

# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Friday 1 – Monday 3 July 2006

## Finnish press

### **Finland received some 200 unaccompanied immigrant children last year**

Most asylum-seeking children coming without parents were boys in their teens, but there were also a few small children. The majority came from Somalia, Afghanistan and Iraq. Municipalities have so far not had common guidelines for taking care of the rights of under aged asylum-seekers, and in some communes youngsters have not been able to attend school classes. None of the under aged asylum-seekers received refugee status last year. There has been a speculation on children being used as anchors for the rest of the family, but in reality parents followed in only 12 cases. (Helsingin Sanomat online [www.hs.fi](http://www.hs.fi), 1 July 2006)

## Norwegian press

### **No new direction**

The government has signaled a new direction, also in the field of immigration. In addition to the usage of internal flight, the return of young children with serious health conditions, return praxis concerning Somalis and borderline cases in relation to UN praxis. The Left Party's (SV) Heikki Holmås points out that there is an urgent need for clearer integration of the UN recommendations to the public administration of foreigners as soon as possible. He thinks it is good that the MFA instructions are not accepted in a manner that would increase the distance between the applying bodies. (Aftenposten online [www.aftenposten.no](http://www.aftenposten.no), 3 July 2006)

### **“We get boasting from the UN”**

Secretary of State Libe Rieber-Mohn says that Norway is a role model when it comes to following the UN's recommendations, emphasizing that UN regulations are always followed in cases concerning protection, but after independent evaluation when based on socioeconomic ground. Rieber-Mohn informs that the hunger strike actualized the need for a more precise interpretation of the UN formulation in the government statute. “The government wants to evaluate the UN formulation in the Soria Moria stature during this autumn. There are no easy answers to how we shall follow UN recommendations in relation to questions that are not about protection”, she says. (Aftenposten online [www.aftenposten.no](http://www.aftenposten.no), 2 July 2006)

### **Norway still defies the UN**

Asylum-seekers are often deported to places where they do not origin from. The government's objective is to “carry out refugee policies that show greater consideration to UNHCR recommendations”. The government also wants to “increase the help for internally displaced refugees”. In addition to Afghanistan, Serbia and Montenegro, Russia and to some extent Iraq and Iran, are countries where Norwegian authorities have deported asylum-seekers to other places than to their home towns. When Norwegian authorities, according to the UNHCR, were unclear on whether this would be the practice employed with the deported hunger striking Afghans, the high commissioner requested a meeting to make sure that UN recommendations would be

complied with. Heikki Holmås (SV) wants a clearer, consistent and comprehensible practice in line with UN recommendations for when making use of internal flight or not. "We hope that Norway and other countries in greatest possible extent follow the guidelines. We are not in the position of demanding that", said spokesperson Pål Aarsæther to Aftenposten.

(Aftenposten online [www.aftenposten.no](http://www.aftenposten.no), 2 July 2006)

#### **Final decision on deportation of an Iraqi**

The 34-year old Iraqi that in 2003 threatened to kill former Minister of Local Government Erna Solberg, will be deported. The final decision was made on Friday. The man has several times directed such threats, last Friday threats were directed towards an employee at the UDI.

(Aftenposten online [www.aftenposten.no](http://www.aftenposten.no), 2 July 2006)

#### **Swedish press**

#### **Smugglers appeal their sentences**

The Chinese couple found guilty of smuggling children from China to Sweden is to appeal their sentences. The man received a 2-year sentence and the woman a 2-year 3-month prison sentence. The man claims that he is the victim in the case and that he thought the children were only tourists. The woman claims that she had no part in the smuggling but was taken advantage of by the man.

(Dagens Nyheter p. 11, SPR translation, 1 July 2006)

#### **"The four missing digits that could be fatal"**

Sweden makes much of its commitments to human rights and the United Nations. Indeed, the government boasts on its website that Sweden has a tradition of "promoting questions of human rights". But the United Nations says the country is still failing to meet international human rights standards by denying access to medical treatment for undocumented migrants. Migrants with no documents, on the other hand, may well find themselves turned away – even when they are seriously ill. Back in January 2006, the UN Special Rapporteur, Professor Paul Hunt, visited Stockholm and firmly expressed his dissatisfaction with "Swedish law and practice regarding the health services available to asylum seekers and undocumented people". The Swedish police have about 15,000 undocumented migrants on their files.

(The Local online editorial [www.thelocal.se](http://www.thelocal.se), 30 June 2006)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Tuesday 4 July 2006

## Norwegian press

### **New asylum policies**

Norwegian authorities send asylum-seekers to countries we believe are unsafe, but locate them in other areas than where they have fled from. This is revealed as a consequence of *Aftenposten* requesting the Immigration Appeals Board (UNE) to form a list of countries where internal flight has been made use of after the change of government. The UN High Commissioner has been critical to this praxis, and has met the Norwegian authorities to ensure that UN recommendations are being followed. Also Amnesty is critical to the shift within asylum policies. We share the concern of Amnesty. Many of the red-green voters have had great expectations that the government will carry out more humane asylum politics. Unfortunately we have so far experienced the opposite.

(Dagsavisen editorial, 2 July 2006)

## Swedish press

### **Extra number of refugees well received**

It has worked out better than expected to receive individuals who have been given residence permits through the temporary asylum law that was in effect until 31 March this year. In Uppsala, there were concerns whether the new residents would be facing shortage of housing and schools and long lines to language training. However, everything has worked out well, according to the Uppsala municipality introduction unit. (Sveriges Radio online [www.sr.se](http://www.sr.se), 4 July 2006)

### **Municipalities in charge of unaccompanied children**

Last weekend the municipalities took over the responsibility of unaccompanied refugee children from the Migration Board. Around 150 children that have arrived to Sweden without parental custody shall leave the Migration Board housings and move to any of the six municipalities that the Migration Board has an agreement with. However, more municipalities need to take part in order to cover up the future needs."In the long run, we need between 20 to 30 more places, which implies agreements with two or three additional municipalities, said Minister of Immigration Barbro Holmberg. (Sveriges Television online [www.svt.se](http://www.svt.se), 3 July 2006)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Wednesday 5 July 2006

## Danish press

### Hunger striking Iranian weighs 45 kilos

The weight of the skinniest of the four hunger striking Iranians has gone down to 45 kilos. The hunger strikers have been protesting against Danish asylum policies since 19 June. During the past two weeks, one of the hunger strikers has left the group because of stomach problems. Politicians from the Social Democrats, Socialist People's Party, and the Unity List have visited the hunger strikers, who are between 27- 43 years old. They have lost between five and nine kilos, and only eaten water and sugar.  
(DR online [www.dr.dk](http://www.dr.dk), 5 July 2006)

## Norwegian press

### Nansen Award to Japanese optometrist

UNHCR announced on Tuesday that the Nansen Award for 2006 goes to the Japanese optometrist Akio Kanai. According to UNHCR, tens of thousands of displaced people living in extremely difficult circumstances have been given a new outlook on life thanks to Dr. Kanai.  
(Dagens Naeringsliv online [www.dn.no](http://www.dn.no), 5 July 2006)

## Swedish press

### Orback tough on asylum-seekers

Minister for Integration Jens Orback is suggesting that the asylum-seekers who choose not to live in the place pointed to them by the Migration Board (*Migrationsverket*) should not receive their daily allowance, but should instead arrange maintenance themselves.  
(Svenska Dagbladet, SPR translation, 5 July 2006)

### Municipalities refuse to take refugee children

As of July 1, children who come to Sweden unaccompanied and then apply for asylum are the responsibility of the local authorities. Some 130 children have been affected by the new legislation. Previously they were housed at the Migration Board's reception centers but, following the law change, the municipalities have had to find homes for them, for example in private homes but even in institutions. While a number of municipalities have signed short term contracts with the Board, others have refused to take in unaccompanied refugee children because of lacking resources.  
(Dagens Nyheter, SPR Translation, 5 July 2006)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Thursday 6 July 2006

## Swedish press

### **The world goes beyond Sweden's borders**

In connection with the ongoing "Political Week" in Almedalen on Gotland, UNHCR, UNDP, FAO and Swedish UN association published an Op-Ed piece in the local newspaper *Gotlands Allehanda*. While stating that Sweden has a well-established reputation as an active UN member, they see Sweden's participation in the world body as descending without anyone protesting. It is important that Swedish political leaders state their views on Sweden's role in the UN during this election year, they stressed.

