

RAM BULLETIN

Refugees, Asylum-seekers and the Mass media Project

Promoting best practice in media representation of refugee and asylum issues

advice
information
research
& training
on media
ethics



No 25, Feb 2003

RAM launches new media dialogue

The first in a new series of RAM regional events took place in Birmingham on 28 Jan, drew together over 40 people from the local media and refugee groups.

RAM Communications Officer, Nick Medic opened the meeting with remarks about the current media stance towards asylum-seekers. Media professionals insisted there was much good will to steer the asylum debate away from sensationalist coverage and mythmaking.

Home Office staff were present to witness a frank exchange of views about the difficulties faced by all parties when covering such controversial topics.

Dan Mason of the *Birmingham Post*, who chaired the event, acknowledged the value of taking on refugee journalists in the newsroom.

'We hope the Media Fora series will improve understanding and coverage of refugee issues and help clear some of the misconceptions on both sides of the newsdesk,' said RAM Co-ordinator Terry Williams, who had earlier addressed a public meeting in Birmingham about the work of RAM.

The successful evening provided an opportunity for all involved to share ideas and contact details, and similar events are now planned for Cardiff, Hull, Leeds & Liverpool.

Media openings for exiled journalists

RAM's strategy to get exiled journalists into UK newsrooms is beginning to pay off.

Several researchers and producers have been in touch recently offering payment for contributions to current affairs programmes.

BBC Radio 5 Live wants interviewees and panel members for discussions on Wednesdays from Millbank studio in London.

Newstyle Radio from Birmingham also wants exiled

journalists for a Wednesday radio program about the contribution refugees can make to UK society.

Exiled journalists wishing to take up these offers should contact Nick Medic on 0117 941 5889.

Working in the UK media

Almost half the places at the RAM Seminar for exiled journalists have been taken up, with two month to go. Applications for the remaining 20 places are invited. The residential seminar will take place at a Bristol University study centre on 28-30 March. Contributors include NUJ General Secretary Jeremy Dear, Big Issue Editor Tim Lezard, and several exiled journalists who have set up their own successful media projects.

Application forms available from ram@presswise.org.uk or call Nick Medic on 0117 941 5889

Prince backs refugees

The Prince's Trust hosted an exhibition, conference and concert at Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral in support of refugees on 30 January.

Speaking about the work of RAM, Nick Medic told an audience that included refugee groups and the Lord Mayor of Liverpool: 'The balance between media commerce and freedom of speech and information will determine the shape of democratic societies'.

Welcoming participants the Lord Mayor recalled his family's roots as refugees from Ireland's potato famine 150 years ago.

The biggest applause was reserved for Ed Murphy of the Merseyside Refugee Network, who said that his generation thought destitution was something had been dealt with. To see it now returning to the streets of Liverpool as result of the new asylum legislation was 'shameful'.

The Prince's Trust is backing a wide range of refugee community projects.

EDITORIAL

A world gone mad?

I have been following coverage of the asylum and immigration in the British media religiously for the past 6 years.

I start each day with R4's *Today*, the *Daily Mail* and one broadsheet. I watch C4 News, alternate between BBC and ITV late news, and end each day with BBC 2's *Newsnight*.

My host country makes assumptions about me through mediated sources and I make my assumptions about them through mediated sources. It has all gone from bad to worse to depressing, but never before hit the depths reached in the past few weeks.

The asylum-seeker is now synonymous with evil – a terrorist cooking ricin who pops out to the surgery to kick a few old ladies off the GP's list, and on the way back picks up a child placed strategically at the local school to prevent it from achieving its targets.

S/he is given £10 a week for food only to steal a nice centrally heated room in a shabby B&B, shared with only three others, from a homeless Gulf War veteran. Did I miss something? Oh, yes, s/he was also able to gag the entire British press from talking about it – as they so often complain.

What has kept my sanity in recent weeks are a few articles by columnists left speechless by the latest hysteria, two films I recommend in this issue, and Asian Dub Foundation's single *Fortress Europe*.

Not even the war with Iraq, Cheriegate or cricket managed to take asylum off the front pages. Even David Blunkett defended asylum seekers against this media attack.

