

# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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

Thursday 29 to Friday 30 November 2007

## Denmark

### Khader wants refugees to Greenland

Naser Khader from the New Alliance thinks Greenland should receive a larger proportion of the refugees coming to Denmark. At present very few refugees live in Greenland, and Khader wants to find out the reasons for this. Juliane Henningsen, a Greenlander holding a seat in the Danish parliament, says she is positive to the idea of receiving more refugees in Greenland, but says that it is essential that integration policy is properly discussed in Greenland.

(Politiken 28 November 2007)

<http://politiken.dk/politik/article439417.ece>, <http://politiken.dk/politik/article439862.ece>)

## Finland

### Rwandese woman deported from Finland

The Rwandese woman who applied for asylum in Finland in 2005 and received a deportation order in April 2007, was on Thursday taken by the police from the reception centre and sent to her county of origin. The congregation that had earlier given shelter to the woman regretted never getting to see the grounds for the deportation or the reasons why the case was not reconsidered by the Department of Immigration. Some twenty persons demonstrated against the deportation in front of the reception centre.

(Helsingin Sanomat 29 November 2007)

<http://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/artikkeli/Ruandalaisnainen+k%C3%A4%C3%A4nnytettiin+Suo+mesta/1135232194317>)

## Latvia

### Latvia to combat illegal immigration

The border guards are getting prepared to combating illegal immigration when Latvia joins the Schengen Agreement. Border guards will increase collaboration operations with Lithuania and Estonia. Latvia's membership with the Schengen Agreement means that non-citizens, stateless persons and refugees will be free to move within the Schengen area without visa.

(Baltic News Service 29 November 2007)

## Norway

### Directorate of Immigration receives criticism

The Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) claims that the Directorate of Immigration (UDI) is breaching UN recommendations and the practice of the Norwegian Immigration Appeals Board (UNE) when rejecting a Chechen asylum-seeker. UDI admits

that there is a possibility that the asylum-seeker will be persecuted if sent back to Chechnya or other parts of Russia, but says he will not be sent to a place where he is in risk of being tortured or murdered. According to the UN and the UNE, people of Chechen origin should not be sent to parts of Russia where they have no connection. (Verdens Gang 29 November 2007

<http://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/artikkel.php?artid=186506>,  
<http://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/artikkel.php?artid=186498>)

## Sweden

### Sweden turns away asylum-seekers

Sweden has started to send back increasing numbers of asylum-seekers to other EU member states in accordance with the so-called Dublin Regulation. During the first ten months of the year, some 3,581 of Sweden's 30,000 asylum-seekers were sent back to one of the 25 member states responsible for their applications. Greece receives much criticism for mistreating refugees, but nevertheless remains the main recipient of asylum-seekers from Sweden. So far this year, the Migration Board has requested Greek authorities to accept 733 persons from Sweden, the majority being Iraqi asylum-seekers. (Sydsvenskan 28 November 2007 and The Local 29 November 2007

<http://sydsvenskan.se/skane/article283287.ece>, <http://www.thelocal.se/9245/20071129/>)

### Moderate Party plans for integration

The Moderate Party has announced a plan for developing its integration policy. Immigrant pensioners wanting to return home will receive financial support. The party will take the proposal to its working group and discuss this and other related issues, such as how to better deal with the asylum process.

(Svenska Dagbladet 29 November 2007

[http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/artikel\\_641265.svd](http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/artikel_641265.svd), Translated by Swedish Press Review)

### Decreasing number of Iraqi asylum-seekers

The refugee flow from Iraq to Sweden has decreased during November. In one month the number of asylum-seeking Iraqis has decreased with 20 per cent. 1,385 Iraqis have sought asylum during November, compared to 1,744 in October. A reason for the decrease might be the improved security situation in Iraq.

(Sydsvenskan 29 November 2007 <http://sydsvenskan.se/varlden/article283523.ece>)

### Online asylum applications

According to the Swedish Migration Board it will hopefully be possible to submit asylum and residence permit applications online within three years. Some asylum-seekers have to wait for up to one year when applying via an embassy, and the online application option will hopefully speed things up.

(Dagens Nyheter 29 November 2007, Translated by Swedish Press Review)

### Few applications for financial support

Only 67 Afghan asylum-seekers have applied for financial support to return voluntarily to their home country. Since the agreement was made in August this year, around 300 people could have applied for it. Minister of Migration, Tobias Billström, believes the low numbers are explained by limited knowledge of this financial support.

(Svenska Dagbladet 30 November 2007, Translated by Swedish Press Review)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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Tuesday 27 to Wednesday 28 November 2007

## Denmark

### **Amnesty: Government discriminates refugees**

A report from Amnesty International claims that the 'start help', a low financial contribution especially created for unemployed persons who have recently moved to Denmark, creates poverty and marginalization, and recommends stopping it. The majority of recipients last year were immigrants, and many had health problems and were not able to work. Amnesty is concerned that the system is a barrier to integration, and claims the government discriminates refugees by not providing same financial support to unemployed ethnic Danes and immigrants.

(Politiken 27 November 2007 and Jyllands-Posten 28 November 2007

<http://politiken.dk/indland/article439720.ece>, <http://jp.dk/indland/article1184712.ece>)

## Norway

### **Support amnesty for illegal immigrants**

The Christian Democratic Party and the Liberals support the Socialist Left Party's wish to give amnesty to illegal immigrants by re-handling their asylum cases, as Sweden did in 2005. Minister of Labour and Social Inclusion, Bjarne Håkon Hanssen, rejects the proposal, and claims it will only encourage more people to 'go into hiding'. According to Hanssen, the only solution is to return them.

(Aftenposten 27 November 2007

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article2122087.ece>,

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article2122088.ece>)

### **NGOs critical to returning illegal immigrants**

NGOs react strongly to Bjarne Håkon Hanssen's views on return of illegal immigrants, saying it is a denial of responsibility and a simplification of a complex problem. Morten Tjessem, Secretary General of NOAS (Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers), claims that people who have stayed in Norway for more than five years after rejection, and cannot be returned, should be granted residence permit. He says that a strict asylum policy can force people in need of protection to 'go underground'. There are, for example, several Iraqis who have been rejected against UNHCR recommendations.

(Aftenposten 27 November <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article2123870.ece>)

## Sweden

### **Back to where they came from**

A leading Social Democrat, Göran Johansson, has stated that people who have been smuggled into Sweden illegally should be sent back directly to their countries of origin, leaving them the right to come back by legal means. Leader of the Gothenburg Council, Johansson believes that it is not fair that some people can afford to pay and that others

are left behind as they cannot, and said that by avoiding this issue, we are creating racism. Dan Eliasson of the Swedish Migration Board said Johansson's views are a cry for help from a municipality which will take a large part of the responsibility for the immigrants. Tobias Billström, the Migration Minister, said that the proposal is unworkable and against the Geneva Convention.

(Dagens Nyheter 27 November 2007

<http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=719314>

<http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=719437>, Translation by Swedish Press Review)

### **Returning Iraqis counted by UN**

UN has started assisting Iraqi authorities in mapping the number of refugees who have returned to Iraq, and their assistance needs. UNHCR has stated that they will provide material assistance to 5,000 families, but the actual number of returnees is still uncertain. Thousands of Iraqis are now returning from abroad.

(Svenska Dagbladet 27 November 2007

[http://www.svd.se/nyheter/utrikes/artikel\\_635509.svd](http://www.svd.se/nyheter/utrikes/artikel_635509.svd))

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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

Saturday 24 to Monday 26 November 2007

## Finland

### **B-status discussion to Parliament in spring**

According to the Special Adviser of the Minister of Immigration and EU Affairs, Astrid Thors, reform of the temporary residence permit, so called b-status, will be brought to parliament in spring, and the intention is to make the changes apply as soon as possible. B-status would cease to exist and all residence permits would include the right to work and to apply for family unification. B-status has been granted to persons whose deportation has not been possible due to "technical hinders" as a civil war, originating above all from Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia.

(Helsingin Sanomat 23 November 2007,

<http://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/artikkeli/Turvapaikanhakijoiden+b-lupien+muutos+eduskuntaan+kev%C3%A4%C3%A4ll%C3%A4/1135232057501>)

### **UNHCR: Too early to return to Iraq**

UNHCR does not consider the situation in Iraq stable enough to encourage or organize large scale returns of civilians. According to a UN survey, most returnees go back because they have run short of money or due to the new visa requirement of the biggest host country, Syria.

