

International Asylum Seeker/Refugee Policy Issues

[Trump Bars Refugees and Citizens of 7 Muslim Countries](#)

Michael D. Shear and Helene Cooper, The New York Times, 27 January 2017

On January 27 US President Trump by means of an executive order closed the national borders to refugees and temporarily suspended immigration for nationals coming from seven predominantly Muslim countries, namely Libya, Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, Iraq, Iran and Syria. The executive order envisages a 120 day pause in the refugee resettlement and 90 days for the immigration system. This decision will impact on nationals of these seven countries. In particular, for fleeing Syrians the US borders are indefinitely closed, while for the other nationals the ban is for 90 days. This pause will allow an additional screening, referred to as 'extreme vetting', to the already approved refugee admissions in order to assure that they do not pose any threat for the security and welfare of the country. Trump also established a religious test for refugees from Muslim nations by ordering that that Christians and others from minority religions be granted priority over Muslims. The President also stated that for Christians fleeing it has been difficult to enter the country. However, Pew Research Centre's (PRC) study shows that almost as many Christian refugees (37,521) were admitted as Muslim refugees (38,901) in the 2016 fiscal year.

[World leaders react to Trump's travel ban](#)

Azadeh Ansari, Nic Robertson and Angela Dewan, CNN, 31 January 2017

Worldwide reactions quickly followed Trump's executive order. Iraq, Iran, Sudan and Yemen expressed their astonishment and disappointment for the presidential decision. The countries maintain that this will not be able to fight the terrorisms nor to protect the US. Then, they added that the first victims of those are the Muslim populations. Other predominantly Muslim countries have remained until now silent, apart from Pakistan. Pakistan's Interior Minister showed disagreement and preoccupation for the victims of the terrorists whose miseries will grow due to this ban. Other exception has been Saudi Arabia, in particular Saudi Arabian airlines announced that people from the seven banned countries will not be permitted to travel.

European countries such as Germany, France but also Turkey appeared unite in condemning the executive order and in endorsing more welcoming policies. The UK Prime Minister May did not make a strong statement and remain vague. Conversely, exponents of the far-right parties, in UK and Netherland and elsewhere, cheer the decision. Australia strongly stated its support for severe border control management, while Canada underlined the importance of welcoming refugees and stated that diversity is Canada's the strength.

[AU elects new commission chair and disapprove Trump's Immigration policy](#)

Abayomi Azikiwe, News Ghana, 30 January 2017

Chadian President Idriss Deby Itno was chosen as chairperson of the African Union on 30 January 2017. Among various statements made, AU has strongly replied to Trump's recent executive orders banning entry into America from seven countries of which three are Africa states: Libya, Sudan and Somalia. Dlamini-Zuma, AU chairperson and the South African candidate for the presidency, during the AU Summit noted that it was the U.S. which had enslaved Africans for over two centuries is now barring its citizens from access into the country on spurious grounds. These African states along with Yemen, Syria, Iraq and Iran in the Middle East have rejected the notion that their nationals constitute a threat to U.S. security. In light of the taking of power by Trump, Dlamini-Zuma described the situation involving U.S.-Africa relations as turbulent. 'The very country to which many of our people were taken as slaves during the transatlantic slave trade has now decided to ban refugees from some of our countries,' said Dlamini-Zuma.

[EU Migration Policy: EU leaders push measures to stop African immigration from Libya](#)

Gabriela Baczynska, Reuters, 30 January 2017

European Union leaders meet in Malta on Friday, 2 February, to give their political backing to a series of new measures aimed at stemming the flow of migrants from the Libyan coast to Italy. Currently the 'Central Med Route' has returned to be the main route for people to reach Europe after the signed EU-Turkey deal last year. Since years EU has focused on fighting smugglers and externalising the control of migration flows. EU leaders aim at strengthening the collaboration with Libya as the main country of departure, as well as with North African and sub-Saharan countries in order to control and prevent migration flows. Such a partnership will probably include help in coordination, training Libyan coastguard, patrolling borders and boosting the volunteer repatriation policies. While the EU leaders state the full respect of human rights and international law through the process, Libya U.N. backed government does not control completely the country and this situation exposes migrants, asylum seekers and refugees' lives to many risks.

