



HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

Joint Committee on Human Rights

Oral evidence: [Legislative scrutiny of the Nationality and Borders Bill](#), HC 588

Wednesday 8 September, 2021

[Watch the meeting](#)

Members present: Harriet Harman (Chair); Lord Brabazon of Tara; Joanna Cherry MP; Lord Dubs; Florence Eshalomi MP; Lord Henley; Baroness Massey of Darwen; Dean Russell MP; David Simmonds MP; Lord Singh of Wimbledon.

Questions 1 - 5

Witnesses

[I](#): Ngozi, Member, VOICES Network; Elkhansaa, Member, VOICES Network; Peter, Ambassador, VOICES Network.

Examination of witnesses

Ngozi, Elkhansaa and Peter.

Q1 Chair: Welcome to this afternoon's meeting of the Joint Committee on Human Rights. In our evidence session this afternoon we are looking at the Nationality and Borders Bill, which is currently before Parliament, will be going to Committee in the House of Commons in October and then thereafter will be scrutinised by the House of Lords.

We are a committee where half of us are Members of the House of Commons and half are Members of the House of Lords. We scrutinise legislation to assist Parliament in understanding the human rights implications of any particular piece of legislation, and after we have had evidence we issue a report, which is then laid before Parliament and used in debates.

We are looking today at the human rights implications of the Nationality and Borders Bill and we have two panels. The first panel, which we have before us now, have very kindly come forward to give evidence from their own experience of the asylum system. We will switch over at about 3.30 pm to hear from professionals involved in the law on asylum, the Policy Institute or those running the Refugee Council, so that is how we are structured today.

All our members will introduce themselves before they put the questions, so you know who they are. Some of our members will be participating remotely, but others of us are here in this meeting room of the House of Lords, so thanks to the technology people, who I hope will keep us all able to hear and speak to each other. After that very long introduction, can I ask Dean to put the first question?

Q2 Dean Russell MP: I will address you first, Peter, as you are in the room. I know we have a lot of questions to go through, so I would ask you to be relatively brief, if that is okay. First, I would just like to ask whether you could tell us about why you left your country and how you felt about how your human rights were at risk.

Peter: I was born a Muslim in my country and after so many years of having encounters I was trying to convert to Christianity. The penalty for someone converting from being a Muslim to a Christian in Iran is death, and you cannot do it freely or with other people knowing, so I had to leave my country after my life was in danger.

Dean Russell MP: Thank you for sharing that. I imagine it must be very difficult. Now that you have come to the UK, what would you say life is like while you are here?

Peter: I can say for sure that life is not the same as how I used to live it before. I am still an asylum seeker, not a refugee, after being here for more than 30 months as of right now, and I have been living in emergency accommodation, which the Home Office has provided for people like me. I have been receiving only £8 a week for all my

expenses, aside from food, which is being provided by the companies that are supporting us. It is just so hard to stay hopeful currently; it is just very hard. The situation is not easy.

Dean Russell MP: In terms of your life before you moved here, there must be, I imagine, a marked difference in the safety that you feel.

Peter: After I knew that I should consider myself a Christian, I did not feel safe at all in my own country, so compared to that I feel a lot safer here, because I know at least my life is not in danger right now. But I worry about my parents, who are staying back in my country, and about my own future and what is going to happen to me here. I know I will stay alive, I hope, but what is going to happen for me and my future?

Dean Russell MP: I know colleagues are asking questions along those lines later. Thank you so much.

Chair: Can I just cut in there to ask you to remind us which country it was you are talking about and where your family still are?

Peter: I have escaped from Iran. I was born in Iran.

Chair: Thank you.

Dean Russell MP: Thank you. I will clarify that with further questions. Ngozi, I would ask you the same question, please. Could you explain why you left your original country and how you felt your human rights were at risk, please?

Ngozi: Thank you for asking. It was not by choice. Nobody wants to leave where they call home, where they have that affinity, that lineage, that flexibility and that love. Nobody wants to leave, but my husband is a member of the IPOB. I am sure a lot of people sitting down here today would know about the indigenous people of Biafra, an ethnic group or a people in Nigeria. A civil war has been fought before now between the Nigerian and the Biafran, which is the Nigerian Civil War or Biafran War. My husband could not return.

I can draw a scenario. If you are unaware of Nnamdi Kanu's case, he is a British citizen who was abducted in Kenya and extradited back to Nigeria because he belongs to the same group. It was no longer safe for my husband to go back and we have to seek sanctuary here.

