

⚡ 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, Sept (197) and Oct (203) 2009, totalled 400.

First Instance: Of 654 applications processed in Sept/Oct '09, some 11 applicants were recognized as refugees at *first instance*, some 475 were refused and some 79 applicants were returned to the EU country to which they first arrived, to have their case processed there. (cf. *Dublin Convention/Regulation*).

Appeal Stage: Of 571 *Substantive Appeals* processed in Sept/Oct 2009, some 42 appellants were recognized as refugees (that is, on appeal, some 42 *First Instance* negative decisions were overturned).

Top Countries of Origin of new asylum applicants in 2009 up to 31 Oct: Nigeria: 21%; Pakistan: 9%; China: 7%; DR Congo: 4% and Moldova: 3%.

Backlog of unprocessed asylum applications at 31 Oct '09: 3,128 (*First Instance:599; Appeals:2,583*).

Family Reunification (FR): New applications in Sept/Oct '09 totalled 65 (involving 122 dependants). Some 70 applications (181 dependants) were processed to completion (ie. report sent to Min. Justice).

FR applicants-top countries of origin in '09 to 31 Oct: Sudan: 14%; Somalia: 13%; Iraq: 12%; Nigeria: 8%; Cameroon: 6%

Separated Children (Unaccompanied Minors) - In Sept/Oct '09, of some 35 separated children referred to the HSE, 14 were re-united with family and 19 placed in care. Of the children referred, some 5 - [2 Chinese, Indian, 1 Niger, 1 Nigerian (2 F/3M: aged 16-17)] - are classified as *Missing from Care*.

Direct Provision -15/11/'09; **Centres:** 48; **Residents:** 6,050 in 19 cos; 806 in Mosney; c.200-300 in 10 centres (Athlone, Ballyhaunis, Clondalkin, Cork x2, Galway x2, Knockalisheen, Monaghan, Sligo); 90 -190 in 14 centres.

Self-Catering: 4 Centres - Dublin, Ballaghaderreen, Dundalk, Mallow. **Capacity:** 12 people; **Residents:** 311.

Reception Centres (2) - Stillorgan and Baleskin. **Capacity:** 459; **Residents:** 242.

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

CHURCH

The Cry of the Earth - On 10 Nov last, the Irish Bishops' Conference launched a pastoral reflection on Christian responsibility to care for the environment. In the Foreword, Cardinal Brady emphasises that *Our earth is ...complex. Its systems of life are interdependent and finely balanced. Small changes in one part of the planet's rhythms and systems can have significant if not dramatic consequences ... How we respond to climate change will have consequences for the future of every person and every form of life on the earth.* Scientific assessment of likely consequences of climate change include: *Increasing heat waves, floods, storms, fire and droughts, causing death and displacement for hundreds of thousands of people.*

(www.catholicbishops.org) Also, the **African Union summit** (Oct '09) was told by UN Under-Sec for Humanitarian Affairs & Emergency Relief that *With increasing natural disasters, including floods, storms and droughts, hitting the continent, more people in Africa are likely to be displaced.* www.irinnews.org

MIGRATION 2010 - the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), in association with the Conference of European Churches (CEC-KEK), has recently launched the year of *European Churches responding to Migration 2010*, focussing on themes for each month, on international days around migration and on religious & intercultural festivals. In 2010, CCME says, *we want to share experiences from existing church programmes for/with migrants, as well as stimulate new programmes to improve the visibility of churches' engagement on behalf of migrants, refugees and minority ethnic people.*

www.ccme.be; cec-kek.org; migration2010.eu

INTERNATIONAL, EU and NATIONAL ISSUES

Global Forum on Migration and Development (Athens, 2-3 Nov '09) - During the Forum's Civil Society Days, Migration Policy Institute Pres, D. Papademetriou, spoke of the challenge of complex global interdependence & the place of migration in this context. and identified 4 core challenges:

- the integration of immigrants and their children
- the need to manage migration much better so as to gain more from migration
- the need to be more mindful of the long-term interests of countries of immigrant origin
- the importance of controlling irregular migration/resisting irresponsible growth of migration.

