



Charity no. 1120185

Patrons:

Anthony Anaxagorou, Poet and Publisher

# Annual Report 2021-2022





**Kent Refugee Help** is a small user-led charity, now in its fourteenth year. Our main focus is working with foreign national prisoners in London and Kent prison establishments. Some of our clients are in prison under immigration laws, being deemed too high-risk to be placed in a removal centre. Others may be refugees, former unaccompanied minors, EU migrants, those with long residence who came to the UK fleeing human rights violations with their parents when very young, people who are undocumented or stateless. All are trying to navigate the complex legal system they are caught up in, with very little help or advice available. Many of them are facing deportation at the end of their sentence without legal representation. We are there to listen and take forward in whatever way is appropriate for each client.

During the year 2021-2022, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic it was still difficult to go into prisons, so we mainly continued to support FNP and people who had been released, remotely. We supported people in various prisons, which included HMPs Pentonville, Elmley, Maidstone, Littlehey and Rochester. In order to continue our support during these difficult times, we applied for and secured emergency funding from the Community Justice Fund. With the cooperation of HMP Rochester, we managed to send money to FNPs during December holidays so they could call their families.

During the year we also received individual referrals from HMPs Wormwood Scrubs, Rochester, Elmley, Swaleside, Huntercombe, Maidstone, and Stoke Heath. There is complex ongoing work with several former detainees from the DIRC (Dover Immigration Removal centre), which closed in 2015. This work is done by the previous case worker on a voluntary basis. Men on bail, waiting for their asylum case to be resolved, are forbidden to work, must conform to reporting restrictions, and are frequently tagged. This is akin to 'prison in the community'. This situation continues. KRH believes that indefinite detention of any person for administrative purpose is discriminatory and should be challenged.

We would like to thank all our funders and organisations who have helped us to continue our work.

## **KRH Personnel**

**Trustees:** Bahriye Kemal, Andrew Jordan, Chris Perks, Chelcie Henry-Robertson

**Legal Advisers:** Antti de Ruano, Fatima Kadić

**Caseworkers:** Kate Adams, Raga Gibreel, Pete Keenan

**Admin. support:** Lesley Grove of Accuracy Accounts, Caroline Gipson VA.

**Volunteers:** Hakki Aganoglu, Pete Keenan, Maria Ruano, Liza Seed, Rupert Bowers, Lucas Strauss, Nick Tompsett (website)

Although we no longer find Sureties for bail, we acknowledge that some of our former Sureties are still in touch with and support the people they stood bail for, some of whom have to wait many years for the resolution of their case.

We continue to work with **The Prisoners' Advice Service** and **Kent Law Clinic** and **BID (Bail for Immigration Detainees)**



## **Finance and Funding**

Our prison work this year has been funded by the **ARM Trust, YAPP, The Allen Lane Foundation, Community Justice Fund, and the Vulnerable Persons Fund** administered through the **Kent Community Foundation**.

Donations from individuals and church groups have continued to be generous. We see this as proof of a strong public desire to see more positive action to welcome and support refugees in the UK. Donations are treated as 'unrestricted' funds, which we use for the many individual needs of our clients. In addition to small amounts to cover emergency food, travel and phone top-ups, we have paid for gym membership, clothing and footwear. We paid for 12 art therapy sessions, subsidised and provided by Birmingham Art Therapies for a client who became mentally unwell in prison and needed community support for him to carry on. We have for the past two years supported an ex-client by paying his allotment fees in order for him to carry on keeping his chickens. A long term client who is still awaiting the outcome of his asylum claim was able to obtain a place at college, and we gifted him a laptop to help him with his studies. The amounts are small, but each one makes a positive contribution to the lives of our clients.

## Personal and Political Journeys by Nasrin Parvaz



Nasrin's painting the Crowded Cell is a reflection of her experiences in Evin Prison Iran where she was held for 8 years and tortured because of her activism for civil rights. This painting was featured in our exhibition of foreign national prisoner's art in 2018. Nasrin was our guest artist. All Nasrin's work features the struggles of refugees and other displaced people. Her boat paintings are a continuation of this theme. Nazanin Zaghari -Ratcliffe who has British and Iranian dual citizenship was detained in Evin

prison for five years on charges of espionage against the Iranian government. Nasrin supported her campaign to be released and has continued to fight for the freedom of people detained for spurious reasons in Iranian prisons, some of whom face execution. When Nazanin was released on 16 March 2022 and flew home, journalists also contacted Nasrin for her story.

