



The Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DR
(by email)

Cabinet Office
Perceval House
14/16 Uxbridge Road
London W5 2HL

20 June 2023

Dear Home Secretary,

Urgent - Justice for Refugees

We are writing to urge you to withdraw the UK-Rwanda agreement, repeal the Nationality and Borders Act, overhaul the Illegal Migration Bill to ensure that it complies with international law, and work with Local Authorities and communities to build a refugee protection system that treats all people with dignity and compassion.

Local government has a proud history of welcoming and supporting refugees, and Ealing is no exception. We work hard to provide a safe haven for people fleeing violence and persecution, and to enable them to actively participate in our communities, but it often feels that we do not have a true partner in central Government. There are significant problems with the national asylum system that affect people in Ealing including a record backlog of cases awaiting a decision, a de facto ban on working, and enforced poverty and homelessness. All of these make it more difficult for us to provide refugees and asylum seekers with a warm welcome.

The Nationality and Borders Act does not address these issues, and has instead created a two-tier system, punishing people seeking safety based simply on how they get here. The Illegal Migration Bill would compound these issues, further criminalising people (including children) seeking safety and threaten them with removal to Rwanda, and segregation in large accommodation centres. To be proceeding with a Bill that the Archbishop of Canterbury has described as “morally unacceptable”, and that Lord Howard of Newport, who served in Margaret Thatcher’s Cabinet, described as “cruelty out of a cynical notion of electoral expediency”, beggars belief.

It is no surprise that over 400 charities and faith groups have signed a national pledge to ‘Fight the ‘Anti-Refugee Laws’.

We believe that everyone should be treated with dignity and respect and claim for asylum should be treated equally and fairly. The Nationality and Borders Act and the Illegal Migration Bill intentionally undermine internationally recognised rights for people fleeing war and persecution.



The UK needs an asylum system that supports and enables people seeking safety to rebuild their lives and encourages communities to welcome them. This is why as a council we are working towards becoming a recognised Borough of Sanctuary so that people seeking sanctuary feel welcomed, included and empowered.

It is critical that you act now for the sake of all those ordinary people who come to this country fleeing terrible circumstances and in search of a better life. These people show real strength in the face of tragedy and deserve to be treated with dignity and compassion.

We therefore implore you to act now and withdraw the Illegal Migration Bill, repeal the Nationality and Borders Act, and work with Local Authorities and communities to build a better refugee protection system for the sake of the lives of so many people seeking sanctuary.

Yours sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Peter Mason in black ink.

CLlr Peter Mason
Leader of the Council

Handwritten signature of Polly Knewstubb in black ink.

CLlr Polly Knewstubb
Cabinet Member for Thriving Communities