



Sara Sharif's father and stepmother jailed for life in prison for her murder Free
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Description



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Sara Sharif's father and stepmother are sentenced to life in prison for the 10-year-old's murder

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Urfan Sharif, 43, must spend a minimum of 40 years in prison and Beinash Batool, 30, must serve 33 years

Her uncle, Faisal Malik, 29, is jailed for 16 years for causing or allowing the death of a child – he was found not guilty of murder

The judge says in sentencing that Sara suffered “a campaign of torture” and was “a very courageous little girl with an unquenchable spirit”

In comments read to the court earlier, Sara's mother Olga called the defendants “sadists” and “executioners”

Sara died on 8 August 2023 at her home in Woking, Surrey and her body was found with dozens of injuries two days later

- **June 2022:** Sara's primary school notices a bruise under her left eye
- **March 2023:** The school notices a bruise on her chin and a dark mark on her right eye, and contacts Children's Single Point of Access for advice, which agrees that a referral to social services is needed
- **16 March 2023:** Social services decides to take no further action
- **April 2023:** Sara's father informs the school that she is to be withdrawn for home schooling
- **8 August 2023:** Sara dies at her family home in Woking, Surrey
- **9 August 2023:** Her father Urfan Sharif, stepmother Beinash Batool, and uncle, Faisal Malik travel from Heathrow Airport to Islamabad, Pakistan, with Sara's five brothers and sisters
- **10 August 2023:** Sara's body is found at her home. She sustained “multiple and extensive injuries” before her death, a post-mortem reveals. Surrey Police began liaising with international partners
- **15 August 2023:** Pakistan police say they received a request from Interpol to search for the group
- **16 August 2023:** The police began searching for Sharif, Batool and Malik
- **13 September 2023:** All three are arrested on suspicion of murder at Gatwick Airport on returning to the UK from Pakistan
- **15 September 2023:** The three relatives are charged with Sara's murder, and further accused of causing or allowing the death of a child
- **7 October 2024:** The trial of Sara's father, stepmother and uncle begins – all three deny the charges
- **11 December 2024:** Jury finds Sara's father and stepmother guilty of murder. Her uncle is found not guilty of murder but guilty of causing or allowing the death of a child
- **17 December 2024:** Sharif and Batool are sentenced to life in prison with minimum terms of 40 years and 33 years, respectively. Malik is jailed for 16 years

As the judge said “take them down”, Sara's father, stepmother and uncle were led out of the dock and

down to the cells, bringing an end to a case that has heard weeks of unimaginable horror.

But it was Sara's memory that lingered in the courtroom after they'd gone.

Her "unquenchable spirit" as the judge put it, her courage and her love for singing and dancing.

This has been a heartbreaking and traumatic case to sit through.

There will be many questions in the days and weeks ahead about what more could have been done to save Sara.

But for now justice has been publicly served.

Sara Sharif's father and stepmother jailed for life
published at 14:46 17 December
14:46 17 December

Earlier we heard the sentences handed down to Sara Sharif's father, stepmother, and uncle. Here's a brief recap of what happened at the Old Bailey:

Sara's father Urfan Sharif was sentenced to life in prison for her murder, and must serve a minimum of 40 years

Her stepmother Beinash Batool was also given a life sentence for her murder, with a minimum term of 33 years

Faisal Malik, Sara's uncle, was not found guilty of murder, but received a jail sentence of 16 years for causing or allowing the death of a child

The judge said in his sentencing that Sara "was battered with great force again and again" and suffered "a campaign of torture"

The 10-year-old was described by the judge as "a very courageous little girl with an unquenchable spirit" who loved to sing and dance

In a statement, Sara's mother Olga said her daughter was "always smiling" and that she "had her own unique character"

Sara Sharif

By the time police found 10-year-old Sara Sharif's body at her home in Woking in Surrey on 10 August 2023, Sara's family had already left the country. The ramifications of that decision are still playing out in Pakistan.

Five of Sara's siblings were taken to Pakistan by her father, Urfan Sharif, stepmother, Beinash Batool and uncle Faisal Malik. The family of eight spent weeks in hiding as the police hunted for them, at times hiding in cornfields to evade them according to the man who told the BBC he hid them

The children were discovered when police raided their grandfather's house in early September 2023 and subsequently sent to a state childcare facility. When the three adults flew back to the UK a few days later, they left the children behind.

