

The Rt Hon David Cameron MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

BY HAND

21 September 2015

Dear Prime Minister,

We are writing to you as Rabbis and Cantors from across the Jewish community in the UK, many of whom are the children of refugees.

As Rabbis and Cantors we regularly read the story of a band of refugees who escaped from a tyrant with only the clothes on their backs and a bit of flat bread. They crossed a sea, and they dreamed of a promised land. We call this the exodus, and it is our founding beacon for hope, and our constant reminder in every generation to open our hearts and our doors to the stranger at our gates. The Bible reminds us more often than any other commandment: "Do not oppress the stranger, for you know the soul of the stranger, because you were once strangers in the land of Egypt." (Exodus 23:9)

We also remember and speak about the brave and committed citizens of this country who opened their homes to welcome 10,000 children fleeing Hitler. We call this the Kindertransport, and it is again our beacon for hope in the values of Great Britain. A light of human kindness that shines into the darkest corners of history.

With such stories to teach us values, we know that now it is our turn to open our gates to refugees who are fleeing from tyranny and evil, often with only the clothes on their backs, and their children in their arms. We were heartened to hear that 20,000 refugees will be welcomed into the UK over the next five years.

Yet we look again to World War II where we find that immediate action could have saved many more children's lives. Let the Kindertransport be our inspiration. 10,000 legitimate refugees, at the very minimum, should be offered asylum in Great Britain in the next 6 months.

In addition to this quick response to the current crisis, we also call upon you and the UK government to re-examine the current UK asylum practices in order to deliver a long-term solution. In particular, we would urge you to review the policy that prevents asylum seekers from working. Many refugees are highly qualified and speak fluent English. A quick integration into the work force will ensure that they can provide for themselves, contribute to society and not depend on government or charitable hand-outs. The great Jewish thinker and philosopher Maimonides taught us the importance of giving charity but stressed that the highest form of charity is to enable the needy person to become self-sufficient. Let us not withhold this opportunity from those who are fleeing to this country in the hope of building a better future for themselves and their families.

As Rabbis and Cantors, we offer our dedicated support for the government in this brave and good deed. The Jewish community will help in the effort of finding homes for shelter. We will raise funds for food, clothing and education. We will support your difficult decision in this time where moral courage is demanded. Let all our children one day tell the story of a nation that listened to the cry of the stranger in need.

Yours sincerely

1. Rabbi Shulamit Ambalu
2. Rabbi Dr Robert Ash
3. Student Rabbi Robyn Ashworth Steen
4. Rabbi Dr James Baaden
5. Rabbi Lisa Barrett
6. Rabbi Charley Baginsky
7. Rabbi Rachel Benjamin
8. Rabbi Jeffrey Berger
9. Rabbi Miriam Berger
10. Rabbi Francis Ronald Berry
11. Student Rabbi Deborah Blausten
12. Rabbi Dr. Barbara Borts
13. Rabbi Janet Burden
14. Chazan Jaclyn Chernett
15. Rabbi Douglas Charing
16. Rabbi Dr. Jeremy Collick
17. Rabbi Howard Cooper
18. Rabbi Janet Darley
19. Rabbi Jason Demant
20. Rabbi Colin Eimer
21. Rabbi Warren Elf
22. Rabbi Mijael Even-David
23. Rabbi Michael Foulds OBE
24. Rabbi Adam Frankenberg
25. Rabbi Paul Freedman
26. Rabbi Helen Freeman
27. Rabbi Ariel J Friedlander
28. Rabbi Anna Gerrard
29. Student Rabbi Nathan Godleman
30. Rabbi Amanda Golby
31. Student Rabbi Alexander Goldberg
32. Student Rabbi Naomi Goldman
33. Rabbi Mark Goldsmith
34. Rabbi Aaron Goldstein

35. Rabbi Dr. Andrew Goldstein
36. Rabbi Dr. Jeremy Gordon
37. Rabbi Tony Hammond
38. Student Rabbi Roberta Harris
39. Rabbi Michael Hilton
40. Rabbi Jason Holtz
41. Rabbi Harry Jacobi
42. Rabbi Dr. Margaret Jacobi
43. Rabbi Richard Jacobi
44. Cantor Zoe Jacobs
45. Rabbi Neil Janes
46. Rabbi Oliver Joseph
47. Rabbi Leah Jordan
48. Student Rabbi Dr Elliott Karstadt
49. Rabbi Laura Janner Klausner
50. Rabbi Dr. Deborah Kahn-Harris
51. Rabbi Rafael Kaiserblueth
52. Rabbi Steven Katz
53. Student Rabbi Hannah Kingston
54. Rabbi Jason Kleiman
55. Rabbi Danielle Kolodny
56. Rabbi Neil Kraft
57. Rabbi Sandra Kviat
58. Rabbi Judith Levitt
59. Rabbi Joshua Levy
60. Rabbi Natan Levy
61. Student Rabbi Daniel Lichman
62. Rabbi Professor Jonathan Magonet
63. Rabbi David Mason
64. Rabbi Monique Mayer
65. Rabbi Maurice Michaels
66. Rabbi Dr. Charles Middleburgh
67. Rabbi Kathleen Middleton
68. Rabbi David Mitchell
69. Rabbi Rachel Montagu
70. Rabbi Lea Muehlstein
71. Baroness Rabbi Julia Neuberger
72. Student Rabbi Danny Newman
73. Rabbi Jeffrey Newman
74. Rabbi Dr René Pfertzl
75. Student Rabbi Anna Posner
76. Rabbi Rebecca Qassim Birk
77. Rabbi Danny Rich
78. Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain MBE
79. Rabbi Sylvia Rothschild
80. Rabbi Professor Marc Saperstein

81. Rabbi Tatsiana Sakhnovich
82. Rabbi Meir Salasnik
83. Rabbi Fabian Sborovky
84. Student Rabbi Zahavit Shalev
85. Rabbi Haim Shalom
86. Rabbi Sybil Sheridan
87. Cantor/Student Rabbi Gershon Sillins
88. Rabbi Irit Shillor
89. Rabbi Frank Dabba Smith
90. Rabbi Mark Solomon
91. Rabbi Zvi Solomons
92. Student Rabbi Frankie Stubbs
93. Rabbi Celia Surget
94. Rabbi Benji Stanley
95. Rabbi Jackie Tabick
96. Rabbi Larry Tabick
97. Rabbi Roni Tabick
98. Rabbi Pete Tobias
99. Student Rabbi Kath Vardi
100. Rabbi Lee Wax
101. Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg
102. Rabbi Alexandra Wright
103. Rabbi Debbie Young-Somers
104. Rabbi Dr Andrea Zarnado