

Here's What the Mainstream Media Won't Tell You About UK Immigration

An Empire who conquered half the world, but now complains about immigrants

By [Michaela Whitton](#)

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U.K.– 51 million people are currently displaced across the world. The number of people applying for asylum in developed countries doubled in a single year and over [100,000](#) migrants were rescued at sea in Europe during the first half of 2015.

In the U.K., it is not our fault that we're subjects of vague scaremongering that claims our tiny island is awash with asylum seekers. What's clear is that people drowning off our shores is inhumane and horrifying, but what's not clear is what our policies are.

Some of us are confused about who's who. In other words, we don't know our refugees from our illegal immigrants or our asylum seekers from our economic migrants. All we know is we are told they are "scroungers."

I won't insult the readership by explaining the differences, but in case any members of the "*coming over 'ere taking our jobs*" brigade happen to be reading—or for those who are simply confused—you can read the differences [here](#).

Just [0.24%](#) of the total U.K. population are refugees

With immigration laws constantly changing, there are a few basics. If someone is at risk of suffering or has suffered persecution in their own country, they can apply for asylum in the U.K. If granted, the person is given permission to remain. While applying for permission, they're legally known as an asylum seeker and when the status is granted, a refugee.

There is no such thing as an illegal asylum seeker

While some asylum seekers may enter the country illegally, once the application process begins, they are entitled to stay while they wait for a decision. Many will have fled unimaginable horrors, left entire lives behind, and undertaken perilous journeys to get to the U.K.

Applications are made through an immigration officer at a port, a screening unit, or the Home Office. Two interviews are attended where information is gathered, fingerprints are taken, and stories are checked for consistency. Proof of the inability to return to their country and the need for protection is required. A caseworker makes a decision and those granted refugee status have permission to remain for 5 years. Only then do they have the right to work and claim benefits.

Asylum seekers in the U.K. can't claim benefits or work

A very small number who can't return but don't meet the definition of a refugee are given humanitarian protection for 5 years, after which they can apply for indefinite leave to remain. Others are granted discretionary leave to remain for a limited time period while a certain type of protection is granted to unaccompanied children who can't return to their own country.

Governments are obliged to provide protection to people who meet the criteria for asylum, and although they are notoriously tough on immigration, these laws are part of U.K. legislation. If you are a glutton for punishment, you can read the mind-boggling list of U.K. immigration rules [here](#).

So who is on the boats and hiding in lorries?

It is impossible to say. They could be asylum seekers, economic migrants, or both.

In 2014, out of 29,914 applications for asylum in the U.K., 41% were granted, according to [The Refugee Council](#). People who are refused have a right of appeal, although only a small number of appeals are heard. Despite media-generated myths, asylum seekers in the U.K. are unable to claim benefits or work and children under 18 are cared for by local authorities. Those over 18 can apply for a small amount of cash and accommodation support. People are generally relocated in undesirable areas where they have no connections. Many are destitute and forced to rely on charities.



People who have been refused are expected to return to their own country either voluntarily or face deportation. Immigration enforcement vans complete with disgraceful “Go Home” signs can now be spotted across the U.K.

Some are detained at the beginning of their application and held in detention centers with prison-like security. The U.K. detains [30,000](#) migrants a year and is one of a small number of E.U. states that practices indefinite detention. This policy of holding people with no time limit has been subject to widespread criticism and raised peremptory issues under international laws against [torture](#).

Detainees are held in high-security detention centers run by multinationals such as [Serco and G4S](#), both of which have a history of human rights abuses. Yarls Wood, a women's detention center, was accused of [state-sanctioned abuse of women](#) when undercover filming by Channel 4 caught staff referring to inmates as “animals,” “beasties,” and “bitches.”

Victims of torture, war, and rape in their own countries are treated as criminals in Britain. Reza, a [woman](#) detained for 13 months, states:

I expected more humanity. This is completely unfair, because once (we) claimed asylum in your country, and you know, it feels like your house is on fire, you're running out of your house, and you go to another house, and you find that house is on fire as well.

Isn't it ironic that asylum seekers entitled to protection from persecution are persecuted in institutions in a country that they came to for help?

The odd racist remark in Britain was once the domain of the fringe. As a result of politics and negative press, the stigmatizing of migrants as a toxic stain on British society is becoming institutional. If you find this hard to believe, buy a British newspaper.

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For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca