

# Bail for Immigration Detainees

Challenging immigration detention in the United Kingdom



Annual Report 2005

# Chair's report

As Chair I am proud to be associated with BID and its considerable achievements in its aim to represent the un-represented and create the conditions necessary to end arbitrary detention

**In the report that follows you will, I hope, gain a sense of an organisation operating with enormous creativity and enthusiasm. After nearly 8 years of existence BID continues to challenge prevailing orthodoxies and expose and attack injustices.**

From the attack on the deficiencies of the legal aid system in 'Justice Denied' to the Bulletins produced for Zimbabweans which led to many obtaining bail themselves, BID's activities over the year have had a significant impact.

As an organisation we are enormously indebted to those who support us: our incredible staff (both paid and unpaid); our funders whose generosity enables us to operate in this hostile and difficult environment; and the huge reserve of goodwill and support from lawyers who often drop other work and go into court *pro bono* to fight for the right to liberty.

Nicola Rogers. Barrister,  
Garden Court Chambers.

**BiD** Bail for  
Immigration  
Detainees

...It seems to me to be infinitely preferable, in respect of a matter which concerns so fundamental a right as the right to individual liberty, that detention be authorised by a judge from the very outset. I accept, however, that the current system, providing the possibility of applying for bail, or judicial review, meets the criteria laid down by article 5 of the Convention. It is essential, however, that this possibility be a real and not a virtual one and here I have a number of doubts....

From my own experience in Dungavel, it was clear that those who did not have decent legal representation, of which there appeared to be plenty, had very little idea, if any at all, as to how they might begin to apply for bail. Many, no doubt, would in any case fail to satisfy the necessary bail criteria, without, for all that, their continued detention being justified...

Extracts from the Report by Alvaro Gil-Robles,  
Commissioner for Human Rights, on his visit to the  
United Kingdom, 4th - 12th November 2004

# Director's report

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." - **Margaret Mead**

**BID's annual report documents and photographs the action of BID, campaigners, activists and the detainees themselves resolutely challenging arbitrary detention. Over the past year we have succeeded in:**

- Training and supporting more detainees to present their own bail applications.
- Supporting specialist lawyers in attacking the detention policy of the Government.
- Publishing 'Justice Denied' – part of the campaign which led to more Government-funded legal representation for detainees.
- Continuing our casework fighting for liberty where no one else will do it – we have provided free bail applications for children, those with mental and physical health needs and detainees held in the unjust 'Fast Track Procedure'.

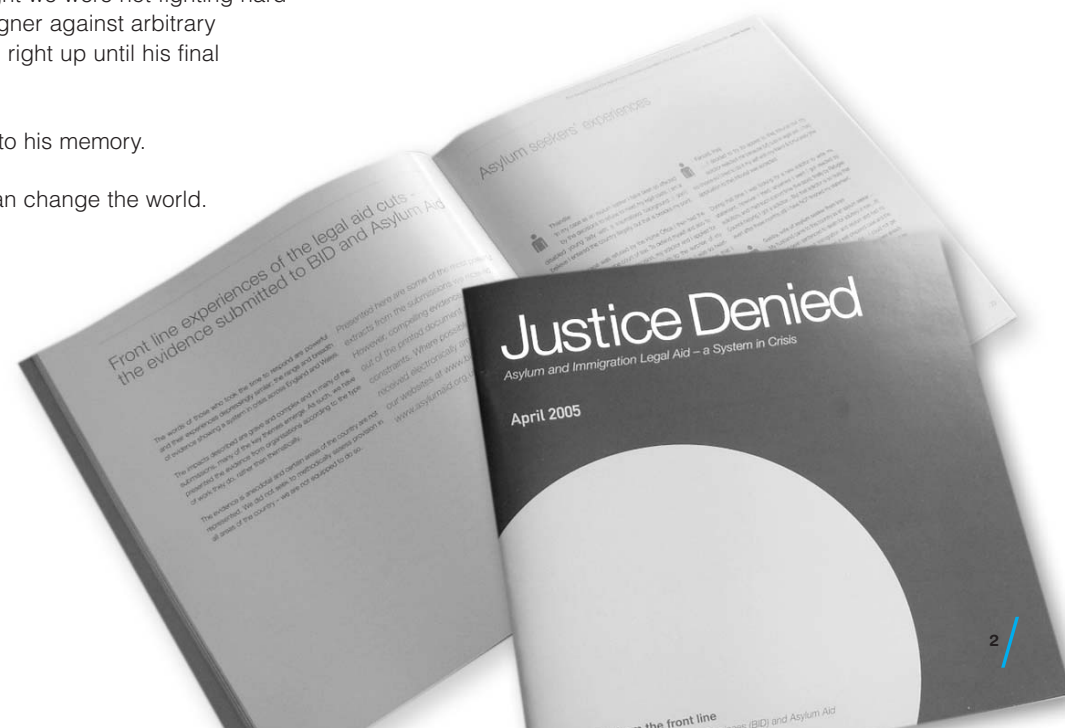
All this was carried out in the context of continued cuts in government funding for legal representation.

