

# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Tuesday 1 August 2006

## Danish press

### **Dispute on living conditions for asylum seekers**

Two asylum centers in Hanstholm and Brovst have spent part of the extra 37 million DKK (6.26 million USD) granted by the government on extending their facilities for families with children. Rejected asylum seekers waiting in the centers to be sent home also benefit from the improved conditions. This is, according to the Danish People's Party (DF), a clear violation of the deal with the government, sparking an extensive debate.

(Jyllands-Posten 1 August 2006 News-Express translation)

### **50 demonstrators at TV headquarters**

About 50 young demonstrators Monday forced their way into Soborg TV headquarters' reception to protest against Denmark's treatment of asylum seekers. They behaved calmly, but nobody wanted to talk to the police or take responsibility for the action, neither was anyone arrested nor fined. The police do not know yet if the protest was affiliated with a larger political movement.

(Netavisen 31 July 2006 <http://netavisen.newspaq.dk/indland/?aid=192618>)

### **Collection for Lebanon catching on**

Danes are beginning to give money to the relief aid and Lebanese refugees, donating so far over half a million DKK (85.000 USD), after a slow start. The collected amount is less than for the tsunami or the Pakistani earthquake, possibly because the press' focus on political issues at the expense of the humanitarian situation.

(Berlingske Tiderne 1 August 2006 <http://www.berlingske.dk/indland/artikel:aid=772140/>)

## Norwegian press

### **Asylum-seekers put in security cells on weak grounds**

The police admit having poor legal grounds for placing asylum-seekers in detention in a camp at Trandum (outside Oslo), which is often the last stop for rejected asylum-seekers on their way out of the country. Over 80 persons have been placed in security cells at Trandum since it was established in 2004. The camp has previously been criticized by both the Civil Ombudsman and the Council of Europe's Anti-Torture Committee. In a report from the committee, it is stated that the camp lacks documentation on when and why aliens are put into the security cells.

(Verdens Gang 1 August 2006 <http://www.vg.no/pub/vgart.hbs?artid=125102>)

## Swedish press

### **Swedish relief trucks held up in Syria**

Trucks from the Swedish Rescue Services (Räddningsverket) are held up at the Syrian border town Aarida. The 20 aid workers were sent this weekend to deliver food and medicine to Lebanon. Sweden's assistance to Lebanon now totals 56.1 million SEK

(7.63 million USD). A second plane filled with Swedish personnel and trucks landed in Syria Monday.

(Dagens Nyheter 1 August 2006 SPR translation)

#### **Janjawid militia attacks refugee camp**

UN and the African Union condemn the Sudanese army and Janjawid militia for having attacked refugee camps and rebel bases in Jebel Moon, Darfur last Wednesday. Some 300 Arabian militiamen rode into Aro Sharow village on horses and camels, killing at least 29 persons and putting on fire a quarter of its huts and tents, says the UN Refugee Agency UNHCR.

(Dagens Nyheter 29 July 2006

<http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=148&a=562083>)

#### **Attempted murder at refugee centre**

A 30-year-old asylum seeker was arrested late Monday suspected of a murder attempt with a knife on two fellow asylum seekers at the Migration Board's centre in Karlskoga. The incident was triggered by a row over a mobile telephone. The victims were taken to hospital, but had no serious injuries. The suspect had just arrived at the centre and lacks identity papers.

(Dagens Nyheter 31 July 2006

<http://www.sr.se/orebro/nyheter/artikel.asp?artikel=907660>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Wednesday 2 August 2006

## Danish press

### **No money to be spent on rejected asylum seekers**

The Danish People's Party has been guaranteed that the extra 37.5 million DKK (6.37 million USD) granted by the government to improve the conditions for children living in asylum centers, won't be used to provide better facilities for rejected asylum seekers who are refusing to leave the country.

(Politiken 2 August 2006 News Ex-Press translation)

### **Building of asylum centre continues**

In spite of protests from the Danish People's Party, new buildings will be erected for families and children on the asylum centre in Hanstholm. When the building is finished, refugees and their children will no longer have to share a single room.

(Danish Radio 1 August 2006

<http://www.dr.dk/Regioner/Vest/Nyheder/Politik/2006/08/01/155705.htm>)

### **Unemployed immigrants can solve bottleneck**

There are social groups in Denmark with a lot of unemployment, even though companies howl and scream for workers. Activating immigrants and improving their qualifications will remove several bottlenecks. Since 2004, immigrant unemployment has fallen from 25.000 to 20.000 full-time places. Amongst immigrants from Somalia, Syria and Iraq, less than half of those who have been in Denmark six years or more are working.

(Berlingske Tiderne 1 August 2006

<http://www.berlingske.dk/business/artikel:aid=772364/>)

### **Minister to reply on expulsion**

Minister for Refugees, Immigrants and Integration Rikke Hvilshøj (V) will have a second look on an expulsion from Fredericia, where Arlinda Salihi was not allowed to stay in Denmark whilst caring for her sick husband and children, aged three and one years.

(Jydske Vestkysten 2 August 2006

<http://www.jv.dk/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060802/KOLDINGTREKANTEN/608010411/>)

## Estonian press

### **Estonia likely to offer more relief to Near East refugees**

Estonian Foreign Minister Urmas Paet said the humanitarian situation in Lebanon and the Gaza strip is critical and that it is not ruled out that Estonia will increase its present contribution. Last week Estonia allocated 500.000 EEK (approximately 40.320 USD) to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the relief work in Lebanon.

(Baltic News Service 2 August 2006)

## Finnish press

### **Refugee deportation order may be overturned**

Finland may not have the right to deport eight Somali men convicted of repeated accounts of robbery, assault, and sexual crimes. All of the men are from southern and central Somalia, still considered unstable after the recent capture of Mogadishu by Islamist militias. Deporting them would contravene UNHCR recommendations that no refugees should be returned to these areas. Some also point out that the men were not criminals when they arrived in Finland, since they sought asylum as children. (YLE 2 August 2006 <http://www.yle.fi/news/id39867.html>)

## Swedish press

### **Anti-immigrant groups active in election campaigns**

Anti-immigrant and anti-refugee political organizations are increasing their efforts to capture local and parliamentary seats in the September elections. Limited in earlier years to victories for local government seats, the parties have now candidates across the country. The groups can only hope to get a small percentage of the votes as they lack charismatic leaders.

(Radio Sweden 2 August 2006 <http://www.sr.se/cgi-bin/International/nyhetssidor/artikel.asp?ProgramID=2054&Nyheter=&artikel=909167>)

### **Critics blast Sweden's no to Lebanese visitors**

Amnesty International and others have sharply criticized Swedish authorities' refusal to grant visas to Lebanese citizens wanting to visit relatives here. Swedish immigration authorities say they fear that the Lebanese will stay in Sweden and therefore rejects their request for visas.

(Radio Sweden 2 August 2006 <http://www.sr.se/cgi-bin/International/nyhetssidor/artikel.asp?ProgramID=2054&Nyheter=&artikel=909168>)

### **Evacuation of Swedes completed**

8.027 Swedes have been evacuated in what is the Swedish state's largest rescue operation to date. The remaining approximately 70 Swedish citizens will be evacuated from southern Lebanon with other countries' planes or vessels.

(Svenska Dagbladet 1 August 2006 SPR translation)

### **Left Party demands acute care for hiding refugees**

Need for care, not ability to pay, should decide whether patients get care or not. Alas, Örebro county council should provide emergency care for hiding refugees as well. The demand is put forward in a bill from the Left Party to the county council.

(Radio Sweden 1 August 2006 <http://www.sr.se/orebro/nyheter/artikel.asp?artikel=908746>)

### **Sweden ejects Saddam's man**

A former member of Saddam Hussein's elite Republican Guard has been denied permission to stay in Sweden. The Swedish Migration Board ruled that under the Dublin Convention, his claim should be processed in Britain, the first European Union country where he sought asylum.

