

18 July 2022

For immediate release



Migrant Voice welcomes the parliamentary Home Affairs Committee's witheringly critical [18 July report](#) on the Government's failure to respond fairly and efficiently to people who make the life-threatening attempt to cross the Channel in small boats in order to seek safety in Britain.

The report, which Migrant Voice members contributed evidence to, points to "disturbing" treatment of people who have survived the dangerous journey, laxity in protecting unaccompanied children in hotels, the complete lack of evidence for the plan to dispatch some asylum-seekers to Rwanda, the Government's failure to establish safe and legal routes for many people seeking asylum, and its failure to work with other countries to stop the traffickers.

Though the report agrees with the Home Secretary that the asylum system is broken, it says, "we invite her to make it clear ... that it was not migrants crossing the Channel who broke it." The "top priority" in asylum operations is tackling the asylum 'work in progress' caseload. The committee points out in its news release, issued with the report, that the backlog in processing cases continues "despite there being little growth in the overall numbers making claims."

Instead of trying to mend the broken asylum system, say the MPs on the committee, the Government is "outsourcing its responsibility for ensuring the mental and physical safety of those seeking asylum to another country, at some cost to its international responsibilities and its reputation."

The committee emphasises that, as most asylum applications have to be made after arrival in the UK, "[t]he failure to ensure safe routes are available to all those who would have a rightful asylum claim leaves people little choice but to use drastic measures to get here." "...Those with a valid asylum claim should not need to risk their lives to get to the UK."

These and other criticisms are not new: they reflect criticisms we ourselves have been making for years. But the 12-member committee has members from four political parties, has looked at the situation in detail, and has made sensible, wide-ranging observations. The report deserves to be listened to and acted on.

The timing is perhaps fortuitous. Migrant Voice believes that this report represents an opportunity for a Government that is currently re-forming itself to grasp an issue that is taking up an inordinate amount of administrative time and is damaging the government's efficiency and its standing in the world.

The Government should take the committee's advice and establish an asylum system that deals with reality and "The UK needs an asylum system that deals with reality. It must be fair, efficient and acknowledge the UK's international obligations. It should work to remove obstacles for those likely to have a valid claim to come to the UK."

/ends

Report: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5803/cmselect/cmhaff/199/summary.html>