

International Asylum Seeker/Refugee Policy Issues

[Australian government defends plan to take 12 000 Syrian refugees](#)

News24, 23 November 2015

Australia's refugee quota amounts to 14,000 refugees per year. However, it has set up a new plan to allow 12,000 additional Syrian refugees. Following the Paris attacks and a public debate on refugee intake, Australia announced that it will continue with taking in these refugees despite pressure from the ruling party's own right wing. According to Justice Minister Michael Keenan, who is responsible for counter-terror policy, there are comprehensive checks in place against terrorists posing as refugees. The Australian police announced on 23 November that indeed 12 men and boys who are living in the community were deemed capable of committing an act of terror such as killing a random member of the public. Federal Police chief Neil Gaughan told ABC TV, however, that the dozen people who are free have been under surveillance for more than a year. Keenan also confirmed that the first five refugees from the special intake arrived in Perth in the week from 16 to 22 November. More are expected to arrive on east coast states before Christmas as well as in 2016.

[German police want 'backup' to cope with refugees, terrorism](#)

News24, 23 November 2015

Germany's Trade Union for Police (GdP) started a nationwide campaign called 'We need backup' to raise awareness of the growing workload officers face. A major strain brought on by terrorist threats and Europe's migration crisis have further intensified the urgent boost in manpower. GdP Federal Chairperson Joerg Radek stated that around 16,000 vacancies have been left unfilled since the turn of the millennium and that more and more officers are working overtime as a result. Germany expects to receive at least 800,000 asylum seekers this year. This has led to a sharp uptake in racially aggravated violence as right-wing extremists target refugee shelters and try to block migrants from entering their towns. Security is also to be boosted at this year's Christmas markets, in response to recent terrorist threats in Paris and Brussels.

[Burundi refugees pack Tanzania camps](#)

Katy Migiro, *IOL News*, 23 November 2015

Six aid agencies announced on 23 November that the lives of over 110,000 Burundian refugees are threatened due to heavy rains, flooding, and a spike in new arrivals to overcrowded camps in Tanzania amid the rising political tension in Burundi. Life-threatening malaria and diarrhoea have been spreading in Nyarugusu, the world's third largest refugee camp, since the rainy season began, and damage caused by a powerful El Nino has left aid agencies short of funds throughout east Africa. According to some of the aid agencies which include Oxfam, Save the Children and HelpAge International 'people are still living in overcrowded mass shelters months after their arrival, where

wet floors and cramped conditions mean that the risk of respiratory infections and waterborne diseases is high'. The agencies also fear that a new exodus of Burundian refugees 'would push the current limits of the camps in western Tanzania to breaking point'. To reduce congestion in Nyarugusu, more than 50 000 refugees are gradually being moved to a second camp, Nduta, some 100 km north. A third camp, Mtendeli, is also planned. The current El Niño weather phenomenon is predicted to be the strongest on record, the United Nations says, causing flooding in east Africa, mainly in Kenya and Somalia, that has put two million people at risk of displacement and disease.

[Canada to announce plan to resettle 25 000 refugees](#)

News24, 24 November 2015

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced on Tuesday 24 November his plan to resettle 25 000 Syrian refugees saying that all 10 of Canada's provincial premiers support bringing that many in. Despite pushback by some officials, Trudeau hasn't backed down from a pledge to bring 25 000 Syrian refugees to Canada. The government will fly in 10,000 refugees by the end of the year and the remainder by end-February which will allow the government to conduct security checks to root out possible Islamic State militants. According to Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale an applicant's 'file will simply be put aside and held for further consideration at a later time' if there is any doubt about an application or an interview or any of the data. The resettlement plan entails that Canada will spend up to C\$678 million (\$510 million) over six years flying in the refugees from Turkey, Syria and Jordan and then helping resettle them. The first flight is due to leave from the region early next month. The federal government will give priority to complete families, women at risk and gay or transgender people. It will prioritise single adult men only if they are gay, bisexual or transgender, or if they are accompanying their parents. Private groups will be allowed to sponsor any single adult man regardless of his sexual orientation. Canada has long prided itself on opening its doors wider than any nation to asylum seekers. In times of crisis in decades past, Canada resettled refugees quickly and in large numbers. It airlifted more than 5,000 people from Kosovo in the late 1990s, more than 5,000 from Uganda in 1972 and resettled 60,000 Vietnamese in 1979-80. More than 1.2 million refugees have arrived in Canada since World War II.

[Many House Republicans want refugee restrictions in spending bill](#)

Patricia Zengerle, *REUTERS*, 24 November 2015

The attacks in Paris earlier this month fueled a wave of anti-refugee sentiment in the United States that had been rising since President Obama announced his plan to admit Syrians in September. On 24 November a letter was put forward to ensure that a must-pass spending bill block any use of federal funding to resettle refugees from Syria and nearby countries to the US. Nearly one-third of the Republicans in the House of Representatives, 74 out of the 246 House Republicans, signed the letter. The letter further urges other House leaders to include a provision in an upcoming appropriations bill that would block President Barack Obama's plan to accept 10,000 Syrian refugees in the next year. President Obama has promised to veto a standalone bill passed by the House, setting tighter controls on refugee resettlement. Congressional aides are now negotiating the \$1 trillion-plus spending bill, facing a Dec. 11 deadline for it to pass the House and Senate and be signed into law by Obama to avoid a government shutdown.

