

# women's asylum news

refugee women's resource project @ asylumaid

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## UK: House of Lords deny deportation to certain death would breach human rights

The determination in the case of N v Secretary of State for the Home Department has dealt a blow to people from abroad who are being treated for HIV here and hoped that this meant they could not be returned because it would breach their human rights. In the long-awaited judgement on this case published on 5th May 2005, the Lords express sympathy for N's plight. However they conclude that there is no positive obligation on a state to continue to provide medical care to "aliens" under article 3 of the Human Rights Act (right to be free from torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment).

N is 30 years old and came here from Uganda in 1998. Her story makes painful reading and we have no doubt that there are many others in her situation.

N was refused refugee status here despite having been kidnapped by the Lords Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda, held against her will for two years, captured by the National Resistance Movement (NRM - part of Uganda's official security forces) and ill-treated and raped by them. The Adjudicator found that the LRA was a terrorist organisation, so it was reasonable to interrogate N to find out whether she was a member, and described her

treatment by the NRM as 'the acts of rogue elements in the security force'. It was concluded that she would not be in danger of persecution if she were returned to Uganda. As Baroness Hale of Richmond (the first woman Law Lord) states in the judgement, we question why such a decision was not appealed.

Shortly after she arrived here, N was diagnosed as HIV positive and having AIDS and responded to treatment so that her condition is now stable. Continuing to have access to the drugs and medical facilities available in the UK would allow her to remain well for 'decades'. Without these, she will suffer ill health, discomfort, pain and death within a year or two. In Uganda the treatment she needs is available but at considerable cost. She has relatives there but none are willing and able to accommodate and take care of her.

The Lords note that the problem is the disparity in the medical facilities available in different countries.

They quote the case of *D v United Kingdom* where the European Court of Human Rights determined that it would breach article 3 to return D to St Kitts as he was dying from AIDS and there was no treatment nor support available for him there. The Law Lords' argument goes as follows. '*Aliens who are subject to expulsion cannot claim any entitlement to continue to benefit from medical, social or other forms of assistance provided by the expelling state.*' There may be exceptions on medical grounds but only if the circumstances are exceptional. It does not count as exceptional that treatment abroad is too expensive for the

applicant. They also argue that extending the interpretation of exceptional circumstances would result in people who have made their way to the UK being granted some form of leave to remain until such time as the standard of medical facilities for the treatment of HIV/AIDS in their countries of origin equalled that in Europe. It would risk drawing people here to benefit from these facilities. It would be better to make the necessary medical care universally and freely available everywhere.

The Law Lords claim that the criteria should be that someone's medical condition has reached such a critical state that there are compelling humanitarian grounds for not removing them to a place which lacks the medical or social services needed to prevent acute suffering.

The Lords conclude that the issue is not just about deporting N; it is also about maintaining her treatment here. They point out that although deporting her would not breach her human rights, this does not mean that the Home Secretary has to deport her – he has discretion whether or not to take this action.

At Asylum Aid, we were very disappointed in this judgement. As far as we can tell, it will only be the most extreme and exceptional cases that will pass the test of being acute enough to exceed the threshold and breach article 3, such as cases where there is a risk of suicide. The other group of people who continue to have a claim to stay here are those who can apply for asylum based on the 1951 Refugee Convention (fear of persecution on the grounds of race,

nationality, religion, political opinion or belonging to a particular social group) including if their HIV status was caused by persecutory rape.

We are also concerned at the reliance on the case of D as it is from the late 1990's when the medical treatment of AIDS was far less advanced than it is today, so the circumstances for people with AIDS were very different.

The next stage of appeal that would be open to N would be take her case to the European Court of Human Rights which can take years. In the meantime we are looking into possibilities of campaigning for a policy change as the result of this legal challenge has brought so little comfort. Case reference: [2005] UK HL 31.

### **ALSO** Spain: Domestic violence now recognized as ground for asylum on basis of MSPG

In an unprecedented decision, Spanish Interior Minister granted asylum to a 38 year-old woman from the Persian Gulf who escaped abuse three years ago where she was denied protection. (her country of origin was not disclosed).<sup>1</sup>

According to newspaper *El Pais*, the Minister José Antonio Alonso declared in a statement: *'There are certain areas of the world where women are forced to*

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<sup>1</sup> Source: This story was circulated by the Dvasylum\_updates network at [DVasylum\\_updates@yahoogroups.com](mailto:DVasylum_updates@yahoogroups.com). Original story: Jorge A. Rodriguez, 'España concede por primera vez asilo a una mujer maltratada' in *El Pais*, 1 June 2005 at [www.elpais.es](http://www.elpais.es).

*marry, they suffer abuse from their husbands and their families and receive no protection from the authorities. For the Interior Ministry these women belong to a social group that is eligible for refugee status in Spain.'* He further stressed that the decision which was taken on 31 May is *'based on the Geneva Convention regarding what constitutes a refugee and their status'*.

The Spanish Commission for Refugee Assistance and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Spain proclaimed the decision *'historic'*. *El Pais* also reports reactions from women's groups in Spain. Ana Gómez Plaza, from the Women for Democracy group sees the decision as a *'recognition of abused women as victims of human rights violations, and hence it's logical that they be granted asylum'*.

It is hoped that such an approach and evaluation of domestic violence cases in the context of the 1951 Refugee Convention will be adopted in many other countries around the world.

**related information** The decision comes at a time when Amnesty International has published a new report highlighting the increase in domestic violence in Spain. AI's report *'More than words - Spain: Making protection and justice a reality for women victims of gender-based violence in the home'* states that the number of Spanish women killed by their partner or former partner as a result of gender-based violence has steadily increased since 2001. Only 5% of women experiencing domestic abuse make a complaint and they face considerable obstacles in

obtaining protection and justice. A copy of the report in Spanish is available at: <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ESLEUR410062005>.

### UK News in brief

#### Extension of law on FGM in Scotland

In 2003 the Parliament in Westminster made it illegal to aid and abet female genital mutilation (FGM), even if carried out overseas. The Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Bill extends that to cover the children of asylum seekers, people granted humanitarian protection and other non-UK citizens such as foreign students, thus closing a loophole in the existing law and rendering the jurisdiction extra-territorial.<sup>2</sup> Likewise any UK national overseas is prohibited from aiding or carrying out the practice regardless of where it takes place. The Scottish Parliament also increased the penalty for carrying out the practice from five to 14 years.

Addressing the Scottish Parliament, Deputy Justice Minister Hugh Henry said she *'and other members of this parliament have been shocked to find out what can happen. I am determined that no girl in Scotland will suffer this mutilation.'*

<sup>2</sup> Source: BBC news, 26<sup>th</sup> May 2005, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/scotland/4584191.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/4584191.stm).

