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A catalytic and *tert*-butoxide ion-mediated amidation of aldehydes with *para*-nitro azides

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We report here a new catalytic reaction in which, *p*-nitro azides are acylated by aldehydes to produce amides and molecular nitrogen in a single step. The transformation is believed to proceed *via* an electron transfer process mediated by the *tert*-butoxide ion, and catalysed by a thiazolium salt derived species.

- ¹⁰ Amide bond forming reactions are among the most executed in organic chemistry, forming key linkages in peptides, proteins, synthetic polymers and drugs.¹ Traditional approaches to amide synthesis involving the coupling of activated carboxylic acid derivatives (anhydrides and acyl chlorides) with nucleophilic amines are expensive, wasteful and often produce toxic by-products necessitating lengthy purification.² The demand for sustainable and greener³ approaches to amide synthesis has stimulated intense activity in the development of new and creative catalytic methods.¹¹
- ¹⁵ Straightforward and desirable methods involving the direct coupling of carboxylic acids and amines with certain boronic acid catalysts have been reported.⁴ Other strategies generally involve either the catalytic or oxidative acylation of an amine, or occur by a suitable combination of complementary reaction partners following a unique pathway. For example, the catalytic generation of activated carboxylates from functionalised aldehydes by *N*-heterocyclic carbene (NHC) catalysts with a co-catalyst, followed by their conversion to amides has been shown to work with a variety of amines.⁵ Oxidative processes utilising NHC's⁶ and metal based catalysts have been
- ²⁰ used for amide formation from aldehydes with stoichiometric oxidants.⁷ The ruthenium catalysed conversion of alcohols and primary amines with loss of H₂ developed by Milstein *et al.*⁸ represents an example of an atom economic and green approach to amide synthesis, whereas the oxidative coupling of α -bromo nitroalkanes with amines offers a quite different pathway.⁹ The formation of amides by the intermolecular coupling of thioacids and electron poor anilines that require no activating or coupling
- reagents has been investigated.^{10,11} The mechanism is believed to involve the nucleophilic attack of the thioacetate onto the azide *N*-3 ²⁵ followed by formation of a cyclic thiatriazoline intermediate which collapses to give the amide, nitrogen gas and elemental sulfur.¹¹ In seeking to further develop the theme of this chemistry, we were intrigued by the possibility of using aldehydes directly in a redox azido-amidation type-process, thus broadening the range of available substrates and eliminating the sulfur by-product.

In recent studies, we observed that in the presence of the thiazolium salt (2), the *tert*-butoxide ion selectively reduces the azide group of *para*-azidonitrobenzene (Scheme 1).¹² The reaction is believed to proceed by an electron transfer process *via* the dianion **3**, followed

³⁰ by concomitant loss of nitrogen gas to give aniline **4**.



Scheme 1 A proposed mechanism to explain the catalytic reduction of 1 to aniline 4 by the -butoxide ion.

³⁵ We now report the *tert*-butoxide ion mediated amidation of aldehydes¹³ with *p*-nitro azides, catalysed by a thiazolium salt derived catalyst. This clean transformation allows the synthesis of 4-nitroaromatic amides in one step with high atom economy, and driven by loss of environmentally benign nitrogen gas.¹⁴

For the reaction development we opted to use the electron deficient 1-azido-4-nitrobenzene **1**, with benzaldehyde **5** as the acyl donor. Using previously optimised conditions for the azide-reduction as a starting point (2 equiv. *tert*-BuONa, THF, rt),¹² a number of ⁴⁰ preliminary reactions were performed (Table 1).

Thus, treatment of the azide **1** and aldehyde **5** in THF with *tert*-BuONa at room temperature immediately resulted in the evolution of a gas and, complete conversion of the starting material **1**. After chromatography, the corresponding target amide **6** was isolated in 56% yield along with *p*-nitroaniline **4** (39%) (Table 1, Entry 1). Similar results were achieved when the potassium salt of *tert*-butoxide ion was employed; giving amide **6** (51%) and aniline **4** (36%) (Table 1, Entry 2). However, when the same reaction was carried out in the

presence of 1 equiv. of the thiazolium salt 2, the yield of the amide 6 decreased (30%) whereas the aniline 4 was isolated in higher yield (62%) (Table 1, Entry 3).

When a solution of **1** and **5** was treated with *tert*-BuONa (2 equiv.) at -25 °C without catalyst, unreacted starting materials were recovered (Table 1, Entry 4). In contrast, the addition of **2** (1 equiv.) to the reaction mixture at -25 °C followed by *tert*-BuONa (3 equiv.) s gave the target amide **6** in 80% yield with no observed aniline **4** (Table 1, Entry 5). A reduced loading of **2** (0.1 equiv.) resulted in a similar yield of amide **6** (81%) (Table 1, Entry 6).

