

[The Government's latest furlough U-turn still doesn't go far enough](#)

After the Government announced a last-minute extension to the furlough scheme on October 31st, [I warned the Chief Treasury Secretary](#) that it wouldn't be sufficient since, sadly, **the coronavirus pandemic would not be going away at the end of November.**

This delay will have cost businesses and individuals an untold amount.

Now, not even a week after their announcement, Rishi Sunak has extended furlough further – this time, to March 2021 – and yet again, he has failed to go far enough.

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[Refugees are some of the most vulnerable people in the world.](#)

Fleeing your home is one of the most heartbreaking decisions a person can make. **Refugees coming to the UK and Europe have risked everything in the hope of safety and a better future for themselves and their families.**

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[MPs must vote for safe and legal routes for refugees](#)

Within just the last few days, yet more people have tragically lost their lives trying to cross the Channel. It is utterly heartbreaking, especially

for the friends and families left behind.

It's hard to imagine how desperate people must be to climb into these boats in search of a better life. It just isn't right that vulnerable people are left no choice but to make these perilous attempts.

Our priority must be to save lives.

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Stop the Torture Bill

For more than 300 years torture has been illegal in the UK. But today the Overseas Operations Bill in the House of Commons would overturn this position.

Liberal Democrats have serious concerns about this disturbing Bill and its implications for human rights, the rule of law, and the UK's position as a leading voice for these values internationally.

Any subversion of human rights commitments is totally unacceptable.

We have serious concerns about this disturbing bill.

The Bill would grant impunity to perpetrators of torture. This is shocking, and would breach the UK's obligations under multiple international treaties to investigate and prosecute acts of torture no matter how long ago they occurred.

This legislation violates commitments in the UN Convention against Torture, the Geneva Convention and the Human Rights Act. It is yet another sign that this Government is determined to undermine the UK's human rights standards from those of its closest neighbours in the EU.

Liberal Democrats have tabled an amendment that would remove the Government's provision in the Bill for exemption from the European Convention on Human Rights in overseas operations.

Despite the Government's claims, this Bill will do nothing to help UK forces.

"Today, the government is seeking to effectively decriminalise torture with the Overseas Operations Bill.

Liberal Democrats will vote against this disturbing Bill.”
[@amcarmichaelMP](https://t.co/h69JLS6ENk) <https://t.co/h69JLS6ENk>

– Liberal Democrats (@LibDems) [November 3, 2020](#)

The Bill reduces the rights of service personnel, including the right to seek personal injury or human rights damages after six years will only benefit the Ministry of Defence. By far the largest proportion of claims against the Ministry of Defence from 2014 to 2019 were brought by service personnel seeking compensation for harms suffered during active service.

We have tabled a series of amendments to the Bill to ensure that service personnel can continue to bring civil claims forward.

But at its heart, this Bill questions our morality as a nation.

Liberal Democrats have long been vocal campaigners against torture.

This Bill questions our morality as a nation.

We led the campaign for a torture inquiry into the Iraq War. We continue to champion human rights in the UK and internationally.

We are clear that this Bill must be amended so that ‘torture’ is included alongside ‘sexual offences’ as human rights violations that can still be prosecuted. And why do the MPs backing this bill believe it is necessary to put a five year limit on prosecuting people involved in acts of torture or war crimes? Some victims will not be physically able to bring cases in this time due to being detained, for example.

We are signatories to cross-party amendments that oppose its deeply problematic provisions on presumption against prosecution, and the five-year limit on torture, war crimes and crimes against humanity. **Survivors of torture and their loved ones must have access to justice.**

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[Extend Furlough](#)

People all over the UK are worried about their future.

Too many people have already lost their jobs because of the Government's failure to plan

COVID cases are increasing, we're facing another lockdown, and businesses can't plan for the future when the government will only extend the furlough scheme for a month.

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