

Isis: Former German militant claims group is planning co-ordinated terror attacks in Europe

A German jihadist who fled Isis after witnessing beheadings and executions in Syria has claimed the group is trying to plan a Europe-wide terror attack.

The 27-year-old former militant, named as Harry S, said he and other foreign fighters had been asked if they would “bring jihad to their homeland”.

“They want something that happens everywhere at the same time,” he said.



Harry S witnessed Isis massacres after the group seized Palmyra in May. Harry S was speaking to [Der Spiegel](#) from prison, where he is still being questioned by police and the intelligence services after being arrested at Bremen airport on his return in July.

He claimed he fled Isis because he could not stand its brutality after three months with the group in Syria and is now telling German authorities all he knows.

The former extremist appeared in a propaganda video filmed shortly after Isis seized the city of Palmyra in May.

Wearing camouflage, he carried the flag of the so-called Islamic State across the screen before German-speaking militants called on supporters across the world to kill “infidels” before shooting two prisoners dead.

“All you need is to take a big knife, and go down to the streets and slaughter every infidel you encounter,” they urged.

The video, entitled “The lions of the Caliphate: A message signed in blood to Angela Merkel” featured notorious Austrian Islamist Mohamed Mahmoud, who founded a banned Salafist group called Millatu Ibrahim.

Since travelling to join Isis in Syria, Harry S said he had been leading mass executions and holding weekly ideological training sessions in Raqqa.

Reports that Mahmoud and former Berlin rapper Denis Cuspert (aka Deso Dogg), who went under the name Abu Talha al-Almani, have been killed in air strikes have not been confirmed by the German government.

Harry S said he met both men for the first time in Syria, having apparently been radicalised after meeting German Islamist René Marc Sepac in prison as he served a two-year sentence for robbery.

After attempting to join Isis in 2014, when he was arrested and returned to Bremen by Turkish authorities, he had his passport confiscated and was ordered to check in at a police station twice a week, [Der Spiegel](#) reported.

But in the spring of his year he managed to travel under someone else's passport to Syria, where he says he was trained to become part of a special unit intended to carry out urban combat missions before detonating suicide bombs. But he fled before being sent into battle.

Harry S stands accused of membership of a terror group and faces a lengthy prison sentence if convicted.

His lawyer, Udo Würtz, said his client did not directly take part in any atrocities, calling him a "lackey who allowed himself to be misled by the propaganda of Isis and who misled himself".

Germany's domestic intelligence agency believes more than 700 Germans have joined Isis in Iraq and Syria.

Nepal passes bill on quake rebuilding

Nepal's parliament yesterday passed a long-delayed law to pave the way for rebuilding after April's massive earthquake, ending months of bickering that paralysed reconstruction despite donor pledges of billions in aid.

"I announce that the bill related to reconstruction of earthquake-affected infrastructure... has been passed unanimously," Speaker Onsari Gharti Magar said in parliament.

The government vowed in June to set up a National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) to oversee rebuilding and ensure that all aid went to victims, as part of its bid to attract funding from sceptical foreign donors.

But political wrangling between the ruling CPN-UML party and the opposition Nepali Congress over the leadership of the new body prevented the bill conferring legal status on the NRA from being passed.

The final vote paving the way for the NRA, which will process all aid funds, followed weeks of closed-door negotiations.

A spokesman for the ruling party told AFP the government would work fast to set up the new state body to avoid further delays in rebuilding.

The 7.8-magnitude quake killed almost 8,900 people and destroyed more than half a million homes. Thousands of victims still live in tents eight months later due to the government's

failure to spend a \$4.1 billion reconstruction fund.

Quake victims have so far received just \$150 in compensation per household, while the government has promised an additional \$2,000 once the NRA is set up and able to disburse funds.

Shibir flexes its muscles in Chittagong of Bangladesh

Activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir chased away Bangladesh Chhatra League men who were placing wreaths at the Shaheed Minar of Chittagong College on the Victory Day yesterday.

Later, the two groups fought pitched battles near the college main gate, prompting police to fire shots in the air to disperse them.

