



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

Nishimura, L. S. (2025). [Climate change, human rights, and Adaptive Mobility. Oxford University Press. Open access book.](#) The potential for climate change to cause vast human movement is a major global issue. Dominant approaches to climate-related migration take mobility as the starting point, exploring legal frameworks that tend to provide protection for migrants only after they move and overlooking measures that could help avoid forced movement in the first place. In contrast, *Climate Change, Human Rights, and Adaptive Mobility* provides a new conceptual and legal approach to human mobility in the context of climate change, one that seeks to compel and shape more proactive, anticipatory action. The book anchors its arguments in the international climate change regime, turning to obligations on adaptation found in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement.

Kaufmann, J., & Fransen, S. (2026). ['Burdens and threats': Displaced populations in Eastern Africa's climate agenda.](#) *Climate Justice in Action*, 192–211. **Open access.** In this chapter, the authors study the inclusion of displaced populations in climate change-related laws and policies in Eastern Africa. While previous studies have highlighted the vulnerability of these populations to climate risks, there is limited research on the specific policy responses aimed at addressing these challenges, particularly in Eastern Africa. This chapter fills this gap by offering a comparative assessment of national climate-related laws and strategies, shedding light on the extent to which these policies account for displaced populations. By focusing on a region that has been under represented in the climate adaptation–displacement discourse, this chapter offers new empirical insights and enhances our understanding of the policy landscape governing the resilience of displaced communities in climate-sensitive areas. Based on our findings, the authors argue that there is a significant

gap in the integration of these populations into formal climate-related policies in the region. This oversight is crucial for building the resilience of displaced populations, and calls for more targeted and inclusive climate strategies that consider the unique vulnerabilities of these communities in Eastern Africa.

McKenzie, E., Borschmann, R., Saling, L., & Hedrick, K. (2026). [Hunger strikes among asylum seekers in Australian immigration detention: Prevalence, precipitants, characteristics, and management.](#) **BMC Public Health. Open access.** Hunger strikes are commonly reported in places of detention, and Australia has some of the most restrictive immigration detention policies globally. Despite this, little is known about hunger strikes among immigration detainees in Australia. The authors aimed to examine the prevalence, precipitants, characteristics, and management of hunger strikes among asylum seekers in Australian onshore immigration detention. The findings highlight concerning high rates of hunger strikes among detained asylum seekers in Australia compared to other detained populations, with protest the most common trigger. Hunger strike management was inconsistent with international best practice. These findings highlight the deleterious impact of immigration detention on the physical and mental health of those detained. Further investigation, and policy and practice development consistent with ethical and human rights frameworks are warranted.

Moosa-Mitha, M., Varcoe, C., Holmes, C., Wallace, B., Hudspith, M., Moor, G., & Craig, K. (2026). [How encounters with health professionals reiterate experiences of coloniality for refugees.](#) **Health Psychology, 45(1), 63.** Physical pain is typically perceived as a raw sensory experience by providers and pain scholars. However, for decolonial theorists, the meaning of pain is derived from the context of colonialization and understood as a multidimensional subjective experience with psychological, emotional, cognitive, and sociopolitical features. The purpose of this field study was to acquire first-hand experiential narratives of racialized refugees living with chronic pain. In this article, the authors undertake a decolonial analysis of the meaning of pain based on the narratives of refugee study participants, including their experiences of encounters with health care practitioners.

Ullah, S. A. (2026). [Societal impacts of the Rohingya refugee presence in Bangladesh's border communities: Tensions and transformations.](#) **Societal Impacts, 7, 100168. Open access.** This study examines how the attitudes of local host communities in Teknaf-Ukhia, Bangladesh, have changed in response to the large-scale influx of Rohingya refugees that started in August 2017. Refugee crises, especially in developing countries, often become long-lasting, putting sustained pressure on host communities with limited resources. Results show a notable shift in public sentiment, from initial sympathy to increased frustration and tension later. Major concerns among host communities include forest degradation, wage competition, rising living costs, and heightened insecurity.

