

women's asylum news

refugee women's resource project @ asylumaid

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If you want to subscribe to our free bulletin 'women's asylum news' by post or by email, please contact Malak Bagher-Niakan, email malakb@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.

Please send any information that you would like to see published in our next edition by 16 May 2006 (see email or postal address on back cover).

UK Immigration Minister says gender guidance is compulsory

In a interview on BBC Radio 4's 'Woman's Hour' (31 March), Immigration Minister, Tony McNulty MP was tackled about the findings of RWRP's latest research which demonstrates that the Home Office gender guidance relating to the determination of women's asylum claims was not being followed by its decision-makers. Debora Singer, RWRP's Coordinator, also on the programme, said that the use of the guidance should be compulsory. The Minister responded by stating that '*in essence all our policy instructions are compulsory.*'

But despite the Minister's statement, the research shows that the policy is not being implemented currently. RWRP believes that Home Office caseworkers should be following the Gender Guidance meticulously and their supervisors should be monitoring how it is taken into account for every decision where this is relevant. The Minister also said the Home Office would closely consider RWRP's recommendations. Clearly the fact that he chose to spend time discussing this issue with us live on air suggests that the Home Office is taking our research seriously.

RWRP has now launched a three-tier campaign to get the Gender Asylum Policy Instruction (API) implemented -

the natural follow up to our research findings launched in March 2006.

The first strand of the campaign is to persuade the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) to implement its own policy. RWRP/Asylum Aid will be discussing the report's recommendations with Lin Homer, Director of IND, in May.

Secondly, we are raising awareness of the Gender API amongst immigration lawyers as we believe that, as a client's legal representative, they are in a good position to remind IND caseworkers to follow the API and to raise any lack of implementation at appeal. We believe this to be an important part of their advocacy role on behalf of women asylum seekers.

Finally we believe that women asylum seekers themselves need to know their rights. We are producing multilingual leaflets summarising the Gender API which we hope will enable women to raise any relevant issues with their legal representatives and/or with IND caseworkers.

The link to the Woman's Hour programme along with other details of our Gender Guidance campaign are available on the Asylum Aid website www.asylumaid.org.uk.

RWRP's research report by Ceneda, S. and Palmer, C., *'Lip service' or implementation? The Home Office Gender Guidance and women's asylum claims in the UK* (London: Asylum Aid, 2006) is available online ('Publications' section) at www.asylumaid.org.uk or request for paper copies can be made to

Malak Bager-Niakan on tel 0207 377 5123 or email: malakb@asylumaid.org.uk.

Other RWRP News

RWRP discusses gender issues in HO country reports

In March RWRP coordinated a meeting of colleagues working on refugee women's issues with Home Office staff within the Country of Origin Information Service (CIS) to discuss mainstreaming gender issues into their country reports.

RWRP raised the need to incorporate UNHCR and Home Office gender guidance by paying more attention to the types of persecution which affect women as asylum seekers. As these reports are used by Home Office caseworkers to assess claims, we believe that lack of reference to issues affecting women may further discriminate against women as there is less information available to support their testimony.

At the meeting, CIS staff asked RWRP to run a seminar for Home Office staff on gender and country of origin information, we'll also have the opportunity to input into the re-structuring of the Home Office country reports in May.

Anyone with details of omissions and errors with regard to information on women in the Home Office country reports should forward details to Bethany Collier, Country Information Officer, bethanyc@asylumaid.org.uk, address: 28 Commercial Street, E1 6LS.

Information must be from published sources.

RWRP's free asylum support advice sessions to RCOs

Could your organisation benefit from asylum support advice sessions? Alice Webb, our asylum support caseworker, is looking for a London-based RCO where she can set up outreach sessions for women asylum seekers. The sessions will focus on providing advice on asylum seekers' rights to accommodation and financial support.

The sessions would be for women only and would take place about once a month at the offices of the RCO. Alice would give one-off advice and take on cases for ongoing work. She would bring an interpreter to the sessions if necessary. Your organisation needs to have a confidential interviewing space that Alice could use to see clients. You would also have to be able to manage the appointment system for the sessions.

