

# Sanctuary

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

**Asylum Applications** for the first two months of 2009 totalled 524 - January: 254; February: 270.

**First Instance:** Of 734 applications processed in Jan/Feb 2009, some 16 applicants were recognized as refugees at *first instance*, some 531 applicants were refused and 56 applicants were returned to have their case processed in the EU country to which they first arrived. (cf. *Dublin Convention/Regulation*).

**Appeal Stage:** Of 329 *Substantive Appeals* processed in Jan/Feb 2009, some 42 appellants were recognized as refugees (ie when appealed, some 42 *First Instance* negative decisions were overturned)

**Top Countries of Origin** of asylum applicants in first two months of '09: Nigeria: 24%; Pakistan: 12%; China: 6%; Zimbabwe: 5%; DR Congo: 4%.

**Backlog** of unprocessed cases at 28 Feb 2009: 4,430 (*First Instance*:1,063; *Appeals*: 3,367)

**Family Reunification (FR):** New applications in Jan/Feb '09 totalled 71 (involving 143 dependants). Some 68 applications (135 dependants) were processed to completion (ie. report sent to Min. Justice). Top country of origin of FR applicants - Sudan: 14 (no other country exceeded the min. 10 applicants for figs to be released).

**Leave to Remain** – from 1 Jan-31 Dec '08, some 1,272 people were granted *LTR* - compared with 852 in '07.

**Removals** (deportations) – in the 12 months up to 31 Dec 2008, some 664 'Deportation Orders' were issued and 162 Orders effected. In the same period, 'Voluntary Returns effected' numbered 553.

**Separated Children** (Unaccompanied Minors) – Total referrals for 2008 of young people under 18 years to the HSE/ Separated Children's Unit were 319, of whom 156 were taken into care, 157 re-unified with family and 26 classified as 'other'. 'Other' includes those whose ages were assessed to be over 18, arrived with valid visa or accompanied by parent. **In Jan/Feb '09**, of 34 separated children referred, some 5 were re-united with family, 29 placed in care and 3 were *Inappropriate Referrals* (age assessed as + 18 yrs). Some 11 Chinese young people (6 F/5M: 14-17 years) are classified as *Missing*.

**Direct Provision:** At 15.03.2009, 6,259 people were resident in 52 centres (cap: 7,127) in 20 counties – included are 798 in Mosney; 199 - 305 in 10 centres (Athlone, Ballyhaunis, Clondalkin, Cork City, Galway x 2, Knockalishen, Monaghan, Millstreet, Sligo) and 100 - 185 people in 9 centres.

**Self-Catering:** 5 Centres (Dublin (2), Ballaghderreen, Dundalk, Mallow). With capacity for 537 people and some 379 resident, almost 20% of places in self-catering accommodation are currently unoccupied.

**Reception Centres** – two, both located in Dublin (Stillorgan, Baleskin). Capacity: 459; Residents: 355.

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

## CHURCH

**ComECE** (Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the EU) **Working Group on Migration** (25.02.09) was briefed on the proposal for a recast of the *Directive on Reception Conditions*. Many of the new proposals are positive, including a procedure to identify persons with special needs, detailed rather than discretionary provisions re detention, and reduced time limit for access to the labour market for people seeking asylum (up to Member States' discretion). However, the general attitude of the EU Member States (MS) is negative and, in the current economic climate, MS are opposed to all provisions which would involve expenditure. With regard to the new *European Asylum Support Office*, its role has still to be balanced between administration and the monitoring of both the implementation of legislation & the divergence of refugee recognition rates. The priority of the **Swedish EU Presidency** (June-Dec '09) will be the approval of the 'Stockholm Programme' - the five-year programme for the area of Justice, Freedom and Security, based on the Communication of the European Commission to be issued in May 2009. A more forward-looking approach to economic migration will be proposed, with a stronger role globally for the EU, as well as the completion of the *Common European Asylum System* (CEAS).

