

# International Asylum Seeker/Refugee Policy Issues

---

## [Hungary approves detention of all asylum-seekers](#)

News24, 07 March 2017

On Tuesday the Hungarian Parliament approved the automatic detention of all asylum seekers in container camps at the country's Southern borders. It reinstated the Hungary's practice of detaining asylum seekers which after EU and international agencies' pressure was suspended in 2013. The decision regards the new asylum seekers entering the country as well as those currently in Hungary will be detained or moved to the camps. The asylum seeker will be not allow to freely move in the country nor leave the border zones while their application is being process.

## [UN says Trump's revised travel ban will worsen plight of refugees](#)

Patrick Wintour, The Guardian, 07 March 2017

The revised travel ban issued by US President Donald Trump has brought about minor changes including the lifting of the indeterminate ban for Syrians and the removal of Iraq from the list of banned countries; the other countries, Somalia, Sudan, Libya, Syria, Iran and Yemen remain banned for a period of 90 days and the US refugee programme is still suspended for 120 days. The number of refugees that Trump's administration will accept remains low at 50,000. The revised order will be active within 10 days. The largest concentration of refugees directly affected are likely to be nearly 15,000 Somalis in Kenyan refugee camps who fled their war-torn country and hoped to resettle in the US. The UN high commissioner for refugees, Filippo Grandi, stated that refugees are not criminal and that these people are fleeing deadly war, violence and persecution, and that it is imperative to protect them.

The affected countries, in particular Iran, Somalia and Sudan restated their concern and disagreement. Specifically, Iran's deputy foreign minister underlined that Iran's 'retaliatory decision' over Trump's initial travel ban is still in place. The other three countries said very little or made no declaration. The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) maintained once again that this order will further complicate the grave situation that refugees find themselves in. Australia has expressed support for the order and said that the deal would not affect the US commitment to take refugees from the Manus Island and Nauru refugee centres.

### [Austria threatens EU funding cuts over Hungary's hard line on refugees](#)

Patrick Wintour, The Guardian, 08 March 2017

In the build-up to the EU summit in Brussels, Austrian Chancellor Christian Kern urged EU member states to remember their responsibility towards taking care of refugees and proposed funding cuts for states that refuse to take their quota of refugees. Kern did not just focus on the issue of refugee redistribution but also criticised the EU member states guilty of 'tax dumping at the expense of their neighbours' and urged a more equitable distribution of the EU budget. He said 'selective solidarity should in the future also lead to selective payments among the net payers'. This issue has become even more important to some member states since the UK, a net contributor, voted to leave the EU last year.

Kern particularly singled out Hungary and Poland for not doing enough to help ease the migrant crisis. Hungary last week passed a law forcing all asylum seekers to stay in detention camps until their status is determined. The introduction of this law was supported by Victor Orbán, Hungary's prime minister, who labelled migration 'a Trojan horse for terrorism'. In addition, Poland receives €9.5bn from the EU budget, making it the largest net recipient. Despite 13,500 refugees being redistributed under an EU scheme so far, Poland has not accepted a single migrant out of its allocated 6,182. As many as 98,000 refugees are due to be distributed by September.

### [Africa: For Refugee Women, Periods a Dangerous, Shameful Time](#)

Anna Pujol-Mazzini, Reuters, 08 March 2017

For refugee women, fleeing their homes for safety, the challenges of a period can be even greater. A research project conducted among 800 refugee women by *Global One* in displacement and refugee camps in Syria and Lebanon found that almost 60 percent of female refugees did not have access to underwear, and many more had no sanitary products for when they had their period. This aggravates an already harsh and difficult situation for many women on the move. Indeed, stigmatization in this sense is spread and girls and women tend to self-isolate and not to walk among another people neither for collecting their food as well as they feel extremely uncomfortable when asking for help or assistance, until the point to avoid it. That has dramatic effect on their wellbeing, on their mental state of mind. Indeed, the lack of sanitary material is overcome by using improvised substitutes such as pieces of mattress or old rags which may lead to urinary tract infections of which about half of the interviewed women have been suffering from.

