



Research Digest

No. 148 | April 18, 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

Abdelaaty, L. (2024). [“The greatest and most important human right”: Citizenship and bureaucratic indifference in refugee-UNHCR correspondence.](#) *Migration Politics*, 3(1).

This article examines how refugees advocate for themselves with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), and what responses their communications produce. It analyzes letters sent by refugees in Kenya to UNHCR headquarters in Geneva between 1983 and 1994. The findings underline a disjuncture between refugees’ efforts to constitute themselves as political agents, and UNHCR’s insistence on viewing them as depoliticized subjects. UNHCR’s responses (or lack thereof) demonstrate the consequences of its insulation and bureaucratization.

Adhyaru, J. S., & Guchait, A. (2023). [Working with Afghan evacuees: Field reflections on five useful supervision questions for crisis intervention workers.](#) *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 37(1), 230–239.

This field reflection is a reflective dialogue between a supervisor and supervisee focusing on work with Afghan evacuees undertaken by the Centre for Anxiety, Stress & Trauma within Central and Northwest London NHS Foundation Trust. This field reflection focuses on five themes that emerged between the supervisor and supervisee during clinical supervision. The themes are posed as questions that may help others working in the context of a humanitarian crisis to utilize supervision to effectively support both staff and the target population. The reflections conclude with recommendations on how supervision can support staff well-being and, in turn, offer a supportive service to people feeling their homeland in the context of war.

Atak, I., Asalya, S., & Zyfi, J. (2024). [Vulnerability of asylum seekers and undocumented migrants in Toronto.](#) *Canadian Journal of Law and Society / Revue Canadienne Droit et Société*, 1–22.

This article examines the underlying structural elements contributing to the vulnerability experienced by asylum seekers and undocumented migrants across two critical domains: refugee eligibility examination and accessibility of essential social services, particularly healthcare. Drawing insights from fieldwork conducted in Toronto between 2020 and 2022, this article investigates how migrants navigate and perceive

vulnerability encountered both at the front-end of the refugee status determination and while trying to access social services. It discusses the perspectives of key stakeholders, , shedding light on their experiences and insights regarding the challenges migrants face. Furthermore, this article critically evaluates Canada's adherence to the principles articulated in the 2018 United Nations Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees concerning the mitigation of vulnerability among migrant populations.

Berding-Barwick, R., & McAreavey, R. (2023). [Resilience and identities: The role of past, present and future in the lives of forced migrants.](#) *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 50(8), 1843–1861. This research highlights how individuals proactively make strategic choices and assume responsibility for their well-being – even if that depends on changing underlying structural issues. The authors show that, despite a hostile immigration environment, as found in the UK, individuals can act and adapt to their environment. However, this is limited to a degree. They demonstrate how time matters in personal resilience processes – both as a tactic for resilience for some and a disruptor of resilience for others.

Pettrachin, A., & Hadj Abdou, L. (2024). [Beyond evidence-based policymaking? exploring knowledge formation and source effects in US migration policymaking.](#) *Policy Sciences*, 57(1), 3–28. Several scholars have observed persistent gaps between policy responses to complex, ambiguous and politicized problems (such as migration, climate change and the recent Covid-19 pandemic) and evidence or 'facts.' While most existing explanations for this 'evidence-policy gap' in the migration policy field focus on knowledge availability and knowledge used by policymakers, this article shifts the focus to processes of knowledge formation, exploring the questions of what counts as 'evidence' for migration policymakers and what are the sources of information that shape their understandings of migration policy issues. The findings challenge scholarly claims about policymakers' lack of access to evidence about migration. The authors also challenge claims that migration-related decision-making processes are irrational or merely driven by political interests.

van Tubergen, F., Kogan, I., Kosyakova, Y., & Pötzschke, S. (2023). [Self-selection of Ukrainian refugees and displaced persons in Europe.](#) *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 37(1), 72–96. The literature on migrants' self-selection is focused on labour migrants, while little is known about refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The researchers contribute to this scant literature by (1) examining a broad set of factors that could determine self-selection, (2) contrasting self-selection profiles of refugees and IDPs, and (3) comparing self-selection profiles of refugees across countries. Specifically, they compare the self-selection profiles of Ukrainian refugees and IDPs with stayers in the months directly following the Russian full-scale invasion in February 2022. The authors draw on unique, cross-nationally comparative data from the OneUA project. The authors found systematic empirical patterns of self-selection related to people's region of origin, family status, and individual-level characteristics.

