

# women's asylum news

refugee women's resource project @ asylumaid

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## **'Deportation feeds trafficking' says grassroots organisation**

Vera Leska, Chief Executive of *'the Hearth'* centre, which provides safe accommodation and services to victims of trafficking in Albania, urges European NGOs and women's organizations to campaign for greater protection for trafficking victims.

In particular she calls on NGOs in European countries to campaign for Leave to Remain to be granted to trafficking victims so that they can access witness protection.<sup>1</sup>

Vera Leska visited RWRP in November during a UK tour to talk about her own combat against human trafficking and the current situation for victims of trafficking in Albania. She stressed that returning trafficked women to Albania was only feeding the trafficking trade.

### **The Hearth Centre**

The Hearth (psycho-social centre) has been at the forefront of campaigning against the trafficking of women and girls in Albania. Vera launched the shelter in 1998, the first to offer services to victims of trafficking, in response to increased numbers of girls involved in the trade (there are currently 25 trafficking victims in the shelter). Its core objective is to work in partnership with government, social services, the Prosecutors' Office and the police to combat trafficking and help victims reintegrate into society. The work

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<sup>1</sup> The UK's policy for trafficking victims under the Poppy pilot scheme means that women who do not cooperate with police within a four week 'cool off' period, will be deported. RWRP has campaigned against this policy, arguing that it is not enough time to build up a relation of trust needed for disclosure. See Women's Asylum News, Issue 31, April 2003.

also includes mediation between victims and their families.

95% of victims helped by the centre come from a police station with which the centre has a partnership. Victims can stay for 3-6 months. When a woman is referred to the centre, assessments are made as to whether they need accommodation and for how long or whether they can go back to their families. All victims have access to medical attention and are tested for sexually transmitted diseases by an in-house doctor. The centre also offers legal advice. Educational courses are provided to help reintegrate women into family life and so they have an opportunity to start up their own business.

### **Context of trafficking in Albania**

Prior to the 1990s there was no human trafficking in Albania. The collapse of communism and introduction of free trade made it easier to travel from Albania through Europe. Albania was first a transit country, chosen by traffickers partly due to its geographical position as a gateway for Eastern Europe to Western Europe. This position made it easy to 'recycle' and distribute people. In addition, Albania's failing economy and limited job opportunities also made Albanian women vulnerable to the deceptive methods used by traffickers. The break-up of traditional Albanian family structures was another factor leading to the increase of Albanian women and girls falling victims of trafficking.

Initially the police's response was to treat victims as criminals. Furthermore, due to the stigma of prostitution in Albania the women were often subjected to sexual violence by the police themselves and many were at risk of being resold by the police back into trafficking.

Through lobbying, the Hearth centre persuaded the Albanian government that Albania was no longer just a transit country but that it had also become a source country.

This evidence was based on research conducted by the centre which analysed the experiences of their clients.<sup>2</sup>

The Hearth also worked hard to develop a relationship with the police and the judiciary in order to get access to trafficked women and be able to give them appropriate support.

### **Trafficking legislation and government's action**

Until 2001 there was no legislation criminalising traffickers. Influenced by the research produced by the Hearth centre, action was taken by the Ministry of Public Order in 2000, ordering the Police Directorate to take measures to identify victims of trafficking and make efforts to return girls to their families. Most district police stations opened a department to deal specifically with trafficking. In 2001 the Albanian government established a National Strategy for fighting human trafficking.

The government's efforts, which are praised by the Hearth project, are reflected in figures for 2002-2003 which show a 40% decrease in trafficking activity compared to previous years, and 125 trafficking convictions in 2003 (the maximum sentence is 15 years imprisonment).

The government has acted to close off routes used by traffickers to transport victims but as the government takes action, the traffickers switch routes. And efforts to combat trafficking in Albania continues to be hindered by the lack of witness protection for victims. Such a scheme is currently being discussed by the government although there are reservations as to how effective it can be in practice due to the small size of the country (more than 8 times smaller than the UK). Vera

<sup>2</sup> The Hearth centre's research evaluated the areas women came from and details of their educational background. Using this information they analysed which areas were being targeted by traffickers. Source: See: Vera Leska and Entala Avdulaj, 'The Girls and Trafficking: Review of Trafficking in Human Beings for the Year 2002', Psycho-Social Centre 'The Hearth', 2003.

Leska points to the fact that Albania is too small for a 'safe' location to remain secret.

### **Education and outreach key to protecting women and girls**

In parallel to their work with the authorities, the centre has been proactive in taking preventative measures against trafficking through outreach and education activities. For instance, its research identified 6 main neighbourhoods of trafficking activity in Vlora where the centre is based. Through contact points in these areas the Hearth monitored women's movements, where they were going and what they were doing. Results showed that girls with a low level of education were most vulnerable. Initially, the largest number of victims came from rural Albania (68% of those interviewed, prior to 2001), areas where it was hard to reach out to the girls to warn them of the dangers of trafficking<sup>3</sup>.

The Hearth project responded to this challenge by targeting schools in those areas for sensitization campaigns – teaching children about trafficking issues and holding parents evenings. Many parents were unaware of local trafficking activity and that girls were skipping classes at school to go and work for traffickers.

The campaign to raise awareness about the dangers of trafficking has been supported by broadcasting programmes which brought young people, parents and government officials together to discuss trafficking.

### **Challenges faced by the project**

The centre follows up on women's progress once they have left the centre and returned to their families. But many of the women have gone back to trafficking because of the

difficulties in integrating. Due to the stigma of prostitution families are often reluctant to accept daughters back into the family home. There are also a range of social problems for women who have been abroad for extended periods preventing them from going back to their normal lives. And without means of support, in a poor country with little economic prospects for them, many of these women return to trafficking. According to Vera Leska, poverty will remain a major factor in the supply of human trafficking.

Finding safe accommodation for victims returned to Albania is one of the biggest challenges faced by the project: an example was provided of a woman who reported her father for selling her in trafficking. The project has spent 10 months on her case trying to find her accommodation but to no avail.

Besides, the shelter has been threatened by traffickers and is now under police guard 24 hours a day.

### **Effective protection needed to obtain convictions**

Vera Leska thinks that the only way to stop trafficking is to encourage women to report traffickers. She says: *'If victims don't report their traffickers, the number of convictions will remain low.'*

Of the 197 women who have stayed at the centre this year, 24 have made a report against traffickers. Reporting involves a process which may last from 3 weeks to 7 months, a period in which women's lives are increasingly in danger. Protection is necessary to create an environment in which women and girls feel safe enough to report their traffickers. Because Albania does not offer witness protection there is currently a lower chance of securing convictions. But as mentioned before, the implementation of a witness protection scheme might not be effective in a small country like Albania where

<sup>3</sup> 'The Girls and Trafficking; Review of Trafficking in Human Beings for the Year 2002', Compiled by Vera Leska and Entala Avdulaj, Psycho-Social Centre 'The Hearth', 2003 shows that this indicator has changed: prior to 2001 68% of victims came from rural areas whereas figures compiled in 2002 suggest that nearly 2/3 of women interviewed (63%) come from urban areas.

it might prove impossible to keep a 'safe' location secret.

