

The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
The Home Secretary
The Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

8th March 2022

Dear Home Secretary,

I hope you are well. I am writing on behalf of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the democratic and representative body of the UK Jewish community, regarding the terrible position of those refugees fleeing the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

This is a fast-moving situation and I am sure that both the Government and civil servants are working around the clock to ensure that the United Kingdom plays its role in accepting and supporting refugees. Nevertheless, there are inevitable delays in the process, leading to refugees being stranded and vulnerable to lack of shelter and malnutrition as well as the dangers of war.

We strongly welcome the Government's family sponsorship programme, the intention to establish a humanitarian sponsorship pathway and your leadership in this matter. Unfortunately, the current process appears to be far too slow. The Jewish community has been moved in particular by a case of a 90-year-old Holocaust and Holodomor survivor, who is currently living in makeshift accommodation in Poland, but whose granddaughter in London is desperately trying to bring her over to ensure that she has the care and support she needs.

For that one story we know about, there are likely to be thousands of refugees, of all faiths and none, facing similar circumstances. I am therefore asking for you to substantially increase capacity for delivering the family sponsorship programme and establish the humanitarian sponsorship pathway for which all Ukrainian refugees are eligible as quickly as possible. Once the humanitarian sponsorship pathway is established, the Jewish community stands ready to play its part in supporting the UK Government in this important task.

Thank you for your time in this matter and your continued support for the Jewish community.

Yours sincerely,



Marie van der Zyl
President
The Board of Deputies of British Jews