

Mishcon de Reya Solicitors

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Dear Sirs

Article: "We resent the Evil Jew in Britain" 2 July 2008

Your e-mail of 4 July 2008 has been passed to us. We act for all relevant parties.

Our clients do not accept that the item posted on 2 July 2008 (the "Posting") is defamatory of Mr Sawalha, and propose to defend any claim that your client may bring in defamation vigorously.

The Posting commented upon a translation of a phrase in a news report in Arabic published on the website of Al Jazeera (the "Phrase"). Our clients obtained a translation of the Phrase, and reproduced it in good faith. Contrary to what you say, the translation is a reasonable one. Furthermore, the use of this language would be quite unexceptional from a person associated with Hamas, given its pronouncedly anti-Semitic programme.

The Phrase, "الوييل لليهودي", consists of two words: "وييل" and "اليهودي". "اليهودي" can mean both Jewish and Jew (as it, like many Arabic adjectives, can double as a noun). The second of these words, "وييل", is prefixed with "ال", which is Arabic for "the". This word is the word that was later changed by Al Jazeera.

The Al-Mawrid, Trilingual Dictionary, compiled by Dr. Rohi Baalbaki, translates this word as follows:

وييل *wabil* ضار سييء، سوخيم، *unhealthy, unwholesome, bad, evil, harmful, hurtful, detrimental, prejudicial, noxious, baneful, pernicious.*

Arabic adjectives always agree with the noun they qualify in number, gender and definiteness (the case here), so the noun phrase "الوييل لليهودي" can properly be translated as 'the Jewish evil'. This is the translation that was quoted in the Posting. Accordingly, it is not accepted that the translation was a "malevolent interpretation of a meaningless word".

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When the Phrase was later altered by Al Jazeera, the fact that it was changed was conscientiously reported by our clients. In the circumstances, our clients do not accept that it is appropriate for them to remove the Posting. The readers of Harry's Place are entitled to have available to them the sequence of postings without deletion. No question of an apology arises.

Shortly after the Posting, a press release was released by the British Muslim Initiative, of which your client is the President. Its language is defamatory in the extreme, characterising the Editors of Harry's Place as "racist", "underhand", "plainly lying", and "pure evil".

It would appear that your client and those with whom he associates believed that the proper response to the Posting comprised, first, defamatory abuse, and only then, the threat of defamation proceedings.

If your client is so unwise as to bring proceedings, our client would be entitled to make him a defendant in related proceedings.

Yours faithfully



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