

Headline: [Prevention of COVID-19 in Internally Displaced Persons Camps in War-Torn North Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo: A Mixed-Methods Study](#)

Source: Global Health: Science and Practice

Date: December 2020

Notes: “This mixed-methods study identified that Congolese internally displaced persons (IDPs) had high awareness and fear of COVID-19, but low specific knowledge, IDPs face major barriers to implementing COVID-19 prevention measures: crowded shelters, frequent movements in and out of the camp for work, and lack of soap for hand hygiene, and IDPs’ desire for peace and to return to their native homes, where COVID-19 precautions could be feasibly implemented, overshadowed their enthusiasm for other control measures such as a vaccine.”

Headline: [Covid-19 Restrictions Decrease Illegal Migration to Europe](#)

Source: Wall Street Journal

Date: January 8, 2021

Notes: “The number of illegal border crossings into the EU dropped 13% in 2020 to 124,000, according to preliminary data collected by Frontex, the EU border control agency. The number of such crossings has fallen since the huge surge of migrants entering Europe in 2015.” The author also reports that this descent in numbers occurred even through thousands of migrants pursued more dangerous routes that were rarely used before the pandemic.

Headline: [Migrant workers suffer as coronavirus cases surge in Thailand](#)

Source: Reuters

Date: January 8, 2021

Notes: “Migrant workers in Thailand are struggling to find work and survive after coronavirus cases in the Southeast Asian nation reached record highs and employers imposed new restrictions. In Samut Sakhon, a province south of Bangkok where the current outbreak began at a seafood market late last year, local charities say many migrant workers - especially those in the seafood and service sectors - are unable to work or access government aid.” Thailand is currently dealing with its worst coronavirus outbreak, with more than 200 new infections each day, raising the total so far to 9,841 cases, including 67 deaths.

Headline: [The Burundian refugee soap maker who is fighting coronavirus in Kenya](#)

Source: BBC News

Date: January 9, 2021

Notes: “When Innocent Havyarimana started his soap-making business in Kenya's Kakuma refugee camp in early 2015, he was trying to move on from the traumatic events that had made him flee his native Burundi a year earlier.” Havyarimana reported having to increase his production of soap by 75% due to the pandemic. “Innocent's story shows how refugees can contribute to their host communities in a number of ways,” reported Julianne Oyler, the chair of the African Entrepreneur Collective (AEC).

Headline: [How COVID-19 made it harder to find safety in the EU](#)

Source: The New Humanitarian

Date: January 7, 2021

Notes: “The coronavirus pandemic led to a 30 percent drop in the number of people applying for asylum in the EU in the first nine months of last year due to constraints on international travel

and hardline policies enacted at the EU's external borders that made it more difficult for people seeking protection to reach the 27 member bloc."

Headline: [U.N. fears 'massive' coronavirus transmission in Ethiopia's Tigray region](#)

Source: The Los Angeles Times

Date: January 8, 2021

Notes: The UN fears "massive community transmission" of the coronavirus in Ethiopia's troubled Tigray region, fueled by displacement and the collapse of health services, as humanitarian workers finally begin to access the region two months after fighting began. A UN report cites the eruption of conflict as of November 4th, during which hospitals have been looted and destroyed.

Related: [UNHCR relocates victims of Ethiopia's Tigray conflict to new site in Sudan](#)

Headline: [Mexican president offers to vaccinate unlawful migrants in U.S.](#)

Source: Reuters

Date: January 6, 2021

Notes: "Mexico's president said on Wednesday he was ready to provide coronavirus vaccines to undocumented migrants in the United States, after the governor of the U.S. state of Nebraska said they would likely not get vaccinated due to immigration status. He did not elaborate on how his government would execute such a plan, or which migrants would qualify."

Headline: [Trump rushes to enact asylum restrictions ahead of Biden presidency](#)

Source: CBS News

Date: January 11, 2021

Notes: "The outgoing Trump administration has finalized several asylum restrictions that are set to take effect shortly before or after President-elect Joe Biden takes the oath of office in nine days. The rules represent President Trump's last major effort to reshape the U.S. asylum system, which his administration has argued is abused by economic migrants. One set of rules, which was slated to take effect Monday until a federal court blocked it last week, would erect restrictions throughout the asylum process and generally disqualify victims of gender-based persecution, domestic abuse and gang violence from U.S. refuge. Another rule set to take effect a day before Inauguration Day would revive a policy struck down in court last summer that bars non-Mexican migrants, including unaccompanied children, from applying for U.S. asylum at the southern border."

Headline: [China's top diplomat visits Myanmar in SE Asia tour, promises vaccines](#)

Source: Reuters

Date: January 11, 2021

Notes: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Myanmar officials on Monday and promised Myanmar 300,000 doses of a Chinese vaccine against the novel coronavirus. The author reports that this promise dovetails China's efforts to broker peace "in Myanmar and in the potential repatriation of Rohingya refugees."

