



## Statement

6<sup>th</sup> October 2020

### **RR calls for the British government to make their planned changes to the asylum system compassionate**

Rethink Rebuild Society (RR) acknowledges that there are fundamental problems within the UK asylum system but expresses great concern that Home Secretary Priti Patel's pledge to reform the system will negatively impact the lives of asylum seekers in the UK and abroad.

Whilst it is true that waiting times for decisions are excessive and that the lives of vulnerable individuals are risked at the hands of traffickers every day, Priti Patel's rhetoric whilst speaking at the Conservative party conference does not suggest that the system overhaul will be implemented with compassion. Her emphasis on stopping "illegal entry" is particularly worrying as this implies connotations that an individual may be deemed less worthy of asylum based on their route into the UK. Individuals do not often make the decision to endanger their lives without significant fear of persecution or danger in their home nation. We are especially alarmed given that Priti Patel's statement comes less than a week after leaked documents allege that the Conservative party considered processing all British asylum seekers on Ascension Island- a contemplation that is positively draconian, inhumane and impractical.

Priti Patel's statement is also likely to have triggered feelings of anxiety and fear in asylum seekers all over the world. The implication that the new system will not allow "endless legal claims to remain" is worrying for those who may have received a refusal in the past. RR are also afraid that the tone of the speech may increase stigma against asylum seekers and refugees, leading to increased instances of discrimination and even hate crime. Negative language used on such a prominent platform, such as suggesting the system is not "firm" enough or that some asylum seekers "break our rules", may impact on the future safety and wellbeing of immigrants in Britain.

RR calls for the British Government to remain fair and compassionate, to preserve the dignity of refugees, and to ensure safer routes for them to reach the UK

### **ENDS**

For further information and press enquiries, please contact 07533155533 or email: [moaz@rrsoc.org](mailto:moaz@rrsoc.org)

Rethink Rebuild Society (RR) is a Manchester-based charity that works towards improving the lives of refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants, in particular but not exclusively Syrians in the UK, helping them become positively established within the British society. RR endeavours to promote peace and protection of civilians to its audience in the UK and the wider public.

