

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom



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Special Consultative Relations with: FAO, ILO and UNICEF

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Dear Prime Minister,

Refugees

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom considers that UK government must act urgently to relieve the hardship suffered by refugees attempting to flee from war and/or persecution, hunger and starvation caused by environmental change. Many suffer harsh treatment and unimaginable dangers on their journeys.

The UK Government should recognise UK partial responsibility for creating the situation by our military intervention in countries where, without sufficient understanding of the problems and without a commitment to dialogue, the intervention has led to destabilisation of governments and lack of governance.

The UK also shares responsibility with other European governments for the promotion, protection and support of the lucrative arms industry which sells arms regardless of the end use or user.

Ill-considered language and press headlines cause undue concern about the impact of receiving refugees into the country, on the NHS, the education and welfare system - indeed on our way of life. But many people are distressed by the suffering of those fleeing their homes: we can see on our TV screens that women who

subject their children to such an ordeal must be desperate. As citizens of this wealthy nation we wish to alleviate the pain and ordeals faced by refugees seeking shelter.

The traffickers are thriving because Governments have turned their backs and failed to provide good political resolution: given the reality of human distress, European leaders need to plan for the provision of basic facilities whilst people are in transit.

Long term action is needed to prevent such situations from arising in the future but immediate short term action must be taken to relieve the suffering.

We urge that the UK government admits:

That this country has a duty to take in more refugees;

That it provides information to show that providing asylum will not create a threat to our way of life;

That most refugees would wish to return to their countries eventually but also that those who may stay would contribute to our well-being.

We urge also that UK Government takes the lead in proposing positive practical planning for the current migration, providing for safe transport out of danger.

Yours sincerely

Anne Scott

Anne Scott, Secretary UK WILPF on behalf of UK WILPF Executive Committee