

Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A press review with summaries of asylum and refugee-related articles in regional media.

Saturday 15 to Tuesday 18 December 2007

Denmark

Christmas-Møller makes asylum negotiations demand

Pia Christmas-Møller, who recently resigned from the Conservative's parliament group, demands that the Social Democrats and the New Alliance should participate in the ongoing negotiations on the agreement concerning rejected asylum-seekers, and encourages the parties to speed up the negotiations. Minister of Integration, Birthe Rønn Hornbech, responded to the statement by inviting the New Alliance to a meeting. Both the Social Democrats and the New Alliance want to allow asylum-seekers to live and work outside reception centres, which the Danish People's Party still refuses to accept. (Jyllands-Posten and Politiken 14 December 2007 <http://jp.dk/arkiv/?id=1202289>, <http://politiken.dk/politik/article446691.ece>, <http://politiken.dk/politik/article446538.ece>)

Sweden deports Somalis despite UN's recommendations

The Swedish Migration Board has made a precedent setting decision saying that no one from Somalia's capital Mogadishu will get a residence permit in Sweden, since no armed conflict is ongoing in the capital. With this decision, the Board rejected the asylum application of a 20-year old Somali man, who came to Sweden in May. The Board's decision goes against the UN's recommendations, which say that all asylum-seekers from Central and Southern parts of Somalia should get international protection. Also, UNHCR considers the conflict in Somalia as one of the worst in the world. (Politiken 15 December 2007 <http://politiken.dk/udland/article446977.ece>)

No asylum agreement before Christmas

New Alliance believes in a broad asylum agreement, but criticizes the Government for spending a long time on the negotiations. Jørgen Poulsen from the New Alliance believes their ambitions in the asylum area are higher than the Government's, but senses a will to solve the asylum problems. New Alliance and the Social Democrats, which met with the Minister last week, do not believe an asylum agreement will be reached before the end of the year.

(Berlingske Tidende and Politiken 17 December 2007 <http://www.berlingske.dk/article/20071217/danmark/712170037/>, <http://politiken.dk/politik/article447714.ece>)

Finland

Iraqi refugees live in lousy conditions in Syria

According to Sybella Wilkes from UNHCR, the situation is getting more and more desperate for many Iraqis in Syria. "They have used up their savings and we see an increasing amount of child labor and prostitution", she says. UNHCR continues to register refugees in Damascus, the majority being persons who came to Syria long ago, but have not been in need of international help before.

(Helsingin Sanomat 16 December 2007)

Norway

Precarious conditions for Iraqi refugees

A new UNHCR report, as many previous reports, reveals how harsh the conditions are for Iraqi refugees in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. Iraqi refugees in the neighbouring countries face problems related to child labor, diseases, economical problems and lack of education. According to UNHCR, 10 percent of the children participating in the survey are working, 46 percent have quit school and 17 percent suffer from chronic diseases.

(Verdens Gang 17 December 2007)

<http://www.vg.no/nyheter/utenriks/irak/artikkel.php?artid=190466>)

Sweden

EU appeal can give Guantánamo prisoner asylum in Sweden

Thomas Hammarberg, the Commissioner for human rights in the Council of Europe, intervenes in the case of Adel Abdul Hakim, who has, by mistake, been imprisoned in Guantánamo for four years. In a letter to the Swedish Migration Board, Hammarberg appeals to the Board that Adel Abdul Hakim should be granted asylum in Sweden.

“Usually I do not form an opinion in individual cases, but this case is special”,

Hammarberg writes to the Director General of the Migration Board, Dan Eliasson. High Commissioner of UNHCR, António Guterres, has made clear that he thinks US should be responsible for the Guantánamo prisoners.

(Dagens Nyheter 17 December 2007)

UNHCR bears no responsibility for the accuracy and content of the press summary, which is based on external news services and does not reflect the views of UNHCR.

External Relations Unit

UNHCR Regional Office for the Baltic and Nordic Countries, Stockholm

swest@unhcr.org, www.unhcr.se

Due to the upcoming holiday season, next Baltic and Nordic Headlines will be issued on Wednesday 2 January 2008. We wish all our readers a peaceful Christmas!

Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A press review with summaries of asylum and refugee-related articles in regional media.

