



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.

NEW RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Paynter, E. (2024). [*Emergency in Transit: Witnessing Migration in the Colonial Present*](#). University of California Press (Critical Refugee Studies Series). Emergency in Transit responds to the crisis framings that dominate migration debates in the global north. This capacious, interdisciplinary study reformulates Europe's so-called "migrant crisis" from a sudden disaster to a site of contested witnessing, where competing narratives threaten, uphold, or reimagine migrant rights. Focusing on Italy, a crucial port of arrival, Eleanor Paynter draws together testimonials from ethnographic research—alongside literature, film, and visual art—to interrogate the colonial, racial logics that inform emergency responses to migration. She also examines the media, discourses, policies, and practices that shape lived experiences of migration well beyond international borders. Centering the witnessing of Black Africans in Italy, *Emergency in Transit* reveals how this emergency apparatus operates and posits a vision of mobility that refutes the notions of crisis so often imposed on those who cross the Mediterranean Sea. This book is available in paperback and open access versions.

Asutay, M., Avdukic, A., & Tobin, S. A. (2025). [*Overcoming the invisible ceiling for the empowerment of refugees and immigrants through Islamic Finance*](#). *Global Policy*, 16(S1), 5–6. The 21st century has been marked by continuous political, economic and financial crises on a global, regional and national scale, leading to an unprecedented movement of people in the form of refugees and immigrants. The global refugee crisis has reached unprecedented levels, with millions of people displaced due to conflicts, persecution and natural disasters. Access to adequate finance is critical for refugees, as it significantly impacts their ability to improve their living conditions, access essential services such as education and health care, and create economic opportunities for themselves and their communities. However, refugees often face substantial barriers to accessing financial services, including a lack of appropriate financial products, restrictive regulations and limited

awareness among financial institutions about their specific needs. Considering the Shari'ah compliant requirement of financial transactions, Muslim refugees are particularly face enormous challenges in this regard.

Gammeltoft-Hansen, T., & Ghezelbash, D. (2024). [What role for law in refugee studies? towards a transdisciplinary agenda.](#) *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 37(4), 837–850. Refugee law has historically formed an important part of refugee studies. Yet, in the past decades, the legal study of refugees has increasingly developed out of sync with refugee studies more generally. The purpose of this special issue is to help bridge the gap between refugee law and refugee studies and foster a broader transdisciplinary research agenda on law within refugee studies scholarship. The special issue serves two overarching purposes. The first is to exemplify and celebrate methodological heterodoxy in refugee law scholarship—deliberately foregrounding perspectives often marginalized within more mainstream legal scholarship. To this end, this issue presents a range of contributions that draw on methods and theories from different disciplines in the study of refugee law, including anthropology, history, psychology, political science, organization studies, and data science. Second, by anchoring this special issue in the *Journal of Refugee Studies*, we hope to convince the wider refugee studies community that empirical and interdisciplinary legal methods may provide new and important insights into some of the core debates on and long-standing challenges to refugee law.

Omata, N., & Gidron, Y. (2024). [Returning to fund refugeehood: dispersal and survival between Uganda and South Sudan.](#) *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 51(1), 101–121. Return movements of refugees, even when gradual or temporary, are typically understood as part of a process of full repatriation or as a 'strategy' for leveraging socio-economic opportunities across borders. However, for some refugees, return is neither a step towards repatriation nor an empowering strategy. Drawing on qualitative and quantitative data from Uganda and South Sudan, this article shows how, due to gradual reductions in aid and the lack of livelihood opportunities in Uganda, South Sudanese refugees travel back to their homeland in order to financially support their relatives who remain in exile. These return movements and the phenomenon of split households among South Sudanese are responses to severe hardship and, paradoxically, are deployed to sustain their life in Uganda. While cross-border migration enables refugees to access subsistence opportunities, this article argues that it underscores how refugees must now find their own means to 'fund' their refugeehood, given ongoing reductions in international assistance for protracted displacement.

Paquet, M., & Boucher, A. K. (2025). [Beyond the queue: The sources and politics of migration backlogs in Canada and Australia.](#) *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 1–14. Backlogs are crucial elements of migration politics, and this article introduces tools to analyze them: a matrix of sources of migration backlogs and a conceptual framework capturing government responses to backlogs. The authors apply these tools to the cases of Canada and Australia. Between 2000 and 2020, they identify four sources of migration backlogs in these countries: legislative or policy design problems, technical malfunctions,

legal challenges, and political decisions. The analysis shows that governments' decision not to act to address a backlog can be a political strategy and that other types of responses are possible, including ordering, reorienting, investing, or ceasing.

