



Oxfam



# fair play

Revised 2007

**Refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland**  
●●● **A guide for journalists**





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# Foreword

The media has a major role to play in our multi-cultural society. It also has certain duties in ensuring responsible reporting on issues of asylum, refugees and immigration.

Without the dissemination of accurate information, our society will struggle to establish satisfactory levels of democracy and accountability of those in power. Journalists are essential to that process and if their work is not carried out with maximum use of truth and accuracy then public life is in trouble. A conscious decision to distort the news is an attack on truth. That includes exclusion or censorship of issues in the media either for political or commercial pressures.

This updated guide is one of a series of publications which goes a long way towards enabling journalists to cover the issue of refugees and asylum seekers in a balanced and truthful manner. The initiative in producing this booklet by Oxfam is welcomed and supported by the NUJ as a useful resource in covering such an important subject.

Paul Holleran  
NUJ Scottish Organiser  
September 2007

*Oxfam produced this guide in collaboration with Amnesty International Scotland, Scottish Refugee Council and the National Union of Journalists – all members of the Asylum Positive Images Network in Scotland.*



RIES

**Daily Record**

**YOUNG NEWSAGENTS**



'I just know what I pick up from newspapers; you tend to get some extreme views.'

(Woman, 51+, Edinburgh) <sup>1</sup>

# Introduction

**98% of the Scottish public receives their information about asylum from the media.<sup>2</sup>**

Accurate and balanced reporting within the media on asylum is crucial to challenging racism and harassment, informing public perceptions of asylum and helping people seeking asylum to safely rebuild their lives and settle in Scotland.

The guide aims to improve the quality of asylum debate in the UK by providing journalists in Scotland with essential information to enable high standards of reporting. It provides quick easy reference to contacts, topics and information sources.

This publication was produced on behalf of the Asylum Positive Images Network – a network of agencies, community groups and organisations. They have come together to positively influence media portrayal of asylum issues, to challenge negative media coverage and to proactively provide accurate information. The network also aims to inform public opinion and support integration by challenging inaccurate representations, and support positive messages. For further information regarding this Network please contact [Scotland@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:Scotland@oxfam.org.uk)

**“Experience over the last 4 years has been that where asylum communities have been established there has been ill-informed adverse media coverage which has contributed to heightened local tensions and resentment of asylum seekers.”<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Warm Welcome? Understanding Public Attitudes to Asylum Seekers in Scotland, ippr, June 2006 p.25, [http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/pub/Warm\\_Welcome](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/pub/Warm_Welcome)

<sup>2</sup> Mori Scotland Poll of 1022 respondents, 2004 on behalf of Oxfam

<sup>3</sup> ACPO guide to meeting the policing needs of asylum seekers and refugees ([www.acpo.police.uk](http://www.acpo.police.uk)) 2001





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A woman wearing a white headscarf is shown in profile, looking downwards. The background is a solid blue color with a faint, large globe of the Earth visible on the right side. The globe shows continents and oceans in light blue and white. The woman's face is partially in shadow, and she has a contemplative expression.

“Being compelled to leave your own homeland due to unbearable circumstances beyond your control to find yourself in a country with totally different language, culture and rules, and no one to help and guide you is a really daunting experience. Every little, ordinary and simple thing becomes a problem and obstacle in your life.

These problems are further compounded when the media appear to be against you and make you feel unwelcome. You feel trapped in an impossible situation. On the one hand, you want to use your education, profession and expertise and make a life for yourself and also make a real contribution to the society you now live in; and on the other hand, you feel stonewalled by restrictive rules, regulations and negative reactions from all corners”

*Exiled journalist now living in Glasgow*

# The basics

## Why people seek refuge

Around the world millions of people are forced to flee from their homes.

AT PRESENT, according to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Refugee Agency, there are more than 10 million people living as refugees across the world.<sup>4</sup> People may be forced to flee for a number of reasons: for some it could be because they have been persecuted because of their political beliefs, or sometimes people are targeted because of their ethnic group, some are targeted because of trade union activism and for others for upholding values such as truthful and responsible journalism. As well of those who have crossed international

borders and become refugees, others fleeing persecution may remain in their home country as internally displaced persons.

Seeking refuge is a vital last resort, a safety net for those who cannot find protection from abuses in their own country and so have to flee to find safety elsewhere. Stable and prosperous countries like the UK do not always provide this sanctuary. Most people seek refuge in developing nations. Two thirds of the world's poorest countries, like Iran and Pakistan.



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<sup>4</sup> [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org) (June 2007)

# 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees

The term 'refugee' in common usage covers a range of people including those displaced by environmental change and natural disaster. Moreover, the term is often confused with other types of migrants. However, 'refugee' has a specific definition in international law.

The 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (commonly referred to as the Refugee Convention or 1951 Convention) is the key legal document that gives the definition of what a refugee is and sets out the rights of refugees to be protected. The Convention has protected millions of lives since it was introduced.

In July 1951, a special U.N. conference in Geneva approved the Refugee Convention. The Convention is the cornerstone of refugee law that clearly spells out who is a refugee and the kind of legal protection, other assistance and social rights he or she should receive from states that are party to the document. Equally, it defines a refugee's obligations to host governments and it sets out certain categories of persons, such as war criminals, who do not qualify for refugee status.

**Article 1 of the Refugee Convention defines a refugee as:** *"A person who is owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social*

*group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country..."*

The 5 elements of this definition are that:

- Refugees have to be outside of their country of origin;
- The reason why they flee has to be because of the fear of persecution;
- The fear has to be well founded;
- The persecution must be as a result of one or more of the 5 categories in the definition; and
- They have to be unable to seek protection or are unwilling to seek protection in their country of origin i.e. they cannot turn to their own governments for protection.

No country has ever withdrawn from its obligations under the UN Convention for the Status of Refugees.

For information on the 1951 Convention, global refugee situations and global statistics please visit: [www.unhcr.org.uk](http://www.unhcr.org.uk)

Many states party to the 1951 Convention also have an asylum process to determine the person's status in accordance with the domestic legal system. UNHCR offers advice to governments on refugee status determination as part of its mandate to promote refugee law and the Convention. UNHCR advocates that governments adopt a rapid, flexible and liberal process, recognising how difficult it often is to document persecution. As one of the 145 signatories to the Convention the UK has an obligation to consider all applications made for asylum in this country.

Individuals may also be granted refugee status by UNHCR. Such individuals are often referred to as mandate refugees and may be eligible for resettlement (see page 28).

- Did you know that Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution?

**“When refugees cannot seek asylum because of off shore barriers, or are detained for excessive periods in unsatisfactory conditions, or are refused entry because of restrictive interpretations of the Convention, the asylum system is broken, and the promise of the Convention is broken too.”**

*Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General: Address to the European Parliament, 29 January 2004*

# Terminology

“There is general confusion about the issue of asylum. Very few people understand the differences between asylum seekers and other migrants, or settled black and minority ethnic (BME) communities. The numbers of asylum seekers in Scotland and the benefits they receive are greatly exaggerated. However, while misinformation and myth can support prejudice, they are not the main causes of it. Even very tolerant people know very few facts.”<sup>5</sup>

## **Asylum Seeker**

Someone who is fleeing persecution, has arrived in another country, made themselves known to authorities and exercised their legal right to apply for asylum and have it considered under the Refugee Convention.

## **Refugee**

Someone whose claim for asylum has been recognised under the 1951 Refugee Convention. However the term is also used generically to describe a person seeking sanctuary from persecution and those fleeing widespread conflict or natural disasters. People who do not qualify under the strict Convention definition of a refugee, but who are recognised as having pressing humanitarian reasons not to be returned home, may be given a form of subsidiary status (see under ‘UK statuses on page 15).

## **Unaccompanied or separated asylum-seeking children (unaccompanied minors)**

An unaccompanied or separated asylum-seeking child is someone who arrives in the UK without a guardian or adult relative, has no adult relative or guardian to care for them within the UK, is under the age of 18 and makes an application for asylum. They will not enter the Asylum Support system instead they will be referred to and supported by the nearest local authority to their point of entry into the UK. If they have not received a decision on their asylum claim at the time of their 18 birthday they will transfer to Asylum Support.

### ● **‘What’s the Story?’**

A study of media coverage of asylum by Article 19 found 51 different terms used to refer to people seeking asylum and refugees – these ranged from insults like ‘parasite’, ‘scrounger’ and ‘spongers’ to terms like ‘illegal immigrant’ and ‘bogus refugee’. Visit – [www.article19.org](http://www.article19.org)

The Home Office is in the process of reforming the immigration process and care arrangements for unaccompanied minors. Under the new proposals unaccompanied asylum-seeking children will be accommodated by specific local authorities who operate specialist services for this group.

### Refused Asylum Seeker

Sometimes known as a ‘failed’ asylum seeker within the UK, this applies to someone who has applied for asylum and has been refused a form of protection by the UK Government.



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#### ● ‘Illegal asylum-seeker’

By definition, therefore, anyone has the right to apply for asylum in the UK. There is no obligation for an asylum seeker to claim asylum in the first country they come to, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights sets out the fundamental right for all to seek asylum. There can thus be no such thing as an “illegal asylum seeker” a term that has frequently been employed in publications.

