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METBO

MONDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2021

A PARODY OF WORLD'S MOST P... WSPAPER



REFUGEES WELCOME

Boris Johnson announces major U-turn and new era of welcome: Pages 1-5 >>

■ ALL DETENTION CENTRES TO CLOSE Page 3 >> ■ HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT "A THING OF THE PAST" Pages 4-5 >>

TORY U-TURN TO WELCOME REFUGEES



Relief: people celebrate the news

■ GOVT U-TURN ON ANTI-REFUGEE STANCE ■ BORIS: "OUR DUTY TO HELP"

by PAIGE TURNER

In a stunning U-turn at the Tory party conference last night, Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced an end to both the government's hostile environment policies and its deeply controversial anti-refugee bill. In a surprise announcement, the PM stated that Britain could no longer turn its back on people

fleeing war and persecution and that helping people seeking safety was "self evidently the right thing to do". Sweeping changes announced last night will see measures to bring more refugees to safety, ensure refugee families can reunite again and see the closure of Britain's deeply controversial immigration detention system.

In a tone of uncharacteristic sincerity, the PM stated that "no decent government should try to win votes by fanning the flames of hatred. These are human beings, just like us. Anyone could become a refugee. As caring people, it's our duty to help". These changes signal an end to government policies that have sought to make it harder

for refugees to reach safety and rebuild their lives in the UK. From the racist 'go home' vans and use of overcrowded and dangerous disused military barracks to house people seeking asylum, to the use of indefinite immigration detention and banning people

Continued on Page 2 >>

SAFE ROUTES FOR ALL!



BOOK YOUR ESCAPE THIS AUTUMN

Last-minute getaway deals!

Sign our petition for a UK that welcomes refugees: scan below

One Strong Voice



"As caring people it's our duty to help"

Continued from Page 1

seeking asylum from working, these approaches have been widely seen as failing vulnerable people in a cynical bid to win votes.

Recognising mistakes made, the PM expressed regret about the government's proposed anti-refugee 'Nationality and Borders Bill', and proposed a new approach to create a fair and humane asylum system, free of political interference, to ensure quick and high-quality decisions and dignified treatment for people seeking safety.

The PM reiterated that "people have suffered at the hands of the UK's sluggish bureaucracy for too long. No one should have to wait years to have their case heard and to be able to rebuild their lives. These sweeping changes will mean people seeking asylum will have guaranteed access to an asylum procedure in the UK and secure, long-term status once they're recognised as a refugee. If you are fleeing war or persecution, our message is: you are welcome."



Risky crossing: new policies mean people will no longer be forced to risk their lives to reach safety.

IN BRIEF

'Drowning Street' no longer with support pledged for more rescues in Mediterranean



IT IS estimated that 1,369 people died while crossing the Mediterranean Sea during this year alone. Since 2014, over 22,000 people have lost their lives making this journey. The reluctance of European states to provide rescue services - and in many cases actively obstruct and impound NGO rescue boats - have only worsened this situation. In a radical shift in policy announced at this year's Conservative party conference, MPs unanimously backed a motion to sup-



port more rescue ships and help prevent more deaths of desperate people fleeing war and persecution.

UK media pledges to adopt more humane language to describe people on the move

UK media organisations came together this week to pledge an end to the use of language which so often uses dehumanising metaphors of water or animals to describe people on the move.

The pledge states that "the language used by the media to depict people on the move obviously influences public opinion. We recognise the vital importance of treating people as human beings and must play our part in this."

New 'Minister of Welcome' a Priti good plan

The 'hostile environment' is to rebuild their lives with the support all people deserve. After years of anti-carpet, to be rolled out by the refugee rhetoric, the Home Secretary newly created position of 'Minister of Welcome'. Home Secretary Priti Patel said this vital new role will be supported on arrival and seek to put welcoming, inclusive as they start their new lives as active part of communities. When we response, ensuring people can exclude people, we are all worse off."