I take pride in being a survivor – but lately I have to dig deep to find the strength to fight back hate speech with facts. But this is not about facts. It is about cheap political scores that are not even thought through properly – like the PM's statements on derogation from the Human Rights Convention. One commentator was consoled with the assumption that Cherie probably won't let him.

Is the world gone mad or is it me?

Zrinka Bralo

MEDIA WATCHING**1. 'One word and you're in'**

An anonymous £24,000 a year immigration officer, (who else?) claimed to the *Sunday Express* (Feb 2) that just by saying the word 'Asylum' visitors to the UK can be rushed through the immigration system.

"These people could be terrorists, rapists or murderers and we have no way of checking into their backgrounds," he says, blaming the Home Secretary for introducing a 12-hour target for processing asylum-seekers.

This gem appeared as part of yet another Express special designed to strike fear into the hearts of middle England, letting people know that the closure of Sangatte has not stopped people finding a way into the UK.

2. 'YOU IN BRITAIN WON'T STOP US'

Readers of the *Western Daily Press* on 1 Feb were treated to 'the true story of asylum-seekers' under this headline.

Reporter Roger Tavener managed to get himself smuggled into Britain twice in four days, and produced a compelling piece about the privations faced by those seeking a new life in the UK.

It is a pity a solid piece of investigative journalism, was billed as an 'Asylum Scandal Exclusive' and marred by presentation it as yet another attack on the vulnerable.

'It is not our fault we are at overload, but that is the truth; it is not their fault that millions of normally tolerant English people are becoming resentful that asylum seekers seem to be getting privileged status, but that is the truth too,' declaimed the WDP editorial, without a shred of irony or evidence.

3. Are you alright, Rebekah?

The *Sun's* new editor, Rebekah Wade resuscitated a technique favoured by the tabloids 20 years ago – questioning the sanity of those with whom they disagree.

When the Home Secretary rose to the bait of the *The Sun's* write-in petition against asylum-seekers, her riposte was an extraordinary piece headlined

'Are you alright, Dave?'. (Tues 28 Jan)

That space should be wasted in such self-serving tosh is bad enough, but next day *The Times* gave space to *The Sun's* political editor Trevor Kavanagh to defend himself against Blunkett's objections to the racist tone of anti-asylum coverage (*David v Rebekah: it'll be The Sun what wins it*, Wed 29 Jan)

How is the public supposed to deal rationally with complex issues when they are treated so cheaply and nastily, with circulation figures as a deciding factor?

Over 400,000 *Sun* readers have signed the petition – blaming asylum-seekers instead of looking for real solutions to their real or imaginary problems.

4. Lies, damned lies, and...

It is time we rebutted the stock-in-trade mendacity of the anti-immigrants - wrote David Aaronovitch in the *Observer* on the 26th January

<http://www.observer.co.uk/comment/story/0,6903,882497,00.html>

5. Press whips up asylum hysteria

Steven Morris explained in *The Guardian* on January 24. David Blunkett's warning that British society was "like a coiled spring" on the issue of asylum seekers comes as the invective of newspapers such as *The Sun*, *Daily Mail* and *Daily Express* reaches new heights.

The finding of the poison ricin in the home of asylum-seekers, and the killing of special branch officer Stephen Oake during the investigation, has prompted some papers to directly link refugees with crime and terrorism. Teams of reporters have been asked to "stitch up" asylum seekers...

http://www.guardian.co.uk/Refugees_in_Britain/Story/0,2763,881251,00.html

6. Now it's fashionable to berate asylum-seekers

There is now a thriving group of pedlars selling anti-immigration theories and sinister 'research', wrote Yasmin Alibhai-Brown in the *Independent* on 7 Jan.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/story.jsp?story=373061>

7. MUK-raking

Martin Bright, Burhan Wazir and Emma Flatt have been investigating the controversial group Migrationwatch UK (MUK) for *The Observer* and discovered that there is more to it than MUK would like you to know.

MUK now dominates the immigration debate. It has prompted stories such as 'One in Ten Londoners is an Immigrant', 'Illegals Put NHS at Breaking Point' and '400 New Schools Needed for Asylum Seekers'.

