

Our government is still going out of its way to support...

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I trust [Global Witness will forgive me reposting this from their blog](#), but the issue seems too important to ignore. If people want to know why the UK has so many tax haven territories what this government's actions prove is that this is because we go out of our way to support their tax haven practices. In my view that is now wholly unacceptable and should require the EU to sanction the UK the moment we leave membership:

Last week, faced with hostile amendments in the House of Lords to its post-Brexit anti-money laundering Bill, the UK government continued to block and delay vital reforms to tackle the UK's role in global corruption and money laundering.

DELAYING GETTING DIRTY CASH OUT OF THE PROPERTY MARKET

One amendment, tabled by Lords from all the major political parties, would have required the government to reveal the true owners of UK properties owned by foreign companies. This transparency would be a vital step to stop [UK property being used as a safe haven for dirty and corrupt cash](#).

The government first stated its intention to reveal the true owners of UK properties way back in 2015, stating that a register would be up and running this year. Yet the laws have not passed, and the owners of these properties still benefit from this offshore corporate secrecy. The amendment would simply have forced the government to fulfil its promise within a year.

In order to head off a cross-party rebellion in the Lords, the government finally published a timetable for when this register would be introduced. Yet despite these proposals having already been consulted on twice, the government's timetable will not see the legislation passed until the summer of 2019, and the register will only come into effect in 2021.

This gives the corrupt another three unjustifiable years to keep reaping the benefits of using the UK's property market as a safe haven for their dirty money.

BLOCKING EFFORTS TO TACKLE TAX HAVEN SECRECY

Another amendment, also backed by Lords from all the major parties, would require the Overseas Territories — which include some of the most notorious UK's tax havens — to publicly reveal the true owners of the companies registered there. Revealing these true, beneficial owners, would tackle the secrecy that act as [getaway cars for the criminal and corrupt](#).

The UK has already introduced [a register of the beneficial owners of UK companies](#), and in December last year [all EU countries agreed to do so too](#). This amendment would bring the Overseas Territories with financial centres, places like the British Virgin Islands and Cayman Islands, into line with the UK and the rest of the EU.

Rather than backing the amendment, which would bring these tax havens up to what David Cameron once described as the “gold standard”, the government yet again sought to block proposals to combat the UK tax haven's central role in global corruption and money laundering.

At the vote, the amendment was narrowly defeated by just ten votes — but the fight is not over.

Next month the Bill will go to the House of Commons, where MPs will have the chance to vote on these essential reforms. Every MP who wants to end the UK's complicity in corruption should demand legislation on the property register this year, and an end to secrecy in the UK's tax havens.