Although some agencies have started distributing 'dignity kits' to women in Iraq, Nigeria and Bangladesh amongst other countries, containing underwear, soap and sanitary pads, researchers say that in emergency situations the specific needs of women and girls still tend to be overlooked despite some progress. The case of the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan shows that action is possible, with a small factory was set up for refugees to produce sanitary pads and training them to use machines bought with the help of online donations.

[Kenya: We've to Shut Dadaab for Security, Uhuru Kenyatta Tells UN](#)

Aggrey Mutambo, The Nation, 08 March 2017

In a joint press conference with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, President Kenyatta argued that the Dadaab camp as it is today no longer serves its original purpose of offering temporary shelter. After the court judgement in February describing the closure of Dadaab as against the national and international law, Kenyan President reiterates governmental will about a as quick as possible closure of the camp and the repatriation of all refugees due to security reasons. In the meanwhile the region is suffering because of drought, the UN has put up a \$4 billion funding appeal to deal with the crisis that has affected Kenya, Somalia, parts of Ethiopia and South Sudan. On March 25, Nairobi will be hosting an extra-ordinary summit of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (Igad), a regional bloc of eight countries in the eastern Africa. The Kenyan President stated that this meeting is also to show Kenya readiness in consulting the regional partners for the stability and prosperity of the entire region.

[UK-funded camps in Libya 'indefinitely detaining asylum seekers'](#)

Patrick Wintour, The Guardian, 10 March

The UK government's aid programme in Libya could be inadvertently harming migrants and refugees, the Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAD) warned on 10 March. The watchdog said some of Britain's £9m package is being used by the Libyan authorities to contain more people taken from the Mediterranean Sea in detention centres, where they face overcrowded conditions and are at risk of abuse and extortion. As known, Libya is not a party of the 1951 Refugee Convention nor 1967 Protocol and is currently home to up one million migrants and refugees. While the UNHCR calls for concerted efforts to ensure that sustainable migration and asylum systems are put in place in Libya and Libyan migration management remains based on the automatic detention of refugees and migrants in inhumane conditions, UK government spokesperson prizes the efforts in tackling human trafficking.

## Regional Displacement Issues

---

[Uganda 4,000 Refugees to be resettled](#)

Fednand Tuhame, The Monitor, 06 March 2017

Due to the ongoing insecurity in the Democratic Republic of Congo, refugees continue to cross the border into Uganda and settle in the Rwamwanja Camp in the Kamwenge District; the camp has hosted Congolese refugees since 2012 amidst the M23 rebellion and wider Kivu conflict and 4,000 refugees are expected to cross the border this year. The Rwamwanja camp is managed by the UNHCR and the Office of the Prime Minister's Department of Refugees. A combination of 'implementing partner' NGOs provide services to the refugees. Refugees are still arriving at the camp, with 12 buses full of Congolese nations arriving on Thursday. By the beginning of 2014, over half a million refugees fled the Democratic Republic of Congo, with 75 percent fleeing and settling in neighbouring countries in the Great Lakes region and Southern Africa.

[EU warns DRC of more sanctions](#)

News 24, 07 March 2017

If political leaders and members of the security forces block a deal with the opposition on the Democratic Republic of Congo's future the EU will sanction the country, according to EU foreign ministers. EU foreign ministers discussed the current situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo in a meeting on Monday and determined that the sanctions would include travel bans and freezing assets and would target those 'responsible for grave human rights violations, for inciting violence or obstructing a peaceful resolution of the crisis which respects the aspirations of the Congolese people to elect their representatives', according to a document that was prepared for the meeting. This threat of new sanctions comes after the EU and the US imposed sanctions in December 2016 on top officials in the country after clashes with protesters against Kabila in September left over 50 people dead.

#### [Number of Congolese armed forces convicted of sexual violence stands at 454 for 2016](#)

Elsa Buchanan, International Business Times, 07 March 2017

The office of Congo's Presidential Adviser on Sexual Violence and Child Recruitment has reported that 454 members of the security forces have been convicted of sexual violence crimes in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2016. In fact human rights violations committed in the country rose by 30 percent in 2016, according to the UN. This disclosure by the office of the representative of the Presidential Adviser on Sexual Violence and Child Recruitment comes amidst efforts by both civilian and military criminal courts to eradicate sexual violence. The 319 members of the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) and the 135 officers of the Congolese National Police (PNC) were condemned for sexual violence crimes last year. Moreover, 18 civilians and members of armed groups were also convicted of sexual violence by military courts. The government department, headed by former minister Jeanine Mabunda, revealed that there were a total of 519 registered sexual violence victims in 2016, 399 of which were minors; 496 complaints were also filed by the victims. There were 280 judicial decisions, which comprised of 225 convictions and 55 acquittals.

