

Constituency Report (October 2020)

Export of UK riot control equipment to the US

In my July report, I highlighted that many constituents had written to me about the Black Lives Matter movement, following the tragic death of George Floyd. I explained that I had written to Liz Truss, the Secretary of State for International Trade, to express my deep concern about the export of riot control equipment from the UK to the US, and I have since conducted an extensive investigation.

On 5 October, Sky News published a long news item on the use of British-made shields against unarmed protesters and journalists in the US. The government had previously conducted an internal review and claimed that there was 'no evidence' that British anti-riot gear had been used in America.

However, in a joint investigation with The Guardian, Bellingcat and Lighthouse Reports, Sky News found that riot shields, made by a company here in the UK with a visible and distinctive "Scorpion" logo on them, were used by law enforcement agencies in Washington DC, Atlanta, Georgia and Salt Lake City, Utah.

Speaking to Sky News, I said: "You're not allowed to sell riot equipment if it is being used for internal repression. So then the question is: what is internal repression? Internal repression is unlawfully hitting people, it is attacking members of the press, it is using unlawful violence, it is

using it in order to suppress legitimate, lawful demonstrations".

"There is clear evidence that British equipment has been used in the United States in a way which is contrary to the law and has been used for internal oppression, and we should not be party to that."

I am very clear in my stance. We should not be selling riot control equipment to the US, or indeed any other country, if they are going to use it to break the law in this way."

You can read the story in full [here](#) and watch Sky News' feature on this issue over on [Twitter](#).



Image from Sky News, 5 October

Fire Safety in Tower Blocks

The Grenfell Tower tragedy made many flat-dwellers feel understandably worried about their own safety. We now know that many blocks of flats have been clad with similar materials, or contain other materials which might be a fire risk.

There need to be robust regulations in place, and housing providers need to take steps to ensure that the homes they are providing are safe.

There have been unacceptable delays, which have led to a situation where temporary fire protection measures are still

in place in many blocks, and leaseholders face the possibility of large bills whilst being unable to sell their homes.

I have been pressing Ministers over the past three years to take effective action to resolve this crisis – but the uncertainty still continues for many of my constituents who live in flats. I have recently written to the Secretary of State, setting out five issues on which he needs to take urgent action. You can see my letter [here](#).

Labour Connected: Women's Conference

This year, the Labour Party's Conference – like so many things – moved online. Our inability to gather in Liverpool did not prevent our movement from hosting many important and interesting discussions as part of 'Labour Connected'. I attended and spoke at numerous events. You can read my speeches from this year's Conference on [Facebook](#).

On 19 September, I spoke at a 'Women Connected' event entitled 'The Impact of Covid: No Turning Back the Clock on Equality'. I started by saying that, whilst we all wish we were together in Liverpool, we are together in spirit and united in our mission, and that's what matters most of all.

In my speech, I discussed the UK's responsibility to put gender equality – among other issues – at the heart of trade policy, and how a Labour government would uphold a commitment to gender equality and justice both within and beyond our borders.

I outlined just how different Labour's trade policy would be to this Tory government's current approach. We would never think that our responsibilities to promote equality and justice stop at our own borders. We will always seek

to use every lever we have, including the deals that we make on international trade, to improve the lives of women both here in Britain, and all around the world.

"A Labour government could not fix all those problems", I said of the sexual violence, malnutrition and the sale of child brides in Yemen, the country stuck at the bottom of the Global Rankings for Gender Equality going back 14 years. But, I said that we could promise one thing; "a Labour Government would never turn our face away, let alone keep selling the arms that Saudi Arabia is using to fuel that dreadful war".



Not Carpool Karaoke. Speaking at the Women's Conference at Labour Connected, 19 September

Animal Welfare and Food Standards

I've been working with the RSPCA who launched a petition on 23 September which you can find [here](#). We have been calling on the government to protect the UK's farm animal welfare standards. We are appalled by the prospect of a UK-US trade deal which will allow US meat produced in horrendous factory farms to be exported to Britain.

Surveys show the majority of British people don't want cheap meat on our shelves or in our restaurants, and in response, the government has said it will keep in place the import bans that we've had within the EU. But what they don't tell you is those import bans only protect standards of food safety, not standards of animal welfare. We cannot allow the government to enter into any trade deal which will lower our country's high food standards and undercut British farmers.

