

Abbas Lakha KC

King's Counsel

CALLED 1984
SILK 2003

"He is supremely hardworking and his advocacy is just phenomenal."

CHAMBERS UK, 2025



Abbas Lakha KC is widely regarded as one of the UK's most successful and respected leading silks, with a heavyweight practice which encompasses a broad range of specialist areas.

He is regularly instructed to advise upon and defend in the most challenging and high-profile cases. He is particularly sought after to advise in International financial crime cases, representing clients both in the UK and around the world.

Background and Expertise

Abbas has experience in all forms of Civil and Criminal Fraud and asset forfeiture work, including restraint and confiscation, and appears before the Tax Tribunals (First Tier and Upper Tier) in respect of VAT and Tax cases. He is highly respected for his advocacy, his attention to detail and his negotiating skills. Regularly instructed to advise at the pre-investigative stages of cases, Abbas has extensive experience of representing high profile individuals for whom reputation management is a significant concern.

Rated in Chambers UK and Legal 500 directories as a leader in the fields of international

crime, murder, terrorism, financial crime and asset forfeiture, Abbas Lakha KC is noted for his detailed preparation, incisive examination and strong jury advocacy. He is particularly skilled in handling international money laundering cases, bribery and corruption prosecutions, VAT frauds, missing trader frauds and insider dealing cases.

Areas of Expertise

- **Financial Crime**

Expertise in defending in large-scale HMRC MTIC/VAT frauds, SFO cases, Bribery and Corruption allegations, money laundering cases, and fraud related civil proceedings in the High Court [with civil Juniors].

Notable cases include: HMRC v Sunico ApS and Others, R v Goddard (Operation Vaulter), R v Gathani (Operation Inertia), R v Hague (Operation District), Z Khan v HMRC.

- **Tax and Fraud**

Abbas has experience in all forms of Civil and Criminal Fraud and asset forfeiture work, including restraint and confiscation, and appears before the Tax Tribunals (First Tier and Upper Tier) in respect of VAT and Tax cases.

In the Criminal Courts he has defended in some of the most high profile tax and duty evasion cases over the years including R v Goddard (Operation Vaulter), R v Gathani (Operation Inertia), R v Hague (Operation District) and the London City Bond series of cases.

In the Tax Tribunals (First Tier and Upper Tier) Abbas has appeared on behalf of Directors and Companies in cases concerning penalties, personal liability notices, HMRC's decisions to withhold input Tax and excise duties arising from a failure to follow HMRC procedures. He is also regularly instructed in an advisory capacity to assist Companies and Individuals wishing to challenge HMRC actions which are seen to be in excess of power.

- **International Crime**

Work undertaken includes being a Consultant to the Sabra Team at the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, advisor to a Kenyan politician (extradition request from Jersey to Kenyan authorities) charged with corruption and money laundering, advisor to former British soldiers on anti-piracy duty in the Indian Ocean arrested in India, advising a Russian oligarch in relation to his financial affairs in the UK, and advising British Nationals residing in the UAE in respect of potential prosecution for financial fraud in the UK.

- **Extradition**

Experience of challenging European and International Arrest Warrants including Interpol Red Alert Notices.

- **Domestic Crime Including Rape and Murder**

Notable expertise in both large multi-handed murder cases, contract/organized crime cases, through to terrorism related murders as well as allegations of Sexual Crime, both current and historical.

- **Regulatory Work**

Undertakes VAT Tribunal work before the Upper and First Tier Tribunals and represents Accountants, Lawyers, Medical personnel and sports personalities before their disciplinary Tribunals.

Abbas successfully appealed against HMRC's decision to cancel Brac Saajan Exchange Limited's registration under The Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds (Information on the Payer) Regulations 2017.

Brac Saajan is a successful money service bureau which is required to register with HMRC. HMRC cancelled Brac's registration because it believed that there were widescale breaches of the Money Laundering Regulations.

In a 10 day hearing at the First Tier Tribunal, Abbas was able to demonstrate that the majority of the breaches HMRC contended were simply not made out. Focusing on the errors in approach and interpretation by HMRC and its officer Sarah Chapman, Abbas succeeded in reversing the decision to cancel BSEL's registration and the decisions that individual officers of Brac were not fit and proper persons and to impose a permanent prohibition on three officers from holding a management role.

- **Private Prosecutions**

Abbas has experience of prosecuting and defending in private prosecutions on behalf of both individuals and corporate entities and is a member of the Private Prosecutors' Association. He can lead clients through the procedural maze of the Criminal Justice System in mounting a Private Prosecution, the thorny issue of disclosure right up to preparing and presenting the prosecution case at trial.

Notable Cases

Bribery and Corruption

R v H and H

R v B

Jubilee Line Fraud

Drugs

R v V, 2021

The case involves the largest ever importations of Class A drugs from the Netherlands over a period of two years and the DV is alleged to be the Dutch mastermind behind the importations which flooded the North East of the United Kingdom. This is a VHCC which has been split into 4 trials each lasting over 6 months.

Complexities: Extradition; Mastery of the Vast Scale of the evidence; foreign intercept evidence.

Manchester Crown Court

[Drugs](#)

Extradition

Austria v PN

R v M

Jersey v O and G

[View Extradition](#)

Financial Crime

Operation Yulan, R v P, 2024

This operation follows an 8-year investigation into an alleged Pension Liberation Fraud whereby vast sums of Pension Monies were unlawfully extracted from the Pension Funds of 100's of alleged Victims. The case has been categorised a VHCC because of its complexity, the international reach of the alleged fraud and the vast amount of evidence relied upon.

Leeds Crown Court

HMRC v S A and Others

R v G (Operation Vault)

R v G (Operation Inertia)

R v H (Operation District)

Z K v HMRC

[View Financial Crime](#)

Investigatory Powers Tribunal

R v F and Others, 2023

Representing 14 Applicants before the Investigatory Powers Tribunal in a complaint relating to Unlawful interception of Data following a Pan European Operation. The operation led to Worldwide arrests of alleged Master Criminals involved in the most serious criminality. The challenge before the IPT has the potential to lead to the staying of all Criminal Trials relying on evidence obtained from the interception of data and as such is the most high-profile Litigation in the Country.

I am also instructed in the associated Criminal Trials wherein the charges include Conspiracy to Murder, Conspiracy to Possess Automatic and Semi-Automatic Weapons with Intent, and a multitude of Drugs Conspiracies at the very highest end.

Complexities: the interpretation of the Investigatory Powers Act and the concept of 'Bulk interception' wrongly being the subject of Targeted Equipment Interference Warrants; lack of candour and its impact on the validity of the Warranty granted by the Commissioner; breaches of ss. 9 and 10 of the IPA and the consequences and potential breach of Article 8 arising from the unlawful interception of Communications.

Investigative Powers Tribunal

Read more:

- [The Times](#)
- [Europol Europa](#)
- [Investigatory Powers Tribunal](#)
- [Essex News and Investigations](#)

Rape and Sexual Offences

R v T, 2024

The Defendant was a Nepalese man who came to this country as a refugee without a bean. He built up a very successful vape business and eventually married a Latvian lady who had 3 children from a previous marriage. He cared for them as his own until the marriage broke down when the family moved out. Allegations were made by the children of sexual abuse over many years from a young age. The Defendant's case was that these allegations were a revenge for not supporting the family in the way he had for many years. He was acquitted of all the charges.

Leeds Crown Court

R v Z

R v F and Others

[Rape and Sexual Offences](#)

Terrorism

R v A (Fusilier Lee Rigby)

R v K (alleged Al Qaeda operative)

R v F (ricin case)

R v S and others (Afghan Hijacking)

[View Counter Terrorism](#)

Achievements

Memberships

- The Bar Council of England and Wales
- The Criminal Bar Association
- The European Criminal Bar Association
- International Bar Association
- The International Criminal Defence Attorneys Association
- The Society of Asian Lawyers
- The Society of Black Lawyers

Appointments

- Bencher of the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple (2009)
- Inspector for the Department of Trade and Industry (2000)
- The Criminal Bar Association of England & Wales Co-opted Committee Member
- The Bar Council of England & Wales VHCC Fees Committee
- Member of the Crime Editorial Board of LexisNexis

Education

- BA (Hons), Leeds Beckett University, 1980-83
- Barrister at Law, Bar School, Council of Legal Education, 1983-84