

The Rt Hon. Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AB

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to you as the Chief Executive Officer of The Co-operative Bank, to call for the intensification of the United Kingdom's support for refugees fleeing the conflict in Ukraine, with a response that matches the scale of the crisis at hand.

As you are all too aware, the desperate situation in Ukraine poses an unimaginable threat to the human rights of Ukrainian citizens and has caused the most severe refugee crisis since the Second World War. Yesterday, our partner, Amnesty International UK, called upon the government to go beyond the current refugee support programme and to waive the restrictions on visas of those most in need at this time. Like Amnesty, we believe that as a country we can do more to support those affected and to shelter those escaping Ukrainian territory during these unprecedented times of war. Since the Russian invasion, millions of people have fled to neighbouring countries and Amnesty International has rightly called upon governments to commit to a number of actions, which must be implemented in order to protect the human rights of these individuals. We support Amnesty's call on the government to:

- 1) Strengthen international efforts to protect civilians, provide humanitarian relief and help bring suspected perpetrators of crimes under international law to justice;**
- 2) Press for parties to the conflict to create and respect humanitarian corridors to safe havens, for all civilians to have access to transportation and time to leave, and for international observers to be granted access to monitor their safe passage;**
- 3) Fulfil the commitment to provide sanctuary to 200,000 Ukrainian refugees in the UK by providing safe routes to travel here, such as through a temporary visa waiver.**

The Co-operative Bank has had an unwavering commitment to co-operative values and ethics for 150 years. Our unique customer-led Ethical Policy guides how we do business and our customers have consistently told us that human rights and equality is important to them. What is important to our customers is important to us, which is why we have been partnered with Amnesty International UK for over 25 years, promoting and supporting their worldwide campaigns to protect victims of human rights abuses.

In line with the expectations of our customers, we have acted at pace to support those affected by the conflict in Ukraine. We are donating £50,000 to Amnesty International UK, to support their efforts in upholding the human rights of refugees and opposing the acts of aggression employed by the Russian government, in both Ukraine and Russia. This week, we also launched a fundraising campaign which match-funded the donations of customers and colleagues to the Disasters Emergency Committee Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal. This has now surpassed £220,000, including our match funding of £100,000, in a matter of days. We are also looking to utilise space within our branch network in order to support refugees and charities. We believe there must be a wider opportunity across the banking industry, and we would be happy to help lead this.

I truly believe that now, more than ever, we must come together and co-operate. It is for all of us to collectively stand up and support the victims of this horrific conflict by removing red tape and waiving the visa requirements for refugees wishing to enter the UK.

Yours sincerely,



Nick Slape
Chief Executive Officer, The Co-operative Bank