

## **Bulletin 21 November 2008**

### **SDV News and events**

#### **Fundraising**

Look out for details of a Christmas fundraising pub quiz, coming soon.

Remember easyfundraising whenever you shop online. Also remember easysearch when you search the internet. Both can generate funds for SDV. Find details of how to register for both on the SDV website.

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

### **Immigration, asylum and detention news**

#### **Parliamentary question on families at Dungavel**

Jo Swinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average length of detention period in Dungavel Detention Centre of (a) a family and (b) an individual, aged (i) under 18, (ii) under 16 and (iii) under 10 years old in each of the last three years.

Mr. Woolas [holding answer 3 November 2008]: The average length of detention for a family in Dungavel House has remained at three days for 2006, 2007 and up until September for 2008.

The average length of detention for single detainees was 17 days in 2006, 23 days in 2007 and 27 days up until September 2008.

#### **Parliamentary question on the cost of detention**

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate she has made of the cost of detaining (a) an adult and (b) a person under 16 years in an immigration centre for one year, broken down by category of cost. [233310]

Mr. Woolas: We do not differentiate costs between an adult and a person under 16-years-old in our immigration removal centres (IRC). The estimated average cost of holding a single person in an IRC is £130 per day.

#### **Victory at last for Zimbabwean asylum seekers'**

In a decision long awaited by approximately 7,500 'failed' Zimbabwean asylum seekers in the U.K, the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal has decided in a test-case that all those unable to demonstrate loyalty to Zimbabwe's ruling regime will be at risk of persecution if removed back to their country.

In allowing the appeal of 'RN', an asylum seeker represented by the Immigration Advisory Service, the Tribunal found that:

"On being identified as someone not able to demonstrate loyalty to the ruling party she may find herself taken to one of the camps established by the militias where there is a real risk she would be detained and molested, physically and sexually. She may

face physical ill treatment in the course of being displaced from her home area and similar treatment in any other area, urban or rural, in which she seeks to re-establish herself. There is no reason to suppose that she would fare any better than her sister who fled with her family to South Africa to avoid the adverse attention of Zanu-PF supporters".

Many of the 7,500 Zimbabweans already refused asylum in the U.K. should be able to benefit from this decision, as will many hundreds more whose cases await a decision from the UK Border Agency. IAS' Julian Bild, RN's solicitor, says;

"The Tribunal's recognition that it is too dangerous for Zimbabweans to return home will mean that many Zimbabweans in the U.K. will now be entitled to stay here as refugees recognised by the 1951 Refugee Convention. Many of those who have spent years in the U.K. with no rights and left effectively destitute will now be able to work to support themselves until it is safe for them to return home".

### **Asylum-seeker charities are just playing the system, says Woolas**

Immigration minister Phil Woolas has attacked lawyers and charities working on behalf of asylum seekers, accusing them of undermining the law and "playing the system". In an interview with the Guardian, Woolas described the legal professionals and NGO workers as "an industry", and said most asylum seekers were not fleeing persecution but were economic migrants.

"The system is played by migration lawyers and NGOs to the nth degree," Woolas said. "By giving false hope and by undermining the legal system, [they] actually cause more harm than they do good."

It is the latest in a series of controversial public interventions by Woolas since he was appointed immigration minister by Gordon Brown in the October reshuffle.

Sophie Brown, chair of the Immigration Law Practitioners Association (Ilpa), said: "Lawyers can only work with the law. To say they are undermining the law is an extraordinary comment to make."

Woolas described how his outspoken remarks had triggered accusations he was the new Enoch Powell, an attack he rejects. "Enoch Powell was trying to divide this country. I'm trying to heal this country by allowing us to have a mature debate on immigration," he said.

In one case, Woolas said, an asylum seeker had won the right to stay after going through six layers of appeal. "That person has no right to be in this country but I'm sure that there is an industry out there [with] a vested interest."

He concedes there are some harrowing, genuine cases of people fleeing persecution, which he claims are undermined by economic migrants. He recounted how another asylum seeker visited his constituency office in Oldham: "One lady showed me the scars on her thighs from where the soldiers had raped her, so I know," said Woolas, "but I cannot take a decision on that lady's behalf if I am fogged by cases that are misusing the law."

Donna Covey, chief executive of the Refugee Council, said the appeals process was a

vital safety net for asylum seekers who are "criminalised" on arriving in Britain. "Having your asylum claim rejected does not make you an economic migrant. For some nationalities, such as Eritreans and Somalis, almost half of refused asylum seekers have their cases upheld on appeal. These are people who would be in danger of persecution such as murder, torture or rape if sent back to the repressive regimes they are fleeing."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2008/nov/18/immigration-policy-health-politics>

## **Woolas plans to curb high court role in deportation cases**

The implications of the tougher-sounding rhetoric of the immigration minister, Phil Woolas, started to become clear yesterday when he disclosed he is to block appeals to high court judges from failed asylum seekers facing deportation.

Woolas disclosed to MPs that a high court judge had this week ordered the Home Office to fly back to Britain, at taxpayers' expense, a deported asylum seeker whose lawyer had lodged an application for judicial review on the morning of his removal. Woolas, who said that his role was "to raise the profile of the debate" on the issue, said repeated access to a review by a high court judge had to be curbed because such appeals were being used to frustrate the system.

The power to block access to judicial review for some of those facing deportation is to be contained in an immigration and citizenship bill in next month's Queen's speech.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2008/nov/21/phil-woolas-high-court-immigration>

## **Detention units 'fail on health'**

Children held in UK detention centres are not getting the medical care they need, a leading medical journal warns.

An editorial in the Lancet says the 2,000 children held each year miss out on vaccinations and highlights concerns raised about individual cases.

It says a new Immigration and Citizenship Bill proposed for next year should rule out routine detention of children in the future.

The Home Office said all children receive the care they need.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/7739849.stm>

## **Other news and events**

### **STUC St Andrews Day Anti Racism March and Rally**

Saturday 29 November 2008, Assemble 10.30am St Andrew's in the Square (off Saltmarket) Glasgow

March off 11.00am. Rally 12.00 noon Glasgow Film Theatre, Rose Street, Glasgow

Come and show your support!

Bring Your banners!

All anti-racists welcome!

St Andrew's Day is about showing a united Scotland.

Everyone deserves an equal chance to live free from fear of discrimination, prejudice and racism.

### **Get World-wise Taster Sessions**

World-wise is an adult learning course for people who want to change the world but don't know where to start. World-wise is all about the power we have to make a difference on issues like climate change and international poverty. A ten-week World-wise course, open to anyone in Glasgow, will run from January 2009 where people learn about important global issues, talk about where we fit into the picture, discover how to influence decision-makers and develop the skills to bring people with us. Sessions cover areas like development basics, trade and climate justice, the Scottish Parliament, using the media and planning a campaign action.

Come along to a free 2 hour session for a taste of what it means to be World-Wise and a chance to meet people taking action on global issues, or tell your friends about it!

Wednesday 26th November, Langside Halls 6.30 - 8.30pm

Email Claire on [clairewomble@gmail.com](mailto:clairewomble@gmail.com) to reserve a space.

### **Act On Climate Change – Just Solutions Now**

- Saturday 6 December
- Assemble: 12.30 at the Amphitheatre, Clyde Street ;
- Rally: 2.00 pm at Glasgow Caledonian University

We, the Scottish Climate Change Campaign, are organising this march as part of the Global Day of Action during the United Nations Climate Talks in Poznan , December 1st to 12th 2008, to call on world leaders to take urgent action on climate change.

For more info, please email:

[cindy\\_courtillier@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:cindy_courtillier@yahoo.co.uk) .

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