

Green Party welcomes Conservative rebels' support for making trade conditional on human rights



Green Party

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- **Jonathan Bartley underlines universal nature of human rights**

The Green Party has welcomed statements from some 30 Conservative MPs that they will block a post-Brexit trade deal with China tomorrow [Tuesday 19 January] because of that country's attacks on the Uyghur community [1]

But Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley has warned that human rights must be universal, and therefore cannot be applied to just one country.

Bartley said:

"While we welcome Iain Duncan Smith's conversion to linking human rights with trade policy it is inconsistent and smacks of opportunism.

"It is a mere five years since George Osborne was rolling out the red carpet for President Xi, who was already trampling on the rights and freedoms of both Uyghurs and Tibetans. This genocide is not new and it is not confined to China."

Bartley agreed that trade agreements should be made conditional on the human rights records of the countries concerned but noted that human rights are universal and so such a stance cannot be used to isolate just one country.

He said:

"You cannot pick and choose whose rights you defend. If human rights are not universal then they are meaningless.

"Duncan Smith and other leading Tories need to adopt a similar stance towards those countries where clear breaches of human rights are taking place, such as Brazil, where Bolsonaro is actively encouraging both genocide and ecocide in the Amazon, and Saudi Arabia, where the government has ignored a high-court ruling that its export of arms used to kill civilians in Yemen are illegal. [2]

“It is the necessity of upholding human rights and environmental standards in global trade that lies behind the UN’s binding treaty. Global Greens have supported this process for some time and we invite the British Conservatives to do the same to indicate that Global Britain will be a beacon for human rights across the world.” [3]

ENDS

Notes

1

FT [reports](#) some 30 Tory MPs are seeking to block a trade deal with China during the debate on the Trade Bill on Tuesday.

2

Ministry of Defence [log](#) of human rights violations in Yemen indicates at least 500 have taken place since 2015.

3

[RTE has reported](#) that the “UN efforts to develop a business and human rights treaty have been ongoing since 2014. These have been hampered by the opposition of key powerful states, often the home states of the largest multinational firms”

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