



*The Nuffield Foundation and the International Association of Refugee Law Judges*

**Roundtable Seminar: “Asylum Adjudication and Country Guidance: Function, Operation, and Future”**

The seminar will be held on **Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2009 at 1pm (lunch from 12pm) at the Nuffield Foundation, 28 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3JS\***

The seminar has been convened to:

- bring together stakeholders (judges, government agencies, representatives, academics, and others) to discuss issues concerning the development and operation of the country guidance system of the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal;
- consider and discuss how the operation of the country guidance system might be enhanced or improved and to consider its possible future development; and
- consider the possible viability of the UK’s country guidance system serving as a model for asylum decision-making systems in other countries and in the EU context.

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\* **Please note:** Due to the constraints of our listed Georgian building, we are unable to provide access or facilities for wheelchair users, or facilities for people with severe hearing impairments. People with mobility needs should contact the Nuffield Foundation for guidance in advance of visiting the building.

# **Roundtable Seminar: “Asylum Adjudication and Country Guidance: Function, Operation, and Future”**

## **SEMINAR AGENDA**

*(NB: the purpose of this agenda is to structure discussion amongst participants at the seminar; participants will have the opportunity to raise relevant issues not mentioned below).*

Chair: Mr CMG Ockelton, Deputy President, Asylum and Immigration Tribunal

**1.00pm – start of seminar**

### **1. Introduction**

- Introduction to the seminar
- Tour de table

### **2. Introductory overview of the country guidance system**

- The work of the IARLJ’s Country of Information – Country Guidance working party - comments by Dr Hugo Storey (rapporteur of the working party)
- The origin, purposes and development of the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal’s country guidance system - comments by Dr Robert Thomas (School of Law, University of Manchester)

### **3. Country information and country guidance**

- The sources and range of country information
- The criteria for assessing country information
- The role and function of country expert evidence in country guidance cases
- The Home Office’s role in presenting country information
- Is there a need for a non-governmental organisation specifically for country guidance purposes?
- Alternatively, does the country guidance enterprise imply greater co-ordination between country information providers on specific country guidance issues?

#### **4. The content and application of country guidance**

- The content of country guidance: risk factors; risk categories
- The authoritative status of country guidance
- Country guidance and changing country conditions and new country information
- Applying and dis-applying country guidance
- Country guidance and the Home Office

**3pm - 3.25pm** – break for tea and coffee

#### **5. Country guidance in its European and international context**

- To what extent do asylum decision-making systems outside the UK see the UK's country guidance system as a possible model to adopt?
- Country guidance and the developing Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and the European Court of Human Rights and the European Court of Justice
- Does the CEAS imply country guidance being organised at the EU level? If so, then how?

#### **6. Management of the country guidance system**

- Selection of individual appeals for country guidance purposes
- The role of legal representatives in country guidance cases

#### **7. Summary and end**

**5pm – end of Seminar**

Please join us for some canapés and wine at the end of the seminar