

Daily COVID-19 and Migration Digest
Monday, March 16, 2020

Headline: [New asylum seekers won't be admitted to refugee centres because of coronavirus](#)

Source: DutchNews.nl

Date: March 16, 2020

Notes: The Netherlands has stopped admitting asylum seekers due to concerns about COVID-19. No identification, registration, or interviews will take place. About 450 people apply weekly for asylum in the Netherlands and there is no information available about what will happen to people who present at processing centers.

Headline: [Coronavirus: ICE crackdown stokes fears for safety of undocumented immigrants during pandemic](#)

Source: The Independent

Date: March 15, 2020

Notes: Reports of surges in arrests by the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE) in New York and Boston in recent days are causing concerns about access to healthcare in migrant communities during the COVID-19 outbreak. ICE has confirmed that it is “deploying special agents to supplement routine enforcement activity to deal with a backlog of cases” at this time, but insists that they conduct operations at medical facilities only under “extraordinary circumstances.” Democrats are calling for guarantees of safety for undocumented individuals who need to seek treatment during the outbreak.

Headline: [Hypocrisy in the time of Covid-19](#)

Source: The Daily Maverick

Date: March 16, 2020

Notes: This op-ed, written by the Vice-Chair of the Migration Health and Development Research Initiative at the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa, discusses the dual tendencies of society to both blame migrants and vulnerable populations for the spread of COVID-19 and to overlook them in responding to the outbreak. The author calls for a more vigorous and targeted public health response, “based on principles of justice, equity and respect.”

Headline: [Le coronavirus, vecteur de propagande anti-migrants](#) (Coronavirus, a vector of anti-migrant propaganda)

Source: Radio France International

Date: March 13, 2020

Notes: This radio piece from France highlights the ways in which the COVID-19 outbreak is being used by ultra-nationalists to fuel anti-migrant sentiment, especially on social media, dehumanizing migrant populations and manipulating information to justify the rejection of immigrants and asylum seekers.

Headline: [Coronavirus: Immigration detainees must be released to stop spread of virus, Labour says](#)

Source: The Independent

Date: March 16, 2020

Notes: Immigration advocates in the UK are concerned about the increased risk of coronavirus infection facing immigration detainees across the country and are calling for their immediate

release, as well as a temporary stop to deportations. Leaders of the Labour party are now joining this call, after two detainees were tested for the virus and seven more were put into quarantine in a facility. Up to 2,000 people are held in seven facilities across Britain at any given time.

Headline: [Coronavirus fear grips Rohingya camps in Bangladesh](#)

Source: Anadalou Agency

Date: March 13, 2020

Notes: Three cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed in Bangladesh and advocates for the Rohingya refugee population inside camps in the nation are concerned about the potential spread of the virus in the camp communities. They cite overcrowding and a lack of soap, water and other necessities to maintain hygiene as risk factors for the population. The government of Bangladesh says they have taken preventive measures for the camp, including staging testing kits and quarantine beds in camp health centers.

Headline: [Do Pandemics Strengthen the Case for Restricting Immigration?](#)

Source: The Volokh Conspiracy

Date: March 13, 2020

Notes: This op-ed, written by a law professor, examines the reasoning behind arguments being made in many countries to strengthen immigration restrictions due to concerns about COVID-19. The author concludes that, “temporary quarantines and other targeted restrictions might be justified. But pandemics do not justify more general migration restrictions. Indeed, the latter often actually imperil health.”

Headline: [Coronavirus cases in migrant detention facilities called ‘inevitable’](#)

Source: San Antonio Express-News

Date: March 15, 2020

Notes: Public health officials are raising concerns about the “inevitability” of an outbreak of COVID-19 in the population of asylum seekers attempting to cross the US-Mexico border. Officials fear that an outbreak either in the detention facilities or in the makeshift camps on the Mexico side of the border would have devastating effects on the population, due to overcrowding and a lack of hygiene supplies.

Compiled by Christina Kay

Headline: [10 Things You Should Know About Coronavirus and Refugees](#)

Source: Norwegian Refugee Council

Date: March 16, 2020

Notes: The NRC is concerned about the impact COVID-19 will have on refugees and IDPs. This list touches on the effect COVID-19 will have considering weak health, water, & sanitation systems in conflict settings and low/middle income countries, unequal distributions of healthcare services, unequal inclusion of refugee populations during disaster preparedness, and vulnerable living conditions of refugees.

Headline: [Asylum Seekers Stuck in French Detention as EU Justice Slows](#)

Source: Bloomberg

Date: March 17, 2020

Notes: Several asylum seekers in French custody set to be sent to Italy are stuck in detention as coronavirus-related lockdowns override EU rules requiring them to be sent back. Several French Court of appeals are dismissing challenges by asylum seekers on the extension of their detentions. Rulings cite Dublin III, an EU regulation, that requires asylum requests to be handled by the country where they were made. Other examples included of how detained persons are by coronavirus's effect on the legal system.

Headline: [Coronavirus Will Decimate Refugee Communities If We Don't Act Now](#)

Source: Norwegian Refugee Council

Date: March 16, 2020

Notes: Jan Egeland, Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council, released a call to action to support refugee and displacement sites. "As world leaders brace for the worst within their borders, they must not abandon those living outside them. We must turbocharge our humanity and stand in international solidarity with refugees and displaced people during this time of widespread uncertainty."

Headline: [New Asylum Seekers will be Put Up in Tents, Justice Ministry Officials Say](#)

Source: Dutch News

Date: March 17, 2020

Notes: Emergency accommodations will be put in place for asylum seekers arriving to the Netherlands. Prior news reported no new refugees arriving will be admitted to official residential centers, but now emergency housing in the form of tents or marquees will be provided.

