

ACTION ALERT: OPPOSE THE “NEW IMMIGRATION PLAN”

The government’s New Immigration Plan introduces a two-tier system so that anyone entering the UK by a so-called illegal route will no longer be entitled to full refugee status. Instead, you will only get “temporary protection status” lasting no longer than 30 months. You will have limited access to benefits and family reunion, and could be removed from the UK while your claim is being decided. You will get only one chance to make an application and it will be easier for your claim to be dismissed as “unsubstantiated”. Even rape survivors will be expected to speak about everything they suffered at the very beginning regardless of trauma and the fear of stigma and discrimination. It will be harder to get asylum if you have a criminal record regardless of how you got it or for what.

We urge people to write to their MP to oppose these changes.

[Template letter here](#)

Please cc Priti Patel MP, Secretary of State for the Home

Department withampp@parliament.uk & public.enquiries@homeoffice.gov.uk

There is a government consultation [here](#) with a deadline of 6 May. The consultation is biased and prevents people from expressing their objections. However, the first question asks if you agree or disagree so you may want to register your opposition there. If you want to fill in the whole survey there is some guidance [here](#).

The plan is another attempt to “divide and rule”. Home Secretary, Priti Patel tried to fuel hostility against people fleeing for their lives by saying that “vulnerable women and children” are being “elbowed” out of the way by men crossing the channel in boats and “jumping the queue”. But women and children applying to come in are being refused.

The plan is based on lies. Patel claims the asylum system is overloaded by “meritless claims”. It is not. People are denied a fair hearing by a system saturated with sexism, racism and other prejudice, and by officials trained to refuse claims no matter how compelling. Legal aid cuts of up to £1.6 billion^[i] have made it impossible to get a good lawyer. Deliberate Home Office foot dragging^[ii] and unjustified appeals add to the backlog of cases. Despite this ¾ of claims succeed.^[iii]

Britain takes many fewer asylum seekers than most other European countries.^[iv] Net migration is down by 20% since 2019.^[v] Most people flee within their own or neighbouring country; **85% of refugees are hosted by countries of the Global South.**^[vi] Only 25,000 people have come to the UK by “safe and legal” resettlement schemes since 2015 – that is just six people per local authority area.

Immigrant people are not a drain on the UK. Migrants from the European Economic Area contributed 34% more in taxes^[vii] than they received in benefits between 2001 and 2011. Many industries depend on migrants – 26% of NHS doctors^[viii] were born abroad.^[ix]

Men arriving in boats aren't elbowing women and children out of the way. Approximately 80% of applications were made "in country" rather than at the ports in 2019.^[x] The UN Refugee Convention says that refugees cannot be penalised for entering the country "illegally" to claim asylum and UK case law has established that travelling from a so-called safe country doesn't disqualify someone from claiming asylum.^[xi]

The government plan penalises women, especially mothers and/or rape survivors. Over 70% of women asylum seekers have fled rape and their claims are routinely dismissed. Many are primary carers for children and other people. Some have had to leave children behind to ensure their safety but continue to support and protect them from afar. Mothers carry an invisible burden of guilt and worry, and are often driven to take risks to raise money to send home.

Rape victims who delay reporting will be fast tracked for deportation, their claims dismissed as "unsubstantiated". This flies in the face of court precedents^[xii] that Women Against Rape helped win showing that women are often "unable rather than unwilling" to report rape because of trauma and fear of stigma and discrimination.^[xiii]

New reception centres (detention by any other name) and off shore processing will lead to more abuse, including rape.^[xiv] ^[xv] Faster removals for so-called foreign criminals will penalise women, like a mother in the All African Women's Group (AAWG) who, having been made destitute, used false papers to work to support her children.

Immigration policy is economic policy. Denying people legal status in the UK and a deliberate policy of destitution by imposing no recourse to public funds restrictions while prohibiting asylum seekers from getting employment, as well as austerity cuts, zero hours contracts, racism and other discrimination boost profits for big business as workers have less power to refuse exploitation and low pay.

Immigration policy supports imperialist proxy wars for corporate profit, the arms trade and environmental destruction. £7.5 trillion is owed by Britain alone in reparations for the Atlantic slave trade. India suffered 200 years of "exploitation, deprivation, looting and destruction"^[xvi]. As AAWG say: "*We have a right to be here. Our work has created the UK's wealth through centuries of slavery and colonialism.*" The international movement for #Papers4All is growing.

