



THE RECORDER OF SHEFFIELD

SENTENCING REMARKS

OF

THE RECORDER OF SHEFFIELD
HIS HONOUR JUDGE JEREMY RICHARDSON KC

AT

THE CROWN COURT AT SHEFFIELD

ON

THURSDAY 2ND JULY 2026

REX

V

YAQUB YOUNIS

Preamble

You may remain seated. You must listen with care to what I am about to say.

In the printed version of these sentencing remarks there will be headings for ease of reference.

These sentencing remarks will be made available to you, your lawyers, the press and the public a short while after the conclusion of this hearing. I also direct that the printed version of these remarks shall be placed within the relevant section of the Digital Case System.

They will also be made available to the public via the website of the Judiciary of England and Wales.

These remarks are also being recorded for television news. It is only right the public know the reasons for the sentence I shall come to pass, particularly as many people were affected by the crimes you committed.

Introduction

Yaqub Younis you are now aged 49 years. You were aged 47 years when you committed this offending.

You fall for sentence following your conviction by the jury of the following four serious crimes which represent different components of the same episode between 10th February 2025 and 12th February 2025:

- (1) Communicating false information with the intention of inducing the police and others to a false belief that you possessed an item which was liable to explode (a bomb hoax).
- (2) Causing a Public Nuisance.
- (3) Affray.
- (4) Causing Criminal Damage.

The maximum sentence on count 1 is 7 years

The maximum sentence on count 2 is 10 years

The maximum sentence on count 3 is 3 years

The maximum sentence on count 4 is 10 years

I have considered the issue of dangerousness. It is my judgment those provisions are not relevant to the circumstances of this case.

I make it plain beyond doubt, the principle of totality – by reference to the definitive guideline of the Sentencing Council on that subject – is front and centre of my consideration in this case. A total sentence which is just and proportionate, that also reflects your overall criminality, will be passed upon you.

I shall pass a concurrent sentence on each count, but I shall pass the lead sentence on count 2 – the public nuisance. I will indicate what individual sentences would have been passed if the crimes stood alone. I shall enhance the sentence on the lead count to reflect over all criminality.

By forcing a trial you forfeited what would have been potent mitigation – namely a guilty plea. As it is, you will be sentenced for your crimes in respect of which there is very limited mitigation.

It is also very important I explain that you will be sentenced for the crimes you committed – nothing more and nothing less. The fact that during the trial you instructed your counsel to make absurd suggestions to witnesses, will be ignored for the purposes of sentence. I have no doubt these suggestions were preposterous and all stemmed from a fixation in your mind that there was some form of state sponsored conspiracy of revenge for what occurred many years ago. That is complete fiction. There is not a shred of evidence that was the case.

There is a backdrop to this case.

The Facts

This case concerns an incident which occurred over 33 ½ hours in mid-February 2025 near the Parkway in Sheffield not far from the Park Square roundabout in the city centre. The block of flats where the incident occurred is called The Gateway. You resided in flat 903 which had been rented by an associate of yours. At the material time you were in breach of licence conditions and were wanted by the police and prison authorities as you had been recalled to prison. To use the vernacular – you were on the run from the prison authorities. You should have been in prison.

That is a serious aggravating feature of this case. Because you were a known criminal and on the run, this plainly caused the police to respond as they did when you repeatedly issued threats.

There is no doubt that between approximately 8pm on 10th February 2025 and 4am on 12th February 2025 you were in flat 903 of The Gateway block of flats. You told a variety of people, including fellow residents, an ambulance crew, and police officers, you had had firearms and explosives. The whole area was evacuated and a siege commenced.

In the trial you assert this was all an MI5 operation and it was set up to assassinate you. You also asserted the negotiators were not police officers but agents of the security services who were there to kill you. That was complete and utter nonsense as was more than amply demonstrated by the evidence of the several police officers who had that assertion made to them. The jury rejected this utter nonsense. They saw through your avalanche of falsehoods.

Let me be as clear as clear could be – this was not a security service vendetta nor were the police officers anyone but who they said they were. Your assertions were – and remain – comprehensively false.

Police officers – both negotiators and others – told you repeatedly who they were and each one of them was demonstrably concerned about your welfare. All wished to bring the siege to a safe and satisfactory conclusion.

The siege eventually came to a dramatic conclusion when a firearms officer pretended he needed the lavatory and went over a barricade. He then immediately took you to the ground. You were restrained and arrested.

