



## BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – FRIDAY 23 OCTOBER 2020

### Prime Minister and Home Secretary

[The Observer](#) (print and online), [The Guardian](#), [MSN](#), [Yahoo News](#), [The London Economic & Spiked](#) – Media outlets continue to report on further developments in relation to inflammatory statements made by the Home Secretary about lawyers.

Home secretary Priti Patel ignored warnings from at least two senior colleagues to stop targeting immigration lawyers after a knifeman threatened to kill a solicitor last month in [an attack linked to her rhetoric](#), the *Observer* reveals.

Downing Street on Friday night refused to answer questions from the *Observer* about what Johnson knew of the attack, Patel's alleged role in inspiring it and, if he did know, why he felt comfortable risking fresh attacks against lawyers.

Legal sources have confirmed that the first requests from fellow ministers to Patel to desist came two days after the knife attack, when officials from the Bar Council and Law Society contacted Buckland and Braverman to pass on their concerns and tell Patel her anti-lawyer rhetoric needed to stop.

Separately, former Lord Chancellor David Gauke writes in **The Guardian (p4, print)**: “A home secretary is, of course, entitled to seek to reform the asylum system, but there are genuine reasons to be concerned about some of the language being used. This week, a 28-year-old man has been in court charged with a racially or religiously aggravated attack on 7 September on a solicitor at a law firm that has been involved in high-profile immigration cases. Subsequently, both the Law Society and **the Bar Council** wrote to the home secretary to raise their concerns about her language putting lawyers at physical risk.”

### Council of Europe report

[The Daily Telegraph](#) (print and online), [Daily Mail](#) (print and online), [Yahoo News](#) - The UK has the lowest proportion of women judges in the whole of the

European Union with fewer than 40 per cent across all court tiers, international research has revealed.

The analysis of 45 nations including the EU shows that only Azerbaijan, Armenia, Morocco and Iceland have lower proportions of women judges than the UK's 39 per cent. In the high and supreme courts, the UK fares even worse in comparison with just a quarter of its judges women, according to the research by the Council of Europe.

**Amanda Pinto QC, chair of the Bar Council**, said: "The lack of women in the higher levels of the judiciary must be urgently addressed and rectified in the interests of justice. Progress has been too slow.

"Even appreciating that our judicial system recruits judges who already have significant legal experience – unlike many other countries that recruit through a separate career route – this report shows that we lag behind many of our neighbours in Europe."

The Daily Mail reports that England and Wales's spending on legal aid was the third highest out of nearly 50 countries analysed in the report, and funded the second-highest number of legal aid cases each year.

Last year legal aid spending in England and Wales ran to £1.5 billion, but the Bar Council, which represents barristers, has suggested the figure be increased to £2.48 billion.

But Amanda Pinto QC, chair of the Bar Council, said: 'Comparing England and Wales' spending on legal aid with that of other countries is like comparing apples with oranges.'

[Her full comment can be read here.](#)

## Backlog

**[The Independent](#), [Yahoo.com](#), [Msn.com](#), [Monmouthshire Free Press](#), [Pontypool Free Press & Barry & District News](#)** - The number of ongoing prosecutions in England and Wales rose by one-third in just three months at the start of lockdown, topping 170,000, new figures show.

The CPS was handling almost 171,000 cases by the end of June, up from 109,000 in March, and legal groups have warned of "a cataclysmic backlog of despair for [victims](#), witnesses and suspects alike".

Amanda Pinto QC, chair of the Bar Council, said: “Law and order means keeping the public safe as well as ensuring access to justice.

“We have seen what lack of funding for law and order achieves – rising crime but low detection rates, long delays to cases, with many collapsing before they get anywhere near a court, and all because government after government has failed to invest in justice.”

Welsh local media also reports that the backlog of criminal cases facing Cardiff Crown Court has swelled during lockdown, quoting **Amanda Pinto QC, chair of the Bar Council**, who agreed the criminal justice system was “already in severe difficulty” before the pandemic.

## Diversity

[The Times, The Lawyer](#) – Barbara Mills QC, Co-Chair of the Bar Council’s Race Working Group speaks to The Times about her journey to the Bar and what she hopes to achieve with the Group.

The group was set up this summer after the killing of George Floyd in America, which reignited the debate about racial disparity and inequality.

“When you set that in the context of the Bar, which strives to say that it represents equality, it doesn’t actually match because it doesn’t look like the population it serves,” Mills says.

The group is examining the factors that hinder attraction and access to the profession and problems with retention that mean black lawyers leave the Bar. It also challenges the “systemic disadvantages and racism” that mean many black barristers get pushed into poorly paid areas of work and cannot make a living, or are mistaken for defendants.

**The Lawyer** profiles Natasha Shotunde, Social Mobility Advocate for the Bar Council and member of its Race Working Group, as well as founder of the Black Barristers Network.

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



**The Bar Council** @thebarcouncil · Oct 17

It's the end of the day at #PupillageFair2020. Thanks to over 1,500 aspiring barristers who took part and to the Inns of Court, SBAs, barristers, chambers and other organisations who gave time and advice to their future colleagues. See you all at next year's Pupillage Fair.

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**The Bar Council** @thebarcouncil · 1h

Join us at the 2020 #BarConf to hear from over 30 expert speakers, choose from over 10 hours of sessions and get 8 hours of CPD in a programme designed to fit around your schedule. Read the full programme, choose your sessions and book:



Annual Bar and Young Bar Conference 2020  
Forward thinking: Bar of the Future  
[barcouncil.org.uk](http://barcouncil.org.uk)



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**The Bar Council** @thebarcouncil · 2h

Applications to join the spring 2021 Pre-Application Judicial Education programme are now open. Apply to get direct insight into the skills involved in becoming a judge:



Pre-application judicial education programme (PAJE)  
Developed by the Judicial Diversity Forum to support groups under-represented in the judiciary  
[barcouncil.org.uk](http://barcouncil.org.uk)



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You Retweeted



**Pelumi Amanda Adeola** @AmandaAdeola · Oct 19

Really enjoyed the live session. Very informative and good to hear that it must be about deeds and not just policies at Chambers. The same goes for law firms/solicitor practices.

**The Bar Council** @thebarcouncil · Oct 19

Today @bmillsbarrister, Co-Chair of the Race Working Group & @Rehana\_Popal, Social Mobility Advocate, will be going live on our Instagram in just over an hour to talk all things about Race at the Bar.

Don't forget tune in at 1:30pm & join them live here: [instagram.com/thebarcouncil/...](https://www.instagram.com/thebarcouncil/)



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