

† Sanctuary †

A bi-monthly newsletter on asylum, refugee and migrant matters from a religious perspective
Refugee & Migrant Project of Irish Bishops' Conference, Columba Centre, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.
Tel. 01-5053157; Fax 01-6016401; E-mail: refproject@iecon.ie

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OVERVIEW

Asylum Applications: Similar figures for each of the months - March (299) and April '08 (299) - totalled 598 (included are some 5 re-applications in March and 2 in April).

First Instance: Of 749 applications processed in Mar/April '08, some 54 people were recognized as refugees at *first instance*, some 635 applicants were refused and 62 applicants were returned to have their case processed in the EU country to which they first arrived. (cf. *Dublin Convention/Regulation*). In the same period, some 177 applicants had their cases processed under the *prioritized* category - none was recognized as a refugee.

Appeal Stage: Of 196 *Substantive Appeals* processed in Mar/April '08, 28 appellants were recognized as refugees – that is, a refusal decision at *First Instance* was overturned.

Top Countries of Origin of asylum applicants: Nigeria: 25%; Iraq: 7%; DR Congo & Pakistan: 5%; Somalia: 4%.

Backlog of unprocessed cases at 30 April '08: 4,599 (*First Instance*: 1,179; *Appeals*: 3,420)

Family Reunification: New applications in Mar/Apr '08 totalled 40 (involving 73 dependants).

Some 27 applications (54 dependants) were processed to completion (ie. report sent to Min. Justice).

Leave to Remain (LTR) - in the 2 months, Mar/April, some 216 people were granted LTR in the State.

Programme Refugees (PR) – In 2007, Ireland accepted 114 PR, bringing to 640 the total number who came here in the 8 year period, 2000-2007. (PR come as part of a recognized group admitted on the basis of a prior agreement between the Irish Government and the UN High Commission for Refugees).

Removals – Of 59 removal (deportation) orders signed in Mar/April '08, some 16 orders were effected. A total of 88 people were returned 'voluntarily' – ordinarily, to their country of origin.

Separated Children (Unaccompanied Minors) - of 42 young people under 18 yrs. who came to Ireland in the 2 months, Mar/April '08, and were referred to the Separated Children's Unit/HSE, 27 were united with family, 14 placed in care and 1 went missing. (2 others referred were deemed to be over 18)

Direct Provision: At 18.05.08, 6,223 people were resident in 52 centres in 20 cos. (cap: 6,809) - 757 in Mosney; 300 + in Athlone, Cork (Kinsale Rd), Ballyhaunis; 200+ in 6 centres; 90-190 in 15 centres.

While numbers applying for asylum decrease, numbers resident in *Direct Provision* centres increase.

Self-Catering: 8 Centres (Dublin (5), Ballaghadereen, Dundalk, Mallow). Capacity: 668; Residents: 455

Reception Centres: (2) - Dublin (Stillorgan, Baleskin). Capacity: 459; Residents: 234.

(Statistics: Dept of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and Separated Children's Unit)

CHURCH

Mission of the Church to Migrants in England and Wales (April 2008) - This statement from the Bishops of England and Wales has grown out of their recognition of the *transformation* in the last few years of the *social character of the Church* in the UK. Its nine Recommendations include -

- *engaging in advocacy to defend the moral and ethical principles that underpin the migration phenomenon and campaigning for the upholding of international laws and standards on migration...*

- *[working] with the government, local authorities and trade unions, as well as ecumenically with other Christian denominations, people of other faiths and the Non-Governmental Organisations.*

Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples – At the XVIII Plenary Session (Rome, May 2008), Johan Ketelers, Sec Gen of the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), speaking on *The Right to Family Reunification* underlined that

it would be beneficial to reflect upon the singular importance of the Church's voice in defence of the family; how to assert that voice more broadly, beginning with advocacy for much greater and reality-based legal migration, especially for close family members, but then going even beyond the current delineations of the rights discourse. ... The Church has an important role to play in further defending and... promoting the many social rights relating to the family situation of global migrants.

Act to Prevent Trafficking (APT), a faith-based group (associated with Conference of Religious of Irl [CORI] & Irish Missionary Union [IMU]), formed to combat trafficking in persons, recently met with Ms Marion Walsh, Executive Director, and Mr Mick Quinn, Assistant Principal, of the newly-formed Dept of Justice

Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU). Following the meeting, APT was invited to be represented at AHTU's Roundtable and on its Working Group on *Awareness-Raising and Training*.

