ‘British ISIS brothers who were friends with Man Utd star “killed while fighting for terror group in Syria”’, *Daily Mirror*, 4 April 2016, available at: [www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/british-isis-brothers-who-were-7690110](http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/british-isis-brothers-who-were-7690110), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>662</sup> ‘Old Trafford brothers believed to be dead “after fleeing to Syria to fight with ISIS”’, *Manchester Evening News*, 4 April 2016.

<sup>663</sup> ‘British ISIS brothers who were friends with Man Utd star “killed while fighting for terror group in Syria”’, *Daily Mirror*, 4 April 2016.

<sup>664</sup> ‘Ex-UCLAN student allegedly killed fighting for ISIS’, *Pulse Media*, 5 April 2016.

<sup>665</sup> ‘Old Trafford brothers believed to be dead “after fleeing to Syria to fight with ISIS”’, *Manchester Evening News*, 4 April 2016.

<sup>666</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>667</sup> ‘Abdulrahman Shariff – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>668</sup> ‘Old Trafford brothers believed to be dead “after fleeing to Syria to fight with ISIS”’, *Manchester Evening News*, 4 April 2016.

<sup>669</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>670</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>671</sup> ‘Abdulrahman Shariff – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>672</sup> ‘Old Trafford brothers believed to be dead “after fleeing to Syria to fight with ISIS”’, *Manchester Evening News*, 4 April 2016; ‘Khalif Shariff – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32026985), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>673</sup> ‘British ISIS brothers who were friends with Man Utd star “killed while fighting for terror group in Syria”’, *Daily Mirror*, 4 April 2016.

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**Place of residence:** Manchester, North West England<sup>675</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Unspecified

**Education:** Law, Lancaster University; South Trafford College, Manchester; Stretford Grammar School, Manchester<sup>676</sup>

**Means of travel:** Unspecified [November 2014]<sup>677</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 20–21<sup>678</sup>

**Network:** Two person cell<sup>679</sup>

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Islamic State [IS]<sup>680</sup>

**Known associates:** Abdulrahman Shariff [younger brother, IS]<sup>681</sup>

**Known to the authorities:** No

**Status:** Missing [presumed deceased, April 2016]<sup>682</sup>

### HUMZA ALI

Humza Ali was taking a course in bricklaying at South and City College, Birmingham, when he attempted to travel to Syria to join Islamic State in January 2015.<sup>683</sup> He was sentenced to nine years in prison on 14 February 2017 for preparing for terrorist acts, as well as distributing terrorist material and sending malicious communications.<sup>684</sup> In January 2015, Ali travelled via Scotland and Ireland to Istanbul, Turkey, but was refused entry and sent back to the UK.<sup>685</sup> He had reportedly been planning to travel to Syria since 2013.<sup>686</sup>

According to the judge, Humza Ali had been “integrated into society until his mid teens”. However, after the age of 17 he became involved with extremists connected to al-Muhajiroun. One friend, Brusthom Ziamani,<sup>687</sup> who was also involved with al-Muhajiroun, was jailed in March 2015 for planning to behead a British soldier.<sup>688</sup> The two men had handed out leaflets together in July 2014.

In June 2014, Ali attended a paintballing session that was regarded by the judge as a training exercise in handling weapons;<sup>689</sup> pictures of this outing were found on his mobile phone when he was arrested that year.<sup>690</sup> Others pictured alongside Ali at the session included: Mohammed Ali Ahmed, convicted in

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<sup>674</sup> ‘Old Trafford brothers believed to be dead “after fleeing to Syria to fight with ISIS”’, *Manchester Evening News*, 4 April 2016.

<sup>675</sup> ‘British ISIS brothers who were friends with Man Utd star “killed while fighting for terror group in Syria”’, *Daily Mirror*, 4 April 2016.

<sup>676</sup> ‘Old Trafford brothers believed to be dead “after fleeing to Syria to fight with ISIS”’, *Manchester Evening News*, 4 April 2016.

<sup>677</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>678</sup> ‘Khalif Shariff – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>679</sup> ‘Old Trafford brothers believed to be dead “after fleeing to Syria to fight with ISIS”’, *Manchester Evening News*, 4 April 2016.

<sup>680</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>681</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>682</sup> *ibid.*; ‘Khalif Shariff – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>683</sup> ‘Apprentice bricklayer, 20, who trained to join ISIS at paintballing centre but was stopped from getting to Syria when his MOTHER confiscated his passport is jailed for nine years’, *Daily Mail*, 14 February 2017, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4224836/Apprentice-bricklayer-20-trained-join-ISIS-jailed.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4224836/Apprentice-bricklayer-20-trained-join-ISIS-jailed.html), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>684</sup> ‘Hodge Hill man “wanted to fight with ISIS” court hears’, *Birmingham Mail*, 24 November 2016, available at: [www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/syrian-terror-trial-live-humza-12223331](http://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/syrian-terror-trial-live-humza-12223331), last visited: 7 March 2017; ‘Judge sentences paintball terror training student who tried to join ISIS’, *Birmingham Mail*, 14 February 2017, available at: [www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/live-sentencing-isis-recruit-humza-12602324](http://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/live-sentencing-isis-recruit-humza-12602324), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>685</sup> ‘Apprentice bricklayer, 20, who trained to join ISIS at paintballing centre but was stopped from getting to Syria when his MOTHER confiscated his passport is jailed for nine years’, *Daily Mail*, 14 February 2017.

<sup>686</sup> ‘Man convicted after training for IS at paintball centre’, *ITV News*, 15 December 2016, available at: [www.itv.com/news/central/2016-12-15/man-convicted-after-training-for-is-at-paintball-centre/](http://www.itv.com/news/central/2016-12-15/man-convicted-after-training-for-is-at-paintball-centre/), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>687</sup> ‘Apprentice bricklayer, 20, who trained to join ISIS at paintballing centre but was stopped from getting to Syria when his MOTHER confiscated his passport is jailed for nine years’, *Daily Mail*, 14 February 2017.

<sup>688</sup> ‘Soldier beheading plan teenager Brusthom Ziamani jailed’, *BBC News*, 20 March 2015, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-31987242](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-31987242), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>689</sup> ‘Apprentice bricklayer, 20, who trained to join ISIS at paintballing centre but was stopped from getting to Syria when his MOTHER confiscated his passport is jailed for nine years’, *Daily Mail*, 14 February 2017.

<sup>690</sup> ‘Man convicted after training for IS at paintball centre’, *ITV News*, 15 December 2016.

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November 2016 for providing finances to those involved in the Paris and Brussels attacks in November 2015 and March 2016;<sup>691</sup> Abdelatif Giani, who travelled to Syria in December 2014;<sup>692</sup> and Gabriel Rasmus, jailed in November 2016 for attempting to travel to Syria to join Islamic State in April 2015.<sup>693</sup>

Ali had met Rasmus at Quran classes in Birmingham,<sup>694</sup> and initially intended to travel to Syria with him in December 2014.<sup>695</sup> Ali had also been in contact with Alex Nash, with whom he discussed jihad and martyrdom. Nash was jailed in May 2016 after he attempted to travel to Syria with his wife in November 2014.<sup>696</sup>

Ali's father, Shahid Ali, was convicted in 2009 of supplying equipment to the Taliban and al-Qaeda, and was arrested when Ali was 12 years old.<sup>697</sup> Shahid Ali had been a member of a cell led by Parviz Khan, who was jailed for life in 2008 for a plot to kidnap and behead a British soldier.<sup>698</sup> When Humza Ali was 17, his mother confiscated his passport, but he obtained another one. His father, according to Humza, had explicitly told him not to travel, and reported him missing when he did. However, after reporting Ali missing, his father is reported to have refused to cooperate with the police.

Once Humza Ali returned from Turkey he sent extremist material to another student on his course via a chat group. He also sent threatening messages to a Labour councillor, calling him a "dirty swine kaffir", and told him to keep away from a "Muslim area". Prior to his sentencing he was described as having "them and us thinking", while his defence argued he had "immature and highly reactionary attitudes" and lacked "cognitive and high-level thinking".<sup>699</sup> He was said to have been "exposed to others of a more sophisticated and radicalised state of mind".<sup>700</sup>

**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** Unspecified

**Nationality:** British<sup>701</sup>

**Ancestry:** Unspecified

**Place of residence:** Bromford Lane, Ward End, Birmingham, West Midlands<sup>702</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Living at family home [with parents]<sup>703</sup>

**Education:** Studying bricklaying at South and City College, Birmingham<sup>704</sup>

**Means of travel:** Travelled by coach from Birmingham to Scotland, travelled by ferry to Northern Ireland, and on to Dublin; travelled by plane to Istanbul, Turkey [January 2015]<sup>705</sup>

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<sup>691</sup> 'Birmingham man found guilty of giving cash to Brussels attack suspect', *Guardian*, 6 December 2016, available at: [www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/dec/06/zakaria-boufassil-birmingham-man-found-guilty-giving-cash-brussels-bombing-suspect](http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/dec/06/zakaria-boufassil-birmingham-man-found-guilty-giving-cash-brussels-bombing-suspect), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>692</sup> 'Birmingham terror suspects "gave £3,000 to Brussels bomber", court hears', *Daily Express*, 29 April 2016, available at: [www.express.co.uk/news/uk/665662/Birmingham-terror-suspects-court-Brussels-bombing](http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/665662/Birmingham-terror-suspects-court-Brussels-bombing), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>693</sup> 'Birmingham men who tried to join ISIS jailed', *BBC News*, 7 November 2016, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-37897107](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-37897107), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>694</sup> 'Apprentice bricklayer, 20, who trained to join ISIS at paintballing centre but was stopped from getting to Syria when his MOTHER confiscated his passport is jailed for nine years', *Daily Mail*, 14 February 2017.

<sup>695</sup> 'Man convicted after training for IS at paintball centre', *ITV News*, 15 December 2016.

<sup>696</sup> 'Walsall group jailed for terror offences', *BBC News*, 23 May 2016, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-36361382](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-36361382), last visited: 7 March 2017; 'Apprentice bricklayer, 20, who trained to join ISIS at paintballing centre but was stopped from getting to Syria when his MOTHER confiscated his passport is jailed for nine years', *Daily Mail*, 14 February 2017.

<sup>697</sup> 'British-born Muslims supplied equipment to al-Qaeda', *Daily Telegraph*, 9 March 2009, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/4962802/British-born-Muslims-supplied-equipment-to-al-Qaeda.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/4962802/British-born-Muslims-supplied-equipment-to-al-Qaeda.html), last visited: 7 March 2017; 'Apprentice bricklayer, 20, who trained to join ISIS at paintballing centre but was stopped from getting to Syria when his MOTHER confiscated his passport is jailed for nine years', *Daily Mail*, 14 February 2017.

<sup>698</sup> 'Four men jailed on terror charges', *BBC News*, 9 March 2009, available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7932719.stm>, last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>699</sup> 'Apprentice bricklayer, 20, who trained to join ISIS at paintballing centre but was stopped from getting to Syria when his MOTHER confiscated his passport is jailed for nine years', *Daily Mail*, 14 February 2017.

<sup>700</sup> 'Judge sentences paintball terror training student who tried to join ISIS', *Birmingham Mail*, 14 February 2017.

<sup>701</sup> 'HAPLESS British ISIS wannabe caught taking part in "PAINTBALL TRAINING SESSION"', *Daily Express*, 19 December 2016, available at: [www.express.co.uk/news/uk/744983/ISIS-British-jihadi-Birmingham-Humza-Ali-PAINTBALL-TRAINING-SESSION-Syria](http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/744983/ISIS-British-jihadi-Birmingham-Humza-Ali-PAINTBALL-TRAINING-SESSION-Syria), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>702</sup> 'Judge sentences paintball terror training student who tried to join ISIS', *Birmingham Mail*, 14 February 2017.

<sup>703</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>704</sup> 'Apprentice bricklayer, 20, who trained to join ISIS at paintballing centre but was stopped from getting to Syria when his MOTHER confiscated his passport is jailed for nine years', *Daily Mail*, 14 February 2017.

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**Age at time of travel:** 18–19<sup>706</sup>

**Network:** Lone traveller

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Al-Muhajiroun [AM]<sup>707</sup>

**Known associates:** Shahid Ali [father; convicted for supplying equipment for terrorist purposes];<sup>708</sup> Zeb Ali [co-defendant; convicted of distributing extremist literature];<sup>709</sup> Brusthom Ziamani [friend; convicted for preparing an act of terrorism];<sup>710</sup> Mohammed Ali Ahmed [friend; convicted for providing finances to those involved in the Paris and Brussels attacks];<sup>711</sup> Abdelatif Giani [friend; Islamic State fighter];<sup>712</sup> Gabriel Rasmus [friend; convicted for preparing for terrorist acts]<sup>713</sup>

**Known to the authorities:** Yes [arrested in 2014 and had his phone seized]<sup>714</sup>

**Status:** In detention<sup>715</sup>

### ZUBAIR NUR

Zubair Nur was a student of Petroleum Geology at Royal Holloway, University of London, when he is believed to have joined Islamic State after his family reported him missing in either January or February 2015 following an attendance report from the university.<sup>716</sup> Nur's family are believed to have travelled to Turkey in an attempt to retrieve him.<sup>717</sup> He was reported to have been killed in Tikrit, Iraq, by extremist social media in September 2015.<sup>718</sup>

Nur attended London East Academy (LEA) prior to enrolling at Royal Holloway. In March 2015, it was reported that Ofsted had previously claimed pupils at the school were “vulnerable to extremist influences and radicalisation” and the school was threatened with closure. LEA, which is administered by a trust linked to the East London Mosque, claimed Nur had shown no signs of extremism while studying there, and was a popular and “balanced” pupil.<sup>719</sup> He was elsewhere described as a “happy go lucky” student who began to dress in traditional Islamic attire.

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<sup>705</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>706</sup> ‘Teenagers bailed over terror allegation’, *Birmingham Mail*, 3 November 2015, available at: [www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/teenagers-bailed-over-terror-allegation-10375269](http://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/teenagers-bailed-over-terror-allegation-10375269), last visited: 8 March 2017; ‘Apprentice bricklayer, 20, who trained to join ISIS at paintballing centre but was stopped from getting to Syria when his MOTHER confiscated his passport is jailed for nine years’, *Daily Mail*, 14 February 2017.

<sup>707</sup> ‘Apprentice bricklayer, 20, who trained to join ISIS at paintballing centre but was stopped from getting to Syria when his MOTHER confiscated his passport is jailed for nine years’, *Daily Mail*, 14 February 2017.

<sup>708</sup> ‘British-born Muslims supplied equipment to al-Qaeda’, *Daily Telegraph*, 9 March 2009; ‘Apprentice bricklayer, 20, who trained to join ISIS at paintballing centre but was stopped from getting to Syria when his MOTHER confiscated his passport is jailed for nine years’, *Daily Mail*, 14 February 2017.

<sup>709</sup> ‘Judge sentences paintball terror training student who tried to join ISIS’, *Birmingham Mail*, 14 February 2017.

<sup>710</sup> ‘Apprentice bricklayer, 20, who trained to join ISIS at paintballing centre but was stopped from getting to Syria when his MOTHER confiscated his passport is jailed for nine years’, *Daily Mail*, 14 February 2017; ‘Soldier beheading plan teenager Brusthom Ziamani jailed’, *BBC News*, 20 March 2015.

<sup>711</sup> ‘Apprentice bricklayer, 20, who trained to join ISIS at paintballing centre but was stopped from getting to Syria when his MOTHER confiscated his passport is jailed for nine years’, *Daily Mail*, 14 February 2017; ‘Pair convicted after giving money to Brussels bomb suspect’, *Sky News*, 6 December 2016, available at: <http://news.sky.com/story/pair-convicted-after-giving-money-to-brussels-bomb-suspect-10685390>, last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>712</sup> ‘Apprentice bricklayer, 20, who trained to join ISIS at paintballing centre but was stopped from getting to Syria when his MOTHER confiscated his passport is jailed for nine years’, *Daily Mail*, 14 February 2017; ‘Birmingham terror suspects “gave £3,000 to Brussels bomber”, court hears’, *Daily Express*, 29 April 2016.

<sup>713</sup> ‘Apprentice bricklayer, 20, who trained to join ISIS at paintballing centre but was stopped from getting to Syria when his MOTHER confiscated his passport is jailed for nine years’, *Daily Mail*, 14 February 2017; ‘Birmingham men who tried to join ISIS jailed’, *BBC News*, 7 November 2016.

<sup>714</sup> ‘Man convicted after training for IS at paintball centre’, *ITV News*, 15 December 2016.

<sup>715</sup> ‘Apprentice bricklayer, 20, who trained to join ISIS at paintballing centre but was stopped from getting to Syria when his MOTHER confiscated his passport is jailed for nine years’, *Daily Mail*, 14 February 2017.

<sup>716</sup> ‘Zubair Nur – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/special/2015/newsspec\\_10259/content/english/dead.html?v=6.6.356](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/special/2015/newsspec_10259/content/english/dead.html?v=6.6.356), last visited: 8 March 2017; ‘Islamic State: Egham student feared to have joined group’, *Get Surrey*, 27 March 2015, available at: [www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/surrey-news/islamic-state-egham-student-feared-8930795](http://www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/surrey-news/islamic-state-egham-student-feared-8930795), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>717</sup> ‘Missing former Chelsea Academy deputy head boy feared to have joined Islamic State’, *Evening Standard*, 23 March 2015, available at: [www.standard.co.uk/news/london/missing-former-chelsea-academy-deputy-head-boy-feared-to-have-joined-islamic-state-10127496.html](http://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/missing-former-chelsea-academy-deputy-head-boy-feared-to-have-joined-islamic-state-10127496.html), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>718</sup> ‘Zubair Nur – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>719</sup> ‘Zubair Nur: Teen feared to have joined Isis attended private Muslim school where students were “vulnerable to radicalisation”’, *Evening Standard*, 27 March 2015.



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According to a friend of Nur, he had made Facebook posts praising extremists, which was out of character and alarmed those who knew him.<sup>720</sup> A former pupil of LEA said that during the five years Nur attended the school he saw him change, and that although the school “didn’t tolerate extremism”, there were “a few hotheads” who he believes may have sparked Nur’s extremism. According to the friend, “he started to research [online] a bit more and that’s where it all started”, when Nur was in Years 10 and 11.<sup>721</sup> Nur was also reported to have volunteered for the Young Muslim Organisation (YMO). The YMO is a youth wing of the Islamic Forum of Europe (IFE), which is alleged to control the East London Mosque.<sup>722</sup>

**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** Unspecified

**Nationality:** British<sup>723</sup>

**Ancestry:** Unspecified

**Place of residence:** Fulham, Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, West London<sup>724</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Unspecified

**Education:** BSc Petroleum Geology, Royal Holloway, University of London; A levels, Chelsea Academy, London East Academy (LEA), Tower Hamlets, London [left 2012]<sup>725</sup>

**Means of travel:** Unspecified

**Age at time of travel:** 18<sup>726</sup>

**Network:** None

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Islamic State [IS]<sup>727</sup>

**Known associates:** None

**Known to the authorities:** No

**Status:** Deceased [September 2015]<sup>728</sup>

### YAHYA RASHID

Yahya Rashid was a student of Design and Electronic Engineering at Middlesex University, London.<sup>729</sup> He was convicted on 13 November 2015 for preparing to commit acts of terrorism in relation to planned travel to Syria to join Islamic State, and sentenced to five years in prison.<sup>730</sup>

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<sup>720</sup> ‘Missing Church of England school deputy head boy “feared to have fled to Syria to join Islamic State after he started posting Facebook messages praising terror chiefs and dressing in Muslim clothes”’, *Daily Mail*, 23 March 2015, available at: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3007078/Missing-Church-England-school-deputy-head-boy-feared-fled-Syria-join-Islamic-State-started-posting-Facebook-messages-praising-terror-chiefs-dressing-Muslim-clothes.html>, last visited: 10 March 2017.

