



# WORLD MIGRATION REPORT 2022



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IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

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Cover photos:

Top: Bogota's Mayoral Office runs this Orientation and Assistance Point in Bogota's bus station where humanitarian partners like IOM offer services to Venezuelan migrants and refugees. © IOM 2019/Muse Mohammed

Middle: Protection from coastal erosion Cox's Bazar. Sampan boats. © IOM 2016/Amanda Nero

Bottom: Many Venezuelans travelling through the continent do so by foot carrying all their children and possessions. Caminantes, or walkers, trek along major highways and through difficult terrain. © IOM 2019/Muse Mohammed

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# WORLD MIGRATION REPORT 2022



This volume is the result of a highly collaborative venture involving a multitude of partners and contributors under the direction of the World Migration Report Editor. Work on this edition (*World Migration Report 2022*) commenced in March 2020 and culminated in the launch of the report in December 2021 by the Director General at the 112th session of IOM Council.

The findings, interpretations, conclusions and recommendations expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of IOM or its Member States.

The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

All reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of the data referred to in this report, including through data verification. We regret, however, any data errors that may remain. Unless otherwise stated, this report does not refer to data or events after June 2021.

This edition of the report is dedicated to the late Ambassador William Lacy Swing (1934 – 2021) and our colleague Tuna Dalkılıç (1980 – 2021), both of whom supported the WMR and gave their time and energy to its production and dissemination.

The stories behind the photographs can be found on page v.



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## Photographs

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Fadmou holds her baby girl as she waits in a clinic in Hargeisa, Somalia. © IOM 2020/Muse Mohammed

### Part I

The Shahrak Sabz internally displaced person (IDP) settlement in Afghanistan was established in 2018 by IDPs fleeing drought. Upwards of 30,000 IDPs now live in the area as of February 2021. © IOM 2021/Muse Mohammed

### Chapter 2

Many of the more than 300,000 Venezuelan refugees and migrants who cross the border of Ecuador and Colombia pass through this border point in Ipiales, Colombia. Others embark on trochas, or informal and more dangerous routes, in rural areas through mountains and across rivers to enter Ecuador. © IOM 2019/Muse Mohammed

### Chapter 3

In the context of reintegration activities 355 returning migrants have received vocational training and have been accompanied in the creation of microenterprises or in the search for a job or work experience in Burkina Faso. © IOM 2018/Alexander Bee

### Chapter 4

Front-line worker at the IOM Point of Entry health screening point in Chanika, United Republic of Tanzania. © IOM 2019/Muse Mohammed

### Part II

Empty Geneva airport during COVID-19. © IOM 2021/Pegah Guillot

### Chapter 5

Jamila is a nurse at one of IOM's e Centres in Cox's Bazar. The facility has been converted to an Isolation Centre for suspected cases of COVID-19. Together with a team of trained doctors, nurses and midwives, Jamila is part of the front-line responders to COVID-19 in the camp. © IOM 2020/Nate Webb

**Chapter 6**

The French photojournalist of Iranian origin Reza Deghati led a three-day photography training workshop in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. The training was aimed at migrants returning to their country after experiencing difficult journeys abroad. Six young photographers also participated in the training. After learning the technical aspects of photography, the participants put their new skills into practice by attending reintegration and recreation activities organized by IOM for returnees and community members. © IOM 2019/Mohamed Aly Diabate

**Chapter 7**

Exit from Metro Station, Moscow. More than 90 per cent of all the streets of this city are cleaned by labour migrant who live in basements. Most of them receive only one third of the salary wages for which they are promised in related documents. Street cleaners are the subjects of frequent attacks by nationalists. © IOM 2018/Elyor Nematov

**Chapter 8**

“Loharano” is the project launched by IOM and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Madagascar, in order to engage the Madagascan diaspora in the economic development of Madagascar. This image was taken in one of the classrooms where volunteers give computer lessons. © IOM 2019/Natalie Oren

**Chapter 9**

Islanders bid farewell to IOM staff as they leave the Carteret Islands. © IOM 2016/Muse Mohammed

**Chapter 10**

Minors at the TAS centre in Bossaso are all Ethiopian unaccompanied children. They were tricked by smugglers to come to Somalia hoping to get to the Gulf but have been abandoned on the road after their money was taken away. IOM, UNICEF and local partner TAS provide shelter and assistance to them while they await family reunification. © IOM 2020/Muse Mohammed

**Chapter 11**

Real feelings. © Coralie Vogelaar 2020

**Chapter 12**

Robeiro, an ex-combatant from an illegal paramilitary group in Colombia, carries the harvested chili peppers. Robeiro is one of 300 beneficiaries of an income generation project implemented by IOM Colombia. © IOM 2009/Diego Samora

**Appendices**

Daniela who is staying at Albergue Sol de Pastos – a transit centre in Ipiales, Colombia – before she travels onward to Ecuador. IOM and other agencies provide shelter, medical and psychosocial assistance, food and other services at this transit centre. © IOM 2019/Angela Wells

**References**

Nour Abdi Garaad is a Somali returnee in Burco who has now set up his own shop in the centre town selling garments. © IOM 2020/Muse Mohammed

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## Foreword

Human migration and mobility may well be age-old phenomena touching almost every society around the world. However, they have changed over time in important ways. Examining these shifts in scale, direction, demography and frequency can help us understand how migration is evolving, and can inform effective policies, programmes and operational responses on the ground.

The current United Nations global estimate is that there were around 281 million international migrants in the world in 2020, which equates to 3.6 per cent of the global population. This is a small minority of the world's population, meaning that staying within one's country of birth remains, overwhelmingly, the norm. The great majority of people do not migrate across borders; much larger numbers migrate within countries, although we have seen this slow over the past two years as COVID-19 related immobility has gripped communities everywhere.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also highlighted the interconnections between migration and mobility, with COVID-19 travel restrictions resulting in hundreds of millions of people being unable to travel for months on end, and leaving many thousands of migrants stranded and in need of assistance.

Migration is a complex issue. As such, it is one that can be exacerbated by misinformation and politicization to alarming degrees. The central aim of the flagship World Migration Report is to set out in clear and accurate terms the changes occurring in migration and mobility globally so that readers can better situate their own work. As the United Nations migration agency, IOM has an obligation to demystify the complexity and diversity of human mobility. The report also acknowledges IOM's continuing obligation to uphold fundamental rights and its mission to support those migrants who are most in need. This is particularly relevant in the areas in which IOM works to provide humanitarian assistance to people who have been displaced, including by weather events, conflict and persecution, or to those who have become stranded during crises, such as COVID-19.

Likewise, IOM remains committed to supporting Member States as they draw upon various forms of data, research and analysis during policy formulation and review processes. Indeed, this is reflected in IOM's Constitution where the need for migration research is highlighted as an integral part of the Organization's functions. The World Migration Report is a flagship component of this important area of work.

That said, we also know that the key features of migration vary across different locations, and that specific audiences (such as policy officials, practitioners, media, researchers, teachers and students) have varying information and analytical needs when using this report to inform their work. So, in addition to the presentation of key global and regional migration data and trends as well as salient thematic issues, this World Migration Report is supplemented by a range of digital tools ensuring that the report does not remain on the "virtual shelf".

I am proud to report that the World Migration Report editorial team won recognition in two categories of the International Annual Report Design Awards 2021, in both the online and pdf categories, for the 2020 edition of the report. Spurred on by this success, IOM has expanded the array of report materials for a digital age. The new online interactive platform allows users to explore and interact with key data in a highly visual and engaging way. This is supplemented by the online educators' toolkit to support teachers around the world as they seek to provide balanced, accurate and interesting learning materials on the fundamentals of migration and migrants for teenagers and young adults.

The rise and rise of disinformation about migration has meant that the World Migration Report has become a key source for fact-checkers around the world, helping to refute false news on migration in a wide variety of places. To assist fact-checkers, we have developed a simple toolkit to help bust key myths on migration. We are also working with partners on the development of a digital policy officials' toolkit to assist them in utilizing its contents in a wide range of policy-related settings.

We are cognizant that many, including Member States' officials, need outputs and materials in their own official language(s). Language translation is a meaningful, practical and cost-effective way of supporting development and technical capacity-building for those working in migration around the world. We are pleased that donors agree: the 2020 edition of the World Migration Report was available for the first time in all six United Nations languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish), with key chapters also translated into German, Portuguese, Swahili and Turkish. Our aim, with the support of donors from all sectors, is to increase our linguistic reach even further for this current edition.

Extending the utility and reach of our flagship report is a particularly gratifying aspect of the evolution of the Organization's role and contribution to migration discourse globally. On this, our 70th anniversary, it is important to reflect upon the ongoing need for IOM's strong operational capabilities to support humanitarian response and leverage migration programmatic expertise. However, what some readers may not realize is that IOM has been one of the longest standing supporters and producers of migration research and analysis, establishing the first scientific journal on international migration in 1961, and commencing the World Migration Report more than two decades ago.

In this era of heightened interest in and activity towards migration and migrants, we hope this 2022 edition of the World Migration Report and its related tools become key resources for you. We hope they help you to navigate this high-profile and dynamic topic during periods of uncertainty, and that the report prompts reflection during quieter moments. But most importantly, we hope that you learn something new from the report that can inform your own work, be it in studies, research and analysis, policymaking, communication or migration practice.



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'António Vitorino'.

**António Vitorino**  
Director General





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# 1 REPORT OVERVIEW: TECHNOLOGICAL, GEOPOLITICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL TRANSFORMATIONS SHAPING OUR MIGRATION AND MOBILITY FUTURES<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

The last two years, since the release of the *World Migration Report 2020* on 28 November 2019 – around three weeks before COVID-19 was initially detected – have been unlike anything we could have imagined. It has not been business as usual. We therefore cannot make the standard, but nevertheless truthful observations about the tremendous benefits that migration brings to the world, about best practices for safe and well-managed migration, and about how crises combined with misinformation can risk diverting our attention and lead to migration being used as a political weapon.<sup>2</sup> While these observations remain valid, the most severe pandemic in over a century has laid bare some other “home truths”. Innovation, ingenuity, skill, compassion, resilience and hope have been witnessed time and again in responding to this global health crisis. Yet there is a sense that some of the core values underpinning a well-functioning system of global governance<sup>3</sup> were at times reduced to rhetoric or fodder for political “announceables”. Values such as equality, sustainability, cooperation, collaboration, tolerance and inclusion were, at times, set aside by political and industry leaders under pressure to respond to the pandemic in a hyper-competitive international arena. Unsurprisingly, some of those reflecting on COVID-19 impacts have called for the return to a holistic understanding of the world and the place that humans occupy in it.<sup>4</sup>

It is within this context that this *World Migration Report* focuses on developments in migration over the last two-year period, with an emphasis on providing analysis that takes into account historical and contemporary factors – historical in recognition that migration and displacement occur within broader long-term social, security, political and economic contexts; contemporary in recognition that we are still in many ways grappling with a significant global upheaval caused by a severe pandemic that has tested even the most resilient systems, countries, communities and people. While acknowledging that we will continue to experience the systemic effects of COVID-19 for many years to come, this *World Migration Report 2022* offers an initial exploration of current data and other evidence to answer the key question, “How has COVID-19 altered migration and mobility for people around the world?” Yet it also answers many other questions beyond a COVID-19 focus, including on important topics such as the links between peace and migration, on disinformation on migration, on countering human trafficking in migration pathways and on climate change impacts.

