

Asylum Link Merseyside

- Offering practical support and friendship to refugees and asylum seekers -

The Destitution Roadshow

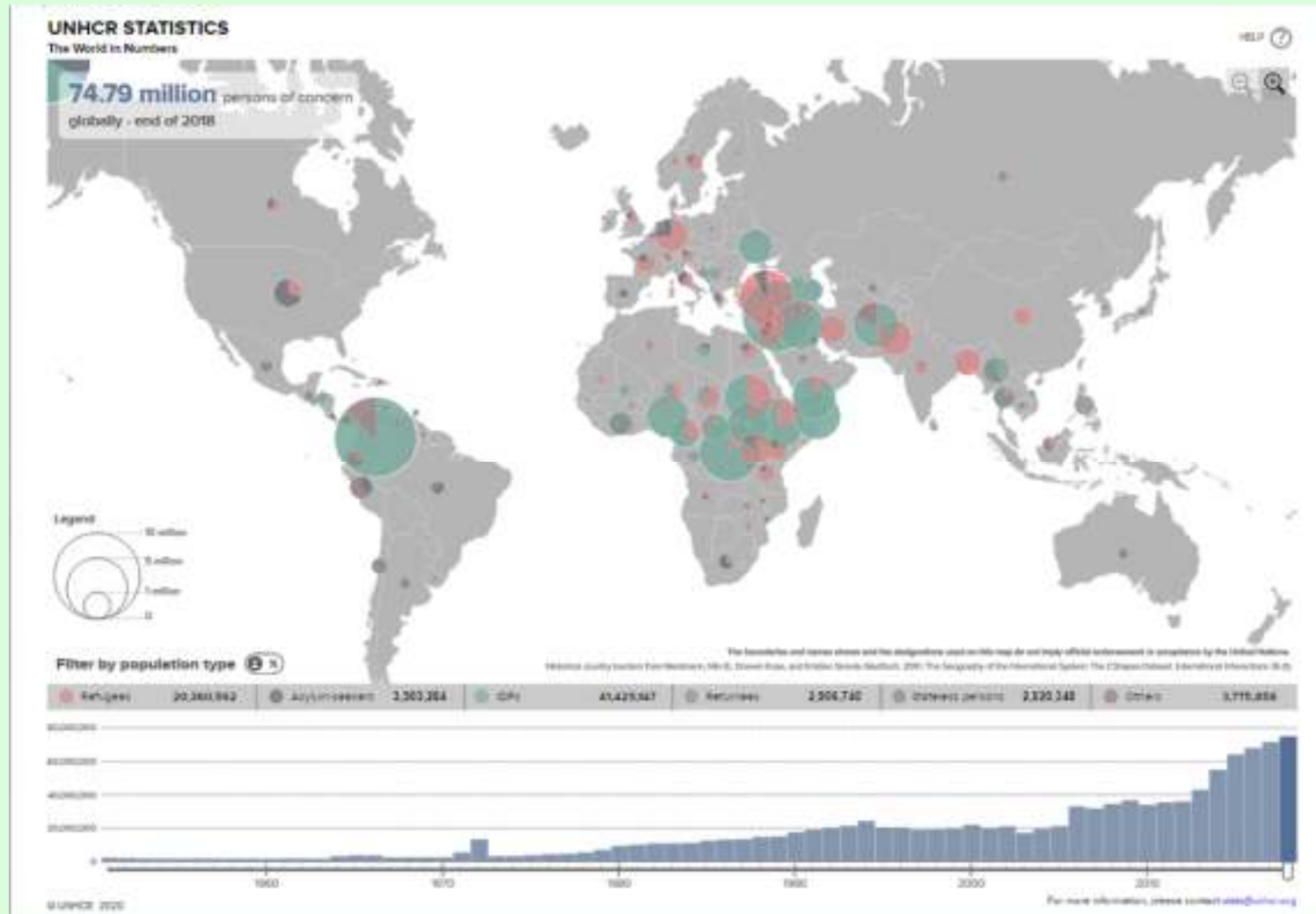


Asylum Link is a small local charity set up in 2001 to help Asylum Seekers in need of support, and to educate the wider public on asylum issues.