(Gotlands Allehanda

[www.gotlandsallehanda.se/GEN\\_UtmatningGA.asp?ArticleID=1229960](http://www.gotlandsallehanda.se/GEN_UtmatningGA.asp?ArticleID=1229960), 7 July 2006)

### **Refugees given amnesty also need psychological support**

Many refugees, who were granted residence permits under a temporary asylum law last winter, have mental problems after living illegally undercover in Sweden for so long. "We already were ill when we arrived here in Sweden, and we got even worse by waiting so long," said Afsar Shadanfar, who fled with her children from Iran. In total they had to wait five years for their residence permits, two of them undercover. Thanks to the new law, their situation has changed completely and the family now gets the health care and social services they require. "The temporary law saved my life. I got a lot of hope," she concluded.

(Sveriges Radio [www.sr.se/uppland/nyheter/artikel.asp?artikel=892839](http://www.sr.se/uppland/nyheter/artikel.asp?artikel=892839), 5 July 2006)

### **Immigrant children failing at school**

There are no rules how Sweden's school system should take in immigrant children and teenagers, with only half of these actually meeting the requirements for upper secondary school. Minister for Education Ibrahim Baylan wants to improve this and has tasked the National Agency for School Improvement and the National Agency for Education with establishing a set of national guidelines and strategies to solve the issue.

(Dagens Nyheter and Svenska Dagbladet, SPR translation, 6 July 2006)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Friday 7 July 2006

## Finnish press

### Number of asylum seekers drops

Finland received 1105 asylum-seekers during the first six months of 2006. The number is 40 per cent lower than the same period last year. The majority of the asylum-seekers came from Bulgaria, former Serbia-Montenegro and Iraq. According to UNHCR, the number of asylum-seekers in the industrialized countries has dropped by 50 percent during the past five years.

(Helsingin Sanomat [www.hs.fi](http://www.hs.fi), 6 July 2006)

## Estonian press

### Estonia gets 850 new citizens

The Estonian government has just granted citizenship to 868 persons, bringing the overall tally so far this year up to 3 000 new citizens. According to statistics from the Citizenship and Migration Board, Estonia had 136 000 residents with undefined citizenship at the beginning of this year, down from 172 325 in 2002. The state integration program for 2004-2007 states that 5,000 persons should receive Estonian citizenship every year.

(Baltic News Service, 6 July 2006)

## Norwegian press

### Demonstrations against deportation of Afghans

Two Afghans kept in the police's transit center at Trandum were informed of their deportation Friday. In the morning, a demonstration against the deportations took place outside the center. One of the demonstrators, Eskil Hadland, claimed that neither of the Afghans had social networks in Kabul. The protests continued at Oslo airport when the Afghans were transferred to their flight to Kabul. Minister of Labour and Social Inclusion, Bjarne Håkon Hanssen, declined to comment on the issue, referring instead questions to the Directorate of Immigration.

(Nettavisen <http://www.nettavisen.no/innenriks/article678823.ece>, 7 July 2006)

### Lier reception center hosts rejected asylum-seekers

Weheliye Ali Matha and Farah Ahmed Hassan are waiting to be deported in the Lier reception center for asylum-seekers. Norwegian authorities have concluded that they have no need for international protection, because they can be protected by their tribe in Somalia. Matha and Hassan consider this unrealistic in a chaotic country as Somalia and therefore refuse to be returned there. The center started to give basic aid to those whose asylum applications have been rejected in March. About 90 persons have lived there since then, with only three returning voluntarily to their country of origin.

(Aftenposten <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article1380105.ece>, 7 July 2006)

## Swedish press

### **Centre wants a more generous refugee policy**

The Centre Party wants to have a more generous refugee policy, under which it would be possible to seek asylum directly in the country of origin. People granted asylum would then be able to join one of the immigration programs for skilled laborers. The Centre Party also thinks asylum seekers should be encouraged to work while waiting for the outcome of their asylum claims.

(The Local

[www.thelocal.se/article.php?ID=4271&date=20060706&PHPSESSID=98bafc7fd8afaa84309afcbb7840f9ce](http://www.thelocal.se/article.php?ID=4271&date=20060706&PHPSESSID=98bafc7fd8afaa84309afcbb7840f9ce), 7 July 2006)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Saturday 8 – Monday 10 July 2006

## Estonian press

### **Ministry for Foreign Affairs allocates 800,000 crowns to refugees in Sudan**

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has announced an 800,000 Estonian crowns (USD 64,231) donation to UNHCR. The donation is to be used for a humanitarian project in Southern Sudan, with a special emphasis to the health care of refugee women and children in South Sudan and to the internally displaced persons in South Sudan, Khartoum and Kassala States of Sudan.

(Eesti Päevaleht online 7 July 2006, <http://www.epl.ee/artikkel.php?ID=325439>)

## Norwegian press

### **Ministry of Justice improves rules at aliens return centre run by police**

The Trandum return centre has for years had no proper regulations for the use of forced measures by the police, and both the Council of Europe's torture-monitoring committee and Norwegian Ombudsman for Human Rights have earlier questioned the practices at the police-run facility. New rules are now being issued to ensure the human rights of the aliens that are being returned to their home countries through Trandum, says secretary of state, Anne Rygh Pedersen (Labour Party).

(NRK online edition, 10 July 2006, <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/innenriks/1.700918>)

### **Two Afghans returned**

Two Afghans were returned to Afghanistan yesterday (Friday), with NOAS claiming the returns are contrary to UNHCR's rules. NOAS has reviewed the papers of one of the returnees and found that there is no backing for the claim that he has a social network in Kabul. UNHCR advises against returning Afghans to Kabul if they have no social network there. NOAS has lodged an appeal with the Second Appeals Board (UNE) to let the man stay in Norway, but is expecting it to be rejected.

(Aftenposten online edition, 8 July 2006

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article1381728.ece>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Tuesday 11 July 2006

## Finnish press

### **UN refugee award to Japanese optometrist**

This year's UN refugee award goes to Dr. Akio Kanai. Through practical assistance the president of Fuji Optical and his staff have improved the quality of life for many refugees, states UNHCR. Kanai has assisted over 100,000 refugees during two decades by means of testing their eyes and providing them with spectacles. Fuji Optical is an important corporate partner for UNHCR. The Nansen Refugee Award is given annually to an individual or organization that has helped refugees.

(Yle online, 11 July 2006,

[http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/haku.php?action=page&id=224814&search=pakolai\\*](http://www.yle.fi/uutiset/haku.php?action=page&id=224814&search=pakolai*))

## Latvian press

### **Minister hopes illegal immigrants from Somalia will be granted refugee status**

Latvian Interior Minister Dzintars Jaundzeikars hopes to find a way of granting refugee status to seven illegal immigrants from Somalia currently living in Latvia without valid documents or shelter. The Somalis left the camp for illegal immigrants in Olaine last week since they had stayed the maximum time, according to the Immigration Law. The Riga county court refused to take notice of the Border Guard claim for extending their period of stay, due to the failure to meet the terms of detainees' right to communicate in a language they understand, assisted by an interpreter if needed. The seven Somalis, five men and two women, arrived in Latvia in August last year. Their request for asylum was rejected as well as their appeal to the immigration authority.

(Baltic News Service, 11 July 2006)

## Swedish press

### **Man threatens to set fire to himself**

After a family from Turkey had their application for asylum rejected on Monday, they entered the Migration Board's office in Kiruna, Northern Sweden, with the father pouring petrol over his body and threatening to set fire to himself. The building was evacuated and the police started negotiations with the man and his wife. The couple's two children were released in the evening after hours of negotiations.

(Svenska Dagbladet, SPR translation, 11 July 2006)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Wednesday 12 July 2006

## Danish press

### **Iranians still on hunger strike**

Four Iranians continue hungerstriking after an Iranian man committed suicide in an asylum reception center in Hanstholm 23 days ago. The four are protesting against Danish asylum policies, and have stayed in Denmark from 3.5 to 13 years. (DR, 1 July 2006 <http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Politik/2006/07/11/145820.htm> )

## Estonian press

### **Foreign minister: Migration and development closely interwoven**

Questions of migration and development are tightly interwoven, Estonia's Foreign Minister Urmas Paet said on Monday at the Euro-African conference on migration and development in the Moroccan capital Rabat. The conference adopted a declaration stressing the need for a more active dialogue between Europe and Africa on migration. Estonia has supported UNHCR since 2000, allocating 1.8 million crowns (USD 146,595) for this purpose last year. Another contribution of 400,000 crowns (USD 32,116) is planned this year. Additionally, Estonia has over the past three years helped Sudanese refugees, with 40,144 USD in 2004, 32,116 USD in 2005, and 64, 231 USD this year. (Baltic News Service, 11 July 2006)

## Latvian press

### **Illegal Somali immigrants back in refugee center**

Seven illegal immigrants from Somalia who arrived in Latvia last year were on Tuesday brought to a refugee center in Mucenieki, near Riga, after Latvia's Citizenship and Migration Affairs Board and the Border Guard decided to grant them asylum-seeker status again. All seven will stay at the center until the Justice Ministry's Appeals Council for Refugee Affairs makes its final decision on the issue. The Somalis had to leave the camp for illegal immigrants in Olaine last week as they had overstayed the maximum time allowed there. Their earlier claims for asylum were rejected, as well as the appeals. (Baltic News Service, 12 July 2006)

## Norwegian press

### **Norway continues ignoring UN recommendations**

All twelve Afghans who have had their cases reviewed following the hunger strike have received negative decisions, and four have already been deported to Afghanistan by force. The Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS) claims that the Appeals Board, UNE, has deported Afghans to Kabul who have no social networks there, contrary to UNHCR's recommendations. The head of UNE, Terje Sjeggestad, says that unlike NOAS and UNHCR, he does not find the matter of a social network in Kabul as important.

