



# NEWSTATESMAN

## Bright's Blog

Politics uncovered by Martin Bright, New Statesman political editor



The Iraqi billionaire convicted of fraud in France has forced the Guardian-Observer to remove six articles from its website

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## Mr Nadmi Auchi (an update)

Posted by Martin Bright | 04 June 2008

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[I have decided to repost this. The lawyers representing Iraqi-British billionaire Nadhmi Auchi, have requested several changes to the original piece].

I was humbled by many of the winners at the Index on Censorship awards for freedom of expression last night (April 21). But I was especially struck by the comments of Julian Assange of Wikileaks, the phenomenally successful whistleblowing site. In particular he mentioned the importance of the unfashionable concept of syndicalism (for most people it seems Trade Unions are so last century) which had helped Wikileaks survive legal attacks in the US. His words truly warmed my heart.

More worrying was the news that the Guardian/Observer has been forced to pull down six articles about Nadhmi Auchi, the Iraqi businessman convicted of fraud in France in 2003. [Mr Auchi's lawyers have asked us to state that he denies guilt and is challenging the fairness of the trial in the European Court.] Auchi has been on the warpath since his name was connected with Tony Rezko, the Illinois fundraiser currently on trial in America, who was one of Barack Obama's earliest backers. In the UK, The Times has been pursuing the story with impressive tenacity.

The articles are still available in various places on the web but it's probably wise not to link to them from here! [Mr Auchi's lawyers have written to ask us to remove the names of the articles concerned.]

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## 6 comments from readers

### Southfork

05 June 2008 at 18:39

I find it hard to believe a supposedly liberal and free state such as the UK can still have such draconian libel laws on its books that obviously favour unsavoury characters. Remember Maxwell? But then nothing about the UK surprises me any more.

At least in the much maligned USA, more and more states have and are passing legislation to protect the freedom of speech of its citizens from such

silly English rules.

**knave**

05 June 2008 at 19:33

What about the man who sponsored your trip to isreal. Arms dealer.

You are a hypocrite

**Afrasiab**

06 June 2008 at 20:24

Soutfork what about the self censorship of theUSmedia when it comes to Israel?

No freedom of speech there.

**Serosch**

06 June 2008 at 20:28

Mr Bright, what about the people you so recently had breakfast with in occupied Palestinian territory, what do you think about their morals.

**Martin Bright**

09 June 2008 at 16:43

How did this end up being about Israel? I was talking about freedom of expression and the practical difficulties of writing about Mr Auchi.

**George Orwell**

02 July 2008 at 09:16

Not that people with lots of money can stifle free speech or anything!

We want to encourage people to comment on our content and to exchange views with other readers and hope this will be done on a courteous basis. However, if you encounter posts which are offensive please let us know by emailing [comments@newstatesman.co.uk](mailto:comments@newstatesman.co.uk) and we will take swift action where necessary.