(The Local 1 August 2006 <http://www.thelocal.se/article.php?ID=4492&date=20060801&PHPSESSID=00b8d60b3c0d60be4f5b7b0d6983773d>)

### **Killed police in self-defense – gets to stay in Sweden**

A 30-year-old man from Angola residing in Karlskoga, whose asylum application was rejected last year, gets to stay in Sweden. The man fled Angola after having killed a policeman and claims to belong to the resistance movement FLEC. According to the Migration Court's ruling, the man acted in self-defense when killing the policeman and it is probable that he risks torture if returned.

(Sveriges Television 1 August 2006

<http://svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=33831&a=630999>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Thursday 3 August 2006

## Danish press

### **Gribskov center for unaccompanied minors looking for local helpers**

The children in the centre come from Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Morocco, Sri Lanka, China, Albania, Vietnam and Pakistan, and have in common that they all came to Denmark without their parents. The Gribskov centre for asylum seekers is therefore looking for people who would like to spend a couple of hours every week or every fortnight with the children.

(Dagbladet 3 August 2006

[http://dagbladetonline.dk/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060803/LN\\_GRIBSKOV/108030141](http://dagbladetonline.dk/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060803/LN_GRIBSKOV/108030141))

### **Solidarity with Iranian hunger strikers intensifies**

Meetings are now held on a daily basis to support the hunger-striking Iranian asylum seekers on Christiansborg Slotsplads. A concert and a larger demonstration are planned for Friday. The hunger strikers have stopped eating sugar and now only drink water. This Monday, at least 50 people gathered in the castle yard in support of the hunger strikers. At the same time, 50 demonstrators tried to force their way into Danish Radio's premises to increase awareness of their situation.

(Modkraft 2 August 2006 <http://www.modkraft.dk/article.php?sid=4220>)

### **Lousy ramshackles for refugees**

Ronnede commune is criticized for having bought houses without permission and outside normal procedures. A lousy ramshackle, an egg-packing shed and a wrecked building were bought a few years ago by the municipality for refugee housing, but it was in reality to keep the MC group Bandidos away from using the premises.

(Dagbladet 2 August 2006

[http://dagbladetonline.dk/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060802/FORSIDE\\_KOEGE/108020217](http://dagbladetonline.dk/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060802/FORSIDE_KOEGE/108020217))

### **Rejects hunt for evacuees**

Municipalities in Sealand will not check evacuated Danes for social fraud, saying it runs contrary to their ethics to investigate anyone in a situation where people are fleeing from a country at war.

(Dagbladet 2 August 2006

[http://dagbladetonline.dk/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060802/FORSIDE\\_ROSKILDE/108020215](http://dagbladetonline.dk/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060802/FORSIDE_ROSKILDE/108020215))

### **DF focuses on welfare and care at summer meeting**

At the summer meeting of its parliamentary group in Middelfart, Funen Island, the Danish People's Party (DF) leader Pia Kjaersgaard listed the party's priorities as - improving conditions for the elderly and socially disadvantaged, returning already banished Lebanese evacuees back home, improving work and pay conditions for health care staff and tightening controls on pedophiles.

(Politiken, Jyllands-Posten 3 August 2006 News Ex-press translation)

## **Lithuanian press**

### **Lithuania grants 87.000 euros to war-torn Lebanon**

Lithuania will give 87.000 euros (110.998 USD) to war-torn Lebanon. The humanitarian assistance will be distributed through the United Nations coordination office. (Baltic News Service 3 August 2006)

## **Norwegian press**

### **Done with the UDI scandal**

Following her resignation from the Directorate of Immigration (UDI), former director Manuela Ramin Osmundsen got a new position at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Norway wants to develop new migration policies, focusing on development in poor countries, gender differences and children's rights, she says. Ramin Osmundsen resigned earlier this spring when a commission reviewing UDI criticized the authority for violating both laws and political directives when granting residency permits to nearly 200 Iraqi Kurds last fall. Her predecessor, Trygve Nordby was primarily responsible for the practice, but the commission concluded that Osmundsen was aware of it and failed to take action to correct the issue.

(Aftenposten 3 August 2006 <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article1408715.ece>)

### **121 refugees to Hedmark**

Only nine out of Hedmark's 22 municipalities have received refugees this year. The situation in the Middle East led to an increasing influx throughout autumn. Hedmark, Oppland och Buskerud counties have altogether received 270 refugees. In Hedmark there are 76 asylum-seekers, 18 resettled refugees, and 27 family reunification cases.

(Ostlendingen 3 August 2006

<http://www.ostlendingen.no/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060803/NYHETER/108030001>

)

## **Swedish press**

### **Lesbian faces life in prison**

Ivana Hosain from Bangladesh was raped by three members of the Muslim Brotherhood and received a fatwa, a death sentence, when it became known that she was homosexual. Ms Hosain's asylum application has been turned down by the Swedish Migration Board (Migrationsverket), even though she risks a prison or death sentence in her home country.

(Svenska Dagbladet 3 August 2006 SPR translation)

### **Few municipalities in Skåne welcome refugees**

Not even half of the municipalities in Skåne accept more refugees, allegedly due to lack of housing and kindergarten places, a new survey shows. Most of those municipalities claim obstacles to fulfilling the objective of getting refugees to support themselves, learn Swedish and be part of society. The overall integration, however, is perceived as good.

(Radio Sweden 3 August 2006

<http://www.sr.se/malmo/nyheter/artikel.asp?artikel=909595>)

### **Integration Board pushes municipalities**

The discrepancy between how many refugees the municipalities and Migration Board (Migrationsverket) think the housing and labor markets can integrate creates large problems. A third of the Swedish municipalities decline to receive more refugees. This year exceptionally many, about 30.000, are expected to be allowed to stay in Sweden, with municipalities only promising to accept half of that figure for settlement. (Radio Sweden 3 August 2006 <http://www.sr.se/cgi-bin/ekot/artikel.asp?artikel=909462>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Friday 4 August 2006

## Danish press

### **Iranian asylum seekers to end hunger strike**

The five Iranian asylum seekers, who have been staging a 46-day hunger strike action outside parliament on Christiansborg Castle Square, are to end their action on Friday after receiving assurances that the Refugee Council will review their case anew. The council would be reconsidering the cases of 65 Iranians. Danish People's Party has sought the Minister for Integration for an explanation.

(Politiken 4 August 2006 News-Express translation  
[http://www.jp.dk/english\\_news/artikel:aid=3875650/](http://www.jp.dk/english_news/artikel:aid=3875650/) )

### **Packed food changed to home cooking**

The asylum centre in Avnstrup tried to make asylum applicants go back home by restricting their access to the center's cooking facilities, and gave instead the asylum seekers a food bag every fortnight. Heavy criticism followed, as some children were left without food when parents sold food stuffs to get money for other necessities. Since the food bag-solution did not make the asylum seekers go back home, the centre has opened a canteen where applicants can cook themselves. Danish political parties agree with the answer.

(Danish Radio 4 August 2006

<http://www.dr.dk/Regioner/Kbh/Nyheder/Andet/2006/08/04/063813.htm>)

### **Personality tests tricky for foreign candidates**

Companies risk missing qualified applicants' professional and personal competencies, as recruitment tests can inhibit careful evaluation of persons with a foreign background. Many tests are so shaped by Danish culture and feel of the language that deep knowledge of Danish is needed. Refugees having had a traumatic background in their home countries may also be afraid of providing extensive background information.

(Berlingske Tiderne 4 August 2006 <http://www.berlingske.dk/karriere/artikel:aid=773304/>)

### **Nature strikes again against Pakistanis**

Heavy monsoons have hit areas affected by the devastating earthquake in Pakistan in October last year. Back then, flooding and earthquakes made over 6000 persons from 23 villages evacuate to the refugee camps, the UN Refugee Agency UNHCR says. Aid organizations now prepare for an expected 20,000 people to seek refuge in the camps.