Headline: [Mexico Will Screen Migrants for Coronavirus](#)

Source: Center for Immigration Studies

Date: March 16, 2020

Notes: The Ministry of Health of Chiapas in Mexico's southern border announced they will turn away any migrants seeking to enter Mexico who test positive for COVID-19. Similar surveillance will also take place at airports. Other Latin American countries are taking on similar border control measures – Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Colombia, Paraguay, and Argentina.

Headline: [Virus And The Migrant: India-Gulf Region Is Second Largest Migration Corridor, Must Not Be Blocked](#)

Source: The Indian Express

Date: March 17, 2020

Notes: Travel restrictions imposed by several West Asian countries is concerning advocates to the movement of Indian migrants. Nearly all countries in the Persian Gulf have stopped accepting migrants from India, and there are nearly 600 fishermen from India stuck on an island in Iran. There will be challenges for Indian workers attempting to return to the countries where they work, as well as financial burdens from inflated flight fares after travel bans are lifted.

Headline: [Coronavirus: Belgium Begins Shutting Down Services For Asylum Seekers](#)

Source: The Brussels Times

Date: March 17, 2020

Notes: The Federal Immigration Office is closing and no longer reviewing new or existing applications for political asylum. The Office receives around 200 application and have between 100-150 people in their waiting room. The Commissioner-General for Refugees, which aids applicants through the asylum process, has also stopped all meetings with applicants. A housing center for asylum seekers in the Dansaert District announced closure due to coronavirus. No solutions have been posed for accommodations for those in the housing center.

Headline: [Concern Mounts of 'Catastrophic' Coronavirus Outbreak in Syria](#)

Source: Al Jazeera

Date: March 16, 2020

Notes: There have been no officially registered case of COVID-19 in Syria. Concern remains about the healthcare system's ability to cope with COVID-19. Opposition groups have tried limiting the movement of people at two checkpoints in northern Syria due to fears the virus will enter from government-held areas. Reports point to outbreaks in the government-held areas of Tartous, Damascus, Homs and Latakia provinces.

Compiled by Rocio Rodriguez Casquete

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Headline: [UN to suspend refugee resettlement abroad due to coronavirus travel restrictions](#)

Source: France24

Date: March 17, 2020

Notes: “The agency said the suspension would begin to take effect within a few days, but also appealed to countries to ‘ensure that movements can continue for the most critical emergency cases wherever possible.’ The UNHCR said on Tuesday there were at least 10 confirmed coronavirus cases among refugees and asylum seekers in Germany. Some aid officials worry this might undermine future support for taking refugees.”

Headline: [NGOs raise alarm as coronavirus strips support from EU refugees](#)

Source: The Guardian

Date: March 17, 2020

Notes: NGOs working with unaccompanied children in both Greece and France raised urgent concerns about the impacts of COVID-19 on this group of migrants and asylum seekers, whom they feel have been “effectively abandoned” by the authorities in the wake of COVID-19. They are calling for more attention to registration and protection of new child arrivals, as well as large-scale distribution of food, soap and access to hot water in migrant communities in order to better prevent the spread of the disease.

Headline: [Citing Coronavirus, Trump Will Announce Strict New Border Controls](#)

Source: New York Times

Date: March 17, 2020

Notes: “The Trump administration plans to immediately turn back all asylum seekers and other foreigners trying to cross the southwestern border illegally, saying they cannot risk allowing the coronavirus to spread through detention facilities and among Border Patrol agents.” Officials say that ports of entry will remain open to American citizens, green card holders, some foreigners, and commercial traffic.

Headline: [How coronavirus hits migrants and asylum seekers in Italy](#)

Source: The New Humanitarian

Date: March 16, 2020

Notes: This article details the myriad of ways that migrants and asylum seekers in Italy are being impacted by the COVID-19 crisis in the country. Hundreds of migrants that were aboard two rescue ships have been quarantined; many agencies have suspended or greatly reduced services to migrants and asylum seekers, including the processing of asylum applications; detention in Libya may have weakened the respiratory and immune systems of many migrants and asylum seekers now in Libya; and the far-right in Italy have been using anti-migrant sentiments as a political tool.

Headline: [No Soap, Little Water, and No Way Out: Refugee Camps Brace for Coronavirus](#)

Source: Vice News

Date: March 13, 2020

Notes: “We need to be realistic: It would be impossible to contain an outbreak in such camp settings,” says MSF’s Hilde Vochten, specifically citing concerns about the low availability of water and soap in Moria camp in Greece, as well as overcrowded conditions. Agencies are attempting to prepare for an outbreak by providing protective gear, building new WASH facilities and testing labs, and training staff.

Headline: [The Greek refugees battling to prevent Covid-19 with handmade face masks](#)

Source: The Guardian

Date: March 17, 2020

Notes: Amid growing concerns about COVID-19 within the Moria refugee camp on Lesbos, Greece, a group of Afghan women have set up an operation to sew face masks for camp residents. They produced 500 masks on their first day.

Headline: [Guatemala suspends all deportation flights from US over COVID-19](#)

Source: Al-Jazeera

Date: March 17, 2020

Notes: Due to concerns about COVID-19, Guatemala will temporarily stop receiving Hondurans and El Salvadorans returned from the US under the asylum cooperation agreement as well as Guatemalans deported from the US. Additionally, the Catholic Church's Migrant Shelters in Guatemala City is also temporarily suspending services to migrants and asylum seekers deported from the US and Mexico, citing concerns for the safety of the migrants in their shelters.

