

# **The UK should not sign trade deals with countries committing genocide.**

**The Government are refusing to accept cross-party amendments to the Trade Bill that would put human rights at the heart of our trade policy.**

The UK and the world can't just stand by and do nothing.

This is particularly important because of what is happening to the Uyghur people in Xinjiang and across China. The Foreign Secretary last week described the mounting evidence to the Commons:

Internment camps, arbitrary detention, political re-education, forced labour, torture and forced sterilisation—all on an industrial scale.

**And yet he refused to call it genocide.** As I told Autumn Conference in September, and following Alistair Carmichael as the first MP to raise the plight of the Uyghurs, it is increasingly clear that that is exactly what this is.

**The UK and the world can't just stand by and do nothing.** The products of Uyghur slave labour can be found across our supply chains and yet instead of firm, bold action this government seems content to tweak around the edges.

As Liberal Democrats we won't stand by and let this happen.

We are working with MPs from across the political spectrum to do the right thing and allow the UK to withdraw or revoke bilateral trade agreements if the High Court makes a preliminary determination finding that the other country has committed or is committing genocide (it only occurs to genocides that are ongoing or may occur in the future, not past atrocities).

We vote on this today, and there is a sizeable rebellion on the Tory benches.

As Liberal Democrats we won't stand by and let this happen.

**We will run the Government close, and we may even win.**

We need to do this not because we don't believe in the international rules-based order (we do, passionately, more than ever) but because it isn't working as intended at the moment when it comes to genocide and China.

The Chinese government, by virtue of its position, regularly blocks routes to such a determination through the international courts, so this is a necessary step if the UK is going to lead by example and give effect to its international law obligations relating to genocide, rather than become complicit.

Never again can we wring our hands in horror after the fact, saying we should have done more.

Never again. Words we say every Holocaust Remembrance Day. Words we must now live by.

We simply can't allow our country to end up on the wrong side of history.

Our party has always led the way on upholding human rights

**By working together, even with those who may not agree with us on other matters, we can stand together and make a difference.**

I urge my colleagues in all parties to vote with their conscience, with British values and to support these amendments today.

We are backed by the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Muslim Council of Britain and the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute.

There are other steps we can take – such as Magnitsky sanctions, a publicly-available watchlist of companies that refuse to clean up their supply chains, a total ban on these products full stop, or human rights labelling on products in our shops – but amending this legislation would have a really significant impact.

In fact it would be world-leading. I'm proud we are there fighting for it on the front line.

**Our party has always led the way on upholding human rights.** From opposing South African apartheid, to Bosnia-Herzegovina, to enshrining 0.7% aid spending in law, we have a proud history and today is no different.

We won't tolerate genocide and nor should the Government.

So today Lib Dem MPs will stand together with colleagues from across the Commons in sending a clear message. **We won't tolerate genocide and nor should the Government.**

So write to your MP and ask for them to support our cross-party efforts.

Let's not just say 'never again'. To quote Burke:

***"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."***

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# **Boris Johnson's EU Trade Deal costing fishing industry £1 million a day**

For years, this Government have promised our fishing industry a sea of opportunity, but, today, our boats are tied up in harbour, their propellers fouled with red tape manufactured in Whitehall.

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Boats that are able to go to sea are landing their catches in Denmark—an expensive round trip of at least 72 hours, which takes work away from processors and other shoreside businesses in this country.

Our Fisheries Minister describes promises made by Ministers as “**dreams**” and apparently did not think it was worth reading the agreement as soon as it was made, even though every second counted.

**How on earth was it allowed to come to this?** The EU trade agreement allows a grace period on customs checks for EU businesses.

**So yesterday, in an Urgent Question to the Fisheries Minister, I asked:**

*“Why was there no grace period allowed for our exporters, and will the Government engage with the EU as a matter of urgency to make good that most fundamental of errors?”*

*Earlier this week, the Prime Minister told the Liaison Committee that compensation is being considered for our fishing industry.*

***Who will be compensated, for what, and by how much? When will our scheme be published and what steps will be taken to help processors, catchers and traders in the meantime?”***

*Can the Secretary of State explain how the literally hundreds of producer organisation to producer organisation swaps done every year will be done on a Government-to-Government basis?*

***Finally, what will happen at the end of a five-and-a-half year transition period? A transition normally takes us from point A to point B.***

*This transition takes us from point A to point A with a new negotiation. Is zonal attachment still the Government's policy on quota shares?”*

I offered to convene a virtual roundtable of all the affected

sectors.

