

# Britain Imprisons Migrants

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Migrants seeking safe haven asylum are treated like criminals.

British media largely ignore what's ongoing. A March 3 [London Independent](#) report was a rare exception proving the rule.

It headlined "Immigration centres: Act now to overhaul Britain's 'shocking' detention of migrants indefinitely and in appalling conditions, say MPs."

It bears repeating. Britain is more police state than democracy. Abused migrants seeking life and liberty are "held for years" under conditions resembling "high-security prisons," the Independent reported.

Appalling treatment violates fundamental human rights. It's "catastrophic" for detainees' health and welfare.

Britain is the only EU country permitting longterm "locked up in limbo" with no right of appeal.

"Some lose hope and they try to kill themselves," said one detainee.

"Some try burning themselves with whatever they can get. Some try hanging themselves in the shower." Others slash their wrists.

"They think it's the only way out. I've seen this with my own eyes."

"Detention is a way to destroy people. They do not kill you directly, but instead you kill yourself."

Thousands endure appalling treatment amounting to torture and other forms of abuse.

Lib Dem MP Sarah Teather chaired an inquiry into what's going on. People detained longterm suffer "intense psychological damage," she said.

Britain's repressive migrant detention system desperately needs a total overhaul.

"Medical conditions in some centres (are) so bad that some detainees (aren't) given treatment even after they tried to kill themselves," said the Independent citing parliament's report on migrant abuse.

Detainees are bullied, harassed, beaten and otherwise abused.

UNHCR's Gonzalo Vargas Llosa said Britain's policy of "routinely detaining asylum-seekers

for reasons of administrative convenience” violates fundamental human rights principles.

“Detention is not only costly, but can have a lasting, detrimental impact on the mental and physical health of asylum-seekers.”

Shami Chakrabarti heads the UK-based Liberty civil and human rights group.

She calls Britain’s “scandal(ous) detention system one of the greatest stains on the UK’s human rights record in recent decades – a colossal and pointless waste of both public funds and human life.”

A Cameroon detainee said “(w)hen I asked for protection, my rights were confiscated and I lost my freedom.”

A Rwandan said “(y)ou are just a number, nothing. I attempted suicide twice.”

A Ghanaian said “(y)ou’re left to rot. People just give up.”

In 2013, Britain detained over 30,000 asylum seekers. They continue treating them like criminals.

RT International alone features regular reports on what’s ongoing. US media ignore it entirely.

In February, RT discussed children imprisoned in UK immigration detention centers despite Whitehall’s commitment to end the practice.

According to Refugee Council’s Judith Dennis, “unaccompanied children arrive in the UK alone, frightened and often traumatized.”

They’re “thrown into adult detention centers” with no regard for their safety or welfare.

Last November, a letter to Prime Minister David Cameron from Oxford University’s Amnesty International, nine heads of Oxford Colleges and 61 senior professors called detainee treatment “contrary to the spirit of democracy, the Human Rights Act, and the United Nations Convention on Refugees.”

It said no one should be detained for administrative purposes “without trial, without time limit, without proper judicial oversight and with little chance of bail – and thus treated worse than criminals.”

Oxford’s Amnesty International president Jo Hynes said Britain “detains more migrants for longer and with less judicial oversight than any other country in Europe.”

A former Ugandan asylum seeker told RT she “just wanted to die.” She spent three months in detention.

She called conditions “horrendous.” Guards “don’t look at you as human beings. It’s true when they say we are animals.”

“Those (detained) without mental health issues end up with” them.

Over two-thirds of women in one detention facility are rape and torture survivors.

Detainees get so depressed, they stop eating, lose hope and want to die. Guards abuse women sexually.

Administrative assessments are made solely to determine who's fit for deportation back to countries detainees fled from fearing for their lives, safety and welfare.

RT reported on hundreds of asylum seeking detainees hunger striking for justice - protesting horrific conditions no one should have to endure.

A Harmondsworth detainee said "(m)ost (in the facility) are very angry. Two days ago two Pakistanis collapsed because they'd not had a meal" for days.

"We are not criminals. We are humans. We are not animals," he said.

Refugee Council's Lisa Doyle said "(i)t's hardly surprising that people imprisoned inside Britain's detention estate are protesting."

"It's extremely distressing for asylum seekers to be locked up when they haven't done anything wrong with no release date in sight."

"Ministers must accept that the cat is out of the bag. Immigration detention is inhumane, expensive and inefficient."

"If the government wants to prove it's serious about justice and protecting vulnerable people then it's high time they consigned the whole system to the history books where it belongs."

Detainees listed grievances in a letter to Britain's Home Office. They complained of brutalizing treatment, inadequate healthcare and no legal help.

"Nobody's listening. Nobody defends us," said one detainee. "It's no humanity. They are treating us like we are animals or less than animals."

Thousands are detained under Britain's Detained Fast Track (DTF) system - established in 2002 to handle asylum seekers.

A damning parliamentary inquiry published days earlier discussed abusive, inhumane conditions in UK detention centers nationwide.

MPs called for detaining asylum seekers a maximum 28 days.

The [Detained Voices](#) web site publishes firsthand accounts of detainee mistreatment.

Comments include saying food served is inedible. Conditions are terrible.

Facilities are infested with rats and bed bugs. Cells are like cages. Nobody cares about people locked up inside.

Some die from mistreatment, lack of care or suicide. Many call conditions harsher than prison. At least there you know when you'll get out.

Detainees have no rights whatever. Most asylum seekers get deported back to home countries.

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