



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on May 25, 2017

Libyan Official: Manchester Bomber's Family Linked to al-Qaeda

As the investigation into the May 22 bomb attack in Manchester, England, by Salman Abedi continues, there are indications that Salman's family in Libya had connections to the Islamic State (ISIS) and al-Qaeda. Abedi, the 23-year-old man identified as the suicide bomber who killed 22 people and injured 59 others, was born in Manchester to parents who had emigrated from Libya.



The latest reports by several news sources on May 24 revealed that Libyan officials have arrested Abedi's father and two brothers — Hashem (shown) and Ismail — and have also uncovered what investigators described as a plot for a new attack. Ramadan Abedi, the bomber's father, was arrested in Tripoli, Libya's capital, on May 24, a Libyan security spokesman told the Associated Press.

Fox News reported further that two U.S. defense officials confirmed to the network that Salman Abedi spent three weeks in Libya prior to the Manchester bombing, and returned to England just days before the Ariana Grande concert on May 22, when he launched his attack as fans exited the event.

Both Fox and Britain's *Daily Mail* cited the Associated Press as the source of reports that the bomber's father had been a member of a former al Qaeda-backed group in Libya.

According to the reports, a former Libyan security official named as Abdel-Basit Haroun said that Ramadan Abedi was a member of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) in the 1990s. The group had links to al-Qaeda. (We noted in our [December 2015](#) article that, before Libya's former dictator Moammar Gadhafi fell out of favor with the United States and was still regarded as an important U.S. ally in the war on terrorism, the United States and Libya had cooperated in anti-terrorism efforts against the LIFG, which had merged with al-Qaeda in 2007.)

The reports noted that although the LIFG disbanded, Haroun said that the elder Abedi belongs to the Salafi Jihadi movement, which it described as "the most extreme sect of Salafism and from which Al-Qaeda and ISIS hail."

At one time, Ramadan Abedi worked for the Gaddafi regime's security apparatus, but he then turned towards what the report described as "hardline Islam." One of Abedi's associates ran a group called the Islamic Martyrs' Movement. Five years ago, the elder Abedi posted photos of soldiers clad in black uniforms who belonged to the Al-Nusra Front, which was the official Syrian branch of al Qaeda until it broke up last July. Underneath the photo, he commented: "Victorious against the infidels ... say Amen!"



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Reuters quoted a statement from Ahmed Bin Salem, a spokesman for Libya's Special Deterrence Force (known as Rada) that another of Abedi's sons, Hashem, was detained in Tripoli on May 23 on suspicion of links to ISIS.

"We have evidence that he is involved in Daesh [Islamic State] with his brother. We have been following him for more than one month and a half," Bin Salem said. "He was in contact with his brother and he knew about the attack."

Rada said Hashem, 20, had traveled from London to Tripoli on April 16.

The report also cited a statement from British interior minister Amber Rudd that Salman Abedi had recently returned from Libya.

In [our article about the Manchester bomb attack](#) two days ago, we observed that the links between Middle Eastern and North African refugees in Europe and terrorist groups in their homelands can easily be traced. We also noted that it is even more important to understand the factors that have destabilized those nations, radicalized many of their inhabitants, and caused hundreds of thousands of people to flee those lands for Europe.

We also quoted from what we consider to be among the best, most concise explanations of the ultimate cause of this crisis we have read, an article written by former Rep. Ron Paul (R-Texas) and reprinted by *The New American* in 2015: "[The Real Refugee Problem — and How to Solve It.](#)" Paul's most basic explanation for Europe's refugee crisis was: "The reason so many are fleeing places like Syria, Libya, Afghanistan, and Iraq is that U.S. and European interventionist foreign policy has left these countries destabilized with no hopes of economic recovery."

We also observed that most of the problems associated with the refugee flow — including terrorist acts performed by either radicals embedded with the refugees or radicalized children of refugees — have occurred in Europe.

We went on to note that though he did not include it in the above-cited article, Paul has often spoken and written about the phenomenon called "blowback" — the reaction that is generated when we intervene in other nations' affairs.

This phenomenon was the basis for a report posted by the Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity on May 24, headlined: "Was Manchester Blowback?"

The writer of the report, Daniel McAdams, participated in a Liberty Report video interview with the former congressman, during which they discussed how foreign intervention in Libya against Gaddafi contributed to the radicalization of Salman Abedi that eventually led to his terrorist actions.

In his report, McAdams wrote:

Western intervention in Libya opened the country up to radical Islamist gangs which had been suppressed under Gaddafi. Just as Gaddafi warned. Same in Syria, where western destabilization efforts have led to an al-Qaeda and ISIS presence that was not there before the west had decided on "regime change" for the secular Assad. Who benefited from the rise of these radical groups? People like the Manchester suicide bomber, who traveled to both countries for training and radicalization. Western interventionist foreign policy has contributed to the Manchester bombing, a classic "blowback" action. The bomber is guilty, but so are those who endorsed the policies creating conditions for people like him to flourish. Tune in to today's Liberty Report.

The [Liberty Report](#) discussion between McAdams and Paul is well worth viewing.



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Photo of Hashem Ramadan Abedi at the Tripoli-based Special Deterrent anti-terrorism force unit after his arrest: AP Images

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