



**IN THE CROWN COURT AT SHEFFIELD**

**THURSDAY 4 JUNE 2026**

**MRS JUSTICE TIPPLES DBE**

**REX**

**v**

**ZULKERNAIN AHMED**

**&**

**ARMAAN AHMED**

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**SENTENCING REMARKS**

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1. Abdullah Yaser Abdullah Taleb was an optimistic person who loved life and loved people. He was always smiling, adored by his family and loved by everyone. He was only 16 years old when, walking in the afternoon sun along the pavement of Staniforth Road, Darnell, Sheffield on 4 June last year, he was murdered by a car driven on to the pavement by Zulkernain Ahmed. The court is conscious that was a year ago today.
2. That car was driven deliberately at speed, on the wrong side of the road and then on the pavement at, and intending to cause really serious harm to, a group of three people riding bikes on Staniforth Road. Those bikes were a moped and two electric bikes and included on one of them a young person called Larome Divers, who was then aged 18. That group were just passing where Abdullah Taleb was walking on the pavement. Abdullah was, tragically, in the wrong place at the wrong time. He did not know and had never met Zulkernain Ahmed who was deliberately driving his car at that group on bikes or Armaan Ahmed who was in the back seat of the car encouraging his brother to act in the way that he did.
3. Abdullah Taleb was born in Yemen arrived in England in the April 2025 to join his father. He was eager to learn and to integrate into the community. He was excited about starting college in September. He had his whole life ahead of him. His senseless and shocking death has been devastating for his parents, his sisters, his wider family and friends.

Abdullah was his parents only son, his sisters only brother. He was a responsible young man and a pillar of the family who, in particular, took care of his mother and his sisters. Abdullah's sisters cannot imagine that they will never see him again. The lives of Abdullah's whole family, and all those who knew him, has been changed for ever by this terrible and tragic murder.

4. As for the three people on bikes, it was not possible to tell at the time who was who as their heads were covered, whether by a helmet or balaclava. One of them was Larome Divers, who was riding a electric bike. He was deliberately hit by the car, catapulted off his bike into a neighbouring garden, and suffered really serious injuries. Those injuries required hospitalisation and surgery. The car was driven at the other two bikes, a moped and an electric bike, but they were able to move out of the way and the riders were not injured. The riders of the moped and the other electric bike have never been identified by the police. Beyond the injuries suffered by Larome Divers, it is not known what impact these offences have had on him and the other two victims.
5. Zulkernain Ahmed I have to sentence you for the murder of Abdullah Yaser Abdullah Taleb. I also have to sentence you for causing grievous bodily harm with intent to Larome Divers (count 3 on the indictment), for attempting to cause grievous bodily harm with intent to an unknown moped rider (count 5) and for attempting to cause grievous bodily harm with intent to an unknown ebike rider (count 7). You were convicted of these four offences unanimously by a jury of this Crown Court on 13 February 2026. The jury found not guilty of the attempted murder of Larome Divers and not guilty of the attempted murder of the unidentified moped rider and the unidentified ebike rider.
6. Armaan Ahmed I have to sentence you for the manslaughter of Abdullah Yaser Abdullah Taleb and for unlawfully inflicting grievous bodily harm to Larome Divers. Those were alternative lesser charges on counts 1 and 3 on the indictment. You were convicted of those offences by a jury of this Crown Court unanimously on 13 February 2026. The jury found you not guilty of all other counts.

### ***Facts***

7. I now turn in more detail to the facts of this case. I must sentence each of you on the basis of the jury's verdicts and I must be sure to the criminal standard as to the factual basis on which to pass sentence.
8. To explain what happened on the afternoon of 4 June 2025 it is necessary to set out the background events which happened in the few days leading up to that.
9. Zulkernain Ahmed, you ran a trade in e-bikes. E-bikes were valuable and important to you. You bought and sold them on facebook and you knew you could sell them for £1,500 or £2,000. You kept e-bikes in the garage at your home in Locke Drive, Darnell, Sheffield. Armaan described these ebikes as "like the jackpot" at trial, that they were easy to get knocked off, jump back on and then reach a speed of 50mph very quickly. Those ebikes were important not only to you, Zulkernain, but to your family. I am sure of that because, shortly after 3am on 31 May 2025, two people came to 26 Locke Drive on e-bikes and attempted to break into the garage at your family home. Very shortly after that you, Zulkernain, and you, Armaan, together with your father, drove off from your home looking

for the people who had attempted to break into your garage. You did so in the Grey Audi S3, driven by your father. You, Zulkernain, were armed with two sticks, which you took with you to frighten off those who had tried breaking into your garage. Nobody knows who those people were, and there was no evidence that it was Larome Divers. You did not find them. Then a few hours later at around 7am you made a short video which showed how angry you both were at what had happened outside your house in the early hours of the morning. You, Zulkernain, were armed with a baseball bat, and you Armaan were armed with a metal rod, which was down your jacket, and you produced during the course of the video which also recorded Zulkernain threatening violence.

