

**THIS IS A DANISH-ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF A DANISH MEDIA ARTICLE BY THE  
BRITISH EMBASSY IN COPENHAGEN**

**From:** [redacted]  
**Sent:** 01 April 2015 10:18  
**To:** [redacted]  
**Cc:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** Danish media carries UK critical article Tuesday 1 April 2015

[redacted]

Today the front page of the Danish broadsheet “Berlingske Tidende” [www.b.dk](http://www.b.dk) (The Times equiv.) carries a UK negative story. Also the Danish radio morning news on DR [www.dr.dk](http://www.dr.dk) (BBC equiv) referred to the Berlingske story. The story focuses on the UK basing tightening of its immigration treatment of Eritrean asylum seekers on a controversial Danish report on the conditions in Eritrea. The report, published a few months ago, by the Danish Immigration Service has previously been highly criticised in the Danish media.

ARTICLE:

**Headline:** Brits use rebuked Eritrea report

**Angle:** UK bases tightening of its Eritrean immigration on Danish report. An avalanche has been set in motion warns international experts. Withdraw (Danish – my insert) report says Danish politicians. [redacted].

Who	Where	What
Home Office spokesman (unnamed)	Denmark	<p>Informs that the British report is:</p> <p>“based on a thorough and objective evaluation of the situation in Eritrea”.</p> <p>“We are aware of, and have taken into consideration, the criticism of the Danish report, that will only be used together with a number of other sources to determine the guidance”.</p>
Johannes Shmidt-Nielsen (Danish MP for the Red-Green Party (an combination of former communists and left-wing political parties)).	Denmark	<p>“a Danish report is according to its sources and the publishing body full of erroneous information but the report has remained. Now its conclusion are spreading to other countries’ foundation for asylum treatment. The government (Danish – my insert) must ensure that the report is withdrawn, and at the same time inform the EU countries that we are not even using the report ourselves</p>

		because there is doubt about its conclusions”.
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Quotes from a few other Danish opposition MP's. The responsible Minister, Mette Frederiksen from the Social-Democratic party has not wished to comment on the case, saying she is on Easter leave. Article also mentions towards the end that information about the British use of the Danish report has 22 of the world's leading experts on conditions in Eritrea to direct a harsh criticism of Denmark's and the UK's reports on Eritrea. The 22 experts sent Tuesday evening their warning in a letter to the EU commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and to the chairman of the European Parliament Martin Schulz.

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

**THIS IS A DANISH TO ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF A DANISH MEDIA ARTICLE BY THE  
BRITISH EMBASSY IN COPENHAGEN**

**From:** [redacted]

**Sent:** 02 April 2015 09:21

**To:** [redacted]  
**Cc:** [redacted]  
**Subject:** RE: Danish articles

Dear [redacted],  
Here is the article.  
Kind regards,  
[redacted]

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## **Danish report used as justification for denying asylum to Eritreans in EU**

*Text of report by Politiko website on 31 March*

[Report by Morten Crone, Simon Bendtsen, and Lars Norgaard Pedersen: "Thrashed Eritrea Report Discarded in Denmark - Now It Is Being Used by the British"]

Great Britain is basing itself on a controversial Danish report on Eritrea in connection with restricting access to asylum for Eritrean refugees. An avalanche has been triggered, experts warn. Withdraw the report, Danish politicians say.

Denmark is helping paint a misleading picture of Eritrea. A picture that ultimately could start a development in which Europe sends thousands of Eritrean asylum seekers back to the dictatorship from which they have fled.

This is the criticism of international experts and Danish politicians after British authorities just issued new guidelines strongly influenced by the controversial Danish Eritrea report from the Immigration Service, which caused intense debate in Denmark at the end of 2014.

The British guidelines use the Danish report and its conclusions as a basic structure, and the report is mentioned at least 48 times in the two reports in numerous quotes.

"The Danish conclusions are circulating in the international public, and they are used as source material for verifying allegations that cannot in the least be documented in reality. The Danish report is now helping shape the European asylum practice regarding thousands of Eritreans," says Kjetil Tronvoll, a Norwegian professor, internationally recognized for his extensive knowledge of Eritrea.

The two British reports are guidelines for how asylum cases from Eritrea are to be handled. On the one hand they cover Eritrea's national service, which according to the United Nations is indefinite slave labour and connected with abuse. On the other hand [they cover] the possibility of returning to Eritrea for Eritreans who left the country without permission. The two categories of refugees are estimated to represent 80-90 per cent of the Eritrean refugees who streamed to Europe in record numbers last year. And who are also expected to flow by the thousands across the Mediterranean to Europe this year.

