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The men were arrested after police launched raids at 3am in Greenvale, Dallas, Campbellfield and Coolaroo. They were remanded in custody until April 30.

Magistrate Simon Zebrowski ordered that the brief of evidence be served by March 19. The accused men were not required to speak during the short hearing.

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Comment: Kyle Horace was 18 when Chief Justice Brian Martin sentenced him to seven years in notorious Berrimah prison in March 2007. Kyle had been in remand since the guilty verdict in November 2006. His daughter was born while he was in remand. Unlike in the above case of an alleged terrorist, it appears that no sympathy was shown to Kyle because of his age or past record of detention, either while in remand or at the time of sentencing. During his seven years Kyle was at no time held in the protection unit of Berrimah prison. He sought solitary confinement as a relief from the fear of his surroundings. Judging by the above news report, Kyle was treated worse than a terrorist.

■ David Hurley, Shannon Deery and Anthony Dowsley
Melbourne

An attempt to buy a black market semiautomatic rifle in recent days prompted a massive police response yesterday, culminating in three alleged Islamic terrorists being charged with plotting a Melbourne massacre.

Police believe Hanifi Halis, 21, Ertunc Eriklioglu, 30, and Samed Eriklioglu, 26, were planning to buy more than one weapon before picking a crowded city target.

Earlier yesterday, Chief Commissioner Graham Ashton said: "Whilst a specific location... was not finalised, there was a view towards a crowded place to be able to kill, we allege, as maximum an amount of people as possible.

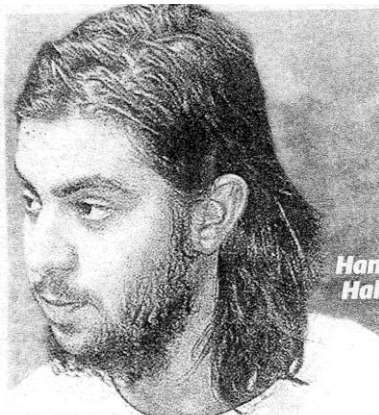
"In the past week, their intentions have escalated... they've become more energised.

The raids in Melbourne's north were led by heavily armed Special Operations Group officers.

The three men had made an effort to move away from attending bigger mosques and also avoided socialising with people who might bring them to the attention of police, sources said.

Police have had the men — all Australians of Turkish background — on their radar since early last year.

All three had their passports cancelled this year — in January, March and October.



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Mr Zebrowski said Mr Halis would be particularly vulnerable while in custody because of his age.

He also said that all three men would be vulnerable because none of them had been in custody before.

A lawyer for Ertunc Eriklioglu asked that his client be seen by a nurse after sustaining injuries during his arrest.

Australian Federal Police Assistant Commissioner Ian McCartney said the suspects had been inspired by the Islamic State terror group...