



JOINT CIVIL SOCIETY SOLIDARITY STATEMENT ON THE ILLEGAL MIGRATION BILL AHEAD OF SECOND READING IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS, MAY 2023



Joint civil society solidarity statement on the Illegal Migration Bill ahead of Second Reading in the House of Lords, May 2023

As a coalition of 181 civil society organisations representing the human rights, migrant, refugee, asylum, anti-slavery and trafficking, children's, violence against women and girls, LGBTQI+, disability rights, health, LGBTQI+, housing, racial justice, criminal justice, arts, international development, environment, democracy, pan-equality, faith, access to justice, and other sectors, we call on Parliamentarians to urge the Government to immediately withdraw the 'Illegal Migration Bill'.

We all deserve to live safe from harm and to be treated with compassion, dignity, and respect. But this shockingly cruel and inhumane Bill turns our country's back on people fleeing war and persecution, blocking them from protection, support, or justice at a time they need it most. The Bill is effectively a ban on asylum, extinguishing the right to seek refugee protection in the United Kingdom. It will put people seeking safety and a better life at risk of irreversible harm, with life and death consequences.

This Bill attacks the very core of human rights, which is the fundamental belief that we all have human rights regardless of who we are or where we are from. Instead, it separates people into categories of 'deserving' and 'undeserving' of human rights. In stripping the most basic rights from people seeking safety and a better life, the Bill dismantles human rights protections for all of us.

The Bill deliberately and unacceptably excludes an entire category of people from the protections guaranteed under our domestic laws and international obligations. It will almost certainly breach multiple international conventions and agreements, including the UN Refugee Convention, the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), and the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (ECAT). The Government has acknowledged that it cannot guarantee the Bill will be compatible with the ECHR, a legally binding instrument. The Convention represents the rights and values that we hold dear, including the right to life, protection from slavery and torture, and the right to liberty, which are all threatened by this Bill.

Not only does the Bill substantially threaten human rights, it aims to shield the Government from accountability when it does violate those rights by reducing parliamentary and judicial scrutiny. The Bill includes the unprecedented and alarming proposal to disapply Section 3 of the Human Rights Act, which empowers our judges to interpret laws in a way that protects our rights. Without that protection, individuals affected by this Bill are limited from getting justice when their rights are violated.

The Bill hands vast delegated powers to the Secretary of State, including the power to amend laws in Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, despite the fact that human rights are largely a devolved matter. The Bill would also enable Ministers to ignore interim measures from the European Court of Human Rights – a rare yet vital last resort to halt proceedings like deportations when people's lives are deemed at risk of extreme and irreversible harm.

This Bill would almost certainly be unlawful domestically and internationally. The Bill signals to the international community that the Government intends to commit human rights abuses while evading scrutiny and accountability, setting a dangerous example to other states.

More importantly, these cruel and inhumane plans are a stain on our collective moral conscience, attacking the values we cherish as a democratic, rights-respecting society. This Bill is a dangerous piece of legislation that will most certainly lead to irreparable harm, grave suffering, and possible deaths if enacted.

We stand united in solidarity with the individuals and families who would be directly harmed, and oppose the Government's divisive attacks on refugees migrants, victims and survivors of human trafficking and modern slavery, and other people who move. We fiercely reject any attempts to undermine the universality of human rights. **We urge all Parliamentarians to urge the Government to withdraw the Bill.**

Signed:

