



Condemn Greek Government's Deportation

On Wednesday April 25, the anti-riot division of the Greek police force deported eight of the 11 detained Iranian asylum seekers, despite assurances from the Greek Minister of Justice that they would not be deported from Greece to Iran. The IFIR has received unconfirmed reports that all eight have been arrested by the Islamic regime upon arrival in Iran. The 11 had been arrested on April 4, 2001 for staging a sit-in at the UNHCR in Athens and sentenced to four months in prison; they were demanding resettlement to a safe third

country and protection. The asylum seekers had been tortured and given electric shocks in prison.

Following an international campaign initiated by the IFIR, which received widespread support and IFIR organised protests at Greek embassies in four countries, the Greek Minister of Justice intervened on behalf of the asylum seekers. The initial investigation revealed that the names and details of the detainees were not even registered on the prison database and that the government planned to clan-

destinely deport the asylum seekers. The Minister informed the IFIR representative in Greece that the 11 would not be deported and would be released shortly. Despite said assurances, the anti-riot police took all 11 to the airport and deported eight of them "voluntarily."

A Greek embassy official in Germany informed our representative there that they could not compromise their relationship with the regime for 11 asylum seekers.

While condemning this act of

inhumanity, we hold the Greek government and the UNHCR directly responsible for the fate of the deported asylum seekers. We also call on groups and individuals to continue their efforts on behalf of the remaining three asylum seekers. Send your protest letters to the following: The Greek Prime minister: mail@primeminister.gr, Greek envoy to the UN: mission.greece@itu.ch and the UNHCR office in Geneva: GREAT@unhcr.ch and its headquarters: HQA000@unhcr.ch.

Stop Deportation of two Iranians from India

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 Commissioner 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.

Editor: Maryam Namazie
Asst. Editor: Javad Aslani

E-mail: ifir@ukonline.co.uk
Tel: 0044 7730 107 337
Fax: 0044 208 813 9734
Address: P.O. Box 27236
London N11, England
Web Site: www.hambastegi.org

Editorial
On Decreasing Asylum
Applications in Europe
By Maryam Namazie, page 2

Editorial

On Decreasing Asylum Applications in Europe

By Maryam Namazie



The number of applications for asylum in Europe has fallen by an average of 14 percent in the first quarter of this year, compared with the same period in 2000. The data issued by the United Nations High Commissioner

for Refugees (UNHCR) also reveals that the number of Iranian asylum seekers has fallen. This is not because the situation in Iran has changed; the Islamic regime continues to

persecute, repress and deny basic civil rights. The decrease in applicants is because of restrictive and repressive measures taken by governments to prevent asylum seekers from reaching Europe. One such recent measure is the establishment

of visa requirements for Iranians entering Bosnia. As we had warned, this restriction has blocked a major escape route for those fleeing intolerable conditions in Iran, preventing flight and forcing many to take even riskier routes.

European governments justify their policies by stating that these restrictions prevent 'bogus' 'illegal migrants' from entering Europe. Since it is impossible for any government to determine the legitimacy of claims without a fair assessment, and since asylum seekers come from countries with well-known and massive civil rights violations, the closing of borders and restrictive measures ac-

tually obstruct genuine refugees from gaining protection.

With their restrictive and repressive measures, European governments are preventing refugee flows. They do so because of the general anti-asylum environment, their racism, when the numbers applying from a certain nationality are high (confirming real violations in their countries of origin) and to appease repressive governments like the Islamic regime. While they abet persecutors and further victimise the persecuted, we must unconditionally reject their restrictions and their bogus and racist arguments and demand the right to asylum.

