



# QUILLIAM

## REFUGE: Pathways of Youth Fleeing Extremism

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By analysing refugee policies and mapping journeys taken by refugees, Quilliam has released the first [report](#) shedding light on the points at which refugees and young people are most vulnerable to recruitment by extremist organisations as they flee conflict. In doing so, we have identified ten 'risk points' where refugees are vulnerable to radicalisation in camps and along the migration route, and have made suggestions on how to minimise these risks by increasing safeguarding and resilience against extremism. The report also looks at ways groups like IS, the Taliban, or Al Shabaab find ways to 'buy' allegiance from refugees by funding their travel or working with traffickers and smugglers.

Some findings of the report reveal:

- The Dublin III agreement means a country where a refugee first registered is responsible for the asylum application. Many refugees do not have rights these countries, increasing the influence of extremist organisations that provide basic services in camps and urban centres
- Groups such as Islamic State and Boko Haram recruit using financial incentives within refugee camps and work with smugglers and traffickers to facilitate the journey to asylum
- From 1 October 2015 to 30 September 2016, the UK received 41,280 applications for asylum. 67% were refused. In comparison, Germany refused 20% of asylum applications over the equivalent period
- **More than 340 unaccompanied asylum seeking children went missing** between January and September of 2015, 132 remained missing at the end of 2015. Some run away for the fear of not being granted asylum, others fall victim to abduction, trafficking, sexual and economic exploitation, and extremist groups
- Children, who are often age disputed and consequently treated like adults, are also detained— **853 children were detained** between 2010 and 2015
- According to Home Office records, there were no children in detention as of 31 December 2015. However, children are still being housed in controversial immigration removal centres (IRCs) as of October 2016 following the closure of refugee camps in Calais
- There is no single EU body that collates information on the number of children detained, nor do EU member states publish such statistics – therefore **it is not certain exactly how many children have been detained, or for how long**
- To date there is no statutory time limit on how long a person may be detained under immigration powers in the UK. The **UK is the only country** in the EU not to have a time limit
- 3,000 detainees were on **suicide watch** during 2015, **including 11 children**
- Extremist organisations work within the country of destination to infiltrate and radicalise refugee communities under the guise of providing aid, using opportunities to preach and proselytise among refugees

From June 2016 to January 2017, Quilliam documented 366 uses of refugee propaganda to incite hatred by Far Right extremist groups (EDL, PegidaUK, and Britain First), and 263 instances of usage by Islamist extremist groups (Islamic State, Taliban, Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab, and Boko Haram). These were organised into categories, revealing the following:

- **Far Right groups** used the majority of **refugee** propaganda to incite **'fear'** and increase the 'otherisation' of refugees based on the threat of them **'invading'** the West or carrying out **sexual abuse** of women and children
- The most dominant theme **Islamist extremist groups** use in propaganda to **refugees** was **'preaching'**, in groups and in isolation, calling them to wage jihad against non-believers

Mark Brennan, UNESCO Chair in Community, Leadership, and Youth Development says *"Quilliam makes a remarkable contribution to our understanding and efforts to take positive action. This [report](#) documents in great detail the complexity of the problem, the scope of the youth refugee crisis, and provides a rigorous analysis of the settings, and potential processes, where refugee youth may be drawn into extremist activities. This document serves as a critical resource for those seeking to understand the refugee crisis, and a vital reference for policy makers who must create balanced, effective, and evidence informed policies. This is a must read for practitioners, program developers, and policy makers at all levels. With such information, and the clear recommendations in the document, significant advances can be made to thwarting extremism recruitment and more importantly helping create environments where youth refugees are welcomed, supported, and empowered to positively shape their communities and societies."*

The [report](#) identifies **ten risk 'hotspots'** where refugees and young people are vulnerable to recruitment by extremist organisations, in conflict zones, in camps and urban centres along the migration route, in the country of destination, and onwards. It advises the following recommendations:

