



# DEATH TRAP

The human cost of the war on asylum

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INSTITUTE OF  
**RACE**  
RELATIONS

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**No section of our society is more vulnerable than asylum seekers and undocumented migrants. Forced by circumstances beyond their control to seek a life outside their home countries, prevented by our laws from entering legally and from working, denied a fair hearing by the asylum system, excluded from health and safety protection at work, kept from social care and welfare, vilified by the media and therefore dehumanised in the popular imagination, their hopes of another life are finally extinguished.**

**The IRR publishes today a roll call of death of the 180 asylum seekers and undocumented migrants\* who have died either in the UK or attempting to reach the UK in the past fifteen years.**

■ 90 died taking dangerous and highly risky methods to enter the country. With legal barriers in place to prevent them securing visas or work permits to enter legally and sanctions applying to above-board carriers, the desperate stow away on planes and lorries or attempt to cross the channel in makeshift boats or cling to trains. The number recorded here is probably only a fraction of those who have died in this way. Our figures rely on news reports and by virtue of the subject matter these deaths are not news.

● 42 died as an indirect consequence of the iniquities of the immigration/asylum system – either by taking their own lives when claims were not allowed, by meeting accidental deaths as they sought to evade deportation, during the deportation itself or by being prevented from travelling to the UK for specialist care.

– 34 died at their own hand, preferring this to being returned to the country they fled, when asylum claims are turned down. And compounding the process is the fact that some of those in

detention and known to be traumatised and particularly vulnerable appear not to have been provided with the medical (especially psychological) support they needed.

- 4 died accidentally as, in terror at what they presumed to be the arrival of deportation officials, they took evasive action.
- 1 person died during the deportation process itself, when she was asphyxiated as officers used 13 feet of tape to subdue and quieten her.
- 2 people died after being prevented from travelling to the UK for medical treatment.

◆ 5 died in prison, police or psychiatric custody, where racist stereotypes of the dangerous black man appeared to induce the use of reckless control and restraint methods or there appeared to be medical neglect of their physical and psychological welfare.

▲ 28 died in the course of carrying out work, which, by virtue of its being part of the ‘black economy’ carried particular dangers and no protective rights. Once again, the numbers reported here are probably a gross underestimation as work-related deaths of people who are ‘illegal’ will often go unreported.

▶ 15 died on the streets of our cities at the hands of racists or as a consequence of altercations which had a racial dimension. Very often the victims had been moved via the government’s dispersal system to areas of the country where they were particularly isolated and vulnerable to attack.

\* These deaths do not include those ‘settled’ black people, those with leave to remain or those asylum seekers who were arrested on suspicion of committing criminal offences who have met their death in the custody of the police, prison and psychiatric hospitals and in racial violence attacks.

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■ **Igor Litvinenko, (21), 6/89**

A Russian man was found dead in the undercarriage of a plane arriving from Moscow at Gatwick airport. A postmortem found that he died from a lack of oxygen at high altitude.

● ◆ **Siho Iyugiven, (27), 5/10/89**

A Kurdish refugee died from burns at Harmondsworth detention centre. He had been detained pending his removal after political asylum was refused. He and his cell mate went on hungerstrike, barricaded themselves in and set bedding alight as a protest. Smoke detectors were not working, few fire extinguishers worked and there were no sprinklers. An inquest recorded a misadventure verdict.

● **Kimpua Nsimba, (24), 15/6/90**

A Zairean asylum seeker was found hanged in Harmondsworth detention centre in west London; where no one had spoken to him in over four days. An inquest recorded a suicide verdict.



◆ **Omasase Lumumba, (32), 8/10/91**

The nephew of Patrice Lumumba, he was a Zairean asylum seeker who had undergone

torture. Arrested in strange circumstances, detained under the Immigration Act and held for five days in a police station, he was then transferred to Pentonville prison while awaiting a decision on his asylum claim. He died of a heart attack after being restrained by six prison officers in Pentonville prison. An inquest found that he was 'unlawfully killed using improper methods and excessive force in the process of control and restraint'.

▶ **Panchadcharam Sahitharan, (28), 3/1/92**

A Tamil refugee died in a gang attack in Newham, east London. Andrew Noble and

Gary Hoskin were charged with murder and affray. The charges were later dropped against Noble and Hoskin was acquitted. The gang were thought to be responsible for attacks with baseball bats on seven Asians on one day.

