

Women's Asylum News

Women's Project at Asylum Aid

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Refused asylum seeking women's experiences of maternity care in Glasgow

Nina Murray, Women's Policy Development Officer, Scottish Refugee Council

As the nefarious Immigration Bill weaves its way through Westminster, there has been heated debate in parliament and beyond around the issue of access to free NHS maternity care. Even before the publication of the Bill, access to free healthcare for migrants in the UK has long been the subject of political wrangling. At Scottish Refugee Council we were aware that a degree of confusion reigned not only among refugees and asylum seekers seeking care in Scotland, but also among health providers, support organisations and even statutory bodies, as to the entitlement to access free NHS healthcare of different groups of migrants in different parts of the UK.

Our research with Strathclyde University, soon to be published, sought to understand the levels of awareness of entitlements in Scotland and their impact on women's experiences of care. We wanted to begin to understand, through a focus on pregnant women refused asylum in Glasgow, whether the legislation governing access to healthcare for asylum seekers in Scotland was being implemented in practice, and how the shifting rules and rhetoric may be impacting on women's experiences of accessing care.

The root of the confusion around asylum seekers' access to free NHS care in the UK is the different legislation and policies governing this area in each of the four devolved administrations of the UK. Whilst immigration and asylum is a reserved matter - meaning that laws and policies in this area are enacted at a UK level by the Westminster Parliament and UK Government - health is devolved, so each of the Welsh, Northern Irish, English and Scottish administrations has taken its own approach.

In Scotland, the law on charging *Overseas Visitors* for access to NHS healthcare has been in force since 1989, and is markedly different from that in England (which was amended in 2011) when it comes to defining who is exempt from charging. Positively, the Scottish law does not even mention the term 'asylum seeker' stating simply that anyone who has made a formal application for leave to stay as a refugee is exempted from charging. The English law further categorises people, making a distinction between those who are waiting for a decision on their asylum application or are receiving specific forms of asylum support, and those who have been refused asylum and are not receiving any support. The latter, extremely vulnerable group, who are very likely to have healthcare needs and very unlikely to have any money, are therefore expected to pay for their healthcare and, consequently, are deterred from seeking it until it is either too late or has become an acute emergency.

These distinctions and differences across the UK already make it understandably confusing for health practitioners and asylum seekers in different parts of the UK, and the proposals by the Department of Health for England to increase liability to charging for NHS services will only make matters considerably worse. Here at Scottish Refugee Council, not only do we occasionally have to help people to access health services they have wrongly been denied access to, we have also had to work closely with organisations, professional bodies and statutory agencies to ensure that their publications and public information accurately reflect entitlements across the nations of the UK.

It was in this context that we worked with Strathclyde University and an advisory group of health practitioners from Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board to design research that would start to build a picture of refused asylum seeking women's experiences of accessing maternity care in Glasgow. In 2012-2013, we interviewed nine women who had accessed maternity care following a refusal on their asylum claim, health professionals working in primary and secondary care, and voluntary sector workers supporting women across the city.

Positively, the findings broadly indicate that pregnant women refused asylum are seen by health professionals first and foremost as women in need of care, and that their insecure immigration status does not preclude or constrain their access to maternity care. We did not find any evidence that women were expected to pay for any of their care nor that their status as refused asylum seekers had an impact on the services they could access.

We also found evidence that in addition to mainstream maternity services some expertise has been built up in the provision of specialist care to asylum seeking women in the Glasgow area.

Women overwhelmingly reported no change in their ability to access healthcare following a refusal on their asylum claim and the majority reported positive experiences of support from their midwife, health visitor, and when giving birth in hospital. Only two women reported a negative experience, in one case at hospital where she felt unsupported immediately after the birth, and in another case where her allocated health visitor was male. However, neither of the women attributed these experiences to their status as refused asylum seekers.

Nevertheless, despite our positive findings on the application of the principle of universal access in Glasgow, our research did uncover a range of factors detrimentally impacting on women's experiences of accessing maternity care in the city. Broadly, these fell into five related categories: interpreting; the asylum process; information provision; access to antenatal classes; and, access to English language classes.

