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### Refugee Crisis: A Detailed Study of the United Kingdom

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# Refugee Crisis: A Detailed Study of the United Kingdoms

By Kurt Secrest



## TERMINOLOGY

Three Different types of refugees.

1. Majority identified refugees are refugees who are fleeing with the idea that the rest of the country have the same reasons for fleeing. They are the primary type of refugee fleeing places such as Iraq, Syria, and Rwanda.
2. Event alienated refugees are usually minority groups that have faced past discrimination based on such things as race, religion, social group, and political affiliation. One of the greatest examples of this group are the Jews who fled Germany before the Second World War.
3. The final type of refugee are those who have flee a country because of a moral conflict that they have with the country. They are hard to define and identify.

## REFUGEE HISTORY IN THE UK

- 1. Early Refugees in the United Kingdom included French Huguenots and the Poor Palatines from Germany. They were accepted because of their religious and class status.
- 2. When the pogroms of Russia endangered the lives of the Jews of Russia, many fled to the United Kingdoms. The backlash against these refugees caused the 1905 Aliens Act which was setup to directly curb the arrival of refugees from Eastern Europe. This act would have major consequences for the Jewish populations across Europe before the Second World War. Less than 100,000 were able to flee to the UK before the war began mostly in part due to public pressure on the government.
- 3. Another major wave of refugees into the United Kingdom consisted of Asians holding British passports who were expelled from Uganda by President Idi Amin in 1973. They were predominately from India and they added a whole new section of middle class status to the United Kingdom. An idea that was floated in the British government was to settle all of these refugees on an island so they didn't settle in the UK. This influx also raised the question of turning culture into a salad bowl instead of a melting pot in which each culture would be able to express themselves.
- 4. The last major influx of refugees before the modern era consisted of Kosovo refugees fleeing from conflict in the Balkans. The problem was times were changing and the salad bowl didn't want any new ingredients so monetary donations were given instead of settling refugees which was criticized by many as not doing enough for the people.
- 5. The modern refugee crisis truly impacted the United Kingdom with the death of Aylan Kurdi, a two year old Syrian boy discovered dead on a Turkish beach after he drowned crossing the Mediterranean with his mother and brother. Refugees after that became a major issue in British politics as refugees from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Eritrea, and many other countries tried to seek asylum in the country. They were fleeing conflict, persecution at the hand of their governments, and reasons that many of us could never truly imagine. This is their tale.

## POLITICAL PARTIES

- The current government in the United Kingdom is formed by the Conservative party under the leadership of Theresa May who took over from David Cameron. Refugee policy by the Conservative government has been focused on preventing what they call "bogus" refugees from entering. They are concerned that refugees are the reason that social services are so overburden and aim to prevent more from coming to the UK.
- The Labor Party is complicated when it comes to refugees because they have shifted from welcoming refugees to the United Kingdom to having similar attitudes towards refugees as the Conservative. This behind the door idea allows them to attack the Conservative government about refugees while not supporting them because of the degradation of national culture that they see. This shift was caused by the rise of New Labor in the early 2000s with Tony Blair coming to power.
- The SNP or Scottish Nationalist Party is by far the most pro-refugee party in the UK. Four in every ten refugees are settled in Scotland with the support of the SNP. The SNP has brought a number of bills to the Parliament for them to accept more refugees but these have been stopped by the government which added fuel to the fire of Scottish independence.
- Plaid Cymru is the national party of Wales and has been an advocate of doing more for refugees in the UK. They have suggested the idea of turning Wales into a sanctuary for refugees because of the low number of refugees being settled there. They have been in constant opposition with the current government over the refugee crisis.
- UKIP or United Kingdom Independence Party is a far right party that was the main leader in the Brexit and fought against all attempts to settle refugees in the UK. Their focus is that refugees who come to the UK are economic migrants trying to slip into the UK. They are concerned because of the possible loss of jobs to UK residents to refugees.

## TRENDS IN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT IN THE UNITED KINGDOMS

Refugees resettlement across the United Kingdom has taken a number of trends depending on "state".

1. England which is the largest and most populous of the four locations. It has been polled that people there are more likely to be against settling refugees in their areas. A little under half of all the refugees on the UK are settled here.
2. Scotland is the opposite of England in many ways because it has a population around 8 times less but has accepted the same number of refugees. 10% of all refugees settled in the UK are settled in Glasgow, Scotland's largest city.
3. Wales is much smaller than Scotland and England yet they have been polled saying they want to take more refugees. Many groups have even criticized the governments decision to only send 1,000 refugees out of 20,000 to Wales.
4. Northern Ireland settles the smallest number of refugees when last fall this number was around 100 but the flow of donations from Northern Ireland has filled warehouses with materials for refugees settling in the UK and for those that were staying in the camp called the "Jungle" near the French city of Calais.

## RESETTLING REFUGEES

- The application process to be accepted as a refugee into the United Kingdom is a complicated process lasting in some cases over two years. This time period is hard on refugees who have already fled for their lives and now face the possibility of their application being rejected. A study of their mental health places asylum seekers lower than any part of Scottish society including refugees who have been accepted.
- Housing becomes a major hurdle for refugees who have made it through the application process because they have 28 days from the time their application is accepted to find housing. This can have major side effects on their ability to find work which in most cases they can't search for until they have been accepted. Their search for employment is further hindered by the certification that they will need in order to work as such professions as doctors and architects.
- Education is a major aspect in helping refugees to integrate so they can learn the language and continue with their education. Language courses for refugees are free for the first six months but after that they cost money except in Scotland where they continue to be free. Most places in the UK also make refugees pay fees as if they were from an overseas country for higher education except in Scotland again where refugees receive free higher education.
- The cultural integration that refugees have gone through in the UK has shown a great improvement in recent years as cultural barriers have fallen. Turbans instead of helmets are now allowed for Sikh riders and Muslim policewomen in London are allowed to wear hijabs. A new program has even begun called "Cup of a tea with a Refugee" which allows locals and refugees to interact in order to highlight the similarities that they share. New cultural centers have also been built for the new communities so they have a safe place to gather.



## CONCLUSIONS

- With the UK withdrawal from the EU in the future the questions about refugees fleeing to the UK are thrown into question. What will happen when the UK border police leave the Calais area? Will the French police stop refugees from fleeing into the UK or will the border become even more secure?
- Refugees in the United Kingdoms face an uphill battle in order to integrate into their new homes because of the rise of populist political parties that see them as a threat to everything they believe in.
- Looking to the future, will the number of refugees being accepted decrease even further or will the UK open their borders to people fleeing conflict around the world?