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SUBMISSION TO THE PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY ON IMMIGRATION DETENTION

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REVIVE (est.2002) is a voluntary sector charitable project of the Spiritans (Holy Ghost Fathers) working in partnership with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Salford. It is supported by Brothers and lay associates of the Edmund Rice Network (Irish Christian Brothers) in an allied project (CHRISP, est. 2010). REVIVE provides advice, food aid, social work , befriending, and advocacy for refugees and persons seeking asylum. *Our mission statement is : **To accompany and support refugees and people seeking asylum living in, Manchester, Salford and adjacent areas without regard to their race, ethnicity, age, gender, religious belief or (dis)ability.***

We operate advice drop-ins in Manchester and Salford. On a typical drop-in day we see 60+ service-users. Currently about 50% of our service-users are 'asylum seekers' . The other 50% are 'refugees' (granted some form of leave to remain) and are helped to access employment, housing, welfare, and medical rights. The biggest issue REVIVE confronts is destitution. Nationally roughly 70% of asylum claims are refused. 'Failed' asylum seekers are (unless they have children) evicted from asylum accommodation and the minimal NASS weekly benefit (£35) withdrawn. Though the great majority of failed asylum seekers are unreturnable , they are reduced to an indefinite limbo of street destitution, homeless and cashless. Legally prohibited from working, and totally without cash or resource, they are dependent on voluntary sector food handouts and the inadequate availability of voluntary sector night shelters.

Asylum seekers report regularly at Immigration Reporting Centres, which also act as a gateway to arrest and detention. Our service-users live in constant fear of arrest and detention. We try to stay in touch with those who are detained.....

This is a submission relating to **IMMIGRATION DETENTION** in the UK for consideration by the Parliamentary Inquiry. The same submission has been made to the Human Rights Committee of the United Nations under Articles 7, 9, and 10 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in relation to the UK Government's current Article 40 Report.

This submission provides some personal testimonies from the REVIVE Manchester-Salford network .

REVIVE submits , on the basis of the experience and testimonies of these and other of our service-users, that immigration detention in the UK is :

- **Arbitrary, because without statutory limit, unpredictable , and frequently disproportionate, determined only by the administrative convenience of the executive and not by judicial decision, unjustified by imminent removal, and not subject to systemic judicial scrutiny**
- **In fact (if not in name) a real prison experience, which is unjust, degrading and inhuman for refugees who have committed no crime, involving, as it does, full deprivation of liberty , grossly disproportionate methods of arrest, restraint, and detention, and substantial failure to adequately address and care for the mental and physical health needs of vulnerable individuals incarcerated**

UK immigration detention in our view, in breach of Articles 7,9, and 10 of ICCPR

1. B : 3 MONTHS IN YARL'S WOOD IMMIGRATION DETENTION CENTRE

- Detention unjustified by imminent removal
- Inadequate and dismissive medical care
- Rule 35 procedure ineffective
- Inhuman and degrading treatment when hospitalised
- Not informed of bail rights
- Mental ill-health exacerbated by unjustified detention

Bintu is a middle-aged female asylum seeker in Manchester :

I am handicapped with a serious heart condition and very high blood pressure. I have many medical problems. I was taken into detention at a signing in at Dallas Court reporting centre in Salford. I was taken to the High Commission [Pennine House detention centre within Manchester airport] and then Yarl's Wood Detention Centre in Bedfordshire.

There was a doctor and an officer in the van, a private contractor. There was another woman, She was in handcuffs. You get handcuffed if you put yourself in trouble. I didn't.

I was in detention for three months

It felt like a prison because you can't go out, but there's everything in there....a cinema, a salon, arts and crafts, a gym, library, computers, classes, arts and crafts. I had my own room....but you don't go outside.

The staff were not nasty to me because I didn't put myself in trouble.

I was taken to hospital after having a fit . An officer called healthcare...I was crying and screaming. They took me to hospital in the town. It was a heart attack. When I was in hospital a UKBA guard kept coming in every 6 hours to my bed to check on me. This was embarrassing for me with all the other patients. I shouted *'I didn't kill anybody. Why do you treat me like a criminal? Why do you think I'll run away. You know I'm handicapped and can't move.* Because of this I was taken to a side room on my own.

Then they released me. UKBA put me in the van and took me back to Yarl's Wood and then I was taken back to Manchester (160 miles) to Dallas Court. Then they called for a taxi to take me to a friend's house They gave me sandwiches and a drink.

The problem with the medical care is that if you are sick they say you are lying, you are making it up. I preferred to meet white people in healthcare . The whites treat you, they were doing their job.

I have never heard of Rule 35, but I knew you could call Medical Justice. A solicitor came to see me in Yarl's Wood but I was told nothing about applying for bail. I was told my case was closed.

I have very high depression now. I could control it before but detention has made me afraid.

