

# women's asylum news

refugee women's resource project @ asylumaid

issue number 53  
september 2005

also in this issue

Other UK news

**p. 3** Two asylum-seeking women on hunger strike hospitalised

UK events & projects

**p. 4**

International news from USA, Guatemala, Sweden, Lebanon, etc.

**p. 7**

International projects, actions & events

**p. 14**

New publications international & UK

**from p. 17**

New online resources

**p. 21**

Notice board

**p. 22**

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Please send any information that you would like to see published in our next edition by Tuesday 18 October 2005 (see email or postal address on back cover).

## IAA not required to use Gender Guidelines research says

More than four years after the publication of Gender Guidelines by the Immigration Appellate Authority (IAA), a five-month (pilot) research project by Professor Rebecca Wallace and Mrs Anne Holliday reveals that they are not being integrated into the mainstream asylum decision-making process at appeal level.

The research is based on informal interviews with Adjudicators, Representatives for the Applicant, Home Office Presenting Officers (HOPO) and Court Personnel at hearing centres in Belfast, Hatton Cross, Glasgow, North Shields and Taylor House in London.<sup>1</sup> It is also based on the observation of about thirty cases in court.

It found that '*where the Guidelines are acknowledged as existing they are applied as a matter of common sense*'. According to the research, this is a view shared by the majority of Adjudicators who also said that an Applicant's claim could be adversely affected by his/her legal representative's lack of knowledge of the Guidelines. This point was reinforced by another finding: the majority of legal representatives interviewed said that the guidelines were to be used in specific cases and none of

<sup>1</sup> Formal structured questionnaires were dismissed when it was found that some interviewees were reticent to 'go on record'.

them, amongst the cases observed, referred to the guidelines as a matter of course. Likewise, none of the HOPOs observed made reference to the guidelines. Thus, unlike Canada, where lack of reference to gender guidelines by decision-makers is considered to be an error of law, Prof. Wallace and Mrs Holloway found that the IAA is not required to use them, although they provide a couple of examples where they were used.

One contentious issue highlighted by the research is the use of all female courts. A number of legal representatives said they '*had actively dissuaded female Applicants from requesting an "all female" court*' because these are found to be '*harsher*' on Applicants. This finding echoes a previous research finding by RWRP according to which some legal representatives interviewed had found all female courts '*notoriously unsympathetic*'.<sup>2</sup>

However the present research also shows that when such requests are made, they are not automatically granted. It refers in particular to the decision in *M (Sierra Leone)* in which the Applicant's Representative submitted the Adjudicator had erred in continuing with the hearing after the Applicant's Representative request for an all-female court was not granted. The Tribunal denied the appeal on such a basis but took also the opportunity to set out its views on the matter:

*'7. ...There is nothing in the procedure rules or elsewhere which*

*requires the IAA to accede to requests for an "all female" court simply on the basis of such a request. Nor is there anything in the Gender Guidelines to require the IAA to grant such a request.*

*8. ... A lot of people, male and female, find giving oral evidence a difficult, embarrassing or stressful experience. (...) Applicant, of whatever gender, must expect to be required to provide details of his or her claim and to have his or her story tested.'*

The Tribunal went on to stress the '*practical*' and '*administrative difficulties*' in getting an all female court and that statements of an embarrassing nature in front of one or more men (such as '*giving evidence regarding a sexual assault*') can be both given and cross-examined in writing.

It is the conclusion of the research that the guidelines need to be applied in practice for any meaningful impact. It stresses that the IAA has failed to take basic steps to ensure such implementation in practice, such as wide dissemination and training.

Lastly, the authors stress that '*there is a need for greater, searching legal analysis*' in terms of the use of membership of a particular social group (MPSG) in refugee jurisprudence of gender-related claims and best practice needs to be identified in this area. This is all the more important, they say, now that a recently adopted European Council Directive envisages a uniform interpretation of MPSG as a ground for asylum. RWRP could not agree more. In

<sup>2</sup> Ceneda, S. for RWRP, '*Women asylum seekers in the UK: A gender perspective. Some facts and figures*', Asylum Aid, London, 2003.

our previous edition of WAN (issue no. 52) we highlighted a deplorable decision on a case referring to Female Genital Mutilation and MPSG. The majority decision in the case (*Fornah v SSHD* [2005] EWCA Civ 680 (09 June 2005)) contributed to a trend in asylum jurisprudence that tends to marginalise women's rights by means of legalistic and semantic technicalities that are applied inconsistently.

### Other UK News

#### **Two asylum-seeking women hospitalised in fifth week of hunger strike in detention centre**

According to Legal Action for Women (LAW), two women have been taken to Bedford Hospital amidst fear for the health of the Ugandan hunger strikers in the fifth week of their protest.<sup>3</sup> Whilst four women hunger strikers remain in Yarl's Wood protesting against their deportation and the conditions in detention, another was recently taken to Dungavel detention centre, Scotland after a 12-hour journey despite her precarious health condition. Crucially however, as a result of their protest some women have found legal representation and been released, giving them the chance to have their case reconsidered. But two women have been deported, one of whom is now in hiding whilst there has been no contact with the other. According to LAW, the Home Office refuses to take any responsibility for monitoring the safety of

those it returns. Harriet Anyangokolo, spokeswoman who has now been released pending reconsideration of her asylum claim, said:

*'We aren't criminals, we are simply asylum seekers who deserve protection under international law. We won't stop fighting for our rights. It would be better to die in a British rather than a Ugandan detention centre.'*

The cases highlighted by LAW in their press release<sup>4</sup> are typically based on gender-related persecution. Yet LAW says that *'many of the women who have contacted Black Women's Rape Action Project and Women Against Rape had previously been unable to speak about the rape they suffered, or if they did, it was dismissed or ignored by the authorities.'*

LAW points to the cases of hundreds of asylum seekers who are deported without due consideration of their case and good quality legal representation with a particular impact on women's cases:

*'These deficiencies are life threatening for women asylum seekers who are routinely imprisoned - against the United Nations High Commission on Refugees and the government's own guidelines - and threatened with deportation. As a result of their public protest, most of the women on hunger strike have now secured legal representation. The threat of removal should be lifted and all the women should be released immediately whilst their cases are reconsidered.'*

<sup>3</sup> Information provided by LAW, 8 September 2005 (on file).

<sup>4</sup> See LAW Press Release, 'Two hospitalised in fifth week of Ugandan women's hunger strike at Yarl's Wood Removal Centre', 1 September 2005.

For more information contact: Legal Action for Women Crossroads Women's Centre PO Box 287 London NW6 5QU, Tel: 020 7482 2496 minicom/voice, Fax: 020 7209 4761; 07958 152 171; email: [law@crossroadswomen.net](mailto:law@crossroadswomen.net).

