

# Doctor who denied he saw Iraqi detainee's injuries is struck off medical register

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A former army doctor who was found guilty of misconduct over the death of the Iraqi detainee Baha Mousa has been ordered to be struck off the medical register.

Derek Keilloh's dishonesty in maintaining his story over several years, including under oath, that he was unaware of Mousa's injuries meant that "with regret" the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service had to strike him off, the chairman of its fitness to practise panel, Brian Alderman, told him.

Keilloh, then aged 28, was serving as regimental medical officer with the First Battalion Queen's Lancashire Regiment in Basra in 2003, in the aftermath of the Iraq invasion. Mousa, an innocent man who had been detained and hooded and beaten by soldiers guarding him, was found on postmortem examination to have 93 separate injuries. But Keilloh maintained that he saw only dried blood by Mousa's nose when he tried unsuccessfully to resuscitate him.

He stuck by his story through an army investigation into the death and in sworn evidence at a court martial of seven soldiers and a public inquiry into Mousa's death. But after a 47 day hearing the MPTS panel concluded that he had in fact seen the injuries and been told of them by soldiers.

The panel acknowledged that, at the time, Keilloh was still a junior doctor who had not been given the predeployment training he was supposed to have and who had been deployed "at short notice, in the early hours of the morning, to a unit in a hostile warlike zone, of which you had no knowledge." On his arrival he was not told of the presence of the 10 detainees, and there was "no clarity" about his responsibilities for their care and welfare.

He was found guilty of failing to safeguard vulnerable detainees, knowing that Mousa and two others may have been assaulted.

The panel took account of a large volume of testimonials indicating that Keilloh, now a GP in Northallerton, North Yorkshire, was "an excellent doctor" who was regarded as "an honest, decent man of integrity" in his professional and personal life. There was no doubt that he was "a highly respected and dedicated doctor with excellent clinical skills who is trusted and respected by colleagues and patients alike."

Nevertheless, his failure to safeguard vulnerable detainees was “likely to damage the confidence which the public has in the profession.”

The panel accepted that Keilloh’s judgment may have been clouded by the traumatic experience of Mousa’s death when he gave his initial statement to the investigation shortly afterwards. But he had maintained his dishonest account over several years, through the court martial and the public inquiry.

“Given the national and international importance of these investigations and the need to uncover the truth of what took place, your repeated dishonesty was wholly unacceptable,” Alderman told Keilloh.

But the panel decided not to suspend his registration immediately, which means that if he decided to appeal he would be able to continue practising while waiting for the appeal to be heard.

Keilloh’s indemnity organisation, the Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland, said in a statement, “Dr Keilloh is extremely disappointed at the decision of this fitness to practise panel, and he will need time to consider the implications of this erasure and his future course of action.”

Niall Dickson, chief executive of the General Medical Council, said, “We support the MPTS’s decision to remove Dr Keilloh’s name from the medical register. We recognise that this has been a particularly challenging case with difficult and unusual circumstances, but patients and the public must be confident that the doctor who treats them is competent and trustworthy.”

## Notes

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