Bombs dropped: UK to end arms sales

ARMS sales by the UK will end this year, after the government announced a shift in priorities to secure jobs for the future and "improve human security rather than threaten it." A government spokesperson stated that "selling arms to despots is obviously incompatible with our moral obligations." A new focus on tackling the root causes of insecurity, especially the climate crisis, will mean increased investment in offshore wind and marine energy, which it predicted will produce more jobs than the entire arms industry and contribute to a safer, more sustainable world.

THE TIMES ARE CHANGING AND SO ARE WE.

IT'S TIME TO HELP PEOPLE SEEKING SAFETY.

IT'S TIME TO STOP RACIST DEPORTATIONS.

IT'S TIME TO END INDEFINITE DETENTION.

IT'S TIME TO HELP PEOPLE REBUILD THEIR LIVES IN SAFETY.

IT'S TIME FOR A BETTER HOME OFFICE.



Home Office

CONTACT US

Website
onestrongvoice.org.uk

Social media
twitter.com/1StrongVoice

Sign our petition for a UK that welcomes refugees:



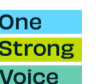
CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS

This edition of the 'Metbo' is a hopeful parody, representing what life could be like if our government welcomed refugees.

If the government abandoned hostility, we know all the stories in this paper could be made real - helping to reunite families, heal the scars of war, and reflecting the caring and compassionate society that we know we are.

This issue has been created by One Strong Voice, the UK's first coalition of campaigners with lived experience of the immigration and asylum system.

Our vision is a welcoming, non-discriminatory immigration and asylum system that treats people with humanity, dignity and fairness.



Help spread the message: if you're inspired by the content of this newspaper, please share it online using #TogetherWithRefugees and #RefugeesWelcome

PM: REFUGEES WELCOME

NEW POLICIES ANNOUNCED TO ENABLE REFUGEES TO REBUILD THEIR LIVES WITHIN COMMUNITIES



Everyone is welcome: a mural greeting new arrivals

by PHIL PAGES

As part of sweeping reforms, the PM announced last night a raft of new measures to support refugees to build a future in Britain as part of local communities "from day one of arrival."

Welcome van: local authorities will make message clear

Alongside lifting the ban on work, a range of measures to empower people to make positive contributions to their local communities through access to education and retraining were also announced.

Stating that it was "senseless" for people seeking asylum to be banned from working while being forced to live in poverty on less than £6 a day, he stated that "people who have risked everything to find safety should be given the chance to be involved and part of society."



A Home Office spokesperson stated that "when we exclude people, we all lose out. We have so much more in common than that which divides us and our communities are vastly improved by their range of cultures, religions and backgrounds. When we work to include all people, everyone is better for it."

Detention: the facts

1
Number of countries in Europe with no limit on how long people can be detained (UK)

14,773
Number of people detained during 2020

1/3
Proportion of detainees at Brook House immigration removal centre on constant suicide watch towards the end of 2020

50%
Percentage of people released back into the community after having been detained, their detention having served no purpose

£100m
Cost of the UK's detention system

An end to detention as all UK centres to close

by BARB DWYER

Home Secretary Priti Patel today announced the closure of Britain's immigration detention centres as a "failed model." She stated that the UK could no longer justify locking up thousands of people - many of whom are refugees, survivors of torture, or victims of human trafficking and modern slavery.

Britain's detention centres, considered to be some of the harshest and most regressive in Europe, look, sound and smell like prisons. But the nearly 15,000 people who were held in these Immigration Removal Centres last year were not found guilty of any crime, but were held instead solely on their immigration status.

Only a Home Office official needs to decide to detain someone for them to be taken from their family, with no idea when they might return.

Perhaps worst of all, before the government's U-turn, the UK remained the only country in Europe with indefinite immigration detention - meaning that people can be given no end-date to their confinement.