The BCL men then returned to the campus and besieged the principal to her office for nearly half an hour, alleging that she was patronising Shibir.

The incidents left at least three youths – two BCL and a Shibir man – injured. Over 60 Shibir activists were detained by the law enforcers.

Later, the college authorities asked the students to vacate their dormitories.

Shibir is the pro-Jamaat-e-Islami student body. Jamaat opposed the birth of Bangladesh during the 1971 Liberation War. BCL is the pro-Awami League student body.

Chittagong City BCL General Secretary Nurul Azim Rony said yesterday's clash ensued around 11:00am after Shibir men hurled brick chunks at some 30 to 40 BCL activists at the Shaheed Minar on the campus.

Organising Secretary Hasmat Ali Rasel of the BCL unit, who was present at the scene, alleged that the Shibir men locked the college main gate after driving them out of campus.

"The Shibir activists had also fired shots at us," he said, adding that more brick chunks were thrown at them when they took position in front of the gate.

Witnesses said more activists joined the Chhatra League group there and they retaliated with brick chunks.

On information, members of nearby Chawkbazar Police Station stepped in and fired shots in the air to disperse both the groups, said Aziz Uddin, officer-in-charge of the police station.

Around 1:00pm, witnesses said, the BCL men went inside the campus through another gate and vandalised windows of some college buildings. There, they caught and beat up a Shibir activist.

However, police rescued him and took him into their custody.

The pro-ruling party activists then confined Principal Prof Jesmin Akther to her office for nearly half an hour, saying she was patronising Shibir – an allegation rejected by the teacher.

After being driven out of campus, the BCL men also blocked the nearby college road from around four hours, demanding that the college be freed from Shibir.

According to BCL leader Nurul Azim Rony, Chhatra League resumed politics in Chittagong College forming a convening committee in 2009 and by a full committee in 2012.

Kawsar Uddin, vice-president of Chittagong College BCL, said they went to the Shaheed Minar for the first time in three decades to place wreaths under the banner of their organisation.

Sources said Chittagong College and Mohsin College are known to be Shibir strongholds.

Shahadat Hossain, president of Chittagong College Shibir, could not be reached despite repeated attempts.

Additional law enforcers were deployed on campus.

DORMS CLOSED

In the evening, the authorities of Chittagong College closed the four dorms until further notice.

Principal Jesmin Akther said male students were asked to vacate their halls within 8:00pm yesterday and female students by 10:00am today.

She also said they decided to form a five-member committee to investigate yesterday's incident.

Chhatra League men of the college attacked Mohsin College with brick chunks yesterday evening and damaged several windows of the buildings. This forced the Mohsin College authorities to close two of its dorms where around 170 students stayed.

Venue allotment for World T20 raises eyebrows

The Indian cricket board's (BCCI) decision to award almost half of the ICC World T20 matches next year to only two venues - Dharamshala and Nagpur - has raised eyebrows. These two venues - which will together host 17 out of 35 games in the tournament - belong to state associations from where the board secretary and president belong.

Bangladesh cricket team will play their three qualifying matches at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium at Dharamshala. Tigers start their journey on March 9, 2016 at the picturesque Dharamshala against Netherlands. On March 11, Ireland will be Bangladesh's next opponent. The third match of the qualifying round for Bangladesh will see Oman take the field on March 13.

Nagpur, the home association of BCCI president Shashank Manohar, is set to host nine games while Dharamshala - home to board secretary Anurag Thakur - run Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association - will stage eight.

Five other venues will host the other half of the tournament. Chandigarh, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bangalore and Delhi - all traditional Test venues - will host a total of 18 matches, including the final at Kolkata's Eden Gardens.

There are 20 international cricket stadiums in the country, of which 15 are certified Test venues now. However, the BCCI decided to shortlist and finalize only these seven venues to host the World T20 matches, to be held from March 9 to April 3.

The biggest surprise is that the marquee game of the tournament -India versus Pakistan -has been awarded to Dharamshala, which has a capacity of only 23,000. Some other venues across India which were ignored boasts capacities ranging from 30,000 to 55,000.

