

# Amnesty International Southend Group

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## Help change the law for refugees

Restrictive rules mean that many refugees in the UK have no hope of being reunited with their family. Together we can change the rules which keep refugee families apart.

Private Member's Bill

Angus MacNeil MP has introduced a private members bill, which will receive its second reading on **Friday 16th March 2018**. The bill has been co-sponsored by a cross-party group of MPs who feel the current refugee family reunion rules are too restrictive. Amnesty International UK is working with the British Red Cross, Oxfam, Refugee Council, Student Action for Refugees (STAR), the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and others to make these changes happen.

Now we need your help to secure 100 MPs voting in favour of the bill, on **Friday 16th March**, to ensure it progresses to the next stage. Together let's make sure they attend.

Write or email your MP

Most MPs normally spend their Fridays in Constituencies, and this is an important part of the role they play. We are asking you to ask them to make an exception to this. Will you write to your MP making the following points;

- **Separation of refugee families can have a devastating impact on their lives**
- **You would like to see the UK government change restrictive rules that keep refugee families apart**
- **You recognise that Friday is an important day for MPs to be in their constituency. However, as a constituent you would like them to make an exception and support the Refugee Family Reunion Bill in Westminster.**
- **Will they commit to attending the Second Reading of the Refugee Family Reunion Bill on Friday 16th March 2018 and vote in favour of the bill?**

What the Bill asks for

- To expand the definition of family member, as currently only partners and children under the age of 18 are allowed to join their family in the UK;
- To give refugee children the right to be reunited with their parents as under current reunion rules children cannot sponsor their parents to come to the UK leaving them alone;
- To reintroduce legal aid for refugee family reunion applications

As part of the IWelcome campaign, Amnesty International is campaigning for the UK to better share responsibility for hosting and assisting refugees. If we can make these changes, it would help create a safe and legal route for refugees in the UK.

Find your MP <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/>