



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

### Fifty-fifth session

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Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

## **Written statement\* submitted by The Next Century Foundation, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[1 February 2024]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



## **Towards a Just and Comprehensive Migration Policy for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

In the often febrile debates regarding asylum and immigration; principals of fairness, compassion, realism and proportionality must be uppermost. Across Europe, these principles are being tested and governments recognise agreement for coordinated action must be a priority. We need assurances that the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is working closely with our European allies following their new Pact on Migration and Asylum. Furthermore, we must take whatever action is necessary for a fairer deal for families caught up in our asylum and migration system. For example, those who make it to France or the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, even by irregular routes, with verifiable family connections here should be differentiated, considered for temporary visas and become the responsibility of their United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland relatives while their cases are considered. A particular priority should be given to the processing of the cases of some uniquely challenged refugees, for instance children coming from war zones.

In the pursuit of a more effective and compassionate migration strategy, it is essential to put forth policy recommendations that not only confront the challenges at hand but also align with the core values of humanity and fairness.

1. **Family Reunification:** A "fast track" approach for individuals with family ties in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland who arrived in France through irregular routes is a viable option. It should be adopted.
2. **Right to Work:** There may or may not be a limited political appetite for concessions regarding paid employment for asylum seekers. However this issue remains crucial. Asylum seekers need not and should not be a burden on the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland taxpayer. They can and should be allowed to work if they agree to cover their own accommodation costs whilst their cases are determined. The present policy is not fit for purpose and is blatantly ridiculous. This could and should go hand in hand with a clampdown on illegal employment in the hidden economy. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is regarded as a far better place to be stateless than in other European nations, in part because of the comparative ease with which illegal jobs for cash can be found here, particularly in the hotel, restaurant, leisure and agricultural sectors.
3. **Backlog:** Addressing backlog issues is imperative through streamlined processes and increased staffing, showcasing an unwavering commitment to safeguarding the rights of asylum seekers. Because of the emotive nature of the small boat crossings of the English Channel, these cases should be prioritized for immediate determination and time limited.
4. **Minors:** A compassionate approach towards children under 16 who arrive in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, affording them an automatic right to asylum, is not just morally justified but also aligns with our duty to protect the most vulnerable. The challenge of age verification for young asylum seekers is considerable, given the absence of a definitive test. The potential use of intrusive methods such as DNA or genetic screening raises ethical concerns, necessitating informed consent from the individuals involved. None the less those genuinely under the age of 16 will undoubtedly readily consent to any procedure that will verify their age and should as a consequence be granted automatic asylum.
5. **War Zones:** The need for fast-tracking processing for migrants from crisis-stricken nations is a pressing necessity, offering prompt relief to those facing imminent danger. The term "crisis-stricken" demands clarification. Seeking basic clarity on the government's stance becomes imperative, especially considering recent events in Ukraine and Afghanistan.

6. **Student's Families:** Lastly, considering recent adjustments by Her Majesty's Government to the pay threshold for overseas family members joining United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland residents prompts us to question whether similar flexibility (and constraint) could be extended to the right of family members to accompany overseas students, warranting a review of this policy.
7. **Collaboration:** We seek assurances that the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland government is closely collaborating with European allies following their new Pact on Migration and Asylum. Furthermore, we advocate necessary actions to secure a fairer deal for families caught up in our asylum and migration system. For instance, individuals with verifiable family connections in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, even if they arrived through irregular routes in France, should be considered for temporary visas and become the responsibility of their United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland relatives during the consideration of their cases.
8. **Equitable Responsibility:** The prospect of achieving a pan-European agreement for the equitable distribution of asylum seekers across 28 countries is undeniably ambitious. Therefore, it is prudent to inquire about the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland government's commitment to the European Commission's Dublin Regulation (a Regulation of the European Union that determines which EU member state is responsible for the examination of an application for asylum), underscoring the importance of shared responsibility among Member States.
9. **Honesty:** It is essential to approach with a critical lens the claim that boat arrivals are decreasing, aligning with government statements. Scrutinizing and questioning the validity of such assertions is paramount for a thorough understanding of the situation.