



Refugee Research Network

Research Digest

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The RRN Research Digest provides a synopsis of recent research on refugee and forced migration issues from entities associated with the RRN and others.

Recent Publications and New Research

Special Issue: Easton-Calabria, E. and Skran, C. (eds.)(2020). Rethinking refugee self-reliance, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 33(1). The aim of this special issue is to rethink and critically examine the concept of refugee self-reliance and assess its relationship with the broader topics of livelihoods and entrepreneurship for refugees. The authors argue for an expanded definition of refugee self-reliance that promotes social as well as economic components and moves beyond narrowly implemented programmes targeting individual and market-based solutions. In so doing, it seeks to contribute to the existing body of literature critically assessing the source, practice and implications of refugee self-reliance and efforts to foster it. ([Open access](#)) [Read here.](#)

New Issue: Wilkinson, L., and Petrovic, L., (eds.) (2020) Comparing the German and Canadian experiences of resettling refugees: A 21st century response. *Canadian Diversity* 17(2). Canadian Diversity is a quarterly publication of the Association for Canadian Studies (ACS). This special issue brings together 15 papers that discuss the outcomes of refugee integration in both Canada and Germany. The first and second sections describes the legal implications and public receptivity toward refugees and economic and employment outcomes of refugees. Other topics include the discussion of the problems with settlement services and general resettlement issues, including challenges accessing language classes. ([Open access](#)) [Read here.](#)

Schockaert, L., Venables, E., Gil-Bazo, M. T., Barnwell, G., Gerstenhaber, R., Whitehouse, K. (2020) Behind the Scenes of South Africa's Asylum Procedure: A qualitative study on long-term asylum-seekers from the Democratic Republic of Congo, *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 39(1). This exploratory qualitative study describes how protracted asylum procedures and associated conditions are experienced by Congolese asylum-seekers in Tshwane, South Africa. The findings focused on the process of leaving the Democratic Republic of Congo, applying for asylum and aspirations of positive outcomes for one's life. Subsequently, it describes the reality of prolonged periods of unfulfilled expectations and

how protracted asylum procedures contribute to poor mental health. Furthermore, coping mechanisms to mitigate these negative effects are described. [\(Open access\) Read here.](#)

Chowdhory, N., & Mohanty, B. (2020). *Citizenship, Nationalism And Refugeehood of Rohingyas in Southern Asia*. Springer, Singapore. This book provides an in-depth investigation of citizenship and nationalism in connection with the Rohingya community. It analyses the processes of production of statelessness in South Asia in general, and with regard to the Rohingyas in particular. To date, very few theoretical insights have been provided on the Rohingya issue, and this book attempts to bridge that gap by exploring a dialogue between the state and its citizens and non-citizens that results in the production of statelessness. [Read here.](#)

Campbell, J. R. (2020) Examining procedural unfairness and credibility findings in the UK asylum system, *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 39(1). This article addresses a key problem confronted by immigration judges (IJs) in their assessment of the asylum claims of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, who are often not allowed to speak or participate in their own hearings. The article has three linked aims: to examine research that looks at how IJs decide credibility; to set out an ethnographic approach to better understand IJs' decision-making; and to argue that asylum tribunals need to adopt appropriate guidelines. [Read here.](#)

New Issue: COVID-19: A new challenge for migration policy (April-June 2020) International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Eurasyllum Ltd. This special issue of Migration Policy Practice (a biweekly Journal for and by policy makers worldwide) discusses the emerging effects of COVID-19 on migrants and migration policy worldwide from a range of perspectives including the humanitarian, economic and data-related implications of the new pandemic. It stresses that while most refugees and migrants live in individual and communal accommodations in urban areas, and therefore face similar health threats from COVID-19 as their host populations, their degree of vulnerability may be a lot higher due to the conditions of their migratory journeys, limited employment opportunities, overcrowded and poor living and working conditions with inadequate access to food, water, sanitation and other basic services. [Read here.](#)