Please note that Alice cannot give advice about asylum claims. She can only give advice on asylum support matters. If you are interested in this opportunity then please contact Alice to discuss on 0207 377 5123 (Monday, Wednesday or Thursday) or email:

alicew@asylumaid.org.uk.

related information

See also training on asylum support appeal in section 'UK projects & events' below.

Other UK News

Asylum seeking lesbian couple granted right to be family in UK

Earlier this month the Court of Appeal allowed an Albanian woman from Serbia to stay in the UK whilst her partner's claim to asylum is being decided.¹ Emine Krasniqi, 54, is living with partner Alban Lamaj, from Kosovo, in Birmingham, as well as Lamaj's child whom the two women raise as 'theirs'.

The women, who fled Serbia after being publicly raped by Serb soldiers, met in the UK before a decision on Krasniqi's claim was made. Krasniqi, who also fled a violent husband and consequently lost contact with her children, was refused asylum by the Home Office. But an adjudicator allowed her appeal, saying that her deportation would breach her right to family life under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

That decision was challenged by an asylum and immigration tribunal which allowed the Home Office to appeal against it on the basis that the adjudicator had made '*material errors of law and the case was not exceptional enough to override her lawful removal*'.² However the Court of Appeal reiterated in its ruling that her removal from the UK would violate Article 8 of the ECHR; it also said that the tribunal had no power

¹ Source: Richard Ford, Court protects lesbian pair's right to be family, in *Times Online*, 11 April 2006 at www.timesonline.co.uk/newspaper/0,,171-2127930,00.html.

² Source: BBC, '*Asylum Seeker can stay with lover*', 10 April 2006, at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/west_midlands/4896906.stm.

to interfere with the adjudicator's finding. Lord Justice Sedley also said that to hold the case '*not exceptional*' was unfair. Lord Justice took into account the particularly violent experiences suffered by the women before fleeing to the UK.

related news

On 7 April, a high court judge accused the Home Office of disregarding the rule of law in trying to '*spirit away*' an immigrant couple it illegally detained then tried to deport. See online at: <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/homeaffairs/story/0,,1749579,00.html>.

Home Office grants funds for outreach project for trafficked women

The Home Office has announced that the first national outreach service for women trafficked to the UK into prostitution is to be launched and operated by the Poppy Project which is run by charity Eaves Housing for Women.³ The Home Office has just extended its grant to the Poppy project to £2.4 million over two years to include new initiatives including the outreach project. The Poppy project already provides safe accommodation, medical and legal help and support for two dozens victims of trafficking in the UK.

³ Source: Josephine Hocking, 'First outreach project for trafficked women set up', CommunityCare.co.uk, 10 April 2006, www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/2006/04/10/53536/First+outreach+project+for+trafficked+women+set+up.html.

The new funding coincides with the end of the government's public consultation on a national action plan on human trafficking which it intends to publish later this year. RWRP's response to the consultation can be found online at www.asylumaid.org.uk.

Burmese protected from deportation

A successful reconsideration appeal before the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal means that many Burmese citizens are now protected from removal to their country which has an appalling record of governmental human rights violations. See Immigration Advisory Service, 16 March 2006, at www.iasuk.org/C2B/PressOffice/display.asp?ID=305&Type=2.

UK projects & events

Project dedicated to empowering refugee women

The Community Development Team (CDT) at the Refugee Council is committed to empowering refugee women and supporting RCOs to develop their activities and services for women.⁴ For more information on the CDT's work with women, contact Elaheh Rambarzini on 0207 346 1160 or email elaheh.rambarzini@refugeecouncil.org.uk

⁴ Source: Refugee Council, RCO Women's News, 16 March 2006, see www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/publications/pub008.htm#rconews.