Dean Russell MP: Thank you for sharing that. In terms of your experience since coming to the UK, can you share what life is like now, please?

Ngozi: Life here in the UK is not the same. Nobody wants to leave the comfort of their own. I as a person was well grounded in my community. I rose to the position of the first vice-chairperson of my organisation. I became the first female leader of the labour union. I was in the civil service. Things were rosy. I enjoyed my days. I love my people. It is not the same for me here.

I have a good degree and a master's as well. I was about to pursue a PhD, but all those had to be thrown away through the window because I needed to be with my husband and my family. It is not the same with me here, because I cannot feel what I feel back home. It is something I would not do by choice. We were forced to take a decision where we can no longer look back.

Dean Russell MP: If I may ask, though, do you feel safer in the UK?

Ngozi: So long as I remain in the UK, I should feel safe, yes.

Dean Russell MP: I know colleagues are asking further questions, so thank you for sharing those details. Elkhansaa, could you also tell us about why you left your country and how you felt your human rights were at risk, please?

Elkhansaa: Thank you very much for giving me the chance to. Yes, I have been forced to flee my country. I left my country because of the fear of my life being eliminated, as I had been targeted by the authorities for ethnicity discrimination and persecution. I had to leave, because I was in danger. I fled my country. I left my children and my family over there. I left my career and everything, because it is a matter of "to be or not to be": to be alive or to be a dead person.

Dean Russell MP: Sorry to interrupt. Would you mind explaining which country?

Elkhansaa: I am originally from Sudan and we have this ethnic persecution of the Alberti tribe. I was targeted by the authorities at the very last time of my being in Sudan. I have been detained and tortured. I have been threatened with being eliminated. For that, I had to leave my country and I came here to the UK.

Dean Russell MP: Thank you for sharing this. I know it must be very difficult. Could you explain what life is like now for you in the UK, please?

Elkhansaa: Yes. I survived, but I would say I have no life. Literally, my whole life is just on hold. I have been here for two years right now and everything is on hold. I have not had any decision yet, and I have been apart from my family and my children. They have grown up. I just feel like I have been left in limbo and this is affecting even my mental well-being. I am trying my best. I survive, but I cannot say that I am having the life that I used to have without family bonding and with the stress, fears and worries that I experience daily. It is a series of challenges every day.

Dean Russell MP: If I may finish my question, the same as to our other witnesses, do you feel safer in the UK?

Elkhansaa: Yes, I feel safe in the UK.

Dean Russell MP: Thank you to all our three witnesses for your time this morning.

Q3 **Joanna Cherry MP:** I am the Scottish National Party Member of Parliament for Edinburgh South West and I would like to thank all three of you for coming to share with us today what must be deeply personal testimony and information. I wonder if I could go back and start with Peter. How did you actually get into the UK? Can you tell us how you got here?

Peter: I got smuggled to the UK on a boat through the channel by colleagues.

Joanna Cherry MP: You were smuggled to a boat, which left France and crossed the channel to England.

Peter: Yes.

Joanna Cherry MP: Did you pay someone to help you to do that?

Peter: Not directly, but back in Iran before I escaped my parents' house, yes.

Joanna Cherry MP: Did you and your parents feel that you had any choice other than to pay somebody?

Peter: At that point, no. I was in hiding and I had to find a way out of the country, so it was the only way.

Joanna Cherry MP: Forgive me if it is an obvious question. Why had you had to go into hiding?

Peter: I believed that my life was in danger during that time and the Government were looking for me.

Joanna Cherry MP: The Government in Iran were looking for you. Is that because they knew that you were a Christian?

Peter: I was trying to convert.

Joanna Cherry MP: Were you aware of any other route to claiming asylum in the United Kingdom, other than the one that you took?

Peter: Me coming to the United Kingdom was never planned, so I never knew I was going to end up in the United Kingdom. I never knew I was going to be on a boat with so many people for almost five hours in deep waters, which I was really scared of. It was never actually planned for me.

Joanna Cherry MP: When you left Iran you did not know where you were going to go. You just wanted to get away from Iran.

Peter: In my country, my family paid those people and they promised to send me somewhere very safe. They mentioned that one of the only safe countries for people like me is Canada. They were trying to send me as far as they could away from the country.

Joanna Cherry MP: At the time, were you aware of any other way for

you to get from Iran to a safe country?

Peter: No, you cannot go to any airport and there is no way other than that.

Joanna Cherry MP: Can I ask you a little bit about your experience? You mentioned that you ended up in a boat with lots of other people, you were in the boat for five hours and you were afraid. What time of year was it?

