



Ben Watson KC

Call: 2002 / Silk: 2021



Ben Watson KC practices primarily 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 was a member of the Attorney General's A Panel, and has been on the Attorney's Civil / Public law Panels for over 10 years. In that capacity, Ben was regularly instructed in high-profile and complex cases, especially involving issues of national security and human rights.

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

Extradition & International Mutual Legal Assistance

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.

Having 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**), he has acted in a series of high-profile cases for the Home Secretary (including, **Gary McKinnon**) and foreign governments (for example, the South African request for the extradition of **Shrien Dewani**, and the French request for **Alexandre Djouhri**, wanted for fraud and corruption offences arising out an investigation into Nicolas Sarkozy's Presidential election campaign).



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, Turkey (for *Hamdi Ipek*, Chairman of Koza Ipek Holdings), and India (for **Vijay Mallya**, Chairman of United Breweries Group, and former CMD of Kingfisher Airlines).

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 (**SFO v Johnson**); an SFO prosecution arising out of the collapse of Torex (**SFO v Loosemore**); an FSA prosecution for insider dealing (**FSA v Calvert**); and two on-going SFO investigations into bribery and corruption.

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

Last year, Ben was instructed in the first 'Unexplained Wealth Order' for the wife of the former Chairman of the International Bank of Azerbaijan.

Notable Extradition & International Mutual Legal Assistance cases

- **US v Arif Naqvi**

US extradition request alleging fraud at the private equity firm, the Abraaj Group.

- **India v Vijay Mallya**

The Indian extradition request for the former CMD of Kingfisher Airlines.

- **NCA v Mrs Hajiyeva**

The first 'Unexplained Wealth Order' made against the wife of the former Chairman of the International Bank of Azerbaijan.

- **R (River East Supplies Ltd) v Crown Court at Nottingham**

Instructed for the UK Central Authority in mutual legal assistance proceedings on the confidentiality of letters of request.

- **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.

- **Russian Federation Requests**

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

- **Abu Hamza & 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.
- **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.

Public Law (including Judicial Review & Human Rights)

Ben is regularly instructed in leading public law cases, particularly those with national security and/or criminal features. He was instructed for the Secretary of State in four 'TPIM' (Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Act 2011) proceedings brought against members of Al-Muhajiroun, as well as the first 'Temporary Exclusion Order' (under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015) imposed on a returnee from ISIL-controlled territory.

Ben also 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 instructed by the Foreign Office and Ministry of Defence in cases arising out of UK military operations abroad. In other public law work, Ben's instructions have 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.



Notable Public Law (including Judicial Review & Human Rights) cases

- **YZ v SSHD**

Instructed for the Secretary of State in the first 'Temporary Exclusion Order' proceedings under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

- **Belhaj v DPP**

Heard by the Supreme Court in March 2018. The appeal concerned the availability of a 'Closed Material Procedure' in criminal judicial review proceedings.

- **LF & IM, JM, LG v SSHD**

Four 'TPIM' (Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Act 2011) proceedings brought against members of Al-Muhajiroun.

- **KAB v Ministry of Defence & 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.

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

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

- **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.

- **Miranda v SSHD & 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.

Other

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Notable Cases

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Directory Recommendations

"Ben is extraordinarily effective and completely on the ball." **Chambers UK 2024: Admin & Public**

"Ben is absolutely first class." **Chambers UK 2024: Civil Liberties & Human Rights**

"Ben is generally recognised as one of the leaders of the Extradition Bar." **Chambers UK 2024: Extradition**

"He's very effective and deadly in court." **Chambers UK 2024: Extradition**

"Ben Watson is exceptional." **Chambers UK 2024: Extradition**



“He’s a very effective advocate and argues difficult things in a fair way, which really makes a difference.” **Chambers UK 2023: Admin & Public**

“Ben is a fantastically fearless advocate. He understands the government’s needs and how to advocate these in court.” **Chambers UK 2023: Civil Liberties & Human Rights**

“A silver-tongued advocate.” **Chambers UK 2023: Civil Liberties & Human Rights**

“Ben has the ability to take a large amount of complex detail, condense it and then present it clearly. He also has exceptionally good judgement when it comes to making tactical decisions.” **Chambers UK 2023: Extradition**

“Ben is able to take a factually and legally complicated case and articulate it clearly and persuasively in writing. He has great judgement and inspires confidence in clients.” **Legal 500 2023: International Crime and Extradition**

“Thorough and fearless, a committed and hard-working advocate.” **Legal 500 2023: Administrative & Public Law**

“A formidable opponent with a fierce intellect.” **Chambers UK 2022: Admin & Public**

“His advocacy is extraordinary. He also provides incredibly practical and really solid advice.” **Chambers UK 2022: Admin & Public**

“He is invaluable on national security cases.” **Chambers UK 2022: Civil Liberties and Human Rights**

“Impressive in this field and a tough advocate who will not give up in the most resilient and charming way.” **Chambers UK 2022: Extradition**

“Ben is extraordinarily easy to work with and able to reassure clients with his grasp of both the factual detail of their cases and the law **Legal 500 2022: Civil Liberties & Human Rights**

