Migration news roundup 3 July 2023



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Stories that inspired us this week

Several Sanctuary Awards were announced including:

- The Mafwa Theatre in Leeds gained status as a Theatre of Sanctuary. (Source: BBC)
- Three schools and a college from Bradford to recognise good practice and provision in supporting refugees and people seeking asylum, and ensuring a culture of welcome, safety, and inclusion. (Source: Telegraph and Argus)
- The City of Westminster council, London voted to become a Council of Sanctuary. (Source: City of Westminster)

A group of ESOL students from Bradford College performed in front of playwright David Edgar as part of Refugee Week. (Source: Telegraph and Argus)

In the King's birthday honours, Mohammed Fahim of the Afghan Welfare Centre in Walsall was awarded an MBE . Also recognised was Dr Desmond Jaddoo, a community activist and bishop who is chair of the Windrush National Organisation. (Source: BBC)

International news

Germany reopened the Federal Reception Program for Afghans which had been on hold due to irregularities reported a few months ago. The programme will prioritise Afghans waiting in

Iran and Pakistan before turning to those still living in Afghanistan. Meanwhile, at the EU summit in Brussels, Poland and Hungary have been resisting the agreement to share responsibility for migrants entering Europe without authorisation. Finally, the Council of Europe Human Rights Commissioner urged Italy to do more to support sea rescues. (Sources: InfoMigrants, AP World News)

UK borders and migration policy

According to a Court of Appeal judgement, the government's plan to remove people seeking asylum to Rwanda is unlawful. The judges ruled that Rwanda is not a safe country, but the Prime Minister says the government will take the case to the Supreme Court. Additionally, the Women and Equalities Committee has said the government should rule out sending children to Rwanda. (Sources: BBC, UK Parliament)

On the Illegal Migration Bill:

- There have been defeats for the government in the House of Lords, which has voted in favour of several amendments. (Source: Sky News)
- The government's economic impact assessment found that the cost of sending an individual to Rwanda would be £169,000. (Sources: Home Office, the Guardian)
- The UK's rights watchdog is 'seriously concerned' about the Bill's impact. (Source: Equalities and Human Rights Commission)

There are reports that people with a right to reside in the UK are still trapped in the Sudanese conflict zone. (Source: the Guardian)

There are reports of an increase in detention centre staff suspended amid accusations of violence towards detainees. Meanwhile detainees at Harmondsworth immigration removal centre have continued to protest about conditions there. (Sources: Mirror, the Guardian)

A new report highlights the health and social care sector's reliance on overseas workers. While recognising economic benefits, it also identifies potential concerns around future recruitment and exploitation risks. (Source: Migration Observatory)

Here's an insight into the experiences of an immigration solicitor . (Source: The Law Society)

Specific migrant groups

On asylum:

- There's a briefing on asylum hotels and contingency accommodation from Greater Manchester Immigration and Asylum Unit (GMIAU). (Source: GMIAU)
- It's been calculated that the Home Office needs to process an asylum claim every four minutes to meet their target for clearing the asylum backlog. (Source: the Guardian)

- A new report says allowing asylum seekers the right to work would increase tax revenues by £1.3 billion. (Sources: National Institute of Economic and Social Research)

It's reported that two-thirds of refugee family reunion application rejections were overturned on appeal between 2019 and 2022. (Source: the Guardian)

Read about Alla's journey to gain a job in investment with the support of Smart Works Leeds, a charity that helps women into employment, now working with Ukrainian refugees. (Source: Yorkshire Evening Post)

Organisations helping Hongkongers coming to live and work in the UK have been awarded £2.6 million by the government. The funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has been allocated across 47 civil society organisations. Meanwhile, many Hongkongers living in the UK continue to fear Beijing's influence. (Sources: DLUHC, Japan Times)

The University of Sheffield is continuing its commitment to supporting people fleeing war and persecution with 10 refugee scholarships open for applications. (Source: the Star)

22 June marked the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the HMT Empire Windrush. This article gives a broad picture of the Windrush generation including statistics detailing who they are, when they arrived, where they settled, and reasons for coming to Britain. The anniversary provided an opportunity to reflect on

the Windrush generation's contributions not only to British society and culture, but to their home countries, and for those caught up in 'hostile environment' policies to share personal accounts including ways of finding a sense of belonging and the impact of the Windrush generation on shaping British identity. Finally, look out for a new commemorative 50p marking the 75th anniversary of the ship's arrival! (Sources: the Guardian, The Conversation, BBC)

On modern slavery, there's an article providing an overview of survivor involvement in non-governmental organisations and a review of the impact of psychosocial interventions on survivor mental health and wellbeing. (Sources: Open Democracy, The Lancet)

A hotel in Brighton is reopening to house unaccompanied children, despite previously closing following high numbers of young people going missing. This decision sparked local protests, with the local authority launching legal action against the Home Office. Here is a report on the challenges faced by unaccompanied children due to the delays in asylum decisions. (Source: the Guardian, the Independent, GMIAU)

Cohesion and integration

On LBC radio presenter James O'Brien discussed the far right narrative on migration. At Glastonbury Festival, Scottish band Young Fathers led the crowd in a chant in support of refugees. (Sources: LBC, Metro)

A rare painting from the 17th century depicting two unknown women - one black and one white - as equals in society, has been prevented from leaving the UK in recognition of its ‘outstanding significance’. (Source: the Guardian)

Learn more about how music therapy can help refugees overcome trauma and increase a sense of belonging in their new homes. (Source: The Conversation)

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