[Tanzania bans refugee groups from entering the country](#)

Kizito Makoye, Reuters, 31 January 2017

A move by Tanzania to ban refugees from entering the country in groups could undermine efforts to protect them and to provide humanitarian assistance, the United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR) said on Tuesday. Tanzania's home affairs minister, Mwigulu Nchemba, announced last week the government would no longer accept groups of refugees at the border, instead it would vet individual cases before granting refugee status.

The east African nation hosts more than 280,000 refugees and asylum seekers, mostly from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi. Fleeing political violence at home, some 10,000 Burundians arrived in neighbouring Tanzania each month towards the end of 2016, swelling three already-overcrowded north western camps. Chansa Kapaya, UNHCR's country representative, said the move means all Burundians now entering Tanzania would be treated as asylum seekers and face lengthy waits for an individually assessed claim to refugee status. Media reports indicate there is a backlog in the process of the applications with 10,000 asylum seekers from the DRC awaiting decisions since November.

[Libya: NATO, E.U. Ships Can Turn Back Migrants in Waters in Return for Aid](#)

Associated Press, 1 February 2017

Libya's U.N.-backed government will consider allowing NATO or E.U. ships to operate in Libyan waters so they can turn back migrant boats, in return for assistance in modernizing the Libyan navy. This would stop the migrants from reaching international waters, at which point they must be granted an opportunity to claim asylum in Europe. The offer by Libyan Prime Minister Fayed Serraj came after he held talks with NATO secretary general Jens Stoltenberg in Brussels. Serraj's government has struggled to exert control over conflict-wracked Libya, while the Libyan coast guard has been accused of being complicit in gross human rights abuses inflicted on migrants in the country.

[Italy to Give African Nations \\$216 Million to Block Migrants](#)

Agence France Press (AFP), thelocal.it, 1 February 2017

Italy will give 200 million euros (\$216 million) to African nations to help their security forces tighten their borders and stop migrants heading to Europe. The so-called 'Africa Fund' will provide funds, training for security forces and border-monitoring equipment to countries along the migration route. The first recipients will be Niger, Libya and Tunisia. 'We give money to these countries, and in return they must use it to reduce the number of illegal migrants arriving here,' Italy's Interior minister Angelino Alfano said. However, it remains unclear how much of those funds have actually been handed over, and what steps, if any, African nations have taken to limit migration flows. The meeting in Valletta on Friday, this time an EU leaders' summit, is also set to discuss migration.

[Serbia's authorities order lockdown at a migrant camp](#)

Aleksandar Vasovi, Reuters, 1 February 2017

On Wednesday the Serbian authorities imposed restrictions on the movements of migrants in a camp near Belgrade, after three men, described as migrants, attacked a woman and her children near the refugee center. The authorities reacted with the introduction of tougher measures. Indeed the migrants will now need permission to leave the camp, a set of former army barracks in the town of Obrenovac, just outside Belgrade, curfew and identification documents. Furthermore, The Minister of Interior Vulin declared that the authorities had introduced a special bus to take migrants back and forth between Obrenovac and Belgrade, 'to avoid mixing' with local population. Although the so-called Balkan route to Western Europe was shut last year, migrants continue to flow through Serbia to its northern border with Hungary. Over 7,000 migrants, mainly from Afghanistan, remain in the country, which is ill-equipped to care for them. For example, during the last weeks asylum seekers have been struggling to survive the Serbian bitter cold winter.

[Blocked by Trump, unwanted by Kenya, Somali refugees face new crisis as famine looms](#)

Obi Anyadike, IRIN News, 2 February 2017

The US is the world's top resettlement country which in 2015 took in roughly 9,000 Somali refugees. The resettlement procedure is arduous and long, some of the 140 people currently stuck in the transit area of Nairobi, controlled by the US State Department, have been applying for leaving Kenya's camps for 10 years or even more. Somalia is a long time war-torn country, unstable and unsafe with environmental problems, such as drought, exacerbating the situation and displacing thousands. Currently, a new drought is threatening the Somali South West State. Moreover about 5 million Somalis, 40 per cent of the Somali population, are estimated to be in need of food aid as

result of the current, as well as the past droughts, which only in 2010-2011 led to death about 260,000 people.

