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# Borders Bill puts 40% of ethnic minority UK citizens at risk

Sunday 4 December 2022, by [Alliance for Workers' Liberty \(AWL\)](#) (Date first published: 14 December 2021).

**The protest-criminalising [Police Bill](#) is just one element of the Tories' push towards a vicious authoritarian state. Just behind it in the parliamentary queue of measures to assault the rights of people living in, working in or trying to come to the United Kingdom, the [Nationality and Borders Bill](#) passed the House of Commons on 8 December and is now on its second reading in the House of Lords.**

The Bill now [attacks the rights not just of the small numbers of refugees the Tories are trying to present as some kind of overwhelming tide](#), but of vast numbers of UK citizens - mainly with brown or black skin.

Clause 9 of the Bill, updated in November, makes it much easier to strip people's British citizenship - without even telling them.

The Blair government twice lowered the threshold for stripping people of citizenship if they held dual citizenship with another country. In 2014 the Tories extended this to citizens who the government believes are eligible for foreign citizenship. This was the situation in the case of [Shamima Begum](#), who the government argued could become a Bangladeshi citizen even though Bangladesh's government emphatically said no.

The numbers deprived of citizenship have grown from none for decades to a few a year after 2002 to dozens after 2014 - and 104 in 2017, the last year for which I could find a definite figure.

Now the Tories want to extend the power of deprivation further still. Clause 9 of the Nationality and Borders Bill says that the government does not need to notify those stripped of citizenship if it does not have their contact details, or if it is "for any other reason" not "reasonably practicable" to do so. It also states that notice should not be given if it is not "in the public interest" to do so.

This will, in many cases, make it much harder to appeal against removal of citizenship. Unsurprisingly, appeals have also risen sharply.

The *New Statesman* has [estimated](#) that nearly six million people could become eligible to have their citizenship removed in this way. Naturally this predominantly affects those born outside the UK - though it also includes over 400,000 UK-born citizens.

The *New Statesman* also estimates that while 5% of white UK citizens are likely to be vulnerable to this power, 41% of non-white ethnic minority citizens are.

That includes up to 1.4 million people of South Asian origin (50% of South Asian background citizens), and up to almost a million with roots in black African and Caribbean countries (39%). It includes up to 152,000 of Chinese origin, and up to 102,000 Hong Kongers.

It also includes very large numbers of certain white ethnic minorities, principally Polish (up to 579,000) and Irish people (407,000).

Of course the government is not going to remove the citizenship of anything like six million people – but it is entirely plausible that we could see the numbers increasing dramatically. Meanwhile this will reinforce the wider climate of precariousness, fear and bigotry which is permeating UK society.

Over 200,000 and rising fast have signed a [petition to remove Clause 9 from the Bill](#).

Some MPs, primarily ethnic minority Labour MPs, have spoken out vocally. Trade unionists and Labour activists must demand the Labour Party leadership swallows its shameful opportunism and hesitancy and goes beyond quietly voting against to raise a storm of protest against the Bill.

If it passes, we need discussion about how to resist its implementation and get it repealed as soon as possible. Even if we get a Labour government, we should not assume it will automatically do so.

Immediately we need to get out on the streets in protest. It is far from impossible the government can be forced to backtrack.

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