Free help with healthcare for vulnerable people

Project: London is a new scheme run by Médecins du Monde, the international non-governmental organisation, aiming to improve access to healthcare for vulnerable people including women, migrants and homeless people. The project can help people access GPs and specialist services, inform people if they are eligible for free treatment under the NHS, and advocate on their behalf to health services. Some short-term treatment and prescriptions are available. Anyone who is not registered with a GP can go to the clinic and appointments are not necessary. All consultation and treatment are free and the service is confidential. The project is at Praxis, Pott Street, London E2 0EF every Monday and Wednesday, 1 – 5 pm. Tel: 020 8123 6614 or 07974 616852. The project is closed on Bank holidays.

Medical Justice – Improving Healthcare for Asylum Seekers

Medical Justice is a new network of ex-detainees, doctors, lawyers and others whose objective is to improve health care for asylum seekers. The network was formed in response to a growing awareness of the inadequacies of service and violations of asylum seekers' rights to health. Its objectives include:

- Arranging hospital admission for seriously ill patients who have been neglected in detention centres;
- Documenting and publishing evidence of inadequate medical care;
- Helping to prevent inappropriate removals from the UK;

- Ensuring tracing of contacts of asylum seekers with dangerous communicable diseases for their protection and that of the public.

For more information, contact: Moyra Rushby at Medact on 020 7324 4739.

Free 2-day Asylum Support (NASS) Appeal Training for London RCOs

Do you know the difference between immigration appeals and asylum support appeals? Would you like to give advice to asylum seekers about their asylum support appeals? Asylum Support Appeals Project (ASAP) is a second-tier advice agency providing legal advice about asylum support appeals to advisors working in voluntary sector agencies and refugee community organisations. We also provide training on asylum support issues.

Our free 2-day asylum support training on 22 and 23 May 2006 (9.45am to 5pm) in East Croydon covers topics such as:

- What housing and welfare support is available for asylum seekers.
- How to challenge NASS decisions.
- How to prepare an asylum support appeal and represent someone at the Asylum Support Adjudicators.

The training includes a trip to the Asylum Support Adjudicators to observe a hearing in action! If you are interested in ASAP's training, free quarterly newsletters or would like ASAP to run in-house training courses that suit your organisation's needs, contact ASAP at Cornerstone House, 14 Willis Road,

Croydon CR0 2XX. Tel : 020 8684 5873
or email: Eiri@asaproject.org.uk.

Campaign against detention of children

The Refugee Council has joined with Save the Children UK, Bail for Immigration Detainees, Scottish Refugee Council and Welsh Refugee Council to launch a campaign that aims to put a stop to placing children in immigration detention.

As highlighted in RWRP and others' research, many children are detained along with their parents, for an indefinite period. The Refugee Council estimates that 2,000 children or more were detained in 2004. For children, the effects of detention in the UK have been shown to be extremely damaging. For more on the campaign and how to get involved, see

www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/supportus/campaigns/detention.htm.

related news

Report on short-term holding centres HM Chief Inspector of Prisons issued a report on 5 April on the short-term holding facilities at Heathrow and Calais used to hold asylum seekers for up to 36 hours when they arrive in the country, or when they are being removed. It found that the centres were not fit to hold detainees overnight or to hold children at all. The report, which concluded that the immigration removal process was '*neither humane nor, in the end, effective*', can be found online at: <http://inspectors.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmiprison/inspect-reports/irc-inspections.html/>.

International news

UNHCR issues new guidelines on application of Convention to trafficking victims

New guidelines have been issued by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on the application of article 1A(2) of the 1951 Refugee Convention and/or 1967 Protocol in relation to victims of trafficking and persons at risk of being trafficked.

The guidelines outline the key elements to take into account when victims of trafficking claim asylum.

First, the forms of severe abuse inherent to trafficking (abduction, forcible or deceptive recruitment, rape, sexual enslavement, removal of organs, etc.) constitute serious human rights violations, and are often a form of gender-related violence, which '*will generally amount to persecution*' (par. 15 & 19). Re-trafficking would also usually amount to persecution (par. 17). Even in cases where the trafficking experience is not likely to be repeated, the continuous psychological impact on the individuals – '*which would render return to the country of origin intolerable*' – may justify the recognition of such individuals as refugees provided '*other interrelated elements relating to the refugee definition are fulfilled*' (par. 16).