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- Offering practical support and friendship to refugees and asylum seekers -
- Monitoring conflict around the World



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- Syria – the worst refugee disaster since WWII



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Who is an Asylum Seeker?

Someone who has fled persecution in their home country and is awaiting a decision from our Government on whether their story is believed.

They may be victims of rape, torture, genocide, homophobia, racism: something which their home state has actively encouraged or has failed to prevent.

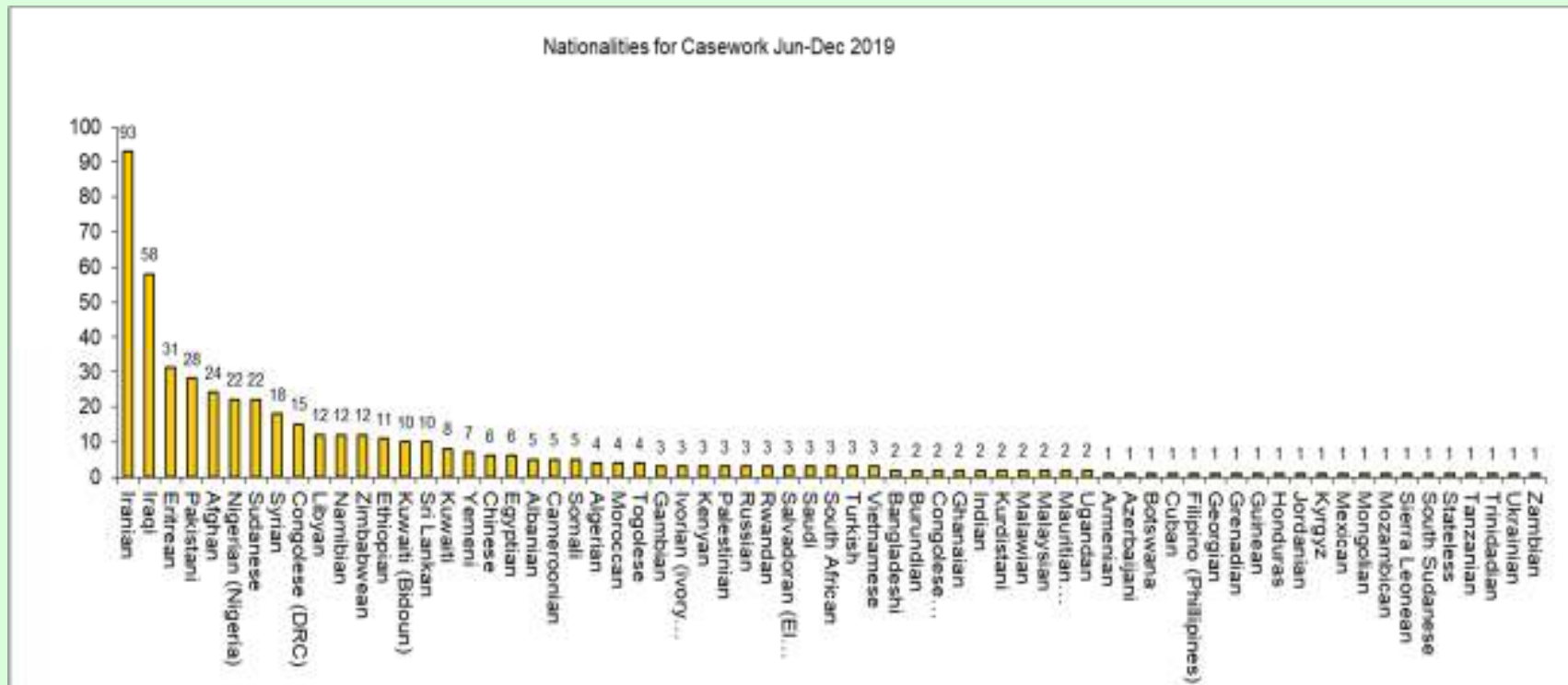
They are also bus drivers, policemen, aunties, sisters, doctors, artists, farmers, professors, soldiers, mum's and teachers, sons and lovers
But who were in the wrong place at the wrong time

They are just like us
It is only their circumstances which are different.

