



## **Proud to be a place of safety for refugees and asylum seekers**

With the name of Allah who is most gracious and merciful, sweet audience, honourable guests, worthy speakers and performers, with a cordial salute to Cecil Jackson Cole, the founder of Oxfam, I appreciate the organisers of today's rally. I feel that this rally will go a long way to encourage refugees to initiate their role in society according to the expertise and capacity of each individual.

Respected audience, refugee is neither a substandard individual, nor a hateful term. At the horizon of history of refugees, there are a number of shining stars who have made remarkable changes in the world of business and life. Mr. Michael Marks is one of those stars, who started his business in partnership with Mr. Spencer at a very meagre level and one can see its climax in the form of Marks & Spencer department stores. Amam Khumeni, who passed 15 years of his life in refuge and revolted the social system of Iran. Muhammad (PBUH) was also forced to leave Makha, his birthplace and to take refuge in Madina, but he gave mankind such principled religion that about 1.5 billion living people of the world are his followers, at the moment.

My loving brothers and sisters, now I have to draw the kind attention of the concerned authorities towards one of the issues faced by refugees at the initial stage. The first and foremost of those issues is of the phase of pre-refugee status, that is called asylum-seeking. The length of this stage extends from a few days up to infinity. For the whole phase of asylum seeking, there is no permission to work or to do any business or activity which may originate any income. This embargo, not only makes the capabilities and intelligence of asylum seekers rusty, it kills their ego as well. The lot of asylum seekers includes a lot of respectable professionals with long experience in their fields. A fact of life of the body and brain is that you use it or lose it. This fact is de-shaping and destroying intelligent brains.

Let us now look into the wastage of working hours and loss of tax money. According to data from the Red Cross, 38,878 (including dependents) asylum applications were lodged to the home office in the year 2015. Nobody can deny that out of 38 thousand individuals, thousands would be in good mental, physical and working conditions. If we assume that a minimum of 8,000 of the 38,000 asylum applicants were able to work, is it not unfortunate that the UK is losing sixty four thousand working hours per day unutilised. The number of lost working hours crosses 16 million per annum, Now imagine that over a decade. This issue merits consideration of the esteemed authorities.

Finally I welcome people seeking sanctuary to Swansea in my personal capacity, as well as on behalf of Swansea City of Sanctuary and offer my humble cooperation to each needy friend at the hour of need.

Thank you to all, and goodbye.