

International Asylum Seeker/Refugee Policy Issues

[A deadly journey for children: The migration route from North Africa to Europe](#)

Reliefweb, 28 February 2017

UNICEF released a report titled '*A deadly journey for children: The migration route from North Africa to Europe*'. The Central Mediterranean from North Africa to Europe is among the world's deadliest and most dangerous migrant routes for children and women. They are vulnerable and subjected to violence and abuses. In particular, in 2016 about 30,000 women and roughly 23,000 minors passed through Libya of which a third of them was unaccompanied. Though the data cannot be precise, it is clear that women and minors have to face hard conditions characterised by exploitation, abduction, abuse and detention exercised by traffickers, militaries and militias.

Accordingly, UNICEF elaborated a six-point agenda and calls governments and the EU for action to keep refugee and migrant children safe.

[European countries have carried out 8% of promised refugee relocations](#)

Daniel Boffey, The Guardian, 2 March 2017

European countries have accepted less than 10% of the 160,000 refugees they promised to move to safety from unsanitary and cramped camps in Italy and Greece. Only 13,546 relocations have been carried out so far leading the European commission to warn that no more excuses are acceptable.

Solely Malta and Finland met their resettlement relocation scheme which close in September 2017. Other country such as Poland, Hungary and Austria refused to participate in the relocation scheme, while Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Croatia and Slovakia are doing so in a very limited way. Member states were also called upon to support the new European Border and Coastal Guard Agency, and improve their performance in returning those who have illegally sought to settle in the EU.

During a press conference in Brussels, the commissioner for migration, Dimitris Avramopoulos, stated that it is possible to relocate all these from Italy and Greece by September. It entirely depends on the political will and perseverance of member states to make it happen. If complete relocation is not met, the EU Commission possibly will fine the state members.

Finally, the Commission mentioned the positive outcome of the EU-Turkey deal in regards to the substantial decrease in people passing through Turkey and Greece as well as the number of the lives lost in the Aegean Sea.

[Calais mayor bans distribution of food to migrants](#)

Amelia Gentleman, The Guardian, 2 March 2017

Natacha Bouchart, the mayor of Calais, France, banned the distribution of food to migrants in a mayoral decree on Thursday, contradicting France's interior minister Bruno Le Roux, who confirmed the opposite. This is seen as part of a wider attempt to prevent the establishment of a new refugee camp after hundreds of people returned to the area three months after the original camp was demolished. The mayoral decree said that the distribution of food to migrants in Calais posed a threat to the peace and security of the area. It even banned all and any 'repeated, prolonged gatherings' in an attempt to make food distribution impossible.

Charities have already announced that they will ignore the ban and are taking legal advice. In the meantime, people are still hungry and so food distribution will continue, albeit now in secret due to increased police presence.

Sarah Arrom, a food distribution volunteer for the charity Utopia56, reported that police fired teargas to prevent volunteers giving breakfast to around 30 teenagers near the city on Thursday. Until Thursday, Utopia56 distributed 250 hot meals a night, with 80% of the meals going to migrants aged between 13 and 22 and from Eritrea, Sudan and Ethiopia. Renke Meuwese, who works for Help Refugees and Refugee Community Kitchen, said that the kitchens were now making about 400 meals a day, a marked increase from the 50 a day they were making last month. The president of the Auberge des Migrants charity, Christian Salomé has warned that this ban will have dire consequences for refugee children in particular.

[Tunisia, Germany strike new immigration deal](#)

AFP, Timeslive, 3 March 2017

German Chancellor Angel Merkel visited Tunisia and Egypt on a two-day trip in order to tackle the migration of undocumented persons to Germany. Merkel is facing increasing pressure in her country and called to decrease the number of migrants present in Germany, this is made tenser due to the upcoming election scheduled for September.

The German Chancellor held a speech before the Tunisian Parliament and the President Beji Caid Essebsi, in which she urged cooperation and improvement of the identification system which, for example, hindered the repatriation of Anis Amri, the suspect in the truck rampage at a Berlin Christmas market that killed 12 people, even though his asylum application had been rejected six months earlier he could not be repatriated because backlog in the Tunisian identification system. Now Tunisia agrees to reply within 30 days. Furthermore, Germany will fund development programmes with 250 million Euro, which will support rural areas, small and middle enterprises, job training for the youth, thus employment opportunities.

[Trump travel ban: new order targeting six Muslim-majority countries signed](#)

Sabrina Siddiqui, Lauren Gambino and Oliver Laughland, The Guardian, 2017

On Monday Donald Trump signed a revised executive order to reinstate a ban on immigration from certain Muslim-majority countries and suspend the US refugee program.