MUK argues that mass immigration will drive up the population with disastrous consequences for the environment, social cohesion and public health. It is worth finding out more about MUK's origins and motives.

<http://www.observer.co.uk/politics/story/0,6903,851479,00.html>

8. We Must Not Let Violent Few Taint Refugees

Matthew Norman issued this warning in the *Mirror* on 17 Jan. <http://www.mirror.co.uk/columnists/mattnorman/matthewnorman/page.cfm?objectid=12543265&method=full&siteid=50143>

Holocaust demo at the Mail

On Monday, 27th January a number of anti-detention groups and the Jewish Socialist Group decided to mark Holocaust Memorial Day by calling a protest against *Daily Mail* coverage of asylum issues. Around 100 protesters gathered at short notice in front of Associated Newspapers' building in Kensington, to vent their anger by shouting "Daily Mail – Hate Mail" and "Evening Standard - No Standard"

The flyer for the demo quoted some ancient yet still familiar coverage: *"The way stateless Jews from Germany are pouring in from every port of this country is becoming an outrage the number of aliens entering the country through back door - a problem to which the Daily Mail has repeatedly pointed"* (DM, 20 Aug 1938).

The flyer contained a reminder of the *Mail's* headline 'Hurrah for the Black Shirts', explaining: 'On Holocaust Memorial Day it is worth remembering that the *Daily Mail* was an enthusiastic supporter of Oswald Mosley and

his British Union of Fascists. *The Daily Mail* sang the praises of Mussolini's Italy and for Nazi Germany. Lord Rothermere the proprietor of the newspaper had regular meetings with Hitler in the mid-1930s.'

RAM goes to Greece

The work of the RAM Project will feature at a Red Cross conference in Athens later this month, when PressWise Director Mike Jempson speaks on the role of the media in highlighting the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers.

R4's One-in: one-out

In BBC's traditional end-of-year poll, listeners were asked to vote for the individual they thought most deserving of honorary status as a British citizen and the individual they felt most deserved to have it revoked.

Two people received around 50% of the nominations in their category (IN: Nelson Mandela; OUT: Tony Blair) and would have been certain to dominate the final vote as well. So to make it more interesting they were treated as a bonus.

At the final count Burmese opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi (53%) was voted IN, and Cherie Blair (31%), wife of the Prime Minister, was voted OUT – ahead of Sheik Abu Hamza (25%) and *Daily Mail* editor Paul Dacre (20%).

http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/today/reports/features/oneinoneout_results_text.shtml

Asylum, immigration and popular culture: Two films and a CD – it's a good start.

British artists, unlike their American counterparts, tend to shy away from the immigration debate. While Susan Sarandon and Tim Robins get arrested protesting about police brutality against a Nigerian asylum-seeker, British celebrities support asylum-seekers at best quietly through donations. At worst they mostly do not care.

However, amidst today's hysterical media panics two brilliant films and a song have bravely taken on the issue and deal with it with a conscience. Both films can still be seen in cinemas across the UK.

Dirty Pretty Things

Stephen Frears' new film opened this year's London Film Festival in front of a star-studded audience.

It is a contemporary thriller with a twist, and a true homage to the large and invisible community of illegal immigrants in the UK.

Okwe (Chiwetel Ejiofor) is a young Nigerian doctor who drives a minicab during the day and spends his nights as a porter in a shady London hotel. The few hours left for sleeping he spends on a couch of a Turkish asylum-seeker, Senay (Audrey Tautou) who works illegally in the same hotel.

Their lives under constant threat from immigration officials and abuse and exploitation become even more complicated when Okwe makes a shocking, gruesome discovery in one of the hotel rooms and they find themselves in a dark, sinister parallel universe to groovy multicultural metropolis.

http://www.riff.com/db_world02/cinema.cgi/interimhomepage/index.htm

11'09"01

For the making of this film, Studio Canal promised directors from 11 countries complete freedom in the choice of subject and visualisation.

The promise was honoured and the film comprises of 11 separate segments by, among others, actor Sean Penn, Mira Nair, and Oscar-winning Bosnian director Danis Tanovic.

