



Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary

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President Lord Roger Roberts of Llandudno

20 TOP FACTS BASED ON THE LATEST ASYLUM STATISTICS

Taken from REFUGEE COUNCIL BRIEFING August 2017

The Government has published its migration statistics for 2017. As we are all aware, the truth about asylum is often in short supply, with the same old myths and scare stories peddled again and again.

1. The dreadful scenes still being witnessed in the Mediterranean and across Europe are a symptom of this wider, global crisis. **Last year, 362,376 people arrived in Europe via sea.** Just under half were women and children.
2. While the pictures we may see on TV perhaps make us think that most refugees are coming to Europe it simply isn't the case. **The UN's Refugee Agency estimates that nearly nine in ten of the world's refugees are sheltered by developing countries.**
3. Most refugees just move from one poor country to another. Uganda hosts a staggering 1 million refugees from South Sudan. In two weeks alone Uganda offered refuge to more people than Britain did all year.
4. Britain is not Europe's top recipient of asylum applications. In 2016, Germany, Italy and France all received at least twice as many asylum applications as the UK. In Germany alone, 722,265 asylum applications were made.
5. Given the world is facing the greatest refugee crisis since the Second World War, comparatively few people make it to Britain in their search for safety. **Asylum applications in the UK actually decreased by 25% to 27,316 in the year ending June 2017.**

It's hardly surprising, given the barriers people face in reaching safe places to rebuild their lives. Britain offers no asylum visa. In fact, there are very few, legal ways for refugees to safely escape their country and claim asylum in another country. The truth is, when war breaks out, countries like Britain often close down refugees' legal escape routes. **Refugees don't place their lives in smugglers' hands because they want to. They do it because they often have no other choice.**

6. The lack of safe and legal routes for refugees to reach safety and claim asylum has deadly results. **Already this year 2,410 men, women and children have lost their lives during their desperate attempt to cross the Mediterranean Sea.** Every death was a tragedy. Even those who make it have encountered many dangers in their journey, not just in their countries of origin. We hear horrific stories of kidnap, rape, imprisonment and torture in countries refugees are travelling through, including Libya.
7. **Fewer women than men come to the UK in search of safety. In 2016, 25% of asylum claims in the UK were from women. Most people claiming asylum in the UK will have made a dangerous journey to get to safety; for many women this means risking sexual violence.**
8. People who are seeking asylum make up a tiny proportion of new arrivals in Britain. **Today's statistics show that 588,000 people arrived in Britain in the last year— but just 27,316 of them were seeking refuge here.** Of course, not all people seeking asylum will be granted permission to stay in Britain.
9. World events often correlate directly with asylum applications; last year people were most likely to seek refuge here from the Middle East, desperate to escape on-going conflict and the murderous advance of ISIS. **The top 3 countries of origin of people applying for asylum in Britain in the twelve months to June 2017 were: Iran, Pakistan and Iraq.**
10. **The British asylum system is extremely tough.** Just 34% of initial decisions made in the year to June 2017 have been grants of protection (asylum or humanitarian protection). However, **many refugees had to rely on the courts rather than the Government to provide them with the protection they need.** The proportion of asylum appeals allowed over that time was 36%.
11. **594 children granted asylum whilst they were still under 18. A further 240 had to wait until they were over 18 to receive the news that they are safely protected here for five years.** The top country of origin during that period

was Afghanistan, followed by Eritrea. More unaccompanied children applied having fled Sudan than any other country, in the last quarter.

Unfortunately, being granted protection as a refugee means that those children will never be able to live with their parents. Shockingly, the UK deliberately prevents unaccompanied children from bringing their parents and siblings to live with them in safety.

12. In the twelve months up to June 2017, 48 children were locked up in immigration detention, despite a Government promise in 2010 to end the practice. 83% of the children who left detention were released, rendering their detention not only harmful but futile.

13. The UK Government has the power to detain people who are here seeking refuge. Today's statistics show that in the last 12 months, 27,819 people were imprisoned in immigration detention centres; among them many people seeking asylum. 52% were released back into the community rendering their detention pointless. Some nationalities are nearly always released from detention; over 90% of Iranians detained were released during this time period begging the question why they are detained in the first place.

14. In contrast to most European countries the UK has no limit on the length of time someone can be detained. At the end of June, 271 people had been locked up for longer than 6 months, purely for immigration reasons.

15. The number of Syrians who have sought asylum in Britain since the conflict began in 2011 stands at just 10,858. That's just 0.21% of Syria's refugees. Like most of the world's refugees, very few Syrians come to Britain in their search for safety.

16. The number of Syrian refugees resettled in Britain stands at 8,283 since the conflict began. In September 2015, the then Prime Minister David Cameron promised to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees by 2020. That's just 4,000 a year. There are over 4.8 million Syrian refugees.

17. In the year to June 2017, just 916 non-Syrian refugees were resettled in Britain via the Gateway Protection Programme run in conjunction with the UN's Refugee Agency (UNHCR). Sadly, just 1% of the world's refugees will ever be resettled which means many refugees face a long, uncertain wait to hear if they will ever be able to rebuild their lives in safety.

We would like to see the UK government make a long term commitment to resettling a greater number of people from around the globe, and also that all refugees are provided with the same kind of help to integrate, wherever the refugees have come from and however they reached the UK.

18. Shockingly, at the end of June 2017 10,033 people who had made asylum applications had been waiting for longer than six months for an initial decision. The number of people having to wait this long has risen by over 50% in the last year.

These people and their families will be stuck living in limbo, anxiously awaiting news of their fate.

19. At the end of June, 38,954 asylum seekers and their dependants were being supported by the Government. This figure has risen since 2012, but is still below the figure for end of 2003 when there were 80,123 asylum seekers being supported.

This does not mean asylum seekers live in luxury; far from it; people have no say in where they live and are often left to survive on [around £5 a day](#).

20. In the last three months, the UK has agreed to provide protection (refugee status or humanitarian protection) to 2,005 applicants and their dependants. Unfortunately, a large proportion of them will [face homelessness and destitution](#) as they struggle to secure an income and a rental property before they are evicted from Home Office provision.