A Refugee is someone who's claim for Asylum has been accepted

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- ## People visiting the Centre

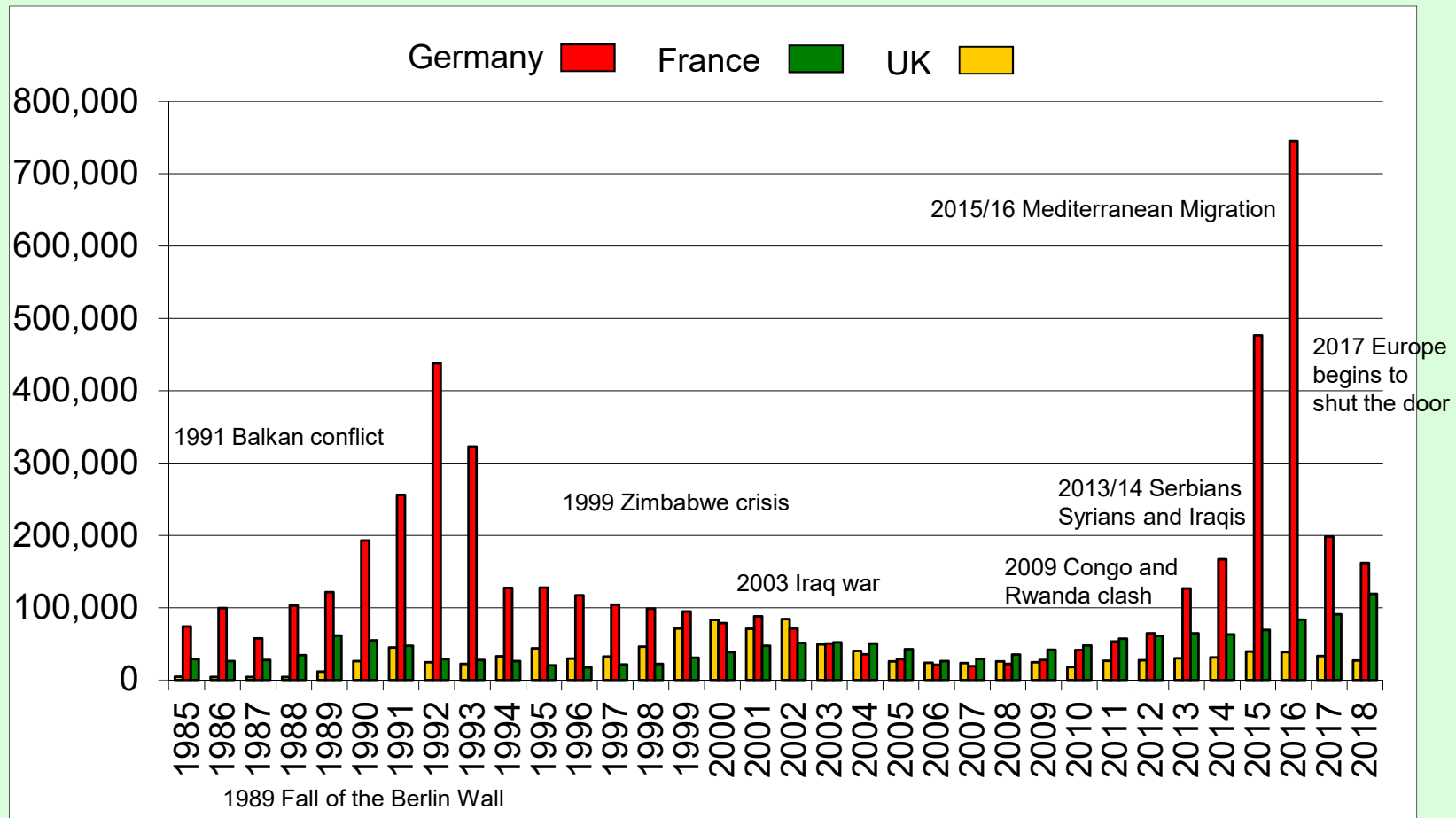


Around 67 different nationalities used the centre in 2019
speaking nearly 100 different languages

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Why do they all come here?



