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EasyJet chief says comments from Sir Stelios ‘disturbing’

By Oliver Gill and Simon Foy

EASYJET boss Johan Lundgren has branded a campaign by the airline’s founder to remove him “disturbing” and “extraordinarily unhelpful” as it scrambles to survive a collapse in global air travel.

Mr Lundgren hit back after [Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou](#) called for him to be sacked along with chairman John Barton as a war of words escalates over the low-cost airline’s strategy.

The deepening of hostilities came as easyJet counted the cost of the coronavirus pandemic, saying losses could top £380m in the first half.

The Luton-based carrier is the first major UK airline to secure taxpayer support. It has raised £600m through the Government’s Covid Corporate Financing Facility. EasyJet said it now has enough cash to survive nine months of grounding.

But Sir Stelios, its biggest shareholder, has criticised bosses for sticking to a contract with Airbus for new aircraft, which he says will prove ruinously expensive. EasyJet said it has no ability to terminate the contract due to Covid-19, rebutting Sir Stelios’s claim that the airline could scrap the deal through a “force majeure” clause.