Headline: [Germany sees sharp drop in asylum requests in 2020](#)

Source: InfoMigrants

Date: January 11, 2021

Notes: "The number of asylum applications in Germany continues to decrease. According to the German interior ministry, there were over 30% fewer applications last year than 2019. According to the ministry, it recorded just over 76,000 first-time asylum applications last year, 31.5% fewer than in 2019. Most of the requests came from nationals from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Turkey."

Headline: [Praying for Hand Soap and Masks](#)

Source: Physicians for Human Rights

Date: January 12, 2021

Notes: This new report documents the conditions experienced by people recently released from immigration detention in the United States. Findings indicate that detention facilities did not comply with CDC guidance related to the COVID-19 pandemic, “creating unacceptable health risks which violated the constitutional rights of detainees.” Nearly half of those interviewed for the report described experiencing COVID-19 symptoms while detained, and many reported waiting days to see a provider and being subjected to frightening medical isolation.

Related: [Opinion: ICE must provide Covid-19 vaccines to all detained migrants](#)

Headline: [Colombian refugees in Ecuador trapped in loops of poverty and insecurity](#)

Source: The New Humanitarian

Date: January 13, 2021

Notes: “Some 400-500 Colombians continue to cross the border into Ecuador each month to seek asylum, according to official figures. This number has remained constant during the pandemic even though border crossings have been officially closed since March, pushing people to enter through irregular, often dangerous, routes.” The actual number of Colombians entering Ecuador may be much higher, as many people do not formally request asylum.

Headline: [Anticipated remittance dive bucked by Latin America and the Caribbean](#)

Source: Devex

Date: January 11, 2021

Notes: “Latin America and the Caribbean was the only region to see positive growth in remittances in 2020 despite initial projections that economic fallout from the pandemic would cause the number of people sending money internationally to friends and family to plummet.” More emergency savings relative to the 2009 financial crisis and improved access to mobile money services among migrants sending remittances from the United States may have contributed to the increase.

Headline: [No Transit: The criminal treatment of transgender asylum seekers in the United States](#)

Source: OpenGlobalRights

Date: January 8, 2021

Notes: “Transgender asylum seekers, who are already more at-risk than typical applicants, now face tremendous hurdles and abuse as they try to survive in the confines of the U.S. immigration system.” The COVID-19 pandemic has further amplified the vulnerabilities of transgender asylum seekers, who “find themselves housed in detention centers at rates over twice that of typical applicants” and are “unlikely to have their cases reviewed by individuals familiar with their unique needs and circumstances.”

Headline: [Online Originals: Building trust with migrant farmers over COVID-19 vaccine](#)

Source: WNCT 9

Date: January 11, 2021

Notes: In North Carolina, “agricultural workers, including migrant farmers, will soon be getting the COVID-19 vaccine.” To address vaccine hesitancy, a group of Latino organizations is rolling out bi-lingual education forums. Leaders are “hoping these community organizations can help with appointments and act as a trusted source when workers have questions.”

Headline: [After Pre-Holiday Outbreaks, Workers Paid to Celebrate in Place](#)

Source: Sixth Tone

Date: January 13, 2021

Notes: Citing concerns about the coronavirus, local authorities in many Chinese cities “are resorting to gift vouchers and phone credit to persuade migrant workers to stay put during the Lunar New Year travel

rush.” Some districts have also said they will cover travel expenses of migrant workers “who instead opt to travel before or after the holiday season.” In 2021, “an estimated 3 billion trips will be made by migrant workers and others hoping to reunite with family and friends” over the holiday.

Headline: [Migrants in Bosnia camp health checked after days in cold](#)

Source: Associated Press

Date: January 12, 2021

Notes: “Many migrants and refugees staying at a camp in northwestern Bosnia have complained of respiratory and skin infections after spending days in makeshift tents and containers amid freezing weather and snowstorms, aid workers warned.” According to doctors screening migrants’ health at the camp, “it wasn’t immediately clear whether any of the migrants might have had COVID-19.”

Related: [Bosnia and Herzegovina: Long-term solutions needed to end recurring humanitarian crisis](#)

Headline: [‘People are traumatised and scared’: Germany’s student-run law clinics for refugees](#)

Source: The Guardian

Date: January 13, 2021

Notes: “Over 30 drop-in law clinics have sprung up across Germany to help refugees apply for asylum.” Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, services have shifted online. In some cases, “it can be harder to get hold of the people who need help, as many asylum seekers don’t have access to Wifi or a computer, and it can be difficult to work with a translator over the phone.”

Headline: [Many migrant children did not attend online classes during last lockdown – study](#)

Source: Irish Times

Date: January 13, 2021

Notes: In Ireland, many migrant pupils were unable to access online classes during school closures last year, according to new research by a network of immigrant-led groups. Language barriers between school staff and students’ caretakers, limited access to digital technology and restrictions on home visits contributed to the lack of access to remote learning.

Headline: [How is Spain's asylum system coping with a record increase in applications?](#)

Source: The Local

Date: January 11, 2021

Notes: “As Spain deals with its highest ever number of asylum applications,” authorities are working to reduce the timeframe to process claims by updating interview requirements and increasing staffing. Despite a growing backlog of cases and inconsistencies among cities, Spain has the highest percentage of positive decisions on asylum claims in the European Union.

