

WHY DID YOU LEAVE YOUR COUNTRY?

Asylum seekers and refugees explain their reasons for coming to the UK

My family left my country because there were problems in our country and it was too expensive for us living in the country and also if you vote for the wrong person you get killed. Voting for the wrong political party would get you in trouble. Well in my country there is the ruling party is the popular party and if you don't associate yourself and if you don't vote for the ruling party you either don't manage to get the basic stuff you need to survive and you end up getting involved in violent situations. So for my family that was too much and my mum felt we had to leave the country. **Female, 17, Zimbabwe***

I am Bedoon. We were born in Kuwait from generations, but we used to have some rights in Kuwait and Bedoon now have no rights at all. With no nationality, we are denied all rights as Kuwait citizens. In 1995 we could apply for nationality. It was only one year and they stopped it. They took the number they wanted and all the rest, and I am one of them, had no state. We are all stateless. They didn't want to recognise us...Bedoon in Arabic means without, without nationality...I was accused of a political act, to organise sit in and march against the government. I was in prison for 32 days...I had to sign paper. I don't even know what it was about. You can die in prison or stay there forever. **Male, 25-34, Kuwait****

Here we are safe. No-one is coming to rape you. No police are coming to take advantage of you. **Female, 25-34, Burundi**

And the reason we left Afghanistan was because it was not safe for us, so we had to leave Afghanistan for better and safer life in the United Kingdom. And the reason that it wasn't safe for us because of the several wars in Afghanistan. Most of the people went away from Afghanistan or they escaping from Afghanistan but we luckily had enough money to get visa to come to this country or to support my dad to come to this country for the first time. But there is a lot, lots of families and people who doesn't have money and they're going to Pakistan and Iran, these two countries have got millions of refugees. In Iran it is terrible, it's completely terrible, they've been misused for many reasons and also they've been called 'Afghani' and to be Afghani in Iran is a kind of shame because the Afghani they've been treated very badly in Iran –very badly— they have been killed, they have been raped, and they have been kidnapped and lots of stuff has been done with Afghanis in Iran. **Male, 17, Afghanistan***

I am not Muslim, I am a Sabian Mandaean. You either have to leave Iraq or change your religion. I went with my parents to stay with a Christian friend but this was not safe. While we were staying with our friend, many Christians were killed. My parents considered this to be a very dangerous situation and began planning for me to leave.

Male, 25-34, Iraq**

I was persecuted, I have been tortured, insulted, harassed. I had everything you can imagine...When my brother escaped from Algeria, the army and the Gendarmes were looking for him. They killed my father and my brother. Actually we didn't know about my brother. We never heard any more since they took him in 1998...we had no news. There are 200,000 disappeared in Algeria. When we won the election, the army cancelled it and started to torture all member of the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front]. They have opened camps of concentration in the desert.

Male, 35-44, Algeria,**

Sources:

* [Audio recordings](#) made of interviews conducted by the Children's Society

**[Chance or choice? Understanding why asylum seekers come to the UK](#), Heaven Crawley, January 2010, Swansea University and the Refugee Council

