Migration news roundup 1 May 2023



- Stories that inspired us this week
- International news
- UK borders and migration policy

- Specific migrant groups
- Cohesion and integration

Stories that inspired us this week

Sifan Hassan, two time Olympic champion who sought refuge in the Netherlands at the age of 15, won the London Marathon in her first ever race of this kind. This is despite an injury and competing against experts in the race of 26.2 miles. (Source: BBC)

A play about two young Ukrainian women and 'Bandura' players, separated by the war, will be broadcast on BBC Radio 4 on 4 May 2023. The drama draws on interviews with refugees from Ukraine. (Source: BBC)

The UK will host Eurovision on behalf of Ukraine in a fortnight. As part of preparations 13 year old Samir Adam Khan from Odessa has had the chance to sing with 80s pop star Sonia. Additionally, as part of its Eurovision Legacy, Liverpool has created space for members of its Ukrainian refugee community to design a garden that features plants from Ukraine. (Sources: Express and Star, BBC)

International news

The UNHCR has highlighted the topic of disability and forced migration in a series of webinars, and shared tools to be applied to strengthen the protection of people with disability according to the UN Convention. Murhaf Hamid, an 11 year old seeking

asylum in Sweden, raised up to $233,000 for Majblomman, a children's charity. (Source: Info Migrant)

Beyond Europe, migrants took to the streets in Mexico to demand the end of detention centres after 40 people were killed in a recent fire. (Source: BBC)

UK borders and migration policy

The Illegal Migration Bill passed its third reading in the House of Commons this week and will now pass to the House of Lords for consideration. The government tabled several amendments - there's commentary on some of these here. (Sources: BBC, Gov.UK, Free Movement)

Further responses to the Bill:

- This briefing argues the Bill may result in people seeking asylum being removed to third countries, or accommodated long-term in the UK, rather than returned to their countries of origin.
- The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has expressed concern that the legislation risks breaching international human rights obligations.
- There are reports of discontent amongst Home Office staff.

(Sources: Migration Observatory, EHRC, Independent)

Meanwhile, the Home Secretary has said people arriving on small boats 'possess values which are at odds with our country',

as well as stating that people arriving from Sudan to seek refuge could be removed to Rwanda. (Source: Independent).

According to provisional Home Office data:

- Nearly a quarter of people crossing the Channel on small boats in the first three months of this year were from Afghanistan.
- The number of people arriving from Albania on small boats has reduced, with just 29 arriving in the first quarter (271 people arrived during the equivalent period last year).
- Over 1,000 people have been returned to Albania since a joint communiqué was signed in December 2022.

(Sources: The National News, Home Office)

The Rwanda scheme is being examined in the Court of Appeal – lawyers have argued Rwanda is not a safe country for such an arrangement and the system would not allow sufficient time for torture survivors to be identified. Meanwhile, health professionals have added their voice to concerns about the scheme. (Sources: Independent, ITV News, Guardian)

Specific migrant groups

Research examining the impact of hotel accommodation on people seeking asylum has found to be unsuitable and recommends more investment to find appropriate housing in the community. (Source: Migrant Voice)

A government factsheet outlines support in place for resettled people from Afghanistan, as part of measures to move this group out of bridging hotels. (Source: Home Office)

A new documentary ‘Leaving to remain’ explores the experiences of three Roma migrants in the UK after the EU referendum, and will be shown in cinemas across the country. You can watch the trailer here. (Sources: Guardian, Vimeo)

On Hong Kong, a new report exploring welcome and support available to Hong Kong BN(O) visa children in schools has been published by the Welcome Committee for Hong Kongers, highlighting good practice. Meanwhile, a short documentary on the same topic has been created by a group of Hong Kong journalists (‘Study 6000 miles away’), with a second documentary focusing on the experiences of older people arriving from Hong Kong. (Sources: WelcomeHK, Green Beans – on YouTube)

On Windrush, artist Barbara Walker is shortlisted for this year’s Turner Prize, exploring the effects of the Windrush scandal on individuals and their families. The winner will be announced in December 2023. In Leeds, ‘King, Country and Homes’ is a new exhibition at the Central Library, focusing on two World War II veterans from Jamaica who helped defend Britain and then settled in Leeds. One of them, Alford Gardner, was sent back to Jamaica in 1947, returning in June 1948 on HMT Empire Windrush. (Source: BBC)

Cohesion and integration

Members of the Orthodox Jewish community in MP Diane Abbott's Hackney constituency (one of the largest such communities in Europe) have shared their views on her widely publicised controversial letter regarding experiences of racism, whilst Martin Gallagher, a campaigner for Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller rights, reflects on his experiences of anti-Traveller discrimination. (Sources: The Jewish Chronicle, The i)

It is reported that British Muslim communities have been disproportionately affected by the cost-of-living crisis, with an increase in Muslims, including those seeking asylum from Muslim-majority countries, missing meals, accessing food banks, and requesting 'Zakat' (charity) support. (Source: The Big Issue)

The Commission on the Integration of Refugees has been in Glasgow this week hearing the concerns of refugees and people seeking asylum and those supporting them across Scotland. (Source: The Herald)

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