

'He had a long beard, lost his sense of humour': Sri Lanka bomber left Australia a 'changed man'

From [Australian Daily Mail](#)

One of the Sri Lankan bombers came back from Australia after his postgraduate studies a changed man, his sister says. Abdul Lathief Jameel Mohamed studied at Swinburne University (postgraduate degree in technology) in Melbourne between 2009 and 2013, *The Australian* reported. Mohamed, suspected to be one of the ringleaders of the atrocity in Sri Lanka, was investigated by the Joint Counter Terrorism Team in 2014 because of his links to several suspects including Australian-born IS militant Neil Prakash



"My brother became deeply, deeply religious while he was in Australia," Ms Hidaya said. "He was normal when he went to study in Britain, and normal when he came back. But after he did his postgraduate in Australia, he came back to Sri Lanka a different man. He had a long beard and had lost his sense of humour. He became serious and withdrawn and would not even smile at anyone he didn't know, let alone laugh." *I would have laid money on his having met undesirable people at the University of Kingston just outside London; that university is known for its jihadist speakers.*

She also claimed that he 'created tension' by berating his family for their religious lapses. 'He told male relatives off for trimming their beards and became angry and totally crazy. So I just stopped speaking to him because it got to the point where it was getting out of hand.'

Just over five years after he left Australia, Mohamed tried detonate a bomb at the luxury Taj Samudra hotel in the Sri Lankan capital. But instead, he blew himself up by accident near a much smaller guest house, the New Tropical Inn, killing two people.

Intelligence pointed to links between Mohamed and several counter-terrorism targets, such as Prakash. Prakash – who was once the most wanted Australian member of ISIS – is currently sitting in a Turkish jail.

Mohamed is believed to have communicated with Prakash once he returned to Sri Lanka. Around the same time, Prakash was still living in Melbourne, but no evidence suggests the pair knew each other then.

Mohamed later traveled to Syria to join Islamic State before he returned to his home country.

While the full length of Mohamed and Prakash's relationship is still being investigated, one source said there was an 'online' link between the pair. At the time of the initial investigations, Mohamed was not considered a threat. In light of the recent attack, Mohamed's time in Australia is being re-examined. Australian Federal Police and ASIO are looking into the possible connection he may have shared with a small community of Islamic State radicals around the time of the start of the Syrian civil war.