



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

June 2018

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about Tommy Robinson.

It is the case that courts have the power to impose reporting restrictions on criminal trials for a number of reasons. Witnesses in any criminal case can apply to the courts for reporting restrictions to provide lifetime protection from being identified in the media, if fear or distress about being identified is likely to affect the quality of their evidence.

A judge may also impose 'postponement orders' in linked trials to avoid jurors having their deliberations contaminated by what they might read or hear about the earlier linked trials. All reporting on the case is postponed until the conclusion of all cases involved. Breach of those reporting restrictions can be dealt with as a contempt of court by a single judge.

Mr Robinson had already been sentenced for contempt of court for breaching section 41 of the Criminal Justice Act 1925 in 2017. He was given a sentence of three months in prison, suspended for 18 months. He was warned that future behaviour of this nature would be treated as a contempt.

After he subsequently breached reporting restrictions he was given a sentence of 10 months in prison for this offence, plus the three month suspended sentence from his previous offence, to be served continuously.

Contempt proceedings do not attract a jury trial. The procedure for a court dealing with a criminal contempt is set out in the Criminal Procedure Rules. They allow a judge to deal with an offender immediately, subject to them being offered legal advice. The Crown Court can commit someone who commits contempt of court to prison for up to two years.



Mr Robinson pleaded guilty to breaching reporting restrictions and committed a second crime within the period of suspension of his first sentence. He was also sentenced in open court.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris".

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**