

Twenty years since the attacks on London's public transport system. The problem of Islamic terrorism in the United Kingdom

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to describe the terrorist attacks on London's public transport system that took place on 7 July 2005 and terrorist threat in Great Britain, posed by the radicalisation of Muslim communities inspired by spiritual leaders inciting violence. The author discussed the background to these attacks extensively. Then, based on investigation reports, among other sources, he presented profiles of the perpetrators, preparations for the attacks, their course and an attempt to repeat them two weeks later. He pointed out problems in ensuring anti-terrorist security in Great Britain, resulting, among other things, from a policy of tolerance towards Muslim extremists.

Keywords

Al-Muhajirun, Muslim extremism, immigrants, secret services, terrorist threat, attacks

Introduction

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the United Kingdom has been fighting Islamic terrorism, which stems from external factors, including the activities of global Salafi jihadist organisations, London's policies, including the participation of British troops in military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the dynamic growth in the number of immigrants from Muslim countries, and the radicalisation of British citizens of immigrant origin who have found favourable living conditions in the United Kingdom. They enjoyed many privileges and brought their relatives to the country. They demanded that local law be adapted to the needs of their minority. They fought for the application of Sharia law in civil matters. The implementation of a multicultural policy in the United Kingdom meant that the threat posed by the uncontrolled spread of radical Islam was not recognised. Dissidents persecuted in their home countries for spreading anti-government propaganda and members of Muslim extremist organisations, including terrorists, could count on asylum in the United Kingdom. In the 1990s, trips to the country of their ancestors became commonplace for young British citizens of Pakistani origin, who constituted the largest Muslim minority. They underwent military training in Taliban and Al-Qaeda camps. There, they were exposed to ideas previously unknown to them and returned with the intention of spreading them in the United Kingdom, including hatred of religions other than Islam and hostility towards Shiites and Ahmadis. Young people of Pakistani origin quickly became radicalised under the influence of slogans preached in mosques by imams and preachers. They became particularly active after the 11 September 2001 attacks in the United States. Although the British security services monitored and arrested individuals suspected of preparing terrorist attacks, jihadist propagandists remained unpunished for a long time. The participation of British forces in military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq led to a sharp increase in the terrorist threat in the United Kingdom.

The attacks of 7 July 2005 on London's public transport system, in which four bombs were detonated (three on London Underground trains and one on a city bus), were the first in a long series of successful attacks and foiled attempts to carry them out. The aim of the article was to describe these attacks and terrorist threat in the United Kingdom related to the radicalisation of Muslim communities inspired by spiritual leaders inciting violence.

Islamic extremism – terrorist threats in the United Kingdom until 2005

Until 2005, the United Kingdom managed to avoid terrorist attacks by Islamic extremists, despite the fact that a large group of radicals openly proclaiming their views lived there. The headquarters of the Tablighi Jamaat (Association for the Propagation of Faith) coordination centre for Europe was established in Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, in northern England. Leicester in central England was chosen as the location for the headquarters of the Federation of Muslim Organisations, which is strongly influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood movement (Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin, MB), which also influences the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB). One of the founders of MAB, Kamal al-Halbawi, became the official spokesperson for MB in Great Britain in 1995. Leicester is also home to the Islamic Foundation (IF), established by Khurshid Ahmad, an activist of the Pakistani religious party Jamaat-e-Islami¹. The MB movement operated in the United Kingdom through a network of interconnected organisations of Palestinian, Syrian, Libyan, Somali, Iraqi and Egyptian origin. Apart from IF and MAB, the most significant ones included the Muslim Welfare Trust, the Palestinian Relief and Development Fund (Interpal), the Palestine Return Centre, the Institute for Islamic Political Thought, the Islamic Centre in London, the Muslim Public Affairs Committee and moreover, the media company Mashreq Media Services, which published Hamas' newspaper *Filastin al-Muslimah* (Muslim Palestine) and the pro-Hamas English-language magazine *Palestine Times*².

The capital of Great Britain has become an important ideological centre for Muslim extremism and Salafi jihadist networks influencing the entire world. In the 1970s, one Algerian fundamentalist declared: *Here in London, there is freedom. They leave us alone and even help us*³. For over 40 years, London was the main base for Islamic extremism, and in the 1980s and 1990s, it was its point of contact. Almost all Muslim movements, from moderate to the most extremist, were located there. London remained

¹ S. Besson, *Islamizacja Zachodu? Historia pewnego spisku* (Eng. The Islamisation of the West? The story of a conspiracy), Warszawa 2006, pp. 125–126, 129.

² M. Whine, *The Penetration of Islamist Ideology in Britain*, Hudson Institute, 18 V 2005, <https://www.hudson.org/national-security-defense/the-penetration-of-islamist-ideology-in-britain> [accessed: 18 XI 2025].

³ X. Raufer, *Atlas radykalnego islamu* (Eng. Atlas of Radical Islam), Warszawa 2011, p. 87.

a place of recruitment and financing for radical Muslim organisations from various countries around the world. Many volunteers travelling to the jihad front in Afghanistan, Yemen, Chechnya, Bosnia or Kashmir passed through London. The volunteers' trips were organised by well-structured networks benefiting from the financial support of local charities⁴.

The city is referred to as 'Londonistan'. The term was first used in 1990 by French counter-terrorism services and the governments of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia⁵. This refers to London as the headquarters of many extremist groups and radical leaders who organise terrorist attacks in other countries. 'Londonistan' became a safe haven for radical Muslim activists such as Omar Bakri Mohammad, one of the founders of the British branch of the Islamic Liberation Party (Hizb ut-Tahrir Islami) and later the Emigrants (Al-Muhajirun) group, who openly supported the attacks in the US on 11 September 2001 and called for the unification of Muslims and the creation of a global caliphate. He was a close friend of Mustafa Kamal Mustafa, better known as Abu Hamza al-Masri, leader of the Ansar al-Sharia organisation and charismatic imam of the Grand Mosque in Finsbury Park, who called for jihad and the destruction of the infidel West. Radical views were also espoused by Omar Mahmud Osman, alias Abu Katada al-Filastini, editor-in-chief of the weekly magazine *Al-Ansar*, which in the 1990s provided propaganda support for the Algerian Armed Islamic Group (Al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah al-Musallaha) by providing it with media coverage and links to Salafi jihad. Abu Katada also supported Al-Qaeda's activities in Europe⁶.

In the 1990s, London became the global centre of the Arab press, including the aforementioned *Filastin al-Muslima* and *Al-Hayat* (Life), *Al-Quds Al-Arabi* (Arab Jerusalem), *Asharq al-Awsat* (Middle East) and *Risalat al-Ichwan* (Message of the Brothers), as well as the Middle East Broadcasting Corporation and many specialist Islamic publications⁷. Some of Osama bin Laden's fatwas were first published in London. In turn, Ayman al-Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden's deputy, published an abridged version

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ M. Zawadewicz, *Życie codzienne w muzułmańskim Londynie* (Eng. Daily life in Muslim London), Warszawa 2008, p. 134.

⁶ K. Izak, *Leksykon organizacji i ruchów islamistycznych* (Eng. Lexicon of Islamist organisations and movements), Warszawa 2014, p. 127, 358–359.

⁷ M. Phillips, *Londonistan. Jak Wielka Brytania stworzyła państwo terroru* (Eng. Londonistan: How Britain is Creating a Terror State Within), Warszawa 2010, pp. 40–41.

of his manifesto entitled *Fursan tahta rayat an-Nabi* (Knights under the Banner of the Prophet) in *Asharq al-Awsat* in December 2001. In it, he presented Al-Qaeda's strategy, starting with the attacks of 11 September 2001, which were intended to provoke a US attack on Muslims and lead to a global jihad, i.e. a struggle between Islam and its hostile forces, namely the Western powers and Russia⁸. In December 2002, Al-Zawahiri published an article in *Al-Quds al-Arabi* entitled *Al-wala' wa-l-bara* (Loyalty and Renunciation or Fidelity and Schism), in which he presented the Koranic definition of Muslim identity. It consists of mutual fidelity among all Muslims and their isolation from Jews and Christians, apostates and heretics⁹. In London, radical groups bringing together immigrants and political refugees from Muslim countries were formed in an Islamist movement with a global reach. At the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, a series of conferences were held in the United Kingdom. They brought together Muslim radicals from around the world, ranging from violent organisations such as Hamas and Hezbollah to Muslim political parties participating in parliamentary elections in Jordan and Malaysia¹⁰.

The United Kingdom provided refuge for radical ideologues of Muslim fundamentalism who were persecuted in their own countries. They were granted political asylum on condition that they did not put their ideas into practice within the territory of the United Kingdom. However, they were free to express them, even in extreme forms, openly calling for jihad against the West. This did not change even after the 11 September attacks. On 14 December 2001, Parliament passed a new anti-terrorism law (the *Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001*) allowing for the arrest of foreigners suspected of terrorist activity. However, the activities of extremist organisations, from which terrorists often emerged, were tolerated. Among them were individuals who carried out terrorist

⁸ M.B. Shishani, *Salafi-Jihadists Geopolitical Perspective of Central Asia*, Central Asia – Caucasus Analyst, <https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/10050-analytical-articles-caci-analyst-2005-6-29-art-10050.html> [accessed: 29 VI 2025]. The full text of the manifesto is included in Laura Mansfield's book, *His Own Words: Translation and Analysis of the Writings of Dr. Ayman Al Zawahiri*, New York 2006.

⁹ J. Gilliam, *Why They Hate Us. An Examination of al-wala' wa-l-bara' in Salafi-Jihadist Ideology*, Military Review, 15 II 2018, <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Journals/Military-Review/Online-Exclusive/2018-OLE/Feb/They-Hate/> [accessed: 15 VII 2025].

¹⁰ M. Phillips, *Londonistan...*, p. 42.

operations or attempted attacks in Europe, Asia, Africa and North America¹¹. For example, on 30 April 2003, two terrorists carried out a suicide attack on Mikes Place bar on Tel Aviv beach, frequented by Western foreigners. Three people were killed and 65 were injured. The perpetrators were British nationals of Pakistani origin. The first, Asif Mohammad Hanif from London, was killed in the attack. The second, Omar Khan Sharif from Derby, survived, but drowned while attempting to escape. This was the first attack in which Hamas used terrorists who were not native Palestinians. According to British intelligence, the perpetrators were recruited in the United Kingdom and then spent some time in Syria, where they met with Hamas fighters and were trained. In March 2004, Hamas released a video containing the joint will of the attackers and information that the attack was to coincide with the first anniversary of the assassination by Israeli forces of Ibrahim al-Makadma, founder of the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades¹².

Although London stood alongside Washington in the war on terrorism in 2001, British territory seemed secure against any attempted attack until disturbing signs forced the government to radically change its policy. In 2002, a government strategy known as CONTEST was developed, which combined the activities of all services to reduce the threat of international terrorism¹³. Despite this, no decisive action was taken against manifestations of Islamic extremism and hate speech. On 11 September 2002, on the first anniversary of the attacks in the US, the Al-Muhajiroun organisation held a conference at the Finsbury Park Mosque entitled 'A Great Day in History', during which it presented what it considered to be the positive – according to the organisation – aspects of the attack. Al-Masri gave a lecture in which he praised the plane hijackers, and Omar Bakri Mohammad called them 'the magnificent nineteen'¹⁴. At that time, the Finsbury Park Mosque was

¹¹ Ibid., p. 44.

