

[Andy McDonald response to the publication of the Gibb report into Southern Rail](#)

Andy McDonald MP, Labour's Shadow Transport Secretary, responding to the publication of the Gibb report into Southern Rail, said:

“Ultimately, the buck stops with the Government. Tory ministers, who designed and awarded the franchise, are responsible for the shambolic delivery of enhancement works and have directed this unnecessary industrial dispute.

“The Gibb report paints a picture of a chaotic relationship between Network Rail, the Department for Transport and Govia Thameslink Railway – none of which have sufficient oversight or responsibility.

“The report contains some sensible proposals for how to improve services, but without ending the industrial dispute and bringing the franchise to an end, passengers will continue to suffer.

“It is within Chris Grayling's power to end the industrial dispute tomorrow by calling off his plans to expand Driver Only Operation, which poses risks to passengers and severely restricts accessibility for those with disabilities. Similar disputes elsewhere on the network have been resolved and there's no good reason for this to drag on any longer.

“A Labour Government would stand up for the interest of passengers rather than train companies, taking Southern back into public ownership and creating a new body to have strategic oversight for the railway, thereby avoiding the chaos and fragmentation that has plagued Southern passengers for too long.”

[China's cabinet eyes lowering corporate burdens in inspection](#)

The State Council, China's cabinet, said Thursday its upcoming nationwide

inspection would focus on the implementation of measures to reduce corporate burden.

The central government will review efforts to reduce or scrap businesses administrative fees, and whether arbitrary administrative charges were imposed on enterprises, it said in a statement.

The central government has pledged to reduce corporate costs by 1 trillion yuan (about 147 billion U.S. dollars) this year.

Recent measures to cut administrative fees and lower the financial burden of companies have supported stable economic growth, but the efforts of some local governments and departments have been lax, noted the statement.

The State Council last month decided to start a new round of reform inspections to ensure tasks for this year's economic and social work will be achieved on schedule.

This is the fourth such nationwide inspection since it began in 2014.

[Draft intelligence law highlights legal rights protection](#)

Lawmakers Thursday deliberated a draft national intelligence law that contains measures to protect the legal rights and interests of individuals and organizations.

The draft was submitted to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for the second reading at the start of its bi-monthly session.

China will protect and honor individuals and organizations who support or coordinate with national intelligence staff, and award those who have made "great contributions" to national intelligence work, it stated.

The draft stipulated that national intelligence agencies and their staff are not allowed to take advantage of their positions to seek personal benefits, and anyone found to have done so will be held accountable in accordance with the law.

In addition, national intelligence agencies should help individuals and organizations report information to intelligence authorities, while those who attempt to deceive (the public) in the name of national intelligence interest may face criminal charges, it said.

A national intelligence law is needed to improve national intelligence work and safeguard national security, lawmakers agreed.

The law was first read and deliberated at the top legislature's bi-monthly session in December 2016.

[Xi calls for unholding 'Lyuliang spirit' in poverty relief](#)



Chinese President Xi Jinping (C) talks with veterans at the former site of a military region command in Xing County of north China's Shanxi Province, June 21, 2017. Xi had an inspection tour in Shanxi Wednesday. [Photo/Xinhua]

President Xi Jinping said more should be done to end poverty and improve the standard of living in revolutionary base areas.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, made the remarks during a tour Wednesday of Lyuliang and Xinzhou, two revolutionary base areas in Shanxi Province.

On Wednesday morning, Xi visited Lyuliang revolutionary memorial museum in Xing County of Lyuliang City and left a basket of flowers in a mark of respect for the country's martyrs, the term used for war heroes.

Xi spoke highly of the "Lyuliang spirit" and said it should be used as motivation to "improve people's lives and to achieve the great rejuvenation

of the nation.”

During the tour, Xi spoke about how the poverty relief campaign related to the target of achieving a “moderately prosperous society in an all-round way” by 2020.

Also on Wednesday, Xi visited the village of Zhaojiawa, an impoverished area in Xinzhou City, where he talked with villagers and officials.

Xi spoke of improving living conditions through relocation and called for better supporting measures that would ensure income sources for residents.

The president also met with poverty-relief work teams, and praised their efforts.

Xi said sending officials to serve as first Party committee secretaries at the local level was not only conducive to the poverty eradication campaign, but also improved the competence of officials. He proposed that promising officials at this level should be considered for promotions.