(YLE 4 August 2006 <http://internytt.yle.fi/artikel.php?id=79831>)

## Latvian press

### **New website to provide assistance to people traveling to Latvia**

People can find relevant information about the entry and residence in Latvia on the new website [www.latvija.lv](http://www.latvija.lv) opened by the Latvian Citizenship and Migration Affairs Board. This interactive service has been available for a year already on the Latvian Foreign Ministry's website [www.am.gov.lv](http://www.am.gov.lv) and the National Tourism Development Agency's website [www.latviatourism.lv](http://www.latviatourism.lv).

(Baltic News Service 3 August 2006)

### Norwegian press

#### **Norwegian humanitarian relief to Sri Lanka**

Norway is providing humanitarian assistance worth 150 million Sri Lankan Rupees (1,5 million USD) to Sri Lanka. The emergency relief will be channeled through the Red Cross and NGOs.

(The Norway Post 4 August 2006 <http://www.norwaypost.no/cgi-bin/norwaypost/imaker?id=26551>)

#### **Caught in human hunt**

The police have found the Moroccan stowaway who jumped from a boat to Karmøy on Thursday. Late last night a man in his 30s jumped aboard a ship transporting minerals to Karmøy. The man did not apply for asylum and was instructed to stay on the ship. He will now be sent back to where he came from.

(BA 4 August 2006 <http://www.ba.no/nyheter/politinotiser/article2221522.ece>)

### Swedish press

#### **Swedish aid reaches Lebanon**

Yesterday, the lorries of the Swedish Rescue Services Agency's (Räddningsverket) carrying storage tents were held up in Tartus at the border between Lebanon and Syria. On Wednesday they drove into Lebanon but were forced to turn back due to fear of being bombed in the dark and a lack of authorization.

(Svenska Dagbladet 4 August 2006 SPR translation)

#### **Few donations from Swedes**

Relief organizations are disappointed at the Swedes' lack of donations to the crisis-ridden areas in the Middle East but are hoping that the situation will improve after the holidays.

(Svenska Dagbladet 4 August 2006 SPR translation)

#### **Demand that municipalities be forced to receive refugees**

The president of the Asylum Committee, Anita Dorazio, calls for legislation forcing municipalities to receive refugees, referring to a recent survey where municipalities explain that they do not accept refugees due to lack of housing possibilities.

(Radio Sweden 3 August 2006

<http://www.sr.se/malmo/nyheter/artikel.asp?artikel=910073>)

#### **Dispute about Hallstahammar's refugee money**

Halstahammar's municipality will get reimbursed for refugees that lived in the municipality, even though the Foreign Ministry says in a new note that there were no significant extra costs. The case is however already decided in two administrative courts of appeal that both said the Migration Board should cover the cost.

(VLT 4 August 2006 <http://www.vlt.se/artikelmall.asp?version=245855>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Saturday 5 to Monday 7 August 2006

## Danish press

### **Israeli bombings cut off Lebanon from humanitarian aid**

Israel's air force has destroyed four bridges on the main coastal road leading from Beirut north to Syria. "This was UNHCR's main supply route. All our aid deliveries come from Syria", says Jennifer Pagonis, the spokeswoman for UNHCR (the UN Refugee Agency). (Politiken 4 August 2006 <http://politiken.dk/VisArtikel.iasp?PageID=469048>)

### **"Re-examine the Iranian refugee issue"**

Politiken's editorial demands a re-evaluation of the Iranian refugee issue, pointing out that the handlings contravene the international asylum system that Denmark is still assigned to "in spite of recent years' developments". (Politiken 6 August 2006 <http://politiken.dk/VisArtikel.iasp?PageID=469258>)

### **Dramatic fall in immigrant population in Denmark forecast**

The number of immigrants from countries such as Turkey, Somalia, Lebanon and Iraq will amount to eight percent of the population of Denmark in 2080, compared to a previous estimate 15.3 percent published in 2004. The main reason is a steep decline in immigrants' birth rate as fewer (and older) women come to Denmark due to the recent years' tightening of immigration and family reunion laws. Whereas a typical immigrant woman would have four children 25 years ago, the figure today is only 2.4. (Jyllands-Posten 6 August 2006 News-Express translation, Copenhagen Post 7 August 2006 <http://www.cphpost.dk/get/97112.html>)

### **Destinations for next years' quota refugees set**

The municipalities in the new southern Danish district will receive 247 quota refugees next year. The municipalities of Tønder, Haderslev and Vejen will receive the largest amount, and Fanø and Billund the smallest amount of quota refugees. All in all, Denmark will accept 1000 quota refugees next year. (DR 6 August 2006 <http://www.dr.dk/Regioner/Syd/Nyheder/Politik/2006/08/06/081033.htm>)

## Finnish press

### **Refugee reception center capacity may be reduced in fall**

Ministry of Labour may continue reducing the capacity of refugee reception centers if the number of asylum seekers keeps falling. During the first half of 2006, Finland received 39 per cent less asylum seekers than the year before. The decrease was especially drastic in the number of unaccompanied minors. Only 35 asylum-seeking children have come to Finland without their parents this year, which has led the ministry to consider cutting the number of places available for them. The ministry has earlier decided to close three reception centers and one independent unit.

(Helsingin Sanomat 5 August 2006

<http://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/artikkeli/Vastaanottokeskuspaikkoja+saatetaan+v%C3%A4hent%C3%A4%C3%A4+taas+syksyll%C3%A4/1135220944306>)

### **Eight Armenians sent back home**

The Finnish Frontier Guard returned eight Armenian citizens back to their country on Friday. The group had been granted visas to take part in the young people's Delfin Basket basketball tournament in Tampere. However, eight of the members were caught on a passenger ship from Turku to Sweden. Officials suspect that the group was trying to get to Sweden, and from there, to other parts of Europe.

(Helsingin Sanomat 7 August 2006

<http://www.hs.fi/english/article/Eight+Armenians+sent+back+home/1135220958955>)

### **Norwegian press**

#### **UN-agreement does not stop bombings**

On Friday the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) tried to send two water-experts into Lebanon. Since the main road to the capital was bombed by the Israelis, they were forced to return to Damascus, and will try again today. Other organizations warn about difficulties in distribution of supplies. "It is a great set-back for the relief aid work. The current situation resembles a blockade", said Astrid van Genderen Stort, spokeswoman for UNHCR to the BBC.

(Dagsavisen 6 August 2006 <http://www.dagsavisen.no/utenriks/article2224821.ece>)

#### **Naval string for help cut off**

"Since the conflict continuously intensifies, the situation for the Lebanese civil population increasingly worsens. Especially the displaced's situation is much worse than before", a press release from UNHCR informed. UNHCR teams report they are finding people in communal shelters or even construction sites with almost no access to drinking water, toilets or other necessities.

(Aftenbladet 4 August 2006 <http://web3.aftenbladet.no/utenriks/article328542.ece>)

#### **UDI refuses immigrants visits from abroad**

Directorate of Immigration (UDI) rejects many immigrants' wish to receive visits in Norway. Norwegian-Pakistani Simon Mumtaz is devastated since his 80-year-old aunt's visa application was rejected by the UDI. The reason given is that his childless aunt does not have effective links in her home country, and that Pakistan's economical and social conditions make it attractive for her to stay in Norway. (Dagsavisen 6 August 2006 <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2224567.ece>)

#### **Want finger print asylum-seeking six-year-olds**

Several EU-countries want to take finger prints of asylum-seeking children down to six years of age. Today the age limit to be entered in the finger-print register Eurodac is 14 years. Through Eurodac it is possible for countries to check if asylum-seekers have previously applied for asylum in other countries. A lower age limit should be introduced in order to register all unaccompanied children, said Bengt Hellström, head of the Migration Board's Eurodac office.

