

# Women's ASYLUM NEWS

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**Refugee Women's Resource Project - Asylum Aid - Issue 34 July 2003**

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## **Asylum Aid is campaigning for NASS to pay for refuge places for women escaping abusive relationships**

Although IND's own Policy Bulletin 18 lays out the guidelines for dealing with allegations of racial harassment, general harassment and domestic violence, the reality is that many asylum seeking women are trapped in abusive relationships because they cannot access appropriate safe, confidential housing.

Page 2 of Policy Bulletin 18 states: *'If there is a significant risk of violence occurring then alternative accommodation should be re-allocated'*. Later in the same document there is a requirement that the police have been informed. It suggests a "log of incidents" should be kept and that an investigation "not normally taking longer than 10 days" should be held.

All of these provisions, even if they were properly implemented, seem to disregard the situation of most asylum seeking women trapped in abusive situations. Any woman would think twice about reporting her abusive partner to the police and then returning to the family home. 'A log' of incidents suggests NASS would expect a woman to endure several incidents before she qualified for 'alternative housing'. And in some cases 10 days for an investigation could result in a woman being seriously

injured or even killed by her abusive partner.

Policy bulletin 18 goes onto to say caseworkers should consider the seriousness of the violence, the threats of violence and the frequency of occurrence along with the likelihood of re-occurrence. These are complicated issues which require expertise, time and listening skills. All of these issues could be addressed with appropriate training for NASS staff to underline the commitment in Bulletin 18.

Furthermore, if a woman leaves an abusive situation by leaving her dispersal area the bulletin states that consent to live in emergency accommodation should only be granted in '*exceptional circumstances*' and requires '*good prima facie evidence*' of domestic violence or the threat of domestic violence. It notes: *'If an incident has not been reported to the police a person should not be re-admitted'*.

**Update on Trafficking:  
Restrictive criteria  
successfully renegotiated by  
Eaves Housing: see details  
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Surely women who make allegations of domestic violence or are brave enough to escape the dispersal accommodation after abuse and approach NASS for assistance should be placed in safe accommodation immediately while an investigation takes place. To do less places the woman at risk of serious injury or even death.

There is, in theory at least, provision for NASS to allocate and fund refuge places for asylum seeking women escaping domestic violence. The reality is very different. There needs to be a commitment from management level of NASS to put in the resources to fund these places. Advising NASS caseworkers to contact Women's Aid helpline on behalf of those women they accept as being trapped in abusive relationships will be to no avail if the resources are not made available. This goes against the current NASS policy of paying as little as possible for dispersal accommodation.

Apparently even David Blunkett told the All Party parliamentary group on domestic violence that refuge services would be made available to women with no recourse to public funds. Hopefully, these promised provisions will fund refuge places for women who have a husband in the UK and are within the two-year probationary period (intended to tackle bogus marriages but which, in fact, tends to lock women into abusive relationships for longer) and have no recourse to public funds. But will they help asylum seeking women escaping domestic violence?

Although there may be an onus on social services to provide for vulnerable asylum seeking women, and it can be argued that those escaping domestic violence come under this category, many social service departments refuse to admit any responsibility unless legal action is taken in

the form of Judicial Review. Even then an application is not guaranteed to succeed. Most successful legal challenges are decided '*on the facts of the case*' which has the effect of restricting the judgment so it cannot be used as a test case for others.

In reality women find it difficult to escape an abusive relationship at the best of times. Any real or perceived barriers to escape are often enough to trap a woman within that relationship.

Asylum seeking women often have an immigration status which is dependant on their partners. They may not speak the language. Culturally it may bring great '*shame*' on the family if she admits to domestic violence and even more shame if she leaves her husband/partner.

Asylum Aid has campaigned on safety issues for women over a number of years and does not believe that '*dispersal*' is a system which offers appropriate housing for vulnerable women, many of whom have been raped and tortured. Problems for women placed into emergency accommodation with a majority of young asylum seeking men have also been highlighted in a recent BBC programme in which Asylum Aid took part.

Finally, the government has introduced a consultation paper on domestic violence (see below) and it is welcome. But the lessons learned from the past, the good practice that has been set up for UK citizens who are subjected to domestic violence should be extended to all women trapped in an abusive relationship. This should translate into funds for refuge places for those with no recourse to public funds; NASS funding for refuge places for women escaping domestic violence and the victims of trafficking; and adequate training for NASS staff.

## Other Information re: Domestic violence

### Safety and Justice Consultation Workshops<sup>1</sup>

This summer the Government released the consultation paper *Safety and Justice: The Government's Proposals on Domestic Violence*. This consultation aims to consolidate the initial consultation on domestic violence in the *Justice for All* white paper and the ongoing work of the Ministerial Group on Domestic Violence.

The Women's National Commission (WNC) were excited to be approached by the Home Office to carry out 12 consultation workshops throughout England and Wales, with a view to gathering the opinions and input of women survivors of domestic violence and their advocates on the proposals laid out in the consultation paper. The programme and protocol for these workshops was developed through advice from the WNC Violence Against Women Working Group and was tested at a Pilot workshop held in London on 16 June. Since then, workshops have been held in Brighton, Plymouth, Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle, London and Merthyr Tydfil.