(Yle 24 November 2007,

<http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/haku.php?action=page&id=266845&search=unhcr>)

## Norway

### **Worried about illegal immigrant children**

The Ombudsman for Children is concerned about the situation of children living illegally in the country, saying it is a tragedy that isolates children from the outer world. In the fear of being revealed by authorities, very few children are sent to school, even though they are entitled to education after having spent three months in Norway.

(Aftenposten 24 November 2007

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article2117934.ece>)

### **Illegal immigrants forced to black labour**

An NGO called Selvhjelp for innvandrere og flyktninger (Help for immigrants and refugees) meets daily with desperate illegal immigrants and claims that several thousand people are forced to black labour in order to survive. They receive low salaries and lack normal rights, but few dare to complain in fear of losing their jobs and being sent back to their country of origin.

(Aftenposten 25 November 2007

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article2119132.ece>,

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article2119151.ece>)

## **Illegal immigrants to be counted**

Norwegian authorities want to find out the number of illegal immigrants living in the country, and the first report of this kind is due to come out before Christmas. Directorate of Immigration considers accurate data important for planning actions and policies both for deporting these people and for helping them. The survey will also focus on the living conditions of illegal immigrants.

(Aftenposten 26 November <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article2120583.ece>)

## **Sweden**

### **Journalist with deportation order can stay**

An Eritrean journalist, Habte Tesfamicael Asfha, who received a deportation order three and a half years ago, was granted a residence permit last Thursday. Cecilia Wikström from the Liberal Party, who has been involved in the case, hopes this decision will affect Sweden's position to other asylum applications from Eritrea, where according to UNHCR, no one should be deported.

(Dagens Nyheter 23 November 2007 <http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=718422>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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

Thursday 22 to Friday 23 November 2007

## Denmark

### **Iraqi minors head elsewhere**

The number of unaccompanied refugee children seeking protection in Denmark continues to fall. New Red Cross statistics show that young Iraqis without parents or guardians are bypassing Denmark and heading for more accommodating countries, but there has been a rise in the number of underaged, unaccompanied children arriving from Afghanistan. 32 Iraqi children have arrived here this year, compared to 54 last year, and 34 have arrived from Afghanistan, twice as many as last year.

(Politiken 21 November 2007 <http://politiken.dk/indland/article436392.ece>)

### **New Alliance believes in fingerprints in government programme**

New Alliance leader Naser Khader emerged from talks with Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen (V) and Conservative leader Bendt Bendtsen (K) yesterday, claiming he could see a government in transition. "There's definitely some movement concerning asylum-seekers and development aid so I believe we will see the New Alliance's fingerprint on the government's programme", he said.

(Politiken 22 November 2007 <http://politiken.dk/politik/article436450.ece>, Translation by News Express)

### **Government wants to improve conditions for asylum-seekers**

Government has presented its political programme for the next elective period. According to the new programme, asylum-seekers with children will be allowed to live outside refugee and asylum centres, but rejected asylum-seekers will still not get work permission. Additionally, the programme proposes to increase the financial support to asylum-seekers voluntarily returning to their home countries, and to combat companies misusing asylum-seekers as black labour.

(Politiken 22 November 2007 <http://politiken.dk/politik/article437344.ece> Partly translated by News Express)

### **Still uncertainty for the rejected Iraqis**

New Alliance criticizes the government's intention to improve conditions only for Iraqi asylum-seekers with children. The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) is also disappointed, as the future remains insecure for the Iraqis despite the government's wish to improve their conditions. Secretary General of DRC, Andreas Kamm, says the government should act more in line with UNHCR guidelines and grant residence permits for the Iraqis.

(Jyllands-Posten 22 November 2007 <http://jp.dk/arkiv/?id=1178852>)

### **Rønn Hornbech is the new Minister for Refugees, Immigration and Integration**

Birthe Rønn Hornbech from the Liberals takes over as Minister for Refugees, Immigration and Integration after Rikke Hvilshøj (V). Rønn Hornbech has been critical

towards the Danish People's Party's asylum and immigration policy, and her nomination may mean a change in the government's asylum policy.

(Berlingske Tidende 23 November 2007

<http://www.berlingske.dk/article/20071123/politik/711230315/>)

## **Estonia**

### **Estonian parliament rejects Center Party's amendments to citizenship law**

The parliament rejected two bill proposals made by the opposition Center Party. The Center Party suggested citizenship to be granted automatically to children of stateless residents and to allow taking the citizenship exam in other languages than Estonian, saying the law should fulfill the international obligations given through the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The number of stateless persons living in Estonia at the end of last year was 125,799.

(Baltic Nordic News Service 22 November 2007)

## **Finland**

### **Thousands of refugees return to calmer Iraq**

Tens of thousands of Iraqi refugees have returned to their home country since the significant decrease of violence. According to UNHCR, altogether 45,000 Iraqis have returned in October, mostly from neighboring Syria. Another driving factor for the return has been the difficulty in finding livelihood in Syria, where employment is a major challenge.

(Helsingin Sanomat 22 November 2007

<http://www.hs.fi/ulkomaat/artikkeli/Tuhannet+pakolaiset+palaavat+rauhallisempaan+Irakiin/1135232011351>)

## **Norway**

### **Six out of ten asylum-seekers have been tortured**

A survey conducted by the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS) reveals that the majority of newly arrived asylum-seekers have been tortured, raped or attempted murdered. NKVTS estimated in June that 30 % of asylum-seekers in Norway are victims of torture, but the actual number is likely to be the double. Half of the asylum-seekers have a psychological diagnosis, but in many cases the need for treatment is not met. According to Jon Ole Martinsen in Self-help for Immigrants and Refugees (Seif), the numbers reflect the situation in the countries of origin.

(Aftenposten and Verdens Gang 22 November 2007

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article2114689.ece>,  
<http://www.vg.no/nyheter/innenriks/artikkel.php?artid=186471>)

## **Sweden**

### **Iraqi refugees return home from Syria**

According to the Iraqi Minister of Migration, around 1,600 Iraqi refugees return to Iraq every day, the majority coming from Syria. During October, when the schools started in Iraq, altogether 45,000 Iraqis returned to their home country. According to UNHCR's

spokesperson Peter Kessler, however, the situation in the southern and central parts of Iraq is still too unsafe for encouraging refugees to return. Many refugees state the lack of work and the new visa regulations in Syria as the primary reasons for returning home. (Sveriges Radio 21 November 2007

[http://www.sr.se/ekot/sokresult.asp?first=1&last=20&from\\_date=1990-01-01+00%3A00%3A00&to\\_date=2007-11-22+09%3A23%3A18&page=1&intUnitID=83&programID=83&nyheter=&Artikel=1731322&strSearch=unhcr](http://www.sr.se/ekot/sokresult.asp?first=1&last=20&from_date=1990-01-01+00%3A00%3A00&to_date=2007-11-22+09%3A23%3A18&page=1&intUnitID=83&programID=83&nyheter=&Artikel=1731322&strSearch=unhcr))

### **Södertälje receives more Iraqis than USA and Canada**

The municipality of Södertälje, with a population of 80,000 people, hosts 900 Iraqi asylum-seekers, while USA and Canada together have given refuge to 700 Iraqis. Södertälje is having difficulties in coping with the consequences of the refugee flow, and is struggling with housing shortage, full schools, and long waiting lists for Swedish courses and introduction programmes.

(Dagens Nyheter 22 November 2007)

### **Nine municipalities says no to refugees**

Nine of the fourteen municipalities which the Migration Board earlier put on a public list for not receiving any refugees have still not signed an agreement on refugee reception. The housing shortage is the most common argument for refusing, and unaccompanied refugee children are considered as a particularly difficult group due to the shortage of foster homes. According to the Migration Board, 38,000 persons are expected to have sought asylum in Sweden by the end of 2007 and the prognosis for 2008 is the same. (Dagens Nyheter 22 November 2007)

### **Returning Afghans face unemployment**

More than four million Afghans have returned to their home country since 2001, both through voluntary repatriation and forced returns. The returning Afghans often face problems as unemployment, lack of health care and schooling. Head of UNHCR in Afghanistan, Salvatore Lombardo, emphasizes the importance of investigating every case individually. "Sending back refugees who cannot return to their home town or to relatives in other parts of the country is not right and only risks creating a humanitarian catastrophe", Lombardo says.

