

## Al-Qaeda 'hinted at alleged doctor attacks'

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National Nine News

By ninemsn staff

An al-Qaeda leader in Iraq may have given a cryptic clue about the foiled UK bombing attacks when he reportedly told a British cleric that "those who cure you will kill you".

*The Times of London* reports the warning was delivered to a senior British cleric, Canon Andrew White, in Baghdad several months ago.

The cleric passed on details of the warning, but not the specific wording, to a senior British Government official in mid-April, according to the report.

*The Times* is also reporting that several of the suspects have links to extremist Islamic groups.

Eight of the Muslims arrested following the foiled London and Glasgow bombing attempts, including Gold Coast doctor Mohammed Haneef, are doctors.

Federal police are using emergency terrorism powers for the first time to extend Haneef's detention, with a top British terrorism investigator is expected to fly in from the UK.

Officers are questioning the 27-year-old Indian national after he was arrested at Brisbane airport on Monday night, attempting to leave Australia.

The second doctor taken in for questioning yesterday, Mohammed Asif Ali, was released after investigators decided there was no charge to answer.

A magistrate granted police an extra 48 hours to interrogate Dr Haneef.

"It was a lightning-fast operation," a police source told the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Gold Coast Hospital colleagues of Haneef said the junior doctor was anxious to fly home on Monday, claiming his wife had just given birth to his child in India.

Haneef reportedly told hospital staff he would be gone for seven to 10 days, but it has been revealed he did not have any scheduled holidays in the hospital roster and he only had a one-way ticket leaving Australia.

"He was in a hurry to get home," a doctor told the *Courier Mail*.

"He didn't mention anything to me about the leave, so maybe it was a quick decision to go to India."

Police yesterday successfully sought from a magistrate the right to question Haneef for another day without laying charges.

However, Federal Police Commissioner Mick Keelty said last night that Haneef "may have done nothing wrong and may at the end of the day be free to go."

A spokeswoman for North Cheshire Hospitals in the UK said that both Haneef and a doctor arrested in Liverpool, north-west England, had both worked at the same hospital near that city.

Haneef worked there until 2005, she said.

In all, six doctors and two others have been arrested over the attempted bombings in London and Glasgow.

Another foreign doctor from the same Gold Coast hospital as Haneef has also been questioned, but Keelty there were no allegations against the man.

The Indian national has been employed at the hospital as a junior doctor on a temporary visa since last September.

He had been hired by the Queensland government from Liverpool under a much-hyped overseas recruitment drive.

Haneef was arrested after a tip-off from British authorities, and Keelty stressed the AFP was acting on their behalf.

The federal and Queensland governments have ruled out a terror threat against Australia in connection with the latest developments.

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