INTERNATIONAL, EU and NATIONAL ISSUES

Council of Europe (CoE) Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg, presented his report on Ireland to the CoE in Strasbourg (April '08). The report analyses the treatment of asylum seekers & migrants, & underlines shortcomings in the draft *Immigration, Residence and Protection Bill*. It calls *inter alia* for a comprehensive approach to family reunification and for work permits for asylum-seekers. In its response, the Irish Govt. totally rejects the recommendation re work permits. **ECRE and Amnesty International** in a letter (13 May) to all Members of the European Parliament, urge them not to accept the compromise text on the *Returns Directive* since it contains provisions of grave concern with regard to safeguarding fundamental rights. These include the detention of adults, unaccompanied minors and families with children for up to 18 months for the purpose of removal. This they say is excessive, disproportionate and unacceptable as a common EU standard.

(ECRAN Update, 12 & 16 May '08 www.ecre.org)

IBC Parents' Deportation Orders Quashed - the Supreme Court affirmed (1 May 2008) the previous decision of the High Court, quashing the deportation orders issued in respect of parents of Irish citizen children who had applied for permission to remain in the State under the *IBC/05 Scheme*, and were refused on the basis that they had not been continually resident in the State since the birth of their Irish child. The Court specified *inter alia* that the Minister should deal expressly with the rights of the child in any decision, that there should be a substantial reason given for issuing a deportation order to a parent of an Irish citizen child and that *each case should be determined on its own circumstances...* (cf. info@immigrantcouncil.ie - 01-6740200)

RESOURCES

MOVING WORLDS - Cinemas of Migration - presented by FOMACS (Forum on Migration & Communications) 8-week film series from 22 May - free. Contact: Dr R Sawhney - rashmi.sawhney@dit.ie Tel 01 4023108

The Memory Box - Film and Teaching Pack produced by FOMACS - Part I of a three-part animated series with material on immigration in Ireland, with a particular focus on Family Reunification.

Order: (€27) FOMACS, DIT, Aungier St. D 2 - maeve.burke@dit.ie www.fomacs.org

Racial Justice 2008 - Theme: *A Banquet for all Peoples (Is 25.6-9)* - a year-long celebration, with Racial Justice Sunday on 14 Sept. **Resources** include Biblical reflections, discussion questions and activities for young people, with materials for Refugee Week, Advent and Christmas, Lent and Easter. www.ctbi.org.uk/racialjusticesunday Order forms: *Refugee and Migrant Project, Maynooth*.

Migration Nation - Statement on Integration Strategy and Diversity Management from the Office of the Minister for Integration, launched May 2008. cf. www.justice.ie

Fit for Purpose Yet - interim findings of the Independent Asylum Commission's review of the UK asylum system, and **Saving Sanctuary**, 1st of 3 follow-up reports, with conclusions/recommendations. www.independentasylumcommission.org.uk Copies: chris@cof.org.uk

Opening Doors - Evaluation of Dun Laoghaire Refugee Project's Drop-In Centre for young people seeking asylum and those with residency - Jan 2008 - by Dervla King; commissioned and funded by Southside Partnership. Available: info@sspship and dunlaoghairerefugee@ireland.com

Understanding Gender-Based Violence: An African Perspective - AkiDwA (network for African women in Ireland), info booklet (May '08). Kerry O'Leary, AkiDwA, 29 Gardiner Place, D1-kerry@akidwa.ie

Domestic Violence Seminar - AkiDwA - 5 June '08, Clarion Hotel, Lapps Quay, Cork.

Contact Nobuhle 086 3096859 - nobuhle@akidwa.ie - Monica 01 814 8582.

TO PONDER

The Church's diaconal ministry in its diverse forms is dedicated to support individuals and groups, and to improve their life chances. An orientation towards human rights gives this field of work particular relevance whenever life chances and participation chances are endangered by sickness, disaster, or social and political conditions. Globalisation processes should not be taken as merely economic developments. In the time of globalisation, it is our historical chance to accomplish the torch relay of Human Rights all around the world. ('Theological Reasons for Human Rights' - Bishop W. Huber, Chair, Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany - Trinity College, DBN, 19.05.08)

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