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Asylum Seeker - Saint or Sinner?



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How are Asylum Seekers perceived?



The difference between asylum seekers, refugees and economic migrants The legal distinctions between these groups of people has become lost amid the frenzied media coverage in recent months.



Headlines are written for specific audiences, to reinforce a point or sensationalise.

Remember the reason for a headline is to sell a newspaper.

When thinking about immigrants most people think about **Asylum Seekers (62%)**

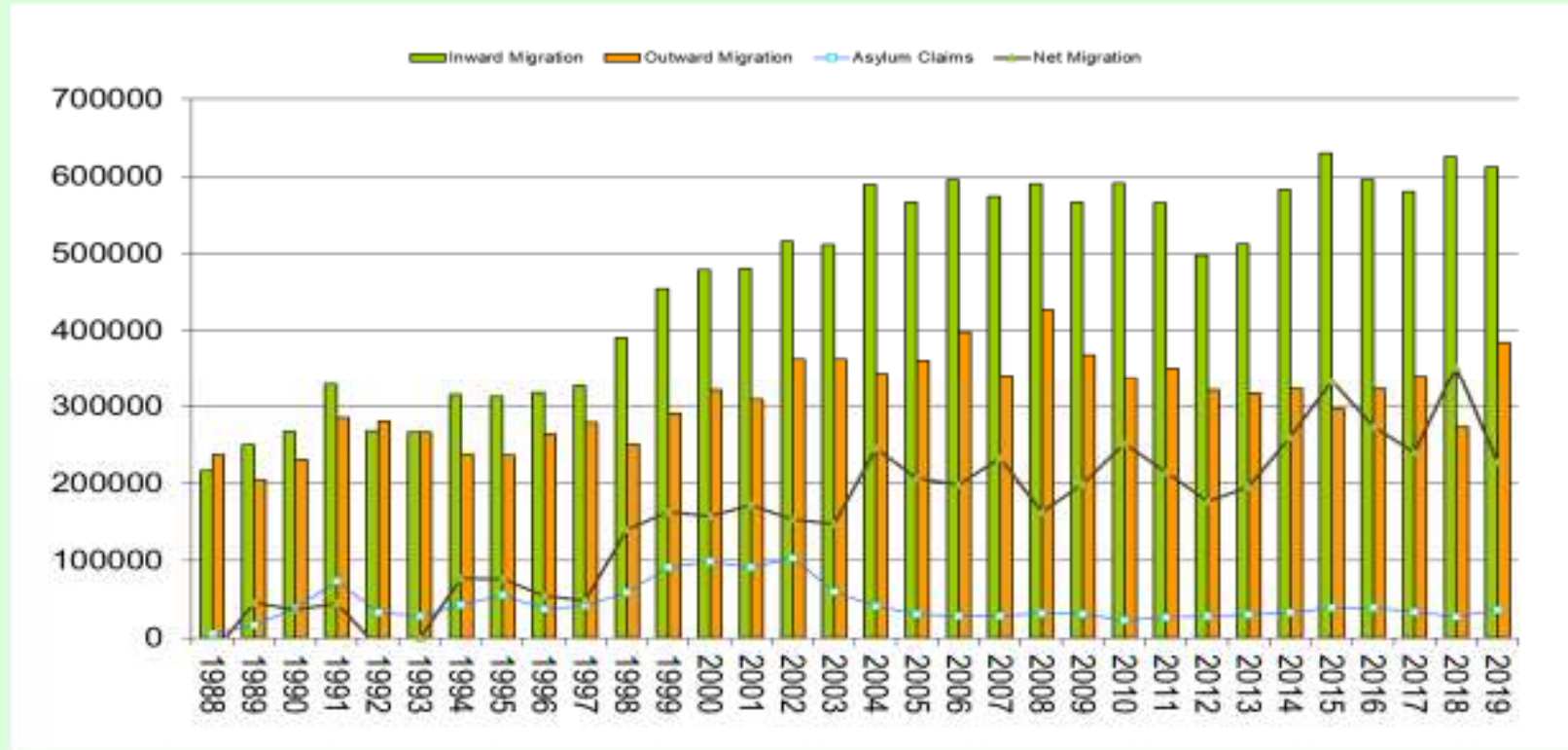
ButAsylum Seekers account for less than **4% of inward migrants**