Reprisals or fear of reprisals inflicted on victims or the victims' family members at the hands of traffickers could also amount to a well-founded fear of persecution (par. 17). In addition, social

discrimination, ostracism or punishment in country of origin in particular for victims of sexual enslavement, may also rise to the level of persecution (par. 18).

Second, in terms of protection issues, the guidelines stress that *'the mere existence of a law prohibiting trafficking in persons will not of itself be sufficient to exclude the possibility of persecution'* (par. 23). For this it will have to be shown that the State has implemented effective measures of protection and that legal mechanisms are accessible to the victims.

But the difficulty, according to the guidelines, will be to link the well-founded fear of persecution to a Convention ground (race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion). This is because trafficking *'is a commercial enterprise, the prime motivation of which is likely to be profit rather than persecution on a Convention ground'* (par. 31).

However the guidelines clearly explain that the *targeting* and *selection* of victims of trafficking may well be for reasons related to one of the five Convention grounds. It states that, for instance, a State inability to maintain law and order following a social upheaval or armed conflict may lead to organised crime taking the opportunity to exploit particularly vulnerable groups (par. 31). These groups can be characterised by ethnicity, nationality, race, religion or political views. Also in a particular society, *'some subsets of children or women may be especially vulnerable to being trafficked and may constitute a social group within the*

terms of the refugee definition' (par. 32).

The guidelines expand further on the concept of particular social group applied to trafficked women in the context of the Convention:

'[par] 38. Women are an example of a social subset of individuals who are defined by innate and immutable characteristics and are frequently treated differently to men. As such, they may constitute a particular social group. Factors which may distinguish women as targets for traffickers are generally connected to their vulnerability in certain social settings; therefore certain social subsets of women may also constitute particular social groups. ...Examples of social subsets of women or children could, depending on the context, be single women, widows, divorced women, illiterate women, separated or unaccompanied children, orphans or street children. The fact of belonging to such a particular social group may be one of the factors contributing to an individual's fear of being subjected to persecution, for example, to sexual exploitation, as a result of being, or fearing being, trafficked.'

In addition, according to the UNHCR guidelines former victims of trafficking may also constitute a particular social group, partly but not exclusively, on the basis of their *'unchangeable, common and historic characteristic of having been trafficked'* (par. 39) and because in some societies they may be viewed as a *'cognizable'* group due to their trafficking experience.

The guidelines provide crucial interpretative legal guidance for governments, decision-makers, legal practitioners as well as the judiciary, in addition to UNHCR's own fieldworkers. They complement existing UNHCR's guidelines on international protection on gender-related persecution and on 'membership of a particular social group'.⁵ They can be found online at: www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/publ/opendoc.pdf?tbl=PUBL&id=443b626b2.

Nepal: Transgender people and HIV workers persecuted

Human Rights Watch (HRW) reports on a persistent pattern of police violence and abuse towards transgender people and HIV/AIDS outreach workers in Kathmandu.⁶ On 14 March, the eve of the Holi festival, police rounded up 26 metis (transgender people) and held them at Hanuman Dhoka central police station in Kathmandu. Five were subsequently moved to another police station. HRW understands that since 16 March they have not been permitted to speak to a lawyer. All have reportedly been charged with committing a 'public nuisance.' According to Scott Long, director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights Program at HRW,

⁵ These guidelines can be found at www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/publ/opendoc.pdf?tbl=PUBL&id=3d58ddef4 and www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/publ/opendoc.pdf?tbl=PUBL&id=3d58de2da respectively.

⁶ Human Rights Watch, *Nepal: 'Sexual Cleansing' Drive Continues*, 18 March 2006, at: www.hrw.org/english/docs/2006/03/17/nepal13020.txt.htm.