(Dagsavisen, 12 July 2006 <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2190750.ece> )

## Swedish press

### **Man seen as endangering lives**

The Turkish man who threatened to set fire to himself in the Migration Board's offices in Kiruna on Monday after being told that his family would not be granted asylum, is seen by the police as endangering the lives of other people. The Turkish family has been in Sweden for four years, but received recently a deportation order after being found not in need of international protection. Following the incident, the man has been admitted to the psychiatric ward at the nearby Gällivare hospital.

(Svenska Dagbladet, SPR translation, 12 July 2006)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Thursday 13 July 2006

## Latvian press

### **Latvia grants alternative status to Somali asylum-seekers**

The Appeals Council for Refugee Affairs of the Latvian Justice Ministry has reportedly granted alternative status to a group of Somali nationals who illegally arrived in Latvia last year. The Somalis had to leave a camp for illegal immigrants in Olaine last week as they had overstayed the maximum time allowed there. Their earlier claims for asylum were rejected, as well as the appeals. Alternative status will now allow the Somalis to stay in Latvia until the situation in their homeland has stabilized.

(Baltic News Service, 13 July 2006)

## Norwegian press

### **Children stay long in asylum reception centers**

A total of 2,100 children currently reside in Norwegian asylum reception centers. 411 of them are still, after three years, not sure whether they can remain in the country. According to the figures of the Directorate of Immigration, UDI, some of them have waited for a decision on their asylum claims for more than five years. Psychologist Nora Sveaas regards this as being in conflict with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The government recently promised to take the conditions of the children into better consideration.

(NRK, 13 July 2006 <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/innenriks/1.721158>)

### **UN: Norway has too strict interpretation**

The Immigration Appeals Board (UNE) has stated that Norwegian practice does not follow UN recommendations in all areas. "Our hope is that all countries, including Norway, follow our guidelines as much as possible," said Pål Aarsæther, spokesman for UNHCR. "However, guidelines are exactly that - guidelines. We do not have measures to force these upon anyone."

(Dagsavisen, 13 July 2006 <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2191877.ece>)

### **"We are following UN recommendations"**

While the Immigration Appeals Board (UNE) says straight out that they are not following UN recommendations, State Secretary for Asylum Affairs at the ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion, Libe Rieber Mohn, claims that the government in fact does follow them. At present, Rieber-Mohn is in Kabul to monitor the return programme, where she is in dialogue with the EU, Afghan refugee minister, Norwegian Refugee Council and UNHCR.

(Dagsavisen, 13 July 2006 <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2191883.ece>)

### **Calls on to remove head of reception center**

The municipality of Sunndal will tomorrow meet with the residents of the asylum reception center there to discuss their criticism against the head of the center. In a letter to the Directorate of Immigration (UDI) they claimed the head of the center has acted aggressively and in an inappropriate manner, which has led to conflicts.

(NRK, 12 July 2006 [http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/distrikt/more\\_og\\_romsdal/1.718407](http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/distrikt/more_og_romsdal/1.718407))

**Swedish press**

**“Discard integration agencies”**

Masoud Kamali, who has been commissioned by the government to investigate discrimination in Sweden, states in a government report today that all the organizations and agencies that work with specific integration policies, including the Integration Board, should be discarded. He proposes that the Integration Board should be replaced by an agency whose main purpose must be to meet the immediate needs of new immigrants.

(Dagens Nyheter, SPR translation, 13 July 2006

<http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=572&a=559088&previousRenderType=6> )

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Friday 14 July 2006

## Danish press

### EU asked to probe asylum centres

Conditions for asylum seekers stranded in Danish asylum centres are so miserable that six organisations have asked the EU Parliament in Brussels to conduct an investigation. According to Niels-Erik Hansen, head of the Documentation and Advisory Centre on Racial Discrimination (DRC), it is non-sensical that asylum seekers are not permitted to work at a time when there is a drastic shortage of manpower. The five other organisations behind the request are SOS Against Racism, Association of Immigrants' Rights Lawyers, Association for Ethnic Equality, Priests in Protest and National Forum for Asylum Seekers' Rights.

(Jyllands-Posten, News Ex-press translation, 14 July 2006)

## Latvian press

### Somalis to stay in Latvia until situation in their homeland becomes safer

The Appeals Council for Refugee Affairs of the Latvian Justice Ministry has granted alternative refugee status to seven illegal immigrants from Somalia who arrived in Latvia last August. This means that the Somali immigrants can be deported to their homeland only after the situation in Somalia improves.

(Baltic News Service, 14 July 2006)

## Norwegian press

### Urges government to follow UN recommendations

The Labour Party's youth association (AUF) urges the government to follow UN's recommendations. Its vice chairman, Martin Henriksen, says a new line was promised in the Soria Moria declaration (the original political platform agreed upon by the three coalition partners) and now they have to act accordingly. As *Dagsavisen* reported earlier, the political leadership in the Labour and Social Inclusion ministry claims that UN recommendations are being followed in the deportation of Afghans, while the Immigration Appeals Board (UNE) states the opposite.

(Dagsavisen, 14 July 2006 <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2193325.ece>)

### Majority of work permits to Polish workers

Over half of the work permits granted this year have been given to Polish workers. During the first half of 2006, close to 32,200 work permits were granted. This is over 9,000 permits more than in the same period last year. 17,200 of these were granted to Polish citizens, shows statistics from the Directorate of Immigration (UDI).

(Dagsavisen 14 July 2006 <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2193273.ece>)

### Immigration to Norway

Statistics from the Directorate of Immigration (UDI) show that during the first half of this year, 2,368 persons applied for asylum in Norway, about the same as last year. Most of the asylum seekers originate from Iraq, Somalia and Russia. At the end of June, 8,000

people lived in reception centres, including some 2,100 children. 106 of the minors are unaccompanied asylum-seekers.

(Dagsavisen 14 July 2006 <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2193270.ece>)

### **Three out of ten refugees harassed**

A survey by the refugee office of the municipality of Hadeland indicates that one in three refugees has experienced harassment, discrimination or violence. The survey finds that men are more at risk of being harassed and discriminated against than women, while young refugees are the most vulnerable and the only group exposed to violence.

(Dagsavisen 14 July 2006

[http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/distrikt/hedmark\\_og\\_oppland/1.724541](http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/distrikt/hedmark_og_oppland/1.724541))

## **Swedish press**

### **Integration Board cannot be blamed**

In a report published yesterday, government investigator Masoud Kamali slammed Sweden's integration policy, saying it pardoned discrimination. Today, Britt-Marie Jonsson, acting director general of the Integration Board, says the Board is not responsible for Sweden's integration policy as this is a political matter. She refrains from commenting on Kamali's proposal to close down the Integration Board and replace it with an agency introducing immigrants to Sweden.

(Dagens Nyheter and Svenska Dagbladet, SPR translation 14 July 2006)

### **Inexperienced interpreters - a healthcare risk**

In order to cut costs, more county councils are contracting interpretation agencies unable to guarantee that their staff has healthcare knowledge. Ali Labriz, head of the Swedish Association of Interpreters, said this could lead to an increased risk of incorrect healthcare treatments. Doctor Shohreh Salehpour, working at the refugee medical centre in Fittja, near Stockholm, says she often encounters interpreters with inadequate language proficiency, including one who recently confused the words "lung" and "liver". (The Local, 10 July 2006 <http://www.thelocal.se/article.php?ID=4296&date=20060710>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Saturday 15 July – Monday 17 2006

## Danish press

### **Danish citizen could be deported**

The 46-year old suspected terrorist Said Mansour could be stripped of his Danish citizenship and deported if found guilty of terrorist activities. Minister of Justice Lene Espersen will shortly sign the indictment that could, for the first time ever, lead to a Danish citizen being thrown out of the country. Mr. Mansour, who has been in custody for ten months on charges of distributing terrorist propaganda throughout the world from his home in Brønshøj, is banned from entering his native country of Morocco, and was reportedly 'shocked' in Copenhagen District Court on Friday when the prosecution presented its demands.

