

HAMBASTEGI

PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF IRANIAN REFUGEES



106

June 25, 2001

June 20 Commemorates more than Int'l Refugee Day

The pages of history are full of mass killings, genocide and brutalities. In Iran, June 20 commemorates the beginning of one of the bloodiest political suppressions of the 20th Century. June 20, 1981 was the start of the Islamic regime's drive to crush the revolution and fortify itself.

On June 20, 1981, the Islamic regime's security forces, Islamic thugs and armed militia, poured into the streets and began mass arrests and killings. Thousands of people were summarily tried and executed. Many were subjected to the most horrific tortures. No brutality was spared to

terrorise a generation who had dared to revolt against the Shah for a life worthy of human beings.

June 20 commemorates much more than International Refugee Day. It commemorates a day in which a regime solidified its rule through brute force and caused one of the largest refugee flows in modern his-

tory.

On this day, the International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR) remembers the countless victims and reminds the world that the perpetrators of these crimes are still in power in Iran – in both the Conservative and so-called Reformist factions. They must be brought to justice.

Defend Rezai and Zareen

Abbas Rezai (25 years old) and Ghafor Zarin (28 years old), two Iranian asylum seekers born in Iranian Kurdistan were arrested and imprisoned by the Indian authorities in Mumbai, India in February 2001. Both are former political prisoners who will face torture and cruel and inhuman treatment and punishment should they be deported to Iran. The two are at serious risk of deportation to Iran. IFIR calls on progressive groups and individuals to write to the United Nations High

Commission for Refugees demanding that they be granted refugee recognition and resettlement to a safe third country and to the Indian embassies in various countries demanding that they be released and their deportation stopped. Office of the UNHCR Chargé de Mission in India, P.O. Box 3135, New Delhi 110003, India, Tel: 0091 114 616 038, Fax: 0091 114 620 137, E-mail: indne@unhcr.ch, cc: HQA000@unhcr.ch, ifir@ukonline.co.uk.

Support Protestors in Iraqi Kurdistan

On Sunday June 3, 500 Iranian refugees began an indefinite sit-in at the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the city of Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan in protest that agency's lack of response to their needs and demands. Iranian asylum seekers in Iraqi Kurdistan have endured years of insecurity and fear coupled with abject poverty and deplorable living conditions. The UNHCR has continually failed to offer protection, a decent standard of living and resettlement to a safe third country. The sit-in has been

organised to highlight their plight, expose the UNHCR's irresponsibility, and solicit international support. Their demands from the UNHCR are: Refer refugees to the embassies of countries offering resettlement; facilitate their transfer to safe third countries; and improve living and health conditions. Send your letters of protest to UNHCR Offices in Erbil, Iraq and Geneva. UNHCR Offices in Erbil and Iraq - Email: unhcr-erbil@un.org; irqba@unhcr.ch; Fax: +8731754271. UNHCR Office Geneva - Email: hqpr00@unhcr.ch; Fax: +42227397353.

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Editorial

UNHCR has Obligations too

By Maryam Namazie

For the past six months, Abbas Rezai and Ghafor Zarin, two Iranian Kurdish political activists, have been languishing in prison for 'illegal entry' into India. They have been beaten, shot at, wounded, and criminalized; they face a serious risk of deportation back to persecution. The United Nations High Commission for Refu-



gees (UNHCR) in India has continually postponed making a decision on their claim and granting them protection.

In Iraqi Kurdistan, the UNHCR continues to refuse to address refugee living, medical, food, protection and resettlement needs. 500 women, men

and children have been participating in a sit-in since June 3 in the hopes of pressuring the agency to finally address their human needs and legitimate demands.

On June 20, International Refugee Day, Ruud Lubbers, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, addressing governments said: "Helping [refugees] and protecting them is a moral and legal obligation, rather than an optional act of charity." Mr. Lubbers would do well to remind his staff and offices in Northern Iraq and India of their obligations too.

On the Presidential 'Elections'

Interview with Maryam Namazie

Before last week's elections, your association declared that the June 8 presidential elections in Iran could only be considered a farce and encouraged refugees to boycott the vote. Why?

Maryam Namazie: We called for a boycott and active protest against the so-called elections and the entire regime because voting for either faction would legitimise this farce. These 'elections' were not elections by any standards and would be unacceptable in Italy and in many places in the world. The majority, including women, Communists, political opponents, atheists, etc. were ineligible to take part. The Guardian Council - a 12-member body - probed the candidates' commitment to Islam and the Islamic Republic and approved only its most die-hard supporters.

