

Press Release

Carter-Ruck

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Government Adviser Qari Asim MBE secures full apology and libel damages from Mail on Sunday and MailOnline

The publisher of the Mail on Sunday and MailOnline, has today apologised in the High Court to Mr Qari Asim over false allegations they published about him in 2019. The Defendant has also published full apologies, and paid Mr Asim libel damages together with his legal costs.

Mr Asim is a senior Imam at Leeds Makkah Mosque and Chair of Mosques & Imams National Advisory Board. He regularly advises statutory bodies and law enforcement agencies in respect of Islamic and cultural issues (including being the Government's Advisor on Defining Islamophobia).

Mr Asim's complaint related to an article published on 6 April 2019, which falsely alleged that Mr Asim, through his support of a protest in Pakistan led by a number of individuals including an extremist cleric, Khadim Rizvi, supported the proposed hanging of a Christian woman, Asia Bibi, for blasphemy. Ms Bibi's plight attracted worldwide media attention and condemnation in 2018. The article also suggested, again entirely falsely, that Mr Asim endorsed the brutal murder of Asad Shah, the shopkeeper in Glasgow who was brutally murdered by an extremist in 2016.

As the Defendant publishers have now accepted, and acknowledged today in Court, not only were these allegations false but, to the contrary, Mr Asim publicly and vociferously *condemned* both these crimes, and actively campaigned for Ms Bibi to be given asylum in the UK.

In recognition of the falsity, and gravity, of the allegations against Mr Asim, Associated Newspapers joined in a Statement in Open Court today before Mr Justice Nicklin, withdrawing the false allegations and expressing a full apology to Mr Asim. A full apology has also been published on MailOnline,¹ on the MailOnline App, and prominently in the print edition of the Mail on Sunday.

Speaking after the resolution of the libel complaint, Mr Asim said:

"The publication of these false allegations has been extremely distressing for me, not least as I have spent many years working to

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¹<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8033519/Clarifications-corrections.html>



promote peace and building and improving inter-faith relations at a local, national and international level.

The inaccurate reporting about me is yet another example of the plethora of inaccurate, myth-making stories reported about British Muslims in sections of the media in recent years. It tars the diligent work by many journalists across the country.

I welcome the decision taken by Associated Newspapers both to apologise formally and pay a suitable sum in damages, in recognition of the gravity of the falsehoods that were published."

For further information, please contact Adam Tudor (adam.tudor@carter-ruck.com) or Helena Shipman (helena.shipman@carter-ruck.com)