

'I still need to live': Christian preacher Hatun Tash on the plot to kill her

From the [Spectator](#)

When Hatun Tash went [missing before Christmas](#) her friends and family had good reason to be worried.

Tash, who is 41, has been targeted because she is a Christian preacher who used to be a Muslim. Last week, an Islamist terrorist who tried to buy a gun to kill her had his jail sentence increased. Edward Little, a 22-year-old Muslim extremist from Brighton, will now spend at least 24 years behind bars for planning a terrorist attack against Tash.

Tash – who has since been found safe and well – feels little relief. There are, after all, plenty of others who would seek to do her harm. The man who slashed her in the face in July 2021 at Hyde Park's Speakers' Corner, where she regularly used to go to read from the Bible and critique the Islamic religion she used to follow, has never been caught. As a result, Tash must keep her whereabouts a secret: the Met, who launched a missing person's investigation into her disappearance, have [since confirmed](#) that Tash is OK but won't say how they know, or where she is.

'I don't feel safe at all,' she tells me over the phone. 'There are lots of other individuals (who might be) planning or thinking the same thing. . . .'

The fallout from the plot against her life led her to stop preaching at Speakers' Corner, where Little had planned to attack her. She says she did so mostly out of concern over the safety of others who might gather there. The plot against her was also believed to have been aimed at those who might have

come to her assistance. It seems hard to believe that she might one day risk a return but she is adamant that she wants to do so. For now, though, she knows she must stay away: 'If someone turns up to Speakers' Corner with chemicals, there is a possibility that they will miss you. They might harm someone else. So it just don't want to be responsible for someone's life or someone's safety,' she says.

'I'm not brave,' she says, 'But...you've got to make a choice. Do you want to deal with it or you just want to just keep quiet. And shut down? Once they know they have (silenced you), they can stop you. Then it's a win for them. But they've been winning quite a long time. I don't have much to lose'

Tash grew up in Turkey as a Muslim and became a Christian after moving to England.

She insists that she focuses on what Islam teaches, rather than an individual's faith. But she is no doubt that being an ex-Muslim who has turned against her childhood faith makes her a target:

A remarkable detail emerged during Little's trial last year: when he was shown a video of Tash preaching, he erupted from his chair inside the police station. He assaulted an officer and had to be restrained. Tash is baffled that she can generate such hatred among a man she has never met: 'I don't even know what his favourite colour is. I don't know anything about this gentleman'.

Tash insists that, as a Christian, she is compelled to talk about her religion – as well as the religion she left behind. . . Tash's argument, that she lives in a democracy where free speech is a guiding principle, is hard to fault.

Little is in prison, but others who seek to do Tash harm continue to roam the streets of Britain. Tash, however, is determined not to let them win. 'You can't stop going to Marks and Spencer because someone is going to harm you. I still need

to live my life. If I don't – If I can't live freely under the law – that's just not life at all.'