

PE1458/HH

Letter from Petitioner Peter Cherbi re: Petition PE1458: Register of Interests for members of Scotland's Judiciary

I wish to draw to the attention of members some further material for consideration prior to the debate in the main chamber of the Scottish Parliament on 9 October 2014, and in member's further deliberations on the petition's proposals to create a register of judicial interests for Scotland's judiciary.

The PPC previously invited Lord Gill to attend the committee several times, however the Lord President refused on each occasion. Instead Lord Gill wrote to the committee reiterating his opposition to the creation of a register of judicial interests.

Lord Gill also refused to attend the Scottish Parliament to answer important points raised by now former Judicial Complaints Reviewer, Moi Ali - who gave a full and frank account during an evidence session with members of the judiciary's resistance to transparency and accountability. Instead, the Lord President attempted to refute the JCR's testimony, by letter.

However, during an official six day visit to Qatar, Lord Gill gave a speech to a gathering which gives a very different view of judicial regulation and complaints to one already given to members of the PPC in person by the JCR.

Lord Gill's willingness to talk openly and publicly in a far away country about judicial ethics, transparency and accountability, while refusing to do so in the Scottish Parliament, and face open questions from members on his claims a register of interests is unworkable for the judiciary, is a matter which I feel members should discuss and take into account.

The speech given by the Lord President, Lord Gill during his visit to Qatar, is published online by the Judiciary of Scotland at the following link: <http://www.scotland-judiciary.org.uk/26/1263/Speech-by-the-Lord-President-to-the-Judges-of-the-Supreme-Court-of-Qatar>

Of further interest to members may be the Issue of the Qatar Foundation magazine of June, which has a full page on Lord Gill's visit to Qatar, published here: <http://cdn.qf.com.qa/app/media/download/18915>

Again, it is regrettable the Lord President feels he is able to travel to other countries as a representative of Scotland's legal system and discuss his view of judicial ethics & transparency yet feels he cannot attend the Public Petitions Committee to discuss his opposition to transparency and the creation of a register of interests, which incidentally, would also take in events such as Lord Gill's Qatar visit.

Lord Gill's visit to Qatar was covered in an investigation featuring the travel of Scottish judges around the world, published by the Scottish Sun newspaper here: <http://www.thescottishsun.co.uk/scotsol/homepage/news/5833709/Lording-it-all-over-the-world.html>.

Given the public interest and the relevance of matters included in this submission to the petition, I hope committee members find the information in this submission as useful for inclusion in any discussions during the debate in Parliament's main chamber on Thursday 9 October 2014.

Peter Cherbi
Petitioner PE1458