

News story: Dstl forensic experts put 'revenge plotter' behind bars

Specialists at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) provided detailed evidence and expert witness statements in the trial of a man who plotted to harm police officers in West Yorkshire.

Ashkan Ebrahimi, 33, was sentenced on Tuesday after being found guilty of possessing explosives with intent to endanger life, possession on an offensive weapon, possession of a bladed article in a public place and stalking offences.

A spokesperson for Dstl's Forensic Explosive Laboratory said:

The case related to a number of documents pertaining to the manufacture of explosives, as well as a quantity of precursor chemicals which could be used to manufacture explosives.

The main evidence for this case was prepared by one of FEL's Principal Case Officers.

A jury at Bradford Crown Court heard how Ebrahimi became obsessed with revenge against the authorities after he was issued with a non-molestation order against his former partner by a judge in the county court and was subsequently separated from his young child. Ebrahimi targeted police officers and a judge after he became obsessed with "limitless revenge" against authority figures.

A police spokesman said:

The effects of this action sowed the seeds of a deep hatred of the police that grew exponentially from that moment.

He believed that the police were committed to destroying his life and set about seeking to take extreme violent action against them.

He said Ebrahimi was arrested in October 2015 after concerns were raised by Calderdale College about his unusual interest in chemicals and wanting to develop a science lab at home.

He developed a deep-seated and consuming hatred and loathing for people in authority, in the main police officers, and set about research and planning his limitless revenge against them.

A large amount of chemicals were also recovered from Ebrahimi's address, along with an extensive collection of weapons including knives, swords, crossbows and high-powered air rifles, the spokesman said.

Ebrahimi had 90 videos saved that related to the creation of explosives, fuses, detonators and gunpowder.

Detective Chief Inspector Warren Stevenson said:

Ebrahimi is a very dangerous individual who posed a significant and very serious threat to police officers, police staff, solicitors and the judiciary.

News story: Changes to the Immigration Rules

The government is demonstrating its commitment to providing protection and support to the most vulnerable people while at the same time encouraging highly talented students and workers to the UK has been demonstrated in Immigration Rule changes laid today.

A significant change to be outlined in the Rules is the creation of a new form of leave for children under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 (the Dubs amendment). This will ensure that those children who do not qualify for refugee or humanitarian protection leave will still be able to remain in the UK long term. Those who qualify for this new form of leave will be able to study, work, access public funds and healthcare and apply for settlement after 5 years, without paying a fee. The change underlines the government's commitment to fulfil its obligation to the Dubs children and the spirit of the legislation.

The Rules also bring into effect the announcement made by the Home Secretary in May that Afghan interpreters and their family members who have relocated to the UK can apply for settlement after 5 years' residence. This will benefit over 1,100 individuals. It additionally implements plans to expand the ex-gratia redundancy scheme to recognise and honour the service of those made redundant before 19 December 2012, as announced by the Defence Secretary on 11 June. This will mean up to 40 additional Afghan interpreters and their family members will be eligible to relocate to the UK.

In addition to the plans to remove doctors and nurses from the Tier 2 visa cap there are a number of further changes to the UK's visa routes. This includes opening up the exceptional talent visa to include leading fashion designers. They will have their application assessed by the British Fashion Council under the endorsement remit of Arts Council England (ACE), one of the existing 5 endorsing bodies on that route.

The route has also been opened up to a wider pool of TV and film applicants, under the remit of ACE, thanks to changes to the list of eligible industry awards and how recently applicants must have won or been nominated for them. The route already covers leading talent in the fields of science, humanities, engineering, medicine, digital technology or the arts and is open to 2,000 people a year.

To make it easier for students to come and study in the UK's world-leading education sector, the Home Office has expanded the list of countries from which students will be able to benefit from a streamlined application process. Students from an additional 11 countries, including China, will be able to provide a reduced level of documentation when applying for their Tier 4 visa. All students from these countries still need to meet all requirements under Tier 4 and UK Visas and Immigration reserves the right to request this evidence in full and will do so for a random sample of applications.

Immigration Minister Caroline Nokes said:

Today's changes show that we are able to adapt to meet the demands of our frontline services and ensure we are able to attract people who can bring real benefits to our creative industries.

At the same time we are confirming our commitment to those children in need with our ongoing support while demonstrating our recognition for people who have risked their lives by serving with our armed forces.