REPORTS AND POLICY BRIEFS

[ICMPD Migration Outlook Mediterranean 2024 Eight migration issues to look out for in 2024.](#) (2024). **International Centre for Migration Policy Development.** This report discusses 8 key migration issues expected in 2024, such as the upward trend of migratory pressure, new waves of refugees from Sudan, the securitization of migration narratives and policies, and the modernization of migration governance.

[Keys to the City 2024: Ending refugee homelessness in London.](#) (2024). **Refugee Council.** Homelessness and destitution among newly recognized refugees in London are on the rise. This growing crisis is a result of systemic failure – the process refugees face while transitioning through the so-called ‘move-on’ period is dysfunctional by design, and discriminatory in delivery. This report presents their latest data and analysis showing a dramatic rise in homelessness for newly recognized refugees, based on Government data for England and figures from their own Private Rented Scheme. The report sets out recommendations for the next Mayor of London and for the Government on how to solve the crisis of destitution and homelessness among newly recognized refugees.

[Neglected in the Jungle: Inadequate Protection and Assistance for Migrants and Asylum Seekers Crossing the Darién Gap.](#) (2024). This report, part of a series of Human Rights Watch reports on migration via the Darién Gap, focuses on Colombia’s and Panama’s responses to migration across their border. It identifies specific shortcomings in their efforts to protect and assist these people—including those at higher risk, such as unaccompanied children—as well as to investigate abuses against them. The report provides concrete recommendations to the governments of Colombia and Panama on addressing these shortcomings and to donor governments, the United Nations and regional bodies, and humanitarian organizations on how to support and cooperate with Colombia and Panama in these efforts.

[Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Families through Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Services.](#) (2024). **Migration Policy Institute.** This issue brief highlights the importance of Infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH) services for immigrant and refugee families as well as gaps in IECMH promotion, prevention, screening, and treatment that affect these families. The brief also identifies opportunities for policymakers and practitioners to improve access to IECMH services for this population.

NEWS AND BLOG POSTS

[IOM report: 1 in 3 migrant deaths occurs in transit while fleeing conflict.](#) (2024). **United Nations.** The UN migration agency reported that one in three migrant deaths happens while people flee conflict,. More than two in three migrants whose deaths have been documented

remain unidentified. Last year was the deadliest on record, with 8,541 migrant victims. Nearly 60 per cent of deaths were linked to drowning. So far in 2024, the trends are similar. Along the Mediterranean Sea route alone – while arrivals this year are significantly lower (16,818) compared to the same period in 2023 (26,984) – the number of deaths is nearly as high as before, with 956 registered since 1 January.

[Kaldor Centre statement on new migration bill, March 26, 2024.](#) **Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law.** The Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law has serious concerns about the scope and ramifications of the Migration Amendment (Removal and Other Measures) Bill 2024, which was rushed into Parliament today. It gives the Minister extraordinarily broad and ill-defined powers which would make a person’s failure to cooperate with the government’s efforts to remove them a criminal offence, expand the Minister’s powers to reverse protection findings, and see entire countries subject to travel bans, prohibiting their citizens from coming to Australia for holidays, work or education – in an attempt to pressure those countries to accept forced returns.

[Myanmar Asylum Seeker Crisis Needs a Humane and Regional Solution](#) by Perry Q. Wood, April 1, 2024. **The Diplomat.** Another capsized boat leading to more tragedy and death at sea. This time it is Rohingya fleeing either persecution in Myanmar or unlivable conditions in makeshift camps outside the country. Seventy deaths and counting from the latest incident alone. The trendline for Rohingya escaping on boats to head for places like Indonesia or Australia is showing a marked increase in numbers. From 2021 to 2023, the United Nations recorded a 441 percent increase in “irregular movements” of Rohingyas seeking to escape places like Kutupalong, the world’s largest refugee camp, in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh.

