

Jeremy Corbyn campaigned for release of Embassy bombers

Jeremy Corbyn, the front-runner for the Labour leadership, spent more than a decade campaigning for Jawad Botmeh and Samar Alami after they were convicted for their role in a car bombing



"Jawad's case is, I believe, a miscarriage of justice," Jeremy Corbyn wrote in a letter to London Metropolitan University Photo: Danny Lawson/PA



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By Steven Swinford, Deputy Political Editor

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Jeremy Corbyn led a campaign for the release of two convicted terrorists who were jailed for their part in the car bombing of the Israeli embassy in London and a Jewish charity building.

Jawad Botmeh and Samar Alami were convicted of conspiracy to cause explosions in the UK in 1996, which injured 20 people. They were jailed for 20 years.



Samar Alami, left, and Jawad Botmeh at the Old Bailey in 1996 Photo: Eddie Mulholland/The Telegraph

Both fought a lengthy campaign to clear their names but their appeals were rejected by the Court of Appeal and the European Court of Human Rights.

Mr Corbyn, the front-runner in the Labour leadership race, has repeatedly raised their cases as part of a long-running campaign to overturn the convictions.

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Since running for leader Mr Corbyn has had to distance himself from a series of anti-Semites and Holocaust deniers he shared a platform with during his years as a backbencher and anti-war

campaigner.

Among the figures he has been linked with are Paul Eisen, a Holocaust denier, Raed Salah, who has been accused of “virulent anti-Semitism”, and the Muslim extremist Dyab Abou Jahjah.

Mr Corbyn also once introduced members of Hamas and Hezbollah – terrorist bodies according to the United States – as “friends”. He says this was “diplomatic language in the context of dialogue”.

In February 2013 he wrote to London Metropolitan University in support of a bid by Botmeh to become a governor after his release from prison.

In a letter to the vice-chancellor, written on House of Commons paper, he said: "I supported Jawad's case inside parliament and outside including meetings/demonstrations; Jawad's case is, I believe, a miscarriage of justice”.

Mr Corbyn signed five letters of support for Botmeh and Alami between 2002 and 2006, raising repeated issues of public interest and calling for their parole.

He directly challenged David Blunkett, the Home Secretary, about the investigation into the bombing and asked whether fingerprints linked the pair to the attacks.



Bomb making paraphernalia recovered by investigating officers during the Israeli Embassy bomb investigation Photo: PA

The bombings in July 1994 took place outside the Israeli embassy in Kensington, west London, and outside the then head office of the UJIA in Finchley, North London.

Both Botmeh and Alami admitted having had possession of five pounds of explosives which were used to make the bombs, but denied they had intended to use the materials in Britain.

Alami said she had had three hand guns and the explosives and guns were found in a lock-up she rented.

The pair took their case to the Court of Appeal in 2001, which found that there was "no reason to regard their convictions as unsafe".



Handguns recovered by investigating officers during the Israeli Embassy bomb investigation. Photo: PA

The judges concluded: "The case against the appellants of complicity in these bombings was extremely strong."

The pair subsequently took their case to the European Court of Human Rights in 2007, which supported the Court of Appeal's decision.

Botmeh was released from prison in 2008 and was until recently a researcher at London Metropolitan University.

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