(Jyllands-Posten, News Ex-press translation, 16 July 2006)

## Norwegian press

### **Stoltenberg on return of Afghans**

Afghans who have been sent back have had their cases thoroughly handled by both the Directorate of Immigration (UDI) and the Alien Appeals Board (UNE). It is strange to say that is dangerous for them to go back when 4.5 million Afghans already have returned, said prime minister Jens Stoltenberg when visiting a summer camp arranged by the Labour Party's youth association (AUF). The prime minister did not respond to Dagsavisen's question on how it is like to have a political leadership (Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion) who claims to fully follow UN recommendations while the implementing agency (UNE) states the opposite.

(Dagsavisen 16 July 2006 <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2195601.ece>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Tuesday 18 July 2006

## Finnish press

### UN agency shows appreciation for donation

Thanks to the money Åland Post collected last year by selling Christmas stickers, over 70 Chechen refugees in Lithuania will cope better with their situation as refugees. The Post has since 1993 collected money for charitable causes through this campaign, and last year 6 900 euros was donated to UNHCR.

(Ålandstidningen 18 July 2006)

<http://www.tidningen.aland.net/se/nyhet.asp?newsID=11115>)

## Lithuanian press

### Russian commits suicide at Foreigners' Registration Center

A 31-year-old Russian female committed suicide at the Foreigners' Registration Center in Pabrade. She had lived at the center since February, when she was detained for illegal entry to Lithuania. There are currently 95 persons at the center, with most of them being Russian.

(Baltic News Service 17 July 2006)

## Norwegian press

### UN evacuates from Beirut

"Non-essential staff is being evacuated from Beirut, while essential UNHCR staff remains on the ground in there," said Jennifer Pagonis, spokeswoman for UNHCR. According to news wire reports, there is little indication that Israeli attacks will end soon. Tuesday afternoon Israeli airplanes bombed the main road between Lebanon and Syria again.

(Aftenposten 18 July 2006)

<http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/uriks/midtosten/article1391628.ece>)

## Swedish press

### Border police reported for trying to deceive asylum-seeker

A border police officer has been reported to the agency's disciplinary unit, suspected of trying to deceive an asylum-seeker into meeting with him after it had been decided that his asylum application would be rejected. The asylum-seeker is one of the Sudanese refugees that went on a hunger strike in May to protest the Migration Board's rejection of their asylum claims. The police officer told the asylum seeker that he should come to the police office to review some new documents relating to his case. However, the asylum-seeker became suspicious and did not show up. According to the asylum-seeker's lawyer, the new documents were in fact documents handed in by the asylum-seeker in 2003. He is currently living underground in Sweden and has appealed the rejection of his asylum claim.

(Sveriges Radio, 18 July 2006)

<http://www.sr.se/goteborg/nyheter/artikel.asp?artikel=900811>)

### **Assault at the Migration Board**

On Tuesday the alarm went off at the Migration Board in Solna when a male asylum seeker attacked some female asylum seekers, said Björn Svensson of the Stockholm police. No staff was hurt and it is unclear whether the man knew the women from earlier. (Svenska Dagbladet 18 July 2006

[http://www.svd.se/dynamiskt/stockholm24/did\\_13236874.asp](http://www.svd.se/dynamiskt/stockholm24/did_13236874.asp))

### **Major Differences in Migration Courts**

A survey made by the Swedish Television (SVT) shows that there is a significant difference among the three new Migration Courts on how they grant residence permits. In Gothenburg, 38 per cent of the applicants receive residence permits or are granted a review of their cases, while in Malmö and Stockholm only 16 per cent and 8 per cent of the cases, respectively, see similar rulings.

(SR 17 July 2006, <http://www.sr.se/cgi-bin/ekot/artikel.asp?artikel=900494>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Wednesday 19 July 2006

## Lithuanian press

### **Parliament expands president's powers to grant Lithuanian citizenship**

The Lithuanian parliament has expanded the president's powers to grant Lithuanian citizenship in cases related to public interest or putting Lithuania's name on the map. Until now Lithuanian citizenship could be granted only where a person makes a significant contribution to the strengthening of statehood of the Republic of Lithuania, boosting of Lithuania's power and its image in the international community. (Baltic News Service 19 July 2006)

## Norwegian press

### **State Secretary: UN is on the same course as us**

To a certain extent Norwegian public has been wrongly informed about what the UN High Commissioner for refugees means regarding the return of Afghans from Norway, says Libe Rieber-Mohn. She is responsible for asylum- and refugee policy at the Ministry for Labour and Social Inclusion.

– After meeting with the staff of the High Commissioner in Kabul, I can ascertain that they (there) do not have anything to object to regarding Norwegian policy, she says to *Aftenposten*.

The High Commissioner defines 70 per cent of Afghanistan's land area as safe to return to. That is to say, far more than Kabul is defined as safe.

The many remarks this summer on what the High Commissioner means and does not mean, she comments on in this way:

- From different departments within the High Commissioner's apparatus there have been some different signals, and these signals have been expressed through Norwegian mass media. Part of the information that has been given to the public in Norway has been somewhat unbalanced. When we communicate with the High Commissioner's representatives in Kabul, I think we are communicating with the ones most competent to comment, she says.

- *You and Bjarne Håkon Hanssen have been accused of deceiving the Afghans to end their hunger strike. Have you done that?*

- We have not deceived anyone at all. Everything the government has promised, we have stood by. All Afghans whose applications have been rejected have had the opportunity to get help from NOAS and Flyktningehjelpen (NRC), says State Secretary Libe Rieber-Mohn to *Aftenposten*.

(*Aftenposten* 19 July 2006 <http://www.aftenposten.no/nyheter/iriks/article1392023.ece>)

### **UDI criticized for methods**

Several professional institutions criticize the Directorate of Immigration (UDI) for using unreliable methods in determining the age of asylum-seekers. Both Oslo University Hospital and Ullevål University Hospital do not longer want to conduct the age tests, which consist of measuring the hand bones of asylum-seekers and examining their teeth. The majority of the over 1,100 children who have been tested during the past three years have been determined as being older than 18 years. After examining 50 of

the cases, Rune Berglund Steen at the Norwegian Organization for Asylum-seekers (NOAS) claims UDI has determined many children as adults on incorrect basis, demanding that UDI reviews their cases again. UDI rejects the criticism. (Dagsavisen 19 July 2006 <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2200612.ece>)

#### **Iraqis returned, but not mullah Krekar**

Mullah Krekar will probably stay in Norway, while all Iraqis without residence permits will be sent home. The reason for this is that Norway wants guarantees that the authorities in Iraq do not give the death penalty to the mullah. The 50-year-old mullah came to Norway as a quota refugee in the beginning of the 90's. Four years ago it became known that the Directorate of Immigration (UDI) and police investigated his connections to the terror network al-Qaida through his previous position as head of Ansar al-Islam. (Dagsavisen 19 July 2006 <http://www.dagsavisen.no/innenriks/article2199697.ece>)

#### **A clear "pain level"**

On July 10 minister Bjarne Håkon Hanssen responded to the criticism towards the Alien Appeals Board (UNE) from 13 NGOs. In their response to Hanssen's reply the NGOs, including Norwegian Organization for Asylum-Seekers (NOAS), state that their criticism indicates a serious problem of legitimacy for UNE. They add that they do not wish to continue their participatory role in UNE and that there is a "pain level" where their participation no longer is consistent with the mandates of their respective NGOs. (Aftenposten 18 July 2006 <http://www.aftenposten.no/meninger/debatt/article1390789.ece>)

#### **Swedish press**

#### **UN prepared for Lebanese refugees**

The UNHCR is preparing to take care of refugees from southern Lebanon. According to the latest numbers, half a million people could be fleeing. "We always hope for the best, but plan for the worst," says Paal Aarsaether, spokesman for UNHCR in the Baltic and Nordic countries. It is of course a difficult situation. Infrastructure, food and drinking water are in short supply. We have stockpiles of relief items in Syria and Jordan, and are prepared to deliver these as soon as there is a possibility, says Paal Aarsaether. (Sveriges Radio 19 July 2006 <http://www.sr.se/ekot/artikel.asp?artikel=901159>)

