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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Refugee Week Scotland 2008**

**June 16-22**

[www.refugeeweek.org.uk](http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk)

#### **Refugee Footballer Kicking Off Refugee Week**

**Pedram Ardallany** of **Partick Thistle** today (Tues) launched **Refugee Week Scotland**, which will run June 16-22.

From football tournaments to films, comedy nights to carnivals, exhibitions, plays, parties and much, much more, **Refugee Week Scotland** is a fantastic festival of events across the country to celebrate diversity and raise awareness of refugee issues.

With over 50 events to choose from and Glasgow's Tron Theatre as the festival hub, there's something for everyone in **Refugee Week Scotland**.

**Pedram Ardallany**, 18, a refugee from Iran who now plays centre-midfield for the Jags (Partick Thistle), said:

*"Refugees don't choose to leave their country. We are forced to do so for reasons beyond our control. Football has been a great way for me to integrate into Scottish life. It is a universal language that people speak all over the world, no matter where they are from. I admire the Scots passion for football and am grateful for the welcome they have given me here.*

*I hope everyone, regardless of their background, will celebrate **Refugee Week Scotland** and share in the things we all enjoy."*

**John Wilkes**, Chief Executive, Scottish Refugee Council, said:

*"For many years, refugees have been seeking sanctuary in Scotland, enriching our communities, contributing to our sports and culture, society and economy. **Refugee Week Scotland** is an acknowledgement of that.*

*But **Refugee Week** is not just for refugees. It is for everyone in Scotland, an opportunity for us all to celebrate what we have in common and understand and respect our differences."*

#### **Notes to Editors:**

1. **Refugee Week Scotland** is co-ordinated by Scottish Refugee Council and is part of a UK-wide festival to celebrate diversity and raise awareness of refugee issues. To download a pdf of the Scottish programme, visit [www.refugeeweek.org.uk](http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk) (from Wed May 28)

2. Scottish Refugee Council is an independent charity that provides advice and assistance to refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland. We also campaign for fair treatment of refugees and asylum seekers and to raise awareness of refugee issues. For more information visit [www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)
3. Pedram Ardallany, now 18, came to the UK from Iran when he was 15 years old. After playing for Arsenal Boys Club, he signed for Partick Thistle one year ago. [www.ptfc.co.uk](http://www.ptfc.co.uk)
4. There are around 10,000 refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland. The majority of new refugees to Scotland are coming from Iraq, Iran and Eritrea, fleeing war, torture or persecution.
5. There are 14 million refugees worldwide (UN Refugee Agency figure). The UK hosts only 2 percent of them. The majority of the world's refugees are taken care of by the poorest countries, such as Iran and Pakistan. There are currently 2 million Iraqi refugees in Syria.
6. Refugees to the UK include 16 knights and peers of the realm, 18 Nobel prize winners, and 71-fellows of the Royal Society. Fish and Chips, the Mini and Marks & Spencer were all introduced to the UK by refugees.
7. For more information, interviews or pictures, contact **Aideen McLaughlin** on **0141 223 7927/07734 030 763**.

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