



MIGRATION IN THE AMERICAS

International Organization for Migration

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IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. IOM is an inter-governmental organization composed of 118 Member States and 20 Observer States.

IOM's German Forced Labor Compensation Program to be Completed on 31 December

Marie Agnes Heine
IOM Geneva

Zofia G. was only 15 years old when Gestapo officers deported her together with her mother from Lublin, Poland to the German Reich in January 1940. For five years, the girl was forced to work 12 to 14-hour shifts on a farm in Thuringia. The cruel farmer beat her many times and almost killed her with a pitchfork. But Zofia survived, migrated to the United States in the 1950s and settled in Chicago.

The 81-year old lady is one of 90,000 former slave and forced laborers who were eligible for compensation under IOM's German Forced Labour Compensation Program (GFLCP) and who received payment.

By the end of 2006, this chapter on compensation for victims of the Nazi regime will be closed forever. After more than six years of arduous and persistent work by a dedicated team in the field and at IOM Headquarters in Geneva, this large program will be completed.

As one of seven partner organizations of the German Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future", IOM was responsible for processing claims and making payments to non-Jewish slave and forced laborers and victims of other personal injury

residing anywhere in the world except for the Czech Republic, Poland and the republics of the former Soviet Union. IOM also dealt with claims for certain property losses under the Nazi regime.

Since the expiration of the program's filing deadline on 31 December 2001, IOM has processed more than 400,000 claims for compensation for different categories of Nazi victims and has paid out more than US\$ 646 million in compensation awards to beneficiaries residing all across the globe. More than 19,000 beneficiaries reside in the Western Hemisphere; with more than 11,000 living in the United States.

IOM's efficient implementation of this compensation program, for which some victims had been waiting for more than 60 years, made a difference to the survivors of Nazi persecution and their heirs. 



Sample of an "Arbeitsbuch" (workbook) of a forced laborer under the Nazi regime.

IOM's Afghan Civilian Assistance Program

The IOM Regional Office in Washington recently hosted a discussion, led by Karoline Lund, IOM Program Manager in Afghanistan, on IOM's Afghan Civilian Assistance Program (ACAP).

Afghanistan has been experiencing a dramatic increase in anti-government activity, and Coalition Forces, NATO and the Afghan National Army have in turn have intensified their operations against the insurgents and the Taliban. The south, the east and the south-east have been the regions mainly affected.

ACAP was created by the U.S. Government to provide assistance for

Afghan families and communities that have suffered losses as a result of Coalition forces' and NATO military operations against insurgents.

The ACAP program is a continuation of the Leahy Initiative (US Senator Patrick Leahy) that IOM has implemented as part of the Afghan Transition Initiative since 2003.

Tim Rieser, Aid to Senator Patrick Leahy attended the presentation and explained, "This is not about handing out cash, it is about providing assistance of a variety of types so that people can rebuild their lives."

IOM ensures that communities are informed of the program. Karoline Lund added, "There is no paperwork in Afghanistan. If someone dies, there is no death certificate, so our contacts with the community and the local leaders are vital to provide help those who have suffered. Responding to the needs of these families and communities contributes to the overall stabilization of Afghanistan."

ACAP is liaising with key stakeholders, such as the Afghan Independent Human

Rights Commission, UNAMA, the U.S. and the Afghan governments, International Armed Forces and Afghan civilians, to ensure that networks are established to carry out the program.

The program is designed to have a no-fault nature, so that there is no focus on why or how the military forces have been involved in specific incidents. Its implementation is based on close cooperation and information sharing with military and civilian personnel in the Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

IOM develops sustainable assistance packages adjusted to the specific needs of the families. The assistance can include: vocational training and small business start up; construction materials; restoration of livelihoods; and reconstruction of buildings or small scale infrastructure vital for the community.

According to Lund the program owes much of its success to the IOM staff, "The IOM staff on the ground have been with IOM for a few years, so they have the expertise from working on different IOM programs, while at the same time they know the reality in the communities. They are honored and happy to provide this assistance."

The program is funded by USAID and is expected to received US\$3 million per year. 🇺🇸



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Community members gather as part of ACAP.

IOM
Washington
New Website

www.iom.int/unitedstates

IOM Washington launched its regional website in September. The new website provides information on regional projects, liaison with donors and other counterparts, upcoming events, and publications. It also contains contact information for IOM offices in North America and the Caribbean.

Global Dialogue on Migration is Launched

Alberto Cutillo
IOM Observer Mission to the
United Nations, New York

The High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (HLD) was held on 14 and 15 September at UN Headquarters in New York, and gathered some 130 high level participants from all parts of the world for an in-depth, thoughtful debate. It was the first time that the UN hosted a major discussion at the global level entirely devoted to migration, 12 years after the Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994.

