

# Plane bombing mastermind unmasked as Egyptian cleric

[Whitehall officials confirmed this weekend that Masri is a "person of interest"](#) and that Britain would help Egypt or Russia in a "kill or capture" mission. Such a move could involve the deployment of the SAS to Egypt.

The man known as Masri claimed responsibility for the Russian plane crash in an audio statement last Wednesday

Masri, 42, is a former scholar of the al-Azhar University in Cairo, a 1,000-year-old Sunni Muslim institution that had given an honorary doctorate to the Prince of Wales in 2008. In November 2014 his Sinai-based organisation pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the self-proclaimed Isis caliph, in return for weapons, finance and potential bomb-making know-how. Sinai Province has repeatedly claimed responsibility for last weekend's plane crash – but has officially refused to explain how it was done.