<sup>721</sup> ‘Zubair Nur: Teen feared to have joined Isis attended private Muslim school where students were “vulnerable to radicalisation”’, *Evening Standard*, 27 March 2015.

<sup>722</sup> ‘Fifth Isis runaway held on take-off’, *Daily Telegraph*, 28 March 2015, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/11501668/Fifth-Isis-runaway-held-on-take-off.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/11501668/Fifth-Isis-runaway-held-on-take-off.html), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>723</sup> ‘Young Brit feared to have quit university to join Islamic State’, *Daily Star*, 23 March 2015, available at: [www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/432321/Isis-terror-group-young-Brit](http://www.dailystar.co.uk/news/latest-news/432321/Isis-terror-group-young-Brit), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>724</sup> ‘Zubair Nur: Teen feared to have joined Isis attended private Muslim school where students were “vulnerable to radicalisation”’, *Evening Standard*, 27 March 2015.

<sup>725</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>726</sup> ‘Islamic State: Egham student feared to have joined group’, *Get Surrey*, 27 March 2015; ‘Zubair Nur – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>727</sup> ‘Zubair Nur – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>728</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>729</sup> *R v Kahar & Ors* [2016] EWCA Crim 568, 17 May 2016, available at: [www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Crim/2016/568.html](http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Crim/2016/568.html), last visited: 19 December 2016, para. 113.

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Rashid enrolled on his course at Middlesex University in autumn 2014 and started his course on 6 October. He did so fraudulently, using a forged BTech certificate to obtain his place at the university despite only having completed GSCEs. He developed radical Islamist ideas by the end of 2014, and befriended three of the men with whom he later travelled to Syria.<sup>731</sup>

He had a history of extremist online activity, including a Facebook post suggested by the judge in his case to imply that Rashid wanted to die as a martyr.<sup>732</sup> Rashid also commented on extremist videos, with one comment relating to the January 2015 attack on the offices of satirical magazine, *Charlie Hebdo*, saying, “Allahu Akbar (God is great). This makes me happy.”<sup>733</sup> He had also viewed Islamic State material online at Wembley Mosque with other members of the group with whom he later travelled.<sup>734</sup>

Rashid used his student loan to purchase flight tickets for himself and four others to travel to Morocco.<sup>735</sup> The group, who together attended Wembley Mosque, went on to travel to Istanbul, Turkey, and then to an Islamic State safe house in Gaziantep, on the border with Syria. The rest of the group are believed to have crossed the border into Syria; however, Rashid was persuaded to return to the UK by his father.<sup>736</sup>

Rashid was reportedly of low intelligence and had a low IQ.<sup>737</sup> A clinical psychologist concluded that Rashid had low intellectual functioning and was thus suggestible and did not understand the seriousness of his actions.<sup>738</sup> A Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist, however, claimed that the evaluation underestimated his intelligence.<sup>739</sup> His defence claimed that he had been manipulated by others in the group from Wembley Mosque, and that Rashid had merely wanted to live in an “Islamic utopia”.<sup>740</sup>

**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** Unspecified<sup>741</sup> [DOB 29 March 1996]<sup>742</sup>

**Nationality:** British<sup>743</sup>

**Ancestry:** Unspecified–Somali<sup>744</sup>

**Place of residence:** Willesden, London Borough of Brent, West London<sup>745</sup>

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<sup>730</sup> ‘Yahya Rashid convicted of preparation of acts of terror after planning to join ISIS’, Crown Prosecution Service, 13 November 2015, available at: [www.cps.gov.uk/news/latest\\_news/yahya\\_rashid\\_convicted\\_of\\_preparation\\_of\\_acts\\_of\\_terror\\_after\\_planning\\_to\\_join\\_isis/](http://www.cps.gov.uk/news/latest_news/yahya_rashid_convicted_of_preparation_of_acts_of_terror_after_planning_to_join_isis/), last visited: 8 March 2017; ‘“Street-smart” teenager who conned his way into Middlesex University then spent his £6,000 student loan buying flights to Syria to join ISIS is jailed for five years’, *Daily Mail*, 18 November 2015, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3323792/Teenager-used-university-grant-join-ISIS-friends-Syria-jailed-five-years.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3323792/Teenager-used-university-grant-join-ISIS-friends-Syria-jailed-five-years.html), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>731</sup> *R v Kahar & Ors* [2016] EWCA Crim 568, 17 May 2016, paras. 113–115.

<sup>732</sup> ‘Teen detained after conning his way into university and blowing loan to travel to join Islamic State’, *ITV News*, 18 November 2015, available at: [www.itv.com/news/london/2015-11-18/teen-detained-after-conning-his-way-into-university-and-blowing-loan-to-travel-to-join-islamic-state/](http://www.itv.com/news/london/2015-11-18/teen-detained-after-conning-his-way-into-university-and-blowing-loan-to-travel-to-join-islamic-state/), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>733</sup> ‘“Street-smart” teenager who conned his way into Middlesex University then spent his £6,000 student loan buying flights to Syria to join ISIS is jailed for five years’, *Daily Mail*, 18 November 2015.

<sup>734</sup> ‘Rashid: Five years for teen who wanted to be ISIS “Footsoldier”’, *Court News*, 18 November 2015.

<sup>735</sup> ‘Yahya Rashid convicted of preparation of acts of terror after planning to join ISIS’, Crown Prosecution Service, 13 November 2015; ‘Teenager blew student loan to travel to join Islamic State after conning his way into university’, *ITV News*, 13 November 2015, available at: [www.itv.com/news/london/2015-11-13/teenager-blew-student-loan-to-travel-to-join-islamic-state/](http://www.itv.com/news/london/2015-11-13/teenager-blew-student-loan-to-travel-to-join-islamic-state/), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>736</sup> ‘London teenager used his student loan to fly himself and four friends to join ISIS in Syria and duped airport police by claiming they were travelling to find love’, *Daily Mail*, 13 November 2015, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3317389/London-teenager-used-student-loan-fly-four-friends-join-ISIS-Syria-duped-airport-police-claiming-travelling-love.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3317389/London-teenager-used-student-loan-fly-four-friends-join-ISIS-Syria-duped-airport-police-claiming-travelling-love.html), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>737</sup> ‘Low IQ teen convicted for Syria plan’, *BBC News*, 13 November 2015, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-34814735](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-34814735), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>738</sup> *R v Kahar & Ors* [2016] EWCA Crim 568, 17 May 2016, paras. 122–123.

<sup>739</sup> *ibid.*, para. 122.

<sup>740</sup> ‘Teenager “Used Student Loan and Grant to Travel to Join Is”’, *Press Association*, 27 October 2015.

<sup>741</sup> *R v Kahar & Ors* [2016] EWCA Crim 568, 17 May 2016, para. 113.

<sup>742</sup> *ibid.*, para. 113.

<sup>743</sup> *ibid.*, para. 113.

<sup>744</sup> ‘Teenager who used student loan to join Isis in Syria gets youth custody’, *Guardian*, 18 November 2015, available at: [www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/18/yahya-rashid-used-student-loan-join-isis-syria-youth-custody](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/18/yahya-rashid-used-student-loan-join-isis-syria-youth-custody), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>745</sup> ‘Teenager arrested at Luton Airport for terror offences’, *BBC News*, 1 April 2015, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-32150550](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-32150550), last visited: 8 March 2017.

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**Family/living circumstances:** Living at family home [mother, father (unspecified of seven) siblings]

<sup>746</sup>

**Education:** Studying Design and Electronic Engineering, Middlesex University, London (obtained fraudulently with a false BTEC Level Three certificate) [October 2014–February 2015];<sup>747</sup> BTEC Level 2, Applied Science, and 6 GCSEs grades C to E, Alperton Community School, Wembley, Brent [low IQ (65–70), placed on Special Educational Needs register]<sup>748</sup>

**Means of travel:** Purchased flight tickets for himself and four others to travel to Morocco;<sup>749</sup> travelled to Istanbul, Turkey, and then Gaziantep, on the border with Syria<sup>750</sup> [February 2015];<sup>751</sup> returned to the UK on 31 March 2015<sup>752</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 18<sup>753</sup>

**Network:** Wembley IS travellers<sup>754</sup>

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Islamic State [IS]<sup>755</sup>

**Known associates:** Khalid Abdul-Rahman, Ibrahim Amouri, Swaleh Mohamed, Deqo Osman [co-travellers, Wembley IS travellers, believed to be in Syria]<sup>756</sup>

**Known to the authorities:** No [no previous convictions; questioned by police on departure for Morocco (en route to Syria)]<sup>757</sup>

**Status:** In detention

### TALHA ASMAL (ABU YUSUF AL-BRITANI)

Talha Asmal was studying A levels<sup>758</sup> at Mirfield Free Grammar and Sixth Form when he travelled to Syria in March<sup>759</sup> or April 2015.<sup>760</sup> He travelled alongside his close friend and next-door neighbour Hassan Munshi.<sup>761</sup> Asmal was killed on 13 June 2015 when he took part in an Islamic State-directed suicide truck-bomb attack with three others on an oil refinery in Baiji, Northern Iraq. He is thought to be Britain's youngest suicide bomber.<sup>762</sup>

Asmal was raised in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire.<sup>763</sup> The executive principal of his sixth form college recalled that he was quiet, conscientious and private, but a “typical teenager”. His family was described

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<sup>746</sup> R v Kahar & Ors [2016] EWCA Crim 568, 17 May 2016, para. 113.

<sup>747</sup> “Teenager “Used Student Loan and Grant to Travel to Join Is””, *Press Association*, 27 October 2015; R v Kahar & Ors [2016] EWCA Crim 568, 17 May 2016, para. 113.

<sup>748</sup> “Teenager “Used Student Loan and Grant to Travel to Join Is””, *Press Association*, 27 October 2015.

<sup>749</sup> “Yahya Rashid convicted of preparation of acts of terror after plotting to join ISIS”, Crown Prosecution Service, 13 November 2015; “Teenager blew student loan to travel to join Islamic State after conning his way into university”, *ITV News*, 13 November 2015.

<sup>750</sup> “London teenager used his student loan to fly himself and four friends to join ISIS in Syria and duped airport police by claiming they were travelling to find love”, *Daily Mail*, 13 November 2015.

<sup>751</sup> “Low IQ teen convicted for Syria plan”, *BBC News*, 13 November 2015.

<sup>752</sup> “London teenager used his student loan to fly himself and four friends to join ISIS in Syria and duped airport police by claiming they were travelling to find love”, *Daily Mail*, 13 November 2015.

<sup>753</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>754</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>755</sup> “Teenager who used student loan to join Isis in Syria gets youth custody”, *Guardian*, 18 November 2015.

<sup>756</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>757</sup> “London Teenager used his student loan to fly himself and four friends to join ISIS in Syria and duped airport police by claiming they were travelling to find love”, *Daily Mail*, 13 November 2015.

<sup>758</sup> “Talha Asmal – Who are Britain’s jihadists?”, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/special/2015/newsspec\\_10259/content/english/dead.html?v=6.6.356](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/special/2015/newsspec_10259/content/english/dead.html?v=6.6.356), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>759</sup> “Dewsbury in “utter shock” over Talha Asmal’s death in Iraq suicide bombing”, *Guardian*, 15 June 2015, available at: [www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/15/dewsbury-in-utter-shock-at-over-talha-asmals-death-in-iraq-suicide-bombing](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/15/dewsbury-in-utter-shock-at-over-talha-asmals-death-in-iraq-suicide-bombing), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>760</sup> “Talha Asmal – Who are Britain’s jihadists?”, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>761</sup> “Dewsbury in “utter shock” over Talha Asmal’s death in Iraq suicide bombing”, *Guardian*, 15 June 2015.

<sup>762</sup> “Talha Asmal – Who are Britain’s jihadists?”, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016; “Dewsbury in “utter shock” over Talha Asmal’s death in Iraq suicide bombing”, *Guardian*, 15 June 2015.

<sup>763</sup> “Even if your home town is Dewsbury, you can be British and Muslim at the same time”, *Guardian*, 21 June 2015, available at: [www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/21/muslim-dewsbury-islam-extremists](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/21/muslim-dewsbury-islam-extremists), last visited: 8 March 2017.

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by Shahid Malik, former MP for Dewsbury, as “beautiful, caring, peace-loving and incredibly humble”, and Asmal himself was described as “sweet-natured, helpful, respectful and friendly”.

Asmal’s family accused Islamic State of targeting their son’s “innocence and vulnerability”. They claimed that he had never demonstrated any violent or extreme views, and that he was exploited by anonymous individuals over the internet who targeted and befriended him with the intention of deliberately grooming him.<sup>764</sup> He is reported to have been groomed over a period of a few months.<sup>765</sup> Hammad Munshi, the older brother of Asmal’s travel partner, Hassan Munshi, was convicted of terrorism offences in August 2008 and was just 15 when he was recruited by a cell plotting an attack on the Royal Family.<sup>766</sup>

**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** Unspecified

**Nationality:** British<sup>767</sup>

**Ancestry:** Unspecified-Indian<sup>768</sup>

**Place of residence:** Savile Town, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, Yorkshire and the Humber, England<sup>769</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Living at family home [with parents]<sup>770</sup>

**Education:** A level student,<sup>771</sup> Mirfield Free Grammar and Sixth Form, Mirfield, West Yorkshire<sup>772</sup>

**Means of travel:** Travelled by plane to Dalaman, Turkey,<sup>773</sup> and crossed over into Syria [disputed: March<sup>774</sup> or April 2015]<sup>775</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 16-17<sup>776</sup>

**Network:** Two person travel cell<sup>777</sup>

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** Islamic State [IS]<sup>778</sup>

**Known associates:** Hassan Munshi [close friend; travel companion; IS]<sup>779</sup>

**Known to the authorities:** No

**Status:** Deceased [d. June 2015]<sup>780</sup>

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<sup>764</sup> ‘Dewsbury in “utter shock” over Talha Asmal’s death in Iraq suicide bombing’, *Guardian*, 15 June 2015.

<sup>765</sup> ‘Indian-origin teen is youngest IS suicide bomber’, *The Hindu*, 16 June 2015, available at: [www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-international/indianorigin-teen-is-youngest-is-suicide-bomber/article7319655.ece](http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-international/indianorigin-teen-is-youngest-is-suicide-bomber/article7319655.ece), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>766</sup> ‘Dewsbury in “utter shock” over Talha Asmal’s death in Iraq suicide bombing’, *Guardian*, 15 June 2015; ‘Britain’s youngest teenager terrorist: “a wake-up call for parents”’, *Daily Telegraph*, 19 September 2008, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2988926/Britains-youngest-teenage-terrorist-a-wake-up-call-for-parents.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2988926/Britains-youngest-teenage-terrorist-a-wake-up-call-for-parents.html), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>767</sup> ‘Isis: 17-year-old boy from Yorkshire “becomes youngest British suicide bomber”’, *International Business Times*, 14 June 2015, available at: [www.ibtimes.co.uk/isis-17-year-old-boy-yorkshire-becomes-youngest-british-suicide-bomber-1506067](http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/isis-17-year-old-boy-yorkshire-becomes-youngest-british-suicide-bomber-1506067), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>768</sup> ‘Indian-origin teen is youngest IS suicide bomber’, *The Hindu*, 16 June 2015.

<sup>769</sup> ‘Even if your home town is Dewsbury, you can be British and Muslim at the same time’, *Guardian*, 21 June 2015.

<sup>770</sup> ‘Dewsbury in “utter shock” over Talha Asmal’s death in Iraq suicide bombing’, *Guardian*, 15 June 2015.

<sup>771</sup> ‘Talha Asmal – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>772</sup> ‘Dewsbury in “utter shock” over Talha Asmal’s death in Iraq suicide bombing’, *Guardian*, 15 June 2015.

<sup>773</sup> ‘Teenage neighbours who flew to Turkey in bid to join ISIS have been described as “ordinary Yorkshire lads” who used to play snooker at their local hall’, *Daily Mail*, 9 April 2015, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3031753/Muslim-leaders-fear-friends-follow-teenagers-flew-Turkey-bid-join-ISIS-pictures-pair-emerge.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3031753/Muslim-leaders-fear-friends-follow-teenagers-flew-Turkey-bid-join-ISIS-pictures-pair-emerge.html), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>774</sup> ‘Dewsbury in “utter shock” over Talha Asmal’s death in Iraq suicide bombing’, *Guardian*, 15 June 2015.

<sup>775</sup> ‘Talha Asmal – Who are Britain’s jihadists?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>776</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>777</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>778</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>779</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>780</sup> *ibid.*

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### CUBEYDA JAMA

Cubeyda Jama was a Computer Studies student at Middlesex University.<sup>781</sup> He pleaded guilty to one count of preparing for an act of terrorism in relation to his plans to travel to Syria or Iraq on 24 June 2016,<sup>782</sup> and was jailed for three and a half years in a young offenders' institution on 28 July 2016.<sup>783</sup>

Jama's defence team claimed that he had had a "disjointed and very unhappy childhood". His parents had separated and he moved from Finland to Somalia before moving to the UK in 2010 with his father.<sup>784</sup> A psychological assessment concluded that Jama was naive,<sup>785</sup> and it was suggested that he had been radicalised through an internet chatroom.<sup>786</sup>

Jama's defence team also stated that his radicalisation had been "rapid".<sup>787</sup> It was suggested that it was a result of "grooming" over the internet, but he had not attempted to groom or encourage others.<sup>788</sup> According to a probation report he was of "low to average" intelligence and was described as vulnerable,<sup>789</sup> while the judge at his trial suggested he was at "obvious risk of radicalisation" by a combination of material on the internet and the influence of others.<sup>790</sup>

On 4 February 2016, Jama was arrested just before take-off on a flight to Bucharest and was found to be carrying a backpack containing numerous extremist documents and "terrorist material".<sup>791</sup> According to the police, Jama had used his student loan to pay for equipment and had been collecting items for his journey since early January 2016.<sup>792</sup> A search of his home uncovered a document in which Jama listed the options of roles he might do for Islamic State, including producing explosives.<sup>793</sup> According to Jama's defence he had no contacts within Syria to help him reach the country.<sup>794</sup>

**Gender:** Male

**Born in UK:** Finland<sup>795</sup> [DOB 31 July 1996]<sup>796</sup>

**Nationality:** Finnish<sup>797</sup>

**Ancestry:** Finnish-Somali<sup>798</sup>

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<sup>781</sup> 'Student, 19, who used his university loan to catch RyanAir flight to Europe to join ISIS is jailed for three and a half years', *Daily Mail*, 28 July 2016, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3713215/Student-19-used-university-loan-catch-RyanAir-flight-Europe-join-ISIS-jailed-three-half-years.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3713215/Student-19-used-university-loan-catch-RyanAir-flight-Europe-join-ISIS-jailed-three-half-years.html), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>782</sup> 'London-based student admits Syria terrorism charge', *BBC News*, 24 June 2016, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-36618008](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-36618008), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>783</sup> 'Teenager who spent student loan trying to join Isis and used a "step-by-step guide to terrorism" is jailed', *Daily Telegraph*, 12 July 2016, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/07/28/teenager-who-spent-student-loan-trying-to-join-isis-and-used-a-s/](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/07/28/teenager-who-spent-student-loan-trying-to-join-isis-and-used-a-s/), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>784</sup> 'Student, 19, who used his university loan to catch RyanAir flight to Europe to join ISIS is jailed for three and a half years', *Daily Mail*, 28 July 2016; 'Teenager who spent student loan trying to join Isis and used a "step-by-step guide to terrorism" is jailed', *Daily Telegraph*, 28 July 2016.

<sup>785</sup> 'Teenager with "step-by-step terrorist guide" jailed after he was caught trying to join Isis in Syria', *International Business Times*, 28 July 2016, available at: [www.ibtimes.co.uk/teenager-step-by-step-terrorist-guide-jailed-after-he-was-caught-trying-join-isis-syria-1573116](http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/teenager-step-by-step-terrorist-guide-jailed-after-he-was-caught-trying-join-isis-syria-1573116), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>786</sup> 'Student, 19, who used his university loan to catch RyanAir flight to Europe to join ISIS is jailed for three and a half years', *Daily Mail*, 28 July 2016.

<sup>787</sup> 'Teenager jailed after trying to join Islamic State in Syria', *Prestwich and Whitefield Guide*, 28 July 2016, available at: [www.prestwichandwhitefieldguide.co.uk/news/14649412.display/](http://www.prestwichandwhitefieldguide.co.uk/news/14649412.display/), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>788</sup> 'Radicalised teenager jailed for three and a half years for trying to join Islamic State', *Braintree and Witham Times*, 29 July 2016, available at: [www.braintreeandwithamtimes.co.uk/news/14650813.Radicalised-teenager-jailed-for-three-and-a-half-years-for-trying-to-join-Islamic-State/](http://www.braintreeandwithamtimes.co.uk/news/14650813.Radicalised-teenager-jailed-for-three-and-a-half-years-for-trying-to-join-Islamic-State/), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>789</sup> 'Student, 19, who used his university loan to catch RyanAir flight to Europe to join ISIS is jailed for three and a half years', *Daily Mail*, 28 July 2016.

<sup>790</sup> 'Teenager with "step-by-step terrorist guide" jailed after he was caught trying to join Isis in Syria', *International Business Times*, 28 July 2016.

<sup>791</sup> 'Thornton Heath teenager Cubeyda Hassan Jama jailed after being caught at Stansted Airport on way to fight for Isis in Syria', *Your Local Guardian*, 28 July 2016, available at: [www.yourlocalguardian.co.uk/news/14649483.Thornton\\_Heath\\_teenager\\_caught\\_with\\_terrorist\\_handbook\\_at\\_Stansted\\_Airport\\_on\\_way\\_to\\_fight\\_for\\_Isis\\_in\\_Syria/](http://www.yourlocalguardian.co.uk/news/14649483.Thornton_Heath_teenager_caught_with_terrorist_handbook_at_Stansted_Airport_on_way_to_fight_for_Isis_in_Syria/), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>792</sup> 'Teenager with "step-by-step terrorist guide" jailed after he was caught trying to join Isis in Syria', *International Business Times*, 28 July 2016.

<sup>793</sup> 'Student, 19, who used his university loan to catch RyanAir flight to Europe to join ISIS is jailed for three and a half years', *Daily Mail*, 28 July 2016.

<sup>794</sup> 'Radicalised teenager jailed for three and a half years for trying to join Islamic State', *Braintree and Witham Times*, 29 July 2016.

<sup>795</sup> 'Three year sentence for "naïve" London teen who tried to travel to Syria to join IS', *Evening Standard*, 28 July 2016, available at: [www.standard.co.uk/news/london/three-year-sentence-for-naive-london-teen-who-tried-to-travel-to-syria-to-join-is-a3307016.html](http://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/three-year-sentence-for-naive-london-teen-who-tried-to-travel-to-syria-to-join-is-a3307016.html), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>796</sup> 'Jama: Teen accused of planning to join Islamic State remanded', *Court News*, 8 February 2016.

<sup>797</sup> 'Teenager with "step-by-step terrorist guide" jailed after he was caught trying to join Isis in Syria', *International Business Times*, 28 July 2016.

<sup>798</sup> *ibid.*

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**Place of residence:** Thornton Heath, London Borough of Croydon, South London<sup>799</sup>

**Family/living circumstances:** Living with father<sup>800</sup>

**Education:** Computer Studies (access course), Middlesex University<sup>801</sup>

**Means of travel:** Intended to travel by plane from Stansted airport to Bucharest, Romania; then intended to travel from Bucharest to Syria<sup>802</sup> [unsuccessful attempt: 5 February 2016]<sup>803</sup>

**Age at time of travel:** 19<sup>804</sup>

**Network:** None

**Known links to proscribed organisations:** None

**Known associates:** None

**Known to the authorities:** No

**Status:** In detention

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<sup>799</sup> 'Student, 19, who used his university loan to catch RyanAir flight to Europe to join ISIS is jailed for three and a half years', *Daily Mail*, 28 July 2016.

<sup>800</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>801</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>802</sup> 'Teenager with "step-by-step terrorist guide" jailed after he was caught trying to join Isis in Syria', *International Business Times*, 28 July 2016.

<sup>803</sup> 'Three year sentence for "naïve" London teen who tried to travel to Syria to join IS', *Evening Standard*, 28 July 2016.

<sup>804</sup> 'Jama: Finnish teenager gets terror trial', *Court News*, 19 February 2016.

## Analysis

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### 1. Introduction

In October 2016, it was estimated that around 850 people from the United Kingdom had travelled to join terrorist organisations in Syria and Iraq.<sup>805</sup> Many were students. Early observations reported by the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence (ICSR) in 2013 suggested that “recent connections to higher education” were a characterising feature of many of those who had travelled to Syria.<sup>806</sup>

Data previously collected by The Henry Jackson Society has demonstrated the extent to which the most serious terrorism plots in the UK have been influenced by individuals who had trained or fought overseas. This research found that “individuals who had previously fought in jihadist conflicts or trained abroad had been disproportionately involved in the most serious Islamism-inspired terrorism offences in the UK”.<sup>807</sup> Those who travel abroad may also continue to pose a risk through their recruitment of others.<sup>808</sup>

In response to this challenge, the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (CTSA) introduced a statutory duty for public bodies, including FE/HE institutions, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.<sup>809</sup> Understanding the signs that individuals may exhibit as part of this process will be crucial if institutions are to be able to provide an opportunity for intervention, and HE/FE institutions must receive the appropriate support to identify those within their care who may be at risk.

The previous profiles detail the cases of 29 students who travelled, or attempted to travel, to work or fight with armed Islamist groups in Syria and Iraq, and demonstrate the ways in which noticeable signs of radicalisation manifested in real cases. Although recent estimates have suggested a drop in the flow of foreign fighters to Syria,<sup>810</sup> analysis of the profiles supports previous research findings and may be useful in understanding the processes behind radicalisation unrelated to overseas travel.

Identifying and understanding these processes is an extremely difficult challenge. Parents, charity workers, social services and friends of individuals who travelled overseas often said they didn’t recognise any signs of radicalisation beforehand.<sup>811</sup> However, too much emphasis on radicalisation being a primarily private process that takes place behind closed doors may be harmful.<sup>812</sup>

The cases profiled often show some clear indications of radicalisation, and in many cases someone did notice relevant changes in the individual’s behaviour. These included real-world relationships with other extremists or changes in behaviour associated with increasing religious observance, politicisation and

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<sup>805</sup> ‘Who are Britain’s jihadists?’ *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>806</sup> Maher, S., ‘ICSR Insight: British Foreign Fighters in Syria’, The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, 15 October 2013.

<sup>807</sup> Stuart, H., ‘Understanding CAGE: A Public Information Dossier’, The Henry Jackson Society, March 2015, p. 11.

<sup>808</sup> Both Raphael Hostey and Aqsa Mahmood, two students who travelled abroad, are thought to have become key recruitment figures. See: ‘British jihadi recruiter reported dead in Syria drone strike’, *Daily Telegraph*, 2 May 2016; and ‘From Scottish teen to ISIS bride and recruiter: the Aqsa Mahmood story’, *CNN*, 24 February 2015.

<sup>809</sup> ‘Revised Prevent Duty Guidance: For England and Wales’, HM Government, 2015, para. 1; ‘Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015’, HM Government, 12 February 2015.

<sup>810</sup> ‘U.S. military softens claims on drop in Islamic State’s foreign fighters’, *Reuters*, 28 April 2016, available at: [www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-recruiting-idUSKCN0XP33K](http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-recruiting-idUSKCN0XP33K), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>811</sup> For example, the radicalisation of Jaffar Deghayes was missed by his family, local volunteer organisations, social services and the police, see: ‘What makes a bunch of teenagers from Brighton go to Syria?’ *You Tube*, 31 March 2016 [4:44], available at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=U116oBmcP00](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U116oBmcP00), last visited: 8 March 2017; ‘From Brighton to the battlefield: how four young Britons were drawn to jihad’, *Guardian*, 31 March 2016, available at: [www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/mar/31/brighton-to-battlefield-how-four-young-britons-drawn-to-jihad-syria](http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/mar/31/brighton-to-battlefield-how-four-young-britons-drawn-to-jihad-syria), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>812</sup> ‘Baroness Warsi Says Terrorists are “Radicalised in Their Bedrooms” – Blaming Mosques Is “An Easy Answer”’, *Huffington Post*, 22 February 2015, available at: [www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/02/22/warsi-radicalisation-muslims-online-internet-extremists\\_n\\_6730324.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/02/22/warsi-radicalisation-muslims-online-internet-extremists_n_6730324.html), last visited: 8 March 2017.

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isolation.<sup>813</sup> The fact that these changes in behaviour were rarely seen as cause for concern and that they did not lead to appropriate intervention is concerning, and suggests not enough is known about the processes of radicalisation.

### 1.2. Identifying and Understanding Radicalisation

Radicalisation is understood, according to the definition within the revised Prevent Strategy, as “the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism”.<sup>814</sup>

The government’s Counter-Extremism Strategy (2015) defines extremism as:

The vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist.<sup>815</sup>

The conceptual framework underpinning government guidance for identifying individuals vulnerable to extremism was developed by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and drawn together in the Extremism Risk Guidelines (ERG 22+).<sup>816</sup> Using casework-based research, the academics working with NOMS identified three elements of the process, using the terms ‘engagement’, ‘intent’ and ‘capability’:

We use ... the term *engagement* to describe the process by which individuals become involved with or identify with an extremist group, cause, or ideology, and we use *intent* to describe the mindset associated with a readiness to perform or contribute to an extremist offence ... we consider the offenders’ *capability* to perform an act of terrorism, producing a three-dimensional model.<sup>817</sup>

This three-dimensional model is elucidated by the authors’ understanding of pathways into extremist offending, particularly their use of the term “socialisation into terrorism”.<sup>818</sup> The authors state:

For those without a criminal background, a period of conditioning or grooming was typically required for them to overcome their inhibitions about breaking the law ... This process [“socialisation into terrorism”] alters the balance of push and pull factors in favour of engagement with a group, cause, or ideology.<sup>819</sup>

This socialisation process moves individuals from engagement to intent when they believe their behaviour will result in social approval, that they have the capability to achieve their goal, and have developed a positive attitude towards the action.<sup>820</sup> Based on casework and interviews with extremist offenders, the research developed a list of 22 indicators of engagement, intent and capability.<sup>821</sup> These informed government guidelines for those seeking to identify whether an individual is vulnerable to

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<sup>813</sup> Suggesting that behaviour associated with religious observance is a sign of radicalisation is controversial, and it is important to recognise that this report does not suggest that wearing religious attire or praying more frequently should be considered a sign of extremism. However, when seen alongside other behaviours, such as withdrawal from a friendship group, withdrawal from association with non-Muslims, sudden appearance of behaviour associated with religious observance among an entire group and the sudden expression of extreme political opinions, behaviour associated with increasing religious observance may represent an indicator of vulnerability.

<sup>814</sup> ‘Prevent Strategy’, HM Government, June 2011, p. 108, available at: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>815</sup> ‘Counter-Extremism Strategy’, HM Government, October 2015, p. 9, available at: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/470088/51859\\_Cm9148\\_Accessible.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/470088/51859_Cm9148_Accessible.pdf), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>816</sup> Lloyd, M. & C. Dean, ‘The Development of Structured Guidelines for Assessing Risk in Extremist Offenders’, *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management* 2.1, 2015, p. 40.

<sup>817</sup> *ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>818</sup> A phrase coined by Roberts and Horgan in 2003, see: Lloyd, M. & C. Dean, ‘The Development of Structured Guidelines for Assessing Risk in Extremist Offenders’, p. 43.

<sup>819</sup> Lloyd, M. & C. Dean, ‘The Development of Structured Guidelines for Assessing Risk in Extremist Offenders’, p. 43.

<sup>820</sup> *ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>821</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 41, 46–47.



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extremism, and can be found in the Channel Vulnerability Assessment Framework (2012) and Channel Duty Guidance (2015).

The Channel Vulnerability Assessment Framework “provides a description of the vulnerability assessment framework used by Channel projects to guide decisions about whether an individual needs support to address their vulnerability to radicalisation and the kind of support that they need”.<sup>822</sup> It describes characteristics within the three-dimensional model of the Extremism Risk Guidelines (engagement with a group, cause or ideology; intent to cause harm; and capability to cause harm) to indicate how these factors might manifest.

### **Engagement with a group may appear as:**

- Feelings of grievance and injustice
- Feeling under threat
- A need for identity, meaning and belonging
- A desire for status
- A desire for excitement and adventure
- A need to dominate and control others
- Susceptibility to indoctrination
- A desire for political or moral change
- Opportunistic involvement in extremism
- Being at a transitional time of life
- Being influenced or controlled by a group
- Relevant mental health issues<sup>823</sup>

### **Indications that an individual has transitioned from engagement to intent may include:**

- Over-identification with a group or ideology
- “Them and Us” thinking
- Dehumanisation of the enemy
- Attitudes that justify offending
- Harmful means to an end
- Harmful objectives<sup>824</sup>

Together with capability (“individual knowledge, skills and competences; access to networks, funding or equipment; criminal capability”) this three-dimensional approach provides a framework for assessing the risk of an individual being drawn into terrorism.<sup>825</sup>

The Channel Duty Guidance provides more comprehensive descriptions of how these characteristics may show themselves in an individual:

### **Indicators of an individual’s engagement:**

- Spending increasing time in the company of other suspected extremists
- Changing their style of dress or personal appearance to accord with the group

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<sup>822</sup> ‘Channel: Vulnerability assessment framework’, HM Government, October 2012, p. 2.

<sup>823</sup> *ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>824</sup> *ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>825</sup> *ibid.*, p. 3.

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- Day-to-day behaviour becoming increasingly centred around an extremist ideology, group or cause
- Possession of material or symbols associated with an extremist cause (e.g. the swastika for far right groups)
- Attempts to recruit others to the group/cause/ideology
- Communications with others that suggest identification with a group/cause/ideology<sup>826</sup>

### **Indicators of an individual's intention to act:**

- Clearly identifying another group as threatening what they stand for and blaming that group for all social and political ills
- Using insulting or derogatory names or labels for another group
- Speaking about the imminence of harm from the other group and the importance of action now
- Expressing attitudes that justify offending on behalf of the group, cause or ideology
- Condoning or supporting violence or harm towards others
- Plotting or conspiring with others<sup>827</sup>

### **Indicators that an individual is capable of acting:**

- Having a history of violence
- Being criminally versatile and using criminal networks to support extremist goals
- Having occupational skills that can enable acts of terrorism (such as civil engineering, pharmacology or construction)
- Having technical expertise that can be deployed (e.g. IT skills, knowledge of chemicals, military training or survival skills)<sup>828</sup>

Despite the extensive casework underpinning the research, the creators of the Extremism Risk Guidelines acknowledge that “the current lack of demonstrated reliability and validity remains the main limitation of the ERG at this time”.<sup>829</sup> However, the findings of this report provide some support for both the underlying theory of “socialisation into terrorism” and the reliability of the 22 factors used in government guidelines.

Evidence in support of these guidelines is particularly needed in light of efforts to undermine the Extremism Risk Guidelines and the government's wider means of assessing vulnerability to radicalisation. In September 2016, the pro-terrorist group CAGE released a report seeking to discredit the “science” behind Prevent. The CAGE report criticised the credibility of the ERG over the “lack of replicated research supporting the findings of the NOMS [ERG 22+] study”.<sup>830</sup> Among many examples of the report's disingenuous claims is the mistaken claim that the ERG is used by unqualified public sector workers to refer individuals to Channel and Prevent.<sup>831</sup> In fact, as one Prevent coordinator made clear at the time:

The Vulnerability Assessment Framework and therefore the ERG has no relevance to most public sector workers and plays no part in the Prevent duty – it is a framework to assess the

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<sup>826</sup> ‘Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism’, HM Government, 2015, para. 51.a-g.

<sup>827</sup> *ibid.*, para. 52.a-f.

<sup>828</sup> *ibid.*, para. 53.a-d.

<sup>829</sup> Lloyd, M. & C. Dean, ‘The Development of Structured Guidelines for Assessing Risk in Extremist Offenders’, p. 50.

<sup>830</sup> ‘The “Science” of Pre-Crime: The Secret “Radicalisation” Study Underpinning Prevent’, CAGE, 29 September 2016, available at: <https://cage.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/CAGE-Science-Pre-Crime-Report.pdf>, last visited: 8 March 2017, p. 15.

<sup>831</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 48–49; Sutton, R., ‘Prevent isn't perfect – but its critics should stick to the facts’, *Left Foot Forward*, 4 October 2016, available at: [www.leftfootforward.org/2016/10/prevent-isnt-perfect-but-its-critics-should-stick-to-the-facts/](http://www.leftfootforward.org/2016/10/prevent-isnt-perfect-but-its-critics-should-stick-to-the-facts/), last visited: 8 March 2017.

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vulnerability of a small number of people assessed entirely voluntarily by a Channel safeguarding panel to see what support they can benefit from.<sup>832</sup>

Additionally, the indicators presented in the Violent Extremism Risk Assessment (VERA-2), a tool developed from earlier assessments after feedback following work in an Australian prison, bear similarities to the ERG and the findings of this study. The indicators specified by VERA-2 are categorised under the following headings: beliefs and attitudes, context and intent, history and capability, commitment and motivation, and protective items. Across these categories, VERA-2 lists a variety of indicators, including, *inter alia*, relationships with violent extremists (including friends or family), manifestations of “us and them” thinking (such as dehumanisation, hostility to national identity, an ideology justifying violence and a lack of empathy with those outside one’s own group), susceptibility to radicalisation and indoctrination, and a sense of moral imperative and superiority.<sup>833</sup>

In addition to providing support to pre-existing international guidelines and building confidence in the assessment process, the report provides useful examples of how indicators may manifest in conjunction with one another in real cases. The Channel Duty Guidance advises that indicators of vulnerability should be taken in conjunction with others, and not in isolation, saying, “There is no single route to terrorism nor is there a simple profile of those who become involved.”<sup>834</sup> It also acknowledges the plurality of pathways into terrorism:

There is no single way of identifying who is likely to be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Factors that may have a bearing on someone becoming vulnerable may include: peer pressure, influence from other people or via the internet, bullying, crime against them or their involvement in crime, anti social behaviour, family tensions, race/hate crime, lack of self esteem or identity and personal or political grievances.<sup>835</sup>

The difficulty in identifying a single profile and the need for flexibility in assessing vulnerability is supported by the findings of this report and has long been recognised. In 2008, the *Guardian* reported on classified research undertaken by MI5 which concluded on the basis of hundreds of case studies that “no single pathway into violent extremism” could be identified.<sup>836</sup> The Home Affairs Select Committee on the roots of radicalisation likewise noted that “radicalised individuals come from a wide range of backgrounds”.<sup>837</sup>

The diversity in the backgrounds of those profiled in this report (see fig. 2) supports this position and therefore the advice that indicators of vulnerability must be taken in conjunction with others and not in isolation.<sup>838</sup> Nonetheless, certain characteristics were more prevalent than others and help provide a useful picture of how these indicators may manifest in real cases:

- Real-world relationships with other extremists were the most defining characteristic. Eleven individuals had a sibling or family member, and 18 had at least one friend, involved in extremist activity. Overall, 23 had family or friends involved in extremism and 16 had alleged contact, in person or online, with another extremist. This suggests that indicators such as “spending

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<sup>832</sup> @WillBaldet, Twitter, 30 September 2016, available at: <https://twitter.com/WillBaldet/status/781813536842477568>, last visited: 8 March 2017; ‘Channel: Vulnerability assessment framework’, HM Government, October 2012, p. 2.

