



PROTECTING OUR  
JEWISH COMMUNITY

# The jihadist plot to murder Manchester's Jews





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Front cover: Surveillance image of Amar Hussein (behind) and Walid Saadaoui at the White Cliffs of Dover, 8 May 2024

Left: Surveillance image of Amar Hussein meeting with Walid Saadaoui

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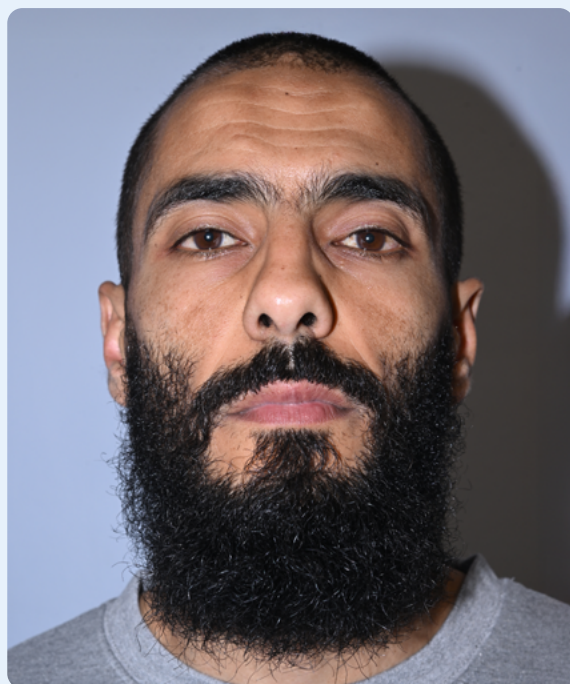
Walid Saadaoui



Amar Hussein



Bilel Saadaoui



# Introduction

On 13 February 2026, two Islamist extremists, Walid Saadaoui and Amar Hussein, were imprisoned for plotting to murder hundreds of Jews in Manchester – the UK’s largest Jewish community outside London. Walid’s younger brother Bilel Saadaoui was also imprisoned, for failing to inform the police about the plot. This was intended to be one of the worst terror attacks ever on British soil, using automatic rifles to shoot large numbers of innocent people, and it was only stopped due to the incredible courage of an undercover operative and the skill of Britain’s police and security services.

Saadaoui and Hussein were both followers of the ideology of the Islamic State (IS) terror group: the same ideology that inspired Jihad al-Shamie to attack Heaton Park Synagogue in north Manchester on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish year, in October 2025, resulting in the deaths of Melvin Cravitz and Adrian Daulby. Beyond this shared ideological allegiance, there is no known connection between the two plots or their perpetrators. Instead, these two plots, and several others foiled by police over the past two years, show the level and nature of the terrorist threat currently faced by British Jews. This threat is the reason why the Jewish community has such high levels of security at its synagogues, Jewish schools and other premises, and is the reason why CST does its work.

All three men were found guilty of the offences on 23 December 2025 after an eleven-week trial at Preston Crown Court.

The operation to foil the plot – officially codenamed Operation Catogenic – was described by Counter Terrorism Police North West as the *“largest scale and most complex covert counterterrorism investigation ever conducted in the North West”*.

During the trial, the court heard that Walid Saadaoui *“hero-worshipped”* Abdelhamid Abaaoud, the now-deceased IS terrorist from Belgium, who had planned and participated in the barbaric November 2015 attacks in Paris, the targets of which included the Bataclan Theatre and Stade de France, and which left 130 people dead and over 400 injured. Walid

wanted to replicate an attack on that scale and savagery on the Jews of Greater Manchester. His and Amar Hussein’s hatred of Jews was described by the prosecution as being *“visceral”, “deep-rooted”* and *“long-standing”*. The pair were *“united”* by that hatred, embraced IS ideology and were prepared to die as *“martyrs”* whilst carrying out the attack.

Greater Manchester’s thriving and close-knit Jewish community numbers around 28,000 and has formed an integral part of the city for more than 250 years.

The trial of the three men began on 7 October 2025, just five days after the deadly terrorist attack on Heaton Park Synagogue, meaning that Manchester’s Jewish community was already in a collective state of shock when the chilling details of Walid’s and Amar’s intended plot began emerging in the local and national news.

And during the course of the trial, news broke of the horrific IS-inspired terrorist attack on Jews celebrating the festival of Chanukah at Bondi Beach in Sydney, Australia, which left fifteen dead and many more injured.

Had this Greater Manchester plot not been foiled by the police, it is highly likely that it would have resulted in hundreds of deaths, hundreds of people being seriously injured and many more being seriously traumatised.

It would have had devastating and long-lasting consequences for the continuation of communal Jewish life not just in Greater Manchester but in the UK as a whole.

This CST report tells the story of what happened.

# Overview



▶ An undercover police operative known as ‘Farouk’ connected with a Facebook account posting pro-Islamic State content. This turns out to be Walid Saadaoui’s account, under the alias “Liya Ernia”.

**13 DEC 2023**

▶ The undercover police operative Farouk drove Walid Saadaoui and Amar Hussein from Greater Manchester to the White Cliffs of Dover National Trust grounds in Kent, the proposed route for smuggling in automatic weapons for the attack.

**16 MAR 2024**

▶ The trial of the three men began, just five days after the deadly terrorist attack on Heaton Park Synagogue, meaning that Manchester’s Jewish community was already in a collective state of shock when the chilling details of Walid’s and Amar’s intended plot began emerging in the local and national news.

**7 OCT 2025**

▶ All three men were found guilty of the offences after an eleven-week trial at Preston Crown Court.

**23 DEC 2025**

**“I want to kill as many [Jews] as possible ... I will go out and kill them with stones ... I have to do (kill) many”**

- WALID SAADAQUI

**15 FEB 2024**

▶ Walid Saadaoui and Farouk first met in person, at Queens Park in Bolton.

**17 MAR 2024**

▶ Walid and Farouk drove to the north Manchester suburbs of Cheetham Hill, Higher Broughton and Prestwich to carry out hostile reconnaissance on the Jewish community there in order to identify targets for the second stage of the intended attack.

**8 MAY 2024**

▶ On 7 May 2024, Walid Saadaoui and Amar Hussein drove to Dover where they spent the night in a local hotel. The following day, 8 May 2024, they drove to the White Cliffs of Dover National Trust grounds overlooking the port. They believed they were watching ‘Farouk’ smuggle their weapons into the country.

