

⚡ Sanctuary ⚡

A bi-monthly newsletter on asylum, refugee and migrant matters from a religious perspective
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OVERVIEW

Asylum Applications for the two months, Jan (189) and Feb (176), 2010, totalled 365.

First Instance: Of 424 applications processed in Jan/Feb '10, some 9 applicants were recognized as refugees at *first instance* and some 284 applicants were refused following interview. A further 79 refusals relate mainly to cases *withdrawn/deemed withdrawn*. Some 52 applicants were returned to the EU country where they first arrived to have their case processed there (*Dublin II Reg*).

Appeal Stage: Of 408 *Substantive Appeals* processed in Jan/Feb'10, 24 appellants were recognized as refugees (ie. *First Instance* negative decisions overturned), 358 were refused & 26 appeals were withdrawn.

Top Countries of Origin of asylum applicants in Jan/Feb '10: Nigeria: 21%; Pakistan: 11%; China: 9%; Ghana: 6%; Afghanistan: 5%.

Backlog of unprocessed cases at 28 February 2010: 2,575 (*First Instance: 472; Appeals: 2,103*).

Family Reunification (FR): New applications in Jan/Feb'10 totalled 67 (with 141 dependants). Some 62 applications (113 dependants) were processed to completion (ie. report sent to Min. Justice).

FR applicants - top countries of origin, Jan/Feb '10: Sudan:8%; Iraq:15%; Afghanistan: 9%; Somalia: 9%; Uganda: 6%

Direct Provision - 21/03/'10; **Centres:** 47; **Residents:** 5,873, in 19 cos; 792 in Mosney; 210-315 in 10 centres (Athlone, Ballyhaunis, Clondalkin, Cork x 2, Galway x 2, Knockalisheen, Monaghan, Sligo); 100-200 in 6 centres, and up to 95 persons in 30 centres.

Self-Catering: 4 Centres - Dublin, Ballaghaderreen, Dundalk, Mallow. **Capacity:** 412 people; **Residents:** 276. **Reception Centre** (1) - Baleskin. **Capacity:** 369; **Residents:** 197. (Stats: Dept of Justice, Equality and Law Reform)

CHURCH

The Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, in a press statement on the final day of the spring general meeting, 10 March 2010, drew attention to migrants and people seeking asylum - (www.catholicbishops.ie) -

Migrants: *Bishops expressed concern regarding migrant workers who, in common with many Irish people, are losing their employment at this time of recession. They noted that...a significant number of migrants are choosing to remain in Ireland. In particular, migrant families, often with children who were born in this country and now attending school here, have put down roots and are well integrated.... It is essential, even in a time of decreased resources, that the rights of migrants in relation to work, access to services and entitlement to social benefits are fully respected.*

People seeking asylum: *Noting the significant decrease in numbers of people coming to seek asylum in this country, bishops discussed Ireland's international obligation to examine in a fair, prompt and transparent manner the application of those who come seeking a place of refuge. Bishops raised concern regarding the numbers of people, including many families, who spend years in 'Direct Provision' centres... Not allowed to take up employment, and with increasingly restricted access to social welfare benefits, many parents face serious challenges in raising their children. The current weekly cash payment to persons seeking asylum of €19.10 for an adult and €9.60 for a child, unchanged since 2000 when 'Direct Provision' was introduced, needs to be reviewed. In a recent study, One Size Doesn't Fit All (Nov 2009, the Free Legal Advice Centres, reflecting the views of many refugee support organisations, suggested for weekly payments: €65 for an adult and €38 for a child.*

Migration, a Phenomenon in the Era of Globalisation, a Sign of the Times - theme of the 6th World Congress on the Pastoral Care of Migrants & Refugees (9 -12 Nov '09). Its recommendations call on the Church to develop and increase its cooperation with governments, civil society and local authorities in advocating for migrants' dignity and rights. The Church is also urged to commit to combating trafficking and exploitation, to insist upon a rights-based approach & to promote family reunification.

www.zenit.org/article

EU and NATIONAL ISSUES

European Council on Refugees & Exiles (ECRE), in its assessment of the European Commission's *Proposal to recast the Qualification Directive*, generally welcomes the proposal in that it raises the standards of protection and is a step forward in harmonising at EU level the eligibility criteria for international protection. Particularly welcome is the alignment of rights granted to refugees and subsidiary protection beneficiaries and amendments to the definition of a family member and of the actors

of protection. Problematic provisions not addressed include the evidentiary assessment, exclusion and revocation provisions, and the eligibility criteria for subsidiary protection. www.ecre.org

