



# Refugee Research Network

## Research Digest

**No. 176 | January 30, 2026**

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

**Dew, A. (2026).** [Refugee Journeys to Australia: Safety, Security, and Support for People from Syria and Iraq with Disabilities](#). Bloomsbury Publishing, New York. This book highlights the experiences of people with disability and their family members from Syrian and Iraqi refugee backgrounds who have resettled in Australia over the past decade. Use code GLR AT8 for a 35% discount on this title on the linked site.

**Wagana, M. (2026).** ["13: Environmental Justice, Climate Change and Food Security: Interventions with Refugee Children in Western Uganda"](#). In **Climate Justice in Action**. Bristol, UK: Bristol University Press. **Open access book chapter**. Focusing on the Young African Leaders Initiative – Green Refugees Community Project, this chapter explores the interconnected issues of climate change, food insecurity and environmental injustice affecting refugee children in Uganda. The author investigates how these factors impact the well-being of refugee children and examines the role of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and external partners, as well as constitutional and judiciary responses to addressing these challenges through climate interventions.

**Atay, E., & Bayraktaroglu, S. (2026).** [Refugees, Family Dynamics, and Resilience: Integrating Systemic Disruptions and Individual Coping Mechanisms](#). **Journal of Family Issues**, 0(0). Migration reshapes family dynamics, emotional well-being, and identity negotiation, disrupting caregiving structures, communication patterns, and intergenerational relationships. This study examines how refugees and their families navigate these systemic disruptions and employ coping mechanisms to foster resilience. The findings contribute to family research by bridging systemic and individual responses, offering policy implications for expediting family reunification, developing culturally responsive mental health services,

and designing intergenerational integration programs. This study underscores the need for holistic, family-centered migration policies and support systems to enhance refugee family well-being and long-term resilience.

**Mathis, C. M., Huslage, M., & Held, M. L. (2026).** [Traveling Together, Traveling Alone: Experiences of Violence and Danger for Migrating Children and Families in the US–Mexico Borderlands](#). *Social Sciences*, 15(1), 23. **Open access.** Decisions to migrate are based on individual and family assessments of risk and opportunity, shaped by economic conditions, risks and experiences of violence, resources, and networks, which interact with personal factors and opportunity. During the journey, migrating people may encounter threats to their safety and wellbeing from both human and natural hazards. Factors that influenced migration included economic stressors such as loss of job and poverty, witnessing or experiencing interpersonal violence or state violence such as kidnapping or threats to self or family, and environmental factors such as natural disasters. Approximately a third of participants traveled with their children, parents or siblings. Younger migrants and migrating people traveling with children reported significantly higher likelihood of encountering dangers during migration. Implications for supporting migrating children and families who have encountered violence and trauma are discussed, as well as limitations of the research.

**Taha, D. M. (2025).** [A dance of virtue and protection: Femininity and masculinity negotiations in Arab cross-national marriage between Syrian refugee women and Egyptian men](#). *Comparative Migration Studies*, 14(1). This article examines how gender identities are relationally constructed and strategically negotiated in marriages between Syrian refugee women and Egyptian men in Egypt. It introduces the concept of negotiated femininities to describe how displaced women navigate structural vulnerability through context-sensitive gender performances, while men enact protective masculinities centered on provision and moral authority. Although Syrian women are idealized for their perceived virtues of docility and domesticity, their narratives expose tensions that both challenge and affirm ideals of hegemonic masculinity. Framed as a “dance of virtue and protection,” the paper contributes to debates on Arab masculinities, inter-Arab and cross-national marriage, refugee-host relations, and the gendered politics of displacement, highlighting marriage as a site of complex negotiation, reciprocal gender role formation, and a pathway for self-resettlement.

**Weima, Y., Biorklund, L., Bose, P., Culcasi, K., Brankamp, H., & Hyndman, J. (2026).** [Jennifer Hyndman’s managing displacement, 25 Years on](#). *Political Geography*, 103484. **Open access.** March 2025 marked 25 years since the publication of Jennifer Hyndman's *Managing Displacement: Refugees and the Politics of Humanitarianism* (2000), a landmark book which has shaped critical research on forced migration and humanitarian politics, and political geography more broadly. In *Managing Displacement*, Hyndman drew both on her professional experience in humanitarian settings in eastern Africa, and on ethnographic research in aid offices from Geneva to the Dadaab camp complex in Kenya, to scrutinize the taken-for-granted ways that states and aid organizations sought to manage displacement at a variety of scales. Her descriptions of refugee camps, analyses of the humanitarian regime,

and reflections on positionality, ethics, and the practicalities of research in the aid landscapes of eastern Africa have resonated with scholars working in displacement contexts around the world. For this article, political and feminist geographers were invited to reflect on the continued relevance of Hyndman's foundational work, to consider how the book has shaped contemporary academic debates on forced migration, and to speculate on future directions of critical, feminist research on refugees and the politics of humanitarianism.