[Toogdag 2023 Blog Series: The Verb ‘Enjoy’ in Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and its Application in Africa](#) by Cristiano D’Orsi, April 9, 2024. **Human Rights Here.** The right to ‘enjoy’ asylum primarily means the opportunity for refugees to benefit from the rights that are listed in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. This contribution investigates whether the right of ‘enjoying asylum’ has been translated into the African continent through the appropriate international, regional, sub-regional and domestic legal instruments. The relevance of this investigation is to understand whether and to what extent refugees hosted by the African countries can ‘enjoy’ the rights derived from their legal status of refugees.

[UNHCR urges immediate action amid heightened risks for displaced in eastern DR Congo.](#) (2024). **The UN Refugee Agency.** The UNHCR Refugee Agency, is raising the alarm as ongoing violence in eastern areas of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) reaches a devastating level. Two years of cyclical conflict in the North Kivu territories of Rutshuru and Masisi have forced over 1.3 million people to flee their homes within the DRC, leading to a total of 5.7 million people becoming internally displaced across North Kivu,

South Kivu and Ituri provinces. Since violent clashes enveloped the town of Sake, in Masisi territory, on 7 February, almost 300,000 people have arrived in the city of Goma and its surroundings, swelling spontaneous and official displacement sites as they desperately seek shelter from indiscriminate bombing and other human rights abuses.

[Weekly U.S.-Mexico Border Update: Mexico crackdown, no spring migration increase, Texas, Guatemala](#) by Adam Isacson, March 29, 2024. Washington Office on Latin America. Migration at the U.S.-Mexico border usually increases in springtime. That is not happening in 2024, although numbers are up in Mexico and further south. Increased Mexican government operations to block or hinder migrants are a central reason. Especially striking is migration from Venezuela, which has plummeted at the U.S. border and moved largely to ports of entry. It is unclear why Venezuelan migration has dropped more steeply than that from other nations.

[What is behind the suicides of LGBTQ+ people in refugee camps in the Netherlands?](#) by Holod Media and Anastasia Pestova, March 30, 2024. Global Voices. In mid-January, it was reported that Antonina Babkina, a transgender girl from Russia who had been granted asylum, committed suicide in the Netherlands. This marks at least the fourth reported case of suicide among Russian-speaking refugees in the country over the past year. According to Sandro Kortekaas, a spokesperson for the Dutch organization LGBTQ Asylum Support, all suicide cases have one thing in common: the victims did not receive psychological support on time. Kortekaas said, “Most refugees come from countries with a huge number of problems. Ideally, there should be a medical evaluation upon their arrival in the Netherlands and another before the refugee interview.”

EVENTS, RESOURCES, DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

[Practical and Compassionate Alternatives to Detention: Catalyst Lecture and Workshop](#) by Exeter Research Networks. Working with the Detention Forum, a network of over 50 NGOs across the UK challenging the use of immigration detention, the Universities of Exeter and Leeds are holding a lecture and workshop on the growing evidence base from projects in the UK and internationally suggesting that there is a more effective, compassionate and cheaper alternative available. This evidence base includes two Home Office funded pilot projects. This lecture will examine this alternative case management model in the community, and how it presents a compelling case for a new operating model for the UK’s asylum and immigration system. This online event will be on April 23, 2024 from 8:30 AM EDT - 10:00 AM EDT.

[Scholars of Excellence Workshop – The “integration business”: A radical critique on migration, development and reception services](#) by Toronto Metropolitan University. The workshop is organized into two panels. The first focuses on the local aspects of this migration industry in both border areas and settlement locations, critically analyzing the ways locals,

settled migrants and recently arrived asylum seekers, refugees or migrants become entangled in forms of service provision that extract capital and constitute multi-scalar processes of governance. The second panel expands this critical perspective by engaging with the broader policy and political discourses on migration and development. Contributors to both panels seek to unmask the processes of capital accumulation that underlie the regulation of mobility, territory, social life and political subjectivities. This hybrid event takes place on April 23, 2024 from 9:30 AM EDT - 4:00 PM EDT.