

## Children in Detention

### Home Office statistics reveal scandalous extent of detention of children

31 August 2009

The Control of Immigration: Quarterly Statistical Summary (April-June 2009), released by the Home Office, contains for the first time more comprehensive figures about children held in immigration detention.

Lisa Nandy, Policy Adviser at The Children's Society, and Amanda Shah, Assistant Director at Bail for Immigration Detainees, comment:

"The Home Office has taken a step in the right direction by releasing this statistical information, as, unbelievably, proper data on the number of children entering and leaving immigration detention has until now not been officially released. These children have therefore been hidden in an inhumane system which holds them without time limit in prison-like conditions.

The statistics do however reveal the scandalous extent of the detention of children for immigration purposes, and confirm our deep concerns about the way children are being detained. Twenty nine per cent of children were detained for over a month, contrary to Home Office policy that children are only detained for the shortest possible time.

**Fifty six per cent of detained children were released back to their communities in the UK, their detention having served no purpose other than wasting taxpayers' money and traumatising the children involved.**

**Children from countries such as Zimbabwe, Somalia and Sri Lanka were detained at a time when either the Home Office was not enforcing returns to those countries or when those countries were widely recognised to be in conflict.**

The Home Office must urgently reverse its policy of detaining children and families for immigration purposes."

#### Key statistics:

- 235 children entered detention in the first quarter of 2009; 180 (75%) were asylum detainees.
- A further 235 children entered detention in the second quarter of 2009; 155 (67%) were asylum detainees.
- 200 out of 235 children (85%) held in detention in the second quarter of 2009 were under 11 years old
- Only 100 of the 225 children who left detention in the second quarter of 2009 were removed i.e. 56 % were released back into the community, their detention having served no purpose.
- 29% of the 35 children in the snapshot data at the end of June 2009 were in detention for more than 29 days.

- Children from Zimbabwe, Somalia, Sudan and Sri Lanka, countries notorious for conflict and unrest, were detained during the second quarter of 2009

The statistics, issued by the Home Office, are available at:  
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/immig209.pdf>

### **Notes to Editors:**

For more information, please contact Rachael Bruce, The Children's Society, tel: 020 7841 4422 email [rdb@childsoc.org.uk](mailto:rdb@childsoc.org.uk)

### **Outcry! campaign**

The Children's Society and Bail for Immigration Detainees are currently campaigning to end the immigration detention of children and their families. Funded by the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, we are campaigning together under the banner OutCry! Sign up to the campaign by visiting [www.outcrycampaign.org.uk](http://www.outcrycampaign.org.uk)

### **The Children's Society**

The Children's Society is a leading children's charity committed to making childhood better for all children in the UK. Visit [www.childrenssociety.org.uk](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk)

### **Bail for Immigration Detainees**

Bail for Immigration Detainees is a human rights charity challenging immigration detention in the UK. It provides free legal advice to detained asylum seekers and migrants to help them secure their release and it campaigns to end arbitrary detention. Visit [www.biduk.org](http://www.biduk.org)

### **The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund**

The Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund continues the Princess' humanitarian work in the UK and overseas. By giving grants to organisations, championing charitable causes, advocacy, campaigning and awareness raising, the Fund works to secure sustainable improvements in the lives of the most vulnerable people in the UK and around the world. Visit [www.theworkcontinues.com](http://www.theworkcontinues.com)

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