

HAMBASTEGI

PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF IRANIAN REFUGEES



December 11, 2000

dutch 'justice' for domestic violence victims

interview with nasim nasirabadi

In the last issue of Hambastegi, readers were introduced to the IFIR-Holland campaign on behalf of Nasim Nasirabadi, an Iranian woman asylum seeker facing domestic violence. IFIR's campaign helped her gain access to services despite Dutch laws cutting her access to social benefits after her case was closed.

Could you introduce yourself and tell us about your asylum case? My name is Nasim Mohammad Aghli Nasirabadi. I have now been living in Holland for three years and four months. I have a two-year-old daughter. My latest attempt for asylum was rejected ten months ago. I

have, since five months ago, lost my entitlement to all social benefits. The police have also confiscated all my documents and papers and have ordered me to leave the country. While in Iran, I was involved in political opposition

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defend mike taylor and 11 anti-racists

Michael Taylor, Branch Secretary of Bristol National Union of Journalists, is to appear in Court in Uxbridge, UK, on December 22 to face charges relating to his and others' actions against the deportation of Iraqi-Kurd asylum seeker, Amanj Gafor. Amanj Gafor was woken in the early hours on August 2 and bundled onto a Gatwick BA flight without his MP House of Commons representative (Val Davey) being notified. Davey was arguing for Amanj to be given leave to remain on compassionate grounds due to his poor mental health condition.

The police clamped down on protestors who had gathered at Heathrow airport in London to protest against Gafor's deportation. According to the Bristol Defend Asylum Seekers Campaign, arrests focused on journalists and film crews breaching freedom of information laws and the new European Human Rights Act. Mike Taylor was one of those arrested. Four charges were brought against him, two of which - assaulting a police officer and resisting arrest - were later dropped. Nonetheless, two charges remain - organising a demonstration to interfere with passenger

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Editorial

against the bosnian government's restriction

by maryam namazie

The Bosnian government has placed a visa restriction on Iranian citizens entering Bosnia in an attempt to 'prevent mass illegal migration into Europe.' The chairman of Bosnia's council of ministers stressed that the decision to impose visas was made at the request of the Iranian government. According to the United Nations mission to Bosnia, 12,323 Iranians arrived at Sarajevo airport this year and only 1,062 of them were recorded leaving the country.

Rather than condemn the visa restriction which further endangers asylum seekers and obstructs flight, the UNHCR spokesperson, Douglas Coffman, stated that: "The UN hopes that this decision [will] help stem the growing problem of illegal migration to Bosnia." In its frenzy to be 'useful' after the end of the Cold War, the UNHCR is openly assisting governments in control, deportations and prevention of flight rather than protection.

The visa restriction is a clear attempt to prevent the Iranian refugee flow and legitimise the Islamic regime. By effectively closing an important escape route, the regime and its supporters hope to further promote their 'reformist Islamic democracy' propaganda vis-à-vis the reality of a repressive regime, which is the cause of one of the primary refugee flows in the world. There can be no cover up, however, as Iranians continue to flee to more tolerable and safer countries and to struggle in Iran for an end to the regime.

In the meantime, the UNHCR and the Bosnian government are duty-bound to ensure that those fleeing are given access to determination procedures, asylum and not deported.

Calling asylum seekers, 'illegal migrants,' doesn't end the responsibility and accountability of the UNHCR and governments.

sit-in in sweden

The International Federation of Iranian Refugees (IFIR) - Sweden Branch and asylum seekers in various camps and cities have begun sit-ins in Hova, Gimo, Stockholm and Holetferd against the Swedish government and in defence of their rights. Sit-ins are also being organised in Goteborg, Malmo, and other cities.

The demands of the asylum

seekers are:

- * Recognition of Iran as an unsafe country
- * An end to the deportation of asylum seekers to Iran
- * Application of international rights standards on all cases
- * Immediate resolution of cases and the right to asylum

IFIR calls on all groups and individuals to send letters of protest and support to the IFIR-Sweden Branch: ifrs@hotmail.com.

campaign against detention in australia

Refugee Action Collective, of which IFIR-Australia Branch is a member, is stepping up its campaign against the Australian government's mandatory detention of all asylum seekers who have entered without proper documents, including hundreds of Iranians, Afghans and Iraqis fleeing repressive regimes and political Islam.

