



MANCHESTER ARENA INQUESTS

Jurisdiction: Manchester City Area

Coroner for the Manchester Arena Inquests: Hon. Sir John Saunders

DIRECTIONS MADE FOLLOWING A PRE-INQUEST REVIEW HEARING ON 29 JULY 2019

On 29th July 2019 at a Pre-Inquest Review before Sir John Saunders, the Coroner **ORDERED THAT:**

Reporting restrictions

1. Pursuant to s.4(2) of the Contempt of Court Act 1981, reporting of the Pre-Inquest Review was delayed in order to ensure no reporting of anything that may create a substantial risk that the course of justice in the criminal proceedings against Hashem Abedi would be seriously impeded or prejudiced.
2. No live reporting of the Pre-Inquest Review was permitted, whether by Twitter, other social media or otherwise. At the conclusion of the oral submissions there was a short break to consult with the Crown Prosecution Service (“CPS”) and Greater Manchester Police (“GMP”), during which it was determined that one matter referred to during submissions should not be reported but that all other matters could be, subject to the extant reporting restrictions made by Mr Justice Sweeney on 22 July 2019 in the criminal proceedings against Hashem Abedi.

Sequencing of criminal proceedings and inquest hearings

3. The criminal trial of Hashem Abedi will take place before the inquests (*Post-hearing note: at a hearing at Oxford Crown Court on the day after the Pre-Inquest Review the trial was set for 5 November 2019*). However, following consultation with the CPS and GMP it has been agreed that the coronial investigation can continue, subject to there being no disclosure to Interested Persons (“IPs”) of any material which might prejudice the criminal trial until those proceedings have concluded.
4. The oral evidence hearings in the inquests will therefore commence on **6th April 2020**. This will be kept under review, in particular with regard to the criminal proceedings and the outcome of any PII application.

Article 2 ECHR

5. Article 2 is held to be engaged. This issue will be kept under review as the coronial investigation continues.

Scope

6. The provisional ruling as to scope, and the list of issues adopted following the Pre-Inquest Review on 28 February 2019, are now made final.

Public Interest Immunity

7. As previously directed, any Public Interest Immunity (“PII”) application and certificate is to be served on the Solicitor to the Inquests by **4pm on 12th August 2019**.
8. The open and closed hearing on PII will take place **on 6th September 2019**.
9. The ruling on PII (or a decision to postpone a final ruling), along with the Coroner’s provisional view as to whether, in light of that ruling, the inquests would be Article 2 compliant, will be sent to Interested Persons (“IPs”) **on 13th September 2019**.
10. IPs may make written submissions **by 20th September 2019** on the issue of whether the inquests would be Article 2 compliant and, if not, whether the Coroner should invite the Secretary of State to establish a public inquiry (“the inquest/inquiry issue”).
11. Counsel to the Inquests will provide written submissions on the inquest/inquiry issue **by 27th September 2019**.
12. Any further Pre-Inquest Review to consider the inquest/inquiry issue further will be listed for **7 October 2019**.

Hearing venue and sitting hours

13. Subject to plans being approved, an area within Manchester Magistrates’ Court will be converted for use as a hearing venue for the inquests.
14. The inquests will sit 10.00am to 5.00pm, four days a week (Monday to Thursday) with Friday as a preparation day.

Interested Person status of Network Rail

15. Network Rail are no longer designated as an IP for the purposes of these inquests.

Jury

16. The issue of whether or not there should be a jury will be dealt with after the determination of any PII application.

Updates on Hashem Abedi criminal trial

17. Counsel to the Inquests will ensure that a suitably qualified person is present at the criminal trial of Hashem Abedi to compile a weekly note of proceedings which will be circulated to all IPs, and submissions may be made by IPs as to whether any particular evidence from the trial is relevant to the inquests.