Feedback collected from the women who have attended these initial workshops has been very positive. WNC has collected many constructive and practical ideas throughout and very much look forward to feeding these back to the Government.

The final four workshops are yet to be held in London (5 September), Cambridge (8 September), Leicester (11 September) and Birmingham (12 September). The 5 September workshop in London has been designed specifically for black and minority

ethnic women in order to ensure we collect their experiences of domestic violence – experiences that are very different and often missed in broad scale consultations.

WNC will be producing a report summarising the key themes to arise which will be available on WNC's website or by writing to WNC. The consultation paper is available at [www.homeoffice.gov.uk](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk). Responses should be sent to: Jackie Westlake, Domestic Violence Consultation, Home Office, 5th Floor, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, SW1H 9AT or to the WNC, Cabinet Office, 35 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BQ. The closing date is 12 September 2003.

### HO definition of domestic violence fails to address the human rights of refugee women says RWRP

Although RWRP welcomes the government's consultation paper on domestic violence the gender neutral definition, which is restricted to violence between current and former partners in an intimate relationship, effectively excludes the experiences of the majority of women from black, minority and ethnic communities.

Firstly by being gender neutral the paper does not recognise that domestic violence is predominantly violence by men against women. The statistics that 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men experience domestic violence also needs to be placed into context: Women suffer the most serious harm, intimidation, threats, rapes and strangulation and post separation violence. Women are also most likely to be killed by current or former partners.

Secondly, by restricting the perpetrators of domestic violence to former and current partners in an intimate relationship the

<sup>1</sup> We are grateful to Karin Snabb for this contribution.

government has ignored the experiences of women from black, minority and ethnic communities who are intimidated, harassed, and/or physically and mentally abused by members of their family, their husband's family and/or the community. Hannana Siddiqi of Southall Black Sisters asks: *'Who is the government frightened of alienating – women or community leaders....who more often than not, are men with conservative religious and political views hostile to women's rights?'*

Neither does this narrow definition of domestic violence recognise such abuses as FGM, honour crime, dowry killing, forced marriage, trafficking and general violence against black and minority women. Siddiqi suggests that tendencies to place issues around violence against black and minority women in categories around race marginalize women's human rights and lead to negative developments.

One of these negative developments is the government's proposals to address the forced marriage issue by raising the age limit for sponsors from 16 to 18 years. This is supposed to prevent young girls being forced into marriages at an early age in order to sponsor their husbands as a method of entry into the UK. According to Southall Black Sisters and other black and minority groups the government has failed to recognise that forced marriages are about the control of women. The consequences of this change are likely to result in young women being subjected to pressure and control, possibly being forcibly held abroad, until they are old enough to sponsor their husbands. It may also result in very young women being forced to have children in order to 'secure' them as a future sponsor.

These intensified pressures undermine family life; have wider implications which undermine the rights of migrant

communities; and provide for differential treatment which undermines the rights of black and minority women.

In a recent speech to Women's Aid Hannana Siddiqi went on to criticise the government for funding community groups and initiatives which encourage women to stay in or to return to abusive relationships through mediation.

This theme is also explored in an article by Maki Kimura and Corinna Ditchaid on *'honour'* crimes in the June/July edition of Refugee Women's News (Refugee Women Association). The authors describe these killings as an *'extreme abuse'* of women's rights and highlight how marginalized cultures are incorporated into mainstream culture in a way that *'culture'* is presented as an excuse for men's crimes against women. This includes the practice of men trying to bring up *'cultural tradition'* to defend themselves against the crime of abusing or killing women in their community.

### News on Trafficking

**Asylum seeking women can now get protection under the HO anti-trafficking pilot scheme** As a result of pressure from NGO's and legal organizations Eaves Housing have re-negotiated some of the restrictive criteria for victims of trafficking accessing the Home Office (HO) pilot scheme (25 places in safe housing plus services).

The HO has now agreed that Eaves can accept women that have already made a claim for Asylum onto the Poppy Project. Further, women who make a claim for asylum while on the Project will be entitled to remain.

Previously the HO had issued additional criteria excluding women who had or were intending to claim asylum despite the fact that women who refuse to cooperate with the police prosecutions were only entitled to four weeks refuge and those whose intelligence were not considered important enough could be expelled from the project after 12 weeks. Women who no longer fit the criteria will now be entitled to NASS support and to protection from deportation while their asylum applications are being considered.

The requirement that women co-operate with the authorities now officially includes a willingness to consider doing so in order to access the four week safety period. Women are now able to remain on the Project provided they meet with Police and Immigration even if the information is not substantive.

Another revision removes the requirement that a woman had to be working in prostitution on the day she was referred to the project. This had effectively excluded women who had managed to escape from their traffickers more than a few hours before being referred. Women will now be accepted onto the scheme if they have been working as a prostitute within the last 30 days.

NASS does not pay for refuge places for women at risk, including trafficked women. Trafficked women and those subjected to domestic violence are subject to the generic system and housing stock. The Minister (Beverley) has initiated a dialogue with NASS and has requested a response within 2 weeks re dispersal and the above.

