



Shabana Mahmood's cruel policy to force torture victims to share rooms ruled unlawful

## Description

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Shabana Mahmood

In a ruling handed down yesterday by the High Court, [Home Secretary](#) Shabana Mahmood's [cruel policy](#) to force victims of torture to share rooms with strangers has been deemed unlawful.

Justifying this pretty damning ruling, the [court judgement states](#) that Mahmood's:

failures amount to a serious breach of the Defendant's public law duties, rendering the impugned policy changes unlawful.

These failures refer to the fact that Mahmood did not instruct any consultations before introducing such an impactful policy change and also gave little consideration for the impacts of this policy on victims of torture, trafficking and other serious violence.

Moreover, she didn't even engage with "established evidence of clinical risk", thus the court decided Mahmood has acted in breach of the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (PSED).

Finally, they also called out the Home Secretary failing to "properly inform herself" of the subsequent impact of the [Allocation of Asylum Accommodation policy](#) on vulnerable survivors of torture, trafficking and serious violence, despite:

long standing, consistent evidence of the serious risks of harm faced by this cohort.

All in all, a pretty damning day for increasingly hostile Shabana Mahmood, but at least it's a good day for justice in the UK.

UK Government acted unlawfully by forcing torture survivors to share rooms, the High Court rules

The judgment is a blow to Shabana Mahmood's plans to send more asylum seekers to army barracks <https://t.co/9vpqtRfTN2>

â?? Socialist Voice (@SocialistVoice) [May 29, 2026](#)

## Estimated 10k survivors of torture in shared accommodation, says charity

This ruling will undoubtedly have a stymieing impact on Mahmood's plans to kowtow to far right influences. The government implemented this policy in an apparent attempt to [win favour with right-wing tabloids and far-right voters](#) by moving asylum seekers out of inadequate hotels and into disused army barracks â?? an even harsher and more hostile environment.

However, her plans to move vulnerable asylum seekers out of hotels entirely by the end of this parliament now lie in jeopardy â?? unless she works to find a solution which is actually legal and finds some semblance of compassion in her increasingly cold, cruel heart.

The charity [Freedom From Torture \(FTT\)](#) have provided estimates that potentially 10k asylum seekers housed in shared accommodation could be impacted by this ruling.

Furthermore, the associate director of advocacy for FTT, Natasha Tsangarides, has welcomed this â??vital and resounding victoryâ?\*, [stating](#)

The judgment makes clear that the government acted unlawfully in changing its policy.

We have seen the consequences of those changes: survivors of torture have been placed in harm's way.

The claimants in this case were FTT and the [Helen Bamber Foundation \(HBF\)](#) who both work with asylum seekers who have escaped physical and psychological abuse. Their argument detailed how, prior to the policy introduced in February 2024 under the last government, there had been a â??protective presumptionâ?\* that survivors would be safe from such cruelty.

Director at the HBF, Kamena Dorling, told the Guardian that the â??terrible living conditionsâ?\* in the UK asylum system has made helping survivors of torture and trafficking even harder. [adding](#)

The decision to force more vulnerable people into large accommodation sites and shared hotel rooms was a political choice that ignored the evidence from those working with refugees every day.

Nevertheless, the Labour government have continued to force them to share rooms and did not consult either charity in its decision to continue with such an obviously harsh policy.

## Shabana Mahmood â?? AI facial recognition now to commence

Mahmood doesnâ??t stop there with her cynical attempts to create a hostile atmosphere for asylum seekers. Awarding a Â£322k contract to a Harlow-based IT company Akhter Computers, Mahmoodâ??s Home Office will now be using AI to determine the age of asylum seekers who say they are under 18.

Because unaccompanied children seeking asylum often receive different treatment when applying for safe haven â?? because most compassionate people would find it quite stomach-churning to turn vulnerable children away â?? but this now appears to be the next defenceless group facing political targeting.

A report last year found that staff in Dover carried out previous tests without adequate training, making it inevitable that officials might mis-assess some childrenâ??s ages. Nevertheless, it is hard to understand how AI would be able to do this more accurately.

Therefore, in practice, itâ??s likely to be yet another group of desperate people feel unwelcome, untrusted and unworthy to be in the UK.

*Featured image via Dan Kitwood/Getty Images)*

By [Maddison Wheeldon](#)

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