

U.K. Lawmaker Jo Cox Is Murdered, Silencing Brexit Debate

by [Robert Hutton](#) [Thomas Penny](#) [Alex Morales](#)
[t RobDotHutton](#) [t ThomasWPenny](#) [t AlexJFMorales](#)

[f](#) [t](#) [h](#)



[U.K. Labour Party Lawmaker Jo Cox Dies After Attack](#)

- ▶ Referendum campaigning is suspended; Cameron cancels speech
- ▶ Osborne, Carney pay tribute to Cox at Mansion House dinner

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Jo Cox, a British parliamentarian and advocate for the U.K. to remain in the European Union, was shot dead on Thursday as she met constituents, shocking much of the world and temporarily silencing the rancorous debate about membership of the 28-nation bloc.

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It was the first killing of a member of Parliament in more than two decades, since the days of Irish Republican terrorism. All campaigning in the referendum, just a week away, was suspended. It is unclear when it will resume.

[Embed] [Twitter: David Cameron on Twitter](#)

Cox, 41, was only elected to the House of Commons last year and was a passionate supporter of EU membership: The previous day her husband Brendan took their two young children out onto the River Thames to fly an “IN” flag from a motorboat.

“She would have wanted two things above all else to happen now, one that our precious children are bathed in love, and two, that we all unite to fight against the hatred that killed her,” he said in a statement. “Hate doesn’t have a creed, race or religion, it is poisonous.”

Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne quoted those words in [remarks](#) made at the annual Mansion House dinner, in the City of London, an event traditionally rich in announcements and eagerly awaited by traders and investors. Bank of England Governor Mark Carney also paid tribute to Cox. Both men left the dinner early after canceling broader speeches they were due to deliver.

The day had started with Brexit supporters attacking Osborne and Carney over their warnings of the economic dangers of leaving the EU. With polls suggesting the country was moving toward leaving, the Labour Party was trying to rally supporters in northern cities. Prime Minister David Cameron was due to address a rally in favor of EU membership in Gibraltar. All that was abandoned as news of the attack came through.

IMF Delay

The International Monetary Fund said it was delaying a planned release of reports on the implications of the U.K. leaving the EU, while the polling company BMG said

it would delay a referendum poll due to be published on Friday by 24 hours. The suspension of campaigning lifted the pound which fell in recent weeks as polls tightened.

Cox was killed outside the venue for one of her regular sessions at which constituents in the town of Birstall can seek advice and help.

“Jo was attacked by a man who inflicted serious and, sadly, ultimately fatal injuries,” West Yorkshire Police’s temporary chief constable, Dee Collins, said in a televised news conference in Wakefield. The Press Association, the U.K.’s national newswire, reported that Cox was shot twice and stabbed. Eyewitnesses speaking to the BBC described her attacker as having a gun he’d fashioned himself.

Man Arrested

Collins said police had arrested a 52-year-old man and weren’t looking for anyone else. They recovered a number of weapons including a firearm, she said.

“We’ve lost a great star,” Prime Minister David Cameron said in a televised statement. “Jo was a great campaigning MP with huge compassion and a big heart.” The U.S. State Department spokesman began his briefing on Thursday by saying his government is appalled by the killing.

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said his whole party is in shock. “Jo had a lifelong record of public service and a deep commitment to humanity,” he said in a statement. “Jo died doing her public duty at the heart of our democracy, listening to and representing the people she was elected to serve.”

Stephen Kinnock, a Labour lawmaker who shared an office with Cox and has known her for two decades, described her as “one in a million.” Before entering Parliament, Cox had worked in Brussels for his mother Glenys, who was a member of the European Parliament.

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‘Ball of Energy’

“She was such a ball of energy and life and warmth,” Kinnock said in a Channel 4 News interview. “Everybody loved Jo. She was somebody who could bring people together.”

Collins of the police refused to discuss reports that Cox's attacker had shouted "Britain First." She said police were "not in a position to discuss any motive." Mark Burns Williamson, the police and crime commissioner for West Yorkshire, sought to reassure minority ethnic groups in the area. "I want to try to reassure communities that our information is that this is a localized incident, albeit one that has a much wider impact," he said.

Guns are very tightly controlled in the U.K., and shootings are rare. Since the end of the terrorism campaigns in Northern Ireland, there have been few attacks on lawmakers. In 2010, Labour's Stephen Timms was stabbed in the stomach by a constituent who had been radicalized by watching Islamic preachers online. He made a full recovery.

The last member of Parliament to be killed was Ian Gow, who was murdered by an Irish Republican Army bomb at his home in Sussex in 1990.

Gabrielle Giffords, the former U.S congresswoman from Arizona who was shot in the head in 2011, issued a statement saying she and her husband grieved for Cox's friends and family and described the killing as "a manifestation of a coarseness in our politics and hatred toward the other that we must not tolerate."

"I don't remember the constituent meeting where I was shot in the head and nearly lost my life, but the scores of such events I and so many others have hosted represent the importance of a democracy connected to its citizens," Giffords said. "Just like January 8, 2011 did not deter America from its founding ideals, the British principle of pluralism and the nation's democratic institutions will endure."

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