One of BID's staff died this year. Richard Green – from BID (South) – died on Sunday 6th November 2005. Richard had been suffering from MS for many years and was increasingly confined to a wheelchair. He was greatly loved, both for his huge enthusiasm for the work and his capacity to heap criticism on BID if he thought we were not fighting hard enough! He was a great campaigner against arbitrary detention and carried on fighting right up until his final admission to hospital.

We dedicate this Annual Report to his memory.

Thoughtful, committed people can change the world.

**Tim Baster.**





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**Bail for Immigration Detainees (BID) believes that asylum seekers and migrants in the UK have a right to liberty and should be protected from arbitrary and prolonged detention by effective and accessible legal safeguards.**

**BID is an independent charity which aims to:**

- improve access to bail for all immigration detainees.
- ensure that detention is subject to regular, independent, automatic review.
- end arbitrary detention in the United Kingdom.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in their 'Comments on the 2005 Immigration and Nationality Bill' express concern at "the current lack of judicial oversight in detention decisions", stating that "...UNHCR considers that the burden - both substantive and procedural - should be on the immigration authorities to substantiate the necessity and proportionality of an individual's detention, rather than on the asylum seeker to demonstrate the grounds on which he or she should be released"

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# The Political Climate that BID operates in

The issue of detention has been high on the political agenda with detention levels increasing to over 2,700 detention spaces within Immigration Removal Centres.

Legal aid cuts introduced in April 2004 have further reduced the capacity of the legal profession to offer a service to detainees.

The Government also announced plans to introduce fast tracking for cases of "single women" at Yarl's Wood removal centre.

Since May 2005, more than 100 women's asylum claims have been 'fast tracked' at Yarl's Wood, undermining access to justice for women survivors of rape and abuse who had sought sanctuary in the UK.

The United Kingdom continues to detain men, women and children for indefinite periods of time without automatic access to the courts. There is no automatic right to be assisted by competent and effective legal representatives. Many detainees continue to have no lawyers to defend them.

The numbers of those in immigration detention continue to rise.



Harmondsworth Detention Centre ©Isabelle Merminod

The Government's Five Year Strategy for asylum and immigration published by the Home Office on 7th February 2005 set out plans to ".... move towards the point where it becomes the norm that those who fail can be detained."