All five are still in Pakistan, now in the temporary care of a relative while the legal battle for where they will live in the long term continues.

In 2023 during a series of hearings in the Family Division of the High Court in London, Sara's siblings were made wards of court, and the court ordered that they should be returned to the UK. However, there have also been simultaneous court proceedings in Pakistan as the children's grandfather, Muhammad Sharif, has fought for custody.

The BBC team in Pakistan has been in attendance of many of the court hearings since September 2023 – for some of the early hearings the children would often be in court, More recently the hearings, which occur every few weeks, have just been attended by lawyers from either side.

Despite over a year of legal back and forth, the children still do not know whether they will stay in Pakistan or be returned to the UK.

A Surrey County Council spokesperson said: "We are continuing to work our way through this highly complex situation, sensitively and carefully, working closely with all of the agencies concerned. Our overriding priority remains the wellbeing of the children and we request that their privacy is respected."

On the morning of 13 November, four weeks into the murder trial of 10-year-old Sara Sharif, came a moment so dramatic it left jurors open-mouthed and an Old Bailey courtroom horrified.

Sara's father Urfan Sharif had not long been in the witness box on the seventh day of giving evidence when suddenly, trembling, he uttered five words that would change the course of the trial.

"She died because of me."

Until then, he had denied almost everything, instead blaming his wife – Sara's stepmother – for her death.

It was the defining moment of an eight-week murder trial.

Child protection advocates call for 'substantial' reformpublished at 14:12 17 December
14:12 17 December

Let's bring you fresh comments from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC), which is calling for "substantial, nationwide reform" to child protection services in the wake of Sara Sharif's murder.

In a statement released after the sentencing, acting CEO of the NSPCC Maria Neophytou said that the Child Safeguarding Practice Review must undertake "an exhaustive search" for answers to understand "how this horrific abuse was able to happen, and for so long".

"Sara has now joined a lengthening list from recent years, which also includes Arthur Labinjo Hughes, Star Hobson and Alfie Phillips, where horrific abuse from a parent or carer has directly led to the death of a young child," Neophytou said.

"To significantly reduce the likelihood of more of these terrible cases emerging, there needs to be substantial, nationwide reform and investment in the services which we rely on to keep our children safe."

In delivering his sentencing remarks, Mr Justice Cavanagh said today that the events in the case “inevitably raise questions” about whether more could have been done to prevent Sara’s death – citing specifically risks associated with unsupervised homeschooling for vulnerable children.

The trial showed again and again how Surrey County Council’s children’s services, Surrey Police and her primary school were all aware of concerns about her family, but none was able to offer a lifeline to Sara.

England’s children’s commissioner said Sara’s murder showed the “profound weaknesses” in the child protection system, as she called for change – including stricter rules on letting vulnerable children be home-schooled.

The NSPCC said child protection services are struggling to cope amid a lack of resources and there were “crucial questions” to answer.

There will now be an independent local safeguarding review of all professionals who had contact with the family, which Surrey County Council says it will play an active part in.

Sentences ‘reflect cruelty and gravity’ of crimes against Sara – CPS published at 13:48 17 December

The sentences handed down to Urfan Sharif, Beinash Batool and Faisal Malik “reflect the cruelty and gravity” of their crimes, the Crown Prosecution Service says.

In a statement released by the CPS after the sentencing, specialist prosecutor for CPS South East Libby Clark, said Sara was a joyful 10-year-old whose life was “tragically cut short by the very people who should have protected and cared for her”.

“The evidence in this case painted a devastating picture of the suffering Sara experienced,” she said, adding that all of this was shown by the injuries found on her body.

Sharif, Batool and Malik demonstrated a “shocking” disregard for her life in the actions they took after her death, the statement added.

‘Sara would sing to anyone who would listen’ published at 13:31 17 December
13:31 17 December

Sara Sharif experienced “daily living hell” at home at the hands of her father and stepmother, but at school she was a caring, cheerful “chatterbox”, who loved singing and dancing, her head teacher said.

