

Home Office statement on international students scandal is a further betrayal
23 July 2020



On 23 July 2019, the Home Secretary published a [written statement](#) regarding the [tens of thousands of international students accused of cheating](#) on an English test in 2014. We are deeply disappointed by its contents.

The Home Secretary has been promising this statement for nearly four months and the lack of substance and refusal to offer any kind of solution is a severe blow to the thousands of innocent students waiting for a lifeline. As they wrote in [a letter to the Home Secretary](#) last month, the students are living daily in growing despair and have been looking to Sajid Javid as their last hope.

Recent reports – including by the [All-Party Parliamentary Group](#) ([our response here](#)), the [National Audit Office](#) ([our response here](#)) and [Migrant Voice](#) – have shown without doubt that the Home Office relied on worthless evidence to strip these students of their visas. The Home Secretary claims to have read these reports, but he has utterly failed in his response.

Comment from Nazek Ramadan, Director of Migrant Voice:

“Yesterday, the Home Secretary finally acknowledged that the government has a duty to do more to help those international students who were wrongly accused of cheating by his department in 2014. Today, he let those students down.

“These are people who came to the UK believing in its education system, its democracy, its sense of justice. They were betrayed in 2014 – and they’ve been betrayed again today.

“We’re deeply frustrated that the Home Secretary has failed to offer a solution. We had hoped that this Home Secretary – who said last year that the phrase “hostile environment” does not represent Britain’s values, and that this country should be a safe, open, tolerant home for all who live here – would be bold enough to acknowledge the mistakes of his predecessors and put this right.

“Instead, he has shied away from any kind of positive action, making only vague suggestions of possible future token gestures that will do nothing for those students who have had five years of their lives – and their futures – ripped from them.

“We say to the Home Secretary, there is still time to put this right before the recess. In your statement, you say this is “a complex matter” – no, it’s very simple. These students are

innocent, the evidence you used to brand them as frauds was worthless, and they must be given the chance to sit a new test and clear their names."

Sheikh Shariful Amin, one of the affected students and a co-leader of the students' campaign for justice, said:

"This is a very very sad outcome. We were all expecting that the Home Office would make a helpful decision that can distinguish the genuine students from the non-genuine students – either a test or an interview. This offers us no certainty as to when we will get our futures back and no certainty when this saga will end. We are still in the same position.

"This decision gives me no positive hope to get my future back."

He's also frustrated that the statement focuses so heavily on the legal processes:

"We all need to come out of these court processes, because it is so expensive, it's such a lengthy process and gives us no way to clear our names."

We will continue to campaign alongside the students until they get the justice they need.