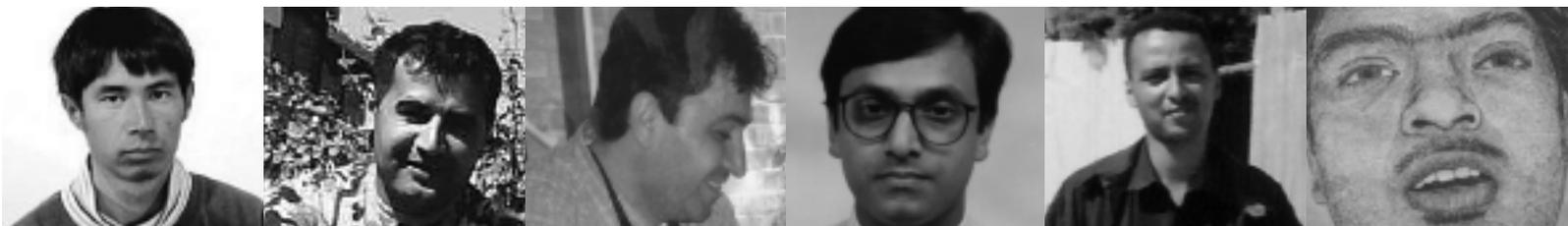




Driven to Desperate Measures: 2006-2010

By Harmit Athwal



INSTITUTE OF
RACE
RELATIONS

Introduction

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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, unhoused and destitute, vilified by the media and therefore dehumanised in the popular imagination, their hopes of another life are finally extinguished. The IRR has catalogued a roll call of death of the 77 asylum seekers and migrants who have died either in the UK or attempting to reach the UK in the past five years as a consequence of direct racism or indirect racism stemming from policies.*

■ 15 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 aboveboard 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.

● 44 died as an indirect consequence of the iniquities of the immigration/asylum system – by taking their own lives when claims were not allowed, by meeting accidental deaths evading deportation or during the deportation itself, by being prevented medical care, by becoming destitute in the UK.

Of these:

– 28 died at their own hand, preferring this to being returned to the country they fled, when asylum claims were 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 psychiatric) support they needed.

– 1 died accidentally as, in terror after a raid by police and immigration officials, he took evasive action.

– 1 person died during the deportation process itself as he was being deported to Luanda,

Angola escorted by three guards from G4S, a private security company.

– 4 people died after being deported back to a country where they feared for their safety. The actual number is certainly far higher.

– 7 people died because of being denied healthcare for preventable medical problems.

– 2 people died destitute and unable to access services.

– 1 baby died as a result of possible safety failings of a housing provider contracted by the UK Border Agency (UKBA).

◆ 7 died in prison custody, either being held for deportation or while awaiting trial or serving sentences for charges involving false documentation.

▲ 4 died in the course of carrying out work which, by virtue of its being part of the ‘black economy’, carried particular dangers and few protective rights. (The numbers listed here are probably a gross underestimate, as work-related deaths of people who are ‘illegal’ will often go unreported in the media.)

* 7 died on the streets of our cities at the hands of racists or as a consequence of altercations with a racial dimension. Often the victims had been moved, via the government’s dispersal system, to areas where they were particularly isolated and vulnerable to attack.

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* These deaths do not include those ‘settled’ black people, those with leave to remain who have met their death in the custody of the police, prison and psychiatric hospitals and in racial violence attacks.

Notes on deaths and those at risk

Racial violence

Migrants who move to find work and asylum seekers dispersed by official policy are often isolated and at risk from racist attacks in traditionally white, rural communities and even some larger towns. Five migrant workers have died since 2006 following attacks with racial motives. In March 2009, Kunal Mohanty, an Indian sailor died after his throat was slit in a street attack in Glasgow. Also in 2009 Marek Muszynski, a Polish migrant worker, died following an attack in Newry, Northern Ireland. Adam Michalski, a Polish migrant worker, was stabbed to death in Wrexham in 2007 and Gregory Fernandes, another Indian sailor, died from a heart attack following a gang attack in Hampshire in the same year. In 2006 two men, Khizar Hayat and Hamidi Hamidullah, died following an arson attack on the shop where they were working. In August 2006, Wei Wang a Chinese asylum seeker, was murdered in Glasgow. The IRR documented racially motivated attacks and murders in its recent report *Racial violence: the buried issue*, which showed that asylum seekers and migrant workers were groups prone to such violence.¹ Recent attacks with a probable racial motive include:

* **February 2010:** A 27-year-old Eritrean asylum seeker was punched and racially abused and spat at after refusing to give two men money in Plymouth.²

* **March 2010:** A Polish man suffered serious injuries after he was run over by a man in a three-ton truck. The assailant shouted at his victim to get a job after spying him rooting through a bin outside a KFC in Hull.³

* **July 2009:** Kurdish asylum seeker Zanko Hamamin had burning paper pushed through his letterbox as part of a campaign of racial harassment by two women in Stockton. The women had also scrawled racist comments outside the house. One of the women, who lived two doors away, had regularly racially abused asylum seekers.⁴

Asylum seekers and self-harm

Many asylum seekers make serious attempts to

take their own life or to injure themselves. These attempts take place in the community and at removal centres on a daily basis. Recent research by the charity Medical Justice documented suicide attempts by young children held in removal centres and the numerous medical harms suffered by children (and their families) as a result of detention.⁵

Freedom of Information requests on self-harm in immigration detention made by Free Movement⁶ found a 25 per cent increase in self-harming between 2008 and 2009, with 215 incidents of self-harm requiring medical treatment in 2009, compared to 179 incidents in 2008. And figures for April/May/June 2010 showed a significant increase of self-harm at certain removal centres, with Dover removal centre showing a 125 per cent increase of incidents of self-harm requiring medical treatment on the previous quarter.⁷ We list below just a few of the serious but non-fatal self-harm incidents over the last two years:

* **December 2009:** A 19-year-old asylum seeker from Afghanistan set himself alight outside Waterside House, a UKBA office in Leeds. The young man was taken from Leeds General Infirmary to a specialist burns unit in Wakefield in a critical condition.⁸

* **November 2009:** A 30-year-old Iraqi man slashed his stomach with a knife at a UKBA office in Brand Street, Glasgow, as he went to report at the centre. The self-harm attempt was a protest against the length of time being taken over his asylum claim.⁹

* **October 2009:** Ibrahim Ali Karim attempted to take his own life while being held at Colnbrook removal centre near Heathrow. He had just been told that he was to be deported the following day to Northern Iraq.¹⁰

* **October 2009:** A 10-year-old Nigerian girl detained with her mother at Tinsley House removal centre near Gatwick airport attempted to strangle herself.¹¹

* **September 2009:** Abdel Zahali, 51, an Algerian asylum seeker, threatened to set himself alight after dousing his clothes with petrol in the offices of Liverpool MP Louise Ellman

after being told his asylum claim had been refused. In December 2009, he was jailed for 10 months for affray in connection with the incident.¹²

* **March 2009:** A Nigerian man threatened to throw himself from the top of a house in Barnsley after his wife and two children were arrested in an immigration raid.¹³

* **February 2009:** An 18-year-old Zimbabwean girl tried to hang herself while she, her sister and mother were being held at Yarl's Wood removal centre. Guards broke into the room and she was resuscitated.¹⁴

* **January 2009:** A detainee from the DRC at Campsfield House removal centre near Oxford slit his own throat. Other detainees reported that the man had been refusing food for over a week and had openly stated his intention to take his own life.¹⁵

* **February 2008:** A 34-year-old African man, Amadou Nyang, repeatedly hit his head against the wall in his cell at Tinsley House removal centre (near Gatwick airport) and broke three vertebrae in his neck, leaving him paralysed from the neck down.¹⁶

Medical causes

The provision of health care to migrants and asylum seekers has become a political hot potato, particularly after the deportation of terminally ill Ama Sumani to Ghana in January 2008. She died just two months later.

