

Take action now!

End Indefinite Immigration Detention



Last year, over 13,000 people seeking sanctuary in the UK were held in Immigration Removal Centres.

There is no time limit on how long people can be held, so they must endure detention without even knowing when it will end.

This cruel punishment is given to people who have not committed a crime.

People are held when they cannot return to countries like Zimbabwe or Somalia because it is too dangerous to return. Others cannot be deported because they do not have a passport and their Embassy refuses to allow them to return. Such people are not able to leave Britain but, instead of being released, are kept in detention indefinitely.

The UK is the only country in Europe that detains people indefinitely on such a scale and in prison-like conditions.

We can do better.

If you think that the UK should implement a limit on the amount of time asylum seekers can be detained, please write to your MP and to the Home Secretary asking for a limit of 28 days.

Indefinite detention – a stain on our human rights record

In 2012, the then Home Secretary, Theresa May MP, announced her intention ‘to create a really hostile environment for illegal migrants.’ The aim was to make life so difficult for (all) migrants, that people would be encouraged to leave Britain voluntarily, or be deterred from coming to the country in the first place.

The indefinite detention of people who have not committed any crime is the policy’s most extreme manifestation. Liberty UK has deemed detention ‘**one of the greatest stains on the UK’s human rights record in recent decades.**’

It is inhumane – The women of Yarl’s Wood Removal Centre are currently on hunger strike over living conditions there. An independent Government review found that the system is failing to protect the most vulnerable, whilst indiscriminately detaining ‘high risk’ people – sufferers of mental illnesses, trafficked people and survivors of gender based violence.

It is ineffective: A UNHCR report found ‘no empirical evidence that detention deters irregular migration or discourages persons from seeking asylum.’

It is not fit for purpose – Staff are ill-equipped to deal with the consequences of the trauma that detainees have faced en route to Britain. Freedom of Information statistics have shown that suicide attempts occur daily in the UK amongst detainees.

It is expensive – Detention costs on average more than £30,000 per year per person. The aim of creating a “hostile environment” blocks consideration of cheaper, more sensible community-based alternatives.

We can and should do better. The system is in urgent need of reform. If you believe that detention must be a last resort, write to the Home Secretary and your MP and ask that a 28 day limit on detention be imposed.

What can I do?

- You can write to your MP (House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA) and the Home Secretary (Marsham St, Westminster, London SW1P 4DF) asking that the UK commit to a more humane, time-bound detention system.
- If you get a response from your MP, please send a copy to enquires@publicissues.org.uk so that we can monitor how the different parties are responding to constituents’ questions.
- You can find out more about asylum and related matters at <http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/category/refugees/>
- You can support Detention Forum’s #time4atimelimit campaign at <http://detentionaction.org.uk/campaigns/indefinite-detention-in-detail>

“You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

Deuteronomy 10:19



The Church of Scotland