#### **Migration Board reforms itself**

After it became known that Migration Board employees acted inappropriately when handling asylum cases, the authority has worked to change its staff handling of and attitude towards asylum-seekers. An ombudsman has also been appointed for the asylum-seekers, albeit this has so far been unknown to asylum-seekers. (Sveriges Radio 19 July 2006 <http://www.sr.se/cgi-bin/ekot/artikel.asp?artikel=901498>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Thursday 20 July 2006

## Danish press

### **Situation in southern Lebanon escalates**

Food and medication do not longer reach refugees in southern Lebanon, where the situation becomes more critical for every hour passing, said Jens Bertelsen of UNRWA. (Politiken 20 July 2006 <http://politiken.dk/VisArtikel.iasp?PageID=466296>)

## Finnish press

### **Helsingin Sanomat: Indians are smuggled to Europe via Finland**

The newspaper Helsingin Sanomat writes that according to border guards, Indians are smuggled illegally via Finland to other Schengen countries. On Wednesday Helsinki district court detained a 22-year-old Indian man suspected of organizing the smuggling. A group of young Indians arrived in Finland in June-July without visa to any of the Schengen countries. They were placed in a reception centre in Helsinki, but shortly after eleven of them disappeared. Seven of them and the 22-year-old were later detained at the border in Torneå.

(YLE 20 July 2006 [http://www.yle.fi/internytt/artikel.php?id=79118\\_Löpsedeln](http://www.yle.fi/internytt/artikel.php?id=79118_Löpsedeln))

## Norwegian press

### **UNHCR helps fleeing Lebanese**

Some 500,000 people have been displaced within Lebanon after more than a week of attacks by Israel, with over 300 killed. Most of the displaced remain in Lebanon, and UNHCR monitors the borders and helps those fleeing to neighbouring countries. The plight of the 20,000 or so refugees and asylum seekers in Lebanon – mainly from Iraq – is also of concern to UNHCR.

(NRK 20 July 2006 <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/utenriks/1.749656>)

### **Lebanese asylum-seekers can stay for now**

Norwegian immigration authorities have decided that no decisions will be taken regarding asylum or other alien cases where possible final rejections would mean return to Lebanon. Those who have previously received final rejections on their asylum applications, do not have to return to Lebanon until the situation there has stabilized.

(TV2/ Nettavisen 20 July 2006 <http://www.nettavisen.no/innenriks/article689813.ece>)

## Swedish press

### **UNHCR gears up for operation in Lebanon**

The UN refugee agency is gearing up for a multi-million-dollar operation in the Middle East aimed at assisting tens of thousands of people displaced by the current crisis in Lebanon. Even though most Lebanese flee within Lebanon's borders, the UNHCR monitors border in countries surrounding Lebanon for outflows of refugees. "Most Lebanese leaving Lebanon find shelter with friends and families", said Ekber Menemencioglu, UNHCR's director for the Middle East.

(Svenska Dagbladet, 20 July 2006  
[http://www.svd.se/dynamiskt/utrikes/did\\_13255794.asp](http://www.svd.se/dynamiskt/utrikes/did_13255794.asp))

**Lebanese issued residence permits**

The Swedish Migration Board (Migrationsverket) has announced that it can extend Lebanese tourists' visitor permits for up to three months.  
(Dagens Nyheter, SPR Translation, 20 July 2006)

**Summer activities for asylum-seeking kids**

To be a child and asylum-seeker can be incredibly difficult, since a great part of everyday life consists of uncertainty. To relieve the long wait, the activity group Children Waiting (Barn i väntan) and Swedish Organization for Individual Human Aid (Individuell människohjälp) organize free activities for asylum-seeking children in Malmö this summer. "It is very fun. We play a lot games, soccer and so on", said nine year-old participant Otman Khalia Joman.  
(Sveriges Radio 20 July 2006  
<http://www.sr.se/malmo/nyheter/artikel.asp?artikel=902005>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Friday 21 July 2006

## Estonian press

### **Dudayev's widow wants Estonian citizenship for herself, family**

Alla Dudayeva, the widow of late Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev, wants to obtain Estonian citizenship for her entire family. Under the amended law on citizenship adopted earlier this year, citizenship for special services can be granted also to people who do not permanently live in Estonia but are interested in obtaining it.

(Baltic News Service 20 July 2006)

## Finnish press

### **Prison sentences for human trafficking**

Helsinki District Court has meted out tough sentences in Finland's first human trafficking trial. All eight defendants were given prison sentences ranging from one to five years of imprisonment for aggravated human trafficking. The Finnish-Estonian gang brought 15 women to Finland over a period of six months to work as prostitutes.

(YLE 21 July 2006 <http://www.yle.fi/news/id39000.html>)

### **Lighter sentences in immigration bribery case**

About a year and a half ago a departmental secretary at the Directorate of Immigration was convicted of accepting bribes from foreigners hoping for speedier processing of their residence permit applications. The Helsinki District Court handed the secretary a nine month suspended sentence and ordered her dismissed from her post. Her suspended term has now been lowered to seven months. From 2000 to 2003, the official received payments from immigrants, mostly Turks, who were seeking faster handling of applications. The court determined that she had received nearly 11.800 euros in bribes.

(YLE 21 July 2006 <http://www.yle.fi/news/left/id39041.html>)

## Norwegian press

### **Norwegian emergency aid to Lebanon**

The Norwegian People's Aid is now organizing the transport of emergency supplies to families in Lebanon. The Norwegian organization is cooperating with local organizations and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

(Norway Post 21 July 2006

<http://www.norwaypost.no/cgi-bin/norwaypost/imaker?id=26184>)

## Swedish press

### **Humanitarian catastrophe threatens Lebanon**

Anxiety is growing for an upcoming humanitarian catastrophe in Lebanon at war. The European Commission has decided to give 92 million SEK (12.4 million USD) to acute humanitarian aid for Lebanon's people. Also the UN Refugee Agency UNHCR aims to go in with multi-million support.

(Radio Sweden 21 July 2006 <http://svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=22584&a=626798>)

**“Easy for Hezbollah to recruit refugees”**

UN's Refugee Agency UNHCR estimates that about 20.000 Lebanese cross the border to neighboring Syria every day. Many of these seek refuge in mosques, churches and schools that have been put at their disposal. In some locations, auditoriums are reportedly used for praising Hezbollah's struggle, appealing to the men and women who have lost everything to take revenge and join the group in the struggle.

(Dagens Nyheter 21 July <http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=148&a=560562>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Saturday 22 – Monday 24 July 2006

## Danish press

### **Demonstration in support for hunger strikers**

Iranian asylum-seekers have now been hunger striking at Christiansborg for 36 days. Their health condition is worrying, and therefore activists want to draw attention to their situation. The hunger strike began after an Iranian asylum-seeker committed suicide in an asylum center. The Iranians are hunger striking because they, as rejected asylum-seekers, have to live for an uncertain duration of time at the asylum centre, since Iran refuses to accept them. However, there is no sign that the Danish authorities will change their position. A demonstration will be arranged today from Christiansborg to the Refugee Board, to urge Denmark to follow international conventions.

(DR online 24 July 2006

<http://www.dr.dk/Regioner/Kbh/Nyheder/Andet/2006/07/24/061850.htm>)

### **Danish exodus to Malmo on the rise**

The number of Danes moving to take up residence across the Sound in Malmo, southern Sweden, has increased sevenfold in the past six years, with Denmark's tight family-reunion rules responsible for about a fifth of the figure. Although the Danish immigration authorities granted 2.500 Danes with foreign spouses family reunion permits in 2005, 400 citizens from third countries applied for permits for reunion with Danish citizens resident in Malmo, fresh Swedish data show. An estimated 1.400 Danes have been forced to move to Malmo alone since the Danish government tightened immigration rules in 2002, with others choosing to reside in the Skåne region of southern Sweden. (Jyllands-Posten 23 July 2006, News Ex-Press translation)

## Estonian press

### **Moscow plans to lure 300.000 expatriates back to Russia**

Russia intends to lure 300.000 expatriates back within three years and plans to open special representations abroad to implement the program, Konstantin Romodanovsky, head of the federal migration service said. The head of the association of Russian compatriots' organizations in Estonia, Sergei Sergejev, said at the end of June that most Russians living in this Baltic state are not going to heed President Vladimir Putin's call to return to Russia and will stay in Estonia. A survey conducted for the Russian Foreign Ministry in 2002 also revealed that only 8-11 percent of ethnic Russians currently living in the Baltic States would like to go back to Russia.