The study identifies a number of ways in which the asylum process, and particularly the asylum support system, is impacting negatively on women's experiences of pregnancy and access to care. In particular, women identified poverty, being on Section 4 support, or a lack of access to cash, as an impediment to their access to maternity care and experience of pregnancy. Women reported struggling to travel to appointments or to hospital when in labour without any cash to take public transport, and one respondent spoke poignantly about friends clubbing together to ensure she always had a few pounds of credit on her mobile phone in case of emergency in the last few months of her pregnancy. Moving accommodation while pregnant or with young children and stress and anxiety caused by the asylum process were also identified by women as impacting on their pregnancy.

Only one of the women interviewed was aware of her entitlement to help with travel costs to maternity appointments, either from the Home Office or the NHS, and she had found out about it from a friend. Another woman spoke about how she felt the information pack provided to women on booking in to maternity services did not apply to her as she was an asylum seeker. Several women reported feeling that antenatal classes were neither accessible nor relevant to them, and others linked a lack of accessible English classes to their experiences of maternity care.

Health professionals, voluntary sector workers and the women we interviewed all identified variation in the quality and provision of interpreting for maternity appointments. There were instances where women were not provided with an interpreter when required, where male interpreters were provided for maternity appointments, and where the professional role of the interpreter had been compromised.

Our report will outline key recommendations for service providers and policy makers to address the issues and we will invite stakeholders to discuss their implementation at an event later in the year. Overall, despite the challenges, the report provides a positive picture of universal access in which refused asylum seeking women are regarded first and foremost as women by health professionals. As the Director of the Royal College of Midwives in Scotland will say in her foreword to the report: *“Let us never lose that culture or belief or we will become a poorer nation for it.”*

Sector update

Government updates its Action Plan to end Violence Against Women.

A year ago the Home Secretary's Action Plan to end Violence Against Women was updated to include detailed action points to benefit women seeking asylum. This was as a result of the Missed Out campaign run under the Charter of Rights of Women Seeking Asylum.

On 8th March this year, the Government published its latest [Action Plan 2014](#). There is one new action point which states “Syrian Vulnerable Person Relocation (VPR) scheme to provide emergency sanctuary in the UK for displaced Syrians will prioritise survivors of torture and violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, and women at risk or in need of medical care.”

Apart from this, UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) has simply rolled over its asylum action points, extending their deadline for another six months. Despite this two action points are listed as having been completed. One relates to developing a process for referrals for survivors of sexual violence. The other is six monthly thematic quality audits on gender.

The remaining action points cover clearer information for women throughout the process, improved training for decision-makers and more country of origin information relating to the situation for women.

Those working through the Charter group have reported that having the referrals project within the Action Plan has helped strengthen the work and has also provided a context when they were training staff about this. The Group will continue to use the Action Plan to ensure accountability for the current action points.

Significant Legal Issues

MM (unfairness; E & R) Sudan [2014] UKUT 105 (IAC) (24 February 2014)

The Upper Tribunal set aside a decision of the First Tier Tribunal (FTT) dismissing an asylum appeal due to a defect of a procedural nature in the FTT proceedings. The impugned decision was set aside on grounds of mistake of fact giving rise to procedural unfairness, even in the absence of fault by the presiding judge.

The appellant, a 31 year old woman, claimed to be Sudanese, of Arabic ethnicity. Her asylum claims were based on her religion as a Coptic Christian, and the harm she suffered at the hands of the police, including incidences of rape and attempted rape, for reasons of this religion. The appellant had informed her solicitors after her interview at the UKBA that the interpreter had wrongly translated certain words describing elements of her religion and its practice, leading her to give answers to questions that were substantially different to those the interviewer actually asked (in English). Her solicitors sent a letter to the Home Office 5 days after the asylum interview recording these errors.

This letter was not made available to the FTT, who therefore proceeded on the assumption that such a letter had not been sent. The FTT judge relied on the absence of the letter to impugn the appellant's credibility, stating:

I find the fact that the Appellant's solicitors did not write to the Home Office pointing out such a significant error in the Appellant's interview record damages the credibility of her claim that she instructed her solicitor to do so. I find **therefore** that the fact that the Appellant has given an inconsistent account as to whether it was the same three police officers who had raped her in April 2008, who subsequently attempted to rape her in September 2012 **is a material inconsistency which damages both the credibility of the Appellant's claim and her credibility generally.** [Emphasis of the Upper Tribunal].