2. ADERONKE APATA : 11 MONTHS IN YARL'S WOOD DETENTION CENTRE

- Arbitrary, disproportionate, indeterminate detention : (i) 2 months in prison beyond completion of sentence for working illegally (ii) 11 months in immigration detention unjustified by imminent removal (iii) 4 further months in prison without charge or conviction for protesting about detention centre conditions
- Inadequate and dismissive medical care
- Rule 35 procedure ineffective
- Absence of legal advice and representation
- Inappropriate conduct of male detention staff
- Mental health condition further exacerbated by prolonged and inappropriate detention
- Inhuman and degrading treatment throughout

Aderonke is 46. She is from Nigeria and came to UK in 2004. She claimed asylum on grounds of both religious and anti-gay persecution. When her lesbian relationship was discovered her family, to put an end to any further same-sex relations, forced her, though a Christian, to marry a Muslim husband. She was pressured into converting to Islam against her will. However, the husband was murdered as a traitor to Islam in marrying her, bringing shame on his faith and family. An Islamic court sentenced Aderonke to death by stoning. Her former girlfriend was murdered by vigilantes in 2012. The UK Border Agency has rejected her claim to asylum and Aderonke remains under threat of deportation to Nigeria, where gay and lesbian people continue to face hatred, violence, imprisonment and murder for their sexuality and lifestyle. The current Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act, enacted in January 2014, formally criminalises same sex relationships, making them punishable by 14 years imprisonment.

The rejection of Aderonke's asylum claim left her homeless and destitute, living on the streets of Manchester without the right to work or any access to support or accommodation. She unlawfully obtained employment, working as an operations manager for a social housing organisation caring for people with severe mental conditions. During this time she paid taxes and national insurance and saw herself as contributing to society. In 2011 she was discovered to be working illegally and was sentenced to 9 months imprisonment (reduced to 4 ½ months) for fraudulently misrepresenting herself as having the right to work. This conviction then became the basis for repeatedly rejecting her credibility as an applicant for asylum.

This is Aderonke's account, told 13/06/2014, of her detention in Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre in Bedfordshire, run for the Home Office by the service company SERCO. The current website shows smiling asylum seekers being prepared for their 'release'.

My sentence for illegal working ended in October 2011, but instead of being released I was kept in prison until 6 December 2011 and was then moved to an immigration detention centre. I had applied for a bail hearing while still in prison, and this was heard in Piccadilly, Manchester. For some reason the bail hearing was adjourned and instead of taking me back to prison I was taken to the short-term detention centre in Pennine House at Manchester airport.

People from this area are detained in Pennine House for 2-3 days before being taken to Yarl's Wood. Nobody told me anything about what would happen to me or where I was going. Nobody said we are taking you to Pennine House, keeping you for so and so time, then taking you to Yarl's Wood. Nobody told me anything. They just treat you like a piece of furniture, who cannot hear anything and does not need an explanation. I was searched from head to toe, and all of my things were searched, everything. It took 4 hours before I could get into a room. I was detained in Pennine House for 3 days, but on the second day they gave me a little card and said we are moving you to Yarl's Wood in the morning. In the morning nobody came. It was after the third night I was moved.

There was a long journey to Yarl's Wood, 5-6 hours in a prison van from Manchester to Bedfordshire. I didn't have my wristwatch because they'd taken everything off me. Again they didn't say a word to me, there was no explanation of what Yarl's Wood was or why I was being taken there. All they were doing was giving me orders- 'go inside', 'do this, do that', just talking among themselves. But I had served my sentence. No explanation, no information, no nothing. Just put into the van and driven down.

When I got to the gate of Yarl's Wood I realised I was coming from prison to prison , was being a driven into another prison... tall gates, wire mesh, security wire on top of high fences...so I said OK this another prison I'm going into. At first I thought it was going to be a better place but when I got to the gate I knew I was simply going to prison. There was no difference.

It took them another 6 hours to check me and my stuff, before I was taken to where I was to sleep . They call it processing, they process human beings. After the journey from Manchester to Bedfordshire on the prison van, and all that processing for another 5-6 hours, I was just exhausted, didn't know what to do, what to expect . No-one said this is how things go , you are going to be here for so-and-so time and then removed or released or whatever.

The first room I was taken to was in what they call the induction wing. I had mental health problems , so when I was in the induction wing I did not share a room with anyone, because they couldn't pair me with anybody. When I was moved from the induction unit to the general unit, dispersed into another wing, I had to share with somebody, two people to a room.

I was served with a deportation notice to remove me, but I had the right to appeal it and lodged an appeal , so there was an ongoing case, and no flight ticket at that point . I did not have a date for the appeal. From the time my sentence came to an end up to the point where I left Yarl's Wood 11 months later I must have had about ten bail applications one after the other, all of them refused. I had lawyers making representations for me, at every point in time. I was always applying for bail – but they didn't grant any. They were all refused on flimsy excuses: they kept saying 'you are a dishonest person we cannot trust you' .My own uncle and my own blood sister in UK were all discredited in court so they didn't have to release me into society. They just wanted to keep me in Yarl's Wood, frustrate me, and make me go home.

