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Hanley Riot Bricks Thrower Spared Jail in 'Unusual' Case

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A man who threw bricks during the Hanley riots has avoided a custodial sentence after a judge ruled the circumstances surrounding his case were “extremely unusual.” Hasnen

Iqbal, 28, was admitted to a single incident of violent disorder during the August 3 unrest but was otherwise commended for his efforts to de-escalate tensions throughout the day.

Stoke-on-Trent Crown Court heard that Iqbal, of Havelock Place, Shelton, was initially present to urge fellow Muslims to avoid engaging in violence. Prosecutor Tomas Quinn detailed how Iqbal had even told a counter-protester that “the police are doing their job,” and assisted an injured man unaffiliated with his group by providing water and tending to his condition.

However, during the height of the disturbance near the mosque on Town Road, Iqbal picked up bricks and threw them towards both the police and the protesters. Although the missiles landed short, the act placed officers at risk. CCTV footage later showed him covering his face with a T-shirt as tensions flared further.

Iqbal’s defence, led by Hayley Parkes, argued for leniency, highlighting that he was not involved in more serious assaults and had even attempted to stop others from attacking a Greggs bakery. She noted his genuine remorse and cited his stable life as a husband, father, and contributing member of the community. His only previous convictions were from when he was a teenager.

In a written statement, Iqbal said he attended the scene believing the English Defence League (EDL) was threatening local businesses. “It was never my intention to become involved, but I accept that in the heat of the moment, I threw items. I immediately regretted my actions,” he said.

Judge Graeme Smith acknowledged that Iqbal’s participation in the violence was an isolated lapse in an otherwise responsible presence. “Your actions in throwing missiles are difficult to understand, given your conduct for the rest of the day,” he said, adding that Iqbal had shown clear remorse and posed a low risk of reoffending.

Iqbal received a 16-month prison sentence, suspended for two years. He must also complete 160 hours of unpaid work and undertake ten days of rehabilitation activity. The court’s decision reflects a balance between recognising public disorder and

acknowledging genuine efforts to maintain peace amid chaos.