

## COMMENT: WHEN COMPASSION IS BLIND, COMMON SENSE IS LOST

At a recent parliamentary committee meeting examining the spiralling issue of so-called "illegal" asylum seekers, Reform UK MP Sarah Pochin delivered a statement that should have been uncontroversial: those who enter the country illegally should, quite simply, be removed. No drama. No moral grandstanding. Just the basic principle that a sovereign nation should control its borders.

But her comments triggered an immediate, almost theatrical reaction from Labour MP for Folkestone & Hythe, Tony Vaughan. Instead of calmly engaging with the very real concerns of residents along Kent's coastline – communities who witness the small-boats crisis at its most visible – Vaughan launched into what can only be described as an ideological tirade, denouncing the stance as "wrong".

Wrong for whom? Wrong for the criminal gangs getting rich from human misery? Wrong for the beleaguered British taxpayer footing an ever-ballooning bill? Wrong for residents who fear the social impact on already stretched services? Or perhaps, wrong for the lawyers and NGO networks who rely on the asylum industry for profit?

Because that is what this is: an industry. One that enriches a small number of specialists, consultants, contractors and caseworkers, while siphoning off funds that could – and should – support British citizens in need. Yet those who raise concerns are told they lack compassion, that they are heartless or xenophobic. The political tactic is as tired as it is dishonest: emotional blackmail masquerading as moral superiority.

Let's begin with a basic point of language. Illegal means illegal. It is not "inappropriate", "undocumented" or "irregular". When an individual knowingly pays a criminal organisation to smuggle them across borders, bypassing lawful channels, they are breaking the law. When they destroy their passports – a tactic repeatedly confirmed by police and intelligence briefings across Europe – they are committing another offence. And when they knowingly enter British territorial waters without prior permission, they commit yet another.

We are not talking about distressed refugees fleeing imminent slaughter. The vast majority passing through the Channel have already traversed safe countries such as France, Germany, Italy and Spain – nations with functioning asylum systems. Under international principles, asylum should be claimed in the first safe country reached. Yet somehow, the dinghies only ever point one way: across the Strait of Dover.

And why? Because Britain's system – aided by years of weak leadership and legal exploitation – is one of the easiest in Europe to game.

If you genuinely wished to seek asylum, the lawful route exists. Apply through a British embassy abroad, undertake

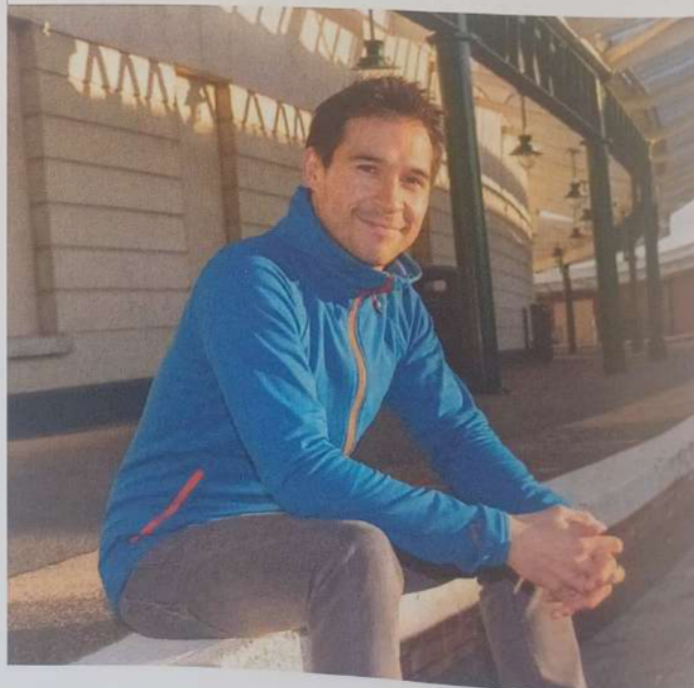
identity verification, pass through security screening, and if successful you will arrive through an airport, safely, perhaps even proudly. You will not risk your life on a freezing Channel, nor enrich a trafficker. But for some, this route is undesirable, because the checks would expose the truth. We are not merely dealing with economic migrants – though that alone is a problem for a nation already struggling with housing, NHS capacity and school places. European intelligence assessments have repeatedly warned that among the flows are violent offenders, gang operatives, extremist ideologues, serial abusers, and financial fugitives.

Are these the individuals we wish to admit unquestioned?

The British public deserve more than platitudes. They deserve honesty. And the harsh reality is that compassion without caution becomes negligence.

This is where Tony Vaughan's intervention becomes especially troubling. Folkestone & Hythe sits on the frontline of Channel crossings. Local residents see the boats. They see the coaches, the processing centres, the hotels. They see first-hand the burden placed on policing, councils and public services. It is entirely reasonable for them to demand their elected representative treat the matter seriously. Instead, Vaughan appears more animated about defending ideological purity than defending the interests of local people.

It is worth remembering his professional background: a highly paid human-rights lawyer. There is nothing wrong with that. But the public is not blind to the conflict of interest – a system that generates vast legal fees for those who specialise in appeals, injunctions and judicial reviews. If that same system is tightened, streamlined or enforced, those legal opportunities diminish.



The optics are not good.

Meanwhile, Mike "Dripping" Tapp, MP for Dover – another coastal constituency bearing the brunt – appears equally determined to frame any enforcement measure as cruelty. But what is truly cruel: returning individuals to safe countries of transit, or allowing a business model to flourish that sees desperate people drowned in cold water while traffickers pocket fortunes?

There is a curious contradiction in the rhetoric of the self-styled compassionate left. They condemn illegal crossings, but oppose every measure designed to stop them. They claim to support asylum seekers, yet defend the very routes that endanger them. They lament extremist infiltration, yet demonise any attempt to verify identity.

And when, God forbid, a terror attack occurs – as it has repeatedly across Western Europe – the same voices perform their ritual of shock, candles and platitudes. "Lessons will be learned." But they never are.

A functioning border is the first responsibility of any government. It is not extreme to expect it, nor hateful to demand it. It is straightforward common sense.

Local people understand this instinctively. It is only the denizens of Westminster, insulated by taxpayer-funded security, who have the luxury of pretending otherwise. For residents of our coastal towns, this is not abstract. It is real, visible, immediate.

We do not blame individuals who seek a better life. But we must be firm against those who exploit loopholes, endanger lives and feed criminal empires. And we must be wise enough to distinguish between genuine refugees and opportunistic migrants coached to game a system that was never designed for mass abuse.

The solution is not endless hotel bills. It is not indefinite appeals. It is not demonising voters who dare to raise concerns. It is robust processing, enforced returns, bilateral agreements with safe countries, and investment in properly managed routes.

Because the longer we allow chaos to reign, the more we erode public trust – not only in immigration, but in democracy itself.

Tony Vaughan and his colleagues would do well to remember this: you were elected to serve the people of Folkestone & Hythe, not to grandstand before Westminster's echo chamber. The residents of Kent deserve representation grounded in reality, not legal activism disguised as compassion.

Britain is, and always has been, a tolerant nation. But tolerance is a two-way street. It cannot function when exploited. It cannot survive without rules. And it cannot thrive when ideology blinds those entrusted to protect it.

The message from the public is clear: compassion, yes – but control first.

That is not cruelty.

That is responsibility.

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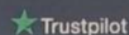


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