(Dagens Nyheter 22 November 2007)

### **Decision on deportation to Afghanistan despite armed conflict**

The Migration Board decided on Thursday to deport a 40-year old to Afghanistan. In the precedent setting decision the Board stated that an internal armed conflict is prevailing in the province of Kandahar, where the man is from, but that the man can be deported to the relatively secure Kabul instead. UNHCR advises against creating internal displacement, but the Migration Board refers to a judgment from the Migration Court of Appeal saying that UNHCR's recommendations are important sources of information but not part of Swedish law.

(Dagens Nyheter and Svenska Dagbladet 22 November 2007

<http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=718035>,  
[http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/artikel\\_621237.svd](http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/artikel_621237.svd))

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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Tuesday 20 to Wednesday 21 November 2007

## Denmark

### **Companies have a responsibility for illegal workforce**

Politicians have reacted strongly to Danish Radio's revelation on the use of asylum-seekers as black and underpaid labour, and intend to severely punish such employers. Vice Chairman of the trade union considers this a major problem, but says the companies should be aware of their moral and legal responsibilities. Danish Red Cross is not surprised to hear some asylum-seekers are tempted to work, but is shocked by the companies' will to exploit them as cheap labour.

(Politiken and Jyllands-Posten 20 November 2007

<http://politiken.dk/indland/article435460.ece>, <http://jp.dk/arkiv/?id=1175021>)

### **Iraqi interpreters heading towards working life**

The Iraqi interpreters, previously assisting the Danish soldiers in Iraq, are eager to leave the asylum centres where they have lived since June, and to earn their living through employment. The ones with technical education are hopeful for finding jobs as engineers, but face an unexpected setback with the requirement for Danish language skills. After having been featured in Iraqi media, return to their home country would be a major security risk.

(Politiken 20 November 2007 <http://politiken.dk/indland/article434771.ece>)

### **Iraq: Thousands of citizens return home**

According to Iraqi authorities, about 1,000 Iraqis return to their home country every day, mostly from Syria. The estimates correspond with UNHCR statistics, showing that about 45,000 Iraqis returned from Syria in October. The returns are explained by an improved security situation, primary in Baghdad, and Syrian authorities' claim for visas from Iraqi nationals.

(Politiken 21 November 2007 <http://politiken.dk/udland/article436182.ece>)

## Finland

### **Shopping centre removed Refugee Council's campaign ads**

A shopping centre in Helsinki removed Finnish Refugee Council's Christmas campaign ads, taped on waste-paper baskets, encouraging people to buy a present that would never be thrown away. FRC runs an online campaign for purchasing school stationeries and other items for refugee camps. The shopping centre representative said the yellow ads did not fit the Christmas season.

(Helsingin Sanomat 20 November 2007

<http://www.hs.fi/kaupunki/artikkeli/Pakolaisavun+roskismainokset+poistettiin+It%C3%A4+keskuksessa/1135231979836>)

## Sweden

### **The Migration Board receives Iraq money**

The Migration Board has received about five million USD from the EU Commission to help asylum-seekers from Iraq. The money will be used for a project which aims to speed up applications. The goal is that simple cases will be completed within 14 days. (Svenska Dagbladet 20 November 2007, translation by Swedish Press Review)

### **One million displaced in Somalia**

Since February this year, 600,000 persons have fled from Somalia's war torn capital of Mogadishu. According to UNHCR, close to one million persons are internally displaced in Somalia. During the last two weeks, 200,000 persons have left Mogadishu due to the intensified fighting between the Ethiopian army and rebels.

(Dagens Nyheter 20 November 2007 <http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=717259>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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Saturday 17 to Monday 19 November 2007

## Denmark

### **Khader makes demands in government negotiations**

New Alliance leader Naser Khader demands a broad agreement on asylum issues as a matter of urgency, else threatening to refuse supporting any other government proposal. Although the remaining three right-wing parties can, with some difficulty, still put together a very narrow majority, the Prime Minister has stated on a number of occasions that he is now looking for broad-based support. This message is welcomed by Khader as an opportunity to reduce the influence of the Danish People's Party.

(Berlingske Tidende 19 November 2007

<http://www.berlingske.dk/article/20071117/valg/111161403/>)

### **Asylum-seekers misused as black labour**

Many cafeterias employ asylum-seekers despite lacking work permits, paying them as little as 5,7 USD per hour, revealed Danish Radio. Asylum-seekers risk being fined and deported if caught by police. Such employers should be severely punished, says Minister of Employment Claus Hjort-Frederiksen. Thomas Adelskov from Social Democrats says the whole asylum process should be improved as to allow the asylum-seekers leave the centres much faster and to start working legally.

(Jyllands Posten 18 November and DR 19 November,

<http://jp.dk/indland/article1173949.ece>

<http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/2007/11/19/075624.htm?nyheder>)

## Norway

### **Red Cross wants to help the illegal residents**

The Norwegian Red Cross wants to be able to offer basic humanitarian services to persons living in the country without a residence permit. These people can currently neither put their children in school nor take them to doctor when they fall sick, and people helping them can be considered breaching the Aliens Act. There are currently some 5000 to 10,000 persons living illegally in Norway and, as in the rest of Europe, the number is increasing. Trygve G. Nordby, Secretary General of the Norwegian Red Cross, says that Norway is one of the few countries not discussing the situation of the illegal population.

(Aftenposten 17 and 18 November 2007,

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article2108679.ece>

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article2106583.ece>)

## Sweden

### **Sweden gets EU cash for refugees**

Sweden is to be granted 4,6 million USD by the European Union as compensation for receiving record numbers of Iraqi refugees. After several months of trying to persuade the EU to “take more responsibility” towards Iraqi refugees, Foreign Minister Carl Bildt told Sveriges Radio on Saturday that the EU response was “welcomed”.

(Svenska Dagbladet and The Local 18 November

[http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/artikel\\_605701.svd](http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/artikel_605701.svd), <http://www.thelocal.se/9131/>)

### **Unicef wants to make UN convention law**

Unicef Sweden is asking for the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to be brought into Swedish law. Sweden ratified the convention in 1990 but has not considered it necessary to bring it into Swedish law; instead Swedish law has been partly adapted. At present, refugee children in hiding do not have the right to education and are subject to a particular school's discretion. If the convention became law then these children would have an unconditional right to education.

(Dagens Nyheter 19 November, translation by Swedish Press Review)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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

Thursday 15 to Friday 16 November 2007

## Denmark

### **Jørgen Poulsen maintains the asylum issue**

Former Secretary General of the Danish Red Cross, Jørgen Poulsen, is convinced that the rejected Iraqi asylum-seekers will be granted residence in Denmark, despite the low support of New Alliance (new political party ed.) in the elections. He is confident that the cases will be reviewed, but unsure as to whether permits will be granted on a temporary or permanent basis.

(Jyllands-Posten 14 November 2007 <http://jp.dk/arkiv/?id=1169323>)

### **Danish People's Party advises Fogh against broad agreements**

Pia Kjærsgaard, Danish People's Party (DF), tries to prevent Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen from committing himself to a broad agreement between the four centre-right parties. She altogether dismisses the suggestion of allowing rejected Iraqi asylum-seekers to work and live outside the asylum centres.

(Jyllands-Posten 15 November 2007 <http://jp.dk/arkiv/?id=1169556>)

### **SF hopes for a more lenient asylum policy**

Rikke Hvilshøj resigns from her post as Minister of Integration, but continues as MP, intending to retire from politics after the next elections. She refers to private reasons for her decision. The Socialist People's Party (SF) is hoping that Hvilshøj's resignation indicates that the government wants a more relaxed asylum policy.

(Berlingske Tidende and Politiken 15 November 2007

<http://www.berlingske.dk/article/20071115/valg/71115130/>,

<http://politiken.dk/politik/article430630.ece>

### **Every fifth child in Vollsmose is traumatized**

According to a new report, at least 700 children are traumatized or live together with traumatized parents in the district of Odense called Vollsmose. There is a high concentration of refugees in Vollsmose, and the waiting list for the Rehabilitation Centre for Traumatized Refugees Fyn is long. Some have to wait for several years to be treated.