The new ban, which revokes a previous order issued on 27 January that prompted instant chaos and was eventually blocked by federal judges, marked a significant retreat for Trump and his administration's vigorous defense of the original travel ban as being within the president's legal authority.

The new travel ban blocks entry to the US for citizens from six of the seven countries named in Trump's original order – Iran, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, Syria and Libya. It removes Iraq from the list of

targeted states and promoted it as an important ally in the fight against IS. The new order implements a more gradual roll-out, meaning the new travel ban will not come into full effect for another 10 days. Moreover, it seeks to address prior complaints by removing language that granted priority to religious minorities for refugee resettlement, which had been viewed as targeting Muslims. It also includes specific exemptions for lawful permanent residents, who had initially been covered by the previous order. What remains unchanged is the 120-day suspension of the refugee program and a reduction of the annual America's refugee intake down to 50,000; however, it will no longer identify Syrian refugees as subject to an indefinite ban.

Unlike the 27 January order, written by the White House and presented to the agencies as a fait accompli, an 'interagency process' permitted concerns about second-order effects of the ban to influence the finished product. However, humanitarian organisations, refugee advocates and civil liberty groups as well as the political parties are screening the new order.

On the one hand, advocacy groups and migration experts still disagree with the revised new order, which they consider discriminatory generally for Muslims and, in particular, for the people coming from the six banned countries. On the other hand, government officials stated to reporters that the objective was not to bar individuals on the basis of religion nor is it a Muslim ban. They said that the justice department had opened inquiries into 300 refugees for potential links to terrorism. But the officials declined to identify how many of those individuals came from the countries subject to the travel ban.

Regional Displacement Issues

[Urgent Action Needed to Help Millions Facing Famine in South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, North-east Nigeria](#)

Reliefweb, 28 February 2017

More than 20 million people in South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and northeast Nigeria are facing extreme levels of food insecurity. Severe drought conditions, conflict, insecurity, extreme violence and/or economic degradation, have led to famine in certain areas of each country, putting millions of people's lives at risk and forcing millions to move in search of food and water.

On 20th February famine was declared in some parts of South Sudan. Over than 30,000 refugees fled South Sudan and reached Sudan in two months only. The number corresponds to the fifty percent of the South Sudanese refugees estimated by the UNHCR for the whole year. In regards to Somalia, between in two months, 138,000 individuals have become internally displaced; Mogadishu and Awdal have received more than 8,000 individuals each from drought-affected areas. The situation is also increasingly dramatic in North-east Nigeria and Yemen where Boko Haram and conflicts aggravate the humanitarian situation and force people to move.

IOM and other agencies have been taking measures in order to alleviate the sufferance of people, but still call for support to deal with the exacerbation of the emergency in the affected countries.

[Burundi: Pierre Nkurunziza 4th Term Would Intensify Violence in Burundi, UNSG Worries](#)

Lorraine Josiane Manishatse, Iwacu, 27 February 2017

UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, presented a report on 23 February to the United Nations Security Council. He expressed his concern about the willingness of Burundian President Nkurunziza to run for a 4th term that would risk intensifying violence in Burundi and undermining collective efforts towards a lasting solution. The President Pierre Nkurunziza announced at the end of December 2016 that he could again run in 2020 presidential elections, 'if the people request it.' Considering the precedent in 2015 UN Secretary General and the leaders of UPRONA, the opposition party not recognised by the current government, fear similar consequences and uprisings. Albert Shingiro, the Burundian ambassador to the UN, criticized the remarks coming from Guterres and said that the report is biased due to the Burundian request to replace the actual the UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser on conflict resolution in Burundi. He also added that the attention paid to the Burundian situation is overplayed considered that in Africa many other leaders run for consecutive terms.

[Countdown to AMISOM withdrawal: Is Somalia ready?](#)

Samuel Oklor, IRIN News, 28 February 2017

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is by now ten years old and the withdrawal of its troops will start in October 2018 and will be completed by the end of 2020. The Mission has been mainly funded by the EU, which is unwilling to engage in an endless peacekeeping operation. AMISOM's tasks include to fight al-Shabaab, to support the expansion of state's authority and the structuring of a new Somali National Army (SNA). Although, the AMISOM withdrawal is close, some important challenges remain there for the Somali State to face. Specifically, the threat of al-Shabaab. The terroristic group has been displaced, but not defeated. Therefore, AMISOM will deploy 4,500 more soldier for a six-month period only in the Lower Luba Region, last al Shabaab's stronghold. Given the harsh and unstable situation the international actors wonder if the new elected president 'Formajo' could manage that transition and fully rule the country while addressing different issues such as reconciliation, corruption, Al-Shabaab, finalizing the constitution and financial support. Moreover, the SNA would count only 20,000 soldiers and its authority is not easily accepted out of Mogadishu. The federal states of Somalia should agree a common strategy in order to provide protection to the civilians and stability to the country. Despite the overwhelming Formajo's success which brought optimism into Somali population, finding solutions to the aforementioned problems remain essential to start the stabilization and maintain the power. Further developments will be conveyed in the upcoming London Conference in May.

