

Thursday 26 November 2020  
(by email and post)

Dear **Andrew Flintham**, *Managing Director, TUI UK and Ireland*  
**Antonio Mota**, *CEO, Evelop Airlines*  
**Gene Willson**, *Managing Director, Titan Airways*  
**Kurt Ekert**, *President and CEO, Carlson Wagonlit Travel (CWT)*  
**Paulo Mirpuri**, *CEO, Hi Fly*  
**Phill Blundell**, *CEO, Air Tanker*

We write to you following confirmation that the Home Secretary Priti Patel is planning a mass deportation of Black British residents to Jamaica on the 2nd December 2020. We understand that your companies have recently worked with the UK Government to operate and facilitate charter flight removals from the UK and we have grounds to believe that one of your firms may be planning to operate the flight planned for 2nd December.

We are writing to ask you to decline to operate the flight on the 2nd December and to pause the operation of deportation flights to Commonwealth countries for the foreseeable future. There are a number of important reasons why such flights are wholly inappropriate at this time and risk the unlawful and wrongful removal of people who have the right to remain in the UK.

The Windrush scandal has not been resolved, and yesterday the Equality and Human Rights Commission concluded that the Government's hostile environment policies breach equality laws and discriminate against Black people.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, it has recently been revealed that Alexandra Ankrah, the most senior Black civil servant working on the Home Office's Windrush compensation scheme has resigned, describing the scheme as systemically racist and unfit for purpose.<sup>2</sup> These developments call into question the Home Office's competency to deal with the continuing injustices it has created.

Until justice has been delivered for all Commonwealth Windrush victims, any deportations to Commonwealth countries risk further unlawful removals of Windrush generation members or Windrush descendants who may have the right to remain in the UK but do not yet have the required paperwork. By way of example, one of the men deported from the UK to Jamaica on a charter flight operated by Evelop in February 2020 was the grandson of a woman who arrived on the HMT Empire Windrush and is still seeking to have his deportation order revoked.

The UK's system for identifying victims of trafficking is in disarray, meaning that the Government frequently seeks to deport people whose offences occurred by reason of their trafficking or forced labour.<sup>3</sup> At least four of the young men detained for deportation on Evelop's February 2020 flight to Jamaica have since been officially recognised as potential victims of trafficking following eleventh hour reprieves. It is unknown how many of those who were removed had similar profiles.

Similarly, and as recently acknowledged by the Home Secretary, the UK's system for recognising asylum seekers is broken.<sup>4</sup> Some of those already detained and due to be deported on 2nd December have physical scars and further evidence of being subjected to ill-treatment and/or have had siblings killed in Jamaica, which puts them at grave risk if removed from the UK. They have been unable to make asylum claims due to multiple barriers. The system for seeking legal advice and representation while in immigration detention has all but broken down since COVID hit and we understand that the computer room at Colnbrook IRC has now been closed due to COVID19,

preventing access to emails and the internet to facilitate legal representation.

The most recent investigation into the consequences of past deportations from the UK to Jamaica found that between March 2018 – May 2019, at least five deportees were killed: Owen Clarke (62); Dewayne Robinson (37); Alphonso Harriott (56); Paul Mitchell (50); Hugh Bennett (48). The investigation also found that surviving deportees lived in fear for their lives.<sup>5</sup>

We understand that a number of those the Home Office is seeking to deport on 2nd December have been in the UK since childhood. This is despite the fact that in 2018, the Government's reviewer of immigration detention, Stephen Shaw CBE, made an official recommendation to Government that "the Home Office should no longer routinely seek to remove those who were born in the UK or have been brought up here from an early age."<sup>6</sup> This followed his findings that a significant number of people routinely deported were "more British than foreign" having either been born in the UK or brought here as young children. Despite a clear and reasoned recommendation, the Government has ignored its official reviewer and made no attempt to reform law or practice. This is notwithstanding a Savanta ComRes poll in June 2020 finding that the public overwhelming support Shaw's recommendation.<sup>7</sup>

The credible risks of unlawful and wrongful deportations should be considered against a backdrop of concern about systemic racism. The unlawful killing of George Floyd in the USA led to widespread Black Lives Matter protests across the UK highlighting our society's many shortcomings in valuing Black lives with equal worth. Numerous official reports have highlighted endemic discrimination within our criminal justice system with inescapable consequences for the fairness of the deportation system.<sup>8</sup>

In an already challenging festive period, and for the reasons listed above, we ask you to reflect on whether the operation of this flight would comply with your corporate social responsibility values. There is precedent for such reflection. In June 2018 Virgin Airlines made the following statement:

*"We made the decision to end all involuntary deportations on our network, and have already informed the Home Office. We believe this decision is in the best interest of our customers and people, and is in keeping with our values as a company".<sup>9</sup>*

**In conclusion, we ask that -**

**(1) those firms who are not intending to operate this flight, make a public statement to that effect;**

**(2) the firm(s) which have been intending to operate and/or facilitate this flight, reconsider their position and communicate this to Government and the wider public.**

Yours sincerely,

- 1. Mangrove Community Association**
- 2. Natalie Barnes, Daughter of the late Paulette Wilson**
- 3. Anthony Bryan, Windrush Campaigner**
- 4. Michael Braithwaite, Windrush Campaigner**
- 5. Glenda Caesar, Windrush Campaigner**
- 6. Elwaldo Romeo, Windrush Campaigner and Chair of Windrush Action**
- 7. Beverley Knight MBE, Recording Artist**
- 8. Naomi Campbell, Supermodel, Actor and Businesswoman**

