

# RAM BULLETIN

## Refugees, Asylum-seekers and the Media Project

advice  
information  
research  
& training  
on media ethics



No 35, December 2003

Promoting best practice in media representation of refugee and asylum issues

### Tabloids claim victory

The *Daily Express* and the *Daily Mail* are claiming victory in their campaigns against asylum seekers following the Queen's Speech which outlined government's plans for a new Asylum Bill.

New Tory leader Michael Howard described the idea of removing the children of unsuccessful asylum-seekers unless their parents agree to quit the UK as 'despicable', in an attack that surprised everyone but delighted the press.

Now the government plans to limit legal aid for asylum-seekers, reduce opportunities for appeal, and track unsuccessful applicants with electronic tags, the *Daily Express* is running a poll (28 Nov) asking 'Should all asylum seekers be tagged immediately?'

It remains to be seen whether the media will put pressure on the government to intervene in conflicts that are driving more and more people to seek safety in western democracies.

### Keep complaining about the tabloids

Delegates to a British Council conference were encouraged to complain when the media get things wrong about asylum issue, reports *Jesse Mashate*.

The UK tabloids were severely criticised for pushing a xenophobic agenda at the expense of professional standards and journalistic ethics, during *A Sense of Place*, held in Cardiff 23-27 Nov.

Welsh Assembly Minister for Social Integration, Edwina Hart told the PressWise Media Day audience, that there was all-party commitment in Wales to supporting diversity and overcoming the fears of those vilified by the press and those influenced by inaccurate media coverage.

In a heated opening session chaired by Gary Younge of *The Guardian*, John Torode, who writes for the *Daily Mail*, suggested that those who object to negative media coverage just want positive stories that support their

political views. It is a newspaper's duty to challenge failures in government policy and highlight abuses of the asylum system, he said.

Simon Taylor of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees said constant complaints about inaccurate coverage can make a difference.

Former Reuters news executive Stephen Jukes, derided biased reporting which relies upon dubious news sources, and said a new type of 'post 9/11 press' has emerged, operating along the lines of 'you are either with us or with them'.

Asmet Elezovski of Roma Media, Macedonia said access to the media was a vital means of highlighting the plight of the dispossessed, but criticised agencies and media for ignoring the prejudice that has made Roma a target for discrimination and violence throughout Europe.

In a particularly moving session, exiled journalists from Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe told their stories and Nick Medic of RAM demolished *The Sun's* 'Swan Bake' story.

Later Bernard Margueritte of *Le Monde*, challenged the rationale of journalism that confuses the right of the public to be correctly informed with the right of owners to make profit by pandering to prejudice. NUJ General Secretary Jeremy Dear echoed him by blaming negative coverage on competition and monopolistic media ownership. He urged people to demand corrections for inaccurate stories but also to thank editors for accurate and positive coverage. Journalists should have a 'conscience clause' in their contracts to help them resist pressure to produce unethical stories.

Kirsteen Tait of ICAR spoke of the likely link between unbalanced reporting and community tensions, but also warned that ignoring local people's fears are a sure way to encourage xenophobia and racism.

Ed Klute from Mira Media in Holland said journalists should take heed of monitoring exercises and take part in debate and dialogue to improve coverage of multiculturalism.

### EDITORIAL

#### Why the UK is wrong about our human rights

Britain has played a key role in the development of democracy and human rights for hundreds of years – especially since the establishment of the United Nations in 1948. It has proved its commitment to freedom by respecting other countries' legitimacy, granting independence to former colonies, and taking a leading role in the UN.

True democracy means freedom of speech, political opinion and religion. It also means majority rule but respect for the rights of the minorities.

Is this true for refugees and asylum seekers in the UK?

Asylum seekers are the slaves of blame and scorn simply because our language, religion and race is different. We are not allowed to see any of our friends or relatives for more than seven days in a row every six months. We are criticised for using public services, even though we are entitled by law to use them. We have even been criticised for owning mobile phones.