Headline: [Juarez isolating newly arrived migrants, restricting access to buildings after COVID-19 case confirmed](#)

Source: Border Report

Date: March 17, 2020

Notes: After a 29-year-old Mexican citizen tested positive for COVID-19 after returning from a trip to Italy, Juarez officials have implemented a new policy to isolate newly arrived migrants for “at least 14 days.” They have also deployed medical personnel to migrant shelters.

Compiled by Christina Kay

Headline: [This age of COVID-10 demands new emergency ethics \(Slim\)](#)

Source: The New Humanitarian

Date: March 18, 2020

Notes: Slim proposes four key areas to focus on as COVID-19 pushes us to create new emergency ethics: 1) emergencies are not only about human rights, but also human duties, 2) emergencies need ethical leaders, 3) particular groups will pay a higher price and our emergency ethics should try to mitigate their suffering, and 4) we all must be “courageous, patient, and humane, and stay focused on the common good.”

Headline: [COVID-19: IASC issues interim guidance for camp operations and addressing mental health and psychosocial support](#)

Source: OCHA

Date: March 18, 2020

Notes: IASC has issued new interim guidance on scaling up COVID-19 readiness and response operations in camps, as well as an interim briefing note on addressing mental health and psychosocial aspects of the outbreak. Guidance is directed to field coordinators, camp managers, and public health personnel.

Headline: [Yemen coronavirus lockdown to hamper relief effort](#)

Source: The New Humanitarian

Date: March 17, 2020

Notes: A ban on flights in and out of Yemen, as well as restrictions on passenger travel by road within Yemen, has restricted the ability of humanitarian aid workers to access the country. As of now, it appears that aid cargo will still be allowed into the country.

Headline: [Nigeria bans entry for travelers from 13 countries as it announces five new cases of coronavirus](#)

Source: CNN

Date: March 18, 2020

Notes: Nigeria has announced entry restrictions on travelers from thirteen countries with more than 1000 cases beginning on March 20th. The article provides an overview of travel restrictions on the continent, including those announced by Tunisia, Morocco, Sudan, Djibouti, South Africa and Egypt.

Headline: [Qatar bans entry of foreigners as coronavirus cases rise](#)

Source: Al Jazeera

Date: March 19, 2020

Notes: Claiming that the majority of COVID-19 cases in the country were related to migrant workers, Qatar has banned entry of noncitizens.

Headline: [Greece curbs refugee movement in camps over coronavirus fears](#)

Source: Al Jazeera

Date: March 18, 2020

Notes: Greece has imposed new restrictions on refugees living in camps, including that refugees in camps will only be allowed to leave in small groups (only one person per family) every hour between 7am and 7pm to obtain food and supplies from nearby villages.

Headline: [New Zealand and Australia close borders to foreigners amid coronavirus crisis](#)

Source: The Guardian

Date: March 19, 2020

Notes: New Zealand and Australia have banned entry to anyone who is not a citizen or resident. Australian Prime Minister has said that the ban was implemented because most of the cases of COVID-19 came from overseas.

Headline: [12 changes to the US immigration system during the coronavirus pandemic](#)

Source: CNN

Date: March 18, 2020

Notes: The article provides a timeline of changes to the US immigration system within the past week, including a March 18th change to adjust its enforcement operations.

Headline: [Fears for refugees after guard at Brisbane immigration detention center tests positive for coronavirus](#)

Source: The Guardian

Date: March 18, 2020

Notes: An immigration guard working at a makeshift detention center in Brisbane has tested positive for COVID-19, prompting fears of disease spread within detention centers.

Headline: [Hypocrisy in the time of Covid-19](#)

Source: Daily Maverick

Date: March 16, 2020

Notes: Vearey calls on South Africa to include foreign migrant populations in the response to COVID-19.

Headline: [Respect Rights in COVID-19 Response](#)

Source: Human Rights Watch

Date: March 19, 2020

Notes: Human Rights Watch has released a new report, "Human Rights Dimensions of the COVID-19 Response," which provides recommendations for governments on the COVID-19 response.

Compiled by Sarah Guyer

Headline: [‘Wash Our Hands? Some People Can’t Wash Their Kids for a Week.’](#)

Source: New York Times

Date: March 19, 2020

Notes: Syrian doctors believe that COVID-19 is already present in Idlib Province, where about three million people live in crowded conditions with little access to running water. Health infrastructure has been decimated during the conflict; COVID-19 testing kits have not yet arrived in northwest Syria to the remaining functional facilities.

Headline: [How coronavirus will affect humanitarian aid response](#) (webinar recording)

Source: The New Humanitarian

Date: March 20, 2020

Notes: The March 19th webinar asked speakers to assess how COVID-19 will impact crisis-affected communities. Speakers included experts from the Center for Global Development, Amel Association, Norwegian Refugee Council in Somalia, and Centre for Education and Research in Humanitarian Action.

Headline: [Statement by Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, on the COVID-19 crisis](#)

Source: UNHCR

Date: March 19, 2020

Notes: Grandi urges states not to limit the right to asylum at their borders. Solutions such as screening, testing, and quarantine can be used to manage the arrival while respecting international refugee protection standards.

Headline: [Responding to the COVID-19 Crisis While Protecting Asylum Seekers](#)

Source: Amnesty International, Refugees International, Human Rights First, Physicians for Human Rights, Women’s Refugee Commission, Médecins Sans Frontières

Date: March 19, 2020

Notes: Amnesty International, Refugees International, Human Rights First, Physicians for Human Rights, Women’s Refugee Commission, Médecins Sans Frontières has issued a joint statement against US plans to close the border to asylum seekers and recommending steps to protect the rights and health of asylum seekers and the public.

Headline: [What coronavirus means for tens of thousands of people in ICE custody](#)

Source: CNN

Date: March 19, 2020

Notes: Key developments on ICE detention in the US include putting social visits on hold and expanding ICE’s budget to build “quarantine capabilities.” Advocacy groups have called for the release of detainees.

