

Bulletin 6 February 2009

SDV News and events

AGM, Committee and Treasurer

The provisional date for the AGM is Tuesday April 28. All SDV members are expected to attend. The date will be confirmed in the next week or so.

A new committee will be elected at the AGM so think about putting yourself forward as a committee member.

After 3 years, Michelle will be standing down as Treasurer at the next AGM. This means this role will need to be filled. The person does not need to have massive financial expertise. He or she would simply need to be numerate and Michelle would provide a handover to go through the procedures. If anyone is interested in this role, or knows anyone who might be, please contact Kate or a member of the committee.

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).

Tesco will also give £5 the first time you do an online shop with them. 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

Three quarters of refugee women 'have been raped'

Disturbing evidence of rape and sexual abuse among refugee women has been released today.

A report by the Refugee Council found three quarters of refugee women have been victims of rape, in their home country and in the UK, and 15 per cent became pregnant as a result of their ordeal.

Donna Covey, chief executive of the Refugee Council said: "We are all aware that rape and sexual violence are commonplace in conflict situations, and our project confirms this. However, what is truly shocking is that women continue to suffer when they come to the UK."

In addition to these horrifying statistics the report also found 22 per cent of women were sexually abused, 9 per cent have gynaecological problems as a result of the abuse they encountered and 5 per cent gave birth to a child as a result of rape.

The main countries of origin are; Sri Lanka, Eritrea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast and Somalia.

[http://www.politics.co.uk/news/policing-and-crime/three-quarters-of-refugee-women-have-been-raped--\\$1266319.htm](http://www.politics.co.uk/news/policing-and-crime/three-quarters-of-refugee-women-have-been-raped--$1266319.htm)

Gay Iraqi could face death penalty if deportation goes ahead

A gay Iraqi man due for deportation tomorrow (Wed 4 Feb) has been told by the UK Border Agency to conduct his relationships "in private" on his return to Iraq, where homosexuality is punishable by death.

Campaign group Iraqi LGBT says the asylum seeker will become the seventh gay Iraqi to be returned to the country by the UK, despite the country being one of only nine in the world where homosexual people are executed.

Though a ruling was made in September 2007 allowing two gay Iraqis to remain in the UK, campaigners working on behalf of the man facing deportation tomorrow say his case was held too long ago to benefit from the change in case law achieved in 2007.

Keith Best, the director of the Immigration Advisory Service, told the Guardian that the government ought to give the asylum seeker a fresh hearing.

The United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA) has said that the man's homosexuality did not form the basis of his original asylum application in 2001 and that his subsequent conviction for seeking to stay in the country illegally makes him an untrustworthy defendant, undermining his claim to be gay.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/feb/03/gay-iraqi-asylum-seeker>

17,000 asylum seekers' files lost

More than 17,000 files containing the personal details of refugees and their families have been lost by the government, plunging the asylum system into chaos.

The names, dates of birth, passport numbers and addresses of people applying to stay in Britain as well as details of their children are believed to be among the documents. In many cases, applicants have had to begin the process again, while still unable to work or claim benefits.

This follows a series of high-profile losses of data, including an Inland Revenue CD with the details of 25 million child-benefit claimants, four CDs with the names of dozens of magistrate court defendants and witnesses, and a Ministry of Defence laptop containing details of 620,000 recruits and potential recruits.

The disclosure comes just days after the National Audit Office found that a backlog of up to 200,000 cases is still to be examined by the UK Border Agency.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/feb/01/refugees-asylum>

Other news and events

DEC Gaza appeal

After an 18 month blockade of Gaza and three weeks of heavy shelling the humanitarian crisis in Gaza is now completely overwhelming.

Thousands of people are struggling to survive with many having lost their homes and most down to their last supplies of food and only limited amounts of fresh drinking water.

Click on the link below to donate:

www.dec.org.uk/item/200