We understand the Minister has asked NASS to consider funding places in refuges and implementing a system whereby trafficked women would not be

automatically dispersed much along the lines of Medical Foundation clients who are exempt from dispersal.

The last important news is that the pilot scheme, originally intended to end at the end of September 2003, has been extended until the end of December 2003.

### **Trafficked woman granted refugee status as protection in Albania deemed insufficient**

The Tribunal has allowed the refugee and human rights appeal of a woman at risk of being trafficked from Albania - [2003] UKIAT00023 K. K had been sold to a man with a view to his marrying her, though he intended to take her to Italy where she believed he would force her into prostitution. She fled.

The social group finding was almost a concession by the Home Office, so not fully reasoned by the Tribunal which found K belonged to the social group of '*women from the North East of Albania*'. The Tribunal accepted that if she did return to Albania she could not go near her family (because it was her family that sold her in the first place) thus '*it would be disproportionate to require the Appellant to leave the country and seek entry clearance from abroad.*'

The findings on insufficiency of protection are helpful although K was sold into trafficking by her family indicating a greater vulnerability on return than someone with a family to go back to.

The tribunal accepted '*argument to the effect that the foregoing background objective material, of recent date, indicates that there would not be a sufficiency of protection for the Appellant in Albania*' and '*that while there may be some*

*improvement the government of Albania "does not yet fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking." It thus can be said that the present situation is sub-minimum.'* Her appeal was also allowed on the ground of her established family life in the UK - married with children to a FRY national with refugee status.

More important decision-wise is the tribunal's determination in *SSHD v Dzhygun* [00TH00728]: The Tribunal found Ms Dzhygun to belong to a particular social group: '*women in the Ukraine who are forced into prostitution against their will.*' *Dzhygun* is helpful in that the Tribunal's finding of a particular social group comprising women in the Ukraine forced into prostitution, was expressly broader than the group found by the Adjudicator; namely women trafficked from the Ukraine into prostitution. The key limitation of *Dzhygun* is that the finding of a particular social group is country specific, so advisors will need to consider carefully whether there is sufficient country evidence to support the establishment of a particular social group of women forced into prostitution.

A further limitation, on its face, is that *Dzhygun* concerns only victims trafficked into or for prostitution. Nevertheless, the claim of a victim trafficked, for example, for domestic slavery would fall to be analysed in the same way, and the establishment of a particular social group would require evidence to demonstrate that either trafficking victims per se, or victims forced into domestic slavery, were a distinctly recognised group in the particular country.

**UK Parliament debates trafficking policy** The full debate parliamentary debate held on 10 July on what measures

the government was taking to fight trafficking in people can be found at: [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld199900/ldhansrd/pdvn/lds03/index/30710-x.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld199900/ldhansrd/pdvn/lds03/index/30710-x.htm).<sup>2</sup>

**Safe House Closure** Asylum Aid is sorry to report that despite vigorous campaigning by counter trafficking groups the safe house for trafficked girls aged 16 or 17 years in West Sussex is to close. West Sussex have said '*It is now time to develop and improve the service to trafficked young people by making it more flexible and broad based.*'<sup>3</sup> They have not said how they intend to this. Counter trafficking groups will continue to monitor the level of service provided.

## Other UK News

**Government's plans to restrict legal aid: another obstacle for refugees to seek protection in the UK** The Government has announced proposals to dramatically restrict legal aid funding for asylum and immigration casework (see details at [www.lcd.gov.uk/consult/leg-aid/asylum.htm](http://www.lcd.gov.uk/consult/leg-aid/asylum.htm)) If implemented these proposals could prove the foremost obstacle to refugee women securing asylum in the UK. Anyone concerned for refugee women should now be considering how they can best respond to these proposals. Asylum Aid's response will be highlighted in the next issue of WAN.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Trafficking Network Update, July 2003. [m.kaye@antislavery.org](mailto:m.kaye@antislavery.org)

<sup>3</sup> Statement from Mark Dunn Cabinet member for social and caring services, west sussex county council, 20 June 2003.

### **Court of Appeal judgement : Support for disabled asylum seekers<sup>4</sup>**

The Court of Appeal - in *The Queen (on the application of Mani) v the London Borough of Lambeth and The Secretary of State for the Home Department* - has held that local authorities have a duty to provide support, under section 21 of the National Assistance Act 1948, to destitute asylum seekers who have a disability which, whilst giving rise to a need for care and attention, falls short of calling for the provision of residential accommodation. The full-text of judgement is available at:

[www.courtservice.gov.uk/judgmentsfiles/j1850/mani\\_v\\_lambeth.htm](http://www.courtservice.gov.uk/judgmentsfiles/j1850/mani_v_lambeth.htm) For previous asylum support court case judgements see: [www.asylumsupport.info/courtcases.htm](http://www.asylumsupport.info/courtcases.htm)

### **Councils must check age of asylum seekers**

([www.communitycare.co.uk](http://www.communitycare.co.uk), 15 July 2003). A high court judge has ruled that local authorities must make a proper investigation into the age of young unaccompanied asylum seekers and not just go on the way they look. The ruling came in the case of a male asylum seeker, who claimed to be 17, and took successful legal action against Merton council's decision to treat him as if he were over-18. Extensive enquiries will now have to be made by the council to determine the boy's age.