▶ **Ruhullah Aramesh, (24), 7/92**

An Afghan refugee was attacked by a gang in Thornton Heath, south London. Barry Hannon, Paul Hannon and Joseph Curtain were given life sentences for murder. One other was convicted of manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility and three others were acquitted. Curtain was freed on appeal after serving three years.

◆ **James Segawa, (28), 28/8/92**

An HIV positive Ugandan asylum seeker died of meningitis and tuberculosis at Mayday hospital, Croydon, after belated transfer from Belmarsh prison where officials had refused to believe he was ill.

● **Turan Pekoz, (43), 16/3/93**

A Turkish asylum seeker died after setting himself on fire at Quest House Immigration Office, Croydon. An inquest recorded a misadventure verdict.

▶ **Saied Ahmed, (68), 14/4/93**

A Somali refugee died from burns after an arson attack on his home in Oxford. Eleven other family members escaped.



▶ **Ali Ibrahim, (21), 7/11/93**

A Sudanese refugee was stabbed to death while he and two friends walked along Little Preston Street in Brighton. A man drinking a can of lager approached the group, then shouted racial abuse and stabbed Ali in the heart. Ian Leanay was sentenced to life for murder. A second man was acquitted after the jury failed to reach a verdict.



◆ Joy Gardner, (40),  
1/8/93

A Jamaican mother of one died after being arrested by 'specialist' officers from the Extradition Unit of the Met who used 13 feet of tape to gag her. The inquest was adjourned till the trial of the officers involved. They have been acquitted but no inquest has yet been held.

● Lejla Ibrahimovic, 1994

A Bosnian asylum seeker took an overdose of sleeping pills after a year-long struggle for her husband to be granted a visa to join her. The Home Office granted her husband a compassionate visa after her death to look after the couples' two children.

■ Four Romanian stowaways, 1/94

Four stowaways suffocated to death in a container in Felixstowe.

● Kwanele Siziba, (27), 27/4/94

A Zimbabwean woman fell 150 feet to her death, attempting to flee visiting officials she believed were immigration officers. In fact, it was bailiffs who called at the flat and were heard threatening to kick the door down. The inquest recorded a misadventure verdict.

● Joseph Nnalue, (31), 23/10/94

A Nigerian died after falling from a balcony in a flat in Stockwell – police and immigration officials were calling at his flat at the time, acting on a tip-off. An inquest ruled that the death was accidental.

● Zinaida Mitzofanova, (63) and Valentina Featherstone, (39), 2/95

A Latvian mother and daughter were found hanged in County Durham before they were due to appeal against a deportation order.

◆ Lungile Simelane, (27), 6/5/95

A 'foreign national' was found hanged in Holloway prison after being given a ten-year sentence for bringing narcotics into the UK. Before her death she informed prison officers that she wanted to take her own life.

● Muttavel Vasanthan, (25), 25/8/95

A Sri Lankan immigration detainee was found hanged in a cell in Norwich prison.

● Bayeh Arefayne, (19), 22/10/95

A young Ethiopian man was due to be deported, set fire to himself in a west London petrol station. He suffered 70 per cent burns to his body and died six days later.

● Djemal Flissa, (29), 28/10/95

An Algerian asylum seeker was deported by air ambulance, after spending 44 days on hunger strike. He was flown, allegedly tied to a stretcher, back to Algeria where he reportedly died.

■ Unidentified person, 8/11/95

Died falling from a ferry in Harwich after asylum was refused.

● Noorjahan Begum, (35), 15/3/96

A Bangladeshi woman died after falling 30 feet from the balcony of the flat where she was living; two immigration officials were calling at the flat at the time. The inquest recorded an accidental death verdict.

● Mohammed Yaqoob, (49), 8/96

A Pakistani man wishing to travel to the UK for medical treatment, was denied a visa for seven months, despite his family raising the necessary funds for a private operation. He died less than 48 hours after being granted a visa on compassionate grounds.



■ **Vijay Saini, (19), 10/96**

An Indian died after freezing to death stowing away with his brother in a plane. Vijay fell from the wheel housing of the British Airways plane flying from Delhi into London Heathrow. His brother Pardeep, 23, miraculously survived the same journey and was found by baggage-handlers at Heathrow airport suffering, from hypothermia. His application for political asylum was turned down on the basis of an interview held less than 24 hours after he arrived at Heathrow. He was later given compassionate leave to remain in the UK.

■ **Unidentified African boy, (12), 23/3/97**

Crushed to death after stowing away in the wheel arch of a Boeing 747 travelling from Kenya to London. His body was found at Gatwick airport.

