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cc:

Heather Buchanan,
Director of Policy and Strategy,
All-Party Parliamentary Group on Fair Business Banking,
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Dear Emma,

I am writing to you as your constituent. I live at 8 Addison Crescent, London W14 8JP.

I would be very grateful for your assistance in respect of a charge against my home, registered by Barclays Bank. I believe that the charge was improperly obtained by the bank and I would greatly appreciate your support, given that my family and I face the loss of our home.

By way of background, in 2009 Barclays granted "equity release" of some £12,000,000 to my former husband, Ziad Takieddine, in the form of loans secured against our then matrimonial homes in London and Paris. Barclays granted the loans against our jointly-owned family homes without my knowledge or consent and in the middle of controversial divorce proceedings. The bank knew that my husband had filed for divorce prior to the loans and that the purpose of the "equity release" was to defraud me and my husband's other creditors, including the French government.

Barclays was fully aware that the loans facilitated my husband's criminal fraud not only against me but also against the French state. It was public knowledge that my husband was under investigation in France for tax evasion, money-laundering and political corruption offences, offences for which he has been charged and for which he currently faces trial.

Nonetheless, the bank not only assisted my former husband to secretly liquidate our joint matrimonial assets but also transferred the net proceeds of the loans to clandestine bank accounts in Lebanon and other remote offshore locations, beyond the reach of the English and French justice systems.

Barclays knew who they were dealing with. Mr Takieddine was recognised by the bank from the outset as a Politically Exposed Person and Barclays will have considered the various contemporaneous press reports linking him to money-laundering, political corruption, tax evasion and other serious criminal offences. Nonetheless, Barclays conspired with Mr Takieddine to undertake a course of action designed to defraud me and his other creditors.

Barclays' motivation was commercial. The bank benefitted from unusually high loan fees of more than £400,000 paid to itself and its advisors. Furthermore, it appears from the bank's internal documents that Barclays was also seeking to profit from Mr Takieddine's links with the Libyan regime of Colonel Gaddafi. Barclays was at the time seeking a major equity investment from Libya to avoid the UK government bail-out.

The Libyan links desired by Barclays were far from reputable. Mr Takieddine has publicly admitted that he carried millions of euros of Gaddafi's cash from Libya to France provide illegal financing for Nicolas Sarkozy's successful 2007 presidential campaign. Barclays also knew that by financing Mr Takieddine, the bank was helping to supply weapons to a convicted terrorist, Abdullah Senoussi, Gaddafi's brother-in-law and security chief, via an illegal arms contract studied and relied upon by Barclays, which contract has since been charged in France with complicity in acts of torture against Gaddafi's political opponents.

I am currently trying to sell my house but am being prevented from doing so by Barclays, which is refusing to agree to meet to discuss the controversial loans and has even refused to provide a mortgage redemption figure to my lawyers. It is possible that the bank has lost or destroyed some of its records of its dealings with Mr Takieddine. But I think that the proper course of action is for the bank to admit to its wrongdoing and to try to make amends.

I hope that you will agree that Barclays has treated me and continues to treat me most unfairly. I would be very grateful for your support, for example via a letter to the Chairman of the bank, Sir Ian Cheshire. The bank's registered address is 1 Churchill Place, London E14 5HP.

I am aware of the work done at the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Fair Business Banking and I would like to bring this matter to their attention. For this reason I am copying in Heather Buchanan, the APPG's Director of Policy and Strategy.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Nicola Johnson
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