

AVIATION

EasyJet founder calls for senior heads to roll over Airbus deal

By Simon Neville

EasyJet's founder and largest shareholder Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou has called for the ousting of the company's chief executive and chairman.

The business tycoon accused the company of behaving like "scoundrels" over its decision to press ahead with a £4.5bn deal to buy new aircraft from Airbus.

The billionaire's remarks came as his shares in the airline lost around £1.2bn in value in less than a month.

Sir Stelios (*inset*) said he wanted the chief executive Johan Lundgren out for "sending £1.5bn of our money to Airbus whilst running an 'aircraft parking lot' for nine months".

He added that the chairman John Barton should also go for "refusing to investigate an independent inquiry to investigate if the Airbus bribery techniques exposed by the UK court judgment on 31 January 2020 have been used in securing the easyJet order by Airbus".

Since the coronavirus pandemic grounded easyJet's entire operation, the company has turned to the Government for a £600m loan.

But Sir Stelios warned: "What the scoundrels are not telling us at all is how much money the company will burn each week after the resumption of flying, which will be well in excess of the £40m per week that they state that they burn whilst the fleet is grounded.

"Flying half-empty planes will be heavily loss-making. That £40m per week of cash burn is before the payments to Airbus... UK taxpayers should be really worried now that

they will not see any of their money back in March 2021."

