

I write purely as a private individual to express my personally held concerns and beliefs regarding the implementation of the recommendations of the Leveson Report.

I have long felt that there are sections of the press in this country who see themselves not as purveyors of facts and information which it is in the interests of all to publish - but rather as pedlars of sensation and scandal (whether or not based on truth and accuracy) for the primary purpose of "selling newspapers" and making their owners super rich.

Witness the treatment of such as the Lawrence Family, the Dowler Family, the McCann family, the families of the Hillsborough disaster victims. The list is endless and stretches back much further in time that these most recent examples of press vilification and intrusions of privacy.

One fact is utterly indisputable; despite regular and repeated efforts to establish a satisfactory system of press self-regulation, those efforts HAVE FAILED DISMALLY. Those unfortunate enough to become the subjects of the animalistic behaviour of the "gutter" press will look in vain under the present system for either protection, apology or redress, no matter what illegal or immoral methods those members of the gutter press employ to "get their story".

The Leveson Enquiry was a response to the public horror and revulsion that was shown at the excesses of the present day newspaper industry and the subsequent Leveson Report was welcomed by the public and parliamentary representatives (MP's) alike who promised action to implement the report. Only the press industry itself demurred. No surprises there then!

It now seems that our current Parliament are preparing to block the implementation of some of Lord Leveson's recommendations. Principally that "if some or all of the industry are not willing to participate in effective independent regulation (his) own concluded view is to reject the notion that they should escape regulation altogether". Lord Leveson went on to say that (in the case of such unwillingness on the industry's part) that he was "driven to conclude that the Government should be ready to consider the need for a statutory backstop regulator being established, to ensure, at the least, that the press are subject to regulation that would require the fullest compliance with the criminal and civil law, if not also to ensure consequences equivalent to those that would flow from an independent self-regulatory system".

How can anyone of common sense argue with such recommendations, given the historically abysmal record of the newspaper industry of self-regulation? MOREOVER, how can any society call itself sane, civilised and just if it allows such corporate behaviour as that indulged in by sections of our press under the present system, to go un-checked?

Please, please, in the name of decency, recommend to our parliamentary representatives that the key "guaranteed access to justice incentive" (section 40 of the Crime and Courts Act) should be brought into effect as Parliament had intended.

I am, as I pointed out at the opening of the letter, expressing my views as an individual citizen of this country. I am your very ordinary "joe public", not a lawyer or other professional, and I have adopted - without apology - some of the arguments advanced by the Hacked Off campaign, to whom we should all be grateful for their untiring efforts on our collective behalf to bring about a more accountable press industry and the proper implementation of Lord Leveson's report. I trust that my remarks and expressions of concern will, nevertheless, weigh equally with you in your deliberations.

Your faithfully,

Mrs Sylvia Elias