According to our records, a gross underestimate of the total problem, at least seven asylum seekers have died as a result of being denied access to treatment. These deaths include those of 18-year-old Mohammed Ahmedi, who died from a heart condition as medical staff and social workers attempted to clarify his immigration status, and Mohammed Ali, an 80-year-old man who was entitled to free NHS treatment and yet was still pursued by debt collectors sent by the NHS for treatment he had received for cancer.

There have also been a number of deaths in prison and one in a removal centre where the care received has been questionable. For example the inquest into the death of Aleksey Baranovsky at Rye Hill prison was highly critical of the care he received while he was held at the prison pending his deportation. The inquest following the death of 18-year-old

Joker Idris at Chelmsford prison was again highly critical of the care he received and found numerous systemic and individual failures by prison staff and Essex social services.

Raids and flight from arrest

In the last four years, thankfully, only one person, Frank Odame (2008), has died following a raid by UKBA staff and police, despite the fact the UKBA has increased the number of raids it carries out, at all times of the day at workplaces (restaurants, takeaways, shops, factories) and private homes. A cursory glance at the UKBA website¹⁷ which lists press releases on recent raids, shows that over one eleven-day period, from 28 September to 8 October 2010, thirty-two people were arrested in eleven raids across the UK. Raids on workplaces and arrests of those working 'illegally' make for good PR for the UKBA - they are doing something and people are being deported.¹⁸

However the pressure to round people up appears to result in more people being injured. We list below raids some by police and UKBA which have resulted in serious injuries:

* **July 2010:** Two men, thought to be Pakistani, suffered injuries and were taken to hospital following an immigration raid by the UKBA in Balham, South London. The men are reported to have jumped on to a roof.¹⁹

* **May 2008:** A 51-year-old Ghanaian man suffered injuries after falling from the third floor of a block of flats in Peckham, south London, following a raid by three immigration officers and a seconded police officer.²⁰

* **April 2008:** A man in his 30s broke both of his legs following a raid by the UKBA on a restaurant in Tooting, south London.²¹

Migrants at risk

As in the case of those perishing on the way to the UK, it is not possible to accurately count those who have died in workplace accidents related to negligence. In our compilation we list four workers who have died in workplace accidents, men often working illegally in dangerous jobs, provided with little or no training and put in situations where health and safety regulations are breached.

But migrants are also at risk from destitution caused by exploitative and care-less employers

and the aftermath, when they are hounded by the authorities. A particularly graphic case (which actually occurred outside our 2006-10 time band) is worth recalling at length. A Ukrainian woman, Oksana Sukhanova, had to have two legs amputated on New Year's Day 2005 because of frostbite after living on the street, homeless and destitute. She had been forced on to the street after losing her job plucking turkeys at a factory in Co. Antrim. She lived in a house provided by the factory with two other migrant workers and was paid the minimum wage. In September 2004, Oksana was sacked. She told the *Irish Times* 'I wasn't given a chance to say anything. There was no trade union or anything like that. The other workers were shocked. They knew I was a good worker. There had been no problem before that. But they were afraid to say anything.' She sought other work and was unable to find any and stayed with some Polish friends but then found herself homeless after they returned home for Christmas. With all her savings gone after spending a few nights in a cheap hotel, she was left on the street. Oksana then realised that she was ill and made her way to the home she had shared with other migrant workers and called an ambulance. The surgeon who treated her said that she was lucky to survive and that it was the worst case of frostbite he had ever seen. She was in hospital for five months and has since had prosthetic limbs fitted.²²

Those who have come to seek work in communities across the UK, to carry out the jobs that other workers will not do in agriculture and factories have, following job losses, been left without the means to support themselves and as a result face homelessness and destitution. Migrant workers from certain EU countries are unable to access any benefits and as a result are left stranded in the UK with families still to provide for back home.

In April 2010 the UKBA began to target rough sleepers and the homeless from the EU. Some people returned home voluntarily, others were receiving help from their embassies, and many more had been served with 'minded to remove' letters, asking them to attend an interview at a police station to prove that they were in work or education or self-sufficient. If they cannot provide such proof they are forced to leave. In August 2010 it was reported that

116 'minded to remove' letters had been given to European migrants and forty people had been advised that they should leave the UK.²³ Below we list a few recent news reports concerning migrants who have come to work in the UK:

* **June 2010:** The *Peterborough Evening Telegraph* reported that the UKBA had returned 77 people through its scheme to return rough sleepers from the EU. In the same week the council reported finding twenty-two foreign national rough sleepers in Peterborough.²⁴

* **November 2009:** John Untan, a 49-year-old Romanian jumped from Westminster Bridge into the Thames, was pulled to safety and spent a month in a psychiatric unit. John had only been in the UK a month and was homeless and sleeping rough. He had been separated from his family who live in Australia when he was deported after serving a sentence for a drugs offence. He had travelled to Europe to seek help to be reunited with his family. However on the day he jumped he had been told by Amnesty International that it could not help him.²⁵

* **April 2009:** Polish man Marjusz Czerwjk, 27, who had been living in Newquay for only three weeks, was found hanged at his home by his girlfriend and brother.²⁶

* **July 2008:** The *Eastern Daily Press* reported that over 200 Portuguese migrant workers were stranded in Norfolk after failing to find employment and accommodation.²⁷

* **July 2008:** A group of Polish workers were dumped outside a factory in Kirkcaldy, Fife, with a promise of waiting jobs, only to be told there were none. The workers have been duped by a Polish agency and had paid for tickets, translation of documents and accommodation.²⁸

* **April 2007:** Pezemyslaw Soltys, 34, was found hanged in the grounds of Craigavon Area Hospital, Portadown. He had travelled to Northern Ireland two years before to seek work, and had worked for a landscape gardening company. He regularly sent money home to his wife and daughters His cousin, Joanna Bak, told the *Belfast Telegraph* that living away from his family and the isolation of living in a new country added to his problems.²⁹

Dangerous methods of entry

Hundreds if not thousands of people have died making their desperate journeys to the UK. We list the cases of 15 people who have been killed attempting to enter the UK over the last five years. On a daily basis men, women and children attempt to enter the UK clandestinely, often having paid smugglers and organised criminal gangs large sums of money for dangerous journeys. Many wait in Calais and other ports across Europe and hide in or under lorries, or in and amongst their cargo. People of all nationalities from Afghanistan, China, Vietnam, Sudan, Iran, Kuwait, Palestine, Eritrea, Iraq, India, Somalia, Syria and Pakistan make repeated attempts to cross over to the UK, to be reunited with family or simply seeking a better life. However attempts to reach the UK are often thwarted, and those caught will be fingerprinted, photographed and handed back to French (or other) authorities. The UKBA with its staff stationed in ports across Europe, using carbon dioxide detectors, heart-beat detectors and sniffer dogs, are stopping many more migrants from reaching the UK. Over four years the number of stowaways found at Calais and Coquelles doubled, from 4,241 in 2006/7 to 8,058 in 2008/9.³⁰ As a result, people now try highly dangerous methods to reach the UK. However, as immigration controls become tighter across Europe, people are making even more desperate attempts to reach the UK. We list below a few examples of reported non-fatal cases in recent years:

* **July 2010:** Three Vietnamese migrants, who risked suffocation by hiding inside black refuse sacks, were caught in the back of a lorry by a UKBA sniffer dog and handed over to the French authorities.³¹

* **June 2010:** Seventeen people, men and boys, aged from 16-35 were treated for exhaustion and dehydration after being found in the back of a lorry at Dover. Paramedics at the scene treated the stowaways and one man in his 30s was taken to hospital.³²

* **June 2010:** Two men jumped from a cargo ship docked in Portsmouth harbour, one man was arrested after being found in the water and the other was arrested hours later near a motorway. The men were both returned to the Dominican Republic.³³

* **June 2010:** A young Romanian migrant miraculously survived sub-zero temperatures after stowing away in the wheel-bay of a plane flying from Vienna to Heathrow.³⁴

* **May 2010:** Five stowaways rang French authorities from the back of a refrigerated lorry asking for help as they feared that they were dying from hypothermia, the group from Afghanistan also included a 'very sick baby'. Police located the phone signal that was transmitting from a motorway near Calais and alerted lorry drivers in the area, however the lorry was never located as the phone signal disappeared.³⁵

