



Home Office

The Lord Murray of Blidworth  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State  
for Migration and Borders

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Lord Purvis of Tweed  
House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0PW

6 July 2023

Dear Lord Purvis,

### **ILLEGAL MIGRATION BILL: LORDS COMMITTEE STAGE**

Following on from your question made during the Committee stage on clause 58 on 14 June (Official Report, column 1981), I offered to write to you regarding the Independent Commission for Aid Impact's rapid review on UK aid for refugees in the UK and your question as to whether the UK had asked UNHCR to prioritise Afghan cases. As I set out at Report yesterday, I pass on my apologies again for the delay in issuing this letter.

The report from the Independent Commission for Aid Impact, published 29 March 2023, states that the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) 'has almost completely ceased processing vulnerable refugees for resettlement to the UK, in effect closing a rare safe and legal route to seek protection in the UK for refugees who do not fall under a nationality-based scheme'.

I would assure you that the UK has not stopped processing cases for refugees who do not fall under a nationality-based scheme, and the most recent published statistics demonstrate this.

The UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) was launched in March 2021, following the completion of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.

In 2021, the UK resettled 1,136 people through the UKRS and in 2022 a further 887 were resettled. We welcomed 133 refugees through community sponsorship in 2021 and over double that number, 272, in 2022. While both schemes did resettle individuals of Afghan nationality; this was 2% of cases in 2021 and 8% in 2022.

The main nationalities resettled through the UKRS and Community Sponsorship in 2021 and 2022 were Syrian (1,470), Iraqi (249) and Sudanese (259), but in total we resettled individuals from 16 different nationalities through these schemes during 2021

and 2022. Full details on all nationalities resettled through our schemes can be found in the Home Office's published quarterly statistics: [Immigration system statistics quarterly release - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-system-statistics-quarterly-release)

The number of people resettled in a particular period will depend on a range of factors including the flow of referrals from UNHCR in the field and the availability of suitable accommodation and care packages in the UK.

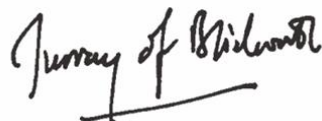
Despite the tireless work of officials, and the good will and support of local authorities, there is a limit to the availability of accommodation and capacity of local authorities to support the refugees we wish to bring here. This has been impacted by efforts to support Afghans out of hotels and into settled accommodation.

As a result, we are necessarily prioritising those who have been referred by the UNHCR and who are already awaiting resettlement.

Let me assure you of the Government's commitment to do more, and indeed are committed to do more as capacity permits. However, the cap on safe and legal routes is the right way to ensure we are able to balance the ambition of the UK to welcome those in need of protection, with the capacity available to support them effectively.

I am copying this letter to Lord Coaker, Lord Ponsonby of Shulbreed, Lord Paddick, the Bishop of Durham, Baroness Stroud, Baroness Lister of Burtersett, Lord Kirkhope of Harrogate, Lord Hannay of Chiswick, Baroness Helic, Baroness Ludford, Lord Carlile of Berriew, Lord Dubs, Baroness Brinton, Lord Green of Deddington, Baroness Hamwee, Baroness Chakrabarti, Baroness Sugg, Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle, Lord Kerr of Kinlochard and Lord Scriven. I am also placing a copy in the library of the House.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Murray of Blidworth', with a horizontal line underneath.

**The Lord Murray of Blidworth**  
**Parliamentary Under Secretary of State**  
**for Migration and Borders**