Migration news roundup 28 August 2023

Image
View of Houses of Parliament from bridge over river Thames

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Stories that inspired us this week

Launching this week in Hull is the ‘Tomorrow’ exhibition by women who have survived conflict and persecution, running until 27 September. (Source: Freedom Festival Arts Trust)

In York a peaceful march was planned for Ukrainian Independence Day. (Source: York Press)

Read the stories of individuals supporting people seeking asylum at the southern US border. (Source: UNHCR)

International news

Attempts to prevent migrant crossings continue around the world:

- Reports of systematic, mass killings of migrants at the Saudi-Yemeni border, many of them from Ethiopia, are denied by Saudi border guards. (Source: BBC)
- Having hoped to reach Europe but imprisoned in Libya, 161 Nigerians returned home via the United Nation’s voluntary repatriation scheme. (Source: Al Jazeera)
- Italian authorities prevented the Aurora rescue ship from docking in the nearest port at Lampedusa for nearly 40 hours, despite low supplies and deteriorating health of passengers. A new Italian law requires rescue ships to sail to the port assigned to them – in this case, Trapani in Sicily. (Source: InfoMigrants)

In contrast, in the US a court is considering whether the Texan authorities should remove an installation of buoys on the Rio Grande designed to prevent migrants crossing from Mexico. (Source: the Guardian)

UK borders and migration policy

This report considers what the asylum ‘in-tray’ could look like for the next government in 2025 predicting that even if the Rwanda plan is implemented, arrivals will outpace removals resulting in a growing ‘perma-backlog’ of people. On asylum accommodation, it recommends ‘creative thinking and close working with local government.’ Meanwhile, the Prime Minster cast doubt on how quickly small boat crossings can be countered. (Sources: Institute for Public Policy Research, Sky, the Independent)

In annual reports from the Independent Monitoring Board (IMB), the report on short term holding facilities in the North East Midlands, Yorkshire and Humber criticises confiscation of medicines, and voices concerns about the screening interview. Reports on Heathrow and Gatwick immigration removal centres highlight long detention periods and issues relating to the cancelled Rwanda flight. (Source: IMB)

Official quarterly migration statistics were published for the year ending June 2023. Initial analysis highlights care worker visas driving work migration and small boat migration accounting for 41% of asylum seekers, as well as a growing asylum backlog. National insurance number allocations to non-UK nationals - a proxy for immigration - show a large majority issued to non-EU nationals, with India and Nigeria the top nationalities. (Sources: Home Office, Migration Observatory, the Guardian, Department for Work and Pensions)

Counter to usual media coverage, this article suggests the UK is being used as a route for some migrants from North Africa to reach France. This article warns that haulage drivers may consider leaving the industry due to large fines for unintentionally bringing people across the Channel in lorries. (Sources: Telegraph, BBC)

This briefing on spouse and partner visas gives an overview of the financial requirements. (Source: Free Movement)

Over 900 people have not proceeded with medical treatment when facing upfront NHS charges during the past two years. The article highlights the case of a Sheffield man who had a stroke after not receiving treatment for a blood-clotting condition. (Source: the Guardian)

Specific migrant groups

The use of the Bibby Stockholm as asylum accommodation could face a legal challenge led by the Mayor of Portland who claims the Home Office should have applied for planning permission. (Source: Sky)

This article claims government has failed to enable sufficient safe routes for Afghans despite launching Afghan schemes, according to the International Rescue Committee. (Source: Express and Star)

This article explains difficulties faced by Sudanese nationals evacuated to the UK earlier this year, as their future migration status and entitlements seem unclear. (Source: Free Movement)

On children and young people:

- Following the removal of cartoons in the children's asylum processing centre in July, a campaign is to send thousands of cheerful postcards to asylum seeking children to welcome them to the UK. (Source: the Guardian)
- Kent County Council is taking legal action against the government due to failure to properly enforce the National Transfer Scheme, which disperses unaccompanied asylum-seeking children to councils across the country. (Source: Kent Online)

A recent online national survey carried out with HongKongers highlights social isolation despite high functioning, integration and high levels of education and qualifications, with Hong Kong media noting that one third of recent Hong Kong migrants to the UK have secured full-time employment. (Sources: University of Liverpool, South China Morning Post)

Cohesion and integration

Regarding the legacy of transatlantic slavery, a leading UN judge stated reparations by the UK are 'required by history and is required by law'. Further, this article argues that reparation is not only about money but also about recognition – including the names and identities of enslaved African people who contributed to the development of industrial and economic systems around the world. (Sources: the Guardian, The Conversation)

A centre to commemorate the UK's anti-apartheid movement will open next year, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The centre will provide information about the UK's multicultural heritage, collect stories, and reach out to schools. (Source: the Guardian)

An opinion poll found the government's recent 'small boats week' may have backfired, strengthening Labour's lead on immigration. The topic is now in the top three issues most important to voters, after health and the economy. (Source: the Guardian)

Last updated:

28th August 2023

Contact us about research

If you have any questions about our research, contact us:
research@migrationyorkshire.org.uk
0113 378 8188

Source URL: *https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/news/migration-news-roundup-28-august-2023*