

My name is Bamidele Hassan and I am from Nigeria. I want to tell the Inquiry about what happened to me in immigration detention. This is all true and I have evidence to back up everything I am saying.

1. I came to UK on a visitor visa in October 2007 as a result of my involvement in political activities in Nigeria. I could not return back because of volatile atmosphere back home. I was arrested in May 2010 by the police in Manchester as I was boarding a bus bound for London. They were doing 'random' identity checks and I was selected. The police arrested me because I had overstayed my student Visa. The reason I overstayed my Visa was because I feared persecution in my country.
2. I was treated terribly by the police. They kept me in a cell for four days under immigration powers. For two days they did not give me any food or water. I had to resort to drinking water from the toilet. I collapsed twice – the first time I collapsed I was left in my cell. The second time I was moved to another cell with a video camera so they could keep an eye on me. It was only then that they gave me water.
3. On the third day I was seen by a doctor. He asked me about my current medication. At that time I was taking Ramipril for high blood pressure – a dose of 10mg. After he examined me, the doctor said that my blood pressure was very high and recommended my release.
4. On the fourth day I was taken to Pennine House at Manchester airport. It was there that I made my claim for asylum. After 4 days at Pennine House, I was moved to Lindholme Immigration Removal Centre.
5. I was seen by a doctor at Lindholme. Again, they found my blood pressure was dangerously high and I was prescribed an additional medication to take.
6. I had my asylum interview at Lindholme. After the interview, the doctor advised the Home Office that my blood pressure was high and recommended that I be released. The Home Office said that my case was suitable for the detained fast track, so after two weeks in Lindholme I was moved to Harmondsworth.
7. I was at Harmondsworth throughout June until early July. By this time, the medication had been increased to 4 different types for my blood pressure and I was diagnosed with depression and given anti-depressants – making 5 different medications. My asylum claim had been refused and all my rights of appeal exhausted.
8. I was moved to Colnbrook detention centre, where doctors gave me more medications for my blood pressure – I was eventually taking 6 medications for my heart / blood pressure and one anti-depressant. July, August, September, October and November 2010 I was detained in Colnbrook and all that time I suffered with neck pain, chest pain, headaches and was unable to sleep. My medications were reviewed and increased across the board. I still felt ill and in pain.

9. The Home Office were accusing me of smoking weed – they didn't believe me even though all the tests showed up negative. I have no idea where they got this from.
10. In October 2010 Medical Justice sent an independent doctor to examine me. This doctor said that I had uncontrollable high blood pressure – resistant hypertension. The doctor said that the medications I was taking had damaged my heart and affected my renal function. This was not something that I had before my arrest.
11. The Medical Justice doctor invited the Immigration Centre doctors to a meeting and it was agreed that the situation was dangerous for me and that I needed to be taken out of detention for hospital treatment.
12. In October I was taken for treatment at hospital. This was the first time I had ever heard the word 'cardiologist'. I was chained and handcuffed to the bed in hospital on the ward. I was humiliated - people on the ward were asking me the nature of my offence, if I had killed someone... People were telling each other to come and see this black man chained to the bed like a dog. Someone even took a picture of me on their cameraphone.
13. After 2 days I was returned to detention at Colnbrook. Removal directions were set for me and I was moved into the short-term holding facility at Colnbrook for three days. The doctors said that I could not be removed because of my condition – uncontrollable high blood pressure – and that I should be moved out of short-term holding to the main block.
14. I collapsed when back on the main block in Colnbrook and had to be given first aid and oxygen for 30 minutes. My blood pressure had risen to a dangerous 220/130. The day before my collapse I had been due to have an outpatient appointment with my consultant. My Home Office caseworker had cancelled the appointment. After my collapse the caseworker said I should be taken to hospital. I refused to go – at that point I was ready to die. The last time I went to hospital I had been badly humiliated – so if death wanted to come to me, I was ready to die. I was kept in the hospital ward at Colnbrook for 4 days before being returned to regular detention.
15. By this time the Home Office were very frustrated with me. They would not release me and were desperate to remove me. The doctors at Colnbrook all knew my condition and would not certify me as fit to fly.
16. On 22 November 2010 I was moved from Colnbrook to Dover. At Dover my medications were increased and I was prescribed painkillers cocodamol and ibruprofen for the pain I was in.