'This is the latest incident in a violent police campaign to "cleanse" Kathmandu of those considered undesirable...Police regularly assault and in some cases sexually abuse transgender people, all in the name of enforcing 'moral values.'

Those arrested included six people working for the Blue Diamond Society, a Nepali non-governmental organisation working in the field of sexual rights, sexual health and HIV prevention. The society had repeatedly documented police abuse of transgender people.

related news

LGBT people abused with impunity

in USA A new research by Amnesty International/USA reveals that thousands of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people are abused by the police in the USA because of their sexuality or gender identity. The human rights organisation has launched a new campaign to call for the end of ill-treatment of LGBT people which includes violent assault, sexual abuse and rape. The research also found that within LGBT communities transgender people, members of ethnic or racial minorities, young people and immigrants are particular targets of police abuse. Many victims do not report the abuse to the law enforcement authorities as a result of the hostility and treatment they fear from the police, or because they know such complaints are not properly investigated. For more information, including the campaign, visit: AI, www.amnesty.org.uk/news/press/16891.shtml.

Child marriages on the rise in Southern Pakistan

According to the UN Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN), there is an increase in the number of young girls forced into marriages in southern Pakistan. IRIN illustrates its report with the story of an 11 year old girl from the southern province of Sindh, innocently excited by the bangles, embroidered clothes, footwear and beauty preparations prior to her wedding. Against her mother's wishes, she is married off to a man who is 45 years old. The girl, who is unaware of her husband's age or the nature of the relationship to her husband, is being sold by her father for \$4,237.

The annual number of forced child marriages in Pakistan is unknown, many occur in remote rural areas and go largely unreported. In 2002 a report by Amnesty International found that such marriages were widespread, despite increased awareness about violence against women. UNIFEM has also campaigned against forced marriage in Pakistan; however the trend continues.

Research indicates that poverty is a key issue in forced marriages. The Sindh and southern Punjab are one of the most impoverished areas in the country, parents become tempted to sell off young girls in exchange for the high sums offered by grooms who are often many times older than their 'brides'. 'Bride' prices range from \$1,400 to \$5,000 with younger girls drawing a larger amount. Many families consider they have 'no choice' but to accept such offers. IRIN says in many cases the deal is made by a single male member of the family such as the girl's father or

grandfather, without consulting other family members.

Hina Jilani, UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders told IRIN that forced marriages are becoming increasingly common and that '*they will only stop if the law is applied.*' The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 states no female under 16 may marry however the law is rarely enforced. In one case, exceptionally a judge in Dadu, Sindh, ordered protection for a seven year old girl who had been sold by her father to a man of 35. The girl's mother went to court to prevent the sale of her daughter.

Early, forced marriage impacts on girls physically and emotionally. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan has documented cases of torture and violence against girls sold by their fathers, the youngest victims were nine years old. IRIN reports that a 15 year old who was married off at 12 now has two children and is living back at her parents' house. She was sold by her father to a man in his 30s as a second wife. She was '*treated like a slave, raped, tortured and then kicked out of her husband's home after he took a still younger girl as his third wife.*' According to Jilani, the combination of lack of awareness of the rights of women and children in general, and the impunity available to people who sell children has aggravated the situation.⁷

⁷ IRIN, *Pakistan: Child marriages on the rise across rural Sindh*, 31 March 2006, www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=52533&SelectRegion=Asia.

DRC: Soldiers convicted of mass rape

Seven soldiers in the Congolese army have been sentenced to life imprisonment for crimes against humanity by a military court in Songo Mboyo, Democratic Republic of Congo.⁸

The seven were found guilty of participating in the mass rape of 119 women in the northwestern province of Equateur. Other charges included crimes against humanity, robbery, incitement to arm, military plot, dissipation of weapons and ammunitions and usurpation of command. The court considered the Congolese government 'jointly responsible' and ordered it to compensate the victims of the soldiers. Human Rights Watch reports that the court directed that the family of a rape victim who died following the attack be paid \$10,000 and that rape survivors be paid \$5,000.

