



Rex

and

- (1) Charlotte Head**
- (2) Samuel Corner**
- (3) Leona Kamio**
- (4) Fatema Zainab Rajwani**

**Sentencing Remarks of Mr Justice Johnson
Crown Court at Woolwich, 12 June 2026**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Charlotte Head, Samuel Corner, Leona Kamio, Fatema Zainab Rajwani, you have each been convicted by a jury of an offence of criminal damage. Samuel Corner, you were also convicted of an offence of inflicting grievous bodily harm.
- 1.2 You are all young people who were of exemplary good character. None of you had any previous convictions. There is extensive evidence of your positive good character. Many witnesses have spoken of your kindness, your selflessness, and your caring and compassionate nature.
- 1.3 You were each appalled at what was happening in the Middle East, particularly after 7 October 2023. You were each convinced that Israel was committing unlawful acts of violence, even genocide, against innocent civilians living in Gaza, including children. You are completely entitled to hold those beliefs. They are shared by many other people. There were lawful democratic means available to you to express your views and to seek to effect change. You were able to, and did, take part in lawful protests. At least one of you wrote to your Member of Parliament. You could have sought a ruling from the court to prevent the export of weapons to Israel, as others did. But you were dissatisfied and disillusioned with the prospect that anything might change by lawful democratic means. So, instead, you decided to take the law into your own hands.
- 1.4 Palestine Action was a group that had existed since 2020. Its overarching aim was to shut down a company that supplied weapons to Israel, Elbit Systems, and to end what it regarded as over a century of British complicity in an apartheid occupation of Palestine. The strategy to achieve that aim was to carry out actions against Elbit Systems and businesses linked to it, in order to intimidate it into ceasing operations or to cause the Government to prevent it from operating. By 2024 it had carried out dozens of actions. The actions comprised unlawful activities that ran from what were described as low level actions (such as acts of trespass) to high level actions (such as burglary and criminal damage). There

is no evidence that prior to 2024 any action had involved violence against the person or activities that were capable of constituting terrorism.

- 1.5 You each attended a Palestine Action training day. You learned about the aims and strategy of Palestine Action. I am sure that you shared those aims and signed up to that strategy. I have reached that conclusion on the basis of your defence statements, your evidence at two trials, your closing speeches and your pre-sentence reports. None of you, at any point, has expressed any qualification to your support for Palestine Action's aims and strategy.
- 1.6 You each agreed to take part in an action at Elbit's factory in Filton, Bristol, in the early hours of 6 August 2024. The action was described in the planning document as high level plus plus. It was a carefully planned and highly sophisticated attack. The planning took several weeks. You operated within a compartmentalised cell. You used encrypted channels for your communications. You employed aliases. After an initial meeting you kept your cameras off. When, shortly before the action, you met in person to make final plans you kept your phones switched off. You did all this to seek to evade law enforcement.
- 1.7 Reconnaissance was undertaken. Imagery of the target was studied and was marked up to indicate different possible lines of attack. There was imagery of a security guard. A safehouse was rented for you to stay at in the 48 hours before the attack.
- 1.8 You, Charlotte Head, purchased a prison van which would be used to drive through the perimeter fences and through the shutters of a loading bay. You, Leona Kamio, hired another van for transport. You each gave dishonest accounts as to the intended purpose of the vans.
- 1.9 You were each provided with sledgehammers and with a backpack that contained items such as a crowbar, flares, a fire extinguisher filled with paint and rope to be used for barricading doors.
- 1.10 You knew that security guards would be at the premises. Whatever you may have been told, it was at best naive in the extreme to believe there would be no confrontation. What you did was highly dangerous, including by driving a prison van through the shutter of a loading bay.
- 1.11 At the time you entered the premises you did not intend to strike any of the security guards with the sledgehammers. Once you entered the premises, three of you (but not Fatima Zainab Rajwani), confronted security guards armed with your sledgehammers or, in Charlotte Head's case, a lit flare. The three of you each advanced aggressively on the guard who was defenceless aside from an umbrella and who had sustained a serious head injury. You screamed at him to "fuck off" and "to get the fuck out". You, Samuel Corner, swung your sledgehammer at him, narrowly missing him.
- 1.12 You each inflicted as much damage as you could to the factory and items within it. You, Samuel Corner, spent several minutes smashing up a disabled toilet with your sledgehammer to try and cause a flood. You swung the sledgehammer