Which is why Vera Leska calls on European NGOs to campaign for Leave to Remain to be granted to trafficking victims so that they can access meaningful witness protection. She argues that EU countries should seek to integrate women and ensure support for NGOs to offer services to women in Albania, and calls for all NGOs to raise their voice and become one coalition to fight for the protection of trafficked women.

Note: The Hearth centre only have funding until 31<sup>st</sup> December and cannot guarantee that their services will run beyond this date. If any one can help with funding (including suggesting sources of funding), please contact Sarah Williams, Campaigns Officer, Anti-Slavery International, Thomas Clarkson House, The Stable Yard, Broomgrove Road, London, SW9 9TL; or email at [s.williams@anti-slavery.org](mailto:s.williams@anti-slavery.org).

### Related News

In 'Janie's secret', 5 November 2003, *The Guardian* reports the story of a teenage girl from Albania trafficked to Britain where she was forced into prostitution. The article also reports on the struggle the Albanian police face to contain the explosion in human trafficking. [www.guardian.co.uk/g2/story/0,3604,1077703\\_00.html](http://www.guardian.co.uk/g2/story/0,3604,1077703_00.html) reports

The Institute of War & Peace Reporting reports that a court in Skopje, Macedonia, sentenced four Macedonians and an ethnic Albanian to a total of 33 years in prison under laws classifying trafficking as a crime, which were introduced in 2002. The court heard harrowing written testimony from the victims, who were not present for the trial. They had been beaten and forced to have sex in brothels

across the country. Observers say that still much more needs to be done in the country to bring more offenders to justice.

For the full story, see: IWPR, Balkan Crisis Report No.464, 16 October 2003 available at the following link: [www.mail-archive.com/archive@jab.org/msg43629.html](http://www.mail-archive.com/archive@jab.org/msg43629.html).

Also from IPWR, '*Montenegrin trafficking scandal deepens*', Balkan Crisis Report, No. 468, 13 November 2003 at [www.iwpr.net/balkans\\_index1.html](http://www.iwpr.net/balkans_index1.html).

The European Union Council of Justice and Home Affairs ministers reached agreement on 6 November on a directive on granting a residence permit for a minimum period of six months for third-country nationals victims of trafficking in human beings who find themselves on the territory of an EU member state.<sup>4</sup>

Under the new directive, if the victims of human trafficking decide to cooperate with the competent authorities, they will receive assistance and be issued a residence permit allowing them to stay legally on the territory of the member state concerned during the relevant proceedings and to work there. Individual countries will be left to decide how to grant them access to the labour market. Full story at:

[www.europa.eu.int/comm/justice\\_home/news/intro/news\\_intro\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/news/intro/news_intro_en.htm).

### RWRP News

## RWRP receives 2003 Award of Distinction for work on Domestic Violence

<sup>4</sup> Information disseminated by ECRE, 'Directive on residence permit for victims of human trafficking on the verge of being formally adopted', ECRAN Weekly Update, 12 November 2003.



On 25 November, the Mayor of London gave awards of distinction to four different organisations 'in recognition of their outstanding and innovative work to further the aims of the London Domestic Violence Strategy and to make London a safer place'. The Refugee Women's Resource Project was presented with the award in recognition of its role in raising awareness of domestic violence issues affecting one of the most vulnerable groups, women asylum seekers and refugee women; and of its contribution to campaigning and lobbying for the provision of effective protection against domestic violence.

The award ceremony took place on the day the Second Annual Report of the London Domestic Violence Forum, 2003, was launched. The report, which was submitted to the Mayor of London, details the work of the Forum between November 2002 and November 2003. It includes examples of domestic violence work in the capital over the past year, and a progress update on recommendations from the Forum's work plan (for a copy, or a copy of the London Domestic Violence Strategy, please follow the following weblink:

[www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/dom\\_violence/](http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/dom_violence/)).



### **Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Bill, 2003**

The award ceremony took place only days before the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Bill 2003 was published on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2003 (the Bill is available at [www.parliament.uk/](http://www.parliament.uk/)).

On the same date, Women's Aid, Womankind Worldwide and the Mayor of London organised a 'Domestic Violence Conference, International approaches to preventing domestic violence: challenges and opportunities for law and practice' where participants heard very informative contributions on the implementation of Domestic Violence legislations in other parts of the world, highlighting what has worked in practice and what hasn't; and reporting back on what women victims and survivors of domestic violence said they would like to see implemented for their protection.

In the context of the publication of the new Bill in the UK, Prof. Liz Kelly, director of the Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit, London Metropolitan University, pointed out that the Government report '*Safety and Abuse*' made no reference to other positive domestic violence initiatives globally.

She stressed that adequate legislation against domestic violence should include a definition of domestic abuse within a Violence Against Women framework linked to human rights and gender equality; a recognition that on-going psychological abuse constitutes a crime (like in Mexico or Cyprus, for example); statutory funding for support services, without which much of the legislation will remain meaningless and a government-based domestic violence campaign (both adopted by the Scottish Executive).

Based on her work and the current provisions of the legislation in New Zealand, Prof. Ruth Busch, University of Waikato, stated that any meaningful state protection against domestic violence should recognize the need to stop the re-victimisation of children and that child safety should be put at the centre of the legislation.<sup>5</sup>

UK participants were told to call for a governmental national strategy on domestic violence and in particular to scrutinise the current provisions in the Bill as this would be the only chance to '*get it right*' for years to come.

### Related Information

**Useful link** Domestic Violence Data Source (information on UK and Northern Ireland):

[www.domesticviolencedata.org/](http://www.domesticviolencedata.org/)

<sup>5</sup> Both the Domestic Violence Act 1995 and an amendment to the Guardianship Act 1968 included provisions to enhance the protection and safety of the children involved in family violence. See Section (3), Section 16A and Section 16B.

Survey reveals that 79% of Zambian wives find it acceptable to be beaten by their husbands '*as a form of chastisement*'. Most women surveyed did not believe they had sexual or reproductive rights in a country marred by a culture of silence around domestic violence. Full story available at: [www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=38176](http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=38176).

**New Publication '*Just Die Quietly: Domestic Violence and Women's Vulnerability to HIV in Uganda*'<sup>6</sup>** The accounts in this report by Human Rights Watch (HRW, Oct 2003) reveal that Ugandan women are becoming infected with HIV, and will eventually die of AIDS, because the state is failing to protect them from domestic violence.

HRW interviewed Ugandan women who confront an environment that sustains unequal power relations, contend with persistent societal pressure to tolerate violence, and whose husbands and extended family routinely subject them to coercion and emotional abuse. Many women were victims of marital rape. Women were also powerless to protect themselves from infection and were unable to access HIV/AIDS services because their husbands physically attacked, threatened, and intimidated them, and did so with impunity.

