



Ministry
of Justice

Matthew Hill

By Email Only

The Right Honourable
Dominic Raab MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Lord Chancellor & Secretary
of State for Justice

7 April 2022

Dear Matthew,

**LEGAL SECTOR EFFORTS TO ENFORCE THE SANCTION REGIME IN RESPONSE TO THE
RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE**

The UK government condemns the Russian government's unprovoked and premeditated war against Ukraine. This is a horrific attack on a democratic, sovereign European nation and the world is taking action to hold Russia accountable. The UK continues to play a leading role in supporting Ukraine and, as you are aware, has imposed sanctions on Russia and Belarus. But the situation remains grave.

We only have to look at Russia – where corruption is rife and Government critics are silenced - to see why the rule of law is so important. I am proud that here in the UK the rule of law means that everyone has a right to access legal representation. The Government needs to defend these rights – in contrast to authoritarian jurisdictions. But clearly, the legal sector also has a responsibility under the sanctions regime to safeguard the UK and protect the reputation of their profession and our legal system.

Over the recent weeks the legal professions have come under significant scrutiny against the backdrop of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. There has been criticism of firms and chambers for acting on behalf of clients linked to Russia. I have and will continue to defend the rights of all – including those subject to sanctions – to access legal advice. But I expect legal professionals to operate to the highest ethical standards and to demonstrate this to the public. Thankfully, I am confident that the overwhelming majority do so.

The legal sector is in fact critical to the operation of an effective sanctions regime and ensuring designated persons comply with the restrictions placed on them. Government and the public look to the regulators to uphold the regime and give the highest confidence that it is being complied with.

I want to thank you for all your work to bring together the legal services regulators to step up compliance and enforcement activity and to look at how to further improve the effectiveness of the supervisory system. My officials will continue to engage with you to make sure that the sanctions regime and money laundering regulations are complied with. Thank you for sharing your insights with the department on the work the regulators have done so far and where there are opportunities for improvement, and we are now carefully considering how we might best support these efforts. I expect to see everyone playing their part and actively pursuing this agenda, and I look forward to hearing about the progress of this work soon.

I am keen to hear from you on how you plan to strengthen enforcement and compliance and how government can best support you in your oversight duties. We must continue to act visibly on this issue to maintain confidence in the sector and the wider legal system, and to ensure we are standing strong with Ukraine.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dominic Raab', with a stylized flourish at the end.

RT HON DOMINIC RAAB MP