The divisive North/South debate that many had feared did not take place; the pervasive message instead was a shared one: migration and development is an issue in which all have both a stake and a responsibility to work together.

Broad willingness to recognize the human rights connections when discussing migration was also acknowledged. Readiness to pursue a global multilateral debate on migration and development also emerged as a key message sent by the HLD. The UN Secretary-General put forward his proposal for the creation of a Global Forum on International Migration and

" The UN High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development opens up new avenues for international cooperation on migration."

Development and the Government of Belgium formally offered to host a first meeting of the Global Forum in July 2007.

Some aspects discussed at the HLD, however, need further definition, such as the role in this states-led initiative of the UN, of civil society, and of the

Global Migration Group (GMG) in substantively supporting the Forum. UN member states have debated the issue subsequently and have adopted in early December a Resolution of the General Assembly, where they take note with interest of the convening of a first meeting of the Global Forum and call, amongst other things, for a renewed discussion at the UN in 2008 on the appropriate follow-up to the HLD. Member states are therefore expected to actively take part in the Global Forum and other initiatives which will help prepare for the HLD follow-up debate.

As a result of IOM's strong engagement in and support to the HLD at all levels, including the many preparatory activities of member states, as well as the events organized during the HLD proper, the Organization was highly visible at this major global event and is committed to play an active role in the preparation of the first meeting of the Global Forum and any other major follow-up to the HLD. 

IOM Counter-Trafficking Training Modules

Amy Mahoney
IOM Washington DC

In January 2007, the IOM Counter-Trafficking Training Modules series is expanding with new topics on: Direct Assistance, Victim Identification and Interviewing Techniques, and Children.

Trainings on Information Campaigns, Cooperation and Networking, Return and Reintegration, Capacity Building have been available since 2005. And these will now be available in French and Spanish throughout IOM's global network.

The IOM Counter-Trafficking Training Modules consolidate IOM's global counter-trafficking experience into

practical "how to" trainings on key counter-trafficking topics. They're a comprehensive and cost effective tool offering a practical approach on issues relating to victims' protection and assistance. The Modules can be quickly adapted globally and translated for delivery at a modest cost through IOM Missions. Depending on location and available training staff, the cost for a training session is approximately US\$7,000 for 25 to 30 individuals. To date, some 700 persons in 25 countries have been trained using the Modules.

"The complexity of human trafficking requires targeted education and awareness-raising, training and capacity building at a variety of levels in order to develop an effective, multi-

pronged approach," said Richard Danziger, Head of IOM's Counter-Trafficking Division.

The Modules have been developed as training tools for target audiences with varying levels of knowledge. Each one begins with basic concepts and definitions related to human trafficking, including activities. The Modules trainings enhance understanding of some of the key elements necessary in building a comprehensive counter-trafficking strategy.

The IOM Modules are funded by the US Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.

For additional information please visit our website: www.iom.int/unitedstates 

IOM OBSERVES ECUADOR'S OUT OF COUNTRY VOTING

Maria Isabel Moncayo
IOM Ecuador

The 2006 presidential elections in Ecuador will go down in history as the first time Ecuadorians living abroad where able to vote. IOM served as International Observer of this important process.

Barcelona, Spain 6am: Sonia leaves her house in a hurry and runs to the subway. She's headed to the Vall D'Hebron Coliseum, where she and another 16,000 Ecuadorians living in Barcelona will vote for the President and Vice President in Ecuador.

At 7am the Ecuadorian Consul, José Nuñez, officially opens the electoral process. Long lines form in front of the polling station, and slowly, Ecuadorian citizens cast their ballots.

"I hope that things someday will improve in Ecuador," says Sonia, a 25-year old Ecuadorian who migrated to Spain six years ago. "I would like to return to my country and know that I will have better job opportunities; that's why I'm voting today."

On 26 November, Ecuadorians elected Rafael Correa as their new president. He will govern the country for the next four years, beginning January 2007.

For the first time, more than 84,000 Ecuadorians living abroad cast their votes, thanks to a combined effort of the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and the Ecuadorian Consulates. IOM staff performed the electoral observation process in the nine cities with the highest number of registered voters.

The first round took place on 15 October. IOM's team of observers were present in Madrid, Murcia and Barcelona in Spain; Milan, Rome and Genoa in Italy; as well as New York City and Newark in the United States.



Ecuadorian nationals eagerly wait in line to cast their vote.

For the second round, on 26 November, IOM was also present in the Venezuelan capital, Caracas.

Also, for both rounds, IOM observers were present in Quito where they verified the processing of the votes from around the world as they were transmitted to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal by fax and/or email. IOM also observed the process of confidentiality of the results, given the time difference with cities in Europe, which sent their results six to seven hours prior to the closing of the polls in Ecuador.