### Nasrin's Statement on the Boat Paintings

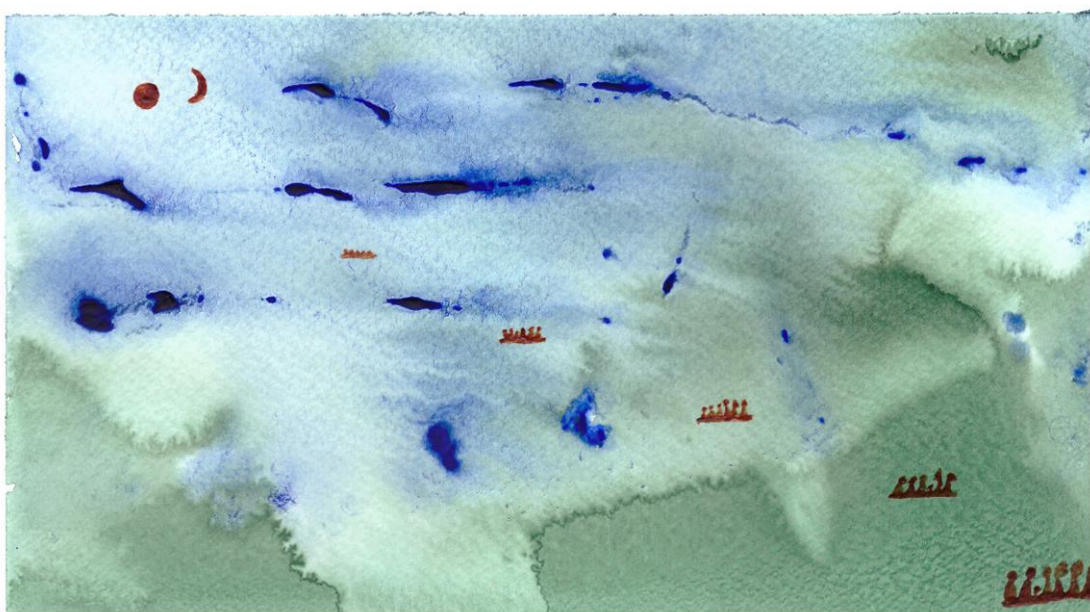
My works explore personal and political journeys based on both my life and collective experiences that I have witnessed and heard about.





I'm interested in evoking an emotion expressing the concerns of everyday life such as imprisonment, immigration, poverty etc - but also seeing the other side with hope and kindness. My work explores the vulnerabilities of humans, which are a snapshot of collective trauma, inflicted on us by the corrupt system. I capture this in my work, regardless of the media I use: drawing, painting, sculpture or printmaking.

My exploration of these subjects started with the realisation that there were no pictures or vivid paintings when I was a political prisoner in Iran. I became a civil rights activist when the Islamic regime took power in 1979. I was arrested in 1982, tortured and spent eight years in prison.



My background study was not art, so while I started to work with watercolours at home to depict the images of prison, I went to life drawing to learn proportion. My hands met clay for the first time in 2018 and I worked with several different printing methods which helped me realise that I could say what I wanted to through art. I have found that despite the lack of control over the final image in printmaking, I could play with it during the process of creation, which made the result interesting.



Both my writing and art are about our historical time: brutal power politics and social injustices all over the world as well as the collective trauma this places on people. I feel that painting and printmaking are more immediate forms of art and means of expression than writing.

These paintings of refugees are about the English Channel which is a shameful sea of blood.

My books are: 'One Woman's Struggle in Iran, A Prison Memoir', and 'The Secret Letters from X to A', were published by Victorina Press in 2018.

<http://www.nasrinparvaz.org/web/>

## Casework and Volunteer Reports

### **Kate Adams Caseworker and Prison Project Coordinator.**

The Prison Project is the core work of the charity, reaching out to foreign nationals in Kent and London prisons. This group is comprised of refugees and migrants who have sought safety and a better life in the UK, only to find themselves incarcerated because of mistakes they have made often resulting from poverty and the cruelty of immigration control. They are a neglected and stigmatised group struggling to survive in a hostile environment. Now under the shadow of the Nationality and Borders Act, which has outlawed asylum claims and diminished migrant rights, they exist in a heightened state of fear and loneliness.