Jacquie Chambers told the BBC that Sara was a much-loved pupil at St Mary’s Primary School who would “sing to anyone who would listen” and had dreams of appearing on The X Factor.

Despite the torture she suffered at home, Chambers said Sara was a “cheerful little soul” in the classroom and she would always be helping younger pupils in the playground.

“She would write songs all of the time and she would sing to anyone who would listen,” she said – something this video clip of Sara, released by police, demonstrates:

There was no reaction from Sharif as he was sentenced, he looked down.

As he was sentenced there was some clapping from the public gallery, and the judge asked for quiet.

Batool looked as if she was about to cry, but no reaction from any of them apart from that. Malik had his head down.

The defendants were led out of the dock and down to the cells to begin their long prison sentences.

The judge thanks the teams involved in the case, all members of the counsel teams and the court staff.

Sara's uncle jailed for 16 yearspublished at 13:01 17 December

Faisal Malik, 29, Sara's uncle, receives a jail sentence of 16 years for causing or allowing the death of a child.

Sara Sharif's father and stepmother jailed for lifepublished at 13:00 17 December

Urfan Sharif, 43, Sara's father, is sentenced to life in prison for her murder and must serve a minimum of 40 years.

Her stepmother, Beinash Batool, 30, is also given a life sentence for her murder, with a minimum term of 33 years.

Batool was also sometimes victim of abuse, says judgepublished at 12:58 17 December

Justice Cavanagh now speaks of mitigating factors in Batool's case, saying Batool was not the prime mover in assaults against Sara.

She also sometimes showed "acts of kindness" towards Sara and treated her wounds, he says – but treated Sara as the family servant.

The judge says Batool was in a coercive and controlling relationship with Sharif and adds that she was vulnerable and sometimes a victim of abuse at Sharif's hands.

He says Batool was under a great deal of strain looking after six children, and that she had a difficult and strict family background and upbringing.

Justice Cavanagh is listing some of the aggravating factors in Batool's case, which include Sara's age and vulnerability, and the fact that Batool could have put a stop to the treatment, which she knew to be wrong.

He also says she singled Sara out as a female child with a different mother.

The judge says there was use of weapons and restraints, and attempts to cover up Sara's injuries – and the abuse was within earshot and sight of other children.

He also lists other aggravating factors as the fact Batool did not call an ambulance for Sara, that she fled to Pakistan – and that she has “no credible remorse”.

You were prepared to sacrifice Sara, judge tells stepmotherpublished at 12:50 17 December

The judge is addressing stepmother Beinash Batool, saying she assisted Sharif’s abuse and helped to cover it up.

He says Batool was “prepared to sacrifice Sara” as she was not her biological child and she did not care very much about her.

He adds Batool was complicit in the abuse and says the starting point for the minimum term in prison, like Sharif, should be 30 years.

We are nearly an hour into the judge’s sentencing statements, and still the defendants stare at the floor.

The jurors present are staring at Beinash Batool as the judge discusses a possible 30-year starting point for Batool’s minimum sentence term.

Justice Cavanagh is now turning to what sentences the defendants should receive – you can watch above by clicking watch live.

He says the starting point for father Urfan Sharif’s minimum term in prison should be 30 years.

“You plainly derived grim satisfaction from your campaign of violence against Sara,” he says.

He says aggravating factors will bring a substantial uplift from the starting point, and goes over the details of the years of abuse and cover-ups Sara was subjected to.

Judge: This case shows danger of unsupervised home-schoolingpublished at 12:40 17 December

The judge briefly turns to whether more could have been done by the authorities, given previous safeguarding concerns raised by Sara’s school and the fact that Sharif was on the radar of various authorities.

He stresses that commenting on this is not the role of sentencing – but makes one comment that the case “brings into sharp relief” the dangers of unsupervised home schooling for vulnerable children.

Sara wrote a card saying ‘I love you, dad’ – judgepublished at 12:37 17 December

Sara was “a very courageous little girl with an unquenchable spirit”, Justice Cavanagh says, and she loved to sing and dance.

He says a video filmed not long before she died of her dancing in front of the TV shows her mobility was impaired, but despite everything, she still smiled at the camera.