Justice McCloskey conducted a lengthy discussion of the common law right to procedural fairness from paragraphs [14]-[21], emphasising the need for a residual ground of review for unfairness arising from mistake of fact and for flexibility of application of common law principles in asylum claims, including the introduction of new evidence,¹ given the peculiar difficulties in establishing facts in asylum claims.

At paragraph [25], the Tribunal held:

The pivotal importance of the error of fact upon which the reasoning of the judge was demonstrably based helps to explain why, in appeals raising issues of international

protection, there is room for departure from an inflexible application of common law rules and principles where this is necessary to redress unfairness. This is especially so where the respondent has, in the words of Carnwath LJ in *E & R*, paragraph [66], failed to co-operate to achieve a correct result. As we have seen, generally, the first of the *Ladd v Marshall* principles requires that the new evidence which was not considered at the earlier hearing could not with reasonable diligence have been obtained at that stage. Plainly that cannot be said here because the letter was written by the very solicitors who were presenting the case before the Tribunal and so it *was* available. It is established that neither the rule in *Al-Mehdawi v SSHD* [1990] 1 AC 876 (that a procedural failure caused by an appellant's own representative did not lead to an appeal being in breach of the rules of natural justice) nor a failure to meet the first of the *Ladd v Marshall* principles applies with full rigour in asylum and human rights appeals: see, e.g. *FP (Iran) v SSHD* [2007] EWCA Civ 13. The decision of the Court of Appeal in *E & R v Secretary of State* points towards a broader approach, in which the common law right to a fair hearing predominates. We consider that this appeal must succeed accordingly.

In conclusion, the Upper Tribunal emphasised that the FTT used the absence of the letter as a foundation for its finding that the appellant could not be believed, and that the resulting unfairness was "palpable". The appeal was remitted for fresh consideration.

1 *Ladd v Marshall* principles.

For the full case, please see:

[http://www.bailii.org/uk/cases/UKUT/IAC/2014/\[2014\] UKUT 105 iac.html](http://www.bailii.org/uk/cases/UKUT/IAC/2014/[2014] UKUT 105 iac.html).

Asylum Aid and Rights of Women are working together on joint strategic work to disseminate legal information on gender, asylum and refugee issues. Asylum Aid would like to thank Rights of Women's Adrienne Anderson for sharing the above case summary.

For more information and case summaries, you can join the Women's Migration and Asylum Network. Email wman@row.org.uk or visit www.rightofwomen.org.uk/current.php

National News

Home Affairs Select Committee inquiry into Asylum

The Government has produced a [response](#) to the [Home Affairs Select Committee's report into asylum](#). In it they accept many of the HASC's recommendations. However [Asylum Aid's briefing](#) points out that their stated policy does not always result in the recommendations being implemented. Despite statements of good intentions in relation to quality of decision making, the Home Secretary does not provide sufficient details of what mechanisms it intends to use to improve the current situation.

Asylum Aid agrees with the HASC's emphasis on using performance management to improve standards. The briefing notes that whilst the Home Secretary agrees with some of these ideas, their response fails to explain how they will achieve this. Asylum Aid believes that a consistent package is required which includes line management, performance management, supervision and appraisal systems to improve the results of quality audits, grant/refusal rates and overturn on appeals. In addition a change of practice requires a change of culture for which greater leadership and vision are needed.

UN Expert Visits UK

In early April the [UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women](#) paid a [visit to the UK](#) at the invitation of the Government. Her mandate is to report to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. The third and current mandate holder is Rashida Manjoo. As Special Rapporteur, she is expected to receive and respond to information on violence against woman and girls, its causes and consequences from Governments and NGOs and make recommendations on measures, ways and means to eliminate violence against women at local, national, regional and international levels.

Issues affecting women seeking asylum were raised with the Special Rapporteur at a meeting coordinated by the End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAW). The lack of joined up government and due diligence whereby women refused asylum become vulnerable to violence against women when destitute was emphasised as was concern about the detention of women seeking asylum.

The Special Rapporteur will be issuing a press release in mid-April and publishing a report about her visit in early autumn. A [report coordinated by EVAW](#) was presented to the Special Rapporteur which included these asylum issues.

Yarl's Wood

The front page of the last issue of Women's Asylum News covered the latest report by Women for Refugee Women and their campaign to prevent women seeking asylum being detained. Since then the stories of two women detained in Yarl's Wood have been headline news.