▶ They did not know it, but they were under police surveillance the whole time; and by the end of that day they would all be under arrest.



**13 FEB 2026**

▶ Walid Saadaoui, Amar Hussein and Bilel Saadaoui were sentenced at Preston Crown Court on 13 February 2026.

▶ Walid Saadaoui was sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 37 years.

▶ Amar Hussein was sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 26 years.

▶ Bilel Saadaoui was sentenced to six years in prison and an extra year to be served in the community. He had been convicted of failure to disclose information about an act of terrorism.

**“We will go to poison them; we will put poison in the water... Their children, their cars and their houses.”**

- WALID TO FAROUK



# The convicted men

## Walid Saadaoui

Walid Saadaoui was the leader of the plot. The court heard that both he and his co-conspirator Amar Hussein embraced the views of IS.

At the time Walid was formulating his attack plans, he was living in Wigan, approximately 17 miles from the large, visible and vibrant Jewish community in the Greater Manchester suburbs of Higher Broughton and Prestwich that he intended to target.

Walid was born on 6 June 1987 in the small town of Gaafour in north-western Tunisia. He and his family lived there until he was aged four or five, when they moved to the coastal town of Sousse. In addition to his brother Bilel, he had one other brother and a sister. Walid grew up speaking Arabic and French and also speaks English.

Walid met his first wife, a woman from the UK, whilst working as an entertainer in one of the local seaside hotels. He moved to the UK in late 2012, first living in Clacton-on-Sea where he worked at a holiday village doing various tasks, including baking and maintenance work. He went on to buy and run the Albatross Italian restaurant in Great Yarmouth whilst living in Lowestoft.

In May 2023, Walid sold the restaurant and moved with his second wife and her children to Wigan. It

was then that he focused on planning the attack on Greater Manchester’s Jewish community.

Walid had for some time been using ten separate Facebook profiles under different aliases to make many posts and reposts of IS documents and propaganda and other violent Islamist extremist material. The profiles were in the names of Haroon Nidma, Jhon Muller, Liya Ernia and Will Alba. He also used five telegram accounts. These were in the names of Hannah Rome, Haroon Nidma, Carl Newman, Peter Cook and Tommy Tucker.

The court heard that the Saadaouis and Hussein possessed numerous nasheeds (Islamic songs) in Arabic produced by two of Islamic State’s media wings: Al-Furqan Association and Ajnad Foundation for Media Production.

Walid’s Facebook posts included one on 17 November 2023 that contained a link to a 25-episode course in the science of explosive materials.

Notably, the profile picture that Walid used for his Facebook account in the name of Liya Ernia was of Abdelhamid Abaaoud, the IS terrorist from the 2015 Paris attacks who the court heard Walid “hero-worshipped”.

Surveillance image of Bilel Saadaoui (left) and Walid Saadaoui (right) sat in Heaton Park in Prestwich, north Manchester on 5 April 2024



On 13 December 2023, an undercover police operative referred to during the trial only as ‘Farouk’ sent a friend request to that account. Walid, believing Farouk shared his extremist views, began communicating with him online telling him of his hatred of Jews and desire to kill them.

It was Farouk’s contact with Walid that enabled Counter Terrorism Police North West to intervene and successfully disrupt Walid’s attack plans.

Farouk, using the name Abu Bilal, told Walid that he was a Muslim who, like Abaaoud, was of Moroccan descent and had lived five minutes away from him in Belgium.

During his conversations with Farouk, Walid claimed to have contacts in a number of detention camps in Syria that had been set up to hold the families of dead and suspected IS fighters, including in al-Roj, al-Hol and al-Raqqah, and to have given financial support to some of them. He also said that, while he and his brother Bilel still lived in Tunisia, he had prepared to carry out a terrorist attack there involving a car ramming.

Walid also claimed to have discussed his attack plans directly with IS contacts who he claimed would “provide support with physical and logistical preparation.”

It was not until 15 February 2024 that Walid Saadaoui and Farouk first met in person, at Queens Park in Bolton.

Under cross examination by the prosecution, Walid agreed that if his plan had been carried out, hundreds of people would have been killed. He claimed,

however, that he had been forced into planning the attack by a member of IS named Hamdi Al-Masalkhi whom he had first met outside a mosque in Norwich in 2017 and with whom he claimed to have been in contact over the following seven years. This claim was not true.

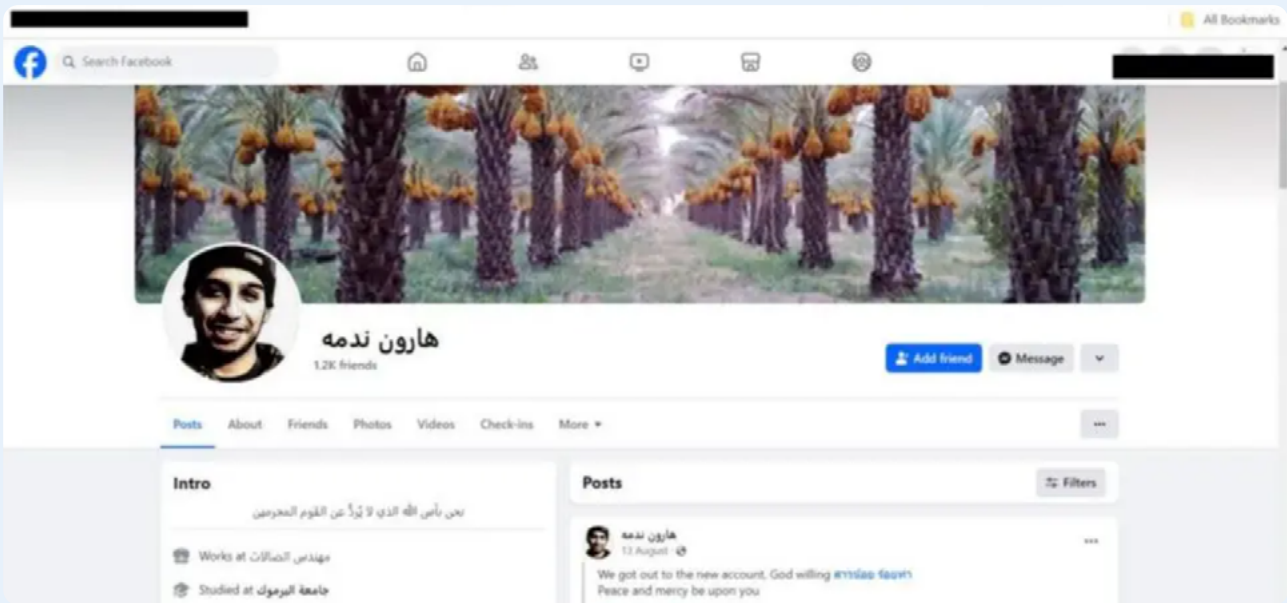
Despite being presented in court with overwhelming evidence that although the man he had identified to the police as Al-Masalkhi was suspected to have travelled to Syria and aligned himself with Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL), he had in fact lived in Cardiff rather than Norwich, left the UK in July 2013 and never returned, and had died in Turkey in February 2021, Walid continued to insist that he was still alive. He claimed that it was an IS tactic to fake the deaths of their members.