**related information** RWRP is currently gathering information to evaluate the application of the Home Office '*gender guidance in the APIs*'. Please contact Sophia Ceneda at [sophiac@asylumaid.org.uk](mailto:sophiac@asylumaid.org.uk) or Tel: 020 7377 5123 if you have any examples of refused asylum cases where gender-related issues have not been given due consideration.

### **Mother and daughter: first family to be evicted under Section 9**

Community Care reported on the case of a mother and her four-year old daughter who were the first to be evicted from their NASS Accommodation in Manchester at the end of August.<sup>5</sup> The local council however said that they knew the mother would be staying with a friend when the decision to evict the family was taken under Section 9. Provisions under Section 9 the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc) Act 2004 allows for removal of benefits from asylum seekers families whose claims have been turned down and who refuse to leave the country voluntarily. The Home Office

<sup>5</sup> Source: Community Care, 'First family evicted under asylum policy', 30 August 2005, online at: [www.communitycare.co.uk/articles/article.asp?liarticleid=50726&liSectionID=3&liParentID=2](http://www.communitycare.co.uk/articles/article.asp?liarticleid=50726&liSectionID=3&liParentID=2). Also, BBC News, 'Asylum Act needs "urgent review"', 24 August 2005, at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/manchester/4181700.stm>.

policy is currently being piloted in parts of Greater Manchester, Leeds and London but ten Greater Manchester councils have expressed concerns about the impact on children, who can be taken into care if their families refuse to return home. In particular Greater Manchester's councils said they wanted the project reviewed '*as a matter of urgency*' to avoid any distress and suffering being caused to children.

Another mother of two, from Pakistan and currently living in Salford, is threatened with eviction and deportation. Samina Altaf fled her country after she suffered domestic violence. She and her daughters suffer from rickets and currently receive treatment in the UK.

A campaign against her deportation as well as a national demonstration against Section 9 is taking place in Bolton on 1 October (assembly at 12 noon at Lever Edge Lane School, Lever Edge Lane, Bolton BL3 3HP). For more information including how to write to Hazel Blears MP to protest against the family's deportation, check:

[www.asylumpolicy.info/samina.htm](http://www.asylumpolicy.info/samina.htm)

### **UK events & projects**

#### **Working with survivors of torture: rape & sexual abuse as a method of torture**

This event organised by the Medical Foundation aims to prepare and to enable participants to develop their skills and knowledge. It targets practitioners who are working with men and women who have survived sexual abuse and

rape during torture. Cost: £120 statutory & private/ £90 voluntary. Some subsidised places for refugee community organisations. Date & location: 29 September - Leeds. Tel: 020 7697 7777 or email: [regional@torturecare.org.uk](mailto:regional@torturecare.org.uk).

### Events by Rights of Women

Rights of Women are currently running practical training courses in Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence: The Domestic Violence course is a half-day course, and topics covered include an overview of the criminal/civil law as they relate to Domestic Violence and recent changes in the law. The Sexual Violence course is a full day course, and topics covered include an overview of the criminal law in relation to the Sexual Offences Act 2003, a definition of rape, sexual assault, consent and the criminal justice system in relation to sexual violence.

These courses run in Cambridge on 16 September 2005, and in Newcastle on 20 and 21 September 2005. Download the course details/application forms at: [www.rightsofwomen.org.uk/](http://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk/) or contact Kathy Francis, Training Officer on 020 7251 6575/6 or email [kathy@row.org.uk](mailto:kathy@row.org.uk).

**Rights of Women are also holding a 30th anniversary conference (1975 – 2005): Women and Violence: What's Law Got to Do with It?** This full day conference for women, will examine current domestic law in this context and identify key areas for change. The conference aims:

- To examine the impact of violence on women from Black and Minority Ethnic

communities and asylum seeking and refugee women

- To promote discussion about the law's response to violence against women
- To evaluate current domestic law's response to violence against women and identify key areas for change
- To discuss practical strategies for addressing violence against women.

RWRP at Asylum Aid will be presenting a seminar on Women Seeking Asylum – Seeking Protection from Violence. Date and venue: Thursday 3 November 2005 9.30 am to 4.45 pm Hamilton House, Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9BD. For more information see [www.rightsofwomen.org.uk](http://www.rightsofwomen.org.uk).

### Sexual assault: do you need help?

**The Haven** is a centre with bases in Whitechapel, Camberwell and Paddington, providing medical help and advice, counselling and practical and emotional support for men, women and children immediately following rape or sexual assault. Assistance is also provided if the person concerned wishes to report the incident to the police. Leaflets on the service are available in 11 languages from the organisation's website at <http://www.thehavens.org.uk>.

**Haven in Camberwell**, King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London, Tel: 020 7346 1599. **Haven in Paddington**, St Marys Hospital, Praed Street, London, Tel: 020 7886 1101. **Haven in Whitechapel**, The Royal London Hospital, 9 Brady Street, London Tel: 020 7247 4787.



### FEM '05

**FEM 05** is a conference with a focus on **Violence Against Women, Multiple Identities, Feminism and Women in the Workplace** being held on Saturday 5 November 2005 at University of Sheffield Union of Students, Western Bank, Sheffield S10 2TG. FEM 05 will feature talks and workshops by leading women's rights organisations and activists and will run parallel to an evening-based event - FemFest - celebrating female art and music. The conference is free and open to all. For more details see [www.femconferences.org.uk](http://www.femconferences.org.uk)

### **Refugee Children: Safeguarding the future of those hardest to protect**

is a conference organised by the Refugee Council to ensure the safety of refugee children and to maximise their opportunities (Thursday 20 October 2005, Regent's College, London and Wednesday 9 November 2005, the Royal York Hotel, York). Speakers will include: Professor Al Aynsley-Green - Children's Commissioner; Alison Stanley - Partner and Head of Immigration Team, Bindman and Partners; Eileen Bye - Inspector at Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons for England and Wales; Katherine Henderson - Solicitor, Head of Immigration and Asylum Department, Browell, Smith and Company; Arthur Ivatts - OBE, Education Consultant, formally Inspector at Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education responsible for asylum seekers and refugees. For more information including workshop details, visit [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/conferences](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/conferences), telephone 020 7346 6739 or email:

[marketing@refugeecouncil.org.uk](mailto:marketing@refugeecouncil.org.uk).

### **Refugee Housing... Integration NOT Isolation**

The conference (London, 20 September 2005, 9am - 4:30pm) aims to help housing providers and policy makers to '*get started*' or to improve the services they offer to refugees and will give delegates the opportunity to hear from organisations already successfully working in this field. The conference may be seen as the first step in trying to agree a common agenda on refugee housing issues and encourage debate around the direction of future service delivery. A mixture of local authority representatives, housing providers voluntary and refugee community organisations will be at the event.