<sup>833</sup> Pressman, E., and J. Flockton, ‘Violent Extremist Risk Assessment’, in *Prisons, Terrorism and Extremism: Critical Issues in Management, Radicalisation and Reform*, ed. Andrew Silke (Routledge, 2014), p. 128, available at: <https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=wbnAgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA122&dq=violent+extremism+risk+assessment&ots=Z-4RuMAyW8&sig=RD1ER5cvrLE4jkiqhEuqDi7ZK8A#v=onepage&q=violent%20extremism%20risk%20assessment&f=false>, last visited: 29 March 2017.

<sup>834</sup> ‘Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism’, HM Government, 2015, para. 54.

<sup>835</sup> *ibid.*, para. 36.

<sup>836</sup> ‘MI5 report challenges views on terrorism in Britain’, *Guardian*, 20 August 2008, available at: [www.theguardian.com/uk/2008/aug/20/uksecurity.terrorism1](http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2008/aug/20/uksecurity.terrorism1), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>837</sup> ‘Roots of violent radicalisation’, Home Affairs Committee, 6 February 2012, p. 9.

<sup>838</sup> HM Government, ‘Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism’, 2015, para. 54.

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increasing time in the company of other suspected extremists”<sup>839</sup> and “family or friends involvement in extremism”<sup>840</sup> were particularly relevant in these cases.

- Alleged or possible contact with other extremists through institutions was also prominent. Nine individuals had a mosque or religious institution suggested as a potential source of their radicalisation, and six attended a school that had other extremist pupils or had an alleged problem with extremism.
- Online activity as a possible source of radicalisation centred on communication with extremists rather than passive consumption of propaganda. Overall, 17 out of 29 individuals profiled had online activity suggested as one source of their radicalisation, but this appeared subsidiary to real-world relationships.
- The appearance of behaviour commonly associated with increasing religious observance and the sudden expression of extreme political views were the most noticed features by those who knew the students. Fourteen individuals showed behaviours commonly associated with increasing religious observance and ten began to express strong political views. Early identification of these indicators could have prevented the students’ travel, suggesting emphasis must be placed to recognise their relevance.
- The students’ cases reflect broader trends. The flow of students profiled peaked between 2013 and 2014 in line with estimates of a general drop in the flow of foreign recruits to Islamic State.<sup>841</sup> The preponderance of real-world relationships also reflected previous Henry Jackson Society research which found this to be a significant feature of recent terror networks in Europe.<sup>842</sup>

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<sup>839</sup> ‘Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism’, HM Government, 2015, para. 51.a.

<sup>840</sup> ‘Channel: Vulnerability assessment framework’, HM Government, October 2012, p. 2.

<sup>841</sup> ‘U.S. military softens claims on drop in Islamic State’s foreign fighters’, *Reuters*, 28 April 2016.

<sup>842</sup> Webb, E., & R. Sutton, ‘An Enduring Threat: Europe’s Islamist Terror Networks Then and Now’, The Henry Jackson Society, 2016, available at: [www.relayto.com/the-henry-jackson-society/92ha8lN0](http://www.relayto.com/the-henry-jackson-society/92ha8lN0), last visited: 8 March 2017, pp. 91-94, 102-105.

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## 2. Findings

Potential sources of the students' radicalisation and the backgrounds of the students were categorised on the basis of the information contained within the profiles. Occurrences of these categories across the profiles are presented in the tables below. While the categories were defined on the basis of the profiles, independently of pre-existing frameworks, there are significant overlaps with Channel Duty Guidelines and the Vulnerability Assessment Framework. Where relevant, these are highlighted below.

Fig. 1 shows the sources that were suggested by one or more witnesses as a source of the students' radicalisation.

Name	Online	Sibling	After travel	Family member	Friends	Mosque or religious institution	Recruited by an extremist	Islamic organisation/Dawa group/organisation	School
Yusuf Zubair Sarwar	✓	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-
Flamur Shalaku	-	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	-
Fatum Shalaku	-	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-
Anil Khalil Raoufi	✓	-	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	-
Mohammad Azzam Javeed	-	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	-
Raphael Hostey	✓	-	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	-
Mohammed Mehdi Hassan	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	-
Nur Hassan	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-
Aqsa Mahmood	✓	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-
Nasser Muthana	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Aseel Muthana	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓
Mohammed Jakir Ali	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
David Souaan	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jaffar Deghayes	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rashed Amani	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-
Ali Kalantar	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-
Mohammed Hadi	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	-
Salma Halane	✓	✓	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-
Zahra Halane	✓	✓	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-
Ednane Mahmood	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Samya Dirie	✓	-	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	-
Shabazz Suleman	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	-	-
Abdulrahman Shariff	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Khalif Shariff	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Humza Ali	-	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	-
Zubair Nur	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	-
Yahya Rashid	✓	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	-
Talha Asmal	✓	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-
Cubeyda Jama	✓	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Fig. 1: Suggested Sources of Radicalisation**

A tick is used when a witness explicitly mentioned a characteristic in the students' case; a tick in the category "moderate family" is used when a witness stated that the students' family was moderate. The dash is used when the characteristic was not mentioned in their case; dashes do not imply, for example, that the family was not moderate.

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Fig. 2 shows the diffuse distribution of background characteristics in the students' profiles. As with sources of radicalisation, the categories were drawn from aspects of the students' backgrounds according to open-source material.<sup>843</sup>

Name	Domestic abuse	Broken home	Poverty/deprived area	Criminality	Studious/good student	Well-adjusted/integrated	Happy/happy family life	Appearance of behaviour	Lonley/isolated/vulnerable	Sudden difficulties/immature/naïve	Intervention of the family	Change in behaviour noticed
Yusuf Zubair Sarwar	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	✓	✓
Flamur Shalaku	-	-	✓	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	✓	✓
Fatum Shalaku	-	-	✓	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	✓	✓
Anil Khalil Raoufi	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	✓	✓
Mohammad Azzam Javeed	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Raphael Hostey	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mohammad Mehdi Hassani	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	-
Nur Hassan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓
Aqsa Mahmood	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓
Nasser Muthana	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	✓	✓
Aseel Muthana	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mohammed Jakir Ali	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	✓	-	✓	✓
David Souaan	-	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓
Jaffar Deghayes	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	-	-	✓	-	✓	✓
Rashed Amani	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓
Ali Kalantar	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	✓
Mohammed Hadi	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	✓	-	✓	✓
Salma Halane	-	-	-	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	✓	-	-
Zahra Halane	-	-	-	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	✓	-	-
Ednane Mahmood	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Samya Dirie	-	-	-	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	-	-	-
Shabazz Suleman	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓
Abdulrahman Shariff	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-
Khalif Shariff	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-
Humza Ali	-	✓	-	-	-	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Zubair Nur	-	-	-	✓	-	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓
Yahya Rashid	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	✓	-	-
Talha Asmal	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-
Cubeyda Jama	-	✓	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	-	-	-

**Fig. 2: Backgrounds**

<sup>843</sup> Y denotes the presence of background characteristics that were explicitly mentioned as relevant to the student in question, and does not signify the absence of that characteristic (e.g. N in the category "moderate family" *does not* indicate that the family was immoderate).

### 3. The Importance of Socialisation

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The idea that the rise of online life has had a profound effect on radicalisation is not new. A number of those who gave evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee on the roots of radicalisation “cited the internet as the main forum for radicalisation”.<sup>844</sup> Alyas Karmani, co-director of STREET Project (Strategy to Reach, Empower, and Educate Teenagers), said, “I think mosques are the least risk. I think sometimes there is a focus on the mosque. I think mosques are completely disconnected from young at risk Muslims. I would say the internet is certainly the most [serious threat as a forum for radicalisation].”<sup>845</sup> This implies that radicalisation is a private affair, and encourages the view that it may not be perceptible.

However, the findings of this report suggest that in a majority of cases, potential indicators of the students’ vulnerability to radicalisation were not private, and in many cases were noticed by those who knew the students. The evidence suggests “socialisation into terrorism”, in particular, was likely a key feature of the students’ cases.

Real-world relationships with other extremists still emerge as one of the most common characteristics across those profiled, in line with recent Henry Jackson Society research into members of Islamic State’s European networks. This study found that one of the networks’ most distinctive features was the preponderance of family and friendship relationships between members and real-world contact with extremists and recruiters.<sup>846</sup> Of these European networks, a number of those involved in the Paris-Brussels attacks were part of the network of recruiter Khalid Zerkani. This included the ringleader of the Paris attacks Abdelhamid Abaaoud, Paris attacker Chakib Akrouh, and Najim Laachraoui, a suicide bomber in the Brussels attacks.<sup>847</sup>

Real-world connections with other extremists were similarly prominent among the students profiled. Out of 29, 18 individuals were part of a friendship group connected to extremism and 11 had a family member involved. Six had both family and friends involved with extremism. In addition, 16 individuals had contact with another extremist, cleric or fighter suggested as one possible source of radicalisation. The profiles reveal that real-world networks were formed in areas such as Portsmouth, Cardiff, Manchester and Coventry. Groups from these areas came into contact with each other either before, during or after travel. This suggests that “spending increasing time in the company of other suspected extremists”<sup>848</sup> and “family or friends involvement in extremism” were particularly significant risk factors.<sup>849</sup>

#### 3.1 Extremism within Families: Brothers, Sisters, Cousins

Henry Jackson Society research into the European Islamic State networks behind the Paris and Brussels attacks demonstrated the extent of family and friendship connections between those involved. The network included the Abdeslam brothers, Salah and Brahim. Salah Abdeslam had been childhood friends with Abdelhamid Abaaoud and Mohammed Abrini, who were also involved in the attacks. Abaaoud’s cousin, Hasna Aitboulahcen, was involved as an accomplice.<sup>850</sup> Another pair of brothers, Khalid and Ibrahim el-Bakraoui, blew themselves up in the suicide attacks on the airport and Metro in

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<sup>844</sup> ‘Roots of violent radicalisation’, Home Affairs Committee, 6 February 2012, p. 15.

<sup>845</sup> *ibid.*, p. 86, Q171.

<sup>846</sup> Webb, E., & R. Sutton, ‘An Enduring Threat: Europe’s Islamist Terror Networks Then and Now’, The Henry Jackson Society, 2016, pp. 91-94, 102-105.

<sup>847</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 92-93.

<sup>848</sup> ‘Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism’, HM Government, 2015, para. 51.a.

<sup>849</sup> ‘Channel: Vulnerability assessment framework’, HM Government, October 2012, p. 2.

<sup>850</sup> Webb, E., & R. Sutton, ‘An Enduring Threat: Europe’s Islamist Terror Networks Then and Now’, p. 104.

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Brussels in March 2016.<sup>851</sup> These clusters of closely related individuals not only formed the backbone of the network, but had also spent time together in Syria.<sup>852</sup>

Such close relationships not only have the potential to draw an individual into extremism, but they also provide an environment in which “defection from the group entails a double betrayal – betraying the cause and betraying one’s family”.<sup>853</sup> Like Islamic State’s European networks, the students profiled included a number of family clusters, such as the Ali family, the Shalaku brothers, the Halane family, the Shariff brothers, the Muthana brothers, the Javeed brothers and the Deghayes brothers. The potential for these relationships to draw an individual into extremism are illustrated in the two case studies below.

### **3.1.1. The Shalaku Brothers**

In spring 2013, Flamur and Fatlum Shalaku travelled to join Islamic State.<sup>854</sup> At the time, Flamur Shalaku was studying at the University of Greenwich,<sup>855</sup> while Fatlum Shalaku was studying for his A levels at Holland Park School in Kensington.<sup>856</sup> Flamur Shalaku had undergone a rapid transformation, changing from someone who would drink and socialise with women to someone who became increasingly religious, and this was followed by a more gradual radicalisation of his younger brother, Fatlum.<sup>857</sup> A friend suggested, “If anyone influenced [Fatlum Shalaku] it must have been his older brother, Flamur. They were close and Fatlum looked up to him. He rediscovered his faith a year into his degree at [university].” As Flamur Shalaku was part of a broader group of extreme young people centred on Ladbroke Grove Mosque, it is also possible that Fatlum Shalaku found himself drawn into this Islamist milieu by his brother, gaining further close extremist connections.<sup>858</sup>

### **3.1.2. The Deghayes Brothers**

Jaffar Deghayes was a student in Brighton when he travelled to Syria in January 2014 with his brother Abdullah and his eldest brother’s best friend, Ibrahim Kamara.<sup>859</sup> The three men were following the eldest Deghayes brother, Amer, who had travelled to Syria in October 2013 to join Jabhat al-Nusra.<sup>860</sup> The Deghayes brothers came from an extremely troubled background and had allegedly experienced domestic abuse and racist violence, and all except Amer had become involved in gang crime.<sup>861</sup> Therefore, social services were optimistic for Jaffar Deghayes when he began to see Amer as a role model. However, with Amer Deghayes being the first to travel to Syria, it is possible that his being a role model may have played some part in drawing Jaffar Deghayes into the conflict.<sup>862</sup>

Like the European Islamic State networks, these two cases support the “socialisation into terrorism” model used by Lloyd and Dean. In both cases, their social conditioning into the extremist milieu may have helped “them to overcome their inhibitions about breaking the law [altering] the balance of push and pull factors in favour of engagement with a group, cause, or ideology”.<sup>863</sup> The additional factor of the

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<sup>851</sup> *ibid.*, p. 104; ‘Brussels bombers identified as brothers Khalid and Ibrahim el-Bakraoui’, *Newsweek*, 23 March 2016, available at:

<http://europe.newsweek.com/brussels-airport-bombers-identified-brothers-khalid-and-ibrahim-el-bakraoui-439717?rm=eu>, last visited: 11 January 2017.

<sup>852</sup> Webb, L., & R. Sutton, ‘An Enduring Threat: Europe’s Islamist Terror Networks Then and Now’, The Henry Jackson Society, 2016, p. 96.

<sup>853</sup> Hafez, M., ‘The Ties that Bind: How Terrorists Exploit Family Bonds’, *CTC*, 19 February 2016, available at: [www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-ties-that-bind-how-terrorists-exploit-family-bonds](http://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-ties-that-bind-how-terrorists-exploit-family-bonds), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>854</sup> ‘Flamur Shalaku – Who are Britain’s Jihadists’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>855</sup> ‘Brainwashed Muslim children aged five think Christmas is banned, warns Scotland Yard commander’, 24 May 2015.

<sup>856</sup> ‘Five pupils from west London comprehensive dubbed “the socialist Eton” are killed waging jihad in Syria and Iraq’, *Daily Mail*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>857</sup> ‘Five former pupils from same prestigious London school killed fighting for Isis’, *Independent*, 24 May 2015; ‘What happened to “Man like Fatlum?” – The inside story of the British suicide bomber of Ramadi’, *MENA etc.*, 22 July 2015.

<sup>858</sup> ‘What happened to “Man like Fatlum?” – The inside story of the British suicide bomber of Ramadi’, *MENA etc.*, 22 July 2015.

<sup>859</sup> ‘From Brighton to the battlefield: how four young Britons were drawn to jihad’, *Guardian*, 31 March 2016.

<sup>860</sup> ‘British jihadist Jaffar Deghayes, 17, killed in Syria’, *Daily Telegraph*, 28 October 2014; ‘From Brighton to the battlefield: how four young Britons were drawn to jihad’, *Guardian*, 31 March 2016.

<sup>861</sup> ‘From Brighton to the battlefield: how four young Britons were drawn to jihad’, *Guardian*, 31 March 2016; ‘What makes a bunch of teenagers from Brighton go to Syria?’ YouTube, 31 March 2016 [4:24].

<sup>862</sup> ‘From Brighton to the battlefield: how four young Britons were drawn to jihad’, *Guardian*, 31 March 2016.

<sup>863</sup> Lloyd, M. & C. Dean, ‘The Development of Structured Guidelines for Assessing Risk in Extremist Offenders’, p. 43.



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family bond, described by Mohammed Hafez as making any thoughts of defection from the group a betrayal of both cause and family,<sup>864</sup> may function as an extra hold factor. Following Lloyd and Dean, it may also have increased the individuals' perception that action would result in social approval from their older sibling, leading to the development of a positive attitude towards travelling to Syria.<sup>865</sup> In turn, the strength and influence of these relationships may work to diminish the efficacy of any additional protective factors, making effective intervention even more difficult while those relationships persist.

Similar dynamics may also have been at work within friendship groups. Humza Ali, whose father had previously been jailed for terrorism offences, became involved with extremists after the age of 17 and had a number of friends who went on to be involved in terrorism. The group of friends attended a paintballing session together, described by the prosecution as a "bonding act" intended as a training exercise in handling weapons.<sup>866</sup> Of this group, one has since been jailed for financing those behind the Paris and Brussels attacks in November 2015 and March 2016, one travelled to Syria in December 2014, and another has been jailed for attempting to travel to Syria.<sup>867</sup>

### 3.2. Real-world Relationships and Radicalisation in Previous Networks

The role of real-world relationships in violent Islamist networks is not restricted to families and friendships. Henry Jackson Society research into the European networks cultivated by Islamic State highlighted the importance of nodes developed by central figures.<sup>868</sup> These included Khalid Zerkani, who operated out of mosques in Molenbeek, Belgium, and has been connected to numerous members of the networks behind the Paris and Brussels attacks.<sup>869</sup> Ahmad Abdulaziz (aka Abu Walaa), a preacher at the Islamic Circle of Hildesheim mosque in Germany and suspected of recruiting for Islamic State, and who has been connected with Berlin Christmas market attacker Amis Amri, may be a similar figure.<sup>870</sup>

In the UK, Anjem Choudary, the driving force behind the now-proscribed al-Muhajiroun organisation, has been a figure of similar influence for around 20 years.<sup>871</sup> Research by The Henry Jackson Society suggests 25% of those convicted for Islamism-inspired terrorism offences in the United Kingdom between 1999 and 2015 have been directly linked to al-Muhajiroun, higher than those connected to Al-Qaeda (10%) and Islamic State (5%).<sup>872</sup>

Three students profiled in this report were linked to al-Muhajiroun. David Souaan was associated with the al-Muhajiroun alias, Need4Khilafah, and attended Need4Khilafah demonstrations organised by Choudary.<sup>873</sup> Humza Ali became involved with supporters of the group after the age of 17 and was also friends with Brusthom Ziamani,<sup>874</sup> an al-Muhajiroun associate jailed in March 2015 for plotting to behead a British soldier.<sup>875</sup> Finally, Nasser Muthana was involved with the al-Muhajiroun front group,

<sup>864</sup> Hafez, M., 'The Ties that Bind: How Terrorists Exploit Family Bonds', *CTC*, 19 February 2016.

