

# Migration news roundup 4 December 2023

Image

View of Houses of Parliament from bridge over river Thames

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## Stories that inspired us this week

Two men who fled from Syria celebrated achieving university degrees: [Mohamed Hady Taresh graduated with a masters in cyber security from the University of Gloucestershire](#) thanks to a Sanctuary Scholarship, and [Harout Marderossian was the first student of Italy's online University for Refugees](#), having studied engineering.

(Sources: BBC, InfoMigrants)

## International news

In Europe there are some important developments:

- [Switzerland has introduced a fast-track asylum process which aims to process applications within 24 hours](#), to reduce pressure by making quicker decisions on claims from countries with low success rates. (Source: Le News)
- The [Finnish government has decided to close its border with Russia](#), in an attempt to reduce unauthorised crossings. (Source: BBC)
- [The EU Commission has proposed a new plan to tackle smuggling](#), intended to punish smugglers without targeting migrants themselves. (Source: InfoMigrants)

The EU has expressed concern that [Niger's repeal of anti-smuggling laws](#) could result in an increase in the number of migrants attempting to reach Europe. (Source: Euronews)

286,000 Afghans (80% of whom are women and children) have returned to Afghanistan since the start of October, after Pakistan set a deadline of November 1 for them to leave the country. [Save the Children has reported an outbreak of infections](#) linked to unsanitary conditions and a lack of access to clean water for those returning. (Source: The New Arab)

## UK borders and migration policy

The [government faced pressure at the Home Affairs Select Committee regarding the fact 17,000 asylum claims had been withdrawn this year](#), acknowledging that they do not know where these individuals are. You can [watch a clip here](#). (Sources: the Guardian, X)

Also at the Select Committee, it was suggested that [Rwanda might be receiving more than the agreed £140m per year](#). Meanwhile a new research report from the Refugee Council says the [Rwanda scheme will not deter people from crossing the Channel in small boats](#). It also suggests that many unaccompanied children are likely to go missing from care to avoid being removed later under the Illegal Migration Act. (Sources: Sky News, Refugee Council)

After last week's immigration statistics revealed further increases to net migration, [Immigration Minister Robert Jenrick has seemingly distanced himself from the Prime Minister's policy approach](#). He's also promised tougher measures to curb net migration in the future, [indicating that a cap on migration might be explored](#). (Sources: the Guardian, BBC News)

This article explores some [potential future problems relating to the asylum system](#), including questions around the future for withdrawn claims, newly granted refugees and refused asylum seekers. (Source: Free Movement)

[A trade union has said that migrant care staff are being exploited by employers](#) through unpaid hours and hidden fees. (Source: the Guardian)

## Specific migrant groups

On asylum and refugees, a [new inspection into the use of asylum contingency accommodation has been launched](#). (Source: Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration)

This article voices councils' concerns that [thousands of refugees are facing homelessness over the Christmas period due to the increase in asylum decisions](#) and a lack of notice and available housing. (Source: Local Government Association)

On children and young people:

- [Kent County Council is in discussion with the Home Office regarding opening new reception centres to temporarily accommodate unaccompanied asylum seeking children](#). (Source: Independent)
- The Children's Commissioner has expressed concern that [vulnerable unaccompanied children were not receiving the care they needed while accommodated by the Home Office in hotels](#). (Source: Children's Commissioner)

On Hong Kong, a new [Channel 4 Dispatches investigates Chinese state sponsored repression of pro-democracy Hongkongers](#) involved in protests and now living in the UK. (Source: Channel 4)

This new briefing focuses on [migration of EU nationals to the UK post-Brexit](#). (Source: Migration Observatory)

Here is a [blueprint for how higher education institutions, supported by the Universities of Sanctuary Network, can become places of safety, solidarity and empowerment](#) for people affected by forced migration. (Source: Times Higher Education)

## Cohesion and integration

[This article explores how to address community tensions related to the Israel-Gaza conflict](#) here in the UK. (Source: Third Sector)

These two articles add to the debate following the recent publication of net migration figures: the first discusses the [Labour party's potential approach to addressing immigration](#), and the second considers [how migration](#)

[statistics are used in support of certain arguments](#). (Sources: the Guardian, the Big Issue)

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## Contact us about research

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