On December 12, the Refugee Action Collective, along with Friends of Palestine and Indigenous Social Justice Association organised a demonstration against detention and racism in which 1,000 people participated. For more information on the campaign, contact the IFI-Australia Branch at aus@one.net.au.

**End
Deportations
Now!**

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activities against the regime. After being discovered by the security agents, I had to flee.

What reasons were given for dismissing your asylum case? I applied for asylum in July 1997. Two months later I received a rejection. I appealed against this decision. After waiting for a year the court rejected my appeal. My lawyer took my case to a higher court. A year and half later the second court threw my case out.

How did you meet Hesham and what was life like with him? While at the refugee camp, I met Hesham. He had Dutch residency. At the beginning our relationship was good. He had indicated to me that if my asylum application was rejected he would marry me and I would be able to obtain permission to stay in Holland. I had no hope whatsoever and no choice but to live with him. At the beginning, our relationship was fine until I became pregnant. After I became pregnant, he changed. I had to tolerate the situation. I thought my future depended on tolerating him for a few years. He raped me repeatedly and he would assault me for standing up to him. He expected me to be an obedient woman.

He thought women are inferior and had no respect for them whatsoever. He considered beating and abusing me as a religious duty. He forced me to observe the Islamic veil and prevented me from going out of the house. He would not let me go to language classes. At the beginning, I was very scared of him. I was particularly petrified of the thought of him taking my daughter away. He had threatened to take my daughter if I dared to leave him. I had to stand up to him. This resulted in more violent actions from him. Once my social benefits were cut my situation deteriorated. I was not even allowed to work and provide for my daughter and myself.

Did you complain to anyone about your boyfriend's violence? Yes I did. About six months ago after a violent beating, I called the police. They came and took me away and kept me for one night. They told me that since I am 'illegally' residing in Holland, they could not help any more. I ended up in that damned house again.

What is the cause of all your sufferings? I think the cause is the inhumane asylum policies of the Dutch government. I never thought that if I escaped from the Islamic Republic, I would end up in Hesham's prison. In Iran, I was constantly in fear of being assaulted for not observing the Islamic dress code. I was always worried about

being arrested for wearing the wrong clothes or acid being thrown on me for wearing make up. In Holland, it is the fear of Hesham beating me, locking me at home or raping me. With the closure of my asylum case, I had lost all my civil rights. I anticipated an end to this miserable life at the hands of Hesham or myself becoming so hopeless and ending it. This is the outcome of Dutch 'justice.'

What has happened since you have been introduced to IFIR? I never thought that such organisations or people existed. People who struggle to defend the rights of asylum seekers and women. I personally am very grateful to all the members of IFIR and thank them for all they have done for me. I have now found hope.

The above was an interview with Nasirbadi initially published in Hambastegi Persian number 91. Maryam Athar Mohammadi, an IFIR activist in Holland interviewed Nasim Nasirabadi.

IFIR-Vancouver holds public meeting

In a November public meeting called by the IFIR – Vancouver, Canada Branch and the School of People's Rights, proposed changes in asylum laws and the situation of asylum seekers in Canada were discussed. Massoud Arjang, of the IFIR-Branch and Elicia Barsalo, an asylum lawyer, spoke of the proposed asylum bill and warned that if the proposed changes were adopted by the parliament it would severely restrict the rights of asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants.

Due to the end of the year holidays, the next issue of Hambastegi English will be published on Monday, January 8, 2001.

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safety and refusing to leave airport property. Worryingly, the judge is keen to “set a precedent to ensure the safety of UK airports”.

According to Mike Taylor: “The police cracked-down and blockaded the media arresting myself, a film-maker from Asian Zee-TV and barricading a BBC film crew (they said with 16 vehicles). The operation was planned from top down... A list of trumped-up charges was laid down on me. They painted me as some sort of terrorist thug. They arrived with body-armour and shotguns to arrest us; we arrived with our children and tin whistles. It was ridiculous. It just goes to show how far New Labour will go to squash the voices of those who dare to welcome asylum seekers.”