Britain's Ken Loach, used his time to tell the story of the events over two decades ago in Chile, when American support for the rightwing of the Chilean Army led to the overthrow and death of the elected socialist president Salvador Allende in September 1973. Loach's narrator is a Chilean refugee in London, who tells of his torture and exile as an act of condolence for the victims of 11 Sept 2001.

Fortress Europe

The words of the new Asian Dub Foundation single from their latest album *ENEMY OF THE ENEMY (2003)* speak for themselves:

Keep bangin' on the wall,

*Keep bangin' on the wall OF
FORTRESS EUROPE!
2022 - A new European order
Robot guards patrolling the border
Cybernetic dogs are getting closer
and closer
Armoured cars and immigration
officers
A burning village in Kosovo
You bombed it out now you're telling
us go home
Machine guns strut on the cliffs of
Dover
Heads down people look out! we're
going over
Burnin' up! can we survive re-entry
Past the mines and the cybernetic
sentries
Safe European homes built on wars
You don't like the effect don't produce
the cause
The chip is in your head not on my
shoulder
Total control just around the corner
Open up the floodgates
Time's nearly up
Keep banging on the wall of Fortress
Europe. Keep banging.
Keep banging on the wall of Fortress
Europe
We got a right, know the situation
We're the children of globalisation
No borders only true connection
Light the fuse of the insurrection
This generation has no nation
Grass roots pressure the only solution
We're sitting tight
'Cos asylum is a right
Put an end to this confusion
Dis is a 21st century Exodus
Dis is a 21st century Exodus
Burnin' up can we survive re-entry
Past the landmines and cybernetic
sentries
Plane, train, car, ferry boat or bus
The future is bleeding coming back at
us
The chip is in your head not on my
shoulder
Total control around the corner
Open up the floodgates
Time's nearly up
Keep banging on the wall of Fortress
Europe, Keep banging
Keep banging on the wall of Fortress
Europe,
Dis is a 21st century Exodus,
Dis is a 21st century Exodus
They got a right - listen not to de
scaremonger
Who doesn't run when they're feel the
hunger
From where to what to when to here
to there
People caught up in red tape
nightmare
Break out of the detention centres
Cut the wires and tear up the
vouchers
People get ready it's time to wake up
Tear down the walls of Fortress
Europe
<http://www.asiandubfoundation.com>*

SURVIVORS **NEVER** **FORGET**

**Guest Editor ZRINKA
BRALO explains how and
why she made her way
from Bosnia to Britain**

For five years before the war in 1992, I worked at the National Radio Station in Sarajevo. I had a perfect life – I loved my job, I worked with my friends and was absolutely absorbed. Most of the time I could not believe I was being paid for doing what I love.

It was important time to be a journalist; the progressive media was the only true opposition in the former Yugoslav one party system, and contributed to the process of democratisation. And radio is brilliant medium to cover immediate changes and open the space for the debate with a public.

We would get our wrists slapped but we were young, arrogant and fearless, and we just could not take our politicians such as Karadzic seriously. Almost in the way people tend to dismiss BNP here. Big mistake.

I woke up on one April morning and there were checkpoints around my house – just like that. Of course I knew what was going on, but I refused to believe that the war would come to the city and that it would turn into the medieval 4-year siege. I still feel hurt and despair of those early days when Sarajevo was betrayed and abandoned by the rest of the world.

I decided to stay in Sarajevo and started working

for the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), which was co-ordinating daily news exchange and transmissions for foreign news crews. I believed that if the world sees what is going on we would be helped. I know it was naïve but in a place like that one comes up with all sorts of fantasies because there is no alternative.

After nearly two years it became impossible for me to stay in Sarajevo for all sorts of reasons: the siege, the cold, no food or water, dead bodies everywhere and all the time, political and military divisions, corruption, ignorant foreign journalists, snipers and checkpoints. It all took its toll on me and my foreign friends first persuaded me to leave Sarajevo and then helped me to get out.

Once in the outside world my problems just began. I had no idea where to go and what to do. I did not care. I was relieved to be out but I was equally overwhelmed by an enormous guilt for leaving family and friends behind.

