

# **Thousands march for independence in Edinburgh**

**Thousands marched on Saturday from Johnston Terrace at the Castle down the Royal Mile and rallied at The Scottish Parliament where the First Minister made a rousing speech.**

Humza Yousaf spoke for almost twelve minutes without notes or autocue and told everyone gathered in the 25,000 strong crowd why independence is still a goal Scotland must achieve – laying out comparisons with other small countries which are already independent and successful and saying “Why not Scotland?”

He criticised Labour for their “unchanged” policies and their stance on the so-called “rape clause”. This is the measure introduced by then Chancellor George Osborne to limit child tax credit to the first two children to encourage those on benefits to make the same choices as those supporting themselves only by working. There was an exception for a child born as a result of non consensual conception – and critics said this forced women to prove that the child is born as a result of a rape to qualify for state benefits, thus enduring further trauma.

He said: “We stand here in front of our nation’s parliament to rededicate ourselves to independence and the people of our country need it now more than they have ever needed it before. We believe in independence because this unequal union has caused so much suffering and so much harm. The people of this country they are not suffering from a cost of living crisis

they are suffering from a cost of the union crisis. And I don't believe Sir Keir Starmer for one minute that the Labour Party offer real change. Keeping the two child limit is not real change. Keeping the bedroom tax is not real change. Keeping us chained to a Brexit that is damaging our economy is not real change. Saying that you will apply the rape clause fairly is not real change. The only fair thing to do with the rape clause is consign it to the dustbin of history where it belongs."

He said: "An independent Scotland will stand up as a beacon of light of social justice, and wellbeing, economy and show a global leadership on issues like climate change. Imagine a better future that only comes friends with independence. And that is our job.

"Our job is to inspire people, not just point out the failings of the miserable Westminster Government, but to inspire people – look for inspiration. Look at the past and look at the future. Take inspiration from the giants on whose shoulders we stand. The brilliant people of our movement, the Neil McCormacks the Margo MacDonalds, the George Leslies, the Winnie Ewings, the Bashir Ahmads that have gone in the past.

"I've stood here at rallies before and I've asked you to imagine that moment when Scotland becomes an independent country. I want you to indulge me again. But not that moment. I want you to think of another moment, I want you to imagine that we are standing here again, gathered not in our thousands But this time in our millions.

"The vote has been won, the negotiations with UK Government done. And here we are standing, looking at giant screens that are showing the proceedings of The Scottish Parliament. I'll be in there, but don't worry, there'll be plenty of folk out here. And we imagine that moment when the Presiding Officer looks at the results of the motion in front of them and says and announces that the Scottish independence Bill, which will

repeal the Act of the Union has been passed by a majority of that Scottish Parliament.”



Humza Yousaf speaking at the Believe in Scotland rally © 2023 Martin McAdam



Believe in Scotland Rally 2 September 2023 PHOTO © 2023 The Edinburgh Reporter

Jamie Hepburn MSP Minister for Independence, said: 'Days like



this matter because it serves to remind those who need reminding that we're still here. We are not going away. We're going to keep campaigning, we're going to make the case, we're going to be in every city, every town, every village, every hamlet, every community, every street, doorstep by doorstep making the case for independence until we win."



Minister for Independence Jamie Hepburn who addressed the Believe in Scotland Rally 2 September 2023 PHOTO © 2023 The Edinburgh Reporter



Lesley Riddoch © 2023 Martin McAdam

Lesley Riddoch journalist said: "When we come to this question of whether it is the EU or EFTA I want us to just have this outlook and keep it really close to us. Where we get inspiration from will be our European colleagues. They've seen it, they've got independence, particularly the Nordic countries, the most small successful countries son earth and they're ready to help us and that's what we need."

Scottish Conservative shadow constitution secretary Donald Cameron MSP said:"Humza Yousaf needs to realise he is the First Minister for Scotland, not the SNP, and his appearance at the independence rally shows his top priority is to push for another divisive referendum.

"People across Scotland will be infuriated that the First Minister attended this march and believes separating our country is more important than helping households through the global cost of living crisis and fixing our broken NHS and crumbling schools.



“Humza Yousaf continues to be completely out-of-touch with public opinion and people are rightly seeing through his reckless behaviour.

“Only the Scottish Conservatives are standing up to this independence-obsessed SNP-Green government and holding them to account for their widespread failings.”



Humza Yousaf acknowledges the crowd gathered outside The Scottish Parliament © 2023 Martin McAdam



Humza Yousaf collects his thoughts before addressing the Believe in Scotland Rally 2 September 2023 PHOTO © 2023 The Edinburgh Reporter



Lorna Slater MSP addressed the Believe in Scotland Rally 2



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The SNP leader at Westminster, Stephen Flynn MP, attended the Believe in Scotland Rally 2 September 2023 PHOTO © 2023 The Edinburgh Reporter





Mr Yousaf marched with the crowds down the Royal Mile © 2023  
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Claude Detrez of Europe for Scotland said that Scotland has many friends in Europe at the Believe in Scotland Rally 2 September 2023 PHOTO © 2023 The Edinburgh Reporter