¹² M. Levitt, *Hamas. Polityka, dobroczynność i terroryzm w służbie dżihadu* (Eng. Hamas: politics, charity, and terrorism in the service of jihad), Kraków 2008, pp. 293–294.

¹³ Intelligence and Security Committee, *Report into the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005*, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7c470140f0b62dffde1050/isc_terrorist_attacks_7july_report.pdf, p. 5 [accessed: 18 XI 2025].

¹⁴ *Abu Hamza profile*, BBC News, 9 I 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-11701269> [accessed: 18 XI 2025]; "Magnificent 19" risks further outrage, *The Standard*, 13 IV 2012, <https://www.standard.co.uk/hp/front/magnificent-19-risks-further-outrage-6948639.html> [accessed: 18 XI 2025].

one of the most active recruitment centres for Islamic militants in London. Muslim extremists from both the United Kingdom and other countries used to meet there. It was at this mosque that Richard Reid, the famous 'shoe bomber', was recruited. In the late 1990s, he underwent military training in Afghanistan, and after returning to London, he became an active member of an extremist cell centred around Al-Masri. Reid smuggled explosives onto an American Airlines flight from Paris to Miami on 22 December 2001. He was overpowered by passengers while attempting to detonate the explosives¹⁵. Many other terrorists listened to Al-Masri's militant sermons, including Hanif and Sharif, mentioned above, Kamal Bourgass¹⁶, Zacarias Moussaoui (alleged 20th bomber of 11 September 2001) and three of the four bombers of 7 July 2005 (Mohammad Sidique Khan, Shehzad Tanweer and Jermaine Lindsay)¹⁷.

In November 2002, six people from Morocco and Tunisia were arrested in London. They were accused of planning an attack on the London Underground. They had no permanent address and were unemployed. One of the suspects admitted to having undergone military training in Afghanistan. A month later, four Algerian nationals suspected of planning a terrorist attack were arrested in London and Edinburgh. In January 2003, five Algerians and one Ethiopian who had arrived in the United Kingdom two years earlier and applied for asylum were detained. Traces of ricin were found in their flat in north London¹⁸.

In 2003, the terrorist threat in the United Kingdom increased in connection with the invasion of Iraq by American and British forces. The Finsbury Park Mosque was closed at that time because CS gas, a complete set of protective clothing against chemical and biological

¹⁵ R. Simcox, H. Stuart, H. Ahmed, *Islamist Terrorism. The British Connections*, London 2010, pp. 308–309.

¹⁶ An Algerian man who killed Detective Stephen Oake in Manchester in January 2003 while attempting to resist arrest by British police, suspected of attempting to carry out a terrorist attack in the United Kingdom using ricin, a powerful poison. See: *Terror Watch: What Ricin?*, Newsweek, 12 IV 2005, <https://www.newsweek.com/terror-watch-what-ricin-116577> [accessed: 18 IX 2025].

¹⁷ R. Simcox, H. Stuart, H. Ahmed, *Islamist Terrorism...*, pp. 46–48, 213, 216, 220, 342, 384, 386; C. Marsden, *Britain: Why did it take so long to bring Abu Hamza to trial?*, World Socialist Web Site, 16 II 2006, <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2006/02/hamz-f16.html> [accessed: 16 VII 2025]; D. Strieff, *Terror-tinged U.K. mosque gets a makeover*, NBC News, 5 VII 2006, <https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna13501930> [accessed: 18 IX 2025].

¹⁸ X. Raufer, *Atlas radykalnego islamu...*, p. 92.

weapons, poison, handcuffs, gas weapons and many blank British passports, driving licences and credit cards, as well as the famous 11-volume encyclopaedia of Afghan jihad, a handbook on terrorism, were found there. Seven people were arrested at the time on suspicion of possessing ricin¹⁹. Al-Masri remained at large. The closure of the mosque did not prevent the preacher from delivering sermons on the street in front of the building and in other mosques in central England. However, no action was taken to stop his activities, even after he issued a fatwa stating that the United Kingdom's active involvement in the invasion and occupation of Iraq made it a legitimate target for attack. According to, among others, *The Guardian* newspaper, security service agents and police officers were opposed to his arrest, hoping that he would provide information about attempts to carry out terrorist attacks in the United Kingdom²⁰.

In May 2003, six Islamic extremists were arrested in Nottinghamshire, central England, as part of an investigation into a suicide bombing in Tel Aviv²¹. Scotland Yard officers estimated at the time that around 50 highly trained fighters out of 200 British nationals trained in Afghanistan had returned to the United Kingdom and formed operational terrorist groups²². In June, the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC) was established under MI5 to assess and analyse the terrorist threat in the United Kingdom.

¹⁹ W. Hoge, *Threats and Responses: Terror Suspects, Mosque Raid in London Results in 7 Arrests in Connection With Discovery of Poison*, *The New York Times*, 21 I 2003, <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/21/world/threats-responses-terror-suspects-mosque-raid-london-results-7-arrests.html> [accessed: 18 IX 2025].

²⁰ P. Owen, *Clarke rejects Hamza inquiry calls*, *The Guardian*, 9 II 2006, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2006/feb/09/terrorism.politics> [accessed: 18 IX 2025]; E.F. Vencat, *'Bleed the Enemy'*, *Newsweek*, 11 I 2006, <https://www.newsweek.com/bleed-enemy-108227> [accessed: 11 VII 2025]. In May 2004, Abu Hamza al-Masri was arrested at the request of the United States, which sought his extradition. In October 2004, the British judiciary brought 15 charges against Al-Masri, including incitement to kill infidels and possession of propaganda material encouraging terrorist activities. In February 2006, Al-Masri was found guilty of 11 of the 15 charges against him and sentenced to seven years in prison. In October 2012, after an eight-year legal battle, he was extradited from the UK to the US. There, in May 2014, he was found guilty on 11 counts of terrorism. On 9 January 2015, he was sentenced to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. See: X. Raufer, *Atlas radykalnego islamu...*, p. 92; *Radical cleric Abu Hamza jailed for life by US court*, *BBC News*, 9 I 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-30754959> [accessed: 18 IX 2025].

²¹ X. Raufer, *Atlas radykalnego islamu...*, p. 92.

²² *Ibid.*

Five threat levels were identified: low, moderate, substantial, severe and critical²³.

In November 2003, during President George W. Bush's visit to London, attacks took place in Istanbul, in which Muslim terrorists targeted the British bank HSBC and the British consulate²⁴. In December of the same year, Afghan veteran Andrew Rowe, who was linked to French jihadist Lionel Dumont, a member of the so-called Roubaix gang, was arrested²⁵. In March 2004, 600 kg of potassium nitrate used in the production of explosives was discovered in the suburbs of London. Eight British citizens of Pakistani origin, aged between 17 and 32, were arrested. One of them, Mohammed Babar, who was associated with Omar Khyam, testified that the group intended to carry out attacks on a London nightclub, a shopping centre in Kent, and energy and gas infrastructure²⁶. In 2004, the Al-Muhajiroun organisation was banned. It recruited Muslim students from British universities for ideological and military training in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen and Sudan. However, Al-Muhajiroun was replaced by two cooperating groups: the Salvation Sect (Firkat an-Naja) and Al-Ghuraba (The Strangers). Both groups were united not only by the idea of moral purity and the promotion of orthodox Islam in the spirit of the first Muslims, but also by the person of Anjem Choudary, a close associate of Omar Bakri Mohammad²⁷. The leaders of the new groups avoided making aggressive statements and officially distanced themselves from extremist propaganda. They removed hostile slogans from their websites registered in the British Isles, but kept links to websites based in Muslim countries, including Indonesia and Bangladesh, which contained random links to

²³ *Terrorism threat levels*, Security Service MI5, <https://www.mi5.gov.uk/threats-and-advice/terrorism-threat-levels> [accessed: 23 VI 2025].

²⁴ R. Simcox, H. Stuart, H. Ahmed, *Islamist Terrorism...*, p. 18.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ X. Raufer, *Atlas radykalnego islamu...*, p. 92; R. Simcox, H. Stuart, H. Ahmed, *Islamist Terrorism...*, p. 18.

²⁷ In 2005, after twenty years in the United Kingdom, Omar Bakri Mohammad voluntarily left for Lebanon, where he was informed by the British authorities that he was banned from returning to the United Kingdom for life. However, he did not cease his activities and participated remotely in meetings and conferences organised by Islamic extremists in London. See: K. Izak, *Leksykon organizacji...*, p. 359.

extremist content, devoid of keywords typical for propaganda of radical Muslim circles²⁸.

In 2004, British security services increased their interest in groups composed mainly of British citizens of Pakistani origin. This was the result of the discovery of a cache of potassium nitrate and the case of an Afghan veteran who refused to carry out a suicide mission similar to Reid's²⁹. On 3 August 2004, a group directly linked to Al-Qaeda and led by Dhiren Barot, alias Abu Musa al-Hindi, a veteran of the war in Afghanistan, was arrested³⁰. At the same time, an attempt was made to change the British political doctrine of multiculturalism. This change concerned support for the separate cultural development of individual ethnic and religious groups of foreign origin, valuing the differences between them and their specific signs of identity. At the same time, it entrusted community leaders with the task of enforcing public order – they were to command social peace from the mosques³¹. On 3 April 2004, Mark Trevor Phillips, chairman of the British Parliamentary Commission for Racial Equality, which had made multiculturalism a key element of social policy, criticised it for the first time, declaring in a press interview that multiculturalism was a term that (...) *has lost its meaning (...). Multiculturalism suggests separation. (...) We should therefore rather talk about how to move from it to an integrated society in which everyone is equal before the law and common values prevail: democracy rather than violence, the common use of the English language and subordination to the culture of the British Isles*³². This statement was poorly received by followers of Islam. During a demonstration organised in London in support of young British men of Pakistani descent imprisoned, they burned the British flag while shouting 'Allah Akbar'³³. This event raised questions about the significance of integration and multicultural policies, factors determining their success or failure³⁴.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 358, 360.

²⁹ G. Chaliand, A. Blin. *Historia terroryzmu. Od starożytności do Da'ish* (Eng. The history of terrorism. From antiquity to Daesh), Warszawa 2020, p. 393.

³⁰ Ibid.; *Al-Qaeda plotter jailed for life*, BBC News, 7 XI 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/6123236.stm [accessed: 7 VIII 2025].

³¹ Ibid.

³² G. Kepel, *Fitna, wojna w sercu islamu* (Eng. Fitna, war in the heart of Islam), Warszawa 2006, p. 222.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Intelligence and Security Committee, *Report into the London Terrorist Attacks...*, p. 17.

The perpetrators of the attack

The suicide attack in London was carried out by four men aged between 18 and 30. Three of them: Mohammad Sidique Khan (30), Shehzad Tanweer (22) and Hasib Hussain (18) were born in the United Kingdom. Their parents had arrived there many years earlier and settled in Beeston and Holbeck, suburbs of Leeds. They found work there and obtained British citizenship. Each of them came from large families. They all attended local schools and mosques. The fourth bomber, Jermaine Lindsay (19), was from Jamaica³⁵.