● **Mehretab Kidane, (28), 1998**

An Eritrean asylum seeker was so afraid of losing his asylum appeal that he hanged himself at his flat in Brixton on the final day of his appeal hearing in London.

■ **Unidentified man, 8/2/98**

Died after freezing to death in the undercarriage of a British Airways plane flying from Baku (Azerbaijan) to Gatwick airport.

● ♦ **Sofonias Alemsged, (22), 7/98**

An Eritrean asylum seeker with psychological problems was found hanged in a Brixton prison cell; he had made previous attempt to take his own life. He died a few weeks before his appeal on his asylum claim was due to be held.

■ **Unidentified person, 8/98**

An unidentified stowaway whose body was seen falling from a plane flying into Heathrow.



▶ **Farhan M. Mire, (32), 12/98**

A Somali asylum seeker was kicked to death in the street by a white man after an argument with a woman who then shouted for help in Harrow, north London. A man was charged with murder in March 1999, but later released after the CPS decided that there was not enough evidence to prosecute. The CPS also queried the racial motivation in the case.

● **Lin Yan-Guang, 12/98**

A Chinese asylum seeker committed suicide in Warley hospital, Brentwood, Essex.

■ **Unidentified man, 1/99**

An Iraqi Kurdish man died attempting to smuggle himself to Dover clinging to the underside of a lorry. As it passed over ramps, he lost his grip and was crushed under its wheels.

▶ **Zardasht Draey, (19), 12/99**

A Kurdish man, who fled Iraq in the 1991 Gulf war, attacked in the early hours of the morning and found with serious injuries at a bus-stop in Fulham, west London. He died in hospital two days later as a result of serious head injuries. In June 2000, Christopher Peterkin was convicted of his murder.

● ♦ **Robertas Grabys, (49), 24/1/00**

A Lithuanian asylum seeker was found hanged in Harmondsworth detention centre on the day he was due to be deported. A report into his death criticised the private company that was in charge of Harmondsworth at the time. In April 2003, an internal Home Office inquiry found that the company running the centre, did not have a formal policy to prevent suicides and that there was insufficient care. (His body was not found for over one hour as guards did not check the room. But he was known to suffer from a depressive illness).

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● **Glynnis Cowley, (40), 4/00**

A South African mother of three committed suicide in Liverpool after her asylum claim was refused. She had been arrested at Heathrow in June 1999 after being found in possession of cannabis and sentenced to eight months. She alleged that she had been kidnapped and forced to act as a drugs courier. While in Holloway prison her asylum claim was refused and after her release she launched an appeal but took her life before it was heard.

■ **Unidentified woman, 9/4/00**

An unidentified woman died after falling from a lorry in St Leonard's, Essex.

■ **58 people including 54 Chinese men – Yang Jiao Hua, Li Yong, Lin Zhao Hang, Lin Chen Xing, Sun Dao Xian, Cheng Kam Kwon, Lin Li Guang, Kuo Chien Ming, Xue You Jie, Cai Fang Qing, Ni Yan Hua, Lin Yi Hua, Gao Jun Wei, Zheng Bo Ying, Lin Guo Liang, Cao Xiang Ping, Chen Xing Zhong, He Chang Ming, Xue Di Di, Cao Xian Xin, Jiang Jan Ming, Ling Ming Gui, Jiang Bin, Lin De Bin, Chen Yi Hua, Li Zheng Guang, Ling Ming Kun, He Yu Yuan, Lin Tong Hui, Lin Tong Yong, Ke Yong Min, Ye Qi Ban, Dong Ti Di, Li Xiao Xiang, Lin Bin, Weng Rui Ping, Lin Fa Ming, Lin Bing, Lin Ming Hui, Lin Bin Jian, He Hua Shun, Yang Xin Xiaun, Lin Feng Di, Yao Zhong Ai, He Ming Qiang, Lin Xian Long, Chen Jin Tian, Lin Xin Chai, Shi Wen Jie, Ding Xiang You, You Long Zhong, Lin Xue Luan, Li Zhen Quan, Guo Ting Xing and 4 Chinese women – Lin Rul Zhen, Gao Yue Ru, Lin Guang, Ke Mei Zhu, 18/6/00**

58 Chinese stowaways (from the Fujian province) were found dead in the back of a refrigerated lorry in Dover. Two survivors of the journey who were found unconscious were taken to hospital suffering from shock and dehydration. The stowaways died after the air vents on the lorry were closed as it was loaded onto a Dover bound ferry at

