

Pippa Woodrow



Call: 2014

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Profile

Pippa takes on cases in the areas of criminal justice, immigration and human rights. She has particular expertise in defending and upholding the rights of vulnerable or marginalised individuals including victims of modern slavery, domestic violence and torture, those with poor mental health and young people. Pippa never gives up on a case and is fast developing a reputation for first-rate client care, clinical preparation, and fearless advocacy. She is described by judges as *“exceptional, caring and hard-working”*, by leading counsel as *“a star in the making”* and *“an exceptional talent, with judgment much beyond her call”*. Instructing solicitors describe Pippa as *“thorough, with a high level of client care and formidable legal expertise”* and *“stands out amongst her peers”*.

Alongside a busy and successful criminal practice defending the most serious criminal allegations including terrorism, murder, child sexual abuse, and drug trafficking, Pippa is regularly instructed in crime-related areas of public and international law, including challenges to the death penalty, actions against the police, extradition and constitutional challenges alleging breaches of fundamental rights in Commonwealth jurisdictions. She also appears regularly in the Immigration Tribunals specialising in family reunion, deportation, domestic violence and asylum cases.

Pippa receives instructions from NGOs as well as private individuals, with recent instructions including interventions on behalf of the Howard League for Penal Reform, and the Death Penalty Project.

Background

Before coming to the Bar, Pippa worked for the Centre for Capital Punishment Studies in Kampala, where she acted for individuals facing the death penalty, and advised the judiciary, domestic legal professionals and international bodies on international obligations, human rights, and criminal justice reform. Pippa has also worked for a broad array of domestic and international organisations including the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia; the UN SRCT Drones Inquiry; Barnet Law Centre's immigration department; Reprieve; the London Innocence Project, and the National Centre for Domestic violence. She has also lectured at the Universities of Makerere, Kampala and Panastara, Phnom Penh in international human rights law.

Outside of the law, Pippa has played hockey at international level and was formerly an opera singer, performing on stages including the Royal Opera Houses in London, Vienna, Aix-en-Provence and Edinburgh. She continues to sing to support organisations promoting civil liberties including Advocates for Human Dignity - a small Human Rights NGO that Pippa founded with fellow students whilst completing her law degree.

Pippa also runs a weekly Street Kitchen for the homeless and food insecure in Kilburn.

Education

BPTC, City University, Outstanding

Graduate Entry LLB, City Law School, 1st Class (top in year)

BA Hons, History, Cambridge

Related practice areas

Criminal Law

Criminal Appeals

Actions Against the Police and Public Authorities

Professional Discipline and Regulation

Immigration

Immigration Detention Group

Extradition

Crime

Adults

Pippa is a fearless defender, often achieving successful outcomes against the odds. She represents defendants and appellants in domestic proceedings at all levels, including the Court of Appeal, and Privy Counsel and is consistently instructed in serious and complex cases covering a wide range of offending including terrorism, murder, human trafficking, fraud, sexual offences and drug trafficking. Pippa also assists clients facing the death penalty overseas.

Given her experience of immigration law (including cases involving national security) Pippa is well placed to deal with cases involving breaches of immigration laws, human trafficking, deportation on sentencing, and terrorism offences.

Alongside her casework. Pippa has also delivered training to students, practitioners and judges in criminal advocacy and mitigation.

Recent instructions include:

- Defending individuals charged with terrorist offences in the UK and overseas. Notably, she has been instructed in two novel prosecutions involving those who fought in Syria against ISIS with the Kurdish YPG. **R v James [2019] EWCA Crim 647** (Central Criminal Court and Court of Appeal) was the first YPG volunteer charged with terrorist overseas. He was acquitted of all charges relating to his involvement with the YPG. Pippa now acts for the second such individual in **R v Burke** (Birmingham Crown Court).

Examples of other terrorism cases in which Pippa have been instructed have involved allegations of preparing acts of serious violence in the UK (**R v Ahmed**, Kingston Crown Court) disseminating terrorist publications (**R v Hussein**, central Criminal Court) and preparation for terrorist acts overseas with Islamic extremist groups (**R v Maher**, Manchester Crown Court);

- Defending individuals charged with murder. Examples include: **R v Spottiswood [2019] EWCA Crim 949** (Newcastle Crown Court and Court of Appeal) involving the strangulation and abandonment of a body on the Northumberland coast) involving complicated expert medical evidence and legal issues of bad character; **R v Iki Ali & Ors** (Central Criminal Court) involving a joint-enterprise stabbing between alleged rival drug dealers; **R v Elderfield** (Oxford Crown Court) in which Pippa assisted in the

defence of a vulnerable woman charged with the murder of a violent partner.

