

DR. CAROLINE LUCAS

**Green Party Member of the European Parliament
for the South East of the UK**

Des Browne
Minister for Immigration
Home Office
50 Queen Anne's Gate
London SW1H 9AT

January 28th 2005

Dear Mr Browne,

I am writing in support of the asylum appeal being made by Azim Ansari who is currently studying in my constituency and his brother Wali Ansari.

I have been contacted by Azim's wife who tells me that the Home Office is currently refusing to extend the one year's exceptional leave granted to Wali and Azim in July 2002. The grounds given for this decision were that it is now safe to return to Afghanistan. However there are continuing problems with ongoing violence, human rights violations and excessive poverty.

Both Azim and Wali suffered persecution, torture and arrest in Afghanistan and fear further persecution should they be forced to return. Their only remaining family members in the country have disappeared. Human Rights Watch raises concern over the continuing control of the warlords, the dominance of officials in national and local posts that have been implicated in previous human rights abuses, ongoing abuses by US forces and continued discrimination against women, children and religious groups such as the Ismail Shia group with which Azim and Wali identify.

This is not an environment which could in any way be considered safe, and I urge you to grant Wali and Azim's permission to stay in the UK. It is simply not acceptable that the UK government invades a country, does very little to address the ensuing chaos and then expects refugees to simply return. Denying this family the right to remain in the UK represents an attack on many of the values this government claims to hold dear: the family, local community, international law - and even common sense. I look forward to hearing your views on this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Caroline Lucas - Green Party MEP for South East England.