

Reform UK row: Leaked messages reveal Farage fury with Lowe

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Nigel Farage called the behaviour of suspended Reform UK MP Rupert Lowe "disgusting" and "contemptible" in private WhatsApp messages seen by the BBC.

In the messages, which were sent after Lowe criticised the Reform leader in a Daily Mail interview, Farage accused him of "damaging the party just before elections".

Reform has always denied there was any connection between Lowe's suspension and his criticism of the party.

In his Mail interview on 5 March, Lowe called Reform a "protest party" led by "the Messiah". He was suspended on 7 March and reported to police over claims he had made threats of violence against party chairman Zia Yusuf.

Reform said it had also received allegations of bullying in Lowe's MP offices. Lowe strongly denies all the allegations.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJsGZL-zb54 He has since accused Farage, external of a "malicious witch hunt" and being motivated "to remove me because I dared to ask questions".

Responding to the latest development, external on social media, Lowe said: "These messages unquestionably prove that the Reform leadership has zero integrity.

"Nigel Farage must never become prime minister."

Farage told the BBC: "The suspension was to protect the party, simple. The newspaper attack on Reform UK is separate but dreadful."

He has previously insisted the party was duty bound to look into any allegations of wrongdoing.

Reform's deputy leader Richard Tice previously told the BBC there was "absolutely no truth" in claims of a link between the decision to suspend Lowe and the allegations being made public.

But a series of messages between Farage and someone who has worked for Lowe in recent years reveals Farage's personal anger with Lowe about his comments to the Daily Mail.

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In one message, Farage says Lowe is "contemptible". When asked by the activist, who is not currently a party member, why Reform had not allowed a lawyer to complete an investigation before suspending him Farage said: "Because he is damaging the party just before elections. Disgusting."

When it was suggested the investigation into Lowe was a response to his criticism of the leadership, Farage replied on WhatsApp: "We are definitely damaged and within two weeks of nominations. Awful."

Farage went on to say the Mail interview was a "side issue" and that the party had to investigate the claims against Lowe.

But the messages reveal a level of animosity between the suspended MP and his team and the Reform UK leadership, alongside the claims about his behaviour, which Lowe vehemently denies.

The BBC's source is themselves the subject of an allegation of bullying, which they strenuously deny.

The BBC has spoken to several members of Rupert Lowe's team. Among them are people who have worked alongside Nigel Farage for years and admired him.

But many now are deeply critical.

One said: "Nigel is thin skinned and egotistical. I have spent years defending him but the aura has gone for me now. Reporting Rupert to the police? Come on. They're trying to put him in prison!"

The staff member went on to claim that the root of this whole row was Elon Musk's praise for Lowe on X, saying: "Nigel is very sensitive about his American contacts."

Another staffer said: "It is absolutely terrible the party going to the police.

"You'd never find someone more kind and considerate than Rupert.

"If you don't have policies as a party, you're a joke and that is what Rupert was pointing out."

The BBC has also seen evidence of lengthy and detailed exchanges between Lowe's offices and Parliament's human resources team over the alleged conduct and subsequent departures of two members of staff.

Lowe has long insisted that he and his staff diligently followed the due process parliament requires of them and there was no need for the party, or a senior lawyer hired by the party, to get involved.

Reform UK has expanded rapidly, now boasting more than 200,000 members and regularly topping or coming second in national opinion polls.

But Nigel Farage has publicly acknowledged that infighting has damaged the party's chances of progress.

Rupert Lowe told the BBC: "Farage has admitted himself, in writing, that the motivation behind my removal was the Daily Mail interview, in which I raised reasonable and constructive questions of Reform structure, policy and communication – following months of pushing for change behind the scenes.

"That interview is why they designed and launched their horrific smear campaign against my name. It is evil behaviour. Nigel Farage must never be Prime Minister. All I have done is tell the truth, and I will

continue to do so."

In the WhatsApp exchanges, Farage is asked whether the row could have been better handled. He says that given the allegations of bullying "in the current world we have to take this seriously and to be seen to take this seriously".

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RR8YYeb4PMk

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