<sup>865</sup> Lloyd, M. & C. Dean, 'The Development of Structured Guidelines for Assessing Risk in Extremist Offenders', p. 43.

<sup>866</sup> 'Apprentice bricklayer, 20, who trained to join ISIS at paintballing centre but was stopped from getting to Syria when his MOTHER confiscated his passport is jailed for nine years', *Daily Mail*, 14 February 2017.

<sup>867</sup> *ibid.*; 'Pair convicted after giving money to Brussels bomb suspect', *Sky News*, 6 December 2016; 'Birmingham terror suspects "gave £3,000 to Brussels bomber", court hears', *Daily Express*, 29 April 2016; 'Birmingham men who tried to join ISIS jailed', *BBC News*, 7 November 2016.

<sup>868</sup> Webb, E., & R. Sutton, 'An Enduring Threat: Europe's Islamist Terror Networks Then and Now', pp. 91–94.

<sup>869</sup> 'Khalid Zerkani, Brussels' jihadist preacher who "perverted a generation"', *France 24*, 26 March 2016, available at: <http://www.france24.com/en/20160325-khalid-zerkani-brussels-jihadist-preacher-kriket-molenbeek>, last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>870</sup> 'Berlin attack sets off hunt for a Tunisian in Germany', *The New York Times*, 21 December 2016, available at: [www.nytimes.com/2016/12/21/world/europe/attack-sets-off-hunt-for-tunisian-who-had-slipped-germanys-grasp.html?smid=tw-share&\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/21/world/europe/attack-sets-off-hunt-for-tunisian-who-had-slipped-germanys-grasp.html?smid=tw-share&_r=1), last visited: 8 March 2017; 'Germany cracks down on Salafists to shield refugees', *The New York Times*, 19 November 2016, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/20/world/europe/germany-salafists-refugees.html>, last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>871</sup> 'Anjem Choudary jailed for five-and-a-half years for urging support of Isis', *Guardian*, 6 September 2016, available at: [www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/sep/06/anjem-choudary-jailed-for-five-years-and-six-months-for-urging-support-of-isis](http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/sep/06/anjem-choudary-jailed-for-five-years-and-six-months-for-urging-support-of-isis), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>872</sup> Stuart, H., *Islamist Terrorism: Analysis of Offences and Attacks in the UK (1999–2015)*, The Henry Jackson Society, 2017, p. xii.

<sup>873</sup> 'UK student who fought in Syria is jailed', *Daily Mail*, 4 February 2016.

<sup>874</sup> 'Apprentice bricklayer, 20, who trained to join ISIS at paintballing centre but was stopped from getting to Syria when his MOTHER confiscated his passport is jailed for nine years', *Daily Mail*, 14 February 2017.

<sup>875</sup> 'Soldier beheading plan teenager Brusthom Ziamani jailed', *BBC News*, 20 March 2015, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-31987242](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-31987242), last visited: 8 March 2017.

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Supporters of Tawheed,<sup>876</sup> and was reportedly recommended to Islamic State by Omar Bakri Mohammed,<sup>877</sup> the former leader of al-Muhajiroun.<sup>878</sup>

### 3.3. Extremism within Areas: Manchester, Portsmouth, Coventry and Cardiff

A corollary of family and friendship relationships is a strong tie to social groups within a particular geographical location. As with family and friendship links, examples of this are found among the European Islamic State networks. Abdelhamid Abaaoud, Mohammed Abrini and the Abdeslam brothers all grew up in Molenbeek, Belgium, while the el-Bakraoui brothers and Najim Laachraoui grew up in nearby Laeken and Schaerbeek, respectively.<sup>879</sup> They maintained their connection to the local area not only through their participation in Khalid Zerkani's Molenbeek-based network, but also by returning to the area following the attacks, with Salah Abdeslam eventually arrested in Molenbeek alongside Soufiane Ayari.<sup>880</sup>

Like the European Islamic State networks, many of the family groups associated with the students formed part of a broader network within a specific geographical location. Groups from these areas came into contact before, during and after travelling. In October 2013, two students from Manchester, Mohammad Javeed and Anil Khalil Raoufi, travelled to join Islamic State and met up with another Manchester student, Raphael Hostey, in Turkey en route.<sup>881</sup> The three men were part of a broader group from Manchester, which included Mohammad Javeed's brother, Jamshed Javeed, who assisted the group's travel.<sup>882</sup> Jamshed Javeed had himself planned to travel to join Islamic State with another Manchester man, Nur Hassan.<sup>883</sup> Hassan left without Jamshed Javeed in November 2013 and is believed to have joined Mohammad Javeed, Raoufi and Hostey in Syria.<sup>884</sup>

Another Manchester-based student member of the network, Abudullahi Jama Farah, helped Hassan to travel and was later sentenced to seven years for his involvement.<sup>885</sup> Farah's cousins, Ahmed, Zahra and Salma Halane, were also from Manchester, and Ahmed is believed to have travelled to Somalia in September 2013 to join al-Shabaab.<sup>886</sup> The two sisters, meanwhile, travelled to Syria via Turkey in June 2014.<sup>887</sup> It is unclear whether Hostey knew the sisters before he travelled, but he boasted that he was responsible for their recruitment.<sup>888</sup> A *Guardian* investigation later found that "16 convicted or dead terrorists have lived within 2.5 miles" of the home of Islamic State fighter and suicide bomber Jamal al-Harith in Moss Side, Manchester. Three of the students (Raphael Hostey, Salma and Zahra Halane) were reportedly direct associates of al-Harith, while others, such as brothers Khalif and Abdulrahman Shariff, lived within the local vicinity.<sup>889</sup>

The group from Manchester also had contact with networks from Portsmouth and Coventry. Once in Syria, Zahra Halane is alleged to have married Islamic State fighter Ali Kalantar,<sup>890</sup> a student from

<sup>876</sup> 'Cardiff jihadis: new police raids over suspected Syria links', *Daily Telegraph*, 28 June 2014, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/10933250/Cardiff-jihadis-new-police-raids-over-suspected-Syria-links.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/terrorism-in-the-uk/10933250/Cardiff-jihadis-new-police-raids-over-suspected-Syria-links.html), last visited: 7 March 2017; 'Welsh jihadists had links to banned groups', *The Times*, 26 June 2014, available at: [www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/crime/article4130605.ece](http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/crime/article4130605.ece), last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>877</sup> 'Nasser Muthana - Who are Britain's jihadists?' *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>878</sup> 'Cleric Bakri barred from Britain', *BBC News*, 12 August 2005, available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4144792.stm>, last visited: 7 March 2017.

<sup>879</sup> Webb, E., & R. Sutton, 'An Enduring Threat: Europe's Islamist Terror Networks Then and Now', pp. 104-105.

<sup>880</sup> 'Paris attacks suspect Salah Abdeslam shot and arrested in Brussels', *Guardian*, 18 March 2016, available at: [www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/18/paris-attacks-suspect-salah-abdeslam-wounded-in-brussels-terror-raid-reports](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/18/paris-attacks-suspect-salah-abdeslam-wounded-in-brussels-terror-raid-reports), last visited: 8 March 2017; Webb, E., & R. Sutton, 'An Enduring Threat: Europe's Islamist Terror Networks Then and Now', pp. 28-30, 34-35.

<sup>881</sup> 'Mother's plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>882</sup> 'Science teacher Jamshed Javeed jailed for plot to fight alongside Isis in Syria', *Manchester Evening News*, 5 March 2015; 'Mother's plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>883</sup> 'Science teacher Jamshed Javeed jailed for plot to fight alongside Isis in Syria', *Manchester Evening News*, 5 March 2015.

<sup>884</sup> 'Mother's plea to fleeing jihadist: How Muslim parents tried to turn son away from war then alerted the police when he defied them', *Daily Mail*, 5 March 2016.

<sup>885</sup> 'Schoolboy jihadi gets seven years for helping ISIS terror cell', *Court News*, 26 August 2016.

<sup>886</sup> 'A-level student faces jail for helping friend to join Isis in Syria', *Guardian*, 11 February 2016.

<sup>887</sup> 'British twins who fled to Syria were top students: report', *New York Daily News*, 9 July 2014.

<sup>888</sup> 'Teenage "terror twins" who fled Britain to join ISIS tried to recruit their whole family telling brothers: "We might seem evil to you, but we will all be happy in the afterlife"', *Daily Mail*, 4 October 2015.

<sup>889</sup> 'Small part of Manchester that has been home to 16 jihadis', *Guardian*, 25 February 2017.

<sup>890</sup> 'British terror twins widowed after "both husbands killed fighting for Islamic State" in Iraq', *Daily Mirror*, 6 December 2014.

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Coventry who travelled in March 2014 with two friends, Rashed Amani and Mohammed Hadi.<sup>891</sup> Salma Halane and Amani are believed to have lived in the same house with Zahra Halane and Kalantar in Syria.<sup>892</sup> Meanwhile, the six men from Portsmouth who travelled to Syria in October 2013, including Mohammed Mehdi Hassan (repeating his A levels at sixth form college and preparing to take up a place at the University of Surrey),<sup>893</sup> had been in touch with the Islamic State fighter, Ifthekar Jaman, who had travelled to Syria in spring 2013. Jaman guided the Portsmouth and Manchester groups to a meeting at Reyhanli, on the Turkish side of the Syrian border.<sup>894</sup>

In addition, Tuhin Shahensha and Mustakim Jaman, Ifthekar Jaman's brothers, were from Portsmouth and part of an online network of friends involved in aiding others to travel to Syria. The group included Adeel Ulhaq and Forhad Rahman, both convicted alongside Cardiff man Kristen Brekke for helping Aseel Muthana join his older brother, Nasser Muthana, in Syria.<sup>895</sup> Ulhaq is also believed have had a romantic relationship with Glaswegian student, Aqsa Mahmood, after grooming her online.<sup>896</sup> Mahmood travelled to Syria in November 2013 to join Islamic State.<sup>897</sup>

### 3.4. The Role of Social Spaces

The vulnerability of social spaces, such as institutions, to extremist misuse has been widely recognised by the government. In 2013, the need for government intervention, where appropriate, to protect vulnerable institutions from extremism was highlighted by a report from the Prime Minister's Task Force on Tackling Radicalisation and Extremism. This stated:

Extremists take advantage of institutions to share their poisonous narrative with others, particularly with individuals vulnerable to their messages. The government must do more to address extremism in locations where it can exert control, such as prisons, and increase oversight where it is needed, such as some independent and religious schools.<sup>898</sup>

More recently, the government's Counter-Extremism Strategy recognised that there was "evidence that our institutions are increasingly targeted by extremists, who look to use them to spread their ideology", specifying schools, universities, local authorities, charities and prisons as areas of particular vulnerability.<sup>899</sup> Nevertheless, the role of institutions in radicalisation has been questioned. In February 2015, the Conservative peer, Baroness Warsi, claimed that people were being radicalised in their bedrooms and not in places of worship:

Online radicalisation is of course a large aspect of [radicalisation] ... Sometimes we've been wanting to find an easy answer – we've said "look, mosques should do more, madrasas should do more" and it's becoming more and more apparent that people are not being radicalised in places of worship but they're being radicalised in their bedrooms by the internet.<sup>900</sup>

However, nine of the individuals profiled in this report had a mosque or an imam suggested as a source of their radicalisation, or attended a religious institution with extremist associations, while six had

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<sup>891</sup> 'Second British jihadi from Coventry "is killed by American air strike while fighting for ISIS in Kobane"', *Daily Mail*, 11 December 2014; Second Coventry jihadist reportedly dies in Syria fighting with Isis', *Daily Telegraph*, 11 December 2014.

<sup>892</sup> 'Second British jihadi from Coventry "is killed by American air strike while fighting for ISIS in Kobane"', *Daily Mail*, 11 December 2014.

<sup>893</sup> 'Family of teenage jihadist Muhammed Mehdi Hassan speak of devastation', *ITV News*, 27 October 2014; 'Fourth man from Portsmouth dies in Syria', *Sky News*, 25 October 2014.

<sup>894</sup> 'How the "Pompey Lads" fell into the hands of Isis', *Guardian*, 27 July 2015; 'On the Trail of Britain's Homegrown Jihadis', *Newsweek*, 15 January 2015.

<sup>895</sup> 'Three men found guilty of helping teenage jihadi travel from UK to Syria', *Guardian*, 10 February 2016; 'Extremist's "gay" chat kept secret to protect his rights: Lawyers tried to ban mention of "Welsh Cutie" because they feared he could be killed by ISIS over his sexuality', *Daily Mail*, 11 February 2016.

<sup>896</sup> 'Heartbroken and hopeless: Parents of Scottish jihadi bride Aqsa Mahmood tell of their devastation at losing her to ISIS brainwashing', *Daily Mail*, 22 February 2016.

<sup>897</sup> 'Target List of British Islamic State Jihadis', *Sky News*, 13 November 2015.

<sup>898</sup> 'Tackling extremism in the UK: Report from the Prime Minister's Task Force on Tackling Radicalisation and Extremism', HM Government, December 2013, available at: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/263181/ETF\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/263181/ETF_FINAL.pdf), last visited: 8 March 2017, p. 5.

<sup>899</sup> 'Counter-Extremism Strategy', HM Government, October 2015, paras. 21–36.

<sup>900</sup> 'Baroness Warsi Says Terrorists Are "Radicalised In Their Bedrooms" – Blaming Mosques Is "An Easy Answer"', *Huffington Post*, 22 February 2015.

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attended a school that was attended by other extremists or had been accused of having a problem with extremism. While there is no evidence to support the allegations often made by family members that the institutions in question played any direct role in the students' radicalisation, it is possible that these spaces functioned as forum in which extremists could socialise with each other.

This supports the findings of the 2012 Home Affairs Select Committee report into radicalisation which found that, although many witnesses stated that the internet was the main forum for radicalisation, "even those witnesses who attributed a significant role to the internet tended to support that report's [a 2011 Home Office study] conclusion that some element of face-to-face contact was generally essential to radicalisation taking place".<sup>901</sup> It poses a particular challenge, as it is simply not possible to prevent individuals from meeting in public institutions, or to hold those institutions responsible. However, it also presents a significant opportunity for intervention, with the safeguarding connections between institutions, local authorities and the police a crucial tool in identifying the development of vulnerability in individuals and peer groups.

### 3.5. Mosques and Islamic Centres

The case of Finsbury Park Mosque in North London is a well-known example of the exploitation of religious institutions by extremists. The mosque was the base of operations for the extremist preacher and recruiter Abu Hamza al-Masri, who used it to radicalise, recruit and train young men. The mosque was only wrested from al-Masri's control in 2003 after a major government intervention from the Charity Commission, police and local authority, and in 2005 the management was subject to a "legal takeover".<sup>902</sup>

Almost a decade later, the former Director-General of the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism at the Home Office, Charles Farr, stated when submitting evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee that radicalisation in religious institutions, including mosques, made up "no more than 1% to 2%' of total cases".<sup>903</sup> Farr instead argued that there was a trend towards radicalisation in private venues rather than religious institutions, but maintained that "we can continue to see some radicalisation going on in religious institutions but it is a very small percentage of the total number that we have in this country".<sup>904</sup> The Home Affairs Select Committee Report concluded in a similar vein that "while the [Prevent] Strategy cautions ongoing vigilance against potential threats, its focus on mosques is more as a tool to help in countering extremist ideology by presenting competing points of view".<sup>905</sup>

However, nine out of 29 students profiled in this report had some connection with a mosque or an imam suggested as one of the sources of their radicalisation, or had been involved with a mosque attended by other extremists.<sup>906</sup> In most cases, there was no suggestion that the mosque itself played any direct role in the individual's radicalisation. Shabazz Suleman attended the Muslim Education Centre in High Wycombe,<sup>907</sup> which a decade earlier counted among its attendees the individuals involved in the transatlantic liquid bomb plot.<sup>908</sup> More recently, Thomas Evans, who travelled to fight for al-Shabaab, attended the Centre,<sup>909</sup> and his mother claimed he had become radicalised after meeting a group of men

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<sup>901</sup> 'Roots of violent radicalisation', Home Affairs Committee, 6 February 2012, p. 16.

<sup>902</sup> 'Abu Hamza "personally gave permission for terrorist recruits to travel to Afghanistan for jihad while preaching at Finsbury Park Mosque"', *Daily Mail*, 18 April 2014, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2608049/Abu-Hamza-used-Finsbury-Park-mosque-recruit-terrorists-jihad.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2608049/Abu-Hamza-used-Finsbury-Park-mosque-recruit-terrorists-jihad.html), last visited: 10 March 2017;

<sup>903</sup> 'The battle for the mosque', *BBC News*, 7 February 2006, available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4639074.stm>, last visited: 10 March 2017.

<sup>904</sup> 'Roots of violent radicalisation', Home Affairs Committee, 6 February 2012, p. 15.

<sup>905</sup> *ibid.*, Q302.

<sup>906</sup> *ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>907</sup> These accusations were often made by only one individual or the student's family, and often denied by the institutions in question.

<sup>908</sup> 'Jihadi terror plots - the High Wycombe connection', *Daily Telegraph*, 9 November 2014.

<sup>909</sup> 'Buckinghamshire mum says she hopes her terrorist son is "burning in hell"', *Get Bucks*, 12 October 2015.

<sup>910</sup> 'Jihadist's link to liquid bomb plotter', *The Sunday Times*, 22 June 2014.

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at the gym and attending a local mosque.<sup>910</sup> Flamur Shalaku, meanwhile, was known to have attended the Ladbroke Grove Mosque, also attended by at least six other men who would go on to fight in Syria.<sup>911</sup>

An institution such as a mosque or Islamic centre can provide a place for extremist individuals to meet and socialise, even if it plays no direct role in their radicalisation. The Halane sisters' cousin, Abdullahi Ahmed Jama Farah, facilitated communication between extremists who would meet at Jame'ah Masjid E Noor mosque in Stretford, Manchester. A spokesperson for the mosque highlighted the difficulty this presents:

We knew them as individuals ... We have had long conversations with the terrorism unit and we are now very careful about who we allow in the mosque and monitoring what they are up to. We've never had any radical speakers here but you cannot stop people from meeting each other.<sup>912</sup>

Direct accusations were made against some of the mosques attended by the students. However, it is important to note that no evidence has been produced to support these accusations, and they may simply reflect that the students associated with their peer groups at these institutions.