Key to this is negative media coverage – particularly from the tabloid press. How can *The Sun* and the Press Complaints Commission claim to have any respect for human rights, when the paper publishes an inaccurate and misleading story about asylum seekers and the watchdog utterly fails to bark?

If politicians and journalists really understood the meaning of democracy, freedom and human rights, they wouldn't show such scorn and prejudice towards refugees and asylum seekers. What has happened to this great British tradition?

**Jahangir Hajipour**  
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Guest Editor

## PCC backs Sun over Swan Bake mistake

Only weeks after the Press Complaints Commission issued fresh guidelines warning newspapers 'that inaccurate, misleading or distorted reporting may generate an atmosphere of fear and hostility that is not borne out by the facts', the PCC has backed away from forcing the *The Sun* to admit that its notorious Swan Bake story broke all the rules.

For full Swan Bake story see this month's COMMUNICATOR on p5.

PCC guidelines:

[www.pcc.org.uk/reports/edit\\_detail.asp?id=20](http://www.pcc.org.uk/reports/edit_detail.asp?id=20)

## Asylum-seekers to blame

The PCC's new guidelines on reporting about asylum-seekers haven't yet sunk in, it seems. London's *Evening Standard* front page 'War on minicab sex attackers' (27 Nov) used one case out of 167 - a rapist jailed last March who happened to have applied for asylum - to illustrate news that police can now take DNA samples from minicab drivers stopped for operating without a licence. The story warned that such sex attacks by 'illegal minicab drivers' are likely to increase over the Christmas period.

On the same day *The Sun* ran 'Asylum seeker's jail job', which gave information about the criminal record of an unnamed Nigerian who had been given leave to remain in the UK in 1999, and then got a job at London's Brixton prison. Perhaps *The Sun* should visit the PCC site for a definition of 'asylum seeker' while the man's lawyers consider whether the lurid story might put at risk his right to a fair trial.

## Major study of asylum reporting attacks media

The British media uses inaccurate language, exaggerates statistics, and often uses stereotypical images when reporting on asylum seekers. These are the main findings of a major study by Article 19, the Global Campaign for Free Expression. In its report *What's The Story?*, the group calls on the media to report asylum issues accurately and fairly. Executive Director Andrew Puddephatt said, "No-one should deny the right of the

media to express strong opinions about asylum policy in this country but readers, viewers and listeners should be able to expect fair and accurate reporting. Sadly, to date, the debate on asylum here in Britain has been misinformed, prejudicial and biased."

For copies of the report go to: [www.article19.org/](http://www.article19.org/).

## Migration Watch distorts facts, says MP

An MP has accused the controversial immigration think-tank Migration Watch of "exaggeration", "distortion" and pedalling "reactionary views". Former immigration minister Barbara Roche made the comments in a speech to the Social Market Foundation on 18 Nov. Roche added: "Let us wrestle back the term asylum to mean something positive and humane, where safer nations are proud to help those in trouble." In August, the *RAM Bulletin* exclusively revealed that a leading member of Migration Watch, David Coleman, was a member of the Galton Institute, previously known as the Eugenics Society. Eugenics is 'the study of methods of improving the human race, especially by selective breeding' (Collins English Dictionary).

## Express report misleads over asylum fraud

*The Daily Express* published a misleading report about fraud committed by asylum seekers on November 18. The paper was reporting on a court case against an asylum seeker who had used two names to defraud the benefits system. Under the headline 'Asylum Chaos' it claimed that "asylum-seeking benefit cheats are using false identities to claim handouts in frauds costing the British taxpayer £100 million a year". But a spokeswoman for the Department for Work and Pensions told the *RAM Bulletin* that the £100 million figure refers to the total amount of identity fraud in the UK. "We don't keep figures just for asylum seekers," she stated.

