

Care home killer asked friend to help

Japan

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The man who stabbed to death 19 disabled people in a Japanese care home asked a friend to join him in his attack, insisting that the handicapped were "unnecessary" and "a waste of taxes".

Satoshi Uematsu, who also wounded 26 people, reacted furiously when his friend refused. He telephoned him again on Sunday, two days before the attack on the Tsukui Yamayuri-en care home where Uematsu once worked.

The friend did not report the conversation, according to Japanese media, one of several failures to appreciate the level of threat posed by Uematsu, who spoke openly for months of his conviction that disabled people were better off dead, and his intention to kill them.

"I didn't think he'd actually do it," the friend, who is 27, told the *Mainichi* newspaper. "I can't believe it. This was an act of terrorism."

Uematsu smiled yesterday as he was driven away from the police station where he handed himself in after the attack. Police said he insisted that he had "saved" his victims from worthless



Satoshi Uematsu smiled as he was driven from the police station

lives, although he expressed sympathy with the relatives of the dead.

Details emerged yesterday of the savage nature of the attack, which was carried out in less than an hour in the early hours of Tuesday morning. After breaking a window with a hammer, Uematsu entered the home and tied up members of staff with plastic handcuffs, but left them unharmed. He took their keys and moved through two floors of the facility, stabbing residents in the neck, throat and chest. He used five different knives.

Questions have been asked about why Uematsu was free to carry out an attack. He was forced to resign from his job at the care home in February after sending a letter to the speaker of the lower house of Japan's parliament setting out his plans. Uematsu was committed to psychiatric care and diagnosed with a mental disorder caused by smoking marijuana, but he was discharged after 12 days when a doctor judged he had recovered.

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