

I saw Australian Neil Prakash at Islamic State's medieval punishments: witness

From [Illawarra Mercury](#)

Neil Prakash, Australia's most infamous Islamic State recruit, strode the streets of the Iraqi city of Mosul with four bodyguards and acted as supervisor for the terror group's medieval punishments.

A resident of the Iraqi city, Yusuf Abbas, has identified Prakash from photographs as one of the foreign militants he saw lording it over local inhabitants in Mosul's central square, Bab al-Toub, where many of the worst punishments took place.

Prakash was born in Melbourne of Fijian and Cambodian parents and moved in 2013 to fight with IS under the name Abu Khaled al-Cambodi. . . this is the first time there has been an eyewitness account of his actions in Iraq.

Prakash was one of Australia's most prominent foreign fighters. He was reported killed in May, 2016, after a drone strike on a meeting in Mosul that he had attended. He is now in a Turkish prison, having been caught in November, travelling, injured and on a false passport in an apparent attempt to escape IS. The Australian government is now seeking his extradition.



He is believed to have been involved in influencing the alleged [Anzac Day plot in Melbourne](#), and a more recent alleged [Numan Haider](#), who launched a stabbing attack on police in Melbourne in 2014

before being shot dead.

Mr Abbas, who lives in the suburb of Al Samah in Mosul's east said Prakash and other foreign militants were known as "muhajireen", or immigrants, and were treated deferentially by local IS fighters. Civilians were not allowed to approach them directly.

"When they walk around they have translators with them, so we ask the translators ... where they are from? And they would say, 'This one is from Australia, he's better than you. He's travelled from overseas, and come here to do jihad, and you are just sitting in your houses. You never do jihad. And this guy came all the way from overseas to bring victories to Muslims and to Islam'."

Mr Abbas is a tailor who, with his wife, had to travel around the city for his business. Like many Mosul residents, they saw beheadings, stonings and whippings taking place at the square which represented the "heart of the city". . . The punishments did not take place every day, but happened regularly, perhaps weekly. They were almost always supervised by foreign fighters.