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**NO  
MORE  
SILENCE**

**GIVING YOU A VOICE**

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# INTRODUCTION

*No More Silence* is a collaborative publication between Library & Learning Services and UWE Student's Union. It showcases uncensored personal accounts of race and inequality, from students and staff at UWE Bristol. It aims at raising awareness of issues around race and racism experienced by our own students and staff. More importantly, it provides a platform for those whose voices remain hidden and/or unheard

We would like to thank all of you who provided a contribution to *No More Silence #5*

*#5 Designed by Medha Pullagura and Aston Hobbs*

**NO  
MORE  
SILENCE  
VOLUME  
5**

Scan the QR code for  
access to audio versions  
of the included content.



# EYE CONTACT

NO MORE SILENCE #5

By Chathuska (Chat) Kiriella

Eye contact;  
the smallest courtesy  
in a room full of conversation.  
You don't realise how powerful it is  
until it's taken from you.

Sit in a meeting at office,  
On Wednesdays  
There is one person.  
She meets everyone's eyes  
except mine,  
skimming past me  
as if I'm not there.

At a work dinner, again a she,  
sitting directly in front of me.  
When she speaks,  
her eyes travel left,  
then right,  
carefully orbiting my face.  
She talks about diversity, ironically;  
while refusing to look at me.

This is not a coincidence.  
I am the only brown person  
in these conversations,  
the sole representation  
of people of colour.

So I ask myself:  
is this racism?  
No slurs.  
No insults.  
Nothing anyone can point to.

Just eyes that never meet mine;  
and the message is clear.



NEITHER

NOR

By Yarden Woolf

When people ask me who I am,  
quite often I do not speak.  
For I am neither this nor that  
not a valley, nor a peak.

"You look like this," they say to me,  
but who are they to judge?  
I am neither this nor that, I tell them;  
I stay firm, I do not budge.

I did not choose my beginnings,  
where my story first was charted.  
Nor do I know where I will go,  
yet I go there whole-hearted.

But sometimes this can be hard,  
with obstacles along the way  
obstacles in the form of assumptions  
that can cloud a sunny day.

Most often people think they know  
where I come from, where I'm at.  
But then I just reply to them:  
I am neither this nor that.

I am not a tall tree,  
a mountain range, or a flowing stream,  
I do not need to be these things  
to be grounded, strong, serene

I invite you to look inside,  
peel the layers, have a chat.  
For then you too will see  
that I am neither this nor that.

I am everything.

I AM EVERYTHING

**M Y W O R T H T O**

NO MORE SILENCE #5

**L I V E O N**

**T H I S E A R T H**

By Chiedza Chabata

Being told that my worth comes from the  
colour of skin

Feeling like nothing matters within

The odd glare and stare cuz my 'fro blows  
beautiful in the wind,

"Is that real or is it really a wig".

Why does it matter whether I'm black,  
green or pink.

Can't I receive love for just being me,

or do I have to be scared that they'll ask  
you're a new type for me.

My worth to live on this doesn't come for  
free,

It's judged because of skin like I'm an  
exotic creature in the debris.

Why is my worth to live on this Earth  
sometimes so gruelling.

It doesn't matter because I will stay and  
keep on moving.

**'I WILL STAY AND KEEP ON MOVING'**



VOCABULARY OF A HATE CRIME

my whatsapp messages, summarised, in the aftermath of targeted vandalism to our Black History Month project at Glenside Campus, University of the West of England, October 2025.

**I talk  
even when  
I don't  
speak.**

By Sorrel Kavanagh

# THE SILENCE I LEARNED TO CARRY

As an international student at UWE Bristol, I have been fortunate to build a supportive circle of friends from diverse backgrounds. However, despite this sense of belonging, I have also experienced incidents that made me deeply uncomfortable due to others' perceptions of me.

During one of my clinical placements, a UWE lecturer offered me advice about an assignment on the topic of personal reflection. Although the discussion was initially relevant, it quickly became clear that discriminatory assumptions were being made. When I mentioned that I had not yet started the assignment, she abruptly asked, "Your English wasn't that good in first year, right?" I was taken aback and could only respond with an awkward laugh. I have spoken English comfortably for many years and hold multiple qualifications that demonstrate my proficiency. Despite this, she continued, saying, "After your clinical placements, your English has improved, now it's almost like your first language!" Her words reduced years of effort, education, and identity to a stereotype shaped by my Asian appearance. Wanting to avoid confrontation, I stayed silent and changed the subject, even though the discomfort stayed with me long after the conversation ended.