(Baltic News Service 24 July 2006)

## Finnish press

### **Eight Somalis could face deportation**

The Directorate of Immigration is issuing deportation orders for eight Somalis as a result of crimes committed in Finland. Some of them face deportation to the unstable southern part of Somalia, in contravention with recommendations of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. The deportation orders are not yet legally valid and no recent deportation

orders have been implemented. Deportees can also appeal the decision to the Administrative Court.  
(YLE Radio News 23 July 2006 <http://www.yle.fi/news/left/id39168.html>)

### **Norwegian press**

#### **UN agency for refugees demands safe corridors**

UN's Refugee Agency is ready to release tonnes of emergency supplies to the displaced people in Lebanon from its emergency stockpiles in Jordan and Syria, but that aid cannot reach those in need of it before safe corridors for humanitarian aid are established. "We have no guarantees yet of safe passage to the mountain regions where thousands of displaced people have sought refuge," said Paal Aarsaether, spokesperson for UNHCR. In Jordan and Syria alone, UNHCR has 250.000 blankets, some 50.000 mattresses, 30.000 kitchen sets, 22.000 tents, 17.000 stoves and other relief items.

(NRK 21 July 2006 <http://www.nrk.no/nyheter/utenriks/1.757317>)

### **Swedish press**

#### **Humanitarian aid workers killed in Darfur**

Humanitarian aid organizations have stopped its work in parts of Darfur province in southern Sudan after three aid workers were beaten to death in a refugee camp. The security situation has deteriorated quickly according to the UN Refugee Agency, which has expressed great concern over the situation. The three humanitarian aid workers, working with water sanitation, were for unknown reasons beaten to death by a group of people in the refugee camp, according to UNHCR. Work in this and nearby camps has therefore been stopped until further notice.

(Svenska Dagbladet 21 July 2006

[http://www.svd.se/dynamiskt/utrikes/did\\_13267622.asp](http://www.svd.se/dynamiskt/utrikes/did_13267622.asp))

#### **81.000 more inhabitants in ten years**

Stockholm is growing – in the next ten years its population will increase by 81.000 people, a new survey by the city administration shows. The new temporary asylum law will give Stockholm yet 2000 new inhabitants in addition to the regular increase of about 7000 people per year.

(Dagens Nyheter 23 July 2006)

#### **Rejected by Iran - again**

The Attarbashi family, three brothers, sisters and their father are back in Sweden again. The police assumed that Iran would accept them this time, but were proven wrong. The cost of the failed attempt to deport the family is 85.000 crowns (11.500 USD). Police officer Hans Galin said the police and Migration Board must now discuss how they should continue with the case. However, the family who has lived in Sweden for five years will not be put into custody again. Last year, 2.490 individuals were deported from Sweden, costing some 133 million Swedish crowns (18 million USD).

(Gefle Dagblad 24 July 2006 <http://www.gd.se/Article.jsp?article=83046>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Tuesday 25 July 2006

## Danish press

### **Politician took part in storming of Refugee Board**

On Monday 20 people forced their way into the Refugee Board's office in Copenhagen, to show sympathy with the hunger-striking Iranian asylum seekers. Amongst the demonstrators was politician Jørgen Arbo-Bæhr from the Unity List (Red-Green Alliance). Around 12 people were arrested for unlawful entering. The politician, however, avoided getting caught by the police.

(Danish Radio 24 July 2006

<http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Politik/2006/07/24/162910.htm>)

### **UN asks for safe corridor to Lebanon**

UN's High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres, calls it "frustrating" that emergency aid for Lebanon's refugees cannot get through and asks for a safe corridor. Israel is blocking the Lebanese harbors and bombs the country's only international airport in southern Beirut. 40 UNHCR trucks with tents, blankets and portable kitchens were yesterday halted at the Syrian border of Lebanon.

(Politiken 25 July 2006 <http://politiken.dk/VisArtikel.iasp?PageID=467091>)

## Lithuanian press

### **Lithuanian president issued more citizenships 2nd year in office**

Lithuanian citizenships were granted by presidential decree to 634 persons in July 2005-2006, while a renunciation of citizenship was accepted from 330 persons. Last year, the figures were 506 and 242, respectively.

(Baltic News Service 25 July 2006)

## Swedish press

### **Fewer seeking asylum**

Over the past three years the number of people seeking asylum in Sweden has dropped, but that does not mean that fewer immigrants are arriving. Many come to work and up to 10,000 people are living (illegally) outside the system and many never seek asylum. The Temporary Aliens' Act was pushed through after pressure from the Green and Left parties, aimed mainly at giving families with children who were in hiding in Sweden a chance to stay. However, people without children were also offered a review of their cases. So far some 35 per cent of them have had their applications rejected, with 1.000 going into hiding.

(Dagens Nyheter 25 July 2006, SPR Translation)

### **Sweden gives millions in Lebanon aid**

Sweden gave a total of 40.5 million kronor (5.5 million USD) in humanitarian aid to Lebanon on Monday, with the foreign ministry saying more could be given later this week. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) said it would respond to a UN appeal for humanitarian aid by donating 20 million kronor (2.7 million

USD) channeled through Unicef, UNHCR, and WHO. A further 16.5 million kronor (2.2 million USD) has been donated to the Swedish Rescue Services Agency, 13 million (1.75 million USD) of which was in response to a request from WFP to help establish a humanitarian aid corridor. The remainder, 3.5 million (470.000 USD), will go towards mine-clearing operations in Lebanon. The Swedish branches of Save the Children and Red Cross have also received a total of four million Swedish kronor (540.000 USD) to fund their efforts in Lebanon.

(The Local 24 July 2006

<http://www.thelocal.se/article.php?ID=4413&date=20060724&PHPSESSID=11d22a39a32b7780b79a0c0b08a38795>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Wednesday 26 July 2006

## Danish press

### **Denmark gives 19 million DKK (3.2 million USD) to Lebanon**

The Danish government donates 19 million DKK (3.2 million USD) for the relief work in Lebanon, to be channeled via UNICEF, WFP and UNHCR for food, transport and shelter for the displaced families. In addition, 7 million DKK (750.000 USD) will be sent to Gaza via UNWRA.

(Netavisen 25 July 2006 <http://netavisen.newspaq.dk/indland/?aid=192235>)

### **47 evacuees got visas**

Just 47 of the 5.300 people that so far have fled from Lebanon to Denmark did not have Danish passports. Lebanese and stateless Palestinians can come to Denmark on visitor visas. All of 47, including 10 children, have been granted 90-day visas, which can be extended if necessary. For the time being, no one of the 47 have applied for asylum.

(TV2 25 July 2006 <http://nyhederne.tv2.dk/article.php/id-4557795.html>)

### **Press photographer arrested**

During the protest at the Refugee Board yesterday, a press photographer from the media syndicate Monsun was arrested. According to the photographer, his press badge was fully visible and even though he identified himself to the police, he was arrested together with 11 demonstrators who had forced their way into the Refugee Board's premises. The media syndicate Monsun demands that Copenhagen police drop their charges against the photographer.

(Danish Radio 25 July 2006

<http://www.dr.dk/Regioner/Kbh/Nyheder/Krimi/2006/07/25/174035.htm>)

## Estonian press

### **Estonia gives half a million EEK to displaced Lebanese**

The Estonian Foreign Ministry gives 500,000 EEK (approximately 40,320 USD) to the UN refugee agency's effort to provide the displaced in Lebanon with shelter and protection. Foreign Minister Urmas Paet said that in view of the rapidly deteriorating situation in Lebanon, Estonia is through UNHCR supporting around 150,000 displaced persons. Some 700,000 people have fled their homes in Lebanon and more than 150,000 have sought refuge in Syria.

(Baltic News Service 26 July 2006)

## Finnish press

### **Jordanian plane landed in Beirut**

A Jordanian military plane has landed at the airport in Beirut to evacuate seriously injured people. The plane has also brought humanitarian aid from the UN. According to the authorities, it is the first plane that lands on the international airport in Beirut since the beginning of Israel's bombings. On Tuesday, Israel informed that it will allow aid flights to Beirut.

(Hufvudstadsbladet 26 July 2006 <http://www.stt.fi/hbl/32275506.htm>)

### Latvian press

#### **Nearly 80 Latvians return to Latvia**

In the first six months of this year, 78 people were repatriated to Latvia, compared to 113 during the same period last year, a spokeswoman for the Latvian Citizenship and Migration Affairs Board said. Since the beginning of the repatriation process, the authority has provided assistance to 123 people of Latvian descent returning to the country. The migration agency has paid them unemployment benefits, covered traveling costs and provided money for learning Latvian. Since 1995, when the repatriation process began all in all 5,259 people have returned to Latvia.

