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Rhys Davies

Year of Call: 2004

Practice Areas

- Civil Fraud
- Public International Law

Public Access

Undertakes Public Access work

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Awards



Experience

Rhys specialises in international criminal law and international human rights law. He is based in London and the Hague and is ranked in the legal 500 as a leading lawyer in international crime.

Rhys was named International Pro Bono Barrister of the year by Advocate, the Bar's national pro bono charity, in November 2021.

Rhys is in demand as a commentator on international human rights and regularly appears both on television and in print. Rhys has a particular focus on the Middle East and the rights of journalists and has significant experience of in-country legal advice and assistance, most recently in the West Bank. Rhys has particular expertise and interest in matters concerning Interpol. He is experienced in leading campaigns to free British and other citizens detained abroad. He is a frequent speaker at human rights events at the United Nations in Geneva and the House of Commons. Rhys often comments for Al-Jazeera Television, and has recently written for the Times, Guardian and Independent newspapers. He is frequently asked to advise non-governmental organisations on matters across the spectrum of international human rights law issues.

Rhys is recognised as a leading junior in international criminal law. He is a member of the lists of Counsel for the International Criminal Court, the Kosovo Specialist Chambers and the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. Rhys is also a member of the list of lawyers for the United Nations Ombudsperson to the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee.

Rhys has significant experience in matters before the United Nations Special Procedures mechanisms, with numerous ongoing cases concerning matters of torture, arbitrary detention and forced displacement. He has acted in matters before diverse international tribunals including the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the World Bank Sanctions System.

Rhys has in-depth experience of both the UK and US Magnitsky sanctions regimes and has worked closely with leading global campaigners on efforts to sanction human rights abusers and corrupt officials. Rhys assisted former UK DPP Sir David Calvert-Smith in the drafting of the report “Undue Influence: The UAE and Interpol” published in April 2021 examining the UAE’s influence over Interpol. Rhys is counsel to an ongoing Fact-finding panel of UK parliamentarians, currently investigating breaches of the rights of British women in the UAE. He has significant experience of commissioning panels and investigations concerning international human rights abuses.

In addition to his work as a commentator, Rhys is much in demand as a speaker and moderator on panels concerning a broad range of international criminal law and international human rights law issues, with a focus on the Middle East, oppressive state conduct and the rights of journalists. Rhys has recently spoken at, and chaired, events at numerous sessions of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva and at meetings at the House of Commons on matters including the use of the death penalty and the protection of prisoners in international law. He is the author of numerous articles concerning justice in the Middle East and is co-author of a recent article on the rule of law in despotic regimes.

For more information about Rhys’s International Law, Reputation Management and Legal and Litigation Campaigns expertise please visit ihr-advisors.com

Rhys retains a domestic common law practice with a focus on fraud. His recent experience in this area includes advising in civil fraud and contempt proceedings, private criminal prosecutions, and pro-active litigation in cases of suspected dishonesty.

Directories

Winner International Pro Bono Barrister of the year, 2021/22, Bar Pro Bono Awards.

Rhys is recommended as a Leading Junior in International Crime in the Legal 500.

The 2022 edition describes him as “*A standout international lawyer. He is the go to barrister for submissions to the United Nations in complex cases.*”

The 2021 edition described him as “*An excellent advocate. He is a sophisticated and highly effective communicator with a*

fiere intellect” and “fearless in his defence of Human Rights and individual freedoms”. The 2021 edition notes that Rhys has “particular expertise in the Middle East and representing clients before the United Nations Special Procedure Committees and Special Rapporteurs.”

Rhys was described in the 2020 edition of the Legal 500 as a *“polished performer who provides tactically astute advice”*.

Education

BVC Inns of Court School of Law

MA (Hons) Law, Trinity College, University of Cambridge

Memberships

- Admitted to list of Defence Counsel before the International Criminal Court
- Admitted to list of Defence Counsel of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon
- Admitted to list of Defence Counsel before the Kosovo Specialist Chambers
- Association of Defence Counsel practising before the International Courts and Tribunals
- International Criminal Court Bar Association
- Human Rights Lawyers Association
- International Bar Association
- Criminal Bar Association
- South Eastern Circuit

News

Rhys Davies writes in the Times Newspaper on the use of Magnitsky sanctions

18/11/2021

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

Rhys Davies authors an opinion piece in the Times today concerning the use of sanctions to target high profile individuals responsible for corruption and human rights abuses.