(Politiken 15 November 2007 <http://politiken.dk/indland/article430310.ece>)

### **Fogh wants a quick agreement on Iraqis**

Prime Minister Fogh Rasmussen will try to reach an agreement regarding the rejected Iraqi asylum-seekers in the new government's meetings already next week. A broad and long-term agreement on asylum and immigration policy will come at a later stage.

(Politiken 15 November 2007 <http://politiken.dk/politik/article430396.ece>)

## Finland

### **Syria closed borders for Iraqis**

Iraqis are facing an increasingly desperate situation after neighbouring Syria has closed its borders and started to require visas from Iraqi nationals. Those, who have managed to get into Syria, are telling horrifying stories from Iraq. One in four is a victim of torture and many people risk being killed, if forced to return. Syria has received most Iraqi refugees, and the population of 1, 5 million Iraqis constitutes a big burden to the society. "Schools are overcrowded, as Syrians follows the principle that all children should attend school", says Sybella Wilkes, Information officer for UNHCR.

(YLE 14 November 2007 <http://areena.yle.fi/toista?id=911757>, track 13.03-15.06)

## Sweden

### **Higher demands on refugees**

The Liberal Party proposes that refugees are required to have a place to live and a stable income before their relatives are allowed to come to Sweden. Minister for Integration and Gender Equality, Nyamko Sabuni, says that the proposal will not necessarily affect the number of refugees coming to Sweden but the idea is to encourage people to settle in places where they can find employment. Over the last 18 months, around 21,000 asylum-seekers have been granted residence permits in Sweden.

(Dagens Nyheter 14 November 2007 <http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=715411>)

### **Migration Board says no to asylum-seekers**

The Migration Board supports the government's proposal about increased labour immigration, but disagrees on the issue of giving work permits to rejected asylum-seekers. According to Dan Eliasson, Secretary General of the Migration Board, such provision would put a greater burden on the Board and make it more difficult to protect persons who really need it. "Migrants, immigrants and refugees have to decide what they are applying for from the beginning", he says. The government, however, believes that asylum-seekers, in some instances, should be able to change their application for asylum to one for a work permit.

(Svenska Dagbladet 14 November 2007

[http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/artikel\\_593401.svd](http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/artikel_593401.svd))

### **Afghans being deported against UNHCR recommendations**

Against UNHCR recommendations, the Migration Board is preparing to deport two young Afghan men to the Ghazni and Uruzgan provinces in Southern Afghanistan. These are provinces listed by UNHCR as insecure areas to where no one should be returned. Head of UNHCR's office for the Baltic and Nordic countries, Hans ten Feld, says that since UNHCR's recently updated guidelines show that the security situation has not improved in these provinces, he hopes the deportations will not be enforced.

(Sveriges Radio 14 November 2007

[http://www.sr.se/ekot/sokresult.asp?first=1&last=20&from\\_date=1990-01-01+00%3A00%3A00&to\\_date=2007-11-15+11%3A01%3A23&page=1&intUnitID=83&programID=83&nyheter=&Artikel=1715469&strSearch=unhcr](http://www.sr.se/ekot/sokresult.asp?first=1&last=20&from_date=1990-01-01+00%3A00%3A00&to_date=2007-11-15+11%3A01%3A23&page=1&intUnitID=83&programID=83&nyheter=&Artikel=1715469&strSearch=unhcr))

### **Two refugees found in container**

Thursday afternoon, two men were discovered in a container of a cargo train in Trelleborg harbour in the south of Sweden. The men were in their twenties and originated from Iran and Iraq. According to the Police, the container came by ship from Italy on 12 November. The men have now sought asylum in Sweden.

(Dagens Nyheter 15 November 2007 <http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=715929>)

### **Deportations to Afghanistan cancelled**

The Migration Board temporarily cancels all deportations to Southern Afghanistan due to the worsening security situation in the country. As a direct consequence of the decision, the deportations of the two Afghan men are also cancelled. Next week, the Board will decide what guidelines to apply. Secretary General at the Migration Board, Dan Eliasson, says the Board is willing to review the issue of whether there is an armed conflict in Afghanistan.

(Sveriges Radio 16 November 2007 <http://www.sr.se/ekot/artikel.asp?artikel=1720157>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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

Tuesday 13 to Wednesday 14 November 2007

## Denmark

### Finland corrects Fogh

During his election campaign, Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen (V) referred to Finland as a country not allowing rejected asylum-seekers to work, while claiming that such rights for asylum-seekers would turn Denmark into a magnet for asylum-seekers. The truth is, however, that after one year of waiting, asylum-seekers are allowed to work in Finland. Aske Repo from the Directorate of Immigration in Finland says that this has not led to an increase in the number of asylum-seekers, which on the contrary has gone down in Finland from 4,000 in 2006 to 1,500 so far this year.

(Jyllands-Posten and Politiken 12 November 2007

[http://jp.dk/indland/indland\\_politik/article1166404.ece](http://jp.dk/indland/indland_politik/article1166404.ece),

<http://politiken.dk/politik/article427121.ece>)

### International focus on refugees and drawings

When Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen (V) met with foreign press, the journalists were mostly interested in the Muhammed cartoons and the Danish immigration policy. The Prime Minister refused to comment on the Swedish asylum policy, but recognized that Sweden receives many asylum-seekers and believes that this would also be the case in Denmark, if some of the opposition parties got it their way.

(Politiken 12 November 2007 <http://politiken.dk/politik/article426663.ece>)

### Lykketoft criticizes the Liberals

Former Party Chairman of the Social Democrats, Mogens Lykketoft, claims that Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen has been dishonest in dealing with the asylum issue during his campaign. The Prime Minister claimed that other countries do not allow rejected asylum-seekers to live and work outside reception centres, which has later proved not to be true.

(Politiken 13 November 2007 <http://politiken.dk/politik/article428070.ece>)

### Fogh sticks with broad asylum agreement

On Election Day, Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen (V) once again said that other political parties will be able to influence asylum policy, even if the Liberals and the Conservative party were to gain the majority vote. The opposition parties are concerned that the Prime Minister will not keep his promises about broad cooperation.

(Politiken 14 November 2007 <http://politiken.dk/politik/article428232.ece>,

<http://politiken.dk/politik/article428253.ece>)

## Norway

### Four out of five are deported

The Directorate of Immigration receives on average 5,000 asylum applications every year. According to the Norwegian Police, very few rejected asylum-seekers leave

voluntarily. By August this year, the police had forcibly returned 1454 persons, while only 307 returned themselves. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) assists those who wish to return voluntarily. General Secretary of the Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS), Morten Tjessem, is not surprised by the figures, because even though persons do not qualify for asylum, they might have good reasons for wanting to stay, he says.

(Norsk Rikskringkasting 12 November 2007 <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/1.4011380>)

### **170,000 have fled Mogadishu in two weeks**

According to UNHCR, more than 170,000 people have fled Mogadishu during the last two weeks due to fighting in the capital. UNHCR is distributing supplies to the internally displaced persons in Somalia, but warns that big problems might arise in areas with many refugees. According to UNHCR, 850,000 internally are currently displaced in Somalia.

(Aftenposten 13 November 2007

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/uriks/article2099712.ece>)

### **Serbian flee to Norway**

400 Serbians from Kosovo have applied for asylum in Norway this year. By the end of September, 66 Serbians were granted asylum, 11 were granted residence permit on humanitarian grounds, while 120 asylum applications were rejected. The Directorate of Immigration (UDI) confirms that it is difficult for Serbians to live in Kosovo. According to the Unit Director of UDI, Hanne Jendal, residence permits are granted to persons who risk persecution if they are sent back. She also says that UDI follows UNHCR guidelines in handling the asylum applications.

(Dagsavisen 13 November 2007 <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article321264.ece>)

## **Sweden**

### **Police and Migration Board disagree about Iraqi passports**

Swedish residence permits, stamped in passports, have become hard currency among forgers and Iraqi refugees. The Swedish Police therefore wants the Migration Board to stop including residence permits in passports, which are often exposed to forgery. Instead they propose the issuing of so-called alien passports to all Iraqis, and include the residence permits there. However, the Board disagrees and considers passports safe and accepted in most countries.