Pincock, K., Jones, N., Youssef, S., & Al Heiwidi, S. (2025). [Formal and informal integration in contexts of displacement: Exploring implications for youth civic identities.](#) *Journal of Refugee Studies*. A vast number of young refugees are formally excluded from basic civil, political, and social rights in the countries where they have lived for many years, with little prospect of safe return to (and citizenship in) the places their families fled. While development policies frame youth civic participation as key to creating inclusive futures, frameworks like the Global Compact on Refugees focus on labour market integration, without reference to young people or their political subjectivities. This article draws on children's political geographies and an intersectional approach to analyse findings from research with displaced youth in Jordan and Lebanon. Data show that although legal recognition is important, historical geopolitical dynamics, economic precarity, location, and gender significantly shape how young refugees relate to host states and navigate refugee- and nationality-based identities across and within contexts. These findings nuance understandings of young refugees' civic identities as shaped by both interpersonal and institutional marginalization.

Wilde, M., Golovátina-Mora, P., Kramer, P., & Juan, L. G. (2025). [Contingent hope: Everyday crisis and future imaginaries among Venezuelan migrants in Colombia.](#) *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, 44(1), 20–32. In this article, the authors analyse the experiences of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia by drawing on fieldwork conducted in the cities of Bucaramanga and Medellín between May 2021 and May 2022. They argue that though the situation facing Venezuelan migrants in Colombia is characterised fundamentally by hardship, at the level of everyday experience it is also one shaped by hope. Engaging with recent debates concerning aspiration and care in situations of precarity, they describe this mode of being as contingent hope: as an orientation towards the future premised on the desired improvement of specific circumstances. They contend that the capacity to maintain hope is derived from the strength of kinship ties that stretch across borders and enable emotional investments in the future.

REPORTS AND POLICY BRIEFS

["Canada has destroyed me": Labour exploitation of migrant workers in Canada.](#) (2025). **Amnesty International**. Tens of thousands of migrant workers travel every year to Canada in the hope of providing a better life for their families. They are promised labour opportunities and working conditions that very often they cannot enjoy in their countries of origin. Yet, many find a different reality upon arrival. This report investigates the human rights impact of Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP), a temporary migration scheme that allows employers to hire migrant workers, primarily in low-pay occupations.

[**Jurisprudence related to Gender-Based Violence against Women. \(2025\).**](#) EUAA. This report examines court decisions related to gender-based violence, following three landmark rulings by the Court of Justice of the European Union providing clearer legal grounds to grant international protection due to persecution or serious harm based on gender. It includes jurisprudence on the assessment of facts and circumstances by asylum authorities and the critical need to implement special procedural guarantees for vulnerable women so that they may participate effectively in the procedure.

[**Seventy per cent of RSF emergency funds allocated to resettling exiled and displaced journalists in 2024. \(2025\).**](#) **Reporters Without Borders.** The report highlights how the growing phenomenon of forced exile particularly affects journalists, as risks for information professionals covering conflict zones have increased worldwide. Seventy per cent of the NGO's emergency funds were allocated to relocating persecuted journalists from all corners of the globe. Today, supporting journalists in exile is crucial to protecting the right to information.

[**Sudan, 'the most devastating humanitarian and displacement crisis in the world' by Conor Lennon. \(2025\).**](#) **United Nations.** Sudan's ruinous civil war is approaching its third year, leaving a legacy of malnutrition, massive population displacement and chronic insecurity. As the UN system prepares to launch a call for record funding of \$4.2 billion to support aid operations in the country, here are some of the main things to know about what has been described as the largest and most devastating displacement, humanitarian and protection crisis in the world today.

[**Ukraine — Displacement and Social Cohesion in Ukraine — February 2025. \(2025\).**](#) **IOM UN Migration.** Since February 2022, numerous communities across Ukraine have witnessed the arrival of displaced persons from other parts of the country or returning from abroad. Continued, widespread displacement is likely to put an increasing strain on public services, infrastructure, housing and the labor market in hosting areas, carrying the potential for increasing tensions between different groups the longer displacement persists. This brief presents key findings on social cohesion, participation in community decision-making processes, and trust in local institutions. Furthermore, it analyses these findings in relation to information on mobility intentions and preferences for durable solutions, aiming to support broader evidence-based programming, policy-making, advocacy, and further research on the subject.