9. **Thandie Newton OBE**, *Actor*
10. **Bernardine Evaristo**, *Author*
11. **Adwoa Aboah**, *Model and Activist*
12. **Naomie Harris**, *Actor*
13. **Afua Adom**, *TV and Radio Broadcaster*
14. **Afua Hirsch**, *Lawyer and Broadcaster*
15. **Akua Gyamfi**
16. **Angelina Osborne**, *Historian and Academic*
17. **Arike Oke**, *Managing Director of Black Cultural Archives*
18. **Ashionye Ogene**, *Journalist*
19. **Ash Sarkar**, *Journalist*
20. **Ayo Akinwolere**, *Broadcaster*
21. **Bella Sankey**, *Director, Detention Action*
22. **Bree Johnson**, *Journalist*
23. **Brenda Emmanus**, *Broadcaster*
24. **Carol Cooper**
25. **Carole Williams**, *Lead member of Equalities & Windrush, Hackney Council*
26. **Charlie Brinkhurst Cuff**, *Journalist*
27. **Clare Clotney**, *Broadcaster*
28. **Crispin Phillip**, *Broadcaster*
29. **D. Peter Herbert OBE**, *Immigration Judge (retired)*
30. **Darren Lewis**, *Broadcaster*
31. **David Olusoga**, *Historian and Academic*
32. **Denise Roberts**
33. **Derek Bardowell**, *Author*
34. **Dianne Greyson**
35. **Dorian Leatham**, *Chief Executive Migrants' Rights Network*
36. **Dr Angelina Osborne**, *Author*
37. **Dr Halima Begum**, *Director of Runnymede Trust*
38. **Dr Omega Douglas**, *Lecturer and Journalist*
39. **Dr Shola Mos-Shogbamimu**, *Lawyer, Author, Broadcaster*
40. **Esohe Aghatise**
41. **Esther Armah**, *Playwright, Radio Host and Political Commentator*
42. **Evadney Campbell MBE**, *Lecturer and Broadcast Journalist*
43. **Gary Younge**, *Author, Broadcaster and Professor of Sociology*
44. **Genelle Aldred**, *Broadcaster*
45. **Gillian Joseph**, *Journalist*
46. **Henry Bonsu**, *Broadcaster*
47. **Holly Henry-Long**, *Broadcaster*
48. **Jacqueline Hinds**
49. **Jacqueline McKenzie**, *Lawyer*
50. **Jessica Phillips**, *Broadcaster*
51. **Joanne Benjamin Lewis**
52. **Jones Ramsey**, *Broadcaster*
53. **Jordan Jarrett-Bryan**, *Journalist*
54. **Juliana Olayinka**, *Broadcaster*
55. **Karen Gabay**, *Radio Presenter and Producer*

56. **Keme Nzerem**, *Broadcaster*
57. **Kuba Shand-Baptiste**, *Deputy Editor, The Independent*
58. **Kwame Kwei-Armah OBE**, *Artistic Director of the Young Vic*
59. **Lee Jasper**, *Vice Chair BAME Lawyers for Justice*
60. **Leroy Logan MBE**, *Former Superintendent at the Metropolitan Police*
61. **Liv Little**, *Journalist*
62. **Lola Okolosie**, *English Teacher and Guardian Columnist*
63. **Lord Victor Adebowle**, *Crossbench Peer*
64. **Lucy Pilkington**, *Producer*
65. **Mangrove Community Association**
66. **Marcia Rigg**, *Campaigner*
67. **Marverine Cole**, *Journalist and Author*
68. **Misan Harriman**, *Photographer*
69. **Nadine White**, *Journalist*
70. **Nelson Abbey**, *Author*
71. **Nike Komolafe**, *Broadcaster*
72. **Obioma Ugoala**, *Actor*
73. **Paul Gilroy**, *Writer, Historian and Academic*
74. **Prof. Marverine Cole**, *Broadcaster*
75. **Reni Eddo-Lodge**, *Journalist and Author*
76. **Sachelle Conner**
77. **Sandra Miller**
78. **Satbir Singh**, *Chief Executive Officer, Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants*
79. **Scarlette Douglas**, *TV Presenter*
80. **Shaista Aziz**, *Journalist, Writer, Stand-up Comedian*
81. **Sharmaine Lovegrove**, *Publisher*
82. **Shireen Khan**
83. **Talie Bee**
84. **Tsedenia Skitch**
85. **Valley Fontaine**, *Broadcaster*
86. **Warren Houghton**, *Journalist*
87. **Yvette Williams MBE**, *Lead Campaigner, Justice 4 Grenfell*
88. **Yvonne Field**, *Campaigner*
89. **Yvonne Witter**, *Writer and Researcher*
90. **Zita Holbourne**, *National Chair, BARAC UK, Author & Artist*

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Notes

1. [Public Sector Equality Duty assessment of hostile environment policies](#), Equality and Human Rights Commission, November 2020
2. ["Black official quit 'racist' Windrush compensation scheme"](#), The Guardian, 18 November 2020
3. ["Priti Patel not following her own anti-trafficking policy, judge rules"](#), The Guardian, 13 November 2020
4. ["Priti Patel pledges to fix 'broken' asylum system in UK"](#), BBC, 4 October 2020
5. ["Revealed: five men killed in past year after being deported from UK to Jamaica"](#), The Guardian, 9 May 2019
6. Stephen Shaw CBE, [Assessment of government progress in implementing the report on the welfare in detention of vulnerable persons](#), July 2018, Recommendation 33, P. 90
7. ["Priti Patel plans a pre-Christmas mass deportation flight to Jamaica on 2nd December, as new ComRes poll finds majority oppose UK's deportation laws"](#), Detention Action Press Release, 24 November 2020
8. The Lammy Review, [An independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the Criminal Justice System](#), September 2017
9. ["Virgin will STOP helping the Home Office deport illegal immigrants on their planes in the wake of Windrush scandal"](#), Daily Mail, 30 June 2018