10. You, Zulkernain, were also prepared to rob for e-bikes. This is clear from what you did to Brandon Pulford. You carefully planned to apparently buy an ebike from Brandon Pulford on the afternoon of 3 June 2025 whereas, in truth, what you intended to do was to rob him of at least one e-bike and then you went off with two of his e-bikes. You did this by getting together a group of five or six people, some armed with sticks, doing a recci of Downham Road earlier in the day and then, at 5.30pm on 3 June, carried out a swift and highly effective robbery taking £3,000 to £4,000 worth of ebikes. I am sure that you, Armaan, were present when that robbery took place as you drove the car which was used and your other brother, Zain Ahmed, was also involved.
11. Brandon Pulford was a friend of Larome Divers. Zulkernain, the evidence you gave at trial was that, on the evening of 3 June 2025, after that robbery had taken place Larome Divers told you how angry he was about this. You said that Larome Divers then threatened to shoot you in the face, kill you with a gun and seriously harm your family. Zulkernain you said that threat was made to you over the telephone in a call which took place around 9.45pm that evening. You, Zulkernain, knew and had met Larome Divers before this as you had traded two or three bikes with him.
12. Only you two know what the real reasons behind what you both did together the next day and what the full story is. I am sure there was a dispute between you, Zulkernain, and Larome Divers, and that you, Armaan, knew of this. That dispute had something to do with valuable ebikes, and I am sure you both knew you could use a car to knock someone off an ebike. Beyond that, I cannot be sure what the dispute was about.
13. I am also sure from all of the evidence that you, Zulkernain, viewed Larome Divers as a threat to you. You wanted to warn him off and for him to be out of the area where you lived in Locke Drive, Darnell. I am sure that you, Armaan, knew about this as well. I am sure that both of you knew that Larome Divers had relations who were in prison serving life sentences and you, Zulkernain, took Larome Divers' threat seriously.
14. I am sure that the next day, 4 June 2025, shortly after 4.30pm both of you knew that Larome Divers was in the area around Locke Drive and on a bike with others. They were a team, and they were close to your house. It is plain that you were aware of this by 16.38 because, as is shown on the CCTV, you both sprang into action, together with your other brother Zain Ahmed. The CCTV footage shows that you, Armaan, pulled your car up alongside Zulkernain sitting in his car, and spoke to him. Zulkernain almost immediately got his baseball bat out of the boot of the car, and put it in the cabin of the car where he was sitting. Moments later you, Zulkernain, pulled your Audi S3 up alongside your home at 26 Locke Drive. Zain Ahmed got out and picked up something which had been stored under the wheel hub of another car parked outside 26 Locke Drive. That item is and remains

unidentified, but Zain took it with him into the passenger seat when he got back into the Audi S3 car. You, Armaan, parked your blue Ford Fiesta on the kerb outside your home, ran inside, and came out with two sticks, and then got in the Audi S3, taking the sticks with you. The Audi S3, driven by you, Zulkernain, then left 26 Locke Drive at 16.38, with Zain in the front passenger seat and you, Armaan, in the back seat behind Zain.