In October 2003, The Press Complaints Commission (PCC) issued guidance regarding the reporting of refugees and asylum seekers. The guidance states that editors and journalists should avoid misleading or distorted terminology, such as the term “illegal asylum seeker” (which is a breach of Clause One of PCC Code of conduct – Accuracy) and should be mindful that ‘inaccurate, misleading or distorted reporting may generate an atmosphere of fear and hostility that is not borne out by the facts’.

[www.pcc.org.uk](http://www.pcc.org.uk)

Many organisations continue to push for stronger guidance and enforcement by the PCC on asylum and refugee related reporting. In Scotland and London there are annual awards presented to journalists for good, balanced and fair reporting on asylum issues.

### **Economic Migrant**

Someone who leaves their country to seek a more prosperous way of life elsewhere. This may be because they are seeking to live a secure and peaceful life escaping poverty and conflict. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the term migrant refers to someone who makes a conscious, voluntary choice to leave his or her country of origin. If they want to return they can do so without obstruction from their government. Recent years have seen more migrants coming from new EU states often referred to as Migrant Workers.

### **Immigrant/migrant**

A catch-all term usually used to describe someone who has left his or her country of origin and arrived in another country usually to take up permanent residence there.

### **Illegal Immigrant**

Normally refers to someone who has arrived in another country, and intentionally not made themselves known to the authorities and has no legal basis for being there. However the term illegal immigrant, although commonly used, is not defined anywhere within UK law. The phrase “illegal immigrant” was found in January 2002 by the Advertising Standards Authority to be racist, offensive and misleading. Most international organisations including the UN and the International Organisation for Migration use the term ‘irregular migrant’ instead.



## UK Statuses

### Refugee status

This status is given when someone has applied for asylum in the UK and has been recognised by the Home Office as a refugee according to the definition set out in the Convention. Previously those granted refugee status were given Indefinite Leave to Remain (i.e. permission to settle permanently in the UK) however now refugees in the UK will be given leave for a period of up to 5 years. When the allotted time expires, the refugee's case will be actively reviewed by the Home Office. Those granted this status are allowed to work and to access mainstream welfare support.

### Humanitarian Protection

Since April 2003 this status has been awarded to people who have been refused refugee status, but cannot be returned to their country of origin as they face serious risk to life or person or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. It is awarded for a three-year period, at the end of this period the circumstances of the case are reviewed.



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If circumstances are unchanged a person with Humanitarian Protection (HP) can apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR). People with HP status are allowed to work and access mainstream welfare systems.

### Discretionary Leave

Awarded to people who have been refused refugee status and who do not fulfil the criteria for Humanitarian Protection, but are allowed to stay in the UK for other reasons. It is only awarded in very limited circumstances, sometimes to separated young people (unaccompanied minors – under the age of 18 who have made an application for asylum in the UK).

# Who seeks asylum in the UK?

**83% of Scots think that asylum seekers should be able to undertake paid employment in order to support themselves.<sup>6</sup>**

THE PERSISTENT MYTH that all asylum seekers are really just economic migrants is unfounded. The main countries of origin of asylum seekers are not the poorest countries in the world. They are the countries dominated by conflicts and human rights abuses.

In 1998/9, during the Kosovo crisis, the largest group of people seeking asylum in the UK were from the Former Republic of Yugoslavia. In 2001, during the war against the Taliban in Afghanistan, the largest group of people seeking asylum came from Afghanistan, and in 2002 Iraq produced the largest number of people seeking asylum in the UK.<sup>7</sup>

In 2006 in the UK the top nationalities of people claiming asylum were – Eritrean, Afghani, Iranian, Chinese, Somali, Zimbabwean, and Iraqi. These are all countries suffering conflict, upheaval or well-documented human rights abuses. The 23,610 applications for asylum which were made in the UK in 2006 was a continued decrease in applications from previous years as a result of tighter border controls rather than a reduction in human rights abuses.<sup>8</sup>

In 2006 the UN High Commissioner for Refugees found the number of people seeking asylum in the main 50 industrialised nations had dropped to 336,000 the fewest since 1988.<sup>9</sup>

**“In my opinion, the media can really play a very crucial role in providing useful information and guidance to asylum seekers / refugees and reflecting their plight fairly and impartially. The media can help refugees / asylum seekers to be included in the society, as opposed to portraying them as unwelcome aliens.”**

*Exiled Journalist living in Glasgow*

<sup>6</sup> Mori Scotland Poll of 1022 respondents 2004 – on behalf of the asylum positive images project

<sup>7</sup> IPPR 2003 'Asylum in the UK; An IPPR Fact File

<sup>8</sup> Home Office Quarterly Asylum Statistics

<sup>9</sup> www.unhcr.org

People seeking asylum are seeking safety. Many are not in a position to choose their destination. In fact the Home Office's own research finds that the principle aim of people seeking asylum is to reach a place of safety and that many arriving in the UK do not have prior detailed knowledge of UK immigration and asylum policy, entitlements to benefits or the availability of work. However once in the UK, most people seeking asylum wish to support themselves through work rather than depend on the state for support.<sup>10</sup>



- Did you know that the Gaza strip hosts the highest number of refugee population to the total population in the world with a ratio of 1:2<sup>11</sup>

For up-to-date statistics on the number and nationality of asylum claimants in the UK and other asylum statistics visit the Home Office Research Development Statistics website. Statistics are published quarterly: [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html)

<sup>10</sup> Understanding the decision making of asylum seekers. Home Office research study 24

<sup>11</sup> USCR (2003) World Refugee Survey



64% of Scots think that Scotland should provide a safe haven to people seeking sanctuary from persecution.<sup>12</sup>

# The asylum process

## Applying for asylum

When someone applies for asylum in the UK they are asking the UK Government to recognise them as a refugee under the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

### What happens next?

The Borders and Immigration Agency (BIA – previously the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND)) within the Home Office is responsible for processing all claims for asylum and asylum support made in the United Kingdom. In March 2007 they introduced the ‘New Asylum Model’, which aims at making decisions on applications more quickly and effectively. All new asylum applications are now processed through this model. The Border and Immigration Agency (BIA) have set strict timetables for claims to be processed. For example, they state that 60% of all asylum cases will be processed within 6 months by December 2008.

**On the next few pages are descriptions of some of the key stages in the asylum process, however as the asylum system is highly complex and developments in asylum law are constantly evolving this information can only be used as a guideline and not a definitive outline of the legal process.**

To apply for asylum people should present themselves to an immigration officer upon arrival at the ‘port of entry’ i.e. airport or seaport etc or by visiting the nearest BIA Asylum Screening Units. According to BIA, 50% of applications are made at port and 50% at Asylum Screening Units.

In Scotland BIA has a regional office in Glasgow, but only families and vulnerable adults can claim asylum there. Most people who arrive in Glasgow are required to travel to Asylum Screening Units in Liverpool or Croydon to register their asylum claim.

When a person claims asylum in the UK they can also apply for Asylum Support. If they are successful they will be placed in induction accommodation and then moved to dispersal accommodation in regions across the UK, including Glasgow. See the next section, Asylum Support and Accommodation for information.

● Did you know – every year around the globe on the 20<sup>th</sup> of June people celebrate sanctuary as part of World Refugee Day? For more information – [www.refugeeweek.org.uk](http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk)

## Screening Interviews

This interview is to gather information including establishing identity, nationality and number of dependants. At this point BIA collect fingerprints, photos and biometric data. This helps to establish whether the application for asylum can be passed to another 'safe third country' where the asylum seeker may have stopped in en route.<sup>13</sup>

## Managing the asylum claim process

Since the implementation of the New Asylum Model, every asylum seeker who arrived after March 2007 has a dedicated Case Owner who deals with the asylum application from start to finish. Asylum seekers dispersed to Glasgow will be allocated a Case Owner based at BIA's Glasgow office, who will be their main point of contact. The case owner is responsible for:

- Interviewing the applicant
- Collecting evidence to support their claim
- Deciding whether to grant asylum or not
- Presenting any appeals in court
- Providing and managing asylum support
- Responding to any queries the asylum seeker may have about their case, and
- Organising the applicant's integration into the UK if their claim is successful or arranging voluntary return or removal back home if the claim is unsuccessful.

<sup>13</sup> For more information please visit [www.ecre.org/topics/dublin\\_ii](http://www.ecre.org/topics/dublin_ii)



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## Case study ●●●

*Mr F, an Afghan, entered the UK with six members of his family and applied for asylum in August 1999. The Directorate issued his Statement of Evidence Form (SEF) in April 2001 and, when it failed to be returned on time, refused Mr F for non-compliance. In June 2001, Mr F lodged an appeal arguing that he had submitted the SEF on time. The Directorate found that it had in fact received the SEF within the deadline, and agreed to withdraw its decision in September 2001. However, it failed to notify the applicant so he applied for judicial review. The Directorate advised the applicant to withdraw his judicial review and it had to meet additional legal costs of £2000. The Directorate interviewed the applicant in September 2002 but, by July 2003, had not decided the claim. Mr F and his family may now be entitled to stay in the UK under the terms of recent Government concession to families who had submitted an asylum application before October 2000.*

*Source: Improving the Speed and Quality of Asylum Decisions. National Audit Office, 2004*

## Reporting

Asylum applicants have to report to their case owner on a regular basis whilst their application is being considered. The frequency with which people have to report is decided on a case-by-case basis. A person may be expected to travel up to 90 minutes or within a 25 mile radius, and will be expected to do so consistently within certain time frames (weekly, monthly) The BIA office near Govan, Glasgow is used as a reporting centre. Reporting is sometimes also referred to as 'signing'. There may be difficulties in meeting reporting requirements including mobility issues for people with disabilities, childcare responsibilities and inability to meet the cost of travel.

