



Landmark international human rights proceedings conclude at the Old Bailey

Today, at the Old Bailey, Kumar Lama, a colonel in the Nepalese army, was told that proceedings were no longer being pursued against him on charges of torture of Mr Janak Raut.

In 2005 Mr Lama allegedly participated in the torture of two detainees at an army barracks under his command during Nepal's decade-long internal armed conflict between the government and Maoist forces.

Last month, a jury acquitted him on one charge of torture but was unable to reach a verdict on a second charge of torture. The jury decided that there was insufficient evidence for them to be satisfied of Mr Lama's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. Today's decision by the CPS to offer no further evidence on the charge where the jury did not return a verdict, is a severe disappointment to the alleged victim, Mr Raut

That a relatively senior foreign military figure was able to face arrest, prosecution and a fair trial process in the UK for these types of allegations makes this a case of great international significance and a major step forward in bringing international criminal suspects to justice.

Janak Raut, a client of both Hickman & Rose and Advocacy Forum, expressed disappointment at the outcome but respected the decision of the jury in August and of the Court today. **He said:**

"Since Mr. Lama was arrested in the UK, the Government of Nepal has been advocating that Nepal will prosecute him and others involved in serious human rights violations. The result of the case provides another opportunity for the Government of Nepal to create the right legal framework for other suspects to face justice."

Hickman & Rose is expert in international criminal jurisdiction and has advised many victims of torture and war crimes in countries across the globe. **Partner Daniel Machover said:**

"We have worked very hard on a number of these cases and it is a source of great satisfaction to know that the UK takes seriously its international obligation to investigate and where appropriate to prosecute alleged crimes of this nature."

Mandira Sharma, founder of Advocacy Forum, said:

"Regardless of the decision not to re-prosecute Mr Lama, the case has already established that the door of universal jurisdiction for the victims of torture and other gross violations is open in the UK and beyond. I just hope the government of Nepal understand the gravity of the issue at hand and start a process to end impunity for torture and gross violations of human rights in Nepal."

For more detail and background to the case please see the attached joint press release from Hickman & Rose and Advocacy Forum

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