Among the most heartbreaking evidence, the judge says, was a short story she wrote that described Batool as a “queen”, a birthday card to Sharif that said “I love you, dad”, and an apology note that asked for forgiveness for answering back.

Her abuse had become normalised for her, the judge says.

“She had known nothing else for her entire life,” the judge says, adding that Sharif and Batool had persuaded Sara that she deserved the treatment.

Sara was beautiful little girl and full of personality, says judge

The judge describes Sara as a “beautiful little girl” who was “full of personality”.

He says her mother describes her as “always smiling”.

The judge goes on to quote a teaching assistant at her primary school describing Sara as “bubbly, confident, chatty, engaging”.

Judge says they only came back to UK due to ‘family pressure’published at 12:35 17 December

Justice Cavanagh turns to the phone call that father Sharif made to Surrey Police from Pakistan, when he said he had killed his daughter.

He says both Sharif and Batool took part in a “bizarre” video press statement, in which they referred only briefly to Sara’s death, saying it was an “incident”, and then went on to complain of the pressure authorities in Pakistan were putting on Sharif’s family.

Cavanagh says eventually three of them returned to the UK, but adds he does not believe they came back willingly, but under family pressure.

You were all engaged in the cover-up, judge tells three defendantspublished at 12:34 17 December

Mr Justice Cavanagh now turns to the steps the defendants took after Sara’s death to cover up what they had done “as best they could”.

The judge says he has no doubt they were all “engaged” in this.

He lists the actions of washing Sara, changing her clothes and putting her in bed.

He tells Malik there is “no doubt” he was involved, as his McDonalds uniform was found partly in and next to the bins, alongside other items.

Sharif also removed the house’s ring doorbell.

Speaking to Sharif, the judge says he has done everything he could “to avoid punishment” despite a note left on Sara’s body suggesting he would do otherwise.

The judge’s words couldn’t be more powerful, and a reminder of the horrific suffering Sara endured.

Used to dealing with difficult cases, Justice Cavanagh describes the medical evidence in this case as “harrowing”.

The violent campaign of abuse, the judge says, is “hard to contemplate”.

He says judges must be careful not to overuse the word torture, but in this case it was no exaggeration to describe the abuse as that.

No-one sought help for Sara as she died, Justice Cavanagh says.

“Incredibly”, he says, Sara’s father Urfan Sharif beat her as a punishment for pretending to be ill.

He and Batool then took steps to flee to Pakistan, he says – and the jury heard a recording of a phone call within an hour of Batool on the phone to a travel agent “speaking coolly and calmly”.

The judge adds that Sharif can be heard in the background urging her to book an earlier flight, and that the other children can also be heard playing.

He reiterates that this is all within minutes of Sara’s death.

We are now nearly 40 minutes into the judge’s comments.

Still, the defendants remain staring at the floor.

The judge says at the time of her death Sara was undernourished and underweight.

The court heard evidence the cause of death was due to multiple injuries and neglect.

These injuries cumulatively caused her death, the judge says.

Sara suffered a decline in the days before death, after being injured on the head, he adds.

Warning: This post and others below contain distressing details

Justice Cavanagh gives more graphic details of assaults against Sara.

He says Sara was tied up in the last few weeks of her life, and that plastic bags were put on her head.

He says Sara used nappies as she couldn’t go to the toilet.

Cavanagh says there is no doubt that Sharif and Batool were jointly responsible for tying Sara up.

Continuing to list Sara’s injuries, the judge cites some that require “special mention” because they demonstrate the “almost unbelievable torture” she endured during the last weeks of her life.

Among those listed was a fracture to a bone in Sara’s neck that would have been sustained by “vigorous” strangulation.

Other injuries included a “serious” brain injury from a few days before her death and open burn

wounds, he says.

The judge adds that Sara's body was found with 25 separate fractures.

He says the severity of these fractures are rare even in car crashes and would require great force.

"This poor child was battered with great force again and again," he says.

The judge describes the medical evidence in this case as "harrowing".

He adds Sara suffered 71 separate fresh injuries in the last few days before her death.