Email: [training.conferences@cih.org](mailto:training.conferences@cih.org)  
Alternatively, please contact Vicky Evans on 020 7247 7800.

### **New Masters in management programme for refugee community organisations**

The Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit at London Metropolitan University is currently recruiting for its innovative MSc in Organisation and Community Development. This new programme is for people working in refugee community organisations who want to develop their management skills and improve their knowledge of the social context of their work. Applications from women are particularly welcome as they are often under-represented on management programmes. For more information call Justin on 020 7133 2110 or go to [www.londonmet.ac.uk/ragu](http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/ragu) (Source: Refugee Council newsletter - online).

### Crocodile Seeking Refuge

A new play by Sonja Linden, '*lifting the lid on the asylum stories behind the headlines*', is inspired by testimonials from refugees she encountered during her seven years as Writer-in-Residence at the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture.

'*Crocodile Seeking Refuge...*' tells the story of five individuals who have sought asylum in the UK: Zakariya from Darfur; Destin from the Republic of Congo; Jalal from Iraq; Parvaneh from Iran and Marie-Elena from Colombia. Each has been forced to flee in the face of death and each is haunted in a different way by the past. Finding themselves in situations that veer from the comic to the tragic, they try to make sense of the British way of life. One of the individual's stories is based on that of an Asylum Aid client and his caseworker.

Booking and venue: Showing at the Lyric Hammersmith from Tuesday 20 September - 8 October 2005 from 8pm at the Lyric Hammersmith, Lyric Square, King Street, London, W6 0QL. Tickets: £12, concessions and under 16s: £7. ID required. To Book call 08700 500 511 or log on to the Lyric Hammersmith website.

### Conference on negative attitudes towards asylum seekers, Scotland

The Scottish Refugee Council is hosting a conference and AGM with the theme '*Challenging negative public attitudes towards asylum seekers in Scotland*'. The conference will be held on the 20th of September 2005. For more details see: [www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/noticeboard/SRC\\_AGM](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/noticeboard/SRC_AGM).

### Asylum Aid AGM

10th October 2005

6pm to 9pm at Conway Hall

25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL

Prof Tony Kushner

Tony McNulty MP,

Minister for immigration (tbc)

All welcome! Please contact us if you are able to attend, Tel: 020 7377 5123.

### International news

#### USA: Appeals court says rape as a war crime amounts to political persecution – Immigration Board agrees

A woman from Guatemala who first applied for asylum in the USA in 1998 won asylum in the country on the basis that the gang-rape she was subjected to was a form of political persecution, not an individual criminal act.<sup>6</sup> Reina Garcia-Martinez was 19 when government soldiers burst into her family house, beat her parents and gang-raped and beat her in a campaign against villagers suspected of supporting anti-government guerrillas.

In 2001 her claim for asylum was turned down when it was ruled that she '*had failed to show that the gang-rape fell into one of the five categories of persecution that can form the basis for*

<sup>6</sup> Source: This is an edited of an article by *The San Francisco Chronicle*, 'Gang-rape victim granted asylum after long court battle', 15 July 2005, story circulated by:

[Dvasylum\\_updates@yahoogroups.com](mailto:Dvasylum_updates@yahoogroups.com).

*an asylum claim'* (political opinion, race, nationality, religion or membership of a particular social group). But in June last year the Ninth US Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Garcia-Martinez was eligible to remain in the US and the case was sent back to the Immigration Board. The latter recognised earlier this year that the gang-raped in front of her family was a form of torture and that she still needed protection despite the war in Guatemala being over. The Immigration Board granted her asylum on humanitarian grounds.

Karen Musalo, director of Centre for Gender and Refugee Studies, Hastings College of Law, San Francisco, said that the decision was important *'for stopping the knee-jerk reaction that if the harm is of a sexual nature, that it's personal, not political, that it's just some rogue soldiers satisfying their lustful urges'*. This point has been increasingly recognised in the USA in recent years and although the Ninth Circuit Court's decisions are not binding in other circuits, it has often *'charted the course for other courts on those issues'* due to its high volume of asylum cases.

Commenting on the outcome of the case, another lawyer said that it was *'heartbreaking'* that a precedent had been set in the case, *'yet the same type of treatment [occurs] in Sudan right now. (...) We need to translate that individual relief into awareness about violence against women as a war crime'*.

Given the current levels of violence with impunity against women in Guatemala (see below), Reina Garcia-Martinez has good reasons to feel relieved not to face deportation to her country of origin.

### Help stop the murder of thousands of women in Guatemala

Amnesty International's campaign *'Stop violence against women in Guatemala'* reveals how thousands of women have been murdered and mutilated in horrific circumstances, many times in broad daylight, in the Central American country in recent years. Last June, the human rights organisation produced a report on the brutal killings of women and girls in recent years (*'Guatemala: No protection, no justice: Killings of women in Guatemala'*).<sup>7</sup>

This was followed by an investigation on violence against women in Guatemala by journalist Christine Toomey of *The Times* published late August.<sup>8</sup> The article confirmed that *'1,500 women were raped tortured and murdered'* in the last four years alone, mostly in the capital city, and the killings of ordinary women (40% registered as housewives, 20% as students) continue on a huge scale, unabated. Ten women a week were murdered last year alone with little prospect of justice being ever administered for the family of the victims. The article outlines how the law provides that a rapist can escape charge if he agrees to marry the victim and she is over 12; and how sex with a minor is condoned unless the girl can prove she is *'honest and did not act provocatively'*.

The author links the culture of killings of women with total impunity to the 30-year-civil war that ravaged the country

<sup>7</sup> Available online at <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAMR340172005?open&of=ENG-GTM>.

<sup>8</sup> Christine Toomey, 'Beasts of prey', in *Times Online*, 28 August 2005, at [www.timesonline.co.uk/printFriendly/0,,1-531-1740992-531,00.html](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/printFriendly/0,,1-531-1740992-531,00.html).



until the 1980s. The civil war was fuelled by successive US administrations threatened by the emergence of left wing guerrillas and the prospect of the election of liberal or socialist governments in Central and South America: they *'proceeded to pump massive military aid into these countries' armed forces and right wing rebels to fight the leftists'*. In Guatemala, there was also the matter of protecting US corporate interests which eventually led to a military coup.

A *'30-year cycle of repression (...)* followed, reaching its bloodiest peak in the 1980s' with despicable acts of violence in which women became the prime targets of rape, mutilation and murder. The violence was later recognised as amounting to *'acts of genocide'* and it was also recognised that the US had *'armed, and in part trained in methods of sadistic repression'* those responsible for most of the atrocities. This highlights the responsibility of western foreign policies in promoting a climate of violence with immeasurable consequences in particular for women and children at any given time but also for generations to come.

