

Facts about Seeking Asylum

About 80% of the world's refugees live in developing countries. The UK is home to fewer than 2% of the total number of refugees in the world. There were 800 000 new refugees and over 40 million people who were uprooted from their homes throughout the world in 2011. By the end of 2012 the numbers had grown and over 45.2 million people were living in forced displacement from their homes.

In the UK in 2012, 64% of initial decisions on asylum applications were refusals and only 27% of appeals were successful. People have to prove their case and it is often impossible to provide documented evidence from a war zone.

The UK Border Agency recorded 140 applications in Northern Ireland in 2012. The top countries of origin of asylum applicants in N Ireland in 2012 were: 48 Somalia, 30 China, 13 Sudan, 9 Zimbabwe, 8 Syria, 6 Iran, 5 Nigeria, 4 India, 3 Kuwait, 2 Palestine, 2 Sri Lanka, single applications from Algeria, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, and two applicants were stateless.

People seeking asylum here face many challenges, one of which is poverty. As a single adult, an asylum applicant receives accommodation and just £36.62 per week (2013 figures).

For more information see: www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/policy_research/the_truth_about_asylum

EMBRACE NI

Building a Welcoming Community

EMBRACE is a group of Christians drawn from different denominations, working together to promote a positive response to people seeking asylum, migrant workers and people from minority ethnic backgrounds in N Ireland.

EMBRACE seeks to reflect gospel values, and equip the Church to fulfil its call to welcome the stranger, by providing information, training, and resource materials, and acting as a channel to assist those in need.

Thinking of Joining Us?

If you are not already a member of EMBRACE, please consider joining us. Subscriptions are £10.00 annually per person and £20.00 for groups. Please email or write to us at the address below.

Making a Donation?

If you would like to make a donation towards our work please send a cheque, payable to EMBRACE. Your support is greatly appreciated.

For more information contact us:

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Office of the
**First Minister and
Deputy First Minister**

www.ofmdfmi.gov.uk



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Hear My Voice

Somewhere safe

Refugee stories

“Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt.”

Matthew 2:13

Fleeing From Fear

Mazvita, a Zimbabwean woman, came to Northern Ireland with her son and sought refuge as she feared for her life back home. In Zimbabwe she worked with a voluntary organisation and in print media where she accessed sensitive government information. This put her life in danger.

Fabian, a Congolese man, considers his escape to be miraculous as he does not remember how many days he walked to find help. He had just been recruited but he did not want to join the fighting. He was sent to get arms with some others and he disappeared. He still believes they think he died along the way.

Zenaph saw her two brothers die in Iraq. She witnessed these horrific scenes when she was barely 12 years old. Fortunately for her, her mum's older sister lived abroad and had no children of her own. Her father thought it wise to send her away to live with her aunt who was working in NI.

Xiang is a nine year old boy who came with his parents from China. Xiang's parents assisted in the Christian House Churches there.

The most famous refugee in history is Jesus. When he was a baby Mary and Joseph had to flee with him to Egypt.

'... an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. 'Get up, 'he said, 'take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.'

Matthew 2:13

'I didn't know where I was coming'

'... if I go back, they will kill me'

'I am happy now, in a safe place.'

Quotations from *Conversation Around the Kitchen Table* compiled by Stephanie Mitchell, 2012 <http://www.communitydialogue.org/PDFs/kitchen.pdf>

An Asylum Seeker is a person who is looking for a safe place outside her/his own country. People seek asylum if they fear persecution in their own country because of their ethnicity, nationality, religion, social group or political opinion.

A refugee is a person who applies for asylum and is successful; they are granted refugee status. 'Refugee' is also sometimes used as a general term for all people who have been displaced from their own countries by persecution, war and civil unrest.

Seeking a Refuge

Mazvita went through the asylum process in Northern Ireland and was granted refugee status. She now has employment and is also studying at a university. Her child is attending school. They have received support from members of their local church.

Fabian's case is still being processed after he was refused the first time. Many refugees such as Fabian have no time to collect documents to support their story when they are fleeing.

Zenaph experienced a lot of bullying at school soon after arriving in Northern Ireland but she resolved to remain focused and concentrate on her education. Her teachers encouraged her and the English lessons provided by a voluntary organisation improved her English. Now she is studying at university. She has become a very confident young woman.

Now **Xiang** is going to school in Belfast. He is too young to understand the asylum process or why his parents had to move to another country. He is happy that his family can live without fear. They have a local community of fellow Chinese people who help them a lot.