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Migration Opportunity Map Project (MOMP)



(28 page .pdf)

Migrants Rights News ~ No: 13

Welcome to the December 2008 edition of Migrants Rights News

The Migrants Rights Network is working for a rights-based approach to migration, with migrants as full partners in developing the policies and procedures which affect life in the UK. Migrants Rights News aims to inform our members and other groups working on migration issues about regional and national policy developments, campaign news, recent research and upcoming events.

At the Heart of Migrants Rights News are the campaigns and strategies being developed by migrants to consolidate their position in British society. We focus on activities that extend the scope of the human, economic and social rights which apply to migrants' circumstances.

We would be happy to circulate information and bulletins sent by members in the following month's newsletter, subject to editorial/space limitations! Please send any contributions to: info@migrantsrights.org.uk.

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In this month's newsletter, find details of:

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- (1) [2008 - a Year in Immigration...](#)

During 2008 the scale and impacts of immigration in the UK have continued to be at the sharp end of local and national debates and the subject of substantial policy

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development and legislative review. Ministerial positions have broadly settled in pursuit of a rigid immigration system within which migrants function as economic units within a tap which can be turned on and off at will, and in which migrants' rights and entitlements are significantly different from those of British citizens.

Within this context, we have continued this year to find common ground among a wide range of groups, institutions and individuals across the UK over the need for a more progressive approach to immigration. A diverse lobby in support of migrants' rights has grown stronger as the limitations of the national agenda and its implications for society at large have become more apparent.

As the UK moves towards a general election, and particularly within a deepening recession, we can expect to see restrictive immigration policies become further entrenched, with serious implications for migrant communities and broader social cohesion. Common strategies and cooperation between groups concerned with migrants' interests will be crucial to respond to the challenges ahead.

Key developments in 2008 have included:

- The development - and delay of - the Government's 'Simplification project' in 2008. The draft Immigration and Citizenship Bill (or 'Simplification Bill') was released in partial form in July 2008 amid a volley of concerns from NGOs, lawyers, trade unions and statutory bodies. Rather than consolidating existing immigration law into one cohesive Act, the Bill took the opportunity to introduce provisions which would strengthen the powers of the Border Agency, bring in a new structure towards citizenship and make sweeping changes to immigration categories and terminology. Following the autumn cabinet reshuffle and the range of concerns around the contents of the draft (partial) Bill, its completion has now been delayed. Its eventual release is expected at some point during 2009. In a further development, a second Bill - the Borders, Immigration and Citizenship Bill - will first begin its journey through January (see article 2: Simplification Bill timetable delayed as Government changes tack), containing select provisions from the draft (partial) Simplification Bill. Simple? Not really.

MRN has been active in responding to Government consultations throughout the development of the Simplification project alongside our network members. Throughout 2008 we have campaigned for the rights of migrants to inform the simplification agenda, arguing that any new legislation must be drafted with full consideration of its impact on prospective and current migrants living in the UK.

- The shaky roll-out of the Points-Based System (PBS) for immigration, aiming to replace 80

immigration routes for work and study in the UK. The PBS is intended to divide routes to the UK into five categories (or 'tiers') under which migrants can come to the UK. It began in February 2008 with Tier 1 (for Highly Skilled Migrants), followed by Tiers 2 (Skilled Migrants with a Job Offer) and 5 (Temporary Workers and Youth Mobility) in November. The PBS, which the Government claimed would make immigration processes easier and more efficient, has been heavily criticised over its high costs for migrants and employers. Tier 1 was reported in November by immigration lawyers to be operating with a 47% refusal rate on applications, indicating significant flaws in the system. At the time of writing it was too soon to gather data on the impact of Tiers 2 and 5, which controversially require migrants' employers to be 'registered sponsors' with the Border Agency. But the relatively low number of employers registered as sponsors (4701 out of an anticipated 20,000 by early December) indicates entrenched suspicion of the system and its new demands on British employers.