On August 13, Amanj Gafor was finally deported by boat from the UK to Germany after a four and a half year struggle to seek asylum in 6 EU countries. His deportation ended a 7-month battle in the UK that saw activists stop three removal attempts on British Airways and Lufthansa flights. In one

such attempt, his struggle to prevent his deportation while bound and handcuffed won the compassion of the pilot and flight crew of British Airways flight BA4715 who refused to take off. After several corporate fines, electronic actions and fax campaigns, the airlines withdrew from his deportation, forcing the British government to resort to deportation by sea. While a sea blockade was planned, in the end Amanj made a decision to go.

Amanj has been ground down by the wholesale rejection in Fortress Europe, by the hard-faced and uncompassionate governments, by the bogus solicitors that sapped his earnings without fighting, by the beatings and brutality of deportation officers and by years of imprisonment without trial in Europe's detention centres. He is now sectioned in a mental hospital in Nuremburg, Germany and under sedation awaiting removal in the near future back to Iraqi Kurdistan, the place he first fled for his life in 1996.

The charges against Taylor must be dropped and Gafor must be granted asylum.

In another case in Ireland, a group of eleven anti-racists who occupied a constituency office in protest to proposed draconian



Mike Taylor

measures against asylum seekers were arrested on March 28. Two of the women were strip-searched. They were protesting the government's plan to introduce prison ships (so-called 'flotels'), forcible fingerprinting and the introduction of police from abroad to catch people fleeing. The eleven have been charged under the Public Order Act and face prison sentences.

All their charges must also be dropped.

Letters of protest and support for Mike Taylor can be sent to the Bristol Defend Asylum Seekers Campaign, bdasc@hotmail.com; letters on behalf of the eleven anti-racists can be sent to Residents Against Racism, dublin_11@hotmail.com. Supporters can also join a protest for Mike Taylor at his hearing on December 22 at Uxbridge Magistrates Court, Harefield Road.

Scrap Vouchers in the UK Now

The UK government is currently reviewing the voucher scheme for asylum seekers. The system causes deprivation, isolation, and is dehumanizing. It must be scrapped not reviewed. Fax members of parliament demanding an end to the voucher scheme. **FaxyourMP.com** is a free online fax service giving you instant fax access to various MPs.

Just go to: <http://www.ncadc.org.uk/>. Click the left hand frame and then click 'Free Online Fax Campaign Against the Voucher Scheme.'

mahmood salehi re- mains in prison he must be released

Mahmood Salehi, a political prisoner, was finally allowed to visit hospital. Due to his poor health conditions, he had to be carried. Though doctors diagnosed that he required immediate medical attention, the authorities nonetheless transferred him to Sanandaj prison from Saqez prison. Previously, the Saqez prosecutor's office had informed Salehi's family that he would be released should he require urgent medical assistance.

Salehi is a labour organizer who has been imprisoned since August 24 because of his labour activities. Salehi is the President of the Bakers' Union. His health is rapidly deteriorating as his only remaining kidney has developed complications.

Mahmood Salehi must receive medical treatment and be immediately and unconditionally released. His life depends on local and international efforts.

Sample letter of protest

Mohammad Khatami
The Presidency
Email: khatami@president.ir

Fax: 0098- 216 464 443

Mahmood Salehi, a labour leader and political prisoner, is at serious risk. Though his health is rapidly deteriorating and his one remaining kidney is in need of immediate attention, he has been denied urgent medical care.

Salehi is the President of the Bakers' Syndicate of the city of Saqez, Iranian Kurdistan and has been imprisoned numerous times for his labour organising activities.

I am / My organisation is extremely concerned about his health and well being and demand(s) that he immediately receive medical attention and that he be immediately and unconditionally released. All political prisoners in Iran must also be released.

I / my organisation condemn(s) the Islamic Republic of Iran for its repression and denial of workers' rights to strike and organise.

Signed:

Name
Organisation

international refugee news

Canadian Immigration officers have been working overtime to deal with a 400-per-cent increase in the number of refugee claims that have been made at four land border crossings in Niagara Falls and Fort Erie, Ontario, since 1998. In 1998-99, the number of refugee claims made in Niagara Falls and Fort Erie totalled 1,536. That figure has soared to 5,857 during this fiscal year. (The Globe and Mail - Canada, December 11, 2000)

Britain's largest ferry company, P & O Stena, is to establish round-the-clock security checks on lorries at the Belgian port of Zeebrugge. And the British Immigration Service will start checking tickets and passports at the Paris Eurostar railway terminal. Checks on passengers catching London-bound trains at the Gare du Nord in Paris will start early next year. (Daily Mail (UK), December 11, 2000)

