

Sent Electronically

Rt. Hon. Sir Keir Starmer KCB KC MP, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom
Rt. Hon. David Lammy MP, Lord Chancellor & Secretary of State for Justice
Rt. Hon. Lord Hermer, Attorney General
Rt. Hon. Lisa Nandy MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport
Rt. Hon. Yvette Cooper MP, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs
Rt. Hon. Sir Alan Campbell MP, Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons
Mr. Nick Timothy MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Justice
Lord Marks of Henley-on-Thames KC, Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Justice
Rt. Hon. Stephen Flynn MP, SNP Westminster Leader
Dr. Ellie Chowns MP, Green Party Westminster Leader
Mr. Nigel Farage MP, Reform UK Leader
Ms. Sarah Rapson, Chief Executive, Solicitors Regulation Authority
Mr. Mark Neale, Director-General, The Bar Standards Board
Mr. Richard Orpin, Chief Executive, Legal Services Board
Dr. Michael O'Flaherty, Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights
Mr. Jan Braathu, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Representative on Freedom of the Media
Ms. Irene Khan, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression

28th January 2026

Dear Prime Minister,

We call on you to include universal Anti-SLAPP provisions in the 2026 King's Speech

We, the undersigned, representing a wide cross section of society - from the legal, media, environmental, anti-corruption, human rights, publishing, and not-for-profit sectors - join the [UK Anti-SLAPP Coalition](#) in calling for the inclusion of universal anti-SLAPP provisions in the next King's Speech anticipated in May 2026. This will ensure those targeted for speaking out in the public interest are able to access justice without being forced out of court by abusive lawsuits, often described as Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation, or SLAPPs. Without concerted action, everyone who speaks out - whether to protest the actions of a powerful company, ask questions of someone of influence or speak out on issues important to themselves or their community, will remain vulnerable to costly, stressful and unpredictable legal action.

In the five years since the Coalition was founded, in January 2021, SLAPPs have been documented against journalists, tax transparency experts, online reviewers, patients, environmental campaigners, local residents, sexual violence survivors, whistleblowers, academics, tenants, victims groups and advocates, and social media users, to name a few. In these cases, wealthy and powerful claimants have misused the British justice system and the costs associated with participating in pre-trial and court proceedings to stifle protected speech and public participation. **This is a society-wide issue that requires a society-wide remedy.**

While the inclusion of anti-SLAPP measures in the 2023 Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act (ECCTA) was a welcome and official recognition of the problem, the provisions are both limited in scope and flawed in approach. Many of us who have signed this letter know firsthand the impact of being subject to abusive legal threats and would agree with your [description](#) of them as “*intolerable*”. We were further heartened to hear the [commitment](#) made by Deputy Prime Minister and Lord Chancellor, David Lammy last December to stop *“the powerful from using abusive lawsuits – so-called ‘Slapps’ – to intimidate reporters, silence investigations, and bury the truth under a mountain of legal threats. Because sunlight is always the best disinfectant.”*

We agree. Now is the time to turn rhetoric into action. By bringing forward universal anti-SLAPP measures in the next King's Speech, Parliament will finally be given the opportunity to establish robust, accessible and universal protections against abusive legal threats and actions.

It is important that the justice system works for everyone. SLAPPs actively prevent a level playing field between those with deep pockets and those for whom affording to mount a defence can draw vital funds away from their families and businesses. The financial inequality so frequently at the heart of SLAPPs can force targets to choose between realising their fundamental rights and economic security. This must end. It is the Government's duty to protect us from this system being weaponised against free expression and everyone's ability to participate fully in society. However, without an effective early dismissal mechanism, an objective test for filtering SLAPPs out of court, and the ability to minimise costs and penalise bad conduct, courts and judges do not have the tools or guidance they need. At a time of unprecedented pressure on our judicial system, court resources should not be wasted on SLAPPs, which are by definition an abuse of the court process.

We appreciate the large list of bills being put forward for the King's Speech represent important and urgent issues. However, it is our belief, informed by testimony from those who have been targeted for realising their rights protected by UK law, that democracy cannot be sustained without everyone being able to express themselves, challenge wrongdoing, or inform others.

