

# Women's ASYLUM NEWS

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**Refugee Women's Resource Project - Asylum Aid - Issue 33 June 2003**

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## **Sexual abuse of refugee women and girls in UNHCR refugee camps: Still a 'real problem', says new report**

The report released in May 2003 by the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of the Congress in the United States, reveals that millions of women and children end up in refugee camps administered by the UNHCR where sexual abuse remains a 'real problem' decades after the issues were first raised.

*'Protecting Refugee Women and Girls Remains a Significant Challenge'* is based on fieldwork in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Thailand, and extensive interviews with refugee women and girls, refugee leaders and camp management. In addition, the study was based on meetings with US and UN officials, as well as relief agencies and non-governmental organizations at the headquarter, regional and country levels. And it included the review of dozens of policy, program and budgetary documents produced by various official bodies such as the Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration and the Bureau for International Organisations.

Despite the development of best practice guidelines by UNHCR and efforts to implement gender-based violence initiatives, it says that women and girls in refugee camps remain 'extremely

*vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse of power due to (1) the high level of poverty among refugees, (2) limited monitoring of camp situations by international relief workers, and (3) cultural attitudes on the part of some relief workers and refugee-led camp management'.<sup>1</sup> Upon arrival at a refugee or displacement camp, women and girls are vulnerable to violence from the local community, combatants who use the camp as a rest base, other refugees but also, as recently highlighted by the allegations of sexual abuse in Kenya and West Africa, relief workers.*

Heavy budget cuts due to shortfall in contributions from international donors have directly resulted in a reduction of gender-based protection programs. In addition, UNHCR's system of staff assignments and rotations (which are voluntary) often result in vacancies at key protection posts (especially in high-risk areas) not being fulfilled. In one particular camp, in Tanzania, it was found that UNHCR had only one junior officer responsible for the physical protection needs of 155,000 refugees in 5 camps.

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<sup>1</sup> United States General Accounting Office, *'Humanitarian Assistance, Protecting Refugee Women and Girls Remains a Significant Challenge'*, May 2003 (Re: GAO-03-663).

Lack of training on protection concepts and techniques was found to be another major shortcoming of the UNHCR's planning strategy in refugee camps. It was found that most UNHCR staff and staff within non-governmental organisations working in partnership with UNHCR in camps had not received any practical training on how to identify and address sexual violence cases.

The report scrutinises the level of protection efforts achieved by UNHCR based on the agency's own commitments established in 2002 following a UNHCR sponsored consultation process which focused on issues of protection and vulnerability. The High Commissioner set five commitments to improve protection and assistance to refugee women and girls in refugee camps:

- the development of comprehensive country-level strategies and programs to address sexual and gender-based violence;
- the guarantee of direct and indirect management and distribution of food and non-food items by refugee women;
- the guarantee that 50 percent of refugee camp management representatives would be women;
- the systematic individual registration of all refugee women and attribution of relevant documentation to ensure their freedom of movement, security and independence vis-à-vis male relatives;
- the provision of sanitary materials in all UNHCR assistance programs.

Fieldwork showed that sexual and gender-based violence programs were successfully implemented in various camps and women were generally represented in food distribution programs. However, the involvement of women in camp leadership positions varied: In some cases (e.g. DRC and Thailand) there were difficulties in guaranteeing women's participation due to

cultural barriers in traditionally patriarchal societies.

According to observation in Sierra Leone and Tanzania but also UNHCR's own reports, it was found that '*UNHCR is generally not individually registering women' and continues to designate males as head of household*'. The consistent distribution of sanitary materials, in terms of quantity, quality, method and frequency, was another shortcoming revealed by the fieldwork research. UNHCR program documents revealed that protection activities were cut due to budgetary constraints: '*For example, the Refugee Women's Unit cut field missions that were to support refugee women's registration and documentation, as well as food distribution and camp management*'.

Another worrying finding is the fact that the allocation of UNHCR staff is not based on the actual protection requirement of refugees but on '*available resources and broad operational plans*', according to UNHCR's own human resource officials: the result is that '*UNHCR's distribution of protection posts is not consistent with the risk level and the caseload of the refugee settings*'. The figures also highlight regional discrepancies that need to be addressed. An illustration of this is the fact that 60 percent of protection posts in low-risk countries were found in Europe despite the fact that they served less than 30 percent of the population at this level and most of their work related to legal issues rather than physical protection.

Whatever the reasons behind the lack of protection activities, the report underlines the fact that despite being amongst the most vulnerable groups in refugee camps, the protection of millions of women and girls (women and children are estimated to represent 80% of the refugee population

worldwide) is still not seen as a priority in the context of limited financial resources. This means that in such situation, the needs for assistance in terms of food, shelter and other essential services including legal issues in certain parts of the world, might overrule the needs for physical protection for women and children in high-risk areas.

The GAO's core recommendations include the reform of UNHCR's staffing system; the expansion of protection training; the development of protection partnering and the continuous focus on combating sexual exploitation of women and girls. Worryingly, the UNHCR disagrees with the idea that its staffing system needs reforming, even though it was found that a shortage of staff in high-risk areas (staff were found less likely to voluntarily assign themselves to such posts) contributes to the lack of protection activities available at country levels. For a copy of the report, visit: [www.gao.gov/new.items/d03663.pdf](http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d03663.pdf)

**Safety of women also a major concern in the context of UK proposals to set up processing centres** As far as women and children asylum seekers are concerned, the GAO report's findings echo grave concerns about the recent UK proposals to set up transit processing centres at the EU borders to handle asylum claims. RWRP highlighted the implications of such proposals for the safety of women and children asylum seekers in its position paper published in WAN No. 39 (Feb 2003): [Government proposal to create regional UN 'protection areas' represents a great threat to women and other asylum seekers' safety](#). This was complemented in May by Asylum Aid's position paper on Government's Proposals on Protection Zones which can be found at:

[www.asylumaid.org.uk/Press%20statement/s/zones\\_of\\_protection\\_0503.htm](http://www.asylumaid.org.uk/Press%20statement/s/zones_of_protection_0503.htm).

Our concerns are shared by other refugees and human rights organisations. '**Unsafe Havens: UK Proposals for Regional Management of Asylum and Transit Processing Centres for Refugees**', the Refugee Council's new report, highlights the safety of women as a major concern and warns the government that the proposals could provide organised crime with a pool of vulnerable women to exploit: An increased number of illegal entrants to the UK will be forced to live underground thus increasing the pool of women vulnerable to trafficking.