EMBRACE - Congratulations to EMBRACE which has received a grant of £32,000 stg. from the NI Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister - recognition at official level for this *group of Christians working together to promote a positive response to people seeking sanctuary, refugees, migrant workers and minority ethnic people in N. Ireland.* www.embraceni.org

The NGO Alliance Against Racism (NAAR) has begun the process of compiling a Shadow Report in response to the Irish Government's (combined 3rd & 4th) Report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). NGOs and all groups now have a major opportunity to provide feedback to the UN on issues relating to racism in Ireland. To involve as many as possible in the NGO consultation process, particularly minority ethnic-led groups and organisations and individuals concerned with racism, a seminar will be held on Thurs 15 April, '10 (for details, cf **RESOURCES**, below).

Mentoring Programme - following the Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI) "train the trainers" session for organisations interested in conducting a mentoring programme, people interested in taking part, as a mentor or mentee, should contact Crosscare Migrant Project (01 873 2844); Doras Luimni Limerick (061 310328); Dodder Valley (Tallaght) Partnership (01 466 4280); Galway City Partnership (091 773466) or Avondhu Blackwater Partnership Cork (025 33411).

Further info - Fidèle Mutwarasibo, ICI Research and Integration Officer - fidele@immigrantcouncil.ie

RESOURCES

News in Black and White, Chinedu Onyejelem, from his Master's study on *How Black People Feel About Media Representation in Ireland* (ISBN-13: 978-3838341255). Available online, incl: www.amazon.co.uk

Integrating Limerick – the aim of the *Limerick City and County Integration Plan 2010 - 2012* is to *promote a vibrant, inclusive and dynamic society...* produced by the 20-Member *Limerick Integration Working Group*, co-chaired by Leonie Kerins (Doras Luimni) & Eugene Quinn (Jesuit Refugee Service).

The Opportunities of Multiculturalism - Post-Graduate Seminar, Wed 31 March, 4-6pm, South Training Room, Berkeley Library, TCD, convened by Amy Daughton, PhD student, School of Religions and Theology. **To book:** daughtoa@tcd.ie - <http://www.tcd.ie/longroomhub/events/forthcoming/>

Training for Trainers - The Africa Centre (9c Lr Abbey Street, D. 1) is facilitating a 4 day course - Wed 14, Thurs 15 April; Wed 21, Thurs 22 April - open to all Africans with an interest in development education and to those who wish to promote balanced images/messages on Africa and Africans in Ireland. Participants must commit to full course. **Apply:** Rebecca@africacentre.ie - 01 8656951

Racism in Ireland: Ensuring an NGO Voice at the UN - NGO Alliance Against Racism (NAAR) - seminar on participating in the NAAR shadow report to the UN, with inputs on the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) & the CERD process - Thurs 15 April, 2010, 9.30 - 2.00pm, EU House, 18 Dawson St., D 2. **Book:** Marian Tannam - justiceop@eircom.net - (01) 8574654

Learning Lab: 'Identities and Social Justice' - a public education project organised by FOMACS & the British Council. The 3-day forum, 13-15 April; 24 - 28 May; 20-24 Sept, aims to contribute to wider debates about cultural identity etc. **Cf** www.learninglab.ie: E-m: noomi@dhr.ie

TO PONDER

...we Christians have a lot to do for the world: to be committed to justice, to solidarity, to speak out against hunger and violence, to save our planet. All these we do, but the world also has need from us of reconciliation and forgiveness, at home and abroad. We need to draw near to and be reconciled with people of different colours, races and languages who live together. Perhaps our country is a laboratory for bringing about unity in diversity, friendship in spite of differences. ... Certainly as a basis there must be respect for right and for justice. But it will not be a viable world until on the soil of justice and equality there flowers the medicinal plant called reconciliation and forgiveness. ...

Cardinal G. Danneels to the Christians of Brussels, on his retirement as Archbishop. INTERCOM, pp 18-19, April 2010

For further info on items in this newsletter, contact Sr. Joan Roddy, Refugee & Migrant Project Director
SANCTUARY can now be accessed at www.catholicbishops.ie/refugees