## Writing wrongs

A new lobbying group has been launched by the Scottish Refugee Council to campaign against negative

press coverage and promote positive images of asylum-seekers and refugees. Campaigners will be asked to write to newspapers about unfair, inaccurate or misleading stories (a summary, key points to include and contact details will be provided). From time to time they will also receive a request to write to their MP or MSP. Campaigners who do not have access to the internet can be updated by post or fax.

Sign up at:

[www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/ca/mpaigns.htm](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/ca/mpaigns.htm)

## RAM journalists address asylum conference

Two journalists featured in RAM's *Exiled Journalists Directory* spoke at the Cardiff Media Conference on Gender, Asylum and the Media, on November 14. Zrinka Bralo described how being both a journalist and an asylum seeker in Britain had enabled her to understand the underlying causes of biased media coverage of asylum. She said she was optimistic that with access to information and balanced coverage, biased notions could be corrected. Zafir Behlic who was chairing the conference, talked of the importance of sharing information in the sector, and disseminating it to the media. Pearl Thevanayagam and Besim Gerguri, previous guest editors of the *RAM Bulletin*, also attended.

## PCC's Director resigns

Press Complaint Commission Director Guy Black has announced his resignation. He is to become press officer for the new Conservative Party leader, Michael Howard.

See <http://www.pcc.org.uk/>

## RAM film get fresh airings

On the receiving end, the compelling 15-minute RAM video, which won applause at the British Council *Sense of Place* event in Cardiff in November is to feature at *Visible Evidence*, an international documentary film festival to be staged at Bristol's Watershed Media Centre on 18 Dec.

See

<http://humanities.uwe.ac.uk/visible-evidence/>

*RAM Bulletin* subscribers can purchase the film for only £5. Postal order or cheque to PressWise, 38 EBC, Felix Road, Bristol BS5 0HE.

EXILED JOURNALISTS SPEAK OUT**WHY ZIMBABWE'S ONLY INDEPENDENT PAPER IS FIGHTING FOR ITS LIFE**

*SANDRA NYAIRA describes how she was left stranded in the UK after her newspaper was shut down by the government.*

The massive, noisy, bustling news-room at *The Daily News* – the only independent daily newspaper in Zimbabwe – now lies quiet. Full of life when it was born in March 1999, the offices were packed with versatile young journalists determined to leave a mark on their country's history by joining a paper regarded as an enemy of the state by the powers that be. But on September 12, the government closed it down, along with its sister publication, *The Daily News on Sunday*.

The closure epitomises the problems bedevilling this former British colony. Genuine democracy and press freedom remain pipedreams 23 years after the attainment of independence. Since the introduction of the obnoxious Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) by President Robert Mugabe, after his controversial re-election last March, conditions for journalists in Zimbabwe have been terrible – a far cry from what we expected when the Union Jack came down in 1980.

Zimbabwe, the jewel of Africa, has been roundly condemned for more than three years for its bad human rights record. The Committee to Protect Journalists says the country is now one of the 10 worst places for journalists to operate in. The arrest, harassment and intimidation of journalists (and ordinary citizens) who criticise government policy is something I certainly never thought I would see in a free Zimbabwe.

As a young person, I was part of the starry-eyed optimism in 1980 when Ian Smith and all he stood for were consigned to the dustbin of history. I never thought that a black government would one day disregard freedom, democracy, respect for human rights and equality before the law. It's hard to believe things have changed so much.

I learned of the paper's closure when I was here in London. Colleagues were sending me text-messages and emails while members of the police force were closing the paper down on September 12. It was a sad day, coming at a time when Zimbabweans badly

need another source of daily information, an independent voice like *The Daily News*.

The paper's crime? It had failed to register with a government commission as required under AIPPA. But that was because it was challenging AIPPA, arguing that the registration clauses in it were unconstitutional and would threaten journalists' freedom. The judge ruled the paper should have registered first before going to the courts, so the paper then attempted to register. But the government moved in fast and cleared the newsrooms and offices of equipment and files.