## Reaching a decision on the claim

The case owner will make a decision on the asylum application based on the details they were given when they interviewed the asylum seeker, and any supporting evidence. The case owner then invites the asylum seeker to a meeting and delivers the decision in person.

If the claim is successful then the applicant is granted five years limited leave to remain in the UK. The refugee now has the right to work, apply for travel documents and for family reunion.

If the claim is unsuccessful the case owner will explain appeal rights and time limits. Appeals are heard by the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal and the case owner will be present to defend their decision.

If the claim is unsuccessful at appeal the applicant will be encouraged to return home voluntarily. If they fail to make their own arrangements to go home or agree to participate in the Assisted Voluntary Return Programme they may be forcibly removed.

## Fast Track Process

Since the New Asylum Model was introduced the Home Office's stated aim is to fast track all asylum applications. Asylum applications are now divided into categories according to the characteristics of their claim. The detained fast track centres at Harmondsworth centre, near Heathrow airport and Yarl's Wood centre are used to process some cases. Other cases are dealt with by a team of regional case owners while the asylum seeker lives in Home Office provided accommodation. The Home Office hope that this new model of fast tracking asylum applications will help them to meet their target of granting or removing all asylum applicants within 6 months by 2011. Already applicants in the detained fast track will receive a decision within one month.

### **Safe or White list countries**

These are countries that the Home Office has identified as being safe, and people arriving from these countries may be subjected to 'fast track' processes and restricted rights of appeal. There are 14 current inclusions on this list (which is subject to amendment at any time by the Home Office) including: Albania, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Ghana (Males only), India, Jamaica, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Nigeria (Males only), Serbia (Including Kosovo **but not** Montenegro), South Africa, and Ukraine.

The list is subject to change. India was only added in January 2005. Countries can also be removed from the list as was the case with Sri Lanka – after a court case finally determined that it is unlawful to call Sri Lanka a safe country.<sup>14</sup>

The right to claim asylum is a right of all people and takes into account individual persecution. Therefore Oxfam, and others, believes that the notion of Safe Country is a false one that may lead to cases not being heard on their individual merits. Even in countries that might appear more peaceful, individuals may be targeted for persecution and may need to flee for their lives to safety.

### **Appeals**

On receiving a decision from the Home Office regarding the initial outcome of an asylum application, a person seeking asylum has

a right to lodge an appeal to challenge a negative outcome, if there is a legal case for doing so. The Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of claimants, etc.) Act 2004 created a new system for asylum appeals. A new Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) has been established and people seeking asylum will be given a timeframe of 10 days in which to lodge an appeal against their asylum decision. The case owner is responsible for explaining the system and the timescales to the applicant, and also for defending their decision in court. If an asylum seeker is dissatisfied with the judge's decision, they may apply to the AIT for the case to be reconsidered but this will only be accepted if it is believed the judge made an error of law. The time to lodge an appeal with the AIT has been reduced to 5 days. In Scotland such cases are heard by the Court of Session (Inner House).

### **Legacy cases**

In July 2006, the previous Home Secretary, John Reid, announced a review to resolve the backlog of old cases (more than 400,000) by 2011, called the Legacy Review or case resolution. All unresolved asylum claims lodged before the introduction of the new Asylum Model are part of this review and referred to as Legacy Cases. In Glasgow more than 1100 families fall into this category, and it is estimated that more than 80 percent have been in the UK more than 3 years.

<sup>14</sup> Court Case Mr K v Secretary of State for the Home Department (2006) EWHC

## Case study ●●●

### **Refusal letter extract:**

*You claim that as soon as you arrived at the Central Police station you were tortured. You claim that while you were handcuffed one of the men asked you questions and started to hit you in the face and that you were cursed. You claim that during this time they wanted you to admit that you had killed your friend but you refused. You claim that you were kept in a prison cell and they brought you back again for more questioning. You claim that they placed soapy rags in your mouth until you agreed to sign the paper because you were very ill and you were not aware of your actions. You also claim that one night two of the guards, came into the prison cell and raped you...*

*You claim that you were ill treated during detention, tortured and raped. The secretary of state does not condone any violations*

*of human rights which may have been committed by members of the security forces in Algeria; however, he does not accept that they are evidence of persecution within the terms of the United Nations Convention. The Secretary of State further notes that the Algerian Government does not condone such violations...*

*In order to bring yourself within the scope of the United Nations Convention, you would have to show that these incidents were not simply the random acts of individuals but were a sustained pattern or campaign of persecution directed at you by the authorities or that the authorities were unable or unwilling to offer effective protection.*

Source: 'Getting it Right' (Amnesty International 2004) [www.amnesty.org.uk](http://www.amnesty.org.uk)

**"The role of the media in presenting the affairs and issues relating to refugees and asylum seekers is extremely important. It is imperative that, in dealing with these issues, the media remain impartial and refrain from using the asylum issues as a tool for political campaign."**

*Male exiled journalist seeking asylum in Glasgow*



## Detention

Immigration detention centres or removal centres as they are currently known, are holding centres for foreign nationals some of whom may be awaiting decisions on their asylum applications or awaiting deportation following a failed application. However it is important to point out that people seeking asylum are liable to detention at any time throughout the asylum process.

### The main reasons for detention are:

- To effect removal
- To establish a person's identity or basis of claim
- Where there is reason to believe that a person will fail to comply with any conditions attached to a grant of temporary admission to UK or release

The Nationality, Immigration and Asylum act 2002 includes powers to detain children. The power to detain people coming to the UK was first introduced by the Immigration Act 1971.

**According to the UN, the UK detains more people for longer periods and with less judicial supervision than any comparable country in Europe.**

### The main detention/removal centres and their capacities are:

Campsfield (198), Dungavel (190), Dover (316), Kalyx (previously Harmondsworth (551), Tinsley House (137), Yarl's Wood (405), Lindholme (112), Colnbrook (313)<sup>15</sup>

Harmondsworth and Yarl's Wood are 'Fast Track' asylum-processing centres. 'Fast Tracking' for Women who are seeking asylum commenced in May 2005 at Yarls Wood.

At the end of 2006, approximately 1455 people who had sought asylum at some stage were being detained in the UK solely under Immigration Act powers. More than 1000 asylum-seeking children were held in detention in 2006.<sup>16</sup>

The use of detention is controversial. Opponents of detention argue that detaining people who have committed no serious crime, and in many cases who have come to the UK to escape persecution is an extreme sanction. There have also been concerns raised about conditions within these centres and the welfare of detainees. There have been a number of disturbances within detention centres and a number of detainees have attempted to or indeed committed suicide.

<sup>15</sup> [www.ncadc.org.uk](http://www.ncadc.org.uk)

<sup>16</sup> [www.homeoffice.org.uk](http://www.homeoffice.org.uk)

60% of Scots do not believe that children should be held in secure accommodation whilst their family's applications for asylum are being considered.<sup>17</sup>

A report by Amnesty International showed that detention in many cases is protracted, inappropriate, disproportionate and unlawful.

Amnesty suspects that 25,000 people who sought asylum in the UK, including women and children, were detained solely under Immigration Act powers in 2004.<sup>18</sup>

### What about Dungavel?

Dungavel House in Scotland is situated near Strathaven in North Lanarkshire. It was opened on 6<sup>th</sup> of September 2001. It currently has the capacity to hold 190 people including families. It is one of three UK removal centres where children are detained (the others being Tinsley House and Oakington). The centre is managed by G4 Justice Services Premier Detention Services. The centre has drawn criticism because it frequently holds children and families. Despite the



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aim of reducing both the incidence and the length of children's detention in Dungavel, an inspection in late 2006 found that both had increased that year. 122 children had been detained during the first 11 months of 2006, compared with 94 in the previous 12 months. The average length of detention had also increased, from three days to nearly three and a half days. This masked, however, some longer periods of stay: seven children had been held for more than seven days, including two for 32 days.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Mori Scotland Poll of 1022 Scots, 2004 on behalf of Oxfam

<sup>18</sup> Detention of people who have sought asylum, Amnesty International 2005, [www.amnesty.org.uk](http://www.amnesty.org.uk)

<sup>19</sup> HM Chief Inspector of Prisons 2006 'Report on an announced inspection of Dungavel House Immigration Removal Centre'. [www.inspectorstcs.justice.gov.uk/hmiprison](http://www.inspectorstcs.justice.gov.uk/hmiprison)

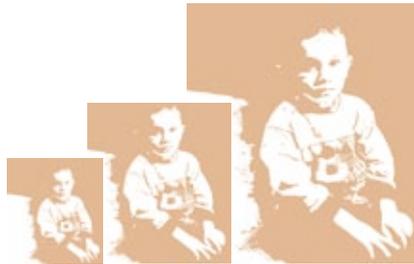
## Case study ●●●

### **Detention**

*Daren had just turned 16 when he arrived in Glasgow in early 2004 after a long and arduous journey to the UK. Daren was told to give immigration officers who interviewed him a date of birth which would make him over 18 years old. Although he subsequently informed removal centre staff that he was a child, no independent age assessment was undertaken and he was treated as an adult. Daren was taken to Dungavel but after two weeks was transferred to Oakington, where he stayed for one week before being transferred again, this time to Tinsley House, and then shortly afterwards, to Harmondsworth.*

*After his asylum application was refused, an attempt was made to remove Daren from the UK but he insisted he was a child and was taken off the plane and returned to Tinsley House after the captain of the aircraft intervened. At Tinsley House, Daren made contact with the visitor's group who put him in contact with the Refugee Council's children's Panel. Daren was age assessed and found to be under 18. After 55 days in detention, Daren was released into the care of social services.*

*Source: No Place for a Child – Children in UK immigration detention. Save the Children 2005 [www.savethechildren.org.uk](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk)*



### **Removals**

People seeking asylum who are not recognised as refugees in the UK, or given any other form of leave to stay are expected to leave the UK. The Border and Immigration Agency may take active steps to remove someone and issue a deportation order. In 2006 18,280 refused asylum applicants (including dependants and voluntary returns) were removed from the UK. See the Home Office site for up-to-date statistics.