Report, Policy Briefs and Working Papers

Report: Schmidtke, R., Schacher, Y., & Sawyer, A. (May 19, 2020) Deportation with Layover: Failure of Protection Under the U.S. – Guatemala Asylum Cooperative Agreement, *Refugees International*. Under the ACA with Guatemala, the United States has rapidly transferred non-Guatemalan asylum seekers to Guatemala without allowing them to lodge asylum claims in the United States. Given Guatemala's inability to provide effective protection and the risk that some transferees face in Guatemala or after returning to their home countries, the United States violates its obligation to examine their asylum claims by implementing the agreement. [Read here.](#)

Research Brief: Sarrica, F., Healy, C., Serio, G., & Samson, J. (May 14, 2020) How COVID-19 restrictions and the economic consequences are likely to impact migrant smuggling and cross-border trafficking in persons to Europe and North America, *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime*. This Research Brief analyses possible scenarios of how smuggling of migrants and cross-border trafficking in persons are likely to be affected by the COVID-19 crisis along mixed migration routes to two important destination regions: North America and Europe. This paper draws on the dynamics observed during other global economic downturns, such as the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, to assess how the COVID-19-induced recession may affect smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons in the near to long term. [Read here.](#)

News reports and blog posts

Immigrants are worrying about social ties and finances during coronavirus by Carlo Handy Charles (May 19, 2020) *The Conversation*. Based on a recent Statistic Canada Study, immigrants and refugees are more likely than Canadian-born individuals to be worried about the social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This article analyzes immigrant's concerns about social ties, social risks, and finances during the pandemic. The author argues that it is imperative for the federal and provincial governments to consider the unique challenges faced by immigrants and refugees as they implement policies to help people in Canada recover from the impacts of the pandemic. [Read here.](#)

How South Africa is denying refugees their rights: what needs to change by Sikanyiso Masuku (May 12, 2020) *The Conversation*. The author argues that the failure to regularise the national asylum system, which is responsible for the documentation of applicants for refugee status and adjudication of appeals, has led to huge capacity constraints. These are evidenced by backlogs that leave many applicants without requisite documents. The consequences of this are far reaching. Vulnerable undocumented people make it harder to plan or manage social services for all. It also poses a threat to security, stability and social cohesion. [Read here.](#)

Asylum seekers lodge complaint with ombudsman over 'catastrophic' coronavirus concerns by Claudia Farhart (May 7, 2020) *Special Broadcasting Service*. 13 Asylum seekers being held in Australian immigration facilities have lodged an official complaint with the Commonwealth Ombudsman, saying the conditions in which they are being held could lead to a "catastrophic" coronavirus outbreak among detainees, arguing that social distancing is impossible inside the immigration facilities, where five men are being forced to share a room. [Read here.](#)

Will Canada be as open to immigrants after COVID-19? By Ratna Omidvar (May 4, 2020) *Policy Options Politiques*. Canadians understand that the success of the country depends on the success of integrating its newcomers. She writes that Canadians must decide whether they will remain an "open country" after the coronavirus ends. She points out that the aging population needs an influx of immigrants to help

Canada to thrive, grow, and prosper. She adds that Canada may accrue a \$100 billion national debt due to the coronavirus but immigrants can help expand the economy and repay the debt. Finally, she writes, closed borders will not stop the spread of viruses like this one and countries must work together to develop a united global response to prepare for the next pandemic when, not if, it happens again. [Read here.](#)

Digital and social media

Webinar: Voices from the Borders Registration hosted by Refugees International and Human Rights Watch (May 28, 2020 02:00 PM). 30 asylum seekers transferred to Guatemala reported abuses while in U.S. custody and, upon arrival in Guatemala, and often felt compelled to abandon their asylum claims and return to their home countries. This webinar will include report of the findings, featuring a video from a woman from El Salvador who was transferred to Guatemala and an audience Q&A will follow. [Register here.](#)

@Refugees released a video #ForYou featuring young refugees from around the world and their essential contributions to fighting COVID-19. [Watch here.](#)