* **May 2010:** A 24-year-old man was found clinging to the front axle below a coach on the M6 near Penrith after the driver heard knocking noises. The coach had travelled from Belgium via Dover.³⁶

* **December 2009:** A 'suspected asylum seeker' jumped from a ship into Harwich harbour and was treated for suspected broken ribs and mild hypothermia.³⁷

* **November 2009:** Two men jumped from a freight ferry in Poole, Dorset in gale force winds. An air and sea search was launched. One man, a Russian, was washed ashore and taken to hospital and the other was also thought to have reached the shore. Two women were also found on a lorry on the same boat. News reports suggested that the group were thought to have paid a lorry driver for their passage from Cherbourg but a disagreement had occurred and the men had jumped from the ship.³⁸

* **August 2009:** A tour leader reported reviving a man found in the engine compartment of his coach as it travelled on a ferry to Dover from Calais. Two other men were found earlier hiding on the coach in Calais and arrested. All three men were thought to be Sudanese.³⁹

* **August 2009:** Eighteen men were found by UKBA staff in Calais in a tanker travelling to Wales carrying gluten powder. The men were caked in powder in the tanker that had no air vents. The men, sixteen Afghans and two Iraqis were fingerprinted, photographed and handed over to the French authorities.⁴⁰

* **September 2008:** A Dutch lorry driver waited nearly 45 minutes for police to arrive after hearing banging from the side of his lorry that was parked on an industrial site in

Lutterworth, despite being concerned that the men were trapped in a refrigerated lorry. The *Northampton Chronicle & Echo* reported that, on arrival, police officers opened and then closed the doors of the lorry after seeing thirteen men, thought to be Afghans, until further police officers arrived at the scene.⁴¹

* **February 2008:** Eight people, including a 12-year-old boy, were rescued from a sealed lorry carrying charcoal powder bound for a sewage treatment works. The group banged on the side of the lorry and road workers near where the lorry was parked in Abbey Wood, south London, raised the alarm and they were rescued. The men, women and children had taken refuge on top of the load but after twelve hours in the lorry had begun sinking in to the powder and suffering from breathing difficulties. The lorry had travelled from Cologne in Germany via Calais. The men were taken to hospital and treated for respiratory problems before being taken into the custody of the UKBA.⁴²

People are so desperate to reach the UK that migrants have even stowed away on army convoys! One man was found at Sandhurst military academy on a coach that had travelled from Germany,⁴³ five others were arrested after being found at the Duke of Gloucester barracks in Gloucestershire after stowing away in an army convoy returning from Kosovo via Calais. The group included 15- and 16-year-old boys from Afghanistan and Iran.⁴⁴ A few enterprising migrants were able to take advantage of UKBA hospitality by stowing away on a coach used to ferry UKBA staff between Folkestone and Coquelles (near Calais in France) in August 2009; one man escaped arrest and fled in to Folkestone. It was also reported that stowaways might have used the coach on previous occasions as it was usually waved through border controls.⁴⁵

PLACE OF DEATH

Deaths in detention

Deaths in removal centres and prisons are usually publicly documented and subject to inquiries by the UKBA, Prison and Probation Service Ombudsman (PPO) and an inquest before a jury. But now it is not just asylum seekers and migrant workers who are driven to

take their lives. Additionally, in the last four years, at least seven people, like Avtar Singh in 2007 and Delaili Kwadzo Abusah in 2008, have committed suicide while detained under immigration powers, usually awaiting deportation after serving sentences for criminal offences (often for using false passports and travel documents). Following the media and subsequent government hysteria over the release of foreign national prisoners in April 2006, many more people are facing a double punishment and being detained beyond their sentence as the government seeks to deport them.⁴⁶ And as the prison system becomes more and more overcrowded it is likely that more people will seek to harm themselves as they suddenly find themselves detained far beyond their sentence.

Deaths in the community

The deaths of asylum seekers in the community have increased and on average there has been one every month. Information on the suicides of asylum seekers in the community is extremely hard to obtain and any figures we give will be an underestimate. The deaths of asylum seekers housed in isolated areas and in desolate bedsits rarely make the news. Quite often another asylum seeker will alert an organisation or individual assisting asylum seekers and an email will be circulated. Or deaths are sometimes reported following inquest proceedings. These proceedings are often short but never sweet – with the verdict usually being ‘took his own life’ and the deceased are usually young men from countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran.

There are usually no family members present to ask or answer any questions, probably just a social worker or asylum caseworker who will provide a few basic details about the circumstances surrounding the deceased person. There is no one to explain why they were here, why they were so desperate to come and why they were so desperate not to be returned. There is no one to ask questions of the UKBA and its staff (and its contractors and their staff) as to how the asylum claim was being handled, if the person obtained proper legal advice, what their living conditions were, if they were destitute, facing eviction or deportation. Many, many questions and usually very few answers.

Death on return

A number of asylum seekers have died after being deported to their country of origin. Most were Iraqi men who had claimed asylum in the UK, had it refused and then, after periods in detention or living destitute, ultimately and reluctantly agreed to return and were killed in violent attacks or took their own lives. We have not included all these deaths in our compilation as they often happened a number of months after return and therefore cannot be directly attributed to UK asylum policies. However, it must be noted that these men would probably still be alive had they not been sent back. All of the men who have died on return came from war-torn zones of the world; two were from Iraq, one from Afghanistan – countries where British troops are at war. However, the UK continues to forcibly return people to these countries, even hiring charter flights so that deportations can be carried out beyond public scrutiny. We list below some of these additional deaths.

* **Heman, 2008:** An Iraqi asylum seeker hanged himself from a tree shortly after being deported to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) area of the country.⁴⁷

* **Kadir Salih Abdullah, (44), August 2008:** An Iraqi refugee kidnapped in front of his home in Kurdistan and not seen again. Kadir arrived in the UK on 29 October 2000 and 'voluntarily' returned to Kurdistan after five years of fighting his asylum claim, during which time he was unable to work and forced to rely on the charity of friends.⁴⁸

* **October 2006:** Two Sri Lankan asylum seekers died shortly after being deported from the UK.⁴⁹

* **Abdullah Tokhi, (35), Autumn 2005:** Shot dead in a crowded bazaar in Afghanistan in Autumn 2005. In November 2002, he had claimed asylum in the UK saying that his life was in danger because of a sectarian and political blood feud, after spending eight months in prison accused of funding the Taliban. However his claim was refused and he was sent back in September 2004.⁵⁰

Endnotes

- 1 *Racial violence: the buried issue*, see <<http://www.irr.org.uk/2010/june/ha000048.html>>
- 2 *Plymouth Herald*, 31 August 2010.
- 3 *Yorkshire Post*, 28 June 2010.
- 4 *Evening Gazette*, 8 June 2010.
- 5 '*State Sponsored Cruelty: Children in immigration detention*', Medical Justice, see <<http://www.medicaljustice.org.uk/content/view/1420/59/>>
- 6 See <<http://www.freemovement.org.uk/index.html>>
- 7 Self-harm in immigration detention, <<http://www.freemovement.org.uk/Resources/self-harm2010.html>>
- 8 *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 23 December 2009.
- 9 *Glasgow Evening Times*, 4 November 2009.
- 10 *Federation*, International Federation of Iraqi Refugees, Issue No.9, November 2009.
- 11 BBC News online, 28 October 2009.
- 12 *Liverpool Echo*, 24 December 2009.
- 13 NCADC email bulletin, 5 March 2009.
- 14 *Sheffield Star*, 19 February 2009.
- 15 *Oxford Mail*, 4, 13 January 2009.
- 16 *Metro*, 10 February 2008.
- 17 See <<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-and-updates/?area=allNews>>
- 18 IRR News, 5 February 2009, <<http://www.irr.org.uk/2009/february/ha000011.html>>
- 19 IRR News, 9 July 2010, <<http://www.irr.org.uk/2010/july/ha000020.html>>
- 20 IRR News, 9 July 2010.
- 21 IRR News, 9 July 2010.
- 22 *Irish Times*, 26 November 2005.
- 23 InsideHousing, 11 August 2010.
- 24 *Peterborough Evening Telegraph*, 3 June 2010.
- 25 *Evening Standard*, 24 May 2010.
- 26 This is Plymouth, 28 April 2009.
- 27 *Eastern Daily Press*, 30 July 2008.
- 28 *Daily Record*, 25 July 2008.
- 29 *Belfast Telegraph*, 5 May 2007.
- 30 Chief Inspector of the UKBA, *Annual report*, see <<http://www.ociukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/files/inspection-reports/ici-ukba-report-july08-sept09.pdf>>
- 31 *Daily Mail*, 22 July 2010.
- 32 BBC News online, 25 June 2010.
- 33 BBC News online, 15 June 2010.
- 34 *Guardian*, 9 June 2010.
- 35 *Daily Telegraph*, 20 May 2010.
- 36 BBC News online, 19 May 2010.
- 37 *The Daily Gazette*, 13 December 2009.
- 38 *Guardian*, 25 November 2009, *Independent*, 25 November 2009.
- 39 *Shropshire Star*, 5 August 2009.
- 40 *Daily Mail*, 7 September 2009.
- 41 *Northampton Chronicle & Echo*, 12 September 2008.
- 42 *Independent*, 9 February 2008.
- 43 BBC News online, 2 July 2009.
- 44 BBC News online, 17 July 2008.
- 45 BBC News online, 2 August 2009, *Daily Mail*, 17 August 2009.

