



2nd November 2022

It is time to end the harmful and divisive rhetoric around refugees and migrants.

At the Migrants' Rights Network, we believe the way we speak about migratised people is integral to how we treat new and settled racialised communities. Recent remarks made by Home Secretary Suella Braverman MP depicting people seeking safety as an "invasion" and an enemy to be feared mirrors far-right rhetoric about migrants and refugees. This has been met with criticism, with Sir Roger Gale, whose constituency includes the now infamous Manston facility, voicing concerns about the impact of the Home Secretary's inflammatory language, specifically by extremists.

But this narrative is not exclusive to the right. Words such as "illegal migrants", "genuine asylum seekers" and 'refugee crisis' are commonly used by opposition parties, the liberal media or sometimes even the Third Sector itself.

When a person in a political position with the responsibility for the safety and protection of our refugee and migrant communities uses such divisive and harmful language, we need to call it out. The hostility and dehumanising language we read and hear needs to be challenged with more fervour.

We are asking for the Home Secretary to withdraw her comments and apologise. We are also calling on the charity sector, activists and community groups to join us in calling for an end to the alienating and divisive narrative around migration.

Remember, our #WordsMatter. It's time to defy the narrative.

In solidarity,

Fizza Qureshi, CEO of the Migrants' Rights Network
Nick Sigler, Chair of the Migrants' Rights Network
Sainga Tony, Vice Chair of the Migrants' Rights Network
Rosario Guimba-Stewart, CEO of Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network
Dr Edie Friedman, Executive Director, The Jewish Council for Racial Equality (JCORE)
Paul Hook, Director, Asylum Matters
Amos Schonfield, Founder & Director, Our Second Home
Matt Powell, CEO and Founder, Breaking Barriers
Josie Naughton, CEO and Co-Founder of Choose Love
Hira Aftab, Co-Founder of Our World Too
Sabrina Sanchez, Director, European Sex Workers Rights Alliance (ESWA)
William Nicholas Gomes, Director, The William Gomes Podcast
Amber Bauer, Founder and CEO of forRefugees
Roger Wilson, Trustee, Hope and Aid Direct
Naomi Webb, Executive Director, Good Chance Theatre
Aké Achi, Founding Chief Executive Officer, Migrants At Work
Vivienne Francis, Founder and Director, Refugee Journalism Project

Aderonke Apata, Founder and CEO, African Rainbow Family.
Dr Dagmar Myslinska, Lecturer, Law Department, Goldsmiths University of London
Eleanor Brown, CEO, CARAS
Jo Cobley, CEO, Young Roots
Susannah Baker, Founding Trustee and Lead for Displaced people - The Pickwell Foundation.
Aké Achi, Founding Chief Executive Officer, Black Europeans
Rachel Grocott, CEO, Bloody Good Period
James Tullett, Chief Executive, Refugee and Migrant Forum of Essex and London (RAMFEL)
Anna Pincus, Director, Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group (GDWG)
Dr Lena Holzer, Lecturer, Law Department, Goldsmiths University of London
Ros Holland, Chief Executive, The Boaz Trust
Anna Jones, CEO and Co-Founder of RefuAid
Siân Summers-Rees, Chief Officer, City of Sanctuary UK
Zehrah Hasan, Advocacy Director, Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants
Sam Grant, Advocacy Director, Liberty
Joanna Knight, Migrants' Rights Network Trustee
Michael Raff, Migrants' Rights Network Trustee
Michael Ahanchian, Migrants' Rights Network Trustee
Annie Viswanathan, Director, Bail for Immigration Detainees
Dr Alex Dymock, Senior Lecturer, Law Department, Goldsmiths University of London
Mia Hasenson-Gross, Executive Director, René Cassin, the Jewish voice for human rights
Dr Rakhi Rashmi, Barrister, 3 Bolt Court Chambers, Trustee, Migrants Rights Network (MRN).
Shasista Aziz, Co-Director of The Three Hijabis and anti-racism campaigner
Amritpal Singh Dhesi, Sikh Council UK
Susie Symes, Chair of the Museum of Immigration at 19PrinceletStreet.
Amber Rose-Dewey, Campaigns Coordinator, Campaign Against Arms Trade.
Sam Perlo-Freeman, Research Coordinator, Campaign Against Arms Trade
Kirsten Bayes, Local Outreach Coordinator, Campaign Against Arms Trade.
Emma Cockburn, Scotland Coordinator, Campaign Against Arms Trade
Susie Symes, Chair of the Museum of Immigration
Thomas Martin, Director, City of Sanctuary Sheffield
Anna Miller, Head of Policy and Advocacy, Doctors of the World UK
Joanne MacInnes, Director, West London Welcome
Alysia Maciejowska, Filmmaker, Moquette Films
Dr Sue Conlan, Director, TACTIC Immigration and Asylum CIC
Leandros Savvides, Act. Chairperson, KISA - Equality, Support, Antiracism
Raman Mundair FRSL, Writer/Artist and Activist