Migration news roundup 22 August 2022

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Stories that inspired us this week

Eight year old York resident Maksym from Ukraine swept the board at a UK chess tournament. (Source: The Times)

Read this beautifully written personal account of a young Afghan woman's seven attempts to get out of Kabul as it fell to the Taliban last year, to reach the UK. (Source: Metro)

Jimmy Cliff, 'The Grandfather of Reggae', has released an album called 'Refugees' and teamed up with UNHCR to create a webpage with ways for fans to support refugees. (Source: UNHCR)

UK borders and migration policy

The High Court ruled that six of ten passages in internal government documents relating to the Rwanda policy must be revealed before the legal case on the lawfulness of the policy which is starting on 5 September; as Foreign Secretary, Liz Truss had applied for these passages to be kept secret to preserve international relations and national security. It's understood that the passages show that government ministers ignored warnings from a foreign office adviser over human rights abuses in Rwanda as they developed the Rwanda policy. Further, the Foreign Secretary has been accused of delaying the Foreign Office's annual human rights report usually published by the end

of June, as it is likely to cover human rights abuses in Rwanda. (Sources: the Guardian, BBC)

On Channel crossings:

- The Royal Navy will be handing back responsibility for responding to Channel crossings to the Home Office in January. Over 14,700 people have crossed since government announced in April the Navy would be leading on the operational response, with over 20,000 in 2022 so far. (Sources: Independent, BBC)
- Rising numbers of people arriving via small boats prompted over 30 Conservative MPs to write to the Prime Minister. (Source: Express)
- Alongside recent reports about Albanian nationals arriving in the UK via small boats, this article makes some contentious statements about the validity of Albanian asylum claims as well as UK responsibilities. (Source: the Telegraph)

The Home Office has withdrawn the requirement for police registration for certain foreign nationals upon arrival in the UK, because the same data is already collected by the Home Office, although the law underpinning the policy has not been repealed. The policy applied to a group of 42 nationalities and affected many international students. (Sources: Home Office, Each Other, Free Movement)

This briefing examining the impact of Brexit on the labour market shows that although the end of free movement has led to labour shortages in some professions like low-skilled roles, other issues also contributed such as Covid-19 and many other countries are also experiencing similar issues. Meanwhile a former Minister outlines his views on immigration policy in depth , arguing that the new Prime Minister should aim to reduce migration to the UK. (Sources: Migration Observatory, Conservative Home)

Specific migrant groups

The tabloids report that during ongoing consultation the Home Office has told local authorities the asylum accommodation estate needs to plan to house 100,000 people by the end of 2023. (Source: the Sun)

Yorkshire and Humber leaders from the voluntary and community sector are among the voices raising alarm over the rate of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children going missing from asylum hotels. On average one child goes missing each week nationally, according to Freedom of Information data in the report 'Outside the frame' published in June 2022. (Sources: ECPAT UK, Independent)

Research into the mental resilience of Syrian children in refugee camps reveals only one in five children show resilience to mental health problems and highlights the importance of environment in recovering from trauma. (Source: Queen Mary University)

The Immigration Rules now allow for refugee family reunion applications from adult dependent children. (Sources: Home Office, Families Together Coalition)

A coalition of charities is asking the government to do more to support Afghan refugees; their letter in the Times requests improving and developing existing resettlement schemes and facilitating refugee family reunion. (Source: Safe Passage)

Given the risk of some hosting arrangements ending, pressure is mounting on the government to double the host thank you payment on the Homes for Ukraine scheme, with the Treasury reportedly considering this as a cheaper alternative to finding independent housing. Over 1,000 hosts signed an open letter urging the government to do more to support integration of refugees from Ukraine. (Source: Independent)

Legal wrangling continues regarding the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS); recent court decisions relate to extended family members and eligibility to apply to the EUSS, including partners unable to get married due to Covid-19. (Source: Free Movement)

On Hong Kong, concerns have been raised about the Chinese Communist Party infiltrating British universities. Meanwhile, this article explores reasons behind the launch of the British National Overseas (BNO) visa. (Sources: Radio Free Asia, ejinsight)

In international student news, a Leeds University PhD student on a family visit to Saudi Arabia was arrested and sentenced to 34 years in prison for her use of twitter. (Source: the Guardian)

On modern slavery:

- For the first time more than 4,000 potential modern slavery victims have been referred to the Home Office in a single quarter, according to the latest National Referral Mechanism (NRM) statistics. The top nationalities were Albanian, UK and Eritrean, with the highest ever number of Albanian referrals. The NRM is the UK system for identifying and supporting modern slavery victims. (Source: Home Office)
- Indonesian fruit pickers face thousands of pounds worth of debt after being illegally charged fees by brokers for finding them work in the UK. (Source: the Guardian)
- There is a consultation on an accreditation framework for Independent Modern Slavery Advocates (ISMAs) which is closing 9 September. (Source: Hope for Justice)

Cohesion and integration

A year after the evacuation from Afghanistan, Mohammad shares his experience of the evacuation of Kabul and coming to the UK. (Source: Refugee Action)

This article describes how the organisation Micro Rainbow is supporting LGBTQ+ Afghans to integrate in the UK. (Source: Gay Times)

Sport fans may enjoy this article on Ramla Ali, the champion women's boxer who first arrived in the UK as a refugee from

Somalia. She won amateur English and British titles before representing her country of birth at the Tokyo Olympics. (Source: BBC)

International news

Tamana Safi, who worked for the last President of Afghanistan, writes on behalf of the women left behind since the Taliban takeover, criticising governments for not doing more to protect Afghan women. Afghan refugee women are also calling for more to be done to avoid women from being 'erased' from society. (Sources: Politics Home, La Prensa Latina)

In Europe, the number of migrants reaching the EU between January and July rose by 86% compared to the same period last year. The treatment of migrants continues to raise concern after both Greece and Turkey refused to take responsibility for 70 migrants stuck on a small island at the border between the two countries. (Sources: EURACTIV, The Civil Fleet)

In Australia:

- Australian unions and employers agree 40,000 more migrants a year should be allowed to enter the country to address the skills shortage. (Source: the Guardian)
- More Afghan Olympians and their families have been granted asylum in Australia. They join more than 100 other Afghan athletes who have settled in Australia over the past year. (Source: The Independent)

Author Gaia Vince says we need to prepare for a ‘migration of a kind humanity has never before undertaken’ if climate change worsens. (Source: the Guardian)

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