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Telegraph apologises to Haras Ahmed and pays substantial damages over false extremism allegation by Andrew Gilligan

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The Telegraph has published a full apology, both in its print edition and online, to Haras Ahmed for false allegations made by its former journalist, Andrew Gilligan, that, as part of a campaign of lies by Muslim extremists to undermine the government's "Prevent" policy and its fight against terror, Mr Ahmed had sought to mislead the public by falsely stating to the BBC that a London Local Authority had mistakenly released the names of children identified thought at risk of radicalisation.

The Telegraph was provided with demonstrable evidence that this was in fact false, and has now accepted that these allegations were, and are, completely unfounded and, that Mr Ahmed is "*in no way himself an extremist*".

In further recognition of the seriousness of the matter, the publishers have agreed to pay Mr Ahmed a substantial sum in damages, in addition to his legal costs.

Speaking today, Mr Ahmed said:

"I am very pleased that the Telegraph has apologised for what it accepts are completely baseless allegations. To be labelled in such defamatory terms has been a harrowing experience. I, like many people, both Muslim and non-Muslim, believe that many aspects of the government's Prevent policy are highly discriminatory and wholly counter-productive. It is in my view a duty on all citizens to speak out against any form of discriminatory practice and injustice, and I find it offensive that certain journalists feel it acceptable to traduce such political commentary as 'extremist'.

I hope that others who wish to challenge aspects of certain policy as draconian are not cowed. On that basis I wish to give a large portion of the damages to Charities and NGO's who are committed to ensuring free speech and equality.

It has been a difficult 18 months, and I am very pleased that the matter has now been resolved."

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