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2 See Chapter 1 of the *World Migration Report 2020* for discussion of these issues.

3 See, for example, UN, 2015.

4 Gardini, 2020.

## *What has happened in migration?*

A great deal has happened in migration in the last two years since the release of the last *World Migration Report* in late 2019. The COVID-19 global pandemic arrived at a time of heightened uncertainty brought about by fundamental changes in technology, adding tremendous complexity and anxiety to a world that was already experiencing significant transformations.<sup>5</sup>

**COVID-19 has radically altered mobility around the world**, and while there were initial expectations and hope that the pandemic would be limited to 2020, virus strains, waves of infection and vaccination programming issues have seen the pandemic continue through 2021. COVID-19 has become a truly seismic global event, testing the resilience of countries, communities, systems and sectors. By the end of the first year of the pandemic, 116.2 million cases of COVID-19 had been recorded globally, while 2.58 million people had died.<sup>6</sup> In mobility terms, 108,000 international COVID-19-related travel restrictions had been imposed globally.<sup>7</sup> Air passenger numbers dropped by 60 per cent in 2020 (1.8 billion) compared with 2019 (4.5 billion), evidence of the massive decline in mobility globally.<sup>8</sup> Chapter 5 of this report provides analysis of COVID-19 impacts on migration, mobility and migrants during the first year of the pandemic.

The last two years also saw **major migration and displacement events**; events that have caused great hardship and trauma, as well as loss of life. Foremost have been the displacements of millions of people due to conflict (such as within and from the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan), or severe economic and political instability (such as that faced by millions of Venezuelans and Afghans). There have also been large-scale displacements triggered by climate- and weather-related disasters in many parts of the world in 2020 and 2021, including in China, the Philippines, Bangladesh, India, the United States of America and Haiti.<sup>9</sup>

We have also seen the **scale of international migration increase, although at a reduced rate due to COVID-19**. The number of international migrants was estimated to be almost 281 million globally in 2020, with nearly two thirds being labour migrants.<sup>10</sup> This figure remains a very small percentage of the world's population (at 3.6%), meaning that the vast majority of people globally (96.4%) were estimated to be residing in the country in which they were born. However, the estimated number and proportion of international migrants for 2020 was lower, by around 2 million, than they otherwise would have been, due to COVID-19.<sup>11</sup> It is likely that the longer international mobility restrictions remain in place in many parts of the world, the weaker the growth will be in the number of international migrants in future years.

Long-term data on international migration have taught us that **migration is not uniform across the world**, but is shaped by economic, geographic, demographic and other factors, resulting in distinct migration patterns, such as migration “corridors” being developed over many years (see Chapter 2 of this report for details). The largest corridors tend to be from developing countries to larger economies, such as those of the United States, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Germany; large corridors can also reflect protracted conflict and related displacement, such as from the Syrian Arab Republic to Turkey (the second largest corridor in the world). While many long-term corridors are likely to continue to feature in the immediate future, COVID-19 has shed light on the intensification of digitalization and the potential for greater automation of work around the world that is likely to affect key labour migration corridors (see discussion below).

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<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 1 of the *World Migration Report 2020* for discussion.

<sup>6</sup> WHO, 2021.

<sup>7</sup> IOM, 2021a (as at 8 March 2021).

<sup>8</sup> ICAO, 2021.

<sup>9</sup> IDMC, 2021.

<sup>10</sup> UN DESA, 2021; ILO, 2021.

<sup>11</sup> UN DESA, 2021.



## Key migration data at a glance



### International migrants<sup>(a)</sup>

**281 million** — **↑** Up from **272 million** (or 3.5%) in 2019  
**international migrants** globally in 2020, or 3.6 per cent of the world's population

<b>Females<sup>(a)</sup></b>	<b>135 million international female migrants</b> globally in 2020, or 3.5 per cent of the world's female population	<b>↑</b> Up from <b>130 million</b> (or 3.4%) in 2019
<b>Males<sup>(a)</sup></b>	<b>146 million international male migrants</b> globally in 2020, or 3.7 per cent of the world's male population	<b>↑</b> Up from <b>141 million</b> (or 3.6%) in 2019
<b>Labour migrants<sup>(b)</sup></b>	<b>169 million migrant workers</b> globally in 2019	<b>↑</b> Up from <b>164 million</b> globally in 2017
<b>Missing migrants<sup>(c)</sup></b>	Around <b>3,900 dead and missing</b> globally in 2020	<b>↓</b> Down from almost <b>5,400</b> in 2019



### International remittances<sup>(d)</sup>

**USD 702 billion** — **↓** Down from **USD 719 billion** in 2019  
**in international remittances** globally in 2020. Although international remittances declined due to COVID-19, the actual decline (2.4%) was much less than initially projected (20%)

<b>Low- and middle-income countries<sup>(d)</sup></b>	USD <b>540 billion</b> in <b>international remittances</b> was received by low- and middle-income countries in 2020	<b>↓</b> Down from USD <b>548 billion</b> in 2019
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## Displaced persons

**89.4 million** people were living in displacement globally at the end of 2020 (includes refugees, asylum seekers, displaced Venezuelans and IDPs) — Up from **84.8 million** in 2019

Refugees <sup>(e)</sup>	<b>26.4 million</b> refugees globally in 2020	Up from <b>26 million</b> in 2019
Asylum seekers <sup>(e)</sup>	<b>4.1 million</b> asylum seekers globally in 2020	Down from <b>4.2 million</b> in 2019
Displaced Venezuelans <sup>(e)</sup>	<b>3.9 million</b> Venezuelans displaced globally in 2020 (not including those who were refugees or asylum seekers)	Up from <b>3.6 million</b> in 2019
Internally displaced persons (IDPs) <sup>(f)</sup>	<b>55 million</b> IDPs globally in 2020: 48 million due to conflict and violence; 7 million due to disasters	Up from <b>51 million</b> in 2019



## Mobility

Mobility was restricted by COVID-19, but internal displacement events increased

COVID-19 restrictions <sup>(g)</sup>	<b>108,000</b> COVID-19 travel restrictions globally in the first year of the pandemic	New restrictions; nil in 2019.
Global air passengers <sup>(h)</sup>	<b>1.8 billion</b> air passengers globally in 2020 (international and domestic passengers)	Major decline from <b>4.5 billion</b> in 2019
Internal displacement events (disaster) <sup>(f)</sup>	Internal disaster displacement events were <b>30.7 million</b> globally in 2020	Significantly up from <b>24.9 million</b> in 2019
Internal displacement events (conflict) <sup>(f)</sup>	Internal conflict and violence displacement events were <b>9.8 million</b> globally in 2020	Up from <b>8.6 million</b> in 2019

Note: See Chapter 2 for elaboration and discussion.

Sources: (a) UN DESA, 2021; (b) ILO, 2021; (c) IOM, n.d.a; (d) Ratha et al., 2021; (e) UNHCR, 2021; (f) IDMC, 2021; (g) IOM, 2021a; (h) ICAO, 2021.



## Technological, geopolitical and environmental transformations shaping migration and mobility

The unprecedented pace of change during recent years in geopolitical, environmental and technological spheres has led some analysts and commentators to coin or use phrases such as the “age of accelerations”,<sup>12</sup> the “fourth industrial revolution”<sup>13</sup> and the “age of change”.<sup>14</sup> More recently, COVID-19 has amplified the sense of uncertainty brought about during momentous change, while also physically grounding much of the world for extended periods of time. The pandemic has required resilience, while also offering the opportunity to reflect on our collective futures.

Similar to other international phenomena, migration has historically been affected by seismic geopolitical events, such as the two world wars, the Cold War, and large terrorist attacks (such as 9/11), which can mark “turning points” in migration governance, as well as in broader discourse and sentiment.<sup>15</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic is the latest seismic geopolitical event, stemming from a global health emergency and, while by no means over, it has already had profound impacts on migration and mobility globally. Existing knowledge, evidence and analyses allow us to place new information on COVID-19 within a frame of reference as new data come to light. Rather than looking only at the here and now, we need to be understanding change in terms of longer-term migration patterns and processes. The significance and implications of COVID-19 can only be sufficiently understood and articulated when contextualized and rooted in current knowledge of migration.<sup>16</sup>

It is also important to place migration and mobility within broader systemic change processes that act to determine, shape and impede responses by governments (at different levels) and non-State actors (e.g. civil society, industry, citizens). Key technological, geopolitical and environmental transformations are particularly relevant and help us to understand better the strategic issues shaping the context in which people migrate, States formulate and implement policy, and a wide range of State and non-State actors collaborate and cooperate on migration and mobility research, policy and practice.

### *Technological transformations*

Technological advances since 2005 resulting in the so-called “fourth industrial revolution” are profoundly changing how social, political and economic systems operate globally.<sup>17</sup> We have been witnessing the rising power of “big tech”, the increasing production capability for self-publishing of misinformation and disinformation, the race by businesses to “digitalize or perish”, the massive increase in data being produced (mainly through user-generated interactions) resulting in increasing “datafication” of human interactions, and the rapid development and roll-out of artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities within business and governments sectors.<sup>18</sup>

Digital technology is becoming increasingly crucial throughout migration. People are able to gather information and advice in real time during migration journeys, an issue that has raised interest and, at times, concern. The use of apps to share information and connect geographically dispersed groups has raised valid questions concerning the extent

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12 Friedman, 2016.