At the end of 2008 it remains unclear as to how the PBS will be used in the future - whether it will flexibly respond to the demands of the UK economy or act as a tool for reducing immigration to the UK. Debates around the impact of economic migration on the British economy and job markets have grown more heated within the context of financial turbulence and recession. MRN has lobbied for the immigration system to operate on more progressive and flexible principles; rather than aiming to 'cherry-pick' the most skilled and financially secure immigrants, we believe the system should recognise the contributions made by a broad swath of migrants to the British economy and society. We think it is likely that, during 2009, parts of the PBS will further unravel as the rigidity of the system and the high costs it loads onto stakeholders are felt.

- The Home Office has intensified its enforcement drive against undocumented migrants in the UK, aiming to restrict and control 'immigration offenders' in the UK. The 'Enforcing the Deal' strategy paper, released in June, laid out Government intentions to strengthen 'Immigration Crime Partnerships' with a range of institutions including the police, local authorities, healthcare providers and private sector bodies, in order to ensure that access to public services and benefits is only possible for those with legal entitlement. Following the Government's pledge to increase the deportation of undocumented migrants, it was announced in May that the [UK detention estate will be increased by up to 60% by 2010](#). To ease enforcement, the use of biometric identification documents began this year. Mandatory [ID cards](#) containing facial and fingerprint details were launched in November for those extending their leave in the UK as spouses and/or dependents

of permanent residents, and as foreign students.

- During 2008 we have continued to develop our campaign on the situation for the estimated 500,000 undocumented migrants in the UK - an issue which promises to feature heavily on the political agenda in the coming years. In November, MRN launched the ['Papers Please' report](#) - the first in our new 'Migration Perspectives Series' - on the impact of the new civil penalty regime regulations. The regime came into force in February, introducing fines of up to £10,000 per undocumented worker for employers who have failed to carry out adequate document checks. Our report found initial evidence that the rights of migrant workers, and in particular of undocumented migrants, are being eroded as a result. We have received strong support for the findings of the research, and anticipate that next year a milestone will be reached in the emergence of a national movement pushing for the regularisation of undocumented migrants, centring on the [Strangers into Citizens campaign](#) in May 2009.
- Successful campaigning by non-governmental groups on issues related to immigration legislation has continued throughout 2008 - including the achievements of [migrant community groups BAPIO](#) and [HSMP Forum](#) in the higher courts in May in challenging retrospective application of changes to immigration rules around the Points-Based System; the valuable campaigning of [Kalayaan](#) - a group working with migrant domestic workers - in securing the rights of many domestic workers as a concession outside the PBS; and the success for lobbyists working on child protection issues in the Government's agreement to [remove the UK's reservation to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#).

We are extremely encouraged by the strengthening of a broad coalition of groups across the UK in pressing for more responsive and fairer immigration policies, with strengthened commitment from across a range of sectors to work on migrants' rights issues. MRN will continue throughout 2009 to support cross-sectoral sharing of information and cooperation towards progressive and fair provisions for all migrants in the UK.

(2) Simplification Bill timetable delayed as Government changes tack

The opening of the 2008/9 Parliamentary session has brought the potential closure of a chapter in the Government's Simplification project. The [draft partial Immigration and Citizenship](#) (or 'Simplification') Bill was released in June this year. It was planned that a full Bill

would follow in January 2009, introducing the "biggest shake-up to our border protection and immigration system for over 45 years". But an announcement in the Queen's Speech opening Parliament indicates that progress towards the full Immigration and Citizenship Bill has been, at least for now, significantly stalled.

The draft partial Immigration and Citizenship Bill was released for public consultation in July 2008, causing widespread anxiety and [attracting criticism](#) from lawyers, public service providers and voluntary sector groups as a result of its sweeping provisions. Groups expressed particular frustration that large sections of the Bill had not yet been completed, including details of proposed powers of surveillance, powers to 'lock down identity' (through biometric data-sharing) and access to public services and benefits for migrants.

A [Home Affairs Select Committee inquiry](#) was launched into the partial Bill in the summer of 2008, taking written and oral evidence from organisations including the Immigration Law Practitioners Association, the Refugee Council, Terence Higgins Trust and MRN during October and November. The Committee was clearly bemused as to why only part of the Bill was available and in November the inquiry was cancelled. The Committee Chair, Keith Vaz, urged the Government to release the full Bill - expected in January 2009 - as soon as possible to allow effective scrutiny.