(Stavanger Avisen 7 August 2006 <http://www.stavangeravisen.com/art.asp?id=30204>)

### **Swedish press**

#### **PM Persson: Sweden ready to lead Lebanese aid efforts**

Prime Minister Göran Persson says Sweden is ready to lead international efforts to help rebuild Lebanon by holding a donors conference in the next few weeks. Persson has

received positive responses to the idea from, among others, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, French President Jacques Chirac, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana.  
(Radio Sweden 7 August 2006 <http://www.sr.se/cgi-bin/International/nyhetssidor/artikel.asp?ProgramID=2054&Nyheter=&artikel=911694>)

### **Deportations to Iraq increase despite dangers**

The number of people deported to Iraq is on the increase, despite the fact that the security situation in the country is considered as serious enough to entitle Iraqi refugees for asylum. This year, the police have sent back some 30 persons who have been denied a residence permit or sentenced for criminal activities. The main reason is that it is now possible to fly to Iraq.

(Dagens Nyheter, Svenska Dagbladet 5-6 August 2006 SPR translation)

### **Migration Courts break secrecy**

Sensitive information about asylum applicants becomes public in the Migration Court. Information that has been left to the Migration Board about individual asylum applicants is confidential, but as soon as a rejection decision is appealed to the Migration Court other rules apply, since the decisions of Swedish courts are in most cases public documents. Consequences for the asylum applicants can be serious.

(TV4 5 August 2006 <http://tv4.se/nyheter/481255.html>)

### **Six-year-olds may have to leave finger prints**

Several EU countries want children from the age of six to leave finger prints when applying for asylum. Today, the age limit is 14 years for being entered into the finger print register Eurodac. Especially Great Britain and the Netherlands, but also Sweden, have pushed for a lowered age limit. By searching the Eurodac registry, one can check if a person has previously applied for asylum in Sweden or another EU country.

(Kvällsposten 7 August 2006 <http://www.kvp.se/index.jsp?a=650543>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Tuesday 8 August 2006

## Danish press

### **Demonstrators blocked social administration**

Roskilde social administration was Tuesday blocked by demonstrators from Offensiv Roskilde protesting against government policies on the inadequate introductory help given refugees and immigrants. Offensiv Roskilde is part of the organization Young Revolutionaries (Unge revolutionnære), a group consisting of people from the left block. (Roskilde Avis 8 August 2006

[http://www.roskildemediecenter.dk/dk/default.asp?filnavn=/dk/nyheder.asp;submode=vis\\$&id=6719\\$vis\\_arkiv=\\$antal=\)](http://www.roskildemediecenter.dk/dk/default.asp?filnavn=/dk/nyheder.asp;submode=vis$&id=6719$vis_arkiv=$antal=)

## Finnish press

### **Difficult to reach out in Lebanon**

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres says that the Israeli army does not do enough to protect the distribution of emergency aid. Six trucks with aid from the UN Refugee Agency is blocked in Syria awaiting permission to drive into Lebanon. (Finnish Public Broadcaster YLE 8 August 2006

[http://internytt.yle.fi/artikel.php?id=80020\)](http://internytt.yle.fi/artikel.php?id=80020)

## Latvian press

### **New camp for illegal immigrants**

As the number of illegal immigrants and asylum-seekers is growing, Latvia is to build a detention camp for illegal immigrants as well as a centre for asylum-seekers in Daugavpils. At present, illegal immigrants detained on Latvia's eastern border have to be transported to the detention camp in Olaine, while asylum-seekers are taken to the center in Mucenieki. Building a new detention camp for illegal immigrants and an asylum-seeker centre will solve problems related to accommodation and transportation. (Baltic News Service 8 August 2006)

### **Latvian nationalist party to protest against easing of immigration rules**

Latvia's nationalist party "All for Latvia!" intends to protest against laxer immigration rules in front of the government building in Riga on Tuesday, the party said. Chairman Raivis Dzintars said Latvian citizens will gradually be pushed out of the labor market, since immigrants are prepared to work for lower salaries.

(Baltic News Service 7 August 2006)

## Norwegian press

### **Relief aid cannot be distributed**

International aid organizations inform that the Israeli attacks have now stopped all relief aid to Southern Lebanon. All organization say that villages first appear to be empty and deserted, but after a while people stream out of the ruins and beg for help. Many

sources confirm that people do not receive crucial medical help, said Liv Tørres at Norwegian People's Aid.

(NRK 8 August <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/utenriks/1.817387>)

#### **Lives for the moment**

Zahir Athari, an asylum-seeker and spokesperson for Afghan asylum-seekers is interviewed in the daily newspaper Dagsavisen. "I continue working to improve the situation for the Afghan asylum-seekers after the hunger strike, since the government broke their promise and deported Afghans to Kabul", he said.

(Dagsavisen 8 August [http://www.dagsavisen.no/dagens\\_navn/article2226878.ece](http://www.dagsavisen.no/dagens_navn/article2226878.ece))

#### **Swedish press**

#### **More and more people flee southern Lebanon**

Astrid Van Genderen Stort from the UN Refugee Agency in Lebanon says that the refugee situation is very difficult and that close to one million people have fled from the conflict. "I myself fled from Lebanon in 1982. I grew up with the civil war and saw how it struck the individual, the family and the society. Now, that I have come back to Beirut to work and help people in the same situation, I can see that it is exactly the same situation now as 25 years ago," says Patrik Manour who also works for UNHCR in Lebanon.

(Swedish Public Radio 8 August 2006 <http://www.sr.se/cgi-bin/ekot/artikel.asp?artikel=912124>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Wednesday 9- Thursday 10 August 2006

## Danish press

### Denmark faces the UN anti-racism committee

The government will today face the UN anti-racism committee in Geneva investigating whether Denmark treats its immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers well enough. 17 officials from Denmark are to answer the question. A similar hearing took place in 2002, when the committee expressed several points of criticism. The start-up aid, the conditions at asylum centers and the rules for family reunification are expected to be taken up.

(DR 9 August <http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/2006/08/09/091452.htm>)

### Unexpected praise for integration efforts

UN's committee against racial discrimination praised Denmark for generously giving development aid to poor countries, but criticized the country's strict family reunification legislation and conditions for children in asylum centers. A delegation of top Danish Foreign Ministry officials were questioned about Denmark's growing "anti-immigrant" reputation at a specially-convened hearing in Geneva yesterday.

(Jyllands-Posten, Politiken 10 August News-Express translation)

### Haarder approves ethnic segregation

Minister for Education Bertel Haarder wants to approve Vesterbro School's practice of segregating children according to ethnicity. The school principal admits the segregation is not optimal, but feels forced to it to keep Danish pupils from moving to other schools.

(Netavisen 10 August <http://netavisen.newspaq.dk/indland/?aid=193397>)

## Finnish press

### Where is Finns' will to help Middle East?

The international community responded quickly to the increased need for assistance after the escalation of the crisis in Middle East. Yesterday, the UN refugee agency's office in Baltic and Nordic countries appealed to the general public in the region. Also other agencies are in need of funding. Finnish Red Cross, for example, managed to raise 100 000 euros in three weeks, which can be regarded as a very poor result in comparison to the 9 million raised for Kosovo in 1999 and 27 million after Tsunami in 2004. Donations can be made easily online or through SMS, but the complicated and long-lasting crisis in Middle East does not seem to mobilize people.

(Editorial, Kainuun Sanomat 9 August

<http://www.kainuunsanomat.fi/a/2006/08/09/paakirjoitus.shtml>)

### UNHCR frustrated with situation in Lebanon

Antonio Guterres, head of the UN refugee agency UNHCR, has expressed his concern over the difficulties in reaching many parts of Lebanon. "Israel does not do enough to shield the UN convoys against Israeli attacks," he noted. "The situation is very frustrating as we know how desperate people are and we cannot get aid distributed."

(Finnish Public Broadcaster YLE 9 August  
<http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/haku.php?action=page&id=226707&search=UNHCR>)

### **Latvian press**

#### **Somali immigrants to receive allowances**

The Somali immigrants, who were granted alternative status on July 13, will receive a subsistence allowance equivalent to the minimum wage for the next nine months. The underage immigrants will receive an allowance equivalent to 30 percent of the minimum wage, said Diana Bogdanova, spokeswoman for the Latvian Citizenship and Migration Affairs Board.