HRW reports that the Ugandan government has failed in any meaningful way to criminalize, condemn, or prosecute violence against women in the home. A discriminatory legal framework is just one of the obstacles Ugandan women face in trying to escape abusive relationships. Women remain without adequate recourse to state protection whether through the police or the local courts, and contend with social stigma when attempting to prosecute their abusers.

<sup>6</sup> Information edited from Human Rights Watch, Summary of '*Just Die Quietly, Domestic Violence and Women's Vulnerability to HIV in Uganda*', at [www.hrw.org/reports/2003/uganda0803/2.htm#\\_Toc47260342](http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/uganda0803/2.htm#_Toc47260342).

The government also fails to address the role of violence in the transmission of HIV to women. Current approaches to fight HIV/AIDS do not address the ways in which domestic violence inhibits women's control over sexual matters in marriage, minimize the complex causal factors of violence, and incorrectly assume that women have equal decision-making power and status within their intimate relationships. The Uganda AIDS Commission has yet to incorporate violations of women's rights, including domestic violence, in its HIV/AIDS programming.

The report is based on more than 120 interviews conducted in various parts of Uganda in Dec 2002 - Jan 2003, and prior and subsequent research. The complete report can be found at:

[www.hrw.org/reports/2003/uganda0803/](http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/uganda0803/).

### Other UK News

#### FGM Update<sup>7</sup>

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) has been a specific criminal offence in this country since 1985 when the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act was passed. (It was probably never legal here as it would almost certainly constitute an offence against the person. The purpose of the 1985 Act was to remove any ambiguity there may have been in the law.) But we know that in some communities, within the UK as well as abroad, the practice is still accepted or even condoned.

The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, which received Royal Assent on 30 October, repeals and re-enacts the 1985 Act (the short title of the new Act describes more accurately the prohibited acts and removes any suggestion of acceptability that the word "circumcision" might imply). It also increases the maximum

penalty, on conviction on indictment, for FGM from 5 to 14 years' imprisonment. But the main effect of the Act is to create extra-territorial offences so that it will be an offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to carry out FGM abroad, and to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad, even in countries where the practice is legal.

Section 8 of the new Act establishes a power for the Secretary of State to make a statutory instrument setting out when the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 will come into force. Subject to raising awareness of the new law, it is intended to bring the Act into force by the end of January 2004.

#### Section 55 up-date

On 24th October 03, Judge Maurice Kay gave judgement on a number of Section 55 judicial review (JR) cases. He took the opportunity to give some guidance on how NASS should be approaching the implementation of Section 55. This guidance was given in response to the very large number of JR applications that have been lodged in respect of S.55 decisions, over 90% of which have been successful in securing support for claimants. Guidance on the judgement can be found at the following weblink:

[www.jcwi.org.uk/campaign/ict\\_bulletin\\_.pdf](http://www.jcwi.org.uk/campaign/ict_bulletin_.pdf).

In response to the judgement, NASS wrote on 18 November 2003 to the Inter-Agency Team to outline how it plans to respond operationally to the new guidance. For a copy of this letter, contact: [Tim.Crowley@refugeecouncil.org.uk](mailto:Tim.Crowley@refugeecouncil.org.uk).

### UK Campaign

#### Asylum Aid Statement on the Asylum and Immigration Bill 2003

<sup>7</sup> This feature was written by Louise Douglas from the Women's National Commission. We are grateful for her contribution.

### December 2003

David Blunkett's threat to punish asylum seekers by taking their children into care if they refuse to voluntarily depart from the UK has grabbed all the headlines. However, this repugnant announcement is merely the tip of an ominously large and dangerous iceberg – the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Bill, which is set to be rushed through Parliament within two to three months.

There is much to condemn in this Bill, but one clause stands out as of particular constitutional significance. Clause 10 of the Bill, if it becomes law, will comprehensively exclude our judges and courts from performing their fundamental role of providing judicial oversight of the government and public bodies.

Anyone concerned for civil liberties and democracy should be deeply disturbed by this clause. Some may marginalize its significance by pointing out that the government's attempt to free itself from any judicial scrutiny is here limited to its dealings with asylum seekers and other immigrants. Of course, Asylum Aid takes no comfort from that observation and is gravely concerned that our client group should face the prospect of their most vital of human rights – the right to safety from terror and torture – being stripped of the basic safeguard of access to the courts.

However, if the principle that our judges and courts provide ultimate scrutiny of government and ultimate protection for human rights is abandoned, nobody can be sure that this or another government will not welcome the opportunity to exclude the judiciary from other areas where government exercises its power.

In addition to the threat to take away people's children, Mr Blunkett's Bill also grants his immigration officers greatly increased powers to arrest and electronically tag asylum seekers, introduces new criminal offences against asylum seekers and further empowers Mr Blunkett to arbitrarily designate types of

asylum seeker as safe to remove without full consideration of their claim.

Mr Blunkett will no doubt tell us that he will ensure these powers are used carefully and safely. He has offered such guarantees before, and they have not been honoured.

He said that the power to force asylum seekers into destitution and homelessness (section 55) would only be used against those that had been in the country some substantial time and were clearly able to support themselves. Hundreds of decisions of the High Court forcing Mr Blunkett's officials to reverse decisions against individual asylum seekers have demonstrated how this power has been wilfully used against any asylum seeker in the UK for any period of time (including a few hours) before making his or her claim.

It was said that magistrates and officers of the Crown Prosecution Service would be instructed upon and have regard to a defence available to refugees before prosecutions of asylum seekers travelling on false documents proceeded. Yet it has become clear that many asylum seekers have been prosecuted and imprisoned without any consideration to a defence that was available to them and should have protected them from prosecution, let alone imprisonment.

If you are concerned for asylum seekers, or simply value the civil liberties and democratic rights to which this country has long aspired, we would ask that you make your voice heard in opposing this Bill.

One day the attack upon asylum seekers will end. However, it will end for one of two reasons; each with dramatically differing potential.

Either a stand against Mr Blunkett's appalling asylum policy will persuade this government that humanity and decency demand an end to his pandering to the clamour from the far right. That would further embed values of



freedom and humanity in our country's constitution to the benefit of all, and exclude bigoted and cruel policies from the mainstream for years to come.

Alternatively, Mr Blunkett will, through sheer brutality, eventually placate the right on the issue of asylum. However, that will not be the end of bigotry. There are many other minorities on the hate list of the far right, and Mr Blunkett's folding over asylum will only encourage the clamour for a new target. Who will be next?

Check Asylum Aid's website at [www.asylumaid.org.uk](http://www.asylumaid.org.uk) for more details on the provisions in the new Bill and how to act to oppose the Bill.