When I was in prison I knew when my sentence was going to end, but I didn't know that in Yarl's Wood. I was in there from early December 2011 to October 2012, 11 months in all. They are supposed to detain you only when they are ready to deport . In all of that time I was refused bail but no flight ticket to deport me was arranged because I had ongoing appeals. I should have been released until I had exhausted all my appeals. At the end of the appeal process, if they came to the conclusion I should go, that's when they should have taken me to Yarl's Wood.

What ended my time in Yarl's Wood was that I led a demonstration, a hunger strike and sit-in protest in October 2012, after witnessing a woman being forcibly deported. The demonstration was very very peaceful, no damage to property, no injury to any human being. It got into press, not as much as I hoped, but it did go round. People knew about it. I submitted a set of demands to UKBA, 10 or 15 demands. One was the principle to end detention, one was to stop deportation, one was to end the fast track process, one was the health care system, one was to stop censorship of the internet because some of us didn't have solicitors. The demonstration lasted for 3 days. 7 people were taken out because of the protest.

I was made an example of and sent back to prison – no charges, 'administrative detention'. They said I was identified as a ringleader and they were moving me to 'Her Majesty's prison estate'. They sent me to Styal Prison in Cheshire .I was there from Oct.2012 to Feb. 2013, when I was eventually released on bail. Styal was worse. Here so many other things happened to me I am unable to speak to you right now as I have a case against them in court. It's in legal process now. It did exacerbate so many of the conditions in my life : I nearly lost my life. I have been taken into so many detentions . It wasn't the other prisoners, it was what I am going through, the whole system of claiming asylum and being locked up. I was working and paying my taxes, but I was still sent to prison, then a detention centre for 11 months without being released, then imprisoned for speaking out on the injustice that's being handed out to us...taken back to prison.. all the pressure built up .

UKBA claimed I was held in Styal prison for my own safety. But there was no threat to my safety in Yarl's Wood and I wasn't a threat to anyone else's safety. I was taken out of Styal prison in January 2013 and taken to Colnbrook Detention Centre for forced deportation. I was there for one or two nights before the flight was due. Medical Justice had been involved with me since March 2012 and knew everything about my history and medical condition. They helped me to get an injunction preventing my deportation, which was cancelled at the last minute. The High Court stopped the deportation and required a proper assessment of my mental health. I was brought back from the airport to Colnbrook Detention Centre and from there back to Yarl's Wood, where I

was put into isolation. There was a report saying I am manipulative and cannot be allowed into association and must be taken into solitary. UKBA did not want Medical Justice doctors to come to Yarl's Wood to do the psychiatric assessment requested by the Court. So they sent me back to prison, back to Styal, before I was released in February. I was released from Styal prison in February 2013 on a bail application on mental health grounds.

I don't get Section 4 asylum seeker support. I was released on two conditions: 1. That I have an electronic tag 2. That I engage in no profession, paid or unpaid. I was released to my pastor's place. I am not with my pastor any more, because when I was released I was not given any medication from prison and I had a relapse. I had to go into a mental health hospital and because of events that happened in the presence of the children in the house my psychiatrist concluded it was not conducive for me to live in an environment with children. It was affecting the children. Salford Council now accommodates me under a mental health order.

When I was in detention I came under Rule 35. It was filled out for me and sent to my UKBA caseowner, who replied to me I still had to remain in detention. I was a victim of torture- I had been beaten up. I have a scar here where I was stabbed. I have witnessed a stabbing in front of me. I thought detaining me was against the rules.

With health care in Yarl's Wood, if you are ill and go the Health Centre all they give is paracetamol, and they only give you that after you have been 4 or 5 times. They say drink water and rest and you'll be fine. I have seen people treated that way whose conditions have got so much worse. People detained are never taken seriously to be sick. Even medical staff who are supposed to be concerned about health of human beings will say you are saying this because you want to get released. They don't treat the human in you, only see you as immigration case. Pregnant women have been detained in that place. I have seen a woman break her waters before they would bring a chair and take her out of detention. It is hard to believe there is a human being that nasty they will not listen to you.

I went into detention with mental health issues and then it got worse from being detained. I had been diagnosed in prison for PTSD and depression. On the very day I was taken from Pennine House to Yarl's Wood I was placed on suicide watch. At one point I saw a doctor's assessment on my file which said I was not fit to fly and therefore could not be removed. Medical Justice came to assess me, and recommended I should be released. That was in March 2012, but they still refused to release me, still kept me in detention. All the time I was in detention I was in what they called the 'Orange Book' for people on suicide watch.

I did not have access to legal advice throughout all this. I had no legal representation between October 2012 and February 2013. I had to represent myself. Since release from prison I have succeeded in getting representation. My claim is now based on Articles 2 and 3, and also Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Psychologically the effect is a big scar. Since release I have been in a secure mental health unit twice. The first time I was in Meadowbrook [Manchester psychiatric intensive care unit] for 3 months after being released in February 2013. Then I was back in again for another 3 months this year, released just two weeks ago. I already had PTSD / mental health problems when I came to UK, before I was ever in detention, but never this much. I am now diagnosed as having severe mental health condition with complex PTSD and psychotic symptoms.

