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Dear Just Stop Oil

Thank you for your [letter of 28 September](#), addressed to the signatories of the open letter, [Lawyers for 1.5°C - Humanity's Lifeline](#).

More than 250 legal professionals have now signed the lawyers' letter. Since I can't speak for them all, I write only on behalf of Plan B.

You refer to the imprisonment last week of more than 50 Just Stop Oil activists for peaceful protest. If that had happened in Russia or China it would be headline news. It is painful to see courageous young people locked away in the name of the rule of law.

Meanwhile, the [latest report from Law Students for Climate Accountability](#) reveals that leading international law firms, many of them based in the UK, increased their support for fossil fuels by \$260,000,000,000 compared to the equivalent period in the previous year. These deadly transactions are legitimised by the British Courts and the regulators of the legal profession.

Taken as a whole, ignorance of the causes and impacts of climate breakdown cannot explain the British legal establishment's reversal of basic moral principles (ie that it is wrong to knowingly cause harm, and right to try to prevent it); any more than can incompetence explain the Government's disastrous response to the cost of living crisis (i.e. the provision of a vast fossil fuel subsidy to cap energy prices, funded from the tax-payer not the polluter, while lifting the moratorium on fracking, axing the programme of home insulation, and accelerating the grant of new oil and gas licences, contrary to all the available expert advice).

The real issue is the corrupting influence of the carbon economy's vast profits. The Conservative MP, Robert Halfon (also Chair of the Education Select Committee) recently referred tellingly to oil bosses as "[the new oligarchs](#)".

It is the duty of all of us to resist the corruption of our democratic institutions and the duty of legal professionals to resist the subversion of the rule of law. You're right to say that signing a letter is not enough. A meeting of the signatories had already been planned to consider the appropriate next steps.

Your personal criticism of the signatories to the letter is, however, crude and misdirected. You say:

“By providing legal services to fossil fuel corporations and governments in their pursuit of “extracting every last drop of oil and gas” you could be seen as aiding and abetting the commission of a crime. Do you want to face trial for complicity in murder?”

You make the false assumption that all legal professionals provide such services. The vast majority do not. To the contrary, a great many of the signatories to the letter apply their skill and energy to exposing the lawlessness of the carbon economy and to defending those who resist it - including in some cases, members of Just Stop Oil.

You imply that fear of future repercussions should stir us to take action. But those willing to step up are moved not by fear but by courage and their sense of injustice.

The actions you urge us to take include apology and imprisonment. The tone is “hellfire and brimstone”, not serious strategy. The duty to act in a moral crisis is the duty to act in accordance with conscience and to aim for practical and effective measures (not to conform to the prescription of others).

The City of London, aided by its legal advisers, supports 15% of global carbon emissions. Given the role of the British legal establishment in legitimising the carbon economy and in wrongly imprisoning so many brave young people, lawyers of good conscience can no longer stand by.

But the form our intervention should take is something we’ll need to work out for ourselves.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Crosland', with a stylized, cursive script.

Tim Crosland
Director, Plan B