



Ministry
of Defence

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
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THE RT HON BARONESS GOLDIE DL
MINISTER OF STATE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

MSU/4/8/2/3/ap

19th July 2022

Dear Maria,

During the Armed Forces Act Continuation Order debate on 5 July, you asked about the treatment of Hong Kong Military Service Corps veterans who did not retain their British passports as had some of their number in 1997. Further, you had raised the issue during the passage of the Nationality and Border Bill in March which led to the Government saying it would update Parliament by the end of June in terms of progress on this matter.

I wish to reassure you that Baroness Williams of Trafford, the Minister of State from the Home Office, will answer your Question for a Written Answer shortly. However, I am pleased to relay that the option identified by the Home Secretary in December 2021 has been further refined to ensure it will be a sufficient solution for British Hong Kong veterans. Collective agreement is now being sought for this and a Written Ministerial Statement will immediately follow. The Government remains committed to implementing a solution by the end of this calendar year, and will provide a further update at the earliest opportunity once we are in a position to announce the policy.

I would like to clarify the matter of passports that you mention. Approximately 3.5 million residents of Hong Kong held British Dependent Territories Citizen status. This status did not entitle holders to a right of abode in the UK. However, between 1986 and 1997, anyone with this status could apply to switch this to British National (Overseas) status. Those that did so, including members of the Hong Kong Military Service Corps, will now be eligible to apply under the British National (Overseas) route, which launched in January this year and provides a route to settlement in the UK. Additionally, a limited number of military personnel who were settled in Hong Kong could apply to register as British citizens under the British Nationality Selection Scheme launched in December 1990. This was a capped scheme and is no longer open.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the Library of the House.

With kind regards,
Yours sincerely,
Annabel

BARONESS GOLDIE DL

The Lord Craig of Radley GCB OBE
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