

Green Party calls on all councils to welcome refugees after 'national disgrace' of asylum seekers' housing revealed



31 January 2017

The Green Party has branded the poor housing and lack of support for refugees in the UK a “national disgrace” and called on every council in the country to step up and take in refugees.

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, made the call after it was revealed some asylum seekers were living in “rat infested” conditions [1].

Bartley said:

“That we would house those fleeing conflict and persecution in rat infested conditions is nothing short of a national disgrace.

“How low can Britain go? This country has a proud history of being a safe haven where those who have been abused, traumatised and suffered violations of their basic human rights can find protection and support. That heritage is being betrayed by this Government.

“We need to see every single local authority welcoming refugees and it is unacceptable that while some councils have taken in hundreds of asylum seekers others, like in the Prime Minister’s own constituency, have taken none at all.

“We are all citizens of the world and we all have a responsibility to provide sanctuary for those fleeing persecution. With the barbaric policies coming from Trump’s America this week the UK should be showing the world how we can and must do better.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-38799694>

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Green Party responds to news Trump could pull out of Paris Agreement



30 January 2017

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, has responded to the news today that Donald Trump could pull the US out of the Paris Climate Change Agreement within a matter of days. [1]

Bartley said:

"The news that Donald Trump could pull the US out of the Paris Agreement is a shame on our own Government. The Prime Minister's failure to prioritise climate change with the President is a complete dereliction of duty.

"But although a US withdrawal would be a bitter blow to the fight to save our planet, the momentum we have gathered is unstoppable, and the Paris Agreement will continue in strength with or without Donald Trump."

Notes:

1. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/donald-trump-paris-climate-change-deal-myron-ebell-us-president-america-pull-out-agreement-a7553676.html>

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Greens condemn Trump's shameful ban on Muslims and refugees



30 January 2017

Dear Editor,

It's mortifying that the Prime Minister was photographed hand in hand on Holocaust Memorial Day with a US President who, later that day, signed an executive order which places an immediate ban on immigrants from seven Muslim majority countries and all refugees entering the USA.

The order, which is called 'Protection Of The Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into The United States', also states that prohibition would not apply to non-Muslims and that Christians fleeing persecution would be prioritised for resettlement.

These measures are a barbaric attack on Muslims in the USA, from the countries which are now banned and on all Muslims around the world. It stamps upon all principles of liberty and civil rights and undermines the value system upon which all our democracies is based.

As Greens here in the UK we are ashamed that the highest elected official of our country visited the USA during this time and then spectacularly failed to take a serious stand against such hatred.

We call upon our Prime Minister to immediately condemn the order in the strongest. Half-baked statements simply aren't good enough. All who value human rights must stand up against this alarming act, the rise in hatred it represents and these clear stirrings towards fascism.

Caroline Lucas MP, Co-Leader

Jonathan Bartley, Co-Leader

Baroness Jenny Jones

Molly Scott-Cato MEP

Sian Berry AM

Caroline Russell AM

Ousman Noor, Campaigns Coordinator, London Green Party

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[**Green Party politicians join Irish Brexit court case**](#)



27 January 2017

*** Jonathan Bartley: "This is about putting power in Britain's hands."**

*** Keith Taylor: "The Government plans to force an extreme Brexit on the public without a mandate to do so."**

*** Steven Agnew: "This case should be welcomed by all UK citizens whether they voted leave or remain."**

UK Green Party politicians are among the politicians named today as plaintiffs in the 'Dublin Case' which seeks legal clarity on revocability of Article 50.

Jonathan Bartley, Co-leader of the Green Party of England and Wales, Northern Irish Green Party leader, Steven Agnew MLA, and the Green Party MEP for the South East of England, Keith Taylor, will join Jolyon Maugham QC, Director of the Good Law Project, as litigants in the case.

The proceedings seek a referral to the Court of Justice of the European Union on the question of whether Article 50, once triggered, can be unilaterally revoked by the UK government without requiring consent from all other 27 EU Member States.

The Green Party campaigned passionately for Remain in the EU referendum, but Bartley is clear that this case is about giving all of the British and Northern Irish public a 'legal safety net'.

He said:

"Any deal that will be negotiated around leaving the European Union would have consequences for the country for decades to come. The British people must not be kept in the dark. They must know what control and what options the country really has. This is about putting power in Britain's hands. We're asking the courts to give everyone clarity on the legal question of whether, in the event of things going badly wrong, or the country being driven over a cliff edge, the Government would be able to revoke Article 50."

"The Government claims that it can't revoke Article 50. But if it is wrong, the British people would have a safety net that could allow them a real choice in a referendum on the terms of the Brexit deal. They would be able to choose between accepting Theresa May's vision of extreme Brexit or rejecting it."

Keith Taylor, who represents the South East of England in the European Parliament, added:

"This case is particularly important as we learn more about the Conservative government's plan to force an extreme Brexit on the public without a mandate to do so."

"I believe Theresa May and Philip Hammond's proposals to send the country hurtling towards an extreme Brexit will see Britain as the ultimate loser in a global race to the bottom on everything from environmental regulations to workers' rights. The plan looks bad for Britain, the environment, jobs, and,

ultimately, the British people. If the electorate reaches the same conclusion when the details become clearer, they must have the choice of putting a stop to the process.”

Steven Agnew MLA believes the case is all the more important following the Supreme Court’s ruling this week that the devolved administration has no legal right to have a say in Theresa May’s negotiations with the EU.

Northern Ireland voted 56% to 44% to Remain in the EU in the June referendum.

Agnew said:

“The unique status of Northern Ireland is being ignored with our traditional parties involved in local squabbles. Any deal on the Irish border will have massive implications across the island and it is vital that the people of Northern Ireland have a say on the final proposal.”

“For that to be meaningful the option to Remain must still be on the table. Otherwise, the UK has no leverage in Article 50 negotiations, as the current assumption is that if we like the Brexit deal, we leave, and if we don’t like it, we leave anyway.”

“Only if this case is successful will the UK have a choice, which is why I believe that this case should be welcomed by all UK citizens whether they voted leave or remain.”

The £70,000 costs of the litigation were crowd-funded by Jolyon Maugham QC largely from small donations. There were almost 1,300 donations of £25 or less and over 1,700 donations of £50 or less.

Jolyon Maugham QC said:

“In 2016 the Country looked at the evidence and decided to leave the EU. I respect that decision: Article 50 should be triggered. But no one knows what lies around the corner. And it’s in our interests that we have the option of remaining if new evidence shows that leaving is damaging people’s job security or rights at work or our ability to fund the NHS or national security.”

“Establishing that the Article 50 notification can be revoked gives us a free option in an uncertain world. Whether to exercise that option is for the electorate. But no one can deny that our national interest is served by us having it.”

The plenary summons will be filed with the Irish High Court on Friday. The Plaintiffs are targeting a hearing date of the application for a reference of March or April.

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Green Party: Government should stop blaming migrants for public service crisis and focus on taxing wealthy



27 January 2017

The Green Party has called on the Government to stop blaming migrants for the crises facing public services and focus on making the wealthiest people in society pay their fair share instead.

The party made the call in response to news the public accounts committee has said HMRC is failing to stop rich tax dodgers.

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader, said:

“While the Government blames migrants and benefit claimants for the problems our country faces from housing to the NHS, it gives special treatment to tax avoiders.

“If we made sure rich tax dodgers paid their fair share there would be more money to support vital services and build the homes we need. Wealth inequality in Britain has soared on the Tories’ watch. We need action to tackle the tax avoidance industry as well as a wealth tax on the top earners if we are to redress the balance.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-38764923>

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