



IOM International Organization for Migration

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## Meeting with Representatives of Health-related African Diaspora Community Organisations

**IOM London held a consultation workshop in May 2009 with a number of representatives of organisations which deal with health issues affecting the African diaspora.**

Insightful contributions and questions from the delegates enabled the IOM team (staff from the Operations, Reintegration and Communications departments) to give detailed information about the resources available and procedures in place to facilitate dignified and safe travel for people with medical needs. Furthermore, the delegates suggested ways of collaborating with IOM with particular focus on the interests of their target communities. It was agreed by all present that there was a need to explore opportunities for IOM to present its programmes at future events to be organised by the African Community organisations.



Photos: Adam Essack for IOM (14 May 2009, IOM London)

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# Assisting Migrants with Medical Needs

## What IOM can do

- Help anybody with medical needs as long as: they wish to return; they are eligible for voluntary return on one of IOM's programmes; they are fit to travel (with any required assistance)
- Try to find out if there are appropriate medical services and medication available in the country of return
- Try to locate the family in the country of return if needed
- Provide help and advice on obtaining appropriate travel documentation
- Arrange and pay for an appropriate, IOM trained medical escort (doctor or nurse) to assist the returnee during the flight, depending on the nature of the incapacitation and the language requirement.
- Make sure that there is appropriate assistance from the airlines during the flight (wheelchair, stretcher, oxygen supply, additional leg room, etc)
- Arrange and pay for the most appropriate transportation to the airport in the UK (currently IOM uses London airports only) and from the airport to the final destination in the country of return (bus, train, taxi or ambulance)

## What IOM cannot do

- Pay for long-term medical treatment in the country of origin.

However, most returnees are eligible for Reintegration Assistance from IOM, which can be used to establish an income-generating project. If the returnee's medical condition prevents them from operating the business themselves this assistance can be provided to the returnee's family.

But IOM London must approve the venture and must be satisfied that the share of the income generated will be going to the returnee.

### **IMPORTANT:**

**The time scale varies from country to country and is also dependent on availability of valid travel documents and flights.**

**It is therefore very important to contact IOM as early as possible as the whole process might take some time.**

# IOM London & Birmingham at Mela Festivals

Staff at IOM London and Birmingham manned a stall and offered information about IOM voluntary return programmes at recent Mela festivals in the London East End and in the Midlands respectively. Both the Vaishaki Mela celebrated by the Sikh community and the Baishaki Mela celebrated by the Bangladeshi community were well attended and colourful events.



# 'Return and Rebuild' assistance



**Under its Return and Rebuild programme, IOM UK continues to offer extra support to Afghan and Iraqi returnees for them to rebuild or repair their family homes.**

*(See the two mini cases below).*



Problems with his taxi business and a worsening economic situation at home led Mr K to join a group of ten other Afghans who travelled through Iran and Turkey to Greece. He stayed in Greece for three years before moving to the UK. Mr K claimed asylum but was refused and after a year in Britain wanted to return to Afghanistan. A friend told him about IOM and he went back home to Kabul in September 2008 where he opened a grocery store. The shop is already running successfully and Mr K can support his family with the profit he makes.

Mr K and his family were living in a succession of rented houses and, owning a plot of land in Kabul, with the contribution of the Return and Rebuild assistance to their own funds they were able to construct a new home. *"The Return and Rebuild assistance of IOM was actually one of the reasons which made me return home voluntarily."*

Mr K used the main Reintegration Assistance to obtain stock for his business. Additionally, IOM is paying the fees for English and computer training which he believes will help him, not only with his business, but to find a job as well.

Mr K's claim for asylum was not successful and he was missing his family so after 5 years in the UK he decided to return to Iraq, arriving back in Erbil in October 2008.

Before coming to the UK Mr K had worked as a car mechanic and taxi driver. This work experience, giving him practical and customer service skills, proved useful on his return to Iraq.

He decided to use the Reintegration Assistance from IOM to go into partnership with a member of his family who owns a shop selling electrical goods and appliances. He invested in the business by buying further stock.

Mr K was not happy that his large family (10) had been living in rented accommodation and so with his own funds he bought a house. The Return and Rebuild assistance from IOM helped him to complete the house by covering the cost of the PVC doors and windows and their installation.

# IOM North West Meets the Head of the Mongolian Buddhists in the UK

In the last few months, IOM North West has continued with its aim of reaching out to diaspora communities across the region, and it has been involved with a number of large-scale events.

In March it celebrated Kurdish New Year, with events in Bolton and Manchester attracting over 550 people. It also attended an event for over 100 members of the Congolese community in Merseyside,

IOM was invited to take part in Bangladeshi Independence celebrations in Lancashire, where staff addressed an audience of 130 community members.