### **This year our casework team has assisted 55 people from the following countries:**

Albania, Algeria, Bulgaria, Congo, Cuba, France, Guinea, Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Kurdistan, Nigeria, Poland, Spain, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Zambia, Zimbabwe. 22 were new cases and 8 required intensive support. Further funding of £20,000 from the Community Justice Fund has allowed us to continue to provide an immigration advice line and comprehensive support through advice letters and legal visits tailored to meet individual needs. The team consists of two experienced part time immigration advisors, Antti de Ruano and Fatima Kadic and myself a generic caseworker. The majority of our clients face deportation without legal representation, due to stringent cuts which caused many immigration firms to close. Those that remain have limited or no capacity for prison cases.

Our legal advisors have assisted clients to build their case for appeal, and represent themselves at the First- tier Tribunal, Immigration and Asylum Chamber. (IAFT). Additional material can be sourced from Bail for Immigration Detainees website (Bid). Clients are also provided with a very useful guide to completing the appeal form produced by a former legal volunteer Catherine Carpenter. This shows them how to apply for a fee waiver so they can request an oral hearing, which is essential to the success of a case. The fee of £140 is prohibitive to many prisoners who are without financial resources and they will opt for a paper hearing which does not allow them a voice in court.

### **Our Successes**

Through generic casework I have helped clients challenge reporting conditions, apply for a release address and lodge an appeal if this is refused. Using a template provided by Bid I assisted our client M in obtaining Exceptional Case Funding legal aid for his deportation appeal. M is from the Sudan which has not accepted him as a citizen so the Home Office are unable to deport him. He has lived in limbo for almost 20 years and is effectively stateless. This contributed to the break- up of his marriage and his attempted suicide. The KRH legal team liaised with the court and helped him prepare to attend the initial case management hearing for the appeal unrepresented. The Judge was sympathetic and gave him adequate time to find a solicitor. He attended his full hearing with good representation and his confidence renewed. We hope he will be granted leave to remain.

A is from Algeria. Algeria has a history of refusing emergency travel documents (ETDS), issued to people the Home Office wants to deport. However in A's case an ETD had been obtained and he was facing deportation within 9 days. He was in prison, very isolated and without representation. Another NGO had been trying to find him a solicitor without result for some time. A KRH legal advisor visited him and provided him with a detailed assessment of his case. Following her advice, he wrote to the Home Office and asked them to suspend removal directions which they did. This has allowed him a breathing space to continue his

search for a lawyer. The next steps are to make an application based on long residence in the UK.

### **Victory for asylum seekers convicted of “boat steering.”**

We received referrals from asylum seekers who had crossed the channel and had been imprisoned and arrested for steering a small boat on the basis that they were assisting “illegal immigration” and effectively people trafficking. These clients were from Iran, Iraq and Sudan and had come to the UK to escape persecution and conflict. I was given the contact details for Canel Halil of Emmerly Halil and Brown Solicitors who had made a successful legal challenge on one such a case which set a precedent. Despite the Crown Prosecution Service advising that there should be no more prosecutions the Home Office continued to press for the arrest and imprisonment of these vulnerable asylum seekers. Canel took five cases from KRH to the Court of Appeal. They were represented by Aneurin Brewster of Red Lion Chambers. Their convictions were formally quashed by the Court on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022 and all were eventually released from prison and immigration detention and have gone on to process their asylum claims.

However, the injustice of their treatment by the British state impacted severely on their health and well-being, leaving them angry, confused and mistrustful. One person tried to take his own life in prison and was saved by a supportive friend. The immigration solicitors we found for one of our clients will press for an unlawful detention claim and I believe there could be grounds for all the clients we referred. I have recently been notified of another client with the same conviction languishing in prison past his sentence date. I immediately him referred to Canel Halil to launch an appeal. We express heart-felt thanks to Canel and his colleague Aneurin Brewer for their indefatigable work in assisting innocent asylum seekers to obtain their freedom and clear their names. Our concern is that criminalizing asylum seekers for crossing the channel is now enshrined in the Nationality and Borders Act which contradicts both the guidance from the CPS and the international refugee convention.