## Amar Hussein

Amar Hussein was born on 25 May 1973. At the time of his involvement with Walid Saadaoui’s attack planning, he was living and working at Salim Appliances furniture and domestic appliances store in Bolton, Greater Manchester, which is approximately 10 miles from Higher Broughton and Prestwich.

Amar did not know Walid before Walid’s move to Wigan in 2023. However, he had known Walid’s younger brother Bilel since 2019, when Bilel visited Salim’s store. He and Bilel went on to pray together in a small private prayer group and exchanged social media posts that contained IS and other extremist

Walid Saadaoui’s Facebook profile under an alias bearing an image of Abdehamid Abaaoud



Surveillance image of Bilel Saadaoui (left) and Walid Saadaoui (right) praying outside the Dower House in Heaton Park in Prestwich, north Manchester on 5 April 2024





Surveillance image of Amar Hussein meeting with Walid Saadaoui



material. Amar used a Telegram account in the name of Mar Don.

Originally a Shia Muslim, Amar claimed to be from Kuwait when he moved to the UK in 2006 and to have spent three years fighting in the Iraqi army for Saddam Hussein.

In 2010 he received a suspended prison sentence for possession of a knife. In the same year he stood trial at Liverpool Crown Court for a racially aggravated assault but was found not guilty.

Following his arrest on terrorism charges in May 2024, Amar was interviewed eight times by the police. One of the officers who interviewed him described him as being “calculated” and “charismatic”. Walid Saadaoui regarded him as being committed but volatile and difficult to control.

Amar had knowledge of handling firearms and, on learning that Walid and Farouk had purchased four automatic assault rifles and ammunition for the attack, gave them advice on aiming and firing them.

Amar Hussein gave no defence statement to his barrister and did not give any evidence during the trial. He appeared in court along with Walid and Bilel Saadaoui on three days at the beginning of the case and then refused to attend any further sessions. On each occasion when he did appear, shortly after proceedings began, the judge was forced to order him to be removed from the courtroom due to his outbursts. On the first occasion, he stood up in the dock, pointed towards the prosecutor who was giving his opening statement, and repeatedly

shouted “how many children?” and “how many babies?” and then: “Don’t talk s\*\*t.”

During the interviews that Amar gave to the police, he denied being involved in a plot with Walid, but declared that he was “proud” to be a terrorist, expressed his support for IS, referred to Jews as “dogs” and the police as “pigs” and made statements including:

- ▶ “Your government... your prime minister sent to Israel weapon to kill our children, you don’t see them in Gaza, you see it or don’t see it...Your prime minister you know, he is terrorist that kills our children and gives Israel weapon and kill our children...Your government wants Israeli to kill us, to kiss [sic] our children.”
- ▶ “Terrorism is our religion... Quran say terrorism is normal... we are proud, we say terrorism is proud.”
- ▶ “Because you kill all our children in Palestine. We have to protect our Islam things... Your government... give weapon to Israelis to go kill our children or not?”

### Bilel Saadaoui

Bilel Saadaoui, like his brother Walid, was a long-standing sympathizer of IS, posted IS and other violent and antisemitic Islamist material on social media, and exchanged such material with Amar Hussein.

Bilel denied, however, having any knowledge of the attack that Walid and Amar were planning to carry out.

Walid, expecting to die carrying out the attack, had in fact given Bilel a copy of his will and a key to a safe hidden in his garden that contained £74,000 in cash for his family.

Bilel Saadaoui was born on 1 January 1989 in Gaafour, Tunisia, moving a few years later with his parents, brother Walid and other siblings to the coastal town of Sousse. Like Walid, he grew up speaking Arabic and French and also speaks English.

After completing high school, he studied literature and philosophy at college and went on to work at one of the town’s hotels where he met a woman from the UK. The couple married in 2014 and settled in Hindley in Wigan, Greater Manchester. Bilel was given leave to remain in the UK until September 2026.

Bilel was unemployed until mid-2015 when he began working for the Islamic charity Ummah Welfare Trust

as a forklift truck driver. Since 2020 he had worked at Pound Bargains in Hindley town centre.

The material found on his mobile phone following his arrest included a compilation made on 9 June 2022 of images and video clips of Bilel, including him training at a gym and hitting a punch bag. The compilation was set to an IS nasheed (religious song) entitled “Now, now the fighting is to come” and included references to jihad and fighting disbelievers. The images included one of Bilel with a raised right index finger – a gesture that is sometimes associated with support for IS.

As previously stated, Bilel and Walid were both born in the small Tunisian town of Gaafour. It was also the hometown of Seifeddine Rezgui, who in 2015 carried out an IS gun and explosives attack on tourists at a beach resort in Port El Kantaoui, just north of Sousse, killing 38 people including 30 British nationals.

Furthermore, according to a report in the Daily Mail on 25 December 2025, Bilel Saadaoui and Seifeddine Rezgui are understood to have been contemporaries at the Ibn Rachiq Secondary School in the Tunisian town of Kairouan.

The report quoted a police source who said that: “The first wife of Walid made reference to Bilel having been at school with the attacker. When interviewed, she said she’d been told by Walid that Bilel had been in the same class as the Sousse beach attacker.”

It went on to state, however, that police said they have not been able to confirm any links between the Greater Manchester plot and figures in Tunisia or any other overseas jihadists – and were “not looking for any other suspects”.

Images from the compilation made by Bilel Saadaoui on 9 June 2022





# The plot

In January 2024, Greater Manchester’s Jewish community held a large March Against Antisemitism in Manchester city centre. It had been attended by an estimated 6,500 people and required a large police operation, including armed officers, as well as a large number of Community Security Trust (CST) personnel to protect those taking part.

