# Douglas Ross accuses Scottish Parliament's Presiding Officer of bias after controversial removal



In a recent and deeply troubling episode at the Scottish Parliament, Douglas Ross, the leader of the Scottish Conservatives, confronted Presiding Officer Alison Johnstone, accusing her of misleading Parliament following his controversial removal from a session. This incident has sparked fierce debate about the integrity and neutrality expected from parliamentary officials—especially in a time when political accountability is paramount.

Ross's ejection from the chamber, delivered without prior notice, raised eyebrows across the political spectrum. Labeling the action as potentially unprecedented, he expressed his grievances: “For a member to be expelled… I have been warned quite a lot recently, as has John Swinney.” His comments expose a wider discontent among the opposition regarding the fairness of the Presiding Officer’s role, especially given Johnstone's background as a Scottish Green MSP, a party often at odds with pro-union perspectives.

Tensions escalated during a contentious session where Scottish Conservative Russell Findlay grilled First Minister John Swinney on the damaging effects of the government's net-zero policies on agriculture. Ross accused Swinney of “deflecting,” only for Johnstone to intervene and remove him for what she deemed disorderly conduct. This event has sparked serious accusations from Ross, who claims that Johnstone's decisions reflect a bias against unionist views, amplifying concerns about her impartiality in a politically polarized setting.

This troubling incident is not an isolated one; it follows a pattern of clashes involving Ross, who previously faced censure for calling Deputy First Minister Swinney "Honest John"—a remark some may consider emblematic of the frustrations many feel toward a government that has mismanaged significant issues. Despite his subsequent apology, the incident underscores the pressing need for respect and decorum in parliamentary debates, especially as criticisms of the new Labour government mount.

Compounding these issues, other political figures, including SNP Deputy Leader Keith Brown, have alleged that the Scottish Conservatives are undermining the integrity of Parliament with misleading claims—particularly regarding essential facts about Glasgow's low emission zones. Such accusations reveal a worrying trend where misinformation threatens to taint serious legislative work.

In an effort to confront Johnstone directly, Ross has indicated attempts to arrange meetings to discuss his removal, though he claims these requests have been consistently rebuffed. Johnstone contends that she received no formal requests for discussion, reaffirming her commitment to neutrality, insisting, “I have acted in a neutral manner,” despite the mounting tensions that seem to cast doubt on this assertion.

The issue of procedural fairness has been further highlighted by Johnstone's own previous criticisms regarding the government’s handling of significant announcements, which she termed "unacceptable" when they were shared with the media prior to parliamentary disclosure. Such remarks reinforce the idea that due process must be followed, especially in a political climate rife with controversy.

As this situation continues to develop, it poses serious implications for the dynamics within the Scottish Parliament. First Minister Swinney, in a defense of Johnstone, lauded her role while insisting on her impartiality as she seeks to uphold parliamentary decorum. Meanwhile, a spokesperson for the Parliament confirmed that Ross had been warned about his behaviour, leading to his temporary suspension.

In the wake of shifting political fortunes, this ongoing saga serves as a stark reminder of the balance required between vigorous political debate and the fundamental decorum essential for productive parliamentary proceedings—a balance that has clearly been disrupted under the new Labour government’s stewardship.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/25212505.ross-accuses-presiding-officer-misleading-parliament/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.thenational.scot/news/24292651.douglas-ross-refuses-apologise-msps-jibe-john-swinney/> - In a recent session of the Scottish Parliament, Douglas Ross, leader of the Scottish Conservatives, was reprimanded by Presiding Officer Alison Johnstone for referring to Deputy First Minister John Swinney as 'Honest John'. The use of nicknames in the chamber is against parliamentary rules. Ross initially ignored the request to apologise but eventually conceded, expressing regret for any hurt caused. The incident occurred during a debate on the construction of new Calmac ferries, which have faced significant cost overruns and delays.
3. <https://www.thenational.scot/news/23576767.keith-brown-accuses-scottish-tories-tarnishing-parliament/> - SNP Deputy Leader Keith Brown accused the Scottish Conservatives of deliberately 'tarnishing' the reputation of the Scottish Parliament by misleading MSPs and engaging in personal attacks. Brown cited Douglas Ross's questioning of the First Minister over Glasgow's low emission zone, which was later found to be based on incorrect information. He also criticised Murdo Fraser for using derogatory language towards Green MSP Maggie Chapman. Brown called for measures to prevent such conduct in the future.
4. <https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/scottish-government-independence-announcement-unacceptable-says-scottish-parliament-presiding-officer-3731367> - Alison Johnstone, the Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament, deemed it 'unacceptable' for the Scottish Government to announce its independence plans to the media before informing Parliament. She stated that significant news should be presented in the chamber first, as a matter of courtesy and respect. This reprimand followed the Scottish Government's press briefing on the benefits of independence, which was reported by national media prior to being addressed in Parliament.
5. <https://www.holyrood.com/news/view%2Cpresiding-officer-stops-ministerial-statement-on-indyref2-after-details-given-to-media> - Presiding Officer Alison Johnstone halted a ministerial statement by Angus Robertson on Scottish independence after details were leaked to the media beforehand. She criticised the Scottish Government for breaching established guidelines that require significant announcements to be made in Parliament first. Johnstone emphasised the importance of respecting the Parliament's role and the need for the Government to adhere to these protocols.
6. <https://www.holyrood.com/news/view%2Cross-and-swinney-accuse-each-other-of-dishonesty-during-tetchy-fmqs> - During a tense session of First Minister's Questions, Scottish Conservative leader Douglas Ross and First Minister John Swinney accused each other of dishonesty over the development of the Rosebank oil and gas field. Ross claimed Swinney opposed the project, while Swinney accused Ross of misrepresenting his position. The exchange was marked by mutual accusations and a reprimand from Presiding Officer Alison Johnstone for Ross's use of the nickname 'Honest John' for Swinney.
7. <https://news.stv.tv/politics/humza-yousaf-ordered-to-apologise-at-holyrood-after-accusing-ross-of-lies> - First Minister Humza Yousaf was ordered to apologise by Presiding Officer Alison Johnstone after accusing Scottish Conservative leader Douglas Ross of lying during a heated exchange in the Scottish Parliament. Yousaf's remarks about Ross's statements on police numbers were deemed inappropriate, leading to the apology. The incident highlights the tensions and the need for decorum in parliamentary debates.