



Exiled Journalists in Europe

A Report by the MediaWise RAM Project

This Report was made possible with funding from the Open Society Foundation

Exiled Journalists in Europe

This Report was published to coincide with a MediaWise RAM Project conference to launch the Exiled Journalists' Network, an independent body formed to provide advice, support and training for journalists who have fled persecution for collecting and disseminating facts and opinions in the public interest. It is dedicated to all those media professionals who have lost their lives in the course of their work.

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Exiled Journalists in Europe



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The MediaWise RAM Project

MediaWise

Formerly known as PressWise, The MediaWise Trust (www.mediawise.org.uk) is a registered charity that began as a voluntary organisation in 1993, set up by 'victims of media abuse' backed by sympathetic journalists and media lawyers to improve the standards and standing of journalism. The Trust champions press freedom and responsible journalism, and is committed to the promotion of accurate and fair reporting. It provides:

- advice to members of the public affected by inaccurate or unfair print or broadcast coverage;
- information about media ethics, law and regulation, and how the media operate;
- research into aspects of media practice, representation of minority groups, and media regulation;
- training for community groups on how to make best use of the media, and for journalists about more effective ways of reporting problematic issues.

MediaWise has a rights-based approach to media ethics. It believes that:

- press freedom is a responsibility exercised on behalf of the public;
- the public has a right to expect accurate information from the media, and should be informed promptly when inaccurate information is published;
- those treated unfairly by the media are entitled to independent advice.

MediaWise employs experienced journalists and collaborates with NGOs, media and academic bodies and international agencies. MediaWise has devised and delivered training programmes for media professionals and non-governmental organisations in over 25 countries, with the International Federation of Journalists, the British Council, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNICEF, and the World Health Organisation (WHO), among others. Its Projects include:

- Children and the media (since 1997)
- Media and diversity (since 1997)
- Health and the media (since 1998)
- Suicide and the media (since 2001)
- Journalism and public trust (since 2004)

The RAM Project

In 1999 MediaWise launched the Refugees, Asylum-seekers and the Media (RAM) Project (www.ramproject.org.uk) to promote best practice in media coverage of refugee and asylum issues. It is based in the UK but has an international dimension. The Project:

- campaigns against hostile and inaccurate coverage;
- supports exiled journalists back into work in the UK;
- provides use-of-the-media training to refugee and asylum groups;
- encourages discussion within the media industry;
- conducts research into the consequences of poor journalism;
- publishes a monthly e-bulletin about media coverage of refugee issues; and
- has established an Exiled Journalists Network with over 150 members.

Exiled Journalists in Europe

The Open Society Foundation

The Open Society Institute and Soros Foundations Network¹

The Open Society Institute (OSI), a private operating and grant-making foundation, aims to shape public policy to promote democratic governance, human rights, and economic, legal, and social reform. On a local level, OSI implements a range of initiatives to support the rule of law, education, public health, and independent media. At the same time, OSI works to build alliances across borders and continents on issues such as combating corruption and rights abuses.

OSI was created in 1993 by investor and philanthropist George Soros to support his foundations in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Those foundations were established, starting in 1984, to help countries make the transition from communism. OSI has expanded the activities of the Soros foundations network to other areas of the world where the transition to democracy is of particular concern. The Soros foundations network encompasses more than 60 countries.

Soros Foundations

Soros foundations are autonomous institutions established in particular countries or regions to initiate and support open society activities. The priorities and specific activities of each foundation are determined by a local board of directors and staff in consultation with George Soros and OSI boards and advisors. In addition to support from OSI, many of the foundations receive funding from other sources.

Open Society Foundation²

The Open Society Foundation in London focuses on projects concerning public health, civic empowerment, poverty, discrimination, as well as education about human rights, political and social sciences, and journalism.

The Foundation works closely with the British government and London-based NGOs, helps build donor partnerships, serves as a channel for information and contacts, develops coalitions with long-term partners, and raises awareness in UK policy circles about issues of concern to the foundation. In addition, the foundation supports initiatives and projects undertaken by other members of the OSI network that come within its sphere of operations and charitable goals.

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-
1. www.soros.org
 2. www.soros.org/about/foundations/osf_london

Exiled Journalists in Europe

FOREWORD

Bemma Donkoh, UNHCR Representative to the UK

The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) welcomes this new Report by MediaWise's Refugees, Asylum-seekers and the Media (RAM) Project, which is a compelling follow-up to its analysis on media manipulation of public opinion on asylum issues (*The RAM Report*, May 2005).

Publication of this report fills a conspicuous gap in assistance measures designed for exiled journalists in Europe. In identifying best practices in providing assistance to exiled journalists, RAM has supplied advocates and practitioners with what we believe will prove a springboard for new and innovative ways to work with refugees and asylum-seekers with backgrounds in the media.

At a time when refugees face increasing hostility in Europe, it is more important than ever that refugees and asylum-seekers are given a voice in mainstream media.

The strength of this study is in its acknowledgement that creating opportunities for journalists in exile is not the sole interest of those working with refugees and the media: it should be a matter of significant concern to any society that claims to value the democratic principle of freedom of the press.

The services outlined in the following pages range from the most basic support (housing, health, etc.), to the more specific (job re-integration training), and further, to extremely comprehensive support programmes (such as the *Maison des Journalistes*). They will thus be of interest to many and disparate organisations. Most importantly, the Report emphasises that a strong network of partners is needed to preserve the efficiency and vitality of these programs.

Building on these observations, recommendations made herein should serve as an invaluable starting point for the creation of programmes to assist journalists in exile to continue practising their calling. UNHCR looks forward to witnessing situations where exiled journalists and the wider media are empowered to pursue and expand upon these proposed initiatives in the years to come.

Exiled Journalists in Europe

INTRODUCTION

Rich Cookson, Mike Jempson & Forward Maisokwadzo

Journalists everywhere apply their skills to inform the public about what is being done in their name and with their money. Inevitably they face the risk of pressure from powerful elites.

In many parts of the world riven by war and poverty and ruled by despots, journalists are threatened, beaten, imprisoned, tortured and murdered simply for doing their job. In the 12 years to 2004, 1,100 media workers were 'killed in the line of duty' according to the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ).³ The US-based Committee to Protect Journalists⁴ records the stories of individual cases on its website and in its journal *Dangerous Assignments*.

According to *Reporters Sans Frontières* (RSF)⁵ more than 50 media workers were killed in 2004, and on 1 January 2005, 107 media professionals were in prison across the world. From the invasion of Iraq in March 2003 until September 2005, 99 journalists lost their lives covering the conflict.

Thousands more are subjected to physical attack, intimidation, arbitrary arrest and harassment every year. In North Korea, for example, journalists can be sent to brutal 're-education' camps simply for making spelling mistakes. In Turkmenistan, the few journalists who dare to work for the foreign media are routinely threatened and beaten-up. In Eritrea there has been no independent media since 2001 because editors and their staff are in prison and foreign correspondents are banned from the country.

On World Press Freedom Day 2003, the International News Safety Institute (INSI)⁶ was set up in Brussels to safeguard the lives of all journalists everywhere, and to help create a culture of safety in the media in all corners of the world. And for some years the Dart Centre for Trauma and Journalism⁷ has been advocating support for journalists affected by the human and natural disasters they have to cover, recently opening a European office.

Meanwhile, increasing numbers of those facing oppression and persecution find that they have no option but to flee their home and seek asylum in a safer country. This is not a new phenomenon, but all the indications are that the situation is worsening. There are no precise figures for the number of journalists forced into exile around the world, but in the UK alone the Exiled Journalists' Network set up by the MediaWise RAM Project has 156 members, and RSF has been in touch with at least 73 journalists who have sought asylum in France.

3. www.ifj.org

4. www.cpj.org

5. www.rsf.org

6. www.newssafety.com

7. www.dartcenter.org

8. www.dartcenter.org/europe/index.html

Exiled Journalists in Europe

This Report is an initial attempt to discover what support is currently available for exiled journalists in Europe. It examines the help and opportunities on offer in eleven countries: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Spain and the UK.⁹ Much of the research has been carried out by exiled journalists based in these countries.

We apologise in advance for any gaps in our knowledge, and this Report should be seen for what it is – a journalistic investigation designed to provide a snapshot of the current situation.

Each country report provides statistics and information about support work being done by journalists' unions and other NGOs. Some contain outlines of specific projects working with exiled journalists and case studies of personal experience.

In describing some of the ground-breaking work that is being done to help exiles recover from the trauma of their experiences, and resume their careers in the media, this Report seeks both to identify success stories that might bear replication in other countries, and to examine gaps in provision. As with our earlier *RAM Report*,¹⁰ the aim of this Report is to encourage others to join in efforts to assist refugee and asylum-seeking journalists to find a new life.

Many exiled journalists have little choice about where they end up – like most refugees their ultimate destination is as likely to be a matter of happenstance as it is to reflect historical, family, professional or linguistic links with the country in which they attempt to settle. How they are treated and what help they are offered varies enormously, given the lack of internationally co-ordinated programmes to protect those living in fear of their lives.

Exiled journalists from past conflicts have moved on. In the UK, for example, Lionel Morrison, an exile from apartheid South Africa, became the first black President of the National Union of Journalists (UK & Ireland), and Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, exiled from Idi Amin's Uganda, is now one of the UK's leading columnists. Many other will have had to abandon their chosen career to survive.

This Report is a call to everyone to remember the risks faced by journalists in different parts of the world, and to actively support attempts to ensure that press freedom is universally respected.

It is also a plea to governments, campaigners and media organisations to find new ways of working together to ensure that journalists driven into exile for providing the public with news, information and opinion have the opportunity to continue their important work as communicators. Their knowledge and experience could help us all to appreciate the causes of conflict, share understanding about the conditions faced by those they have left behind, and discover possible solutions to the circumstances that have sent them into exile.

9. RAM researchers contacted media and refugee organisations in several other countries, but could find no information about projects for exiled journalists, apart from a nascent association in Switzerland (see www.amnesty.ch/f/if/ifamf/m0505f/jxs.html).

10. A detailed study of the MediaWise RAM Project and the strategies it has adopted to improve media coverage of refugees and asylum-seekers since 1999, intended as a guide to other minority groups wishing to challenge inaccurate and unfair media coverage.

Exiled Journalists in Europe

RECOMMENDATIONS

When the MediaWise RAM Project helped to establish the Exiled Journalists' Network (EJN) our initial aim was to put people in touch with each other, identify media professionals who could help provide a voice for refugee community organisations in the UK, and encourage them to find work in the UK media.

We discovered a huge reservoir of talented and normally resourceful people whose lives and careers had been completely knocked off course by tragic events. Often the circumstances of their flight or decision to seek asylum prevented them from supplying documentary evidence of their work or employment record. Their first priority was survival, and their immediate needs were very basic: stable accommodation, financial help, legal assistance with asylum claims, contact with their families, and sometimes psychological and medical assistance. Our own limited resources and remit prevented us from fulfilling these 'welfare' functions.

We concentrated on confidence-building and professional issues. Those who wanted to work in the media quickly realised they would need fresh training or reskilling to cope with the very different media culture of the UK. We have sought to introduce them to the UK media, encouraged them to join the main journalists' union, and provided training, work placements and paid assignments.

Among those who have joined the EJN are exiles in other lands, and we realised that there appears to be no co-ordinated pan-European work being carried out to support exiled journalists elsewhere. Indeed, as this Report shows, there are few dedicated projects or services for exiled journalists in the eleven countries we have investigated.

From our experience and the results of our investigation, this is what we believe is needed to assist journalists who seek safety in exile:

- **recognition by the authorities in safe countries of the special risks faced by media workers;**
- **networks through which media workers under threat can find routes to safety;**
- **secure accommodation in a safe country and access to their families;**
- **assistance with asylum claims, including specialist legal advice, especially relating to evidence about the conditions under which the media operate in their home countries, and their own personal predicament;**
- **support from and contact with media professionals in their new home, especially to share information about conditions in their countries of origin;**
- **affordable training and work opportunities to enable them to discover whether it is appropriate for them to continue in their chosen career, and**
- **links with appropriate refugee community organisations for whom they can continue to provide news and information about their country of origin, and provide means of communicating with the host community.**

Exiled Journalists in Europe

Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF), the main organisation working with exiled journalists in more than one country – helping Iranian journalists in Germany, running the *Maison des Journalistes* in Paris, and aiming to open similar hostels in Germany, Spain and the UK if funding and support can be secured – is overstretched and underfunded, like so many NGOs.

With the backing of other influential organisations concerned with press freedom issues, RSF would be well-placed to spearhead pan-European work to create the conditions that would assist exiled journalists.