Latest PFMH Blog Post: [Drowning at the Hands of the EU: Is the New Pact on Migration and Asylum a Lifejacket or a Depleted Promise?](#) *Written by Janna Safran, student at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health*

Compiled by Jennifer Ostrowski

Headline: [Aid Groups Warn of COVID-19 Outbreak at Ethiopian Refugee Camp in Sudan](#)

Source: Voice of America

Date: January 13, 2021

Notes: "Aid workers this week confirmed several cases of COVID-19 in Sudan's camps for refugees who fled the fighting in Ethiopia's Tigray Region. The United Nations refugee agency and aid group Mercy Corps say an urgent intervention is needed to avoid a humanitarian disaster."

Related News: [Ethiopia: A partial view of the humanitarian fallout emerges in Tigray](#)

Headline: [Covid: Asylum seeker camp conditions prompt inspection calls](#)

Source: BBC

Date: January 14, 2021

Notes: "Asylum seekers housed in a military training camp have claimed the "very bad" conditions are making them feel increasingly desperate. The Home Office decided to house up to 250 asylum seekers at the site in Penally, Pembrokeshire, from September. But some housed at the camp claim the conditions are unsafe and putting them at risk of coronavirus."

Headline: [Mexico, Central America cite COVID-19 concern over migration](#)

Source: AP via Border Report

Date: January 14, 2021

Notes: "The Mexican government said Wednesday that it and 10 other countries in North and Central America are worried about the health risks of COVID-19 among migrants without proper documents. The statement by the 11-member Regional Conference on Migration suggests that Mexico and Central America could continue to turn back migrants on the basis of the perceived risks of the pandemic."

Headline: [Honduras: First migrant caravans of 2021 depart for US](#)

Source: DW

Date: January 15, 2021

Notes: "Several hundred people have begun a journey of thousands of kilometers through Central America to the US. The migrants are hoping for a more humane approach to migration under President-elect Joe Biden."

Related News: [Migrants at Risk as Coronavirus Shuttles Mexico Shelters](#)

Headline: [Greece seeks to send 1,450 migrants back to Turkey](#)

Source: Reuters

Date: January 14, 2021

Notes: "Greece is pushing to return 1,450 people currently in migrant reception centres on Lesbos and other Aegean islands to Turkey, Migration Minister Notis Mitarachi said on Thursday, calling on Ankara to respect asylum agreements with the European Union. [...] Migrant returns to Turkey, under a 2016 EU-Turkey agreement, largely dried up last year due to the coronavirus crisis. But Mitarachi said conditions were now in place for them to resume thanks to new technology and COVID-19 testing procedures."

Headline: [Jordan launched COVID vaccination program for refugees](#)

Source: Info Migrants

Date: January 15, 2021

Notes: "Jordan has launched a comprehensive COVID-19 vaccination program for refugees and asylum seekers. It is one of the first countries in the world to address the particular risk situation of refugees. The UN refugee agency UNHCR in Geneva sang the praise of the Jordanian health authorities for including migrants and refugees in their initial vaccination run. The Jordanian national COVID-19 vaccination plan began this week. Anyone living on Jordanian soil, including refugees and asylum seekers, is eligible to receive the vaccine free of charge, according to UNHCR."

Headline: [Aid sector is 'last safe haven' for abusers, UK investigation warns](#)

Source: The Guardian

Date: January 14, 2021

Notes: “The sexual abuse and exploitation of local women by international aid workers remains ‘rife’, say MPs, describing the sector as the ‘last safe haven’ for perpetrators. [...] The coronavirus pandemic is likely to have made the problem more acute, said the committee, as food shortages and aid cuts have exacerbated the vulnerability of mostly female aid recipients.”

Headline: [Journeys of hope: what will migration routes into Europe look like in 2021?](#)

[Migrants from Eritrea, Egypt, Syria and Sudan cross the Mediterranean after fleeing Libya.](#)

Source: The Guardian

Date: January 14, 2021

Notes: “As a new year begins, so do the journeys of tens of thousands more people seeking a new life overseas. The Guardian has spoken to experts, charity workers and NGOs about the challenges and risks they face on the main migration routes into Europe.”

Related News: [How COVID-19 made it harder to find safety in the EU](#)

Latest PFMH Blog Post: [Drowning at the Hands of the EU: Is the New Pact on Migration and Asylum a Lifejacket or a Depleted Promise?](#) *Written by Janna Safran, student at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health*

Compiled by Katherine McCann

Headline: [For true herd immunity, we must vaccinate immigrants as a priority](#)

Source: The Guardian

Date: January 14, 2021

Notes: The public charge rule and requirements to show identification and proof of work in essential jobs are likely to deter immigrants seeking the legal right to remain in the US from coming forward to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Anti-immigrant policies like the public charge rule, which links eligibility for residence in the US to the use of certain publicly-funded services, are “self-destructive” and limit progress toward achieving herd immunity.

