



Blackpool council Reform leader exposed as BAE Systems officer, uniparty warmonger

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The *Canary* can reveal that Reform UK's [leader in Blackpool Council](#) is an "officer" employed at BAE Systems. BAE is a weapons manufacturer heavily implicated in the Gaza genocide and other war crimes.

Reform's Blackpool Council [group leader](#) is James John (aka Jim) O'Neill, 69. He was elected as Blackpool's first Reform councillor in 2024, taking the Marston ward from Labour. He states his employment on his sparsely detailed [Register of Interests](#) on Blackpool Council's website as: "Officer, BAE Systems."

O'Neill was outside BAE's Samlesbury manufacturing plant informing policing operations and notifying anti-genocide blockaders of "trespass" in the early hours of 29 June. He was a "first responder" to the protest scene by 6:25am, per the *Canary's* reporter on the ground (see top image aka [@just.barold](#)).

During the election Jim made a charity pledge, has he delivered on it? Yet to see evidence. <pic.twitter.com/fvDoLLF4Sd>

Reform Party UK Exposed (reformexposed) [June 9, 2025](#)

[BAE arms firm workers get big pay rise amid escalating war and genocide](#)

Reform are the "uniparty" revamped

According to O'Neill, he was the first Reform UK candidate to [take a seat from Labour](#) where it was once assumed that Reform posed a threat primarily to Tory politicians. In October 2024, [O'Neill said](#)

Quite early on we were getting the message from some people that they felt betrayed by Labour and they were looking for an alternative. I was just straight talking with people on the doorstep.

Among many reasons that people feel betrayed by Labour, especially [since Tony Blair](#) is the party's insistence on involving Britain in [illegal murderous wars](#). From Iraq to Libya, Gaza to Iran and beyond, [BAE Systems](#) has been central in arming occupations, [executions and genocide](#). They [profit enormously](#) so.

Alongside the Tories, Labour are branded the "uni-party" by those who oppose such self-evidently disastrous foreign policy. It destabilises [entire regions](#), causes [mass displacements](#) and unavoidably results in [violence on British soil](#) from those traumatised by [Western war-crimes](#) (See: the [British-Libyan MI6-linked bomber](#) who killed [23 people, himself included](#) in Manchester at an Ariana Grande concert.)

It might have surprised many Reform voters, who perhaps bought Nigel Farage's words about [ending "forever wars"](#) when he [wholeheartedly backed](#) the illegal US-Zionist war on Iran in early

March. It might surprise them further to see active [weapons producers](#) working in senior roles within Reform's ranks.

Fittingly, the Israeli apartheid regime paid [£50,000](#) for Reform UK politicians [to visit the occupation entity](#). For a party supposedly opposed to asylum seekers, Reform are very aligned with the actors that create them. To anyone paying attention, clues were there all along: Reform is the neoliberal, war-hungry uni-party now.

[Andrew Feinstein](#) is world-leading arms trade researcher at [Shadow World Investigations](#) and author of [monumental](#) arms industry exposé [Shadow World](#). Speaking to the *Canary* about O'Neill, Feinstein said:

This senior Reform politician works for BAE Systems, Britain's largest arms maker which is complicit in the genocide in Gaza and has a history of extreme corruption.

This illustrates that Reform is as much a part of Britain's out of control military industrial complex as the Tories and Labour, which rakes in so much money while delivering very little value for money as the Tories and Labour.

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[Activists disrupt BAE Systems at careers fair in Lancashire](#)

BAE Systems is criminally complicit

The major production factory in Samlesbury, Lancashire, manufactures F-35 bomber-jet parts, including the rear fuselage. The company and its officer, Reform's Jim O'Neill, must answer for plausible war crimes.

The BAE factory [reportedly manufactures](#) the rear fuselage for every F-35 warplane, including those supplied to and used by [Israel and the US](#). F-35 pilots have massacred hundreds of thousands of civilians across Gaza, Lebanon, Iran, Yemen, and countless more countries.

London-based research charity Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) [confirmed](#) that two UK defence companies — BAE Systems and [Raytheon UK](#) — produce components used in Tomahawk cruise missiles. This is the same missile type that [struck Minab girls' school](#) in Iran, killing over 170 innocent children and their teachers.

AOAV published a 2024 report titled [How BAE Systems helped arm almost half the world](#). In its introduction, AOAV details BAE's soaring profits through the Gaza genocide and ever-present threats of looming world war. The report notes succinctly:

War, it seems, is good for the arms dealer.

The report found that BAE has [definite or reported](#) trading relationships with 93 countries around the world. That's around half of the globe, or 48% of total UN member states. This took [serious investigating](#) since:

BAE Systems does not list all its national clients on its website nor in its annual reports.

Most egregiously, however, AOAV [detail the worst crimes](#) committed by states with [known links to BAE's weapons supplies](#). While they note the lack of exact confirmation, researchers [confirmed that](#)

29 of the 81 confirmed countries that BAE Systems have helped arm in the last decade have used explosive weapons that have reportedly harmed civilians since 2013. From such state use, AOAV recorded 6,292 incidents of explosive weapon use, based on reputable English-language reporting, and some 44,103 civilians harmed – of which 24,019 were killed.

Councillor O'Neill did not respond to the Canary's request for comment on these findings.

Featured image via the Canary / [@just.barold](#)

By [Cameron Baillie](#)

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1. News

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1. bae
2. blackpool
3. council
4. exposed
5. leader
6. news
7. officer
8. reform
9. systems
10. uniparty
11. warmonger

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