

Isil is targeting people with mental health problems, police chief warns, as minicab driver convicted

An update to [The Telegraph](#)

Isil fanatics are deliberately targeting people with mental health problems to inspire them to carry out terror attacks, a police chief has warned after a man suffering from psychosis was convicted of trying to behead a tube passenger. The Somali man's attack was ultimately not treated as a terror attack but he claimed at the time that he was acting in revenge for coalition bombings in Syria.

Commander Dean Haydon, head of Scotland Yard's Counter-Terrorism Command said warped propaganda from Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (Isil) is aimed at the vulnerable to inspire lone atrocities by so-called "spontaneous volatile extremists".

Mire, who threatened a string of passengers in the knife rampage in December had a history of mental health problems and his psychosis involved the belief that he was being persecuted for his religion and trailed by the security services.

Mr Haydon said: "If you look at some of the propaganda that's coming out of IS and Syria and elsewhere, part of their propaganda is specifically targeted in relation to the vulnerable. We're not just talking about mental health here, we're talking about vulnerable individuals within the community.

"As a result of what I would call inspiration as a result of

that propaganda, we are seeing more and more lone actors. "Spontaneous volatile extremists is another term. Literally people who get inspired through, mostly the internet, through that propaganda material and then decide to go off and commit an attack either here in the UK or elsewhere overseas."

Mire had no contact with jihadists in Syria, or extremist preachers in the UK, and was not charged with any terror offences.

But Mr Haydon defended Scotland Yard's decision to declare the attack as a terrorist incident on the night it happened.

"That was really because of the words that he used at the time of the attack. He used the expression Allahu Akbar (God is great), he was talking about Syria and he was talking about acts of coalition forces in Syria. In the very early stages we needed to be completely reassured, so it needed further investigation to unpick was it a terrorist incident or not.

"If you look at the actual evidence that we presented to the court, it is a crime-related case but it has got undertones, if you look at his motivation.

"This was a random attack, completely unprovoked. He wasn't a member of IS, (but) he was inspired by IS."

Mr Haydon added: "Terrorist organisations will prey on the vulnerable. This is a classic case where that propaganda has inspired him to commit an attack."

He will be sentenced on July 27.