#### [UN says Burundi's political impasse and human rights worsen](#)

News 24, 10 March 2017

The UN special adviser on Burundi, Jamal Benomar, has this week drawn attention to the worsening situation in the country. Reports of grave human rights violations, such as extra-judicial killings and disappearances have increased amidst the deteriorating political crisis. Benomar further warned that any attempts by President Nkurunziza to amend the constitution to allow him to seek a fourth term would 'risk intensifying the crisis.' So far, President Nkurunziza has done little to allay fears with the government refusing to allow UN monitoring or to negotiate with the opposition, according to the UN Security Council.

## South Africa

---

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

Bobby Jordan, Times Live, 06 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 and Treasury Disagree On Whether Or Not An Agreement Has Been Reached On Border Bill](#)

Huffington Post, 06 March 2017

Home Affairs and Treasury agree only on the surface about the some provisions of the Border Bill. Specifically. The Treasury is concerned with the inclusion of the South African Revenue Service (Sars) in customs and excise collection at the country's ports of entry. If Sars is not incorporated into the new border management agency, its role in collecting taxes will be fragmented at a time when concerns have been raised about it meeting its collection targets. Despite these issues, the Home Affairs Minister maintained that an agreement has been reach and would be signed.

#### [Justice Minister to face ICC in an 'inquisitorial process, not a trial'](#)

Avantika Seeth and Muhammad Hussain, City Press, 9 March 2017

South Africa issued a notice to formally revoke its withdrawal from the International Criminal Court on Tuesday. The decision comes after the Gauteng High Court ruled in February that the initial process to withdraw from the ICC was unconstitutional and invalid. The withdrawal proposal arrived after South Africa was condemned by the international court for not arresting Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir during his visit to the country in 2015. Al-Bashir has been accused of war crimes and genocide, but has denied the allegations. Exactly for this precedent on April 7 the government, led by Justice Minister Michael Masutha, will present its case on why it could not execute the warrant of arrest before the ICC. It is essential to note that South Africa will not be appearing as an accused before the pre-trial chamber but to assist the chamber to understand the country's position in what is procedurally an inquisitorial process. South Africa will fully participate in this process.

#### [South Africa: Presidency Refuses to Accept Memo From Anti-Xenophobia Protest](#)

Ihsaan Haffejee, GroundUp, 9 March 2017

On Thursday, a group of about 300 demonstrators and supporters of the Coalition of Civics Against Xenophobia made their way from Burgers Park to the Union Buildings, Pretoria, where protest leaders wanted to hand over a memorandum of demands. The march did not receive the relevant permission but police escorted the march. Once the march reached the Government building, the organisers have been told that no one from the Office of the Presidency was willing to accept the memorandum. Representatives for the Somali, Congolese and Pakistani communities declared their disappointment and frustration about the lack of commitment and cooperation of the government in standing against xenophobia.

#### [South Africa: Multi-Pronged Approach to Tackle Xenophobic, Gang-Related Violence](#)

SAnews.gov.za, 10 March 2017

On Thursday Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa said government is deploying a number of strategies to respond to the recent wave of civil unrest linked to xenophobia and drug and gang-related violence. He stated that the civil unrest occurred in places that were plagued by socio-economic challenges like poverty, unemployment and inequality. The response involves not only the organs of the state, but also civil society formations, community groups and individual citizens. The Deputy President claimed that government's new national strategy against gangsterism, approved by Cabinet on 1 March 2017, is an evidence of government efforts to tackle the situation also on the socio-economic level, and that a similar approach has been taken to tackle recent xenophobic violence. Namely, a multi-faceted strategy involving local communities, churches and civil society, while promoting integration policies and legality. He underlined the fact that said through Operation Fiela the security cluster has undertaken intensive crime combatting and prevention operations targeting hot-spot areas in all provinces.