Headline: [Will Biden stop the public health order that has turned away migrants nearly 400,000 times?](#)

Source: The Dallas Morning News

Date: January 19, 2021

Notes: “Immigration, civil rights and medical groups are pushing the Biden team” to lift the Title 42 public health order that uses the COVID-19 pandemic as a pretext to restrict asylum processes in the US. Since March 2020, the order has resulted in nearly 400,000 rapid “expulsions” of immigrants at US borders. While the Biden administration has announced sweeping immigration proposals, it has not committed to lifting Title 42, despite the lack of public health justification for the policy.

Related: [Incoming Biden administration to migrant caravan: Don't come, you won't get in immediately](#)

Headline: [U.S.-bound caravan thwarted in Guatemala as pressure against migrants continues](#)

Source: The Washington Post

Date: January 19, 2021

Notes: “Most of the thousands of migrants who left Honduras for the United States on foot last week have been turned around in Guatemala,” which now requires a negative coronavirus test upon arrival. While thousands of Honduran migrants pushed through the initial crossing, most were violently stopped at military checkpoints about 100 miles north of the border. “By Tuesday morning, more than 3,000 had been detained or forcibly sent back by security forces.”

Related: [COVID-19 tests: Central America's latest tool to stop migrant caravans](#)

Headline: [UN: Pandemic reduced migrants by 2 million by mid-2020](#)

Source: AP News

Date: January 16, 2021

Notes: “A new U.N. report estimates that the COVID-19 pandemic reduced the number of international migrants by 2 million by the middle of 2020 because of border closings and a halt to travel worldwide — an estimated 27% decrease in expected growth.” Experts speculate that the second half of 2020 likely saw comparable or greater declines in migration.

Related: [Report: International Migration 2020 Highlights](#)

Headline: [Four COVID-19 cases confirmed in eastern Sudan camp for Ethiopian refugees](#)

Source: Radio Dabanga

Date: January 17, 2021

Notes: “Four COVID-19 cases were confirmed and are in isolation in the Um Rakouba refugee camp in eastern Sudan’s El Gedaref on Tuesday. 63 close contacts have been identified and quarantined, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).”

Headline: [‘Unprecedented exodus’: Why are migrant workers leaving the UK?](#)

Source: Al Jazeera

Date: January 15, 2021

Notes: “Migrants have left the United Kingdom in large numbers, causing what is likely to be the largest population decline since WWII, according to a new study. As many as 1.3 million people born abroad left the UK in just over a year – from July 2019 to September 2020,” creating an “unprecedented exodus” driven by the economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic.” The study’s authors note that “much of the burden of job losses during the pandemic has fallen on non-UK workers and that has manifested itself in return migration.”

Headline: [Kent refugee site locked down after scores test positive for Covid](#)

Source: The Guardian

Date: January 19, 2021

Notes: “A former Kent army barracks being used to house asylum seekers has been locked down – preventing its 400 residents from leaving – after scores of people tested positive for coronavirus.” The private contractors managing the site in the UK “have advised its residents the entire camp has been placed into isolation, with police officers enforcing the move.” Humanitarian organizations and health professionals had repeatedly warned of “the significant risks posed by Covid-19 at the site.”

Headline: [Colombia to keep land, river borders closed until March](#)

Source: Reuters

Date: January 15, 2021

Notes: “Colombia will keep its land and river borders closed until March 1 as it tries to curb the spread of coronavirus, its migration agency said on Friday, following a decision to extend a so-called selective quarantine through February. International air travel, which resumed in September, will not be affected by the decision.” According to officials, humanitarian corridors on the border will remain open and border crossings of goods will continue.

Headline: [700 children crossed the U.S. border alone after being required to wait in Mexico with their families](#)

Source: CBS News

Date: January 15, 2021

Notes: “Hundreds of migrant children who crossed the U.S. southern border alone after their families were required to wait in Mexico” under the Trump administration’s “Remain-in-Mexico” policy “are being denied legal safeguards established by Congress, lawyers told a federal court Thursday.” The Biden administration has pledged to discontinue the policy, but “cautioned doing so will take time, given the ongoing pandemic.”

Headline: [Op-Ed: Palestine Refugees Are Forced to the Back of the COVID Vaccine Line](#)

Source: Truthout

Date: January 18, 2021

Notes: “As the world races to vaccinate against COVID-19, Israel has been touted for having one of the fastest response rates.” However, “Palestinians living in the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and in the Gaza Strip have been explicitly excluded, including health care workers on the front lines of the COVID-19 response.” Vaccine access in the West Bank and Gaza relies on COVAX, a project led by WHO and Gavi to “accelerate the development and manufacturing of the vaccine to guarantee equitable access for every country.”

