

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 Raghb 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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