

Muslims have won power battle between prison gangs, says hero of London Bridge attack

From the [Telegraph](#)

Muslim gangs have orchestrated a shift in the power balance in prisons through violence and religious conversions, according to the convicted murderer who became a hero of the 2019 [London Bridge terror attack](#).



Steve Gallant and two other men confronted terrorist killer Usman Khan after he had stabbed Cambridge University graduates Saskia Jones, 23, and Jack Merritt, 25, to death | CREDIT: PA WIRE/METROPOLITAN POLICE



Steve Gallant with his Queen's Gallantry Medal, presented to him at Windsor Castle in September 2023 | CREDIT: JORDAN PETTIT/PA WIRE

Steve Gallant was on day release from prison when he grappled terrorist [Usman Khan](#), who had stabbed two young people to death, to the ground before the violent extremist was shot dead by police. His heroism won him the Queen's Gallantry Medal.

Mr Gallant, who was freed from prison after being given a 10-month reduction in his sentence, will this month deliver a lecture giving his ringside view of the rise of Islamist extremism in category A and B prisons where he served his sentence for the murder of a former firefighter in Hull.

He was jailed for life in 2005 and sent to Frankland high-security prison in Durham where up to 20 terrorists were transferred in the following years, sparking a tit-for-tat prison war between white and Muslim gangs.

The flashpoint came in July 2007 with an attack on Dhiren

Barot, an Al-Qaeda terrorist ... seen by his fellow Muslims as an "emir" (leader) in rank and esteem. Barot, then 35, suffered agonising burns when a white inmate poured a pan of boiling cooking oil over his head . . . In retaliation for the attack on Barot, Omar Khyam, another terrorist serving 20 years for planning a fertiliser bomb attack in London, doused Malcolm Cruddas, a white armed robber, with hot oil, even though he was not connected to the previous assault.

"There was now a battle for wing control. Those who had stoked the fire had created deadly enemies," said Mr Gallant. "It didn't matter to the convicted terrorists, as they committed themselves to a violent cause, and some were only alive because their bombs had failed to detonate while strapped to them."

Against a backdrop of a growing number of convicted and suspected Islamist terrorists being sent to jail, Mr Gallant said the "balance of power" shifted to Muslim gangs. "As the Islamists started to grow in number and in strength, the balance of power changed," he said. "People who probably wouldn't have ever even thought about converting began to do so because they thought their chances were better off on their side..."

Mr Gallant claimed the power shift filtered down to Category B prisons because of the numbers. However, he believed there was now less inter-gang violence because "the major power struggle is pretty much done". "The power shift has happened. Prisoners have accepted that, so on that level, it's calm,"

Mr Gallant said he believed prison governors and officers had taken action when violence broke out but had failed to take sufficient preventative or pre-emptive action partly because of fears of being accused of racism.

It is a view shared by Jonathan Hall KC, the independent reviewer of terrorist legislation, who will attend Mr

Gallant's lecture to the Henry Jackson Society, a foreign policy and national security think tank.

Mr Hall's report on extremism in jails found Muslim terrorists had been able to seize control of wings and set up sharia courts in prisons as staff were so concerned about being accused of racism.

Mr Gallant has backed moves by the Ministry of Justice to increase the use of segregation units for the most dangerous offenders, boost security and intelligence gathering and improve offender behaviour programmes. *I will say, yet again, we need a Millbank penitentiary system suitable for the modern era. These are men whose womenfolk are expected to live under a system of enclosure and seclusion; why should they not to protect other prisoners from contagion.*