Similar concerns were raised by Amnesty International in a 40-page report '**Unlawful and Unworkable: extra-territorial processing of asylum claims**' (18 June) which says the plans to set up transit processing centres outside the EU to handle asylum claims are morally flawed, unlawful and unworkable and warned of asylum being driven underground. At the same time, the international system of refugee protection could be severely undermined (a copy can be found at: [www.amnesty-eu.org/1/Text\\_of\\_document\\_UK-EU-UNHCR\\_Unlawful\\_and\\_Unworkable.doc](http://www.amnesty-eu.org/1/Text_of_document_UK-EU-UNHCR_Unlawful_and_Unworkable.doc))

In a new briefing paper, '**An Unjust "Vision" for Europe's Refugees**' Human Rights Watch argues that the UK proposal to send asylum seekers to processing centres abroad is an effort to dodge responsibilities under the 1951 Refugee Convention and other human rights treaties. The proposal, expected to be rejected by the European Council on 20 June, undermines the fundamental right to seek asylum, and the right to be protected against return to an unsafe place. The

proposal would also violate the Refugee Convention by penalizing refugees for their mode of entering the United Kingdom.

Asylum seekers and refugees will be at risk of further human rights violations if sent to the countries proposed for processing asylum claims under the UK plan. Police forces in all of the named countries except Croatia (i.e. Albania, Croatia, Iran, Morocco, Somalia, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine) have been repeatedly accused of serious misconduct, sometimes directly targeting refugees, such as returns to unsafe places, arbitrary arrests, detention and even arbitrary killings and torture of non-nationals. HRW says the UK and other governments could still be complicit for harm experienced by persons transferred to processing centres. See: <http://hrw.org/backgrounder/refugees/uk/>.

## Quarterly Update On RWRP's Activities

Welcome to a new section in our bulletin which will appear on a quarterly basis so that we can inform our readers and partners about our activities in the last few months but also the activities planned in the forthcoming weeks and months.

● **Since it was established in 2000, the RWRP has specialised in gender-based asylum and human rights casework, prioritising those women who are the most vulnerable, the most in need of representation, and the least likely to find it elsewhere. The kinds of cases we take on are varied and complex and raise crucial questions about exactly what should be understood to constitute “persecution” and “inhuman and degrading treatment”. Because of this they are also often hard to**

win, at least at the initial decision-making stage.

The women who come to us for help may have experienced domestic violence, - forced marriage, FGM (female genital mutilation), the threat of honour killing or stoning for having committed adultery (or having otherwise trespassed their society's rules of conduct for women), and rape or sexual assault by state or non-state agents.

We also work increasingly with victims of trafficking (mainly women who have been trafficked into prostitution or domestic slavery), with asylum-seeking women who are HIV+, and with women in detention.

Some women come to us soon after arriving in the UK for advice on making their initial asylum or human rights claim. Far more often, however, we find that a woman coming to us for help will already have been here for some time. She may previously have had an asylum or human rights claim but been misadvised or poorly represented by agencies that were inexperienced in dealing with gender-based claims. Or she may have come to the UK with a husband or partner as a dependant on his claim, not realising and never being told that in fact she had the right to make a claim in her own right. In the case of a trafficking victim, she may have been unable to escape her situation until after months or years here. For all kinds of reasons, including fear, shame, isolation, and lack of information, these women may never before have disclosed the persecution or ill-treatment they have experienced, or even recognised it themselves as persecution or ill-treatment.

The nature of the work we do means that effective representation is intensive, painstaking and time-consuming. This inevitably means that our capacity to take on new cases, whether at initial application



or appeal, is limited. However, we can also help in a number of other ways. We can provide advice through the Asylum Aid advice line (tel: 020 7377 5123, Mon-Tue 2-4:30 and Thur-Fri 10-12:30). If a woman needs more advice or the case is more difficult than can be discussed on the phone, we will wherever possible arrange a one-off advice appointment, at which an experienced advisor can assess her case, discuss the available options, and, if appropriate, make a further referral. We can provide female interpreters where necessary for both phone and face-to-face advice. We also regularly offer group and individual advice sessions to women in detention, and advise and support other organisations working on gender-related cases.

● **In terms of outreach and asylum support advice and casework, we have**

continued to have a steady stream of referrals. As usual, the cases reveal a worrying level of problems with NASS support. Recent cases have included a woman with a newly born baby who has had her support cut off by NASS despite several letters which notified NASS of the birth. Another case involved a woman with a very young child who left her dispersal accommodation after experiencing rape and racial harassment. NASS refused to allow her into emergency accommodation in London and insisted that she should return to the dispersal area. They have now issued her with emergency support in London and are reconsidering their decision.

There has been a flurry of referrals involving clearly inappropriate decisions to disperse women. We are currently doing battle with NASS over a woman who has a clear need for secure refuge accommodation. NASS tried to disperse

the woman to a 'normal' dispersal address but are reconsidering after our representations to them. If NASS try to disperse her again to unsuitable accommodation, we will refer the case for a possible Judicial Review of their decision.

Negative decisions on Section 55 (whether someone has claimed asylum as soon as reasonably practicable) have begun to increase. Consequently, there are increasing numbers of single asylum seekers who are being left with no recourse to public funds. RWRP has learned that some (if not all) of the Section 55 decision letters that have been issued contain stock words and phrases and are very formulaic. Advisors should make sure that people obtain a copy of their screening notes when they claim asylum in-country. These notes may be crucial in challenging a later refusal of NASS support under Section 55.

**Besides casework, we have also been extremely busy this year with a number of training sessions, workshops and presentations.**

● **RWRP provides sessions on gender awareness for immigration advisors,** caseworkers and solicitors on gender relating to both international Conventions and asylum procedures and practice which seriously disadvantage women asylum seekers. These sessions are based on casework experiences at the project which have been explored in RWRP's recent report: '*Women Asylum Seekers in the UK: A gender perspective*', available on our website.

The sessions also highlight the Refugee Women's Legal Group (RWLG) Gender Guidelines and the Immigration Appellate Authority gender guidelines which appear to be routinely ignored by decision makers

at initial decision making stage through to appeal. This is despite the Home Office declared commitment to introduce Gender Guidelines into initial decision- making and follows a consultation process with RWLG in which RWRP took part. To date the negotiated gender guidelines remain under discussion at the Home Office.

Gender awareness training, workshops and awareness sessions are available to other groups such as refugee women's groups, visitor's groups etc and usually form a part of every RWRP session. And RWRP has facilitated workshops for immigration detention visitor's groups to help them to signpost and refer their clients more effectively.