Peter: It was on 20 July 2020.

Joanna Cherry MP: It was summertime. What was the weather like?

Peter: The weather was okay. It did not look very dangerous. They told me that the water was almost calm, unlike other days.

Joanna Cherry MP: Why were you scared? I know it sounds like a silly question, but it is important for people to understand why you were afraid.

Peter: I have this fear of deep waters—that something below is going to take me and bring me down. The moment I figured out that I would be going on a boat, I completely freaked out. I did not want to do this, but there was no other way.

Joanna Cherry MP: Was there not the choice for you to stay in France?

Peter: I never had a choice to stay anywhere, because I never had a document or any kind of money or currency with me, so they would just take me wherever they wanted without asking me whether I wanted to go.

Joanna Cherry MP: Ngozi, can I ask you some similar questions to what I just asked Peter? Can you tell us how you actually entered the United Kingdom? How did you get here? Was your husband already here?

Ngozi: Yes, I came by air and I joined my husband through the family reunion system. That is how I came here, but, more importantly, I want you to know that it is not about the lottery of how we came. It is the reason why we came, because people do not really have their bag packed, have their suit and jackets hung up, have their air ticket in their hands and run down to the aeroplane to say, "I am coming over to the UK". People are actually seeking safety, running away from persecution, fleeing from danger and going for a place of refuge. The reason why we came should be paramount, rather than how we came.

Joanna Cherry MP: I hear you, but we have to ask these questions, so we understand the full background. Should we understand that, when you got on that plane, you had been through a procedure and people were expecting you to arrive in the United Kingdom? You had been through the legal procedures of family reunion.

Ngozi: Absolutely, yes, an application had to be made and the records of the application all had to go through. Then I was expected to pass some side criteria, which the Home Office set out should be qualified before that could be granted. It is not really as easy as sitting down there in the comfort of my home; the visa has been passed through my door and then I hop on the plane. The application came with so many records, hurdles and challenges.

Joanna Cherry MP: I have helped friends and families of constituents and it has taken years to go through the family reunion process. Can you tell us how long it took for you to go through that process?

Ngozi: Bearing in mind that, when you are coming to the UK or seeking asylum under the asylum system, you are not allowed to work, that is the reason why this committee should also consider lifting the ban, because when people work they can take charge and responsibility of their own accounts. They can chart their own course. They can foot their own bill. The pressure would be lifted from the system and the Government, and the money that is being channelled in things such as this would not come from the pockets of individuals.

Having said all that, there was no legal aid, and that is where I am going, so we had to struggle through, making applications for me and children. That application took over a year. The first application got refused because of birth certificates. I felt that the Home Office had owed me a duty of concern by asking for birth certificates if it really had wanted to do a thorough job. It had also refused another application under the auspices that a TB test needed to be carried out, which nobody tells you.

Do not forget the background of where we are coming from. The system here in the UK is totally different from where I come from. I do not know what the asylum system is. Even with my year of experience, my background in education and things like that, I had hardly heard the word "asylum" until I came to the UK. I did not know what it is to seek asylum and I did not know that you need to make an application in the first place to get into a particular country. I know people go for visas, but I do not know what the processes are, so I am not even bothered.

When you open these 20 or 30 pages of application, there are rudiments that you are expected to go through. Nobody teaches you how to make this application. You do it honestly from your heart, feeling that you are doing the right thing. Then the Home Office uses that as a criterion to refuse such applications. Nobody is guiding you through. Even if you pay for a solicitor, it takes so much money to make that application and nobody tells you that you need to do a TB test.

After doing the TB test, what shocks my imagination and what beats my conscience is that you come into the UK and you are still expected to do a TB test. My question is why make me pay so much to do a TB test in the first place, in my home country, when I will come into the UK and the same TB test will be conducted. If there is an atom of TB, you have to be

treated, so why have the TB test in the first place? That was the second reason for the refusal.

By then I have gone through the wheels of agony, the fear of not being with my family and decapitation, and the brokenness of a woman who has been separated from her husband. Each refusal brings rejection and fear, and at that point I just wanted to make it right.

When the approval came, we were given only 30 days. Those 30 days were to pack up everything you know, to say goodbye to the place you have called home, to the people you have known all your life and to a place that you have settled in so well. It was not enough to do anything, not even to see a family who has been in hiding. How do you pass through the security and breach all the apparatus because you need to get on a plane? It became another challenge for me, because 30 days, no matter how long it was, was looking like two days for me. I was not able to do anything. Then it comes with the fear of getting the money to buy a plane ticket. How do you raise money? All the way through it was one hurdle and one challenge after another, and living a life of not knowing what is next.

