

## Ben Watson



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BEN WATSON



A "genius" junior with vast experience in cases concerning European Arrest Warrants and extradition relating to international terrorism issues. **(Chambers UK 2018: Extradition)**

"Very hard-working and has a great ability to master the detail of a case. He is very technically able and a powerful advocate who is able to command the confidence of the court." **(Chambers UK 2018: Extradition)**

"He is a really excellent advocate. Very clear and persuasive." **(Chamber UK 2018: Administrative and Public Law)**

'Phenomenally bright.' 'Judges really love him and his legal analysis is brilliant.' 'He has a great degree of charm as an advocate, but he can be steely when necessary.' **(Chambers UK 2017: Extradition)**

'Fantastic, very responsive and very good at strategy.' 'Energetic, enthusiastic, bright and effective. Reassuring to have him on your team.' **(Chambers UK 2017: Administrative and Public Law)**

"He is clever and hard-working and really impresses with his cross-examinations. He is a star of the future." **(Chambers UK 2016)**

"He is very very smart, gets on well with clients, is very industrious and offers a rounded view in his advice." **(Chambers UK 2016)**

"He is phenomenal, very good with the clients and user-friendly." "He is one of the first people who comes to mind, and is extremely good." **(Chambers UK 2015)**

"He's in a different league to many juniors. He's extremely accessible and really good at giving advice." **(Chambers UK 2015: Public & Administrative Law)**

### Details of practice

Ben is one of the country's leading juniors in crime, extradition, and public law. He is regularly instructed to act for individuals in high-profile extradition cases, as well as in criminal cases, particularly those with an international or public law dimension. He has been a member of the Attorney General's Civil/Public law Panels for 10 years, and in that capacity is regularly instructed in sensitive and complex cases, especially cases involving issues of national security and human rights.

#### Crime, extradition and MLA

Ben has been involved in many of the leading extradition cases on international terrorism, the European Arrest Warrant scheme, as well as various high-profile allegations of fraud and other 'white collar' crime.

Over the past few years, Ben has been instructed for the UK Government before the European Court of Human Rights in many of the leading authorities on extradition and human rights (including *Abu Hamza, Bary, Al Fawwaz, Ahmed, Aswat, and Wellington*), and has extensive experience advising and acting in high-profile cases for both the Home Secretary (for example, *Gary McKinnon*) and foreign governments (for example, the South African government's request for the extradition of *Shrien Dewani*). With that background, Ben now regularly acts for clients resisting extradition, particularly in complex cases raising issues of political corruption, abuse of process, and human rights conditions abroad. His current and recent defence instructions therefore include extradition proceedings initiated by the Russian Federation, Iraq, the UAE, Mexico, and India.

Ben also still prosecutes and defends in the Crown Court in his own right, with white collar crime and related asset recovery proceedings his particular areas of interest. Recent instructions for the defence in these areas include an SFO LIBOR prosecution; an SFO prosecution arising out of the collapse of Torex (*SFO v Loosemore*); and an FSA prosecution for insider dealing (*FSA v Calvert*).

In addition, Ben regularly acts and advises in confiscation, cash forfeiture and civil recovery proceedings in the Crown Court, High Court and County Courts.

#### Public law including judicial review and human rights

Ben is regularly instructed in leading public law cases, particularly those with national security and/or criminal features. For example, he recently acted for the Metropolitan Police in *Miranda v Met Police*, following the stop and questioning of an associate of Edward Snowden's at Heathrow under anti-terrorism powers; and is regularly by the Secretary of State for Defence in cases arising out of UK military operations abroad. Last year, Ben's instructions included acting for the Government in the judicial review claim concerning the burial site of *Richard III*, and proceedings challenging the UK's decision to pursue a prison training contract with Saudi Arabia.

Between 2011 and 2016, Ben was appointed as a Special Advocate by the Attorney General, and in that capacity acted for a wide variety of clients including Ms Zatuliveter, a former Parliamentary researcher for a Lib-Dem MP who was accused of being a Russian spy; Messrs Omar & Njorge, who alleged UK involvement in their rendition from Kenya to Uganda; and in a recent challenge to EU sanctions targeting Iran's nuclear proliferation activities. This year, Ben has resigned his appointment to focus on Government instructions in the same areas.

#### Other areas of interest

Ben is also frequently instructed to appear at Coroner's inquests, and undertakes police disciplinary proceedings, civil actions against the police, and immigration cases.