Headline: [Rohingya, UN Step Up Efforts to Get Malaysia Refugees Screened for Virus](#)

Source: New York Times

Date: March 20, 2020

Notes: UNHCR and Rohingya community leaders are increasing efforts to get refugees who attended a recent event to be tested for COVID-19 after cases were identified linked to that event. Advocates are concerned that refugees may fear coming forward for testing.

Headline: [More than 600 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Africa](#)

Source: WHO

Date: March 19, 2020

Notes: More than 600 cases of COVID-19 have been identified in Africa in 34 countries, including twelve countries that are experiencing community transmission. WHO Has been supporting governments by providing test kits, training lab technicians, strengthening surveillance, and guiding countries on developing call-centres and hotlines.

Headline: [World Bank, IFC look to quickly deploy COVID-19 funds](#)

Source: Devex

Date: March 20, 2020

Notes: The World Bank is expected to approve the first round of funding through a fast track facility within the next week. Initial support is focused on the most vulnerable countries that have been identified through WHO risk and vulnerability assessments.

Headline: [Covid-19 lockdown turns Qatar's largest migrant camp into 'virtual prison'](#)

Source: The Guardian

Date: March 20, 2020

Notes: Qatar's largest labor camp is under total lockdown with police guarding the perimeter, leaving thousands of workers trapped in over-crowded camps. The government has previously announced hundreds of cases among "expatriate workers."

Headline: [Gender implications of COVID-19 Outbreaks in Development and Humanitarian Settings](#)

Source: CARE

Date: March 17, 2020

Notes: CARE has recently issued a report outlining some gendered implications of COVID-19 in humanitarian and development settings.

Headline: [Refugee Chefs to Cook Free Meals for Healthcare Workers and Local Community](#)

Source: Thrillist

Date: March 17, 2020

Notes: Mera Kitchen Collective, based in Baltimore, Maryland and led by refugee chefs, is cooking and delivering free meals for 1,400 people who need them, including healthcare workers and out-of-work parents, demonstrating one of the many ways that refugees and migrants have contributed to the COVID-19 response.

Compiled by Sarah Guyer

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Headline: [Canada To Turn Back Asylum Seekers In Effort To Stop Coronavirus Spread](#)

Source: NPR

Date: March 20, 2020

Notes: Canada will now turn back all asylum seekers attempting to cross the border at unofficial entry points due to concerns about COVID-19. More than 50,000 migrants and asylum seekers have used unofficial border crossings into Canada since 2017. Justin Trudeau says the measure is temporary, "in keeping with Canadian values."

Headline: [Home Office releases 300 from detention centres amid Covid-19 pandemic](#)

Source: The Guardian

Date: March 21, 2020

Notes: Following legal action by advocacy agency Detention Action, the UK government released 300 people from immigration detention. The lawsuit by Detention Action and a vulnerable detainee made the case that the government was failing to protect the individuals in detention facilities from the dangers of COVID-19.

Headline: [Coronavirus: les migrants du parc Maximilien relogés dans un hôtel](#)

Source: LaLibre.be

Date: March 21, 2020

Notes: Migrants who were previously living in a Brussels park have been moved into a nearby hotel, in an agreement between the hotel owner and the Belgian government. This comes following a national lockdown related to COVID-19 and a previous police action to move the migrants out of the park.

Headline: [Million undocumented migrants could go hungry, say charities](#)

Source: The Guardian

Date: March 22, 2020

Notes: Agencies are warning of the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers whose claims have been rejected. A report from the Pew Research Center estimates that there could be around a million people in this group, who already have limited access to livelihoods activities and depend on assistance from agencies, which have closed due to the pandemic.

Headline: [Coronavirus | In Kerala, migrants at crossroads over COVID-19 fears](#)

Source: The Hindu

Date: March 23, 2020

Notes: COVID-19 is impacting migrant workers in India in multiple ways. First, many migrant workers have lost employment for the foreseeable future as major cities shut down. Second, as train cancellations are announced, there is growing panic among this population as they try to get back to their families before transportation is suspended. The National Health Mission has trained migrant link workers to disseminate information related to COVID-19 in the migrant community.

Headline: [Far right uses coronavirus to scapegoat refugees](#)

Source: Mail & Guardian

Date: March 22, 2020

Notes: This article provides a sweeping look at the ways that politicians in many countries are using anti-immigrant rhetoric across Europe and the US to discuss the COVID-19 pandemic and the dangers that this has for refugee and migrant populations.

Headline: [DOJ seeks new emergency powers amid coronavirus pandemic](#)

Source: Politico

Date: March 21, 2020

Notes: The US Justice Department has quietly asked Congress for the ability to ask chief judges to detain people indefinitely without trial during emergencies. The changes requested would also allow the US to block anyone with COVID-19 and anyone from countries on a presidential travel ban list from applying for asylum in the United States.

Headline: [Will Immigrants In America Find the Cure to Coronavirus?](#)

Source: The National Interest

Date: March 15, 2020

Notes: This article highlights the importance of immigrants to the American pharmaceutical industry, in the context of searching for a coronavirus vaccine. It highlights that the eight large companies who are working on the search for a vaccine consistently utilize foreign workers, specifically biochemists, biophysicists, chemists and other scientists.

Compiled by Christina Kay

Headline: [COVID-19: UN chief calls for global ceasefire to focus on ‘the true fight of our lives’](#)

Source: UN News

Date: March 23, 2020

Notes: UN Secretary-General António Guterres urged warring parties to enact an immediate global ceasefire to allow humanitarian workers to reach vulnerable populations.

