

Green Party: We need to talk about arms sales



6 June 2017

*** Jonathan Bartley: "The 'special relationship' with Saudi Arabia has to end"**

*** Event details: 2.30pm, ExCel London, One Western Gateway, Royal Victoria Dock, London E16 1XL**

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, will give a speech in London about arms sales calling on the new Prime Minister to suspend sales to Saudi Arabia on their first day in post.

Bartley will say that Britain's foreign policy cannot be divorced from counter-terrorism and that the UK must end its special relationship with Saudi Arabia – a country which turns a "blind eye while weapons flow freely to D'aesh".

Saudi Arabia has been accused of causing the vast majority of civilian deaths in the conflict in Yemen, including with weapons sold to the Saudi dictatorship by the UK Government [1]. Since March 2015, when Saudi Arabia intervened in the civil war in Yemen, the UK has licensed £3.3bn worth of arms to the Saudi regime [2].

In a speech to supporters outside ExCel London, where the world's biggest arms fair DSEI is held, Bartley will ask why no one is holding the Prime Minister to account for the human rights abuses of the Saudi regime, and their regimes complicity with Islamic extremism.

With the UK currently the second biggest arms dealer in the world [3], Bartley will also promise that Green MPs elected this week will campaign to suspend all arms sales to countries which are violating human rights.

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, is expected to say:

"The British Government's cosy relationship with Riyadh must end. The Saudi

Regime is a human rights abuser and turns a blind eye while weapons flow into the hand of terrorists. In the wake of the horrific and despicable acts of terrorism we have seen in the last three months we need to have an honest conversation about foreign policy and realise it cannot be divorced from counter-terrorism. It is a national shame that the UK sells arms to a regime that looks away while weapons flow freely to D'aesh.

"I appeal to the leader that takes the keys to Number 10 on Friday to spend their first day in office making an attempt to begin righting this atrocity by immediately suspending all arms sales to Saudi Arabia. And I make voters this promise: Green MPs elected this week will always campaign for the UK to suspend arms sales to countries which are violating human rights – this is the absolute minimum requirement of a confident and caring nation."

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/23/uk-in-denial-over-saudi-arms-sales-being-used-in-yemen-claims-oxfam>
2. <https://www.caat.org.uk/media/press-releases/2017-04-03>
3. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/britain-is-now-the-second-biggest-arms-dealer-in-the-world-a7225351.html>

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[Green Party pledges free prescriptions for all](#)



5 June 2017

*** Caroline Lucas: "This Government is fining people for falling sick"**

*** Molly Scott Cato: "Prescription charges undermine the principle of universal free healthcare"**

*** Event details: 2pm, Easton Day & Night Pharmacist, 192 Stapleton Road, Easton, Bristol, BS5 0NY [1]**

Caroline Lucas will announce the Green Party's plans to scrap prescription charges as part of its commitment to a national health service that's genuinely free at the point of use.

Lucas will accuse the Government of fining people for being sick and creating barriers which stop people accessing the medication they need.

GPs have warned that the £8.60 prescription charge in England [2] is forcing some people to make a choice between food and medication [3].

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have already scrapped prescription charges, and the Green Party wants to adopt the same scheme in England.

Caroline Lucas, co-leader of the Green Party, is expected to say:

"Let me start by saying my thoughts remains with all those affected by the horrific acts in London yesterday. It is with a heavy heart that I speak to you today, but one which knows how important it is not to let those who seek to divide us succeed, or our democracy be cowed by fear.

"So I am here today to talk to you about the NHS. Every day this Government is fining people for falling sick by charging for prescriptions. GPs have warned that prescription charges force some patients to choose between spending their earnings on food – or essential medical treatment. This is not acceptable. It's also a false economy because not taking prescribed medication can cause people to miss work and lead to additional GP or hospital appointments."

Lucas will announce the Green Party plans while visiting a community pharmacy in Bristol with Molly Scott Cato MEP.

Molly Scott Cato, Green South West MEP and Bristol West candidate, is expected to say:

"The NHS was founded on the principle of universal access to free, publicly funded and provided health care at the point of use. Prescription charges in England undermine that principle and the Green Party would not make people pay for access to vital medication."

Scrapping prescription fees would cost an estimated £550 million annually [4]. The Green Party argue these costs could be more than met by getting rid of the NHS internal market – a move which would save an estimated £4.5bn according to the Centre for Health and the Public Interest [5].

ENDS.

For more information contact: press@greenparty.org.uk / 0203 691 9401

Notes:

1. Event details: 2pm, Easton Day & Night Pharmacist, 192 Stapleton Road, Easton, Bristol, BS5 0NY.

The Green Party has suspended national campaigning until Sunday night after the London terror attack. We are in discussion with the other parties and if campaigning does not resume tomorrow another email will be sent.

2. <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcosts/Pages/Prescriptioncosts.aspx>

3. <http://www.pulsetoday.co.uk/news/commissioning/commissioning-topics/prescribing/prescription-charges-adversely-impact-on-patient-care-say-40-of-gps/20007736.article>

4. https://www.sruk.co.uk/media/filer_public/ca/f8/caf8a735-b265-40f6-8d52-40d69152060f/20170428_letter_from_prescription_charges_coalition_-_rt_hon_jeremy_hunt_-_conservative.pdf

5. <https://chpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/At-what-cost-paying-the-price-for-the-market-in-the-English-NHS-by-Calum-Paton.pdf>

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[Nationwide speeches by Green politicians call for change in political climate](#)



5 June 2017

The Green Party has called for a shift in the political climate in a series of speeches across England on World Environment Day (June 5) [1].

