

# Is a Visa-Free Africa Ever Possible?

## Editor's Note



In a landmark, albeit non-binding move, 123 member states of the United Nations General Assembly voted to recognise the slavery of Africans during the trans-Atlantic slave trade as the “gravest crime against humanity”. This resolution signals a pivotal shift in the global narrative of justice and memory. However, it faced opposition from the United

States, Israel, and Argentina, along with 52 abstentions from the United Kingdom and European Union member states. Ghanaian President John Mahama told the assembly that “The adoption of this resolution serves as a safeguard against forgetting. It also challenges the enduring scars of slavery.” The vote was also welcomed by the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, who remarked that the economic prosperity of Western nations was “built on stolen lives and stolen labour”.

As the world stands at contrasting poles of history, a recent online debate sparked by a Kenyan netizen over Nigeria’s continued visa fees highlights a stark divide in Africa’s mobility politics. While Kenya has opened its borders to nearly the entire continent, including Nigeria, the latter’s commitment to a ‘visa-free Africa’ remains largely performative. Despite being a signatory to the African Union (AU) Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Nigeria’s refusal to reciprocate keeps the dream of a borderless continent stalled in bureaucracy. In Issue 2, we asked, “Who Wants Africans on Their Soil?” But what happens when African governments themselves are at the helm of migration diplomacy?

This issue follows refugees and asylum seekers across the world. We examine the UK-Nigeria partnership, aimed at deporting failed asylum seekers to Nigeria, the legal hurdles of Somali Temporary Protected Status (TPS) beneficiaries and the launch of the World Health Organisation's flagship publication assessing how the health of refugees and migrants is integrated into national health policies.



### **Cover Illustration**

The illustration depicts a growing diplomatic tension that has now exposed contradictions in intra-African mobility. Despite Kenya's visa-free policy for Nigerians, Kenyan travellers report facing high costs, delays, and frequent denials when applying to visit Nigeria.

# Migration Monitor

## **UGANDA:**

Uganda has launched its first national migration policy, aiming to protect the rights of migrants while better harnessing the potential of the Ugandan diaspora. This framework is part of a coordinated agenda, the Vision 2040 and the Fourth National Development Plan, among other global migration policies. Provisions of this policy include strengthening partnerships,



safeguarding human rights, labour mobility and the diaspora and regional and international cooperation.

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Owing to the ongoing war between Iran, the United States, and Israel, 43 Ugandan students have been rescued through the Turkish border before boarding flights back to Uganda. This repatriation effort was led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with the Uganda People's Defence Forces and the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs.

## **UK:**

The UK has established a partnership with Nigeria aimed at accelerating the removal of residents without visas, foreign criminals, and those who have failed asylum applications, signalling a tighter migration regime. This partnership has, however, stirred mixed opinions from Nigerian citizens,

especially with the ongoing crime crisis with bandits and insurgents, which is fostering a less habitable environment for the country's residents.

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The UK Home Office has initiated a pilot programme providing financial incentives for individuals and families whose asylum applications have been denied to depart voluntarily; otherwise, they risk removal from the country if they refuse. Under this scheme, individuals can receive up to £10,000, while families may be offered as much as £40,000.



### **GHANA:**

The Ghanaian government has stated that at least 272 Ghanaians have been lured by Russia into fighting in the war with Ukraine, and 55 of them have died. This development is amid widespread tensions, as other Africans are also being illegally recruited with promises of job opportunities; however, Moscow has denied claims of illegal recruitment.



This could push African governments to rethink their immigration policies and enforce travel bans for national security reasons.

**US:**

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has agreed to an extension for Somalia Temporary Protected Status (TPS) beneficiaries, following a federal court order on March 13 to halt the termination of the Somali TPS initially set to end on March 17, 2026. This means Somalia's TPS beneficiaries are allowed to maintain their work authorisation and protection from removal while legal challenges persist.



## From our Writers



### How Much Blood is in a Tomato? African Migrant Deaths & Agricultural Labour in Italy:



Giselle Musabimana

As an average “climate-anxious” and socially-conscious Afro-European Millennial, I have grown accustomed to navigating through life, grievously aware of the weight of my consumption.

Four years ago, I started mainly buying secondhand clothing. I timidly – but conceitedly – pride

myself on never having purchased a item from Shein or Temu. My unwavering love for food does not prevent me from seeing it as a political battleground, one that is not detached from ethics. While grocery shopping, I clutch my phone, scanning the aisles, checking labels and barcodes, and verifying lists and names of brands to boycott. The impending doom and sense of helplessness that overcomes me while watching martyred bodies in Gaza, in Sudan, in Lebanon, in Eastern Congo, slowly subsides when I know I was somehow less complicit in these massacres. My hands feel less tainted with blood. Back in my hometown in Italy, shopping at the farmers' market often soothes my restlessness. Buying "farm-to-table", seasonal food, supporting small farmers' businesses, and all that. The bountiful fruit and vegetable stalls in the town square, along with the hard-working and smiley elderly farmers, all appear less problematic, less

tarnished by tragedy and death.

Satnam Singh was just about 31 years old when, on 17 June of last year, he crushed his arm in a plastic wrapping machine at work. He had been working at Antonello Lovato's small business in Latina for about two years, together with his wife, Soni. Most news headlines have vaguely described Satnam as a Punjabi undocumented worker, whose entire life appears contained in the crude, brutal tragedy of his death. A whole existence condensed into the minute description of how the machinery ripped off his right arm and lower limbs, all along with the banality of evil of his employer who, after forbidding everyone on the plantation from calling an ambulance, abandoned Satnam's body near his home and placed the severed arm in a vegetable harvesting box.

