



JUDICIARY OF
ENGLAND AND WALES

IN THE CENTRAL CRIMINAL COURT

Mrs Justice McGowan

REGINA

-V-

SALIH KHATER

SENTENCING REMARKS

1. On the morning of 14th August 2018, you attempted to kill members of the public; pedestrians and cyclists on their way to work and seconds later to kill two Police Officers on duty protecting the public outside the Palace of Westminster.
2. The details of your journey to London and how you spent the night are catalogued in the charts and the compilation video that was played in open court and need not be set out at any length here. In the time shortly before these offences you repeatedly drove around Parliament Square and the surrounding area. You drove off the Square down each of the exit routes in preparation for the attack. On one occasion you parked in nearby Great Peter Street walked back up to the Embankment and took a quick glance at the Palace of Westminster. I accept the Prosecution suggestion that your intention was to see if the Police Officers, wearing high visibility vests, were on duty. You saw that they were, and you went straight back to your car and drove off.

3. Soon afterwards you completed yet more circuits of Parliament Square. You then drove deliberately at a group of pedestrians and cyclists who were stationary on or near a small island at the traffic lights on the junction of Abingdon Street and Parliament Square, on the corner in front of St Margaret's Church and Westminster Abbey. You deliberately drove at that group intending to kill as many of them as you could. Immediately after that collision you aimed your car at the Police Officers on duty by the security barrier at the vehicle entrance to the Palace of Westminster at Old Palace Yard. Your undoubted intention was to kill as many people as possible and by so doing to spread fear and terror. It was an attack on strangers and Police Officers outside the seat of political democracy in this country. By extraordinary good fortune no deaths or life-threatening injuries were caused.
4. The offence of attempted murder carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. It is a serious offence for the purposes of the dangerousness provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 2003. I must determine whether you pose a significant risk of serious harm to members of the public by the commission of further offences.
5. I have been provided with a number of reports prepared before the trial. I also have a pre-sentence report prepared since the trial which says that you have been:

“assessed as posing a high risk of serious physical and associated emotional and psychological harm to indiscriminate members of the public as well as Police Officers carrying out their legitimate public duties. The risk is likely to involve multiple victims.”
6. I find on the facts of this offence that you are dangerous in that you present a significant risk of causing serious harm to the public by future offending.
7. The Sentencing Council has provided guidelines. I must apply those guidelines unless it would be unjust to do so. I must look at your culpability, in other words your blameworthiness, and the harm you did.
8. I must also consider what sentences these offences would have attracted had you succeeded in killing your victims. If you had succeeded this would be the murder of more than one person, it would have been the murder of Police Officers in the execution of their duty and it involved the use of a car as a weapon. It would be in the highest category of seriousness and a whole life order would have been likely. Your culpability is at the highest level.

9. I recognise that the physical harm caused was not particularly serious. However the continuing effect on the people you injured is set out in their statements, which I have read carefully. They are to be commended for the dignity and poise they demonstrated in giving their evidence. They will continue to experience the effects of that day for a long time, possibly for ever. The fear that this offending will have caused in the wider public cannot be precisely measured but will undoubtedly have had an impact on the many people who travel into and through that area.
10. I must take into account all the circumstances of the offences and also all I have been told about you and your behaviour. You have never been convicted of any criminal offence. That provides little mitigation in all the circumstances but I take it into account in your favour to the limited extent appropriate.
11. I must particularly look at your motivation. A terrorist connection would aggravate the seriousness of your offending. Did these offences have a terrorist connection? Terrorism is defined for these purposes in the Terrorism Act 2000;

“the use or threat of serious violence when;

*the use or threat is designed to influence the governmentor to intimidate the public or a section of the public, **and***

the use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause.”

12. There is no evidence of any link between you and any group or individual connected to any extremist views. There is no evidence that you have expressed any such views. There is no clear evidence as to what triggered this behaviour. There is some evidence that you had been behaving oddly but you do not currently have any recognised mental illness.
13. You deliberately targeted people and police officers around the Houses of Parliament; you specifically came to London for that purpose. You replicated the acts of others who undoubtedly have acted with terrorist motives. You deliberately copied those others. You drove into pedestrians and cyclists immediately in the area of Westminster. You then drove at the officers on duty at a security barrier guarding Parliament. There is no evidence that you did not understand what you were doing and the consequences of your actions. There is no evidence of any other motivation. The

primary facts lead to the proper conclusion that, even acting alone, you acted for a terrorist purpose. All the evidence is consistent with that conclusion.

14. You have never explained your actions and have not given any account, before or today, that is capable of dissuading me from drawing the conclusion that this offending had a terrorist connection.
15. You tried to kill many people, you used your car as a weapon to do that and two of the people you tried to kill were Police Officers acting in the execution of their duty. I find to the criminal standard of proof that your offending on this occasion was connected to terrorism. The Notification Procedures apply in this case.
16. The seriousness of this offending and the continuing risk that you present can only be met by a sentence of life imprisonment. If I had not passed a sentence of life imprisonment the determinate sentence would have been 30 years. Therefore, I impose a life sentence with a minimum tariff term of 15 years, less the days that you have already served. You may never be released from custody but if you are, that will only happen if the Parole Board is satisfied that you no longer present a risk to the public. They will not begin to consider that question until you have served the minimum tariff element of the sentence.