Zeebrugge. In March 2001, the trial began of the Dutch lorry driver, 32-year-old Perry Wacker, who was accused of 58 counts of manslaughter and people smuggling; 29-year-old Ying Guo was also accused of conspiracy to smuggle people. Perry Wacker was found guilty and jailed for 14 years. Ying Guo was also found guilty and sentenced to six years. In May 2001, seven men in Holland were convicted of charges in relation to the deaths of the 58; two other men were acquitted. On 31 July 2002, Perry Wacker lost his appeal against the manslaughter convictions



▶ **Abdi Dorre, (31), 8/00**

A Somali refugee died in hospital after being found with serious head injuries at the bottom of stairs at the Lounge night-club, Northampton. Hospital staff alerted the local police, but they did not bother to investigate thoroughly, assuming that Abdi's death was an accident. It was only after the family pressured the police that arrests were made but, even then, the suspects were later released without charge. At the inquest in May 2001, without a jury, the coroner recorded an open verdict. The family launched a campaign to seek a proper investigation of the death and, in August 2002, two men were charged with his manslaughter. The CPS originally claimed there was insufficient evidence to bring charges against anyone.

■ **Unidentified man, 17/11/00**

Found by police in Dover, he was thought to have been run over by the lorry he was hiding in.

● **Saeed Alaei, (26), 21/12/00**

An Iranian asylum seeker, dispersed to Nelson, Lancashire, was found hanged after his asylum claim was rejected.

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▶ **Gian Singh Nagra, (37), 7/1/01**

An asylum seeker was found with serious head injuries after a suspected racial attack at Elm Park tube station, later died in Old Church hospital, east London. The trial of his assailant in August 2001 heard that, on 7 January, a 14-year-old girl phoned 20-year-old Matthew Dorrian alleging that ‘an evil-looking Asian’ had been behaving strangely and leering at her and her friends at Elm Park tube station. Despite there being no evidence of any indecency, Dorrian went down to the station, armed with a golf club and hit Gian with the golf club across the face. Gian was found with massive head injuries and later died from blood loss. The Old Bailey jury were unable to reach a verdict on the charge of murder, but Dorrian admitted manslaughter.



● **Shokrolah ‘Ramin’ Khaleghi, (27), 18/1/01**

An Iranian asylum seeker, dispersed to Leicester, was found dead in the International Hotel, a

hostel for asylum seekers, after his asylum claim was rejected. He had been a political prisoner in Iran, jailed for six years and tortured for refusing to serve in the Iranian army and affronting fundamentalist beliefs by shaving his facial hair. He took a drugs overdose one week after learning that his asylum claim had been rejected.

● **Unidentified Kosovan man, 20/1/01**

Kosovan was discovered on a ferry travelling from Ostend to Dover, he was put back on a ferry to deport him to Calais, but jumped from the ship to his death.

■ **Unidentified Iraqi man, 2/01**

Died after jumping 20 feet from a bridge on to a moving train heading for the UK through the Channel tunnel. Another man survived the same jump but broke both legs.

■ **Tommy Klen Mayola, (19), 20/2/01**

An asylum seeker from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), had waited over two years for a decision. Was found dead in the undercarriage of a US Airways plane in San Francisco. Police at Gatwick had arrested him earlier the same day as he attempted to gain access to another plane. He had been photographed, fingerprinted and then released on bail.

▲ **Ionut Simionica, (22), 27/2/01**

A Romanian migrant worker died when when part of St Mary’s church, Marylebone, on which he was working, crushed him. The trial of two firms and an engineer under health and safety legislation is due to start on 6 December 2004, at Southwark Crown Court. However, if found guilty they can only be fined, not imprisoned.



▶ **Fetah Marku, (24), 24/3/01**

A Kosovan asylum seeker was beaten and stabbed to death by a gang of men in Edgware, London. Fetah

had been visiting from Hull and was celebrating his birthday with friends at the Oscar Wilde pub. A post mortem gave the cause of death as multiple injuries that included 29 stab wounds, a punctured lung, a fractured skull and internal bleeding. In June 2002, an Old Bailey jury found 33-year-old Richard Ellis guilty of Fetah’s murder. Ellis, who worked as a music promoter at the pub, claimed not to have known anyone else who took part in the attack on Fetah but the jury found that Ellis had ‘provided encouragement’ to the mob. After the conviction, the judge commented that it was unlikely that Ellis (a black man) was ‘solely responsible’.

