

MADE IN BRITAIN ISIS forger who 'helped Paris jihadis kill 130 people was radicalised at London's Finsbury Park mosque'

From [*The Telegraph*](#)

A MASTER forger arrested in connection with the ISIS Paris terror attacks was radicalised at the Finsbury Park mosque, police have revealed. Algerian Athmane Touami, 35, was held by Italian police after a two-year international probe.



He allegedly provided fake documents to the Islamist terrorists who carried out the Paris attacks, in which 130 people were murdered and 350 wounded. The terrorists launched coordinated attacks on the Bataclan theatre, five cafes and the Stade de France.

He was also accused of being a member of a terrorist organisation, with Italian police saying he was a member of Islamic State. Touami had undergone "a process of religious radicalisation and had frequent and prolonged contacts with jihadists and militants in international terrorist organisations," police said.

Italian police said Touami was part of an ISIS cell that was

operating in France and Belgium and wire taps revealed he had been a regular at London's Finsbury Park mosque. He had had contact with an imam at Finsbury Park Mosque, who had contributed to his radicalisation, police said. The imam had disseminated a video in which it was claimed that Covid-19 was a "divine punishment" for non-Muslims and Muslims who were not strictly obedient to Islamic beliefs.

Religious leaders at the mosque and Home Office staff have worked hard to transform it from a hotbed of radicalism into a model of community relations. But in January 2015, after the offices of Paris magazine Charlie Hebdo were targeted by ISIS terrorists, the mosque's links with radical preachers resurfaced after it was alleged that the gunmen were followers of Djamel Beghal, an extremist based there in the late 1990s.

An Italian investigator said: "Intercepted telephone conversations revealed that radical Islamic indoctrination had taken place at the Finsbury Park mosque in London, which British intelligence has long held not only to be religious venue but also a symbol of British jihadism, where from the 1990s until 2000 radicalisation was undertaken and terror groups formed that spread terror throughout the world."

The Sun has established that Touami lived in London before and after the Paris terror attacks and was even interviewed as an eyewitness to the June 2017 Finsbury Park mosque attack.

Anti-terror prosecutor Roberto Rossi told The Sun: "In an intercepted telephone conversation the arrested man was heard talking to associates about his time at Finsbury Park mosque in London. 'It was quite clear that he had studied there and there was talk of jihadist extremism at the mosque – he also described how he personally knew one of the imams who taught there but it wasn't Abu Hamza.'"

Bari was a key transit point for jihadists returning from the Middle East to Europe, investigators said. "Bari is becoming a

central focus in the fight against terrorism. There's no doubt that those coming from war zones and areas governed by terrorist networks must pass through Bari for logistical reasons in order to reach other European countries," said Roberto Rossi,

Touami, also known as Tomi Mahraz, is alleged to have been in contact with Abdelhamid Abaaoud, an IS extremist from Belgium who was the mastermind of the Paris attacks. Abaaoud was killed in a police raid five days after the attacks. French investigators have established that the perpetrators of the Paris attacks were in possession of 14 fake Belgian identity documents from the same manufacturer. The forgeries enabled them, according to French judges, "to carry out preparations for the attacks and in particular to rent flats, to travel around Europe to set up the terrorist cell, to withdraw money."

Italian police said that since 2010, Touami and his brothers also had contact with Amedy Coulibaly and Cherif Kouachi, two of the extremists involved in the Charlie Hebdo shooting.

Touami is already in prison in Bari, where he is serving a two-year sentence for possession of counterfeit documents. He was due to be released in June, but the accusations relating to the Paris attacks mean that his release has been blocked. A new detention order has been issued, with Italian investigators saying Touami would most likely disappear "without trace" if he was allowed out of prison.