
Asylum seeker urges end to Hotel Stays, calls for work



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London, August 22 – An asylum seeker housed at The Bell Hotel in Epping has called on the UK government to end the use of hotels for migrants and allow them to work while awaiting asylum decisions.

Mohammed, a Somali national who has spent four months at the hotel, told the BBC that hotels create isolation and tension among residents. “Let them close all the hotels and let us work. We are

not tourists,” he said, adding that camps or regular housing would be preferable.

The appeal comes after the High Court granted a temporary injunction preventing The Bell Hotel from accommodating asylum seekers beyond 12 September. Around 140 migrants will be relocated to alternative sites.

Minister for Border Security Dame Angela Eagle reaffirmed the government’s plan to close all asylum hotels by the end of this Parliament. Current rules generally prohibit asylum seekers from working unless their case has been pending for over 12 months.

Epping residents remain divided, with protests at the hotel leading to 16 arrests for public disturbances. Two asylum seekers also face unrelated criminal charges, while Mohammed expressed sympathy for local concerns. “Give us the chance to work and support ourselves,” he said.

According to Home Office data, 199 asylum seekers were staying in hotels in the Epping Forest area at the end of June.