By downplaying the seriousness and consequences of illegal exit and evasion of conscription, the British authorities are able with one stroke to cut off the greater part of this massive stream of refugees.

"Now that British authorities are using the Danish report they demonstrate a disingenuous approach - that they want to use every means in their attempt to stop the Eritrean refugees from demanding asylum. The Danish report has triggered an avalanche," says Mirjam Van Reisen, professor at Tilburg University in the Netherlands, where she researches Eritrean affairs and the conditions of Eritrean refugees.

In order to understand how the British authorities are using the Danish report, you must delve deeper into the two reports: for example, it has been assumed until now that Eritreans who left the country illegally risked persecution if they returned to the country, it says in one of the British reports:

"But 'up-to-date' information indicates that this is no longer the case," it says in a summary of the so-called policy recommendations.

"The most updated information from Eritrea - meaning the report by the Danish fact-finding mission - indicates that those who refuse to commit themselves to or evade military service are not considered traitors or political opponents. Eritreans who left the country without permission are no longer intrinsically at risk of persecution or abuse when they return (to Eritrea, editor's note)."

#### Information Is Exaggerated

At the same time reference is made to the Danish conclusions that if Eritreans just pay a tax to the regime they are able to return to Eritrea without fear of persecution. Concerning violations of human rights in connection with national service, the British report uses a quote from the Immigration Service's report:

"The information about abuse during military service is more often than not exaggerated. People doing military service are not overburdened or working under slave-like conditions. They are not beaten, subjected to torture, or suffer from poor nutrition," it says in a British quote from the Danish report.

It was precisely the Danish conclusions about the military service that caused Professor Gaim Kibreab from South Bank University in London to withdraw as the main source in the Danish report. His public condemnation of the report in *Berlingske* in December was the starting signal for tremendous criticism of the Eritrea report. His contribution has since been edited out of the report by means of black strikeouts.

The Danish report was originally the foundation for a new, stricter policy towards refugees from Eritrea, but after tremendous international criticism of the report, and after two central officials withdrew from the report, the stricter practice was taken off the table.

Today the report is given no weight in the Immigration Service's processing of Eritrean asylum applications, and just about all Eritreans are now once again being granted asylum in Denmark. Though the Danish change of practice was dropped, however, the Immigration Service stands by the report. That position should now be changed, says the Danish Parliament:

"It is very problematic. The government must explain to the British that although the report has not yet been withdrawn, the stricter practices that were planned are off the table because there was too much doubt about the report. It is now clear that the report must be withdrawn. Perhaps that might also become gradually clear to the Immigration Service," says Karina Lorentzen Dehnhardt, integration spokeswoman for the Socialist People's Party.

Johanne Schmidt-Nielsen, political spokeswoman for the Red-Green Alliance, calls it deeply serious:

"A Danish report is, according to the sources and the service's own staff members, full of wrong information, but the report has remained in place. Now the conclusions of the report are spreading to other countries' justifications for asylum processing. The government must make sure that the report is withdrawn, and at the same time the government must inform the EU nations that we are not even using the report ourselves, because there is doubt about its conclusions."

Peter Skaarup, legal affairs spokesman for the Danish People's Party, points out that the British use of the Danish report provides a reason to ask the government what status the report actually has:

"Now that other countries are letting the Danish report become part of their basis for changing their asylum practices, Denmark must explain to the rest of Europe whether the report holds up. Because we could end up in a situation where all other EU nations restrict their practice on the basis of Danish conclusions, which we do not want to use to restrict our own practice."

#### 'Report Is Strongly Slanted'

The British takeover of the Danish conclusions and the new, tougher British guidelines, are miles away from yet another, quite new, report on Eritrea. Norske Landinfo, which writes country reports for use by the Norwegian asylum authorities, has just issued a report that is far more cautious in its conclusions. The Norwegian report underlines that it is very difficult to conclude anything definite about Eritrea.

Country adviser Grethe Neufeld from Landinfo describes the Danish report as methodically weak but slanted.

"It gives the impression that it was written with a certain agenda," Neufeld says.