# Bail Casework

“Information on bail and how to apply for this is vitally needed. It was clear that some solicitors are exploiting the situation around bail to extract significant fees just to prepare applications...” From ‘Conclusions of and recommendations made to the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner’, presented by independent consultants, OISC Annual Report, 31 March 2005

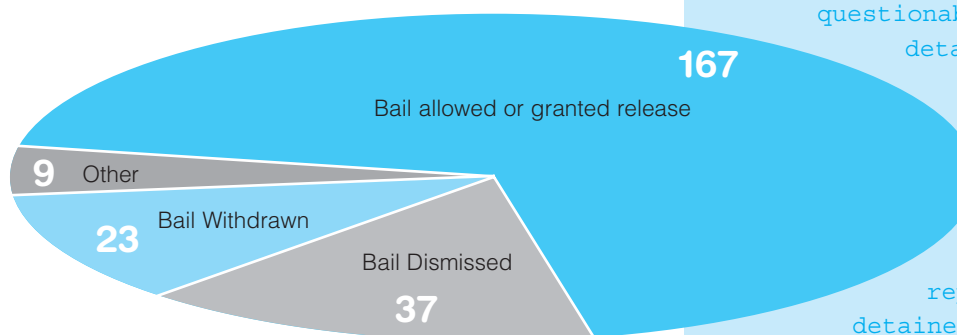
**BID represented in 236 cases, securing release for 167 detainees between 31st July 2004 and 1st August 2005.**

As referral to government funded lawyers became increasingly difficult, BID had to take on more and more of the preparation of the immigration case. This included country research, doctors reports, and taking statements.

BID has three offices – London, Portsmouth and Oxford. Detainees can ring us directly and ask for help.

**1,160 detainees contacted BID for help.**

Those we were able to assist were accepted and we did all we could to obtain their release.



Half of the detainees at Haslar had no legal representative and the standard of advice available to those who did have representation was sometimes questionable... Only half of the detainees who responded to our pre-inspection survey said that they had a legal representative, and less than a quarter had had a visit from their representative. Half the detainees who responded had been detained at Haslar for more than a month, and were likely to have been detained elsewhere prior to their arrival.

Report on an announced inspection of Haslar Immigration Removal Centre 9 -14 May 2005 by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

# Right to Liberty (Outreach) Project

This project trains detainees to prepare and present their own bail applications when they do not have lawyers to do so.

## The Right to Liberty Project empowers detainees with the tools to challenge their detention.

Detainees started fighting back in greater numbers – at least 150 that we know of (over 100 detainees were successful in getting bail or temporary admission). Many more detainees went to court than are noted in our statistics as our Notebooks on Bail are now in three languages and are kept in the libraries of all detention centres.

We also published legal bulletins to help detainees in court.

BID set up new workshops in Colnbrook, Campsfield and Dover Immigration Removal Centres.

### Final Right to Liberty Statistics for all Bid \*

|               |   |              |    |
|---------------|---|--------------|----|
| Algeria       | 2 | Ivory Coast  | 1  |
| Angola        | 1 | Jamaica      | 18 |
| Burundi       | 2 | Liberia      | 4  |
| Cameroon      | 3 | Malawi       | 1  |
| Chad          | 2 | Nigeria      | 18 |
| Congo (Br)    | 1 | Pakistan     | 5  |
| Congo (DRC)   | 8 | Sierra Leone | 4  |
| Dominican Rep | 1 | South Africa | 4  |
| Eritrea       | 2 | Tanzania     | 1  |
| Ethiopia      | 1 | Uganda       | 2  |
| Gambia        | 1 | Zambia       | 1  |
| Georgia       | 1 | Zimbabwe**   | 60 |
| Ghana         | 2 |              |    |
| Guinea        | 2 |              |    |
| Iran          | 1 |              |    |
| Iraq          | 6 |              |    |
|               |   | <b>156</b>   |    |

## The Right to Liberty Project results were as follows

|              |           |             |           |           |           |
|--------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Allowed bail | <b>85</b> | TA/CIO bail | <b>18</b> | Dismissed | <b>53</b> |
|--------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|

TA = Temporary Admission  
CIO = Chief Immigration Officer

\* Right to Liberty Project Statistics for Bid (Including all offices, Zimbabwean cases and the Outreach Database (31 July 2004 – 1 August 2005)

\*\* This is an estimate of total numbers. Probably far less than actually went to court using BID material.