Khan, the eldest of them, later identified as the leader of the terrorist cell, was remembered as a diligent, quiet student who never caused any trouble. After graduating from school, he worked for a local aid agency and then for the Department of Trade and Industry³⁶. In 1996, he began studying business at Leeds Metropolitan University. While still a student, he began working with young people, and after graduating in 2001, he was employed as a teacher at a school in Beeston, an educational institution for children with language and behavioural difficulties³⁷. He was highly regarded by teachers and parents. In 2002, he gave an interview to the *Times Educational Supplement*, in which he spoke passionately about his work³⁸. At the same time, he became known as a devout Muslim. He prayed regularly at work and mosque. He said that he did not have a peaceful youth, easily getting into fights, drinking alcohol and taking drugs. He was also involved in drug dealing and had several conflicts with the police, including warnings for assault and handling stolen goods. He broke with that life and turned to religion. According to those around him, he was not aggressive, radical or politicised in the way he spoke about religion to his charges³⁹. However, this turned out to be an illusion, as Khan was leading a double life. On the one hand, he was extremely socially engaged, and on the other, he was conducting covert jihadist activities.

In July 2001, Khan and his close friend Wahid Ali travelled to the Manser training camp in the Pakistan-controlled part of Kashmir. The camp was

³⁵ *Report of the Official Account of the Bombings in London on 7th July 2005*, <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7c7bc840f0b626628ac62e/1087.pdf>, pp. 15–16 [accessed: 7 VII 2025].

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Report of the Official Account...*, p. 14, 16.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

run by the Mujahideen Movement (Harakat ul-Mujahideen). From there, they travelled to north-eastern Afghanistan and reached the front line between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance. They returned home a few days before the attacks of 11 September 2001. At school, Khan officially spoke out against these attacks⁴⁰. According to Artur Wejksznar, citing Simon Elegant's article entitled *A London Bomber's Asia Tour*, published in *The Time* on 26 September 2005, after completing military training at the Manser camp, Khan moved to a Taliban camp near Bagram, not far from Kabul. After American forces entered Afghanistan on 7 October 2001 and provided support to the Northern Alliance, he actively defended the Taliban regime. He then went on a reconnaissance mission to Malaysia, where he met with Riduan Isamuddin, alias Hambali, a member of the Indonesian Muslim Community (Jemaah Islamiyah). Khan's main task was to find out how much money the organisation needed for its terrorist activities. During his visit to Borneo, Khan met with Nasir Abbas, a high-ranking member of Jemaah Islamiyah, with whom he travelled to the organisation's base on the Philippine island of Mindanao. There, he was to meet with Azhari Husin, who was responsible for preparing most of the explosives used by Jemaah Islamiyah terrorists⁴¹. According to a report by the special services prepared for the House of Commons, media reports concerning Khan's visit to Malaysia and the Philippines were investigated and deemed to be unfounded⁴².

At the turn of 2001 and 2002, Khan began regularly attending the Finsbury Park Mosque in London, where he made contact with Al-Masri and his close associate Harun Rashid Aswat, who had undergone military training in Pakistan and Afghanistan. After returning to London, he was responsible for recruiting new members. Khan personally supported, and may also have been responsible for recruiting, Omar Sharif and Asif Hanifa, who carried out a suicide attack in Tel Aviv in April 2003. Khan is believed to have visited Israel in February 2003, probably to conduct reconnaissance prior to the attack⁴³.

⁴⁰ Ibid.; *Profile: Mohammad Sidiq Khan*, BBC News, 2 III 2011, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-12621381> [accessed: 2 VI 2025].

⁴¹ A. Wejksznar, *Ewolucja terroryzmu motywowanego ideologią religijną na przykładzie salafickiego ruchu globalnego dżihadu* (Eng. The evolution of religiously motivated terrorism as exemplified by the Salafi global jihad movement), Poznań 2010, pp. 346–347.

⁴² *Report of the Official Account...*, p. 20.

⁴³ A. Wejksznar, *Ewolucja terroryzmu...*, p. 346; R. Simcox, H. Stuart, H. Ahmed, *Islamist Terrorism...*, p. 213.

Khan's official social life revolved around youth clubs, a Muslim bookshop and a gym. Until 2003, he sat on the management committee of one such club. Khan's community work allowed him to establish close ties with Tanweer and Hussain, for whom Khan, whom they called 'Sidi,' was a mentor.

Working with young people began to give way to establishing contacts with Islamic radicals⁴⁴. In 2003, Khan met Omar Khyam, a British citizen of Pakistani origin who had previously travelled to northern Pakistan, where he underwent training in the manufacture of fertiliser bombs at a camp in the Malakand district. That same year, the two travelled to Pakistan with a group of British jihadists, probably also to Malakand. After their return, they planned another trip, but Khan postponed it due to his wife's pregnancy. In February and March 2004, Khan met several times with Khyam, who was already under surveillance by MI5. In April 2004, Khyam was arrested on charges of leading a conspiracy to detonate a high-powered explosive device in London. Khan was not a suspect in this case⁴⁵. However, he was dismissed from his job. The school administration decided that his sick leave from 20 September to 19 November 2004 was unjustified. On 19 November, Khan left for Pakistan⁴⁶.

Tanweer also lived in Beeston. He came from a well-off family and was a good student and a talented sportsman. From an early age, he took religion seriously, but showed no signs of extremism. At school, he was remembered as calm, modest and popular among his peers. At the age of 16, he became very religious. He developed his sporting interests at Leeds Metropolitan University, where he received a Higher National Diploma after two years of study. In 2003, he left the university and did not continue his studies. During his studies, he turned even more towards religion, to which he devoted more and more time. This was probably the reason why he dropped out of university. While still a student, he attended a religious school in Dewsbury. However, there were no signs that this had turned into religious fanaticism, even though he repeatedly visited the Finsbury Park Mosque in the company of Khan⁴⁷. In April 2004, he received a warning for indecent behaviour, but otherwise had no trouble with the police.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 16.

⁴⁵ R. Simcox, H. Stuart, H. Ahmed, *Islamist Terrorism...*, pp. 24–26.

⁴⁶ *Profile: Mohammad Siddique Khan...*

⁴⁷ A. Wejksznar, *Ewolucja terroryzmu...*, p. 346.

On 19 November 2004, he travelled to Pakistan with Khan, and after returning to Leeds, he did not work and was supported by his family.

Hussain lived in the Holbeck district. He was not an outstanding student. He was quiet at school and did not have many friends. He became involved in racial protests, but did not attract attention with aggressive behaviour⁴⁸. At the beginning of 2002, he went on a traditional pilgrimage to Mecca (hajj) with his family. After returning to his country, he began to manifest his religiosity. He wore traditional Muslim clothing and praised Al-Qaeda, calling the 11 September 2001 attackers martyrs. He told his teacher that he wanted to become an imam after finishing his studies. In 2004, he was punished for shoplifting, but apart from that incident, he had no problems with the police. In 2005, he obtained a vocational diploma in business from South Leeds College⁴⁹.

Lindsay was an outsider among the group of attackers. He was born in Jamaica in 1985, his father quickly abandoned them. The following year, his mother, son and another man moved to the United Kingdom. They settled in Huddersfield, England. Jermaine attended local schools. He was popular among his peers, intelligent, artistically, musically and athletically gifted. He trained in kickboxing and martial arts⁵⁰. In 2000, Lindsay's mother converted to Islam, and he followed suit shortly afterwards, taking the name Djamal. His conversion to Islam was accompanied by a change in the environment in which he often spent time. He spent more and more time at the mosque. In Huddersfield and neighbouring Dewsbury, he was admired for the speed with which he became proficient in Arabic and memorised large sections of the Koran. He was 15 years old at the time. Despite his young age, he showed maturity and seriousness. He regularly wore a long Arabic robe (jellabiya)⁵¹. It is believed that Lindsay was greatly influenced by the radical preacher Abdullah al-Faisal, also of Jamaican origin, a colleague of Al-Masri, convicted in 2003 and then deported to Jamaica for dissemination of propaganda materials of an extremist nature, inciting racial hatred and urging the killing of 'infidels'⁵². Jermaine was punished for distributing leaflets supporting Al-Qaeda at school. In 2002, his mother

⁴⁸ *Report of the Official Account...*, p. 15.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁵² *Ibid.*; R. Simcox, H. Stuart, H. Ahmed, *Islamist Terrorism...*, pp. 14–15.

moved to the US to live with her third partner, leaving the boy alone in the family home. This event was a traumatic experience for him. He dropped out of school and lived on benefits. He also did odd jobs, including selling mobile phones and books about Islam⁵³. He met Samantha Lewthwaite, a British woman who had converted to Islam, online, and they participated in the 'Stop the War' march organised in London on 30 October 2002. They married and settled in Huddersfield. After the closure of the Finsbury Park Mosque in 2003, Lindsay and Tanweer visited Al-Masri when gatherings with his participation were organised in front of the temple⁵⁴. In September 2003, Lindsay moved with his wife to Aylesbury, but they spent a lot of time in Huddersfield. It was probably in the second half of 2004, in Huddersfield or Dewsbury, that Lindsay met Khan⁵⁵.

The preparations for the attack

The turning point in the preparations for the terrorist attacks in London was Khan and Tanweer's trip to Pakistan. It took place on 19 November 2004 and lasted until 8 February 2005. Previously, Khan had travelled there alone or with other people, and his trips were not for the purpose of visiting family. Tanweer informed his family and friends that he was going to Pakistan to broaden his religious knowledge. Khan's friends, on the other hand, believed that he was going to Pakistan to cross the border into Afghanistan, where he had previously stayed. In Pakistan, the two men went their separate ways. Tanweer stayed with his uncle in Faisalabad. After a week, Khan came to pick him up and they both headed north. Tanweer informed his family that they were going to the Lahore area to visit one of the religious schools⁵⁶. It is possible that both men travelled to one of the training camps in Malakand, where Khan may have established contacts with Al-Qaeda during an earlier trip. One of its representatives in the United Kingdom was Mohammed Kayyum Khan, who in July 2003 organised Khan's trip to the training camp in Malakand. Tanweer, in turn, established contacts with the Army of Muhammad (Jaish-e Mohammed)

⁵³ *Report of the Official Account...*, p. 18.

⁵⁴ A. Wejksznar, *Ewolucja terroryzmu...*, p. 347.

⁵⁵ *Report of the Official Account...*, p. 18.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

organisation⁵⁷. It is also mentioned that both underwent training in the manufacture of explosives. This training was organised for them by Rashid Rauf, a British citizen living in Pakistan. The training took place in a rented house in Islamabad, where Khan and Tanweer made a film about martyrdom, which was to be released after their deaths⁵⁸. The decision to carry out an attack in London was therefore made in Pakistan. Tanweer claimed that he had not found a suitable school to study Islam⁵⁹.

After returning to the country, Khan and Tanweer began to implement key elements of the attack plan. Both resigned from their jobs. They involved Hussain and Lindsay in their activities. From April 2005 onwards, the men spent a lot of time together. In May, they rented a modern flat at 18 Alexandra Grove. This put them far away from the Beeston area, where they were well known. They did not attract attention in their new location, as the neighbourhood was mainly inhabited by students renting flats. The Grand Mosque was located nearby. The flat was rented to them by an Egyptian, Magdy Elnashar, whom Lindsay met at the mosque in November 2004. Elnashar obtained his PhD in chemistry from Leeds Metropolitan University in May 2005 and left for a holiday in his home country in June, intending to return to the UK to continue his research work⁶⁰.