Asylum for Shayda in Japan

Shayda, an Iranian gay asylum seeker, has been detained by Japanese immigration officials for almost a year. His asylum application has been rejected and he is at risk of being deported to Iran where he will face persecution. IFIR calls on progressive groups and individuals to send letters of protest demanding that Shayda be granted protection and immediately released from prison. Send letters to: Masayoshi Kisima, the Ministry of Justice, Masahiko Kohmura, the Minister of Justice, Takumi Nakao,

Immigration Bureau, the Ministry of Justice and Akira Sakai, Higashi Nippon Immigration Control Centre, Fax Number: +81-3-3592-7393, E-mail Address: webmaster@moj.go.jp. UNHCR Tokyo and Korea Office, Fax Number: +81-3-3499-2272, e-mail address: jpnto@unhcr.ch; UNHCR Headquarters Office in Geneva, Fax Number: +41-22-739-7346, E-mail: webmaster@unhcr.ch.

For more information, see Homan's web site <http://www.homan.cwc.net>.

Turkey Arrests over 300

Refugees living in the border town of Van, Turkey informed IFIR on April 26 that the Turkish police were indiscriminately arresting refugees at the marketplace and taking them to security for questioning. Over three hundred were arrested.

IFIR immediately informed the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

(UNHCR) in Van and international organisations.

Most of the refugees were released the same day, however a number remain in prison. IFIR is concerned for their safety and calls on groups and individuals to demand their release.

UNHCR Turkey's e-mail: turan@unhcr.ch.

**Next Issue:
Monday,
May 14, 2001**

Asylum for Mike Taylor Found Guilty of Sara Motiei Defending Asylum Seekers

Sara Motiei's (Case number: UN00/01463) asylum application has been rejected by the Swedish government, despite Motiei's well-founded fear of persecution based on her sex. She fled domestic violence that was condoned by the Islamic regime. IFIR urges progressive groups and individuals to send letters of protest to Swedish immigration: Fax: 0046-8301536, E-mail un@un.se demanding asylum for Sara.

Mike Taylor who was arrested on August 3, 2000 while leafleting passengers at Heathrow Airport to try to stop the deportation of Amanj Gafor, an Iraqi Kurd asylum seeker, and charged with breaking airport bye-laws that prohibit 'demonstrations' on airport property, was found guilty on April 17 and given a conditional discharge.

Taylor made it clear that he

did not accept the verdict and will appeal. IFIR calls on groups and individuals to support Taylor's appeal and the right to protest against deportations.

For more information, contact Bristol Campaign to Defend Asylum Seekers on 0117 973 3869 or 0117 965 1803 or BDASC, Box 41, Greenleaf Bookshop, 82 Colston Street, Bristol BS1 5BB.

Long Live May 1 Int'l Workers' Day

May Events

The IFIR and several other organisations are calling for a **demonstration on May 4 in support of Farrokh Shiri** at 9:30am onwards at Exeter Crown Court, New North Road, Exeter, Devon in the UK. On March 7, Shiri discovered his appeal for political asylum in Britain had been turned down. He was arrested after threatening to take his own life. On May 4, there will be a preliminary hearing. Other organisations calling for the demonstration are: Exeter Socialist Alliance, Peace in Kurdistan Campaign, South West National Civil Rights Movement, National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns, Bristol Campaign to Defend Asylum Seekers, Brent Committee to Defend Asylum Seekers, Kurdistan Solidarity Committee, Bail Circle, Socialist Outlook, Socialist Workers Party, Campaign to Defend Asylum Seekers, Plymouth Socialist Alliance, Barbed Wire Britain Network to End Refugee and Migrant Detention, Close Down Harmondsworth and Close Campsfield.

During May 4-6, Maryam Namazie, IFIR's Executive Director, will be speaking at a conference entitled **'Refugee Women Fleeing Gender-Based Persecution'** in Montréal, Canada being held at the Hôtel Maritime Plaza, 1155 rue Guy.