- The creation of a **Safeguarding and Resilience against Extremism (SRE) framework** obligatory for all the main bodies with which vulnerable refugees interact, including but not limited to the DfE, the DCLG, the Home Office, the National Crime Agency, and all local authorities
- **Multi-agency cooperation** and an inter-agency approach between UK and EU actors for asylum seekers entering the UK illegally, and to monitor remittance funding abroad
- **Operations to provide safe spaces for IDP's (Internally Displaced Peoples), officiated routes of safety** and monitored transit to prevent opportunities for recruitment; gain valuable intelligence and to deprive valuable revenue for IS and other terrorist groups

*"Among the most eye-opening points in this [report](#) is the fact that while most of us understand that our failure to provide safe passage to refugees endangers refugee lives, we might not understand that it also creates a threat to our own national security. Money paid by refugees to smugglers not only helps to fund Islamic State activities, but refugees are signed up to support IS in exchange for their travel. Where we fail to offer security to refugees, we leave the door open for radicalisation. We need to understand that the provision of safe and legal routes for refugees is in the best interests of all of us."* writes Rosalind Ereira, Solidarity with Refugees.

## *Introduction*

The size of the world's forcibly displaced population has doubled in less than 20 years. Statistics from UNHCR reveal forced displacement surpassed 65.3 million for the year ending December 2016; almost 34,000 individuals flee their homes every day. Refugee populations are increasingly fleeing violence perpetrated by extremist organisations (this report focuses on al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, Islamic State, Taliban, al-Qaeda). In terms of youth, UNICEF reports that 1 in 200 children is a refugee, this is an upward trend that will continue in 2017.

## *Chapter One: Refugees and Refugee Policy*

As of December 2015, approximately 21.3 million people were refugees across the world, over half of whom are under the age of 18. A further 34 million have been internally displaced. A number of countries are not signatories to the 1951 Refugee Convention – including the UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India. Many refugees hosted in these countries do not have their respective cares guaranteed.

In the EU, the Dublin III regulation (2013) specifies only one member state is responsible for examining an asylum application; using a hierarchy of criteria to determine which EU country is responsible for examining the asylum application. Dublin III does not guarantee asylum seekers refuge in the EU if a safe “third country” can be identified. This process creates an imbalance between the numbers of asylum applications handled by various states across Europe.

Not all people who have been forced to flee their homes are considered refugees in legal terms. The 1951 Refugee Convention outlines five legitimate grounds to consider an individual a refugee: persecution on the basis of race, religion, nationality, social or political affiliation. According to UNHCR, a person is only classified as a refugee if they are able to demonstrate their status. In the meantime they remain asylum seekers, which is to say that their request for refuge is yet to be processed. A migrant is someone who has made the choice to move from their country of origin to improve their life, and not under situations of duress or fear. As such, poverty is not recognised in the 1951 Refugee Convention as grounds for international protection. Often, the line between a successful asylum claim and an unsuccessful one is very slim.

The UK conforms to the laws and conventions issued by the EU and the UN, including the Dublin agreement and 1951 Refugee Convention. This is subject to changes that may result from the process of leaving the EU (Brexit). The UK admittance of asylum seekers is handled between Home Office and UNHCR. This is broken down into three systems - the first system is the Gateway Protection Programme (GPP), which aims to settle up to 750 refugees in the UK each year. The second system is the Mandate Refugee Scheme (MRS), which allows refugees with a close family connection in the UK to be resettled in the UK. In January 2014, a third system, the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Programme (VPR), was added as a route to asylum in the UK for selected refugees, with a commitment to resettle 20,000 refugees over the period 2015-2020. From 1 October 2015 to 30 September 2016, the UK received 41,280 applications for asylum. 67% were refused. In comparison, Germany refused 20% of asylum applications over the equivalent period. The top 5 countries applying for asylum in the UK were Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Syria. However, the UK has no obligation to consider applications for asylum in the UK made abroad, and there is no provision to allow refugees to travel to the UK with the intention of seeking asylum. In 2015, of the 1,392,000 asylum claims in European countries (EU plus Norway and Switzerland) the UK's share was 3%.

