

# Dozens of terrorists linked to British preacher are jailed

[Sharia4Belgium had close ties to Anjem Choudary](#), the British radical preacher, and lifted much of its rhetoric from the banned group Islam4UK, which he founded. Mr Choudary described him as “a dear friend of mine” in comments to *The Times* last November. The British preacher made several visits to speak to Sharia4Belgium members which were filmed and posted on the internet. *His tweets in support of the men jailed are [Choudary is himself subject to a suspended sentence](#) from a Belgian court.*

Sharia4Belgium rose to prominence in 2010 after a protest against a proposed ban on wearing the full-face Islamic burqa in public.

It found fertile ground for recruitment in Antwerp, Belgium’s second biggest city, which has a large Muslim community, mainly from Turkey and Morocco, as well as one of Europe’s biggest Jewish Orthodox communities.

Belgium remains on high alert following last month’s terror major operation, which authorities said had smashed a cell aiming to kill police officers in public streets and at police stations.

Two suspected militants were shot dead in a raid in the eastern city of Verviers.

Defence lawyers argued that Sharia- 4Belgium was merely an organisation that aimed to provoke public opinion, like the Russian rock group Pussy Riot.

Judge Luc Potargent said that it was a terrorist group that

had groomed dozens of young men. "Sharia4Belgium recruited these young men for armed combat and organised their departure for Syria," he said. Sharia4Belgium was credited with helping to turn Belgium into Europe's most concentrated source of jihadist recruits for Syria.