

Press Release

Carter-Ruck

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The Mail apologises and pays £110,000 in damages over chemical weapons libel

The publisher of the Daily Mail has today apologised for an article on its website which falsely linked Britam Defence Ltd (a leading UK-based risk management and training consultancy), and two of its senior Directors (David Goulding and Philip Doughty) with an alleged plot to carry out a chemical weapons atrocity in Syria. As well as removing the article and apologising on its website and in Court, the Mail has also agreed to pay £110,000 in libel damages, plus the Claimants' legal costs.

Carter-Ruck Partner Adam Tudor today read a Statement in open Court reporting the settlement of the matter. Mrs Justice Nicola Davies heard how the Mail's article had falsely suggested that Britam and the two directors had been willing - for enormous financial reward - to contemplate supplying chemical weapons to opponents of the Assad regime in Syria. The newspaper had reported that this formed part of an alleged covert US plot to stage attacks which could then be blamed on President Assad. As well as being illegal, any such plot would inevitably have led to the death, injury and maiming of countless innocent civilians.

The Mail's allegations were based on internal emails which were said to have been sent between Mr Goulding and Mr Doughty and which had been published on the internet after Britam's computer systems had been illegally hacked. That hacking continues to be the subject of a criminal investigation.

In fact, and as the Mail has now accepted, the emails were complete forgeries. They were not created or sent by Mr Goulding, Mr Doughty or for that matter anyone else associated with Britam; on the contrary, they were fabricated and posted on a US website by the individuals behind the hacking. The Mail has also acknowledged that the Claimants had no involvement in or knowledge whatsoever of any chemical weapons plot and would never contemplate becoming involved in heinous activities of the kind referred to in the article.

For further information please contact Adam Tudor (adam.tudor@carter-ruck.com / 020 7353 5005).

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