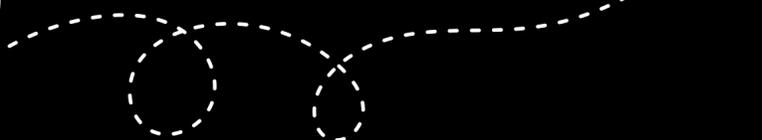




KEY DEFINITIONS

April 2022

**Migrants'
Rights
Network**



MIGRANT

A migrant is any individual who has crossed borders between two different countries for the purpose of temporary residence: for example to study or to work. Migrants will often face many barriers in the country they have arrived in, which can include xenophobia, racial discrimination, Islamophobia, inability to access public services, and other obstacles.

Migrants who travel to another country temporarily in order to work are often called "economic migrants" by the media. We believe that this is a problematic term with concerning implications: namely, that migrants who seek better job prospects are undeserving of dignity, and should be demonised (click [here](#) for more info).

Even though migrants set off with the intention of temporary residence, many actually end up permanently residing. The descendants of these migrants are referred to as second generation migrants, third generation migrants and so on.

IMMIGRANT

An immigrant is a person who has crossed borders for the purpose of permanent residence in the new country they enter. An immigrant also faces obstacles, especially if they have not been naturalised, or if they are not granted indefinite leave to remain.

The descendants of immigrants are referred to as second generation immigrants, third generation immigrants, and so on.

ASYLUM SEEKER/REFUGEE

An asylum seeker is an individual who has been forcibly displaced from their home country, because of war or conflict, settler-colonialism, or because they have been harmed or threatened with harm due to their ethnicity, religious or political beliefs, disability, gender identity or sexual orientation. An asylum seeker often has very limited rights in the country they have arrived in. Asylum seekers may seek formal, official protection from the country they have arrived in. Otherwise, they may live outside the remit of the law, fearing apprehension by the Home Office, and forced removal.

If the claim for asylum is upheld, the asylum seeker is granted the right to remain, and is officially recognised as a refugee. If a claim for asylum is rejected, the asylum seeker will often face forced removal to their home country, and may be referred to as someone with an irregular immigration status (or sometimes referred to as an "illegal immigrant"- click [here](#) for more info as to why this term is incorrect and inhumane.

It is our view that asylum seekers have valid fears of being sent back to their home country, and that most rejected asylum claims should have been upheld. It is therefore heartbreaking to see countless individuals being forcibly removed back to countries in which they face a real risk of persecution, harassment and violence.

We also understand that many asylum seekers are inaccurately portrayed as "economic migrants" by the Home Office, the government and by the media at large, and we recognise this to be highly concerning.

INTERNAL MIGRATION

Internal migration is the movement within a country. An internally displaced person is an internal migrant that has been forcibly displaced from their home, because of settler-colonialism, war or conflict, or because they have been harmed or threatened due to their ethnicity, religious or political beliefs, disability, gender identity or sexual orientation. The difference between an internally displaced person and a refugee or asylum seeker, is that an internally displaced person does not cross formally recognised state borders from one country into another.

DIASPORA

Diaspora refers to a group of people with shared ethnic origin that live outside of their country of origin.

Diasporic communities in the UK are by default also migrant communities: either their parents or their grandparents would have come to the UK from another country.

EXPAT

How does a migrant differ from an expat? In short, skin tone. White people are more likely to be afforded the privilege of being referred to as expats. Black, brown and other racialised communities are more likely to be constructed as migrants.

However, some migrants in the UK are white, and come from other parts of Europe. These people will often face xenophobia.

However, many first, second and third generation migrants in the UK are from non-European backgrounds. These migrants (including diasporic communities) will face xenophobia, but also racism, since they are not white.

It is therefore important to understand that many migrants will face compounded axes of oppression. Recognising that one individual may belong to multiple oppressed identity groups is the theory of Intersectionality.

HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT

The Hostile Environment was a set of policies in the aftermath of Theresa May's speech in 2012: "the aim is to create, here in Britain, a really hostile environment for illegal immigrants". Most notably, this includes the Immigration Acts of 2014 and 2016.

These policies have also included immigration checks and raids, denying access to basic services, as well as laws mandating the sharing of information between public sector organisations and the Home Office.

The Hostile Environment has meant that vulnerable people have feared engaging with public services, for fear of being forcibly removed. It also has meant that exploited workers or those who have been subjected to a hate crime, fear reporting what they have been through to the relevant authorities.

It is also true that even British citizens can and have been wrongfully forcibly removed and wrongfully threatened with forced removal. The most notable ramification of the Hostile Environment was the Windrush scandal, in which many British citizens, mainly of Afro-Caribbean origin, were forcibly removed to countries in which they have never resided, or were denied their essential rights.