Lobbying of and by the IFJ, the European Journalists' Federation,¹¹ INSI, UNESCO,¹² UNHCR,¹³ the European Broadcasting Union,¹⁴ the World Association of Newspapers,¹⁵ Amnesty International,¹⁶ International PEN¹⁷ and the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)¹⁸ might encourage media companies, the Council of Europe and the European Union to consider funding initiatives addressing the specific needs of exiled journalists.

We would recommend:

- **The establishment of a hostels like the *Maison des Journalistes*, able to provide short-term accommodation for newly-arrived media professionals, with access to the internet, legal and social support systems, and contact with media professionals, in each of the main centres of media production in Europe where there is a significant need.**
- **The creation of interlinked email networks, like the EJN in the UK and *Journalistes Africains en Exil* (JAFE) in France, to allow exiled journalists to share information and find out about training and work opportunities, ideally initiated by media unions and/or professional associations in each European country.**
- **The creation of special skills-assessment and training schemes in each European country to enable exiled journalists to discover whether it is possible or appropriate to continue in their trade.**
- **A programme of work-placements in the local or national print and broadcast media to allow exiled journalists to gain experience, ideally co-ordinated by employers' organisations in each European country.**

11. www.ifj-europe.org

12. www.unesco.org

13. www.unhcr.ch

14. www.ebu.ch

15. www.wan-press.org

16. www.amnesty.org

17. www.internationalpen.org.uk

18. www.ecre.org

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- **Bursaries for exiled journalists to undertake research, write up their experiences or undertake degree courses that would enhance their skills and employment prospects.**
- **Support for non-governmental agencies, including refugee community organisations, able to provide relevant support and activities that make best use of the skills of exiled journalists.**
- **Opportunities for exiled journalists to become involved in co-ordinated international campaigning work to highlight the problems faced by journalists around the world.**
- **Support from media and non-governmental organisations for exiled journalists' work to promote press freedom in their home countries.**

Exiled Journalists in Europe

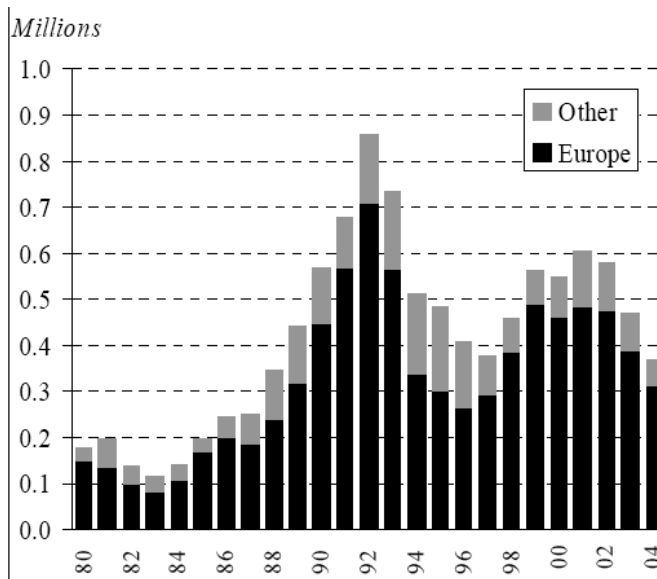
EUROPE: A major destination for asylum-seekers

Rich Cookson

Across the world, more than 19 million people were classed as asylum-seekers, refugees and internally displaced people in 2004,¹⁹ according to the Office for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Roughly half of them – some 9.2 million persons – were refugees.

Some 2,317,800 of those refugees were in Europe, and during the year there were a further 444,000 applications for asylum.²⁰

The UNHCR reports that the number of people seeking asylum is currently falling in industrialised countries – the graph below shows the number of asylum claims lodged in industrialised countries (with Europe highlighted) from 1980 to 2004.²¹



During 2004, France became the main destination country for people seeking asylum. The United States, which had been the largest asylum-seeker receiving country in 2003, became the second largest recipient country. The United Kingdom, the second main destination country for asylum-seekers in 2003, fell to third position, while Germany, a leading European destination country for much of the 1980s and 1990s, was fourth. Canada was fifth, followed respectively by Austria, Sweden, Belgium, Switzerland and the Slovak Republic.

The following table shows the main countries of origin for people seeking asylum in Europe in 2004 and the press freedom ranking given to each country by RSF (out of a total of 167 countries).²² It reveals that most countries from which people are forced to seek asylum have very poor records on press freedom.

19. The total population of concern to UNHCR is not totally reflected in these figures as an important part of the stateless populations have not been systematically identified, or statistical data is unavailable despite renewed efforts on the part of UNHCR.

20. *2004 Global Refugee Trends*, UNHCR, 2005

21. *Asylum levels and trends in industrialised countries*, UNHCR, 2004

22. *Ibid* and RSF World Press Freedom Index - www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=11715

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Country of origin	Number of applications	Rank	Press freedom rank ²³
Russian Federation	29,077	1	140
Serbia & Montenegro	21,829	2	77
Turkey	15,773	3	113=
China	11,358	4	162
Nigeria	10,848	5	117=
India	9,774	6	120
Iran	9,544	7	158
Iraq	9,411	8	148
Pakistan	9,273	9	150
DR Congo	8,810	10	141
Georgia	8,749	11	94
Afghanistan	8,550	12	97
Somalia	8,444	13	128=
Algeria	8,341	14	128=
Bangladesh	5,790	15	151

Pan-European Projects

Two media organisations are supporting exiled journalists in more than one European country: RSF (see Recommendations) and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ).²⁴ The CPJ – an independent, non-profit organisation dedicated to global press freedom – has a general defence fund to help journalists who find themselves in emergency situations as a result of persecution because of their work. From January to September 2005, it helped 22 media workers seeking exile or resettlement, distributing an average of US\$600 to each. Of these, two went to Europe: one Cuban in France, one Uzbek in Russia. It has also given assistance grants to journalists who need to leave their country temporarily, and can also provide letters of support to help applications for asylum.

23. 1 is best, 167 worst

24. www.cpj.org

Exiled Journalists in Europe

COUNTRY REPORTS

BELGIUM

Guy Mulongoy Momat

In line with many European countries, asylum applications in Belgium rose steadily during the 1980s, peaked in 2000, and are now falling. According to the *Office des Etrangers* (OE)²⁵ – the government department responsible for assessing asylum requests – there were 42,691 applications in 2000, but the numbers have fallen steadily since then, to 15,367 in 2004.

The following table²⁶ shows the top five countries of origin from January to July 2005:

Country	Applications
DR Congo	765
Russia (and Chechnya)	756
Serbia (and Kosovo)	726
Slovakia	551
Iraq	491

Exiled Journalists

There are no official figures for the number of exiled journalists in Belgium. Belgium's *Reporters Sans Frontières* (RSF) office reports helping just two exiled media workers, from DR Congo and Guinea, in the period 2004-05.

Project profiles

Both RSF and Amnesty International²⁷ offer assistance to exiled journalists.

"When journalists come to see me I ask them to provide as many details as possible," says Mireille Veldkens, Communications and Press Officer at RSF.²⁸ "Those details will be passed to our head office in Paris, where they will be cross-checked using our network of correspondents in the countries of origin. In some cases editors-in-chief are contacted.

"It's only when we are convinced that somebody is genuinely a journalist, who has left his country of origin because he faces threats or persecution because of his work, that RSF can help by providing a recommendation letter to the person, and in some cases financial assistance too," she explains, adding: "We reject some people because we find that the reason for their persecution has nothing to do with their work as journalists. Occasionally, I've also received an

25. www.fedasil.be/home/asylum_year

26. www.fedasil.be/nationaliteiten

27. www.amnestyinternational.be

28. www.rsf.org

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application from someone pretending to be a journalist – one person, for example, used to sell newsletters in his country of origin.”

Media unions

In Belgium there is one major media union, called the General Association of the Belgian Professional Journalists (AGJPB)²⁹ but it does not offer any special assistance for exiled journalists.

Self-organised groups

A network of exiled journalists – modelled on the one established by the RAM Project in the UK – is being set up by a group of exiled journalists, including Carly Kanyinda, who is communications officer for Convivial.³⁰ Convivial was established in 1996 by Marie-Noëlle de Schoutheete, a Belgian, and Rwandan refugee Florida Mukeshimana, who recognised that refugees need both material and psychological support to help them settle in Belgium.

“We provide full assistance to refugees, including psychological care, legal advice, professional assistance, education and financial support – by providing loans to refugees for their rental deposits,” says Convivial’s Judith Murazishya. “Most of these refugees are referred to us by social services.”

Since 1996, Convivial has dealt with more than 7,000 refugees from 65 different countries. In 2004, it had contact with over 1,800 refugees and their families.

The organisation ensures that refugees are received in Belgium with dignity and are given the opportunity to determine their own futures. Refugees are central to the running of Convivial itself.

“We are in the process of creating a network of exiled journalists in Belgium, though it is not easy,” says Carly Kanyinda, a journalist from DRC. “But after we learnt what has been achieved in the UK, we believe that sharing best practice and capacity-building will help us to develop our network.”

29. www.agjpb.be

30. www.convivial.be

Exiled Journalists in Europe

DENMARK *Dina Yafasova*

A total of 3,235 people sought asylum in Denmark in 2004 – down from a peak of 12,512 in 2001 – of whom 278 were granted Geneva Convention status and 229 de facto status.³¹

The following table³² shows the main countries of origin for asylum-seekers in 2004:

Country	Applications
Serbia and Montenegro	784
Afghanistan	285
Iraq	217
Russia	163
Somalia	154

Exiled journalists

It is impossible to obtain accurate figures about the number of exiled journalists living in Denmark. The Asylum Department of the Danish Immigration Service may hold these statistics, but is bound by a duty of confidentiality not to release them.

While the plight of exiled journalists is an issue of concern and importance – senior media figures have discussed it in recent interviews – little practical work is being done to assist them. There are several possible reasons for this. One is that relatively few journalists who are forced into exile choose Denmark as their final destination country. Another is public hostility towards immigrants – the media often portrays asylum-seekers and refugees in a negative light. Further, the number of people seeking asylum in Denmark has dramatically decreased in a last three years.

Through various organisations working with asylum-seekers and refugees, we have identified six journalists living in exile in Denmark (three are detailed below) – though there are likely to be many more than this.

There are unconfirmed reports of exiled journalists from Afghanistan, Argentina, Burkina Faso, Cuba, Eritrea and Russia.

Media Unions

The Danish Union of Journalists³³ does not offer specific assistance to exiled journalists. However it is involved in plans to start such a project (see below).

31. www.udlst.dk/statistik

32. www.udlst.dk/statistik

33. www.journalistforbundet.dk

Exiled Journalists in Europe

Other projects

In 2004 the Danish NGO International Media Support (IMS)³⁴ proposed a new project that would help journalists who are facing persecution in their home countries. IMS suggested providing assistance to those wishing to flee persecution and subsequently offering support to those who arrive in Denmark. IMS is currently discussing this with the Danish Union of Journalists, Danish School of Journalism³⁵ and Danish PEN.³⁶

The asylum department of the Danish Red Cross produces a monthly newspaper called *New Times*, specifically for asylum-seekers. It is an English language publication distributed in refugee camps and to those working with refugees and asylum-seekers. The editor is a Danish journalist, but most of the material is written by a group of (unpaid) asylum-seekers. The project provides meaningful occupation for asylum-seekers, and is clearly a good opportunity for exiled journalists. However, it should be noted that many of the people involved in writing for *New Times* are not professional journalists and the project is not specifically aimed at exiled media workers.

Case studies

Mustafa X, 29 and from Syria, was forced into exile in 2002 after being imprisoned in Lebanon because of his writing. He went first to Sudan and then decided to head for London. But while being transported in a container, he was stopped in Denmark and detained by the Danish authorities. He ended up in refugee camp and, after two years there, was granted political asylum. While in the refugee camp, he tried contact Danish media, telling them about his situation and offering them articles on his homeland, but he received no responses.

Amna Y, from Iraq is a 55-year-old widow with two adult children. She holds a university degree in English literature and worked for Baghdad newspaper *Al-Jumhuria*. Forced into exile in 1994 after pressure on journalists in Iraq became unbearable, she went first to Jordan, and then travelled to Austria where she spent a few months in a refugee camp. She went to Denmark in 1997 and spent two years in a refugee camp before being granted asylum in 1999. Although she speaks good English, she has been unable to rebuild her career in the Danish media. Amna is now working for a project to help Arabic women integrate into the Danish job market.