"...thank you for the marvellous work that you and the rest of the BID team did for me and the rest of my Zimbabwean colleagues while in detention to ensure our release. The advice that you gave us and the courses/workshops you ran in the detention centres made our release possible..." EN was released after 3 months of detention (and is now looking to start his PhD in Public International Law!)

# Legal Bulletins for detainees

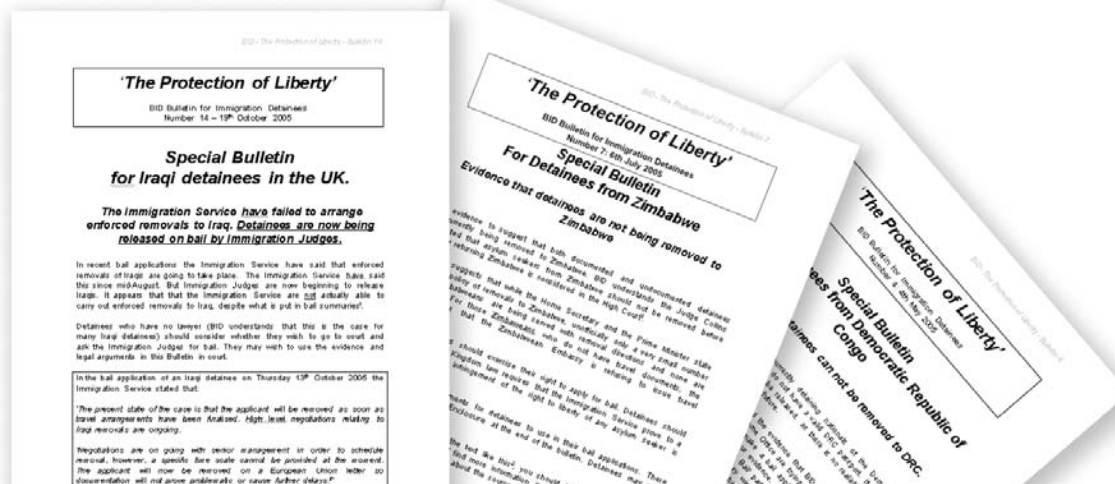
## Protection of Liberty

**BID created an important new way of challenging detention by preparing Legal Bulletins on Iraq, Congo (DRC), Liberia and Zimbabwe. Bulletins provide detainees with legal arguments and evidence to use in their bail hearings.**

For example, during July and August, BID produced four separate Legal Bulletins for Zimbabwean detainees presenting their own bail applications. A large number of Zimbabwean detainees went to court and most were released using the Bulletins over that month. Eventually the Refugee Legal Centre (with a BID staff member seconded to them) successfully challenged the removal of all Zimbabweans.



Detention Centre ©Isabelle Merminod



Ex Lindholme Removal Centre  
BID

Re: Thanks  
I would like to thank you for your assistance in my bail application which was successful. The Judge immediately pronounced my freedom hardly a minute into the hearing for a personal recognisance of £50(fifty pounds). I am giving copies of Bulletin 9 & 10 to fellow Zimbabweans to help them assist bail applications for their loved ones who might be in detention. I will appreciate you sending me any relating literature in future. Once again thank you very much. Your assistance is invaluable



# The Detained Families Project

BID's position on the detention of families with children is very simple: the detention of children is morally offensive and should stop immediately. We oppose it completely and without reservation.

**BID represented 28 children from 19 families (included in our casework statistics) in the last year. We obtained release for 20 of the children – 8 were removed with their families.**

Between October 2004 and February 2005, BID's Policy and Research Officer acted as policy advisor to Save the Children during research on the detention of families and age-disputed children. This work included providing policy information, guidance and case-study material. The final report *No Place for a Child – Children in UK immigration detention: impacts, alternatives and safeguards* was published in February 2005, and includes 16 case studies from BID's work.

BID is currently working with the Refugee Council and Save the Children on a public campaign against the detention of children. BID is also working with specialist lawyers to legally challenge the policy of detaining children.