Joanna Cherry MP: Thank you for painting such a detailed and powerful picture of the process and what you went through. Elkhansaa, I would like to ask you some similar questions about how you got from Sudan to the United Kingdom. I think you have three children. Is that correct? How did you actually come from Sudan to be in the United Kingdom? Tell us about that journey.

Elkhansaa: As I have been telling you, I was forced to flee my country and leave everything behind, including my own children and my husband, just for the fear of my life. Luckily, I came here via a flight. I had to pay. Actually, my uncle had to pay and I would say he sacrificed his life for me, because a few months later he was eliminated by the authorities.

Yes, I came here on a flight and it was an extraordinary journey for me to the UK. When I came here, I did not have a clue where I was heading to. I just was looking for sanctuary and that agent was being paid. When we had just landed in the UK, he said, "You go and ask for asylum". I did not even know what asylum meant at the time and how things could go on. I used to come to the UK. I did my master's degree in the UK and I have been here at times for holidays. It was totally different. It feels different.

It was a very tough journey. Emotionally, you feel a sense of guilt that you left even your own children, because you did not have a choice. You did not have the choice of where to go and which route to take. Yes, so I have the privilege of being lucky to land in the UK.

Joanna Cherry MP: You knew the United Kingdom already, because you did your master's degree here. You are a pharmacist by profession. Is that correct?

Elkhansaa: Yes.

Joanna Cherry MP: It is a very different experience coming here to study and coming as an asylum seeker when you are fleeing for your life. Can I just understand this? Your uncle paid an agent who arranged for you to get a plane ticket. Do you know how much money was involved?

Elkhansaa: I have no idea, but it is quite a huge amount of money. I am not sure because he arranged the plane and everything.

Joanna Cherry MP: All you knew was that you were to get on the plane, go to the United Kingdom and then ask for asylum when you landed in the United Kingdom.

Elkhansaa: I did not even know that I was heading to the United Kingdom when I got on the plane.

Joanna Cherry MP: You did not know where you were going.

Elkhansaa: No.

Joanna Cherry MP: Presumably, there were a number of flights, so the first flight would be going to one place and then you had to take a connecting flight. Is that right?

Elkhansaa: Yes, I think there was a connection for half an hour in some other countries.

Joanna Cherry MP: When you went to the airport you did not know where you were going.

Elkhansaa: He had the passport. He had everything. We got together.

Joanna Cherry MP: The agent had a passport for you. Was it your own passport?

Elkhansaa: No, it was not my own passport. My own passport is with the authorities.

Joanna Cherry MP: So the agent arranged a passport for you. You went to the airport. Did you meet him there and get the passport?

Elkhansaa: Yes.

Joanna Cherry MP: Then he told you where you were going.

Elkhansaa: He got with me into the airplane.

Joanna Cherry MP: He came with you.

Elkhansaa: Yes, he came with me.

Joanna Cherry MP: Did he come all the way to the United Kingdom?

Elkhansaa: Yes, he just left me in the airport. "You go and seek sanctuary", and that is it. I have never seen him again.

Joanna Cherry MP: Was that at Heathrow? Which airport did you arrive at?

Elkhansaa: It was Heathrow Airport.

Joanna Cherry MP: He came all the way to Heathrow with you, but then left you there and said, "You go and seek asylum now". Was this man known to you before?

Elkhansaa: No.

Joanna Cherry MP: Have you ever seen him again?

Elkhansaa: No.

Joanna Cherry MP: Did you feel that you had any other choice than to follow that route of allowing your uncle to make the arrangements for you? Was there any choice for you to get out of Sudan or any other way to do it?

Elkhansaa: There was no choice and there was no time. I had to go through this way. I did not know if there was even another route through boat or lorry. I did not know whether I should apply to this. I had no other choice.

Joanna Cherry MP: Thank you for sharing that with us. Thank you to all three of you.

Q4 **Lord Dubs:** I should declare an interest, in that some years ago I was in fact chief executive of the Refugee Council in London. Could I start with Peter? You came by boat. I was listening to your answers just now. Did you travel through any safe countries before you got on the boat?

Peter: Yes.

Lord Dubs: Which countries did you go through?

Peter: I got arrested once in Switzerland. It is a safe country. Then I was taken to Spain and I had to stay there. I passed through France to go to Calais and arrive here, so there were three safe countries.

