



Jesuit Refugee Service UK
Hurtado Jesuit Centre
2 Chandler Street
London
E1W 2QT

tel: 020 7488 7310 · fax: 020 7488 7329

e-mail: uk@jrs.net · web: www.jrsuk.net

Press Release

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Contact: Megan Knowles | megan.knowles@jrs.net | 020 7488 7328

Root and branch reform of Home Office's approach to immigration is urgently needed, says Jesuit Refugee Service

JRS UK welcomes the report from the Home Affairs Select Committee into the Windrush generation, and echoes the call for the hostile environment to be abolished for all those affected by it.

Commenting on the conclusions of the report Sarah Teather, Director of JRS UK said, “**This report highlights again the numerous failings of the Home Office to treat people with dignity and respect. The so-called Windrush scandal has forced the government to consider immigration policy through a more humane lens, and so to glimpse the devastation its hostile environment has on human lives.**

“The Home Secretary must keep to his promise of creating a ‘fair and humane’ immigration system for all. At JRS UK, we witness first-hand how impossible burdens of proof, disregard for evidence, and the arbitrary use of immigration detention ruin the lives of those seeking asylum, as they have the lives of these Windrush era citizens.

“A reversal of the matrix of ‘hostile environment’ policies and a root and branch reform of the Home Office’s approach to immigration are urgently needed.”

The Home Affairs Select Committee report into the Windrush Generation highlights that this group were “caught up” in a “series of different policy, cultural and organisational changes in the Home Office” and a “raft of laws collectively known as the ‘hostile’ environment”. The Committee outlined how the “rigid” culture created an environment where people are automatically “treated with suspicion and scepticism”.

Whilst the report focuses on Windrush-era citizens, the Committee questions the effectiveness of the ‘hostile environment’ as a whole, raising “numerous examples of mistakes made and significant distress caused”. JRS UK see examples of the mistakes and distress caused by the dehumanising approach to asylum and immigration casework, and the debilitating effects poor decision making has, every day. Such failure has a devastating impact on human lives.

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Notes to Editor

1. The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organisation, at work in 51 countries around the world with a shared mission to accompany, serve and advocate on behalf of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons. In the UK, our work currently focuses on those who find themselves destitute as a consequence of government policies and those detained for the administration of immigration procedures.
2. JRS UK has an outreach service to the Heathrow Immigration Removal Centres where it undertakes pastoral and befriending work with all those held in detention, including asylum seekers, and others struggling to regularise their immigration status. JRS UK is joining others in arguing for an end to indefinite detention.
3. Contact: Megan Knowles, Communications and Development Manager, megan.knowles@jrs.net; Sarah Teather, Director, sarah.teather@jrs.net