● **RWRP is also a member of the GLA Domestic Violence Forum and**

specialises in assisting women subjected to domestic violence to seek protection through the asylum process (see also our series on '*Refugee Women and Domestic Violence: Country Studies*' available from our website). The project offers domestic violence workshops or awareness sessions and presentations to non refugee/asylum specialists to flag up the protection rights of asylum seeking women who are often dependant on their husband's claim. This is aimed to facilitate signposting and effective referrals. A recent session for Bexley Council workers was particularly effective. RWRP has also been invited to make a presentation and run workshops for the Women's Aid National Conference in July.

● **Presentations and Workshops on trafficking over the past few months have taken many different forms.**

This includes being represented on a panel discussion at the Barbican showing of *Lilya4ever*; two workshops for the Soroptomists Conference (after which they adopted Trafficking as one of their national campaign issues); and workshops and

presentations for refugee groups including the Refugee Women's Association during Refugee Week.

Asylum Aid is currently preparing a pilot training session for legal caseworkers on Trafficking which will include an awareness session designed to assist caseworkers identify trafficking victims and a legal session to discuss best practice at each stage of the asylum process. RWRP has also piloted an immigration overview workshop session with a street project working with those involved in the sex trade. The project hopes to reach out to other similar projects with a view to taking this training to them. The workshop includes a Joint Working interactive session during which RWRP were able to draw up an action plan for joint working with the project to identify and assist victims of trafficking.

**In addition to advocacy and training, we are expanding and improving our resources with the continuous development of our library and website.**

● **In fact, RWRP is preparing to launch its library and resources for public use.**

The library will be open to asylum seeking and refugee women, and voluntary sector or women's organisations working with women asylum seekers. This service is offered as part of RWRP's commitment to empowering women and to further promote the need for greater acknowledgment of gender related persecution.

RWRP have been collating a library of resources specific to the needs and interests of women asylum seekers and refugees, including a strong collection of materials on gender specific country information and gender persecution. We have a wide range of books, journals, reports, policy papers and good practice

guides which include the work of leading academics, international human rights organisations as well as local country of origin NGO's. RWRP has recently incorporated Positively Women's resources on HIV and refugee women and continues to build its collection of resources on Trafficking and Domestic Violence.

With over 1000 documents, including all RWRP's own publications, the library creates the opportunity for women to undertake research to support their asylum claims in a friendly and supportive environment. In addition it offers others resources to aid understanding of cultural needs and experiences and the damaging affects of gender persecution, as well as access to resources on asylum support.

The library will offer supervised sessions, with RWRP staff on hand to help with searches and provide advice on sources of information. Internet access will also be available. We look forward to welcoming you at the library launch. The launch date will be advertised shortly in WAN and on our website [www.asylumaid.org.uk](http://www.asylumaid.org.uk). Watch this space!

### ● RWRP resources are also available from Asylum Aid's website. In response

to feedback RWRP will be improving its section of this site, highlighting issues of concern to refugee women in the UK. Materials available will range from policy documents, gender guidelines, supplementary materials from workshops and training given by RWRP and how to seek advice from RWRP caseworkers. The site will soon feature pages devoted to key issues such as Domestic Violence, Trafficking and HIV & Aids. All RWRP publications will continue to be published on the site and are free to view or download. The RWRP library catalogue

will be available to search from our website.

We are keen to receive feedback on the website, please make use of the feedback form our home page!

● **On the research front, after the publication of our report on 'Women asylum seekers in the UK', and two new editions of the series 'Refugee women and Domestic Violence: Country Studies', we are now concentrating on distributing the reports and disseminating the findings (for downloading from the web or ordering a copy, please visit [www.asylumaid.org.uk](http://www.asylumaid.org.uk) and click on 'Publications').**

We already made a presentation of our report on 'Women asylum seekers in the UK' at the Refugee Legal Centre which was very well received; and we will be speaking about researching refugee women's issues at a Conference on refugee experiences in Sussex 'Sanctuary by the Sea', on Saturday 21 June in Brighton.

From our point of view, the purpose of these presentations is to get feedback from organisations and individuals working with women asylum seekers on further research in order to best promote the rights of women asylum seekers. Many ideas were suggested including some research on women in detention, monitoring Home Office practice in terms of interview sessions with female asylum seekers, or monitoring court sessions including practical arrangements for women with children.

We have also just produced a new leaflet on '7 myths and facts about women asylum seekers' which we distributed for the first time during Refugee Week. The leaflet is also available from our website at

[www.asylumaid.org.uk](http://www.asylumaid.org.uk). Please feel free to print and distribute as many copies as needed.

● **Campaigning and Lobbying is a major part of our work too. RWRP were**

members of the RWLG consultation team invited by the Home Office to negotiate gender guidelines for initial decision-making. The guidelines include recognition of the fact by decision makers that gender persecution such as rape or sexual abuse is often disclosed late and should not automatically be treated as a credibility issue; that all women should be automatically interviewed by the Home Office to ensure they have an opportunity to make their own asylum claim where appropriate; that women interviews and interpreters should be provided on request; and many other gender related issues mainly along the same lines as the original RWLG guidelines. Negotiations have been ongoing for over a year now. In the last few months UNHCR have made submissions on the document and these are currently being considered by the Home Office. The guidelines then have to go before the Minister for approval.

As the current RWLG gender guidelines and IAA gender guidelines are routinely ignored by decision makers RWRP will monitor and campaign for the guidelines to be routinely implemented and will offer workshops for legal caseworkers on gender.

● **RWRP continue to campaign and lobby for the effective protection of**

trafficking victims in the UK through this bulletin (see WAN 32, May 2003); through meetings and correspondence with Beverley Hughes, Home Office Minister; through our participation in the Anti-Slavery Counter Trafficking Group; lobbying on

new legislation such as the Sexual Offences Bill to include the UN definition of trafficking and through joint working with organisations such as Eaves Housing to secure safe accommodation for all trafficking victims.

The campaign includes lobbying the government to institute measures in the EU Framework decision such as a reflection period of three months (where they will be given leave to remain in the UK) to empower them to make informed choices about their future.

RWRP continues to represent individual trafficking victims in their Asylum and Human Rights applications with a view to securing indefinite leave in the UK where they are likely to be re-trafficked or fear persecution at the hands of their traffickers, family members, communities and/or the state on return to their country of origin.

● **RWRP also supports Southall Black Sister's campaign for a Domestic**

Violence Concession which protects victims of domestic violence from who have no access to public funds to access effective protection in the UK. RWRP also lobbies for domestic violence campaigns and initiatives to be translated into different languages and for measures to be taken by each local authority domestic violence unit to try and reach asylum seeking women.

