

## High Court Orders Independent Probe into MI5 Over False Evidence and Agent Abuse Allegations

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— Categories: Human Rights



The High Court has ordered an independent investigation into MI5 after it admitted to providing false evidence in a case involving an undercover agent accused of abusing women. Judges found previous internal reviews inadequate and raised the possibility of contempt proceedings,

signaling serious concerns over transparency and accountability within the UK's domestic intelligence agency.

The case involves an MI5 covert human intelligence source, referred to as "X," who allegedly abused two female partners. One of the victims, identified as Beth, accused the agent of attacking her with a machete and using his affiliation with MI5 to terrorize her. The BBC reported extensively on the abuse and MI5's failure to prevent it. In 2022, the UK government secured a court injunction to prevent the BBC from publicly identifying the agent, although the broadcaster could report on some of the claims.

In court proceedings over the injunction, a senior MI5 officer known as Witness A claimed the agency had not confirmed the agent's identity to the BBC. The broadcaster later reported that MI5 had disclosed the information to one of its journalists. MI5 and the attorney-general later admitted the court had been misled. Director-General Sir Ken McCallum publicly apologised in February and repeated that apology after the High Court ruling, stating that MI5 takes its responsibility to provide accurate information to the courts very seriously.

The High Court also found that special advocates, appointed to represent the BBC during closed national security sessions, were similarly misled. The judges criticized MI5's continued use of its "neither confirm nor deny" policy long after it had become unrealistic to uphold in this specific case. They expressed disappointment over MI5's piecemeal and unsatisfactory explanations to the court.

While no decision has been made to initiate contempt of court proceedings against specific MI5 personnel, the judges clarified that

accountability remains possible as the investigation proceeds. The case raises broader questions about transparency, oversight, and the integrity of intelligence operations in sensitive legal matters.