



Barrister

RACHEL FRANCIS

Email: rf@onepumpcourt.co.uk

Call: 2012



Specialist in
Family
Personal Immigration

Civil Actions Against Public Authorities
Modern Slavery & Trafficking Team
Specialist Family & Immigration Team

Experience

Rachel is an award-winning barrister practicing in family, immigration and public law. She has particular expertise in the overlap between immigration and family law, and in working with victims of modern slavery and human trafficking and sustained abuse.

Rachel has particular aptitude in working with clients of exceptional vulnerability. In 2019 Rachel was awarded the LAPG Special Award at the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year Awards (third ever award), which recognises exceptional commitment to access to justice.

Rachel is the co-director of [Claiming Space](#), a Community Interest Company she co-founded in 2017 to provide support, and training for practitioners working with vulnerable populations. In 2021 Rachel co-authored the best-selling practitioner text, [Vicarious Trauma in the Legal Profession: a practical guide to trauma, burnout and collective care](#), which outsold all other books released by its publisher, LAG, in its first year of sale.

Rachel regularly delivers training on immigration and family law matters; her journal article, 'Immigration issues in children law proceedings' January [2020] Fam Law 88, on the intersection between these two practice areas was endorsed in the Court of Appeal (<https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWCA/Civ/2020/731.html> see §35).

Rachel has spoken widely at conferences, on national radio, podcasts, and in print media, about vicarious trauma and its impact on practitioners.

Education

BA Hons English Literature (Durham University), First Class
Graduate Diploma in Law (University of Law), Distinction
Bar Professional Training Course (University of Law), Very Competent

Memberships

Immigration Law Practitioners Association
Young Legal Aid Lawyers (former Co-chair)
Bail for Immigration Detainees
Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers
Family Law Bar Association
Association of Lawyers for Children
Court of Protection Bar Association

Awards



CASES

BEL, BEB, BCC, BEC, BKJ and BDM v Secretary of State for Foreign Commonwealth and Development Affairs

[AC-2025-LON-000997]

The High Court has quashed a decision of the Foreign Secretary refusing to help a family of six Palestinians leave Gaza. Mr Justice Chamberlain's significant ruling requires the Foreign Secretary to "*think again*" and make a new, lawful decision on the family's request for help.

The family were represented by Ben Bundock (One Pump Court), led by Tim Owen KC (Matrix) alongside Tim James-Matthews (Matrix), instructed by Jenni Whitaker and Liz Barratt of Bindmans, supported by trainee solicitor Shivani Soni.

The family – a father, mother, and four children (two young adults, two children) – have been living in extreme peril and deprivation. One of the children was recently hit by shrapnel from a tank shell when seeking food at an aid distribution site. Despite holding conditional entry clearance to join their British relative in the UK since January 2025, the family have been unable to leave Gaza. Israel controls the movement of Palestinians out of Gaza and will only currently look at requests for people to leave if they are made by another state.

Mr Justice Chamberlain found serious flaws in the Foreign Secretary's decision-making. First, the FCDO had not properly grappled with whether the Claimants' entry clearance, granted on the basis of a close family connection to a British citizen, meant they should be provided with consular assistance.

Secondly, the FCDO had severely limited the people they would help leave Gaza due to concerns about opening the 'floodgates', but had not actually considered the number of people in Gaza in the same position as this family – people in Gaza with entry clearance to the UK – revealed during at the hearing to be just 38. Thirdly, the FCDO had said asking Israel to let the family leave would spend "*political and diplomatic capital*" with Israel, but had treated it as irrelevant that senior members of the Israeli government have made statements suggesting that they want Palestinians to leave Gaza if another country is willing to accept them, and that the Israeli authorities had written to the FCDO inviting them to put forward names of Palestinians for evacuation.

The Foreign Secretary initially argued that the family's claim was 'non-justiciable' because it intruded into a "*forbidden area*" of foreign affairs, meaning that the courts should not entertain it. By the time of the hearing, the Foreign Secretary accepted that the claim was justiciable in full, a position which Mr Justice Chamberlain noted was "*correct*".

David Chirico KC, also instructed by Bindmans, acted for the family in their successful appeal to the Upper Tribunal. Rachel Francis, instructed by Wilsons, is acting in a number of claims against the Foreign Secretary on behalf of other families in Gaza, with co-junior Asma Nizami (Doughty Street) and led by Amanda Weston KC (Garden Court). Catherine Robinson has also been working on these

claims.

The clients remain in Gaza at extreme risk, and members of chambers continue to carry out urgent work seeking to secure their exit.

Read the full judgment [here](#).

Read the press release from Bindman's [here](#).

Read BBC news coverage [here](#).

Area of Law:

[Judicial Review](#)

Related Barristers:

[Benjamin Bundock](#)

[David Chirico KC](#)

[Rachel Francis](#)

[Catherine Robinson](#)

Local Authority B v BD & Ors

[2022] EWHC 2341 (Fam)

Care proceedings following removal of K at birth. Complex intersection of family, trafficking and international law, with Public Interest Immunity orders, and separate closed / open proceedings, due to collateral police investigation of international trafficking rings.

Fact finding judgment: <https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Fam/2022/2341.html>

Related Barristers:

[Rachel Francis](#)

PUBLICATIONS

Vicarious Trauma in the Legal Profession

Vicarious Trauma in the Legal Profession: a practical guide to trauma, burnout and collective care (co-author) LAG 2021. It can be purchased

at: <https://www.lag.org.uk/?id=209883&fromsearch=true#iosfirsthighlight>.

'Immigration issues in children law proceedings' January [2020] Fam Law 88

Related Barristers:

[Rachel Francis](#)