

MI5 'missed significant opportunity' to stop Arena bomber

Live from the [Manchester Evening News](#)

There was 'a significant missed opportunity to take action' on the part of MI5 that might have prevented the murders of 22 people in the Manchester Arena bombing, the third and final report of the public inquiry into the atrocity has found.

One of two key pieces of intelligence about suicide bomber Salman Abedi – both of which weren't passed on to police by MI5 – 'gave rise to the real possibility of obtaining information that might have led to actions which prevented the attack', revealed the report today (Thursday, March 2).

The Security Service received a vital piece of information about Salman Abedi before he murdered 22 people in May 2017, but [did not act swiftly enough on it](#), the public [inquiry into the atrocity](#) found. It could have led officers directly to the Nissan Micra, parked outside Devell House in the Rusholme area of Manchester, where he was storing the homemade device, the report said.

Had investigations taken place, Abedi could have been stopped at Manchester Airport on his return to the UK from Libya just days before the bombing, or been followed to where the bomb was being kept. *The Abedi family were picked up by the Royal Navy from a 'refugee' boat in the Mediterranean; if Libya was so dangerous why did they go back? and forth?*

Sir John Saunders, the inquiry's chairman, said he found it wasn't possible to reach a finding 'on the balance of probabilities or to any other evidential standard' as to whether the attack 'would have been prevented' had that action

been taken.

He said: "However, there was a realistic possibility that actionable intelligence could have been obtained which might have led to actions preventing the attack."

He identified five other failings of the MI5 and counter-terrorism police:

- Abedi not being correctly categorised as a formal subject of interest, which would have led to a formal assessment of the threat he posed in the years before the attack. Instead, he was categorised as a lower-level 'de-facto' subject of interest in 2014 and in 2016.
- Twice failing to refer Abedi to the Prevent deradicalisation programme, in 2014 and 2015/16.
- Failure to analyse over 1,000 text messages exchanged between Abedi and a jailed terrorist, Abdalraouf Abdallah, in 2014.
- A delay downloading the contents of an illicit mobile phone used by Abdallah in jail, seized in February 2017 but not examined until June 2017, weeks after the bombing.
- The "risky" decision to focus on the terror threat from the Islamic State terror group in Syria "meant that both the Security Service and CTPNW (Counter-Terrorism Policing North West) underestimated the risk from Libya in 2017".



Salman Abedi was captured on CCTV making his way to the Manchester Arena with the homemade device in his rucksack | CREDIT: GMP

The bit that has really got me about that night is that the junior security guard who has a 'bad vibe' and Abedi was told by his older Muslim colleague that he was

'OK', and one of the fathers waiting to collect his family after the concert, getting the same 'bad vibe' was also told by the Muslim security guard not to worry. And that man couldn't take his fears to a police officer because the officers of British Transport police were on an extended meal break and the Greater Manchester Police didn't even know there was a major gig on until the explosion.

See it. Say it. Ignored.

[The leaders of a mosque](#) attended by Salman Abedi were guilty of 'wilful blindness' to highly-charged political debate about the conflict raging in Libya before the atrocity, the inquiry has also found.

The south Manchester mosque was today (Thursday, March 2) heavily criticised in the third and final report of the public inquiry into the atrocity, which examined the radicalisation of the bomber, although it was not an 'active factor' in that radicalisation.

Inquiry chairman Sir John Saunders praised the 'generally truthful and reliable' evidence of a liberal imam at the mosque, Mohammed El-Saeiti, who said in his evidence he was

ostracised at the mosque after speaking out against radical Islam. El-Saeiti, said he received death threats on social media over one address he gave at the mosque – and there were concerns he would be attacked by the Abedi brothers Salman and Hashem.

Ismail Abedi, the elder brother who has now flown out of the country, approached him at the mosque days after he gave the sermon and criticised him for what he said in it. Mr El-Saeiti said up to 1,500 worshippers at the mosque heard the sermon on October 3, 2014 – the same day as a video of the murder by Islamic State of Salford taxi driver Alan Henning was released.

... criticised the ‘unreliable’ evidence of Fawzi Haffar, the chair of trustees at Didsbury Mosque who was accused of ‘wilful blindness’ about the charged atmosphere at the mosque before 2017 about the conflict in Libya. . . Mr Haffar ‘tended to downplay the strength of the links between the mosque and the Abedi family, said Sir John.

Sir John also criticised Mr Haffar for saying in his evidence the mosque had ‘no ties to Libya’ and no knowledge anyone from the mosque had gone to Libya. “In my view, Fawzi Haffar’s evidence was not an accurate reflection of the position in the years before 2017. It lacked credibility,”

The wider family of Salman Abedi ‘holds significant responsibility’ for his radicalisation while Manchester-based Islamic State ‘poster boys’ also encouraged him, the public inquiry into the atrocity has also concluded. *Name them! And once their involvement in terror has been established and they are convicted of an offence remove their British citizenship and deport them.*

Sir John blamed dad Ramadan Abedi, mother Samia Tabbal and brother Ismail Abedi for turning Salman Abedi and his accomplice brother Hashem into Islamic State fanatics prepared

to kill children at a pop concert.

All 'held extremist views' and are believed to be in Libya.

Downing Street has said the government is committed to learning the lessons from the inquiry into the "callous and cowardly" attack. *Except thousands of military age young Muslim men are landing on the south coast in little boats every month; They are from countries where there isn't a war, and were there serious danger in their homeland surely they would be bringing their women and children to safety? So the lesson to learn is to be careful who arrives, and be very careful who is allowed to stay.*