



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Sir Robert Chote
Authority Enquiries
UK Statistics Authority
Fry Building
London
SW1P 4DF

10 March 2023

Dear Sir Robert Chote

I am writing to raise concerns over the use of statistics by the Home Secretary related to irregular migration to the UK.

Earlier this week, the Home Secretary Suella Braverman stated in the House of Commons that "there are 100 million people displaced around the world, and likely billions more eager to come here if possible."

She also stated in the Commons on 7th March that: "there are 100 million people around the world who could qualify for protection under our current laws. Let us be clear: they are coming here." In a subsequent interview with ITV's Good Morning Britain, the Home Secretary claimed the 100 million figure was "an estimate by the UN", adding that "many of them are heading to the United Kingdom."

The UNHCR has estimated that although there are more than 100 million forcibly displaced people around the world, only 26 million have left their own country - most of those are in the countries immediately surrounding conflict zones. The 100 million statistic includes Internally Displaced Persons who will not leave the borders of their own country, let alone be coming to the UK.

The latest official statistics from the government show that there were 45,755 people detected arriving by small boats in 2022.

It would therefore appear to be a gross misrepresentation for the Home Secretary to imply that 100 million people are coming to the UK. There also appears to be no source for her claim that billions are eager to come here if possible.

This is a symptom of a wider issue with the Home Secretary's presentation of her new Illegal Migration Bill. Her divisive, often misleading rhetoric is irresponsible and risks fuelling further division and tensions in our society. As you have said in the past, the misuse of statistics by politicians can damage their integrity, cause confusion and undermine public trust.

I therefore ask that you investigate the Home Secretary's comments and offer your guidance on whether they are misleading.

Yours sincerely,

Alistair Carmichael MP
Liberal Democrat Home Affairs Spokesperson