## Directory recommendations

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"Ben Watson is the 'cleverest man in chambers' according to his peers who note his 'exemplary drafting skills' and 'easy manner with clients'." **(Chambers UK 2016: Criminal Fraud 2016)**

'He is phenomenal, very good with the clients and user-friendly.' 'He is one of the first people who comes to mind, and is extremely good.' **(Chambers UK 2015: Extradition)**

'He's in a different league to many juniors. He's extremely accessible and really good at giving advice.' **(Chambers UK 2015: Public & Administrative Law)**

'He is extremely assiduous and hard-working, and has a great eye for detail. A very reliable person to have on your team.' **(Chambers UK 2015: Civil Liberties & Human Rights)**

"One of the most impressive juniors in the field." **(The Legal 500 2014: Civil Liberties & Human Rights)**

"A hugely popular choice for the handling of extradition matters. He is very well liked by clients and is able to deal with complex human rights issues. 'He is dedicated and hard-working, has great client skills and is wonderfully analytical'" **(Chambers UK 2014: Extradition)**

"Ben Watson is regarded as "a real star of the future," whose "exemplary written work" deserves special mention. His areas of practice have a strong international focus, with extradition, general crime and mutual legal assistance all falling under this umbrella." **(Chambers UK 2013: Crime)**

"Ben Watson is a special advocate, enabling him to advise on the most sensitive matters. He is lauded for his 'phenomenal legal mind for one of his call,' and he acts on hotly contested extradition matters" **(Chambers UK 2012: Crime)**

## Education/professional qualifications

MA Hons (Cantab)  
Diploma in Law  
Hardwicke Entrance Award (Lincoln's Inn) 2000  
Lord Denning Scholar 2001  
Cholmely Scholar 2002  
Sir Louis Gluckstein Prize for Advocacy 2002

## Appointments

Attorney General's A Panel 2016  
Attorney General's B Panel 2011  
Attorney General's C Panel 2006  
Attorney General's Special Advocate's Panel 2011-2016

## Publications

Contributor to Asset Recovery: *Criminal Confiscation and Civil Recovery*, looseleaf, OUP

## Direct access

Ben Watson is qualified to accept instructions direct from clients under the Bar Council's Public Access Scheme. This means that members of the public who seek specialist advice can come direct to him. In addition, he welcomes instructions from solicitors, in-house law departments, qualified foreign lawyers, and clients licensed by the Bar Council to give instructions direct to barristers under the Bar Council's Licensed Access Scheme.

For further information please contact our Clerks.

## Notable cases

### **R(oao Ismail) v SSHD**

Heard by the Supreme Court in January 2016. The appeal concerns the SSHD's human rights obligations in the field of international mutual legal assistance.

### **Solicitor General v Cox and Parker-Stokes**

Instructed for the Solicitor General in contempt proceedings brought for publishing photographs taken in court on Facebook.

### **KAB v Ministry of Defence and Foreign & Commonwealth Office**

Acting for the UK Government in proceedings issued by three Afghan nationals who claim to have been engaged as spies for the UK in Afghanistan.

### **Russian Federation extradition requests**

Instructed for the defence in numerous separate proceedings, including *Korolev*, *Tyurin*, and *Trefilov*.

### **Miranda v SSHD and Met Police**

Acted for the Met Police following the stop and questioning of David Miranda, an associate of Edward Snowden's, at Heathrow under anti-terrorism powers.

### **Nour v Ministry of Defence**

Judicial review claim challenging the UK's provision of 'defence education' to the Sudanese Armed Forces.

### **Richard III**

Instructed for the Secretary of State for Justice in the judicial review claim concerning the burial site of the King's remains.

### **Abu Hamza and others v United Kingdom**

Instructed for the UK Government before the European Court of Human Rights in support of six separate US extradition requests alleging offences of Al-Qaeda related terrorism offences (led by James Eadie QC).

### **Gary McKinnon**

Acted for the Home Secretary.

### **South Africa v Shrien Dewani**

Instructed for the South African authorities in their request for the extradition of Shrien Dewani accused of conspiring to murder his wife while on honeymoon in Cape Town.

### **Secretary of State v Ekaterina Zatuliveter**

Acted as Special Advocate for Ms Zatuliveter, a former researcher for the Lib-Dem MP, Mike Hancock, who was accused by MI5 of being a Russian spy.

### **Bulgaria v Atanasova**

Successfully resisted two Bulgarian extradition requests accusing the former secretary to the Bulgarian Chief Prosecutor of murdering a fellow legal secretary with an axe. Both requests rejected on the grounds of bad faith/abuse of process.

### **Germany v Toben**

Obtained the discharge of Dr Toben who was accused of 'holocaust denial' in a European arrest warrant issued by a German prosecutor.

### **Brown et al. v Government of the Republic of Rwanda**

Former local mayor in Rwanda accused of genocide by the Government of Rwanda. Extradition request rejected on the basis that surrender would be incompatible with Article 6 (right to a fair trial) due to the absence of an independent and impartial tribunal in Rwanda. For the defence.

### **Meadow v General Medical Council**

Led by the Attorney General intervening on the issue of expert witnesses' immunity from suit.