13 Schwab, 2016.

14 Mauldin, 2018.

15 Faist, 2004; McAuliffe and Goossens, 2018; Newland et al., 2019.

16 McAuliffe et al., 2020.

17 Friedman, 2016; Schwab, 2016; Triandafyllidou, 2018.

18 Desjardins, 2019; Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2018; McAuliffe, 2021; Skog et al., 2018; Zuboff, 2019.

to which digital technology has been used to support irregular migration, as well as to enable migrants to avoid abusive and exploitative migrant smugglers and human traffickers.<sup>19</sup> Migrants have also developed applications to support better integration in receiving countries, while maintaining social links and financial support to their families and societies back home, including through the increasing prevalence of “mobile money” apps.<sup>20</sup> More recently, we have seen migrants develop online chatbots using machine-learning technologies to provide psychological support, as well as to help navigate complex migration policy and visa processing requirements, although digital capture in various migration systems of an increasing amount of personal information is raising concerns about privacy and other human rights issues (see Chapter 11 of this report).

Other connections between migration and technology are also emerging in migration debates. As artificial intelligence technologies are progressively taken up in key sectors, their broader consequences for migrant worker demand and domestic labour markets are areas of intense focus for policymakers and businesses in both origin and receiving countries.<sup>21</sup> Recent discussions have also turned to blockchain technology and its consequences for migration, especially for international remittances, but also for digital identities and global mobility.<sup>22</sup> Social media technology is also increasingly impacting the politics of migration, with a surge of far-right activism on social media platforms seeking to influence public debates and ultimately political decisions (see Chapter 8 of this report).

Profound technological change was deepening before COVID-19, but has significantly intensified during the pandemic, meaning that deep digitalization of an already digitalizing world will be one of the most significant long-term effects of COVID-19. Shaping migration and mobility systems to reduce the impacts of inequality in a world that is suffering multiple “digital divides”<sup>23</sup> will be particularly important in ensuring implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other multilateral agreements.

### *Geopolitical transformations*

Increased competition between States is resulting in heightened geopolitical tension and risking the erosion of multilateral cooperation. Economic, political and military power has radically shifted in the last two decades, with power now more evenly distributed in the international system.<sup>24</sup> As a result, there is rising geopolitical competition, especially among global powers, often played out via proxies. The environment of intensifying competition between key States – and involving a larger number of States – is undermining international cooperation through multilateral mechanisms, such as those of the United Nations.<sup>25</sup> We are living in a period in which the core values underpinning global governance are being challenged. The values of equity, accountability, impartiality, fairness, justice and probity are being actively undermined, as some political leaders disregard common interest in preference for personal interest – even if it corrodes laws, processes and institutions that have, overall, sought to advance whole nations and peoples, without excluding or expelling some because of their inherent characteristics or beliefs.<sup>26</sup> Ongoing and systematic corrosion, as we have witnessed throughout history, can extend to attacks on human rights and ultimately on groups of people within societies.<sup>27</sup>

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19 McAuliffe, 2016; Sanchez, 2018.

20 Kitimbo, 2021.

21 Hertog, 2019; McAuliffe, 2018.

22 Latonero et al., 2019; Juskalian, 2018.

23 “Digital divides” refers to unequal access of digital technology along economic, geographic, demographic and gender lines. See ITU, 2020.

24 Menon, 2015.

25 Natalegawa, 2020.

26 Fotaki, 2014.

27 Rawnsley, 2018.

In rebalancing the geopolitical debate and arguing for the profound benefits of the multilateral system, many States and the United Nations have actively progressed a number of key initiatives to deliver improved conditions for communities globally, most especially for those most in need. Despite the challenges of a geopolitically charged competition, some progress has been made towards achieving the SDGs,<sup>28</sup> as well as on the specific issues of migration and displacement via the two Global Compacts for migration and on refugees.<sup>29</sup> On the eve of the 2022 International Migration Review Forum – the primary intergovernmental platform on the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration, including as it relates to the SDGs – preparations are well under way, with a series of regional review processes having already been finalized across 2020 and 2021.<sup>30</sup> A rallying cry has also been made recently by the United Nations Secretary-General in his 2021 report *Our Common Agenda* on bolstering support for multilateralism in an increasingly complex, competitive and uncertain world.<sup>31</sup> *Our Common Agenda* outlines the United Nations' actions that are designed to strengthen and accelerate multilateral agreements (including the SDGs) and make a tangible, positive difference in people's lives around the world.

### *Environmental transformations*

The intensification of ecologically negative human activity is resulting in overconsumption and overproduction linked to unsustainable economic growth, resource depletion and biodiversity collapse, as well as ongoing climate change. Broadly grouped under the heading of “human supremacy”, there is growing recognition of the extremely negative consequences of human activities that are not preserving the planet's ecological systems. In several key areas, analysts report that the world is at or nearing “breaking point”, including on climate change, biodiversity collapse and mass extinction of thousands of species,<sup>32</sup> while pollution is at record levels, altering ecosystems globally.<sup>33</sup>

COVID-19 has dampened human activity in key spheres (e.g. transportation/travel, construction, hospitality) enabling a mini environmental recovery,<sup>34</sup> as well as a space to reflect on the ability of humans to achieve extraordinary things during times of crisis. However, there is a strong sense that this is merely a pause and that human activity will rebound once the pandemic is over, wiping out the pandemic-related benefits.<sup>35</sup> The implications for migration and displacement are significant, as people increasingly turn to internal and international migration as a means of adaptation to environmental impacts (see Chapter 9 of the *World Migration Report 2020*), or face displacement from their homes and communities due to slow-onset impacts of climate change (see Chapter 9 of this report) or experience displacement as a result of acute disaster events (see Chapters 2 and 3 of this report).

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28 UN, 2021a. This 2021 progress report documents SDG progress, but also highlights how COVID-19 has resulted in major setbacks.

29 Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration; Global Compact on Refugees.

30 UNNM, 2021.

31 UN, 2021b.

32 UNEP, 2020a.

33 UNEP, 2020b.

34 Arora et al., 2020.

35 Freire-González and Vivanco, 2020.

## Through the years: IOM marks its 70th anniversary

The year 2021 marks the 70th anniversary of IOM, providing the opportunity to reflect on the Organization and its work, especially since 2016 when it entered into the United Nations system as a related agency. IOM is the leading intergovernmental organization promoting (since 1951) humane and orderly migration for the benefit of all, with 174 Member States and a presence in over 100 countries. Initially established as the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe (PICMME) in 1951, its role was carved out of the chaos and displacement of Western Europe following the Second World War (see text box below on IOM's early years).

### IOM in its early years

Mandated to help European governments to identify resettlement countries for the estimated 11 million people uprooted by the Second World War, IOM (or PICMME, as it was known then) arranged transport for nearly a million migrants during the 1950s.

A succession of name changes from PICMME to the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) in 1952, to the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration (ICM) in 1980 to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in 1989, reflects the Organization's transition over the course of half a century from logistics agency to migration agency.

While IOM's history tracks the human-induced and natural disasters of the past half century – Hungary 1956, Czechoslovakia 1968, Chile 1973, the Vietnamese boat people 1975, Kuwait 1990 and the Asian tsunami and Pakistan earthquake of 2004/2005 – its credo that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society has steadily gained international acceptance.

From its roots as an operational logistics agency, it has broadened its scope to become the leading international agency working with governments and civil society to advance the understanding of migration issues, encourage social and economic development through migration, and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

*Source: IOM, 2021b.*

Over time, IOM's role and responsibilities have expanded considerably in line with the growing salience of migration as a key issue in governance at the international, regional, national and subnational levels.<sup>36</sup> What started as a focus on logistics in support of resettling people displaced by conflict has expanded to cover a wide range of issues, as outlined in IOM's Constitution and as shown in Table 1 below.<sup>37</sup> Further information on how IOM has evolved as an organization, especially since 2016, is in Appendix A.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Martin, 2014.

<sup>37</sup> IOM, 2020a.

<sup>38</sup> Note that at the time of writing IOM's Headquarters in Geneva was undergoing a restructure. For information about IOM's organizational structure, please visit [www.iom.int/](http://www.iom.int/).

Table 1. Key facts and figures on IOM (1951, 2016 and 2021)

	1951	2016	2021
Number of Member States	23*	166	174
Number of Observer States	–	6	8
Number of field locations worldwide	18**	408	450**
Number of staff (excluding consultants)	352**	10 184	16 257**
Number of nationalities represented in staff	19**	163	172**
Breakdown between female (♀) and male (♂) staff	–	4 764 ♀ and 5 420 ♂ (47% ♀ and 53% ♂)	7 640 ♀ and 8 614 ♂** (47% ♀ and 53% ♂)**
Total combined revenue for the year (i.e. assessed and voluntary contributions)	USD 26.1 million**	USD 1 615.6 million	USD 2 182.7 million**

Note: – means data for that year are not available.

\* This corresponds to the number of participating States prior to the entry into force of the Constitution on 30 April 1954.

\*\* Figures in the 1951 column marked with a double asterisk are based on the year 1952. Figures in the 2021 column marked with a double asterisk are as of 31 December 2020.

Sources: Progress Report of the Director General covering the period 1 June 1952 to 31 August 1952, PIC/70, 18 September 1952; Financial Statements, including report of the external auditors, covering the period 1 February to 31 December 1952, MC/8, 27 March 1953; Financial Report for the Year Ended 31 December 2016, C/108/3, 18 May 2017; IOM Snapshot 2021; Observer States, as of April 2021; Financial Report for the Year Ended 31 December 2020, C/112/3, 31 May 2021; and Annual Report for 2020, C/112/INF/1, 25 June 2021.

As can be seen from Table 1, IOM's presence around the world has grown over time, in part a reflection of the increased focus on migration governance, but also due to the unfortunate reality concerning the growth in internal displacement and the humanitarian and other support needed by some migrant populations. As outlined in Chapters 2 and 3 of this report, the long-term trends regarding migration and displacement vary according to a range of factors, including geography. IOM's regional offices therefore often reflect the regional dynamics associated with migration and displacement trends, and events over time. What this means in practice is that while the United Nations refers to six geographic regions (see Appendix A in Chapter 3 for regional compositions), IOM has nine geographic regions: East and Horn of Africa; West and Central Africa; Southern Africa; Middle East and North Africa; Asia and the Pacific; South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia; European Economic Area, the European Union and NATO; South America; Central America, North America and the Caribbean.