There are disagreements within the company about how the paper should have handled the issue, but I still argue that a democratic government should not have closed down the newspaper, let alone arrested and charged journalists for working on an 'illegal' publication. This was just the beginning of a long-protracted legal battle to get the paper back on the streets. I hope one day the paper will be back.

I was saved from arrest and prosecution because I had come to the UK last year, courtesy of the British Council, to study for my MA in International Journalism at the City University. But I have found myself stuck here for an unknown period as events in Zimbabwe keep unfolding. During my stay, I have learnt a lot about the coverage of countries like Zimbabwe in the British and international media – issues I was raring to share with my colleagues. I discovered there is no real diversity in the coverage of Zimbabwe, with most of the papers believing that a story should only be put into print if a white person has been affected, an issue that plays straight into the Zimbabwean government's hands, for it wants the rest of the world to believe the crisis in its backyard is a racial one when it's not. Very few journalists look at the other side of the story, that more black people are being affected by the crisis. I was also incensed by the coverage of the Iraq war. The embedding of journalists is one of the things governments like Zimbabwe's have always yearned for to ensure that journalists tow the line.

Learning about what's happening back home when I'm so far away has been difficult. As someone who has always been involved in sourcing stories, reading state newspapers on the internet is almost unbearable. I can only hope and pray that the government will one day allow independent voices to speak and be heard in the country. It is sad to know that about half of the journalists who used to work at *The Daily News* are now living in exile. Many of them are in the UK, where perhaps they should set up a newsroom to replace the one that was closed two months ago.

Email: [snyaira@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:snyaira@yahoo.co.uk)

## MAPPING THE REFUGEE SECTOR

### 4: MIGRANT HELPLINE Helping asylum seekers when they arrive

#### *Pearl Thevanayagam looks at the work of this important refugee support organisation*

Many asylum seekers have been forced to sleep rough since the government introduced draconian new laws in January 2003.

Section 55 of the 2002 Immigration Act forbids the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) from providing assistance to asylum seekers unless they make their claim 'as soon as reasonably practicable' after arrival in the UK.

Migrant Helpline, the Refugee Council and Refugee Action are lobbying against this and in November started a three-week survey to assess the impact of the new law.

Migrant Helpline has its origins in Kent's Committee for the Welfare of Immigrants, a charity started by Swiss-born Helen Ellis in 1964. She wanted to help people who were travelling through ports without passports or money.

Migrant Helpline's information and quality manager, Alison Chambers, says the charity was still struggling when in 1988 there was a marked increase in asylum seekers arriving in Dover port. "The organisation changed its name to Migrant Helpline and in 1993 received its first funding from the Home Office," she says.

She continues: "Until the Home Office created NASS in 2000, local authorities were looking after the needs of the asylum seekers. With the creation of NASS, central government took over the responsibility but their resources

were stretched. Hence Migrant Helpline was able to assist NASS by managing its policies."

Migrant Helpline's main objective is to provide reception services to newly-arrived asylum seekers, particularly those who have been granted temporary leave to remain until their status is decided.

#### MIGRANT HELPLINE FACT SHEET

Number of paid staff:	214
Number of volunteers:	26
<b>Budget (2001-2002):</b>	<b>£8.8m</b>

#### **Head Office**

Freight Services Approach Road  
Eastern Docks, Dover CT16 1JA  
Tel: 01304 203977  
Fax: 01304 203995

#### **Website**

[www.migranthehelpline.org.uk](http://www.migranthehelpline.org.uk)

#### **Information and quality manager**

Alison Chambers

#### **Press Officer**

Julie Larner

"You'll be amazed at how asylum seekers get to the port. Most arrive here in the back of trucks or ferries, under the wheels of trains, and in trains and cars. Croydon office also sends us those who arrive by air," Alison explains.

The induction centres are equipped with medical facilities and offer TB screening, at least two nurses and a doctor visiting twice weekly. "This enables the asylum seeker to have medical records and access to GP or NHS services," she says.

