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IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

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# “Free the Fishing Children!”

Just over a year ago, IOM became involved in the issue of child trafficking for labour exploitation in Ghana. I had heard many stories and read various reports in the press, but now was the time to try and evaluate the extent of the phenomenon and find ways to reunite the children with their families.

We had enlisted the support of colleagues from the Ministry of Manpower Development and Employment and of the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs. Two local NGOs, “APPLE” and “Free the Slaves”, also joined our ranks as we departed one morning last April to visit three fishing communities in Yeji, in the Atebubu District of Brong Ahafo region.

We decided to meet the Chief of Yeji who would be able to provide us with information on the extent of the problem. We also met with an officer of the Integrated Development of Artisan Fisheries (IDAF) project, which aims to supply fishermen with updated fishing equipment. IDAF confirmed that many fishing communities dotted along the banks of Volta Lake were



*Yeji Paramount Chief, Nana Kagberese, calls on all fishermen to release the enslaved fishing boys.*

harbouring children who were being exploited. The officer promised to speak with the fishermen and arrange for us to visit some of the communities.

The following day I took part in a fact-finding mission that visited Jakalai No. 3, Tonka and Kaduegbordzi Kope, three small fishing communities located along the banks of Volta Lake less than ten kilometres from Yeji town.

These were typical fishing villages with square mud houses and thatched roofs. What struck me was the absence of basic community facilities such as running water or wells, markets and schools. A place of worship was only available in one of the three communities.

Later that day we discovered that each village was organized around the family household. Each household was made up of the master fisherman, locally known as the “slave-master”, his wife and their natural children and the trafficked children engaged in fishing for the slave-master.

In Jakalai, there were 52 slave-masters, 40 at Kaduegbordzi Kope and 44 at Tonka. On average, each slave master employed 13 children. We found two slave-masters who owned as many as 28 and 25 children respectively. It turned out that those three communities were harbouring more than 1,200 children.

Much to my surprise, it wasn't difficult to engage in a dialogue with the slave masters. Soon, discussions carried out in the local Twi and Fante language revealed that most of the children were trafficked from the Volta and central regions, especially from communities also engaged in fishing. The children are taken from their communities by traffickers upon payment of sums ranging from 400,000 to 1.5 million Cedis (US\$47 to US\$177) to the parents or guardians.

The slave-master normally makes an initial payment of 50 per cent of the agreed sum. The duration of the contracts ranges between one and three years.

The boys' main task is to pull in the nets. But some boys have drowned after being forced to dive to the bottom of the lake to release nets when they get caught.

We finally managed to speak to some of the enslaved fishing boys. They told us that they were not involved in the negotiations. Some said they were told by their parents to go and live with their uncles who would not only take care of them but

would ensure that they attended school. None were told that they were being taken away to work as slaves.

Some had been in the Yeji fishing communities for six years or more and could not remember the name of their parents or where they came from. When we asked them if they wanted to be reunited with their parents, most said yes and asked if we could help them.

Their day begins at dawn and lasts through the late afternoon or night during the peak season. They are given food in the morning, before leaving for work and when they return at night. Many told IOM that they are punished and beaten for dozing off at work.

After many hours of discussions, the slave-masters acknowledged that it is wrong to use children for such difficult and hazardous work. They said they were willing to cooperate on one condition: that we would do something to remedy their loss if they release the children.

Now the arduous task of freeing the fishing-boy-slaves has started. I have returned once more with my team to the villages. Confidence has grown to

the extent that we have managed to register 571 trafficked children. We have promised the fishermen that they would receive training and modern fishing equipment to improve their fishing methods once the fishing-boy-slaves have returned to their homes.

I hope that the transit centre in Yeji town, provided to IOM by the Atebubu District Assembly, will soon receive the first children freed under the programme.

But our job will not end there. The difficult process of tracing families must begin. When we succeed in tracking down the families, the boys will be reunited with their parents. We must ensure that the children return to school or join vocational training programmes. We must also address the question of poverty, which led to the trafficking of the children in the first place, by making sure that families receive micro-credits to help them generate enough income to support their children. This is paramount if we are to tackle the root causes of child trafficking in Ghana and the region.

**Dr Ernest Taylor, IOM Accra**

Local people support the release of the enslaved fishing boys.



# Ex-Combatants Hope for a New Life in Uganda

The cattle were agitated. Something was wrong, but John wasn't sure what. It was a typical hot sunny day in northern Uganda amidst the lush-green pastures where he tended livestock. Suddenly, armed men appeared out of a thicket across the field and moved towards him. He was forced to march with the rebels to their encampment. Just five years old, John left his last innocent thoughts on that field.

John was tired when he finally slumped down at the camp along with some 40 other young kids. He wondered if his mother and grandfather knew where he was. Dusk was setting in and the familiar night air mingled with the smell of sweat and fear. One boy started crying and a soldier hit him in the face with a heavy stick. The next morning the sick and weak children were separated from the group. Soldiers executed them right in front of everyone. John absorbed some fast survival lessons that day: don't ask questions – speak only when spoken to – follow orders.

They put him on duty to fetch water, keep the camp tidy and serve food to the platoon. After a couple of months he was taught how to use a bow and arrow, a spear, a knife, a machete and later a gun. When soldiers brought prisoners of war back to the camp, John was forced to execute them. He

feared the consequences of disobeying so he did everything that he was ordered to do, even though some of his actions gave him nightmares. And as he grew, he started fighting alongside the rebels.

Thirteen years after his abduction, John told his story to the IOM staff in Nairobi.

