

Why you should join the #MarchOnTheHomeOffice Glasgow, Sat 16 March

A joint statement from STUC and SUTR Scotland

Anti-racists and anti-fascists have no time to lose! Mainstream government racism against refugees, asylum seekers and migrants is reaching fever pitch - and 2024 will see a general election where the Tory government will plunge into new depths using racist scapegoating to try and cling on to power.

The advance by the far right internationally continues. We face in 2024 the most terrifying expression of this dynamic with the possibility of Trump back in the White House. The growth of the far right goes hand in hand with a rise in Islamophobic and antisemitic ideas and attacks.

Racist former home secretary Suella Braverman and prime minister Rishi Sunak use the antisemitic far-right Great Replacement Theory. Sunak agreed to attend an event organised by fascist Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. Him and Braverman played a disgusting role in directly fanning the flames of fascist Tommy Robinson and his far-right supporters to smash up Whitehall, falsely "defending the cenotaph" against an imaginary threat during a demonstration calling for a ceasefire in Gaza.

The rise in far-right antisemitic ideas and Islamophobia go hand in hand. In response to mass protests in solidarity with Palestine, the Tories are whipping up deplorable Islamophobia. The International Court of Justice's (ICJ) findings that it is "plausible that Israel has committed acts that violate the Genocide Convention" has also seen the government doubling down on their targeting of Muslims, with cabinet ministers trying to curb civil liberties and actively emboldening fascist groups. It was disgusting to see arch-racist Nigel Farage, encouraged by this mood, opposing first minister Humza Yousaf's call for refugees from Gaza to be housed in Scotland and how Farage linked this to a rise in terrorism. We will continue to say that ALL refugees are welcome here.

Meanwhile, the public inquiry into Sheku Bayoh's death in police custody in 2015 continues this year. Months after a Police Scotland retiring chief constable admitted to the force being 'racist and discriminatory', the anti racist movement must confidently stay on the streets to continue to support this vital struggle for justice and ensure it will be a watershed moment in the fight against institutional racism.



In this context, Stand Up to Racism and the Trades Union Congress have called national demonstrations in Scotland, England and Wales that are an intervention by the anti racist and trade union movement against the growing racism pushed from the top of our institutions. In Glasgow, the march called by SUTR and the STUC will assemble at BBC Scotland and march to the Home Office to send a powerful message that our society is opposed to the government's racist attacks - and that we are prepared to fight back in mass numbers, as we did in Kenmure Street and elsewhere.

We can build on the victories our movements have had - against the far right in Erskine or Elgin, resisting the Rwanda plan or forcing Suella Braverman's resignation - to create even greater resistance that puts those who want to welcome refugees and root out racism in our communities onto the front foot.

We want all anti racists in Scotland to see this as their demonstration and to build it as a crucial challenge to the rising levels of Islamophobia, antisemitism and racism in Britain and across the world. Therefore, we think it's important to clarify questions that have been raised within some sections of the movement.

We wish to make it absolutely clear that, contrary to false claims that have been made, SUTR Scotland has no formal or informal relationship with the COFIS and GFI groups. Claims that SUTR "works closely" with or "invites" these groups are false - this year or in the past. Neither is it true at all that these groups have ever been "involved at an organisational level" or that SUTR has "coordinated" their participation. Lists of all the trade unions, campaigning groups and civil society organisations backing the demonstration are always publicly available, with logos listed on publicity.

It is crucial in 2024, in the face of the far right's advance, that we build a mass, *united* movement that takes on racism, Islamophobia and antisemitism. Building this unity in the face of the far right's advance may not be the focus of every campaign, but it is a crucial task. As the history of the 1930s and the horror of the Holocaust tells us, we must take the threat of division seriously.

The demonstration in Glasgow is for all who want to welcome refugees, oppose the government's racist offensive, demand justice for Sheku Bayoh and oppose racism, Islamophobia and antisemitism.

Do you oppose this racist government?

Do you want to stop the Rwanda Plan for offshore detention?

Do you welcome refugees?

Do you want to build unity against the far-right, Islamophobia and antisemitism?

Then this demonstration is for YOU!

We urge you to join and help build a huge demonstration to stop the hate.