1. Danielle Roberts, Senior Policy and Development Officer, Here NI
2. Andrea Cleaver, CEO, Welsh Refugee Council
3. Paul Hook, Director, Asylum Matters
4. Deborah Gold, Chief Executive, National AIDS Trust
5. Saqib Deshmukh, Interim CEO, Alliance for Youth Justice
6. Deborah Coles, Executive Director, INQUEST
7. Chris Jones, Director, Statewatch
8. Declan Owens, Co-Chair, Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers
9. Declan Owens, CEO, Ecojustice Ireland
10. David Weaver, Chair, OBV
11. Lee Jasper, Co-Founder, Blaksox
12. Jess McQuail, Director, Just Fair
13. Emma Hutton, CEO, JustRight Scotland
14. Chloe Trew, Director, Participation and the Practice of Rights
15. Jonathan Senker, CEO, VoiceAbility
16. Andrew Copson, Chief Executive, Humanists UK
17. Tim Naor Hilton, Chief Executive, Refugee Action
18. Victoria Marks, Director, ATLEU
19. Clare Moseley, Chair, Care4Calais
20. Susanna Revolti, CEO, Borderlands
21. Mauricio Silva, IRD Coordinator, Columbans in Britain
22. Mia Hasenson-Gross, Executive Director, René Cassin, the Jewish voice for human rights
23. Amber Bauer, CEO, forRefugees
24. Lucy Nabijou, Coordinator, Haringey Welcome
25. Jane Lees, CEO, CommunityWorks
26. Ruhi Akhtar, CEO, Refugee Biriyani & Bananas
27. Naabil Khan, Volunteer Coordinator, STAR Exeter
28. Jeremy Thompson, Manager, Restore (a project of Birmingham Churches Together)
29. Miranda Reilly, Director, The Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees
30. Aisling Playford, Policy and Advocacy Manager, Rainbow Project
31. Toni Soni, Centre Director, Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre
32. Suleiman Abdulahi, Managing Director, Horn of Africa People's Aid Northern Ireland
33. Jabbar Hasan, Director, Iraqi Association
34. Jeannie Tweedie, Co-Director, Elmbridge CAN
35. Kayte Cable and Vicki Felgate, Co-Founders, Big Leaf Foundation
36. Aderonke Apata, Founder and CEO, African Rainbow Family
37. Sampson Low, Head of Policy, UNISON
38. Gisela Valle, Director, Latin American Women's Rights Service
39. Aderonke Apata, Founder and Chairperson, Manchester Migrant Solidarity
40. Sue Lacey, Founder, Together100
41. Eleni Venaki, Director, The Comfrey Project
42. Karen Pearse, Director, Positive Action For Refugees and Asylum Seekers
43. Amos Schonfield, CEO, Our Second Home
44. Chloe Crowther, Bristol Defend Asylum Seekers Campaign
45. Tom Brake, Director, Unlock Democracy
46. Sebastian Rocca, Founder and CEO, Micro Rainbow
47. Sheila Mosley, Steering Group member, Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network - QARN
48. Mel Steel, Director, Voices in Exile