The Bill and the Home Secretary's asylum policy in general have been condemned by **the Committee to Defend Asylum Seekers** in a statement issued in December 2003. A petition based on the statement will be circulated soon (the full statement can be found at: [www.labournet.net/antiracism/0312/ncadc1.html](http://www.labournet.net/antiracism/0312/ncadc1.html))<sup>8</sup>

The Committee calls *'on all those who value liberty and basic humanity to join us in condemning this Bill and to demand that the Home Secretary and government revisit and radically amend this repugnant policy of attacking asylum*

<sup>8</sup> The basis of the following statement was laid at a 50-strong meeting of immigration advisers, lawyers and anti-racist activists, called by the CDAS on 10 November. Signatories so far: Asylum Aid, CDAS, African Liberation Support Campaign, ATD Fourth World, Rev Paul Nicolson, Roland Rance, Secretary, Waltham Forest Trades Council, Jane Kelly, Ruth and Norma Appleton, Pete McLaren, convenor Coventry & Warwickshire Socialist Alliance, C Graham, Barry Gilheany, Jim Denham, TGWU, Andrew Collingwood, Chair, Amicus University Of York Branch (personal capacity), Bronwen Handyside, GWU, David R Callaghan.

*Seekers'* (BCM Box 4289, London WC1N 3XX | Phone 07941 566183 | E-mail [info@defend-asylum.org](mailto:info@defend-asylum.org)).

### UK Events/Projects

#### **New project for African people affected by HIV/AIDs**

African Health for Empowerment and Development, or AHEAD, is a new project for people from Africa living with and/or affected by HIV/AIDs and living in South London. The new African HIV Information and Access Service is a partnership between AHEAD, Positive Place and ACIA and is funded by the South London HIV Partnership. It aims to help with getting information on health, housing, immigration, benefits, social and emotional support, training and employment. The service is available in Bemba, French and Lingala, and other African languages on request. Contact Kuba at AHEAD at the following venues:

**Trafalgar Clinic**, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Greenwich, on Thursdays from 9am-3pm on 020 8836 5756

**Alexis Clinic**, University Hospital, Lewisham, Tuesdays & Fridays from 9am-12noon on 020 8333 3000 or

**AHEAD**, on Mondays from 2pm-6pm on 020 8326 4868. Email: [a.head@africanhealth.org.uk](mailto:a.head@africanhealth.org.uk).

#### **Human Rights Advocacy training for refugees and members of the Middle East Diaspora**

The 2004 Middle East course aims to enhance the work of refugees and members of the Middle East Diaspora to bring about positive change with regard to human rights in the Middle East. The course provides practical

training to develop advocacy skills and a broad understanding of human rights advocacy.

Applicants must be of Middle Eastern origin (including north Africa) and currently resident in the UK. Preference will be given to applicants who are refugees or asylum seekers. Participants must be willing to work constructively with people of different cultures, beliefs, politics or gender, towards a common goal of greater respect for human rights. A good level of spoken English is required.

Date: February to 23 April 2004. For more information, please contact Richard Germond, Programme Co-ordinator, Education Action International, International Division, 14 Dufferin Street, London EC1Y 8PD. Tel: 020 7426 5825. Fax: 020 7251 1315. E-mail: [hratp@education-action.org](mailto:hratp@education-action.org) or website [www.education-action.org](http://www.education-action.org).

### **Award opportunity for projects engaging adult asylum seekers or refugees in learning**

Tell the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) about the ways your project has engaged adult asylum seekers or refugees in learning and you could win a National New Learning Opportunities Award with a top prize of £5000 and with further prizes of £500. The awards recognise and promote excellence in the provision of adult learning in the UK and celebrate creativity and innovation in providing more opportunities for adults to learn - whoever and wherever they are.

NIACE would like to encourage more projects that offer learning opportunities to asylum seekers and refugees to apply in the Outreach and Curriculum Innovation Category. Your scheme should show outstanding ability to reach and engage new learners, through successful outreach activity and curriculum innovation. For more information or to request an application form, please call the NIACE Campaigns Team on 0116 2044 200 or email

[alw@niace.org.uk](mailto:alw@niace.org.uk). Forms can also be downloaded at [www.niace.org.uk/alw](http://www.niace.org.uk/alw) The closing date for entries is 16 January 2004.

## International News

### **Bangladeshi gay men have well-founded fear of persecution, says Australian High Court**

On 9 December, the Australian High Court allowed two Bangladeshi gay men who fled their country five years ago and sought asylum on the grounds of social ostracism and fear of persecution, to appeal against the decision of the Australian Refugee Review Tribunal (RTT), a lower court and immigration tribunal.

The High Court overruled the decision of the RTT (dated of 5 February 2001) and remitted the case to the Tribunal for re-determination. It said that RRT was wrong not to consider what would have happened to the men if they lived openly as a couple: *'Having determined that homosexuality was unacceptable in Bangladesh and could lead to potential harm such as being bashed by police, the Refugee Review Tribunal erred in then holding that the men did not have a well founded fear of persecution.'*<sup>9</sup>

The Court of Appeal had heard that the couple had been sentenced to death by a local religious council and that they feared they would be killed or suffer other serious harm if they returned to Bangladesh. The full text of the High Court's decision<sup>10</sup> is available at: [www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/cth/HCA/2003/71.html](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/cth/HCA/2003/71.html).

<sup>9</sup> Quoted by BBC, 'Australia grants gay asylum claim', 9 December 2003, at [www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/3302649.stm](http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/3302649.stm).

<sup>10</sup> Appellant S395/2002 v Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs; Appellant S [2003] HCA 71 (9 December 2003).

### **Sexual Violence continues in DRC**

According to Amnesty International, massacres, mutilation and rape continue in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo despite a recent peace agreement aiming to end the five-year conflict.<sup>11</sup>

The human rights organisation reports that *'within a 10-week period in 2003, more than 100 cases of rape and sexual abuse were reported, including sexual torture of women committed in front of their family members. Gang rapes, sometimes performed in public, have been used to terrorize women and girls and to humiliate civilian populations suspected of collaborating with enemy forces, in order to pressure these populations into submission.'*

Sexual violence has been consistently used as a weapon of war throughout this devastating conflict but victims face an additional trauma when they are infected with HIV/AIDS due to a high prevalence among perpetrators from all parties in the war. In many cases victims suffer other forms of harm or are killed.

It has also been reported that many of the girl children are *'being forced to serve as soldiers on the frontlines are routinely raped and used as sexual slaves by adult commanders'*. Amnesty International campaigns to *'Act now to stop violence against women in the Democratic Republic of Congo!* For details, follow the following link: <http://takeaction.amnestyusa.org/petition/Index.asp?id=15>.

### **Woman receives prestigious Human Rights Award for her role in Chechnya<sup>12</sup>**

As Coordinator of the Grozny office of the Moscow-based human rights organisation

*'Memorial'*, Lida Yusupova collects testimonies from victims of human rights abuses in Chechnya, including locations where killings and disappearances have occurred. She also accompanies the victims in their claims to the Russian Army and Security Services and provides legal assistance to the extent that the judicial system still functions in this part of Russia. Memorial is one of the few remaining human rights organisation in Chechnya.