### 3.5.1. A Coventry Mosque

In March 2014, Ali Kalantar travelled with two friends, Rashed Amani and Mohammed Hadi, to join Islamic State.<sup>913</sup> Before he travelled, Kalantar had become visibly religious and began regularly attending an unnamed local mosque, and his father believed that an imam at the mosque was responsible for his radicalisation.<sup>914</sup> His sister agreed, and alleged that the imam had told the three Coventry Islamic State travellers to travel to "fight jihad".<sup>915</sup> At least two of the Coventry Islamic State travellers attended the local mosque in question,<sup>916</sup> but in leaked Islamic State files, none of the three travellers had filled in the field identifying who had recruited them.<sup>917</sup>

### 3.5.2. Al-Manar Centre, Cardiff

In February 2014, Aseel Muthana followed his older brother, Nasser, to Syria to fight for Islamic State.<sup>918</sup> According to their father, Nasser and Aseel began to behave differently after they started attending the al-Manar centre. Their father said, "Some of it must be on the internet, but it must also be the radical sheikhs who come to Britain to do this."<sup>919</sup> Muhammed Mustafa al-Muqri, allegedly connected to the proscribed terrorist organisation *al-Gamaa al-Islamiya*, was said to be a regular speaker at the mosque,<sup>920</sup> and Mohammed al-Arifi, banned from the UK in 2014,<sup>921</sup> had also appeared at the al-Manar Centre.<sup>922</sup>

On 27 June 2014, the mosque released a statement claiming that they were "determined to work together to build a strong, cohesive and tolerant city, based on mutual respect". The statement also said, "We reject extremism and together we will challenge those who want to destabilize [sic] and damage our

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<sup>910</sup> 'Buckinghamshire mum says she hopes her terrorist son is "burning in hell"', *Get Bucks*, 12 October 2015.

<sup>911</sup> See Flamur Shalaku profile.

<sup>912</sup> 'Small part of Manchester that has been home to 16 jihadis', *Guardian*, 25 February 2017.

<sup>913</sup> 'Second Coventry jihadist reportedly dies in Syria fighting with Isis', *Daily Telegraph*, 11 December 2014; 'Father: Teenager fighting in Syria was "radicalised by imam"', *BBC News*, 24 June 2014 [video 2:25].

<sup>914</sup> 'Father: Teenager fighting in Syria was "radicalised by imam"', *BBC News*, 24 June 2014 [video 3:43].

<sup>915</sup> 'Leaked ISIS files reveal 3 young men fighting in Syria may have been radicalised in UK city', *Daily Mirror*, 4 May 2016.

<sup>916</sup> 'Father: Teenager fighting in Syria was "radicalised by imam"', *BBC News*, 24 June 2014 [video 2:05].

<sup>917</sup> 'Leaked ISIS files reveal 3 young men fighting in Syria may have been radicalised in UK city', *Daily Mirror*, 4 May 2016.

<sup>918</sup> 'Extremist's "gay" chat kept secret to protect his rights: Lawyers tried to ban mention of "Welsh Cutie" because they feared he could be killed by ISIS over his sexuality', *Daily Mail*, 11 February 2016; 'Aseel Muthana - Who are Britain's jihadists?' *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>919</sup> 'British jihadi may have been radicalised by terror plot neighbours in Cardiff', *The Times*, 23 June 2014.

<sup>920</sup> 'The British jihadist who swapped boozing for terror - and the schoolboy charity fundraisers who are waging war for ISIS', *Daily Mail*, 23 June 2014; Home Office, 'Proscribed Terrorist Organisations', 16 December 2016, p. 6.

<sup>921</sup> 'Britain bans Saudi cleric who supports jihad in Syria', *Reuters*, 25 June 2014.

<sup>922</sup> 'The British jihadist who swapped boozing for terror - and the schoolboy charity fundraisers who are waging war for ISIS', *Daily Mail*, 23 June 2014.

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communities and our young people.”<sup>923</sup> However, it was claimed by a source with knowledge of the local community that the Muthana brothers “were groomed” at the al-Manar Centre, “not to the stage to go, but so that they are satisfied that what they go to do is right. It all comes down from the school of thought. Fight the Shias, fight these people, fight those people — that’s where it all started. The teaching [at the al-Manar Centre] helped the people recruiting.”<sup>924</sup>

### 3.6. Educational Institutions

As in the case of religious institutions, educational institutions can provide forums in which extremists can socialise, even if the schools themselves play no role in the radicalisation of the students. This was the case among a number of institutions with which the students had contact. There have, however, been instances of more direct involvement of extremists in UK educational institutions.

The 2015 Counter-Extremism Strategy noted historical cases of this exploitation, including the “Trojan Horse” scandal, when a government report found “co-ordinated, deliberate and sustained action ... to introduce an intolerant and aggressive Islamic ethos” to several schools in Birmingham.<sup>925</sup> The report found that this was done by “gaining influence on the governing bodies, installing sympathetic head teachers or senior members of staff, appointing like-minded people to key positions, and seeking to remove head teachers they do not feel to be sufficiently compliant”.<sup>926</sup> The Counter-Extremism Strategy also noted that Ofsted and the Department of Education found evidence of “unacceptable practices” at six East London independent Muslim schools and a maintained secondary school where students were “vulnerable to extremist influences and radicalisation”.<sup>927</sup>

The government has recognised that this vulnerability extends to higher and further education (HE/FE) institutions. The revised Prevent Strategy stated in 2011 that there was “unambiguous evidence to indicate that some extremist organisations ... target specific universities and colleges (notably with a large number of Muslim students) with the objective of radicalising and recruiting students”, and noted the role of independent extremist preachers who have “sought to repeatedly reach out to selected universities and Muslim students”.<sup>928</sup> Acknowledging that “extremist preachers use some higher education institutions as a platform for spreading their messages”, the Prime Minister’s Task Force “agreed to work with universities and their student bodies to find trained Muslim chaplains who will be able to challenge extremist views on campuses”.<sup>929</sup> The Counter-Extremism Strategy, meanwhile, highlighted that “some students are and have been influenced by extremist ideology and that some universities have been the focus of attention by extremist speakers”.<sup>930</sup>

The contact between students and educational institutions can provide opportunities to stop individuals being drawn into terrorism, at home and abroad. From those profiled in this report, some universities have seen more than one student travel abroad to join a terrorist organisation. Anil Khalil Raoufi, Mohammad Javeed and Raphael Hostey, reported to have been students of John Moores University in Liverpool, travelled to join Islamic State together in 2013.<sup>931</sup>

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<sup>923</sup> ‘Joint Statement on the Fight Against Extremism in Cardiff’, Al-Manar Centre, 16 September 2014, available at: [www.almanar.org.uk/news\\_description.php?id=33](http://www.almanar.org.uk/news_description.php?id=33), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>924</sup> ‘Banned cleric preached at mosque where jihadi brothers worshipped’, *Daily Telegraph*, 23 June 2014.

<sup>925</sup> ‘Counter-Extremism Strategy’, HM Government, October 2015, para. 22.

<sup>926</sup> ‘Report into allegations concerning Birmingham schools arising from “Trojan Horse” letter’, HM Government, July 2014, available at: [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/340526/HC\\_576\\_accessible\\_-.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/340526/HC_576_accessible_-.pdf), last visited: 8 March 2017, p. 14.

<sup>927</sup> ‘Counter-Extremism Strategy’, HM Government, October 2015, para. 23.

<sup>928</sup> ‘Prevent Strategy’, HM Government, June 2011, p. 73.

<sup>929</sup> ‘Tackling extremism in the UK: Report from the Prime Minister’s Task Force on Tackling Radicalisation and Extremism’, HM Government, December 2013, p. 6.

<sup>930</sup> ‘Counter-Extremism Strategy’, HM Government, October 2015, para. 26. For further examples of extremist speakers on campus, see: Sutton, R., ‘Preventing Prevent? Challenges to Counter-Radicalisation Policy on Campus’, The Henry Jackson Society, 2015, available at: [http://henryjacksonsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Preventing-Prevent\\_webversion3.pdf](http://henryjacksonsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Preventing-Prevent_webversion3.pdf), last visited: 8 March 2017, pp. 17–32.

<sup>931</sup> ‘John Moores University students may be fighting with ISIS in Syria’, *Liverpool Echo*, 4 March 2015.

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While there is no evidence that any of those profiled were radicalised on the premises of an educational institution or that these institutions were explicitly targeted as in the “Trojan Horse” case, it must be noted that a number of the students attended institutions that had other students involved, or who went on to become involved, in extremism. Once again, this highlights the potential for “socialisation into terrorism” within institutions, with extremist peer groups using these spaces to associate with one another. As suggested above, it also reinforces the importance of ensuring that effective safeguarding networks can operate within these institutional spaces, given the opportunity they offer for effective early intervention.

### ***3.6.1. Fitzalan High School, Cardiff***

Aseel Muthana was a student of Fitzalan High School in Cardiff, and another student at the school, Kristen Brekke, was convicted alongside two others in February 2016 of helping Muthana reach Syria.<sup>932</sup> The school has previously faced accusations of a culture of extremism, with a former teacher claiming that girls were “bullied into wearing ... hijab”, teenagers were afraid to listen to Western music, and that some students saw terrorists as heroes and their victims as deserving.<sup>933</sup> However, these accusations were rejected by the school, and the mother of a pupil argued that the comments ran counter to her experience of the school and described behaviour that she had never witnessed.<sup>934</sup>

### ***3.6.2. Holland Park School, London***

Holland Park School in Kensington was attended by a number of students who went on to be involved in violent extremism. Among them was Fatlum Shalaku, who travelled with his older brother, Flamur, to Syria in spring 2013.<sup>935</sup> Flamur Shalaku had also been a student at the school,<sup>936</sup> and other former students included: Hamza Parvez, who travelled to fight for Islamic State in May 2014; Mohammed Nasser, who travelled to fight for Islamic State in May 2014 with Parvez,<sup>937</sup> and was killed in June 2014;<sup>938</sup> Mohammed el-Araj, who fought for Jabhat al-Nusra and was killed in August 2013;<sup>939</sup> and Amal el-Wahabi, jailed for tricking a former Holland Park School schoolfriend into delivering money to her husband, Aine Davis, in November 2014.<sup>940</sup> The headmaster later claimed the school had a “strong line on secularity and a very strong line on zero tolerance to any kind of fundamentalism from any religion”.<sup>941</sup>

### ***3.6.3. Sidney Stringer Academy, Coventry***

Mohammed Hadi was studying at Sidney Stringer Academy when he travelled to Syria in March 2014.<sup>942</sup> The school had already been known for extremist behaviour among its students, and in 2010 reported and suspended a group of Muslim students who threatened to violently attack another student for writing an online tribute to British soldiers on Armistice Day. One of the students involved had described himself online as “a terrorist”, and another student was photographed holding an assault rifle and posted a poem about hijacking on his Facebook account.<sup>943</sup> It must be noted that Sidney Stringer

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<sup>932</sup> ‘A council has rejected former teacher’s claims children are being radicalised at Cardiff secondary school’, *Wales Online*, 17 May 2016; ‘Three men found guilty of helping teenage jihadi travel from UK to Syria’, *Guardian*, 10 February 2016.

<sup>933</sup> ‘Shocking story of extremism in class: I taught jihadis at Cardiff school where Rigby’s killer is called a hero’, *Daily Mail*, 13 October 2016.

<sup>934</sup> ‘A council has rejected former teacher’s claims children are being radicalised at Cardiff secondary school’, *Wales Online*, 17 May 2016.

<sup>935</sup> ‘Fatlum Shalaku – Who are Britain’s jihadis?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016; ‘Five pupils from west London comprehensive dubbed “the socialist Eton” are killed waging jihad in Syria and Iraq’, *Daily Mail*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>936</sup> ‘Five pupils from west London comprehensive dubbed “the socialist Eton” are killed waging jihad in Syria and Iraq’, *Daily Mail*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>937</sup> ‘Joining ISIS: Hamzah Parvez and Mohammed Nasser’, *Huffington Post*, 1 November 2014.

<sup>938</sup> ‘Mohammed Nasser – Who are Britain’s jihadis?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>939</sup> ‘Mohammed el-Araj – Who are Britain’s jihadis?’, *BBC News*, 10 October 2016.

<sup>940</sup> ‘Woman jailed for funding Syria jihad’, *BBC News*, 13 November 2014; ‘Five pupils from west London comprehensive dubbed “the socialist Eton” are killed waging jihad in Syria and Iraq’, *Daily Mail*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>941</sup> ‘Five pupils from west London comprehensive dubbed “the socialist Eton” are killed waging jihad in Syria and Iraq’, *Daily Mail*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>942</sup> ‘From a Coventry schoolkid to Isis warrior in Iraq’, *The Sun*, 22 June 2014.

<sup>943</sup> ‘Schoolboy who received death threats from Muslim gang after supporting British troops “will not return to school”’, *Daily Mail*, 18 November 2010.

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Academy took the incident seriously and did take measures against the students who demonstrated extremist behaviour, highlighting the effectiveness of reporting procedures which can be put in place.

When the public aspect of radicalisation which may manifest at these institutions is recognised, it is apparent not only that institutional contact can provide a potential opportunity for intervention, but that the period of transition between institutions, such as between school and university or two different places of worship, should be recognised as a period of vulnerability. In this situation, individuals may be moving away from the oversight of those who would have been best placed to notice a change in behaviour, as with Mohammed Mehdi Hassan, who became associated with the men with whom he travelled to Syria during a gap year before attending university.<sup>944</sup> To effectively harness the opportunity provided by institutional contact, it is important to recognise that in the majority of cases behavioural changes indicative of radicalisation were noticed by someone who knew the student. Even for those for whom online activity featured, it was subsidiary to real-world relationships, and often appeared alongside noticeable indications of radicalisation.

### 4. The Online Facilitation of Real-world Relationships

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Involvement with extremist family and friendship groups or attendance at an institution with a history of extremist attendees present a clear risk. Such involvement has the potential to engage an individual with extreme ideologies while potentially diminishing the efficacy of protective factors or intervention while those relationships persist. While online activity was subsidiary to these high-risk face-to-face relationships, the internet provided a means of communication with other extremists that in some cases led to real-world relationships. Of those with real-world connections to extremists, 13 individuals profiled had some online extremist activity as an additional suggested source of radicalisation. Of the 17 individuals who had online activity, including all four female individuals, the majority were engaging with extremists online. In the cases of Aqsa Mahmood and Sanya Dirie, online communication was the first step towards a face-to-face relationship, while in the case of the Halane sisters, it allowed them to maintain contact with a radical family member who had already travelled abroad.

#### 4.1. The “Bedroom Radical”

Aqsa Mahmood, who travelled to join Islamic State in November 2013, was described by her parents as a “bedroom radical” who had become brainwashed.<sup>945</sup> Mahmood is believed to have spent much of her time in her bedroom communicating with extremists through internet chatrooms.<sup>946</sup> According to her family’s solicitor, it was not possible that she could have been influenced by family members or clerics.<sup>947</sup> However, the use of the phrase “bedroom radical” is misleading, as Mahmood had been in face-to-face contact with an extremist before she started her degree. Adeel Ulhaq, convicted in February 2016 for helping Aseel Muthana travel to Syria,<sup>948</sup> is thought to have groomed Mahmood over the internet before the two arranged to meet in person. Mahmood ran away to meet Ulhaq, leaving a note for her family.<sup>949</sup>

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<sup>944</sup> ‘How the “Pompey Lads” fell into the hands of Isis’, *Guardian*, 27 July 2015.

<sup>945</sup> ‘Parents urge “bedroom radical” Aqsa Mahmood to return home’, *Channel 4 News*, 3 September 2014 [video: 00:52–1:02].

<sup>946</sup> ‘Aqsa Mahmood: how did Scot become jihadi bride in Syria?’ *The Week*, 4 September 2014.

<sup>947</sup> ‘Parents urge “bedroom radical” Aqsa Mahmood to return home’, *Channel 4 News*, 3 September 2014.

<sup>948</sup> ‘Three men found guilty of helping teenage jihadi travel from UK to Syria’, *Guardian*, 10 February 2016.

<sup>949</sup> ‘Heartbroken and hopeless: Parents of Scottish jihadi bride Aqsa Mahmood tell of their devastation at losing her to ISIS brainwashing’, *Daily Mail*, 22 February 2016.



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### 4.2. “Jihad Matchmaker”: Women in Contact with Fighters

Samya Dirie travelled to Syria in September 2014 alongside 15-year-old Yusra Hussien, whom she is believed to have met on the internet. The two girls were reportedly influenced by extremists online, and Hussien is believed to have been groomed through a dating website called “Jihad Matchmaker”.<sup>950</sup>

The internet may have played a similar role in the radicalisation of two other female students. Salma and Zahra Halane are believed to have travelled to Syria in June 2014,<sup>951</sup> and used the internet to communicate with their brother, Ahmed Halane. Ahmed is believed to have travelled to Somalia in September 2013 to join al-Shabaab,<sup>952</sup> and the girls may have been “inspired” by their brother’s radicalisation.<sup>953</sup> It has also been suggested that the girls were radicalised online by fighters who funded their trip with the intention to marry them.<sup>954</sup> Indeed, fellow student fighter Raphael Hostey has boasted that he recruited the sisters.<sup>955</sup>

### 4.3. Communication with Extremists through Online Chatrooms

The Channel Duty Guidance recognises that vulnerable individuals may be drawn into terrorism by “peer pressure, influence from other people or via the internet”.<sup>956</sup> Rather than the passive consumption of online propaganda, engagement with others through online chatrooms was more common among the students, particularly those who were regarded as vulnerable to the influence of others. As well as the claims made about the Halane sisters, examples included Cubeyda Jama, who attempted to travel to Syria in February 2016.<sup>957</sup> Jama can be described in the language of government guidance as having a “susceptibility to indoctrination”,<sup>958</sup> and was assessed by probation services to be “naïve”, “vulnerable” and of “low intelligence”.<sup>959</sup> According to the judge in his case, he was “an obvious risk of radicalisation” under the influence of others and online material.<sup>960</sup> Talha Asmal, who travelled with his next-door neighbour and whose family believed that he was targeted because of his “innocence and vulnerability”, provides a similar case. While there is evidence of real-life interaction with other extremists, his family claimed that he had been exploited by anonymous extremists online who deliberately groomed him.<sup>961</sup>

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<sup>950</sup> ‘Father of second missing British teenage girl thought to have been radicalised online before travelling to Syria pleads to come home’, *Daily Mail*, 7 October 2014; ‘“ISIS runaway” Yusra Hussien may have been lured to Syria by jihadi dating site’, *Daily Mirror*, 1 October 2014.

<sup>951</sup> ‘British twins who fled to Syria were top students: report’, *New York Daily News*, 9 July 2014.

<sup>952</sup> ‘See the women who have fled the UK to join ISIS’ brutal regime in Syria’, *Daily Mirror*, 17 February 2016, available at: [www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/sec-women-who-fled-uk-7386048](http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/sec-women-who-fled-uk-7386048), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>953</sup> ‘Twin Manchester schoolgirls who ran away to Syria “have married ISIS fighters and mainly stay indoors and read the Qur’an unless their jihadi husbands take them out”’, *Daily Mail*, 24 July 2014.

<sup>954</sup> ‘Twin girls who ran away to Syria were star pupils with 28 GCSEs between them’, *Manchester Evening News*, 9 July 2014.

<sup>955</sup> ‘Teenage “terror twins” who fled Britain to join ISIS tried to recruit their whole family telling brothers: “We might seem evil to you, but we will all be happy in the afterlife”’, *Daily Mail*, 4 October 2015.

<sup>956</sup> ‘Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism’, HM Government, 2015, para. 36.

<sup>957</sup> ‘Thornton Heath teenager Cubeyda Hassan Jama jailed after being caught at Stansted Airport on way to fight for Isis in Syria’, *Your Local Guardian*, 28 July 2016.

<sup>958</sup> ‘Channel: Vulnerability assessment framework’, HM Government, October 2012, p. 2.

<sup>959</sup> ‘Student, 19, who used his university loan to catch RyanAir flight to Europe to join ISIS for three and a half years’, *Daily Mail*, 28 July 2016.