15. Both you Zulkernain and you Armaan knew that you were setting off in that car, armed with weapons, looking for Larome Divers, and the others he was with, and that Larome Divers was on an ebike or something similar. Between 16.41 and 16.45 you picked up Adam Mohammed, who was outside a barbers' shop a few streets away. Adam Mohammed got in the back of the car, behind you Zulkernain, the driver. Adam had asked for a lift to 'Hot Shots' snooker and did not know why he was not being driven directly there. The car, by then loaded with four people, was then driven around by you Zulkernain, with Armaan in the back seat, hunting for Larome Divers, and those he was with. In that time you both knew that that car was going to be used as a weapon when you found the cyclists. I am sure that you, Armaan, knew the car was going to be used, at the very least, to knock Larome Divers off his bike.
16. I am sure that what you, Zulkernain, and you, Armaan, were doing, was not a rushed plan or something that happened on spur of the moment. Rather, it is something which arose out the events the previous evening, and you both prepared yourselves for action once you knew or were told that Larome Divers was in the area of your home. Likewise, I am sure that the decision to use the car as a weapon was not something was made on the spur of the moment.
17. At 16.51 you, Zulkernain, were telephoned by Suliman Khan, a friend of yours, who told you that he had seen the cyclists and where they were. Less than one minute later, you, Zulkernain, drove your car out of Locke Drive and onto Staniforth Road.
18. What happened next at 16.52 was captured on CCTV from a number of different angles, and for those who have seen the horrific events it records, it is chilling to watch.
19. You, Zulkernain, as the driver immediately spotted the group of three cyclists in Staniforth Road, which you knew included Larome Divers, and they were approaching towards you in your car. In response to that you drove your Audi S3, a powerful sports car, into the wrong side of the road and accelerated towards the three cyclists, all of whom were wearing dark clothing and balaclavas. Only their eyes could be seen. I am sure you could not tell who was who, and you could not tell which one of these cyclists was Larome Divers. The speed you drove the car at towards them was at least 30 miles per hour.
20. The group of three cyclists were made up of a person on a moped, who was wearing a helmet, one person on an electric e-bike, and a second person on an e-bike. One of the riders of an e-bike was Larome Divers, and the bike he was on was a Surron electrically assisted pedal cycle. As I have explained, the other e-bike rider and the moped rider have never been identified.
21. You, Zulkernain, deliberately drove the Audi S3 at speed head on towards the three cyclists. The rider of the moped was able to swerve to the left and move out of the way of the car, and then pulled up afterwards and looked behind him to see what was happening.

22. You, Zulkernain, drove the Audi S3 into the next in the group, which was the rider on the e-bike. You deliberately collided your car with the ebike and its rider, and you hit the ebike with the front quadrant of the Audi S3. I am sure from the collision experts' evidence at trial that this was to the nearside head light, which was on the front of the car.
23. The impact between the car and the ebike caused the rider of that bike, who was Larome Divers, to be catapulted off the bike and into the neighbouring garden where he was seen on the CCTV travelling head down. The gate at the entrance to the garden was broken, and the ebike was damaged. Larome Divers, suffered very serious injuries, which I will return to.
24. There was at the same time a child, a 16 year old boy, Abdullah Yaser Abdullah Taleb, walking on his own along the pavement throwing a water bottle up and down and, as he approached the bus stop on the pavement, a safe space for any pedestrian, he was hit outright and fatally injured by the car that you Zulkernain were driving so dangerously and at speed. This was the second collision. Abdullah Taleb did not stand any chance of surviving that collision and died very shortly afterwards from catastrophic head injuries.
25. Larome Divers suffered really serious injuries which included a fractured right forearm, fractured tip of the shoulder, fractured ankle, a wound to his right elbow and laceration to the liver. All those injuries were consistent with high energy trauma. Larome Divers had to be hospitalised and required surgery in order to treat those injuries. Having watched the CCTV footage over and again during the course of the trial, it is fortunate that he did suffer head injuries and was not also killed. Larome Divers was spoken to the police at the hospital in the presence of his mother but declined to provide any formal evidence regarding what happened to him.
26. You, Zulkernain, then drove your car past the scene, did a U-Turn, and drove back down Staniforth Road. The car was very badly damaged and dragging the front bumper along the ground. I am sure that, you, Zulkernain, looked out of the window of your car, and saw Abdullah Taleb on the floor very badly injured. You also knew that Larome Divers had been knocked off his bike. You did not stop for a moment, and you drove off and were more concerned about hiding your car, and getting away from the scene with your two brothers as soon as possible.
27. You, Zulkernain, drove the car to Robinson Avenue, where it was abandoned tucked away under an arch. On the way at 16.53 you dropped off Adam Mohammed outside his home address.
28. You, Zulkernain, and you Armaan, together with Zain, got out of the car once you had parked it up in Robinson Avenue. You gathered up the weapons, two sticks and one metal rod, and by accident left the baseball bat behind in the car, and you ran to your home carrying the weapons as quickly as you could.
29. At 16.57 you, Zulkernain, told your girlfriend by snapchat that you had written your S3 off. Then at 16.58 you called 999 to report your car as stolen in order to make out that you were not the driver at the time of the collision. You then sent your girlfriend another message telling her you were going to jail.