(Baltic News Service 26 July 2006)

### Norwegian press

#### **Asylum-seekers - good business**

There is a "price-war" between companies and organizations that run asylum reception centers. During the past years money spent per asylum-seeker at the centers has been cut back. Norwegian People's Aid (Norsk Folkehjelp) claims that it is all about money and not about the quality, when the Directorate of Immigration (UDI) allots contracts, and has ended its negotiations with the authority. Since 2001, Norwegian asylum centers are run by three different actors on the market: municipalities, non-profit organizations and private commercial companies. Anne Siri Rustad at UDI admits that the costs per person are lower today than previously, but denies that it is at the expense of quality services. She also denies that the cost would be the conclusive factor when looking for operators for the centers.

(Vårt Land 25 July 2006)

<http://www.vl.no/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060725/ARTIKLER/60724012/1089>

### Swedish press

#### **Sweden criticized for denying illegal immigrants healthcare**

The Platform for International Co-operation on Undocumented Migrants puts Sweden at the bottom of its European league table. Charities say that while an illegal immigrant might get help for a broken bone, he could be turned away for a potentially fatal cancer. It is thought around 15.000 people are living illegally in Sweden.

(Radio Sweden 26 July 2006)

<http://www.sr.se/cgi-bin/International/nyhetssidor/artikel.asp?ProgramID=2054&Nyheter=&artikel=905200>)

#### **Man arrested for smuggling humans**

A man was arrested in Helsingborg early Wednesday, suspected of smuggling humans. The man, a Turkish citizen born in 1974, was stopped by customs after disembarking the ferry from Helsingör. With him in the car were two passengers lacking identification papers. The passengers, allegedly brothers from Iraq, have now applied for asylum in Sweden.

(Helsingborgs Dagblad 26 July 2006)

[http://hd.se/helsingborg/2006/07/26/man\\_gripen\\_foer\\_maenniskosmuggling](http://hd.se/helsingborg/2006/07/26/man_gripen_foer_maenniskosmuggling))

**Expulsion order for the Högsby murder appealed**

The 18-year-old Afghan refugee who was sentenced for murdering a man in Högsby has appealed his expulsion order to the Supreme Court. The 18-year-old was sentenced to four years institutional youth care and expulsion for life after stabbing a man to death.

The Court of Appeal saw it as a honor-related slaying.

(Sveriges Radio 26 July 2006 <http://www.sr.se/cgi-bin/ekot/artikel.asp?artikel=905222>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Thursday 27 July 2006

## Danish press

### Denmark answers UN call for aid money

Following a joint appeal by the UN to raise funds for humanitarian aid efforts in Lebanon, Denmark will be donating a total of DKK 25 million (4.25 million USD). The aid money will be shared between some 20 UN agencies and Danish relief organizations.  
(27 July 2006 Jyllands-Posten [http://www.jp.dk/english\\_news/artikel:aid=3861442/](http://www.jp.dk/english_news/artikel:aid=3861442/))

### Confusing refugee statistics

Haslev municipality used to be put forward as a good example, but is now the fourth worst amongst 72 municipalities when it comes to refugees who have successfully entered the labor market. Overall, persons that got residence permits in and after 2002 were more likely to become self supported or attend school in their first three years in Denmark than those that received their permits before 2002.

(Dagbladet 27 July 2006

[http://www.dagbladetonline.dk/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060727/FORSIDE\\_KOEGE/107270182](http://www.dagbladetonline.dk/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060727/FORSIDE_KOEGE/107270182))

## Finnish press

### Border guard detained Indian suspected of people smuggling

The preliminary investigation made by the border guard regarding an Indian suspected of people smuggling is still ongoing. The man is suspected of smuggling at least six Indians into Finland, persons who have now left the country, said Petteri Partanen at the border guard.

(Hufvudstadsbladet 26 July 2006 <http://www.hbl.fi/pagespeed/url/News/story/3415469>)

## Norwegian press

### “Effective links to Kabul” – Op-Ed piece by NOAS

In *Dagsavisen* 13 July, State Secretary Libe Rieber-Mohn states that the government in its handling of Afghan asylum-seekers follows recommendations from UNHCR. Such an assertion can hardly be met by any other reaction than surprise. Many of the Afghans, whose cases have been discussed, are not originally from Kabul. They cannot return to their home towns because they are not safe there. UNHCR means that when handling persons in such situations, one should have a certain humanitarian standard. As a minimum, this should mean that one avoids putting them in a situation of humanitarian need. We maintain our strong hope that the Norwegian government also could adhere to these values, writes Rune Berglund Steen, head of Norwegian Organization for Asylum Seekers (NOAS).

(Dagsavisen 27 July 2006 <http://www.dagsavisen.no/debatt/article2208770.ece>)

### Asylum-seeker minister

Mohamed Emin Saed Khalid, 42, has been an unemployed refugee in Norway for seven years. Now he is appointed to be minister for parliamentary affairs, as a representative

for the Kurdistan Workers Party (KTP), in northern Iraq. The Kurdish family Khalid is making arrangements to return to northern Iraq, from where they fled in 1999. Mohamed Khalid originally fought as a guerilla soldier against Saddam Hussein's regime for 12 years before entering politics.

(Nettavisen 27 July 2006 <http://www.nettavisen.no/innenriks/article694194.ece>)

### **Swedish press**

#### **Aid reaches Lebanon**

The first emergency shipments with food and medicines have reached the coastal city of Tyr in southern Lebanon and Beirut's international airport. In Syria and Jordan the UN Refugee Agency has stockpiles of tents, mattresses, blankets and other aid items. The Swedish Rescue Services will be sending 30 relief workers to the area this weekend. (Smålandsposten 26 July 2006 [http://www.smp.se/article/692159\\_101-123-0-0](http://www.smp.se/article/692159_101-123-0-0))

#### **The Liberal party demands that refugees are received**

The Liberal party in the municipality of Ystad has put forward an absolute demand for the upcoming election campaign: If the Conservative block cannot unite around an election campaign programme where receiving refugees in Sweden is assured, the Liberals should not partake in the alliance.

(Ystads Allehanda 26 July 2006

<http://www.ystadallehanda.se/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20060726/TOMELILLA/107260971>)

#### **Investment will get refugees to Arvidsjaur**

The northern Arvidsjaur municipality will receive 46 refugees in August, just in time for the school start. Previously, most refugees resettled there left after a short period. A refugee secretary will now be hired to help the new town inhabitants.

(Sveriges Radio 26 July 2006

<http://www.sr.se/norrbottn/nyheter/artikel.asp?artikel=905090>)

#### **Reimbursement for receiving refugees**

The municipal council in Vingåker has signed an agreement with the Immigration Board to accept 30 refugees this year and a similar number next year. Under the contract, it will be reimbursed 497.100 kronor (67.300 USD) per refugee. The money will be used for integrating refugees on the labor market. Currently, 275 asylum applicants and 42 persons who have been given resident permits are living Vingåker.

(Katrineholms-Kuriren 27 July 2006

[http://www.kkuriren.se/kkuriren/standard\\_artikel.php?id=30048&avdelning\\_1=101&avdelning\\_2=102](http://www.kkuriren.se/kkuriren/standard_artikel.php?id=30048&avdelning_1=101&avdelning_2=102))

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Friday 28 July 2006

## Danish press

### **Political consensus on sending expelled Lebanese back home**

Politicians from all sides of the spectrum in Danish politics are agreeing that a Palestinian originally expelled from Denmark for crimes who has returned as an evacuee from war-torn Lebanon, must be expelled. Leading parties in parliament, notably the ruling Liberals (V) and Conservatives (K), as well as the opposition Social Democrats (S) and centrist Social Liberals (R), agree that he must be deported, but only when the situation in Lebanon has improved.

(DR, Politiken, Børsen 28 July 2006, News Ex-press translation)

### **Relief aid organizations recommended to be clearer**

Danes have not yet opened their purses to give economic aid to the many hundreds of thousands of refugees in Lebanon. Danish researchers recommend relief organizations to identify clear aid objectives that the Danes can understand. Allegedly, for the time being unclear refugee numbers and different appeals make it hard to raise solidarity for the situation of the displaced.

(Jyllands-Posten 28 July 2006 <http://www.jp.dk/indland/artikel:aid=3863512/>)

## Finnish press

### **Relief aid slowly starting to reach people**

As of two days ago, UN trucks with water, food and other necessities have started to reach the most war-torn parts of Lebanon. An estimated 700.000 people have left their homes and are displaced within the country.

