

## Fighting fake news

Sir, Your report "Russian network uses AI chatbots to spread disinformation" (Mar 6) exposes a critical vulnerability in our digital landscape: the manipulation of AI chatbots to spread falsehoods. Taiwan has long been on the frontlines of combating such disinformation. Facing relentless attempts to sway public opinion, the country has developed real-time fact-checking systems to swiftly debunk false narratives, digital literacy programs to help citizens critically assess information sources and international collaborations that strengthen global defences against these threats.

As AI-driven disinformation tactics grow more sophisticated, democracies worldwide must take proactive steps. Enhancing AI resilience through better detection mechanisms, investing in media literacy to equip people with critical thinking skills and fostering global co-operation will be essential in safeguarding information integrity. Taiwan's model shows that resilience is possible without restricting free speech. The global community should take note and

apply these lessons before AI-generated propaganda further undermines democratic societies.

**Shannon Shiau**

Visiting scholar, Sigur Centre for Asian Studies, George Washington University

## Sentencing rules

Sir, The difficulty in forcing prisoners to attend court for their sentencing is clearly illustrated in the Kyle Clifford case (letter, Mar 13). Clifford received a whole of life tariff when sentenced. What further sanction exists to the court to punish his non-attendance — torture perhaps? In my experience it was only in the most egregious of cases that defendants refused to attend their sentencing. Generally they knew what was likely to happen to them and were too cowardly to face their victims.

**His Honour David Ticehurst**

Circuit judge 1998 -2020;  
Winscombe, Somerset

Sir, When I was first appointed, before sentencing an individual it was necessary to check the most recent sentence confirmed by the Court of Appeal, which could be found in