



**What will  
it be for  
migrants  
in 2026?**

# Editor's Note

2026 has ushered in another year of uncertainty for migrants and people on the move. From renewed deportation crackdowns in the United States to debates in the UK Parliament on settlement and long-term residency for skilled workers, migration is once again at the centre of political agendas.

Across Africa, conflict and climate shocks continue to drive displacement at a scale that demands global attention. In moments like this, policy debates can feel distant from the everyday realities of people navigating borders, paperwork, safety and belonging. Yet the decisions made today will shape the futures of migrants and communities displaced.

How will these policies reshape migrant lives, and what proactive steps can communities take to remain informed, prepared and resilient in the face of tightening systems? Our first issue brings together summaries, insights and resources to help migrants and people on the move to understand the moment and to imagine pathways forward rooted in collective care.





# Migration Monitor

## **SPAIN:**

Spain is opening doors for undocumented migrants; the government plans to regularise about half a million migrants living and working in the country. Provided they arrived before December 31, 2025, with a residency of at least five months, and have a clean criminal record, they may qualify for legal status, greater stability, and opportunities.

## **DENMARK:**

Denmark has introduced a new law that allows authorities to deport foreign nationals who are convicted of serious crimes and sentenced to at least one year in prison. The reform means some migrants who commit major offences could face removal from Denmark after serving their sentences.

## **USA:**

The United States has paused processing green card, citizenship, and asylum applications for people from 19 countries previously included in a travel ban. This means affected applicants may face delays and uncertainty while U.S. immigration authorities review or reconsider these cases.

## **ITALY:**

Far-right groups in Italy have started a public petition pushing parliament to consider a new law that would allow large-scale deportations of migrants, including their children. If the proposal gains enough support, it could lead to stricter immigration policies and increased fears among migrant families living in Italy.

## UK:

In the UK, the debate around Indefinite Leave to Remain continues in the parliament. The Home Office projects that 1.6m people would receive ILR between 2026 and 2030 under its current rules. The new proposed rule aims to stop a large number of people from being granted settlement in the coming years. This proposed new rule plans to increase the standard waiting period before a migrant becomes eligible for settlement from five to ten years, with some exceptions.

## SWEDEN:

Sweden's government plans to require asylum seekers to stay in official reception centres while their applications are being reviewed. Asylum seekers will need to show they are living in these centres to continue receiving benefits, and they may also face limits on travel while their cases are being processed.

## GHANA:

Ghana has temporarily stopped accepting citizenship applications from members of the African diaspora while it reviews and improves the process. Officials say the pause aims to make applications clearer, more accessible, and more efficient. The decision may delay some applicants, but it is intended to create a smoother and fairer system in the future.



## DR CONGO:

The Democratic Republic of Congo has agreed to accept the return of its citizens who are in the UK without legal immigration status. This follows pressure from the UK government, which warned it could restrict visas for Congolese nationals. The agreement may lead to more deportations of undocumented Congolese migrants from the UK.

## AUSTRIA:

Austria reported that no asylum applications were recorded in January 2026 along its Burgenland-Hungary border, an area often used by irregular migrants. Officials described this as a sign of stronger border control. The announcement highlights Austria's continued efforts to reduce irregular migration and tighten entry routes into the country.

## Major Displacement Hotspot in Africa

**South Sudan:** The humanitarian crisis in South Sudan continues, driven by conflict and severe flooding. Over 2.3 million refugees are in neighbouring countries like Uganda, Ethiopia, and Kenya. About 818,000 to 1.9 million internally displaced people, and nearly 1 million people, primarily South Sudanese returnees fleeing the war in Sudan since April 2023.

# From our Writers

Remittances are often celebrated as Africa's hidden development engine. They are more stable than foreign aid, more reliable than government programmes and more impactful than most investments. The World Bank projects that African migrants will continue sending over \$50 billion annually, a figure that exceeds the GDP of several African countries.

Yet behind the impressive numbers lie emotional stories that rarely make headlines. The pressure to provide is woven into the migrant experience. The moment someone gets a visa or boards a plane, family expectations change. Migration is seen as an automatic upgrade in economic status. Even those in low-wage jobs abroad are imagined as people with abundant resources.