On May 26, 2001, Namazie will be speaking at the National Civil Rights Movement's **Spring Conference entitled 'Building a United Future'** at 9.30am at Highfields Youth and Community Centre, 96 Melbourne Road, Leicester LE2 ODS, UK. The conference includes panels and sessions on: an appraisal of family campaigns, post-Macpherson racism and resistance, setting out our priorities, Britain's colour bars, building an anti-racist trade union network, fighting racism against asylum seekers; post-Macpherson: paradise or nightmare, racism in schools and education, and a public rally. Other speakers at the conference include: Suresh Grover, Imran Khan, Maxie Hayles, Jon McKenzie, Gareth Pierce, Mike Mansfield, Tony Benn MP, Arun Kundnani, Jabez Lam and union representatives. For more information and to book places, visit the website at: <http://www.ncrm.org.uk/conference> or contact: Halima Mohamed, National Civil Rights Movement, Tel: 020 8574 0818 / 020 8843 2333, Fax: 020 8813 9734, Email: info@ncrm.org.uk.

International Refugee News

* Arrests

The Spanish civil guard, in four different operations, have intercepted 21 immigrants without documents in the Gibraltar hinterland and arrested two people for transporting them. (RNE Radio 1, Madrid (via BBC), April 26, 2001)

Police detained more than 200 clandestine immigrants in southern Italy in separate clampdowns on 'illegal immigration.' All, with the exception of a minor of Albanian origin, managed to flee. The youth was arrested. Police intercepted 147 clandestine immigrants, mostly Turks and Iraqis of Kurdish origin, but also Kosovars and Albanians, in one swoop after they landed on the southern Adriatic coast. Another group of 56 Iraqis of Kurdish origin was intercepted farther to the north near Vieste. (Agence France Presse, April 26, 2001)

An official source at the Royal Oman Police said that 105 'infiltrators' had been arrested, who illegally entered the country. Seventy-four of them were arrested from Al Batinah region, 16 from Dhahira region, eight from the Musandam governorate, three from the governorate of Dhofar and four from Al Wufta region. The source added 66 were Pakistanis, 18 Afghans, 4 Yemenis, 9 Iranians, 6 Somalis and 1 Bangladeshi while the nationality of one is yet to be

identified. (The Times of Oman, April 25, 2001)

The Malaysian Police General Operations Force seized 424 'illegal immigrants'—this year's biggest haul—at a project site in Pajam. 364 Indonesians—including 44 women—44 Pakistanis, 12 Myanmars, three Bangladeshis and an Indian, were nabbed during the operation. They will be sent to the Immigration detention camp at Machap Umboo in Malacca before being deported. (The Star (Malaysia), April 25, 2001)

A ship with hundreds of 'illegal immigrants,' many of them believed to be children, docked at the southern Italian port of Gallipoli. They are mostly Kurds, Sri Lankans, Iraqis and Iranians. In 2000, 66,057 illegal immigrants,' who had arrived in Italy either by boat or across northern borders, were expelled. Of those, 26,817 people were intercepted as they landed on vessels on Italy's southern coast. (Reuters, April 23, 2001)

Iran's police arrested 317 'illegal' Afghan immigrants crammed on a truck in central Mehriz. (IRNA news agency, Tehran (via BBC), April 22, 2001)

A boat carrying 200 suspected 'illegal immigrants' was spotted near Christmas Island. An immigration department spokesman said the boat's passengers, of Middle Eastern origin, would be taken to mainland Australia

for questioning. (Agence France Presse, April 23, 2001)

Spanish police and the Coast Guard caught 216 Africans trying to sneak into southern Spain after making a perilous crossing of the Strait of Gibraltar. (The Associated Press, April 19, 2001)

A group of 20 refugees from Afghanistan, who were heading for Austria, was detained by the Slovak police. Four people-smugglers, including two underage boys between 15 and 16 have also been detained. The foreigners will be placed in a refugee camp. From 1992 to March 2001, 5,696 refugees have asked for asylum in Slovakia. Last year it was 1,556, which are 236 people more than in 1999. Some 600 refugees have asked for asylum in Slovakia this year. (CTK News Agency, Prague (via BBC), April 18, 2001)

122 suspected 'illegal immigrants' were in detention in Australia after a boat was intercepted near Ashmore Reef. (The Age (Melbourne), April 20, 2001)

A search got under way in the northern regions of Western Australia for 15 suspected 'illegal immigrants.' The 15 remained at large after a similar number had been apprehended and taken into custody earlier in the day near the small coastal town of Exmouth, 1,300 kilometres (800 miles) north of Perth.