You can view the publication at <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-uk-must-target-corrupt-individuals-50s2l02mq>

Rhys Davies named International Pro Bono Barrister of the Year

04/11/2021

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

Rhys Davies and Ben Keith said:

“We are delighted to accept this award and are pleased that we are able to raise awareness of the importance of pro bono work in the international area. However, the most important people are our clients.

Ryan Cornelius has been the victim of the most egregious human rights breaches imaginable and will almost certainly die in prison unless we can help secure his release. We have been working with his family we’ve asked the UN and the UK and US governments for assistance and in his campaign for justice. His case is a perfect example of how pro bono lawyers can try to help those most in

need.”

Advocate said the following:

“Rhys and Ben have worked extensively on a pro bono basis to achieve justice for Ryan, a British national who has been wrongfully imprisoned in Dubai for over 13 years. They have acted as legal counsel on his campaign and have provided the client’s family with advice, written advocacy, legal submissions and in-depth legal assistance.

“In a real-life David and Goliath situation, their work has involved gaining a detailed understanding of the complex commercial beginnings of the case in order to bring out the full extent of the injustice done to the client, as well as taking on powerful international adversaries who can fund expensive litigation.

“Their work has centred around the UN conventions against torture and arbitrary detention, and what is conventionally referred to as the Global Magnitsky Sanctions legislation now in force in the UK, US and Canada. They have made submissions under UN Conventions to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention in Geneva and the UN Special Rapporteur against Torture in Geneva. They have also made Global Magnitsky Sanctions submissions to the UK FCDO and the US governments.

“Rhys and Ben’s work has involved the challenge of using what is still relatively new legislation, both in the UK and internationally, with both of them operating outside of their areas of expertise. It has been an incredibly time-consuming case in which they have drafted lengthy submissions to the UN and to the British, US and Canadian governments. They have made themselves available whenever required for meetings with Ryan’s family, towards whom they have shown unfailing patience, professional humility and understanding.

“The outcome of this has been a legal framework which has knitted together a far more substantial campaign than the family had been able to mount unaided, which has already garnered support from high profile human rights activists. Although the campaign is still in its opening stages, it is now equipped to achieve its desired result.

“Chris Pagett CMG, OBE, who supported their nomination, said: ‘Rhys and Ben have throughout this displayed unfailing attentiveness and sensitivity, never losing sight of the fact that they are working to help a frightened and vulnerable family. That family now has grounds for hope.’”



Rhys Davies instructed to represent the longest serving American in a foreign jail accused of a white-collar crime.

13/10/2021

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

Rhys and Ben have been instructed lead the legal efforts for his release, including submissions under the US Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, and submissions to the Special Procedures mechanism of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Marcus Grant and Rhys Davies Shortlisted for the 2021 Bar Pro Bono Awards.

07/10/2021

Barristers involved: Marcus Grant Rhys Davies

The winners will be announced at a drinks reception and ceremony on the 3rd November. A full list of the nominees can be found via the link below.



You can view the publication at <https://weareadvocate.org.uk/award-nominees.html>

Rhys Davies addresses a side event at the 48th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

28/09/2021

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

Rhys Davies spoke at a seminar of international human rights experts at the 48th Session of the UNHRC, concerning UAE and Interpol. The panel questioned the UAE's influence over Interpol in light of the UAE Police General Inspector's candidacy for next Interpol President.

Rhys Davies writes in the Times on the forthcoming elections for the presidency of Interpol

15/04/2021

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

The UAE's candidate for the presidency has been linked to allegations of serious human rights abuses and yet is widely believed to be the leading candidate for the role.

You can view the publication at

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/ac76fa8a-9d4a-11eb-8da6-6f8eccc82ac3?shareToken=b5240a04a530c4a56b468c7d803ac977>

Undue Influence: The UAE and Interpol Report Launch.

07/04/2021

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

The full report can be downloaded [here](#).

The report launch can be live streamed 10am, 7th April via the link below.

You can view the publication at <https://ihr-advisors.com/research-and-events/event-one-ystk5>

Rhys Davies appears on Al Jazeera television to comment on the imprisonment of journalists in Egypt

19/02/2021

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

Egypt is ranked amongst the world's worst nations for freedom of the press and detention of journalists.