Mustafa-Cico Arnautovich is a journalist from Bosnia-Herzegovina. He was editor of one of the biggest newspapers in his home country, but was forced into exile in 1992. He is a member of the Danish Writers Union, and was awarded the 1994 Prize of the Year by the Danish Refugee Council.

34. www.i-m-s.dk

35. www.djh.dk/international

36. www.pen.dk

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FINLAND

Rich Cookson

Finland has been receiving refugees since 1979, when it became a signatory to the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Since then it has received 23,000 refugees, mostly from the former Yugoslavia, Iran, Iraq, Somalia and Vietnam.

The Finnish Aliens Act (in force since 1 May 2004) lays down the laws governing the country's asylum and refugee systems, though the grounds for granting asylum specified in the Act are the same as in the Geneva Refugee Convention.

In line with some 15 other countries, every year Finland accepts a fixed number of 'quota refugees' – persons defined as in need of humanitarian protection by the UNHCR. Since 2001, the quota has been set at 750, and in recent years has been largely comprised of Afghans, Iranians and Iraqis.

Applications for asylum are submitted to police or passport control officers. Asylum-seekers are then transferred to one of 14 reception centres while their claim is assessed.

A total of 3,861 persons sought asylum in Finland in 2004.³⁷ The following table³⁸ shows the top five countries of origin:

Country	Applications
Yugoslavia Fed. Rep. & Serbia and Montenegro	837
Slovakia	341
Macedonia	279
Somalia	253
Bulgaria	238

In 2004, 28 percent were accepted (compared to 26 percent the year before).³⁹

Exiled Journalists

There is no official information about the number of exiled journalists in Finland. According to the Finnish Refugee Advice Centre,⁴⁰ there are about 20 exiled media workers in the entire country. Most come from Afghanistan, Chechnya, Chile, Ethiopia, Iraq, Russia and Somalia.

37. www.uvi.fi/netcomm/content.asp?article=1987

38. Ibid

39. Ibid

40. www.pakolaisneuvonta.fi

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Media Unions

The main media union is the Union of Journalists in Finland,⁴¹ which comprises 19 smaller member associations and was founded in 1921. It now has some 14,000 members. Although it is concerned about the representation of immigrants in the media – 10 years ago it organised a series of seminars and published a booklet about this issue – it has no projects relating specifically to exiled journalists.

Other agencies

The number of exiled journalists in Finland is low, so there are few programmes for them. In 1999 the Finnish Refugee Council (FRC)⁴² ran an eight-month course for journalists to which the RAM Project contributed. It was designed to help media workers better understand asylum and refugee issues, and two exiled journalists took part. The FRC plans to repeat the course in 2006.

There are a handful of media aimed at immigrant communities, such as *SixDegrees* magazine,⁴³ some local radio stations which broadcast programmes by immigrant communities, and the Finnish Broadcasting Company's *Mundo* programme⁴⁴ – a media education, training and work-placement project for immigrants and ethnic minorities. Some of these projects receive public money from the Ministries of Labour, Education and/or Foreign Affairs. None, however, is specifically aimed at exiled journalists.

There has also been a very limited amount of academic research about press treatment of immigrants and ethnic minorities.⁴⁵

Self-organised groups

There is no official body for exiled journalists, self-organised or otherwise. However, many of the exiled journalists in Finland are in contact with each other.

41. www.journalistiliitto.fi

42. www.pakolaisapu.fi

43. www.6d.fi

44. www.yle.fi/mundo

45. See www.kepa.fi/teemat/raportit/pdf/010_finnish_press.pdf and www.uta.fi/jourtutkimus/Ethnicity%20in%20Finnish%20Journalism-1.pdf

Exiled Journalists in Europe

FRANCE

Ibrahim Seaga Shaw

UNHCR statistics show France as the top destination country during the first three months of 2005, with 15,700 asylum applications (almost the same as for the first quarter of 2004, but 10 percent more than the first quarter of 2003).

Asylum-seekers must apply to the *Office Francais de Protection des Refugies et Apatrides* (OFPRA).⁴⁶

Numbers peaked at over 60,000 in 1989, dropping to less than 20,000 in 1996 and rising again to 50,547 in 2004. Since the 1980s the largest number of applicants has come from Asia.

Exiled journalists

Paris-based *Reporters Sans Frontières*⁴⁷ has been campaigning against the repression of journalists throughout the world since 1985, providing moral and financial support to journalists forced into exile in France and elsewhere while they acquire refugee status. The Paris secretariat has a staff of about 30.

Hajar Smouni runs its refugee unit, co-ordinating assistance to journalists seeking political asylum in France. For many from Francophone countries France is their destination of choice, but others claim asylum because they have been stopped en route to other European or Scandinavian countries.

"Apart from the language factor, they also choose their country of asylum because they have some friends or family members who would help them fill out their papers and explain to them how the asylum system works," she says.

Most exiled journalists seeking political asylum in France are put in touch with RSF by lawyers or French social workers dealing with asylum-seekers, she explains, although RSF does also help journalists believed to be in serious danger to get visas to countries of their choice.

RSF records show that 73 journalists from around the world sought political asylum in France between August 2004 and January 2005.

46. www.ofpra.gouv.fr

47. www.rsf.org

Exiled Journalists in Europe

Region	Applications
Africa	23
Maghreb and Mid-East (MME)	17
Europe	17
Asia	9
The Americas	7

The following table⁴⁸ shows the countries of origin and numbers of journalists seeking asylum in France, August 2004 to January 2005:

Country	Number	Country	Number
Haiti	7	Albania	1
Cameroon	5	Cambodia	1
DR Congo	5	China	1
Madagascar	4	India	1
Guinea	2	Senegal	1
Nepal	2	Sri Lanka	1
Sierra Leone	2	South Africa	1
Togo	2		

To receive support from RSF, asylum applicants must be journalists who have left their country of origin because they face threats or persecution because of their work. "We cannot help a journalist because of his political activities; it is just out of our domain here," says Smouni. "We reject others perhaps because we find that the reason for their persecution has nothing to do with their work or maybe because they worked as journalists four years ago which does not qualify them; we have to prove that if they go back to their countries they would be in danger – if not, OFPRA or the Appeals Commission (*Recours*) would reject their cases."

Determining who is and who is not a journalist and who has a genuine claim can be difficult. Smouni says some come to RSF with "fake files, fake media cards, fake newspapers". RSF cross-checks information using their network of correspondents in the applicants' countries of origin. They supply as many details as possible, and their trusted contacts investigate as they would on any story – contacting editors-in-chief, the person's family, or the police. A negative answer does not necessarily close the file, says Smouni. "I myself would call the editor-in-chief or some other source just to double-check before I can say no to a person, just to be sure that we are not closing the door to somebody who is genuinely a journalist, and really in danger".

Almost half of the 73 journalists who came to the RSF for help were turned down on grounds of insufficient evidence of proof of identity or of imminent danger should they return to their country.

48. RSF

Exiled Journalists in Europe

The efficacy of independent investigation of the asylum applications of exiled journalists is demonstrated by the fact that only two of those supported by RSF during the period were rejected by the authorities. Smouni explains that some applicants come to them after having been rejected by OFPRA and the Appeals Commission, so their cases would go before the State Council (*Conseil d'Etat*). "Once you are before the State Council, you really have to come up with new elements in your case, enough to convince them that OFPRA and the appeals commission were wrong. It is really difficult to get your status before the State Council," she says.

Occasionally RSF will provide emergency help, says Smouni. "For example a journalist recently came to see me and he didn't have anywhere to sleep for the night, and we got him a hotel for two days since social services did not have a place ready for him... We also have stand-by assistance fund budget of about 300 euros for extreme cases. We send a lot of these funds to people in third countries, mostly in Africa, waiting to get their UNHCR status." RSF has a very good working relationship with the *Maison des Journalistes* (MDJ) which provides temporary accommodation and other logistical assistance to journalists going through the asylum process.

Results⁴⁹ of applications for assistance from RSF between Aug 2004 and Jan 2005:

REGION	RSF SUPPORT	PENDING	NO RSF SUPPORT
Africa	10	1	12
The Americas	1	0	6
Asia	6	0	3
Europe	4	2	10
Maghreb & Mid-East	14	2	1
Total	35	6	32

Project profiles

The *Maison des Journalistes* (MDJ)⁵⁰ is a well-appointed three-storey hostel with 15 bedrooms (two designed to accommodate people with disabilities), a communal kitchen and social and study areas, with access to the internet, in a converted industrial building in Paris. It provides accommodation and assistance for exiled journalists for a period of six months while their applications for asylum are being processed by the authorities.

The idea for the MDJ was born at a social event attended by Danièle Ohayon, journalist with *France Info*, and film producer Philippe Spinau, in February 2000. Ohayon, a press freedom activist with *Reporters Sans Frontières* (RSF), is now its President, and Spinau is the full-time Director. They formed an association with support from non-governmental organisations and media colleagues, and by May 2002 were able to provide accommodation for the first seven

49. RSF

50. www.maisondesjournalistes.org

Exiled Journalists in Europe

exiled journalists, in the Bobigny district of Paris. The Mayor of Paris donated their current premises, opened in November 2003.

RSF, the European Commission, the Mairie de Paris, Region Il de France, Pathé, NMPP Press Services, Europarl and Senat among others, contributed to the €800,000 cost of renovating the building. The fifteen rooms are named after the top French media houses including *Les Echos*, Canal Plus, *Le Monde*, RFI, Centre Presse, *Bayard*, *Milan Press*, *Le Canard Enchaîné*, Radio France, M6, *Paris Match*, TFI and TV5, which provide 50 percent of running costs. The remaining 50 percent comes from the European Commission Fund for Refugees.

Residents are referred once they have been screened by RSF. "It is especially difficult for those who don't speak French who are otherwise left to fend for themselves on the streets," says Spinau. "We accept those who meet the requirements and help them settle down from the traumatic experience of being forced into exile because of their work; we try our best to make life easy for them. We provide them with restaurant and metro tickets, and short French lessons for those who have problems with the language."

In order to help continue their profession, the MDJ funds a quarterly newsletter, *L'Oeil de l'Exile* (*The Eye of the Exile*), produced by residents and edited by Ohayon. Finding work in the French media however is far from easy.

"So far all the 72 journalists who have lived at the MDJ since its inception in 2001, then in Bobigny, had their refugee status before leaving to fend for themselves," says Spinau who is keen to see the MDJ replicated elsewhere, and would like to see a common agenda at European level to improve the conditions for exiled journalists seeking asylum in Europe.

Journalistes Africains en Exil (JAFE)⁵¹ was set up in 1999 by African journalists living in exile in France to provide moral and financial support to colleagues seeking asylum, and to assist those with political refugee status to integrate into French society. To be eligible for membership, the journalist must come from Africa, and must either be an asylum-seeker or refugee. JAFE President, Cameroonian journalist Eyoum Ngangué, says it has brought together journalists from Algeria, Burundi, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone.

In September 2000, Ngangué co-ordinated publication of JAFE's first book: *Comment la France Traite L'Asile Politique: Lettres à nos mères restées au pays* (*How France Handles Political Asylum Cases*, Harmattan) containing accounts of the exile experiences of eight JAFE members Lakhdar Khelifaoui (Algeria), Edgar Mbanza (Burundi), Thomas Hirénée Atenga, Eyoum Ngangué and Issa Ngandji Nyaphaga (Cameroon), Iyasou Alemayehu (Ethiopia), Boniface Murutampunzi (Rwanda), and Ibrahim Seaga Shaw (Sierra Leone). Excerpts of this book were published on the RSF website. The book helped to raise awareness about, and some funds for, JAFE, which has been struggling to survive.

"We have no means of defending our colleagues and supporting the administrative process of their asylum demands and integration into their new environment as here we are merely seen

51. www.jafe.org

Exiled Journalists in Europe

as a simple association of immigrants. We are therefore reduced to a state of silence even when we are in exile. In France only associations such as RSF and *France Terre d'Asile*⁵² are recognised to work on matters relating to helping refugees. Our objective is to make them recognise our potential as professional journalists and treat us as partners," says Ngangué.⁵³

With funding from *Fondation de France*, JAFE has now launched its own website www.jafe.org.

Case studies

Dina Salmame was an Iraqi documentary filmmaker working for Japanese private film agency, Independent Press, making documentaries with UNICEF on the humanitarian situation in Iraq, when she sought political asylum in France in December 2004. She says she was targeted by insurgents in Baghdad with links to Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, of the Al-Qaeda network, who accused her of working as a spy for the US-led Coalition troops. One of her documentary films had featured one of the bosses of this cell, who was later arrested. This made her an easy target for accusations of working closely with the foreign troops. She decided to flee because there was an imminent threat to her life, particularly when she realised she could not trust Coalition troops to protect her.

