



GARDEN COURT CHAMBERS

Hossein Zahir KC

YEAR OF CALL: 2005, 1998 (SOLICITOR) | YEAR OF SILK: 2019



Hossein Zahir specialises in criminal defence work. He has represented defendants charged with murder, drug trafficking, fraud, money laundering and other serious crimes.

He has a particular interest in terrorism and public order and protest cases.

Hossein is ranked for criminal law in Chambers UK 2019 (Band 4). He is ranked for criminal law in Legal 500 UK 2019 (Tier 2).

"Hoss is an exceptional advocate, legal thinker, strategist and, most importantly, a true fighter who never gives up."

LEGAL 500, 2024

"He is a really effective advocate. He has a way of addressing a jury horizontally - neither speaking up to them nor talking down to them."

CHAMBERS UK, 2024

"Tough, hard-working, charismatic and talented."

CHAMBERS UK, 2023

"He leaves no stone unturned and is fearless in the defence of his client."

CHAMBERS UK, 2022 (CRIME)

"His preparation, client care and dedication to a case is nothing but outstanding."

LEGAL 500, 2022 (CRIME)

"A thorough advocate who works incredibly hard and is impressive in court. He totally enthrals juries and is very skilled at challenging prosecution evidence."

CHAMBERS UK, 2021 (CRIME)

If you would like to get in touch with Hossein please contact the clerking team:

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You can also contact Hossein directly:

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CRIMINAL DEFENCE

Hossein Zahir has acted as lead defence counsel in some of the most high-profile criminal and terrorist trials in recent times. He is recognised as a leading individual in both Chambers & Partners and the Legal 500. He is a member of the Garden Court Chambers Crime Team, winners of the Legal 500 Crime Team of the Year 2015.

Hossein specialises in criminal defence work. Formerly as a solicitor and now as a barrister he has represented defendants charged with murder, drug trafficking, fraud, money laundering and other serious crimes. He has particular experience in terrorism as well as public order and protest cases.

Prior to coming to the law Hossein worked for the Newham Monitoring Project, a community organisation in East London committed to supporting and campaigning on behalf of the victims of racial harassment.

NOTABLE CASES

Murder

R v Al Shihabi (2022) - Woolwich Crown Court

Defendant charged with murder following a single stab to the chest. He was acquitted of murder and convicted of manslaughter.

R v Adams (2022) – Birmingham Crown Court

Defendant charged with murder together with 3 others following a shooting. He was the only defendant to be acquitted on all counts.

R v Padley (2021/ 2022) – Loughborough (‘super court’)

Represented the second defendant on a 9 handed indictment charging robbery, conspiracy to commit GBH and murder in the course of a ‘county lines’ drug feud

R v Khan (2021) – Reading Crown Court

Represented the first defendant on an 8 handed indictment charging murder in the course of an organised fight.

R v Carter Fraser (2021) – Central Criminal Court

A vulnerable defendant acquitted of murder. He was alleged to be part of a team responsible for shooting an innocent member of the public mistakenly targeted as part of a gang feud.

R v Sohal (2021) - Croydon Crown Court

Defendant charged with murder following gang fight.

R v Dempster (2020) - Central Criminal Court

Rape and murder in the course of a burglary.

R v Mahmood (2020) - Reading Crown Court

A ‘cut throat’ case with defendant acquitted of murder at retrial and co-defendant convicted after the first trial.

R v Bramble (2020) - Central Criminal Court

Defendant charged with murder unfit to plead with trial of the issue.

R v Balachandran (2017) - Luton Crown Court

Represented first defendant. Multi-handed murder with 'cut throat' defences.

Terrorism

R v Rashid (2021) – Woolwich Crown Court

Defendant charged with terrorist offences arising out of the conflict in Syria

R v Aristidou (2021) – Central Criminal Court

Defendant charged with terrorism offences arising out of the Syrian conflict. The case involved complex jurisdictional issues.

R v Chapra (2021) – Kingston Crown Court

Defendant charged with terrorism offences related to the dissemination of terrorist publications

R v Safaa Boular (2018) - Central Criminal Court

Represented Safaa Boular the youngest female ISIS supporter (her sister and mother were convicted of separate plots) convicted of two charges relating plans to carry out attacks in Syria and the UK. Complex issues of disclosure engaged as well as the role of MI5.

R v Nadeem Patel (2018) - Central Criminal Court

Leading counsel for defendant charged with firearms offences jointly with Umar Haque (in turn charged with grooming children and planning UK attacks). The only defendant of four acquitted.

R v Tadesse Kersmo (2017) - Snaresbrook Crown Court

Leading counsel representing senior member of democratic Ethiopian opposition group charged with terrorism, offences. This case involved detailed expert evidence on the geo politics of the region. Defendant acquitted on all charges.

R v Ayfer Yildiz (2017) - Central Criminal Court

Represented the defendant was accused of disseminating terrorist publications, namely Turkish communist magazines. The defendant was acquitted on all charges.

R v Pervez Rafiq (2016) - Central Criminal Court

Leading counsel for Mr Rafiq who was charged with terrorism fundraising by organising aid convoys to Syria. The defendant included the use of evidence from MI5. The defendant was acquitted on all charges.

R v Tarik Hassane (2016) - Central Criminal Court

Represented Tark Hassane in relation to allegations of planning to shoot a soldier or policeman in support of ISIS. The plot had progressed to the stage where a weapon and ammunition had been purchased.

R v Iqbal & others (2013) - Woolwich Crown Court

Represented Mohammed Ahmed who pleaded guilty to engaging in preparatory terrorist conduct.