Stirring a mixture (30 min) of the azide **1**, the aldehyde **5** and *tert*-BuONa (2 equiv.) at -25 °C; no reaction was observed (TLC) until the addition of **2** (0.1 equiv.), then after a further 30 min, the amide **6** was isolated in 83% yield (Table 1, Entry 7)^r

Table 1 Optimisation of the reaction conditions and control experiments.

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D ₂ N 1 (0.5 mr	N ₃ + H mol) 5 (1.5 ec	2, base THF T (°C), 30 m	in O ₂ N		4 NH ₂
Entry	2 (equiv.)	base (equiv.)	T (°C)	6 yield ^a (%)	4 yield ^a (%)
1	-	NaO ^t Bu (2.0)	rt	56	39
2	-	KO ^t Bu (2.0)	rt	51	36
3	1.0	NaO ^t Bu (3.0)	rt	30	62
4	-	NaO ^t Bu (2.0)	-25	0	0
5	1.0	NaO ^t Bu (3.0)	-25	80	0
6	0.1	NaO ^t Bu (2.0)	-25	81	0
7	0.1	NaO ^t Bu (2.0)	-25	83	0

^aisolated yield after chromatography; ^b2 added after stirring 1 and 2 at -25 °C in the presence of *tert*-BuONa.

We next investigated the one pot diazotisation-azidation-amidation reaction, since this would negate the isolation of the azide substrate.¹⁵ This proved viable; the diazotisation/azidation of *p*-nitroaniline **4** with ^tBuONO/TMSN₃ at 0 °C in THF,¹⁶ followed by catalytic amidation at -25 °C provided the amide **6** in an excellent 94 % yield (Table 1, Entry 1). The scope of the tandem reaction was next is investigated with a number of electron deficient anilines and several aldehydes (Table 2, Entries 1-15). Both *ortho-* and *meta*-substituents on the *narg-*nitroaromatic azide were well tolerated with benzaldehyde (Table 2, Entries 2-4). The reaction worked best

substituents on the *para*-nitroaromatic azide were well tolerated with benzaldehyde (Table 2, Entries 2-4). The reaction worked best when electron deficient anilines were coupled with electron rich aromatic aldehydes, including *ortho-* and *para-substitution* on the aromatic aldehyde (Table 2, Entries 5-7).

When an electron deficient aromatic aldehyde was used, the yield of amide dropped significantly (38%) (Table 2, Entry 8). The ²⁰ heteroaromatic thiophene-2-carbaldehyde was tolerated, giving the corresponding amide isolated in good yield (82%) (Table 2, Entry 9). When alkyl aldehydes were employed; high yields were consistently obtained (78-94% yield, entries 10-15).

The reaction raises a number of interesting questions with regard to the mechanism. During the 1980's, Guthrie and co-workers published a number of detailed papers on the reaction mechanism between the *tert*-butoxide ion and nitrobenzene, involving SET processes.¹⁷ Indeed, the function of *tert*-butoxide ion as an electron transfer agent is well documented.¹⁸

²⁵ When the amidation reaction of the azide **1** and benzaldehyde (**2**) was attempted under an atmosphere of oxygen or in the presence of the radical trap TEMPO, no reaction was observed with complete recovery of the azide **1**. These results, which are consistent with our earlier findings¹² provide support for a radical based mechanism in the amidation process (See Scheme S1, supporting information (SI)).

Table 2 Reaction of *para*-nitro aromatic azides with various aldehydes

NH ₂ 0 ₂ N H ₂ NH ₂ 1. ¹ BuONO (1.05 equiv.), TMSN ₃ (1.05 equiv.), THF, 0 °C 2. RCHO (1.5 equiv.), 2 (0.1 equiv.) NaO'Bu (2 equiv.), 2 (0.1 equiv.) NaO'Bu (2 equiv.), THF, -25 °C EWG							
Entry	Aniline	Aldehyde	Amide	Yield% ^a			
1	O ₂ N NH ₂	H H	O ₂ N N O	94			
2		H H		85			
3	O2N CF3 NH2	H C	O ₂ N CF ₃ H O	77			



^aisolated yield after chromatography.

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The relative nitrogen connectivity between the starting azide and the corresponding amide was determined by performing experiments with 15 N-labelled 1-azido-4-nitrobenzene. The reaction proceeded with retention of 15 N directly attached to the aromatic ring (See Scheme S2, SI).