(Agence France Presse, April 18, 2001)

Security forces in northwestern Turkey detained 116 people suspected of planning to enter Italy illegally and four Turks accused of smuggling them. Police stopped two buses carrying the would-be immigrants, including Turkish, Somali, Algerian, Palestinian, Lebanese and Afghan nationals. The group included 15 women and 5 children. (Reuters, April 17, 2001)

* Children

Of the more than 4,600 people in INS custody under the age of 18, fewer than half have attorneys, principally because neither they nor alien adults have a right to one. Such children, mostly unaccompanied minors, must navigate the complex INS proceedings alone. In addition, their claims are subject to the same high standards of proof as those of adults. That often involves complex allegations about life-threatening issues of abuse, neglect, torture, violence and political upheaval. If they fail, they are deported. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., has introduced a bill that would address both the lack of legal representation and some of the problems that the children's advocates complain about. (The National Law Journal, April 12, 2001)

*** Deaths**

Two men died when they tried to board trains in Calais. (British Broadcasting Corporation, April 26, 2001)

The Salvadoran attorney general's office said it's investigating a complaint that an 'illegal migrant' fell off a boat and drowned after being shot in a confrontation with a Salvadoran Navy patrol boat and at least one of three boats carrying 'illegal migrants' from South and Central America. (The Associated Press, April 24, 2001)

A Vienna court has ruled that far-right leader Joerg Haider defamed an African immigrant who died while being deported from the country by calling him a drug dealer. Haider was sued by the family of Nigerian Marcus Omofuma, who died two years ago while being deported bound and gagged on an aircraft, over comments he made on Austrian radio in September 1999. "I would have liked a member of the government to raise the question: what did this dead drug dealer do to our children when he sold his drugs?" Haider said. A Vienna court ruled on April 18 that Haider's remarks were "false and without respect" to the Nigerian. Omofuma's death sparked widespread protests from human rights groups. The three police officers who were accompanying him on a flight from Vienna to Sofia were suspended from their jobs, but resumed work recently although legal proceedings are continuing. (Agence France Presse, April

24, 2001)

At least four 'illegal immigrants' perished on a frigid mountain range straddling the Greek-Bulgarian border in the latest deaths along the treacherous route. The mountain, known as Belasicas in Bulgarian, is a popular route with migrants making their way into European Union member Greece. Nearly 30 immigrants have perished on the mountains since 1994, according to Greek and Bulgarian authorities. The victims a man from Ghana and two women and a man carrying Georgian passports were apparently caught in a strong winter storm that hit northern Greece early this week. In another incident, the Coast Guard picked up 21 'illegal' Iraqi Kurdish immigrants aboard a sinking Turkish fishing boat. (The Associated Press, April 17, 2001)

*** Deportation**

Head of the Aliens Department of the governor-general's office in Kerman, Iran says that members of 10 human-trafficking groups have been arrested in the region that had illegally transported 500 Afghans from Sistan and Baluchestan Province to Kahnuj in Hormozgan Province. A new revised illegal immigrants act law of the state provides for the arrest and deportation of those smuggled in by rings of 'illegal immigrants' traffickers. (IRNA news agency, Tehran (via BBC), April 27, 2001)

Straw said that 9,000 failed asylum seekers

were deported in the past 12 months (The Guardian (U.K.), April 26, 2001)