It is imperative...that any decision to detain children be taken by a judicial authority, capable of independently weighing up all the relevant considerations. I do not believe that the possibility of applying for review satisfies this condition - certainly not in practice, as I have noted, but not in principle either. It is perverse that the burden should lie on the child or his family to take arduous steps to challenge their detention, rather than on the Immigration Service to prove its continuing necessity to an independent authority. A system minimally in conformity with the rights of the children would, in my view, require the Immigration service to seek the authorisation of a judge, with a periodic, judicial review of the continuing justification for detention.

**Extracts from the Report by Alvaro Gil-Robles, Commissioner for Human Rights, on his visit to the United Kingdom, 4th - 12th November 2004**



# Bail for detainees on 'fast track'

The 'Fast Track' Procedure is a cynical and largely successful attempt to deprive asylum seekers of effective, competent legal representation and to extend the use of arbitrary detention in the UK.

**People seeking asylum in the UK are detained on arrival. They are interviewed and refused, often without legal help, in a matter of a few days. If they appeal, they often have to go to court without legal representation. Not surprisingly the majority are unsuccessful.**

Many detainees are rushed through the fast track procedure and then spend months in detention, as they cannot be removed.

In June 2005, BID began working on a small sample of twelve Fast Track cases over a three-month period (included in our casework statistics).

Using a mixture of self-representation, bail casework and applications for temporary admission, we obtained liberty for 8 detainees – two Liberians, two Congolese, two Cameroonians and a Ugandan – in the space of six weeks. Due to the rush of work on Zimbabwe in July we had to slow down on this pilot project.

We have since recommenced the work. As the Government extends 'fast track', BID will be putting more resources into challenging it.



*Campaigning outside Dungavel @Isabelle Merminod*

# Legal Representation for detainees

The fight for competent, effective and government-funded legal representation over the last year.

**BID should not have to exist. It is completely unacceptable that the UK fails to fund effective and competent legal representation for those it detains.**

In September 2005 – after prolonged campaigning pressure and public criticism – the Legal Services Commission, quoting BID's work, finally announced that they were going to start a pilot project providing Government funded legal advice in detention centres.

Unfortunately, the legal representatives are still bound by the 'merits test' (which forbids solicitors to represent asylum seekers and migrants if the chance of success is less than 50%).

We believe that this will mean that most detainees are still unable to obtain competent and effective legal representation.

There are two key areas where we have been concerned about access to legal advice for some time, namely advice for those in detention... Other reports recently published by Bail for Immigration Detainees (BID), Asylum Aid and Amnesty International all suggest an increasing number of detainees without access to legal advice.....at Harmondsworth where all fast track clients have a duty representative at the beginning of the process, the number of applications for bail is staggeringly low despite the fact that many clients are detained there for long periods of time.

Immigration Policy Team Legal Services  
Commission: Discussion Paper for Stakeholder  
Meeting 11/10/05



Banners outside a detention centre  
©Isabelle Merminod

# Working with specialist lawyers

BID works with specialist lawyers to advance the rights of detainees. We see this as a powerful method of employing our casework information to challenge arbitrary detention in the UK.

## The Court upholds the right of detainees to pursue civil actions for unlawful imprisonment!

BID and the Immigration Law Practitioners Association (ILPA) were given permission to intervene in the case of ID in the Court of Appeal. The case was successful and the Court ruled that false imprisonment actions can continue to be brought against detention under immigration powers.

In the judgment, Brooke LJ stated “The evidence of the interveners showed...that when the Home Office determined to embark on the policy of using powers of administrative detention on a far larger scale...the practical implementation of that policy threw up very understandable concerns in individual cases...”.

The court found that “so long as detention, which may cause significant suffering, can be directed by executive decision and the order of a court... is not required ...I see no reason why the claim of an immigrant deprived of his liberty by an unlawful decision of an immigration officer should go uncompensated by reasons of practical concerns about administrative convenience.”