### **Christopher gets Leave to remain**

Christopher, an ex-detainee I visited in the Dover Immigration Removal Centre in 2003, has kept in touch over the years. His nationality was disputed by the Home Office and he only survived after leaving detention with support from his church. Christopher is now happily married with five children.

About two months ago Christopher called me to say the whole family had been granted leave to remain. The catalyst was the death of the kindly pastor who had supported him for so many years, which resulted in the family being made homeless. The Citizen’s Advice Bureau referred them to Social Services and an application was made by his wife for herself and the children in which Christopher was included. Now they have alternative accommodation and Christopher is looking for a job. At last, he has some security but it has taken so long! We congratulate Christopher and his family for their perseverance and endurance and wish them well for the future.

### **Kate Adams, Caseworker**

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### **Antti de Ruano, Legal Project Report**

While at present we can only offer one-off legal advice on immigration matters and only very exceptionally legal representation in a very small number of cases, it seems to us that the legal advice we can provide is already of considerable assistance to foreign national prisoners who often do not seem to even have access to the limited advice we give about the options they have but of which they do not seem to have any knowledge before hearing our advice.

#### Interesting Litigation with a Happy End - Confidentiality of Communication between Prisoners and their Legal Advisors

KRH was involved in litigation somewhat unusually on the issues of confidential access with prisoners.

It seemed a potentially interesting case about the scope of Prison Rule 39 and legal privilege in correspondence between prisoners and their legal advisers. It seemed an important point of principle that prisoners should have the benefit of legal privilege in their communications with their OISC regulated legal advisers on issues of legal advice and representation with their immigration and deportation cases. Rule 2 of the Prison Rules 1999 defines the term “legal adviser” for the purposes of these rules as a prisoner's 'counsel or solicitor, and includes a clerk acting on behalf of his solicitor...' but somewhat surprisingly this has been interpreted so as not to include OISC regulated legal advisers. Curiously on the other hand, in the case of *R (van Hoogstraten) v Governor of Belmarsh Prison* [2003] 1 WLR 263, it was held that an Italian *avvocato* by virtue of EU provisions then in force was entitled to be considered a legal adviser for the purposes of Prison Rules.

However, by settling the matter out of court in the end, KRH achieved an even better outcome through confidential access which now covers all our staff at KRH and not only the legal advisers who had sought to rely on Rule 39.

We remain deeply grateful for the considerable amount of work done, as would inevitably be the case with High Court litigation, completely free of charge, by Rupert Bowers QC and Tayyiba Bajwa, barristers of Doughty Street Chambers and Mark Spragg and Huguette Craggs of Keystone Law, Solicitors.

**Antti de Ruano, Legal Advisor**

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**Pete Keenan**  
**HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT and Changing Attitudes**  
**Diary of a Year to Date**

Quote: from National Daily 2/12/21

‘DOZENS of mourners in Dover gathered under its White Cliffs on Wednesday evening to remember the 27 lives lost in the Channel a week on from the disaster.

The candle-lit vigil was the third to be held at the Dover coast in just over a year, the most recent taking place three months ago for a 27-year-old Eritrean man who drowned in the English Channel in August. “It’s absolutely horrific,” vigil organiser Kay Marsh(Samphire) told the Morning Star.

Local resident Pete Keenan, who is also a case worker for Kent Refugee Help, told the Star the vigil was symbolic of the coastal community’s historic resistance against threats to human rights.

“This area stood in direct opposition to the Nazis in the past and we’re not prepared to accept it from within, and not defend human rights,” he said.’

The 3.5 metre-tall living artwork of a young Syrian refugee child was walked across Turkey, through Europe, arriving in Dover on 20th October last year, to focus peoples minds on the plight of young refugees fleeing Syria. Dover has very much been seen as a ‘front line’ for refugee and immigration policies and reaction; we had been forced to deal with the attentions of aggressive attention seeking far right groups. Thus as locals gathered for the walk through Dover and up the winding path to the Castle on the Hill, it was with great delight that we saw a really great number of adults and children gather under clear skies, before the walk under the stars, with dozens of large hand made lanterns towards the illuminated castle above.