The core of the work in all of the regional offices (and Headquarters) reflects IOM's Strategic Vision,<sup>39</sup> adopted in 2019, and its Constitution, with particular reference to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in the meeting of operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants. The precise activities involved in fulfilling its mandate at the regional level does, however, reflect the specific needs and migration realities on the ground, as highlighted in Appendix B.

## The World Migration Report series

The first world migration report was published 22 years ago, initially as a one-off report designed to increase the understanding of migration by policymakers and the general public. It was conceived at a time when the effects of globalization were being felt in many parts of the world and in a multitude of ways. Indeed, the first world migration report states that part of its genesis was due to the effects of globalization on migration patterns, and that the report therefore “looks at the increasingly global economy which has led to an unprecedented influx of newcomers in many countries...”<sup>40</sup> The report highlighted the fact that, despite being an “age-old phenomenon”, migration was accelerating as part of broader globalization transformations of economic and trade processes that were enabling greater movement of labour, as well as goods and capital.

Table 2 below provides a summary of key statistics reported in the first edition (*World Migration Report 2000*), as compared to this current edition. It shows that while some aspects have stayed fairly constant – the proportion of female international migrants, as well as the overall proportion of the world’s population who were migrants – other aspects have changed dramatically. International remittances, for example, have grown from an estimated USD 128 billion to USD 702 billion, underscoring the salience of international migration as a driver of development. It is unsurprising then that the International Organization for Migration itself has grown in size, with a significant increase in membership over the last two decades, up from 76 to its current membership of 174 States. Also of note in Table 2 is the rise in international migrants globally (up by about 87%) as well as of refugees (up by about 89%) and internally displaced persons (up by about 160%), all the while remaining very small proportions of the world’s population.

Table 2. Key facts and figures from World Migration Reports 2000 and 2022

	2000	2022
Estimated number of international migrants	173 million	281 million
Estimated proportion of world population who are migrants	2.8%	3.6%
Estimated proportion of female international migrants	49.4%	48.0%
Estimated proportion of international migrants who are children	16.0%	14.6%
Region with the highest proportion of international migrants	Oceania	Oceania
Country with the highest proportion of international migrants	United Arab Emirates	United Arab Emirates
Number of migrant workers	–	169 million
Global international remittances (USD)	128 billion	702 billion
Number of refugees	14 million	26.4 million
Number of internally displaced persons	21 million	55 million

Sources: See IOM, 2000 and the present edition of the report for sources (Chapter 2).

Notes: The dates of the data estimates in the table may be different to the report publishing date (refer to the reports for more detail on dates of estimates); refer to Chapter 3 of this report for regional breakdowns. Data for 2000 may differ to those originally published due to a standard practice of revising historical estimates at the time of each new dataset release. See, for example, UN DESA, 2021. For the purpose of this table, children refers to those aged 19 years or less.

The *World Migration Report 2000*'s contribution to migration policy as well as migration studies was timely, and its success heralded the World Migration Report series. Since 2000, 11 world migration reports have been produced by IOM, and the report continues to focus on making a relevant, sound and evidence-based contribution that increases the understanding of migration by policymakers, practitioners, researchers and the general public. To support this objective, the series was refined in 2016, moving away from a single theme for each edition to a global reference report for a wider audience. Each edition now has two parts comprising:

- Part I: Key data and information on migration and migrants;
- Part II: Balanced, evidence-based analysis of complex and emerging migration issues.

### *New digital tools through expert collaboration*

The World Migration Report series now incorporates a range of digital tools tailored for use in various settings. The tools have been developed in partnerships with some of the world's leading experts in migration data analysis, data visualization, education and the science-policy interface.

The new World Migration Report interactive data visualizations were developed in recognition of the need to deliver outputs in a wide range of formats for expanded accessibility and utility. Launched in May 2021, the interactive data visualizations allow users to both read the “headline” summaries on long-term trends, while also interacting with data points to explore specific time periods, corridors or countries. The new interactive format has become the centrepiece of the *World Migration Report* online platform, which was awarded gold for the first time at the 2021 International Annual Report Design Awards.<sup>41</sup> Additional tools for people working in migration and learning about migration, such as the educators' toolkit and the forthcoming officials' toolkit, demonstrate the growing salience of migration as well as the utility of the report.<sup>42</sup> IOM partners with an extensive range of experts in developing and delivering both the report and the related tools in a wide variety of languages to increase local use.<sup>43</sup>

## *World Migration Report 2022*

This edition builds on the previous two reports (2018 and 2020 editions) by providing updated migration statistics at the global and regional levels, as well as descriptive analysis of complex migration issues.

Part I, on “key data and information on migration”, includes separate chapters on global migration trends and patterns; regional dimensions and developments; and a discussion of recent contributions to migration research and analysis by the United Nations system, including IOM. These three chapters have been produced institutionally by IOM, drawing primarily on analyses by IOM experts, practitioners and officials around the world, based on data from a wide range of relevant organizations. The eight chapters in Part II are authored by applied and academic researchers working on migration, including IOM researchers. They cover a range of “complex and emerging migration issues” including:

- COVID-19 impacts on migration, mobility and migrants;
- peace and security as drivers of development and safe migration;

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<sup>41</sup> IADA, 2021.

<sup>42</sup> See <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/about>.

<sup>43</sup> See the “partners” page on the *World Migration Report* website (<https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/about>), which includes many academic institutions, as well as leading policy think tanks and education organizations.

- migration as a stepladder of opportunity;
- disinformation about migration;
- migration and slow-onset climate change;
- human trafficking in migration pathways;
- artificial intelligence and migration; and
- migrants' contributions globally.

While the choice of these topics is necessarily selective and subjective, all the chapters in Part II of this report are directly relevant to some of the most prominent and important debates about migration in the world today. Many of these topics lie at the heart of the conundrums that face policymakers as they seek to formulate effective, proportionate and constructive responses to complex public policy issues related to migration. Accordingly, the chapters aim to inform current and future policy deliberations and discussions by providing a clear identification of the key issues, a critical overview of relevant research and analysis, and a discussion of the implications for future research and policymaking. The chapters are not meant to be prescriptive, in the sense of advocating particular policy “solutions” – especially as the immediate context is an important determinant of policy settings – but to be informative and helpful in what can be highly contested debates.

### *Part I: Key data and information on migration and migrants*

Chapter 2 provides an overview of global data and trends on international migrants (stocks) and international migration (flows). It also provides a discussion of particular migrant groups – namely, migrant workers, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons – as well as of international remittances. In addition, the chapter refers to the existing body of IOM programmatic data, particularly on missing migrants, assisted voluntary returns and reintegration, resettlement, and displacement tracking. While these data are generally not global or representative, they can provide insights into changes that have occurred in relevant IOM programming and operations globally.

Following the global overview, Chapter 3 provides a discussion of key regional dimensions of, and developments in, migration. The discussion focuses on six world regions as identified by the United Nations: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern America, and Oceania. For each of these regions, the analysis includes: (a) an overview and brief discussion of key population-related statistics; and (b) succinct descriptions of “key features and developments” in migration in the region, based on a wide range of data, information and analyses, including from international organizations, researchers and analysts. To account for the diversity of migration patterns, trends and issues within each of the six regions, along with descriptive narratives of “key features and recent developments”, are presented at the subregional level.

There is a substantial amount of research and analysis on migration that is being undertaken and published by a range of actors such as academics, governments, intergovernmental organizations and think tanks. Chapter 4 provides a broad overview of contributions by the United Nations system, including the United Nations Network on Migration (UNNM) as part of supporting the ongoing implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the Global Compact on Refugees and the Sustainable Development Goals.



## Part II: Complex and Emerging Migration Issues

### Chapter 5 – The Great Disrupter: COVID-19's impact on migration, mobility and migrants globally



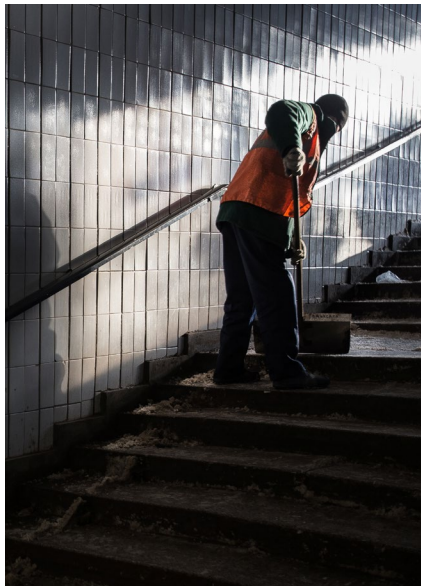
- This chapter provides an analysis of the impacts of the pandemic on migration and mobility, with particular reference to migrants' immobility and vulnerabilities. It focuses on the first year of COVID-19.
- For people who had migrated, been displaced and/or were part of a highly mobile group prior to COVID-19, the likelihood of having been directly affected by the pandemic is especially high. Aside from health-related impacts, many became trapped in immobility and unemployed, without income support or other social protection. COVID-19 led to large-scale stranded migrant populations, with some experiencing destitution, detention and abuse.
- COVID-19 highlighted that widely accepted norms previously considered to be cornerstones of international mobility were quickly set aside in the face of the pandemic. The pandemic also pointed to pervasive inequalities deeply rooted in modern-day societies around the world, while also demonstrating that migrant workers and diaspora are frontline workers not only in essential occupations, but also as agents of global human development as remitters.

### Chapter 6 – Peace and security as drivers of stability, development and safe migration

- This chapter draws upon existing evidence to explore the interaction between conflict, instability and insecurity; development; and migration, showing that instability or conflict feed negatively on development and hence drive displacement, asylum-seeking and unsafe migration.
- The chapter also goes beyond these well-documented links to show how migration can contribute to stability and development and thus mitigate the conditions that lead to irregular migration and displacement.
- It highlights some of the pragmatic peacebuilding initiatives, such as community stabilization, that have proven key within the context of migration and displacement to building and sustaining peace at a local level. It also shows how migrants, through a range of activities, contribute to peacebuilding. They do this by advocating for peace, through mediation, building public service institutions, and supporting their families and communities through remittances.