On 3rd December, however, the Queen's speech opening the new 2008/9 Parliamentary Session confirmed rumours that the Government will not be releasing the full Bill in January 2009 as intended. Instead, two immigration bills are planned for next year. The first, to be introduced in January, will be a new 'Borders, Immigration and Citizenship Bill'. This will bring in certain provisions around integrating customs and immigration powers within the UK Border Agency and introducing the controversial system of 'earned citizenship'. MRN has laid out our full concerns about 'earned citizenship' in a [briefing paper](#) responding to the March 2008 Government Green Paper 'The Path to Citizenship'.

Release of the full Immigration and Citizenship Bill will be pushed back to later in the 2008/9 Parliamentary Session, although a specific date has not been named. The Government has acknowledged that the Bill "needs to be done well rather than done quickly" - an encouraging recognition of the [problems arising from the draft \(partial\) Bill's](#) over-arching proposals, although some speculate that the change of Immigration Minister may have marked a shift in Home Office priorities.

(3) 'The Illegals' community play premieres in London

A [new play about undocumented migrants](#), developed and produced by the iceandfire theatre company, was premiered in London's Soho Theatre in November to a full

house.

'The Illegals', which is now available for performances in community venues on request, aims to challenge negative images of undocumented migrants by presenting a set of true stories, told by actors. The play features seven characters, based on interviews with undocumented migrants. The range of experiences and issues raised shows how broad the circumstances are that can lead to irregularity, and the high risks and limited possibilities for those who find themselves in that situation. 'The Illegals' has been developed in response to the Government's enforcement strategy which presents the deportation of undocumented migrants as a viable strategy. Iceandfire makes a strong case for the introduction of a regularisation programme for undocumented migrants living in the UK.

The launch of the play coincided with the [November announcement by London's mayor, Boris Johnson](#), that his office will be conducting a review into the potential for an amnesty regularising the position of London's estimated 400,000 undocumented migrants. Although Labour and Conservative ministers have been quick to dismiss an amnesty to resolve the status of the undocumented population in the UK, the debate looks set to continue next year. Initiatives such as 'The Illegals', which aim to challenge negative perceptions among a wide audience, will play an important role in supporting ongoing campaigns for a long-term solution to the problems faced by undocumented migrants.

'The Illegals' will be available for showings across the country on request, and we would strongly recommend it as the basis for debates about these issues, that can be adapted to different venues and audiences. For more information visit www.iceandfire.co.uk.

4) Review of Housing and immigration

Meeting the housing needs of vulnerable migrants within the context of a general shortage of affordable accommodation continues to be challenging for many local organisations across the UK. The [Housing Associations' Charitable Trust \(HACT\)](#) conference entitled 'A home from home', in early November, was dedicated to challenges of refugee housing in modern Britain. The event explored the obstacles that currently prevent refugees and asylum seekers from full access to affordable housing. Based on the collaborative 'Accommodate' project, the discussion focused on responses to policy and practice challenges which have prevented integration and equality of access to housing for refugees. HACT reported that partnerships between housing associations, refugee community organisations (RCOs), local authorities and voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) may make a significant contribution to improving refugee housing and community cohesion

more widely.

The conference came at a time when migrants' access to social benefits and services is under close scrutiny. The Government's new 'Borders, Immigration and Citizenship Bill,' now due to be introduced in January 2009, will propose controversial provisions around probationary citizenship - lengthening the period before migrants applying for citizenship can access full public benefits and services in the UK. Among concern from many sectors, leading housing groups have responded collectively to threats to restrict migrants' access to housing support in the UK. Shelter, the Chartered Institute of Housing and the Housing Associations' Charitable Trust [sent a letter](#) to the Government in late October, arguing that restricting full benefits to only those with full British citizenship for an extended period would result in an increase in homelessness and destitution amongst migrants during this period. Concerns such as these appear not to have impacted on Immigration Minister Phil Woolas, who bluntly stated in a widely-quoted interview with The Sun in early December that "[entitlement to benefits should be for citizens of our country, not other people](#)".