A sign of the times: Harmondsworth immigration removal centre and 'closed' graffiti on a road sign



Over half of all people in immigration detention have sought asylum in the UK at some point, meaning they are seeking safety from war or violence, or are survivors of torture, human trafficking or modern slavery. Subjected to solitary and close confinement, even during the worst periods of the Covid-19 pandemic, research has shown the terrible impact this can have

on the health of detainees. A report released this year from Bail for Immigration Detainees and Medical Justice reported detainees suffering memory loss, insomnia, paranoia, nightmares, panic attacks, flashbacks of past trauma, low mood, fatigue, self-harm and suicidal ideation. One detainee said "I didn't enter prison with mental health problems but

I'm not the same person I was. My mind is not the same." Shockingly, around 50% of all people detained are subsequently released, having suffered for no purpose at all. Priti Patel stated "it was high time for a system that respects people's humanity, regardless of their immigration status."

Bringing 20,000 refugees to safety "simply the right thing to do"

by WARREN PEACE

IN A MAJOR government U-turn, Home Secretary Priti Patel has announced that it is time for Britain to "take its fair share" of refugees - with a new commitment to resettle at least 20,000 people fleeing war and persecution each year.

70% of the world's refugees are currently hosted in countries neighbouring their own - often without the infrastructure or resources to adequately support large numbers of people. The UK currently takes an extremely small proportion of the world's 82.4 million forcibly displaced people per head of population - presently hosting an "indefensibly meagre 0.5% of the world's refugees," admitted Priti Patel in her speech at the Conservative party conference last night.

Priti Patel outlined the case for the UK having both "a humanitarian duty and the practical ability to resettle far more refugees." Announcing the new measures, she emphasised the importance of "looking beyond arbitrary labels like nationality and instead seeing human beings, just like us. Families, just like ours."

Pre-empting criticism about where resettled people would live, ministers have highlighted recent government figures revealing that 268,385 homes in England had been empty for at least six months as of November 2020. Priti Patel stated that this was "not an issue of space, but one of equity. We have the means, until now we've just been lacking the moral impetus to help. This must now change."



More families to be reunited than ever before

by JUSTIN THYME

MORE REFUGEE families will be reunited than ever before, according to a new pledge made at the Conservative party conference today.

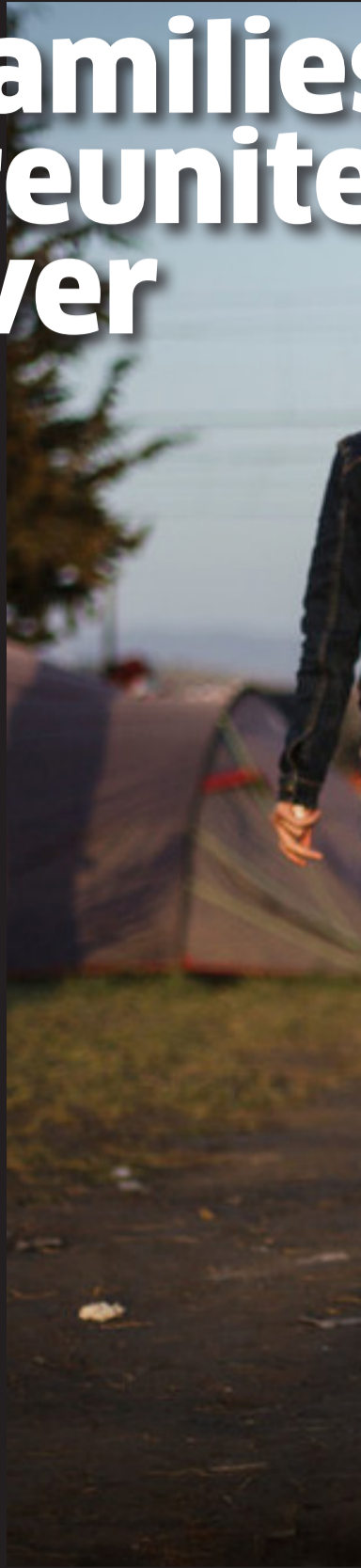
Acknowledging the UK's previously extremely restrictive rules around helping to reunite families torn apart by war, Prime Minister Boris Johnson expressed regret that many people who've reached safety in the UK have found it practically impossible to bring their dependent family members to join them.