Walid and Amar had noticed this event and intended to target a similar large outdoor Jewish community gathering in Manchester city centre, which they were expecting to take place at some point in the summer of the same year.

The pair planned to use powerful automatic AK-47 assault rifles and pistols to kill as many Jewish people and responding police officers as possible at that gathering, before driving to attack Jewish community sites less than three miles to the north in the suburbs of Higher Broughton and adjoining Prestwich.

Those suburbs are home to the largest proportion of Greater Manchester’s Jews. Situated within them are many synagogues, Jewish schools and nurseries, yeshivas (Jewish seminaries), kosher food shops, cafes and restaurants; as well as community centres, care homes and other welfare and cultural organisations. The streets are often full of Jewish families going about their lives.

If Walid and Amar were not captured or killed whilst attacking there, they intended making their way to an army base where they would kill members of the armed forces.

Walid believed that he and Amar would be assisted in the attack by two others: a man who he thought shared their extremist ideology but was in fact an undercover police operative, referred to throughout the trial only as ‘Farouk’, and that operative’s supposed cousin.

Walid initially hoped that his brother Bilel Saadaoui would also agree to take part, but he was unable to persuade him to do so.

During the trial, the undercover police operative ‘Farouk’ gave extensive evidence from behind a screen that shielded his identity from the public and press galleries.

Walid had discussed with Farouk the idea of coordinating the attack in Manchester with one in France that he believed would be organised by one of Farouk’s associates. Walid expressed his

desire to Farouk that *“our operation is going to be much bigger”*. He had also told Farouk that a march against antisemitism in Manchester would be a *“very beautiful time”* to attack Jews.

In order to achieve the highest possible number of deaths and casualties, Walid intended to wait until the event in Manchester city centre was at its busiest before commencing the attack. They planned to begin from within the gathered crowd, and Walid planned to wear a GoPro video camera to broadcast real-time footage of it and to pledge allegiance to IS. They intended to dress like orthodox Jewish men to avoid attracting attention until they opened fire, and to confuse the responding police officers once they did so.

Walid also suggested to Farouk that in order to divert the police’s attention away from the section of the march where they planned to start firing, three separate 999 emergency calls could be made to the police claiming that there was someone armed with a *“weapon or a sword”* in a different part of the crowd or in its close vicinity who intended to kill those taking part. This, Walid claimed, would leave the group free to shoot without opposition. He further suggested positioning one member of the group on a rooftop to act as a sniper.

Walid told Farouk that they should acquire ambulance crew uniforms to take with them so that if they weren’t killed by responding police officers during the first stage of the attack, they could change into them to disguise themselves. They would then steal an ambulance at the scene and use it to drive to Higher Broughton and Prestwich to begin the second stage.

At one point Walid had suggested to Farouk that they would need cluster bombs to attack the march and should try to obtain a drone.

Walid and Amar expected and wanted to die as *“martyrs”* in the process of carrying out the attack or, if they survived, some days later when they were finally hunted down by the police. On 15 February 2024, during Walid’s first face-to-face meeting with the police undercover operative Farouk, Walid had told him: *“I will not keep it a secret, I am scared of incarceration. I would rather be killed than go to their prisons... You know when you go to the Islamic State religious training camps, they don’t train you how to use weapons first, they train you how never to surrender. You keep one bullet*

*or a knife or anything on you, if it didn’t work, it is better to finish your life and become a martyr to go to Heaven than to be taken hostage and then the brothers will try to release you and so on.”*

Other methods of attack had been discussed by Walid. On 17 December 2023, during a conversation via Facebook, Walid told Farouk: *“I can use a knife in the operation but this will not be enough to take revenge, only the automatic gun. I want to kill as many as possible.”*

On 25 December 2023, during an exchange of voice notes via Telegram, Walid said to Farouk: *“As I told you Sheikh, these matters of running someone over with a car or using a knife is ineffective. What is needed is an automatic gun, an automatic gun”* and that *“We must run rivers of their impure bloods.”* He also told Farouk: *“Apart from the issues of automatic guns, there is car crashes in crowded locations. Very crowded with a lot of people. The crash should use a big truck not the small car. I mean the transit van.”*

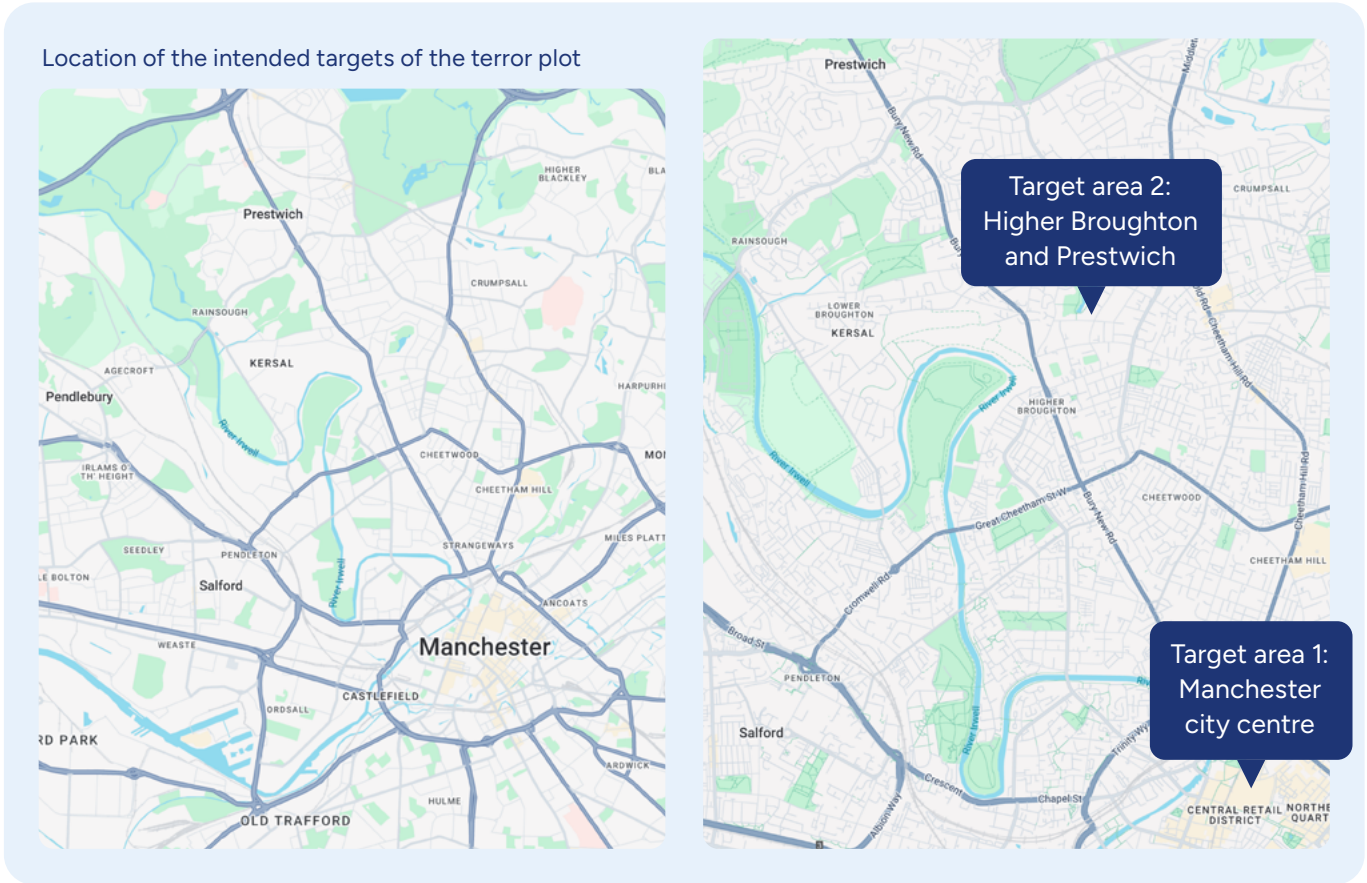
On 15 February 2024, during his first face-to-face meeting with the undercover police operative Farouk, Walid had said, whilst discussing his plan to attack the Jewish community in Prestwich and Higher Broughton: *“It is a must that we grab a Jewish person and slaughter him and remove his head and wipe (the floor). Rub blood on my body with his blood*