Today he's 18 and an ex-Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) veteran of countless battles. He fled to Nairobi in 1999. He is also one of 588 "reporter" registrants (accompanied by 342 dependents, mostly children) who hope to go back home through a new IOM initiative to return former combatants.

The LRA espouses a government based on the Ten Commandments and has waged a guerrilla war in northern Uganda since 1986. Other splinter rebel groups have also contributed to the ceaseless violence that has devastated that part of the country creating frightening levels of poverty – food levels are alarmingly low, malnutrition is rampant and outbreaks of meningitis and bubonic plague have been reported. Approximately 800,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) are currently at risk. Over the years, thousands of people have joined or have been forced into the LRA and other rebel movements.



*Ex-combatants will return home with their families.*

President Museveni wants to change things.

In January 2000 the government signed the Ugandan Amnesty Act, which provides amnesty to nationals involved in “acts of war-like nature”. This covers Ugandans residing in or outside the country who have been engaged in armed rebellion or war since 1986.

IOM, in conjunction with the Kenyan and Ugandan governments and the Ugandan Amnesty Commission, has launched an EU and US government funded project to register and return home all qualified applicants. A similar programme is underway in Sudan. IOM, UNICEF and the NGOs World Vision, GUSCO and Kichwa will provide rehabilitation and reintegration to ex-combatants, who will return to safe areas if their home regions are unreachable.

Each story is a microcosm of the thousands of lives affected by waves of war and bush battles that have swept over northern Uganda for nearly two decades. John is one of an estimated 10,000 abducted children. Over 5,550 of these young boys and girls are still missing, according to a UNICEF-supported registration system.

An untold number of girls and women have been subjected to brutality. Females outnumbered male reporters at IOM 299 to 289. Often forced into servitude and sexual slavery, many psychologically scarred women had children from unwanted pregnancies. Sarah came to IOM with five children and explained that each one was the product of a different rape.

Another reporter, Patricia, said, “What I have seen I don’t want to see ever again. I had to strangle people to survive and I was a wife to many husbands.” Patricia, along with other rebels, child soldiers and abducted women and children broke away from encampments in Sudan and fled to Kenya as word spread of possible amnesty and return.

Entire tribes have been affected. The Acholi people exemplify the plight of northern Uganda. “One day my village was attacked and burned. We all fled into the bush and were captured by the LRA. Then you have to fight for them or be killed,” recounts Charles. He escaped to Kenya and has

lived as a refugee since 1994. Other Acholi joined rebellions willingly when their houses were attacked and their relatives were killed. The Acholi make up a significant number of northern Uganda’s IDPs.

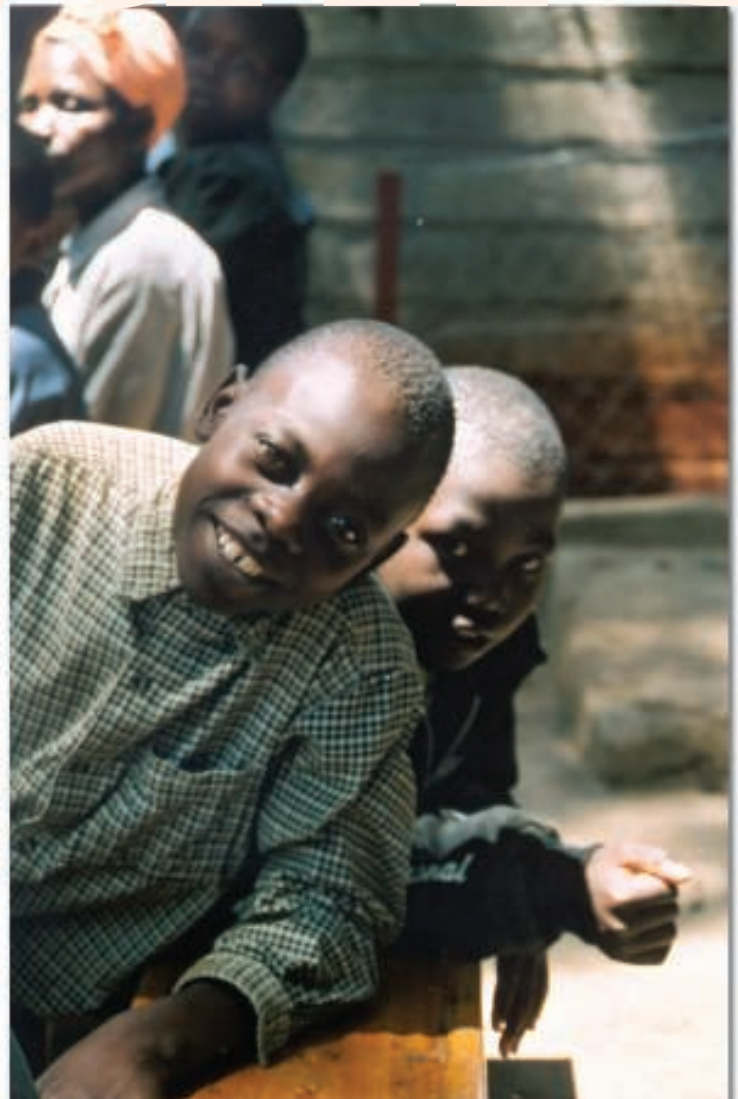
All the registrants have been living in “irregular” conditions in Kenya. Without documentation or legal status, they’ve been harassed by police, jailed and reduced to living on the streets. Their children have no access to education; health care comes through the beggar’s luck of a handout. Up to now, living in these deplorable conditions in Kenya has been the only viable option. “There’s no way to make money here. I sleep in the park at night and beg during the day, but I don’t want to fight anymore,” said one young male reporter.

