**What is “Economic Migration” and why can it end in tragedy?**

Cold, scared, heart beating fast and yet slightly hopeful. This is how I imagine the young Vietnamese girls felt whilst waiting to travel to the UK hoping for a new life with new opportunities. A world away from their small town of [Nghe An](https://www.theguardian.com/global/2019/oct/26/essex-lorry-deaths-most-victims-likely-to-be-from-vietnam-say-reports).

Rewind back 50 years and my 74-year-old Indian Grandfather Ramesh Sachdev was in a similar situation. He was standing alone at a small airport in Nairobi with a ticket and a newly printed passport in his hand. The hustle and bustle of his 2-bedroom home with 7 sisters and 5 brothers seemed far away. "We lived hand to mouth and my parents had borrowed money from a local money lender for my ticket," my Grandfather told me. "Economic migration is what we called it – I went to England in the hope of a better life for my family."

Fortunately, my Grandfather was successful in finding work and having a good life but sadly not everyone is so lucky.

The story that has shocked and sickened people all over the world is that of the [39 people that were found dead in a lorry container in Essex in eastern England on 23rd October](https://www.theguardian.com/global/2019/oct/26/essex-lorry-deaths-most-victims-likely-to-be-from-vietnam-say-reports). 8 of the 39 people were women and some of them are believed to be Vietnamese because their [families reported them as missing but this has not been confirmed.](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-50159748)

If you are wondering why someone would go on such a dangerous journey, the answer is partly “economic migration” which means when people move countries in the hope that they will earn more money.

I visited Vietnam on holiday this week and spoke to 20-year-old student Ha Anh Bui from Hanoi University. She told me, “Even one person that goes abroad can get a salary high enough to provide money for their whole family.” She continued, “It can be life changing and that is why people take the risk and because some people have successfully made the journey.”

Hotel manager Dang Minh Thuan told me “Sometimes people have high debts and that is why they have no choice but for someone in the family to go abroad and try and earn money to pay back their debts.”

I spoke to Nick Grono from [Freedom Fund](https://freedomfund.org/) a charity that works to fight human trafficking told me, “Being poor is one of the main reasons for economic migration, as those that are desperately poor are often willing to take significant risks – even to their lives – in an effort to ensure a better life for them and their families.”

The police are looking for the criminals that brought these 39 people to the UK and are responsible for their deaths. If you want to help then you can donate to charities such as the Freedom Fund that work to stop events like this from happening again and to make sure migrants are protected.

These 39 people paid the highest price. They paid with their lives.

***Ishani Patel***

***Age 9, year 5***