*and throw it away. That is the least we can do.”* He also suggested to Farouk that they could run over Jews in that area with a car, exit it and set it on fire to cause an obstruction and then, *“We carry out the act tack, tack, tack we then two of us move with another car to a distance that is 4 hours away. That area is full of Christians.”*

On 15 March 2024, Walid and Farouk had their second face-to-face meeting. During their discussions about how an attack might be carried out, Walid suggested wearing a fake explosive belt so that nobody would approach them.

Walid and Amar planned to obtain automatic weapons by smuggling them into the country via the Port of Dover.

Walid conducted hostile reconnaissance on the Jewish community in Prestwich and Higher Broughton to scout out potential targets. On 17 March 2024, while Walid was walking with Farouk around the area, they passed one of the area’s Jewish schools. Walid told Farouk: *“This is a school this one. It is a school time. There is one hour and a half left. We will go to poison them; we will put poison in the water... Their children, their cars and their houses.”*





# Attack planning & preparations

## Personal Preparations

Walid Saadaoui expected and wanted to die as a “martyr” carrying out the attack. To ensure his wife and family would be financially secure after his death, he had bought their house without a mortgage and had hidden a safe containing £74,000 in cash in the garden. He had given a key to the safe to his brother Bilel along with a copy of his will. He had also intended selling or releasing the pet birds that he kept.

Following Amar Hussein’s arrest, the place he was living and working at in Bolton, Salim Appliances, was searched by the police. They discovered a note he had written that showed he was not planning to return.

## Physical Fitness Training

Walid regarded it important for jihadists preparing to carry out attacks to get physically fit, and emphasised to Amar and Farouk the need for all three of them to do so.

He himself was observed on several occasions leaving his house to go jogging, and during a telephone conversation with Farouk on 17 January 2024, told him: *“Regarding your physical health, stick to jogging, you will have to be 100% cardio fit, as there will be a lot of hit and run and then we will go in cars. It is possible we could be on the run for three-four days in the street or a week...”*

In another conversation he had with Farouk on 22 February 2024, he said: *“... It is important to squeeze from your day, the 24 hours, to squeeze at least 20 minutes, 30 minutes jogging...In addition to the stomach exercises, arm exercises...You have to be physically fit. You have to be prepared, to be able to run for at least 10 minutes... We have to be prepared.”*

## Acquisition of Firearms

Walid intended using some of the money from the sale of his restaurant to fund the purchase of firearms for the attack.

Early on in his communications with the undercover police officer Farouk – and even before they had first met in person – Walid began discussing with him what firearms could be used, where and how

they could be purchased and how, if necessary, they might be successfully smuggled into the UK.

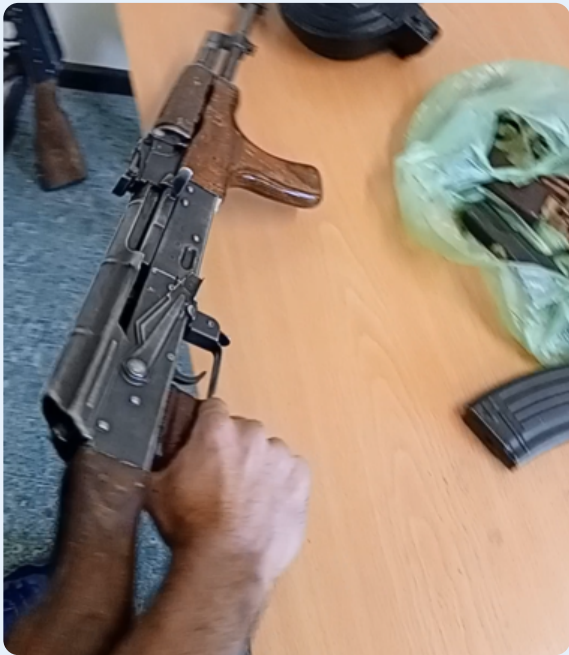
On 14 January 2024, Walid told Farouk that they would *“first of all need four automatic guns”* and that each should come with at least 200 rounds of ammunition. Walid said to him: *“I told you 200 are a minimum, minimum... It is better than everyone will carry with him 5 magazines. You can become a martyr in the first minute and you can become a martyr after one week or 3 days.”*

In total, Walid asked Farouk to source four AK-47 assault rifles, two pistols and approximately 1,200 rounds of ammunition.

Farouk told Walid that he could obtain the weapons from a contact in Morocco. He agreed to ask the supplier to send a video showing the serial numbers and showing the weapons being assembled and disassembled so that he could confirm they were genuine.