R v Irfan Naseer (2013) - Woolwich Crown Court

Represented Bahader Ali, Mohammed Rizwan and Mujahid Hussain on guilty pleas in relation to allegations of acts preparatory to acts of terrorism and terrorist fund raising.

R v Khan & others (2013) - Woolwich Crown Court

Represented O Khan who pleaded guilty to engaging in preparatory terrorist conduct, namely an armed attack on an English Defence League rally in Dewsbury.

R v DD (2013) - Central Criminal Court

Represented DD charged with breaching a Terrorism Prevention Investigation Measure (TPIM).

R v Begum (2012) - Central Criminal Court

Defendant charged with possessing terrorist documents/ publication.

R v Chowdhury & others (2012) - Woolwich Crown Court

Represented O Latif who pleaded guilty to engaging in preparatory terrorist conduct.

R v Shanthan (2009) - Kingston Crown Court

Represented Shanthan in a trial of alleged members of the proscribed organisation LTTE (Tamil Tigers) and providing support for that organisation.

R v Saleem (2008) - Kingston Crown Court

Trial of former members of the Islamist group Al Muhajiroun. Represented Abdul Saleem accused of inciting terrorism and fundraising.

R v Ahmed Ali and others (2008) - Woolwich Crown Court

The "Heathrow bomb plot" or Operation Overt - represented Mohammed Gulzar.

R v Baluch and Marri (2008) - Woolwich Crown Court

Represented Faiz Baluch who successfully raised the defence of self-defence to allegations of inciting terrorist murder overseas and involvement with a terrorist group operating in Baluchistan, Pakistan.

R v Khyam & Others (2006-2007) - Central Criminal Court

Operation Crevice "fertiliser bomb plot" trial - Represented Anthony Garcia

Other cases

R v Taylor (2020) - Snaresbrook Crown Court

One punch manslaughter with defendant acquitted.

R v Dixon and others (2018) - Wood Green Crown Court

Leading counsel for juvenile defendant charged with firearm conspiracies with his mother and older brother.

R v N Rashid (2016) - Sheffield Crown Court

Represented defendant charged with 11 others after a large-scale violent disorder following a counter protest against 'Britain First' and far right protestors. All defendants acquitted on grounds of self-defence.

R v M Ali (2015) - Central Criminal Court

Represented defendant MA was charged with possessing a chemical weapon (ricin). He relied upon the statutory defence of 'peaceful purpose' (not previously argued). MA convicted.

R v Eroglu (2012) - Central Criminal Court

Represented defendant charged with arson by throwing petrol bombs into a cafe used by political opponents.

R v Iqbal (2012) - Liverpool Crown Court

Represented defendant in relation to complicated allegation of fraud linked to dental practice.

R v Rollins (2011) - Blackfriars Crown Court

Represented defendant charged with conspiracy to commit violent disorder as part of an anti-fascist protest.

R v Woollard (2011) - Southwark Crown Court

Represented a student who threw a fire extinguisher from a rooftop during protest.

CRIMINAL APPEALS

R v Ahmed [2018] EWCA Crim 133

Attorney Generals reference of first instance sentence in this terrorist case. Sentence unchanged.

R v Golamaully [2017] EWCA Crim 898

Successful sentence appeal in terrorist fundraising case.

R v El-Gurbozi [2016] EWCA Crim 1172

Successful sentence appeal for complex car theft conspiracy

R v Ali [2016] EWCA Crim 864

Sentence and conviction appeal for possession/ purchase of chemical weapon.

Secretary of State for the Home Dept v (1) EC (2) EG (2017) [2017] EWHC 795 (Admin)

Appeal against the imposition of a Terrorism Prevention and Information Measure appeal

R v Dart & 4 Ors (2014) [2014] EWCA Crim 2158

Led for the applicant Ahmed and alone for the applicant Hussain. Conjoined terrorism sentence appeal.

Sentence reduced for Hussain.

R v Usman Khan [2013] EWCA Crim 468

Consideration of dangerousness in terrorist cases.

R v Wassab Khan [2013] EWCA Crim 1345

Consideration of the test to be applied on submission of no case to answer.

R v Abdul Rehman Saleem & Ors [2009] EWCA Crim 920

Sentences reduced on appeal for terrorist convictions.

R v Omar Khyam & Ors [2008] EWCA Crim 1612

Appeal against conviction and sentence.

Ayliffe, Swain and Percy v DPP [2005] EWHC 684 (Admin)

Appeal by way of case stated on the question of lawful activity in aggravated trespass the appellants claiming the activity they disrupted was unlawful as it was in pursuance of the Iraq war. Hossein was the instructing solicitor.

R v Saddiqui [2003] EWCA Crim 1191

Appeal against sentence in relation to the Burnley disorders. The court clarified the approach to violent disorder arising from the appellants' lawful presence in the streets in defence of their community.

Percy v DPP [2001] EWHC Admin 1125

Appeal by way of case stated on protest, freedom of expression and Article 10 ECHR. Hossein was the instructing solicitor.

BACKGROUND

In the early 1990s Hossein spent a number of years working for the Newham Monitoring Project, an anti-racist campaigning organisation that provides legal advice and practical support to victims of racial violence and harassment in east London.

He qualified as a solicitor in 1998 having completed his training at Bindman and Partners solicitors. He then moved to Hickman and Rose solicitors where he qualified as a court and police station duty solicitor. In 2000 he moved to Birnberg Peirce and Partners solicitors where he qualified as a Higher Courts Advocate in 2003. He transferred to the Bar in 2005.

EDUCATION

BSc (Hons)

CPE

LPC

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