Channel Rescue: ‘BREAKING: WE’VE WON! – the [Home Office](#) has announced that it is going to abandon Channel pushbacks in the face of legal challenges that we were bringing alongside [PCS Union](#), [Care4Calais](#), and [Freedom from Torture](#).

‘The abandonment of the pushback policy is thanks to the tireless work of organisations fighting against reckless, unlawful government policies. Pushbacks are a reckless endangerment to life and we have always maintained and reminded the government that they are unlawful. Huge thanks to our legal team, the [Good Law Project](#).’

The Hostile Government afront to Human Rights, was nowhere better demonstrated than by the callous enclosure within the condemned C19th local Napier Barracks huts, of registered Asylum seekers, in direct violation of its own Covid first wave regulations for the protection

of the populace. The subsequent inevitable large scale outbreak, despite warnings, caused no change of policy, and the same stark units were re populated as before.

The Refugee NGO's, in the light of such cynicism, established a 'Drop in Centre' not far from the camp, offering on-going support to residents from Napier, avoiding a potential for being seen as complicit with Government policy, by operating within the Barracks itself.

I supported a recent visit to Kent from European Refugee Research group MIGREUROP, who undertake comparative studies of different European states, their policies, popular reactions and NGO activities, our part of Kent being a focus in that regard again. I was able to introduce Pierre M. to NGO's at the Drop in Centre and arrange a meeting and tour of operations with members of Channel Rescue, who patrol the coast /observe/ support/campaign for those attempting the crossing from France in small boats.

We also managed to arrange an online meeting with representatives of the RNLI – whose vocal media refusal to cooperate with either Government 'Push Back' policies or hostile right wing rhetoric, was a truly heart-warming beam of light, in the midst of a particularly dark sequence of events and attitudes – and did no harm at all to their donations – again great to hear.

There have been many lows, but some very definite highs in the reaction of some people to events here in Kent over the last 12 months. Having lived long term with the Hostile Environment now, its historical trajectory and current state is expanded upon, in 'Status Now's web page and the likes of the 'Good Law project' are well worth investigating too – particularly in light of Rwanda perhaps?

#### Casework Report:

An unexpected role for me post DIRC years, was to find myself cast by circumstances in a 'Mckenzie friend' type of role, standing by a long term client/friend(by now), in a Legal hearing, in lieu of a professional counsel. We had the bonus of a not unsympathetic judge, who was also very competent. Unfortunately so was the H.O. representative. With a rather thin defence bundle, we had to focus heavily on undermining a very specific aspect of the H.O's case, which was unfortunately not enough to win the overall appeal, but was really highlighted in the judges Decision and Reasoning, to the point that it provides potential strong future evidence in dealing with another aspect of Mr. C's situation.

**Pete Keenan, Caseworker**

**Message to the ‘Not the Andrew Marr Show’ of January 16 2022 by Canel Halil, Emery Halil & Brown Solicitors**

The successful appeal and subsequent acquittal of Fouad Kakaei, and the successful appeals which have now followed from it, represent a fundamental victory for those individuals forced by circumstances beyond their control to seek sanctuary and safety from a world that is thankfully alien to the majority of us. What compels people such as Mr Kakaei to risk their lives in flimsy, unseaworthy boats in order to seek asylum is lost by those who use these people as political footballs when they try and kick them back across dangerous waters.

Heroes come in many guises. And Mr Kakaei is a hero for this cause. Having been arrested, prosecuted and wrongly imprisoned in December 2019 for an immigration offence, his misery was compounded at the end of his sentence when he was again visited by Immigration Authorities and told he was now being further prosecuted for a facilitation offence that carries up to 14 years imprisonment. It would have been easy for Mr Kakaei at that stage to ignore the legal advice that I gave to him in the cells at Medway Magistrates Court at the beginning of the pandemic that he was not guilty and he should fight to prove his innocence. It would have been easy for him to reject the advice of his Counsel, Mr Aneurin Brewer, that he had a defence to the charges. It would have been easy for him to adopt what had become the standard practice in the local courts of pleading guilty to receive the maximum discount off the routine 2-3 year sentence of imprisonment and stay quiet! And it would have been easy, some may even have said sensible, for him to have pleaded guilty at the commencement of his re-trial after his successful appeal in order to secure his immediate release as he had by then already served his entire (unlawful) prison term!