■ **Mohammed Ayaz, (21), 14/6/01**

A Pakistani man was found in a Richmond car park after dropping from the wheel arch

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of a British Airways plane flying from Bahrain to Heathrow. Two passengers on the flight saw Mohammed running across the runway and under the plane just before it took off and told crew but the flight take-off could not be aborted. Mohammed was originally from Pakistan but was working in Bahrain as a labourer. An inquest recorded a misadventure verdict.



▶ **Firsat Dag, (22), 5/8/01**

A Kurdish asylum seeker, dispersed to the notorious Sighthill estate in Glasgow, was stabbed to death in a racist attack.

Scott Burrell, 26, was charged with Firsat's murder and accused of attempting to murder a German tourist on the same day. In December 2001, Burrell was sentenced to serve a minimum of 14 years for a 'shameful, cowardly and unprovoked attack'. In August 2003, the compensation awarded to Firsat's family was halved because Firsat allegedly used a false name on his asylum application.

■ **Unidentified Kosovan man, 20/8/01**

Found dead two miles from Dover after being deported on a ferry by the Immigration Service.



● **Nasser Ahmed, (35), 21/8/01**

An Eritrean asylum seeker was found hanged at his flat in Nelson, Lancashire, shortly after his asylum

claim was rejected. A worker who helped Mr Ahmed at a drop-in centre for asylum seekers said, 'We do know that he had received a letter from the Home Office... there are hints that that was what pushed him over the edge.'

▲ **Zhang Guo Hua, 10/01**

A Chinese migrant worker died after working

all weekend at a factory in Hartlepool. He worked at stamping the 'Samsung' logo on microwaves for 72 hours a week at a factory with up to 80 other Chinese men. The men often worked 100-hour weeks and for over 24 hours at a time. A post mortem found that he died from a subarachnoid haemorrhage.



■ **Omid Jamil Ali, (21), 18/10/01**

An Iraqi who, hoping to enter the UK through the Channel Tunnel, leapt onto a moving train from a

bridge in France. In the fall he injured himself severely. But the train reportedly did not stop till it arrived in England. Only then was Omid retrieved and taken to hospital, where he was pronounced dead. His body remained in a morgue till September 2004, when campaigners raised the £3,100 needed to send Omid's body back to Iraq to be buried by his family.

● **Joseph Crentsil, (39), 25/11/01**

A Ghanaian asylum seeker died after falling from a third floor window of a flat in Streatham when two immigration and two police officers were questioning five other men at the flat. An inquest recorded an accidental death verdict.



● **Chijioko Ekengwu (aka John Paul), (9), 20/12/01**

A Nigerian boy suffering from Hodgkin's lymphoma, died the day before he was due to fly to the UK for

treatment. Celine Ekengwu, the young boy's aunt, had saved £13,000 to pay for it. She won an appeal on 23 October 2001 against a decision refusing John Paul a visa to travel to the UK for treatment. The Foreign Office began an investigation into why it had taken the High Commission in Lagos, Nigeria, two months after the decision to issue a visa.

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### ■ Unidentified man, 1/02

Died after being electrocuted on top of a train in the Channel Tunnel heading for the UK.

### ● Souleyman Diallo, (28), 1/1/02

A Guinean asylum seeker committed suicide by jumping 100 feet off Redheugh Bridge, Tyneside, a few weeks after being told he was to be deported back to Guinea.

Souleyman, who spoke little English, was dispersed to Gateshead soon after he arrived in July 2000 and was not provided with any translation services. He felt that the interpreter at his appeal hearing had misinterpreted him. His solicitor commented that his 'inability to access competent legal advice, difficulties in communicating his case and tight deadlines for submission of statements have contributed to his case not being properly heard'. She made a complaint to the Immigration Commissioners about his death. The coroner recorded an open verdict.

### ■ Unidentified man, 18/2/02

Died after falling from a train in the Channel Tunnel heading for the UK. Maintenance workers discovered his body 14 miles into the tunnel.

### ● Nariman Tahamasbi, (27), 25/2/02

An Iranian asylum seeker was found hanged in Lewes prison. He had been arrested trying to leave the country and was sentenced to six months for fraud and deception.



### ● Mohsen Amri, (27), 12/3/02

An Iranian asylum seeker committed suicide at his home in Handsworth, Birmingham, after having a work permit refused and asylum application rejected. He had been in the UK for two years and made repeated requests for work

permits (he did not want to work illegally). His asylum application had been refused on a technicality.

