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Paul Nowak General Secretary
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Dear Minister,

The Illegal Migration Bill

I am writing on behalf of the TUC to express our serious concern at the proposals contained in the Illegal Migration Bill.

As the UN Refugee Agency has said, 'The legislation, if passed, would amount to an asylum ban – extinguishing the right to seek refugee protection in the United Kingdom for those who arrive irregularly, no matter how genuine and compelling their claim may be, and with no consideration of their individual circumstances.' Analysis undertaken by the Refugee Council shows that two-thirds of asylum seekers will be granted asylum because they are refugees who need safety in the UK.

The government's proposals would tarnish the reputation of the UK. Not only would we be turning our back on those in genuine need, but we would also be breaching our international legal obligations under the Refugee Convention.

We are extremely concerned that these proposals would exacerbate the problems with exploitation in the labour market. It is staggering that the government is developing a proposal that would see modern slavery victims, trafficked to the UK for exploitation, denied refuge and sent back to the criminal gangs who trafficked them in the first place. Furthermore, the proposals risk many migrant workers being pushed into the informal economy where the worst employers will take advantage of workers who have no legal status and no recourse to labour market inspectorates.

The government's proposal and the language used to describe it are divisive and will stoke tension in British communities. This was seen recently in Knowsley where far right supporters violently protested against asylum seekers.

We urge you to reconsider these harmful proposals.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'PN' with a flourish.

Paul Nowak
General Secretary