Latest PFMH Blog Post: [Drowning at the Hands of the EU: Is the New Pact on Migration and Asylum a Lifejacket or a Depleted Promise?](#)

Written by Janna Safran, student at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health

Compiled by Jennifer Ostrowski

Headline: [Sahel violence displaces two million internally- UN says](#)

Source: Africa News

Date: January 22, 2021

Notes: “For the first time, more than two million people have been displaced in the Sahel within the borders of their countries, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reported on Friday. [...] Already this year, violence in Niger and Burkina Faso has forced more than 21,000 people to flee their homes and seek refuge within their own countries. And in Burkina Faso, since December 31, a series of armed attacks in the north of the country have displaced more than 11,000 people. But the UN says the Sahel is also seeing rising needs such as extreme poverty, food insecurity, climatic changes, and the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Headline: [Bosnia and Herzegovina: Migrants Left in the Cold](#)

Source: Human Rights Watch

Date: January 21, 2021

Notes: “Bosnian authorities should immediately provide adequate, winterized accommodation for migrants and asylum seekers stranded in freezing temperatures in the northwestern part of the country, Human Rights Watch said today. After a fire destroyed the temporary emergency camp in northwest Bosnia on December 23, 2020, hundreds are housed in tents that do not meet basic humane housing conditions. [...] Conditions in the Lipa temporary emergency camp were poor before the fire, with a lack of basic services including critical hygiene and sanitation services such as sewage and running water. The camp had been operating since April 2020, when it was set up as part of the government’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic.”

Headline: [Save the Children: 10 million Afghan kids need life-saving help](#)

Source: Info Migrants

Date: January 20, 2021

Notes: “Over 18 million people in Afghanistan, including 9.7 million children, desperately need life-saving support, according to Save the Children. The organization on Tuesday called in a statement for urgent increases in humanitarian funding for Afghanistan and noted that about 2,000 children had been killed or injured over the last nine months. [...] ‘The schools are now closed because of harsh winter conditions and COVID-19 restrictions and they won’t reopen until March. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating the humanitarian crisis,’ [Country Director] Nyamandi said.”

Headline: [France reports 41% plunge in asylum requests](#)

Source: Times Malta

Date: January 21, 2021

Notes: “The number of asylum requests dropped 41% in France last year as the COVID-19 outbreak and travel restrictions curtailed the number of migrants entering the country, officials said Thursday.”

Related News: [Greece posts 80% annual decrease in migrant flows](#)

Headline: [Analysis: 'Invisible' migrants risk being last in line for COVID-19 vaccination](#)

Source: Reuters

Date: January 21, 2021

Notes: “As Latin American nations start to launch mass COVID-19 inoculations, after more than 500,000 deaths, rights groups fear some five million Venezuelan migrants and refugees living across the region will be last in line - or could miss out altogether. Colombian President Ivan Duque has said the nearly one million undocumented Venezuelans in Colombia, which has registered 50,000 coronavirus deaths, will not be eligible for a vaccination when the roll-out is due to begin next month.”

Related Report: [ACAPS - The Caminantes: needs and vulnerabilities of Venezuelan refugees and migrants travelling on foot, Thematic report, January 2021](#)

Headline: [UNHCR: Migrants released from Zintan shelter](#)

Source: The Libya Observer

Date: January 21, 2021

Notes: “The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) mission in Libya has confirmed the release of all asylum seekers held at the Zintan shelter, explaining that most of those released had been held for more than two years, in extremely dire conditions. [...] The UN organization reiterated that it has long advocated for the release of all refugees and asylum seekers and an end to arbitrary detention in Libya, especially with the rising number of Covid-19 cases in the country.”

News Related to the U.S. Biden Administration’s Immigration Policy Changes

Headline: [IOM Commends United States’ Inclusion of Migrants in COVID-19 Vaccine Roll-out](#)

Source: IOM

Date: January 22, 2021

Notes: “The International Organization for Migration (IOM) welcomes the inclusion of migrants in the new US Administration’s national strategy for COVID-19 response and its commitment ‘to ensuring that safe, effective, cost-free vaccines are available to the entire U.S. public—regardless of their immigration status.’”

Headline: [How to Decode Biden’s Immigration Blitz](#)

Source: The Marshall Project

Date: January 22, 2021

Notes: “With his first-day rush, Biden began to undo some of Trump’s draconian measures to slash immigration and unleash enforcement. But a close look at Biden’s actions shows that they are only a start towards undoing the bureaucratic stranglehold on the immigration system that Trump left behind.”

Headline: [Asylum-seekers urged to ‘stay in place’ pending new guidance from White House](#)

Source: Border Report

Date: January 21, 2021

Notes: “Despite Biden’s roll back of “Remain in Mexico” policy and unveiling of immigration reform bill, COVID-19 protocols remain in place at U.S.-Mexico border. [...] This, after President Joe Biden issued executive orders rolling back Donald Trump’s signature Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) program and unveiling an immigration reform project to legalize up to 11 million unauthorized immigrants already in the country.”

Related Report: [Physicians for Human Rights - Forced into Danger: Human Rights Violations Resulting from the U.S. Migrant Protection Protocols](#)

Latest PFMH Blog Post: [Drowning at the Hands of the EU: Is the New Pact on Migration and Asylum a Lifejacket or a Depleted Promise?](#)

Written by Janna Safran, student at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health

Compiled by Katherine McCann

Headline: [MSF calls on Biden administration to put humanitarian needs at the center of migration policies](#)

Source: MSF

Date: January 25, 2021

Notes: “As President Biden begins to roll back some of the Trump administration’s most harmful migration policies, the international medical humanitarian organization Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) calls for urgent action to completely phase out or rescind migration policies that endanger the lives of migrants and refugees.”

