

Monday 15th November 2021

Priti Patel apologises to Dr Salman Butt in a statement in open court

In a statement in open court, the UK Government has apologised to Dr Salman Butt, Chief Editor of Islam21c, for calling him an extremist in a press release published on 17 September 2015 by Prime Minister David Cameron.

Aidan Eardley, legal counsel for the Secretary of State for the Home Department, told the court this morning:

“The Government accepts that it was wholly false to allege that Dr Butt is an extremist hate preacher who legitimises terrorism and therefore someone from whose influence students should be protected”. It is sorry for the harm caused to him and in particular for the fact that the allegation was made and maintained for so long.”

Dr Butt’s solicitor, Tamsin Allen of Bindman’s LLP, said:

“The most shocking thing about this claim is that the Home Secretary defended it over 5 years, even though it was accepted that the very serious allegations were not true. It was only after documents revealed that it was a mistake to include Dr Butt’s name in the publication that she was forced to conclude the proceedings and pay a very substantial sum in compensation to Dr Butt. We are delighted that Dr Butt’s reputation has now been entirely vindicated.”

Dr Butt said of the lengthy proceedings:

“This long battle has uncovered many shocking revelations along the way. One of the clearest lessons of this case in particular is just how baseless the notion of “extremism”—and therefore “counter-extremism”—actually is. I believe the discourse of extremism is dead. More and more people are realising that it is a nebulous term used by the powerful to silence any thoughts, ideas or speech they do not like or cannot challenge without coercion. It is the “heresy” of today.”

Dr Butt has also challenged the government’s monitoring and collation of his online activities by the Extremism Analysis Unit, a part of the Home Office pursuant to the Prevent Duty. His challenge is pending before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). Bindmans LLP represent Dr Butt in his ECtHR application.

[END]

Dr Butt can be reached on Salman.Butt@Islam21c.com and is available for comment or interview.