

YOU MAY BECOME ILLEGAL

LEGALITY IS NOT GARANTEED



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OVERVIEW

FOR LEGAL PURPOSES, IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THIS EXHIBITION DOES NOT PROVIDE LEGAL SERVICES, IMMIGRATION CONSULTATION, OR SOLICITATION. THE INFORMATION PRESENTED IN THIS EXHIBITION IS A COMPILATION OF INFORMATION THAT IS AVAILABLE ONLINE. AS IS THE CASE FOR THE UK IMMIGRATION SYSTEM, NOTHING IN THIS DOCUMENT OR THE REST OF THE EXHIBITION IS GUARANTEED.

The terms "illegal migrant" and "undocumented migrant" are often used interchangeably, but there is a subtle difference between the two.

"Illegal migrant" is a term that suggests that a person has entered a country or is residing in a country in violation of that country's immigration laws. The term "illegal" has a negative connotation and suggests that the person is doing something wrong or unlawful.

"Undocumented migrant," on the other hand, is a term that suggests that a person may be residing in a country without proper documentation, but it does not necessarily imply that the person has broken any laws. In many cases, undocumented migrants may have entered a country legally, but their visas or other documentation may have expired, or they may have lost their documentation.

So while both terms refer to individuals who are in a country without proper authorization, "illegal migrant" suggests that the person has done something wrong, whereas "undocumented migrant" simply describes their lack of proper documentation. It's important to note that the use of either term can have political implications and can be viewed as stigmatizing or dehumanizing, so it's important to use language that is respectful and accurate.

BECOMING "UNDOCUMENTED" OR "ILLEGAL"

CHANGES IN IMMIGRATION ACTS HAVE SOMETIMES RESULTED IN INDIVIDUALS BEING DEEMED "ILLEGAL" OR "UNDOCUMENTED" IN THE UK. THIS CAN HAPPEN IN A FEW DIFFERENT WAYS:



1. Overstaying visas – Some individuals may have entered the UK on a valid visa but have stayed beyond the permitted time. Under immigration law, these individuals are considered "overstayers" and are subject to removal from the UK.

2. Illegal entry – Some individuals may have entered the UK without proper documentation, such as a visa. This is considered illegal entry and can result in the individual being subject to removal from the UK.

3. Changing circumstances – Some individuals may have entered the UK legally, but their circumstances have changed, such as the end of a relationship or the loss of a job. If they are no longer able to meet the requirements of their visa, they may be deemed "illegal" in the UK. **(This is Kenisha Kwame's Story)**

4. Administrative errors – Sometimes, individuals may be deemed "illegal" due to administrative errors, such as a failure to renew a visa in time or a mistake in the application process.

5. Expensive Applications – Many individuals who become undocumented later in life do so because they cannot afford the expensive cost of immigration applications in the UK, and there is no assistance available to subsidize these costs. This is often the case for individuals with Limited Leave to Remain (LLR) status who are required to reapply every two years at a cost of between £1500–£2000, including legal fees. However, the organization called "WE BELONG" provides support for students and other young people who may find themselves in this situation.

THE IMPACT OF BEING UNDOCUMENTED

1. LACK OF ACCESS TO PUBLIC SERVICES AND BENEFITS

Undocumented migrants typically do not have access to public services and benefits, such as healthcare, education, and housing. They may also find it difficult to open a bank account or obtain a driver's license.



2. RISK OF EXPLOITATION

Undocumented migrants are often vulnerable to exploitation by employers, who may take advantage of their lack of legal status to pay them less than the minimum wage or make them work in unsafe conditions.

3. RISK OF ARREST AND DETENTION

Undocumented migrants are at risk of arrest and detention by immigration enforcement officers. They may be held in immigration detention centres and face removal from the UK.



4. LIMITATIONS ON THEIR ABILITY TO WORK

Undocumented migrants may only be able to find work in the "black market" and are at risk of exploitation by employers. They are also unable to access employment protections and benefits, such as sick pay and holiday pay.

5. DIFFICULTY IN ACCESSING HEALTHCARE

Undocumented migrants may be reluctant to seek medical treatment for fear of being reported to the authorities. This can lead to serious health problems and can also put public health at risk.



6. SEPARATION FROM FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Undocumented migrants may face separation from their family and friends, as they may be unable to bring their loved ones to the UK or may be forced to return to their country of origin.

ORGANISATIONS WORKING TO SUPPORT

1. WE BELONG

"We Belong" is a migrant youth-led organisation based in London that advocates for the rights of young migrants and helps develop young leaders by providing advice, support, and training. They engage with 16-25-year-old migrants and work to create a strong counter-narrative to the UK's hostile environment by advocating for immigration system reform. They were inspired by the US Dreamers and built on the success of their first campaign, Let Us Learn, which raised awareness and changed government policy to provide student loans for young migrants. They have a 300+ community of changemakers and seek to have a positive impact on society. They provide their services to young people nationwide through in-person and online activities.

2. THE JOINT COUNCIL FOR THE WELFARE OF IMMIGRANTS (JCWI)

The aim of this small charity is to live in a country where immigration law and policy are based on evidence, the rule of law, and respect for human rights and dignity. They strive for a country where no individual or family is made vulnerable or destitute, and all fundamental human rights are upheld. They want to celebrate and share the benefits of migration, and have cohesive and stable communities. This is achieved by challenging unjust laws, influencing the debate on migration, providing reliable legal advice to vulnerable individuals and families, improving the quality of advice through training and capacity building, and supporting progressive movements at the grassroots and national levels. The organization fights against the politics of hate and fear to create a better Britain.

3. THE MIGRANTS' RIGHTS NETWORK

The Migrants' Rights Network is a UK charity that stands in solidarity with all migrants in their fights for rights and justice. We co-curate campaigns using anti-oppression practices to create transformational change, extending beyond the individual impact on migrants' lives, to tackle oppression at its source.