"We are the party of the family," he declared to thunderous applause. "We believe in keeping families together and that is what we are going to do," boomed Mr Johnson as he pounded the lectern.

The speech was very well received by MPs and party members alike, many of whom have since spoken out in support of the new policy.

"People should not have to face being in a new country, trying to rebuild their lives alone," said the Minister for Children and Families, Will Quince MP. "People deserve to have the love, support and care of their family"

"Family life is a right of every human being and refugees are no different. Family reunion for refugees should be enhanced and strengthened so that everybody has a chance to keep their loved ones safe."



SANCTUARY
Reach a place you can be free



CHANNEL
PARIS - LONDON
EAU DE PARFUM

GIVE HELP "NO"

by OPHELIA PANE

In a remarkable change in direction, the government has dropped plans to penalise people forced to take desperate journeys to seek asylum in the UK.

The government's previously proposed anti-refugee bill (known as the 'Nationality and Borders Bill') aimed to determine how worthy someone was of protection based on the journey they'd taken to the UK. People arriving without prior authorisation were likely to receive a lesser form of protection, including temporary status, no access to financial support, and limited rights to family reunion.

This approach, running counter to international law, received widespread criticism for not recognising the lack of so-called 'legitimate' routes to the UK. For someone seeking safety, there is no 'asylum visa' to apply for in order to come to the UK.

You can't even apply for resettlement.

At the Conservative party conference today, Priti Patel stated that the UK could no longer unjustly differentiate between refugees based on how they travel to the UK.

She said "refugees are ordinary human beings who have had to take extraordinary measures to seek safety. So often, people don't have a choice how they travel, the threat to their lives is so great that they have to quickly uproot themselves and find a life elsewhere."

She continued "The issue of how a person seeking asylum reaches the UK is not relevant to their claim to be here and should not effect the outcome of that claim." "To treat vulnerable men, women and children who have put their lives at risk to reach safety in the UK as criminals is not only a huge waste of taxpayers' money but also brutal and cruel. It is time to help, no matter how people arrive."

S
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Refugees to be housed in communities, not camps

by POPPY COX

AS part of radical changes to the UK's immigration system, the government today announced the closure of all of Britain's controversial asylum contingency accommodation, alongside a move away from planned "offshore processing" centres for people seeking asylum - until recently a key part of the government's proposed 'Nationality and Borders Bill'.

Since September last year, the government has used decommissioned army barracks in Wales and Kent to house people who have come to the UK seeking asylum. Boris Johnson's government continued to hold people at a former Napier army barracks in Kent, in defiance of a court ruling which deemed the squalid facility "unsafe"

and said it failed to meet the "minimum standard" for accommodation.

While there has been speculation that the government would move to hold people seeking asylum in disused ferries and oil rigs, or as far away as Rwanda or Ascension Island, today the Home Secretary announced new proposals signalling an end to such plans.


Priti Patel announced that "people seeking asylum are human beings. People that have survived unimaginable situations including war, torture and modern slavery should have dignified housing within communities, not be exiled to offshore camps or overcrowded barracks."



Condemned: Napier Barracks in Kent

NO MATTER HOW PEOPLE ARRIVE"

PEOPLE BEFORE POLITICS

 Conservatives



People before politics: a projection behind Priti Patel during her conference speech spells out the Conservative party's new direction.

REALITY CHECK

REALITY CHECK

REALITY CHECK

THIS IS THE CRUEL REALITY OF THE HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT

As you will have realised, this isn't a real edition of the Metro.

While the government has the power to make the stories in this paper true; while it could act with humanity towards people seeking safety for their families; it isn't. Rather than improving matters, the government's anti-refugee 'Nationality and Borders Bill' will only deepen suffering already being caused.