Dina crossed the border to Jordan in October 2004 where she remained in hiding until she was able to buy a passport with a visa. Her original destination was Sweden but she was arrested en route at the Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris. She found temporary respite at the *Maison des Journalistes*, but worries about her family. "They were forced to move from our house when some gunmen recently opened fire there looking for me."

Dina's husband **Faed Qarmish** is Jordanian. He worked as a camera-operator with Independent Press until he arrived in France in May 2005 to join Dina and seek asylum. They became the first married couple at the MDJ.

Qarmish says he suffered detention and torture at the hands of extremist Islamic groups in Baghdad, and received several death threats. "I cannot return to Iraq, where I've lived most of my life, or to my country of origin, for fear of been targeted by these extremists who operate across the Jordanian border. In this area, terrorists operate with impunity," he says. He and his wife have been visited by Kenji Goto, General Director of Independent Press, who came to Paris and supported their applications for asylum.

52. www.france-terre-asile.org

53. Martin Luther Journalistes Africains: Allo la JAFE?, published in, *The Eye of the Exile*, N° 002, April 2003 (quarterly newsletter run by residents of the MDJ)

Exiled Journalists in Europe

GERMANY *Claudia Anthony*

In Germany, unlike many other countries, the right to asylum is enshrined in the constitution (Article 16a of the 1949 Basic Law), as well as being rooted in the 1951 Geneva Convention.

Relatively few people sought asylum in Germany during the first few decades of the Federal Republic. Those who did were primarily refugees from communist Eastern Bloc countries and, in most cases, their claims to asylum were recognised. During the mid-1970s, larger numbers of asylum-seekers from other countries began to arrive. The Federal government rejected the majority of cases on the grounds that they were not suffering political persecution. Applications peaked in 1992 when 440,000 people sought asylum – but only 4.25 per cent were accepted.⁵⁴ The law on asylum was comprehensively overhauled in 1993 – known as the ‘compromise on asylum’ – and numbers have generally fallen since then.

In 2004, there were 35,607 applications, of which only 1.5 percent were granted asylum and a further 1.8 percent were protected from deportation, while 63.9 percent were rejected (the remaining 32.8 percent of applications were either withdrawn or resolved by other means).⁵⁵ From January to August 2005, there were 19,221 applications.⁵⁶

In 2005 the five main countries of origin have been:⁵⁷

Country	Applications
Serbia and Montenegro	3,901
Turkey	2,041
Iraq	1,164
Russia	1,157
Vietnam	722

Exiled Journalists

Specific data on the overall number of exiled journalists is not available. But three organisations – German PEN,⁵⁸ the Hamburg Foundation for the Politically Persecuted,⁵⁹ and RSF Germany⁶⁰ – said they had been in contact with a total of 54 over the last five years. These included media workers from the following countries:⁶¹

Algeria (2)	Armenia (1)	Azerbaijan (1)	Bangladesh (1)
Bosnia Herzegovina (2)		Chechnya (2)	China (1)

54. www.zuwanderung.de/english/1_fluechtlinge.html

55. *ibid*

56. www.bamf.de/template/statistik/anlagen/hauptteil_5__2005_08.pdf

57. www.bamf.de/template/statistik/anlagen/hauptteil_5__2005_09.pdf

58. www.pen-deutschland.de

59. www.hamburger-stiftung.de

60. www.reporter-ohne-grenzen.de

61. Note that some exiled journalists may have had contact with more than one organisation, and so may be counted twice.

Exiled Journalists in Europe

Columbia (1)	Cuba (1)	Eritrea (4)	Georgia (1)
Iran (10)	Moldavia (2)	Russia (4)	Serbia (1)
Sierra Leone (3)	Sudan (1)	Syria (2)	Tajikistan (2)
Tunisia (2)	Turkey (6)	Vietnam (1)	Zimbabwe (2)

Media Unions

Both the Deutsche Journalistinnen- und Journalisten-Union (DJU)⁶² and the Deutscher Journalisten Verband (German Journalists' Union)⁶³ offer assistance to exiled journalists in individual cases. Membership of the DJU is based on fees set according to income.

Project profiles

There are several institutions that can offer help to exiled journalists.

Reporter ohne Grenzen (RSF) supports persecuted and exiled journalists by providing letters of support and country reports that have proved influential in the outcome of applications for exile. It offers financial assistance for persecuted journalists and their families, and also works with German Embassies to secure visas for threatened journalists before they leave their home country.

RSF also identifies and recommends journalists either for residence stipends with the Hamburg Foundation for the Politically Persecuted and the Writers in Exile Programme of PEN – Zentrum Deutschland e.V., or funding from other sources. Through its press releases and newsletters, it raises public awareness about the needs of exiled journalists. The organisation also holds discussions with the state authorities responsible for exile issues, and lawyers working on cases.

The **Hamburg Foundation for the Politically Persecuted** provides one-year residence stipends for politically persecuted activists, many of whom are journalists. It initiates and supports signature campaigns for political prisoners and the 'disappeared', and informs the public about people who are persecuted for political reasons. It also encourages people who know about threatened persons to establish contact with it.

The **Writers in Exile Programme of PEN – Zentrum Deutschland e.V.** offers three-year residence stipends to persecuted writers and journalists, finances legal support in asylum cases, and bears the financial costs of therapy (for those who have faced torture, for example). It encourages recipients of its awards to write and give public readings. Twice in the last five years, it has published anthologies of writings of its exiled writers and journalists, who live in PEN apartments in Berlin, Cologne, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Lubeck and Munich. They are provided with living expenses as well as health and other insurance. It also funds German language courses for those who wish to learn the language.

62. www.dju-hamburg.de

63. www.djv.de

Exiled Journalists in Europe

Amnesty International's Writers and Journalists Co-ordinating Group⁶⁴ is a voluntary section of AI with a large network of country and asylum groups that could be helpful in asylum applications. It encourages threatened journalists outside Germany to contact it for assistance.

Haus Langenbroich⁶⁵ is a project of the Heinrich Boell Foundation and offers short-term residence stipends to writers, journalists and artists who are threatened in their home countries. It also organises discussion programmes and seminars.

Journalisten helfen Journalisten e.V.⁶⁶ is a network of journalists supporting threatened journalists in crisis regions and also journalists seeking asylum in Germany. It operates on a voluntarily basis.

Self-organised groups

We have found no evidence of self-organised groups for exiled journalists in Germany.

Case studies

During the second outbreak of the Chechen war, **Mainat Kourbanova** was a correspondent with several print and electronic media in Russia including the Moscow newspaper *Novaja Gazeta* and a north Caucasus radio station, *Radio Swoboda*.

Adopting the pseudonym Mainat Abdulaeva, her articles were also published by the German newspapers *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. She wrote extensively about atrocities committed by the Russian Army and the violence in Chechnya.

Born in Grozny in 1974, she read journalism at the Chechnya State University, and was a 2003 nominee for the Andre Sakharov Prize for human rights and freedom of the press. But numerous threats against her and her daughter forced her to flee Chechnya. German RSF recognised her as a journalist in need of support and made a case for her to be helped by the Writers in Exile Programme of PEN. Subsequently, PEN assisted her to travel to Germany and has been providing living, health and other costs for them since November 2004. She is currently working on a book about the situation in Chechnya.

"Filing an asylum claim would be my last option – I want to return home but I cannot do so because I have to go through Russia," she says. "They would kill me immediately! Even now my parents and my brothers are treated like hostages."

Exactly seven days after Paul Kamara, editor and proprietor of the newspaper *For di People*, was jailed under maximum-security in Freetown, Sierra Leone (on 13 November 2002), his colleague **Benjamin Palmer** was at a marathon interview to justify his asylum claim in Germany.

64. www.amnesty.de

65. www.heinrich-boell.de/haeuser/haus1.htm

66. www.journalistenhelfen.org

Exiled Journalists in Europe

Benjamin was *For di People's* court and parliamentary correspondent, and says he was influential in obtaining a Commission of Inquiry Report that castigated President Ahmed Kabbah for corruption.

Paul published details of the report and received a two-year jail term. Benjamin fled before the authorities could lay hands on him.

Yet on 3 July 2003, his case for asylum was rejected. To this day, he is still angry, disappointed and surprised: "I am shocked that I was not recognised as a journalist in the first place, even after confirmation by RSF.

"I thought Germany was a country that supported free press, a free society and human rights. In fact, along the path of escape that was open to me, Germany was closest to safety. I was even threatened with deportation. I am only allowed to stay here now just because I got married to a German woman".

He says he would now like to study journalism in Germany. "I love my profession", he says, "I can make an input in many areas of journalism. I can give talks to other journalists or journalism students. I want to get back into my profession".

Back in Sierra Leone, the intimidation continues. *For Di People's* acting editor Harry Yansaneh died in July 2005 from kidney problems, following a vicious assault on 10 May. In a letter to the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists shortly before his death, he accused an MP's son of the brutal attack.

In March 2002, **Sergei Zolovkin** survived an assassination attempt in Russia's southern resort town of Sochi. It was not the first attempt on his life – his reports in *Novaya Gazeta* focused on organized crime and corruption in high places. After numerous death threats against him and his family he decided to flee.

Still writing for the *Novaya Gazeta* and other German newspapers, he was initially accommodated by the Hamburg Foundation for the Politically Persecuted in 2002 and was later supported by the Writers in Exile Programme of the German PEN.

Now resident in Germany with his wife, he says: "I got asylum here very quickly. Now I am on the social welfare system. I want to go back to Russia and make a new beginning in the opposition. But for now, I am learning German and hope one day to write in German".

Exiled Journalists in Europe

GREECE

Nick Broumas

Situated at the crossroads of three continents, Greece is a natural gateway for refugees entering Europe. While the number of asylum-seekers is generally falling across Europe, in Greece it is rising. In 2005, for example, Greece saw the largest increase among the 'old' EU countries – up 101 per cent, to 5,500 applications.⁶⁷

The table below⁶⁸ shows the top countries of origin during 2003:

Country	Applications
Iraq	2,831
Pakistan	681
Iran	608
Afghanistan	561
Nigeria	444

Exiled journalists

There is no specialized help on offer to exiled journalists arriving in Greece. The state and Greek NGOs treat them the same as any other refugee or asylum-seeker. Consequently, it is impossible to ascertain how many exiled journalists are in the country. Amnesty International's Vicky Anagnostopoulou says that the number of exiled journalists in Greece is "minimal".⁶⁹

Media unions

The National Union of Journalists of Athens (ESIEA)⁷⁰ reports that it has never been approached for help by an exiled journalist. Its legal spokesman Vasia Pantazi adds that "to make somebody a member of ESIEA he/she must be Greek".⁷¹

Other projects

There are none. Anagnostopoulou says that asylum-seekers in Greece face difficult conditions – such as ill-treatment by border guards and by police officers in urban centres, poor conditions in detention as long as they remain undocumented, and bureaucratic hurdles in their efforts to obtain legal documents that will allow them to stay and work in the country.

