# Nigel Farage sparks sectarian row ahead of Hamilton by-election in Scotland



Nigel Farage has found himself at the centre of a heated political dispute in Scotland as he faces allegations of attempting to undermine the nation’s political discourse. Anas Sarwar, leader of the Scottish Labour party, has strongly condemned Farage, labelling him a "poisonous man who doesn't understand Scotland." This exchange follows a contentious social media advertisement from Reform UK, the party Farage leads, which has been labelled "racist" and has incited a significant backlash.

The controversy revolves around a Reform UK advert linked to the Hamilton by-election, scheduled for the upcoming week. Sarwar has accused Farage of introducing sectarianism into Scottish politics, a claim he made in light of an ad that utilised selectively edited speeches to insinuate that Sarwar prioritises specific communities. "This is a blatant attempt from Nigel Farage to try and poison our politics here in Scotland," Sarwar stated. He further emphasised his dedication to combating sectarianism, asserting that his contributions to the NHS contrast sharply with Farage’s lengthy career in European politics, which he characterised as self-serving.

In a press conference defending the advertisement, Farage retorted that Sarwar's own words demonstrate a prioritisation of the south Asian community in Scotland. Farage asserted, “All we’ve done is to put out the exact words spoken by him without any comment.” He claimed that the accusations from Sarwar indicated that Reform UK was gaining traction in Scottish political discussions.

The advertisement itself features clips of Sarwar encouraging political engagement among south Asian communities, but critics argue that the captured soundbites have been misrepresented to suggest explicit prioritisation of those groups. Sarwar has termed the campaign a “very deliberate dog whistle” aimed at implying questions about his loyalty and identity as a Scottish citizen. “I am a Scot, a proud Scot,” he affirmed, stressing his desire to contribute positively to Scottish society.

The political context is further complicated by reactions from other Scottish political leaders. John Swinney, Scotland's First Minister, has raised concerns over Sarwar's willingness to entertain collaboration with Reform UK, suggesting that this could compromise the integrity of the Scottish Parliament and undermine essential societal values. Swinney has expressed his commitment to refusing any alliances with Farage's party, urging Sarwar to match this commitment; he claims that allowing Farage’s influence could have detrimental consequences.

Sarwar, however, has countered that Swinney is using Farage as a "bogeyman" to distract the public from pressing issues, such as inadequacies in healthcare and education, that plague the SNP-led government. This perspective suggests that the real issues at stake are being overshadowed by sensationalist rhetoric and political manoeuvring.

In a climate where Reform UK's influence appears to be increasing—evident in recent polling that suggests they could secure a significant number of seats in the Holyrood election—both Sarwar and Swinney seem to be navigating a politically precarious landscape. Some party officials, including Richard Tice, the deputy leader of Reform UK, have claimed that both leaders are fearful of the party’s sudden rise in public support, positing that this reflects a broader dissatisfaction with established parties.

With the Hamilton by-election looming, the exchanges between Farage and Scottish Labour highlight not just personal animosities but also a larger struggle for the soul of Scottish politics. As parties vie for prominence and position, it remains to be seen how these narratives will shape voter perceptions and behaviour in the upcoming elections.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/nigel-farage-branded-poisonous-man-35294137), [[4]](https://news.stv.tv/politics/swinney-using-farage-as-bogeyman-to-distract-from-snp-failure-sarwar-says)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/nigel-farage-branded-poisonous-man-35294137), [[2]](https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/anas-sarwar-leaves-door-open-to-working-with-nigel-farages-reform-on-individual-issues-4974591), [[5]](https://www.gbnews.com/politics/nigel-farage-john-swinney-reform-uk-snp-protests)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://newsvoice.info/article/page/dailyrecord/news/politics/john-swinney-accuses-anas-sarwar-34630050), [[4]](https://news.stv.tv/politics/swinney-using-farage-as-bogeyman-to-distract-from-snp-failure-sarwar-says)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/scotland-nigel-farage-first-minister-glasgow-snp-b1226369.html), [[7]](https://news.stv.tv/politics/swinney-and-sarwar-terrified-of-nigel-farages-reform-uks-rise-in-the-polls-tice-claims)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/nigel-farage-branded-poisonous-man-35294137), [[2]](https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/anas-sarwar-leaves-door-open-to-working-with-nigel-farages-reform-on-individual-issues-4974591)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/nigel-farage-branded-poisonous-man-35294137> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/anas-sarwar-leaves-door-open-to-working-with-nigel-farages-reform-on-individual-issues-4974591> - Anas Sarwar, leader of Scottish Labour, has indicated a willingness to collaborate with Nigel Farage's Reform UK on specific issues if they secure seats in the next Holyrood election. While ruling out formal coalitions, Sarwar expressed openness to good ideas from any opposition MSP, regardless of party affiliation. This stance comes amid discussions about Reform UK's potential influence in the upcoming election, with some polls suggesting they could win a significant number of MSPs, positioning them as potential kingmakers in the Scottish Parliament.
3. <https://newsvoice.info/article/page/dailyrecord/news/politics/john-swinney-accuses-anas-sarwar-34630050> - John Swinney, First Minister of Scotland, has accused Anas Sarwar of facilitating Nigel Farage's Reform UK by leaving the door open to cooperation on individual issues. Swinney expressed concern that Sarwar's approach could undermine important societal values and stated he would confront Farage directly. He emphasized that there would be no cooperation with Reform UK in the Scottish Parliament and urged Sarwar to match this guarantee, expressing fears that any support from Farage could be damaging to Scottish politics.
4. <https://news.stv.tv/politics/swinney-using-farage-as-bogeyman-to-distract-from-snp-failure-sarwar-says> - Anas Sarwar has accused First Minister John Swinney of using Nigel Farage as a 'bogeyman' to distract from the Scottish National Party's (SNP) failures in government. Sarwar criticized Swinney for focusing on Farage instead of addressing issues like the National Health Service and education system, which he claimed are failing under SNP leadership. He emphasized that the upcoming election should focus on improving public services and not be about Farage, who he believes has no interest in Scotland or its people.
5. <https://www.gbnews.com/politics/nigel-farage-john-swinney-reform-uk-snp-protests> - An anti-Reform UK summit held by John Swinney, First Minister of Scotland, was disrupted by protesters who accused the Scottish National Party (SNP) of being 'democracy deniers'. The event, aimed at strengthening and protecting democracy in Scotland, saw demonstrators holding banners and wearing T-shirts with slogans like 'not far-right'. Reform UK councillor Thomas Kerr criticized the summit, stating that it was an affront to democracy and that the SNP was scared of Nigel Farage's influence.
6. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/scotland-nigel-farage-first-minister-glasgow-snp-b1226369.html> - Anas Sarwar, leader of Scottish Labour, has stated that Scots face a simple choice at the 2026 Holyrood election: him or John Swinney. Sarwar accused First Minister Swinney of attempting to 'defraud' the people of Scotland and using Nigel Farage as a distraction from the SNP's failings in government. He emphasized that his party represents change and a new direction for the country, contrasting with Swinney's leadership.
7. <https://news.stv.tv/politics/swinney-and-sarwar-terrified-of-nigel-farages-reform-uks-rise-in-the-polls-tice-claims> - Richard Tice, deputy leader of Reform UK, claimed that both John Swinney and Anas Sarwar are 'terrified' of the party's rise in the polls. He suggested that Reform UK could achieve 20% support by the summer and accused Swinney and Sarwar of fearing the party's growth. Tice highlighted that Reform UK has gained significant traction in Scotland, with membership surpassing that of the Scottish Conservatives, and could secure seats in the upcoming Holyrood election.