

# Green Party accuses Government of “ripping up” environmental protections



28 October 2020

Responding to Government amendments to the Environment Bill currently going through Parliament, Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party of England and Wales said:

“Government’s vague long-term plans to deliver environmental improvements, ‘enabling’ local authorities and ‘promoting’ resource efficiency amount to little when compared with the European law it intends to replace.

“It was clear that Brexit would weaken environmental protections and the government’s proposed Office of Environmental Protection was a toothless watchdog. But the government amendments to the Environment Bill would allow the Government to basically tell the Office of Environmental Protection what to do.

“Given that the inspiration for Brexit amongst many Conservative MPs was precisely ripping up the ‘red tape’ that has protected our countryside, waterways, and natural habitats for decades, to have no route to independent legal redress would be a source of considerable concern.

“The Green Party is campaigning for a strong, independent environmental regulator with legal powers to prosecute the government for breaches of environmental law. We are supporting amendments to the Environment Bill that will create powerful environmental protections for decades to come.”

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## Green Party Celebrates new UN Nuclear Weapons Treaty



26 October 2020

- **UK government should establish Global Britain as country committed to real security and peace**

As the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has now been ratified by 50 UN Member States, it will come into full legal effect under International Law on 22 January 2021.

The Treaty requires signatories to 'never under any circumstances ... develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices'. It provides two legal pathways by which nations holding nuclear weapons, like the UK, can eliminate their arsenals, and sets out the principles for establishing sustainable legal, institutional and verification systems for treaty compliance and implementation.

Caroline Lucas, Green Party MP and longstanding supporter of nuclear disarmament said:

"This Treaty represents a new hope for the world in an era of increasing instability. The stigmatisation of certain categories of weapons has been a crucial outcome of previous international treaties prohibiting chemical weapons, biological weapons, antipersonnel landmines and cluster munitions under international law. Weapons that are outlawed are increasingly seen as illegitimate, so this international prohibition of nuclear weapons is an essential step towards their global elimination. There can be no justification for holding these weapons that threaten mass destruction and appalling suffering were they ever to be used. At this time when we are having to find a new place in the world, the UK should establish our role as a country committed to peace and global disarmament."

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley said:

“I have written to Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab to request that he signs the Treaty in the name of the United Kingdom. As one of the three original signers of the 1970 Non-Proliferation Treaty, we have a particular responsibility to lead in fulfilling its binding legal requirements, including nuclear disarmament.

“Conservative politicians are fond of saying that they support multilateral disarmament, and yet the government has failed to participate so far. Now that this UN Treaty is about to become International Law, the government has an opportunity to show that their commitments are more than empty words.”

Rebecca Johnson, Green Party Security, Peace and Defence Speaker and first president of the International Campaign to Ban Nuclear Weapons (2017 Nobel Peace Laureate), said:

“The Treaty was taken forward by UN Members because they recognised the high risks and catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences of nuclear weapons. They looked at the facts and evidence and recognised that nuclear weapons do not deter and might be detonated by accident, intent or insanity. Far from being a security asset, nuclear weapons are an obstacle to peace and progress, and get in the way of collective security actions to tackle the real security threats we have on the ground from Covid to climate and the ecological emergencies facing us all.”

ENDS

Notes to editors

The UK is one of three depositary states for the 1970 Non-Proliferation [Treaty](#) (along with the United States and USSR, now Russia). In accordance with their NPT obligations, the UK and all signatories are required to ‘pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.’ It was on this basis that a large number of NPT states parties initiated the multilateral negotiating process (under UN General Assembly auspices) that led to the adoption on 7 July 2017 of the [UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#), which has so far been signed by 84 states and ratified by 50, and will enter into force on 22 January 2021.

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# Green Party rejects government attempts to downplay structural racism



22 October 2020

- **Government must acknowledge that higher Covid risk is built on centuries of oppression and exploitation**

Ahead of Equalities Minister Kemi Badenoch's statement to the Commons, Green Party deputy leader Amelia Womack has rejected comments made by government advisor Dr Raghbir Ali that "structural racism is not a reasonable explanation" for black and south Asian people's greater risk of illness and death.[1]

Womack said:

"The higher rates of Covid infection amongst communities of colour can largely be explained by poorer quality housing and the fact that they have access to a narrower range of jobs. But what the government is failing to accept and respond to is that these reduced life chances are the result of centuries of oppression and exclusion."

