

Beat: News

Killers of British soldier Lee Rigby sentenced to life

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USPA News - Two al-Qaeda-inspired men convicted of murdering a British soldier in the streets of London last year were sentenced Wednesday, one to life without parole and the other to life with a minimum of 45 years, officials said. They were both removed from the courtroom after disrupting the sentencing.

In an attack witnessed by bystanders in May 2013, Michael Adebolajo, 29, and Michael Adebowale, 22, struck soldier Lee Rigby with a car before stabbing him to death with a meat cleaver and knives. "Today's sentence reflects the true horror of their actions in taking this young man's life in such a barbaric way," said Police Assistant Commissioner Cressida Dick. In December, a jury unanimously found the defendants guilty of brutally murdering 25-year-old Drummer Lee Rigby, but the men were found not guilty of the attempted murder of a police officer. Adebolajo and Adebowale had pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm with intent to cause fear of violence at an earlier hearing. As Justice Sweeney began Wednesday's sentencing, the two British Muslim converts began to shout and scuffle with court security guards, the BBC reported. Adebolajo was heard shouting "Allahu Akbar" ("God is great") and Adebowale shouted "that's a lie" when the judge said their extremist views were "a betrayal of Islam." Both men were eventually forced to the ground and removed from the court. Sue Hemming, the head of counter-terrorism at the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), said Rigby's murder marked "one of the most appalling terrorist murders" she had ever seen. "Not only was the attack brutal and calculated, it was also designed to advance extremist views. As a soldier, Fusilier Rigby was targeted in a clear act of revenge, deliberately carried out in full view of members of the public for maximum impact," she said. The May 22, 2013, murder was deemed a terrorist attack carried out by the self-described "soldiers of Allah." According to the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), which is better known as Scotland Yard, Drummer Rigby was on the afternoon of the murder returning from duty in central London to Woolwich Barracks where he was based. Adebolajo, with Adebowale in the passenger seat, drove a Vauxhall Tigra directly at Rigby at a speed between 30 to 40 miles (48 to 64 kilometers) per hour. The soldier was struck from behind and carried on the hood of the car until falling on the ground when it came to a stop. Adebolajo and Adebowale then exited the vehicle and attacked Rigby with knives and a machete before dragging him into the middle of the road and repeatedly stabbing him. When officers arrived at the scene, the men ran back towards the car with Adebolajo raising the cleaver above his head. Police shot and detained both men. "I know the court process has been particularly distressing for Lee Rigby's family. I hope they can take some small comfort from the sentences imposed today and can begin to move forward," Hemming said. Rigby is survived by his wife Rebecca and two-year-old son Jack.

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