

Upcoming Meetings & Events

SOUTH ASIA UNBOUND: HUMANITARIANISMS IN AND OF SOUTH ASIA
– MAR 5

On Friday, March 5 at 8 AM EST, the New International Histories of South Asia network (NIHSA) will host a discussion on the globalization of South Asian refugeedom, exploring South Asia as a site where alternative definitions of refugees, migration, and humanitarianism emerged, as well as exploring migrant communities that have so far been excluded from histories of international and South Asian (forced) migration. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY EVENT: ANTI-TRAFFICKING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM
– MAR 8

On Monday, March 8 at 1 PM EST, ROMILDAMOR will host a virtual panel to discuss anti-trafficking efforts and strategies in the United Kingdom's (UK) post-Brexit context, including how to address the disappearance of crucial channels of cooperation and information that the UK faces with regard to eradicating human trafficking networks. Panelists include Dame Sara Thornton, current Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner of the UK and Marcia Longdon, the International Co-Chair to the Immigration & Human Trafficking Committee at the American Bar Association (ABA) Employment & Labour Section. For more information and to register, click [here](#).



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United States Issue Updates

• Immigrant Visa Ban Revoked

On February 24, the Administration announced that it was officially revoking the two proclamations (10052 and 10131) that banned the “Entry of Immigrants Who Present a Risk to the United States Labor Market During the Economic Recovery Following the 2019 Novel Coronavirus Outbreak.” The White House noted in its new proclamation rescinding the ban that, “it does not advance the interests of the United States. To the contrary, it harms the United States, including by preventing certain family members of United States citizens and lawful permanent residents from joining their families here. It also harms industries in the United States that utilize talent from around the world.” The former Administration first signed the proclamation halting immigration on April 22, 2020. On June 22, it was expanded in scope and extended through the end of 2020. On December 31, it was extended through March 31, 2021. The ban halted all legal immigration — separating hundreds of thousands of families, throwing businesses into chaos, and disrupting the economic recovery.

• Preliminary Injunction Issued in Deportation Moratorium Case

On February 23, Judge Drew Tipton of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas issued the latest barricade to the Administration’s 100-day moratorium on deportations, originally announced on its first day in office. Last month, Judge Tipton issued a temporary restraining order (TRO) to stop the moratorium from being enforced in a case filed by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton. In a 105-page ruling, Judge Tipton wrote, “This preliminary injunction is granted on a nationwide basis and prohibits enforcement and implementation of the [100-day pause] in every place Defendants have jurisdiction to enforce and implement the January 20 Memorandum.” In his decision, he wrote that he found that Texas had proved the 100-day deportation pause would threaten the state with financial harm — and that the moratorium, as rolled out, violated administrative laws and procedures.

Upcoming Meetings & Events (cont'd)

A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS: THE DREAMS THAT COME WITH A NEW ADMINISTRATION – MAR 16

On Tuesday, March 16 at 8 PM EDT, the Utah Council for Citizen Diplomacy will host a virtual discussion with former senior advisor in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) John Amaya. The discussion will dive into the real-life impacts of America's failure to fix its immigration system. Mr. Amaya will address the changes he hopes and expects to see with the new Administration and how these changes will impact the United States and its neighbors in Central America. For more information and to register, click [here](#).

United States Issue Updates (cont'd)

• Migrant Facility Housing Unaccompanied Children Reopens

On February 22, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) [announced](#) that it would reopen a migrant housing facility in Carrizo Springs, Texas, to house 700 unaccompanied minors aged 13 to 17, sparking criticism. Carrizo Springs, which once housed oil-field workers, was converted into a facility for unaccompanied minors by the previous Administration in 2019. Carrizo Springs is an influx care facility, not subject to state regulations or the requirement of a state license in childcare. Baptist Child and Family Services (BCFS) will operate the facility. Of the reopening, Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY-14) stated, “[It] is not okay, never has been okay, never will be okay — no matter the administration or party. Our immigration system is built on a carceral framework. It's no accident that challenging how we approach both these issues are considered 'controversial' stances.”

• New Deal for New Americans Act Re-Introduced

On February 24, the New Deal for New Americans Act was [re-introduced](#) by Senators Edward J. Markey (D-MA) and Mazie Hirono (D-HI) and Representatives Grace Meng (D-NY-06), Jesús Chuy García (D-IL-04), and Pramila Jayapal (D-WA-07). The legislation promotes immigrant and refugee inclusion, as well as coordinates the efforts of federal, state, and local governments to support the social, economic, and civic integration of immigrants and refugees. If passed, the Act would: (1) Increase refugee admissions to at least 125,000 per fiscal year; (2) Establish several new federal offices and programs to assist with integration, job training, and education of immigrants (3) Bolster family reunification by reducing (from 21 years old to 18 years old) the age at which citizens can petition for eligible family members to receive an immigrant visa, and; (4) Amend the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) to no longer allow for the deportation of an individual deemed a public charge.

• More Than 60 Members of Congress Calling for an End to Title 42 Expulsions

On February 23, Representatives Frederica S. Wilson (D-FL-24), Gregory W. Meeks (D-NY-5), Pramila Jayapal (D-WA-7), and Bennie G. Thompson (D-MS-2) led a [letter](#) of more than 60 members of Congress to the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) urging an end to the practice of summarily expelling migrants under Title 42 of the Public Health Services Act as soon as is practicable and to employ alternative forms of humanitarian relief for detainees subject to deportation for the remainder of the pandemic. “We write out of deep concern about continued Title 42 expulsions and deportations that have taken place in recent weeks, seemingly regardless of whether these migrants meet priorities for removals. In many cases these deportees are families and children who likely pose no security threat. The [Trump] Administration misused Title 42 to summarily expel hundreds of thousands of migrants while denying them due process and access to the asylum system in contravention of international legal obligations,” the members of Congress wrote.

