



Executive Summary: New Refugee Categories, New Tactics

Solutions Lab Grantee, Kathleen R Arnold,
DePaul Migration Collaborative, DePaul University
Community Partner, The Resurrection Project
Grant Period: July 2023 to June 2024

Research Assistance from: Samira Abdoulaye, DePaul MS Refugee and Forced Migration Program 2024; Mia Borowski, DePaul MS Refugee and Forced Migration Program 2024; Brianna Ortiz, DePaul BA/BS Political Science and Environmental Studies 2024

This report was made possible thanks to the generous support of Schreiber Philanthropy



About the DePaul Migration Collaborative

The DePaul Migration Collaborative (DMC) is born from DePaul University's commitment to immigrant communities. In 1996, the College of Law founded its nationally recognized Asylum & Immigration Law Clinic. In 2015, the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences introduced the first U.S. graduate program in Refugee & Forced Migration Studies. The DMC, a joint venture of the College of Law and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, embodies DePaul's continued dedication to interdisciplinary research and advocacy in migration and human rights, seeking systemic change through education and collective action, reinforcing DePaul's legacy as an immigrant-serving institution.

DePaul Migration Collaborative Co-Directors

Sioban Albiol, College of Law

Shailja Sharma, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

DePaul Migration Collaborative Staff

Jill Nyhof Rodriguez, Program Manager

Dominique Cressler, Program Coordinator

2024-2025 DePaul Migration Collaborative Steering Committee:

Sioban Albiol, Professor of Legal Practice and Director, Asylum & Immigration Law Clinic, College of Law

Maria Joy Ferrera, Associate Professor, Social Work, Critical Ethnic Studies, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Max N. Helveston, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Strategic Initiatives; Faculty Director, Mary and Michael Jaharis Health Law Institute; Associate Professor of Law, College of Law

Martha A. Pagliari, Assistant Dean of Experiential Learning; Professor of Legal Practice and Writing, College of Law

John Shanahan, Associate Dean, Director of Liberal Studies and Professor of English, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

Shailja Sharma, Professor and Chair, International Studies, Refugee and Forced Migration Studies, Global Asian Studies, Islamic World Studies, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Learn more at: <https://law.depaul.edu/academics/centers-institutes-initiatives/depaul-migration-collaborative/Pages/default.aspx>

About the Researcher, Kathleen Arnold and Her Team

Kathleen R. Arnold is a political theorist, Director of the Refugee and Forced Migration Master's Program at DePaul University, and co-director of the NGO Sanctuary Now. She is the author of six books and numerous chapters and articles focused on issues of political sovereignty and critical analyses of public policy, but the focus of her work could be summed up in the word *statelessness*. She is interested in the democratic and justice-oriented questions that arise from the condition of statelessness. Dr. Arnold specializes in analyzing houselessness, poverty, gender and intersectional vulnerabilities as they relate to migrants and internally displaced peoples. Through the project *New Categories, New Tactics*, Professor Arnold was able to train a team of student research assistants to learn how to conduct research for country conditions reports and how to provide annotated bibliographies of all recent primary sources to save non-profit law groups time and resources. The students who worked on this team included Samira Abdoulaye, Mia Borowski, and Brianna Ortiz. Each student contributed to the project through writing and research, amongst other tasks. Although not a project partner, Dr. Arnold's team also worked with [Northeastern University School of Law's Immigrant Justice Clinic](#) and with Prof. Hemanth Gundavaram who introduced the team to non-profit legal service providers in Boston with whom Dr. Arnold could share the research with.

About the Community Partner: The Resurrection Project

The Resurrection Project (TRP) was Dr. Arnold's community partner. The Resurrection Project is one of the most important legal service providers for migrant and refugee petitions in the Chicago area. Their Immigrant Justice team has been at the forefront of strengthening the state's immigrant justice ecosystem. From championing pro-immigrant campaigns to expanding empowerment programs and delivering direct legal services, TRP has become a vital force in building a more equitable future for immigrant communities. They provide a number of important services in the Pilsen neighborhood and work with legal partners throughout Chicago. In the past year, they have run one of the most vital clinics for Venezuelan arrivals providing hundreds of people with work authorization and parole status on-site. Additionally, TRP partners with numerous nonprofit legal service providers throughout Chicagoland which makes them well-positioned to share resources. Through *New Refugee Categories, New Tactics*, Prof. Arnold and TRP sought to support asylum-seekers and to bypass a very expensive and exclusive legal system. In the end, Dr. Arnold and her team provided The Resurrection Project with country conditions research, annotated bibliographies, and country conditions reports. These materials can be used by legal service providers in refugee adjudications.

The Project

Since 9/11, the US refugee system has made it very difficult for bona fide refugees to get refugee status, as documented by law professors Andrew Schoenholtz, Phil Schrag, and Jaya Ramji-Nogales. Vetting processes are more stringent, case overloads mean that judges and some adjudicators are unfamiliar with all country conditions and/or cannot keep up due to capacity and the systems contradictory mechanisms that ensure many petitions are not approved.

Additionally, cases have become more complex as individuals are often persecuted by civil society actors in their country rather than government agents (or a combination of the two).

A number of factors including more stringent vetting processes, increased caseloads for adjudicators, and the involvement of both nongovernmental and government actors as persecutors have made accessing asylum protection more difficult. For these reasons, expert witness and country conditions reports are crucial to aid a refugee's petition, explaining how civil society actors act politically, offering up to date primary sources as evidence of persecution,

and providing context for an individual's future fear of persecution. Legal service providers are increasingly using these reports due to these new circumstances. These reports importantly provide credible sources, thus fulfilling the "well-founded" requirement of the definition of a refugee. However, these reports are expensive and normally require that a refugee hire a lawyer.

Through this Solutions Lab Project, Dr. Arnold and her team prepared country conditions reports for Afghanistan, Iran, Cameroon, Columbia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mexico, Haiti and more. For some countries, Dr. Arnold and her team prepared multiple reports to address critical themes including LGBTQIA+ issues, indigenous peoples and femicide.

Access Materials

The reports may be available to legal representatives engaged in pro-bono representation of asylum-seekers upon request by contacting Solutions Lab partner the Resurrection Project who fields and responds to these requests. Contact: Rocio Pulido rpulido@resurrectionproject.org for access to these materials.