IOM hopes to play a role to change all of this.

As John told his life story somber-faced, young children of other reporters played and laughed behind him. The juxtaposition stood out clearly: at five John was marched away from a normal childhood, but these young children, products of the violence that has encircled and ruled John’s world, will now have an opportunity for education and a future untouched by war and indigence. John too hopes to put his rebel past behind him and search for fragments of a life he barely remembers. “When I get back, I want to look for my mother and grandfather and go to school,” he says.

**Sasha Chanoff and Dennis Haraszko,**  
IOM Nairobi

uganda





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Clockwise from the top:  
John and Samson are  
veteran fighters of the LRA.  
They look forward to returning home,  
but are worried that they will not be accepted;  
Patricia with her son.  
They all dream of a new and peaceful life  
in Uganda.

All photos © Tessa Neylan 2003



# Victoria's Nightmarish Round Trip

**"D**on't be deceived into travelling to Italy, things are rough over there. The promise of a well-paid job and a bed of roses may be a way of luring you into prostitution. You will be exposed to untold hardship."

This was the advice Victoria gave to two young girls whose discussion about travelling to Italy she overheard while at a beauty parlour. At first, the girls laughed at her and wondered what she was talking about, then they heard her story and her traumatic experience in Italy.

Victoria speaks with a heartfelt desire to protect young innocent girls from the suffering she endured.

Victoria is the only daughter of a poor family from Benin City. When she was a teenager, her parents divorced and she replaced her mother in taking care of her father and four brothers. Her father did all he could to look after the family. She felt very protective towards her brothers, so she did everything she could to help minimize the impact of the divorce.

Victoria completed secondary school and although she wanted to become an accountant, she had to leave her studies so her father would have enough money to educate her brothers. "In Nigeria, the education of boys usually takes priority over the education of girls," Victoria explains. "But my father said he would help me start a small business, so I could contribute to the education of my brothers."

While she was waiting for her father to gather enough money to open a business, Victoria paid regular visits to an old school friend, whose mother, Pauline, offered her a job in Italy. It was common knowledge that many girls from Benin go to Italy for prostitution, so she told her that she was not interested in becoming a

prostitute and went as far as to say: "I would die of hunger rather than become a prostitute."

Pauline reassured Victoria about the job and shortly after took her to a voodoo shrine to make a vow. She knew that this ritual was often used to bind a girl's will and to take full control of her destiny.

When she stepped inside the voodoo shrine, locally known as "juju", Victoria said, "My vow will not be binding should I be forced into prostitution."

Some days later, Pauline introduced Victoria to a 40-year-old woman who had just returned from Italy. "Madame", as she was known, was delighted to meet Victoria and said "You are young and very beautiful and you fit the requirements. This job is good for girls between 18 and 20 years of age. After that, they are too old."

The long journey began with a stop in Lagos where "Madame" obtained a passport for Victoria. In the taxi from Milan airport, "Madame" asked Victoria if she could start working the following day. Victoria became suspicious and asked, "What are you talking about?" "Madame" replied, "Oh stop being so naïve; you will be working as a prostitute."

Victoria became extremely angry and nervous and shouted, "Send me back to Lagos immediately!" Her cries were attracting so much attention that "Madame" abandoned her, but not before taking her passport.

Victoria roamed the streets of Milan for five days, gesticulating to make herself understood. A lady gave her 10,000 Lire so she could take a taxi to the nearest police station. The police referred her to the Missionary Sisters of Charity who offered her a safe shelter. Later, IOM helped her return to Nigeria. Once back home, IOM and partner NGOs helped her to reintegrate. She decided not to resume her education, but was helped to set up a shop selling baby clothes. She is now busy with her job and plans to reinvest her earnings into buying more goods for her shop. She hopes this will secure a more stable life for herself and her family.

Another important task for Victoria is to serve as an example for other vulnerable girls, who might be trafficked to Europe. She is determined to continue helping young girls as much as possible by informing them of the dangers of falling prey to people promising easy earnings and "honest" jobs.

**Giulia Falzoi, IOM Rome**

This Italian funded programme to counter trafficking in Nigerian women and minors and to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmissible infections (STIs) was launched by the IOM offices in Rome and Lagos in April 2001.

In the past 18 months, 28 Nigerian victims of trafficking have been assisted in their safe return and reintegration. As part of the programme, an information campaign in Edo State is informing potential victims of the hazards of falling prey to traffickers. A shelter to house the returning victims has been opened in Benin City and more than 70 health and social workers, and local authorities have been trained in HIV/AIDS and STIs prevention.

# Afghan Transition Initiative Supports Women Film Makers

IOM's US government-funded Afghan Transition Initiative programme is supporting 20 Afghan women filmmakers on a one-year training course in Kabul.

The course is taught by French journalists and is designed to give the women the skills they will need to take up jobs in the Afghan broadcasting and film industries.

The technical film skills taught in the course will help the students to communicate events in Afghanistan through their own eyes – in contrast to the eyes and camera lenses of the thousands of foreign reporters who have visited the country over the past 18 months.

"After years of repression, Afghan women are still grossly underrepresented in the media. This project is a small step towards redressing the balance," says IOM Afghanistan programme officer Ginette Baerten.

The students each receive a scholarship of US\$100 a month. Most worked as journalists or studied journalism at university before joining the course in the summer of 2002.

Eighteen-year-old Jamila Emanai, one of the students on the course, says that film is a powerful medium in Afghanistan. "I always wanted to be a journalist and I chose to be a camera woman because there are many illiterate people in Afghanistan who can only be reached through television pictures."