67. www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/news/opendoc.htm?tbl=NEWS&id=431db6ee4

68. *2003 UNHCR Statistical Yearbook*

69. Interview with Vicky Anagnostopoulou from the Greek section of Amnesty International, 17 September 2005

70. www.esiea.gr

71. Interview with legal representative of ESIEA Vasia Pantazi, 19 September 2005

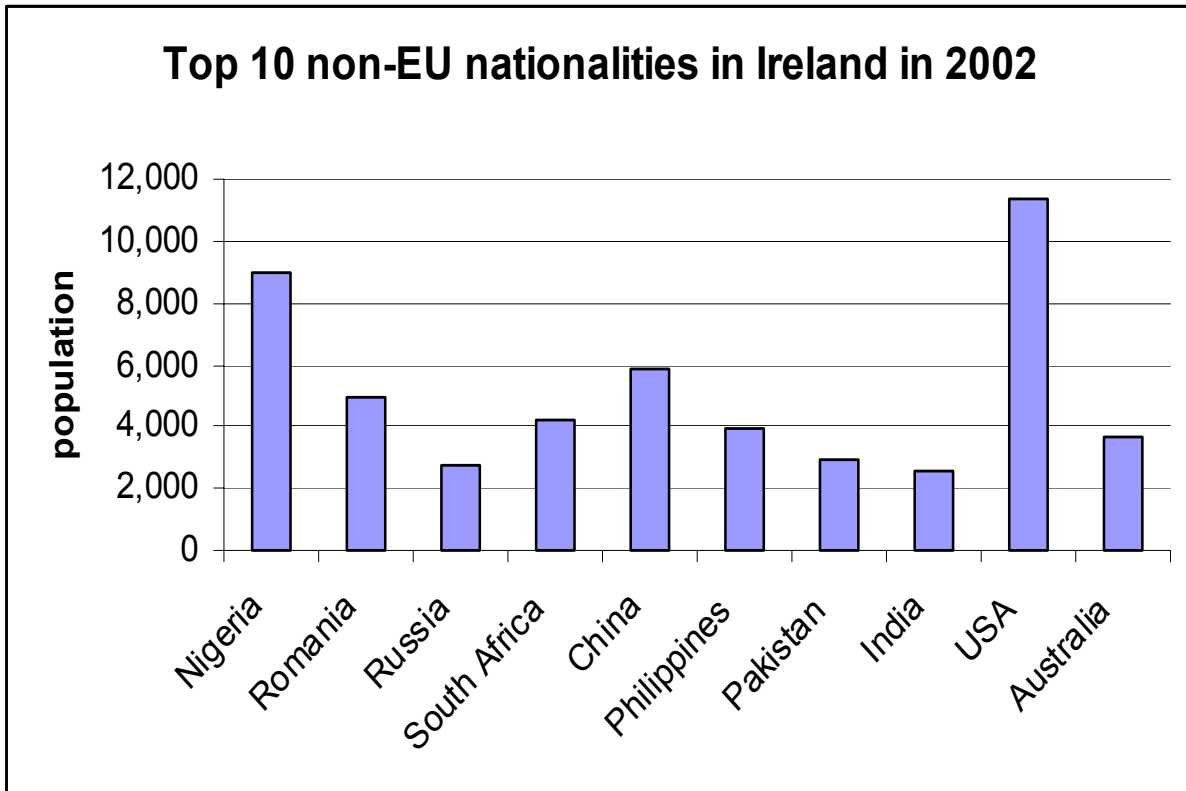
Exiled Journalists in Europe

IRELAND

Abel Ugba

Mass migration to Ireland is a relatively new phenomenon. Until the beginning of the 1990s, it was a country of continuous and sometimes massive emigrations. Most migrants who came to Ireland before the 1990s were mostly non-permanent high-skilled workers and university teachers from the United Kingdom and North America. But the mass inward migration that started in the mid-1990s resulted in dramatic demographic and cultural changes.

According to the 2002 census, approximately six percent of Ireland's 3.9m population are not Irish and another 1.3 per cent are only part-Irish.⁷² Although citizens of the United States of America were the highest non-EU national group in Ireland, there have been increased migrations from a handful of countries in Africa and China and the Philippines since the mid-1990s (see table below⁷³).



Since the 1990s there has been a general increase in asylum applications although the numbers have fallen in the last three years. In Ireland, those applying for refugee status can broadly be divided into Geneva Convention applicants and quota refugees. Both the 1951 United Nations Geneva Convention and the 1967 New York Protocol have been incorporated into Ireland's

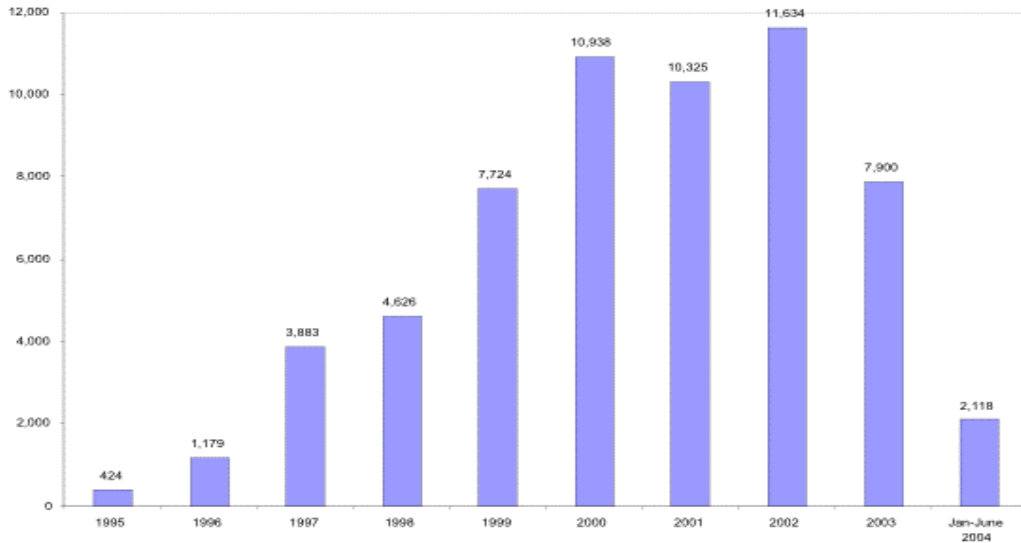
72. Central Statistics Office 2002 – www.cso.ie

73. Based on results of the 2002 Census

Exiled Journalists in Europe

asylum laws via the Refugee Act, 1996. The Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner (ORAC) is responsible for processing asylum applications. The Refugee Appeals Tribunal hears appeals arising from the decisions of the ORAC.

The graph below⁷⁴ shows the number of applications for asylum in Ireland from 1995 to June 2004:



Until the late-1990s, relatively few asylum-seekers came to Ireland, but numbers peaked in both 2000 (10,938) and 2002 (11,634). In 2004 it reduced dramatically to 4,766.

According to ORAC, the five top nationalities that sought asylum in Ireland in 2004 were⁷⁵:

Country	Applications
Nigeria	1,776
Romania	286
Somalia	198
China	152
Sudan	145

Exiled journalists

It is difficult to ascertain the numbers of exiled journalists in Ireland because there is neither a formal organisation nor an official register of immigrant journalists. However, informal networks of exiled journalists do exist – according to Pamela Akinjobi, an immigrant journalist and regular contributor to *Metro Eireann*,⁷⁶ immigrant journalists in the Greater Dublin Area have from time

74. www.migrationinformation.org

75. www.orac.ie/pages/Stats/2004.htm – Annual Statistics

76. www.metroeireann.com

Exiled Journalists in Europe

to time come together to participate in community and integration programmes. Activists in these informal networks include people from Algeria, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe.

Media unions

“The National Union of Journalists in Ireland has been supportive of exiled journalists and has assisted refugee journalists from Nigeria and Algeria in gaining asylum,” says Séamus Dooley, Secretary of the NUJ in Ireland.⁷⁷ NUJ support has included lobbying, providing background information for asylum cases and backing appeals against unfavourable decisions.

Cherif Labaché, an Algerian journalist who sought political asylum in Ireland in 1997, says “the NUJ was very supportive and helpful when I made my application for residency”. Labaché, who now works as Communications Officer with Cairde,⁷⁸ an organisation that advocates equal access to health services for ethnic minorities, says the NUJ also helped him to understand his rights in Irish society.

The NUJ has also helped exiled journalists to gain placements and employment with media organisations. A journalist from Nigeria whom the NUJ helped in this way went on to help set up a monthly newspaper that reports on immigrant communities. The Executive Council of the Union has worked with Integrating Ireland,⁷⁹ the umbrella body for refugee, asylum-seeker and immigrant support groups, to provide training for immigrants in a wide range of skills, including public relations and journalism.

In 1999 the National Union of Journalists attempted to set up a Black Members Council (BMC), but it never became functional. Although the Council was not aimed specifically at exiled journalists or writers, it is the closest thing to a special group for immigrant writers that has been mooted in Ireland. The BMC faced several difficulties – Dooley blames a lack of interest shown by exiled journalists, while Labaché says a lack of funding was also a problem.

Other agencies

There are no agencies that work specifically with exiled journalists in Ireland. However, some agencies that work with asylum-seekers and refugees have shown a willingness to support immigrant journalists and writers.

One example is the Association of Refugees and Asylum-seekers in Ireland (ARASI),⁸⁰ an independent group that lobbies on behalf of asylum-seekers and provides education, training and advice. Its National Co-ordinator, Mercy Eburn Peters, an exiled journalist from Sierra Leone, says immigrant journalists in Ireland seeking to re-enter the profession are confronted by a multitude of problems that include xenophobia from both society and the mainstream media, and a lack of recognition of foreign qualifications.

77. www.nuj.org.uk

78. www.cairde.ie

79. www.integratingireland.ie

80. ARASI, 213 North Circular Road, Dublin 7, Ireland. Tel:+353 (0)18381142 Fax: +353 (0)18381143. Email: arasi_@eircom.net

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She adds: "The dramatic increase in the numbers of exiled journalists in Ireland in recent years and the need to create the space and a conducive atmosphere for them to re-enter the profession make it urgent and necessary to have a committed and supportive network". Peters also believes that the involvement of exiled journalists in media production will help to minimise bias in news reports and other media products.

Other independent agencies working with refugees and asylum-seekers in Ireland include Amnesty International,⁸¹ Arambe Productions⁸² (a theatre company led by Nigerian-born Bisi Adigun, which provides training in acting and theatrical skills), the African Refugee Network⁸³ (which advocates for better conditions for receiving and integrating asylum-seekers and refugees), the Irish Refugee Council and Integrating Ireland.

Project profiles

There are no specific projects relating to exiled journalists in Ireland.

Self-organised groups

There are also no self-organised groups in Ireland at this time. However, there are plans to set up an association of African writers and journalists. These efforts are being spearheaded by Theophilus Ejorh, an exiled journalist from Nigeria, Mercy Eburn Peters and Pamela Akinjobi. The association will support members and provide them with a platform for their professional and creative activities.

Case study

Cherif Labaché fled military dictatorship in Algeria and arrived in Ireland in 1997. In his native country, he had trained and worked as a journalist. But in Ireland he faced many challenges, including lack of residence rights and an uncertain professional future. He turned to the NUJ for assistance.

The NUJ helped Cherif to establish legal residency and work as an intern with the *Irish Independent*, Ireland's largest circulation daily broadsheet. The experience rekindled his confidence in his own abilities and connected him to professional colleagues. Since then he has participated in many local and national media productions, including radio broadcasts. He describes his current job with Cairde as "very interesting" because he is involved in providing a service "that is truly needed in Ireland at this time". Cherif says there is "definitely a need for an organised and efficient network of immigrant journalists in Ireland in view of the problems that we face here today". He says those problems include language barriers, racism and discrimination, lack of job opportunities and lack of financial resources.

81. www.amnesty.ie

82. Arambe Productions, 10-11 Earls Street South, Dublin 8. Tel:+353 (0)1473 6600
email: arambe@artsincontext.com

83. African Refugee Network, 90 Meath Street, Dublin 8. Tel: +353 (0)14734523; Fax: +353 (0)14540745. Email: arn@yahoo.com

Exiled Journalists in Europe

ITALY

Rich Cookson

According to statistics from the Italian Central Eligibility Commission (CEC)⁸⁴ there were 8,701 applications for asylum in 2004. The CEC granted refugee status to 780 of them (9 per cent) and 'rejected' 7,921 (more than 91 per cent).

These figures have been widely reported in the Italian media – and used by some sections of the press to demonstrate that the majority of asylum-seekers are not 'genuine'. However, the number of 'rejected' asylum cases includes 2,352 in which people were granted other forms of international protection. Rather than the 9 per cent of 'genuine' cases widely reported, the UNHCR estimates that more than 51 per cent of asylum applicants whose cases were actually examined on their merits in Italy in 2004 were judged to be in need of international protection.

The table below⁸⁵ shows the main countries of origin in 2003:

Country	Applicants
Somalia	1,743
Liberia	1,550
Serbia and Montenegro	1,510
Eritrea	1,230
Pakistan	787

Exiled journalists

The UNHCR, the refugee agency *Consiglio Italiano Rifugiati*⁸⁶ and other non-governmental refugee organizations in Rome have no information on the number of exiled journalists in Italy.

We found little evidence of specific projects to support exiled journalists in Italy.

84. Figures from www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texts/vtx/news/opendoc.htm?bl=NEWS&id=429704254&page=news

85. *2003 UNHCR Statistical Handbook*

86. www.cir-onlus.org

Exiled Journalists in Europe

NETHERLANDS

Arnob Chakrabarti & Rich Cookson

The number of people seeking asylum in the Netherlands in 2004 was 9,782, down from 13,402 in 2003. In 2004, some 39 percent of applications were approved, up from just 16 percent in 2003.⁸⁷

The main countries of origin in 2003⁸⁸ were:

Country	Applications
Iraq	3,473
Iran	555
Afghanistan	492
Somalia	451
Liberia	440

Exiled journalists

Precise numbers are unobtainable, but the only organisation working with exiled journalists, On File, has 150 members.