49. Ewan Roberts, CEO, Asylum Link Merseyside
50. William Gomes, Director, The William Gomes Podcast
51. Dr Razia Shariff, CEO, Kent Refugee Action Network
52. Andrea Simon, Director, End Violence Against Women Coalition
53. Emily Crowley, Chief Executive, Student Action for Refugees (STAR)
54. Tamsin Cook, Co-Artistic Director, Mafwa Theatre
55. Rose Caldwell, CEO, Plan International UK
56. Isobel Ingham-Barrow, CEO, Community Policy Forum
57. Clare Moody, Co-CEO, Equally Ours
58. Sadia Sikandar, Advisory Board, West End Refugee Services
59. Rosie MacPherson, Artistic Director & Joint CEO, Stand & Be Counted Theatre
60. Efi Stathopoulou, Programmes Manager, Refugee Legal Support
61. Ros Gowers, Coordinator, Evesham Vale Welcomes Refugees
62. Margaret Lennon, Director, Bridges Programmes
63. Daniel Boyle, Senior Parliamentary and Policy Officer, BEMIS Scotland
64. Elayne Hill, CEO, Central England Law Centre
65. Angus Clark, Chief Executive, Herts for Refugees
66. Liz Needham, Chair of Trustees, St Albans for Refugees
67. Jean-Pierre Moussally, community councillor of the agglomeration of Grand Calais Terres & Mers, EELV (French Green Party)
68. Nancy Kelley, CEO, Stonewall
69. Juliet Harris, Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights), Director
70. Shameem Ahmad, CEO, Public Law Project
71. Emma Ginn, Director, Medical Justice
72. Pete Ritchie, Director, Nourish Scotland
73. Fraser Sutherland, Chief Executive, Humanist Society Scotland
74. Alexandra Lopoukhine, Interim Executive Director, Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants
75. Georgina Fletcher, Chief Officer, Regional Refugee Forum North East
76. Catharine Walston, Trustee, Cambridge Refugee Resettlement Campaign
77. Catharine Walston, Chair of Executive, Cambridge Convoy Refugee Action Group
78. Rev Peta Evans, Senior Pastor, Metropolitan Community Church of North London
79. Jenni Regan, CEO, IMIX
80. Bridget Young, Director, NACCOM
81. Andrew Jackson, Chief Executive, Upbeat Communities
82. Sarah Fenby-Dixon, trustee, Refugee Aid Network
83. Kat Lorenz, Director, Asylum Support Appeals Project
84. Mhairi Snowden, Director, Human Rights Consortium Scotland
85. National Committee, Women for Independence
86. Will Sutcliffe, Chair, Bradford City of Sanctuary
87. Charles Dobson, Chairman, Skipton Refugee Support Group
88. Angie Pedley Co-ordinator, Craven Refugee Support Network
89. Angie Pedley, Co-ordinator, Craven District of Sanctuary
90. Robert Rae, Co-Director, Art27 Scotland
91. Amanda Jones, CEO, Shropshire Supports Refugees
92. Amy Lythgoe, Trustee, Together Now
93. Zara Mohammed, Secretary-General, Muslim Council of Britain
94. Maggie Pearse, Chair, BIASAN (Bradford Immigration and Asylum Support and Advice Network)
95. Daniel Tsz Kin Kwok, Director, The Hong Kong Scots CIC
96. Gail Heath, CEO, Pankhurst Trust (incorporating Manchester Women's Aid)

97. Steve Newman, Chair, FODI (Friends of the Drop In for asylum seekers and refugees, Sunderland)
98. Alphonsine Kabagabo, Director, Women for Refugee Women
99. Tim Hopkins, Director, Equality Network
100. Gill Tipping, Co-chair, Lewes Organisation in Support of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (LOSRRAS)
101. Lilian Geijssen, European Director, Ben & Jerry's
102. Sian Summers-Rees, Chief Officer, City of Sanctuary UK
103. Chloe Wolfe, Charity Manager, Swindon City of Sanctuary
104. Helen Hodgson, Operations Director, Hope at Home
105. Lisa Norcross, Project and Fundraising Manager, Kairos Housing
106. Alan Gray, Chair, Forth Valley Migrant Support Network
107. Amanda Church-Mcfarlane, Co-CEO, Abigail Housing
108. Clare Campbell, Operations Manager, Walking With in North Tyneside
109. Stroud District Together With Refugees
110. Martha Spurrier, Director, Liberty
111. Nick Beales, Head of Campaigns, RAMFEL
112. Revd Jide Macaulay, Chief Executive Officer, House of Rainbow CIC
113. Lade Olugbemi, The Nous Organisation
114. Sandy Brindley, Chief Executive, Rape Crisis Scotland
115. Dennis Carney, Chair, Black Connection
116. Ros Holland, Chief Exec, Boaz Trust
117. Ted Britton, Chair of Trustees, WYDAN
118. Gwen Hines, Chief Executive, Save the Children
119. Jamie Balfour-Paul, Founder, Magic for Smiles
120. Avril Sharp, Policy Officer, Kalayaan
121. Dania Thomas, Director, Ubuntu Women Shelter
122. Mark Courtice, Chair of Trustees, Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group
123. Agnes Tolmie, Chair, The Scottish Women's Convention
124. Kate Alexander, Director, Scottish Detainee Visitors
125. Simon Tyler, Director, Doctors of the World
126. Sacha Deshmukh, Chief Executive, Amnesty International UK
127. Dr. Patrick Roach, General Secretary, NASUWT
128. James Wilson, Director, Detention Action
129. Anna Lewis, CEO, Open Door North East
130. Simon Cheng, Director, Hongkongers in Britain
131. Jane Grimshaw, Convenor Hastings Supports Refugees
132. Julie Bishop, Director, Law Centres Network
133. Sattinder Collins, Chair, Tees Valley of Sanctuary
134. Elizabeth Long, Partnerships, Refugee, Asylum seeker & Migrant Action (RAMA)
135. Stephanie Neville, Project Manager, Stories of Hope and Home
136. Alison Pickup, Director, Asylum Aid
137. Kerry Smith, CEO, Helen Bamber Foundation
138. Ailsa Dunn Secretary Hay, Brecon and Talgarth Sanctuary for Refugees
139. Reverend Gerard Goshawk, Minister, Six Ways Erdington Baptist Church
140. Clare Henry, Management Committee, Exeter City of Sanctuary
141. Hayley Nelson BEM, Director, Learn for Life Enterprise
142. Sanchita Hosali, CEO, The British Institute of Human Rights
143. Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, Quakers in Britain
144. Clarissa Hanna, Chair, Faversham and Villages Refugee Solidarity Group
145. Dr Judith Turbyne, Chief Executive, Children in Scotland