Detention centres for illegal immigrants were not meant to be holiday camps, Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock said in a response to comments by former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, who described South Australia's

Woomera detention centre as a "hell-hole." Ruddock denied human rights abuses went on at the centre. (The Australian Associated Press, December 11, 2000)

Former prime minister, Malcolm Fraser, called for an independent inquiry into allegations of sexual abuse of children and other human rights abuses at Woomera. "I have seen the reports, I have seen photographs of it from a distance from outside the barbwire," "Is this really the place to put people who might be, probably are, trying to escape from absolute tyranny?" "The facilities are not good. It's obviously very hot and clearly unpleasant, management extraordinarily harsh, unthinking and not carrying out their duty of care if the allegations have any validity at all." Mr Fraser said private enterprises should not be allowed to run prisons or detention centres because they were more concerned with boosting profits than the welfare of detainees. He said the use of water cannons and tear gas to quell violence at Woomera was unprecedented in Australia. (The Australian, December 11, 2000)

In 1990, the US Congress quietly removed homosexuality as a disqualification for admission to the United States. In 1994, Attorney General Janet Reno clarified persecution based on sexual orientation can be considered grounds for asylum. But immigration lawyers said deserving asylum applicants who are lesbian or gay still face significant hurdles to filing, documenting and winning their case. **In August, a California-based federal appellate court strengthened the hand of gay asylum-seekers by making it clear they may be considered part of a distinct social group.** (The Fort-Lauderdale Sun-sentinel, December 10, 2000)

Police detained 14 Iraqi Kurds on this eastern Aegean Sea Island, and arrested a 17-year-old smuggling suspect who travelled with them from the nearby coast of Turkey. (The Associated Press, December 10, 2000)

Children held for years in immigration detention centres. Asylum seekers shackled at airports or tossed in county jails with felons. Immigrants deported for incidents that occurred years ago. **The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights will scrutinize asylum and immigration laws and their effect on immigrants' civil rights in an effort the commission calls "Crossing Borders."** (The Associated Press, December 8, 2000)

UN member states will

meet to sign the first UN convention against international organized crime. The convention and two protocols — against trafficking in women and children for sex slavery, as well as the smuggling of migrants —, which were also adopted by the United Nations in November, will come into force after ratification by 40 countries. (Agence France Presse, December 8, 2000)

Fourteen thousand have been caught in the past five months trying to board ferries at the French Calais port, either with no papers or false visas. Calais port has hired an army of security agents since July who stick rods into the trucks to test carbon dioxide levels and the possible presence of humans. One of the main operators ferry firm, P&O Stena Line, started similar tests this month. France's frontier police say they send only about 20 percent back home and 80 percent are 'non-returnable.' (Reuters, December 7, 2000)

Bosnia's central government decided to require Iranian citizens to enter the country with visas in a bid to prevent mass illegal migration into Europe. According to the United Nations mission to Bosnia, **12,323 Iranians arrived to Sarajevo airport this year and only 1,062 of them have left the country.**

During the past three months, Croatian authorities have returned over 2,300 Iranians to Bosnia. The decision on visas was made at the request of the Iranian government. "The UN hopes that this decision helps stem the growing problem of illegal migration to Bosnia," Douglas Coffman, UN spokesman, told AFP. (Agence France Presse, December 7, 2000)

Amnesty International said after five days of meetings with government and political party officials that Japan had to do much more to meet its international commitments on human rights. Japan also had a woeful record on asylum seekers, often deporting refugees "before they even have the chance to apply for asylum" and sending them back to an uncertain fate. Between 1994 and 1997, only one out of 516 asylum seekers was granted refugee status. (Agence France Presse, December 8, 2000)

Australian Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock has blamed a malicious campaign against the operators of the Woomera Detention Centre, for allegations of brutality at the centre. Family services director said children were handcuffed and kept in solitary confinement, according to information from medical clinic staff

and lawyers visiting the detention centre. Ruddock rejected suggestions that one child being transported to Port Hedland had leg restraints applied to him and he dismissed claims by Amnesty International that children were deprived of food for up to 32 hours during that trip. (The Australian, December 8, 2000)