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

Regularisation Schemes for Irregular Migrants have recently begun in Italy and Belgium, despite the fact that these unilateral initiatives contravene the so-called European Pact, and come at a time of rising unemployment. In Italy, the scheme will benefit those who provide domestic services and/or care for elderly and handicapped people, and could be availed of by up to half a million irregular migrants. Eligible in Belgium are long-stay asylum seekers and irregular migrants with proof of having close ties with the country. An estimated 350,000 people there could stand to benefit from regularization.

cf Migration News Sheet, Oct 2009; mns@migpolgroup.com

EMBRACE NI, and other charities such as St Vincent de Paul, are experiencing increased demands in NI for both money and goods to sustain migrants and people seeking sanctuary, especially those who have no recourse to public funds. This is against the backdrop of research showing that migrants seem to be more vulnerable to job loss in the recession & are the subject of increased harassment.

Separated Children living in Ireland (19 Nov '09). Launching this Report from her Office, Children's Ombudsman, Ms Emily Logan said that *Inferior care for separated children must stop*, adding that children who have come here without their parents are not receiving adequate support from the State and are dealing with an asylum process that does not take account of their age or vulnerability. As well as her own concerns, the report includes recommendations that

- the best interests of the child must be considered in any new legislation
- there should not be discrimination in the provision of care
- separated children should be allocated an independent guardian
- the asylum process for separated children should be improved.

Ms Logan emphasised that: *Separated children are entitled to the same treatment and rights as nationals or resident children. ... All considerations of their immigration status should be secondary.*

www.oco.ie/whatsNew/oco-separated-children-project.aspx

RESOURCES

Supporting integration between the refugee and host community in Northern Ireland - launch by Corrymeela/NICRAS, *Ulster Museum, Belfast*, Wed 2 Dec '09, 10.30-12.30. E-m: amwhite@corrymeela.org
Fundamental Rights in the European Union: New Challenges and Old Issues - NUI, Maynooth, Thurs, 3 Dec '09, NGO Forum (9.30-11.00) & Roundtable (11.00-2.00) - Pres Mc Aleese will address the Roundtable & contributors will include Morten Kjaerum, Director, Fundamental Rights Agency.

To register, contact marianne.oshea@nuim.ie

Living in Ireland is Crosscare Migrant Project's recently-launched immigrant integration resource - website: www.livinginireland.ie and accompanying booklet in five languages - *provides general information as well as exploring culture, language, history, society and participation in Irish society.*

Tales by Moonlight: African Stories for Children by Ms Olububmi Salako, Dundalgan Press 2008 - in 3 Volumes, for 7-12 yr olds, an Intercultural Resource for Primary School teachers/pupils, Youth Workers etc, to promote dialogue among African, Irish and other children.

I AM JUSTICE – A Journey out of Africa by Paul Kenyon, Preface Publishing, 2009, pp.250, €15.30.

Justice's journey began in Ghana at the hands of his abusive uncle. Determined to make something of his life he fled across the Sahara desert, before being captured...managed to escape to Libya from where he hoped to sail to freedom ...eighty miles off the North African coast a tiny boat is sinking... Available: Eason and most bookshops.

Help fight welfare cuts - The Poor Can't Pay: to avoid the poorest in our society being forced to pay for the current economic crisis, cf www.thepoorcantpay.ie & e-mail your TDs /key Ministers on the issue.

TO PONDER

Against the compelling urgency of the plight of immigrants, [] the claims of legal compliance must give way to the more fundamental claims of our common humanity. If numerous immigrants are here because their families would otherwise live in abject poverty, the issue boils down to legal conformity versus possible starvation... In attempting to understand what is just, we have to imagine real persons and their concrete situations. ... Can we become the [citizen of the developing world] whose longings, not unlike our own, still appear so remote? Such becoming can lead to a moral imagination that gives primacy to radical human need over legal compliance. The survival and growth of our own civilization may well depend upon our imagining better.

'Imagining the Immigrant - Why legality must give way to humanity', John J. Savant, in *America*, 26 Oct 2009, p 16