### *Chapter 7 – International migration as a stepladder of opportunity: What do the global data actually show?*



- This chapter examines the key questions of “who migrates internationally and where do they go?” It presents analysis of a range of statistical data and draws upon some of the existing body of research on migration determinants and decision-making.
- Analysis of international migrant stock and human development index data show that between 1995 and 2020, migration from low- and medium-development countries increased, but only slightly, reconfirming existing macroeconomic analyses which show that international migration from low-income countries has historically been limited.
- However, contrary to previous understandings of international migration, the analysis indicates that there has been a “polarizing” effect, with migration activity increasingly being associated with highly developed countries. This raises the key issue of migration aspirations held by potential migrants from developing countries around the world who may wish to realize opportunities through international migration, but are unable to do so as legal pathways are unavailable to them.

### *Chapter 8 – Disinformation about migration: An age-old issue with new tech dimensions*

- This chapter examines the factors shaping disinformation about migration in terms of society, politics, media and technology. It outlines best practices in building public resilience to disinformation and the major insights from current research, with reference to major gaps in our understanding of disinformation and the current barriers to advancing this work.
- The chapter highlights evidence and practical examples from around the world and from a variety of contexts. It also identifies recommendations and implications for policymakers and other stakeholders seeking to counteract disinformation generally and about migration specifically.



## Chapter 9 – Migration and slow-onset impacts of climate change: Taking stock and taking action



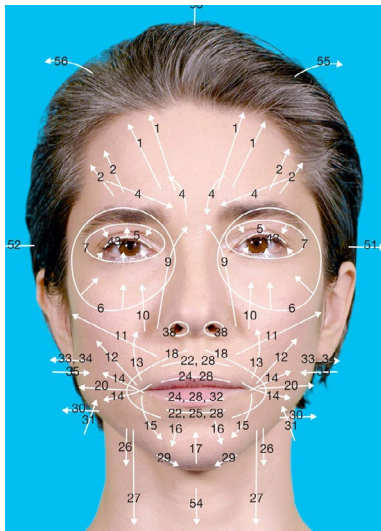
- This chapter focuses on migration in the context of the slow-onset impacts of climate change, an area where policy and knowledge gaps remain. It presents some of the key challenges associated with understanding and taking action on slow-onset climate impacts and migration issues, and explores how migration policy and practice can play a role in responding to some of the most pressing challenges.
- Looking ahead at a future in which slow-onset climate events are expected to worsen, appropriate migration management policies and practices can and should be part of the solution. Recent examples of migration policy initiatives that address climate impacts on migration, including slow-onset dimensions, are outlined in the chapter.
- At the global level, policy discussions have identified some entry points where migration policymakers could be instrumental in promoting positive changes, notably in terms of facilitating migration in the context of slow-onset climate events, and there has been growing interest among both developed and developing States in discussing migration linked to climate impacts in policy terms.

## Chapter 10 – Human trafficking in migration pathways: Trends, challenges and new forms of cooperation

- This chapter provides an overview of current trafficking trends and patterns, looking at the available data on migrant victims of human trafficking and traffickers. It explores current challenges and promising avenues for the prevention of trafficking of migrants, including prosecuting traffickers, protecting victims and cooperating in counter-trafficking efforts.
- There is widespread global consensus on the urgent need to prevent and combat human trafficking in migration pathways, with few other migration-related issues having attained as much agreement within the international community. However, there is less consensus on how to achieve this in practice, and there remains a shortfall in political will to introduce effective policies to that end. The chapter offers insights in this area across several domains.



### Chapter 11 – Artificial intelligence, migration and mobility: Implications for policy and practice



- This chapter examines the implications of AI for policy and practice in the context of migration and mobility through the prism of the existing international human rights framework of rules, standards and principles. This is important because of the potential for human rights to be eroded – or bolstered – as a result of the design, development, implementation and expansion of AI technologies around the world.
- The use of AI throughout the “migration cycle” is examined, with reflections on key strategic challenges and opportunities in this important area of new technology, including as it relates to the “future of work” and long-term migration trends.
- While AI can certainly bring about a series of advantages for policy and practice, there are a range of risks to State and non-State actors (including migrants) that need to be carefully managed, especially from regulatory and human rights perspectives.

### Chapter 12 – Reflections on migrants’ contributions in an era of increasing disruption and disinformation – “REPEAT”

- This chapter first appeared in the *World Migration Report 2020*. The research for this chapter inspired us to delve deeper into the topic of disinformation, resulting in Chapter 8 on disinformation about migration (in this volume).
- The last two years, however, have shown us that the issue has not abated. In fact, with COVID-19 disinformation, the massive challenges concerning balanced and accurate accounts of migrants’ contributions have only become worse. So, here it is again, to remind us of the importance of the topic and so additional readers can draw upon its contents.



Overall, this world migration report has been produced to help deepen our collective understanding of the various manifestations and complexities of migration in the face of systemic and accelerated change. We hope that all readers are able to learn something new from this edition, as well as to draw on its contents as they undertake their work, study or other activities.



# PART I

KEY DATA AND INFORMATION  
ON MIGRATION AND MIGRANTS













# 2

## MIGRATION AND MIGRANTS: A GLOBAL OVERVIEW

### Introduction

Describing and analysing how migration around the world is changing from a range of different perspectives, including those entailing economic, social and security dimensions (and associated legal–policy frameworks), must start with an understanding of fundamental metrics. Human migration may well be an age-old activity touching almost every society around the world; however, it is changing in important ways. Examining the shifts in scale, direction, demography and frequency can illuminate how migration is evolving while also pointing to long-term trends that have been shaped by historical as well as recent events.

The current global estimate is that there were around 281 million international migrants in the world in 2020, which equates to 3.6 per cent of the global population.<sup>1</sup> A first important point to note is that this is a very small minority of the world's population, meaning that staying within one's country of birth overwhelmingly remains the norm. The great majority of people do not migrate across borders; much larger numbers migrate within countries.<sup>2</sup> That said, these estimates relate to migrant populations, rather than movement events. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the interconnections between migration and mobility, with COVID-19 travel restrictions resulting in unprecedented immobility around the world. At the time of writing (July 2021), travel restrictions in many countries were being (re)imposed or strengthened as virus strains circulate the globe, testing the world's collective resilience in the face of a global health crisis unseen in the preceding century.

When mobility regimes are not impeded by global pandemics, the overwhelming majority of people migrate internationally for reasons related to work, family and study – involving migration processes that largely occur without fundamentally challenging either migrants or the countries they enter. In contrast, other people leave their homes and countries for a range of compelling and sometimes tragic reasons, such as conflict, persecution and disaster. While those who have been displaced, such as refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), comprise a relatively small percentage of all migrants, they are often the most in need of assistance and support.

This chapter, with its focus on key global migration data and trends, as well as new COVID-19 mobility and travel-related data, seeks to assist migration policymakers, practitioners and researchers in making better sense of the bigger picture of migration, by providing an up-to-date overview of global migration and migrants. The chapter draws upon current statistical sources compiled by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Bank, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the University

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1 UN DESA, 2021a.

2 The most recent estimate was 740 million internal migrants globally in 2009 (UNDP, 2009).

of Oxford.<sup>3</sup> The chapter provides an overview of global data and trends on international migrants (stocks) and international migration (flows). It also provides a discussion of particular migrant groups – namely, migrant workers, refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs and missing migrants – as well as of international remittances and COVID-19-related mobility restrictions.

The chapter also refers to the body of programmatic IOM data, particularly on assisted voluntary returns and reintegration, resettlement and displacement tracking.<sup>4</sup> While these data are generally not global or representative, they can provide insights into changes that have occurred in relevant programming and operations globally. As the United Nations migration agency, with activities relevant to all the themes discussed in this chapter, IOM data have the capacity to provide further insights on migration and its various dynamics, including the diverse needs of migrants.

### Defining migration, migrant and other key terms

Outside of general definitions of migration and migrant, such as those found in dictionaries, there exist various specific definitions of key migration-related terms, including in legal, administrative, research and statistical spheres.<sup>a</sup> While there is no universally agreed definition of migration or migrant, several definitions are widely accepted and have been developed in different settings, such as those set out in UN DESA's 1998 *Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration*.<sup>b</sup> Work has recently been completed by the United Nations Statistical Division and a task force of the United Nations Expert Group on Migration Statistics on a revised conceptual framework on statistics on international migration and mobility to guide the process under way in updating the 1998 Recommendations.<sup>c</sup> The conceptual framework was endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission at its 52nd session in March 2021, paving the way for revised recommendations on international migrant and mobility that are better able to account for different aspects of mobility, including migration.<sup>d</sup> The conceptual framework is summarized in Appendix A.

Technical definitions, concepts and categories of migrants and migration are necessarily informed by geographic, legal, political, methodological, temporal and other factors. For example, there are numerous ways in which migration events can be defined, including in relation to place of birth, citizenship, place of residence and duration of stay.<sup>e</sup> This is important when it comes to quantifying and analysing the effects of migration and migrants, however defined. We encourage readers to refer to primary sources cited in the chapter for information on specific definitions and categorizations underlying the data. Readers may also find the IOM *Glossary on Migration* (2019 edition) to be a useful reference. The *Glossary* is available at the IOM Publications Platform: <https://publications.iom.int/books/international-migration-law-ndeg34-glossary-migration>.

a See, for example, Poulain and Perrin, 2001.

b UN DESA, 1998.

c United Nations Statistics Division, 2021.

d United Nations Statistical Commission, 2021.

e See, for example, de Beer et al., 2010.

3 To keep within the scope of this report, statistics utilized in this chapter were current as at 30 June 2021, unless otherwise stated.

4 IOM data on victims of human trafficking are presented in Chapter 10 of this report.

## International migrants: numbers and trends

UN DESA produces estimates of the number of international migrants globally. The following discussion draws on its estimates, which are based on data provided by States.<sup>5</sup> The current United Nations *Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration* defines an “international migrant” as any person who has changed his or her country of usual residence, distinguishing between “short-term migrants” (those who have changed their countries of usual residence for at least three months, but less than one year) and “long-term migrants” (those who have done so for at least one year). However, not all countries use this definition in practice.<sup>6</sup> Some countries use different criteria to identify international migrants, for example by applying different minimum durations of residence. Differences in concepts and definitions, as well as data collection methodologies between countries, hinder full comparability of national statistics on international migrants. A review of the United Nations recommendations is currently under way, as discussed in the text box above.

