

New Zealand: Auckland man on trial accused of possessing ISIS material before buying hunting knife

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A man repeatedly accessed “violent” Isis propaganda online before buying a knife, a court has heard.

The man, who was a resident at an Auckland mosque at the time of the alleged offences, faces three charges of possessing an objectionable publication relating to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

Known only as Mr S due to an interim suppression order, he is also charged with possessing an offensive weapon and failing to comply with a police search. The man in his thirties ... is on trial at the High Court at Auckland.

He has denied three charges of possessing objectionable publications, possessing a knife without lawful authority and failing to comply with a search. The three publications had been classified as objectionable by the censor, for promoting acts of terrorism, extreme violence and cruelty, the court heard.

This morning in the High Court at Auckland, Crown prosecutor Henry Steele told the jury during his opening address such ISIS material was “designed to both instruct and inspire”. “You no doubt will know of the black flag of ISIS,” Steele told the jury.

The material Mr S is accused of possessing – from mid-2018 –

is highly graphic in nature and has since been declared objectionable by the Chief Censor for promoting acts of extreme violence, cruelty and terrorism. Two of the publications include a series of still images with nasheeds (hymns and chants), while the other is a video. Steele said these particular nasheeds were "clearly designed" to inspire and celebrate the cause of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (Isis).

In one of the nasheeds a single still image of a black figure carrying a machine gun can be seen, with lyrics referencing violence acts including decapitation and terrorism of enemies. Steele alleged this nasheed was accessed by the defendant from both his tablet and mobile phone at least eight times, including the morning of his arrest. The lyrics in the second nasheed explicitly encouraged terrorist attacks on countries of disbelievers, Steele said.

Both nasheeds would be watched by the jury, Steele said.

The Crown alleges the video, which is the cause of the third objectionable publication charge, provides practical instruction on how to kill. The video shows people being murdered. Steele said that while the publications were not deemed objectionable until after the accused's arrest, it would be up to the jury to decide if a reasonable person would have cause to believe they were objectionable.

Beyond the three publications, the jury will see a snapshot of the defendant's online activities which the Crown says shows what was going on in the defendant's mind. "There was a significant and operative interest in the Islamic State," Steele said.

One publication, titled "We came to fill horror everywhere", displays men dressed in black with assault rifles, the ISIS flag and a city on fire. The lyrics include: "We will drink from the blood of disbelievers." A second, called "What a

victory for he who got Shahada", features a person in black with a machine gun and an ISIS flag.

Mr S also posted some of the lyrics on his personal Facebook account. The video, described by Steele as a "how to kill non-Muslims", shows a prisoner having their throat and wrists cut and a "non-believer" running with an explosive device strapped to him before it explodes.

Steele told the jury they would watch the video during the course of the trial.

In the context of the defendant's online activity, he made a decision to purchase a large knife, and have it couriered to the mosque. While he was waiting for the knife to be delivered, he was arrested.

The prosecutor held up the weapon, inside a plastic display, for the court to see. "As you'll see it's not a small knife, not the sort of knife you'd have in your kitchen drawer," he said. "It's a knife with a very specific purpose."

he trial, before Justice Sally Fitzgerald and a jury, continues.