

Salman Abedi: Manchester Arena bomber 'talked about killing in a public space for years', inquiry hears

Police held messages between Manchester Arena bomber and terrorist recruiter years before attack, inquiry told

From [Sky News](#) the [Manchester Evening News](#) and the [BBC](#)

The more I read the angrier I get. This could have been thwarted at so many points, starting with the Mediterranean rescue but it wasn't. And it was young girls and women who bore the brunt of the killing.

More than 1,000 messages between a 'Salman' and a now-convicted terrorist recruiter were discovered by police in 2014 in a counter-terror operation, but the person wasn't identified as bomber Salman Abedi until after he murdered 22 people at Manchester Arena in 2017, the public inquiry into the atrocity was told. Some exchanges between Abedi and Abdalraouf Abdallah were 'capable' of revealing Abedi's extremist mindset ...But the information was not highlighted to a counter-terror policing intelligence unit,



The detective who led the 2014 probe agreed the 'Salman messages' should have been 'lifted out' of that operation for separate 'intelligence development'.

The inquiry has already heard that in the July – four months before police found the messages – Abedi was ‘closed’ by MI5 as a subject of interest.

A gist of secret evidence sessions held last year has been read at the public inquiry into the atrocity. It revealed new information about MI5’s knowledge about the bomber.

Kim Harrison, who is representing 12 of the victims’ families, said they had been “deeply shocked and appalled by the evidence”.

“To hear that concerns had apparently been raised with superiors regarding the triaging of intelligence, including worries that something could get through due to the volumes of documents being considered is difficult to swallow,” she added.

A new summary of the inquiry’s closed evidence hearings, which took place over 10 days in November, has revealed the MI5 officer who first evaluated one piece of intelligence accepted during questioning that it could have been understood, back then, to indicate activity of pressing national security concern.

The Manchester Arena bomber repeatedly told his friends and family that he wanted to launch a terrorist attack on a “public space” but none of them took him seriously, a public inquiry has heard.

The inquiry in Manchester heard from a prison officer, who cannot be named and was identified by the initials P01.

He described a conversation on 1 December last year with bomber Salman Abedi’s close friend Abdalraouf Abdallah, 28, who is serving a jail sentence for terrorism at HMP Wakefield. During the five-minute chat, P01 sat on the prisoner’s bed in his cell and was told by Abdallah that the terror atrocity was done by “one of his boys”.

The officer filed the conversation on the prison's Mercury intelligence system.

Three weeks later, P01 gave more detail in a statement to police about the conversation he had about the bomber. The statement read: "I said that, 'if he was one of his boys, had he not mentioned it to him?'"

"Abs said for years the lad had said about killing people in a public space but all this lad's friends and family had shrugged it off as just bravado, it had been said that often."

Inquiry chairman Sir John Saunders said he would reach a conclusion over whether a Greater Manchester Police intelligence unit 'should have found things out which they didn't'.