twice at PC Buxton when he was defenceless on the floor with his arms outstretched, mercifully causing only a minor injury. But you then swung it twice at Police Sergeant Kate Evans. She was on her knees seeking to arrest one of your co-defendants. She had her back to you. You raised the sledgehammer above your head and swung it all the way down so that it struck her on the back. She did not have any chance of seeing or escaping the blow. Fortunately, she was wearing a stab vest which dissipated some of the force of the blow, but you could not have known that she was wearing a stab vest.

2. Elbit Systems

- 2.1 Throughout the case, including today, you have sought to portray Elbit as a criminal company that is intentionally assisting a genocide.
- 2.2 It is not for the court to make political or legal or factual judgements about events in the Middle East or about the role or conduct of Elbit in those events. The court's role in sentencing is defined and limited by legislation passed by Parliament. That requires an assessment of the seriousness of your offending by reference to your culpability in committing the offence and the harm which the offence caused or was intended to cause or might foreseeably have caused, and any aggravating or mitigating factors. It does not involve adjudicating upon the conduct of third parties who are not defendants before the court and whose actions are not the subject of these proceedings.
- 2.3 Elbit is not on trial. It is not a party to this case. It would be quite wrong for the court to make findings about its conduct in order to inform the evaluation of the seriousness of your offending.
- 2.4 That does not mean that your beliefs and motivations are left out of account. It means that an assessment of your beliefs and motivations does not require the court to judge the conduct of the victim of your offending.

3. Terrorism connection

- 3.1 At the time of your offending, Palestine Action was not a proscribed terrorist organisation. It was not unlawful to be a member or supporter of Palestine Action. The vast majority of its actions were not capable of satisfying the statutory definition of terrorism. You have not been charged with, prosecuted for, or convicted of, any terrorist offence.
- 3.2 At the outset of the case, and at the request of the prosecution, and after hearing legal argument, I ruled that it appeared that the evidence on the indictment revealed that your alleged offence of criminal damage had a terrorist connection. As I made clear at the time, that ruling had procedural consequences but did not have any effect on the trial or any sentencing. Legislation prevented the reporting of that ruling. You asked me not to lift the reporting restriction because you were concerned it might cause prejudice. I agreed to your request not to lift the reporting restriction at that stage, even though there was a strong public interest in permitting reporting.

- 3.3 I have considered the question of a terrorist connection entirely afresh and without reference to my previous rulings. To decide whether your offence had a terrorist connection, the court must apply the test set out by Parliament. Your offence had a terrorist connection if it (1) involved serious damage to property and (2) was designed to influence a government or to intimidate a section of the public and (3) was for the purpose of advancing a political or ideological cause. That question must be considered separately in respect of each of you, but, on the evidence there is no material distinction between you.
- 3.4 I have already told you that, for the reasons that I will set out more fully in writing, the offence of criminal damage that you each committed had a terrorist connection.
- 3.5 There was serious damage to property. The video and photographic evidence shows the extent of the damage caused, the means by which the damage was caused, and the time period of more than 20 minutes over which the damage was caused. It extended to the damage of very many individual items of technological equipment, as well as a disabled toilet. In many instances the damage caused was not trivial or minor, but rather substantial to the point of destruction. The evidence shows that well over £1m was paid out by insurers in respect of the damage.
- 3.6 Having seen each of you give evidence, and considered all of the material in the case, I do not consider that any of you were seeking to influence the Israeli government. In particular, the fact that you were seeking to destroy weapons that you believed were destined for Israel did not involve an attempt to influence the Israeli government in the sense that is contemplated by the statute.
- 3.7 I am, however, sure that one of the purposes of your offending was to influence the United Kingdom Government. A strategic aim of Palestine Action was to end “British complicity”, and you were signed up to that aim. For example, you, Charlotte Head, said in your closing speech that you signed up to do an action with Palestine Action which was a group that had been trying to end British complicity in war crimes, and that direct action was necessary because the government does not listen when people ask nicely. You, Samuel Corner, said in evidence that you were really interested in Palestine Action and that the institutions you had been trying to convince to act were mostly just ignoring you. You, Leona Kamio, said in your defence statement that you relied on the fact that the United Kingdom was allowing arms exports to Israel and that the United Kingdom was complicit in crimes that Israel was committing. You, Fatema Zainab Rajwani, said in your closing speech that you were sick of waiting for the government to act.
- 3.8 You had each tried to persuade your University, or local authority, or the government, not to support Israel. You had become disillusioned with lawful protest and had decided to engage in criminality. You all well knew that the attack on Elbit was an action taken in the furtherance of Palestine Action’s strategic aims. Those aims included putting Elbit out of business, and to do that by carrying out actions which were designed to influence the British government to prevent Elbit from operating. Palestine Action material referred to the potential to target Ministry of Defence offices, or other relevant buildings