The students will produce two films about Afghan women in the course of the year. The first will be a 52-minute documentary drawn from "oral history" interviews conducted with 100 Afghan women around the country.



Young Afghan woman learns to operate a video camera.

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IOM, working in close cooperation with the Afghan Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA), is to implement a US\$2.5 million US government-funded programme to build and equip 14 provincial women's centres in Afghanistan.

The centres, which will extend MOWA's work to promote the social and economic empowerment of women throughout the country, will focus on delivering literacy and skills training to Afghan women.

The project is part of IOM's US-funded Afghanistan Transition Initiative (ATI) programme, which has promoted community and infrastructure development in concert with the Afghan transitional government since the beginning of 2002.

ATI projects targeting Afghan women and girls totalled US\$2.2 million in 2002. They included:

- Construction/rehabilitation of 33 schools serving some 35,700 girls in 11 provinces around the country.
- Support for the Intermediate Medical Institute (IMI) in Mazar-e-Sharif – one of five Afghan institutes providing training for 700 nurses, midwives, dentists, pharmacologists and lab technicians every year.
- Rehabilitation work at the MOWA complex in Kabul, including the equipping of 11 offices, and support for technical advisors to help MOWA to set up operations and develop programmes.



© Marc Petzoldt/IOM 2003

Nilab Zarim, 27, who worked for IOM under the Taliban, and is now a student on the course, was delighted to see the films broadcast. "My family was very proud when they saw my work and I even received a telephone call from a cousin in France who saw one of the films on TV."

The US\$97,000 project is being carried out in cooperation with AINA, a French-Afghan media NGO. In addition to funding from the US, the project has received support from the Asia Foundation and UNESCO. If further funding becomes available, AINA plans to offer the students additional courses in English language, computers and editing to expand their skills and enhance their employment prospects.

**IOM Kabul**

The second will be a 52-minute documentary on women in politics, drawn from interviews with 100 women who were delegates to the Emergency Loya Jirga or assembly that elected the current transitional administration.

The students have already made four short films broadcast on French television. Their subjects include the lives of female inmates in Kabul's prison, street children, an engagement party and life in a village on the Shomali plain outside Kabul.

The Shomali, once the most fertile irrigated land in Afghanistan famed for its vineyards, was depopulated, mined and largely destroyed when it became the frontline between the Taliban and Northern Alliance factions in the second half of the 1990s.

In December they also made a short ten-minute film profiling IOM's Return of Qualified Afghans (RQA) programme. The film includes interviews with three remarkable RQA candidates among 400 who have returned to Afghanistan to help rebuild their country.<sup>1</sup>

1. Video compact discs of the film are available free of charge from IOM's Media and Public Information in Geneva, [mpi@iom.int](mailto:mpi@iom.int)



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# Somali Family Reunites in Italy



© IOM 2003

*Hussein's youngest children playing at the IOM office.*

**T**he rebels burst into my house after sundown. My wife and two of my brothers were there. They aimed their guns and shouted: 'Where is he? Take us to him!' My family didn't know where I was because I was constantly changing my hiding-place. So the rebels dragged my brothers out of the house and killed them both. Fortunately, my wife's life was spared. That was the moment I decided I had to leave Somalia." Hussein,<sup>1</sup> a Somali refugee living in Italy with his wife and four children, remembers that dreadful day.

Hussein and his family recently visited the IOM office in Rome to tell their story. A story of constant death threats, followed by their desperate

escape from Somalia to Ethiopia and their eventual arrival to Italy. "The journey to Ethiopia was long and dangerous. We reached Djibouti and then boarded a train bound for Addis Ababa. The night was freezing and I was so worried for my children; but in the end, we made it."

Hussein left for Italy in December 1998 hoping that his family would be able to join him shortly thereafter. "I was well received in Italy. But as soon as I arrived, I kept thinking of my family, I was longing to hug them again."

One of the main problems he faced when he tried to bring his family to Italy was the fact that the Italian Government does not recognize Somali identification documents

1. The names have been changed at the request of the family.



Hussein's four children with Simona Moscarelli, IOM Officer in charge of the Somali Family Reunification to Italy project.

because of the continuous political instability in the country.

This is when IOM stepped in to solve the impasse. DNA testing clearly established the veracity of the family bonds. Once this was established, IOM identified and provided documentation to Hussein's family to help them obtain entry visas to Italy.

Finally, the long-awaited day arrived.

"The 12th of July 2002 was the best day of my life: IOM confirmed the arrival of my family. The first one I saw was Yusuf, my eldest son, but at first I didn't recognize him. It was three years since I had last seen him. He approached me and said: 'Dad, dad, it's me.' He had grown into such a tall boy! 'Yes dad, it's me!' he said with tears in his eyes. Then I recognized Asho and Amina, and finally, my wife with my youngest son in her arms."

Today Hussein lives in Rome, is well integrated and has an excellent relationship with his neighbours. "To celebrate the end of Ramadan, our Italian friends brought us traditional Italian Christmas cakes and we celebrated together," he says proudly.

So will he ever return to Somalia? "I'll go back once the war is over, to settle matters left pending. But it is still a dangerous place. A few weeks ago my brother's son was killed while walking in Mogadishu. I hope peace will return to Somalia. But for the time being, I want to live in Italy with my family."

The children are in school and quickly learning Italian. They want to be doctors, teachers or pilots. Three-year-old Abduraman mumbles, "I want to go to school."

Thirteen years of civil war, drought and famine have caused more than 500,000 deaths. Somalia seems ripped apart by the never-ending internal power struggles. So far, 12 conferences have failed to restore peace in a country where more than 400,000 persons are internally displaced and 300,000 have fled to neighbouring countries.

