



Sappho Dias

Year of call: 1982

"She's very good and very experienced."

Chambers UK Bar

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Practice Summary

Sappho Dias has been in practice since 1982 following pupillage in a civil-commercial set, before joining a mixed civil/crime set where she undertook disciplinary and regulatory cases defending professionals. Sappho is experienced in the areas of Planning Law and Local Government Law (Advisory work as well as Judicial Review in Adult Social Care cases). She has been recently involved in a number of Court of Protection cases.

Sappho is especially experienced in Election Law, having been retained by the Electoral Commission in respect of the Scottish Referendum. Sappho was also retained by six different local authorities in respect of the General Election to advise Returning Officers. She has been involved in a number of election cases representing the Returning Officers from different local authorities.

She has experience in substantial criminal cases and was involved defending in a money laundering case which in opening was described as the biggest money laundering case ever prosecuted. In more recent times Sappho has been retained by the SFO and disparate solicitors as independent counsel on issues to do with legal professional privilege. In 2007 Sappho added to the scope of her practice and began to represent political prisoners in Burma (Myanmar) before international tribunals including many well known pro-democracy political activists such as the 88 Generation leaders Min Ko Naing and Ko Ko Gyi, as well as five of the journalists who worked for the Democratic Voice of Burma.

Sappho Dias is a trained advocacy teacher and taught on the South Eastern Circuit Advanced Advocacy Course at Oxford for 18 years and she has also been part of the UK's delegation of advocacy trainers in the USA, South Africa, Botswana and Pakistan. She has written and published articles in human rights, and regulatory law, as well as writing complex case studies for advanced advocacy training. In 2009 she was invited to give the guest lecture for the Canadian Institute for Advanced Legal Studies at its annual conference in Cambridge – "Burma, Tragedy Law and Hope".

Sappho now has a wide practice which extends from International, Human Rights and Constitutional Law matters to domestic matters involving Local Government, Election Law, Planning Law and Immigration Law, where she has represented the Secretary of State for the Home Department.

She has also had a background in cases which involved sexual misconduct, both in the criminal and civil context.

Elections & Governance

"Knows election law inside and out" Chambers & Partners 2016

Sappho's practice in Election Law has involved advisory work for foreign governments with regard to constitutional amendments. Her domestic practice has involved advisory work to local authorities with particular reference to Election Law, as well as advisory work in respect of the duties owed by Councils and particular officers. Sappho has also appeared in election fraud cases representing Returning Officers, where in one of those cases the election commissioner commended her work.

Her recent work has involved representing another returning officer in a case where new law was created in that Sappho succeeded in her argument that the Petitioner be ordered to pay not only the normal litigation costs but also that of the set up costs of the election court.

Sappho's work has also involved Judicial Review acting on behalf of Local Authorities in Adult Social Care cases.

Adult Social Care

Sappho has knowledge of social care law including assessment and care planning duties, eligibility thresholds, the provision of healthcare services and the eligibility of persons subject to immigration control.

In recent times Sappho has represented local authorities in the Court of Protection.

Mental Health

Sappho has represented patient applicants in aspects of discharge of orders made under the Mental Health Act 1983.

Inquests

Sappho has acted on behalf of local authorities in deaths inquests where the deaths occurred in premises either owned or controlled by local authorities.

Planning

Sappho has undertaken advisory work involving all aspects of planning law. More recently she has been involved in advisory work in respect of Petitions to the Parliamentary Committee in respect of HS2.

Sappho has advised local authorities in respect of Section 106 agreements as well as Compulsory Purchase Orders.

Regulatory & Disciplinary

Since joining chambers she has renewed work in disciplinary and regulatory law, with particular emphasis on financial regulation, as well as corporate crime. In particular she has defended professionals charged with misconduct. She has also advised companies in respect of compliance with requirements from the Financial Conduct Authority.

International Public & Trade Law

The international work undertaken by Sappho Dias has included advisory work in respect of Constitutional law, as well as the drafting of consequential and corollary legislation. She has acted for foreign governments in respect of this advisory work.

Competition Law

Sappho Dias has undertaken advisory work in respect of the interface between civil and criminal law in Competition Law investigations. She has given specific advice in respect of the amended provisions to the Enterprise Act 2002 by the Enterprise and Regulatory and Reform Act 2013.

Health & Safety

Sappho has acted on behalf of local authorities in their prosecutions against companies (some of which are substantial) for breaches of health and safety regulations.

Professional Qualifications and Positions

CEDR Accredited Mediator

Languages

Burmese and Urdu

Associations

South Eastern Circuit

Association of Regulatory and Disciplinary Lawyers

Appointments

Chair of the Burma Justice Committee,

Board Member of the Burma Campaign UK

Notable Cases

Richards v Devenish (Election Case) [2017] EWHC 37

Alan Walsh Inquest (2017)

Parkinson v Lewis & Ors (Election Case) 2016 EWHC 725 (qb)

Wilson v Aziz (Election Case) (2016)

Mackinlay v Kent Police (Election Case) (2016)

Story v Riordan (Election Case) (2016)

Aussenberg -v- Mr Tim Shields (Chief Executive of Hackney Council) (2015)

Rolls Royce Advisory LLP 2015

Williams -v- Patrick & Others (2014) EWHC 4120 (QB) – Election Case

Laphai Gam –v- State of Myanmar (2014) United Nations WGOAD

La Ring v Myanmar (Human Rights Case) (2014)

Tesco Advisory LLP 2014

Brang Shawn –v- State of Myanmar (2013) United Nations WGOAD

Myint Aye –v- State of Myanmar (2012) United Nations WGOAD

Ko Mya Aye –v- State of Myanmar (2011) United Nations WGOAD

Min Ko Naing –v- State of Myanmar (2008) United Nations WGOAD
