



Objection to Campsfield Expansion Plan

To whom it may concern,

I am writing on behalf of René Cassin, the Jewish non-governmental organisation which seeks to protect and promote universal human rights by drawing on Jewish experience and values. We strongly object to the potential expansion of the Campsfield House Immigration Removal Centre for three important reasons.

It's immoral. We believe the proposal to expand the detention system presents a significant threat to the human rights of some of the world's most vulnerable people. Current UK policy on immigration detention allows innocent people to be kept in prison-like conditions without a trial, a time limit or adequate medical facilities and legal support. Furthermore, Britain is the only country in Europe that still uses indefinite detention as an administrative tool and, as such, our reputation as 'the gold standard' of human rights is at risk amongst the international community. If the UK shies away from its international responsibilities, there is a danger that countries less committed to human rights will interpret this behaviour as a green light to ignore them.

It's inefficient. The proposed site for expansion lies in a designated Green Belt area, in which the construction of new buildings is generally not allowed. This means that the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice must demonstrate a strong need for detention expansion in order to obtain planning permission. However, the plans to expand the Campsfield House Immigration Removal Centre are ill-founded considering that more than a third of those who are detained are released back into the community and do not result in removals. In fact, the UK has been removing fewer people as the size of the detention estate has grown. Moreover, detention is extremely expensive to maintain. It is estimated that £76 million a year of tax-payers' money is wasted detaining asylum seekers who are ultimately released into the community. Despite the cost, and the fact that the UK detains more migrants for longer and with less judicial oversight than any other European country, immigration detention does not act as a deterrent to immigration. It does not solve the problems that advocates of the tool are putting forward.

It's ill-timed. In 2014, the UK Parliament launched its first dedicated and official inquiry into the impacts and implications of immigration detention. The inquiry is yet to report its findings, however it is likely that it will report a need to change or at least cut back on needlessly costly, inhumane administrative tools.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Sam Grant'.

Sam Grant
René Cassin