In 2015, 74% applicants from asylum seekers in the UK were male and 10% of main applicants were under the age of 18. More boys made the journey to the UK alone than with a parent or adult. Female applicants made up just over 25% of all applicants for asylum in the UK in 2015. The majority of dependants are female, but only 21% of main applications are from women and girls. This is despite the UNHCR estimate that around 50% of the world's forcibly displaced are women. In 2015, 35% of women were granted asylum or other protections, compared to 41% of male applicants. Women are less likely to make dangerous journeys to Europe - usually men come alone, hoping their wives and children can join them safely later; this gender discrepancy is beginning to change. The UK instituted gender guidelines in the asylum process in 2004, recognising distinct forms of gendered violence and suffering as sufficient grounds for asylum application. Crucially it needs to be realised that there will always be a reluctance to reveal details of such acts, which can disadvantage women in the asylum process.

Throughout the immigration process, children and adolescents can fall between gaps in system – it is difficult to determine age (particularly when most minors have either no or false documents). Some will have false adult documents enabling them to have control, to travel alone, and work, however, failing to identify and treat a child as such can have terrible consequences. A common way to radicalise and exploit children is through human trafficking – the Palermo Protocol was put in place to fight this and deal with such issues. The UK signed the protocol in December 2000. UK government policy forbids the detention of minors unless in exceptional circumstances. However, detention is applicable to children where there is no clarity and consensus about their age. 128 children entered detention in the UK over the course of 2015 and were detained for an average of 7 days; during this time, previous traumatic experiences of war and the stress will often be compounded because of a lack of sufficient access to specialist care, in clear contravention of the Palermo Protocol. The number of unaccompanied minors among refugees in the UK almost quadrupled in 2015 (around 88,300 - of half of them being from Afghanistan and 91% being male in total).

Young unaccompanied refugees are more vulnerable to radicalisation if they are separated from their parents, who remained in the country of origin at risk to violent and radical groups, or in a new host country. There is no question that militant groups target refugee youth (defined as between 15 and 24 years old) for recruitment, however, it has been argued that refugee youth can also become autonomously radicalised (through online content for example). Newcomers and second- and third-generation immigrants are prone to radicalisation and can isolate themselves as a result of perceived discrimination, developing socially destructive worldviews. The formation of identity at a second- or third-generation level can leave a vacuum upon which extremist groups are then able to capitalise. If the vulnerabilities of young refugees arriving at their destination are not countered by long-term approach to integration, democratisation of national identities, and prioritisation of wellbeing and mental health of young people, the risk of radicalisation is likely to persist into future generations.

### ***Chapter Two: Refugee Nexuses***

Quilliam maps and studies refugee situations using nexuses (countries of origin, countries of first refuge, and other contributing forces such as countries involved in the conflicts that do not accept substantial numbers of refugees). This is broken down into four Nexuses:

1. Somalia-Kenya-Ethiopia; 2. Syria-Iraq; 3. Afghanistan-Pakistan-Iran; 4. Bangladesh-Myanmar.

### Nexus 1: Somalia-Kenya-Ethiopia

Somali refugees continue to flee conflict rooted in their 1991 Civil War, this turmoil was exploited by Osama bin Laden to establish the East African al-Qaeda in Kenya with intentions of making connections with Islamist groups fighting in Somalia. Simultaneously, the Islamic Court Union (ICU) created al-Shabaab ('the Youth') – which is now affiliated with Al-Qaeda (through splinters and various groups). Economic and political instability in the country have made it very fertile ground for extremists, and Somalis have fled as a consequence – although a diasporic nation, they deeply retain connections with their country of origin, investing in its future and security. For example, worldwide remittances to Somalia account for approximately half of Somalia's gross national income, and exceed the amount the country receives in humanitarian aid, development aid and foreign direct investment combined. This helps fund food, healthcare, and education – known areas to be exploited and utilised for recruitment by extremist organisations.

