

Name : Anonymous from Sri Lanka (I do not wish my name to be made public) as told to Anna Pincus of Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group

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Currently in Brook House IRC. I cannot give oral evidence as I am detained.

My detention began on 14 October 2013 and this is the first time I have been in detention. I have only been in Brook House IRC. I claimed asylum when I came to the UK in 2007 and my asylum claim was refused. I appealed and I currently have a JR pending at the High Court.

### **Executive Summary**

1. Mental health impact of detention is severe and there is a necessity for a time limit to detention.
2. There is inadequate health care and torture history ignored.
3. The Home Office book air tickets when they do not have travel documents. This causes distress and wastes money.
4. People are detained when they have cases pending. They should be released with a tag.

1. **Impact of detention** : Before I was in detention, I was well. Now I am mentally forgetting. I have lost 13kg in the last two months. Before I had a good appetite. I can't sleep but before I never needed sleeping tablets. I used to be positive and now I am crying like a baby. The other detainees laugh at me because I am an old man crying like a baby. I can't control the tears. Detention kills you mentally. Even animals need freedom. I never liked to cage an animal or a bird and now I am like a dog. I'm given food and locked up like a dog. I came here to save my life. I never did wrong. I tried my hardest to do only good in the UK. I would never even have travelled without an Oyster Card. Before I watched TV and now I can't. I can't watch the TV news in case there is fighting because I have terrible dreams. I dream of people killing and blood. Once I saw myself hanging in a dream. I wake up screaming when I dream of blood. I can't motivate myself. I sit at a computer to type and I can't type. When I came to detention I was always out of my room and now I want to be alone. My body is empty with a burning feeling inside and I stay alone in my room. People lose hope. I feel forsaken by God but I do trust in him. I have support from the Chaplaincy and they pray with me. I have a pain in my head and I feel crazy. I talk to myself. I'm ready to die. This is the impact of indefinite detention.

2. **The needs of vulnerable detainees** : I was tortured in my own country, Sri Lanka but the Home Office do not believe me. I do not get the support in detention I need as a vulnerable person and torture survivor. For two and a half months I was given continuous paracetamol but it didn't help because my pain was a pain from detention. I have terrible head pain. I went out of detention to hospital for two days and during that time my head pain went away. Even the officers said I looked different when I came back. My face changed. Everything changed until I came back. The conditions in the rooms in detention don't bother me. Where I sleep or how the cell is, isn't important to me. If I was free, I could sleep on the floor! Freedom is everything. No freedom destroys you. I talked to the mental health nurse and that was okay for a short time but not for 11 months. My depression increased and now I have given up on healthcare for my depression.
3. **Social implications** : I was picked up for detention in only the clothes I stood up in. The charity helped me with clothes otherwise I had nothing. People outside in the UK don't understand why you are detained for so long. In Sri Lanka I had an import/export business and I have three sons. The youngest was four years old when I left. I love my family. I wouldn't have given them up for anything but to save my life. People in Sri Lanka don't understand why you are detained so long. If I was outside I would see my friends and I would walk. I used to walk 10k on cycle paths in green places. Now my body can't walk as I lost my strength. I lost my strength and my mind. I lost friends, family, health and I know if I am sent back I will lose my life.
4. **Is the decision to detain appropriate** : I don't think anyone should be detained if they have a JR pending. I think they should close detention centres and tag people but leave them outside. If they are tagged, the Home Office can know where they are but they don't mentally die.
5. **Tickets booked when there are no travel documents** : I was issued with removal directions lots of times and I paid £6,000 in solicitor bills for JR, bail, a fresh claim and stopping flights. The last time I was given removal directions I knew I couldn't afford to pay the solicitor to stop the flight again and I decided to go and face what would come in Sri Lanka. I knew I would die there but I decided to die there rather than stay in detention. I cut off my beard. People brought my property to the Centre and I was ready to go. I was terrified and feeling crazy but ready to go. Then I went to the officers and they said your flight is cancelled by the Home Office because they don't have travel documents ready. This is wrong for detainees because to get ready to face death then you don't go is terrible. I feel I am losing my mind. It's like a torture. And the money for the UK is a waste to buy travel tickets. My friend in another centre from Sri Lanka was given a ticket for Bangladesh and that ticket was cancelled too because it was wrong. Only the right tickets should be issued when people have travel documents in place.