Headline: [‘Invisible’ migrants risk being last in line for vaccination](#)

Source: Gulf Times

Date: January 25, 2021

Notes: Authors for the Gulf Times from Bogota, Colombia and Nairobi document the numerous concerns of undocumented Venezuelan migrants in Colombia and the Dominican Republic, as well as representatives from various aid groups, regarding the scarcity of vaccines for the “invisible” – undocumented migrants. “Colombian President Ivan Duque has said the nearly one million undocumented Venezuelans in Colombia, which has registered 50,000 coronavirus deaths, will not be eligible for a vaccination when the roll-out is due to begin next month.”

Headline: [The pandemic is no excuse to shut the door on refugee resettlement](#)

Source: The New Humanitarian

Date: January 25, 2021

Notes: “COVID-19 is one of the biggest global challenges in modern history, and all nations are grappling with its impacts. But some countries have responded by shutting their doors even further to the world’s most vulnerable. By and large, resettlement and other migration pathways have become increasingly limited during the pandemic.” Authors document the closing of doors by United States and Australia, as well as Canada’s unique approach for immigration plans and refugee resettlement.

Related: [COVID-19 Pandemic Pushes Down Number of Refugee Resettlements](#)

Headline: [Life Is ‘Really Tough’ For Refugees Trying To Settle In Pandemic America](#)

Source: NPR

Date: January 25, 2021

Notes: “Federal financial support for refugees ends at 90 days, when they are expected to become self-sufficient. That hasn’t changed during the pandemic. Now, refugees fear eviction and poverty as jobs are scarce. The usual challenges of moving to a new country are all the more daunting when many schools, offices, banks and places of worship are closed and work is drying up.” Authors document refugees’ concerns about their livelihoods, as well as their mental health during this time in the United States.

Headline: [Minnesota refugee from Congo finds new struggles amid pandemic, police violence](#)

Source: Minnesota Star Tribune

Date: January 25, 2021

Notes: Author Maya Rao documents the story of Machozi Rashidi, a Congolese mother of six who left a Tanzanian refugee camp for the US in 1996. “At the refugee camp, Rashidi did not worry that someone would take away her home. In America, she was learning, she only had a place to live as long as she could afford to pay the owner. She started to miss the certainties of the camp, where they had been assured of food. Here, she worried her family could go hungry.” Rao documents the uncertainties Rashidi newly faced in the United States, as well as her interface with the documented murder of George Floyd. “‘We are running away from death and from war, from all these other problems, but here it seems like it’s the same thing,’ Rashidi recalled thinking. She wondered if ‘maybe we should just go back.’”

Headline: [New IRC analysis: Domestic partners perpetrate 94% of gender-based violence against Rohingya women in Cox's Bazar](#)

Source: IRC

Date: January 25, 2021

Notes: "Since January 2020, screening data from IRC programming shows that an average of one in four women and girls screened at health facilities and women's in Cox's Bazar continue to report they are survivors of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), consistent with the findings of [IRC's June 2020 Shadow Pandemic report](#). Despite the enormous new challenges women and girls face in reporting - including reductions in the availability of NGO services, limitations on refugees' freedom of movement, and for many GBV survivors, quarantine at home with their abuser - the data shows a spike in reported rates of physical assault as compared to other types of violence that coincide with the first month of lockdown. In reality this is likely a fraction of the overall number."

Headline: [Humanitarians plan for COVID-19 vaccinations in conflict zones](#)

Source: Devex

Date: January 25, 2021

Notes: "Mass COVID-19 vaccination campaigns in fragile and conflict settings remain months away, at the earliest, and an estimated 9 out of 10 people in low-income countries are unlikely to receive a vaccine this year. But some international humanitarian and medical aid organizations are already bracing and preparing for the practical considerations of such a large undertaking, complicated by issues of ensuring access, combating misinformation, and contacting all eligible vaccine recipients."

Webinar Event: [The Impact of COVID-19 on Migrant and Refugee Health](#) - Registration [here](#).

Hosted by: Lancet Migration

Date: January 28, 2021, 15:00 CET, by Zoom

Notes: The M8 Alliance Webinar Series on Migrant and Refugee Health is a new format and brings together experts from across the M8 Alliance to discuss global, develop innovative and collaborative answers and promote science- based policy advice. Each lecture will last 90 minutes and different speakers from within the M8 Alliance and beyond. More details about this lecture is available [here](#).

Compiled by Sabeen Rokerya

Headline: [As Sub-Saharan crises force more to flee, UNHCR calls for stronger Mediterranean route response](#)

Source: UNHCR

Date: January 27, 2021

Notes: UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, “is seeking just over US\$100 million to enhance refugee protection in African countries en route to the Mediterranean” according to its newly released 2021 strategic action plan and funding appeal. The agency expects displacement in the Sahel to increase due to “protracted displacement, dire conditions in neighbouring host countries where [displaced people] sought shelter, the continued economic impact of the COVID pandemic and a lack of viable alternatives.” UNHCR’s strategy seeks to increase engagement with refugees along routes toward the Mediterranean.