Prominent Green politicians took part in coordinated speeches in Bath, Bristol, Isle of Wight, London and Sheffield [2]. Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, spoke in London at 10am.

Speaking ahead of the event, Bartley said:

“Theresa May’s staggeringly weak response to Trump’s climate sabotage shows how weak her Government is when it comes to environmental protection. She is standing idly by while the US president swings a wrecking ball at the Paris agreement.

“Britain could be leading the world in climate technology, creating thousands of new jobs and building an economy for the future. By voting Green on 8th June you will send the clear message to whoever is in Government that climate-wrecking policies are utterly short-sighted.

“In 2015 UKIP gained one MP but with 13% of the vote they changed the political narrative. UKIP said “jump” and the Conservatives said “how high?”. We can do the same at this election with a Green vote – a vote for a positive, inclusive, open, confident, and caring Britain. A Britain that is a true democracy with a parliament representative of the people.”

Notes:

1. <http://worldenvironmentday.global/>
2. Times and locations of speeches:

Eleanor Field in Bath

Time: 8.30am

Location: Roman Baths, Stall Street, Bath BA1 1LZ

Molly Scott Cato and Jean Lambert in Bristol

Time: 9am

Location: Brandon Hill, Park Street, BS1 5RR

Vix Lowthion in Isle of Wight

Time: 9.30am

Location: 115 St James Street, Newport, P030 5HB

Jonathan Bartley in London

Time: 10am

Location: Corner of Natal Road and Streatham High Road, SW16 6JA

Natalie Bennett in Sheffield

Time: 11.30am

Location: Surrey Street entrance, Sheffield Winter Garden, S1 2L

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[Green Party responds to London terror attack](#)



4 June 2017

The Green Party's thoughts are with the families and friends of the victims

of last night's terror attack in central London, as well as with others affected. Our thanks go to the emergency services who responded with professionalism and enormous bravery.

Green Party co-leader Caroline Lucas said:

"My heart goes out to all those affected and caught up in these horrific and despicable attacks, and my thoughts are with the victims and their families. Deep thanks to our emergency services who have responded again with enormous bravery, and to the many members of the public displaying courage and compassion in the midst of terrible scenes."

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley said:

"I am sickened that terrorists have again attempted to divide us in such a cruel and crude fashion. They will not succeed. As in Manchester, and in the aftermath of the Westminster attacks, people will come together in the coming days and demonstrate that our way of life is precious and will not be surrendered to those determined to spread fear."

The Green Party will shortly be suspending national campaigning until this evening. Local campaigning will continue.

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[Green Party: We will stand up for free movement](#)



2 June 2017

*** Party points to OBR statistics which show negative economic effect of ending free movement**

*** Lucas wants Britain to retain free movement, and remain a member of the Single Market**

The Green Party will today launch a staunch defence of free movement. Speaking in Sheffield the party's co-leader Caroline Lucas and former leader, Natalie Bennett will defend migrants' contribution to Britain and pledge their support for continued free movement within Europe.

Caroline Lucas, who was one of few politicians to stand up for free movement in the EU Referendum, will say that migration has 'enriched' Britain both culturally and economically. She will slam the other parties for 'failing to make the case for free movement' and accuse the Tories of 'facilitating a race to the bottom on migration' and 'sacrificing our economy on the altar of ending free movement'.

She will point to figures from the Office of Budget responsibility which show that cutting migration to 185,000 (well above the Tories' target) will cost the treasury up to £6bn [1].

A recent study by the London School of Economics has blown apart a number of key myths around migration [2], saying: "Immigrants pay more in taxes than they take out in welfare and use of public services. UK-born individuals, on average, take out more in welfare and benefits than they pay in taxes. So immigrants help to reduce the budget deficit. There is little evidence that immigrants have negative effects on crime, education, health or social housing."

Caroline Lucas is expected to say:

"The Green Party is proud to celebrate free movement and the huge contribution that migrants have made to Britain. It's easy to blame immigration for the lack of school places or GPs but it's also wrong. Free movement has hugely benefited our economy and made our communities richer. The challenge is to ensure we all share those benefits more fairly and equally.

"Free movement enriches and diversifies our communities. A culture that's rich in diversity is exposed to new ways of thinking, new ideas, new languages and new opportunities. It is outward thinking, rather than self-limiting.

"The economic arguments for free movement are strong too. We'd be a poorer country without the taxes EU nationals pay, and the work they do in our hospitals, care homes and councils. Without free movement, there is a very real risk that the economy will not be able to generate enough tax take to support current levels of investment in the NHS or other public services – levels which have already been cut to the bone."

Natalie Bennett, who is herself a migrant from Australia, will say:

“Britain’s political culture is awash with migrant-blaming rhetoric. As someone who came to this country from abroad, and is now proud to call it my home, I find it particularly disturbing to see politicians continuing to blame all of this country’s problems on migration. We know that cuts to schools, our hospitals in crisis and the housing shortage are the fault of failed government policies, not migrants. Migrants may be a convenient scapegoat for those in power, but the truth is that people coming to Britain from abroad make a huge contribution to our economy and our society.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/staggers/2016/11/6bn-year-cost-cutting-immigration>
2. <http://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/ea039.pdf>

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