Rodney Dixon QC and Rhys Davies file submissions at the United Nations on behalf of the Huwaitat tribe in Saudi Arabia, following forced evictions and killings in pursuit of the Neom mega-city project

23/09/2020

Barristers involved: Rodney Dixon QC Rhys Davies

The Huwaitat Tribe have been living in their ancestral lands for hundreds of years and have been forcefully evicted from their homeland by the Saudi authorities in order to make way for the NEOM Megacity project. The communication urges the two UN rapporteurs, as well as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, to open an investigation on behalf of the Huwaitat tribe and to take all necessary steps to protect their rights.

Rhys Davies appears on Al Jazeera television to comment on the treatment of former Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Nayef

24/08/2020

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

Rhys was asked to comment on the likely reasons for detention, in light of recent press reports suggesting that Prince Nayef has been refused medical treatment.

Rhys Davies comments in the Independent newspaper on the new UK's Magnitsky sanctions regime, and its impact on human rights.

17/07/2020

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

Rhys discusses the likely impact of the new law in an article in the Independent newspaper.

You can view the publication at

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/sanctions-dominic-raab-russia-saudi-arabia-human-rights-abuse-a9622461.html>

Rhys Davies appears on Al Jazeera to comment on the trial of Saudi nationals charged with the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi

03/07/2020

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

Rhys was interviewed on Al Jazeera television and asked to comment on the importance of the proceedings, as well as the prospects of the Saudi government handing over the defendants.

Rhys Davies appears on Al Jazeera television to discuss war crimes in Libya

23/01/2020

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

The threats emerge against a backdrop of attacks on civilians in heavily populated areas, in likely breach of international humanitarian law.

Rhys Davies comments for The Independent newspaper on the threat to target cultural sites in Iran by President Trump

06/01/2020

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

Rhys told The Independent that the military action described in Mr Trump's tweets could certainly be a war crime and noted that although the US is not a signatory of the International Criminal Court, there is a domestic framework where someone could be brought to justice in the US.

Rhys Davies submits Urgent Communication to United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, and the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention

05/12/2019

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

Ms Jbara was forcefully detained on November 3rd 2018 by Palestinian Authority security forces and held in the notorious Jericho Women's Prison. During her detention, Ms Jbara was subjected to abuse and torture. Ms Jbara has now been released but remains at risk of further detention, abuse and torture. Submissions have been made to UN bodies in order to secure Ms Jbara's safety and prevent further breaches of her rights.

Rhys Davies appears on Al Jazeera television to comment on the legality of air strikes in Yemen

30/08/2019

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

The Yemeni defence ministry stated that more than 300 people were killed and wounded as a result of the bombings.

Rhys Davies appears on Al Jazeera television to comment on the death of former Egyptian president Mohammed Morsi

18/06/2019

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

Reports indicated that he had been held in prolonged solitary confinement and had repeatedly been denied medical treatment. Last year, a report by the Detention Review Panel warned that a lack of medical treatment could result in Morsi's premature death. Rhys was asked to comment on the legal and human rights implications of Morsi's death in custody.

Rhys Davies attends court in the West Bank, as international counsel for activist Suha Jbara

12/06/2019

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

On 12th June 2019, Ms Jbara was brought before judges at the Jericho courthouse for the 5th time, but has yet to be formally charged. Submissions to the UN Special Rapporteur on torture are now pending.

Urgent Communication submitted to UN Special Rapporteur on Extra-judicial, summary or arbitrary Executions

20/05/2019

Barristers involved: Rodney Dixon QC Rhys Davies

It is currently held by the Moroccan authorities due to Mr. Bouachrine's ongoing criminal proceedings in Morocco. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention recently held that Mr Bouachrine's detention was arbitrary and that his trial proceedings had been marred by violations of his right to a fair trial, and directed that the Moroccan authorities release him immediately, following Counsel's application to the Working Group. The mobile phone is potentially relevant to the Special Rapporteur's investigation as Mr Bouachrine has stated that it contains text messages sent between himself and Mr Khashoggi about their safety and security in the period prior to Mr Khashoggi's murder and Mr Bouachrine's arrest. Both of them as leading human rights journalists had been highly critical of the Saudi government and its policies. Mr Bouachrine's appeal proceedings continue in Casablanca.

Please see link below for English news item, and [here](#) for news item in French.