Lord Dubs: Why did you choose not to stay in, say, Switzerland or France as safe countries? Why did you choose to come to the UK?

Peter: The smugglers had me always with them and they would tell me, "We can leave you here any time we want and, because you do not have any documents, ID or money, the police will eventually get you and put you in prison". I never had the choice to stay or to move away from somewhere. I was always with them and without any contact with my family or anywhere outside.

Lord Dubs: You say that you were in the hands of the smugglers and you had absolutely no choice until you got to your final destination in the UK. Is that a fair way of putting it?

Peter: Yes.

Lord Dubs: You had no say. At no point did anybody say, "Do you want to go to the UK?"

Peter: No. I always thought that I was going to Canada. I thought, because Iran has an embassy in this country, it would not be safe for me. I know it is a safe country, but I could never trust the Government of Iran.

Lord Dubs: I wonder if I could turn to Ngozi. You came by air, so in fact you had no chance of coming to a safe country, did you? Did you have a flight straight to London or did you stop on the way?

Ngozi: I had a flight straight from my country and landed in Heathrow.

Lord Dubs: You were given no choice as to which country you were going to. Were you able to say that you wanted to go to the UK?

Ngozi: I never even knew I had a choice. Nobody educates you. Nobody tells you that you have a choice. I wish I had known that I had a choice. Maybe I would have made another choice. Maybe I would have stayed closer to home. Maybe I would have been by my father's face to watch him die in my own land, to kiss him goodbye, to be at his funeral and to just walk through the backyard and say, "Daddy, I love you". It is a very difficult thing for us to come all the way. I had no choice. It was just all the way from home down to Heathrow.

Lord Dubs: Your situation was not that different, was it, Elkhansaa? You did not have any choice either when you came by air, from what you said earlier.

Elkhansaa: Yes, I had no choice. The agent was arranging the whole thing. Luckily, I came here via a flight, because it would be very tough if it was any other route. Anyway, you do not have the choice.

Lord Dubs: I suppose the person who organised the flight for you through the agent could have argued about a final destination, but you were not able to do that. Is that fair?

Elkhansaa: Yes, I was not involved in this conversation. I was just being told, "Now you can go with this guy. You will be in a safe place".

Q5 **Lord Henley:** I am a Conservative Member of the House of Lords. I want to move on to ask you about your actual experiences of the current asylum system. I appreciate, Elkhansaa and Ngozi, that you both said that initially you did not even know what asylum meant, but you have been on quite a long learning curve and have seen quite a lot of the current system. Ngozi, you have talked about some of this, so perhaps it would be helpful if you could start off by explaining what your experience of the UK's asylum system was. Do you think it requires changes and, if so, how?

Ngozi: I would love to start with the latter of your questions. I would like to see a reform in the UK asylum system. I would like to see improvements in the UK refugee and asylum accommodation. I would like to see the ban on the right to work lifted for refugee and asylum seekers. I would like to see an expanded family reunion rule. I would like to see a reform in the application process. I would also like to see a smooth transition of integration for family reunion.

Having said all this, in my experience as a VOICE ambassador, which is an organisation of people who have lived experience of family separation, refugees and asylum, I have come to understand the system, which I never was aware of. In my quest for knowledge I have dug a little deeper to see what the modus operandi and asylum system are of other countries that are similar to the UK and that is where the quest for change is coming from.

The UK asylum system application process is too rigorous. It takes too long for you to go through the process of application. If you are granting an application, why wait 10 years? Why does somebody need to stay for two or three years? I have a colleague of mine who after 14 years got an application approved. Why does somebody need to be broken completely into shreds before an application can be granted?

I would like the accommodation of people who are called asylum seekers to be a place where humans can live, a place where you can come in and be treated like a human being, not just a shelter. I want to see a system where you do not want me to be grateful for what you are giving me. Give it to me because I deserve it, because I am a human. There is too much in the UK asylum system. I want a total reform and a total overhaul of the Home Office dealing with the asylum system. I want to see a process where, if an asylum is merited, there is a quicker process to the end. People's mental health is damaged in this process.

Even when a person's application is running, they have immigration officers sent after them, who come with shackles and chains, bundle them into a van and take them to a removal centre only to find out that this person still has an ongoing application in the Home Office. Where is the synergy? I want to see a synchronisation between the applications centre, the removals centre and the immigration office, where free flow of information can be corresponded from one point to the other instead of damaging people, taking them away and eventually coming back and saying, "We are sorry. We just realised that you have an application going on". Where is that vacuum? Where is that bridge of information? What happened?