In a rented flat, the bombers began constructing explosives using readily available and inexpensive chemicals. To avoid arousing suspicion, they bought them in batches. They made their first purchase on 31 March 2005⁶¹. It can therefore be assumed that before they rented the flat, they already had a significant amount of chemicals in their possession. These included acetone (solvent) and hydrogen peroxide (bleach or hydrogen peroxide), sulphuric or hydrochloric acid and distilled water combined in appropriate proportions. This produces an explosive material in the form

⁵⁷ R. Simcox, H. Stuart, H. Ahmed, *Islamist Terrorism...*, p. 213, 456.

⁵⁸ *Shehzad Tanweer*, Counter Extremism Project, <https://www.counterextremism.com/extremists/shehzad-tanweer> [accessed: 27 VI 2025].

⁵⁹ *Report of the Official Account...*, p. 20.

⁶⁰ *Chemistry student held in Cairo*, The Guardian, 15 VII 2005, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2005/jul/15/july7.uksecurity10> [accessed: 15 VII 2025]. A week after the attacks, Magdy Elnashar was arrested in Cairo. Initially, he was considered to be the mastermind and instigator of the London bombings, or the founder of the group of bombers. Ultimately, the Egyptian authorities cleared him of charges and released him in August 2005. See: X. Raufer, *Atlas radykalnego islamu...*, p. 93.

⁶¹ *Report of the Official Account...*, p. 23.

of powder or crystals called acetone peroxide, abbreviated as TATP, from the English name: *triacetone triperoxide* (trimeric acetone peroxide). It is a highly unstable substance with a powerful explosive force, not much less than TNT. TATP, commonly used by terrorists, is also known as the 'mother of Satan'. The aforementioned Reid attempted to detonate it⁶². Due to the release of suffocating chemical vapours, Tanweer and Lindsay had to use face masks and open windows. The escaping gas caused the tops of the plants outside to die and lightened the hair on Tanweer and Hussain's heads, which their families noticed a few weeks before the attack. The men explained to them that this was the effect of chlorine in the swimming pool where they regularly swam with Khan. The explosive material produced was divided into four portions weighing an estimated 2 to 5 kg and placed in rucksacks. It is very likely that the group carried out a test explosion, although it is not known where and when it took place⁶³.

It is estimated that the cost of preparing for the attacks amounted to no less than GBP 8000, including travel, car and flat hire, and the purchase of chemicals⁶⁴. It appears that Khan provided most of the funds. He worked for three years and opened several bank accounts, into which he deposited small amounts for long periods of time, and had a good credit rating. This enabled him to take out a loan of GBP 10 000, but from March 2005 onwards, he fell behind with his repayments and had overdrafts on his accounts. Lindsay, on the other hand, made several purchases using cheques that the sellers were unable to cash⁶⁵.

On 28 June, three participants in the plot (excluding Hussain) travelled to London via the same route as on the day of the attack. They probably made a similar trip in mid-March. It is believed that they acted in a methodical and disciplined manner, using mobile phones cautiously and

⁶² G. Vince, *Explosives linked to London bombings identified*, New Scientist, 15 VII 2005, <https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn7682-explosives-linked-to-london-bombings-identified/> [accessed: 15 VII 2025]; P. Szymczak, *TATP, materiał wybuchowy zwany matką szatana. Czy można go wykryć?* (Eng. TATP, an explosive known as the mother of Satan. Can it be detected?), Focus.pl, 23 IX 2019, <https://www.focus.pl/artykul/czy-tatp-materia-wybuchowy-zwany-matk-szatana-mona-wykry> [accessed: 23 VI 2025].

⁶³ *Report of the Official Account...*, p. 23.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

travelling in rented cars. It was assumed that Khan may have suspected that he was under surveillance, which increased his vigilance⁶⁶.

During the period of preparation for the attacks, Lindsay's behaviour changed. He became less religious, did not pray with his wife, shaved his beard and wore Western clothes. He had an affair, but maintained relationships with other women. He established contacts with petty criminals⁶⁷. On 27 May, he participated in a robbery in Luton, near London, during which a car registered in his name was used. Lindsay was not questioned by the police in connection with this case⁶⁸. He spent money on various purchases, which he exchanged online for materials needed to make explosives. He spent less and less time at home, and when he was there, he locked himself in his room with his computer. Shortly before the attack, his wife confronted him with text messages from a girl she had discovered on his phone. She asked him to leave the house, which he did⁶⁹.

In the days leading up to the attack, Hussain often left the house. On 4 July, he told his mother that he would be travelling to London in the coming days. Two days later, he said that his trip to the capital had been postponed due to a car breakdown, but that he had to leave that evening for another destination. At around 3.30 p.m., his sister-in-law noticed that he was getting ready to leave. That was the last time his family saw him⁷⁰.

On 4 July, Tanweer went to visit his old school friends. The next day, he asked his mother to pack a bag for him because he wanted to go to Manchester to visit a Muslim school. On 6 July, he played cricket in a local park until late in the evening. When he returned home, he said he had lost his mobile phone. He was last seen at home shortly after 11 p.m. It is believed that he left shortly afterwards⁷¹.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 24.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Intelligence and Security Committee, *Could 7/7 Have Been Prevented? Review of the Intelligence on the London Terrorist Attacks on 7 July 2005*, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7c153540f0b61a825d6582/7-7_attacks_intelligence.pdf, p. 17 [accessed: 23 VI 2025].

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 24–25.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 25.

⁷¹ Ibid.

The course of the attack

On 7 July 2005, at 5.07 a.m., Lindsay arrived in Luton from Leeds in Fiat Brava. He parked in the car park at the railway station. He went inside and checked the timetable. He then moved his car several times. At 6.49 a.m., Nissan Micra pulled up next to Lindsay's car, and Khan, Tanweer and Hussain got out. The men put on large backpacks and went to the station. They looked like tourists going on a trip. At 7.15 a.m., they entered the station and headed for the ticket gates. They had already purchased their tickets. They went to the platform, where they waited about 20 minutes for the train to King's Cross station. They were clearly relaxed. The train departed from the platform at 7.40 a.m. The train arrived at King's Cross at 8.23 a.m. Seven minutes later, the men were seen in the station concourse hugging each other before parting. Each of them went to the underground⁷². Tanweer boarded train no. 204 on the Circle Line heading east, Khan boarded a train on the same line heading in the opposite direction, and Lindsay boarded a train on the Piccadilly Line heading south. Hussain was heading to a tube station on the same line. At 8.50 a.m., the train Tanweer was travelling on stopped at the crowded platform at Liverpool Street station. The terrorist was sitting in the second carriage at the front. His rucksack was on the floor at his feet. A few seconds after leaving the platform for Aldgate station, an explosion occurred. Eight people were killed, including the perpetrator, and 171 were injured⁷³. Within a minute, a bomb exploded in the second carriage of train no. 216, which was travelling from Edgware Road station to Paddington station, and on which Khan was travelling. Seven people were killed and 163 were injured. The third bomb exploded about two minutes after the first, as train no. 311 on the Piccadilly Line, on which Lindsay was travelling, approached Russell Square station. The bomb exploded in the crowded first carriage, resulting in the highest number of casualties. Twenty-seven people were killed and 340 were injured⁷⁴.

⁷² *Report of the Official Account...*, pp. 2–4.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

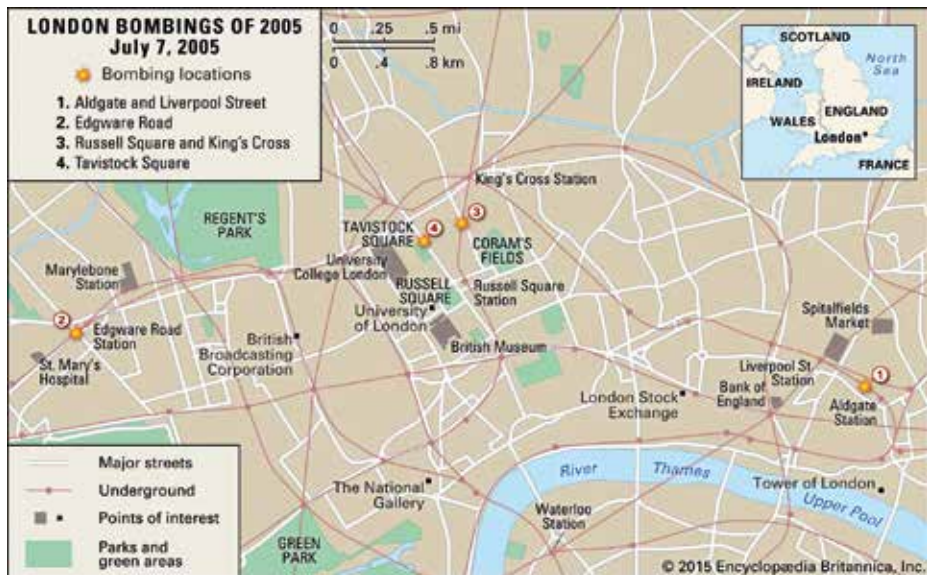


Figure 1. Location of the terrorist attacks on 7 July 2005 in London.

Source: M. Ray, *London bombings of 2005*, Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/event/London-bombings-of-2005> [accessed: 12 VII 2025].

At 8.55 a.m., Hussain got off the Piccadilly Line underground train at Euston Road station, where he spent several minutes unsuccessfully trying to contact the other bombers on his mobile phone. He then returned to King's Cross station, where he bought a 9V battery, possibly to detonate the explosive device. At 9.06 a.m., he entered the McDonald's restaurant on Euston Road, which he left after about 10 minutes. At 9.19 a.m., he was seen on the 91 bus travelling from King's Cross to Euston Station. This time, clearly nervous, he squeezed his way through the passengers. At Euston Station, he changed to the number 30 bus travelling east from Marble Arch. The vehicle was crowded due to the closure of the underground following the earlier attacks. He took a seat at the back of the upper deck and placed his rucksack on the floor between his feet, where he was seen 'fiddling' with something inside it. At 9.47 a.m., when the bus was at Tavistock Square, he detonated the bomb, killing 14 people, including himself, and injuring more than 110 (Figure 1)⁷⁵.

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 5–6.

The explosion occurred near the headquarters of the British Medical Association, from which doctors rushed out to rescue the injured. It is not known why the terrorist did not detonate the device at 8.50 a.m., like the other perpetrators. Perhaps the reason was a faulty battery, which he had to replace⁷⁶. The attack in London took place at a time when the G8 summit was being held at the Gleneagles Hotel in Scotland and the day after the International Olympic Committee's decision to award London the 2012 Summer Olympics⁷⁷.

