

INDEX ON CENSORSHIP

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Commissioner Bernard Hogan-Howe
Metropolitan Police
New Scotland Yard
8-10 Broadway
London SW1H 0BG

Dear Commissioner

I am writing to express my grave concern at reports that the Metropolitan Police is seeking a court order under the Official Secrets Act to force journalists at the Guardian newspaper to reveal their sources on reports covering the phone-hacking scandal.

The protection of sources has been repeatedly recognised and affirmed as a fundamental tenet of press freedom in international law and by the European Court of Human Rights and is safeguarded under Article 10 of the Human Rights Act. The use of the Official Secrets Act appears to be a calculated attempt to bypass these protections in law.

The Guardian has been at the forefront of the investigations into phone hacking, assiduously reporting the story when both the Metropolitan Police and the CPS had failed to pursue the case. Its revelations form one of the most important instances of investigative journalism in recent years, sending shockwaves through both the political and media establishment and culminating in the announcement of a public inquiry.

I strongly believe that the Metropolitan Police should desist from this course of action as a matter of urgency. Any continuation of this case under the Official Secrets Act would mark not just a severe threat to free expression in the UK but would also cause further damage to the Metropolitan Police's already tarnished reputation in this matter.

Yours sincerely



John Kampfner, Chief Executive