

Prince Harry says tabloid coverage felt like ‘full blown stalking’

AFP | London, United Kingdom

Prince Harry on Wednesday blasted the publisher of two UK tabloid newspapers for “terrifying” coverage of his relationship with ex-girlfriend Chelsy Davy that felt like “full blown stalking”, as he gave evidence at London’s High Court.

On the third day of the highly anticipated nine-week trial, Harry began testifying against Associated Newspapers Ltd (ANL), the publisher of the Daily Mail and The Mail, which he and six others accuse of unlawful information gathering against them.

The newspaper group strenuously denies his claims.

Harry insisted in a witness statement to the court that the trial was not “not just about me” but was also in the wider public interest.

The suspicion that people close to him were leaking stories to the press created an atmosphere of “distrust”, he said, that led to the breakdown of his relationship with another girlfriend, Natalie Pinkham.

“It led to me not speaking to her for years,” he stated. “...but I now believe that it (the articles) will have come from listening in to our communications, voice-mail interception and/or blagging (impersonation).”

Referring to his romance with Davy, Harry said in his statement the coverage by two journalists



Britain's Prince Harry arrives outside the High Court in London on January 20, 2026, for the second day of the trial in his case against a major UK newspaper group.

in particular was oppressive.

“They turned up everywhere. It felt like full blown stalking and constant surveillance... This sort of intrusion was terrifying for Chelsy,” he said.

‘Hunted’ feeling

“It made her feel like she was being hunted and the press had caught her and it was terrifying for me too because there was nothing I could do to stop it,” he added.

The case has been brought

by Harry alongside six other high-profile figures, including pop icon Elton John and his husband David Furnish.

It is the prince’s last active legal case in his long-running crusade against the British media.

“There is obviously a personal element to bringing this claim, motivated by truth, justice and accountability, but it is not just about me,” he said in the statement unveiled as he entered the witness box.

“There is also a social element

concerning all the thousands of people whose lives were invaded because of greed,” the prince said.

Dressed in a dark suit and striped tie, Harry, 41, took the stand at London’s High Court late morning, swearing an oath on the bible before facing

questions from ANL’s legal team.

He made history in 2023 by becoming the first senior British royal to enter the witness box in more than a century, when he testified in his successful hacking claim against Mirror Group Newspapers (MGN).

Last year, on the eve of another scheduled trial, Rupert Murdoch’s UK tabloid publisher NGN agreed to pay him “substantial damages” for privacy breaches, including phone hacking.

“Lurid”

In the ANL case, the seven well-known figures -- in-

cluding actors Liz Hurley and Sadie Frost -- accuse the publisher of illegally intercepting voicemail messages, listening in on phone calls and deceptively obtaining private information.

They allege it paid private investigators implicated in other phone-hacking lawsuits for some of the unlawful information used to generate dozens of stories.

The accusations cover a period from at least 1993 to 2018 in some instances.

ANL has consistently denied the claims, calling them “lurid” and “preposterous”.

King Charles III’s younger son has long railed against media intrusion, blaming paparazzi for the death of his mother Princess Diana, who was killed in a Paris car crash in 1997 while trying to shake them off.

Campaigner Doreen Lawrence -- whose son Stephen was murdered in a 1993 racist attack -- and ex-politician Simon Hughes are the other two claimants.

David Sherborne, representing the seven, told the High Court on Monday that he planned to show “there was clear and systematic use of unlawful gathering of information” at ANL.

Antony White, ANL’s lawyer, has countered that evidence will prove it has “provided an explanation through a long series of witnesses of the sourcing by its journalists of the 50-plus articles” concerned.

Chelsy Davy

Japan restarts world’s biggest nuclear plant

AFP | Kariwa, Japan

The world’s biggest nuclear power plant was restarted Wednesday for the first time since the 2011 Fukushima disaster, its Japanese operator said, despite persistent safety concerns among residents.

