



JUDICIARY OF
ENGLAND AND WALES

THE HONOURABLE MR JUSTICE MURRAY

In the Crown Court at Wolverhampton

R v Mohammed Azim – Sentencing Remarks

22 June 2026

1. **Mohammed Azim**, last Friday at this court, following your trial for the murder of Lily Whitehouse, you were found guilty. It falls to me to sentence you today.
2. This afternoon, we have heard the moving personal statements of Melissa Wheeler, Lily's aunt who was also a close friend of hers, and Katie Whitehouse, Lily's cousin. Ms Wheeler's statement eloquently expresses her profound grief at the loss of her niece and best friend and the impact that Lily's death will have on the life of her daughter.
3. Ms Katie Whitehouse's statement eloquently expresses the immediate and ongoing consequences of Lily's death for the larger family. She reminded us that Lily was a young woman with ambitions, dreams, and goals, and we, of course, heard during the trial of Lily's desire to get further education and to qualify as a nurse. Ms Katie Whitehouse also spoke movingly of the impact of Lily's death on Lily's baby daughter.
4. During the trial, much was made of the fact that Lily for the past couple of years has been estranged from her family and that she had few close friends. However, it is clear not only from the moving personal statements we have just heard but also the respectful and consistent attendance of numerous family members and friends of Lily that the reality was more complex, and that there were many people who loved her, even if circumstances meant that she did not see them from day to day.
5. The depth of the pain and grief that they have suffered as a result of your crime cannot be fully understood by those who have not experienced such a tragedy. As Ms Katie Whitehouse herself said, no sentence that I pass today can possibly reflect the value of Lily's life or in any way offset the depth of grief and sense of loss of her family and everyone else who loved her.
6. Before turning to the sentence that I must impose, it is necessary to say something about the facts of this case in order to make clear the factual basis on which you are sentenced. Except where I have indicated otherwise, I am sure to the criminal standard about the following matters of fact. In relation to certain matters where I may express a view on the facts, but I am not sure to the criminal

standard, I make clear now that I sentence you, as I must, on the factual basis most favourable to you.

7. On Wednesday, 5 November 2025 at about 21:40 on Old Park Lane in Oldbury, you deliberately drove your Mercedes vehicle recovery truck directly at Lily Whitehouse, crushing the right side of her body, causing traumatic and fatal injuries to her chest. As a result of the collision, Lily suffered extensive blunt force injuries to her upper body, including extensive bruising, lacerations, and abrasions, including brush abrasions or “road rash” caused by dragging along the road surface, as well as up to seven rib fractures, laceration and contusion of the right lung, which caused extensive bleeding into her chest cavity, and a laceration of the right lobe of her liver. There were various external injuries to her head, including extensive brush abrasion of the right side of her face. She had no significant internal head injuries, apart from evidence of injury to axons in her brain, which were either caused by traumatic injury or lack of oxygen or blood supply, or both. These injuries were not survivable, and she would almost certainly have been dead within minutes, if not seconds. It is unlikely that she could have been saved by the emergency services, even if they had arrived within a couple of minutes of the collision occurring.
8. You and Lily had met on a street in West Bromwich almost two and half years earlier, on or about 3 June 2023. She had only just turned 17 years old a couple of days before you met. You were 38 years old at the time, so you were 21 years older than her. You and Lily arranged to meet a short time later at a pub in West Bromwich, and your relationship developed from there. At first, the relationship was primarily one of friendship, but after about five months or so, it became an intimate and sexual one.
9. You were born in Kashmir in Pakistan. You arrived in the United Kingdom in 2001 when you were 14 years old to join your mother and father. You married in 2007 and have children. Your marriage ended in 2015, since when you have been living by yourself. You have worked on and off since you first arrived.
10. During your relationship with Lily and at the time of her death, you were a vehicle recovery driver. You were often on call to collect and transport vehicles on the back of your Mercedes, which was a flatbed truck adapted for vehicle recovery. You travelled all around the country to collect vehicles, often at short notice. Your working pattern was a source of tension between you and Lily, because it often meant that you were unable to spend time with her and also because, during the long periods when you were driving, you were unable to read and respond to the numerous messages she sent you. Sometimes, Lily did accompany you on work trips, as she had done on the evening before she died, when she went with you to collect a vehicle in Blackpool.
11. At the time you and Lily met, she had been living with her father. After that, she was in social housing, before getting her own flat in Amber Drive in Oldbury, where she lived for most of the last year of her life. Although you did not live

together, you often spent the night together, usually at your place rather than hers.