30. In a few minutes after that at 5pm Zain Ahmed was picked up by a white Mercedes and he has never been seen since.
31. You, Zulkernain, and you Armaan, went into your home, changed your clothes, gathered some things together from the house, including a large amount of cash. Then at 17.09 you both jumped into Armaan's blue Ford Fiesta and drove from Sheffield to the ferry terminal Dover with your passports and £2,090 of cash. You, Armaan, were the driver.
32. During the course of that journey you, Zulkernain, were googling to find out which countries you could not be extradited from and, when you were both arrested, the police found in the car a handwritten note with the details of Turkey and other destinations written on it. Also in the car on the way to Dover you, Zulkernain, were arranging for your abandoned car on Robinson Avenue to be taken away and hidden, and you sent a pin drop the location in Robinson Avenue to the person you were in touch with.
33. You both arrived at Dover shortly after midnight by which time you, Armaan, had purchased ferry tickets to Calais, France. You were arrested by the police shortly after 1am on 5 June 2025 as you made your way back to your vehicle which was port-side, in the embarkation lane ready to depart to Calais.

***Sentence: Zulkernain Ahmed***

34. Zulkernain Ahmed, I must sentence you for murder. I take this as the lead offence. What I say now is addressed to you, Zulkernain Ahmed.
35. You are 21 years old and were born on 2 January 2005. You were 20 when you murdered Abdullah Taleb. You have one previous conviction, which was for possession of a bladed article in a public place, when you were 16. You do not have any other convictions.
36. I have read the pre-sentence report dated 7 May 2026, which gives me more information about you. You did poorly at school and, although you attended Sheffield City College, you did not complete your studies there because of a motoring collision. You were diagnosed with autism and ADHD some time ago. The pre-sentence report identifies a "maturity need". The author of the report also reminds the court that the brains of young people are still developing up to the age of 25, particularly in the parts of the brain which regulate emotions, impulse control, awareness of risk and the ability to appreciate the consequences of one's own and others' actions.
37. Today I have also been provided with a psychological report prepared by Dr Amber-Renee Gayle, dated 24 April 2026. Dr Gayle is a forensic psychologist. I have read her report and your barrister, Mr Webster KC, has directed my attention to particular paragraphs in that report at 4.1.1, 4.1.4, 4.2.4 and 4.3.3. Mr Webster KC has also, quite rightly, reminded me of what was said by the Court of Appeal in the case of *R v ZA* [2023] EWCA Crim 596 and the Sentencing Council's Guideline *Sentencing Children and Young People* at paragraph 1.5.
38. I have also read the letters to the court from your family, and others who have known you for many years, which speak well of you.

39. The only sentence I can pass on you for murder is one of life imprisonment. It is in any event the proper sentence for your crime. I also have to set the minimum term that you must serve before the Parole Board can consider you for release. That minimum term will reflect your overall criminality. The minimum term does not represent the time you will actually spend in custody; it is simply the minimum period that you must spend in prison before your case can even be considered by the Parole Board. If they do not order your release, you will remain in custody for the rest of your life. If they do release you, you will be liable to recall to custody for the rest of your life.
40. I must set the minimum term by reference to Schedule 21 of the Sentencing Code as Parliament has enacted. I judge this to be a case which falls within paragraph 4 Schedule 21 and therefore has a starting point of 25 years. This is because you drove your car from your home in Locke Drive, around the neighbouring streets, and into Staniforth Road hunting down Larome Divers and the group he was with on bikes. You intended to use your car as a weapon against that group when you found them and, when you found them in Staniforth Road, you drove your car at speed at that group intending to cause all those you drove at really serious harm. When you did this with that intent you killed Abdullah Taleb with your car and, even though he was not your target, you murdered him.
41. That starting point of 25 years takes into account the pre-meditation, planning and danger which arises where the weapon is a car, and a person takes that car to the scene and use the car to commit the offence: see *R v Deepröse* [2025] 1 WLR 1190, CACD at 1196B-C.