She was presented with the 2004 Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defender, for *'her tireless efforts in a situation of war and extreme danger, with increased risk for women'*. For more on the award and previous recipients, see

[www.amnesty.org.uk/deliver/document/15041](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/deliver/document/15041).

### ***'Gender-based violence, perhaps the most shameful human rights violation'*<sup>13</sup>**

In a message to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November 2003, Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary General declared that gender-based violence was *'perhaps the most shameful human rights violation. As long as it continues, we cannot claim to be making real progress towards equality, development and peace.'* He pointed that the trafficking in women constitutes a violation of human rights.

This message followed another public statement on the occasion of the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery (2 December) when he described debt bondage, forced prostitution and forced labour, all related to the trafficking trade, as *'violations of the most fundamental human rights: the right to life; the right to dignity and security; the right to just and favourable conditions of work; the right to health; and the right to equality.'*

<sup>11</sup> Amnesty International USA, 'Gender-based violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo', *Women's Human Rights Bulletin*, December 2003/January 2004.

<sup>12</sup> Edited from Amnesty International, *'Chechen Human Rights worker wins prestigious Martin Ennals award'*, at [www.amnesty.org.uk/deliver/document/15041](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/deliver/document/15041).

<sup>13</sup> United Nations Press Release, *'Secretary General calls for transformation in men's attitudes to end all forms of violence against women'*, SG/SM/9030, OBV/396, WOM/1418, 24 November 2003.

He called on all States *'who have not yet done so'* to adopt the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized crime, which enters into force in December 2003 and *'to take more vigorous action to enforce laws against trafficking and violence'*. He also urged States to make use of the *'Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking'* produced by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: *'These provide practical tools to ensure that human rights are at the centre of anti-trafficking strategies at national, regional and international levels.'*<sup>14</sup>

And he called on States to contribute to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, which provides assistance to victims of slavery and slavery-like practices.

### **The Fight against violence against women will require leadership**

The UN Secretary General also condemned the increased use of rape and sexual violence as weapons of war perpetrated against women and girls in armed conflict and made a plea for all societies to help eliminate all forms of violence against women:

*'This will require leadership at every level, in every culture, country and continent. It will require a bold transformation in men's attitudes and behaviour so that women become their equal partners. It will require changes in oppressive laws, practices, and institutions. It will require us to speak up, and to make clear that when it comes to violence against women, there are no grounds for tolerance and no tolerable excuses.'*

<sup>14</sup> These can be found at [www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/E.2002.68.Add.1.En?Opendocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/E.2002.68.Add.1.En?Opendocument). For other related documents produced by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, see [www.unhcr.ch/women/focus-trafficking.html](http://www.unhcr.ch/women/focus-trafficking.html).

The text of the two public statements can be found at:

[www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2003/sgsm9030.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2003/sgsm9030.doc.htm); and

[www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2003/sgsm9039.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2003/sgsm9039.doc.htm).

### **Violence against Refugee Women prevents their advancement<sup>15</sup>**

During a ceremony for the *'2003 UNHCR Award for the Promotion of Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Refugee Women'* in Geneva earlier this month, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Ruud Lubbers said that violence against refugee women prevented them from living full lives in safety and security: *'Violence undermines women's personal, social and economic advancement and prevents us from supporting their choices and capacities for durable solutions.'*

The High Commissioner presented 20 awards to refugees, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and UNHCR staff for their work in building the capacities of refugee women and promoting gender equality but warned that much was still to be done. This is the second ceremony since the award was created in 2002. He declared: *'We must act (...) to empower and act to remove all the barriers which make women vulnerable to violence.'*

Linda Awanis, an Iraqi refugee and President of the Council of Refugee Women in Bulgaria, was one of the 20 winners drawn from Africa, North America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. She thanked UNHCR for involving refugees, in particular refugee women, in the search for solutions to their problems: *'Thank you for trusting us and for believing that your efforts would not be wasted on us.'* For more information and a full list of recipients of the 2003 award see: [www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/taxis/vtx/news](http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/taxis/vtx/news).

<sup>15</sup> UNHCR, 'We must act to empower women', says Lubbers at UNHCR gender awards', 5 Dec 2003.



### **Women's human rights and international relations<sup>16</sup>**

The Women's Rights Committee adopted on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2003 a report on violation of Women's Human Rights and International relations of the EU. The report asks the Commission to include in all development agreement a global definition on violence against women and a specific clause, which could suspend the agreement in case of violence against women.

The Commission should be able to sign commercial agreement with partners' countries depending on their efforts to combat violence against women and on the recognition of violence suffered by women in their countries in the asylum process. The report also requests that violence against women should be included in the negotiations agenda on trade and development between the EU and Iran and that gender-specific persecutions be recognised for granting asylum to women. For more information, please contact the European Women's Lobby, at [www.womenlobby.org/](http://www.womenlobby.org/).

### **France: Reformed asylum law recognizes persecution by non-state agents<sup>17</sup>**

The reformed law which was adopted by the French Parliament on 19 November recognizes for the first time persecution by non-state agents: this means victims of such persecution can be granted refugee status.

At the same time, the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (Ofpra) – which will now become the main decision-making body in the French asylum process - will be allowed to reject an asylum application if the asylum seeker can be protected by an international or regional

organization in another region within his country (the concept is called '*internal asylum*').

The reform also introduces the concept of safe countries of origin for countries where human rights and other fundamental rights are deemed to be respected. Ofpra will draft a list pending a decision at European level on this issue.

Another concept introduced by the reforms is that of subsidiary protection to be granted for one year renewable to foreigners threatened in their countries who can not be considered refugees in the terms of the Geneva Convention. Subsidiary protection can be withdrawn under certain circumstances (e.g. involvement in criminal activities and threat to national security). One of the major objectives of the reforms adopted, due to enter into force on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004, is to reduce the time an asylum seeker has to wait before his claim is examined from two and a half years to two months. For further details, visit [www.lemonde.fr/web/article/0,1-0@2-3224,36-342470,0.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/web/article/0,1-0@2-3224,36-342470,0.html).

#### Related News

On 3 December 2003 the Swiss parliament adopted new asylum legislation which will enter into force on 1 April 2004.<sup>18</sup> Asylum seekers whose claims are judged to be obviously unfounded or abusive (so called "Nichteintretensentscheid/ décision de non-entrée en matière" such as safe country of origin) will be immediately excluded from the social welfare system. Asylum seekers whose claims have already been rejected in a EU State will no longer be recognised as refugees in Switzerland unless new circumstances call for a review of their cases. For more details contact ECRE at [www.ecre.org/](http://www.ecre.org/).

