

**Wales Rejects the Illegal Migration Bill**

The draconian Illegal Migration Bill is currently being debated in the House of Lords. The accompanying debates have been marked by saddening anti-migrant rhetoric. **The Bill essentially bans the right to claim asylum in the UK**. Those who enter the UK ‘irregularly’ will be permanently inadmissible to any protection status.

This is yet another doomed project from the UK Government to criminalise those fleeing war and persecution. They say they do this to “stop the boats”. **In reality, this will push already desperate people to make more dangerous journeys**.

The current ‘legal’ routes for people to claim refuge in the UK are insufficient. Over 8,000 Afghanis crossed the Channel into the UK in 2022 after having fled the Taliban because they did not have another option. This Bill slams the door on vulnerable people, including survivors of war, oppressive regimes, and organised crime.

The Bill will give the Home Secretary and Home Office immense powers to detain and remove people without considering their asylum claim. **There needs to be an overhaul of the asylum system to make it fair, effective, and humane**.

The Home Secretary and Home Officer have both have demonstrated not to be up to the task. Under their watch, the asylum backlog has grown, **putting the lives of thousands in limbo**. During this wait, those who have fled unimageable horrors are placed in unsuitable accommodation for far longer than is legally allowed. Let’s not forget that under these same Home Secretary and Home Office over 200 unaccompanied minors have gone missing.

It is frightening what level of negligence will be done with increased power. **Many people’s lives will fundamentally be changed for the worse**.

**Wales Needs To Be Different**

Wales has a proud history of welcoming those in need. From Belgian refugees during the Great War to the *Kindertransport* before the Second World War, and including the evacuation of Basque children during the Spanish Civil War. More recently, **Wales has committed to being a Nation of Sanctuary**. **This Bill is completely incompatible with these aspirations**.

As such, we must mobilise across Wales to oppose the Bill and show the UK Government that we reject it.

**Make A Difference**

We call on the Welsh Government and all MSs in the Senedd to:

• oppose this Bill in its entirety and to make that opposition clear in communication with the UK Government and the UK Parliament;

• vote to withhold legislative consent on the Bill on 20 June 2023;

• take all possible legal steps to ensure that Wales complies with its obligations to protect victims of trafficking in Wales, including legislation and litigation; and

• reaffirm our commitments in Wales to being a Nation of Sanctuary and the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Wales Anti-racist Action Plan. Also, our committed support to the universality of human rights, including compliance with the Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights

We ask all MPs, in particular those representing Welsh constituencies to:

• oppose this Bill in its entirety when it returns from the House of Lords. If not possible to defeat, to vote for as many of the amendments which would make the legislation unworkable or at the very least limit some of its worst aspects

We ask people and organisations across Wales to:

• publicly reject this Bill, in its entirety, and ask others to do the same;

• write to your MS and your MP asking them to oppose the Bill in Parliament;

• join the Wales Refugee Coalition and help campaign for a compassionate asylum alternative

**We, the undersigned, will not stand for this Refugee Ban Bill to be passed in our names**.

Andrea Cleaver, CEO, Welsh Refugee Council (WRC)

Salah Rasool, Wales Refugee Coalition, and Chair, Kurdish All Wales Association

Susie Ventris-Field, Chief Executive, Welsh Centre for International Affairs

Dr Mike Chick, Senior Lecturer

Stephen Richardson

JenI Williams, Chair, Swansea Women’s Asylum and Refugee Support Group

Sweeta Durrani

Deirdre Ryan, Swansea Palestine Community Link

Maria Nicholas, Duty Manager, Swansea Asylum Seeker Support

Ailsa Dunn, Secretary, Hay, Brecon and Talgarth Sanctuary for Refugees

Sandra Morton, Chairman of Trustees, Swansea Asylum Seekers Support

Sadie Jade Fouracre-Reynolds

Nicola Colston, Treasurer, Knighton and District Refugee Support Group

Catrin Edwards, Lecturer, Department of International Politics, Aberystwyth University

Nadir Taha, Sanctuary Team Lead, Ethnic Minorities & Youth Support Team Wales

Bonnie Williams, Director, Housing Justice Cymru

Faruk Ogut, Chief Coordinating Officer, Displaced People In Action (DPIA)

Sian Summers-Rees, Chief Officer, City of Sanctuary UK

Korin Jones, Resettlement Case Worker, DPIA

Sam Allen, Advocacy and Training Coordinator, Displaced People in Action

Jane Dodds, Member of the Senedd for Mid and West Wales, Leader of the Welsh Liberal Democrats

Sam Ward, Campaign Manager, Climate Cymru

Cllr Stephen Cunnah, Cardiff Council

Cllr Rhys Taylor

Cllr Susan Elsmore

Geoff Ryan, retired mental health nurse

Asha Vijendran, Business Development Manager, Welsh Refugee Council

Jennifer Morgan, Trustee, Welsh Refugee Council, and Law Lecturer, Cardiff University

Harry Iles. Chair, Welsh Refugee Council

Cllr Dan De'Ath, Cardiff Council

John Clark

Sue White

Beth Kidd, Wales Sanctuary Service Manager, Welsh Refugee Council

Dylan Lewis-Rowlands, Co-Chair, Labour for an Independent Wales

Lu Thomas, Director, Gypsies and Travellers Wales

Cllr Tim Thomas, Bridgend County Borough Council

Dr Talat Chaudhri, Assistant Editor, Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru

Alicja Zalesinska, CEO, Tai Pawb

Cllr Jamie Green, Cardiff Council

Darren Williams, Wales National Officer, PCS Union

Anthony Slaughter, Leader, Wales Green Party

Cllr Rhys Mills, Plaid Cymru

Gwern Gwynfil, CEO, YesCymru

Ethan Jones, Director, YesCymru

Katie Dalton, Director, Cymorth Cymru

Colin Nosworthy

Bill Rowlands, Head, End Youth Homelessness Cymru

Korina Tsioni, Future Leaders Changemaker, FGC Office