(Sveriges Radio 12 November 2007

[http://www.sr.se/ekot/sokresult.asp?first=1&last=20&from\\_date=1990-01-01+00%3A00%3A00&to\\_date=2007-11+14+09%3A36%3A44&page=1&intUnitID=83&programID=83&nyheter=&Artikel=1712277&strSearch=pass](http://www.sr.se/ekot/sokresult.asp?first=1&last=20&from_date=1990-01-01+00%3A00%3A00&to_date=2007-11+14+09%3A36%3A44&page=1&intUnitID=83&programID=83&nyheter=&Artikel=1712277&strSearch=pass))

### **Record high numbers of immigrants**

The immigration pace to Sweden continues to break new records. The largest immigrating group is still returning Swedes, but the number of Iraqis coming to Sweden is not far behind. According to Statistics Sweden (SCB), 12,821 Swedish citizens and 9,203 Iraqi citizens had immigrated to Sweden by the third quarter of 2007. The temporary asylum law, applied between the end of November 2005 and the beginning of

2006, was given as the primary reason for the large numbers last year, but the numbers turned out to be equally high this year.

(Svenska Dagbladet 13 November 2007

[http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/artikel\\_588525.svd](http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/artikel_588525.svd))

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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

Saturday 10 to Monday 12 November 2007

## Denmark

### **Fogh: Asylum-seekers will not get a claim to housing**

Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen (V) lists four main elements in a short-term solution for the rejected asylum seekers: 1) implementation of the Government's program considering activation and education, 2) improvement of the offer of education in folk high-school and secondary school, 3) permit rejected asylum-seekers who cannot return to settle outside the reception centres and 4) increase the economic support to rejected asylum-seekers who return to Iraq. The Prime Minister says he is not talking about a *claim* to housing, but rather something that might be an option for some asylum-seekers after a concrete evaluation has been made.

(Politiken 9 November <http://politiken.dk/politik/article424843.ece>)

### **The Conservatives ready for asylum agreement**

Head of the Conservatives, Bendt Bendtsen, has promised that the government's proposal for the asylum policy will be implemented, even if the Danish People's Party is not willing to join. However, Bendtsen says he is aiming for a broad asylum agreement including the Danish Peoples Party. The New Alliance's founder Anders Samuelsen, says Bendtsen's statement shows that the Conservatives are approaching the New Alliance. Peter Skaarup from the Danish People's Party is surprised over Bendtsen's statement. Skaarup says he likes broad agreements but since the policies of the parties are so different it is not possible. The Danish People's Party maintains their policy.

(Berlingske Tidende, Jyllands Posten and Politiken 10 November 2007

<http://www.berlingske.dk/article/20071110/politik/711100356/>,

<http://jp.dk/arkiv/?id=1164313> and <http://politiken.dk/politik/article425537.ece>)

### **Asylum-seekers already live outside centres**

The question of to what extent asylum-seekers should be permitted to live and work outside reception centres, has already been answered – many of them already do. According to the heads of the two biggest asylum holding centres at Avnstrup and Sandholm, nearly one out of three asylum seekers spend most of the week with their friends or partners in Copenhagen, and only return to pick up their mail or clean their rooms. Head of the Sandholm Asylum Centre, Jørgen Chemnitz, says the quality of life for young male asylum seekers dramatically improves if they have relationships outside. (Jyllands-Posten 10 November 2007 <http://jp.dk/arkiv/?id=1163506> , translation by News Express)

## Norway

### **56 reports of concern at reception centres for children**

The Child Welfare Service in the municipality of Asker runs the Directorate of Immigration's only transit reception centre for unaccompanied minor asylum-seekers

over 15 years old. 56 reports of concern were by 1 October 2007 registered at the reception centre. The head of the centre, Tor Einar Høystad, says most of them concern possible trafficking victims, either due to forced prostitution, forced labour or other crimes. It might also be a combination. Høystad underlines that not all of the youngsters that are reported are victims, but the policy is that it' i better to report one too many than one too few.

(Verdens Gang and Norsk Rikskringkasting 12 November 2007

<http://www.vg.no/pub/vgart.hbs?artid=184082>,

<http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/distrikt/ostlandssendingen/1.4012860>)

## **Sweden**

### **Refugee flow in Congo-Kinshasa**

Since the civil war ended in 2003 more people than ever have fled from their homes in the province of North Kivu in Congo-Kinshasa. According to UNHCR more than 160,000 persons have fled their homes over the last months. Since December last year, approximately 375,000 persons have been forced to flee their homes in the province of North Kivu due to the continuing fighting between government forces, militias and rebel groups. UNHCR expresses concern for the risk of violence and assault towards the civilian population.

(Svenska Dagbladet 9 November 2007

[http://www.svd.se/nyheter/utrikes/artikel\\_580541.svd](http://www.svd.se/nyheter/utrikes/artikel_580541.svd))

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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

Thursday 8 to Friday 9 November 2007

## Denmark

### **Liberals ready for EU rule on asylum-seekers' right to work**

Asylum-seekers' right to work is a hot subject in the election campaign. The Liberals are against allowing asylum-seekers to work but are ready to join the EU Directive, which gives asylum-seekers the right to work after a year of waiting. Today Denmark has dispensation from this directive. According to the Liberal's head in the EU, Charlotte Antonsen, it would not involve any difficulties to join the directive since the Danish rules already live up to EU's rules. Her explanation is that the Directive's right applies after 12 months, but an asylum application process in Denmark normally takes about 6 months. (Politiken 7 November 2007 <http://politiken.dk/politik/article422354.ece>)

### **Employers warn against letting all asylum-seekers work**

Despite the lack of labour in Denmark many employers warn against the Social Democrats and the Social Liberals proposal to give asylum-seekers the right to live and work outside the reception centres. Former head of the Social Liberals and present head of the Danish Chamber of Commerce, Poul Erik Pedersen, points out that the organization would like to see a work possibility for asylum-seekers who have been living in reception centres for years, but states that by giving asylum-seekers direct access to the labour market everyone would seek asylum in Denmark. Also the Danish Labour Market and SALA are criticizing the proposal while LO praise it. (Politiken 7 November 2007 <http://politiken.dk/politik/article422372.ece>)

### **Haarder: "Asylum-seekers have no right to work"**

Former Minister of Integration, Bertel Haarder from the Liberals, says that asylum-seekers should not have a right to work on contractual conditions. In 2003 Haarder legislated that asylum-seekers could participate in activities in companies and voluntary work. But he points out that it is a big difference from the Social Democrats and the Social Liberals proposal. "If rejected asylum-seekers would have the right to work in line with the proposal, which none of the Nordic countries allows, it will have a dramatic effect and make the human smugglers' business even more blooming", says Haarder. (Jyllands Posten 8 November 2007 <http://jp.dk/arkiv/?id=1160412>)

### **Fogh wants broad agreement in the asylum area**

Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen (Liberals) said Thursday night in DR (Denmark's Radio) that he immediately after the election on Tuesday will call for negotiations on a broad and long-term agreement on asylum policy. "In the short-term, we must find a solution for the rejected asylum-seekers which a majority of the politicians can accept. At the same time we must establish a long-term asylum policy, meaning that the actual refugees of course will get a safe haven but the rejected asylum-seekers would have to go home as soon as possible". However, the Prime Minister is still negative towards letting the rejected asylum-seekers work.

(Berlingske Tidende and Politiken 9 November 2007  
<http://www.berlingske.dk/article/20071108/politik/711080432/>,  
<http://politiken.dk/politik/article424118.ece>)

## Sweden

### **Romanian mass immigration to Italy causes crisis**

The atmosphere was tense when Romania's Head of Government Calin Popescu Tariceanu visited Rome and met with Pope Benedictus XVI and Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi. Romanians compose the largest immigrant group in Italy today, and since Romania became a member of the European Union in January this year, the number has increased dramatically. Romanians have been involved in serious crimes which have led to protests and revenge among Italian citizens, especially from right-wing extremists. In Romania people have demonstrated against mistreatment and deportations of Romanians in front of the Embassy of Italy. Racism is on the rise in Italy and a diplomatic crisis has developed between Romania and Italy. UNHCR spokesman Laura Boldrini says the situation is tense and serious.

(Dagens Nyheter 8 November 2007)

### **Problem countries pointed out**

The Swedish Migration Board asks the Government to help them improve the cooperation with countries which failed asylum-seekers are to be sent back to. In many cases it is difficult to provide travel documents for rejected asylum-seekers. The Board's Director-general, Dan Elisasson, highlights ten countries in a letter to the Ministry of Justice: The Democratic Republic of Congo, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mongolia, Russia, Tajikistan and Vietnam. Nine out of 10 asylum-seekers lack ID-documents.

