Abbas Lakha KC

King's Counsel
CALLED 1984
SILK 2003

"Abbas is a class act in criminal defence. He is a highly persuasive advocate who is intelligent and personable."
CHAMBERS AND PARTNERS, 2027



Abbas Lakha KC is one of the UK's leading criminal silks, with a heavyweight practice spanning serious and organised crime, international financial crime, and regulatory and asset recovery work. He is consistently instructed in cases where the stakes are highest—liberty, reputation and substantial financial exposure.

Abbas is regularly instructed in the most challenging and high-profile matters, including murder, terrorism, firearms and major drugs conspiracies; complex financial crime including fraud, money laundering, bribery and corruption; and regulatory and tribunal work before the Tax Tribunals and professional disciplinary bodies. He is frequently engaged at the pre.investigation and pre.charge stages, particularly in matters involving reputational sensitivity and international elements.

- **Investigatory Power and EncroChat Litigation**

A defining aspect of Abbas's modern practice is his expertise in challenges to covert investigatory techniques and surveillance.derived evidence. He has acted in proceedings before the Investigatory Powers Tribunal, including litigation arising from EncroChat.related interception and warrantry issues, addressing questions of lawfulness, statutory

interpretation, proportionality and Convention compliance in cases of national significance.

- **Financial Fraud, Asset Recovery and Regulatory Work**

Abbas has extensive experience across civil and criminal fraud and asset forfeiture, including restraint and confiscation, and appears regularly before the First.tier and Upper Tribunal (Tax) in VAT and tax matters. He is particularly well known for substantial HMRC.related litigation, including complex VAT/MTIC and excise disputes and challenges to regulatory enforcement decisions.

- **International and Cross-border Expertise**

Abbas is frequently instructed in cross.border investigations and litigation involving overseas authorities, international evidence and extradition.linked issues. His work often involves sensitive reputational considerations for high.profile individuals and corporate clients.

- **Approach**

Abbas is known for meticulous preparation, strategic judgement and calm authority under pressure, combining technical mastery with clear and pragmatic advice focused on achieving the best possible outcome for the client.

Notable Cases

Bribery and Corruption

R v Baker, 2025-2026

Bribery and corruption prosecution of a senior EON employee concerning energy infrastructure procurement contracts and alleged illicit payments from subcontractors.

R v O and G, 2012-2025

Prosecution and extradition of a former Minster and Head of Kenya Power alleged to have received corrupt payments for the granting of Government contracts for building the Kenyan power grid.

Jubilee Line Fraud, 2004

Bribery and corruption prosecution of a senior employee within London Transport surveyors Department concerning the leaking of price sensitive information to bidding companies to secure contracts.

R v H and H

R v B

Jubilee Line Fraud

Bribery and Corruption

Drugs

R v V

The case involves the largest ever importations of Class A drugs from the Netherlands over a period of two years and the D V 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

Jersey V O and G, 2012-2025

Advised and represented in high-profile extradition proceedings brought by the Attorney General of Jersey seeking the surrender of senior Kenyan public officials to face money laundering and corruption charges arising from the award of energy infrastructure contracts. The request formed part of a long-running international investigation centred on allegations that bribe payments were channelled through offshore corporate vehicles, including a Jersey-registered entity used to conceal proceeds. The matter engaged complex jurisdictional challenges, constitutional litigation and appellate proceedings in Kenya concerning the legality of the extradition process and prosecutorial mandate. The case formed part of wider asset recovery proceedings involving multi-jurisdictional evidence and confiscation orders.

Austria V Pillar, 2018

Advised and represented in extradition proceedings arising from a European Arrest Warrant issued by an EU Member State seeking the surrender of a female respondent in connection with alleged financial crime and associated money laundering offences. The case proceeded under the Part 1 framework of the Extradition Act 2003 and engaged issues of dual criminality, evidential sufficiency and proportionality. The defence advanced forum and human rights challenges, including Article 6

and Article 8 considerations, alongside scrutiny of the requesting state's prosecutorial basis and underlying financial evidence. The matter required detailed analysis of cross-border transactions and corporate structures.

Re H B, 2026

Advised a UK-based national formerly operating within the Indian banking sector in relation to INTERPOL exposure arising from allegations of large-scale financial embezzlement linked to his tenure at a cooperative bank. The individual was under investigation by Indian economic crime authorities concerning the alleged diversion of substantial institutional funds. Strategic advice was provided on pre-emptive engagement with INTERPOL's Commission for the Control of Files (CCF) to resist the issuance of a Red Notice on political motivation and due-process grounds, alongside parallel representations to the UK National Crime Agency addressing extradition risk, abuse of process and Article 6 considerations. The matter involved analysis of cross-border financial evidence and asset tracing exposure. Ongoing advisory instruction.

Austria v PN

R v M

Jersey v O and G

View Extradition

Financial Crime

HMRC v CEO of MSB, 2025-2026

Represented the CEO of a regulated Money Service Business subject to a large-scale money laundering investigation following an HMRC regulatory visit. Allegations centred on systemic AML failures and handling of suspicious transactions. Advised on compelled disclosure, interview strategy and regulatory engagement.

Successfully negotiated a civil settlement avoiding criminal prosecution while preserving both personal liberty and operational continuity of the licensed entity. Direct Access instruction involving sustained engagement with HMRC Solicitors Office.