At 8.51 a.m., the first report was made to the 999 emergency number by a tube worker at Aldgate station. At the same time, the London Ambulance Service received a report and sent an ambulance to Liverpool Street station. The first fire engine arrived at Aldgate at 9.00 a.m., and at the same time, additional fire and rescue teams were dispatched. Officers from the British Transport Police took action and requested assistance from the Metropolitan Police Service. However, the situation was very difficult. After the explosions, passengers were plunged into total darkness. The interior lights of the carriages went out and internal communication between the driver and passengers ceased to function. Smoke was coming out of the underground. Information about the explosions and power loss on some sections of the underground initially led the London Underground Network Control Centre to conclude that there had been power surges in the network, and they began to respond to this scenario. Shortly afterwards, the centre received a call informing them that there had been an accident at Edgware Road station. It was suspected at the time that the train had hit a tunnel wall and that there was a passenger on the tracks⁷⁸. At 9.15 a.m., it became clear that an explosion had occurred, although the cause and exact location remained unknown. In the early stages, the emergency services and police acted chaotically because it was not clear what had happened. Passengers were unable to contact train drivers, and drivers were unable to contact headquarters, as communications were down for the first half hour after the attack. Initially, emergency services were called to seven locations. For a time, it was believed that there had been five separate incidents in

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 6.; *Report of the 7 July Review Committee*, https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla_migrate_files_destination/archives/assembly-reports-7july-report.pdf, p. 37 [accessed: 20 VI 2025].

⁷⁷ M. Phythian, *Intelligence, Policy-Making and the 7 July 2005 London Bombings*, "Crime, Law & Social Change" 2005, vol. 44, no. 4–5, p. 362. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10611-006-9027-3>.

⁷⁸ *Report of the 7 July Review Committee...*, p. 12, 25.

the underground. Despite conflicting information, the Metropolitan Police considered the situation to be serious, without specifying the causes⁷⁹. At 9.30 a.m., the national crisis centre was activated. Half an hour later, Home Secretary Charles Clarke chaired a meeting. The possibility of a terrorist attack was considered, which was confirmed at 10.55 a.m. by the head of the Home Office. He informed the representatives of the services that the explosions had caused many casualties and the suspension of public transport. At the same briefing, Ian Blair, Commissioner of the London Metropolitan Police, stated that the situation was very confusing but was now under control⁸⁰.

To provide immediate assistance, 101 ambulances and 25 rapid response medical teams were sent to the scene of the attacks. However, communication with the Royal London Hospital, where the injured were being transported, failed because all telephone networks were overloaded.

Fifty-six people were killed, including four attackers. Fifty-three people died immediately as a result of the explosions, one on the way to hospital and two in hospital. A total of 775 people were injured. The hospital admitted 27 seriously injured and 167 people who were able to move on their own. Seventeen patients underwent surgery. Some of the people were taken to other hospitals⁸¹. Among the victims were three Polish women: Monika Suchocka (23), Karolina Glueck (29) and Anna Brandt (43). Three other Polish nationals suffered minor injuries⁸².

At 11.15 a.m., during the first press conference of the day, Commissioner Blair announced that there had been six explosions⁸³. At noon, Prime Minister Tony Blair, who was attending the G8 summit in Scotland, issued a statement saying that a series of terrorist attacks had taken place in London, and the leaders of the G8 expressed their condemnation of the perpetrators. At 12.55 p.m., the Home Secretary made a statement in Parliament informing that there had been four explosions. He listed their locations and stated that the perpetrators remained unknown and would be identified by the investigation that had been launched. He added that the false information

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 13.

⁸⁰ *Report of the Official Account...*, p. 7.

⁸¹ K.L. Koenig, *Medical Consequences of the 2005 London Terrorist Bombings*, NEJM Journal Watch, 25 I 2007, <https://www.jwatch.org/em200701260000006/2007/01/26/medical-consequences-2005-london-terrorist> [accessed: 26 VI 2025].

⁸² B. Holyst, *Terroryzm. Tom 1* (Eng. Terrorism. Volume 1), Warszawa 2009, p. 708.

⁸³ *Report of the 7 July Review Committee...*, p. 13.

that had been reported earlier was due to the fact that the explosions occurred on trains between stations, causing passengers to leave both underground stations. This gave the impression that an incident had occurred at each of them. At the same time as Minister Clarke was speaking in Parliament, a statement was published on the internet in which responsibility for the attack was claimed by The Secret Organisation of Al-Qaida in Europe. It also threatened the governments of other countries that had sent troops to Afghanistan and Iraq⁸⁴. At 5.30 p.m., Prime Minister Blair, who had returned to London, went to a meeting of the national crisis centre held in the Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms and made a statement announcing the most intensive police and security service operations to bring those responsible to justice. Before midnight, gym membership cards belonging to Khan and Tanweer were found at Aldgate underground station⁸⁵. A painstaking investigation into the perpetrators of the attack began.

The investigation into the attack and the attempted repeat attack

Investigators analysed footage from over 2500 CCTV cameras monitoring the London Underground. The breakthrough in the investigation came when footage from King's Cross station was found showing four men walking together with large rucksacks. The same individuals were seen on CCTV footage from Luton railway station. The Nissan Micra and Fiat Brava cars used by the terrorists were found in the car park in front of the station. The first car contained several small explosive devices, the purpose of which could not be determined, while a pistol was found in the second car⁸⁶. The investigation uncovered various recordings, one of which contained a statement by Khan: *We are at war and I am a soldier*.

⁸⁴ *Report of the Official Account...*, pp. 7–8. On 9 July, the Abu Hafs al-Masri Brigades, an organisation linked to Al-Qaeda, claimed responsibility for the attack in London. This was the same organisation that claimed responsibility for the attack in Madrid on 11 March 2004. See: C. Johnston, *Tube blasts 'almost simultaneous'*, *The Guardian*, 9 VII 2005, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2005/jul/09/july7.uksecurity12> [accessed: 9 VII 2025].

⁸⁵ *Report of the Official Account...*, p. 8.

⁸⁶ B. Holyst, *Terroryzm...*, p. 708; B. Levitt, *The True Story Behind Attack on London: Hunting the 7/7 Bombers*, *Time*, 1 VII 2025, <https://time.com/7299329/attack-on-london-netflix-true-story/> [accessed: 1 VII 2025].

*Now you too will taste the reality of this situation*⁸⁷. The investigation revealed that on the day of the attack, the terrorists made calls to a mobile phone belonging to Harun Rashid Aswat, one of Al-Masri's closest associates, who is believed to have been the mastermind behind the 7 July attacks. Aswat was arrested on 20 July 2005 in Zambia⁸⁸. On the same day, the British press published information about the identification of all victims of the attack in London. In response to Prime Minister Blair's proposal to organise an international conference on combating Islamic extremism, British Muslim leaders demanded an independent judicial inquiry into the motives of the four 'local' suicide bombers who attacked London. They also warned that the Muslim community alone was not capable of eliminating extremism⁸⁹.

On 21 July 2005, another series of attacks was attempted. Four bombers: Yassin Omar, Mukhtar Ibrahim, Ramzi Mohammad and Hussain Osman attempted to detonate bombs at three London Underground stations (Oval, Shepherd's Bush and Warren Street) and on a bus on Hackney Road. None of them exploded. In two cases, only the detonators worked, but the explosives did not detonate, and the third was not activated. One person was injured. The bombers fled the scene⁹⁰.

The following day, at Stockwell underground station, police officers shot and killed Jean Charles de Menezes (27), a Brazilian citizen who had been living in the United Kingdom for three years. He was pursued by plainclothes police officers, but did not stop and ran into the underground station, where he was overpowered by two officers, while a third fired seven shots at the man lying on the floor. He was not a terrorist, nor did he have any connection to the 21 July attack.

After the events of 7 July, police guidelines on how to deal with individuals suspected of planning a suicide attack were changed. Officers were instructed to shoot them in the head to prevent the possibility of the wounded terrorist detonating a bomb. The whole affair had a negative

⁸⁷ B. Levitt, *The True Story...*

⁸⁸ A. Wejksznier, *Ewolucja terroryzmu...*, p. 346, 348.

⁸⁹ *All 56 dead identified in July 7 attacks*, NBC News, 20 VII 2005, <https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna8642326> [accessed: 20 VII 2025].

⁹⁰ A. Wejksznier, *Ewolucja terroryzmu...*, p. 349; X. Raufer, *Atlas radykalnego islamu...*, p. 93.

impact on the image of the British police, and the head of the Metropolitan Police, Ian Blair, resigned⁹¹.

At the end of July, Mohammad and Ibrahim were arrested in London. The third bomber, Omar, was arrested in Birmingham (dressed in a burqa), while Osman was arrested in Rome and sent back to the United Kingdom⁹². The attackers were immigrants from the Horn of Africa (two from Somalia, one from Ethiopia and one from Eritrea). They arrived in the United Kingdom in the 1990s and were awaiting citizenship. They did not establish contact with Pakistani jihadists.

It was also not possible to confirm any links between the terrorist groups involved in the 7 and 21 July attacks. The terrorists involved in the 21 July attacks had insufficient knowledge of how to manufacture explosives, but they were just as determined as their predecessors and had a similar motivation of 'martyrdom'. This was in response to the presence of Western troops, including those from the United Kingdom, in Afghanistan and Iraq⁹³. The bombers were convicted of participating in a conspiracy to commit mass murder, and each received a sentence of at least 40 years in prison⁹⁴.

On 2 August 2005, in a speech broadcast on Qatar's Al-Jazeera channel, Osama bin Laden's deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, said that the 7 July attacks were a response to the prolonged presence of Western forces in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as the beginning of a major confrontation that would remind Americans of a second Vietnam⁹⁵. He also offered Western countries a ceasefire if they withdrew from the Middle East and forced Israel to make peace with the Palestinians. On 1 September, in a recording broadcast by the same television station, he justified the attacks in London, stating: *Our targets are the lands and interests of countries that are involved in aggression against Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan*⁹⁶. On 25 September, Al-Zawahiri unequivocally confirmed Al-Qaeda's responsibility for the attacks in London:

⁹¹ *Policja nie odpowie za śmierć w metrze* (Eng. The police will not be held responsible for the death in the underground), TVN24, 13 II 2009, <https://tvn24.pl/swiat/policja-nie-odpowie-za-smierc-w-metrze-ra85753-ls3724956> [accessed: 13 VII 2025].

⁹² A. Wejksznier, *Ewolucja terroryzmu...*, p. 350.

⁹³ A. Wejksznier, *Ewolucja terroryzmu...*, p. 350; X. Raufer, *Atlas radykalnego islamu...*, pp. 93–94.

⁹⁴ B. Levitt, *The True Story...*

⁹⁵ A. Wejksznier, *Ewolucja terroryzmu...*, p. 350.

⁹⁶ X. Raufer, *Atlas radykalnego islamu...*, p. 95.

Brothers, knights of unity and heroes of the London operation, may Allah place you in his heavenly gardens and accept your good deeds. Their wills contain important lessons for Muslims in Pakistan and the West regarding the rejection of taghut [idols] and the determination of the mujahideen of Islam [...] to take revenge on the crusaders and Jews for the crimes they have committed with their hands drenched in the blood of the Muslim people. The blessed attack on London is one of a series of attacks that Al-Qaeda has had the honour of carrying out against the arrogance of the British crusaders in response to more than a century of British aggression against the Muslim nation, the historical crime of the creation of Israel, and the ongoing crimes of the British against Muslims in Afghanistan and Iraq⁹⁷.

On 6 July 2006, before the first anniversary of the London bombings, Al-Jazeera broadcast Tanweer's posthumous will. The terrorist declared that the operation (...) *was only the beginning of attacks that would continue and grow stronger until you withdrew your troops from Afghanistan and Iraq*. The video recording was accompanied by a message from Al-Zawahiri, who stated that Khan and Tanweer had been trained in Al-Qaeda camps⁹⁸.