<sup>16</sup> Source: European Women's Lobby, Newsflash, October 2003.  
<sup>17</sup> Edited from ECRE, ECRAN Weekly Update, 19 November 2003.

<sup>18</sup> Information edited from From ECRE ECRAN-Weekly Update, 10 December 2003.

Amnesty International condemns the use of lists of safe countries of origin to restrict access to asylum procedures as it says it constitutes discrimination among refugees that is strictly forbidden by Article 3 of the Geneva Convention. AI points to the fact that *'the decision on which countries to include on the common list may be the result of political bargaining influenced by national interests, rather than human rights considerations'*. For further information, click on [www.amnesty-eu.org](http://www.amnesty-eu.org), then on 'documents' page.

### International Projects & events

#### International Coalition demands justice for murdered women<sup>19</sup>

Since 1993, over 300 women who live in conditions of poverty in Juarez and Chihuahua, Mexico, have been abducted, raped and murdered. The Mexican authorities have failed to effectively investigate the cases, ignoring repeated requests by the families to bring the perpetrators to justice. The indifference of the Mexican authorities to these crimes represents complicity in the violence against women and a lack of accountability in prosecuting crimes against the poor.

In solidarity with Justicia para Nuestras Hijas and Bring Our Daughters Home (grassroots organizations started by the families of the women who have been murdered) a series of events including street protests, film screenings, silent vigils, cultural events and religious services took place in various parts of the world from 31<sup>st</sup> October to 3 November 2003 to commemorate the 300 and more women who died. Participating organisations included MADRE, Amnesty International, Mexico Solidarity Network, Women in Black –

New York,<sup>20</sup> Grupo de Trabajadoras por la Paz, Vamos a la Peña del Bronx, Red Solidaridad con Venezuela, Centro Mujeres Dominicanas and Mujeres Radicales.

For information visit:

[www.mexicosolidarity.org/Juarez\\_Action.html](http://www.mexicosolidarity.org/Juarez_Action.html).

Women in Black is an international peace network operating in many countries around the world. Women in Black stands in silent vigil to protest war, rape as a tool of war, ethnic cleansing and human rights abuses all over the world. For a full contact list around the world see [www.womeninblack.net/contact2.html](http://www.womeninblack.net/contact2.html).

#### Gender Montage: Paradigms in Post-Soviet Spaces

is a series of documentary films that address socio-economic, political and gender challenges in post-Soviet countries. Although the films cover a wide range of subjects – from drug trafficking, prostitution, women's political participation to women's and human rights violations – they portray a uniform picture of widespread gender discrimination in most of the former Soviet republics.<sup>21</sup>

For instance, *'Wishing for seven Sons and One Daughter'* is the tale of women who recourse to abortion of female embryos in Azerbaijan because inheritance is traditionally passed down the male line. Whilst in the past newborn girls were often killed, the film shows that ultrasound technology means that families can now design their *'ideal'* family by ending pregnancies that would lead to the birth of a girl. See full list at:

<sup>20</sup> **Women in Black** is an international peace network operating in Italy, Mexico, Spain, Germany, England, Azerbaijan, Colombia, and in the Former Yugoslavia. Women in Black stands in silent vigil to protest war, rape as a tool of war, ethnic cleansing and human rights abuses all over the world. For a full contact list around the world see <http://www.womeninblack.net/contact2.html>.

<sup>21</sup> Original source: Women's Enews, *'Films Depict Rising Sex Bias in Old Soviet States'*, 24 November 2003, at [www.womensnews.org/article.cfm?aid=1611](http://www.womensnews.org/article.cfm?aid=1611).

<sup>19</sup> Information edited from European Women's Lobby, Newsflash, October 2003, at [www.womenlobby.org](http://www.womenlobby.org).

[www.asiasociety.org/arts/gender\\_montage/index.html](http://www.asiasociety.org/arts/gender_montage/index.html).

### New Publications

#### **Twa women speak out about double discrimination**

A new report published by Minority Rights Group (MRG), highlights the double discrimination faced by Twa women in the Great Lake region of Africa, both as indigenous peoples, and as women. The Twa have faced widespread discrimination and violation of their rights in the region, a situation which has been exacerbated by the violent conflict in the region.

Twa women additionally face gender discrimination, from both broader society and from within their own Twa communities. Building on extensive interviews with Twa women themselves, MRG's report '*Twa Women, Twa Rights in the Great Lakes Region of Africa*', written by Dorothy Jackson, highlights their dual struggle for change and the recognition of their rights by those both outside, and within their communities. Twa women's voices can clearly heard in this report, calling for change and recognition of their rights - as indigenous peoples and as women. The report is available from

[www.minorityrights.org/OnlineReports/OnlineReports.asp](http://www.minorityrights.org/OnlineReports/OnlineReports.asp) as well as in hard copy (ISBN 1 904584 11 X. Nov 2003, A4, 40pp. £6.70 inc. P&P £6.95/US\$11.75 outside UK).

#### **Asylum Law and Practice (Nov 2003)<sup>22</sup>**

'*Asylum Law and Practice*' by Symes and Jorro deals comprehensively with the new procedures and framework of the Nationality Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 including

asylum claims and monitoring, appeals and statutory review, procedure before adjudicators and the Immigration Appeal Tribunal with guidance on drafting grounds of appeal.

It draws together decisions of the higher courts and the largely unreported determinations of the IAT, and places them in the broader context of decision making in the English speaking jurisdictions abroad: Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA. There is also detailed coverage of the "asylum" consequences of the ECHR and a full account of the interpretation of the Articles of the Refugee Convention in UK law (ISBN/ISSN 040698378X).

#### **Refugees and Asylum Seekers: A Guide for Journalists in Scotland<sup>23</sup>**

This is a new guide for journalists covering stories involving refugees and asylum seekers published in December 2003 by Amnesty International and produced in collaboration with the National Union of Journalists, Oxfam and the Scottish Refugee Council. The guide provides factual information, helping to dispute commonly-held misconceptions. It also contains data to assist journalists in putting issues in their proper perspective as well as contacts, important dates, analysis of key issues and specifics on asylum seekers' rights and the processes they go through.


<http://www.nujglasgow.org.uk/news.html>.

A copy can be obtained by contacting the Scottish NUJ Office on 0141 632 2378 or alternatively contact the Scottish Office of Amnesty International UK, 6 Castle Street, Edinburgh, EH2 3AT, Tel: 0131 466 6200, Fax: 0131 466 6201, E-mail: [scotland@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:scotland@amnesty.org.uk).


<sup>22</sup> Information reproduced from <http://rimer.butterworths.co.uk/webcat/enquiry/index.htm>.

<sup>23</sup> Sources: Amnesty International Scottish Office, <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/scotland/index.shtml>; Scottish NUJ Office, [www.nujglasgow.org.uk/news.html](http://www.nujglasgow.org.uk/news.html).

### Related Information

 *'What's the Story? Results of research into media coverage of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK'*, by Article 19, 13 November 2003, at the following link:

[www.article19.org/](http://www.article19.org/).

