

Press Release: Impact of clause 11 of the Nationality and Borders Bill on refugees in the UK

The Nationality and Borders Bill is currently being debated at Committee Stage in the House of Lords. The Bill has been the subject of widespread criticism from all sides of the political spectrum: if it passes in its current form, people fleeing conflict and persecution will face an increased risk of poverty and destitution in the UK, and will find it much harder, if not impossible, to obtain full protection.

On Tuesday 1st February 2022, peers will debate clause 11 of the Bill, which contains measures that are likely to have significant negative impacts upon the lives of refugees.

In particular

- **The Bill puts up to 3,100 refugees at risk of poverty, destitution and exploitation every year.** It would do so by denying anyone who arrives in the UK via a so-called “irregular route” access to a safety net, and leaving them in what is likely to be a protracted state of limbo for up to ten years.
In practice, since there are virtually no government-approved routes to reach the UK for those in need of international protection, almost all refugees in the UK would be subject to these punitive measures.
- There is no evidence that this would help to achieve the government’s stated aim of deterring people from seeking safety in the UK. At the same time, it **creates a very real risk of causing significant harm**.
- **Living in limbo makes integration hard**, if not impossible. The uncertainty created by temporary immigration status pushes people into insecure and low-paying jobs, and takes its toll on mental health. Having to pay extortionate fees pushes people towards poverty. And refugees will have no access to a safety net, no matter what hardships they encounter. This runs the risk of leaving people hungry and even homeless. Women and children are likely to be amongst the groups hardest hit.
- Every day, Praxis works with people who have been put in desperate situations by the same measures that this Bill will apply to refugees. Based on nearly 40 years’ experience, we know that the combination of insecure immigration status, denial of access to a safety net, a decade-long wait for settlement and high fees **already leaves thousands of people in precarity, poverty and destitution**. There is no reason to think it will not do the same to refugees.
- Few details of how these measures will be applied in practice are included in the Bill, or accompanying documents. Most will be determined in the Home Office’s immigration rules, which are not routinely subject to parliamentary scrutiny.

Praxis comments

Josephine Whitaker-Yilmaz, Praxis’ Policy and Public Affairs Manager, said:

“We are deeply concerned that the Nationality and Borders Bill will push thousands more people into poverty, homelessness and desperation every year.

If the government is serious about ending poverty and homelessness, it should urgently revisit these proposals, which risk forcing even more people in need of protection into destitution.

These matters are simply too important to be left to the discretion of the Home Office, which has time and again failed to demonstrate compassion in its approach to vulnerable people.

We urge peers to show their commitment to a safer society for everyone by opposing clause 11 in debate today.”

To find out more about the Nationality and Borders Bill, and how it will negatively impact people seeking safety in the UK, read Praxis’ briefing: [“Briefing on the Nationality and Borders Bill: the impacts of differential treatment on ‘group 2’ refugees”](#)

For more questions, quotes or interview, please contact Praxis Stories and Media Coordinator Laura Stahnke (laura.stahnke@praxis.org.uk - 07862007367) or Praxis Policy and Public Affairs Manager Josephine Whitaker-Yilmaz (Josephine.Whitaker-Yilmaz@praxis.org.uk)

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