Any candidate approved by this body was chosen because he was a most loyal servant and had proven his allegiance beyond a doubt. This Conservative body approved Khatami in 1997 and again this year because of his commitment to the regime. The approved presidential candidates included former and current ministers, who have been directly responsible for gross violations of civil rights in Iran; for example, Tavakoli was a former prosecutor and labour minister; Ali Fallahian was a former intelligence minister who has a warrant out against him in Germany. Khatami was a minister of censorship for many years before he became president, and was in office during the past four years when innumerable individuals were imprisoned, tortured, stoned, hung from cranes in public...

The faces of these 'candidates' should be on 'wanted,' not election posters. Calling for a boycott and active protest were the only right things to do.

In any case, 99 percent of those living abroad didn't vote and many actively opposed the 'elections,' especially since most are victims of this regime. So many still have the physical and psychological marks of repression on them. Their applications for asylum have already revealed their position against the entire regime. Our call only asked that they formally state their opposition to the Islamic Republic once more for the world to see.

Don't you think that calling for a boycott weakens the possibility of reforms and instead, helps the conservatives?

Maryam Namazie: Boycotting and opposing the 'elections,' weakens both factions, thereby strengthening the growing people's movement for freedom and equality. The key question is not what helps one or the other faction of a repressive regime, but what better advances the movement for real change in Iran.

Moreover, in terms of civil rights, there is no real difference between the so-called Reformist and Conservative factions. Both want to uphold the Islamic 'rule of law' that has resulted in the execution of over 100,000 people, and imposed widespread lack of rights and sexual apartheid. Their aims are the same; it's only their tactics that are different. In fact their infighting is over how best to save their regime. Khatami is as much part and

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Presidential 'Elections'

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parcel of the regime and responsible for its crimes as Khamenei is. In fact, this time round he is as much the Conservative faction's candidate as he is the Reformist faction's. After 4 years of his presidency, it has become painfully obvious to even those who had any illusions about him that the terms reform, civil society and dialogue between civilisations were merely marketing strategies to make an intolerable regime, an uncivilised regime, an unreformable regime, a regime of repressive monologues, more palatable for Western public opinion.

Also, much has been said about Khatami being a 'reformer' but one is hard-pressed to find any evidence of such reforms in Iran. When Western governments, the media and Human Rights Watch speak of reform, they usually mention the large numbers of newspapers in Iran, yet the quantity of newspapers has nothing to do with reforms or improvements in the freedom of expression and press. If you look at the editors and publishers of all the newspapers or even at the journalists themselves, you will see that they are all mainly clergy, government officials, relatives of government officials, former Pasdars and interrogators who have turned into journalists overnight - a good case in point is Akbar Ganji who was part of the notorious Pasdars. Though they are 'insiders,' they are

still being arrested and their papers shut down. One can only imagine what it's like for ordinary people, for Communists, for progressives, for the women, youth and workers... This is not freedom of expression and press. Hambastegi, the International Federation of Iranian Refugees' (IFIR) paper or WPI Briefing cannot be published there. It is banned; our writers and editors, and those distributing our papers would be arrested, tortured and killed.

The terms freedom of expression and press, reform and civil society all have meaning and cannot be used lightly especially in reference to such a regime. Reforms are first and foremost changes in laws and policies that improve the lives of real human beings. The abolishment of stoning to death would be a reform; the fact that the Islamic regime stops stoning women in public due to public outrage but does so privately and in its prisons (it recently stoned a woman in Evin prison in Tehran) is not a reform. It just shows that the regime knows that the situation is explosive and is fearful of people's outrage. An end to compulsory veiling would be a reform; the fact that women are 'improperly veiled' every day on the streets is not reform; it just shows that women are protesting and opposing compulsory veiling despite its risks. Hundreds of thousands of women have been flogged, imprisoned, had their bodies slashed with razors, and had acid thrown in their faces so that they could walk down the streets with

their veils pushed back. Millions in Iran and worldwide have opposed stoning forcing the regime to worry about the bad publicity. It is Communists, women, youth, the working class, political activists, and people who must be credited with such 'openings' in Iran - not Khatami and his empty slogans about 'reform.'