[6 children die as migrant boats sink off Turkey](#)

News24, 27 November 2015

At least six children drowned on Friday in two separate incidents when their boats sank off Turkey while trying to make the risky crossing to Greece. A first boat loaded with 55 Syrian and Afghan migrants sank in the Aegean after setting out from near the town of Ayvacik for the Greek island of Lesbos. Turkish coastguards have so far recovered bodies of four Afghan children. Another two children were recovered near the coast of the southwestern resort of Bodrum when their vessel heading for the Greek island of Kos sank off the coast. Turkey and the European Union have agreed in principle to a refugee action plan, which is expected to be finalised at a summit on Sunday. The EU is planning to give Turkey cash help as well as provide visa-free travel for Turkish nationals in return for Ankara's help to contain refugee crisis.

[Migrant crisis: Turkey and EU strike deal to limit refugee flow](#)

BBC News, 29 November 2015

After a meeting in Brussels between all 28 European member states and Turkey, a deal was struck to control the flow of migrants to Europe. Turkey will receive €3bn (£2.1bn) and political concessions in return for clamping down on its borders and keeping refugees in the country. Under the deal, Turkish citizens may be able to travel without visas in Europe's Schengen zone, which allows free movement between many European countries, by October 2016. However, the rules will be relaxed only if Turkey meets certain conditions. The BBC's Istanbul correspondent Mark Lowen says there was reluctance among some EU members to bow too deeply to Turkey when there are serious concerns about its government's respect for democracy and the rule of law. Jean Claude Juncker, president of the European Commission, said the deal 'would not lead to a situation where we forget about the main differences and divergences we have with Turkey - human rights and freedom of the press.'

Regional Displacement Issues

[Burundi violence: US to place sanctions on officials](#)

BBC News, 24 November 2015

The United States has announced to put sanctions on four current and former officials in Burundi in connection with the continuing violence there. They include the minister of public security, Minister Alain Guillaume Bunyoni, the deputy director of police, Godefroid Bizimana, former intelligence chief, Godefroid Niyombare as well as former defense minister, Cyrille Ndayirukiye. The four will face an asset freeze and visa restrictions. The White House said it had received 'multiple, credible, and ongoing reports of targeted killings, arbitrary arrests, torture, and political repression by security forces, as well as violence and abuses by youth militia affiliated with the ruling party'. 'Recent dangerous rhetoric by government officials has further contributed to the climate of fear and risks inciting further violence,' the statement added.

[DRC: Draconian crackdown on dissent one year ahead of elections](#)

Amnesty International, 25 November 2015

A year before presidential elections are to be held in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Amnesty International reports on the country's justice system by highlighting eight individuals who have been wrongfully arrested due to their political activism against President Kabila's intention to prolong his term. In its report, Amnesty International states that the 'government's crackdown on those voicing these views has intensified'. Part of the government's crackdown includes arbitrary arrests, prolonged

incommunicado detentions by the National Intelligence Agency (ANR) and trials based on trumped-up or illegitimate charges violating the rights to liberty, freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. Since DRC's Constitution limits a President to two consecutive terms and also prohibits the number and length of terms from being changed by constitutional review, President Kabila's run for a third term would be unconstitutional. According to Sarah Jackson, Amnesty International's Deputy Regional Director for East Africa, the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes 'Lessons should be learnt from Burkina Faso and Burundi where mass protests were sparked by incumbents attempting to extend constitutional term-limits creating longer-term crises.'

[COP 21: Ready or not – drought tests Ethiopia](#)

Colin Cosier, *IRIN News*, 27 November 2015

According to the UN 8.2 million Ethiopians are in need of food assistance this year and expect the number to increase to 15 million next year. The government has bought a million metric tonnes of grain, but the supply is only expected to last the next few months. Ethiopia is expected to be hit hard by global warming, with big swings in rainfall variability from drought to flooding. The ability of farmers to adapt to a changing climate, and the government to identify a path to sustainable development, are key for the country's future. While there was unanimous agreement among independent aid officials that the authorities are working hard to avert disaster, not all agree the crisis is 'under control' as claimed by government spokesman and communications minister Getachew Reda at a recent press conference. But a top foreign aid official says while no one is starving to death, about 200,000 children die each year from preventable diseases linked to malnutrition, and the drought will make matters worse. How the disaster response will be paid for is another cause for concern, warns the head of one international NGO. In October, a figure of \$596 million was set to cover the costs of the drought response until the end of the year. The government has contributed \$192 million while the international community pledged \$163 million, leaving a significant funding gap, the government insists it and donors will meet.

