



# Green Party

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Dear Mr Baxter,

I am writing to you in connection with a segment broadcast by GB News yesterday evening during the 'State of the Nation' show hosted by Jacob Rees-Mogg. The segment of concern gave a wholly biased account of the verdict in the trial of Donald Trump for sexual assault, including comments from Kari Lake that were designed to undermine the rule of law. On the basis of this segment, and a string of other violations of the broadcasting code, we are requesting that you revoke GB News's broadcasting licence.

As your own guidelines state, the requirement to achieve 'due impartiality' is central to broadcasting regulation in the UK. Broadcasters are required 'To ensure that news, in whatever form, is reported with due accuracy and presented with due impartiality.' This requirement was clearly breached by the segment yesterday evening.

The offensive segment included comments from the host Jacob Rees-Mogg, Kari Lake and Nigel Farage. All three spoke in favour of Trump and are long-standing Trump apologists. There was no attempt to provide any balance. Regulation 5.8 states that 'Any personal interest of a reporter or presenter, which would call into question the due impartiality of the programme, must be made clear to the audience' was also clearly breached, as were a number of the other regulations relating specifically to impartiality.

In the case of Rees-Mogg himself, we feel that your specific guidance 'Can politicians present TV and radio shows? How our rules apply' has opened the door for politicians to engage in partisan broadcasting masquerading as news and current affairs and to undermine the general regulation 5.3 'No politician may be used as a newsreader, interviewer or reporter in any news programmes unless, exceptionally, it is editorially justified.'

Your specific guidance includes the following:

*"In general, serving politicians cannot be a newsreader, interviewer or reporter in any news programme. They are allowed to present other kinds of shows, however, including current affairs. But generally speaking, if it's a news programme, a politician cannot present."*

Here you have created a grey area that Rees-Mogg and GB News exploited last night. Clearly, the verdict in Donald Trump's trial was news and this was probably the first time most viewers had heard it. We do not think you should accept that this programme is not regulated as news



merely because it apparently portrays itself as an 'entertainment' show. We would suggest you tighten your rules around politicians acting as presenters; your current rules are clearly being exploited and the basic requirement of impartiality is being flouted.

Your guidance also states that 'The right to freedom of expression is a really important factor here', another norm that is being exploited for partisan ends. The concept of 'freedom of speech' has itself been politically mobilised by right-wing politicians and commentators in recent years. We are clear, as is the law, that freedom of speech does not mean license to speak as you please. It is not only limited by human rights law but also by democratic norms including respect for the rule of law. It is clear that the offensive segment violated all these norms and standards.

This latest breach of your guidelines comes on the back of a string of controversies relating to GB News. They are clearly learning nothing from the two breaches where you've already ruled against them, and we understand that you have two further investigations which are currently ongoing. It is clear that the executive team of GB News lack the competency to operate a legitimate news operation in this country.

We have seen how this partisan, divisive and politically motivated broadcasting has shaken the very foundations of democratic society in the US. It is your role, as our broadcasting regulator, to protect us against a similar decline. Revoking the licence from GB News, which is clearly following the same format and style, would be a clear sign that you are taking this responsibility to protect our democracy seriously.

Yours sincerely;



*Molly Scott Cato*

**Jack Lenox**, Culture, Sport and Digital Inclusion spokesperson  
**Molly Scott Cato**, External Communications Coordinator  
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