About two months after Satnam's death, still in Latina, 54-year-old Dalvir Singh dies of exhaustion in the scorching August heat. Dalvir was Punjabi northern India for good in the coming years. Famakan Dembele, 28, also died of extreme heat and exhaustion, just one year before Dalvir. He was originally from Mali and had just arrived in Foggia a few weeks prior. He worked as a tomato picker in the ghetto of Torretta Antonacci, infamously known for its deplorable conditions and the recurrent cases of violence against migrants. He was found lifeless after his shift, lying in the shade of an olive tree, under the rain.

Famakan's, Satnam's, and Dalvir's deaths are not isolated incidents but rather part of a systematic and ever-growing mosaic of workers exploited and murdered by the phenomenon of 'Caporalato'.

Featured Art: *"Il Caporalato"* as exhibited at MAAM Museo dell'Altro e dell'Altrove di Metropolitiz\_città provided with permission for limited use by the author, Stefano maria Girardi.

African Migration News  
In Your Pocket  
Biweekly

Compiled  
By Migrants  
For Migrants



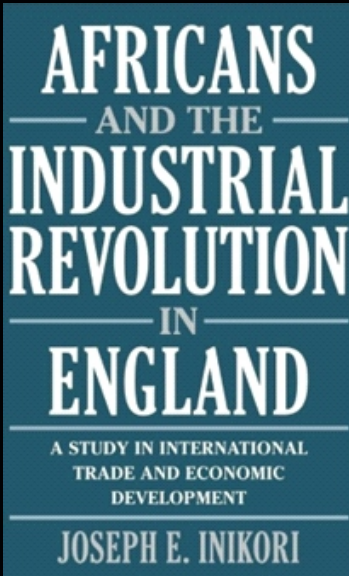
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## What to Read Now



The Industrial Revolution in England was a formative period for the imperial economy. During this time, trade and markets expanded beyond regional proximity, including the Arab world and North Africa. This era was characterised by several discoveries and settlements that led to the exploration of Africa and the establishment of import and export routes via the Atlantic. This period also gave rise to the second large-scale system of human slavery. While technological advancements began to reduce the

need for human labour, slaves, mainly from Sub-Saharan Africa, played a significant role in expanding Britain's economy. Critics have often pointed out that the profits from this manual system were meagre compared to what was necessary to fund the next major imperial conquests—rapid industrial consumption.

## Resources

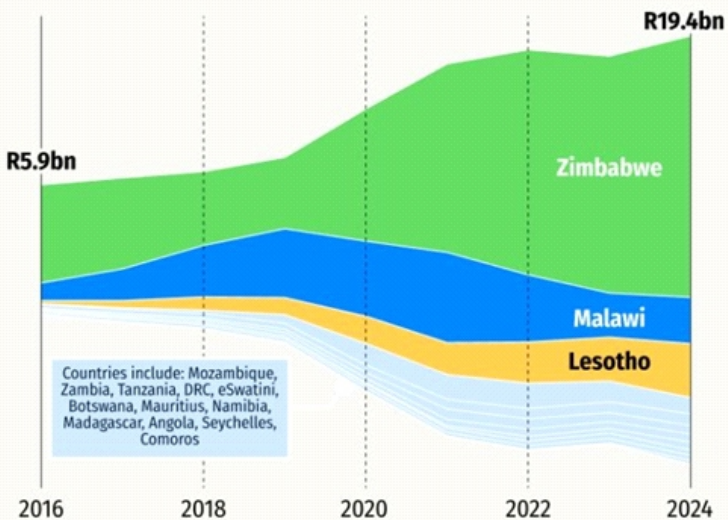


The World Health Organisation (WHO) recently launched the World Report on Promoting the Health of Refugees and Migrants: *Monitoring Progress on the WHO Global Action Plan*. This flagship publication cuts into the 2019-2030 roadmap and establishes the first benchmark for monitoring advancements in creating inclusive and migrant-responsive health systems.

## In Numbers

# Remittances from SA more than triple in eight years

R19.4bn sent to southern Africa in 2024, up from R5.9bn in 2016



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Source: SA Reserve Bank: South Africa to the rest of SADC Remittances Market Assessment 2024 Report

[theoutlier.co.za](http://theoutlier.co.za)

Of the R19.4 billion in remittances sent across 15 southern African countries by South Africa, Zimbabwe received the highest share at 84%.

## The Mobility Gaze



Asmara, Eritrea, 2024  
Photo: Helen G

For nearly forty years of intermittent conflict, from the Eritrean war of independence to the Eritrea-Ethiopia border war. Asmara, the capital of Eritrea, was never in ruins. The city operated as normal, serving the military and

administrative needs. At the same time, its countryside bore the scars of the war. Due to the escalating tensions of the border war, the Eritrean government at that time carried out a large-scale expulsion of 70,000 Ethiopians and people of Ethiopian origin residing in Eritrea, many of them based in Asmara, as part of a broader pattern of population displacement.

# The Community Corner



**Join Our  
Community**

When you JOIN THE COMMUNITY, you get free access to:

- The biweekly migration magazine
- Verified global migration updates
- Resources and opportunities
- Policy and data on migration explained simply
- Help decide what you want us to talk about in our next issue

## **How Can You Join?**

Message us on WhatsApp to be a part of the conversation by sending **"Hi"** to **+44 7986 983956**, and we will allow you into the room!

We are building a newsroom & community that counters misinformation and bias in global mainstream news about African migration. We are working with local and cross-border journalists to challenge biased global reporting frameworks that shape migration. We want to disrupt extractive storytelling practices & expand the range of perspectives represented in international media discourse surrounding migration.

*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](https://monitor.diasporafrica.org)

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