# Jeremy Corbyn challenges Keir Starmer’s immigration rhetoric and condemns UK arms sales at Wide Awake Festival



At the recent Wide Awake Festival in Brockwell Park, London, Jeremy Corbyn delivered a passionate critique of Sir Keir Starmer's recent immigration announcement, specifically challenging his use of the phrase "island of strangers." The former Labour leader, now an independent MP after losing the party whip, emphasised that Britain’s strength lies in its rich diversity and varied backgrounds. Corbyn refuted Starmer's implication that the country could become isolated through migration issues, stating, “Let’s hear no more of this nonsense spoken by some about this being a country of strangers,” and fervently invoking the spirit of community that embodies London.

This sharp critique has stirred debates reminiscent of historical divides. Critics have drawn parallels between Starmer's language and the infamous rhetoric of Enoch Powell, who delivered the notorious “rivers of blood” speech in 1968, invoking fears among some that earlier generations' struggles regarding immigration might resurface under contemporary discussions.

In addition to addressing immigration, Corbyn also condemned Britain's ongoing arms sales to Israel, urging an immediate halt to such trades. He invited attendees of the festival to support anti-war demonstrations concerning the plight of the Palestinian people, insisting that Britain's complicity via armaments has a direct impact on the ongoing conflict. Highlighting the UK’s role in supplying weapons used in attacks on Gaza, Corbyn lamented, “This country, Britain, has supplied weapons and parts for the F-35 jets that are used to bomb Gaza,” calling for moral accountability.

This discourse reflects not just personal opposition to the current government's policies but also signals a broader reassessment of Labour's stance towards international conflicts. The recent decision by the UK government to restrict certain military exports to Israel indicates a growing recognition of these concerns, as nearly 30 of the 350 export licences were halted due to the potential misuse in breaching humanitarian laws in Gaza. Such governmental shifts may be seen as an acknowledgment of the mounting pressure from both public sentiment and political voices like Corbyn advocating for a reevaluation of Britain's diplomatic relationships based on international law and human rights.

Furthermore, Corbyn's comments extended to a contention regarding wealth distribution within the UK. He proposed that the government should impose higher taxes on the very wealthy to fund essential public services, declaring, “You can’t achieve equality and justice if you extol the virtues of billionaires and do nothing about taking money off them.” This perspective starkly contrasts with Labour's current leadership, which has sought to distance itself from Corbyn's approach and rhetoric, as articulated by Starmer in recent statements emphasising practicality over ideological purity.

The festival itself, while a celebration of music and culture, mirrored local tensions surrounding its organisation. Residents have voiced concerns about the damage and disruption caused by these events in Brockwell Park, leading to legal actions against Lambeth Council. Despite a High Court ruling that deemed the council's use of park space “irrational,” follow-up planning applications have allowed the festivals to proceed.

As political narratives evolve within the Labour Party and wider societal discussions regarding diversity, wealth, and international relations unfold, Corbyn's remarks at the festival have injected a critical perspective into the ongoing dialogue about national identity and accountability in governance. With prominent voices advocating for significant change, the challenge lies in reconciling these ideals with the practicalities of modern politics.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/jeremy-corbyn-criticises-starmers-island-of-strangers-speech-at-festival-NSL3XCAUPFMF5JJYD2OMDV5DPQ/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/jeremy-corbyn-criticises-starmers-island-of-strangers-speech-at-festival-NSL3XCAUPFMF5JJYD2OMDV5DPQ/> - Jeremy Corbyn criticized Sir Keir Starmer's use of the phrase 'island of strangers' in an immigration announcement. Speaking at the Wide Awake Festival in London, Corbyn emphasized the UK's strength lies in its diversity and different backgrounds, contrasting Starmer's remarks with those of Enoch Powell's 1968 speech. Corbyn also called for an end to British arms sales to Israel, urging support for Palestinian demonstrations and suggesting higher taxes on the wealthy to fund public services. Additionally, he addressed the legal issues faced by Irish rap trio Kneecap during the festival.
3. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/06/13/jeremy-corbyn-accuses-keir-starmer-rewriting-history/> - Jeremy Corbyn accused Sir Keir Starmer of 'rewriting history' after Starmer claimed he was certain Labour would lose the 2019 general election. Corbyn pointed out that Starmer never expressed such doubts at the time and criticized his current stance as double standards. He emphasized their joint campaigning efforts in 2019 and urged Starmer to 'own' his involvement, expressing disappointment over the change in Starmer's narrative regarding the election outcome.
4. <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/article-815313> - Jeremy Corbyn condemned the UK's continued supply of weapons to Israel, questioning why the UK, a signatory to the International Criminal Court, continues to arm Israel despite allegations of genocide against Palestinians. He called for the UK to 'abide by international law' and suggested that diplomatic relations should be reconsidered if arrest warrants are out for Israeli leaders. Corbyn is also in talks with four other independent MPs to form a new pro-Palestine group to increase their influence in Parliament.
5. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/09/02/monday-evening-news-briefing-britain-to-stop-exporting-some/> - The UK government announced it will halt exporting certain military equipment to Israel after determining there is a risk they may be used in violation of humanitarian law in Gaza. Approximately 30 out of 350 export licenses will be affected. This decision aligns with the UK's strategic export licensing criteria, which prohibits the export of items if there is a risk of them being used to breach humanitarian law. The move reflects growing concerns over the use of British arms in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
6. <https://www.jpost.com/arab-israeli-conflict/jeremy-corbyn-calls-for-review-of-arms-sales-to-israel-over-gaza-clashes-549231> - Jeremy Corbyn called for a review of arms sales to Israel following clashes in Gaza, condemning the killing and wounding of unarmed Palestinian protesters by Israeli forces. He emphasized the right of Palestinians to protest against their conditions and called for an independent international inquiry into the killings. Corbyn also urged the UK government to freeze arms sales to Israel, highlighting the use of live ammunition against unarmed civilians as illegal and inhumane.
7. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/01/02/sir-keir-starmer-to-distance-himself-jeremy-corbyn-labour/> - Sir Keir Starmer announced plans to distance himself from his predecessor, Jeremy Corbyn, stating that his premiership would not be 'vanity dressed up as virtue.' In a major speech, Starmer criticized former Conservative leaders and emphasized that politics is about making a 'practical difference' to people's lives, not about self-regard or vanity. He highlighted his experience in making 'life-or-death decisions' as a lawyer, positioning himself as ready to lead the country with a focus on practical outcomes.