['They Told Us They Were Here to Help Us.' Then Came Slaughter](#)

Dionne Searcey, New York Times, 28 February 2017

Nigerian population of Borno State have been witnessing an increasing in violence and killing of unarmed civilians committed by the army, which is heavily deployed in the state in order to dismantle Boko Haram and to find its member. Reports of civilian massacres and burning of entire villages have emerged in recent weeks as residents from areas previously sealed off by Boko Haram start to stream out and supported by humanitarian workers for the United Nations.

The President Muhammadu Buhari, a former general elected on promises to defeat Boko Haram and stamp out corruption, pledged to clean up the abuses occurring in Borno State. However, the Nigerian Army has a long record of human rights abuses. Civilians have complained for years of arbitrary detentions, torture and killing by soldiers. Worried about such abuses. Currently, the

army's aggressive sweeps to root out the remaining fighters have taken a toll on more than just Boko Haram.

Soldiers have pushed into forests that have long hidden Boko Haram fighters. New villages have been freed, and major roads have reopened. The army says it has scattered Boko Haram and encouraged many of the nearly two million people in Nigeria who have been uprooted by violence to go back home.

However, the army seems not able to distinguish Boko Haram fighters from civilian who are victim of the violence of both.

[Zimbabwe floods killed 246, made thousands homeless](#)

Al-Jazeera, 4 March 2017

The heavy rains continue in Zimbabwe where floods have killed 246 people and left about 2,000 homeless since December. Officials declared national disaster and appealed to international donors for 100 million USD. The funds combined to possible local bank loans would be deployed in assisting people and in rebuilding infrastructures which the floods destroyed or damaged. The government does not have enough funds for managing the emergency seen that the 90 per cent of budget is going into salary.

At the same time, the health care workers, doctors and nurses, are striking because of unpaid bonuses. The government has sent health professionals belonging to the army, who are unable to cope with the high number of patients. President Mugabe, 93, is currently in Singapore due to medical treatment.

[AMISOM: 57 al-Shabab fighters killed in Juba raid](#)

Al-Jazeera, 3 March 2017

AMISOM confirmed that in the Thursday assault to one of the al-Shabaab camps in southern Juba caused the death of 57 fighters belonging to al-Shabaab. This is one of the deadliest attack against the terroristic group by AMISOM. The African Union forces said that vehicles and equipment were destroyed while a large cache of weapons had been confiscated. However, Abdiasis Abu Musab, al-Shabaab's spokesman for military operations, told the Reuters news agency that the armed group's fighters had ambushed Kenyan soldiers, prompting them to call in air support, and the armed group had lost no one in the clashes.

[Uganda: 4,000 Refugees to Be Resettled](#)

Fednand Tuhame, The Monitor, 6 March 2017

Due to insecurity in the Democratic Republic of Congo, authorities in Kamwenge District, Western Uganda, have continued to register more refugees settling at Rwamwanja camp which is managed by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and the Office of the Prime Minister's Department of Refugees. The district chairman, Mr Aggrey Natuhanya, said that 4,000 refugees are expected to be brought to the camp this year for settlement, mainly of them are Congolese nationals who have been fleeing the M23 rebellion and the broader Kivu conflict since 2012.

South Africa

['Africa is for all Africans' - march against xenophobic attacks](#)

Paul Herman, News24, 4 March 2017

On Saturday morning a group of about 100 people marched from District Six to the Parliament in order to show support to African people coming from different countries who have been victim of recent xenophobic attacks in Johannesburg and Pretoria. In particular, the march aimed at responding to the march against foreigner nationals in Pretoria held on February 24.

The march in Cape Town is a result of the collaboration among ten different activist groups such as Africa Solidarity network, the Cape Town Housing Assembly, Gender Sonke Justice, Unifam and others. Before marching the representatives of the aforementioned groups held speeches by which they expressed their concern about the Home Affairs policy at pace of work which hinder the migrants to obtain legal documents; they called to education against xenophobia and state that this a political issues and have to be address as such. They concluded by saying that this will not be the last solidarity march, the underlined that South Africans are not all xenophobic, and that - recalling the constitution - South Africa belongs to all who live in it.