He says she was injured on her head, face, chest, abdomen and each of her limbs.

There was also evidence she was tied up, beaten with a metal pole and Sharif admitted hitting her head with a phone.

Justice Cavanagh goes on to say to Malik that he was not a child.

"You were 28 years old and anyone, however much they were in awe of their brother, should have recognised what was happening to Sara was dangerous and wrong."

Cavanagh says Malik could have sought help from officials.

He adds that some of the assaults happened in front of other children.

The judge now turns to Malik – Sara's uncle – who came from Pakistan to undertake an undergraduate course.

He says he has "no doubt whatsoever" that Malik was aware of what was happening to Sara – explaining the house and flat were "too small" and "overcrowded" to make any other conclusion.

Justice Cavanagh continues to reference the number of injuries on Sara's body at the time of her death – demonstrating she was the victim of "many assaults"

He calls it "inconceivable" that Malik would not have been around for any of them or did not see or hear anything.

As the judge continues to talk through the facts of the case, all three defendants are still staring at the floor.

The security officers in the dock and the interpreter are watching the judge, while the three people being sentenced are staring at the worn blue carpet in the courtroom.

The judge, Justice Cavanagh, adds that the stress and trauma Sara experienced from the violent campaign of abuse is "hard to contemplate".

He says "predictably and tragically" she was then punished for the physical responses she had to the abuse.

The judge says the abuse began when Sara was six or seven.

He says she never did anything that could justify that treatment.

He adds Batool went along with the abuse and cared less because Sara was not her biological child.

The judge continues Batool made no effort to stop the assaults and put make-up on Sara to cover bruises and agreed to take her out of school.

The judge, Justice John Cavanagh, continues to say Sara was deprived of an education because she was taken out of school.

He says Sara was forced to wear a hijab and cover up her body, adding that this was not for religious reasons. Cavanagh notes that other women in the family did not cover up, and says in Sara's case this was to cover up bruises on her body.

Cavanagh says Sara was a brave, feisty, and spirited child. He says she was not submissive as Sharif wanted her to be.

"She stood up to you," he says, adding that Sharif's ego played a role over the physical power he had over her.

The judge continues to say that it is "clear" that from a young age Sara was treated as a "skivvy" in the family.

He cites examples including that from the age of six or seven she was made to do the washing and hang it up.

He continues to say that from "time to time" Batool performed some acts of kindness towards her – but stresses that neither she nor Sharif had any concern for her "happiness or quality of life".

The judge turns to the decision to take Sara out of school, which he says was due to the obvious visible signs of beating, that Sharif worried would alert the authorities.

Batool did not stand in his way and did "nothing significant" to protect Sara, he says, and even assisted Sharif.

He says it is clear that Sara was singled out amongst her siblings for this treatment and there is no evidence other children were subject to the same treatment.

He says this is for two reasons – that Sara was not Batool's child, and that she was a girl.

The judge says it was clear Urfan Sharif was beating Sara by 2019.

He talks about details of her treatment, including standing her up against a wall and waking her in the night to physically punish her.

He adds there were sinister videos of Sara being slapped while she was trying to cuddle her newborn sibling.

Justice Cavanagh continues by saying “it will take some time to describe the facts of the case”, adding that he intends to do so in some detail.

He says this is for two reasons – to explain the reasons for the sentences he is about to pass, and in tribute to Sara, so the full scale of the ordeal she was subjected to is out in the open.

The judge, Mr Justice John Cavanagh, explains to Sharif and Batool that the only sentence he can pass for the offence of murder is one of life imprisonment.

However, he adds, he will need to specify the minimum term that must elapse before they can be considered for release on licence.

He adds it’s important to “stress” two matters – firstly that the minimum term does not mean they will automatically be released after that period – it is the minimum amount of time they must spend in custody before their case can be considered by the parole board.

Secondly, he emphasises the sentences should not be interpreted as a measure of the “value” of Sara’s life.

Nothing the judge can do will “provide recompense” for the loss of Sara’s life, he says.

Sharif, Batool and Malik have their heads down as the judge says the degree of cruelty involved in this case is almost inconceivable.

As the judge continues, the defendants still show no reaction.