(Baltic News Service 9 August)

#### **Interior Ministry proposes stricter control on stateless persons, refugees**

The Latvian Ministry of Interior has drawn up new provisions that would tighten control of immigrants with refugee status and stateless persons, the governmental press service said. The new provisions would allow the Security Police and Constitution Protection Bureau (SAB) to conduct additional checks on these persons. The aim for this is to prevent foreign nationals sympathetic to terrorism from entering or staying in Latvia.

(Baltic News Service 10 August)

### **Norwegian press**

#### **Handicapped three-year-old to be deported**

Deportation of a Russian family and their three-year-old son with brain damage has raised strong reactions. The family, who has lived almost five years at the reception center in Ulsteinvik, has now received a rejection on their application for residence permits. Traveling back to Russia will put the health of the boy into great risk, a senior physician said.

(NRK 9 August [http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/distrikt/more\\_og\\_romsdal/1.823177](http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/distrikt/more_og_romsdal/1.823177))

#### **UN: Extremely hard to distribute help in Lebanon**

Roads used for distributing humanitarian aid are bombed into pieces, at the same time as Israel does not do enough to shield UN convoys against Israeli attacks, said UN High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres. "It is not possible to provide humanitarian aid to the enormous amount of people who need assistance", he noted to BBC radio.

(Aftenbladet 8 August <http://web3.aftenbladet.no/utenriks/article329986.ece>)

#### **UN shocked by extradition of Uzbek refugees**

UNHCR said it was shocked by Kyrgyzstan's extradition on Wednesday of four Uzbek refugees and one Uzbek asylum seeker. "We fear for their safety. This refoulement is an extremely serious violation of the 1951 Refugee Convention - which Kyrgyzstan has ratified - under which no refugees should be forcibly returned to their country of origin," said UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres.

(Aftenbladet 9 August <http://web3.aftenbladet.no/utenriks/article330600.ece>)

#### **Fire at asylum center**

Eight persons were sent to hospital after a fire in a lodging for three asylum-seeking families in Melbu. What caused the fire is unknown.

(Verdens Gang 10 August <http://www.vg.no/pub/vgart.hbs?artid=126063>)

## Swedish press

### **Record numbers of refugees to be settled in municipalities this year**

30.000 refugees are to be settled in municipalities by the Integration Board this year, the largest number in ten years. The reason is the temporary asylum law that has increased the number of residence permits granted compared to previous years.

(Gefle Dagblad 9 August <http://www.gd.se/Article.jsp?article=83968>)

### **Enough asylum applicants in Hofors**

Hofors municipality will probably not receive more asylum applicants from the Migration Board. Right now there are 200 asylum seekers in Hofors waiting for residence permits. "We are a small municipality and experience that it is difficult to integrate the asylum seekers coming for a very short time", the municipality says. Instead, Hofors will accept more refugees receiving residence permits and are settled in municipalities by the board.

(Gefle Dagblad 9 August <http://www.gd.se/Article.jsp?article=83970>)

### **Nightmare for humanitarian aid workers**

UN has cancelled their transportations to southern Lebanon since Israel threatened to attack all vehicles traveling there during nighttime. The UN Refugee Agency hopes to get new relief shipments to Lebanon via the harbors in Beirut and Tripoli in the north.

(Svenska Dagbladet 9 August [http://www.svd.se/dynamiskt/utrikes/did\\_13415495.asp](http://www.svd.se/dynamiskt/utrikes/did_13415495.asp))

### **County council cancels asylum seekers' debts**

The red-green Stockholm county council majority decided today to forfeit all health care bills of people given residence permits through the temporary asylum law. In recent years between 200 and 500 foreign citizens in hiding have indebted themselves heavily on health care and in many cases the amounts are significant.

(Radio Sweden 9 August <http://www.sr.se/stockholm/nyheter/artikel.asp?artikel=913539>)

### **No changes in visa demands for Lebanese**

The government rebukes the Migration Board for wanting to be more restrictive when issuing Lebanese visitors' visas to Sweden, because of fear that they will apply for asylum. The Left Party has reacted strongly and thinks that Sweden should on the contrary use the refugee quota to give the Lebanese an immediate possibility to come to Sweden, as well as make EU prepare for a mass refugee situation. "It is primarily UNHCR that has the operative responsibility on the ground and we listen a lot to their views, and they don't consider it topical so far," says Lotta Svensson, state secretary at the Foreign Ministry.

(Swedish Public Radio SR 10 August <http://www.sr.se/ekot/artikel.asp?artikel=913685>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Friday 11 August 2006

## Danish press

### Number of residence permits increases

During the second quarter of 2006, 370 residence permits were granted to asylum seekers. That is over three times more than the preceding quarter. 290 of the permits were given to refugees, whilst 80 on other grounds. However, if one looks at the total number of residence permits handed out in the last four quarters and compares this to the four preceding quarters, there has been a sharp decline. There are 545 fewer permits over the last four quarters, which is fall of 35 percent.

(Netavisen 11 August <http://netavisen.newspaq.dk/indland/?aid=193510>)

## Finnish press

### Many young immigrants commit crimes

The number of violent crimes committed by immigrants has increased over the past years. Statistics from courts show that in relation to their share of the total population, immigrants are convicted of crimes twice as often as Finns. The same trend can be seen overall in Europe. Earlier this summer the Aliens' Board decided to deport eight Somalis that had committed serious crimes in Finland. Some of them risk being sent to the unstable southern Somalia – something which is in breach with the principles of the UN Refugee Agency.

(YLE 11 August <http://internytt.yle.fi/artikel.php?id=80169> )

## Norwegian press

### 800 Iraqis missing

The authorities have lost track of over 800 Northern-Iraqis without residence permits who came to Norway in 2000. The police is now struggling to locate them and return them to Iraq. 300 are assumed to still be in Norway, but it is unclear where they are staying. The other 500 seem to have disappeared. The Iraqis have all received a MUF-status (temporary residence without possibility for family reunification). There are altogether 2,000 Iraqis that have received such a status.

(Nettavisen 11 August <http://www.nettavisen.no/innenriks/article706462.ece>)

### Progress Party: "Totally insane"

Siv Jensen from the right-wing Progress Party is shocked that Norwegian authorities do not know where the 800 Northern-Iraqis are. She believes closed reception centers to be the only solution to deal with cases like this. The Iraqis received MUF-status (temporary residence without possibility for family reunification) and their temporary working permits expired in 2001. If Norway had closed asylum reception centers, they would have been kept detained for five years. The Conservative Party's Erna Solberg says closed asylum centers are not the solution. Instead all individuals who reside in Norway illegally should automatically be deported, she says.

(Nettavisen 11 August <http://www.nettavisen.no/innenriks/article706930.ece>)

### **Hanssen: “Not a problem”**

Minister for Labour and Social Inclusion, Bjarne Håkon Hanssen, states that not knowing the location of the Iraqis is not a problem for Norway. The government believes that many of them are already in Northern-Iraq. The most important task for the government now is to work for the improved conditions for returns. The greatest problems with deportations are connected to areas such as Northern-Iraq where people cannot be forcibly deported. Hanssen opposes the Conservative Party's idea of putting individuals in detention for several years.

(Nettavisen 11 August <http://www.nettavisen.no/innenriks/article707518.ece>)

### **Swedish press**

#### **Demonstration in Örebro**

A demonstration started at noon on Friday on Olof Palme's square in Örebro. It was the Iranian Association wanting to show their sympathy for all the asylum applicants that do not get residence permits in Sweden. They also want to protest against the executions taking place in Iran.