Four 'illegal immigrants' clung on to the side of a ferry for 20 miles in a desperate attempt to get into the UK. Because they had not officially landed in the UK, they were returned to France. On Wednesday 74 illegal immigrants were returned to Poland after a series of police raids in Southampton. However, this latest attempt highlights the increasingly dangerous lengths immigrants are prepared to go to in a bid to get into the UK. The incident mirrors the dangers a group of Romanian stowaways faced when they hid in the underside compartment of a Eurostar train recently. In addition, two men died when they tried to board trains in Calais. (British Broadcasting Corporation, April 26, 2001)

On April 25, the anti-riot division of the Greek police force deported eight of the 11 detained Iranian asylum seekers, despite assurances from the Greek Minister of Justice that they would not be deported from Greece to Iran. The IFIR has received unconfirmed reports that all eight have been arrested by the Islamic regime upon arrival in Iran. The 11 had been arrested on April 4, 2001 for staging a sit-in at the UNHCR in Athens and sentenced to four months in prison; they were demanding resettlement to a safe third country and protection. The asylum seekers had been tortured and given electric shocks in prison. (International Federation of Iranian Refugees,

April 25, 2001)

UK Home Secretary Jack Straw vowed to step up the number of asylum seekers who are removed from the UK after being refused refugee status. Straw said the number of asylum seekers returned by immigration officers would be 30,000. The target is backed up by investment in 1,500 extra immigration officers to work as arrest squads. Mr Straw also announced the Home Office will be using more charter aircrafts to repatriate unsuccessful asylum seekers. (Press Association (U.K.), April 25, 2001)

The government has secretly decided to order Iraqi Kurds seeking refuge from the war-torn country out of Britain. The Home Office has admitted to an unannounced change of practice' in the way it assesses asylum claims from Iraqi Kurds who say they are fleeing Saddam Hussein and conflict in the region. This has led to a dramatic increase in the refusal rate. In February, the last month for which figures are available, 78% of Iraqi applicants were refused asylum or exceptional leave to remain, compared with 14% in July 2000. The refusals peaked in October when 91.4% of those seeking asylum were ordered out of Britain. (The Guardian (U.K.), April 25, 2001)

The Lawyers for Human Rights has threatened to challenge in court a circular ordering South African border authorities to turn back asylum seekers and refugees coming through neighbouring

states. The LHR claims the circular contravenes the Refugee Act, which states that asylum seekers must be allowed to enter SA and should be given temporary residence permits while their applications are considered. (Business Day (South Africa), April 24, 2001)

Seventy foreigners who were caught in Edirne trying to illegally cross into Greece or Bulgaria have been taken to the Habur and Nusaybin border gates to be deported. Most of the 70 persons - of whom 11 are women and five are children - have no passports. Edirne Security Directorate officials have said that this year 395 persons were deported from Ataturk Airport and from the Nusaybin, Habur, Gurbulak, and Sarp border gates. They were citizens of Morocco, Syria, Iraq, Algeria, Georgia, Moldova, and Iran. (TRT 2 television, Ankara (via BBC), April 15, 2001)

* **Detention**

A guard at one of Australia's 'illegal immigrant' detention centres pleaded guilty to twice beating a Middle Eastern man being held at the facility. Graeme Hindmarsh was charged with inflicting assault occasioning bodily harm on the man at the Port Hedland detention centre in Western Australia state in January. The 46-year-old victim was restrained by plastic cuffs during the attacks. He sustained a cut lip and loosened tooth in the first assault, and was struck some six times in the arms, legs and body during the second

beating. (The Associated Press, April 26, 2001)

Three men have been charged over a riot at the Curtin Detention Centre on April 4. The riot was believed to have been sparked by detainees' frustration at the time being taken to process their applications to stay in Australia. (The Australian Associated Press, April 25, 2001)