When compared to Britain's Bangladeshi, Ghanaian and Romanian migrants, Somalis face lesser prospects in the long term, exacerbating issues of identity and political alienation that can push young people towards radicalisation. Britons are thought to make up about 25% of the 200 or so foreign fighters that the al-Shabaab group in Somalia currently fields.

### Nexus 2: Syria-Iraq (Turkey, parts of Lebanon and Jordan)

Syria has been ruled by Al-Assad since 1970, most recently by Bashar Al-Assad since 2000. Since then, the civil war that began over sectarian, ethnic and religious lines has fostered an environment in which IS and Jabhat al-Nusra (al-Qaeda off-shoot) have flourished. By the end of 2015, an estimated 6.6 million people were IDPs within Syria, and 4.6 million had fled Syria as refugees. There, numbers continue to rise. This has put immense pressure on neighbouring countries as rising numbers of refugees seek haven in Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan. Lebanon and Jordan are not signatories to the 1951 Refugee Convention, but Turkey is. Refugees from Iraq and Syria have arrived in the UK since the 1940s. From 2006 to 2008, Iraqis were largest refugee group arriving in industrialised countries – they are as of 2014, the ninth largest refugee group.

In addition to making use of young men and women in countries where it holds territory, IS has become successful in reaching out to them in Europe and recruiting them. However, IS and JN's pool of recruitment from the UK has been not only from among the Iraqi or Syrian diaspora community, but includes both Muslims and converts to Islam and from a plethora of multiple ethnicities and national backgrounds.

### Nexus 3: Afghanistan-Pakistan-(Iran)

Invasions by the Soviet Union and US-led forces in Afghanistan in 1979 and 2001 has moved 2.6 million Afghans refugees into bordering Pakistan and Iran. Pakistan holds around 1.5 million refugees, half of whom are below the age of 14. Between 1979 and 2001, 1 in 4 Afghans has at one time been a refugee meaning it is difficult for these individuals to create support networks. The Afghan refugee issue has intensified as the conflicts in the region have escalated. In 2016, IS and the Taliban have continually conducted attacks in Afghanistan, acting as catalysts for instability and unsafe conditions. There is now a continuing competition between two groups.

As of December 2015, there are approximately 76,000 Afghan-born population in the UK, ranking the 30<sup>th</sup> most common overseas country of birth residing in the UK.

#### Nexus 4: Bangladesh-Myanmar

Bangladesh's location, bordering India and Myanmar has become an emerging area of activity for IS – a gateway for attacks and fertile ground for recruits. The main source of refugees entering Bangladesh from neighbouring Myanmar are the Rohingya Muslims, whose ethnic and religious identities have been denied by the regime since the 1962 military coup. Like Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran, Rohingya Muslims face repatriation. Official figures suggest 25,000-35,000 refugees from Myanmar are in Bangladesh, living in three refugee camps. These numbers account only for officially recognised refugees, and fail to account for the rest of up to 500,000 people that have settled in Bangladesh since 1990. There has been a rise of refugees in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention. The increase in Bangladesh's refugee population means more refugees from Bangladesh arrived in the UK from 1960 to 1990. Of the UK's Bangladeshi community, 92% is Muslim. 84% live in inner London. 43% of this figure in the borough of Tower Hamlets alone, with overspill into nearby boroughs of Newham, Hackney, and Camden. Like the Somali community, the British Bangladeshi community is very close, remitting a great deal of money to Bangladesh. Despite doing better than other refugee groups economically, members of the community are torn between social and political alienation and fear of a loss of homeland culture. This has, somewhat, led to them being involved in radical organisations domestically and joining them abroad. Islamist groups are known to be active within London's Bangladeshi community, with Jamaat-e Islami (JEI), an Islamist party in Bangladesh, having influence in religious communities in East London and especially in the East London Mosque.