REPORTS AND POLICY BRIEFS

[IOM Warns of Deepening Needs as Over Three Million People Return to Sudan.](#) (2026).

IOM. More than three million people have returned to their areas of origin in Sudan, despite the extensive damage to housing, basic services, and vital infrastructure. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is calling for sustained funding to meet the rising needs in areas of return and to support solutions that can help end the cycle of displacement.

[Mapping Report on Transitioning into Adulthood.](#) (2026). **EUAA.** This report provides an overview of possible actions to strengthen support for young asylum seekers and refugees within the framework of the Common European Asylum System. It also offers key recommendations for determining and reception authorities on how to enhance interventions for children transitioning into adulthood, as well as for those who have recently made this transition.

[Navigating citizenship in Moldova: Legal changes and rights-based implications.](#) (2026).

Norwegian Refugee Council. This briefing note summarises the key amendments to Moldova's Citizenship Law that entered into force in December 2025. It analyses the legal and rights-based implications for refugees, displaced persons from Ukraine, stateless individuals, children, and long-term residents, and outlines priority advocacy actions to ensure inclusive access to citizenship and prevent exclusion.

[“No One Cares About Us Anymore”: How U.S. Aid Cuts Have Intensified the Crisis for Women and Girls in Afghanistan](#) by **Devon Cone.** (2026). **Refugees International.**

In 2025, the Trump administration shut down the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and abruptly halted most U.S. foreign aid programs. The process was poorly planned and ideologically driven, with a particular focus targeting what the administration viewed as gender-related activities. These cuts have recklessly derailed critical activities supporting the safety and well-being of women and girls around the world. The administration also stripped gender-related language from federal documents and multilateral commitments. The result has been a direct erosion of hard-won global standards on women's protection and rights. There is arguably nowhere where the consequences are more severe than in Afghanistan, where the Trump administration canceled all aid programming – a decision that advanced and deepened the reach of the Taliban's system of gender apartheid.

[Venezuela after Maduro: mixed migration implications of a sudden regime rupture](#) by **Bram Frouws, Roberto Forin, & Simon Tomasi.** (2026). **Mixed Migration Centre.**

The abrupt removal of President Nicolás Maduro by United States forces in early January 2026 represents a profound political rupture in Venezuela with regional implications. While reactions have been sharply polarised, ranging from international condemnation to open celebration among parts of the Venezuelan diaspora, the implications for migration dynamics remain uncertain.

NEWS AND BLOG POSTS

[**Afghan migrants stranded in Pakistan after the US suspends refugee resettlement**](#) by **Mehr Mumtaz, January 29, 2026. The Conversation.** In January 2025, Seema received an email from the International Organization for Migration saying that her flight from Pakistan to the United States, which she and her family were booked on after months of extensive interviewing and background checks by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, had been canceled. Their lives now hinge on policy choices that will determine whether the United States honors the obligations it made during two decades of intervention that reshaped Afghan lives and livelihoods.

[**Australia tarnished by persistent racism, refugee abuse**](#), **February 4, 2026. The Canberra Times.** The poor treatment of refugees, systemic discrimination and racism have tarred Australia's human rights record, despite freedoms in the nation being largely upheld. Racial and ethnic discrimination - including anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian racism - was increasing, as was racism towards Indian and Indigenous communities, the Human Rights Watch 2026 world report found.

[**Commission presents a five-year strategy on migration**](#), **January 29, 2026. Migration and Home Affairs.** On 29 January, the European Commission presented the first European Asylum and Migration Management Strategy. It sets out the EU's political objectives on asylum and migration, with concrete priorities for the next five years. The newly adopted Strategy emphasises the commitment and ongoing work to put in place an EU framework that is fair and firm, and that effectively manages migration together with partner countries, while remaining true to European values. It sets out the way forward to achieve three main objectives: preventing illegal migration and breaking the business of criminal smuggling networks; protecting people fleeing war and persecution, while preventing abuse of the asylum system; and attracting talent to the EU to boost the competitiveness of the EU's economy.

