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## Iraqi admits he set up fake abuse claims against British soldiers



British troops have faced claims they abused Iraqis during the war CREDIT: HANIAL-OBEDI/AFP

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson last night said he was “repulsed” by an Iraqi refugee’s admission that he helped arrange hundreds of fake abuse claims against British soldiers.

Whistleblower Basim Al-Sadoon told a national newspaper that he had an office in Basra, Iraq, that allegedly handled made up claims from locals against the British Army in a bid to win compensation from the Ministry of Defence in British courts.

Mr Al-Sadoon, 37, described the scam as a “racket”, and he told The Sun: “It was like a claims factory and it didn’t matter if the claims were true or false.” He reportedly talked about how clients sourced paperwork that wasn’t real, and accused soldiers who weren’t even present.

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Boasting of connections in Iraq, he said a vast number of his 300 clients made up allegations in a bit to earn money. “Word spread and they would come to me. It was all about money - people exaggerating sometimes what they see,” he said.

One example he chose to highlight was a claim he was bringing about concerning himself which was inspired by an incident involving Danish troops.



Phil Shiner of Public Interest Lawyers CREDIT: LEON NEAL/AFP

He said he was asleep at home in 2004 when they allegedly beat him with rifle butts and seized him against his will. Using that experience, he says he and 17 other Iraqis made the exact same allegations against British forces in claims submitted by [law firm Leigh Day](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/06/09/leigh-day-lawyers-cleared-wrongdoing-iraq-war-torture-murder/). “Same date, same hour, same allegations, same operation. It wasn’t Danish troops, it was British. All of us did the same,” he said.

Last night Mr Williamson said: “Hundreds of brave and innocent British heroes suffered great pain at the hands of this sick get-rich-quick scam.

“I’m repulsed by these vile revelations... and those responsible should be held to account.”

[The Sun reports](https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/5571614/fake-abuse-claims-iraq-war-heroes-mod/) that he was employed by a British-based Iraqi middleman named Mazin Younis, 59, who was contracted by UK law firm Leigh Day and the disgraced Phil Shiner’s firm Public Interest Lawyers. It says Mr Younis was paid for passing clients to Leigh Day and also received money from Mr Shiner for securing claimants, and used people like Mr Al-Sadoon to help him secure clients.

A spokesperson for Leigh Day said: “We take these allegations extremely seriously and we therefore urge the Sun to make any evidence it has to support them available to the MoD and to ourselves as a matter of urgency.

“The claims in question have not proceeded past the early procedural stage and are now being reviewed with all other cases following the High Court judgment in December which found that British troops had unlawfully detained and abused Iraqi civilians.

“We are unable to make any comment on individual cases owing to our professional duties of confidentiality, however, Leigh Day vehemently denies any allegation that it knew any claims to be false or encouraged false claims at any time.”

Mr Younis also denied wrongdoing.

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