One thing is absolutely clear - this regime is unreformable. It cannot end compulsory veiling, stoning, sexual apartheid, etc. because that would mean an end to an Islamic state. Its overthrow is a precondition for any real reforms and improvements in people's lives and conditions.

Khatami obtained more than 21 million votes, but the percentage of voters was less than expected. Why was there such a poor turnout?

Maryam Namazie: Though there were many more eligible voters this time round, the numbers who took part were much less. Also a large number actively protested the 'elections' by setting voting booths on fire, demonstrating, writing slogans on walls against the 'elections' and the regime, and dissuading others from voting. The Worker-communist Party of Iran, the IFIR and other opposition groups have refuted the numbers of voters announced by the regime. Many eyewitness accounts have reported that the turn out was low - much lower than the regime's own statistics. There are numerous reports that people took voting cards in order to

get their papers stamped (to assist them with university and job applications and rations) but then tore up their cards. Moreover, 30 percent of the voting booths were mobile, facilitating election fraud. Clearly, a much smaller number voted for the regime than it states. The reasons are clear. Four years ago, people voted for Khatami in order to reject the regime's main candidate and increase factional infighting, thereby creating an opening for themselves. This time round, he was both factions' candidate.

The President of the Italian Republic, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi sent his best wishes to President Khatami, hoping that Iran will have a speedy return from international exile, that it would continue with democratic and human rights reforms. Do you think that western democracies have justified faith in Khatami?

Maryam Namazie: Western governments want public opinion in their countries to believe that things have improved in order to justify close and profitable relations and also the increasing numbers of refusals and deportations of Iranian asylum seekers back to Iran. Nonetheless, the brutal realities in Iran, the mass movement struggling for real change and the flight of large numbers of people trying to escape persecution are undeniable.

The above is segments of an interview by an Italian journalist on the June 8 presidential 'elections' in Iran.

Sample Protest Letters

unhcr-erbil@un.org; irqba@unhcr.ch; Fax:
+8731754271
hqpr00@unhcr.ch; Fax: +42227397353

I / My organisation am / is writing in full support of the 500 Iranian refugees who began a sit-in at the UNHCR office in Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan on June 3 and in protest to the UNHCR's policies and inaction.

Their demands are that the UNHCR:

- 1- Refer refugees to the embassies of countries offering resettlement
- 2- Facilitate their transfer to safe third countries
- 3- Improve living and health conditions.

I urge your office to immediately meet with representatives of the protestors and address their demands.

Signed: Name, organisation
Cc: ifir@ukonline.co.uk

UNHCR Chargé de Mission in India
P.O. Box 3135, New Delhi 110003, India
Tel: 0091 114 616 038
Fax: 0091 114 620 137
E-mail: indne@unhcr.ch, hqpr00@unhcr.ch

I / My organisation am / is writing to express my/ our concern about the situation of Abbas Rezai and Ghafor Zarin, two Iranian Kurdish asylum seeker languishing in Indian prisons for the past six months.

I / my organisation call(s) on the UNHCR to immediately grant the two protection and refugee recognition, facilitate their release from prison, and resettle them to a safe third country. They are at risk of being deported to Iran where as former political prisoners and activists they will face torture, cruel and inhuman treatment and punishment, and persecution. Your immediate action is requested.

Signed: Name, Organisation
Cc: ifir@ukonline.co.uk

Defend Iraqi Kurds

Join July 3, 2001 Picket and Public Meeting. Picket, 12 to 2pm at the Home Office, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1. Public Meeting, 7:30pm at the House of Commons, Room 10 Westminster SW1. Speakers: John

McDonnell, MP; Imran Khan, Civil Rights Lawyer; Suresh Grover, National Civil Rights Movement; Dashty Jamal, General Federation of Iraqi Refugees Britain; Moayed Ahmad, Worker Communist Party of Iraq; Maryam

Statewatching new Europe

Maryam Namazie will be speaking on the EU and racism at an international conference on the state, civil liberties and secrecy organised by Statewatch on Saturday 30 June 2001 10.00 am - 5.30 pm at the University of London Students Union, Malet Street, London WC1 [nearest tubes: Warren Street, Russell Square, Goodge Street, Euston Square]. Other speakers include: Aidan White, European Federation

of Journalists; Andrew Puddephatt, Article 19; Caspar Bowden, Foundation for Information Policy Research; Frances Webber, Institute of Race Relations; Gareth Peirce, lawyer; Glyn Ford MEP; Graham Watson MEP, UK, chair of the Citizens' Freedoms and Rights Committee in the European Parliament; Heidi Hautala MEP, Finland, Co-President of the Green/EFA group in the European Parliament; Hilary Wainwright, edi-