#### ***Chapter Three: Mapping Points of Vulnerability***

The risks of radicalisation begin in early recruitment strategies preying on short-term vulnerabilities and immediate needs of those trapped in conflict zones, and persist into the journey itself. Aspects of this journey can push refugees into the hands of Islamist organisations, and these processes can continue in countries of settlement (mistreatment, poor policy making and exhaustion can lead to political alienation and frustration). The situation of refugees in this country of origin is one of extreme difficulty. In addition to intense violence, refugees face shortages of food and money with which to support themselves and families.

#### *Vulnerabilities in Country of Origin*

##### Nexus 1: Somalia-Kenya-Ethiopia

In a study of young people joining al-Shabaab, 48% formally joined the organisation within 30 days of being introduced to it. This demonstrates a degree of desperation to find quick solutions to short term needs with help of fees paid by the group, which can be up to \$500 USD monthly. A youthful demographic mixed with genuine grievances has led to Somalia being ranked first in the Child Soldiers Index.

##### Nexus 2: Syria-Iraq (Turkey, parts of Lebanon and Jordan)

As the number of Syrian refugees grows, there is greater pressure for international relief organisations to meet expanding needs, and they are not always able to do so. 60% of Syrian labour force (3.5 million) are unemployed, 3 million as a consequence of the conflict – in such context it need only be a case of which extremist organisation pays more than another.

##### Nexus 3: Afghanistan-Pakistan-(Iran)

The growing number of IDPs in Afghanistan leads to competition for meagre resources mixed in a toxic cocktail of rising unemployment and little access to basic services. The Afghan government is struggling to provide any development projects or basic services due to spending on national

security. Additionally international funding has dwindled following troop withdrawal and other crises dominating donor attention. The Afghan government is now trying to work in alliance with the international community to provide a durable solution to its displaced and returning citizens. The Taliban play on Afghan's unemployment, poverty, hatred of foreign troops, lack of education, religion and perceived lack of good government to recruit. Afghan children also continue to be recruited in both support and combat roles for the Taliban – mostly through madrasas run by the Taliban.

#### Nexus 4: Bangladesh-Myanmar

Many Myanmar IDPs are being resettled by the government, but in conflict areas like Kachin and Shan States, access from humanitarian aid is restricted. Child IDPs are exposed to multiple grave violations perpetrated by both Myanmar Armed Forces and extremist Ethnic Armed Groups, including use and recruitment into the organisation to be used in the conflict, sexual violence, occupation of schools, and killing and maiming. In camps, recruitment is in the form of a lottery – in some camps/villages, all male residents register to have their names chosen, or the lottery is based on household, leaving it up to the family to decide which member should serve.

#### *Vulnerabilities in Country of First Refuge or Safe Third Country*

Refugees reside in both camps and urban/informal settlements, however incentives from organisations are effective as many refugees do not have rights in their safe third country regardless of their location, increasing the lure of extremist organisations. Additional vulnerabilities include sexual violence, which is often a result of confined spaces with no access to contraception, as well as used as a weapon of war by extremist organisations and as a reward for fighters.

#### Nexus 1: Somalia-Kenya-Ethiopia

Despite international protocols laid out by 1951 Refugee Convention, recruitment of refugee minors in Kenya is symptomatic of a lack of sustainable funding by the international community for the continued fight against al-Shabaab. AMISOM's forces use additional resources of refugees to reinforce their ranks. In light of security concerns, where an al-Shabaab arms smuggler was arrested in a refugee camps, Kenya has closed down its largest refugee camp, forcing repatriation of Somali refugees back to a Somalia that is under siege by al-Shabaab. Somalian refugees are placed back in Somalia in over-crowded and unsanitary conditions, where al-Shabaab fills the void, providing Somalians with the only option of provisions to survive. Provisions to Somalian refugees in Ethiopia are so poor (93% of refugees in Dolo Ado camp reported having no education) that Somalian refugees are seeking assistance elsewhere, including returning to Somalia under threat of recruitment from al-Shabaab.