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- 46** See also IRR News, 16 July 2009, <<http://www.irr.org.uk/2009/july/ha000024.html>> and *European Race Bulletin*, no. 69, 'Foreign nationals, enemy penology and the criminal justice system', <http://www.irr.org.uk/pdf2/ERB_69_FNP_all.pdf>
- 47** Indymedia, 13 August 2008.
- 48** Federation of Iraqi Refugees.
- 49** *Hansard*, Commons written answer to Harry Cohen, 2 November 2006.
- 50** *Independent*, 5 February 2007.

List of deaths

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● ◆ **Bereket Yohannes, (26), 19/1/06**

An Eritrean asylum seeker was found hanged in a shower block at Harmondsworth removal centre. According to the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns (NCADC), which received reports that Bereket had arrived in the UK from Italy in October 2005, he was detained on arrival in the UK, taken to Dover immigration removal centre and then to Harmondsworth in December. NCADC was told that Bereket had 'removal directions' for February but that the deportation had been deferred pending a judicial review. Detainees at Harmondsworth also told NCADC that the deportation was neither to Eritrea nor back to Italy, but to Sudan. According to other detainees at the centre, he was fearful of deportation and found conditions at the centre 'unbearable'. He also spoke of his intention to take his life. An inquest in March 2007 was told how he had previously tried to take his own life while he was held at Dover removal centre a month prior to his death, and found that he took his own life.

● **Taufik Al-Karazeh, aka Mohamad Eid, (27), 10/2/06**

A Syrian asylum seeker found hanged in the meter cupboard of his flat in Rochdale on the day he was due to move out. His asylum claim was refused in September 2005. His body was found by his asylum caseworker who had arranged for his voluntary deportation to Palestine. After he failed to return his keys she visited the flat and found his body. She told the inquest that he had become paranoid and thought that the Home Office had installed CCTV at his flat and that staff were following him. The coroner, Simon Nelson, found that he took his own life, but that he couldn't be sure that his balance of mind was disturbed at the time. He said: 'Between 4 February and 10 February Mr Al-Karazeh made the decision to take his own life. I have no evidence to suggest he was depressed and therefore I am reluctant to say the balance of the deceased's mind was disturbed at the time of death. The fact that he was due to leave the UK, be it vol-

untarily or otherwise, was playing on his mind, but that would be the case with any asylum seeker.'

● **Yadav Krishnakumar, (20 months), 20/2/06**

A 20-month-old baby boy died hours after being admitted to Fairfield Hospital, Bury suffering from dehydration. The inquest, in December 2006, was told that Yadav had been taken to the hospital and a doctor's surgery in the 48 hours before his death after suffering from diarrhoea and vomiting, but little was done. It was found that he probably died of dehydration and the coroner recorded a verdict of death by natural causes, although it is extremely rare for a child to die of dehydration. The coroner was extremely critical that the family of Sri Lankan asylum seekers had been placed in the area without any support network, describing it as 'incomprehensible and inhumane'.

● **Naser Al Shdaida, (36), 9/3/06**

A Syrian asylum seeker died after jumping in front of a train in Streatham. An inquest was told that he suffered from post-traumatic stress and was scared of being deported after he was told his asylum claim had failed.

● **Danielle Dominy, (30), 04/06**

A Brazilian woman living in Werrington, Cornwall died after drinking antifreeze because she feared immigration officials were going to separate her from her daughter who was born in the UK. An inquest was told she had waited six years for a ruling on residence and was barred from work and benefits. Dr Elizabeth Carlyon, the coroner, recorded an open verdict, saying she would write to the Home Secretary about the case. According to husband Jamie Dominy, Danielle had come to the UK in 1999 and they had met and planned to travel the world but Danielle had become pregnant and overstayed her visa by a few weeks. The couple had tried to sort out her immigration status but she was told to leave the UK and reapply from Brazil. Danielle had been 'left in limbo', just waiting for a knock at the door.

● **Serghei Nichita, (22), 16/4/06**

A Moldovan asylum seeker whose burned body was found on a towpath next to the Grand Union Canal in Sixfields, Northampton. The inquest was told that he had suffered burns to half his body and the pattern of the burns suggested that he had held a live conductor (he was found near an electricity pylon). A case-worker from the local asylum support team told the inquest that he had come to the UK as a teenager and was awaiting a decision on his application for an extension to his discretionary leave to remain. The coroner recorded an open verdict saying 'I'm quite satisfied there was no third party involvement but I can't presume his death was an accident or that he wanted to end his life.'

■ **Unidentified man, 23/4/06**

A man died after apparently trying to cut himself loose from under a truck after slipping under the wheels and being dragged a mile along the A14 in Cambridgeshire. Police believed he was a stowaway. The German driver of the lorry was arrested on suspicion of causing death by dangerous driving and driving with excess alcohol. The victim was described as Asian, aged 24 to 45, slim, 5ft 8in tall, with short hair, moustache, goatee beard and sideburns.

* **Khizar Hayat, (40), 27/4/06**

A Kashmiri-born migrant worker died following an arson attack on the shop where he worked in Kennington, south London.

* **Hamidi Hamidullah, (31), 3/5/06**

A migrant worker from Afghanistan died following an arson attack on the shop where he was working. 32-year-old Robert Torto was charged with the murders of Khizar Hayat (see above) and Hamidullah Hamidi and also charged with three counts of arson with intent to endanger life, relating to attacks on other buildings. At the Old Bailey he pleaded guilty to manslaughter and one count of arson, but two further charges of arson relating to earlier attacks were allowed to lie on file. Torto, who was suffering from paranoid schizophrenia, was ordered to be detained indefinitely in a secure hospital. The court was told that the attacks were religiously motivated.

■ **Asif Azmad, (17), 11/5/06**

Died after being crushed to death by the lorry he had stowed away in. The 17-year-old from Afghanistan clung to the lorry for fifteen miles before falling and being crushed on the A3 near Clanfield. The lorry had travelled to Portsmouth from France. It took police eight months to identify Asif, whose brother told the inquest that he did not know his brother was travelling to the UK.

● **Sivanathan Gowthaman, (29), 13/5/06**

A Sri Lankan asylum seeker died instantly after jumping in front of train in Bedhampton. An inquest into his death was told that mounting debts and the failure of his asylum claim were thought to have been factors. On the day before his death he had told his landlord that he was leaving to live with his brother in London, another man (who could not be traced) helped him pack his belongings and the two men left. The inquest found that he took his own life.