The president vowed continued efforts to improve people’s lives and asked everyone to “roll up sleeves and work harder together with the CPC Central Committee.”

[Green Party says government amnesty for Grenfell victims does not go far enough](#)



Green Party

22 June 2017

The Green Party has welcomed the government’s amnesty for undocumented migrants affected by the fire at Grenfell Tower but says the reprieve does not go far enough.

The party says that it has spoken to victims of the fire who are worried that they were in breach of their tenancy and as a result do not want to come forwards to ask for information about missing friends and family.

The discovery may help to explain why the death toll remains so uncertain as it appears some tenants were subletting their flats or had more people living in them than they had officially declared.

The Green Party has called on the government to extend its amnesty for undocumented migrants to survivors who were in breach of their tenancy and any welfare or benefits related claims.

The party has also asked the government to confirm exactly what legal costs they intend to cover for survivors. Cuts to legal aid mean many residents will struggle to get advice and representation on issues like the replacement of lost documents, seeking insurance compensation, and negotiating time off work with employers. Many lawyers have also raised concerns that residents' views will not be fully taken into account in any public inquiry if they cannot get legal advice [1].

In a letter [2] to Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Co-Leader of the Green Party Caroline Lucas said:

“In the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire, I am hearing reports from volunteers in the community that some survivors are reluctant to officially report friends and family members as missing because they fear the consequences of revealing that eg flats were being sublet or lived in by people not on their tenancy. I hope you will agree with me that knowing the identities of all those who might have been killed is critical and that all necessary assurances should be given to residents of Grenfell Tower that any information they provide will be for reporting purposes only.

“The victims of the fire are already facing enormous personal and practical challenges and do not need any additional worry and stress. This situation is compounded by an ongoing sense that the authorities are not there to help them and I am sure you will agree that the Government needs to work as hard as possible to overcome this impression going forward. I hope you will therefore announce an amnesty for any residents worried that they have might have breached housing, benefit, or immigration rules.”

Notes

The latest estimate suggests 79 people have died in the fire that engulfed Grenfell Tower on 14 June. The Green Party's Sian Berry, Caroline Russell, and Amelia Womack have all visited the tower and helped residents with their concerns and queries.

[1]

<http://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/lawyers-rally-to-help-grenfell-tower-residents-facing-looming-mountain-of-paperwork-a3566356.html>

[2] Full text of the letter:

To Rt Hon Sajid Javid,

In the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire, I am hearing reports from volunteers in the community that some survivors are reluctant to officially

report friends and family members as missing because they fear the consequences of revealing that eg flats were being sublet or lived in by people not on their tenancy. I hope you will agree with me that knowing the identities of all those who might have been killed is critical and that all necessary assurances should be given to residents of Grenfell Tower that any information they provide will be for reporting purposes only.

The victims of the fire are already facing enormous personal and practical challenges and do not need any additional worry and stress. This situation is compounded by an ongoing sense that the authorities are not there to help them and I am sure you will agree that the Government needs to work as hard as possible to overcome this impression going forward. I hope you will therefore announce an amnesty for any residents worried that they have might have breached housing, benefit, or immigration rules.

This amnesty should also extend to undocumented migrants who had been living in the tower block, and to private owners who may have known that subletting practices were going on. The latter may hold crucial information on the whereabouts of people missing following the fire.

It's also critical that there is a clear and flexible package of support for individuals who may have cases with government authorities pending and are worried about the impact of eg the loss of documentation. For example, if someone is in the process of claiming asylum and is now unable to provide evidence, there should be an assumption in favour.

I welcome the announcement that there will be state funding to cover the costs of legal representation at the inquiry. In addition to seeking legal advice ahead of the public inquiry, residents will need support on a range of issues including the replacement of documents lost in the fire, how to make insurance claims, and how to negotiate time off work with their employers. Please can you confirm which costs will be met and what support will be put in place to ensure victims are able to fully access the support they need.

I appreciate that this letter touches on matters which are the responsibility of a number of Government departments but trust you will liaise to provide a response as the coordinating Minister. I look forward to a timely reply that can go some way towards providing the victims of the fire with critical assurances about their security and wellbeing.

Yours sincerely,

Caroline Lucas MP

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