The current army and police are said to be the same men that committed these political crimes. The ombudsman's office report counted 639 police officers implicated in criminal activities, including rape and murder, in the last 12 months, and opened cases against 383 of them. But so far, less than 10% of murders of women and girls have been investigated and of 527 such murders last year, only one resulted in a prosecution.

Christine Toomey writes: *'... In a land where the culture of machismo is so pronounced, it is not surprising that men have become accustomed to thinking they can murder, torture and rape women with impunity'*. According to human rights workers *'the use of violence against women to terrorise the population'* is a key element in the history of Guatemala.

Amnesty International's campaign aims to gather signatures for a petition to be presented to the president of Guatemala. To take part, please go to: [www.amnesty.org.uk/deliver/postcard/80.html](http://www.amnesty.org.uk/deliver/postcard/80.html).

### Sweden: Deportation of gay Iranians stopped after executions

The Swedish government has temporarily frozen deportations of gay Iranians asylum seekers who were refused asylum after news emerged of the hanging of two teenagers in July in Mashhad, Iran, on charges of *'involvement in homosexual acts'*.<sup>9</sup> The teenagers – under 18 at the time of their arrest – were accused of raping younger boys and held in prison for 14 months before their execution. Following the news, gay rights activists called on their government to immediately suspend all deportations of gay asylum seekers to Iran.

Although Sweden adopted gender guidelines in 2001 and *'guidelines for investigation and evaluation of asylum cases in which persecution based on*

<sup>9</sup> Source: AP, *'Sweden allows gay Iranians asylum in light of executions'*, found on USA UNHCR website: [www.usaforunhcr.org/archives.cfm?ID=3237&cat=Archives](http://www.usaforunhcr.org/archives.cfm?ID=3237&cat=Archives).

*given sexual orientation is cited as a ground* in January 2002,<sup>10</sup> it did not recognise gays as a persecuted group in Iran until last month when it took the decision to freeze the deportations. Activists say that other gay people from Nigeria, Uganda and Pakistan are refused asylum.

### **Sudan: Women speak of prevailing sexual violence study says**

A study into the health impact and well-being of women and girls affected by the conflict in Western Sudan revealed that women and girls continue to experience sexual violence on a large scale. The study undertaken by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the UN Children's Fund was based on a large number of focus group discussions. The women and girls were not directly questioned on issues relating to sexual and gender based violence but they *'came up in most focus groups when discussing the health impacts of the conflict'* according to UNFPA.

*'Physical injuries due to beatings, rape, miscarriages, excessive bleeding or injuries sustained during flight from the enemies'* as well as sexually transmitted diseases and psychological disturbances were amongst the health problems mentioned by the women. The study revealed that stigma and shame affected in particular unmarried girls who appeared to be the most affected. Many survivors obtained help from traditional birth attendants rather than seeking healthcare in clinics and hospitals. However the study also found that

*'communities to some degree were demonstrating an increased awareness of the nature of the problem and seemed to accept/support survivors of sexual violence more so than at the start of the conflict'*.

The study follows a series of reports by the UN and other international NGOs on violence against women in the region since the start of the conflict (see WAN issue no. 52). Women in Darfur have asked for additional protection forces and the disarmament of the militias. The study calls for more action to prevent sexual violence against women and girls and better access and coverage of healthcare services in response to their needs.

**"Many have shattered lives and have lost family – a child losing a parent or a wife losing a husband. Some are victims of sexual abuse. Their lives must be rebuilt." (UNHCR commenting on the situation of Togolese refugees who fled to Benin in recent months, 7 September 2005).**

### **Lebanese Penal Code *'cruel'* and *'unfair'* say women's groups**

Women's activists speaking at the Lebanese Press Federation last month spoke publicly of how the Lebanese Penal Code *'cruelly discriminated'* against women.<sup>11</sup> The Code was last amended in 1943. It allows honour killings (Law 562) whilst pardoning a rapist or kidnapper if he marries the victim (Law 522). Adultery is recognised as a crime

<sup>10</sup> see [www.migrationsverket.se/infomaterial/asyl/allmant/se\\_x\\_en.pdf](http://www.migrationsverket.se/infomaterial/asyl/allmant/se_x_en.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Source: Story circulated by Women Living Under Muslim Laws, [www.wluml.org/](http://www.wluml.org/), 10 August 2005. Original story: Jessy Chahine, 'Women's groups call for amendment of Penal Code', *Daily Star Staff*, 22 JULY 2005.

for women but not for men, as noted in a recent CEDAW (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women) report on Lebanon: "*(A)rticles 487, 488, and 489 of the penal code discriminate against women with respect to the conditions that establish the crime and penalty imposed on the adulterer and the adulteress*".<sup>12</sup>

The Lebanese Women's Network is a coalition of 14 of the major women's groups in the country. Its aims are to raise awareness of women's issues and advocate for reform. The declaration was supported by the head of the Lebanese Press Syndicate, Mohammad Baalbaki who called on Lebanon to '*witness equal treatment of men and women in all issues, because without this equality we will have a crippled society*'.

Women in Lebanon are currently denied the right of passing on their nationality to their children. According to the Centre for Research and Training for Development (CRTD), '*for the average Arab woman, basic citizenship rights such as the right to vote, to have an identity card or a passport, to access social protection schemes and entitlement, to send children to school, to marry, to travel... and to pass on citizenship to their children are either lacking or granted through the mediation of a male family member*'.<sup>13</sup> Tunisia and Egypt are the exceptions as women were recently given the right to pass on citizenship to their children under strict laws.

<sup>12</sup> See CEDAW report, '*Lebanon*', 9 February 2005, at [http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw33/issues\\_questions/CEDAW-PSWG-2005-II-CRP1-ADD8\\_Lebanon\\_-E.pdf](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw33/issues_questions/CEDAW-PSWG-2005-II-CRP1-ADD8_Lebanon_-E.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Source: WLUML, '*Lebanon: Calls for gender equality fall on deaf ears*', 16 August 2005 at [www.wluml.org](http://www.wluml.org).

### India: Domestic violence law adopted

Women Living Under Muslim Laws reported in July that the Union Cabinet of India had approved the introduction of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Bill, 2005 in Parliament.<sup>14</sup> In the new bill, the definition of domestic violence covers '*actual abuse or the threat of abuse that is physical, sexual, verbal, emotional or economic*'. It also includes '*harassment by way of unlawful dowry demands to the woman or her relatives*'. The Bill protects women who '*are or have been in a relationship with the abuser where both parties have lived together in a shared household an are related by consanguinity, marriage or adoption*'.

In addition, the new legislation seeks to protect women's rights to housing and to give a woman the right to reside in her matrimonial home or shared household, even if she has no titles of rights to such households, through a Magistrate order. Under the legal provisions, Protection Officers will be appointed to each case and non-governmental organisations can register as service providers for providing assistance to the abused in terms of medical and legal support and the provision of safe shelter.