The prosecution assert the real reason you did as you did was because you were on the run from the police because as you were in breach of his licence in respect of a previous sentence.

You barricaded yourself in your flat and held the police at bay in a siege lasting many hours over three days causing major disruption in Sheffield.

Those there were police officers – both firearms officers and negotiators – from the South Yorkshire Police and the West Yorkshire Police. I wish to pay tribute to each one of those officers who gave evidence in the trial. Each behaved with conspicuous bravery, compassion and concern in all their dealings with you. They handled a very challenging situation with patience, skill and with immense professionalism.

You made threats to civilians and an ambulance crew at the outset – and then to police officers – that you had explosives and firearms. That was a false claim – because although you had several knives, a meat cleaver and other items, there were, in fact, no firearms and no explosives.

In the course of the siege you threw things from the windows and damaged property belonging to the owners of the furnished flat in which you lived. You caused over £17,000 worth of damage to the flat.

Efforts were made by the police repeatedly to end the siege and at no stage was any attempt made to kill you – nor was this an MI5 operation or anything of the kind.

The prosecution case is you relied on making these false claims about MI5 to create a smokescreen for your own misconduct.

The jury rejected your wholly bogus defence case.

Your evidence was a tissue of lies and exaggeration from start to finish.

I am entirely satisfied the backdrop to this case was concluded in 2014.

It is right to say you were prosecuted for very serious crimes involving firearms and non-fatal shootings. There was a trial in the Crown Court at Birmingham in January 2016 involving two separate incidents in Birmingham and Stoke on Trent. You were convicted and sentenced to very long terms of imprisonment. There were very serious disclosure deficiencies by the

prosecution in that case and it went to the Court of Appeal, Criminal Division in 2017. The convictions were quashed and a retrial was ordered.

When the case came before the Crown Court at Birmingham for the second time (the retrial) in January 2018 the prosecution offered no evidence in respect of the Birmingham allegations, but accepted your offer to plead guilty to a conspiracy to commit grievous bodily harm in respect of the Stoke on Trent aspect of the case.

You were sentenced to 11 years and 6 months imprisonment.

You were released on licence on 9th July 2021.

Thereafter, you were made the subject of entirely legitimate civil proceedings in the High Court in respect of unexplained wealth and there was also a tax investigation.

It is not without significance that the orders of the High Court were made from June 2023 onwards. The proceedings continue.

You were on the run from 2023, when you breached the terms of your licence, until the start of the siege on 10th February 2025 and your arrest on 12th February 2025.

I am entirely satisfied you are fixated in the irrational belief that there is a vendetta. You have harboured this irrational fixation for several years and you believe that all the entirely legitimate actions of the state in respect of Unexplained Wealth Orders in the High Court and the tax investigation, are connected to the quashing of the conviction in 2017 and the backdrop.

You have used that absurd and unwarranted fixation as a cover for your criminal conduct – when in truth you were on the run from the authorities because you should have been in prison serving the sentence imposed upon you back in 2018.

I am also satisfied that you added to this irrational construct in your own mind by the voluntary consumption of cannabis. The neighbours often smelled cannabis adjacent to your flat. This heightened your irrational thinking.

I will now set out a little more detail of what you did during the siege.

The incident started when you told the partner of a neighbour that you had explosives and firearms in your flat and they should leave at once. They did and called the police. The neighbour had previously called an ambulance because of her own ill-health. The ambulance crew arrived and you made similar threats to them.

At about 9pm two women police officers arrived and you repeated the threats. They retreated to another floor and other officers were called to the scene.

The police declared a major incident and the occupants of The Gateway as well as other properties in the area were evacuated.

Thereafter – with an array of very skilled police negotiators doing their best to de-escalate the situation and persuade you to end the siege – you responded repeatedly with angry outbursts of threatening you had explosives and firearms. You also consumed cannabis and repeated the absurd assertion the officers were there to assassinate you or kill you. This officers endlessly and repeatedly responded to this inharmonious leitmotif that they had no intention of killing you and their sole aim was to end the situation.

Officers spoke to you through the door and from a terraced area from below. They were accompanied by armed officers who at no stage aimed any gun at you. You were shouting and completely irrational.

Eventually – to aid communication – a door was cut in half once the officers had entered the flat after you had barricaded yourself in the bedroom. This assisted with communication, but you resolutely refused to come out. The officers were forced to take this seriously by your words. They took your threats seriously and had no means of ascertaining whether you were engaging in an elaborate and serious hoax or this was real.