Priti Patel accuses asylum seekers and immigrants of breaking the law but she is the criminal. She instructed the police to break up the Sarah Everard vigil; was sacked for making secret deals with the apartheid state of Israel while freezing 1/3 of Britain's aid to Palestinians; worked as a lobbyist for the murderous tobacco and arms industry; promotes fracking; targeted "activist lawyers" leading to at least one attempted murder; admitted bullying an employee. She tries to divide and rule by offering citizenship to some Windrush people whose longstanding

citizenship the UK government had illegally denied, but the horrors and scars of the deaths, deportations and refusal of compensation over years of hostile environment will not be forgotten or forgiven.

Treating asylum seekers and refugees as disposable aims to lower everyone's standards, to get people used to some lives not counting. It goes hand in hand with the Do Not Resuscitate notices put on people with disabilities during the pandemic, the police killings of people of colour for which there has been no justice, the decriminalisation of rape and sexual assault, the criminalisation of homelessness and begging, the forced separation (including forced adoptions) of working-class children, many children of colour, from their mothers, mostly single mothers. Enforced destitution, first introduced against asylum seekers has been spreading to others – over 130,000 people have died from the impact of benefit cuts and austerity.[xvii]

The Covid pandemic showed how dependent everyone's survival is on caring work, overwhelmingly done by women, in the family and outside, unwaged or low waged, with or without papers. The contribution of immigrant people and refugees is visible and acknowledged as never before but this has not brought an increase in rights and wages. While nurses were offered a shameless 1% increase for risking their lives to save lives during the pandemic, many immigrant NHS workers are still denied access to the very service they provide.[xviii] The demand for a Care Income[xix] would be some recognition for this vital contribution.

UK-born or not, with or without papers, in defending immigrants and asylum seekers we defend ourselves from a criminal and callous government. The New Immigration Plan must go.

***Global Women Against Deportations** includes the All African Women's Group, a 100 strong organisation of women asylum seekers and refugees from every continent along with Legal Action for Women, Women Against Rape and Women of Colour/Global Women's Strike.*

[i] The Guardian: **The annual legal aid budget is 1.6bn a year – 950m lower, in real terms, than it was in 2010**

[ii] <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/migration-to-the-uk-asylum>

'**Serious flaws**' in the National Referral Mechanism for victims of trafficking meant that in 2017 of the 5,145 cases, 3,273 had no decision after a year. UK Human Rights Blog, <https://is.gd/F4GtAl>

[iii] Source: <https://www.freemovement.org.uk/statistics-refugees-uk/> "Once the initial grants of asylum are combined with the wins on appeal, the Home Office estimates that as many as 74% of processed asylum claims are successful."

[iv] <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/asylum-in-the-uk.html> & <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/migration-to-the-uk-asylum/>

[v] <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-december-2020/list-of-tables#asylum-and-resettlement>

[vi] <https://www.unhcr.org/5ee200e37.pdf>

[vii] **UK immigration: two UCL research papers published today | UCL News - UCL – University College London**

[viii] **Figures show extent of NHS reliance on foreign nationals | NHS | The Guardian**

[ix] <https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/population/remittances-matter.html>

[x] <https://refugeecouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Asylum-Statistics-Annual-Trends-Feb-2020.pdf>

[xi] **Do refugees have to stay in the first safe country they reach? - Full Fact**

[xii] <https://womenagainstrape.net/legal-precedent-for-rape-victims-seeking-asylum/>

[xiii] <https://refugefromrapeanddestitution.blog>

[xiv] <https://womenagainstrape.net/rape-sexual-abuse-in-yarls-wood-irc/>

[xv] **UN accuses Australia of systematically violating torture convention | Australian immigration and asylum | The Guardian**

[xvi] At the beginning of the 18th Century, India's share of the world economy was 23%, as large as all of Europe put together. By the time the British departed India, it had dropped to less than 4%. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-33618621>

[xvii] **Austerity to blame for 130,000 'preventable' UK deaths – report | Politics | The Guardian**

[xviii] <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/oct/14/migrants-denied-nhs-care-for-average-of-37-weeks-research-finds>

[xix] <https://globalwomenstrike.net/careincomenow/>