One
Strong
Voice

Shared by members of One Strong Voice - the UK's first coalition of campaigners with lived experience of the immigration and asylum system - the testimonies here reveal the harsh reality of life for people seeking safety in the UK.

"I was trafficked as a child. I thought I was British until the Home Office detained me"

by AJ

I WAS trafficked here as a child. I'm not aware of what my nationality is. I thought I was British until the Home Office decided to throw me in detention.

I've lived in the UK all my life, as far as I'm aware - but I'm still in limbo. One day I'm recognised as a possible victim of trafficking and the next day I'm not. And the next day I am and then I'm not. It's emotional and psychological warfare.

I haven't been able to work or study for 10 years.

Before that, I had my own company. I lost all of that.

The government changed my status and put me in detention. I lost my home, everything, in detention for two and a half years. I get panic attacks, I can't sleep at night. I'm already suffering from PTSD. I wake up deeply petrified. This has been going on for so long.

I keep other people at arm's length because I'm tired of talking about it to people I care about. I don't want them to feel bad for me.

Going forward, I need to get my mind into a safe place to be able to think that far ahead. The situation has gone on for so long you're afraid to have hopes and dreams. This government are just using refugees as a story to cover up other bad news.

"I used to think the UK was a country of human rights"

by M

AT FIRST, I didn't feel in danger, but then the civil war raged, the government won, and the threat to my safety began to build. I had to leave the country before it was too late.

About 8 years ago I entered the asylum system - I was even detained by the government for a while - and I am still navigating the system today. I used to think the UK was a country of human rights. But there is a side I'd never seen before. I realised there was a hidden world that many people do not know.

Before I entered the asylum system, when I was a student, that was a completely different life, it feels like an aeon ago. I'm now in a completely different world, focusing on completely different issues. Now I don't feel welcome by the authorities. It's a very hostile system. I'm still navigating the asylum process. I'm lucky that I have found a community of friends who are on the side of compassion, of humanity.

I'm really concerned about Priti Patel's anti-refugee bill. It's going to make the situation much worse. The existing system is already harsh.

It's inhumane. What's lacking is compassion, humanity and fairness. She's going to do the opposite. When you implant the message that some immigrants are 'illegals', criminals, or bad people, it's easier to justify bad treatment.

The government's anti-refugee bill suggests people should ask for help in their native country before leaving. That's wholly impractical as well as dangerous. In my country, the systems of government, military and security were integrated and corrupted. There's no confidentiality. So it's very dangerous.

If I could speak to Priti Patel I would say the present asylum system should be changed, but her proposal is not the answer. I would ask her to speak to people like me with lived experience. Get into their shoes. Make the system more accessible, compassionate and humane.

I always hear the phrase that the UK has a proud history of welcoming people seeking sanctuary. Let's make sure the present and future is something we can also be proud of.

REAL LIFE STORY

While many of the stories in this paper aren't real, this one is.

REALITY CHECK // REALITY CHECK // REALITY CHECK

"Patel wants you to take 'safe routes' but there aren't any"

by N

I have been in the UK for 22 years and I'm now a British citizen. There was a war in DRC - killing and burning in my country. My journey was dangerous but necessary.

I have always felt welcome by the community in this country. This is home for me. I'm passionate about this country and the people. I feel so safe. I've been to Germany, France, Belgium - I don't have the same feeling. It's different. This country is better - it is great. People here are warm, they are welcoming. This is a country where you can have your accent and, if you're good, you can still get a good job. We need to stay positive and resist these corrupting messages.

When I see Priti Patel's anti refugee bill coming and I hear about how badly they are treating refugees in detention centres and it scares me to think what this country might become.

It's definitely changing. And it really worries me. Are my children going to be OK? Are we all going to be OK in the future?

