



Refugee Digest 37 **February 2020**

Refugees, Migrants and Displaced Persons

Pope Francis made special reference in his Christmas Day message to the injustices and many forms of slavery that lie at the root of much of the movement of peoples. He said: "It is injustice that forces them to endure unspeakable forms of abuse, enslavement of every kind, and torture in inhumane detention camps. [...] It is injustice that turns them away from places where they might have hope for a dignified life, but instead find themselves before walls of indifference." In recent speeches Pope Francis has established injustice as a core hermeneutic for understanding the migratory phenomenon and for crafting a response to it. This opens policy perspectives in areas such as protection and the foregrounding of rights based responses, but more importantly, it shifts the discussion away from the sole focus on security.

<https://www.dw.com/en/popes-christmas-day-message-the-light-of-christ-is-greater-than-all-conflict/a-51790161>

In December 2019, the Pope made the same observation when welcoming 33 refugees from the Island of Lesbos. In that speech he also called the ignorance of many around this issue 'a sin' and condemned putting economic interests above the needs and protection of migrants. In citing examples he is beginning to give substance or content to the 'injustices' he refers to, which is also helpful in creating policy perspectives.

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2019-12/pope-francis-it-s-injustice-that-causes-migrants-to-die-at-sea.html>

These insights from the Pope have relevance as tensions around refugee issues continue to find resonances in both politics and community settings. In the USA the issue of the border wall and the funding of its construction continues to be debated.

https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2019-12-11-naspers-unlocks-10-billion-of-value-with-prosus-listing-2-2-2/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Business%20Maverick%20Wednesday%2011%20December%202019%20CENTBEE&utm_content=Business%20Maverick%20Wednesday%2011%20December%202019%20CENTBEE+CID_4e7a8a7f62bdcf566631925ba49cb730&utm_source=TouchBasePro&utm_term=Trump%20Barred%20From%20Building%20Border%20Wall%20With%20Military%20Funds

In the USA the Church has engaged in the political domain, publicly calling on Governors not to follow the Governor of Texas' example of discontinuing support for resettlement programs in that State. This is a fine example of an alternative narrative, emanating from the Church, being ramped up to the political level in an attempt to provide a different, more humane, policy consideration.

<https://www.miamiherald.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/article239342573.html>

In Europe concern continues to grow as reports of an increased number of migrants from Turkey to the EU surfaces. A report claims that 2019 saw a 46% rise in migrants to the EU from Turkey, translating into about 70 000 persons.

https://www.dw.com/en/migrant-arrivals-in-europe-from-turkey-nearly-double-in-2019/a-51702064?utm_source=dailybrief&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=DailyBrief2019dec17&utm_term=DailyNewsBrief

In Mexico, the Church has also appealed to the Catholic community to be welcoming, respectful and generous to the caravan of Honduran migrants making their way through Mexico to the USA. This despite the government' stance of ambiguity and hesitancy with regard to the migrants. It is a further example of the Church's narrative influencing pastoral approaches to this issue.

http://www.fides.org/en/news/67260-AMERICA_MEXICO_The_Bishop_of_Tapachula_in_the_face_of_the_ambiguous_and_hesitant_official_position_it_is_important_to_listen_to_and_treat_migrants_as_brothers

In South Africa commentators speak of the government erecting a 'paper wall' against further immigration. New regulations prohibit refugees and asylum seekers from participating in political activity in SA, and there are further restrictions on employment. The regulations allow for detention, revocation of refugee status, and deportation. Civil society organizations working in this area have been sharply critical of the regulations; they are said to constitute a deviation from the duty to protect refugees and are seen as vague in places and unnecessarily punitive.

<https://www.businessinsider.co.za/rules-update-bans-refugees-in-south-africa-from-politics-2020->

<https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/national/2020-01-03-government-tightens-its-grip-on-refugees-and-asylum-seekers/>

<https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/sas-new-refugee-regulations-could-have-been-drafted-by-trump-says-activist-20200117>

<https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/sunday-tribune-south-africa/20200105/281638192132674>

As the new year and the new decade dawns, there is a growing awareness that if displaced persons are to be treated justly and their lives and well-being protected, then there will need to be a change of attitude not just amongst people who hold power, but also amongst ordinary citizens whose prejudices are often the basis for narrow and discriminatory policies.

https://international.la-croix.com/news/migrants-still-await-a-sea-change-in-attitudes/10745?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=e-mail&utm_content=31-12-2019&utm_campaign=newsletter_crx_lci&PMID=3a72042ed0da248a18f664113a327e12

https://international.la-croix.com/news/migrants-and-the-european-way-of-life/10833?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=e-mail&utm_content=28-12-2019&utm_campaign=newsletter_crx_lci&PMID=3a72042ed0da248a18f664113a327e12

In the light of the above assertion, this article asks the critical question as to whether enough is being done to assist in this great humanitarian crisis, or whether more could be done, especially by wealthier countries.

https://international.la-croix.com/news/migrants-in-limbo/10930?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=e-mail&utm_content=25-12-2019&utm_campaign=newsletter_crx_lci&PMID=3a72042ed0da248a18f664113a327e12

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