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## BETRAYAL OF OUR BOYS



Target . . troops on duty in Gulf

# IRAQ RACKET COSTS YOU A PACKET

**MoD hit  
by 'abuse'  
lies scam**

**EXCLUSIVE**  
by **DAVID WILLETTS**

**AN Iraqi refugee told last night how he arranged hundreds of fake abuse claims against British war heroes in the Gulf.**

**Whistle-blower Basim Al-Sadoon said it was part of a racket to win payouts from the Ministry of Defence. Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said he was "repulsed" by the scam.**

*Full Story — Pages 4 and 5*



● 'FALSE CLAIMS FACTORY' IN IRAQ

● 'HUNDREDS' LYING TO GET MoD PAYOUT

● MINISTER BLASTS 'GET-RICH-QUICK' BIDS



**EXCLUSIVE** by **DAVID WILLETTS**  
 Defence Editor

**A RACKET** lodging fake abuse allegations against Brit war heroes in the Gulf was run like a "claims factory", a whistle-blower said.

Iraqi refugee Basim Al-Sadoon ran an office in downtown Basra which he says handled false accusations made by locals against the

British Army in a bid to win Ministry of Defence payouts.

A Sun investigation reveals the extent of the operation was so large he even admits launching his own lying claim – which is still being pursued in the British courts.

*Last night Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson blasted the "sick" scheme and said he was "repulsed" by the revelations.*

In a series of shocking admissions Basim, 37, told how clients

exaggerated claims for money, sourced fake paperwork and accused soldiers of wrongdoing even when they were not present.

He said yesterday: "It was a racket, all of it. All these people cared about was money. It was like a claims factory and it didn't matter if the claims were true or false."

Basim was employed by a 59-year-old British-based Iraqi middleman named Mazin Younis.

Younis has been contracted by



UK law firm Leigh Day and disgraced tank-chaser Phil Shiner's now-defunct Public Interest Lawyers firm.

### 'People exaggerated in order to make money'

He was paid £1.6million in 2009 for passing clients to Leigh Day while also receiving £500 from Shiner for every "claimant" he secured. Younis relied on agents on the ground like Basim to find clients willing to make claims.

Leigh Day vehemently deny any wrongdoing, insisting they had no knowledge – nor encouraged – the behaviour outlined by Basim. They pledged to take appropriate action if claims were found to be without merit.

*Basim says he knowingly gathered over 300 Iraqi clients and that a vast number made up allegations to make money from the MoD.*

He said: "I have many connections in my city Basra. I got help from friends, cousins, I could approach many clients through that.

"Word spread and they would come to me. It was all about money – people exaggerating sometimes what they see."

Basim alleged many claimants driven by the promise of cash even secured dodgy documents from Iraqi officials to back false claims.

He said: "People were bringing papers randomly, there was no specific standards to accept cases.

"OK, you have a story and a little papers from any military camp. Also, you can get papers from Red Cross office in Basra fraudulently.

"You can collect some case elements. After that you start your story.

"If you have an old spot on your body from old torture, you can use it as well as evidence against MoD.

"If you get a slap in the face,

you can say it was a stick or a gun. If you have been jailed for 24 hours you'll say they put me in a very bad place, I have psychiatric problems.

"In Iraq it's easy to get doctors' papers backing claims. Doctors for cash can give you many reports. Claims were exaggerated to make money."

*Basim believes many claims against Brit heroes are fraudulent – because he even lodged one himself.*

In 2004 he says he was asleep at home when Danish forces seized him and beat him with rifle butts.

Despite knowing they were Danes, he and 17 other Iraqis made carbon-copy allegations against Brit forces in claims submitted via Leigh Day.

He said: "I also made the same claim against the British. Same date, same hour, same allegations, same operation. It wasn't Danish troops, it

was British. All of us did the same."

In 2014 Basim got a letter from Leigh Day saying lawyers had issued proceedings against the MoD in the High Court, despite adding: "You have not provided us with any evidence to prove you were captured and or detained by British Forces."

The claim is still active but Basim says he will now withdraw it.

Four Iraqis represented by Leigh Day won payouts at the High Court last December. The firm has now contacted over 600 clients saying their case will be reviewed and may lead to further successful claims.

While the now closed IHAT probe investigated alleged criminality by

British troops, these are civil compensation claims for alleged wrongful detention and ill-treatment.

*Combined, the lawsuits could end up costing the MoD tens of millions.*

Basim, now in Denmark, said: "It's the British legal system's fault for making it so easy. The orders were to look for cases and collect as many as possible against the MoD."

The Ministry has already paid £20million compensation to over 300 claimants and spent in excess of £100million on legal fees defending abuse claims.

Younis denied wrongdoing, saying: "These allegations are false. Iraqi claimants who

came via Mr Al-Sadoon were referred to Leigh Day if they had supporting evidence. Leigh Day would have then called or met the claimants to ensure the authenticity."

A Leigh Day spokesman said the firm "vehemently denies any allegation it knew any claims to be false or encouraged false claims". Mr Williamson, *below*, 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 exposed by The Sun, and those responsible should be held to account."

**GOT** a story that needs investigating? Call The Sun on **020 7782 4104** or email **exclusive@the-sun.co.uk**

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**'I'm repulsed by revelations'**





**Employer . . . Mazin Younis**



**Whistle-blower . .  
Al-Sadoon told of  
scam against Army**

# £100m is the cost of abuse compo

By DAVID WILLETTS  
By DAVID WILLETTS

**BRIT troops have been targeted over alleged abuses for almost a decade.**

**The MoD has paid out more than £20million in compensation to Iraqis.**

**Another £13million has been spent settling around 300 abuse claims.**

**The total cost of legal action arising from both the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts is £100million.**

**In 2009 the £31million Al-Sweady war crimes inquiry was launched to investigate accusations of murder by squaddies.**

**The following year Labour set up the Iraq Historic Allegations Team.**

**IHAT had a £57million budget to probe hundreds of claims, made mainly via legal firms Leigh Day**

**and Phil Shiner's Public Interest Lawyers.**

**Cases rose from 165 to more than 3,500.**

**In 2014 the Al-Sweady Inquiry concluded allegations of torture and murder against Brit soldiers were "calculated lies".**

**The Solicitors Regulation Authority began a probe into Mr Shiner, 61.**

**Last February he was struck off and ordered to pay costs of £250,000 after being found guilty of misconduct and paying a tout to drum up business.**

**Leigh Day was later cleared of misconduct charges at the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal.**

**Then Defence Secretary Michael Fallon shut down IHAT last June.**

**In December four Iraqis represented by Leigh Day won compo after the High**

**Court ruled they had been unlawfully detained.**

**The firm hailed the "big victory", opening the door for many more payouts.**



Accused . . . troops in Iraq



Struck off . . . lawyer Shiner

