Migration news roundup 22 July 2024

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Stories that inspired us this week

As the Paris Olympics approach, read about individuals in the UK asylum system, for whom sport is very important. Relatedly, meet some of the 36 athletes from 11 countries who will be competing as part of the Refugee Olympic Team in Paris 2024. (Sources: the Guardian, News Center 1)

Leeds resident and former Spice Girl, Mel B has received an honorary doctorate from Leeds Beckett University on trauma-informed approaches for survivors of domestic abuse. Mel referenced being the 'daughter of an immigrant' in her acceptance speech. Well done, Scary Spice! (Sources: BBC, X)

International news

Speaking at the Trans-Mediterranean Migration Forum, representatives from Libya and Tunisia called on the European Union to increase aid to North African states struggling with the effects of largescale migration to Europe via the North African coast. Meanwhile, in the Sudanese city of El Fasher in the North Darfur region, some 800,000 displaced civilians are trapped with dwindling food, water and medical supplies, as fighting between

rival militias renders the city inaccessible to international aid groups. (Sources: Al Jazeera, UN News)

In Europe, the Finnish parliament's approval of a new bill, granting individual border guards the authority to deny asylum to aspiring migrants seeking entry from Russia, prompted criticism from scholars and legal experts as the measures may violate Finland's international commitments as well as the constitution. While in Ireland, anti-migration protests have erupted into violence again in Dublin, targeting asylum accommodation. (Sources: Al Jazeera, the Guardian)

UK borders and migration policy

A new 'Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill' was announced in the King's Speech 2024 to establish a 'Border Security Command' to tackle smuggling gangs, ending the agreement with Rwanda, and modernising the immigration system, including clearing the asylum backlog, ending hotel use, and increasing returns. (Source: Prime Minister's Office)

At a meeting with European leaders, media reported the Prime Minister is open to offshoring processing of asylum claims, while he also announced funds for education and employment projects designed to address root causes of migration across the Channel from Africa and the Middle East. (Sources: Financial Times, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office)

A review of the Seasonal Work visa scheme recommends better conditions for workers. (Source: Migration Advisory Committee)

Specific migrant groups

It was revealed during a High Court hearing that the government plans to prioritise processing asylum claims of those who were previously labelled 'inadmissible' and potentially removed to Rwanda. This affects up to 90,000 individuals, with certain nationality groups likely to be considered first. People living in asylum accommodation on the Bibby Stockholm, supported by local residents and campaigners, began a protest due to the length of time taken to process asylum claims. Lastly on asylum, the Home Office apologised about letters that had been sent in error granting asylum seekers leave to remain, and were subsequently retracted. (Sources: the Guardian, InfoMigrants)

Civic organisations have sent a letter to a prime minister outlining steps that a new government could take to fix the issues with the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS). This article lists specific issues experienced by Roma EU citizens. Relatedly, the latest Immigration Tribunal statistics show that the success rate for EUSS appeals is 43% and the average time to receive a decision is 10 months. (Sources: the Guardian, UK in a Changing Europe, Ministry of Justice)

A report released this week found that placing lone asylum-seeking children in Home Office child hotels in Kent increased the risk of exploitation and trafficking. The report maintains that

of the 440 unaccompanied children who went missing from these settings between 2021 and 2024, over a hundred are still unaccounted for. Relatedly, the Children's Commissioner for England visited Kent and communicated their concerns to the Home Office and the Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration. (Sources: University College London, The Children's Commissioner)

Langar Aid, a Coventry-based charity providing food support to homeless people and others struggling financially, has observed that there is an increasing number of international students in different cities using soup kitchens and reaching out for food parcels. In other news, the Quality Assurance Agency, commissioned to review transparency and fairness of international student admissions at UK universities (amid concerns that some universities lowered their entry requirements to attract overseas students at foundation level), found that processes have remained fair for both international and home students. (Sources: the PIE Network, BBC)

Cohesion and integration

A new poll has revealed that Nigel Farage's Reform party has a worse reputation as a 'racist party' than UKIP did back in 2015. At the same time, the poll shows only one in five people disapproved of the Rwanda policy being scrapped and highlights a wider public support for the Labour government's new immigration agenda. (Source: British Future)

Kit Fan, a Hong Kong academic living in York, shares his story of renouncing Hong Kong citizenship for fear of retaliation from the Chinese government. (Sources: MSN)

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