Patel wants you to take 'safe routes' - there aren't any. In some places between Turkey and Greece they are leaving people in the water or setting them adrift in dinghies to send them back. To say that if you arrive in a certain way that you won't be supported. That's inhumane. It really concerns me that people will not get the help they need.

What makes this country great are the values of democracy, where people are not tortured, where people are safe, in certain countries, if you're black, you can really struggle. I was still a refugee when I worked at an MP's office. He didn't look at me with my accent. That's who we are.

"This system is very cruel to the people that need protection"

by Aurora

My life was in danger in Iran, and I had 24 hours to flee my beloved country to save my life. I came to the UK to seek safety and the kindness of people here helped me through my journey to overcome the trauma I was in and rebuild my life here. I have now lived in the UK for 10 years.

I am proud that I am a survivor of torture, despite my perpetrator's aim to break me down, I managed to rebuild myself and my life again. Nobody wants to leave their homeland and leave their loved ones behind unless they are desperate, but this system is very cruel to the people who need protection. Humanity doesn't have any place in this process. They just want to kick you out no matter how desperate you are for safety and protection.

I wish Humanity would overcome politics. I wish no child would see their parent get shot for water. I wish no mother would see her child gets bullet for freedom. I wish for PEACE in the whole world.

REAL LIFE STORY
While many of the stories in this paper aren't real, this one is.

GOOD DEED FEED

While the government is doing all it can to prevent people seeking safety from rebuilding their lives, groups across the UK are stepping up to provide the support all people deserve.

- Together with Refugees is a new coalition of UK organisations that believe in standing up for people to seek safety in the UK.
- We believe refugees should be able to live in dignity and be empowered to rebuild their lives while making valuable contributions to their communities.

- Search on social media with #togetherwithrefugees to see the groups and individuals taking action to campaign, fundraise, build community and stand with refugees all across the UK - then share your own messages and examples of solidarity too!

You can find more info at www.togetherwithrefugees.org.uk



SEND A MESSAGE THAT REFUGEES ARE WELCOME!

Join us in sending a message loud and clear that we want the UK to offer protection to people seeking safety and reject the cruel approach of the government's anti-refugee bill.

JOIN THE REFUGEES WELCOME RALLY 2021

📅 Wednesday 20th October
🕒 4:30 - 6:30PM
📍 Parliament Square, London

Join the Together With Refugees Week of Action on 18-24 Oct. Find out more at www.togetherwithrefugees.org.uk



SPORT



A GOAL TO BE PROUD OF

AS CARING PEOPLE, THE UK CAN DO THE RIGHT THING. WE JUST NEED THE POLITICAL WILL TO MAKE IT HAPPEN.

WHAT do we teach children when they first tussle over a toy at nursery, or a new kid starts at their school? We teach them share what we have, to be kind, to welcome and to offer friendship.

While this is what we teach children, so often, these lessons seem to be lost on our politicians; closing the door, turning away desperate refugees and preventing people rebuilding their lives in safety. They're still building the higher wall,

not the longer table as caring people we know we can - and should - offer.

We know the real threat we face doesn't come from outside; it doesn't arrive by dinghy. The real threat our communities face are politicians that have cast empathy, compassion and humanity aside. Because before anyone is a refugee or asylum seeker; before they are English, Afghan or Sudanese; they are human. While everyone's place of birth is

a lottery; while no one chooses the circumstances they're born into, it is undeniable that all humans have the right to live in safety. So why should this lottery so absolutely determine our fate?

Instead of acknowledging this simple fact, politicians want us to bolt our doors, draw up the bridges and retreat back to old prejudices. It is in their interests to stoke the fires of animosity and division, rather than

risk us identifying their failures. We know it wouldn't take much to turn this around. The UK has the means to offer a real welcome to people seeking safety.

Now is the time to decide - what kind of people do we want to be? What kind of society do we want to have? We think building more welcoming communities and a more welcoming world - that's a goal to be proud of.



COMPASSION IS GREAT

BRITAIN



True greatness comes from how we treat our fellow humans, no matter where they're from