

Leon Kazakos

"A class act who is a pleasure to watch" - Chambers UK 2019
"An excellent tactician, he is the hardest-working and most user-friendly barrister solicitors know"- Legal 500 2018



Year of Call: 1999

020 7353 5324

Leon Kazakos is an experienced defence practitioner instructed in a wide variety of cases involving allegations of fraud, money laundering and related financial misconduct. He regularly provides advice and advocacy in demanding and complex cases, representing individuals and companies who are either under investigation or facing prosecution for serious financial wrongdoing.

He is an accredited advocacy trainer (Lincoln's Inn), a pupil supervisor and a trained facilitator for advocacy and the vulnerable.

Leon lectures and delivers training to solicitors and accountants firms in relation to criminal and regulatory matters, with a particular focus on financial misconduct and money laundering.

He is a contributing editor to Butterworths "Fraud Law, Practice and Procedure" and a contributing author in corporate crime to Lexisnexis.

Leon is ranked as a leading individual in Chambers & Partners and as a leading junior in The Legal 500.

"He is very impressive, has a very quick legal mind and understands where the problems are. He has a lovely manner too – in court he's respectful but firm." – Chambers UK 2018

"Particularly good for an underdog who needs someone to fight their corner." – Legal 500 2016

Location

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Business Crime & Financial Services

Ranked as a leader in financial crime in Chambers and Partners and Legal 500, significant and complex fraud cases are a very substantial part of Leon's practice. He has extensive experience of defending most forms of business crime and is instructed to defend in cases brought by the Financial Conduct Authority, the Serious Fraud Office, CPS, BEIS, HMRC as well as defending against private prosecutions. Leon's caseload spans the full spectrum, from allegations of misconduct in insolvency proceedings to the operation of unauthorised collective investment schemes to bribery, corruption and wide ranging conspiracies to defraud.

Recent instructions:

BEIS v K (2018)

Defence counsel for the leading defendant in a prosecution brought on behalf of the Insolvency Service. The case concerned the alleged abuse of a series of limited companies (through 'phoenixing') and the creditors voluntary liquidation scheme in order to evade debts to creditors and to pursue property investment transactions.

Operation Observe (2018)

The successful defence of a businessman accused of fraud and money laundering. The prosecution alleged his involvement in an high value conspiracy to defraud members of the public through the offering for sale of tickets to sporting events. The case received widespread publicity both before and during trial (see [here](#)).

R v J (2018)

An allegation of the laundering of the proceeds of a 'boiler room' fraud where rare earth metals were mis-sold as suitable products for private investors.

T v T (2018)

The successful defence of a businessman against a private prosecution brought by an ex-business partner accusing him of fraud and misuse of the letter of credit scheme.

The proceedings arose out of an international action brought in the High Court by a contractual counterparty.

NCA v E (2018)

Instructed for the respondent in Part V (High Court) Civil Recovery Proceedings.

Operation Dogstar (2018)

The successful defence of a City worker accused of participation in fraudulent equity release loan applications and mortgage fraud.

NCA v D (2017)

Instructed for the respondent in Part V (High Court) and Part VI (Tax Tribunal) Civil Recovery Proceedings.

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Operation Cotton (2015-2017)

Leading Junior representing a defendant accused of conspiracy to defraud arising out of the operation of a collective investment scheme, the largest land banking scheme prosecution brought by the FCA.

R v A (2017)

Representing an individual accused of involvement in a £12m international fraud and money laundering operation.

R v V (2017)

Representing a businessman accused of a series of frauds on investors, the public revenue and government institutions.

R v C (2017)

An allegation of fraud involving the sale of carbon credits to the public.

R v A (2015 – 2018)

A series of allegations of high value mortgage frauds and money laundering against the background of organised crime.

R v DS (2015)

The successful defence of a Barclays Bank Business Manager against allegations of money laundering arising out of an investigation by the Hi-tech crime unit into a series of multi million pound frauds.

Operation Isidor (2015)

Representing a property developer accused of involvement in a long running money laundering and mortgage fraud conspiracy with allegations of involvement in organised crime.

Operation Vara (2014)

Leading Junior in the defence of a man accused of cheating the public revenue arising out of his alleged involvement in a £15m international gold smuggling operation.

Operation Solent (2013)

Representing an NHS employee accused of a conspiracy to defraud the Royal Marsden.

Criminal Defence

Ranked as a leader in Crime by both the Legal 500 and Chambers and Partners for a number of years Leon is a

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highly experienced and committed defence advocate. He has a wide ranging and diverse defence practice with its roots in defending in cases involving serious and organised crime. His current practice has a heavy bias on defending those accused of serious financial misconduct. He is however regularly instructed to appear in cases of homicide and serious violence, rape and other serious sexual offending where specialist witness handling of vulnerable complainants is called for, drug and human trafficking, computer hacking and cases brought under the Modern Slavery Act.

Recent Instructions:

R v A (2018)

The defendant was a footballer who had been extradited to face an allegation of rape that was, by the time of trial, years old. The case required careful and considered cross examination of a number of witnesses – both complainant and those to whom she complained at the time – and legal argument as to capacity to consent. The defendant was unanimously acquitted by the jury.

R v W (2018)

The successful defence of a businessman who had been accused of a serious sexual assault by a woman with whom he was in a casual sexual relationship.

R v C (2018)

Representing the lead defendant in a very large scale conspiracy to pervert the course of justice.

R v Rooney (2017 – 2019)

The largest slavery prosecution brought to date against 11 members of the same extended family. The case was widely reported by the media once reporting restrictions were lifted (see one of the BBC reports [here](#).) Leon's client was one of only two who did not receive prison sentences for his role in the overall criminality. Leon is presently instructed to defend in a series of other cases involving allegations of slavery.