NEWS AND BLOG POSTS

[**Aid efforts hamstrung in Goma as the M23 tightens control by Emmet Livingstone & Fidèle Kitsa, February 14, 2025. The New Humanitarian.**](#) Aid groups in Goma say their response to the city's capture by M23 rebels and Rwandan troops late last month is being hampered by insecurity and funding cuts, as uncertainty also grows around how they will work under a new rebel administration. Residents of the city – the biggest in eastern

Democratic Republic of the Congo – said they have been supporting each other as best they can, sharing food, doing emergency first aid, and accommodating people displaced by the fighting. Goma is a humanitarian relief hub for all of eastern DRC, and was the epicentre of a vast crisis before it fell. It hosted nearly one million people displaced by earlier waves of the M23 conflict – who survived in sprawling camps of tarpaulin shelters.

[Iran detains 72 Afghan migrants in Semnan province crackdown](#) by Siyar Sirat, February 12, 2025. Amu TV. Iranian authorities have detained 72 Afghan migrants in Semnan province over the past three days as part of an ongoing crackdown on undocumented foreigners, according to Gholamhossein Arab, the police chief of Damghan district. Arab stated that the detained individuals have been transferred to a migrant camp for deportation. “Given the rising presence of undocumented migrants in Damghan, a collection plan was implemented to remove them,” he said. In addition to the arrests, Iranian authorities shut down three businesses for employing Afghan migrants without proper documentation, Arab said.

[Majority of Australian voters expect fair and humane approach to refugees, poll shows](#) by Sarah Basford Canales, February 16, 2025. The Guardian. Political leaders are being urged to embrace refugee policies “grounded in humanity, not cruelty” as new research has found a majority of Australians polled believe the federal government has a responsibility to accept people seeking asylum. The polling, commissioned by the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre and conducted by Redbridge, shows more than half of those polled support granting asylum seekers work and study rights while they await the outcome of their protection visa applications. The findings, from a survey of 1,508 Australian voters in January, show that while many support tough policies for those seeking asylum, many still support compassionate responses.

[Stateless in a sinking world: the untold plight of climate refugees](#) by Sneha Singal, January 23, 2025. LSE Human Rights. By 2050, it is projected that 200 million people will require humanitarian assistance annually due to the devastating effects of climate change, creating one of the most pressing humanitarian crises of our time. The 21st century has witnessed climate change transform from an environmental issue into a multifaceted global crisis, profoundly reshaping politics, societies, and human survival. Its consequences extend far beyond rising temperatures, shifting rainfall patterns, and extreme weather events, as a critical yet often neglected outcome of these environmental shifts is large-scale human displacement, giving rise to a category of individuals increasingly referred to as “climate refugees.” These “climate refugees,” also known as “environmental refugees” or “the world’s forgotten victims,” are individuals forced to flee their homes due to environmental degradation and climate-induced disasters. Climate change is not merely a challenge for existing refugees but a leading and accelerating cause of forced displacement globally.

[The Right to seek asylum does not exist at U.S.-Mexico Border](#), February 20, 2025. Amnesty International. Amnesty International has found that the right to seek asylum in the United States is non-existent at the U.S.-Mexico border, in violation of U.S. human rights

national and international obligations. The organization outlined its findings in a new briefing released today, which documents the treatment of people seeking safety in the United States interviewed between February 3-9 at the border. These alarming findings stem from the Trump administration's executive actions and the increased militarization of the border by the Mexican government.

[Polish MPs pass bill to suspend right to asylum](#), February 21, 2025. **Polskie Radio**. The Polish government in October announced a new migration strategy that aims to reduce the number of migrants and tighten control over immigration processes. The strategy also includes a temporary suspension of asylum applications in case of direct security threats. The measure now goes to the Senate, the upper house of Poland's parliament, for further debate. If passed by both houses of parliament and signed by the president, the legislation will allow the Polish government to suspend the right to seek asylum for a period of up to 60 days along specific sections of its border with Belarus.

[UK to deny citizenship to small boat refugees](#) by Mark Easton, February 13, 2025. **BBC News**. The government has toughened up rules making it almost impossible for a refugee who arrives in the UK on a small boat to become a British citizen. New guidance states that anyone who enters the UK illegally having made a dangerous journey, which could be via boat, but also by means such as hiding in a vehicle, will normally be refused citizenship, regardless of the time that has passed. In a statement, the Home Office said the strengthened measures made it clear that anyone who entered the UK illegally would face having a British citizenship application refused. But the change has been condemned by the Refugee Council and some Labour MPs - including Stella Creasy who said the change "meant refugees would forever remain second class citizens".