## **UK Events/Projects**

### **Violence against women:**

**tackling trafficking** (Reading, 7-12 September 2003). Building on the training on this issue undertaken in sending, transit and receiving countries by the seminar directors, this seminar will explore what we know internationally about this form of trafficking, the impacts on victims, law enforcement, inter-agency work and prevention. The seminar is facilitated by Dr Liz Kelly and Linda Regan from the Child and Women Abuse Studies Unit, London Metropolitan University, together with a range of leading experts with extensive experience of responding to trafficking for sexual exploitation. For more information/register online, go to: <http://www2.britishcouncil.org/seminars-governance-0349.htm> or contact Stephen Finn at [stephen.finn@britishcouncil.org](mailto:stephen.finn@britishcouncil.org). Alternatively, phone British Council Seminars on +44 (0)1865 302715, fax +44 (0)1865 557368, 516590.

### **Healthcare of Asylum Seeker &**

**Refugee Women** is a Conference taking place on 18th September 2003 which will be chaired by Naaz Coker, Chair of the Refugee Council. The Conference is highly relevant for all those involved in the commissioning and delivery of healthcare services for female asylum seekers and refugees in primary and secondary care. It will offer delegates the opportunity to hear from leading practitioners who work with asylum seeker and refugee women.

Participation to the event costs £100 + VAT for registered charities. The venue will be in Central London but for more details on registration and programme, contact: Central London Bookings: Tel: 0870 400 1020 Fax:0870 400 1099. Or visit: [www.capitaconferences.co.uk](http://www.capitaconferences.co.uk).

<sup>4</sup> Direct source: [www.asylumrights.net](http://www.asylumrights.net).

**Rights of Women Training Programme for Women Autumn 2003** includes courses on domestic violence and the law, sexual violence and the criminal law and family law (September and October). For further details, contact Rights of Women at 020 7251 6575/6 or by email at [info@row.org.uk](mailto:info@row.org.uk). Or visit the following site: [www.rightsofwomen.org.uk](http://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk) where you can also download an application.

**Therapeutic and Research Challenges of Working with Refugees and Victims of Torture** (A One-Day Workshop Friday 24 October 2003) The Centre for Trauma Studies and Traumatic Stress Service is hosting a workshop facilitated by colleagues from the Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims (RCT), based in Copenhagen, Denmark. The RCT has an international reputation for its research and therapeutic work with the medical and psychological rehabilitation of victims of torture and organised violence.

Venue: Citilodge Hotel, Nottingham  
Cost: £85 (incl. all refreshments and materials) For details and further information please contact Centre Administrator, Liz Jeffrey, Centre for Trauma Studies/Traumatic Stress Service, Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust, Westminster House, 598 The Wells Rd, Nottingham NG3 3AA, United Kingdom  
Tel: +44 (0)115 952 9436. Fax: +44 (0)115 952 9487

## International News

**Women tortured and sexually abused by police in Turkey for being politically active** On 14 June, Kurdish woman Gülhabar Gündüz was abducted by

four police officers in Istanbul and subsequently tortured and raped. Gündüz is a member of the Istanbul women's board of the Democratic Party (DEHAP) in Turkey. According to an appeal launched by the World Organisation Against Torture (known as OMCT), Gündüz said that the men told her that '*she should not be leading political activities because she is a woman and that [her treatment] would be a lesson to her*'.<sup>5</sup> Police denied that this happened and also denied harassing her following her political activities leading up to the March 8, International Women's Day.

OMCT stated: that it was '*deeply troubled by the sex-specific nature of the torture and the targeting of women political activists because they are women, and would like to highlight that it has received other reports of torture of women, as detailed in OMCT's recent alternative reports on violence against women in Turkey to the Committee Against Torture*'.

An international women's delegation of six women from Holland, Germany and Austria, organized by the Women's Bureau for Peace e.V., investigated the state attack on the Kurd but were also told by DEHAP that the attack was not an isolated incident.<sup>6</sup> Seven people had been abducted and abused in the last four months, five of whom women who were sexually tortured. The trial against four police officers who had been charged with arresting and sexually abusing two other DEHAP members began the day before Gündüz abduction.

<sup>5</sup> Source: OMCT Appeals '18/6/2003: Turkey: rape and torture of political activist Ms. Gülbahar Gündüz' at [www.omct.org/](http://www.omct.org/) (Turkey)

<sup>6</sup> Source: Women without borders, 'Turkey: State attacks on active Kurd women', 9 July 2003. at [www.women-without-borders.org/frauen-ohne-grenzen.asp?loc=news&pg=new&id=453&lang=eng](http://www.women-without-borders.org/frauen-ohne-grenzen.asp?loc=news&pg=new&id=453&lang=eng)



There were also threats against DEHAP-activists trying to mobilise women to support Gündüz in talking publicly about her ordeal and her fight against government violence. Police attempted to kidnap the head of the DEHAP women's commission of Istanbul-Gaziosmanpasa during a demonstration of protest which was brutally ended by the police. Although she managed to escape, she was threatened with rape in a remote forest.

