



"I was saddened and shocked to read in the Ministerial statement released yesterday that only 350 children will be received under the regulations in the Dubs Amendment. Our country has a great history of welcoming those in need, particularly the most vulnerable, such as unaccompanied children.

Refugees, like all people, are treasured human beings made in the image of God who deserve safety, freedom and the opportunity to flourish. Jesus commands us to care for the most vulnerable among us:

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" (Matthew 25:40).

The Government's decision last year to take in vulnerable children was the right thing to do and was further evidence of the UK's leadership on the response to the Syrian and wider migration crisis. Our Government's leadership on financial and technical support in the region, and its leadership in resettling refugees from UNHCR camps is to be commended. However, I fear that this week's decision does not meet the spirit of the commitment that was given during the passage of the Immigration Act last year.

I agree entirely with colleagues who have spoken out on this already that for those of us who supported the Dubs amendment, we believed that the Government was committed to welcoming up to 3000 children under this scheme. To end the scheme now, when such a small proportion have actually entered the country, is regrettable. Local authorities, who are bearing the costs of the resettlement, must be given the resources and time needed to meet our original commitment.

On Tuesday, I was in Istanbul to co-sponsor a Forum on modern slavery and trafficking. During the event, we heard about the clear and terrible link between the large-scale movement of refugees and the risk of trafficking. Providing safe passage for unaccompanied children already in Europe, into caring and loving homes – in some cases through Christian groups such as the excellent Home for Good – is a clear and tangible way in which we as a country can demonstrate our values of protecting the vulnerable and welcoming the stranger.

We must resist and turn back the worrying trends we are seeing around the world, towards seeing the movement of desperate people as more of a threat to identity and security than an opportunity to do our duty. We cannot withdraw from our long and proud history of helping the most vulnerable.

I very much hope that the Government will reconsider this decision, and work with church groups and others to find a sustainable and compassionate solution that allows those most in need to find sanctuary in our country."

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