

4th July 2023

Rishi Sunak
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1 2AA

Dear Prime Minister,

We write to you as survivors of human trafficking and modern slavery, urging you to consider the devastating impact the Illegal Migration Bill will have on people with similar experiences to us. This Bill sets out provisions that will mean that anyone entering the country via irregular means can be detained and removed and not have access to modern slavery support even if they are found to be victims. It shows that Britain will not tolerate anyone, regardless of their situation, even if they are forced or coerced, to enter the country via irregular means. This is wrong. The focus instead must be criminalising human traffickers, not criminalising victims of these horrendous crimes.

Britain has prided itself with world-leading legislation such as the Modern Slavery Act 2015, which has provided so many people a second chance in life. This Bill regresses from this leadership and will make Britain a place where perpetrators of human trafficking and modern slavery can thrive, and victims of trafficking become invisible. When a person is trafficked into the country, their traffickers have absolute control of them. Traffickers use the threat of detention and deportation to stop their victims from coming forward and engaging with the authorities. This Bill makes these threats true. Victims will be forced to go underground and people committing trafficking crimes will evade prosecution. As victims will not come forward, and therefore won't be counted in statistics, it will create a false environment that on the surface, may seem as though there is no crime occurring. It will in fact be flourishing. The Home Office itself acknowledges that 'Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment'.¹

The Bill makes provisions for child victims of trafficking to be removed from the country once they turn 18. If a child has been trafficked into the UK and has grown up in Britain, this country will become not only their home, but will have everything they know and are familiar with. Removing them to another country to which they have no connection will create a generation of young people that will have no sense of identity or security. These children will be treated as second class citizens as set out in the Bill. We have a duty of care to children growing up in this country and removing them from all they know will leave them

¹ [Modern Slavery: How the UK is leading the fight](#)

open to further exploitation. What measures has the Government put in place in these 'safe third countries' to ensure people are safeguarded appropriately?

The people writing to you now are not just survivors. We are mothers and fathers. We are students. We are professionals. We are contributing members of this society. For many of us, this would not have been possible without the support that we received, which will now be unavailable to so many victims of this horrific crime.

The legislative process of the Illegal Migration Bill has been rushed, and there has been no consultation with survivors. The people passing this Bill have not experienced what we have experienced, yet are making provisions that will have a devastating impact on survivors of this heinous crime. We must lead with compassion and care and not scare monger with a harmful narrative. The Government must consult with survivors and people working in the anti-trafficking sector to have a deeper understanding of who would be affected by this legislation. We plead that you consider the real-life impact of what the Illegal Migration Bill will do to victims of trafficking, before passing it in its current unworkable form.

Yours sincerely,

Survivors and Survivor Groups

All members of the Lived Experience Advisory Panel

All members of the TARA Advisory Group

NZ Survivor

Ibra Weveti

Loretta Ogochukwu Okeke

Shanisa Edmund