If you go back to the beginning, I was working in society as an operations manager. I was on a good salary. I was paying taxes and national insurance. It wasn't as though I was taking money from the company without giving anything in return. Then my support was stopped and my money taken from me. I had nothing. I was destitute. I was sleeping rough on the streets of Manchester. Somebody helped me out to get a job and start working. They gave me papers in my name and I got a job and a roof over my head. I was sent to prison. When I was in Yarl's Wood UKBA employed me! They paid me £1 an hour. I was even given an award as employee of the month in Sept. 2012 – a certificate and £10 voucher.

To the staff in those places we are not human beings. They talk to us anyhow. They just come at will at random into our rooms, and we're all females. The points I made in the protest were vindicated by the sexual abuse problem only last month. A Yarl's Wood official told the press about a sexual assault by a guard, guards against detained, and revealed that women are deported by force

without their mental health being properly assessed. Lots has never come to light. I have spoken this morning to a journalist who wanted to speak to a detainee but Yarl's Wood wouldn't let her in. She's going to try again. They discussed my mental health problems in the presence of other detainees, which I thought was breach of the rules. They were having a laugh. I mentioned this to a medical doctor, who said I should write down my concern and get witnesses, but the witnesses would not write anything- they were scared of getting deported. They used to say they held me in high esteem, that I was one of the exceptional ones here, but still they insulted me.

Male staff just barge into your room. Women who have suffered domestic violence, rape, torture are subjected to the torture of being locked up again. Guards talk to you as though you are not a human being. They handcuff people, physically force women, beat them, gag them.

If you want more I am on *You Tube* - Novaramedia did an interview a few months ago, when I was in hospital. The day after that interview we heard about the death in Yarl's Wood of the lady from Jamaica, Christine Case. They don't believe you when you are sick, and even when they know you are sick they say you're not sick. In my situation, the day I was to be deported a doctor assessed me and said I should see a psychiatrist urgently, so they took me to the airport urgently instead! That tells you they don't care about people's health. That's the problem, they don't care. I asked am I fit to fly and they said as far as we're concerned you've been fit to fly from the day you were given the deportation order. They ignore all the medical reports.

There's a wrong culture in Yarl's Wood. Only closing it down will stop it. I am involved in campaigning to get that place shut. There are so many groups now supporting asylum seekers. I want all of them to stand up to get all these detention centres shut. Detention is supposed to be the last resort. It's supposed to be for a short while immediately before you are deported yet they kept me there for 11 months and then sent me to prison for no offence. Look at what happened to the UN rapporteur: they would not let her into Yarl's Wood. I attended one of the meetings she addressed.

This should not be happening in this part of the world where we say human rights are respected. That should be happening back in my country, in Nigeria or Somalia or any of these developing countries. I always say to people that Yarl's Wood is a different world to the Britain I am in now, it's a very different world. And that world has come from nowhere. God knows where it has come from. It's a concentration camp.

When I am on my own sometimes I remember keys, the sound of keys, and I just lose it. I can't be alone, can't be in a confined space like this. I need to run out of this room. It's a fear of being confined. It's a scar on my mind, not movable.

3. NAWAZ KHAN : 1 MONTH IN YARL'S WOOD DETENTION CENTRE

- Disproportionate and unnecessarily aggressive and intimidating mode of arrest
- Disregard for wife's acute medical needs and mental health condition / inadequate and dismissive medical care
- Rule 35 procedure ineffective
- Inhuman and degrading treatment throughout
- Mental health condition exacerbated by unjustified detention

My name is Nawaz Khan and my nationality is Pakistani. I am an asylum seeker in UK since 3 years. I live with my wife. My wife came to the United Kingdom on 10th April 2009 using a passport containing a valid student visa which expired on 31st December 2010. I came here on 26th May 2010 as her spouse using a passport with a student dependent visa valid until 31st December 2010.

On 17th August 2010 we claimed asylum, which was refused on 17th September 2010. We met in 2005 when my wife's home town was struck by an earthquake. I was in one of the rescue teams, working with the Red Cross and UNICEF. Fozia was dug out of the debris. We fell in love. My wife's family beat her to stop her seeing me and forced her into a marriage with a much older cousin. The night of the forced marriage she fled. We subsequently married. We are now expecting twins, due in July. Both of us face

'honour' death threats from my wife's family . I am a Sunni, she is a Syed Shia, an elite caste. For them family honour counts for more than anything in the world. Syed girls are not allowed to marry outside the kinship group. If a suitable match of her own age cannot be arranged, a Syed girl has to remain unmarried or marry an older unmarried or widowed man . In 1992 my wife's cousin was murdered with the boy she eloped with, with the police watching . Her family is powerful . They own a bus company and are able to corrupt the police, I face charges of kidnapping and abduction . My family has been subjected to serious violence by employees of my wife's father. We are from Lahore, where an honour killing was recently carried out outside a Court with the police looking on.