Headline: [3 workers at facilities housing migrant kids in U.S. custody test positive for coronavirus](#)

Source: CBS News

Date: March 23, 2020

Notes: The U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement issued a statement that three staff members who work at two facilities in New York that care for unaccompanied migrant children have tested positive for COVID-19. Children housed in these facilities will not be released to sponsors until quarantines at the locations are lifted.

Headline: [‘We are sitting ducks for Covid 19’: asylum seekers write to PM after detainee tested in immigration detention](#)

Source: The Guardian

Date: March 23, 2020

Notes: Detainees in immigration detention centers across Australia have written a letter to Prime Minister Scott Morrison pleading to be released, stating they are unable to protect themselves in detention. Advocates in the country are calling for an immediate release of asylum seekers.

Headline: [Rohingya refugees need a coronavirus lifeline, not an internet ban](#)

Source: The New Humanitarian

Date: March 24, 2020

Notes: Mohammed Arfaat, a Rohingya refugee living in Cox’s Bazar, makes a request to policymakers for phone and internet access to combat rumors that are creating panic in the camps. Arfaat fears the impact of an outbreak in the crowded camps.

Headline: [Mogadishu’s refugees ‘waiting for death’ as Covid-19 reaches Somalia](#)

Source: The Guardian

Date: March 24, 2020

Notes: Refugees in Nabadoon camp outside Mogadishu fear the arrival of COVID-19, compounding existing concerns about their ability to access food, clean water, and basic healthcare. The article outlines concerns in other camp situations in sub-Saharan Africa. WHO is concerned about the significant increase in cases on the continent in recent days.

Headline: [Coronavirus: All activities to be suspended at Rohingya camps from Wednesday](#)

Source: Dhaka Tribune

Date: March 24, 2020

Notes: Bangladesh’s Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) announced that all activities, other than those pertaining to food and health, will be suspended beginning on Wednesday. Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) reported a lack of testing facilities, ICU beds, and skilled medical professionals.

Headline: [Shattered by Years of War, Syria Braces for Coronavirus Spread](#)

Source: The New York Times

Date: March 23, 2020

Notes: The Syrian government announced the first case of COVID-19 on Sunday. While no cases have been confirmed in the northwest, patients have been showing possible signs for weeks. WHO reports that

300 test kits should arrive to the northwest in the next few days. Advocates are concerned about reports that the government has told doctors not to disclose cases.

Headline: [Libya's refugees face being cut off from aid due to coronavirus](#)

Source: The Guardian

Date: March 24, 2020

Notes: UNHCR announced last week that it would suspend some activities in Libya and will stop making visits to detention centers until staff are given PPE. This weekend, approximately 200 refugees and migrants were released from Tripoli's Sabaa detention center.

Headline: [As White House Contemplates Coronavirus Asylum Ban, Hate Groups Urge Trump to Seize the Moment](#)

Source: Southern Poverty Law Center

Date: March 23, 2020

Notes: SPLC outlines concerns that the Trump Administration's efforts to block asylum seekers amid the COVID-19 pandemic has been pushed by anti-immigrant and hate groups.

Headline: [Pelosi Coronavirus Plan Gives \\$300M in Taxpayer Money to Foreign Refugees](#)

Source: Breitbart

Date: March 23, 2020

Notes: The article published by the conservative news outlet reports that Speaker Pelosi's plan for COVID-19 response includes "millions in American taxpayer funding to refugees living overseas" and compares this to funding provided to runaway and homeless youth and veterans.

Compiled by Sarah Guyer

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Headline: [COVID-19 Threatens South Sudan's At-Risk Populations](#)

Source: Human Rights Watch

Date: March 24, 2020

Notes: South Sudan has implemented measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 including bans on flights and mass gatherings as well as mandatory quarantines. HRW raises concerns about the potential of these measures to disrupt humanitarian relief efforts or supply chains, as well as concerns about detained and displaced populations in South Sudan.

Headline: [Immigrant Detention Center Employee Tests Positive For COVID-19](#)

Source: Houston Public Media

Date: March 24, 2020

Notes: An employee at an ICE detention facility in Conroe, Texas has tested positive for COVID-19. The facility holds 833 men and women. Advocates state that this raises fears of a potential outbreak among the detained population, especially considering known issues with limited access to hygiene measures and healthcare in the facilities.

Headline: [Venezuela's broken health system is uniquely vulnerable to coronavirus. Neighbors are afraid the country will hemorrhage infected migrants.](#)

Source: Washington Post

Date: March 20, 2020

Notes: This article highlights the inability of Venezuelan health facilities to respond to the COVID-19 crisis due to a lack of supplies and equipment. It also focuses on anti-immigrant rhetoric that is being used by neighboring countries to close their borders due to fears of migrants spreading COVID-19 while neglecting to discuss providing protections for migrants as a way to protect everyone.

Headline: [Thai coronavirus lockdown leaves migrant workers exposed](#)

Source: Reuters

Date: March 23, 2020

Notes: Construction is exempted from Thailand's lockdown to contain COVID-19 spread, and migrants make up most of the construction workforce in the nation. Migrants' rights activists are criticizing the lack of protection provided to these construction laborers, saying it puts migrants at risk during the outbreak.

Headline: [Greece Frets Turkey Will Send COVID-19 Carriers, Terrorists in Migrant Ships](#)

Source: The National Herald

Date: March 25, 2020

Notes: Turkey is using asylum seekers and migrants as political tools in an attempt to put pressure on the EU. This article highlights the ways that COVID-19 is intersecting with anti-immigrant rhetoric as it quotes Greek fears that new arrivals from Turkey might include COVID-19 carriers.