On 25 January 2024, Farouk sent a video to Walid that he claimed had come from his supposed contact. It appeared to show a Kalashnikov AK-47 assault rifle on a table in a room with three others leaning against one of the walls. Also on the table were four standard AK-47 magazines, one large

Clip from video sent by Farouk to Walid Saadaoui on 25 January 2024



capacity AK-47 magazine, a pistol and two bags of bullets. In the video a hand appears which loads bullets into one of the standard magazines, attaches it to the AK-47 on the table and then ejects bullets from the side of the rifle’s barrel.

When on 15 February 2024 Walid and Farouk finally met in person, their discussions included how the weapons could be smuggled into the UK through the Port of Dover in a car driven by Farouk.

## Safe house

After completing their reconnaissance of Higher Broughton and Prestwich on 17 March 2024 (see below), Walid discussed with Farouk the need for a safe house in which they could plan the attack and store the weapons for it. Walid told him that he wanted to put up a map there with *“all the targets, the timings and the pictures.”*

On 13 April 2024, Farouk informed Walid that a suitable property had been rented on Stratford Avenue in Bolton. What Walid did not know was that the property had been rented by the police and that a covert surveillance camera had been installed inside.

During the trial, the jury was shown footage from the camera that showed Farouk lifting a section of carpet to indicate to Walid where the weapons could be stored under the floor.

## Hostile Reconnaissance - Online

The police found two cached images of the Manchester Jewish Museum on Cheetham Hill Road in north Manchester on Amar Hussein’s mobile phone: one showing the building’s exterior and one its interior. Both images were openly available on the internet and had been cached on 18 July 2022 – more than a year before the period in which Amar and Walid planned their terrorist attack.

On 22 December 2023, Walid attempted to use a Facebook account in the name of Will Alba to join a private Manchester Jewish community Facebook group in order to gather information on Greater Manchester’s Jewish community, and identify potential targets for an attack such as communal events and gatherings. From research he had carried out online, he managed to convince the group’s administrator that he was Jewish and had recently moved to Manchester from London where he had been a member of a synagogue in Croydon.

Walid also joined another Manchester Jewish community Facebook group to identify possible targets. He took particular interest in the details

about the ‘March Against Antisemitism’ through Manchester city centre attended by an estimated 6,500 people that it had held in January 2024. He later told Farouk that he wanted to attack a future event of that sort.

## Hostile Reconnaissance – In Person

On 16 March 2024, the undercover police operative Farouk drove Walid Saadaoui and Amar Hussein from Greater Manchester to the White Cliffs of Dover National Trust grounds in Kent. That was the first time Farouk met Amar.

During the journey, Walid and Amar discussed their plans for the attack, the importance of engaging in violent jihad, and their hatred of Jews, *“non-believers”*, and Muslims who they did not regard as following their own interpretation of the Islamic faith.

Once they arrived at the White Cliffs they spent time observing the operations of the Port of Dover below to assess how best the firearms and ammunition, which Walid and Amar believed Farouk had purchased for the attack, could be smuggled into the UK without detection.

During their discussions about how they would carry out the attack, Walid told them: *“We’re involved in it... Us like this, are involved in it (all laughing). The creation of a terrorist gang (all laughing).”*

The following day, 17 March 2024, Walid and Farouk drove to the north Manchester suburbs of Cheetham Hill, Higher Broughton and Prestwich to carry out hostile reconnaissance on the Jewish community there in order to identify targets for the second stage of the intended attack.

As Walid had previously advised, they wore casual sports clothes to avoid drawing attention to themselves. Walid had trimmed both his beard and his moustache.

Walid told Farouk that he had visited the area before with a friend and that *“there are too many Jews here”*.

The two men walked past synagogues, Jewish schools and nurseries, yeshivas (Jewish seminaries), kosher food shops and cafes, and other Jewish-owned businesses observing the locations’ security measures and how busy they were.

As they did so, Walid spoke to Farouk of his hatred for Jews. He told him that Jews were *“the most cowardly of people”* and declared, *“These are the killers of the messengers and prophets... their children... Yes, I will tell you why; they have a big*



community, they gather together. They have congregations, I just need to know. As I told you we will execute..."

At one point, referring to a Jewish woman they had just passed, Walid said to Farouk: *"Look, this is how God created them... God had cursed them to become pigs and monkeys. Those who were cursed as pigs and monkeys are an ugly nation. I have never seen a Jewish woman young and beautiful."*

During the trial, the jurors were shown CCTV footage from one of the nurseries they passed showing Walid looking into the camera.

As they walked past one Jewish school, they observed children playing football in its grounds and, pretending to speak on Face Time on their mobile phones, took a photograph of a sign outside it bearing an address and website.

They also took a photograph of an advertising board in the area that had information about a march that was due to be held in Manchester.

As they passed another Jewish school, Walid told Farouk: *"This is a school this one. It is a school time. There is one hour and a half left. We will go to poison them; we will put poison in the water... Their children, their cars and their houses."*

They entered a kosher supermarket located opposite a synagogue and walked through it in order to assess how it might best be attacked. Walid said to Farouk: *"I go to the back and you at the front... We can have the pieces [guns] in the bags... If they move to the left then you kill him on the left."* Farouk had suggested buying something but Walid refused saying he did not want to give money to Jews because *"all of the money will go to Israel."* Later, Walid told Farouk that they should attack the shop late one evening when it was full of people.

When they returned to Farouk's car, Walid revealed to him that he had accessed a Facebook group for Manchester Jewish community and seen details of various local Jewish community events including the large March Against Antisemitism through Manchester city centre weeks earlier. He told Farouk: *"And they have a march like this, at the end of June we execute... If they organise it in July we execute in July... It is full of Jews."*

He explained to Farouk that such a march would be the first target of their intended attack and the Jewish community in the areas they had just walked through would be the second. Walid went on to tell Farouk: *"Hitler may God be exulted was burning them, the Jews. Did you know; may God make them*

*ugly!... Imagine yourself amongst them and you are wearing a rucksack. And then you start. They wouldn't have where to escape..."*

On 7 May 2024, Walid Saadaoui met with Amar Hussein who drove them to Dover where they spent the night in a local hotel. The following day, 8 May 2024, Amar drove them to the White Cliffs of Dover National Trust grounds overlooking the port.