Other changes to the Rules include:

- A new settlement category for Turkish business people, workers and their families who are in the UK under the EU-Turkey European Communities Association Agreement (ECAA). This means that Turkish workers and business people will be able to settle in the UK after 5 years as either an ECAA business person or ECAA worker (or equivalent points based system routes), as long as the most recent period of leave was under the ECAA. This category was first announced in March 2018 after an Upper Tribunal ruling meant the previous route had to close.
- Electronic Visa Waiver (EVW) holders will be able to present their EVW in a digital format for the first time, allowing for a smoother journey to the UK. This means passengers will be permitted to present their EVW in an electronic or printed format to carriers upon departure and a Border Force Officer upon arrival.

More information is available in the [statement of changes](#). The changes will come into effect on 6 July 2018.

[Press release: UKEF appoints Samir](#)

Parkash as Chief Risk Officer

Samir joins UKEF from the Royal Bank of Scotland, where he most recently was the Managing Director for credit for large corporates, and previously led the bank's credit functions for industrials and corporates in Asia Pacific. He has an extensive background in risk management in the banking sector, with more than 25 years' experience across numerous geographies and sectors.

UKEF's Chief Risk Officer is responsible for enterprise-wide risk management, including UKEF's portfolio of up to £50 billion – safeguarding taxpayers' money while at the same time ensuring that UKEF is able to offer the best support possible to its customers and their overseas buyers.

Louis Taylor, UKEF's Chief Executive Officer, welcomed Samir to UKEF, saying:

I am very pleased to welcome Samir, who brings a wealth of experience to the role of UK Export Finance's Chief Risk Officer. The government's Export Strategy, due to be published in coming weeks, puts UKEF at its heart, and Samir will play a critical role, helping us provide world-class support for the UK's world-class exporters at the same time as ensuring that taxpayers' money is rigorously safeguarded.

Samir Parkash, Chief Risk Officer at UKEF, added:

I am delighted to be joining UK Export Finance at a time when the work of the department has never been more important – UKEF's support can be transformative for its customers, and for the UK's economy, jobs and prosperity. I look forward to playing my part, ensuring that UKEF continues to deliver for the UK's export community.

Samir succeeds David Havelock, Chief Risk Officer at UKEF for more than 12 years, who retired at the end of March. David was appointed a Commander of the British Empire in the 2018 Queen's Birthday Honours in recognition of his contribution to the UK's export economy.

[UK Export Finance](#) is the UK's export credit agency and a government department, working alongside the Department for International Trade as an integral part of its strategy and operations.

Our mission is to ensure that no viable UK export should fail for want of finance or insurance from the private market. We provide finance and insurance to help exporters win, fulfil and ensure they get paid for export contracts.

We have supported exports in the aerospace, construction, oil and gas, mining

and metals, petrochemicals, telecommunications, and transport sectors.

Our regional network of [export finance managers](#) support UK businesses to export. Our range of products includes:

- Bond insurance policy
- Bond support scheme
- Buyer & supplier credit financing facility
- Direct lending facility
- Export insurance policy
- Export refinancing facility
- Export working capital scheme
- Letter of credit guarantee scheme

Our [country cover positions](#) outline our current cover policy and risk appetite for each country

[News story: Civil news: further chance to bid for 2018 contract work](#)

A new process is to open giving organisations meeting our minimum requirements a further opportunity to tender for 2018 civil contract face to face work.

What is happening?

We want to give organisations another chance to bid for work under the 2018 civil contract. We are thinking particularly about those organisations which either:

- did not submit a tender, or
- failed to submit compliant tenders for specific categories of law or procurement areas

Which categories of law will be open to bids?

Tenders will be invited in the following categories of law:

1. family
2. housing, debt and welfare benefits
3. immigration and asylum
4. mental health
5. community care
6. claims against public authorities (formerly known as 'actions against the police etc')
7. clinical negligence

8. public Law
9. family mediation

Minimum contract requirements

Any organisations able to meet the minimum contract requirements will be able to tender to deliver advertised contract work under a 2018 Standard Civil Contract.

This includes organisations that have already tendered for a 2018 Standard Civil contract and wish to deliver additional services. Also, organisations which have not previously tendered.

What are the timescales?

We expect these tenders for further face to face contract work to open by the end of June.

What about immigration removal centres?

Work at Immigration Removal Centres (IRCs) is allocated on a rota basis and we have already received bids significantly in excess of the number of slots available.

So, the LAA will not be tendering for access to these services as part of the further procurement process.

Why do this now?

Our existing tender processes mean that we have already secured services in most procurement areas.

These include our main face to face procurement process and the supplemental tender activity that followed in specific categories of law and procurement areas.