Headline: [U.S. postpones court hearings for asylum-seekers in Mexico over coronavirus](#)

Source: CBS News

Date: March 23, 2020

Notes: “Citing the global response to the coronavirus pandemic, the Trump administration on Monday moved to postpone all court hearings for the thousands of asylum-seekers it has returned to Mexico ... While waiting months for their hearings, many asylum-seekers have been living in squalid conditions inside camps and shelters located in crime-ridden Mexican border cities like Matamoros, Tamaulipas, a state the U.S government warns Americans not to visit because of rampant violence.”

Headline: [Assisting migrants at risk as coronavirus strikes Italy](#)

Source: Anadolu Agency

Date: March 24, 2020

Notes: New migrant arrivals to Italy have dropped in recent days, but conditions in reception centers and informal settlements housing migrants in Italy are deteriorating, raising concerns about COVID-19. NGOs have provided resources that were available to them and are calling for government assistance in these settings. The article notes that most migrants arriving in Italy are coming from Libya, where conditions are so bad that even facing the Italian COVID-19 outbreak seems better than remaining in Libya.

Headline: [UNHCR: Refugees suspected of Covid-19 told to seek medical treatment](#)

Source: MalayMail

Date: March 24, 2020

Notes: The Malaysian government has announced that refugee communities and asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR will be tested for free in Malaysian public hospitals if they are suspected of Covid-19. It also stated that those who are undocumented or have expired documents will not be arrested when approaching medical facilities.

Compiled by Christina Kay

Headline: [COVID-19 Restrictions Preventing Thousands from Accessing Lifesaving Aid](#)

Source: Norwegian Refugee Council

Date: March 25, 2020

Notes: Jan Egeland, Secretary-General of the NRC, calls for countries to consider the delivery of humanitarian aid to be essential services alongside medical staff, food retailers, and pharmaceuticals. Aid workers are unable to scale-up services because of lockdowns, concerning advocates vulnerable communities will be at greater risk. Border closures and in-country restrictions to limit the spread of COVID-19 are preventing aid from reaching displaced and refugee communities.

Headline: [Commissioner Calls for Release of Immigration Detainees While COVID-19 Crisis Continues](#)

Source: Council of Europe – Commissioner for Human Rights

Date: March 26, 2020

Notes: The Commissioner for Human Rights from the Council of Europe calls on all member states to reevaluate detention of asylum seekers and irregular migrants, provide appropriate accommodations and basic services for freed detainees, and refrain from issuing new detention orders and forcibly returning rejected persons.

Headline: [COVID-19 Spread Sparks Anti-Foreigner, Anti-Diaspora Sentiment in Cameroon](#)

Source: Voa News

Date: March 25, 2020

Notes: Officials have reported acts of violence and harassment against passengers recently arrived on an Air France flight last week. The U.S. Embassy in Yaounde has reported a rise in harassment online and in person, with acts of violence against expats and visitors from the Cameroonian diaspora. A quote from an interviewee included misinformation about the spread of COVID by the U.S. or China for commercial purposes and economic gain.

Headline: [Mexico Suspends Refugee Requests as Coronavirus Cases Climb to 405](#)

Source: Reuters

Date: March 24, 2020

Notes: Starting Tuesday, Mexico has stopped processing asylum requests. This occurs alongside other measures taken by the U.S. and Canada to limit access to asylum, including turning back asylum seekers who present at ports of entry. COMAR, Mexico's refugee agency, said they will resume April 20th. The Foreign Ministry is also placing a hold on issuing passports from March 27th to April 19th.

Headline: [Asylum Seekers in Israel Forced to Fend for Themselves During Coronavirus Crisis](#)

Source: Haaretz

Date: March 24, 2020

Notes: Asylum seekers in Israel are particularly vulnerable during the COVID-19 crisis. Many have lost their jobs as restaurants and hotels close down and they do not have access to unemployment benefits, national health insurance, or other parts of the social safety net. Asylum seekers seeking information from the Ministry of Health's informational hotline about COVID-19 found that they were unable to access the resource because they needed to enter an identity number, which they did not have.

Headline: [Migrants say COVID-19 fears led to disturbance in Texas immigration detention center](#)

Source: Texas Tribune

Date: March 25, 2020

Notes: Fears related to COVID-19 led to a disturbance inside a Texas immigration detention center this week. Detainees described concerns related to overcrowded conditions, a lack of cleaning supplies, and insufficient screening measures for new arrivals as reasons for the action, where dozens of detainees demanded to be released. ICE officials responded to this disturbance with the use of force and pepper spray.

Headline: [Uganda has announced measures to suspend the reception of new refugees and asylum seekers for the next 30 days, as confirmed cases of covid-19 reached 14 in the East African Country](#)

Source: The New Humanitarian

Date: March 25, 2020

Notes: Uganda will be closing transit and reception centers immediately, while flights have been grounded and borders sealed since Sunday. "Under emergency situations, refugee law and practice can be suspended," Dismas Nkunda, executive director of Atrocities Watch Africa, told The New Humanitarian. "But, of course, this will greatly affect those seeking asylum, which goes against the policy and practice of Uganda."

Headline: [Live Blog: Refugees in the COVID-19 Crisis](#)

Source: UNHCR

Date: March 26, 2020

Notes: Compiled tweets by global UNHCR staff, demonstrating the varying humanitarian responses to and in spite of COVID-19. This includes uplifting images and messages from aid workers and supporters.

