

[Your Name]

[Your Address]

[City, Postal Code]

[Email Address]

[Date]

[Member of Parliament's Name]

[House of Commons]

[Parliamentary Address]

Dear [Member of Parliament's Name],

I trust this correspondence finds you in good health. I am writing to convey my sincere appreciation for the British National (Overseas) [BNO] visa scheme and the commendable support that the British government has extended to the Hong Kong community during these tumultuous and challenging times. Your steadfast commitment to upholding human rights and providing sanctuary to individuals escaping political repression is profoundly valued by those of us who have experienced the significant repercussions of the current circumstances in Hong Kong.

The History of Our Identity

Historically, the circumstances surrounding Hong Kong's transition from British rule to Chinese sovereignty were complex and profoundly impactful on the lives of millions. Notably, the British government did not offer a referendum to the people of Hong Kong, thereby denying them the opportunity to select their future—whether to pursue independence, maintain the status quo, or consent to a transition under Chinese governance. This absence of agency has yielded lasting repercussions, contributing to a pervasive sense of deprivation concerning our identity as Citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies (CUKC). It is imperative to acknowledge that many individuals of that era lacked fundamental understanding regarding citizenship and civil rights, rendering them ill-equipped to navigate the evolving political landscape.

Furthermore, an analysis of the historical context demonstrates a troubling lack of substantial protections for the citizens of Hong Kong from the very beginning.

Notwithstanding the Sino-British Joint Declaration, which was designed to preserve rights and freedoms within Hong Kong, it is imperative to emphasise that this agreement does not stipulate explicit repercussions in the event that the Beijing government neglects to uphold human rights. As a result, this has rendered numerous residents of Hong Kong susceptible to political persecution and repression, thus fostering an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty.

The Concerns and Fears Amongst Our Community

As constituents of the Hong Kong community, we hold significant apprehensions regarding recent developments in immigration policy. Specifically, the recent statements made by Kemi Badenoch concerning a potential modification of the settlement scheme- extending the duration from five years to ten years- have elicited considerable concern among our members. It is crucial to underscore that, although we express our gratitude for the BNO visa scheme, which was instituted as a humanitarian response to the protests against the anti-extradition bill in 2019, we are increasingly anxious about the permanence and stability of this initiative.

A significant number of individuals express concern regarding their ability to fulfil the settlement requirements following the initial five-year period. The uncertainty associated with this timeline negatively impacts the hopes and aspirations of numerous residents of Hong Kong who are seeking safety and security in the United Kingdom. Moreover, the recent modification in immigration policy, which altered the criteria from granting discretionary settlement to political prisoners to a policy of mandatory refusal, raises considerable apprehension. This change does not adequately address the unique challenges faced by individuals prosecuted under the National Security Law in Hong Kong, who may encounter significant difficulties, if not insurmountable obstacles, in successfully applying for a British National Overseas (BNO) visa to the United Kingdom.

Furthermore, it is imperative to emphasise the impact of current policies on families. Holders of the BNO passport who give birth outside of China and Hong Kong are compelled to apply for HKSAR passports for their children. Ironically, even BNO visa holders who give birth in the United Kingdom encounter the perplexing obligation of applying for BNO visas for their newborns. This inconsistency not only introduces additional bureaucratic challenges but also exacerbates the distressing uncertainties that families must contend with.

Our Proposal

In consideration of these concerns, we respectfully implore the British government to contemplate the following measures as a means of addressing both the pressing

needs of the Hong Kong community and the historical injustices we have experienced:

1. Guarantee the Permanency of the BNO Visa Scheme

We kindly request your commitment to ensuring the permanence of the BNO visa scheme, thereby affording stability and a sense of security to the individuals and families impacted.

2. Remove Mandatory Refusal for Hong Kong Political Prisoners

The immigration policy ought to be revised to eliminate the mandatory refusal stance regarding political prisoners originating from Hong Kong. This modification would empower the United Kingdom to appropriately address the injustices encountered by these individuals.

3. Grant a Special British Identity to Newborns

We propose that newborn infants of holders of BNO visa status who are born in the United Kingdom be granted a distinct British identity, such as that of a British Citizen Overseas, in order to guarantee their rights and recognition as integral members of the community.

4. Simplify the Path to Registration as British Citizenship Instead of naturalisation

We respectfully request that holders of BNO passports be allowed to register directly as British citizens. This streamlined procedure would facilitate a smoother transition for individuals who have long regarded the United Kingdom as their home.

4.1 Streamline Settlement Requirements for BNO Visa Holders

The existing settlement process ought to be streamlined to reduce the burdens faced by BNO visa holders.

- It is proposed that holders of the British National Overseas (BNO) visa be permitted to undertake the Life in the UK and English examinations upon completion of their settlement period, prior to their registration as citizens. It is more reasonable for those seeking registration to undertake examinations rather than those on Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR), who possess their British passport for their entire life.

- It is required that holders of the BNO visa do not depart from the United Kingdom for a period exceeding 90 days in order to fulfil the settlement requirements. This

pragmatic alteration would acknowledge the distinct circumstances encountered by numerous residents of Hong Kong and offer them a more definitive pathway to residency.

5. Restoration of CUKC Identity

A pivotal measure in addressing our concerns would be the reinstatement of the CUKC identity for BNO passport holders. We contend that acknowledging BNO passport holders as British, alongside providing them the prospect of settling in the UK through streamlined processes, would considerably alleviate their anxieties regarding an uncertain future. This reinstatement transcends mere administrative procedure; it constitutes an essential recognition of the historical injustices endured by the people of Hong Kong.

It is acknowledged that the United Kingdom government encounters numerous challenges, encompassing both domestic and international considerations. However, the necessity for a fair and equitable approach to immigration and citizenship for the Hong Kong community is of utmost urgency. Our entreaties for action are grounded in a quest for recognition, fairness, and security for individuals who have endured significant hardship and turmoil.

I sincerely appreciate your attention to these matters and strongly encourage you to advocate for the proposed changes within the government. The future of numerous families in Hong Kong is at stake, and the support of our representatives is vital to ensuring that we can establish ourselves with dignity and security in our new home.

I express my gratitude for your time and consideration. We anticipate the implementation of constructive changes that are in accordance with the principles of justice, equality, and human rights for the Hong Kong community.

Yours sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your Contact Information]