UKBA has refused our asylum claim. Currently the case is in the High Court . This is just the story of our detention in 2012, and of the medical issues .

On 22nd October 2012 UK Border Agency detained us and the Tribunal court released us 21st November 2012 on bail.

They came at 5.00 a.m. in the morning, breaking down the door. There were 8 of them, wearing dark uniforms, stab vests and batons. They came into our bedroom without any notice. Their manner was very rude and rough, as though we were going to resist . They handcuffed me like I was a criminal in this country. I can't talk about the long journey to the detention centre . I can't explain how horrible it was, but you can imagine because of my wife's medical condition.

At the time of our detention my wife was suffering with chronic left-side pelvic pain which affected her ability to walk . She was and still is under a physiotherapist for this. She had a ruptured ectopic pregnancy and had to have her left fallopian tube removed. During the operation doctors did medical negligence with her- they had cut some tissues. The pain has continued since then. She also suffers from persistent back and neck pain following injuries in the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan. She finds it extremely difficult to make any journey, let alone a long one like the one to Yarl's Wood. She was also being treated for depression and had had some recent attempts of self-harm. She has symptoms of poor sleep, low mood, poor concentration and feeling of hopelessness and thoughts of self-harm. She had been taken into A&E on 9th February 2012 following an impulsive act of deliberate self-harm when she cut her wrists. At the time of our arrest and detention she had acute difficulty walking and was under the following treatments requiring regular appointments :

1. *Physiotherapist Mrs Helen Shepherd in Salford Royal hospital*
2. *Dr Colsom Bashir, chartered clinical psychologist, at the Willow Tree Healthy Living Centre Salford.*
3. *Mental Health Crisis team, Salford*
4. *Pain centre administrator Salford Royal Hospital.*

Her need for ongoing treatment and regular weekly appointments with the physiotherapist, psychologist and pain team, was completely ignored by UKBA , who on 22nd October 2012 transported and detained us at Yarl's Wood Detention Centre in Bedfordshire. This was a 4-5 hour journey. When they brought us from our home to Yarl's Wood they didn't allow us to bring my wife's crutches with her. They said we will provide you with crutches in the detention centre but when we got there they didn't provide her with anything for her mobility . During our journey from Salford to Bedfordshire she was in great pain : she is unable to travel because she can't travel by any vehicle, she hurts when the vehicle moves.

In Yarl's Wood my wife could not go for food to the dining hall but they did not provide her food in the room. She was just eating fruits there. She was so depressed during that period. From 28 October she had heavy bleeding with clots, but they did not send her to Bedford hospital until 12th November 2012. First the Yarl's Wood nurse did a urine test and he said I am not sure because the strip was showing two lines. He sent my wife to the hospital and there a lady doctor said it might be a miscarriage or it might be heavy bleeding. She did some tests and in the morning she discharged her and said you will have to do your test again after 2 days to make sure it is negative.

Me and my wife's GP told Yarl's Wood staff a 100 times that she uses crutches but they didn't pay any attention to this problem. I helped my wife to take her to the toilet and change her clothes and helped her to sit and stand because she can't put on a shirt on her own. I showed the UKBA staff all the letters from her GP and all the appointments she was missing, but they said we can't do anything. They kept the medication which her GP had prescribed and did not provide that medicine to my wife during the period of detention. 29 days on she was on the same stage as at very first day. And her mental health condition was much worse.

They kept saying you have to come on reception to take medication but my wife could not walk more than 100 yards

On 21 Nov. we were released on bail after a month's imprisonment to no purpose. We were returned the long distance to Manchester, with my wife in a far worse medical and psychological condition than when we went. The Judge granted us bail on conditions including that both of us have to go to Dallas Court for reporting and signing. I am so worried about her medical problem. She was admitted to hospital again on 2 May 2013, in a coma following a further suicide attempt. I am so upset if they will detain us again what we will do. Below are some links if you want to understand our case more easily :

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<http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2013/04/508801.html>

<http://www.jaack.eu/post/47399036730/love-across-the-faith-divide>

<http://www.ncadc.org.uk/campaigns/fozianawaz/index.html>

<http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/anti-deportation/>

4. ANDREA CARR : PENNINE HOUSE AND COLNBROOK IRC - AN ENGLISH VISITOR'S PERSPECTIVE

- Detention unjustified by imminent deportation
- Inhuman and degrading treatment
- Prison visiting vitiated by petty tyranny and obstructionism of officials
- Inadequate and dismissive medical care
- Physical and mental health damaged by continuing unjustified detention

Andrea Carr is an English citizen and a teacher of English in an English secondary school. She is 33. X is a refugee from the Sudan, a medical doctor. Because his asylum case is still in process and he fears negative response from UKBA he does not wish his name to be used.

I first met Mr X in October 2013. As a trainee teacher, I was on my placement at an organisation called REACHE Northwest. REACHE is funded by the National Health Service and helps to enable asylum seeking and refugee healthcare medical professionals (primarily doctors) to work in the medical profession in the UK. Its main role is to teach English to a high level as candidates have to pass their IELTS exams at the very high level of a band 7.5 in each of the four language skills in order to be accepted for professional conversion.

