

Sally Daghlian, chief executive of Scottish Refugee Council, said:

“This is the yearly round of knee-jerk immigration and asylum legislation and the controls proposed will restrict the fundamental right to asylum.

“Although the bill claims to be about combating illegal immigration, it does not distinguish between those fleeing persecution and irregular migrants. By closing the doors tighter to those seeking protection, the bill will stop those most in need from getting here, undermining their right to seek refuge. The most vulnerable will then be forced to try to reach safety by illegal methods. They shouldn’t be penalised for doing this.

“A good asylum system is not about reducing the number of applications, but ensuring that people who need protection are given it, and dealing humanely with those who aren’t granted refugee status.

“Scottish Refugee Council is also concerned about how the new powers of immigration officers to arrest and detain will be policed and regulated, especially in relation to children.”

end