Working in close coordination with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Italian Embassies in sending countries, IOM has so far assisted more than 200 Somali nationals. The programme is managed by IOM Rome in cooperation with IOM offices in Nairobi and Addis Ababa.

Francesca Ferrari, IOM Rome



Drought and civil war continues to plague Somalia.

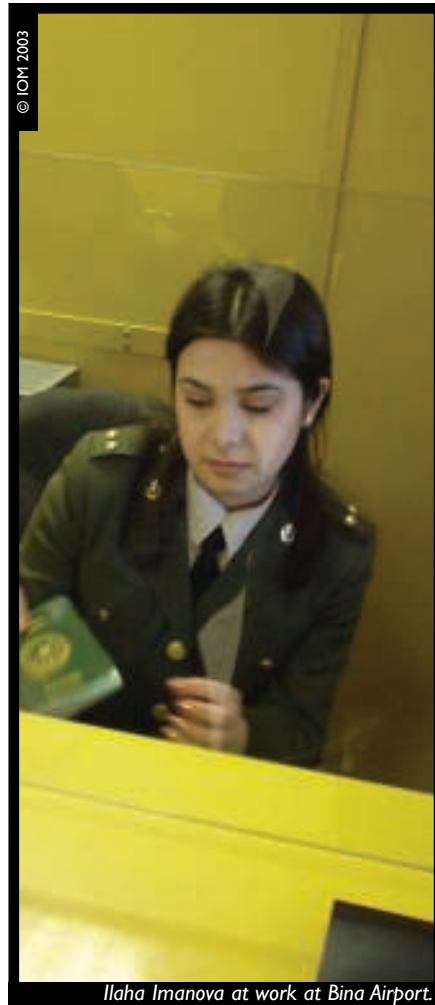
© Jean Philippe Chauzy 1991

# A Major Facelift for Azerbaijan's Border Guards

**F**eminization has been a key development in the transformation of Azerbaijan's border guards into the new State Border Service. The traditional male military structure is being replaced by professionals trained to face the current challenges of international migration management.

As part of IOM's Capacity Building in Migration Management Programme in Azerbaijan, the IOM office in Baku supports the training programme for border guards. The training focuses on effective traveller and document examination. Since the first course began in July 2001, a total of 39 newly-recruited female border guards have completed the training.

Twenty-two-year-old Ilaha Imanova took part in the IOM sponsored training and now works as a control officer for the State Border Service at Bina Airport. Her father was finance officer at the Border Guard Headquarters and her sister is a medical doctor in the same organization. "Their careers inspired me to become a border guard, although my father did not approve of my vocation. At school I was the only girl in our class with this ambition. My parents and relatives told me being a border guard is a job for men. I have signed a five-year contract with the State Border Service. I wanted to be useful to my country by assuming



*Ilaha Imanova at work at Bina Airport.*

some responsibility for its development. Part of my job serves to promote our national hospitality, while at the same time preventing unwanted travellers from entering Azerbaijan."

During the first months of work at the airport, a senior officer provided "on the job training" and supervised the performance of the new recruits.

Ilaha is excited about the new challenge "This job allows me to meet people of many different cultures, but I also come across those who use different methods to attempt illegal entry into the country. Last week we stopped seven Iranians with passports that had been altered. The first thing I noticed was their nervous behaviour. A colleague examined the documents, which proved to be forged. That to me is a great example of teamwork. Frankly speaking, I don't see any professional difference between male and female border guards. Our male colleagues respect us and do not discriminate against us. We have good teamwork and always seek consultation and guidance from the more experienced officers, some of whom have travelled abroad for training."

Adalat Zamanov, Head of the Border Guard Unit at Bina Airport, believes that as female border guards become more experienced they will turn out to be the best controllers. "Their accuracy, commitment and persistence in performance is higher compared to male border guards. The military face at the airport has definitely changed."

Ilaha shares her plans for the future. "I would like to develop my career and become a senior officer. I am sure my father would be proud."

Last October, five female trainees, along with ten male colleagues, travelled to Poland to take part in a one-year border management programme offered by the Ketrzyn Border Guards School. This group will become trainers for new recruits in the Border Inspection Training Centre, supported by IOM.

# Jehovah's Witnesses Persecuted by Nazi Regime Receive Compensation

When Hitler seized power in 1933, about 25,000 Jehovah's Witnesses were living in Germany. Because they considered themselves citizens of the Kingdom of God and therefore not accountable to any earthly government, they refused to conform. Their refusal to salute Hitler, join the Nazi party, vote, perform military service or participate in any war-related activity, pitted them against the regime.

In 1935 the Nazis introduced a law banning Jehovah's Witnesses from the civil service. When compulsory military service was introduced, Jehovah's Witnesses were rounded up and taken into "protective custody" in concentration camps. Only those who renounced their faith were released. An estimated, 5 to 10 per cent of the pre-war concentration camp popu-

lation was Jehovah's Witnesses. Some 6,000 were imprisoned and more than 2,500 died in the camps.

Max Hollweg survived and recently received compensation under IOM's German Forced Labour Compensation and Holocaust Victim Assets programmes.

"Non-medical Practitioner" reads the brass plate on Hollweg's detached family house in Schlangen, a small village near Paderborn in northern Germany. At the age of 92, he was still working to supplement his small state pension when he spoke to IOM's Marie Agnes Heine. Sadly a few days before *IOM News* went to print, he passed away.