Mr. X, a trained doctor in his own country, was an exceptionally bright student but he also stood out because he was always one to try to help his fellow class mates in any way he could. I was also aware that in his free time, he did lots of volunteering for organisations such as the Red Cross and the Manchester City of Sanctuary project. To be honest, all of the teachers (as well as the students) were drawn to him; he was just one of those very special people you meet from time to time.

As my time at my placement came to an end, and as I became more involved in the City of Sanctuary, I began to develop more of a personal relationship with Mr X. I began to learn more about the problems he was experiencing with his claim to seek asylum, and I grew quite concerned for him after the rejection of his asylum claim and when he learned that he had 'exhausted his rights for appeal'.

One day, in late March (2014), X asked me to read some of his paperwork. I read a medical report which highlighted the physical and mental torture he had endured whilst being detained in Sudan. I have since read numerous reports which record X's story of why he was forced to leave his home country. I have also spoken to X extensively about these matters. I have absolutely no doubt in my mind that his story is one hundred per cent genuine. I have read the Home Office's reasons for disbelieving X and I think that the reasons they have scraped together are absolutely absurd.

In brief: X was a medical doctor in Sudan and worked at Khartoum Teaching Hospital. Under the rule of the regime, the working conditions for medical staff became progressively worse and parts of the hospital were closed down by the authorities. According to news reports, this continues to happen. X decided to join the workers' union, indeed became the chairman. He took part in numerous protests, and was, as a result, detained and tortured on two separate occasions (one being for a period of 24 days).

X is also from an ethnic minority group from Sudan, and (as is now widely known), individuals of this minority group are currently being subjected to 'ethnic cleansing' by the authorities in Sudan.

Regardless of these facts, the Home Office found a sequence of ridiculous reasons to refuse all of X's claims for asylum in the UK, which began when he arrived in the UK in December 2012.

In March 2014, X went to Dallas Court, the Manchester immigration reporting centre, to 'report'. On that day, he was detained and taken to Pennine House detention centre at Manchester airport. He rang me to tell me this news and I was completely and utterly shocked by this. He had never missed an occasion when he was supposed to report or given anyone any reason whatsoever to think that he might try to abscond. I therefore just did not understand why he needed to be detained.

This was 85 days ago [Andrea's account was written on 7 July 2014] and from that day on, I have grown sadder and sadder the more I have learnt and witnessed of the way in which innocent human beings are incarcerated against their will (and how they are treated) for committing no crime. I have been shocked, appalled and deeply saddened to discover what can happen to human beings in my own country.

PENNINE HOUSE DETENTION CENTRE (Manchester) On the evening X was detained, I visited him at this 'temporary' detention centre, and this is when my experience of detention centres (and their staff) began.

As far as visiting goes, I can only say that from my point of view, gaining an 'appointment' to visit a detainee is made extremely difficult. I am a forthright and determined woman with good English, and I really struggled to obtain appointments to visit. I can only imagine that for many visitors (perhaps new to the country, or with poor levels of English) gaining the opportunity to visit a loved one is often near impossible.

The building itself is hidden away at the back of Manchester airport. There are no signs to indicate where it is. Information on gov.uk website states: 'you're advised to telephone reception for directions from Terminal 2 as the centre is not signposted'. This is difficult to do when the telephone is often left to ring out for hours on end! This information seems very odd on a government website, but it indicated the sense I have gained that people involved in being detained or those wishing to visit are treated with complete and utter disregard.

Appointments are made on the day on a first- come- first -served basis via the telephone, which often rings out for very long periods of time. When I was eventually fortunate enough to get through, the staff member was often seemingly quite delighted to say 'visits are full today' in a very abrupt way. I soon started to telephone at 6am to make an appointment for that day, and even then was often unsuccessful in gaining one. There is one visit permitted every half hour between 2pm and 9pm. So, I am no mathematician but under my estimation, this means there are a grand total of fourteen visits available for each day.

If you do manage to get an appointment, and find the building, you are allowed 30 minutes in a tiny room (I'd guess around 10ft x 6ft – and the room is floor to ceiling with A4 posters all showing a big yellow smiley face with the capsule 'be happy!' and details of how to complain about anything you are unhappy with!!! The irony!!!). Your precious 30 minutes are cut to approximately 15 after you have been subjected to being searched, and because of the time it takes staff to examine the documents you must provide.

In my experiences, the staff took great delight in discovering any documents that could not be used to prove visitor identity, such as a proof of address letter being two days over the 'within one month' requirement. A refugee friend brought his refugee ID card for proof of identification. The member of staff barked '*ya can't use that, you'll 'ave to go 'ome, you've not got t'paper part*'. This

friend was confused and stepped away ready to leave until I asked about the 'paper part'. I realised that the member of staff had not even looked at which form of ID my friend had presented, and had presumed it was a driving licence. Luckily, my friend was permitted to enter, but I know that had I not been there, my friend would have gone home, and I know how upset he would have felt on missing his only opportunity to visit his friend before he was moved to Colnbrook.