The estimated number of international migrants has increased over the past 50 years. In 2020, almost 281 million people lived in a country other than their country of birth, or about 128 million more than 30 years earlier, in 1990 (153 million), and over three times the estimated number in 1970 (84 million). The proportion of international migrants as a share of the total global population has also increased, but only incrementally. The vast majority of people live in the country in which they were born. The impact of COVID-19 on the global population of international migrants is somewhat difficult to assess, one reason for this being that the latest available data are as at mid-2020,<sup>7</sup> fairly early in the pandemic. That said, it is estimated that COVID-19 may have reduced the growth in the stock of international migrants by around two million. In other words, had there not been COVID-19, the number of international migrants in 2020 would have likely been around 283 million.<sup>8</sup>

Table 1. International migrants, 1970–2020

Year	Number of international migrants	Migrants as a % of the world's population
1970	84 460 125	2.3
1975	90 368 010	2.2
1980	101 983 149	2.3
1985	113 206 691	2.3
1990	152 986 157	2.9
1995	161 289 976	2.8
2000	173 230 585	2.8
2005	191 446 828	2.9
2010	220 983 187	3.2
2015	247 958 644	3.4
2020	280 598 105	3.6

Source: UN DESA, 2008; UN DESA, 2021a.

Note: The number of entities (such as States, territories and administrative regions) for which data were made available in the UN DESA International Migrant Stock 2020 was 232. In 1970, the number of entities was 135.

5 Data are also provided to UN DESA by territories and administrative units. For a summary on UN DESA stock data sources, methodology and caveats, please see UN DESA, 2021b.

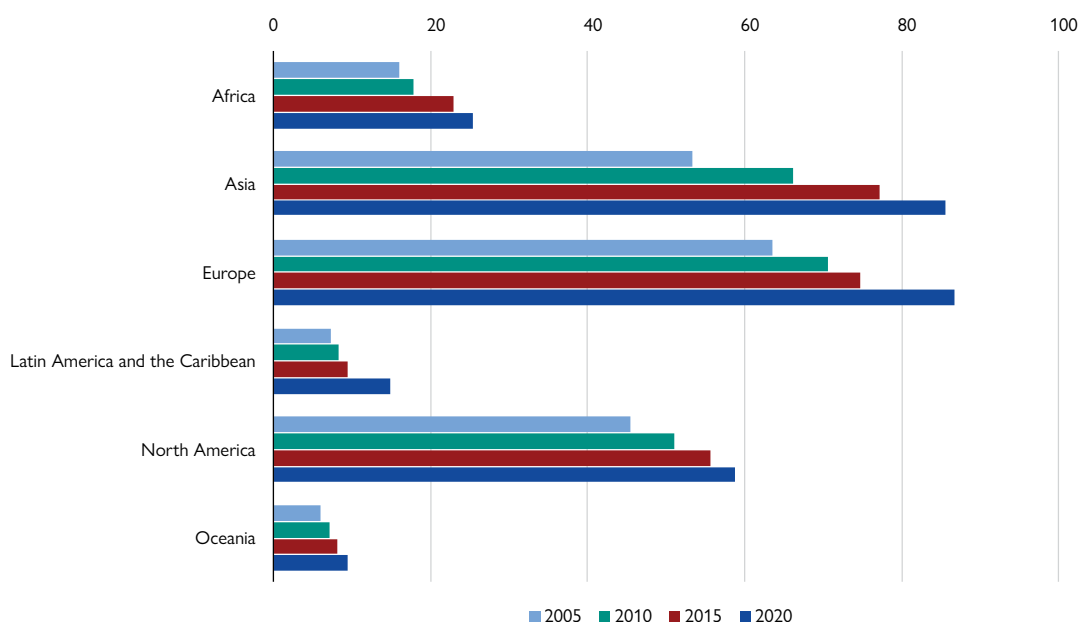
6 UN DESA, 1998.

7 UN DESA, 2021b.

8 UN DESA, 2021c.

When international migrant populations are examined by United Nations region, Europe is currently the largest destination for international migrants, with 87 million migrants (30.9% of the international migrant population), followed closely by the 86 million international migrants living in Asia (30.5%).<sup>9</sup> Northern America is the destination for 59 million international migrants (20.9%), followed by Africa with 25 million migrants (9%). Over the past 15 years, the number of international migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean has more than doubled from around 7 million to 15 million, making it the region with the highest growth rate of international migrants and the destination for 5.3 per cent of all international migrants. Around 9 million international migrants live in Oceania, or about 3.3 per cent of all migrants. The growth of international migrants living in each region between 2005 and 2020 is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. International migrants, by major region of residence, 2005–2020 (millions)



Source: UN DESA, 2021a.

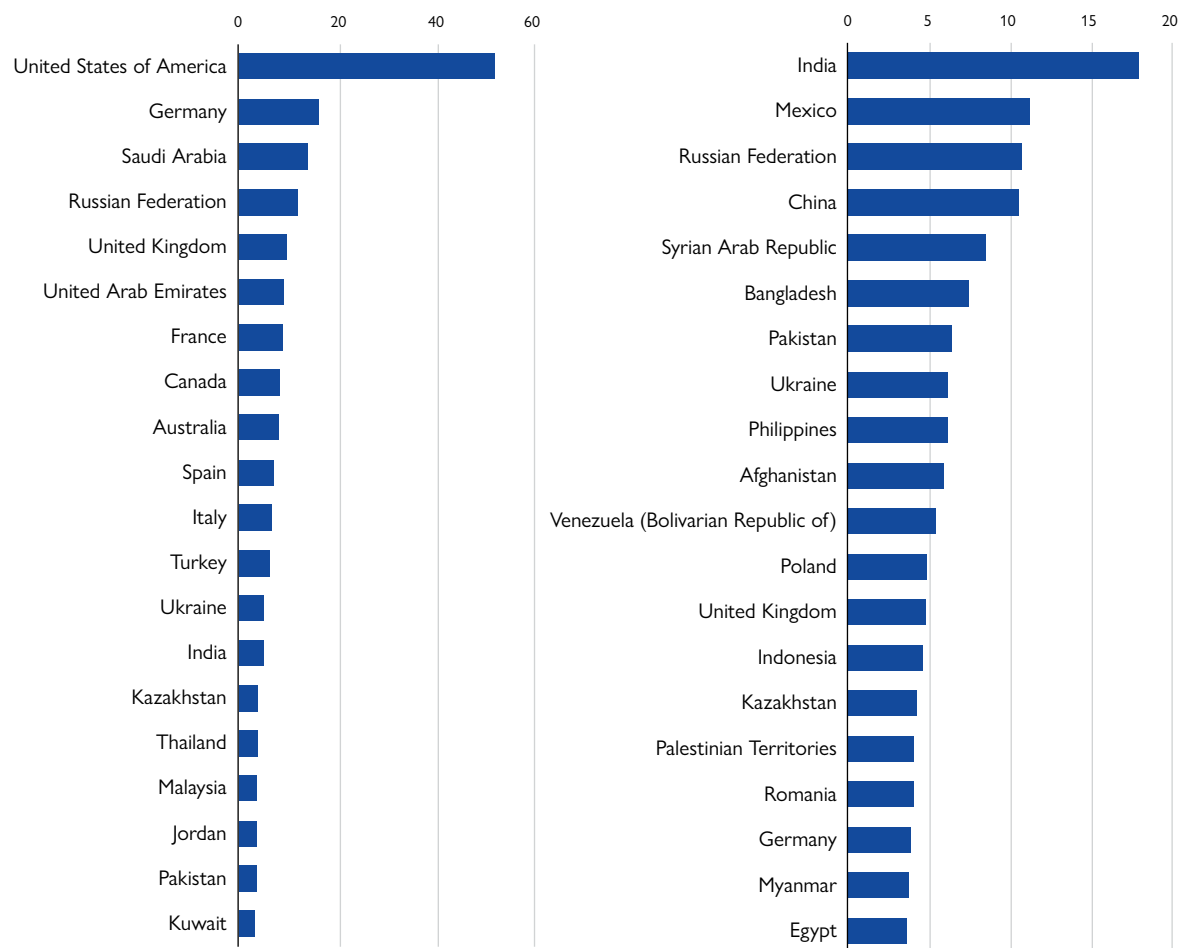
Oceania has the largest share of international migrants as a proportion of the total population, with 22 per cent of the population having been born in another country. Northern America has the second largest share of international migrants at 15.9 per cent, followed by Europe at 11.6 per cent. Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia have international migrant shares of 2.3, 1.9, and 1.8 per cent respectively.

As has been the case for the past 50 years, the United States of America remains the primary destination for migrants, at over 51 million international migrants. Germany has become the second most prominent destination, with nearly 16 million international migrants, while Saudi Arabia is the third largest destination country for international migrants, at 13 million. The Russian Federation and the United Kingdom round out the top five destination countries, with about 12 million and 9 million international migrants respectively. A list of the top 20 destination countries for migrants can be found in the left panel of Figure 2.

<sup>9</sup> UN DESA, 2021a.

With nearly 18 million people living abroad, India has the largest emigrant population in the world, making it the top origin country globally. Mexico is the second most significant origin country at around 11 million. The Russian Federation is the third largest origin country, followed closely by China (around 10.8 million and 10 million respectively). The fifth most significant origin country is the Syrian Arab Republic, with over 8 million people living abroad, mainly as refugees due to large-scale displacement over the last decade (see discussion in the refugee section below). The panel on the right in Figure 2 features the top 20 origins of migrants in 2020.

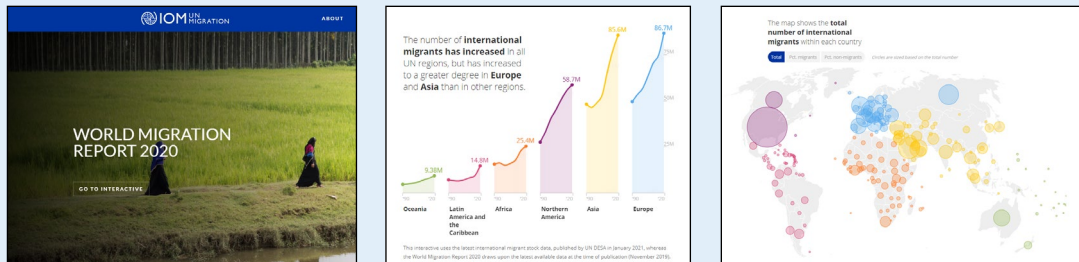
Figure 2. Top 20 destinations (left) and origins (right) of international migrants in 2020 (millions)



Source: UN DESA, 2021a.

