

Kate Osamor - MP for EDMONTON

Newsletter: November 2015

Syria Statement

Wednesday 2 December, Parliament will be asked to vote on whether we send our British forces to war, not many decisions will be harder for an MP. Many of my constituents have been in contact with me regarding my position on military action by the UK in Syria. I have endeavoured to get back to everyone individually on this matter and I will continue to do so, but to be clear; I, like the Leader of the Labour Party, will be opposing military action in Syria.

Syria is complex and the battlefield is crowded with competing ideologies and aims. At the heart of the conflict are civilians trapped in opposition-held areas who face regular bombardment by government forces with barrel bombs and artillery. Syria is now unpopulated due to devastation caused by years of civil war. Still the battles continue:

- The Assad government is mostly attacking civilians in areas controlled by the armed opposition while occasionally (MORE than occasionally, regularly) fighting ISIL
- The armed opposition is mostly fighting government troops while occasionally (and ISIL, there is no more joint operation at all, just a full blown war) fighting ISIL.
- ISIL fights whomever gets in the way of its mission to takeover more territory and enforce its interpretation of Islamic law.

Syria had a population of 22 million people in 2011 but after four years of civil war there's no way to know the real death toll. 12 million people or more than half the population have been forced from their homes. Close to eight million of them have sought refuge within Syria, three-and-a-half million are children. In my humble opinion I believe the only intervention the UK should be offering is shelter, humanitarian aid & solidarity to those families that are seeking refuge in the UK or abroad.

Paris

The shooting and bombings which took place in Paris were horrific and unjustifiable acts of violence. My thoughts go out to all those who lost their loved ones in the attack, to all the people of Paris, and all those affected by the violence of Islamic State worldwide. Our intelligence and security services work tirelessly to keep us safe and they deserve our support and gratitude. Much of their work often goes unseen and unreported, but I know that a number of serious plots in the UK have been disrupted in the past months. Indeed, the UK threat level remains at 'severe'.

Council of Europe

I have been elected on the United Kingdom delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe established in 1949 to achieve European unity, is an association of European states, to promote unity between members, defend human rights, increase social and economic progress, while matters of national defence being excluded.



The English Collective of Sex Workers invited me for a lovely lunch, at their offices, the Crossroads Women's Centre. The collective, a network of sex workers who tirelessly campaign hard for decriminalisation, safety and financial resources, and work on the street and indoors – are crucial at this moment when so many people, particularly mothers and other women, are being pushed into sex work by austerity. They, and a number of other groups based at the centre, have worked hard for many years.

The UK Cinema Association is the trade association representing the interests of UK cinema operators. Chief Exec, Phil Clapp invited me to Odeon, Lee Valley, to broaden understanding of the role that cinemas have, not just as places of entertainment but also as community hubs and drivers of the local economy.



Last Friday, alongside the wonderful children of St John & St James School, I had the pleasure of turning on the Edmonton Christmas lights. The children performed a lovely collection of songs, leading up to a countdown. Thank you Tahsin Ibrahim and Heather Knightly for working hard in making this happen.



Thursday 5 November, I led my first debate in parliament on RBS and the future of UK banking. I called the debate in light of George Osborne's decision in the summer to begin selling off public shares in RBS without consulting parliament. The first tranche of shares were sold at a £1 billion loss, and the total loss to the British taxpayer will be £13 billion if all the sales go ahead. Public opinion is against the sale; nearly 120,000 people have signed a petition calling for the sales to be halted. In the debate, I

highlighted how reforming RBS into a series of local banks would benefit Edmonton, as local banks favour lending to small businesses. 27 MPs from both sides of the House participated in the debate and lasted approximately three hours. The government is missing a golden opportunity to fix the structural problems of UK banking which were exposed in the crisis. Reforming RBS is in the interest of the taxpayer and the economy. We must learn from the events of 2008. By failing to provide evidence justifying the sale and failure to consider alternative options, the government is putting ideology above what is best for the economy and the taxpayer. I ended my opening speech by calling for the government to hold an independent review into the sale of RBS shares. The deputy leader of the House took the vote to the floor and there were no objections.

