

Rudolph Spurling

Call: 2007

Specialist in:

- Personal Immigration
- Business Immigration
- Civil Law
- Direct Access
- Modern Slavery & Trafficking Team
- Direct Access Trained



Experience

Rudolph is an experienced asylum and immigration practitioner. He focuses largely on protection work, but also accepts instructions in human rights and immigration appeals.

He is regularly instructed in judicial review and Court of Appeal matters.

Rudolph is committed to representing vulnerable and marginalised clients.

Rudolph has extensive experience of pursuing asylum appeals from a wide range of countries and for the full extent of Refugee Convention reasons, including claims based on sexuality and the risks to trafficked people. He has also represented clients in immigration appeals dealing with wide array of issues relating to the Points-Based System, European law, deportation and numerous cases relying on private and family life rights and the best interests of children. A large proportion of the work he does is legally aided, because he strongly believes that people who are short of funds are no less entitled to representation than those who have means.

Rudolph's commitment to immigration work comes from his own experience as a migrant, having spent part of his childhood living in Cameroon and his late twenties living and working in provincial China. Before he retrained as a lawyer his work experience was very varied: he worked at different times on a factory production line, as a lexicographer, research assistant, foreign teacher and local government officer; in his younger days he also experienced periods

of unemployment. As a result he mixes easily with people from a great variety of different ages and backgrounds.

What the directories say

“He is prepared to work with the client in drafting, and is very thorough in his preparation. His tenacity ultimately results in successful outcomes for his clients.”

“Rudolph is a truly standout barrister, renowned for his exceptional ability to handle complex, multifaceted cases with skill and insight.”

“Rudolph is very knowledgeable and a pleasure to work with. He is very generous with his time and achieves great results for clients.”

Chambers & Partners (2026) Immigration (Band 5)

Education

University of Law, LLB in Legal Practice (2007); King’s College London, MA in English Before 1525 (1990); UCL, BA in English (1988)

Memberships

ILPA
HRLA

Languages

Rudolph gets by in rusty French and approximate Mandarin

Cases

Successful Bangladeshi Asylum Claim

Rudolph’s client married into a prominent Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) family in Sylhet, who are also influential in the London Metropolitan BNP (in consequence of fleeing to the UK).

Her husband was murdered while on his allotment in Bangladesh, ostensibly by a young woman in mysterious circumstances, but the family believe by his political enemies in the



Awami League (AL), the party of government.

A few years ago, Rudolph had represented his client's nephew, who obtained asylum after a successful appeal, having been previously abducted and tortured by the AL in Bangladesh.

His client's claim however was refused on credibility grounds, despite her late husband's brother successfully claiming asylum in the UK around the same time, which was granted on application.

The case came to court and was adjourned several times. The Respondent was eventually directed to produce the decision minute in relation to her brother-in-law's asylum application, which showed that the decision-maker had accepted in his case that her husband's murder may well have been political and formed a core part of the reason for granting his application.

In the meantime, civil disturbances in Bangladesh brought down the AL government, to be replaced by an interim 'caretaker' government, headed by a Nobel Prize-winning economist on a promise to clean up Bangladeshi politics.

Rudolph drafted arguments based on background material to argue that, notwithstanding the change in national government, the AL is still embedded in positions of power and influence locally, therefore her husband's murderers are even more likely to want to stop her making difficulties for them and internal relocation is not a viable alternative for her in the circumstances as a lone middle-aged (or elderly, in Bangladeshi eyes) woman from a socially conservative background. The Tribunal agreed.

Successful Namibian Asylum Claim

Successful asylum claim for a particularly vulnerable Namibian bisexual appellant who had been the victim of enforced domestic servitude and sexual assault, who was fluent only in Otjiherero, which the Home Office could not source interpretation services for.

A bisexual Namibian woman from a remote village near the Botswanan border, who is only fluent in Otjiherero, the language of her tribe, recounted the horrific abuse she received from an early age.

From being forced to live in a concrete shed in the yard, sleeping on the floor, essentially as a domestic slave, to the physical and sexual assault she endured for several years, orchestrated by their stepmother, resulting in the birth of two children and contracting HIV.



She was then forced into marriage to a local alcoholic widower, who was 20 years older than her, which resulted in the birth of a third child. Her husband subsequently died from an alcohol-related condition.

The abuse was reported to the Tribal Authority, who said they could not get involved.

Eventually she made her way to the UK, leaving her 3 children in Namibia with a friend, and claimed asylum on arrival, on Christmas Day 2018. When she made her claim, she made it clear that she could not express herself in English and asked for an Otjiherero interpreter. This was refused, on the basis that they did not have one.

The screening interview took place in English. She was then referred to a solicitor, who attempted to take instructions from her, again in English on the basis that they could not find an Otjiherero interpreter.

The statement was sent to the Home Office unsigned, and with a disclaimer that they could not guarantee its accuracy. Several years later she underwent an asylum interview. Again, she asked for an Otjiherero interpreter, which was again refused, on the basis that they did not have one. Her claim was refused as lacking in credibility. Her solicitor said they could no longer represent her.

Rudolph was then instructed by her new representatives, Bristol Law Centre, who found an Otjiherero interpreter, in Wrexham.

Rudolph travelled from London to the solicitor's office in Bristol, spent hours assessing her evidence with her to draw up a detailed witness statement and then argued in written and oral submissions that the asserted inconsistencies in her previous accounts were not an indicator of an unmeritorious claim, but resulted from a combination of PTSD and statements taken without the benefit of an interpreter.

At the hearing, the FTJ agreed. From claiming asylum in the UK to the asylum appeal the process took almost 6 years, during which her oldest child reached adulthood and left home.

Rudolph Spurling acts for Appellant in SA(Non-compliance with rule 21(4)) [2022] UKUT 132 (IAC). Missing grounds are not necessarily fatal to an Upper Tribunal appeal application

Further Information can be found in the Free Movement article, prepared by Emma Turnbull



at:

<https://freemovement.org.uk/failure-to-include-grounds-not-necessarily-fatal-to-application-for-upper-tribunal-appeal/>

Rudolph Spurling was instructed by Shahid Rahman Solicitors.

