

Headline: [COVID-19 is largely an afterthought in camps hosting Ethiopian refugees](#)

Source: Devex

Date: February 2, 2021

Notes: “Though there have only been a handful of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the refugee camps of Tunaydbah and Um Rakuba — which are currently hosting over 60,000 people who have fled violence in northern Ethiopia, aid workers believe that cases are going undetected. Humanitarian actors at the camps are overwhelmed with the needs of the constant influx of people arriving, and have limited funding. COVID-19 is just one of many challenges burdening the camps, and in many ways, remains deprioritized.”

Headline: [Dozens of countries have no plan to vaccinate refugees. That could leave everyone at risk.](#)

Source: The Washington Post

Date: February 1, 2021

Notes: “Of 133 countries which UNHCR, the United Nation’s refugee agency, has information on, 81 have finalized their vaccination strategies and only 54 have included explicit provisions to cover populations of concern such as refugees, asylum seekers and stateless and internally displaced people.” Advocates warn that failing to include these populations “ultimately undermines a nation’s efforts to stop the coronavirus.”

Related: [Ensuring Equitable Covid-19 Vaccine Distribution in South Africa](#)

Headline: [‘We felt like we were animals’: asylum seekers describe life in UK barracks](#)

Source: The Guardian

Date: February 2, 2021

Notes: In September, barracks with capacity to house 600 people were handed over from the UK Ministry of Defence to the Home Office to be used as accommodation for asylum seekers. Residents of the barracks describe poor conditions, fear, uncertainty, and lack of support. The barracks “have been criticised for crowded conditions, limited access to healthcare and legal advice and, more recently, a significant Covid-19 outbreak.”

Headline: [‘I need mama, I need school’, migrant child stuck in Bosnia appeals to EU](#)

Source: Reuters

Date: February 2, 2021

Notes: “More than 8,000 migrants from Asia, the Middle East and North Africa are stuck in Bosnia, which since early 2018 has become a transit route for those aiming to reach wealthier EU states.” However, “the coronavirus pandemic has seen the EU seal its borders, leaving the migrants with little hope of entering and requesting asylum.” Migrants living in Bosnia describe lacking adequate accommodations, struggling with prolonged separation from family members, and staying indoors due to fear of abuse and attacks by local people and police.

Headline: [A Honduran Migrant Caravan Collides with the U.S. “Vertical Border” in Guatemala](#)

Source: The Intercept

Date: February 2, 2021

Notes: Militarized crackdowns on migrant caravans have intensified “amid U.S. pressure on Mexico and Central American countries to stop migrants and asylum-seekers long before they reach the U.S. southern border.” The COVID-19 pandemic has emerged as the latest justification for these crackdowns. “When a large Honduran migrant caravan set out for the U.S. in October 2020, Guatemala decreed a ‘state of prevention,’ [...] arguing that the caravan threatened public health and national security.”

Headline: [Biden issues new immigration orders, while signaling cautious approach](#)

Source: The Washington Post

Date: February 2, 2021

Notes: “President Biden signed executive actions Tuesday ordering the review and potential reversal of the Trump administration’s deterrent policies along the Mexico border and the barriers they created to legal immigration.” The orders “will ‘review,’ though not cancel, the Migrant Protection Protocols, also known as the ‘Remain in Mexico’ program.” They “leave intact, pending review, the emergency pandemic measure known as Title 42 that allows border authorities to rapidly ‘expel’ back to Mexico those who cross the border illegally.”

Related: [Opinion: It’s good Biden is ending for-profit federal prisons. Detained immigrants deserve no less.](#)

Headline: [To Avoid an Outbreak, China Cancels Lunar New Year for Millions of Migrants](#)

Source: The New York Times

Date: January 28, 2021

Notes: “China has added restrictions, offered incentives and appealed to a sense of filial and national responsibility” in an effort to prevent some 300 million migrant workers from traveling home for the new year. “The rollout of the rules has drawn widespread criticism in China, with many people calling the approach unfair to migrant workers, who have long been treated as second-class citizens under China’s strict household registration system.”

Related: [So near, yet so far: Tet separation leaves migrants in tears](#)

Headline: [The COVID-19 Pandemic Highlights the Need for Sustainable Reintegration Strategies for Returning Migrants’ Communities and Countries](#)

Source: Migration Policy Institute

Date: February 3, 2021

Notes: As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded, “millions of migrants were stranded in the countries where they work and live, and countless others were expelled or returned voluntarily to their countries of origin.” A new policy brief from the Migration Policy Institute examines these situations and “considers how to strengthen return infrastructure and partnerships between countries of origin and destination.”

