

# London terror suspects were known to police

Chris Marsden  
6 June 2017

Police have named all three murderers whose stabbing frenzy left seven dead and 18 in critical condition Saturday night at London Bridge and Borough Market.

One is Khuram Shazad Butt, 27, the other Rachid Redouane, both from Barking, in east London. In the case of Butt, it has now been admitted that he was known to MI5 and the police.

The third attacker was named on Tuesday in the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera* as Youssef Zaghba. The Moroccan-born man was stopped by authorities in Bologna last year while attempting to get to Syria. The newspaper reports that Italian intelligence services informed British intelligence of this. Minutes after, the Metropolitan Police Counter Terrorism Command unit released Zaghba's name while claiming he "was not a police or MI5 subject of interest."

This confirms earlier reports that at least one suspect, Butt, who was previously referred to as "Abs" or "Abu", a derivative of his Arabic name Abu Zeitoun, was reported to the police, who then protected him from investigation.

On Sunday evening the *Guardian* reported that Erica Gasparri, who lives in the same flat complex in Barking, said she confronted Butt in a local park two years ago because he was seeking to radicalise young children, including her son. Gasparri took four photographs of Butt and gave them to the police. Their reaction was extraordinary. They "said the information had been passed on to Scotland Yard... They told me to delete the photos for my own safety, which I did, but then I heard nothing."

A former friend of Butt also said he had contacted police in Barking, telling BBC's Asian Network he had "phoned the anti-terror hotline."

The same attacker appeared in a Channel 4 documentary last year about British jihadis, in which he is involved in a confrontation with police after he holds up an ISIS flag in Regent's Park. The documentary states that he and others were detained for an hour but released without charge after officers supposedly failed to find the flag!

Perhaps the most devastating account is in yesterday's *Daily Telegraph*, which reports that counter-terrorism officers secretly recorded an ISIS-inspired terror cell in Barking only last month discussing how to carry out a van and knife attack in London.

The *Telegraph* writes throughout as if the cell concerned does not include the three perpetrators of Saturday's identical atrocity. But one of those investigated boasts that he has radicalised more than a dozen "students" in Barking "wanting to martyr themselves." He details how an attack would "use a car as a weapon," driving at pedestrians and then getting out to attack others with knives: "YouTube videos all make it properly easy to do."

It would, he said, involve going to the gym to make their arms stronger. The *Mail* reports that the London Bridge attack suspect Butt was a keen gym user.

One of the plotters also talked about "getting an automatic [vehicle] so the boys can drive it." A neighbour of Butt said he had asked him about where he could hire an automatic transmission van.

On Sunday, police arrested 12 people, mainly residents in the Elizabeth Fry tower block in Barking where Butt lived. The *Mail* reports that during the raid a police detective was photographed with notes in his possession that were on display, relating to Saturday's terror attack—suggesting of one of those involved: "He had been interrogated last year for his Islamic views, his house was searched, passport was taken + he had to sign on."

The list of those involved in terrorist outrages known to the police and secret services gets longer: Mohammed Sidique Khan, who led the July 7, 2005 bombings in London; Michael Adebolajo and Michael Adebowale, the killers of Fusilier Lee Rigby in 2013; Khalid Masood, who in March carried out a similar vehicle/knife attack on Westminster Bridge; and Manchester suicide bomber Salman Abedi. In all cases, the official explanation is that they were not considered to be a real threat.

Metropolitan Police Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley said that, in the case of Butt, there had been no

evidence of “attack planning” and he had been deemed a “low priority.”

Met Commissioner Cressida Dick is infamous for leading the July 22, 2005 operation that ended in the police execution of innocent Brazilian Jean Charles de Menezes. She is already busy formulating the excuses for why the three perpetrators of Saturday’s attack were left free. She told BBC Radio 4’s *Today* programme, “Inevitably, [even] with a large database and some very good knowledge, on occasion somebody will, as my predecessor predicted, get through and be successful, and on occasion those people may have been known to the agencies before.”

Even more exposed than Dick is Prime Minister Theresa May. She declared Sunday, “Enough is enough,” and demanded stepped-up action against suspected terrorists—above all by strengthening the police and security services. But her bellicose rhetoric cannot conceal the fact that Manchester bomber Abedi has been exposed as one of a family of Libyan Islamists who were protected assets of MI5 because they were involved in the campaign of destabilisation and military intervention to bring down the regime of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi.

Indeed, the only real way of lessening the terror threat would involve closing down the Islamist networks sponsored and protected by the British state to be deployed in regime-change operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria.

For May, this is a particularly explosive question. She was home secretary in the government of Prime Minister David Cameron when, in 2011, the Abedis and many others were released from the control order restrictions on them so they could take part in fighting in Libya. So exposed is she that after she suggested the recent attacks should lead to a review of Britain’s counter-terrorism strategy, Steve Hilton, who worked for Cameron until 2012, tweeted that she was “responsible for security failures of London Bridge, Manchester, Westminster Bridge.” She should “be resigning not seeking re-election. Her spin doctors attack MI5, but she was in charge of them for years.”

These issues were deliberately concealed by Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn yesterday, when he was asked if he was supportive of Hilton’s call for May’s resignation.

He replied in the affirmative, but did so while solidarising himself with “a lot of very responsible people who are very worried that she was at the Home Office for all this time and presided over these cuts in police numbers, and she’s now saying that we have a problem.”

“We’ve got an election on Thursday and that is the best opportunity to deal with it,” Corbyn added.

Corbyn chose his words in line with his ongoing efforts to reassure the ruling elite that he can be trusted to lead a Labour government that will safeguard its interests. Having abandoned his previous declarations of opposition to anti-democratic measures, militarism and nuclear weapons, he is now pledged to recruiting 10,000 extra police and providing more money for the army, MI5 and MI6.

Corbyn is busy changing the political narrative of the general election just as surely as May is attempting to do with her own focus on terror. If Labour does win the June 8 general election, then it will be thanks to millions of workers and young people who supported Corbyn’s claims to be opposed to Tory austerity. Now, however, Corbyn is positioning himself and Labour to be able to claim a mandate for strengthening the repressive apparatus of the state.

By concealing the true purpose of the police and secret services, Corbyn is politically disarming and demobilising the working class in the face of grave political dangers. The Tory-supporting media gives a far more accurate indication of the sweeping attacks on democratic rights being prepared behind Corbyn’s recent statement that the police and MI5 must be given what they need to “protect the public.”

Writing in the *Sun*, Douglas Murray called for an end to “large-scale Islamic immigration,” the “permanent closure” of mosques “caught hosting anti-British views,” “imprisonment of everyone known to have connections with extreme organisations” and the deportation of dual nationals “caught associating with designated groups.” The *Mail* editorialised, “We need action—now. There is a war being fought on our streets and it’s time to deploy all the weapons at our disposal.”



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)**