

Uber seeks U-turn on ruling UK drivers are employees

30 October 2018



Demonstrators, including Uber drivers, marched in London as the ride-hailing firm sought to overturn employment tribunal rulings which could pave the way for tens of thousands of its drivers in the UK to receive the national minimum wage and paid holiday time

Uber launched Tuesday an attempt at England's Court of Appeal to overturn a ruling that the ride-hailing app's drivers are its workers rather than self-employed, as protestors rallied outside.

Uber is trying to overturn employment tribunal findings which could pave the way for tens of thousands of its drivers in Britain to receive the national minimum wage and paid holiday time.

The US firm's lawyers said the "agency model"—with Uber acting as an agent between self-employed drivers and passengers—has been used in the private hire industry "for many years", and this had not been properly taken into account by the tribunal.

Lawyer Dinah Rose said Uber was not "unusual" in the industry, but "the Uber app enables it to operate on a much larger scale than traditional minicab companies".

A prior tribunal had found that former Uber drivers Yaseen Aslam and James Farrar had been its "workers".

Rose claimed that the "only legally proper conclusion" from the tribunal's findings "was that the claimants were not employed as workers".

The company has about 40,000 drivers and 3.5 million customers in the British capital.

Outside the Royal Courts of Justice in London, hundreds of "precarious workers" attended a demonstration organised by the Independent Workers Union of Great Britain, which represents Aslam and Farrar.

"Today's action is the articulation of the legitimate rage of the precarious workers and the exploited workers of the UK," said IWGB general secretary Jason Moyer-Lee.

Speaking outside court, Farrar said people had told him to "work somewhere else" if he did not like working with Uber, "but the problem is the problems are repeated across the economy".

Farrar said the case was more important than just the outcome for himself.

"There is a lot at stake. If we lose this, all those (other) people will be affected."

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