

Rt Hon Theresa May MP  
Home Secretary  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

28th August 2015

Dear Theresa May MP Home Secretary,

We are writing on behalf of Junior Gathering, a group of 76 young Quakers aged between 11 to 14.

We heard the very distressing story of one asylum seeker and ex-child soldier. After being kidnapped and used as a child soldier in East Africa, he was then forced to fight and abduct other children for almost a decade. After finally managing to flee this person ran to the authorities of his country, however he was then subject to imprisonment and torture for 5 years without trial until finally being released. After these 5 years, he finally made it to the United Kingdom, a place where he thought that he would be safe and treated with compassion. However, this was not the case.

This person has now been in the United Kingdom for fifteen years. His asylum status is still uncertain. It is cruel to allow someone who has gone through so much as a child soldier and has been rejected by their own government to be kept waiting so long, not knowing whether they can stay. It is saddening that not only has his own government rejected him, but he has also been neglected by ours.

Because he is not legally allowed to work, he has no way of earning more money than the little he is given by our government. What he does get he spends on essentials such as bus travel to college, where he is trying to further himself by earning his GCSEs.

He can only afford to phone his mother once a month. They have been separated for more than two decades with no communication until recently.

We demand that asylum seekers not be allowed to fall into such a situation.

Firstly, it is inhumane and undignified for someone to not be able to plan their life due to such uncertainty. Therefore the decision on asylum cases must be shortened. Fifteen years is longer than most of us have been alive.

Secondly, this case shows that many asylum seekers want to improve themselves and want to be able to contribute to our society. Therefore if a decision on asylum is yet to be made, the asylum seeker should be able to earn a living.

Thirdly, asylum seekers must be treated as more than just statistics and an inconvenience, but as the people and human-beings they really are.

In Friendship,

On behalf of Junior Gathering,

Anna-Tina & Ailwyn  
Clerks