



Home Office

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Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP  
House of Commons  
London  
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7 June 2021

Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your email of 5 May to the Home Secretary on behalf of your constituents about the New Plan for Immigration. I am replying as the Minister for Immigration Compliance and Justice.

The UK has a proud track record of helping those fleeing conflict or persecution and I would like to reassure your constituents that this will continue. Our asylum system offers protection to the most vulnerable via defined safe and legal routes. Since 2015, we have resettled almost 25,000 men, women and children seeking refuge from persecution across the world - more than any EU country. We have also welcomed more than 29,000 close relatives through refugee family reunion and created a pathway to citizenship eligible to over five million British Nationals (Overseas) status holders in Hong Kong to come to the UK.

As you will understand, these humanitarian issues do not stand alone. They are part of the Government's overall approach to asylum and immigration, and the delivery of a fair, but firm system. The current system is broken and requires comprehensive reform.

Those in need of protection should claim asylum in the first safe country they reach. In 2019, around one in six asylum seekers to the UK were matched to an asylum claim in another European country. Illegal migration from safe countries undermines our efforts to help those most in need. Controlled resettlement via safe and legal routes is the best way to protect such people and disrupt the organised crime groups that exploit migrants and refugees.

Anyone who arrives in the UK from a safe country, such as France, and who did not come directly from a place of danger without good cause; or has a connection to a safe country where they could reasonably have claimed asylum, may be deemed inadmissible for asylum in the UK. This is in line with Article 31 of the Refugee Convention and is aimed at deterring dangerous journeys and upholding the first safe country principle. The alternative is the current system that is exploited by human traffickers who encourage vulnerable people to risk their lives crossing the Channel.

Under the New Plan, the UK will give priority to resettling refugees from areas of conflict and instability rather than those who are already in safe European countries. We will continue to resettle refugees in need of protection, but we will expand the global reach of

our efforts - working with the UN and other international organisations to provide a safe and legal route for people fleeing persecution in their home countries, enabling them to start new lives. This refined approach will also be more responsive to persecuted minorities and emerging international crises, resettling refugees who are at urgent risk more quickly. The Home Secretary will also have the ability to grant a humanitarian route to vulnerable individuals in immediate danger and at risk in their home country.

We recognise that refugees face multiple challenges to integrating in the UK, including high levels of trauma. We therefore plan to provide access to a tailored, holistic package of support which will enable refugees to integrate into the UK and rebuild their lives here. Full details of the package and other proposals will be confirmed following analysis of feedback from the recent consultation.

I hope that this response has further clarified our proposals and I would like to confirm that we stand by our moral and legal obligations to help innocent civilians fleeing cruelty from around the world.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Philp', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

**Chris Philp MP**