(Sveriges Television 8 November 2007)

[http://www.svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=22577&a=964293&lid=is\\_search549588&lpos=0&queryArt549588=asyl\\*&sortOrder549588=0&doneSearch=true&sd=22634&from=siteSearch&pageArt549588=0](http://www.svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=22577&a=964293&lid=is_search549588&lpos=0&queryArt549588=asyl*&sortOrder549588=0&doneSearch=true&sd=22634&from=siteSearch&pageArt549588=0))

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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

Tuesday 6 to Wednesday 7 November 2007

## Denmark

### **Appealing Iraqis win over the Danish Immigration Service**

More than one third of the asylum-seekers from the Southern and Central parts of Iraq who have been rejected by the Danish Immigration Service this year, have later had their decisions overturned by the Refugee Appeals Board. Last year only every tenth case was overturned by the Board. For the whole of Iraq every fourth rejected case was changed by the Board. UNHCR's position is that persons from the Southern and Central parts of Iraq are in need of international protection.

(Jyllands Posten 5 November 2007 <http://jp.dk/arkiv/?id=1156872>)

### **The Social Democrats and the Radicals stands united**

One week before the election the Social Democrats and the Social Liberals show a united front in the asylum area. Helle Thorning-Schmidt (SD) and Margrethe Vestager (SL) put the asylum area in the spotlight by stating that if they win the election, asylum-seekers will have a free choice of living in reception centres and to get education and employment. According to Thorning-Schmidt this will prevent mental ill health among the asylum-seekers and also create better conditions for integration. "It is also an invitation to the New Alliance. We believe that a shared line can be created on this area", she says. Naser Khader from the New Alliance is not impressed by the offer and calls it a "tactical maneuver".

(Berlingske Tidende 5 November 2007

<http://www.berlingske.dk/article/20071105/valg/111051149/>)

### **Khader: "Give them residence permit and employment"**

Naser Khader from New Alliance is specifying his demands to the government in the asylum area. Khader wants to give all the rejected asylum-seekers a two year temporary residence and working permit, so they can pay for living outside the reception centres themselves. He says the situation in Iraq determines this proposal and that the situation must be evaluated again in two years. If the situation in Iraq has not changed in ten years, permanent residence permits might be the way to go, he adds.

(Politiken 6 November 2007 <http://politiken.dk/politik/article420145.ece>)

### **Fogh: "Denmark will be a magnet for refugees"**

Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen warns that Denmark will be a magnet for refugees if asylum-seekers will get the right to work. This comes as a reaction after the proposal from the Social Democrats and the Social Liberals to the New Alliance. Fogh says SD is breaking a promise since they now are willing to go much further than many other European countries. "An alien policy like that would mean that Denmark will be an enormous magnet and an attractive terminus for the world's human smugglers", Fogh says.

(Politiken 6 November 2007 <http://politiken.dk/politik/article420194.ece>)

### **UNHCR: “No reason to fear increased refugee flows”**

According to UN's Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the European Council on refugees and exiles (ECRE) there is no reasons to fear increased refugee flows if a government led by the Social Democrats and the Social Liberals would let asylum-seekers live and work outside the reception centres. Hanne Mathisen, spokesperson at UNHCR for the Baltic and Nordic countries states that many countries in Europe are letting asylum-seekers live and work outside the reception centres, and this has not had an effect on the refugee flows. The Secretary General at ECRE, Bjarte Vandvik, is sharing UNHCR's position but according to the Secretary General at the Danish Refugee Council, Andreas Kamm, the domestic refugee organizations are by no means united in to what degree SD and SL have hit the spot with their proposal.

(Berlingske Tidende 6 November 2007)

<http://www.berlingske.dk/article/20071106/valg/111061266/>)

## **Estonia**

### **Most Estonians back automatic citizenship for stateless person's children**

Most Estonians are for automatically granting citizenship to children of persons with undefined citizenship, it appears from a survey commissioned by the daily Eesti Päevaleht. Under the present law, children of holders of a "grey" or alien's passport born in Estonia after February 1992 are eligible for citizenship, while their parents have to apply for it. Data from the Interior Ministry show that there are 3,210 persons under 15 carrying alien's passports Estonia. The Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner Thomas Hammarberg says that the right to citizenship must not depend on parents' wish. Meeting with Hammarberg, Foreign Minister Urmas Paet was open to the criticism, saying the government was prepared to discuss the issue, but later on the government rejected the idea.

(Baltic News Service 7 November 2007)

## **Sweden**

### **Torture accusations against the Greek coastguard**

A new report from over 70 Human Rights Organizations, including Amnesty International, reveals mistreatment of refugees arriving in boats over the Mediterranean. The problem with boat refugees dreaming of a better life in Europe is just as heavy for Greece as for Italy and Spain. Most of the refugees travel over the Mediterranean and next go to countries like Germany, France and Sweden. The illegal stream of refugees is increasing dramatically, and over 500 people have drowned on their way from Africa to Europe so far this year.

(Svenska Dagbladet 5 November 2007)

[http://www.svd.se/import\\_np/import\\_np\\_utrikes/artikel\\_562369.svd](http://www.svd.se/import_np/import_np_utrikes/artikel_562369.svd))

### **Human smuggling is increasing**

We are witnessing a dramatic increase in human smuggling to Sweden. To the Western part of Sweden alone some 40 Iraqis are smuggled every day. The largest groups of Iraqi refugees are living in countries in the Middle East. For those who are able to reach Europe, Sweden is the main target. According to the Swedish Migration Board, 20.000 Iraqis will arrive in Sweden illegally this year. The Iraqis are smuggled via Syria, but also via Greece and France. To reach Sweden most of them travel through Denmark.

(Sveriges Television 5 November 2007

[http://www.svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=34007&a=959920&lid=is\\_search527895&lpos=0&queryArt527895=flykting\\*&sortOrder527895=3&doneSearch=true&sd=47225&from=siteSearch&pageArt527895=0](http://www.svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=34007&a=959920&lid=is_search527895&lpos=0&queryArt527895=flykting*&sortOrder527895=3&doneSearch=true&sd=47225&from=siteSearch&pageArt527895=0))

### **The Swedish Migration Board avoids JO-criticism**

The Social Board of the Municipality of Solna reported the Board's treatment of unaccompanied minor asylum-seekers (UMA) to the Parliamentary Ombudsmen (JO) last year. The municipality was given more responsibility for the UMAs than they were supposed to, according to guidelines given in 2006. JO Nils-Olaf Berggren says the problem lies in the fact that more UMAs than predicted arrived in Sweden and other municipalities are not very interested in receiving this group.

(Dagens Nyheter 6 November 2007 <http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=712952>)

### **Ruling on situation in Iraq appealed**

The question as to whether there is an internal armed conflict in Iraq or not has again been put on the agenda after Lawyer Bengt Nergård appealed a previous judgment from the Migration Court on behalf of a 51 year old Iraqi man. The Migration Board has given an expulsion order, because the Migration Court of Appeal in three previous asylum-cases has stated that there is no internal armed conflict in Iraq. Due to the lack of recognition of the conflict as an internal armed conflict, asylum-seekers from Iraq must prove an individual threat.

(Dagens Nyheter 6 November 2007 <http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?a=712799>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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Saturday 3 to Monday 5 November 2007

## Denmark

### **Hvilshøj rejects criticism in asylum case**

A 13-year old mentally ill Iraqi boy is granted residence permit in Denmark, while his mother will be sent back to Iraq. Minister of Integration Rikke Hvilshøj (the Liberals) rejects the criticism coming from the opposition parties in this particular case. An expulsion order is the reason why Hvilshøj could not grant humanitarian residence permit to both the boy and his mother. The boy's psychiatrist warns against separating the two. The mother will not be deported until the tribunal has decided whether the expulsion order can be changed.

(Politiken 3 November 2007 <http://politiken.dk/indland/article417108.ece> and Berlingske Tidende 4 November 2007 <http://www.berlingske.dk/article/20071104/danmark/111031319/>)

### **Abducted children might never return home**

Red Cross' spokesman Inah Kaloga says it is difficult to tell where some of the 103 abducted children in Chad originally are from, and some of the children might therefore never see their parents again. 91 of the children lived together with at least one of their parents when they were kidnapped. Most of the children are between three and five years old and this is one of the reasons why UNHCR and the Red Cross have problems with establishing exactly where the children are from. The children have been interviewed and photographed by UNHCR, and it has come clear that many of the children are siblings. According to UNHCR this will make the work easier.

