

Breaking News English.com

UK politician orders removal of cartoons for child asylum seekers (10th July 2023)

Level 4

The UK immigration minister Robert Jenrick has ordered the removal of Disney cartoons from the wall of an asylum centre. The Disney characters were there to make asylum-seeking children happier. The centre looks after children who arrive without their parents. Jenrick reportedly said the art sends a message that the UK is "too welcoming". A UK priority is to stop boats of asylum seekers from arriving.

British artists have responded by offering to repaint the centre. High-profile artists want to create art that is welcoming for the stressed children. One artist told The Art Newspaper that he was "baffled" that the original artwork was painted over. He called it "pointless cruelty". He said his artwork might make Jenrick "think twice" about destroying the artists' work, "just to deny a vulnerable child something fun".

Level 5

The UK's immigration minister Robert Jenrick has ordered the removal of Disney cartoons from the wall of an asylum centre. Reporters say Jenrick told staff at the centre to remove the Disney characters that were there to make asylum-seeking children happier. The centre looks after child migrants who arrived without their parents. Jenrick reportedly believes the art sends the message that the UK is "too welcoming". A UK priority is to stop boats of asylum seekers from arriving in the country. It also wants to stop people smugglers.

A group of British artists has responded to the removal of the art by offering to repaint the centre. Celebrated British cartoonist Guy Venables and other high-profile artists want to create art that is welcoming for distressed children. Mr Venables told The Art Newspaper that he was "baffled" that the original paintings were painted over. He called it "pointless cruelty". He said his artwork might make Jenrick "think twice about vandalising...professional cartoonists' work just to deny a vulnerable child something fun to look at."

Level 6

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."