



EMBARGOED UNTIL 00:01 THURSDAY 24 SEPTEMBER

On **Thursday 24 September**, a letter signed by over 200 international students who were wrongly accused of cheating on an English test by the Home Office in 2014 will be delivered to the Prime Minister. They represent thousands of students who have been fighting for six years to prove their innocence, and they're now calling on Boris Johnson to take urgent action to end this injustice.

This injustice was the result of the same “culture of disbelief and carelessness” that [Wendy Williams identified as causing the Windrush scandal](#) – and the same tendency to act based on “anecdote, assumption and prejudice” that [the Public Accounts Committee identified in a report last week](#). By acting to resolve this situation, the Government would be sending a clear and welcome message that their intentions to transform the Home Office are serious.

The students' letter will be delivered by post, but – subject to Covid-19 restrictions – a small number of the affected students will be **demonstrating in Parliament Square on Thursday at 10.30-11.30am** with a copy of the letter. At 10.45am, they will be joined by **Stephen Timms MP**, who has fought with the students for justice for many years.

Reports by the [National Audit Office](#), [Public Accounts Committee](#) and [APPG on TOEIC](#) last year exposed fundamental flaws in the evidence used by the Home Office against the students and proved that the decision to revoke or refuse tens of thousands of visas was wholly unjustified. (See *attached briefing for further info.*)

Former Home Secretary Sajid Javid recognised the scale of this injustice and [said that the Government had a duty to do more to help the innocent students](#). And on his first day in office, Prime Minister Boris Johnson promised to address this issue.

But we and the students have seen no progress, with the current Home Secretary scrapping a scheme proposed by Javid that could have provided a route for students to clear their name, and failing to propose any other solution.

Frustrated by the delays and silence, the students are now making a direct appeal to the Prime Minister.

Migrant Voice has been campaigning alongside the students for justice since 2017. **Director Nazek Ramadan said:**

“These students have been living a nightmare for six years. Stripped of their rights and their futures destroyed, many are destitute and suffering severe mental health problems. There is a mountain of evidence that proves they are victims of a mammoth injustice – and the Government can ignore this no longer.

“We urge the Prime Minister: Listen to the students, look at the evidence and take the action needed to put this right.”

Interviews with Nazek or with affected students can be arranged prior to Thursday, or at Parliament Square on the day (remaining subject to Covid-19 restrictions). Photos will also be available on the day. Contact press@migrantvoice.org with requests for interviews or further information.

[LETTER STARTS]

Dear Prime Minister Boris Johnson,

We are some of the nearly 34,000 international students who were unfairly accused by the Home Office of cheating on an English test six years ago. We were innocent but our visas were refused or revoked and the Government gave us no way to defend ourselves. Our futures were destroyed and we were left to fight a years-long legal battle costing each of us tens of thousands of pounds.

Multiple judges, as well as parliamentary and watchdog reports, have ruled that the evidence relied upon by the Home Office to make these allegations is deeply flawed - but the Home Office is continuing to use it against us.

The Home Office has stolen our futures, branding us frauds and forcing us to bear a lifelong mark of shame. Many of us are destitute, barely able to survive or care for our families, having spent everything we own trying to clear our names. Many of us are suffering from severe stress and depression. Some of us have even attempted to take our own lives because we see no other way out.

The coronavirus pandemic has made our situation even worse. Our support networks have collapsed, the charities we rely on have been closed, our friends and families are unable to help as they are struggling themselves. We are terrified of catching the virus and being hospitalised, or dying with a black mark still against our names. This is not the future we wanted or worked for.

This country has a proud tradition of justice and fairness - one of the many reasons we chose to come here for our education. But in our case, this tradition has been willfully disregarded. We have heard again and again that progress is being made, yet the situation has never been resolved and we face a dark and uncertain future.

We write to you today as we have already waited too long. We write to you because it is within your power to right this wrong, to put an end to our detention, deportation and humiliation.

Allow us to prove our innocence by establishing a free and transparent scheme - independent of the Home Office - through which we can get our cases to be reviewed and clear our names.

We came to the UK for a world-class education and to pursue our dreams, but that has been cruelly taken from us. We're asking you, as the Prime Minister, to show leadership and allow us the chance to start rebuilding our lives as we come out of this pandemic. Let this be a fresh start for us all.

Yours sincerely,

STUDENT NAMES HERE – FULL LIST WILL BE AVAILABLE ON [OUR WEBSITE](#) ON THURSDAY

[LETTER ENDS]