



Research Digest

No. 145 | March 7, 2024

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

NEW RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Adekola, P.O., Cirella, G.T. & Brownell, G. (2024). [Reintegration programs and the willingness of displaced persons to return home: Analyzing the role of social infrastructure in north-east Nigeria.](#) *Journal of International Migration & Integration*.

This study explores the impact of Boko Haram's violence on northern Nigeria, particularly focusing on the willingness of conflict-induced internally displaced persons (CIIDPs) to return home and the role of restoring social infrastructure in this process. The authors conclude that while restoring social infrastructure is a factor, it should not be viewed as the sole solution for promoting willingness to return in a post-conflict context. To address the broader issue, they recommend that governments and policymakers in conflict-affected communities prioritize restoring water sources and access roads, as these appear to be critical factors in encouraging the return of IDPs.

Borrelli, L. M., & Ruedin, D. (2024). [Towards a precise and reflexive use of migration-related terminology in quantitative research: Criticism and suggestions.](#) *Comparative Migration Studies*, 12(1), 1-18.

To describe migration-related phenomena, there is a need to reflect on the terminology and choose the most adequate one to determine whether migration is the (main) cause of a phenomenon, a consequence, or even unrelated and misattributed. The authors argue that such terminology in quantitative and experimental research is often flawed because of its differentiated adoption in legal, political, or scientific contexts. They conclude that quantitative research should avoid reproducing state-created terminology and instead look beyond the strict field of immigration to consider other classification systems like gender, ethnicity, language, or social class to reduce the negative attributes ascribed to non-citizens.

Feyissa Dori, D., Hagen-Zanker, J., & Mazzilli, C. (2024). [The entanglement between tangible and intangible factors in shaping Hadiya migration aspirations to South Africa.](#)

International Migration Review. This article expands scholarly knowledge on migration decision-making, drawing on the case of Hadiya (Southern Ethiopia) migration to South Africa. The authors propose a conceptual framework where intangible factors (religious beliefs, imaginations, norms, and emotions, and feelings) are placed at the core of decision-making, alongside more tangible factors, such as livelihood opportunities. Showing the centrality of such aspects in Hadiya respondent's life stories, they argue that only by looking at the interplay of intangible and tangible factors can we reach a better understanding of the complex dynamic of migration decision-making.

H. Kuo, B. C., & Rappaport, L. M. (2024). [A prospective longitudinal study of depression, perceived stress, and perceived control in resettled Syrian refugees' mental health and psychosocial adaptation.](#) *Transcultural Psychiatry.* This prospective study examined the psychosocial adaptation of a community sample of newly resettled Syrian refugees in Canada. Specifically, data on depressive symptoms, perceived stress, and perceived control were collected. Empirical results identify a potentially broad, precipitating, and persistent effect of depressive symptoms on Syrian refugees' psychosocial resources and adaptation post-migration. Clinically, the study results highlight the importance of early screening for depressive symptoms among refugee newcomers within a culturally and trauma-informed, integrated health setting. Furthermore, this study underscores the value and need for theoretically guided longitudinal studies to advance future research on refugee mental health and psychosocial adaptation.

Ozdamar, O., Giovanis, E. & Akdede, S.H. (2024). [Attitudes towards Syrian refugees in Türkiye: Does cosmopolitanism matter?.](#) *Journal of International Migration & Integration.* This paper empirically investigates the possible relationship between cosmopolitanism and attitudes towards Syrian refugees in Türkiye. Previous research has emphasized that factors determining cosmopolitanism can also influence attitudes toward refugees and immigrants. However, no study has documented evidence of the link between these factors and the attitudes of Turkish people towards Syrian refugees. Findings show that those with cosmopolitan orientations, people who have been or lived abroad in the past, and individuals who know at least one foreign language and participated in cultural activities while being in another country are more tolerant of refugees.

