

# "We've seen this playbook before": British PM says Elon Musk is spreading lies and misinformation"

U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer defended his record as a prosecutor in the wake of false claims promoted on X

BY **CHARLES R. DAVIS**

British Prime Minister **Keir Starmer** did not name **Elon Musk** directly, but it was clear who he was condemning when he told reporters that people were "spreading lies and misinformation" about **child abuse** in his country, falsely accusing the U.K. leader of failing to prosecute foreign-born predators.

"We have seen this playbook many times — whipping up of intimidation and of threats of violence, hoping that the media will amplify it," Starmer said at a press conference Monday, the BBC **reported**. "Those who are spreading lies and misinformation as far and as wide as possible are not interested in victims, they're interested in themselves."

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Starmer, who last year led his center-left Labour Party to victory after 14 years of Conservative rule, was addressing bogus claims spread by Musk and others that he did not take action to address the threat of so-called

"grooming gangs" that targeted children for sexual exploitation. Prior to leading the Labour Party, Starmer served as director of the Crown Prosecution Service from 2008 to 2013 and was the first to bring a case against one such gang, The New York Times **reported**.

"When I left office, we had the highest number of child sexual abuse cases being prosecuted on record," Starmer said Monday. "The victims here suffered terrible abuse and then they weren't listened to."

Musk, who spread the false claims on his social media platform, X, has for months targeted the current British government with far-right disinformation. In the summer of 2024, Musk asserted that "civil war is inevitable" in Britain after right-wing extremists attacked immigrants across the country, incited by a false claim — spread on X — that a child murderer had been an asylum-seeker (the alleged murdered was **in fact** a native-born British citizen).

More recently, Musk has called for the freeing of the fascist anti-immigrant activist Tommy Robinson and, over the weekend, asked his followers if they believe the U.S. government should forcibly "**liberate**" Britain. Starmer, speaking Monday, accused Musk and others of "trying to get some vicarious thrill from street violence that people like Tommy Robinson support," **per** the Associated Press.

Musk's support for the British far right comes after he dropped more than \$250 million to elect Donald Trump and follows his public endorsement of Alternative for Germany, an extremist party that critics say is led by Nazi sympathizers.