

# BBC to pay £1m after libel battle with IVF doctor

**By Urmee Khan**

THE BBC has paid more than £1 million after a libel battle over claims made in a *Panorama* programme about Mohamed Taranissi, the fertility doctor.

Mr Taranissi, who is said to have helped mothers give birth to 2,300 babies through in-vitro fertilisation, accused the BBC of defaming his techniques. The *Panorama* programme, titled *IVF Uncovered* and broadcast in January 2007, sent an undercover reporter to pose as a potential patient.

It has emerged that both sides have come to a settlement. A spokesman for the BBC said: "Both parties have agreed to settle and not to continue forward and consider the matter now closed."

A source close to the case said the BBC was not paying any damages to Mr Taranissi, but would cover his legal costs, about £900,000.

The corporation's own costs have not been revealed but they are likely to be a substantial six-figure sum.

The High Court had already ordered the BBC to pay an estimated £500,000 of Mr Taranissi's costs last October after it "threw in the towel" over one part of its defence.

Mr Taranissi has been described as Britain's most successful fertility doctor, after his Assisted Reproduction and Gynaecology Centre (ARGC) in London topped a clinic league table.

His success rates are higher than any other clinic, with 60 per cent of women patients under 35 giving birth.

The Egyptian-born doctor is estimated to be worth £38 million. A spokesman from Mr Taranissi's office said the BBC had paid over £1 million.

The decision to settle comes just over a week after the broadcaster offered to pay £30,000 and apologise to the Muslim Council of Britain over claims that it encouraged the killing of British troops.