

Bulletin 5 September 2008

SDV News and events

Keep raising money for nothing for SDV through easyfundraising

We have raised nearly over £60 through easyfundraising so far this quarter. If seven more of you sign up for a month's free trial with blockbuster by the end of September, we will reach over £100 – that's more than three visits paid for.

We can raise even more if you also sign up for a fortnight's free trial of Lovefilm (£8.00 for each sign up)

Go to the "easyfundsraising for SDV" page of the SDV website for a link to easyfundraising. You need to register first - but that is quick and easy! Then click on the "FREE funds" tab at the top of the easyfundraising page.

There are also details of lots of other ways to get free funds. Please also remember to go through this site if you are doing any online shopping. We can raise around £25-£40 from insurance companies if you buy contents, holiday and car insurance online through easyfundraising – all SDV members and supporters should register!

Please also remember easysearch – 10 searches a day can raise about £20 in a year.

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

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

Immigration, asylum and detention news

New Statesman, no place for a child campaign

Visit the New Statesman website for several articles on the detention of children

<http://www.newstatesman.com/subjects/no-place-for-children>

Women's Hour feature on the detention of children

Follow the link to hear a discussion about the detention of children in Yarl's Wood including contributions from Al Aynsley Green (Children's Commissioner in England), the journalist Natasha Walter, UKBA head Lin Homer and a mother detained in Yarl's Wood.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour/02/2008_36_fri.shtml

United Nations Human Rights Committee condemns UK detention conditions

The Committee remains concerned that the State party has continued its practice of detaining large numbers of asylum-seekers, including children. Furthermore, the Committee reiterates that it considers unacceptable any detention of asylum-seekers

in prisons and is concerned that while most asylum-seekers are detained in immigration centres, a small minority of them continue to be held in prisons, allegedly for reasons of security and control. It is concerned that some asylum-seekers do not have early access to legal representation and are thus likely to be unaware of their right to make a bail application which is no longer automatic since the enactment of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002. The Committee is also concerned by the failure to keep statistics on persons subject to deportation who are removed from Northern Ireland to Great Britain, as well as their temporary detention in police cells. (arts. 9, 10, 12 and 24)

The State party should review its detention policy with regard to asylum-seekers, especially children. It should take immediate and effective measures to ensure that all asylum-seekers who are detained pending deportation are held in centres specifically designed for that purpose, should consider alternatives to detention, and should end the detention of asylum-seekers in prisons. It should also ensure that asylum-seekers have full access to early and free legal representation so that their rights under the Covenant receive full protection. It should provide appropriate detention facilities in Northern Ireland for persons facing deportation.

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/hracs93.htm>

High court to rule on incarceration of boy, eight, in detention centre

Lawyers acting on behalf of an eight-year-old boy detained in an immigration removal centre in Bedfordshire are to challenge the legality of his incarceration this week in the high court.

The Iranian boy, known for legal reasons as Child M, has been locked up in Yarl's Wood, the UK's main immigration removal centre for women and families, since July 15. His mother has been trying to claim asylum since last year, claiming her life is in danger if she returns to Iran after photocopied extracts of Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* were found in her house and business premises. She, Child M and his two adult siblings are being held in the centre while their solicitors challenge the Home Office's decision to send them back to Iran.

A report last month from the chief inspector of prisons, Anne Owers, said children were detained for too long and left distressed and scared at the centre.

Lawyer Richard Jones, who is acting for Child M, has filed an application for a judicial review of the boy's detention order, arguing that the home secretary Jacqui Smith's decision to keep him there is "unlawful", "disproportionate" and in breach of his human rights. He says the boy is suffering serious physical and mental health problems as a result of his incarceration. Urgent arrangements are being made for a psychiatrist to assess him.

As of Friday, there were 37 children at Yarl's Wood, according to a spokesman from Serco, the private firm that runs the centre on behalf of the UK Border Agency. Serco says the average stay for a child is 15 days.

Full story at:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2008/sep/01/immigration.law>