5) MRN is still seeking Treasurer!

MRN is currently looking for a Treasurer to serve on our Executive Committee (Board of Trustees) and to liaise with its secretariat in London. The ideal candidate will have a background in accountancy, preferably within the charity or not-for profit sector and will have a serious commitment to the aims of the MRN.

MRN has a very active and diverse Board of Trustees which is currently made up of seven members who are responsible for the overall management of the organisation. The Board is supported by a Policy Advisory Group and these two bodies together provide representation from across England, Scotland and Wales, further enabling the MRN to meet the needs of its network members. The Treasurer will be a member of the Board of Trustees and will exercise governance responsibility for the financial health of the charity, reporting on this at intervals to the Board.

We are looking for somebody with a strong knowledge of financial management, who would be willing to commit on a voluntary basis to this exciting role for a minimum of one year. If you think that this somebody could be you and would like to express your interest please send a cover letter along with your CV at info@migrantsrights.org.uk. To learn more about the key responsibilities that this role involves, please read full job specification available for download on our website at www.migrantsrights.org.uk/opportunities.htm.

The closing date for applications has been extended until Friday 2nd January 2008.

(6) Upcoming Events

- ['Papers Please - The Impact of the Civil Penalty Regime on the Employment Rights of Migrants in the UK](#), Migrants' Rights Network, November 2008

In February 2008 the Government launched its civil penalty regime directed against employers employing undocumented migrant workers. Fines of up to £10,000 per worker can now be levied on any employer who is judged to have been lax in checking the immigration status of employees. MRN's "Papers Please" report considers the impact of this measure on groups of workers. Amongst groups who are already judged to be vulnerable to exploitation and discrimination, the report finds evidence that the rights of migrant workers are being further eroded as a result of the civil penalty regime. It identifies trends which indicate new tensions and a rise in discriminatory practices, and calls for urgent action to prevent further developments increasing the vulnerability of migrants in the workforce.

- ['Relocation, Relocation' Research Report](#), Asylum Aid, November 2008

Asylum Aid has produced an in-depth analysis of the impact of internal relocation on women asylum seekers. Internal relocation is the system by which asylum seekers, even those judged to have been persecuted in their country of origin, may be told that they would be safe to relocate to a different part of that same country and therefore would not qualify for asylum in the UK. The report claims, based on a series of qualitative interviews and wider research, that women are disproportionately affected by internal relocation, as their asylum claims are more likely to be based on non-state persecution than are men's. This report discusses the legal application of internal relocation and questions the appropriateness of this principle for women asylum seekers who have experienced gender based persecution.

- ['A positive benefit: changing the terms of the migration debate'](#) - A white paper from the Progress Policy Group on Immigration, November 2008

Headed up by Claude Moraes MEP, the Progress Policy Group has produced a review of Labour's immigration policies for 2009. The report challenges the heavy emphasis of the Points-Based System for immigration on attracting highly skilled workers, by proposing that a limited number of unskilled non-EU migrant workers should be able to enter the UK, alongside greater flexibility within the system to change skill priorities. It calls for the greater engagement of trade unions around migrant worker

rights, alongside local initiatives to support and celebrate diverse communities.

- ['Equality and diversity in jobs and services: City policies for migrants in Europe'](#), Cities for Local Integration Policies for Migrants (CLIP), November 2008

Written by Sarah Spencer, this report examines the challenges faced by European cities in attempting to integrate people from diverse backgrounds. The report is the product of a project which draws upon the cooperation of 25 cities from across Europe; diverse case-studies are used to illustrate the policy recommendations to support migrants in gaining employment within city administrations, as well as in accessing public services. The report emphasises the challenges that migrants can face in accessing jobs and services, and the importance of equality and diversity provisions to overcome these barriers.