R v Various

Representing a series of building firms and sole traders accused of being 'rogue traders', in prosecutions brought across England and Wales by a variety of local authorities. These cases require the expert cross examination of surveyors and other construction experts as to the need for the construction work, its quality and market price.

R v F (2018)

Murder: the killing of a french tourist on a London street by a man heavily under the influence of cocaine.

R v M (2018)

Representing a coach driver accused of causing death by careless driving following a collision in Central London.

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In addition Leon has represented a number of police officers accused of a variety of criminal offences, from driving offences to violent crime to attempted poisoning.

These are invariably cases where the allegations – regardless of gravity – have very serious consequences for the reputation and careers of those on trial. Leon’s cross-discipline experience in both criminal and regulatory fields allows him to provide specialist advice to police officers under investigation.

Private Prosecution

Graded at Grade 3 by the Crown Prosecution Service and with experience of prosecuting a wide variety of cases Leon Kazakos also advises on the bringing of private prosecutions in cases where the CPS have declined to prosecute.

Recent Instructions:

Re: J

Advice on the bringing of a private prosecution of a then serving cabinet minister for expenses fraud.

Re: G

Advice on the bringing of a private prosecution for a suspected fraud perpetrated by an insurance company against a contracting supplier.

Re: C

Advice on the bringing of a private prosecution of an insolvency practitioner (Administrator) for fraud in the conduct of a company’s affairs.

Re: M

Advice to the defendant in civil proceedings about the bringing of a private prosecution for perjury.

Re: D

Advice on the bringing of a private prosecution for assault in the context of a divorce.

Criminal Regulatory

Leon has experience of advising individuals and companies in cases where very serious injury has resulted through alleged breaches of Health and Safety legislation. In environmental cases Leon defends in prosecutions brought by the Environment Agency or local authorities in relation to permitting breaches and/or pollution.

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Recent Instructions:

R v N (2018) and R v S (2019)

Instructed for the defence in two separate cases where private individuals were charged with breaches of the Control of Trade in Endangered Species Regulations 1997. The defendants had, using various internet forums (Ebay and Instagram) purchased and then sold or offered for sale clothing made from pelts and skins of endangered species. Those species were listed in the annexes to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Both defendants faced further charges brought under the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979 for the fraudulent evasion of the regulation of the trade, and the fraudulent evasion of import and export duty. Non custodial sentences were achieved in both cases.

R v P

A prosecution brought by the Environment Agency and the local authority for long term abuse of the regulations and serial breaches of enforcement notices over the operation of an unlicensed waste disposal system on green belt land. The case involved protracted legal argument and confiscation proceedings thereafter.

R v E

A prosecution of a waste management company for serial breaches of the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2010 and for misconduct in insolvency proceedings.

R v D

This criminal prosecution arose from the very serious injury to and blinding of a man employed by the defendant company to service and repair motor vehicles.

Professional Discipline

Leon provides advice to and represents police officers and HMRC officers in professional disciplinary matters.

Recent Instructions:

AA v PC K

The officer was accused of discreditable conduct, of a breach of the Data Protection Act and of acting in breach of the standards of confidentiality after sharing information about an arrest with a colleague, information that then reached the victim of the incident.

The Appropriate Authority had argued that dismissal was the only suitable outcome after a contested hearing. Having heard argument the Panel were persuaded – despite characterising the behaviour as gross misconduct – that the officer should receive a final written warning, thus remaining in employment.

MP v Q

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The successful defence of a police detective accused of a series of allegations of gross misconduct: including allegations of dishonesty. All allegations of dishonesty were found to be groundless with a large proportion of the case against the accused officer being stayed for abuse of process.

Re: B

Advising an accountant [whose clients include household name celebrities] facing an investigation in respect of both tax advice given and the operation of a tax avoidance scheme.

Re: JS

Advising an officer of HMRC facing disciplinary proceedings brought for suspected evasion/non declaration of Stamp Duty Land Tax arising out of his operation of a business undeclared to his employer.

Tax

An indirect tax evasion specialist Leon advises and represents individuals and companies who wish to appeal the decisions of HMRC to withhold input tax or to assess duty claims. He appears before the First and Upper Tier tax Tribunals in cases where financial misconduct (often but not exclusively MTIC fraud) is alleged by HMRC. He brings his significant experience in defending in the criminal courts in tax and duty fraud to these cases along with a full understanding of the significant body of case law that has developed in this area.

Recent Instructions:

GSM Export (UK) Ltd & Anor v Revenue & Customs

[2014] UKUT 457 (TCC) (14 October 2014)

A case which develops the case law on security for costs in tax tribunal proceedings

London Cellular Communications Ltd v Revenue & Customs

[2014] UKFTT 874 (TC) (08 September 2014)

E-Tel (UK) Ltd v Revenue & Customs

[2014] UKFTT 607 (TC) (19 June 2014)

Edgeskill Limited v HMRC

[2014] UKUT 38 (TCC) (27 January 2014)

GSM Export (UK) Ltd & Anor v Revenue & Customs

[2012] UKFTT 744 (TC) (05 December 2012)

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Accreditations



Appointments & Memberships

- Advocacy Trainer (Lincoln's Inn)
- South Eastern Circuit
- Criminal Bar Association
- Fraud Lawyers Association
- Association of Regulatory and Disciplinary Lawyers
- Financial Services Lawyers Association
- Revenue Bar Association
- Private Prosecution Association

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