

UK Constitutional Crisis Deepens as Boris Suspends Parliament

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It has been termed a 'constitutional outrage' by Speaker of the UK House of Commons, John Bercow, as the UK government announced its plan to delay the beginning of the parliamentary year till mid October in an attempt to avoid opposition parties from derailing Brexit. Prime Minister Boris Johnson has already asked the Queen to condone such a move, thereby postponing the Queen's speech - which signifies the beginning of the parliamentary year - till 14th October. On Wednesday the Queen granted his request.

The move provoked a furious reaction from Johnson's pro-Remain colleagues, who view it as a way of him ruling out any attempt to stop a No Deal Brexit. Opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn accused Johnson of conducting a 'smash and grab' on Britain's democracy and he himself has also requested an audience with the Queen, having already written to Her Majesty to express his concerns about Conservative plans. Boris Johnson for his part has denied that he was stopping MPs from blocking a No Deal Brexit, saying there was 'ample time' for the issue to be debated in the last two weeks of October.

Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon earlier expressed her concerns on the matter, tweeting:

'Unless MPs come together to stop him next week, today will go down in history as a dark one indeed for UK democracy'.

She went further to say that it was in fact 'not democracy but dictatorship' and called on Conservative party leader in Scotland, Ruth Davidson, to oppose the government suspension. Ruth Davidson for her part announced her resignation on Thursday, citing her desire to spend more time with her family, however admitting she felt conflicted over Brexit. Davidson's resignation will be a huge blow to the Unionist movement in Scotland, and consequently a boost to the Scottish Nationalists. Other prominent Conservatives have also criticised Johnson's action, with former Chancellor Phillip Hammond terming it 'profoundly undemocratic'.

The government may have been prepared for widespread protests given a No Deal Brexit on 31st October, but given yesterday's news the backlash has already begun, with [calls](#) by media personalities such as Owen Jones on social media for people to take to the streets on Wednesday to 'defend democracy'. A petition has also been started which aims to collect 17 million signatures against what is being labelled the 'Boris Johnson coup'.

There are indeed questions surrounding the legality of such a bid to effectively shut down

parliament at a time when debate and discussion surrounding Brexit is needed most. The Scottish National Party's Joanna Cherry has stated that her party have called for the Scottish court to organise a hearing on this issue this week, and are confident of being heard. However, according to journalist [Robert Peston](#), government lawyers state that they 'absolutely confident the courts cannot interfere'.

As for the Queen's role in this; it is normal for her to support such government decisions. This has not prevented opposition politicians however from appealing to Her Majesty not to prorogue parliament till Friday 8th November. 45 MPs from the Scottish National Party, Labour, Green and Liberal Democrats yesterday signed a declaration called an Early Day Motion which calls on the Queen to use her powers to overrule the government.

Johnson's move has taken many by surprise, but the reality is that Brexiteers have long been intent on achieving Brexit at whatever the cost. The prospect of outcry from politicians and the public alike does not seem to concern the Johnson team, who staunchly believe in the advantages of Brexit, and are confident that the UK can weather any storm which awaits after October 31st. Boris Johnson's meetings with EU leaders last week may have created a show of solidarity and a common desire to achieve a deal, but the reality is that the PM always knew it would be nigh impossible to get an agreement passed by parliament, and so regardless of any deal negotiated with Brussels, leaving without a deal is looking increasingly likely. Some analysts are suggesting that this is a way of Johnson forcing parliament to accept some kind of deal, but the fact is that the Johnson Brexit team is staffed of hard-line Brexiteers, some of whom have been calling for a No Deal Brexit for some time.

With this arguably reckless act however Johnson is no doubt storing up trouble for the future credibility of his party. It has only deepened the rift between Remainers and Brexiteers and exacerbated the feelings of mistrust in the Johnson government. With still around half of the country opposed to Brexit, and a majority of people in Scotland against it, he is also putting the territorial integrity of the United Kingdom on the line. By charging forward to implement a No Deal Brexit, he is undoubtedly only worsening the current constitutional crisis and fuelling the Scottish independence movement. Time will tell if the opposition can succeed in stopping him.

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