The ruling validates the Statue of Rome that created the International Criminal Court, in classifying rape as a crime against humanity.

Yemeni government allows women to qualify to become judges

On 18 March the Ministry of Justice announced its decision to allow women to qualify as judges.⁹ For the first time, the prospective new class of 104 students to train as judges in the

⁸ IRIN, *Soldiers jailed for mass rape*, 14 April 2006. www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=52801&SelectRegion=Great_Lakes.

⁹ Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN), *Yemen : Women's groups praise move to qualify women judges*, 21 March 2006. www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=52333.

Supreme Judiciary Institute, will include four women. Huryah Mashhoor, deputy chairperson of the Women's National Committee says,

'This is an excellent decision, which we consider a good step towards improving women's positions in a male dominated sphere....The presence of women in the judiciary system as judges has become a necessity.'

Prior to unification in 1990, women in South Yemen frequently worked as judges. The Yemeni Socialist Party, the then ruling party of the south, featured women's empowerment high on their agenda. Unification brought in a more conservative and religious culture which did not recognise women as judges, so those previously working as judges in the south were assigned to administrative duties at the justice ministry.

International projects & events

Afghanistan: New database on violence against women

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) has launched a new project to register the types of violence committed against women in Afghanistan, identify gaps in service provision and form a central record of information for law enforcement agencies to help better prosecute cases.¹⁰ The project is based on a

¹⁰ Source: UNIFEM, *'UNIFEM Launches Database to Track Violence against Women in Afghanistan'*,

database that will also be used to devise national strategies to tackle violence against women and improve legislation. The information will be collected by field workers trained by UNIFEM in conducting interviews with victims of violence and assessing their safety needs and injuries.

According to women's rights advocates there is a lack of understanding of what constitutes violence against women in the country and such violence is widely accepted within communities. In addition law enforcement agencies often disregard women's complaints of assault. For more information on this project, contact Meryem Aslan by email at: meryem.aslant@unifem.org.

related information

UNIFEM Fact sheet on violence against women in Afghanistan can be found online at :

<http://afghanistan.unifem.org/vaw/vaw.htm>.

UN fails to Integrate Gender Equality in the UN Reform Agenda

Women's NGOs who participated in the 2006 UN Commission on the Status of Women were 'outrage[d]' that '*gender equality and strengthening of women's machineries within the UN system are barely noted, and are not addressed as a central part of the reform agenda.*'¹¹

Over ten years after a commitment to gender parity was made at the Beijing Conference, women remain underrepresented in decision-making roles at the UN, including in committees,

www.unifem.org/news_events/story_detail.php?StoryID=412.

¹¹ European Women's Lobby, Newsletter, March 2006.

expert panels and senior positions. The Asia-Pacific Caucus called for the setting up of a women's task force on the Reform of the UN.

Seminar on Male & Public Violence Against Women

The Women's World March is organising a seminar to examine how to organise a big mobilisation against male domestic and public violence during the European Social Forum 2006, 4-7 May 2006, Athens, Greece. For more information on ESF's program, visit: <http://workspace.fse-esf.org> or www.fse-esf.org. Alternatively contact: Sonia Mitralia: soniamitralia@gmail.com.

Women's Petition Against trafficking during World Cup

The Party of European Socialists has launched a Women's electronic petition which calls for action to prevent the mass trafficking of women and girls into Germany for prostitution during the World Cup. For information and to sign go online to:

www.pes.org/content/view/380/169/.

new publications

international

Beyond Honour: A Historical Materialist Explanation of Honour-related Violence

Tahira S. Khan is the author of this study to be published in July 2006 (Oxford University Press, USA). According to the publishers, the study '*attempts to look beyond the cultural notion of honour as the main/only motive behind gender*

based violence. The study is a blend of academic research and personal experiences and observation that examine honour related issues through the lens of historical academic research along with a simple narration of present day stories of victims around the globe.'

To order, visit:

www.oup.com/us/catalog/general/subject/Sociology/SexGender/?view=usa&ci=0195979028#Description.