#### Supporters fear deportation of ex-slave asylum seeker

The organisation Praxis, which supports the settlement and integration of economic migrants and refugees in the UK, says that Sanou Magloire, an asylum seeker from Burkina Faso, could be sent back to the country where she was held as a slave from the age of three and repeatedly raped by *'her slavemaster'* from the age of 12 or 13.<sup>3</sup>

On arrival in the UK in September 2002, the 26-year-old sought asylum a day after her arrival but her claim and appeals were rejected. The Home Office tried to remove her four times. A last attempt aborted in February 2005 when flight carrier Air France refused to take her after she took off her clothes in protest. She was subsequently put in prison until April 2005 before her release following a successful campaign by Bail for Immigration for Detainees and a number of community organisations and supporters. Living in a house with her two-year-old daughter, she is now waiting to see if she will get another appeal.

<sup>3</sup> See full story *'From Slavery in Africa to a UK Prison'*, 17 May 2005 available online at: [www.praxis.org.uk/readnews.aspx?id=55](http://www.praxis.org.uk/readnews.aspx?id=55). Also BBC news, *'Protesters fight deportation move'*, 2 April 2005 at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/4404321.stm>.

### 15 year old testifies against traffickers in open court

A young woman from Lithuania escaped from her traffickers when brought to a nightclub in Sheffield. While in the toilets, she asked a group of English girls for help. The girls managed to distract her Albanian pimps and she ran to a nearby police station.<sup>4</sup> Until then, she had been passed from one pimp to the next for up to £4,000. When she was not forced to work, she was repeatedly raped by her pimps. The *Telegraph* reported that the night she escaped she had been due to be passed on to her eighth owner in three months and likely to be sold on and sent to Germany.

Like many other girls from Eastern Europe, the young girl had been lured into the trafficking sex industry when a girl called a friend and offered them a job in the UK. Her flight was paid for and she was asked to hand over her passport at Heathrow airport by her 17-year-old minder before being bought by a man who raped her. She was then driven to Birmingham, Leicester and Sheffield where she was repeatedly sold and raped by traffickers and clients.

When she testified in court against her abusers, she refused to conceal her identity behind a screen. Three of the men who bought and abused her were all asylum seekers from Albania. They have been jailed for 18, 15 and seven years at Sheffield Crown Court and according to the *Telegraph*, are the first in Britain to be charged under the Sexual

Offences Act 2003 which came into force on 1 May 2004 and includes provisions to punish trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation.

#### related information

The US Department of State has produced its fifth annual Trafficking in Persons Report available online at:

[www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2005/](http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2005/).

#### UK events & projects

##### No More Tears Sister

This film focuses on the subject of FGM. There is a screening at the Frontline Club, 13 Norfolk Place W2 1QJ on Monday 13th June at 7.30pm followed by a Question and Answer session with the film maker. Details can be found online at [www.thefrontlineclub.com](http://www.thefrontlineclub.com), or reservations can be made by emailing:

[Jessica.linzey@thefrontlineclub.com](mailto:Jessica.linzey@thefrontlineclub.com).

##### Conferences on women in Europe

NAWO together with the UK Joint Committee on Women are holding four free conferences in 2005 to bring together and inform UK women on European issues. The two remaining conferences are in London on 15 June and Perth on 18 June. With the UK holding the EU Presidency from 1 July and a possible referendum next year on the EU Constitution these are crucial times for women in the UK to influence events in Europe. The Conferences will be a mixture of workshops and presentations. Workshop themes include

<sup>4</sup> See full story, Nigel Bunyan, 'I run out of tears, says girl sold around Britain as a sex slave at the age of 15', in the *Telegraph*, 9 May 2005, at [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/).

Europe beyond the Peace Process, Women and the EU, How to find EU information on the www and many more.

For further information or booking, please contact the Women Connect office at [info@womenconnect.org.uk](mailto:info@womenconnect.org.uk) or visit [www.womenconnect-regions.org.uk](http://www.womenconnect-regions.org.uk)

### **Celebrating Sanctuary at the Coin Street Festival**

Sunday 19 June, 2-7pm, Bernie Spain Gardens & Oxo Tower Wharf, Upper Ground, South Bank, London SE1. Admission: Free Information on telephone: 020 7401 3610 or visit online either [www.coinstreetfestival.org](http://www.coinstreetfestival.org) or [www.refugeeweek.org.uk](http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk). This free festival event launches Refugee Week (20-27 June) and celebrates the evolving and positive contribution of refugees to cultural life in London and the UK, featuring music, juggling, dance, stories, family activities and food and drink.

### **British Red Cross Refugee Day**

The conference '*Asylum in the UK: Many Voices, Different Perspectives, Which way forward?*' takes place on 21st June 2005, 10 am - 5.00 pm – Admission free at Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, Holborn, London WC1R. Speakers include Rabbi Julia Neuberger; anti-apartheid campaigner and internationally acclaimed novelist, Dr Beverley Naidoo; Naaz Coker chair Refugee Council and the St Georges NHS Trust and the Head of the Policy unit of the Home Office, amongst many others. For more information and to book or request a stall at the event, contact [refugeeweek@redcross.org.uk](mailto:refugeeweek@redcross.org.uk)

### **Exhibition on insomnia**

Opening on the same day as Celebrating Sanctuary is a free exhibition organised by the British Red Cross taking place at Bargehouse, Oxo Tower Wharf, London SE1. Using insomnia as an analogy for the inability to access a place of security, rest and recuperation, this exhibition hopes to provoke thought and discussion around refugee experiences by presenting works and texts on insomnia. From 19-26 June, 11am-6pm daily.

### **Fundraising Event by Women Asylum Seekers**

Women Asylum Seekers Together (WAST) is holding its first fundraising event, an evening with Julie Hesmondhalgh - star of Coronation Street, and with music and entertainment.<sup>5</sup> Venue: Saffron Restaurant, the Old Town Hall, Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester M8. Friday 17 June, 7pm. Tickets from £5 to £15. A third of the proceeds will go the Farhat Khan and Family Must Stay Campaign and the remainder to support the development of WAST. For further details contact the ticket hotline on 07947 996966 or email: [farhatmuststay@dm1.net](mailto:farhatmuststay@dm1.net).

### **No One Is Illegal International Conference**

'No one is illegal – Solidarity not sympathy – For a world without borders – Defend the outlaws' Saturday 25 June 2005 1:00pm - 6:00pm, Cross St Chapel, Cross Street, Manchester. Entry

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<sup>5</sup> Source: Institute of Race Relations at [www.irr.org.uk/2005/june/ha000004.html](http://www.irr.org.uk/2005/june/ha000004.html).

by donation. Contact details: NOII c/o Bolton Socialist Club, 16, Wood Street, Bolton. Email/website: [info@noii.org.uk](mailto:info@noii.org.uk) [www.noii.org.uk](http://www.noii.org.uk).