- Appeared for a company and private individual before the Privy Council (led by Peter Ceter QC) in a case concerning the scope and the doctrine of “strict liability” on appeal from Trinidad and Tobago.
- **R v Petrou** (Snaresbrook Crown Court, led by Sarah Vine) defending a man charged with child cruelty and daily rape of his stepdaughter and second wife, cruelty and sexual abuse of his daughters; and offences of violence against their mother.
- Defending victims of modern slavery, examples include **R v Finnerty** (Kingston Crown Court) in which the prosecution of a highly vulnerable individual was eventually dropped following extensive legal arguments about disclosure and public interest in prosecution.
- **R v Cristea & 10 ors** (Southwark Crown Court, led by James Martin) involving a Romanian national charged with large-scale conspiracies in human trafficking, controlling prostitution and money laundering. The prosecution case collapsed following argument regarding disclosure, anonymous hearsay and evidence of police manufacturing evidence;
- **R v Bashrit** (Birmingham Crown Court) defence of a young woman charged with conspiracy to defraud. Following Pippa’s cross-examination of the Crown’s principal witness the prosecution was persuaded to review the case and the jury invited to acquit.
- **R v Bux** (Southwark Court Court). Client entered a guilty plea to attempting to incite a child to engage in sexual act and to meet a child following grooming. Following lengthy legal submissions the Defendant was granted a suspended sentence without conditions, outside of the sentencing guidelines, and permitted to return to his country of origin as he wished.
- **R v Smithers** (Snaresbrook Crown Court). Successfully defended in the first ever trial concerning the new domestic offence of coercion and control. The case raised complex issues concerning the relationship between an offence seeking to criminalise psychological manipulation and allegations of physical violence;
- **R v Westwood** (Inner London Crown Court) Pippa secured a community order for a Defendant convicted of making indecent images. Further, court was persuaded that the SOPO terms sought by the crown would breach Article 8 rights.

Youth Justice

Pippa is passionate about protecting the rights of vulnerable individuals, and young people in particular. Alongside her legal knowledge, she uses her extensive experience working with young people in schools, sports clubs and children's homes to make sure young defendants feel included and are given agency in what can otherwise be an overwhelming, confusing and (sometimes) damaging process.

A psychologist supporting one vulnerable client commented at the conclusion of the case that: *"Pippa's approach was noticeably different from the vast majority of firms. [Her] time, patience and accessibility demonstrated to K your investment in a good outcome for him. This was a real demonstration to K of how you were holding in mind his sense of worth and value as an individual, a message a lot of our young people do not experience from the wider system. I know this is something K noticed and will hopefully internalise, and so in many ways your work with him has also been a helpful therapeutic intervention in itself."*

Examples of Pippa's work in youth cases include:

- Intervention on behalf of the Howard League for Penal Reform before the Court of Appeal (led by Edwards Fitzgerald QC) challenging legitimacy and effectiveness of deterrent sentencing in respect of children;
- Defending a 15-year old charged with joint enterprise murder facing cut-throat defences (**R v M & Ors**, Central Criminal Court, led by Andrew Hall QC);
- Assisted Kirsty Brimelow QC in the appeal of a child convicted of murder seeking to argue that a change of instructions given shortly after the jury's guilty verdict amounted to fresh evidence on the basis of the particular cognitive and limitations associated with adolescent brain development (**R v L** [2019] EWCA Crim 1326)
- **CPS v D & Another** (Highbury Corner Youth Court) Acting for a 16 year old charged with drug trafficking offences involved in county lines operations and subject to exploitation. Bail of any sort was resisted by the Youth Offending Team. Bail was nevertheless secured and charges subsequently dropped following defence insistence on referrals to the National Referral Mechanism and raising of defences under Section 45 Modern Slavery Act.
- **CPS v C** (St Albans Youth Court). Trial of a 15 year old charged with sexual assaults of multiple children over a 2-year period. He was acquitted on all charges;
- **CPS v K & 6 others** (Stratford Youth Court) acted for a 15 year old charged with joint enterprise ABH. KLA was acquitted following submissions that no joint enterprise could

be proven;

Pippa is also mindful of the extent to which children are affected by the criminalisation and imprisonment of parents and primary carers and is passionate about challenging failures to assess and give weight to best interests of children within the criminal justice process. Recent successes in this area have included securing a suspended sentence of 2 years for a father charged with street dealing of class A drugs. His son faced returning to domestic violence at his mother's home or being taken into care if the court had not departed from the sentencing guidelines which provide a starting point of 4.5 years.