In Black History Month, Womack emphasised the link between past oppression and present disadvantage.

She said:

"The Green Party has called for an All-Party Commission of Inquiry for Truth and Reparatory Justice to begin to address these inequalities caused by structural racism.

"Telling the truth about Britain's history of colonialism and its central role in the trans-oceanic trafficking in enslaved Africans is the first step towards a society where all can flourish."

Womack repeated the Green Party's call for urgent action now to address structural inequality.

She said:

“We agree with the BMJ that ‘tangible action must be taken now to protect BAME people’. But we would go further and argue that urgent action must be taken to ensure that people from minority communities are given equal chances in our society.

“Such measures could include affirmative action in employment, mandatory levels of representation on company boards and public bodies, and the use of blind CVs in recruitment processes.”

ENDS

## Notes

### 1

Dr Ali made his comments during a briefing on the first quarterly report on Covid disparities, led by the government’s Race Disparity Unit and the Minister for Equalities, Kemi Badenoch.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-54634721>

### 2

On 11 October, the Green Party Conference passed a motion committing to reparatory justice for Afrikan enslavement:

<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2020/10/11/green-party-commits-to-reparatory-justice-for-afrikan-enslavement/>

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**Scrapping spending review shows PM’s  
‘build back greener’ promise is  
hollow, warn Greens**



21 October 2020

• **“The climate emergency won’t wait,” says Molly Scott Cato**

The Green Party has criticized the government’s decision to abandon the three-year spending plan that was to have framed the policy agenda for the Johnson government.

Molly Scott Cato, the party’s finance spokesperson and an economist, said:

“This is a failure of vision from a Prime Minister whose promise to ‘build back greener’ has been shown to be hollow. The climate emergency won’t wait.

“At the last election we called for £100bn every year to fund a green transition. This would not only improve our homes and our transport system but also create thousands of jobs in communities across the country to replace those lost to the Covid crisis. Without this level of ambition we risk falling into the worst recession this century.

“This failure to establish a direction of travel for the economy will create greater uncertainty for local authorities as well as business and stall the medium-term investment that is so vital to enable our economy to recover.

“The government that will host the next round of COP talks in little over a year is failing to make the long-term investments that the climate crisis demands. It is a time to show leadership and that means long-term and large-scale investments in the Green New Deal that the country and the planet are crying out for.”

ENDS

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## Rich countries have historic responsibility to help those on climate crisis frontline, warn Green Party



20 October 2020

- **Molly Scott Cato responds to latest Oxfam report which finds climate finance is increasing debt OF poorer countries**

The Green Party has warned richer nations must provide grants to help poorer countries prepare for the climate crisis as a new report finds 80% of assistance has come in the forms of loans. [1]

Responding to the latest Oxfam report, Molly Scott Cato, Green Party finance spokesperson and economist, said:

“Rich countries such as the UK have a responsibility to help those who are on the frontline of the climate emergency, as a result of the historic carbon emissions that have helped us build our wealth.

“Climate justice means that neither rich governments nor private companies should profit from vast sums many countries in the Global South have to spend on preparing for climate change.

“The wealthy nations that are responsible for the largest amount of historic emissions should be offering grants, not loans, to help those now paying the price for our abuse of the natural world in order to become rich.

“As we prepare for COP26 next year we urge the government to look at this report’s recommendations and find new ways of providing the finance these countries need to protect themselves against the worst impact of the climate

emergency

“Whether that is cancelling debt or taxing the worst polluters to pay for adaptation investment, it is our responsibility to protect those that are now paying the price for our greed and short-sightedness.”

ENDS

## Notes

### 1

The Oxfam report, Climate Finance Shadow Report 2020, was published on Tuesday 20 October

<https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/climate-finance-shadow-report-2020>

### 2

<https://ourworldindata.org/contributed-most-global-co2>

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