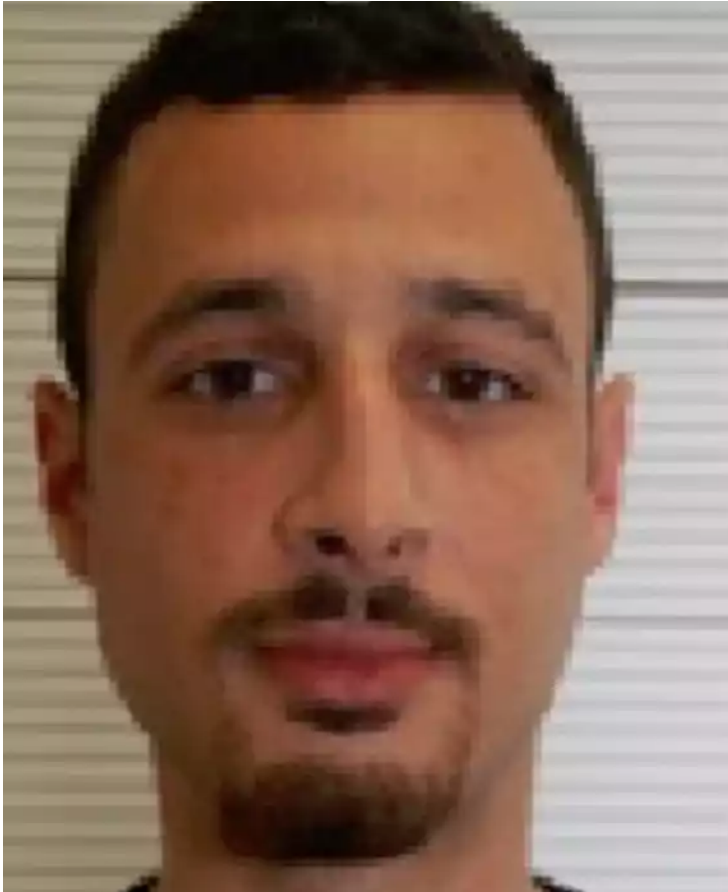


Two UK men who paid Brussels bombing suspect to be sentenced

Zakaria Boufassil and Mohammed Ali Ahmed gave £3,000 to 'man in the hat' Mohamed Abrini in Birmingham park



Zakaria Boufassil (L) was found guilty of engaging in conduct in preparation of acts of terrorism. Mohammed Ali Ahmed had admitted the offence. Photograph: West Midlands police/EPA

Press Association

Monday 12 December 2016 02.28 EST

Two British men linked to the Brussels bombing suspect Mohamed Abrini are due to be sentenced on Monday for terror offences.

During a secret rendezvous in a Birmingham park, Zakaria Boufassil and Mohammed Ali Ahmed supplied £3,000 to Abrini - dubbed "the man in the hat" after he was caught on CCTV at Brussels airport just before the bombing in March this year.

A jury of six men and six women at Kingston crown court in south-west London last week found Boufassil, 26, from Birmingham, guilty of engaging in conduct in preparation of acts of terrorism.

Ahmed admitted the offence the previous month, while the Crown Prosecution Service offered no evidence against Boufassil's sister, Soumaya.

Boufassil, 26, admitted during the trial that he met Abrini in the park, but denied it had anything to do with terrorism and its funding. He also denied sharing the intention of Ahmed, who he insisted took advantage of his naivety and never communicated his plans.

During the trial, the court heard that money was taken from an account held by Anouar Haddouchi, an associate of Ahmed who previously lived in Birmingham and had travelled to Syria to fight for Islamic State, into which overpayments of housing benefits totalling £5,413 had been paid between 21 December 2014 and 1 November 2015.

Ahmed used a replacement debit card for the account to make 17 withdrawals between 30 May and 30 June 2015 - £3,000 of the cash was later handed to Abrini in Small Heath Park in Birmingham.

Abrini, 31, was arrested in Belgium on 22 March and accused of participating in terrorist acts related to his role in the Brussels suicide bombings.

The Belgian Moroccan is also wanted by French authorities for the 13 November 2015 attacks in Paris in which 130 people were killed.

[More news](#)

Topics

[Crime Birmingham](#) [UK security and counter-terrorism](#) [Brussels attacks](#)

[Save for later](#) [Article saved](#)

[Reuse this content](#)