

Upcoming Meetings & Events

ECDC DINNER SERIES: AFRICAN AMERICANS & THE IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE – FEB 19

The Ethiopian Community Development Council is hosting a discussion about the African American community's diverse views on immigration as part of a wine and dinner series. Immigrant Food Co-Owner Peter Schechter will open the night, and Niambi Carter, author of "American White Black: African Americans, Immigration, and the Limits of Citizenship" will facilitate the conversation. Learn more [here](#).

US-VIETNAM RELATIONS 25 YEARS OF NORMALIZATION: WHAT'S NEXT? CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES – FEB 19

The US-Asia Institute invites you to join us and our panel of experts for an in-depth look into US-Vietnam economic and diplomatic ties from 1pm to 3pm on February 19 at the Rayburn House Office Building 2044. This year marks the 25th anniversary of formal diplomatic relations between the US and Vietnam. As Chair of ASEAN this year, Vietnam is in a leadership role to direct the focus of the 10-member association in 2020. RSVP [here](#).



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Brexit or Megxit: Which is Worse?

By Kelly Ann Whelan

The British are good at coming up with fun nicknames and slogans for some difficult moments in history.

Margaret Thatcher, Milk [Snatcher](#).

Annus [Horribilus](#).

[Megxit](#).

And probably even more devastating than Megxit,

[Brexit](#).

Recently, on January 31, the withdrawal agreement removing the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU) entered into force. This marked the UK nearing the end of a long road of leaving the EU that began with a national referendum in June 2016.

which is the reason many citizens voted "leave." Previous to Brexit, the UK accepted high numbers of asylum seekers and economic migrants. Now that it has left, there will be complicated implications for those seeking to immigrate to the UK, as well as for citizens who previously enjoyed free [movement](#) and permanent immigration to countries in the EU.

In this paper, we look at the implications of the UK's departure from the EU on immigration to and from the country and its effects on the European asylum landscape.

Read this week's full brief [here](#).

Issue Updates

Upcoming Meetings & Events (cont'd)

TWITTER STORM ON IMMIGRATION COURTS – FEB 19

AILA, NIJC, and Human Rights First are co-hosting a Twitter Storm on Wednesday, February 19th, at 3:00 p.m. ET. The Twitter Storm will highlight the dysfunction in the immigration court system and call for reform. For questions, including sample social media, contact Mary Cunningham (MCunningham@aila.org).

40th ANNIVERSARY OF REFUGEE ACT – MAR 17

March 17th marks the 40th Anniversary of the Refugee Act of 1980, which created the federal Refugee Resettlement Program.

REFUGEE COUNCIL USA ADVOCACY DAYS – APR 28 – 29

Join Refugee Council USA (RCUSA), refugee leaders, resettlement staff, faith leaders, business leaders, veterans, and advocates from around the country on April 28-29 in Washington, D.C. to mobilize, learn, and advocate directly to Members of Congress to protect and rebuild the refugee resettlement program. RCUSA will organize meetings for attendees with Members of Congress and their staff. If interested in participating, fill out an application [here](#). If interested in sponsoring the event, more information can be found [here](#).

• ICE Issues Fingerprinting Guidance for Minors in ORR Shelters

Last week, ICE issued updated guidance to its field offices regarding the collection of fingerprints of minors in ORR custody. The guidance states that ICE officers will collect fingerprints, at the shelter, from minors who recently turned 14 years of age while in ORR care, in most cases. In the remainder of cases ICE may require fingerprint collections at the local ICE field office.

• U.S. Government Settles Lawsuit for Refugees Left Behind by Refugee Ban

On February 10, the U.S. government settled in the case of *Jewish Family Service v. Trump*. The settlement requires the government to expedite the refugee resettlement applications of over 300 refugees affected by the ban, including all individual plaintiffs and any other refugees who had reached the final stages of processing in October 2017, but still have pending applications. The text of the settlement can be read [here](#).

• Department of Justice Sues California, New Jersey, Washington's King County

On February 11, the Department of Justice announced three separate lawsuits against the states of California and New Jersey as well as King County, Washington. California has banned the use of private prisons, including ICE detention facilities. In New Jersey, a state Attorney General directive limits state agencies from assisting federal immigration authorities unless required by law. King County, which includes Seattle, has a current executive order banning deportation flights from King County International Airport. Read more [here](#).

