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Legal view on terrorism to be debated at Northumbria

Tackling terrorism is high on the national and international agenda, but how does the law handle the phenomenon? A prestigious legal expert will examine the subject during a public lecture and the launch of criminal law publication at Northumbria University, Newcastle, this week.

Judge Sir David Baragwanath, President of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, has been invited to deliver a lecture entitled Terrorism as a Legal Concept as part of the 2014 Ashgate Annual Lecture in Criminal Law series.

Taking place on Thursday 27 November in Northumbria's School of Law, the free lecture launches the publication of *General Defences in Criminal Law: Domestic and Comparative Perspectives*, published by Ashgate Publishing and co-edited by legal academics at Northumbria and Durham universities.

Judge Baragwanath has prosecuted and defended major criminal cases, including murder trials and complex fraud proceedings. He also sat as a judge of the High Court and the Court of Appeal of New Zealand, where he dealt with civil, criminal and international litigation. Judge Baragwanath is an overseas bencher of the Inner Temple in London and was appointed to the Special Tribunal for Lebanon in March 2009.

His lecture will be an opportunity for members of the public to hear an experienced legal mind explore the issues around the legal concept of terrorism.

General Defences in Criminal Law: Domestic and Comparative Perspectives, is jointly edited by Professor Alan Reed (Associate Dean for Research and Innovation, Northumbria University), Professor Michael Bohlander, of Durham University, Nicola Wake (Senior Lecturer and MLaw Year One Director, Northumbria University), and Emma Smith (Lecturer, Northumbria University).

This new publication is aimed at academics and people in the legal profession. Released next month, the text examines the defences available to defendants in theory and practice. The publication is timely as there is currently a wide debate around liability and defendants' rights.

Professor Reed said: "It is exciting to engage with colleagues here at Northumbria in an innovative monograph series on Substantive Issues in Criminal Law engaging world leading academic contributors from a domestic and comparative legal systems perspective."

Commenting on the lecture, Nicola Wake added: "We are delighted to welcome leading expert Judge Sir David Baragwanath to Northumbria to deliver his lecture on 'Terrorism as a Legal Concept'. This highly important lecture marks the second in our Ashgate lecture programme, and it sees the launch of the second edition of our "Substantive Issues in Criminal Law" series."

Echoing these views, Emma Smith said: “The domestic and comparative perspectives within each volume so far have made a valuable contribution to each specialist area and this is reflected in the feedback received to date. We are very much looking forward to welcoming Judge Sir David Baragwanath to Northumbria University for what will be an engaging and informative event”

The publication has already received praise from legal practitioners and academics. HE Judge Howard Morrison, of the International Criminal Court, said: “This publication deals expertly with complex issues including transfer, duress, insanity, mistake and reasonableness. The comparative elements are especially welcome. It is an inspiring read and scholarly tool for criminal jurists.”

Gavin Dingwall, Professor of Criminal Justice Policy at De Montfort University and recognised expert on the subject, added: “Any just legal system has to reflect carefully on the situations when an individual can avail themselves of a defence so as to avoid criminal liability. Academic scrutiny is also essential to ascertain whether the boundaries set can be justified. By drawing together leading scholars from around the world, Professors Reed and Bohlander have edited a collection that advances this debate significantly and which will be viewed as a vital reference point for all future research in the area.”

The 2014 Ashgate Annual Lecture in Criminal Law will take place on Thursday 27 November at 5.30pm in Northumbria University’s Law School, Room 403, City Campus East. Entry to the lecture is free of charge and on a first come, first serve basis.

For further information contact Emma Smith (e.l.smith@northumbria.ac.uk).

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