

UK politician orders removal of cartoons for child asylum seekers

10th July 2023



The UK's immigration minister Robert Jenrick is at the centre of a storm for ordering the removal of children's cartoons from the wall of an asylum centre. News agencies

say Mr Jenrick instructed staff at the Kent Intake Unit to remove murals of Disney characters that were there to soothe asylum-seeking children. The Unit looks after and processes child migrants who are unaccompanied by parents. The BBC said Jenrick reportedly believed the art sent a message that the UK was "too welcoming". A government spokesperson said: "Our priority is to stop the boats and disrupt the people smugglers." One of the UK government's top five priorities is to stop the arrival of asylum seekers on "small boats".

British artists have responded to the removal of the art by offering their services to redecorate the Unit. The celebrated British illustrator and cartoonist Guy Venables has enlisted other high-profile artists to create works of art that are welcoming for highly distressed child refugees. Mr Venables told The Art Newspaper: "I've offered to repaint the mural...in the refugee centre." Venables was "baffled" that the original murals were painted over. He called it a "display of astonishing, pointless cruelty". He said his artwork might make Jenrick "think twice about vandalising several professional national cartoonists' work just to deny a vulnerable child something fun to look at."

Sources: theartnewspaper.com / bbc.com / theguardian.com

Writing

No country should ever turn away child asylum seekers. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

immigration / storm / cartoon / asylum / murals / soothe / processes / art / smugglers artists / illustrator / refugees / baffled / pointless / cruelty / think twice / vulnerable

True / False

- 1) The UK immigration minister removed refugees from an asylum centre. T / F
- 2) The children at the asylum centre are there without their parents. T / F
- 3) Robert Jenrick said the UK is a very welcoming country. T / F
- 4) The UK's top priority is to stop refugee boats. T / F
- 5) British artists have repainted the asylum centre. T / F
- 6) A UK artist couldn't understand why the Disney paintings were erased. T / F
- 7) The artist said it was cruel to remove the Disney paintings. T / F
- 8) The artist said Robert Jenrick needed to think three times. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. storm | a. replied |
| 2. removal | b. calm |
| 3. instructed | c. puzzled |
| 4. soothe | d. helpless |
| 5. priority | e. erasure |
| 6. responded | f. callousness |
| 7. celebrated | g. prime concern |
| 8. baffled | h. controversy |
| 9. cruelty | i. admired |
| 10. vulnerable | j. ordered |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of immigration?
- b) What do you know about immigration in the UK?
- c) What do you think of the removal of the cartoons?
- d) What do you think Robert Jenrick thinks of asylum seekers?
- e) Do you think a lack of cartoons will deter asylum seekers?
- f) How can we stop people smugglers?
- g) How can we help asylum seekers?
- h) What advice do you have for Robert Jenrick?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. The UK's immigration | a. vandalising |
| 2. at the centre | b. baffled |
| 3. child migrants who are unaccompanied | c. top five priorities |
| 4. the art sent a message that the UK was | d. child |
| 5. One of the UK government's | e. of a storm |
| 6. I've offered to repaint | f. "too welcoming" |
| 7. Venables was | g. the mural |
| 8. He called it a display of astonishing, | h. minister |
| 9. think twice about | i. pointless cruelty |
| 10. deny a vulnerable | j. by parents |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What is your country's immigration policy?
- What do you think of the response of the British artists?
- What would help highly distressed child refugees?
- Do you think removing the art was 'pointless cruelty'?
- Should the cartoonists create a new mural at the asylum centre?
- What is your message to the refugees?
- What questions would you like to ask Jenrick?

Spelling

- The UK's oiagnritmmi minister
- Mr Jenrick ttensicdur staff
- hotoes asylum-seeking children
- looks after and processes child gntraism
- niocdacpanume by parents
- Our rtyiirop is to stop the boats
- The celebrated British rsottlirlua and cartoonist
- I've offered to repaint the rlamu
- Venables was febflda
- a display of astonishing, pointless tuyrcle
- think twice about avidgiansnl
- just to deny a velaulnreb child

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. e	3. j	4. b	5. g
6. a	7. i	8. c	9. f	10. d

Role Play

Role A – Cartoons

You think cartoons are the best form of art. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their forms. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): photographs, graffiti or oil paintings.

Role B – Photographs

You think photographs are the best form of art. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their forms. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): cartoons, graffiti or oil paintings.

Role C – Graffiti

You think graffiti is the best form of art. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their forms. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): photographs, cartoons or oil paintings.

Role D – Oil Paintings

You think oil paintings are the best form of art. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their forms. Also, tell the others which is the least interesting of these (and why): photographs, graffiti or cartoons.

Speaking – Art

Rank these with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|------------|--------------------|
| • Cartoons | • Photographs |
| • Graffiti | • Oil paintings |
| • Manga | • Architecture |
| • Pop art | • Installation art |

Answers – True False

1	F	2	T	3	F	4	F	5	F	6	T	7	T	8	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.