

To:  
Liz Truss, Foreign Secretary  
cc Priti Patel, Home Secretary

Dear Secretary of State,

**I am writing to urge you to launch an immediate, emergency airlift operation to resettle Ukrainian refugees currently arriving in Poland who want to come to the UK. Given the scale of the Ukrainian refugee crisis, it is only right that our country plays its part.**

I have just returned from the Ukraine-Poland border. There I met refugees who have been forced to flee Putin's assault on their homes, as well as incredible people from all over the world who have come to help.

I was proud to see many British aid workers and volunteers providing support, but I was appalled by the lack of any organised UK Government sponsored or supported welcome and the absence of UK Government personnel on the ground at the border, to help Ukrainian refugees who want to come to the UK.

There was no-one from the UK government at the border or at the Humanitarian Aid Centre (where I counted representatives from 19 other countries) or at the train station I visited. And these were all key centres for arriving Ukrainian refugees.

I spoke to British volunteer aid workers who had gone up and down the Ukrainian-Polish border over the last week who confirmed that they had not seen any UK Government-sponsored presence at all. And a representative of Poland's leading charity there, Caritas, also confirmed that, unlike other countries, the UK appeared not to be present.

Yet I met people who are desperate to come to the UK – often to join family members. However, there was no one from the Government and no-one supported or sponsored by the UK Government to help them to get here or even to explain how they might get to the UK.

In just the past few days, more than 100,000 people across the UK have offered to host refugees fleeing Ukraine – demonstrating clearly the immense compassion of the British people. The Government must urgently step up its response to match that spirit of generosity.

Since the very start of this war, the Liberal Democrats have been calling for a resettlement programme, working with the UNHCR and other refugee agencies to bring Ukrainian refugees to the UK, as we did for those fleeing Assad's war in Syria.

Without some sort of resettlement scheme, ideally far more open and flexible than past schemes, many of these refugees will never be able to get to the UK to take up the incredible offers of help from people in our country. There is also a very real danger that some refugees will fall into the hands of human traffickers and people smugglers.

We must prevent that, by providing safe and fast transportation for Ukrainian refugees seeking to come to the UK. The Government should send personnel to the Ukrainian border now, ideally working with the UK's own specialist refugee and aid charities, to form new welcome groups with the charities already on the ground.

**So I believe the UK Government must now provide free flights to the UK, with coaches to the nearest Polish airports from key border crossing points and also establish welcoming reception centres for the refugees here on arrival at the UK.**

It is very frustrating that, despite the many recent U-turns on visas, the Government still refuses to act on resettlement and to facilitate safe and quick passage to the UK and I urge you to do so now.

**I would like to request an urgent meeting, at your earliest convenience**, to discuss how the Government can better support and welcome to the UK the refugees from Putin's attack on Ukraine.

I look forward to hearing from you at your very earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Ed Davey MP

Leader of the Liberal Democrats