

# **LONDON BRIDGE INQUESTS**

## **HEARING 1**

### **SUBMISSIONS ON BEHALF OF ZAHRAH**

#### **REHMAN (widow of Khuram Butt)**

*Zarah Rehman is referred to throughout as 'ZR' and Khuram Butt as 'KB'*

1. CTI's summary of the law is agreed.
2. It is further agreed that it is clear beyond all doubt that each of those who died on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2017 was murdered in a terrorist attack and that the Record of Inquest should state that the person who died was unlawfully killed.

[CTI paras 3(a), 56-7]

3. No issue is taken with the fact or content of CTI's proposed narrative conclusions.

[CTI paras 3(b), 58-9]

4. The comprehensive and thorough investigation into the attack at London Bridge and Borough Market on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2017 included, in headline form, the taking of over 2,800 witness statements, the gathering of 6,100

exhibits, the review of over 10,000 documents and the examination of something in the region of 9,500 hours of CCTV footage. More than 1500 police officers were involved in the exercise.

[DC7184, para 12.1]

5. In advance of the Inquest beginning, Det Supt Riggs, the Senior Investigating Officer, compiled two lengthy reports [DC7183, 7184], the first of which provided an overview of the SO15 investigation and summarised its key findings as follows:

At para 7.2

*'In some cases it could be shown that a number of individuals had a close and regular association with the attackers, including up to the day of the attack. However, police found little evidence to prove that anyone, besides Butt, Redouane and Zaghba, knew that this attack was going to take place and there is no evidence that anyone knowingly assisted or encouraged this attack. As a result, no one was charged with any offences in relation to the attack.'*

At para 7.3

*'The evidence gathered regarding the events on the evening of 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2017 at London Bridge and Borough Market, and the acts conducted in preparation for them, draws me to the conclusion that it was planned and carried out by Khuram Butt, Rachid Redouane and Youssef Zaghba and no one else.'*

6. On 14<sup>th</sup> June 2019, she was asked by CTI, Jonathan Hough QC, if these remained her conclusions now that evidence had been given to the Inquest. She confirmed that they were.

*Q. In conclusion, you've told us about the scale and intensity of your investigation, including to determine whether anyone else was involved in the attack. You told us before that you had no evidence, positive evidence, that anyone else was involved; does that remain your assessment?*

*A. Yes, it does.*

*Q. Including taking account of all the evidence that's come out in these Inquests?*

*A. Yes, it does.*

*Q. And no positive evidence that we have heard beyond reference by Witness L to a piece of fragmentary intelligence that anyone else knew that any kind of attack was contemplated?*

*A. That's right, sir.*

[Day 26, 14.06.19 p104-5]

7. None of these conclusions is disputed by any IP.
8. ZR condemned the attack and KB's actions in emphatic terms, initially in one of the 9 statements she made to the investigators [WS0242B] and then in the course of her evidence, describing his actions as '*disgusting*' [170] and those of ISIS supporters who commit terrorist acts as '*animals*'. She did not mourn her husband or attend his funeral, mourning only for the victim's families and laying flowers on London Bridge subsequently [169].
9. However, a separate point has been raised in evidence by counsel for the families, namely that ZR must have appreciated that her husband had the *potential* or was *capable* of committing a violent, terrorist act.
10. To the extent that it is relevant to the conclusions to be drawn (eg in the context of whether a report to the CT authorities should have been made by her) it is submitted that the evidence, and all proper inferences to be drawn from it, dictate that the answer is in the negative.
11. The thrust of the questioning of ZR by Gareth Patterson QC on behalf of the six families is encapsulated in two questions, asked at the beginning and end, respectively, of his interrogation of her.

*'Q ... is the truth that you just cannot bring yourself to admit that you must have realised that he had the potential to act in this sort of violent way?'*

[Day 21, 06.06.19 at p106]

*'Q. Ms Rehman, casting your mind back, isn't the truth that throughout your marriage to this man, you not only knew how extreme he was in his radical views, but you also did realise that he was capable of something that involved the use of*

*violence; isn't that the truth?'*  
p151]

[ibid, at

12. Both suggestions were denied and it is right to emphasise that, throughout the evidence, a distinction in principle has been identified between a person who holds strong, radical or even extreme views on the one hand and the possibility that they might translate into a criminal, violent, terrorist act on the other.

13. In relation to the same general point of what was known of KB's views plus the fact that no report was made to the authorities, the CTI Written Submissions at para 61 (supported by the six families at para 5 of their submissions and the family of Xavier Thomas at para 64 of theirs) state:

*'61 ...we submit that serious consideration should be given to recording the fact that Khuram Butt's family were aware of his extremist views and behaviour but did not report those matters to the authorities. A passage of the following kind might be suggested:*

*Multiple warning signs about the extremist views and conduct of one attacker were known to a number of his close family members in the months and years before the attack. In the main these were not reported to the authorities'*

14. Whereas it is accepted that ZR was aware of her husband's views and conduct to the extent she described in her evidence, and that she did not make a report at any stage, if (but only if) it is decided to record a passage relating to these matters, then the same should be tempered by reference to the overall effect of her evidence, the principal points of which were:  
[all references are to Day 21, 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019]