Sometimes a person may find himself or herself in a position whereby the BIA has not detained them but has refused to grant them any form of status and also cannot remove them from the UK. Asylum applicants in this position will be evicted from their accommodation and are not legally allowed to work. They may apply for section 4 support that constitutes shared accommodation and vouchers to cover subsistence (paid at a lower rate than Asylum Support).

## Non-refoulement

This is the principle whereby it is unlawful for a country such as the UK to return or transfer a person to a place where his or her life or freedom may be in danger. It must be taken into account at the beginning of the asylum process when authorities are considering removing someone to a 'safe third country' (e.g. because that person has stopped in another country considered to be safe before applying for asylum in the UK) to ensure that the UK does not participate in a chain of events that would lead to a person being returned to the country they have fled.

It must also be taken into consideration at the end of the asylum process when the UK wishes to remove a person who has sought asylum in the UK but has not been granted any form of protection. (Refused asylum seeker).

**“When I was sent back to Kinshasa, soldiers were waiting for me. Fortunately a stranger from a human rights group met my plane and took me out of the airport. I know someone who was asked to pay \$300 in return for his freedom. Now I live with a friend I met at the detention centre in England. I have no money, and no family. There is no one to help me. My Lingala is bad, so they (the security forces) think I’m a spy from Rwanda. How can I return home?”**

*Congolese man from Bukavu, recently removed from the UK*<sup>20</sup>

## Case study ●●●

*In mid-2003, hundreds of Eritrean asylum seekers were rescued at sea by Maltese authorities when their boats were shipwrecked in the Mediterranean Sea. The Eritreans were detained in Malta.*

*Malta, as a state party to both the 1951 Refugee Convention and the European convention on Human Rights is bound to comply with its obligations under international law. Of the 400 asylum seekers rescued at sea, 220 were forcibly deported back to Eritrea. These included those who had not yet lodged a claim for asylum and those who had not yet had a chance to appeal against an initial (negative asylum) decision. When they arrived back in Asmara, these people were immediately arrested, taken to a military camp, and detained incommunicado without charge. Thirty of the detainees subsequently managed to escape the detention and made their way to Sudan, where they were granted refugee status. More than 150 deportees from Malta are still detained in Eritrea. There are reports that some members of the group were shot by Eritrean security forces while trying to escape to Sudan.*

*Source: Foreign Territory  
The Internationalisation of EU Asylum Policy  
Oxfam 2005. [www.oxfam.org.uk](http://www.oxfam.org.uk)*

<sup>20</sup>Source: Foreign Territory, The Internationalisation of EU Asylum Policy Oxfam 2005. [www.oxfam.org.uk](http://www.oxfam.org.uk)

## Voluntary Return

At any point in the asylum determination process a person can seek assistance to return voluntarily to their country of origin. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) can help to facilitate this for those people who cannot return without assistance. People may choose to return for a variety of reasons, e.g. there has been a change of circumstances in the situation in their country of origin. In order to begin the process of return a person seeking asylum would be asked to withdraw their application for asylum. Asylum applicants are now given information at various points throughout the asylum process and IOM are present at BIA's Glasgow premises to offer information and advice.

## Citizenship

If a person has been granted permission to stay indefinitely in the UK they are entitled to apply after a number of years for British Citizenship. Since 2002, a citizenship ceremony has been introduced part of fulfilling the criteria for citizenship includes being able to speak English to a reasonable standard and having knowledge of UK rights and responsibilities. The fee for naturalisation in 2007 is £655.<sup>21</sup>



## Resettlement – The Gateway Protection Programme

The Gateway Protection programme is a resettlement initiative that aims to settle 500 UNHCR recognised refugees within the UK each year. These refugees will normally have previously been living in UNHCR refugee camps. A number of English local authorities have offered to take refugees under this programme since 2004. 2007 saw the arrival of around 80 refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo to Motherwell, after North Lanarkshire agreed to be the first Scottish local authority to participate. In contrast the US resettles 80-120,000 people each year under resettlement programmes.

- Did you know – 3<sup>rd</sup> May is World Press Freedom Day?

## Case study ●●●●

### **Democratic Republic of the Congo**

*The presidential and legislative elections in 2006 were marked by numerous human rights violations.*

*Insecurity, ethnic tensions and human rights abuses continued throughout 2006 in the DRC, including unlawful killings, rape, torture and ill-treatment, recruitment and use of child soldiers, arbitrary arrests and unlawful detentions.*

*Decades of neglect, poor governance and mismanagement of resources, compounded in the east by war, left essential services and infrastructure, including the justice, health and education sectors, in a state of near-collapse.*

*More than 1.6 million people were internally displaced, while 410,000 were living as refugees in neighbouring countries.*

*Source: Amnesty International Annual Report 2007*

## Case study ●●●●

### **Iraq**

*Widespread violence continued to escalate in Iraq throughout 2006 – killing or injuring tens of thousands of Iraqi civilians. Many killings took on an increasingly sectarian nature. Iraqi security forces committed widespread human rights violations, including the killing of civilians and torture and other ill-treatment of detainees.*

*Soldiers belonging to the US-led Multinational Force (MNF) have been prosecuted on charges that include the killing, rape or inhumane treatment of civilians. The MNF held thousands of people in arbitrary detention without charge or trial.*

*Vulnerable groups, including minorities and women, continued to be targeted for abuses.*

*The violence has displaced hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, who fled the country and sought refuge abroad.*

*Source: Amnesty International Annual Report 2007*

# Asylum support

## Financial support in the asylum system

Throughout the asylum process support may be available through BIA's Asylum Support system (previously through National Asylum Support Service (NASS)). People may be eligible for support in the form of accommodation and cash support or cash support if alternative accommodation is available, for example if a person seeking asylum can stay with friends or relatives.

To qualify for support a person must have applied for asylum, be destitute (have no funds to support themselves) and have applied for asylum in the UK 'as soon as reasonably practical' after arrival. 'Reasonably practical' is currently defined as within three days. There are many reasons why a person may not be able to apply for asylum upon arrival in the UK including the most obvious of not knowing whom to contact.

If BIA agrees to process an application for support to a person seeking asylum they may send people to induction centres whilst their support needs are being assessed. This could be anywhere in the UK. Induction aims to be carried out over a 14 day period and people will be able to receive information regarding the asylum process and rights and responsibilities. They can access health care and other services.

In Scotland the Scottish Refugee Council and the YMCA work in partnership to provide an induction facility to newly arrived asylum seekers. This is called Section 98 support.

If a person is successful in applying for support they will be dispersed to accommodation in the region. Currently Glasgow is the only local authority in Scotland that has a contract with the Home Office to accept dispersed asylum seekers. Accommodation will be allocated dependent on need and on a no-choice basis. Sometimes it will be required for people to share accommodation with other people seeking asylum.

BIA also provides 'essential living needs' including cash support and maternity payments. BIA provides subsistence support equivalent to 70% of current income support levels (100 per cent for those under 16 years of age) This means people seeking asylum get by on 30% less than what is considered the absolute minimum sum needed for a UK national to subsist. Weekly levels of entitlements from 9th of April 2007 are:

<b>Qualifying Couple</b>	<b>£64.96</b>
<b>Lone Parent (aged 18 or over)</b>	<b>£41.41</b>
<b>Single Person (aged 25 over)</b>	<b>£41.41</b>
<b>Single person (age 18-25)</b>	<b>£32.80</b>
<b>Person aged 16-18</b>	<b>£35.65</b>
<b>Child under 16</b>	<b>£47.45<sup>22</sup></b>

An asylum seeker can stay in this accommodation until the BIA decides the outcome of his or her asylum claim.

<sup>22</sup> [www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk)

### **After a positive decision on the asylum claim**

If BIA grant a person refugee status, Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave (sometimes known as positive decisions) the BIA support will end after 28 days and the person will be entitled to either find employment or access mainstream benefits.

