

YOUR VOICE



London Refugee Voice



Strengthening your Voice

8th October 2009

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Borders, Immigration and Citizenship News

Cuts in Asylum Support

From 5th October 2009, people who enter the UK seeking asylum and sanctuary have had their support, especially affecting single parents, who are already expected to survive on benefits 30% less than British families.

The Guardian brings to light how these cuts go against the UN Convention on the Rights of Children which clearly states that all actions and policies taken by the state should be in the best interest of the child by further discriminating against children already fleeing oppression, torture and persecution.

This decision has infuriated organisations working with refugees across the UK, causing them to hit out at the government, branding the cuts “appalling”. They are urging the government instead to allow asylum seekers to work so that they are given the opportunity to support themselves instead of having to rely on state benefits. To read more see:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/theobserver/2009/oct/04/asylum-seekers-childrens-rights-benefits> and
<http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/news/press/2009/october/20091005.htm>

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Congolese Refugees warned by UNHCR Not to Go Home

The U.N. refugee agency says its efforts to warn a group of more than 2,000 Congolese refugees in Burundi not to return to the homes they fled in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo as the current situation in South Kivu province is still too volatile is not working .

According to the UNHCR spokesman, Andrej Mahecic the refugees, living in Gihinga camp in Mwaro province since 2004 adamant on going back and UNHCR have no power to prevent them from going back.

He says the UNHCR supports repatriation as a preferred solution for any refugee, but he says conditions for organized voluntary repatriation to eastern DRC do not exist right now. To read more See:

<http://www.voanews.com/english/2009-10-06-voa34.cfm>

Growing concern for displaced Tamils due to Monsoon Floods

A British Minister says that approaching the Monsoon season in Sri Lanka has left a quarter of million displaced Tamils in dire humanitarian need of being allowed out of internment camps as the camps may face flash floods .

The Sri Lankan government says people are being held in "welfare

camps" while they are screened to see whether they were rebels and denies that the Tamils are detained under "conditions of internment", a phrase used by UN officials.

The UN has said the bad conditions in the camps may result in growing frustrations and two children have already been injured in a standoff between Tamils and the Sri Lankan army. To read more See:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/oct/06/monsoon-floods-threaten-tamils> and

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south-asia/8293982.stm>

Sudanese refugees face rape in Chad

According to an Amnesty International report Sudanese women who escaped the Darfur conflict to eastern Chad are facing high levels of sexual violence.

The report also states that the UN peacekeepers in Chad have failed to stop these attacks in and around the dozen camps dotted along the border. "These women fled Darfur hoping that the international community would offer them safety and protection. " To Read more See:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/8282360.stm> and

<http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hYOaufE9vop-HzNKRdMQO39E1xeQD9B19VQ00>



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Meetings

* **LRV** would like to thank our members who participated in **The Borders, Immigration & Citizenship Act Meeting** on 30th September.



A special thank you to Alison Harvey (ILPA) and Benjamin Brown (UKBA) for sharing their experience and knowledge.

Refugee and Migrant Climate Change Forum

Monday 19th October from 2-5pm at the Amnesty Action Centre, London EC2A 3EA (travel expenses reimbursed, refreshments provided)

The event will provide a space for Refugee Community Organisations as well as refugees and migrants to come together to find out more about and discuss **climate change and its impact on migration**. Through scientist presentations and discussion workshops, the event will explore questions like:

- **How are things changing in countries across the global south due to climate change?**
- **How could people who have to migrate because of climate change be protected?**
- **What can refugees and migrants in the UK do about it?**

The event is being organised by the Climate Outreach Information Network in partnership with a committee of individuals and organisations including Praxis, Migrants Rights Network, Refuge Action, Refugee Council, Brent Association for Voluntary Action, Bangladesh Council in Europe, Hackney Community Environmental Project and Doctors of the World.

Please confirm your attendance at this meeting by contacting Catrina Pickering at catrina@coinet.org.uk or 01865 403 334. For further information see: www.coinet.org.uk.



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