## NASS Hard Cases Unit finally agree to offer accommodation for detained asylum seekers without appeal rights.

NASS accommodation had not been available prior to the bail application for those seeking bail before the immigration courts who had no outstanding appeal. This created a ‘Catch 22’ situation in which detainees failed to obtain bail because they had no address to go to – but were not eligible to apply before bail was granted. At the request of the Refugee Legal Centre, BID argued that this should be a matter for the court but, by the end of the February 2005, the Home Office had refused to accept any evidence put forward. However, the Hard Cases Unit changed its policy and was granting accommodation for these detainees.

## Zimbabwe is unsafe!

BID seconded its Right to Liberty Manager to the Refugee Legal Centre to assist in preparing statements for the successful case in which the courts stopped the removals of all Zimbabwean asylum seekers.



Memorial outside Yarl's Wood for Manuel Bravo who committed suicide in detention. @Isabelle Merminod



# Policy, Research and Public Meetings

Policy, Research and Public Meetings continued to be central to our work.



*Speakers at the meeting fighting deportations ©Isabelle Merminod*

**'They took me away – women's experiences of immigration detention in the UK'** was published jointly with Asylum Aid in September 2004. It was launched at a parliamentary meeting in October 2004. Women who had been detained spoke powerfully about their experiences, and the meeting and report together helped to achieve a higher profile for women's rights and needs in detention.

**'Fit to be detained? Challenging the detention of asylum seekers with health needs'** by BID was published in May. The report is based on the cases of 13 adults and 3 children with health needs, held in UK prisons and IRCs for periods ranging from 40 to 720 days (an average of 250 days)

Between October and March 2005, BID's policy and research officer worked one day a week at Amnesty International to assist with the writing of a report on immigration detention. The report, **'Seeking asylum is not a crime'**, was published in June 2005 and includes interviews with a number of former BID clients.

**'Justice Denied - Asylum and Immigration Legal Aid - a System in Crisis'** Published jointly with Asylum Aid in April 2005, the report is based on information from 78 organisations and individuals and concludes that there is a severe shortage of good quality advice and representation available to asylum seekers and migrants. The report was launched at the Centre for the Study of Human Rights at the LSE in April 2005 and the event was attended by over 150 people. A press launch after the election achieved coverage on the Today Programme, local radio, and in several newspapers.

**'Deaths in immigration detention and violent deportations to dangerous countries'** On 19 October 2005, BID set up a meeting to discuss and organise against the government's policy of removing asylum seekers to countries like Iraq, Zimbabwe, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. There were speakers from the Institute of Race Relations, INQUEST, Zimbabwean and Iraq human rights activists, asylum-seekers and former detainees, women from the Black Women's Rape Action Project, and representatives of Ugandan women hunger strikers from Yarl's Wood IRC.

**'New evidence of abuse, halt all DRC deportations'**

A BBC World Service investigation broadcast on 1st December, confirmed that asylum seekers who are returned to Kinshasa risk being detained without trial in the country's death trap prisons. BID joined with the National Coalition of Anti Deportation Campaigns and JCWI to call an emergency meeting in the Commons. Speakers included the journalist from the BBC World Service, Human Rights Watch, Congolese Society, BID and Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants.

**Imprisoned: the damaging effects of immigration** BID, Detention Advice Service and Asylum Aid supported this successful photographic exhibition by the photographer Isabelle Merminod detailing suicides, the detention of children and the mentally ill in a powerful and uncompromising exhibition of photographs accompanied by testimony and reports. Many of the photographs in this annual report come from this exhibition. Launched by Yasmin Alibhai-Brown and the Chief Inspect of Prisons, Ann Owers. The message was horribly reinforced by the suicide of Bereket Yohannes, a 26 year-old from Eritrea, in Harmondsworth the day after it was opened.

# Financial Information

The financial information below has been extracted from the full audited financial statements of Bail for Immigration Detainees for the year ended 31 July 2005, on which the auditors, Michael Bell & Co issued an unqualified audit opinion.

## Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 July 2005

|                                                                 | Unrestricted Funds<br>£ | Restricted Funds<br>£ | 2005 Total<br>£ | 2004 Total<br>£ |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Incoming Resources</b>                                       |                         |                       |                 |                 |
| Grants and Donations                                            | 4,111                   | 0                     | 4,111           | 6,572           |
| Income of Charitable Activities                                 | 66,500                  | 124,868               | 191,368         | 174,627         |
| Investment Returns                                              | 6,935                   | 0                     | 6,935           | 4,639           |
| Other Income                                                    | 7,676                   | 0                     | 7,676           | 9,560           |
|                                                                 | 85,222                  | 124,868               | 210,090         | 195,398         |
| <b>Resources Expended:<br/>Charitable Expenditure</b>           |                         |                       |                 |                 |
| Direct Expenditure                                              | 17,428                  | 100,238               | 117,666         | 125,337         |
| Support Expenditure                                             | 61,635                  | 15,998                | 77,633          | 56,269          |
| Management and Administration                                   | 1,995                   | 7,000                 | 8,995           | 2,402           |
|                                                                 | 81,058                  | 123,236               | 204,294         | 184,008         |
| Surplus/(deficit) on ordinary activities before funds transfers | 4,164                   | 1,632                 | 5,796           | 11,390          |
| Transfers between funds                                         | 5,000                   | (5,000)               | 0               | 0               |
| Balance brought forward                                         | 57,326                  | 71,495                | 128,821         | 117,431         |
| <b>Total Funds at 31st July 2005</b>                            | <b>66,490</b>           | <b>68,127</b>         | <b>134,617</b>  | <b>128,821</b>  |

## Balance Sheet at 31st July 2005

|                                     | 2005<br>£      | 2004<br>£      |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Fixed Assets</b>                 |                |                |
| Tangible Fixed Assets               | 3,222          | 3,080          |
| <b>Current Assets</b>               |                |                |
| Debtors                             | 7,161          | 6,490          |
| Cash at bank and in hand            | 140,451        | 126,612        |
|                                     | 147,612        | 133,102        |
| <b>Creditors</b>                    |                |                |
| amounts falling due within one year | 16,217         | 7,361          |
|                                     | 131,395        | 125,741        |
| <b>Net Assets</b>                   | <b>134,617</b> | <b>128,821</b> |
| <b>Funds</b>                        |                |                |
| General Funds -                     |                |                |
| Total Unrestricted Funds            | 66,490         | 57,326         |
| Restricted Funds                    | 68,127         | 71,495         |
|                                     | 134,617        | 128,821        |

Full, audited financial statements are available from Bail for Immigration Detainees, 28 Commercial Street, London E1 6LS.

**The people and organisations that we have worked with over the year. BID has always valued co-operation with other groups in the sector. Our collective work has vastly improved the capacity of the sector to fight for the rights of detainees.**

**Association of Visitors of Immigration Detainees** with whom we worked in relation to the welfare of detainees

**London Detainees Support Group** with whom we worked, and continue to work, attacking the detention of asylum-seekers in the fast track procedure in Harmondsworth. We also work together on cases of severely ill people who should not be in detention at all

**Asylum Welcome** in Oxford refer cases to us for bail. They work closely with staff at the office in Oxford

**Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group** also refer cases to BID for bail applications

**Haslar Visitors Group** refer cases to BID and there are strong links between the two organisations –most of staff at BID(South) are – or have been – active visitors as well

**Asylum Aid** with whom we published 'Justice Denied' and jointly supported the photographic exhibition on the damaging effects of detention in the Spitz Gallery held in January 2006

**Joint Council for the Welfare of Refugees** who worked with us on the meeting about the danger of return to the Democratic Republic of Congo

**Immigration Law Practitioners Association** with whom we worked on amendments to the new bill

**Detention Advisory Service** with whom we jointly supported the photographic exhibition on the damaging effects of detention in the Spitz Gallery held in January 2006