The plant was “started at 19:02” (1002 GMT), Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) spokesman Tatsuya Matoba told AFP of the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa plant in Niigata prefecture.

The regional governor approved the resumption last month, although public opinion remains sharply divided.

On Tuesday, a few dozen protesters -- mostly elderly -- braved freezing temperatures to demonstrate in the snow near the plant’s entrance, whose buildings line the Sea of Japan coast.

“It’s Tokyo’s electricity that is produced in Kashiwazaki, so why should the people here be put at risk? That makes no sense,” Yumiko Abe, a 73-year-old resident, told AFP.

Around 60 percent of residents oppose the restart, while 37 percent support it, according to a survey conducted in September.

TEPCO said Wednesday it would “proceed with careful verification of each plant facility’s integrity” and address any issues appropriately and transparently.



An aerial view of Tokyo Electric Power Company Kashiwazaki-Kariwa Nuclear Power Plant in Kashiwazaki City, Niigata Prefecture.

Kashiwazaki-Kariwa is the world’s biggest nuclear power plant by potential capacity, although just one reactor of seven was restarted.

The facility was taken offline when Japan pulled the plug on nuclear power after a colossal earthquake and tsunami sent three reactors at the Fukushima atomic plant into meltdown in 2011.

However, resource-poor Japan now wants to revive atomic energy to reduce its reliance on

fossil fuels, achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 and meet growing energy needs from artificial intelligence.

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has voiced support for the energy source.

Fourteen reactors, mostly in western and southern Japan, have resumed operation since the post-Fukushima shutdown under strict safety rules, with 13 running as of mid-January.

Kashiwazaki-Kariwa is the first TEPCO-run unit to restart

since 2011. The company also operates the stricken Fukushima Daiichi plant, now being decommissioned.

Nearly 15 years after the disaster, “the situation is still not under control in Fukushima, and TEPCO wants to revive a plant? For me, that’s absolutely unacceptable”, said Keisuke Abe, an 81-year-old demonstrator.

‘Anxious and fearful’

The vast Kashiwazaki-Kariwa complex has been fitted with

a 15-metre-high (50-foot) tsunami wall, elevated emergency power systems and other safety upgrades.

However, residents raised concerns about the risk of a serious accident, citing frequent cover-up scandals, minor accidents and evacuation plans they say are inadequate.

“I think it’s impossible to evacuate in an emergency,” Chie Takakuwa, a 79-year-old resident of Kariwa, told AFP.

On January 8, seven groups opposing the restart submitted a petition signed by nearly 40,000 people to TEPCO and Japan’s Nuclear Regulation Authority.

The petition said the plant sits on an active seismic fault zone and noted it was struck by a strong quake in 2007.

“We can’t remove the fear of being hit by another unforeseen earthquake,” it said.

“Making many people anxious and fearful so as to send electricity to Tokyo... is intolerable.”

Before the 2011 disaster -- which killed around 18,000 people -- nuclear power generated about a third of Japan’s electricity.

String of scandals

Japan’s nuclear industry has also faced a string of scandals and incidents in recent weeks, including data falsification by Chubu Electric Power to underestimate seismic risks.

At Kashiwazaki-Kariwa, TEPCO said Saturday that an alarm system failed during a test.

“Safety is an ongoing process, which means operators involved in nuclear power must never be arrogant or overconfident,” TEPCO President Tomoaki Kobayakawa said in an interview with the Asahi daily newspaper.

Japan is the world’s fifth-largest single-country emitter of carbon dioxide after China, the United States, India and Russia, and is heavily dependent on imported fossil fuels.

Nearly 70 percent of its electricity in 2023 came from coal, gas and oil -- a share Tokyo wants to slash to 30-40 percent over the next 15 years as it expands renewable energy and nuclear power.



Nuclear energy produces large amounts of electricity with very low greenhouse gas emissions—over its full life cycle, its carbon footprint is comparable to wind power and lower than that of solar energy.