[SA-Nigeria fallout 'will have have dire consequences'](#)

Mthulisi Sibanda and Okoro Chinedu, News24, 4 March 2017

The xenophobic violence in Gauteng sparked a diplomatic fracas between South Africa and Nigeria. Captains of commerce and industry have warned of dire consequences for the continent as Africa's two biggest economies intermittently fall out over violent attacks on foreigners in South Africa. Tensions were visible in the past week as the South Africa-Nigeria Chamber of Commerce (SA-NCC) held its board meeting where concerns were raised for business bearing the brunt of the xenophobic attacks. This does not only refer to the small businesses looted during the attacks, but also to the countries' multinationals.

In the midst of the diplomatic row, SA-NCC has been in contact with the diplomatic missions in both countries to express concerns on behalf of its members concerning the South Africa's response, describing it as not quick nor decisively enough to convince Africans elsewhere that it was really concerned about the attacks on foreigners, or determined to stop it at all costs.

Meanwhile, Adi Bongo, economics expert at the University of Lagos, warned that while Nigerians had previously turned the other cheek, alleged complicity by law enforcers in South Africa had incited reprisals against South African firms lately. He added that the failure of leadership characteristic of the current political elite in South Africa today and the government inability in producing dividends for the larger majority of black South Africans emerge during the attacks.

Finally, the acting national police commissioner Khomotso Phahlane, who presented South Africa's crime statistics on Friday, told City Press that no amount of anger or emotions in society should encourage lawlessness and people taking the law into their own hands.

[Lesotho boys trafficked to Cape Town, says NGO](#)

Soyso Maliti, IOL, 5 March 2017

The NGO 'Embrace Dignity' based in Woodstock, Cape Town, has reliably learnt from the UN that young boys are being trafficked from Lesotho to Cape Town for sex work. The organisation is engaged in fighting prostitution and gender-based violence as well as in rising awareness on those topic. It occurs that vulnerable young people, girls and boys, being trafficked from neighbouring countries such as Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Mozambique. Prostitution has been a lucrative form of organised crime in Cape Town, being trafficking a core figure of it. 'Embrace Dignity' believes that the solution lies in reforming the law on prostitution, a key component of commercial sexual exploitation, a driving force behind the huge growth in human trafficking, therefore the organisation submitted to Parliament's petitions committee several issues to look at.

['Home affairs should manage state security'](#)

S'thembile Cele and Setumo Stone, News24, 5 March 2017

The ANC discussion document on Peace and Stability proposes to elevated the Department of Home Affairs to a strategic and crucial national security, service-delivery and economic development unit. The document states that the department has been severely underfunded over the past 23 years and that this lack of funds resulted in ongoing tensions between locals and foreign nationals.

Gigaba maintained that the asylum-seeker system broke down because of the abuse by low-skilled migrants and this created social unrest. Moreover, the document says DHA policy framework and security should be repositioned and its operational and organisational structures and funding remodelled. Indeed, the document advocates the department's inclusion in the security architecture of the country, presenting Zambia's home affairs system as a case study where the minister of home affairs is responsible for the police service, prisons and immigration.

[Sassa 'Armageddon' will be avoided - Ramaphosa](#)

Paul Herman, News24, 1 March 2017

The Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa Cyril Ramaphosa says government will not allow the wheels to come off as a Sassa social grants crisis looms. Referring to the critical situation of SASSA grant, Ramaphosa tried to assure the Parliament and the opposition on Wednesday.

The opposition harshly question Developmental Minister Damlini's promise about delivering the grants on the 1 of April to the about 17 million SASSA dependents and complained about her absence during the last two parliamentary meetings. However, Ramaphosa assured that the SASSA situation is being addressed.

[Border centres for immigrants a worry for SA refugee experts](#)

Bobby Jordan, TimesLIVE, 6 March 2017

Government has proposed setting up 'processing centres' at strategic border posts to speed up adjudication of asylum applications amid a growing backlog of cases which has overwhelmed the system. Home Affairs spokesman, Mayihlome Tshwete, defended the proposed changes, in particular for the centres, by stating that this will decrease the actual exploitation of the asylum system, and that the government will ensure the proper management and regulation of those. This also implies government providing free food and shelter according to the international law.

The proposal goes against the current South African approach which allows asylum seekers to study and work while waiting for the final decision and, as experts warn, it could fuel resentments against foreigner nationals coming to South Africa. Another issue raising concerns is Home Affairs' lack of manpower in the major cities, which seem unlikely to be addressed with the opening of the new processing centres on the border.

[Home Affairs Dept Monitors Limpopo River](#)

Koketšo Motau, EWN, 4 March 2017

The Department of Home Affairs is closely monitoring the water level of Limpopo River while three of its ports of entry remain closed in the province due to flooding. Specifically, Zanzibar, Platjan and the Pont Drift ports of entry remained closed and Home Affairs is encouraging travellers to use the Makopong port of entry.