I rose to speak at 10.01am – "Like many of my hon. Friends here today, I was disappointed to learn that the Government appear to have dropped their plans to introduce a corporate liability offence. By going back on their manifesto pledge to prosecute economic crime, this Government are pandering to corporations. They are not following through on their promise to tackle tax evasion. They are not adequately holding corporate criminals to account, in the same manner as other criminals. After the crash of 2008, the public have a right to expect those who launder money, defraud or commit other white-collar crimes to be brought to justice. The bail-out cost UK taxpayers £133 billion—more than £2,000 per person." See the full speech here: <http://goo.gl/MpzjJr>



I am pleased that the Chancellor has reversed his prior decision to submit the police to harsh spending cuts. This would have been a grave risk for the safety of Londoners in general, particularly in light of the recent attacks in Paris. It would have particularly affected Edmonton, which has seen an above average rise in crime in London. Youth violence in Enfield increased by 19% during the last twelve months compared to the London average of 13%. I want to thank campaigners who fought hard to keep the police budget protected.

Tax Credits

I am glad that the government have finally backed down in the face of overwhelming opposition to tax credits. I received many letters and emails from constituents about this issue. Tax credits are a vital lifeline for many people in my constituency. The proposals were an unfair attack on hard working families, the very people that the government claimed to support. The government U-turn is no credit to the Chancellor. It is a result of strong opposition, in the House and on the streets, to these measures. It is a victory for hard working people. Ultimately, we must not forget that this is a concession, albeit an important one, in a budget that will continue to hit the most vulnerable the hardest. Disabled people have been hit four times harder than anyone else by austerity. The Chancellor has refused to back down on the £12 billion cuts to welfare. The 140,000 families on Universal Credit will suffer the full cut, as will families who newly qualify for tax credits in 2018. This is not a full and fair reversal.

There are parts of the Housing and Planning Bill, which I welcome such as measures that would restrict the operation of rogue private landlords and letting agents (although I believe these measures fall far short of ensuring that renters have a more secure, affordable home). However, there are also parts of the Bill I cannot support and I am concerned the Bill will not help most people struggling to buy their own homes, will mean a severe loss of affordable homes, and will weaken the obligation of private developers to contribute towards the building of new affordable homes. I am also concerned that proposals in the Bill to introduce a duty on councils and housing associations to charge higher rents to council tenants above a certain household income threshold, (the suggested threshold is a household income of £30,000 outside London, £40,000 in London) will hit people on modest incomes and could result in a disincentive for families to work additional hours. We are facing a housing crisis in this country - many people cannot afford a home, can barely afford their rents and, in the worst cases, are sleeping rough. Home-ownership has fallen every year since 2010, last year there was the fewest affordable homes built in over two decades, and there has been a 36% increase in homelessness.



I participated in Remembrance Sunday commemorations in Edmonton, and I was honoured to lay the wreath for all those who have died as a result of war. It was a very humbling event and I was glad to see such solidarity and respect shown from everyone present. Remembrance Sunday is an important day when we remember those who lost their lives not only in the First World War, but in all wars worldwide, both past and present, both service men and women and civilians. We must learn from the past and work together to build peace across the world today.

I joined Kate Green and Sarah Champion MP for International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.



VOTING

- Housing and Planning Bill — Decline Second Reading — 2 Nov 2015 at 21:50 - I voted against requiring those on high incomes living in social housing to pay market rents; against funding right to buy style discounts for housing association tenants; against enabling the Secretary of State to require local councils to sell expensive properties, perhaps using the revenue to fund new housing, and against other proposed changes to the law on housing and planning.
- Housing and Planning Bill — Second Reading — 2 Nov 2015 at 21:50 - I voted against requiring those on high incomes living in social housing to pay market rents; against funding right to buy style discounts for housing association tenants; against enabling the Secretary of State to require local councils to sell expensive properties, perhaps using the revenue to fund new housing, and against other proposed changes to the law on housing and planning.