Extradition

Pippa has a growing extradition practice and is regularly instructed to defend in Part I cases including requests from Greece, Romania, Italy and Poland. She has secured discharges both on technical grounds relating to the validity of the EAW as well as on human rights grounds.

She frequently argues cases involving the rights of children under article 8, and well as cases involving potentially inhumane and degrading prison conditions (both on the basis of generally prevailing conditions, and on the basis of a requested person's particular vulnerabilities).

Pippa has acted in numerous cases involving expert evidence and also has experience representing vulnerable requested persons with mental health issues.

Notable cases include:

- **K v Greece** Pippa secured the discharge of a Greek warrant on the basis that all co-defendants had previously been acquitted following retraction of the allegation by the complainant and that there was no case to answer. The case involved detailed arguments concerning abuse of process, Sections 20, 21B and Article 8 as well as expert evidence from prison conditions experts, as well as expert Greek lawyers concerned with the history of the domestic litigation. Despite s14 of the Extradition Act the court accepted that the weakness of the requesting authorities' domestic case against co-defendants went both to Section 14, 21A and Article 8, despite further information stating that the complainant was still available to give evidence.

- **R v Germany** Pippa acts for a former police informant accused of fraud who suffers from significant mental health conditions;
- **D v Romania** Pippa secured discharge of a conviction warrant for a vulnerable requested person with significant mental health problems and family commitments on the basis that prison conditions would have breached Article 3 ECHR.

International Criminal Law and Death Penalty

Pippa acts in a number of on-going challenges to the death penalty overseas, and advises on appeal for those convicted and sentenced in capital cases. Recent instructions include a case brought in conjunction with the Death Penalty Project seeking to argue that the Death Penalty is per se unconstitutional in Guyana. If successful, the case is likely to have a significant impact on the use and status of the death penalty across South and central America as a whole.

Pippa gained considerable experience in capital cases prior to building her UK practise, having run the Uganda Capital Mitigation Project for the Centre for Capital Punishment Studies between 2013 - 2014. Prior to that she also volunteered for Reprieve, undertaking work for their operations and death penalty teams. Whilst in Uganda, Pippa provided legal and advocacy assistance over 400 'condemned' men and women, of whom 225 were released from death-row. In addition to assisting in capital appeals before the Court of Appeal and Supreme Court, Pippa advocated for those whose death sentences had been vacated as unconstitutional following the 2009 Supreme Court 2009 ruling in **Kigula & 417 others** but who had subsequently remained on death row indefinitely without lawful sentence or further access to the courts.

Ugandan cases of particular note include:

- **Ibrahaim v Uganda** – Pippa successfully applied to the Supreme Court to overturn its previous judgment confirming the death sentence on the basis that the court had lacked jurisdiction to hear the case. The case set a new East-African precedent.
- **Uganda v Kigolo** - Secured re-sentencing before the High Court for a youth who had been sentenced to death as an adult. He was released from death row following representations in mitigation and has now been freed from custody.

Pippa has advised the judiciary and international bodies including UNDP, International Committee of the Red Cross and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on international practice and procedure in capital cases as well as human rights and proposed areas of reform including introducing mental health and pre-sentence reports into the mitigation process.

Pippa's experience in cases before international criminal tribunals involving accusations of war crimes and crimes against humanity includes:

- **Case 004 – Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia** working as part of the team defending an individual in Case-004, led by Goran Sluiter and Richard Rogers;
- assisting Richard Rogers in preparation of a supplementary communication to the Prosecutor of the ICC under Article 15 of the Rome Statute inviting her to initiate investigations into widespread and systematic land grabbing by the Cambodian elite since 2002 as a crime against humanity.

As a volunteer analyst working for the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Counter Terrorism and Human Rights (Ben Emmerson QC) inquiry into the use and legality of lethal Drone strikes in global counter-terrorism operations, Pippa was responsible for collecting and analysing evidence in relation to drone strikes causing civilian casualties in Pakistan.

Pippa has also lectured in international human rights law and international criminal law at Panastra University, Phnom Penh and Makerere University, Kampala.