On occasion you threw items from the flat to the terrace below and damaged the furniture and fitting within the premises.

This went on for over 33 ½ hours.

Eventually – as I have explained – an officer gained your confidence and asked to use the lavatory as a pretext to get into the bedroom. His fast moving action brought this serious incident to a close. You were taken down and arrested.

This was a hoax and there were no firearms or explosives.

You maintained the nonsense about the vendetta in the police interview.

The Consequences

The consequences of this siege were fully set out for the jury in the trial by Superintendent Paul Ferguson and the official from the local authority, Richard Eyre. It was also covered in the evidence of one of the residents who gave evidence.

The residents of The Gateway were evacuated. They had to leave rapidly – they were even compelled to leave pets behind such was the rush of the evacuation. Over 80 residents were taken to the Ponds Forge Recreation Centre for accommodation for the remainder of the siege.

Roads were closed and a cordon around The Gateway was established for well in excess of 30 hours. Park Square – which is one of the busiest

intersections in Sheffield was closed. The tram network and other transport was severely affected which had an immense impact on the lives of the citizens of this city as well as commercial and other visitors. School and hospital visits were affected. In an ordinary day in excess of 39,000 vehicles pass through the Park Square roundabout. None could for well over 30 hours. Your conduct had a major impact on the police and other emergency services for 36 hours. Massive extra expenditure was incurred by way of police overtime and diversion from everyday police duties. The total cost for all the emergency services due to your criminal conduct was a little short of £195,000. Mr Eyre gave unchallenged evidence that the total loss of revenue to the city coupled to payments for extra services due to this incident was in excess of £300,000.

This is all quite apart from the loss of income to business in the city who either could not operate or were severely affected because customers and others could not get to them.

The personal inconvenience to many, many citizens and others cannot be calculated in financial terms. But there is no doubt whatsoever your criminal conduct for over 30 hours close to the city centre and adjacent to a major traffic hub has caused incalculable harm and severely disrupted a major city in this country – embracing both people and public services. You severely paralysed an important part of this city for well over 30 hours.

Previous Criminality

You have previous convictions.

In 1990 you were convicted of affray. You were fined for that. In 2004 you were sent to prison for 4 years for false imprisonment. You have also been convicted of possession of a specified item in a prison which was met with a short consecutive sentence. You were also sentence to 16 months imprisonment for witness intimidation in 2015 when you were sentenced to 16 months imprisonment. Finally, in January 2018 you were ultimately sentenced to 11 ½ years imprisonment to which I have already made mention.

You will be released from that sentence in 2029.

The sentence I pass to day will commence today. It cannot be consecutive by operation of an Act of Parliament. Nor may I enhance an otherwise appropriate sentence so as to make it, in effect consecutive to the current sentence you are serving. The sentences will run in tandem from today

Mitigation

I have fully considered the sentencing not which has been used as the foundation for oral submissions today.

The following points of mitigation, in summary, have been advanced:

1. This incident was a single event.
2. There were no actual devices – firearms or explosive devices.
3. There was no actual physical danger.
4. You thought your life was in danger. You assert you had an honest fear.
5. I am asked to consider your personal circumstances.
6. There were no actual injuries.
7. I am asked to consider your previous experience of the criminal justice system in the Birmingham case. The sense of grievance was accentuated during submissions by your counsel.
8. It is asserted you are now remorseful given what you now know was the situation.
9. You are now an enhanced prisoner in the prison where you are detained. You are undertaking purposeful work in the prison. I am pleased to hear that.
10. You are an intelligent man and I am invited to give you some sense of hope for the future.

I have very much abbreviated these helpful submissions made by Miss Haughey KC on your behalf.

She also made a series of submissions by reference to previous cases.

Sentencing Guidelines

There are no sentencing guidelines for counts 1 and 2 except the general guideline where I must consider the seriousness of offending by reference to the culpability of the offender and the harm caused by the offending.

There are guidelines for counts 3 and 4.

The prosecution assert count 3 falls into category 1A due to high culpability and the nature of the threats and your conduct. I agree. Accordingly, there is a starting point of 2 years with a range of 18 months to 2 years and 9 months.

Count 4, it is submitted falls into category 1A too with a starting point of 18 months imprisonment and a range of 6 months to 4 years.

There are asserted to be aggravating factors.

