



Rt Hon Kier Starmer KCB KC MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

23 March 2026

Dear Prime Minister,

We write as No One Above, a collective of survivors of trafficking and abuse linked to Mohamed Al-Fayed.

We are asking for one specific commitment: that the next King's Speech includes legislation to tackle SLAPPs. This is a consensus that now extends across journalism, law, academia and Parliament and to which we, as survivors, now add our voices.

In October 2024, you stated that the use of the law to intimidate journalists away from the public interest is "intolerable", and that your government would act. That commitment has not yet been delivered.

You have now been asked to act by a broad and consistent coalition. As Nik Williams of the UK Anti-SLAPP Coalition has set out, you have received letters from 166 editors, journalists, lawyers and civil society representatives, 103 academics, and Labour MPs, each calling for a robust, accessible and universal anti-SLAPP law.

The case of Mohamed Al-Fayed demonstrates the consequences of its absence.

Journalists and producers have described reporting on serious allegations relating to Al Fayed as being altered, delayed or curtailed following legal intervention or the credible threat of it, from the mid-1990's onwards. A rape allegation identified during a 1997 television investigation was not broadcast following legal threats. In subsequent litigation concerning reporting on Harrods, disclosure was narrowed and further scrutiny constrained. Reporting on an allegation involving a 15-year-old was later revised to remove reference to Al-Fayed.

Information entered the public domain in partial form, or not at all and as a result, reporting did not accumulate into a coherent public understanding. Patterns were suppressed and without visibility there was no sustained scrutiny and no intervention.

During this period, women and children were reporting rape, sexual abuse, trafficking and coercion linked to this environment. Some women report being unable to secure legal representation from firms that later acted after Al Fayed's death. The failure here is not only that wrongdoing was not prosecuted, but that it was not allowed to be fully seen at the time when exposure could have made a difference. Earlier identification, earlier corroboration and earlier intervention were all possible.

More than 400 women have now come forward and that number is not only a measure of harm, but a measure of time: of how long information was suppressed before Al Fayed's death allowed it to be brought into public view.



This is the function of SLAPPs in practice - to increase the cost of publication, to fragment reporting, and to defer public understanding until after a perpetrator's death. The UK remains a jurisdiction in which those with sufficient resources can use litigation, or the credible threat of it, to shape what becomes public, with existing safeguards that are partial, inconsistent and which actively enable harm to continue unchecked.

You have described that outcome as intolerable. We are asking you to translate that assessment into law – because this is not simply a matter of media policy, but of whether the legal system permits those with power and resources to influence what becomes known and when.

We ask that the King's Speech commits to introducing comprehensive anti-SLAPP legislation. That legislation should include early dismissal of abusive claims, cost protection for defendants, a clear statutory definition, application across all areas of public interest reporting, protection for those contributing to such reporting and for survivors seeking to bring civil claims, and meaningful deterrent consequences for those who misuse the courts for this purpose.

The current framework does not provide these protections. It actively enabled the pattern described above. More than 400 women are now part of that record of failure.

Yours sincerely,

No One Above

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