<sup>960</sup> ‘Teenager with “step-by-step terrorist guide” jailed after he was caught trying to join Isis in Syria’, *International Business Times*, 28 July 2016.

<sup>961</sup> ‘Dewsbury in “utter shock” over Talha Asmal’s death in Iraq suicide bombing’, *Guardian*, 15 June 2015.

## 5. The Role of Behavioural Changes in Identifying Vulnerability

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The ability of institutions and individuals in contact with students to successfully identify vulnerability is vital in providing the appropriate intervention before an individual is drawn into terrorism. The Metropolitan Police's Action Counters Terrorism (ACT) campaign, launched on 6 March 2017, raises awareness of the importance of public reporting of suspicious behaviour in preventing terrorist attacks.<sup>962</sup> ACT encourages communities to not be concerned about wasting police time because "the public already contribute intelligence to around a third of the most serious terrorism investigations".<sup>963</sup>

Contrary to claims that radicalisation often takes place behind closed doors, changes in behaviour that could have been taken as indicative of radicalisation were frequently witnessed among the students profiled. The failure to recognise the signs in these cases suggests that confidently identifying behaviour associated with radicalisation can be problematic. This is because single characteristics, including changes in behaviour, cannot be taken on their own as an indication of radicalisation. The Channel Duty Guidance warns:

It must not be assumed that these characteristics and experiences will necessarily lead to individuals becoming terrorists, or that these indicators are the only source of information required to make an appropriate assessment about vulnerability.<sup>964</sup>

However, while behavioural changes such as the expression of extreme political views and the appearance of behaviours commonly associated with increased religious observance do not alone indicate radicalisation, they were the most noticed behavioural indicators among the students profiled. Changing behaviour was noticed by one or more of those who knew the individuals profiled, sometimes years before their travel, in 17 out of the 29 cases. Sudden expressions of extreme political opinions were recognised in the cases of ten of the students profiled, while behaviour commonly associated with increased religious observance was noticed in 14 of the students.

The Channel Duty Guidance identifies certain changes in behaviour as indicative of vulnerability, and importantly recognises that these changes should raise greater concern if they take place within a particular context, including individuals:

- "Changing their style of dress or personal appearance to accord with the [extreme] group
- Day-to-day behaviour becoming increasingly centred around an extremist ideology, group or cause
- Loss of interest in other friends and activities not associated with the extremist ideology or cause"<sup>965</sup>

This means that changes in behaviour such as the sudden adoption of Islamic dress or significant increase in religious observance alone should not be seen as indicative of vulnerability. However, if they manifest alongside other behaviours which may indicate vulnerability, then they may be more significant. Understanding the importance of this context can therefore provide a safeguard against misidentifying the sudden appearance of behaviours associated with religious observance or political

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<sup>962</sup> 'Met Police launch new counter terrorism campaign urging public to report suspicious activity', *Get West London*, 7 March 2017, available at: [www.getwestlondon.co.uk/news/west-london-news/met-police-launch-new-counter-12698224](http://www.getwestlondon.co.uk/news/west-london-news/met-police-launch-new-counter-12698224), last visited: 29 March 2017.

<sup>963</sup> 'Public urged to help communities defeat terrorism with new Action Counters Terrorism (ACT) campaign', *National Counter Terrorism Security Office*, 7 March 2017, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/action-counters-terrorism>, last visited: 29 March 2017.

<sup>964</sup> 'Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism', HM Government, 2015, para. 54.

<sup>965</sup> *ibid.*, para. 51.b-d.

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opinion as evidence of vulnerability, while still appreciating the extent to which such signs have appeared in the cases profiled.

The concept of cognitive integrative complexity provides one useful means of identifying this distinction. Lloyd and Dean write that they:

distinguish the features of extremist thinking from nonextremist thinking in relation to the concept of cognitive integrative complexity. Extremist views or ideologies are characterized by simplistic, reductionist, bipolar thinking (them and us, persecutors and persecuted, worthy and unworthy) that preempts argument, is emotionally charged, and appeals to the part of our brains that mediates fight or flight in response to threat.

They [extremist offenders] are characterized by low integrative complexity in that they do not accommodate or integrate multiple perspectives, a mindset that analysis suggests is more likely to lead to conflict and violence in state and nonstate actors.<sup>966</sup>

In other words, an individual may demonstrate a sudden increase in behaviour commonly associated with religious observance (wearing Islamic clothing, growing a beard, praying regularly, increased mosque attendance). This should not be regarded as concerning in itself. However, it might raise concern if it were to appear alongside other characteristics indicative of vulnerability, including behaviours which may reflect low cognitive integrative complexity, such as the expression of extreme political “us and them” opinions, or withdrawal from a former friendship group or non-Muslims.

Examples of how low integrative complexity may manifest in behaviour can be found in the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children’s (NSPCC) list of indications of radicalisation, which includes, “Isolating themselves from family and friends; talking as if from a scripted speech; unwillingness or inability to discuss their views; a sudden disrespectful attitude towards others.”<sup>967</sup> Such behaviours were noticed in a number of cases. These behavioural changes were also witnessed in those who socialised with extremists or had other risk factors associated with vulnerability.

### 5.1. Sudden Expression of Extreme Political Opinions

Extreme political opinions, the desire for political change or strong political feelings do not alone indicate an individual’s vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism. However, “feelings of grievance and injustice” and “a desire for political or moral change” are indicators of vulnerability that are often noticed.<sup>968</sup> The expression of extreme political opinions often reveals indications of the low cognitive integrative complexity associated with an extremist mindset, particularly in the form of “us and them” thinking.

This can provide an opportunity to intervene. In 2014, a BBC interview with Muslim mothers suggested that expression of feelings of political grievance and injustice can provide an opportunity for discussion before they escalate, to ensure that they are expressed in a constructive, rather than destructive, way.<sup>969</sup>

The early identification of such strong political views helped the authorities stop David Souaan before he travelled to Syria for a second time. Souaan was arrested after his fellow students alerted the authorities when he showed them pictures of himself in Syria, talked of people he knew who had died

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<sup>966</sup> Lloyd, M. & C. Dean, ‘The Development of Structured Guidelines for Assessing Risk in Extremist Offenders’, p. 41.

<sup>967</sup> ‘Why we’re doing more to protect children from radicalisation’, NSPCC, 30 August 2016, available at: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/fighting-for-childhood/news-opinion/why-doing-more-protect-children-radicalisation/>, last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>968</sup> ‘Channel: Vulnerability assessment framework’, HM Government, October 2012, p. 2.

<sup>969</sup> ‘Are Muslim mothers the cure for radicalisation?’ *BBC News*, 4 April 2014 [video], available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-26875188](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-26875188), last visited: 8 March 2017.

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fighting there, and his desire to establish a caliphate.<sup>970</sup> His “us and them” thinking was seen in the prosecution’s claims that Souaan “called other students ‘kuffar’ [infidel] ... and became more hard-line and serious if anyone mentioned anything to do with girls or alcohol”.<sup>971</sup> His expression of these views also took place within the context of his attendance at demonstrations organised by the al-Muhajiroun alias group Need4Khilafah.<sup>972</sup> At one of these rallies he filmed himself indicating his desire to establish an Islamic State in the United Kingdom.<sup>973</sup>

Like Souaan, Humza Ali began to show clear indications of increasing Islamist political views. In July 2014, he was seen handing out leaflets entitled “Education under the Sharia” alongside fellow al-Muhajiroun associate Brusthom Ziamani. When he returned to the UK after failing to enter Syria, Ali sent messages to a Labour councillor telling him to stay away from a “Muslim area” and calling him a “dirty swine kaffir” and “Shaytan”.<sup>974</sup> In addition, Ali’s behaviour became increasingly centred on the group and its ideology.<sup>975</sup> This was evident in his attendance at a paintballing session with other extremists, described as a “bonding act” and training session, and his wearing a T-shirt that read, “Call of Duty Dawa and Jihad”.<sup>976</sup>

His religio-political thinking was distinctively characterised by signs of low integrative complexity. For example, he was described as thinking in terms of “them and us”, reacting only to violence against Muslims, but not non-Muslims. In the language of VERA-2, Ali’s thinking beliefs and attitudes were marked by a “lack of empathy, [and] understanding outside [of one’s] own group”.<sup>977</sup> The defence explicitly described him as lacking “cognitive and high-level thinking”.<sup>978</sup>

It is also possible for extreme views to appear alongside behaviour that would typically not be associated with extremism. This was seen in the case of Jaffar Deghayes, who travelled to Syria in January 2014. When Deghayes was 14 he was found drunk in Brighton shouting sexist and threatening abuse at passers-by, including, “Allah will seek revenge for me,” and, “Do what you want to me. See what happens when judgement day comes. You will all go to hell.”<sup>979</sup> When he returned from visiting family in Libya the following year it was noted that he had begun to express strong political views, telling a youth offender officer that all Americans were terrorists in September 2013, and was referred to Channel.<sup>980</sup>

The Channel Duty Guidance also specifies “peer pressure, influence from other people ... bullying, crime against them or their involvement in crime, anti-social behaviour, family tensions, race/hate crime” as factors that might have “bearing on someone becoming vulnerable”.<sup>981</sup> The Deghayes brothers had a significant history of these factors, and Jaffar Deghayes’ expression of extreme political opinions and possible extremist views could have been taken in this context as further indicators of his increased vulnerability to radicalisation.<sup>982</sup>

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<sup>970</sup> ‘UK student who fought in Syria is jailed’, *Daily Mail*, 4 February 2016.

<sup>971</sup> ‘Student who planned to fight for IS jailed’, *Sky News*, 3 February 2015; See also “using insulting or derogatory names or labels for another group” in ‘Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism’, HM Government, 2015, para. 52.b.

<sup>972</sup> ‘UK student who fought in Syria is jailed’, *Daily Mail*, 4 February 2016.

<sup>973</sup> ‘Muslim student who wanted black flag of ISIS to fly over Downing Street and had beheading video on his phone is jailed for three and a half years’, *Daily Mail*, 3 February 2015.

<sup>974</sup> ‘Apprentice bricklayer, 20, who trained to join ISIS at paintballing centre but was stopped from getting to Syria when his MOTHER confiscated his passport is jailed for nine years’, *Daily Mail*, 14 February 2017.

<sup>975</sup> ‘Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism’, HM Government, 2015, para. 51.b-d.

<sup>976</sup> ‘Apprentice bricklayer, 20, who trained to join ISIS at paintballing centre but was stopped from getting to Syria when his MOTHER confiscated his passport is jailed for nine years’, *Daily Mail*, 14 February 2017.

<sup>977</sup> Pressman, E., and J. Flockton, ‘Violent Extremist Risk Assessment’, p. 128.

<sup>978</sup> ‘Apprentice bricklayer, 20, who trained to join ISIS at paintballing centre but was stopped from getting to Syria when his MOTHER confiscated his passport is jailed for nine years’, *Daily Mail*, 14 February 2017.

<sup>979</sup> ‘From Brighton to the battlefield: how four young Britons were drawn to jihad’, *Guardian*, 31 March 2016.

<sup>980</sup> *ibid.*; compare also “clearly identifying another group as threatening what they stand for and blaming that group for all social or political ills” in ‘Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism’, HM Government, 2015, para. 52.a.

<sup>981</sup> ‘Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism’, HM Government, 2015, para. 36.

<sup>982</sup> ‘From Brighton to the battlefield: how four young Britons were drawn to jihad’, *Guardian*, 31 March 2016.

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### 5.2. Sudden Appearance of Behaviours Commonly Associated with Increased Religious Observance

As with the appearance of strong political views, behaviours commonly associated with increased religious observance are not by themselves indicative of radicalisation or vulnerability to radicalisation. This is recognised by Channel Duty Guidance, which states, “Outward expression of faith, in the absence of any other indicator of vulnerability, is not a reason to make a referral to Channel.”<sup>983</sup> Nonetheless, a number of witnesses noticed that many of the students profiled had begun to pray five times a day, frequently attend a mosque, wear traditional Islamic dress, purchase religious material, grow a beard, change mannerisms, or become unfriendly and withdrawn from non-Muslim friends. This was the most commonly noticed behavioural change in the profiles and aligns with Channel Duty Guidance’s engagement factors, including changing personal appearance, day-to-day behaviour, and possessing symbols or materials associated with extremism.<sup>984</sup>

Confidently distinguishing behaviours associated with increased religious observance from those that occurred alongside other indicators of radicalisation poses a significant challenge. Given the prevalence of behaviour commonly associated with increasing religious observance and the small number of those vulnerable, responding to this difficulty is necessary to mitigate against over- or under-reporting. In many of the cases profiled there were additional signs that the students’ increasing religious observance may have been indicative of increased vulnerability, and being able to spot these signs alongside the increased religious observance will be crucial.

Religious identity has in the past been suggested as a possible protective factor against radicalisation. A classified MI5 briefing note in 2008 was reported by the *Guardian* to have stated that:

Far from being religious zealots, a large number of those involved in terrorism do not practice their faith regularly. Many lack religious literacy and could actually be regarded as religious novices ... very few have been brought up in strongly religious households ... there is evidence that a well-established religious identity actually protects against violent radicalisation.<sup>985</sup>

Given the number of students’ who demonstrated behaviour associated with religious observance, it is vital that this behaviour is not recognised *prima facie* as indicative of the presence of a protective factor.

This position is often accompanied by those who argue that that terrorists often display supposedly “un-Islamic” behaviour, such as drug taking, alcohol consumption or murder.<sup>986</sup> However, this behaviour may instead precede an increase in religious behaviour. Brahim Abdeslam, who killed himself in a suicide attack on the Comptoir Voltaire café during the November 2015 Islamic State attacks on Paris, provides an example of this. Abdeslam was involved with alcohol and drug dealing, and ran a club that was closed down because of drug-related activity.<sup>987</sup> However, according to his brother, the only change noticed in Brahim Abdeslam and his other brother, Salah Abdeslam, who was arrested in March 2016 in relation to the Paris attacks, was that they became more religious.<sup>988</sup> Their brother recalled noticing

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<sup>983</sup> ‘Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism’, HM Government, 2015, para. 54.

<sup>984</sup> *ibid.*, para. 51.b-d.

<sup>985</sup> ‘MI5 report challenges views on terrorism in Britain’, *Guardian*, 20 August 2008.

<sup>986</sup> Hasan, M., ‘Mehdi Hasan: How Islamic is Islamic State?’ *New Statesman*, 10 March 2015, available at: [www.newstatesman.com/world-affairs/2015/03/mehdi-hasan-how-islamic-islamic-state](http://www.newstatesman.com/world-affairs/2015/03/mehdi-hasan-how-islamic-islamic-state), last visited: 8 March 2017; Kherbane, R., ‘The government believes the more conservative the Muslim, the more likely they will turn to terror’, *Independent*, 20 November 2015, available at: [www.independent.co.uk/voices/the-government-believes-the-more-conservative-the-muslim-the-more-likely-they-will-turn-to-terror-a6742431.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/the-government-believes-the-more-conservative-the-muslim-the-more-likely-they-will-turn-to-terror-a6742431.html), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>987</sup> ‘The unlikely jihadi: How party-loving Paris bomber drank and ran a club closed down for drugs in the Belgian hotbed of terror’, *Daily Mail*, 16 November 2015, available at: [www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3319932/Guns-God-grievances-Belgiums-Islamist-airbase.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3319932/Guns-God-grievances-Belgiums-Islamist-airbase.html), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>988</sup> ‘Paris attacks suspect Salah Abdeslam shot and arrested in Brussels’, *Guardian*, 18 March 2016, available at: [www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/18/paris-attacks-suspect-salah-abdeslam-wounded-in-brussels-terror-raid-reports](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/18/paris-attacks-suspect-salah-abdeslam-wounded-in-brussels-terror-raid-reports), last visited: 8 March 2017; ‘Paris attacks: Abdeslam brothers “were manipulated, not radicalised”’, *BBC News*, 22 November 2015, available at: [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-34895294](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-34895294), last visited: 8 March 2017.

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that they had begun to pray and stopped drinking; he said they “wanted to calm down and show more respect in their practice of religion”.<sup>989</sup>

The sudden appearance of behaviour associated with increasing religious observance was noticed in 14 of those profiled in this report. The change in behaviour witnessed in Flamur Shalaku was so noticeable it was described as an “almost overnight transformation”.<sup>990</sup> One of the Coventry travellers, Rashed Amani, reportedly showed a similar change. Although one university friend claimed he showed no signs of radicalisation,<sup>991</sup> other sources suggest he became more religious, grew a beard and prayed at the mosque regularly.<sup>992</sup> Similarly, Zubair Nur, who was studying at Royal Holloway when he travelled to Syria,<sup>993</sup> was witnessed transforming from a “happy go lucky” student to one who wore traditional Islamic dress.<sup>994</sup> Jaffar Deghayes, meanwhile, turned away from petty crime and began to attend Arabic classes and watch religious lectures, and voluntarily observed Ramadan for the first time the summer before he travelled to Syria.<sup>995</sup>

One means of safeguarding against misidentifying this kind of behavioural change is being attentive to the presence of extreme political views and to signs of low integrative complexity characteristic of extremist thinking. Examples include signs of “us and them” thinking, which could be reflected in withdrawal from certain social groups or behaviours, and excessively emotionally charged views that pre-empt argument.<sup>996</sup> Some changes in behaviour, such as withdrawal from previous friendships and family, or from non-Muslim friends, could be indicative of the development of “us and them” thinking. Increasing isolation from non-extremist relationships may make an individual more vulnerable to radicalisation.

Yusuf Sarwar was convicted of preparation for acts of terrorism in relation to his travel to Syria in an attempt to fight for al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) in July 2014.<sup>997</sup> After enrolling at Birmingham City University he became increasingly religious, and his family noticed that he was attending the mosque and praying five times a day, and he grew a beard. These changes occurred within the context of his mother’s observation that he had become “a bit more withdrawn, more reserved ... [and] a lot more serious”.<sup>998</sup> Meanwhile, Anil Khalil Raoufi was noted by his neighbour to have changed from a “normal” friendly child interested in football to a teenager wearing Islamic attire who refused to greet her.<sup>999</sup> Around the age of 17 he also reportedly stopped talking to his non-Muslim friends.<sup>1000</sup>

Other students who showed signs they were vulnerable to developing extreme political views include Mohammed Jakir Ali, whose father said he had noticed that his son had grown a beard and expressed a desire to “join the Syrian people”.<sup>1001</sup> In the case of Aqsa Mahmood, there were a number of indications alongside the sudden appearance of behaviours associated with religious observance. According to her friends, she had been interested in popular culture, but had developed a curiosity about Islam in her teens.<sup>1002</sup> She “began wearing the hijab ... [and] ... buying religious books”, as well as attending religious

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<sup>989</sup> ‘Paris attacks: Abdeslam brothers “were manipulated, not radicalised”’, *BBC News*, 22 November 2015.

<sup>990</sup> ‘Five former pupils from same prestigious west London school killed fighting for Isis’, *Independent*, 24 May 2015.

<sup>991</sup> ‘Leaked ISIS files reveal 3 young men fighting in Syria may have been radicalised in UK city’, *Daily Mirror*, 4 May 2016.

<sup>992</sup> ‘Father: Teenager fighting in Syria was “radicalised by imam”’, *BBC News*, 24 June 2014 [video 03:43].

<sup>993</sup> ‘Missing former Chelsea Academy deputy head boy feared to have joined Islamic State’, *Evening Standard*, 23 March 2015.