#### Nexus 2: Syria-Iraq (Turkey, parts of Lebanon and Jordan)

Recruitment campaigns from both government and extremist organisations are underway in Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. The Turkish government reportedly announced, via refugee camp microphones, opportunities for young men aged 20 to 25 to voluntarily join the Turkish security and police force to fight in Syria. FSA recruitment offices operate inside several refugee camp in Jordan, where recruiters openly walk around tents with loudspeakers calling refugees to sign up. IS has also been known to recruit using financial incentives within refugee camps in Lebanon and Jordan, spending up to \$2,000 on costs of recruiting refugees in both countries. IS is also taking advantage of the lack of education: in Lebanon, out of 500,000 children who are eligible to attend school, more than half are not in education. Children and young people who are recruited and trafficked by IS are an important resource, as they allow the group to convey a sense of future for itself as a state.

### Nexus 3: Afghanistan-Pakistan-(Iran)

A UNGA report on children and conflict found that children are used by Afghan National Army at checkpoints, as messengers and tea boys, and are forcibly recruited into Afghan Local Police (cases of sexual abuse). Reports reveal that children are kept in Afghan National Directorate for Security detention facilities for alleged association with Taliban, beatings, electric shock torture and sexual abuse occur. Extremist groups exploit children's lack of mental and physical development, the Taliban indoctrinate children through madrasas or religious schools where they are then used in battle. Where refugees are the given opportunities to access education, particularly in Pakistan, they have performed well and seized chances provided to them.

### Nexus 4: Bangladesh-Myanmar

Bangladeshi authorities have cracked down on the flow of Rohingya refugees and asylum-seekers from Myanmar. The bulk of the Rohingya who successfully reach Bangladesh have sought shelter in makeshift camps across the Cox's Bazar. Groups like Jemaa Islamiya and Harakat ul-Jihad-e-Islami in refugee camps in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh use the educational approach to recruitment. Bangladesh's location is a gateway for IS to begin attacks on the subcontinent and south-east Asia. Southeast Asia has become not just a nascent area of activity for IS as a gateway for attacks into the subcontinent but also as a fertile source of recruits that can be trafficked into the Syrian war and beyond.

#### *Vulnerabilities on Route*

##### **Eastern Mediterranean Route**

While some refugees may have to pay smugglers up to \$560 for passage towards the Mediterranean coast, IS, capitalising on this route, offer free passage to those willing to join IS. IS is able to provide a degree of security. The financial lure is ever-present on the refugee journey - to those reaching the Mediterranean coast, IS offer potential recruits up to \$1,000 to join the organisation. IS clearly aware of the value of these refugee routes for the purposes of recruitment and for exporting their operatives into Europe. Aside from potentially facilitating access to Europe for IS fighters, the suspicion created by the mere possibility of this is likely to increase xenophobic and anti-refugee sentiment in Europe, reinforcing the narratives that IS uses to recruit both refugees from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, and from Muslim communities in Europe and the West.

Smugglers are also a threat - Afghan refugees travelling towards the Greek Islands commonly rely on smugglers and traffickers – and more than 90% of arrivals in the EU were in some way facilitated by some form of illegal enterprise, a direct consequence of the fortification of European borders and the small numbers of refugees resettled in the EU directly from refugee camps. An Interpol and Europol report expects the extensive use of smugglers to negatively affect unaccompanied minors, who, as well as being exposed to the risks of sexual exploitation or being made into recruitment agents by the smugglers, may be forced into committing criminal activities in the destination countries. Risks posed to women and children should also be noted.

These particular vulnerabilities are further reinforced by the fact that the journey into Europe is the most dangerous for unaccompanied minors, with high death rates and 10,000 unaccompanied refugees disappearing upon arrival in Europe, many of whom are thought to have fallen into the hands of the very same criminal organisations that brought them into the continent.

