



# do 1 thing



1 refugee without hope  
is too many.



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## Learn a Fact about Refugees

*Below are some simple facts about asylum seekers and refugees. If you would like to learn more about international protection and the work of UNHCR there's plenty more information on this website [www.unhcr.ie](http://www.unhcr.ie) and on the global website [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org).*

### **Do definitions even matter?**

Yes! It's really important that we use the correct terms and the appropriate language when dealing with sensitive subjects. It affects people's legal rights. Incorrect definitions can lead to misunderstanding and even prejudice.

### **Who is a refugee?**

International law defines refugees as people

- who are outside their country of origin and
- whose life and or human rights are seriously at risk because of
- who they are (e.g. their race, nationality, social group), or what they believe (e.g. their religious beliefs or political opinion); and
- their governments will not or cannot protect them.

Refugees are entitled to be protected against forcible return to their countries of origin. This is known as the principle of *non refoulement*.

### **Who is an asylum seeker?**

The terms asylum seeker and refugee are often confused. Asylum seekers are people seeking recognition as refugees, who are waiting for the government to decide on their case. These people are entitled to stay in the State while their application to be considered as a refugee is being considered. They also have a right to a fair hearing of that application and to an appeal.

### **Are asylum seekers illegally in the country?**

There is no such thing as a bogus asylum seeker or an illegal asylum seeker. Everybody has a right to seek asylum in another country. People who don't qualify for protection as refugees will not receive refugee status and may be deported. But just because someone doesn't receive refugee status doesn't mean they were a bogus asylum seeker.

### **What is subsidiary protection?**

Subsidiary protection can be given to people who do not meet the legal definition of a refugee but are still in need of international protection because they would risk facing the following threats if returned to their country: (1) the death penalty or execution; (2) torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or (3) threats from an international or internal armed conflict. This status was created across the EU by a Directive.



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### **What's the difference between a migrant and a refugee?**

Migrants and refugees increasingly make use of the same routes and means of transport, including undertaking dangerous sea crossings and using people smugglers. They are, however, fundamentally different and, thus, are treated differently under international law. Migrants, especially economic migrants, choose to move in order to improve their lives. Refugees have to move if they are to save their lives or preserve their freedom.

### **Where in the world are most of the refugees?**

Currently more than 37 million people are displaced by violence around the world. Many people think that the majority of refugees and asylum seekers come to Europe but this is not in fact the case. The reality is that while the Refugee Convention was designed initially to deal with the displacement of people within Europe, in the aftermath of World War II, Europe for a long time has not been home to most of the world's displaced people. In fact the vast majority - about 80 percent - are hosted and cared for in developing countries, not industrialized ones.

### **Are there any famous refugees?**

The singers M.I.A, Regina Spektor, Shingai Shoniwa (from the Noisettes) and Mika all come from refugee families. Albert Einstein, the theoretical physicist and Sigmund Freud, founder of psychoanalysis were also refugees. Alek Wek, the Supermodel, fled Sudan with her family and started her fashion career in the UK and US.

### **Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Ireland**

- There are approximately 10,000 refugees living in Ireland today. Many other refugees who came to Ireland in the past are now Irish citizens.
- Refugees have come to Ireland from all over the globe, fleeing from persecution and conflict. Many of them have made enormous sacrifices to get themselves and their families to safety and to begin, under the protection of the Irish State, to re-build their lives.
- There are currently approximately 5,600 asylum seekers living in 40 reception centres (September 2011) around Ireland awaiting a decision on their application for refugee status, for subsidiary protection, or for humanitarian leave to remain.
- Asylum seekers living in these centres are provided with three meals daily.
- They receive EUR19.10 a week per person and a further EUR9.60 per child.
- On occasion, they may receive a supplementary payment to help cover costs such as school uniforms and school books for their children.
- They are not entitled to work.
- Children under 18 are entitled to primary and secondary level education.
- In 2010 there were 1939 applications for refugee status in Ireland. There have been 910 applications from asylum seekers to date in 2011 (up to 31 August 2011).