On 22 March 2007, Mohammad Shakil and Waheed Ali were arrested in London while attempting to travel to Pakistan. On the same day, Sadeer Saleem was arrested in Leeds. They were charged with participating in a conspiracy to prepare the attacks of 7 July 2005⁹⁹. The arrested individuals knew the perpetrators of the attack well, but their involvement in Khan's terrorist cell was not proven. In April 2009, they were sentenced to seven years in prison for participating in military training in Pakistan and attempting to travel there for further training¹⁰⁰.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 96.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ A. Wejksznier, *Ewolucja terroryzmu...*, p. 351.

¹⁰⁰ *British 7/7 suspects jailed for terrorism camp plans*, Reuters, 29 IV 2009, <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/british-7-7-suspects-jailed-for-terrorism-camp-plans-idUSTRE53S5SV/> [accessed: 29 VI 2025].

The UK's counter-terrorism security issues

The terrorist attack in London undermined the effectiveness of MI5. British security services did not fully take into account the threat posed by Muslim extremists, as they assumed that these circles had been effectively infiltrated. Three weeks before the attacks on 7 July, the terrorist threat alert level was lowered from severe to substantial (from 4 to 3 on a five-point scale), and the heads of the services assured that they had the situation under control, except that the two bombers from 7 July, Khan and Tanweer, and one of the bombers from 21 July had already been of interest to the British services in 2004. However, it was concluded that they did not pose a serious threat. The determination and operational commitment of Khan's cell was underestimated¹⁰¹. Renowned British security institutions with vast experience in combating Northern Irish terrorism, reinforced financially after 11 September 2001, were unable, despite their personnel and organisational resources, not only to stop the bombers, as evidenced by the July attacks, but also to correctly assess the scale of the threat¹⁰². Within two weeks, a second, independent group of terrorists could have adopted a similar *modus operandi*, and only the lack of professionalism of its members in the production of explosive devices prevented numerous casualties among London residents.

The events of 2005 influenced anti-Muslim sentiments among the British and led to an unprecedented increase in the sense of terrorist threat. Although leaders of the British Muslim community immediately condemned the actions of the bombers (several leaders even issued fatwas – theological rulings stating that the attacks were contrary to Islam), there was an increase in the number of hate crimes. The victims included both Muslims and people whom the attackers wrongly identified as followers of Islam¹⁰³. There have been several attacks on mosques,

¹⁰¹ F. Elliott, S. Goodchild, *7/7 one year on: Why did it happen? The big questions still need answers*, The Independent, 2 VII 2006, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/7-7-one-year-on-why-did-it-happen-the-big-questions-still-need-answers-406351.html> [accessed: 2 VII 2025]; B. Levitt, *The True Story...*

¹⁰² Cabinet Office, *The National Security Strategy of the United Kingdom. Security in an interdependent world*, <https://www.statewatch.org/media/documents/news/2010/oct/uk-national-security-strategy-2008.pdf>, pp. 4–5, [accessed: 14 VI 2025].

¹⁰³ *20 lat temu zamachowcy Al Kaidy dokonali zamachów bombowych w londyńskim metrze* (Eng. Twenty years ago, Al-Qaeda bombers carried out attacks on the London Underground), PAP, 7 VII 2025, <https://www.pap.pl/aktualnosci/20-rocznica-zamachow-bombowych-w>

including in London, Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham, South-on-Sea and Exeter¹⁰⁴. Islamophobia, propagated mainly by far-right organisations and parties, intensified. The increased terrorist threat led to the inclusion of the Prevent programme in the government's CONTEST strategy. Its aim was to prevent attacks by identifying individuals expressing extremist views. The programme was constantly expanded, and individuals deemed dangerous were referred to a part of the programme called Channel. Although Prevent was applied to all extremists, including the far right, it was criticised from the outset by Muslim organisations for stigmatising their communities. Some even expressed the opinion that it was deeply Islamophobic. The most controversial part of the programme was the obligation imposed on schools, the police, the health service, local government organisations and other public institutions to report individuals suspected of harbouring radical views that could lead to terrorism¹⁰⁵. In April 2006, a new anti-terrorism law (*The Terrorism Act 2006*) came into force, defining and mandating the prosecution of crimes such as glorifying terrorism (praising terrorist acts in the hope of encouraging others to commit them), participating in or organising terrorist training, planning and preparing a terrorist act, and disseminating publications with terrorist content¹⁰⁶. The government proposed the initiative to criminalise the glorification of terrorism shortly after the London bombings. It was to be one of a package of measures targeting Muslim preachers such as Al-Masri, whom Prime Minister Blair considered to be inciting hatred. The new law was intended to give the police the power to detain a terrorism suspect for up to 28 days instead of the previous 14 (the government initially proposed 90 days). The provision came into force on 25 July 2006. The law was protested by human rights activists, who claimed that the new

londynie#:~:text=7%20lipca%202005%20r.,ofiar%20zamachu%20wynosi%C5%82%2034%20lata [accessed: 7 VII 2025].

¹⁰⁴ M. Zawadewicz, *Życie codzienne...*, p. 138.

¹⁰⁵ *About Prevent*, Prevent Watch, <https://www.preventwatch.org/about-prevent/> [accessed: 23 VII 2025]; A. Safdar, *Prevent: UK anti-terror plan "harms children's rights"*, AlJazeera, 13 VII 2016, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2016/7/13/prevent-uk-anti-terror-plan-harms-childrens-rights> [accessed: 13 VII 2025].

¹⁰⁶ It was the fourth anti-terrorism law after: *Terrorism Act 2000*, *The Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001* and *The Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005*. See: A. Kalicki, *Aspekty prawne w brytyjskim systemie zwalczania terroryzmu* (Eng. Legal aspects of the British counter-terrorism system), in: *Terroryzm. Materia ustawowa?*, K. Indeck, P. Potejko (eds.), Warszawa 2009, pp. 92–100.

law would restrict freedom of speech and the freedom of action of non-governmental organisations¹⁰⁷.

The new law did not stop Islamic extremists from carrying out hostile activities. After the Ministry of the Interior banned one group, a new one was established under a different name. For example, after the aforementioned Firkat an-Naja and Al-Ghuraba were banned in July 2006, Choudary established an online organisation called Islam4UK. It continued the ideological message of Al-Muhajiroun, motivating young Islamic radicals to travel to Pakistan for training. On 6 August 2006, the police announced that they had uncovered a terrorist plot to blow up aeroplanes flying from the United Kingdom to the United States. Twenty British citizens of Pakistani origin were arrested, eight of whom were charged with preparing a terrorist plot. They had undergone training on the Afghan-Pakistani border. It was there that the plan for the attacks was hatched, and the group's leader, Abdullah Ahmed Ali, received detailed instructions on how to carry them out. The attackers intended to blow up the planes over the Atlantic using liquid explosives hidden in soft drink bottles. Since the plans for these attacks were revealed, stricter security measures have been introduced at airports, prohibiting liquids from being brought on board aeroplanes¹⁰⁸. In November 2006, MI5 director general Eliza Manningham-Buller stated that the services were monitoring 200 groups comprising over 1600 individuals (mainly British citizens of foreign origin) involved in planning or supporting terrorist attacks in the United Kingdom or abroad¹⁰⁹.

Terrorist organisations managed to maintain their operational capabilities despite decisive action by the British authorities after 2005 aimed at dismantling these structures. This was confirmed by the attack on Glasgow Airport on 30 June 2007. Shortly before that, in January 2007, the British police managed to prevent the kidnapping and killing of a British soldier¹¹⁰. Anti-terrorist measures taken by British authorities have forced

¹⁰⁷ W. Brytania: Nowa ustawa antyterrorystyczna weszła w życie (Eng. United Kingdom: New anti-terrorism law comes into force), Wirtualna Polska, 13 IV 2006, <https://www.money.pl/archiwum/wiadomosciagencyjne/pap/artikul/w;brytania;nowa;ustawa;antyterrorystyczna;weszla;w;zycie,28,0,152348.html> [accessed: 13 IV 2006]; A. Kalicki, *Aspekty prawne w brytyjskim systemie...*, p. 95.

¹⁰⁸ K. Izak, *Leksykon organizacji...*, p. 361.

¹⁰⁹ X. Raufer, *Atlas radykalnego islamu...*, p. 96.

¹¹⁰ A. Wejksznier, *Ewolucja terroryzmu...*, p. 351.

a number of terrorist cells to go into hiding¹¹¹. However, the propaganda activities of jihadist ideologues continued to be tolerated. In September 2008, on the seventh anniversary of the terrorist attacks in the US, Islam4UK announced in the media a conference entitled 'Caliphate for Britain – God's Alternative'. Invitations and posters advertising the meeting featured a map of the United Kingdom with the black flag of Islam flying over it and the inscription 'Caliphate'. During the gathering, attended by over 100 people, Choudary stated that seven years earlier Osama bin Laden had taught the Americans a lesson, but the 'crusaders' had learned nothing, so another 11 September would occur in the British Isles. Another 7 July could also come. The leader of Islam4UK then declared: *We do not integrate into Christianity. We will ensure that one day you will integrate into the Sharia Islamic law. Our eyes are on Downing Street. That is why the British are so afraid. It would be easy for us to declare Jihad in Britain and each one of us could become a time-bomb waiting to go off*.¹¹² Another person who delivered a speech filled with hatred was Saiful Islam, head of the Salafi Youth for Islamic Propagation. He praised Bin Laden for his courage and warned against a repeat of the events of seven years ago, stating, among other things, that: *The American government and no one else is to blame for the 11 September attacks. They are the terrorists. Sheikh Osama repeatedly warned America, all because of their arrogance, because they thought they were a superpower and no one could threaten them, so Osama bin Laden taught the US a lesson that they still have not learned*.¹¹³ Referring to the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan, he warned the United States and the United Kingdom: *Wake up. Withdraw. You must stop the violence, otherwise the next 11 September will take place in the United Kingdom, and the next 7 July may also happen here*.¹¹⁴

The activities of Muslim extremists contributed to the establishment of the anti-Muslim organisation English Defence League (EDL) in Luton in 2009. The city is inhabited mainly by descendants of immigrants, mostly

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² R. Watson, *Al-Muhajiroun and the long tail of UK terror*, The New Statesman, 22 II 2020, <https://www.newstatesman.com/long-reads/2020/02/al-muhajiroun-and-long-tail-uk-terror> [accessed: 22 VII 2025].

¹¹³ "Have more babies and Muslims can take over the UK" hate fanatic says, as warning comes that "next 9/11 will be in UK", Daily Mail, 13 IX 2008, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1054909/Have-babies-Muslims-UK-hate-fanatic-says-warning-comes-9-11-UK.html> [accessed: 13 VII 2025].