### **After a negative decision on the asylum claim**

If the outcome of the asylum application is a refusal (or negative decision) a number of things may happen. If an appeal against the asylum decision has been lodged, BIA will continue to support the asylum applicant. If appeal rights are exhausted or not pursued and the person is at the end of the asylum determination process BIA will terminate all support including accommodation. Families with children do not currently have their support terminated at the end of the process, although provisions exist to give BIA the authority to do this.

Some people in this position may be able to apply for support (called Section 4 support) but only if they cannot be returned to their country of origin. For others it means eviction from their accommodation and potential destitution.



© Scottish Refugee Council

### **The Right to Work**

In July 2002 the UK Government revoked the right for people seeking asylum to apply for permission to work after waiting six months for a final decision on their asylum claim. In 2006 the UK adopted an EU Council Directive (the Reception Directive) allowing asylum seekers who had not had an initial decision to apply for permission to work after one year. Very few asylum seekers benefit from this since most receive an initial decision quickly although the final decision can be prolonged by the asylum process. In practice, asylum seekers are not able to work and are forced to accept support from the Government.

● Did you know – 27<sup>th</sup> January is Holocaust Memorial Day?

## Destitution

Destitution is a state of extreme or severe poverty and a person can become destitute at any point in the asylum process. Being destitute is the eligibility criteria for receiving support from the BIA. However even if BIA provides a person with support there are many reasons why a person could again later become destitute, including through administrative errors. At the end of the asylum determination process there is the potential risk of destitution when BIA withdraws support completely from people, and there is no other option of support. People effectively are left destitute and homeless because they have no rights to access any

government support. New refugees can also experience destitution because of delays in accessing mainstream benefits.

Research by Scottish Refugee Council about people seeking asylum experiencing destitution in Scotland found that:

- The majority of asylum seekers who become destitute in Scotland have been refused status and at the end of the asylum process. Asylum seekers at the end of the process were unwilling to take up Section 4 support because of the conditions attached to it (they often have to sign up for voluntary return).

### Case study ●●●

***Refusing access to support from NASS under Section 55 'as soon as reasonably practical'. Reason: time delay in approaching Immigration.***

*The applicant claimed that she could not claim asylum at immigration control because the agent told her they would deport her back to Turkey. The applicant claimed that she was too scared to lodge an asylum claim at the airport and that she expected the agent to take her to a woman who would help her in the UK. The applicant then claimed she went back to Immigration control to seek assistance. The Secretary of States officials believes that if*

*she was scared of being deported then she would not have approached Immigration. (Letter to a 27 year old Iranian female)*

*The applicant claimed that the agent warned her she would be deported to Eritrea. The Secretary of State official believes that a genuine refugee would have sought assistance from authorities of a safe country at their earliest opportunity. The Secretary of State notes that although the applicant passed through Immigration, she did not present herself and her problems. (Letter to a 20 year old Eritrean female)*

*Source: The impact of Section 55 on the Inter-Agency Partnership and the asylum seekers it Supports, IAP 2004. [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)*



## Case study ●●●

*Hulya and her husband Kerim arrived from Turkey in 2002 and claimed asylum in the UK. They live in Glasgow with their two young children. Hulya and her children have been granted leave to remain in the UK. Her husband Kerim (who has a separate asylum claim) also received a positive decision, but some months later received a letter contradicting this and saying his application for asylum had been refused. His lawyer contacted the Home Office who told them a mistake had been made.*

*The National Asylum Support Service stopped Kerim's support. NASS also stopped supporting Hulya and the children because she had leave to remain.*

*Hulya (now entitled to receive welfare benefits) had trouble accessing them. There was a mistake in processing her application due to a mix up between two job centres. Hulya now receives £23.00 a week benefit for herself. There are problems accessing benefits for the two children. The whole family of four are struggling to survive on a single person's benefit. Hulya is frustrated, "...there is no money for school, or food or bus passes...I'm very, very tired"*

*Source: Adapted from 'What's going on? – a study into destitution and poverty faced by asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland' Refugee Survival Trust 2005. [www.rst.org.uk](http://www.rst.org.uk)*

- Administrative errors and procedural delays within the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) system are additional causes of destitution. The current support system fails to provide an adequate safety net to prevent people becoming destitute.
- People experience destitution through all stages of the asylum process: the problems of destitution are not related only to specific policies, but are inherent in the underlying policy-framework.<sup>23</sup>

**Scottish Refugee Council research echoed some of the concerns raised by earlier research conducted by Refugee Survival Trust.**<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Scottish Refugee Council (2006) 'They think we are nothing'

<sup>24</sup> Refugee Survival Trust (2005) 'What's going on?'

# Rights and entitlements for people claiming asylum

People seeking sanctuary in the UK are seeking our protection from human rights abuses. They have entrusted themselves to our system and processes in the hope that we will be able to meet their needs and provide them with sanctuary.

While a person is in the asylum determination system and our asylum support systems they also have certain rights and responsibilities that are not part of the asylum determination process. Although people are facing times of difficulty and insecurity throughout the asylum process they have a natural need to want to contribute, to participate and to integrate. People seeking asylum may be restricted from pursuing certain activities or goals whilst awaiting the outcome of their asylum application. They do have a right however to access the following services.

- Did you know – there are currently 17.1 million 'people of concern' across the globe according to UNHCR?



© Scottish Refugee Council

## Access to Health

People seeking asylum are entitled to be registered with a doctor and a dentist and have access to free NHS prescriptions. People seeking asylum have reported difficulties in maintaining good health after arriving in the UK.<sup>25</sup> A BMA report concluded that the health of asylum seekers might get worse after entry to the UK.<sup>26</sup>

There is concern around the UK Government's recent proposals to limit healthcare for people who have reached the end of the asylum determination process. If a person is refused asylum in England and Wales they may only be able to access emergency treatment, and only until their condition has been stabilised. Free access to treatment may be withdrawn but may still be accessed if a person is able to pay the costs of the treatment.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Oxfam and Refugee Council 2002 'Poverty and Asylum in the UK'

<sup>26</sup> BMA 2002 'Asylum seekers: meeting their healthcare needs'

<sup>27</sup> Refugee Council (supported by Oxfam) 2006 'First Do No Harm: Denying Healthcare to those whose asylum claims have failed.'

### **Access to Education**

Young people seeking asylum under the age of 16, either unaccompanied or as part of a family unit have a statutory right to a school education. People seeking asylum are eligible to have fees paid at Further Education colleges for ESOL (English as a second or Other Language) courses as well as National Certificate courses and other non-advanced courses (HNC/HND) up to 16 hours per week.

Access to Higher Education courses has been extremely difficult. Applicants have to pay international course fees and demonstrate they can support themselves financially. In addition, people seeking asylum are not eligible for Student Support, Access Funds or Hardship Loans. A college or University may make concessions for its own reasons.

In Scotland in August 2007 the Scottish Government announced that asylum seeking young people who had completed three years in the Scottish Education system and had met the entry requirements for university and or college, would be eligible for the same fee support as Scottish students. In England asylum seekers still face the same barriers to accessing Higher Education outlined in the previous paragraph.

### **Policing**

People seeking asylum are subject to the same policing as other UK citizens. They are encouraged to report crime against them, and will also be prosecuted for crimes they have committed. The association is keen to also point out that within the asylum community

there is no evidence of a higher rate of criminality. In fact, according to ACPO, having fled danger in their home country, asylum seekers are more likely to become the victims of crime in the UK.<sup>28</sup>

### **Volunteering**

People seeking asylum are allowed to volunteer. This includes whilst they are appealing against a decision to refuse them asylum, and those whose application has been turned down, but are registered with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) for return to their home country when practical. People seeking asylum will have been issued with a document saying that they must not engage in paid or unpaid work but this does not include genuine voluntary work.

Home Office guidance states that care should be taken to ensure that activity undertaken by an asylum seeker is for a not-for-profit organisation, and does not amount to either employment or job substitution. It confirms that asylum seekers are entitled to receive out of pocket expenses just like other volunteers. Volunteering is a different concept from 'community service'. The Home Office was keen to make 'community service' become a condition of certain types of support that people seeking asylum undertake a form of community service. However this policy was heavily criticized and they were unsuccessful in finding any organisations willing to participate in a pilot of this policy.

For Home Office guidance see:  
[www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk)

<sup>28</sup> ACPO 2001, 'Guide to meeting the Policing needs of asylum seekers and refugees'

# Asylum in Scotland

## **Responsibility of the Scottish Government towards asylum seekers and refugees**

On May 12 1999 the Scottish Parliament reconvened after nearly 300 years absence and Scotland, whilst still remaining a part of the United Kingdom, gained responsibility for 'devolved' areas of legislation such as health, education, housing and local government.

**However, asylum and immigration continue to remain 'reserved' matters, responsibility for which lies with the UK Parliament at Westminster in London. Nevertheless, the recognition that asylum seekers also interact with devolved services such as education, health and social work, alongside the Scottish Government's responsibility to address the needs of those asylum seekers who have been granted refugee status, led the Scottish Government to begin to develop policies and strategies in relation to both asylum seekers and refugees.**

To assist in this process, the Scottish Refugee Integration Forum was established in January 2002 with the remit to develop action plans to enable the successful integration of asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland and the



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provision of more accessible, co-ordinated and good quality services.