^s The role of the thiazolium salt **2** is uncertain and warrants further investigation. However, preliminary mechanistic studies with the thiazolium derived triazene $7^{12,20}$ demonstrated that such speices are stable to the amidation conditions and hence ruled out as a possible intermediate (Scheme 2).



Scheme 2 Subjecting the triazene 7 to the preferred amidation conditions did not lead to the formation of 6.



Scheme 3 A plausible amidation mechanism 1 (R=Ph).

Based upon the available experimental data, we present a working hypothesis to explain the mechanism. Thus, electron transfer from the *tert*-butoxide ion gives the dianion **8**, a process that we tentatively propose is catalysed by a thiazolium anion relay derived from **2** (**13**).¹² Whereas protonation and loss of nitrogen from **8** would deliver the corresponding aniline (Scheme 1), interception of the intermediate **8** by an electrophilic aldehyde would deliver intermediate **9**.¹⁴ A subsequent 1,3-hydride shift leads to intermediate **10** that is poised to extrude nitrogen gas and deliver the dianion **11**. Next, in a manner consistent with the observations of Guthrie,¹⁷ we speculate that the loss of two electrons from **11** occurs through two SET processes with concomitant formation of two equivalents of the *tert*-butoxide anion from *tert*-butylperoxide. Overall imidate **12**, *tert*-butanol and *tert*-butoxide are generated which, upon protic work up deliver the corresponding amide **6** and tert hutanol (Scheme 2).

¹⁰ work-up delivers the corresponding amide **6** and *tert*-butanol (Scheme 3).

Conclusions

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In summary, we have documented a new and straightforward synthetic method for the catalytic synthesis of substituted *p*nitroaromatic amides, based upon an azido-amidation mechanism. This method offers an orthogonal approach to current methodology and, in particular, the method works particularly well with electron deficient anilines, thus complementing existing methodologies is involving activated carboxylic acid derivatives. Studies are currently ongoing to unravel the mechanistic details of the reaction.

Notes and references

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Supporting Information

tert-Butoxide Promoted One-Pot Azidation-Amindation of para-

nitroanilines with aldehydes

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Schemes and Figures



Scheme S1 Evidence for an electron transfer process in the azido-amidation reaction of azide 1 as ${}_{3}$ both ${}^{3}O_{2}$ and TEMPO radical shut down the reaction.



Scheme S2 Experiment carried out using 15 N-labelled *p*-nitroaniline 15 N-**1** showed retention of the labeled 15 N atom in the corresponding amide 15 N-**6**.

Materials and Methods

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¹H and ¹³C-NMR spectra were recorded on a Bruker AV (III) 400, Bruker AV 400,

Bruker DPX 400, AV 3500 (400MHz or 500 MHz (¹H), and 100 MHz or 125 MHz (¹³C)) spectrometers. Chemical shifts are expressed in parts per million (ppm) and the spectra calibrated to residual solvent s signals of DMSO (2.54 ppm (¹H) and 40.5 ppm (¹³C)). Coupling constants are given in hertz (Hz) and the following notations indicate the multiplicity of the signals: s (singlet), d (doublet), brd (broad doublet), dd (double doublet), t (triplet), tt (triple triplet), q (quartet), m (multiplet). High Resolution Mass Spectra were recorded on a VG micron Autospec or Bruker microTOF. Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FT-IR) spectra were obtained using a Perkin Elmer 1600 series or Bruker

uncorrected. Thin layer chromatography was carried out on Merck pre-coated silica gel plates (60F-254) and visualised using ultra violet light or KMnO₄ solution. THF was freshly distilled from sodiumbenzophenone. Where necessary, reactions requiring anhydrous conditions were performed in dry solvents in flame dried or oven-dried apparatus under argon atmosphere.

Experimental Procedures

General procedure:

^rBuONO (0.53 mmol, 1.05 eq.) was added to a mixture of the aniline (0.50 mmol, 1.00 eq.) and TMSN₃ (0.53 mmol, 1.05 eq.) in THF (2 mL) at 0 °C. The mixture was stirred until deemed complete (TLC). Then, the solution was cooled to -25 °C at which temperature the aldehyde (0.75 mmol, 1.50 eq.), thiazolium salt **2** (0.05 mmol, 0.10 eq.) and NaO^tBu (1.00 mmol, 2 eq.) were added sequentially. The resulting mixture was stirred until complete consumption of the azide (TLC). EtOAc (5 mL) and sat. NaHSO_{3(aq)} (5 mL) were added and the layers separated. The organic layer was washed with NaHSO_{3(aq)} (5 mL), 1 M HCl_(aq) (5 mL), dried (MgSO₄), filtered and evaporated under reduced pressure to give the crude product. Purification of the crude residue by flash column chromatography on silica ¹⁰ with [95:5:1-80:20:1 petrol:EtOAc:Et₃N] as eluent gave the corresponding amide.

