

# Harmondsworth IRC and Brook House IRC Detention Centres – Urgent Report

We are more than 100 people in G Wing of Harmondsworth IRC, and we urgently call on human rights organizations, the press, TV, and media to help us and bring attention to our situation. There are hundreds of other people in detention centres across the UK facing similar conditions.

In addition, more than 95 asylum seekers in Brook House Immigration Removal Centre, who are in the same situation as us, support this report. We are more than 80 people in Harmondsworth.

We came to the UK seeking a new beginning and a safe life. Each person has a unique story and case: fleeing war, persecution, political oppression, personal issues, injustice, slavery, corruption, and other crises. We all share one common goal: to live a safe, normal life, protected from harm, with the right to work, access basic freedoms, and be reunited with our families.

**Countries of origin:** Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Turkey, Afghanistan, Iran. You are likely aware of the situations there; no further explanation is needed. Our request is simple: the basic human rights described above, and the most essential one—freedom.

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## Arrival and Initial Interviews

Upon arriving in the UK by small boat, the Border Force and police took us to Dover (Home Office). Without allowing time to rest or recover from the trauma of our journey or prior hardships, we were forced into interviews. Our statements were recorded inaccurately, dismissed, or deliberately misrepresented. We were repeatedly told that this was “not the main interview” and that a primary interview would follow. In reality, this interview determines our fate, and there is no second chance. Immediately after, we were judged and taken to detention.

On arrival, we were shocked to find ourselves in a facility with people who have criminal records. Our only “crime” was crossing the English Channel and requesting asylum.

Since arrival, the Home Office promised access to solicitors. This promise is false: no one here has legal representation. Every detainee is forced toward deportation to France, regardless of their case, evidence, or personal circumstances.

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## Detention Conditions

### Mental and Physical Health Neglect:

- A detainee, **Galwan Abbass**, suffered severe bullet injuries from Syria, including four surgeries and metal implants. Despite extreme pain, officers laughed at him and only gave painkillers.
- **Abdulsalam** requires a specialist for a long-standing testicular condition but has only received painkillers for over two months, now causing stomach problems.
- **Sarhad**, with mental health issues, was told he could not access treatment because he has a deportation ticket to France.

- **ESSA**, a Sudanese detainee, developed severe trauma on arrival and was later taken away; his current whereabouts are unknown.
- **An Afghan detainee** held with us in the detention centre has attempted suicide multiple times due to severe mental health distress. Despite clear signs of ongoing vulnerability and self-harm, he remains in detention and has not received appropriate psychological care.
- **Ako** was forcibly deported to France; his family has no information.
- **Arkan** was forcibly deported to France; his family has no information.
- **Mohammed Majid** was forcibly deported to France; his family has no information.
- **Millat** was forcibly deported to France; his family has no information.
- Ethiopian detainees and others were physically beaten and forced to return to France against their will.

### **Healthcare System Failures:**

- Mentally unwell detainees who attempt suicide are sent to the block rather than receiving proper medical or psychological care.
- Alarms and routine disruptions exacerbate mental distress.
- Detainees with physical and mental health needs are routinely ignored or mistreated.

### **Living Conditions:**

- Over 80 people share a wing with only two washing machines, one of which is broken.
- Limited access to computers—16 machines for more than 200 people—requires running and fighting for access.
- Phones are confiscated; families can only call using expensive old Nokia phones.
- Food is inadequate (e.g., old potatoes during Christmas Eve), and access to meals is strictly controlled.

### **Psychological Harassment and Abuse:**

- Officers insult, humiliate, and intimidate detainees, sometimes physically assaulting them.
- Detainees are forced to interact with people who have criminal records and are taught how to buy and sell drugs.
- Incidents include fights in the main dining area where detainees were almost killed; our friends were there and came back scared.

### **Isolation and Lack of Communication:**

- Families are denied contact; emails and mail are delayed or ignored.
- Even relatives in the UK cannot visit detainees.
- Access to social media, video sites, and outside information is completely blocked.

### **Injustice and Inequality:**

- Only 10% of small boat arrivals are detained here; the remaining 90% are in hotels. This selective treatment causes feelings of injustice and trauma.
- Kurdish detainees, in particular, experience targeted verbal abuse.

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## Specific Incidents and Accidents

1. **Galwan Abbass**: Screaming in pain from bullet injuries; officers laughed and refused hospital care.
2. **Abdulsalam**: Denied specialist care for testicular condition; only given painkillers for over two months.
3. **Sarhad**: Mental health issues ignored due to pending deportation to France.
4. **ESSA** (Sudanese detainee): Taken away; whereabouts unknown.
5. **ARAKAN**: Deported to France; family has no information.
6. Ethiopian detainee: Physically beaten and forced onto plane against his will.
7. **Mahdi** (Ethiopian detainee): Home Office canceled his flight after staying over two months. He became extremely distressed and broke TVs, tables, and other property. Four officers intervened; his current welfare is unknown.
8. **Pakistani arrivals by small boat**: Many arrived with us; current whereabouts unknown, not brought to detention centers like others.
9. **Returnees to France**: Several taken back against their will; families have no information, raising serious safety concerns.
10. **Computer room incident**: Officer accused Kurds of being traitors, provoking tension.
11. **Laundry fights**: 80 people, one working washing machine; conflicts are constant.
12. **TV and toilet paper incidents**: Officers insulted detainees and threw items at them.
13. **Alarm system**: Constant false alarms cause stress and sleep deprivation.
14. **Suicide attempts**: Detainees attempting suicide are taken to the block, not treated properly.
15. **New Year's Eve incident**: Eight detainees were told they would be released but were sent to another detention centre instead.

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## Summary

Detainees are subjected to extreme physical, psychological, and emotional abuse. Healthcare is inadequate, legal representation is denied, families are isolated, and basic human rights are violated. People are mentally deteriorating due to constant fear, harassment, and uncertainty about their fate.

We call on human rights organizations, the media, and governments to investigate **Harmondsworth IRC** and **Brook House IRC**, ensure the protection of detainees, provide legal representation, and guarantee access to healthcare and basic human rights.

We are not criminals. We are refugees seeking safety and freedom. Our lives are at risk. Please help us.