Two of the three jurors present are staring at the defendants in the dock. The other is watching the judge.

Justice Cavanagh says judges must be careful not to overuse the word torture, but it is no exaggeration in this case, describing what happened to Sara as a “campaign of abuse”.

He says none of the accused have shown a “shred” of remorse.

Addressing Urfan Sharif, he says he initially blamed Beinash Batool for Sara’s death, then, when it was clear this had no credibility, he changed tack.

The judge says Sharif’s show of remorse is nothing but a ploy.

Judge Mr Justice John Cavanagh starts speaking.

He reads out what the accused were convicted of.

He says Sara’s death was the “culmination of years of neglect” and “torture” of a small child.

He says her father Urfan Sharif was mainly responsible – and that the degree of cruelty was

“unbelievable” and “happened in plain sight”.

As the judge begins his sentencing remarks, none of the three defendants are looking at the judge.

The court clerk is asking for silence throughout, and the judge comes in.

The judge says the defendants may remain seated until he tells them to stand.

Urfan Sharif, Beinash Batool and Faisal Malik are now back in the dock.

Husband and wife, Sharif and Batool, who blamed each other during the trial are looking straight ahead. Soon they will soon find out their punishment.

We’re about to hear the judge deliver his sentencing remarks, where he will explain the reasoning behind the prison terms he will give to Sara’s father Urfan Sharif, stepmother Beinash Batool and uncle Faisal Malik.

The judge, Justice John Cavanagh, will tell them how long they will spend in prison.

The jury don’t have to come back for the sentencing hearing. Their duty to the court came to an end after they were discharged by the judge following the verdicts on Wednesday.

But jurors can come back for the sentencing if they want to and they often do take the opportunity.

Three have returned today to hear Sara’s father, stepmother and uncle be sentenced.

The barristers have finished and the judge has left the courtroom.

There’ll be a break of about 10 minutes, before Mr Justice Cavanagh returns to begin his sentencing remarks.

The three defendants and three jurors have also left the courtroom.

You’ll be able to watch at his remarks live at the top of the page when he begins.

Mailk’s barrister continues that this was his first trip out of Pakistan.

“He ended up in a situation not of his making,” he says, adding “he then failed to take the actions he should have taken”.

Concluding his statement, Ivers says that Malik regrets that.

Once Malik’s barrister finishes speaking, the judge will rise for about ten minutes before he returns to court to start his sentencing remarks.

As a reminder, the sentences themselves will come towards the end of the sentencing remarks.

“There is – we suggest – absolutely no evidence that he was ever actually present when any violence took place,” Faisal Malik’s barrister Michael Ivers KC continues.

Malik, who also did not give evidence during the trial, was not present at the family home on the evening that Sara suffered the main injury that led to her death.

He says that Malik “wasn’t there when that scream was heard” by the family’s neighbour Fiona Mellon, whose evidence was read to court during the trial.

Michael Ivers KC for Sara’s uncle Faisal Malik is now on his feet.

“When one listens to comments on this case... the temptation to simply lump these defendants together will have been a very strong one,” he says.

“Yet the jury showed cool, calm, clinical approach... that approach is the approach I urge on My Lord.”

Ivers then goes on to say Malik “didn’t have full knowledge,” adding: “He will have had absolutely no idea of the dysfunctional family he was arriving into.”

Batool’s barrister asks the judge to distinguish between Sharif and Batool.

“These are not two offenders that are equally culpable,” she says.

This speaks to the overall basis of Caroline Carberry KC’s submission – that Batool should not get the same sentence as Urfan Sharif.

“Through me, Beinash Batool expresses genuine remorse for Sara’s unintended death,” she says.

“She is unlikely ever to see or speak to her...children.”

The jury never got to hear from Beinash Batool during the trial as she declined to give evidence.

Barrister Caroline Carberry KC tells the court: “The court can be sure that Ms Batool... was an isolated and vulnerable young woman.”

She discloses Batool had a history of depression and self-harm.

“At some point Beinash Batool ceased to be a protector of Sara,” Carberry continues.

The sentencing hearing has been going on for nearly 50 minutes so far and Sara’s father, stepmother and uncle have kept their heads down throughout.