This is an issue I feel very strongly about and one which I raised at [International Trade Questions](#) on 8 October. I asked Liz Truss to identify which law which will prevent the import of pork into the UK that has been produced on American farms that still use cruel and unnecessary sow stalls. She could not give me an answer that was anything more than rhetoric, yet again demonstrating this government's lack of commitment towards maintaining our high standards in relation to food and animal welfare.

On 12 October, I was disappointed that the Lords amendment to the Agriculture Bill, which called on imported agricultural and food products to comply with domestic

standards, did not pass in the Commons despite Labour's best efforts. But all is not yet lost – we will have a final chance with the Trade Bill in the coming weeks. The fight for our farmers is not over.

In the meantime, please join me by getting involved with another important campaign, the [Save Our Standards campaign](#), backed by Jamie Oliver and Joe Wicks, to defend food standards in the UK from cheap and unhealthy US imports.



International Trade Questions, 8 October

International Trade and Work in Parliament

- 18 September: Video call with Manufacturing Trade Remedies Alliance (MTRA) Unions
- 19 September: Spoke at Warwickshire Labour Conference
- 19 September: Spoke at Women's Conference Rally – [‘The Impact of Covid: No Turning Back the Clock on Equality’](#)
- 21 September: Spoke at Labour Connected Training Session – ‘How to Get Involved in a Labour Campaign - A Role for Everyone’
- 21 September: Spoke at Open Labour Rally – [‘Own the Future’](#)
- 21 September: Chaired Rose Network's US Election Panel
- 22 September: Video call with Make UK
- 22 September: Spoke at SERA Panel – [‘Don't Trade Away Our Future: Climate and Environmental Proofing Trade Policy’](#)
- 23 September: Bloomberg and Labour Roundtable – ‘Trade After Brexit: Risks, Opportunities, Rewards’
- 24 September: Spoke at a TUC and Justice for Colombia Event – [‘Peace and Human Rights in Colombia’](#)
- 30 September: Video call with the National Farmers' Union
- 1 October: Video call with the New Zealand High Commissioner
- 5 October: Video call with the National Office of Animal Health
- 6 October: Video call with the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders
- 6 October: Video call with Novo Nordisk
- 8 October: [International Trade Questions](#)
- 8 October: Spoke at the Confederation of British Industry's Conference
- 9 October: Video call with the Australian High Commissioner
- 9 October: Video call with the RSPCA

- 12 October: Q&A with Surrey Labour Students
- 13 October: Video call with the M5 group of British manufacturers
- 13 October: Video call with the Trade Justice Movement
- 16 October: Video call with War Child

In the constituency

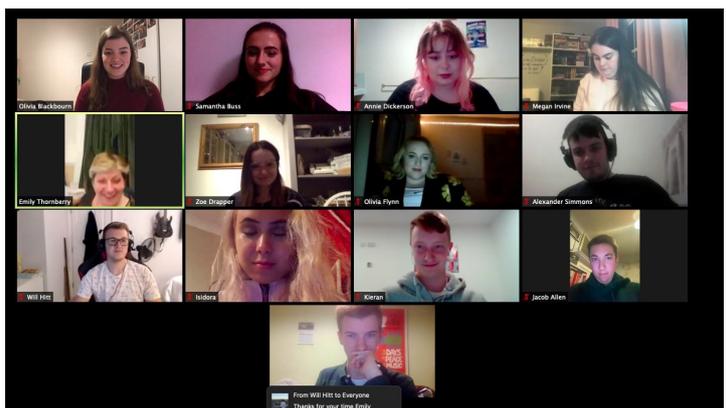
- 2 October: Advice surgery at St Luke's Community Centre
- 15 October: Video call with Junior Doctors regarding changes to paediatric services in North Central London

Media

- 1 October: [Sky News](#) – “There is clear evidence that British equipment has been used in the United States in a way which is contrary to the law.”
- 8 October: TalkRadio
- 10 October: [Times Radio](#) – “We need to have a deal with the European Union.”
- 18 October: [Westminster Hour](#)



Speaking to Sky News about the export of UK riot control equipment to the US, 1 October



Q&A with Surrey Labour Students, 12 October