Migration news roundup 5 February 2024



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Stories that inspired us this week

Read Noor’s story of becoming a bodybuilding champion in Australia. He was motivated by Rocky films he saw as a child in a Rohingya refugee camp in Bangladesh. (Source: UNHCR UK)

A charity volunteer tells the story of a photograph of her mother who arrived in 1939 on the Kindertransport. The image was displayed in an exhibition, and the other girls featured were identified only a year ago. (Source: imix)

International news

Conflict in Sudan has caused displacement of over 10 million people, leading to the International Organization for Migration calling for urgent action. Chad hosts the largest number of the people displaced. (Source: InfoMigrants)

With record numbers of people crossing the US-Mexico border, President Biden is trying to negotiate a political deal to use new emergency measures to close the border when the system can’t cope. (Source: the Guardian)

In Europe:

- Two application processing centres are to be built in Albania to process asylum seekers arriving via Italy. (Source: InfoMigrants)
- Over 4 million Ukrainians registered under the European protection scheme are likely to have their status renewed beyond March 2025. (Source: Yahoo News)

UK borders and migration policy

The Home Secretary announced that measures to curb net migration will take effect in March and April this year. These include stopping care workers bringing dependants, and increases to the minimum salary threshold for the skilled worker visa, and to the minimum income requirement for family visas. There's some analysis of the change to family visa policy here. The statement comes as latest projections suggest the UK population could grow by nearly 10% by 2036, potentially reaching 74 million, while Migration Observatory's briefing on net migration suggests the forecast for the net migration component of that projected population growth is too low. (Sources: Home Office, Migration Observatory, BBC)

There's a new parliamentary briefing on the immigration health surcharge, which on 6 February increases from £624 to £1,035 per year. (Source: UK Parliament)

On the Rwanda scheme:

- The Safety of Rwanda Bill passed its second reading in the House of Lords and will now proceed to committee stage. (Source: BBC)
- The President of the European Court of Human Rights reminded countries that they are legally obliged to comply with the court's injunctions. The new UK legislation would allow ministers to ignore 'Rule 39' orders (one prevented the first Rwanda removal). (Source: BBC)
- The UK equality watchdog told parliamentarians the proposed law risks 'breaching its obligations under international law'. (Source: Equality and Human Rights Commission)
- Home Secretary James Cleverly suggested that if returns agreements are reached with other countries, the number of people sent to Rwanda could be 'quite low'. (Source: BBC)
- People awaiting decisions on their asylum claims have spoken of their distress at receiving letters sent in error, telling them they could be sent to Rwanda. (Source: the Guardian)
- The government has published a new factsheet on the Bill. (Source: Home Office)
- Finally, here's an updated briefing exploring UK government policies aimed at deterring people from seeking asylum. (Source: Migration Observatory)

Specific migrant groups

Newly granted refugees experiencing street homelessness staged a sit-in at Bury Town Hall in protest about the lack of available accommodation. (Source: ITV)

This articles explores the difficulties faced by some resettled Afghans including children separated from family when brought to the UK, unable to sponsor parents to join them. (Source: the Guardian)

A Freedom of Information request revealed that over 170 people, including 15 unaccompanied children, had to be moved out of a former RAF site used as asylum accommodation as it was not appropriate for them. Meanwhile, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published a report on the experiences of displaced children, notably finding that unstable accommodation placements and the use of hotel accommodation removed a sense of agency for young people. (Sources: BBC, ONS)

A new research report compares the Hong Kong BN(O) and Ukraine visa schemes as the main safe and legal routes into the UK, and captures experiences of the visa holders. Meanwhile, another parliamentary briefing focuses on access to student finance and status of students from Hong Kong. (Sources: Lancaster University, UK Parliament)

On international students:

- There's some insightful data analysis regarding international students, discussing why many are switching to care work after graduation. (Source: Migration

Observatory)

- This article discusses some of the issues surrounding the increase in international students to the UK, including their impact on domestic students, the labour market and the reliance of universities on their fees. (Source: the Guardian)
- This briefing on international students says the UK is second globally as a study destination. The University of Leeds and University of Sheffield are among the top study destinations. (Source: Migration Observatory)

It has emerged that the government chose not to comply with a court ruling stating that modern slavery victims should be given temporary leave to remain while awaiting an asylum decision. (Source: the Guardian)

A legal case is being brought against the seasonal worker scheme, based on the experiences of an Indonesian man who ended up sleeping rough at York railway station. (Source: the Guardian)

Cohesion and integration

Here's an article on how to educate children and young people to be more welcoming to young asylum seekers and refugees. (Source: The Conversation)

A new report on the numbers of migrants in the UK labour market says that non-EU migrants who moved to the UK to seek asylum are more likely to be unemployed than those who moved for work, family, or study. (Source: Migration Observatory)

A blog post on the subject of ‘The Good Migrant’ considers how the image has been popularised through mainstream media and political rhetoric. (Source: Refugee Action)

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