### **Network for European Women's Rights Conference**

NEWR is holding its Final Conference on 30 June & 1 July 2005 at the University of Birmingham. The conference will give participants and speakers the opportunity to discuss the results of the NEWR research. For the past three years, researchers from academic and institutional circles, from NGOs and civil society have taken part in the research led by NEWR on the four themes of trafficking in women, reproductive rights, political participation and social entitlements of women in the context of an ever-growing European Union. Speakers include Professor Yakin Erturk, UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women. For more see online: [www.newr.bham.ac.uk/general/Conference/newr\\_final\\_conference.htm](http://www.newr.bham.ac.uk/general/Conference/newr_final_conference.htm) Registration form available online at: [www.newr.bham.ac.uk/general/Conference/newr\\_booking\\_form.htm](http://www.newr.bham.ac.uk/general/Conference/newr_booking_form.htm), deadline June 23.

### **Refugee Action's Choices programme**

Refugee Action's 'Choices' programme is offering free impartial and confidential information and advice to asylum seekers and refugees of all nationalities who are considering voluntary return to their countries of origin. This will include immigration queries; information on country of origin; referring to appropriate organisation for help in the

UK; assisting on travel documentation; advising on available travel assistance and return programmes. For more information about this programme please contact: Choices' office in London tel: 0207 654 7700, in Manchester tel: 0161 233 1200, in Leeds tel: 0113 244 5345, and Leicester tel: 0116 261 4846. You can download Choices' leaflets from RA's website: [www.refugee-action.org](http://www.refugee-action.org).

### **Free training for refugee & asylum seeking women**

The next courses by the Refugee Women's Association (RWA) in London from now to September are: Job Search Skills for Refugee Women Doctors; Certificate in Pre-School Practice (cache level 2) and Accelerated English for Refugee Women. Assessment days are held during June, July and September. All the courses are free of charge. RWA pays travel expenses and contributes towards childcare costs or provides a free crèche. All the courses are wheelchair accessible unless otherwise stated. These courses are very popular, so it is advisable that people book early. For information about any of the courses, or to book a place, please call Refugee Women's Association on 020 7923 2412 and ask to speak to an Advisor or the Training Organiser.

### **Domestic Violence Awareness Training Woman's Trust**

The course on 28th June 2005 is aimed at all staff working in agencies working with women and children experiencing domestic violence and will cover the following issues: Definitions and statistics; different forms of domestic

violence and their impact upon women; children's experience of domestic violence; why women may remain in or return to violent relationships; equalities issues; help and services available to women and children experiencing domestic violence and good practice guidelines. For further information and bookings please contact Woman's Trust, Heidi Sabrautzky at Top Floor, Unit 1 Kensington Cloisters, 5 Kensington Church St, London W8 4LD. Tel: 020 7795 6444/6999, fax: 020 7795 6123 [www.womanstrust.org.uk](http://www.womanstrust.org.uk), or email: [administrator@wtrust.entadsl.com](mailto:administrator@wtrust.entadsl.com).

### **Elevate Management and Leadership Training for Women: Information Session**

Elevate – Women's Resource Centre's unique training programme by women for women - is currently recruiting for the first training intake – June to December. The course leads to NVQ Level 3-4 UNITS or equivalent certification. It is free to all women who fit the project's criteria and who are ready to commit to ten days training over a period of four to five months.

If you would like to join or get further information on the training, the Elevate Team would like to invite you to come to its final information session at WRC (76 Wentworth Street, E1) on 15 June 2005, from 5.00pm to 6.30pm. Phone on 0845 330 7918, or e-mail: [elevate@wrc.org.uk](mailto:elevate@wrc.org.uk) If you cannot make it to the session, call Felice on 020 7426 9636, e-mail: [Felice@wrc.org.uk](mailto:Felice@wrc.org.uk) (she will be happy to give you further information on eligibility, or arrange an initial interview).

### **Support for Refugee Teachers**

Empower Teachers has been funded by the London Development Agency (LDA) to support refugee teachers. Are you a refugee teacher? Do you have a home office document stating you are a refugee and you are allowed to work in the UK? Are you a refugee woman returning to the labour market?

Through funding from the LDA Empower Teachers are able to offer 50 refugee teachers the opportunity to gain qualified teacher status and experience in UK schools and to learn about the British education system. For more info, write to: [Info@empowerteachers.co.uk](mailto:Info@empowerteachers.co.uk).

### **Introductory Course on Counselling Refugees October 2005 – July 2006**

The Refugee Therapy Centre (RTC), a charity run mostly by refugees for refugees, is running an introductory course on counselling for people who would like to learn about working with refugees and asylum seekers in the community. RTC is looking for refugees and asylum-seekers from diverse backgrounds to share their experiences and learn from each other, in working with refugees and asylum seekers. This course is free for refugees and asylum seekers. People already volunteering or working in the community will also be welcomed. The course is held on Friday afternoons. For more information contact the Refugee Therapy Centre, 40 St Johns Way, London N19 3RR. Tel: 0207 272 2565, or email [natalie@refugeetherapy.org.uk](mailto:natalie@refugeetherapy.org.uk) [www.refugeetherapy.org.uk](http://www.refugeetherapy.org.uk).



### Institute of Race Relations offers media training

IRR News, the independent race and refugee news network, is providing free, basic, practical *training for Black, Minority Ethnic and Refugee groups* on how to get your story in the news, rectify misreporting and develop a strategy for your organisation. If a member of your organisation would like to attend a one-day workshop later in the year, please contact Jenny Bourne on 020 7837 0041 for more information. Places are limited.

### Other international news

#### Honduran rape victim denied asylum in USA for failing to demonstrate failure of protection

A woman who was raped by her boyfriend and subsequently sought asylum in the USA after giving birth to a son, was denied asylum by the Ninth Circuit Court for failing to demonstrate that *'Honduran government is unwilling or unable to control rape in that country'*.

Ingrid Yamileth Castro-Perez asylum claim was based on membership of a particular social group and *'the fact that the rapes she suffered constituted past persecution for which the Honduran government is responsible, because it is unable or unwilling to control rape in that country'*.

Whilst the country information submitted on Honduras stipulates that domestic violence is widespread, it also emerged that Honduras treats rape separately and

classifies it as a crime in the Penal Code punishable by 3 to 9 years' imprisonment. Castro-Perez testified she did not report the rapes to the police as she *'thought they were not willing to do anything because they would say that we were boyfriend and girlfriend and that they would not say or think that that was [not] normal'*.

Source:

[DVasylum\\_updates@yahoo.com](mailto:DVasylum_updates@yahoo.com)

See full opinion on Castro-Perez v Gonzales (June 2005) online at:

[www.ca9.uscourts.gov/ca9/newopinions.nsf/Opinions+by+date?OpenView&Start=1&Count=100&Expand=1.1](http://www.ca9.uscourts.gov/ca9/newopinions.nsf/Opinions+by+date?OpenView&Start=1&Count=100&Expand=1.1)

#### Afghanistan: government under pressure to uphold women's rights amidst increased violence

Following the murder of five women in just two weeks in April and May this year, hundreds of women took to the streets in Kabul to call on the government to take action against those responsible for their deaths and improve women's security.<sup>6</sup> At the beginning of May, three women were raped and strangled for what seems to be their link with NGOs or Western aid agencies, according to a note left near the bodies. A group called the Afghan Youth

<sup>6</sup> Sources: IRIN news, *'Afghanistan: Rally calls for protection of women following triple murder'*, Kabul, 5 May 2005, available online: [www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=46970&SelectRegion=Asia&SelectCountry=AFGHANISTAN](http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=46970&SelectRegion=Asia&SelectCountry=AFGHANISTAN) and Amnesty International, *'Afghanistan: Calling for fair and thorough investigations for crimes against women'*, 12 May 2005. Also: IRIN news, *'Afghanistan: Domestic violence intolerable, say battered women and girls'*, Kabul, 13 April 2005.

