



**SUPPORTING AND
EMPOWERING
REFUGEES**

Welcome to this month's Advocacy Network bulletin

Hello all! We aim to provide a direct link between the Refugee Council's Advocacy Team and other individuals and organisations working with refugees and people seeing asylum in the UK. [Read more about the Advocacy Network](#) and share with others who you think may be interested in joining.

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First things first, we owe you a very big THANK YOU!

Thanks to your support for the Refugees Welcome Pledge campaign, more than 100 MPs begin the new Parliament having committed to ensuring that the UK remains a welcoming place of safety for people fleeing conflict and human rights abuses. This is a great achievement which would not have

been possible without your support.

But we won't stop there. The Refugee Council will be working with our partners, Refugee Action and Scottish Refugee Council, and MPs from all parties to build on this momentum. We will be asking for your help again so that we can keep speaking up louder and clearer for refugees.

You can help us change the law



Right now, millions of refugees are on the move across the world, forced to flee their homes due to war, violence and persecution. Some are trying to reach loved ones already living in safety, including in the UK, who they are separated from not only by seas and by borders – but also by restrictive laws.

We're calling on the Government to change the rules to allow more refugees to be able to reunite with their loved ones in safety – but [we need your help](#)

On Thursday 29 June, 20 MPs will have their names drawn out of a hat, and they'll be given the opportunity to introduce a bill on any issue they want. Before then, we're asking people to contact

their MP to ask them to enter the draw and, if they're successful, to use the opportunity for a refugee family reunion bill.

Number of refugees worldwide soars to record high

According to figures published by the [UNHCR](#), 20 people every minute were forced to flee their homes due to persecution, conflict and human rights abuses in 2016. This means that the total number of people having to flee their homes worldwide has soared to a record high of 65.6 million, an increase of 300,000 in just 12 months.

Of this number, 40.3 million people had been displaced within their own countries, while 22.5 million people had been forced to flee their countries and become refugees. An additional 2.8 million people are still awaiting decision on their claim for asylum. You can read [more here](#).

Our response to the Queen's Speech

The Refugee Council welcomes the announcement in last week's Queen's Speech that the next Parliament will introduce a new Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill. An Immigration Bill was also announced; it is expected that this will primarily be focused on exiting the European Union it also present real opportunities to improve the lives of refugees. Our plea to the Government is that it grabs this opportunity with both hands. [Read more here](#)



And finally...want to work with us?

We are recruiting for an Advocacy Network co-ordinator to join our fantastic Advocacy team.

This is an exciting new role which will be responsible for running the Refugee Council's Advocacy Network. We aim to build a vibrant community of organisations and individuals who are committed to sharing information and working together to improve the lives of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. The Advocacy Network co-ordinator will connect with organisations across the country, run events and produce our bulletin and will be key in developing the network. [More info here](#)

Coming next: You may remember that we [reported](#) that people coming under the two resettlement schemes Syrian Vulnerable Person's Scheme and Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme will arrive with refugee status rather than Humanitarian Protection, which was previously the status awarded to beneficiaries of those schemes. Anyone who arrived on these two programmes prior to 1st July 2017 will have to ask for their status to be converted. We are aware that the Home Office is working on the process right now and will share details of it through this network when we have them.



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