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

from Muslim countries, who form a parallel society and live according to Sharia law. The immediate cause of the EDL's formation was an attempt by Choudary's supporters to attack participants in a ceremony in Luton welcoming soldiers of the Royal Anglican Regiment returning from Afghanistan¹¹⁵. The organisation was established within the football hooligan subculture. It became a permanent feature of British political life. It organised regular demonstrations that attracted between several hundred and several thousand participants. Its membership was estimated at 25 000–30 000, making it one of the largest street protest movements in the United Kingdom¹¹⁶. Unlike traditional British far-right parties (such as the National Front or the British National Party), the EDL did not refer to anti-immigrant and racist ideology in its official statements, but claimed that it was only opposed to Islam. The League viewed Islam not so much as one of the religions of British society, but rather as an aggressive and expansionist political ideology that threatened human rights and democracy. It considered it its duty to morally support British troops in the Middle East. Against this backdrop, there were frequent clashes with Muslims protesting against the presence of British soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan¹¹⁷.

In January 2010, Islam4UK announced that it would organise a march of 'empty coffins' through the streets of Royal Wootton Bassett, where the bodies of British soldiers killed in Afghanistan were brought. Relatives, friends of the fallen and residents lined the streets as the flag-draped coffins of the fallen were carried on catafalques. Choudary accused the soldiers of murder and posted an open letter online entitled *To the families of British soldiers who have died or are currently in Afghanistan*, explaining the reasons for organising the march. His announcement sparked a wave of protests¹¹⁸. This forced the authorities to ban Islam4UK. The decision came into force on 14 January 2010¹¹⁹. The threat of imprisonment did not change

¹¹⁵ J. Barlett, M. Littler, *Inside the EDL: Populist Politics in a Digital Age*, https://demos.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Inside_the_edl_WEB.pdf, p. 10 [accessed: 10 IX 2025].

¹¹⁶ K. Jaskułowski, *Głośni i dumni: etnografia Angielskiej Ligi Obrony* (Eng. Loud and proud: an ethnography of the English Defence League), "Prace Etnograficzne" 2017, vol. 45, n. 1, p. 117.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ *Fury over British Muslim cleric's anti-war march threat*, CNN, 5 I 2010, <https://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/europe/01/04/britain.afghanistan.demo/index.html> [accessed: 5 I 2010].

¹¹⁹ D. Orr, *Is the Islam4UK ban a blow against democracy?*, The Guardian, 14 I 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/jan/14/deborah-orr-islam4uk> [accessed: 14 VII 2025].

the nature of Choudary's statements, as he consistently preached extremist propaganda. He founded the website Muslims Against Crusades (MAC). This name was also used to refer to his supporters. Taking advantage of his access to social media, Choudary was able to reach a wide audience of Muslims with his views, thereby influencing the level of their radicalisation¹²⁰. On 11 September 2011, MAC supporters organised a demonstration next to the US Embassy in London to mark the 10th anniversary of the attacks in the US. Clashes with the EDL ensued¹²¹. On the same day, 11 British Muslims were arrested in Birmingham for preparing a terrorist attack in that city using eight bombs placed in rucksacks. Some of them had undergone training in Al-Qaeda camps on the Afghan-Pakistani border. The terrorists intended to turn Birmingham into a zone of small-scale warfare. All of them were sentenced to imprisonment. The leader of the group, Irfan Naseer (31), was sentenced to life imprisonment, and his two closest associates, Irfan Khalid (28) and Ashik Ali (28), received sentences of 23 and 20 years' imprisonment, respectively. The members of the group were under the ideological influence of Choudary¹²².

On 10 November 2011, the British Home Office decided to ban the MAC. It was the 48th extremist organisation banned in the United Kingdom under the anti-terrorist Act and the Act prohibiting the glorification of terrorism. The ban on the group's activities meant that the authorities had the right to seize its assets and that membership in the organisation was punishable by up to 10 years' imprisonment. In a statement, Choudary described the banning of the MAC as a manifestation of the British government's hatred of Muslims¹²³. The MAC was replaced by the United Ummah organisation, which organised a demonstration in London on 2 December 2011 against American drone strikes on Muslim countries¹²⁴.

¹²⁰ C. Gammell, *Muslims Against Crusades earn notoriety in less than a year*, The Telegraph, 21 IV 2011, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/8461436/Muslims-Against-Crusades-earn-notoriety-in-less-than-a-year.html> [accessed: 21 VI 2025].

¹²¹ D. Casciani, *Muslims Against Crusades banned by Theresa May*, BBC News, 10 XI 2011, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-15678275> [accessed: 10 XI 2025].

¹²² *Wielka Brytania: 11 skazanych za planowanie zamachów w Birmingham* (Eng. United Kingdom: 11 convicted for planning attacks in Birmingham), Wirtualna Polska, 26 IV 2013, <https://wiadomosci.wp.pl/wielka-brytania-11-skazanych-za-planowanie-zamachow-w-birmingham-6082107866088065a> [accessed: 26 VII 2025].

¹²³ D. Casciani, *Muslims Against Crusades...*

¹²⁴ K. Izak, *Leksykon organizacji...*, p. 365.

On 22 May 2013, two British men of Nigerian descent, Michael Adebolayo (28) and Michael Adebawale (22), killed British soldier Lee Rigby in the London borough of Woolwich. The man, who was crossing the street, was first hit by a car, and then the perpetrators attempted to cut off his head with a meat cleaver, shouting 'Allah Akbar'. They dragged his body into the middle of the street so that passers-by could see it. The perpetrators did not flee the scene of the crime, but talked to bystanders while waiting for the police. They tried to explain their views to them, with Adebolayo shouting, among other things: *We swear by the almighty Allah we will never stop fighting you. The only reason we have killed this man today is because Muslims are dying daily by British soldiers. It's an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.*¹²⁵. When the police arrived, the men tried to attack them. Both hoped to be killed on the spot and become martyrs. However, they were only wounded. Adebolayo and Adebawale came from Catholic families of Nigerian immigrants, but converted to Islam and became radicalised in the United Kingdom¹²⁶. This murder led to social mobilisation that spread across almost the entire country. It was the largest such mobilisation in over 30 years. Anti-Muslim demonstrations took place in many cities. In response to these events, Prime Minister David Cameron declared war on radicalisation and extremism, but he directed even stronger words at the EDL and BNP, stating that he would not tolerate right-wing Islamophobia. He also announced the creation of a special task force, TERFOR, whose aim was to combat extremists¹²⁷. These promises were not fulfilled. The crackdown on the far right was intensified, but Islamic extremists and Muslim activists accusing the British of Islamophobia and racism were tolerated.

Meanwhile, there were growing opinions that the special services could have prevented the attack on 22 May 2013, just as they could have prevented the attacks in London eight years earlier. Adebolayo was already known to the services in 2010, when he intended to join the armed organisation Harakat al-Shabab al-Mujahideen (Young Mujahideen Movement) in Somalia. However, he was arrested in Kenya and sent back to the United

¹²⁵ *Dożywocie i 45 lat więzienia dla „rzeźników z Londynu” za zabójstwo żołnierza* (Eng. Life imprisonment and 45 years in prison for the 'London butchers' for the murder of a soldier), TVN24, 26 II 2014, <https://tvn24.pl/swiat/dozywocie-i-45-lat-wiezienia-dla-rzeznikow-z-londynu-za-zabojstwo-zolnierza-ra402449-ls3352033> [accessed: 26 VII 2025].

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ G. Kayzer, *Radykałowie na celowniku* (Eng. Radicals in the crosshairs), "Gazeta Polska Codziennie", 29 V 2013.

Kingdom¹²⁸. The British authorities did not place him under surveillance or bring him to trial, as they should have done under the 2006 Act, which criminalised travelling or intending to travel abroad with the intention of joining a terrorist organisation or carrying out an attack. The situation was similar with Adebowale, who had previously been under surveillance. It also turned out that both terrorists were guided by the teachings of Choudary, who remained at large and continued to preach hate speech with impunity¹²⁹. The decision to arrest him was only made after he pledged allegiance to Islamic State in July 2014. Two years later, he was sentenced to 5.5 years in prison, instead of the 10 years he faced. The guilty verdict was preceded by an investigation that cost millions of pounds. It showed that his name had been linked to most terrorist attacks in the UK. He is believed to have inspired more than 100 UK citizens to carry out terrorist attacks, and it is likely that one in four of the more than 900 British jihadists who left to fight for Islamic State were influenced by their mentor's teachings¹³⁰. Other statistical data is included in a report by the non-profit organisation Counter Extremism Project (CEP) entitled *Anjem Choudary's Ties to Extremists*. It lists 33 organisations and 112 individuals whom Choudary influenced or communicated with during his career. Of these, 20 carried out terrorist attacks, 50 attempted to do so, 19 joined or attempted to join Islamic State in Syria, and others promoted jihadist content and recruited for terrorist organisations¹³¹.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.; P. Falkowski, *Niespokojny Londyn* (Eng. Restless London), "Nasz Dziennik", 3 VI 2013.

¹³⁰ M.R. Chehab, *Kim jest Anjem Choudary, mentor ostatniego zamachowca z Londynu?* (Eng. Who is Anjem Choudary, the mentor of the latest London bomber?), Newsweek, 8 XII 2019, <https://www.newsweek.pl/swiat/po-zamachu-w-londynie-kim-jest-anjem-choudary/n0plx7f> [accessed: 8 XI 2025].

¹³¹ *Anjem Choudary's Ties to Extremists*, Counter Extremism Project, <https://www.counter-extremism.com/anjem-choudary-ties-to-extremists> [accessed: 23 X 2025]. Choudary served less than half of his sentence, with the remainder to be served under strict supervision, but he continued his propaganda and agitation activities nonetheless. In 2019, he initiated the revival of the Al-Muhajiroun organisation. He used social media to teach his followers in the US and Canada. He became involved in the activities of the Islamic Thinkers Society, an organisation promoting radical ideas. Al-Muhajiroun was operating under this name. His close associate in Canada was Khaled Hussain, representing a new generation of Choudary's students, promoting him in North America. On 17 July 2023, after Hussain arrived in London to meet with Choudary, both men were arrested. On 30 July 2024, Choudary was sentenced to life imprisonment with the possibility of release after 28 years, while Khaled Hussein received a 5-year prison sentence. See: *International counter terrorism*

The Islamic State continued the activities of jihadist networks in the United Kingdom. It intended to carry out an attack to commemorate its predecessors who were responsible for the 2005 bombings. One such plot was uncovered in 2015, another the following year, and three in 2017¹³². Unfortunately, it was a year marked by three terrorist attacks: in London on 22 March (6 people killed and at least 49 injured)¹³³ and 3 June (8 people killed and over 40 injured)¹³⁴, and the deadliest suicide bombing in Manchester on 22 May (22 people were killed and 118 were injured). The perpetrator of the latter was Salman Ramadan Abedi, who detonated a bomb placed in his rucksack as concert-goers were leaving the venue shortly after American singer Ariana Grande had finished performing¹³⁵.