“It is not even in rotation that Dharamshala has been awarded the game,” a senior board functionary said, adding: “If you had a choice between 23,000 people watching India play Pakistan and 40,000 or 50,000 people watching, which option would you choose?” Clearly, outside of Maharashtra, where Pakistan are not welcome to play, there are several venues that could have been considered for this big-ticket game.

G Gangaraju, the BCCI vice-president from South Zone and also the chairman of the board’s tour programme and fixtures committee, was not forthcoming on the reasons behind allotting 17 matches to Nagpur and Dharamshala and shortlisting only five other venues. “I’ll have to look into it and get back to you. I’m in Parliament right now,” Gangaraju said.

Only a month ago, BCCI had added six new venues to its list of certified Test centres. Of those six, only Dharamshala has been awarded eight World T20 games while the remaining five -Pune, Rajkot, Indore, Ranchi and Visakhapatnam -have been ignored altogether.

Some other traditional centres like Chennai -the power centre of the previous regime in the BCCI -have also been snubbed. Chennai will host only four women’s World T20 games instead of the expected big-draw men’s matches.

Officials from the grounds and pitches committee were also contacted to ascertain if there were particular reasons why so many possible venues were ignored. “Not that I know of,” a senior committee member said. Two state association presidents also pleaded ignorance on why their venues, recently upgraded to Test centres, were not considered.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) will pay the BCCI Rs 55.2 cr to host the entire men’s World T20, which works out to Rs 1.6 cr per match for 35 matches.

It is understood that the BCCI will pay the hosting association the gate money for each game, which sources say is between to Rs 2-3 cr per match depending on capacity and ticket sales.

Even for a venue with minimum seating capacity, hosting eight matches would mean earning a little more than Rs 8 cr from the board.

Surprisingly , there is nobody in the BCCI who is willing to explain the reasons behind the venue allotments.

Lionel Messi out of Club World Cup clash with Guangzhou Evergrande

Lionel Messi will miss Barcelona’s Club World Cup semifinal with Guangzhou Evergrande due to renal colic, the club has announced.

Barca will face Luiz Felipe Scolari’s Asian champions at the International Stadium Yokohama on Thursday as they look to book their place in the final on Sunday.

However, they are expected to be without Neymar as he builds up his fitness following a groin injury and Messi has now been ruled out.

A statement on the club's official website read: "Leo Messi will not be playing in today's Club World Cup semifinal against Guangzhou Evergrande.

"The Argentinian striker is suffering from renal colic, a type of abdominal pain commonly caused by kidney stones, and will be absent for the 11:30 a.m. CET kick-off against the Asian champions.

"His future availability will depend on the outcome of further medical tests."

European champions Barcelona won the Club World Cup in 2009 and 2011 and are aiming to become the first club to win the competition three times.

They will face South American champions River Plate in the final after the Argentine side beat Sanfrecce Hiroshima 1-0 in their semifinal.

The losers of Thursday's game will face Sanfrecce in the third-place playoff.



Lionel Messi (C) vies with Las Palmas' goalkeeper Javi Varas and defender Pedro Bigas Rigo (R) prior to getting injured during the Spanish league football match. Photo: AFP

Pakistan confirms participation in Saudi-led anti-terror alliance

After initial ambiguity, the Pakistan government confirmed on Wednesday its participation in a Saudi-led military alliance for 'fighting terrorism', but said the scope of its participation would be defined after Riyadh shared the details of the coalition it was assembling.

"Pakistan... is awaiting further details to decide the extent of its participation in different

activities of the alliance,” a statement issued by the Foreign Office said.

Saudi Arabia had announced on Tuesday that it had forged the 34-nation alliance of Muslim countries for fighting terrorism and extremism, which included Pakistan. Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al Jubeir had later explained that the participating countries would



Members of Saudi special forces take part in a graduation ceremony held in Riyadh on May 19, 2015. Photo: Reuters.

themselves decide about the extent of their participation.

The coalition was envisaged to serve as a platform for security cooperation, including provision of training, equipment and troops, and involvement of religious scholars for dealing with extremism.