Related: [Cambodian Migrant Workers Caught Between Thai COVID-19 Outbreak and Joblessness at Home](#)

Headline: [Data reveals impact of COVID-19 on livelihoods and futures](#)

Source: UNHCR

Date: February 2, 2021

Notes: A new data visualization project from UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, collates statistics from multiple sources to better illustrate the devastating impact of COVID-19 on refugees, the internally displaced and the stateless in terms of jobs, incomes, food security, education, protection and inclusion.

Headline: [COVID-19 was a big test for UN migration initiatives. Did they succeed?](#)

Source: Open Democracy

Date: February 2, 2021

Notes: “Migrants are at a ‘triple loss’ by the pandemic—not only are their jobs more precarious, their journeys more perilous, but they also face twice the risk of contracting the virus than non-migrant populations.” In part, this is because “many of the lockdowns around the world are local,” and “a global governance solution like the GCM [Global Compact for Migration] is unable to pilot these decentralised dynamics.”

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: [Migration through Panama resumes after pandemic lockdown](#)

Source: Associated Press

Date: February 11, 2021

Notes: “After nearly a year stalled in migrant camps at the edge of the jungle, hundreds of migrants have begun to move across Panama and into neighboring Costa Rica in recent weeks. Panama closed its borders last March to try to slow the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly 2,000 migrants suddenly found their years-long journey toward the United States suspended. But on Jan. 29, Panama announced it was reopening its land borders, setting off a surge of migration through the dense jungle covering the Colombia-Panama border.”

Headline: [US to end deals to send asylum seekers back to Central America](#)

Source: Al Jazeera

Date: February 6, 2021

Notes: “The United States has moved to end agreements with three Central American nations under which former President Donald Trump’s administration intended to send migrants and asylum seekers who arrived at the US border back to those countries. In a statement on Saturday, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said President Joe Biden’s administration is suspending the accords with the governments of Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, effective immediately.”

Related: [US to turn back ‘vast majority’ of migrants at Mexico border](#)

Headline: [Malaysia offers COVID-19 vaccinations to foreign residents, undocumented migrants](#)

Source: Reuters

Date: February 11, 2021

Notes: Authors report that “Malaysia will extend its free COVID-19 vaccination programme to all foreigners residing in the country, including students, refugees and undocumented migrants... The Southeast Asian country is expected to begin its vaccine rollout at the end of this month, aiming to cover at least 80% of its 32 million population within a year.” Authos report that priority will be given to Malaysians, with the vaccination schedule for foreigners to be announced at a later date.

Headline: [All migrants living in UK eligible for COVID-19 vaccine](#)

Source: Reuters

Date: February 8, 2021

Notes: “Migrants living in Britain will be eligible to receive COVID-19 vaccines regardless of whether they have the legal right to live and work in the country, the government said on Monday, adding that getting the shot would not trigger immigration checks.” Authors also document that “Those registered with a GP (General Practitioner) are being contacted at the earliest opportunity and we are working closely with partners and external organizations to contact those who are not registered with a GP to ensure they are also offered the vaccine.”

Headline: [UNHCR and IOM welcome Colombia’s decision to regularize Venezuelan refugees and migrants](#)

Source: UNHCR

Date: February 8, 2021

Notes: UNHCR and IOM praise Colombia’s initiative to provide ten-year temporary protection status to Venezuelans in the country. In a press release, the organizations and UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi state that “this bold humanitarian gesture serves as an example for the region and the rest of the world. It is a life-changing gesture for the 1.7 million displaced Venezuelans who will now benefit from added protection, security and stability while they are away from home.”

Related: [Aid groups praise Colombia for Venezuelan migrant move, say more help needed](#)

Headline: [Tel Aviv gives foreign nationals, asylum seekers COVID shots](#)

Source: ABC News

Date: February 9, 2021

Notes: “Health authorities in Israel's Tel Aviv have started dispensing COVID-19 vaccines to foreign nationals and asylum seekers as part of an initiative to inoculate the city's foreign population... The vaccination campaign has won praise internationally for its quick pace, but also drawn criticism for not including Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank and the blockaded Gaza Strip. The World Health Organization has raised concerns about the inequity, and rights groups say Israel has the obligation as an occupying power to vaccinate Palestinians.”

Compiled by Sabeen Rokerya

Headline: [Palestinian refugees in Lebanon three times more likely to die with COVID-19](#)

Source: Reuters

Date: February 16, 2021

Notes: “Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are three times more likely to die with COVID-19 than the population as a whole, according to U.N. figures that highlight the pandemic’s outsized impact on the community. [...] In the year since Lebanon registered its first case, about 5,800 have been infected with the coronavirus and about 200 of them have died, said a spokeswoman for the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA.”

