

# Man accused of inciting others to decapitate Islam insulters says he did so to 'get more followers'

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A Twitter user accused of encouraging others to decapitate anyone who insulted Islam has told a jury he retweeted praise for a terrorist "just to have some more followers".

Prosecutors allege Shahpal, of Birkin Avenue, Radford, Nottingham, encouraged others to commit, prepare, or instigate acts of terrorism in a series of retweets, including one containing an image of Mr Paty's severed head.

Shahpal, 41, is also alleged to have tweeted messages backing a Pakistan-based political party which supported the "out-of-hand murder of those who it thinks have committed blasphemy".

Under cross-examination from prosecutor Dan Pawson-Pounds on Monday, Shahpal, who is originally from Pakistan and was assisted by an Urdu interpreter, denied pretending to have a poor understanding of English to try to escape responsibility for his tweets.

After the defendant accepted that Mr Paty did not deserve to die and that the teacher's killer was not "as brave as a lion" – contradicting statements in one of his retweets – Mr Pawson-Round asked him: "Why did you retweet a tweet saying all these things then?"

Shahpal responded: "As I have already told you, the reason behind this was just to have some more followers.

"At the time when I retweeted it, that picture (of a [severed](#)

head) wasn't fully open at that time on the feed of Twitter. So at the time I did not know what picture it was that I was retweeting."

Claiming he had only read the first line of the message before retweeting it, Shahpal added: "I did not fully read it. What I have read, it did not say that his chopped off head was lying on the floor. A friend of mine who set up this account for me, he told me that if you do this, you are going to get more followers."

The defendant denies two counts of encouraging others to commit, prepare, or instigate acts of terrorism, and two alternative charges of the same offence being reckless as to whether such acts would be encouraged.

The trial continues.