The sixteenth of 18 children, Hollweg grew up in a family of Jehovah's Witnesses. As a child, he realized that he was different from his schoolmates. At the age of 12, he helped feed his large family by working at a neighbouring farm. He also helped his parents distribute religious leaflets in the afternoons and on weekends. He recalled that teachers often punished him with strokes of the cane on his fingers for not knowing the words of Protestant hymns.

In his early twenties, Hollweg was sent to the former Czechoslovakia to work as a preacher near Prague. In 1931 the Czech police arrested him and handed him to the German authorities.

In Germany he was kept in prison for a short time, but after his release he was repeatedly arrested for religious

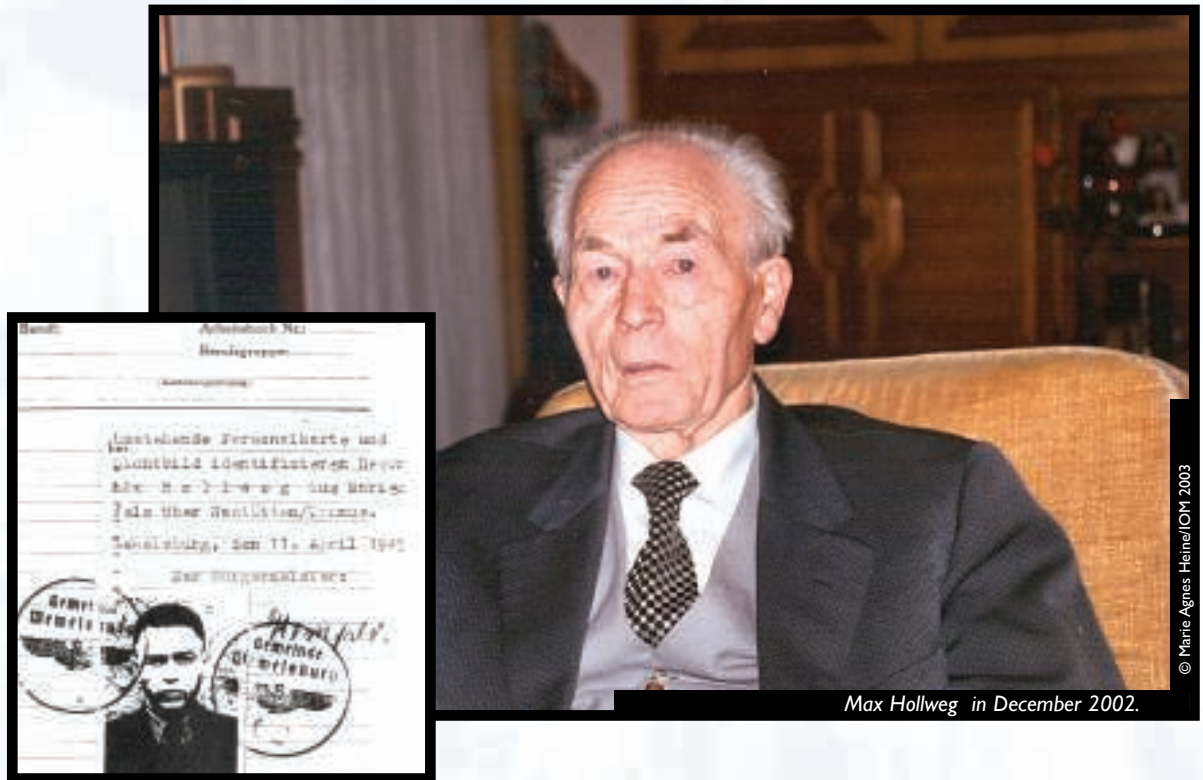
activities. In 1938 he spent several months in a Gestapo prison in Frankfurt, before being transferred to the concentration camp at Buchenwald near Weimar.

"I had never broken the law in my whole life," explained the sprightly old man with animated eyes. "I never committed a criminal act, but suddenly, just being a Jehovah's Witness was enough reason for the Nazis to persecute me relentlessly."

In Buchenwald, the SS worked day and night at breaking the spirit of the Jehovah's Witnesses. When the prisoners refused to renounce their faith, the beatings and abuse became even worse. As so-called "Bible students", Hollweg and his co-religionists were forced to wear a purple triangle on their clothing and were singled out for severe treatment.

He and the other Jehovah's Witnesses were quite isolated. "There was vicious competition amongst the different groups – Jews, political prisoners, Roma, homosexuals, criminals, so-called antisocial elements and Jehovah's Witnesses. Many people had to suffer or even die because of the maliciousness of their fellow prisoners," he recalled bitterly.

The Jehovah's Witnesses stuck together and tried to help and protect each other as much as possible. Hollweg used his knowledge of herbal medicine to treat health problems caused by the exhausting work and bad food. He was also able to supplement their diet with nutritious thistles and other weeds.



Max Hollweg in December 2002.

© Marie Agnes Heine/IOM 2003

In March 1940, with the arrival of ever greater numbers of Jews in Buchenwald, Hollweg and 89 other Jehovah's Witnesses were transferred to Wewelsburg where Hitler planned to establish a giant training academy for SS officers. Labour was needed to build that facility and a new concentration camp in neighbouring Niedernhagen. Each week, large numbers of detainees from other camps arrived.

His manual skills helped him to survive the camps. In Wewelsburg he also worked as a barber in the evenings. In his memoirs published in Germany in 1997,<sup>1</sup> Hollweg recalled the day when he was summoned by Wewelsburg's Commandant Haas and told to shave him.

This could have been a death sentence, but Hollweg composed himself and did a good job. Later Haas asked him if he had been afraid. Hollweg replied: "No! If I'd cut your throat, you wouldn't have had a chance to shoot me." Haas apparently appreciated this kind of humour and subsequently Hollweg shaved him every day.

