

Jonathan Morris

From: Jonathan Morris
Sent: 01 November 2010 18:29
To: linda.lee@lawsociety.org.uk
Subject: Russell Tribunal on Palestine

Dear Madam President

I am writing to you on behalf of the British Israel Law Association (BISLA) to express our deep dismay that the Law Society has agreed to host at its premises later this month the Russell Tribunal on Palestine (www.russelltribunalonpalestine.com/en/sessions/london-session).

Given its stated aims and the roster of speakers, it is abundantly clear that the Tribunal will not be seeking to conduct an impartial legal enquiry. Instead, it will be used as basis for providing a one-sided platform to those who wish to denigrate the State of Israel and, by hosting this event at your premises, the Law Society will be perceived as providing its support for the Tribunal.

Accordingly, we would urge you to cancel this booking immediately and so prevent the good name of the Law Society being used in this inappropriate and unacceptable manner.

I look forward to hearing fro you.

Yours faithfully

Jonathan Morris
Vice Chairman
British Israel Law Association



The Law Society

From the Chief Executive

Mr J Morris
Vice Chairman
British Israel Law Association
Jonathan.morris@bplaw.com

2 November 2010

Dear Mr Morris

The Russell Tribunal

Thank you for your recent communication to the Law Society. I imagine that your contacting the President may have been prompted by an article that appeared in the Jewish Chronicle on 31 October.

You may find of interest a letter we issued on Tuesday 2 November to the Editor of the Jewish Chronicle.

As you will note, although the Law Society's building is the venue for this event, the Law Society has no other involvement with it.

As I said in my letter to the Editor, it was regrettable that the Jewish Chronicle correspondent didn't bother to contact the Law Society in advance.

I do hope this satisfies the points of concern you raised with us.

Yours sincerely

Desmond Hudson
Chief Executive

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From the Chief Executive



The Law Society

Mr J Morris
Berwin Leighton Paisener LLP
Jonathan.Morris@bplaw.com

4 November 2010

Dear Mr Morris

Thank you for your recent email. I am writing to explain the Law Society's position over the use of our building for the Russell Tribunal, over which we have received some protests from you and other members of the profession.

As I have previously explained, the booking came about as a result of our external letting agency having received an order to rent space that is available on the open market over a weekend where the Law Society's offices would otherwise be closed. We do have a policy as to the organisations we would do business with and seek to ensure that the way in which we deal via our outsourced service provider with such requests is free from bias and operated in a prudent and sensible way.

We do recognise that the Russell Tribunal is controversial, perhaps objectionable to some. Although I have no wish to be drawn in to substance, it is inevitable that any such organisation dealing with such difficult questions will arouse controversy. I note that Russell Tribunal website subtitle is "Jews for Justice for Palestine"; which suggests that opinion in Israel and amongst Jewish community is not monolithic.

One correspondent wrote saying that it is offensive for the Law Society to allow an organisation like Russell Tribunal which demonises Israel, a "cradle of jurisprudence" and bastion of democracy in the Middle East, to hold event at the Law Society. Israel's record on jurisprudence and democracy not disputed. But equally, our country has a long and proud tradition of freedom of opinion and expression. The Russell Tribunal may or may not be biased, but not proscribed. It is a sad day when subjects are censored just because they are contentious.

That said, we have not the least intention of causing offence among our members. I would like to personally assure you that holding this event in Chancery Lane emphatically does not mean Law Society endorses, sponsors or associates itself in any way with the Russell Tribunal. We will and do make that absolutely clear.

This may also be an opportune time to let you know that the President of the Law Society has been on a visit to Israel and Palestine this week at the invitation of the Israel Bar and the Israeli-British Chamber of Commerce. The visit has reinforced the close relationship we have with the Israel Bar and set out a number of ways we can work together more closely in future, including on business development co-operation as Israel's legal market opens up. A separate report on this visit will be available in the near future.

Yours sincerely

Desmond Hudson
Chief Executive

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