I ended up in the UK because I had friends here who offered support, understanding and the spare bedroom.

I started picking up the pieces of my life. I worked with survivors of camps in Bosnia, started a Masters degree at the London School of Economics in Media and Communication. I wanted to make myself useful to justify my own survival. For a year I waited while the authorities were examining my case and a year later, just around the time of the massacres in Srebrenica, I was refused asylum.

Again, I had to fight for survival. I had nothing to lose and I decided to speak out. My friends in the media

helped with campaigning and 3 years later I was allowed to stay. This experience opened my eyes about the injustice that refugees experience and after my case was resolved I continued campaigning for refugee rights.

I was shocked by the level of hysteria in the public debate on immigration and I felt I had to do something about it.

I guess being a journalist made it easier for me to speak out and the experience of war prevents me from keeping quiet in the face of human misery and injustice.

As I write this, Holocaust Memorial Day is being marked around the country, 27th January, the day when Auschwitz was liberated.

It has been uncomfortable several weeks for us exiles, our portfolio of sins has now expanded to destroying NHS and terrorism and it seems that all of us interested in truth and facts are fighting a lost battle.

However, every time the pressure gets to me I hear the words of Professor Yehuda Bauer of The International Institute for Holocaust Research at Yad Vashem, ringing in my head: "**You shall never be a perpetrator. You shall never be a victim. You shall never be a bystander.**"

What a simple creed to live one's life by – I know it sounds almost unachievable, but one can at least try.

Zrinka Bralo is at present executive director of the Migrant and Refugee Communities Forum in London. She has worked as a reporter on Undercover Britain for Channel 4 and is contributor to various TV and radio programmes on the issue of immigration and asylum and human rights. Contact details: zrinkab@macunlimited.net

Cut-out-and-keep COMMUNICATOR

A PressWise use-of- the-media Guide

YOU HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO COMPLAIN

With the Government getting jumpy about media criticism and editors aware that 'playing the asylum card' can increase their circulation, anti-asylum-seeker stories are high on the media agenda yet again. Some editors appear to be vying with each other to bring their readers ever more sensational stories. Don't give up and accept it. If you find the coverage unacceptable – make your views known.

1. You can complain directly to an editor or to the programme producer, preferably as soon after publication as possible.
 - For advice on how to write to an editor see www.presswise.org.uk/mediatio.htm
 - Make it clear whether your letter is for publication (supply your full name and address - if you do not want them published, explain why).
 - To help us monitor complaints about refugee and asylum issues, please send copies of your complaint and any replies you receive to PressWise.
2. Find out which is the appropriate regulator:
 - **Advertising Standards Authority:** All advertisements
 - **BBC Complaints Unit:** BBC radio and TV programmes & online material
 - **Broadcasting Standards Commission** (Fairness, accuracy and standards issues) & Independent TV Commission (contractual obligations): All TV programmes
 - **Press Complaints Commission:** Local, regional and national papers and magazines and their on-line versions
 - **Radio Authority:** All radio programmes
Addresses can be found via the PressWise website www.presswise.org.uk/mediatio.htm
3. Link your complaint directly to specific clauses of the regulators' Codes of Practice and guidelines. Copies of these codes can also be viewed via the PressWise website
 - Clearly identify the item you are complaining about (give the date, publication/channel, title/headline, page/time)
 - Itemise the information that is incorrect and, where possible, offer the correct information and any evidence you have to support it.
 - Where possible identify the clause/s in Codes of Conduct/Guidelines which you believe the item breaches and explain why.
 - If you believe that the information is misleading, derogatory or inflammatory, explain why and

suggest a more reasonable way of communicating the information.

