

For the Attention of
Mrs Theresa May,
10 Downing Street,
London.

August 5, 2016

Dear Prime Minister,

We are writing to request your urgent intervention on behalf of the refugee children in Calais.

Latest figures from Citizens UK suggest there are 170 children in Calais with a right to relocate to Britain in order to reunite with their families.

The dangers facing these children are well documented and urgent. Their fears, as documented recently by UNICEF include "violence displayed by the police, civilian militias and traffickers, as well as sexual assault committed against both girls and boys".

During your time as Home Secretary you led, worldwide, efforts to tackle modern day slavery and the evils of sexual abuse and exploitation of innocent people.

We were delighted to see from your announcement earlier this week that you will continue to show this leadership now as Prime Minister. It is in that spirit that we ask for your urgent intervention in Calais.

Under the terms of the Dublin III Treaty each of these children have a right to reach their loved ones. It is precisely because they have no other choice than to try and reach their loved ones in Britain that these are among the most vulnerable children in Europe.

If the rights of these children are not upheld they are left with an appalling choice between train tracks on the one hand, and the very traffickers you have challenged every step of your career since you became Home Secretary in 2010.

Two children have died in the hands of these traffickers in the past six months, children who should have had safe and legal passage to the United Kingdom. Reports of children being forced to indenture themselves or prostitute themselves for passage to Britain are on the rise and with the prospect of further demolitions in Calais the context could not be more urgent.

That is why we are asking you to intervene to ensure that all eligible children are identified, supported, and transferred by the British and French authorities with all possible haste.

Ensuring, as your government is now working to, that family reunion provisions are active from the frontier of Europe should stop the flow of desperate children to Calais. The ones who are there already must not be forgotten, punished, or lost.

I deeply hope that your government may show more humanity and intelligence than the Chamberlain government showed to the Jewish people until after Kristallnacht in mid- November 1938.

Yours Sincerely,
Vanessa Redgrave and Lord Alf Dubs