### ■ Unidentified person, 20/2/02

Five stowaways attempted to board a freight train as it entered the Channel Tunnel. One was hit by a hydraulic ram and crushed to death.

### ■ Unidentified man, 14/4/02

Believed to be African, he was found dead in the undercarriage of a freight plane at Heathrow airport. The plane had flown from Uganda via Cairo and Ostend in Belgium to Heathrow.

### ● Shiraz Pir, (25), 7/5/02

A Pakistani asylum seeker died five days after being found hanging in his Bristol home after his asylum claim was rejected. Facing deportation, he could not understand why friends had been given refugee status and he had been denied. He left a note asking that his body be returned to his parents. An inquest recorded a verdict of suicide whilst the balance of his mind was temporarily disturbed. The coroner criticised the Home Office for the delay with his asylum application.

### ● Forsina Makoni, (79), 11/ 5/02

An elderly Zimbabwean woman died after setting herself alight in Gillingham after her claim for political asylum was refused. She had been a vocal opponent of Robert Mugabe's regime and became depressed in the weeks before her death after her claim was refused.

### ■ Unidentified man, (30s), 16/5/02

Believed to be West African, he was found dead in the wheelarch of a British Airways flight from Ghana.

### ■ Unidentified Russian man, 12/6/02

Trying to cross the Channel from France, he

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went missing after his canoe capsized. Another man clung to the canoe for over five hours before being rescued and taken to hospital in Calais suffering from hypothermia.



▶ **Peiman Bahmani, (28), 29/8/02**

An Iranian asylum seeker died after being stabbed in a racist attack in Hendon, Sunderland.

Peiman shared a home with four other Iranians and police alleged there was a confrontation outside the house with a group of white people. Peiman, whose asylum claim had not yet been decided, worked as the manager at Leonardo's Italian restaurant in Sunderland, owned by his girlfriend, Sonia Voza. In February 2003, 18-year-old Steven Roberts was jailed for life for his murder.

▶ **Mustafa Ally Abdillahi, (31), 10/02**

A Somali refugee was found with serious head injuries in a hostel for the homeless in Luton. In May 2003, 36-year-old Neal Bond, who also lived in the hostel, was convicted of his murder. Bond, who denied the charges, was sentenced to life imprisonment. Mustafa was beaten to death with a fire extinguisher and Bond's footprints were found on his sweatshirt. The motivation behind the attack was not revealed in court. Bond claimed not to remember what happened, despite being found in his room, his hands, clothing and duvet all covered with Mustafa's blood.

● **Beverley Fowler, (32), 2/10/02**

A Jamaican woman was found hanged two days before the end of her sentence, in Durham prison. She was a mother of three who was due to be deported back to Jamaica after serving a sentence for drug smuggling. In September 2003, an inquest recorded an open verdict. The inquest was

told she feared for her safety in Kingston because the man who forced her into drug smuggling had murdered her partner.

■ **Immanuel Duah and another young boy, 30/11/02**

Aged about 12-14 years-old, the boys were found dead in the wheel compartment of a Ghana Airways flight from Accra to Heathrow airport. A ground engineer found them huddled together.

● **Sirous Khajeh, (29), 24/12/02**

An Iranian asylum seeker was found hanged at his home in Huddersfield. He was a torture victim who had been told that his asylum claim had been rejected and he faced eviction from his home and deportation. However, this information was incorrect and Sirous had in fact been granted asylum. A Yorkshire coroner recorded a verdict of suicide and was critical of the Home Office's handling of his application.

● **Mikhail Bognarchuk, (42), 31/1/03**

An Ukrainian asylum seeker was found hanged at Haslar removal centre.

▶ **Mohammed Isa Hasan Ali, (22), 9/2/03**

An Afghan asylum seeker died two days after being attacked by a man in Southampton. His 17-stone assailant shoved him in the chest because he seemed to be laughing at him and he fell to the ground 'like a ton of bricks'. Because he had his hands in his pockets he was unable to break his fall. He lay unconscious on the ground for a while and was assisted by passing nurses. Police were called to the scene and after speaking to both men let them leave. Mohammed suffering from a fractured skull and bleeding went home where he told his housemates that he had been attacked and then went to bed with a headache, not realising the extent of his injuries. He was

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later taken to Southampton General hospital where he died. A post mortem found that he died from a fractured skull. Alexander Briant, 21, was convicted of manslaughter.