Thursday 13 to Friday 14 December 2007

Denmark

Langballe: Asylum children are fine

On Wednesday, Minister of Integration, Birthe Rønn Hornbech, entered into negotiations with the Danish People's Party (DF) concerning a new asylum agreement. One of DF's negotiators, Jesper Langballe, does not think more efforts have to be put in for the youngest asylum-seekers. "These children are fine. They live under conditions which quite many Danish children do not", says Langballe.

(Jyllands Posten and Politiken 13 December 2007 <http://jp.dk/arkiv/?id=1201368>, <http://politiken.dk/politik/article445915.ece>)

Cleaning company offers work to asylum-seekers

While the government is working on finding a solution for the rejected asylum-seekers at the country's reception centres, the cleaning company ISS offers 1,250 adult asylum-seekers employment. The offer applies both to asylum-seekers with pending cases and rejected asylum-seekers who cannot return home due to the situation in their home country. The government now has to decide where it stands on the issue. So far the Danish People's Party has said flatly 'no'.

(Politiken 12 December 2007 <http://politiken.dk/indland/article445846.ece>)

Social Democrats lost votes on the asylum policy

An analysis of the voters' reactions shows that the Social Democrats lost votes due to their asylum policy in the election, which also was the case in 2001. Two weeks before the election the Social Democrats and the Social Liberals made a statement saying that asylum-seekers should have the right to live and work outside the reception centres. The Social Democrats admit that the refugee issue had an effect on the election result.

(Politiken 13 December 2007 <http://politiken.dk/politik/article445863.ece>)

Denmark deports Iraqis to an insecure future

Denmark deports Iraqi asylum-seekers to Greece, where they are at risk of to be sent back to an insecure situation in Iraq. Danish Immigration Service refers to the Dublin-regulation, which gives EU member states the right to send back asylum-seekers to the first EU country they came to, without looking into their asylum application. Both the UN and the EU recommends no country to send refugees back to Greece, because of the country's extremely harsh refugee policy. During 2006, no one was granted asylum in Greece. Over the last two years, Denmark has sent eight asylum-seekers back to Greece.

(Politiken 14 december 2007 <http://politiken.dk/udland/article446341.ece>)

Norway

Billström: Norway needs to take a greater responsibility

The Swedish Minister of Migration, Tobias Billström, states that Norway and the rest of the world must take a greater responsibility for the refugees coming mainly from Iraq. He points out that the large refugee flow to Sweden is a great burden for the Swedish welfare state. "We have received more refugees from Iraq than the rest of Europe and the US together. Of course this situation cannot go on", says Billström and encourages countries to increase their cooperation with UNHCR. 63 % of all asylum-seekers coming to the Nordic countries seek asylum in Sweden.

(Dagbladet 13 December 2007

<http://www.dagbladet.no/nyheter/2007/12/13/521128.html>)

Sweden

Billström heralds new immigration policy

In his Op-ed, published in the daily Dagens Nyheter, the Minister of Migration, Tobias Billström, initiates an investigation into how the reception of asylum-seekers is carried out and can be improved. The government wants to review the law and make amendments in order to encourage asylum-seekers to choose residential location with housing and employment or education opportunities. The government also wants to shorten the waiting time between a negative asylum decision or a deportation order and the departure from Sweden for asylum-seekers. There will be a new policy in place by the end of February 2009 at the latest.

(Dagens Nyheter 13 December 2007 <http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=724161>)

Immigration investigation is welcome

The government wants to change the law in order to encourage asylum-seekers to move to municipalities with better work and education opportunities. The commission, which is appointed today, is welcomed by Anders Lago, municipal commissioner in Södertälje. However, according to Lago, waiting for the commission's proposal in 2009 is not enough. "Immediate measures are needed", he says, referring to the fact that Södertälje houses a large number of refugees. One measure would be to abolish the right for asylum-seekers to decide their residential location, says Lago.

(Dagens Nyheter 13 December 2007 <http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=724291>)

Sweden deports to Somalia despite UN's warnings

On Thursday, the Swedish Migration Board decided to deport a 20-year old to Somalia. In the precedent-setting decision the Board stated that an internal armed conflict is not prevailing in Somalia's capital of Mogadishu. According to the Board, the man is not considered to have a strong enough individual fear of persecution, which would let him stay in Sweden. UNHCR recommends that no one should be returned to Central and South Somalia. This year over 3,000 Somalis have come to Sweden and eight out of ten have received residence permits.