[Rival militia forces battle in central Somalia: UN](#)

AFP, *YAHOO News*, 28 November 2015

According to the United Nations Rival militia forces have clashed in central Somalia in the town of Galkayo on 28 November. The fighting broke out between gunmen loyal to the Puntland and Galmudug districts causing hundreds of civilians to flee. Tensions have been high since fighting erupted on November 22, when at least six people were killed and dozens injured. The UN envoy Nicholas Kay has called on the fighting to stop, warning the rival political groups that 'shelling civilian areas may be a crime against humanity or war crime'. Although the rivals agreed on a ceasefire, it now appears to have collapsed. In a statement signed by the United States, European Union, Britain, Sweden and Italy, the UN and the regional IGAD bloc have called on the leadership of Puntland and Galmudug 'to resolve their differences through peaceful dialogue'. Furthermore, they 'urge these leaders to instruct their security forces to stand down, and conduct an orderly withdrawal from the line of division separating the northern and southern districts of Galkayo city in order to prevent further bloodshed'.

[Burkina Faso votes to choose first new leader in decades](#)

Reuters, *SABC*, 29 November 2015

On 29 November polls opened in Burkina Faso in the first free election in three decades. The country will choose a replacement for President Blaise Compaore, who ruled for 27 years but was overthrown last year in an uprising backed by the army after an attempt to change the constitution to maintain

his tenure. The polls were pushed back from October 11 after an abortive coup in September by members of the now-disbanded elite presidential guard.

South Africa

[UN to help Makana outcasts](#)

David MacGregor, *TimesLive*, 24 November 2015

In response to the xenophobic attacks in Grahamstown on 21 October that drove hundreds of foreigners out of the city, a stakeholder meeting at Grahamstown City Hall was held on 23 November to discuss possible solutions for the displaced people. According Patrick Kawuma Male of the UN High Commission for Refugees, the UN would not only help out the 108 foreigners who qualified as asylum seekers or refugees financially, but will also try to help hundreds of other displaced foreigners to return to their homes and shops. He said that the 108 refugees and asylum seekers who qualified for UNHCR assistance would be given R1000 a month with which to pay rent and food worth R500 a month for the next two months. He also mentioned that UNHCR would 'establish a presence' in the city and help find lasting solutions to the problem.

[Durban houses over 170,000 migrants](#)

Chris Ndaliso, *IOL News*, 24 November 2015

The African Union and the Africa Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes convened a two-day conference on 24 & 25 November titled the 'Conflict-Induced Migration in Africa' meeting, which is hosted at the Coastlands Hotel in uMhlanga, Durban. During the meeting the number of 170,000 documented migrants emerged who are said to be residing in Durban. The meeting was hosted in response to the escalating rate of migration, especially from conflict zones in parts of Africa and its aim was to assess trends and difficulties arising from conflict-induced migration. The outcomes of the meeting would be tabled at the United Nations with the hope of inspiring a re-look at migration policy. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the UN - Africa office were also part of the meeting. Bernardo Mariano, regional director of IOM, said four of the top 10 refugee host countries in the world were Ethiopia, Kenya, Chad and Uganda. He said Africa hosts more than a quarter of the world's refugees and stretched the need to develop migration policy that takes freedom, security and justice into account better. Sharon Cooper, of the UN High Commission for Refugees, said the scale and volatility of conflicts in Africa remained a challenge for the commission. According to her 'the commission is dealing with 54.9 million migrants [globally] and some of these were forcibly displaced. All come with their different humanitarian challenges, which underline the need to seek new mechanisms to address the root causes of conflicts that cause refugees to flee their homes'.

[Home Affairs to effect visa changes](#)

ENCA, 25 November 2015

On 25 November Home Affairs Minister Malusi Gigaba announced that the Department of Home Affairs will be implementing concessions to the controversial visa regulations over a three-month period. According to him the department has 'taken note of recent statements concerning actions taken regarding concessions that cabinet had made to ease the implementation of the amended immigration legislation and regulations'. The concessions are supposed to be in place by January 31

next year and would also include capturing biometrics in a pilot phase at ports of entry into South Africa. The biometrics pilot would start at OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg, Durban's King Shaka International Airport and Cape Town International Airport. Gigaba said that recommendations around biometrics would 'afford better measures to keep South Africans and those within the republic safer from the evils that evidently exist globally. These are progressive interventions and we welcome them'. Home Affairs would also look at introducing a long-term multiple-entry visa that would enable frequent travellers coming into South Africa to stay for a period that is longer than three months, and up to three years. Gigaba said the key to successful implementation of these concession was to collaborate with other department partner.

[HRC probe into Zulu King's remarks complete](#)

ENCA, 28 November 2015

During a speech held in Pongola at a moral regeneration event in March 2015, Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini is believed to have made a remark about foreign nationals and how they are changing the nature of the South African society, calling on those foreign national to return to their place of birth. This remark was then said to have sparked xenophobic violence in KwaZulu-Natal which has then spread to other parts of the country. Since the speech, the king's spokespeople have claimed he was misinterpreted and was in fact referring only to undocumented foreigners. An investigation then followed into the matter if the remarks indeed have prompted xenophobic violence. The investigation is believed to be complete and the report will be handed to the king and 31 complainants on 29 November. Feedback will have to be given on the findings by 16 January 2016. However, the public will only know its contents in February when the report will be made public.