Yours sincerely,

Editorial and media senior management

John Witherow, Chairman, Times Media Ltd

Katharine Viner, Editor-in-Chief, The Guardian

Chris Evans, Editor, The Telegraph

Allister Heath, Editor, Sunday Telegraph

Roula Khalaf, Editor, The Financial Times

Geordie Greig, Editor-in-Chief, The Independent

Oliver Duff, Editor-in-Chief, The i Paper

Alessandra Galloni, Editor-in-Chief, Reuters News

John Micklethwait, Editor-in-Chief, Bloomberg

David Higginson, Chief Content Officer, Reach PLC

Zanny Minton Beddoes, Editor-in-Chief, The Economist

Philip Collins, Editor, Prospect Magazine

Jemimah Steinfeld, CEO, Index on Censorship

Franz Wild, CEO and Editor-in-Chief, The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (TBIJ)

Chrissie Giles, Deputy Editor, The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (TBIJ)

Katie Mark, Deputy Editor, The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (TBIJ)

Joshi Herrmann, Founder and Editor, Mill Media

Calum Grewar, Local Editor, The Glasgow Bell & Mill Media

Dan Hayes, Founder, The Tribune

Abi Whistance, Editor, The Post

Leigh Baldwin, Editor-in-chief, SourceMaterial

Carole Cadwalladr, Investigative journalist and co-founder of The Nerve

Clare Rewcastle Brown, Investigative journalist and founder, The Sarawak Report

Peter Geoghegan, Author, journalist and founder of Democracy for Sale

Paul Radu, Co-Founder and Chief of Innovation, Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP)

Drew Sullivan, Co-Founder and Publisher, Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP)

Gerard Ryle, Executive Director and President, International Consortium of Investigative Journalists

Paul Lewis, Head of Investigations, The Guardian

Juliette Garside, European Financial Affairs Editor, the Guardian

Isabel Hilton, Co-Chair Board, The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (TBIJ)

Richard Sambrook, Co-Chair Board, The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (TBIJ)

Eleanor Rose, Enablers Editor, The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (TBIJ)

Lawyers and other legal professionals

Nicki Schroeder, Group General Counsel, Reach PLC

Pia Sarma, Editorial Legal Director, Times Newspapers Ltd

David E. McCraw, Senior Vice President & Deputy General Counsel, The New York Times Company

Jason P. Conti, General Counsel, EVP, Dow Jones & Company, Inc.
Sayra Tekin, General Counsel, News Media Association
Gavin Millar KC, Barrister, Matrix Chambers
Marc Willers KC, Barrister, Garden Court Chambers
Keio Yoshida, Barrister, Doughty Street Chambers
Rupert Cowper-Coles, Head of Media, Reynolds Porter Chamberlain (RPC) LLP
Samantha Thompson, Senior Associate, RPC LLP
Alex Littlewood, Senior Associate, RPC LLP
Caroline Kean, Solicitor, independent media consultant
Matthew Dando, Partner, Wiggin LLP
Adelaide Scardino Lopez, Senior Associate, Wiggin LLP
Matthew Jury, Managing Partner, McCue Jury and Partners
Ian Rosenblatt OBE, Founder & Senior Partner, Rosenblatt Law
Matthew Gill, Defamation Solicitor, Good Law Project
Gillian Phillips, Freelance editorial content lawyer
David S. Korzenik, Partner, Miller Korzenik Rayman LLP
Laura R. Handman, Partner, Davis Wright Tremaine LLP
Laura Lee Prather, Partner, Haynes Boone

Journalists and writers

Catherine Belton MBE, Author of *Putin's People* and Russia reporter, Washington Post
Alan Rusbridger, Journalist, former Editor of The Guardian and Prospect Magazine
Edward Lucas, Author, European and transatlantic security consultant and fellow at the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA)
Tom Burgis, Investigative reporter, The Guardian and author of *Kleptopia: How Dirty Money is Conquering the World*
Eliot Higgins, Open source investigator and SLAPP target
Paul Caruana Galizia, Investigative reporter, Financial Times
George Greenwood, Investigations reporter, The Times
Sean O'Neill, Senior Writer, The Times
Cat Neilan, Whitehall Editor of The Observer
Tom Bergin, Author and Reuters investigative journalist
Jenna Corderoy, Investigative reporter, Democracy for Sale
Thomas Rowley, Investigative journalist
Matei Rosca, Investigative journalist and owner of the website reporter.london.
Jack Adamović Davies, Investigative journalist

Simon Lock, Enablers Senior Reporter, The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (TBIJ)