Convention has allegedly claimed responsibility. One woman was publicly executed on 20 April – initially stoned and then beaten to death – for suspected adultery in Badakhshan province, in North-East Afghanistan. It was allegedly the first public execution of a woman for committing adultery since the Taleban regime was removed at the end of 2001, and took place within 48 hours of her condemnation by a local ulema court. The man accused of committing adultery with her was freed after being whipped a hundred times. Another woman was shot at the end of the month when she participated in a national day celebration in the western city of Herat.

According to the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA), violent incidents against women are increasing in Afghanistan but many remain unreported. The government is now under pressure by the UN in Kabul to take immediate action against the killers but Amnesty International reports that the Afghan government has so far rarely investigated crimes against women and has a poor record in terms of holding perpetrators of human rights abuses to account. Women's groups see the killings not only as a security issue but also *'a political move to discourage and scare women'* as many consider running in the forthcoming parliamentary elections.

Violence against women is widespread in Afghanistan (see also AI's report *'Afghanistan: Women under attack'* in International publication section below). It includes forced marriage, *'honour'* killings and domestic violence in a country with only four shelters all in Kabul, which are currently hosting over

100 women and girls. The shelters are supported by MOWA and other agencies and provide protection, accommodation, food training and healthcare. Women are often referred to MOWA by the office of the attorney general or the Supreme Court, up to 20 per day according to current statistics. Others come directly to the Ministry for help but the limited space available means that 30 women are currently in prison for their own safety. Some women testified to IRIN (Integrated Regional Information Network) that they were treated like animals and used for settling disputes between two families or tribes.

### **Egypt: demonstrators sexually assaulted whilst protesting against *'flawed'* referendum**

The BBC reported on 1 June that a number of women testified that loyalists President Mubarak's party had assaulted them during a demonstration against a forthcoming referendum. The subject of the referendum is the proposed multi-candidate presidential elections due to take place later this year.<sup>7</sup>

The women who complained to the police about incidents of *'groping, harassment and assault by men suspected of being government supporters'* also said that police and security forces stood by or shouted orders when the attacks took place. Some women were said to have had their clothes torn apart and were left completely naked in the streets. The government response was to blame the assaults on *'emotional tension'* but

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<sup>7</sup> BBC news, 'Egypt anger over "groping attacks"', 1 June 2005 at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\\_east/4600133.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4600133.stm)

others described the incidents as a '*black day*' for Egypt and are determined to bring the perpetrators to justice. Demonstrators protested few days later in Cairo demanding that Interior Minister Habib el-Adly resign after allegations that he allowed the sexual assaults on women at the previous pro-democracy demonstration.

The incidents occurred days after the World Economic Forum published its report putting Egypt under the spotlight on gender issues by stating it has the largest social and economic disparity between the sexes amongst 60 countries studied, along with Jordan, Pakistan and Turkey.<sup>8</sup> 56% of women over 15 in Egypt are illiterate compared to 33% of men. As of 2003 only 2.4 percent of parliamentarians are female. The National Council for Women says the report should have highlighted the '*significant steps towards improving women's participation*' in politics but Dr Nawal El Saadawi, a leading Egyptian feminist and sociologist, confirms that '*women have no role in Egyptian politics, this is a very male dominated class society. We have one man or one family rule; we don't have political institutions or political parties*'.

Details on how the study was carried out can be found in WEF's report '*Women's Empowerment: Measuring the Gender Gap*', available online at: [www.weforum.org/gendergap](http://www.weforum.org/gendergap).

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<sup>8</sup> Source: IRIN, Middle East Weekly report, '*Egypt: Mixed reaction to WEF report on women's status*', Cairo, 18 May 2005.

### **Bahrain: Prominent woman activist on trial for being outspoken against family courts**

Ghada Jamsheer is the head of the Women's Petition Committee (WPC), a network of activists demanding the codification of the kingdom's family laws and the reform of its family courts. Whilst there are no written status laws in Bahrain, there are two family courts which are Shari'a based, one for Sunni and one for Shia Muslims. The courts hear personal status cases, including marriage, divorce, custody and inheritance cases and Human Rights Watch reports that judgments are based on the judges' own reading of Islamic jurisprudence. Furthermore, '*judges presiding over these courts are generally conservative religious scholars with limited formal legal training. Many of them are unapologetically adverse to women's equality and persistently favour men in their rulings.*'

Since 2001, WPC has gathered evidence on hundreds of cases held in family courts where religious jurisprudence was misinterpreted resulting in Bahraini women being denied their rights arbitrarily. Some women were denied custody of their children because they work or are pursuing higher education. According to HRW, Ghada Jamsheer has organised protests and a hunger strike in the last four years in order to highlight women's predicament in family courts. She has also presented dozens of complaints to the Ministry of Justice and the Office of the King describing the mishandling of cases by specific judges. Two years ago, WPC collected 1,700 signatures for a petition demanding legislative and judicial changes.

The government promised a codified family law including a provision to grant divorced women presumptive child custody but no action has been taken so far. Now HRW says Ghad Jamsheer faces three trials for her role in criticizing the family courts and up to 15 years in prison if convicted. LaShawn R. Jefferson, Women's Rights director at Human Rights Watch said: *'These lawsuits are a blatant attempt to silence her and undermine the reform efforts she spearheads.'*

Source: Human Rights Watch Press release, *'Bahrain: Courts Try to Silence Women's Rights Activist'*, New York, 2 June 2005, at <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2005/06/02/bahrai11062.htm>.

### Campaigns to stop '*honour*' killings in Middle East and Asia

In Iraq, it is believed that the rise in the number of '*honour*' killings since the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime is due to an increased influence of conservative attitudes.<sup>9</sup> '*Honour*' killings are often unreported thus difficult to quantify but a study conducted by the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) reveals that more than 400 women have been raped since Saddam's downfall and over half were later murdered in '*honour*' killings. Other motives for '*honour*' killings include a woman's refusal to accept her family choice of marriage partner or

<sup>9</sup> Source: Ziyad Khalaf al-Ajely, '*Killing for 'honour'*', in Iraqi Crisis Report No. 125, Institute of War and Peace Reporting, Baghdad, 17 May 2005.

marrying against the family's wish, or falling pregnant outside of wedlock.

