

Scottish Anti- SLAPP Summit

ENSURING SCOTLAND IS NOT
LEFT BEHIND IN THE FIGHT AGAINST
SLAPPS

Organised by:
**INDEX
CENSORSHIP**

University
of Glasgow
School of Law

Supported by:
Justice for Journalists
Foundation for International
Investigation of Crime against Trade

Location
**UNIVERSITY
OF GLASGOW**
& online

**MONDAY
26 FEB
2024**
Starts 08:45



For biographies of the
speakers and more
information scan here

Background

Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs) are abusive lawsuits filed by a private party with the purpose of silencing critical speech. They can be brought by anyone seeking to avoid scrutiny, whether an oligarch, corporation, politician, or businessperson. The targets? Anyone speaking out in the public interest. This includes journalists and media outlets, as well as academics, campaigners, writers, whistleblowers, patient advocates and sexual violence survivors (to name but a few). The outcome? Issues and topics that cannot be scrutinised, which will weaken the public information space.

For a long time, SLAPPs have been seen as a London-specific problem. The firms behind the most egregious legal threats have always made a home in the gleaming skyscrapers and ornate courtrooms of the English capital. But this ignores how vulnerable people in Scotland are to SLAPPs.

A number of cases bearing the hallmarks of SLAPPs have been documented in Scotland. This includes an anti-fish farm campaigner prevented from documenting the welfare of salmon farmed in Scottish waters; a victims' advocate supporting those targeted by the OneCoin cryptocurrency scam received a legal letter from Carter Ruck; a news blog had to take down their website in the lead-up to the Indy Ref due to a legal threat from an oil company CEO; and a defamation threat against a community Facebook group moderator remains sisted seven years after he was sued in 2016 that can be brought back at any time.

While England and Wales and European institutions are slowly moving to stamp out SLAPPs, Scotland is no closer to ensuring our courts are protected and that everyone can speak out without the fear of costly or time-intensive legal threats.

This conference, organised by **Index on Censorship** and the **University of Glasgow Law School**, with the support of **Justice for Journalists Foundation**, is a step towards addressing this. Only by hearing from those targeted, identifying gaps in Scots Law that can be exploited and exploring what a Scottish Anti-SLAPP law could look like, can we ensure that free expression is protected for everyone who speaks out and speaks up.

TIME		SPEAKERS
8.45 - 9.00	Arrival	
9.00 - 9.20	Welcome	Nik Williams, Dr Stephen Bogle & Maria Ordzhonikidze
9.20 - 9.55	Keynote	Paul Radu - Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP)
9.55 - 10.00	Video - What is a SLAPP?	
10.00 - 11.10	PANEL 1 Targeted in Scotland: Testimony from targets of SLAPPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jen McAdam - OneCoin victim advocate* • Don Staniford - Environmental campaigner • Rebecca Stott - Writer and historian* • Andy Wightman - Land reform campaigner and former MSP • CHAIR: Dani Garavelli - Journalist
11.10 - 11.40	Coffee Break (30 min)	
11.40 - 12.50	PANEL 2 Mapping the legal landscape: Exploring the gaps in Scots Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christine O'Neill KC - Brodies LLP • Rosalind McInnes - BBC Scotland • Dr Andrew Tickell - Glasgow Caledonian University • CHAIR: Dr Bobby Lindsay - University of Glasgow
12.50 - 14.20	Lunch Break (1hr 30)	
14.20 - 15.30	PANEL 3 Pressuring the Press: The impact of SLAPPs on the Scottish Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Daly - BBC Scotland • David Leask - Freelance journalist • Gill Phillips - The Guardian • Nik Williams - Index on Censorship • CHAIR: Susan Coughtrie - Foreign Policy Centre
15.30 - 16.00	Coffee Break (30 min)	
16.00 - 17:10	PANEL 4 Imagining the unimaginable: What would a Scottish Anti-SLAPP Law look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Stephen Bogle - University of Glasgow • Dr Francesca Farrington - Anti-SLAPP Research Hub, University of Aberdeen • Charlie Holt - CliDef and CASE • Anna Myers - Whistleblowing International Network (WIN) • CHAIR: Carole Ewart - Campaign for Freedom of Information in Scotland (CFoIS)
17.10 - 17.30	Closing Statement	Roger Mullin - Former MP Nik Williams - Index on Censorship

*Joining remotely