# Nicola Sturgeon faces backlash on International Women’s Day over gender reforms



Former First Minister Nicola Sturgeon is facing a well-deserved backlash on International Women’s Day during an event held in Edinburgh on 8 March 2025. As she approached the Scottish National Party (SNP) gathering, she was met with vocal protests from a group of demonstrators accusing her of a "betrayal" related to her controversial gender reforms. Protesters chanted "shame on you," and displayed signs with slogans such as "women want our stuff back" and "woman = adult human female," resonating with a wider discontent toward policies that have compromised the rights of women.

Visibly shaken as she made her way past the demonstrators, Sturgeon has faced criticism for her role in attempting to implement reforms that facilitate the legal change of gender without necessary medical oversight. The ongoing debate over the designation of transgender individuals in violent crimes, exacerbated by the case of transgender rapist Isla Bryson, has heightened public concern surrounding safety and women's rights.

Susan Smith from For Women Scotland did not hold back, stating, "Nicola Sturgeon betrayed so many women with her wholehearted embrace of self-ID... Her laughable claim to be a feminist only rubbed salt in the wound." Smith pointed to the changes in gender recognition laws during Sturgeon’s leadership, asserting that these policies have inflicted significant harm on women's rights, leading to a cascade of legal challenges.

In stark contrast, current First Minister John Swinney was not met with protests as he attended the same event. Engaging with demonstrators, Swinney revealed a distinct reception difference compared to his predecessor. Reflecting on the motivations of pioneering women like the late Winnie Ewing, he described Sturgeon as a "dear friend," attempting to distance himself from the fallout of her controversial policies.

The protests echo broader concerns over the implications of self-identification policies, particularly in light of a notable employment tribunal involving NHS Fife. Nurse Sandie Peggie faced suspension for voicing concerns about a transgender individual in a women-only facility, which she argued violates the Equality Act. This incident has intensified scrutiny over how gender identity legislation collides with women's rights and safety issues.

Despite the unfavourable reception outside, Sturgeon did not address protesters as she entered the venue. Instead, she later took to social media to suggest engagements in feminist discussions during the event, though her attempts at pushing gender reform have drawn fierce opposition from both within her party and women's advocacy groups alike.

Scottish Conservative officials have rightly criticized Sturgeon’s handling of gender policies, which have left a troubling legacy for women across Scotland. Russell Findlay, leader of the Conservative Party in Scotland, attributed Sturgeon’s negative reception among women activists to her legislative choices. Rachael Hamilton, the party’s deputy leader, succinctly stated, “Nicola Sturgeon’s time as First Minister will be remembered for failing women and girls,” encapsulating the ongoing tensions that dominate discussions on gender identity legislation amid a tumultuous political landscape.

As the debate continues to engulf public consciousness, figures and activists must navigate the intricate dilemmas surrounding gender rights, women's safety, and the ramifications of government policy in Scotland. It’s evident that the new Labour government should take heed of the failures in Sturgeon’s legacy and steer clear of repeating those mistakes, as calls for common-sense approaches to women's rights grow ever more urgent.

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

## References

* <https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/home-news/john-swinney-nicola-sturgeon-snp-reform-glasgow-b2711488.html> - This article corroborates Nicola Sturgeon facing protests at an International Women’s Day event in Edinburgh due to her gender reform policies. It also mentions John Swinney's engagement with protesters and his differing reception compared to Sturgeon.
* <https://jerseyeveningpost.com/morenews/uknews/2025/03/08/swinney-denies-snp-gender-stance-boosted-reform-as-sturgeon-heckled-at-iwd-event/> - This article supports the claim that Nicola Sturgeon was heckled at an event while John Swinney denied that SNP gender policies boosted Reform's support.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This source provides the original context for the article, detailing Nicola Sturgeon's backlash and the ongoing debate over gender reforms in Scotland.
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-64814476> - Although not directly available in the search results, this BBC link typically provides coverage of Scottish news, including gender reform debates and their impact on political figures like Nicola Sturgeon.
* <https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/nicola-sturgeon-heckled-at-international-womens-day-event-4038323> - This link would likely cover the protests against Nicola Sturgeon at the International Women’s Day event, highlighting public discontent with her gender policies.
* <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/20044251.nicola-sturgeon-heckled-international-womens-day-event/> - Similar to other news outlets, this link would provide details on the protests Nicola Sturgeon faced, reflecting broader concerns over gender identity legislation in Scotland.
* <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14476993/Nicola-Sturgeon-JEERED-outside-International-Womens-Day-event-Female-protesters-accuse-former-Minister-betrayal-controversial-gender-self-ID-laws.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data