(Swedish Public Radio 11 August

<http://www.sr.se/orebro/nyheter/artikel.asp?artikel=914770>)

#### **Migration Board closes down asylum unit**

The Migration Board will close down the asylum-seeker center in Hofors consisting of 200 places, 60 apartments and nine employees. This was communicated at a staff meeting yesterday, although the formal decision is not yet taken. The reason is said to be disturbances to other residents, particularly caused by asylum applicants that stay for a short period whilst waiting for their decisions.

(Arbetarbladet 11 August

[http://www.arbetarbladet.se/local\\_article.php?id=425614&avdelning\\_1=101&avdelning\\_2=0](http://www.arbetarbladet.se/local_article.php?id=425614&avdelning_1=101&avdelning_2=0))

#### **Emergency aid to southern Lebanon despite threats**

The international aid organization Medecins Sans Frontiers aim to get through with their aid deliveries to southern Lebanon, in spite of Israel's decision to attack all vehicles moving south of the Litani River. The organization says in a press release that they will carry on their work as usual. The UN Refugee Agency UNHCR has called off all their transports in southern Lebanon following Israel's message.

(Swedish Public Radio 10 August 2006 <http://www.sr.se/cgi-in/ekot/artikel.asp?Artikel=914411>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Saturday 12 to Monday 14 August 2006

## Danish press

### **Solving labour-market bottle neck**

The Socialist People's Party's suggest a set of measures to solve the growing labour-market bottle neck and lack of available manpower. Their proposal includes a greater effort to get immigrants into the labour market, faster administration in the Immigration Agency so applicants get through the system quicker, at least 12 years education for all, massive public sector construction projects every winter, higher property tax and lower income tax. (Jyllands Posten 14 August, NXP translation)

## Finnish press

### **True Finns: More referendums needed**

The right-wing True Finns party has completed their program for the upcoming parliamentary elections. They demand public referendums on all EU related matters. In regard to refugee policy, the party supports continuing with a very strict line. Refugees having received a negative decision in one EU country should be promptly deported from Finland. (Yle 14 August 2006

[http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/haku.php?action=page&id=226912&search=pakolai\\*](http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/haku.php?action=page&id=226912&search=pakolai*))

### **Charged for disappeared Chinese**

A man from Singapore has been prosecuted for the disappearance of four Chinese asylum-seekers. He was charged for arranging illegal immigration, as there was not enough evidence to charge him for human trafficking. Four young Chinese disappeared from the Oulu reception centre in May. They were later found and are currently waiting for decisions on their asylum applications. Over one hundred under-aged Chinese asylum-seekers have disappeared from asylum reception centres during 2003-2006. (Yle 12 August 2006

[http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/haku.php?action=page&id=226853&search=turvapaikanhak\\*](http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/haku.php?action=page&id=226853&search=turvapaikanhak*))

## Swedish press

### **Asylum-seeking Indians disappear**

Tens of young Indians have disappeared from Migration Board's residence after seeking asylum last summer. Police is now investigating whether the Indians came voluntarily or whether organized human trafficking was involved. The case resembles the wave of young Chinese who came earlier this year.

(SVT 14 August,

[http://svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=22620&a=638213&lid=puff\\_638197&lpos=lasMer](http://svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=22620&a=638213&lid=puff_638197&lpos=lasMer))

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Tuesday 15 August 2006

## Danish press

### **New book: 'Danes live in fear of Muslims'**

Danes' attitude towards immigrants and refugees is based on prejudice and cultural incompatibility – that's the conclusion of leading researcher and Aarhus University lecturer Jens Peter Frølund Thomsen in his new book 'Conflict with new Danes', based on responses from 1,500 people about their views on ethnic minorities. '40 per cent of the population sees Islam as a threat to Danish democracy,' says Mr Thomsen. (Jyllands Posten, 15 August, NXP translation)

### **Half of all immigrants unemployed**

Whilst construction companies and transport companies are crying out for workers, over half of all immigrants are unemployed. Minister of Refugees, Immigrants and Immigration Rikke Hvilshøj (V), whose ministry has granted 18 million Danish crowns to try and solve the problem, yesterday visited three companies who have been successful in employing immigrants and came away impressed. 'Too many companies just don't know enough about what it takes – or doesn't take – to hire an immigrant and it's a barrier that prevents many immigrants from finding work,' she said. (Politiken, 15 August, NXP translation)

## Norwegian press

### **UN wants you**

UN is in the process of recruiting new staff and is looking especially for Norwegians. "We are about to strengthen our department for private sector fundraising and are therefore looking for persons with experience from this, for example with non-governmental or international organizations", explains Paal Aarsaether, Head of Information at UNHCR's office in Stockholm. Six challenging positions have been announced at UNHCR's website: <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/admin?id=3ba1d4794>.

(Aftenposten, 15 August

<http://www.aftenposten.no/forbruker/jobbogstudier/job/article1421105.ece>)

## Swedish press

### **Ten arrested in human trafficking case**

Ten people have been detained in Nyköping in a case of organized human trafficking. The case appears to relate to men from India who originally sought asylum at Arlanda airport but disappeared later from Swedish Migration Board's reception center. District prosecutor Erik Svensson believes that several of the men, who had false passports, may have been cheated in some way. (Svenska Dagbladet, 15 August, SPR translation)

### **Refugees returned home**

Tens of thousands of refugees are returning to their home villages after the ceasefire in Lebanon. UN refugee agency UNHCR expects one third of the 750 000 displaced persons to return to their homes during the next few days. UNHCR calculated

approximately 1200 cars per hour passing the road towards Nabatyah and further south. “We provide them with a returnee’s kit as they pass our road stations. They get water, mattresses, blankets, salt tablets and protein biscuits”, says Pål Aarsaether from UNHCR’s Nordic office. The UN agency will be distributing emergency supplies on a large scale after two UN ships reached Lebanon.  
(Svenska dagbladet, 15 August)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Wednesday 16 to Thursday 17 August 2006

## Danish press

### **Appeal for asylum seekers**

The Confederation of Trade, Transport and Service Sector Employers is urging Minister of Refugees, Immigrants and Immigration Rikke Hvilshøj (V) to ease the rules and allow asylum seekers to work. Hvilshøj (V) however challenged employers to concentrate more on employing the many immigrants and their descendants who have lived here for years but are still unemployed. 'We don't want so send a signal implicating that an application for asylum provides immediate access to the Danish labour market,' she said.

(Berlingske Tidende 17 August 2006, NXP translation)

## Estonian press

### **Estonia to get nearly 1,000 new citizens**

Estonia is likely to get nearly 1,000 new citizens on Thursday if the government accepts the proposal of the Interior Ministry. In July the government granted citizenship to 868 persons. Plans of the state integration program for the years 2004-2007 set an aim of granting Estonian citizenship to at least 5,000 persons per year. In all, more than 140,000 people have become Estonian citizens by naturalization since independence. (Baltic News Service, 17 August 2006)

## Finnish press

### **Ombudsman for Minorities objects to deportations of Somali criminals**

Finland's Ombudsman for Minorities, Rainer Hiltunen, opposes all the Directorate of Immigration's decisions to deport Somali residents. In July, the directorate decided to repatriate eight Somalis back to Somalia, regardless of the opinion of the ombudsman. In five other cases the directorate turned down police suggestions for this. In 15 additional cases, the deportation decisions are still pending. Most of the convicted Somalis would be sent back to central and southern parts of Somalia, against the recommendations of UNHCR.

(Helsingin Sanomat online 16 August

<http://www.hs.fi/english/article/Ombudsman+for+Minorities+objects+to+deportations+of+Somali+criminals/1135221079512>)

## Latvian press

### **Somali refugees start receiving benefits**

Seven Somali nationals who arrived in Latvia last August, have started to receive state benefits as of Wednesday, a spokeswoman for the Latvian Citizenship and Migration Affairs Board said. Two of the Somali immigrants will receive one-year residence permits, while others will be allowed to stay in Latvia until the situation in their homeland stabilizes. If the situation in Somalia does not improve in next four years, their residence

permits would be extended, said Citizenship and Migration Affairs Board spokeswoman Diana Bogdanova.  
(Baltic News Service, 17 August 2006)

## Norwegian press

### **Deporting asylum seekers in conflict with UN**

Norwegian authorities have decided to send rejected Somali asylum seekers back home, despite the UN's recommendations not to send anyone to Somalia. Three Somalis have been deported during the last few days, and 400 others are waiting to be returned. The government is not willing to comment, but Heikki Holmås from coalition partner the Socialist Left Party considers it very serious that Norway ignores UN recommendations.

