

Home Office 'expansion' of Syrian resettlement scheme fails the most vulnerable, says Green MEP



4 July 2017

Yesterday, the Home Office claimed to have “expanded” its scheme to resettle refugees from Syria and neighbouring countries [1].

In fact, the number of refugees it has committed to resettle from the region under the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) remains unchanged – capped at 20,000 by the year 2020.

The difference lies in the number of refugees who are eligible for resettlement. The UK will now welcome vulnerable individuals of any nationality – not just Syrian – who have been affected by the country’s ongoing conflict.

Jean Lambert, London’s Green MEP and the Green Party’s migration spokesperson, says:

“I welcome the Government’s decision to widen the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme to non-Syrian citizens. This enables the UK to offer a fresh start to some of the Iraqi refugees who have also fled Syria – many of whom have now been displaced from their homes twice. It also means that families of mixed nationalities will be able to seek refuge in the UK together.

“However, in reality, this change in eligibility won’t make a significant difference so long as the scheme remains capped at resettling just 20,000 people. In fact, it will result in fewer Syrian nationals being welcomed to the UK – broadening the pool of those who qualify for resettlement, without expanding the number who will ultimately be accepted.

“As the Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, declares she is ‘proud’ that the UK is

'making sure our doors are open to the people who most need our help', let's remember her recent move to slam the same door shut in the faces of unaccompanied children in France, Italy and Greece through the recent closure of the 'Dubs' scheme [2].

"This announcement is a step in the right direction from the Home Office. However, we must bear in mind that it's the smallest of concessions, while a humanitarian crisis of enormous proportions continues to unfold both in the Middle East and closer to home."

Notes:

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/refugees-of-all-nationalities-fleeing-syria-are-now-eligible-for-resettlement-in-the-uk>
2. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-38912428>

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[Green Party calls for immediate lifting of public sector pay cap](#)



4 July 2017

***Co-leader Jonathan Bartley: "Private companies are having a banquet organised by the Government while public sector workers aren't even getting the crumbs from the table"**

The Green Party has called on the Government to immediately lift the public sector pay cap after a damning report revealed the scale of the impact on

workers [1].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“What will it take for Theresa May and Philip Hammond to listen? The staff on the frontline in our most important jobs – including the emergency services they have been so ready to praise in the last few months – and even their own party colleagues have urged them to see sense.

“Enough is enough and it’s time for the Government to shift its priorities away from cutting taxes for those who don’t need it and start paying public sector workers fairly, many of whom are struggling just to make ends meet.

“The Prime Minister’s attempt to sneak out this report is the latest indication that she knows this unpopular policy is nearing the end of its shelf life. Planned tax cuts for corporations should be scrapped immediately. Private companies are having a banquet organised by the Government while public sector workers aren’t even getting the crumbs from the table. Let’s give our teachers, doctors, firefighters and police the pay rises they deserve.”

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/jul/03/damning-government-report-shows-scale-of-public-sector-pay-cuts>

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[Green Party: Escalating price must be final nail in Hinkley coffin](#)



3 July 2017

The Green Party has responded to news the estimated cost for Hinkley Point C has risen by £1.5 billion.

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, said:

“Hardly a week passes at the moment without new evidence that Hinkley is a terrible deal. The announcement that the cost of the Hinkley Point C Power Station has gone up again, this time by a staggering £1.5bn, comes just ten days after the National Audit Office confirmed what campaigners already knew – that the deal is overpriced and risky.

“The Government’s proposals are a rip off for taxpayers and consumers, and suck resources from where they are really needed: investing in clean energy and fighting climate change. This should be the final nail in the coffin for Hinkley.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-40479053>

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[Greens Lead Cross-Party Call for Brexit Environment Bill](#)



1 July 2017

MPs are calling for a new Environmental Protection Bill to be added to the government's list of policy priorities for the year ahead as laid out in last week's Queen's Speech.

Led by Green Party co-leader Caroline Lucas, the environment amendment has cross-party support from Labour MPs David Lammy and Kerry McCarthy, Liberal Democrat MP Layla Moran, the Scottish National Democrat MP Chris Law, and Plaid Cymru MP Liz Saville Roberts.

The [amendment](#), which was introduced last week and will likely be voted for on Thursday June 29, states that "in negotiating our future relationship with the EU, the Government should opt for the most environmentally effective way forward."

This includes introducing a new bill to "transfer all relevant EU law into domestic law by way of primary legislation". This legislation should include "the meaningful transfer of existing targets and to set new and ambitious targets" as well as provide access to citizens to environmental justice.

'Conspicuous Absence'

[Speaking in the House of Commons](#) on Monday, Lucas said "a Bill on environmental protection is conspicuous by its absence. Given the significance of the EU's role in environmental protection, I think that this is a particularly grave omission on the part of the government's Brexit team."

The [Queen's speech last week](#) introduced this year's legislative program, the majority of which is concerned with leaving the EU. The only mention of climate change came when the Queen reiterated support for the Paris climate agreement.

Since then Theresa May's government has officially announced its deal with Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). The DUP was called "[dinosaurs](#)" in Parliament by Lucas last week following the Queen's speech due to their [history of climate denial](#) and denying the science

behind evolution.

In a statement to DeSmog UK, Lucas said: “It’s astounding that the Queen’s Speech didn’t contain plans for a bill to protect the environment in the Brexit process. The Government is aiming to pass eight separate pieces of Brexit legislation, yet they’re leaving environmental protection behind despite 80 percent of our laws in that area coming from the EU.”

She continued: “I’d urge MPs from all parties to back my call for an Environmental Protection Act. Such a bill would both strengthen our environmental laws and ensure that a legal and regulatory framework is in place to enforce them.”

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[Green Party calls on Theresa May to oppose Trump’s travel ban](#)



30 June 2017

The Green Party has condemned Donald Trump’s reinstated travel ban and called on Theresa May to stand up to the president.

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“Theresa May should show some backbone and lobby the US President ahead of the final Supreme Court decision expected in October. The international community has a collective responsibility for refugees. Those who are able to help the most should be doing the most – and leading by example.

“Watered down discrimination is still discrimination and Trump’s arbitrary and narrow judgement about what family means has no basis in fairness or compassion. This is a man driven by the desire to appease his own ego, willing to ignore basic common sense and decency, and withhold help from innocent people – even putting many of them at risk.

“The efforts of everyone, in the courts and on the streets, who have resisted Trump’s cruelty is heartening. We must refuse to accept such stirring up of hatred and continue to support all those who are fighting the president’s actions.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-40452360>

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