(Dagens Nyheter 13 December 2007 <http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=724621>)

Refugees not reporting crimes to Police

A compilation made by the Swedish Association for Victim Support (Brottsofferjouren, BOJ) shows that refugees who have been exposed to crimes rarely reported to the

Police. "Being a refugee, you are extra vulnerable, you do not know the language or how the judicial system is working", says project leader at BOJ, Göran Thornadtsson. Out of 59 refugees exposed to crimes, 26 had reported it to the Police. (Dagens Nyheter 14 December 2007

<http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=147&a=724677>)

UNHCR bears no responsibility for the accuracy and content of the press summary, which is based on external news services and does not reflect the views of UNHCR.

External Relations Unit

UNHCR Regional Office for the Baltic and Nordic Countries, Stockholm

swest@unhcr.org, www.unhcr.se

Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A press review with summaries of asylum and refugee-related articles in regional media.

Tuesday 11 to Wednesday 12 December 2007

Denmark

Danish UN employee killed

A 39-year-old Danish UN employee was killed by a car bomb that ripped through the UNHCR office in the Algerian capital, Algiers, on Tuesday. At least 67 were killed and over 40 injured in two massive bomb blasts, one very close to the Danish embassy. Per Stig Møller, Minister of Foreign Affairs, condemns the terror attack and says it has become more dangerous to work for international organizations, such as the UN. (Politiken 11 and 12 December 2007 <http://politiken.dk/indland/article445439.ece>, <http://politiken.dk/udland/article445352.ece> Partly translated by News Express)

The Social Liberals criticize narrow start on asylum negotiations

The government started this week negotiations with the Danish People's Party and former parliamentarian from the Conservatives, Christmas-Møller, on improving the conditions for the rejected asylum-seekers with children. The Social Liberals criticize the Government for not living up to its promise of a broad cooperation, as the Danish People's Party and Christmas-Møller were the only ones invited to the meeting. (Jyllands-Posten 11 December 2007 <http://jp.dk/arkiv/?id=1199201>, <http://jp.dk/arkiv/?id=1199249>)

Finland

Several casualties in bomb explosions in Algiers

Over 20 persons, eleven of them UN employees, were killed in a bomb explosion in the capital of Algeria yesterday. The suicide bomb exploded on the street between the UNHCR office and a police station. "There is no doubt that UN was the target of one of the blasts", said António Guterres, Head of UNHCR. (Helsingin Sanomat and Yle 12 December 2007, <http://www.hs.fi/ulkomaat/artikkeli/Algerian+pommi-iskuissa+ei+suomalaisuhreja/1135232508581>,

Norway

Iraqi refugees forced home

Lebanese authorities refuse to grant residence permits to Iraqi refugees, who now risk being put in prison unless they return to their home country. Lebanon, which has not signed the 1951 UN Refugee Convention, considers the Iraqis to be illegal immigrants, even though they have been granted refugee status by UNHCR. There are some 50,000 Iraqis currently living in Lebanon.

(Verdens Gang 11 December 2007

<http://www.vg.no/nyheter/utenriks/irak/artikkel.php?artid=189213>)

Norwegian-Pakistanis want closed borders

Several Norwegian-Pakistani politicians argue for a stricter asylum and refugee policy and a reduction of labour immigration, while on the other hand they find the rules for family reunification too strict. Saera T.Khan, who is holding a seat in the Norwegian Parliament, says she is aware of these attitudes, but claims it is dangerous to weaken the legitimacy of the asylum system.

(Dagbladet 11 December 2007

<http://www.dagbladet.no/nyheter/2007/12/11/520832.html>)

A black day for UN in Algeria

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon condemns the terror attack which killed at least 11 UN staff members in the Algerian capital. The two bombs exploded next to a building housing the Supreme Court and in a street outside the UN offices, both the UNDP office and the UNHCR office were damaged in the attack. "I have no doubt that the UN was targeted", says UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres to BBC World. Al-Qaida has taken responsibility for the bombings.

