

David B. Harris – Canadian Counterterrorism Expert Comments on RCMP Arrest and Charges involving Canadian ISIS Recruits

Earlier today, the RCMP issued a press release concerning an arrest in Canada and charges under Canada's Criminal Code terrorism provisions against two others Canadians at large allegedly in Syria as foreign fighters for the Islamic State. These arrests and charges resulted from investigations conducted by the RCMP's INSET in the Province of Ontario in connection with Project SERVANT.



David B. Harris, INSIGNIS

We asked David B. Harris of the Ottawa-based INSIGNIS Strategic Research, Inc. for his comments on the significance of today's RCMP counterterrorism actions:

Harris is a Canadian lawyer involved in criminal and national security issues. *Maclean's* calls Harris "one of Canada's leading experts on terrorism" and acknowledges "his almost unique willingness to speak publicly and fearlessly about Islamic extremism." He has also consulted with intelligence organizations in Canada and abroad, and served with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) in 1988-1990. See our NER interview with Harris: "[A Self-Inflicted Injury: Immigration, Infiltration and Canada's Growing Islamist Threat](#)".

Today's arrest marks one the most dramatic manifestations, to date, of counterterrorist efforts to dismantle the expanding ISIS enemy infrastructure in Canada, an infrastructure that threatens Canadians and Americans. The full size of the cell involved is still a matter of investigation.

The arrest comes as a trial continues in Canada in an alleged Islamist terror plot to blow up a railway between New York and Ontario, and increasing concerns are expressed about extremism in this country.

The RCMP release provided details on the individuals arrested and charged in absentia, "[RCMP](#)



Awso Peshdary

Today, as part of an extensive national security criminal investigation named Project SERVANT, the RCMP Integrated National Security Enforcement Team (INSET) in Ottawa arrested one individual and charged two others with terrorism offences under the Criminal Code of Canada. Awso Peshdary, 25 years old from Ottawa, was arrested and charged with participation in the activity of a terrorist group (Sec. 83.18); and with facilitating an activity for a terrorist group (Sec. 83.19). He is currently in custody.



Khadar Khalib
John Maguire

Today, the RCMP also laid terrorism charges *in absentia* against Khadar Khalib, 23 years old, and John Maguire, 24 years old, both from Ottawa. Khalib was charged with leaving Canada to participate in the activities of a terrorist group (Sec. 83.181); and with counseling a person to participate in an activity of a terrorist group (Sec. 83.18). Maguire was also charged with facilitating an activity for a terrorist group (Sec. 83.19). Charges were also laid for conspiring to participate or to contribute in an activity of a terrorist group (Sec. 465 (1)(c)) against all three.

While there have been recent reports saying that Maguire was killed in Syria, the RCMP has not received conclusive

evidence confirming that he is deceased.

As these two individuals remain at large, arrest warrants have been obtained and an Interpol Red Notice is being issued. The RCMP continues to work actively with its domestic and international partners to bring them back to Canada so they can be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

“We acknowledge the valuable contribution of our INSET partners, including the Ontario Provincial Police and the Ottawa Police Service, who played a significant role in this case. We also want to thank the Canadian Security Intelligence Service for their valuable contribution on this file,” said Chief Superintendent Jennifer Strachan, officer responsible for the RCMP’s Criminal Operations in Ontario.

“These charges speak to our ability to tackle a threat that is multifaceted and constantly evolving. Through collaborative efforts with our partners, we were able to disrupt an organized network associated with ISIS. This network was involved in recruiting individuals for terrorism purposes and in sending them into Syria and Iraq for the benefit of this terrorist group,” stated Assistant Commissioner James Malizia, officer in charge of the RCMP’s officer in charge of the RCMP’s Federal Policing Operations.