### *Aggravating and mitigating factors*

42. Having identified the starting point, I have to take into account the aggravating and mitigating factors, to the extent I have not allowed for them in my choice of starting point.
43. There are a number of aggravating factors.
44. First, you deliberately drove your car at speed at the group of three people on bikes, one on a moped and two on ebikes, which included Larome Divers intending to cause them really serious harm. You hit one of them, Larome Divers, and the other two riders were able to move out of your way. This is reflected in the three other offences, counts 3, 5 and 7, you were convicted of. In my judgment, I need to consider these three offences together, identify the sentence to be passed in respect of them, and then explain how they aggravate the offence of murder. I will deal with that after I have identified the other aggravating and mitigating factors.
45. Second, you were acting together with your older brother, Armaan, and, as the driver of the car, you had the leading role, and you were both armed with weapons in the car ready to use. You had a baseball bat by you in the driver's seat of the car. Further, the speed at which you and your brothers gathered your weapons, got in your car and left your home in Locke Drive at 16.38 means that I am sure that there was planning and pre-mediation to attack Larome Divers beyond the taking and using of the car as a weapon. I am sure that this attack arose out of the dispute you had with Larome Divers, which had started the evening before relating to the robbery ebikes. Beyond that I cannot be sure of the reason for that dispute.

46. Third, the offences were committed late afternoon on a busy residential street, and were witnessed by a number of different people, whether on the bus, in their cars or in their homes. Those that witnessed what you did were shocked by what they saw. The fact the victim was a pedestrian, and a vulnerable user of the highway, is reflected in the starting point I have identified.
47. Fourth, you abandoned the car out of the way in Robinson Avenue, lied to the emergency services that your car had been stolen, on the way to Dover were making arrangements for your abandoned car to be taken away and hidden, and you attempted to flee the country.
48. There are also a number of mitigating factors.
49. First, it is clear from the jury's verdicts that your intention was to cause really serious harm to Larome Divers, rather than to kill. It is that intent to cause really serious harm, a transferred intent, which relates to the offence of murder.
50. Second, your age. You are 20 and you are immature.
51. Third, you were diagnosed with autism and ADHD some time ago. In this context I have considered the Sentencing Council's Guideline for *Sentencing offenders with mental disorders, development disorders, or neurological impairments*. That Guideline explains, amongst other things, that culpability will only be reduced if there is sufficient connection between the offender's impairment or disorder and the offending behaviour. I watched you give evidence at trial, and have now had the benefit of the report of Dr Gayle. I have taken all those factors into account. I am quite sure that, when you deliberately drove your car on the wrong side of the road at three cyclists coming towards you, these diagnoses did not impair your ability to exercise appropriate judgment, make rational choices or understand the nature and consequences of your actions. You knew full well what you were doing, why you were doing it, and that it was highly dangerous. These diagnoses are, however, part of your personal circumstances, and to that extent I take them into account in mitigation, together with your age and immaturity. I also take into account what Dr Gayle has said about why you are likely to experience a more difficult time in custody than an individual without your mental health conditions.
52. Fourth, apart from one conviction which was in 2021 when you were 16, you do not have other convictions. That conviction was for possession of an axe in a public place, and the sentence was an eight-month referral order made by the Youth Court. I have also read all that your friends and family have said about you, although that provides limited mitigation in the circumstances.
53. Mr Webster KC, your barrister, has submitted that you are remorseful about the result of your actions. He says that you accepted responsibility for the death of Abdullah Taleb at an early stage of the proceedings. He points to the fact that you pleaded guilty to manslaughter and section 20 on counts 1 and 3 and the only issue in your case at trial was intent. The pre-sentence report and psychological report makes it clear that you have been deeply affected by the fact, as result of your criminal behaviour, you killed a child. However, the issues at trial went beyond that victim and concerned your actions deliberately driving at speed at a group of three people on bikes and you told the author of the pre-sentence report that your intention was to give Larome Divers a little nudge of the bike, so he would fall off. That was not what happened. In these circumstances, I find it

hard to categorise what you now say as genuine remorse, but I accept that may be a feature of your immaturity.

54. Mr Webster KC also submits that the threat posed to you by Larome Divers is a mitigating factor. This is because Larome, and his family, had a bad reputation for violence. I disagree, whatever threat you may have perceived from Larome Divers, that does not mitigate in any way what you did.

### ***Counts 3, 5 and 7***

55. I turn now to counts 3, 5 and 7.

56. The most serious of these is count 3: causing grievous bodily harm with intent to Larome Divers. You have heard me discuss with your barrister the Sentencing Council's Guideline for *Causing grievous bodily harm with intent to do grievous bodily harm*. I have to identify where this particular offence falls in that guideline.