associated with government decision making, and that one of the most crucial aspects of taking action was to apply pressure. Whether or not each of you were aware of that particular document, I am sure that you were each aware, and had signed up to, the underlying sentiment.

- 3.9 I am also sure that your offending was designed to intimidate those who worked for Elbit and for businesses that were linked to Elbit. That amounts to the intimidation of a section of the public.
- 3.10 I am also sure that your offending was for the purpose of advancing a political or ideological cause. It was intended to advance your beliefs that Israel's approach to Palestine generally, and its military activities in Gaza in particular, were wrong, that the United Kingdom government should not be permitting the export of weapons to Israel, and that it was legitimate to damage the property of others in the pursuit of that cause.
- 3.11 Section 69 of the Sentencing Act 2020 requires that the court treats your offending's terrorist connection as an aggravating factor. That means it increases the seriousness of the offence.

4. Criminal damage

- 4.1 Parliament has set the maximum sentence for criminal damage as 10 years' imprisonment.
- 4.2 You each had different roles, but you were all fully signed up to the plan and intended to cause as much damage as you possibly could. Subject to individual mitigation, I do not make any distinction between you in terms of the seriousness of your offending.

Culpability

- 4.3 You each bear exceptionally high culpability for the offence. There was an exceptionally high degree of both planning and premeditation. None of you were the organisers of the action, but you were closely involved in its planning, and you had a right of veto at every stage. The offence involved many participants over a long period of time. You were reckless as to whether injury was caused to people, including any security guard who might have got in the way or who might have been behind the loading bay shutter when you drove through it. You each intended to cause very serious damage to property and to render the factory inoperable for as long as possible. None of the factors that are indicative of only medium or lesser culpability are present.

Harm

- 4.4 As to harm, this was a factory that you believed to be worth £25M, and to be Elbit's flagship site, and to be the site of cutting-edge research and development. You intended to cause as much damage as you could, and to put the factory out of operation for as long as you could.
- 4.5 The harm that you caused included harm to property which resulted in an insurance payment of £1.175m. There were further additional security and

staffing costs. Although not directly covered by the offence for which you were charged, you also caused damage to the premises themselves. I do not have direct evidence from those who worked at the factory, but I am sure that at least some will have been distressed and concerned about what had been done to their place of work, where they are entitled to feel safe.

- 4.6 There was also considerable additional symbolic and societal harm in that you sought to glorify criminality and vigilantism and to lend support to Palestine Action's agenda which now included terrorism. You wore a uniform of red boiler suits. You video recorded your offending with the intention that the videos would be placed on social media. Charlotte Head and Fatima Zainab Rajwani, you each live-streamed yourselves saying that you had broken into the most secure Elbit factory, that "you have been Pal Actioned", and "long live the resistance, interfada, interfada now." This was posted to social media in the immediate aftermath of the incident.
- 4.7 The harm that you intended to cause, and the harm that your offending might foreseeably have caused, and the harm that it in fact caused, were all exceptionally high. It was well beyond that which is contemplated by the sentencing guideline as a high level of harm.

