



The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak, MP, Prime Minister
The Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC, MP, Home Secretary

17 August 2023

Dear Prime Minister and Home Secretary,

The Safety and Protection of Immigration Practitioners

I am writing on behalf of our members to express our increasing concern regarding the safety of immigration practitioners and the growing climate of hostility towards them.

Our members are barristers, solicitors, advocates, and OISC regulated advisers practising in all aspects of immigration, asylum and nationality law, and academics, non-governmental organisations, and individuals with a substantial interest in the law. We exist to promote and improve advice and representation in the areas of immigration, asylum, and nationality law.

As you will be aware, an independent legal profession is fundamental to ensuring access to justice, equality before the law, and the proper functioning of a democracy. Lawyers must be allowed to perform their professional duties without fear for their safety and with the appropriate safeguards should their security be threatened or compromised. They must not be identified with their clients, or their clients' causes, as a result of discharging their professional obligations.

Regrettably, we have noted that, rather than being respected for the vital work that they undertake to uphold the rule of law and represent some of the most vulnerable members of our society, practitioners representing migrants find themselves targeted. A clear and recent example of this was the treatment of Jacqueline McKenzie, a senior and well-respected immigration solicitor, who was the subject of a dossier sent by Conservative Campaign Headquarters to certain media outlets. It is evident that such actions and rhetoric fuel hostile media reporting which, in turn, has serious implications for the safety of individuals fulfilling their professional duties and their ability to provide independent and equal access to legal advice, representation, and justice.

On 10 August 2023 ILPA issued a Statement on the Safety and Protection of Immigration Practitioners (enclosed for ease of reference), in which we listed numerous examples of the use of inflammatory language both by senior past and current ministers (including yourselves) and a number of media outlets. We also referred to the letter sent to the Home Secretary on 22 May 2023 calling for an end to the Government's use of such language, in response to HOPE not hate's research which provided 'clear evidence that hostile Government and media rhetoric on migration is escalating far-right anti-migrant activity'.



Now, as then, we urge you to foster an environment in which human rights can be protected and legal professionals are free to fulfil their duties without fearing for their safety.

Yours faithfully,

Jonathan Griffin
Chief Executive Officer

