

## **Bulletin 3 October 2008**

### **SDV News and events**

#### **Fundraising**

Please remember to use easyfundraising whenever you shop online, particularly if you're buying insurance.

Check out the various ways of getting free funds on the site.

Also remember easysearch – if you make 10 searches a day, you can raise £20 a year for SDV.

Find details of both easyfundraising and easysearch on the SDV website.

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

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

#### **No place for a child campaign**

Sign the New Statesman's online petition against the detention of children at:

<http://www.newstatesman.com/2008/09/children-petition>

#### **Investigation into claims of abuse on asylum-seekers**

Claims by hundreds of asylum-seekers that they have been beaten or abused by British guards during their detention and removal from this country are to be independently investigated for the first time

The Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith, has appointed Nuala O'Loan, the former Police Ombudsman of Northern Ireland, to conduct an investigation into mistreatment allegations first reported in this paper last year. Dame Nuala, who won praise and criticism from Catholics and Protestants for her robust style in dealing with complaints against the police and led the inquiry into the handling of the Omagh bombing, has been given a wide remit to reopen cases of alleged brutality. She has also been asked to report on any failures of a system that allows private security guards to use "reasonable force" in restraining asylum-seekers.

The Home Secretary's intervention follows the publication of a detailed report in July that revealed nearly 300 cases of alleged physical assault and racial abuse in the past four years. The report, entitled Outsourcing Abuse, raised concerns about the control and use of private security firms in the detention and deportation of some of the most vulnerable people in British society.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/investigation-into-claims-of-abuse-on-asylumseekers-946106.html>

**Asylum, migration and refugees – news from the Scottish Churches  
Parliamentary Office**

Click on the link for news of police operations on human trafficking and measures to prevent it.

<http://www.actsparl.org/update2.htm>

**News from AVID**

The latest edition of In Touch is attached at the end of this bulletin

**Other news and events**

**Volunteer Induction Day, Saturday 4th October, 11am – 4pm UNITY  
Centre**

The Unity Centre has played a crucial and unique role in providing solidarity to asylum seeker families in Glasgow over the last two and a half years. We provide friendly and desperately needed support for families when they face detention or being forcibly removed from the UK. The centre is independently run by a collective of volunteers and we share the responsibility of running the centre between us.

New volunteers are always welcome at the Unity Centre – you do not need to be an expert on asylum matters to be a volunteer. All you need is to be able to commit to at least half a day a week helping at the centre.

We will be holding an induction day / open day for new volunteers on Saturday 4th October at the Unity Centre.

The day will run through the different ways in which we try to help asylum seekers when they have been detained as well as looking at the previous ways we have helped people with housing, benefits and other legal issues.

It will be a good opportunity to find out what we do and how we organise things at the Unity Centre. It'll also be a good time to meet some of the members of the volunteer collective or if you are just interested in visiting the centre then please come along!

You can find out more information from our website at [www.unitycentreglasgow.org](http://www.unitycentreglasgow.org) or phone 0141 427 7992

Bring food to share - there are shops nearby.

**The Great Trade Robbery: Tuesday 7th October, 7:00pm**

How the EU Trade Strategy is Affecting Poor Countries.  
The World Development Movement invites you to an evening of  
TALKS, DEBATE AND FILM  
SCIAF Offices, 19 Park Circus, G3 6BE  
Come along and find out what you can do!  
FREE ENTRY & FREE WINE!  
For more information, contact

Kate Robinson on 0777 5653 467

[www.wdm.org.uk/trade](http://www.wdm.org.uk/trade)

**Half price Guardians and Observers**

Follow this link to get vouchers for half price papers for a month.

<http://www.guardianmarketing.co.uk/vouchers.html>

## AVID Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees

Patrons: Belinda Allan, Colin Firth, Lord David Ramsbotham, GCB, CBE and John Scampion, CBE  
Registered Charity No. 1063784

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# in touch

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### AVID contact details:

Address: PO Box 1496, Oxford OX4 9DY

AVID Chair (Sally Tarshish)

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[inscapedgardens@btinternet.com](mailto:inscapedgardens@btinternet.com)

Vice Chair (Liz Cox)

Tel: 01483 417649

[e.l.cox@btinternet.com](mailto:e.l.cox@btinternet.com)

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### Communication with AVID

We are currently changing and updating the AVID website and it should be ready to go live in a couple of weeks. In the meantime the old [coordinator@aviddetention.org.uk](mailto:coordinator@aviddetention.org.uk) is no longer operational but both Sally and I can be contacted at the email addresses above. The new personal and general AVID email addresses will be available shortly.