Senior officials at the foreign ministry initially expressed surprise at Pakistan being included in the new group, and said that Riyadh had not taken Islamabad on board. But subsequent developments revealed that Saudi Arabia had been given a secret commitment regarding joining the alliance, about which the Foreign Office was not aware.

There were speculations about who had given that assurance.

The military had started in October a new phase in the bilateral defence relationship by training Saudi special forces personnel in countering terrorism. Chief of Army Staff Gen Raheel Sharif visited Saudi Arabia after the special exercises for discussions on counter-terrorism efforts.

The Foreign Office statement tried to brush off the embarrassment caused to Riyadh because of the reports that it had included Pakistan in the coalition without its prior knowledge by

saying that it welcomed the formation of the counter-terrorism alliance.

It impliedly conceded that some information had been shared with it before the announcement from Riyadh, as the statement noted that it was awaiting 'further' details.

The Foreign Office said it consistently supported all efforts at fighting terrorism and a resolution adopted at the 42nd session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation had called on members to "join regional and international efforts to fight terrorism and extremist thought".

Anwar Iqbal adds from Washington: The United States said on Wednesday that the new coalition supplemented its efforts to defeat terrorism and it had long been urging its Muslim allies to form such an alliance.

"It certainly is in line with what we have long been saying and urging countries in the region to do, which is to coalesce around the need to deal with the terrorist threat there in the region," US State Department spokesman John Kirby said at a news briefing.

"We welcome, as we have welcomed, any intensification of the effort against ISIL (the militant Islamic State group) in the region, as well as against other terrorist networks. Any effort to increase pressure on those networks is a welcome effort."

He said the US was waiting for details on how this force would operate but noted that the Saudi announcement had given a broad outline.

"I would only point you to what the deputy crown prince himself said, which is that they're not ruling anything in or out at this point in terms of what it could mean," Mr Kirby said.

"There's every expectation and anticipation by this coalition to work with neighbours and partners in the region in ways that collectively they think is most appropriate to go after terrorist threats," he added.

Asked if it would be a parallel alliance or work with the US-led international coalition, Mr Kirby said those 34 nations were already part of the 65-plus-member coalition against the IS.

"This is something separate and distinct that they have done themselves and have arranged for themselves, ... but they are already part of the coalition countering" the IS in the region, he said.

Maldives joins Saudi-led anti-terrorism military alliance

The Maldives is among 34 countries that have joined a Saudi Arabian-led Islamic military alliance formed to combat terrorist organisations.

According to a statement from the state-owned Saudi Press Agency, "a joint operations centre shall be established in the city of Riyadh to coordinate and support military operations to fight terrorism and to develop the necessary programs and mechanisms for supporting these efforts."

Announcing the new coalition at a press conference last night, Deputy Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman, also the kingdom's defence minister, said the coalition will "target all terrorist

organisations in the Islamic world.”

The campaign would “coordinate” efforts to fight terrorism in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Egypt, and Afghanistan.

“Every country will be participating according to its capabilities and we will not only fight [the Islamic State], but any terrorist group,” he said.

More than 100 Maldivians are thought to be fighting with militant groups in Iraq and Syria, including the Jabhat al-Nusra Front and the Islamic State (IS). At least seven Maldivian fighters have been killed in battles and local media reports suggest a steady outflow of would-be jihadis, including entire families and members of Malé’s criminal gangs.

Details of the Maldivian army’s participation in military operations remain unclear. The government has yet to officially comment on the decision to join the military coalition.

Ibrahim Muaz Ali, the president’s spokesperson, declined to comment and directed *The Maldives Independent* to the foreign ministry and the military. The spokesperson of the Maldives National Defence Force was not responding to calls at the time of publication.

The countries participating in the new alliance include Jordan, United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Turkey, Chad, Togo, Tunisia, Djibouti, Senegal, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Gabon, Guinea, Palestine, Comoros, Qatar, Cote d’Ivoire, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Malaysia, Egypt, Morocco, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, and Yemen.