Custodial threshold, type of sentence and guideline category

- 4.8 The offence of criminal damage is so serious that neither a fine nor a community sentence can be justified. In each of your cases I will impose the shortest custodial term that is commensurate with the seriousness of the offence, taking account of aggravating and mitigating features. Because there is a terrorist connection, I must impose a special custodial sentence which consists of the appropriate custodial term and a further period of 1 year for which you will be subject to a licence.
- 4.9 The guideline for the custodial term in a high culpability and high harm case starts at 18 months' custody with a range of 6 months to 4 years' custody. The top of the bracket is less than half the 10-year statutory maximum. The exceptional nature of both your culpability and the harm you intended to cause, and did cause, is such that a significant upwards adjustment to the starting point is required before considering aggravating and mitigating factors. To apply a starting point that is within the guideline would be contrary to the interests of justice, and contrary to the intention of Parliament expressed through the statutory maximum sentence. I adopt a starting point of 5 years' custody.

Aggravating factors

- 4.10 It is an aggravating factor that the offending had a terrorist connection. In measuring the increase to the sentence on account of that factor I take account of the fact that you did not intend to injure any person, and that part of your motivation in taking action was to prevent the death and suffering of Palestinian civilians, including children. That significantly reduces the increase in the sentence that would otherwise be appropriate.

- 4.11 It is also an aggravating factor that you were on the premises as trespassers. You knew you were not entitled to be there. You used extreme force and aggression to break in, deliberately using a large vehicle as an instrument of destruction, driving the van through two security fences and through the shutter of the loading bay. There was a high degree of persistence. You continued when security guards intervened and, as a group, you tried to get them to leave. There is a degree of overlap between the aggravating features and the factors that resulted in an elevation of the starting point to 5 years. I have therefore been careful not to double count the weight to be ascribed to each of the factors. Nonetheless, each of the aggravating factors is substantial in its own right. In combination with each other they are truly exceptional and take the case well outside the range of offending that is encapsulated by the sentencing guideline.
- 4.12 After taking account of the aggravating features that apply in each case, and subject to mitigation, I would impose a sentence of 7 years' custody in each of your cases. That is a 2 year increase on the starting point.

Mitigation

- 4.13 In each of your cases I have taken full account of everything in the materials that have been put before me, including the pre-sentence reports, and everything that has been said on your behalf. I have followed the applicable Sentencing Council guidelines, including the guidelines on sentencing young people and those with mental disorders or neurological impairments.
- 4.14 The fact that you were trying to shut down a company that you thought was acting unlawfully does not reduce the seriousness of the offence. In this country we all live under the rule of law. That means that the law applies to everyone, everyone is equal before the law, and everyone is entitled to look to the law to protect them and their property from criminality. The law does not tolerate vigilantism. Elbit is entitled to look to the police and the courts to protect its property. Those who believe that Elbit is acting unlawfully are not entitled to take the law into their own hands and damage its property. The fact that you did so does not amount to mitigation. Rather, your motivation and the way in which you acted on your motivation is reflected in the aggravating features I have identified. That includes the offence having a terrorist connection but where the extent of the uplift takes account of all the circumstances.
- 4.15 Your offending did not amount to an act of civil disobedience where conscientious motivation can be treated as mitigation. In such cases the offenders act with restraint, recognise that their conduct is contrary to the law, and accept the consequences of their actions. You acted with demonstrative excess and no restraint, you maintain that your conduct was lawful, and you refuse to accept the consequences of your actions.
- 4.16 I have taken full account of your exceptional positive good character. In each of your cases it is a substantial mitigating feature which will be reflected in a considerable reduction in each of your sentences. I have given it the greatest possible weight in each case.

- 4.17 You, Charlotte Head, have struggled with your mental health. It is not suggested that this reduces your culpability for the offence. I do, however, accept that it will at times make custody more difficult.
- 4.18 You, Leona Kamio, have anxiety, depressive symptoms and trauma related distress which may affect your experience of custody. Again, I do not consider that reduces your culpability but it will make custody more difficult.
- 4.19 You, Fatema Zainab Rajwani, were 20 at the time and are now 21. You were therefore a young adult but substantially younger than Charlotte Head and Leona Kamio. I have taken account of your age as a mitigating factor. However, your offending was not impulsive or due to peer pressure. It was planned and carefully thought through over several months. You spent a few days thinking about it before signing up to the action. Almost two years on and two years older you still appear to believe you did the right thing. You also have a diagnosis of ADHD and I take account that the impact of custody will have on you.
- 4.20 You, Samuel Corner, were only a little older and I agree with the finding in the pre-sentence report that there is a degree of immaturity. But in your case too, I am sure that your decision to take part in the action was not impulsive or due to pressure but was planned and carefully thought through. You have been diagnosed with autistic spectrum condition and with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. I do not consider that your age or your conditions reduce your culpability for the offence of criminal damage. I do, however, recognise that your autistic spectrum condition may make custody more difficult and I take that into account.