 **Online letter campaign** If you feel you should do something about the dehumanisation of asylum seekers and refugees by the section of the British press, join the online letter campaign by following the link [www.not4profit.org.uk](http://www.not4profit.org.uk), put in your details and click the button.

### International Online resources

***'Afghanistan, No one listens to us and no one treats us a human beings: Justice denied to women' (Oct 2003)***

This report documents Afghan women's concerns about widespread domestic violence, forced marriage, and rape by armed groups. According to Amnesty International, the international community has failed to fulfil its promises to bring freedom and equality to the women of Afghanistan: *'Nearly two years on, discrimination, violence, and insecurity remain rife, despite promises by world leaders, that the war in Afghanistan would bring liberation for women'*. Full report:

[www.web.amnesty.org/library/index/engasa110232003](http://www.web.amnesty.org/library/index/engasa110232003).

**A Global Link to Women's Human Rights Analysis, Views, News and Advocacy**

Fundamentalisms - a Web Resource for Women's Human Rights is a joint initiative of the Association for Women's Rights in

Development (AWID), Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML) and Rights and Democracy, focusing on identifying and exposing the international dynamics of fundamentalisms.

The *'WHRNet'* web-resource highlights the impact of fundamentalisms on women in particular, and identifies trends and strategies to counteract them. Comprehensive, cross-regional analysis and information are provided to promote a greater understanding of fundamentalisms. It contains many features including regularly updated thematic overviews addressing the impact of fundamentalisms on areas such of women's health and sexuality, education, employment, political participation and leadership, etc.; and regular opinion pieces and interviews from women taking the lead in advancing and protecting women's human rights in situations where fundamentalisms undermine them.

Other features include a guide to relevant human rights forums and mechanisms; an online research tool on themes specific to fundamentalism and extensive links to relevant organizations, resources and articles. For more information please visit the WHRnet's site at [www.whrnet.org/](http://www.whrnet.org/) or WLUML international solidarity network's website: [www.wluml.org](http://www.wluml.org).

**New webpages on Sexuality, Gender and Islam**

These pages are the result of Safra Project research, funded by Citizenship 21. The new webpages provide information on studies undertaken by reformist and feminist Muslim scholars. The focus of the research is to challenge gender bias, homophobia and transphobia that Muslim LGBT people, particularly women, experience.

The webpages have sections on the following themes:

What do we mean by Gender?, What do we mean by Sexuality?, What do we mean by



Islam?, Gender (roles) and Islam, Women's Sexuality and Islam, (Male) Homosexuality and Islam, Same-Sex Relationships between Women and Islam and more, along with a Glossary of Key Terms and a Bibliography and links.

To view these pages please visit [www.safraproject.org](http://www.safraproject.org). In order to update the information available, the Safra Project welcomes comments and links to other relevant resources not yet included. Safra Project, P.O. Box 35929, London, N17 0WB, UK. Email: [info@safraproject.org](mailto:info@safraproject.org), or website: [www.safraproject.org](http://www.safraproject.org).

### **Domestic Violence Handbook for Mongolia and Central Asia<sup>24</sup>**

A joint publication of the Mongolian Women Lawyers' Association and National Centre Against Violence, this Domestic Violence Handbook was inspired by a December 2002 meeting on domestic violence legislation sponsored by the Mongolian Foundation for an Open Society (MFOS). The handbook's publication was co-sponsored by MFOS and the Network Women's Program. For a copy, click on the following link:

[www.soros.org/initiatives/women/articles\\_publications/publications/domestic\\_handbook/dv\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.soros.org/initiatives/women/articles_publications/publications/domestic_handbook/dv_handbook.pdf).

### **Women's Link Worldwide Database**

Women's Link functions as a network, collaborating with women's rights and human rights groups in Western Europe and Latin America to foster the implementation of international law and the use of international tribunals to advance women's rights. It provides technical assistance to women's rights advocates on the use of international human rights law in national cases, and guidance on

bringing cases to regional and international tribunals.

Women's Link's Website maintains a database of judicial decisions from selected countries related to women's rights with a special focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights, and violence against women. The database provides both case summaries as well as direct access to case law from national, regional and international tribunals. The Website contains information on the social and political context of national and regional laws affecting women's rights, as well as interviews with leading international human rights lawyers such as Mary Robinson, former U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights. For more details and to access the database, see: [www.womenslinkworldwide.org/](http://www.womenslinkworldwide.org/).

## **UK Online resources**

### **Navigation Guide on Women refugees and asylum seekers in the UK**

The ICAR (Information centre about asylum and refugees in the UK) online Navigation Guide is now available at [www.icar.org.uk/pdf/ng007.pdf](http://www.icar.org.uk/pdf/ng007.pdf). It will be constantly up-dated so ICAR would like to hear about any new reports and publications that might be added to the guide. Click on [www.icar.org.uk](http://www.icar.org.uk) for contact information.

### **Torture Survivors' Handbook**

The 71 page document, produced by the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture and Redress (Nov 2003), provides information about social and medical welfare, as well as advice for torture survivors on rebuilding their lives in exile. Chapter II covers information on reparation for torture and Chapter III is a nationwide listing of

<sup>24</sup> Source: Open Society Institute, Network Women's Program at: [www.soros.org/initiatives/women/articles\\_publications/publications/domestic\\_handbook](http://www.soros.org/initiatives/women/articles_publications/publications/domestic_handbook).

services offering support, information and advice. It is intended for survivors including refugees and British nationals tortured or ill-treated abroad, their families and advisers. Available as a PDF file at the following weblink:

[www.torturecare.org.uk/Handbook\\_En.pdf](http://www.torturecare.org.uk/Handbook_En.pdf).

### **IAS Addendum to report 'Home Office Country assessments: An Analysis.'**<sup>25</sup>

The IAS (Immigration Advisory Service) Addendum published in December details relevant changes made to the October 2003 Home Office Country Assessments in light of specific criticisms in the original IAS analysis. According to IAS, it *'demonstrates that there have been substantial changes made to most of the October 2003 Home Office Country Assessments examined, many of which mirror specific criticisms made in the original IAS analysis'*. IAS says these changes constitute an *'implicit acknowledgment by the HO of the varying quality of their reports'*.

*'The IAS Addendum also raises a number of ongoing concerns regarding the levels of accuracy in the Home Office Country Assessments, such as the significant amount of disputed information that remains unchanged in the October 2003 Assessments. In addition, [it] raises serious concerns about the reliability of the Home Office Country Assessments that were not included in the original IAS analysis. Considering the numerous inaccuracies highlighted in those that were examined, we suggest that it is likely that the unchecked Country Assessments will have been equally flawed. (...) The inaccuracies in the unanalysed reports will not have been rectified and will therefore continue to mislead decision-makers.'*

To download a free copy of the IAS December 2003 Addendum, visit the IAS website at [www.iasuk.org](http://www.iasuk.org) or click on:

[www.iasuk.org/document\\_store/Doc337.doc](http://www.iasuk.org/document_store/Doc337.doc).