More than 90 per cent of Iraqi and Afghan asylum seekers are found to be genuine refugees and succeed in their bid to stay in Australia, new figures from the Department of Immigration show. The new figures show temporary protection visas were granted to 92 per cent of Iraqis who were processed by the Department of Immigration between July 2000 and March this year. Almost 89 per cent of Afghan applicants were successful. Most of those rejected were successful on appeal. If the Government knows such a high percentage will be accepted, it shows why you do not need mandatory detention. (The Sydney Morning Herald, April 18, 2001)

* **Determination Procedures**

An Observer investigation has discovered that the UK Home Office routinely employs untrained and inexperienced translators for asylum interviews in contradiction to explicit government legislation. Over 70 per cent of asylum seekers to Britain are refused, a decision ap-

pealed against by most of them but upheld in over 80 per cent of cases. The Government cites these statistics as proof of its stringent interviewing procedures, but the experiences of unqualified translators has left the Home Office facing questions over how seriously it tries to understand the plight of those appealing for help. 'It seems unlikely to me that either of the men I translated for will get asylum,' said Reynolds. 'The system obviously wanted to get rid of them as soon as possible. They didn't seem bothered whether these people got a fair trial or not.' (April 28 2001, Guardian)

The Immigration Department forged a key document related to a refugee claim by a Kurdish man whom Ottawa suspects of having terrorist links, says the Security Intelligence Review Committee. The computer-generated document shortened the time the man spent with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service in order to undermine his allegation he was interrogated by agents. (Globe and Mail, April 28, 2001)

The British Medical Association launched a new handbook on human rights for doctors. The book covers the full compass of human rights abuses, from medical involvement in torture and judicial executions, through neglect or abuse in institutions, the treatment of prisoners, trafficking in women and children, unethical research and the use of biological and chemical weapons. The BMA's publication deplors the

hardening of attitudes towards asylum seekers in this country. The BMA is opposed to the detention of asylum seekers and to the voucher scheme and is strongly critical of the way the dispersal of asylum seekers has been managed. (23 Apr 2001, British Medical Association London Office)

* **Legislation / Laws**

A push for a common European definition of who qualifies as a refugee was unveiled by the home secretary, raising fears that those under threat of rape or marital killings, those pursued by criminal gangs and other victims of "non-state persecution" will in future not be allowed asylum in Britain. The EU directive, backed by changes in UK law, would overturn rulings by British judges, who Mr Straw has attacked in the past for taking "an overliberal approach" to asylum cases. The home secretary has also promised to set up more immigration arrest squads employing mobile electronic finger printing facilities and to increase the use of charter flights to step up the number of failed asylum seekers being deported from Britain. (The Guardian (U.K.), April 26, 2001)

Belgium Interior Minister Antoine Duquesne said as of 1 January, new, very strict asylum rules have been applied in Belgium that do not provide any financial help to the asylum seekers and accelerated the process of evaluating the requests, which now does not exceed

one month. After their request is turned down, the unsuccessful seekers are extradited within a couple of days. (TASR web site, Bratislava (via BBC), April 26, 2001)

The Supreme Court in Nepal has ruled as unconstitutional a bill aimed at allowing immigrants to become Nepali nationals after living in the Himalayan state for 10 years and learning its language. The opposition said the new law would open floodgates to more than 100,000 Bhutanese refugees and hundreds of thousands of Indian immigrants to become Nepalese nationals. (The Associated Press, April 26, 2001)

The Canadian Supreme Court struck down a century old law on crimes committed under duress and upheld the acquittal of a Serbian woman who brought two kilograms of heroin into Canada to prevent the murder of her mother. The decision could ease the admission into Canada of refugee claimants with criminal records who can demonstrate they acted under threats of violence. (April 21, 2001, National Post)

