

The rights of Gurkhas

A letter to the Herald, May 2009

Sir -

In the end, we got the right decision on the rights of Gurkhas. It is now clearly established: people prepared to die fighting for our country should have a right to live in our country. It seems strange that that was ever in question.

The government's attitude towards the Gurkhas has been unfair, ungenerous, and unacceptable. Joanna Lumley and her fellow campaigners deserve much credit for persevering with the cause. Credit is due also to Nick Clegg, in whose name the motion stood; he called this one absolutely correctly.

It was a good day for our parliamentary democracy, with a coalition of Conservatives and Liberals and a number of Labour MPs coming together to carry a point of principle.

Rightly, ministers then quickly acknowledged that a new approach is required. But the story isn't over yet. The test that we now must apply is whether that approach meets the needs of the Gurkhas and their supporters. Will ministers be able to look Gurkhas in the eye and say: "We are now being fair and just"?

Yours

Damian Hinds
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