



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – FRIDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2020

Barrister mistaken for defendant

[Daily Mail](#), Sky News, Daily Express, The Times, [The Guardian](#), The i Paper, Metro, [Daily Mirror](#), PA Media, The Times Scotland, Scottish Daily Mail, Scottish Daily Express, Yahoo News, Capital FM, Yorkshire Post, Hampshire Chronicle, News Shopper, Wiltshire & Gloucestershire Standard, Cumnock Chronicle, Local Berkshire, The Westmorland Gazette, Glasgow Times, Gazette Series, Bridgwater Mercury, Basingstoke Gazette, Essex Live, Kingdom FM, Sunshine Radio, Law Society Gazette, plus 144 other media outlets –

Print, radio and online media, including national media, report that Kevin Sadler, the acting chief executive of HM Courts and Tribunals Service, has condemned the “totally unacceptable behaviour” and promised to investigate the complaint made by a black barrister, Alexandra Wilson, who specialises in criminal and family cases, after she was mistaken for a defendant three times in one day at court.

Amanda Pinto QC, Chair of the Bar, is quoted across all media. She called the incident “appalling”. She said: “With regret, I fear Alexandra’s experience is not a one-off. Many barristers have to put up with the prejudiced assumptions of others – Alexandra has done so with exemplary grace and patience. I am speaking directly with HMCTS, the senior judiciary and the CPS [Crown Prosecution Service] immediately, urging more to be done to stamp out this behaviour.

“The barristers’ profession is always striving to be more representative of the society it serves. There is more to do to change the perception of the bar, but that is no excuse for the kind of attitudes and remarks described. We are not all white, middle-class men.”

Breaking international law

[Daily Express](#) X 2, [Daily Mail](#), [Vanity Fair](#), The Independent, Daily Mirror, Evening Standard, LBC, Yahoo News, Pop Times, PA Media, Daily Record, Herald Scotland, Bucks Free Press, Manchester Evening News, MSN – The media reports

that barrister Amal Clooney has said she is resigning as the UK's special envoy on media freedom over the Government's "lamentable" suggestion it could violate international law over the Brexit Withdrawal Agreement.

In her resignation letter, Clooney said: "**As the President (Chair) of the Bar Council of England and Wales** has affirmed, undermining the rule of law that 'this country is built on ... will fatally puncture people's faith in our justice system'".

Separately, the Daily Express also reports that former Prime Minister, Theresa May, has also criticised the Government's decision to break international law if needs be over the Withdrawal Agreement.

She said: "As the Law Society and **the Bar Council** have said, these provisions enable UK minister to derogate from the obligations of the United Kingdom under international law in broad and comprehensive terms and prohibit public bodies from compliance with such obligations."

Prosecutions

[The Daily Telegraph](#) – The Telegraph reports that "thousands of thugs, thieves and drug offenders" have been let off prosecutions by the police during the coronavirus pandemic to ease the pressure on the court system, an investigation by The Telegraph has found.

Police have dropped prosecutions in at least 6,000 cases and instead applied out-of-court measures such as community resolutions which do not result in a criminal record.

The number of cases where offenders were dealt with through community resolutions rose by 50 per cent in lockdown, from 10,700 in April and May last year to more than 16,000 for the same two months this year.

Amanda Pinto QC, Chair of the Bar, is quoted in the article. She said: "It is extremely telling of the Government's priorities that the police have been finding ways tactically to avoid exacerbating the dire state of the justice system, while the Government refuses to invest to address the underlying problem and support public safety long-term.

"The Government must press forward to reduce the backlog through greater use of the existing court estate, more Nightingale Courts, greater use of better technology and significant staff recruitment, so that the public is safe and faith in justice is restored."

Judicial diversity

Asian Image, Swanage and Wareham Voice, Epping Forest Guardian, Prestwich and Whitefield Guide, The Scottish Farmer, Northern Farmer, Impartial Reporter, Barhead News – Further media coverage appears of the news that people from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds are less likely to be successful when applying to become a judge, and only 9% are senior barristers, official figures show.

Amanda Pinto QC, Chair of the Bar, is quoted across all media channels. She said the industry must “have a far better reflection of society” so members of the public can be confident in the legal representation they receive.

She added: “I feel extremely strongly that the Bar must diversify. We must reflect the society that we serve.

Annual Bar Conference

Politics Home – Politics Home reports that the line-up and programme for the Bar Council’s Annual Bar and Young Bar Conference 2020 has just been announced, entitled ‘Forward thinking: Bar of the Future’.

Turkey

Lawyer Monthly – A group of European law societies penned [an open letter](#) to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan arguing for the release of 55 legal professionals recently detained in Ankara.

The lawyers in question were arrested during dawn raids on 11 September, in which their offices were searched and they were subjected to questioning in relation to their professional activities.

These actions by Turkish authorities ran contrary to United Nations principles, according to the letter signed by Lawyers for Lawyers, the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe, the Law Society of England and Wales, the Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales, **the Bar Council of England and Wales** and the German Bar Association.

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barcouncil.org.uk/becoming-a-bar...

The video player shows a man in a suit and glasses, identified as Liam Kelly, a Pupil Barrister at Deans Court Chambers. The video is titled 'PUPILLAGE FAIR' and has a duration of 1:17 with 696 views. The video is set against a background of bookshelves.

4:37 PM · Sep 24, 2020 · Twitter Web App

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Chair of the Bar, Amanda Pinto QC, to raise this appalling experience with HMCTS, CPS and senior judiciary and demands action. @EssexBarrister

barcouncil.org.uk/resource/appal...

Alexandra Wilson @EssexBarrister · Sep 23

I thought I'd explain what happened today because I'm absolutely exhausted and tbh I think a light needs to be shone on this. Especially given so many people like me seem to experience the same thing.

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