To download an order form for the original IAS analysis (£17.50), please click on the link below:

[www.iasuk.org/document\\_store/Doc309.doc](http://www.iasuk.org/document_store/Doc309.doc).

### **'Listen to the Refugee's Story**

*How UK Foreign Investment Creates Refugees and Asylum Seekers'* is co-published by Ilisu Dam Campaign Refugees Project, The Corner House and Peace in Kurdistan (Nov 2003).

In many cases, British companies, taxpayers and the government directly and indirectly support the human rights abuses that accompany British investment and policies abroad. Many of these abuses ultimately force people to flee their homes and then their countries. These investments include not just weapons exports but also oil and gas pipelines, mines, and large hydroelectric and irrigation dams.

The publication includes stories, poems and drawings from refugees and asylum seekers from all over the world, about why they have been forced to flee their countries. The book highlights broader links between enforced migration and global economic processes, poses key questions about trade and development policies and corporate accountability, and addresses the effects of the current "war on terrorism" on different communities. The document is available in word document or pdf, at this weblink:

[www.thecornerhouse.org.uk/document/summary/refinves.html](http://www.thecornerhouse.org.uk/document/summary/refinves.html).

### **Migration, public health and compulsory screening for TB and HIV<sup>26</sup>**

<sup>25</sup> Edited information provided by IAS, text by Billie Dainton, Senior Research Officer, Immigration Advisory Service.

<sup>26</sup> From the IPPR <http://www.ippr.org.uk> Press release [www.asylumpolicy.info/pressreleases/healthscreening.doc](http://www.asylumpolicy.info/pressreleases/healthscreening.doc).

This is the first in IPPR's new Asylum and Migration Working Paper Series, established as a vehicle for examining the evidence in relation to specific aspects of policy and practice in this area. Authored by academics, experts and policy specialists from across the public policy arena, the working papers provide an overview of key policy issues in a timely and easily accessible format.

The aim is to encourage the exchange of ideas about asylum and migration issues and ensure that policy making is underpinned by empirical evidence about the nature and causes of migration, the impacts on different countries and communities and the effects - both intended and unintended - of policies which might be introduced in response. The papers will be released every two to three months.

Full text available at the following link:  
[www.asylumpolicy.info/healthscreening.pdf](http://www.asylumpolicy.info/healthscreening.pdf).

For subscription to the series and receipt of notification about newly published papers, please send your details to [f.hopwood@ippr.org](mailto:f.hopwood@ippr.org).

### Asylum Statistics 3rd Quarter 2003: UK and UNHCR figures

UK figures are available in PDF file at the Home Office's website:

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/asylumq303.pdf](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/asylumq303.pdf).

UNHCR also released their figures for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2003 at [www.unhcr.org/](http://www.unhcr.org/). The UNHCR report, which covered 29 industrialised countries excluding Italy, shows that the number of asylum applicants was 20 percent lower for the first nine months of this year compared to the same period last year, and 24 percent lower compared to the same time frame in 2001.

Among countries of asylum, the United Kingdom had the largest number of asylum applicants (47,900) over the nine-month

period, although this is 39 percent fewer than the same period last year. The United States, the second-largest asylum country with 43,600 applicants, also saw a 32-percent drop compared to the same time frame last year.

## Notice Board

### Refugee and asylum seekers funding priority<sup>27</sup>

The Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales has published its new guidelines for charities applying for a grant during 2004 - and its funding priorities for charities working at an England and Wales-wide level. Priority areas remain unchanged although some objectives are more tightly defined: Refugees and asylum seekers; supporting diversity and inclusion for charities working with people from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities and capacity building for charities (particularly where charities have an income of £100,000 or less).

The 2004 guidelines and England and Wales-wide funding plan can be obtained from [www.lloydstsbfoundations.org.uk](http://www.lloydstsbfoundations.org.uk). Alternatively contact Louise Harley, Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales, Tel: 020 7398 1705/ E-mail:

[louise.harley@lloydstsbfoundations.org.uk](mailto:louise.harley@lloydstsbfoundations.org.uk).

The new address for the **Foundation for Women's Health, Research & Development** (FORWARD) Unit 4, 765-767 Harrow Road, London NW10 5NY. Tel: 020 8960 4000, Fax: 020 8960 4014, E-mail: [forward@forwarduk.org.uk](mailto:forward@forwarduk.org.uk).

**NAWO** (National Association of Women's Organisations) is now based at:

<sup>27</sup> Information edited from Lloyds TSB Foundation, Press Release, 5 December 2003.

NAWO, 1<sup>ST</sup> floor, 1-3 Berry Street, Clerkenwell Road, London EC1V 0AA. Tel: 020 7490 4100.

■ ■ **OISC** (Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner), as of 1 December 2003 is located at: OISC, 5th Floor, Counting House, 53 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2QN. All contact telephone, fax, and e-mail addresses remain the same.

■ ■ The new address and contact information for the **European Council for Refugees and Exiles** (ECRE UK) is: 103 Worship Street, London EC2A 2DF, UK. Tel: +44-(0)20-7377 7556, Fax: +44-(0)20-7377 7586.

Please send any information that you would like to see published in our next bulletin by 8<sup>th</sup> January 2004 (see address on back cover)



# women's asylum news

Produced by RWRP (for more information on this issue, please contact Sophia Ceneda)  
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Asylum Aid provides free legal advice and representation to asylum-seekers and refugees, and campaigns for their rights. Registered as a charity no. 328729. To support Asylum Aid's work, please complete and return the form below to Asylum Aid, FREEPOST LON18836, London, E1 6BR (however, using a stamp will save us money)

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- Right to vote at the AGM election
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- Up to date campaigning information emailed directly
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I wish to make a gift of £ \_\_\_\_\_

## Asylum Aid - STANDING ORDER FORM

To: The Manager, \_\_\_\_\_ Bank,  
(Address of Bank) \_\_\_\_\_

Please pay **ASYLUM AID** the sum of £ \_\_\_\_\_ each  
month/quarter/year (delete as appropriate) until further notice  
and debit my account no. \_\_\_\_\_

sort code: \_\_\_\_\_ starting on (date) \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

[FOR OFFICE USE] To: NatWest Bank plc, PO Box 3AW, 104  
Tottenham Court Rd, London W1A 3AW. Sort Code: 56-00-31,  
account no. 63401711

## Gift Aid Declaration

**Asylum Aid**  
**Registered Charity no. 328729**

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.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

I would like Asylum Aid to treat my donations as Gift Aid donations (please tick)

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

Your declaration covers all donations you have made to Asylum Aid since April 2000 and any donations you might choose to make hereafter. You must have paid as much tax (or more) in this year as we will reclaim on your donation