N-(4-nitrophenyl)benzamide (Table 2, Entry 1)



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Yellow solid (0.139 g, 94 %); $R_{\rm f}$ (70:30 petrol-EtOAc) 0.3; mp 198-199 °C (lit.,¹ 199-201 °C); IR (FTIR, ¹⁵ CHCl₃) $\nu_{\rm max}$ cm⁻¹: 3431 (NH), 1692 (C=O), 1507 (NO₂), 1405, 1345, 1243, 1113; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 10.8 (s, 1H), 8.29–8.26 (m, 2H) 8.08–8.06 (m, 2H), 7.99–7.97 (m, 2H), 7.66–7.64 (m, 1H), 7.59–7.55 (m, 2H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 166.5 (C), 145.7 (C), 142.7 (C), 134.2 (C), 132.4 (CH), 128.7 (CH), 128.1 (CH), 130.0 (CH), 120.9 (CH); ¹⁵N NMR (100 MHz, DMSO- d_6) -248.5; HRMS ESI: calcd for C₁₃H₁₁N₂O₃ [M+H]⁺, 243.0764; found, 243.0775; calcd for C₁₃H₁₀NaN₂O₃ [M+Na]⁺, 265.0584; ²⁰ found 265.0588.

N-(3-chloro-4-nitrophenyl)benzamide (Table 2, Entry 2)



Yellow solid (0.117 g, 85%); $R_{\rm f}$ (70:30 petrol-EtOAc) 0.3; mp 160 °C (lit.,² 162-164 °C); IR (FTIR, CHCl₃) $v_{\rm max}$ cm⁻¹: 3417 (NH), 1697 (C=O), 1511 (NO₂), 1398, 1345, 1253, 1121; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 10.3 (s, 1H), 8.42 (d, 1H, J = 2.6 Hz), 8.29 (dd, 1H, J = 8.9, 2.6 Hz), 8.26 (d, 1H, J = 8.9 Hz), 8.03–7.99 (m, 2H), 7.68–7.64 (m, 1H), 7.60–7.55 (m, 2H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 166.5 (C), 145.0 (C), 141.3 (C), 133.4 (C), 132.4 (CH), 128.6 (CH), 128.1 (C), 127.9 (CH), 166.6 (CH), 124.9 (CH), 122.9 (CH); HRMS ESI: calcd for C₁₃H₁₀ClN₂O₃ [M+H]⁺, 277.0374; found, 277.0373; calcd for C₁₃H₉ClN₂NaO₃ [M+Na]⁺, 299.0194; found 299.0189.

¹⁰ *N*-(4-nitro-2-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)benzamide (Table 2, Entry 3)



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Yellow solid (0.119 g, 77%), R_f (70:30 petrol-EtOAc) 0.3; mp 158–161 °C; IR (FTIR, CHCl₃) v_{max} cm ⁻¹: 3414 (NH), 1707 (C=O), 1534 (NO₂), 1508 (NO₂), 1398, 1345, 1161, 1050; ¹H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 10.42 (s, 1H), 8.57 (dd, J = 8.8, 2.5 Hz, 1H), 8.52 (d, J = 2.5 Hz, 1H), 7.98–7.95 (m, 3H), 7.67–7.63 (m, 1H), 7.51–7.55 (m, 2H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 166.4 (C), 145.4 (C), 141.8 (C), 133.3 (C), 132.4 (CH), 131.8 (CH), 128.7 (CH), 128.0 (CH), 127.8 (CH), 126.3 (C, q, J = 33.1 Hz), 122.4 (CH); HRMS ESI: calcd for C₁₄H₁₀F₃N₂O₃ [M+H]⁺, 311.0638; found, 311.0633; calcd for C₁₄H₉F₃N₂NaO₃ [M+Na]⁺, 333.0457; found 333.0453.



Yellow solid (0.130 g, 84%); R_f (70:30 petrol-EtOAc) 0.3; mp 129–131 °C (lit.,³ 129 °C); IR (FTIR, CHCl₃) v_{max} cm⁻¹: 3431 (NH), 1694 (C=O), 1520 (NO₂), 1415, 1322, 1250 (CF), 1163 (CF); ¹H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 11.0 (s, 1H), 8.49 (d, J = 2.2 Hz, 1H), 8.35 (dd, J = 9.0, 2.2 Hz, 1H), 8.26 (d, J = 9.0 Hz, 1H), 8.02–7.99 (m, 2H), 7.66–7.64 (m, 1H), 7.60–7.57 (m, 2H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, DMSO- d_6) 170.0 (C), 144.4 (C), 142.1 (C), 134.2 (C), 133.0 (C), 129.7 (CH), 129.1 (CH), 128.4 (CH), 128.1 (CH), 123.7 (CH), 123.2 (C, q, J = 33.2 Hz), 118.8 (CH); HRMS ESI: calcd for C₁₄H₉F₃N₂NaO₃ [M+Na]⁺, 333.0457; found 333.0450.

