



GENERAL ELECTION 2019: OUR SUPPORTER FACT SHEET

Would you like to know whether your local parliamentary candidate stands against torture? Read our handy election guide of key facts and messages.

If elected, here are five questions you can ask your local parliamentary candidates to make sure the UK is a safe place for torture survivors.

1. Britain as a place of safety

Question: If elected, will you make sure people who have fled torture can access safety in Britain?

Freedom from Torture is calling on the government to ensure Britain is a safe haven for torture survivors. This means:

- Fulfilling our obligations under the United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention ensuring those who have been persecuted are able to ask for safety in Britain. The UK government is a signatory to the Convention and currently it is possible for anyone arriving on our shores to apply for asylum.
- Increasing the number of refugees resettled from refugee camps in other countries to the UK.
- Ensure there are safe and legal routes for people to apply for asylum in the UK, so they are not forced to undertake treacherous journeys or put money in the hands of people smugglers.
- **FACT: In 2018, 37,453 people applied for asylum in the UK.** Germany received 161,900 applications in 2018 and France 114,500.
- **FACT: The vast majority of the world's refugees (84%) are hosted in developing countries.**
- **FACT: the government does not record the number of torture survivors who apply for asylum each year. It has been estimated at 30% of all applicants.**

2. A fair and humane asylum system

Question: Will you challenge the Home Office to get more decisions right first time, so people who have been tortured can access safety quickly and are not sent back to face further torture?

This means:

- **Getting asylum decisions right the first time.** Too many refugees have their claim for asylum wrongly rejected and are forced to appeal.
- Ensure that asylum interviews are conducted fairly and take in to account medical evidence.
- **FACT: Currently, around 40% of appeals are successful,** meaning the Home Office got the initial decision in these cases wrong.
- **FACT: 84% of asylum applicants in Freedom from Torture's report *Proving Torture*, had independent medical evidence dismissed by the Home Office.**

3. Help survivors to rebuild their lives in the UK.

Torture causes long-lasting mental and physical pain and recovery can take years. Many of those seeking refuge in the UK are vulnerable and traumatised.

Question: Will you help survivors rebuild their lives in the UK by the making sure they get access to therapy, suitable accommodation and support?

This means:

- Ensuring that people seeking asylum are given clean and suitable accommodation.
- Ensuring that torture survivors have access to free healthcare.
- **FACT: People seeking asylum do not get large handouts from the state. They live off Home Office support of £36.95 per week.**
- **FACT: Asylum seekers are not allowed to work** and are forced to rely on state support.

4. Survivors of torture should never be detained for immigration purposes.

People who have survived torture should not be locked up in immigration detention centres. The UK government introduced the [Adults at Risk policy in 2016](#) to identify vulnerable people who were detained, with a view to releasing them.

Question: Will you end the detention of torture survivors for good?

This means:

- Ensuring that torture survivors are never held in immigration detention centres.
- When someone in detention discloses torture they are released as soon as possible.

- **FACT:** At any one time, there are **more than 1,000 people in adults at risk in detention**.
- **FACT:** Medical professionals say that detention risks further trauma to a vulnerable person. **Between 2017 and 2018, there were 907 cases** where doctors said that the detention would be harmful to individuals, but only around 500 were released.

5. Stand up to governments and our leaders when they commit or enable torture or turn a blind eye to it.

Torture destroys peoples' lives. We believe that **trade agreements should never take priority over people's rights. Nothing can ever justify torture.**

Question: What will you do to help end torture around the world?

Steps the British government can take to end torture:

- Ensure that British soldiers are held accountable for their actions [by dropping these proposals](#) by the Ministry of Defence.
- Investigate all allegations of torture because no one is above the law.
- Britain has a **proud tradition of upholding the absolute ban on torture**. It should lead by example and hold governments around the world to account.
- **FACT:** The UK government under Boris Johnson is currently considering proposals to block prosecutions of war crimes, including torture, committed by British soldiers abroad.
- **FACT:** US President Donald Trump has said that “torture works” and has stated that he loves waterboarding.
- **FACT: Torture is illegal, doesn't work and is always wrong.**