*** Myths**

A major study of 'illegal immigrants' has found that almost all of them come to Britain with the intention of finding work, contrary to the popular image of new arrivals in search of generous benefits. 'Not a single illegal immigrant we examined thought that benefits was a

reason for coming to Britain,' said Bill Jordan of Exeter University, who carried out the government-funded project. Asylum seekers, who are registered on arrival, are largely prevented from working, but they find work, the survey discovered, because they are highly motivated, presentable and prepared to accept low pay. Many were also better educated than their British counterparts. Half the immigrant workers doing manual jobs were graduates or had diplomas. (April 28 2001: Electronic Guardian)

There were more than 76,000 asylum applications in 2000 in the UK, representing some 100,000 people, the highest ever number. The latest figures to come from the Home Office show that this year, applications are going down with 900 fewer in March 2001 than at the same time last year. The trend for applications, which have been accepted, remains reasonably static at approximately 17% of the total. However, does that mean that the remaining 83% are "bogus" asylum seekers? During 2000, some 24,000 applicants were granted refugee status, given leave to remain or permitted to stay on appeal. A further 10,000 "backlog" applicants were allowed to stay on "pragmatic grounds". These figures taken together represent almost 45% of the 76,040 asylum seekers who arrived at our shores in that year. Refugee agencies say there are thousands of applicants missing in the system because the Home Office does not

properly collate the figures for eleventh hour approvals. They say that it could mean that the government is really accepting at least half of all applicants as genuine. (British Broadcasting Corporation, April 25, 2001)

*** Protests**

Twenty-two 'illegal' Iraqi immigrants - 18 men, 3 women and a girl - have escaped from their quarantine centre in a city in Indonesia's North Sumatra province. The immigration chief said the Iraqis had met with officials from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to arrange their deportation. (Agence France Presse, April 26, 2001)

57 asylum seekers and 'illegal immigrants' started a hunger strike in a refugee camp in Gyor (NW Hungary). The hunger strikers, natives of 13 countries, are protesting bureaucratic foot-dragging over their cases. (Hungarian News Agency (MTI), April 22, 2001)

About 700 'illegal migrants' from mainland China and their supporters marched to the government headquarters to demand that they be allowed to remain in the territory. (The Associated Press, April 22, 2001)

Protesters held a demonstration outside the Immigration Department's Sydney offices today demanding the release of detained immigrant prisoners. (The Australian Associated Press, April 18, 2001)

*** Racism / Fascism**

Asylum seekers have come to Glasgow, UK from Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Turkey and other countries. Last week, in one of many recent incidents, two badly bruised Palestinian brothers said they were beaten by a gang of teenagers. (April 28 2001: Electronic Guardian)

A Tory MP Right-winger John Townend, who sparked the controversy on discrimination last week, claimed in a letter to race equality chiefs that he thought the concept of a multi-ethnic society was a "mistake". He accused Robin Cook, who in a recent speech hailed chicken tikka masala as Britain's national dish, of "challenging the very concept of our nation". He added: "Presumably he considers us a mongrel race." (The Evening Standard (U.K.), April 27, 2001)

The British government has yet to set a date for an election (expected in June), but the shrill sounds of the campaign are already all too audible, as a row flares over one of the most sensitive topics facing the country: race and immigration. At the centre of the storm is a pledge agreement drawn up by a publicly funded antiracism group, the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE). Candidates who sign agree not to use racially inflammatory language during the election campaign. Several individual politicians, including finance spokesman Michael Portillo refused. (The Christian Science Monitor, April 26, 2001)

A u s t r a l i a ' s

relationship with Europe and Asia was being damaged because of perceptions we were anti-immigration, former Prime Minister Paul Keating said. Images of rioting refugees in detention centres in the middle of the desert were being broadcast internationally, putting potential tourists, investors and immigrants off Australia. (The Australian Associated Press, April 26, 2001)

