

# Immigration isn't Political it's Personal



My mum's family is from Mauritius. Although most of them have moved to the UK, my Nana is still in Mauritius and due to the strict immigration laws, she is unable to move here with her family. Instead, she is alone for every birthday and every Christmas. She isn't a number. She's a person.

## Immigration Isn't Just a Number – It's People

To many politicians immigration is not personal. It's easy for them to write it off as “statistics”, “numbers”, or an “invasion,” because they don't see the human beings behind the numbers. They sit in studios or parliament chambers and talk about immigration like it's a maths problem, debating whether we need to “take back control.” But immigration isn't an abstract for so many of us — it's our families, our loved ones, our lives. But its our voices that aren't included in the conversation.

## The UK's Hostile Environment

The UK immigration system is cruel. Even peaceful, elderly people are unable to move here and be with their families. They aren't asking for benefits. They're not taking anything. They just want to be with their families. People like Nigel Farage enjoy spreading the rhetoric that immigrants are lazy and taking advantage of the system, when this is just not true. Some migrants are coming from war-torn countries like Syria and just want to live peacefully, but are preventing from seeking asylum. The vast majority of migrants come to the UK from developing countries not

for handouts or leisure, but to work hard, build a better life, and pursue education and opportunity. Unlike Nigel Farage, they're not interested in skipping work for a sunbed, they're here to contribute, not disappear from responsibility. Because of strict requirements, endless paperwork and deliberately harsh policies, these people are stuck in another country and separated from their families and turning away the vulnerable. This is what the government calls "protecting our borders", but it's really separating families, treating people like threats instead of human beings.

Lies, Rhetoric and Rwanda

*"People don't put their children in boats unless the water is safer than the land."* – Warsan Shire



Nigel Farage and GB News enjoy pushing lies about immigrants "taking advantage of the system" and being showered with gifts when they arrive in the UK, while UK citizens are struggling with the cost of living crisis, but this is just not true. The reality for most asylum seekers is bleak. They are not allowed to work while their claim is being processed (a process that can take months or even years) and they're expected to survive on just £6.43 a day. They're often placed in overcrowded, poor-quality places sometimes in isolated hotels or military barracks, with little or no support. Many face hostility, suspicion, and even abuse from locals or right-wing protestors. They don't jump queues. They don't live in luxury. They are vulnerable people fleeing war, torture, and persecution, only to arrive here and be treated as a burden or a threat.

The Conservative government created the Rwanda scheme, in which people seeking asylum in the UK can be forcibly deported to Rwanda. Rwanda is not a safe place for refugees or anyone. The UK Supreme Court deemed it as "unlawful" and that the plan posed "a real risk of inhuman or degrading treatment", which breaches Article 3 of the ECHR. In spite of this, the government decided to push a new law, the "Safety of Rwanda Bill", which just declares Rwanda as safe and overrides the Supreme Court. This decision shows that the Conservative government and those that share their view on immigration, have no compassion or conscience as they are willing to force immigrants to a country that they know full well is unsafe.

Deterrents like Rwanda are used to dissuade migrants from coming over to seek asylum, and what a surprise, this does not work. The journey to reach the UK is a dangerous one, and people aren't risking their lives and their children's lives for fun, they are fleeing something much worse in their native countries, and these deterrents aren't going to stop them. Instead of deterring these vulnerable people, we should be helping them.

## Race and Immigration

When it comes to immigration and asylum seeking, the race of the migrants often shapes how governments and the public respond to them. Migrants who are white and perceived as culturally similar tend to be treated with far more compassion than Black, Brown, or Arab migrants, who are too often seen as threats. When the war in Ukraine broke out, the Western world responded with compassion, fast-tracking visas, opening borders, and welcoming Ukrainians with open arms. But when Syrians, Afghans, or Sudanese people flee their war-torn countries, they're met with suspicion, blocked from seeking asylum, and labelled as "dangerous." The difference? It's not the danger they're escaping — it's the colour of their skin.

## Deportations and Broken Families



This cruelty isn't just British, it's a global pattern of dehumanisation. Thanks to Trump's presidency, in the US, families are ripped apart at the border, children are being separated from their parents. In the United States, especially under Trump's presidency, immigration policies and deportations have led to the forced separation of thousands of children from their parents at the southern border and many of these families are never reunited. The justification? "Deterrence". But like the UK's Rwanda scheme, it didn't stop people, because when you're running from war, gang violence, or persecution, a detention centre still looks safer than where you came from.

Many politicians argue that immigration is not personal to avoid racism accusations, dismiss the real, human impact of harsh immigration laws or rhetoric and allows them to justify harmful policies without taking responsibility for the people they hurt.

I have news for them. Immigration is personal. It's my family and so many others. If we saw immigrants as neighbours instead of numbers, we'd build bridges, not offshore cages.