On 29 November 2019, Usman Khan (28), born in the United Kingdom, attacked passers-by with a knife near London Bridge. He killed two people and injured three others. Witnesses to the incident, including Łukasz Koczocik from Poland, who was also injured, tried to stop the attacker. The terrorist was shot dead by the police. His idol and mentor was Choudary. Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack. In 2010, Khan, operating under the pseudonym Abu Saif, was arrested along with eight other extremists¹³⁶. They were preparing a series of attacks, including on Parliament, the London Stock Exchange, the US Embassy, the flat of the then Mayor of London Boris Johnson, and St Paul's Cathedral¹³⁷. In 2012, Khan was sentenced to 16 years in prison. He was released on parole. The day after the attack, Prime Minister Boris Johnson criticised the practice of releasing terrorists on parole, saying that if Khan had not

investigation leads to Anjem Choudary conviction, Counter Terrorism Policing, 23 VII 2024, <https://www.counterterrorism.police.uk/historic-met-and-international-police-counter-terrorism-investigation-leads-to-anjem-choudary-terror-conviction/> [accessed: 23 VII 2025]; *CPS statement: Convictions of Anjem Choudary and Khaled Hussein*, Crown Prosecution Service, 31 VII 2024, <https://www.cps.gov.uk/cps/news/cps-statement-convictions-anjem-choudary-and-khaled-hussein> [accessed: 31 VII 2025].

¹³² A. Wejksznar, *Europejska armia kalifatu. Tom I. Centrum supersieci* (Eng. The European Army of the Caliphate. Volume I. The centre of the supernetwork), Warszawa 2020, pp. 234–235.

¹³³ Ibid., p. 237.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 246.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 240, 243.

¹³⁶ M.R. Chehab, *Kim jest Anjem Choudary...*

¹³⁷ Ibid.

been released early, he would not have carried out the attack. He also reported that 74 people convicted of terrorism are currently on parole¹³⁸.

On 15 October 2021, British citizen Ali Harbi Ali (26) stabbed Conservative politician David Amess to death in London. The killer was under Choudary's influence. Experts criticised the Prevent programme, which had cost millions of pounds to implement but had failed to achieve its objectives. They pointed out that the reasons for the programme's failure included its paralysis by Muslim clerics and social activists as well as its constant criticism by opposition representatives¹³⁹.

On 29 July 2024, Axel Rudakubana (17), a British citizen of Rwandan descent, stabbed three girls attending a dance class to death. He also injured nine other children and one adult before being apprehended. The attack took place in the town of Southport, near Liverpool. After the incident, several days of anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim protests and riots broke out in many British cities. There were clashes with police officers, and a police station as well as a hotel for illegal immigrants awaiting asylum were attacked¹⁴⁰.

Summary

After the Al-Qaeda terrorist attack in London on 7 July 2005, Tony Blair's government took measures to improve internal security and protect citizens from extremist attacks. However, these measures were limited due to opposition from Muslim organisations and human rights activists. Supporters of a hard line against Islamic extremism criticised the British practice of so-called vigilant tolerance, which allowed many radical imams

¹³⁸ "Przygotowywał działalność terrorystyczną". *Mężczyzna zatrzymany* (Eng. "He was preparing terrorist activities". Man detained), TVN24, 2 XII 2019, <https://tvn24.pl/swiat/wielka-brytania-policja-zatrzymala-mezczyzne-podejrzanego-o-terroryzm-ra989867-ls2508450> [accessed: 2 X 2025].

¹³⁹ V. Dodd, *Ali Harbi Ali guilty of murdering MP David Amess in terrorist attack*, The Guardian, 11 IV 2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/apr/11/david-amess-verdict-terrorist-attack-ali-harbi-ali-guilty> [accessed: 11 VI 2025].

¹⁴⁰ M. Czarnecki, *Po ataku nożownika w Southport rozruchy rozlały się na kolejne brytyjskie miasta. Aresztowano ponad 90 osób* (Eng. After the knife attack in Southport, riots spread to other British cities. Over 90 people were arrested), wyborcza.pl, 4 VIII 2024, <https://wyborcza.pl/7,75399,31200497,po-ataku-nozownika-w-southport-rozruchy-rozlały-sie-na-kolejne.html> [accessed: 4 VIII 2025].

to incite hatred and violence. The British authorities emphasised, however, that the strategy of focusing on surveillance and control measures for individuals suspected of terrorist activity yielded better results than imprisoning them, as it allowed for the gathering of intelligence¹⁴¹. According to some experts, the source of placing the rights of criminals above the safety of British citizens was the *Human Rights Act*, which in 1998 incorporated the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights into British law. Literally interpreted, the provisions allowed foreigners prosecuted in their countries for crimes to be granted asylum in the UK because they could be exposed to 'inhuman or degrading treatment' there¹⁴². On the basis of this law and Resolution A/HRC/22/L.40 of the UN Human Rights Council, adopted in March 2013, even the slightest criticism of Muslim minorities, including the term 'Islamic terrorism', may be considered punishable Islamophobia¹⁴³.

This strategy failed, and the authorities were eventually forced to arrest the so-called hate preachers. However, it took several more years before they were successfully deported from the country. Al-Masri was not extradited to the US until October 2012¹⁴⁴, Abu Katada was handed over to Jordan in July 2013. However, Amman had to assure that Abu Katada,

¹⁴¹ G. Wilk-Jakubowski, *Sytuacja społeczna muzułmanów w Wielkiej Brytanii* (Eng. The social situation of Muslims in the United Kingdom), Kraków 2013, p. 153.

¹⁴² A. Pearson, *Allison Pearson: We must get rid of the dreadful Human Rights Act*, The Telegraph, 13 V 2015, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/11602222/Allison-Pearson-We-must-get-rid-of-the-dreadful-Human-Rights-Act.html> [accessed: 13 VI 2025].

¹⁴³ The resolution states that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations cannot be associated with any religion, nationality or ethnic group. This would mean that there is no such thing as Palestinian, Basque, Corsican, Tamil, Muslim and dozens of other forms of terrorism. However, most terrorist organisations have had and continue to have references to ethnic, national and religious terms in their names. The EU representative to the UN condemned the provisions contained in the document, while referring to international support for freedom of speech: "(...) America is still the last bastion of freedom of speech, but it is clear that even here we are sliding down a slippery slope towards the demise of free speech. This is sad and frightening. I hope that people will wake up, because this freedom is being quietly taken away from them, while many of them live in the belief that they will always have it". See: D. Weiss, *If You Criticize Islam, You Will Suffer Consequences*, Citizen Times, 13 VII 2014, <http://www.citizen-times.eu/2013/06/13/if-you-criticize-islam-you-will-suffer-consequences/> [accessed: 13 VIII 2024].

¹⁴⁴ *Ekstradycja Abu Hamzy do USA wstrzymana przez apelację* (Eng. Abu Hamza's extradition to the US halted by appeal), Wirtualna Polska, 26 IX 2012, <https://wiadomosci.wp.pl/ekstradycja-abu-hamzy-do-usa-wstrzymana-przez-apelacje-608212057132033a> [accessed: 26 IX 2025].

who had previously been sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment for his involvement in the preparation of two attacks in the country's capital in 1999 and 2000, would not be tortured to extract a confession. After hearing the unfavourable verdicts, both men appealed to higher courts and the European Court of Human Rights¹⁴⁵. International humanitarian organisations defended them, even though they incited hatred and Al-Masri organised terrorist attacks in Yemen.

In Great Britain, however, a policy of concessions and privileges continued to be applied to Muslims. They were given special rights at the expense of other social groups. This special status exempted Muslims from complying with norms, the violation of which by members of other social groups is punishable by sanctions. The application of Sharia law in civil matters was permitted (including marriage and inheritance issues). The multiculturalism programme was intended to curb discontent among newcomers, primarily from Muslim countries, and weaken their critical attitude towards their new homeland. These calculations failed completely, and the friendly policies of successive governments led to a rise in Islamic extremism¹⁴⁶. This situation worsened after the large wave of migration in 2015. The British police concealed crimes committed by Muslim minorities from the public. Fear of being accused of racism paralysed the actions of the security services. In the UK, Muslim gangs sexually abused around 1400 British girls over a period of 10 years, and the police did not make this information public. When the case came to light, a report stated, among other things, that the reason for the inaction, silencing and downplaying of the crimes was the fear of law enforcement agencies of accusations of racism and the political consequences of turning native Britons against ethnic minorities¹⁴⁷.

¹⁴⁵ *Wydalony z Wielkiej Brytanii Abu Katada, oskarżony o terroryzm* (Eng. Abu Katada, accused of terrorism, expelled from the United Kingdom), Wirtualna Polska, 7 VII 2013, <https://wiadomosci.wp.pl/wydalony-z-wielkiej-brytanii-abu-katada-oskarzony-o-terroryzm-6031568274154113a> [accessed: 7 VII 2025]. In September 2014, a military court in Jordan finally acquitted Abu Katada of charges of terrorist activity, allegedly involving plans to attack Americans and Israelis. The radical preacher was released. See: *Oskarżony o planowanie masakry niewinny. Abu Katada na wolności* (Eng. Man accused of planning massacre found not guilty. Abu Katada released), TVN24, 24 IX 2014, <https://tvn24.pl/swiat/oskarzony-o-planowanie-masakry-niewinny-abu-katada-na-wolnosci-ra471293-ls3412841> [accessed: 24 IX 2025].

¹⁴⁶ G. Wilk-Jakubowski, *Sytuacja społeczna muzułmanów...*, pp. 152–153.

¹⁴⁷ G. Drymer, *Afery seksualne w Wielkiej Brytanii. Gwałty muzułmańskich gangów* (Eng. Sex scandals in the United Kingdom. Rape by Muslim gangs), Rzeczpospolita, 1 X 2017,

The effectiveness of deradicalisation programmes seems questionable due to the inability to realistically assess whether someone has softened their views. Such a person's claim that they have abandoned their ideas may be considered a lie. It is also difficult to predict their future behaviour. They very often feign a change in behaviour in order to divert the attention of the security services. An example of this is Usman Khan, the terrorist of 29 November 2019, who, prior to his conditional release from prison, assured that he was a good Muslim and a good British citizen and that his involvement in planning attacks was immaturity¹⁴⁸. After his release, he joined the Learning Together programme, which aims to eliminate prejudice against other people. Khan's victims, who were fatally stabbed, were the programme coordinator and a volunteer. Mandatory deradicalisation programmes for terrorists leaving prison have proved to be a failure. In private conversations, they admitted that they had not changed their beliefs and that for them, the fight for an Islamic state was still ongoing¹⁴⁹.

On 8 October 2024, MI5 chief Ken McCallum announced in a rare public statement that since 2017, his agency and the police had foiled 43 different terrorist attacks¹⁵⁰. The terrorist threat in the United Kingdom remains at level three (substantial) on a five-point scale, which means that an attack is likely. According to government assessments, the threat to the United Kingdom is 'persistent and evolving' and, at the same time, 'less predictable and more difficult to detect and investigate'¹⁵¹. This is accompanied by public unrest. Furthermore, three quarters of the British public believe that Muslim extremists pose the greatest threat to the country¹⁵².

<https://www.rp.pl/spoleczenstwo/art2411491-afery-seksualne-w-wielkiej-brytanii-gwalty-muzulmanskich-gangow> [accessed: 8 X 2025].

¹⁴⁸ M.R. Chehab, *Kim jest Anjem Choudary...*

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ *Director General Ken McCallum gives latest threat update*, Security Service MI5, 8 X 2024, <https://www.mi5.gov.uk/director-general-ken-mccallum-gives-latest-threat-update> [accessed: 8 X 2025].

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² M. Smith, *Which extremists do Britons see as threats in 2024?*, YouGov, 29 II 2024, <https://yougov.co.uk/politics/articles/48784-which-extremists-do-britons-see-as-threats-in-2024> [accessed: 29 VII 2025].

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