

Email Subject: Stop the charter flight to Jamaica 11/02/2020

Dear [Member of Parliament],

I am writing as a constituent to ask that you urgently oppose the removal charter flight due to deport up to 50 people to Jamaica on Tuesday 11th February 2020. Mass deportation flights cannot continue to be an everyday function of the state – they have led to serious miscarriages of justice, premature deaths and they remain the violent hands of the hostile environment.

As you will be aware, on Thursday 6th February protests organised by BARAC UK, the Society of Black Lawyers, Momentum Black Caucus, and BAME Lawyers For Justice were held in Whitehall – supported by Members of Parliament, Trade Unionists and families impacted by deportations. Protest and demonstration have made clear that the Home Office continues to destroy lives, personal finances, and tear families apart through unlawful detentions and forced deportations, but the government continues to ignore this as part of its continued assault and dehumanisation of migrants, racialised people and all those whose ‘belonging’ to British soil can be questioned.

Details emerging from activists, journalists, and whistle-blowers have indicated sustained attempts to prevent access to justice for people detained at Harmondsworth and Colnbrook immigration removal centres, as they have faced significant disruptions to signal and connections on basic phones issued to them on detention. This has left detainees unable to contact lawyers and families to access appropriate legal advice and emotional support. As Zita Holbourne of BARAC UK has argued, nearly all of those people being forcibly detained and deported will be people who are currently going through appeals processes and seeking to regulate their immigration status. Many of those detained will have lived in the United Kingdom since childhood. Among the identified potential deportees includes a father of two British children, a former UK soldier who had been medically discharged, and a blind man who has been told that he can be cared for by his elderly grandmother in Jamaica, despite her having medical evidence which undermines this. Holbourne also writes that one of the deportees was born in the UK, and his mother is from the Windrush generation, and that this flight will separate more than 40 children from their parent – with the British government telling people that they can parent their children via Skype.

Furthermore, a leaked report commissioned further to the Windrush scandal strongly recommended that the government must end the practice of deporting people who arrived to the United Kingdom as children. As it is evident that many of the people scheduled to be placed on the removal charter flight would be allowed to stay in the UK after the implementation of the Windrush report, it must be an obligation for this government to suspend deportations until this process is completed.

The Prime Minister has claimed that the anticipated deportees are all “serious criminals” but evidence has emerged that this is not the case, and deportees include those who have been

convicted for minor drug offences. Regardless, the severity of one's "criminal" history should not serve as a premise for deportation. Exiling "criminals" does nothing to resolve and prevent the social ills endemic in British society, and a deportation further to a prison sentence not only speaks of abject failure of the prison estate to function as a tool for rehabilitation and reintroduction to society, but functions to racially other those 'undesirable' criminals who can be determined as 'not British enough'. Further, criminality describes the relationship between an inhabitant and the state – it is often defined by the breaking of stringent and unworkable immigration laws. In this way, deportations on the basis of criminality often have little to do with justice or protection for victims, but unchallenged obedience to state doctrine and a commitment to standards of behaviour under the threat of exile which do not exist for white British citizens.

These deportation flights are a matter of life and death. As was reported in 2018, 11 people of the Windrush generation who were wrongly deported were found to have died. As The Guardian have reported this week, only 3% of Windrush claimants have so far received compensation. By continuing to deport people to their deaths, this Government has made clear that it has learned no lessons from the Windrush scandal and intends to continue a regime of terror against Black Caribbean people and all racialised others through extending the hostile environment. Descriptions of the inhumane and brutal treatment of elderly Black Caribbean people continue to trouble me, and I imagine, many of my fellow constituents. I therefore ask how, using your parliamentary capacity, you will address the issue of justice for victims of Windrush to ensure their right to return to the UK with permanent right to remain, citizenship, and full financial compensation for the losses of them and their families.

As a constituent – I urge you to immediately write to the Home Secretary calling for the cancellation of the 11th February flight, and to advocate for an end to all charter flight mass deportations and all aspects to the hostile environment. I also urge you to attend the Second Reading of the Windrush Compensation Scheme (Expenditure) Bill on Monday February 10th. I further urge you to advocate for clear policy ensuring the protection of those from Commonwealth countries who migrate and begin lives in Britain.

Regards,

[Your Name]

Make sure to add your address and phone number so that the MP can verify that you are a constituent.