# Dame Esther Rantzen’s remarks on assisted dying bill spark backlash from Labour MPs



During a recent parliamentary debate concerning the controversial assisted dying bill, Dame Esther Rantzen drew significant attention for her remarks about the motivations of those opposing the legislation. Rantzen suggested that some critics may be influenced by their religious beliefs, implying that they should be transparent about these motivations. However, this call for so-called honesty from MPs has sparked a backlash from several Labour MPs, revealing a wider-reaching discontent with the Labour government's approach to navigating sensitive societal issues.

Labour MP Jess Asato was particularly forceful in her response, characterising Rantzen’s comments as “distasteful and disrespectful.” Asato urged her colleague Kim Leadbeater to distance herself from Rantzen’s claims, asserting that opponents of the bill are not solely driven by hidden religious motives. In this light, the debate exposes a troubling trend within the Labour administration, as it seeks to dismiss legitimate concerns about ethical implications in favour of a one-size-fits-all narrative that fails to accommodate diverse viewpoints.

Echoing this sentiment, Labour MP Florence Eshalomi stressed that framing opposing viewpoints as merely religious objections undermines the seriousness of an issue that demands careful consideration. This dismissal not only diminishes the essential ethical discussions but also illustrates the larger failure of the current government to engage meaningfully with its constituents, many of whom voice genuine fears about the impact of the bill on vulnerable populations.

Rantzen has been a steadfast advocate for the assisted dying bill, expressing delight over its recent passage. She references emotional pleas from healthcare professionals concerned about the suffering of terminally ill patients. Yet, this narrow focus on personal suffering overlooks the broader implications of such legislation, especially as the Labour government’s agenda anoints itself the arbiter of morality while disregarding fundamental rights and concerns raised by citizens.

The underlying tension in this debate mirrors a troubling reality regarding the rights of terminally ill individuals juxtaposed against the moral considerations informing opposition. Rantzen’s push for transparency may be well-intentioned but raises further questions about the government's readiness to engage with criticism that extends beyond mere religious bias. Reducing nuanced debates to accusations of intolerance does not only simplify complex issues but undermines the serious dialogues necessary for democratic governance.

As Parliament continues to navigate the complexities of assisted dying legislation, the dialogue ignited by Rantzen’s comments illustrates a society wrestling with profound ethical dilemmas. The intersections of faith, societal values, and policy decisions will remain contentious as MPs confront the moral ramifications of these critical discussions, especially in a landscape that increasingly necessitates vocal opposition to government-led narratives.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/video/2025/may/16/esther-rantzen-accused-of-being-disrespectful-as-mps-debate-assisted-dying-bill-video> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/video/2025/may/16/esther-rantzen-accused-of-being-disrespectful-as-mps-debate-assisted-dying-bill-video> - In this video, Labour MP Jess Asato questions Kim Leadbeater about Esther Rantzen's 'distasteful and disrespectful' comments regarding opponents of the assisted dying bill, suggesting they are motivated by undeclared religious beliefs. Additionally, Labour MP Florence Eshalomi criticizes Rantzen for dismissing valid concerns about the bill as stemming from religious beliefs.
3. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/shabana-mahmood-mps-esther-rantzen-wes-streeting-life-b1196734.html> - Dame Esther Rantzen urges MPs guided by their religious beliefs to be transparent about their reasons for opposing the assisted dying bill. She emphasizes the importance of honesty regarding motivations, particularly when religious beliefs influence opposition to the legislation.
4. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/rantzen-urges-mps-to-be-honest-about-religious-opposition-to-assisted-dying-NTKAPECN3ZNXJLELN6NF3HMVEA/> - Dame Esther Rantzen calls on MPs to be honest about their religious motivations when opposing the assisted dying bill. She highlights concerns that some opponents may be distorting facts due to their faith-based objections, urging transparency in their positions.
5. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/dame-esther-rantzen-absolutely-thrilled-at-assisted-dying-vote-result-VJOUBLTAC5IBLIC2BOV3DN66VU/> - Dame Esther Rantzen expresses her excitement over the successful vote on the assisted dying bill. She praises Kim Leadbeater's presentation of the bill and acknowledges the emotional testimonies from doctors about the suffering of terminally ill patients.
6. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/shabana-mahmood-mps-esther-rantzen-wes-streeting-life-b1196734.html> - Dame Esther Rantzen urges MPs guided by their religious beliefs to be transparent about their reasons for opposing the assisted dying bill. She emphasizes the importance of honesty regarding motivations, particularly when religious beliefs influence opposition to the legislation.
7. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/shabana-mahmood-mps-esther-rantzen-wes-streeting-life-b1196734.html> - Dame Esther Rantzen urges MPs guided by their religious beliefs to be transparent about their reasons for opposing the assisted dying bill. She emphasizes the importance of honesty regarding motivations, particularly when religious beliefs influence opposition to the legislation.