

Beat: Travel

UK bomb hoax suspect detained for mental assessment

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USPA News - A man who allegedly made a false bomb threat on board a Qatar Airways flight to England on Tuesday, triggering a major scare in which fighter jets were scrambled to escort the plane, has been detained for a mental health assessment, British police said Wednesday. Greater Manchester Police said the 47-year-old man, whose name has not been released, was sectioned under the Mental Health Act on Wednesday.

"Following his arrest he was assessed by medical staff and again by a mental health team. He was subsequently sectioned to allow for a fuller assessment and appropriate treatment," a police spokesperson said. The Mental Health Act allows police to detain a person who appears mentally unstable in order to take him to a place of safety for up to 72 hours, during which the person is assessed by doctors. They will then decide whether to release him from mental care, keep him in hospital if he agrees to be a voluntary patient, or, if his mental state warrants it, detain him for up to 28 days for treatment. The 47-year-old man from northwest England is accused of handing a note to a crew member while on board Qatar Airways Flight 23, which carried 269 passengers and 13 crew on a flight from Doha to Manchester. The pilot declared an emergency, believing a bomb was possibly on board, after which fighter jets were scrambled to escort the plane until it landed. The Airbus A330-300 landed safely at Manchester Airport, after which armed police boarded the aircraft and took the man into custody on suspicion of making a bomb hoax. Police also searched the aircraft but found nothing suspicious. The contents of the note that sparked the bomb scare have not been released.

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United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com