

() 10.43pm

Dame Diana Johnson > (Kingston upon Hull North) (Lab)

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On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. You have had notice of this. In Prime Minister's Question Time yesterday, the hon. Member for Edinburgh North and Leith (Deidre Brock) asked the Prime Minister about compensation for those infected and affected by the contaminated blood scandal. The Prime Minister responded:

"What I would say is that extensive work has been going on in Government for a long time, co-ordinated by the Minister for the Cabinet Office, as well as interim payments of £100,000 being made to those who were affected."<u>—[Official Report, 25 October 2023;</u> <u>Vol. 738, c. 830.]</u>

That is factually incorrect, and I hope that the record can be corrected as not all those affected have received interim payments. A parent who lost a child or a child who lost a parent in the scandal has received no such interim payment, despite clear recommendations from Sir Brian Langstaff, the chair of the infected blood inquiry, that such payments should be extended immediately.

That confusion by the Prime Minister and his officials is deeply hurtful to those who are still waiting for the Government to respond to Sir Brian Langstaff's second interim report on compensation published in April. Sir Brian made it clear that the compensation scheme should be set up now and should begin work this year. We are nearly in November, very close to the end of 2023, and there is still no clarity from the Government. We have no idea what progress the Government have made on their work, despite being told repeatedly that it was at pace and they were working towards the original November deadline for the publication of the final report, which is now due out in March. Surely they have some progress to report to the House.

The Government have also failed to explain why victims of the infected blood scandal are being treated differently from the victims of the Post Office Horizon scandal, who rightly have received compensation before the public inquiry into their scandal has concluded. If the Government are determined to needlessly delay justice to victims of the infected blood scandal, that makes the need to extend interim payments to bereaved parents, children and siblings—as recommended by Sir Brian—even more critical. The clue is in the word—they are interim payments, to be made before the final compensation payments. That is why what the Prime Minister said yesterday is so wrong. There has been not one word on whether the interim payments will be extended. I wonder whether you might be able to assist me, Madam Deputy Speaker, in getting the Government to tell the House of Commons what they are doing in relation to Sir Brian's final recommendations on compensation.

Madam Deputy Speaker >

(Dame Rosie Winterton)

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I thank the right hon. Lady for her point of order and for giving notice of it. I know how hard she has campaigned on this issue and that it is a matter of concern to Members on all sides of the House. She has raised a number of issues, some of which are ongoing and, I am sure, will be raised in other ways.

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First, she said that she thought the Prime Minister had perhaps made an incorrect statement. She will know that Mr Speaker is always very anxious that, if any incorrect information has been said inadvertently, it should be corrected at the earliest opportunity. She has also raised a number of issues about when the Government might come forward with further information. Fortunately, we have the Leader of the House here, who was listening closely to the right hon. Lady, and I think she wishes to respond.

The Leader of the House of Commons >

(Penny Mordaunt)

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Further to that point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I will be brief. I am sure that, if there were business questions, the right hon. Lady would have asked that question. I thank her for the work that she and her all-party parliamentary group on haemophilia and contaminated blood have done. The position that she set out is correct. I was here yesterday, and I do not think that the Prime Minister sought to state that it was otherwise. Given we do not have a business statement today, I will write to the Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General, my right hon. Friend the Member for Horsham (Jeremy Quin), on the specific issue of those affected who have not received interim compensation payments, to ask that he consider what she has said today and update her and the House at the earliest opportunity.

I would stress that the compensation study was set up to be concurrent with the inquiry, so that we could move swiftly to make amends for this appalling injustice. I know, because I had meetings with my officials yesterday, that that is very much the view of the Minister. He is determined to make progress on these things quickly and on the practical things that we can do in the interim. The right hon. Lady has my assurance on that. My involvement is to ensure that, if any legislation is needed, we are ready to do that. I reassure the House—and thank her for the opportunity to do so—that this Government, which set up the inquiry, are determined to ensure that all people infected and affected have justice.

Madam Deputy Speaker >

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I thank the Leader of the House for her statement. I am sure that the right hon. Lady will follow up and there will be some liaison about how to go forward.

Christian Wakeford >

(Bury South) (Lab)

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On a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I provided advance notice of it to Mr Speaker earlier.

A few days ago, The Sunday Times reported on its front page that a "Hamas fugitive" who

"ran the group's terrorist operations in the West Bank"

 lives here in London.
 GRO-C
 is designated by Israel as a senior Hamas operative in Europe and accused of

 fleeing the country with fake documents. He is now believed to hold UK citizenship.
 GRO-C
 lives in Barnet not far from Sawalha.

 He was designated by Israel in 2013 as a senior Hamas operative in Europe. He is listed as a trustee of a UK registered charity,
 Education Aid for Palestinians. A publicly available video shows him hosting a 2019 event in London titled "Understanding Hamas".

Two weeks ago, Hamas launched the deadliest terror attack the world has seen since 9/11. This House rightly voted to proscribe Hamas in its entirety in November 2021. It is therefore a serious national security risk for Hamas operatives to be living here in London, especially where at least one appears to have done so through the use of fake documents in obtaining British citizenship. Madam Deputy Speaker, can you advise me on how I might raise this with the Government as a matter of great urgency and ask if you have had any indication of a Minister seeking to come to the House to provide an urgent update on this matter?

Madam Deputy Speaker >

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11/03/2024, 10:48

Points of Order - Hansard - UK Parliament

I thank the hon. Gentleman for notice of his point of order. I hope that he will understand that I cannot comment on individual cases. I have had no notice of a statement, but he has put the issue on the record and those on the Government Benches will have heard his point.

Deputy Speakers

Ordered,

That, further to the Orders of 30 January and 23 February 2023, paragraphs (1) and (2) of the Order of 19 December 2022 relating to the appointment of Sir Roger Gale as Deputy Speaker and to the exercise of the functions of the Chairman of Ways and Means shall continue to have effect up to and including 31 March 2024.—(*Gagan Mohindra.*)

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