Perhaps the highlight of the last few months however, was IOM's presence at a Mongolian community event in Manchester in May. The Khamba Lama, Gabju Choijamts Demberel, Head of the Centre of Mongolian Buddhists and Abbot of Gandan Tegchenling Monastery, came to the UK with five other delegates from the monastery to talk to the Mongolian community in the UK. The Khamba Lama came to Manchester on Tuesday 5th May and led prayers at the Manchester Buddhist Centre. About seventy members of the Mongolian community from across the North of England and the Midlands attended the event, as well as two representatives from IOM UK. At the end of the meeting, Zaya Chinbat (IOM's Mongolian Outreach Consultant) spoke to the group and explained IOM's assisted voluntary return programmes. This was very well received and has already resulted in a number of enquiries to IOM Manchester from Mongolians who wish to return home.

Looking forward to June, the celebrations surrounding Refugee Week will see the North West office supporting and attending events throughout the month in Manchester, Liverpool, Wigan and Bolton. There are also plans afoot for meetings with the Afghan and Iraqi communities with a live link-up to returnees in those countries.



## IOM Liverpool moves to new location

The IOM Liverpool office has a new home:

Regus Reception,  
5th Floor  
Horton House  
Exchange Flags.  
Liverpool L2 3PF  
Phone: 0151 244 5641

Opening hours for enquiries & applicants remain the same:

Monday to Friday:  
10 am–1 pm & 2–5 pm

From left to right: Enkhzaya Chinbat, The Khamba Lama and Kate Beaumont (IOM Manchester)

# IOM Wales & the South West

## IOM South West Receives Award

The Nigerian Association in Bristol organised a Culture and Diversity Day on 25 April at Malcolm X Hall, Bristol. The main objective of the event was to celebrate diversity, promote tolerance and cultural awareness among members of the Nigerian community, other diaspora groups and the host community.

The other objective was also to honour individuals and organisations that had rendered outstanding service to members of the Nigerian community in SW England and beyond.

In this context, Jason Matthews, Head of Office at IOM Wales and South West was delighted to receive an award on behalf of IOM. *(See photo on this page).*

Among the nearly 200 people who attended the event were Mr Job Oniwon, consular officer for Education and Welfare representing the Nigerian High Commissioner to London and His Excellency the Deputy Mayor of Bristol City Council, IOM staff from Bristol and Ayo Audu, Outreach Consultant for Nigeria. A special guest at the event was Uche Njoku, IOM Senior Programme Officer in Lagos who had come specifically to share her experiences in dealing with returnees from Europe, Asia, Latin America and other countries in Africa.

The Deputy Mayor of Bristol, Councillor Royston Alan Griff, hailed the leading role played by the local authority in promoting inclusion and community cohesion.

In his address, Mr Job Oniwon was full of praise for the "excellent relations" which exist between IOM and the Nigerian High Commission. He commended IOM for its work in assisting not just members of the Nigerian community but other migrants who could benefit from voluntary return programmes.

## Zimbabwe Independence Day in Bristol

**Members of the Zimbabwean community in Bristol in partnership with IOM Wales and the SW recently organised an event to mark Zimbabwe Independence Day on 18 April 2009.**

**The event was held at Lockleaze Primary school just outside Bristol and attracted around 300 people including Bristol Councillors Paul Smith and Peter Hammond and the local Member of Parliament Hon. Kerry McCarthy.**

**The programme of presentations by IOM and others was punctuated with music, cultural dance and sampling of different Zimbabwean food.**



# IOM Worldwide

## **PAKISTAN:** **Rapid Response Teams Help Displaced Families Outside Camps**

IOM is deploying two Rapid Response Teams to assess and respond to the needs of families displaced by military operations in Swat, Buner and Dir in Pakistan and who are living in out-of-camp settlements.

The teams will carry out need assessments, provide technical assistance for shelter support, collect and coordinate information with humanitarian partners and help distribute relief goods to vulnerable displaced families.

Brian Kelly, IOM Head of Emergency and Stabilization Programme in Pakistan said: "Learning from our past experience following the 2005 earthquake, the Rapid Response Teams will, by working on the ground among the displaced, provide a clearer picture on how best to respond to urgent needs of the displaced. This will not only benefit our work, but also that of other humanitarian partners responding to this enormous displacement crisis".

Eleven IOM Rapid Response Teams, which started operations in earthquake-affected areas of Pakistan in 2006, saved a number of lives in emergencies, trained thousands of villagers and volunteers in disaster preparedness, provided risk assessments for 1,200 remote and high altitude villages, and distributed relief items to vulnerable families.

## **COLOMBIA:** **New Centre To Welcome Returning Migrants**

A new Welcome Home centre, managed by IOM, will soon open its doors in the capital Bogota to provide returning migrants immediate assistance upon arrival, legal and psycho-social counselling and help to continue their education, find employment or explore opportunities to set up micro-enterprises and to access medical care.

An agreement signed towards the end of May by Colombia's Minister of Foreign Relations, Jaime Bermúdez, the Mayor of Bogota Samuel Moreno, and IOM's Director General, William Lacy Swing, paved the way for the opening of the centre.