12. Prior to you, Lily had had two boyfriends, one named Dinesh, who was also known as Lucky, and the other a boy from Coventry, whose name you did not know. For much of the time you knew Lily, Lucky had been in prison, but at some point in early 2025, it appears that he and Lily got together again for a short time, during which Lily got pregnant.
13. Lily's baby daughter was born 10 weeks prematurely on 24 September 2025. Because she was so premature, she had to be kept in Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley for several weeks after her birth. She was still in hospital at the time of her mother Lily's death.
14. Lily went to visit her baby every day in hospital. On the evening of 5 November 2025, you collected Lily from a side road off the Birmingham New Road, to which she had travelled by bus and walking after her last visit to her baby in hospital.
15. Despite the pregnancy, it appears that Lily wanted to maintain an intimate relationship with you. You told her that due to the pregnancy, things could not be the same as it had been between you and her before she got pregnant. Nonetheless, it appears that you were happy to continue your sexual relationship with her.
16. There was a lot of evidence at the trial about your relationship with Lily, including evidence from Lily's aunt, Melissa Wheeler, from Lily's father's ex-partner, Libby Higgs, who had maintained her friendship with Lily, as well as an extensive Schedule of Messages exchanged between Lily and you (which was merely an agreed representative selection of a much larger body of messages), and agreed evidence of what Lily had said about your relationship at various times to Social Services, most, but not all, of which was positive about your care and support for her.
17. It is difficult to assess how reliable Lily's statements to Social Services were, either positive or negative. While she told Social Services on various occasions that you treated her well, looked after her, and provided her with food and support, she also on one occasion in March 2024 reported that you had dragged her around by the hair, tried to force her out of your address, and had thrown a remote control at her, leaving a mark. She later denied this, and, two months later she even went as far as to say that the social worker to whom she had originally reported the assault had lied about it because that social worker had never liked you and was plotting with her family against her and you. The unlikelihood of that accusation suggests that her original report of assault was, at least to some extent, based in truth. Lily also told Social Services in July 2023 that she had met and spent time with your family, which you, in your own evidence, denied had ever occurred.
18. There is strong evidence in the Schedule of Messages between you and Lily to support an incident having occurred on or about 19 September 2025 in which you

had hit Lily with the door of your vehicle while pulling away, causing her to fall, and hurt her hand. Lily had also told her aunt, Melissa, about this.

19. It is clear that Lily herself was strongly attached to you, and that she was also to a degree volatile and extremely needy. In the Schedule of Messages, she said many angry and abusive things to you to get your attention. For the most part, your responses are muted and pacifying, but it is notable that, in the messages, you did not deny accusations made by Lily that you hit her on occasions. This is consistent with what she told Melissa Wheeler and Libby Higgs about your having punched and pinched her. In your own evidence, you denied these accusations, called it play-fighting, and said that you did no more than hold her arms to try to calm her down.
20. I am also sure that you did call Lily a “dumb, silly bitch”, or words to that effect, and told her she was no good at being a mother, after she told you that she had been struggling to produce enough milk to breast-feed Havanna and that she would be moving to bottle-feeding her.
21. I am satisfied to the criminal standard that while much of the time you were supportive of and kind to Lily, largely because you wished to continue a sexual relationship with her, at other times you were physically aggressive and abusive towards her as well as, to a limited degree, controlling of her. Having regard to the evidence as a whole, it is clear that the relationship was very much on your terms, which is not surprising given that you were a much older man with a great deal more life experience than Lily and given her neediness and dependency on you.
22. On the evening of 5 November 2025 in Old Park Lane, after you drove at and crushed Lily, you picked her body up from the road, put her in the cab of your truck, and drove off towards Park Street, where you eventually stopped by the side of the road near a business called AGS Aluminium. Along the way you rang 999, and we heard the call during the trial. When speaking with the 999 call operator and later with the paramedics and the police, you lied, saying that Lily had been hit by a hit-and-run driver on Park Street.
23. It is, frankly, a mystery why you picked up Lily’s body and put it in the cab of your truck, given that you rang the emergency services almost immediately after doing so. You say that you did it because you originally intended to take her to the hospital yourself, but you quickly realised that it would not be safe for you to do so. You were clearly panicked, as can be heard on the audio recording of the 999 calls you made.
24. While you only have two prior convictions for three relatively minor offences and those occurred more than ten years prior to Lily’s death, I note that one of those offences was a common assault on your ex-wife. The other two offences were simple possession of a class B drug (cannabis) and fraudulent evasion of import duty in relation a quantity of hand-rolling tobacco.
25. You are now 41 years old, having turned that age on the day you killed Lily.

