



global witness

For immediate release: 24th March

Global Witness welcomes important changes to libel laws

Jack Straw's proposed reforms to the UK's libel laws herald a much-needed change in approach to freedom of speech in the UK. They also represent a victory for the Libel Reform Campaign, of which Global Witness is a member.

Mr Straw's stated intention to counter the growing threat of libel tourism is welcome news for all those threatened by the ability of the world's rich and powerful to use the UK legal system as a place to do their dirty work. Also welcome is the recognition of a need to better define and protect public interest reports by campaigning NGOs and the media. Finally, the clear commitment to a single publication rule is an excellent, concrete step towards protecting publications that serve the public interest.

"Common sense has prevailed: this announcement has given those currently exploiting the UK's legal system a much-needed reality check," said Global Witness Director Charmian Gooch. "We look forward to seeing a clear timetable for consultation and research on the other reforms that Mr Straw is proposing to take forward to the next Parliament."

Note: The [Libel Reform Campaign](#) is a coalition of NGOs at the forefront of the growing movement for libel reform, which is led by [English PEN](#), [Index on Censorship](#) and [Sense about Science](#).

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Global Witness investigates and campaigns to prevent natural resource-related conflict and corruption and associated environmental and human rights abuses