# Robert Jenrick demands urgent ban on kettles in high-risk prison cells after boiling water attack



Top Conservative Robert Jenrick has issued a clarion call for urgent reforms within the UK prison system, particularly in light of the shocking assault on a prison officer by inmate Axel Rudakubana at HMP Belmarsh. In this disturbing incident, Rudakubana hurled boiling water over a prison officer, bringing to the forefront the relentless and worsening issue of violence against prison staff. Jenrick’s assertive demand for immediate action to ban kettles in the cells of high-risk prisoners starkly highlights what many regard as an unacceptable leniency towards dangerous offenders—a concern that resonates with those advocating for a more robust stance on criminal justice.

The brutal event, which unfolded last Thursday, exemplifies a disturbing trend in UK prisons, where assaults involving boiling water have alarmingly proliferated. Jenrick stressed the significant risks, citing the shared accounts of many prison officers who have endured similar violent encounters. He warned that without swift and decisive intervention, it could soon lead to the tragic reality of a prison officer losing their life in such confrontations. Such ominous predictions are not unfounded; a prior incident involving Samuel Boland in 2018, who was sentenced to additional time for a similar attack, illustrates the perilous environment facing corrections personnel.

Jenrick's comments resonate deeply within a broader discussion about the culture of violence endemic in the prison system. A 2019 report revealed that boiling water was increasingly weaponized by inmates, often rooted in escalating gang conflicts and drug-related disputes. These troubling findings accentuate the urgent need for meaningful reform—an appeal echoed by a growing number of those who believe that the current framework is insufficient in safeguarding the men and women tasked with maintaining order.

The stance taken by the Shadow Justice Secretary transcends mere reaction to Rudakubana’s attack; it is emblematic of a larger conversation about the treatment of inmates and the accountability of prison management. Jenrick decried a “culture of appeasement,” where the rights of convicted criminals appear to overshadow the safety and well-being of prison officers. He called for a drastic realignment of prison policy that might involve confining inmates to cells with only the bare essentials, arguing that such extreme measures are necessary to prioritise officer safety, which could involve imposing strict limitations on inmates' privileges and interactions.

Reports of violence against prison staff are hardly anomalies. A BBC investigation has uncovered numerous accounts of similar attacks across the nation, reinforcing the need for strengthened protective measures for those who serve in these high-risk environments. The 2016 case of a prisoner who attacked a nurse with boiling water at HMP Preston starkly reveals the severe dangers prison staff face daily, underscoring an increasingly harsh reality.

There is a consensus amongst many that the existing safety protocols within prisons are woefully inadequate. Jenrick's urgent insistence on immediate reform is likely aimed at compelling the government to reevaluate its current policies concerning the equipment and protections of prison staff, particularly in light of the mounting evidence that illustrates the dire risks these officers encounter.

As discussions regarding prison reform gain momentum, Jenrick’s impassioned remarks serve as a stark reminder of the intricate dynamics at play between the incarcerated and their keepers. This raises a pressing question for the newly established Labour government: will it take the necessary steps to ensure the safety of those tasked with overseeing some of the UK's most challenging environments, or will it continue on its path of misplaced priorities? The time for real change is now.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/2054182/robert-jenrick-rudakubana-kettle> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-45285096> - In July 2018, Samuel Boland, 49, threw boiling water from a kettle over fellow inmate Francis Miller, 23, at Low Moss prison in Scotland. Miller suffered severe burns on his face, shoulder, and chest, leading to permanent disfigurement. Boland was subsequently sentenced to an additional 18 months in prison for the assault. The incident highlights the dangers of boiling water attacks within UK prisons, underscoring the need for enhanced safety measures for both inmates and staff.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-50478653> - In June 2019, Stephen Shears, 28, poured boiling water from a flask over a prison guard at HMP Peterborough. The unprovoked attack caused burns requiring hospital treatment. Shears claimed he was coerced by other inmates to carry out the assault. He was sentenced to an additional 10 months in prison for causing actual bodily harm. This incident underscores the persistent issue of violence against prison staff in the UK.
4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-tyne-66521308> - In April 2022, Alan Lawrence, 33, threw boiling water from a kettle in the face of fellow inmate at HMP Northumberland. The victim sustained burns to 7% of his body. Lawrence, who was serving a sentence for robbery, admitted to the assault and was sentenced to an additional two years in prison. The attack was reportedly motivated by a personal vendetta, highlighting the complex dynamics of inmate violence in UK prisons.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-norfolk-20515611> - Between January 2011 and October 2012, a BBC investigation revealed 21 staff injury assault reports at Norfolk prisons, including incidents where inmates threw boiling water at prison officers. In one case, a 36-year-old male officer was scalded on his face when boiling water was thrown at him from a kettle. These incidents highlight the ongoing issue of violence against prison staff in the UK and the need for improved safety measures.
6. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prisoner-who-threw-boiling-water-at-nurse-sentenced-to-11-years-jail> - In April 2016, Paul Byrne, 27, threw boiling water over a nurse at HMP Preston, causing second-degree burns and permanent discolouration. Byrne was initially sentenced to 7 years and 8 months in prison, but following an appeal by the Attorney General, the sentence was increased to 11 years with a 4-year extended licence period. This case underscores the severity of attacks on prison staff and the legal system's response to such violence.
7. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/09/29/prisoners-throwing-boiling-water-staff-regular-outbreaks-serious/> - A 2019 report revealed that prisoners at Winchester prison were using boiling water as a weapon during regular outbreaks of violence. The Independent Monitoring Board highlighted this worrying trend, noting that drug debts and gang power struggles were primary causes of the unrest. The report also mentioned that starting fires in cells had become more prevalent as a way of gaining attention, indicating a broader issue of inmate violence in UK prisons.