But Mr Kakaei kept his faith in himself and I am pleased to say his legal team. Despite the concerted efforts of the Crown Prosecution Service to secure his conviction having maintained an interpretation of the law which the Court of Appeal has now ruled was a “legal heresy”, Mr Kakaei finally left prison a free, and more importantly, an innocent man! Thankfully, others now tread a similar path, despite the continued efforts of the State to argue for their criminalisation and imprisonment.

The Government’s answer to these cases has been to enact their Immigration and Borders Bill which will junk the protections enshrined in the 1951 Refugee Convention for those desperate to seek asylum in the UK and for humanitarians who help them.

As a footnote, I hope that Mr Kakaei’s case, and those of the other successful Appellants, highlights the importance of a properly funded independent legal profession. For as many years publicly funded criminal defence practitioners have struggled to keep our profession and practices alive in the face of critical legal aid cuts. Without properly funded defence practitioners innocent people such as Mr Kakaei have passed through the courts at break neck pace and been advised to take their medicine and plead guilty or take their punishment without much challenge. If the Government continues to cut rather than invest in legal aid it will force firms to close or offer a cut-price service, and access to justice for people such as Mr Kakaei will be “lost at sea”. This is an SOS on all fronts.

NB Canel cannot attend our AGM due to other commitments, but gave us permission to include this piece about his work in the Annual Report.



## Events



**Seeking Sanctuary:  
Mental Health, Space & Papers in a Hostile Environment  
Saturday 15 May 2021**

Introduction and Chair **Bahriye Kemal**

**Kate Adams, Raga Gibreel & Peter Keenan (Kent Refugee Help Caseworkers)**  
Annual Review: On Casework, Legal Project, Napier Barracks

**Antonia Benfield, Leonie Hirst, Shu Shin Luh (Barristers, Doughty Street Chambers)** Re-triggering Past Trauma and Torture in Napier Barracks: Role of NGO volunteers to enable access to justice, support and evidence gathering.

**Cornelius Katona (Medical Director of the Helen Bamber Foundation)** Mental health in immigration detention and contingency accommodation

**Faith Ngcobo (Status Now 4 All)** Until Everyone is Safe, No One is Safe: Indefinite Leave to Remain for All!

Readings, screenings and talks on Lived Experiences by Write to Life | Freedom From Torture, and our new patron Anthony Anaxagorou

Celebrating 14 years of working with detainees and ex-detainees  
[www.kentrefugeehelp.org.uk](http://www.kentrefugeehelp.org.uk) | [info@kentrefugeehelp.org.uk](mailto:info@kentrefugeehelp.org.uk)

**22 MAY**  
**Empty the barracks**  
**Close the camps**

In 2021, Bahriye Kemal organised and chaired an event entitled Seeking Sanctuary: Mental Health, Space, Papers in Hostile Environment, where vulnerable people, poets, experts and campaigners spoke on the complex struggle for the right to health, space & papers experienced during the pandemic.

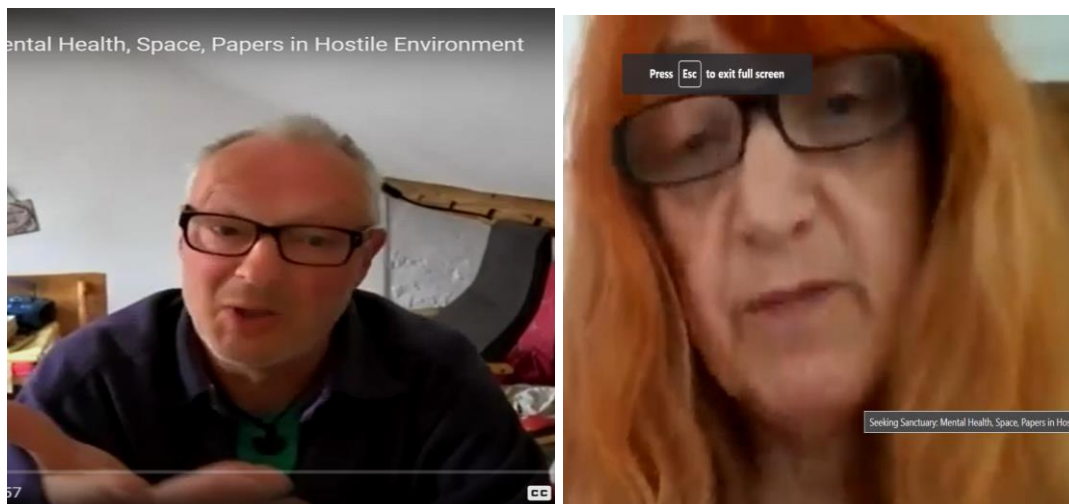
Everyone deserves the right to healthcare, spacious living, food and an income to survive the pandemic; however, the hostile environment has prevented people from having these basic rights to survival. The online event responded to this, focusing on the ways destitute and undocumented people have been refused the right to a safe environment. It focused on the ill-treatment of asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants, the problems of surviving without papers, how it affects mental and physical health, and the new proposals from the government.

