

Murder of Conservative MP David Amess will be used to strengthen state and clampdown on democratic rights

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On Saturday, a senior government official informed the media that the man suspected of murdering the Conservative MP Sir David Amess is Ali Harbi Ali, a 25-year-old Briton of Somali heritage. As with other terror attacks carried out over the last decade, it soon emerged that he was known to the counter-terror authorities.

Amess was murdered just after midday on Friday in a church in his Essex constituency of Southend West, while he was meeting constituents. Although never becoming a minister, Amess had been an MP for almost 40 years, having first been elected in 1983. He was a devoted Thatcherite and supporter of Brexit. Amess was a critic of the Iranian regime, a former member of Conservative Friends of Israel, and the chairman of the UK's Qatar All Party Parliamentary Group.

At the MP's surgery held at the Belfairs Methodist Church in Leigh-on-Sea, Ali walked up to the 69-year-old Amess, pulled out a knife and repeatedly stabbed him—up to 17 times according to some accounts.

Medical staff soon arrived but the MP died at the scene.

Ali made no attempt to attack anyone else and waited in the church until police arrived at 12.10pm, approximately five minutes after he stabbed Amess. He was arrested on suspicion of murder.

The *Mail on Sunday* reported it had been told by “security sources” that “they believed the killer of Sir David had planned the murderous assault more than a week in advance. Sources revealed that the attacker was thought to have booked an appointment at Sir David's constituency.” On October 12, Amess pinned to the top of his twitter feed the date and details of where his constituency surgery would be held, advising his constituents to book an appointment.

Ali is being detained under section 41 of the Terrorism

Act 2000, with a magistrate authorising his detention until next Friday. The Metropolitan Police's counterterrorism division said that “The early investigation has revealed a potential motivation linked to Islamist extremism.” Police said they believe the murderer acted alone.

Ali reportedly lives with his father in a council-owned flat in a converted Victorian property in Lady Somerset Road in the north London borough of Camden. Houses on the road sell for around £2million and Labour Party leader Sir Keir Starmer lives on a street nearby. The Metropolitan Police have confirmed that they had searched three properties in London Saturday.

Few details have emerged about Ali, but the BBC reported that several years ago he was referred to Prevent, the government's counter-extremism programme even though the authorities insist that he was unknown to the domestic intelligence agencies MI5 and not on a terror watchlist. Deputy Assistant Commissioner Dean Haydon described Amess's death as a terrorist incident, saying that early investigations had found “a potential motivation linked to Islamist extremism”.

Ali's father, Harbi Ali Kullane, was until recently the director of communications at the office of the prime minister of Somalia. The *Sunday Times* reported Kullane saying, “I'm traumatised... This is nothing to do with my work for the Somali government.’

Amess's killing is the sixth murder of an MP in the post Second World War era, but the second in just five years. In 2016, just days before the Brexit referendum in which the population voted to leave the EU, Labour MP Jo Cox was stabbed and shot to death outside her Batley and Spenningsdale constituency office in west Yorkshire. Cox was a Remain supporter and her murderer, the fascist Thomas Mair, screamed “Britain First” as he killed her.

Previously, Nigel Jones, the then Liberal Democrat MP

for Cheltenham, who now sits in the House of Lords as Baron Jones of Cheltenham, was badly injured by a mentally ill man who attacked him with a sword in his constituency office in January 2000. A Gloucestershire county councillor, Andrew Pennington, was killed in the same attack as he tried to defend Jones.

In May 2010, Labour MP Stephen Timms was stabbed twice in the abdomen by Roshonara Choudhry, an Islamist who said that she wanted “to get revenge for the people of Iraq”. Timms survived the attack.

Amess’s death has been met by a clamour from the parliamentary parties and media for national unity and a political set-up based on tolerance. The *Guardian* editorialised, “The brutal events of Friday afternoon remind us all that as a country we need to come together for the sake of a peaceful and flourishing democracy.”

The editorial appeared Saturday, as Conservative Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer laid flowers at the scene of Amess’ killing. They were flanked by Home Secretary Priti Patel and Sir Lindsay Hoyle, the Speaker of the House of Commons. Labour and the Lib Dems have announced that they will not contest the seat held by Amess in a by-election.

Amess’s death will occasion a further shift to the right and a strengthening of the state in the name of the “war against terror”, as with every terrorist atrocity carried out over the two decades since the Afghan war.

A raft of counter-terror laws and other acts severely curtailing democratic rights and civil liberties has been imposed. Patel is currently pushing through the anti-immigration Nationality and Borders Bill, including a clause that Border Force officials be granted immunity from criminal prosecution if migrants die at sea during new “turnback” operations in the Channel.

A central target of repression will be left-wing and socialist politics, with hysterical calls being made for a clampdown on “left” extremism.

On Sunday, Blairite Dan Hodges issued a frothing comment in the *Daily Mail* headlined, “I don’t know why Sir David Amess was killed but the visceral hatred of Tories at the heart of Labour has to end right now”.

Referring to the murder of Jo Cox, Hodges stated, “So the threat of Right-wing extremism is real. But at least it is recognised and, in the main, universally condemned by the political mainstream. And it exists primarily on the political fringes.”

He continued, “This morning, we have to begin to talk about and confront the scourge of Left-wing extremism.

“It is a very different creature to the extremism of the

Right. It is less overtly violent. But it is equally toxic and represents an equal risk to our democracy and its parliamentary representatives. Because, crucially, it does not reside on the political margins.”

Hodges then targets Labour MP John McDonnell, shadow chancellor under Jeremy Corbyn’s “left” leadership of the party from 2015-2020, who paid tribute to Amess on his death. But, said Hodges, “in 2011, McDonnell said this: ‘I want to be in a situation where no Tory MP, no Tory or MP, no Coalition Minister, can travel anywhere in the country or show their face anywhere in public without being challenged by direct action.’”

After making an amalgam between a vague call for direct action with terrorism, Hodges denounced Corbyn for fuelling extremist politics, writing, “The hatred on the far Right of politics is—rightly—well documented. But it’s no longer sustainable to continue to ignore and normalise the hatred nurtured within the mainstream of the Labour Party and the wider Labour movement.”

Therefore, he concluded, “it is no longer possible to draw equivalence about the toxicity that exists within the two main parties. A visceral hatred of Tories is now embedded in Labour’s DNA in a way that is simply not reciprocated.”

A number of commentators noted that immediately following the 2016 Brexit referendum, this right-wing political scoundrel published a column, “Labour MUST kill vampire Jezza [Jeremy Corbyn]. If MPs don’t vote for ‘Jexit’ now, their party is doomed.”



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