

Backroom inquiry rubberstamps false imprisonment, kidnapping and coercion by Australian intelligence agency

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After a closed-door inquiry, the inspector-general of intelligence and security, whose office is part of the prime minister's department, has found that two Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) officers should not face prosecution for their role in the failed terrorism case against a young Sydney medical student.

Amid media headlines heralding the first major terrorist arrest in Australia, Ul-Haque was consigned to an isolation cell in a "supermax" prison, with bail twice refused by a magistrates' court. After six weeks, he was freed on bail after a judge said the Crown prosecutor had acknowledged that Ul-Haque did not pose a threat to Australia or its people. (See: "Student charged with 'terrorist' training released on bail")

Court documents released subsequently show that the AFP charged Ul-Haque to pressure him into becoming an undercover informer. One AFP agent wrote in a briefing note to ASIO: "The AFP are hoping to use Ul-Haque against Lodhi and although he is not co-operating with them at the present time, I believe when he is charged he may change his mind." The other purpose of the charges was to satisfy political directives. In secret evidence, a senior AFP officer testified that the police had been directed to "lay as many charges under the new terrorist legislation against as many suspects as possible because we wanted to use the new legislation".

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