



Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary

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President Lord Roger Roberts of Llandudno

SECOND JUNE 2020 LD4SOS NEWSLETTER

ENDING INDEFINITE DETENTION

We have now heard that there is a slight change to the David Davis amendment procedure, and the wording below reflects what the situation is. Please, if you haven't already done so make arrangements to talk to your Tory MP, and encourage others to do so too. The issue remains extremely important and is urgent as there could be a vote before the end of the month.

We now have a crucial opportunity to put a stop to Indefinite Detention for Immigration Purposes, through an amendment to the Immigration Bill. The amendment is expected to be put forward by Conservative MP, David Davis, with the support of all opposition parties, so it has a real chance of success if enough Tory MPs back him and vote for his amendment.

If there are queries about the procedure, suggest they talk to David Davis's office.

Our Lib Dem Policy on Detention can be found [here](#).

The rest of the newsletter follows after this briefing:

Urgent Action: Time Limit amendments to Immigration Bill

Background

David Davis MP (Conservative, Haltemprice and Howden) has tabled amendments to the Immigration Bill to introduce a time limit for immigration detention. These are the amendments which came so close to succeeding in the last Parliament. His amendments are receiving strong cross party support across the House of Commons.

The amendments are set out in the House of Commons Notices of Amendments (https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-01/0104/amend/immigration_rm_pbc_0605.pdf, at NC1, meaning New Clause 1), and there is an explanatory note prepared by Detention Action (for which contact Bella Sankey below).

The proposed new law would:

- Make sure that no one is detained for longer than 28 days
- Put independent judges in charge not Home Office staff
- Protect vulnerable people like torture and trafficking survivors from prolonged detention

With this wide-ranging cross party support and in the current very uncertain political climate, we feel that this is a great opportunity to push once again for a time limit to be introduced for immigration detention in the UK.

Urgent Action

As Detention Forum, we are urging all of our member organisations to contact **Conservative (and DUP) Members of Parliament** as soon as possible to ask them to support David Davis MP's amendments.

It would be great if you could reach out to as many of these MPs as you feel able to in the next few days.

In particular, it will be helpful if you can make use of any local connections to MPs.

You can find contact details for all MPs here:

<https://members.parliament.uk/members/Commons>

We suggest that you keep your communication short and to the point.

We'd like you to ask the MP to support these amendments to the Immigration Bill on a time limit for detention tabled by David Davis MP with cross party support.

We'd also like you to make one point as to why you think a time limit is so important. You might want to refer to:

- We currently have no time limit and people can be detained indefinitely

- Britain has a long tradition of legal protection for civil liberties. This tradition is undermined each day that migrants are detained without a time limit.
- Detention has a damaging mental health impact
- The longer people are detained, the less likely it is that they will be removed from the UK.
- Last year both the Home Affairs Select Committee and the Joint Committee on Human Rights supported the introduction of a time limit on detention.

***And do please let Jonathan Ellis or us know which MPs you are contacting and any responses.
Thanks for your support!***

For more information:

1. **Guidance on contacting MPs** – contact Jonathan Ellis: jonathan.detentionforum@gmail.com
2. **Guidance on the amendments** – contact Bella Sankey: bella@detentionaction.org.uk

RETURNING PEOPLE SAFELY

We are very concerned about [this Independent Monitoring Board report](#) which documents breaches of the Dublin Convention on returnees. The NICER recommendations should be carried out as in <http://citizensuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/NICER-Final-Report.pdf> and in our [policy here](#):



HELP FOR MIGRANTS

Council member Dr Ruvi Ziegler wrote a letter to the Times imploring the government to adhere to the UK's international refugee law obligations

HELP FOR MIGRANTS

Sir, You report that asylum-seekers will have their "potential immigration offences handled more sensitively" if they agree to be whistleblowers ("[Help for illegal migrants if they aid investigations](#)", Jun 1). But under Article 31 of the 1951 convention relating to the status of refugees, which the UK has ratified, countries are forbidden from imposing penalties on refugees on account of their "illegal entry or presence": the threat of punitive measures is against the letter and spirit of the convention.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Christine Jardine has been making an impact on domestic violence issues in the Domestic Abuse Bill Committee in Parliament. It was bad enough hearing the story told to the committee by a survivor, but at the end she put a crucial question – "would it have been different if you had been NRPF" and the answer was "yes". In other words her terrible experience would have been even worse. This is the [Hansard extract](#): [and you can read more here](#).

The clearest, rights-respecting way to tackle trafficking and unsafe crossings is by opening safe and legal routes to asylum in the UK.

Ruvi Ziegler

Associate professor in international refugee law, University of Reading

CHANNEL CROSSING ISSUES.

Seeking Sanctuary reports [here](#) on distress and evictions of migrants in northern France.

FAMILY REUNION

Alert that the UK is proposing to scale back its obligations as per the 'safe passage' [statement](#) here.

WAYS YOU CAN HELP.

From your armchair, you may have responded to these asks already, but here are most of them in [one place](#).

FINANCIAL HELP

Refugee Action was founded in 1981 and has worked tirelessly since providing advice and support to Britain's refugees and asylum seekers. In the current Corona Virus pandemic Refugee Action is continuing to provide practical support for refugees, many of whom face health problems, difficulties in

accessing medical care and living in inappropriate overcrowded conditions. This is particularly hard given social distancing and many services not being open.

The charity is also employing interpreters to ensure refugees are kept fully informed of the advice on Corona Virus and ensuring that refugees are able to access the help they need at this time.

If you would like to support the work of Refugee Action please go to [here](#).

Safe Passage aims to help child refugees access legal routes to safety. The charity works with children who are stranded in camps, and helps them have a safe place to go to within the country they want to be in. The plight of child refugees living in camps in Europe has become desperate as a result of corona virus spreading in overcrowded sites and the restrictions placed on travel across Europe. Many of them will be helped by the charity to ensure they remain safe and that their claims for asylum are not forgotten. Please help the British government to remember the plight of child refugees by supporting Safe Passage [here](#).

Thank you to anyone who has supported one of the charities publicised in this newsletter. More to come in the next one.