


NICK CLEGG

LEADER OF THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS HEADQUARTERS | 8-10 GREAT GEORGE STREET | LONDON | SW1P 3AE

Natalie Samarasinghe
UNA-UK
3 Whitehall Court
London
SW1A 2EL

16th March 2015



Thank you for your letter of 17th February calling on the Liberal Democrats to make preventing atrocity crimes a commitment in our manifesto.

You are right – genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity diminish us all. This is why the Liberal Democrats believe that in order to secure the future, for everyone, it is essential to focus on long term preventative measures and have a more proactive approach to dealing with security challenges.

I agree that cross-party consensus on preventing atrocity crimes is absolutely necessary. As you say, preventing atrocity crimes is not only a strategic national interest, but is a goal that reflects the UK's humanitarian values too. I am very proud that Liberal Democrats in this government have ensured that even in difficult times of economic recession, the UK aid budget has been protected, the UN target to commit 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) to Overseas Development Assistance has been met and is now enshrined in law, the UK is the second biggest single country donor to the Syria crisis (pledging £700 million so far) and we now have a robust and legally binding International Arms Trade Treaty, as promised in our 2010 manifesto.

In a more globalised, interdependent world, freedom for individuals is no longer best protected solely by the nation state. Our policy paper, 'Liberty and Security in a Globalised World' – passed by our party members at Autumn Conference in 2008 – reaffirms the party's strong support for the principle of the Responsibility to Protect, initially proposed by the Liberal Government in Canada, and now adopted by the United Nations too. The international community has to act when a state fails to protect its own people. However, our party is clear that any intervention should be legal, for humanitarian reasons, must involve wide international participation, should have reasonable and achievable aims, as well as a clear and realistic exit strategy.

I can assure you that the Liberal Democrats remain committed to the ongoing process of improving global leadership and accountability, promoting the rule of law and international justice, as well as continuing to promote the values of equality, liberty and tolerance through cooperating with and strengthening multilateral bodies worldwide, such as the United Nations, the European Union and the Commonwealth.

With best wishes,



Nick Clegg MP

Leader of the Liberal Democrats