R V P, 2025-2026

Defending in Operation Ramsay, a long-running HMRC investigation into alleged large-scale excise duty and VAT evasion within the tobacco trade. The prosecution alleged illicit importation of tobacco originating in Russia and routed through EU jurisdictions via parallel import mechanisms to evade UK duty. Represented one of the alleged architects of the enterprise, addressing issues of supply

chain knowledge, beneficial ownership and financial tracing. The case involved extensive customs data, freight records and cross-border financial evidence

R v A R, 2023-2026

High-profile MSB money laundering prosecution following an undercover operation. Evidence includes mobile downloads, EncroChat material, overseas banking inquiries and accounting reconstruction. Attribution of Encro device usage forms a central issue.

Operation Yulan, 2025

VHCC pension liberation fraud following an 8-year investigation involving offshore structures, introducer networks and international evidence. Proceedings involved extensive digital disclosure and expert accountancy analysis.

R v S H, 2025-2026

Defending a Harley Street surgeon charged with multi-count tax evasion and fraudulent evasion of income tax arising from corporate vehicles through which professional earnings were channelled. The case raises complex issues regarding attribution of personal tax liability where no dividends or remuneration were drawn and funds were extracted solely via director's loan accounts. The defence challenges HMRC's characterisation of loan withdrawals as taxable income and addresses corporate structuring, beneficial entitlement and criminal intent. Extensive forensic accounting evidence.

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 Vaulter)

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, 2023-2025

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

Tax Investigation, Tribunal Work, Prosecutions

COP 9 Settlements, 2026

Advising a senior executive in relation to a Code of Practice 9 investigation initiated by HMRC's Civil Investigation of Fraud (Offshore) Team concerning alleged undeclared offshore income and capital gains. Managing disclosure under the Contractual Disclosure Facility while conducting sensitive negotiations to secure civil resolution. Strategic focus includes limiting penalties to 30% and securing protection from criminal prosecution under the COP 9 framework.

R v H and H, 2024

The defendants were charged with tax evasion of £3.6 million on a substantial property transaction involving the Local Council. The tax evasion involved the use of a complex web of off shore structures in the BVI and Gibraltar. Ultimately negotiated a settlement which allowed the Court to defer sentence for the payment of the evaded Tax in full.

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

Recognition

"Abbas is a class act in criminal defence. He is a highly persuasive advocate who is intelligent and personable." **Chambers and Partners, 2027**

"Abbas is always extremely good at pin-pointing where the real issue lies. He has great clarity and great restraint when things go wrong, remaining confident and inspiring confidence." **Chambers and Partners, 2027**

"Abbas provides great leadership in matters spanning criminal and civil fraud and related areas. He is also extremely client friendly, engendering complete trust, and is a joy to work with." **Chambers and Partners, 2027**

"Mr. Lakha K.C. is an extraordinary barrister with unparalleled tactical and strategic acumen, a unique depth of professional experience in both criminal and civil law, as well as the intersection of the two jurisdictions, and a deft touch with lay clients and professional opponents. He is rightly

admired and feared as an opponent and the go-to barrister for serious and complex criminal defence work at a national and international level." **Legal 500, 2027**

"Abbas provides great leadership in matters spanning criminal and civil fraud and related areas. He excels in providing strategic vision in complex and difficult circumstances. He is utterly unflappable, suave, and fights like the dickens for his clients. He is also extremely client-friendly, engendering complete trust, and he has great commercial and tactical awareness. Abbas keeps an eye at all times on the needs of his clients and is very creative in devising the plan to achieve their objectives. A joy to work with." **Legal 500, 2027**

"Abbas is an exceptional advocate. He has real presence in court and inspires confidence in clients." **Legal 500, 2025**

"He is supremely hardworking and his advocacy is just phenomenal." **Chambers and Partners, 2025**

"Abbas is a very effective silk who is business-minded and hardworking." **Chambers and Partners, 2025**

"Abbas Lakha KC's advocacy is outstanding and he is very experienced." **Chambers and Partners, 2025**

"A fantastic leader with wonderful client handling skills, and his advocacy is targeted, persuasive and effective." **Legal 500, 2025**

"Abbas is a brilliant negotiator and is able to achieve incredible outcomes for his clients." **Legal 500, 2025**

"He is exceptional. He works tirelessly for clients and is a very well-prepared cross-examiner." **Chambers and Partners, 2024**

"Abbas is very dedicated, hard-working and always prepared." **Chambers and Partners, 2024**

"Abbas is one of the best advocates at the Bar – his ability to make cogent representations, pinpointing the issues at hand distinguishes him from his peers." **Legal 500, 2024**

"A fine silk, who is highly able and very personable." **Chambers and Partners, 2024**

"Abbas is a very good criminal silk and he knows his way around difficult crime areas." **Legal 500, 2023**

"Abbas is an exceptional advocate with exceptional care for both his lay and professional client."

Chambers and Partners, 2023

"Consistently brilliant." **Chambers and Partners**

"A wonderfully composed, methodical and smooth operator who provides calm and detailed advice." **Chambers and Partners**

"Very calm, unflappable and has the court’s ear." **Chambers and Partners**

"A very safe pair of hands." **Chambers and Partners**

"An absolute class act. His advocacy is top of his game." **Legal 500**