- Try to avoid using emotive or offensive language; be rational and polite.
4. Whatever your criticisms of the PCC, it is very important to let them know if you are unhappy about the way refugees and asylum seekers are represented in the print media. The volume of complaints is an indicator of public concern, even if the industry's Code of Practice doesn't properly allow for the type of complaint you wish to make.
 5. Summary of key press code clauses:
 - Clause 1 deals with accuracies
 - i) Newspapers and periodicals must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted material including pictures.
 - ii) Whenever it is recognised that a significant inaccuracy, misleading statement or distorted report has been published, it must be corrected promptly and with due prominence.
 - iii) An apology must be published whenever appropriate.
 - iv) Newspapers, whilst free to be partisan, must distinguish clearly between comment, conjecture and fact
 - Clause 2 offers an opportunity to reply
A fair opportunity for reply to inaccuracies must be given to individuals or organisations when reasonably called for.
 - Clauses 3 (privacy), 4 (harassment), 5 (intrusion into grief or shock), & 11 (misrepresentation) might apply if the story concerns people living in fear for their lives.
 - Clauses 6, 7 & 10 cover stories affecting children.
 - Clause 13 deals with discrimination but, like all the others, relates only to the impact of a story on an individual. Groups of people (like 'refugees' or 'asylum-seekers') are not specifically covered. PressWise believes the PCC should accept some 'third party' complaints, since civil society is damaged if the public is given inaccurate information or coverage encourages hostility towards a particular social group....
 - Be prepared to defend your complaint on 'public interest' grounds, since many of the clauses use 'public interest' as a get out.
 6. The Editor of the publication will be asked to respond to your complaint, and you will have a chance to see and respond to the editor's comments. Your response will also go to the Editor before the PCC steps in to adjudicate, if no satisfactory resolution has been reached.
 7. If you need help in compiling your complaint contact The PressWise Trust, tel: 0117 941 5889 fax: 0117 941 5848; email: pw@presswise.org.uk

'PEG' BOARD

Help to set the media agenda by generating stories rather than having to react to theirs.

Keep your ears and eyes open for events which might provide you, and the media, with a 'peg' on which to hang positive stories about refugees or asylum seekers.

Keep your media contacts informed about what is happening and why it is relevant for them.

Thursday 6 - Saturday 8
February

IDENTITIES WITHOUT BORDERS CONFERENCE

The concept of citizenship, its rights and responsibilities, is undergoing rapid change in Europe. This colloquium will address some of these complex questions of integration and diversity.

Venue: The Armenian Institute, 7 Hollingbourne Road, London SE24 9NB

For more info and to register contact 020 7978 9104 or info@armenianinstitute.org

Thursday 6 February 6.30 - 9.00pm

HOW FOREIGN INVESTMENT CREATES ASYLUM SEEKERS

The Ilisu Dam Campaign and other organisations are working to create new space in the public debate around asylum seekers by emphasising the role that UK foreign investment has to play in forcing people to flee their countries. This meeting aims to discuss further ideas and possible future actions for the project.

Venue: Ar-Rum, 44-48 Clerkenwell Road, London, EC1M 5PS.

For more info, contact on rochelle.harris@ukonline.co.uk or 07876 771 576.

Thursdays 6 - 27 February 7.30 - 8.30pm

GET CREATIVE!

If you are interested in starting a writing career and you are from the Middle East (Arabic, Kurdish or Persian), then come and join the regular meeting.

Venue: Hammersmith Library, ten minutes walk from Hammersmith Station.

For more info and to confirm your place, contact Ghas Aljundi on

020 7736 0864 or email gias.aljundi@hafed.org.uk

Saturday 8 February 2.00 - 3.00pm

BRISTOL DEMO

Organised by Bristol Campaign to Defend Asylum Seekers with the Stop the War Coalition and the Anti-Nazi League. While asylum issues again hit the headlines the largest country of origin is now Iraq.

Venue: Outside Asda, Bedminster, Bristol

For more info, contact Bob Hughes on hughesbob@compuserve.com

Monday 10 February 9.00am - 5.00pm

IMPROVING REFUGEE HEALTH SEMINAR

Organised by MEDACT, a seminar for hospital and public health doctors, nurses, GPs, therapists, mental health workers and other health professionals involved in providing health care services to refugees and asylum seekers.

Venue: Cavendish Square, London

For more info, contact Moyra Rushby on 020 7272 2020 or moyrarushby@medact.org

Saturday 15 February 12 noon

NO WAR ON IRAQ

National demonstration against war on Iraq, organised by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), Stop the War Coalition and the Muslim Association of Britain.

