



**BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE –
FRIDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2020**

“Activist lawyers”

Daily Mail, Evening Standard, Huffington Post, PA Media, Yahoo News, MSN, Echo New, Herald, Shropshire Star, iNews, Halesowen News, Stourbridge News, Surrey Comet, Oxford Mail, Belfast Telegraph, Northern Echo, News Shopper, Dudley News, Bournemouth Echo, Jersey Evening Post Newschain, Thurrock Gazette, ThisisLocalLondon, Stroud News & Journal, Droitwich Advertiser, Chorley Citizen, County Times, Worcester News, Asian Image, Barhead News, Impartial Reporter + 200-plus other media outlets - Home Secretary Priti Patel has been accused of using “divisive and deceptive” language by the Bar Council after complaining “activist lawyers” were frustrating the removal of migrants.

The Home Secretary posted on Twitter that the Government had removed people who had arrived in the UK in small boats and had no “legal right” to be in the country.

But she said that efforts to remove more migrants were being “frustrated by activist lawyers”.

Amanda Pinto QC, Chair of the Bar Council, is quoted across all media outlets. She said that lawyers should not be political targets for simply doing their jobs. She added: “Irresponsible, misleading communications from the Government, around the job that lawyers do in the public interest, are extremely damaging to our society. Legal professionals who apply the law and follow Parliament’s express intention, are not ‘activists’.

“They are enabling people to exercise their statutory rights and defend themselves against those in power. Without those lawyers, our system would crumble. The justice system provides a vital check and balance and should not be attacked for the sake of political point-scoring by the Government.

“We strongly condemn the use of divisive and deceptive language that undermines the rule of law and those working to uphold it.”

The Bar Council's response on Twitter yesterday gained a lot of support <https://twitter.com/thebarcouncil/status/1301611441854779395>

The Home Secretary's latest comments come a week after the Home Office was forced to abandon using a video which accused "activist lawyers" representing migrants of trying to disrupt the asylum system after a barrage of complaints.

Diversity at the criminal Bar

[The Guardian](#) (print & online) – The Guardian looks in-depth at how junior barristers and pupils from underrepresented backgrounds are dropping out of the profession at an alarming rate, threatening the diversity of the criminal Bar.

The Guardian reports that last month the **Chair of the Bar, Amanda Pinto QC**, criticised the Treasury's lack of support for the self-employed bar. It followed [a report](#) which revealed 38% of criminal barristers were uncertain whether they would still be practising law in 2021 and 16% of self-employed barristers actively want to leave the bar as a result of the pandemic.

Lawyers for Extinction Rebellion

[Legal Futures](#), [The Times](#) – Legal journalists report that Lawyers for Extinction Rebellion (XR) will perform a "theatrical and arrestable action" outside the London office of the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) today in a bid to push the regulator "to confirm or deny lawyers' rights to engage in peaceful non-violent protest, without fear of losing their right to practise".

It follows protests outside the Law Society, SRA and Bar Council on Wednesday to demand they treat the climate and ecological crises "with the urgency they require".

Letters handed in to each body featured a series of demands, including that they "declare a climate and ecological emergency" (CEE), implement "rigorous sustainability goals" in their daily operations and activities, and adopt a green code of conduct.

Chair of the Bar, Amanda Pinto QC, pledged to consider the initiatives proposed by Lawyers for XR. She said: "There is no question that climate change is a crucial issue and the Bar Council is already looking at what more it can do to help the profession address the impact of climate change more effectively.

"The Bar Council, along with other legal professional bodies, has been proactive in highlighting the seriousness of the problem and the role the law can play in

protecting our planet, as seen from Justice Week 2020, for which we produced a series of short films focusing on environmental law.

“We also promote environmental responsibility to chambers and are already looking at further projects we can pursue in this area... I look forward to discussing these challenges with Lawyers for Extinction Rebellion.”

BAR COUNCIL TWEETS <https://twitter.com/thebarcouncil>



The Bar Council ✓
@thebarcouncil



"Activist lawyers" again? Really? Doing your job is now activism, it seems. We are wondering what an "activist Home Secretary" does. [#ChangeTheRecord](#)



Priti Patel ✓ @pritipatel · 14h

Today we removed people who came here via small boat.

They had previously claimed asylum elsewhere and had no legal right to be in the UK.

Removals continue to be frustrated by activist lawyers, but I will not let up until this route is unviable twitter.com/ukhomeoffice/s...

9:02 PM · Sep 3, 2020 · [Twitter for Android](#)

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