Until the 1820s, Africans dominated Atlantic migration. For every European, four to five enslaved Africans disembarked in the Americas. But in the next decades, African migration out of the continent dwindled to small numbers. Only in the 1960s, following decolonisation, did African migration out of the continent begin a sustained comeback. By this time, African migrants typically moved of their own volition. North Africans led the way, but migration from below the Sahara also increased steadily, many moving to the former European metropolises, but increasingly also to North America and the Gulf region (Lucas 2015). Today, according to UN estimates, some fifty per cent of all African international migrants reside outside the continent, and some 30 per cent of sub-Saharan international migrants. But how did African migration patterns evolve in the intervening period?

Michiel de Haas and Ewout Frankema in African Economic History Network (AEHN)



# The Village Corner

It has been an honour to contribute to the multitude of voices at Diaspora Africa so far.

As we are faced with increasing barriers and degrading policies that restrict people's mobility, we need platforms such as this one that allow for voices and stories that resist reductive and infantilising narratives around migrants.

Finally, migration news and updates that actually speak our language and our realities.

It actually feels good to see a space that centres African migrant stories, not just statistics

This is something I wish existed when I first moved here. Sometimes migrants just need to know they are not alone. This creates that feeling.

It feels like sitting in a global African living room. Really excited for this!

## JOIN THE VILLAGE on WhatsApp

When you JOIN THE VILLAGE, you get free access:

- The biweekly migration magazine
- Verified global migration updates
- Community conversations
- Resources and opportunities
- Space to share your story
- Policy and data explained simply
- Join to tell us what you want us to talk about in our next issue - Use *'What migration topic should we cover in our next issue?'*

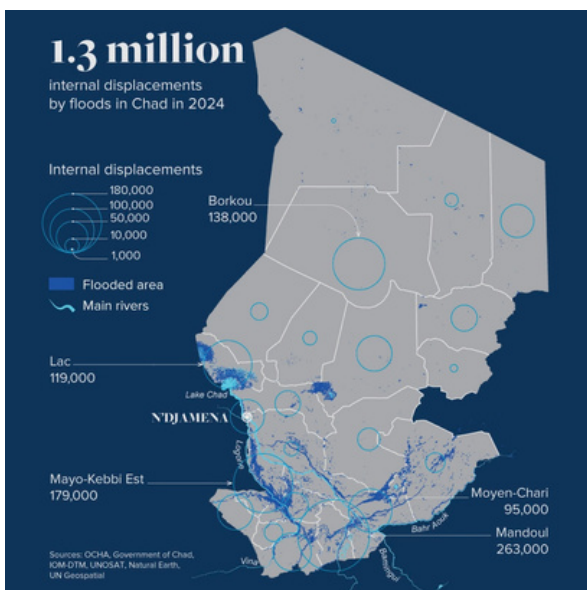
**Join our village on WhatsApp to be a part of the conversation.**

Send Hi to **+44 7986 983956**



# Resources

Are you a refugee or an asylum seeker in the United Kingdom? The Refugee Council, a UK charity, offers comprehensive support to refugees and asylum seekers, focusing on crisis advice, mental health counselling, practical resettlement assistance, housing support, specialist support for unaccompanied children, English language classes, and employment support.



## In Numbers

Chad is facing severe climate challenges, with floods causing massive internal displacement. Between 2022 and 2024, the country experienced its worst floods in decades, forcing over 1.3 million people to flee their homes. By the end of 2024, nearly 1.2 million people were still displaced, the highest number in 15 years.

Source: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

# Gazing Backwards



*A young woman holding a woven bag popularly known as "Ghana Must Go"*

*This biweekly magazine reflects the migrant experience and uses “the village” as a living metaphor for our global African community. The magazine is independently funded by the Diaspora Africa team. Many updates featured in this publication are sourced from our Migration Monitor database, which tracks migration trends affecting African migrants and diasporic communities globally.*

[monitor.diasporafrica.org](http://monitor.diasporafrica.org)

