<Address Line 1>

<Address Line 2>

<Address Line 3>

<Postcode>

<Date>

Dear (Name of your Member of Parliament),

I hope you are well. I am writing to you as I would like to raise my concerns about the Nationality and Borders Bill which had its second reading on 19th and 20th July**.** The Bill is a key instrument in a wider overhaul of the asylum system proposed in the government’s New Plan for Immigration. This legislation shows no respect for human dignity, justice, or the protection of human life.

Already, asylum claimants often struggle to get justice and are re-traumatised by the asylum process and life in the asylum system. Proposals in The Bill would create further barriers to protection for those who badly need it, and an even more hostile environment for asylum seekers and refugees.

Some of my key concerns with the *Nationality & Borders Bill* are:

1. Plans to differentiate between refugees on the basis of how people got here ignore the reality of seeking asylum and are deeply cruel. Refugees rarely have a choice of how they travel, and the Refugee Convention does not oblige them to seek asylum in the first safe country they come to. These plans would affect many women and children, contrary to the government’s claim to be trying to protect them. Analysis from the Refugee Council, based on the government proposals in the New Plan for Immigration published in March, demonstrated that 2 in every 3 women and children that the UK currently recognises as refugees would be turned away under these new rules **Discriminating against refugees obliged to arrive spontaneously will not prevent desperate people from making dangerous journeys.** These plans deny the right of refugees to seek asylum, and should be abandoned.
2. The Bill would allow for asylum seekers to be removed from the UK while their claims are being processed, opening the door to offshore processing of asylum claims.[[1]](#endnote-1) This would be highly impractical and costly, and has given rise to serious human rights abuses in other contexts where it has occurred. It undermines our commitment to processing claims fairly and offering sanctuary to refugees.
3. Many planned reforms in the asylum determination process start from the assumption that asylum claimants are likely to be lying.In reality many people are wrongly refused asylum: in 2020, 39% of cases initially refused by the Home Office were granted on appeal to the courts. Our asylum determination process should start with an openness and willingness to listen to people seeking asylum.

Our asylum system is in urgent need of reform, but this is not it. We need to place a focus on human dignity and culture of protection at the heart of the asylum system.

For this, we need a fresh starting point. The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) UK has recently published, *Being Human in the Asylum System*, a report laying out principles for a just and person-centred system drawing on Catholic Social Thought. This report underlines the crucial importance of human dignity in the asylum system, and I would urge you to seriously consider its proposals.

**This legislation is deeply cruel, impractical, and destructive to the common good. I ask you to speak out against these proposed changes to the asylum system.**

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to arrange to meet with you to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely,

1. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)