

Written evidence from Eric LeVin (SOT92)

Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee The Status of the UK's Overseas Territories in the 21st Century inquiry

Further to my previous submissions to your commission, (*'Failings in human rights protections for British Overseas Territories Citizens in the Turks and Caicos Islands'*, 2 September and *'business licensing'*, 5 November), I would like to contribute this brief submission on the new proposal for estate agent licensing¹.

Under this proposal, only people with Islander status will be able to work as estate agents. This is a major professional occupation here and this proposal continues this government's policy of stripping rights and livelihoods from BOTCs. Real estate now joins the other sectors that are, or will be, blocked from BOTCs, and most economic activity in this country will soon have some type of restriction or impediment to BOTC participation.

These proposals take no consideration of the large number of citizens without Islander status here, nor of the fact that the government intends that very few non-Islander citizens receive status. It also continues this administration's tradition of treating BOTCs as foreigners and not citizens belonging to this country.

New quotas and xenophobic ethnic policies for granting Islander status, that I covered previously, mean that citizens from unfavoured origins have next to no chance of gaining status. Combined with these proposals, the result is *de facto* ethnic segregation between citizens for good jobs. I do not need to remind your committee that this is a trait shared with some of the most notorious regimes in history.

Additionally, these policies are not compliant with the international human rights conventions that apply here nor the successive recommendations of international observers.

Recent proposals like this highlight the insecure position of BOTCs in the TCI. Because we are disenfranchised, the limited rights and privileges we have as British Turks and Caicos citizens can evaporate at any time. As the sovereign power, the UK has the obligation to remedy these issues.

February 2024

1

<https://gov.tc/images/docs/Consultation%20on%20Implementation%20of%20the%20Real%20Estate%20%20Brokers%20and%20Salesmen%20Licensing%20Ordinance.pdf>