

Princess seeks forced marriage protection order for her child

By Steve Bird

PRINCESS HAYA BINT AL HUSSEIN, the youngest wife of the multi-billionaire ruler of Dubai, has urged a British court to protect one of her children by granting a forced marriage protection order.

The Jordanian princess, who fled to Britain in May with her two children "in fear for her life", is fighting an application from her husband, Sheikh Mohammed, for the "summary return" of the youngsters to the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Princess Haya is also seeking a non-molestation order, a process normally used to protect someone who claims they have been subjected to domestic violence. However, the details surrounding the order, including to whom it applies, cannot be reported.

The children are living with their mother in her £85million home in Kensington, west London. The princess has applied successfully for them to be wards of court, and any decisions about their future cannot be made without the approval of the presiding judge, Sir Andrew McFarlane, the president of the Family Courts Division.

Princess Haya, 45, attended the first day of the preliminary hearing at the Royal Courts of Justice in London. It

is the first time she has been seen in public since she left her family home in the Gulf last month.

In what is likely to be one of the most expensive child welfare cases in British family court history that may reveal how women are treated in the Dubai royal household, Princess Haya sat next to her lawyer, Baroness Shackleton, and stared intently, listening to proceedings.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, 70, the founder of the Godolphin horse racing stable and thought to be worth £9billion, is not in court but is represented by Lady Helen Ward, a family and divorce lawyer.

He and his estranged wife are both friends with the Queen, due to their shared love of horses.

A court order is in place which means the names, ages and gender of their two children and details of the case cannot be reported.

However, according to the Government's website, the "forced marriage protection order" the princess is seeking for one of her children is commonly used to prevent someone "threatened with a forced marriage" leaving the country.

The former Olympic equestrian, who became the sheikh's sixth wife in 2004, was said to have flown on a private jet to Germany, before



Princess Haya, right, the estranged wife of the ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed, left, leaves the High Court in London with her lawyer, Baroness Shackleton

making her way to the UK. While the exact details of why she left are not known, some have said it stemmed from the earlier treatment of two of the sheikh's princess daughters who also tried to flee.

Princess Latifa, 33, ran away from Dubai last year to try to seek asylum.

However, she was seized off the coast of India by commandos and returned to Dubai.

She recorded a video before her capture in which she warned her life was a sham and claimed she had suffered abuse. In December last year, Princess Latifa was pictured alongside Mary Robinson, the former president of

Ireland and friend of Princess Haya, in the Dubai family home in what was largely seen as a publicity stunt.

In 2000, Princess Shamsa ran away from her father's estate near Chobham in Surrey. It is believed she was later abducted and returned to Dubai.

It has been claimed Princess Haya, the half-sister of King Abdullah II of Jordan, fled Dubai because she learnt "the truth" about Princess Latifa.

The sheikh, the vice-president and prime minister of the UAE as well as leader of Dubai, is said to have 23 children by his different wives.

A poem recently appeared on his official Instagram page thought to have

'There is a public interest in the public understanding... proceedings that are before the court'

been written by him which accused an unnamed woman of "treachery and betrayal".

The judge yesterday allowed the media to report how Princess Haya had applied for wardship of their children, as well as for a forced marriage protection order and a non-molestation order.

Rejecting an application by Sheikh Mohammed's lawyers for those details to be subject to reporting restrictions, Sir Andrew ruled that "there is a public interest in the public understanding, in very broad terms, proceedings that are before the court."

The hearing continues.

Neuroscientists create software to read brain and help people with speech loss to 'talk'

By Lizzie Roberts

NEUROSCIENTISTS have created brain-reading software that can decode speech signals in real-time into written sentences, potentially transforming the lives of people who have lost the ability to speak.

The software is the first of its kind to show how the intention to say specific words can be extracted from the brain

activity and converted into text quickly enough to keep pace with a normal conversation. The research analysed listening and speaking together, rather than separately like in previous studies, to build up a picture of how the brain operates in real time.

Created by scientists at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), the model currently only works for certain basic sentences, but it is hoped it

can help create an advanced system that can decode the words a person intends to say in real-time.

Patients who experience facial paralysis, due to a stroke or spinal cord injury, may partially or completely lose their ability to speak.

But the areas in the brain which control the muscles of the jaw, lips, tongue, and larynx to produce speech are often intact and active. It could then be

possible to use these intentional speech signals to decode what patients are trying to say.