Media unions

The Dutch Journalist Union (NVJ)⁸⁹ does not have any special projects or programmes to support exiled journalists, but it has set up the Migrants and the Media⁹⁰ working group which is concerned with fair and accurate reporting of ethnic minorities, and helped to launch the On File project (see below).

Projects

On File⁹¹ was founded in 1996 as a result of a joint initiative of three organizations: the NVJ, *Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland*⁹² (Dutch Council for Refugees) and the cultural and political centre *De Balie*⁹³. The organisation has 150 members – mainly journalists, plus a dozen writers. New members apply every month. Journalists and writers who are still seeking asylum are as welcome as those who have achieved refugee status. One of On File's guiding principles is that one does not stop being a journalist after fleeing one's country.

87. www.ind.nl/en/inbedrijf/overdeind/cijfersenfeiten/Cijfers2004_asiel.asp

88. *2003 UNHCR Statistical Handbook*

89. www.villamedia.nl/n

90. www.beeldvorming.net

91. www.on-file.nl

92. www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl

93. www.balie.nl

Exiled Journalists in Europe

Foreign journalists who take refuge in the Netherlands are usually experienced professionals. They suffer from the usual problems refugees face, but with the added difficulty of finding work in the Dutch media, where language is often a significant obstacle.

Applicants for On File must be able to demonstrate professional activities in their homeland, by providing a press card, CV and articles or sound/video productions. In some cases, a letter of appointment or a statement from a former editor can be accepted. The board of On File decides the merits of each application.

On File receives financial support from the Dutch ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences, from *Vluchtelingenwerk* and also donations from colleges.

On File is the only organisation that works specifically with exiled journalists. However, other organisations, such as Free Voice,⁹⁴ a Dutch NGO that supports independent media in developing countries, hires exiles as freelancers.

"While Free Voice does not have a policy on exiled journalists in Europe, sometimes we work with them," says Aik Meeuse, the organisation's Communications Officer. "Our colleague Babah Tarawally is an example. He was born in Sierra Leone, came to Holland as a refugee and trained as a journalist. He worked in regional television and produced his own programme. Now he is responsible for the work of Free Voice with partners in Western Africa.

"Another came from Afghanistan, was trained as a journalist in Holland and we hired him to give training for the RTA (Radio Television Afghanistan) in Kabul for our Kids News Network programme. A third, Vera Illes, came as a journalist refugee from Hungary to Holland in 1956. Now she works with us on our Eastern Europe programme."

Case study

Sergej Kreso was forced to flee from Bosnia when the town he was living in, Doboj, fell to the Serbs. He was working as a journalist at Radio Doboj and was editor of the editorial board for youth programmes. Doboj was a site of brutal clashes and fell to the Serbian army in May 1992. "Soon afterwards the army started to implement a radical policy of ethnic cleansing – one of the first steps undertaken by the new authorities was to dismiss all non-Serb journalists," he says. "There was nothing left for me to do in Doboj, either as a journalist, or as a human being." He fled to the Netherlands in 1993 with his wife and two year-old daughter.

"The thought of continuing my journalistic career never even crossed my mind back then. On one side, I was disappointed in journalism as a profession, and on the other hand I could not have believed that I could function as a journalist in that foreign land and in that foreign language.

"However, in 1996 I met a few Dutch journalists, who had put together an initiative to found an association of journalists refugees. I became one of co-founders and first members of On File.

94. www.freevoice.nl

Exiled Journalists in Europe

In 1999, On File managed to arrange a three-month internship for a number of its members, which is how I started working for RTV L1 in Maastricht. Instead of the three months, I stayed for three years.

"Today, I am still in my profession. Not directly as a journalist, but rather as an author of documentary movies. Two years ago, with the help of On File, I made a short documentary *Symphony for a Street Musician*. The plan was only to screen the movie at the yearly assembly of the association, but, following very positive reviews, the movie made it to four international film festivals. I am currently working on a new film."

Exiled Journalists in Europe

SPAIN

Claudia Julieta Duque

Spain is considered to be one of the most hostile countries for refugees and asylum-seekers in the EU. In 2002, it granted asylum to just 175 of 6,147 applicants,⁹⁵ which represents just 3.4 percent – one of the lowest rates in the EU.

With restrictive legislation that divides the process of asylum into two phases – admission and the procedure itself which, critics argue, constitutes an “insurmountable filter”⁹⁶ for the majority of applicants – Spain denies asylum to the vast majority of asylum-seekers. In 2003 and 2004 it rejected 95 percent of all applicants.⁹⁷

Because of its proximity to North Africa (just 14km at the closest point), most asylum-seekers are from Africa. Also, because of its historical links with Latin America (including a shared language), 15 percent of asylum applicants come from Colombia – a country with 40 years of armed conflict – and Cuba.⁹⁸

Main nationalities of asylum-seekers in Spain in 2004⁹⁹ were:

Country	Applicants
Nigeria	1,029
Algeria	988
Colombia	648
Mali	253
DR Congo	201

Exiled journalists

There are no official statistics about the number of exiled journalists in Spain. Some analysts estimate that there may be as many as 100 exiled journalists in the country,¹⁰⁰ but that figure is questionable, given that just 352 asylum-seekers in 2003 had professional qualifications,¹⁰¹ and out of the 5,918 applicants only 227 were accepted.¹⁰²

95. Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado (CEAR: Spanish Commission for helping the Refugee). *La situación de los refugiados en España*, Informe 2003. (The situation of refugees in Spain, 2003 Report). In its 2005 Report, CEAR includes a variation in the number (168) as it is reflected in the table1.

96. CEAR, 2003 Report, op.cit.

97. CEAR, 2005 Report, op.cit.

98. CEAR, 2005 Report. op.cit.

99. CEAR, 2005 Report. op.cit.

100. Periodistas refugiados en España: noticias desde el exilio (Refugee Journalists in Spain: News since the exile), Aguilar, Carla, *ATB Magazine*, September 2004.

101. OAR. *Memoria de la OAR*, 2003. (2003 Report). Internal document, unpublished.

102. Ibid

Exiled Journalists in Europe

RSF in Madrid and the Commission for Supportive Journalism in Barcelona (*Comisión para un Periodismo Solidario*)¹⁰³ state that because there are no programmes to support exiled journalists in Spain, almost all of them are forced into non-media work such as sales, domestic service and care work. "They have to choose between their profession and their life," says Pilar Aymerich, from the Commission in Barcelona.

Most of the exiled journalists come from Argentina, Colombia, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea, Iran, Ivory Coast, Morocco and Syria. Due to the difficulties in obtaining asylum, in many cases they become 'illegal' after the process, which makes their lives a daily survival exercise. There are also cases of journalists returning to their home country after a few years in exile.

Although the general situation for exiled journalists in Spain is poor, there are few cases in which asylum has been granted speedily and with the backing of the Spanish mass media. These are almost always high profile cases of famous journalists, some of whom have been jailed for their work. Examples include Ali Lmrabet from Morocco and Raúl Rivero from Cuba, both currently working for *El Mundo* newspaper.

Media unions

There are media unions and press associations all around the country, but none of them have established specific programmes for exiled journalists. However, some press organisations have supported individuals.

In Barcelona, the Catalan Association of Journalists¹⁰⁴ has created the Commission for a Supportive Journalism, whose main purpose is to train reporters about immigration issues, which has brought them into contact with exiled journalists. The Commission, according to its President, the photographer Pilar Aymerich, has become a "bridge" between exiled reporters in Barcelona. It also offers them the opportunity to publish articles in the Association's magazine.

In Cantabria, province of Santander, the Press Association has a joint project with the International Federation of Journalists' Centre for Solidarity. This government-funded project provides financial assistance to Colombian reporters who are victims of human rights violations or have received death threats due to their work.

In 2003, the Press Association in Granada set up the Ruíz Carnero Award to honour journalists fighting for freedom of expression worldwide. The Award takes its name from Constantino Ruíz Carnero, director of the newspaper *El Defensor de Granada*, who was killed in 1936 during the fascist repression. The prize has been delivered to Raúl Rivero and Ali Lmrabet.

103. www.periodistes.org/home.php

104. www.sindicat.org

Exiled Journalists in Europe

Other projects

Reporters Without Borders (RSF)¹⁰⁵ was established in Spain ten years ago. Since then, according to its executive director, Florence Turbet-Delof, it has helped some 30 exiled journalists. She says that the situation for exiled journalists in Spain is “extremely hard”, with long waiting-times for responses to asylum requests.

RSF offers legal assistance to the refugees through the Spanish Commission for helping the Refugee (*CEAR: Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado*)¹⁰⁶ and the Spanish Catholic Association of Migration (*ACCEM: Asociación Comisión Católica Española de Migración*)¹⁰⁷ and also works with the Red Cross to provide accommodation for journalists. RSF supports journalists in learning Spanish language.

The organisation also helps exiled journalists make contact with Spanish media organisations, so they can offer themselves for work but, Turbet-Delof says that “almost all of them have to abandon their profession to survive in this country”.

RSF aims to open a hostel, similar to the *Maison des Journalistes* in Paris, and is currently looking for funding.

Some Colombian reporters have benefited from a one-year Amnesty International programme called Protecting Human Rights Defenders in Spain, and a similar governmental programme (which runs for nine months). Both include financial support for living in Spain, including housing and living expenses for the recipient and his/her family.

In Amnesty’s case, the programme is administered from AI’s headquarters in London. Each application is considered by both AI and a group of Colombian NGOs. So far AI has received in Spain the journalists Hollman Morris (2001), William Parra (2000) and Claudia Julieta Duque (2005). Morris and Parra returned to Colombia, but during 2005 Morris was the victim of new death threats, while Parra suffered an assassination attempt during which he was seriously injured.

The governmental programme has included, among others, the journalists Alfredo Molano and Laura Zapata. Both returned to their country. The current Colombian Vice-President Francisco Santos has also been through the programme.

Self-organised groups

Association for Freedom of Express and Press Liberty in Equatorial Guinea

Journalist Pedro Nolasco Ndong Obama Nkara left Equatorial Guinea on 9 July 2002 when he received news of a plan to kill him, after six years of constant attacks and threats.

105. www.rsf.org

106. www.cear.es

107. www.accem.es

Exiled Journalists in Europe

Pedro was RSF's correspondent in Equatorial Guinea, a founder of newspapers *El Tiempo*, *La Opinión* and *La Nación* – all censored by the dictatorship – and of the Association for the Liberty of Press in Equatorial Guinea (ASOPGE). He reported on human rights violations of political prisoners at the country's Black Beach jail, including torture, lack of medical attention, and withholding of food and water. After he fled, the Government took control of ASOPGE.

In Spain he founded the Association for Freedom of Expression and Press Liberty in Equatorial Guinea (ASOLPEGE) to fight for freedom of expression and democracy in his home country. ASOLPEGE currently has 7 working members, all exiled journalists from Equatorial Guinea.

Pedro also publishes an online newspaper called *El Muni*, with the support of an African network based in Oslo, Norway.

However, he says that on 24 June 2005 he was illegally detained while covering a protest organised by the exiled opposition at Equatorial Guinea's Embassy in Madrid. While taking photographs of the protest, he was arrested and charged with public disorder. Pedro alleges he was also seriously beaten by police, but now faces trial on several counts.

"I feel absolutely abandoned by a government that asked me to come here and then forgot totally its commitment to my work, my past as a defender of the freedom of the press and democracy in Equatorial Guinea," he says. "But, as Nelson Mandela said, on the way to the freedom many things can happen to you, including death, prison and pain".

Case studies

Jairo Valencia left Colombia with his family on 26 September 2001, after living in the country's capital since January under government protection. He worked for the radio station Mirador Estereo, in the western town of Chinchiná (Caldas province) and for the daily newspapers *El Ejemplar*, *El Vocero* and *La Patria*, as well as for Canal G Televisión. He had been threatened several times by police, the army and paramilitaries in the town after denouncing lawlessness in the region and abuses by the security forces. During his confinement in Bogotá and his subsequent exile, many of his friends were murdered while others received death threats from right-wing paramilitaries and the police.

During his six first months in Spain, Jairo was supported by CEAR, RSF and the Red Cross. "They paid for my rent, my food and arranged schooling for my son. I will never have words to say thanks to them enough," he says.

However, obtaining work was difficult. He worked as a truck driver, a watchman, a scrap collector and also worked washing potatoes. "I felt like my brain was freezing, so I decided to play chess as a way of making myself think. It's incredible, but today I have to say that chess has given me more during those years than my work: I have had the opportunity to travel, to meet people and to represent Colombia. Thanks to chess, I have recovered my dignity."