Whilst the adoption of specific legislation against domestic violence is a welcome development in any country, the experience of women in many countries reveal that the actual implementation of such laws remains fraught with obstacles

<sup>14</sup> WLMUL, '*India: Cabinet clears proposal for female domestic violence law*', 18 July 2005, at [www.wluml.org/](http://www.wluml.org/).

such as practical access to justice for victims/survivors of domestic abuse; lack of resources for support services such as shelters, welfare and medical help; and traditional views on domestic abuse (see below). The situation in India will therefore need to be closely monitored to see how effective this new law is.

### related information **China: Domestic violence outlawed but women face deeply ingrained attitudes**

The BBC has reported that China has outlawed domestic violence and sexual harassment with a law that has designated gender equality as '*one of the country's basic national policy*'.<sup>15</sup> This means that Chinese women will now be able to take legal action against abusive husbands and those who sexually harass them. However the BBC reports that the scale of the problem and '*deeply ingrained attitudes towards women that go back over two millennia*' constitute a major hurdle to the implementation of the new law. According to a national survey of 8,000, 79% of women said they had experienced sexual harassment.

### **Afghanistan: Highest maternal mortality rates in some regions**

Afghanistan has some of the worst maternal mortality rates in the world, with an average of 1,600 deaths per 100,000 births according to the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR).<sup>16</sup> Yet in the province of Badakhshan, in the northeast, maternal mortality rates escalate to 6,500 births per 100,000, the worst ever recorded in the world.

Restrictions on women outside the home are said to be one of major contributory factors, along with lack of health and other structural facilities, and an economy shattered by decades of war. Another element contributing to these soaring maternal mortality rates is the lack of female doctors - after years of a ban on women's education during the Taleban regime - in a society where it is prohibited for women to be treated by male doctors. IWPR was told that in Bamian province, where maternal mortality rates are only marginally better than in Badakhshan, there are only 10 doctors (of whom two are female) serving 300,000 people. In the other 38 medical centres of the province, there are only forty doctors, only five of whom are women.

Other key factors linked to the high maternal mortality rates include poverty, lack of nourishment, and girls being married off at very young ages. The situation is exacerbated by illiteracy - almost 98 percent of women are illiterate in some provinces - which means basic

<sup>15</sup> Source: BBC News, 'China outlaws sexual harassment', 28 August 2005, at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/4192672.stm>.

<sup>16</sup> Compared to 12 deaths per 100,000 births in USA and three in Sweden. Source: Salima Ghafari and Mari Nabard for IWPR in Kabul, 'Afghanistan: A life for a life', in *IWPR Women's Perspectives*, No. 9, 8 September 2005.



education on health issues is difficult to transmit.

**related publication** HRW new report: *'Campaigning against Fear: Women's Participation in Afghanistan's 2005 Elections'*. In this report, Human Rights Watch says that an atmosphere of fear prevails for women's rights in Afghanistan. This includes fear amongst women involved in politics on the eve of the September elections. According to interviews with women candidates and those working for the election in the last month, Taliban forces have reemerged in some areas and are trying to disrupt the elections. In other areas it is local military commanders who intimidate voters and women candidates. Women are worried for their security especially *'with warlords and human rights abusers on the final candidates lists'*. A full copy of the report can be found online at <http://hrw.org/backgrounder/wrd/afghanistan0805/index.htm>.

### Rwanda: Half of Parliament seats held by women

Following the genocide in 1994, women have found themselves at the forefront of political life in Rwanda.<sup>17</sup> They currently hold 49 percent of the seats in the parliament, the highest percentage in the world. A number of women also hold key positions in the government including cabinet members: The Minister of Justice is a woman, and so are the

head of the National Reconciliation Commission and the deputy police chief.

The situation is undoubtedly a legacy of the genocide as now women outnumber men seven to one. The genocide was followed by a dramatic shift of women's position in Rwandan society. For instance, whilst before the genocide only 10 percent of women were literate, the figure has now risen to 50 percent. A law in 1999 has also promoted the advancement of women by allowing women to own their own family property, essential in a country where agriculture generates 90 percent of the country's earnings.

Women's groups and women holding high positions in the government are now pushing for an extension of women's political gains to better influence changes that will improve women's lives. The task is colossal. Many women are still traumatised by sexual and physical violence they experienced during the genocide, in addition to witnessing the extermination of their family members. HIV/AIDS continues to spread with, according to Women's Enews, 13 percent of Rwandans between 15 and 49 infected, although the figure is said to be an underestimation. Maternal mortality rate is also one of the highest in the world (1400 per 100,000 births in year 2000).<sup>18</sup>

**Related publication** See details of *"Surviving against the odds"*, A Book of Testimonies from Survivors of the

<sup>17</sup> Source: Alexandra Poolos, *'Rwandan women's leadership spreads to villages'*, Women's Enews, 6 September 2005, at [www.womensenews.org/article.cfm?aid=2438](http://www.womensenews.org/article.cfm?aid=2438).

<sup>18</sup> Source: IRIN PlusNews, *'Rwanda country profile'*, at [www.plusnews.org/AIDS/Rwanda.asp](http://www.plusnews.org/AIDS/Rwanda.asp).



Rwandan Genocide', in 'new publications\_ international' below.

### Slave trade claims 2 million victims each year

Louise Harbour, UN's High Commissioner of Human Rights, told the Asia-Pacific human rights conference that millions of women and children fall victim to human trafficking and end up as sex slaves, beggars, and forced labourers every year.<sup>19</sup> She added that more people were being trafficked than ever before. No country or region is said to be immune. In the Asia-Pacific Region, the scale of the problem has reached '*epidemic proportions*', mostly fuelled by the sex trade.

The High Commissioner told the conference that '*Gender-based violence in any of its forms denies girls and women their basic rights and dignity, and harms the development of entire countries*'.

### related information

#### Kosovo:

**Internal trafficking on the rise**  
Kosovo has traditionally been a place of transit or destination for victims of trafficking.<sup>20</sup> But recently several hundreds women and children are estimated to have been internally trafficked. Until now there were no procedures to deal with the referral of victims and assisting their reintegration in society.

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<sup>19</sup> Justin Haggler, 'Two million fall victim to trade each year, says UN', in the *Independent*, 31 August 2005, at <http://news.independent.co.uk/world/politics/article309206.ece>

<sup>20</sup> Source: Reproduced by NEWW Polska, Nikola Gaon, '*Reintegrating Kosovo's Victims*', 23 August 2005, at [www.osce.org/kosovo](http://www.osce.org/kosovo).

The Organisation for Safety and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has been working with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the Centre to Protect Victims and Prevent Trafficking Human Beings (PVPT) and the International Labour Organisation, as well as other non-governmental organisations (NGOs), to create a comprehensive referral mechanism and adopt practical measures to help victims reintegrate as well as protect them. It is expected that by September 2005 a referral system for internally trafficked victims will be in place. But continuous government funding will be necessary for it to be effective, as well as co-operation between government bodies and NGOs.