The international women's delegation informed European politicians and diplomats about the situation in Istanbul and was planning to write a detailed report. A copy of the report, along with other information about attacks on women in Turkey as well as the current campaign for social peace and political participation, can be requested at Ceni - Kurd Women's Bureau for Peace e. V., Gruppellostr. 27, 40120 Düsseldorf, Germany, Tel. 0049 211 171 1080 or via e-mail: [cenifrauen@gmx.de](mailto:cenifrauen@gmx.de).

**Women still at risk of sexual violence in Kakuma refugee camp (Kenya)** At the end of last month, the UN Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) reported fighting between refugees and local Turkana people which led to the death of 11 lives. According to IRIN, *'The Turkana complained that the UN and aid agencies operating in the area were all catering for the Sudanese instead of the local people, while the refugees said their women were being raped outside the camp while searching for firewood, as well as having their food rations stolen during raids'*. For more details see: [www.irinnews.org/pring.asp?ReportID=34986](http://www.irinnews.org/pring.asp?ReportID=34986).

**Prison brutality exposed in Romania** The Romania government has been ordered by the European Court of Human Rights to pay 46,000 euro in compensation to an imprisoned lawyer who suffered *'inhuman and degrading treatment'* at the hands of the authorities.<sup>7</sup> The Court in Strasbourg condemned Romania for *'injuries and psychological torture suffered by Alexandru Pantea while he was held in custody in 1994-5, and for failing to carry out an effective inquiry into his complaints'*.

The Court ruled that that the authorities had violated several areas of the European Convention on Human Rights but the case also highlights again the urgent need for reforming the justice system in Romania, especially if the country is to join the European Union (as it hopes to do in 2007). Several international human rights organizations, including Amnesty International and the Helsinki Committee, have criticized the *'inhuman and degrading'* prison conditions as well as poor treatment of people held in custody at the hands of the police. The ECHR is dealing with over 170 cases relating to alleged human rights violations in Romania.

## International Project

**First-Ever Women's Coalition on HIV/AIDs launched in Ethiopia<sup>8</sup>** The coalition, made up of tens of thousands of women including leading Ethiopian figures, aims at combating HIV in a country where the HIV prevalence rate is estimated at nearly 11% of the total

<sup>7</sup> Balkan crisis report No. 441 IWPR

<sup>8</sup> UN Integrated Regional Information Networks - June 18, 2003

population.<sup>9</sup> 3 millions are estimated to be living with HIV/AIDS. The coalition has been given an initial budget of US\$200,000 from the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in order to mobilise Ethiopian women in taking the lead in the fight against the virus.

Prime Minister Meles Zenawi made clear at the United Nations Conference Centre in Addis Ababa that the responsibility for stopping the spread of the virus laid with individuals who needed to change their behaviour. The pandemic was described as a '*national emergency*' by Ethiopian President Girma Wolde Giorgis who also called for a '*fundamental change in the way women are treated in society*' pointing out that women's lack of access to education and economic dependency in a traditional society like Ethiopia often constituted an obstacle in combating the virus.

## New Publications

**Violence Against Women: 10 Reports/Year 2002<sup>10</sup>** (July 2003) is a third collection of reports published by the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) covering the situation of women in Croatia, Czech Republic, Moldova, Poland, Spain, Sudan, Togo, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, and Yemen within the framework of its Violence against Women Programme.

The reports show that while there are some encouraging signs of progress in the development and implementation of new legislation and procedures with respect to violence against women, states are overwhelmingly failing to uphold their international and national obligations to

exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish gender-based violence at the hands of private individuals. Across the board, these OMCT reports found that the vast majority of violence against women takes place within the family.

For example, information from the Croatia report reveals that as much as 98% of all violence against women is family violence. The report on the Czech Republic notes that spouses or partners are responsible for 51% of all rapes in that country. In Moldova, one study asserts that 22% of all the women interviewed reported having been a victim of abuse by their husband or partner, while in Poland, researchers have concluded that as many as 1 in 6 women are victims of domestic violence.

OMCT's report on Sudan notes with concern that marital rape is not criminalized there and that although statistics concerning domestic violence are not available, such violence is suspected to be widespread. Domestic violence is also a serious problem in Togo where 85% of women interviewed reported that they knew at least one woman victim of such violence and 52% reported having been victims themselves. In Uzbekistan, an inspector estimated that 80% of the calls he receives concern family quarrels and 50 to 60% of OMCT report on Venezuela highlights that in Caracas, a woman is killed every 12 days by a man for reasons related to their relationship. In Yemen, only 26% of women who participated in a survey reported never having been subjected to violence in the home.

While OMCT recognizes that more States are beginning to develop laws against domestic violence, the problem remains grave in most countries. Lack of awareness raising, which results in police and judicial personnel who are ill equipped to handle

<sup>9</sup> These are 1999 figures. Source:

[www.countryreports.org/content/ethiopia.htm](http://www.countryreports.org/content/ethiopia.htm)

<sup>10</sup> Edited from OMCT Press Release: '*New publication: "Violence against Women"*', 8 July 2003.

domestic violence complaints and a continued culture of silence surrounding the crime, perpetuates this form of violence against women and hinders its eradication.