Related News: [Lebanon begins vaccinations with sceptics a major hurdle](#) – Al Jazeera

Headline: [Zaatari camp inaugurates world's first COVID-19 vaccine clinic for refugees](#)

Source: Roya News

Date: February 15, 2021

Notes: “The clinic, which was opened in partnership with the Jordanian Ministry of Health and UNHCR, hopes to vaccinate 50 refugees per day, in line with all safety and health protocols set by the Ministry of Health. While the Jordanian vaccine campaign has included refugees since its inception, refugees at Zaatari camp were previously bussed to neighboring Mafraq to receive their vaccines. Officials hope having the clinic on the grounds will make for a more seamless process.”

Related Article: [Vaccinating refugees spurs a global dilemma](#) – Politico

Headline: [Even ‘illegal migrants’ in Iran will get COVID-19 vaccine](#)

Source: Tehran Times

Date: February 12, 2021

Notes: “‘All over the world, as soon as illegal migrants are identified, they are detained and arrested. But, in Iran, we will inject the coronavirus vaccine even to them,’ ILNA quoted Jahanpour as saying. A majority of Afghan migrants residing in Iran are undocumented, he noted. Iran is hosting about one million documented foreign nationals, and perhaps another one million are illegally living in the country, deputy minister of interior has said.”

Headline: [Venezuelan Refugees’ Experience Amid COVID-19](#)

Source: Borgen Magazine

Date: February 13, 2021

Notes: “Venezuelans have endured the largest refugee crisis in recent years, with nearly five million people fleeing from the country. However, amid the ongoing novel coronavirus crisis, approximately 130,000 Venezuelan refugees have attempted to return home to Venezuela due to worsening conditions in their new host countries. Venezuelan returnee facilities are overcrowded and face limited food, water and access to medical care. These conditions are likely to promote the spread of the virus. Protesters against the poor living conditions have reportedly been jailed, a move which has further accelerated the pandemic’s growth.”

Headline: [Border agency reports spike of nearly 6,000 immigrant children crossing into US alone](#)

Source: The Guardian

Date: February 15, 2021

Notes: “The surge is low compared to past years, but Covid-19 has reduced housing capacity, necessitating use of a controversial influx facility. US Customs and Border Protection encountered 5,871 kids at the south-west border without a parent or legal guardian last month, the largest influx yet since the start of the public health crisis in early 2020.”

Related News: [The Harrowing Journeys To Safety Of Asylum-Seekers During A Pandemic](#) – NPR

Related Commentary: [More Action is Needed to End Family Separations and Protect Children at the Border](#) – Human Rights Watch

Headline: [Ottawa immigrants more impacted by COVID-19](#)

Source: CIC News

Date: February 15, 2021

Notes: “Immigrants and racialized communities in Ottawa are at a higher risk of exposure to COVID-19, according to a new report. [[The report](#)] was based on a virtual community dialogue event hosted by The Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership (OLIP) and funded in part by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).”

Headline: [One year of COVID-19: Vaccines bring hope, but Africa must be included](#)

Source: Africa News

Date: February 12, 2021

Notes: “It is a moral imperative that Africa’s access to needed vaccines is drastically improved, but also that COVID vaccination campaigns do not come at the cost of other key health concerns. Vaccination programs for other diseases must continue. The fast spread of the 501Y.V2 variant underscores a now-common phrase: No one is safe until everyone is safe. Given the global character of the pandemic, equitable access to its vaccine today is a critical step towards more equitable access to vaccines more generally.”

Headline: [Venezuelans in Colombia, rapes in Tigray, and Ebola \(again\) in Congo: The Cheat Sheet](#)

Source: The New Humanitarian

Date: February 12, 2021

Notes: This article reviews major migration news, including discussing vaccinations for Venezuelans living in Colombia and addressing the impacts of COVID-19 variants in vaccine access for migrant populations.

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Compiled by Katherine McCann

Headline: [IOM: COVID-19 Leads to 73% Drop in Migration from Horn of Africa to Gulf Countries](#)

Source: IOM

Date: February 23, 2021

Notes: New data from IOM “confirms a nearly three-fourths decline in migration from the East and Horn of Africa regions towards Gulf Council Countries during 2020.” The drop follows years of high levels of African migration through Yemen to the Gulf of Arabia. Despite fewer arrivals – in part due to COVID-19 travel restrictions – risks to migrants increased with more detention, exploitation and forced transfers.

Headline: [Opinion: Colombia’s treatment of Venezuelan refugees is a global model](#)

Source: Financial Times

Date: February 24, 2021

Notes: “The decision this month by Iván Duque, president of Colombia, that his government will grant temporary protection status to almost 2 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants could turn the tide on one of the biggest crises of its kind in recent history.” The decision “opens the door to Covid-19 vaccination plans” and “lets [refugees] contribute to Colombia’s post-pandemic economic recovery.”