57. This case falls in Culpability Category A. It is high culpability because of the use of a highly dangerous weapon, the car. You also had a leading role and the victim, riding an ebike, was vulnerable. The injuries suffered by Larome Divers are, in my assessment, grave injury which fall in Harm Category 2. The starting point for this offence is 7 years' custody, with a category range of 6 to 10 years' custody. That starting point needs to be adjusted upwards to reflect the fact there is more than one feature of higher culpability. The seriousness of this offence is aggravated by the fact you were armed with weapons in the car, the offence took place on a busy residential street, you lied to emergency services that your car had been stolen, you took steps to get it hidden it and then attempted to flee the country. In mitigation there is your age, immaturity, diagnoses of ADHD and autism, character references, and the lack of relevant or recent convictions. Balancing all of these factors, the sentence I would have passed for this offence alone is one of 8 years' custody. However, this offence is aggravated by counts 5 and 7.

58. Counts 5 and 7 are attempting to cause grievous bodily harm with intent to first the unknown moped rider (count 5), and second to the unknown ebike rider (count 6). I also have to apply the Guideline for *Causing grievous bodily harm with intent* in relation to these offences, but must do so taking into account they were attempts. These offences both fall in Culpability Category A. It is high culpability for the reasons I have just identified on count 3. The victims, one on a moped and the other on ebike, were both vulnerable road users. There is no evidence of any harm to either victim. Harm is therefore Category 3. The starting point for each of these offences is 5 years' custody, with a category range of 4 to 7 years' custody. That starting point needs to be adjusted upwards to reflect the fact there is more than one feature higher culpability, and adjusted downwards to reflect the fact that the offence was an attempt, and there is no evidence of harm to the victim. The seriousness of the offence is aggravated by the features I have just identified in relation to count 3, and the same mitigating features apply. Balancing all of these factors, the sentence I would have passed for these offences alone would have been one of 4 years' custody.

59. I adjust count 3 to take into account counts 5 and 7. In doing so, I must ensure that the total I impose is just and proportionate. In my judgment that increase should be to 12 years

custody on count 3. Given that represents all the offending on counts 3, 5 and 7 it is appropriate to move outside the category range in the Sentencing Guideline on count 3.

60. I also have to take into account that, if this was the only sentence I had imposed, you would have been entitled to release at the two-thirds point in the sentence, namely after eight years.

### ***Minimum term***

61. I now return to the offence of murder. As I have explained, the only sentence I can pass is one of life imprisonment and I have to set the minimum term.

62. I put on one side the aggravating feature of counts 3, 5 and 7 for the moment. I have weighed up all the other aggravating features in this case, and the mitigating features and consider that they balance each other out.

63. I now have to consider what would be the appropriate minimum term to reflect all your offending behaviour and, in doing so, I have to ensure the total imposed is just and proportionate.

64. Having done that, I have decided that the minimum term in your case, Zulkernain Ahmed, will be thirty years. From that you must have deducted the number of days you have already spent in custody which I am told is 360 days. This should be recorded as a minimum term of 29 years and 5 days.

65. The sentences I pass are:

- a. Count 1: Life imprisonment. The minimum term you will serve is 29 years and 5 days.
- b. Count 3: Twelve years' custody concurrent.
- c. Count 5: Four years' custody concurrent.
- d. Count 7: Four years' custody concurrent.

66. The car is forfeit, there is no order for costs and no order for compensation. The victim surcharge applies.

67. I also direct that the CCTV in this case relating to the events on Staniforth Road on the afternoon of 4 June 2025 be placed on the Parole Board's file.

68. Zulkernain Ahmed please now go with the dock officer.

### ***Sentence: Armaan Ahmed***

69. Armaan Ahmed, I must sentence you for manslaughter. I take this as the lead offence. What I say now is addressed to you.

