

Emily Thornberry MP

ISLINGTON SOUTH AND FINSBURY

February 2024 Report



Tonight, I will vote in favour of Labour's amendment in favour of a ceasefire in Gaza:

That this House believes

- *that an Israeli ground offensive in Rafah risks catastrophic humanitarian consequences and therefore must not take place;*
- *notes the intolerable loss of Palestinian life, the majority being women and children;*
- *condemns the terrorism of Hamas who continue to hold hostages;*
- *supports Australia, Canada and New Zealand's calls for Hamas to release and return all hostages and for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, which means an immediate stop to the fighting and a ceasefire that lasts and is observed by all sides, noting that Israel cannot be expected to cease fighting if Hamas continues with violence and that Israelis have the right to the assurance that the horror of 7th October cannot happen again;*
- *therefore supports diplomatic mediation efforts to achieve a lasting ceasefire; demands that rapid and unimpeded humanitarian relief is provided in Gaza;*
- *demands an end to settlement expansion and violence; urges Israel to comply with the International Court of Justice's provisional measures;*
- *calls for the UN Security Council to be meet urgently;*
- *and urges all international partners to work together to establish a diplomatic process to deliver the peace of a two-state solution, with a safe and secure Israel alongside a viable Palestinian state, including working with international partners to recognise a Palestinian state as a contribution to rather than outcome of that process, because statehood is the inalienable right of the Palestinian people and not in the gift of any neighbour.*



Ambulance ride-out with the Islington Ambulance Centre

Last week I had the honour of shadowing two brilliant paramedics from Islington Ambulance Centre, Rachel and Derek, as well as undertaking CPR training from the Islington Ambulance Centre crew.

I travelled with Rachel and Derek right across North and Central London on their Friday night shift. Their confidence, passion and dedication was clear, and so too was the enormous pressure our emergency services are under. By 8PM, there was not one seat left in UCLH A&E. Far too many people we saw were being forced to rely on emergency care because they had been unable to get the care they needed before their medical problems reached a crisis point.

Our community is so lucky to be looked after by heroes like Rachel and Derek. It was an honour to see them do their jobs with such selfless and unflagging dedication, and a real inspiration to know they will be getting up tomorrow, and the day after that, and every day they are on shift, to do exactly the same thing again.



Fabian Society Conference crime speech

In January I delivered a speech at the Fabian Society Annual Conference about Labour's Crime Mission - one of our five missions for government and the one I am most closely involved in as Labour's Shadow Attorney General.

In the speech I talked about how the left should never concede the issue of law and order to the right, as a failure to uphold justice and the rule of law impacts the poorest and most vulnerable the most. And I also spoke about three areas that will be a huge focus for Labour if we win the general election - violence against women and girls, fraud, and the need to restore community policing so that we can crack down on the so-called 'low level crime' like burglary and antisocial behaviour that plague our communities.



Labour's plan for tackling knife crime



Speaking on Talk TV about Labour's plan for tackling knife crime

Knife crime continues to be a blight on our community in Islington. It's clear that over the past fourteen years Tory cuts to youth services and neighbourhood policing have had a terrible impact on levels of violent crime on our streets, despite the impressive efforts of our fantastic Labour Council and London Mayor to fight this terrible problem using increasingly squeezed funding from government.

That's why this month Labour announced our plans to end the knife crime epidemic, including our proposals for a proper ban on the online sale of zombie knives and ninja swords, and our pledge to launch 100 new youth hubs across the country that will bring together mental health workers, youth services and mentors to create a more joined up approach to this problem. That's the kind of bold action we need to tackle serious youth violence, not more hollow rhetoric and funding cuts under the Tories.



Whittington maternity services

This month I co-hosted a parliamentary event about maternity and neonatal services in North London, where I was able to tell local NHS leaders on behalf of constituents why we believe so strongly that keeping the Whittington Maternity Unit open is the right choice for our community and indeed could be so much better with more investment.

It was striking to hear at that event that over 70 per cent of pregnancies in North Central London are assessed as moderate to high risk. That's why we need midwife-led maternity services backed up by the very best specialist neonatal care for mothers and babies under the same roof in Islington.

To have your say in the consultation, or to find out more about the proposed changes to local NHS maternity and neonatal services, [click here](#).



Holocaust Memorial Day

It is an honour every year to sign the Holocaust Educational Trust's Book of Commitment in Parliament, and to also say a few words at Islington Town Hall to mark Holocaust Memorial Day.

Islington is an example of how we can all live together, but we need to be strong and we have to be prepared to stand up and challenge when we see something that comes to threaten our community. The importance of events like Holocaust Memorial Day is to remind us of that, and to make sure that we learn from it.



Ministerial severance pay campaign



More than 90 ministers were sacked or resigned during the 2022 year of Tory chaos, when Boris Johnson was forced from office, followed by the meltdown of the 45-day Truss premiership. But did you know that every one of those ministers was entitled to claim a quarter of their annual salary as taxpayer-funded severance pay when they left office, even if they had barely had the job for a few weeks?

Last month, I uncovered that Conservative ministers took home nearly one million pounds in severance pay in the 2022/23 financial year. It's astounding that Tory MPs were able to walk off into the sunset with taxpayers' money after that year of madness.