[**Federal judge bars Trump administration from detaining lawful refugees in Minnesota**](#) by **Chloe Rosen, January 29, 2026. CBS News.** A federal judge on Wednesday temporarily barred the Trump administration from detaining refugees in Minnesota who do not yet have green cards, following a bid by the administration to reexamine thousands of refugees' cases. The temporary restraining order was brought about by the International Refugee Assistance Project and other organizations, on behalf of a group of refugees who have been detained by immigration authorities or fear detention.

[**Rohingya Genocide Case Moves to Judgment: World Court Concludes Hearings in Gambia's Landmark Action Against Myanmar**](#) by **David Esposito, January 29, 2026. Human Rights Watch.** On January 29, the three-week hearings on the merits of Gambia's genocide case against Myanmar before the International Court of Justice came to a close. The case, filed in 2019, alleges that Myanmar's atrocities against ethnic Rohingya in 2016 and 2017 violate the Genocide Convention of 1948. During the hearings, Gambia argued that the extreme brutality, pervasive sexual violence, targeting of children, and widespread burning and destruction of villages by Myanmar's military against the Rohingya population are

among the indicators of genocidal intent: to destroy the Rohingya, in whole or in part, on the basis of their identity as a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.

Why Iran keeps turning off the internet during mass protests by Niloofar Hooman, **January 28, 2026. The Conversation.** What began on Dec. 28 in Tehran as a revolt against economic hardship and the collapse of the national currency quickly spread across dozens of other Iranian cities and provinces. People from diverse socioeconomic, religious and ethnic backgrounds joined what has become the largest anti-regime protest since the 1979 revolution. Chants of “death to the dictator” and “death to Khamenei” echoed far beyond Tehran’s Grand Bazaar. As a response, the government shut off all internet services, leaving roughly 92 million Iranians in a digital blackout since Jan. 8.

EVENTS, RESOURCES, DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

MOEBIUS seminar, “Sovereignty ordering migrations inside European borders. Uses v. ethics. **MOEBIUS.** The seminar will feature a lecture by Thomas Gammeltoft-Hansen, Professor of Law and Director of the Center of Excellence for Global Mobility Law at the University of Copenhagen. His talk will focus on the theme, "Free Movement vs External Border Control? Reframing Schengen as Legal Infrastructure." This is an online event on February 13, 2026, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m, CET.

Podcast: Is Climate-Vulnerable Africa Prepared for Increased Displacement?. **Migration Policy Institute.** Africa may be the most climate-vulnerable region of the world. How prepared is the continent for a future of increased displacement? This episode of the Changing Climate, Changing Migration podcast speaks with Aimée-Noël Mbiyozo, a senior research consultant at the South Africa-based Institute for Security Studies.

Recording: The Role of Counselling & Reintegration Support in Shaping Migrants’ Return Decisions. **Migration Policy Institute.** Featuring a study on the role that counselling and reintegration programs can play in shaping migrants' return decisions, this webinar examines how timing of such interventions, counselling approaches, and collaboration with trusted origin-country partners can help make these programs more effective. Four speakers will comment on the study of nearly 118,000 case files from the Dutch Government’s Repatriation and Departure Service.

WEBINAR: 2026 State of Play Assessment on Statelessness in Europe. **European Network on Statelessness.** On 25th February, their annual webinar provides a state of play on statelessness in Europe and an opportunity to learn about the latest law and policy developments. In conversation with experts working in different countries and community members with lived experience, the network will present their annual assessment of key trends on statelessness in Europe. They will also present an analysis of statelessness in Armenia, following its addition to the Statelessness Index last month, and updated data for several other countries. This is an online event at 12:30 - 13:15 CET.