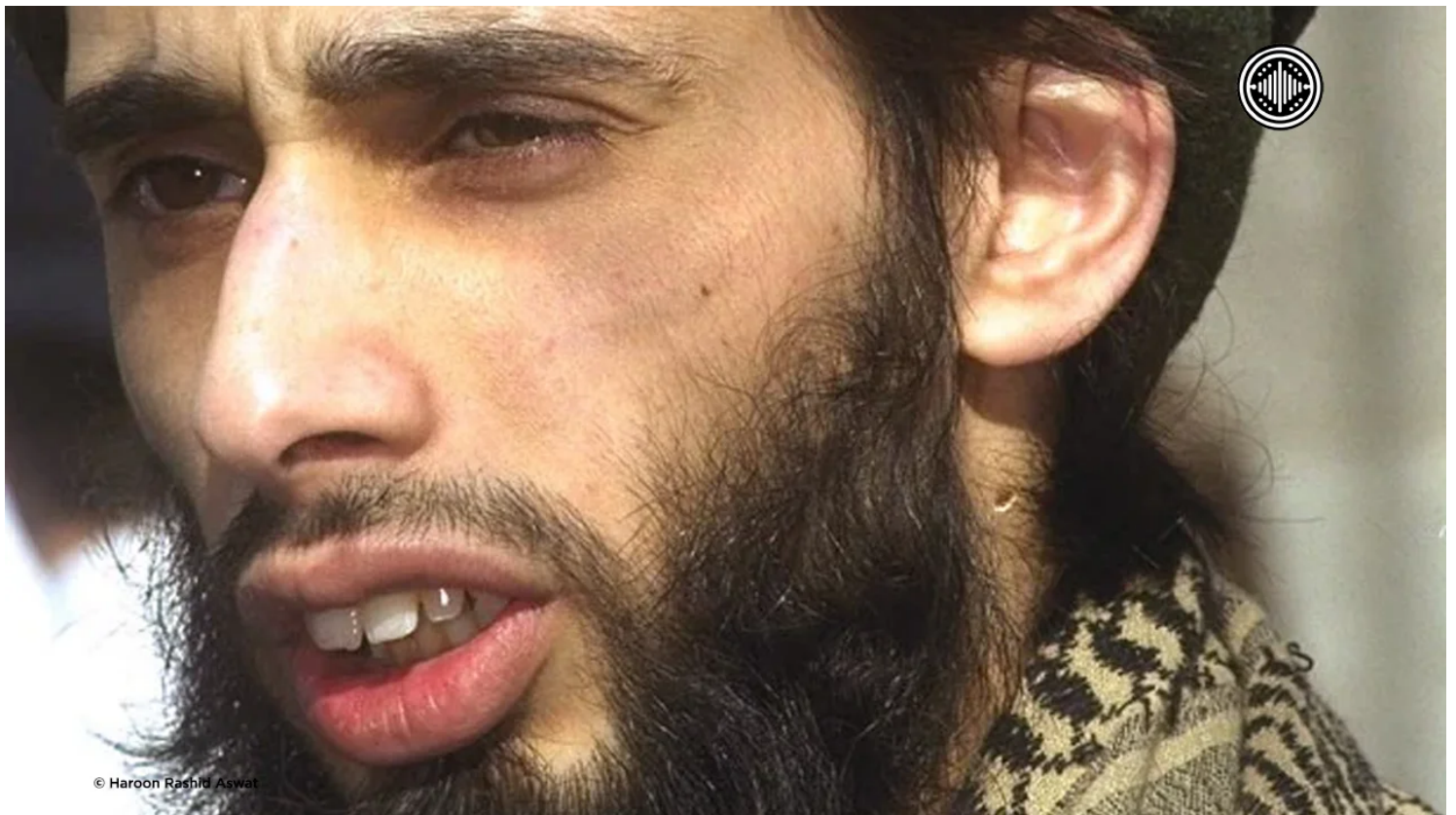


Convicted Terrorist Linked to 9/11 and 7/7 Attacks May Be Freed Without Full Risk Assessment

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— Categories: Crime



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A convicted al-Qaeda operative involved in plotting both the 9/11 and 7/7 terrorist attacks could soon be released onto British streets, raising serious national security concerns. Haroon Aswat, 50, a British-born Islamist extremist, is currently detained under the Mental

Health Act at a secure psychiatric facility, yet may be freed without undergoing a complete terrorist risk evaluation due to legal technicalities.

Aswat, originally from West Yorkshire, was sentenced to 20 years in a New York court in 2015 for conspiring to establish a terrorist training camp in Oregon alongside radical preacher Abu Hamza. During his incarceration in the United States, Aswat admitted to having a role in the September 11, 2001, attacks in the United States and the July 7, 2005, bombings in London.

He was extradited to the UK in 2022 following several years at Broadmoor Hospital, a high-security psychiatric facility. Upon his return, his sentence was reduced to seven years, factoring in the time he had already served. He has since been transferred to Bethlem Royal Hospital in London, more commonly known as Bedlam.

Documents released by the United States District Court, cited by *The Sun*, reveal alarming details about Aswat's continued allegiance to al-Qaeda. The files describe him as a trained "foot soldier of al-Qaeda," who, while imprisoned, claimed Osama bin Laden was his "commander" and made threats such as, "I will behead all of you." Prison staff recorded multiple instances of disciplinary violations and extremist rhetoric, leading officials to conclude that Aswat remained dangerous and ideologically radicalised.

Despite this, British psychiatrists have indicated that Aswat is in a stable mental condition and could be eligible for release "in the relatively near future." However, as confirmed by High Court Justice Jay, he has not been subjected to a formal terrorist risk assessment since his deportation back to the UK.

In a 2022 assessment, forensic psychiatrist Dr Richard Taylor stated that Aswat still posed a serious public threat, noting his continued support for violent extremist ideology. These concerns were echoed by senior police officers during High Court proceedings in April. Detective Sergeant David Taylor assessed that Aswat had a significant history with Islamist extremism, warning that his past convictions, ideological affiliations, and fragile mental health could present a security risk. Similarly, Detective Inspector Karen Bradley stated that she believed Aswat remained a potential terrorist threat.

If released, Aswat will not be subjected to surveillance or a Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measure (TPIM), which are typically used to monitor individuals suspected of

posing a security risk. Under current conditions, he would be free to travel abroad provided he notifies the police in advance.

The case has drawn strong criticism from political figures. Shadow Immigration Minister Robert Jenrick described Aswat as a “despicable man” who was “behind one of the most deadly attacks in modern history,” adding, “He should never experience freedom again.”

A government spokesperson responded by reaffirming the state’s commitment to national security. “Protecting our national security is the very first priority of this Government, and if any individual poses a threat to that security, the police and intelligence services have a range of powers they can apply to deal with that threat. We will always do whatever is necessary inside the law to protect the public from any risk posed by former terrorist offenders or people of terrorist concern.”