##### **Southeast Asian Route**

For thousands of migrants and asylum-seekers, the boats are the first leg of a desperate journey from Bangladesh to Malaysia and beyond. After paying money to smugglers, the refugees are

herded onto fishing boats where they are taken to large trawlers in international waters and then carried onto destinations such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. Women endure rape, sexualised violence and forced marriage while waiting for travel both in order to pay for the journey and whilst on the boat. These trawlers are often caught in inhumane maritime 'ping-pong' as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand prevent the trawlers from landing on their shores. In 2015, 6,000 refugees were stranded on overcrowded boats in the Andaman Sea after smugglers abandoned the ships subsequent to failing to land the boats. Of the refugees transported by smugglers to Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, many are handed over to armed traffickers who hold them for ransom, making the refugees call their families for additional money in exchange for freedom.

### *Vulnerabilities in Countries of Destination*

The beginnings of life in a host country, particularly in Europe, can often be considered the final stage, however, here too extremist organisations infiltrate and radicalise refugee communities - in Germany for example, extremists tried to establish contact with refugees inside refugee centres and at local mosques under the guise of providing aid, using opportunities to preach and proselytise among refugees, warning them about Western values and norms and inciting refugees against German officials and the German public. Within camps and holding centres refugees are at risk from criminal acts against women and children, which serves to create lack of belief in the host country and its facilities. It exacerbates previous trauma already endured by those living in the camps. There is also a particularly shocking mental health situation in UK detention centres (3,000 detainees on suicide watch during 2015, including 11 children).

Asylum seekers are the single most common category of immigration detainees in the UK – over the last six years, Home Office Immigration Statistics demonstrate that asylum seekers have steadily remained around 50% of the total immigration detainee population. IS91R from the Home Office specifies five reasons for detaining an asylum seeker: if the asylum seeker is 'likely to abscond', 'insufficient reliable information to decide', if their 'removal from the UK is imminent', 'whilst alternative arrangements are made', or their release is 'not considered conducive to the public good' then they face a great problem. To date there are no statutory time limits on how long a person may be detained for under immigration powers in the UK, and no such limit has ever existed – the UK is the only country in the EU not to have time limit. The Home Office supports the argument that the UK does not need time limits on detention because it already has one under what is known as the Hardial Singh Principles. Prolonged detention times occur when it is impossible to return someone to their country of origin, but also as a result of administrative shortcomings. Additional factors unspoken by Home Office can prolong detention - example: unannounced movement between IRCs: 'created problems of communication with relatives, friends, lawyers and others'. Being placed on Suicide Watch can also prolong a person's detention.

The main problem is that asylum seekers 'are treated like criminals when their crimes are simply fleeing their own country for whatever reason': handcuffed even when without resistance. The lack of humanity in how women were treated seems to result in a loss of; privacy, sense of decency, compassion and respect as a result of being detained in the IRC. The Home Office has set out guidelines for those who should and should not be detained; women are not recommended to be detained, and yet they are, and significantly, pregnant women. However, the UK government is still routinely detaining large numbers of women who are survivors of rape, sexual violence and other forms of torture, in direct violation of their own guidelines. Leading sources of asylum applicants in the UK were Eritrea, Iran, Pakistan, Sudan, Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Albania, Nigeria and Sri Lanka. Most are facing some kind of extremist threat. There is a growing trend of, and evidence to indicate

that, asylum seekers are voluntarily returning to their home countries after receiving poor treatment in Europe.