Related: [Expecting a fresh influx, Spain opens migrant camps in the Canaries](#)

Headline: [Pandemic and xenophobia: The plight of migrants in SA](#)

Source: Maverick Citizen

Date: January 26, 2021

Notes: “Away from home, migrants in South Africa have been hard hit by the impact of Covid-19 and a resurgence of xenophobia.” Migrants have suffered economic losses, faced increasing calls to leave the country and, in some cases, been excluded from pandemic relief interventions. In August, 300 Nigerians were evacuated from South Africa, but had to pay for their flight tickets – an expense many cannot afford.

Headline: [Covid-19 Pandemic Pushes Down Number of Refugee Resettlements](#)

Source: The Wall Street Journal

Date: January 25, 2021

Notes: “A fraction of the nearly 1.5 million refugees in urgent need of resettlement were resettled through the United Nations” last year. “World-wide, 22,770 people were resettled in 2020 through the U.N.,” the lowest number since at least 2003. Restrictions on international travel due to the coronavirus pandemic and countries’ decisions to reduce the number of refugees they would accept contributed to the decline.

Headline: [As deportations soar, Afghan returnees struggle on home soil](#)

Source: The New Humanitarian

Date: January 26, 2021

Notes: “Nearly 860,000 Afghans were pushed home from Iran in 2020 – a record tally for undocumented migrants returning to a country mired by conflict and an economy shattered by the coronavirus pandemic.” In Afghanistan, nearly half the population may need humanitarian aid in 2021, as “conflict, disasters, and the pandemic have nearly doubled aid needs over the last year.”

Related: [COVID-19 is pushing migrants back to their home countries](#)

Headline: [Syrian refugees in Lebanon are under pressure as never before. But they say Syria is still too unsafe to return.](#)

Source: The Washington Post

Date: January 24, 2021

Notes: Millions of Syrians who sought safety in Lebanon “are stuck between untenable options: ongoing instability and violence back in Syria as President Bashar al-Assad consolidates control, and deteriorating conditions in cash-strapped Lebanon, where politicians are pressing refugees to leave.” In 2020 “a new cascade of problems,” including the coronavirus pandemic, have contributed to increasing tensions over access to jobs, aid and basic services.

Related: [Opinion: Plight of Syrian refugees in Lebanon must not be ignored](#)

Headline: [Will Turkey’s refugees be vaccinated against the coronavirus?](#)

Source: Arab News

Date: January 24, 2021

Notes: “While Turkey’s COVID-19 vaccination program has been under way since Jan. 13, there has been no official declaration about whether refugees, registered or unregistered, will be immunized.”

Related: [Opinion: Will vaccine nationalism lead to the exclusion of Rohingya refugees?](#)

Headline: [Undocumented Immigrants Await Chance at Vaccination](#)

Source: NBC DFW

Date: January 25, 2021

Notes: Advocates estimate that “at least half of the 2.4 million farmworkers in the United States are undocumented.” Per public health experts, these essential workers need to be prioritized for the coronavirus vaccine regardless of immigration status. However, “after the damage caused by the Trump administration the challenge is to convince undocumented immigrants that they will be safe in seeking a vaccine.” Organizations are responding by ramping up education and outreach programs and finding trusted messengers and healthcare partners.

Related: [Language barriers, wariness make vaccinating immigrants hard](#)

Headline: [The ‘spiralling crisis’ pushing Hondurans to flee north](#)

Source: Al Jazeera

Date: January 26, 2021

Notes: “Thousands in [a] US-bound migrant caravan were returned to Honduras this month, but many say they will try again.” In January, Guatemalan security forces violently cleared caravan members from the highway, citing “public health and security to justify its crackdown.” Hundreds of thousands of Hondurans were displaced by back-to-back hurricanes in November, layered alongside “a still-volatile political situation and decades of inequality.”

Headline: [US judge blocks Biden’s 100-day freeze on deportations](#)

Source: Al Jazeera

Date: January 26, 2021

Notes: “A United States federal judge has temporarily blocked an effort by Joe Biden to halt the deportation of some immigrants for a 100-day period.” The memo, issued by a top Homeland Security official, was intended to pause “certain deportations to enable the department to better deal with “operational challenges” at the US-Mexico border during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Headline: [Podcast: Behind closed doors: Filipina workers trapped by the pandemic](#)

Source: The Guardian

Date: January 26, 2021

Notes: “Journalist Corinne Redfern discusses the impact the pandemic has had on the Filipino women trapped overseas, including Mimi (not her real name) who works for a wealthy family in London for just £5 an hour. Mimi was asked to keep working through the first lockdown with the family coaching her on what to say if the police stopped her. In her spare time, Mimi helps other overseas workers escape situations where they are being abused.”

