



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – FRIDAY 27 AUGUST 2021

Afghanistan

[Sky News](#), Yahoo News, MKFM, Radio Essex, Bro Radio, Radio Exe, Coast FM, Go Q Radio, Polish News, Manx Radio, Three FM, Island FM, Great Yorkshire Radio, News24 (France), The Greek Times, London Modern Chronicle – Sky News interviewed Chair of the Bar, Derek Sweeting QC, on the risks to judges in Afghanistan since the Taliban took control of the country.

Sky News reports that many judges and prosecutors who convicted Taliban fighters and criminals are now desperately trying to seek asylum elsewhere.

The Chair of the Bar told Sky News that the Bar Council had been contacted by Afghan judges and prosecutors desperate for help.

"We are hearing from some people who are terrified and feel that they've got good reason to be as well," he said.

"These are people who've already put their lives on the line for the last two decades protecting the rule of law and trying to modernise the justice system in the interests of Afghanistan and its society as a whole. It's a real risk and it's disappointing we're not in a position to do more to ensure that they're safe."

"Most government officials are going to be worried. There is evidence in the past, this year for example, judges in particular have already been targeted by Taliban assassins. That's a real reason for thinking they may well have judges in their sights."

The interview with the Chair of the Bar also ran across several radio stations and other international media outlets.

Working Lives survey

The Times ([online](#) and print, p.28) – The Times reports on the leaked Working Lives Survey. The article states that bullying and harassment among barristers has almost trebled in the past eight years. The survey also found that most incidents of bullying, harassment or discrimination reported by barristers related to their gender.

Derek Sweeting QC, Chair of the Bar Council, is quoted as saying that the organisation was “doing all it can to tackle the problem by providing tools and support for the profession”, adding: “It will take time and will require the whole profession to play a part in eradicating these problems.”

Criminal justice statistics

Law Society Gazette – Further coverage appears of the Bar Council’s response to the latest quarterly criminal justice statistics which show from January to March this year there was a decline in prosecutions but a rise in community resolution orders and other out of court disposals.

Derek Sweeting QC, Chair of the Bar, is quoted in the reports. He said: “Greater reliance on community resolutions for more serious offences can send the wrong message to the public and victims of crime – that this is a ‘get out of jail free card’. Whilst out of court disposals can be effective in reducing reoffending for minor offences, they must not be seen simply as an alternative to court, especially for sex offences or other serious crimes. Criminals must be dealt with in a manner that reflects the seriousness of their offending, otherwise, the public will lose confidence in the criminal justice system.”

BAR COUNCIL TWEETS



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