70. Armaan Ahmed you are 27 years old and were born on 13 June 1998. You were 26 when you unlawfully killed Abdullah Yaser Abdullah Taleb. You were a man of good character, when you committed these offences. You left school with GCSEs, qualified as a dental technician and had established employment as a civil servant in the Home Office in Sheffield City Centre when you committed these offences. You are married and your wife was pregnant with your first child in June last year, and you now have a young child. I have also read the letters to the court from your family, and others who have known you for many years, which speak well of you.
71. I have read the pre-sentence report dated 21 April 2026, which gives me more information about you. The author of the report records that you have expressed you are sorry for the death of Abdullah, but do not accept any responsibility for what happened.
72. The jury found you not guilty of murder on count 1, but guilty of the alternative charge of manslaughter. The jury also found you guilty of section 20 on count 3. You were acquitted on counts 4 to 7. The jury's verdicts mean that the person you anticipated would be harmed was only Larome Divers.
73. The Sentencing Council Guideline which applies is *Unlawful Act Manslaughter*. You have heard me discuss this Guideline with the barristers. I have to identify where this offence falls in that guideline.
74. Mr McKone KC, your barrister, submits that this case falls in Culpability Category C: factors indicating medium culpability. His submissions are that the court cannot be satisfied to the criminal standard that you intended to cause or encourage harm falling "just short" of really serious harm, and the verdicts suggest that the jury accepted that you did not encourage Zulkernain to use the car as a weapon, the wooden weapons were never used and you never used any violence at all.
75. Mr McDonald KC, for the prosecution, submits that this case falls in Culpability Category A: very high culpability. He submits that this is a case where very high culpability is indicated by a combination of culpability B factors. He relies on two of these. First, death was caused in the course of an unlawful act which involved an intention by the offender to cause harm falling just short of GBH. Second, death was caused in the course of an unlawful act which carried a high risk of death or GBH which was or ought to have been obvious to the offender. Alternatively, Mr McDonald KC says this is a case where very high culpability may be indicated by the extreme character of one or more culpability factors.
76. You were convicted as an accessory. You intentionally encouraged your brother, Zulkernain, to drive his Audi S3 into the group of three oncoming cyclists and Abdullah Taleb was killed as a consequence of this. You are an intelligent person and I am sure that it was, or ought to have been obvious to you, that that unlawful act carried a high risk of death or causing really serious harm of another person.
77. I next have to consider your intention. You were 26 years old in June last year, and a mature employed civil servant. You were more mature than your younger brother, and you knew that very well. You got in the car armed with two sticks, you knew you were going with your brothers to hunt for Larome Divers. I am sure that you knew that Zulkernain was going to use the car to drive at Larome Divers and knock him off his bike, and you had

weapons in the car to use after that. You intended that Larome Divers would be harmed but on the evidence at trial, and in the light of the jury's verdicts, I cannot be sure that you intended to cause harm to Larome Divers which just fell short of GBH.

78. In my judgment this is Culpability B case: high culpability. That has a starting point of 12 years' custody and a category range of 8 to 16 years' custody.

### ***Aggravating and mitigating factors***

79. I now have to identify the factors increasing seriousness. There are the following aggravating factors.

80. First, you were convicted of unlawfully inflicting grievous bodily harm to Larome Divers. This is reflected in your conviction of the alternative charge on count 3. I will consider this offence separately, identify the sentence to be passed on it, and then explain how it aggravates the offence of manslaughter. I will deal with that after I have identified the other aggravating and mitigating factors.

81. Second, you were acting together with your younger brother, Zulkernain, who as the driver of the car, had the leading role. You were both armed with weapons in the car ready to use. You had two sticks with you when you got in the back of the car. You knew that Larome Divers was in the area of your home at 16.38. You were apparently working from home that day. I am sure it was you who knew it was Larome Divers in the area first. This is because it was you who pulled up your Ford Fiesta alongside your younger brother's car, and told him this information through the windows of your cars. That was then the moment when you, and your two other brothers, spang into action. You immediately gathered your weapons together, all got in the car, and drove off in search of Larome Divers and the group he was with. You were all ready to do this, as the weapons were all easily to hand, and it literally took moments for you all to load in to the car with your weapons and set off in search of the group. I am quite sure you had planned this beyond the taking and using of the car itself as a weapon. That was a plan that you and Zulkernain were both involved in following the events of the evening of 3 June 2025.

82. Third, the offences were committed late afternoon on a busy residential street, and were witnessed by a number of different people, as I have explained in relation to Zulkernain.

83. Fourth, when the car was abandoned on Robinson Avenue, you took three sticks out of the car and ran home, changed your clothes, got together cash and your passport, and you then immediately drove your car to Dover, with your brother Zulkernain as the passenger. You bought the tickets to Calais and were on the cusp of fleeing the country when you were arrested.