However, we have also identified a number of organisations which wish to deliver civil legal aid but failed to submit compliant tenders in the category of law or procurement area in which they wish to deliver work.

The purpose of the procurement process was to allow organisations which want to deliver publicly funded civil work and meet the LAA's minimum requirements to do so.

As a result, we are giving organisations this further opportunity to tender.

What about the existing procurement process?

We are well-advanced with verification activities to complete the 2018 face to face procurement process.

Following our recent reminders to applicants we have also seen an increase in organisations verifying their bids.

April 2018 supplemental tender

In addition to the main face to face procurement process, the supplemental tender opportunity opened in April 2018 to attract additional services in a small number of areas.

The categories of law included immigration and asylum, family and housing and debt.

Organisations which tendered for a standard civil contract in the supplemental procurement process can expect to receive notification of the outcome of their tender in the week beginning 18 June 2018.

Further information

[Civil 2018 contracts tender](#)

Press release: Investment Minister opens new Steel & Alloy factory

Steel & Alloy's new £27 million Popes Lane manufacturing site in Oldbury has been opened by the UK's Minister for Investment Graham Stuart.

The new site provides another boost to the area with an initial 60 jobs being created, a number that could double based on further development at the site.

Popes Lane is situated at the heart of the Midlands' motor industry, with products rolling off the assembly line destined for the likes of JLR, Honda and Nissan, and is seen by ministers as a strong vote of confidence in the region as the UK departs the European Union.

The new factory offers further good news for the Midlands, which attracted 225 FDI projects last year, creating more than 8,300 new jobs.

Minister for Investment, Graham Stuart, said:

A thriving Midlands Engine is essential to our national economic success and it is fantastic to see foreign investment boosting a long-standing UK company here in the Black Country.

The Midlands sits at the heart of the UK with key transport links as the M1, M6 and West Coast Mainline running through it. The Department for International Trade was set up by Theresa May to boost export, promote investment and reduce barriers to trade.

As an international economic department, we will continue to use

our sector specialists, regional exporters and staff in 108 countries to attract investment to the Midlands and support higher growth and better paying jobs.

Steel and Alloy Managing Director, Mark Cooper, said:

The significant investment in Popes Lane, a state of the art steel processing centre, is an investment in the future of the automotive Industry in the Midlands. This will allow Steel & Alloy to meet the ever-changing needs of our customers and the industry as a whole for years to come.

Sandwell Council leader Councillor Steve Eling said it was an important day for Sandwell when Steel & Alloy acquired the site for such a significant development.

He said:

It is encouraging to see such an important development in Oldbury and we welcome the investment and new jobs the highly-successful company brings to the borough.

It is further confirmation that Sandwell and the Black Country remains at the heart of quality UK manufacturing.

Sandwell welcomes businesses wishing to expand and grow and we offer whatever assistance we can to assist them to invest in our borough.

We were able to support Steel & Alloy through the Growth and Spatial Planning Team and we are delighted that they have been able to construct a new modern factory in our area.

Popes Lane is the latest in a series of 40 global sites developed by Gonvarri Steel Services, the group which Steel and Alloy is a part of, that are strategically located close to the automotive industry which relies on the group's products.

The government sees the [Midlands Engine](#) as a key driver of the UK economy, with the more than 775,000 businesses accounting for 21.6% of all England's exports in 2016.

In the 2015 Autumn Statement £5 million was set aside over 4 years for trade and investment promotion in the Midlands Engine.

Activities

- The Midlands Engine investment hub in Birmingham was launched in March 2017 and runs until 31 March 2019. Its priority is developing an FDI

offer for the region, focusing on capital investment opportunities and particular sectors.

- Local partners have been supported to create sector-based investment offers and attend events to promote the most significant sectors in the Midlands: automotive, rail, life sciences, cyber security, advanced materials, and tech.
- Local partners have also been supported to exhibit at the MIPIM property show in Cannes on a pan-Midlands basis. In March 2018, the Midlands Pavilion was used to launch DIT's updated [Midlands Engine investment portfolio](#) showcasing 24 projects worth over £11 billion.
- Trade missions for Midlands businesses in key sectors have taken place to China (2), USA (2), Germany, UAE and Ireland. Further Midlands trade missions are being planned to USA (Boston & Maryland), Japan, Germany, China, UAE (Dubai) and India.
- A specific Midlands Engine China engagement strategy (covering both Trade and Investment) has been created.
- A network of Export Champions has been created – Midlands business leaders who have a track record of export success.