

Islamic State claimed responsibility for Arena attack on Twitter 18 minutes after the bombing, inquiry is told

From the [Manchester Evening](#) news. I did report this [at the time](#); this is an expert assessing the significance of the claim in relation to the manner of the radicalisation of Abedi and his family.

Islamic State claimed responsibility for the Manchester Arena bombing on Twitter 18 minutes after the attack, the public inquiry has been told.

An expert in radicalisation said the speed of the boast suggested the terror group had been given a 'heads up' about the devastating May 2017 attack and had not just inspired suicide bomber Salman Abedi.

His brother Hashem Abedi, 24, is serving a minimum 55 years behind bars for helping his older sibling carry out mass murder. He was in Tripoli when Salman Abedi carried out the deadly bombing but was just as guilty.

For three years, he denied he knew what his brother was doing and claimed he didn't hold extremist views although a jury convicted him at the Old Bailey in March 2020 following a trial he largely boycotted, often refusing to attend court.

It was only while behind bars on October 23 last year he finally confessed in a chilling video interview with officials from the continuing public inquiry into the atrocity, admitting he was a supporter of 'violent jihad' and he had he

helped carry out the attack on behalf of Islamic State.

The inquiry heard that he said: "I did it for Islamic State."

Today (Monday) the continuing public inquiry into the atrocity heard the terror group claimed responsibility for the attack in Twitter posts 18 minutes after the attack.

They were said to have been posted by a 'non-native English speaker'.

Starting his second day of evidence, Dr Matthew Wilkinson, an expert in Islamist extremism, said the posts suggested 'some prior knowledge that it was due to take place'.

The terror group was 'very clever with social media', he added

He said it was 'possible they just claimed it but it suggests to me that they at least had some sort of heads up about it'.

Earlier, Dr Wilkinson said the arena attack was 'undoubtedly inspired' by Islamic State but he went on that members of an Islamist group Katiba al-Bittar may also have helped the Abedis prepare the attack.

Questioned by Nicholas de la Poer, counsel to the inquiry, he said he had concluded even before Hashem Abedi's confession the attack could be attributed to Islamic State. He said he had identified 18 reasons for this.

He went on: "There's absolutely no doubt that they were inspired at the very least by the world view of the so-called Islamic State and its strategic objectives to cause mayhem in the west." The witness pointed to a 'cadre of Manchester-based Libyan terrorists' including Abdalraouf Abdallah, a convicted Islamic State recruiter who remains behind bars.

Salman Abedi had known at least six people in Manchester who had been convicted of terror offences, he said.

He pointed to his lack of educational achievement which may have left him feeling 'systematically rejected'.

The witness said denigration of and violence towards women 'can be' a feature of Islamist extremism.

He said there was a 'connection' between people who commit crimes against women and who then become involved Islamist extremism. Such misogyny was more acute for 'non Muslim women', he said. ...he (Abedi) attacked a female student while at Manchester College who he had punched including while she was on the ground 'because she was wearing a short skirt'.

Dr Wilkinson agreed the 'assault' was 'misogynistically-driven'. He recalled one fellow student had said Salman Abedi had a 'very bad attitude towards women'. Dr Wilkinson, asked if intervention may have helped at that stage, conceded 'it might have done'.

Salman Abedi was driven 'by an intense desire for approval' as well as the fear of reprisals, said Dr Wilkinson...He was seduced by the 'kick a**e' reputation of Islamist radicals for whom 'the gloves were off'.

Dr Wilkinson said the government's much-criticised Prevent strategy to steer people away from extremism had had a 'terribly marginalising, persecuting effect on much of the Muslim community'. It had sent 'perfectly sane and sanguine Muslims foaming at the mouth when it's brought up'. *It must be pointed out that Dr Wilkinson is Dr [Matthew Tariq Wilkinson](#) and he has been a practising Muslim since 1991. I'm sure he is spot on about violence and terrorists, but he will insert apologia about the Koran's 'respect' for women and emphasise the peaceful verses.*

The inquiry heard that 'extremist' educational books were found 'lying around' in Didsbury Mosque, where Salman and Hashem Abedi attended as youngsters and their father, Ramadan Abedi, performed the call to prayer. Ismail Abedi, the elder

brother, volunteered in the mosque's Arabic school – and their mother taught there briefly.

Questioned by John Cooper QC, on behalf of another group of families, Dr Wilkinson agreed one of the texts was based on an 'us versus them Islamist worldview' although it did not trumpet violent extremism. Another, said Dr Wilkinson, was 'squarely Islamist' and considered a 'seminal' text. He said he would not expect them to be in a mainstream mosque as 'authorised literature'.

Pressed by Chris Henley QC on behalf of Didsbury Mosque, Dr Wilkinson confirmed he never visited the mosque, saying he was analysing material during lockdown and he also questioned what could be gained by paying a visit. He agreed going 'incognito' may have helped but the witness, a Muslim, questioned how incognito he would be as a visiting 'white convert' to Islam

Interesting that the Muslim witness believes Salman Abedi could and should have been identified as a danger earlier, while the non-Muslim educational expert had him down as merely an [unpleasant lout](#).