

# Refugee facts



## What's the difference between a refugee and an asylum seeker?

A refugee:

- has fled their home and country due to a well-founded fear of persecution due to their race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Many refugees are in exile to escape the effects of natural or human-made disasters.
- was once an asylum seeker, but has now proven to the UK authorities that they would be at risk if returned to their home country, so they have had their claim for asylum accepted by the UK Government.
- can stay in the UK either long-term or indefinitely.

## An asylum seeker:

- is waiting for a decision about whether the government will give them refugee status.
- has fled their home and country because of fear or persecution, and has arrived in another country, whichever way they can.
- has made themselves known to the authorities and submitted an asylum application to become a refugee.
- has a legal right to stay in the country while awaiting a decision on their application.

## How many refugees are there in the world?

- There are 25.4 million refugees, 3.1 million asylum seekers, and 40 million internally displaced people worldwide.
- 44,400 people are forced to flee their homes every day because of conflict and persecution.
- 57% of refugees worldwide come from just three countries: South Sudan, Afghanistan, and Syria.

## How many asylum seekers and refugees are there in the UK?

- At the end of 2017 there were 121,837 refugees and 40,365 pending asylum cases in the UK.
- In the third quarter of 2018, the highest number of first-time asylum applicants were registered in Germany, France, Greece, and Spain – and then the United Kingdom.
- Worldwide, around 85% of refugees are hosted in developing countries – not wealthy industrialised countries.
- Top refugee hosting countries are Turkey, Uganda, Pakistan, Lebanon, and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

## Where do asylum seekers in the UK come from, and what benefits do they get?

- In the year ending September 2018, the largest number of asylum applications came from nationals of Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Sudan, and Albania.
- Housing is provided for asylum seekers but they can't choose where it is, and are often given 'hard to let' properties, which are the ones that council tenants don't want to live in.
- Most asylum seekers don't have the right to work, so have to rely on state support. They get £37.75 a week, which is £5.39 a day for food, sanitation, and clothing.

### **What is World Refugee Day?**

- World Refugee Day commemorates the strength, courage, and perseverance of millions of refugees.
- It also marks a key moment for the public to show support for families forced to flee.

### **What about economic migrants, and internally displaced people?**

An economic migrant:

- has moved to another country to seek a better standard of living, for example to find work, or seek better education.
- could be legally or illegally living in the UK, depending on how they entered the country, and may or may not have a legal work permit.

### **Internally displaced people:**

- haven't crossed a border to find safety – they are on the run at home.
- are within their own country and remain under the protection of its government, even if that government is the reason for their displacement.
- are among the most vulnerable in the world, as they often move to areas where it is difficult to deliver humanitarian assistance.

Sources: The UN Refugee Agency, Asylum in the UK (<https://www.unhcr.org/uk/asylum-in-the-uk>). The UN Refugee Agency, Figures at a glance (<https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>). The UN Refugee Agency, Internally displaced people (<https://www.unhcr.org/internally-displaced-people.html>). The UN Refugee Agency, World Refugee Day (<https://www.unhcr.org/refugeeday/>). The UN, World Refugee Day (<http://www.un.org/en/events/refugeeday/>).