



Charity no. 1120185

Patron: Professor John Fitzpatrick OBE, Kent Law Clinic

Annual Report 2014–2015

ANNUAL REPORT 2014 – 2015

Kent Refugee Help is a small, user-led charity working for the release of migrants currently or recently detained in Dover Immigration Removal Centre (known as the DIRC), or in prisons in Kent and London. We believe that indefinite detention for administrative purposes is discriminatory and unjust, and should be challenged. We seek to obtain the release of detained persons through casework with individuals and by supporting bail applications. A feature of our work is the continuing support we offer to former detainees and their families following their release into the community.

2014-2015 has seen the extension of our activities to include foreign nationals held in prisons in Kent and London prior to threatened deportation. Our caseworkers continue their crucial support for Dover detainees and ex-detainees, whom we have also been able to assist with some travel and educational expenses. We work closely with Kent Law Clinic, Samphire (ex-Dover Detainees Visitor Group), Bail for Immigration Detainees (BID), and Detention Forum.



Kalfan (Bajuni): Pumpkin Day at Sage Greenfingers project, Sheffield. After 10 long years of uncertainty Kalfan was granted leave to remain in March 2015.



KRH Personnel

Trustees: Rod Edmond, Lyn Innes, Ewen Macmillan, Chris Perks, Sue Powell (Chair)

Caseworkers: Kate Adams, Pete Keenan

Administrative Support: Lesley Grove of Accuracy Accounts and Alexia Padgham of Your VA

Website: Nancy Roth

Volunteers: Hakki Aganoglu, Matthew Bodycombe, Rosie Hardy, Bahriye Kemal, Alice Scott, Martin Welby.

Also essential support from Sureties, present and former detainees.

KRH continues to work closely with the Kent Law Clinic, Catherine Carpenter, John Fitzpatrick, and Sheona York, who generously share their expertise with our case-workers, volunteers, and clients. Sheona's contributions to training sessions have been brilliantly clear, informative, and challenging.

We have during the past year continued our regular meetings with the management of the Dover Immigration Removal Centre (DIRC). These meetings have allowed us to share information and suggestions which can benefit our clients, and facilitate our access to them. We have agreed a new Memorandum of Understanding concerning the times and conditions for KRH member and caseworker meetings with detainees, and have established a generally cooperative approach to supporting the men in the DIRC. A recent move has been to establish joint meetings with DIRC management and Samphire, and we have found this sensible and useful.

After considerable discussion as to the key points to be emphasised, including an end to indefinite detention, our submission to the Parliamentary Enquiry on Detention was written and sent by Lucy Williams.

This year we have completely recreated our website: www.kentrefugeehelp.org.uk, designed and maintained by Nancy Roth, a supporter from Falmouth. The website features news and comments on recent events organised by KRH, as well as links to other organisations and articles relevant to the status and plight of refugees in Britain and the rest of Europe. We hope you find it easy to navigate and welcome your comments or ideas for additions. All websites are work in progress, and ours is no exception. We hope it strikes the right balance between what we are doing, and informative articles about the wider context of our work.



Training

KRH holds at least one training event each year to keep us and our friends up-to-date with current legislation and changes affecting our clients. In November Richard Warren, who works with Sheona York at the Kent Law clinic, gave an excellent presentation on the effects of the 2014 Immigration Act, "Challenging the Climate of Hostility- Foreign national prisoners facing deportation." 30 people attended. Sue Powell presented on being a surety. Ruhul Anam former detainee spoke about his experience of immigration detention in prison and detention centres.

After the meeting the sister of a man facing deportation to the Caribbean emailed Kate Adams, who had organised the event. She wrote:

Thank you and your team for having and hosting the meeting last night. What we heard was very informative and gave our family hope. The authorities and the government do not know the devastating impact that their policies and actions are having on families. Every action has a reaction and each group feels like they have been targeted. Where does this? The anger and hate being sown by these policies will have a long lasting effect on society. Fathers, in particular, are being taken away from their children, who are British Citizens, are being left to grow without a father and there is well documented evidence of the consequences of that, and they are not good. The impact also of living in this country for 30 years and now being told that you have to leave. It is indeed a death sentence; they might as well hang you. Where is your future? You are going to a country where do not even know something as basic as the phone system there.

Finance and Funding

We are currently supported by grants from the **Allen Lane Foundation** and **The Yapp Trust** (both now in their second year of a two year grant), and are also supported by a 3-year grant (now in its second year) from the **Henry Smith Foundation**. These three grants have allowed us to continue our core work with DIRC detainees and ex-detainees, and we are deeply grateful to these charities for their crucial support.