- ['Issues affecting Migrant Workers in Wales, their families and the communities in which they live and work National Assembly for Wales'](#) Equality of Opportunity Committee, November 2008

This report examined the experiences of migrant workers in Wales, identifying the impact of economic migration on local services and highlighting examples of good practice in relation to community relations, employment policies and service delivery. The key recommendations to emerge from the report were: to improve access to information for migrant workers and their families, to improve access to language classes; to promote good relations between migrants and local communities, and to provide support for organisations and staff coming into contact with migrant workers and their families.

(7)Reports and Research

- [Undocumented Children in Europe Conference](#), PICUM Brussels, 22nd - 23rd January 2009

This conference, organized within the framework of the EU project "Fighting discrimination-based violence against undocumented children in Europe", will provide an opportunity to investigate the specific needs and problems that undocumented children face in Europe when trying to access their basic social rights. The event will enable participants to share experiences and good practices regarding the provision of protection to undocumented children. Draft program and registration form are available on PICUM's website (<http://www.picum.org>). Registration €15 (including lunch & refreshments) is open until 03 January 2009.

- ['The pathways and experiences of undocumented migrants' conference](#), Graduate Centre, London Metropolitan University, North Campus, Holloway Road, London N7, 4 February 2009

This event will be the Final Conference marking the successful completion of the London Metropolitan University project on Undocumented Worker Transitions. The project was funded under the 6th Framework Programme of European Commission, coordinated by the Working Lives Research Institute, London Metropolitan University and carried out by seven partner institutions, the Forschungs- und Beratungsstelle Arbeitswelt (Austria), Université Libre de Bruxelles (Belgium), International Centre for Minority Studies and Intercultural Relations (Bulgaria), Roskilde University (Denmark), University "Ca'Foscari" of Venice (Italy), Gabinet d'Estudis Socials (Spain) and the Working Lives Research Institute (UK). The Conference will report on the main findings of the project, focusing on the pathways and experiences of undocumented migrants in seven European Member States: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Italy, Spain and the UK. There will be a platform of distinguished experts in the field of migration who will contribute in sessions on: Migration in Europe Today: Trends, Perspectives, Challenges; Shadow Economies, Legal Status and Migration; Managing Migration in the European Union; Migration and Labour Market Impacts.

For the full agenda and to book a place please visit www.undocumentedmigrants.eu and go to the section on Conference. Alternatively you can email Eugenia Markova: E.Markova@londonmet.ac.uk; Anna Paraskevopoulou: a.paraskevopoulou@londonmet.ac.uk; Tessa Wright: t.wright@londonmet.ac.uk; or Sonia McKay: s.mckay@londonmet.ac.uk.

- ['A Better Deal for Polish Workers' event](#), TUC/BERR Vulnerable Workers Project and the Federation of Poles in Great Britain, Saturday 7th February 11.00am-5.00pm at POSK Centre, 238-246 King Street, London W6 0RF

The aim of this event is to introduce Polish workers to their rights at work and how trade unions and service providers can support and help them. There will also be a number of workshops aimed at Polish workers, which at present are likely to include: How can I get a better job? - training and qualifications in the Building Services sector; How do I know I'm not being exploited? - employment rights information and advice; How can I enforce my employment rights? - getting involved and building self-empowerment; How does Tax and National Insurance work? The organisers aim that the event can be used as a platform to enable unions to

extend their reach into areas most at risk so that they can provide help and support to the most vulnerable workers. For more information please contact Bob Blyth, Vulnerable Workers Project, SERTUC, 0207 467 135

- '[Stopping Traffick '09. How can we tackle human trafficking?](#)' Conference, Home Office, Central London, 4 March, 2009

This conference, organised by the Home Office, will bring together all those with a role to play in implementing the UK's strategy to eradicate trafficking and will look at key issues such as: 'What more we can do to target and stop traffickers' - 'How we can identify and support the victims of trafficking' - 'The role of voluntary groups and public service providers'. The event will be a good opportunity to share best practice, build on the experience of the leading organisations in each sector and discover opportunities for cross-working to influence the government's policies in this area, and shape what can be done to tackle human trafficking in a more effective way. For full agenda and to book a place, please visit www.connectpa.co.uk/conferences/humantrafficking/

