

CLAIM NO. QB-2019-003443

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

QUEEN'S BENCH DIVISION

**MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS LIST
BETWEEN:**

**(1) SITUATION PUBLISHING LIMITED
(2) GARETH CORFIELD
(3) PAUL KUNERT**

Claimants

- and -

**(1) ARIA TAHERI
(2) ARIA TECHNOLOGY LIMITED
(3) VELO SYSTEMS LIMITED**

Defendants

STATEMENT IN OPEN COURT

Counsel for the Defendants

My Lord, I appear on behalf of the Defendants. My friend Mr Wheelhouse appears on behalf of the Claimants.

My client, Mr Taheri, is the founder and CEO of ATL, a computer hardware retailer based in Manchester, UK, which trades under the name of "Aria PC", and the owner of Velo Systems Limited, the company which operates the Aria PC website (www.aria.co.uk).

Over the course of the past 18 months Mr Taheri published a number of highly defamatory publications in the form of tweets on his Twitter account (@ariataheri), several articles online on the Aria PC website, and a paid for Google Advert relating to the Defendants' reporting of the Upper Tier Tribunal case of *Aria Technology Limited v HMRC* [2018] UKUT 0363 (TCC).

The First Defendant's online publications defamed The Register and two of its employees, namely Gareth Corfield, a journalist, and Paul Kunert, The Register's UK Editor. In his publications, he accused The Register, Mr Corfield and Mr Kunert of publishing fake news and producing click-bait journalism. He also warned other businesses not to advertise with The Register on the basis that any association would harm their reputations.

In addition to the publications mentioned above, he also published several unsavoury cartoons on behalf of ATL, which depicted and targeted Mr Corfield and Mr Kunert personally.

Mr Taheri now accepts that his tweets, online articles, the Google Advert and the cartoons were false and highly defamatory and should never have been published. He deeply regrets having done so and apologises unreservedly for having done so.

He has agreed to settle this claim by paying significant damages and costs to Mr Corfield and Mr Kunert, and to provide undertakings not to repeat the false claims that he made.

Counsel for the Claimants

My Lord, I accept all that my friend Mr Rudman has said and I accordingly ask for leave that the record be withdrawn.

Andrew Wheelhouse

Jake Rudman

Solicitor for the Claimants

Counsel for the Defendants