5. Inflicting grievous bodily harm

- 5.1 Samuel Corner, you also committed an offence of inflicting grievous bodily harm. The statutory maximum sentence is 5 years' imprisonment.
- 5.2 You bore high culpability for the offence. The victim, Police Sergeant Evans was, in the circumstances, obviously vulnerable because she was on her knees facing away from you trying to arrest a co-defendant. You used a sledgehammer. It weighed 3.2kg and you swung it from full height down to Sergeant Evans on the ground. You agreed that it is obvious that if you hit a person with a sledgehammer it is capable of causing really serious injury, including breaking bones. I am sure that it was, in the way it was used, something that at least approached being a highly dangerous weapon. There was a degree of persistence in that you swung the sledgehammer twice, having previously swung it at another officer.
- 5.3 I do not accept that this was, in any realistic sense, an attempt to use force in the lawful defence of another or that, as you said at the time, you were protecting a co-defendant. Sergeant Evans was not using any unnecessary or unlawful force. You had heard screaming, and your vision may well have been obscured, but you had no reason to believe that it was necessary to attack Sergeant Evans. You swung your sledgehammer at her just as you had swung it at PC Buxton and at a security guard with no justification. This was extreme and gratuitous violence against a vulnerable police officer who was acting in the course of her duties.

Although the attack on her was short-lived that was only because of the intervention of other officers, and it came in the context of several minutes of violence towards property and violence towards others. You did not intend to cause really serious injury, but you must have known it was highly likely that she would suffer serious injury.

- 5.4 As it was, she did suffer really serious injury. She sustained multiple fractures to her vertebrae. The injuries have had a substantial and long-term effect on her ability to carry out her normal day to day activities and on her ability to work. Almost 2 years later she has still not been able to return to full operational duties. She has not been able to sustain a role as a sergeant and is unable to work overtime so she has lost significant earnings. She still experiences disturbed sleep, often waking in a panicked state or after distressing dreams. There has been an effect on her parents and her children who now fear for her safety. The injuries do not fall within the highest category of harm which involve threat to life or a need for lifelong dependency on others, but they do fall within category 2.
- 5.5 The sentencing guideline starting point is 3 years' custody with a range of 2 - 4 years.
- 5.6 It is a substantial statutory aggravating feature that the offence was committed against an emergency worker acting in the exercise of her functions as such a worker.
- 5.7 The same mitigation applies. In the light of your autism, the noise and smell in the factory may have been overwhelming, and that may have impaired your ability to exercise appropriate judgment, or to make rational choices or to understand the nature and consequences of their actions. That may explain why the jury were not sure that you intended to cause really serious injury. If so, your autism has already been taken into account in very significantly reducing your culpability. But your autism does not begin to explain why you chose to swing a sledgehammer at a police officer. I do not accept your counsel's suggestion that "an element of autistic meltdown... led to the assault." That was not an explanation that you gave in evidence. Your explanation was that you were acting in the defence of a co-defendant, but that explanation was rejected by the jury. There is no medical evidence to support your counsel's suggestion that autism can explain a decision to swing a sledgehammer at a police officer. I do not accept that your culpability for this offence is reduced by reason of your autism or by your attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.
- 5.8 The Pre-Sentence Report suggests that you are remorseful. I do not accept that there is any substantial and genuine remorse. After striking her, and when it must have been obvious that she was injured and in great pain, you told her that she bore responsibility for Israel's conduct in Gaza. You declined to answer questions in interview. Nothing in your defence statement acknowledged the harm that Sergeant Evans had been caused. You advanced an unrealistic account that you were acting in self-defence. You refused to accept that that her injuries amounted to really serious harm. As Officer Evans says, you have never even said sorry, although your counsel says that is now something you would wish to do.