(Aftenposten 11 December 2007 and Verdens Gang 12 December 2007

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/uriks/article2148262.ece>,

<http://www.vg.no/nyheter/utenriks/artikkel.php?artid=189855>)

Sweden

The middle class returns to Baghdad

The improved security situation in Iraq makes several hundred Iraqi refugees, mainly belonging to the middle class, return to their home country every day, despite UNHCR's recommendations not to return yet. There is no massive repatriation but the situation in Baghdad has already changed with reopening shops and restaurants. "Everything is relative. The improvement means for example that there only are 30 attacks every day, compared to 90 attacks before", says UN's special envoy in Iraq, Staffan de Mistura.

(Sveriges Radio 11 December 2007

http://www.sr.se/ekot/sokresult.asp?first=1&last=20&from_date=1990-01-01+00%3A00%3A00&to_date=2007-12-12+10%3A50%3A00&page=1&intUnitID=83&programID=83&nyheter=&Artikel=1768500&strSearch=unhcr)

Migration Board: families are being separated unnecessarily

The current law forces rejected asylum-seeking fathers with families in Sweden to leave their children and apply for residence permit in Sweden from their country of origin, a process which can take a long time. In October, the Migration Board asked the government for an amendment of the law, but so far nothing has happened, and family members continue to be separated from each other.

(Sveriges Radio 11 December 2007

http://www.sr.se/ekot/sokresult.asp?first=1&last=20&from_date=1990-01-01+00%3A00%3A00&to_date=2007-12-12+10%3A52%3A44&page=1&intUnitID=83&programID=83&nyheter=&Artikel=1768470&strSearch=asyl*)

No longer lack of places for unaccompanied minors

The lack of places for unaccompanied minors coming to Sweden has now been solved. Since Secretary General of the Migration Board, Dan Eliasson, in October named 14 refugee-rejecting municipalities, 200 additional places for unaccompanied minors in 30 municipalities have been promised.

(Svenska Dagbladet 11 December 2007

http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/artikel_677609.svd)

At least 60 killed in Algiers

On Tuesday, at least 60 persons were killed in two car bomb explosions in the Algerian capital Algiers, one of them targeted at and damaging UNHCR's and UNDP's offices. Al-Qaida's North Africa wing has claimed responsibility for the terror attack. Eleven of the dead are UN employees and several are still missing. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon condemns the terror attack. It was the most deadly bomb attack on a UN office since the Baghdad bombings in 2003.

(Dagens Nyheter 12 december 2007

<http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=723915>,

<http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=723926>)

UNHCR bears no responsibility for the accuracy and content of the press summary, which is based on external news services and does not reflect the views of UNHCR.

External Relations Unit

UNHCR Regional Office for the Baltic and Nordic Countries, Stockholm

swest@unhcr.org, www.unhcr.se

Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A press review with summaries of asylum and refugee-related articles in regional media.

Saturday 8 to Monday 10 December 2007

Denmark

Opposition demands asylum negotiations

After the elections, Anders Fogh Rasmussen promised that the government would quickly make an agreement on the arrangements for rejected Iraqi asylum-seekers. The government has, however, not yet even started the negotiations and the opposition is now demanding action. The Danish Doctor's Association is also disappointed and says immediate solutions are needed as there is evidence that the asylum-seekers get sick from staying at reception centres.

(Politiken 8 December 2007 <http://politiken.dk/indland/article444230.ece>,
<http://politiken.dk/indland/article444275.ece>)

Appeal for not moving refugee children

The Danish Red Cross warns for the consequences of the government's proposal to let the rejected Iraqi asylum-seekers live outside the reception centres. According to Jørgen Chemnitz, head of the Danish Red Cross, moving away from schools and friends might be stressful for the already vulnerable children in reception centres. Danish Red Cross says these families should be granted residence permits, since they do not have an option of returning back to Iraq.

(Berlingske Tidende and Politiken 9 December 2007
<http://www.berlingske.dk/article/20071209/danmark/712090057/>,
<http://politiken.dk/indland/article444549.ece>)

All Iraqi interpreters get asylum in Denmark

306 out of the 373 Iraqi interpreters and their families, who have come from Iraq since July, have been granted asylum in Denmark. No one has been rejected and the pending applications are due to be handled by the end of January 2008. Danish Immigration Service denies that they have given the Iraqi interpreters special treatment compared to the 472 other Iraqi asylum-seekers, who have been rejected and are now waiting for deportation orders.

