

Our statement on the Hostile Environment & the pandemic:

Over the last eight years, the enforcement of Hostile Environment policies by the UK Home Office has 'successfully' demeaned, isolated and impoverished migrants (of any status). This finely tuned enforcement apparatus now combined with self-isolation and pervasive fear opens up stark choices for destitute womxn with no recourse to public funds - police brutality on the streets or the brutality that comes from being locked up with sexual predators, without bank accounts or disposable incomes womxn with families are choosing to ration scarce food supplies, starve or risk infecting their households with trips to empty food banks.

Let us not forget that even before Covid -19, hostile environment policies- indefinite detention and deportations - were designed to contain the contagion these 'illegals' and 'aliens' would bring to our neighbourhoods and cities. The logic of this policy was that if we treated migrants with dignity, gave them rights to decent housing, bank accounts, rights to work and access to free healthcare, education, public funds while their claims were being considered they would refuse to leave. What we have seen is that the intended consequence of the policy was instead to create a precarious, racialized underclass with womxn bearing the brunt of the draconian imperatives of this state policy.

Over the last few days we have seen how the Scottish Parliament's bureaucratic delays in rolling out a clear destitution response to COVID-19 means councils can brush off responsibility for housing and feeding womxn with no recourse to public funds despite the obvious public health and safety issues. This institutional inertia has a daily human cost as womxn with little or no resources struggle to find their next piece of food and a safe place to avoid infection, sexual predation and violence.

In the eighth largest economy on the planet we demand to know where are our safe spaces, our community housing projects, our communal food kitchens to prevent hunger, starvation, disease, sexual abuse and violence, destitution and death? Why do our fellow human beings have to depend on the fickle, self-interested charitable handouts of supermarket conglomerates and why is food, secure accommodation and dignity still not a human right irrespective of immigration status?

As another night falls we stay on our phones whispering, reassuring the womxn at the other end of the line as she hides in a corner somewhere, praying that this will be the night when she can safely close her eyes and dream of a better world. This is unacceptable!

We demand an immediate end to the Hostile Environment policy