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He now works as a car salesman. "Even though I am not a journalist any more, I can't forget where I am from and what my dreams were when I left Colombia. Whenever I can, I speak about my country at conferences, courses and different events."

Colombian **Henry Molano** was working for *Informativo Teleantioquia*, a regional TV news channel, when Alex Lopera, peace advisor to the Antioquia Governor and former vice-minister of Education, was abducted and murdered by the army. Henry investigated the case but received numerous death threats, which eventually forced him into exile. In September 1999, he arrived at Barajas Airport in Spain and just six months later ("I am a privileged person," he says) was granted asylum.

Henry became involved with the solidarity movement for refugees, first as a volunteer with CEAR, where he was later hired as press officer. He won a fellowship to the Antena 3 channel and worked there for six months. He was selected as a newsreader for the Telemadrid channel, where he worked for five years. Currently, he works as presenter of a programme on Channel 2, called *Con todos los acentos* (With all the Accents).

"After six years I feel I am from Spain, and at the same time I am always trying to do something for Colombia. I also know that the Spanish government sells and donates weapons for the war in my country, and is involved daily in our conflict, while its asylum policies are an obstacle for most applicants. The government asks you for proof of your political situation, about the death threats against you, but many people do not bring any proof with them."

Despite that, he says: "I am clear I have been privileged – nothing makes you forget, because when you have to flee, you feel that your life has been stolen from you".

Exiled Journalists in Europe

UNITED KINGDOM *Forward Maisokwadzo*

The number of people seeking asylum in the UK grew steadily throughout the 1990s and peaked in 2002, when there were 84,130 applications. Numbers have decreased since then, to 33,960 in 2004, and are widely predicted to fall further.¹⁰⁸

The following table¹⁰⁹ shows the top five countries of origin, during the second quarter of 2005:

Country	Applicants
Iran	715
Somalia	455
Iraq	435
Afghanistan	415
China	380

Exiled journalists

As with most countries, precise figures of exiled journalists are impossible to obtain. But the RAM Project (see below) currently supports 156, from the following countries:

Afghanistan (5)	Albania (1)	Belarus (1)	Bosnia (4)
Bangladesh (1)	Burundi (2)	Cameroon (5)	Colombia (4)
Congo (5)	Congo Brazzaville (2)	Chile (1)	Ethiopia (3)
Eritrea (1)	Gambia (1)	Iran (5)	Iraq (7)
Israel (1)	Ivory Coast (1)	Kurdistan (5)	Kenya (3)
Kosovo (3)	Lebanon (1)	Nigeria (5)	Pakistan (5)
Philippines (1)	Rwanda (2)	Sierra Leone (10)	Sudan (9)
Somalia (3)	Serbia (2)	Sri Lanka (2)	Syria (1)
Tanzania (1)	Turkey (2)	Togo (1)	Uganda (6)
Uruguay (1)	Uzbekistan (1)	Zambia (1)	Zimbabwe (14)

Media unions

The National Union of Journalists (NUJ),¹¹⁰ one of the biggest and longest-established in the world, with 35,000 members, plays a leading role in backing journalists in trouble around the world, including helping refugee journalists seeking asylum in Britain.

At the instigation of members working for the MediaWise RAM Project, the NUJ introduced a two-year Associate Membership scheme for exiled journalists at a special rate of £10 per year in acknowledgement of the difficulties faced by those seeking asylum or with refugee status in the UK. It entitles exiled journalists to seek advice and support from his/her local union branch and attend branch meetings. Some 46 exiled journalists have already joined the union through this

108. www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds – *Asylum Statistics United Kingdom 2004*

109. *Ibid.*

110. www.nuj.org.uk

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scheme. They receive a copy of the union's *Journalist* magazine, and the contact details for NUJ organisers allocated to each industrial sector. They are also entitled to free places on regular NUJ training courses, which help to update professional skills and adjust to UK media practices. However, they are not entitled to all the benefits of full membership – for example, in line with NUJ Rules, they cannot have an NUJ Press Card, unemployment and sickness benefits, or vote in NUJ elections.

The union's Black Members' Council has taken responsibility for organising exiled journalists within the union, but on welfare issues, exiled journalists are often referred back to the RAM Project.

Projects

The Refugees, Asylum-seekers and Media (RAM) Project¹¹¹ was set up in 1999 by the media ethics charity MediaWise (formerly PressWise), to promote best practice in media representation of refugee and asylum issues.

Since the mid-1990s, media coverage of asylum-seekers and refugees has been unremittingly hostile and often seriously inaccurate in several of the UK's most powerful newspapers, which has had a major impact on public opinion. To counter this, the RAM Project has developed strategies to assist refugees, asylum-seekers, and organisations working with them to challenge misrepresentation of refugee and asylum issues in the media, and promote fair and accurate reporting.

It has built links between refugee organisations and media professionals in both the UK and across Europe, and established informal networks to share media skills, experiences and information. One of its central beliefs has been that the best people to speak for refugees and asylum-seekers are those who have been through the system – through its website and a monthly publication, the *RAM Bulletin*, it has enabled exiled journalists to speak out.

Exiled journalists have been commissioned to write articles for the *Bulletin* and guest-edit two consecutive editions, supported by RAM staff and a freelance sub-editor. Writing for the *Bulletin* not only provides an income but can also help improve writing skills and restore confidence. As a result of working for the *Bulletin* several editors have successfully gained freelance work in the mainstream media. Exiled journalists have also contributed to the development of the website.

The RAM Project has also produced the *Directory of Exiled Journalists*, as both a booklet and website¹¹² outlining the skills, expertise and employment history of almost 150 exiled journalists in the UK. The printed version, published in 2003, was sent to national and regional newspaper editors, senior broadcasters, and press officers at national refugee organisations. The online version was set up so that the directory could be easily updated and accessed as new members joined the network. The purpose was to encourage editors in both the print and broadcast

111. www.ramproject.org.uk

112. www.ramproject.org.uk/directory

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media to offer employment or commissions to journalists who have fled to Britain after persecution for doing their duty as journalists.

The print version featured 43 journalists who had fled from 24 countries – from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. The website also contains additional information about newer members of the network. Both provide details of each journalist's training, qualifications, circumstances of exile, the languages they speak and their areas of specialist journalistic knowledge. Some were top-flight journalists in their home country, while other were young reporters just starting out.

In the two months after the *Directory's* publication, four members were invited onto television or radio shows, and another was interviewed in the NUJ's magazine *The Journalist*. Publishing industry magazine *Press Gazette* and a specialist website for journalists¹¹³ also ran articles about it.

The RAM Project has also arranged work placements for exiled journalists at the BBC, *Yorkshire Evening Post* and *Press Gazette*. The placements have helped members understand how the UK media operates, while newsrooms benefit from their vast experience and contacts. Many of the members can provide invaluable insights into what is going on in their home countries and regions. They can also help UK reporters understand the difficulties of the asylum process.

It has encouraged other organisations such as Article 19¹¹⁴ and the Information Centre on Asylum and Refugees¹¹⁵ to employ exiled journalists when conducting research into media issues.

The Project also arranges residential weekends to encourage exiled journalists back into newsrooms. In May 2003, for example, 35 delegates attended seminars on how the UK media operates, training and skills, setting up your own media outfit, and presentations from support agencies including media unions. They were supplied with information about career entry points, training agencies, trade magazines and free copies of the *Guardian Media Guide*. Subsequently, the RAM Project negotiated for exiled journalists to have access to specialist training courses run by the NUJ and other providers.

In May 2005 the RAM Project devised a pilot course in conjunction with University of Lincoln's School of Journalism offering skill assessment and introduction to UK media techniques.

It has also helped exiled journalists set up their own organisation, the Exiled Journalists' Network (EJN), which aims to provide advice, information, training and welfare support to exiled journalists. The EJN now has more than 150 members who have come to the UK after facing persecution in their home countries simply because of their media work, and hopes to register as an independent charity.

113. www.journalism.co.uk/nws/story686.html

114. www.article19.org

115. www.icar.org.uk

Exiled Journalists in Europe

Other projects

Exiled Writers Ink¹¹⁶ supports writers in exile. It organises readings, conferences and performances to raise the profile of exiled writers' work, helps writers publish their work, and campaigns against racism and human rights abuses throughout the world.

Case study

Jean Baptiste Kayigamba, a journalist from Rwanda, came to the UK in December 2001.

His problems with the current government of Rwanda began in June 1993 when he began to work as a stringer for Inter Press Service (IPS). He had graduated from the National University of Rwanda but, being a Tutsi, was unable to find work. "Members of my ethnic group were discriminated against in all sectors of national life, including in education, employment and the army. So, after months of unemployment, a friend of mine suggested that I could use my English skills to work as a freelance journalist," he says.

These were troubled times for Rwanda, in the grip of war with the Tutsi-dominated rebels of the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF), who had attacked Rwanda from Uganda in October 1990. There was considerable ethnic tension and the government had stifled the control of both local and international press. Most Tutsi were automatically dubbed accomplices of the 'enemy'.

Jean says that when genocide broke out in April 1994, most journalists who had criticised the government were prime targets. Over 40 were murdered during the bloodbath. "I was lucky to survive. But almost all members of my family did not."

After the 1994 genocide, he was appointed to serve in the Office of the President of the Republic of Rwanda, first as Press Attaché, then later on as Director of Media and Public Relations. But after a couple of years, Jean decided to return to working as an independent journalist, working notably for *Deutsche Presse Agentur* (DPA), Reuters, and PANA. "My decision to quit public service was due to the fact that I could not express myself freely without risking getting in trouble with the authorities," he says.

Jean and his colleagues founded the independent Rwanda News Agency (RNA). Its aim was to cover news from the Great Lakes region. "Several attempts were made by some in the government leadership to use us to peddle their propaganda. It was a matter of choosing to be with them or against them. The risk of being with them required us sometimes betraying our journalistic ideals and professional guidelines. This was sometimes accompanied by increased threats on our lives," he says.

"When Rwandan and Ugandan troops clashed in 2001 in the town of Kisingani, political pressure on us increased even further. Some top government officials wanted to use us for their propaganda against Uganda. I felt I had no other alternative except to leave my country," he recalls. "I came to UK to seek political asylum. I was granted refugee status at the beginning of 2002. In October of the same year I managed to enrol for a postgraduate course in publishing

116. www.exilewriters.co.uk

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at Oxford Brookes University as a part-time student. I completed this course in June this year," he says.

The RAM Project gave him the opportunity to network and practice his journalist skills as a guest editor of the *Bulletin*. "Through the Project I have managed to attend training courses which not only helped me improve my journalism but also instilled confidence in me. It also gave me a platform to exchange information with colleagues from all parts of the world."

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APPENDIX 1 – BIOGRAPHIES

Claudia Anthony – Germany report

With over a decade of journalistic work, Claudia was honoured with the Human Rights Watch Hellmann-Hammet Journalism Award in 2000. She holds a Master's degree in international law from Kiev University in the Ukraine, and a Master's degree in intercultural conflict management from the Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences in Germany. Persecuted and forced to flee Sierra Leone during the war, she is hosted in Berlin by the German PEN and continues to work as a freelance journalist and researcher.

Nick Broumas – Greece report

Nick has degrees in Mass Communications and Politics from London Metropolitan University, and International Journalism from City University. He is currently freelancing in Greece.

Arnob Chakrabarti – Netherlands report

Arnob has been a reporter with the Dutch Broadcasting Corporation since 1999. He is also one of On File's ten board members.

Rich Cookson – Researcher and writer – Finland, Italy & Netherlands reports

Rich is a freelance writer and investigative journalist. A former editor of *The Big Issue South West*, his work has appeared in the *Guardian*, *Independent*, *Observer*, *Daily Mail* and on BBC TV. He sub-edited the *RAM Bulletin* during 2004 and 2005 and produced both *Satisfaction Guaranteed? Press complaints systems under scrutiny* and *The RAM Report* for MediaWise.

Claudia Julieta Duque – Spain report

Claudia is a Colombian journalist and human rights activist. She has lived in exile first in Peru and now in Spain, where she is part of Amnesty International's programme for Protecting Human Rights Defenders. In 2001 she faced repeated death threats against her and her 11 year-old daughter, a kidnapping, an attempted forced disappearance, and is currently battling a legal case alleging defamation, connected to her research into the case of Jaime Garzon, a prominent journalist and humorist killed in August 1999. She has worked at the news agency Colprensa, the Investigative Unit of Caracol, UNICEF, the Guatemalan Truth Commission, and several Colombian human rights NGOs.