- 5.9 The aggravating factor I have identified substantially outweighs the mitigation and requires a substantial uplift from the 3-year starting point.
- 5.10 You fall to be sentenced for two separate offences that were committed at the same time. It is necessary to consider whether to impose concurrent or consecutive sentences and to consider adjusting the terms so as to ensure that the resulting total sentence is just and proportionate to the totality of your offending. Although committed at the same time, these were quite different types of offence against different victims and causing entirely distinct harm. It is appropriate to impose consecutive sentences. I have reduced the sentence I would otherwise have imposed on the criminal damage charge to reflect the principle of totality.

6. Practical effect of sentences

- 6.1 I will impose a determinate custodial sentence for the offence of inflicting grievous bodily harm. You will serve between one third and one half of that sentence.
- 6.2 I will impose special custodial sentences for the offences of criminal damage. You will each serve two thirds of the custodial part of those sentences in custody. You will then be considered for release by the Parole Board. If released you will remain on licence until the end of the custodial term and then will be subject to an additional licence of 1 year. If you are not released at the two-thirds point, you will be released at the end of the custodial term and will then remain on licence for a further year. If you breach any of your licence conditions you may be recalled to custody.
- 6.3 In each case you will be subject to the automatic imposition of terrorist notification requirements for a period of 15 years.
- 6.4 You will each be credited for the time you have spent remanded in custody pending trial. In the case of each of you apart from Samuel Corner, there will also be a deduction of 45 days from the sentence to reflect one half of the time you have spent on what was, or was intended to be, a qualifying curfew.

7. Ancillary orders

- 7.1 You, Charlotte Head, used the prison van to commit the offence. It was integral both to the commission of the offence, and to its demonstrative nature; it was not simply used for transport. You also drove it without insurance. In addition to the custodial sentence, and after taking account of the factors in the Sentencing Council guidelines, it is necessary, fair and proportionate to disqualify you from driving for an effective period of 1 year. Because I am also imposing a custodial sentence, I am required by law to extend the period of disqualification by two thirds of your custodial term so that it has effect after your release.
- 7.2 I have decided not to make compensation orders in any of your cases. You are each facing a lengthy custodial sentence. It is not reasonably likely that you would have the means to satisfy any compensation order. The assessment of the

amount would not be straightforward. It is open to Elbit and Police Officer Evans to bring legal proceedings to seek compensation.

- 7.3 You must each pay the statutory victim surcharge in the sum of £228 or such other sum as is required by law.

8. Sentence

- 8.1 Charlotte Head, I sentence you to a special custodial sentence of 6 years less 45 days. That consists of a custodial term of 4 years and 320 days and a 1-year additional licence. I disqualify you from driving for 4 years and 91 days.
- 8.2 Leona Kamio, I sentence you to a special custodial sentence of 6 years less 45 days. That consists of a custodial term of 4 years and 320 days and a 1-year additional licence.
- 8.3 Fatima Zainab Rajwani, I sentence you to a special custodial sentence of 5 years and 8 months less 45 days. That comprises a custodial term of 4 years and 200 days and a 1-year additional licence.
- 8.4 Samuel Corner, I sentence you to 3 years and 8 months imprisonment for the offence of inflicting grievous bodily harm. For the offence of criminal damage I sentence you to a consecutive special custodial sentence of 5 years. That comprises a custodial term of 4 years, and a 1-year additional licence. The total term is therefore 8 years and 8 months.

9. Commendation

- 9.1 I commend Police Constable Kate Evans. All police officers take an oath to act with fairness, integrity, diligence and impartiality and to accord equal respect to all people. Constable Evans discharged that oath to an exceptional degree. After her spine had been fractured by Mr Corner's sledgehammer, her reaction was to try to help him. He claimed to be in discomfort because his handcuffs were too tight. Sergeant Evans, although in great pain, manoeuvred herself into a position where she could check that the handcuffs had been applied correctly and were not causing unnecessary discomfort.