● **Ese Elizabeth Alabi, (29), 15/5/06**

A Nigerian woman died in hospital having been denied a heart transplant. Ese visited the UK regularly to see her fiancé and had never overstayed her tourist visas. However, in September 2005, she fell ill (while pregnant) and was told she could not fly home. She gave birth to twin boys in February, but steadily became sicker. She was diagnosed with a serious heart condition needing an immediate transplant. But as a foreign national her need was decided to be of a lower priority than UK citizens'. Her lawyer went to court for judicial review of this decision and because of the length of the legal fight she overstayed her visa and her case was adjourned until an application was made for exceptional leave to remain. Her health deteriorated and she died before her case was heard.

◆ ● **Aleksey Baranovsky, (33), 06/06**

A Ukrainian man bled to death in his cell at Rye Hill prison, Warwickshire. An inquest was told how he had repeatedly self-harmed as a protest against his impending deportation after serving a seven-year sentence and feared being killed by the Russian mafia if deported. A mental health assessment was never carried out and his request to see a doctor hours

before his death was not followed up. An investigation by the Prison and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) found that a nurse failed to provide the standard of care reasonably expected of someone in her role. When staff did realise that he was not breathing it took twenty minutes for his cell door to be opened. The coroner called his treatment at the privately run Rye Hill prison 'shameful and appalling'. The jury recorded a highly critical narrative verdict outlining a catalogue of failures, highlighting failures to follow policy on suicide prevention or to arrange an urgent psychiatric assessment and a lack of communication between staff.

● **Dejere Kebede-Tulu, (25), 06/06**

An Ethiopian athlete, considered to be one of the best long-distance runners in the UK, was found dead in his flat in June 2006. In April 2007, an inquest into his death was told he continued to train as a runner despite living on a mere £25 per week. He came to the UK in 2001 after his father was murdered and claimed asylum. He had to wait until three weeks before his death before he was given indefinite leave to remain. His body bore scars of torture and at the time of his death he was receiving treatment from the Helen Bamber Foundation and it was workers from the organisation that found his body at his Holloway flat. The coroner recorded an open verdict as the cause of death could not be determined.

■ **Two Asian men, 12/6/06 and 22/6/06**

An Asian man was found dead by a roadside near Witham, Essex, two other men were also found nearby and taken to hospital, one of whom was severely dehydrated and in a critical condition. Another man died in hospital ten days after being found. The five men, all thought to be Pakistani, were smuggled concealed in a tool compartment underneath a lorry travelling from Denmark to Tipton. In November 2007, the Lithuanian lorry driver, Georgji Negatin, faced trial on two counts of manslaughter. Negatin allegedly dumped the men from the truck in the middle of the night, two men ran away and a cyclist discovered the others the following day. The survivor, Faisal Nayyer, told the court that he had paid £5,000 for the journey. He told the court the five men

had been told to lie in the toolbox, next to one another, with no food or water and then they had been locked in to the box. Negatin denied all knowledge of the men, insisting that they had secreted themselves in the lorry. In June 2007, the judge directed the jury to find Negatin not guilty of one count of manslaughter as it could not be proved where one of the victims had died. (UK law only covers those deaths that happen here in the UK). He was convicted on the second count of manslaughter and sentenced to 12 years in prison. The two dead men have never been identified.

● **Abiy Fessfha Abebe, (35), 5/7/06**

An Ethiopian asylum seeker was found hanged in Greenbank accommodation centre in Liverpool, the day after being told his asylum claim had been refused. His claim had been classified as a 'late and opportunistic' one and was being handled under the fast-track system under which decisions on asylum claims are given in eleven days. The conditions under which Abiy was housed and receiving support (£35 per week) meant that he had to report on a daily basis to Reliance House – some miles away. An inquest in September 2006 found 'it more likely than not he died by his own hand'. Abiy's family were particularly concerned by the contents of Abiy's suicide note (addressed to his 'case owner') that was left in his room. 'I can't go back. I rather die', were Abiy's last words in the note. The note suggested that personal particulars contained in his asylum claim had been revealed to his employers in Ethiopia and that this had terrified him.

* **Wei Wang, (41), 08/06**

A Chinese asylum seeker died in hospital twelve days after being attacked in an unprovoked attack yards from his home in the Sighthill area of Glasgow. He had been in the Glasgow area for three months after being dispersed from London. In May 2007, Paul Brown was sentenced to life imprisonment for murder, and told he would serve at least 17 years. The court was told that Brown struck Wei over the head with a bottle and then rifled through his pockets, as he lay unconscious, stealing his wallet. Another man, Mark Kerr, 18, was sentenced to four years and six months after pleading guilty to reduced charges of serious

assault - in exchange for his testimony against Brown.

● **Pierre Palmaba Kabamba, (61), 12/8/06**

An asylum seeker from Congo died after falling from a fifth floor window at the Nayland Rock hotel in Margate. The death is being treated as suicide. Pierre was staying with his wife at the hotel that is run by Migrant Helpline as an induction centre for up to 200 new arrivals – mainly Africans. An inquest in October 2006 found that he took his own life.

● **Zamira Sadigova, (51), 17/8/06**

An asylum seeker from Azerbaijan jumped to her death from her eleventh-floor flat in Glasgow as health officials and police officers tried to break down her door in order to section her for treatment. The *Glasgow Herald* reported that she had arrived in the UK in 2002 with her young son and claimed asylum on the grounds that she had been persecuted because she was Azerbaijani and a member of the Jehovah Witnesses. However, her asylum claim was rejected, as was an appeal, and benefits were withdrawn in April 2005. Various medical reports stated that she was 'vulnerable'. Zamira, who had been diagnosed as suffering from paranoid schizophrenia, was first sectioned in 2003 when she was found jumping in front of cars on a Glasgow street. In the last few months before her death Zamira was surviving on £20 a week, given to her by a mental health charity. She had also become delusional, repeatedly talked about killing herself and had cut herself off from family and friends. Scottish MSPs called for a public inquiry into her death and the fact that she had been denied access to mental health treatment a year before her death. In October 2010, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service confirmed that a fatal accident inquiry would be held but no date has been fixed.

● **Paul Kiese, (31), 03/9/06**

A Congolese asylum seeker found hanged under a bridge over the River Spodden near Rochdale, a month after having his asylum application refused. A friend told the inquest that he had spoken about killing himself on numerous occasions, 'Once they rejected his appeal, Paul had no money and wasn't allowed to work. He

had no money to live, I gave him food. He was a quiet person, but he had an objective in his life - to gain asylum.'

● **Abdullah Ahmed Maroof, (30), 10/06**

An Iraqi man died after setting himself alight in his car on the A19 on the edge of Norton, Stockton. He feared being sent back to Iraq and possible retaliation after a cousin was murdered. Mr Maroof's wife, Jane Parkes, told the inquest into his death: 'He still felt responsible and guilty for his cousin's murder. He thought that on his return he would be blamed and called to account for not protecting him more.' His wife also told the inquest about immigration problems which were playing on his mind. The coroner, Michael Sheffield, found that Abdullah had killed himself, 'I am satisfied that the actions he took - and strange actions they were - were intended to end his life.'

■ **One unnamed man, (20s), 8/10/06**

One man was found dead and another was found seriously injured on the A20 in Sellindge, Kent. Police were seeking the driver of an articulated lorry that apparently reversed over the men. The men were both believed to be Iraqis in their 20s. The injured man suffered a broken pelvis.

◆ ● **Sarah Namala, (44), 15/10/06**

Ugandan asylum seeker died after being found unconscious and unresponsive in her cell at Cookham Wood prison. She suffered from mental health problems and had fits while in prison. She had been prescribed anti-convulsant medication to treat epilepsy despite a firm diagnosis of epilepsy having not been made.

▲ **Ajet Krasniqi, (24), 24/10/06**

An undocumented Kosovan labourer died from serious head injuries after being hit on the head with a reinforced steel joist (RSJ) in Buckhurst Hill, Essex. The inquest in July 2008 was told that his head was struck by an RSJ which dropped whilst a group of workers were trying to lift it. Just prior to the incident, Ajet was plastering a ceiling inside the property when he was asked to come and help move the joist. He, along with other workers, was not wearing a hard hat. The HSE inspector told the

jury that the HSE 'wouldn't recommend manually handling that weight at all.' The inquest recorded a verdict of accidental death. His employer was fined £10,000.

