

## POLICE LAUNCH MAJOR SEARCH FOR THE KILLERS

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Britain's biggest-ever manhunt was under way yesterday for the terrorists who brought carnage to London. Police and Security Service agents working on the mass murder inquiry are concerned at least three members of an al-Qaeda cell could be on the loose in Britain. BRITAIN'S biggest-ever manhunt was under way yesterday for the terrorists who brought carnage to London. Police and Security Service agents working on the mass murder inquiry are concerned at least three members of an al-Qaeda cell could be on the loose in Britain.

And it emerged that the authorities want to track a Moroccan cleric who lived in the UK for many years and has been linked with other bombings.

The Home Secretary Charles Clarke agreed the main concern was that the terrorists could strike again. He said: "That is, of course, the number one preoccupation that the police and security services have at this moment."

Security expert Charles Shoebridge warned another attack was now likely as the cell had now broken cover.

One theory is the atrocities were carried out by a four-strong group based in the Midlands or North who arrived together at King's Cross station early on Monday.

But police would not discuss whether they suspect the terrorists hold British passports, or were in the country illegally, or how long they had spent preparing the attack.

It is thought that the three Underground explosions were triggered by timers, but police were last night still refusing to comment on whether the bus attack was Britain's first suicide bombing.

Meanwhile, US authorities have been quoted as confirming that Scotland Yard anti-terrorism officers have recovered key parts of the timing devices in the three train blasts, but not at the site of the wrecked bus.

The Madrid bombings which killed 191 people in March last year were all triggered by mobile phones, but yesterday Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Ian Blair noted there is no signal on deep-lying Tube lines.

Sir Ian refused to reveal how many officers were involved in the inquiry, but it is a far larger number than for any previous UK crime.

Officers from Scotland Yard's anti-terrorism branch are working closely with Special Branch officers from around the UK.

They are liaising with agents from all three of Britain's security services as well as their foreign counterparts.

In Madrid, police discovered three bombs that failed to go off, fitted to mobile phones that used the alarms as timers.

The masterminds have still not been caught.

On Thursday, a previously unknown group calling itself the Secret Organisation of al-Qaeda of Jihad Organisation in Europe claimed responsibility for the London bombings.

US media last night reported that Britain had asked its authorities for information on Mohamed Guerbouzi, also known as al-Garbuzi, who was jailed for 20 years in his absence over the May 2003 Casablanca bombings.

The 49-year-old cleric lived in London for 16 years, but went into hiding when it was revealed he was in contact with a key suspect in the Madrid bombings.

Meanwhile, the most terrifying aspect of the new al-Qaeda cell is they claim to have links across Europe, a West terrorist expert said yesterday.

And Prof Wolff, of Bath University, said it could be a relatively new group: "It has managed to avoid the usual chitter-chatter that goes with previous attacks or attempted attacks.

"So this might mean that it is a relatively new group on the scene with this kind of high profile attack. On the other hand, to organise this sort of high-profile attack, it is quite clear that there is also some kind of support network in place in the UK."