

May trial set for Islamist preacher Anjem Choudary accused of terror offences

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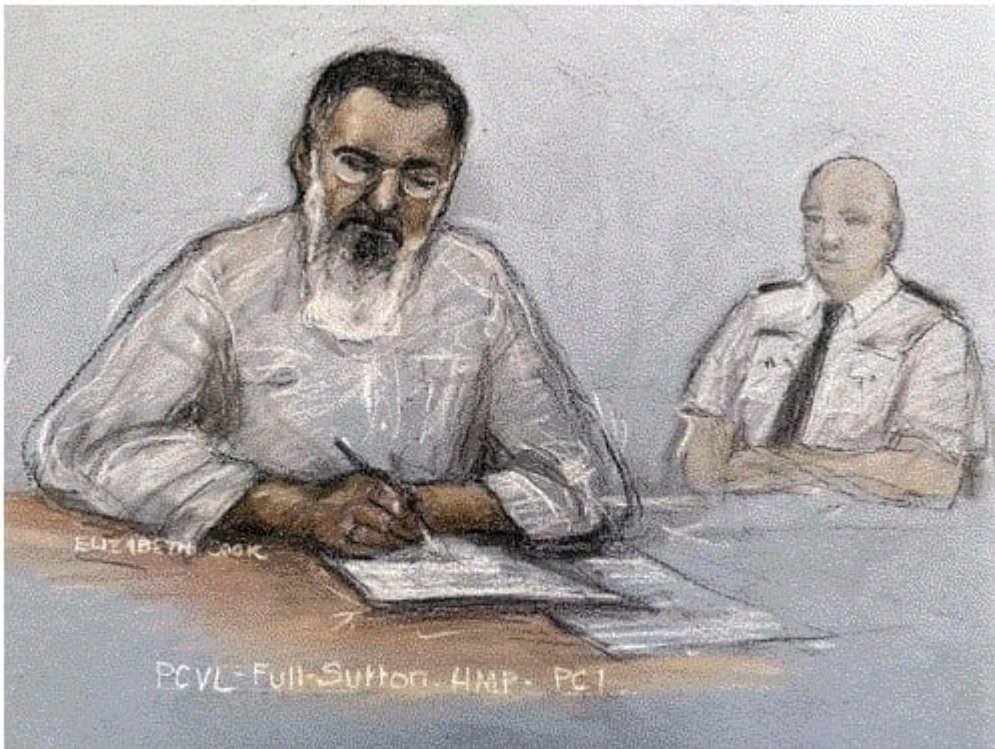
East London Islamist preacher Anjem Choudary is facing a trial next May for alleged terror offences.

The 56-year-old was arrested in a dawn raid at his home in Ilford on July 17 while a second suspect, Khaled Hussein, was detained at Heathrow having arrived on a flight the same day.

On Friday the defendants appeared at the Old Bailey for a preliminary hearing by video link from custody.

Choudary, father of five, was at HMP Full Sutton in Yorkshire and Hussein appeared from HMP Wandsworth in south London. Mr Justice Jeremy Baker set a plea hearing for January 5 and a provisional trial at Kingston Crown Court from May 20 next year.

The court was told the trial of up to eight weeks would be heard before a High Court judge. During the hearing, the defendants spoke only to confirm their identities and dates of birth.



Court artist sketch of Anjem Choudary appearing by video link from HMP Full Sutton in Yorkshire at the Old Bailey / Elizabeth Cook/PA Wire

Grey-bearded and bespectacled Choudary wore a white robe and Hussein appeared in a grey and black checked shirt.

Choudary could be seen on the video link scribbling notes as defence barristers in court discussed the timetable for the case.

Mr Justice Baker told the defendants: "The trial in this case – if it is to take place – will take place at Kingston Crown Court before a High Court judge on May 20 of next year and you will appear at either that court or this court on January 5 for a plea and trial preparation hearing. In the meantime, you will remain in custody."

It is said Al-Muhajiroun has been reborn under a different name, the Islamic Thinkers Society (ITS), and Choudary is accused of giving a series of lectures to ITS.

Mr Stanier (*prosecution*) said Hussein is accused of being a member of the banned group for around two years, and has been "working for (Choudary) in the online space to provide a platform for the words and messages of the organisation".

Nick Price, from the CPS Counter Terrorism Division, said at

the July hearing: "The CPS has authorised charges in relation to Anjem Choudary and Khaled Hussein under the Terrorism Act. The charges relate to the proscribed organisation Al-Muhajiroun, also known as the Islamic Thinkers Society. Criminal proceedings against Mr Choudary and Mr Hussein are now active and they each have the right to a fair trial. It is extremely important that there should be no reporting, commentary or sharing of information online which could in any way prejudice these proceedings..."