



**BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE –
FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2020**

“Activist lawyers”

[Daily Mail](#), [Daily Mail](#), [Daily Mail](#), [Daily Mail](#), [Daily Mail](#), PA Media, The i, Daily Mirror, Yahoo News, MSN, Shropshire Star, iNews, Surrey Comet, Bournemouth Echo, Newschain, Thurrock Gazette, Asian Image, Free Press Series, Bracknell News, Harwich and Manning Tree Standard, Largs and Millport News, The Argus, Whitehaven News, The Westmorland Gazette, Prestwich and Whitefield Guide, Epping Forest Guardian, Swanage and Wareham Voice, MSN, Order Order, [Legal Cheek](#), The London Economic, News 24 (France), Express and Star, Evening Express, Boarder Counties Advertiser, Gazette News, Irish News + **220-plus other media outlets** – Further media coverage appears of the Home Secretary Priti Patel’s continued reference to “activist lawyers” preventing the Government from removing migrants.

Amanda Pinto QC, Chair of the Bar, is quoted in five separate articles in the Daily Mail and across all other media outlets. She said that lawyers should not be political targets for simply doing their jobs.

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.

International law

The Guardian (print and [online](#)), PA Media, MSN, Yahoo, The Times, Asian News Day – The media reports on the government’s Internal Market Bill, which may lead to a breach of international law.

The media reports on the concerns raised by many in the legal sector about the government’s intention to break international law.

Amanda Pinto QC, Chair of the Bar, is quoted. She says: “It should not need to be said that this country is built on, and subject to, the rule of law.”

“Undermining this vital principle will fatally puncture people’s faith in our justice system, both at home and internationally. Someone committing a crime in a ‘specific and limited way’ nonetheless commits a crime and an admitted breach of international law in a ‘specific and limited way’ is nonetheless a breach.”

The Times reports that the Attorney General, Suella Braverman, is likely to get a “rough ride” over the government’s bill when she chairs the meeting of the Bar Council on Saturday.

Judicial independence

The Guardian (print and [online](#)), The Times, MSN - A crown court judge who twice refused to extend custody time limits for defendants and criticised government spending on criminal justice during the pandemic claims he has been blocked from hearing a similar case.

HHJ Raynor, who sits at Woolwich Crown Court, has complained to the senior judiciary that he has been subjected to “improper and undue influence”.

In the past month Raynor has twice refused to extend the time a defendant can be kept behind bars, and he blamed the Ministry of Justice for failing to provide sufficient emergency courts to deal with the growing backlog of criminal trials.

Amanda Pinto QC, Chair of the Bar, is quoted in media reports. She said: “An independent judiciary is an essential pillar of our democracy. It is vital that no judge is ever subject to political or any other pressure to take a particular decision, or there is the appearance of such pressure. That is especially so when someone’s liberty is at stake. We would not accept it in another jurisdiction, and it should never be tolerated here.”

Custody time limit extension

[Society of Editors](#), [Law Society Gazette](#), – Media coverage emerges of the legal sector’s response to the temporary extension of custody time limits from 182 days to 238 days, aimed at reducing the backlog of cases.

Amanda Pinto QC, Chair of the Bar, called on the Ministry Justice to increase investment in the criminal justice system through the opening of additional courts allowing more hearings to take place.

She said: “We understand the current issue about ensuring that potentially dangerous criminals are not released because their trial has been very delayed due to the existing backlog of trials exacerbated by Covid-19.

“However, we are very concerned that this 25% increase in the lawful detention of a potentially innocent person because there aren’t enough courts available to hear their trial does not become a license to push off cases for longer than absolutely necessary. The government must increase sustained investment in the criminal justice system to add more court rooms urgently, especially those capable of safely hearing cases with many defendants.”

Criminal courts recovery plan

Politics Home – Politics Home reports on the Bar Council’s response to the government’s criminal courts recovery plan.

Amanda Pinto QC, Chair of the Bar, said: “This recovery plan is welcome but long overdue. The Lord Chancellor and the Ministry of Justice have taken on board the many concerns expressed by the Bar Council and others involved in the criminal justice system when shaping it.

“We are pleased that acknowledgement that greater use of the existing court estate, more Nightingale Courts, greater use of better technology and significant staff recruitment are all vital to recovery.

“We continue to watch cautiously to see whether extending operating hours has the desired effect on improving case volumes without impinging on court users including legal professionals.”

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Amanda Pinto QC, chair of the Bar, has weighed in on the row: "An independent judiciary is an essential pillar of our democracy. It is vital no judge is ever subject to political or any other pressure to take a particular decision, or there is the appearance of such pressure..



Tristan Kirk ✓ @kirkkorner · 20h

Judge who slammed the MoJ over its coronavirus response claims he was 'pressured' by senior judges.

Serious complaint of 'improper and undue pressure', amid fears that the judiciary may have been subjected to political influence: [standard.co.uk/news/uk/judge-...](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/judge-...)

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...That is especially so when someone's liberty is at stake. We would not accept it in another jurisdiction, and it should never be tolerated here."



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Chair of the Bar: "It should not need to be said that this country is built on, and subject to, the rule of law. Undermining this vital principle will fatally puncture people's faith in our justice system, both at home and internationally." Full statement:
barcouncil.org.uk/resource/bar-c...



Sir Bob Neill MP ✓ @neill_bob · Sep 8

Well, it was a straight answer to a straight question. But a very troubling one nonetheless. Even as a "contingency", a willingness to break international law sits ill for a county that has always prided itself on upholding the rule of law.
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