Namazie, International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR). For further information, contact Dashty Jamal, Campaign Coordinator at 07810128481, P.O. BOX 1575, ILFORD IG1 3BZ, sahand@shamal.freeserve.co.uk or Maryam Namazie, IFIR.

tor Red Pepper; Ilka Schroeder MEP, member of the inquiry into Echelon; Liz Fekete, Institute of Race Relations; Maurice Frankel, Campaign for Freedom of Information; Neil Gerrard MP; Richard Norton-Taylor, The Guardian; Simon Davies, Privacy International; Stephen Jakobi, Fair Trials Abroad; Suresh Grover, National Civil Rights Movement. For more information: fax 0044 (0) 20 8880 1727, e-mail: office@statewatch.org, www.statewatch.org.

Sara Motiee Granted Protection

Sara Motiee, an Iranian woman who escaped reactionary Islamic laws and persecution and fled to Sweden three years ago, finally received permission to stay. Her case had been highlighted in a previous issue of Hambastegi. She was under threat of deportation but has finally been given the right to remain in Sweden after a strong campaign by the IFIR-Sweden branch as well as other organisations.

**Next Issue:
Monday,
July 9, 2001**

Support Demands of Asylum Seekers in Liverpool

Asylum Seekers housed in 'The Landmark' and 'The Inn on the Park' in Liverpool, have gone on hunger strike against their appalling conditions and the Home Office's procedures. Up to 600 asylum seekers are housed in the tower blocks; 50% are Kurds, others are, Afghans, Iranians, East and West Africans. According to the Landmark Hunger Strike Committee:

'We are a group of refugees from Liverpool; we began a hunger strike on the 11th of

June in protest at the way we have been treated by the British Government and by Landmark Liverpool Ltd, who own the tower blocks we live in. These are our demands: 1. We demand a positive response for our asylum applications. Some of us have been waiting for over a year to hear from the Home Office. Many refugees are being rejected before the interview stage. 2. We demand that the British Government cancels its contract with Landmark Liverpool Ltd and that the

company is dissolved. Over the past year large numbers of residents in Landmark properties have made complaints about dampness, lack of working lifts, delays in receiving mail, health problems as a result of the poor conditions of the building, threats and intimidation by the landlady and her agents, and inadequate protection from racist attacks in the vicinity of the buildings. The landlady has made threats against residents who have attempted to complain about these issues. She has also in-

timidated residents who have contacted the press and outside organisations for help, and have attempted to stop residents joining a peaceful protest about the conditions in her properties. This is why we have decided to go on hunger strike. We are tired of being treated like animals. We appeal for your support for our protest. Send messages to: landmark_hungerstrike@hotmail.com, Fax: 0151 726 9515 or Phone: 07801 554918.

International Refugee News

* Deaths

(The Orlando Sentinel, June 19, 2001) Officials recovered the bodies of five Haitians and rescued 20 others who were stranded on a small island off Abaco Island.

(Agence France Presse, June 18, 2001) A joint Mozambican-South African investigation has dismissed claims that South African police threw 14 'illegal' Mozambican migrants from a moving train while 'repatriating' them.

(Reuters, June 15, 2001) Six 'illegal immigrants' drowned and four, including three children, were missing after the boat hit a rocky islet east of the Greek holiday island of Mykonos. "The survivors are 45 men, six women and seven children of Iraqi and Afghan nationality," a ministry spokesman said

(Reuters, June 7, 2001) U.S. Border Patrol agents found the bodies of two 'illegal immigrants' who died trying to enter the United States from Mexico less than a month

after 14 people died on another journey across the scorching hot border

(The Vancouver Sun, June 8, 2001) The macabre fate of 'illegal immigrants' who have drowned trying to reach Italy over the past five years is returning to haunt the country as Sicilian fishermen admit they have thrown hundreds of bodies caught in their nets back into the sea. The corpses are believed to be the remains of those who died on what La Repubblica called on Thursday "the Mediterranean's worst tragedy since the Second World War", an incident on Boxing Day, 1996, when at least 283 'illegal immigrants' drowned when their ship, a rusting freighter, collided with a Maltese boat picking them up at sea.