They are behind glass and separated by dock officers.

Caroline Carberry KC for Batool continues by saying her role was “subordinate to Urfan Sharif” who she describes as a “a controlling, manipulative and violent man” and the “instigator of violence towards Sara”.

She adds: “Where did the balance of power lie? It certainly did not lie with her.”

Caroline Carberry KC for Sara’s stepmother Beinash Batool is now on her feet.

“At the forefront of everyone’s mind in this courtroom and beyond is Sara who’s young life was needlessly lost as a result of the physical abuse she sustained in her own home,” she says.

“For her part in Sara’s death the only sentence the court can impose on Beinash Batool is life.

Carberry suggests a starting point of 15 years – but adds that there should be a distinction between the minimum terms imposed on Beinash Batool and Urfan Sharif.

Urfan Sharif’s barrister Naeem Mian KC continues: “We have had the benefit of reading the sentencing note prepared on behalf of the second defendant”, Sara’s stepmother Beinash Batool.

Mian says that Sara’s father Urfan Sharif “accepts responsibility for that which he did” and that “we share the view expressed by the Crown: They (Sharif and Batool) are equally as culpable.”

He adds there was no explanation given during the trial for the multiple bite marks or the “horrific” burns found on Sara.

Urfan Sharif knows that a sentence of great substance awaits him, and “he understands what that will mean for him given the age he is now”, Mian says.

He asks the judge to “afford (Urfan Sharif) that which he did not afford Sara. Afford him some possibility of release at some point in the distant future.”

Naeem Mian KC – the barrister for Sara’s father, Urfan Sharif – is on his feet and says the crime “invokes a sense of outrage, anger and disgust”.

But he tells the judge: “The task before your Lordship... must be approached dispassionately.”

He suggests the appropriate starting point is 15 years.

“We know that will be subject to a significant uplift. We understand that as does Mr Sharif.”

He adds: “The case was advanced on the basis that there was no intention to kill.”

The prosecution has just finished speaking.

The court is now hearing from Naeem Mian KC, the barrister for Ufan Sharif, who begins by saying: “Nothing I say is intended to diminish or mitigate the horror.”

The prosecutor now turns to discussing Faisal Malik, Sara’s uncle who lived with the family and was convicted of causing or allowing a child’s death.

The maximum sentence for causing or allowing the death of a child is life imprisonment, the prosecutor says, with the prosecution is suggesting a starting point of 14 years in prison for Malik.

“Sara’s dreadful treatment was taking [place] in an extremely small flat, and then in a larger but still small house. Faisal Malik was living in that house as a member of the family,” the prosecutor says.

“Throughout that period there had been extensive steps to cover up Sara’s violence, mistreatment by

these defendants including twice removing her from the school because there were injuries they felt they couldn't conceal, under the pretence they were going to home school her," says prosecutor Emyln Jones.

"We also submit that there is mitigation available by which the defendants intended not to kill her but to cause her serious harm," he adds.

But he says it "may pale into insignificance when set against the range and gravity of the aggravating features".

The prosecutor is detailing some of the abuse Sara faced, saying Sara was restrained and couldn't take herself to the toilet.

"She suffered this violence in her own home where she ought to have been able to feel safe and loved and cared for," the prosecutor says.

"The younger children cannot safely have been shielded from the violence that Sara suffered."

Warning: This post contains distressing details

Prosecutor Bill Emlyn Jones KC continues: "This is a murder of a child... especially vulnerable... she was 10 at the time of her death.

"On the evidence she had suffered serious violence from at least the age of six."

He adds: "The violence includes the use of a variety of weapons: a cricket bat, and improvised truncheon made from the leg of a high chair, burns from an electric iron and a scald from burning liquid.

"The violence used was not just excessive but sustained."

"We merely invite the court to consider that the seriousness of the murder of Sara is such as to bear comparison with other types of murder [which do get whole life order]," Emyln Jones continues.

The prosecutor then explains there is a non exhaustive list of the types of murder that fall into a whole life term.

"The starting point would be one of 15 years, but given the range and gravity of the aggravating features... 15 years might be rendered somewhat academic," he tells the court.

"This is a case which bristles with aggravating features," he says.

