# Luton shooting raises alarm over rising school violence and extremism



On 13 September, in Luton, 18-year-old Nicholas Prosper was arrested following the fatal shooting of his mother, Juliana Falcon, aged 48, and his siblings, Giselle, 13, and Kyle, 16, in their family home. The incident took place in Leabank Tower on the Marsh Farm estate, with neighbours alerting police after hearing gunfire. Minutes later, officers apprehended Prosper on Bramingham Road, a location that serves as the most direct walking route between his home and St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School, which Prosper and his siblings attended years earlier.

Later that day, police conducted searches in the area where they discovered a loaded shotgun and over 30 cartridges concealed in a nearby bush. Following his arrest, Prosper pleaded guilty to the murders, but investigations revealed that he had apparently only completed the first phase of a larger plot. Authorities suspect that he had been planning a shooting at the primary school, a scenario that raises concerns about the possibility of a school shooting in Britain, reminiscent of the tragic Dunblane massacre in 1996.

Detective Chief Inspector Sam Khanna of the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire Major Crime Unit stated, “What was uncovered during our investigation left no doubt as to his intentions to carry out an attack at a school, but fortunately Prosper was apprehended before he could cause any further harm.” This incident highlights a disturbing trend, as the UK has seen an uptick in school shooting plots inspired by violent online material linked to US massacres, including the infamous Columbine High School shooting of 1999.

Data indicates that in the year leading to March 2024, there were 162 referrals made to the Prevent programme regarding interests in school massacres, a 2% increase from the previous year. However, only 19 of these referrals led to formal interventions and mentoring. Jonathan Hall KC, the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, expressed concern over the issue, pointing out that many cases, including those of prospective school shooters lacking ideological motives, fall outside the legal definition of terrorism.

Hall voiced the need to recognise and address the unique aspects of this cohort, stating that “school shooting obsessions crop up in a lot of counter-terrorism casework.” The exploration of grievance as a motivating factor has become increasingly relevant, particularly among young individuals who view their schools as sources of frustration.

This year has also seen other concerning incidents related to school shooting plots. A 17-year-old boy in Edinburgh, who idolised the Columbine shooters, admitted to wanting to carry out a mass shooting at his school, while a gun enthusiast in January was found constructing an arsenal for attacks against both police and his former school. Additionally, attempts by several teenagers to enact similar plots have been thwarted in recent years.

The growing prevalence of online communities that idolise past mass shooters intensifies the worry among law enforcement and scholars. Research from the Institute for Strategic Dialogue has documented how these forums allow young people to forge emotional connections with individuals responsible for mass violence. Senior analyst Cody Zoschak remarked on the intertwined nature of these subcultures with both ideological communities and the potential for self-radicalisation.

Academic Gina Vale from the University of Southampton highlighted the influence of US school shootings on British youth, pointing to how these violent acts provide a template for those considering their own attacks. Zoschak described the escalating phenomenon of “nihilistic violence,” characterising it as primarily emotional and self-serving, lacking a political or ideological agenda.

In response to this growing challenge, a government spokesperson confirmed that an independent inquiry into recent violent incidents involving youth will seek to examine broader issues of rising violence and extremism amongst young people. The aim is to enhance the capacity of multi-agency interventions to properly address the risks presented by this emerging cohort. Nicholas Prosper is scheduled to be sentenced later this month, and the specifics of his motivations and planning remain undisclosed as investigations continue.

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

## References

* <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/uk/luton-murderers-internet-history-paints-troubling-picture-heres-what-we-know-about-nicholas-prosper-who-killed-family/articleshow/118579007.cms> - This article corroborates the details of Nicholas Prosper's case, including his guilty plea and the discovery of his plans for a school shooting. It highlights his disturbing online activities and fixation on violent content.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prosper_family_murders> - This Wikipedia entry provides background information on the Prosper family murders, including the victims and the circumstances of the crime. It also mentions Nicholas Prosper's arrest and charges.
* <https://www.cps.gov.uk/thames-and-chiltern/news/teen-who-shot-dead-mother-brother-and-sister-pleads-guilty-murders> - This Crown Prosecution Service news release confirms Nicholas Prosper's guilty plea to the murders of his family members.
* <https://www.instituteforstrategicdialogue.org/> - The Institute for Strategic Dialogue is mentioned in the article as a source of research on online communities that idolize past mass shooters. Their work highlights the influence of these communities on young people.
* <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/> - Academic Gina Vale from the University of Southampton is referenced in the article for her insights on the influence of US school shootings on British youth.