● **In addition, RWRP actively lobbies and campaigns against measures taken by**

the government which disproportionately affect women such as the White List of countries processed through Oakington without a right of in country of appeal. The White List includes many countries which produce the majority of trafficking victims who are unlikely to disclose information which will identify them as trafficking



victims within the confines of a detention centre such as Oakington and/or within such a short period of time.

Women generally, who often make late disclosure of gender related violence, are disadvantaged by the White List and RWRP maintain that the UK are failing in their obligations to asylum seekers under this procedure. Further women who are subjected to domestic violence may be detained with their abusive partners/ husbands at Oakington making it practically impossible for them to safely disclose this abuse.

If you would like to help with any of the above-mentioned issues, do not hesitate to contact us (see back page for full details). Asylum Aid campaigns against all measures that curtail the rights of asylum seekers and, with Asylum Aid, RWRP's role is to highlight the fact that women are disproportionately affected by many of the government's new measures.

## UK News

**Two Thai Sisters jailed for exploiting hundreds of Thai women in prostitution racket<sup>2</sup>** The two sisters were jailed on 3<sup>rd</sup> June for running a huge prostitution ring which brought hundreds of women to Britain. One was sentenced to five years' imprisonment and the other to three and a half years. Their victims were reported to be treated like "*animals*" in a network of 15 brothels in London as they were forced to accept contracts to prostitute themselves until they had paid off the £44,000 "*fee*" requested to allow them to go free or work

<sup>2</sup> Edited from Cahal Milmo, 'Two Sisters jailed for exploiting hundreds of Thai women in prostitution racket', *The Independent*, 4 June 2003, at [www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk).

for themselves. Whilst many women had already worked in the sex industry in Thailand, others were duped into the work with promises of jobs as cleaners or domestic servants; others were threatened with violence against their families in Thailand if they did not comply.

The judge said: '*It is clear that each of the girls you controlled had to perform sexual acts with literally hundreds of men before they were allowed to share in the money their prostitution produced... These obligations were reinforced by threats that if they did not comply then their families in Thailand would suffer. These were girls in a foreign land, totally dependent on you and you used them as animals.*' The two sisters were keen on advertising the young age of their victims. A supermarket worker, a refugee from Sri Lanka and partner of one of the sisters, was also jailed for two years for living off immoral earnings.

**Related information:** Campaign on Trafficking and the current legislation/protection gaps in the UK, full details in WAN issue No. 31, April 2003.

**Survey sheds new light on incidence of rape amongst refugees and asylum seekers<sup>3</sup>** A survey conducted by Community Care and based on in-depth interviews with 150 professionals working closely with asylum seekers (in local authorities, voluntary organisations, the National Health Service, registered social landlords and private sector organisations), reveals that nearly a third of them have encountered women asylum seekers pregnant as a result of rape. A similar proportion has dealt with clients who were HIV positive.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Community Care, '*Professionals say services for asylum seekers are falling*', 29 May 2003, at [www.communitycare.co.uk/](http://www.communitycare.co.uk/)

Over 9 in 10 have worked with asylum seekers with mental health problems such as depression, anxiety and panic attacks; and with asylum seekers who were frightened and/or lonely. 70% have encountered people they suspected had experienced torture and the majority had come across children whose parents had disappeared or been killed in conflicts. The survey also reveals that 87% believe the services on offer are failing refugees and asylum seekers. Two-thirds say they had not received enough specific training on their needs and 9 in 10 indicated more help was needed with language and translation. Three-quarters thought that the use of accommodation centres was wrong (comparing them to 'prisons' and 'ghettos') and 92 thought that the detention of children should stop immediately.

A majority agreed with the statement that '*the way asylum seekers are treated by the British authorities is racist*' and 91% said that '*national politicians should be doing more to encourage understanding of asylum seekers and refugees*'.

### **MPs counter attack Government's secret plan to screen asylum seekers for infectious diseases<sup>4</sup>**

MPs are so outraged by a government inquiry into the impact of immigration on Britain's public health and the Government's refusal to consult refugee groups or health experts in the process that they decided to launch their own inquiry.

The government inquiry, commissioned by the Home Office and the Department of Health, and carried out by the Cabinet Office, has raised ferocious criticism from

<sup>4</sup> Edited from Sophie Goodwill and Jo Dillon, 'Secret plan to screen refugees for diseases', *The Independent on Sunday*, 25 May 2003 at [www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk).

MPs and human rights groups. The Government is being accused of secretly planning to screen all immigrants for infectious diseases in response to fears that rising rates of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and Aids are being brought to this country by immigrants. The *Independent on Sunday* reports that a pilot scheme was set up in Ashford, Kent, in June 2002 to test asylum-seekers for TB, but so far not one positive result has been found. It reports that some medical experts believe that refugees develop infectious diseases in the UK, where they tend to live in poor and overcrowded conditions.

A senior Home Office source confirmed that new screening policies may emerge once the results of the Cabinet Office report, expected to be available this summer, have been evaluated.

A parallel parliamentary inquiry is the All-Parliamentary Group on Aids. Evidence is has been collected from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, medical experts and NGOs. RWRP was invited to provide evidence last month on whether a detention centre is in any case appropriate for somebody who is HIV+.

### **Home Office expands White List to include another 7 countries<sup>5</sup>**

The countries on the list are assume to be safe and now include (from Tuesday 17th June 2003): Brazil, Ecuador, Bolivia, South Africa, Ukraine, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh - anyone from any of these countries will be fast-tracked through Oakington Reception Centre. Asylum applicants from these countries will have no right of appeal in the UK as their claims are refused and

<sup>5</sup> Source: [www.ncadc.org](http://www.ncadc.org). Since 7 October 2002, the list also includes: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia; since 6 February 2003 and Albania, Bulgaria, Jamaica, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania and Serbia + Montenegro (previously the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia).

certified as 'clearly unfounded'. The total number of countries deemed 'safe' by the Home Office amounts to 24.

## UK Events/Projects

**Domestic Abuse: Needs of Black Minority Ethnic Women, their Children and Young People, City Chambers, Edinburgh** The conference on Thursday 26 June will consist of speakers from various backgrounds and keynote speakers include: Hannana Siddiqi, Joint Co-ordinator, South Hall Black sisters, Claire Houghton, National Children's Worker, Scottish Women's Aid. For further details please contact Pushpa or Giri at Shakti Women's Aid on 0131 475 2399

**Protect the Refugee Child** is a Conference on refugee children and refugee integration policy organised by Birmingham Refugee Children & Youth New Hope Partnership (NHP)<sup>6</sup> on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2003 from 9am until 3pm in Birmingham. The aims of the conference are to: ■ bring voluntary and statutory organisations together to discuss the current major issues that relate to refugee children (age 0-12) and youth (age 13-25); ■ produce a good and sustainable guide for statutory and voluntary organisations providing services to unaccompanied/accompanied refugee children and youth; ■ disseminate information on services for refugee children and youth provided by the voluntary and statutory organisations.