Talks explored the legal, social, spatial and psychological challenges experienced by refugees, asylum seekers and those without immigration status from various shocking perspectives, including: response to the containment of vulnerable people in unsafe, contagious and filthy Napier barracks, where 200 caught Covid and seven attempted suicide; exposing how people without papers have no access to healthcare and public health directives necessary to limit COVID-19 viral transmission; demanding indefinite leave to remain for all; revealing ways vulnerable people are forced to survive without right to space, right to spatial isolation; role of NGO's against the injustice.

The event was a call against the shocking condition in Napier Barracks, and a campaign against the appalling New Plan for Immigration that fundamentally undermines the right to claim asylum, will increase destitution, and criminalises refugees and migrants.



These and other issues were considered through a range of perspectives, which included migrant workers, charity workers, experts, academics, campaigners, activists, artists, poets, and more.



The event kicked off with a session with our caseworkers Raga Gibreel, Kate Adams, and Pete Keenan discussing casework, legal projects and the Napier Barracks.

The event continued with four excellent presentations

We would like to thank the speakers – Antonia Benfield, Leonie Hirst, Shu Shin Luh (Barristers, Doughty Street Chambers), Cornelius Katona (Medical Director of the Helen Bamber Foundation), Faith Ngcobo (Status Now 4 All), Freedom From Torture, our new patron Anthony Anaxagorou, and our former clients – who participated in this successful zoom event.

The first presentation was by Antonia Benfield, Leonie Hirst, Shu Shin Luh (Barristers, Doughty Street Chambers) who discussed re-triggering past trauma and torture in Napier Barracks with focus on the role of NGO volunteers in enabling access to justice, support and evidence gathering.





## Improving Mental Health Support for Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Cornelius Katona MD FRCPsych  
Medical and Research Director  
Helen Bamber Foundation