Home Office guidelines state that IRCs should 'avoid the detention of children'. Home Office's Immigration Statistics show a decrease in recent years of the number of children being detained, but reported that across all the UK IRCs a total of 853 children had been detained between 2010 and 2015 - numbers cannot be clarified. In an attempt to confirm statistics on number of children being held in detention in Britain, Quilliam sent two Freedom of Information requests in August 2016, one to Tinsley House and one to Yarl's Wood to ask for the number of women and children entering their respective IRCs by country of nationality between 2010 and 2015. Both requests were received, but only the one sent to Tinsley House returned within prescribed time allocation given by government of 20 days. As of January 2017, Yarl's Wood have not responded to the Freedom of Information Request Quilliam sent in August 2016. Nevertheless, statistics from Tinsley House were in line with Home Office's Immigration Statistics, apart from figures given for 2015: the Home Office Immigration Statistics recorded 64 detained children, the Freedom of Information request recorded 63 detained children. Meanwhile, Tinsley House's Independent Annual Report for 2015 recorded 56 detained children. Therefore, statistics on how many children are being detained in Britain's IRCs is no closer to being confirmed, with the Home Office contradicting its own records. Unaccompanied children: most commonly detained on the 'grounds that their age is in question', often referred to as 'age disputed' - problems of documents (no or false documents). Without other information to identify them as children, young people are incorrectly judged and thus treated as adults in detention.

#### ***Chapter 4: Refugees and Reciprocal Radicalisation***

Roger Eatwell terms "cumulative extremism" a process whereby "one form of extremism can feed off and magnify other forms", whereby forms of extremism mirror other groups' rhetoric. Quilliam created a database of Far-Right media groups, by collecting and archiving every mention of refugees on Facebook pages of EDL, PegidaUK, and Britain First, as well as on The Muslim Issue and Jihad Watch, between 18 August 2016 and 6 January 2017. The content was placed in different categories: mental health, religion, violence, food, fear, women and children, imperialism and crusades, punishment. There is a prevalence of religious elements in anti-refugee discourse: 13% of posts contained references to religion which allows far right groups not only to tie in the threat with a wider religious and ethnic community, but make implicit connections to threats posed to the 'white' population by Muslims already within the UK. The association of refugees with violence is almost as common as their association with religion - 20% of all posts registered. The narrative of these ideas is conducted on two inter-connected planes, that of 'invasion' and 'women and children', capitalising on instances of rape and child-abuse in order to demonise the refugees and more broadly, disseminate the idea of widespread sexual abuse arriving with refugees. Official and semi-official channels were constrained given the illegality of the incitement of violence, only 8% of posts include references to punishments, which range from fighting back against violent refugees, to their deportation. In the cases of both PEGIDA and the EDL, the two most employed outlets for links were the Daily Mail and the Daily Express, mainstream right-wing newspapers in the UK. Britain First was different, posting about refugees primarily from own website, several Islamophobic blogs and far-right news outlets. Using the same eight categories, (with the addition of 'Race/Colour', which includes any incident that makes mention of refugee's skin colour or race) 145 tweets from 40 distinct twitter accounts were collected - tweets posted in the period 4 August 2016 to 9 September 2016 were analysed.

Quilliam further created a database of propaganda used by the extremist and terrorist organisations of Islamic State, Taliban, al-Qaeda, al-Shabaab, and Boko Haram that refers to refugees and IDPs. An extensive internet search regarding the aforementioned organisations and their references to refugees took place every day from 13 June 2016 to 8 January 2017. Four themes: negative grievances (references to or pictures of death to warn refugees of consequences of leaving); positive reinforcement: state-building; preaching; guilt. The most dominant theme in propaganda was 'preaching' (53.07%) (calls from fighters and citizens to Muslims to wage jihad) – 32.13% of the gathered data falls under the theme of 'negative grievances' - 'guilt' represents the smallest category, compiling 5.07% of the data. Quilliam found that violence and fear are dominant themes in data collected under Far Right and Islamist extremist propaganda Islamists, but these themes are used in different ways.

### Chapter 5: Policy

This report ends with policy recommendations that insist on the importance of treating children as children first. By treating children as asylum seekers, the UK is not fulfilling its obligation to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the country. Moreover the report has shown that there is evidence to suggest that young people are not always treated appropriately in the UK's IRCs - that needs to be changed, and former unaccompanied children should be supported as they prepare for life in Britain, using Safeguarding and Resilience against Extremism (SRE) frameworks that Quilliam puts forward for evaluation.

The full report can be accessed [here](#)

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