



Mehreen Faruqi launches court action against Pauline Hanson for 'insulting and humiliating' tweet

By political reporter [Nour Haydar](#)

Posted Wed 3 May 2023 at 4:18pm, updated Thu 4 May 2023 at 12:33am



Mehreen Faruqi has launched the action in the Federal Court. (ABC News: Ian Cutmore)

Greens deputy leader Mehreen Faruqi has launched court action against One Nation leader Pauline Hanson over an "insulting and humiliating" tweet, which she alleges breached racial discrimination laws.

Senator Faruqi claims Senator Hanson violated section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act when she tweeted last year that she should "pack your bags and piss off back to Pakistan".

In documents filed in the Federal Court on Wednesday, Senator Faruqi's lawyers allege the tweet is unlawful and have asked the court to stop Senator Hanson from repeating the phrase or similar phrases like "go back to where you came from" in public.

Her lawyers allege the tweet "did offend, insult, humiliate and intimidate" Senator Faruqi and "other people who share attributes" with her, adding that it "was done because of the race, colour or national or

Key points:

- Greens Senator Mehreen Faruqi alleges a tweet by the One Nation leader breached racial discrimination laws
- Court documents say Pauline Hanson's tweet is unlawful under section 18 of the Racial Discrimination Act
- Senator Faruqi wants the tweet removed, and Senator Hanson

ethnic origin of the applicant and some of the people in the group".

blocked from repeating similar comments in public

Senator Faruqi's lawyers have also asked the court to order Senator Hanson to delete the original tweet and publish a new post acknowledging she has "committed unlawful offensive behaviour" and pin it to her profile for three months.

Senator Faruqi's team are seeking the court require Senator Hanson to undertake anti-racism training and pay \$150,000 to a not-for-profit organisation nominated by Senator Faruqi.

The ABC contacted Senator Hanson for comment but a spokesman said she would not be commenting on the matter.



Mehreen Faruqi is the Greens deputy leader. (ABC News: Matt Roberts)

In a written statement, Senator Faruqi told the ABC Senator Hanson's tweet "unleashed a frenzy of hate and abuse" which lasted for days.

"This court action is about holding her accountable and using the Racial Discrimination Act to prevent her from engaging in bigoted conduct that hurts people in the future."

Last year, Senator Faruqi lodged a complaint with the Australian Human Rights Commission over the tweet, but she said Senator Hanson declined to participate in the process.

As a result, the complaint was terminated by the commission on March 8 because there was no reasonable prospect of the matter being settled by conciliation.

Senator Hanson posted the incendiary tweet on the day of Queen Elizabeth II's death in September last year, after Senator Faruqi called for a treaty with First Nations and said she could not mourn "the leader of a racist empire built on stolen lives, land and wealth of colonised people".

Senator Faruqi said she decided to start legal action against Senator Hanson because people who have faced "the sear of racism" want to see discrimination called out and held to account.

"I'm drawing a line in the sand and saying enough is enough," she said.

"Like many migrants and people of colour in this country, I've been told to 'go back to where I come from' hundreds of times and it never gets easier.

"Being told to go back to where we come from is the ultimate racist dog whistle because it tries to rob you of your belonging to the place you call home and paints you as 'un-Australian.'"



Pauline Hanson made the comments on Twitter on the day Queen Elizabeth died. (ABC News: Ian Cutmore)

Senator Faruqi emigrated to Australia from Pakistan in 1992 and became Australia's first Muslim senator when she joined the Senate in 2018 after having served in the New South Wales parliament.

She said the pain caused by Senator Hanson's comment "is like putting salt on the open wounds of racism I already carry from past attacks".

"It never gets easier to deal with racist attacks," she said.

"It hurts every time.

"It questions my belonging to a place which has been home to me for 31 years and shakes my sense of worth."

Section 18C makes it unlawful for someone to do an act that is reasonably likely to "offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate" someone because of their race or ethnicity.