

Anti-Refugee Bill: how to meet your MP

We want the UK to be an inclusive, welcoming, and a safe place for refugees to rebuild their lives. But if the Nationality and Borders Bill becomes law it will prevent families from being reunited and put people at risk of being sent back to torture and persecution.

As the bill reaches a critical stage in Parliament, people from all over the UK will be meeting their MPs to explain why this bill is so harmful and why it matters to them. Join them by getting a meeting with your MP anytime between now and the week of 6 December.

You don't need to read all of this guide – but it includes useful info and tips!

5 simple steps to meet your MP

1. [Email your MP using our online tool](#) asking for a meeting any time on the week of 6 December
2. If you don't hear back, send another email or call their office
3. Let us know when you've secured your meeting by emailing us on campaigns@freedomfromtorture.org
4. Read our tips if you'd like to feel prepared on what to say - but don't worry, you don't need to be an expert. You just need to show you care.
5. Report back - tell us how it went and together we'll discuss our next steps

Preparing for your meeting

- You could do some research on your MP. Google them and find out what they're interests are.
- Look at the talking points we've included below so you feel up to date on the issue
- If you're doing the meeting as a group, think about who will cover what in the meeting
- If you're meeting online, make sure you've got a Zoom or Skype link from the MPs' office or created one yourself. You can create a Zoom account for free <https://zoom.us/freesignup/>
- If you're doing a video call, think about where you want to have your meeting, ideally somewhere you won't be disturbed by others. Set up your computer somewhere and test out the camera.

What to ask MPs to do

- MPs can attend the report stage of the bill debate in early December and say the bill represents the greatest assault on refugee rights in our lifetime because of the way it will punish refugees who have taken an irregular route to safety.
- MPs can vote and speak in favour of [Amendment No. 8](#), which seeks to remove Clause 11 from the bill. Clause 11 is the section of the bill that introduces differential treatment for refugees based on how they arrived in the UK. Amendment No 8 has been introduced by the Lib Dems and MPs can lend their support to it.
- We are urging Conservative MPs to engage Home Office ministers by writing to them privately or submitting written Parliamentary Questions on specific concerns about the impact Clause 11 will have.
- MPs can call for The Home Office to commit to an ambitious, but deliverable, target of at least 10,000 global resettlement places a year, including for Afghan refugees. This change doesn't need legislation. We're calling on MPs from all parties to speak out on the need for a target, and to support any [future amendments](#) on a resettlement target.

Talking points about the bill and refugees

- People are losing their lives in search of safety, but these measures will not stop this. [Research](#) suggests that policies have very little influence over where people may end up, the changes focus on penalising people who enter the UK through 'irregular routes', even though for many people, there are no alternative, safe routes. There is no visa people can apply for to enter the UK to seek asylum.
- Many refugees have no control over their journey to safety. Those that do choose to come to the UK do so for good reasons including family links, knowledge of English language or familiarity with UK culture and society.
- By punishing refugees for their method of arrival, Clause 11 is inconsistent with the Refugee Convention. The Government hasn't explained how it justifies the disadvantage this clause will have on vulnerable people who are unable, through no fault of their own, to comply with the new requirements. Government should set out the legal basis for its approach in light of the UK's international commitments to refugee protection.
- For most refugees pre-authorised routes to asylum will not be available, or accessible. It is therefore morally and legally wrong for this bill to criminalise and punish refugees who arrive in the UK through any means possible.
- Granting temporary protection status, instead of refugee status, for refugees who arrive irregularly will cause significant suffering and is not consistent with the UK's

international commitments. Temporary protection status will divide families, increase the risk of destitution and create a prolonged state of limbo for refugees.

- When compared against EU countries, in 2020 the UK ranked 7th for the absolute number of people to whom it gave protection, including resettled refugees.
- Resettlement is one of the few existing safe routes that refugees can access to come to the UK. The Home Office should look to build on the success of the Syrian Resettlement Scheme by committing to a target of at least 10,000 global resettlement places a year.
- The UK is one of the richest countries in the world, and most British people believe in giving others a helping hand. Our asylum system should set the gold standard and reflect our values of compassion and justice by processing all those who arrive as quickly and fairly as possible and ensuring they can rebuild their lives in safety and become part of our communities

General tips for your meeting

MPs are people like us, so you should remember that they will often be moved by powerful stories. Remember also they have a duty to represent constituents like you who voted them into power and who they represent in Parliament. Here are some things you could talk about.

- You could break the ice by talking about where you live in your constituency or local issue they may be comfortable chatting about
- Tell them your personal story - why do you care? Was it something you read, someone you met or maybe just a belief you hold? If you can make it something they'll relate to, even better.
- Ask what they think about the issue or what they've heard about it to engage them in the topic and find out their thoughts
- If they ask a question you don't know the answer to, tell your MP you will get them further information and follow up afterwards
- Not all MPs will support us, but be polite as much as possible and try not to argue - ask them questions to find out more about what's behind their views instead
- After the meeting, send them a thank you email as that may make them remember your discussion even more, you can include extra information if you like
- Make notes so you can report back!