This year we also received a one year grant from **Awards for All** for a pilot project working with detainees held in prisons in Kent and London. Our report on this project appears below. We will be applying for funding to continue this project for at least one more year.

In addition we have received a number of donations from individuals, churches, and other groups. People have given generously to the **Eddie Barns Memorial Fund**.

These funds have allowed us to assist ex-detainees with emergency funds for travel and subsistence . A grant from the **Huguenot Trust** also made it possible for us to assist ex-detainees with educational and training costs.

We are now applying to a number of charities for funding to cover case-worker salaries and other core expenses during the next two years.



Alpha Barry with his KRH surety, David Herd and son Eli and other friends on the occasion of his graduation at Westminster Cathedral. Alpha completed his BA in Tourism Management at St Mary's University, Twickenham after securing one of the Article 26 fee-waived places at St Mary's.

Casework statistics	2014-15	2013-14
Total number of Referrals:	73	(53)
Total men Released with our help:	20	(19)
Released with Surety:	13	(11)
Released no surety allocated:	1	(2)
Released Temporary Admission:	6	(4)
Released voluntary return:	0	(1)
Removed against will:	4	(4)
Granted leave to remain with our help:	5	(1)
Unlawful Detention Compensation award:	1	(1)

With the re-opening of renovated wings and expansion of the DIRC capacity to accommodate over 400 men, we have seen a growth in referrals again this year. We note increasing detention of particular ethnic/regional groups by the Home office in Dover. Of major concern in the past few months has been the placing in DIRC of men suffering from serious medical conditions with which the Health centre is not adequately equipped to deal.

The impact of yet more cuts in Legal aid on those with whom we work is a significant element in casework. In particular the removal of legal aid for Article 8 family related representation has a heavy human toll, with desperate families often falling into the hands of incompetent or unscrupulous representatives. On the other hand it is heartening to find occasionally a local private solicitor such as the one in Ashford who is not only extremely competent, but also whose heart comes before her fee.

We also began to feel more immediately here the impact of ISIS when we assisted an individual, in fear of his life in an ISIS controlled area of Iraq, to negotiate both literal and legal minefields, and gain sanctuary in the UK.

Collaboration with other organisations

Strong cooperation with the folk at **Samphire** provides benefits for all concerned. We now meet every three months jointly with Samphire and DIRC management, and these meetings have offered suggestions and evidence for positive change in attitudes by DIRC staff and in the treatment of those detained.



KRH presence within APEK (Advice Partnership for East Kent), raising awareness about Kent detainees, created a window for Sheona York from Kent Law Clinic to deliver to a broad range of advice groups a talk on the impact of Immigration Legal Aid cuts.

Our collaborative campaigning work this year as part of **Detention Forum** can be summed up by part of the group's post election statement:

It was disappointing that the parties which pledged to end indefinite detention did not win the election but there is no time to despair as detention continues.

At the same time we have gained more ground that enables us to continue to challenge immigration detention – six years ago when we started, it was not even an “issue” as few people knew about it, let alone dared to talk about or criticise it. The issue has become far more mainstream now, in particular thanks to the detention inquiry report, and although the political climate is very tough, we have reasons to believe that we can still make progress in challenging detention.

A recently circulated Detention Forum restructure proposal has been circulated by us and suggests ways to take the campaign forward, building on the above advances.

Both new and experienced Sureties continue to inspire with their often remarkable commitment and determination to go the extra miles in support of those with whom we work.

Refugees in Prison: Foreign National Prisoner project:

Personnel: Casework Manager: Kate Adams, assisted by Subashini Nathan (November 14 - Feb. 15). Alice Scott, Ewen Macmillan, Matthew Bodycombe

During the past year, KRH has been supporting migrants held in prisons. Holding migrants under immigration powers *after* the end of criminal sentences is a scandal that has been of concern to KRH so we are very grateful to Awards for All for funding this project. In addition to challenging the ongoing imprisonment of time-served prisoners we also support challenges to deportation orders when prisoners fear returning to their country of origin or have families and friendship ties in the UK.

Recent legislation has not only reduced access to legal aid but has severely reduced the rights of migrants *and* their families.

This year we have assessed 75 foreign national prisoners and referred on, or supported 40 of them. We have done intensive work with 18 men in HMPs Wormwood Scrubs, Wandsworth, Elmley, Maidstone and Swale and we are now a regular presence at 2-monthly workshops in



HMP Pentonville. We have seen prisoners from Albania, Algeria, Afghanistan, China, The Netherlands, Germany, Ghana, India, Jamaica, Kurdistan, Liberia, Lithuania, Nigeria, Palestine, Pakistan, Portugal, Poland, Romania, Somalia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Tunisia and Turkey.