The information about the British use of the Danish report is now causing 22 of the world's leading experts on Eritrean conditions to sharply criticize Denmark's and Great Britain's reports on Eritrea. On Tuesday evening [31 March] the 22 experts sent their warnings in letters to the chairman of the EU Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, and to the chairman of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz. That launched the Danish Eritrea case on the path of being highly political, because the EU system is now forced to take a position on the controversial Danish Eritrea report.

A spokesman for the Home Office, the British interior ministry, tells Berlingske that the two new British reports are "based on a thorough and objective assessment of the situation in Eritrea."

"We are aware of and have taken into account the criticism of the Danish report, which is only being used in conjunction with a number of other sources in order to determine the guidance."

In Denmark the Immigration Service has read both the Norwegian and British reports:

"The Immigration Service announces that one has read the two reports with interest, and that they form part of the foundation for the asylum case processing, in which the clear starting point is that the service grants asylum to everyone who is judged to be from Eritrea."

Justice Minister Mette Frederiksen (Social Democrat) did not wish to comment on the matter.

*Source: Politiko, Copenhagen, in Danish 0000 GMT 31 Mar 2015*

Post specific issues that may impact on operational delivery over the last month or expected over the next month such as;

- [Redacted],
- Political Issues,
- Health & Safety etc

Immigration News from Nordic Baltic region

## **DENMARK**

### **New rules on Eritrean asylum-seekers**

The Immigration Authority has decided to resume handling asylum applications from Eritreans, but with a catch. The Authority is not inclined to give asylum to young men who have left their country illegally in order to avoid the draft. Under Eritrean law it is illegal for those of draft age to leave the country without permission. Eritrean border guards have orders to shoot to kill Eritreans attempting to flee the country. Eritreans are the second largest asylum-seeking nationality in Denmark. The first nine months of this year saw 2,212 Eritreans seeking asylum in Denmark compared to 98 last year. A Danish fact-finding mission was in Eritrea and Ethiopia in August and September to gather information from, among others, Western embassies, international organisations and the Eritrean government.

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### **Criticism of Eritrea decision**

The decision by the Immigration Authority in Denmark to reopen repatriation to Eritrea has been widely criticised by human rights organisations. The Danish Refugee Council says the decision may have been taken based on incomplete evidence. Amnesty International has sent the Immigration Authority's report on Eritrea to its experts in East Africa for comment, but says that its immediate comment is surprise that the report suggests that those who have fled Eritrea illegally can return with impunity. The Immigration Authority report says that those who have fled illegally can return provided that they sign an apology for having escaped and paying 2 per cent of their annual wage to the state.

### **Eritrea report criticism continues**

Controversy surrounding the Immigration Authority's Eritrea report continues with other media reporting on the issue, that Berlingske highlighted yesterday. Politiken has interviewed a spokesman for Eritrea's embassy in the Nordic region who says that those who leave Eritrea illegally will have to accept their punishment when they return. "They will have to go to court or the military. But at a later date. They will have to pay for the crimes they have committed in Eritrea," says Yonas Manna Bairu of the Eritrean Embassy in Stockholm. At the same time Prof. Gaim Kibreab of London South Bank University, who appears in the Immigration Authority report but says that he has been quoted out of context, maintains that he does not wish to be associated with the report, criticising its authors for misrepresenting him.

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### **Eritrea refugees to get asylum**

The Immigration Authority has begun to give asylum to Eritrean asylum-seekers again following the recent controversy surrounding a report that resulted in a hiatus on asylum for those from Eritrea. A media storm that followed the publication of the report, which was said to be flawed resulted in a resumption of cases in hand on December 8. Since then 122 cases have been handled, 119 of which have resulted in asylum.

### **UK using questionable DK report**

British authorities have released a report and instructions regarding Eritrea and Eritrean asylum seeking that is for a large part inspired by a report from the Danish Immigration Authority, but which has been severely criticised for its conclusions and has been set aside. According to the report, the British reports are based on the Danish conclusions, with Denmark's now rejected report being mentioned 48 times. At issue are the consequences of leaving Eritrea without government permission and the consequences of avoiding Eritrean national service. "The Danish conclusions are doing the international rounds and are being used as a source to verify claims that cannot be documented," says Norwegian Prof. Kjetil Tronvoll, an expert on Eritrean affairs. The original Danish report was the basis for tightening rules on whether asylum-seekers from Eritrea were able to achieve asylum in Denmark. Apparent serious flaws in the report, however, caused Denmark to set the report aside and change its practices again.

The report in English can be read [HERE](#).

