

Greens: “Latest detention statistics reveal catalogue of horrors”



30 November 2017

Green Party Co-Leader Jonathan Bartley has responded to the release of the latest asylum detention statistics, labelling them a “catalogue of horrors.”

The data, released this morning by the government [1], appears to show that:

- The total of number of asylum seekers detained in British detention centres has increased in the last quarter by 522
- The number of children detained in the last quarter has increased by 12
- The number who have been deported has also increased by 44
- The longest resident of a detention seeker has now been there 1845 days, over 5 years

Mr Bartley said:

“The publication today of the latest detention statistics reveals a catalogue of horrors. Britain is detaining more asylum seekers, more children, and doing this for longer. And rather than help asylum seekers find refuge, more and more are just being sent back to the countries they came from – often to face torture and death. These statistics highlight an asylum system which fails to reach basic levels decency and humanity.

“Rather than locking up people indefinitely, the government should be looking at how it can welcome, settle, and support asylum seekers. Britain should be processing asylum claims in local communities and offering far more support to help asylum seekers get on in this country – things like English lessons, training, and counselling to help them overcome the horrors they have faced. The current system is a shame on Britain and a shame on this government.”

Notes

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/662536/detention-jul-sep-2017-tables.ods

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Green deputy leader to visit Ryedale fracking site



30 November 2017

Green Party deputy leader Amelia Womack will visit the Kirby Misperton fracking site in Ryedale on Friday afternoon (December 1) to meet local demonstrators and visit the protection camp.

Womack's visit is part of a series called 'Green Friday' where Green Party politicians spend a day at the site [1].

Earlier this month Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley was dragged across the road by police while giving a speech to protesters at the site [2].

Womack said:

"I'm looking forward to meeting protesters who are putting their bodies on the line every day to stand up for their communities, particularly after appalling treatment of Jonathan by police only a few weeks ago. I'm so inspired by how dedicated the Ryedale community is in its stand against fracking.

"Fracking is dirty, dangerous and unnecessary. It will jeopardise our climate commitments and prolong our dependency on fossil fuel for years to come. The Government should be leaving fossil fuels where they belong – in the ground – and investing in modern, clean energy for the future."

Notes:

1. <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2017/11/17/natalie-bennett-to-join-fracking-protest-at-kirby-misperton/>
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/green-party-joint-leader-jonathan-bartley-dragged-along-road-by-police-at-yorkshire-fracking-protest-a3688386.html>

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Green Co-Leader to call on other parties to “rally behind free movement” at debate



30 November 2017

The Green Party Co-Leader Jonathan Bartley will use a panel debate on migration later today to urge other parties to “rally behind free movement”.

Bartley will argue that the leadership of other parties are not making the positive case for immigration and that that is dividing communities.

He will say that “to lose the gift of freedom of movement would be like losing a part of our identity as humans beings.” Bartley will also say that other parties must “abandon their fixation with treating migrants as economic statistics” and talk instead about their worth as human beings.

Mr Bartley will be speaking at a debate on the future of migration policy in Britain hosted by the consultancy PwC [1]. Also on the panel will be Anna Soubry MP and Labour peer Lord McConnell.

Mr Bartley is expected to say:

“We have to stop thinking of migrants as economic numbers that will either benefit or hurt our economy. This fixation has to end. We need a new language for migration, one that focuses on migrants as people, fathers, mothers, daughters, sons, and friends.

“To move is to be human, it’s to be free but the Both Conservatives and Labour are surrendering that freedom. To lose the gift of freedom of movement would be like losing a part of our identity as humans beings. As of this day I want to see all progressives in all parties coming together to defend freedom of movement and to launch a wholesale defence of our right and the rights of others to travel.”

Notes

[1] 14:30pm – 17:30 Migration Still Matters: Toward a new national consensus on migration. Embankment Place, London WC2N 6RH

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EU must impose an arms embargo on Saudi Arabia



30 November 2017

The Greens/EFA group is calling on the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, to launch an initiative in the Foreign Affairs Council to impose an arms embargo against Saudi Arabia. The European Parliament will hold a debate this afternoon on the situation in Yemen, with a vote on a motion for a resolution tomorrow.