- Housing and Planning Bill — Money — 2 Nov 2015 at 21:50 - [I](#) voted against requiring those on high incomes living in social housing to pay market rents; against funding right to buy style discounts for housing association tenants; against enabling the Secretary of State to require local councils to sell expensive properties, perhaps using the revenue to fund new housing, and against other proposed changes to the law on housing and planning.
- Housing and Planning Bill — Ways and Means — Charging of Fees — 2 Nov 2015 at 21:50 - [I](#) voted against the charging of fees under any Act arising from the Housing and Planning Bill. Such fees relate to the tenancy deposit information scheme and planning applications.
- Access to Medical Treatments (Innovation) Bill — Database of Innovative Treatments — Departure from Accepted Practice — Money — 3 Nov 2015 at 15:55 - [I](#) voted against a database of innovative medical treatments.
- Opposition Day — Policing — 4 Nov 2015 at 18:45 - [I](#) voted for a funding settlement for the police that maintains frontline services and does not compromise public safety.
- Scotland Bill — New Clause 1 — Independent Commission on Devolving Full Powers Over Taxation and Spending to Scotland — 9 Nov 2015 at 19:30 - [I](#) voted for an Independent Commission to analyse the expected impact of devolving full powers over taxation and spending to Scotland.
- Scotland Bill — New Clause 35 — Consent of the Scottish Parliament to certain Westminster Acts — 9 Nov 2015 at 19:52 - [I](#) voted to require the UK Parliament to have the consent of the Scottish Parliament before making laws applying to Scotland on devolved matters.
- Scotland Bill — New Clause 15 — Abortion — 9 Nov 2015 at 21:30 - [I](#) voted against giving the Scottish Parliament the power to set Scotland's laws on abortion.
- Scotland Bill — New Clause 18 — Giving the Scottish Parliament Powers Relating to Tax Credits — 9 Nov 2015 at 21:47 - [I](#) voted against giving the Scottish Parliament the power to make laws on child tax credit, and working tax credit.
- Scotland Bill — Clause 32 — Power for Scottish Parliament to Set Quotas for Those with Protected Characteristics — 9 Nov 2015 at 21:47 - [I](#) voted to clarify that the Scottish Parliament is able to set minimum quotas for those with certain protected characteristics such as sex, race, and disability.
- Trade Union Bill — New Clause 2 — Workplace Ballots and Ballots by Electronic Means — 10 Nov 2015 at 16:30 - [I](#) voted to allow trade unions to hold workplace ballots electronically.
- Trade Union Bill — Clause 9 — Union Supervision of Picketing — 10 Nov 2015 at 17:45 - [I](#) voted against requiring the appointment of a picket supervisor and against requiring them to be identified to, and contactable by, the police.
- Trade Union Bill — Clause 9 — Consent of Devolved Administrations and Local Government — 10 Nov 2015 at 18:11 - [I](#) voted to require the consent of the devolved administrations and local government before applying new regulations on trade union activity within their areas of responsibility.
- Trade Union Bill — Clause 14 — Deduction of Union Subscriptions from Public Service Workers in Devolved Administrations and Local Government — 10 Nov 2015 at 18:11 - [I](#) voted to allow trade union subscriptions to be deducted from the wages of workers in certain public services run by the devolved administrations or local government.
- Trade Union Bill — Third Reading — 10 Nov 2015 at 18:55 - [I](#) voted against requiring a 50% turnout in order to make a strike ballot valid and against other aspects of increased regulation of trade union activity.

WRITTEN QUESTIONS / - DEBATES

If you would like to view my written questions and Early Day Motions, please visit my website to acquire up-to-date versions of this material - www.kateosamor.co.uk

**MY ADVICE SURGERIES ARE LOCATED AT
Broad House, 205 Fore Street, N18 2TZ**



If you have a personal issue (i.e with housing, immigration or benefits) come down to my office, between 10am and 1pm Monday to Friday; where my staff will discuss your case further.

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