Migration news roundup 5 November 2024



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Stories that inspired us this week

Jin Davod, a young social entrepreneur, is nominated for the 2024 UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award. This is in recognition of her initiative Peace Therapist, an online platform matching licensed therapists with people needing help following a traumatic event. The platform has over 100 psychologists providing therapy in Arabic, English, Kurdish and Turkish, making it uniquely accessible to refugees. (Source: UNHCR)

Onjali Q Raouf, the author of 'The Boy at the Back of the Class' that tells the story of a boy from war-torn Syria who moved to the UK, has recently visited Holy Primary School in West Belfast, where she had conversations with pupils about her books and the experiences of refugees. (Source: Belfast Media)

International news

The Netherlands has announced its 'toughest-ever asylum policy', according to the country's Council for Refugees, which includes the re-introduction of border controls and restrictions on asylum permits to last a maximum of three years. Germany is also taking tougher measures to tighten migration as it plans to lower the monthly support rate for people who seek asylum.

(Sources: AP News, Reuters, InfoMigrants)

Beyond Europe, this week people of the United States of America will be voting for their next president, with both candidates making promises to implement tougher migration policies. (Source: Al Jazeera)

In high income countries population would shrink without migration. This short item demonstrates the data graphically. (Source: Our World in Data)

UK borders and migration policy

This article highlights how many people arrived in the UK via Channel crossings this year, suggesting more individuals and families arrived this year than in 2023, but less than in 2022. It also tells that 50 people have died while attempting to cross in 2024, including 10 in October. More on Channel crossings, an undercover investigation highlights the rise of Vietnamese smuggling networks bringing people across the Channel, who charge higher prices for apparently safer crossings with more organised, last minute camps near to the launch site. The article raises the possibility that some people are also being trafficked as they work in the UK to repay their debt. (Sources: ITV News, BBC)

In other news, Bill Gates was amongst those criticising the chancellor after she announced cuts to overseas aid spending in last week’s budget. In 2023 a quarter of the budget was spent

on asylum accommodation. (Source: BBC)

Specific migrant groups

This briefing draws together available data about refugees and people seeking asylum from Afghanistan living in the UK, arriving via small boats or resettlement schemes. It highlights Leeds as the second local authority providing resettlement to Afghans in the UK, followed closely by North Yorkshire (6th) and Bradford (8th). (Source: Migration Observatory)

On asylum:

- As the Bibby Stockholm contract nears its expiration date, hundreds of people seeking asylum have been relocated to alternative accommodation. The barge was described as a 'ghost town' for the few remaining people on board. (Sources: BBC, Independent)

- A right-wing extremist from Worcestershire has been jailed for the attempted murder of an Eritrean man living in an asylum hotel. The attack took place in April 2024, prior to the summer riots. (Source: Counter Terrorism Policing)

This new report details how forced or compulsory labour is interwoven into the UK economy, with an examination of the interplay between poor employment practices and labour

exploitation. (Source: The Centre for Social Justice)

Another new publication, this time on those arriving on the BN(O) visa route. It outlines challenges some Hongkongers are experiencing when looking for work that matches their skills and qualifications. The research report is accompanied by a guide for employers explaining who the Hong Kongers are, their rights and advice on how to welcome them into the workforce. (Source: British Future)

In a turnaround from the previous government's position on Windrush, the Home Secretary promises a 'fundamental reset'. She reopened the Home Office Windrush unit and announced better support for people to claim compensation, including appointing a new Windrush Commissioner. (Source: Home Office)

On young people, a Bill proposed by Liberal Democrat peer Baroness Hamwee aims to enable unaccompanied child refugees to sponsor parents and siblings for the purpose of family reunion . The Refugees (Family Reunion) Bill reaches committee stage in the House of Lords on 5th November. (Sources: PoliticsHome, UK Parliament)

Cohesion and integration

The Migration Observatory has published a new report on the fiscal impact of immigration in the UK. It finds that contribution varies across different types of migrant group, age and skills, length of stay and immigration route, with migrants arriving at

working age more likely to make a positive contribution to the nation’s finances, while families and children often result in greater expenditure. Overall, the fiscal impact of migration is less than 1% of GDP. (Source: Migration Observatory)

The Guardian has shared an article on the Prime Minister of Spain’s recent comments on immigration, as an example of positive rhetoric. The article explores Spain’s current attitudes on immigration and how Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez bucks the trend on European attitudes to migrants. (Source: the Guardian)

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