Methoxy-N-(4-nitrophenyl)benzamide (Table 2, Entry 5)



Yellow solid (0.124 g, 91 %); R_f (70:30 petrol-EtOAc) 0.3; mp 183-185 °C (lit.,⁴ 184–185 °C); IR (FTIR, CHCl₃) v_{max} cm⁻¹: 3435 (NH), 1685 (C=O), 1504 (NO₂), 1345, 1240, 1113, 1030; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 10.6 (s, 1H), 8.26–8.24 (m, 2H) 8.07–8.04 (m, 2H), 8.01–7.98 (m, 2H), 7.11–7.08 (m, 2H), 3.31 (s, 3H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 165.9 (C), 162.8 (C), 146.2 (C), 142.7 (C), 130.4 (CH), 126.5 (C), 125.2 (CH), 120.1 (CH), 114.2 (CH), 55.9 (CH₃); HRMS ESI: calcd for C₁₄H₁₃N₂O₄ [M+H]⁺, 273.0870; found, 273.0869; calcd for C₁₄H₁₂NaN₂O₄ [M+Na]⁺, 295.0689; found 295.0689.

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3,5-Dimethoxy-N-(4-nitrophenyl)benzamide (Table 2, Entry 6)



Yellow solid (0.119 g, 79%), R_f (70:30 petrol-EtOAc) 0.2; mp 198-199°C; IR (FTIR, CHCl₃) v_{max} cm⁻¹: 3356 (NH), 1674 (C=O), 1604, 1548 (NO₂), 1342, 1249, 1027; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 10.45 (s, 1H), 8.26–8.22 (m, 2H), 8.01-7.98 (m, 2H), 7.72 (d, J = 8.6 Hz, 1H), 6.72 (d, J = 2.3 Hz, 1H), 6.68 (dd, J = 8.6, 2.3 1H), 3.94 (s, 3H), 3.85 (s, 3H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 164.5 (C), 163.4 (C), 158.5 (C), 145.2 (C), 142.2 (C), 132.0 (CH), 124.9 (CH), 119.4 (CH), 115.8 (C), 105.9 (CH), 95.6 (CH), 56.7 (CH₃), 56.1 (CH₃); HRMS ESI: calcd for C₁₅H₁₅N₂O₅ [M+H]⁺, 303.0975; found, 303.0973; calcd for C₁₅H₁₄N₂NaO₅ [M+Na]⁺, 325.0795; found 325.0792.

¹⁰ 4-Methoxy-N-(4-nitro-3-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)benzamide (Table 2, Entry 7)



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Yellow solid (0.138 g, 89%); R_f (70:30 petrol-EtOAc) 0.3; mp 110–113 °C (lit.,³ 112–114 °C); IR (FTIR, CHCl₃) v_{max} cm⁻¹: 3436 (NH), 1686 (C=O), 1508 (NO₂), 1250 (CF), 1175 (CF), 1097, 1030; ¹H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 10.80 (s, 1H), 8.48 (d, J = 2.3 Hz, 1H), 8.35 (dd, J = 9.0, 2.3 Hz, 1H), 8.23 (d, J = 9.0 Hz, 1H), 8.02–7.99 (m, 2H), 7.12–7.10 (m, 2H), 3.32 (s, 3H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 165.7 (C), 162.7 (C), 144.3 (C), 141.4 (C), 130.1 (CH), 127.7 (CH), 125.6 (C), 123.0 (CH), 122.5 (C, q, J = 33.2 Hz), 121.1 (C), 118.2 (CH), 133.9 (CH), 55.6 (CH₃); HRMS ESI: calcd for C₁₅H₁₂F₃N₂O₄ [M+H]⁺, 341.0744; found, 341.0743; calcd for C₁₅H₁₁F₃N₂NaO₄ [M+Na]⁺, 363.0563; found 363.0568.

