

Former British soldier sent £31k of night-vision rifle sights to Taliban

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A former British soldier raised money for the Taliban and sent £31,000 worth of night-vision rifle sights for its militants to use in battle, a court has heard.

Muhammed Choudhary, 41, sent packages containing the night vision scopes to Pakistan so they could be smuggled in for fighters in Afghanistan.

Choudhary, of Ilford, east London, bought 12 thermal imaging rifle scopes between 2017 and 2019 from legitimate specialist UK suppliers for a total of £31,489, the court heard.



When Taliban fighters first started using night vision devices in 2016 it was considered to represent a significant increase in their capabilities Credit: NOORULLAH SHIRZADA/AFP

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NHS as an X-ray technician when he was arrested in 2020.

The former British soldier admitted two counts of entering into or becoming concerned in an arrangement for the purposes of terrorism, relating to 12 thermal imaging rifle scopes.

He also admitted to providing money knowing or having reasonable cause to suspect that it would or might be used for the purposes of terrorism, between 9 May 2017 and 1 May 2019

Anne Whyte, KC, prosecuting, told the Old Bailey: "Choudhary knew that the money and rifle scopes were intended to be used for the purpose of terrorism, namely by the Taliban, in Afghanistan, in its conflict with the Afghan government and coalition forces. . . As a former British soldier he was well aware of the capabilities of the scopes, and the purpose to which they were to be deployed. . . She also said that Choudhary's communication with others showed that he had initiated contact with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) when he approached the Organisation via WhatsApp on Dec 31 2016.I

"It was already clear that he had sent financial aid by that point," Ms Whyte added.

Choudhary's texts to the IEA included comments such as: "I am ready to dedicate my whole for this blessing cause."

He also made reference to his ability to operate weaponry, as a former British soldier.