(a) ZR's background

- She is a devout Muslim [172] who, though plainly intelligent and articulate had had a sheltered upbringing within a conservative culture
- She had never dated boys [8] and had always anticipated, as was the case, entering into an arranged marriage. Her marriage took place on 25<sup>th</sup> December 2013 when she was 20 years old, meeting and speaking to KB that day for only the second time since she was 9 years old [9].
- Her views on Islam were moderate, as were her family's [3] but her traditions, which she readily accepted, were conservative, including the strict segregation of genders [173] to the extent that KB erected a pole and curtain in the hallway of their flat so that she could pass from kitchen to bedroom without seeing or meeting any male visiting him [175]. All she had wanted from childhood was to be a wife and mother [168]

(b) The marriage

- Initially loving and attentive, KB started to change after the birth of his son in October 2014 when *'he started to become less obsessed with me and his family life and he started looking for the next best thing that he could get into'* – which was both Islam and the political situation in Syria [184]
- He was by now spending time away from the home and ZR was aware that he was watching the likes of Anjem Choudury on YouTube [186, 188] and associating with people affiliated to ALM [190]
- Although disapproving of this, she was confident that this did not in any sense provide a gateway to violence or terrorism

because of the ‘*covenant of security*’ [190]. Neither at this stage or at any stage did she believe or suspect in her worst nightmares that KB would act as he later did [192]

(c) Loss of trust

A series of events led to a loss of trust in her by KB and accusations by him that she had betrayed him by confiding in her family and his. The consequence was that he became increasingly withdrawn and absent from the home and untrusting of her in regards to his views and opinions which he no longer shared with her.

The contradictions in his nature, however, meant that although it was still obvious that his interpretation of Islam remained ultra conservative, he did nothing to impose his views, such as in regards to her dress, her watching television and her pursuing what he termed as her British version of Islam [193]

- February 2015 – KB booked to take his family to Turkey, leading to ZR’s father and brothers seizing his passport [188]
- November 2015 – at a time when he was ‘*barely at home*’ [194] KB announced his wish to take a second wife leading to ZR leaving him and going to live with her parents where divorce was discussed [195]
- January 2016 – The Jihadis Next Door was broadcast whilst ZR was living at her parents’ home. KB, who had never previously mentioned the filming on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2015, claimed he had merely been in the wrong place at the wrong time [198]. Anxious to believe him in order to save her marriage,

ZR returned home after KB swore an oath never to take another wife during ZR's lifetime [199].

- Thereafter, it appeared to ZR that KB seemed to distance himself from those he had previously associated with [200] – an opinion objectively confirmed by Witness L [Day 24, 12.06.19 at p88-9]. In hindsight, she believes this conduct was merely to keep a low profile, believing his TV appearance would have brought him to the attention of the police
- Mid 2016 – KB began attending the Ummah Gym but, by now, his lack of paid employment was causing daily arguments [202]. Still desperate to make the marriage work, ZR agreed to KB's wish to have another child [203].
- October 2016 – KB arrested on fraud charges. ZR informed his mother and brother leading to further allegations of betrayal against her [206].
- 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2016 generally – by now, KB was rarely home or participating in family life during the week. He would sleep most of the morning, waking at 11am-12noon, go to teach at Ad Deen School at 1pm, return home at 4-4.30pm and leave for Ummah Gym an hour later [202]
- KB never praised the actions of those who committed the terrorist attacks at Westminster Bridge or Manchester Arena [127, 151]. It is a measure of his duplicity towards ZR that, on the contrary, he expressed sadness to her at the death of a child at Manchester at a time when his intention to commit the attack at London Bridge was already formed, Redouane having purchased the knives used on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

15. It is recognised that the knowledge of KB's views and opinions by ZR and KB's family and the fact that no report was made to the authorities by any of them has been a matter of legitimate interest to the families of the deceased and to the Inquest generally. It is accepted that serious consideration to recording matters in the manner described in CTI's Written Submissions Para 61 (set out at para 13, above) must be given.

16. However, it is submitted that ZR's evidence, if accepted, may militate against that course so far as she is concerned, alternatively would warrant words of qualification or explanation in her case.

17. Usman Darr

(a) The court is invited to disregard the evidence of Usman Darr, the estranged husband of ZR's sister in law, Haleema Butt, in so far as it appeared to implicate ZR in

(i) expressing support for the words and character of Anjem Choudary at a family gathering during Ramadan 2015, and

(ii) supporting an argument by KB in relation to the execution of a Jordanian pilot by providing KB with a detail of a battle

(b) Usman Darr had made a written statement [WS1859] provided to the investigators by his solicitor in which he made no mention of Anjem Choudary and the Ramadan incident (because '*it slipped my mind*' [252]) and no mention in it of ZR in any regard.

(c) The context in which he appeared at court on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019 has since become known:

- The original transcript shows that he entered court at 1610hrs
- Between 1604hrs and 1609hrs he had sent a flurry of 23 WhatsApp messages [DC8312] to Haleema Butt, threatening variously *'I'm gonna Fukin wreck u all'*, *'I'm gonna be a cunt now'*, *'Just u watch'* and expressing his anger and threats against not only his wife but also against others related to or linked to KB, including Haleema's brother, Saad, and Saad's wife, Noor Butt, whom he said he was going to accuse (falsely) of having killed her own daughter.
- It appears plain that his evidence was motivated by anger and spite and is inherently unreliable in the regards complained of.

**24<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

**ANDREW RADCLIFFE QC**

**2, Hare Court**

**ADAM MORGAN,**

**Furnival Chambers**