Both MOWA and the Women's Freedom Organisation, an Iraqi NGO, have established safe houses for women escaping '*honour*' killings and other forms of violence. However it is not clear how the practice, which is widely accepted amongst various Iraqi tribal communities, will be eradicated. Progressive groups also consider the rise in Islamic fundamentalism a threat to women's rights. Women activists who have been calling for improved women's rights and equality with men since the downfall of Saddam Hussein's regime are considered as traitors to Islam.<sup>10</sup> Many have been killed since the beginning of 2005 - a dozen in Baghdad, 20 in Mosul - as a consequence of their outspoken engagements, participation in politics, or because of their involvement with NGOs. Some were also murdered for not obeying to dress codes prescribed by posters put on walls of schools, mosques and shops.

In Pakistan's tribal belt, and in particular the southern province of Baluchistan, human rights activists denounce the increasing use of '*honour*' killing for settling personal disputes from what used to be an unusual custom to punish both sexes for having illicit relationships, the UN Integration Regional Information Network (IRIN) reports. The practice has no Islamic or legal roots but stems from traditional socio-cultural norms. Women can become a victim for having an illicit relationship, marrying a man of her

<sup>10</sup> Source: IRIN, '*Iraq: Focus on threats against progressive women*', Baghdad, 21 March 2003, at: [www.cidi.org/humanitarian/hsr/iraq/ixl266.html](http://www.cidi.org/humanitarian/hsr/iraq/ixl266.html).

choice, going outside the home without the permission of a male family member, seeking a divorce, or seeking employment outside the family home.

However, according to Dr Arif Mehmood, campaign manager at Oxfam, women in Pakistan are being killed to *'settle disputes, acquire land, or pay off debts. But "honour" is used as a convenient cover to legitimise crimes against women'*. A social activist from Naseerabad, Baluchistan, confirmed: *'To kill a sister, daughter, wife or other female family member for personal financial gains is usual in this region'*. Thus it is not uncommon for a male to accuse a rival of illicit relations with one of his female relatives and to kill her to prove it, before being rewarded with a ransom or a marriage with a sister or daughter of his opponent.

Like in Iraq, there are no official statistics on *'honour'* crimes in Pakistan. The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan counted 579 victims in 2004, 546 of which were women. The Pakistani government has recently adopted a law that condemns killers convicted of *'honour'* crimes to the death penalty but for any judicial process to take place, the crimes have to be reported or uncovered. As part of a wider campaign against violence against women in South-East Asia, Oxfam has launched a six-year campaign in Baluchistan to reduce the social acceptance of the practice through engagement with traditional tribal leadership, elders, religious leaders as well as political activists and local civil society groups.

In Jordan, *'Honour'* killings account for one-third of all violent deaths according to an article by the Christian Science Monitor dated of March 2005.<sup>11</sup> Despite this high proportion in a country of low crime rates, until recently *'honour'* killings attracted little attention. A widespread campaign has been organised by various activists, and in particular the Jordanian Women's Union, calling for better protection for women and asking for a change in the laws that currently only provide lenient sentences against perpetrators.<sup>12</sup>

But the practice is deeply entrenched in a tribal society that believes that *'an unchaste woman destroys not only her own reputation, but also the name and 'honour' of all her family'*. It is therefore not surprising that some Jordanian MPs oppose the changes. One commented: *'Women adulterers cause a great threat to our society because they are the main reason that such acts take place. If men do not find women with whom to commit adultery, then they will become good on their own.'* Yet according to journalist Rana Hussein, who has been campaigning for the introduction of stricter laws to punish *'honour'* crimes, nearly 70% of victims of *'honour'* killings are virgins.

Whilst it is believed to be a tribal custom, the laws in Jordan are clearly sanctioning the practice, in particular Article 340 of the Jordanian Penal Code often used in defence along with Article

<sup>11</sup> Source: Alasdair Soussi, *'Women challenge "honour" killings'*, in *Christian Science Monitor*, 2 March 2005 at [www.csmonitor.com/2005/0302/p15s01-wome.html](http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0302/p15s01-wome.html).

<sup>12</sup> See IRIN, *'Jordan: Special report on 'honour' killings'*, 18 April 2005, online at: [www.irinnews.org/S\\_report.asp?ReportID=46677&SelectRegion=Middle\\_East](http://www.irinnews.org/S_report.asp?ReportID=46677&SelectRegion=Middle_East).

98 which provides for a reduced sentence if the perpetrator kills another person in a '*fit of fury*'. In addition, many families convince relatives under 18 to commit the crime as under-age perpetrators are only sent to juvenile centres and released with a clear criminal record.

Provisions for protection are scarce: Some women live in prison for their own protection and a few only can benefit from the Jordanian Women's Union six-bed shelter in Amman. The department of social services offers counselling for family reconciliation but this is said to be rarely successful.

In the Palestinian territories, '*honour*' killing is currently viewed as a crime of passion by the law with '*extenuating circumstances*' and perpetrators are often let off with lenient sentences.<sup>13</sup> More than 300 Palestinian women recently demonstrated requesting a change in the legislation, especially as the number of '*honour*' crimes has risen recently. The Palestinian Authority is now looking to introduce new legislation that would make '*honour*' killing a capital crime like other murders.

Whilst common in many Muslim countries, '*honour*' killings has also been reported in Brazil and Ecuador and Western countries with immigrant populations such as the United Kingdom, Sweden, Italy and Germany. It is estimated that there are 5,000 cases worldwide a year.

<sup>13</sup> Source: Rasha Ellass, '*Honor Killings Protested; Plan B Stalls*', in Women's Enews, 14 May 2005, online at: <http://womensenews.org/article.cfm/dyn/aid/2295>.

### Kuwait: women granted political rights

The Kuwaiti parliament approved on 16 May 2005 a bill extending full suffrage and political rights to women by a vote of 35 to 23. Once the bill receives assent by the Amir of Kuwait, it will become law and extend to Kuwaiti women the right to vote and stand in elections, beginning with the next national elections in 2007.<sup>14</sup> This means Kuwait's domestic legislation will be in line with its international obligations as the country acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1994 and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 1996.

The change in the law had previously been blocked by a majority of tribal and Islamist members of parliament who had argued that Islamic law prohibited women from positions of leadership. The amendment requires women voters and candidates to '*abide by Islamic law*' but women's rights leaders hope it will merely require separate polling places for women and men.

In January 2004, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) highlighted in strong terms the lack of women's political rights and the impact on women's enjoyment of other rights protected under the

<sup>14</sup> Sources : BBC News, '*Kuwaiti women win right to vote*', 17<sup>th</sup> May 2005 [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/455274\\_9.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/455274_9.stm). AI, 'Kuwait: Amnesty International welcomes the extension of political rights to women' 20 May 2005, at <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE170042005>.

Convention. It recommended that express steps be taken.

### related information

A new report from Amnesty International (AI), *'GCC States: Women Deserve Better Respect and Dignity'*, looks at violence against women in the family in the Gulf Co-operation Council countries including Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates. Highlighting the failure of the public authorities, particularly the police, to provide protection, it also looks at social and legal practices that facilitate and perpetuate violence against women, and block their escape from violence in the home. The report examines the situation of migrant domestic workers, including violence against them, the multiple forms of discrimination they face, violations by the authorities, and abuses by employers. Available at <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE040042005>.