Besides opportunities for networking, examples of good practice will be shared and discussed during interactive

<sup>6</sup> Birmingham Refugee Children & Youth New Hope Partnership (NHP), 101 Villa Road, Handsworth, Birmingham B191NH  
Tele/fax: 0121-5516040. Email: [newhope@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:newhope@tiscali.co.uk).

workshops on the key service areas affecting refugee children and youths. Venue: South Aston Community Association Centre, 2 Tower Road, Aston, Birmingham, B6 5BN. To find out more, please contact Roy Bartholomew on 0121 244 7365 or 0121 244 0011 or 07791 782 580.

**Human Rights: Limits and Extension** is a one-day (free and open to all) conference organised by the School of Law, Governance and International Relations London Metropolitan University on 9th July 2003 9:30-18:00 at Henry Thomas Room, LMU, North Campus, Tower Building, Holloway Road, London, N7. Speakers will include academics from various Universities as well as the Centre for Research in Human Rights, Roehampton Institute, the Sierra Leone Women's Forum and Institute for Commonwealth Studies. Topics will include: the Political Content of Human Rights; Human Rights: Foundations and Limits and Social Rights as Human Rights.

**New Library Services for asylum seekers and refugees.** The London Libraries Development Agency has been awarded £119,000 by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation<sup>7</sup> to develop services for refugees and asylum seekers in five London boroughs. This project will build on work already undertaken in the London Borough of Merton to develop services in Brent, Camden, Enfield, Merton and Newham. The Project will identify different refugee and asylum seeker communities in each borough and will work with them to

<sup>7</sup> The Paul Hamlyn Foundation focuses its support on Arts and Education projects in the UK. The Foundation has a strong interest in improving access to books, reading and library services, for young people and others from excluded communities. This is the primary focus of The Reading and Libraries Challenge Fund, launched in 2003.

provide access to services such as information about health, education and employment. For further information contact Fiona O'Brien at the London Libraries Development Agency, 35 St Martin's Street, London WC2H 7HP. Tel: 0207 641 5266 or email: [fiona.obrien@llda.org.uk](mailto:fiona.obrien@llda.org.uk).

**Three exciting Theatre Productions!**  
**I have before Me a Remarkable Document Given to Me By a Young Lady from Rwanda** is playing at the Finborough Theatre from 17 June to 12 July.

**A Woman's place** is a theatre production devised and performed by women living in London as political refugees. On 8 July, 7.30pm at Oh Art! (Oxford House) in Bethnal Green (call 020 7739 9001 for tickets) and 17 & 18 July at 8.00pm at Hoxton Hall (call 020 7739 5431).

**Sense of Belonging, the tale of Ikpiko** is a play about an inquiry on the happenstance of female circumcision in mid-western Nigeria. At the Arcola Theatre, from 8 July (for tickets, call 020 7503 1646).

## International News

**Norway to change asylum regulations to help cases of gender-related or sexual orientation persecution** The *Norway Post* reported in May this year that Municipal Minister Erna Solberg announced that *'it is going to be easier for refugees who are exposed to gender-based persecution to obtain asylum in Norway'*.<sup>8</sup> This follows a commitment

announced in June 2002 by State Secretary Kristin Ørmen Johnsen to elaborate further on the *'membership of a particular social group'* ground when new immigration legislation is to be proposed to Parliament by the end of 2003.<sup>9</sup>

The Secretary of State noted that there has been *'precedence for the inclusion of homosexuals and women who transgress social norms in a society'* in Norwegian asylum practice and refugee have been granted asylum because they fear gender-based persecution according to existing 1998 guidelines on refugee criteria. But the Ministry would like to further strengthen the protection for persecuted women in the legislation. Johnsen added: *'We would like to update the Norwegian legislation in accordance with recommendations from UNHCR regarding a gender sensitive application of the Convention'*. According to Johnsen, the Ministry considers that *'this means that gender may inform the assessment under race, religion, nationality, social group or political opinion. The enumerated grounds should be properly interpreted to encompass gender-related persecution claims, and include the experiences of women as asylum seekers'*.

Norwegian practice considers persecution by third parties to fall within the Geneva Convention (i.e. serious harm at the hands of a force that the State cannot or will not control). The only situation where a fear of persecution will not be considered to exist is where meaningful national protection is available.

**Related Information** In 2000, the Irish Refugee Act 1996 was amended to include, *inter alia*, a progressive feature according to which *'membership of a social*

<sup>8</sup> Source: The Norway Post, 'Asylum regulations to be changed', 19 May 2003.

<sup>9</sup> State Secretary Kristin Ørmen Johnsen, 'The new draft regulation in Norway', presentation at UNCHR workshop at Oslo Plaza, 18th of June 2002.



group' includes 'membership of a group of persons whose defining characteristic is their belonging to the female or the male sex or having a particular sexual orientation'.

### UN Tribunal denies rape victims

**justice** The Coalition on Women's Human Rights in Conflict Situations declared that Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda 'does not care' about the thousands of Rwanda rape victims, many of whom are currently dying of AIDS.

Rights and Democracy, coordinator of the Coalition's work and who has been monitoring the prosecution of sex crimes at the ICTR, reports: 'During Del Ponte's four year tenure, there has been a decline in the number of new indictments that contain sexual violence charges, as well as a lack of commitment to adequately develop the evidence in cases where rape charges were previously brought. (...) Some cases are moving forward without rape charges, even where the prosecutor is in possession of adequate evidence'.<sup>10</sup>

### Underage prostitution growing in

**Armenia**<sup>11</sup> Child prostitution is growing in Armenia as more young people end up homeless according to an article published by the Institute for War and Peace Reporting. Yet Mikael Danielian, head of the Armenian Helsinki Group, says the issue remain a taboo and is never talked about.

The report refers to the case of a young woman who was gang-raped two years

ago whilst begging in a park in the capital Yerevan with her mother and brother. Her mother chose 'not to go to the police, fearing that as a beggar, she would only get into more trouble. Instead, she actively encouraged her daughter to become a prostitute ... For Armenians, who traditionally have strong family values, it is particularly shocking to discover that some mothers are actually forcing their daughters onto the streets'. Another young woman of 15 was sold by her mother for 1,500 dollars in cash to a man who took her abroad with him before abandoning her in Turkey. She made her way back to Armenia by working as a prostitute.

