

# International Asylum Seeker/Refugee Policy Issues

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## [Crisis-prone Europe set for a replay of 2015](#)

James Neuger, *Mail & Guardian*, 4 January 2016

The year 2015 has been a tense year for Europe and 2016 threatens to be a replay of it. More than one million refugees arrived in Europe in 2015. Two million newcomers are expected to come within the next two years. This large number of refugees has put a lot of strain on the bloc's internal passport-free travel system. The challenges coming with the wave of refugees in connection with the Paris terror attacks have caused shifting mentalities to the right. The rising tide of nationalism has spurred doubt whether the European Union will hang together. The election victory of the Polish Law & Justice party, a Eurosceptic party that is against immigration, ended a phase of pro-EU reliability in Eastern Europe's largest country and aligned it with the querulous Hungary of Prime Minister Viktor Orban. Anti-immigration grandstanding on Europe's edges adds to strains in societies in the middle – mainly Germany, Austria and Sweden – that flung their borders open to the most Muslim newcomers with the goal, eventually, of parcelling them out across Europe in an equitable fashion. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who refused to set an upper limit on refugees coming into Germany, triggered the first serious inner-party challenge to her hold on the chancellorship. On the other side of the English Channel, British opponents of the EU see the continent's subpar economy, leaky borders and vulnerability to terrorism as justification for pulling out the bloc in a referendum Prime Minister David Cameron plans in 2017. However, Cameron relies on the EU leaders' summit in Brussels in February 2016, hoping to get away with new rules governing the U.K. membership in the EU so that he can campaign to keep Britain in the EU.

## [Turkey finds bodies of 36 migrants](#)

Suzan Fraser, *The Globe and Mail*, 5 January 2016

Turkish authorities found the bodies of at least 36 migrants, including several children, who drowned off Turkey after their boats overturned in rough waters as they tried to reach the Greek island of Lesbos. Twelve refugees were rescued. Nine bodies washed up on a beach in the resort town of Ayvalik early in the morning, prompting authorities to dispatch coast guard boats and gendarmerie officials to search the area by sea and by land for possible survivors. Seven other bodies were washed up on a shore at Dikili, a resort about 50 kilometres south of Ayvalik. By late afternoon, the gendarmerie forces had recovered a total of 29 bodies in the area while seven others were found by the coast guards. The victims of the first incident are believed to be from Iraq, Algeria and Syria. There was no information on the nationalities of those drowned in the second incident.

### [26 000 children seek refuge in Sweden](#)

Georgi Gotev, *EurActiv*, 7 January 2016

Over the last 4 months, a record-breaking 115,000 asylum seekers arrived in Sweden. Among them were nearly 26,000 unaccompanied minors. The amount of refugees has forced Sweden to take exceptional border control measures, says Justice and Migration Minister Morgan Johansson. Since photo ID checks were introduced on all people entering from Denmark, Sweden has noted a sharp drop in migrants. Johansson pleads that the principle which states that asylum seekers should apply for asylum in the first country where they arrive, should be the rule, that the Dublin regulation on asylum should be enforced, and that the flow of refugees should be slowed down by strengthening the EU's external borders.

### [Build more fences to stop migrants entering Europe, says Hungary's PM](#)

Alix Culbertson, *EXPRESS*, 8 January 2016

Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban demands the erection of a new frontier in northern Greece from the European Union in order to stop migrants from coming into the continent. He considers it to be insufficient to only rely on an agreement with Turkey. In October the EU had offered Turkey a possible £2.2 billion in aid, the prospect of easier travel visas and renewed talks on Turkey joining the bloc - in return for its help stemming the flow of migrants into Europe. Orban has gained support in his country for his tough stance on migration which involved putting up fences on his country's southern border to keep out migrants and asylum seekers. EU members initially criticised the barriers but several countries, including Slovenia and Austria, have since raised fences of their own and others have imposed checks within the EU's free movement Schengen zone to cope with the flow. According to Orban Bulgaria, one of Greece's northern neighbours, needs to be adopted into the EU's Schengen zone as well, while Macedonia should be given financial support and other assistance so it could beef up its defences.

## Regional Displacement Issues

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### [Al-Shabaab takes village in Somalia](#)

*News 24*, 4 January 2016

At least ten people, including three Al-Shabaab militants, were killed and several others injured on Monday, 4 January 2016, in a heavy fighting between the government forces and Al-Qaida allied network in southern Somalia. The fighting took place at the regions's Warmahan neighborhood early Monday. Warmahan is some 60 kilometres to the south of the Somali capital Mogadishu. National forces overpowered the Al-Shabaab militants. The Somali National Army controls the area now. They lost three soldiers, three others were wounded. However, Al-Shabaab claimed they captured the neighbourhood and killed a large number of soldiers on the spot. The attack followed the deployment of up to 600 African Union soldiers in the southern port city of Kismayo on Sunday. The Ethiopian troops came to back up Kenyan and Somali troops battling Al-Shabaab in the region.

