

Rt. Hon Liam Byrne, MP  
Secretary of State for the Home Office  
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London SW1 4DF  
Fax: 020 8760 3132

Dear Mr. Byrne

I have made myself familiar with the case of Brian, Chelsea and their mother Selina Adda from Ghana, Home Office Ref: A1290971. They are currently being held in Yarl's Wood IRC and due to be forcibly removed from the UK on Friday 3rd October on British Airways flight BA81 @ 14:15hrs from terminal 5 Heathrow to Accra, Ghana.

At 7:00am on Monday 29 September, Selina Adda and her two children Brian (8) and Chelsea (3) were getting ready as usual to go to St Patrick's Roman Catholic Primary school in Wilford. There was a knock at the door and 8 immigration officers forced entry into their house and half an hour later, they were on their way to Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre. They were not given any food until late in the evening and the children spent the day in a state of high anxiety. The day before their detention, a number of friends from the local Christian community had held a birthday party for Brian for his eighth birthday. His presents are still waiting for him in the flat.

Brian has been a model pupil since he started at St Patrick's four years ago. His Head teacher described him as unique in his attitude to learning and respect for his teachers and his fellow pupils. Every year his classmates have voted for him to serve on the school council. His name appears frequently in the Head teacher's Gold Book award - most other children are lucky to make an annual entry.

Brian's mother Selina has also been a model example. Despite being treated for clinical depression she enrolled on an access to nursing course after following advice from her GP-referred counsellor and received a distinction. She has just started a one-year GCSE maths course, which she hopes will qualify her to apply for nursing training. She also encouraged other mothers at the children's primary school to go back to education to acquire some skills.

Selina left Ghana in a hurry four years ago when tribesmen from her village tracked her down to the Ghanaian capital Accra. She had fled to Accra from her village to avoid a forced marriage to a polygamous much older man of a different religion. Despite coming from a Catholic family, she was promised to a Muslim chieftain who already had two wives. Family honour meant she had no choice but to wed or flee. When she was found several years later and despite being in a relationship and with a young child, she was still asked to comply with the forced marriage or her mother would be killed. This is when she came to the UK with her young child leaving her partner to go into hiding. Her sister committed suicide in Ghana last year after no longer being able to cope with her life there. Selina has no other relatives alive in Ghana.

If Selina is returned to Ghana she will have no choice but to return to her village and the forced marriage. Her daughter Chelsea will be at risk of female genital mutilation that is widely practiced in northern Ghana.

I ask you to exercise your powers of discretion; please do not remove this family from the UK where they now have a safe life. Removing them would be putting them in a position of risk where there is real fear for their safety. Please release the family from detention and return them to their Nottingham home.

Yours Sincerely,

Name:

Address:

City:

Postcode:

Country:

Date:

Email:

Phone: