



## DEMANDS FROM A PANDEMIC

### International banner drop: PAPERS FOR ALL!

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On Sunday 19th April, we will be dropping banners across the UK and Europe to demand papers for all. We join our comrades in France and Denmark in this action calling for international solidarity. We demand that national governments and the European Union immediately grant unconditional and indefinite residence rights to everyone subject to immigration control. In this we echo and support similar calls being made in the Spanish state and we emphasise that this is winnable: in Portugal the government has already enacted a limited version of this demand, granting resident status to all migrants with open asylum or residency applications until July 1st.

Lockdown is difficult for everyone, but in the UK and Ireland many people are facing it while locked out of the most basic means of survival due to hostile environment policies, the 'no recourse to public funds' conditions that is attached to many forms of limited leave to remain or due to being undocumented. These policies restrict access to healthcare, the right to work, access to welfare or social services including safe housing, meaning many people are dangerously locked out of the public health response to COVID-19.

Meanwhile, the pandemic has shown just how essential many undervalued jobs in which migrants make up a large percentage of the workforce really are. The people holding society together are the care workers, cleaning workers and delivery drivers, the supermarket and food production workers, agricultural workers, transport workers, and all NHS / HSE frontline staff. Yet many of these people are not even paid a living wage, and are the very same workers the UK and Irish governments continue to call "unskilled", barring entry under classist immigration regimes. Sex workers, particularly those who are undocumented or otherwise subject to immigration control, are also disproportionately impacted and like other precariously employed workers do not have a monthly salary to rely on, don't get sick pay and often are without savings.

While in the UK some frontline workers in the NHS are getting their visas automatically renewed for one year, all migrant workers remain subject to immigration control and enforcement. Similarly, people who are skilled in these occupations but denied the right to work because of their immigration status could be filling the vacancies that exist in these sectors, and contributing to the care and health of our communities. In Ireland, many frontline health workers and care providers are International Protection Applicants living in Direct Provision. The potential risk of contracting and spreading Covid-19 is particularly high due to the state's negligence in providing adequate protection to these communities. All of this illustrates the contradictions of the immigration system even according to its own logic. However, we denounce and reject this logic completely: people should not have to prove themselves as 'useful' to be deserving of dignity and rights. Not during COVID-19, not ever.

While interviews for international protection applicants in Ireland have been suspended until further notice at the International Protection Office, in the UK people subject to immigration control and enforcement are now forced to fight for their legal status online. The Legal Sector Workers Union has highlighted the ways in which immigration workers are simply unable to do their jobs safely in the current conditions. Online hearings not only raise privacy concerns as insecure platforms are used, but also make it impossible for people to be able to make disclosures,

particularly of sensitive information, to their legal representatives. On top of this, many people risk missing their hearing due to lack of internet or access to technology in their accommodation. Many forms of evidence are currently inaccessible – medico-legal reports cannot be commissioned, the Home Office has stated that full files will not be provided in response to subject access requests, and sureties in bail proceedings are being prevented from attending hearings.

In this context, there is no sense in tinkering around the edges. Piecemeal changes are complex, confusing, and far too slow. The situation is urgent and nothing short of immediate unconditional indefinite leave to remain for everyone subject to immigration control will suffice. Lack of access to the basic rights of being a resident makes people disproportionately vulnerable to violence and premature death. While this has always been true, it is made starkly more visible during this period of pandemic. A person's chances of survival should not depend on their immigration status or ability to work: not now, not ever!

While the UK prepares charter flights to exploit cheap migrant labour from Eastern Europe during the pandemic, and workers are flown into Ireland from Bulgaria to pick fruit, both countries cite travel bans as an excuse for inaction on leaving people to die in camps and at borders across Europe. We do not accept this excuse. We join international calls demanding the immediate right of passage to, and through, the European mainland for everyone imprisoned in the camps along the externalised borders of Fortress Europe. Here we include all people forced to live in inhuman conditions in camps in Greece - both on the islands and mainland, Italy, the Spanish enclaves in Ceuta and Melilla, in Bosnia, Serbia and other spots along the Balkan route. No one should ever be forced to live in such places, without access to safe housing, food or water; not now, not ever.

We demand the UK urgently relocates all people suffering at Europe's external borders as a result of brutal and violent efforts to externalise Europe's borders, and we demand the UK honors commitments made under the Dublin Regulation to provide travel for those already accepted for reunification with family members in the UK. Far too many families have been separated for far too long as a result of the European border regime. This must end now. No one should be denied seeing their loved ones, not ever, but especially not in times of crisis - something many of us are experiencing for the first time during COVID-19.

**The enemy doesn't arrive by dinghy, he arrives by limousine - make the rich pay for COVID-19!**

WE DEMAND:

1. Immediate, unconditional and indefinite leave to remain for all migrants, irrespective of present immigration status or ability to work!
2. End Irish Direct Provision!
3. End detention!
4. Stop all deportations!
5. Safe passage to Ireland and the UK for people stuck at externalised borders and hotspots!
6. Immediate action to reunify all those separated from family members in Ireland and the UK by the European border regime!

**#LeaveNoOneBehind #PapersforAll**