

**Bar Standards Board
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By email only: contactus@barstandardsboard.org.uk

11th May 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

We write to express our deep concern about the recent comments made by Suella Braverman, a member of Parliament, former Attorney General for England and Wales, member of the Bar and current Home Secretary regarding her racist statement against the British Pakistani community and comments regarding Asylum seekers.

On 2nd April 2023, Ms Braverman stated¹:

“What we’ve seen is a practice whereby vulnerable white English girls – sometimes in care, sometimes who are in challenging circumstances – being pursued and raped and drugged and harmed by gangs of British Pakistani men who’ve worked in child abuse rings or networks.

We’ve seen institutions and state agencies, whether it’s social workers, teachers, the police, turn a blind eye to these signs of abuse out of political correctness, out of fear of being called racist, out of fear of being called bigoted.

And as a result thousands, we are not talking small numbers, we are talking large numbers, thousands of children have had their childhoods robbed and devastated and there are many of these perpetrators behaving still running wild and behaving in this way..”

When challenged, Ms Braverman went on to say

“There have been several reports since about the predominance of certain ethnic groups and I say British Pakistani males who hold cultural values totally at odds with British values who see women in a demeaned and illegitimate way

¹[Listen to Suella Braverman and realise: this show of diversity in our cabinet is not progress | Sayeeda Warsi | The Guardian](#)

and who pursue an outdated and frankly heinous approach in terms of the way they behave..”

With regard to Asylum seekers Ms Braverman has used inflammatory language to demonise and dehumanise a vulnerable category of people, in the absence of evidence to support her contentions by suggesting that 100 million Asylum seekers would come to the UK were it not for her planned immigration crack down, that Albanian people arriving in small boats were exploiting modern slavery laws, that people crossing the channel have “values” at odds with the UK and hold “*heightened levels of criminality*”².

Previously, Ms Braverman has even described the arrival of Asylum seekers in the UK as an invasion. These comments are not only highly inaccurate and offensive, but they also perpetuate harmful stereotypes and contribute to a climate of hate and prejudice.

As a member of the legal profession, Ms. Braverman should be held to a high standard of professionalism and ethical conduct. Her statements not only undermine the integrity of the legal profession, but they also have the potential to damage the reputation of the UK as a tolerant and inclusive society.

It is deeply concerning that someone in Ms. Braverman's position would make such sweeping generalisations without any evidence to support her claims. In fact, the “evidence” states otherwise:

- In 2020, Home Office-commissioned Report found that most group child sex offenders are men under the age of 30 and the majority are white. The Report also confirmed that there was not enough evidence to suggest members of grooming gangs are more likely to be Asian or black than other ethnicities.
- In her interview, Ms Braverman referred to the Rotherham Report as evidence in support of her abhorrent statement that it was part of the British Pakistani ‘culture.’ The Report itself rejects this ludicrous assumption. The Report states “*As has been stated many times before, there is no simple link between race and child sexual exploitation, and across the UK the greatest numbers of perpetrators of CSE are white men.*”³
- A 2015 study found that of the ‘*1.231 perpetrators of group and gang-based child sexual exploitation, 42 per cent were White, 14 per cent were Asian or British Asian and 17 per cent were Black.*’⁴ This hardly places British Pakistani males at the forefront of such abhorrent crimes. It should be noted here that ‘Asian’ or ‘British Asian’ include Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Sri Lankans who are all of South Asian descent.

² [Home Secretary Suella Braverman claims people arriving in the UK on small boats have... - LBC](#)

³ Page 91, [independent-inquiry-into-child-sexual-exploitation-in-rotherham](#) 2013 Report.

⁴ [Are British-Pakistani men raping White girls? What Suella Braverman said on grooming gangs and why has it irked Pakistan \(firstpost.com\)](#) 6 April 2023

- On 5 April 2023, 13 white men were charged with child sex offences. These White male sex groomers have been charged with offences against a number of girls between the ages of 14 and 17 mainly in the Blackrod and Adlington areas of Bolton, Greater Manchester during 2016 and 2018.⁵ Bolton has a large British Pakistani community, yet none of those charged came from this community which flies in the face of Ms Braverman’s statement and neither has she made a comment in parity on such cases.
- The Migration Observatory at Oxford University (OMO) has in fact found that just 12% of Albanians who came across the Channel in 2022 were referred to the national referral mechanism (NRM), which is designed to provide victims with safety and support. Of the Albanians whose cases were assessed, 90% were found by the Home Office to have “reasonable grounds” for claiming to be victims of modern slavery, the body has discovered.
- OMO has also stated that it is not aware of any recent academic or official statistics examining criminality among refugees who had recently arrived in the UK and that “*There is little evidence that migrants are any more or less likely to commit crimes than any other members of the population,*”.
- In fact, analysis by the Refugee Council shows that that most of those crossing the Channel are people fleeing war-torn or oppressive countries where no safe and formal routes such as refugee visas exist for making an asylum claim in the UK.⁶
- The said analysis found that six out of ten (60%) of all those who made the dangerous Channel crossing to the UK in small boats last year will be recognised as refugees through the asylum process, which means that the majority of those arriving are not criminals but genuine refugees.
- The same analysis/report also found that 8,700 children were among those crossing the Channel, which is around one in five of the overall number, further highlighting not just the inaccuracy of Ms Braverman’s comments but vulnerability of the category of people that her comments will affect.

It is our view that Ms Braverman’s comments incite violence against the British Pakistani and Muslim community as well as refugee communities, fuelling racist sentiments and discriminatory narratives.

Ms Braverman’ also recently attacked the Black community by reportedly condemning Essex Police for removing racist ‘golliwog’ dolls placed by the owners of a pub in a hanging position consistent with the lynching of black people during slavery.

⁵ [Group of 13 men appear in court charged with child sex offences over two-year period - Mirror Online](#) 5 April 2023

⁶ <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/latest/news/majority-of-people-on-small-boats-crossing-channel-last-year-are-refugees-new-analysis-shows/>

It is our view that the following Bar Council Code of Conduct Rules have been breached (although this should not be considered to be an exhaustive list):

- **Rule CD5 – “You must not behave in a way which is likely to diminish the trust and confidence which the public places in you or in the profession.”**
- **Rule C8 – “Conduct on your part which the public may reasonably perceive as undermining your honesty, integrity or independence is likely to diminish the trust and confidence which the public places in you or in the profession, in breach of CD5.”**
- **Rule C12 – “You must not discriminate unlawfully against, victimise or harass any other person on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, nationality, citizenship, sex, gender re-assignment, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, disability, age, religion or belief, or pregnancy and maternity.”**

We urge the Bar Council of England to take swift action in response to Ms. Braverman's racist remarks.

It is crucial that members of the legal profession uphold the highest standards of integrity, impartiality, and professionalism. Ms. Braverman's comments are a clear violation of these standards and should not go unchallenged.

We look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully,

London Muslim Community Forum

Natasha Lloyd Owen and Chiara Maddocks, Co-chairs of the Society of Labour

Lawyers Crime Group

Society of Asian Lawyers

Association of Muslim Lawyers

Muslim Lawyers Action Group

Luton Council of Mosques – 23 Muslim organisations

Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants

Sunni Council of Mosques