■ **Unnamed Afghan man, (40s), 11/06**

A man died after being run over by the lorry he had been hiding under after tying himself to it with rope. The man was killed after cutting himself free from the underside of the lorry and falling under the wheels as it started moving in Harlow, Essex.

● **Imran Yousaf, (28), 01/07**

A Pakistani doctor found hanged at a friend's home in Bedford. Imran was a qualified doctor who came to the UK in order to practise medicine. He passed the exams allowing him to practise in the UK, however, despite sending out hundreds of letters and job applications he was unable to secure employment. And then in March 2006, the government announced that priority would be given to UK postgraduates. The British Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (BAPIO) began a legal challenge to this decision, of which Imran was a part. He did not leave a suicide note but a letter from immigration officials telling him that his visa would not be extended was found beside him. Friends of the doctor commented that he was becoming increasingly distraught.

■ **Samuel Peter Benjamin, (17) 27/1/07**

A South African man was found in the landing gear of a BA plane recently arrived in Los Angeles from London Heathrow. A pilot checking the plane for its return flight to the UK found the body. The young man from Cape Town, South Africa is thought to have stowed away on the plane on 22 January, six days before his body was found.

◆ ● **Abass Usman, (26), 29/01/07**

A Nigerian man found hanged in his cell at Preston prison. He was on remand accused of using false documents and had only been in the prison for five days.

● **Garip Aygun, (27), 3/07**

A Turkish kebab shop owner was found hanged from a tree near Dover Castle. He had moved to the UK in 2005 to set up a business with his

brothers, one of whom told the inquest: 'He had stress because of the customers at the kebab shop. There was a lot of racism. Late-night customers would shout at him.' The coroner commented: 'I am satisfied that Mr Aygun intended to end his life.'

● **Baitul Atique, 02/3/07**

A Bangladeshi man found dead from an apparent overdose of sleeping pills in Dhaka. He had entered the UK as a dependant of his wife who entered under the Highly Skilled Migrants Programme (HSMP). However the couple were forced to return to Bangladesh following changes to HSMP and an extension to his wife's visa being rejected. His wife said that he was depressed following concerns about being able to repay loans the family had taken to travel and work in the UK and that they never would have taken them out if they had known about proposed rule changes. Baitul had earlier attempted suicide on his return.

● **Uddhav Bhandari, (40), 18/3/07**

A Nepalese asylum seeker set himself alight in the Eagle Building, Bothwell Street, Glasgow, home to the asylum and immigration tribunal, on 7 March and died eleven days later in Glasgow royal infirmary. The former police officer had exposed corruption within the police force in Nepal. He was then posted to a remote region, a move considered as punishment. Uddhav started to receive death threats following a gun battle and was later sacked for his involvement in the incident. Finally finding work with a leftist newspaper, his role in a controversial article made him more enemies in Nepalese society. Upon receiving an order to report to police, Uddhav and his family fled the country. Although the Home Office never disputed the facts in his asylum claim, Uddhav's asylum application was rejected as a judge deemed the threat he faced in Nepal was not sufficiently serious, and that in any case, he would receive protection upon return as he was high-profile. Having been in the UK six years and terrified of being sent back, he set fire to himself as he was about to launch his final appeal.

▲ **Otari Davidovitch Hudoian, (46), 28/3/07**

A Kurdish Iraqi man died after falling from a height while refurbishing a farm building at

East Hall Farm, Rainham, Essex. At the inquest in July 2008 a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspector told the inquest that the site was in very poor condition, that there were no guardrails, floorboards were missing and the general condition of the building site was untidy. A verdict of accidental death was returned. His nationality was initially unclear as he was known as a Georgian called Mehmet. However his family were eventually located in northern Iraq. He was identified by fingerprints held by the Home Office.

● **Conrad Dixon, (40), 19/5/07**

A Jamaican asylum seeker died after setting himself alight and suffering nearly 100 per cent burns after his claim for asylum was refused. The Stoke-on-Trent coroner recorded a verdict of suicide.

■ **Unnamed man, 06/07**

An unnamed man was found dead in a speedboat being transported from Greece to Devon. Three others were taken to hospital. The boat was being transported by road and was stopped by police on the A43 near Chambery, France where the three men were found in a confined space with little ventilation. They had been on the boat for two days.

* **Adam Michalski, (24), 08/07**

A Polish migrant worker stabbed to death in a Wrexham street as he tried to get away from his assailant. In December 2007, Thomas Blue, 25, was sentenced to life in prison with a minimum 17-year term, after being found guilty of the murder that he said was in self-defence. The trial was told how Blue abused Adam for being Polish and then stabbed him four times. The judge said he was satisfied that there was a racist element.

● **Solyman Rashed, (28), 6/9/07**

An asylum seeker who had been deported to Iraq from the UK was killed by a roadside bomb in Kirkuk, after having been back in the country for only two weeks. He had been held in various immigration detention centres for fifteen months after being arrested in May 2006 when he was homeless and destitute. Solyman felt that he would never be released from detention, after making numerous bail applica-

tions, and agreed to return voluntarily. He was deported to Baghdad on 15 August and travelled to his hometown of Kirkuk where he was killed just over two weeks later.

● **Shaukat Ali, (61), 10/10/07**

A Pakistani man found hanged at the flat where he was staying in Birkby, Huddersfield after being told his asylum claim had failed. His brother told the inquest that Shaukat had been in the UK illegally and had been trying to claim asylum but had recently been told he had to leave the UK. The coroner found that he took his own life while the balance of his mind was disturbed.

* **Gregory Fernandes, (32), 10/07**

An Indian sailor from Goa died of a heart attack after being attacked by a gang in Fawley, Hampshire. He and a shipmate were returning to their ship berthed at Fawley oil refinery when they were met by a 20-strong gang who attacked them outside a hotel and then again further down the road. A passer-by, Jody Miles, broke up the fight and took Gregory back to the docks where he collapsed and died from a heart attack as a result of the stress. His friend Pitchilnaviram suffered a broken collarbone. Police said that Gregory was attacked because of his race. Ten teenagers, aged 13 to 17, were arrested on suspicion of murder, GBH and violent disorder and later released on bail. In January 2008, the Fernandes family expressed concern at the police investigation and the failure to charge anyone. Later three young boys were charged with murder. At their trial in February 2009, the three admitted lesser charges of manslaughter. In March 2009, Stephen Pritchard, 18, Daniel Rogers, 18 and Chay Fields, 16 were sentenced to six-and a half years in prison. A 15-year-old boy admitted GBH on Pitchilnaviram and was given a 12-month detention and training order. Another 15-year-old who also admitted assault was given a 18-month supervision order.

◆ ● **Avtar Singh, (37), 17/11/07**

An undocumented Punjabi father of two took his own life in prison. He had travelled to the UK in 2003 and after some time here had sought advice from an agent on how to regularise his status. He was advised to travel to

Spain to obtain legal status and had been given a false passport, for which he was caught. He served a seven-month sentence and was due to be deported to India the day before he died.

◆ ● **Abdullah Hagar Idris, aka Joker, (18), 25/12/07**

An unaccompanied asylum-seeking child from Darfur, who arrived in the UK in 2005 and took his own life on Christmas Day 2007 at HMP Chelmsford. An inquest in June 2010 heard damning evidence of numerous systemic and individual failures by state bodies, principally including HMP Chelmsford and Essex Social Services (ESS), in the way Joker was treated and cared for both before and after entering prison. The inquest into his death was told he had been due for release in January 2008 but shortly before his death was given a notice of deportation to Sudan. He was probably unable to understand fully what was to happen as his English was not very good.

◆ ● **Siumpalan Sathiyar, (29), 20/1/08**

A Sri Lankan man found hanged in his cell at Wormwood Scrubs prison in West London. He was on remand on a charge of 'making a false instrument'.

