

Queen announces defamation reform bill

LONDON, UK: Index has announced that thanks to our Libel Reform Campaign, the Queen has announced a defamation bill in the next parliament.

This will be the first wholesale attempt at reform since 1843 and an amazing achievement for the campaign and its 60 000 supporters. The bill will open the way to ending libel tourism and protecting free expression for journalists, writers, bloggers and scientists around the world. However, there is still work to be done and we will carry on fighting to make sure that the detail in the final Bill will truly deliver reform.

How you can help

We think that the Defamation Bill will be tabled sooner rather than later so it's really important that we keep the pressure on. Please sign our petition and let the government know there is real demand for reform.

What happens next?

The government published its draft Defamation Bill in March 2011, followed by its response to the Scrutiny Committee report on the draft Bill in February 2012. Both fell short of what is needed.

Over the coming months, the Libel Reform Campaign which represents the efforts of English PEN, Sense about Science and Index will continue to fight for:

- A public interest defence so people can defend themselves unless the claimant can show they have been malicious or reckless.
- A strong test of harm that strikes out claims unless the claimant can demonstrate serious and substantial harm and they have a real prospect of vindication.
- A restriction on corporations' ability to use the libel laws to silence criticism.
- Provisions for online hosts and intermediaries, who are not authors nor traditional publishers.

Follow the libel reform campaign on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

[Members and supporters of the Libel Reform Campaign react.](#)

For more information go to [Index on Censorship](#)

Source: Index on Censorship