



Member of Parliament for Tottenham

Rt Hon Theresa May MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Monday 15th April 2018

Dear Prime Minister

Re: Windrush generation immigration status

As your Government prepares to host the 2018 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London this week, we are writing to request an immediate and effective response to the growing crisis facing British residents who arrived in Britain from the countries of the Commonwealth prior to 1973.

Now in their 60s and 70s having lived, worked and raised families in this country over the last five or six decades, many of these individuals are grandparents and great-grandparents, nurses, schoolteachers – hardworking people who helped to shape modern Britain and contributed hugely to so many aspects of life in this country.

These individuals and their families were born as citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies or as Citizens of the Commonwealth and enjoyed the right to enter and remain in the United Kingdom, just as those born in Britain enjoyed and exercised the right to move to the farthest reaches of the Commonwealth.

Yet in recent years many of these individuals have been incorrectly identified as undocumented or 'illegal' migrants, with the Home Office having lost its own records and with many of those who arrived as children no longer able to rely on the paperwork of parents long since deceased.

All too often these routine bureaucratic errors bring about the separation of families and irreparable damage to lives in addition to undue stress, anxiety and suffering. The impact has been felt in the cases of individuals losing the right to work, to rent property, to receive pensions, to access their bank accounts or even to access vital healthcare – a particularly cruel twist of fate as so many of those affected have spent their lives in the service of our National Health Service. Indeed, following World War Two our country and its government sent out a call to the Commonwealth and invited these individuals to Britain to help build our National Health Service and rebuild our country.

Compounding this crisis, many of those who do have the right to be here are understandably too afraid to approach the Home Office for help with their paperwork in case they are detained, stripped of their rights or separated from their families and removed to countries of which they have no memory and in which they have no remaining family members.



Member of Parliament for Tottenham

We are proud of Britain's history as a welcoming country and as open and diverse nation. This June we will celebrate the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the Windrush, and of a generation of people who brought with them their talents, their cultures and their dreams and helped to build a confident, prosperous and outward looking Britain. We will also observe the 50th anniversary of Enoch Powell's infamous 'Rivers of Blood' speech, a moment in history which serves as a reminder that it is incumbent on all of us to defend the shared values of our Commonwealth and it is our shared responsibility to stand up against those who wish to divide our nation along lines of race and ethnicity.

As Members of Parliament we stand in solidarity with the representatives of the sovereign nations of the Commonwealth, members of the Commonwealth diaspora communities in Britain and civil society on this issue, and further we specifically request that you direct your Government to urgently put in place procedures for the swift resolution of this growing crisis.

You will note that over the weekend a petition calling on the Government to change the burden of proof, establish an amnesty for all minors that arrived in Britain between 1948 and 1971, and provide compensation to those affected passed 100,000 signatures meaning that it will be considered for a debate in Parliament. We hope that you will ensure that this is addressed with the utmost urgency in advance of any such debate.

We urge you to guarantee the status of all Commonwealth nationals whose right to remain is protected by law and to provide an effective, humane route to the clarification of their status. It is a simple act that will transform the lives of so many people who have contributed so much to our country. We also urge you to meet with Commonwealth nationals, their legal representatives and the groups campaigning on their behalf to address this crisis. Surely the time has come to give them the security they deserve.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'D. Lammy'.

Rt Hon David Lammy MP
Chair, All Party Parliamentary Group on Race and Community

Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn MP. Leader of the Opposition

Rt Hon Diane Abbott MP, Shadow Home Secretary

Dawn Butler MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Equalities and Diverse Communities

Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP, Chair, Home Affairs Select Committee

Afzal Khan, Shadow Immigration Minister

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