(Agence France Presse, June 11, 2001) Two coast guard vessels, helicopters and a customs boat were searching the coast for 11 Albanian migrants who went missing after a raft sank off Italy's southeast coast.

(Radio Slovakia,

Bratislava (via BBC), June 12, 2001) Three Indian nationals who were trying to get to the Czech Republic by crossing the river were detained. One died some 10m away from the riverbank. 20 others had been dragged away by the current.

(Reuters, June 13, 2001) Italian police recovered the bodies of five 'illegal immigrants' who were catapulted overboard when the speedboat they were travelling in flipped over off the coast of Italy. The five were part of a group of 34 who set off in the boat from Albania.

(The New Straits Times (Malaysia), June 13, 2001) Seven policemen have been detained in connection with the death of a foreigner during an attempted breakout by 'illegal immigrants' from the Meggatal detention centre in Malaysia.

* Deportation

(Reuters, June 21, 2001) A senior representative of the UNHCR will visit Vietnam to discuss the 'repatriation'

of about 250 ethnic minority people from Cambodia.

(The Associated Press, June 21, 2001) Indonesian police have arrested 111 'illegal immigrants' from Iraq, Iran, Algeria and Afghanistan who were suspected of being bound for Australia. The group included four women, five children and one baby. He said the group would be deported.

(Turkish Daily News, June 20, 2001) Paramilitary police in separate operations in eastern Turkey have detained 81 people said to have illegally entered the country from Iraq. They will be deported.

(The Independent (Banjul), June 18, 2001) More than 24 Gambians who recently travelled to Northern Ireland via France without visas have been reportedly refused entry and subsequently deported home.

(Agence France Presse, June 6, 2001) Israel expelled four Lebanese who had crossed during the night to seek asylum. An Israeli military jeep dropped the four in a deserted border region, from where they

walked toward the village of Shebaa where Lebanese police seized them.

*** Detention**

(The Australian Associated Press, June 21, 2001) A teenaged Syrian boy and six Iraqi men faced a West Australian court over their alleged involvement in a May riot at the Port Hedland detention centre. Detainees claim the riot began after Australasian Correctional Management (ACM) staff bashed a teenaged boy at the centre.

(The Associated Press, June 18, 2001) A parliamentary committee recommended an overhaul of Australia's system of mandatory detention for asylum seekers, arguing that it has led to human rights abuses. The government immediately rejected the recommendations, calling them naive and saying the committee lacked expertise. The committee noted allegations of bashing of detainees by center management, detainees being handcuffed, substandard bathroom facilities and medical treatment, separation of families and psychological pressure by staff through threats of violence or having visa applications denied.

(The Washington Post, June 7, 2001) Mexico has become the world's waiting room for 'illegal immigrants' hoping to 'sneak' into America. Mexican authorities deported 152,000 last year, almost all of them trying to reach the United States. Another 28,000 were caught by U.S. officials after crossing the border. The main detention center was designed to hold 150 people sometimes houses 600. Once detained, many immigrants seek refugee status, especially those from Iran, Iraq, Sierra Leone, Pakistan, Somalia and Colombia,

who argue that it would be too dangerous for them to return home. Officials representing the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees visit the detention center twice a week to assess those requests. 266 applications were made last year and 78 were granted by the UNHCR.

(The Australian Associated Press, June 7, 2001) Five immigration detainees who allege they were assaulted by detention centre guards would not be deported without notice while police investigated their claims. The Australian Department of Immigration gave the undertaking in the Federal Court after two others also allegedly assaulted by guards at the Villawood Detention Centre, in Sydney's west, this year were recently deported to China.

*** Laws/Legal**

(The Guardian (U.K.), June 21, 2001) In a case that could have important implications for the EU's planned common asylum policy, a European parliament committee yesterday criticised Sweden's treatment of a US national who has been refused asylum on the grounds that he comes from a so-called "safe" country. The parliament's committee on citizens' rights and freedoms, justice and home affairs threw its weight behind a growing international campaign by suggesting that Stockholm should re-examine the asylum application of Ritt Goldstein, who fled to Sweden in July 1997 after suffering police brutality. Goldstein, 48, was a justice of the peace and successful businessman when, in 1995, he became involved in a campaign to reform the US police force by making its members more accountable. Goldstein claimed he immediately became the target of vicious reprisals, which

the US authorities and justice system were powerless either to prevent or redress. In its rejection of his asylum application and appeal, the Swedish immigration board said Goldstein's case was "manifestly unfounded" because the US is "an internationally recognised democracy" with "a functioning legal system" that did not allow the persecution of its citizens. Spokesmen from five Swedish political parties have criticised their government's approach. "Under the Geneva Convention, every person has the right to an individual review of their asylum application," said Marianne Andersson of the Liberal Centre party.