According to the article, the number of children who live on the streets of Armenia has sharply risen because of a 'rocketing divorce rate and falling standards of living. Child vagrancy still ranks very low on the government's list of priorities and there are very few agencies dealing with the problem'. At the same time, the authorities do rarely intervene unless the children are involved in theft or violence. The children 'rarely have any cash worth extorting'. Armine Hovhanesian, head of the Orran (Cradle) help centre which focuses particularly on street children with psychological problems, says that the children 'feel utterly despised by society'.

### Uzbek Men evade prosecution for violence against women

According to the Institute of War and Peace Reporting,<sup>12</sup> very few Uzbek women victims of domestic violence and workplace violence make statement against their abuser in a traditional society where women are confined to a subservient role and where sexual purity of women and values of honour over justice. Women are scared about their family's honour and fear

<sup>10</sup> Libertas, , Spring 2003, Volume 12, Number 4, p.3.

<sup>11</sup> Source: edited from IWPR'S CAUCASUS REPORTING SERVICE, No. 182, June 5, 2003, 'Child prostitution Taboo in Armenia'.

<sup>12</sup> Source: Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Reporting Central Asia no. 211, 'Uzbek women suffer in silence'.

disgrace, divorce and destitution if they come forward. Instead many chose to attempt to commit suicide: *'Every year, doctors in Samarkand operate on around 40 women with burns received in such acts. Eighty per cent of them cannot be saved'*. Survivors fear to talk about the reason they tried to commit suicide and according to Bibisora Oripova, a surgeon with experience of treating burn victims, *'If a woman tells the truth, her relatives take revenge on her.'*

Domestic violence is not a new phenomenon in Uzbekistan but is reported to have increased with the downturn of the economy: many men are now out of work and turn to alcoholism and drugs, which has aggravated the problem. In parallel, many women have only recently entered the workplace in order to feed their families where labour rights are *'grossly violated'* whilst women are subjected to further abuse. According to a local representative of the Independent Organisation for Human Rights in Uzbekistan: *'Employers hire women, rape them, treating them as if they had no rights. Even underage girls are raped.'*

Human Rights Activists say the lack of intervention by the authorities perpetuates the cycle of violence. Police are said to be reluctant to conduct inquiries even in the most extreme cases of abuse, either to *'preserve their region's public image'* or due to pressure from family: cases end up being classified as accidents.

**EU Funding for treatment of torture victims cut by a third** The decision to cut funding of existing services and concentrate on funding activities which aim to prevent torture threatens specialist services in about 30 rehabilitation centres around the world.

At a time when Europe is increasing resources and implementing legislation that restricts refugee rights to access protection within its border, the EU decision raises concerns that victims of torture are becoming a low priority. Campaigners believe that the funding cut from 12m Euro in 2001 to 8m in 2002 and 2003 reflects a reluctance to fund groups working with refugees and asylum seekers.

The EU contends that a decision was taken to shift resources to trying to prevent torture in the first place but this is done at the expense of victims. Rehabilitation centres for victims of torture, such as the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture in the UK (MF), offer medical, psychotherapeutic, legal and practical assistance to clients. The sharp cut in funding will greatly affect the extent to which such services can be provided. As MF's Director of Public Affairs, Sherman Carroll, declared: *'torture remains as prevalent today as ever. (...) It is shirt-sighted that the EU is not increasing its money for prevention rather than moving it from rehabilitation'*.

34 groups operating worldwide issued a statement in which they say: *'These services have been established with great difficulty, and often operate in the face of government resistance, and are unlikely ever to be re-established if they are now to close due to lack of funding. There are few alternative sources of funding apart from the limited support that may be obtained from the UN. Therefore this change of policy by the EU Commission has seriously endangered these initiatives, which endeavour to repair the consequences of gross human rights violations'*.

**New U.S. State Department Trafficking Report ignores**

**government practices that penalise victims of trafficking** According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), the report fails to '*meaningfully evaluate government's efforts to combat trafficking in persons ...[whilst it] gives undue credit for minimal efforts and ignores government practices such as summary deportation and incarceration which effectively punish trafficking victims*'.<sup>13</sup>

In compliance with the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act 2000 (USA), the report reviews the performance of 116 countries which are classified in one of three categories, according to their performance in meeting the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking set by the legislation. Countries in Tier 1 are deemed to be in compliance, Tier 2 countries are not, but are thought to be making significant efforts and Tier 3 fail to comply and to make any efforts to combat the trade.

Human Rights Watch criticises the way countries are classified because '*The State Department consistently credits countries for their efforts to combat trafficking even when they have not passed legislation specifically criminalizing all forms of forced labor as trafficking, or when they have failed to sign or ratify the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking supplementing the U.N. Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, the single most authoritative international human rights instrument on trafficking. Another consistent shortcoming is that Tier 2, where seventy-five countries fall, remains a catch-all category. Tier 2 comprises countries of varied trafficking records. The report also fails adequately to*

*explain its concrete minimum standards for countries to move up tiers*'.

Despite being an improvement on the two previous editions, the report provides no figures on the number of people being trafficked in each country, let alone disaggregated figures by age, sex, nationality and the nature of their forced labor. In addition, HRW points to the report's lack of analysis, for instance ignoring key factors such as government corruption and complicity in the trade and lacking details on trials and convictions of government agents for trafficking related offenses. These would provide a measure of government's real efforts to combat trafficking. HRW has highlighted a number of countries where they illustrate the above- mentioned report's shortcomings.

For more, visit [www.hrw.org/](http://www.hrw.org/) Another report produced by the U.S. State Department, the Annual Human Rights Reports was also recently criticized by Lawyers Committee for Human Rights in the USA for containing '*blind spots*'. The Lawyers Committee argued, in a Congressional testimony delivered in May, that the '*recently released 2002 State Department country reports, which look at the human rights record of 190 countries, fail to mention abuses in key countries engaged in the 'War on Terrorism.'*' For more see '*Rights Wire*' available online at: [www.lchr.org/rights\\_wire/Rightswire\\_7.htm#state](http://www.lchr.org/rights_wire/Rightswire_7.htm#state).