Perhaps most shockingly, some ministers were paid off who, even under the current legislation, shouldn't have been paid at all. These include the disgraced MP Peter Bone, who received more than five thousand pounds despite being older than 65 - the legal cut-off for receiving such a payment.

Labour have proposed reforms to the severance rules that would have prevented anything like this ever happening again, including preventing ministers from pocketing several months pay for only a few weeks' service, and barring those found guilty of misconduct from receiving a payout.

On 6 February, I led a debate in parliament on Labour's plans for reforming severance pay, and we forced a vote that would have changed the rules. But the Tories voted our proposals down - no prizes for guessing why.



Double byelection victory

This month saw two byelections, after one Tory MP was forced out in disgrace and the other resigned to protest Rishi Sunak's policies. Now the results are in, it's fantastic to see two brilliant Labour candidates overturn enormous majorities to win these seats. The Wellingborough result was the second biggest by-election swing to Labour since the Second World War, demonstrating just how fed up residents feel after fourteen years of the Tories.

I made three visits to support these campaigns, and met lifelong Tory voters who told me they would be voting Labour for the first time. I was struck by how well-organised and motivated our campaigns were, so I know firsthand that nobody is taking the general election for granted, and our fantastic campaigners and an army of volunteers will all be working hard for every vote. I want to pay tribute to their fantastic achievements as we enter an election year, and especially to all those who travelled from Islington to campaign.



International Court of Justice ruling on Gaza

Labour supports the role of international courts in adjudicating on issues of international law. I am deeply concerned that it has now been more than two weeks since the ICJ interim ruling on Gaza and yet the government has still not said whether it accepts the court's authority, agrees with its orders, and believes Israel should do the same. When I directly put that question to the Attorney General in Parliament recently, she was unwilling to give me that assurance. You can watch my question to her [by clicking here](#).



School visits

The pupils of Islington are among the most conscientious and inquisitive in the country. That is the impression I was left with after visiting three Islington schools this month.

At Canonbury Primary I met the school council and learned how they are at the heart of school decision making, even deciding what's on the lunch menu! At Winton Primary, I had the honour of announcing the results of school elections, and was quizzed on everything from Labour's plans for government to second-wave feminism! And at City of London Academy Islington, I was struck by how unafraid students were to share how their experiences had been impacted by national politics. We are very lucky to have such engaged and passionate young people growing up in our constituency.



Constituent coffee morning

On Friday 16th February I hosted a coffee morning at the Vibast Community Centre. The event was an opportunity for people from the local area to come and have a chat with me about things taking place locally or nationally, whilst enjoying a coffee with friends and neighbours.

Around 50 people attended and we discussed many issues of the day, including the Wellingborough by-election, the plans for the development of the Finsbury Leisure Centre, the war in Ukraine, and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods to name just a few.



What else I've been up to this month



Law Officers and Shadow Law Officers' meeting with the Ukrainian Prosecutor General

Being grilled by London City University students about being a woman in law and a woman in politics



Campaigning in Deal with our fantastic parliamentary candidate Mike Tapp



Talking politics with Andrew Marr on LBC



Speaking at a fundraiser for local candidate Adam Jogee in Newcastle Under Lyme



Campaigning in Chipping Barnet with team Islington South!



Diary

Constituency and campaigning

21 January - Campaigning in Chipping Barnet
25 Jan - Visited Canonbury Primary School
25 Jan - Visited City of London Academy Islington
26 Jan - Spoke at the Islington Town Hall Holocaust Memorial Day Event
26 Jan - Byelection campaigning in Wellingborough
29 Jan - Roundtable about Whittington Maternity Services
31 - Attended police commanders commendation ceremony

2 Feb - Roving constituency surgery
2 Feb - Visited Winton Primary School
4 Feb - Campaigning in Deal with Labour Candidate Mike Tapp
5 Feb - Speaking to London City University politics and law students
8 Feb - Byelection campaigning in Kingswood
9 Feb - Islington Ambulance Service ride-out
10 Feb - Town Hall constituency surgery
10 Feb - Campaigning in Islington
15 Feb - Byelection campaigning in Wellingborough
16 Feb - Constituency coffee morning
18 Feb - Greater London Assembly campaign launch

Parliament and Shadow Attorney General

20 Jan - Speech to the Fabian Society Conference about Labour's Crime Mission
22 Jan - BBC Politics Live
22 Jan - Meeting with the Society of Labour Lawyers
23 Jan - Spoke at a fundraiser for Keir Mather MP and Simon Lightwood MP
24 Jan - Media round on knife crime including Talk TV, GB News, 5Live, BBC News Channel, Times Radio, LBC and Sky News
26 Jan - Spoke at a fundraiser for Newcastle-Under-Lyme candidate Adam Jogee
29 Jan - Supreme Court visit

1 Feb - Attorney General Oral Questions
1 Feb - Met the Ukrainian Prosecutor General
6 Feb - Opposition Day Debate on Ministerial Severance Pay
19 Feb - Meeting with City of London Police about fraud
21 Feb - Online events with Lancaster University Politics Society students