In the 10 reports, OMCT also expresses considerable concern about the prevalence of trafficking in women and the failure of many States to enact specific legislation to address this form of violence against women. For example, there is no comprehensive legislation to prosecute traffickers in Croatia, Uzbekistan, Sudan, or Venezuela. In Poland, it is estimated that as many as 10,000 women and girls are trafficked out to foreign countries every year and 60% of the prostitutes in Poland are suspected of being trafficking victims and the OMCT report on Togo notes that trafficking in children for domestic servitude is a growing problem. The Czech Republic has made trafficking a distinct crime, it focuses on the border crossing element of trafficking and thus does not cover trafficking within Czech borders. Further, Czech legislation does not provide financial and other social assistance to trafficking victims who are returned to the Czech Republic.

Violence in the family and trafficking are only two examples of the many forms of violence against women which persist in today's world. Recognizing the importance of raising awareness about violence against women in all of its forms, the OMCT country reports compiled in this publication serve as important documentation of the widespread and pervasive nature of violence against women in the family, in the community and at the hands of State agents. Report's details: Carin Benninger-Budel and Joanna Bourke-Martignoni, 'Violence Against Women: 10 Reports/Year 2002', OMCT, 2003, ISBN: 2-88477-045-3, 392 pp. For further information concerning OMCT's Violence Against

Programme please contact the women's desk at: [cbb@omct.org](mailto:cbb@omct.org) or [loh@omct.org](mailto:loh@omct.org).

**Watchlist report reveals widespread cruelty against children in DRC<sup>11</sup>** The Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict released a report on June 16 documenting systematic cruelty and torture against children in the Democratic Republic of Congo during the country's five-year war. The report, available at [www.watchlist.org](http://www.watchlist.org), calls on the Security Council to do more to ensure protection of Congolese civilians, particularly children.

The report shows that all parties to conflict in DRC perpetrate sexual violence and use rape as a weapon of war. It refers to Human Rights Watch and others who have documented extraordinary brutality, including examples of mutilation and such bad injuries that the victims need reconstructive surgery. Girls as young as five years old are attacked and many victims contract HIV and other STIs but lack of medical facilities throughout the country means that they have little chance to get treatment. Several of such reports date of Spring 2003. The report also shows that DRC is a country of origin for trafficking in persons, mainly to France and Belgium for sexual exploitation, whilst no official efforts are made to deal with it (anti-trafficking legislation is non-existent). Children are abducted and trafficked to be labor or sex slaves or to serve in military forces of all sides (including Ugandan and Rwandan troops).

Parallel to this, children living in destitute conditions are '*managed and exploited by professional prostitutes*' and granted no protection against HIV and other STIs. Girls and women are also sexually exploited in and near coltan mines and

<sup>11</sup> Edited from [www.watchlist.org](http://www.watchlist.org) press release.

many are reported to have contracted HIV: *'Impoverished families push children into prostitution or give their daughters to men, to take with them to the mines in exchange for money or goods.'* Children are also used as forced labor in the extraction of natural resources or as security patrols. A full copy of the report is available at: [http://www.watchlist.org/reports/dr\\_congo.r eport.php](http://www.watchlist.org/reports/dr_congo.report.php)

**The Final Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of non-citizens** is now available in pdf at [www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/2/55sub/advancedoc.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/2/55sub/advancedoc.htm) . It includes a synthesis of the general principles of and specific exceptions to the rights of non-citizens under international human rights law together with a brief identification of some of the areas in which these rights are not being respected.

It also provides an update of international/regional standards and jurisprudence of treaty-monitoring bodies relevant to the rights of non-citizens; information about practical situations and concerns that have arisen with regard to non-citizens and summaries of governments' replies. The report, by David Weisbrodt, found that in many countries there are institutional and endemic problems confronting non-citizens. The situation, however, has worsened as several countries have detained or otherwise violated the rights of non-citizens in response to fears of terrorism. The report will be considered by the Sub-Commission during its forthcoming session July 28, 2003, through August 15, 2003. For more, visit: [www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/2/55sub/advancedoc.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/2/55sub/advancedoc.htm).

**Supporting Refugee children in 21st Century Britain** by Jill Rutter (June 2003)

is a revised edition which takes into account changes in the law, in particular the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000) that came into force in April 2002 and the new Asylum and Immigration Act (2002). The book covers the backgrounds of 35 of the major refugee groups in Britain, including Albanians, Eastern European Roma and people fleeing the former Soviet Union, Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan. There are also sections on healthcare issues, emotional and psychological issues, using the expressive arts with young refugees and on parental involvement and family literacy.

**Between NASS and a hard place (2003)** is a summary of a feasibility study based on research in Yorkshire and Humberside on housing and community development issues for refugees in areas of dispersal. The aims of the study were to *'gauge broad levels of housing need amongst newly settled refugees; identify sources of access to housing and related support services; and identify the level of relevant community development initiatives amongst refugee communities'*. Interviews were conducted with refugee community organisations, service providers, support agencies, and individual asylum seekers and refugees.