● ◆ **Liu Jin Wu, (35), 5/5/03**

A Chinese asylum seeker took his own life while on remand at HMP Barlinnie in Scotland. It emerged during a fatal accident inquiry (FAI) that he was a Mandarin speaker who only had access to an interpreter three times during his ten weeks in the prison. He was on remand for two counts of attempted murder and during police interviews had told them that he was hearing voices; a provisional diagnosis of paranoid psychosis was made. He had been told he faced deportation regardless of what happened during the criminal proceedings as his asylum claim had been refused. The Inquiry was also told that he did not receive appropriate food as staff were unable to understand what he wanted. Staff also failed to check on him hourly as was required when he was found to be suicidal. But the FAI concluded that his suicide was due to mental health problems rather than any failure by the prison authorities.

◆ **Olga Blaskevica, (29), 7/5/03**

A Latvian woman was murdered by her partner, Olegs Pavlos, 35, in the family holding area at Harmondsworth just hours before the pair were due to be deported from Britain. They had been working picking fruit and flowers in the UK for about a year and came to the attention of the immigration service after they were arrested when they went to a Lincolnshire police station to complain that they had been robbed. In June 2004, Pavlos denied murder but admitted manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility. He was found to be suffering from paranoid schizophrenia.

■ **Unidentified man, (25), 18/6/03**

A man from the Ivory Coast was found dead in the sea around Beachy Head near Eastbourne. The man had allegedly hidden on a ship – the Patricia Delmas – that was travelling from Belgium to Le Havre when he was arrested as a stowaway. He was being held in the ship's jail when he managed to escape and jump overboard. It was thought that the man had mistakenly thought the ship was bound for the UK.

■ **Two unidentified people, 7/03**

Two people thought to be seeking to enter Britain were found dead in the water by a life-boat crew in the Channel.

▲ **Satish Kumar, (28), Islam Uddin Ahmed, (46) and Soran Karim, (23), 7/7/03**

Three agricultural workers died when the minibus they were in collided with a Great Western train in Worcestershire. The men were from India, Bangladesh and Iraq. Soran Karim was an asylum seeker from Iraq who lost his parents and a brother in the chemical attack on Halabja and was probably working illegally. In May 2004, Adnan Kadir Karim, 25, an Iraqi, who had admitted not being able to read English signs was sentenced to five years in prison after being convicted of manslaughter by criminal negligence; he was also banned from driving for two years.

■ **Hekmat Karmin Salih, (29), 17/8/03**

An Iraqi Kurd was found dead in a lorry entering Britain after being crushed by metal containers. The lorry was stopped by police in Poole, Dorset, and three men were found – the body of Hekmat and two others, who were arrested.

● **Vasiliy Todchuk, (24), 9/03**

A Russian national who had deserted from the Russian army in Chechnya, was found hanged on a building site in Govan, Glasgow. He had been detained in Polmont

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YOI on criminal charges in early 2003 and attempted suicide on the day before his release. Several weeks before his death he had been advised that he would be deported.

● **Israfil Shiri, (30), 3/9/03**

A destitute Iranian asylum seeker died six days after pouring petrol over his body and setting himself alight in the offices of Refugee Action in Manchester. His asylum application had been rejected and he was homeless and penniless. Israfil suffered from a painful bowel complaint but, after his asylum claim was refused, he was unable to get medical treatment and was in constant pain.

● ♦ **Tema Kombe (aka Emmanuel Silva/ Gladwell Moseki Keenao), (32), 4/9/03**

A Ugandan asylum seeker was found hanged in a toilet in the psychiatric ward at Heatherwood hospital, Ascot, after being detained under the Mental Health Act. The inquest returned a verdict of misadventure after hearing that he had made three previous attempts on his life.

● **Mohammed bin Duhri, (20), 20/10/03**

A Palestinian asylum seeker was found hanged at Belmarsh maximum-security prison. He had been held at Dover Immigration Removal Centre but, after he allegedly assaulted a guard, he was moved to Belmarsh. Three prison officers were suspended after filing reports saying, after the death, that he was still alive.

● **Unnamed man, 2004**

An Iraqi asylum seeker set himself alight in London. He had a history of mental health problems and was scared he would be returned to Iraq.

■ **Two unidentified men, 2/04**

Two men were found dead in the hold of a ship, the Cecdelta, which docked at

Alexandra dock in Hull. The ship was carrying nuts and had travelled from Ghana. Another man was found alive.