Resources:

IASC GBV Guidelines - [COVID-19 Resources to Address Gender-Based Violence Risks](#)

Compiled by Rocio Rodriguez Casquete

Headline: [The Third Wave: Preparing for COVID-9 in a Crisis](#)

Source: The New Humanitarian

Date: March 26, 2020

Notes: Summary of a panel led by Ben Parker, with Jeremy Konyndyk, Virginie Lefevre, Suze van Meegan, and Karl Blanchet. Conversation covered the “Third Wave” impacts on resource-poor nations, responding to COVID while maintaining essential operations,

Headline: [The U.S. Is Now Sending Migrant Children Back to their Home Countries.](#)

Source: New York Times

Date: March 26, 2020

Notes: Unaccompanied minors from Central America arriving to the U.S. border are being returned to their home countries without due legal processes. This is a change from prior statement by Customs and Border Protection that unaccompanied minors would be exempted from the new policy and admitted to shelters run by the department of Health and Human Services.

Headline: [Asylum Seekers and Migrants not Respecting Lockdown](#)

Source: Brietbart News

Date: March 26, 2020

Notes: Example of sensational reporting by known right-wing news media outlet. Article reports on concerns by French and German leaders on ignored lockdown orders by immigrant communities, fearing violent backlash if enforced. Also reports on attack in Italy by an immigrant.

Headline: [3 Migrant Children in U.S. Custody Test Positive for Virus](#)

Source: New York Times

Date: March 26, 2020

Notes: The Office of Refugee Resettlement issued a statement that three immigrant children in U.S. custody at a New York facility have tested positive. Five staff members and a contractor at three separate facilities in NY have also tested positive. This follows outcries from immigrant advocates for immigrants to be released from government custody.

Headline: [Unprepared for the Worst: World’s Most Vulnerable Brace for Virus](#)

Source: New York Times

Date: March 26, 2020

Notes: “As wealthy countries like the United States and Italy struggle with mass outbreaks of the coronavirus, international health experts and aid workers are increasingly worried that the virus could ravage the world’s most vulnerable people: the tens of millions forced from their homes by violent conflict.”

Headline: [COVID-19: Bangladesh Enforces Lockdown in Rohingya Refugee Camps](#)

Source: Andalou

Date: March 26, 2020

Notes: Bangladesh authorities have begun lockdown order of all 34 Rohingya refugee resettlements. Rohingya rights activists have called for full restoration of internet service in Rohingya camps so information can be accessed readily.

Headline: [Struggling to Save Peace Talks, Afghanistan Now Must Deal with Refugee Return](#)

Source: VOA

Date: March 26, 2020

Notes: According to the Afghanistan’s Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, Afghan refugees living in Pakistan and Iran are voluntarily repatriating. Over 150,000 Afghan refugees have returned from Iran since February. Many are voluntarily returnees due to fear of COVID-19 in Iran.

Headline: [Coronavirus Slowing Desert Locust Response Amid New Swarms](#)

Source: Bloomberg Green

Date: March 22, 2020

Notes: Effective measures to combat infestation of locusts, such as spraying pesticides, are at a standstill as deliveries are delayed and the cost of pesticides and equipment rise. A locust outbreak in the Horn of Africa is already threatening food security and livelihoods.

Resources:

GBV AOR [Tools & Resources for Thematic Areas](#)

IASC GBV Guidelines - [COVID-19 Resources to Address Gender-Based Violence Risks](#)

Relief Web - [Updates](#)

Compiled by Rocio Rodriguez Casquete

Headline: [Bosnia: Decision to Confine Thousands Of Migrants Into Camp Inhumane and Puts Lives At Risk](#)

Source: Amnesty International

Date: March 27, 2020

Notes: Amnesty Europe Deputy Director Massimo Moratti has reported that migrants living in Una-San Canton in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been forcefully transferred and confined to a tent camp in Lipa. “Confining people in potentially harmful conditions cannot be justified on the grounds of public health. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the authorities in Bosnia have a responsibility to address the needs of all marginalised groups and ensure humane living conditions... for all people, including migrants and asylum-seekers.”

Headline: [Calais Refugees Aim to Reach UK to Escape Coronavirus Lockdown](#)

Source: The Guardian

Date: March 29, 2020

Notes: Buses will be sent to camps in Calais in Dunkirk Tuesday to transfer refugees to housing. There are around 2,100 refugees who would be entered into coronavirus lockdown. Distrust of the police and close-quartered housing is leading to refugees to make plans to cross the English Channel to avoid ‘voluntary’ accommodation. NGO presence at the camps have lessened, with shortage of food, water, and showers being reported. At this moment, no cases of COVID-19 have been reported.

Headline: [What Does a COVID-19 Response Look Like with Limited Water?](#)

Source: DevEx

Date: March 27, 2020

Notes: A review of various approaches to scaling up WASH programming, and modifications in communities with limited sources of water.

Headline: [Portugal to Treat Migrants as Residents During Coronavirus Crisis](#)

Source: Reuters

Date: March 28, 2020

Notes: Migrants and asylum seeker with pending applications for residency in Portugal will be granted citizenship rights from March 30th until July 1st. This is to ensure access to public and healthcare services during the outbreak.

Headline: [India's Coronavirus Lockdown Leaves Vast Numbers Stranded and Hungry](#)

Source: March 29, 2020

Date: New York Times

Notes: Migrant laborers have been protesting the lockdown in India, with the closure of business leaving them jobless and homeless. Conflicting messages and actions by individual states and the central government of India, has led to frustration and violence by police. Migrants who lived and ate at their work sites are experiencing safety and food insecurity, and vulnerable to police violence when gathering at food distributions. It is unclear how a \$22.5 billion relief package for those made unemployed by the lockdown will reach migrant workers who may not be registered in national labor databases or a home address.

Headline: [Canada Could Face Legal Trouble Over Refugee Deportations Amid COVID-19 Crisis: Advocates](#)

Source: Coast Mountain News

Date: March 29, 2020

Notes: Advocates say Canada may find legal liability if asylum seekers turned away at the Canadian border are deported by the U.S. A 30-day agreement with Canada and the U.S. includes turning away any migrants seeking asylum.