EVENTS, RESOURCES, DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

[Book Launch and Panel Event | Social Science: A Very Short Introduction](#). **Refugee Studies Centre, Oxford University**. Social science is a vast, diverse, and contested field, and it is changing rapidly with the growing use of AI and machine learning, with increasing collaboration with the natural sciences and humanities, and with growing concern to make social science research more equitable and inclusive. The panel will bring together some of Oxford's leading thinkers to discuss Alex Betts' book and to explore the future of social science, from a range of disciplinary perspectives. It will examine emerging trends and transformation in methods, theory, research impact, graduate training, and in relation to equality, diversity, and inclusion. This is a hybrid event and will be on March 6, 2025, 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM GMT.

[CRS Seminar: The Legal and Social Landscape Surrounding Queer Asylum in Japan](#). **Centre for Refugee Studies, York University**. This presentation examines how sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) asylum claims are understood within Japan's refugee and asylum system, an area that remains understudied despite international recognition of

SOGI asylum. Through an analysis of SOGI cases in Japan since 2004, drawing from government press releases, media reports, and court decisions, the presentation highlights both the partial protections available to queer asylum seekers and the limitations in the country's domestic legal framework and administrative procedures for recognising SOGI-based persecution. This document review, while constrained by the small number of claimants and limited access to case information, is also contextualised within the broader social recognition of “LGBTQ+” people in the society. Although some developments in the legal and social landscape surrounding queer people seem to reflect global sexual politics, the issue of queer displaced persons has not yet gained significant prominence within Japan. This discussion demonstrates how these dynamics contribute to inconsistent interpretations of SOGI asylum cases. This is a hybrid event that will be on March 13, 2025, 1:00 PM - 2:30PM (EST), in Toronto at York University.

[Launch Event: Global Report on Law and Policy on Internal Displacement \(UNHCR-GPC\). Refugee Law Initiative, University of London.](#) The event, organised by UNHCR and the Internal Displacement Research Network will launch the second “Global Report on Law and Policy on Internal Displacement: Implementing National Responsibility” developed by UNHCR in collaboration with the Global Protection Cluster’s Task Team on Law and Policy. This report presents an overview – global and by region - of key law and policy developments related to prevention, protection and solutions for IDPs that occurred since the publication of the first Global Report on Law and Policy on Internal Displacement also reflected in UNHCR’s IDP Law and Policy Dashboard. The event will be an opportunity to discuss the findings of the report and hear from experts focusing on key aspects of implementation, including meaningful participation of internally displaced persons and engagement by judicial, human rights as well as development actors. The webinar will take place on 10 March 2025, 1:00PM - 2:30PM GMT.

[New global toolkit to guide refugee claims involving climate change and disasters.](#) **Kate Jastram, Jane McAdam, Geoff Gilbert, Tamara Wood and Felipe Navarro, International Protection for People Displaced across Borders in the context of Climate Change and Disasters: A Practical Toolkit (Center for Gender & Refugee Studies, Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law and Essex Law School and Human Rights Centre, 2025).** Displacement in the context of disasters and climate change is already happening. Across the globe, rising temperatures, sea-level rise and more extreme weather events are forcing people to move. Most people stay within their own country. But some cross an international border to seek safety, raising the question, do they qualify for refugee status or international protection on human rights grounds? Lawyers and decision-makers need to better understand when, how and why an individual may have a valid claim for protection in such circumstances. The Practical Toolkit will help legal practitioners, judges and government officials navigate climate-related international protection claims by focusing on established legal principles.

[Judging Refugees: Narrative and Oral Testimony in Refugee Status Determination.](#) **UNSW Kaldor Centre.** A recording of the celebratory launch of 'Judging Refugees:

Narrative and Oral Testimony in Refugee Status Determination' held on 20 November 2024. This was a hybrid panel event co-hosted by UNSW's Centre for Criminology, Law & Justice, and the Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, in conversation with Dr Anthea Vogl, Dr Tina Dixon, Associate Professor Maria Giannacopoulos and Professor Daniel Ghezelbash. In 'Judging Refugees', Anthea Vogl investigates the black box of the refugee oral hearing and the politics of narrative within individualised processes for refugee status determination (RSD). Drawing on a rich archive of administrative oral hearings in Australia and Canada, Vogl sets global trends of diminished and fast-tracked RSD against the critical role played by the discretionary spaces of refugee decision-making, and the gate-keeping functions of credibility assessment.