(The Korea Times, June 21, 2001) A total of 104 foreigners have sought asylum in South Korea since December 1992, but only one, an Ethiopian, has been granted refugee status. By nationality, Congolese topped the list of asylum seekers with 26, Burmese came next with 21, followed by Algerians with 18. The others are 10 Iranians, five Afghans and four each from Pakistan and Liberia.

(National Post (Canada), June 19, 2001) Tello, a Peruvian labour leader has been spared deportation from Canada because the Shining Path is hunting him. "It wasn't about whether the Shining Path is still a strong enough organization to defeat the government," said his lawyer. "It was about whether they could assassinate Tello.

(The Christian Science Monitor, June 20, 2001) Unlike most other countries, Germany will not offer asylum for any reason other than persecution by the ruling government. Because Germany doesn't recognize the Taliban regime that controls 95 percent of Afghanistan, its citi-

zens are not eligible for asylum in Germany. Last year, Germany's constitutional court said that persecution by a "state-like organization" amounted to the same thing. It has sent the case back to the lower court for a decision.

(Agence France Presse, June 20, 2001) Asylum seekers in South Africa were being left in limbo by restrictive legislation and intolerance by South Africans despite protection promised by the constitution. The main problem for asylum seekers is regulations restricting them from finding jobs or studying pending the outcome of their applications. The regulations, promulgated last year, are seen as a step backward after the country's first Refugee Act, in 1998, which was regarded as a relatively progressive law recognising the rights of refugees. Currently there are about 16,600 refugees registered in South Africa.

(The Korea Herald, June 20, 2001) A local lawyers group will launch Korea's first legal aid body for refugees, the Committee on Legal Aid for Refugees.

(June 16, 2001, NY Times) France was embarrassed by a US decision to grant political asylum to a Frenchman on the grounds that he had been persecuted by corrupt magistrates in Nice. The order by a Los Angeles judge, the first ever such American action in favour of a French citizen, has reignited a scandal over allegedly deep-rooted corruption in the official establishment of the freewheeling Mediterranean coast. The affair stems from a long child custody battle. Karim Kamal, a former Cote d'Azur resident, says that a paedophile ring that included local judges sexually abused his daughter. Nice prosecutors refused to open an in-

quiry in 1996, despite what the US court said was convincing evidence that the child, then 4, had been abused by Marie-Pierre Guyot, her mother. The daughter of a Nice judge, she has won a series of local court rulings in her favour, while M Kamal has been sentenced to prison in his absence for insulting judges and briefly abducting his daughter.

(The Associated Press, June 6, 2001) Greece began a drive to register hundreds of thousands of 'illegal immigrants,' giving them a final chance to live and work without fear of deportation. The program applies only to immigrants who can prove that they have been in Greece for at least one year.

(Reuters, June 6, 2001) Spain plans to tone down its controversial new immigration law by granting visas to foreigners who are already settled and have strong ties to the country. Due for approval at the end of July, the planned amendment to the law follows months of criticism from the country's mostly North African and Latin American immigrants, as well as from human rights groups.

(The Toronto Star, June 13, 2001) A decision by Canada's refugee board to grant two South Korean teens, a 16-year-old girl and her 14-year-old brother, asylum from their abusive father has broken new ground in protecting children. The ruling is believed to be the first time a child's refugee status has been recognized in a domestic abuse case independent of a parent's refugee claim.

(The Canadian Press, June 14, 2001) Parliament passed Bill C-11, a revamped Immigration Act that cracks down on human smuggling and refugees who are 'criminals,' and aims to deter 'queue-jumpers' and 'crooks.' Those who

arrive illegally in Canada by plane, boat or other means will be detained. It bars criminals from claiming refugee status, including anyone convicted of a major crime in Canada or who was sentenced to two years or more in their home country. Those convicted of non-violent crimes or persecuted for politically-motivated reasons could be included under that definition, though officials say decisions can always be reviewed. The Act also creates penalties of up to \$1 million or life in prison for smuggling illegal immigrants into the country; determines - in six months for regular cases, three months for those in detention - whether applicants qualify as refugees; creates up-front security checks of all refugee claimants; clarifies grounds for detaining refugees. 'Illegal migrants,' those without documentation and those who are "uncooperative" can be held; allows fewer appeals that delay removing refugee applicants with serious criminal records; suspends claims for refugees charged with crimes until courts rule.