From there they observed the Port of Dover below using a pair of binoculars to ensure Farouk, as planned, had managed to pass through it safely with what they believed would be the first consignment of firearms. They did not know it, but they were under police surveillance the whole time; and by the end of that day they would all be under arrest.

Surveillance image of Amar Hussein (right) and Walid Saadaoui at the White Cliffs of Dover, 8 May 2024



# Arrests

Shortly before midday on 8 May 2024, having completed their observation of the Port of Dover and confirmed that Farouk had passed through it successfully with the cache of weapons, Walid Saadaoui and Amar Hussein returned to Hussein's car and began their journey back to Bolton.

Once there, Walid drove alone to the Last Drop Village Hotel on the outskirts of the town where he had agreed to meet Farouk in the carpark and collect from him the firearms: two automatic assault rifles, a semi-automatic pistol and almost 200 rounds of ammunition.

The weapons had in fact been deactivated by the police and placed in Farouk's car shortly before his meeting with Walid.

As Walid was standing by the open boot of Farouk's car in the process of taking possession of them, he was approached by counterterrorism officers. Walid attempted to flee but was apprehended.

A short time later, Amar Hussein was arrested at the domestic appliance store in Bolton where he lived and worked, and Bilel Saadaoui was arrested at the gym where he was training in Wigan.

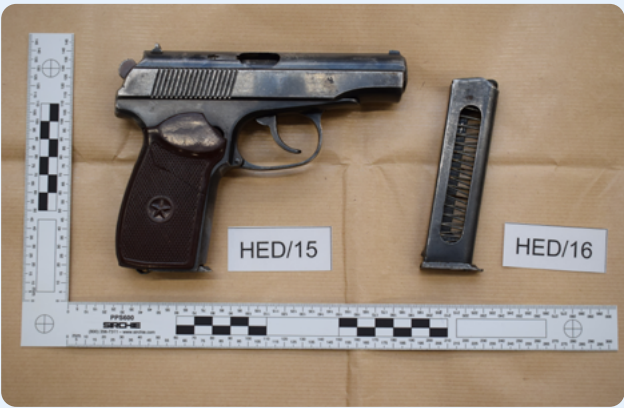
Walid Saadaoui attempting to evade arrest



Arrest of Bilel Saadaoui



Weapons seized during Walid Saadaoui's arrest





# Sentencing

Walid Saadaoui, Amar Hussein and Bilel Saadaoui were sentenced at Preston Crown Court on 13 February 2026. Only Walid and his brother Bilel appeared in court. Amar, although in the court building, refused to leave his holding cell.

Walid Saadaoui was sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 37 years.

Amar Hussein was sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 26 years.

Both men had been convicted of preparation of terrorist acts, contrary to Section 5(1)(B) of the Terrorism Act 2006 between 13 December 2023 and 9 May 2024.

Bilel Saadaoui was sentenced to six years in prison and an extra year to be served in the community.

He had been convicted of failure to disclose information about an act of terrorism.

As the trial judge Mr Justice Wall began his sentencing statement, he said: *"I note that Amar Hussein has refused to come into court today as he refused to attend for most of the trial. He has instructed his counsel to advance no mitigation. His cowardice in remaining in his cell rather than coming to court to face up to what he has done is a true sign of his character: brave enough to plan to threaten an unarmed group with an AK-47 but not sufficiently courageous to face up to what he did. I shall address him as if he were here. He will then be able to read these remarks if he ever feels brave enough to do so."*

During his remarks about Walid and Amar, the judge said: *"I am sure that you intended to use AK-47 Kalashnikov automatic weapons to launch a deadly attack on the streets of Manchester"* and that the attack *"would have led to the deaths of many people and serious injury to very many more."*

He said he concluded that *"you were very close to being ready to carry out your plan. The date of execution was entirely dependent on the decision of the Jewish Community as to when they intended to organise their next march in Manchester."*

Mr Justice Wall was clear about the anti-Jewish hatred that lay at the heart of the plot, telling Walid Saadaoui and Amar Hussein: *"You are antisemitic. You intended to target the Jewish community. Your conversations and postings make it clear how*

*deep seated your hatred is for Jewish people."* He stated that *"you were both fervent supporters of ISIS"*, and that they were happy to also kill Christians, the police, and Muslims who did not share their extremism.

The judge went on to tell Walid and Amar: *"There is no indication that the threat you pose to the public is less now than it was at the time of your arrests nor that the risk will necessarily diminish with the passage of time."*

During the sentencing of Bilel Saadaoui, the judge told him: *"On the jury's verdict, you knew of your brother's intentions but failed to disclose this fact to the authorities. By keeping the information to yourself, you risked endangering the lives of his many potential victims. I have concluded that in part you were motivated to act as you did by familial loyalty but, in part, because you shared some of his views and prejudices."*

In his final remarks, the judge made a particular point of commending the undercover operative Farouk saying: *"His is a dangerous and difficult job. He undertook it with great skill and patience. He saved many lives by putting his own on the line."*



