

MEPs vote to ban arms sales to Saudi Arabia while the UK hosts its delegates at the world's largest arms fair



14 September 2017

Today cross-party MEPs voted in favour of a Greens/EFA resolution to place arms embargoes against all countries that fail to uphold international humanitarian law. This includes banning the sale of military equipment to states that abuse human rights. The vote sends a strong message to the European Commission – it's time to take action against irresponsible arms deals [1].

This resolution coincides with the Defence and Security Equipment International Exhibition (DSEI) arms fair in London, which is this week hosting 1,600 exhibitors from 54 countries including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey and Bahrain [2].

Jean Lambert, London's Green MEP, said:

"The world's largest arms fair is currently underway in my constituency, London. As I write, UK ministers and civil servants are facilitating the sale of weapons to 56 countries, including many with records of using them to commit appalling human rights abuses – Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Bahrain and more.

"However, while the British Government has been busy promoting the global arms trade, Members of the European Parliament today voted in favour of a resolution asking Member States to take responsibility for the dreadful consequences of these deals.

"In an ideal world, we'd stop the sale of weapons altogether. However, if that's not feasible we are morally and legally obliged to ensure they do as little harm as possible. We need to know where the arms we sell are going, who is using them, and why. If countries fail to uphold international humanitarian law, we should stop providing them with military equipment. If Member States don't comply with this rule, they must face real consequences.

"It's time for the UK Government to recognise this direction of travel, and shut down the DSEI festival of violence for good. The event sends a clear message to the EU and the rest of the world that the UK is moving backwards – prioritising lucrative arms deals over defending human rights. For as long as this is allowed to continue, innocent people will pay with their lives."

Notes:

1. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20170911IPR83507/eu-arms-export-control-needs-a-face-lift>
2. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/dsei-2017-arms-fair-liam-fox-weapons-exports-defence-industry-protests-minister-saudi-arabia-yemen-a7943301.html>

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Emergency demonstration against deportation of Samim Bigzad



14 September 2017

The Green Party and Kent Anti-Racism Network have organised an emergency demonstration against the deportation of Samim Bigzad outside the Home Office at 5pm today [1].

The party has called the UK government “cruel and callous” and “shameless and undemocratic” after it sent Samim back to his home country Afghanistan yesterday despite the granting of a last minute injunction against his deportation [2]. Samim was at Istanbul airport when the injunction was announced but officials still put him on a plane bound for Kabul. The Green Party is demanding that Samim be returned to the UK and granted leave to stay.

Amelia Womack, Green Party deputy leader, will attend the demonstration. She is expected to say:

“It’s a cruel and callous government that’s willing to send a man to his death. It’s a shameless and undemocratic one that would do so against the wishes of a court of law.

“We won’t let them get away with it. We believe that Britain need not be a home to cruelty and division but a place of friendship and solidarity, a place where human life is respected and valued. We will fight this government until the end – until they bring Samim back.”

Notes:

1. <https://www.facebook.com/events/421734468221274/>

2. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/samim-bigzad-deport-home-office-afghanistan-beheading-kabul-court-order-violate-taliban-a7944491.html>

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[Green Party: Cruel Government deporting man wanted by Taliban](#)



12 September 2017

The Green Party has warned the Home Office will have “blood on its hands” if it goes through with plans to deport a man threatened with beheading by the Taliban.

Reports claim the Home Office will force Samim Bigzad to board a flight to Afghanistan this morning (Tuesday 12 September) [1] despite the fact he is wanted by the Taliban.

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

“Only a cold, cruel Government would push through this deportation. The Home Office could end up blood on its hands if it sends Samim Bigzad to Afghanistan and I urge it to reconsider. After military involvement in the country for 13 years it is appalling that the Government would see to wash its hands. We have a moral duty to offer refuge to those fleeing conflict and persecution in Afghanistan.”

ENDS.

For more information contact: polly.albany-ward@greenparty.org.uk / 07590046501

Notes:

1. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/samin-bigzad-deport-home-office-afghanistan-beheading-threat-taliban-kabul-plane-flight-asylum-a7941881.html>

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[Green Party responds to expansion of badger cull](#)



11 September 2017

The Green Party has responded to the Government's announcement that the badger cull will be expanded to 11 new areas [1].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

"The badger cull is not only inhumane but ineffective. This is a black and white issue, thousands of badgers are dying a slow, painful death for absolutely no reason. There is very little evidence to support the government's claims that the cull will prevent the spread of TB, but as the science against the badger cull gets stronger, the Government simply expands the cull every year. One of Britain's most beloved animals is being pushed to the brink of extinction – it's unsustainable, cruel and expensive, costing taxpayers £40 million over the last four years.

"In the Government's announcement today it focused on the relaunch of the vaccinations programme [2], which the Green Party supports. It appears they are hoping to sneak out the expansion of the cull, which they know is unpopular and shameful. The fact the vaccinations programme is being reintroduced shows that the Government accepts there are alternatives to the cull, making it all the more pointless and barbaric.

"It's time to end this cruel approach and fully roll out a humane vaccinations programme for both badgers and cows, and introduce rigorous TB testing and strict biosecurity measures. We must also tackle the intensification of farming which worsens the spread of TB."

Notes:

1. <https://twitter.com/PA/status/907192935862730757>
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/badger-vaccination-scheme-relaunched-in-fight-against-bovine-tb>

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Wind price drop should be the 'nail in the coffin' for nuclear says Caroline Lucas



11 September 2017

* 'This news should be the death knell for Hinkley' says Lucas

Caroline Lucas, the Green Party co-leader, has said that the dramatic price drop for offshore wind should be 'the nail in the coffin' for new nuclear.

Lucas' call come as the price for wind technology has fallen [1] far below that of nuclear, with a strike price as low as £57.50/MWh. Lucas said that 'this news should be the death knell for Hinkley'.

Caroline Lucas, co-leader of the Green Party, said:

"This massive price drop for offshore wind is a huge boost for the renewables industry and should be the nail in the coffin for new nuclear. While clean, green wind power has the potential to seriously cut people's bills – the Government's undying commitment to new nuclear risks locking us into sky high prices for years to come. Put simply, this news should be the death knell for Hinkley.

"The Government should now commit to this technology – and scale up investment in offshore wind so that it becomes the backbone of British energy. Such a move wouldn't just add to the thousands of jobs in the sector already, but would lock us into a low-carbon, low-price energy future that would benefit consumers and businesses for years to come."

ENDS

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/643560/CFD_allocation_round_2_outcome_FINAL.pdf

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