

Rt Hon Keir Starmer MP
Prime Minister's Office
10 Downing Street, London
SW1A 2AA

Monday 5th August 2024

Sent via email

Dear Prime Minister,

The unprecedented levels of racist rioting across the UK over the last few days is utterly deplorable.

It is devastating that the tragic crime committed in Southport continues to be associated with ongoing violence against people of colour. It is contemptuous of the grief experienced by the families and of the Southport communities affected.

It is clear that this eruption of violent racism has long been simmering under the surface. What is happening is the direct result of years of normalised racism and Islamophobia, enabled by mainstream politicians and the British media. Many of us warned of these outcomes during the election period which saw an intensification of Islamophobia, and anti-migrant narratives.

We are particularly concerned that certain sections of the media and political elite have chosen to take the ongoing violence as an opportunity to entertain debates about 'legitimate grievances', 'integration' and immigration. Muslim communities and people of colour should never have to justify their level of integration in order to claim basic protection from criminal acts, and it is incredulous that we should have those debates in the midst of this unprovoked and sustained violence. To blame the victims of this violence is an insult to people of colour across the country.

The Islamophobia, racism and anti-migrant violence we have witnessed on the streets of the UK represents the rot that has become normalised as part of our politics. The new Labour government must take this opportunity to reset the direction of travel and foster zero tolerance for far-right, racist and anti-migrant narratives.

As organisations that work on racial justice and Islamophobia, we say that it is the government's responsibility to take command of the narrative and show leadership. An emergency Cobra meeting is insufficient, this is a national emergency and Parliament should be recalled to effect a national, coordinated political response which gets to the root of this violence.

The government must acknowledge that challenging the far right is not simply a question of online misinformation, or increased police surveillance but involves a wholesale shift in our political culture, language and policies. It is urgent that Parliament is recalled to address the scale of this crisis, and ensure that all people and communities of colour are protected.

Yours sincerely,

Shabna Begum, Runnymede Trust
Action for Race Equality
Amnesty International UK

Anti Caste Discrimination Alliance
Association of Visitors to Immigration
Detainees (AVID)

Beyond Detention
Big Leaf Foundation
Black Equity Organisation
Black South West Network
BME National
Boaz Trust
Bristol Law Centre
CARAS
Caribbean & African Health Network
(CAHN)
Children's Rights Alliance for England
Chilyep
Choose Love
City of Sanctuary UK
Discrimination Law Association
End Violence Against Women Coalition
Equality Act Review
Europa
Every Child Protected Against Trafficking
(ECPAT UK)
forRefugees
Freedom from Torture
Friends, Families and Travellers
Gazelle Professional Services
GIPSIL
Good Chance Theatre
Govan Community Project
Greater Manchester Ethnic Communities
Network and Manchester BME Network
HEAL Collective
HIAS + JCORE
Hibiscus
HOPE not Hate
Humanity Harmony Opportunity
Humans for Rights Network
Immigration Law Practitioners' Association
(ILPA)
Inclusive North
INQUEST
Islamic Society of Britain

Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants
(JCWI)
Just for Kids Law
Migrant Democracy Project
Migrant Voice
Migrants Organise
Migrants' Rights Network
Music Action International
Muslim Council of Britain
NHS BME Network
Nigeria Community Association
North East Law Centre
Open Rights group
Operation Black Vote
Our Second Home
Pennine Oak's
POMOC
Positive Action in Housing
Praxis
Prevent Watch
Race Equality Foundation
Race Equality Network
Rainbow Migration
RefuAid
Refugee Action
Refugee and Migrant Forum of Essex and
London (RAMFEL)
Refugee Women Connect
S-REP
Safe Passage International
Southeast and East Asian Centre
(SEEAC)
Student Action for Refugees (STAR)
Sub-Saharan Advisory Panel
Swindon City of Sanctuary
The William Gomes Podcast
Together with Migrant Children
Traveller Movement
UK ISLAMIC MISSION
Voices in Exile
War on Want
Waterloo Community Counselling

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