The High Court's recent decision to prevent the Minister for Immigration, Ruddock, from deporting Mansour Aala back to Iran is more than just an immigration case. It is a major statement of Australia law, which will have widespread, long-term effects. The case creates some strong constitutional rights for individuals. It gives them an enforceable right to be treated fairly by Commonwealth officers. (The Canberra (Australia) Times, December 8, 2000)

A major crackdown on illegal immigrants by P&O Stena Line, Britain's largest ferry company has netted 43 stowaways in its first 24 hours. The ferry company has hired 40 security guards to check every lorry bound for Dover from Calais. Guards using hand-held carbon dioxide gas detectors, which can trace human breath inside the vehicles, will check lorries. The controversial move has been condemned by some refugee groups who believe a private company should not

be involved in immigration control. (Press Association (UK), December 7, 2000)

An Iraqi baby girl was detained by French police yesterday with her mother and other 'illegal immigrants' in a dawn swoop at Calais. On the British side, police reported a big fall in the number of 'illegals' being taken into custody as the Calais checks took effect. Even so, 27 Iraqis, Afghans and Iranians were caught in Kent, Gloucestershire and Dorset. Ten Iranian stowaways, including four children, were found in a British lorry. (The Daily Telegraph (UK), December 7, 2000)

German Interior Minister Otto Schily rejects the proposals of the European Union asylum policy as he believes that they would make it impossible for Germany to return 'illegal' refugees to the neighbouring countries through which they entered Germany, especially to the Czech Republic and Poland. The EU proposals stipulate that asylum seekers who enter EU territory through a "third safe country," should apply for asylum in the EU member country where they arrived. (Czech News Agency (CTK), December 6, 2000)

Amnesty International has revealed three new cases of alleged child abuse in Australian

immigration detention centres. In one case it was alleged a three-year-old boy had been put in leg restraints and later kept with his father in a suicide-proof cell without windows, toilet or shower for 13 days. The cases also involved children allegedly being denied food and medical attention. Amnesty International called for a wide-ranging judicial inquiry into detention of "illegal immigrants." AI said the latest claims concerned Iraqi, Afghan and Iranian asylum seekers and were made by the children's parents. They allegedly occurred at detention centres in four States, and while asylum seekers were being moved between centres. The claims follow allegations reported yesterday that a senior ACM employee molested Chinese women on a deportation flight, and earlier allegations that a 12-year-old Iranian boy was abused and sold for sex by his father in South Australia's Woomera Detention Centre. AI said that while it was claimed that the 12-year-old had been removed from Woomera, Amnesty had information he was still at the centre. Among other incidents listed by Amnesty were claims that a four-year-old Afghan girl at Maribyrnong Detention Centre had a broken wrist for two weeks last year before being taken to hospital and that an Iraqi girl, 11, was kept in a confined space at the Woomera centre for nine days with her father

and 23 other men. A spokesman for the Immigration Minister, Ruddock, said some of the claims could have been exaggerated. He rejected calls for a judicial inquiry. (The Australian Associated Press, December 7, 2000)

The U.S. Justice Department is to propose groundbreaking new rules today easing the way for victims of domestic violence to gain asylum in the United States. (Los Angeles Times, December 7, 2000)

Montreal immigration advocates are denouncing a recommendation by Health Canada to screen would-be immigrants for HIV believed to cause AIDS. Under the proposal, would-be immigrants testing positive for HIV would be barred from settling in Canada. (The Gazette (Montreal), December 3, 2000)

US Virgin Island authorities have arrested 61 'illegal immigrants' who arrived by boat in the U.S. Virgin Islands in little more than a week. Officials have arrested more than 600 "illegal aliens" in the U.S. Caribbean territory this year. (The Associated Press, December 5, 2000)

The UNHCR has sharply criticised the EU for not providing sufficient financial or political support to alleviate the escalating refugee crisis. The Deputy High Commissioner slammed EU

Member States' piecemeal approach to asylum and their policy of re-enforcing external borders and clamping down on human trafficking. (UNHCR, European Report, December 6, 2000)

The UK Government's voucher system for asylum-seekers should be scrapped because it is demeaning, inefficient and poor value for money, a cross-party group of members of the Scottish Parliament said. (Evening News, December 5, 2000)

The German government announced that it was lifting a three-year-old ban on permitting asylum seekers to obtain jobs in the country after living in Germany for one year. (Agence France Presse, December 6, 2000)