(Hufvudstadsbladet 27 July 2006 <http://www.hbl.fi/pagespeed/url/News/story/3420090>)

## Norwegian press

### **“Let refugees take care of grandmother”**

The Conservative Party (Høyre) suggests that refugees should be educated to work in the health sector. Norway must prepare itself for a steadily aging population at the same time as the working population - who can take care of the elderly - is decreasing.

Individuals who receive asylum, quota refugees and individuals receiving residence permits on humanitarian grounds, are prime candidates to work in Norway's elderly homes, a senior party official said.

(Nettavisen 28 July 2006

<http://pub.tv2.no/nettavisen/innenriks/politikk/article694795.ece>)

## Swedish press

### **19-year-old pregnant girl to be expelled**

An asylum-seeking 19-year-old pregnant girl from Kazakhstan was yesterday apprehended by police and will be expelled to France today. The girl, living for two years in Hofors with her boyfriend, was on her way to a maternal care centre when seized by

the police despite meeting with police regularly to notify authorities of her whereabouts. After one year of residence in the second country where a person has sought asylum, the Dublin convention blocks expulsion of a person to the first country of asylum. However, in this case the Migration Board has made a special arrangement to extend this period, as it took it two years to reject her application for asylum.  
(Gefle Dagblad 27 July 2006 <http://www.gd.se/Article.jsp?article=83395>)

### **Struggle for permits to stay continues**

The eight Sudanese hunger striking in Malmö in the spring have handed in comprehensive appeals to improve their chances to remain in Sweden. According to their support group, their security situation has worsened since they have been in the media, thus the regime in Sudan can now easily identify them. All eight have appealed under the temporary asylum law.  
(SVT 27 July 2006 <http://svt.se/svt/jsp/Crosslink.jsp?d=34007&a=629023>)

### **Lebanese Swedes without homes**

Over a hundred Swedes evacuated from Lebanon are now without homes in Sweden. Many are waiting at hotels and temporary accommodation for a decision about their future. The people concerned fled to Sweden during the last war and gained Swedish citizenship before returning to their homeland when the situation stabilized.  
(Dagens Nyheter, Svenska Dagbladet 28 July 2006, SPR translation)

### **Many asylum-seekers hiding**

The new temporary asylum law has made it possible for over 12.000 to receive residence permits in Sweden. However, until now, 8.000 people have received rejections on their appeals. 1.000 of them have left the country, while many others live in hiding since they feel they have nowhere to return to.  
(Dagens Nyheter 28 July 2006  
<http://www.dn.se/DNet/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=147&a=561827>)

### **Rapid process from idea to action**

Since 1 July the municipalities have taken over the government's responsibility for unaccompanied refugee children. As late as 1 June the Migration Board called on the municipalities to receive the children. The final decision was taken by the municipal executive committee on 11 July, two days later the first children arrived. So far, seven municipalities have signed agreements to receive asylum-seeking children.  
(Västerbottens folkblad 28 July 2006 <http://www.folkbladet.nu/index.asp?vf=1&x=41298>)

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# Baltic and Nordic Headlines

Saturday 29 - Monday 31 July 2006

## Danish press

### **Iranians gear up hunger strike action in front of parliament**

Four Iranians staging a 40-day-long hunger strike outside parliament in protest against Denmark's tight asylum policies, have decided to intensify their action. The Iranians say they will now cease to take a daily input of sugar, which has sustained them so far, and drink only water. The protesters have reportedly lost up to 18 kilos in weight and there are mounting fears for their health. The four Iranians have had their requests for political asylum in Denmark rejected by the authorities.

(Berlingske Tidende, NEWS- express translation 29 July 2006)

### **Visas to previously rejected asylum-seekers**

The authorities have not checked if any of the 50 persons from Lebanon who have received asylum in Denmark, have previously applied for asylum in the country. Several of them are in fact rejected asylum-seekers, sources told Berlingske Tidende.

(Jyllands-Posten 30 July 2006 <http://www.jp.dk/indland/artikel:aid=3865532/>)

### **New conflict about asylum children**

Two municipalities in charge of asylum centers have now chosen to use part of their extra funding to build larger spaces for children at the centers. This is in contrary to the government's decisions that the 37 million extra DKK (approximately 6.329.438 USD) given to the asylum centers would go to education and better activities for children.

(DR 29 July 2006

<http://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/2006/07/29/115752.htm>)

### **Christian refugees also need protection**

Among the 500 quota refugees Denmark receives each year, an increasingly growing number of Christian refugees is received. This has led to accusations from the Social Liberals that Denmark is discriminating against refugees with other religious beliefs. An absurd statement, states *Berlingske Tidende* in an editorial. The refugees are all documented refugees from UNHCR refugee camps. However, when Danish authorities have the choice between two refugees with equal needs of protection, and one of them is seen as easier to integrate in Denmark than the other, they take the person who is easiest to integrate. The government has good reasons for this. The former policies, where authorities just received 500 quota refugees every year unscreened, led to the situation that only seven percent of the quota refugees capable of working were employed in 2003. It cannot be fair, neither to the refugees nor taxpayers to continue with such non-politics. When choosing those who have the best prerequisites to have a life as active citizens, it is not strange that some have Christian backgrounds.

(Berlingske Tidende 30 July 2006 <http://www.berlingske.dk/leder:aid=771288/>)

## **Finnish press**

### **Tougher Controls on Refugee Children?**

The Ministry of Interior is planning legislation that would make refugee-centre personnel legally obliged to divulge the content of overheard conversations to the Directorate of Immigration, frontier guard officials and police. The information would be used in determining whether the family should be granted asylum or deported. Those opposed to the bill say it infringes on a child's privacy and could cause psychological damage if children become afraid to speak. The legislation is aimed at so-called B-permit children. These underage refugee children come mainly from Somalia or Afghanistan. As their residence status is only temporary, they do not receive any education or daycare. (Yle 29 July 2006 <http://www.yle.fi/news/id39645.html>)

### **Finland's Border Guard caught illegal immigrants**

Finland's Border Guard caught two men trying to enter Finland illegally from Russia on Friday. The two were from Tajikistan, aged 25 and 37, and had crossed the border near Ylämaa, South Karelia, just moments before being apprehended. Both said they had entered the country to find work. After being questioned the men were sent back to Russia.

(STT 31 July 2006

<http://virtual.finland.fi/stt/showarticle.asp?intNWSAID=13282&group=General>)

## **Norwegian press**

### **UN convoy arrived in Beirut**

A UNHCR convoy carrying 400 tonnes of relief aid arrived in Beirut from Syria on Saturday. The convoy carried blankets, mattresses, collapsible jerry cans and kitchen sets to be distributed to displaced people who have fled into mountain regions and around Beirut to escape the conflict, a UNHCR press release stated.

(Aftenbladet 29 July 2006 <http://web3.aftenbladet.no/utenriks/article325921.ece>)

## **Swedish press**

### **Forced to seek asylum in France**

Although she is pregnant and her partner and his family live in Sweden, she has been expelled. The 19-year-old woman from Kazakhstan is now in Paris. Since her case is handled under the Dublin Convention, the woman now has to seek asylum in France. Refugee lawyer Tryggve Emstedt criticizes Swedish authorities' handling of the case.

(Sveriges Radio 30 July 2006

<http://www.sr.se/gavleborg/nyheter/artikel.asp?artikel=907389>)

### **Refugees from Lebanon "homeless" in Sweden**

Many Swedes of Lebanese descent, who have returned to Sweden since Israel's military strikes began, have nowhere to live. More than a hundred are being put up in hotels near Stockholm's Arlanda Airport or in the towns they once lived in. Some say they have been promised more permanent accommodation, which they need to start a new life in Sweden again.

(Sveriges Radio 28 July 2006 [http://www.sr.se/cgi-](http://www.sr.se/cgi-bin/International/nyhetssidor/artikel.asp?ProgramID=2054&Nyheter=&format=1&artikel=906600)

[bin/International/nyhetssidor/artikel.asp?ProgramID=2054&Nyheter=&format=1&artikel=906600](http://www.sr.se/cgi-bin/International/nyhetssidor/artikel.asp?ProgramID=2054&Nyheter=&format=1&artikel=906600))

**Many Lebanese want to come to Sweden**

After the evacuation of 7.500 Swedes from Lebanon, hundreds of Lebanese now want to seek refuge in Sweden. The handling of their cases by the Migration Board can take between four to five months, said Maria Martignier at the Swedish consulate. (Sveriges Radio 31 July 2006 <http://www.sr.se/ekot/artikel.asp?artikel=907419>)

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