

Should Shamima Begum be allowed back into the UK?

Summary Answer?

Yes. Her UK citizenship should be returned and she should be brought back but then she should answer to the UK legal system for her actions. The main reason is that she is the UK's problem. The UK should deal with her and should not dump the problem on the rest of the world.

What has she done?

She left the UK at the age of 15 to join Islamic State. She may also have committed other crimes while with Islamic State that we don't know about. She now wants to return to the UK. [1].

Are we attempting to have a legal argument here?

No we are attempting to have a moral argument. That is, if the legal arguments taking place elsewhere come up with a different answer to us then there may be a deficiency in the law.

Was the decision that she cannot return made by the Supreme Court?

No the decision was made by the UK government. The Supreme Court only decided that the decision was not illegal.

Result of Supreme Court case?

She cannot return to the UK. [2]

Do we believe it was right to remove her passport?

No. She does not have Bangladeshi or any other citizenship. Removing her passport leaves her stateless.

Where might the security risk be that the Supreme Court is worried about?

- She might carry out terrorist crimes when she is back in the UK.
- Letting her into the country might set a precedent that would allow other bad people in.
- Getting her out of the refugee camp and back to the UK might expose UK operatives to risk.
- She would have to be monitored which would drain manpower and might expose risks elsewhere.

Do we believe that there will be risk of her carrying out terrorist crimes when back in the UK?

Possible but unlikely because:-

- She has seen directly the result of extreme ideology.
- She would be assessed before release from prison.
- She will be back with her family.

Is it valid to argue that she should be kept out of the UK because letting her back in would set a precedent that would allow many other bad people back in?

No. that is a very prejudiced argument. Her case should be judged on its own merits.

If the UK decided to allow her back in would the UK have a responsibility to help her get back?

Yes as a UK citizen in trouble she would deserve some help. Also if the government decided to allow her back they would not remain credible if they then left her to make her own way home.

If the UK decided to allow her back in would that expose her to risk within the refugee camp?

Yes. She could be kidnapped and ransomed to the UK or to her relatives.

What are the risks to the world of not letting her and people like her back to their countries?

- They have to be supported while living in refugee camps.
- They might become a group of disaffected terrorists, travelling to all the hotspots around the world.
- They might have descendants who will continue to make trouble for the world for generations to come.

If a UK citizen had committed crimes in the UK and then in, say, Vietnam and was then living in luxury there would the UK think it appropriate to remove his citizenship and let him carry on living there?

No. The fact that Shamima Begum is currently living in unpleasant conditions should not affect the decision.

Does she have any value to the UK?

- Her unique experience makes her valuable.
- She has value as the daughter of a British family.
- As a UK citizen her opinion is of value.
- She may be able to help with de-radicalisation programs.

Does she have any children?

She has had three but all have died.

If she had any children would the answer be different?

It should not be. Otherwise there is an incentive on other people like her to have children so that they can come home.

Is there some aspect of racism or prejudice in the government or the court's decision that she cannot return?

There is no evidence for that.

Should we take any notice of the opinions she is reported as having now?

No. She is living in a refugee camp surrounded by ex-Islamic State refugees. She cannot express her opinions freely.

References?

[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shamima_Begum

[2] Shamima Begum cannot return to UK, Supreme Court rules
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-56209007>

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