

Press Statement 1 to be Issued by BIEN during the Congress in Bath, UK

Subject: Responding to Disturbances: Why a Basic Income is Vital

Date: 29 August 2024, Bath, UK

The recent riots in English urban areas and in Northern Ireland were precipitated by racism, extremist nationalism and religious bigotry. That's what everybody sees, and everyone is responding to. However, the unseen underlying cause of such attitudes and behaviour is *chronic economic insecurity*, just as lurches to the far right in other countries have been due to economic insecurity and the growth of the new mass class, the precariat, whose lives are mired in insecurity, instability, precarity and debt. When people are insecure, it's easy to induce them to believe the lie that other vulnerable groups are to blame for their precarity.

We believe that, in this moment of existential crisis, when society could drift into authoritarianism and lack of any sense of social solidarity, moving in the direction of a basic income for all usual residents, as an economic right, is a social and economic imperative.

Unless this road is taken, insecurities will continue to grow, there will be more ugly disturbances, and there will be insufficient incentive to lead more secure lives. The claim for basic income is primarily ethical or moral, a matter of common justice, freedom and security. There is no other way to overcome society's polycrisis. We call on the government to set up a Commission to work out the optimal way forward.

The Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN), the largest network of practitioners working on this policy instrument, stands ready to provide its expertise and advice on the consideration of a community-wide basic income in the UK. As a charity registered in the UK, we would be keen to offer our support to our communities in considering policy steps towards increased social justice. You can reach us at bien@basicincome.org.

On behalf of BIEN's Executive Committee



BIEN Chair, Sarah Davala