

Green Party statement on the arrest of Ellie Chowns MEP



15 October 2019

The right to peaceful protest is a fundamental pillar of a liberal democracy. We stand in solidarity with Ellie Chowns MEP who was arrested late on Monday 14th October while peacefully attending the Extinction Rebellion gathering in Trafalgar Square.

It is disturbing that the Metropolitan Police should impose a Section 14 across the whole of London, after 9pm on Monday 14th October. This is a disproportionate response to peaceful protest and to responsible expressions of democracy at this critical time for the planet.

A Section 14 should not be imposed across the entire capital city. It should only be applied to specific areas, and only then in response to genuine threats to public order. This is not the case here: just the indiscriminate arrest of peaceful protesters.

The imminent threat of the climate crisis and the UK government's continued lack of meaningful action means Extinction Rebellion have legitimate cause to protest. The disruption from these protests, frustrating as it is for ordinary Londoners, is nothing compared to the enormous disruption that unchecked climate change will bring.

Limiting freedom of expression and peaceful protest – as in the case of the arrest of Ellie Chowns – is an erosion of the quality of our democracy.

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