REPORTS AND POLICY BRIEFS

[Bearing Witness: Atrocities and Looming Hunger in Darfur.](#) (2024). Refugees International. Many of the same atrocities seen in Darfur 20 years ago – including potential genocide – are unfolding again today. These atrocities are driving mass forced displacement and growing humanitarian needs. Most deaths to date have been due to violence, but without increased relief aid, many more people will die due to hunger and disease in the months ahead. With more than 10 million people displaced and half its population facing acute food insecurity – including nearly 5 million at the brink of famine – Sudan is now the largest

displacement crisis in the world, and one of the worst humanitarian crises. Darfur, with rising hunger and the spectre of genocide, has become the worst of Sudan's crises.

[Outmatched: The U.S. Asylum System Faces Record Demands.](#) (2024). **Migration Policy Institute.** The U.S. humanitarian protection system is under significant strain at a time of mass displacements globally, a backlog of 2 million asylum applications, and record arrivals of migrants seeking asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border. The Biden administration has turned to alternate pathways to provide temporary protection to some, while imposing restrictions on asylum. This report examines the current state of the U.S. protection system, focusing on recent changes the Biden administration has been making in asylum processes and temporary protections, as well as the challenges and lessons the U.S. experience may offer for other asylum systems and countries. The report is one of five country case studies and a synthesis report in a comparative asylum project developed by the Clingendael Institute.

[Scars of War and Deprivation: An Urgent Call to Reverse Tigray's Humanitarian Crisis.](#) (2024). **Refugees International.** It has been over a year since peace was declared between the Federal Ethiopia Government and authorities in the Tigray region. Yet, at a time when the region should be recovering, people remain in crisis. Widespread hunger is gripping a portion of the population, including the most vulnerable. The hunger is a function of two years of living under siege during the war, a crippling drought, and a nearly seven-month pause in food aid intended to root out corruption. Mothers who survived gang-rape by soldiers should be undergoing treatment for physical and mental healing, but instead are wondering how they will feed their children. For a range of reasons, aid has not scaled up to meet the needs of Tigray's internally displaced people (IDPs). If relief does not come, many will die, and some even fear that the fragile peace agreement could be in jeopardy.

[The Mobility Key: Realizing the Potential of Refugee Travel Documents.](#) (2024). **Migration Policy Institute.** Governments are increasingly experimenting with new mobility pathways for refugees, beyond traditional resettlement operations. These include complementary pathways that connect refugees with work or study opportunities in a country other than the one in which they first sought safety—expanding their future prospects while easing pressure on top refugee-hosting countries. This policy brief—part of the Beyond Territorial Asylum: Making Protection Work in a Bordered World initiative led by MPI and the Robert Bosch Stiftung—outlines the different types of travel documents that can facilitate refugees' movement and key barriers to acquiring and using them. It also identifies steps that countries of asylum, transit, and destination, along with donors and international organizations, can take to overcome these challenges.

[UN Refugee Agency expresses alarm over escalating humanitarian crisis in eastern DR Congo.](#) (2024). **The UN Refugee Agency.** This is a summary of what UNHCR spokesperson Eujin Byun said at a recent press briefing at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. The worsening humanitarian situation civilians face in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is worrying. Intensifying violence and conflict are exacting a heavy toll on innocent civilians, hundreds of thousands of whom are attempting to seek safety on the peripheries of conflict

zones. Since the resurgence of fighting around the town of Sake in the North Kivu Province on 7 February, 144,000 individuals have been forced to flee the outskirts of Goma. They have fled indiscriminate bombings that have impacted displacement sites and other civilian areas over the past few weeks, which have resulted in the deaths of more than 20 civilians and injured more than 60.

NEWS AND BLOG POSTS

[By boat or by plane? If you're seeking asylum in Australia, the outcome is similarly bleak](#) by Savitri Taylor, February 20, 2024. **The Conversation.** Last week, 39 foreign nationals arrived by boat in a remote part of Western Australia. This revived dormant debates about border security. People without visas come to Australia by air and sea, though we only ever seem to hear about the latter. Unlike unauthorized air arrivals, unauthorized maritime arrivals (people without visas that arrive by boat without permission) are given high media visibility. This feeds a narrative that the country has lost control of its borders, creating a political problem for the government of the day. This article reflects what happens behind the headlines, when people arrive in Australia without permission, whether by boat or by plane.