Only **29%** of the population think of **students**, a group accounting for **37%** of immigrants

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Why are we worried about Asylum Seekers?



Given the scale of world conflict, is a low asylum claims rate a good thing?

Worldwide displacement hits all-time high as war and persecution increase

74.8 million people at risk of persecution or conflict - 2019



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The Asylum Process

Port of Entry or Croydon - Screening Interview - outline basis for Asylum claim. Dispersal - NW Liverpool Hostel - 2 to 6 weeks – section 98

Onward dispersal: Wigan, Liverpool, Gtr Manchester - Substantive Interview - SEF (statement of evidence form) It is crucial to tell everything & get it right, first time. Section 95

Waiting for the decision. 3-6 months - Reporting regularly, filling time until the decision comes. The decision is made by a caseowner.

1st Tier Immigration Asylum Tribunal 6-12 months An independent Immigration Judge/s looks at the case - there are two meetings - the case management review and the court hearing.

The case will not be supported with legal aid if the solicitor feels there is a less than 50% chance of success

This is the end of the main part of the Asylum process. On refusal (50%) people are given 21 days to make arrangements to leave and then all support and housing is stopped.

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The Asylum Process

Request *permission* to appeal to upper tribunal. A senior immigration judge reviews the grounds – must be based on an error in law

If permission is given, the case goes forward. This is complex: sometimes the case is referred back to the lower tribunal, or it is thrown out. Occasionally it goes forward to the [appeals](#) panel of 7 judges but it must have a bearing on other people's cases.

Judicial Review IF solicitors feel there is scope they may apply for a Judicial Review of aspects of the case – this is costly

Further Submissions
– a fresh claim

Liverpool is a centre for Further Submissions. If accepted section 4 support is given. Voucher only.

The asylum process in this country is highly adversarial: so what is the effect of the system or peoples emotional and physical state. How do they cope with refusal and disbelief?

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The Asylum System – Good or Bad for Mental Health

- No permission to work
- No access to mainstream education
- Isolated: by language, by culture, by lack of knowledge
- Poverty: Just over £37/week to live on
- Waiting: People can wait years for a decision

The excuses given are that: it'll be over soon or it's a stressful time anyway. And when you are refused and drop out of support.

- Homelessness – no way forward – the hostile environment

On refusal, most people are not removed but given 21 days to leave their house and return voluntarily. Most do not and become homeless with no job, no shelter and no benefit.

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Why do people get down?



“This is my street. Nobody has ever said hello to me. When I say hello to them they either ignore me or say hello without any feeling. I have tried to help the older people in the street to show them I am human.”

Jan 2014

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Asylum Seekers and Mental Health

In a survey of Asylum Seekers at St Anne's in 2009

70% of people felt their situation affected them mentally

50% of people felt their problems developed in the UK and were severely depressed

60% of people felt their status affected the way they were treated

50% of people were severely depressed



In a survey ALM undertook for the NHS in 2019 from a sample of 130 people, 50% said they had mental health problems

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We have designed an Asylum Process that makes people ill, and ultimately pushes them towards traffickers and illegality.

This costs us in: Healthcare, Acute Mental Health Provision, Security, (Police, Courts, Probation) and is morally bankrupt.

As the 6th largest economy in the world, we can and should do better.