

Scots lawyers condemn government language

The Law Society of Scotland has condemned the UK Government for its use of dismissive references to the legal profession as “lefty lawyers”, while the Dean of the Faculty of Advocates has written to the Prime Minister.

Amanda Millar, President of the Law Society of Scotland, said: “It is extremely disappointing and frustrating to continue to hear and read about inflammatory language being used by senior Government figures to describe the legal profession and its vitally important work.

“Lawyers dedicate their skills, experience and professionalism to protect and uphold people’s legal and human rights, ensuring those rights apply equally to all. In doing so, they are upholding the rule of law, a cornerstone of our society and democracy. They must be able to carry out this fundamental role without fear of intimidation or restrictions to their independence or impartiality.

“Every person in a position of power should reflect carefully on the language they use and respect the role of the legal profession in maintaining a democratic and civil society.”

The Dean of Faculty made a personal plea to the Prime Minister and also to the Home Secretary to stop denigrating the legal profession.

Mr Dunlop has written a letter to Boris Johnson and Priti Patel following speeches in recent days in which references were made to “lefty human rights lawyers and other do-gooders”.

In his letter, Mr Dunlop said that lawyers who acted against the state were simply doing their professional duty. He noted that, fortunately, instances of violence against lawyers were rare in the UK, unlike in other countries.

“However, in a climate of increasing populism, this sort of rhetoric is not only facile and offensive, it is potentially harmful. With great power comes great responsibility, and I have to say – with great respect – that I simply cannot fathom why it is thought in any way appropriate to attempt to vilify, in public, those that are simply doing their job, in accordance with the rule of law,” said Mr Dunlop.

“I would accordingly, and again with great respect, ask each of you to eschew such unhelpful language, and to recognise that challenges to the executive are a necessary part of our democracy. Anything less would be a confession that we no longer live in a democracy.”

*An open letter to [@BorisJohnson](#) and [@pritipatel](#) , approved by all Office Bearers of [@FacultyScot](#) Please stop the denigration of the legal profession.
pic.twitter.com/9iFgA42jvn*

– Roddy Dunlop QC (@RoddyQC) [October 8, 2020](#)