### International projects, actions & events

#### MADRE's campaign for women's shelters in Iraq

The women's rights organisation MADRE reports an epidemic of violence against Iraqi women, including kidnapping, rape, domestic violence, sexual slavery and 'honour killings'. MADRE writes that in the aftermath of the US invasion of Iraq, *'increasingly, women are being beaten, attacked in the streets, and forced into unwanted marriages at the behest of reactionary religious forces unleashed by the US invasion. These extremists urge men to kill rape survivors or disobedient women relatives who have "dishonoured" the family.'*

Currently Article 41 of Iraq's penal code sanctions the beating of a wife for various reasons including *'for the sake of righteousness, as disciplining'*.<sup>21</sup> According to lawyers, the provision has often been used in court to justify domestic abuse. Some women's rights activists in Iraq are hoping that the decision to include a clause in the new draft constitution stating that *'violence and abuse in the family, school and society shall be forbidden'* will automatically annul Article 41. But others think that this new provision will be outweighed by another article according to which Islam is to be *'a basic source of legislation'*.

Until full protection and services are offered to Iraqi women who experience domestic violence, MADRE and the Organization for Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI) are supporting Iraq's only network of women's shelters. MADRE is providing support for counselling and education for women housed in shelters. However the organisation needs to raise \$50,000 (or c. £27,000) to pay for basic supplies, such as clothing and food, but also hire doctors, counsellors, and teachers. To help please donate online at [www.madre.org/programs/appeal/iraqshelters.html](http://www.madre.org/programs/appeal/iraqshelters.html).

<sup>21</sup> Source: Shareef Hazza and Raghad Ali, 'Will constitution curb wife abuse?', in Iraqi Crisis Report No. 141, Institute of War and Peace Reporting, September 2005.

## The 10th AWID International Forum on Women's Rights and Development

From October 27-30, up to two thousand women's rights activists, academics, policy makers and students will converge upon Bangkok for the most highly anticipated international meeting for women's rights of the year. After Beijing +10, the G8 Summit and the UN World Summit, the AWID Forum is a chance for activists to finally gather together on OUR terms, to set our own agenda, and to push forward on our global movement towards change. Registration is still open, although spaces are filling up fast. To register, go online :

[www.awid.org/forum/register\\_for\\_forum.htm](http://www.awid.org/forum/register_for_forum.htm). Alternatively, email inquiries: [awidforum@awid.org](mailto:awidforum@awid.org), Tel inquiries: +1.416.594.3773, Fax inquiries: +1.416.594.0330. Or write to AWID, 215 Spadina Ave., Suite 150, Toronto, Ontario M5T 2C7 CANADA.

## Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice supporting work in Darfur and Uganda

The organisation Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice (formerly '*Women's Caucus for Gender Justice*') has recently conducted a gender-training seminar for the Registry of the International Criminal Court (ICC), specifically for staff dealing with victims and witnesses, reparations and participation issues, and security personnel. It is the third seminar WIGJ have conducted for the Court this year. The ICC has now asked WIGJ to provide a gender-training seminar for their Darfur team before they begin investigations. This training will focus on interviewing victims of sexual violence,

elements of the crimes and necessary evidence, and fostering a comprehensive approach to gender based crimes which captures the range, extent and impact of these crimes on victims.

WIGJ recently met with women's NGOs, human rights NGOs, and lawyers' associations in Uganda to plan future work, especially in Northern Uganda and Kampala. The aim is to '*assist in the development of an informed and supportive legal environment for women victims of the northern conflict; support and further stimulate local law reform efforts to promote gender equality; and support Ugandan (women) lawyers to be on the list of counsel authorised to represent victims before the ICC.*'

WIGJ is also continuing to work with the Court to address their responsibility in ensuring gender balance and regional diversity amongst the staff of the ICC as required by the Rome Statutes. In this context, WIGJ has been reviewing appointments to the ICC in particular with regard to gender and region of origin, the level of positions to which women are appointed and their participation in the ICC's decision-making structures. Whilst women are present in good numbers at very senior levels in the Office of the prosecutor, there are low numbers of women in professional posts at and above mid-to-senior level positions. WIGJ also noted a lack of affirmative action strategies to actively promote positions to and through women's NGOs, networks and professional associations.

WIGJ is concerned that '*few women are in management positions, women have less structural authority within the*

*institution and far fewer women than men are participating in the fora where crucial decisions on the substantive work of the Court are made.'* For details of the ICC's work and vacancies, go online at: [www.icc-cpi.int/home.html&l=en](http://www.icc-cpi.int/home.html&l=en). For information on WIGJ's activities, please email at [info@iccwomen.org](mailto:info@iccwomen.org) or write to: WIGJ, Anna Paulownastraat 103, 2518BC The Hague, The Netherlands.

### **Kosovo: Medical Foundation to provide trauma counselling training**

Master's degree psychology students at Prishtina University in Kosovo are to receive training in trauma counselling by Medical Foundation therapists before using their clinical skills in community mental health centres, hospitals, schools and other social services across the country. Socio-therapeutic or psychotherapeutic treatment is currently unavailable in Kosovo or at best restricted to the most severe cases of mental illness as public health services have very limited resources. It is hoped that the programme, which will hopefully run for three years, will help boost much needed mental health provisions. Great concerns have been raised about the lack of such provision especially for returning refugees, let alone the resident population, and women and children in particular. For more see: [www.torturecare.org.uk/index.php?module=articles&func=display&ptid=1&catid=&aid=657](http://www.torturecare.org.uk/index.php?module=articles&func=display&ptid=1&catid=&aid=657).

### **Call for an International Conference against immigration controls**

The international conference of No One Is Illegal held in Manchester, UK on 25 June called for an international day of action against immigration controls on Saturday 1 October. 2005 marks the centenary of the introduction of immigration controls in Britain - the Aliens Act (1905) and No one is Illegal hopes to make the 1 October action an annual event.

The group notes the ongoing deterioration of conditions in the UK for asylum seekers but also the growing movement to protect the rights of all regardless of immigration status. It is also highlighting two days of action on 17 & 18 December called by the Mediterranean Social Forum to mark the launch of the International Convention on the Protection of All Migrant Workers and Their Families. For more information see <http://www.noii.org.uk> or contact No One Is Illegal, Bolton Socialist Club, 16 Wood Street Bolton, BL1 1DY. Email: [info@noii.org.uk](mailto:info@noii.org.uk).

