# Nicola Sturgeon brands Keir Starmer’s immigration rhetoric 'the dumbest of dumb politics'



Former Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has unleashed a scathing attack on Prime Minister Keir Starmer, condemning his recent immigration speech as "the dumbest of dumb politics." This criticism follows Starmer's alarming assertion that without stringent immigration controls, the UK may become an "island of strangers." Such inflammatory rhetoric echoes Enoch Powell’s notorious "rivers of blood" speech, stirring up intense debate about the implications of these divisive views.

During a campaign stop in Blantyre for the upcoming by-election in Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse, Sturgeon accused Starmer of employing a "very deliberate dog whistle" to stoke anti-immigrant sentiments. Contrasting his comments, she highlighted the value of diversity in Scotland, declaring it one of the nation’s greatest strengths. Progressive politicians must vigorously combat the insidious rise of anti-immigrant narratives, represented in part by Starmer's increasingly hardline stance.

Sturgeon pointedly remarked on the implications of Starmer's rhetoric, stating, "Either he was aware of the consequences, in which case it's disgraceful, or he wasn't aware, in which case: why is he in a leadership position at all?" Her observations raise alarm bells within the Labour Party about the compatibility of Starmer’s approach with the party’s values, potentially alienating long-time supporters. Polling data suggests his comments have failed to enhance his support, underscoring a strategic contradiction in his approach.

Moreover, Sturgeon argued that by legitimising stances akin to those historically pushed by figures on the far right, Starmer risks empowering right-wing parties while harming Labour's traditional base. This rhetoric, echoing calls made by less reputable figures, could have harmful repercussions for Scotland’s economy and public services. Sturgeon categorically termed this moment as "one of the most disreputable" in Labour’s history, urging for a decisive stand against the corrosive politics surrounding immigration.

Critics like Scottish Labour deputy leader Jackie Baillie have responded by accusing Sturgeon of lacking political introspection in light of her own leadership’s failures, including rising homelessness and NHS challenges. These remarks highlight a broader internal conflict within Labour, contrasting Sturgeon’s past leadership with Starmer’s new direction.

Starmer's immigration policies represent a stark departure from the previous government’s more compassionate approach. His administration now prioritises drastically reducing immigration levels, with proposals that include tightening English proficiency requirements and extending the timeline for acquiring settled status. This shift has drawn fire not only from within Labour but also from opposition parties like the Greens, who have condemned his polarising language. They argue that a more empathetic approach is essential, one that addresses the root causes of migration rather than merely seeking to curtail numbers.

As Starmer's administration strives to recalibrate Labour’s immigration stance, the challenge looms large: how to foster a dialogue that respects immigrant communities while addressing the genuine anxieties of those feeling left behind. As the political landscape continues to shift, the ramifications of these contentious immigration debates will reverberate throughout the UK, highlighting an urgent need for thoughtful, inclusive policy-making.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/dumbest-dumb-politics-nicola-sturgeon-35243303> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/keir-starmer-milestones-speech-labour-reset-immigration-farage-b1198303.html> - In December 2024, Prime Minister Keir Starmer unveiled his 'plan for change,' emphasizing the need to reduce immigration levels. He acknowledged the UK's over-reliance on immigration to address workforce shortages and pledged to implement measures to control both legal and illegal immigration. However, immigration was notably absent from the six 'milestones' he presented, leading to criticism from Reform UK for lacking measurable targets. Starmer's approach focused on tackling people smuggling gangs and reforming the points-based system to address the root causes of illegal immigration.
3. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Restoring_control_over_the_immigration_system> - The 'Restoring Control Over the Immigration System' white paper, published in May 2025, outlines the UK government's plans to tighten immigration controls. Key proposals include increasing English proficiency requirements for all visas, extending the time required to achieve settled status from five to ten years, halting visas for social care workers, and restricting skilled worker visas to graduate-level occupations. The plan also introduces temporary visas for lower-skilled roles with limited duration and no path to settled status, aiming to reduce net migration and address public concerns over immigration levels.
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-speech-on-migration-28-november-2024> - In November 2024, Prime Minister Keir Starmer delivered a speech at 10 Downing Street addressing the UK's immigration challenges. He criticized the previous government's liberal immigration policies, stating that they had turned Britain into a 'one-nation experiment in open borders.' Starmer pledged to publish a white paper detailing plans to reduce immigration, including reforms to the points-based system and crackdowns on employer abuse of visa routes. He emphasized the need to control borders and reduce dependency on immigration to address workforce shortages.
5. <https://bright-green.org/2024/06/06/greens-slam-keir-starmers-divisive-rhetoric-on-migration/> - In June 2024, the Green Party of England and Wales criticized Labour leader Keir Starmer's approach to migration. Co-leader Adrian Ramsay accused Starmer of adopting 'divisive rhetoric' after he pledged to reduce immigration numbers and control borders. Ramsay argued that Starmer's stance mirrored that of the Conservatives and failed to address the root causes of migration, such as global inequality and conflict. The Greens advocated for a more compassionate and inclusive approach to migration, focusing on human rights and social justice.
6. <https://www.gbnews.com/news/keir-starmer-ignored-the-elephant-in-the-room-immigration> - In September 2024, political commentator Esther Krakue criticized Prime Minister Keir Starmer for not adequately addressing immigration concerns in his conference speech. Krakue claimed that Starmer ignored the 'elephant in the room' by not discussing issues related to immigration and integration. She emphasized the importance of addressing public concerns about immigration to maintain social cohesion and national unity. Starmer's speech focused on other challenges facing Britain, leading to criticism for overlooking the significance of immigration in national discourse.
7. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Premiership_of_Keir_Starmer> - Keir Starmer's premiership has been marked by significant shifts in immigration policy. Early in his tenure, he canceled the controversial Rwanda asylum plan, describing it as 'dead and buried.' The establishment of the Border Security Command aimed to tackle smuggling gangs facilitating illegal crossings over the English Channel. Starmer's rhetoric, including phrases like 'take back control' and 'we risk becoming an island of strangers,' drew criticism for echoing past divisive political language. His approach reflects a departure from previous policies, focusing on stricter immigration controls and national security.