

---

**Contact:** Joanna Biernat [Joanna.biernat@jrs.net](mailto:Joanna.biernat@jrs.net) | 07395 416045  
**Date:** 24 March 2021  
**Embargo:** Immediate release

## Press Release

### **‘Cruel and dishonest’ changes to UK asylum system marks ‘a dark day in Britain’s history’ says Jesuit Refugee Service UK**

Changes announced by Home Secretary Priti Patel today, have been condemned by the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS UK)<sup>1</sup> as deeply cruel, dishonest and inhumane. Those seeking asylum who arrive via irregular routes, such as in small boats in the English Channel, will no longer have the same entitlements when claiming asylum as those who arrive through government designated routes.<sup>2</sup>

Under new plans to be announced in parliament this afternoon, those forced to flee their homes, seeking protection from the UK who have not arrived via the limited and restrictive routes laid out by government, would not be immediately able to claim asylum. This process would place vulnerable refugees at risk of removal at any time, and force their family reunion rights and access to necessary financial support to be vastly limited.

Sarah Teather, Director of JRS UK said:

**“Today is a dark day in Britain's history. The country which was once at the forefront of championing the refugee convention has announced it no longer supports the right to claim asylum and be granted sanctuary here from violence.**

**“The changes being announced are cruel and dishonest. The government knows full well that those seeking safety are forced to cross borders irregularly. An asylum system designed to penalise this is lying about its purpose.**

Under the 1951 Refugee Convention, of which the United Kingdom is a signatory, those seeking asylum are guaranteed the right of entry into a country. The reality for so many seeking sanctuary, including those supported by JRS UK is that they frequently have no choice but to cross borders irregularly. JRS UK renews calls for a fair and just asylum system that should support all those who have been forced to flee their homes from violence, persecution, and war in order to rebuild their lives elsewhere.

**- Ends -**

---

#### Jesuit Refugee Service UK

Hurtado Jesuit Centre · 2 Chandler Street · London · E1W 2QT

T: 020 7488 7310 | F: 020 7488 7329 | E: [uk@jrs.net](mailto:uk@jrs.net)

[www.jrsuk.net](http://www.jrsuk.net) | Twitter: [@JRSUK](https://twitter.com/@JRSUK) | Facebook: [/jesuitrefugeeserviceuk](https://www.facebook.com/jesuitrefugeeserviceuk)

## Notes to Editor

1. **The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)** is an international Catholic organisation, at work in over 50 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. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-plan-refugees-priti-patel-b1821290.html>
  
3. **Contact: Joanna Biernat, Editorial Communications Assistant,**  
[Joanna.biernat@jrs.net](mailto:Joanna.biernat@jrs.net) 07395 416045;