### **new publications**

#### **international**

*'Campaigning against Fear: Women's Participation in Afghanistan's 2005 Elections'* is a new report by Human Rights Watch in which they urge the Afghan government and international monitors to take special measures to protect women from attacks and intimidation by the Taliban

and regional warlords. Afghanistan's official election campaigning period began in August, with the election scheduled for 18 September. Human Rights Watch says that key measures to protect women candidates include improving complaint procedures and organizing direct coordination between security forces and the candidates.

There are 582 women candidates, who make up approximately 10 percent of the 5,800 total. 25 percent of seats in the lower house of parliament (Wolesi Jirga) and the provincial councils are reserved for women. Approximately 12 percent of the candidates for the Wolesi Jirga, 328 out of 2707, are women. Proportionally fewer women – only 8% of the candidates – are standing for the provincial councils, where pressure from local commanders and restrictive social norms will probably be greater than the national-level Wolesi Jirga in Kabul. In southern and eastern provinces with high levels of insecurity and resurgent Taliban forces, there are no women candidates for the five reserved seats.

The report describes how women candidates confront numerous challenges to equal participation, including access to information, free movement around the country, few guarantees for physical safety, and lack of financial resources compared to men. The report is available at:

<http://hrw.org/backgrounder/wrd/afghanistan0805/index.htm>.

### Publications on Refugee Women's Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights

The International Centre for Reproductive Health published four new reports in June 2005 on the sexual and reproductive health rights and needs of refugee women in Europe, with recommendations to EU policy makers:<sup>22</sup>

- International Workshop, 17-19 January 2005, Ghent, Belgium (Workshop Proceedings)
- Rights, Policies, Status and Needs (Literature Review)
- National Policies on Sexual and Reproductive Health for Asylum Seekers and Refugees (Survey Analysis)
- Recommendations to Policy Makers Within the European Union For the Promotion of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights of Asylum Seekers and Refugees.

The reports are available free on request, to receive one or more of these publications please send your full address to [icrh@ugent.be](mailto:icrh@ugent.be).

### Haiti: violence against women and children committed with impunity

Countless abuses of women and children in the ongoing crisis in Haiti are highlighted in a new report by Amnesty International entitled '*Haiti: Disarmament delayed, justice denied*'. The current context of generalized violence and lawlessness means that hardly any women report attacks to the police, either because they see it as

<sup>22</sup> Information circulated by [www.asylumpolicy.info/](http://www.asylumpolicy.info/).



pointless or because they fear reprisals. Police officers have also allegedly carried out some attacks. Accurate figures are thus hard to obtain but Amnesty has gathered many testimonies of violence which often follow a similar pattern. The women and girls are usually attacked in their homes or in the home of relatives or friends. The attack is often perpetrated by groups of heavily armed men who burst into the homes and subject their victims to gang rapes and other forms of sexual violence. The men are often masked, concealing their identity. Rapes are often carried out in front of the victim's children or other relatives.

Hardly any legal redress or support is available for women, who often have to stay in their home, the site of the attack, or are made to leave by their husbands who reject them. As the majority of heads of households in Haiti, women also bear the brunt of the increasing insecurity in the country, which has a direct impact on the economic activities in the informal sector in which most women derive their livelihood.

More details as well as background information on the human rights and humanitarian crisis in Haiti are available in the full report, available at [www.amnestyusa.org/countries/haiti/document.do?id=0B27D2F42AF656E78025701C0042CB13](http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/haiti/document.do?id=0B27D2F42AF656E78025701C0042CB13).

### Thousands of girls involved in armed groups in DRC

In a new report entitled '*Forgotten casualties of war*', Save the Children draws attention to the plight of 12,500

girls '*belonging*' to government and non-government forces in the Democratic Republic of Congo.<sup>23</sup> According to the children's rights organisation the girls do not want to take part in an ongoing programme of demobilisation and reintegration because they do not see themselves as '*child soldiers but as "wives" or "camp followers"*'. They also said they '*were seen as having "lost value" to their communities*' because they were assumed to have been sexually abused and carriers of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV. The organisation said that less than two percent of girls in armed groups pass through the Save the Children's reintegration programme.

A full copy of the report can be found at [www.savethechildren.org.uk/temp/scuk/cache/cmsattach/2698\\_GAAF%20report.pdf](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/temp/scuk/cache/cmsattach/2698_GAAF%20report.pdf)

### Police abuse children in Papua New Guinea

The police in Papua New Guinea regularly commit extreme violence against children, according to a report by Human Rights Watch, *Making Their Own Rules; Police Beatings, Rape and Torture of Children in Papua New Guinea*. Although all children are at risk, the violence is particularly targeted against the many street children. Human Rights Watch is calling on the governments of both Papua New Guinea and its neighbour Australia, to act urgently on the problem. Australia is the country's

<sup>23</sup> Integrated Regional Information Network, 'DRC: 12,500 Girls members of armed groups', NGO report says', Nairobi, 25 August 2005 available online at: [www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=48752&SelectRegion=Great\\_Lakes&SelectCountry=DRC](http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=48752&SelectRegion=Great_Lakes&SelectCountry=DRC).

largest foreign donor and much of its aid is directed to the police force. Full report available at <http://hrw.org/reports/2005/png0905/>.

### ***'Bangladesh: Human Rights defenders under attack'***

Killings of people promoting human rights in Bangladesh are on the increase due to the failure of successive governments to bring perpetrators to justice, according to this new report by Amnesty International. The report also highlights the arbitrary arrest, torture and filing of unfounded criminal charges by government agents against those who speak out on human rights abuses in the country. Human rights activists are subjected to death threats, physical attacks and sometimes assassination by individuals or groups usually linked to armed criminal gangs, political parties or mercenary gangs thought to be linked to local politicians. Amnesty International is calling on the Bangladesh authorities to halt the arbitrary arrest and torture of human rights defenders and ensure the rigorous investigation of reports of death threats and attacks against them. See report online at: <http://amnesty-news.c.topica.com/maadTv8abjGrxce3IXWb/>.

### ***'Survival Against the Odds' - A Book of Testimonies from Survivors of the Rwandan Genocide***

In January 2005, Survivors Fund, the only UK based charity with the specific remit of assisting survivors of the Rwandan genocide, received a grant from the Funding Network to record and

disseminate the testimonies of survivors of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. The Memory Healing project focuses on women and girl survivors raped and infected with HIV during the genocide who are now dying of AIDS and for whom time is running out to tell their stories.

Sharing their experiences is an important part of the healing process for survivors helping them, often for the first time, to share their horrific experiences, and allows them to access support services they need such as counselling, testing for HIV, and antiretroviral medication. Remaining in silence, as many are forced to do, perpetuates loneliness, depression and despair. Testimonies are also eye witness accounts of genocide, living wills to the children those dying will leave behind, and serve as memorials to those who were killed and can not tell their own stories.