For Somalis one of the most popular destinations has been Kenya and the refugee camp of Dadaab, close to the Somali border, or Kakuma. However, since last year the Kenyan government has stressed the will to close Dadaab and send away 261,000 Somali refugees living there and other thousands of refugees and asylum seekers. Moreover Kenya is putting pressure on the UNHCR in order to accelerate voluntary repatriation programme and the situation in the camps is steadily worsening, this includes also shortage of food. This is the frame in which Somali refugees and population find themselves. They are stuck, unwanted and without escape. The only options include the hope that Dadaab would not close this year or maybe to flee to Uganda, which has a more welcoming policy, yet Uganda is facing hard time due to great number of South Sudanese refugees which have been arriving since 2013.

[US refugee resettlement system reels from Trump ban](#)

Ben Parker, IRIN News, 3 February 2017

Trump's 120 days travel ban issued last week will have great consequences in the non-profit network for refugee resettlement in the US. This network is a huge machine which has been assisting three million refugees since 1975. It has been growing decades and developed a public-private partnership. This involves government funding and private charity. Generally the US government funding represent the consistent part of the NGO's income, the government spends about 1 billion dollars on incoming refugees per year, which translates into about \$2,000 per refugee. The executive order also foresees cuts which will definitely affect the system. Moreover, the 120 day pause affects NGO workers, such as translators, and also 67,689 refugees who had been fully cleared by the department of Homeland Security and were 'travel ready'. When the programme restarts, supposedly at the end of May, only about 20,000 can be admitted from then until the end of September under the new quota (30,000 of the 50,000 total arrived before Trump took office). The rest will be in limbo. They include 13,928 Somalis, 10,680 Iraqis, 8,886 Syrians, 1,805 Sudanese, 983 Iranians, and 29 Yemenis. Many will likely have to repeat lengthy security and health clearances that expire after a relatively short time. The resettlement vetting process rarely takes less than two years so these refugees may be resettled in a similar time frame if not longer.

Regional Displacement Issues

[African migrants face torture, blackmail amid Yemeni chaos](#)

Maad Al-Zikry, Maggie Michael, Associated Press, Salon, 28 January 2017

Migrants from the Horn of Africa are flowing into Yemen at ever growing rates despite the nearly 2-year-old civil war that has thrown the country into its own humanitarian crisis of hunger and displacement. The migrants are hoping to cross Yemen and reach neighbouring oil-rich Saudi Arabia. More than 111,500 migrants landed on Yemen's shores last year, up from around 100,000 the year before, according to the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat, a grouping of international agencies that monitors migration in the area. Over 90 percent of the migrants belong to the Oromo community, Ethiopia's largest ethnic group, whose members often complain of discrimination at the

hands of the Ethiopian government. Most are aged 25 and younger and around 20 percent of the migrants are unaccompanied minors.

The chaos caused by the civil war has raised migrants' hopes that they can slip through to Saudi Arabia, with no central authority keeping watch. However, the turmoil has also left migrants vulnerable to abuse and cruelty at the hands of the armed trafficking rings, many believed connected to and acting with protection from the multiple militias involved in the war. Nearly 30 percent of the migrants who have sought IOM help to return home said they had been approached by one of the warring parties in Yemen or by militant groups trying to recruit them as fighters. An estimated 9,000 migrants are being held in prisons, whether by the rebels or by opposing factions.

The fate of migrants in Yemen remains a black hole. It is not known how many become trapped and abused, but officials from the IOM and other U.N. agencies believe it is widespread. It is not even known how many eventually make it to Saudi Arabia, as the kingdom does not release figures. Authorities in southern Yemen have carried out forced deportations of migrants at least seven times, IOM officials said. In December, at least 25 drowned when they were forced onto boats to leave Aden.

