

Radicalised New Zealand teen planned terror attack in Christchurch

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A radicalised teenage boy planned to ram a car into a group of people and stab them in Christchurch.



Crown prosecutor Chris Lange told the Christchurch District Court at sentencing on Thursday that the boy wrote a note to his mother and has since told a psychologist when it began he “decided not to hurt anybody because he did not have the means to kill enough people,” reports Stuff. “The reason no-one was hurt was that he did not

have access to knives,” Mr Lange said.

The incident had been strongly premeditated and the boy was hostile toward non-Muslims. He expected police to kill him once his rampage started.

After his arrest, he told police he was angry and had “done it for Allah”. The boy left school at age 15, became socially isolated, and converted to Islam.

The youth’s name is suppressed and the details of the offending cannot be published. He has admitted eight charges. People were frightened by his actions during the incident last year, and damage was done, but no-one was hurt before he was held until the police arrived. Lange said even though the youth had been treated for months by the youth forensic

psychiatric team, he was still seen as a high risk of reoffending, and a risk to family members and members of the public.

Defence counsel Anselm Williams said the youth accepted responsibility with his guilty pleas, and gave explanations to the professionals who spoke to him. He urged intensive supervision be imposed because prison would mean limited access to the rehabilitation and socialising programmes he needed. The strict conditions proposed for the intensive supervision were "almost unheard of", he said. He urged the suppression orders be made. "His rehabilitation would be affected by his name being published and him becoming in any way a celebrity of sorts, or someone of note," he said.

Judge O'Driscoll said the teen's rehabilitation would benefit the community in the long run, but he said it was one of the most difficult sentencings he had ever been involved in. "There is a need to deter you, denounce your conduct, and protect the community...There was a disinterest in what is seen as the moderate point of view. You had thoughts which most people who live in a civilised society would find unacceptable."

Pre-sentence reports indicated he had the potential to act more violently than what happened.

The court adopted a rehabilitative approach to the teen's sentencing with Judge Stephen O'Driscoll releasing him on intensive supervision with a list of conditions and a warning that if he breaches these conditions or reoffends, he will likely be sent to prison. One of the conditions – which applies for two years while the judge will monitor his progress – is counselling by a member of the Muslim community.

I foresee future problems. Has New Zealand (a country I admire) learnt nothing from what she has seen in Australia and

Europe?

Judge O'Driscoll told the teenager police had contacted a person from the local Muslim community to meet him regularly for counselling. "Everyone is really wanting to help and assist you, so you don't engage in acts of violence and harm innocent members of the community."

He has interim name suppression, but that would not be made a permanent order until he successfully completed the supervision sentence. Judge O'Driscoll will get regular monitoring reports on his progress, the first in a month's time.

The president of the Federation of Islamic Associations, Hazim Arafah, said from Christchurch that his organisation "completely condemned any violence towards any community and that will never change. The risk of young people not well informed about Islam becoming radicalised online would always be present and the federation fully co-operated with the authorities. If you look at the statistics just about all of them are low lifes who have no family, no achievements and no qualifications. It's easier to recruit people who are misinformed about Islam. If people wanted to know about the real Islam they could approach anyone at mosques around the country."

Who converted this boy to islam? Who witnessed his taking of the shahada? Are they in New Zealand? If so have they been investigated themselves?

The Minister responsible for intelligence services, Andrew Little, said there were "30 to 40 people of concern at any one time" on the Security Intelligence Service's "watch list" of Islamic State sympathisers. "The threat level to New Zealand is currently assessed as low, which means that, while a domestic incident is possible, it's not expected," Little said.

I do hope that New Zealand does not learn the hard way.