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Dear

There has been significant public interest and comment following the immigration enforcement action in Glasgow on 13 May. That enforcement action has raised a number of important issues.

The Scottish Government welcomes people who come to Scotland to make a positive contribution to our communities, our public services and our economy. It is important that we treat people who want to make Scotland their home with dignity, fairness and respect.

I accept that migration needs to be controlled to deter and prevent abuse, fraud and criminal activity. Indeed the need to control migration was one of the seven draft principles set out by the Scottish Government in our January 2020 paper *Migration: Helping Scotland Prosper*. However, any enforcement procedures in Scotland must be carried out with due regard to the safety of our communities and be aligned to our values of dignity, fairness and respect.

The immigration raid in Pollokshields, in the heart of a community celebrating Eid, a day after the First Minister warned of an upsurge of COVID-19 cases in the South Side of Glasgow failed that test. It created an unnecessary situation requiring a significant Police presence to ensure public safety.

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I know that you have highlighted the importance of public opinion and consent in relation to immigration enforcement activity. I am clear that we need democratic accountability and oversight of immigration including immigration enforcement. The events of 13 May were a clear articulation of the views of the community. I don't consider inflammatory and divisive rhetoric suggesting that those taking action are protecting murderers, rapists and high profile offenders is helpful.

We both know that it is inaccurate to suggest that all those subject to immigration enforcement have been linked to criminality. Clearly there will be some cases where swift action needs to be taken to remove individuals who present a risk but as the events at Kenmure Street showed, individuals facing deportation are often valued members of communities they have been part of for many years. Many of those subject to immigration enforcement have committed no crime and are no threat to the public, having simply exhausted their appeal rights.

A more humane approach to immigration enforcement is required, one which reflects the views and values of Scottish communities and does not involve the heavy-handed approach of raids which are disruptive to our communities, are inherently divisive, risk public health and take up valuable Police resources.

I would welcome an urgent meeting to discuss how to ensure there is no repetition of the events at Kenmure Street in the future..



Angus Robertson

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