It concludes: *'the picture of settlement and integration uncovered within the context of dispersal is a confusion of responsibilities, overlapping policies and crowded initiatives in which the needs of refugees have yet to be fully integrated within planning and delivery mechanisms for mainstream services. ... Any failure to quantify need and plan and act on stronger information, may jeopardise existing efforts, increase racial tensions and restrict the potential refugees have – and are keen to exercise to make a positive contribution.'* For a copy

of the report, please send a cheque payable to hact for £10 (including p&p). For a free summary of the report send a SAE for 20p to hac, or download it from the website [www.hact.org.uk](http://www.hact.org.uk) .

**Migration and HIV: Improving Lives in Britain** is an Inquiry into the Impact of the UK Nationality and Immigration System on People Living with HIV. Visit: [www.appg-aids.org.uk/Publications/Migration%20and%20HIV%20Improving%20Lives.pdf](http://www.appg-aids.org.uk/Publications/Migration%20and%20HIV%20Improving%20Lives.pdf) (Source: asylumrights.net).

**Directory of Exiled Journalists** is a new publication compiled by the PressWise Refugees Asylum-seekers and the Media (RAM) project. It contains brief biographical details of 43 journalists from 24 countries along with contact details. The aim of this directory is to assist exiled journalists to find work in the media. An online version has a search engine which allows for search per type of media skill, country of origin, language or name. See <http://www.ramproject.org.uk/directory/>. For offers of work: contact the journalist direct. If you wish to join the Directory, contact ram@presswise.org.uk

**ECRI Report on Racism in Five Countries: Persisting Problems**  
The Council of Europe's expert body on combating racism, the **European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)**, today released five new reports examining racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance in Armenia, Iceland, Luxemburg, Slovenia and Spain. The reports detail continuing grounds for concern for the Commission. Read more in ECRI press release and in the reports themselves, at the following

address:  
[www.coe.int/t/E/human\\_rights/ecri/](http://www.coe.int/t/E/human_rights/ecri/)

## International Online resources

**Women Living Under Muslim Laws new website** is available in English, French and Arabic at [www.wluml.org](http://www.wluml.org) with main sections being 'News and Views', 'Calls for Actions', 'Publications' and 'Links' to other websites dealing with similar issues.

As part of its new project on **Trafficking in Women and Girls**, the CCR has set up a website at: [www.trafficking.ca](http://www.trafficking.ca).

**New Human Rights Watch Reports**  
'*Climate of Fear: Sexual violence and abduction of women and girls in Baghdad*' (HRW, New York, July 2003) and '*Abducted and Abused: Renewed conflict in Northern Uganda*' (HRW, New York, July 2003) can both be downloaded in pdf at: <http://hrw.org/reports/2003/iraq0703/> and <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/uganda0703/>.

**Office for High Commissioner for Human Rights launches quarterly reports** from its country and regional field offices which are written in English but also in Spanish (for the South America and Caribbean region) and French (for some of the African countries).<sup>12</sup> The Background Information for each country office provides a concrete synopsis of each office's Terms of Reference and Working Mandate. Women, indigenous peoples and children are examples of some of the targeted

<sup>12</sup> Source: Human Strategies for Human Rights (HSHR), a United States Based Non Profit Organization, at [www.hshr.org](http://www.hshr.org).

beneficiaries. The quarterly reports will then elaborate on the status and actions related to these activities. The new reports can be accessed at [www.unhcr.ch/html/menu2/5/field.htm](http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu2/5/field.htm)

### **Two new tools for searching human rights information on the Web**

Human Rights Network International of the University Libre de Bruxelles has set up a new bilingual (English / French) database on human rights accessible free of charge at [www.hrni.org](http://www.hrni.org). On the website you will find, classified by theme, full texts of judgments and decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and of the UN Human Rights Committee, as well as international and regional conventions on human rights, reports of the United Nations or non-governmental organizations, scholarly articles, bibliographic references, and a portal of Internet sites on human rights and a list of actors (NGOs, universities, international organizations) playing a role in this field.

HURIDOCS, the global human rights network of human rights organisations, has created a new tool HURISEARCH at [www.huriresearch.org](http://www.huriresearch.org) which allows searching sites of non-governmental human rights organisations in 58 different languages. HURISEARCH is a pilot project, and at the moment over 600 sites of human rights NGOs are included. Suggestions to include additional sites are welcome. Use the search engine, test it, try and make it work for you and take a few minutes to complete the survey so that HURISEARCH can try to meet the needs of the global human rights community: [www.huriresearch.org/survey.htm](http://www.huriresearch.org/survey.htm)

**Belief and Exclusion** as PDF-File

The last publication by the European Network Against Racism (ENAR), '*Belief and Exclusion. Combating Religious Discrimination in Europe*' by Manuela Scharf is now downloadable in PDF format on [www.enar-eu.org/en/publication/](http://www.enar-eu.org/en/publication/)

### **New website on all forms of discrimination**

[www.stop-discrimination.info](http://www.stop-discrimination.info) is an initiative of the European Union in Deutsch, English and French with sections with sections on discrimination, campaign activities, events, press and links to other websites.

### **UK Online resources**

#### **New component on mental health**

<http://mentalhealth.harpweb.org.uk> focuses on mental health and well-being issues that affect refugees and asylum seekers, including sections containing information on legal rights and health services for refugees and asylum seekers with mental health needs; a guide to mental health problems, treatments and self-help strategies; practical tools and guidelines on a range of topics including the use of interpreters; information on the role of culture in the context of mental health and well-being, covering issues such as PTSD, spirituality and religion and traditional healers.