Manual on Honour Related Violence

Prevention of violence against women and girls in patriarchal families (2005) is a manual produced by Swedish organisation Kvinnoforum.¹² The key objective is to spread the knowledge and experience gained by Kvinnoforum which for the last twelve years has been working in Sweden, the Middle East and other parts of the world with girls and boys exposed to the problem of honour killing or violence. Another key objective is to help more effective national and transnational work in Europe and internationally to diminish the incidence of honour related violence. The tool is also expected to help document the experiences of people exposed to honour related violence.

This manual is aimed at professionals representing authorities (e.g. police, social services, judiciary, schools, health care, immigration), shelters etc., who come in contact with people with issues/problems related to honour related violence; and at other

professionals who meet similar groups/communities. Training allows participants not only to learn new information but also to challenge their own perceptions of key personal concepts such as power, sexuality, gender and control. The manual can be found at:

www.qweb.kvinnoforum.se/projects/heder/manualHRV2005.pdf.

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

Aimed at policymakers, donors and practitioners working in health and beyond, this guide by Cornwall, A. and Jolly, S. (2006) reviews current policy issues and explores cutting-edge debates relating to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). It also features summaries of key readings with links to further resources. Issues covered include:

- What is meant by SRHR?
- Why SRHR is crucial for meeting international development targets
- Obstacles to realising SRHR: the rise of conservatism
- Talking about pleasure in relation to SRHR
- A more positive approach: linking sexuality, health and human rights.

This guide reviews current policy issues and explores cutting-edge debates relating to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). For more details and a full copy, visit:

www.siyanda.org/static/cornwall_jolly_srhr.htm.

¹² Source: Neww Polska, Newsletter No. 121 at www.neww.org.pl/en.php/news/news/1.html?&nw=2239&re=2.

Report of UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking

The Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking, Sigma Huda, for the UN Human Rights Commission 2006 focuses especially on the links between demand and sex trafficking and gives a deep analysis of the human rights dimension in the UN Protocol against trafficking. The report entitled *Integration of the Human Rights of Women and a Gender Perspective - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights aspects of the victims of trafficking in persons, especially women and children* (February 2006) can be accessed online at:

www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/chr/docs/62chr/ecn4-2006-62.doc.

Annual Report of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights

The 2005 Annual Report of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (International Federation of Human Rights/World Organisation Against Torture) presents the situation of 1,172 human rights defenders who are oppressed, as well as obstacles to freedom of association in nearly 90 countries. The report includes a detailed overview for each continent and then detailed country observations. Find it online at:

www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/fullobs2005a.pdf.

UNHCR report *The State of the World Refugees*

This latest book by UNHCR examines the '*changing dynamics of displacement over the past half decade.*' The number of refugees at 9.2 million is the lowest in 25 years, but there are an estimated 25

million internally displaced people worldwide. According to the author, this itself raises new challenges in an increasingly globalised world, in addition to '*widespread confusion over migrants and refugees*'; *tightened asylum policies and growing intolerance.*'

The State of the World Refugees Human displacement in the new millennium is now available in PDF online at:

www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/template?page=publ&src=s_tatic/sowr2006/toceng.htm.

new publications

UK

Seeking asylum - A report on the living conditions of asylum seekers in London

This report attempts to provide a greater insight into the lives of asylum seekers and a different perspective from current media representations which are often negative. 50 asylum seekers (36 men and 14 women) selected randomly were interviewed between May 2005 and February 2006 by members of the Refugee Media Action Group. Many of them were service users at the Migrants Resource Centre. The majority of them were living in National Asylum Support Service (NASS) accommodation. The research reveals that the condition of the accommodation is often poor and inadequate for people with disabilities. Mixed sex accommodation was a cause of concern for females, especially those who have been victims of rape and torture. Housing staff were described by many of the participants as '*rude, racist and unhelpful.*'

The report reveals that all participants mentioned experiencing hardship and poverty and many go without meals or resort to the charity of friends and the Church. The majority have been waiting for several years to hear a decision relating to their status. The Refugee Media Action Group suggests that asylum seekers are given the following basic rights to improve their quality of life: *'The right to a speedy [asylum] process; the right to a decent standard of living; the right to work.'* Th
13 page PDF

www.migrantsresourcecentre.org.uk/documents/SeekingAsylum_000.pdf.

