

Statement from Lowkey for 'Behind Locked Doors' 29th February 2020

My apologies for my absence today, I was greatly looking forward to getting involved in this important campaign. As you all know the United Kingdom unlike all other countries in the EU has no limit on how long people can be detained in immigration cases. Generally between 20k and 30k people across the span of a year are detained on immigration cases in this country. France has a limit of 32 days while Germany has a limit of 6 weeks. So it is safe to say while this country does not have anything like the Jungle camp in Calais, in terms of detention of migrants it is already closer to Australia and the US where there is also no time limit.

In the United States where detention of human beings is a booming private business, it is said that at any point around 30k people are held in indefinite immigration detention. As someone who worked as a translator in Calais working on cases to bring minors to this country to reunite with their family members through the Dubs amendment in EU law, I am deeply worried about the future of immigration policy post Brexit. The graveyard at the bottom of the mediterranean and the 20k plus people who have died trying to enter Europe since 2000 speak to the horrific reality of Frontex and the callous indifference of the EU policy towards people fleeing war. However, with harsher immigration policy depicted as a panacea by many in mainstream media and politics, my fear is more needless suffering and trauma for more people post Brexit. The likelihood is we are heading to an immigration policy more akin to the US and Australia than Germany.

That is why it is vital to support this campaign. Those who are detained in prison due to open immigration cases following a custodial sentence are disadvantaged going into their proceedings. Their ability to access legal advice is significantly harder. In some cases people serve their sentence only to be told right at the last minute by the home office that they must now be held indefinitely for immigration reasons. This cold and inhumane treatment by the home office can lead to traumas, self harm and even in some cases suicide. It is for all the reasons above that I am excited to join your campaign in demanding bail for all immigrations detainees and an end to indefinite detention.