Yashika Bageerathi, a 19 year old from Mauritius, had her asylum claim dealt with separately from her family as she was over 18. After her claim was refused, UK Visas and Immigration attempted to deport her, despite her being in the middle of her A-level course. Giving evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee on 1st April 2014, Mandie Campbell, Director General of Immigration Enforcement Directorate at the Home Office, stated that guidance that young people should be allowed to complete imminent exams applies only to children under 18. Yashika's detention in Yarl's Wood sparked a huge protest spearheaded by fellow pupils at her school, Oasis Academy Hadley in North London. Despite this Yashika was deported to Mauritius on 2nd April.

On Sunday 30 March news emerged that a 40 year old woman, since named as Christine Case from Jamaica, had died in Yarl's Wood. The Government has confirmed an investigation into the circumstances of her death will take place.

Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre is run by Government contractor Serco. The Guardian quotes Keith Vaz, Chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee, as saying "last year, the Chief Executive of Serco wrote to me and said that seven of his employees had been dismissed for inappropriate conduct at Yarl's Wood over the last few years."

With the cases of the two women fresh in the minds of the public, Women for Refugee Women has stepped up its [campaign](#) to end the detention of women seeking asylum.

International News

Three Steps Forward and Five Steps backward – have women lost their fight for equality in the post Arab Spring revolutions?

Sawsan Salim, Director, Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation

It was widely expected that following the people's uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, the position of women in these countries would be greatly enhanced. Such expectation was derived from the heroic roles played by women in the insurrections that brought about the defeat and downfall of the previous dictatorial regimes. During the struggle the women were not only subjected to the vagaries of war, they were systematically targeted, abused and raped by the security forces in order to humiliate them. However, in spite of the brutal and overwhelming forces deployed against them, the women and men struggled on relentlessly until "victories" were secured.

In the case of the women, the taste of victory was short lived. The men, with whom the women fought, shoulder to shoulder, appropriated and shared the spoils between them, leaving the women in a much worse situation than before. They have little or no role in the post-revolution political systems and other rights are gradually being eroded. Women are now expected to observe the formal Muslim dress code for which non-compliance will result in severe punishment. Violence against women is increasing, along with the forced marriages of young girls and rape. The following are extracts from articles written about post-revolution Tunisia, Egypt and Libya.

Egypt – according to Jenny Montasir's writing for Middle East Voices, in the aftermath of the Morsi rule the struggle for equality between men and women requires new ideas. She quotes from Gihan Abouzeid, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) consultant and managing editor of Ikhwan Papers magazine; "We are actually facing two types of challenges. The first is on the policy level because of the conservative religious government and how they understand Islam, and the second is on the cultural level." She also quotes from National Council for Women President, Mervat Tallawy; "in Egypt the political hurdles are intensified by a strong wave of anti-female sentiment where women's actions are policed at all times, coupled with a decreased emphasis on education in favour of marriage and homemaking".

Tunisia – a report from Octavia Nasr; The news stories indicate a deterioration of the Tunisian woman's status, her role and her political, as well as social, involvement. Violence

against women is augmenting; from the rape of a three-year-old in her own backyard to the rape of a pregnant woman in front of her husband, stories that break the heart and depress anyone who cares about the future of this nation that always valued women and gave them equal rights with their male counterparts even under a dictatorship that lasted decades. The public outcry against these crimes is louder than thunder in the face of a deafening silence from the current government that does not condemn or offer any solutions or timetable to redress the desperate situation.

Libya – According to the Associated Press - “On her way back from her job as a lecturer at a university near Tripoli, Libyan poet Aicha Almagrabi was stopped by a group of bearded militiamen. They kicked her car, beat up her driver and threatened to do the same to her. Her offense: being alone in a car with men without a male relative as a guardian” “You have violated the law of God,” the militiamen told her. The incident, which ended with the militiamen allowing Almagrabi to drive home, underlined the bitter irony for women in post-revolution Libya. Women played a major role in the 8-month civil war against the dictator Moammar Gadhafi, massing for protests against his regime, selling jewelry to fund rebels, smuggling weapons across enemy lines to rebels. Women fear worse may yet to come. The country is soon to begin work drafting a new constitution, which activists fear will enshrine the relegation of women to second-class status, given the influence of hardline Islamists.

