



## Good News!

Eugene has a British partner and two British children but the Home Office would neither allow him to work nor give him support unless he left them and went to live in Scotland. For many months Haslar Visitors gave a small allowance so the family could stay together. In 2008 Eugene finally got his papers and is now allowed to stay in the UK and work here indefinitely – this picture was taken on the day he got the news!

*Left: Eugene  
Below: Willy and Mike  
(Photo Amaya Roman)*

## More Good News!

It's often difficult to keep in contact with detainees once they have left Haslar, but Willy Mutwadi Mipasi is an exception. Willy, a medical biologist from DRC, arrived at Haslar in August 2004. He had claimed asylum in April 2003, but lost his appeal later that year because of very poor legal advice. He was immediately arrested and detained, just days before he was due to start a work placement at a hospital in Derby.



During the twelve months he spent in various detention centres, despite numerous interventions from lawyers and politicians, the Home Office made several attempts to remove Willy to DRC. On two occasions, he was frogmarched onto aircraft at Heathrow, and requested an audience with the captain. After explaining that he was a refugee who was being delivered up to be murdered by his persecutors, the captain refused to carry him aboard, and he was led back to detention.

At Haslar, Willy was linked with HVG visitor (now Chair) Mike Brown who also spoke French, and the two developed a strong friendship. The immediate danger was imminent removal directions. Mike lobbied local Gosport MP Peter Viggers on Willy's behalf, and the then Immigration Minister Des Browne cancelled the removal on the strength of the MP's representations.

Rosy Bremer at BID South organised a bail application and Willy was released from detention. He went to live at Mike's house in Fareham, and the two got to work on collecting evidence for a fresh asylum claim in the window afforded them by Des Browne.

However, the day after the fresh claim application was received by the Home Office, the Immigration Service ordered Willy's arrest, intending to remove him from the UK within 48 hours in order to prevent any judicial moves to save him. Only the intervention of Amnesty International - literally minutes before Willy was due to be escorted onto a scheduled flight to Kinshasa – forced the cancellation of these secret plans.

Willy's plight became front-page news in the local press and the lead story for *Meridian News* bulletins. Willy was interviewed on Radio 4's *Today* programme, and the BBC broadcast a documentary on former Portsmouth FC striker and HVG patron Lomana Lua Lua's support for his fellow countryman.

Leading immigration barrister Margaret Phelan, who had been successful in having Willy bailed only four weeks earlier, took on his case, and there followed three years of legal wrangling. Finally, the Court of Appeal castigated the Home Office for its callous treatment of Willy and their lack of "anxious scrutiny" in the consideration of fresh evidence from asylum seekers. This judgement paved the way for a second asylum claim, which was refused by the Home Office but allowed on appeal to the Asylum & Immigration Tribunal.

Willy now has full refugee status.

At Haslar, Willy was well known as a worship leader and evangelist, and for the prayer and encouragement he gave to other detainees. It is a ministry he has continued ever since his release, visiting those in detention and telephoning them to give spiritual and moral support.

Willy has also been active in the wider community. He is associate pastor at the Jubilee Francophone Church in Portsmouth. In November, he received his pastoral licence at a ceremony in London, and looks forward to ordination next year. He is a member of the Hampshire African Immigrants' Association (HAFRIA) and produces their quarterly magazine.

Willy plans to stay in Hampshire and fulfil his dream of working for the NHS. "I thank God for the Haslar Visitors Group, and for everyone who has helped me" he said.

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