## World Migration Report Data Visualization Platform

In May 2021, IOM launched a new World Migration Report web portal that integrates fact-based migration narratives with interactive data visualizations on the most up-to-date global migration data and trends.<sup>a</sup>



This digital format offers an intuitive representation of the data by displaying interactive visualizations of global migration trends. Building on the analysis developed in the report, the site provides country-level migration statistics and maps, interactive visualizations of migration corridors, and the leading remittance recipient and source nations since 1995, in addition to global and regional data. New interactive components on COVID-19 restrictions were added from this current report.

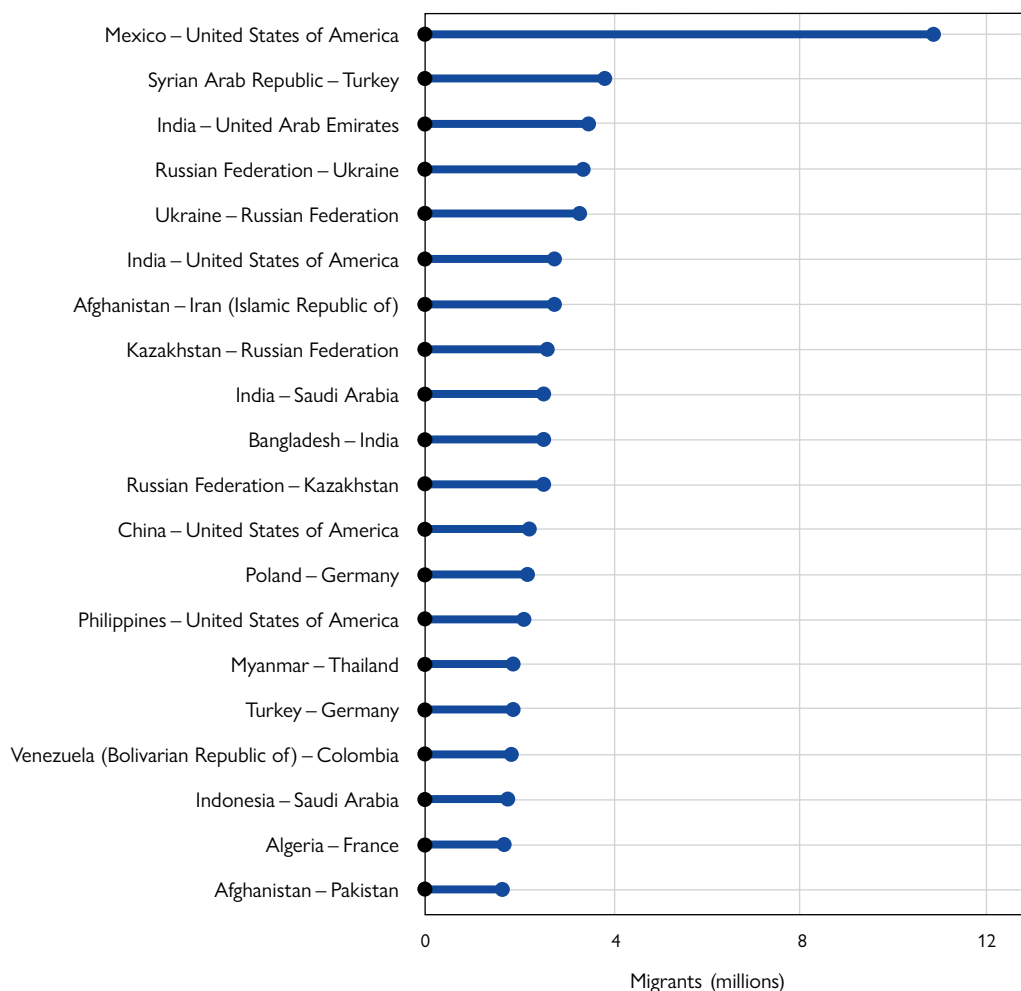
By creating a visual context for the information, data visualization favors a more accessible comprehension of the magnitudes of the numbers and the trends at play, supplementing the extensive analysis presented in the report. The interactive platform is available in English, French and Spanish.

a IOM, 2020a.

The available international migrant data include estimates of origin and destination links between two countries, allowing for the estimation of bilateral migration “corridors” globally. The size of a migration corridor from country A to country B is measured as the number of people born in country A who were residing in country B in 2020. Migration corridors represent an accumulation of migratory movements over time and provide a snapshot of how migration patterns have evolved into significant foreign-born populations in specific destination countries.

As can be seen in Figure 3, the Mexico to United States corridor is the largest in the world at nearly 11 million people. The second is from the Syrian Arab Republic to Turkey, comprising mainly refugees displaced by the Syrian Arab Republic’s decade-long civil war. On the other hand, the third largest corridor in the world, India to the United Arab Emirates (over 3 million), comprises mainly labour migrants. The bilateral corridor between the Russian Federation and Ukraine take up spots four and five among the largest corridors in the world. About 3 million people born in the Russian Federation now live in Ukraine, while nearly the same number of people have moved from Ukraine to the Russian Federation.

Figure 3. Top 20 international migration country-to-country corridors, 2020



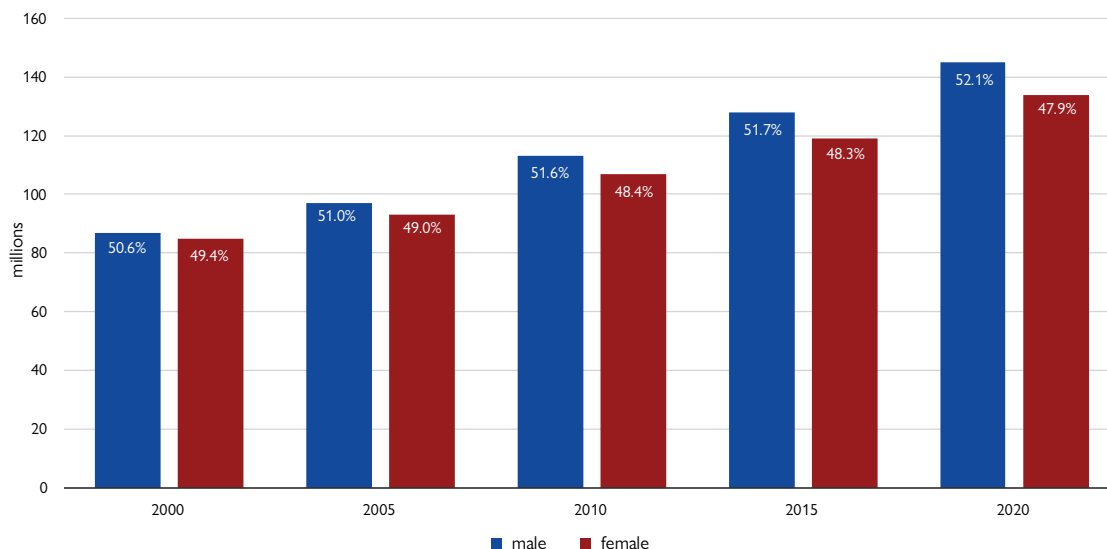
Source: UN DESA, 2021a.

Note: The corridors present the number of international migrants (millions) born in the first-mentioned country and residing in the second. Corridors represent an accumulation of migratory movements over time and provide a snapshot of how migration patterns have evolved into significant foreign-born populations in specific destination countries.

Most international migrants (around 78%) were of working age (between 15 and 64 years of age). Since 1990, the share of international migrants age 19 and younger has dropped from 18.9 per cent to 14.6 per cent, while international migrants older than 64 have remained steady at around 12.2 per cent.

There is currently a larger number of male than female international migrants worldwide, and the gap has increased over the past 20 years. In 2000, the male to female split was 50.6 to 49.4 per cent (or 88 million male migrants and 86 million female migrants). In 2020 the split is 51.9 to 48.0 per cent, with 146 million male migrants and 135 million female migrants. The share of female migrants has been decreasing since 2000, while the share of male migrants has increased by 1.4 percentage points. See Figure 4 for further breakdowns by sex.

Figure 4. International migrants, by sex, 2000–2020



Source: UN DESA, 2021a.

### Conflating “migration” and “migrant”

In a general sense, **migration** is the process of moving from one place to another. To migrate is to move, whether from a rural area to a city, from one district or province in a given country to another in that same country, or from one country to a new country. It involves action.

In contrast, a **migrant** is a person described as such for one or more reasons, depending on the context (see the text box on “Defining migration, migrant and other key terms” above). While in many cases “migrants” do undertake some form of migration, this is not always the case.

In some situations, people who have never undertaken migration may be referred to as migrants –children of people born overseas, for example, are commonly called second- or third-generation migrants.<sup>a</sup> This may even extend to situations involving statelessness, whereby whole groups of people are not able to access citizenship despite being born and raised in a country. Such people may even be referred to as irregular migrants by authorities.<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> See, for example, Neto, 1995; Fertig and Schmidt, 2001.

<sup>b</sup> Kyaw, 2017.



## International migration flows

While data on migrant stocks are widely available, data on global migration movements (flows) are much more limited. Available UN DESA estimates on global migrant stocks are extensive and global in scope; however, the database of migration flows only encompasses 45 countries.<sup>10</sup> Capturing data on migration flows is extremely challenging for several reasons. First, while international migration flows are generally accepted as covering inflows and outflows into and from countries, there has been a greater focus on recording inflows. For example, while countries such as Australia and the United States record cross-border movements, many others only count entries and not departures.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, migration flow data in some countries are derived from administrative events related to immigration status (for example, issuance/renewal/withdrawal of a residence permit), which are then used as a proxy for migration flows. Furthermore, migratory movements are often hard to separate from non-migratory travel, such as tourism or business.<sup>12</sup> Tracking migratory movements also requires considerable resources, infrastructure and ICT/knowledge systems. This poses particular challenges for developing countries, where the ability to collect, administer, analyse and report data on mobility, migration and other areas is often limited. Finally, many countries' physical geographies pose tremendous challenges for collecting data on migration flows. Entry and border management, for example, is particularly challenging in some regions because of archipelagic and isolated borders, and is further complicated by traditions of informal migration for work.<sup>13</sup>

There are currently two main data sets on international migration flows, both of which are derived from national statistics: UN DESA's International Migration Flows data set and OECD's International Migration Database. Since 2005, UN DESA has compiled data on the flows of international migrants to and from selected countries, based on nationally available statistics. At the time of writing (July 2021), there had been no update to the UN DESA flows data set, with the most current being the 2015 version. The 2015 migration flows data set comprises data from 45 countries, up from 29 countries in 2008 and 15 countries in 2005.<sup>14</sup>

The OECD has been collecting international migration flow data since 2000, allowing for trend analysis to be conducted over a subset of major destination countries, depicted in Figure 5 (though data are not standardized, as explained in the note under the figure). The latest available data indicate that in 2018, a 10 per cent increase in permanent migration inflows was recorded from the previous year of 2017. The United States, one of the main destination countries, recorded around 1.1 million new entries in 2018, a 2.7 per cent decrease compared with the previous year. Another country that recorded a notable change was Chile, with 64 per cent growth. With regard to the European countries in OECD, total migration increased by around 136,000 in 2018 (3.2% more than 2017). Within Europe, the United Kingdom and Italy recorded 6.5 and 5.2 per cent declines in permanent flows, respectively. The growth in Europe was instead led by Spain (+23%, or an increase of around 106,000) and Portugal (+52%, or an increase of around 32,000).