Survivors Fund has made five of the testimonies into the book *'Survival Against the Odds'* which was launched on 15 July 2005 at a commemoration to mark the end of the period of 100 days of genocide in Rwanda. Present at the event was Linda Melvern journalist and author of *'A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda's Genocide'* and *'Conspiracy to Murder: Planning the Rwandan Genocide'*. The testimony books will be circulated in the UK and Rwanda to reinforce the message of *Never Again* and to raise awareness of the problems survivors face in rebuilding their lives. For a copy of the book, please email Flavia Kirungi at [info@survivors-fund.org.uk](mailto:info@survivors-fund.org.uk).

## Great Ancestors: Women Asserting Rights in Muslim Contexts

Claims are often made that the struggle for women's rights is alien to Muslim cultures and societies. A new publication from Pakistan's Shirkat Gah Women's Resource Centre, and Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML) explodes this myth by documenting the lives and work of women activists who changed women's lives from the 8th to the mid-20th century. '*Great Ancestors: Women Asserting Rights in Muslim Contexts*' (by Farida Shaheed & Aisha L.F. Shaheed, 2005) is available from [www.wluml.org/english/pubsfulltxt.shtml?c](http://www.wluml.org/english/pubsfulltxt.shtml?c).

## Directory of Detention Conditions

The Immigration Advisory Service (IAS) have published this new directory as a resource for practitioners in the field of asylum law who wish to make an argument about a breach of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights. It is also intended for human rights and penal reform groups lobbying for improvements in detention conditions around the world. The directory is a detailed report on detention facilities including police stations, remand centres and facilities for pre-trial detainees, prisons, military detention centres, juvenile detention centres and unofficial detention centres. It covers 16 countries including Algeria, Burma, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe. Topics such as accommodation, methods of restraints and punishment, access to outside contacts, discrimination towards particular groups and inspections and

independent monitoring of the facilities are reviewed for each country.

The report is available for £25 plus £4.95 UK p & p from the IAS at Research & Information Unit, Immigration Advisory Service, County House, 190 Great Dover Street, London SE1 4YB, Tel: 020 7967 1310, Fax: 020 7967 1456, email: [detention@iasuk.org](mailto:detention@iasuk.org). More information at [www.iasuk.org](http://www.iasuk.org).

## new publications

UK

## Refugees and the Development of Africa: The Case of Eritrean Refugees in the UK

This new report on the plight of Eritrean asylum seekers in the UK provides background on the causes of their flight as well as the poverty and difficulties they experience in the UK, calling for all asylum seekers to be allowed to work. The report is based on interviews with over 400 rejected Eritrean asylum seekers and points out that: '*Whatever happens to African asylum seekers in the UK affects the people of Africa. Thus, policies ... such as "Make Poverty History" ... [based on] a commitment to build Africa must be extended to those African nationals who are arriving in the UK as refugees and asylum seekers.*' The report by Petros Tesfagiorgios is available online from the Institute of Race Relations website at: [www.irr.org.uk/pdf/eritrean\\_refugees.pdf](http://www.irr.org.uk/pdf/eritrean_refugees.pdf).

## Young Refugees - A Guide to the Rights and Entitlements of Separated Refugee Children

The second (2005) edition of this guide by Save the Children is now available free. The guide has been comprehensively updated and expanded. It provides information about rights and entitlements, and includes advice to professionals on how to support young people to access them. To request a copy please call Kate or Helen on 0161 434 8337 or email: [K.Kenny@savethechildren.org.uk](mailto:K.Kenny@savethechildren.org.uk).

## online resources

### international

## Freedom House: Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties 2004

Copy of the latest edition published in August 2005 can be found online at: [www.freedomhouse.org/research/index.htm](http://www.freedomhouse.org/research/index.htm).

## Procedural Standards for Refugee Status Determination under UNHCR's Mandate

Released by UNHCR on 1 September 2005, this document can be found in PDF on UNHCR's website: [www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/publ/opendoc.htm?tbl=PUBL&id=4316f0c02](http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/publ/opendoc.htm?tbl=PUBL&id=4316f0c02). See also **Fall in asylum applications continue UNHCR says** See comments and figures for first six months of 2005 online: [www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/news/opendoc.htm?tbl=NEWS&id=431db6ee4](http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/news/opendoc.htm?tbl=NEWS&id=431db6ee4).

## notice board

## Domestic Violence Co-ordinator sought

The Latin American Women's Rights Service seeks to recruit a Domestic Violence Co-ordinator to offer emotional and practical support to Latin American women experiencing domestic violence; undertake education and awareness programmes within the Latin American community; and promote improved services for women and children experiencing domestic abuse (salary: £22,758 per annum 35 hours per week).

The successful candidate will be fluent in English and Spanish; have a minimum of one year's recent experience in providing information and advice in the UK; have a mature understanding of gender issues within the context of minority ethnic communities; and a thorough understanding of the issues facing Latin American women in London. The closing date for application is 30 September 2005 and interviews are expected to be held during the 2nd week of October 2005. To apply, please contact LAWRS on 020 7336 0888.

## CARA: New research position for refugee

CARA (Council for Assisting Refugee Academics) is pleased to invite applications from refugees for the 1st CARA Science Scholar in Residence at the British Library's new centre for scholars and writers. This 9-month part-time position sponsored by CARA will commence 7 November 2005. It is a unique opportunity for a refugee who

lectured or did research in the sciences at a university in their home country to hold an honorary research position at one of the world's leading research libraries.

CARA particularly encourages women to apply for all CARA grants, including this one. For more information, contact Elizabeth Cafferty or Marieke Stroink on 020 7021 0883/4 or at [stroink.cara@lsbu.ac.uk](mailto:stroink.cara@lsbu.ac.uk). Deadline for receipt of completed applications is 5pm on Monday 19 September.

### **New RAGU Courses for 2005/06**

The Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit (RAGU) at London Metropolitan University is running the following courses in 2005/2006:

- Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning is a 4-month programme that aims to fast track refugee professionals into employment and higher education and focuses on cultural re-orientation and personal development.
- Management for Working in Communities (masters level module).
- Routes into Employment in Schools for Refugees: The programme is aimed at providing a first step towards employment for those interested in pursuing a career in education and developing skills for supporting refugee pupils in school.

For more information including course dates, or to register please contact Justin on 020 7133 2344 or check RAGU's website: [www.londonmet.ac.uk/ragu](http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/ragu). (Source: [refed@yahoogroups.com](mailto:refed@yahoogroups.com)).



Produced by RWRP (for more information on this issue, please contact Sophia Ceneda)  
Asylum Aid, 28 Commercial street  
London E1 6LS Tel: 020 7377 5123  
Fax: 020 7247 7789  
Email: [sophiac@asylumaid.org.uk](mailto:sophiac@asylumaid.org.uk)  
Website: [www.asylumaid.org.uk](http://www.asylumaid.org.uk)

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(or more) in this year as we will reclaim on your donation

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