

IMPACT: UKIP is an anti-immigration political party that spearheaded the “Yes” side of the Brexit vote in the United Kingdom. The party’s policies include calls for Muslim-only prisons, a burqa ban, and special security screening for Muslim would-be immigrants. The current party leader, Gerard Batten, has called Islam a “death cult,” defended Tommy Robinson, and has welcomed far-right personalities into the party.

- The [UK Independence Party \(UKIP\)](#) was **established in 1993 as a “Eurosceptic” party** by Professor [Alan Sked](#). According to its [website](#), the party currently has [three members](#) in the House of Lords in the UK parliament. As of December 2018, UKIP has [8 members](#) in the European Parliament. It [describes](#) itself as a “democratic, Libertarian Party.”
- A 2018 op-ed in the *Guardian* by [Sked](#) [stated](#) that he established the party to campaign for Britain’s withdrawal from the European Union (EU). In 1997, Sked resigned from the party after [struggling](#) to “maintain control in the face of discontent among the party’s right-wing elements,” led by [Nigel Farage](#). In 2018, Sked stated that “only immigration mattered to him [Farage],” and [called](#) for the party to “dissolve itself,” as “it now lacks all political credibility and provokes laughter rather than sympathy.”
- Beginning in 2006, under [Farage’s](#) leadership, the party took a major shift by [adopting](#) “policies on a broad range of [economic and social issues](#),” immigration being key. In 2016, the *BBC* wrote that [Farage](#) brought “UKIP from a fringe force to the third biggest party in UK politics in terms of votes at the 2015 general election.” In the same year, Sked [stated](#) UKIP had become “extraordinarily right-wing” and devoted to “creating a fuss, via Islam and immigrants.”
- In 2009, [Farage](#) [co-founded](#) the Europe of Freedom and Democracy (EFD) parliamentary group in the European Union. UKIP was the largest in the EFD [coalition](#) of 10 parties, all of which were considered [right-wing or far-right](#). In 2012, one of the members of the EFD, Italian MEP Mario Borghezio, [declared](#) in a radio interview that [Anders Breivik](#), the Norwegian mass murderer, had some “excellent” ideas.
- A 2016 [article](#) in *Politico*, identified [Farage as one of the key individuals to push Brexit](#), the informal name of the campaign to withdraw the United Kingdom from the EU, onto the national agenda, with UKIP **raising alarm over “excessive immigration.”** During the Brexit campaign, the party promoted the anti-migrant, “[breaking point](#)” poster,” described by an article in *Politico* as [echoing “Nazi propaganda.”](#) An article in *The Daily Beast* [described](#) UKIP as having reached its “height of influence” in 2016 after “spearheading the winning ‘yes’ side of Britain’s [Brexit](#) vote to leave the European Union.” A 2017 article in the *Independent* [stated](#) that “one of Ukip’s most effective tactics has been to **exploit public concerns over immigration.**”
- A 2015 article in the *Telegraph* [noted](#) that **UKIP had the strongest support in areas of the UK that had the lowest immigration population.** The authors of [Revolt on the Right: Explaining Support for the Radical Right in Britain](#), a book on the rise of UKIP, identified “characteristics which they say predict UKIP support. These include age, ethnicity (UKIP supporters are overwhelmingly white), class, English identity, and [a pervasive feeling of having been “left behind” by the political process.](#)”
- **UKIP has had a turbulent leadership record.** Its current leader, MEP Gerard Batten, [took over](#) as interim leader in February 2018 after the party [voted out](#) former leader [Henry Bolton](#). The *Guardian* [reported](#) Bolton had replaced Paul Nuttall who left following the party’s performance in the 2017 election. Nuttall’s

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predecessor, Diana James, quit after just 18 days. In April 2018, Batten was elected leader of the party.

