
SERVING BRITISH SOLDIERS AMONG NEO-NAZI TERROR SUSPECTS ARRESTED IN UK

- 06.09.2017

Deutsche Welle (5 September 2017)

Four alleged members of a banned neo-Nazi group have been arrested on suspicion of preparing and instigating acts of terrorism. The UK's defense ministry said that some of them were soldiers serving in the British army.

The four men, who are between the ages of 22 and 32, were detained Tuesday "on suspicion of being concerned in the commission, preparation and instigation of acts of terrorism," British police said in a statement.

The men, who the authorities didn't name, are also allegedly part of the banned neo-Nazi group National Action. The Ministry of Defense confirmed in a statement that "a number of serving members of the army have been arrested under the Terrorism Act for being associated with a proscribed far-right group."

The West Midlands Counterterrorism Unit made the arrests in the English cities of Birmingham, Ipswich and Northampton and in Powys, Wales. Several properties were raided in connection with the arrests.

"The arrests were pre-planned and intelligence-led; there was no threat to the public's safety," West Midlands Police said.

Banned neo-Nazi group

National Action was the first far-right group outlawed under the UK's Terrorism Act in December. The group had praised the assassination of British lawmaker Jo Cox, who was killed last June by a far-right sympathizer obsessed with Nazis and white supremacist ideology.

"National Action is a racist, anti-Semitic and homophobic organization which stirs up hatred, glorifies violence and promotes a vile ideology," Home Secretary Amber Rudd said when she announced the ban. "Proscribing it will prevent its membership from growing, stop the spread of poisonous propaganda and protect vulnerable young people at risk of radicalization from its toxic views."

Britain is on the threat level "severe" □ the second-highest threat level meaning an attack is considered likely □ after suspected Islamist attacks in London and Manchester. A van driver also mowed down a group of worshippers outside a London mosque in June, leaving one person dead.

dv/msh (AFP, AP, Reuters)

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