### [Burundi Hit by More Violence Ahead of Peace Talks](#)

Jill Craig, *VOA News*, 4 January 2016

Unidentified assailants fired three shells toward the centre of Burundi's capital on Monday, two days before peace talks between Burundi's government and opposition are set to start in Tanzania. One of

the shells landed a few meters from the offices of Bujumbura's mayor, injuring three people, including a woman who was seriously wounded. Brief panic ensued after the attack. Over the weekend, at least three people were killed. Eyewitnesses say that one of them was a young musician murdered by a police officer. Police officials said he was a criminal fleeing an arrest when he was accidentally gunned down. Authorities have opened an investigation into the incident. The ministry of public security asked the public to remain vigilant. The peace talks between Burundi's government and opposition groups were said to be postponed, with no word on when they may resume.

#### [Fourteen killed in east DRC attack](#)

AFP, *IOL News*, 7 January 2016

According to local authorities and the military fourteen people were killed in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo overnight on 7 January by suspected Rwandan rebels accused of repeated attacks in the area. The rebels have slipped past the army's positions to carry out the attack using knives or other bladed weapons. Local authorities hold the FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda) responsible for the latest attacks, taking place in Miriki, 110 kilometres north of Goma, capital of conflict-torn North Kivu province. The FDLR is a Hutu group based in eastern Congo, some of its members being accused of taking part in the 1994 genocide in neighbouring Rwanda. The Congolese army last year launched an offensive to try push the FDLR out of the east, where the rebels have been wrecking havoc since the genocide of mostly ethnic Tutsis across the border in Rwanda. In October, FDLR members were accused of stabbing three people in Lubero, one of the traditional homelands of central Africa's Nande tribe. However, local sources have linked the attacks in Lubero to attempts by a local Nande leader to bar the return to the area of displaced Congolese Hutus, whom he accuses of trying to 'conquer' Nande land.

#### [Nigeria: Boko Haram Kill Seven in Suicide Attack, Raid](#)

AFP, *All Africa*, 7 January 2016

On Tuesday, 5 Jan 2016, Boko Haram gunmen have mounted their first attacks since Nigeria's government declared the Islamist group 'technically' defeated, killing seven people in a raid and suicide bombing. The attacks happened in the north-eastern state of Borno, near the group's Sambisa Forest hideout, where the army is looking to flush out remnants of the rebel group. The first attack happened in Izgeki village where Boko Haram gunmen on bicycles killed two people. Being pursued by the gunmen, villagers were forced to cross the river in order to reach Izghe, the village across. One of the pursuers wore a suicide belt, killing five people when blowing himself up near the market. Izghe is in the district of Gwoza, which Boko Haram captured in August 2014 and which the group's shadowy leader Abubakar Shekau declared the centre of its self-styled caliphate. It was previously attacked in February 2014 where more than 100 people were killed as the rebels torched homes, opened fire and set off explosives. Thousands of residents fled the attack into Adamawa towards the town of Madagali and elsewhere but following the army's recapture of territory, some managed to return and begin reconstruction. Also on Tuesday another attack by Boko Haram gunmen took place in a nearby village of Nchiha where the gunmen looted food and burnt a large part of the village. Luckily no-one was hurt as residents managed to flee.

# South Africa

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## [South Africa's ruling party calls for tougher anti-racism law](#)

Geoffrey York, *The Globe and Mail*, 5 January 2016

South Africa's ruling party, the African National Congress, has called for a law criminalizing racism in the country, after Penny Sparrow, supporter of the opposition party, the Democratic Alliance, made a racist comment on social media. His post received widespread media attention and inspired commentary about the limits of free speech and the continuing presence of racist attitudes in the country, almost 22 years after the end of apartheid. Citing this and other incidences, Moloto Mothapo, the ANC's spokesman in parliament, released a statement saying the party wants 'specific legislation' criminalizing 'any act that perpetuates racism or glorifies apartheid.' There are already laws against hate speech in South Africa, and there is also the Equality Court to deal with cases of racial discrimination. The ANC says, however, this is not enough and that tougher laws, modelled on the German laws that prohibit the denial of the Holocaust, are needed.

## [Crime down during festive season](#)

Carlo Petersen, *IOL News*, 6 January 2016

A delegation of high ranking police officers announced they were pleased with the outcome of integrated anti-crime initiatives in the Western Cape province over the festive season. Crime had decreased in areas which had been worst-hit by crime during this time. 603 people had been arrested for various crimes in the province during December. The most arrests were for illicit drugs (3 642), 'liquor-related' crime (3 241) and 1 506 for contact crime. Police had focused on heavily frequented places such as shopping malls or tourist attractions as well as areas notorious for gang activity and crimes against woman and children. In order to make operations more effective deployments got supported by administrative personnel and students from several training academies. Usually there are many stabbings and shootings over festive season. While eleven people were shot dead over eight days during the 2014 festive season only three deadly shootings took place since 1 December 2015.

## [Zuma urges citizens to expose corruption](#)

Genevieve Quintal, *News24*, 9 January 2016

In a speech addressed to ANC supporters held at the Royal Bafokeng Stadium in Rustenburg on Saturday, 9 January, President Zuma urged everyone to 'fight corruption and expose corruption and expose corrupt people and report them to law enforcement'. The president delivered his speech as part of an executive summary of the ANC's January 8<sup>th</sup> statement in which he spoke about the party's policies and traditions which 'must unite all people of South Africa, black and white' saying that 'there is enough room in the ANC for everyone'. The party celebrated its 104th anniversary on Friday, 8 January.