Headline: [Con o Sin Pandemia: a los Migrantes Solo les Queda el Monte](#)

Source: El Pais

Date: March 28, 2020

Notes: Opinion piece by a journalist on the treatment of asylum seekers at the border crossing between Guatemala and Mexico. The writer writes on the fears of Central American asylum seekers who left their countries before borders closed, to avoid being trapped with perpetrators. "To quarantine is not a priority when someone has promised you death."

Headline: [Migrant Workers in Maldives at Added Risk from COVID-19](#)

Source: Human Rights Watch

Date: March 27, 2020

Notes: There is concern that two of the five active cases in the Maldives are migrants workers. They are a community at risk due to congested shared quarters and work that does not make social distancing possible. Further challenges include limited or no access to health insurance, due to employer abuse.

Headline: [Coronavirus Lockdown Leaves Migrant Workers Stranded in Thailand](#)

Source: AlJazeera

Date: March 29, 2020

Notes: Migrant laborers in Thailand were met with challenges after being swiftly fired from jobs whose functions halted due to the economic slowdown. According to the IOM, between four and five million migrant workers from neighboring countries were living in Thailand before the lockdown, with many undocumented. Border closures have forced many to stay in Thailand, while those who migrate irregularly are at risk of exploitation because of legal status. The Thai government is offering limited assistance, which are not regularly afforded to migrant workers.

Resources:

IASC - [Interim Guidance COVID-19 Response](#)

Compiled by Rocio Rodriguez Casquete

Headline: [A Desperate Scramble to Prevent the Pandemic at a U.S.- Mexico Border Camp](#)

Source: Foreign Policy

Date: March 30, 2020

Notes: Groups such as Global Response Management are working to prepare for the arrival of the coronavirus in the makeshift encampment for asylum-seekers in Matamoros. Although there are no confirmed cases currently, an outbreak would be disastrous in the camp where social distancing is impossible and healthcare is inaccessible.

Headline: [IASC Interim Guidance on COVID-19: Focus on Persons Deprived of Their Liberty \(developed by OHCHR and WHO\)](#)

Source: Inter-Agency Standing Committee

Date: March 27, 2020

Notes: On March 27th, the IASC published interim guidance on issues specific to the health of persons deprived of their liberty, including those in immigration detention centers.

Headline: [Libya: Detainees at Risk of Coronavirus Spread](#)

Source: Human Rights Watch

Date: March 29, 2020

Notes: Human Rights Watch urges the reduction of individuals in detention in Libya, specifically those who are unjustly and arbitrarily detained, children, low-level and nonviolent offenders, older adults, people with disabilities, people with pre-existing conditions, and children and wives of suspected Islamic State fighters, among others. The first three cases have been confirmed in the country. The health system has been stressed by intermittent armed conflicts since 2011.

Headline: [Release inmates in Yemen to avert nationwide coronavirus outbreak, experts urge](#)

Source: UN News

Date: March 30, 2020

Notes: The Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen issued a statement urging all parties in the conflict in Yemen to release detainees and political prisoners to mitigate the risk of a COVID-19 outbreak.

Headline: [Coronavirus in crisis-hit Burkina Faso: Healthcare centres close as cases rise](#)

Source: The New Humanitarian

Date: March 30, 2020

Notes: The growing outbreak of COVID-19 cases in the Burkina Faso – at 222 cases with 12 deaths on March 30 – is particularly concerning given the weakened health system in the country following periods of armed violence. There is currently only one hospital with 500 beds and one small clinic designated to treat COVID-19 patients.

Headline: [These immigrant doctors want to help the US fight coronavirus, but they're stuck on the sidelines](#)

Source: CNN

Date: March 30, 2020

Notes: Immigrants in the United States who have medical training in their countries of origin face barriers to practicing in the United States. Some of these barriers are being reevaluated in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Headline: [COVID-19: Migrant workers sprayed with disinfectant in Uttar Pradesh](#)

Source: Bangalore Mirror

Date: March 30, 2020

Notes: Migrants in Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh were sprayed with a disinfection chemical by officials who told them to wait for buses and food as they tried to return to their homes. Lav Aggarwal, Joint Secretary, Health Ministry has said that this conducted by a group of over-zealous officials.

Headline: [Issue Brief: COVID-19 and the Displaced: Addressing the Threat of the Novel Coronavirus in Humanitarian Emergencies](#)

Source: Refugees International

Date: March 30, 2020

Notes: The issue brief by Refugees International outlines key areas of vulnerability for displaced populations, describes the situation in key contexts, and provides key recommendations for the response.

Headline: [Making America sick again: How anti-immigrant measures will worsen the coronavirus pandemic](#)

Source: New York Daily News

Date: March 30, 2020

Notes: In this opinion piece, Samari argues that the Trump Administration's immigration policies, such as the expansion of the public charge rule and harsh enforcement policies, will exacerbate the spread of COVID-19 in the United States.

Headline: [Border Wall Work in Arizona Speeds Up, Igniting Contagion Fears](#)

Source: New York Times

Date: March 31, 2020

Notes: Continued rapid construction of the border wall in Arizona, which the Trump Administration contends will help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the United States from Mexico, is prompting fears that the influx of workers will increase transmission in border towns.

Headline: [Syrian refugees aid vulnerable Swiss amid COVID-19 outbreak](#)

Source: UNHCR

Date: March 26, 2020

Notes: Shadi Shhadeh, a Syrian refugee living in Switzerland, has mobilized a network of volunteers to shop and run errands for their neighbors at high risk in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Compiled by Sarah Guyer