

Tuesday, 30 May 2017

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your e-mail regarding the issue of human rights. You are right to focus on this at the moment because with the current international political situation, the unstable UK context and Brexit, it is more important than ever that we stand up for human rights.

Domestically my priority over the next UK parliament would be to ensure that Human Rights protections are prioritised during the Brexit negotiations and that there is no weakening of these if, or when, leave the European Union. My party has pledged to defend the Human Rights Act and our membership of the European Convention on Human Rights, and to reinstate funding for the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Having said that, there are several areas in which current UK Government policy domestically is actively ignoring people's human rights.

One is the area of how we treat people with disabilities. I have worked in social care, looking after and supporting individuals with disabilities to leave positive and fulfilling lives, so this is an area I care about deeply. The UK Government has been investigated by the UN in regard to welfare reform, the sanctions regime and benefit changes, and how they affect people with disabilities. The UN report concluded that measures such as the Bedroom Tax, the closure of the Independent Living Fund and the sanctions regime have amounted to a 'grave and systemic violation' of the rights of people with disabilities.

I would prioritise reinstating adequate assistance to ensure those with disabilities can cope with their extra cost of living and so they receive good support to enjoy independent lives as much as possible. My party has pledged to end the punitive sanctions regime.

I am also very concerned by the issue of routine immigration detention in this country. Many refugees are detained indefinitely at immigration centres such as Yarl's Wood, without adequate access to legal representation and with no hope of being freed. This is an injustice, often inflicted upon those who have experienced human rights abuses in their own countries before seeking shelter here. We recently announced our women's manifesto at the gates of Yarls Wood to signal our intention to close these centres. We would also ensure that asylum seekers who are pregnant, who have experienced torture, rape or sexual violence are not detained.

Internationally I believe it is as important as ever to ensure we have an ethical foreign policy that promotes human rights. We believe it is wrong that we trade with and sell arms to countries with poor records on human rights, such as Saudi Arabia. If we do leave the European Union and begin seeking bilateral trade agreements with other nations then we must insist, as it Green Party policy, upon respect for human right as a precondition to signing any agreement.

We also must address the issue of climate justice. Worsening climate change, driven in large part by emissions from the world's developed countries, is contributing to the large movements of migrating peoples through famine and drought. The UK must play its role not only in working with other countries to limit global warming, but also in allocating sufficient funds to help developing countries cope with the adapting to climate change.

These would be my priorities for human rights in the next 5 years;

- Defending current human rights protections if and when leave the EU
- Ensuring adequate welfare and support for individuals with disabilities
- Ending immigrant detention domestically and providing support for refugees
- Promoting an ethical foreign policy that helps improve protection of human rights
- Ensuring climate justice, preventing worsening climate change and allocating funds to assist with adaptation for developing countries

If elected I would fight to keep these issues at the top of the agenda. Please don't hesitate to contact me again if there is an issue you would specifically like to ask about.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stuart Tuckwood". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stuart Tuckwood
Parliamentary candidate for Cambridge