

Don't believe the lies about asylum seekers

The fascist British National Party is exploiting and fuelling media hysteria about asylum seekers to win seats in the 10 June elections. The hysteria is based on lies and distortions, which many mainstream politicians have failed to challenge

Far from scrounging, asylum seekers have made a huge contribution to the UK

More than half of nurses recruited to the NHS come from overseas. Many refugees are professionals such as doctors and teachers who are in short supply. Teachers in schools where there are asylum seekers say their presence improves standards because they bring different cultures and languages. The government says asylum and immigration costs £1.7 billion a year, but immigrants and refugees contribute £2.5 billion a year to the economy, a net gain of £800 million.

Britain does not take more refugees than other countries

Pakistan and Iran alone host almost one-third of the world's 12 million refugees. Poor countries such as Tanzania, Guinea and Armenia each take more refugees than Britain. Within the EU, Britain comes tenth in terms of asylum applications per head of population.

Asylum seekers do not leave their families and homes on a whim

Most come from countries which abuse human rights. When the situation improves, people no longer seek asylum. Almost no-one from Zimbabwe claimed asylum before 1999. But in 2002, almost 10% of asylum claims were from Zimbabwe nationals. War-torn Bosnia, Croatia and Kosovo produced large numbers of asylum seekers in the 1990s. But in the three years to 2003, there were fewer than 250 from all three countries combined.

Refugees do not bring disease to Britain

The British Medical Association found asylum seekers do not bring TB into Britain. Just like an increasing number of UK citizens, those asylum seekers that had contracted TB did so as a result of severe overcrowding and poverty. The millions of people who travel abroad every year on holiday are more likely to bring diseases into Britain.

Asylum seekers do not receive large cash hand-outs

Hundreds of asylum seekers have been refused any financial assistance or housing and are homeless. What cash people do receive comes from the government and is just 70% of basic income support – less than £40 per week. Asylum seekers are not allowed to work.

Refugees do not get the best housing

They are forcibly dispersed to some of the worst estates in the country. A property developer in Liverpool admitted buildings used to house asylum seekers were "not fit for human beings".

The UK is no soft touch

United Nations figures show the UK detains more asylum seekers than other European countries, and for longer. The UK is the only European state that detains children. It has stopped people getting out of Zimbabwe to Britain despite accepting it is not safe for those who have escaped to return. Thousands of asylum seekers no longer receive any form of state assistance.

Committee to Defend Asylum Seekers