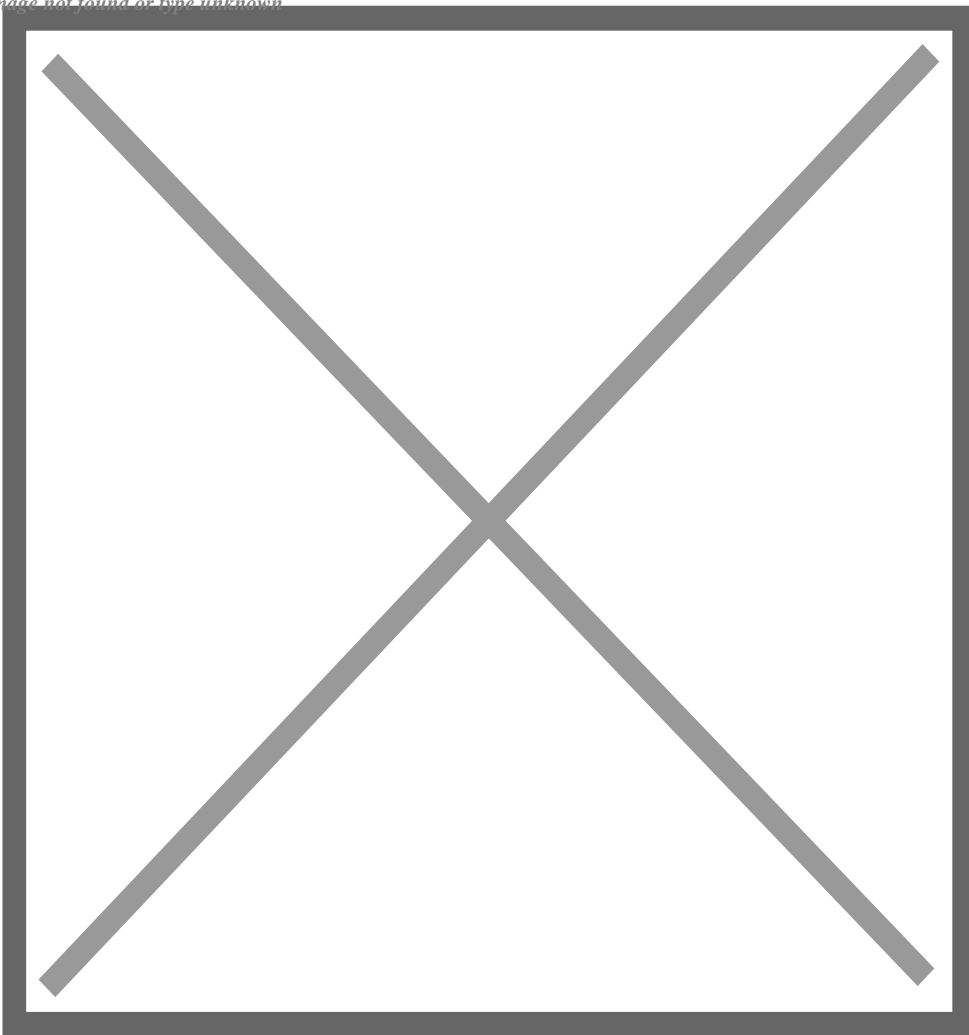


Muslim man sentenced to hard labor in UK for fighting back against far-right rioters

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London, August 17 (RHC)-- A judge in UK has sentenced a young Muslim man to 20 months in prison for fighting back against far-right rioters, who have been terrorizing Muslims after false news published in social media.

The sentence has sparked debate about the implications of the controversial ruling for self-defense as the UK is reeling from the worst racially-fueled Islamophobic insurgency.

Judge Robert Linford at Plymouth Crown Court in the south-west English city of Plymouth sentenced 24-year-old Amer Walid to 20 months in prison for throwing cans at far-right rioters who had thrown alcohol at him.

Walid, who had no prior convictions, was assaulted by far-right extremists during their confrontation with an anti-racist rally on Monday, August 5th.

The worst far-right fascist anti-immigration riots in decades engulfed the UK from 30 July 30 to August 5, with mobs attacking mosques, attempting to torch hotels housing migrants and hurling bricks at police officers.

The rioting was triggered by social media users falsely claiming the suspect in the murders of three little girls in a stabbing attack in the Northwest English seaside town of Southport was a Muslim asylum seeker.

The court heard that Walid had visited a mosque before joining the protest at the Civic Centre on Royal Parade. He had told the police that he had learned about the demonstration through social media and attended to protect his faith.

Prosecutor Lewis Aldous told the court that the can of beer landed at Walid's feet and that it made him angry as he did not drink alcohol due to his Islamic beliefs and threw it back.

Walid initially said he threw only one item, but after viewing BodyWornVideo footage recorded by police, he admitted to throwing several items at far-right rioters.

The young Muslim's advocate Zoe Kuyken said that given the fireworks being thrown and the "very religiously offensive phrases being said" on that night, there was an "unsurprisingly a level of fear both in Mr. Walid and those around him."

The judge said he accepted Walid had not been "looking for trouble" and that rioters "had been throwing missiles" and making "deeply offensive racist chants."

But he sentenced Walid to 20 months in prison, telling him: "What you should have done was rise above their simply obnoxious racism. "You were capable of doing that but you didn't, instead what you did was throw four missiles of one sort or another at the group opposite," he added.

The far-right gatherings ostensibly started as anti-immigration marches, organized on social media platforms like X and on WhatsApp and Telegram groups. They quickly turned disorderly and violent.

Protesters set ablaze two Holiday Inn hotels, in the town of Rotherham, northern England, and in Tamworth, in the Midlands, central England, that were believed to be housing asylum seekers awaiting a decision on their claims.

The Rotherham hotel at the time was "full of terrified residents and staff," according to a statement by South Yorkshire Police Assistant Chief Constable Lindsey Butterfield.

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