

Deaths in immigration detention and violent deportations to dangerous countries

A campaign meeting called by **Bail for Immigration Detainees (BID)**

6 – 8 p.m, Wednesday, 19 October 2005.

St James's Church, 197 Piccadilly, London W1J 9LL

This meeting will focus on two key areas: the rise in the number of deaths in immigration detention in the UK and the policy of the UK Government in seeking to remove refused asylum seekers to countries like Iraq, Zimbabwe, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. The aim of this meeting is to share views, ideas and strategies for action.

Chair: Katie Ghose, BID Trustee (and Director of the British Institute of Human Rights)

Speakers:

Harmit Athwal, Institute of Race Relations

Deborah Coles, INQUEST

Harris Nyatsanza, Zimbabwean human rights activist, asylum-seeker and former-detainee
Iraqi community representative (tbc)

Cristal Amiss, Black Women's Rape Action Project

Harriet Anyangokolo, Representative of Ugandan women hunger strikers from Yarl's Wood
IRC and member of All African Women's Group

Tim Baster, Bail for Immigration Detainees

DEATHS

- Seven people have killed themselves in immigration detention since January 2003. On 15 September 2005, Manuel Bravo from Angola apparently took his own life in the family unit at Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre, where he was detained with his young son.
- Only 4 self-inflicted deaths of detainees were recorded between 1989 and mid-2003
- Who is being held accountable for these deaths?

DETENTION

- More asylum seekers and migrants than ever before are detained - 2155 people at the last official snapshot, in 10 centres and a number of prisons around the UK
- More women and children are now detained - 13% of detention beds are allocated to families
- Free, good quality legal advice and representation is almost impossible to access from detention following draconian changes to public funding introduced in April 2004 - the Legal Services Commission and Department for Constitutional Affairs have so far failed to take action to ensure legal representation is available
- Detainees are resorting to hunger strikes to make their situation heard
- Asylum claims by survivors of rape and torture are being 'fast tracked' in detention processes without enough time to prepare their case

DEPORTATION

- The Home Office and the courts are refusing to grant protection to survivors of rape, torture and political violence
- The Government are pursuing removal to dangerous situations in pursuit of an arbitrary target of more removals per month than new unfounded asylum claims
- Forced removals are planned to Iraq and Zimbabwe despite widespread condemnation and concern
- Asylum seekers from Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo and other countries are terrified of being sent back

Wheelchair accessible. Attendance free - a collection will be taken to cover costs of meeting.

Reasonable travel costs for unwaged migrants and asylum seekers can be arranged - to get expenses you must contact BID in advance at sarah@biduk.org or phone 020 7247 3590 www.biduk.org