



Refugees Digest 10 **November 2016**

Refugees, Migrants, Asylum Seekers and Displaced Persons

This year, 2016, marks 65 years since the Refugee Convention came into effect. Most estimates agree that there are at present some 65m refugees, one million for every year of the Conventions existence. The highest number of forcibly displaced persons since records began. On 19th September, the UN will host a summit on refugees in an attempt to revisit and update various protocols and best practices in shouldering responsibility for forcibly displaced persons. In the meantime there has been attention fixed on the number of young people, often unaccompanied who are making often long and difficult trips. It is estimated that 7009 young people made the journey across the Mediterranean during the first six months of 2016, almost double the number for the same period in 2015. At a recent Conference on Trafficking in Persons, Cardinal Onaiyekan of Abuja pleaded with African governments to do more to work for justice in their countries so as to mitigate the flow of people to Europe for what often turns out to be a worse life than in their home countries. Pope Francis challenged Europeans to welcome refugees and stated that welcoming strangers was one way of countering terrorism in the sense that a warm welcome reversed the alienation and cynicism which often led to terrorism.

The issue of migration continues to feature as a key policy point in the USA presidential elections especially in Mr Trumps oft repeated call for a wall along the 3,200km border between the USA and Mexico, the deportation of the estimated 11.3m undocumented migrants in the USA (more recently Mr Trump spoke of 'swift removal' for 6.5m of that number) This would reduce the labour force by approximately 6.4%. Mr Trump also spoke of reversing the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, executive order of President Obama.

The EU discussion around African states who are in active in preventing migration being marked for reductions in EU aid, continues to be debated and there has been discussion at the AU about appropriate responses.

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