

Migration news roundup 18 December 2023

Image
View of Houses of Parliament from bridge over river Thames

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Stories that inspired us this week

The [Leeds Compassionate City Awards celebrated projects and people supporting migrants](#) including Leeds City of Sanctuary, Guiding Light Leads, DAMASQ project and Hala Wadi. (Source: Leeds City Council)

A [chef in Bradford shares how she keeps her Palestinian heritage alive](#) through cooking. (Source: Telegraph and Argus)

Outside of the region, [Waheed Arian, a British doctor, is determined to help refugees](#) heal from war-related trauma through his charity in Chester which mixes exercise with therapy. (Source: Al Jazeera)

A [farmer in Bristol who came to the UK as a refugee from Syria in 2017 has forged a successful business](#) under the name Rocketman, while [Paintings by Hong Kong raised British painter](#), displayed at the Crypt Gallery in London last weekend, focus on silent political protests happening in the city. (Sources: Bristol 24/7, VOA News)

International news

According to Frontex data, [2023 is a year with the highest arrival of migrants considered irregular to the EU since 2016](#). In Italy, [82,550 applications from non-EU workers were submitted on the first day of seasonal worker visa cycle](#). (Source: InfoMigrants)

This article shares [tragic stories of people who attempted to cross from Russia into Finland during the period of border closure](#). (Source: the Guardian)

Meanwhile, [Italian government's plan to build two migrant reception centres in Albania has been suspended](#) by the Albanian court. (Source: BBC)

Outside of Europe:

- [The Global Refugee Forum, the world's largest gathering dedicated to refugee issues co-hosted by the UNHCR, was formed last week](#). (Source: UN News)

- This article explores [a current situation and journey of Afghan refugees through 11 countries, trying to cross the US-Mexico border](#) to reach the US. (Source: BBC)
- Amid increasing anti-Rohingya sentiment in northern Sumatra, where most of the 1,500 Rohingya arriving from Myanmar on boats since November have settled, [the Indonesian government has called on the international community to strengthen efforts to resolve the Rohingya refugee crisis](#). (Source: ABC News)
- In Hong Kong, [the government is continuing to crack down on political dissent, including warrant arrests for overseas activists](#). (Source: Al Jazeera)

UK borders and migration policy

[The Safety of Rwanda \(Asylum and Immigration\) Bill](#) passed its second reading in the House of Commons this week despite some Conservative MPs abstaining. [Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is expected to face a bumpy ride](#) during the next stages of the parliamentary process in the new year. Critique of the bill continues with the [Chair of the Joint Committee on Human Rights highlighting inconsistencies with the UK's obligations under international law](#). Several [high profile figures, including football commentator Gary Lineker, have written to the government](#) asking it to abandon its plans. This article reports on the [potential for individual legal challenges](#), as well as possible legal action by a trade union. (Sources: BBC, the Guardian, UK Parliament, ITV)

Following recent announcements of measures to reduce net migration:

- [The government has published a new factsheet](#), including an overview of the changes, while [this briefing answers some questions about the changes](#), acknowledging that in some cases the detail is as yet unclear or undecided. (Sources: Home Office, House of Commons Library)
- [This analysis considers what the increased salary thresholds could mean for migration numbers](#). (Source: Migration Observatory)
 - This article considers the [implications of the measures from an employer perspective](#), with [the Royal College of Nursing saying that staff shortages will be exacerbated](#) by the plan to prohibit workers from abroad bringing dependants. (Sources: Free Movement, Nursing in Practice)
- There's anger and concern about the potential impact of [the planned new minimum salary requirement of £38,700 for those wanting to apply for a family visa](#). (Source: the Guardian)

Meanwhile, as [government procurement activity indicates plans to continue to run large scale sites to process small boat arrivals](#) until at least 2030, [79% of people think the government is doing a 'bad job' of managing immigration](#), according to a new poll. In other news, [amended data protection legislation allowing immigration data to be exempt from being released to an individual, has been declared unlawful](#). (Sources: BBC, Ipsos, Free Movement)

Specific migrant groups

Spotlight is on the [living conditions of the Bibby Stockholm following the tragic news that one of the residents died by suicide](#) this week. Elsewhere, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) minister Michael Gove has spoken about homelessness issues for new refugees, highlighting that [the lack of notice to leave asylum accommodation is creating pressures](#). (Sources: the Guardian, the Big Issue)

[A Home Affairs Committee report expresses concern that the government is no longer treating modern slavery as a priority](#) as a result of its focus on irregular migration, and [questions claims that new arrivals are 'abusing' the National Referral Mechanism](#). The report is critical of leaving the role of Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner vacancy for 18 months, and of the delay in developing a new modern slavery strategy. It also cites a change in ministerial responsibility. (Sources: UK Parliament, Independent)

[The latest data on Windrush compensation shows](#) that by the end of October 2023 more than £73 million had been paid out to individuals through the scheme, and over 77% of claims have had a final decision. (Source: Home Office)

Cohesion and integration

Following the sad news of Benjamin Zephaniah's death last week, here are two interesting articles on how he [challenged racist perceptions of Rastafarians](#), especially by the Police, and how [for many children, his poetry and literature would have been 'the first time they encountered published literature written in a language that represented how they spoke](#) and talked about things that mattered to them'. (Source: the Conversation)

Two interesting articles here relating to housing and poverty in England. Researchers have created [a new 'ethnic group deprivation index' to address the hidden poverty](#) of, predominantly [ethnic minority populations living in otherwise wealthy or gentrified neighbourhoods](#). (Source: the Guardian)

Contact us about research

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