(Politiken 3 November 2007 <http://politiken.dk/udland/article417299.ece>)

## Finland

### **Asylum-seeking woman from Rwanda rejected**

A Rwandese woman who has been protected by the Whitsun parish in Lahtis has now had her right to appeal denied by the Supreme Administrative Court. The woman came to Finland two years ago and had her asylum application rejected this spring. Since then she has been living in hiding, with help from the Whitsun parish in Lahtis.

(Yle 2 November 2007

<http://svenska.yle.fi/nyheter/sok.php?id=112897&sokvariant=arkivet&lookfor=asyl&advanced=yes&starttid=&sluttid=&antal=10>)

## Norway

### **Fleeing from the violence**

The 90,000 people who have fled Somalia's capital Mogadishu receive little help. Rolf A. Vestvik from the Norwegian Refugee Council says it is almost impossible for humanitarian organizations to reach the refugees due to the insecure situation in the

country. 39 international humanitarian organizations warn against a humanitarian disaster. UNHCR reports that those who have remained in Mogadishu live in constant fear of new violent outbreaks. According to UNHCR, over half of the people who have fled the city have gone to the village of Afgooye, outside Mogadishu. UN estimates that at least 400,000 people currently live in camps outside the capital.

(Dagsavisen 2 November 2007 <http://www.dagsavisen.no/utenriks/article320334.ece>)

### **Raises alarm about asylum children**

Responsibility for asylum-seekers between 15 and 18 years old will not be transferred to the Child Welfare Service next year, and they will therefore have to remain in the reception centres. A network consisting of 14 organizations, among them Save the Children and The Lawyer Association, think the government violates Norwegian law and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. They are meeting with the Standing Committee on Family and Cultural Affairs of the Norwegian Parliament on 5 November. Only asylum-seekers under 15 years old will from now on be taken care of by the Child Welfare Service, which is only 10 % of the 250- 300 unaccompanied minor asylum-seekers in Norway today.

(Dagsavisen 5 November 2007 <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article320440.ece>)

### **UNHCR: 400,000 refugees to repatriate to Afghanistan**

UNHCR states that 400,000 Afghan refugees will by the end of 2007 have repatriated to Afghanistan from its neighbouring countries, mostly from Iran and Pakistan. According to UNHCR, the authorities in Pakistan and Iran are putting pressure to make more Afghan refugees repatriate. There are about 8 million Afghan refugees today. Since Taliban was overthrown in 2001, some 4, 2 million Afghans have returned to their home country. At the same time fights in Afghanistan still force people to flee from their homes. So far this year some 15, 000 families have been driven away from their homes in the southern parts of Afghanistan.

(Aftenposten 5 November 2007

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/uriks/article2085002.ece>)

## **Sweden**

### **The refugee reception is close to collapse**

The Swedish Migration Board (SMB) has 34 reception units and almost 40, 000 persons registered in their system. Of them, 2,500 persons have been granted residence permits but due to the housing shortage they are being forced to stay at the Board's reception units. The units are overburdened and the SMB Secretary General, Dan Eliasson, warns that the whole system might soon collapse. He states that the situation will soon be untenable since the municipalities are too slow in arranging accommodation and the police are not effective enough in carrying out forced deportations.

(Dagens Nyheter 1 November 2007, p.12-13)

### **40 refugees thrown overboard**

Once again refugees have been thrown overboard and killed by human smugglers during the dangerous boat journey over the Gulf of Eden. On Saturday authorities in Yemen informed that corpses of 40 Somali refugees had been brought in from the ocean. Altogether 120 persons were thrown overboard 1,5 nautical miles out of the

Yemenite coast, of which 78 persons were saved and taken to hospital. After treatment they were handed over to UNHCR, said the head of security in the Abyan province.  
(Svenska Dagbladet 3 November 2007  
[http://www.svd.se/nyheter/utrikes/artikel\\_558175.svd](http://www.svd.se/nyheter/utrikes/artikel_558175.svd))

### **Refugee flow to Sweden is expected to increase**

New statistics from UNHCR shows that Sweden receives more Iraqi refugees than the rest of Europe together. Between January and September this year almost 14,000 Iraqi asylum-seekers have come to Sweden while 13,500 Iraqis have fled to other countries in Europe. According to UNHCR's Nordic and Baltic Office's spokesperson, Hanne Mathisen, the cause for this might be the known fact that Sweden lives up to its international obligations and also follows UNHCR's recommendations. However, the fact that Syria has closed its borders and, according to an internal document from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Syrian authorities are about to start deporting refugees back to Iraq will lead to a further increase in Iraqi refugees coming to Sweden and to the rest of Europe.

(Sveriges Radio 5 November 2007

[http://www.sr.se/ekot/sokresult.asp?first=1&last=20&from\\_date=1990-01-01+00%3A00%3A00&to\\_date=2007-11-05+10%3A10%3A24&page=1&intUnitID=83&programID=83&nyheter=&Artikel=1697291&strSearch=asyl](http://www.sr.se/ekot/sokresult.asp?first=1&last=20&from_date=1990-01-01+00%3A00%3A00&to_date=2007-11-05+10%3A10%3A24&page=1&intUnitID=83&programID=83&nyheter=&Artikel=1697291&strSearch=asyl))

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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.

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

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

Saturday 27 October to Friday 2 November 2007

## Denmark

### **Social Liberals U-turn on immigration causes unrest**

The Social Liberals ran into trouble last weekend by announcing a turnaround in immigration policy. Party leader Margrethe Vestager's efforts to align her party with potential coalition partners, the Social Democrats, by stating that the Social Liberals are now prepared to accept strict immigration legislation, were met with disdain by some party members. The party's former spokesperson on immigration, Simon Emil Ammitzbøll, said that the party leadership had made a big mistake by negotiating with the Social Democrats in the middle of an election campaign.

(Politiken 27 October 2007 Translation by News Express

<http://politiken.dk/politik/article407603.ece>)

### **The Conservatives demand change in Khader's asylum policy**

The Conservatives' political spokesperson, Pia Christmas-Møller, demands a stricter asylum policy from the New Alliance before a governmental collaboration or any collaboration at all could be possible. It is in particular Naser Khader's policy about granting asylum-seekers and rejected asylum-seekers work permits that are not well received by the Conservatives. They are also critical against Khader's wish to shut down the reception centres and keep only Sandholmlejren as a reception station.

(Politiken 28 October 2007 <http://politiken.dk/politik/article408283.ece>)

### **Integration report full of mistakes**

The Danish Employers' Federation (DA) claims that the pan-European immigrant report published earlier this year by the British Council in Brussels, which ranked Denmark at no.21 out of 28 European countries, is riddled with mistakes. According to DA, The Institute of Human Rights, who provided the Danish data for the report, mistakenly informed Brussels that under Danish legislation there is no law that protects immigrants from discrimination, no public funding is provided for immigrant organizations, and no information is available to immigrants concerning authorization for foreign qualifications. Head of Department Birgitte Kofod Olsen at the Institute of Human Rights rejects the criticism.

(Jyllands-Posten 31 October 2007 <http://jp.dk/indland/article1151066.ece> Translation by News Express)

### **Iraqi translators are paid with money from development aid fund**

Sources in the Ministry of Refugees, Immigration and Integration Affairs and Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirm that money is taken from development aid funds to give economical assistance to Iraqi translators. The translators were brought to Denmark last summer by the army's Hercules plane, and they are so-called pre-asylum-seekers.

Steen Gade from the Socialist People's party thinks it is grotesque to let the poor people pay the price of a problem Denmark has been involved in creating.

( Berlingske Tidende 1 November 2007  
<http://www.berlingske.dk/article/20071101/danmark/711010318/>)

### **Welfare above Integration**

Danish voters consider welfare to be the most important topic of the election. For the first time since 1998 the refugee- and immigration question has moved down the list. A survey conducted by Gallup Institute for the Berlingske Tidende shows that 29 % consider welfare to be the most important issue, while 27 % consider refugee/immigration to be the main issue of this year's election.