Bill Emlyn Jones KC for the prosecution says cases that normally incur whole life orders involve abduction of a child or sexual or sadistic motivation, or murder of a child involving a substantial degree of pre-meditation or planning.

The murder of Sara does not precisely fit in either of those two definitions, he tells the court.

He says as far as pre-meditation is concerned, Sara's murder was not pre-meditated. But he says they submit the violence to Sara was substantially pre-meditated.

“Sara was always smiling. She had her own unique character,” the statement from Sara’s mother says.

“She is now an angel who looks down on us from heaven. She is no longer experiencing violence.”

Speaking on the accused, Olga says: “You are sadists. Although even this word is not enough for you. I would say you are executioners.”

She added: “I hoped that when she grew up we would meet, but now that won’t happen.”

The judge takes his seat on the bench and the defendants stand and confirm their names.

Bill Emlyn Jones KC for the prosecution then outlines the crown’s position on the sentencing.

He reminds the court that Urfan Sharif and Beinash Batool were convicted of the murder of Sara, and that Faisal Malik was acquitted of her murder, but found guilty of causing or allowing her death.

He says Sara’s mother Olga Domin is on the link to the hearing and is going to read her statement.

Sharif and Malik are both looking down at the floor in the dock. Batool is looking around the courtroom and up to the public gallery.

In the corner of the courtroom there is a camera ready for when the judge will deliver his sentencing remarks later. First we will hear from the prosecutor Bill Emlyn Jones KC. We are waiting for the judge to come in.

We are all ready now for the sentencing. The legal teams for the prosecution and the defence are in court, the three defendants are sitting in the dock, separated by security staff.

Three female jurors have returned for the sentencing having found Urfan Sharif and Beinash Batool guilty of the murder of Sara Sharif on Wednesday.

They also convicted Sara Sharif’s Uncle Faisal Malik of causing or allowing the death of a child.

Warning: The page contains distressing details

Post-mortem examinations showed Sara had died from a constellation of injuries and neglect. Her body was covered in bruises, she had a traumatic head injury, human bite marks and multiple broken bones. She had been burned by a domestic iron.

A search of the house and garden revealed – among other things – homemade hoods made of plastic bags and packing tape, as well as a cricket bat with Sara’s blood on it.

It was a brutal end to the life of a girl remembered by her former class teacher as spirited, sassy, bubbly, and whose happy place was being on the stage.

Sara had loved playing the guitar and dreamed of being on the X Factor. Her favourite colour was pink, and her favourite food was chicken biryani.

Sara Sharif was killed at her home in Woking, Surrey, on 8 August 2023.

She had been subjected to dozens of injuries – including “probable human bite marks”, an iron burn and scalding from hot water, a post-mortem examination found.

At the time, Sara had been living with her father, Urfan Sharif, his wife, Beinash Batool, and her uncle, Faisal Malik, as well as her five brother and sisters.

The day after she was killed, on 9 August, the whole family fled to Islamabad, Pakistan.

Urfan Sharif called Surrey Police from Pakistan when he landed, telling them: “I’ve killed my daughter... It wasn’t my intention to kill her, but I beat her up too much.”

Surrey Police found Sara’s body at the house and launched an international manhunt for the three adults.

Sharif, Batool and Malik eventually flew back voluntarily a month later and were arrested at the airport. Today, over a year later, they will be sentenced.

The father and stepmother of 10-year-old Sara Sharif will be sentenced at the Old Bailey later for her murder.

Sara was killed in her home in Woking, Surrey, in August last year after suffering years of torture and violence.

Her father, Urfan Sharif, and his wife, Beinash Batool, were found guilty of murder last week and are now facing life sentences. Batool, 30, cried in the dock as the verdicts were read out last week, while Sharif, 43, remained silent.

Sara’s uncle, Faisal Malik, 29, will also be sentenced. He was cleared of murder but found guilty of causing or allowing the death of a child – police say he “did nothing to prevent” Sara’s death.

The court will first hear from the prosecution and the defence, before the sentences are handed down. We have correspondents down at the Old Bailey, and the judge’s sentencing remarks will also be broadcast live, so stay with us.

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