(Politiken 9 December 2007 <http://politiken.dk/indland/article444567.ece>)

Norway

Illegal immigrants live with extra psychological pressure

According to the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS), little is known about the psychological condition of illegal immigrants. A recent report from NKVTS revealed that many newly arrived asylum-seekers have traumas and psychological problems, and these problems are likely to increase when people go into hiding.

(Aftenposten 9 December 2007
<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article2143042.ece>)

Sweden

Migration Board director on criticism

In his Op-ed, published in the daily Dagens Nyheter, the Secretary General of the Swedish Migration Board, Dan Eliasson, responds to recent criticism and announces improvements in the asylum process. Eliasson writes that the Board faces many challenges over the coming years; shortening the handling time of asylum cases, improvement of explaining the decisions and the ability to motivate asylum-seekers to return. Also, non-governmental organizations like the Red Cross and Amnesty will get a larger possibility to critically review and question the work of the Migration Board. (Dagens Nyheter 10 December 2007 <http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=723048>)

UNHCR bears no responsibility for the accuracy and content of the press summary, which is based on external news services and does not reflect the views of UNHCR.

External Relations Unit
UNHCR Regional Office for the Baltic and Nordic Countries, Stockholm
swest@unhcr.org, www.unhcr.se

Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A press review with summaries of asylum and refugee-related articles in regional media.

Thursday 6 to Friday 7 December 2007

Denmark

Christmas-Møller wants a new asylum policy

Pia Christmas-Møller has resigned from the Conservative's parliament group but points out that she neither has left the party nor has been in contact with other parties concerning a new membership. She emphasizes her will to enhance change in the asylum policy, as she declared in her election campaign, but continues to support the government in other aspects.

(Politiken 5 December 2007 <http://politiken.dk/politik/article442864.ece>)

Norway

Illegal immigrants without health care

Illegal immigrants carrying infectious diseases often fail to obtain treatment in fear of being revealed by the authorities or due to financial constraints. According to Secretary General of the Norwegian Red Cross, Trygve Nordby, there is a risk of increasing public health problems if persons suffering from serious diseases such as tuberculosis, HIV and sexually transmitted diseases do not receive treatment.

(Aftenposten 7 December 2007

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article2140248.ece>)

Sweden

Philippine farmers: send Angelina Jolie

A Philippine farmer movement wants UNHCR to send the American movie star Angelina Jolie to the Philippines to witness the refugee flow fleeing the army's offensives. The left-wing movement writes in a letter to UNHCR that the situation for the refugees in the rural areas is deteriorating and appeals to UNHCR to send their good-will ambassador Jolie to the country. 160,000 persons have lost their lives in the 50-year-long conflict in the Philippines and close to two million people are displaced.

(Dagens Nyheter 7 December 2007 <http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=722552>)

UNHCR bears no responsibility for the accuracy and content of the press summary, which is based on external news services and does not reflect the views of UNHCR.

External Relations Unit

UNHCR Regional Office for the Baltic and Nordic Countries, Stockholm

swest@unhcr.org, www.unhcr.se

Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A press review with summaries of asylum and refugee-related articles in regional media.

Tuesday 4 to Wednesday 5 December 2007

Denmark

Iraq: Refugees should stay in Europe and the United States

The Iraqi Minister of Migration, Abdul-Samad Rahman, wants Iraqis who have fled to Europe and the United States to stay where they are, since the Iraqi government is currently unable to handle a massive return. Some 50,000 Iraqis have returned to their home country during the last few months. UNHCR has started to gather supplies for the returned families.

(Danmarks Radio 5 November 2007

<http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Udland/2007/12/05/080732.htm>)

Norway

Searching for war criminals in archives

The Directorate of Immigration is opening old archives to find possible war criminals living in Norway. Some 12,000 refugees fled the war in Bosnia to Norway in the 1990s, but the possible war crimes were not investigated at that time. The matter has now come into spotlight again, and some cases, initially 200 from Bosnia, will be reinvestigated.

(Aftenposten and NRK 5 November 2007

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article2136672.ece>,

<http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/1.4215918>)

Sweden

Two women in custody for child smuggling

Two women with Chinese background have been taken into custody suspected of human smuggling of Chinese children. The police arrested the women in Västerås after following the two Chinese children who disappeared from one of the Migrations Board's reception centres in Stockholm last week. The two children have not been returned to the reception centre.