Saudi Arabia’s regional rival Iran and its allies Syria and Iraq are not part of the alliance. But the joint statement said “more than ten other Islamic countries have expressed their support for this alliance and will take the necessary measures in this regard, including Indonesia.”

The kingdom has been engaged in a nine-month-long conflict with Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen and has carried out airstrikes against IS fighters in Syria.

IS, which controls large swathes of Iraq and Syria, has vowed to overthrow the monarchies of the Gulf states. The militant organisation has also targeted Saudi Arabia’s Shia minority and killed dozens in bomb attacks on mosques.

The formation of the new military alliance comes after the US urged Gulf Arab states to do more to aid the campaign against IS.

Meanwhile, since assuming office in November 2013, President Abdulla Yameen’s administration has fostered closer ties with Saudi Arabia and China. The president has regularly criticising alleged interference in domestic affairs by Western powers amidst persisting criticism of the government’s human rights track record.

Saudi Arabia and Maldives recently penned an agreement hailed as a [“religious bridge”](#) to maintain religious unity here. The kingdom’s Islamic Affairs Minister Saleh bin Abdulaziz visited the Maldives last month and agreed to help improve the collection of Zakat, an Islamic tax, publish books on Islam in English, expedite ongoing mosque projects and train Imams.

The visit came after Saudi Arabia hosted a conference on moderate Islam in Malé. Islamic Minister Dr Ahmed Ziyad said at the time that the Saudis will help maintain the Maldives’ 100 percent Muslim status.

“A lot of Maldivians may not be aware of this, but there is an organized effort to sustain Western influences here. Those in power in Saudi Arabia understood that it will not do to leave Maldives like this,” he said.

The Saudi government has since agreed to send scholars to Maldives on a regular basis.

In August, Saudi Arabia established a diplomatic mission in the Maldives for the first time. The kingdom also granted US\$20 million for budget support earlier this year, and agreed to provide a US\$80 million loan for the development of a an urban centre on the artificial island of Hulhumalé.

The government has also revealed that during Yameen’s September visit to Mecca, the Saudi government had agreed to provide cheap crude oil to the Maldives. The crude is to be refined in Singapore.

Two senior ministers meanwhile traveled to Riyadh earlier this month to negotiate with the Saudi Investment Fund on investing in the northern iHavan transshipment port.

Republican candidates clash over how to counter IS

Republican presidential hopefuls sparred over how to stop the so-called Islamic State (IS), in the first debate since attacks in California and Paris.

The national security focus yielded heated exchanges between Senators Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio who clashed on surveillance and immigration policy.

Jeb Bush also sought to revive his struggling campaign by forcefully attacking front-runner Donald Trump.

“You’re not going to be able to insult your way to the presidency,” he said.

Mr Trump was on the defensive early in the debate for his proposed ban on Muslims entering the US, saying, “We are not talking about religion, we are talking about security.”

However the debate quickly expanded to broader issues of foreign policy and national security.

The candidates repeatedly addressed heightened fears of terrorism in the US on the same day an emailed threat shut down Los Angeles’ school system.

Analysis: Anthony Zurcher, BBC News, Las Vegas



The audience was outspoken during the debate

The big question going into this last Republican debate of 2015 was how Donald Trump's competitors would try to take the front-runner down.

It seems, however, that only Jeb Bush got that memo. He alone among the candidates engaged the New Yorker directly, and if he had been as forceful several months ago as he was on Tuesday night, his campaign might be in much better shape.

Instead, most of the fireworks during the Las Vegas event occurred between the trio of first-term senators – Marco Rubio, Rand Paul and Ted Cruz.

On the issues of national security and immigration, Mr Rubio faced off against his two congressional colleagues in often acrimonious exchanges.

Barely mentioned over the course of an evening that focused on foreign policy was Mr Trump's call to close the US border to all Muslims.

Given how all the candidates assiduously avoided the subject, one would never have guessed that it was a story that merited global headlines and ignited a firestorm of controversy.

[What Trump doesn't get about the net](#)

[Republican debate: Winners and losers](#)

[Four ways Republicans might take on Trump](#)

But the top nine candidates disagreed over the scope of government surveillance and how to end the civil war raging in Syria.