146. Lucila Granada, CEO, Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLEX)
147. Marguerite Hunter Blair CEO Play Scotland
148. Fizza Qureshi, CEO, Migrants' Rights Network
149. Robert Moore, Company Secretary, North Wales Regional Equality Network
150. Mark Kieran, CEO, Open Britain
151. Griff Ferris, Senior legal and policy officer, Fair Trials
152. Kris Harris, Policy Coordinator, Project 17
153. Debbie Ariyo OBE, CEO AFRUCA Safeguarding Children
154. Debbie Ariyo OBE, Chair BASNET
155. Pierre Makhoulf, Legal Director, Bail for Immigration Detainees
156. Chris Minnoch, CEO, Legal Aid Practitioners Group
157. Owen Temple, Chair, No To Hassockfield
158. Sneha Aurora, Director, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI)
159. Jim McCormick, Chief Executive, The Robertson Trust
160. John Good, Acting CEO, ActionAid UK
161. Suzanne Swinton, Chief Executive, Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance
162. Danny Srisakandharajah, CEO, Oxfam GB
163. Hugh Knowles and Miriam Turner, Co-Executive Directors, Friends of the Earth (England, Wales and Northern Ireland)
164. Donna-Louise Cobban, CEO, Beyond Detention
165. James Pearson, Director of Policy & Practice, Alzheimer Scotland
166. Yo Dunn, Director, National Autistic Taskforce
167. Enver Solomon, CEO, Refugee Council
168. Rev Caz Hague, Methodist Minister, Birmingham Circuit
169. Steve Cooke Chair Derbyshire Refugee Solidarity
170. Katrina French, Founder and Managing Director, UNJUST
171. Dr Shabna Begum, Director of Research, Runnymede Trust.
172. Yasmine Ahmed, UK Director, Human Rights Watch
173. Kamran Mallick, CEO, Disability Rights UK
174. Rosalind Stevens, Project Manager, Civil Society Alliance
175. Jasmine Mohammad, Safety4Sisters Northwest
176. Patricia Durr, CEO, ECPAT UK
177. Kevin Hanratty, Director, Northern Ireland Human Rights Consortium
178. Emily Graham, Head of Campaigns, Safe Passage International
179. Lilian Seenoi Barr, Director of Programmes, North West Migrants Forum
180. Leila Zadeh, Executive Director, Rainbow Migration
181. Sonya Sceats, Chief Executive, Freedom from Torture