This was warmly welcomed, as 1999 did not only see the opening of a new Scottish Parliament, but also the passing of the UK Government's Immigration and Asylum Act.<sup>29</sup> This introduced a new policy of dispersing asylum seekers across the UK from London and the South East of England.<sup>30</sup> In Scotland, Glasgow City Council was the only local authority to agree to receive asylum seekers and with little preparation, thousands began arriving in 2000.

Glasgow now houses the most asylum seekers of all cities in the UK. Currently, over 5,500 people living in BIA contracted accommodation in Glasgow<sup>31</sup> that equates to around 10% of the UK asylum-seeking population. There are 175 people across Scotland receiving financial support only.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> This Act received royal assent in 11 November 1999 [www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1999/19990033.htm](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1999/19990033.htm)

<sup>30</sup> The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 The National Asylum Support Service (NASS) was set up within the Home Office. NASS is a UK agency which co-ordinates support for asylum seekers, until a decision is made about their asylum claim. This new agency took over tasks which had previously been the responsibility of local authorities, and set up a new UK framework of support to replace them. 'No-choice' dispersal was also introduced, to reduce pressure on the South East of England and London. NASS entered into contracts with local authorities and other housing providers across the UK to provide accommodation for asylum seekers. NASS is currently changing its name and role as the UK asylum system is being changed.

<sup>31</sup> At August 2007 5668 people in BIA accommodation, COSLA Strategic Migration Partnership

<sup>32</sup> Asylum statistics, 2nd Quarter 2007: [www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs07/asylumq207.pdf](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs07/asylumq207.pdf)

**The top nationalities** – the main countries of origin of asylum seekers living in Glasgow in 2007 are:

- Iran
- Iraq
- Pakistan
- Somalia
- Sri Lanka
- China
- Afghanistan
- Turkey
- Zimbabwe
- Democratic Republic of Congo<sup>33</sup>

### **Integration– a differing view**

The first Scottish Refugee Integration Forum Action plan was published in February 2003. It provided a range of measurable actions for statutory and voluntary organisations in six areas: Media; Housing; Justice; Community Safety and Access to Justice; Children’s Services; Health and Social Care and; Enterprise, Lifelong Learning, Employment and Training. A key aspect of the plan was that it saw integration as a process that should begin when asylum seekers first arrive in Scotland, not just when they are granted refugee status, a different interpretation from the UK Government’s National Refugee Integration Strategy.<sup>34</sup> An example of the work funded through the Scottish Refugee Integration Forum is the **Framework for Dialogue Project**, which is run by Scottish Refugee Council and Glasgow City Council. This provides a forum for asylum seekers and refugees to influence social policy and planning of services within their local

communities in Glasgow. The second Action Plan has now been written and will form part of the Scottish Executive’s new Race Equality strategy to be published in early 2008.

### **The interaction of UK and Scottish legislation and its impact on asylum seekers**

Since 1999 UK asylum policy has been under increasing public scrutiny and the UK Government has passed three substantial acts of parliament on asylum and immigration<sup>35</sup> each of which has tightened the asylum system and reduced the rights and entitlements for asylum seekers and refugees. Whilst all of this legislation should apply to the UK as a whole, it has sometimes been the case that it has impacted differently in Scotland as a result of devolved legislation, differing institutions, or different political viewpoints. For example, Section 11 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act 2004 removed the rights of refugees to apply for social housing to a local authority in England or Wales other than the one to which they were dispersed as asylum seekers. However, this provision does not apply to Scotland as housing is a devolved matter and refugees can apply to another local authority in Scotland for housing.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Correct as of August 2007, figures provided by COSLA Strategic Migration Partnership

<sup>34</sup> [www.nrif.org.uk/docs/RefugeeIntegrationConsultationPaper.pdf](http://www.nrif.org.uk/docs/RefugeeIntegrationConsultationPaper.pdf) “There are many definitions of integration but for our purposes we mean the process that takes place when refugees are empowered to achieve their full potential as members of British society, to contribute to the community, to access public services and to become fully able to exercise the rights and responsibilities that they share with other residents of the UK. Within this context the term ‘refugee’ means a person who has been recognised as such (as opposed to asylum seekers)...”

<sup>35</sup> Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002; Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act 2004; Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006

<sup>36</sup> It also means that they can make an application in England or Wales.

A very recent example is the UK Borders Bill which is currently passing through the UK Parliament. Provisions in the Bill will extend the powers of immigration officers at ports, allowing them to detain and search anyone on suspicion of any offence (including non-immigration offences) for up to 3 hours. However, these powers will not currently take effect in Scotland as they lie within the devolved area of criminal justice.

### **A warmer welcome?**

Political discourse surrounding immigration in Scotland has been more favourable than in the rest of the UK. This has contributed to better media and public attitudes towards asylum seekers and refugees. In 2006 Scottish Refugee Council commissioned research into attitudes towards asylum seekers in Scotland.<sup>37</sup> The key finding was that there is greater tolerance to asylum seekers in Scotland compared to England and Wales; and many Scots are supportive of the principle of asylum, and feel that people fleeing persecution should be offered sanctuary.

### **'Dawn raids'**

Better public support particularly in areas where asylum seekers live in Glasgow has been one of the reasons for the public outcry against the use of early-morning enforced removals, so called 'dawn-raids' to detain refused asylum seekers and their children before returning them to their country of origin. Combined with a high-profile media campaign, this led to the Scottish Executive in September 2005 to raise concerns with the Home Office, particularly around the impact that enforced removals were having on children. Subsequently, the Home Office agreed to certain measures including the creation of a new post of Regional Director for Immigration in Scotland, a review of how removals of families are conducted by the Home Office; and to work with a proposal from the Executive to introduce a 'lead professional' who would take responsibility for coordinating information from health, education, police and social work professionals. This information can then be provided to BIA to help it take informed decisions on the management and timing of the removals.

● Did you know – every 26<sup>th</sup> June is the UN International day for Victims of Torture?

### Scottish Cabinet memo

The SNP administration which took power in summer 2007 continues to put pressure on the Home Office. On 3 August 2007, they published a cabinet memo on asylum. This includes:

- Opposition to 'dawn raids' and the detention of children in Dungavel;
- Expectation that families in the legacy review who arrived prior to March 2006 should be granted leave to remain;
- Asking the Home Office to reconsider the right to work for asylum seekers;
- Taking all steps to protect and promote the best interests of all children in Scotland; and
- Seeking full implementation of the issues the previous Scottish administration discussed with the Home Office.<sup>38</sup>

**“Granting the children of asylum seekers the same rights as other children in Scotland in terms of nursery provision and access to education was not courting popularity. But delegates it is right. It is about decency and fairness. It is about the sort of people we are. The sort of Scotland we want to be.”**

*Alex Salmond, First Minister of Scotland, SNP Conference speech, 2007.*

**“Sometimes it seems that simply arriving in the UK is a crime in itself. That seems to be what people are saying. But this was not an easy option for me.**

**I hope the media can provide the public with information to help people understand that seeking asylum is a desperate measure, not a crime.”**

*Female exiled journalist seeking asylum in Glasgow*

<sup>38</sup> [www.scotland.gov.uk/News/News-Extras/asylum-issues](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/News-Extras/asylum-issues)

# Key asylum legislation

## UK Legislation

In June 2007 the Home Office called for consultation to Simplify Immigration Law that may see a consolidation of existing legislation. The area of immigration and asylum legislation has seen 6 major revisions since 1997. Two other Bills are currently passing through the UK Parliament that will have an impact on the asylum system: The UK Borders Bill and the Criminal Justice and Immigration Bill.<sup>39</sup>

The various Bills and Acts can be viewed at [www.publications.parliament.uk](http://www.publications.parliament.uk) (and main points are synthesised as follows):

### Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006

- Restrict appeals for those refused entry into the UK
- To tackle illegal work by penalising workers with jail sentences and employers with higher level fines
- To further strengthen the country's borders through increased border controls and enforcement measures
- To respond to new security threats

**“If the media appears to be against you, you feel unwelcome, you are trapped in an impossible situation. On the one hand you want to use your education and profession to make a life for yourself and make a contribution, on the other hand you feel restricted by negative reactions.”**

*Exiled journalist seeking asylum in Glasgow*



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### Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc) Act 2004

- Received Royal Assent on 22 July 2004
- Abolished previous two-tier asylum appeals system and replaced it with a single tier system called the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal
- Made it a criminal offence for a person not to possess, without reasonable excuse, a valid identity document when arriving in the UK
- Introduced Integration loans to newly recognised refugees
- Makes Section 4 support (for those who are eligible and at the end of the asylum process) conditional on a person's willingness to undertake 'community activities'
- Introduced the withdrawal of support for families who do not leave the UK voluntarily at the end of the process

### 2002 Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act

- Introduced concept of Accommodation and Induction centres
- Introduced the Asylum Registration Card (ARC)
- Reintroduced a list of 'safe countries'
- Introduced new reporting regime
- Introduced wider powers as to who can authorise and detain asylum applicants.

### **2000 Human Rights Act**

- Incorporated the European convention on Human rights ECHR into UK law
- Allowed cases concerning ECHR to be brought before a UK Court as well as the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

### **1999 Immigration and Asylum Act**

- Removed remaining benefit entitlements from all asylum applicants
- Introduced a voucher support system (scrapped in 2002)
- Created the National Asylum Support Service (NASS)
- Introduced the policy of dispersal throughout the UK

### **1997 Dublin Convention**

- Provided an agreed framework to determine which EU member state is responsible for considering a persons application for asylum
- Introduced the 'safe third country rule, allowing EU countries to return applicants to other 'safe' EU countries they have travelled through.

