

2.3 Anti deportation campaigning

Anti deportation campaigning relates to that specific type of campaigning done with and for an individual asylum seeker facing deportation. STAR groups can play an important role in an anti deportation campaign by bringing the campaign to a wider audience and providing support.

An anti deportation campaign is about building and demonstrating support for the asylum seekers case so that the Home Secretary will use their discretionary powers in their favour, i.e. to halt deportation and reconsider the case. A campaign is necessary where the law is not enough to stop deportation or removal. Not every case requires a campaign. Many cases can be won just through proper legal representation.

What things influence the Home Office

Petitions – Outline the case on 1 page, with space for supporters to sign their name, calling for your friend to be given leave to remain in the UK

Model Letters - A 1 page pre-written letter to the Home Office signed by a supporter with their address. It is easy for the Home Office to ignore model letters but much harder to get people to write their own. You have to weigh up the balance and decide what you want to do.

Postcards - On the front: typically have a picture of your friend and your campaign group. On the back: a couple of sentences about the case and asking for your friend to be given leave to remain. Signed by supporter with their address.

Some general tips

- Keep your friend involved - It is vital that your friend is at the centre of all decision making. Nothing should be done without their agreement.
- Start early – An anti deportation campaign can run along side and complement any legal case and should be started as soon as possible, even as soon as they first get legal representation.
- Give the campaign a clear name, such as “Lante Alloty Must Stay “.
- be prepared for the long haul - Many successful campaigns have taken years to resolve and often, for the campaign to be successful, your friend will need to produce new evidence for the Home Office and demonstrate a lot of public support for their case to stay.

1. Get legal advice

If they don't already have legal representation you could try:

- The Immigration Law Practitioners Association which has a list of registered members practicing across the country on its website: www.ilpa.org.uk.
- The Immigration Advisory Service has branches nationwide and may be able to offer free legal advice to your friend. www.iasuk.org.
- Alternatively visit your local law centre or citizens advice bureau.

Your friends' solicitor should check that the information the Home Office currently has is correct and that they have interpreted it correctly.

2. Get evidence to support the case

This could include membership cards of opposition parties, newspaper articles mentioning you friend, arrest warrants, death certificates of family / associates, quotes from well respected NGOs' reports that relate in general to the situation, evidence to prove their identity or nationality, Home Office In country reports available from the Country Information Policy Unit

3. Put a case document together

This should include basic details of the case, who is being threatened with deportation, why the Home Office want to deport them, why this is unjust and how you are planning to resist the deportation. This document can then be used either whole or in bits for press releases, campaign materials, in E mails or interviews. Consider it the basis facts of your campaign.

T a k i n g a c t i o n

4. Publicise the campaign

- The main focus of your campaigning story should be the story of your friend themselves. Remember that if you are trying to gain some kind of public support then you need to relate to them those issues that are clearly outrageous about the case and the situation. Don't make it technical
- Any campaigning material should include a photo of your friend, their Home Office reference number and contact details of the campaign (not your or their personal contact details) plus info of how you would like supporters to help. You could produce materials in English and another appropriate language. Include updates on future planned activities or details of support gained.
- Campaigns require publicising your friends situation and their life. They will have to learn to speak in public about their case. They will hopefully be invited to speak at meetings not just locally but all over the country. This is important so the campaign can become a national and not just a local one.

5. Get official support

Identify which key players may be happy to publicly support your campaign.

- Contact your friends MP and arrange a meeting to discuss their case. MPs can raise your friends case with the Minister, ask a PQ relating to their case, or submit an Early Day Motion* calling on other MPs to support their case.
- If your friend is attending university, aim to get the support of their lecturers, even the Vice Chancellor or even the University and Colleges Union (UCU)
- Other bases for campaign support may include local refugee organisations, local trade union branches, schools or religious organisations.

This extract is based on guidance from the National Coalition for Anti Deportation Campaigns. For a more detailed guide, include case studies and model letters, etc, go to www.ncadc.org.uk.