Silence followed me into my hospital placements as well. At my most recent placement, the department was predominantly white. I noticed how staff members of colour were often excluded from close-knit social groups, rarely included in casual conversations or shared moments of connection. As a student, this sense of exclusion felt even more pronounced. I watched as white students were approached warmly, spoken to with ease, and welcomed into conversations that never seemed to reach me. While there were individuals who were kind and supportive, the overall pattern was impossible to ignore. The feeling of being present, yet unseen, was deeply unsettling.

Over time, these patterns extended beyond social interactions and into opportunities. My friends and I began to notice that interviews for roles within the hospital placement site were consistently offered to students who were white or who closely matched the dominant personality and cultural demographic of the department. As students of colour, we found this odd. There were no explicit remarks, yet the homogeneity of those invited to interview spoke for itself. It raised quiet questions among us about who was seen as a "good fit," and whether merit alone was truly being considered.

These experiences may appear small to those who have never faced them, but they accumulate. They shape how safe we feel to speak, how confident we feel to belong, and how often we choose silence over honesty. For a long time, I told myself that staying quiet was easier, and challenging these moments would only make things uncomfortable. But silence comes at a cost. It allows assumptions to go unchallenged and normalises inequality in spaces meant to educate, support, and empower.

By sharing my experience, I am choosing to break that silence. Not to assign blame, but to demand awareness. No one should have their abilities questioned, their identity reduced, or their presence overlooked because of how they look. If we want inclusive institutions and equitable learning environments, we must be willing to listen to uncomfortable truths and ensure that no one feels invisible ever again.

# ON THE CORNER SHOP

By Joana Costa Santos

I walk into the corner shop, the bell above the door rings and my eyes meet those of the men behind the counter. We smile at each other and make small talk. He is, just like me, an immigrant. His accent betrays him like mine often does. As we communicate through this borrowed language, we silently acknowledge our shared condition as outsiders. Without saying it, we identify with each other in the struggle of being an alien. There's a mutual understanding, a feeling of belonging to a group that doesn't belong. That is the nature of an immigrant, someone who doesn't belong to the land they chose to inhabit, so if our origins dictate where we belong, I often wonder who does belong.

In the 2021/22 census, The Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford concluded that 10.7 million people in the UK were born abroad. This number won't include the ones that come into the country illegally. More than 16% of the population are foreigners. Most of us will attempt to assimilate the culture of our newly chosen home and consequently close the gap that distances us from the locals. In this manner, there's an underlying hope that we won't feel so alien to them. With luck, we will learn their ways and probably lose some of ours in the process. This will lead us to a place where we might not have been entirely faithful to our heritage, but at least we are accepted. Maybe, one day, we will be made to feel like we belong.

In simple terms, locals differ from immigrants because they were born in the country in question. In theory, it's their rightful place. The 2021/22 census shows that 3.839 million children have at least one foreign parent. This means that although they were born in the UK, the chances are they will be raised in two different cultures: the one of their country of birth and that of their parent/s. Their identities will still be split and exist in a cultural limbo. Consequently, this will contribute to the belief that they do not belong in the country they were born in. So, considering the son of immigrants, the argument that what makes you belong to a place is whether you were born there or not seems to weaken.

// **10.7 MILLION PEOPLE  
IN THE UK WERE  
BORN ABROAD** //

This idea can be further proved by those who migrate within their country of origin. In 2017, *The Sunday Post* reported that, on average, Britons live 100 miles from their birthplace. In the 2021/22 census, it is reported that, for example, 73,091 people moved from and 82,330 moved into Bristol. 44,786 people moved from and 113,878 moved into Leeds. 23,527 people moved from, and 52,397 moved into Brighton and so on. They are outsiders within their own country, foreign to the communities they moved into. Although their cultural gap with their community is much smaller because they share the country's broader culture, they may still face different accents or ways of living. Ultimately, it could be argued that because internal migrants weren't born into the area that they inhabit, they don't belong there themselves.

We could take this even further by considering the English population's genetic origins. Most English people share the same genetics as those from the Netherlands, Germany, and Scandinavia due to the mass migration from those countries 400 years ago—most English natives are, consequently, immigrant descendants. This means that most likely, even English citizens born to both English parents and who never moved away from their place of birth are of foreign descent. Their ancestors equally didn't belong here at some point in history.

When I reflect upon these facts, I can't help but think that who belongs where transcends where they were born. Chances are, many of us came from somewhere else or are descendants of those who have. Belonging, then, is a personal process. It becomes about engaging with our chosen place and the people in it. It is about mutual acceptance and looking for the similarities in each other instead of the differences. By cultivating these values, it is possible to overcome the belief that some of us are more entitled to a piece of land than others.