"Currently, patients with speech loss due to paralysis are limited to spelling words out very slowly using residual eye movements or muscle twitches to control a computer interface," said Edward Chang, a speech neuroscientist and one of the paper's authors.

"But in many cases, information

needed to produce fluent speech is still there in their brains. We just need the technology to allow them to express it."

The research, published in the journal *Nature* and funded by Facebook, placed small electrodes directly on the brain of three epilepsy patients, all of whom had normal speech.

The electrodes allowed researchers to record their brain activity, while they were asked a set of nine questions

and asked to read a list of 24 potential responses. Using this data, the team then created a computer model that was trained to match patterns of brain activity to the questions the patients heard and the answers they gave.

The software was able to identify from the brain signals what questions the patient had heard and the response they gave, with an accuracy of 76 per cent and 61 per cent respectively.

Language of the natural world being 'overtaken by technology'

By Anita Singh
ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

IF THE words cloud, stream and tweet bring to mind nature and birdsong, you are the last of a dying breed.

Research has found the language of the natural world is being lost or overtaken by references to technology.

Modern usage of the word "tweet" now refers to social media rather than birdsong in 99 per cent of cases, a comparative analysis of conversations have shown.

In the 1990s, a stream was a small river and a net was something you used to catch things.

Now those definitions have fallen to 36 per cent and 63 per cent respectively – a stream is how your audio and video are played online, and "the net" is the internet.

Usage of the word "web" in terms of nature has fallen from 71 per cent two decades ago to seven per cent now. And while 100 per cent of references to a

"cloud" in the Nineties were about the sky, the figure has fallen to 77 per cent as the remaining 23 per cent think of it as a place to store online data.

Researchers at the University of Leeds used two bodies of transcribed, informal conversations among members of the public, comprising five

'If today's children aren't connected to nature, who is going to stand up for our countryside in the future?'

million words in the Nineties and 12million words in the 2010s.

In the earlier conversations, 100 per cent of references to a "field" concerned grass or farmland. That has fallen to 70 per cent, with modern conversation taking in the metaphorical fields of work, gravity or energy.

The study was commissioned by the National Trust to mark the launch of its

50 Things To Do Before You're 11½ initiative, which lists free activities including cloud-watching, making friends with a bug and getting up early to observe a sunrise.

Andy Beer, the organisation's regional director for the Midlands, said: "As a nation we are losing our connection with nature."

"This is really worrying for us as a conservation charity."

"One of the key reasons we were formed was to protect and look after green spaces and wildlife for the benefit of the nation. If today's children aren't connected to nature, then who is going to stand up for our countryside and wildlife in the future?"

Dr Robbie Love, a linguistics fellow who conducted part of the study, said: "Language represents what's important to a culture or society. Nature language being replaced or used less frequently suggests nature potentially becoming less important or being replaced by other things."



Fossil fools Climate change rebels chained themselves to the wrong building in the City of London yesterday. Their target was Drax, which plans to build a gas power station in North Yorkshire, but it moved premises last year. Instead 200 activists protesting against the use of fossil fuels brought chaos to the offices of Statkraft, a Norwegian renewable energy firm.

Equitable Life

Time to decide on the future of the Equitable

We have been writing to policyholders about an important Proposal. If the Proposal is approved, all policyholders who are still with the Equitable would be affected. Policyholders that have already moved their policy elsewhere, or cashed in their benefits, will not be affected by the Proposal.

If approved the Proposal would:

- ▶ Increase With-Profits Policy Values with an immediate one-off Uplift;
- ▶ Remove Investment Guarantees (including any guaranteed annual increases) and any With-Profits Switching Rights;
- ▶ Convert With-Profits Policies to Unit-Linked Policies; and
- ▶ Transfer the Equitable's business to Utmost Life and Pensions

With-profits policyholders will be asked to vote as part of this process and the whole Proposal requires approval by the High Court.

We are currently writing out to all affected policyholders to provide full details, including the risks and benefits, so they are able to make a decision about whether the Proposal is right for them.

Our website www.equitable.co.uk has also been updated with information about the Proposal and all the key documents.

If you think you have a policy with us and haven't heard from us, please let us know as we want to make sure that we reach as many policyholders as we can, to enable them to have their say.

If you have any questions you can reach us in the following ways:

- 📞 UK Callers: **0330 159 1530**
- 📞 Outside the UK: **+44 1296 386242**
- ✉ Equitable Life, Walton Street, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP21 7QW
- 🌐 Website: www.equitable.co.uk
- ✉ Email: enquiries@equitable.co.uk

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