X was transferred to Colnbrook Detention Centre, run for UKBA by the private security company SERCO. Here detainees are locked in their rooms at night and for parts of the day. Visitors are searched, finger-printed, and photographed

COLNBROOK IRC (Berkshire, near London Heathrow Airport) I apologise for going into so much detail here, but the point I am trying to make is that the staff seem to enjoy finding ways of refusing visitors entry and I have sat and witnessed this happening to many visitors on many occasions. I have seen family members crying at Colnbrook when they are turned away when the proof of address is out of date by days or other minor reasons. It may be that this is fair enough, but it's the way the staff deals with these situations that really turns my stomach. I simply cannot emphasise how poor the attitude is of the majority of the staff members at these centres.

One man was turned away after he had travelled 300 miles from Newcastle to Colnbrook. I saw him try to explain that he had telephoned the centre the previous day to check that the form of ID he had would be accepted, and he had been told that it would, but the member of staff would simply not listen to his explanation. This man's brother (the detainee) was being deported the following day and the visitor was turned away. He was evidently extremely upset. I have witnessed more incidents like this than I care to remember.

I can honestly say that in all my life, I have never encountered so many rude, unkind and unreasonable people as I have since meeting the members of staff I have come across in the detention centres I have visited. I have begun to believe that it cannot be simply coincidental that two different detention centres have been unfortunate enough to have employed so many of the rudest individuals I have ever met, all at the same time. The only way I can think that so many staff can adopt such an unkind manner, is that they have all grown so accustomed to treating detainees and visitors with such utter disrespect and lack of regard, that it has become second nature to them now.

One young lady visitor was told (as we all are) that she could take 'nothing' into the centre with her and that her pockets should be emptied. She did this but missed a receipt she had in one pocket. In front of a room full of visitors, this member of staff shouted (and he really did shout) '*are you dumb? I said nothing!!!! N.O.T.H.I.N.G, nothing!!!!*' On another occasion I parked my car in the usual car park and was greeted by an angry man who marched towards me and said '*can't you read?*' whilst pointing to a sign (only A4 size) which said 'staff only'. One man had great difficulty understanding the pronunciation of my surname (Carr) and asked me repeatedly to spell it. In the end he got angry, shoved paper towards me and I had to guess that he wanted me to write it down. There are literally hundreds of examples I could give and have chosen only a few. I will add that I was so upset by the way in which one lady treated me that I did complain on a SERCO complaints form and I put it in the complaints box. After one month I rang the centre to follow this up as I had (surprisingly) not received any response. After six phone calls and the glorious pleasure of speaking to various members of staff at the detention centre, I did speak to a lady called Sonia who 'deals with complaints'. She said she would look into this and ring me back the following day (19th June 2014). Astoundingly, I did not receive another call from Sonia.

Obviously, this is all from a visitor's perspective. However, I do have knowledge of the experience my friend has suffered as a detainee. X's mental health has understandably declined during his detention, and this sadly continues to worsen. He sees a counsellor and was informed that he would be referred to see a psychologist after his mental state worsened when he recently learnt that his younger brother has been detained and tortured in Sudan because the Sudanese authorities wanted to question him over X's whereabouts. X is still yet to see a psychologist.

X is diabetic and has told me that non-medically trained staff have performed procedures that only medically trained staff should carry out (as a doctor himself, he knows about such matters in detail). X also had flu-like symptoms for a worrying length of time (around 7 weeks) and looked very unwell when I visited him during this time. The conditions in the centre sound to be quite awful. I

can only give my opinion of the visiting and reception areas and the staff, but overall, I would say that from what I have seen, the entire set-up is inhuman.

The main point I hope to have put across is that after witnessing and experiencing the horrific ways in which *visitors* are treated, my concern is how do the staff treat the *detainees*? I have a fairly strong 'voice' (sadly, because I am white, English and 'educated'), I am more than capable of standing up for myself, and I am very confident..... even so I have been treated in a manner that has, at times, made me feel like giving up on my visit or on my indeed my human rights. I encounter people with low levels of English, who are there to say farewell to loved ones being deported to war- torn countries and oppressive regimes , and who are treated in a worse manner than I am . I just cannot stand to think how they must feel. I can then only presume that the detainees themselves are treated horrifically. If I am made to feel worthless after one visit, how on earth must the detainees feel every day? It just adds insult to injury when we consider the fact that they should not be detained at all.

I am 33 years old and have lived in England my entire life. I knew absolutely nothing about the asylum seeking process or about detention centres. I would also add that most people I know also know nothing about such things.

I really hope awareness of such things can be raised as I feel certain that if more British nationals knew about the horrific treatment of human beings in a country that is supposed to be civilised more would surely be done to stop this from happening.

I would like to add that the only way I can describe the ways in which the Home Office have dealt with X's claim for asylum (from what I have read and witnessed) is to say that they are extremely successful in the way that they psychologically abuse the individual to the point where they wish to give up. In X's case, he has, on numerous occasions, confided in me that the physical torture he suffered in his own country was easier to deal with than the mental abuse he has suffered at the hands of Home Office officials and whilst being detained.

