

Birmingham University student 'plotted to supply IS with bomb delivery drone'

A [University of Birmingham PhD student](#) plotted to supply Islamic State (IS) terrorists with a drone capable of delivering a bomb or chemical weapon, a court has been told.

Mohamad Al-Bared is accused of designing the device that had an "explosive head" and creating modified parts for it using a 3D printer.

Material, allegedly written by Mr Al-Bared, was uncovered by detectives, suggesting the idea for the drone was "somewhat inspired by the design of the Tomahawk missile".

Jurors heard he had filled out an application form to join IS (*the forms seem to have been circulating in [Birmingham](#)*) and was "reporting back to someone" on his progress building the drone.

The 26-year-old mechanical engineering graduate, from Coventry, went on trial before a jury at Birmingham Crown Court on Wednesday.

At the time, Mr Al-Bared was studying for a PhD at the University of Birmingham, the court was told. A 3D printer was also found at his home, which could be used to make parts for the drone.

Ms Heeley (Michelle Heeley KC, prosecuting) alleged that evidence gathered from devices said to belong to Mr Al-Bared showed he was a supporter of IS and that "this drone was being built" to help the organisation.

After showing the drone, which was contained in a large see-through plastic bag, to the jury, the prosecutor said it was

of a type that has landing gear and a small digital camera.

Ms Heeley also alleged that Mr Al-Bared had filled in an IS application form and set up a UK-registered company to help plans for future foreign travel. Ms Heeley continued: "He says he is not responsible for filling in the application form, but we say how else has it got there?"

Ms Heeley said messages found on an electronic device also included reference to fuses, mechanical detonators and an "explosive" head. "What drone for legitimate use needs an explosive head? What does need an explosive head is a drone that has been designed on a missile." Ms Heeley told the jury: "That's the real reason this drone is being built. That one sentence tells you what this case is about and why we say the defendant is guilty.

Mr Al-Bared, whose PhD work involved laser-based micro-drilling, denies a single charge alleging he engaged in conduct in preparation of terrorist acts to benefit a proscribed terrorist organisation.

The trial continues next Tuesday.