Lucy Nash, Enablers Senior Impact Producer, The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (TBIJ)

Academics

Dr. Peter Coe, Associate Professor in Law, Birmingham Law School, University of Birmingham

Rebecca Moosavian, Associate Professor, School of Law, University of Leeds

Richard Moorhead, Professor of Law and Ethics, University of Exeter, Professor of Law, Monash University and Honorary Professor, UCL Faculty of Laws, London

John Heathershaw, Professor of International Relations, University of Exeter

Thomas Mayne, Research Fellow, DPIR, University of Oxford

Tena Prelec, Lecturer, University of Rijeka, and Honorary Research Fellow, University of Exeter

Laura T. Murphy, Professor of Human Rights and Contemporary Slavery, Sheffield Hallam University

Robert Barrington, Professor of Anti-Corruption Practice, Centre for the Study of Corruption, University of Sussex

Dr. Claire Elder, Lecturer (Assistant Professor) in International Relations, School of Social and Political Sciences, The University of Melbourne

Dr. Francesca Farrington, Lecturer, School of Law and Social Justice, University of Liverpool

Professor Jackie Harrison, Centre for Freedom of the Media, University of Sheffield

Dr. Gemma Horton, Impact Fellow for Centre for Freedom of the Media, University of Sheffield

Associations, foundations and media support organisations

Laura Davison, General Secretary, National Union of Journalists (NUJ)

Dawn Alford, Chief Executive, Society of Editors

Owen Meredith, Chief Executive, News Media Association

Emilia Díaz-Struck, Executive Director, Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN)

Jodie Ginsberg, Chief Executive Officer, Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)

William Horsley, UK Chairman, Association of European Journalists

Felicity Garvey, UK Advocacy Officer, Reporters Without Borders

Sarah Baxter, Director, Marie Colvin Center for International Reporting

Romana Cacchioli, Executive Director, PEN International

Daniel Gorman, Director, English PEN

Dominic Williams, Chair, Wales PEN Cymru

Menna Elfyn, President, Wales PEN Cymru

Ricky Monahan Brown, President, Scottish PEN

Flutura Kusari, Legal Advisor, European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF)

Vafa Fati-Zade, Trustee, Justice for Journalists Foundation

Publishers and publishing associations

Dan Conway, CEO, Publishers Association

José Borghino, Secretary General, International Publishers Association

Joanna Prior, CEO, Pan Macmillan

Arabella Pike, Publisher, William Collins

Civil society organisations and representatives

Sir William Browder KCMG, Head, Global Magnitsky Justice Campaign

Matthew Caruana Galizia, Director, Daphne Caruana Galizia Foundation

Dan Neidle, Founder, Tax Policy Associates

Daniel Bruce, Chief Executive, Transparency International (UK)

Areeba Hamid, Co-Executive Director, Greenpeace UK

Will McCallum, Co-Executive Director, Greenpeace UK

Harriet Wistrich, CEO, Centre for Women's Justice

Verity Nevitt, Co-Founder, The Gemini Project

Dame Audrey Glover DBE CMG, Chair of Trustees, Foreign Policy Centre

Sir Trevor Phillips, Chair of Trustees, Index on Censorship

Helen Mountfield KC, Trustee, Index on Censorship

Sybille Raphael, Joint Chief Executive, Protect

Helen Taylor, Deputy Director, Spotlight on Corruption

Nina Cresswell, Writer and SLAPP target

Andrew Burgess, SLAPP target and campaigner

James Nixey, Senior Fellow, Conflict Studies Research Centre, and former Director, Russia and Eurasia Programme, Chatham House

Zelda Perkins CBE, Founder, Can't Buy My Silence UK

Dr. Gavin Hayman, Executive Director, Open Contracting Partnership & Co-Chair, UK

Anti-Corruption Coalition

Kevin Keith, Chair, UK Open Government Network

Nicholas Hildyard, Co-Director, The Corner House

Alex Prezanti, Co-Executive Director, State Capture Accountability Project

Emily Patterson, Co-Executive Director, State Capture Accountability Project

Mia Paukovic, Senior Coalition Manager, UK Anti-Corruption Coalition

George Freeman, Executive Director, Media Law Resource Center

Carole Ewart, Director, Campaign for Freedom of Information in Scotland (CFoIS)

Gabriel Šípoš, Senior Legal Manager, International Lawyers Project

Anna Myers, Executive Director, Whistleblowing International Network