

# Terrorist commander jailed for 15 years over planned Sydney attacks

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The leader of a terrorist organisation convicted over planned attacks on a Sydney naval base, a courthouse and the Mardi Gras will spend up to 15 years in prison.

Hamdi Alqudsi, 48, was sentenced in the NSW Supreme Court on Tuesday, seven months after a jury found him guilty of directing the activities of Islamic State-aligned terror group, The Shura, from August to December 2014.



Justice Stephen Rothman found that while planning for numerous attacks was still in its infancy, the end result if the plots had been carried out would have been “horrendous”.

The Shura’s plans included attacks on the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, the Israeli embassy, the Garden Island Naval Base in Woolloomooloo, and a targeted strike on the Australian Federal Police at a NSW Supreme Court hearing. The idea of beheading an “unbeliever” and draping their body in an Islamic State (IS) flag, and having someone affiliated with IS

fly to Sydney to teach the group how to make improvised explosive devices were also mentioned.

Alqudsi's full 15-year jail term will expire on November 10, 2034. His non-parole period of eight years and three months will expire on February 10, 2031.

The Shura, which means consultative or consultation council in Arabic, was formed in 2013 initially to send fighters from Australia to Syria. The group pledged allegiance to IS in August 2014. Alqudsi was the "commander" or "emir" of the Shura and held numerous meetings with members where they discussed potential terror plots...

The terror boss is already behind bars, convicted in September 2016 after the Shura worked to send members to Syria. For these acts, he was sentenced to eight years in prison, expiring on July 11, 2024. His six-year non-parole period ended on July 11 last year however he was not released because of the criminal proceedings which ended on Tuesday.

Alqudsi has always denied having any involvement in the Shura, including in an interview with the Australian Border Force when stopped at Sydney Airport where he claimed to be on a pilgrimage to the Hajj. His denials, while seeming reasonable at the time, were "plainly disingenuous," the judge said. Justice Rothman also did not accept Alqudsi's disavowal of extremist behaviour and claims he followed a more "moderate" form of Islam which were made to Muslim chaplain Ahmed Kilani while in prison.

He had also not shown any real remorse or contrition for his conduct, the judge said.