



National Gathering update

A call-out has been made for a gathering of UK NoBorders groups in February 2008. The network has just entered a new phase of activity with a successful international camp and demonstration at Tinsley House, actions against the construction of Brook House, and co-ordinated blockades of immigration 'snatch squads'. We think now is the time to assess the past few months and to discuss strategies and tactics for the months ahead. Manchester NoBorders has thus agreed to host **a gathering of active NoBorders groups from 15-17 February in Manchester**. We propose that groups can arrive from the afternoon of Friday 15 February for an informal evening of entertainment, so that Saturday and Sunday can be spent in meetings. Several groups (Bristol, Brighton, Oxford, Leeds, London, Nottingham) have confirmed these dates, but we would still like to hear from other ones.

Please email us with suggestions for agenda items and other queries...

manchesternoborders@riseup.net

Day of action: Dawn raids stopped by No Borders groups

18 December 07

On Tuesday 18 December in the early morning hours, activists from the No Borders network, blocked the paths of immigration snatch squads in Glasgow, Bristol, Newcastle, Manchester and Portsmouth. No Borders groups aimed to prevent Immigration Enforcement Officers from staging dawn raids, in which families are often rounded up in preparation for removal to countries from which they have been forced to flee. Later that morning the activities of the Home Office in London were disrupted too.

Dawn raids are used to gain custody of whole families in order to imprison them. Every day, doors are kicked in and families are snatched from their beds and taken to detention centres, where they are punished for seeking refuge in this country. They are taken away from their houses, jobs, schools and communities – their lives. Immigration Enforcement Officers come in the middle of the night as the children and their parents sleep in bed, and have not left to go to school or work. It also ensures no witnesses are present. There are no official statistics as to the number and regularity of these raids because the government will not release the figures. But the fleets of vehicles which have been blockaded this morning and the harrowing personal accounts of families indicate large-scale capacity. With this day of action the No Borders network has highlighted just a few of these bases, which are hidden around the country.

Glasgow

Glasgow Reporting Centre at Brand Street was shut down No Borders activists and friends from the Unity Centre locked on to the gates and put up a tripod blocking the vehicle entrance much to the frustration of a 'dawn raid' team that arrived at 5.30 to raid a family's home. 4 people were arrested.

Bristol

In Bristol, activists arrived in time to lock onto vehicles, and a police officer was overheard confirming that a dawn raid had been planned. No arrests were made.

Portsmouth

10 No Borders members targeted the Border and Immigration Agency offices at Norman House in Portsmouth. 3 activists locked on with arm tubes to gates, preventing the movement of one of the BIA vans with blackened windows that was due out on a dawn raid that morning. The fence was draped with a banner declaring "No Borders. No Nations. No One Is Illegal."

Newcastle

Newcastle activists dressed in Santa outfits and four people locked onto the gates and used arm

tubes to prevent vehicles from leaving the car parks. Their banner read "Santa says No, No, No to snatches!"

Manchester

In Manchester, a group of activists targeted the Group 4 Securicor (G4S) enforcement teams in Salford. G4S operates 'snatch squads' from Greater Manchester's immigration reporting centre at Dallas Court They used a motorbike chain to lock shut the gate at Dallas Court, preventing the snatch teams from leaving the premises. They also hung a banner reading "Caution snatch squads – we are watching you".

London

Five people from refugee support groups including No Borders London managed to successfully blockade the front entrance of the Home Office headquarters on Marsham Street in London. Within seconds they small group unfurled a banner reading "No Child is illegal; Child Detention is a Crime!" and one individual secured the two main doorways off with "Police, Do Not Cross" tape.

Security appeared, demanded they move and ordered this journalist no to take photographs. The blockade lasted long enough to cause some disruption and allowed time to send the message out that child deportation and detention was illegal.



Campsfield IRC anniversary demonstration

24 November 07

60 to 70 protesters rallied outside the gates of Campsfield detention centre in Oxfordshire.

In November 1993 Campsfield opened with the bussing-in of detainees from the detention huts at Harmondsworth. Now, 14 years later, thousands of innocent people have been detained in Campsfield without charge or conviction, without time limit and without judicial oversight. And since

then the huts of Harmondsworth detention centre have been replaced by the huge new detention centres, Colnbrook and Kalyx, and eight others have opened, among them Yarl's Wood, Europe's largest.

The protest demanded the closure of Campsfield and all detention centres, the end of deportations and freedom of movement for all.

GEO detention profiteers shut down

30 November 07

It took just four activists to shut down the national head offices of GEO, the company which manages Campsfield detention centre in Oxfordshire, for a day.

Despite the poor publicity, the company had clearly heard that a noise demo was planned outside their Reading offices.

The protestors made a pleasant racket with drums in front of the office's ground floor windows and handed out leaflets to security, passers-by and police.

They soon grew suspicious after peering through the office blinds only to see darkened rooms, and were informed by the hired security that GEO's workers had been told not to come in for the day.

Harmondsworth 4

In November 2006 detainees at Harmondsworth immigration detention centre protested against conditions inside the centre and their treatment by the guards. The centre was damaged and the detainees were moved to other detention centres and prisons.

Three detainees were charged with criminal damage and a further detainee was charged with conspiracy to cause criminal damage. The trial of the four men will open on 7 January 2008 and a demonstration will take place at Southwark Crown Court from 9am onwards.

Angel Group protest in Leeds

7 December 07

30 people joined a demonstration outside the offices of Angel Group on 7 December calling for its closure. The protest was organised by The United Refugee Organisation and supported by Leeds No Borders and a number of refugee community organisations. Angel Group make massive profits providing accommodation for asylum seekers.

In a press statement the United Refugee Organisation said "Angel group are a company paid to provide accommodation for asylum seekers. The Angel group is one of the main contractors with the Home Office for accommodation of asylum seekers in the

UK. Since last year we have had many complaints about them".

Developments after the demo show Angel group in a less than angelic light. The organiser from the United Refugee Organisation is an asylum seeker living in Angel group accommodation. Soon after the demo he received two phone calls from the housing provider criticising him for holding a demo and for speaking out against them. Angel group staff then turned up at his house while he was out and led themselves into the building to 'check the electricity'!

Asylum Airways

According to newspaper reports, a company specialising in removing failed asylum-seekers is to approach the Government with plans to use specially adapted aircraft to deport 'disruptive' refugees. Asylum Airways, run by an Austrian aviation consultant with ties to British security firms, will operate aircraft for European countries which do not wish to use established airlines for the forced removal of asylum-seekers.

The planes will have specially designed seats so that the 'passengers' can be strapped down and restrained by guards. A deal could save the Government millions of pounds compared with the piecemeal contracts it has negotiated with dozens of airlines as well as reduce the number of aborted deportations.

Figures released under the Freedom of Information Act show that the removal of hundreds of asylum-seekers each year has to be cancelled because of 'disruptive behaviour'. But this can include medical problems as well as complaints from passengers.