

Migrants' Rights Network

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we stand up for all migrants

Minister of State for Immigration
Home Office
Direct Communications Unit
2 Marsham Street
London
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19th January, 2023

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you from the Migrants' Rights Network to thank you for your recent comments urging caution in relation to rhetoric in migration discourse. Specifically, in the wake of the exchange between Holocaust survivor Joan Salter and the Home Secretary around the word 'invasion'.

As a UK charity predominantly led by migratised people, we know the enormous ramifications negative rhetoric can have on the lives of refugee and migrant communities. The use of the term 'invasion' ultimately dehumanises people seeking asylum and is contributing to increased hostility towards the communities we work with. Therefore, I am grateful to you for urging caution amongst your colleagues around the words they use in immigration discourse.

However, I am also concerned by some of the rhetoric you have used in relation to the concept of the so-called 'genuine' asylum seeker. Specifically, the emphasis you have placed on distinguishing people you claim are fleeing "genuine persecution" and those who are "gaming the system". Under international law, everyone has the right to claim asylum and it is factually incorrect to state an individual does not have the right to asylum before the claim has been submitted. It is a damaging generalisation that frames individuals as a homogenous group who are perceived as innately dishonest. As Immigration Minister, the language you use carries enormous weight and has real-life implications for those claiming asylum in the UK.

In light of this, I would urge you to read the information we have published as part of our long-running Words Matter campaign. This is informed by the lived experience of the Migrants' Rights Network's team and wider community. Furthermore, I, along with asylum seekers in our network, would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss our campaign with you in more detail.

Yours sincerely,

Fizza

Fizza Qureshi
CEO of the Migrants' Rights Network