You can view the publication at

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-7041659/Lawyers-jailed-Morocco-journalist-urge-phone-release-Khashoggi-probe.html>

Rhys Davies appears on Al Jazeera Television to analyse leaked reports in the Guardian of abuse of Saudi political prisoners

01/04/2019

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

The Guardian has been informed that the Saudi King commissioned examinations of up to 60 prisoners, possibly with a view to releasing and pardoning them. The examinations take place against a backdrop of ongoing scrutiny into allegations of human rights abuses in Saudi Arabia.

Rhys Davies is asked to comment on the release of Saudi Arabian human rights activists, on Al Jazeera Television

29/03/2019

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

Eman al-Nafjan, Aziza al-Yousef and Roqaya al-Mohareb were released from prison after nine months, having been detained for

campaigning for human rights reforms in Saudi Arabia. Eight other human rights campaigners who were arrested at the same time remain in custody.

Rhys Davies writes in the Guardian, highlighting human rights abuses in Egypt and calling for the UK to stand up for the rule of law

13/03/2019

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

Egypt executed 15 people in February after unfair trials in which human rights campaigners say confessions were elicited by torture.

You can view the publication at

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/mar/13/egypt-executed-15-people-in-february-why-is-the-uk-staying-silent>

Rhys Davies and Aidan Ellis speak at an event in Parliament to discuss Human Rights abuses in Egypt

07/03/2019

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies Aidan Ellis

Rhys and Aidan discussed the political and legal remedies available and joined a panel of experts in calling for the UK to use its influence to help end Human Rights abuses in Egypt. Egyptian authorities continue to execute prisoners following trials which do not meet basic international standards of fairness.

Rhys Davies appears on Al Jazeera Television to discuss a UN investigation into the Khashoggi killing

30/01/2019

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

Rhys also discussed the likely impact of the UN's report, to be published in June.

Rhys Davies and Aidan Ellis have been added to the list of lawyers for the United Nations Ombudsman to the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, for petitioners who seek delisting from the sanctions list.

21/01/2019

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies Aidan Ellis

Rhys Davies is asked to comment on Al Jazeera television on the latest developments in the Khashoggi case

07/01/2019

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

11 individuals have been charged in connection with the killing, although their identities have not been revealed. Rhys spoke about recent United Nations demands for an international investigation, as well as the likely response from Turkey.

Rhys Davies appears on Al Jazeera to comment on a request by British parliamentarians to visit Saudi women activists currently imprisoned.

02/01/2019

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

Saudi Arabia detained a number of activists last year. Recent reports have suggested that those individuals have been denied basic legal rights and have been subjected to torture whilst in detention. A cross-party group of parliamentarians, as well as leading

international lawyers, have written to the Saudi embassy in the United Kingdom asking for assistance in organising a visit to those activists.

Rhys Davies appears on Al Jazeera to discuss the latest developments in the Khashoggi affair

10/12/2018

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

In light of the refusal by Saudi Arabia to accede to a Turkish request for the extradition of key suspects in the Khashoggi killing, Rhys Davies was interviewed on Al Jazeera television and asked to comment on legal and political remedies. Rhys spoke on the next steps available to Jamal Khashoggi's family, and the international community at large.

Rhys Davies admitted to the List of Specialist Counsel before the Kosovo Specialist Chambers

29/10/2018

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

TGC is pleased to announce that Rhys Davies has been admitted List of Specialist Counsel as Defence Counsel before the Kosovo Specialist Chambers (KSC) in the Hague.

Rhys Davies writes in the Times, addressing the international response to the war in Yemen in light of the Khashoggi killing

24/10/2018

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

Rhys has written an article in the Times, in light of the Khashoggi scandal, calling for the international community to take to the opportunity to prevent catastrophe in Yemen.

You can view the publication at <https://bit.ly/2JdAOSQ>

Rhys Davies writes in the Independent newspaper regarding legal remedies in the Khashoggi affair

22/10/2018

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

Following the admission by Saudi Arabia that Jamal Khashoggi was killed at their Turkish Consulate, writing in the Independent newspaper, Rhys Davies addresses possible remedies in international law. Rhys sets out the next steps that might be taken at against both Saudi Arabia and the individuals allegedly involved in the killing.

