

UK reporter won't be prosecuted for hack leaks

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(AP) — British prosecutors said Tuesday they won't press charges against a Guardian journalist and her suspected police source over leaks about the country's high-profile phone hacking investigation.

The decision closes a sensitive case which has tested already strained relations between Britain's media and its largest police force, both of whom are struggling to deal with the fallout from the phone hacking scandal which erupted last year after revelations that journalists at the News of the World tabloid routinely hacked voicemails.

Media groups were angered that police were pursuing The Guardian reporter Amelia Hill over the leaks, especially given that her paper had helped uncover the scandal.

Britain's Crown Prosecution Service said in a statement Tuesday there was enough evidence to show that Hill had gotten leaks about the case from an unnamed 51-year-old detective constable, but that prosecuting them would not be in the public interest.

The Guardian said in a statement on its website that it welcomed the "sensible decision to abandon this worrying attempt to criminalize legitimate contact between journalists and confidential sources."

Hill, who has produced a string of exclusives surrounding the phone hacking investigation, said in a statement that implicating her in the investigation had been a "disproportionate response" from authorities

and a "sinister attempt to chill public-interest journalism."

Allison Levitt, principal legal adviser to the director of public prosecution, explained that the decision not to charge Hill came after considering new legal guidelines for criminality in journalism. In cases involving the media, prosecutors must weigh whether the public interest served by journalists' conduct outweighs the overall criminality alleged, Levitt explained.

Hill was working with other journalists on articles which were "capable of disclosing the commission of criminal offenses, were intended to hold others to account ... and were capable of raising and contributing to an important matter of public debate, namely the nature and extent of the influence of the media," Levitt said. "In her case, the public interest outweighs the overall criminality alleged."

The [phone-hacking](#) scandal has rocked Britain's establishment. It has spawned three parallel police investigations and led to the arrests of more than 40 journalists, public officials and media executives. Six people have been charged in relation to the investigations.

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