

Oppose the Nationality and Borders Bill...

NO OFFSHORE DETENTION

END THE HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT

The latest horror in the attempt by Boris Johnson, Priti Patel and the cabinet to intensify their racist ‘Hostile Environment’ was unveiling plans for offshore detention in Rwanda.

This heinous plan comes as the Nationality and Borders Bill (NABB) returns to the Commons for its final stages. It is part of the government’s agenda to transform the already brutal asylum system in Britain and drag it further rightwards while stoking racism towards refugees and migrants.

This is both an extremely concrete attack on human rights, and highly ideological.

The deal with the Rwandan government is a shocking development. It won’t be a case of sending people to be processed there until they can get confirmed asylum status in Britain. If this were the aim, it would be completely illogical.

The British government is choosing to send people to a viciously repressive regime where they will never be allowed into Britain.

Human Rights Watch says, “Rwanda has a known track record of extrajudicial killings, suspicious deaths in custody, unlawful or arbitrary detention, torture, and abusive prosecutions, particularly targeting critics and dissidents. In fact, the UK directly raised its concerns about respect for human rights with Rwanda, and grants asylum to Rwandans who have fled the country, including four just last year.”

The NABB creates two tiers of “deserving” and “undeserving” people



This year's March Against Racism in London

seeking asylum based on imaginary “legal” routes.

This is a government desperate to divert attention from their Covid failings, illegal parties while people died, and a cost of living crisis after a decade of austerity.

We must say loud and clear that refugees and migrants are not to blame – and that all refugees are welcome here.

Few refugees make it to Britain

The establishment promotes all sorts of myths about refugees. They claim Britain has been too welcoming, and is now overwhelmed. But the truth is 86% of refugees live in countries neighbouring their country of origin. For example, over 6.7 million people have fled conflict in Syria. By the end of 2020 Turkey was home to 3.7 million of them.

In comparison, by the end of February 2021 Britain had resettled just 20,319 Syrian refugees. It is currently home to roughly 1% of the world’s 26.4 million refugees.

Protecting children

Children account for 30% of the world’s population, but 42% of all forcibly displaced people. We all remember the devastating image of two year old Aylan Kurdi who drowned in the Med. The government’s policy brands children like him “illegal”.

Claiming asylum is a right

As the Refugee Council has pointed out, “Under international law, anyone has the right to apply for asylum in any country that has signed the 1951 Convention and to remain there until the authorities have assessed their claim.

“It is recognised... that people fleeing persecution may have to use irregular means in order to escape and claim asylum in another country – there is no legal way to travel to the UK for the specific purpose of seeking asylum”.

Refugees are not a “burden”

It is a myth that taking in refugees and granting people asylum is a burden. If given a chance, refugees can make an enormous contribution to our society, and to our communities.

Just one example: about 1,200 medically qualified refugees are recorded on the British Medical Association’s database. The total cost of training a refugee doctor to work in the NHS is just 12% that of training a new doctor for one year.

An attack on human rights

The NABB represents a significant attack on human rights in removing the ability to claim asylum for all but those arriving via official “legal” routes.

Tory minister for tackling illegal immigration Tom Pursglove claims the government is “cracking down” through the bill, which will also make it a criminal offence to knowingly arrive in Britain “illegally”.

The refugee charity Care4Calais says less than 1% of the world’s refugees are able to follow “legal” migration routes, such as resettlement schemes.

Refugee organisations have repeatedly pointed out that the vast majority of asylum claims come from countries listed by the Global Peace Index as the most dangerous in the world, and that is because there is no safe legal route to enter Britain for most refugees, the majority have no choice but to seek unofficial – and unsafe – routes. The repeated tragedies in the Channel are a direct result of this.

Stand Up To Racism calls for the scrapping of the NABB and the rapid expansion of safe and legal routes for refugees to enter Britain and claim asylum.

Stripping citizenship

Clause 9 of the bill is another flashpoint, that could mean around six million people could be stripped of their British citizenship without warning – a major breach of international human rights obligations.

In France we have seen a worrying level of votes for the fascist Marine Le Pen in the presidential election – whose vile policies include stripping children of migrants of their citizenship.

The fact that the British government policy echoes that of Le Pen underlines the fact that racist populist governments such as Johnson’s, the far right such as Eric Zemmour, and fascists like Le Pen are all using the same strategies in an attempt to grow – scapegoating Muslims, migrants and refugees.

This creates a toxic climate. It is down to anti-racists to stand up to every racist policy, every racist attack, and challenge racism, Islamophobia and antisemitism wherever it appears in every workplace and community. We have to organise to oppose the racist offensive.

The NABB, offshore detention and the murderous policy of ‘pushbacks’ are at the centre of that offensive.



Repelling an immigration raid in Glasgow

Firefighters and others who have risked their own lives to step into the gap and rescue people have then faced prosecution.

Across Europe and further afield, similar policies are being pursued.

We must continue to build international solidarity, as we saw on the demonstrations to mark UN anti racism day in March.

Make ALL refugees welcome here

In the wake of war in Ukraine millions are fleeing the country. But the British government has been shamefully slow to welcome Ukrainian refugees.

Meanwhile, black and Asian people were stopped and turned away at the borders as they tried to flee Ukraine, a stark reflection of the deep racism at play.

Many have been angered by the hypocrisy of establishment figures who talk of their shock at war in a “civilised society”. Their compassion for refugees who “look like us” is often absent when it comes to black and ethnic minority people fleeing wars elsewhere.

Stand Up To Racism says #AllRefugeesWelcome – a key slogan of the recent 12,000 strong #MarchAgainstRacism demonstrations.

Stop the scapegoating

The NABB is part of the intensification of a racist offensive by Johnson’s cabinet, as it tries to divert blame onto refugees and migrants for a crisis caused by the rich that is of economic, ecological and pandemic proportions.

The Black Lives Matter movement has highlighted and challenged the extent of institutional racism in Britain – from disproportionate covid deaths, to police violence and the treatment of Child Q. In response, we need to create a mass, united anti-racist movement.

Glasgow shows the way

Glasgow’s mass community response on Kenmure St, Pollokshields, in May 2021 that stopped a Home Office dawn raid was an inspiring action that reflected a widespread feeling of solidarity with refugees and migrants, and opposition to the hostile environment.

Elsewhere, it was the persistence of the local campaign in Penally, Wales, that led to the detention centre being closed.

And the Home Office has been forced to back down on one deadly aspect of their racist onslaught – Patel’s plan for ‘pushbacks’.

As Sabir Zazai from the Scottish Refugee Council said in his speech at a demonstration against offshore detention: “We need to turn every deportation flight into a Kenmure Street”.

Stand Up To Racism has called protests and will continue to work alongside others as part of a wider campaign to defeat Patel’s racist, inhuman attack on refugees and migrants. Our local groups will be developing networks in every area to oppose the government’s hostile environment. To get involved, contact info@standuptoracism.org.uk

Model motion on offshore detention

Please scan the QR code to download.



GET IN TOUCH

Stand Up To Racism has groups around Britain. To become involved with our campaigns please get in touch, and follow us on social media:

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- 📷 standuptoracismuk
- FACEBOOK Stand Up To Racism
- TWITTER @AntiRacismDay