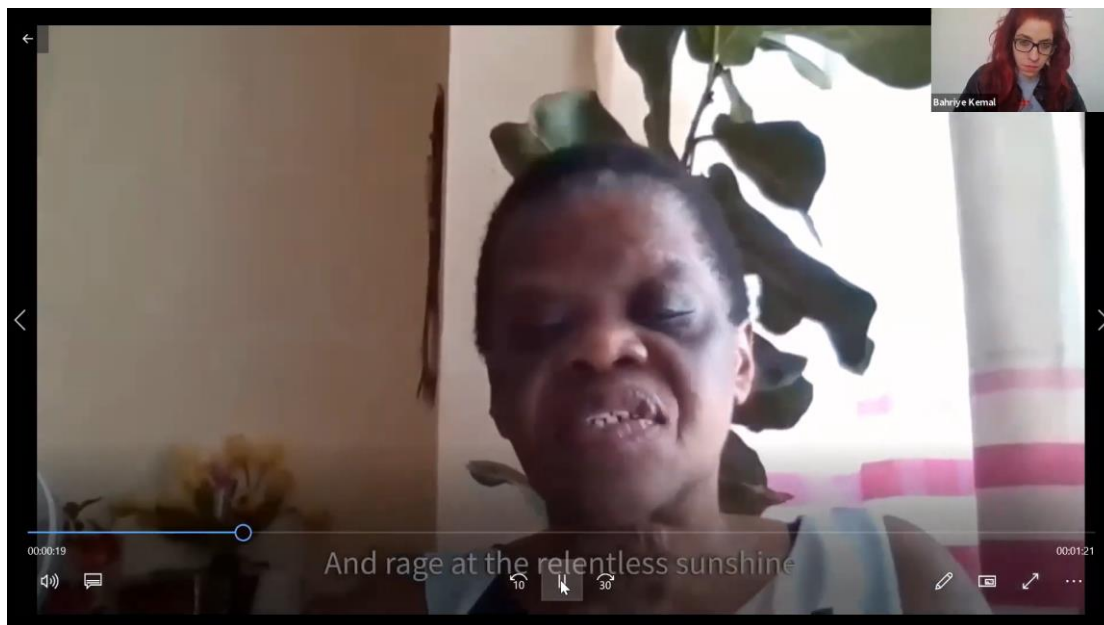


The next paper was Cornelius Katona (Medical Director of the Helen Bamber Foundation), which focused on mental health in immigration detention and contingency accommodation



The event continued with Faith Ngcobo's (Status Now 4 All) talk, focused on the topic of 'until everyone is safe, no one is safe', with a call for Indefinite Leave to Remain for All!

Faith shared her own and others' lived experiences of the struggles within the system, including numerous refusals, with people being accused of lying, even to the extent of questioning their own name. Faith shared a video of someone with lived experiences who is 65 years old.



The event ended with readings on Lived Experiences by Write to Life | Freedom From Torture, including the poem 'Why I left' by Jade Amoli-Jackson.

The event was recorded and can be watched via this youtube link [Seeking Sanctuary: Mental Health, Space, Papers in Hostile Environment | Kent Refugee Help](#)

## Training

Kent Refugee Help are registered with the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC), which means we are authorized to provide legal advice and representation in UK immigration law. We have regulated advisers at level 3 (the highest level) who can represent clients up to hearings at the First-Tier Tribunal and the Upper Tribunal (Immigration and Asylum Chamber) and the European Court of Human Rights. On registering with the OISC, KRH also joined the well-established Immigration Law Practitioners' Association (ILPA), involved with policy work. Our legal advisers have attended mainly online zoom training events arranged by various barristers' chambers and others. One of our caseworkers completed OISC level 1, which has been kindly funded by Refugee Action. Due to Covid, she has unable to take the exam. She will complete the exam and give level 1 advice as soon as she can.



## Looking Forward...

The state of the world and hostile environment towards people seeking asylum has not changed, indeed it has worsened considerably. The Nationality and Borders Bill has recently been passed in parliament despite vigorous campaigning against it by all refugee organisations. The Bill seeks to deny sanctuary rather than offering welcome. The proposals for asylum reform focus on refusing people protection and aims to make life in the asylum system unbearable – it is a reform that will force people to live in anxiety, under the continuous threat of removal, and denied the chance to reunite with family and loved ones. It focuses on penalising and criminalising refugees, turning them into legal and illegal people. Dividing people between “illegals” who took a clandestine entry, including dangerous crossing, and “legals” who took the orderly process of resettlement directly from refugee camps under government programmes.

In spite of this overwhelming hostility towards displaced people, we continue to have hope, with many people in civil society, organisations and the general public expressing their opposition to the increasing hostility.

In 2021, Amal a puppet representing a Syrian displaced young person, arrived in the UK after walking 8000km from Gaziantep. She was welcomed by thousands of people in Folkstone, Dover and Canterbury before moving to north Kent, London and then settled in Manchester. Amal, whose name means Hope in Arabic, made us all feel hopeful that we can have concrete change. In June 2022, as part of Refugee Week with its focus on Healing, Amal will be returning from Manchester to Kent for an event entitled Together Again. Here she will be welcomed by the Migration and Movement Signature Research Theme at the University of Kent as part of the Youth Summit for young people who have lost learning as a result of the pandemic. The first day of the Summit focuses on Migration and Amal will join the young people and charities to dance a dapke with the different music that she experienced throughout her journeys. Together we will Heal through dance. Kent Refugee Help looks forward to welcoming and dancing with Amal.

**Amal in Canterbury at the University of Kent in 2021**



### Amal in Dover in 2021



The need for our work continues to increase all the time. We are very grateful to the support of our volunteers and friends upon whom we depend for so much.

Our work in supporting refugees and migrants is more urgent than ever, and we will do our utmost to make their voices heard.