▲ **Wu Zhu Weng, (27), 31/1/08**

A Chinese migrant worker died in Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital after falling through a skylight of a roof he was working on. Sharaz Butt, company director at Norwich-based Alcon Construction, pleaded guilty to manslaughter in July 2008 at Norwich Crown Court and also admitted three health and safety offences on behalf of the company, including failing to ensure the safety of employees and failing to give staff proper training. The court was told how Butt drove Wu to hospital and told staff the injuries happened after Wu had fallen down stairs at his home. Wu had actually fallen 13 feet when he stumbled through a skylight which was covered by a thin plastic sheet and was not marked as a hazard. In August 2008, Butt was jailed for twelve months and disqualified from acting as a company director.

● **Mohammed Ahmedi, (18), 6/2/08**

A young Iraqi asylum seeker with a heart con-

dition died in Gloucester Royal hospital as doctors and social workers attempted to clarify his immigration status. His family and lawyer expressed concerns that he was not treated adequately because his status was unclear.

● **Barhan Ahmed, (28), 18/2/08**

An Iraqi asylum seeker died after setting himself alight in Nelson, Lancashire. An inquest in September 2008 was told that he suffered from depression and had told his doctor of his despair. He made his asylum claim in 2002 after seeking asylum with his brothers but it had been refused. The coroner found that he had taken his own life.

● **Ama Sumani, (39), 30/3/08**

A Ghanaian woman died in Korle Bu Hospital in Accra, Ghana after being deported from the UK in January 2008 while being treated for cancer at the University Hospital of Wales. She was taken from the hospital in a wheelchair by five immigration officers and driven to Heathrow. The *Lancet* commented after her removal, 'To stop treating patients in the knowledge that they are being sent home to die is an unacceptable breach of the duties of any health professional. The UK has committed an atrocious barbarism. It is time for doctors' leaders to say so, forcefully and uncompromisingly.'

◆ ● **Delaili Kwadzo Abusah, aka Alfredo Castano-Fuentes, (28), 30/3/08**

A Ghanaian found hanged in his cell at HMP Pentonville. He was arrested in north Wales and charged with entering the country illegally after using a false passport, and served a one-year sentence. The inquest was told he was served with a deportation notice two weeks before his death. Julie Rogers, a senior officer at Pentonville who delivered the news of his deportation, said she spent five minutes with him, and he appeared to have expected it. The coroner directed the jury to record a verdict of suicide.

● **Lucy Kirma, 05/08**

An asylum seeker was found dead in a house used to house asylum seekers in the Edgbaston area of Birmingham. A friend who found her commented: 'I think she had received a letter saying she had to leave and she was very upset about it. I think she just starved herself to

death because she took to her room and wouldn't come out, not even for a drink. She told me her support had also been stopped.'

■ **Two unnamed men, 25/5/08**

The bodies of two unidentified men, thought to be north Africans, were found in the cargo hold of a ship docked at Ayr port in Scotland. The ship had recently arrived from Tunisia carrying material for the production of fertilisers. It is thought that the men died soon after secreting themselves in the hold as once the doors were shut there would have been very little air. The men were thought to be Tunisian after ID cards bearing a Tunisian flag were found.

● **Mohammad Hussain, (36), 3/8/08**

This man died of cancer in hospital following a long fight to gain refugee status. Mohammad left Erbil and sought refuge in the UK in March 2000, following threats from the Kurdish Democratic Party because of his political campaigning. He narrowly avoided deportation, on 14 May 2008, after his lawyer successfully challenged it. While he was held in Lindholme removal centre he sought medical help for a lump in his stomach and was prescribed painkillers. On his release in May he went to Doncaster Royal Infirmary where he was diagnosed with a form of cancer which (by that stage) was incurable.

● **Nadir Zarabee, 5/8/08**

An Iranian asylum seeker found hanged in a park in Longsight, Manchester after being asked to leave his Trafford home, which had been provided by a private company contracted by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) to provide housing to asylum seekers in the area.

● **Hussein Ali, (35), 10/08/08**

Shot himself in the cellar of his home in Sulaimania, Kurdistan days after being deported from the UK. Hussein had been in the UK since 2002. He was detained for fifty days at Oakington removal centre in Cambridgeshire after being arrested in London for working without permission. He was deported to Erbil via Jordan on 7 August 2008.

● **Unnamed Zimbabwean man, (32), 1/9/08**

A Zimbabwean man found dead at his home, a

month after being released from Colnbrook, the maximum security removal centre in west London. A post-mortem revealed the cause of death as tuberculosis (TB). The man came to the UK in 2002 on a visitor's visa that he overstayed. He was held at Colnbrook for just over two years until shortly before his death. Prior to that he had served a sentence of forty months at Littlehey prison where he was detained under immigration powers for deportation to Zimbabwe and transferred to Colnbrook. In July 2008, he was temporarily released on licence following an Appeals Tribunal hearing and placed in National Asylum Support Service (NASS) accommodation, where he was found on 1 September 2008 a neighbour noticed his flat door was open and the television on. The man was released six days after being told he was no longer infectious and after having spent time in hospital and on the healthcare wing at Colnbrook being treated for TB. Information from the coroner suggested that he had been trying to register with a doctor following his release from Colnbrook but had been unsuccessful. An investigation following the death by the Prisons and Probation Service Ombudsman (PPO) made four recommendations, two in relation to the medical needs of detainees and two in relation to public protection. The two public protection recommendations were accepted, however the recommendations in relation to accessing healthcare for asylum seekers were not. The PPO stated that the 'the state has a duty of care to those it is releasing from immigration detention', and was also critical of the lack of information provided to NASS caseworkers who were unaware of the man's medical condition.

● **Frank Odame, (36), 09/08**

A Ghanaian man found with head injuries below a block of flats after police officers and immigration officials visited a flat in Woodford Green. The death is being investigated by the Directorate of Professional Standards of the Metropolitan Police Service.

■ **Baj Singh, (33), 09/08**

Indian man died after being crushed to death under the wheels of a lorry in Trent Vale, Staffordshire. The lorry had travelled from Belgium via Germany. An inquest was told that

fingerprint records showed that he had been picked up twice by immigration officials while trying to enter the UK from Calais and sent back. He had no official documents but gave his name as Baj Singh, when he was picked up earlier on 18 April.

● **Mohammed Ali, (80), 2/11/08**

An Iraqi man suffering from cancer died after being denied treatment and pursued for payment for treatment he had already received. He arrived in the UK in 2006 from Denmark to live with his son in London and was soon diagnosed with lung cancer. He did receive some treatment but this was soon stopped on the grounds that he was not entitled to free treatment. Instead Mohammed was pursued by debt collectors (sent by the NHS) who, according to his son, called at their home first once a month and then on a weekly basis. Mohammed was here legally and was waiting to hear from the Home Office about his right to remain in the UK, which was granted in April 2008. The hospital did agree to refund part of his money and to treat him - but it was too late.

■ **Duy Nguyen, (25), 2/12/08**

A Vietnamese man found dead in the back of lorry stopped on the M3 in Winchester by police after arriving from France in the Channel Tunnel. The 45-year-old driver was detained and later bailed pending further inquiries. The driver called the police after being alerted by another motorist on the M3 who had seen a hand poking from the lorry. The driver had stopped and an unidentified man had run from the lorry. Police said the death was not suspicious and that he had died from hypothermia and natural causes.

* **Kunal Mohanty, (30), 03/09**

This Indian sailor died after his throat was slit in a street attack in Glasgow. Kunal, in the city to sit exams at the Nautical College for promotion to sea captain, was on his way to get a meal with three friends. Christopher Miller approached the four and asked for a cigarette and then, after calling Kunal 'black b*****d', produced a knife and slashed Kunal across the throat. Miller was also later heard to boast to having 'done a P**i'. Miller, 25, denied charges of racially aggravated murder and attempting

to pervert the course of justice and acting in a racially aggravated manner. A jury unanimously found him guilty and the judge sentenced him to serve at least 18 years in prison. (Miller had previous convictions for racially aggravated offences.)

■ **Unknown man, (30s), 6/4/09**

Found dead on Eurostar rail tracks, his badly injured body was found by police who believe he had been hit by a train or fallen from one.

* **Marek Muszynski, (40), 07/09**

A Polish man died after being attacked in the street in Newry, Northern Ireland. He was allegedly taunted with 'Go back to your own country, you're not wanted in Ireland', and then savagely beaten and robbed. A man and a woman have been charged with murder.