[Europe ignores Nigeria humanitarian crisis at its peril, warns top UN official](#)

Ben Quinn, The Guardian, 1 February 2017

Toby Lanzer, the UN assistant secretary general and lead humanitarian coordinator for the Sahel, has recently called attention to the burdensome situation in the Lake Chad region. On the borders among Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and Chad more than 10 million people, of which about 515,000 are children, are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Lanzer stressed that Nigeria and the Lake Chad region are enduring the worst humanitarian crisis in Africa and sought to rally support ahead of a major donors. According to him European countries had done too little to tackle the crisis despite the opportunity to address humanitarian and migration issues in tandem. The new U.S. administration is planning to drastically cut its funding for the UN, therefore Lazer wishes a stronger European engagement. The humanitarian crisis in northern Nigeria has implications that Europe can ill afford to ignore, according to the UN official. Nigeria was the third largest source of migrants crossing the Mediterranean in 2016. New funding will be discussed on 24 of February in the major donor conference in Oslo that will be co-hosted by Nigeria, Germany and Norway.

[People dying of drought in Somalia as UN issues pre-famine alert](#)

Katy Migiro, Reuters Africa, 2 February 2017

The U.N.'s humanitarian coordinator for Somalia declared that the country is going toward a catastrophe and famine of great scale. While the U.N. is in pre-famine alert, 6.2 million people are in need emergency aid. The similarities with the previous drought in 2011 are growing; livestock deaths, rising in prices and the falling of casual labour wages. The U.N. would need to redouble the efforts to into full emergency mode in the next few weeks. In 2011 al-Shabaab obstacle and made nearly impossible to distribute the emergency aid. Currently, al-Shabaab is more marginalised than in 2011, however, certain rural areas risk being cut out.

[Analysts Cast Doubt on DRC Accord After Opposition Leader's Death](#)

Salem Solomon, VOA news, 2 February 2017

Etienne Tshisekedi, the leader of the Congolese opposition, passed away on 1 February and his death could undermine the recent accord for the new elections and political stabilisation. Tshisekedi

is remembered as a steady and honest dissenting voice during years of violence and political turmoil in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its predecessor, Zaire. He founded the Union for Democratic and Social Progress (UDPS) in 1982 and succeeded in unifying different voices within the party, but now experts fear the rising of new UDPS factions. Moreover, it is doubtful that a valid substitute can be quickly found in order to continue the transition towards the elections as decided in the New Year's accord, which sees the polls held before the end of the year and calls for a prime minister to be selected by the opposition and for additional power sharing.

South Africa

[Imminent Lesotho deportations will not follow Trump approach - Gigaba](#)

Roxanne Henderson, Sowetan Live, 30 January 2017

Department of Home Affairs Minister Malusi Gigaba on Sunday updated on the Lesotho special Permit application process. The deadline for applicants to submit outstanding documents is on March 31 and from April deportations will start.

Until now a total of 127,048 online special permit application have been submitted. By the end of December, 88,563 Basotho nationals had completed the application process, while the rest still have to submit outstanding documents. Moreover, to date, 31,019 permits have been collected.

This permit aim at relieving pressure from the asylum seeker management system, provide amnesty to Basotho who obtained SA documents fraudulently and regularise the undocumented ones.

Gigaba referred to Trump and said that SA will not mimic the US concerning migration policy-related matters. Though the announced deportation of Basotho nationals who failed to apply for the permit, he said that in future SA would like to accommodate free movement for the citizens of all African countries. Then, he distanced himself from Trump's approach and considers it damaging for the US politics.

[More Migrant Worker Checks](#)

Karl Gernetzky, Business Day, 1 February 2017

Home Affairs set to increase inspections in four sectors which employed great number of foreigners, namely mining, hospitality, construction and agricultural sectors. Home Affairs Minister Malusi Gigaba said in Pretoria that the issue of migrant workers had taken centre stage worldwide and needed to be managed sensitively. He said the government needed to 'control the narrative' regarding an issue that was becoming subject to right-wing opinions globally. Moreover, he stressed that a key issue has been the failure to properly distinguish between economic migrants and refugees. Gigaba said the department planned to increase inspections in the mining, hospitality, construction and agricultural sectors and wishes to start to collaborate with industry bodies as well. Meeting with the representatives of the four sectors are on-going.

