Dear MP

The purpose of this letter is to alert you to a pattern of discrimination that is being employed by HSBC bank in inhibiting or closing the accounts of Syrian nationals or turning them down as potential customers. This pattern has been well documented by the Syrian community in Britain and seems to be a pervasive problem affecting Syrians regardless of their immigration status.

HSBC is citing Syria's sanctioned status to justify its discriminatory policy. A template letter sent by HSBC to Syrian customers reads, 'Our records show that you are resident in a country that is subject to financial sanction restrictions. Due to the increased requirements for compliance with international obligations concerning payments to and from sanctioned countries, we have taken the decision to close the above account(s).' It does not substantiate these allegations with any objective evidence.

While I understand that banks are prohibited from dealing with Syrian entities because the country is under sanction, I do not understand how these financial regulations can justify the profiling of an entire community. The mere fact that a bank customer is Syrian should not automatically raise red flags. Any decision to refuse service to a customer or to inhibit or close an account should not be made without substantiated, objective and compelling evidence.

There is a very real problem in this country with the way vulnerable foreign Syrian nationals are being treated by HSBC. HSBC is pursuing a blatantly discriminatory practice and is shamefully abusing its power over its Syrian customers.

I do hope that a formal investigation will be launched into the matter and I ask that you do whatever is in your power, as my constituency MP, to ensure that banks are made to uphold the dignity of their customers while complying with financial legislation.

Best regards,