(8) Other Announcements

- **Call for evidence - Experiences of detention in Greater Manchester, Refugee & Migrant Forum Manchester - by 19th January 2008**

The Refugee and Migrant Forum Manchester has been negotiating with the UK Border Agency for improvements to their practices in Greater Manchester since February 2007. The Forum is now working on improving UKBA practices within the detention process. They would like anyone who is interested to speak to people who have experience of detention between 30 June 2008 and 21 January 2009 and ask them to consider meeting with a member of the Forum to hear about the work they are doing. This would be an informal conversation with no obligation to answer any questions about their experiences, absolutely no information about their identity will be shared with the UK Border Agency. An interview can be arranged following this first meeting if someone decides to participate. To arrange any meetings or for further information as soon as possible or by 19th January 2008, please contact the Forum Development Worker: Sophie King, forum@mrsn.org.uk, Tel - 0161 232 7420

- **Request for female asylum-seeker interviewees for 'The Testimony Project' -**

as soon as possible

The Testimony Project is looking for female asylum seekers and refugees to take part in filmed interviews. The Testimony Project is a collaboration between women who are seeking asylum, film makers, graphic designers, lawyers and web designers, who are together creating an online gallery broadcasting the personal stories of 12 women seeking asylum in the UK. We aim to give voice to women whose voices aren't heard and to gain insight into what it is like to be an asylum seeker. The website will provide comprehensive legal advice and sign-posting in several languages to guide people through the asylum process. Anyone who takes part who wishes to remain anonymous can do so. If you, or someone you know, would like to take part, please contact Leanne Savill on 07941 262 272

- o **Job Opportunities at London Metropolitan University's Working Lives Research Institute**

Discrimination and Work Researcher

London Metropolitan University's Working Lives Research Institute has been researching racism at work for over six years, and has now been asked to survey trade union and employer responses to racism and other forms of discrimination throughout the European Union. We wish to appoint a Discrimination and Work Researcher at Research Fellow or Senior Research Fellow level who has a background in these areas to join the WLRI team on a permanent basis. S/he will be passionately committed to social justice and anti-racism as well as to the highest quality of research. The successful postholder will contribute to the University's research excellence through academic outputs and research grants. S/he will also make a contribution to the WLRI's post-graduate teaching programmes.

The Research Fellow scale starts from £26,117 pa while the Senior Research Fellow scale (including London weighting) is between £37,752 and £47,541. The closing date for applications is January 12 and interviews will be held on Monday January 19 2009. Enquiries about the post can be made to Professor Mary Davis (m.davis@londonmet.ac.uk) or Dr Sonia McKay (s.mckay@londonmet.ac.uk). The Job Description is available at

<http://www.workinglives.org/job-opportunities.cfm>. Application forms will be available through the [Londonmet electronic recruitment system](#) from January 5.

Employment Relations Researcher

London Metropolitan University's Working Lives Research Institute has been researching trade unionism and employment relations for over six years. It has just won new projects to survey trade union responses to discrimination throughout the European Union and to investigate how European conciliation and arbitration services have responded to changing trends in individual and collective conflict and to examine the role of European Works Councils in challenging restructuring. We wish to appoint a Researcher at Research Fellow or Senior Research Fellow grade who has a background and interests in one or more of these areas to join the WLRI team on an initial 24 month contract. S/he will be passionately committed to social justice as well as to the highest quality of research. The successful postholder will contribute to the University's research excellence through their academic outputs and will also make a contribution to the WLRI's post-graduate teaching programmes.

The Research Fellow scale (including London weighting) is between £26,117 and £39,107, and the Senior Research Fellow scale rises to £47,541. The closing date for applications is January 12 and interviews will be held on Monday January 19 2009. Enquiries about the post can be made to Professor Steve Jefferys (s.jefferys@londonmet.ac.uk) or Dr Sian Moore (sian.moore@londonmet.ac.uk). The Job Description is available at <http://www.workinglives.org/job-opportunities.cfm>. Application forms will be available through the [Londonmet electronic recruitment system](#) from January 5.

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