The following is an extract of a report from Mounira Chaieb, a Tunisian journalist that gives added insight into the position of women post Arab Spring;

At a recent International Forum in Morocco, on the rights of women, post Arab Spring, a speaker is reported to have said “we wonder whether women have become the losers of the 2011 Arab revolts”. The views of the delegates from the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, the United States and Canada is that instead of creating opportunities for women, the revolutions brought about an increase of religiously dominated parties to power, with more restrictions on women. For example, in Tunisia the law does not recognize marital rape or emotional abuse and if a woman is raped by a stranger, proceedings against the man can be dropped, if he agrees to marry the woman who is raped.

New issues facing women in countries of the Arab uprisings includes; lifting the ban on polygamy, legalizing the marriage of under-age girls, introducing female circumcision in countries where the practice is totally foreign, and the exclusion of women from the labour market.

In Egypt women won only 8 seats out of 498 in the elected Parliament, which is less than 2%, compared to 12% prior to the revolution. There was disappointment over the new

constitution and the place of women in it. It was pointed out that the new constitution was rushed amid political and ideological polarization and therefore was full of 'loose' terms that are subject to interpretation in relation to women and their rights as citizens.

In Morocco, while there were eight women in the previous cabinet, today there is only one in the Islamist-led government. Earlier this year, the Islamist-dominated parliament adopted a decree lowering the age of marriage for girls from 18 to 16, considered by most a major setback. Moroccan feminists have protested vigorously, but to no avail.

A first draft of the electoral law in Libya reserved ten percent of seats in the constituent assembly for women, but the quota was later abandoned.

In Tunisia, the election in 2011 brought 49 women into the 217-seat Constituent Assembly. Forty-two of these women are members of the Islamist Ennahdha party.

Turkey remains a patriarchal society and women are encouraged to be educated just for the "well-being of the generations they raise." She mentioned that in Turkey, as in Tunisia and Morocco, ruling Islamist parties agree on the concept of 'complementarity' instead of equality between men and women.

The effects of the Arab uprising on women were the starkest in Syria, where a brutal civil war has left more than 100,000 people dead and millions displaced, according to UN figures. Rights groups say forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad have targeted women with rape and torture, while hardline Islamists have stripped them of rights in rebel-held territory. "The Syrian woman is a weapon of war, subjected to abductions and rape by the regime and other groups," a Syrian women's rights campaigner told Reuters.

In Libya, ranked 14th for women's rights, experts voiced concern over the spread of armed militias and a rise in kidnapping, extortion, random arrests and physical abuse of women. They said the 2011 uprising that overthrew Muammar Gaddafi had failed to enshrine women's rights in law.

In another article on Arab Uprising & Women's Rights: Lessons from Iran, Haideh Moghissi wrote; For a variety of reasons, the establishment of full-fledged Islamist states, à la Iran, may not be in order. But the very experience of Iran warns us of the serious challenges ahead for democratic forces. The devastating example of the reversal of revolutionary aspirations and demands in the aftermath of the 1979 revolution, following the establishment of an archaic, rights-negating, misogynist theocracy, bore enormous costs for women, who had supported the revolution in the millions and in different forms.

For women in particular, a revolution whose mobilizing demands were freedom, democracy and social justice turned into a huge prison under the self-appointed guardians of Shari'a. In fact the repeated defeats of progressive social and political movements in Iran throughout the 20th century have been profound for Iranian women: the most basic demands of activists of women's "right to have rights," to use Hannah Arendt's profound concept, are still those first articulated in the early 1900s that have remained unfulfilled ever since.

UK Training and Events

IARS Training in Gender Sensitivity in the Asylum Process

Monday 14th April

Refugee Council, Gredley House, 1-11 Broadway, Stratford, London E15 4BQ

Free. 2pm-8pm

To find out more or to book a place contact Natalia at N.Paszkievicz@iars.org.uk

The training is delivered by Dr Natalia Paszkiewicz, IARS Research and Policy coordinator, and refugee and asylum-seeking women involved in the Abused No More project.

The training is for professionals and service providers and focuses on the effects of gender based violence on women in the asylum system and the need for gender-sensitive treatment within the system.