Two Palestinian refugees suffered horrific injuries after being attacked by a racist mob on the streets of Scotland. A gang of racist thugs - more than 40 teenage girls and young men - pounced on them in Sighthill, Glasgow, attacking them with metal bars, bottles, stones and sticks. The brothers are now in hospital with terrible injuries. Ali Sherzadi Nejid, 33, from Iran claims he was attacked as he carried his eight-month old baby through Sighthill. He said: "I was hit with metal bars. They bang on our doors every night and my wife is a very nervous." (The Daily Record (U.K.), April 25, 2001)

The Canadian Yukon Territory's deputy minister of tourism has apologized for describing East Indian immigrants who arrived on Nova Scotia's shore as "towel heads, turbans, in loin cloths." Dan Brennan made the remarks during a Friday night Tourism Industry Association dinner when he was telling a story after the dinner about 174 'illegal migrants.' (The Canadian Press, April 24, 2001)

A Canadian federal

court judge who has not always sided with refugee claimants once calling the Chinese migrants who arrived on the B.C. coast in 1999, including these above, "an unarmed invasion of Canada" lambasted the Immigration and Refugee Board, accusing it of downplaying acts of discrimination and hatred in the world. (April 19, 2001, National Post)

An Oslo pub was ordered to pay a fine plus court costs for refusing to admit an African immigrant - a case that was seen as a key test of Norway's anti-racism laws. (The Associated Press, April 19, 2001)

The Conservative leadership in the UK was forced to distance itself from "bigoted" literature printed by its own party activists, which claimed that "Labour is now importing foreign nurses with HIV". The leaflet also accuses Labour of being "soft" on the "floods of bogus asylum-seekers." (The Independent (U.K.), April 18, 2001)

*** Restrictive Measures / Militarisation of Borders**

The sign on the bulletin board at the Red Cross shelter in Sangatte, France warns that people may well die if they try to 'sneak' through the nearby channel tunnel, which links France to Britain. The possibilities spelled out in big block letters include being electrocuted by 25,000-volt lines, being squashed to death, and being buffeted by 200-mph winds that whip through the tunnel, knocking

undocumented migrants off the freight trains they have hopped. But the hazards have not stopped the Eurotunnel from becoming one of the most popular routes for thousands of people fleeing Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and other countries in a desperate bid to find work and stability in Britain. (The Dallas Morning News, April 27, 2001)

The European Union announced the launch of a project to help potential new EU members in eastern and central Europe improve their immigration, visa and border controls. (The Associated Press, April 27, 2001)

The number of applications for asylum in Europe has fallen by an average of 14 percent in the first quarter of this year, compared with the same period in 2000, according to figures published by the UN refugee agency (UNHCR). (Agence France Presse, April 27, 2001)

There is a real threat that Belgium will re-introduce the visa requirement for Slovaks and it is the development of Slovak Roma migration in the weeks ahead that will be decisive. (TASR web site, Bratislava (via BBC), April 26, 2001)

Federal lawmaker Peter Lindsay, a member of Prime Minister John Howard's Liberal Party in Australia, has called for mandatory DNA samples to be taken from all Australians, starting with newborn babies, to further empower law enforcement agencies. He also said migrants should not

be allowed into the country unless they provide a DNA sample. (The Associated Press, April 26, 2001)

Slovak Prime Minister called on Hungary to help his country combat an exodus of Gypsies to Belgium. Some 100 Gypsies or Roma have left Slovakia since Belgian authorities lifted visa requirements April 10. (The Associated Press, April 23, 2001)

In its search for effective measures against "look-a-like" fraud where passports and other documents are illegally shared, the Dutch government is turning to biometrics. (ITworld.com, April 18, 2001)

The opposition German Christian Democratic Union and its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union, have agreed to a joint stance on asylum and immigration. (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, April 20, 2001)

*** Women**

Pregnant women who are seeking asylum or with refugee status have a high rate of perinatal mortality, according to a study in this month's Irish Medical Journal. Perinatal is the period just before and just after birth. (The Irish Times, April 18, 2001)

www.
hambastegi.
org