Mike Jempson – MediaWise Director

Mike is the co-founder and the current Director of The MediaWise Trust. A campaigning journalist, author and trainer, he has over 30 years' experience in the trade. He serves on the Ethics Council and Professional Training committee of the National Union of Journalists (UK & Ireland), is a consultant with the International Federation of Journalists, and a member of the boards of the Campaign for Press & Broadcasting Freedom, the Institute of Communication Ethics, and the Exiled Journalists' Network. He has conducted training for journalists in over 20 countries, and has worked on media issues with UNESCO, UNICEF, the WHO and the EC.

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Forward Maisokwadzo – RAM Project Communications Officer – UK report

Forward is an exiled journalist from Zimbabwe. He worked on the *Zimbabwe Independent*, and has freelanced for the South African *Sunday Times*, UK *Sunday Times*, *Voice of America* and the *Guardian*. He holds an MA in International Journalism from City University, and as Communications Officer with the MediaWise RAM Project has played a key role in developing the Exiled Journalists' Network.

Ibrahim Seaga Shaw – France report

Ibrahim is a freelance journalist and researcher who recently completed a PhD at the Sorbonne in Paris. In Sierra Leone he was editor of *ExpoTimes* – a newspaper he has since relaunched online (www.expotimes.net) since going into exile in 1999. He is a member of both JAFE and the UK-based EJN, and is now based in the UK.

Abel Ugba – Ireland report

Abel teaches journalism at the University of East London. He was the editor and a co-publisher of *Metro Eireann*, Ireland's multicultural newspaper. He had also worked as a journalist in Nigeria until 1992.

Terry Williams – RAM UK National Co-ordinator

Terry is a journalist who has been the part-time National Co-ordinator for the Project since 2000. Most of his time has been spent developing the Regional Media Networks. His business, Media in Mind, works to improve media representation of vulnerable groups.

Dina Yafasova – Denmark report

Dina is investigative journalist and writer. Born in the Soviet Union (Uzbekistan), she now lives in Denmark. She holds a Master's degree in journalism and writes on human rights and press freedom violations, torture, child labour, ethnic and gender discrimination, smuggling of human organs and the consequences of the Soviet biological industry. Formerly Central Asian correspondent for the Danish professional weekly journal *Sygeplejersken* (1998-2001) and Central Asian and NIS consultant for the agency International Media Support (2002-2003), since 2003 she has been writing for Danish publishing house Gyldendal. In 2001, she was the recipient of a Human Rights Watch/Hellman-Hammet award for writers who have been targets of political persecution. In 2002 the Committee to Protect Journalists nominated her for the Courage in Journalism Award awarded by the International Women's Media Foundation.

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APPENDIX 2 – WEB-BASED RESOURCES

This selection of web-based resources does not claim to be comprehensive (apologies to those inadvertently missed out) but should prove useful to those wishing to gather information about refugees and asylum-seekers in Europe.

UN Agencies

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights:	www.unhchr.ch
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees:	www.unhcr.ch
United Nations Children’s Fund:	www.unicef.org
United Nations Human Settlements Programme:	www.unhabitat.org

International

Amnesty International:	www.amnesty.org
Asian Migrant Centre:	www.asian-migrants.org
Asylum Law:	www.asylumlaw.org
Campaign for Convention of the Rights of Migrants Ratification:	www.migrantsrights.org
Captive Daughters:	www.captivedaughters.org
CARE (Christian Action Research & Education):	www.care.org
Co-operation for the Development of Emerging Countries:	www.cospe.it
December 18:	www.december18.net
Federation of Centers for Migration Studies:	www.scalabrini.org/fcms
Global Disaster Information Network:	www.gdin-international.org
Globally Internally Displaced Project:	www.idpproject.org
Human Rights Watch:	www.hrw.org/refugees
International Council of Voluntary Agencies:	www.icva.ch
International Crisis Group:	www.crisisweb.org
International Organisation for Migration:	www.iom.int
International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement:	www.icrc.org
Jesuit Refugee Service:	www.jesref.org
Kalayaan:	www.geocities.com/makakalayaan
Lutheran World Federation:	www.lutheranworld.org
Mathaba.net:	www.mathaba.net/www/black
MediaWise RAM Project:	www.ramproject.org.uk
Migrant Rights International:	www.migrantwatch.org
Migration Dialogue:	www.migration.ucdavis.edu
Minority Rights Group International:	www.minorityrights.org
Organisation of American States:	www.oas.org
Redress:	www.redress.org
Refugees International:	www.refugeesinternational.org
Relief Web:	www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf
Reporters Sans Frontières	www.rsf.org
Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation:	www.unpo.org
War Resisters International:	www.wri-irg.org
World Association for Christian Communication:	www.wacc.org.uk
World Council of Churches:	www.wcc-coe.org
World Organisation Against Torture:	www.woatusa.org
World Refugee Survey:	www.refugees.org

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Europe-wide

European Campaign on Women Asylum-seekers:	www.womenlobby.org/asylumcampaign
European Country of Origin Information Network:	www.ecoi.net
European Journal of Migration and Law:	www.kluweronline.com/issn/1388-364x
European Research Centre of Migration and Ethnic Relations:	www.ercomer.org
European Roma Information Centre:	www.erionet.org
Filipino Youth Network in Europe:	www.home.zonnet.nl/fyneurope
Flemish Refugee Council:	www.ociv.org
International Center for Migration Policy Development:	www.icmpd.org
Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe:	www.osce.org
Platform of Filipino Migrant Organisations in Europe:	www.platformweb.org
Statewatch:	www.statewatch.org

By country

Austria

EFDÖ Austria (Protestant Refugee Service):	www.evang.at/efdoe
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Belgium

European Roma Rights Centre:	www.errc.org
Info Turk:	www.info-turk.be
Le Forum Asile et Migrations:	www.f-a-m.be

Denmark

Baltic Media Centre:	www.bmc.dk
Danish Refugee Council:	www.english.drc.dk
Danish Association for International:	www.ms.dk/uk/default.htm
International Media Support:	www.i-m-s.dk

Finland

Finnish Directorate of Immigration:	www.uvi.fi
Finnish Red Cross:	www.redcross.fi/english
Finnish Refugee Council:	www.pakolaisapu.fi
Ministry of Labour/ Immigration and Work Permits Finland:	www.mol.fi/migration/pateng.html
Refugee Advice Centre/ Pakolaisneuvonta:	www.pakolaisneuvonta.fi/index.en.html

France

CIMADE:	www.cimade.org
Migrants Against HIV/Aids:	www.hivnet.ch/migrants/home.html
Sana Papier:	www.bok.net/pajol/index.en.html

Germany

Amnesty for Women:	www.amnestyforwomen.de
Auslaenderrat Dresden e.V.:	www.auslaenderrat.de
Der Paritätische Wohlfahrtsverband:	www.paritaet.org
Deutscher Caritasverband:	www.caritas.de
Deutsches Rotes Kreuz Team 33 (Migration Department):	www.rotkreuz.de
Diakonisches Werk der EKD:	www.diakonie.de
European Centre for Minority Issues - ECMI:	www.ecmi.de
IMIS Institute for Migration:	www.imis.uos.de/english/index.htm

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Informationsverbund Asyl / ZDWF e.V:
Pro Asyl - Germany:

www.asyl.net
www.proasyl.de

Greece

Greek Council for Refugees:

www.gcr.gr

Hungary

Roma Press Centre:

www.romapage.hu

Ireland

Equality Authority:

www.equality.ie

Italy

International Documentation and Communication Centre:

www.ines.org/inpagina

Italian Consortium of Solidarity /Consortio Italiano di Solidarietà:

www.mir.it/icsICS

Italian Council for Refugees:

www.cir-onlus.org

Pontifical Council for Care of Migrants:

www.vatican.va

Kosovo

Roma National Congress:

www.kosovoroma.tsx.org

Luxembourg

ASTI:

www.asti.lu

Fondation Caritas Luxembourg:

www.caritas.lu

Netherlands

Centre for Migration Law:

www.jur.kun.nl/cmr

Dutch Refugee Council:

www.vluchtelingenwerk.nl

European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations:

www.ercomer.org

Free Voice:

www.freevoice.nl

Inlia:

www.inlia.nl

Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies:

www.pscw.uva.nl/imes

Internet Centre Anti-Racism Europe I CARE:

www.icare.to

Landelijk Bureau ter bestrijding van Rassendiscriminatie (LBR):

www.lbr.nl

Mira Media:

www.miramedia.nl

Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute:

www.nidi.nl

Refugee Organisation Netherlands:

www.vluchtelingenorganisaties.nl

Stoa (Stichting Omroep Allochtonen):

www.stoa.nl

UNITED for Intercultural Action:

www.united.non-profit.nl

Norway

Norwegian Organisation for Asylum-seekers (NOAS):

www.noas-asyl.no

Norwegian Refugee Council:

www.nrc.no/engindex.htm

Portugal

Portugese Refugee Council:

www.cpr.pt/index3.html

Portuguese Refugee Council:

www.cidadevirtual.pt/cpr/home.html

Slovenia

PIC (Legal and Information Centre for NGOs):

www.pic.si

Peace Institute:

www.mirovni-institut.si

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Sweden

Department of Care and Welfare municipality of Ale:	www.ale.se
Caritas Sweden:	www.caritas.se
Centre for Research in International Migration:	www.ceifo.su.se/en
Swedish Network of Asylum and Refugee Groups:	hem.passagen.se/asylum/ovrigt3.html
Swedish Red Cross:	www.redcross.se
Swedish Refugee Council:	www.algonet.se/~refuge
Quick Response:	www.quickresponse.nu

Switzerland

International Council of Voluntary Agencies(ICVA):	www.icva.ch
Schweizerische Zentralstelle für Flüchtlingshilfe/ Organisation:	www.sfh-osar.ch
Swiss Red Cross:	www.redcross.ch
World Council of Churches:	www.wcc-coe.org

Turkey

The Association for Solidarity with Asylum-seekers and Migrants: www.asam.8k.com

United Kingdom

Article 19:	www.article19.org
Council for Assisting Refugee Academics (CARA):	www.academic-refugees.org
Exiled Writers Ink:	www.exiledwriters.co.uk
Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees:	www.icar.org.uk
Institute of Race Relations:	www.irr.org.uk
Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants:	www.jcwi.org.uk
Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture:	www.torturecare.org.uk
National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns:	www.ncadc.org.uk
National Union of Journalists:	www.nuj.org.uk
The Home Office:	www.homeoffice.gov.uk
Refugee Action:	www.refugee-action.org
Refugee Council:	www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

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Recent MediaWise publications

The Media and Children's Rights: A resource for journalists by journalists

A pocket-sized handbook commissioned by UNICEF to assist media professionals to scrutinise the effectiveness of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Published 2005, ISBN 0-9547620-3-7 Available for the cost of postage from MediaWise.

Journalism and Public Trust

A collection of 28 articles by journalists, academics and commentators, highlighting current concerns about the status of journalists in society.

Published 2004, £5.00 + p&p

Satisfaction Guaranteed? Press complaints systems under scrutiny

Analysis of the workings of the Press Complaints Commission, the print industry code of conduct, and other media regulatory systems.

Published 2004, ISBN 0-9547620-1-0, £15.00 + p&p

The Directory of Exiled Journalists

The stories and career details of over 40 journalists from 26 countries who are starting new lives in the UK after facing persecution at home.

Published 2003, ISBN 0-9547620-0-2, £10.00 + p&p

The RAM Report

A detailed study of the MediaWise Refugees, Asylum-seekers and the Media (RAM) Project and the strategies it adopted to improve media coverage of refugee and asylum issues since 1999. It is intended as a guide to other minority groups wishing to challenge inaccurate and unfair coverage.

Published 2005, ISBN 0-9547620-4-5, £15.00 + p&p

Working with the Media: A use of the media handbook for health communicators

Produced for World Health Communication Associates.

Published 2005, ISBN 0-9547620-2-9, £8.00 + p&p

Leaflets

Reporting Asylum and Refugee Issues: a resource by and for journalists

Produced by the MediaWise RAM Project with the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Published 2004, £1.00 for 10 + p&p

The Media and Suicide: Guidance for journalists from journalists

Produced with Befrienders International, the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). Available in English, French and Spanish.

Published 2003, £1.00 for 10 + p&p

Video/DVD

On the Receiving End: Exiled journalists speak out

Fifteen-minute film illustrating refugee responses to UK media coverage. Produced by PressWise and Omni Productions.

Published 2003, £12.50 + p&p