An Indonesian construction labourer was jailed five years and ordered to be given five strokes of the rotan by the Magistrate's Court here for endorsing a forged social visit pass and entry permit. The charge under section 55D of the Immigration Act 1956/63 carries a maximum 10 years' jail, RM100,000 fine and six strokes of the rotan. (Malaysia General News, December 5, 2000)

The asylum claims of women who face persecution abroad because they are openly lesbian, express feminist views or have been victims of sexual abuse or

domestic violence will be given full consideration by UK immigration judges under new “gender guidelines” for asylum cases. (The Guardian, December 5, 2000)

The Irish Department of Justice is considering sending asylum seekers to the site of an old military camp. (The Irish Times, December 5, 2000)

Authorities in southern Spain have arrested 161 “illegal immigrants” over the last 24 hours in Andalusia. (Agence France Presse, December 4, 2000)

Two “illegal immigrants” from North Africa trying to enter Spain died in separate incidents after they were intercepted by authorities. A Moroccan man in his late twenties died after he was shot in the chest by a Civil Guard police officer. The other North African man also died after apparently inhaling toxic fumes while the Spanish Coast Guard towed a small launch carrying him and others to port. (Reuters, December 4, 2000)

German police arrested two teen-agers for vandalizing a memorial to Omar Ben Noui, 28, an Algerian who bled to death after jumping through a glass door while fleeing neo-Nazis who chased him through town in February 1999. (The Associated Press, December 3, 2000)

Greek officials intercepted 26 Iraqis at the port of Patros in the Peloponnese islands. (Agence France Presse, December 3, 2000)

Police in Cyprus arrested 35 Iraqis and Iraqi Kurds, including nine children, who entered the island illegally after travelling from neighbouring Lebanon on a fishing boat. Last month another 40 Iraqi Kurds and Syrians landed in Cyprus in a similar manner. Many of them, excluding children who are being taken care of by welfare, are in custody pending arrangements to repatriate them. (Reuters, December 3, 2000)

The UK Conservative party is revising its hard line policy of locking up all asylum applicants in special detention centres after Home Office officials costed the programme at over £2bn in capital costs and £1bn in annual running costs. (The Guardian (UK), November 29, 2000)

About 150 asylum seekers protested outside the Department of Home Affairs’ offices in central Johannesburg, South Africa against cruel treatment in a peaceful sit-down demonstration. (Integrated Regional Information Networks, November 29, 2000)

UK immigration officials tried to deport Eve Aidoo, whose baby is several days overdue, to

Ghana. The case emerged as the Home Office revealed figures showing that the number of forced removals rose by 600 in the first six months of this year to 7,400, an increase of 9 per cent. (The Independent (UK), December 1, 2000)

Italians harbour a deepening fear of foreigners and think immigrants are a direct cause of an increase in crime. Nearly a third of Italians say their biggest concern is an increasing number of arrivals on their shores from outside the European Union. (Reuters, December 1, 2000)

Italian police on Friday freed a Tunisian youth from six-day confinement in a container carried by truck and arrested the driver for human smuggling. The 17-year-old was found with no food left and suffering from hypothermia. (Agence France Presse, December 1, 2000)

The manager of Woomera detention centre has been moved out amid allegations of child sexual abuse, the rape of a nurse by a member of his staff, harassment of detainees and poor administration. He remains an employee of the Australasian Correctional Management. (The Australian, December 1, 2000)

Croatian police detained a group of 42 “illegal immigrants” as they

attempted to enter the country from Bosnia. Twenty-five Iranian and 17 Turkish citizens were arrested in the central Croatian village of Gornji Vaganac, near the Licko Petrovo Selo border crossing with Bosnia. (Agence France Presse, November 30, 2000)

More than 230 children were being held in detention centres as “illegal immigrants,” the Australian government said. In the previous 12 months, 651 children had been released. (The Australian Associated Press, November 28, 2000)

The Australian government denied it had refused to cooperate with a United Nations human rights committee, which has cancelled a planned trip to inspect Australian detention centres. (The Australian Associated Press, November 28, 2000)

Two Iranian men in detention at the Port Hedland facility spent two-and-a-half hours up a light pole in protest against the time taken to process their applications to stay in Australia. They climbed the pole and agreed to come down after discussions with immigration department officials and management of the centre. (The Australian Associated Press, November 28, 2000)