# Reactions and responses

## Frank Ferguson, Head of the Special Crime and Counter Terrorism Division at the Crown Prosecution Service:

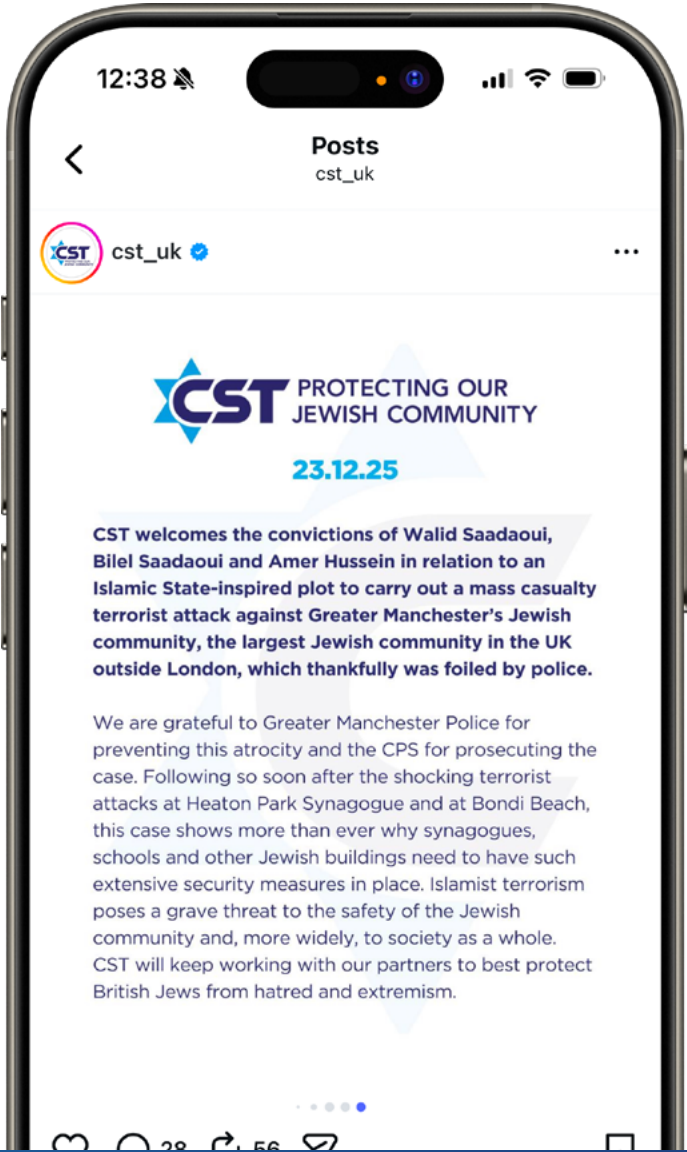
*"This was a deeply disturbing plot inspired by extremist ideology. Had these terrorists succeeded – it would have led to mass murder and been one of the deadliest attacks on Jewish communities in this country."*

## Assistant Chief Constable Rob Potts, Head of Counter Terrorism Policing North West (CTPNW):

*"Walid Saadaoui and Amar Hussein intended to target members of the Jewish community in an evil act born out of hate and intolerance. If they had been successful then what followed would have been devastating and potentially one of the deadliest terrorist attacks to ever take place on UK soil."*

## Greater Manchester Police Chief Constable Sir Stephen Watson QPM:

*"Throughout this trial, it was clear that the offenders' hatred towards our Jewish community knew no bounds...All too recently in Sydney, and here in Manchester in October, we have felt the devastation of terrorism directed toward our Jewish community. A terrorist attack upon our Jewish friends and neighbours is an attack on us all, an affront to every decent person in our country. Yet once again, we see the tireless and effective work of UK law enforcement and our partners, such as the Community Security Trust, in keeping our communities safe."*





# Appendix

## The terrorists’ Islamic State song calling for Jews to be killed

The Prosecution’s evidence against Walid Saadaoui, Amar Hussein and Bilel Saadaoui included the fact that they were in possession of numerous nasheeds (Islamic songs) in Arabic produced by two of Islamic State’s media wings: Al-Furqan Association and Ajnad Foundation for Media Production.

Below are excerpts of an English translation of an MP3 recording of an Al-Furqan Association nasheed entitled *And Kill Them Where You Have Encountered Them* that Walid Saadaoui sent to undercover police operative Farouk on 4 January 2024:

*“... Thirdly, the murder crimes and awful scenes we see in Gaza, this is what the Jews are accustomed to over the ages, they are the most hating people towards Muslims.*

*God had showed them in his book, the almighty had said: ‘you will find the most hating to Muslims are the Jews and heretics.’*

*Let the Muslims expect no less than that, and the Jews of Palestine and the Jews in the rest of the world are the same.*

*They are a portion of the whole body and they are a unity, and separating them is a lie the patriotists and the nationalists tried to spread.*

*The noble Quran had exposed what are the characteristics of the Jews and scandalised them. It didn’t divide them into types and sections.*

*So it is a must that Muslims regard the Jews how God almighty had shown them. Muslims need to understand the nature of the battle against them in the light of the verses of the Noble Qur’an. Not how it has been proscribed by the empty books of politics and the twisted national references.*

*The battle with the Jews is a religious battle. It is not over the land, the soil or the borders. It is a battle that stemmed its legitimacy from the book of the traditions. Not from the international legitimacy of its laws.*

*The Muslim is fighting of the Jews because they have disbelieved in God almighty.*

*The Jews have had fought the prophets of God and confronted the Muslims as enemies.*

*In the history of the Jews there is nothing except stories about them killing our prophets of God and making up stories against them.*

*That was enough to fight them off even if they didn’t distain the Al-Aqsa mosque and Palestine. How have they done that and more.*

*The war is extended with them until the day of Battle of (STONES AND TREES – as been revealed in the Hadith). The war with the Jews will not end by the solution of the state or the two state solution as some nationals would hope.*

*It is a religious battle. It is not over the land, the soil or the borders.*

*It is a battle that stemmed its legitimacy from the Book and the traditions. Not from the international legitimacy of its laws.*

*The Muslim is fighting of the Jews because they have disbelieved in God almighty. The Jews had fought the prophets of God and making up stories against them...”*

*“... It is a religious doctrinal war that will last until we kill the Dajjal [a mythical devilish creature of the symbols of the day of judgement approaching] on the hands of Jesus, peace be upon him.*

*This is a promise from God and God does not change his promises.*

*Fourthly, in front of the Jewish, cursedly war, and the danger plot that the people of Palestine are in.*

*The situation does not accept any complements or leaving the door ajar. Being sad of what is*

*happening to Muslims does not mean betraying or misleading them.*

*Our duty is to offer a truthful advice of what truth we believe in only for the sake of God and to clear our consciousness and to protect the bloods not to be shed in vain.*

*In Islam as we previously mentioned, the purpose of fighting is to achieve the goal of Oneness and to elevate the word of God.*

*This purpose has disappeared from the latest Gaza battle. It has become apparent in the speeches and declarations of the leaders of the factions, all don’t talk beyond the land and the country they made it a target for which the blood was shed. They tend to forget that Palestine and Jerusalem did not attain this high position only thanks to the dust and mud. But it reached this level from the Heavens. ...”*





## CST's Mission

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- ▶ **Promote good relations** between British Jews and the rest of British society by working towards the elimination of racism, and antisemitism in particular.
- ▶ **Represent British Jews** on issues of racism, antisemitism, extremism, policing and security.
- ▶ **Facilitate Jewish life** by protecting Jews from the dangers of antisemitism, and antisemitic terrorism in particular.
- ▶ **Help those who are victims** of antisemitic hatred, harassment or bias.
- ▶ **Promote research** into racism, antisemitism and extremism; and to use this research for the benefit of both the Jewish community and society in general.
- ▶ **Speak responsibly** at all times, without exaggeration or political favour, on antisemitism and associated issues.



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