(Dagens Nyheter and Svenska Dagbladet 3 December 2007

<http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=721291>,

http://www.svd.se/stockholm/nyheter/artikel_653969.svd)

More than a half of all asylum-seekers can stay

The Migration Board has so far decided on 29,245 asylum applications this year, and 51 per cent of the applicants have been granted residence permit directly. That is a large increase to the rate that applied between 2003 and 2005, before the amendment of the Alien's Act, when an average of 13 per cent were granted residence permit. The majority of the 6,909 rejected applications appeal to higher instances.

(Dagens Nyheter and Svenska Dagbladet 3 December 2007

<http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=721330>,
http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/artikel_654821.svd)

UNHCR and Iraq in repatriation programme

An emergency aid programme has been established to help the returning Iraqi refugees. UNHCR contributes with 11 million USD and the Iraqi government has set aside 98 million USD. During the first phase, 5,000 families or around 30,000 persons will be offered help. The Iraqi government says, however, that it is still too early for Iraqis from Sweden to return. UN's representative in Iraq, Staffan de Mistura, emphasizes that UNHCR does not recommend a massive repatriation and says the situation in Iraq is still fragile even if the security situation has improved.

(Dagens Nyheter and Svenska Dagbladet 4 December 2007

<http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=721795>,
http://www.svd.se/nyheter/utrikes/artikel_659535.svd)

Review of legislation on asylum-seekers' place of residence

The government intends to review the law allowing asylum-seekers to decide themselves their preferred place of residence, with the aim on encouraging asylum-seekers to choose a residential location which can provide employment opportunities. "The law has not been reviewed in 12 years", Minister of Migration, Tobias Billström says, but says he is not in favour of forcible settlement.

(Svenska Dagbladet 4 December 2007

http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/artikel_658887.svd)

UNHCR bears no responsibility for the accuracy and content of the press summary, which is based on external news services and does not reflect the views of UNHCR.

External Relations Unit

UNHCR Regional Office for the Baltic and Nordic Countries, Stockholm

swest@unhcr.org, www.unhcr.se

Baltic and Nordic Headlines

A press review with summaries of asylum and refugee-related articles in regional media.

Saturday 1 to Monday 3 December 2007

Finland

Most racist crimes in Kotka and Kajaani

The number of racist crimes, investigated by the police, has risen gradually during the past few years, and amounted in 748 last year. Proportion of racist crimes in relation to the number of immigrants is biggest in the cities of Kotka and Kajaani, both hosts of big refugee reception centres. Kajaani also receives annually some 100 refugees for resettlement.

(Helsingin Sanomat 2 December 2007

<http://www.hs.fi/digilehti/kotimaa/artikkeli/1135232274397>)

Sweden

Iraqi refugees return from Syria

UNHCR in Damascus reports that 600 Iraqis return from Syria to their home country every day, mainly because of Iraq's improved security situation, but also due to the new visa rules, lacking work permits and poverty in Syria. UNHCR considers it too early to encourage large-scale repatriation to Iraq. At the same time, more Iraqi refugees in Syria are in need of food aid. World Food Programme provides food assistance to 50,000 - 70,000 Iraqi refugees in Syria every week, and the situation is deteriorating.

(Dagens Nyheter 2 December 2007 <http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=720958>

and Svenska Dagbladet 3 December 2007)

New cases of human trafficking

Two of the four Chinese children who sought asylum in Sweden during the last two weeks, disappeared from a reception centre on Saturday. The municipality of Sigtuna wants to place the remaining two children in a special accommodation in order to be able to protect them, but there are no places available. Altogether 100 Chinese children have disappeared from reception centres in Sweden during the past few years, all believed to be victims of human trafficking.

(Svenska Dagbladet 1 and 3 December 2007

http://www.svd.se/stockholm/nyheter/artikel_649277.svd,

http://www.svd.se/stockholm/nyheter/artikel_652723.svd)

UNHCR bears no responsibility for the accuracy and content of the press summary, which is based on external news services and does not reflect the views of UNHCR.

External Relations Unit

UNHCR Regional Office for the Baltic and Nordic Countries, Stockholm

swest@unhcr.org, www.unhcr.se