"If terrorists strike again... the first question will be, 'Why didn't we know about it and why didn't we stop it?'" said Mr Rubio, taking aim at Mr Cruz, who had voted to curtail government surveillance powers.

Another of Mr Trump's proposals – "closing that internet up" to stop IS recruitment – has been hotly debated, with the candidate saying, "I don't want them using our Internet".

Image copyright Reuters

Image caption Mr Carson has seen his support dip in recent weeks
After defending it, he seemed confused by loud booing from the audience, and replied: “These are people that want to kill us folks.”

It was not the only time that the crowd played a part in the programme; on several occasions the audience’s cheers and jeers forced a pause in the candidates’ conversation.

At one point, a heckler interrupted Mr Trump with inaudible comments.



Image caption Mr Kasich called for the country become more united

Other highlights from the debate included:

- Despite expectations of a confrontation between the top candidates – Senator Cruz and Mr Trump – the men avoided directly criticising each other
- Mr Trump said that he would not pursue a third-party campaign, saying he had “gained great respect” for the party’s leadership
- When asked whether he could order air strikes that could kill civilians or children, Ben Carson pointed to his experience as a paediatric surgeon and having to tell children about brain cancer
- Kentucky Senator Rand Paul stuck to his strong libertarian foreign policy beliefs, despite stark differences with the other candidates
- New Jersey Governor Chris Christie repeatedly stressed his executive experience as a governor and prosecutor and took a swipe at senators like Mr Cruz and Mr Rubio saying they were all talk
- Ohio Governor John Kasich said world leaders would have been better off discussing terrorism than climate change at a recent summit in Paris
- Former Hewlett Packard CEO Carly Fiorina said help from the private sector should be sought to fix an “incompetent” government

The Republican contest – in depth

[How to dump Trump](#) – four ways his rivals might beat him at the debate

[Muslims on Trump](#) – Muslims in Las Vegas reflect on Trump ban plan

[Cruz on the rise](#) – five things to know about Trump’s biggest threat

[Clinton’s secret agent?](#) – Conspiracy theorists claim Trump is Hillary Clinton’s plant

Mr Trump loomed large over the so-called undercard debate, with the four candidates split over the efficacy of his proposed ban.

Senator Lindsey Graham apologised to US-allied Muslim leaders saying: “I am sorry. He does not represent us”.

Democrats debate on Saturday night, and both parties will hold debates in January.

The state-by-state primary contests in the presidential election begin in six weeks in Iowa on 1 February and will last for months.

Each party will formally nominate their candidate over the summer, with Hillary Clinton the favourite to win the Democratic nomination.

Americans will finally go to the polls in November, and the newly elected president will assume office in late January of 2017.

[News Source](#)

One killed, 40 injured in road tragedy

One person died while 40 others were injured when a bus fell off a cliff at Lindula in Nuwara Eliya this morning.

Police said the bus was transporting employees who were returning to the Tea Research Institute from Talawakele.

The person who died was identified as Kumari Kiribathgoda (59), a resident of Colombo. The injured were admitted to the Lindula and Nuwara Eliya Hospitals.





– See more at :
<http://www.dailymirror.lk/99745/one-killed-40-injured-in-road-tragedy#sthash.Vg7Khu68.dpuf>

Prez's visit sparks protests in Janakpur

The situation has remained tense due to President Bidhya Devi Bhandari's visit to Janakpur since early Wednesday. President Bhandari's participation for the Ram-Janaki Bibaha Mahotsav has sparked protests all over Janakpur.

Supporters of Madhesi Morcha and Madhesi coalition are jointly demonstrating at Janakpur's main chowk. The security has been tightened and heavy deployment of security personnel can be seen in the area.

The agitating Samyukta Loktantrik Madhesi Morcha (SLMM) had announced on Tuesday that it would protest Bhandari's visit. Bhandari is scheduled to arrive at Janakpur at around 12 pm by a helicopter.

Meanwhile, the Ram Janaki temple is being evacuated for security purposes. The pilgrims from Nepal and India have complained that it is improper to evacuate the pilgrims from temple premises.