IOM Director General sees the Welcome Home Project as a timely initiative that will help returning migrants achieve a productive and successful reintegration.

According to Colombian government figures, 3.3 million Colombians are living outside the country; 35 per cent in the United States and 23 per cent in Spain.

In Spain, increased job losses due to the global financial crisis are impacting upon Colombian migrants who are opting to return home.

Around 800 Colombian migrants have applied for the Spanish government financial incentives programme, created to encourage unemployed migrants to return home.

## **SUDAN:** **Re-establishing Critical Transport to Provide Life Saving Assistance in Darfur**

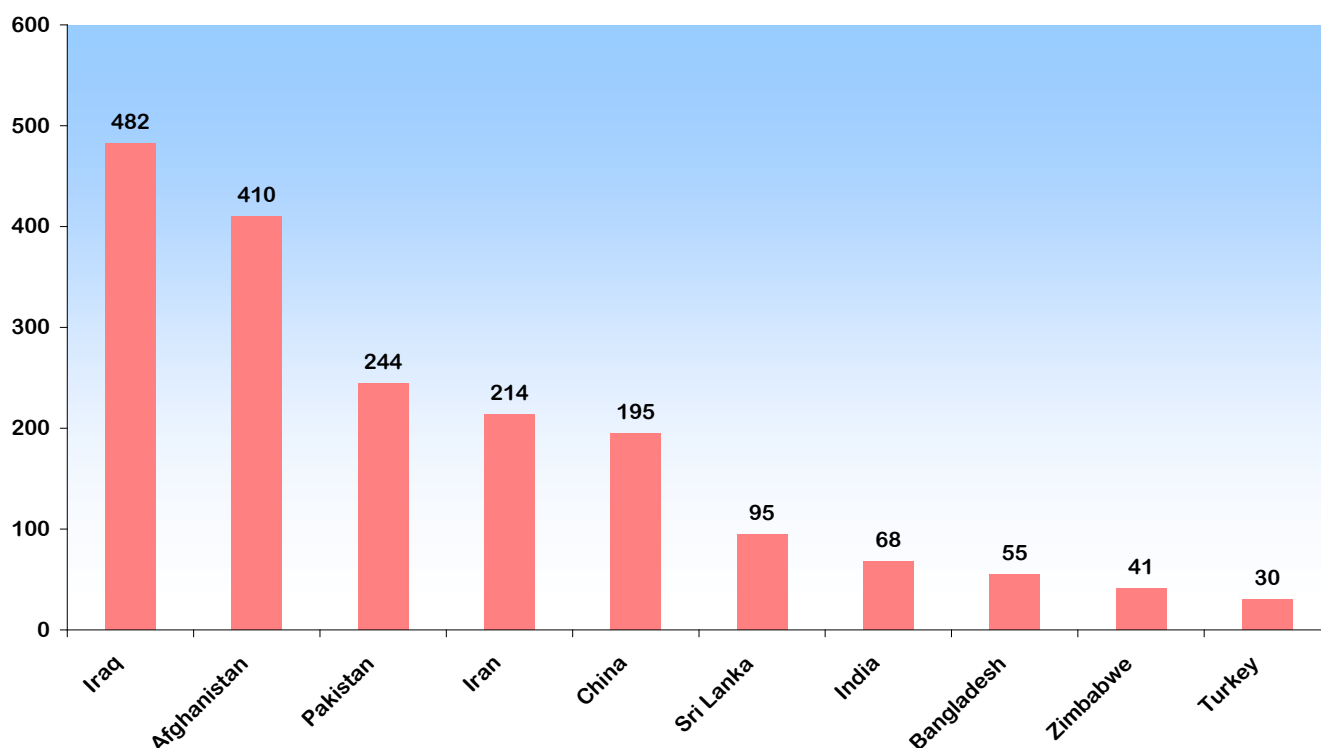
IOM is re-establishing the transport mechanism allowing the distribution of emergency shelter and non-food items to more than 660,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) in the three Darfur states in Sudan.

Transportation of the critical life-saving humanitarian assistance to Darfur has been affected by the expulsion earlier this year of several non-government organisations from the region, which in turn has impacted on the effectiveness of the non-food item pipeline reaching those in need.

With most of the funding for the US 1.6 million operation from the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), IOM will work to ensure the delivery of assistance before the June rains begin and to replenish warehouses. And it expects to move 14,000 MT of cargo to all three Darfur states for three-months.

# Reintegration Assistance

The Top 10 Countries of Return of beneficiaries of IOM UK's Reintegration Assistance since the launch of the 'new approach' in October 2007 account for 75% of the total number of recipients of Reintegration Assistance.



The table below shows a breakdown of the preferred reintegration activity of all the returnees who were offered Reintegration Assistance from October 2007 to April 2009.

Small business	2240
Training	17
Education	57
Job Placement	90
Other	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>2444</b>

Since 1999, IOM UK has helped more than **30,000** individuals to return to some **140** countries.