# Slough man charged after arson attacks and Asda bomb hoax linked to terrorism



A significant development has unfolded in Slough, where a 20-year-old man has been charged with multiple terrorism-related offences following a series of alarming incidents. Ilyas Akhtar stands accused of preparing acts of terrorism, possessing information useful to terrorists, and conducting two distinct arson attacks, alongside causing a bomb hoax at an Asda supermarket.

The charges stem from events that took place over the month of May. The bomb hoax was reported at the Asda store on Telford Drive on 9 May, triggering concerns among both local residents and law enforcement. Subsequently, two arson incidents occurred at local venues; the first fire was set at the Slough Ice Arena on 14 May, followed by another at the Salt Hill Activity Centre on 31 May. Akhtar’s actions not only caused disruption but also raised alarms regarding security in public spaces. Following the investigation led by the southeast division of counter-terrorism policing, Akhtar was charged on Friday and is currently in custody awaiting a court appearance at Westminster Magistrates’ Court.

This case highlights the ongoing challenges posed by domestic terrorism and the necessity for vigilant public safety measures. The landscape of terrorism has evolved rapidly in recent years, and incidents like this one remind us of the persistent threats communities face. In similar past events, individuals have faced prosecution for similar hoaxes, demonstrating how seriously law enforcement treats such threats. For instance, in 2017, Ahmed Belkasim was convicted for making bomb hoax calls to the Home Office just a day after the Manchester Arena attack, further illustrating the gravity with which authorities view such offences.

Media reports indicate an increase in investigations related to domestic threats, accentuating concerns about youth involvement in terrorism. Earlier cases have shown varying motives among perpetrators, from political ideologies to personal grievances. For instance, in 2018, Munir Mohammed and Rowaida El-Hassan were found guilty of plotting a terror attack, displaying the dangerous lengths some individuals will go to fulfil their extremist beliefs.

Understanding the context of these incidents is crucial, particularly when sophisticated methods and targets are implicated. The recent charges against Akhtar come against a backdrop of enhanced counter-terrorism efforts in the UK, with various arrests made in recent years involving individuals suspected of preparing or instigating acts of terrorism. This includes a notable 2013 case, where four men were jailed for plotting an attack using a remote-controlled device.

As the investigation continues, it becomes increasingly vital to address not just the immediate implications of such threats but also the broader societal issues that foster radicalisation. The discourse surrounding terrorism necessitates a collective response, drawing together law enforcement, community leaders, and educational institutions to combat the underlying factors that lead to such injustices.

With Akhtar due to appear in court soon, this case is sure to remain at the forefront of national security discussions, underscoring the importance of vigilance and preparedness in an era where the spectre of terrorism still looms large.

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* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/asda-bomb-terror-attack-suspect-akhtar-b2765373.html), [[2]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/asda-bomb-terror-attack-suspect-akhtar-b2765373.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/asda-bomb-terror-attack-suspect-akhtar-b2765373.html), [[2]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/asda-bomb-terror-attack-suspect-akhtar-b2765373.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/man-convicted-for-bomb-hoax-on-home-office-day-after-manchester-terror-attack-a3691156.html), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/jan/08/uk-couple-found-guilty-of-plotting-christmas-terror-attack)
* Paragraph 4 – [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2013/apr/18/luton-terror-plot-four-jailed), [[6]](https://www.irishtimes.com/news/material-for-major-bomb-is-seized-in-england-1.1137602)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/asda-bomb-terror-attack-suspect-akhtar-b2765373.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/asda-bomb-terror-attack-suspect-akhtar-b2765373.html> - Ilyas Akhtar, 20, has been charged with preparing a terror act after allegedly carrying out a bomb hoax at an Asda supermarket and arson attacks at two locations in Slough. The charges include preparing acts of terrorism, possessing information useful to terrorists, carrying out two arson attacks, and causing a bomb hoax. The arson incidents occurred at Slough Ice Arena on 14 May and Salt Hill Activity Centre on 31 May. The bomb hoax charge relates to an incident at the Asda supermarket on 9 May. Akhtar remains in custody and is due to appear at Westminster Magistrates’ Court on Saturday.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/man-convicted-for-bomb-hoax-on-home-office-day-after-manchester-terror-attack-a3691156.html> - Ahmed Belkasim, 30, from Greenwich, was convicted for making bomb hoax calls to the Home Office just one day after the Manchester Arena attack. Between 23 and 24 May 2017, he called the immigration compliance and enforcement team at Lunar House in Croydon, threatening to commit a similar attack. Belkasim made a total of 10 calls, during which he claimed to have knowledge of bomb-making and threatened to cause harm. He denied the charges but was found guilty at the Old Bailey.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/jan/08/uk-couple-found-guilty-of-plotting-christmas-terror-attack> - Munir Mohammed and Rowaida El-Hassan were found guilty of plotting a Christmas bomb or chemical attack in the UK. Mohammed, 36, volunteered for a 'lone wolf' mission and enlisted the help of El-Hassan, a pharmacist, to obtain chemicals for bomb-making. At the time of his arrest in December 2016, Mohammed had two of the three components needed for a lethal explosive, along with bomb-making manuals and ricin poison. The couple denied preparing terrorist acts but were convicted following a trial at the Old Bailey.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2013/apr/18/luton-terror-plot-four-jailed> - Four men were jailed for plotting a terrorist attack in Luton. Zahid Iqbal, 31, and Mohammed Sharfaraz Ahmed, 25, discussed sending a remote-controlled toy car carrying a home-made bomb under the gates of a Territorial Army centre in Luton. Umar Arshad, 24, and Syed Farhan Hussain, 22, were also involved in the plot. The men admitted engaging in conduct in preparation for acts of terrorism between January 2011 and April 2012. The court heard that they considered methods, materials, and targets for a terrorist attack.
6. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/material-for-major-bomb-is-seized-in-england-1.1137602> - Eight British citizens of Pakistani descent were arrested under the Terrorism Act after police seized half a tonne of ammonium nitrate fertiliser, a key bomb-making ingredient, during dawn raids across London and the Home Counties. The arrests were part of a significant anti-terrorist operation involving MI5, MI6, and the Metropolitan Police's anti-terrorist branch. The men, aged between late teens and early 20s, were held on suspicion of being involved in the commission, preparation, or instigation of acts of terrorism.
7. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/10/police-simulate-dramatic-terror-attack-at-manchesters-trafford-c/> - Greater Manchester Police conducted a counter-terrorism training exercise at the Trafford Centre, simulating a suicide bomber detonating explosives and opening fire in a busy shopping mall. The exercise aimed to test the emergency response to an extremist attack. However, the portrayal of the terrorist as a Muslim shouting 'Allahu Akbar' led to accusations of institutional racism. Police Chief Garry Shewan apologised for the offence caused, stating that the exercise was not linked to any specific terror threat but was intended to prepare for potential attacks in the North West.