Still in the shop, I focus on my shopping. The man's phone rings, and he picks it up, speaking in a language I don't recognise. I grab a tin of tomatoes. The label reads "Made in Italy"—a foreigner like most of us.



THE  
ELDEST  
DAUGHTER  
OF A

BROWN  
HOME

By Saliha Sadaf

Firstborn brown girl, shoulders trained to hold blame, pain comes loud and sudden before she can name the pain.

"Be strong," they say.

"Be grateful."

"Do what you're told." So she swallows her childhood, to keep the family whole. She gives and gives until empty, confusing love with cost, becoming who they needed even when she's lost.

Always the one uniting, alone when she breaks, holding space for everyone while her own heart aches.

They call it tradition. She calls it survival.

They call it respect. She calls it denial.

But survival is not silence. And strength is not pain. She is not just a cycle meant to carry their chain.

**She is the pause.**

**The breath.**

**The break.**

**The one who stops the bleeding  
so the next ones don't ache.**

# THE MEASURE OF LEAVING

By Clay C. Johnson

Why would you wander so far from home?

Is it to cruise the seas, or see the trees  
on the far side of Rome?

Or is it to escape the dread you walked instead,  
those dim-lit corners where your dreams once  
bled.

Nay, you never want to leave what once was  
yours to know:

your friends, your family, the love you could not  
hold.

Yet still you go –  
compelled by winds not of your choosing,  
to seek a world so wild, so free,  
so accepting of me?

And when you return your gaze to where once  
you stood,  
you hear them speak as if your leaving were a  
stain upon their good.

As though your hope were theft, your spirit cleft,  
your measure bereft  
of its worth.

Nay, this is your home; these are your kin.

This is the land they grant you begin.

The land of your forebears – for all humankind,  
different in feature,  
yet mirrored in mind.

For why would you wander so far from home,  
if not to find  
you're never alone?

# TWO SISTERS FROM THE UK

Meet Bassmala Morkaz and Baraeh Morkaz - two unstoppable sisters whose voices recently reached one of the world's biggest stages: the United Nations Human Rights Council.

From UWE Bristol to global conversations, these sisters are proving that when young women rise, entire communities rise with them.

# TO THE UK:

**A BOLD JOURNEY FOR JUSTICE**

By Bassmala and Baraeh Morkaz

# // THE SUDANESE PEOPLE ARE FACING A COMPOUNDED HUMANITARIAN TRAGEDY //

## From UWE to the World

Bassmala, a UWE graduate with both a Bachelor's and Master's in Biomedical Science (specialised in Medical Genetics), now works as a Widening Participation Intern, helping open doors for underrepresented students. Baraeh, a passionate third-year Law student at UWE, is on the path to becoming an international human rights lawyer. Science and law might be different fields, but these sisters share one mission: amplifying the voices of Sudan's civilians caught in conflict.

## Taking Sudan's Story to the UN

At the Human Rights Council, both sisters delivered powerful, truth-filled messages on behalf of Sudan: Baraeh addressed the President of the Council with a clear call: "The Sudanese people are facing a compounded humanitarian tragedy. Ending the recruitment and use of mercenaries by the Sudanese army is necessary to protect civilians and stop ongoing human rights violations.



Bassmala followed by urging the Council's Vice President to take a firm stand: "We call upon the Human Rights Council to issue a clear condemnation of these racially-based crimes, to mandate the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the International Fact-Finding Mission to prepare a dedicated report on the ethnic dimension of these violations," Their statements directly aligned with the Council's conclusions, reinforcing international action on two critical issues:

- Ending the recruitment and use of mercenaries and child soldiers - the Council condemned the illegal recruitment of children and the use of armed militias.
- Addressing racially and ethnically motivated violence in Darfur - their call for a clearer condemnation of ethnic targeting echoed the Council's deep concern over ethnically motivated attacks and the parallels to past atrocities in the region.

### **A United Front for Human Rights**

Together, Bassmala and Baraeh used their voices to demand truth, accountability, and protection for Sudan's innocent civilians.

Two sisters.

One mission.

A powerful reminder that young people can and do shape the world.

Their journey is far from over - and their impact is just beginning.



# PREVIOUS

Explore the four previous issues of No More Silence and discover the stories, poems, and illustrations from our previous contributors! Access the content at: [go.uwe.ac.uk/nomoresilence](http://go.uwe.ac.uk/nomoresilence).

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Issue 01



Issue 03



Issue 04



# ISSUES

URE. CORNER.

AK. LEAVING.

THER. DREAD.

N. PAUSE.

K. LAND. FREE.

TRADITION. S.

LLIED. ACCEPT.

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E. HUMAN.