The organisation provides induction services in Ashford, Margate and Dover in Kent. It arranges accommodation and food for asylum seekers, and runs five briefing sessions explaining what the support services offer, how the asylum system works, what the individual's rights and responsibilities are, and how the dispersal process operates. The orientation briefing deals with basic house rules in the centres,

such where the emergency exits are and signing in and out. The briefing on support processes explains NASS' procedures for getting accommodation, expenses, and advice from solicitors on asylum claims. The rights and responsibilities briefing outlines UK laws, and provides background information about the local area.

Migrant Helpline explains to the asylum seekers that they will not be allowed to live in London or the South-East unless they have relatives in those areas. Those without relatives are sent to accommodation centres in cities such as Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Sheffield and Glasgow. It also points out that once an asylum seeker is granted leave to remain they must leave their accommodation after 28 days and, as a UK resident, can obtain housing and benefits...

Migrant Helpline operates a One-Stop service for longer-term asylum seekers and refugees. It also helps refugees find employment, educational training, housing facilities and offers day-to-day help like paying electricity or gas bills – similar to citizens' advice bureaux. While the Home Office funds the charity's induction and reception facilities, Migrant Helpline also receives grants and donations from the European Commission, Community Fund and private donors.

Media Officer Julie Larner says that the organisation deals with issues affecting asylum seekers by running training sessions for trainee immigration officers and police officers.

"Our work has been covered by BBC Radio Kent, BBC Radio London and Kent regional newspapers. BBC Southeast News have also made a documentary on our induction centres. But we always protect our clients' identity and warn those interviewing them not to question them about their home country," she adds.

## Cut-out-and-keep COMMUNICATOR

### Should *The Sun* be basted for urban myth-making?

On 4 July 2003 a new urban myth entered the popular imagination. A front page 'exclusive' in *The Sun* (circ. 3.5 million daily) announced **SWAN BAKE Asylum seekers steal the Queen's birds for barbecues**

*'Callous asylum seekers are barbecuing the Queen's swans, The Sun can reveal. East European poachers lure the protected Royal birds into baited traps, an official Metropolitan Police report says.'*

Reporter Mike Sullivan went on to quote Steve Knight of the Surrey based Swan Sanctuary *"To these people they are a perfectly acceptable delicacy."*

The story was fleshed out on p.7 under the banner **ASYLUM GANG HAD 2 SWANS FOR ROASTING**

*'Police swooped on a gang of East Europeans and caught them red-handed about to cook a pair of royal swans,'* it began.

*'The asylum seekers were barbecuing a duck in park in Beckton, East London. But two dead swans were also found concealed in bags and ready to be roasted. The discovery last weekend confirmed fears that immigrants are regularly scoffing the queen's birds.'*

RAM Project Communications Officer Nick Medic, an exiled journalist from Eastern Europe, was contacted by other refugees angry and suspicious about the story. They made a collective complaint to the PCC on 10 July and Nick began his own investigation.

Calls to West Ham, North Woolwich, Forest Gate and Beckton police stations revealed there was no record of the alleged offence.

Steve Knight of the Swan Sanctuary told Nick *The Sun* had not been faithful to his words. He could not confirm that the incident described ever happened, but said that that someone had once phoned him to say that from their window they could see someone pushing a swan in a shopping trolley.

Nick asked the Metropolitan Police for the 'official report'. Detective Chief Supt Tristram Hicks replied in writing: *'We never released a report on this subject to The Sun newspaper so we are not sure to what they were referring. We think that they may have meant an internal intelligence note that was sent to... police stations by our Wildlife Unit earlier this year... This one page note was prompted by numerous reports from the public that swans were being killed and eaten by people they believed to be Eastern Europeans..'*

*'Nobody has been arrested or charged in relation to offences against swans by the Metropolitan Police recently...'*

*'The Sun...referred to asylum seekers being responsible. We have no information at all that supports this contention and indeed when we spoke to... Mike Sullivan, he agreed that this was a mistake on The Sun's part.'*