Bodil Valero was rapporteur for the European Parliament's report on Arms Exports, which previously called on High Representative Mogherini to launch an embargo (1). She comments:

"It is a scandal that EU member states continue to provide arms and expertise to Saudi Arabia in the war against Yemen. High Representative Mogherini should urgently launch an initiative to impose an EU arms embargo against Saudi Arabia. As chairwomen of the Foreign Affairs Council, we urge Mogherini to formally put the item of an embargo on the agenda of their next meeting. EU countries cannot continue to be party to the horrible suffering being caused in Yemen.

"Saudi Arabia should immediately stop the sea, land and air blockade of Yemen and allow full access for humanitarian aid to all parts of Yemen."

The UK is one of the EU countries still exporting high volumes of arms to Saudi Arabia, where Prime Minister Theresa May is currently visiting (2). British MEP Molly Scott Cato adds:

"While Theresa May will no doubt pay lip service to the tragedy facing the people of Yemen during her trip to Saudi Arabia, these words will mean nothing so long as the UK continues to sell billions of euros worth of weapons to Saudi Arabia each year.

"There are signs that war crimes are being committed in Yemen on a grave scale. We support the collection of evidence for the criminal prosecution of those committing such crimes and UN sanctions against individuals obstructing delivery of humanitarian assistance."

Notes

(1) See our press release from 12 September for more information:

<https://www.greens-efa.eu/en/article/press/keine-waffen-nach-saudi-arabien/>

(2) According to figures obtained by The Guardian, UK military sales to Saudi Arabia were over £1.1bn in the first half of 2017:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/24/uk-sales-of-arms-and-military-equipment-to-saudi-arabia-2017>

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MEPs challenge Commission over allegations of Russian influence in referendum campaign



29 November 2017

A cross-Party group of MEPs are raising concerns with the European Commission about Russian interference in the EU referendum in an 'unprecedented display of unity'. Green, Labour, Lib Dem and Plaid Cymru MEPs together with an ex-Conservative MEP have signed a letter to the Commission about their concerns [1]. They have asked how much the Commission know of Russian influence in the referendum campaign and of the techniques used; whether they consider such interference was an attempt by the Kremlin to attack and destabilise the EU; and whether they will use EU agencies to investigate the allegations.

Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP, said:

"The EU referendum and the decision to leave the EU has been one of the most divisive our nation has ever experienced. But it is also bridging the political divide. In an unprecedented display of unity, MEPs from across the political spectrum, have united to express our deep concerns over allegations of Kremlin meddling in the EU referendum campaign."

"The allegations of Russian influence cast a long shadow over the Brexit result. This makes it even more essential that the British public are provided another opportunity through a ratification referendum to accept the deal negotiated by the government or choose to remain in the EU."

Clare Moody, Labour MEP, said:

"The Electoral Commission's enquiry shows the evidence is mounting of links between British politicians and the Russian government and we now know there

were over [156,000 Russian-based Twitter accounts](#) engaged in a concerted campaign to support the Leave side. It is essential we get some answers about the extent to which this interference influenced the referendum result. That's why, as MEPs, we are asking the Commission to tell us what they know and to investigate further."

Catherine Bearder, Lib Dem MEP, said:

"Theresa May has already acknowledged Russian interference in the General Election, now she needs to recognize the same happened in the EU referendum campaign and offer assurances to the British public by delivering a ratification referendum on the final deal. This must be a vote which is fair, regulated and free from interference from foreign organisations and governments."

Notes:

1. Letter to EU Commission:

<http://mollymep.org.uk/2017/11/28/wq-commission-russia-ref/>

Full list of signatories: Molly Scott Cato (Green), Julie Girling (former Conservative), Clare Moody (Labour), Catherine Bearder (Lib Dem), Richard Corbett (Labour), Jill Evans (Plaid Cymru), Jean Lambert (Green), Jude Kirton-Darling (Labour), Paul Brannen (Labour)

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