Doing research with refugees: Issues and guidelines

This book (Temple, Bogusia and Moran Rhetta, eds., January 2006) explores methodological issues relating to the involvement of refugees in both service evaluation and development and research more generally. It builds on a two-year seminar series attended by members of a range of statutory and voluntary organisations, as well as academics and refugees themselves. Cost: Online order £48.00 from
www.policypress.org.uk/catalog/product.

online resources

international

Database charts practices that harm and discriminate against women worldwide

A new OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) database on Gender, Institutions and

Development (GID) shows deeply rooted social norms, practices and traditions still discriminating against women and harming women's economic opportunities in many countries around the world. These range from forced marriages and female genital mutilation, and restrictions on inheritance and ownership rights. The database was set up to help governments choose policies that will be effective in assisting economic growth. Compiled from various sources, the database gives comparative data for 162 countries, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, on the socio-economic status of women. See:
www.oecd.org/dev/institutions/GIDdatabase.

online resources

UK

Online fact sheet about UK Health Services

This fact sheet (Crown Copyright, November 2005) has been written to explain the role of UK health services, the National Health Service (NHS), to newly-arrived individuals seeking asylum.¹³ It covers issues such as the role of GPs, their function as gatekeepers to the health services, how to register and how to access emergency services.

Space has been left for health teams to add their contact details, and those of local out-of-hours services. Special care has been taken to ensure that information is given in clear language, and the content and style has been

tested with user groups. The leaflet, only available electronically, is in 43 languages:

www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidanceArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4122587&chk=w2Q1ZY

related news

Online leaflets on health problems are available in eight languages. Download from:

www.soundshealthy.nhs.uk.

HIV/AIDS and the law in UK

Presentations given on HIV/AIDS and the law in the UK (Birbeck) are now available on the UK Law and HIV/AIDS website:

www.keele.ac.uk/research/lpj/Law_HIV-AIDSPres_Papers.htm.

notice board

Rwanda refugee author seeks publisher

A Rwandan woman who fled from genocide in her home country (in which her husband was killed) and resettled with her son in Norwich has written a book about her experiences.¹⁴ Illuminée

¹⁴ Source: Story circulated by www.asylumpolicy.info. Original source: Naomi Canton, 'My life: from Rwanda to Norwich', in *Evening News*, 10 April 2006 at: www.eveningnews24.co.uk/content/News/story.aspx?brand=ENOnline&category=News&tBrand=enonline&category=news&itemid=NOED10%20Apr%202006%2010%3A15%3A40%3A690.

Nganemariya was granted refugee status in the UK and has been looking for a job ever since but to no avail. She and her son are the only Rwandan refugees in Norwich and she has found difficult not to be able to share her experiences with anyone. Her book recounts her life in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda, when the genocide began in April 1994. According to *Evening News*, she said: 'I think my book will help a lot of people who have been through a lot. It will give them strength as well.' She is now looking for a publisher.

If you can help Illuminée Nganemariya publish her book contact Evening News reporter Naomi Canton on tel: 01603 772418 or email her at:

naomi.canton@archant.co.uk.

New website on refugee children seeks contributions

The National Children's Bureau (NCB) is seeking written examples of good practice working with asylum seeking and refugee children to be added to its new website. The website, due to be launched in June, will disseminate good practice guidance, research and training materials compiled as part of an NCB project to improve practice in the assessment and planning for unaccompanied refugee and asylum seeking children. To contribute, please email: skane@ncb.org.uk.

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- Up to date campaigning information emailed directly
- Invitations to Asylum Aid events, eg. open evenings
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