“An extremely hard-working and capable new silk.” **Legal 500 2022: Civil Liberties & Human rights**

“Extremely intelligent and always well prepared **Chambers UK 2021: Extradition**

“A silk in waiting.” **Chambers UK 2021: Extradition**

“He’s an impressive advocate; very careful and very thorough.” **Chambers UK 2021: Civil Liberties & Human Rights**

“outstanding lawyer, and mature beyond his years.” **Chambers UK 2021: Administrative & Public**

“One of the government’s go-to barristers for human rights cases.” **Legal 500 2021: Civil Liberties & Human Rights**

“Possesses a huge range of skills and is good as part of a team.” **Chambers UK 2021: Extradition**

“His paperwork is superb and he’s highly regarded by judges.” **Chambers UK 2020: Admin & Public**

“He’s really smart, very switched on, proactive in his work and incredibly dependable.” **Chambers UK 2020: Civil Liberties & Human Rights**



“Ben is undoubtedly one of the best juniors in extradition. He never stops thinking about a case and is extremely persuasive in court.” **Chambers UK 2020: Extradition**

“A calm and impressive advocate, adept at arguing for both claimants and the government.” **Legal 500 2020: Civil Liberties & Human Rights**

“He’s fantastically hard-working, easy to work with and a team player.” **Chambers UK 2019: Admin & Public**

“A super-bright junior with vast experience in cases concerning European Arrest Warrants and extradition relating to international terrorism issues.” **Chambers UK 2019: Extradition**

“He is completely dedicated to his cases and is always on top of them.” **Chambers UK 2019: Extradition**

“Excellent lawyer. Good with clients, judges and solicitors.” **Legal 500 2019: Civil Liberties & Human Rights**

“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**

“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 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.” **Legal 500 2014: Civil Liberties & Human Rights**

Education

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

Publications

- Contributor to *National Security Law, Procedure & Practice*, Oxford University Press (2019)
- Contributor to *Criminal Confiscation and Civil Recovery*, Oxford University Press

Appointments

- Attorney General’s A Panel (2016)
- Attorney General’s Special Advocate’s Panel (2011-2016)
- Attorney General’s B Panel (2011)
- Attorney General’s C Panel (2006)

Accreditations



Privacy Statement

I, Ben Watson KC, am a data controller and can be contacted at 3 Raymond Buildings, Gray’s Inn, London WC1R 5BH or by telephone on 020 7400 6400 or by email at c/o clerks@3rblaw.com. My Data Protection Policy can be found below.



All personal data that I process is for the purposes of providing legal services, conducting conflict-checks, marketing, defending potential complaints, legal proceedings or fee disputes, keeping anti-money laundering records, training other barristers and pupils and when providing work-shadowing opportunities, and/or exercising a right to a lien. The types of data I process vary upon the nature of the legal matter in relation to which I am engaged to advise, but can include names, contact details, biographic details and 'special category personal data' (such as details of racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, health, sex life and criminal convictions and proceedings).

Depending upon the circumstances of the case, the legal bases upon which I process personal data are (i) the performance of a contract to which the data subject is a party or in order to take steps at the request of the data subject prior to entering into a contract, (ii) the processing is necessary to comply with legal obligations to which I am subject, or (iii) the processing is necessary for the legitimate interests set out above, except where such interests are overridden by the interests or fundamental rights and freedoms of the data subjects which require protection of personal data, in particular where the data subject is a child. When I rely on (iii) legitimate interests, my 'Legitimate Interests Assessment' can be found [here](#). When I process data which has not been obtained directly from the data subject (e.g. personal data contained in evidential materials), it will have been supplied to me as part of my instructions in circumstances covered by legal professional privilege.

Depending upon the circumstances of the case, I may share the personal data with:

1. my Chambers, which supplies professional and administrative support to my practice;
2. Courts and other tribunals to whom documents are presented;
3. my lay and professional clients;
4. potential witnesses, in particular experts, and friends or family of the data subject;
5. solicitors, barristers, pupils, mini pupils and other legal representatives;
6. ombudsmen and regulatory authorities;
7. current, past or prospective employers;
8. education and examining bodies;
9. business associates, professional advisers and trade bodies.

I retain personal data for no longer than 10 years after the case has come to an end or as otherwise required by law.

I do not intend to transfer data to any country which is not either within the European Union, 'white listed' by the EU or otherwise permitted by EU law (e.g. to the USA under the provisions of the 'Privacy Shield').

Under the GDPR, data subjects whose personal data I process have the right to request from me access to, and rectification or erasure of, their personal data, the right to the restriction of processing concerning them, the right to object to processing as well as the right to data portability. Data subjects also have the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner's Office (ico.org.uk).

In cases where there is a contract between me and the data subject, the provision of personal data is a contractual requirement and the data subject is obliged to provide the personal data in order that I can supply legal services. A failure to provide such data may mean that I will not be able to provide the legal services.

Rev 1.1 17.07.2018



[Data Protection Policy](#)

[Legitimate Interests Assessment](#)