Many prisoners thought about trying to escape, but not many dared to risk it. "Some who succeeded were caught and torn to pieces by trained dogs," Hollweg remembered.

Hollweg witnessed numerous atrocities committed by brutal SS guards. A popular sport was to take away a prisoner's cap and throw it over a line drawn by the guards. The prisoner had to cross the line to pick it up and was then "shot trying to escape". Hollweg remembered how starving Russian prisoners arrived after days of travel without food or water. "They were so hungry that they licked up spilled soup from the dirt floor."

Between 1940 and 1942, 21 of Hollweg's fellow Jehovah's Witnesses were killed by camp guards. The number of executions increased steadily until the Niedernhagen camp was eventually closed and the surviving prisoners transferred, mainly to Ravensbrück, Stutthof and Neuengamme camps.

After the end of the war and after seven years of imprisonment, Max Hollweg faced new challenges. His qualifications as a "Doctor of Natural Healing" were not recognized and his appeal to the court was rejected by an unsympathetic judge. As he could not afford to do an extra year of university studies, Hollweg decided to qualify as a non-medical practitioner.

In Wewelsburg he met and later married a girl from a German refugee family from Poland. Subsequently he established a practice in Schlangen, where he lived with his family until his death in 2003.

Despite his advanced age, Hollweg continued to spread his religion door-to-door.

And what did the IOM compensation programmes mean to him? "I think it's ridiculous to try to financially compensate us for what has been done. As Jehovah's Witnesses we continue to be discriminated against and therefore any additional assistance is welcome," he said.

**Marie Agnes Heine, IOM Geneva**

1. Max Hollweg, *Es ist unmöglich von dem zu schweigen, was ich erlebt habe – Zivilcourage im Dritten Reich*, Mindt publisher, Bielefeld, 1997

# Promoting an Image of Migrants Free of Stereotypes and Prejudices

The IOM office in Rome has launched a Euro 1.8 million EC-funded information campaign to improve the perception of migrants, their social integration and their entry into the Italian labour market.

In January, IOM's partner, the Italian satellite TV channel RAI News 24, began broadcasting the first of ten five-minute Public Service Announcements (PSAs) exposing stereotypes affecting immigrants in Italy and underlining the problems that they face when they try to integrate into Italian society.

The PSAs explore various myths associated with migrants, amongst others: their impact on the job market; their dependence on the state; their links with crime, prostitution and drugs, and their cultural incompatibility.

RAI News 24 has also produced a short video: *Immigrants: Ten prejudices to destroy*, which has been broadcasted on the satellite channel.

IOM is also working with its partners to set up MIGRA, Italy's first Immigrant Information Agency. The agency will be on line at [www.migranews.net](http://www.migranews.net) to provide up-to-date news to the media, migrants and civil society on issues relating to the integration of migrants into Italian society. MIGRA currently employs five journalists in Rome, and plans to hire another 15 others part time in the near future.

per una immagine libera da stereotipi e pregiudizi

## L'IMMAGINE DEGLI IMMIGRATI IN ITALIA

### TRA MEDIA, SOCIETÀ CIVILE E MONDO DEL LAVORO

Progetto "Immigrants: Ten prejudices to destroy" promosso da IOM, Caritas di Roma e Istituto Nazionale per lo studio e la ricerca  
 Organizzato e realizzato da IOM, Istituto Nazionale per lo studio e la ricerca, Istituto Nazionale per lo studio e la ricerca, Istituto Nazionale per lo studio e la ricerca  
 Il progetto è finanziato dalla Commissione Europea, Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Ministero del Lavoro e Ministero della Sanità  
 Roma, 2008

Another IOM partner, the NGO Caritas, is supporting the programme by organizing events and public debates in over 100 Italian municipalities. Since the project began, it has distributed more than 4,000 leaflets, 500 posters and 1,000 fact sheets describing the project nationwide.

Italy became an immigration country in the mid-1970s. Since then, the number of immigrants has risen from 300,000 to an estimated 1.6 million at the end of 2001, representing 2.8 per cent of the population. A further 700,000 applications for citizenship were submitted under a recent regularization exercise targeting irregular migrants.

This IOM programme is aimed at reversing the disturbingly negative image of migrants in Italian society and the media. It also extends to Greece, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, where similar public information activities are planned.

**IOM Rome**

Italy

# The Image of Migrant Women in Italy: The Story of a Journalist

I come from Mexico, a magic, almost surreal land, where the euphoric joy of people contrasts with a prevalent sense of sadness that stems from perennial problems that seem to have no real solution. Mexico is a land where life is everything and at the same time "*la vida no vale nada*", it is worth nothing, as depicted in a famous "*ranchera*" song.

I studied journalism and began working as a scriptwriter for a national radio station. At the same time, I wrote articles for a weekly magazine. I always had many interests, and very stimulating sociocultural surroundings put me in touch with extremely positive and sensitive people. I remember the endless nights of discussions that produced brilliant ideas, which never really materialized as we were all struggling financially.

Then I travelled to Italy, a bit by chance and a lot by desire. Working as a journalist, I looked for an excuse to visit old and mythical Europe, the cradle of intellect and culture. Even as a child, I was eager to discover new horizons. Whenever people mentioned a country they had visited, I would listen intently to their stories. I would imagine all kind of events taking place in far away places.

So one fine day, having put money aside, I managed to do the "*salto del charco*", literally to "cross the ocean". I visited Madrid, Paris, Amsterdam, and Monaco, writing articles for a Mexican magazine, for which they never paid me.



