

Opponents of Fox-Sky Deal Speak Out at Houses of Parliament

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A public meeting held at the British Parliament on Monday heard former opposition leader Ed Miliband demand that 21st Century Fox's proposed takeover of [Sky](#) be blocked because of a catalog of alleged wrongdoing at [Fox News](#) and other Murdoch-owned news outlets. Miliband, answering a question from *Variety*, also dismissed as "blackmail" a warning from [Sky](#) that it might shut down Sky News if the takeover deal is thwarted.

Former and current employees of [Fox News](#), Roger Ailes' former protégé, and a lawyer representing a host of clients with grievances against the network gathered in London to detail their experiences of working for and against Fox. The public meeting, chaired by former Labour Party leader and vocal Murdoch critic Miliband, took place inside the Palace of Westminster and came as the U.K.'s Competition and Markets Authority continues its in-depth review of Fox's proposed \$15 billion takeover of Sky.

Fox was not officially represented at the meeting, and has denied many of the allegations made by speakers at the gathering, who included current Fox News anchor [Kelly Wright](#), former Fox News Radio correspondent Jennifer Golloher, former Ailes associate [Joe Lindsley](#) and high-profile lawyer Douglas Wigdor.

Wright, fresh from speaking to the Competition and Markets Authority, talked about the alleged discrimination he endured and Fox News' alleged attempts to play down positive news from the African American community. Wright is suing the company for racial discrimination. Golloher, speaking publicly on the matter for the first time, and Lindsley also gave damning accounts of their experiences at Fox News and with Ailes.

Although the event mostly covered the activities of Fox News in the U.S., Miliband said the speakers' stories had a direct bearing on whether the Murdoch family would be fit and proper owners of Sky. He said that "a drive for commercial success overwhelms a commitment to decent, ethical standards" at Murdoch-owned companies. "That is the pattern that comes through from all of the different testimonies that we've heard: What matters above all is the bottom line and what doesn't matter is the rules or even the laws."

Miliband also attempted to draw a through-line with Fox's governance and the U.K.'s 2011 phone-hacking scandal. He said that a new corporate governance code Fox instituted in 2012 had not changed anything. "The same pattern of misbehavior and wrongdoing was repeated," Miliband said.

The CMA's probe into the Fox-Sky deal is still underway. The takeover has been approved by European Union authorities and in the other countries in which Sky operates, but has met with strong resistance in the U.K., where politicians and pressure groups such as Avaaz have sought to derail the bid.

Fox chief James Murdoch [has previously said the company](#) remains confident a deal will proceed. "Obviously we were disappointed" by the government's decision to call in the U.K.'s Competition and Markets Authority to examine the \$15 billion takeover bid, Murdoch said in September. "But we're also looking forward to engaging with the CMA....We're confident that it goes through."