

ASYLUM SEEKERS

## Immigration scandal, 'bogus Christians' game system to stay in UK

POLITICS

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130 in East Midlands, 200 in Liverpool, 200 in Teeside, 20 in Essex, 40 on the Bibby Stockholm barge. This is just the tip of the iceberg of the “bogus conversions” to Christianity of hundreds of asylum seekers including convicted criminals, rapists,

murderers, drug dealers. Due to the elevated numbers, critics have dubbed the phenomenon 'pray to stay'. Now, the UK Home Secretary has launched an inquiry into the validity of migrant and asylum seeker conversions to Christianity. The concern is that "finding Jesus" offers a faster track to asylum in Britain.

**The issue re-emerged forcefully recently after a Muslim from Afghanistan**, allegedly doused a woman and her two children with acid last January 31 in south London. Later news reports revealed that Ezedi had arrived illegally in the back of a lorry, had two convictions for a sex offence and exposure, and that his conversion to Christianity had formed part of his asylum application. A police investigation revealed that his halal butchers in Newcastle testified what a good Muslim he continued to be, despite his apparent defection to the Christian faith some years earlier.

**The first prominent case of a dangerous foreign national** whose conversion from Islam to Christianity won him asylum took place in 2021. Liverpool bomber Emad al-Swealmeen from Iraq was the first to make headlines when he blew himself up in what is presumed to have been a failed bomb attack outside the Women's Hospital. He too began a conversion to Christianity, in 2015, after he had exhausted his asylum appeal rights. He was baptised at Liverpool Anglican Cathedral in November the same year. Yet, a Koran and an Islamic prayer mat were found at his flat suggesting that he still followed Islam.

**Since 2018, the overwhelming majority of "pseudo conversions"** follow the same pattern: Muslim men from Middle East countries where Christians are persecuted and especially Christians who have defected from Islam claiming their lives would be in danger if they are deported. As it's difficult to discern if conversions are authentic, asylum seekers can usually rely on the Human Rights Act to support their application to remain in the UK.

**The case of a 43-year-old Bangladeshi man who spent 12 years in jail** for murdering his wife is a prime example. He successfully appealed against the Home Office's bid to deport him by saying he was a Christian convert who would be at risk if he was deported back to Bangladesh, a predominantly Muslim country. The judge granted his appeal on the grounds of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which bars the removal of individuals who would face serious harm from torture or from inhuman or degrading treatment.

**Another case involves an Iranian who had been jailed for 18 months** in the UK for assault. A judge ruled he could not be deported, despite evidence he was not a genuine covert,

because he had covered his arms with Christian tattoos that would lead Iranian officials to believe he had converted, putting his life at risk if he was sent back.

**Moreover, the doctrine of *taqiyya* permits the sin of feigning unbelief** in order to pursue a pious goal or for reasons of safety. In many cases this is so thinly veiled that concerned judges are openly questioning if Church leaders are being duped by insincere asylum seekers converting to Christianity to avoid deportation. “[The Sunday Telegraph disclosed](#) that judges had questioned in court how church leaders had been able to vouch for asylum seekers from Iran and Iraq when they were unable to communicate with them for the language barrier”. In another, Judge Holt criticised the speed with which church authorities baptise appellants hearing the case of an asylum seeker who was baptised at Wakefield Anglican Cathedral on 2 May 2018, after arriving only 5 weeks earlier in the UK.

**The point is a reference from a priest or pastor** is often crucial in persuading an immigration judge to overlook a Home Office recommendation that he should not be granted asylum. And as the Church of England is the principal recruiter of Muslim converts, it has become the main target of attack. Former Home Secretary [Dame Priti Patel is a particularly vocal critic](#), “The Church must stop giving succour to dangerous criminals and those who seek to exploit our system. These violent criminals must go from prison to plane, [referring to the proposed bill to send illegal immigrants to Rwanda for processing] that's what the public expects,” she reproached.

**In its defence, the Church of England argues it is not its job** to vet asylum seekers nor to enforce borders but to follow the teachings of the Bible. Pastor Phylip Rees from Tredegarville Baptist Church in Cardiff told the *Daily Mail*, he just wanted to help immigrants in need, adding: “We prayed that God would send us asylum seekers and lo and behold the Home Office opened up an office right next to the church.” He went on to describe how he had arranged mass ‘full immersion’ baptisms of migrants in the sea off South Wales during winter months as a ‘litmus test’ of their faith (see [video](#)). Yet, the 74-year-old minister also admitted that up to 60 per cent of the people he baptised over the years were never seen again. In 2016, the Dean of Liverpool Anglican Cathedral claimed 200 asylum seekers had been confirmed there, in just four years. To this, he added a crucial giveaway: “I can’t think of a single example of somebody who already had British citizenship converting here with us from Islam to Christianity.”

**According to [Migration Watch UK](#), Dr Mike Jones**, the country is bitterly divided with Christian churches “out of sync with majority opinion”. “It would be expected that the church supports those in need and encourages evangelisation, the problem is there

are policies in place that allow them to advocate for people they don't know well and without the proof conversions are genuine", he said on *The Spectator* podcast.

**Rod Liddle associate editor of *The Spectator***, states the catalogue of failures calls for a response that doesn't pull up the drawbridge to immigration but that takes on board, "the reason these migrants are lining up to embrace the Church of England, ... is that they have been told by the real enemies within, the 'refugee' NGOs, that this will greatly improve their chances of securing asylum."

**The case of Abdul Ezedi has ignited a fierce political debate in the UK.** The public wants to know how he managed to stay in the UK despite his history which freed him to commit this horrific crime with obvious implications for national security. Dr Mike Jones has an answer but is pessimistic about the solution. "If someone enters your country illegally the Human Rights Act (HR) makes it almost impossible to deport them if they arrive from a country that is considered unsafe", he said. "The only way to stop this is to amend or abolish the HR Act. **The Rwanda scheme** disapplies sections of the HR act, but doesn't go anyway far enough," to definitively resolve the asylum controversy.