



Joint Committee on Human Rights

Mike Tapp MP
Minister for Migration and Citizenship
[Delivered by email]

18 June 2026

'Visa Brake' – Afghanistan, Cameroon, Myanmar & Sudan

Dear Minister,

Thank you for your letter of 7 May 2026 which replied to my letter to the Home Secretary on behalf of the JCHR, dated 16 April 2026, concerning the visa brake that was implemented on 26 March for nationals of Afghanistan, Cameroon, Myanmar and Sudan.

In response to the request in our letter for the numbers of students visas applied for and granted from these four countries in the past five years and also the numbers of asylum claims made by individuals from each country who were in the UK on student visas, you provided us with a detailed breakdown that had been part of the impact assessment published when the visa brake was implemented. We have a few further questions on this breakdown:

- The data provided covers the period up to September 2025. Are you able to provide more up to date figures – we note that the general immigration statistics recently published by the Home Office cover up to the end of 2026 Q1?
- We note that the data provided is not cohort-matched, meaning that the asylum claims made in 2023 (for example) may have been made by students who were issued their visas in other years. Since the data does not track the behaviour of a specific cohort, is it suitable to establish the likely behaviour of future cohorts?
- Does the data for "YE Sept 2025" include data from October to December 2024? If so, does this not overlap with the data for 2024 to give an inaccurate picture?



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- We see from the data provided that the number of asylum claims from student visa holders from Afghanistan has dropped significantly from its high of 2000 claims in 2023 to 470 claims in YE Sept 2025. This does not appear to demonstrate the “upward trend” that you state in your letter. While the proportion of asylum claims to student visas issued has gone up, it is unclear what this demonstrates given that the data is not cohort-matched (as discussed above). Can you please explain how the Afghanistan data, in particular, justifies the application of the visa brake to nationals of that country?
- The date provided concerns ‘study’ visas. Could you please provide a breakdown of asylum claims by type of study visa for each of these countries? Could you also please provide a breakdown of the number of asylum claims made by (a) those who have first applied for a graduate visa and been rejected and (b) those who have first successfully moved on to a graduate visa?

In our letter we specifically asked whether you could “identify what proportion of the asylum applications made by individuals holding student (or skilled worker) visas from the four affected nations are successful? In other words, what proportion of these applications are from individuals who have a well-founded fear of persecution and are therefore ‘genuine refugees?’” While you referred us to the Home Office’s immigration statistics, these do not include the detail that we requested. Has information on the success rate of asylum claims made by student visa holders from the four affected nations been analysed for the purposes of the visa brake policy? If so, can you please share it with us? If not, can you explain why this was not considered relevant?

Our letter welcomed the Home Office announcement that new “safe and legal” routes will be opened, starting with a new student refugee route under which arrivals will arrive in autumn of 2027, but we also asked if you could identify what alternative safe and lawful routes are currently available to individuals from each of Afghanistan, Cameroon, Myanmar and Sudan who have a well-founded fear of persecution and want to seek asylum in the UK. Your reply referred to the new routes that are not yet open but did not directly address what routes are available now.

We understand from the Refugee Council that the recently released Home Office statistics show 4,894 people were granted protection through resettlement schemes in the year to March 2026, which was 37% fewer people than arrived through such schemes the year before. Significantly, 4,409 (90% of all those resettled) arrived through the Afghan Resettlement Programme or ARP, which was closed on 1 July 2025 (which did not involve claims for asylum but rather granted leave to remain, before arrival in the UK, to Afghans who were vulnerable, primarily due to links with the UK). Only 476 people were resettled through the UK Resettlement Scheme.¹ What options are there now, in June 2026, for young people from Afghanistan, Cameroon, Myanmar and Sudan who are fleeing persecution and wish to seek protection in the UK?

I would be grateful for a response to this letter by 10 July 2026.

¹ [“Top facts from the latest statistics on refugees and people seeking asylum”](#), Refugee Council website



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Yours Sincerely

Lord Alton of Liverpool
Chair, Joint Committee on Human Rights