### European Parliament urges Jamaica to End Violence and Homophobia

Member of the European Parliament called on the Government of Jamaica to *'repeal sections 76, 77 and 79 of the Offences Against the Person Act, which criminalise sex between consenting adult men and are used as justification for unacceptable harassment, notably against HIV/AIDS educators; asks the Government of Jamaica to actively fight widespread homophobia'*.

The practice was documented by Human Rights Watch in its November 2004

report on Jamaica, *'Hated to Death'*. See also RWRP *'Safe for Whom? Women's human rights abuses and protection in "safe list" countries: Albania, Jamaica and Ukraine'*, Asylum Aid, June 2004.

### EU: Council of Ministers adopt convention against trafficking

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted the Convention on action against trafficking in human beings, along with two other treaties, on 3 May.<sup>15</sup> The aim is to *'prevent and combat trafficking in human beings in all its forms, namely national or international, whether or not it is linked with organised crime'*.

However, the Convention met with criticism by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and NGOs such as Amnesty International and Anti-Slavery International. The convention was criticised in particular for failing to focus on the protection of victims of trafficking and with provisions – some of which are binding – concentrating instead on borders protection. For instance the right to seek asylum is omitted in the text. Victims will have a minimum period of 30 days as a recovery and reflection period, instead of a recommended period of at least 6 months put forward by NGOs. The UK has not ratified the Convention.

<sup>15</sup> Source: ECRE 'ECRAN Weekly', May 2005.

### International projects & events

#### **Burundian woman recipient of UNHCR Refugee Award**

A Burundian woman has been selected for the UNHCR's 2005 Nansen Refugee Award. Marguerite Barankitse has been honoured for her work assisting more than 10,000 children of all ethnic origins, affected by the civil war in Burundi and other conflicts in the region. Ms Barankitse is the director of the NGO 'Maison Shalom' in Ruyigi, one of the country's poorest provinces. The shelter provides refuge, medical care and education for displaced and unaccompanied children, including refugees and returnees. Her organization is currently helping refugee women and children who are returning to Burundi after years of exile in Tanzania to rebuild their lives. For more information on the project see [www.maison-des-anges.org](http://www.maison-des-anges.org).

#### **New care facility for people with HIV & AIDS in Nairobi**

Kenya's Ministry of Health and the international medical charity inaugurated on Thursday a new facility in Nairobi's to provide comprehensive care to people living with HIV/AIDS. The Comprehensive Care Centre, in the Mbagathi District Hospital, run jointly by the Kenyan Ministry of Health and Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) Belgium, will provide counselling, testing and treatment with antiretroviral (ARV) drugs to those living with HIV. The centre will also train the staff in the diagnosis and care of HIV/AIDS patients.

Some 1.24 million Kenyans are living with HIV and 200,000 of them require ARV treatment. For more information see [www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=46857](http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=46857).

#### **Promoting preventative measures to combat trafficking for sexual exploitation**

European Women's Lobby (EWL) is running a project on '*Promoting preventative measures to combat trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation*', together with the Coalition against Trafficking in Women (CATW).

The purpose of this project is to address gaps in current anti-trafficking programs and policies that avoid focusing on gender equality, the demand, and the links between trafficking and prostitution. It will support women's NGOs working on these issues in 12 countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Kosovo/Albania, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Russia, and Serbia-Montenegro, and will draft national action plans with all the countries involved. A first national action took place in the Czech Republic, where a seminar was organised in Prague on 24 March. The meeting discussed the Czech legislative proposal to regulate prostitution (the proposal was then rejected by the Czech Chamber of Deputies on March 29). For more information contact Colette De Troy: [centre-violence@womenlobby.org](mailto:centre-violence@womenlobby.org).



## Activities for World Refugee Day 20 June 2005

The European Network 'UNITED for Intercultural Action' publishes a List of activities taking place around World Refugee Day. The List of activities is a special section of the Calendar of Internationalism, updated weekly on-line and sent in a hardcopy every three months to more than 2500 organisations all over Europe. For information on adding events contact: [info@unitedagainstracism.org](mailto:info@unitedagainstracism.org). For a list of events published so far visit: [www.united.non-profit.nl/pages/act05rfc.htm](http://www.united.non-profit.nl/pages/act05rfc.htm) and [www.unhcr.ch/](http://www.unhcr.ch/) (then go to 'Special Events')

## International Day for the support of victims of torture

26<sup>th</sup> June is the United Nations International Day for the support of victims of torture, an opportunity to denounce the use of torture, a cruel violation of human rights. The UN urges supporters to show solidarity with victims of torture and take action to stop these heinous abuses. For events and materials go to the following websites: International Rehabilitation Council for Torture victims at:

[www.irct.org/usr/irct/home.nsf/unid/BKEN-5GWHGJ](http://www.irct.org/usr/irct/home.nsf/unid/BKEN-5GWHGJ)

Amnesty International at:

[www.amnestyusa.org/stoptorture/denounce\\_torture.html](http://www.amnestyusa.org/stoptorture/denounce_torture.html).

## International Conference for Ending Occupation, War and Violence

The 13th International Conference of Women in Black will take place in Jerusalem 12-16 August 2005. On the programme are lectures, workshops and multi-cultural events; an exhibit of Women in Black materials from around the world; fact-finding tours/teach-ins about Palestinian occupied areas; events to express opposition to occupation, war, and violence.

Most of the conference sessions will be held in Jerusalem but will include visits to Palestinian cities and towns to learn about the tragedy of occupation and also in order to demonstrate opposition to the occupation and all its attendant violence. For additional information please visit: [http://coalitionofwomen.org/home/english/events/women\\_in\\_black\\_0805](http://coalitionofwomen.org/home/english/events/women_in_black_0805) from where you can email Women in Black.

## new publications

### international

## Women's bodies as a battleground in the DRC

A new report produced by International Alert (IA) is based on the findings of research carried out by two local women's organisations based in South Kivu, Eastern DRC. According to IA, the research report entitled '*Women's bodies as a battleground: Sexual violence against women and girls during the war in the DRC, South Kivu (1996-2003)*' goes beyond documenting the violation of women's human rights during the war in DRC to examining the socio-cultural

roots of this violence and the different forms it takes.

The report in English and French can be found on the web at the following links:

[www.international-alert.org/pdf/pubwpp/sexual\\_violence\\_ongo\\_english.pdf](http://www.international-alert.org/pdf/pubwpp/sexual_violence_ongo_english.pdf) and [www.international-alert.org/pdf/pubwpp/sexual\\_violence\\_ongo\\_french.pdf](http://www.international-alert.org/pdf/pubwpp/sexual_violence_ongo_french.pdf).