**This is a shambles of the Government's own making; there is no one else to blame now.**

The Minister must start listening to the fishing industry. **That's why I offered to convene a virtual roundtable of all the affected sectors.**

**The time for complacency has passed.**

A reminder again that contrary to the Fishing Minister's comments yesterday these weren't "big dreams" – these were promises made at the heart of government by Boris Johnson and others. They have used the fishing industry for their own ends – time to make good the damage. <https://t.co/vX4CAfWlfX>

– Alistair Carmichael (@amcarmichaelMP) [January 14, 2021](#)

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## **[The Government must take on my Bill to give NHS heroes the right to live in the UK](#)**

**I tabled the Immigration (Health and Social Care Staff) Bill 2019-21, which was due for its second reading on Friday.**

Lib Dems will continue to fight for healthcare workers' rights

But the Government have decided to axe all sitting Fridays until the end of March, **meaning dozens of Private Members Bills will effectively be shut down.**

My Bill proposed that all health and social care staff from outside the EU would be granted indefinite leave to remain, giving the peace of mind about their immigration status and granting them rights enjoyed by British citizens.

Like the rest of our wonderful NHS and care staff, hundreds of thousands of people from other countries are on the frontlines of the Covid pandemic,

putting themselves in harm's way to make sure we get the care we need.

This illustrates why my Private Members Bill to offer Indefinite leave to remain is so important [#NHSheroes](#) [#righttoremain](#)  
<https://t.co/fbeVB904vh>

– Christine Jardine (@cajardineMP) [January 9, 2021](#)

Those who have put their lives at risk for our country are welcome to live in it.

**The UK should say, loudly and unequivocally, that those who have put their lives at risk for our country are welcome to live in it.**

That's what my Bill would do, and I am deeply disappointed that the Government is not even letting it be debated in Parliament.

**I am not giving up.** I will urge Ministers again to make Government time available to pass this urgent legislation, which has cross-party support.

**The idea that anyone who has worked so hard to save lives during this emergency might one day be forced to leave should be unthinkable.**

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## **Happy Pongal**

It's been a huge privilege to come to know many Tamil people in my constituency and across the UK since being elected to Parliament back in 1997, and I can therefore say with total certainty, that the contribution of British Tamils to our country and society has been exemplary, with the hard work, intelligence and dedication of so many amazing British Tamils.

**Celebrations like this are an opportunity to remember the exceptional contributions we witness everyday from entrepreneurs, public servants and of course our frontline workers. Thank you for all you do.**

Current lockdown measures mean this year's Pongal celebrations will feel distinctly different as so many of us remain separated from friends and loved ones. Despite these challenges, let us look to the future with hope and let us strengthen our collective efforts to beat this virus.

To everyone celebrating, I wish you overflowing happiness and good health for the year ahead. Iniya Thai Pongal Nalvazhthukkal!

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## [Parents must be given vouchers instead of woefully inadequate food parcels](#)

**It is completely unacceptable that parents have received woefully inadequate food parcels in place of free school meals.**

The Secretary of State must urgently investigate this situation.

The amount of food parents have received to feed their children is not anything like enough to provide an adequate, nutritious lunch every day.

Nor do they appear to represent value for money, given what the parcels should theoretically be worth.

It is unacceptable that parents have received woefully inadequate food parcels in place of free school meals.

Our Education Spokesperson [@libdemdaisy](#) has written to the Secretary of State urging him to investigate the situation & replace these abysmal hampers with food vouchers.

[pic.twitter.com/GfTdf5Ww40](https://pic.twitter.com/GfTdf5Ww40)

– Liberal Democrats (@LibDems) [January 13, 2021](#)

These abysmal hampers must be urgently replaced with food vouchers.

I have written to the Secretary of State asking him to investigate the situation urgently and replace these abysmal hampers with food vouchers.

**Time and time again, this Government has let children and families down on the issue of free school meals, which are critical to the education and future of so many children.**

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