

NO 'ETHNIC CHARTER FLIGHTS' STOP THE DEPORTATIONS!



An 'ethnic charter flight' to Nigeria is scheduled to leave London via Dublin at 6.00pm today. The plane has been specially booked by the UK Border Agency as a mass forcible deportation of more than 20 families with children as young as one year against their will. Anti-deportation campaigners are today holding protests today in London and Dublin as well as here in Cardiff.

As one of the 'white list' countries set out in the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, Nigerian asylum applications are almost automatically dismissed by the Home Office regardless of the merits and evidence supporting individual claims. Cases certified as 'manifestly unfounded' under the Fast Track system are often not examined properly and claimants do not have the right to in-country appeal against the Home Office decision. With charter flights, claimants do not even have time or adequate legal representation to seek a judicial review.

Many of today's deportees are victims of torture, rape and female genital mutilation. The arbitrary and inconsistent way in which the UK border agency acts toward migrants creates a huge amount of injustice:

- A mother-of-two, with her two young children says she is a victim of violent human trafficking but her injuries have not been examined by a medical expert.
- Kenneth Nwose Ubaka and two of his children, a human rights activists who fled Nigeria in 2005 after being tortured and shot by the Nigerian military police. His wife and their third child were absent when they were detained from their home in Sheffield by the immigration authorities. In a statement yesterday, Ubaka said: "My 12-year-old daughter has completely lost her mind and has been put on self-harm watch [in detention]. She has been psychologically tortured having not seen her mother for about 10 days. She is in great fear and has not eaten anything for the past 3 days."



Following a number of successful anti-deportation campaigns, the UK government is increasing resorting to the use of charter flights to deport refused asylum seekers outside the public gaze. This week alone, there are three such flights to Afghanistan, Cameroon and Nigeria, with another to Iraqi Kurdistan next week. Campaigners argue that deportation charter flights amount to 'collective expulsion', which is prohibited under Protocol 4 to the European Convention on Human Rights. The UK government signed the protocol in 1963 but is refusing to ratify it.

Nigeria: The legacy of colonialism

Nigeria was a British colony until 1960 and like much of Africa it was created as the arbitrary division of colonial possessions; even the name Nigeria was invented by the wife of the Colonial Governor General. Many of the current problems faced by people in the region are the direct result of exploitation and domination by British interests, both during the age of Empire and more recent capitalist neo-colonialism. Were it not for the systematic plundering of its wealth, Nigeria would have the potential to be a very rich and powerful state. Despite having abundant natural resources and being a major oil producer, poverty is a fact of life for the majority of people in this, the most populous country in Africa.



The political fallout of post-colonial reorganisation has led to military coups, brutal civil war and endemic corruption. The Human Rights Watch World Report 2008 for Nigeria states: "Widespread government corruption, political and intercommunal violence, police torture and other abuses continue to deny ordinary Nigerians their basic human rights...millions of Nigerians still lack access to basic health and education services".

UK Border control is a clumsy attempt to avoid the payback of conquest and exploitation, a refusal to acknowledge the victims of the crimes of empire. Those who have been dispossessed by imperialist domination are perfectly justified in following the flow of wealth back to Britain.



No Borders South Wales is part of a transnational network of autonomous groups advocating freedom of movement and equality for all. We encourage and support campaigns against deportation, detention and social control. We work on a non-hierarchical, anti-authoritarian basis, using consensus decision making. noborderswales.org.uk