**Australian Court rules against Indefinite Detention of Children**<sup>14</sup> On 19th June, the Australian Family Court has ruled against the indefinite detention of children. Chief Justice Alastair Nicholson,

<sup>13</sup> Source: Human Rights Watch, '*U.S. State Department Trafficking Report Undercut by Lack of Analysis*', New York, 11 June 2003, at [www.hrw.org/press/2003/06traffickingreport.htm](http://www.hrw.org/press/2003/06traffickingreport.htm)

<sup>14</sup> Extract from National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaign (NCADC), '*Court rules against Indefinite Detention of Children*', 19 May 2003.

and Justice Stephen O'Ryan made the majority ruling that the court's welfare jurisdiction extended to the protection of children in immigration detention.

Two children aged 12 and 14, still in detention with their parents, had filed the action for their release in that their continued detention was harmful to their welfare. At the time of the decision which does not affect the parents 108 children were in Australia's detention centres. The Australian Government was reported to be considering an appeal against the decision.

In the UK, NCADC reports that 4 children of the Ay family have spent more than 338 days in detention. For more see [www.ncadc.org.uk](http://www.ncadc.org.uk).

**International Criminal Court's first Prosecutor sworn in** The ICC saw its first chief prosecutor, Mr. Luis Moreno Ocampo, sworn in during a special ceremony in The Hague on Monday, June 16, and is also expected to elect its registrar in the same week.<sup>15</sup> The inauguration of the ICC first chief prosecutor will enable the court to launch investigations into genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in coming months when national justice systems fail to do so. There are currently 90 States Parties to the ICC. Whilst the European Union has formed a new Common Position reinforcing its support for the International Criminal, the United States has reiterated its opposition to the court and continues to seek agreements that exempt U.S. citizens from its jurisdiction: so far, 37 bilateral agreements have been signed but only a small number has been ratified.

<sup>15</sup> Source: ICC Press Release, New York, 12 June 2003, via [iccmmedia@iccnw.org](mailto:iccmmedia@iccnw.org).

## International Events

**26 June UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture** The International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) invites you to join the 26 June 2003 Campaign on the UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. The UN Convention against Torture remains the least ratified of the core international human rights treaties, with only 128 of the 190 UN Member States having ratified the convention (including the UK). Last year more than 50,000 people participated in 283 events in 95 countries worldwide. For a range of free campaign materials (both kits and written) and a list of planned activities for 26 June 2003 worldwide, please visit [www.irct.org](http://www.irct.org).

## New Publications

**April 2003 World Refugee Survey** The 258-page World Refugee Survey 2003 is an annual report produced by the United States Committee on Refugees. It reviews conditions and government policies affecting refugees and displaced persons in 134 countries and includes 13 pages of comprehensive and widely-cited statistics available on refugees, internally displaced persons, and asylum seekers.

Articles include a commentary on the plight of North Korean refugees in China by Senator Sam Brownback of Kansas, chair of the U.S. Senate subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, and another on the need for equal international protection for Palestinian refugees by USCR policy analyst Ahmed Jabri. The "Year in Review," by Survey editor Merrill Smith, analyzes the war on terror's impact on refugees and summarizes the key refugee



developments in Africa, the Americas, East Asia and the Pacific, Europe, the Middle East, and South and Central Asia. Among the Survey's detailed reports are those on the United States, Russia, Colombia, Congo-Kinshasa, Australia, Burundi, and Indonesia. The Survey is available online at <http://www.refugees.org/> where a copy can also be ordered (\$25).

**'From Persecution to Prison: The Health Consequences of Detention for Asylum Seekers'** is a new study by Physicians for Human Rights and the Bellevue-New York University Program for Survivors of Torture which reveals the damaging impact of detention on asylum seekers fleeing torture and persecution. The report is based on interviews with 70 asylum seekers (14 of whom women) in 2001 and 2002 detained in two detention centres and 3 county jails in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The study found that three-quarters of those interviewed said they had been tortured in their country of origin, and the majority said they were suffering from psychological problems on arrival in the USA.

Some 70 percent reported that their psychological conditions worsened whilst in detention and a number thought that their physical health had also deteriorated. A woman who had been beaten and raped in prison in her home country said: *'I have great fear, I feel like I'm reliving it at times. When I think about what happened to me - I feel the pain in my body again, like its happening to me... to experience what I experienced before arriving to this country and then being put in prison, that added to my suffering.'*

Only 6 percent said they had received counselling services and the study attributes high levels of anxiety, depression

and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) to the length of time spent in detention and lack of access to mental health provision. For full text, visit online: [http://www.phrusa.org/campaigns/asylum\\_network/detention\\_execSummary/](http://www.phrusa.org/campaigns/asylum_network/detention_execSummary/).

**Related Material: New Amnesty International Report on Children in Detention: 'Why Am I Here: Unaccompanied Children in Immigration Detention'**. For full text, visit the following link: [www.amnestyusa.org/refugee/children\\_detention.html](http://www.amnestyusa.org/refugee/children_detention.html)

Also, **'Capitalist Punishment: Prison Privatization and Human Rights'** is a new book published by Human Rights Internet in collaboration with Clarity Press which uncovers the grave effects of prison privatization on human rights. It details the outcomes of trends across the USA, Canada, the UK and Australia toward private prisons. Specific chapters target the effects upon traditionally-marginalized groups, such as women, children and indigenous communities. For more information, visit the following website links: [www.hri.ca/capitalistpunishment/html](http://www.hri.ca/capitalistpunishment/html) or [www.bookmasters.com/clarity/b0020.htm](http://www.bookmasters.com/clarity/b0020.htm)

**When does internal displacement end?** is a new collection of articles released in June 2003 in a new special issue of Forced Migration Review (Issue 17).<sup>16</sup> Researchers and practitioners from around the world examine the question *'when does internal displacement end'* and shed important light on how it should be

<sup>16</sup> Published in collaboration with the Brookings Institution-SAIS (School of Advanced International Studies) Project on Internal Displacement and Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of International Migration.

answered. Visit the following link for discussion papers and reports:

[www.brook.edu/fp/projects/idp/idp.htm](http://www.brook.edu/fp/projects/idp/idp.htm).

Papers and reports will be compiled in a forthcoming publication by the Brookings-SAIS Project. For more details, email: [gsanchez@brookings.edu](mailto:gsanchez@brookings.edu).

**Researching Internal Displacement: State of the Art** is a Conference report including a summary of papers presented at the conference held on 7-8 February 2003 in Trondheim, Norway.<sup>17</sup> It sets out answers to key questions facing IDP researchers such as: What distinguishes research on internal displacement? What are the main issues re: IDP today? How can research findings feed into policy, protection and humanitarian response? Full versions of the presentations summarised in the report are available both in printed version and on the web at [www.idp.ntnu.no/conference](http://www.idp.ntnu.no/conference).

