

@ home in a strange place (sacred conversations on migrating)



This collection of photos is the work of the Revd Pat Nimmo. You will read her incisive and thoughtful statement on the following page.

Pat has kindly offered these photos of Asylum Seekers and Refugees to help us in our sacred conversations around themes of migrating, home and belonging.

We commend them for your use in your conversations and we have provided questions to enable your conversation.

May your sacred conversations lead to deeper reflection, conversion of minds and attitudes *and* concrete acts towards a new vision of home and belonging in our common humanity!

April 2016
The United Reformed Church

We would very much appreciate if you can kindly provide us with any feedback that would help us to improve this and any of other the resources we have put together. Please use the feedback form which can be found among the online resources [titled your feedback matters].

Statement from the Artist

The project is a centre for Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Birmingham. The centre supports about 15-20 people in addition to their children.

Most of the participants have suffered serious trauma escaping violent situations in their home countries.

Issues of identity are sensitive as their cases are being processed by the UK Home Office. This can take two weeks or years depending on seemingly arbitrary criteria.

Their immigration status places them on a spectrum of visibility to invisibility. Their situation changes slowly and then dramatically.

Most are suffering from profound dislocation, loss and posttraumatic stress as well as a loss of professional status despite their outward appearance.

Sensitivity of capturing images and the emotional environment has made the necessity for a *level of obliqueness*.

The fragmentation and trauma of having their lives ripped apart and arriving in a strange country seemingly intact but emotionally broken needed to be conveyed visually. They reconstruct their identities against this backdrop of dislocation and loss.

All of the participants could not be photographed initially. For most a degree of anonymity was required, although they wanted their story told.

Some are still in danger for a variety of reasons.

Over half will be refused Asylum status.

Despite their experiences they are vivid people, who are part of the largest movement of displaced people since the II World War.

Despite media propaganda their stories are about a desire for safety and peace for themselves and their loved ones.

They are a microcosm of a much greater global human tragedy.

Pat Nimmo
Minister – United Reformed Church
April 2016



"I am subject to a paternity test so my future is uncertain"

Status: Pending

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Why is a baby classified as an asylum seeker when its parents have leave to remain?



"I am four months old.
I was born in the UK
but my future is uncertain
because my mother
is an asylum seeker.
She has to pay for a
paternity test
for me
but she doesn't have the money.
She is very worried about what is going to happen."

Status:Uncertain



"When I was born the midwives were sworn to secrecy.."

Status: Leave to remain until attains 18 years of age

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Reflect on why the Home Office will not accept paternity tests from Boots but require the asylum seeker to pay out over £400 for a private test at their lab.



"I escaped from Albania in a lorry. when I was released I had no idea where I was."

Status: Pending

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How would you feel coming to this country in a lorry, not knowing where you were going and being worried about dying from lack of oxygen?



“I flew to London from Turkmanistan to be with my father. I was threatened with deportation at Heathrow. I am 15 years old.”

Status: Indefinite leave to remain

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Why are parents not allowed to be with minors as they come through passport control at Heathrow?



"I came from Nigeria to work as a nurse. At some point I was designated illegal. I went into hiding."

Status: Leave to remain conditional

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Why is a spouse not allowed to be with their partner when they are being questioned by the Border Agency as they come through Passport control?



“ I was shot by Russian secret police twice. I suffer with paranoia.”

Status: Indefinite leave to remain

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When we know there is war in countries affecting civilians why does it take so long to give asylum?



"We ran out of money so I had to leave my husband in the Calais jungle."

Status: Pending

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How would you feel if you had to leave your husband wife or child in the Calais Jungle because you ran out of money?



"I escaped from Chechnya to London via Moscow when my daughters were in danger of being abducted."

Status: Pending

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Why is the UK accepting so few Asylum seekers compared to other countries at a time of humanitarian crisis?

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