

UK lawmakers take heat off 'Climategate' scientist

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Phil Jones said he even considered suicide over the "climategate" scandal.

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Scientist in "Climategate" controversy cleared of hiding or manipulating data
- UK parliamentary committee said climate scientists must publish all their raw data and methods
- E-mails to and from Jones made their way onto Internet last November
- Their release was seen as blow to U.N. Climate Summit in December

London, England (CNN) -- The UK scientist at the center of the "Climategate" controversy over leaked e-mails has been cleared of hiding or manipulating data by a parliamentary committee.

But lawmakers who had been investigating the row over global warming science said in a report published Wednesday that climate scientists must publish all their raw data and methods to ensure the research is "irreproachable."

The Climatic Research Unit (CRU) of the University of East Anglia in eastern England has been under fire since last November when emails, which skeptics claimed showed scientists hiding and manipulating climate data, were allegedly hacked and leaked onto the Internet.

The material, dating back to 1996, was published on Web sites run by climate change skeptics who claim efforts had been made to manipulate data to exaggerate the threat of global warming.

As a result of the "leak," the head of the CRU, Professor Phil Jones, said he would step down from the post, while a review was carried out into claims of data tampering. He later said he had even considered suicide over the stress of the controversy.

[Climate row scientist says he considered suicide](#)

The Commons report said the leaked emails suggested a "blunt refusal" by Jones to share scientific data but its chairman Phil Willis said there was no evidence that Jones hid or manipulated data to back up his own science.

"The focus on Professor Jones and CRU has been largely misplaced," the report said. "On the accusations relating to Professor Jones's refusal to share raw data and computer codes, the committee considers that his actions were in line with common practice in the climate science community but that those practices need to change."

[Q&A: Climategate explained](#)

Much of the controversy focused on one particular e-mail that Jones sent relating to the preparation of a figure for the WMO Statement on the Status of the Global Climate in 1999. He wrote: "I've just completed 'Mike's Nature trick' of adding in the real temps to each series for the last 20 years ... to hide the decline."

But the Commons committee cleared him of malpractice here too, concluding: "On the much cited phrases in the leaked e-mails -- "trick" and "hiding the decline" -- the committee considers that they were colloquial terms used in private e-mails and the balance of evidence is that they were not part of a systematic attempt to mislead."

"Insofar as the Committee was able to consider accusations of dishonesty against CRU, the Committee considers that there is no case to answer."

The e-mails' release just weeks before the United Nations Climate Summit in December was seen as a blow to efforts to agree a global deal on climate change. The summit ended on December 18 with what was widely seen as a weak document that fell far short of its original aims in reducing global carbon emissions.