"IOM's observers reported that the Out of Country Voting was carried out without irregularities and in an orderly fashion," said Alejandro Guidi, IOM Chief of Mission in Ecuador. "The Ecuadorian authorities made great efforts during the second round to improve organization based on lessons learned from the first round."

During the first round, some problems were reported when large numbers of non-registered Ecuadorians attempted to vote. In Murcia, some 25 per-

sons suffered minor injuries following scuffles at busy polling stations.

"To avoid a repeat in the second round, timely information was disseminated by the consulates and the Supreme Electoral Tribunal regarding the rights and duties of Ecuadorian citizens abroad. This significantly reduced the number of non-registered voters who approached the polling stations," explained Guillermo Viera, an IOM observer in Murcia. Also, some election sites were moved to larger locations, which had better access for voters. In other cases, two elections sites were arranged for one city, in order to accommodate the large numbers expected.

Migration in Ecuador is not a recent phenomenon. Massive international migration began in the late nineties, as a consequence of the economic crisis that occurred, which reduced GNP by 30%. Today, more than two million Ecuadorians live abroad and their remittances have become the country's second largest source of income.

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For these reasons, the participation of the Ecuadorian diaspora became decisive for this latest elections. "If we consider this was the first time that Ecuador has undertaken out of country voting, we think both the electoral and consular functions were quite successful and we are satisfied

with the results," expressed Ambassador Carlos López Damm, Ecuador's Under Secretary of Migration.

"Taking part in this historical election process has been very important for IOM. We were able to be witness to

the success of the out of country voting, as well as the civic duty demonstrated by the Ecuadorian diaspora," concluded Guidi. 

Building Capacity to Manage Migration in the Caribbean

A regional seminar on Migration in the Caribbean was organized by IOM and hosted by the Government of the Netherlands Antilles 5 to 8 November, in Curacao.

Participants included government officials and experts from 21 Caribbean

governments, and representatives of observer governments and regional institutions.

The participants discussed the migration and development link, including migrant remittances and migration data; brain drain of health professionals and migrant's access to health; and facilitating the movement of persons while strengthening border security and preventing irregular migration and trafficking in persons.

IOM and Caribbean States are all concerned, from different perspectives, with the appropriate management of migration flows in the region. The Caribbean region is characterized by a very fluid internal movement of persons,

and by significant transit movement of non-Caribbean migrants. Lack of economic opportunities in many areas coupled with historical patterns of movement, and in some cases human rights abuses and disasters, are the main drivers influencing human migration from the Caribbean both within and outside the region.

"These seminars support the need for regional cooperation and have served to assist in identifying issues of common interest." - Government Participant

The IOM Regional Seminar was funded by the US State Department, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, and is a follow-up to IOM/UNHCR Joint Regional Seminars held in 2003, 2004 and 2005. 



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Participants discuss migration issues in the Caribbean.



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IOM Caribbean Regional Seminar 2006 Participants

IOM Assistance to the US Refugee Resettlement Program

Since its creation in 1951, IOM has assisted millions of refugees to start new lives in resettlement countries.

In 2006 IOM assisted more than 41,000 refugees in their resettlement process to the United States.

One of these groups is the Meskhetian Turks who were deported en masse in 1944 from Meskhetia (a region of the present-day Georgian Republic) to Soviet Central Asia and were subsequently forced to flee Central Asia when ethnic tensions erupted in the late 1980's. Those who managed to flee Central Asia and resettled in the Krasnodar Kray region of Russia were treated as illegal migrants by the local authorities and found it very difficult to legalize their status.

In 2004, the US Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM), in cooperation with

the Russian Government, offered voluntary third country resettlement in the United States to eligible Meskhetian Turks living in the Krasnodar Kray.

The IOM office in Moscow received and screened a total of 7,633 applications (some 22,900 persons) and provided assistance to applicants in meeting the program eligibility criteria and in preparing for their respective refugee status determination interviews. Officers of the Department of Homeland Security Citizenship & Immigration Services carried out the interviews and provided refugee status to 4,174 cases comprising a total of 12,607 Meskhetian Turks.

IOM Moscow is coordinating medical clearance, cultural orientation, resettlement arrangements, final clearance by the United States authorities and the actual departure and transportation of the refugees.

As of November 2006, a total of 10,493 Meskhetian Turks had arrived in the United States as part of the United States Refugee Program.

For more information on IOM's services to refugee resettlement programs, please visit the IOM website www.iom.int 

"For the first time in our lives we feel we are being treated with respect."

International Organization for Migration
1752 N St. NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036

September 18, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

About a year ago my family and I arrived in the United States from Russia. We were allowed to enter the country as refugees and are part of an ethnic group called the Meskhetian Turks. Today I am writing to thank you for helping to make our safe arrival in this country possible. On behalf of all my Meskhetian Turk friends, I express sincere gratitude for the opportunity you have given us to live in a free and safe environment. For the first time in our lives, we feel that we are being treated with respect. Our children can peacefully attend schools and plan for successful futures. Parents can work and provide for the needs of their families. We have been given a new chance in life, and for this we will always thank the government of the United States.

