# Climate Emergency Absent from Final Party Leaders' Debate Raises Concerns



On 2 July 2024, British political leaders Sir Keir Starmer and Rishi Sunak participated in the final televised party leaders' debate, moderated by Mishal Husain. However, none of the questions posed during the debate addressed the climate emergency, despite the issue's critical importance. The absence of climate-related discussions marked a stark contrast to the 2019 pre-election debate dedicated to the climate crisis by Channel 4, during which then-Prime Minister Boris Johnson committed to a "green industrial revolution."

Throughout the current campaign, both Labour and Conservative leaders have largely sidestepped the topic of environmental action. Rishi Sunak’s brief mention of Labour's green plans suggested potential higher taxes but did not delve deeper into environmental policies. Labour’s Ed Miliband, shadow secretary for climate change and net zero, emphasized the urgency for significant climate action, noting that the next government will oversee crucial years in achieving net zero targets.

Labour has proposed reversing the ban on onshore wind and has stressed the need for substantial green investment to ensure economic growth and energy security. However, the shadow chancellor, Rachel Reeves, has reduced Labour’s spending pledge from an annual £28 billion to £5 billion. Meanwhile, the Conservatives shelved plans to ban gas boilers from 2035 and have seen prominent energy companies like Shell and BP shift focus back to fossil fuels.

Significant green investments remain a major talking point, with investors like Macquarie still committed to various green projects. Nevertheless, the lack of substantial climate debate during the election campaign has highlighted concerns from economists, industrial leaders, and environmental campaigners regarding the future trajectory of the UK's climate policies.