4-Nitro-N-(4-nitrophenyl) benzamide (Table 2, Entry 8)



Yellow solid (0.052 g, 38%), $R_{\rm f}$ (70:30 petrol-EtOAc) 0.2; mp 266-270 °C (lit.,⁵ 267-269 °C); IR (FTIR, CHCl₃) $\nu_{\rm max}$ cm⁻¹: 3693 (NH), 1600 (C=O), 1530 (NO₂), 1511 (NO₂), 1346, 1241, 1113; ¹H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 11.11 (s, 1H), 8.42–8.41 (m, 2H), 8.39–8.38 (m, 2H), 8.23–8.22 (m, 2H), 8.09–8.05 (m, 2H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, DMSO- d_6) 165.2 (C), 149.0 (C), 145.5 (C), 143.3 (C), 140,4 (C), 130.0 (CH), 125.4 (CH), 124.1 (CH), 120.6 (CH); HRMS ESI: calcd for C₁₃H₁₀N₃O₅ [M+H]⁺, 288.2351; found, 288.9213; calcd for C₁₃H₉N₃NaO₅ [M+Na]⁺, 310.2169; found 310.0425.

N-(4-nitrophenyl)thiophene-2-carboxamide (Table 2, Entry 9)



Yellow solid (0.102 g, 82%), R_f (70:30 petrol:EtOAc) 0.3; mp 221-223 °C (lit.,⁶ 222-224 °C); IR (FTIR, CHCl₃) v_{max} cm ⁻¹: 3430 (NH), 1673 (amide), 1600, 1506 (NO₂), 1344, 1245, 1113; ¹H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 10.75 (s, 1H), 8.29–8.25 (m, 2H), 8.10 (dd, J = 3.8, 1.1 Hz, 1H), 8.04–8.00 (m, 2H), 7.95 (dd, J = 5.0, 1.1 Hz, 1H), 7.27 (dd, J = 5.0, 3.8 Hz, 1H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 160.5 (C), 145.2 (C), 142.5 (C), 139.1 (C), 133.1 (CH), 130.3 (CH), 128.3 (CH), 124.9 (CH), 119.8 (CH); HRMS ESI: calcd for C₁₁H₉N₂O₃S [M+H]⁺, 249.0328; found, 249.0315; calcd for C₁₁H₈N₂NaO₃S [M+Na]⁺, 271.0148; found 271.0140.

N-(4-nitrophenyl)-2-phenylpropanamide (Table 2, Entry 10)

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Yellow solid (0.127 g, 94%), R_f (70:30 petrol:EtOAc) 0.3; mp 168–169 °C; IR (FTIR, CHCl₃) v_{max} cm ⁻¹: 3401 (NH), 1702 (C=O), 1599, 1533 (NO₂), 1506 (NO₂), 1344, 1249, 1177, 1114; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 10.65 (s, 1H), 8.22–8.18 (m, 2H), 7.86–7.82 (m, 2H), 7.40–7.32 (m, 4H), 7.26–7.22 (m, 1H), 3.89 (q, *J* =7.0 Hz, 1H), 1.43 (d, *J* = 7.0 Hz, 3H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 173.2 (C), 145.3 (C), 142.1 (C), 141.2 (C), 128.5 (CH), 127.3 (CH), 126.9 (CH), 124.9 (CH), 118.9 (CH), 46.2 (CH), 18.6 (CH₃); HRMS ESI: calcd for C₁₅H₁₅N₂O₃ [M+H]⁺, 271.1077; found, 271.1070; calcd for C ₁₅H₁₄N₂NaO₃ [M+Na]⁺, 293.0897; found 293.0901.

¹⁰ N-(4-nitrophenyl)cyclohexanecarboxamide (Table 2, Entry 11)

Colourless solid (0.109 g, 88%); $R_{\rm f}$ (70:30 petrol-EtOAc) 0.4; mp 160–163 °C (lit.,⁷ 162-163 °C); IR (FTIR, CHCl₃) $v_{\rm max}$ cm⁻¹: 3429 (NH), 1702 (C=O)), 1505 (NO₂), 1345, 1246, 1163, 1114; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 10.4 (s, 1H), 8.21–8.17 (m, 2H), 7.86–7.83 (m, 2H), 2.83 (tt, J = 11.5, 3.5 Hz, 1H), 1.84– 15 1.81 (m, 2H), 1.78–1.74 (m, 2H), 1.66–1.64 (m, 1H), 1.45–1.16 (m, 5H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 175.2 (C), 145.7 (C), 141.9 (C), 124.9 (CH), 118.6 (CH), 44.9 (CH), 28.9 (CH₂), 25.3 (CH₂), 25.1 (CH₂); HRMS ESI: calcd for C₁₃H₁₆NaN₂O₃ [M+Na]⁺, 271.1053; found 271.1055.