The 2014 Immigration Act, which introduced contentious requirements for unabridged birth certificates when travelling, also requires that individuals applying for a business visa, or companies applying for a corporate visa to bring in individuals with requisite skills, must prove they employ at least 60% South African nationals. Legislative changes to the Refugee Act are also in the offing, with the Refugee Amendment Bill currently before Parliament, which will among other things redefine some of the grounds for exclusion of refugee status. A decision about the status of the Zimbabwe Special Permit, currently covering 197,000 people, is expected in February. Gigaba stated that 'We

are not going to take any decision that is going to leave hundreds of thousands of people on the street without documentation.'

[South Africa: Factory Owner Arrested Together With 35 Undocumented Persons](#)

South African Police Services Press Release, 1 February 2017

A factory owner and 35 undocumented persons were arrested by the police members assisted by the Immigration officials from Home Affairs at a shoe factory in Chatsworth (Durban). The Crime Intelligence members gathered information on a shoe factory operating in Chatsworth which had undocumented persons in their factory. Crime intelligence members, with the assistance of the Immigration officials at Home Affairs as well as Durban Public Order Police, then conducted a surprise inspection of the factory. Police discovered that the owner was aware that the persons he was hiring were in the country illegally. The owner of the factory was subsequently placed under arrest and will face charges of employing undocumented persons in his factory. All the suspects arrested will appear in the Chatsworth Magistrates' Court.

[Sassa: Yes, we have failed to deliver](#)

Phillip De Welt, Mail & Guardian, 1 February 2017

The South Africa Social Security Agency (Sassa) has 59 days left to negotiate terms with the provider of social grant payments or up to four million people stand to lose access to their lifeline monthly payments. Those negotiations have not yet started. On Wednesday, Sassa told a Parliamentary committee that the biometric cards used to identify social grant recipients at pay points will no longer work come April. In 2014 the Constitutional Court confirmed that the CPS contract had been awarded unlawfully, and ordered that a new tender be issued. Sassa said the responses it received to that issued tender were poor and that it would take over the entire process instead. The Constitutional Court condoned this, on the basis that Sassa promised to conclude that process by the time the invalid CPS tender expires on March 31. On Wednesday, Sassa admitted that will not happen. 'We need to come and acknowledge that, yes, we have failed,' said Sassa executive manager Raphaahle Ramokgopa. The only option Sassa thought possible, she said, was to extend the CPS contract for at least another year.

[Three Somali shopkeepers murdered in Khayelitsha](#)

News24, 3 February 2017

Three Somali shopkeepers were killed within minutes of one another in Khayelitsha (Cape Town) on Thursday night, Western Cape police said. The motives of the three incidents are yet to be determined and no one has been arrested as yet. A 27-year-old man, who apparently owned a shop, was shot at 21:45. Five minutes later, at 21:50, a 22-year-old man was killed in his shop. Around the same time, a 28-year-old man was shot dead in his shop in Solomon Tshuku Street. All the murders took place in Site C.

[Time to enrol kids for school next year](#)

The Cape Times, 5 February 2017

Early deadlines for school applications have been set to meet an increasing demand for those seeking enrolment. In order to accommodate children for next year, the provincial education department has announced March 24 as the deadline for applications. The deadline applies in particular for children starting Grade 1 or Grade 8 and children who were changing schools. Immediate placement for those who apply late cannot be guaranteed, nor places at schools of choice for anybody. Thus, it is vital that parents apply at several schools. There are about 1 million

pupils enrolled at schools across the province this year, and at the start of the academic year about 17 000 were not placed in schools. There are still 3 500 children who have not been placed at schools in the province for this academic year and they will be then provided with a 'catch-up programme'. Schools must inform parents of the outcome in writing of their applications by June 3. Parents have to confirm acceptance by the end of the second term, by Friday, June 30.