
Press Release

Date: 8 December 2018

Embargo: Immediate

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Further death in detention shows “detrimental effect” of indefinite detention, says Jesuit Refugee Service

News emerged on Friday evening of another tragic death on the UK detention estate, bringing the total number of known deaths in detention to 4³ in 2018. The 51-year old tragically died on Sunday. Sarah Teather, Director of JRS UK said, **“We are deeply saddened to hear of another death in Harmondsworth this past weekend. Our thoughts and prayers are with the young man’s family and friends who will be understandably deeply distressed by this news.”**

Beatrice Grasso, JRS UK Detention Outreach Manager said, **“Our thoughts and prayers are also with those in detention as they adapt to yet another tragic death. When I was visiting Harmondsworth this week, it was clear that the news had deeply affected everyone there. A number of people came to see JRS this week to speak of their distress and upset about the death of their fellow detainee, as well as a failed suicide attempt of another person in the past week. This aggravates already high levels of stress and anxiety.**

“This is not the first death in detention this year, and I fear it will not be the last time something like this happens. It is a testament to the detrimental effects on both physical and mental health that indefinite detention innately causes, often compounding existing vulnerabilities and corroding an individual’s dignity.

“Whilst some people are held in detention for a short period, others can be detained for protracted periods before ultimately being released back into the community. The trauma of detention coupled with the anxiety induced by this uncertainty have a damaging effect on the physical and mental health of those who are put through it.”

The UK is the only country in Europe that does not set a time limit on detention. In 2017, the longest recorded length that someone had been held in the detention estate was 1845 days, that’s over 5 years⁴.

Beatrice Grasso, JRS UK Detention Outreach Manager continued, **“It is time to end the structural injustice of immigration detention, the negative effects of which last long after a person has been released. It’s Time for a Time Limit.”**

JRS UK is a member of the Detention Forum and along with others are calling for an end to detention and an urgent introduction of a 28 Day Time Limit.

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Notes to Editor

1. The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organisation, at work in 51 countries around the world with a shared mission to accompany, serve and advocate on behalf of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons. In the UK, our work currently focuses on those who find themselves destitute as a consequence of government policies and those detained for the administration of immigration procedures.
2. Contact: Megan Knowles, Communications and Development Manager, megan.knowles@jrs.net, Sarah Teather, Director, sarah.teather@jrs.net
3. Inquest: Truth, Justice & Accountability (<https://www.inquest.org.uk/deaths-of-immigration-detainees>)
4. Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees (<http://www.aviddetention.org.uk/immigration-detention/what-immigration-detention>)