(Berlingske Tidende 1 November 2007  
<http://www.berlingske.dk/article/20071101/valg/111011268/>)

## **Estonia**

### **Increase of naturalizations**

According to data from the Citizenship and Migration Board the number of stateless persons living on a valid residence permit in Estonia has, from the end of last year decreased from 125,799, until the end of September 2007, to 118,616. Since 1992 altogether 146,240 persons have been naturalized and the percentage of stateless persons has decreased from 32 % to 9 % between 1992 and 2006. The national integration program's action plan for 2004-2007 is to grant Estonian citizenship by naturalization to 5,000 persons annually.

(Baltic News Service 26 October 2007)

### **Minister rejects naturalizing process being too slow**

During a visit to Finland, Estonia's Population Minister Urve Palo said that Estonia is not too slow in naturalizing stateless residents and that the Russian speaking part of the population also is responsible for solving the issue of citizenship. Palo rejected the charges that Estonia is issuing citizenship too slowly. According to Palo, Estonia cannot be accused of having made citizenship tests too difficult or conducting them with insufficient frequency. Palo indicated that stateless residents do not have enough motivation to acquire Estonian citizenship, as social guarantees are equal for stateless residents and citizens. "We need to find ways to motivate them," the minister said in Helsinki.

(Baltic News Service 30 October 2007)

### **Estonian government negative to grant newborn citizenship**

The Estonian government has come to the decision not to support the Center Party's wish to grant citizenship to children born to parents with a permanent residence permit in Estonia. According to the bill, initiated by the oppositional Center Party one month ago, children, whose parents reside in Estonia on a permanent residence permit, should be granted citizenship, even if they are not Estonian citizens at the time of the child's birth. The Justice Ministry's proposal to the government was not to support the bill, saying that the effective Citizenship Act created all the preconditions to prevent the statelessness of children. According to the Citizenship and Migration Board there are 118,616 stateless persons in Estonia residing on the basis of effective residence permits.

(Baltic News Service 1 November 2007)

## Norway

### **Iraqis threaten UDI employees**

Iraqis with temporary residence permit now receive rejections and will be sent back to Iraq. Some of the rejected Iraqis have responded by threatening the employees of the Directorate of Immigration (UDI). Minister of Labour and Social Inclusion, Bjarne Håkon Hanssen, says any critic should be aimed at him rather than the other employees of the Immigration Board who are just following the ministry's directions.

(Aftenposten 27 October 2007

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article2069396.ece>)

### **Convicted foreigners to be sent home for serving their penalty**

Minister of Justice and the Police, Knut Storberget, is currently touring Europe. He wants sentenced foreigners to serve their penalty in their home countries, and has already managed to make an agreement with Russia. Altogether he will visit 12 countries. So far this year 20 criminals have been sent out of Norway, compared to six last year.

(Verdens Gang 28 October 2007 <http://www.vg.no/pub/vgart.hbs?artid=177180>)

## Sweden

### **Human smuggling revealed in Malmö**

Last weekend customs officials on the Swedish side of the Öresund Bridge revealed two attempts of human smuggling into Sweden. Four persons were apprehended suspected of human smuggling or help to human smuggling and the eleven persons seeking asylum were handed over to personnel at the Swedish Migration Board. Two of the suspects were released on Sunday morning but the other two were arrested.

(Svenska Dagbladet 28 October 2007

[http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/artikel\\_540077.svd](http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/artikel_540077.svd))

### **Stockholm receives 30 refugee children**

The city of Stockholm has made an agreement with the Swedish Migration Board to receive thirty unaccompanied refugee children with a permanent residence permit. The city has earlier made an agreement on receiving such refugee children and youths without a permanent residence permit. "Through creating a home for children and youth who have received a permanent residence permit, with qualified personnel, we will better be able to help the children carrying traumatic experiences", says the social vice mayor Ulf Kristensson.

(Dagens Nyheter 29 October 2007, p. 14)

### **Risk of deportations despite worsening situation in Afghanistan**

The Swedish Migration Board (SMB) is expected to shortly take a new position on the situation of the unsafe areas in Afghanistan but continues in the meantime to carry out deportations to these areas despite the worsening security situation in the country.

During August and September, four rejected asylum-seekers from Afghanistan had their cases handed over to the Police, who enforced the deportations. At the moment two Afghans are kept in custody and can be deported any day. One of them comes from Ghazni in Central Afghanistan, an area to which UNHCR considers too dangerous for return. According to Anders Sundquist, Head of the Swedish Advice Center for refugees and asylum-seekers, SMB should not have handed over any errands to the police until

they have reviewed the situation in Afghanistan. But SMB cannot wait with the decisions. "Like other legal authorities we have to make decisions based on the knowledge we have", says Dan Eliasson, Secretary General at SMB.

(Sveriges Radio 29 October 2007

[http://www.sr.se/ekot/sokresult.asp?first=1&last=20&from\\_date=1990-01-01+00%3A00%3A00&to\\_date=2007-10-31+10%3A53%3A09&page=1&intUnitID=83&programID=83&nyheter=&Artikel=1683878&strSearch=unhcr](http://www.sr.se/ekot/sokresult.asp?first=1&last=20&from_date=1990-01-01+00%3A00%3A00&to_date=2007-10-31+10%3A53%3A09&page=1&intUnitID=83&programID=83&nyheter=&Artikel=1683878&strSearch=unhcr))

### **Kidnapping of 103 African children**

On Thursday nine Frenchmen, six from the organization L'Arche de Zoé (Zoés ark) and three journalists, were stopped while they were about to send 103 Chadian and Sudanese children by plane from Abéché in Chad to Paris in France. Zoés ark claimed that the orphaned children were saved from being child soldiers and that French families not would adopt the children but be "host families". Annette Rehrl, spokesperson for UNHCR, says that more and more points to the children neither being orphaned nor child soldiers. "They say all the time that they want to go home to their parents", Rehrl says. The nine Frenchmen from Zoés ark and the six Spanish men who were part of the aircrew were on Monday charged with kidnapping of under-aged children, fraud and accessory to a crime.

(Svenska Dagbladet 30 October 2007

[http://www.svd.se/nyheter/utrikes/artikel\\_543067.svd](http://www.svd.se/nyheter/utrikes/artikel_543067.svd))

### **90, 000 have fled from fighting in Mogadishu**

Almost 90, 000 civilians have fled from their homes in Somalia's capital Mogadishu after last weekends violent fighting. According to UNCHR this was "the worst fighting in several months". At least ten civilians were killed in different incidents and at one point Ethiopian soldiers opened fire towards demonstrators, who protested against their presence in Somalia. The situation had calmed down on Wednesday but people were still fleeing from the city. Humanitarian organizations are warning that a catastrophe is beginning to pile up in Somalia, since they are having difficulties in managing the help needs in the war torn country.

(Svenska Dagbladet 31 October 2007

[http://www.svd.se/nyheter/utrikes/artikel\\_548539.svd](http://www.svd.se/nyheter/utrikes/artikel_548539.svd))

### **Swedish Migration Board: "the law must be changed"**

A result of the new Aliens Act is that rejected asylum-seekers with a family in Sweden must return to their home country to apply for a residence permit, a process which is lengthy and forces the asylum-seeker to be away from his or her family for at least six months. Secretary General at the Swedish Migration Board, Dan Eliasson, is in a letter to the government proposing amendment. "I find it outmoded and unnecessarily formalistic forcing parents to be separated from their child and go to their home country for a long time to apply for a residence permit they are entitled to", says Eliasson.

(Dagens Nyheter 2 November 2007

<http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=147&a=711873>)

### **Increase of Iraqi asylum-seekers in Sweden**

The number of Iraqi asylum-seekers coming to Sweden continues to increase. During October almost 3500 persons sought asylum in Sweden and half of them were from Iraq. This is the largest number during the 21st century. Last time such a large number of asylum-seekers came to Sweden during one month was in the beginning of the nineties. (Sveriges Radio 2 November 2007

[http://www.sr.se/ekot/sokresult.asp?first=1&last=20&from\\_date=1990-01-01+00%3A00%3A00&to\\_date=2007-11-02+12%3A10%3A53&page=1&intUnitID=83&programID=83&nyheter=&Artikel=1693103&strSearch=asyl](http://www.sr.se/ekot/sokresult.asp?first=1&last=20&from_date=1990-01-01+00%3A00%3A00&to_date=2007-11-02+12%3A10%3A53&page=1&intUnitID=83&programID=83&nyheter=&Artikel=1693103&strSearch=asyl))

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