

UK Home Secretary Suella Braverman calls for overturn of UN refugee convention in fascist speech

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Conservative Home Secretary Suella Braverman stepped up the UK government's war against refugees and asylum seekers in a fascist speech at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington (AEI) last week.

Braverman hailed the AEI as an "organisation that has contributed so much to the intellectual foundations of the conservative movement in the US and the UK..."

"Some of those affiliated with AEI have had a significant impact on my own thinking, she added, naming another devoted Thatcherite, "Sir Roger Scruton, who was a visiting scholar here for several years" and Antonin Scalia, the arch-reactionary former US Supreme Court justice, who ruled in allowing the stolen election of 2000 that "there is no universal right of suffrage."

Braverman declared that "uncontrolled and illegal migration" was "an existential challenge for the political and cultural institutions of the West." Framing migration by refugees as essentially a criminal enterprise, the word "illegal" was mentioned over 40 times on the speech and "illegal migration" over 20 times.

She cited the island of Lampedusa as a means of solidarising herself with the anti-migrant campaign of Georgia Meloni's far-right Italian government, declaring that on "12th September, over 120 hundred boats, carrying more than 5,000 illegal migrants, made the hundred-mile crossing from Tunisia, in Africa, to Italy.

"Within 48 hours illegal arrivals outnumbered the local population and a state of emergency had been declared. By 20th September, at least 11,000 had landed, with migrants sleeping in the street, stealing food, and clashing with police."

The US "faces similar challenges" as "Thousands of people illegally cross the border on a daily basis."

"Europe is at a critical juncture," she added. "The [European Union] must find a way to meet the challenge

of illegal migration." She praised EU Commission President "Ursula von der Leyen's recent visit to Lampedusa" for demonstrating "the Commission's recognition of the severity of the situation."

The WSWS noted of the trip, "Ursula von der Leyen expressed solidarity with the fascist Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. The measures planned [by the European Union] are reminiscent of the darkest times in European history. They involve the complete closure of 'Fortress Europe,' mass deportations to war torn countries and disaster zones in North Africa and the establishment of concentration and deportation camps by the military."

Braverman took aim at the United Nation Refugee Convention, signed in 1951 in the aftermath of the horrors of Second World War—above all the Nazi persecution of the Jews and the Holocaust as not "fit for our modern age". It "conferred protection on some two million people in Europe," she said, whereas "it now confers the notional right to move to another country upon at least 780 million people."

A "misguided dogma of multiculturalism" had failed by making "no demands of the incomer to integrate", allowing "people to come to our society and live parallel lives in it... And, in extreme cases... pursue lives aimed at undermining the stability and threatening the security of society," Braverman declared.

The entire "global asylum framework" had to be torn down as it was a "promissory note that the West cannot fulfil". Those who "arrived illegally or passed through multiple safe countries along the way... should cease to be treated as refugees," she insisted. As well as the Refugee Convention, "In Europe we've added through the European Convention on Human Rights additional human rights laws," she complained.

Western countries, she said, "will not be able to sustain

an asylum system if in effect, simply being gay, or a woman, and fearful of discrimination in your country of origin, is sufficient to qualify for protection”. All the world’s problems could be resolved, said the home secretary, if only illegal immigrants stopped devouring the resources of society.

Like far-right figures around the world, Braverman’s broad political aim is to whip up a frenzied anti-immigration atmosphere to mobilise politically backward sections of the population as a battering ram against a growing movement of the working class. Her speech followed her comments solidarising with Metropolitan Police armed officers protesting charges brought against the officer responsible for the murder of Chris Kaba in 2022 and promising measures to prevent such prosecutions in future. Both interventions were made on the eve of this week’s Tory Party conference to cement a future leadership challenge, in anticipation of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak losing an expected general election next year to Labour.

They had the desired effect, with the *Daily Express* crowing that with the speech, “Suella Braverman went from [Tory party] leadership hopeful to international superstar in just 24 hours”.

Outright fascists backed the speech, with Mark Collett of the Patriotic Alternative group declaring, “What I do know, is that what she said is a good thing for nationalism... we should capitalise on this and do our best to take control of this situation and steer the national conversation in the correct direction.”

No opposition to “steering the national conversation” to witch-hunt and scapegoat migrants was forthcoming from the liberal media, outside of a few pro-forma complaints over her attack on “multiculturalism” and her homophobia.

The *Guardian*’s main political concerns were two-fold.

It tried to portray Labour as some sort of progressive opposition to the government but was reduced to focusing on a single tweet by Shadow Home Secretary Yvette Cooper complaining of “Deeply divisive, damaging political game playing—unworthy of her office.” The *Guardian* continues to fulsomely back Labour’s plan to curb immigration through “a restored partnership with the EU.” Cooper’s central message was that Braverman had “lost grip of Tory asylum chaos” and should “sort chaos at home”.

The *Guardian* also tried to boost supposedly dissenting voices within the Tory Party, again to conceal and apologise for the full reactionary direction of both the

government and Labour itself. Its endeavours and those of other newspapers centred mostly on a dozen gay Tory MPs who complained to the chief whip and, after days of silence, Jeremy Hunt, a leadership rival, who politely declared that he “wouldn’t use her words” while stressing that Braverman was “absolutely right” to demand measures against “criminal gangs smuggling thousands of people over the Channel”.

This was the pattern throughout government, with one of what the *Times* described as a “pink wall” Tory MP complaining, “Her comments lessen the argument for reform because now the focus is on whether we are bigoted to argue for change rather than the need to reform a broken asylum system across the world”, and Sunak refusing to explicitly contradict someone clearly mounting a challenge to his leadership for fear of solidifying internal opposition behind her. Like Hunt, he praised Braverman’s Illegal Migration Act denying refugees the right to stay in Britain if they arrived “illegally” on a small boat via the English Channel and enables them to be deported to a “safe third country”—with the government seeking to send them thousands of miles away to Rwanda.

The *Spectator*, the house organ of the Tories, laid out the underlying political logic behind Braverman’s elevation as Sunak’s likely successor, with columnist Patrick O’Flynn writing, “Here is the thing: Suella Braverman is right. The system really is unsustainable. Either it must be reformed radically by conventional politicians or it will end up being dumped in chaotic and dangerous fashion by a new wave of demagogues that electors have had to turn to in desperation.”

He concluded, “The time is coming soon when the Conservative party and its leader will have to decide whether they are for real when it comes to tackling the wholesale abuse of the asylum system by would-be economic migrants or prefer instead to hand the task on to wilder forces.”



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