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# Great Britain: Labour 'pitting refugees against each other', Ukraine campaign says

Thursday 13 February 2025, by [ELLIARDS Xander](#) (Date first published: 12 February 2025).

**THE Labour Government has been accused of pitting Ukrainian and Palestinian refugees "against each other" after Keir Starmer said it was "wrong" for a Gazan family to be allowed to settle in the UK.**

The Ukraine Solidarity Campaign Scotland (USCS) spoke out against the Prime Minister after he said he would close a "loophole" that allowed a Palestinian family to win the right to live in the UK through a settlement scheme aimed at Ukrainians.

An upper tribunal judge granted the Palestinians' appeal, allowing them to come to the UK under the Ukraine Family Scheme on the basis of their right to a family life under the European Convention on Human Rights Article 8.

Speaking at Prime Minister's Questions on Wednesday, both Starmer and Tory leader Kemi Badenoch said [that the decision had been "wrong"](#) and that parliamentarians would look at ways to prevent more Palestinians being allowed to settle in the UK.

A USCS spokesperson said: "We are disappointed to see Ukrainian and Palestinian refugees being pitted against each other by successive UK governments which have consistently failed to fulfil their obligations under international law.

"We are so proud that Scotland has provided a welcoming home to tens of thousands of people fleeing Russia's brutal and imperialist war against Ukraine.

"Scottish civil society has mobilised in solidarity with Ukrainians to a scale and extent not seen in decades, and we hope this will continue for as long as the war lasts.

"However, we deeply regret that the Home Office's treatment of refugees fleeing war remains extremely unequal.

"It is unjustifiable for the UK to extend international protection to Ukrainians while denying it to Palestinians.

"This is not only morally wrong but also undermines the international campaign in solidarity with Ukraine, particularly in the Global South, where many will see it as an example of western countries applying double standards."

The Ukrainian campaign group said that instead of closing the "loophole", as Starmer had said, Labour should "make similar schemes available to refugees from all wars, including in Gaza, Syria, Sudan, DR Congo, Afghanistan and elsewhere".

Amid the severe backlash, the [SNP](#)'s depute leader at [Westminster](#) said that the Tory and Labour positions were "absolutely appalling".

"Just when you think the Conservatives can't sink any lower they go and surprise you all over again," Pete Wishart said.

"There is a grim race to the bottom to be seen to be as hard as possible on refugees to counter the rise of Reform."

The Scottish [Greens](#) said that the UK's largest political parties are "competing with one another in a bid to be as hostile as possible to refugees".

The party pointed to new guidance, which was quietly issued on Tuesday, which says that people who arrive in the UK to claim asylum by irregular means - such as on small boats over the Channel - [are blocked from ever gaining citizenship](#).

Green MSP [Maggie Chapman](#) said: "It is a race to the bottom for human rights.

"Keir Starmer was a human rights lawyer, but now he is implementing some of the most racist, authoritarian and despicable anti-migrant policies in decades."

She added: "We can and must be a welcoming country that offers support and solidarity to people in need rather than punishing and demonising them. We must also recognise the role that the UK has played in creating instability in other parts of the world.

"Freedom, empathy, compassion and solidarity have to be at the heart of the system we create. But that can't happen as long as the UK Government is prioritising performative cruelty and trying to compete with Nigel Farage."

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