Assemble Embankment (nearest tube Blackfriars or Temple) for march and rally in Hyde Park.

For more info, contact CND on 020 7700 2393

Saturday 15 February 2.30 - 4.00pm

SOMALI WOMEN GET CREATIVE!

A new weekly event organised by Exiled Writers Ink! and HAWA and funded by London Arts. Creative Writing with Evlynn and Drama with Dictynna. Please contact Exiled Writers Ink before coming!

Venue: Adastral Community Centre, 22/23 Kidlington Way, London NW9. (Colindale Station and then bus 204 to Lanacre Road).

For more info, contact Jennifer Langer on jennifer@exiledwriters.fsnet.co.uk or 020 8458 1910.

Thursday 20 February 12 noon - 5.00pm

'REFUGEE RIGHTS' CONFERENCE

Student Action for Refugees (STAR)'s Youth Conference is an

opportunity for 16-18 year olds to find out more about the current issues facing refugees and asylum seekers, and develop ideas about how they can get involved supporting refugees and asylum seekers.

Free admission

Venue: Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Central London.

For more info, contact STAR on 020 7820 3006 or info@star-network.org.uk

Saturday 22 February 9.30am - 5.00pm

UNITE AGAINST RACISM

Organised by the National Assembly Against Racism (NAAR), a one day national conference in the tenth anniversary year of the murder of Stephen Lawrence.

Registration fees £10 organisations, £3 unwaged.

Venue: TUC Conference Centre, London, Nearest tube Tottenham Court Road.

For more info, and to register, contact NAAR on 020 7247 9907 or 020 7247 3146.

Thursday 27 February 6.30pm

LEEDS MEDIA FORUM

Organised by the RAM Project, in partnership with Refugee Council, Refugee Action and NUJ, a forum to bring together asylum seekers and refugees, organisations working on their behalf and journalists to debate how to best turn the tide of negative coverage.

Food and wine from 6.30pm. Venue: Leeds Town Hall, The Headrow, Leeds LS1 3AD

For more info, or to reserve a place, contact Anna Kelson on 0117 941 5889 or anna@presswise.org.uk

Saturday 15 - Sunday 23 March

ACTION WEEK AGAINST RACISM

21 March was declared International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination by the General Assembly of the United Nations as a reaction to the murder of 70 peaceful demonstrators in Sharpeville, South Africa in 1960. This year once again hundreds of activities will take place all around Europe.

UNITED co-ordinates the activities, functions as an information point and distributes campaign material. Please send information on your activities.

For more info, visit www.unitedagainstracism.org

USEFUL WEBSITES

Authoritative information is vital if you want to be taken seriously

by the media. The RAM Bulletin and website will try to keep network members informed about useful sources of data and stories.

Here are some websites you might like to check out – they could provide you with helpful background material for when you are being interviewed, or when issuing press releases. **Journalists should always check their sources – and so should you.**

When quoting facts and figures always indicate your source.

Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees (ICAR) is an independent centre collecting, compiling and disseminating up-to-date and academically credible information about refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. It offers a counterweight to misinformation and stereotyping in press coverage and political discussion.

<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/humanities/ch/icar/>

OneWorld UK is the national centre of OneWorld, the largest international network and online information resource for sustainable development and human rights, with media and other useful links.

<http://www.oneworld.net/uk/campaigns/asylum-seekers/front.shtml>

The Student Action for Refugees supports refugees in a practical way in their local communities through volunteering, raises awareness of refugee issues and campaigns with and for the rights of refugees everywhere.

<http://www.star-network.org.uk/>

The International Crisis Group (ICG) is an independent, non-profit, multinational organisation, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.

<http://www.crisisweb.org/>

European Council for Refugees and Exiles – useful statistics on European and links <http://www.ecre.org/factfile/realfacts.shtml>

Immigration Watch

For an up-to-date info on asylum issues.

<http://www.immigrationwatch.info/>

Asylum Support

To subscribe to a daily e-newsletter on immigration.

<http://www.asylumsupport.info/>