**Asylum Voices, Experiences of people seeking asylum in the United Kingdom** has just been published by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (June 2003), based on interviews with 146 refugees, 38 of whom are women, from 37 countries.<sup>18</sup> Asylum seekers and refugees speak for themselves, describing why they had to flee their own country (a small section highlights the specific experiences of women asylum seekers) and the way they have been treated in the UK. For details, contact CTBI, tel: 020 7523 2121,

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<sup>17</sup> Extract from Forced Migration Review/Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 'Researching Internal Displacement: State of the Art, Conference Report',

<sup>18</sup> The book was edited by Dr A. Bradstock and Revd A. Trotman and the research conducted by Jennifer Monahan assisted by Caroline Howard and Katharine Fletcher.

Fax: 020 7928 0010 or visit:

[www.ctbi.org.uk](http://www.ctbi.org.uk).

**The challenge of reporting refugees and asylum seekers** is a publication of the Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees in the UK written by Nissa Finney (May 2003). It highlights the key points discussed during the debates organised at regional media events and provides a number of recommendations. See [www.icar.org.uk/](http://www.icar.org.uk/) for full text.

### Other Online resources

**New Circular on 'Guidance relating to unaccompanied children and families with Children in Need'** The circular issued to Local Authorities by the Dep.t of Health can be obtained by writing to: Department of Health Publications, PO Box 777, London, SE1 6XH. It can also be found online by clicking on this link: [www.info.doh.gov.uk/doh/coin4.nsf/page/LAC-\(2003\)13?OpenDocument](http://www.info.doh.gov.uk/doh/coin4.nsf/page/LAC-(2003)13?OpenDocument). (Source: [refed@yahoogroups.com](mailto:refed@yahoogroups.com))

**Scottish Ethnic Minorities Directories** is a new online resource that brings together over 450 local and national organisations providing services to minority ethnic and refugee communities across Scotland.<sup>19</sup> It is continuously updated and can be searched by name, town or preferred listing. Go online to [www.paih.org/semdb/index.php](http://www.paih.org/semdb/index.php) and log on with the username and password: 'directory'. A hard copy of the Directory costs £25 (free to members). Discounts are also offered on bulk orders. Just email: [home@paih.org](mailto:home@paih.org).

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<sup>19</sup> Source: Quickmail, 17 June 2003.

**Ethnic Minorities Law Centre's new website** at [www.emlc.org.uk](http://www.emlc.org.uk) Ethnic Minorities Law Centre is a Scottish charity set up in 1001 which provides a culturally sensitive, bi-lingual and free Legal Service and Representation including Legal Advice on Immigration Law, Asylum Law and Appeals, Race Discrimination, Employment Issues and Housing Issues in Scotland. EMLC has bilingual staff who can speak Urdu, Punjabi, Hindi and Cantonese and has access to community interpreters.

**The Council of Europe launches a website on Action against the trafficking of Human Beings** The website is focusing on the Council's actions against the trafficking of human beings. It also gives details of International legal instruments, national laws, seminars and reports. View the site in full here: [www.coe.int/T/E/Human\\_Rights/Trafficking/](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Human_Rights/Trafficking/)

**Comic Relief announce new funding programme** Comic Relief is getting ready to spend the money that was raised on Red Nose Day 2003. The Budget Yourself and Apply Yourself software are good for working out what you need and preparing an application. They are both available to download free at: [www.funderfinder.org.uk](http://www.funderfinder.org.uk) [www.monitoring-group.co.uk/News%20and%20Campaigns/news-stories/2003/may%20stories/comic.relief.htm](http://www.monitoring-group.co.uk/News%20and%20Campaigns/news-stories/2003/may%20stories/comic.relief.htm).

## Notice Board

**Asylum Aid recruits for a new Asylum caseworker** (Salary: £23,690 p.a.). We are seeking an asylum caseworker to provide advice, casework support and representation to refugees and

asylum seekers in London, and to contribute to Asylum Aid's training, information and campaigning work. For details and application forms, send an SAE (A4, 57p stamps), quoting reference CW/ALG to: Personnel, Asylum Aid, 28 Commercial St, London E1 6LS, or download them at [www.asylumaid.org.uk](http://www.asylumaid.org.uk). Please do not telephone, email or send a CV. Closing date for completed applications: Friday 18th July. Interviews: week commencing 28th July. Asylum Aid is an equal opportunities employer. Reg. charity no. 328729.

**The Women's Resource Centre Annual General Meeting** takes place on 25 September 2003 from 4-6pm (followed by refreshments) at Regent's College, Regent's Park, NW1. Guest Speaker: Valerie Strachan, Deputy Chair of the Community Fund will be speaking on recent developments and challenges facing the Community Fund. To book a place, please contact WRC on 020 7377 0088 or email [info@wrc.org.uk](mailto:info@wrc.org.uk). Priority for spaces will go to organizational and individual members of the Women's Resource Centre. The venue has disabled access and parking.

**And last but not least...Thank you to everyone who attended the Celebrating Sanctuary Festival, on Sunday 15th June, at London's South Bank** Hundreds of people visited Asylum Aid's interactive stall and the event was a real success, with lots of people taking part in our quiz and winning prizes donated by local restaurants and businesses. Asylum Aid t-shirts proved very popular, as did our world map asking all visitors to use stickers to indicate where they were from; demonstrating the ethnic diversity of the thousands of people who attended the

festival and enjoyed a wide range of music, dance, food, poetry and more.

We hope to see you for next year's festivities! For information about Refugee Week, log onto [www.refugeeweek.org.uk](http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk).

**Please send us any information that you would like to see published in our next bulletin by Wednesday 16 July 2003 (see address on back cover).**

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



# women's ASYLUM NEWS

Produced by RWRP (for more details on information in this issue, contact

Sophia Ceneda)

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)



We are very grateful for the support of Matrix Chambers who have been funding the publication of Women's Asylum News. Any views expressed in this publication are those of the authors. Any legal information in this bulletin is intended as a general guide only, and should not be used as a substitute for legal advice. Any contributions from, or references to, external sources (including website links), agencies or individuals do not necessarily reflect the views of Asylum Aid nor receive our endorsement.

**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)**

## Membership Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

STANDARD

£4 / month = £48 / year

UNWAGED

£20 / year

### Benefits

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

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

STANDARD

£2 / month = £24 / year

UNWAGED

£10 / year

### Benefits

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

I wish to make a gift of £ \_\_\_\_\_

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To: The Manager, \_\_\_\_\_ Bank,  
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and debit my account no. \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

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account no. 63401711

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**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.

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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 donations.