(The Australian Associated Press, June 14, 2001) Australian courts were undermining efforts to curb illegal migration, with decisions making it more difficult to reject asylum claims, Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock said. He said the courts have placed the burden of proof on immigration department officials that an individual was not a refugee, rather the onus being on the claimant, as is the case under the UNHCR. The government was now preparing legislation to alter the interpretation of the refugee convention as it applies in Australia.

*** Living Conditions**

(Press Association

(U.K.), June 20, 2001) Employers, trade unions and others have joined forces in a call for asylum seekers to be given the right to work six months after they apply to stay in Ireland.

(Deutsche Presse-Agentur, June 19, 2001) The opposition Greens charged that the situation of refugees in Austria is "a disgrace". Only one third of applicants for asylum were taken into state care. In the whole of 2000 there had been nearly 18,300 applications, of which 1,000 had been granted. The latest figures come amid almost daily reports of groups of refugees, many from Afghanistan, Iraq and India, being stopped by police and soldiers at the eastern Austrian borders.

(Australian Broadcasting Corporation, June 18, 2001) Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock is pushing ahead with a plan to force asylum seekers into work-for-the-dole programs.

The Independent (U.K.), June 19, 2001

*** Myths and Realities**

(The Philadelphia Inquirer, June 22, 2001) Badolata, Italy, a poor town with a shrinking population, has become a beacon for refugees. "The Kurds were good for our town," said Mayor Mannello. "They were engineers, doctors, students and workers. More would have stayed if we could have given them something. We're plagued here with a 30 percent unemployment rate. But I believe that immigration can help many dying Italian towns. We think a consequence of us helping them may mean our town will prosper again."

*** Protests**

(Die Welt (Germany),

June 21, 2001) Lufthansa reacted speedily against attacks via the Internet by human rights organisations, which are accusing the company of profiting financially from the deportation of rejected asylum-seekers. For 10 minutes during the company's general meeting on Wednesday was the homepage difficult to access owing to the protesters' action, while some secondary pages were unavailable for a short time. Protesters were also present at the general meeting, and company head Jurgen Weber's report was interrupted several times.

(The Australian Associated Press, June 21, 2001) A teenaged Syrian boy and six Iraqi men faced a West Australian court over their alleged involvement in a May riot at the Port Hedland detention centre. Detainees claim the riot began after Australasian Correctional Management (ACM) staff bashed a teenaged boy at the centre.

(Reuters, June 20, 2001) Protesters in two Australian cities demanded the release of asylum seekers from remote outback camps as criticism of the government's policy of mandatory detention of illegal immigrants grew.

(The Associated Press, June 18, 2001) Police recaptured three Iranian asylum seekers who were on the run for nine days after tunneling out of Woomera, a remote detention center in the Australian Outback. Four other Iranians had been captured last week.

(The Independent (U.K.), June 15, 2001) Ten people have started a hunger strike in protest to their "barbaric treatment" within the British asylum system. They say the protest was sparked by a combination of delays in the asylum process and "appalling conditions" in the Liverpool tower blocks where they have

been housed. The protesters, who have moved out of the flats in the Everton area of the city since starting their strike four days ago, say they are "tired of being treated like animals".

(The Australian Associated Press, June 15, 2001) Asylum seekers had been subjected to a campaign of vilification and scare-mongering by politicians, South Australia's peak union body, The United Trades and Labor Council of SA said and called for an end to a detention policy it said created further trauma and discrimination for refugees.

(Australian Broadcasting Corporation, June 8, 2001) The Immigration Minister, Philip Ruddock, has confirmed two new disturbances at the Woomera Detention Centre were the result of four applications for refugee status being rejected. Up to 30 detainees were involved in the disturbances last night and this morning.

*** Racism**

(The Guardian (U.K.), June 22, 2001) People's concerns about immigration and race relations have risen dramatically in the past five years, with almost a fifth of the population seeing it as one of the most serious problems facing the country, according to a poll. More cited race relations than the economy, education, poverty or the European Union.

(Reuters, June 20, 2001) A majority of Germans think fewer immigrants should be allowed into the country, a poll showed, just as the government was considering relaxing its immigration rules.

