



Sam Gyimah MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Justice
Ministry of Justice
102 Petty France
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By email: sam.gyimah.mp@parliament.uk

09 January 2017

Dear Mr Gyimah,

MOJ ref: 039857 HOLLESLEY BAY IMB: INVESTIGATION OUTCOME

Thank you for your letter dated 05 January 2017 received by post this morning in which, in paragraph 3, you inform me of your decision to terminate my appointment as Chair of Hollesley Bay IMB and my membership of Hollesley Bay or any other Independent Monitoring Board for a period of 5 years, with immediate effect.

It appears that the prejudicial character assassination against me has reached its ultimate conclusion. Sadly, not one but two Ministers of State have been embroiled in it. Like your predecessor, Mr Selous, you were given only what certain people wanted you to hear, never the whole story.

After nine months of wrangling, the department under your responsibility has, at the taxpayer's expense, been used to "shoot the messenger"; all I ever did was write in the public interest about reform.

I robustly deny that I "repeatedly disclosed official, classified and other information, often in an inaccurate manner" and the other ways you assert in paragraph 2. I did not undermine the confidence of the public and the reputation of the Independent Monitoring Boards; it did that all by itself under a failing Secretariat by not being independent and by not being fit for purpose in its current form.

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One paragraph of what I wrote upset the sensibilities of just nine people of HBIMB and I was bullied and ostracised by them in reprisal for it, despite my apology. The article itself was seen by the then Secretary of State for Justice, Mr Gove, who expressed no issue with it. But the calls for reform obviously rattled the IMB National Council President, Mr Thornhill, himself embattled and fighting for his own relevance, who set in motion a series of events, creating a smokescreen behind which real misconduct at Hollesley Bay, including by NOMS staff, was allowed to take place and to go unchallenged.

Our prisons are in crisis and reform is taking too long.

As Prisons Minister you need to get a grip on Monitoring. From what I have seen and heard first-hand, I am seriously concerned about our National Preventative Mechanism and our ability to fulfil our obligations under OPCAT.

In the next five years, I will continue to speak up truthfully and will add my voice to the very many voices calling for change. I will support policies introduced by you or by your successor where those policies do bring about real change. However, I shall not hesitate in bringing a strong critique where those policies gloss over the hard questions or where they shirk the implementation of measures for real reform.

This is a matter of significant public interest.

In the meantime, I will return my MOJ identity pass immediately and I expect your teams to act promptly to revoke access I have to CJSM.

I believe you to be a very decent man, Mr Gyimah, and wish to assure you that I hold no personal grievance with you whatsoever, but on this occasion I'm afraid others have wanted to play you for a fool. Maybe that's why this letter smacks of 'cut and paste'. Did you really write it or was it written for you by wonks inside MoJ? I noted that the signature on the letter was a scan and not signed by your own hand.

Yours sincerely,



Faith Spear

cc. John Thornhill, President of the National Council for Independent Monitoring Boards; and Declan Moore, Governing Governor of HMP and YOI Hollesley Bay.