The simple but precious freedoms we now enjoy were beyond reach in the environment where we previously lived. We recognize them every day and will never take them for granted. We proudly display the American flag in our home and will do all we can to support this great country. We believe in the principles of this country and hope that it will always be the strongest nation on earth! Once again, please accept my heartfelt appreciation for helping us to come to the United States!

Warmest Regards,



Central American Women Unite to Fight Trafficking of Women

Agueda Marín
IOM Costa Rica

A groundbreaking two-day event held in early December in San Jose brought together female ministers members of the Central American Council of Women Ministries (COMMCA by its Spanish acronym), IOM counter trafficking experts, and the Central American Network of NGOs combating violence against women.

Recognizing that trafficking of women is yet another manifestation of gender violence, government and non-governmental participants agreed on guidelines for an action plan that will advance the systematic development of public policies to combat the trafficking of women.

The leadership of COMMCA also agreed to urge all Central American heads of state participating at the upcoming XXI Summit, scheduled to take place this month in Costa Rica, to include the trafficking of women, as a priority item in their regional political agenda.

Central America is faced with complex migration movements occurring into, through, and out of the region, with all countries reporting cases of human trafficking. Although there are no figures to quantify the exact magnitude, the num-

ber of victims of trafficking directly assisted by IOM and preliminary studies confirm that the region is one of origin, transit and destination for women and children trafficked for sexual exploitation. Also, there is evidence of trafficking from other continents for the manufacturing industry.

Although 80% of victims of trafficking worldwide are women and minors, the issue of trafficking of women still receives little attention in national and regional debates. IOM's regional statistics on return assistance for victims of trafficking indicate that women and minors represent more than 90% of all cases.

The causes and consequences of trafficking are different for women and men. Even though poverty affects men and women, sexual discrimination and violence are added in the case of women. Women with a history of family violence or sexual exploitation are more prone to be

trapped by human trafficking networks. During the migration process, women are controlled by exercising physical and sexual violence upon them.

In Central America, studies show that some 70% of migrant women suffer some kind of violence and 60% of them suffer sexual abuse during their migration route. Once they reach their destination, women are also subject to sexual violence, even in cases where the purpose of trafficking is not sexual exploitation. Unfortunately sexual violence is an effective way used by traffickers to subject victims to dependency, fear and servitude.

Understanding how trafficking stems and affects women different than men is crucial to identify and implement effective counter trafficking policies and programmatic and service options to provide assistance to the victims. 



Panelists discuss trafficking of women in Central America.

Document Examination and Intelligent Profiling in Trinidad and Tobago



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Participants of training session.

With more than 100,000 fans expected to travel to the Caribbean for the 2007 Cricket World Cup, IOM held ten days of training in December, for more than 100 immigration and law enforcement officers from Trinidad and Tobago and the Turks and Caicos.

The participants received intensive training in: fraudulent documents, counterfeiting, security features of passports, passport examination, evidence, detection of impostors, and risk profiling.

An important part of the course is a special session for training of trainers to enable Immigration Division officers

to continue the process in the months and years ahead.

This training is part of the IOM project in Port of Spain “Strengthening Technical Capacity in Trinidad & Tobago”, funded by the US State Department.

For more information contact: IOM Port of Spain, Tom Sinkovits, Email: tsinkovits@iom.int 

1 DECEMBER -- WORLD AIDS DAY



In commemoration of World AIDS Day, the International Organization for Migration, the Pan-American Health Organization and the World Bank (Youth AIDS Team) hosted a panel discussion and film screening of the award winning “edutainment” film *Wan Lobi Tori* a Surinamese Love Story.

The film uses a Romeo and Juliet-type love story to highlight the issues of stig-

ma and discrimination, in relation to HIV and AIDS in the Caribbean. The director depicted the relationship between two young people from different socioeconomic backgrounds who are confronted with an HIV-positive diagnosis. The story illustrates how the young couple deals with the diagnosis, telling their families, and how the family’s acceptance helped the young couple’s outlook on life with HIV.

The panelists spoke about the effectiveness of health communication

(edutainment) messages in conveying the dangers of HIV and AIDS. The use of public service announcements (PSAs) as a behavior change modifier was also discussed. To highlight this, IOM and PAHO previewed their recently developed PSA (“The Pharmacist”) created for the English-speaking Caribbean. 

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Editors: Erin Foster and Niurka Piñeiro

International Organization for Migration • 1752 N Street NW, Suite 700 • Washington, DC 20036

Tel: 202-862-1826 • Fax: 202-862-1879 • Email: mrfwashington@iom.int • Website: www.iom.int/unitedstates



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