26. I note that I have the power to make a deprivation order in relation to your Mercedes truck under section 153 of the Sentencing Act 2020. I have decided, however, that this is not the sort of case in which it is necessary or desirable to make such an order.
27. The sentence for murder fixed by law is imprisonment for life. I must now set the minimum term that you will serve before the Parole Board can consider you for release.
28. I have considered the provisions of Schedule 21 to the Sentencing Act 2020, which governs the determination of the minimum term in custody for the mandatory life sentence for murder. Although you used your heavy Mercedes truck as a weapon to kill Lily, I accept that you did not take it to the scene of her death on Old Park Lane for that purpose. Accordingly, there are no factors that bring this case within paragraph 2(1), 3(1), or 4(1) of Schedule 21.
29. It falls, therefore, within paragraph 5 of Schedule 21, which indicates that the appropriate starting point for determination of the minimum term is 15 years, before considering aggravating and mitigating factors.
30. The three most significant aggravating factors are:
 - a. your use of a heavy vehicle as a weapon to kill Lily;
 - b. the fact that you killed someone with whom you were in an intimate relationship – in other words, the murder occurred in a domestic context; and
 - c. that when you killed Lily that she had a five-week old baby daughter, born 10 weeks premature, who was still in hospital.
31. In relation to this third factor, it is aggravating both as to culpability and harm. In relation to culpability, even though I sentence on the basis that your decision to kill Lily was spontaneous, you would have been aware in the moments before you killed her that she was a young mother with a five-week old baby still in hospital. Indeed, you had just picked her up, by arrangement, after her visit to her baby in hospital that evening. It is obvious, too, that the harm caused by the murder is significantly aggravated because Lily's baby has lost her mother forever at the very beginning of her life.
32. Although Lily was not “particularly vulnerable” by reason of her age within the sense that term is used in paragraph 9(b) of Schedule 21 and therefore this case does not fall within that statutory aggravating factor, she was a psychologically vulnerable young woman, given her troubled background, who was to some extent estranged from her immediate family and had little face-to-face contact with them, who did not appear to have a circle of close personal friends, and who was therefore very needy and dependent on you, as you well knew. This is, therefore, an additional non-statutory aggravating factor, although it is of lesser weight than the other three aggravating factors that I have mentioned.

33. On the evidence, I cannot be sure that when you formed the intention to hit Lily with your truck, you intended to kill her. I sentence on the basis that your intention was to cause her really serious bodily harm. This is a mitigating factor. Nonetheless, it must have been apparent to you, even in the moment that you decided to drive straight into Lily, that there was a substantial risk that you could kill her by doing so. This significantly lessens the weight of this mitigating factor.
34. I accept that your decision to drive into Lily with your truck was a spontaneous decision. There is no evidence of premeditation or prior planning. This, too, is a mitigating factor.
35. Even though your offending history is relatively light, having committed only three minor offences more than ten years before you killed Lily, one of those offences was an assault on your ex-wife. Accordingly, I am not able to accept the submission made on your behalf that there is more than minimal mitigation from your lack of relevant convictions.
36. It is part of your personal mitigation that you have been diagnosed with trauma-related psychiatric illness and a major depressive disorder and that there will be an impact on your family, who are, of course, themselves also innocent victims of your crime. I take these matters into account.
37. Balancing the aggravating factors with the mitigation, I determine that the appropriate minimum term in this case is one of 20 years, before taking account the time you have spent on remand in custody.
38. I understand that you have spent 227 days on remand in custody. The minimum term that you must serve will be reduced to reflect this. If the information that I have been provided with as to the number of days on remand proves to be inaccurate, then the prosecution or defence must notify the court so that the case can be relisted to correct the calculation as soon as possible and, in any event, within 56 days.
39. You and everyone else in court should understand three things about that minimum term:
 - a. first, you must serve every day of it before the Parole Board can even consider releasing you;
 - b. secondly, even then the Parole Board will only release you if it is satisfied that it is safe and appropriate to release you. Otherwise, you will remain in custody for the rest of your life; and
 - c. thirdly, if you are ever released from custody, you will remain subject to the life sentence for the remainder of your life, which means that, if necessary, you can be returned to custody at any time.
40. The statutory surcharge applies to this sentence.

41. Mohammed Azim, please stand up. For the murder of Lily Whitehouse, I sentence you to life imprisonment with a minimum term to serve of 20 years less 227 days spent on remand in custody, meaning that you must serve a minimum term of 19 years and 138 days.
42. You may go down.