I am utterly appalled and disgusted that this is happening in my country.

In the 85 days that X has been detained, I have witnessed an incredible decline in this man's mental and physical health and have seen a truly great man destroyed.

I have begun to lose faith in humanity.

If you would like any more details from me please ask

Andrea Carr 07/07/2014 andreabaines@hotmail.co.uk

5. JENNIFER VERSON : – TREATMENT OF A MEMBER OF MIGRANT ARTISTS' MUTUAL AID IN YARL'S WOOD IRC

- Inaccessibility of legal advice and bail rights
- Insensitive and intimidating conduct of male detention staff towards women
- Lack of safeguards against sexual abuse
- Inadequate and dismissive medical care
- Inhumane and degrading treatment

My name is Jennifer Verson. I am one of the founders of a group called Migrant Artists Mutual Aid (MaMa). In brief, we meet weekly as a group of British and migrant women, most of whom are seeking asylum in the UK .Many are mothers, some are survivors of sexual violence, and many of our members' claims for asylum are based on gender issues such as domestic violence and trafficking.

In September of last year one of our members was suddenly detained. Quickly after arriving in Yarl's Wood Naome was issued with removal directions for a charter flight to Pakistan. While in Yarl's Wood she became one of the members of a group of women who

went on hunger strike. I was her main contact and spoke to her daily on the phone during the process. MaMa works to save our members and we wanted to stop the charter flight altogether. Some of the women to be deported on the flight were victims and witnesses to incidents of sexual intimidation and violence at Yarl's Wood which have since become public. We listened to regular reports of medical issues being dismissed by guards and the women being told that they were 'just putting it on'

Another of our members was detained about two weeks ago and issued with removal directions without having had access to a solicitor. It is common practice to refuse, detain and issue removal directions almost simultaneously. Often the refusal and detentions are issued on a Friday at a time when people do not have access to solicitors. In the case of Naome who is 60 years old the main concern is that [ECHR] Article 8 decisions are being made on the basis of 'proportionality' and it is clear when reading these decisions that the level of racial bias of the judiciary is appalling and that most people do not have access to the resources to challenge them.

The case with Naome is stunning .We are not exactly sure about the facts but, for an 8 pm flight she was taken from Yarl's Wood at about 1 pm, her phone was turned off and we were not able to contact her again until 7 pm at which point she believed she was being taken to the plane. At 7:15 she refused to go and her daughter reported to me that the guard said, 'we weren't going to take you anyway'. We had been actively campaigning with Ministers and MPs because Naome had not had a chance to see a solicitor.

We do not know what happened. We do know that by that evening her daughter was contacted by somebody who said that they were the solicitor assigned to Naome's case and that she was going to be bailed the next morning, the daughter just needed to send him £1800 ! By Monday when she realized that her mother had not been to court and was not going to be bailed, she called Colnbrook , where Naome had been transferred, to find out what had happened. She was informed that there was an ongoing investigation by the Metropolitan Police of cases of legal fraud. Because of waiting lists for legal aid and the speed of issuing removal directions there is a culture of extreme panic which makes people vulnerable to these types of fraud.

The main issue I feel is that with the detention centres being run by private companies there is an unacceptably low accountability ceiling: they are not under the jurisdiction of the HRA and are not bound by freedom of information legislation.

We are concerned at the way the guards are trained and believe that their actions would be considered cruel and degrading treatment or torture if they were employed by the state. I am concerned that this is actually one of the main motivations for privatization above the financial incentive.

This is evident in the way that women are treated in Yarl's Wood. It is not clear whether or not male guards entering into women's rooms is used as a form of intimidation or if it has a sexually exploitive motivation. What is clear is that women report continuously that guards will knock and then walk right in without waiting. This is because the knock is captured by CCTV but the timing of the entrance is not. There is substantial evidence that SERCO does not take these complaints seriously and does not wish to take the time to review CCTV footage.

Professionals who work in criminology, psychology and related fields understand how this type of intimidation affects women who have been detained, how removing the ability of having privacy deteriorates a person's mental health in a way that is possibly systematic to make them more compliant or complacent , yet these complaints are dismissed.

Our concern is that it is very very difficult for survivors of sexual violence to disclose the details of what has happened to them even to professionals and friends. The process and environment of the detention system of women makes it almost impossible for them to build credible cases that would result in the prosecution of traffickers and other perpetrators.

I think that the main issue must be that the oversight and accountability of a privatised system is resulting in substantial violations of human rights that the UK government won't be able to be held accountable for and that this is part of a larger strategy outlined by the Home Secretary Theresa May both to lower net migration at the expense of the most vulnerable and create a 'hostile environment'.

I hope this helps. I am sure both of our members would be happy to make statements, and there are plenty of things that can be elaborated on, but these I think are the main issues

Jennifer Verson 14/07/2014 jenniferverson@gmail.com