

Bulletin 13 January 2009

SDV News and events

Free Funds

On the "free funds" area of the easyfundraising website, there are lots of ways to raise funds for free for SDV. These include free trials with lovefilm (£8) and blockbuster (£6.25) and filling in a short survey for the chance to win a Honda civic (£2.50 donation). If we all did this, we could raise quite a lot of money! Go to easyfundraising using this link

<http://www.sdv.org.uk/id15.html>

Immigration, asylum and detention news

From Belsen to Zimbabwe: Sorry minister, but to call the Geneva conventions outdated traduces 60 years of torture and abuse (by Helen Bamber)

I have worked in human rights for 60 years. I was a member of one of the first rehabilitation teams to enter the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in 1945 and have since continued to help survivors of extreme brutality and human rights violations. At the Helen Bamber Foundation I see on a daily basis victims of torture, human trafficking for sexual exploitation, genocide and ethnic cleansing.

I find myself compelled to speak out publicly in response to comments by the immigration minister, Phil Woolas. Calling for a review of the Geneva conventions - which he described as outdated - Woolas argued that "a significant number of people who claim asylum are doing so for broadly economic reasons".

I agree with Woolas to an extent - the asylum system is in dire need of an overhaul. However, I contest the implication that only a minority of migrants are fleeing death and persecution. It is a documented fact that patterns of migration mirror patterns of global conflict.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/jan/13/geneva-conventions-woolas>

Primark in storm over conditions at UK supplier

Britain's high street fashion giant Primark was at the centre of a storm last night over allegations that illegal immigrants paid just over half the minimum wage had been employed to make fashionable knitwear for one of the firm's bestselling ranges.

Primark announced yesterday that it had launched an inquiry after an investigation by the Observer and the BBC revealed that Manchester-based garment firm TNS Knitwear may have breached key employment and immigration laws. Breaches of the legislation could lead to fines of up to £10,000 for each illegal worker and potential prosecution for tax evasion and employment law abuses.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/business/2009/jan/11/primark-ethical-business-living>

Top wheelchair athlete is facing deportation

A wheelchair-using elite athlete, who has won five gold medals for Britain, is facing by deportation after being convicted of a driving offence

Vincent Onwubiko, 42, who has lived in Britain since arriving here from Nigeria in 1994, is being held in an immigration removal centre, where his disability caused by polio makes it impossible for him to use the toilets. He also claims he was assaulted after he was denied a shower. Campaigners claim that he should not be deported since his crime does not meet the criteria to be deemed "dangerous" and that he has been maltreated in establishments ill-equipped to cope with his immobility.

Onwubiko, a power-lifter, represented Britain at the prestigious Stoke Mandeville games in 1995 and 1997, and at the World Champion of Champions competition in Birmingham in 1996, collecting five gold medals in all.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/jan/11/immigration-deportation-paralympics>

New policy on judicial reviews that challenge removals: UKBA: 09 January 2009

A new policy on handling legal challenges to UKBA removing people from the United Kingdom (judicial review challenges) will come into effect on 30 January. This will help establish a swift end-to-end process for concluding asylum cases and deporting foreign national prisoners.

This will affect the cases of people who make another application for judicial review (JR) within three months of a judge refusing permission on a previous JR application, particularly where the first claim has been found to be clearly without merit or where a case has been withdrawn or otherwise concluded.

From 30 January UKBA will no longer automatically suspend removal, particularly where the first claim has been found to be clearly without merit.

It will only affect cases where the claimant has raised:

- the same or virtually identical grounds; or
- grounds that could reasonably have been raised previously at the judicial review.

In these circumstances UKBA is unlikely to suspend removal on receipt of a judicial review challenge.

People affected by this policy will need to obtain an injunction to prevent removal taking place, and we will ensure they are told they need to do this.

The revised policy aims to deter claims that are designed simply to disrupt the removal process and to ensure that claimants do not benefit in any way by lodging a weak claim.

<http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsarticles/policychangeonjudicialreviews>

Other news and events

Benefit gig for Unity, Monday 19th January

Glasgow Student Action for Refugees

presents music from:

MUDHUTS
LEAN TALES
SPEARBRAVE
TAHIR TAHIRA

For a wonderful evening of entertainment to raise money for the Unity Centre



Lean Tales



Mud Huts

At the HALT Bar, Woodlands Road,
Monday 19th January
From 8pm

Suggested donation £2.00
Asylum seekers free