Around the World in International Migration

• Central American Migration Likely Due to Hurricanes and COVID-19

Hurricanes and the COVID-19 pandemic have contributed to a huge rise in the number of people going hungry in four Central American countries, leading many to make plans to migrate. A United Nations World Food Program study (WFP) found that nearly eight million people are hungry in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. WFP regional director Miguel Barreto said that, after the spread of COVID-19 and the arrival of hurricanes Eta and Iota, the region had “hit rock bottom.” “Many now have nowhere to live and are staying in temporary shelters, surviving on next to nothing,” he said. The hurricanes destroyed the homes and livelihoods of 6.8 million people. According to the WFP, they even disrupted service, tourism and informal jobs, causing hunger in new groups who were “previously relatively untouched.”

• Thousands of Ethiopians Seek Asylum in Sudan’s Blue Nile State

Several thousand people fleeing escalating violence in Ethiopia’s Benishangul Gumuz region have sought safety in Sudan’s Blue Nile State over the last month. Violence in the Metekel Zone of the Benishangul-Gumuz region is separate from the deadly conflict in Ethiopia’s northern Tigray region, which has caused more than 61,000 Ethiopians to seek refuge in Sudan’s provinces of al-Qadarif and Kassala. It has been reported that members of the ethnic majority in the region attacked the homes of ethnic minorities, causing more than 7,000 to flee. This is the latest ethnic conflict in a country with more than 80 ethnic groups. Tensions escalated in the past three months in Metekel Zone, prompting Ethiopia’s government to declare a state of emergency in the area on January 21.

• Many Countries in Europe Excluding Undocumented Migrants from COVID-19 Vaccine Plans

The European Commission adopted a recommendation for effective vaccine strategies and deployment in Member States in October 2020, citing refugees as a priority group, but with no mention of undocumented migrants. However, individual Member States are each responsible for developing their own vaccine strategies as well as defining and prioritizing groups for vaccination. The trend that is emerging is great disparity between countries. Countries like the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, France, Spain, and Italy are including undocumented migrants in their vaccination strategies, according to official sources. Belgium’s Ministry of Health said the country would vaccinate undocumented individuals, though it remains unclear whether it will do so as part of an official national strategy. Germany and Serbia officially reported that refugees and asylum seekers would be prioritized in their respective vaccine strategies. The Greek Ministry of Health clearly guaranteed refugees in camps social security numbers so they could access vaccines, but there has been no inclusion thus far of undocumented migrants. Spanish and Bosnian authorities, on the other hand, are working to return many asylum seekers in their camps to countries of origin. Meanwhile, Poland has explicitly excluded non-resident foreigners from its vaccination program.

• Malaysia Deports Over 1,000 Migrants Despite Court Order

On February 23, the government of Malaysia deported 1,086 Myanmar detainees back to Myanmar just weeks after a coup there, despite a court order halting the repatriation. The migrants, who include vulnerable asylum seekers, departed on three Myanmar navy ships from a Malaysian military base after arriving on packed trucks and buses under police escort. The court order came just after the migrants were transported to a naval base where three Myanmar military ships were waiting. The Malaysian Immigration Office argued that there were no United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) cardholders or ethnic Muslim Rohingya refugees in the group, who were held for offenses including not having valid travel documents, overstaying their visas, and violating social visit passes. A group of 27 Malaysian lawmakers also sent a letter to Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin on Sunday urging him to halt the deportation, but they received no response. Malaysia does not officially recognize asylum seekers or refugees, but has allowed a large population to stay on humanitarian grounds. It is home to some 180,000 refugees and asylum seekers, including more than 100,000 Rohingya and other Myanmar ethnic groups.

Whispers from Washington

Current Capitol Hill Considerations

MPP Asylum Seekers Arrive in United States

On February 22, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees launched the Conecta [website](#), which allows those waiting in Mexico under the former Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) program to apply for an appointment with the Support Hub, the first step in applying for asylum.

This week, the Administration allowed the first MPP asylum seekers to enter the country and will allow up to 30 people a day to enter through three ports of entry: Brownsville, San Ysidro, and El Paso. Those coming into the United States will first require background checks and a negative COVID-19 test.

It is unclear whether the Administration will expand entry quotas in the future and how asylum applicants from MPP will be queued for adjudication. As of January 2021, many applicants [wait](#) up to a year or more for affirmative asylum interviews or three years for their case to reach immigration court.

Global Gigabyte

Umoja-Enosi, the first pan-African soccer team in Greece, was created in 2019 with the support of the Greek branch of Service Civil International (SCI) in downtown Patissia, a section of Athens. The team has 20 members, all young men from different parts of Africa, who are either asylum seekers, recognized refugees or second-generation migrants born in Greece.

Membership in this highly promising team, which plays in an independent championship and organizes fair play and soccer technique seminars, has allowed many of the players to make strides in the process of assimilation.

Their effort is bolstered by Bala Patissia a community activism group whose area of interest is centered around the park and soccer pitch on the corner of Kambouroglou and Samara streets in Kato Patissia. “We are carrying out nine pilot-phase initiatives in different Athenian neighborhoods like Exarchia, Kerameikos and Akadimia Platonos, which are aimed at assimilating refugees,” said project head Haris Biskos at a recent City of Athens press conference presenting the initiative, “We are seeking to bring people close together.”

Read more about the story [here](#).

If you have any questions
or comments, please
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