

Opinion

When terrorists target children

The Islamic State's war against the West has become a war against the West's children.

Children like Saffie Rose Roussos.

The angel-faced eight-year-old — described by a teacher as “quiet and unassuming with a creative flair” — was one of the first victims to be identified after Monday night's suicide bombing at a concert in Manchester, England.

Because she loved the music of pop singer Ariana Grande, this little girl, along with her sister and mother, eagerly joined 21,000 other fans at Manchester Arena. And because of that innocent love, this young girl with big brown eyes and a cherubic smile was slaughtered along with 21 others, many of whom were also children. Even in a world that has been numbed by the depredations of Islamist terrorists who distort the teachings of their faith as they indiscriminately murder others — in airplanes, transit systems, nightclubs, arenas and resorts to name just a few targets — the attack on Manchester's youth stands out as an act of pure evil.

Although police have identified the dead suicide bomber as Salman Abedi, a Manchester resident of Libyan descent, they do not know if he was part of a larger conspiracy.

However, the Islamic State has proudly claimed responsibility for the attack. And in doing so it admitted it is willing to target children and teenagers, Ariana Grande's core fan base.

In the eyes of this terrorist group, these were not young people who had harmed no one, they were the enemy. How deluded and depraved can you get?

The hearts of decent people around the world are now breaking for those young people in England as well as the devastated families they leave behind.

Of the 59 concert-goers who were injured badly enough by shrapnel to be hospitalized, at least 12 were children under 16. We are not accustomed to hearing of so many young lives cut short or maimed in such a brutal and deliberate way.

Attending a pop concert has become a rite of passage for young people in Europe and North America, one happy step on the path to adulthood.

Now parents, and likely many teens and children, will pause and think twice about indulging in such events. That, of course, is what the terrorists intend.

Unable to stand up for long against Western armies — the Islamic State is being beaten in Iraq — the Islamist extremists wage a merciless, asymmetrical warfare, using terror as a weapon to weaken and divide societies. But the terrorists will not win as long as our political leaders remain dedicated to protecting the lives of their citizens and aggressively pursue the terrorists whenever they can.

Nor will the extremists ever claim victory as long as ordinary citizens in multicultural countries such as Britain, Canada and America refuse to succumb to the fear or hatred of others that the terrorists wish to inspire. Whoever doubts this should think of Saffie Rose Roussos, how she died and how important it is to resist what killed her.



Champion Tracks

At left, (front row, from left) Anna Strachan, Ellen Crawford, Maureen Cassidy, (middle row, from left) Julie Flynn, Dianne Tomson, John Cassidy, Paul Crawford, (back row, from left) John Flynn, Udo Tomson and Chris Strachan visit the Great Wall of China. Send 'Champion Tracks' photos to cohara@miltoncanadianchampion.com (minimum 600 KB resolution). Please include destination information and everyone's names.

Up Front

Please keep your pets safe

As temperatures rise these days, so too do the risks associated with a dog in a parked vehicle. Sadly, this continues to be a problem in our society — regardless of how many columns/editorials are written or how many reports surface about animal neglect.

At the risk of stating the obvious, a car can become an oven-like deathtrap in a matter of minutes, even with the window cracked open. Don't think so? Try sitting in your vehicle for 10 minutes on a hot day and see how little air circulation there is with a slightly



Steve LeBlanc

News/Sports Editor

rolled down window — and how quickly you start feeling the adverse effects. And that's without the fur factor. The 'I was only in the store for a minute' defence simply rings hollow. Nothing takes just a minute. Those who think so are the same ones who subscribe to the theory that Rome really was built in a day.

If you must take your dog along on weekend errands, please consider bringing a family member or friend along to take Fido or Spot for a short walk in the parking lot while you're busy shopping. This may not be the easiest course of action. But remember, having a pet isn't about convenience — it's about companionship.

That's put in serious jeopardy when you leave a dog in the sweltering heat. Please, let's keep our four-legged friends safe — and cool — this summer.

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