● **Heval Huseyn Ismail, (28), 9/8/09**

A Kurdish asylum seeker found hanged in a park in South Shields, South Tyneside. He arrived in the UK in 2006 from Syria and was refused asylum in 2008 and was facing deportation. The coroner recorded an open verdict saying he was not satisfied he intended to take his own life.

● **Jasraj Singh Kataria, (23 months), 16/8/09**

A young child fell from the window of a third floor flat in Dennistoun, Glasgow. Jasraj fell from the window as he apparently watched children walking to school, on 8 August, and died just over a week later. His family were Sikh asylum seekers from Afghanistan, who had been housed at the block of flats by a UKBA contractor, the Angel Group. According to the *Glasgow Herald*: 'Homes with vulnerable occupants must have windows fitted with equipment to prevent falls.' The Angel Group has insisted that the windows at the flat were fitted with locks, as has the UKBA, but has also refused to make public its investigation into the death. Campaigners have called for a fatal accident inquiry into the death.

● **Hassan Rahimi, (16/17), 10/9/09**

A teenage unaccompanied Afghan asylum seeker found hanged in Hounslow, west London in accommodation provided by the social services

department. The day before his death, he was arrested following an alleged assault on his key worker following an argument over an 'allowance payment'. The day before his death he had also been told that key workers would not be staying with him overnight at his flat and that the hours spent with him would be reduced. He had arrived in the UK in June 2005 and placed in the care of Hounslow social services, had been given leave to remain until 8 October 2010 and was awaiting a decision on whether further leave to remain would be given. He was placed with at least six difference foster carers and then in shared/supported accommodation. He had also spent time in secure psychiatric care. There seemed to be some dispute over his age, as following an arrest Hassan insisted that he was over 21 and be treated as an adult. In September 2009, the coroner found that Hassan had taken his own life.

■ **Unknown man, 31/10/09**

Body of a man found in a lorry that was about to enter the Channel Tunnel in France. The lorry had travelled from Belgium and was stopped by customs officials and his body was found in a cramped compartment that was hidden. It is thought the man suffocated to death.

● **Mohammed Safi, (18), 30/10/09**

An Afghan boy found drowned in the Thames seven hours after being arrested on suspicion of immigration offences.

● **Jianping Liu, (35), 12/11/09**

A Chinese woman died after falling from a bridge on the Northern Perimeter Road near Heathrow airport hours after she was arrested by police as an overstayer in the public departure area at Terminal 1. She had been released at 9.30am from custody after it was found that she had leave to be in the UK, and her death was reported at around 1pm that afternoon.

● **Yurij Skruten, 01/10**

A Ukrainian man was found hanged in a disused pub in Brentford. His body was decomposed so the exact cause of death was difficult to establish. He had apparently been living rough after his asylum claim had been refused.

● **Serguei Serykh, (43), Tatiana Serykh,**

Stepan Serykh, (19), 7/3/10

Three Russians died after falling from the fifteenth floor at the Red Road complex in the Balornock area of Glasgow, where asylum seekers are housed by the YMCA under contracts with the UKBA. According to media reports, the family had been granted refugee status in Canada but refused citizenship. Following disputes with authorities, they had left and travelled to Europe, eventually seeking asylum in the UK in 2007. The family apparently settled in Newham, east London where their asylum claims were refused in December 2008. They then moved to Glasgow in autumn 2009. On 15 February the family were told that they were facing deportation, they could go voluntarily or be forcibly deported, back to Russia. The family were also thought to be facing eviction from their flat. Campaigners have called for a fatal accident inquiry to be held into the deaths.

■ **Ramahdin, (16), 11/4/10**

An Afghan boy died in the early hours of the morning after apparently falling from a lorry that had just boarded a boat near to Dunkirk. The young boy, named only as Ramahdin, was apparently trying to reach his cousin who had already travelled clandestinely to the UK the week before.

● ◆ **Eliud Nguli Nyenze, (40), 15/4/10**

A Kenyan man died at Oakington removal centre in Cambridge after apparently suffering a heart attack. Campaigners and other detainees alleged that he had been refused medical care. Following his death a disturbance erupted at Oakington and at least 60 people were transferred to prisons. In the days following the death the private company that runs the centre, G4S, was stripped of its British Safety Council award for its 'commitment to improving health and safety'. An inquest in October 2010 was told that he had collapsed in his room and despite earlier complaining that he wasn't well had been refused paracetamol. An ambulance took twenty minutes to reach the centre and the nurse who went to treat him did not take a defibrillator with her. The Home Office pathologist could find no cause of death but suggested sudden adult death syndrome. The coroner recorded a verdict that he died of natural caus-

es, a verdict Eliud's family were unhappy with.

● **Alan Rasoul Ahmed, Wales, (21), 2/5/10**

A man found hanged in accommodation in Kensington, Liverpool. Alan had become depressed over the final weeks of his life, he was homesick and wanted to return home to Iraq after his asylum claim was refused. Unfortunately being left in limbo and the pain of wanting to return home became too much for him and he took his own life.

● **Osman Rasul Mohammed, (27), 25/7/10**

An Iraqi Kurdish asylum seeker jumped from the seventh floor of a Nottingham tower block. On Sunday 25 July 2010, according to the *Guardian*, police officers talked to Osman as he was perched by railings of Clifford Court in Radford for two hours before he placed his hand on his heart, looked up to the sky and jumped. Osman was destitute and relied on the generosity of his friends, many of whom were in a similar situation, and local charity distributed by Nottingham and Notts Refugee Forum (NNRF). Osman had been in the UK since 2001 after fleeing Iraq when his father and brother were killed. He had been refused permission to stay in the UK but was in the process of submitting a fresh asylum claim. As such he was not in receipt of any support from the government and was forced to live on the street with £20 per month and food parcels supplied by NNRF. He was not allowed to work and probably had little access to health care. He had separated from his Polish partner with whom he had two children. The *Guardian* also reported that he had managed to make his way to London to visit UKBA offices in Croydon but had been turned away and told to find a solicitor. Osman was one of over 10,000 clients of the Refugee and Migrant Justice (RMJ) charity that recently went into administration leaving its vulnerable clients without access to legal advice.

▲ **Qabil Amin, (21), 22/8/10**

An asylum seeker from Afghanistan found dead in the cab of a digger in Blackburn, Lancashire. He suffered from head injuries after the digger he was driving crashed. The UKBA commented that his 'case for asylum was still under consideration at the time of his death, but the legality of his work is still being looked at.'

● **Jimmy Mubenga, (46), 12/10/10**

An unnamed Angolan man died after becoming 'unwell' during a deportation. According to the *Guardian* the man was being escorted by three guards from the private company G4S, on a flight that was preparing to leave from Heathrow to Luanda, Angola, paramedics were called and the man was taken to Hillingdon hospital where he was pronounced dead. Police are investigating the death.

Selected further reading

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Please see the IRR's website for further information, particularly, the IRR's report, *Driven to Desperate Measures*, which examines deaths from 1989-2006:
<<http://www.irr.org.uk/2006/september/ha000013.html>>
<<http://www.irr.org.uk/pdf/Driventodesperatemeasures.pdf>> (pdf file, 401kb)

Also view the IRR's *Fact file: roll call of deaths of asylum seekers and undocumented migrants* at:
<<http://www.irr.org.uk/2006/december/ak000016.html>>

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Front cover pictures, top row from left to right:

Jasraj Singh Kataria, Eliud Nguli Nyenze, Aleksey Baranovsky, the Serykh family (Serguei, Tatiana and Stepan), Osman Rasul Mohammed, Deжере Kebede-Tulu. **Second row:** Asif Azmad, Heval Huseyn Ismail, Naser Al Shdaida, Baitul Atique, Abiy Fessfha Abebe, unidentified Asian stowaway.

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Institute of Race Relations
2-6 Leeke Street, London WC1X 9HS
Tel: 020 7837 0041
Fax: 020 7278 0623
Web: www.irr.org.uk
Email: info@irr.org.uk
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