### **1996 Asylum and immigration Act**

- Removed benefit entitlement for 'in country' asylum applicants
- Introduced restrictions on employment
- Introduced a 'white list' of countries
- Introduced concept of 'safe third country'

### **1993 Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act**

- Refugee Convention incorporated into UK law
- Amended the law on certain appeal rights, introducing appeal rights to all asylum seekers

● Did you know – 30<sup>th</sup> August is the International Day of the Disappeared?

- Introduced 'fast track' procedures
- Allowed for the fingerprinting of people seeking asylum

### **1987 Carriers Liability Act**

Introduced fines on airline and shipping companies for carrying passengers with no travel documentation or with fake documents

### **1971 Immigration Act**

- Gave immigration officers powers to detain asylum applicants
- Set out UK policy on asylum seekers

### **EU Directives and Regulations**

At the European Council summit in Tampere in 1999, European states set themselves a goal to establish a common EU policy on immigration and asylum, including a Common European Asylum System (CEAS). The aim of the CEAS is to harmonise asylum systems across the EU member states. The date for completion of this is 2010. The first stage has now been completed and includes:

- A common understanding of who is a refugee (the qualification directive)
- Minimum rules for processing asylum claims (the procedures directive)
- Minimum standards for the support given to asylum seekers (reception directive)
- A new instrument to replace the Dublin Convention to ascertain which EU country has responsibility for a particular asylum claim (Dublin II regulation)

For more information on the Common European Asylum System, please visit:

[www.ecre.org](http://www.ecre.org)

# Who's who in the asylum system

## **Border & Immigration Agency (BIA) (Formerly Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND))**

This is the government agency within the Home Office responsible for processing all claims for asylum and for running the Asylum Support system. They are responsible for interviewing, assessing and making decisions on all applications.

[www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk)

## **COSLA Strategic Migration Partnership**

This was set up to facilitate the delivery of accommodation and support services to asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland. In 2007 their remit was extended to include migration issues more widely. Their main role is to provide strategic oversight to the services provided to asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in Scotland. They work in partnership with a range of organisations to achieve this.

[www.asylumscotland.org.uk](http://www.asylumscotland.org.uk)

## **Glasgow City Council (Glasgow Asylum Seeker Support Project)**

Glasgow City Council has a contract with the Home Office to provide accommodation and support for the Home Office dispersal scheme. The city council has a team of project workers who provide support to people seeking asylum living in this accommodation, and who provide health and education support to all asylum seekers in Glasgow.

[www.glasgow.gov.uk](http://www.glasgow.gov.uk)

## **Scottish Refugee Council**

Scottish Refugee Council is a charity providing advice, information and assistance to asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland.

[www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)

## **Immigration Advisory Service (IAS)**

The Immigration Advisory Service is a charity participating in the Community Legal Service scheme with quality assurance. IAS has over thirty years' experience and offices throughout the UK and abroad. All advisers are professionals specialising in nationality, immigration and asylum law.

[www.ias.org.uk](http://www.ias.org.uk)

## **Immigration Appeal Tribunal (IAT)**

The Immigration Appeal Tribunal is an independent judicial body, which is constituted under the Immigration Act 1971, and succeeding acts. It deals with applications for permission to appeal and appeals against decisions made by Immigration Adjudicators.

[www.iaa.gov.uk](http://www.iaa.gov.uk)

## **Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT)**

The Asylum and Immigration Tribunal is the single tier appeals system which was constituted under the Immigration and Asylum (Treatment of Claimants etc) Act 2004. The Tribunal replaced a two-tier system and is responsible for dealing with appeals against decisions made by the Home Office on asylum cases and other immigration matters.

[www.ait.gov.uk](http://www.ait.gov.uk)

## UNHCR – The UN Refugee Agency

This is an impartial humanitarian organisation mandated by the United Nations to lead and co-ordinate international action for the worldwide protection of refugees and the resolution of refugee problems.

[www.unhcr.org.uk](http://www.unhcr.org.uk)

## Refugee Community Organisations (RCO)

RCOs are refugee led independent community organisations. They may organise around nationality, language, gender or common issues/themes. Essentially they will be constituted voluntary membership based organisations. Many of those who work for RCOs do so on a voluntary basis. There are a number of RCOs in Glasgow at present.

## Medical Foundation for the Victims of Torture

Medical Foundation opened offices in Glasgow for the first time in 2004. The organisation provides care and rehabilitation to survivors of torture.

[www.torturecare.org.uk](http://www.torturecare.org.uk)

## YMCA

The YMCA in Glasgow has a contract with the Home Office to provide accommodation and support to people seeking asylum under the BIA dispersal programme. The YMCA also accommodate the induction programme in Scotland, which is staffed by Scottish Refugee Council.

[www.ymcaglasgow.org](http://www.ymcaglasgow.org)



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## Angel Group

Angel Housing Group is a private housing provider contracted by the Home Office to provide accommodation and support in Glasgow.

## ATLAS Partnership

The lead partner in the ATLAS partnership is Glasgow City Council, and it incorporates a range of other organisations drawn from the voluntary sector, colleges, Glasgow alliance and local economic development companies. The partnership supports and funds a number of projects across Scotland that work to support the integration of asylum seekers and refugees.

[www.atlas-scotland.co.uk](http://www.atlas-scotland.co.uk)

● Did you know – 10<sup>th</sup> December is International Human Rights Day?



# Useful contacts

## Media contacts



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### **Scottish Refugee Council**

**Contact:** Media & Communications Officer  
**t.** 0141 223 7927  
**e.** [info@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)  
**[www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)**

Scottish Refugee Council was founded in 1985 to provide advice and assistance to individuals who are forced to leave their own country and seek protection in Scotland. It has evolved over the last 20 years and is the only independent professional agency in Scotland dedicated to refugee and asylum issues. A registered charity in Scotland, Scottish Refugee Council has a diverse funding base and is supported in its work by a wide range of organisations. Scottish Refugee Council campaigns to ensure that the UK government meets its international, legal and humanitarian obligations as well as to raise awareness of refugee issues in Scotland.

### **COSLA Strategic Migration Partnership**

**Contact:** Manager  
**t.** 0141 248 2396  
**e.** [info@cosla.gov.uk](mailto:info@cosla.gov.uk)  
**[www.asylumscotland.org](http://www.asylumscotland.org)**

This was set up to facilitate the delivery of accommodation and support services to asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland. In 2007 their remit was extended to include migration issues more widely. Their main role is to provide strategic oversight to the services provided to asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in Scotland. They work in partnership with a range of organisations to achieve this.

### **Scottish Government**

**Contact:** Press Enquiries  
**t.** 0131 244 1111  
**e.** N/A  
**[www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)**

The Scottish Government is responsible for devolved matters, such as refugee integration. Queries on immigration, asylum law or issues including the operation of detention centres should be directed to the Home Office.



### **Glasgow City Council (media office)**

**Contact:** Press Officer

**t.** 0141 287 0910

**e.** [pr@glasgow.gov.uk](mailto:pr@glasgow.gov.uk)

**[www.glasgow.gov.uk](http://www.glasgow.gov.uk)**

Glasgow City Council is contracted by NASS to provide accommodation to asylum seekers under the Home Office dispersal programme. The Council also leads the way in providing education, support, translation and training opportunities, among many other innovative support programmes. Glasgow is a multi-cultural city that welcomes all within her boundaries.

### **Border & Immigration Agency (Glasgow)**

**Contact:** Press officer

**t.** 0141 555 1443

**[www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk)**

Press Office answer all media enquires.

### **Oxfam in Scotland**

**Contact:** Media & Communications Manager,  
Asylum Project Officer

**t.** 0845 900 5678

**e.** [scotland@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:scotland@oxfam.org.uk)

**[www.oxfamgb.org/ukpp](http://www.oxfamgb.org/ukpp)**

Oxfam facilitates the Asylum Positive Images Network. Oxfam supports a network of organisations themed around asylum in the media. In addition Oxfam has undertaken research into public perceptions and media representations of asylum. Oxfam also works on asylum issues from a EU policy dimension.

## Other contacts

### **Amnesty International Scotland**

**Contact:** Campaigns Officer

**t.** 0844 800 9088

**e.** [scotland@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:scotland@amnesty.org.uk)

**[www.amnesty.org.uk/scotland](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/scotland)**

Amnesty International is a worldwide human rights movement, which is independent of any government, political faction, ideology, economic interest or religious creed. They undertake research and advocacy for the protection and promotion of the human rights of refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced people.

Amnesty International's work on refugee's aims to:

- Improve Home Office initial decision making, to ensure all asylum seekers have access to fair and satisfactory asylum procedures and are permitted to stay in the UK until the outcome of their appeal
  - Improve the provision of protection for asylum seekers in the UK
  - Improve the UK government policy and practice on detention of asylum seekers
- Provide accurate, up-to-date country information on UK asylum cases.