You can view the publication at

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/jamal-khashoggi-death-international-law-prosecute-istanbul-saudi-arabia-mohammed-bin-salman-a8596236.html>

The Human Rights Situation in Saudi Arabia

09/10/2018

Barristers involved: Rodney Dixon QC Rhys Davies

He co-authored a report on detentions in Saudi Arabia with Lord Ken Macdonald QC earlier this year which has been submitted to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. The webpage of the conference is [here](#) which includes the livestream of the event. Rhys Davies also participated in the event.

Rhys Davies and Sian Reeves speak at a press conference outside the embassy of Saudi Arabia, in London

05/10/2018

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies Sian Reeves

At the press conference, Rhys Davies called upon the Saudi government to confirm whether it had detained Jamal Khashoggi and, if so, to release him immediately. Sian Reeves highlighted the Saudi government's history of arrests of activists and dissidents, and further called upon the Saudi government to release Jamal Khashoggi if he is in their custody.

You can view the publication at

<https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20181005-uk-rights-groups-call-on-saudi-to-reveal-khashoggi-whereabouts/>

Rhys Davies has been quoted in an article published in The Daily Express

17/09/2018

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

"From Salisbury to the South China Sea, opponents of Western democracy are trying to undermine the structure of international legal norms. Bolton's comments hand Russia, China and other regimes the tools to do so. No institution is perfect but the attack on lawyers and judges at an institution with a broad international backing is chilling."

You can view the publication at

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/1018042/john-bolton-donald-trump-international-criminal-court-icc-afghanistan-investigation>

Rhys Davies co-authors an article in the New Law Journal - International Justice: English lawyers in despotic jurisdictions.

17/07/2018

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

As part of a series of articles on international justice and the rule of law in other jurisdictions, Rhys Davies & Ben Keith ask whether, following the success of the Dubai International Financial Centre and the imminent launch of the Astana International Financial Centre, countries such as Kazakhstan and the United Arab Emirates are using the reputation of English law and lawyers to shield their poor human rights records.

You can view the publication at

[https://www.newLawjournal.co.uk/content/international-justice-english-lawyers-despotic-jurisdictions](https://www.newlawjournal.co.uk/content/international-justice-english-lawyers-despotic-jurisdictions)

Sian Reeves, Rhys Davies and Myles Grandison address an event at the United Nations in Geneva

27/06/2018

Barristers involved: Sian Reeves Rhys Davies Myles Grandison

Sian Reeves chaired the event relating the torture and ill-treatment of women in UAE's prisons.

Rhys Davies highlighted the human rights violations committed against women in the UAE, and the cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment that they are subjected to whilst in UAE prisons.

Myles Grandison focused on extradition between the UK and the UAE, and the refusal of the UK courts to extradite to the UAE in view of the current conditions in UAE prisons.

Rhys Davies admitted to the List of Counsel for the International Criminal Court

25/06/2018

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

TGC is pleased to announce that Rhys Davies has been admitted to the List of Counsel for the International Criminal Court, in the Hague. Rhys joins chambers' increasing panel of barristers approved to provide legal assistance in relation to proceedings before the International Criminal Court.

Rhys Davies chairs an event at the House of Commons on famine in Yemen

25/06/2018

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

Rhys chaired, and spoke at, a seminar of international human rights experts in the Grimond Room at the House of Commons concerning the unfolding crisis in Yemen. Rhys was joined by a panel of international lawyers and experts to consider the humanitarian impact of the ongoing international blockade, as well as remedies in international law.

Rhys Davies admitted to the List of Counsel for the Special Tribunal for Lebanon

08/06/2018

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

TGC is delighted to announce that Rhys Davies has been admitted to the List of Counsel for the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, in the Netherlands, as Co-counsel.

Rhys Davies addresses an event at the United Nations in Geneva

13/03/2018

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies

Rhys focused on the recent presentation of a report to the Office of the Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court, which highlights allegations of war crimes committed by nationals of countries subject to the jurisdiction of the ICC.

Rhys Davies and Aidan Ellis address an event at the House of Commons

28/02/2018

Barristers involved: Rhys Davies Aidan Ellis

Rhys and Aidan addressed Committee Room 17 on the growing use of the death penalty in both civilian and military jurisdictions, and called for a moratorium on its use. Rhys further highlighted the increased politicisation of the judiciary since the coup of 2013, and Aidan observed that the death penalty was part of a process aimed at suppressing dissent.