Headline: [Migrant Workers Making Covid Gear Most Vulnerable in Pandemic](#)

Source: Bloomberg

Date: January 22, 2021

Notes: Migrant workers in Southeast Asia “have borne the brunt of Covid-19,” in part due to overcrowded conditions in worker dormitories. The situation is forcing governments in the region to “confront the flaws of the low-wage labor model” and recognize that “an effective long-term public-health solution will have to involve raising the living and working standards of migrant workers.”

Latest PFMH Blog Post: [Drowning at the Hands of the EU: Is the New Pact on Migration and Asylum a Lifejacket or a Depleted Promise?](#) *Written by Janna Safran, student at the Columbia*

University Mailman School of Public Health

Compiled by Jennifer Ostrowski

Headline: [Coronavirus: Germany loses sight of its refugees](#)

Source: DW

Date: January 27, 2021

Notes: “Amid heated debate about the long-term effects of the lockdown on children, business and the arts, Germany's refugees seem to have been forgotten.” Fears of deportation and the lack of educational and employment opportunities due to the pandemic have increased the burden refugees face.

Headline: [Asylum seekers housed at British army barracks warned of crowding before COVID-19 outbreak](#)

Source: CBC

Date: January 28, 2021

Notes: “The British government has started transferring dozens of asylum seekers to hotels to self-isolate after reports that more than 100 people housed at former army barracks in southeast England have tested positive for COVID-19. An open letter from the asylum seekers shared by the humanitarian organization Choose Love said 120 of the roughly 400 men being housed at the Napier barracks had tested positive for the virus by the third week of January.”

Headline: ['Herded like animals': Nigerian returnees recount horror in Saudi detention](#)

Source: Africa News

Date: January 29, 2021

Notes: “Nigeria on Thursday repatriated nearly 400 of its citizens stranded by the coronavirus pandemic for months in Saudi Arabia, flying them back to the capital Abuja, an aviation ministry official said. The Nigerians were economic migrants stuck in Saudi Arabia after being caught up in the coronavirus restrictions and needed assistance returning home.”

Headline: [Lebanon: Gaps Remain in Vaccine Program Planning](#)

Source: Human Rights Watch

Date: January 28, 2021

Notes: “The Lebanese government should uphold its commitment to ensure that everyone living on its territory has equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines and is included in the national vaccine program, regardless of their nationality or residency status, Human Rights Watch said today. It should also swiftly address gaps in its strategy to inoculate the population just weeks before the vaccine drive is slated to begin.”

Related News: [Palestinian refugees in Lebanon to receive free covid vaccine](#)

Headline: [In refugee camps, access to internet supports research during the coronavirus pandemic](#)

Source: Phys.org

Date: January 26, 2021

Notes: “Qualitative research that involves working directly with remote communities is always difficult to undertake, and even more so right now. Digital research tools like mobile phones and tablets, which are wireless and connected to the internet, make it possible.”

Headline: [Activists Demand a More Just Immigration System, Call for Demilitarization of Border in New Resolution](#)

Source: Democracy Now!

Date: January 28, 2021

Notes: “In Washington, D.C., immigrant activists and their allies staged an action in front of the Washington Monument Wednesday, marking the fourth anniversary of Trump's Muslim travel ban. Immigrant rights groups are calling for major reforms to modernize and humanize the country's

immigration system. They are also asking lawmakers to back Washington Congressmember Pramila Jayapal's Roadmap to Freedom Resolution, which was introduced Wednesday."

Headline: [Refugee rights 'under attack' at Europe's borders, UN warns](#)

Source: The Guardian

Date: January 28, 2021

Notes: "UNHCR says it is alarmed by mounting expulsions and pushbacks of refugees and asylum-seekers and is calling for states to urgently investigate and halt increasing violence against people at Europe's land and sea borders. [...] UNHCR said that the Covid-19 pandemic should not be used as an excuse to deny the right to asylum or refugee status."

Headline: [IOM Requires USD 3 Billion to Bring Relief to 50 Million People Affected by Crises in 2021](#)

Source: IOM

Date: January 29, 2021

Notes: "One year on from the start of the COVID-19 pandemic response, an unprecedented number of people are grappling with the effects of crises and are in dire need of aid and protection. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) announces today that it aims to meet the needs of an estimated 50 million people displaced or affected by crises through its 2021 Crisis Response."

Headline: [NGOs warn: Reduced humanitarian access impedes response to rising cases of COVID-19 and the harsh effects of winter in Northern Syria amid shortages of humanitarian aid](#)

Source: ReliefWeb (Multi-organizational press release)

Date: January 28, 2021

Notes: "Sub-zero temperatures, floods and soaring food prices – combined with rising cases of COVID-19 and ongoing aid shortages – have rapidly increased the needs across northern Syria at a time when humanitarian access to the area has been severely constrained, NGOs warned today - six months after the UN Security Council voted to further limit access points for humanitarian aid to the country. Women, men and children are suffering from lack of access to aid, including food, water and medical supplies including oxygen, and funding is falling short of meeting the basic needs of millions of Syrians across the country."

Latest PFMH Blog Post: [Drowning at the Hands of the EU: Is the New Pact on Migration and Asylum a Lifejacket or a Depleted Promise?](#)

Written by Janna Safran, student at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health

Compiled by Katherine McCann