Related: [Venezuelan migrants face higher risk of pandemic eviction](#)

Headline: [Countries Are Ramping Up Vaccinations. What About Refugees?](#)

Source: Foreign Policy

Date: February 19, 2021

Notes: “In the quest for herd immunity, experts say including refugees in national immunization efforts is critical to ending the pandemic. Yet refugees, most of whom have fled conflict or persecution in their home countries, are missing from more than one-third of countries’ national vaccine plans.”

Related: [Refugees and undocumented migrants must be vaccinated, NGOs warn](#)

Related: [UNHCR’s Global COVID-19 Needs \(February 2021\)](#)

Headline: [Asylum hotels: 'Covid, fights and abuse' at London centres](#)

Source: BBC News

Date: February 20, 2021

Notes: In response to the coronavirus pandemic, UK officials moved asylum seekers to hotels while they waited for their applications to be considered. Asylum seekers report being locked in their rooms by hotel management and being subjected to COVID-19 outbreaks, insufficient amounts of food, and other abuses.

Headline: [More child migrants are arriving alone in Spain's holiday islands than ever before. This is what happens to them](#)

Source: CNN

Date: February 23, 2021

Notes: Migrant arrivals in Spain’s Canary Islands have increased, in part due to disruptions to other migration routes during the Covid-19 pandemic. According to government data, of the 23,000 migrants who arrived in 2020, more than 2,600 of them were unaccompanied minors. Some families are taking part in a program run by the local government and a non-profit to offer foster care for migrant children.

Headline: [Applications for asylum in Europe drop sharply amid pandemic](#)

Source: AP News

Date: February 18, 2021

Notes: “Applications for asylum in the European Union dropped by more than 30% in 2020 compared to the previous year, reaching their lowest level since 2013, according to the bloc’s asylum agency.” The decrease is mainly attributed to travel restrictions put in place during the coronavirus pandemic.

Headline: [Virus Variants Deliver Fresh Blow to Europe’s Open Borders](#)

Source: The New York Times

Date: February 21, 2021

Notes: “As new variants of the coronavirus spread rapidly, major countries are moving to reintroduce border controls, a practice that’s become Europe’s new normal during the pandemic and is chipping away at what was once the world’s largest area of free movement.” The closures continue the hardening of borders that was promoted by many European countries during the 2015-2016 arrival of more than one million refugees on the continent.

Related: [UK to push at G-7 for global standard on ‘vaccine passports’](#)

Headline: [Migrants on the move again in Mexico and Central America](#)

Source: AP News

Date: February 18, 2021

Notes: After a year of “pandemic-induced paralysis,” migrants in Latin America are on the move again. Service providers working along migration routes believe that “the flow north could return to the high levels seen in late 2018 and early 2019.” However, “the protective health measures imposed to slow the spread of COVID-19, including drastically reduced bedspace at shelters along the route, mean fewer safe spaces for migrants in transit.”

Headline: [Biden Takes On Trump’s Migrant Policies and Confusion Reigns at the Border](#)

Source: The New York Times

Date: February 23, 2021

Notes: “President Biden is trying to untangle an interlocking web of Trump-era border restrictions, leading for now to disparate treatment of migrants and rampant confusion” at the US-Mexico border. The administration has begun allowing migrants forced to wait in Mexico under the Migrant Protection Protocols to enter the US, but is keeping in place a pandemic-related rule that empowers authorities to continue turning migrants back at the border.

Related: [Joint Letter to HHS and CDC on Orders Authorizing Border Expulsions](#)

Related: [Asylum seekers waiting in Mexico rattled by delays to US entry](#)

Related: [US reopens Texas surge facility to hold immigrant teenagers](#)

Related: [UN agencies begin processing at Matamoros](#)

Headline: [Look to refugee schools for lessons on teaching kids after COVID, some experts say](#)

Source: The Seattle Times

Date: February 22, 2021

Notes: US educators working with refugee students say that children “who come to this country at a disadvantage in every way — recovering from trauma, struggling to parse a new language, behind academically — can catch up to their peers and even excel, if they’re given the right support. That bodes well for the millions of children who have been left behind by COVID-19.”

Related: [‘Intranet’ rescues education in Syrian refugee camps](#)

Related: [Class of COVID-19: Finding The Lost Children Of Migrant Farmworkers](#)

Headline: [Covid-19: Mass medic migration leaves Iran in pandemic panic](#)

Source: Middle East Eye

Date: February 17, 2021

Notes: Iran is experiencing “an exodus of its healthcare professionals, including doctors and nurses, who have chosen to take up jobs abroad rather than stay home amid the Covid-19 pandemic. Over the past 10 months, more than 3,000 healthcare workers have reportedly emigrated from Iran” to countries offering better financial and workplace incentives, “as well as respect for the healthcare profession.”

Related: [Venezuelan Migrants Providing Crucial Labor in South America](#)

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