## REPORTS AND POLICY BRIEFS

**Educational attainment and employment among immigrants with disabilities** by **Christoph Schimmele, Allison Leanage, Maciej Karpinski, Jing Shen, and Rubab Arim. (2025). Statistics Canada.** Using the 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability, this study examined differences in educational attainment and employment between immigrants with and without disabilities. Immigrant men with and without disabilities had similar levels of educational attainment, while immigrant women with disabilities had lower levels of educational attainment than immigrant women without disabilities. Immigrant men and women with disabilities had lower levels of employment than their counterparts without disabilities. Much of the gap in employment between immigrants with and without disabilities was found at lower levels of education. Among those with a bachelor's degree or higher, there was a smaller gap in employment between immigrant men with and without disabilities, and no difference in employment between immigrant women with and without disabilities. These patterns in employment were mostly similar to those between Canadian-born persons with and without disabilities.

**Fragmented asylum: fault lines in regional responses to the Sudanese displacement crisis** by **Margaret Monyani & Otilia Anna Maunganidze. (2025). Institute for Security Studies (ISS).** The conflict in Sudan has triggered one of Africa's most urgent displacement crises, straining fragile asylum systems in Egypt, South Sudan and Chad. This report exposes the gaps between legal commitments and lived realities, where refugee protection is patchy and human rights remain elusive. Drawing on field interviews and policy analysis, the report offers practical recommendations to transform fragmented responses into a resilient, rights-based regional protection system.

**Identity management manual.** (2026). **IOM UN Migration.** This manual delves into the complexities and innovations in identity management, offering in-depth analyses on legal frameworks, technological advancements and best practices. With contributions from leading experts and organizations, it serves as a comprehensive guide for policymakers, practitioners and stakeholders committed to strengthening identity systems worldwide.

**Overview of the Implementation of Safe Country Concepts. Situational Update No. 24.** (2026). **EUAA.** This report presents the state of play of EU+ countries implementing safe country concepts in the processing of asylum applications. The biannual overview is published in January and July. This report covers July-December 2025.

[Study visit to Sweden on good practices in upholding the rights of asylum-seeking and refugee women and girls. \(2026\). ECRE.](#) ECRE and a number of its partner organisations from across Europe carried out a study visit to Stockholm, Sweden in June 2025 as part of an analysis of national practices in the protection of self-identified asylum-seeking and refugee women and girls. The specific aim of the visit, which was organised within the ‘Empowerment and Protection of Migrant Women’ (AMAL) project, was to assess how Sweden’s legal framework, asylum procedures, reception systems and civil society structures respond to the specific needs of self-identified women and girls. Drawing on extensive exchanges with national authorities, civil society actors, legal practitioners and academia, the report provides an in-depth picture of both progress and emerging risks. It underscores that even though Sweden continues to host a strong ecosystem of actors committed to supporting asylum-seeking and refugee women and girls, the restrictive policy climate is increasingly shaping the extent to which these protections can be upheld in practice.

## NEWS AND BLOG POSTS

[AD1108: South Africans oppose immigration, express mixed attitudes toward foreigners](#) by Asafika Mpako and Stephen Ndoma, January 10, 2026. **AFRO Barometer.** In South Africa, immigrants often bear the brunt of public anger for the country’s high crime rates, economic hardships, and failing public service delivery, despite a lack of credible evidence to support these perceptions. The most recent Afrobarometer findings reveal that a majority of South Africans oppose the free movement of people across international borders in Southern Africa. Seven in 10 respondents say immigrants have a negative impact on the economy, and even larger majorities want fewer immigrants and refugees, or none whatsoever, to come into the country.

[As Money Goes out for Climate-Related Loss and Damage, Displaced Communities Stand to Benefit](#) by Shana Tabak and Alejandro Martin Rodriguez, January 9, 2026. **Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.** With the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage scheduled to make its first distribution in 2026, countries and members of the fund’s board have an opportunity to prioritize human mobility.