17. In total during my detention I applied for bail 7 times – and they were opposed by the Home Office and bail was refused every time. I had no lawyer and had to represent myself because I was prevented from getting legal aid.
18. Outpatient appointments with my consultant were cancelled 4 times by the Home Office. The medico-legal report Medical Justice prepared for me said I was not fit to be removed. The Home Office then arranged for me to be removed on a charter flight and the doctor at Dover IRC certified me as fit to travel.
19. I had no lawyer but I applied for an injunction to the High Court. I was moved to Brook House to prepare to be removed. At Brook House I waited to hear about the outcome of the application to the High Court. I heard nothing and Brook House said they had received nothing. I insisted I was not going to go and pack my stuff for removal without finding out either way – seeing it for myself that the High Court said no.
20. I rang the High Court and they told me the injunction I applied for was granted. I told Brook House and they said they had no evidence. I saw my name on some papers in the bin in the office. I pointed this out to the staff and it was the papers from the High Court granting my injunction. They said they didn't know how they got there.
21. Even though the injunction was granted they did not release me from detention. I remained in Brook House. The dosage of the medication was maximum for all of them. I felt bad all the time. It was affecting my thoughts and my brain. I was drowsy all the time, like I was drunk, my tongue was heavy. I struggled to motivate myself, I was acting out of character – feeling angry and aggressive, inclined to fight and argue. I couldn't sleep, I couldn't eat even though I felt hungry. They wanted to give me a mental health assessment and send me to a psychiatrist, but because I didn't want to do that they said I wasn't complying.
22. Eventually through pressure from Medical Justice, the Home Office took me to see the consultant cardiologist in March 2011. Once again, I was taken in handcuffs, accompanied by uniformed guards.
23. The consultant was very annoyed. He told the guards that he could not treat me properly like that (in handcuffs) and that is part of the cause of my problems. He told them that they needed to respect my privacy – they were breaching my privacy standing around while I was getting undressed to have tests. Then he sent them out because they were not supposed to be listening to my confidential medical information.
24. The consultant wrote a medical report to the health team at Brook House. The report said that I needed to be admitted onto his ward for proper treatment. It was unacceptable that he had not seen me for 6 months. He nullified the 'fit to fly' from Dover. He said that I was to have no guard and no chain and be admitted to hospital as a free man to have my treatment without

interference from the Home Office. He outlined all the treatment and tests that I needed – kidney, ECG, MRI... His report was dated 10th March 2011 and I was released from detention on 18th March.

25. Life after detention was also very hard. I was living off the charity of friends and relations. This caused a lot of friction. I was still on a lot of medication and the built up stress of being in detention made me difficult to live with.
26. I was still very ill. I had a lot of hospital appointments but no money to get to them. I collapsed on a bus, fell down the steps and had to spend two days in Darenth Valley Hospital.
27. My wife and I, who had been estranged, were reunited. I made a fresh claim for asylum. Our daughter was born and was diagnosed with Down's syndrome, which was very hard for us to deal with.
28. I eventually got a good legal aid lawyer to pursue my case. When I told them what had happened to me in detention with regards to my health, they could not believe it. My lawyers pursued the Home Office for unlawful detention, as they said I should not have been detained once the seriousness of my health condition was known. They also helped me to make a fresh claim for asylum.
29. My unlawful detention claim was successful. The Home Office rejected my fresh claim for asylum but I appealed, and the Immigration and Asylum Tribunal allowed my appeal on asylum and human rights grounds. In April 2014 myself, my wife and my daughter were granted refugee status.
30. Presently am taking four regular anti-hypertensive medications for my blood pressure, three years after I have been released from detention. But my blood pressure has been considerably controlled compared to when I was detained. Its only that my life has not been the same because I need to rely on the medications for my daily activities. I was awarded damages for unlawful detention – the damages paid for my legal fees for my asylum appeal, and for our living expenses whilst awaiting the outcome of our asylum application and were not allowed to work. My wife, my daughter and I have now been accepted as refugees. We are trying to make a life for ourselves here. We are living in temporary accommodation.

My experience of immigration detention was terrible. I was detained for 11 months, in 7 different detention facilities. My physical health suffered terribly as a result of the poor healthcare provision – permanent damage has been done to my heart and my renal function. My mental health suffered, and I experienced humiliating treatment. The impact on my family relationships was severe – particularly after detention. When I was detained I felt like there was no end in sight.

Bamidele Hassan, 17/09/2014.