- In the past, **Batten, who at the time served as UKIP’s Brexit Spokesman, called Islam a “death cult”** and defended his statement, saying it was “factually and historically true.” In February 2018, **Batten called for “Muslims to be asked to sign a document renouncing parts of the Qur’an.”** While giving an interview on *Sky News*, **Batten stated that Islam “was propagated by invasion, by violence and intimidation.** And if you look at every continent in the world where you have this belief, then you have violence. **It glorifies death.”** In July 2018, while speaking at a rally **in support of Tommy Robinson, co-founder of the English Defense League (EDL), Batten claimed “the founder of Islam was ‘a pedophile who kept sex slaves.’”** Currently, on UKIP’s website, Batten states that the party represents “freedom from political correctness and cultural fear.”
- In April 2017, the party announced its **“integration agenda,” which included proposals to “ban the burqa and sharia courts.”** It also called for a “moratorium on new Islamic faith schools until substantial progress has been demonstrated in integrating Muslims into mainstream British society.” An additional proposal included a call to “implement school-based medical checks on girls from groups at high risk of suffering Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).” An article in the *Guardian* noted the rights groups “believe introducing checks on girls from at-risk communities would be an invasion of privacy that would create ‘second-class citizens.’”
- In 2017, then UKIP-leader Paul Nuttall claimed the “party’s policies were not singling out Muslims.” Nuttall defended UKIP’s “integration agenda,” stating, “We have a heightened security risk at the moment and for CCTV to be effective you need to see people’s faces,” and “This isn’t an attack on specifically on Muslims, it’s all about integration.” **Caroline Lucas, the Green Party leader, described the agenda as “full-throttled Islamophobia.”**
- In 2017, Arron Banks, a former donor to the party, accused UKIP of going to “war on Muslim religion,” following the release of the party’s “integration agenda.”
- In response to the party’s “integration agenda,” rights activist Miqdad Versi wrote the proposal had “taken the party even closer to the overt and unashamed bigotry of the British National party and the EDL, preying on the very worst prejudices of their voters.”
- A June 2018 article in *The Daily Beast* announced that **former Breitbart writer Milo Yiannopoulos, along with British YouTube personalities Carl Benjamin, Mark Meechan, and Paul Joseph Watson of InfoWars, a far-right conspiracy website, would be joining UKIP** in what Watson described as a “soft coup” in the party. Following this announcement, an article in *The Independent* noted that UKIP gained “500 members” after allowing “far-right activists” in the party.
- UKIP members have a history of anti-Muslim statements. **Ken Chapman once stated, “Islam is a cancer that needs eradicating ... clear them all off to the desert.”** In May 2017, former leader **Nuttall echoed Chapman’s words, stating that “radical Islam is a cancer that needs to be cut out of our society.”** Robert Brown, a UKIP town councilor in Ramsey, Cambridgeshire, labelled Muslims “evil.” Former leader, **Farage, called British Muslims a “fifth column.”** In 2009, political journalist Mehdi Hasan reported that Lord Pearson, who served as the leader of the party from 2009-2010, argued that Britain was under threat because “the Muslims are breeding ten times faster than us...I don't know at what point they reach such a number we are no longer able to resist the rest of their demands.”

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- In 2017, **Anne Marie Waters, the founder of Sharia Watch** ran as a **UKIP candidate for the general election**. Then-leader of UKIP, Nuttall, stated Waters' views made him "uncomfortable" and went "way above and beyond party policy." Following public pressure from rights groups and the media, Waters was deselected as a parliamentary candidate by UKIP's National Executive Committee (NEC). She remained active in the party and ran for the leadership in 2017, only to come in second place to Henry Bolton.
- In September 2018, the **party held its 25th-anniversary conference where it released its interim manifesto**, which Batten said was intended to make UKIP "a populist party in the real sense of the world." The *Guardian* reported the manifesto **called for the abolition of the category of hate crime**, "as well as scrapping the Equalities and Human Rights Commission and the government's equalities office." The manifesto also **called for Muslim-only prisons reserved** for incarcerated Muslims "who promote extremism or try to convert non-Islamic prisoners." Another **policy idea involved "special security screening for Muslim would-be immigrants."** When asked if this mirrored U.S. President Donald Trump's Muslim ban banning immigration from presently five Muslim-majority countries, a UKIP spokesman admitted there were "similarities," but "there has been no conscious aping of the president of America's policies."
- In **response to the manifesto, former leader Farage stated the party was "in danger now unless it changes direction very, very quickly, of total and utter marginalization."** Farage also stated it "really upsets" him that Batten was considering allowing entry to Tommy Robinson. **MEP Jonathan Arnott, who quit UKIP in 2017, accused the party of "dog-whistle" approach towards Muslims.** Arnott quit the party following its promotion of "anti-Islam messages," stating: "Tough and robust policies to tackle extremism are absolutely right. The victimization or demonization of Muslims and Islam is not."
- On November 22, 2018, the *Guardian* reported Batten **appointed Robinson as a "personal special adviser"** on grooming gangs and prisons.
- On December 4, 2018 **Farage announced his departure from UKIP**, stating the party was unrecognizable because of the **"fixation" with the "anti-Muslim policies of its leader, Gerard Batten."** Additionally, the *Guardian* reported Farage was dismayed by Batten's "decision to appoint the far-right campaigner Tommy Robinson as an adviser." On December 7, 2018, former UKIP leader Paul Nuttall announced his resignation from the party stating, "Putting Tommy Robinson front and centre, whilst Brexit is in the process of being betrayed, is in my view a catastrophic error."