

# Open Letter to Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer



**Sir Keir Starmer**

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**Dear Prime Minister**

**Re: The Other Windrush Scandal**

There are those who argue that the Windrush scandal which was the product of Theresa May’s ‘hostile environment’ tarnishes the name ‘Windrush’ and should rightly be called the ‘Home Office scandal’. But, on matters to do with immigration, border control and policing, the Home Office is the engine room of government.

I suggest that there are two definitions of the Windrush scandal. One is the Home Office scandal and the other is the scandal of what has become the Windrush industry. You, sir, are cynically encouraging the growth of the latter.

‘On 13 May 2025, the prime minister, you borrowed from a playlist that has stood the test of time in British politics and remains living testimony to systemic racism and to how embedded the racialisation of immigration has become. In response to Reform’s electoral gains in local elections and in a by-election earlier that month and Nigel Farage’s jingoistic claims about the same, you spoke to white Britain and especially to those whom you feared would desert Labour and throw their lot in with Reform, telling them that they should not give up on Labour just yet. Instead, they should give you time because you share their anxieties that Britain risks becoming ‘an island of strangers’ and you were going to show them evidence of Labour taking action to make sure that does not happen.

But, by 18 June 2025, anticipating Windrush Day on 22 June, you had gathered a good number of those ‘strangers’, calling themselves the Windrush generation and their descendants, in 10 Downing St, to tell them how much you valued them and how much the nation was grateful for ‘the contribution’ they had made to building Britain. They were clearly the right sort of strangers, even though all of them most probably know someone who had suffered detriment, if not loss of life, as a consequence of being caught in the hostile environment dragnet. Indeed, some of them had been and are still actively involved in providing legal representation for Windrush victims seeking compensation from the Home Office for heinous deeds of injustice, including wrecking their lives.



They had all come from that reserve pool of labour that Britain had left unskilled and undeveloped in its former colonies to which their forebears had been forcibly transported in British ships, predecessors of the Empire Windrush. It was from that pool of labour that the West India Regiment was formed and was deployed across the battlefields of Europe. After demobilization, they returned to even worse economic conditions in the Caribbean, many having to throw themselves on the mercy of their local community, especially the disabled and infirm. As a consequence, they decided to return to Britain and seek a better life.

By the time the general election of 1964 was announced, immigration was dominating political discourse. In Smethwick, west midlands, the Conservative candidate Peter Griffiths was boldly telling voters in that constituency: 'If you want a nigger for a neighbour, vote Labour'. Griffiths won his seat with a 7.2% swing from Labour, thus unseating Patrick Gordon Walker, the sitting Labour MP and former Shadow Foreign Secretary.

The incoming Labour Government wasted no time in publishing the White Paper 'Immigration from the Commonwealth', which set out their intention to place further restrictions on migration from the Commonwealth, whilst also introducing integration policies for those already here.

The 1965 Act effectively positioned Britain on a spectrum with, at one end:

- the state ostensibly espousing liberal notions of the value and 'richness' of diversity while passing increasingly racist immigration legislation ...and at the other end:
- the Far Right wanting to 'keep Britain white', with the two major political parties oscillating between the centre and the Far Right

Less than 4 years after Peter Griffiths' alert to the Smethwick electorate, Enoch Powell, Conservative MP for Wolverhampton southwest added to your borrowed playlist when he delivered his 'rivers of blood' speech, in which he gave dire warnings to the entire British nation on the dangers of allowing the population of 'coloured immigrants' to expand. (April 1968)

By 2016, UKIP had positioned itself firmly along that spectrum, acting as a fulcrum to determine the direction (always rightwards) of those two main parties, to the extent that it not only triggered Britain's exit from the European Union, but by the 2024 general election had inserted itself into mainstream parliamentary government.

The history of the black presence in Britain after the second world war did not begin when Sam Beaver King and Arthur Torrington decided to reinvent the Empire Windrush and start a 21st century crusade to iconise that ship and the passengers it brought on that single voyage it made from the West Indies to Britain. Nor was that history disconnected from the longer history of Africans and people of African descent in Britain.

The British monarch is already handing out gongs in recognition of 'services to the Windrush generation'. This will no doubt become a staple. Meanwhile, you stubbornly refuse to release and make a public response to the report you commissioned Martin Forde KC to produce on allegations of bullying, racism and sexism within the Labour party, a report you have had since 2022; a report whose findings apply no doubt to your own treatment of Diane Abbott and other Black and Global Majority MPs and Labour members.

Finally, over the decades, we have relentlessly campaigned against the lack of inclusion in British social history and in the school/college curriculum, of the record of all we have ever done in pre- and post-war Britain and of our own journey with Labour.

The Other Windrush Scandal compounds that erasure and effectively rewrites British social history, through the blinkered lens of Windrush.

For the sake of this and future generations, we each have an obligation: a) to put an end to this Windrush scandal and its active falsification of our history and  
b) to arrest the growth of the Windrush industry.

Rather than your hubristic endorsement and encouragement of that falsification of the history of the post-war Black presence in Britain, let us see evidence of you and Labour taking a lead in putting an end to this Other Windrush Scandal.



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