



Home Office

RECEIVED 10 JUL 2009

Phil Woolas MP

MINISTER OF STATE

2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF

www.homeoffice.gov.uk

The Rt Hon Tessa Jowell MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

08 JUL 2009

Dear Tessa

Thank you for correspondence about the UK Border Agency's settlement policy for former Gurkhas.

In view of the large number of letters we have received on this subject I am setting out the policy position here in a form that you can forward onto individual constituents. I am sorry for the delay in responding to many of these letters.

It was this Government in 2004 that granted the right of settlement in the UK to Gurkhas who served on or after July 1997 when the Brigade's base moved from Hong Kong to the UK.

On 21 May 2009 the Home Secretary announced that new guidance will be published which will make it clear that those who served in the Brigade of Gurkhas between 1948 and 1997 for longer than four years will be eligible to apply for settlement in the United Kingdom. Applications will be granted, unless there are particular reasons for excluding an individual from settlement, for example criminality.

This scheme recognises the unique nature of the service given to the Brigade of Gurkhas and is offered to them alone on an exceptional basis.

We estimate that 36,000 former Gurkhas are now eligible to apply to come to the United Kingdom although we believe that not all of these will choose to do so. We have now made contact with almost all those with outstanding applications and we believe that the majority of the retired Gurkha community are aware of the change.

Where you have written to me about issues outside the above you will receive a separate response on those points.

PHIL WOOLAS MP