Publications

UNHCR Publishes Report discussing FGM in Europe

UNHCR has published a report analysing the number of women entering Europe and seeking asylum on claims relating to FGM. The report seeks to find out how many women enter the EU each year who have been the victims of FGM or are at risk of being so. The report uses statistical data and personal testimony to begin building up a comprehensive picture of the challenges faced by refugee and asylum seeking women fleeing FGM in their home countries. The report recommends improvement in training tools and materials to support victims of FGM, enhancement of awareness of gender sensitive nature of Country of Origin information and the development of country and community tailored prevention and protection policies and responses for the abandonment of FGM in the EU.

The report can be read here: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5316e6db4.html>

There is also a video available to watch in five parts which documents the experiences of women who have sought asylum in Europe:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/toomuchpainfgm>

Gender in refugee Law: From the Margins to the Centre

Questions of gender have strongly influenced the development of international refugee law over the last few decades. This volume assesses the progress toward appropriate recognition of gender-related persecution in refugee law.

It includes a chapter from Asylum Aid's Debora Singer: *Falling at Each Hurdle: Assessing the Credibility of Women's Asylum Claims in Europe*. In addition there are chapters from, Christel Querton: *Women Fleeing Armed Conflict: Seeking International Protection in the United Kingdom*, and Claire Bennett: *Lesbians and UK Asylum Law: Evidence and Existence*, who have both worked for Asylum Aid in the past.

Evaluating the research and advocacy agendas for gender in refugee law ten years beyond the 2002 UNHCR Gender Guidelines, the book investigates the current status of gender in refugee law.

Gender in Refugee Law: From the Margins to the Centre

Published: Routledge, 14th April 2014

Hardback: £90.00

Charter of rights of women seeking asylum



Endorsements: 348

Google group membership: 165

What Does a Woman Need to Know Before her Asylum Interview?

[Why Refugee Women](#) (WRW) was founded in the UK in 2010 to represent the voices of and support dignity and respect for refugee women in the Yorkshire and Humberside region. Our work is regional, but our message is universal.

WRW launched a new campaign at Bradford University on Friday 21st March 2014. WRW Chair, Beatrice Botomani explained to a multitude of asylum seekers and refugees, academicians, professionals and service providers from all over the UK that thousands of refugee women struggle in the asylum system. Each day, their minds filled up, saturated and overwhelmed with questions that have no answers. Why are we treated like criminals? Why are we treated as if we have no feelings?

The Improving Decision Making campaign is aimed to improve decision-making in the Home Office to reduce the culture of disbelief and increased volumes of refused asylum cases. The campaign is taking a bottom-up approach, providing information to women who are just starting the asylum process. The aim is to raise women's awareness of the issues that make many cases to fail, such as not revealing their entire stories.

The campaign uses a new [information leaflet](#) put together by women who have been through the asylum process themselves. It includes the rules that interviewers must follow - the Gender Guidelines. Having this information makes women feel more confident to speak freely at their asylum interview. It can also put the interviewer at their ease and make for a better environment for the woman being interviewed. WRW are in a process of producing these leaflets in different languages.

At the launch, guest speaker, Debora Singer, emphasised that women who have been through the asylum process themselves know what information women need in this situation; they have the understanding; they know what it is like sitting in that interview room feeling fear and shame and uncertainty.

WRW is pretty sure that these women can give other women the courage to make sure they stand up for their rights as they claim asylum.

For more information about this campaign, send WRW an [email](#).

She was detained without charge

Nobody believed her story and no-one spoke up for her

Her family and friends didn't know where she was

Afraid...isolated...

She had no idea what would happen to her next

And that was after she sought asylum in the UK

Our asylum system is now so tough that, all too often, this is how people seeking help are treated. And that can't be right.

We believe the system should be fair and just and that every asylum seeker should have legal help to make their case - only then can we say in good conscience 'let the law take its course'.

Asylum Aid is an independent, national charity that secures protection for people seeking refuge in the UK from persecution in their home countries.

We provide expert legal representation to asylum seekers and campaign for a fair and just asylum system. Founded in 1990, we have since helped 30,000 people to get a fair hearing. In 2009 85% of our clients were granted leave to stay in the UK when decisions were made on their claims for protection.

Please support us

Your donation will safeguard our independence and enable us to stand up for fair asylum rights without fear or favour.

You can make a donation via our website:
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