²⁵ N-(4-nitrophenyl)cyclopropanecarboxamide (Table 2, Entry 12)⁹

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Yellow solid (0.102 g, 78%), R_f (70:30 petrol:EtOAc) 0.4; mp 145-147 °C (lit.,⁸ 183-185 °C); IR (FTIR, CHCl₃) v_{max} cm ⁻¹: 3430 (NH), 1701 (C=O), 1507 (NO₂), 1343 (NO₂), 1159, 1035, 953, 853; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 10.81 (s, 1H), 8.22–8.18 (m, 2H), 7.85–7.81 (m, 2H), 2.50 (app quintet, J = 1.8 Hz, 1H), 0.88–0.86 (m, 4H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 172.7 (C), 144.4 (C), 141.9 (C), 125.0 (CH), 118.6 (CH), 14.8 (CH), 7.9 (CH₂); HRMS ESI: calcd for C₁₀H₁₀N₂NaO₃ [M+Na]⁺, 229.0584; found, 229.0581.

N-(2-chloro-4-nitrophenyl)cyclohexanecarboxamide (Table 2, Entry 13)



¹⁰ Colourless solid (0.130 g, 92%); R_f (70:30 petrol-EtOAc) 0.4; mp 156-158 °C; IR (FTIR, CHCl₃) v_{max} cm⁻¹: 3692 (NH), 1619 (C=O), 1524 (NO₂), 1443, 1241, 1025, 930; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 9.69 (s, 1H), 8.34–8.34 (m, 1H), 8.19–8.19 (m, 2H), 2.64 (tt, *J* = 11.4, 3.4 Hz, 1H), 1.86–1.83 (m, 2H), 1.76–1.74 (m, 2H), 1.67 – 1.64 (m, 1H), 1.45–1.16 (m, 5H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 175.2 (C), 143.1 (C), 141.3 (C), 124.9 (CH), 124.8 (C), 124.1 (CH), 123.0 (CH), 44.1 (CH), 29.1 (CH₂), 25.3 (CH₂), 25.1 (CH₂); ¹⁵ HRMS ESI: calcd for C₁₃H₁₆ClN₂O₃ [M+H]⁺, 283.0844; found, 283.0834; calcd for C₁₃H₁₅ClN₂NaO₃ [M+Na]⁺, 305.0663; found 305.0653.

N-(4-nitro-2-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)cyclohexanecarboxamide (Table 2, Entry 14)



²⁰ Colourless solid (0.131 g, 83%): $R_{\rm f}$ (70:30 petrol-EtOAc) 0.4; mp 142-145 °C; IR (FTIR, CHCl₃) $v_{\rm max}$ cm⁻¹: 3428 (NH), 1706 (C=O), 1517 (NO₂), 1320, 1275 (CF), 1163 (CF), 1077; ¹H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 9.72 (s, 1H), 8.49 (dd, J = 8.9, 2.6 Hz, 1H), 8.44 (d, J = 2.6 Hz, 1H), 7.89 (d, J = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 2.55 (tt, J = 11.5, 3.4 Hz, 1H), 1.85–1.82 (m, 2H), 1.78–1.74 (m, 2H), 1.66–1.62 (m, 1H), 1.44–1.16 (m, 5H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 175.2 (C), 144.2 (C), 141.6 (C), 130.1 (CH), 127.8 (CH), 123.5 (C, q, J = ²⁵ 31.3 Hz), 122.2 (CH), 121.4 (C), 43.8 (CH), 28.9 (CH₂), 25.4 (CH₂), 25.1 (CH₂); HRMS ESI: calcd for C₁₄H₁₆F₃N₂O₃ [M+H]⁺, 317.1108; found, 317.1094; calcd for C₁₄H₁₅F₃N₂NaO₃ [M+Na]⁺, 339.0927; found 339.0914.

N-(4-nitro-3-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)cyclohexanecarboxamide (Table 2, Entry 15)



Colourless solid (0.138 g, 87%); R_f (70:30 petrol-EtOAc) 0.4; mp 128-130 °C (lit.,³ 129-131 °C); IR (FTIR, CHCl₃) v_{max} cm⁻¹: 3415 (NH), 1706 (C=O), 1517 (NO₂), 1380, 1225 (CF), 1142 (CF), 1068; ¹H NMR (500 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 10.62 (s, 1H), 8.29 (d, J = 2.2 Hz, 1H), 8.17 (d, J = 8.9 Hz, 1H), 8.04 (dd, J = 8.9, 2.2 Hz, 1H), 2.36 (tt, J = 11.4, 3.4 Hz, 2H), 1.85–1.82 (m, 2H), 1.77-173 (m, 2H), 1.66–1.63 (m, 1H), 1.45–1.15 (m, 5H); ¹³C NMR (125 MHz, DMSO- d_6) δ 175.6 (C), 144.2 (C), 141.1 (C), 127.8 (CH), 122.9 (C, q, J = 31.3 Hz), 122.0 (CH), 121.0 (C), 117.1 (CH), 45.1 (CH), 28.9 (CH₂), 25.3 (CH₂), 25.1 (CH₂); HRMS ESI: calcd for C₁₄H₁₆F₃N₂O₃ [M+H]⁺, 317.1108; found, 317.1095; calcd for C₁₄H₁₅F₃N₂NaO₃ [M+Na]⁺, 339.0927; found 339.0919.