#### What *The Sun* has offered to publish:

*'A report in The Sun on the 4th July about the disappearance of swans in southern England stated that asylum seekers were responsible for poaching them.'*

*'While numerous members of the public alleged that the swans were being killed and eaten by people they believed to be Eastern European, nobody has been arrested in relation to these offences and we accept that it is not therefore possible to conclude yet whether or not the suspects were indeed asylum seekers.'*

#### What the complainants asked for:

##### SWAN BAKE: CORRECTION AND APOLOGY

A report in *The Sun* of the 4th July, headlined on the front page SWAN BAKE, stated that gangs of Eastern European asylum-seekers were responsible for the disappearance of swans from southern England.

The story was based on unsubstantiated allegations made by unnamed members of the public who claimed to believe that swans were being killed and eaten by Eastern Europeans.

The police have confirmed that nobody has been arrested for such offences, and they have no evidence that asylum-seekers or Eastern Europeans are responsible for reported reductions in the swan population.

*The Sun* accepts that it is not possible to conclude whether the offences described actually occurred. We would like to apologise for any false impression that may have been given.

#### What the PCC has ruled:

*'In this instance the Commission noted that the newspaper was unable to provide any evidence for the story which, to its readers would appear to be a factual account.'*

*'Although the newspaper should have ensured that the article was presented as conjecture in the first instance the Commission noted that the publication had offered to print a clarification... to ensure that readers were aware that the statement was based on inconclusive material.'*

*'The Commission noted that your proposed draft clarification was more comprehensive than that suggested by the newspaper, but considered that the original proposal constituted sufficient remedial action...(and) concluded that no further action was required on the part of the newspaper...'*

#### Which version do you think *The Sun* should publish?

There is no solid evidence to support a sensational story that has entered the popular imagination, yet five months later THE SUN is simply obliged to run a disclaimer that they confused conjecture with fact!

#### Have your say:

PCC: 020 7353 1248 [complaints@pcc.org.uk](mailto:complaints@pcc.org.uk)  
Sun Ombudsman 0207 782 4059 [william.newman@the-sun.co.uk](mailto:william.newman@the-sun.co.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 can 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.**

Monday 1 December  
7.30pm

### POETRY CAFE

Exiled Writers Ink! present their regular monthly evening of poetry. First Language: Second Language with two Hungarian born poets, Victor (Gyöző) Határ and George Szirtes from two different generations come to read and talk about their work, plus poets from the floor. £2 members and unemployed refugees, £3 non-members  
Venue: 22 Betterton Street, London WC2. Nearest tube Covent Garden  
For more info, contact [jennifer@exiledwriters.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:jennifer@exiledwriters.fsnet.co.uk) or visit [www.exiledwriters.co.uk](http://www.exiledwriters.co.uk)

Monday 1 December  
6.00pm

### A WOMAN'S PLACE

Organised by the Refugee Women's Association with Pillion Productions. As part of the 10th anniversary celebrations, there will be a theatre production performed by refugee women with an exhibition of paintings by Laura Villegas. The bar will open at 6.00pm, with the play starting at 7.30pm. 10 free tickets will be reserved for unemployed refugee or asylum

seeking women at each show.

Tickets for the play and the exhibition are £10 (groups of 5 and more: £8), concessions £8 (groups of 5 and more: £6). To book tickets, call the Albany on 020 8692 4446

Venue: Douglas Way, Deptford, London SE8 4AG. Nearest Underground: New Cross.

For more info, contact 020 7923 2412 or visit [www.refugeewomen.org/info/womanplace.htm](http://www.refugeewomen.org/info/womanplace.htm)

Tuesday 2 December  
7.00pm

### POETRY NIGHT

Organised by the Refugee Writers Association, an evening bringing together refugee writers and artists working alongside indigenous writers/artists using literature to overcome trauma. Entrance is free.