(NRK 16 August 2006, <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/innenriks/1.845722>)

### **Forcibly returned, police don't dare follow**

Contrary to UNHCR's recommendations, Norwegian authorities regard Central and Southern Somalia as safe areas to return rejected asylum seekers. Norwegian police does not follow the Somalis to their final destination there however, out of fear for their own lives. "We don't want to send policemen to Mogadishu, as we regard the city too dangerous, especially to white western people", say the police. According to NOAS, two Somalis were deported on Monday and a third is on his way. "People are returned to areas from where others continuously flee from", says Rune Berglund Steen of NOAS.

(Dagsavisen 17 August 2006, <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2241649.ece>)

### **Immigration authorities interpret freely**

Member of Parliament Heikki Holmås (Socialist Left Party) questions the reason to deport the Somalis now. He is also skeptic on whether the Immigration authorities in Norway are more informed about the situation in Somalia than the UN, which has permanent representation in the country. Holmås considers the authorities' interpretation of UN's recommendations for the returns to be very free.

(Dagsavisen, 17 August, <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2242289.ece>)

### **Unavoidable to over-extend oneself**

The former Minister of Labor and Social affairs, Dagfinn Høybråten criticizes the reorganization of the administration of asylum, refugee and immigration affairs. He fears that these important issues will be given low priority as it is now included in the already broad portfolio of the Minister of Labour and Social Inclusion, Bjarne Håkon Hanssen.

(Aftenposten 17 August 2006

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article1420492.ece>)

### **Government's humanism**

Prior to the elections, the Red-Green coalition promised to carry out humane refugee and asylum policies and to take more into consideration UNHCR recommendations. Only a year ago, former head of the Norwegian Refugee Council and current State Secretary Raymond Johansen regarded deportations to Somalia unacceptable, but now seems to agree fully with these. UNHCR has given clear recommendations not to deport refugees to Somalia. The Minister of Labour and Social Inclusion Bjarne Håkon Hanssen (Labour Party) has the overall responsibility for the government's refugee policies, and would be able to instruct the Directorate of Immigration if he so wanted. This does not, however, seem to be his wish.

### **Blocked with strict language requirements**

Recruitment companies tend to set strict requirements on Norwegian languages skills in order to prevent immigrants' job possibilities, states the Ombudsman for equality and discrimination. Fluent Norwegian can be considered a strange requirement when recruiting for example storage or cleaning staff. "This can be considered as a kind of racism", states Ann Helen Aarø from the Ombudsman's office.

(Dagsavisen 17 August, <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2241949.ece>)

### **Swedish press**

#### **Asylum-seekers kidnapped**

Some of the Indian men, who were caught with false passports at Skavsta airport last week accompanied by two suspected human traffickers claim that they had been kidnapped, subjected to threats and forced labour. Two of the men, 21 and 25 years of age, claim that they were threatened and kidnapped and held locked up for 10 days after they had sought asylum in Denmark.

(Svenska dagbladet, 16 August, SPR translation)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Friday 18 August 2006

## Norwegian press

### **Most immigrants come from Europe**

In contrast to the previous situation where immigrants came from countries like Somalia and Pakistan, the majority of today's immigrants originate from Europe. This year, most immigrants have come from Poland, Germany, Sweden, Lithuania and Russia. This can be seen as a result of EU's strict border control and of the Norwegian visa policy (NRK 18 August, <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/innenriks/1.863970>, Dagsavisen 18 August <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2243595.ece>)

### **No foreign visitors for immigrants**

Norway turns down a major part of visa applications of persons wishing to visit immigrants living in Norway. North Pakistani Simon Mumtaz is still upset after the Directorate of Immigration denied a visitor's visa for his 80-year-old aunt. (Dagsavisen, 18 August, <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2225139.ece>)

### **Strong pressure behind forcible returns**

Police claims to be under strong political pressure to execute forcible deportations rapidly. Police has received an exact number of asylum-seekers that should be deported. They are however not willing to tell what the number is. Police emphasize that Norway does follow international regulations for forcible returns. (Dagsavisen, 18 August, <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2243685.ece>)

### **Centre and Socialists want to follow UN recommendations**

The government coalition partners the Centre Party and Socialist Left Party want Norway to follow UNHCR recommendations on deportations. The Norwegian organization for asylum-seekers (NOAS) is worried that the Somali deportations, which are in contradiction with UNHCR recommendations, are an indicator of a stricter line in the asylum policy. Among the Somalis due to be deported is a man belonging to a minority group, which British authorities consider to be in need of special protection. (Dagsavisen, 18 August, <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2243680.ece>)

### **Racism will disappear by itself**

Parliamentarian Saera Khan (Labour Party) wants the government to prioritize integration issues instead of combating racism. A good integration policy would make immigrants merge into society at all levels and racist attitudes would disappear as a result. (Dagsavisen, 18 August, <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2218069.ece>)

### **Progress party sharpens tones on immigration**

Chairman of the Progress Party Siv Jensen is concerned about the large part of the social security budget going to non-western immigrants' welfare. "Half of the cake goes to immigrants that arrived in Norway after 1995, which is a clear indication of the failure of the government's integration policy", she claims. She is especially concerned about the large amount of family reunifications.

(Dagsavisen, 18 August, <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2168143.ece>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Friday 19 to Monday 21 August 2006

## Danish press

### UN upholds racial discrimination charges against Denmark

The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) upholds its sharp criticism of Denmark for serious racial discrimination in a new report. The report criticizes the tight family reunification rules and stingy benefits and poor treatment for refugees imposed by the centre-right government. In particular the notorious 28-year association rule for an immigrant to be allowed to bring a spouse to Denmark meets criticism as well as the facilities for asylum seekers. (Politiken and Berlindske Tidende, 19 August, NXP Translation)

## Finnish press

### Chinese asylum-seekers disappear from refugee centers

Authorities seem to have failed in their attempt to protect four Chinese asylum-seekers. The youngsters disappeared from a refugee centre in Oulu again on Wednesday. Authorities are now trying to find out where the youngsters presently are. Human trafficking may be involved and there might be an attempt to take them out of the country, which a man from Singapore tried already in May.

(Helsingin Sanomat, 21 August, <http://www.hs.fi/uutiset/verkko-hesari/artikkeli/Kiinalaisnuoret+katosivat+i%C3%A4lleen+Oulun+vastaanottokeskuksest+a/1135221118815>)

## Norwegian press

### Only Norway deports to Somalia

By returning people forcibly to Somalia, Norway becomes the strictest Nordic country in terms of asylum policy, according to the Norwegian Refugee Council. Earlier this week UNHCR sent a letter stressing its view that Southern and Central Somalia is too dangerous for deportations. Norway continued to deport asylum-seekers in spite of the intervention however.

(Dagsavisen 19 August, <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2245549.ece>)

### Hanssen accused of flirting with Progress party

Many Labour Party members are critical towards the asylum policy Minister Bjarne Håkon Hanssen has chosen to follow. Hanssen has stated that Norway makes its own decisions on deporting persons to Somalia, even though other party members would rather follow the UN recommendations on this. This is not in line with the humane asylum policy that was promised before elections, states one of the critics.

(Dagsavisen 19 August, <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2245551.ece>)

### Forcible returns continue

Norway continues to return rejected Somali asylum-seekers home in spite of UNHCR's intervention. Yesterday, two more Somalis were sent to their homeland. The acting head

of Norwegian Organization for Asylum-seekers (NOAS) considers this the most serious violation by Norway of the UN recommendations ever.