• Guatemala Enacts Controversial Law against NGOs that “Disturb Public Order”

On February 11, the Guatemalan Congress passed law 04-2020, the Law of Non-Governmental Organizations for Development. The law institutes new reporting requirements, allows the Guatemalan executive to close NGOs that “disturb the public order” with foreign donations or financing, and includes criminal sanctions for executives of closed NGOs. All foreign-funded NGOs are affected. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees and other organizations have stated concerns that the law will be used against organizations that fight for civil and human rights as well as against government corruption. Read more [here](#).

• Third Circuit Finds that Children and Others May Challenge Placement in MPP

On February 13, the Third Circuit found that district courts have jurisdiction to consider challenges to an individual's placement in the so-called Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP). In the case *E.O.H.C. v. Secretary of Homeland Security et al*, the Third Circuit held that limitations on jurisdiction in the Immigration and Nationality Act cannot be used to prevent judicial review in some immigration cases. Read the full opinion [here](#).

• Trump Extends “Emergency” Declaration at US-Mexico Border

On February 13, President Trump officially extended his declaration of a “State of Emergency” along the US-Mexico border. The move allows the Trump administration to reprogram defense funding to build parts of the border wall. The original emergency declaration was issued on February 15, 2019. Read more [here](#).

USCRI Time Machine

In this week's USCRI Time Machine, we look at the 2001 issue brief, *Afghans in Crisis*. In the brief, USCRI covered the humanitarian catastrophe in Afghanistan and neighboring countries caused by cumulative effects of decades of on-going conflict and the worst drought to have hit the region in 30 years.

Among the issues in the paper was the discussion of the more than 500,000 newly uprooted Afghans, how drought was threatening hundreds of thousands in the region, and the failure of international response to the needs on the ground. At the time of reporting, Tajikistan had likewise refused entry to some 10,000 Afghans at its border, as did Iran. It had left many former refugees returned to areas affected by conflict and drought struggling to reintegrate, and those left behind with little chance of receiving sufficient help.

USCRI's recommendations for the situation centered around more urgent response and aid for refugees and IDPs, stating, "The overarching need in both Afghanistan and Pakistan at the moment is for substantially more international assistance...without a major international effort to assist these populations, a humanitarian tragedy could occur." Likewise, USCRI recommended that the U.S. urge Russian authorities (whose troops control the Tajik/Afghan border) to press Tajikistan to permit Afghan refugees to enter.

Today, Afghan refugees continue to face an uphill battle. According to recent 2020 UNHCR reports, millions of Afghan refugees have been living in protracted situations for over 40 years and comprise [the largest protracted refugee population](#) in Asia—the second largest refugee population in the world. [Nearly 25%](#) of Afghanistan's 35 million population are former refugees who have returned home in the last 18 years. Likewise, Afghans are the largest group of asylum seekers currently [arriving in Europe](#).

Global support for the Afghan refugee situation has been on the decline and funding levels have dropped over the past several years. Underfunding continues to be an issue for Afghans in exile as well. It has severely affected efforts to educate and empower young Afghans (who comprise [more than a million](#) refugees living in Pakistan and Iran) and UNHCR notes that this contributes to "immense risks for an uneducated youth in a region prone to radicalization."

[In a recent report](#), Amnesty International stated that the international community has shown a "callous indifference" towards Afghan refugees and asylum seekers, where forcible returns from Europe have threatened the lives of refugees and asylum seekers. Countless humanitarian organizations have [spoken out against](#) forcible return of Afghan refugees in countries like Greece and Turkey, noting that returns result in secondary displacement, unemployment, and instability.

Global Gigabyte

A new documentary, *Midnight Traveler*, filmed by Afghan refugee Hassan Fazilli, focuses on his family's [three-year journey](#) to seek asylum in Europe. The documentary, filmed entirely on the family's mobile phones, shows the filmmaker, his wife, and four young children as they seek asylum in Tajikistan, Iran, Turkey, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Hungary, after fleeing persecution from the Taliban.

The film has been lauded as a beautiful and heartbreaking view of a family's struggles to reach hope and safety. It has won awards from the Berlin Film Festival, Sundance Film Festival, and the San Francisco International Film Festival. See the trailer [here](#).

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Kelly Ann Whelan at kwhelan@uscmail.org or (703) 310-1130 ext. 3056.

