



Statement on Sovereign Borders Bill of 24th March 2021

Govan Community Project are extremely disheartened, frustrated and hold deep concerns about the Home Secretary's new proposals for the UK asylum system. The proposals being put forward create a 2-tier system which creates a further inequity in an already divisive and inhumane system which seeks to further marginalise individuals seeking refuge in the UK.

All individuals fleeing persecution for whatever reason have a right to be treated with compassion, humanity and dignity. Seeking asylum is a human right we **all** have and a right which the UK claims to uphold.

For most individuals seeking asylum, fleeing danger and persecution, making difficult choices to leave their lives as they know it and loved one's behind, gaining protection is highly unlikely to be achieved through an organised resettlement scheme. If your life was in danger, or you were facing daily persecution and the real risk of harm escalating at any moment, any one of us would flee the situation by whatever means are possible to us at that time, and may be forced to make difficult, risky survival decisions along the way, including dangerous routes of travel. If you are fleeing under the cover of darkness with nothing, how do you fill in paperwork to request a formal settlement or safe route?

These new proposals include using routes of travel as a means of judging whether an individual's claim for asylum is legitimate. A claim for asylum must be based solely on the fear and risk of persecution which forced them to flee their home in the first place, never on the routes made to seek protection. Using a 2-tier system

which differentiates between those who arrive through resettlement and those who undertake perilous journeys to reach the UK is unjust and discriminatory.

Seeking asylum is a human right and not a criminal act and individuals who are seeking protection should not face a closed door just because an official route was not a viable option for them.

Yes, the asylum system in the UK is under pressure and needs changes but these changes should not be based in increasing hostility and creating more division and exclusion. The system is not working due to poor processes and decisions taken by the Home Office, not by those turning to the UK for protection. Longer delays in decision making, accompanied by poor quality of decision making (which is evidenced through the number of initial refusals which are overturned on appeal), depriving individuals of the right to work, support themselves and contribute to society, the appointment of profit making private contractors for asylum accommodation who provide substandard accommodation whilst making a healthy profit, lack of due process in relation to safeguarding and access to health support, to name but a few failings of the current system.

We welcome plans to continue to resettle refugees to those who do arrive through the 'formal' routes but there are so many vulnerable children and adults who do not fit into this neat little box who also need and are entitled to protection.

The Scottish Government give a clear commitment to supporting refugees from day one of their journey to access support and connections with local communities to rebuild their lives and this new proposal goes against everything contained within the New Scots strategy and we hope that the Scottish Government and all of our MSP's and MP's will stand strong alongside our communities to oppose this bill with all the vigour they have, and to lobby their Westminster colleagues to do likewise.

The thought processes behind these cruel and vulgar Inhumane policies should have no place within a UK Government in the 21st Century and GCP commit to doing everything within our capacity to stand with our partners across the asylum sector to oppose this insanity.