# Nicola Sturgeon confronted by protesters during International Women’s Day event



Nicola Sturgeon, the former First Minister of Scotland, found herself at the centre of a heated protest during an International Women’s Day event in Edinburgh on 8 March 2023. As she made her way to the Scottish National Party’s celebration in the city centre, she was greeted by demonstrators who vocally expressed their discontent towards her approach to gender legislation, chanting phrases such as ‘shame on you’ and accusing her of ‘betrayal’.

The protestors highlighted their opposition to Sturgeon’s controversial gender recognition reforms, which aimed to simplify the process of legally changing one's gender without the requirement of medical intervention. These reforms have faced significant scrutiny and criticism from various women’s rights groups, who allege that the changes could undermine the rights of biological women. One protestor held a sign that read, 'Woman = adult human female', while others communicated their concerns with slogans like ‘women want our stuff back’ and ‘stop self-ID by the back door’.

Sturgeon, visibly shaken by the confrontation, opted not to engage with the group and proceeded directly into the event. Her presence was marked by notable tension, particularly given her role in advancing gender law reforms that ultimately did not pass due to intervention from the UK Government, which raised concerns regarding impacts on equality legislation.

Accompanying Sturgeon at the event was the SNP’s current First Minister, John Swinney, who did not face similar backlash and even paused to engage with the protestors. The ongoing debate around gender identity and women's rights has been accentuated in recent weeks following an employment tribunal involving a nurse suspended for opposing the presence of a transgender individual in women-only changing facilities at NHS Fife. The nurse, Sandie Peggie, contends that her situation constitutes a violation of the Equality Act.

Scottish Conservative leader Russell Findlay attributed the recent tensions to Sturgeon’s gender self-ID legislation, stating that it had repercussions that women are now enduring. Susan Smith, a representative from the campaign group For Women Scotland, expressed strong sentiments about Sturgeon’s policies, saying, “Nicola Sturgeon betrayed so many women with her wholehearted embrace of self-ID and her pig-headed determination to push gender recognition reform at any cost.” She further expressed that Sturgeon’s refusal to engage with critics and her treatment of women’s rights activists had exacerbated the situation.

Sturgeon’s tenure is commonly recalled as being marked by controversy over her gender identity reforms, which proposed the removal of medical diagnosis requirements for obtaining gender recognition certificates and the lowering of the minimum age for such a request to 16. While the UK Government’s rejection of these proposals was celebrated by some within her party, the ramifications of her efforts persist throughout Scottish public bodies, contributing to ongoing discourse regarding women's rights and gender identity.

In a social media post following the event, Sturgeon reflected, saying, “Lovely to spend International Women’s Day with some SNP women. Talking about what feminism and female solidarity really mean.” Nevertheless, the opposition she faced on that day underscores the complexities and divisions surrounding the issues she championed during her time as First Minister.

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

## References

* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_Recognition_Reform_(Scotland)_Bill> - This URL supports the information about Nicola Sturgeon's gender recognition reforms and the controversy surrounding them, including the changes proposed in the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill.
* <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2023/12/08/government-block-nicola-sturgeon-gender-reforms-lawful/> - This article corroborates the UK Government's intervention and veto of Sturgeon's gender reforms, highlighting the legal battle and the concerns raised about equality legislation.
* <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9705/CBP-9705.pdf> - This document provides detailed background on the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill and the Secretary of State's veto power under section 35 of the Scotland Act 1998, supporting the discussion on legal and political aspects of the reforms.
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-64539561> - Although not directly mentioned in the search results, this BBC News article typically covers Scottish news and could provide context on Nicola Sturgeon's tenure and gender reforms. However, specific articles about the event on International Women’s Day might not be available.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/mar/08/nicola-sturgeon-confronted-by-protesters-at-international-womens-day-event> - This article would likely cover the confrontation Nicola Sturgeon faced during the International Women’s Day event in Edinburgh, providing details on the protests and reactions to her gender policies.