**Chinese Information and Advice Centre** who helped with interpretation for Chinese clients in the bail workshops run by BID

**Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture** to which we have referred cases and worked alongside in meetings with the Home Office

**Medecins sans Frontieres (MSF)**. We worked with MSF in their pilot project looking at the detention of mentally or physically ill detainees

**Refugee Arrivals Project**. Has helped us time and again – including finding accommodation for a pregnant woman bailed on to the street

**Refugee Children's Consortium**. BID has been involved in the Refugee Children Consortium since its inception

**Refugee Council**. BID works with the Refugee Council challenging policy and attempting to extract undertakings from IND officials

**Refugee Council Children's Panel**. The Panel refers disputed minors to BID

**Tamil Welfare Association** who has worked with us interpreting in workshops

**Amnesty International**. Our policy and research manager worked on the Amnesty report 'Seeking asylum is not a crime'. This was published in June 2005 and includes interviews with a number of former BID clients

**Human Rights Watch**. A senior researcher spoke with BID and JCWI on the safety of Congolese being returned to Kinshasa

**The Refugee Legal Centre** with whom we worked on the Zimbabwe cases

**Former Detainees** who have spoken at meetings and refused to remain silent

**INQUEST** with whom we campaigned against returns to DRC and against deaths in detention

**Black Women's Rape Action Project** who spoke at the meeting campaigning against returns to the DRC

**National Coalition of Anti Deportation Campaigns** with whom we campaigned against removals

**Solicitors** who we worked with over the year on many different cases

**Medical Justice** campaigning against poor medical care in detention centres

I would like to support BID's work in defending the rights of immigration detainees

|           |
|-----------|
| Name:     |
| Address:  |
|           |
| Postcode: |
| Email:    |

I want to make a donation of



Please make cheques payable to:  
'Bail for Immigration Detainees'

*giftaid it*

If you are a UK taxpayer, BID can claim back 28p for every £1 you donate, making your donation worth a third more at no extra cost to you. As long as the amount of tax you pay in a year is equal to or greater than the tax that BID claims back, you will qualify.

Yes, I am a UK taxpayer and I want my donations to BID to be Gift Aid donations until I notify otherwise. This applies to all donations I have made since 6 April 2000 and I make from now on.

*We are committed to spending your money wisely.*

**BiD** Bail for  
Immigration  
Detainees

28 Commercial Street, London E1 6LS  
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Email: info@biduk.org Registered Charity No. 1077187

# Support us!

Become a supporter or make a donation to our work...



- In 1998, around 800 asylum seekers and migrants were detained under Immigration Act powers at any one time. By September 2005, 2220 people who had at some stage claimed asylum in the UK were detained.
- Many detainees have no, or very poor, legal representation and many experience great difficulty in accessing an independent review of their detention by way of a bail application. HM Inspectorate of Prisons has drawn attention to the fact that "access to competent and independent legal advice is becoming more, not less, difficult as fewer private practitioners offer legally aided advice and representation."
- 35 girl children and 40 boy children were locked up in detention centres on September 24th 2005, according to the Home Office statistical snapshot.
- Harmondsworth Immigration Removal Centre (IRC), near Heathrow airport, is one of the largest centres. It is run by UK Detention Services, which is owned by Sodhexo - a multinational company, based in France, which runs prisons world-wide and previously managed the asylum voucher scheme until protests forced it to be scrapped.
- In the UK there are ten centres used to detain migrants and asylum seekers, with a total capacity of 2724 places.
- Immigration detainees are also held in criminal prisons – 170 people (8.5% of the total) were held in prisons at the last official count.
- Detention is without limit of time, and can be for prolonged periods (official snapshot figures for the end of June 2005 show more than 20% of detainees had been detained for more than three months, and for up to more than a year in 55 cases).



Front Cover:  
Woman Protester outside Dungavel detention centre  
© Isabelle Merminod



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