© Nino Dragotto 1995

Marta Elvira Patiño dancing during a Latin American fashion show in Rome.

left: the poster promoting the information campaign.

I was running short of money so I went on to Rome, the last stop scheduled on my journey. And here is where I fell in love. I went back to Mexico but two years later returned to Italy, where I have lived for the past 17 years.

Being a migrant woman is a very particular experience. When you're 28, moving to another country is fascinating at first. But once there, you realize how hard it is. I thought that curiosity was enough to lead a good life and quickly adapt to the new place. Instead I felt uprooted. I missed my friends and our long discussions; my family was no longer there to offer their support.

I was working as a domestic and had just given birth to my second child. I felt lucky to be dedicating myself entirely to my children. But after a while this was not enough. I tried to work again as a freelance journalist, but all the doors I knocked on remained closed. My self-esteem plummeted. I felt inadequate, ignorant and always in the wrong place. So I decided to return to Mexico. This is when I received an offer from a Mexican weekly magazine to work as a correspondent, which I did for four years.

Women's issues have accompanied me all my life, both in Mexico and in Italy. I've had the chance to observe how women have conquered emancipation and obtained equal opportunities.

It is this life long experience that I am now sharing with other migrant women thanks to the IOM project The Image of Migrants In Italy. I am now putting some of these stories together in a short film, which will be shown as part of the information campaign to promote the image of migrants in Italy.

I hope it will help people to better understand what it means to be a migrant woman, and at the same time give courage to all migrant women.

**Marta Elvira Patiño**

# Kapuas Bersatu Riverboat Provides a Lifeline for Displaced Madurese

**U**nder monsoon clouds at a West Kalimantan river port in January, four men scurried around a typical 100-passenger, five-tonne riverboat, preparing for the arrival of trucks loaded with health kits.

The cargo was destined for a remote resettlement site for internally displaced Madurese migrants up the Kapuas river – one of the great rivers that link the inaccessible mountains and jungles of Borneo's interior to the sea.

The river boat, provided by IOM and now operated by the Kapuas Bersatu or United Kapuas cooperative,

represents both an essential transport link to the settlement and an experiment in co-existence in an area racked with ethnic tensions since the late 1990s.

Of the four crew of the riverboat, two are Madurese migrants from the densely populated island of Madura at the eastern end of Java, encouraged by the Soeharto regime to "transmigrate" and develop under-populated West Kalimantan during the 1970s and 1980s.

The other two crew members are ethnic Malays – the local inhabitants whose often strained relations with the migrants flared into open conflict in the town of Sambas in 1999, causing some 20,000 Madurese to flee their homes for makeshift Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps in Pontianak, the provincial capital.

By the summer of 2001, unable to return to their homes in Sambas, with no incentive to return to poverty in Madura, and facing growing hostility from Pontianak residents, the displaced Madurese faced a bleak future.

When the Indonesian government offered incentives to encourage them to move from the Pontianak IDP camps to 17 resettlement sites, mainly along the Kapuas river, some 17,000 Madurese decided to accept. By mid-2002, the camps in Pontianak were empty.

While the resettlement sites offered a fresh start, problems of access to the sites – except by prohibitively expensive riverboat – and the lack of start-up funds to help the Madurese to buy agricultural tools, seeds and fertilizer, posed a serious threat to the success of the scheme.

In response to a request from the Indonesian government and in close consultation with the West Kalimantan provincial government, the local community and the Madurese themselves, IOM responded in September 2002 by launching a two-pronged micro-enterprise development project.

The project was designed to both improve river access to the resettlement sites and to provide small-scale income-generating opportunities for the IDPs. Better transport links for people and goods would not only give the IDPs better access to jobs in the city,

but would also facilitate trading opportunities for their agricultural produce.

IOM's solution was to set up Kapuas Bersatu, a 25-member cooperative comprised of men and women representatives from both the Madurese and host Malay communities, and to provide the cooperative with the riverboat that now travels the Kapuas river.

In addition to ferrying people and goods, the riverboat is occasionally hired by international NGOs to deliver food, medical and agricultural supplies to the IDPs, generating income for the cooperative.

Under the plan, IOM also set up IDP-managed loan groups for income generation in the settlements. The scheme, which will eventually also provide loans for local Malay families to build bridges between the communities, has already provided a total of 360 Madurese households with

US\$60 each as agricultural start-up capital.

The funding for both the riverboat and the seed capital is initially in the form of loans. If the repayments are on target during the first year of the project, the boat and the seed capital, including the payments and interest received, will be turned over to the beneficiaries.

But more donor funding is desperately needed if the scheme is to be a success. While the first US\$60 payment provided seeds and tools, a second US\$75 payment will be required this year to pay for fertilizers and other agricultural inputs needed to compensate for the poor soil in the settlements and ensure their survival.

**Marites de la Cruz, IOM Jakarta**

*The crew of the Kapuas Bersatu riverboat load passengers and medical supplies.*



### Migration Research Series

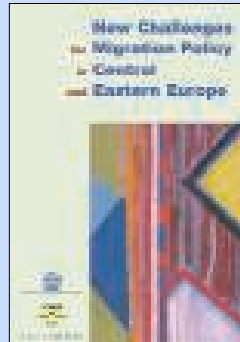


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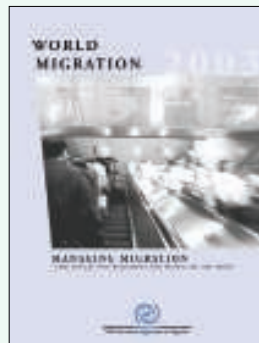


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