

AUSTRALIA'S \$18M CYBER WAR ON JIHADIS RECRUITING ONLINE

Government promises to shut down websites and social media platforms spreading terrorist propaganda

"YOU ARE STRONG, smart, beautiful and we are hoping you will make the right decision. We miss you more than you can imagine. We are worried and we want you to think about what you have left behind. You had a bright future, so please return home."

That was emotional plea to Amira Abase from her devastated family after they learned that the 15-year-old had got on a flight from Gatwick

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to Turkey with two friends Kadiza Sultana and Shamima Begum, 16 and 15, in what police think is an attempt to travel to Syria to join Islamic State as jihadi brides.

However, along with the sadness, there was also anger after it emerged that the three girls, all pupils at London's Bethnal Green Academy, had been contacted on Twitter by Aqsa Mahmood, 20, another woman who had flown to Syria from Glasgow in 2013 to join the terror group, with the Mahmood family saying that the British intelligence services, who had been monitoring Aqsa's account, having "serious questions to answer". "Sadly, despite all the government's rhetoric on

Isis," the Mahmood family said in a statement. "If they can't even take basic steps to stop children leaving to join Isis, what is the point of any new laws?"

Radicalisation of three teenagers by a known jihadi on a major platform such as Twitter points to major flaws in the strategies being employed by Western intelligence services, with experts saying that they are being overrun by the sheer scale of extremist propaganda online.

The United Kingdom Home Office admits the problem, saying that such propaganda "can directly influence people who are vulnerable to radicalisation".

To tackle this perceived "bedroom radicalisation", the Home Office say they are cooperating with social media companies and civil society groups, divulging figures that reveal the take-down of unlawful terrorist material online has almost tripled. While the Home Office could not divulge government spending figures on the battle against online extremism, it revealed that, from 2010 to 2013, 19,000 pieces of online extremist material were removed from websites by the British government's Counter Terrorism Internet Referral Unit (CTIRU) in comparison with 56,000 pieces since December 2013 alone, marking an almost 300% rise. Other members of

DROP IN THE OCEAN: After Australia's attorney general announced an \$18m fund to fight terror online, experts in counter terrorism said that this 'cat and mouse' strategy is ineffective

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