

From: [Redacted – Commons Press Office] <[Redacted]@parliament.uk>

Sent: 25 June 2025 17:25

To: [Redacted – Parliamentary Security Department] <[Redacted]@parliament.uk>; [Redacted – Speaker's Office] <[Redacted]@parliament.uk>; [Redacted – Serjeant-At-Arms Office] <[Redacted]@parliament.uk>

Cc: OYET, Ugbana <oyetu@parliament.uk>; [Redacted – Commons Press Office] <[Redacted]@parliament.uk>

Subject: FW: Media Pass application

Highly Restricted: Security

Hi all

I wanted to get the below on your radar, and also get your input.

We have been approached by an investigative news website, Declassified UK, to have a parliamentary media pass.

For context – The normal process when we get an application from an outlet that doesn't currently have a press pass is for the SAA's office to contact me for a view as to whether a particular media outlet should have a press pass, but ultimately it's the SAA's office that takes the final decision, based on my input.

Normally it is fairly clear-cut, however the below is potentially more sensitive.

Declassified specialise in quite in-depth investigations, with a particular focus on Foreign Affairs from a particular standpoint (see, for example, this recent piece regarding the Commissioner - <https://www.declassifieduk.org/parliament-watchdog-accused-of-bias-over-treatment-of-pro-israel-politicians/>). The requester is also the author of quite a contentious book into political corruption – <https://martinrhyswilliams.com/parliament-ltd/>.

Declassified's nearest "rivals", OpenDemocracy, do hold a media pass.

They are regulated by IMPRESS.

I am minded to decline, for the following reasons

- They are only requesting access on a weekly basis, so one could argue they could access as a member of the public, rather than needing a full time media pass
- They are not specifically a politics organisation, as their main focus is around foreign affairs

However, if we did decline, I think they will potentially ask some quite detailed questions around access policies – requests are generally taken on a case by case basis, and I think they may question why some other 'fringe'/non-traditional media like OpenDemocracy have a pass when we would be declining Declassified. They are the type of outlet that may do some commentary about being "shut out", and make unwarranted comparisons with the fact they've done critical articles about Parliament. And likely follow-up and FOI queries relating to media pass allocations etc. That of course isn't a reason to approve them – and we wouldn't comment publicly on access policies – but just wanted to highlight the risk.

Do let me know if you have any thoughts/input, but as it stands I'd recommend declining (and sorry for the length of the email, but I wanted to set out the full context)

Kind regards
[Redacted]

From: OYET, Ugbana <oyetu@parliament.uk>

Sent: 25 June 2025 18:31

To: [Redacted – Commons Press Office] <[Redacted]@parliament.uk>; [Redacted – Parliamentary Security Department] <[Redacted]@parliament.uk>; [Redacted – Speaker's Office] <[Redacted]@parliament.uk>; [Redacted – SAA Office] <[Redacted]@parliament.uk>

Cc: [Redacted – Commons Press Office] <Redacted@parliament.uk>

Subject: RE: Media Pass application

Dear [Redacted],

Thank you for your email. It is very useful to have the context.

Do we know the coverage/readership for Declassified?

I think part of the criteria for a pass should include:

- Scale/size of readership/audience/coverage
- It is principally a politics outlet
- It will be on the estate at least 3 sitting days each week the House is sitting.

As at least two of the above criteria have not been met, I think a pass should be declined. However I am willing to hear other views.

Regards,
Ugbana

Ugbana Oyet
Serjeant At Arms