[Motherhood under Surveillance: The Gendered Violence of ICE’s Alternatives to Detention](#) by Juliana R. S. and Gabriella Sanchez, January 21, 2026. **Border Criminologies.** The arrival of Donald Trump to the White House in January 2025 marked a dramatic, yet not unexpected shift in US migration policy and enforcement. Over the past year, while encounters at the US–Mexico border have fallen sharply, agents for US Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) have apprehended thousands of people across the country, disproportionately targeting racialised communities and relying on excessive use of force. At least 40 people are known to have died in ICE custody – six of them in the first weeks of 2026 alone. *This blog post was co-written with Juliana R. S., the pseudonym chosen by a young Venezuelan woman and mother of two young children who was admitted into the US in the city of El Paso, Texas, where she has lived since 2024. She was placed under ICE’s*

*alternatives to detention (ATD) program, known locally as ISAP – Intensive Supervision Appearance Program-- upon her arrival.*

**[The Mass Deportations of Lithuanians during the Two Soviet Occupations](#)** by Tomas Balkelis, January 8, 2026. **Researching Internal Displacement.** This brief article highlights the lesser-known deportations of people from Lithuania conducted in 1940-1950s by the Soviet authorities. The unlawful Soviet actions led to the forced displacement, imprisonment, and deaths of thousands of Lithuanians within the Soviet Union, resulting in significant shifts in political, cultural, and economic life in Lithuanian society.

**[What Iran’s latest protests tell us about power, memory and resistance](#)** by Shirin Khayambashi, January 18, 2026. **The Conversation.** Iranians have been expressing their dissatisfaction with the current regime for decades. And although the recent protests were initiated in response to the dire economic crisis, the country’s future will depend more on whether authoritarian repression and political fragmentation — both inside its borders and across the diaspora — can be overcome.

## **EVENTS, RESOURCES, DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

**[Talk: Bordering on Indifference: Immigration Agents Negotiating Race and Morality.](#)** **UCLA.** In “Bordering on Indifference: Immigration Agents Negotiating Race and Morality” (Princeton University Press), Irene I. Vega draws on interviews with ninety immigration agents—Border Patrol Agents and ICE Deportation Officers—to examine the institutional production of indifference in the U.S. immigration enforcement system. She argues that indifference, understood most simply as apathy or detachment, is both a taught bureaucratic strategy that agents use to look away from the most conflicting aspects of their work, as well as a major product of their efforts to cultivate a moral sense of self. In effect, indifference is one of the mechanisms that protects the status quo in immigration agents like the U.S. Border Patrol and ICE. This is a hybrid event that will be on January 30, 2026, 3:00PM - 4:30PM ET.

**[Collection of Essays: Emerging Perspectives: Essay competition 2025.](#)** **Mixed Migration Centre.** The Emerging Perspectives 2025 collection features a curated selection of essays from the Mixed Migration Centre’s (MMC) annual essay competition. This year’s competition invited young researchers, writers, and thinkers from the Global South to explore the critical theme of “migration in the context of geopolitical turmoil”. Selected from a record-breaking pool of over 500 submissions, the essays in this collection represent the 20 finalists and runners-up. These works offer original, analytical, and deeply personal insights into how shifting global orders, foreign interventions, and economic instability are reshaping human mobility.

**[Podcast: Stories of Queer Iranians.](#)** **NQIIFM.** This podcast series is part of the project titled Negotiating Queer Identities Following Forced Migration. The project explores the

experiences of individuals who have left Iran to escape persecution and discrimination based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics.

**Presentation: Topic Trauma-Informing the Asylum Process: Guidelines and Recommendations Co-developed with Young People Seeking Asylum.** **ESRC Centre for Society and Mental Health.** Unaccompanied children and young people seeking asylum in the UK experience hardships and challenges when accessing support, social services and applying for asylum. Navigating the asylum system and the asylum process itself can negatively impact the mental health of young people seeking asylum, in some cases it can even cause trauma or re-traumatise them. This presentation draws on empirical findings based on Albanian young people's lived experience of the UK's asylum process. This is an online event on February 11, 2026, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM GMT.

**Seminar: Asylum Frontiers: The Impacts of Border Externalization in Guatemala.** **UCLA.** The last decade and a half have seen a dramatic increase in the outsourcing of border-making processes to countries in the Global South. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in several externalized asylum processing and refugee resettlement sites (including the Republic of Nauru and Jordan), but specifically in Guatemala, this talk looks at these recent developments through the lens of 'resource frontiers.' Presenter Julia Morris is Associate Professor of International Studies at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. This hybrid event is on February 10, 2026, 3:30 PM ET.