Despite having been living in the UK for many years many prisoners now face removal to countries they have little knowledge of. Clients often have strong connections to the UK and some fear persecution in countries of origin. We have identified victims of torture and have referred clients to solicitors to restart asylum claims, build cases and gain release through bail. KRH also supports the families of detainees at deportation hearings and bail hearings. Many of the cases we work with are extremely complicated and require liaison with agencies including health care staff inside and outside the Prison. These include health care providers, Probation, Section 4 accommodation providers, solicitors and other charities most notably Bail for Immigration Detainees (BID) Article 8 Deportation Advice Project (ADAP) who have been of great assistance. We have also referred many cases to Bid's Prison Project for bail.

5 men have been released on Bail successes with KRH's support and we have recruited 2 new bail sureties and supported sureties from detainee's own networks.

Case studies:

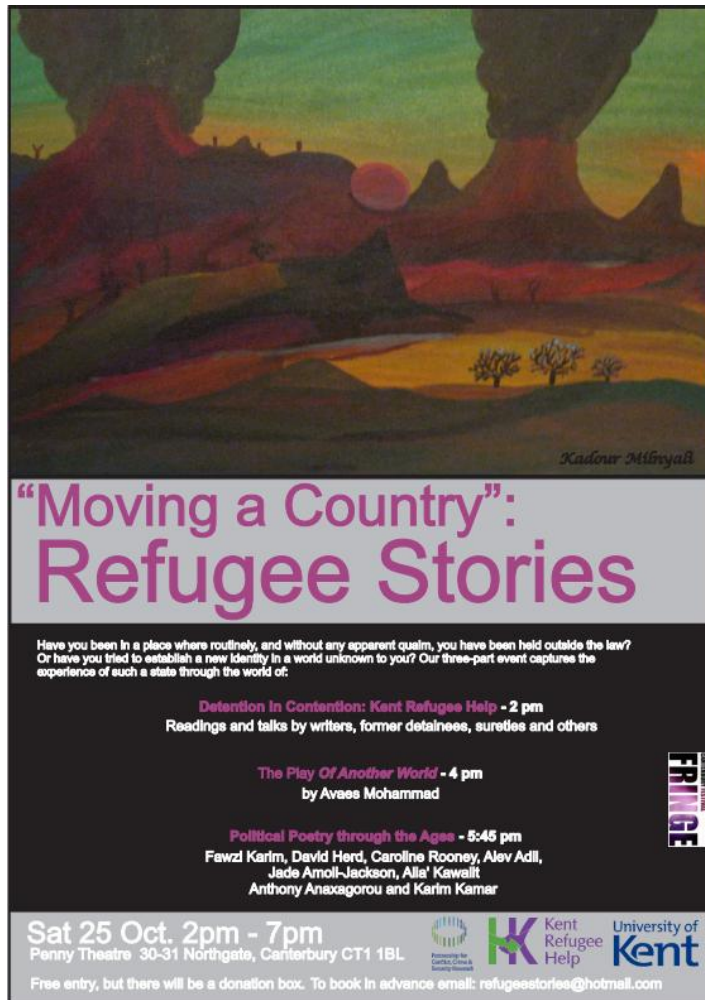
Mr K (39) has been in the UK since 1995. He has children in the UK and is appealing against an 8-year sentence. He has been tortured in his country of origin and has been diagnosed with PTSD. He has a history of self-harm and has attempted suicide three times. KRH has been advocating for his health needs in a prison and against being sent to a prison without appropriate medical facilities. We have referred his case to ADAP.

Mr F (22) was sentenced to 5 years but was held in prison under Immigration powers for an extra 7 months. KRH found him a surety and liaised with his solicitors though a bail application could not be made. He has recently been moved out of prison to a detention centre.

Mr T (41) is Liberian but the Home Office claims he is Nigerian. He has been in the UK since 1982. KRH supported him and his family to get bail and he is now living with one of his 8 siblings. He has 2 children. He has significant mental health issues so KRH provided a care plan to assist with his release on bail.

Public and Social Events

Moving a Country, October 25, 2014



Moving a Country was a five-hour extravaganza of readings, talks, drama and poetry by 17 speakers who presented the experiences of refugees from around the world. These worlds were shared and celebrated by around 100 people who attended.