<sup>994</sup> ‘Missing Church of England school deputy head boy “feared to have fled to Syria to join Islamic State after he started posting Facebook messages praising terror chiefs and dressing in Muslim clothes”’, *Daily Mail*, 23 March 2015.

<sup>995</sup> ‘From Brighton to the battlefield: how four young Britons were drawn to jihad’, *Guardian*, 31 March 2016.

<sup>996</sup> Lloyd, M. & C. Dean, ‘The Development of Structured Guidelines for Assessing Risk in Extremist Offenders’, p. 41.

<sup>997</sup> ‘R v Yusuf Sarwar and Nahin Ahmed – cases concluded in 2014’, Crown Prosecution Service Counter-Terrorism Division; R v Sarwar & Anor [2015] EWCA Crim 1886, 9 December 2015, paras. 10.

<sup>998</sup> ‘“I turned my son in. Now I feel betrayed”’, *The Times*, 28 March 2015.

<sup>999</sup> ‘British amateur boxer “killed fighting jihad in Syria”’, *Daily Telegraph*, 13 February 2014.

<sup>1000</sup> ‘Police question family of British student, 20, shot dead while fighting for rebels in Syria’, *Daily Mail*, 13 February 2014.

<sup>1001</sup> ‘British Isis suicide bomb recruit studied at Jihadi John’s university’, *Daily Telegraph*, 11 March 2016.

<sup>1002</sup> ‘Aqsa Mahmood: how did Scot become jihadi bride in Syria?’ *The Week*, 4 September 2014.

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classes and discussing Muslim thought online.<sup>1003</sup> Her mother took the appearance of her increasing conservatism as a positive sign, saying she had been happy Mahmood was more interested in religion than “partying or boys”.<sup>1004</sup>

However, there were a number of other signs that could have indicated her vulnerability to radicalisation. Mahmood began spending an increasing amount of time in her bedroom on extremist forums.<sup>1005</sup> She showed an interest in the conflict in the Middle East, but her parents were aware only that she was “angry and frustrated at the loss of innocent life in the Middle East”.<sup>1006</sup> Her mother said she began talking about Syria and “became very emotional and would cry when she watched the news”.<sup>1007</sup>

When Mahmood’s parents discovered that she had been communicating with a boy, her family intervened, contacting him and telling him to end contact with her. When she ran away to join him, the two families met at Huddersfield Central Mosque, where she told her parents she wished to marry him. The boy was Adeel Ulhaq,<sup>1008</sup> who was later convicted for helping Aseel Muthana travel to Syria to join his brother.<sup>1009</sup> Her family believe that Ulhaq had groomed and radicalised Mahmood over the internet before she went to university.<sup>1010</sup>

While her mother said she had not considered that Mahmood wanted to travel to Syria, she did recognise that her daughter’s behaviour was concerning. This was evident in her confiscation of Mahmood’s phone at night, to checking it for any “cause for concern”.<sup>1011</sup> While none of these behavioural changes alone can be taken as indicative of her radicalisation, in combination, Mahmood had many of the most commonly noticed features across all of those profiled: contact with an extremist, behavioural changes including sudden and emotional politicisation directly related to Syria showing some characteristics of low cognitive integrative complexity, and the appearance of behaviour associated with increasing religious observance.

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<sup>1003</sup> ‘Scottish schoolgirl abandons university course to join fanatical Islamic State jihadists fighting in Syria’, *Daily Record*, 2 September 2014.

<sup>1004</sup> ‘Heartbroken and hopeless: Parents of Scottish jihadi bride Aqsa Mahmood tell of their devastation at losing her to ISIS brainwashing’, *Daily Mail*, 22 February 2016.

<sup>1005</sup> ‘Aqsa Mahmood: how did Scot become jihadi bride in Syria?’ *The Week*, 4 September 2014.

<sup>1006</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>1007</sup> ‘Heartbroken and hopeless: Parents of Scottish jihadi bride Aqsa Mahmood tell of their devastation at losing her to ISIS brainwashing’, *Daily Mail*, 22 February 2016.

<sup>1008</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>1009</sup> ‘Three men found guilty of helping teenage jihadi travel from UK to Syria’, *Guardian*, 10 February 2016.

<sup>1010</sup> ‘Heartbroken and hopeless: Parents of Scottish jihadi bride Aqsa Mahmood tell of their devastation at losing her to ISIS brainwashing’, *Daily Mail*, 22 February 2016.

<sup>1011</sup> *ibid.*

## 6. Policy Recommendations

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### Issue: Indicators of Vulnerability Were Not Recognised or Misidentified

#### Recommendation: Anchor Prevent training in real cases to improve the reliability and confidence of, and communication between, front-line staff

For at least 17 students, a change in their behaviour was noticed that was indicative of vulnerability to radicalisation, and 23 had family or friends involved in extremism. Therefore, it is concerning that only one of the 29, Jaffar Deghayes, was referred to Channel, and this referral was unsuccessful in preventing his travel.<sup>1012</sup>

This suggests a problem in identifying indicators of vulnerability across the board – teachers, public sector staff, police, social services and local charities – and a potential weakness in communication between those with whom the students had contact.

Those who had institutional contact did not identify the signs of radicalisation, despite the Prime Minister’s Task Force on Tackling Radicalisation and Extremism’s commitment to “protect[ing] children from extremist views in schools”.<sup>1013</sup> This difficulty may have been because they did not know how to expect indications of radicalisation to manifest, or because they lacked confidence in distinguishing normal from extremist behaviour and views (e.g. between normal religiosity and the appearance of behaviour commonly associated with increased religious observance as a sign of radicalisation).

This lack of confidence is reflected in a poll released by the *Times Educational Supplement* (November 2016) which concluded that “many teachers feel ill-equipped to spot radicalised pupils”.<sup>1014</sup> To increase the confidence and reliability across the board, the Home Office and local authorities should:

- Anchor Prevent training in illustrations taken from real cases, based on up-to-date and growing case-based research. This will help staff to understand how the descriptions in government guidelines are manifest in real cases, and thereby improve their confidence in identifying vulnerable individuals.
- Frame Prevent modules according to the three red flags: friends or family involved in extremism; attendance at an institution with a history or association with extremism; and ideology (behaviour associated with religious observance and sudden expression of extreme political views of low-integrative complexity). These three red flags are complementary to, and should feature alongside, the three factors based on the ERG 22+: engagement, intent and capability.
- Ensure that Prevent modules appropriately emphasise evidence suggesting that behaviour associated with increasing religious observance is not necessarily a protective factor, but in many cases can be indicative of radicalisation. Misidentification of this indicator can be costly: in the cases of Jaffar Deghayes<sup>1015</sup> and Aqsa Mahmood, their behaviour associated with increasing religious observance may have been misinterpreted as a positive sign.<sup>1016</sup> It should also be made

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<sup>1012</sup> ‘From Brighton to the battlefield: how four young Britons were drawn to jihad’, *Guardian*, 31 March 2016.

<sup>1013</sup> ‘Tackling extremism in the UK: Report from the Prime Minister’s Task Force on Tackling Radicalisation and Extremism’, HM Government (December 2013), p. 5.

<sup>1014</sup> ‘Exclusive: Teachers are not being given adequate Prevent strategy training, poll finds’, *Times Education Supplement*, 4 November 2016, available at: [www.tes.com/news/school-news/breaking-news/exclusive-teachers-are-not-being-given-adequate-prevent-strategy](http://www.tes.com/news/school-news/breaking-news/exclusive-teachers-are-not-being-given-adequate-prevent-strategy), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>1015</sup> ‘From Brighton to the battlefield: how four young Britons were drawn to jihad’, *Guardian*, 31 March 2016.

<sup>1016</sup> ‘Heartbroken and hopeless: Parents of Scottish jihadi bride Aqsa Mahmood tell of their devastation at losing her to ISIS brainwashing’, *Daily Mail*, 22 February 2016.



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clear that a history of behaviour perceived as “un-Islamic” (such as alcohol consumption or drug use) does not preclude radicalisation.<sup>1017</sup>

- Advise police and social services in effectively sharing relevant information on vulnerable individuals so the full picture is known across all agencies. Agencies involved in the case of a vulnerable person must be aware that vital information may be held by another agency, and be provided with the means of obtaining that information quickly. This can ensure that in cases such as that of the Deghayes brothers (who had many vulnerability factors in their background, known by different agencies),<sup>1018</sup> a comprehensive risk assessment can be made.

### Issue: Families Lacked the Skills and Knowledge to Identify Radicalisation

#### Recommendation: Increase awareness of support available to families that gives them the skills and knowledge to help them identify the signs of radicalisation

Some parents did not recognise, or misidentified, signs of radicalisation, while those who did attempt to intervene were unsuccessful. For example, Aqsa Mahmood’s mother went to great lengths to monitor her daughter’s communications, but ultimately failed to spot the signs because of her lack of social media skills.<sup>1019</sup>

The Prime Minister’s Task Force on Tackling Radicalisation and Extremism is committed to “build[ing] the capabilities of communities and civil organisations so that they can campaign against the large volume of extremist material, including online”.<sup>1020</sup> The parents of the students do not appear to have accessed support from such groups and may not have been aware of the support available.

In light of this, the government and local authorities should:

- Increase awareness of organisations that can offer technical support, particularly with regard to the use of social media. It was found that 90% of Muslim mothers had no internet access and did not know what their children were accessing online, according to a study conducted by JAN Trust.<sup>1021</sup> Training such as JAN Trust’s Web Guardians course, which gives mothers the skills to protect their children from online radicalisation, should be widely publicised through community groups.<sup>1022</sup>
- Liaise with community groups, community centres and mosques to help spread awareness in local communities of non-governmental groups offering advice and technical support to parents. Local authorities should also help to foster relationships between non-governmental organisations, such as Faith Associates,<sup>1023</sup> Families Against Terrorism and Extremism (FATE),<sup>1024</sup> ConnectFutures<sup>1025</sup> and JAN Trust,<sup>1026</sup> and community groups with which families

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<sup>1017</sup> ‘From Brighton to the battlefield: how four young Britons were drawn to jihad’, *Guardian*, 31 March 2016.

<sup>1018</sup> ‘Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism’, HM Government, 2015, para. 36; ‘From Brighton to the battlefield: how four young Britons were drawn to jihad’, *Guardian*, 31 March 2016.

<sup>1019</sup> ‘Heartbroken and hopeless: Parents of Scottish jihadi bride Aqsa Mahmood tell of their devastation at losing her to ISIS brainwashing’, *Daily Mail*, 22 February 2016.

<sup>1020</sup> ‘Tackling extremism in the UK: Report from the Prime Minister’s Task Force on Tackling Radicalisation and Extremism’, HM Government, December 2013, p. 3.

<sup>1021</sup> ‘Are Muslim mothers the cure for radicalisation?’ *BBC News*, 4 April 2014.

<sup>1022</sup> ‘Web Guardians’, JAN Trust, available at: <http://jantrust.org/projects/web-guardians>, last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>1023</sup> Faith Associates, available at: [www.faithassociates.co.uk/](http://www.faithassociates.co.uk/), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>1024</sup> Families against Terrorism and Extremism, available at: [www.findfate.org/en/the-facts/](http://www.findfate.org/en/the-facts/), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>1025</sup> See for example, ConnectFutures work telling the stories of former extremists, training in safeguarding against extremism for educational institutions, local authorities, and public sector workers, helping young people to develop resilience to extremism and their group projects, which includes the promotion of critical thinking skills in young people. ConnectFutures, available at: <http://connectfutures.org/>, last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>1026</sup> See for example, the JAN Trust’s intention to “empower women as society’s nurturers” in an attempt to prevent children from becoming radicalised and equipping mothers with the online skills to monitor their children; ‘Are Muslim mothers the cure for radicalisation?’ *BBC News*, 4 April 2014. JAN Trust, available at: <http://jantrust.org/about-us>, last visited: 8 March 2017.

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may come into contact, to ensure that community leaders are able to point parents towards the most appropriate support and training.

- Improve the confidence and reliability of parents to identify signs of vulnerability by increasing the accessibility of guidelines and training materials. While increasing internet skills and access among families will unlock vital information,<sup>1027</sup> awareness of alternative conduits of advice must be created. Local authorities should advise community groups, community centres and mosques to help spread awareness in local communities of hotlines, such as that of the NSPCC.<sup>1028</sup> This helpline offers “help and support to adults worried about the radicalisation of a child” by “helping them to recognise the warning signs, or highlighting local support services that are available”.<sup>1029</sup> Additionally, “moves towards greater openness should be stepped up. Intervention criteria and training materials need to be published and debated, if standards are to be improved and rumours about discrimination dispelled” (David Anderson QC).<sup>1030</sup>
- Encourage and create awareness of organisations and projects that teach critical thinking skills, particularly in forums unrelated to counter-extremism. Behaviour associated with increasing religious observance and politicisation characterised by low integrative complexity were predominant among the students. Given the important role played by socialisation, organisations and projects that provide training in critical thinking to the broader community can safeguard against worldviews characterised by low integrative complexity. An example is the organisation ConnectFutures, which aims to “develop tailored projects and products that bring people together to build confidence, trust, critical thinking and resilience at both the individual and group level”.<sup>1031</sup>

### **Issue: The Dissemination of Misinformation about ERG 22+ with the Purpose of Undermining Government Guidelines**

#### **Recommendation: Support and create awareness of case-based research pertaining to ERG 22+ and government guidelines**

In September 2016, pro-terrorist group CAGE Prisoners released a report providing misinformation about ERG 22+.<sup>1032</sup> This report constituted an attempt to undermine government guidance and public confidence in Channel and Prevent. This may deter front-line staff or family members from drawing attention to individuals whose behaviour may indicate vulnerability. To push back against this, the government should:

- Create awareness of cases and case-based research expanding on, and demonstrating the reliability of, government guidelines. A growing body of research will push back against misinformation, as well as improve effectiveness and reliability through incorporation into training for public sector staff.
- Help foster relationships between researchers and research bodies to collaborate and share data throughout Europe, by supporting networks such as the Radicalisation Awareness Network

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<sup>1027</sup> ‘Are Muslim mothers the cure for radicalisation?’ *BBC News*, 4 April 2014.

<sup>1028</sup> ‘Why we’re doing more to protect children from radicalisation’, NSPCC, 30 August 2016.

<sup>1029</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>1030</sup> ‘David Anderson QC: Prevent strategy can work against radicalisation... if it is trusted’, *Evening Standard*, 16 February 2017, available at: [www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/david-anderson-qc-prevent-strategy-can-work-against-radicalisation-if-it-is-trusted-a3467901.html](http://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/david-anderson-qc-prevent-strategy-can-work-against-radicalisation-if-it-is-trusted-a3467901.html), last visited: 8 March 2017

<sup>1031</sup> ‘ConnectFutures – connect communities’, available at: <http://connectfutures.org/connectcommunities/>, last visited: 10 March 2017.

<sup>1032</sup> ‘The “science” of pre-crime: The secret “radicalisation” study underpinning Prevent’, CAGE Prisoners, 29 September 2016, available at: [www.cage.ngo/publication/the-science-of-pre-crime/](http://www.cage.ngo/publication/the-science-of-pre-crime/), last visited: 8 March 2017; Sutton, R. ‘Prevent isn’t perfect – but its critics should stick to the facts’, *Left Foot Forward*, 4 October 2016.

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(RAN).<sup>1033</sup> Collaboration and data sharing between research bodies in European countries that have produced high numbers of jihadists, such as France and Germany, can provide a broader understanding of radicalisation across Europe.<sup>1034</sup> A long-term strategy supporting and developing the ERG 22+ must include cross-border collaboration which will help to develop our understanding of radicalisation and test the reliability of government guidelines in a broader context.

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<sup>1033</sup> Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network_en), last visited: 8 March 2017.

<sup>1034</sup> 'Iraq and Syria: How many foreign fighters are fighting for Isil?', *Daily Telegraph*, 24 March 2016, available at: [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/03/29/iraq-and-syria-how-many-foreign-fighters-are-fighting-for-isil/](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/03/29/iraq-and-syria-how-many-foreign-fighters-are-fighting-for-isil/), last visited: 8 March 2017.

## 7. Conclusion

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Identifying individuals who are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism is a necessary but difficult task. For this reason, the UK government has made it a statutory duty for all public bodies, including FE/HE institutions, to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism.<sup>1035</sup> While failing in this duty can be costly, it can prove difficult to fulfil.

Government guidelines, the research on which it is based, and risk assessment frameworks describe indicators of vulnerability to radicalisation. The findings of this report provide case-based illustrations of the ways in which these indicators have manifested in real cases. Such research is vital in ensuring that misperceptions are corrected by evidence, that costly mistakes are not repeated, in refining our understanding of what radicalisation looks like, and improving reliability and confidence in identifying it.

The report found that in the cases of many of the 29 students profiled, radicalisation was not a private matter. The use of phrases such as “bedroom radical”, suggesting that radicalisation is private and unnoticeable, is therefore misleading. While the internet featured in many of the cases, it often facilitated and was subsidiary to relationships with extremists. However, the role of the internet should not be overlooked, with the visibility of a student’s radicalisation online potentially providing opportunities for intervention.

Undue emphasis on private radicalisation risks creating the perception that it is difficult, if not impossible, for friends, family, neighbours and public sector staff to recognise the signs of radicalisation. Among the students, signs of their radicalisation were almost always noticed by someone, but were misinterpreted or unreported. The most commonly noticed – the sudden appearance of behaviour commonly associated with increasing religious observance, alongside other sudden changes – was often missed, and even viewed as a positive in some cases.

The prevalence of behaviour associated with increasing religious observance appearing in conjunction with the expression of strong political views or grievances and association with other extremists suggests that these signs should be an immediate red flag to friends, family and public sector staff. In some cases the presence of behaviours or sudden expression of views that suggest a low cognitive integrative complexity appeared alongside these and other indicators, suggesting that the encouragement of critical thinking skills may go some way to create resilience against simplistic, binary and reductionist worldviews.

Long-term resilience within communities is particularly relevant given the prominent role of “socialisation” into terrorism. Real-world relationships with other extremists emerged as the most common feature of those profiled, with 11 students having a family member and 18 having a friend involved in extremism. In addition, 16 had alleged contact, online or face to face, with an extremist, and nine attended a religious institution that had been suggested as one of the sources of their radicalisation or was attended by other extremists.

Identifying these signs will be crucial if prevention efforts are to be successful. The three “red flags” highlighted as potential indicators by this report (friends or family involved in extremism; attendance at an institution with a history or association with extremism; and showing sudden and visible signs of engagement with an ideology) should be incorporated into training for public sector staff, and it is advisable that families be supported in developing the technical skills to spot these signs. Meanwhile, community organisations providing training in critical thinking “at both the individual and group level” are vital.

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<sup>1035</sup> ‘Revised Prevent Duty Guidance: For England and Wales’, HM Government, 2015, para. 1.

## About the Author

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## About Student Rights

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Student Rights is a non-partisan project of The Henry Jackson Society dedicated to supporting equality, democracy and freedom from extremism on university campuses. Set up in June 2009, Student Rights monitors extremism on UK university campuses - focusing on a range of different groups including, but not limited to, fascist or racist organisations, Islamist groups, and extreme political parties.

## About The Henry Jackson Society

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The Henry Jackson Society is a think tank and policy-shaping force that fights for the principles and alliances which keep societies free - working across borders and party lines to combat extremism, advance democracy and real human rights, and make a stand in an increasingly uncertain world.



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