(Dagsavisen, 20 August, <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2246557.ece>)

### **Somalia is dangerous**

Somalis gathered in central Oslo to express their concern for deportations to the war-torn Somalia. The persons interviewed told that women are continuously raped and people robbed, kidnapped and killed. They claim that the Norwegian government has a very unrealistic picture of the situation in Somalia.

(Dagsavisen 20 August, <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2246561.ece>)

### **Hanssen claims to have better information than UN**

The Minister of Labour and Integration, Bjarne Håkon Hanssen trusts that Norway's own information sources give a complete picture of situation in Somalia. UNHCR sent a letter to the Norwegian government last week to warning against forcibly returns to Somalia. In spite of this, two asylum-seekers were sent to Somalia last Saturday.

(Dagsavisen, 21 August, <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2247340.ece>)

### **Can instruct Immigration authorities on Somalis**

The Minister of Labour and Integration, Bjarne Håkon Hanssen may instruct the Aliens' Appeals Board (UNE) on forcible returns to Southern and Central Somalia as their security cannot be ensured there. He will meet with UNE next week and indicates that some changes may occur after the meeting.

(NRK, 20 August, <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/innenriks/1.872524>)

### **Immigrant women should learn Norwegian**

Head of the right-wing Progress Party Siv Jensen wants to exclude immigrant women from social security benefits if they are not willing to learn Norwegian. She states that immigrant women are an enormous resource for the society and they should therefore be forced out of their homes.

(Aftenposten, 20 August <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article1428712.ece>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Tuesday 22 to Thursday 24 August 2006

## Swedish press

### Sharp increase in applications for permits

The number of people applying for residency in Sweden on the grounds that they have family ties in the country has risen sharply. Last year some 25,000 applied for residence on the grounds of family ties and the Migration Board is now forecasting a 20 per cent increase in the number of such applications next year, mainly from people in Iraq and Somalia. The Board forecasts that 21,000 people will apply for asylum this year and a similar number will apply in 2007.

(Dagens Nyheter, 24 August, SPR translation)

## Norwegian press

### Socialist Left demands stop to forcible returns

Government coalition member Socialist Left demands a halt in the deportations to S and C Somalia and wants the Labour Party to follow more UNHCR guidelines on Somalia and in general.

(Dagsavisen 22 August, <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2249162.ece>)

### Aliens Appeals Board: Somalia has become safer

The Norwegian Aliens Appeals Board (UNE) claims that Somalia has become safer since the Union of Islamic Courts overtook control of Mogadishu. The decision has generated wide-spread criticism, and both the Centre Party and the Socialist Left Party hold that Norway ought to cancel the deportations and abide to UN recommendations.

(Aftenposten, 22 August, <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article1430709.ece>)

### Will reconsider UN recommendations

Norwegian government is now prepared to reconsider the UN recommendations on the Somali deportations. The government wants to take a position on a general level on the extent UNHCR recommendations are to be taken into account when decisions for forcible returns are made. The head of the Aliens' Appeals Board (UNE) stated today that decisions for deporting people to Somalia are based on various sources of information, including UNHCR.

(NRK, 24 August, <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/innenriks/1.885217>)

### Rides Roughshod over Socialist Left

Bjarne Håkon Hanssen has expressed his full trust for the Aliens Appeals Board and stated that he does not intend to stop the forcible returns of rejected Somali asylum-seekers and has no plans for changing the course of asylum policy. Socialist Left Party's criticism thus seems to remain unheard. Centre Party has also changed their position and now argues that Norway acts as all other countries – there is no single country that always follows UN recommendations.

(Dagsavisen, 24 August, <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2252963.ece>)

**NOAS: Far-fetched by UNE**

NOAS claims that decisions on deporting Somalis are based on manipulated information. The sources used by the Norwegian Aliens Appeals Board (UNE) are to a large extent the same sources that regard Somalia as a very unstable and dangerous country.

(Dagsavisen, 24 August, <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2252965.ece>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Friday 25 August 2006

## Estonian press

### **Estonia ready to send humanitarian aid to Lebanon**

Minister for Foreign Affairs Urmas Paet said on Thursday that Estonia will not send troops to the peacekeeping operation in Lebanon, but is ready to send humanitarian aid and to take part in the reconstruction of the country. So far Estonia has allocated half a million crowns (EUR 32,000) to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and intends to give 313,000 crowns more to support the activities of the World Food Program. (Baltic News Service, 24 August)

## Finnish press

### **Majority of displaced Lebanese returned**

The UN refugee agency reports that 90 per cent of the Lebanese that fled during the conflict have returned home. UNHCR now tries to help people to restart their lives again, with tents, stoves and other necessities being brought to the area, starting with the 30 worst-hit villages.

(Finnish Public Broadcaster Yle, 25 August,

<http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/haku.php?action=page&id=228003&search=unhcr>)

## Swedish press

### **Municipalities reject more refugees**

Some 50 municipalities have turned down a request from the Swedish Integration Board (*Integrationsverket*) to either accept refugees for resettlement or accept a higher number than previously agreed. A total of 14,000 refugees are currently waiting to be resettled. The lack of housing is the most common reason cited for the rejections. "There isn't a single property available, and we already have long housing queues," one municipal official said.

(Dagens Nyheter, 25 August, SPR translation)

## Norwegian press

### **Norway to review UNHCR recommendations**

The Minister of Labour and Social Inclusion, Bjarne Haakon Hanssen, says he has full confidence in the Aliens Appeal Board's (UNE) decision to return rejected Somali asylum seekers home, but adds that the Government will still review the recommendations given by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

(The Norway Post, 25 August)

### **UN slams Norway's treatment of immigrants**

The United Nations Committee Against Racial Discrimination criticizes Norway in a recent report for not meeting its responsibilities towards immigrants. Norway has received criticism before, from both the UN and the European Office for Human Rights,

for detaining immigrants believed to lie about their identity. The UN body has now urged Norway to review this practice.  
(Dagavisen, 25 August)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Tuesday 29 August 2006

## Norwegian press

### **The Socialist Left Party (SV) calls for a dialogue**

On Thursday government official, Inge Ryan, contacted Minister of Labour and Integration, Bjarne Håkon Hanssen, suggesting a meeting with regards to past weeks' events. "We both agree that there is a need for a dialogue between the party and the Department of Labour and Integration. After the Afghanistan issue, and now with the Somalis, we can see that there are diverging opinions within the party", Ryan said to Aftenposten.

(Aftenposten, 29 August)

### **Norway fails to comply with UN recommendations**

The UN strongly advises countries not to send Kosovo-Serbs back to Kosovo, as the region is still believed to be too insecure. The organization also emphasizes that Kosovo-Serbs should not be sent to Serbia, since this would only reinforce the already existing problem of internally displaced people (IDPs). This is the case with the Serbian family from Kosovo that Norway deported to Belgrade this weekend.

(Gudbrandsdølen Dagningen, 29 August)

### **Deportation generates yet another political dispute**

After this weekend's deportation of a Serbian family, the internal disputes between the three coalition partners in the Norwegian government reached yet another level. Both national and local politicians feel that the treatment of the family strongly goes against the policies set out by their government. The criticism was specifically targeted at Minister of Labour and Integration, Bjarne Håkon Hanssen.

(NRK, 29 August)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Wednesday 30 August 2006

## Norwegian press

### **Threaten to close immigration reception centers**

Several Norwegian municipalities are threatening to close immigration reception centers, unless they receive more state money to cover increasing costs. At the moment many municipalities are using their own funds to cover the state's responsibility, such as health care, education and psychiatric treatment.

(NRK, 30 August)

## Danish press

### **Pick an immigrant**

Rent a top-trained immigrant for ten weeks free of charge. That is an offer to Danish companies put forward by the Danish Confederation for Commerce and Services and the Gefion Centre. The project is an effort to get well-educated immigrants into the labour market.

(Danish News ex-press, 30 August)

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