## INTERNATIONAL, EU AND NATIONAL ISSUES

**UN High Commission for Refugees** reports that the number of people seeking asylum in industrialised

countries has grown for a second consecutive year. Some 383,000 people applied for refuge in Europe, N. America and other developed regions in '08 - 12% more than in '07. While most applicants were Iraqi, the report says the increase can partly be attributed to higher numbers of asylum applications by citizens of Afghanistan, Somalia & other countries experiencing turmoil or conflict. ([www.unhcr.org/statistics](http://www.unhcr.org/statistics))

**US President, Barack Obama**, has announced (mid-March '09) the nomination of Luis C. de Baca as *Ambassador-at-Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons*. On the US Committee on the Judiciary, de Baca's portfolio included immigration, civil rights and modern slavery issues and in the US Justice Department he has served on the Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit.

**The European Court of Justice** (17/02/09) has clarified that the **Qualification Directive** [art.15(c)] provides protection against *serious & individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict*. The word *individual* must be understood as covering harm to all civilians... When the *indiscriminate violence*, as assessed by the national court, rises to such a level as to show *substantial grounds for believing* that the person would be subjected to a real threat to life/person merely by being present, subsidiary protection must be granted. (Cf ECRE Weekly Bulletin, 20 Feb 2009 [www.ecre.org](http://www.ecre.org))

The **Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Bill** (UK) contains proposals to introduce checks on people crossing land borders, including the border between the Republic and N. Ireland. A briefing paper (25.02.09) by the NI Human Rights Commission, for the House of Lords' Committee stage, voices concerns about the impact of the Bill if passed - particularly the danger of racial profiling of people from minority ethnic groups crossing the border or living/working close to the border. ([www.information@nihrc.org](http://www.information@nihrc.org)).

## RESOURCES

**Voting in Local Elections** – Ordinarily, immigrants, people seeking asylum, migrant workers and international students, at least 18 years old, can vote in local elections in Ireland **if listed on the 'Register of Electors' or its 'Supplement'**. Those not registered, or who have changed address, can register up to 2 months prior to election date, including at their local Garda Station. Cf. [www.vote.ie](http://www.vote.ie)

**Negotiated Identities, Histories and Public Cultures** - Centre for Transcultural Research and Media Practice - 6 conversations at the Irish Film Institute & *Alliance Francaise*, March-May '09.

[www.ctmp.ie/media/1914544\\_seminars\\_printable.pdf](http://www.ctmp.ie/media/1914544_seminars_printable.pdf) Info: Dr R Sawhney, [rashmi.sawhney@dit.ie](mailto:rashmi.sawhney@dit.ie) Tel 01 4023108

**Directory of Migrant-led Churches and Chaplaincies** - [www.irishcouncilofchurches.org](http://www.irishcouncilofchurches.org) / [www.iccsi.ie](http://www.iccsi.ie)

**Unity in Diversity In our Churches**: a resource to assist parishes/ congregations with the integration of new residents into their faith communities and Irish society, produced by the Parish-based Integration Project (PIP), Bea House, Milltown Park, D.6 & Inter-Church Committee on Social Issues (ICCSI). Hardcopy - PIP: [adrian@iccsi.ie](mailto:adrian@iccsi.ie) Online - [www.iccsi.ie](http://www.iccsi.ie)

**Encounters with Islamic Theology** – eight-week evening lecture series, 26 Jan- 29 June, 2009, 7pm, at Trinity College Dublin (TCD) hosted by Irish School of Ecumenics/TCD. Jane Welsh Tel 01 8961297 & [jwelch@tcd.ie](mailto:jwelch@tcd.ie)

**Invisible Pathways** – A critique of the Irish immigration system and how it can contribute to people becoming undocumented - published by Crosscare'09. Cf. [migrantproject@crosscare.ie](mailto:migrantproject@crosscare.ie) [www.migrantproject.ie](http://www.migrantproject.ie)

**Factory Girls – Voices from the heart of modern China** by Leslie T. Chang; Picador; 420 pp; £12.99 stg - stories of real people, mostly young women, caught up in the biggest migration in human history...

## TO PONDER

*Modernity prized the value of freedom greatly, and understood it predominantly in terms of a strong individualism with weak social ties. Postmodernity seems to allow for more scope for the group or community, but with a weak, de-centred notion of the subject. ... God, it might be agreed, is the ultimate free autonomous Subject. And yet God is revealed to us as the Trinitarian Mystery, a symbol of interdependence. We, who are made in God's image and likeness, do well to take notice.*

*The Recession and God – Reading the Signs of the Times*, p.50, Gerry O'Hanlon SJ, Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice & Messenger Publications 2009

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](http://www.catholicbishops.ie/refugees)