

## Football Association embroiled in racism row

By [Kathryn Batte](#)

Wednesday 1 November 2017



Image: Wikimedia Commons

### **More doom and gloom surrounding FA as officials are called to resign over handling of Eni Aluko discrimination**

FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION chiefs Martin Glenn and Greg Clarke have faced calls to resign over their handling of the Eni Aluko discrimination case. Aluko, 30, who had accused former England women's boss, Mark Sampson, of making racially discriminating remarks towards both herself and teammate Drew Spence, put her case before the Digital, Culture, Sport and Media Committee.

The FA were forced to issue an official apology after independent barrister Katharine Newton revealed that there was now overwhelming evidence that Sampson did make racist, "ill-judged attempts at humour" on two occasions to both players. Newton's two previous investigations had cleared Sampson of any wrong doing but failure to interview either Aluko or Spence had prompted claims of an FA cover-up. Newton's fresh findings assert that Sampson told Aluko to make sure her Nigerian family didn't bring the Ebola virus with them to Wembley in 2014 and asked Spence, a mixedrace player, how many times she had been arrested.

“  
”

Clearly the FA still has a long way to go on the road to equality

England women's goalkeeping coach, Lee Kendall, was also accused of regularly speaking to Aluko in a fake Caribbean accent. Kendall had to be sent home from France, where the England squad were preparing ahead of a friendly match two weeks ago, amid the allegations. Sampson's four year tenure as England women's manager ended in September after new information on an old safeguarding issue came to light which concluded that the Welshman had inappropriate relationships with players he coached at Bristol Academy.

This came a day after he had taken charge of England's first competitive game following their semi-final exit from the Women's European Championships in the summer. England had eased past Russia 6-0 in a World Cup qualifier and players made a point of celebrating the first goal by embracing their manager – a clear statement of support for him. Aluko expressed her anger at these actions on Twitter: “For the most together team in the world tonight's ‘message’ only shows a level of disrespect that represents division and selfish action.”

You can perhaps forgive the England women's squad for expressing support for their manager who had twice been cleared of any wrong-doing. However, surely the comfortable 6-0 win in itself would have sufficed without the exaggerated celebration which was both insensitive and disrespectful. Whether spontaneous or not, those actions now look foolish.

Despite the FA clearly stating the reasons for Sampson's dismissal, many believed Aluko's claims were at the root of the cause and she came under an unfair amount of criticism. Former England goalkeeper, David James, posted tweets (since deleted) which effectively accused Aluko of lying: “Mark Sampson sacked as @England women's manager?! Seems some wasted talent can't deal with the fact they aren't good enough! #enialuko.” James is one of a number of people on social media who were quick to label Aluko as a troublemaker without having any idea of the facts.

During the hearing in the House of Commons, it was also discovered that the FA had withheld half of an £80 000 out-of-court settlement it had agreed with Aluko. The player claimed that Glenn had threatened that she would not receive her money unless she issued a statement that the FA was not institutionally racist which Aluko believed was “bordering on blackmail”. Glenn denied this was the reason for withholding the payment. MP and committee chairman Damian Collins called for the four FA executives involved in the case – Glenn, Clarke, Technical Director Dan Ashworth, and the Human Resources Director, Rachel Brace – to resign.

I had the pleasure of meeting Aluko when I went to Sweden to watch the 2013 European Championships. Her brother played for Hull City at the time and as a lifelong Tigers fan I took the opportunity to have a conversation with her.

She was extremely friendly and generous with her time, and her level of intelligence was obvious – Aluko is a qualified lawyer and has worked on commercial deals for David Beckham, One Direction and Victoria Pendleton to name but a few. That's why, when these allegations first arose, the idea that Aluko would ‘make up’ something so serious just didn't sit right with me. That Mark Sampson was twice cleared before being found to have made racist comments is completely unacceptable.

In addition, the treatment of Eni Aluko by not only the Football Association, but certain journalists and other people involved in the game (like David James) has been unfair, unjust and shameful. Many people have been too quick to judge the situation without a clear understanding of the facts. The FA have made clear errors in their handling of the Mark Sampson affair and their treatment of Eni Aluko.

The case becomes more and more embarrassing for the organisation but despite the humiliating

appearance at the parliamentary inquiry, chiefs Glenn and Clarke have reportedly been told their jobs are safe and have remarkably received full-backing from the FA board. Hopefully, Aluko's courage to stand up and speak out will encourage others to do the same in the future.

Clearly, the FA has a long way to go on the road to equality.



Most Read

Discussed

1. [Men's Football 3s fight back to win on Derby Day](#)
2. [Premier League Round-Up: Gameweek 15](#)
3. [Zidane the greatest of all time](#)
4. [Mind over Matter: An insight into the psychology of boxing](#)
5. [Women's sport to open and close Roses 2019](#)
6. [Is lad culture really a bad thing?](#)

## Write for Nouse Sport

[Get in touch with the editors](#)

[Join the Facebook group](#)

## More in Sport

[York 'Movember' total revealed](#)

[Premier League Round-Up: Gameweek 15](#)

[Premier League Round-Up: Gameweek 14](#)

[Men's Football 3s fight back to win on Derby Day](#)

[Premier League Round-Up: Gameweek 13](#)

[Netball 1s show Roses mettle in front of large crowd](#)

[About Nouse](#)  
[Who's Nouse](#)  
[Website Credits](#)  
[Contact Us](#)  
[Advertising](#)  
[Archives](#)  
[Student Discounts](#)  
[Print Editions](#)  
[Mini-Sites](#)  
[Nouse on Twitter](#)

[Nouse on Facebook](#)

[Nouse on Google+](#)

© 1964–2018 Nouse

[Policies](#) |

