

LEVESON PART 2

MYTH BUSTER

MYTH:

Enough time and money has been spent on Leveson already; the time and money and strain on judicial resources isn't worth it.

- Leveson Part 1 cost £5.4 million and took 15 months. By comparison, many other inquiries cost more and take longer.
- The £50 million widely cited in anti-Leveson newspapers refers to the combined cost of Part 1 of the Inquiry (£5.4 million) and the three primary police investigations, Operations Elveden, Tuleta, and Weeting (including Operation Golding).
- These investigated a wide range of offences, with resultant prosecution and trial costs totalling £43.7 million. More than 40 people were convicted.
- By contrast News Corp spent an estimated £63 million on these trials, as well as a £16.1 million severance package and a further £5.3 million payment to Rebekah Brooks. The larger and more powerful the company, the more public resources are required to investigate it.
- News Corp has also paid out more than \$500m in legal fees and damages in civil claims and stands to pay out more if Leveson Part 2 uncovers more wrongdoing.

MYTH:

Hardly any journalists were found guilty so there's nothing left to investigate.

- Not true. 10 of the 40 convicted were journalists.
- The other 30 comprised 11 police officers and police staff and 19 other public officials.
- There were thousands of victims of phone hacking, blagging and other types of illegal conduct by newspapers. This is rarely reported in the mainstream press.

MYTH:

Phone-hacking is a historic problem.

- Wrong. Many of the executives who presided over this practice and used the results in their newspapers are still in charge. In addition, new evidence of hacking and police corruption has emerged.
- Rupert Murdoch is launching a take-over bid for Sky whilst the Leveson Part 2 investigation into his and James Murdoch's knowledge and actions around phone-hacking remain uninvestigated.
- Rebekah Brooks has returned as Chief Executive of News UK and is facing a new legal claim that hacking was rife at the Sun whilst she was editor.
- Mazher Mahmood – the “fake sheikh” - was convicted only relatively recently. There has been no investigation into his illegal activities over many years and his relationships with police and prosecutors.
- The Hillsborough disaster occurred in 1989 but it took until 2016 to secure a truthful inquest verdict; they now want the truth about who knew what about the cover-up and when. The same applies to the family of Daniel Morgan murdered in 1987.

MYTH:

Leveson 2 just wants to re-run the trials.

- Trials tell us if individuals are guilty of specific acts. Inquiries shine a light on corruption and the culture of misconduct within an organization.
- They can provide information and answers which press and police are seeking to cover up.

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MYTH:

There's nothing left to investigate and it's unlikely to make any new recommendations.

- Wrong. Only half the job has been done. The Leveson Inquiry was always supposed to take place in two parts.
- Part 1 looked into press regulation but not the specifics of any wrongdoing, the conspiracies or the cover-up. Part 2 could not begin until the criminal and civil trials had been completed, which they now have.
- Vital issues raised in the Terms of Reference for Part 2 have not been investigated. The trials have not asked how major newspaper corporations developed and maintained a culture of criminality over many years, damaging the lives of numerous victims.
- Anything less than a full inquiry into these issues would be a betrayal of victims.

MYTH:

Leveson Part 2 is not supported by the public.

- Wrong. A YouGov poll commissioned by Hacked Off found that 46 per cent of the public think Leveson Part 2 should proceed. Just 10 per cent think it should be cancelled.
- Notable victims who want Leveson Part 2 to go ahead include the Dowler family, Christopher Jefferies, Gerry and Kate McCann, Hillsborough Family Support Group, and Alastair Morgan (the brother of the murder victim, Daniel Morgan).
- Notable organisations include Hacked Off, the National Union of Journalists, Transparency International UK, The Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, 38 Degrees, Avaaz, and the Media Reform Coalition.

MYTH:

IPSO has made progress since Leveson 1.

- Wrong. Like its discredited predecessor the Press Complaints Commission, the 'Independent Press Standards Organisation' remains a complaints handling body - not a regulator.
- It remains in the control of the industry and is a 'cheerleader' for it – it is not independent.
- There has been no meaningful reforms to the Code of Practice governing the press, and despite widespread and continuing press misconduct, IPSO has not carried out a single regulatory investigation.
- IPSO conforms to the 'pattern of cosmetic reform' that Leveson warned of. When created it met only 12 out of 38 Leveson recommendations. IPSO's 2016 "external" review was a bogus exercise.
- A YouGov poll commissioned by Hacked Off and published on 10 January 2017 found that 59% of the public had little or no confidence in IPSO compared to just 15% who did. See also Hacked Off's briefings "The Failure of IPSO" and "No More Excuses".

MYTH:

Sir Brian Leveson doesn't want Part 2 of the Inquiry anyway.

- Sir Brian Leveson has said nothing publicly on this question.
- Unsubstantiated reports that Sir Brian has privately told a former Minister that he didn't want to chair it himself (which is not a requirement) is no surprise given that he runs the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court.
- In response, the judiciary formally clarified that the Government must consult Sir Brian before any final decision is made and that he made no public statement as to the merits of Part 2 or his own involvement in any proceedings. A government Minister has also confirmed this.
- In any event, there is no need for Sir Brian Leveson to conduct Part 2 himself as another senior judge could be appointed who could "read into" the case in a few weeks.