

Subject: Victims and Prisoners Bill leaving migrant victims unprotected

Dear [**Name of MP**],

I am writing as the second reading of the Victims and Prisoners Bill will take place on Monday, 15 May. This Bill has long been promised to crime victims and organisations supporting them. The Bill seeks to improve the experiences of those who have been victimised with better access to justice and protection. Nevertheless, the rights and entitlements for vulnerable migrant victims of crime are not part of this legislation.

A wealth of evidence has shown that migrant women's vulnerability to experiencing gender-based abuse increased due to having insecure immigration status. Perpetrators of violence exploit this vulnerability to threaten migrant victims with deportation, destitution and separation from their children if they come forward and seek support. The fear of facing negative immigration control consequences after reporting a crime is not unjustified. Data obtained by Freedom of Information requests show that in the last couple of years, over 2,000 victims of crime were referred to the Home Office for immigration control after reporting to the police. More than 400 victims of domestic abuse are part of this statistic. The Domestic Abuse Commissioner will be proposing an amendment to introduce a firewall. I urge you to support this change in legislation.

Migrant women with No Recourse to Public Funds, who are prevented from accessing welfare benefits, are at risk of

destitution if leaving an abusive partner. Southall Black Sisters will be working on an amendment to ensure successful existing models of protection for migrant women on spouse visas (DVILR/DDVC) are extended to all migrant victims of abuse.

I invite you to participate in the second reading of this legislation and raise concerns about how its current form fails to guarantee equal protection for migrant victims. A Bill that seeks to be transformative cannot leave some of the most vulnerable behind.

Finally, I urge you to meet with migrant victims' representatives to discuss in detail proposals to enhance systems of protection for women with insecure immigration status. Their details are as follows:

- Hannana Siddiqui, Southall Black Sisters, hannana@southallblacksisters.co.uk
- Elizabeth Jiménez-Yáñez, Latin American Women's Rights Service, elizabeth@lawrs.org.uk
- Jasmine Mohammad, Safety 4 Sisters, Jasmine@safety4sisters.org

Sincerely,

[Remember to add your name and postcode]