I propose to pass concurrent sentences on counts 3 and 4 at the starting point. There may well be aggravating factors, but they are subsumed into the overall sentence to be passed on count 1 and 2. There is a risk of double counting if I load those specific points into these two sentences.

Miss Haughey submitted that the categories are lower. Even if I accepted that argument, I would be entitled then to uplift the sentences to levels where I fix the sentence in any event. She rightly did not pursue the point. I much prefer the submissions of the prosecution on this issue.

I have been addressed on counts 1 and 2 about a series of cases in the Court of Appeal. I make the point – as was made in several of those cases – that the sentencing in case of bomb hoaxes and public nuisance are always distinctly fact specific.

The cases have been of interest. I eschew an academic and ultimately arid analysis of which case is worse than another.

I shall sentence you for what you did in this case and the consequences of it.

Conclusion

It is my judgment that I must approach my task when considering the overall circumstances of this case in terms of the bomb hoax and public nuisance aspect of the case by reference to these principles:

1. Cases of this kind are always fact specific and reference to other cases, although not without interest, are purely examples of the level of sentencing in that offending.
2. The court must assess the seriousness of the offending by reference to the culpability of the offender and the harm caused by the offending.
3. An assessment of the consequences is important by reference to the level of disruption – both physical and economic – to those affected.
4. The conduct of the offender is vital including the nature and extent of the threats that were made.
5. In a siege situation, the length of it and what happened in consequence of it, are important considerations.
6. If there were physical acts, that may aggravate the sentence and there may be other crimes committed simultaneously, which too would aggravate the sentence.
7. The intention and motives of the offender may be important too.

I have those principles well in focus when making decisions in this case.

You held irrational and entirely fictional beliefs. This stemmed from what occurred to you in 2017 when the Birmingham and Stoke on Trent convictions were quashed. You were subsequently sentenced for the Stoke on Trent offences following your guilty plea at the retrial. You were sent to prison and then released on licence. You breached that licence and went on the run. This is when you committed these crimes.

You have used the bogus assertion about the security services as a masquerade.

The simple fact is you were on the run and this siege was a bizarre ploy to cover the truth.

The jury saw through the lava flow of lies in your evidence.

The police behaved with total propriety and professionalism throughout.

The consequences for the City of Sheffield were exceptionally serious, indeed colossal.

However, I do take into account all that I know about you and the various points of mitigation. I have well in mind your sense of grievance about what happened to you in 2016 and 2017 in respect of the Birmingham episode. That will serve to temper the sentence, but it was several years ago and I cannot ignore the fact you were sentenced for the Stoke on Trent episode. Indeed, you were on the run having been released on licence when you committed this offending. By reason of the backdrop and the limited points of mitigation I have reduced what would have been the sentence by 6 months.

The crimes you committed on this occasion were very serious examples of that form of offending. There was not an ounce of justification for what you did. It is clear the police harboured real fears you had explosive devices and firearms. The fact you did not, was not known until afterwards.

Having regard to all the circumstances of the case these would have been the individual sentences had they each stood alone.

Count 1 – the bomb hoax – 5 years

Count 2 – public nuisance – 6 years

Count 3 – 2 years

Count 4 – 18 months

The overall criminality which embraces the various components of the case as represented by the other counts will be reflected by an increase in the sentence on count 2. That sentence will reflect overall criminality. I have well in mind the principle of totality.

The total sentence will be one of 7 years.

This was an exceptionally serious incident with massive economic and personal consequences for the citizens of the City of Sheffield. There is a requirement in this case to punish you severely for what you did and there is also a need for a level of deterrence.

This is a severe sentence and it is intended to be a severe sentence.

Sentence

You will now stand.

I impose upon you the necessary statutory charge in the appropriate amount, together with all necessary ancillary orders.

I will not make a compensation order nor a costs order. You are in prison at present and will be for some time to come.

The total sentence I pass upon you is 7 years imprisonment.

That sentence is made up as follows by reference to each count:

Count 1 – 5 years

Count 2 – 7 years

Count 3 – 2 years

Count 4 – 18 months

All sentences are concurrent one with the other.

As you well know there will come a time when you will be released. Parliament makes provision for this and it is not part of the order of this court or any court. You will be subject to licence conditions when you are released. You know all of this detail because you were in breach of your licence conditions when you committed these crimes. If you breach the conditions of your licence, you will be subject to recall to serve an extra portion of the sentence.

I repeat the total sentence is 7 years imprisonment.

Take him down.