▲ **23 Chinese workers: 18 men – Yu Hui, (34), Chen Mu Yu, (30), Guo Nian Zhu, (39), Lin Zhi Fang, (19), Xu Yu Hua, (37), Wu Jia Zhen, (36), Wu Hong Kang, (34), Xie Xiao Wen, (41), Lin Guo Hua, (37), Guo Bing Long, (28), Zhou Xun Cao, (38), Lin Guo Guang, (36), Cao Chao Kun, (35), Guo Chang Mou, (18), Yang Tian Long, (33), Lin Li Shui, (33), Wang Min Lin, (37), Lin You Xing, (38). 3 women – Chen Ai Qin, (39), Zhang Xiu Hua, (45) and Wang Xiu Yu, (27), 5/2/04**

Twenty-three migrant workers, mostly from the Fujian province in China, died after they were caught in the dark on the mudflats by a rising tide at Morecambe Bay, Lancashire. They were all thought to be asylum seekers awaiting decisions on their claims. Initial news reports put the number of victims as low as 14. However, after some time it was revealed that the number who had died was much higher. Fourteen survivors were taken into custody. Originally seven were arrested on suspicion of manslaughter, but were later released on police bail. Two of the arrested survivors, Gua Lin, 30, and Lin Mu Lung, 29, both asylum seekers, were taken into the custody of the Immigration Service. Later, in March, a 33-year-old Chinese man was arrested in Liverpool on suspicion of manslaughter and questioned in a Lancashire police station. Many of the victims, it was reported, had been forced to work by a gangmaster who withheld their wages. In April, Detective Constable Neil Thompson was given a formal written warning and removed from the inquiry after he used offensive racist language (the word 'chink') in police interviews. Fifteen of the victims who died have now been identified. Police officers also travelled to China to obtain DNA samples in order to identify those who died. Of those arrested, two had

the charges against them dropped; six others' bail was extended and four were being questioned over 'serious' immigration offences. By May, police had revised their figure for the number who died to 23, with 21 bodies recovered by that time. In June, an inquest heard that the victims had died from drowning and all 23 had been identified although only 21 bodies had been recovered. In July 2004, Lin Liang Ren, 27, was charged with manslaughter, conspiracy to commit facilitation and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice. Zhao Qing Xiao, 19, was charged with conspiracy to commit facilitation and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice. Lin Mu Yong, 29, was charged with conspiracy to commit facilitation.



◆ **Kabeya Dimuka Bijoux, (35), 1/5/04**

An asylum seeker from the Democratic Republic of Congo died in Haslar removal centre in Gosport.

He allegedly died while exercising but other detainees alleged he had sustained injuries after he was beaten at Reliance House Immigration Centre in Liverpool on 2 March 2004.



▶ **Bapishankar Kathirgamathan, (24), 6/5/04**

A Sri Lankan-born restaurant worker died two weeks after being

racially attacked in Ashford, Kent. Bapishankar suffered serious head injuries after he and a friend were racially attacked on a footbridge in Victoria Road on 22 April 2001. Two men, James Rossiter, 22, and Tony Pile, 18, were charged with murder and remanded into custody. At a court hearing in July, the men denied the charges.



● **Zekria Ghulam Mohammed, (27), 18/05/04**

An Afghan asylum seeker was found hanged at his flat in the Dennistoun area of Glasgow. Zekria had been living in Scotland for four years and prior to his death his asylum claim had been refused and benefits stopped. He was also facing eviction from accommodation provided by NASS. Zekria, who trained as a dentist in Afghanistan, 'was ashamed and broken. He felt there was no hope left,' according to his friends.

● **Unidentified Ukrainian man, (31), 19/7/04**

A Ukrainian asylum seeker was found hanged in Harmondsworth detention centre. His death sparked a night of disturbances at the centre and led to all the detainees being transferred to prisons and other detention centres.

● **Tung Wang, (22), 23/7/04**

A Vietnamese asylum seeker was found hanged in Dungavel removal centre in Scotland just days after being transferred from Harmondsworth removal centre after the disturbance.



▶ **Kalan Kawa Karim, (29), 6/9/04**

An Iraqi asylum seeker died in hospital after being attacked by a white man outside a pub in Swansea.

Kalan was disabled – he had lost a leg below the knee after being tortured in Iraq. He came to the UK to seek asylum in 2002 and had been living in Swansea. Kalan was walking home with a friend when three men attacked them; Kalan was punched in the back of the head and taken to Morriston hospital where he later died. Police are treating the attack as racially motivated. Eight days after his murder, 26-year-old Lee Mordecai was charged with Kalan's murder.

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