### **AVID workshop on visiting post sentence ex foreign nationals**

AVID is organising a workshop to be held on November 8<sup>th</sup> at the Resource Centre Holloway Road London from 10.30 - 4.00p.m.

Steve Mason (DAS), Steve Symonds (ILPA) and Jerome Phelps (LDSG) will be contributing. A more detailed programme will follow. There are only 15 places so please contact Sally Tarshish if you are interested.

[inscapedgardens@btinternet.com](mailto:inscapedgardens@btinternet.com)

[01865 250690](tel:01865250690)

### Detainee Property

The Detention Service Order 09/2008 sets out UKBA's new policy in relation to detainee property. This introduces allowances for the first time. It is based on the assumption that the detainee will be leaving the centre by air and so will be limited to 20kgs. Centres will therefore not accept more than this amount of luggage into the centre when people are detained. Friends and relatives will not be able to bring items in excess of this allowance. Nic of GDWG is putting together detention user groups' concerns and he will be putting these to UKBA. Contact him if you have points you would like to raise. [neadie@gdwg.org.uk](mailto:neadie@gdwg.org.uk)

John Alleyne has recently been involved with a couple of cases concerning the removal by the police of cash from detainees and the all but impossibility of its recovery. He would like to know how widespread this practice has become and to obtain estimates of numbers affected and the financial sums involved. Documentary evidence would be especially useful.

Where a detainee has more than £1000 and police have reason to suspect it has been unlawfully obtained (eg by working illegally) it can be removed. Detainees must be informed of their right to appeal within 30 days but this can be an expensive process. When an appeal is late or refused the money is finally confiscated by a magistrate's court.

If anyone has any similar cases, could they forward them to me and John can then see whether other visitors or groups have similar concerns?

### News from the Groups

#### Haslar Visitors Group

Laura del Nevo, Haslar's deputy coordinator, left at the end of August to take up a new post coordinating the volunteers who monitor police cells in four of the London Boroughs. A replacement should start in November.

## Dover Detainees Welfare Group

DDWG held their AGM this week where Kent Refugee Action and a Health trainer from the local PCT were the speakers. The meeting was well attended by ex detainees who expressed appreciation of DDWG's support for detainees and ex detainees in the community and the ILR, as well the small grants available prior to removal.

## London Detainees Support Group

LDSG have launched a new project: '**Long Term detention.**' The aim of the project is to raise awareness and promote a wider debate in relation to Civil Liberties. The plan is to gather evidence and testimonies from detainees who have been held for a year and beyond. More details from LDSG.

## Medical Justice

Medical Justice will be producing an on line befrienders manual in the next few months which will be based on the recent training day.

Contact for referrals :

<http://www.medicaljustice.org.uk/content/view/full/68/100/>

How to get involved :

<http://www.medicaljustice.org.uk/content/blogcategory/61/100/>

Medical Justice also has draft guidelines and practical notes on hunger strikes on its website.

## The Next Asylum Bill

The new "Immigration and Citizenship Bill" was originally stated by the Government to be a simplification exercise to bring together all the Asylum Acts since 1971. In practice it is also likely to increase the powers of the Home Office and the restrictions on asylum seekers still further. About 2/3rds of the new Bill were published in draft in July and consultation is under way. The result is expected to be introduced into Parliament in January 2009. The intention is not only to replace the Immigration Acts but also to replace the

Immigration Rules and policy instructions/guidance.

Two Parliamentary Committees will scrutinise the draft bill. The Home Affairs Committee has asked for submissions by Wednesday 17 September and the Joint Committee on Human Rights by Friday 31 October. ILPA is taking an active part in scrutinising the draft. ILPA and BID are cooperating on the parts relating to detention and bail.

Note : there is a Google group run by ILPA for people wishing to keep abreast of developments at

<http://groups.google.com/group/googlegroup-on-simplification?hl=en>

## Abusive Treatment of Asylum Seekers

The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights, at their meeting in July, heard evidence of high levels of physical and medical abuse of asylum seekers by staff in detention centres, and of the abusive way asylum seekers are treated throughout the asylum process. Inadequate treatment of women victims of sexual abuse were highlighted.

## Non-EU family members of EU nationals.

A recent ruling in the European Court of Justice has made clear the right of non EU family members to join EU nationals who are working in another EU country, without the restrictions currently imposed by the UKBA. Anyone affected should seek legal advice. The case to quote is **Metock C** – 127/08 of 25 July 2008.

## Handcuffing of Detainees under Escort Detention Services Order 08/2008

This DSO replaced two existing ones. Frank Arnold of Medical Justice has already made some comments and these will be on the agenda at the next DUG meeting

Liz Cox

26.09.08