The site also contains 10 minute Webcasts of mental health workshops covering topics such as working with torture victims, working with children, the psychological impact of living in institutions, use of interpreters, supporting staff in challenging settings; as well as short films highlighting good practice. [www.harpweb.org.uk](http://www.harpweb.org.uk) already contains many vital resources ranging from a free downloadable multi-lingual appointment card in 30 languages to information on unaccompanied minors, trafficking and refugee health professionals

or information on cross-cultural issues, country profiles and a guide to languages.

### **Caring for Dispersed Asylum Seekers**

is a resource pack published by the Department of Health and the Refugee Council (June 2003) for use by all frontline health staff and service planners who come into contact with Asylum seekers and Refugees. Its main aim is to help local health and social care agencies to meet the needs of asylum seekers who are dispersed to their areas. The resource pack is based on interviews with over 40 health projects and local councils as well as a survey of Primary Care Trusts and Local Consortia dealing with asylum seekers under the dispersal arrangements. It provides details on entitlement to healthcare; latest developments on Home Office policy; NASS support arrangements; Health guidelines; mental health; as well as an overview of social care legislation. The pack is available free on the internet at: [www.doh.gov.uk/asylumseekers](http://www.doh.gov.uk/asylumseekers).

### **New statutory instrument: Racial discrimination & social security.**

In force from 19 July 2003, the new regulations implement the EU Race Relations Directive outlawing direct and indirect racial discrimination in the field of (amongst other things) social security and social assistance. 'The Directive is concerned with the principle of equal treatment between persons, irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, in the areas of employment (and related matters), social protection, social advantage, education and access to and supply of, goods and services which are available to the public, including housing':

[www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031626.htm](http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/si/si2003/20031626.htm)

**Website Relaunch** ICAR, the Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees, has relaunched its website [www.icar.org.uk](http://www.icar.org.uk) including a new feature entitled 'Mapping the UK' which provides users with information about asylum and refugee issues as they relate to specific cities and towns in the UK (currently Bicester, Leicester, Sheffield and Southampton; soon to be completed: Glasgow, Bristol and Cardiff). Visit the site for all other features such as a statistics section, separate section for information about the postgraduate network hosted in partnership with UNHCR's UK office; over 80 digests of relevant publications and over 350 general links to websites offering national, regional or local coverage.

### **Notice Board**

#### **New Address for Medical Foundation**

**North West Office:** It is now at The Angel Healthy Living Centre, St Phillips Place, Off Chapel Street, Salford, M3 6FA. Tel: 0161 839 8090; Fax: 0161 839 7020. Email addresses remain the same at [jboyles@torturecare.org.uk](mailto:jboyles@torturecare.org.uk) and [ekurtis@torturecare.org.uk](mailto:ekurtis@torturecare.org.uk).

#### **ELENA International Course on the Relevance of the European Convention on Human Rights for Asylum Law**

23 – 26 October 2003, Palais des Congrès IBIS Centre "Aux Ponts Couverts", Strasbourg, France. The course will analyse the relevance of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) for national, European and international asylum law. The course will focus on a detailed study of procedural and substantial legal questions, in particular the role and jurisprudence of the European Court for Human Rights. Deadlines for registration: 15 August 2003. Contact

ECRE at 020 7729 5152 or email  
[gmckenna@ecre.org](mailto:gmckenna@ecre.org) for details and costs.

**Please send us any information that you would like to see published in our next bulletin by Monday 11 August 2003 (see address on back cover).**

If you want to subscribe to our free bulletin 'Women's Asylum News' by post or by email, please contact Peggy Saint-Auret, email [peggyasa@asylumaid.org.uk](mailto:peggyasa@asylumaid.org.uk) or tel: 0207 377 5123. For details of all of our publications (to download or order) please go to: [www.asylumaid.org.uk](http://www.asylumaid.org.uk).



# women's ASYLUM NEWS

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to become a **MEMBER** of Asylum Aid

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UNWAGED

£20 / year

### Benefits

- Receive a copy of our annual report free of charge
- An invitation to attend Asylum Aid's AGM
- Opportunity to stand for election to the board of trustees
- Right to vote at the AGM election
- Free subscription to our quarterly newsletter
- Access to member-only section of website
- Up to date campaigning information emailed directly
- Invitations to Asylum Aid events, eg. open evenings
- Buy copies of Asylum Aid's reports at a reduced price

I would like to become a **FRIEND** of Asylum Aid

STANDARD

£2 / month = £24 / year

UNWAGED

£10 / year

### Benefits

- Receive a copy of our annual report free of charge
- Free subscription to our quarterly newsletter
- Invitations to Asylum Aid events, eg. open evenings

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and debit my account no. \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

[FOR OFFICE USE] To: NatWest Bank plc, PO Box 3AW, 104  
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account no. 63401711

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If you are a UK taxpayer, Asylum Aid can claim back 28p for every £1 you donate, making your donation worth almost a third more at no extra cost to you. Please complete and return this declaration.

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