

Alex Bennie

Call to Bar: 2017



Alex has a multidisciplinary practice covering criminal law, actions against police, and human rights, with a particular interest in areas impacting on vulnerable parties, minorities, or involving accountability of public authorities.

He defends and prosecutes regularly in serious and multi-handed criminal cases and deals frequently with POCA proceedings, findings of fact, and is trained to handle vulnerable witnesses, and youths.

He has specialist expertise in bringing actions against the police, regularly acting successfully for claimants in jury trials, and on appeal, to challenge wrongful arrests, profiling, assaults causing personal injury, and other areas of police misconduct. He has considerable further experience in areas of social welfare law which raise issues of human rights or public law.

He has regularly acted in human rights, asylum, and deportation cases in the First-tier and Upper Tribunals; in possession and homelessness proceedings, and in cases involving the intersection of these areas and community care law, including on judicial review.

Alex has international expertise in legal issues surrounding the death penalty and human rights in capital jurisdictions, and international human rights more generally. He is Director of Programmes at Evolve which regularly offers technical assistance in capital cases and has headed up statistical research into sentencing trends in Uganda.

He has addressed judges on sentencing issues surrounding the death penalty and has designed, built and delivered online training tools for prosecutors in Uganda.

Crime

Alex defends and prosecutes in serious and multi-handed criminal cases and has appeared in the Court of Appeal. He has defended in cases involving attempted murder; GBH; importation, production and supply of drugs; robberies; firearms; fraud; and sexual offending.

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Practice areas:

Criminal Law

International Human Rights

Actions Against The Police

Immigration & Asylum

Professional appointments:

City University BPTC – Outstanding

City University GDL – Distinction

University of Cambridge – Ancient Philosophy Mphil

UCL – Classics – First Class (1st in year and Dean's List award for outstanding achievement across the humanities faculty)

He regularly prosecutes multi-handed cases involving serious violence, domestic violence and false imprisonment, robbery, supply of drugs, and fraud. Alex has specific expertise in actions against the police, analysis of police misconduct, and related human rights issues, which complements his criminal practice. He has international expertise in cases involving capital punishment, and has assisted and advised in capital case appeals in different jurisdictions.

He has designed resources and delivered training to prosecutors abroad in advocacy and in criminal law and procedure. He is trained in handling vulnerable defendants, victims and witnesses and has extensive experience prosecuting and defending in cases involving complex legal arguments or expert evidence surrounding specific vulnerabilities or mental health issues. He has acted in POCA proceedings for the Crown and defence, and in cases involving financial fraud and money laundering.

Recent cases

R v AO (2023, Woolwich Crown Court): Successful half-time submission in a multi-handed joint enterprise robbery.

R v FA (2023, Croydon Crown Court): Two counts of s.18 involving spontaneous stabbing of two members of the public. Acted for an extremely vulnerable defendant through to a mental health disposal.

R v SP (2023, Woolwich Crown Court): A multi-handed Encrochat drug supply conspiracy case arising out of Operation Venetic. Successfully resisted submissions on role relating to “trusted couriers” centered around money minding, possession of Encrochat phones, and proximity to leadership.

R v AA (2023, Woolwich Crown Court): Successful half-time submission in a case of racially aggravated harassment and assault against police officers. Careful analysis of body worn video disproved the allegations.

R v AP (2023, Kingston Crown Court): Acquittal in a case of stalking with serious alarm or distress involving an extremely vulnerable defendant with a severe intellectual disability. Close analysis of the expert evidence and sensitive cross-examination of the complainant properly contextualised the behaviour.

R v AC (2022, Basildon Crown Court): Multi-handed ATM burglary conspiracy involving use of explosives on several occasions.

Actions Against The Police

Alex offers experienced representation to Claimants in multi-track jury trials, and on appeal, in cases involving allegations of police misconduct, false imprisonment, assault, and personal injury to members of the public. He also accepts instructions in inquests. He has expertise in challenging the wrongful uses of handcuffs, of force, of tasers, of entry, of stop and search, and of arrest particularly in cases raising questions of honesty or discrimination.

He frequently deals with complex legal arguments on topics such as costs, QOCS, fundamental dishonesty, and s.329. Prior to commencing pupillage, he undertook paralegal work for Bhatt Murphy during the Article 2 inquest into the police restraint death of Olaseni Lewis.

Recent cases

PN v Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis (2023, Central County Court sitting at the Royal Courts of Justice): Successful challenge of stop and search of a BAME member of the public which was found to have lacked genuine suspicion;

RM v Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis (2023, Central County Court sitting at the Royal Courts of Justice): Successful challenge of arrest of a BAME member of the public in connection with a robbery which was held to have lacked honest suspicion.

MP v Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis [2022] EWHC 3244 (KB): Successfully acted on appeal in a case which turned on the application of the QOCs regime in proceedings where a personal injury case was raised after issue of proceedings. The case is an authority for the proposition that QOCS applies retrospectively in such instances.

SF v Chief Constable of Kent Police (2022, Canterbury County Court): Successfully challenge of unreasonable use of force in a case of forcible entry into a property and use of a taser on a member of the public.

Immigration & Asylum

Alex has extensive experience representing appellants or judicial review applicants before the First-tier and Upper-tribunal in cases involving human rights or asylum and in deportation cases.

Housing

Alex has extensive experience acting in possession and disrepair proceedings and homelessness challenges, and of advising on judicial review in those areas. He further advises on the intersection of housing and other areas of social welfare law, including social security, mental health and community care law.

International Human Rights

Alex has considerable expertise in capital punishment law and comparative procedure and in the international frameworks and human rights law bearing on the criminal process. He also has experience advising on international human rights law and drafting UN complaints.

Prior to starting pupillage, Alex volunteered in City University's Pakistan Death Row project, which won the award for outstanding international collaboration of the year at City's Vice Chancellor's Awards 2016. He coauthored several reports on comparative capital case jurisprudence and its application to capital sentencing in Pakistan.

He volunteered at Reprieve for a year working on cases with a death penalty or international human rights dimension. He assisted the Reprieve Africa Team within the Malawi Resentencing Project.

At 1MCB, he assisted Ariane Adam and Vyaj Lovejoy with the drafting of successful submissions to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention which resulted in a declaration of unlawful detention in the case of three relatives of the Director of the Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy, Sayed Ahmed Alwadaei. Alex is currently Director of Programmes for Evolve which works on capital cases and criminal justice development in Uganda. Evolve assisted hundreds of inmates extensively in the Kigula re-sentencing phase. Alex conducted statistical research into sentencing trends in Uganda, and problems arising after Kigula, which he presented at the 2018 Annual Judges' Conference. Evolve advised the Ugandan Sentencing Guidelines Committee on current draft High Court Guidelines. He has presented to the Supreme Court of Uganda on complications following abolition of the mandatory death penalty in Uganda..

Evolve traces missing files for capital inmates detained but unable to appeal due to file loss. Evolve reorganized the Supreme Court of Uganda's civil and criminal registries, as part of which Alex created a digital archive management system for logging the location and movement of case files and trained Supreme Court staff on its use. He more recently created an online training academy for the ODPP of Uganda and co-delivered training on advocacy, criminal law, and case preparation for prosecutors using it. He authored a comprehensive textbook on Ugandan criminal law for that exercise and is currently working on comparable online resources for defence practitioners. He has drafted submissions in successful appeals against conviction and sentence in capital cases. This includes the Ugandan Supreme Court case of Otim Moses where the appellant's death sentence was overturned following an error of law in relation to his age at time of offending. He had been unlawfully on death row for 10 years



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