

News

Van Attack on London Muslims Suggests New Polarization

Attacker plowed into crowd of Muslims leaving prayer services

By *Danica Kirka, Paisley Dodds and Gregory Katz*
Associated Press

LONDON — The rash of deadly terror attacks that has rattled Britain in recent months took an ominous new turn on Monday as Muslim worshippers became targets during the holy month of Ramadan, mowed down by an attacker who plowed a van into a crowd leaving prayers at two mosques in north London.

It was the same tactic Islamic extremists used in recent assaults on Westminster Bridge and London Bridge. Those attacks and a third outside

in the Muslim community following the attack shortly after midnight that injured at least nine people in London's Finsbury Park neighborhood, which is home to a large Muslim population.

Authorities said the incident was being treated as a terror attack.

One man died at the scene, although he was receiving first aid at the time and it wasn't clear if he died as a result of the attack or from something else.

British media identified the suspect as Darren Osborne, a 47-year-old Briton and father of four living in Cardiff, Wales, who was not known to authori-

"This was an attack on Muslims near their place of worship," May said in a televised address.

"And like all terrorism, in whatever form, it shares the same fundamental goal. It seeks to drive us apart — and to break the precious bonds of solidarity and citizenship that we share in this country. We will not let this happen."

Mayor Sadiq Khan, London's first Muslim mayor, also urged residents to stand together.

"While this appears to be an attack on a particular community, like the terrible attacks in Manchester, Westminster and London Bridge, it is also an assault on all our shared values of tolerance, freedom and respect," Khan said, adding that there would be "zero tolerance" for hate crimes.

"We will not allow these terrorists to succeed. ... We will stay a strong city," the mayor said.

May said police would assess security at mosques and provide any additional resources needed ahead of upcoming celebrations marking the end of Ramadan.

The Metropolitan Police Service, already stretched by investigations of the earlier attacks and a high-rise apart-



Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May, right, talk to faith leaders at Finsbury Park Mosque in north London, after an incident where where a van struck pedestrians, in London, Monday June 19, 2017. British authorities and Islamic leaders moved swiftly to ease concerns in the Muslim community after a man plowed his vehicle into a crowd of worshippers outside a north London mosque early Monday, injuring at least nine people.

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a pop concert in Manchester have triggered a surge in hate crimes against Muslims around Britain.

British authorities, including Prime Minister Theresa May, and Islamic leaders moved swiftly to ease concerns

ties before the attack.

Details about the assailant were sketchy, but the assault — the most dramatic against Muslims in London in recent years — suggested a new, dangerous level of polarization in British society.

ment fire that killed at least 79 people, said it was putting extra patrols on the streets to protect the public.

The attack occurred about 12:20 a.m. when a speeding white van swerved into worshippers emerging from prayers outside the Muslim Welfare House and nearby Finsbury Park Mosque.

People surrounded the driver and witnesses said the outraged crowd began attacking him. A local imam, Mohammed

Mahmoud, said he and others shielded the man until police could take him away.

"By God's grace, we were able to protect him from harm," the imam said.

Police said the driver was arrested on suspicion of the commission, preparation or instigation of terrorism, including murder and attempted murder.

Toufik Kacimi, chief execu-

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