

Home Office 'expansion' of Syrian resettlement scheme fails the most vulnerable, says Green MEP



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Yesterday, the Home Office claimed to have “expanded” its scheme to resettle refugees from Syria and neighbouring countries [1].

In fact, the number of refugees it has committed to resettle from the region under the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) remains unchanged – capped at 20,000 by the year 2020.

The difference lies in the number of refugees who are eligible for resettlement. The UK will now welcome vulnerable individuals of any nationality – not just Syrian – who have been affected by the country’s ongoing conflict.

Jean Lambert, London’s Green MEP and the Green Party’s migration spokesperson, says:

“I welcome the Government’s decision to widen the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme to non-Syrian citizens. This enables the UK to offer a fresh start to some of the Iraqi refugees who have also fled Syria – many of whom have now been displaced from their homes twice. It also means that families of mixed nationalities will be able to seek refuge in the UK together.

“However, in reality, this change in eligibility won’t make a significant difference so long as the scheme remains capped at resettling just 20,000 people. In fact, it will result in fewer Syrian nationals being welcomed to the UK – broadening the pool of those who qualify for resettlement, without expanding the number who will ultimately be accepted.

“As the Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, declares she is ‘proud’ that the UK is

‘making sure our doors are open to the people who most need our help’, let’s remember her recent move to slam the same door shut in the faces of unaccompanied children in France, Italy and Greece through the recent closure of the ‘Dubs’ scheme [2].

“This announcement is a step in the right direction from the Home Office. However, we must bear in mind that it’s the smallest of concessions, while a humanitarian crisis of enormous proportions continues to unfold both in the Middle East and closer to home.”

Notes:

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/refugees-of-all-nationalities-fleeing-syria-are-now-eligible-for-resettlement-in-the-uk>
2. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-38912428>

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