

Professor in climate change scandal helps police with enquiries while researchers call for him to be banned

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The scientist at the heart of the climate change email scandal was today interviewed by police about the scandal.

Two plain clothes officers arrived in an unmarked car in the afternoon and took Professor Phil Jones to Norfolk Police's headquarters in nearby Wymondham to give a statement.

Sources said the interview concerned the theft of emails from the university and alleged death threats since the contents of the emails were released, adding he was being treated as a 'victim of crime' rather than a suspect in any criminal investigation.

Detective Superintendent Julian Gregory added: 'He is one of the people assisting police with their enquiries.'

A spokeswoman for the University of East Anglia refused to comment and said Professor Jones would not be adding to a statement he released on Tuesday.

The professor refused to comment at his detached home in Wicklewood, a few miles outside Norwich.

Meanwhile, researchers are calling for Professor Jones to be banned from contributing to agenda-setting United Nations reports.

Eduardo Zorita, an expert in European climate trends, said that future reports from the UN's International Panel of Climate Change would lack credibility if Professor Jones was involved in their compilation.

As director of the University of East Anglia's prestigious Climatic Research Unit, the professor has provided temperature data key to previous reports used by governments around the world when setting climate change policy.

Dr Zorita also said that the content of thousands of emails and documents stolen from the University of East Anglia's computer system and published on the internet confirmed that some global warming research was riddled with 'machination, conspiracies and collusion'.

He and colleague Hans von Storch were mentioned in more than 30 documents, with one email referring to Professor von Storch as 'frankly an odd individual'.

Other emails have been seized on by climate change sceptics as evidence that researchers

have been manipulating raw data and discussing ways of evading Freedom of Information requests.

In one of the most damaging emails, Professor Jones seems to suggest using a 'trick' to massage years of temperature data to 'hide the decline'.

In another, he appears to respond to news of the death of climate sceptic John Daly with the words 'in an odd way this is cheering news!'

Others show British researchers apparently dismissing the work of scientists challenging the global warming orthodoxy as 'crap' and a top American climatologist admitting it was a 'travesty' that scientists could not account for the lack of global warming in recent years.

Dr Zorita, of the Institute for Coastal Research in Geesthacht in northern Germany, is an expert in climate change over the past 1,000 years and contributed to the most recent IPCC report.

He said that he was aware that his call for Professor Jones and others who wrote controversial emails to be banned from contributing to future reports could harm his career, but 'the scientific assessments in which they may take part are not credible any more'.

He said: 'I can confirm what has been written in other places: research in some areas of climate science has been and is full of machination, conspiracies and collusion, as any reader can interpret from the CRU files.

'The scientific debate has been in many instances hijacked to advance other agendas.'

The researcher added although he does not believe that manmade climate is a hoax, he and other researchers have been 'bullied and subtly blackmailed' to fit in the scientific mainstream.

'In this atmosphere, PhD students are often tempted to tweak their data so as to fit the "politically correct picture",' he said.

'Some, or many, issues about climate change are still not well known. Policy makers should be aware of these attempts to hide these uncertainties under a unified picture.'

The comments come in the wake of Professor Jones's decision to stand down from his university work while an independent investigation is carried out.

The professor said that he 'absolutely' stands by the science produced by the centre - and that suggestions of a conspiracy to boost the evidence for man-made global warming were 'complete rubbish'.

Issues to be probed include data security and whether the university responded to Freedom of Information requests.

However, the university was tonight unable to confirm if the data that appears to have been manipulated will be reanalysed.

Environmental chemist Professor Peter Liss will become acting director and further details of the review will be released 'within days'.

Professor von Storch, director of the Institute of Coastal research, said: 'This is a brave act on the side of Phil Jones and may be the only way to restore his authority as an excellent scientist.

'What is left for Phil Jones to do is to restrain from doing review work for journals, and, of course, he should stay away from the IPCC and similar assessment exercises.'

He added that the investigation should be led by a non-Briton and include input from climate change sceptics.

Dr Benny Peiser, director of the British-based Global Warming Policy Foundation, said: 'What is important is that the university comes clean on this and they don't fudge the inquiry.

'We need total transparency on this.

'If they try to set up some kind of whitewash panel which an inquiry that does not have the total trust of the public it will make matters worse.

'We have called for a High Court judge to chair the inquiry just to make sure that trust is restored.'

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