

The Illegal Immigration Bill is itself Illegal

In light of the Government's announcement that they intend to pass legislation that punishes asylum seekers who arrive here 'illegally', it feels necessary to set the record straight by correcting some of the misinformation that has recently surfaced in the media and in letters to The Sheffield Star.

Firstly, it is not illegal to cross a border and claim asylum. Indeed, the rights of people seeking asylum are protected by The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 14), the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, the European Convention on Human Rights and our own Human Rights Act. These rights are protected, regardless of how and why anyone arrives in a country¹. The Government is aware they are breaking international law on human rights, which is why they are attempting to apply a "rights brake" to circumvent these obligations.

This latest revelation comes on the heels of multiple attempts to stoke anger towards people seeking asylum, often portraying them to be "bogus" by using terms such as "invasion" or "economic migrants". This is also incorrect. According to the Home Office, just over three quarters (76%) of the initial decisions in the year ending June 2022 were grants (of asylum, humanitarian protection or alternative forms of leave)². Many of the asylum applications that were not granted at first are later granted after appeal. Questioning the authenticity of the majority of asylum applications is not only inaccurate, but also a malicious attempt to raise hostility towards those seeking asylum.

Finally, the idea that Britain is a 'grave train' uniquely inundated with migrants as a result of our "overly-generous" benefits system is a myth. The UK is home to just 1% of the world's 226.4 million refugees³. In the year ending June 2021 the UK was 6th amongst EU27 countries in terms of the number of asylum applications lodged⁴. In terms of asylum seekers per capita, the UK ranked just 16th amongst European countries⁵. According to the numbers from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 83% of all refugees are hosted in low and middle-income countries⁶, not in Europe. Therefore, claims that insinuate the UK receives more asylum claims than any other country are false.

More people are arriving *by boats* as the Government has curtailed many other established routes for seeking asylum, leaving people to attempt boat crossings as a last resort.⁷ Citizens from conflict zones are most likely to get their visa applications

¹ www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants/

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-june-2022>

³ www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/nov/27/asylum-in-the-uk-the-key-numbers

⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00191/default/bar?lang=en>

⁵ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn01403/>

⁶ <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/publications/brochures/62a9d1494/global-trends-report-2021.html>

⁷ [Channel crossings: UK strategy to stop migrant boats will not work, government warned | The Independent | The Independent](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/immigration/asylum-seekers-channel-crossings-uk-strategy-to-stop-migrant-boats-will-not-work-government-warned-b1000000.html)

to visit the UK rejected, which may lead them to take 'illegal' routes.⁸ If the Government's ambition is to reduce the number of boats, they need to provide safe alternatives for people to claim asylum.

Finally, it is important to recognise the cultural and economic contribution that migrants and refugees give to our country. Indeed, investment in refugees has actually been shown to result in economic benefits over time as refugees become entrepreneurs, innovators, taxpayers, consumers and investors, they create jobs, raise productivity and wages of local workers, lift capital returns, stimulate international trade and investment, and boost innovation, enterprise and growth⁹.

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⁸ [Refugee crisis: Thousands of Syrians have UK visa requests rejected by Home Office | The Independent | The Independent](#)

⁹ <https://www.cigionline.org/sites/default/files/documents/WRC%20Research%20Paper%20no.4.pdf>