84. The mitigation is that you have no previous convictions. You were in employment at the time of the offences. The references from your family and friends speak highly of you. You are married with a child, who has been born since you have been in custody. However, as your barrister Mr McKone recognised, these matters are of limited mitigation in the present circumstances.

85. Mr McKone KC also submits that the threats made by Larome Divers could amount to some mitigation. I do not agree. The threats Zulkernain says were made do not provide any mitigation for what you did.
86. I have also read all that you have said in your letter to the court. You are certainly sorry for the situation you are now in, but it is hard to categorise it as genuine remorse.

***Count 3: Alternative charge, section 20***

87. I turn now to your conviction under section 20 of the Offences against the Person Act 1861 for inflicting grievous bodily harm to Larome Divers. You have heard me discuss the Sentencing Council's Guideline with the barristers. The maximum sentence for this offence is five years. I have to identify where this offence falls in that guideline.
88. Mr McKone KC submits this is a Culpability B case: medium culpability. This is because there was not a significant degree of planning, you did not play a leading role, the sticks you put in the car were not highly dangerous weapons and, although the car was a highly dangerous weapon, you did not encourage the use of it.
89. Mr McDonald KC, for the prosecution, submits this is a Culpability A case: high culpability. This is because there was a significant degree of planning or premeditation; use of a highly dangerous weapon; and leading role in group activity.
90. The car was used in the offence, and you knew that the car – a highly dangerous weapon - was going to be used. This is plainly a Culpability A case.
91. Mr McKone KC submits that is a harm category 2 or 3 case and submits the case is made less clear because there has been lack of co-operation from Larome Divers. The prosecution say this is a harm category 1 case. In my judgment, the injuries suffered by Larome Divers fall squarely in category 2.
92. This gives a starting point of three years' custody with a category range of two to four years' custody. The seriousness of this offence is aggravated by the fact you were armed with weapons in the car, there was planning, the offence took place on a busy residential street and you tried to flee the country. In mitigation there are all the points I have just identified. Balancing all of these factors, the sentence I would have passed for this offence alone would have been one of 3 years 9 months' custody.

***Manslaughter***

93. I now return to the offence of manslaughter.
94. I put on one side the aggravating feature of the second 20 conviction. I have weighed up all the other aggravating features in this case, and the mitigating features and consider the aggravating features outweigh the mitigating features. The sentence for this offence alone would have been fifteen years.

95. I now have to consider what would be the appropriate sentence would be on count 1 to reflect all your offending behaviour and, in doing so, I have to ensure the total imposed is just and proportionate.
96. Having done that, I have decided that the sentence I have identified on count 1 should be increased by two years to seventeen years to reflect the totality of the offending. From that the number of days you have already spent in custody will be automatically deducted.
97. The author of the pre-sentence report assesses you overall as a medium likelihood of reoffending and a medium risk of serious re-offending. As to the risk of serious physical or psychological harm to one or more people this, in the light of your offending, is assessed as high in relation to children and the public in general. The report also identifies that, if you are open to addressing the issues associated with your offending, that is a risk which may decrease over time. In the light of that report, the evidence I heard at trial and all that I know about you, I do not make a finding of dangerousness.
98. The sentences I pass are:
- a. Count 1: Seventeen years' custody. The days you have spent on remand will automatically count towards your sentence. You will serve two-thirds of this sentence before you are released on licence. When you are released, you will be on licence. You must comply with the with the terms of the licence and commit no further offences or you will be liable to serve a further period in custody.
  - b. Count 3: Three years' nine months custody concurrent.
99. I make no order for costs and no order for compensation. The victim surcharge applies.
100. Armaan Ahmed please now go with the dock officer.
101. Finally, I would like to extend the Court's condolences to the family, other relations and friends of Abdullah Yasser Abdullah Taleb. I know that Abdullah's father was here observing throughout the trial and, notwithstanding the awful family he and his family have had to deal with, I know that at all times he was immensely dignified. I would also like to pay tribute to the members of the public who, having witnessed the shocking events in Staniforth Road, immediately went to help Abdullah, gave him CPR and immediately summoned help from the emergency services. They did all that they could in a deeply distressing situation. Finally I should acknowledge the work of the police in this case, and thank all counsel and solicitors involved.

**Mrs Justice Tipples**

**4 June 2026**