I want to see an asylum system where a child refugee can be granted a reunion to their family. I want to see an expanded route where a child over 18 can be granted a stay over the mum and the dad. I am sure you are aware that the asylum system does not grant or allow a child over 18 to join the parents. How many of us leave home at 18? We all remain children to our parents, even when we are over 18. These children's lives are damaged when you leave them back in different countries and they

do not have the opportunity eventually to join you again, because the rule says if a child is over 18 he is not allowed to come under family reunion. It is a great loss.

I want to see an asylum system process that rejuvenates professionals. People come here when they flee from danger in their country. They are medical doctors; they are engineers; they are in the media. They have that qualification. Elkhansaa is a pharmacist. I want to see a process where our career can be rejuvenated, where we can go back into that system to give back to society, and a system that transitions us back to what we were, so that we can be a giver and bring in the virtue that we have in us, instead of being dumped somewhere after being given that status of a refugee, so we no longer can be proactive. We eventually are damaged by the system.

I want to see a system that does not damage the human, who is me. I want to see that system that serves me, that integrates me back into society, that makes me feel like a human once again and that gives me that total reassurance and acceptance. I want so much from the UK asylum and refugee system.

Lord Henley: Thank you so much. Elkhansaa, can you talk about your experiences and what you think you would like to see in the way of changes?

Elkhansaa: My asylum process is just a series of challenges that never end and I hope it will come to an end soon. I have been here for two years, and it took me a whole year to be interviewed and almost over one year without a decision being made. This kind of delay in decision-making and interviewing people puts people in a bad situation that affects their mental well-being, even for those mothers such as me, who have left their children and their family back home. There is a feeling of stress and guilt that your children are growing up away from you and are still too young to understand why their mother or their father is not there with them. They have that feeling that you abandoned them.

Being a highly qualified person, you do not have the right to work. This system is forcing people to be dependent. We need a system that does not make people a burden. We are not a burden. We can contribute back to society, if the system allows us to do that, so a work permit is one of the reforms that should be in place. The family reunion is a very important and challenging thing, because you cannot rebuild your life and go ahead without being stable and settled, and when thinking about your family and being apart from them.

The accommodation housing system here is totally not working. These people need to be treated in a dignified way. It is not just a shelter, especially this kind of initial accommodation where you will be in a hostel. You share your room with somebody you do not know. You do not feel safe. The quality of the food and the accommodation—nothing is working.

Lord Henley: Peter, do you have anything that you would like to add

about your own experience of the system and what changes you would like to see?

Peter: This is a change that everyone would like to see in the current system. Right now, the taxpayers are paying for all asylum seekers, who are not allowed to work in this country. The Government are blaming asylum seekers because of that. These people are able, I am sure, in some way to contribute to society by working and paying their taxes, instead of living in hotel rooms and just waiting all day long without having anything else to do.

As others mentioned, our mental health and physical health are both in danger. During the time that we have been waiting, speaking for myself and the people I have seen around me, we are all in bad situations, especially talking about mental health. The staff and the people who are managing us in the hotel and emergency accommodations are SBHL and Clearsprings. They are two companies that do not know anything about health and well-being. None of them are health professionals and they are in charge of asylum seekers who are mentally not very stable in the hotels. With all the problems they are creating for us, they are really making it harder for us to live. They are not making it easier at all.

I have to blame this on the Government and the Home Office, because these companies just care about how much money they are making here and they have their own business plans. They do not really care about us as individuals. The people who are working and managing us all come from foreign countries, so the only reason they are coming to this country is to make money and send it back to their own country. In the end, they just do not care about us. They are just there to do their jobs. The other points others have already talked about. These are the two points I wanted to mention.

Chair: Thank you very much indeed to all three of you for bringing your experience to us and explaining to us. You have come from three different countries, Sudan, Iran and Nigeria. What you have helped us understand, which is important context when we come to discuss the details of the Bill, is that you did not come here through choice, but you were fleeing your country because of fear of remaining. You could not just choose, like going on a holiday, where you go and how you go.

You have explained the circumstances very clearly. You have explained the lack of information that you had, when you came, about the nature of the asylum system and the additional struggles that you have faced since you actually got here. By explaining what has happened to you, which is clearly the case for so many other people who seek asylum, you have provided us a good background and context for our report, so I would like to thank you very sincerely. Your evidence has been extremely helpful. Can I wish you well for the future and thank you? We will now go on to our next panel.

