



Refugee Digest 58

8th October 2021

Refugee, Migrants and Displaced Persons

The Roman Catholic Church observes the last Sunday in September as *World Day for Migrants and Refugees*. This year marked the 107th such observance. The 2021 message, with its emphasis on solidarity, was titled 'Towards an Ever Wider We.' Pope Francis expressed his fear that after the pandemic the world would plunge into more feverish forms of consumerism and egotistical self-preservation. He called on all people to embrace each other without fear and to work towards making the Church and society more inclusive. A close reading of the document shows that the four verbs that underline his thinking on mobile people are clearly present: protection, welcome, promotion and integration.

<https://tinyurl.com/bsfnbtvc>

Various episcopal conferences and church-based NGOs issued statements contextualising the Pope's message and reflecting on their particular situations.

<https://www.exaudi.org/uk-bishop-on-world-day-migrants-and-refugees/>

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/wdmr21/>

<https://www.usccb.org/offices/resettlement-services/world-refugee-day>

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/church/news/2021-06/english-channel-bishops-migrants-refugees-migrants.html>

<https://www.acmro.catholic.org.au/>

In an earlier message, the SACBC reflected on the reality of exclusion of mobile people during the pandemic and called for a very practical form of inclusion – of the wider we – in terms of ensuring access to education and health facilities.

https://sacbc.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/SACBC-Migrants-Refugees_Message_-_World-Refugee-Day-20-June-2021.pdf

A Jesuit communique underlines the link between the Pope's message and the UN Global Compact of 2018, signed by many states including South Africa and the Holy See.

<https://www.sjesjesuits.global/2021/09/25/global-pope-francis-calls-for-a-more-inclusive-we/>

With regard to academic research, an important paper has been published on the types of responses rolled out by the welfare states in Europe during the pandemic and the impact of these policies on mobile peoples. It is noted that generally these policies have shifted from financial support for individuals to investing in human capital and employability, equipping them with resources that will enable them to navigate life's ups and downs. The research looks at the impact of such shifts on migrants whose vulnerability before the pandemic was exacerbated by the pandemic.

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/social-investment-european-welfare-states>

A second research paper worth looking at concerns the need to move from unilateral border control to multilateral border management. It looks at this issue especially through the prism of lessons learnt around the world during the past few years. The problems it looks at have been accentuated by the pandemic.

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/migration-management-border-lessons>.

On the local front, on 30th September President Ramaphosa reiterated that vaccinations are available at no cost to everyone living in South Africa irrespective of status. Despite very clear directives in this regard we continue to hear of instances where undocumented people are refused the vaccination.

<https://www.iol.co.za/news/opinion/sa-moves-to-lockdown-level-1-read-president-cyril-ramaphosas-full-speech-a565a63f-908b-49fd-8783-dfcca0988b95>

The SA government has made it possible for asylum seekers to access the R350 COVID grant through an identity number generated by SASSA.

<https://www.enca.com/news/sassa-opens-new-channels-for-social-relief-grant-applications>

<https://www.enca.com/news/asylum-seekers-can-apply-distress-grant-caregivers>

70 undocumented migrants from Lesotho, Malawi and Zimbabwe were detained and appeared in court in the Eastern Cape for being in SA illegally. It appears that at least some arrived in the country after lockdown and thus had no opportunity to apply for documentation.

<https://www.groundup.org.za/article/immigrants-arrested-labour-inspection-sweep-eastern-cape/>

Widely diverse and contested narratives exist around issues of immigration. This article calls for stricter measures to be taken against border crossing into South Africa. It argues that, as other African countries fail, many people would migrate to South Africa, putting pressure on limited resources and straining social cohesion

https://www.politicsweb.co.za/opinion/we-need-a-realistic-immigration-policy?utm_source=Politicsweb+Daily+Headlines&utm_medium=Social+Media&utm_campaign=Daily+Headlines

The sad saga of the refugees who camped outside the UNHCR offices in Cape Town and then in the Methodist Church in Greenmarket Square, continues. While many have been assisted, a number still hold out for repatriation to a third country. Some have moved back into communities around Cape Town and some have returned to their countries of origin. They have also spoken of their lack of trust in the police and the DHA.

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-09-29-refugees-in-cape-town-giving-up-hope-of-home-affairs-or-police-assistance-would-rather-leave-sa/>

In the run-up to local elections, insults, political posturing and populist rhetoric come into sharp relief. Sadly, xenophobic and anti-foreigner vitriol also appears in these campaigns. Recently, Patriotic Alliance leader Gayton McKenzie tweeted about “illegal foreigners having to go back” and the like. In a country with a sad history of xenophobic attacks such sentiments are not only immoral but dangerous.

<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2021-08-30-what-do-a-gangster-a-pastor-and-sushi-have-in-common-the-patriotic-alliance/>

<https://www.thesouthafrican.com/news/gayton-mckenzie-interview-illegal-immigrants-patriotic-alliance/>

Peter-John Pearson
Director

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