Immigration, Asylum and Statelessness

Pippa has experience dealing with both appeals and judicial review matters. She has undertaken cases involving human rights, asylum, domestic violence, family re-union, nexus deportation, unlawful detention, nationality, EU treaty rights, trafficking, modern slavery and statelessness.

Given her experience in criminal law, Pippa is well placed to act in cases where issues of criminal conduct are raised.

Pippa undertakes pro-bono cases for Bail for Immigration Detainees and the Bar Pro Bono Unit.

Prior to coming to the Bar, Pippa volunteered, and later worked as a part-time caseworker at Barnet Law Service in the immigration and social services department.

Examples of recent instructions include:

- Acting for vulnerable appellants (including children) claiming political asylum from Ethiopia on the basis of links to the OLF. These cases now involve detailed submissions seeking to resist the Home Office invitations to go beyond existing country guidance in light what they claim are changed circumstances in Ethiopia. These submissions have been successfully resisted in all appeals Pippa has acted in to date.
- Acting for those appealing deportation decisions and orders and seeking to revoke such order both in relation to EU and third party countries. Recent examples include: **G v SSHD (Somalia)** successful appeal against refusal to revoke a deportation order against a Somali national convicted of firearms offences aged 16, some 10 years previously in the face of 3 previous determinations with negative credibility findings.
- Acting for Appellants claiming Asylum from Egypt, including a successful appeal to UTT against FTT refusal with negative credibility findings, and subsequently appearance in FTT for re-hearing where A was granted asylum on the basis imputed political opinion.
- Acting for victims of trafficking and torture including: **MO v SSHD (Turkey)** involving a victim of torture who was previously refused asylum and return to Turkey where he was tortured further. Credibility was disputed. He was recognised as a vulnerable witness with severe PTSD and his appeal granted on the basis of legal submissions only; **N v SSHD (Vietnam)** involving successful representation of a 17 year-old trafficking victim seeking asylum whose age was disputed. The case was eventually conceded by the Home office after 2 years of litigation; **J v SSHD (Nigeria)**, successful asylum claim of a victim of Juju torture and trafficking following a negative NRM decision.
- **GA & 4 others (DRC nationals) v SSHD** Successfully acted for 3 children and 2 adults who had been waiting for 3 years for family reunion with their grandfather, a political refugee, during which time one of the Appellants had passed away.
- **E v SSHD (French national)** Bail secured for an individual whose claimed nationality could not be verified and who had convictions for possessing class A drugs with intent to supply. He had been in administrative detention for almost 3 years and his previous 6 bail applications had been denied;
- **D v SSHD (Turkish national)** Assisted Alex Burrett in successfully resisting the attempted deportation of a Turkish 'foreign criminal' who had previously been found not

guilty of a number of serious violent offences by reason of insanity and treated in a psychiatric hospital.

- **A v SSHD (Stateless)** – Judicial review of refusal of a statelessness application, including a challenge to standard of proof in statelessness cases.
- Pippa assisted in the case of **Pham v SSHD [2015] UKSC 19** before the Supreme Court, concerning deprivation of the appellant's British citizenship on national security grounds, statelessness and EU citizenship. The Appellant has now been extradited to the USA on terrorism charges. SIAC proceedings remain on-going.

Actions Against the Police

Pippa accepts instructions to advise and represent those seeking to challenge failings and abuses by the police, particularly in relation to their treatment of vulnerable and young persons.

Recent cases Pippa has been involved with have included claims for assault, false imprisonment, malicious prosecution, trespass to goods, and Article 3 failures to investigate offences causing serious injury. Recent instructions include:

- Advice and representation of a young man with autistic spectrum disorder subjected to unnecessary arrest and unlawful search in respect of harassment allegations made against him by a former teacher;
- Advice in respect of individuals detained for unreasonable periods by cell staff/prison authorities following an order of the court granting bail or non-custodial sentences;
- Victim of a road traffic accident which left him seriously disabled seeking damages for police failings to investigate and prosecute the driver at fault;
- Individuals wrongly detained for significant further periods by prison authorities or cell staff following an order by the court that they be released on bail or following the imposition of a non-custodial sentence.

Regulatory Law

Pippa undertakes advisory work and representation for practitioners brought before their professional disciplinary tribunals, including the NMC and HCPC. She has acted primarily for nurses appearing before the fitness to practice committee of the NMC including cases relating to administration of un-prescribed medication and failures to properly assess a patient who was later hospitalised with broken ribs and a punctured lung.