(The Scotsman (U.K.), June 13, 2001) Two Palestinian brothers who became the victims of Glasgow's most notorious racist attack on asylum seekers left Scotland because

of their ordeal. Iyad and Haitham Saada believed the country would be a safe haven for them and came to Glasgow last year after fleeing a south Lebanese camp with brother Ziad in an attempt to find a better life for their family. But earlier this year they were set upon by an angry mob of around 40 in the Sighthill area, leaving them hospitalised.

*** Restrictive / Repressive Measures**

(The Associated Press, June 22, 2001) Alnar, a wandering ship with Liberian men, women and children refused entry at port after port in West Africa appeared off the tiny nation of Togo, sending up an SOS for help before dawn.

(Agence France Presse, June 22, 2001) Kazakh President called for a crackdown on 'illegal migration,' which he said threatened stability in this former Soviet republic.

(Kyodo News Service, June 21, 2001) Japan will increase the number of immigration personnel in an attempt to prevent the entry of foreigners without proper documentation.

(The People's Daily (China), June 22, 2001) Hong Kong police launched a large-scale search operation to crack down on 'illegal immigrants.'

(The Birmingham Post (U.K.), June 21, 2001) Three Turkish 'illegal immigrants' lay cramped in a 12-inch high container under a lorry all the way from Germany to Britain. They had to lie flat to fit into the pallet box under the front axle of the truck. When discovered, they were groggy and dehydrated.

(The New York Times, June 21, 2001) The chief of the United Nations agency criticized wealthy West European countries and Australia today for increasingly closing their

borders to those fleeing war and persecution. He accused politicians in Australia, Austria, Britain, Denmark and Italy of inflaming sentiment against refugees by calling them "bogus" asylum seekers who are "flooding" their countries. "Politicians taking this line used to belong to small extremist parties, but nowadays, the issue is able to steer the agenda of much bigger parties" because appeals to fend off "foreign hordes clamouring at the gates" leave opposing parties responding with tougher policies.

(The Associated Press, June 21, 2001) Indonesian police have arrested 111 'illegal immigrants' from Iraq, Iran, Algeria and Afghanistan who were suspected of being bound for Australia. The group included four women, five children and one baby. He said the group would be deported.

(Turkish Daily News, June 20, 2001) Paramilitary police in separate operations in eastern Turkey have detained 81 people said to have illegally entered the country from Iraq. They will be deported.

(Media Indonesia, Jakarta (via BBC), June 20, 2001) Indonesian police have arrested 67 'illegal immigrants' from Iran and Iraq to Australia.

(The Star (Malaysia), June 18, 2001) Malaysian police rounded up 216 'illegal immigrants' - Indonesians, Bangladeshis and Indians. They will be sent to the Semenyih detention camp.

(CNN, June 15, 2001) Australian Federal Police have intercepted a boat carrying 231 'illegal immigrants,' 197 men, 30 children and nine women, from the Middle East.

(Reuters, June 6, 2001) The leader of Germany's Jewish community urged the government to clamp down on immigrants 'pretending' to be Jewish in order to enter the coun-

try.

(The Australian Associated Press, June 6, 2001) Divers have found 5 'illegal immigrants' on a wooden boat. They were detained.

(Press Association (U.K.), June 7, 2001) UK police have detained 10 'illegal immigrants' believed to be from Lithuania, discovered on a yacht.

(Reuters, June 7, 2001) One of the biggest challenges facing Hungary and other European Union candidates is curbing the flow of thousands of 'illegal migrants' across their borders, Jean-Francois Durieux, deputy director at the Geneva-based UNHCR, said. "It is a major challenge because within the EU there is free movement of people...control of the external border becomes paramount."

(The Australian Associated Press, June 7, 2001) Australian Customs has intercepted 290 asylum seekers at Ashmore Islands off northern Western Australia.

(Australian Broadcasting Corporation, June 12, 2001) The Australian Immigration Minister, Philip Ruddock, will visit Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam for discussions with government ministers and officials to discourage the illegal movement of asylum seekers.

(The Canadian Press, June 13, 2001) The Canadian government will proceed with a plan to test all immigrants and refugees for the AIDS virus, despite strong opposition from AIDS activists. However, people who test HIV-positive will not be automatically excluded. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis. Currently, prospective newcomers can be tested for disease at the discretion of a doctor, but HIV testing would become routine under the new policy.