This three-part event, held at the Penny Theatre, was part of the Canterbury Fringe Festival, organized by KRH in collaboration with the University of Kent's Centre for Colonial and Postcolonial Studies.

The first '**Detention in Contention: Kent Refugee Help**', included readings by Abdulrazak Gurnah, whose celebrated fiction has explored and dramatised the experience of the immigrant, and Kate Adams, artist, poet and KRH case worker. This was followed by talks from Rod Edmond, academic and writer, on his experience as a bail surety with KRH, and Ruhul

Annam, a former detainee, who discussed the long-term social and psychological effects of detention.

The second part of the event was a striking piece of **puppet theatre, 'Of Another World,'** by the poet and novelist Avaes Mohammad, dramatising the migrant experience of being isolated in a strange and unfamiliar world.

The final part, '**Political Poetry through the Ages**', comprised an exceptional line up of poets: Fawzi Karim, Caroline Rooney, David Herd, Alev Adil, Jade Amoli Jackson, Alia Kawalit, Kayo Chingonyi.

Moving a Country captured the voices and stories of refugees today opening up their experiences, high-lighting suffering, prejudice and official indifference, without losing hope in the possibility of a better future. It involved a conversation between the speakers and the encouragingly diverse audience that resulted in a more detailed and nuanced understanding of the immigrant experience and gave a powerful shot of energy to all those involved in easing the passage of the immigrant, and challenging the public attitudes and official policies that make that current experience unacceptable.

Much of the credit for the success of this event goes to the fantastic energy and efficiency of Bahriye Kemal who was chiefly responsible for the organizing and publicity.

Vigil for Migrants Drowned as they sought Refuge in Europe

On Saturday 28 April about 30 people attended a vigil by the Brian Haw peace bench on Whitstable beach, called the last minute for the 700 migrants drowned crossing the Mediterranean. The vigil was organised by the local Stop the Cuts Group and Kent Refugee Help.



Chris Weller from Canterbury and Whitstable Stop the Cuts Group asked for two minutes of silence in a call to end war and to remember the migrants and their families.

Kate Adams from Kent Refugee Help commented, "As well as reinstating the search and rescue service we must also demand asylum and a safe crossing for these refugees."

Currently there is no legal way for them to come. The EU must change its policy and the UK should also play its part. The migrants are coming from unstable regimes such as Syria, Eritrea and Somalia. To date we have only resettled 143 Syrian refugees and in total we take just one percent of the world's asylum seekers, yet we have a moral and legal responsibility to provide protection under the Refugee Convention. "

In the first quarter of 2015, 1,500 people have already drowned, 20 times as many as in the same period of 2014. Last year over 4000 bodies were recovered from the Mediterranean, and these were just the ones who were found.

Visit to Greece



In April, over the period of the Greek Easter, Kate Adams and Sue Powell visited former KRH caseworker **Eleftheria Papa** in Athens. She lives in Exarcheia, the site of a vigorous social and political life, and she took them to the square where many demonstrations took place, and where many migrants lived as homeless people until the Fascist group Golden Dawn killed a Pakistani there and closed the square in 2013. Thereafter migrants could only be sheltered in detention centres and prisons.

Under the new government some moves are being made to process asylum claims and , and there is less harassment of migrants by police . Eleftheria works as a volunteer in a migrant shelter which houses up to 15 asylum seekers. She discussed with Kate and Sue the possibility of twinning with KRH, forming a regular link

to exchange news and ideas.

A full report by Kate Adams can be read on the KRH website: www.kentrefugeehelp.org.uk

Mid-Winter Party and Auction

Our party in December was again held at Sue Powell's house in Wye. We welcomed new and old friends including several of our clients, who particularly enjoy relaxing in a family setting. We used the opportunity to hold an auction of paintings, mostly provided by Kate Adams as a result of clearing her attic. The auction raised £400 for the Eddie Barns Fund (with a small amount going to Algerian artist Kadour Milnyali for the materials used in the painting he contributed).



Looking Forward

In the face of continuing turmoil in North Africa and the Middle East, together with the recent election results and targeting of migrants as scapegoats, our work will become even more necessary in the coming year. We will continue our core activities working with detainees and former detainees in the Dover Immigration Removal Centre as well as increasing our involvement with detainees held in prisons in Kent and London. We seek the support and encouragement of all volunteers and well-wishers in creating better public awareness of issues surrounding refugees and asylum seekers.



‘Desert Spirit’ by Algerian artist, Kadour Milnyali, a former client of the charity

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