[New York lawyer group denounces massacre of migrants in Mexican state of Sonora](#) by Beatriz Guillén, February 21, 2024. **El País.** Four-year-old Jonzi was one of a group of migrants travelling across the Mexican state of Sonora last Thursday when an armed commando attacked the vehicles. The child, who had arrived in Mexico from Ecuador, died, along with at least two other women. His death had gone unnoticed, added to the large number of missing, kidnapped and deceased migrants attempting to reach the U.S. border that nobody asks about and whose bodies nobody claims. However, a New York law firm specializing in migrant issues, 1800Migrante, [released a statement](#) based on a witness account that spoke of a “migrant massacre” in Sáric, about 50 miles from the border with Arizona.

[Over 15,000 refugees cross into Uganda since January: UN refugee agency](#) by Xinhua, February 19, 2024. More than 15,000 refugees have crossed into Uganda from neighbouring countries since January, and the number is expected to increase throughout the year, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Frank Walusimbi, UNHCR Uganda spokesperson, told Xinhua by telephone on Monday that most refugees came from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Sudan and South Sudan.

[Poland has opened its arms to nearly 1 million Ukrainian refugees, but will they be able to stay for the long term?](#) by Kate Golebiowska, Marta Pachocka, and Sabina Kubiciel-Lodzińska, February 26, 2024. **The Conversation.** Two years after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the European landscape has been completely transformed by Ukrainian migrants fleeing their homeland. In the weeks after Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, Poland immediately opened its borders and became the primary recipient of Ukrainian refugees. By [May 2022](#), 3.5 million Ukrainians – or 53% of all people who fled the country – had crossed the border into Poland. Many have since returned to Ukraine or settled

elsewhere, but many have stayed. The authors discuss why Poland has been so open to this large number of refugees – and how long they will be able to stay.

Thailand Braces for Refugee Influx After Myanmar Junta Announces Conscription

Law by Tommy Walker, February 18, 2024. VOA. Thailand is bracing for an influx of refugees after Myanmar's military recently announced a conscription law. Analysts say the Thai government should put those fleeing Myanmar into safe zones. Last week, Myanmar's military activated the People's Military Service Law, meaning men aged 18 to 45 and women aged 18 to 35 can be drafted into the armed forces for two years of compulsory service. Certain personnel in specialist professions, like doctors and engineers, must serve for three years. In the case of a national emergency, the military service can be extended to five years.

Ukraine refugees want to return home — but how? by Cevat Giray Aksoy and Barbara

Rambousek, February 21, 2024. EU Observer. It is generally accepted that the longer refugees are out of their home country, the less likely they are to return. However, in Ukraine's case, it looks slightly different. Two years after being forced to flee their homes due to the Russian invasion, a significant number of the eight million displaced Ukrainians continue to express a strong determination to return. In the authors' new EBRD research paper, they look at surveys on the intentions of refugee Ukrainians in Europe to return or integrate. Fewer than one in ten intend to settle permanently outside Ukraine. Most are planning to return either very soon (7.6 percent) or when it is safe (59.0 percent).

EVENTS, RESOURCES, DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Border Controls, Politics and Digitization: The banality of digital "reasonable suspicions" and their effects

by Lincoln Alexander School of Law. The objective of this presentation is to analyze how the politics of digital suspicion affect travellers seeking entry or transit visas. With a view to the consequences for individuals, Elspeth Guild, a Jean Monnet Professor ad personam in law at Queen Mary University of London, and Didier Bigo, a part-time professor of International Political Sociology at the Department of War Studies, King's College London, will analyze what groups are in charge of elaborating these policies, the link between private providers and public authorities, and the declared objectives and difficulties of constructing reliable and relevant data. This speaker series is on March 28, 2024, at 12:00 - 1:00 PM EDT at Toronto Metropolitan University.