Venue: The Miller's Tavern in Riverside Cardiff

For more info, contact Eric Ngalle Charles at [st02004288@uwic.ac.uk](mailto:st02004288@uwic.ac.uk) or 07939 087 807

Friday 5 December  
6.00pm

### A WOMEN'S PLACE

Organised by the Refugee Women's Association with Pillion Productions. As part of the 10th anniversary celebrations, there will be a theatre production performed by refugee women with an exhibition of paintings by Laura Villegas. The bar will open at 6.00pm, with the play starting at 7.30pm. 10 free tickets will be reserved for unemployed refugee or asylum seeking women at each show.

Tickets for the play and the exhibition are £10 (groups of 5 and more: £8), concessions £8 (groups of 5 and more: £6).

Venue: Oh!Art (Oxford House), Derbyshire Street, Bethnal Green, London E1. Nearest

Underground and British Rail: Bethnal Green  
For more info, contact 020 7923 2412 or visit [www.refugeewomen.org/info/womanplace.htm](http://www.refugeewomen.org/info/womanplace.htm)

Tuesday 9 December  
6.30pm - 8.30pm

### PUBLIC MEETING

Organised by the Coalition Against Legal Aid Cuts in response to the proposed government legislation to limit legal aid for asylum seekers and on immigration matters. Guest Speakers are Diane Abbott MP, David Lammy MP, Karen Chouhan and Courtney Griffiths QC. Other high profile speakers tbc.

Venue: House of Commons

For more info, contact 020 7247 9907, 07790 022 472 or email [naar@gxn.co.uk](mailto:naar@gxn.co.uk)

Thursday 18 December  
7.00pm

### LISTEN TO THE REFUGEE'S STORY

Organised by the Ilisu Dam Campaign Refugee Project, a party and cultural evening with performances of poetry, reading, music and dance from members of various communities, including Somalis, Kurds, Afghans, Colombians and Nigerians.

Venue: Halkevi Community Centre on the Stoke Newington Road in Hackney, London

For more info, contact Estella on 020 7586 5892, 020 7250 1315 or email [estella24@gn.apc.org](mailto:estella24@gn.apc.org) or [knklondon@gn.apc.org](mailto:knklondon@gn.apc.org)

Thursday 22 January  
6.30 - 8.30pm

### ACROSS THE DIVIDE

Organised by Exiled Writers Ink!, the development of the project Across the Divide: Writing Across the Jewish-Muslim Divide. Opportunities will be provided through a series of creative writing workshops to challenge stereotypes, discover common ground and gain an insight into the 'other'.

Venue: Diorama Arts Centre, Euston  
For more info, contact Jennifer Langer on [jennifer@exiledwriters.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:jennifer@exiledwriters.fsnet.co.uk)

Wednesday 4 February  
to Friday 23 April

### HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY TRAINING PROGRAMME

Organised by Eduaction Action International, a practical training programme for refugees and members of Middle East diaspora who want to promote human rights in the Middle East. Deadline for receipt of completed applications is 5 January 2004.

Venue: Friends House, 173 Euston Road

For more info, contact 020 7426 5824 or visit [liza.figueroa-clark@education-action.org](mailto:liza.figueroa-clark@education-action.org)

### USEFUL WEBSITES

**Journalists should always check their sources – and so should you. When quoting facts and figures always indicate your source.** Authoritative information is vital if you want to be taken seriously by the media. Here are some websites you might like to check out.

#### Article IX

[www.article19.org](http://www.article19.org)

#### PCC Guidelines

[www.pcc.org.uk/reports/edit\\_detail.asp?id=20](http://www.pcc.org.uk/reports/edit_detail.asp?id=20)

#### Scottish Refugee Council

[www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/campaigns.htm](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/campaigns.htm)

#### Visible Evidence

<http://humanities.uwe.ac.uk/visible-evidence/>

**Visit the RAM Project website for information, contacts, news and views**  
[www.ramproject.org.uk](http://www.ramproject.org.uk)