### **The Bridges Project**

**Contact:** Director

**t.** 0141 554 5440

**e.** [admin@bridgesprogramme.org.uk](mailto:admin@bridgesprogramme.org.uk)

**[www.bridgesprogrammes.org.uk](http://www.bridgesprogrammes.org.uk)**

The Bridges Project develops work-based interventions for refugees and asylum seekers. It has an established work shadow scheme, which puts asylum seekers in the workplace alongside indigenous Scots of the same profession.

The Bridges Project also works with a range of other organisations to develop training and accreditation programmes for refugee professionals. They also have a mentorship and training programme for unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

### **British Red Cross, Refugee Unit, Glasgow**

**Contact:** Manager Refugee Services

**t.** 0141 332 1607

**e.** [scotland@redcross.org.uk](mailto:scotland@redcross.org.uk)

**[www.redcross.org.uk](http://www.redcross.org.uk)**

The British Red Cross provides a range of services for asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland. These include:

- the International Tracing and Message service – helping families separated by conflict regain contact
- Orientation Service – assisting asylum seekers and refugees to access services in Glasgow through the support of trained volunteers

- the production of a guide, 'Welcome to Glasgow – an information guide for new arrivals and refugees' in English and six other languages
- Destitution support – providing emergency support to destitute asylum seekers.
- A refugee newspaper providing information and guidance to refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland.

### **Equality & Human Rights Commission in Scotland**

**Contact:** Press Office

**t.** 0141 245 1855

**e.** [Scotland@ehrc.gov.uk](mailto:Scotland@ehrc.gov.uk)

**[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)**

The New EHRC is working to eliminate discrimination, reduce inequality, protect human rights and to build good relations, ensuring that everyone has a fair chance to participate in society. In relation to asylum issues, they can provide information and advice to people who think they have suffered racial discrimination. Their work also includes promoting good race relations.

### **Exiled Journalists Network**

**Contact:** Development Officer  
t. 0117 941 5889  
e. [ejn@mediawise.org.uk](mailto:ejn@mediawise.org.uk)  
[www.ejn.org.uk](http://www.ejn.org.uk)

The EJN was set up support Exiled Journalists living in the UK and to challenge misrepresentation of refugees and asylum seekers by the mass media. They try to promote the best practice in media representation of refugee and asylum issues. They are currently a network of over 150 members and has taken over the work of the Refugee Asylum Media project – believing the best people to talk about these issues are asylum seekers and refugees themselves.

### **The Glasgow Violence Against Women Partnership**

**Contact:** Development Worker  
t. 0141 287 6781  
e. [info@gvawp.org.uk](mailto:info@gvawp.org.uk)  
[www.gvawp.org.uk](http://www.gvawp.org.uk)

The Glasgow Violence Against Women Partnership (GVAWP) brings together statutory and voluntary agencies with the aim of working together to improve responses to gender-based violence in Glasgow. As part of this work GVAWP has established the WAIR (Women Asylum Immigration and Refugee issues) group. They seek to identify and initiate appropriate responses to issues/gaps in services for women from asylum seeking and refugee communities who are survivors of male violence in their country of origin or in Glasgow.

### **Immigration Advisory Service**

**Contact:** Manager  
t. 0141 248 2956  
e. [scotland@iasuk.org.uk](mailto:scotland@iasuk.org.uk)  
[www.iasuk.org](http://www.iasuk.org)

IAS is the UK's largest charity dealing with asylum seekers and immigrants, providing free advice in Scotland to those facing asylum or immigration difficulties.

### **Positive Action in Housing**

**Contact:** Director  
t. 0141 353 2220  
e. [info@paih.org](mailto:info@paih.org)  
[www.paih.org](http://www.paih.org)

Positive Action in Housing is a minority-ethnic led charity whose mission is to work with communities and others to enable everyone to have an equal chance to live in good quality, affordable and safe homes, free from discrimination and the fear of racial harassment and violence. Their work with those seeking asylum includes: the Frontline Housing Advisory Service; a casework service for those facing problems of homelessness, racial harassment, overcrowding or poor housing conditions. A volunteering programme that offers training and support to volunteers to eventually overcome barriers and access to employment. The Refugee Aid Project: providing essential items of clothing, bedding and home wear to asylum seekers living and or destitute in Glasgow.

### **Refugee Survival Trust**

**Contact:** Manager  
**t.** 0131 554 6776  
**e.** [info@rst.org.uk](mailto:info@rst.org.uk)  
**www.rst.org.uk**

The Refugee Survival Trust prevents the destitution of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland through the provision of small grants/assistance. Grants are only given to those within the asylum process, and only when no other source of support is immediately available.

### **Save the Children**

**Contact:** Refugee Programme Manager  
**t.** 0141 248 4345  
**e.** [scotland@savethechildren.org.uk](mailto:scotland@savethechildren.org.uk)  
**www.savethechildren.org.uk/caris**

Save the Children undertakes Integration work with children and young people in Scottish schools. They provide specialist information on unaccompanied child asylum seekers/refugees and a special website for young people, parents and lawyers on legal issues. They have also undertaken research on detention, trafficking, dispersal and young people's experience in Glasgow.

### **Strathclyde Police, Community Safety Department**

**Contact:** Asylum Seeker Liaison Officer  
**t.** 0141 532 2483  
**e.** [contactus@strathclyde.pnn.police.uk](mailto:contactus@strathclyde.pnn.police.uk)  
**www.strathclyde.police.uk**

Strathclyde Police aims to build safer communities to improve understanding and encourage respect between people from different backgrounds. They do this through a network of dedicated community police officers who work in areas where asylum seekers are housed. These officers can be contacted through your local police office.





# Essential websites



## [www.amnesty.org.uk/scotland](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/scotland)

Contains information on Amnesty's work detailing oppression and human rights abuses throughout the world.

## [www.asylumaid.org.uk](http://www.asylumaid.org.uk)

Asylum aid offer free legal advice and representation to refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. This site also contains really useful resources that focus on women seeking asylum in the UK.

## [www.asylumsupport.info](http://www.asylumsupport.info)

Asylum support information, policy updates, latest news stories and an email bulletin.

## [www.biduk.org](http://www.biduk.org)

Bail for Immigration Detainees, a free dedicated bail service for detainees under UK immigration legislation

## [www.ein.org.uk](http://www.ein.org.uk)

Electronic immigration network information on refugee law and policy

## [www.ecre.org](http://www.ecre.org)

European Council on Refugees and Exiles.

## [www.exiledjournalists.net](http://www.exiledjournalists.net)

Organisation set up to help exiled journalists. Provides EJN News online.

## [www.icar.org.uk](http://www.icar.org.uk)

The Information Centre about asylum seekers and refugees, an independent centre that exists to promote understanding of asylum in the UK and contains links to a number of research reports.

## [www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int)

International organization for migration. Provides information about voluntary return programmes amongst other things

## [www.jcwi.org.uk](http://www.jcwi.org.uk)

Joint council for the welfare of immigrants, information regarding law and policy.

## [www.nuj.org.uk](http://www.nuj.org.uk)

National Union of Journalists site, contains information and guidance on reporting asylum issues.

## [www.oisc.org.uk](http://www.oisc.org.uk)

Office of Immigration Service Commissioner, information on the regulations governing immigration advice in the UK.

## [www.oxfam.org.uk](http://www.oxfam.org.uk)

Oxfam provides information on International Development and Asylum

## [www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)

Information on asylum and refugee issues in Scotland.



**[www.pcc.org.uk](http://www.pcc.org.uk)**

Includes Press Complaints Commissions code of conduct and guidance on reporting asylum issues.

**[www.rfs.org](http://www.rfs.org)**

Reporters without Borders, an organisation fighting for press freedom and denouncing violations of human rights all over the world.

**[www.rsc.ox.ac.uk](http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk)**

The Refugee Studies Centre at Oxford University gives information on various courses, research, journals and academic papers regarding refugee issues.

**[www.refugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk)**

The Refugee Council is the largest organisation in the UK working with asylum seekers and refugees. In addition to providing help and support, they also work with asylum seekers and refugees to ensure their needs and concerns are addressed.

**[www.unhcr.org.uk](http://www.unhcr.org.uk)**

The UN's Refugee agency, contains information on global refugee situations.

**[www.worldrefugee.com](http://www.worldrefugee.com)**

A web site that covers the news headlines from across the globe in relation to asylum and refugees issues.

**[www.refugee-action.org.uk](http://www.refugee-action.org.uk)**

Refugee Action is an independent national charity that works with refugees to build new lives in the UK. The organisation has 23 years of experience in reception, resettlement, development and integration, and provide advice and support in 10 regions across England.

**[www.scottishhumanrightscentre.org.uk](http://www.scottishhumanrightscentre.org.uk)**

Scottish Human Right Centre information on human rights development in Scotland.

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*The producers of this publication cannot accept responsibility for the acts or omissions of any of the organisations, third parties or websites mentioned in the guide, and inclusion within this guide does not signify endorsement. The producers of this guide have made every effort to ensure that the information within is accurate, however in a fast changing policy environment key information is likely to change.*

*We hope that you found this guide useful, if you have any comments or would like further information please contact the Asylum Positive Images Project at Oxfam t. 0141 285 8880 or email: [Scotland@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:Scotland@oxfam.org.uk)*



# fair play

Oxfam produced this guide in collaboration with Amnesty International Scotland, Scottish Refugee Council and the National Union of Journalists