### **The Future of Women's Rights: Global Visions and Strategies**

(Zed Books & Association for Women's Rights in Development, 2004) is a collection of essays highlighting various trends which may threaten the ongoing work of women's movements in advancing gender equality, women's human rights and sustainable human development. Issues raised include globalization and neoliberal economics, developments in biotechnology, the neo-conservative backlash against women's rights, monopolistic ownership patterns over information technologies that exclude women, fundamentalisms of various kinds and the rise of identity politics that subordinate or marginalize women's issues, and the increase in violent conflict and war. Order at <http://www.awid.org/publications/FutureWomensRights.pdf>

### **AI's reports on women's rights in Nigeria and Afghanistan**

AI examines the situation for women experiencing domestic violence in '*Nigeria: Unheard voices – violence against women in the family*'. According to the report, up to two-thirds of women in certain communities in Lagos State,

Nigeria are believed to have experienced physical, sexual or psychological violence in the family, with neither the Lagos government nor the Federal government doing anything to stem the tide of violence – and in some cases even condoning it. For further information or to see a copy of the full report, please see

[http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/en\\_gafr440042005](http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/en_gafr440042005)

Another new report '*Afghanistan: Women under attack*' highlights the difficulties and dangers faced by women, stating '*throughout the country, few women are exempt from violence or safe from the threat of it.*'

Daily, Afghan women are at risk of abduction and rape by armed individuals, forced marriage and being traded in settlement of disputes and debts. They face discrimination from all segments of society as well as by state officials. Violence against women is widely accepted by the community and inadequately addressed at the highest levels of the government and the judiciary. Investigations by the authorities into complaints of violent attacks, rape, murders or suicide of women are neither routine nor systematic, and few result in prosecutions. For the full report, see [http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/EN\\_GASA110072005](http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/EN_GASA110072005).

### **Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa: Citizenship and Justice**

This is a new report by Freedom House. The first ever comparative assessment of women's rights in the Middle East and North Africa, the report found a substantial deficit in women's rights in the 16 countries and one territory reviewed. Women are at a profound disadvantage in practically every institution of society: the criminal justice system, the economy, education, health care, and the media.

The study rates countries on a numerical scale, offering the first such ranking of the status of women in the region. The survey's methodology is derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Only three countries -- Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria -- scored above average in some areas of women's rights. Saudi Arabia earned the lowest scores.

According to the study, women in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) face a systematic gender gap, aided in large measure by discriminatory laws and by the routine lack of enforcement of existing laws guaranteeing equality and fair treatment. While women in the region have made substantial gains in education, none of the countries evaluated meets internationally recognized standards for women's rights protections.

The study identifies several major obstacles that prevent women in the MENA region from enjoying the full range of legal, civil, political, economic, and social rights, among them inferior status due to legal discrimination, discrimination in nationality and citizenship laws, domestic violence, lack of information, absence of voice, women's inferior status in family law and

lack of complaint mechanisms. The report is available at:

[www.freedomhouse.org/research/menasurvey/](http://www.freedomhouse.org/research/menasurvey/).

### Forgotten Casualties of War: Girls in Armed Conflict

This Save the Children's publication (27 April 2005) reveals that over 120,000 girls are working for armed groups around the world.

The report identifies a '*hidden army*' or '*generation*' of girls, some as young as eight, who are abducted against their will to live life in the army. The roles of the girls vary from being actual soldiers through to serving as porters, cleaners and cooks. Almost all are forced to serve as sex slaves or '*wives*'. In Uganda, there are an estimated 6,500 girl soldiers captured in the rebel Lord Resistance Army (33% of the total army). In the Democratic Republic of Congo, there are thought to be 12,000 girls still associated with armed forces. In Sri Lanka, 21,500 girls are considered to be associated with armed conflict (43% of all the children fighting).

Even after leaving the conflict situation, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes are underfunded, leaving girls vulnerable to recriminations and ostracism by their families and communities.

Available at <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/scuk/jsp/resources/details.jsp?id=2746&group=resources&section=news&subsection=details> or by phone: 020 7012 6841

## Searching for Best Practices to Counter Human Trafficking in Africa: A Focus on Women and Children

The report by UNESCO published in March 2005 examines trends and patterns of trafficking in the region and the legal framework, and goes on to look at the work and input of experts and agencies involved in anti-trafficking initiatives in order to propose best practice strategies for a way forward. Available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001384/138447E.pdf>

This report and other news and resources on trafficking are highlighted on the website of HumanTrafficking.org – the latest newsletter is at [www.humantrafficking.org/newsletter/2005/april.html](http://www.humantrafficking.org/newsletter/2005/april.html)

## 'Fertile Fields: Trafficking in Persons in Central Asia'

(Prof. Liz Kelly, IOM TCC, Vienna, 2005, ISBN 978-92-9068-243-1). The report highlights that whilst Central Asia has not yet been identified as a trafficking 'hot spot', there is evidence that sexual and labour exploitation - often combined - is widespread in the region. Victims are mainly recruited through deceptive recruitment, and mostly through illegal 'travel' and 'employment' agencies. The report 'maps out the regional patterns of trafficking in persons in Central Asia, outlines the links to labour migration, presents data on trafficking victims assisted in Central Asia, determines gaps in existing data and develops recommendations on counter-trafficking responses.' For more information,

please visit [www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int). Orders may also be sent directly to International Organization for Migration, Publications Unit, 17 route des Morillons, 1211 Geneva, E-mail: [publications@iom.int](mailto:publications@iom.int).

**related publication** **A Global Alliance Against Forced Labour** by the International Labour Office reveals that at least 12.3 million people are trapped in forced labour in the world today, and 2.45 million of them are victims of human trafficking. 43% of trafficking victims, or 1.4 million people, are forced into commercial sexual exploitation such as prostitution. Another one-third are trafficked for economic exploitation. Children under age 18 comprise up to half of forced labourers in the world today. The report concludes that discrimination based on gender or ethnic origin is a major determinant of trafficking, and poverty and gender-specific cultural practices make women especially vulnerable. Report is online at: [www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inf/pr/2005/22.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inf/pr/2005/22.htm).

## Report on Roma's Human Rights

The Human Rights Commissioner for the Council of Europe, Alvaro Gil-Robles, has published a report on *the human rights situation of the Roma, Sinti and Travellers in Europe*. The report includes information on allegations of forced sterilisations of Romani women carried out in Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic, and urges that Roma asylum seekers should not be returned to Kosovo because of the risk of racially motivated violent attacks. Available at

[http://www.coe.int/T/E/Commissioner\\_H.R/Communication\\_Unit/CommDH%282005%294\\_E.doc](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Commissioner_H.R/Communication_Unit/CommDH%282005%294_E.doc)

## Detention of Asylum Seekers Across Europe

This is a new report by Elodie Mignard for Positive Action in Housing which provides an overview of the detention of migrants and asylum seekers in the 15 EU member states. The report will be useful to anyone working with detained asylum seekers. For more information contact [home@paih.org](mailto:home@paih.org).

## new publications

UK

## Publication on Refugee women volunteers and employees

*'Refugee women - from volunteers to employees a research project on paid and unpaid work in the voluntary sector and volunteering as a pathway into employment'* documents the experiences of refugee women as volunteers in a range of organisations, including Refugee Community Organisations, refugee agencies and *'mainstream'* or generic voluntary organisations in the UK. It identifies the barriers refugee women face in making the transition from voluntary to paid work and the resources they use to overcome them. The report includes recommendations regarding how refugee women's concerns could be included in employment and equal opportunities policies and practices. Available from the Working Lives Research Institute online at:

[www.workinglives.org/volunteers.html](http://www.workinglives.org/volunteers.html)

## A study of asylum seekers with special needs

This report by the Refugee Council (April 2005) documents the findings of a survey of asylum seekers with special needs, in a context where there are often disputes over responsibilities for care and support between the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) and local authorities. The study highlights the range of issues that are not being addressed by the current support system and confirms how current policy is failing to meet the needs of asylum seekers with special needs. Recommendations are made for improved provision of services for asylum seekers. Available at [www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/downloads/rc\\_reports/AsylumseekersspecialneedsApril2005.pdf](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/downloads/rc_reports/AsylumseekersspecialneedsApril2005.pdf)

## *Gendered Migrations: Towards gender sensitive policies in the UK*

(by Eleonore Kofman, Parvati Raghuram and Matt Merefield, Institute for Public Policy Research) is part of our Working Paper series and seeks to understand the changing nature of contemporary gendered migrations in the UK. You can listen to a piece about the working paper on Radio 4's Woman's Hour [www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour/2005\\_23\\_mon\\_02.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour/2005_23_mon_02.shtml). See also IPPR website at [www.ippr.org/migration](http://www.ippr.org/migration).

### online resources

#### international

Amnesty International has published a new fact sheet on the *International Criminal Court: Ensuring justice for women*. The Rome Statute is the first international treaty to expressly recognize a broad spectrum of sexual and gender-based violence as some of the gravest crimes under international law. The Statute gives the ICC jurisdiction over genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Although both men and women can be the victims of most of these crimes, some of them, such as enforced pregnancy, can be committed only against women. Others, such as rape and sexual assault are committed disproportionately against women. The fact sheet describes how the ICC defines crimes against women and how women are involved in the processes of the court both as officials and witnesses. Available at <http://www.amnestyusa.org/icc/document.do?id=962E12D23AAB025080256FC700373120>

### Amnesty International's new website on HIV/AIDS

The new site is based on the premise that human rights abuses contribute to the spread of HIV and undermine attempts to protect people from becoming infected, and once infected, from receiving needed treatment and care. Follow the following weblink: [www.amnestyusa.org/hiv\\_aids/index.do](http://www.amnestyusa.org/hiv_aids/index.do).

**Online course on Sex Trafficking**  
'*Advanced Topics in Sex Trafficking*' is an online course that will focus on the sexual exploitation and abuse of women and children through trafficking, prostitution, and pornography.<sup>16</sup> Topics covered will include: the organization and operation of criminal networks, official corruption, the role of the state in facilitating and combating sexual exploitation, health effects, perpetrator behavior, and policy debates. There will be particular focus on victim needs and services. Course materials include theoretical essays, research reports, expert testimonies, prevention education materials, protocols for services, and curricula for recovery programs.

The course will be accessed through WebCT at the University of Rhode Island from Sept 7 - Dec 9. Registration is open to non-URI students on July 6, 2005. For more information, email course instructor Dr Donna Hughes at [dhughes@uri.edu](mailto:dhughes@uri.edu) or visit online: [www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes](http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes) and [https://webct.uri.edu/public/WMS490\\_Hughes/index.html](https://webct.uri.edu/public/WMS490_Hughes/index.html).

### notice board

#### Two vacancies at RWA

The Refugee Women's Association is seeking to recruit a Partnership Development Officer (Salary £25,200 - £28,100 pa. incl. London Weighting) and an Administrative Officer (Salary

<sup>16</sup> Source: Neww Polska, newsletter no. 79, [www.neww.org.pl/en.php/news/news/1.html?&nw=1067&re=1](http://www.neww.org.pl/en.php/news/news/1.html?&nw=1067&re=1).

£18,500 - £19,500 pa. incl. London Weighting). For more information or an application pack, contact RWA on telephone number: 020 7923 2412 or email: [info@refugeewomen.org](mailto:info@refugeewomen.org) or write to: RWA, Print House, 18 Ashwin Street, London E8 3DL enclosing a large SAE (46p). Closing date: Tuesday 21 June. Interviews: week beginning 27 June.

### Grants for academic refugees

CARA provides grants to academic refugees who are now living in the UK, and seeking to further their educational or vocational goals. Grants may cover college expenses, childcare expenses and in limited cases maintenance. To be eligible, you must have held a paid academic post at a non-UK university, and have UK Refugee Status, Leave to Remain (Indefinite, Exceptional or Discretionary) or Humanitarian Protection; in exceptional circumstances, asylum seekers may be helped. Women are particularly encouraged to apply. For more details and help with applying, contact Brooke Sperry, Programme Assistant, on 020 7021 0884 or [sperry.cara@lsbu.ac.uk](mailto:sperry.cara@lsbu.ac.uk), or Marieke Stroink, Programme Officer on 020 7021 0884 or [schreiber.cara@lsbu.ac.uk](mailto:schreiber.cara@lsbu.ac.uk). Deadline for applications: 12.00pm on 1 July 2005.

### Fee Waivers for Refugee Students on the Refugee Studies MA Programme at UEL

The MA Refugee Studies Programme at the University of East London is pleased to announce a number of fee waivers available to qualified students who can show that they have been granted refugee status or

have applied for asylum in the UK. A number of fee waivers, sponsored by the Pauline Ortiz Memorial Fund, will be granted on the basis of strong academic and/or relevant professional experience and financial need. The deadline for applications for the course and the scholarship is 30 June 2005.

The MA in Refugee Studies (one year full-time, two years part-time) links the study of forced migration to the lived experience of refugee communities. It offers specialist options in racism, refugee education and schools, gender and psycho-social issues, and cultures of exile. For more information contact Diane Ball: [D.M.Ball@uel.ac.uk](mailto:D.M.Ball@uel.ac.uk) ; tel 020 8223 2770 or see [www.uel.ac.uk/ssmcs/programmes/postgraduate/refugeestudies/index.htm](http://www.uel.ac.uk/ssmcs/programmes/postgraduate/refugeestudies/index.htm).

### Health & Marriage Rules

#### Campaigns by JCWI (Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants)

Are you an asylum seeker, overstayer or other immigrant who has been refused, or charged for, non-urgent medical care in a hospital? Would you be interested in telling your story to us and helping us to campaign against the rules? Please send us your details in complete confidence to [info@jcw.org.uk](mailto:info@jcw.org.uk).

Please send any information that you would like to see published in our next double edition (no. 52 July/August) by 26 July 2005 (see email or postal address on back cover).

# women's asylum news

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

## Membership Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

STANDARD

UNWAGED

£4 / month = £48 / year

£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

UNWAGED

£2 / month = £24 / year

£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 £ \_\_\_\_\_

## Asylum Aid - STANDING ORDER FORM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Gift Aid Declaration

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

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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