2-((Z)-3-benzyl-4-methyl-2-((E)-(4-nitrophenyl)triaz-2-en-1-ylidene)-2,3-dihydrothiazol-5-yl) ethanol
 (7)



1-azido-4-nitrobenzene **1** (50.0 mg, 0.305 mmol) and the thiazolium salt **2** (82.0 mg, 0.305 mmol) were dissolved in THF (1 mL) and the corresponding mixture was cooled to -78 °C. NaH (30.5 mg, 60% w/w mineral oil, 0.761 mmol) was added to the mixture in one portion. The reaction mixture was allowed to warm to room temperature, at which point a bright red colour appeared. The reaction was stirred at room temperature until complete (TLC, 5 h). The reaction mixture was then poured onto saturated ammonium chloride solution (5 mL) and the products extracted with ethyl acetate (3 x 5 mL). The combined organic extracts were dried over anhydrous magnesium sulfate, filtered and the

solvents removed *in vacuo*. The resulting residue was finally subjected to flash column chromatography (eluting with ethyl acetate) to deliver the product as a bright red solid (98.0 mg, 81%), $R_{\rm f}$ (EtOAc) 0.2; IR (FTIR, CHCl₃) $v_{\rm max}$ cm⁻¹: 3108 (OH), 1520 (NO₂), 1428 (N=N), 1327, 1134, 1106; ¹H NMR (400 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆) δ 8.28 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 7.64 (d, *J* = 8.9 Hz, 2H), 7.41-7.37 (m, 2H), 7.33-7.30 (m, 1H), 7.26-7.24 (m, 2H), 5.42 (s, 2H), 4.93 (t, *J* = 5.7 Hz, 1H), 3.59 (app q, *J* = 5.7 Hz, 2H), 2.76 (t, *J* = 5.7 Hz, 2H), 2.16 (s, 3H); ¹³C NMR (100 MHz, DMSO-*d*₆) δ 176.8 (C), 155.6 (C), 145.4 (C), 135.8 (C), 133.1 (C), 128.9 (CH), 127.7 (CH), 126.5 (CH), 125.0 (CH), 121.7 (CH), 116.5 (C), 60.5 (CH₂), 48.6 (CH₂), 29.7 (CH₂), 11.2 (CH₃); HRMS ESI: calcd for C₁₉H₂₀N₅O₃S [M+H]⁺, 398.1281; found, 398.1291; calcd for C₁₉H₁₉N₅NaO₃S [M+Na]⁺, 420.1101; found, 420.1122.

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NMR spectra

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2-((Z)-3-benzyl-4-methyl-2-((E)-(4-nitrophenyl)triaz-2-en-1-ylidene)-2,3-dihydrothiazol-5-yl) ethanol (SI1)
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N-(4-nitrophenyl)benzamide (Table 2, Entry 1)



N-(3-chloro-4-nitrophenyl)benzamide (Table 2, Entry 2)



N-(4-nitro-2-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)benzamide (Table 2, Entry 3)



N-(4-nitro-3-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)benzamide (Table 2, Entry 4)



Methoxy-N-(4-nitrophenyl)benzamide (Table 2, Entry 5)



3,5-Dimethoxy-N-(4-nitrophenyl)benzamide (Table 2, Entry 6)



4-Methoxy-N-(4-nitro-3-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)benzamide (Table 2, Entry 7)



4-Nitro-N-(4-nitrophenyl) benzamide (Table 2, Entry 8)



N-(4-nitrophenyl)thiophene-2-carboxamide (Table 2, Entry 9)



N-(4-nitrophenyl)-2-phenylpropanamide (Table 2, Entry 10)



N-(4-nitrophenyl)cyclohexanecarboxamide (Table 2, Entry 11)



N-(4-nitrophenyl)cyclopropanecarboxamide (Table 2, Entry 12)



N-(2-chloro-4-nitrophenyl)cyclohexanecarboxamide (Table 2, Entry 13)



N-(4-nitro-2-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)cyclohexanecarboxamide (Table 2, Entry 14)



N-(4-nitro-3-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl)cyclohexanecarboxamide (Table 2, Entry 15)

