Migration news roundup 13 March 2023



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Stories that inspired us this week

To celebrate International Women's Day, meet some inspiring women leaders in the refugee and migration sector. (Source: IMIX)

Some local stories:

- former Leeds United academy star and child refugee from Liberia, Nohan Kenneh earned his first senior international call-up to play for Liberia
- in Sheffield three Ukrainian refugees share about volunteering at a St Luke’s Hospice Shop
- read about the story behind the famous pork sandwich shop chain Béres Sheffield, started when a Hungarian butcher’s son came to the UK as a political refugee after the 1956 uprising.

(Sources: Leeds Live, The Star)

International news

Following Tunisian President’s anti-immigrant remarks last month, the African Union postponed a conference in the country, the World Bank halted talks and calls are growing to boycott Tunisian products in African countries. (Sources: Middle East Monitor, Middle East Eye, Morocco World News)

Fire in a refugee camp in Bangladesh left 12,000 Rohingya refugees without shelter and destroyed essential infrastructure such as health centres, learning facilities and mosques. (Source: the Guardian)

UK borders and migration policy

The government published its Illegal Migration Bill. If passed into law it would enable government to remove people arriving in the UK via irregular routes such as crossing the Channel in small boats, without allowing them to first make an asylum claim. (Sources: UK Parliament, BBC)

There's been widespread criticism of the proposed legislation, including from UNHCR who stated it would be 'extinguishing the right to seek refugee protection in the United Kingdom for those who arrive irregularly, no matter how genuine and compelling their claim may be'. The EU said the Bill would breach the European Convention on Human Rights and the Home Secretary recognises there is 'more than a 50% chance' of such a contravention. Many see the proposals as unworkable in practice , for example due to limited capacity within the detention estate. Public debate was heightened as football presenter Gary Lineker defended his comments likening government rhetoric to that of 1930s Germany, with BBC sport programmes disrupted over the subsequent weekend as commentators stood by their colleague. (Sources: UNHCR, Independent, ITVX, the Guardian, BBC)

As a reminder of the reasons why people make the dangerous journey across the Channel, at the start of this clip there's an interview with an Iranian refugee who claimed asylum in the UK and is now training as a nurse. Relatedly, this article provides insight into reasons behind the increased numbers of people from Albania attempting to come to the UK. (Sources: Sky, the Guardian)

A new report explores immigration policy and public attitudes since the Brexit referendum and lessons for current times. (Source: UK in a Changing Europe)

Specific migrant groups

In the new year it was revealed that around 200 children seeking asylum have gone missing from Home Office provided hotels since June 2021; just 13 children have been found since January. There are still concerns about gangs grooming children in hotels for criminal activities. (Sources: iNews, BBC)

Home Office documents show over 2,500 victims of crime were reported by police to immigration enforcement between 2020 and 2022, including children who have been sexually exploited and women subjected to domestic violence. Critics say it's making those affected 'victims twice over'. (Source: the Guardian)

The Bell Foundation provides a framework for schools who are welcoming young refugees into their classrooms, particularly on how to make most use of available funding. (Source: The Bell

Foundation).

The Windrush Schemes Factsheet is updated with data for the end of January 2023; 59% of compensation claims have had a final decision, over £55 million has been paid and over £10 million more offered. (Source: Home Office)

On modern slavery:

- The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is the system for identifying and supporting modern slavery survivors. Latest NRM statistics for October to December 2022 show the number of people referred was the second highest number recorded. Albania remains the top nationality. The summary for the year 2022 was also published with 16,938 potential victims referred during 2022, the highest annual number since records began in 2009. Both datasets show an initial grant rate over 80%.
- Government analysis considers the number of people referred to the NRM while detained after arriving on small boats.
- This briefing includes an overview of the debate prompted by ministerial assertions that the modern slavery system is being abused by individuals at risk of removal from the UK.

(Sources: Home Office, UK Parliament)

Various events promoting the culture of Hong Kong are taking place in March. Hong Kong March initiative is led by the Hong Kong Umbrella Community with a variety of local events taking

place across the Yorkshire and Humber region. In other news, the government BNO visa page has been updated to clarify the process of the BNO visa extension. (Sources: Hong Kong March, Gov.uk)

On EU nationals, a new briefing looks at the implications of the judgement on pre-settled status holders and potential options for its implementation by the Home Office. (Source: Migration Observatory)

Cohesion and integration

Harewood House in Leeds has commissioned a portrait of the Black British actor David Harewood as part of a project to acknowledge historical links to slavery. (Source: the Guardian)

A woman who came to the UK as a child in the 1960s from Kenya describes her experience of over 50 years of racism here. Meanwhile, experiences of British Asian families since the 1950s are brought to life in the current series of 'Back in Time', including the invention of the Balti in Birmingham. (Sources: Metro, BBC iPlayer)

A panel discussion looked at actionable policy proposals to address racial equality, covering a wide range of issues such as representation, hate crime and equality of opportunity in the workplace. (Source: British Future)

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