



BAR COUNCIL NEWS UPDATE – FRIDAY 30 APRIL 2021

China

[The Scotsman](#), [The Lawyer](#), [Legal Futures](#), [Politics Home](#), [Global Legal Post](#), [Law Society Gazette](#), [Law.com](#), [New Law Journal](#), [Legal Cheek](#); [Scottish Legal](#), [Irish Legal](#), [Citizen News \(HK\)](#) – There's widespread media coverage of the news that the Bar Council, along with the Faculty of Advocates, the Bar of Ireland, and the Bar Council of Northern Ireland have signed a letter condemning the sanctions issued by the Chinese Government against barristers.

The joint letter states that the imposition of sanctions on lawyers for providing a legal opinion contravenes the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers and that the naming of a barristers' chambers within the sanctions is a further indiscriminate attack on legal professionals, which is inconsistent with respect for the rule of law.

Derek Sweeting QC, Chair of the Bar, is quoted in the coverage. He said: "We must be robust and call out this attack for what it is – a threat on the work of lawyers globally and on the rule of law. Providing independent legal advice is the fundamental role of lawyers.

"There should be no place for the use of bullying and punitive measures by a state because it disagrees with a legal opinion."

Bar Council meeting

[The Times](#), [Legal Futures](#), [Apple Daily \(HK\)](#) [Hong Kong Free Press](#), [Police Professional](#) – National, international and legal media report on the weekend's meeting of the Bar Council, covering different aspects of the session.

The Times and Hong Kong media focus on the Bar Council meeting speech from Hong Kong Bar Association Chair, Paul Harris SC, whilst legal press report on the speech made by Max Hill QC, Director of Public Prosecutions.

Charter for Black Talent

[International Employment Lawyer](#), [Politics Home](#) – The media reports that an initiative aimed at increasing the number of talented Black professionals in senior positions in the UK's professional services sectors has been backed by the Bar Council of England and Wales.

The barrister profession's representative body joins the City of London Corporation, the Inns of Court, Magic Circle law firms, Big Four accountancy giants, along with Brick Court Chambers, 4 Pump Court, 3 Verulam Buildings, Matrix Chambers, and the Commercial Bar Association in supporting the [Charter for Black Talent in Finance and the Professions](#).

Derek Sweeting QC, Chair of the Bar, said the charter will play an essential role in addressing the need for the Bars to pave the way for Black professionals to progress into more senior positions in their areas of practice.

The charter is the brainchild of Brick Court Chambers' [Harry Matovu QC](#), who has been working in partnership with [Michael Eboda](#), CEO of Powerful Media, to extend its reach.

Pupillage

[Legal Cheek](#), [Law Society Gazette](#) – The legal media reports that the number of graduates competing for pupillages rose by over 1,000 this year as the impact of Covid-19 on an already over-subscribed system begins to show.

According to Bar Council figures, 3,301 candidates applied for just 246 positions via the pupillage gateway in 2021. On average, applicants submitted around six application each. In 2020, 2,142 applicants competed for 237 pupillages.

The figures do not include applications submitted outside the pupillage gateway.

BTAS Sanctions Guidance

[Legal Futures](#), [Law Society Gazette](#) – Legal Futures reports that plans to “beef up” the sanctions imposed on barristers for serious offences – including sexual misconduct, harassment and discrimination – have been unveiled.

A review carried out by the Bar Tribunals & Adjudication Service (BTAS) found that many of the starting points recommended in its current sanctions guidance were on the “lenient” side.

On average over the past three years, only 28 barristers a year were made subject to sanctions.

Chair of the Bar, Derek Sweeting QC, said: “It’s no secret that many at the Bar feel that the current sanctions do not reflect the seriousness of cases concerning sexual misconduct and the [Bar Council has raised concerns](#) with both the BSB and BTAS on this point.

“We hope that in assessing the sanctions guidance the impact on victims of harassment at the Bar is considered.

“Now is the time for the Bar to get its views heard on this matter and the wider sanctions review and respond to this consultation. BTAS is listening.”

English commercial law

[Le nouvel Economiste](#) – The French equivalent of The Economist reruns an article from the latter publication that quotes **Chair of the Bar, Derek Sweeting QC**, looking at the growing competition faced by London’s commercial courts and Britain’s legal services.

“London is attractive, for English judges don’t take bribes, are seen as not favouring home litigants over foreigners and don’t generally get leant upon by politicians. They are often specialists, which means judgments tend to dig more deeply than those elsewhere, says **Derek Sweeting QC, Chair of the Bar Council**, the barristers’ professional body, and the common law can “adapt and develop embryonically” to new kinds of business dispute. Formats have been tweaked to speed up big cases.

“**Mr Sweeting** says Britain’s reputation for the rule of law, on which it trades, risks being tarnished by the government’s fights with lawyers and threat to break the Brexit treaty.”

[BAR COUNCIL TWEETS](#)



The Bar Council ✓
@thebarcouncil



We, @FacultyScot, @TheBarofNI + @TheBarofIreland have issued a joint statement urging national & international Bar associations to condemn China's sanctions.

Full statement: barcouncil.org.uk/resource/state...
[@BarCouncilChair](#)

Read more in [@TheScotsman](#):
scotsman.com/news/politics/... [@AlexofBrown](#)



Scotland's advocate group demands action on Chinese sanctions and urge inter...
Scotland's advocate group has demanded action on Chinese sanctions in a joint statement with UK legal professionals.

scotsman.com

10:33 AM · Apr 27, 2021 · Twitter Web App

View Tweet activity

227 Retweets **6** Quote Tweets **183** Likes



The Bar Council ✓
@thebarcouncil



Derek Sweeting QC [@BarCouncilChair](#) in [@TheEconomist](#) on why London courts still appeal to overseas litigants & the risks to Britain's reputation for the rule of law from the government's fights with lawyers and threat to break the Brexit treaty.

The Economist ✓ @TheEconomist · Apr 25

Globalisation is good for London's law courts, whose judges are seen as independent and specialist. But it also brings new challenges [econ.st/32J00OK](https://www.economist.com/stories/2021/04/25/globalisation-is-good-for-london-s-law-courts-but-it-also-brings-new-challenges)

9:40 PM · Apr 27, 2021 · Twitter for Android

||| [View Tweet activity](#)

3 Retweets **7** Likes