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10 UN DESA, 2015.

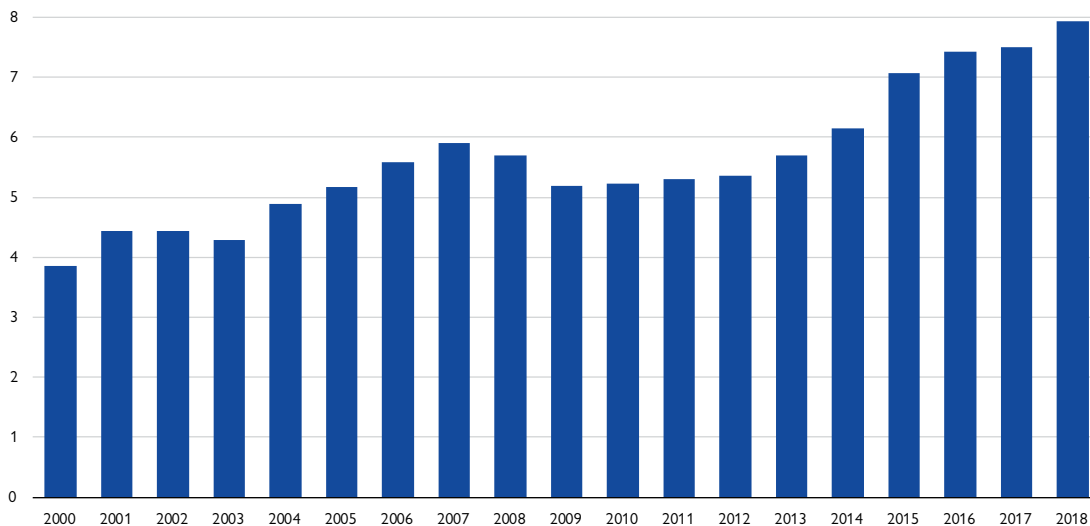
11 Koser, 2010; McAuliffe and Koser, 2017.

12 Skeldon, 2018.

13 Gallagher and McAuliffe, 2016.

14 For UN DESA migration flow data, as well as for the specific countries included, please see UN DESA, 2015.

Figure 5. Inflows of foreign nationals into OECD countries, permanent migration, 2000–2018 (millions)



Source: OECD, n.d.a.

Note: Data are not standardized and therefore differ from statistics on permanent migration inflows into selected countries contained in OECD's International Migration Outlook series. The 35 countries typically included in OECD statistics are the following: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States. In some years, data for particular countries are not available: data were made available for 31 countries in 2000. Notably, data for Greece have not been reported between 2000 and 2004, and data for Turkey were reported only for 2010, 2016, 2017 and 2018.

The impacts of COVID-19 on mobility globally are discussed below in this chapter and also in Chapter 5 of this report.

### *Unsafe migration flows*

Some migration corridors pose many more challenges than others, for migrants as well as for authorities. Migrants' journeys can sometimes be characterized by unsafe and even deadly outcomes, often related to a range of social, political, economic, environmental and policy factors that can profoundly impact the way in which people undertake migration.<sup>15</sup> In the wake of the tragic events of October 2013, in which more than 360 people died in the sinking of two boats near the Italian island of Lampedusa, IOM began collecting and compiling information on migrants who perish or go missing on migratory routes worldwide as part of its Missing Migrants Project.<sup>16</sup> Data sources include official records of coastguards and medical examiners, media stories, reports from non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies, and interviews with migrants.<sup>17</sup>

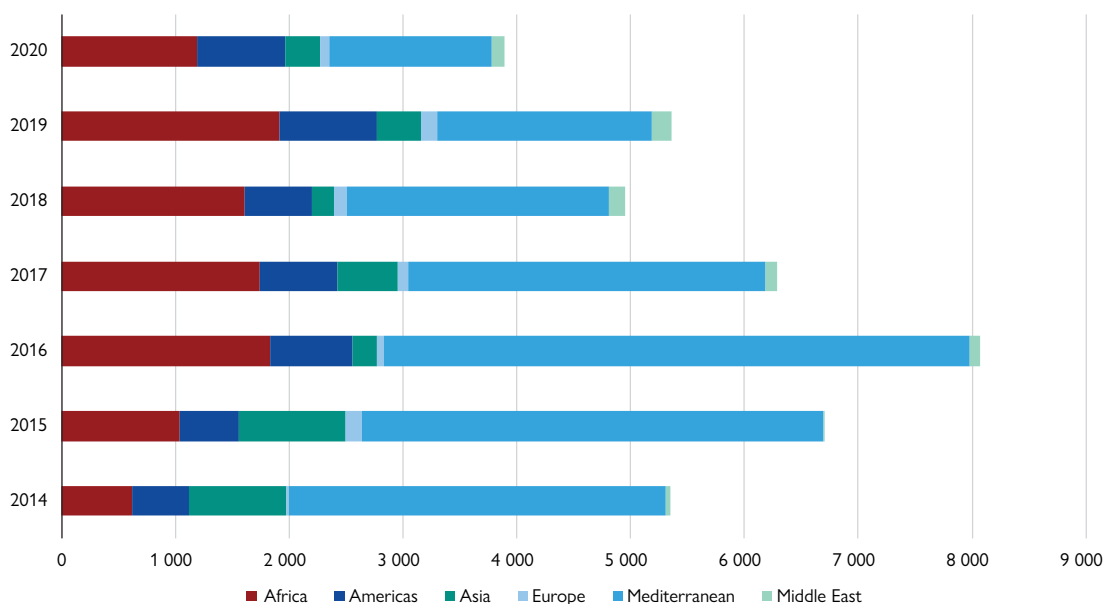
<sup>15</sup> McAuliffe et al., 2017.

<sup>16</sup> See <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/>.

<sup>17</sup> IOM, n.d.

Across six years of data collection, 2020 recorded the lowest total (around 3,900), compared with the previous almost 5,400 recorded in 2019 (see Figure 6). The decrease in deaths between 2019 and 2020 reflects, in part, the mobility restrictions imposed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is likely that 2021 will also record a reduced number of deaths overall, with travel restrictions continuing globally. In total, between 2014 and 2020, the Mediterranean Sea has seen the highest number of deaths, claiming the lives of over 21,200 people. In 2020, the Mediterranean continued to be the place with the highest known number of deaths during migration, recording over 1,460 fatalities. Following the trend observed over the previous six years, there was a higher proportion of deaths on the “Central Mediterranean route”.<sup>18</sup>

Figure 6. Migrant deaths by region, 2014–2020



Source: IOM, n.d. (accessed 20 September 2021).

Note: Data include recorded deaths as well as those reported as missing. See the Missing Migrants Project webpage for details of methodology and geographic regions (<https://missingmigrants.iom.int/>).

The Missing Migrants Project faces notable challenges in its data collection. For instance, most recorded deaths are of people travelling via clandestine routes, which are often at sea or in remote areas (to evade detection), meaning remains are often not found. Few official sources collect and make data on migrant deaths publicly available. Relying on testimonies of fellow migrants and media sources can be problematic due to inaccuracies and incomplete coverage. Nevertheless, the project sheds light on a previously under-researched and neglected topic, highlighting the need to address this ongoing tragic issue, including in the context of the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

### *COVID-19 impacts on mobility*

COVID-19 has been the most severe pandemic in a century, with its combination of high transmission, virus strains and the severity of the disease forcing policymakers into previously uncharted territory. While the main focus has necessarily been on responding to the global health crisis (e.g. virus testing, disease treatment, and vaccination development and programming), part of the response has involved drastic changes to freedom of movement of people all around the world, which in turn has massively impacted human mobility globally. COVID-19-related immobility has become the “great disrupter” of migration.<sup>19</sup>

Governments around the world implemented various measures to limit the spread of the virus, and a range of restrictions was introduced from early 2020, evolving over time. New data sets emerged to track policy responses globally, such as the University of Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker,<sup>20</sup> which has recorded a wide range of government responses globally, such as “stay-at-home” measures, workplace closures, school closures, restrictions on gatherings, restrictions on internal movements within a country, and international travel control measures. In addition, IOM began tracking travel restrictions globally early in the pandemic, drawing upon a range of data and reporting results via its COVID-19 Mobility Impacts dashboard.<sup>21</sup> See additional data, research and analysis in the thematic Chapter 5 on COVID-19 impacts in this report.

Some countries, such as El Salvador, Israel, New Zealand, Nigeria, Qatar and Singapore, quickly imposed significant international travel restrictions (by early March 2020), while others took action weeks or months later.<sup>22</sup> Some countries stopped all entry of foreign citizens, some banned citizens of specific countries, while even further, some countries completely closed borders to stop departure and entry of all people, including their own citizens.<sup>23</sup> Quarantine measures were also introduced by some countries, requiring passengers entering a country to be quarantined in isolation for a minimum period (typically 10 to 14 days) immediately upon arrival.

Overall, COVID-19 travel restriction measures – both internal and international – were quickly put in place by the vast majority of countries around the world, with the peak occurring in late March to early April 2020 (see Figure 7). While international travel restrictions were more likely to have been enacted early in the pandemic, there was a greater variety of control measures during the initial weeks (including screening early on), probably due to governments needing to assess the severity of the crisis during a period of extraordinary uncertainty. As the severity of COVID-19 became clear, the number of both international and internal travel restrictions rose drastically.

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<sup>19</sup> McAuliffe, 2020.

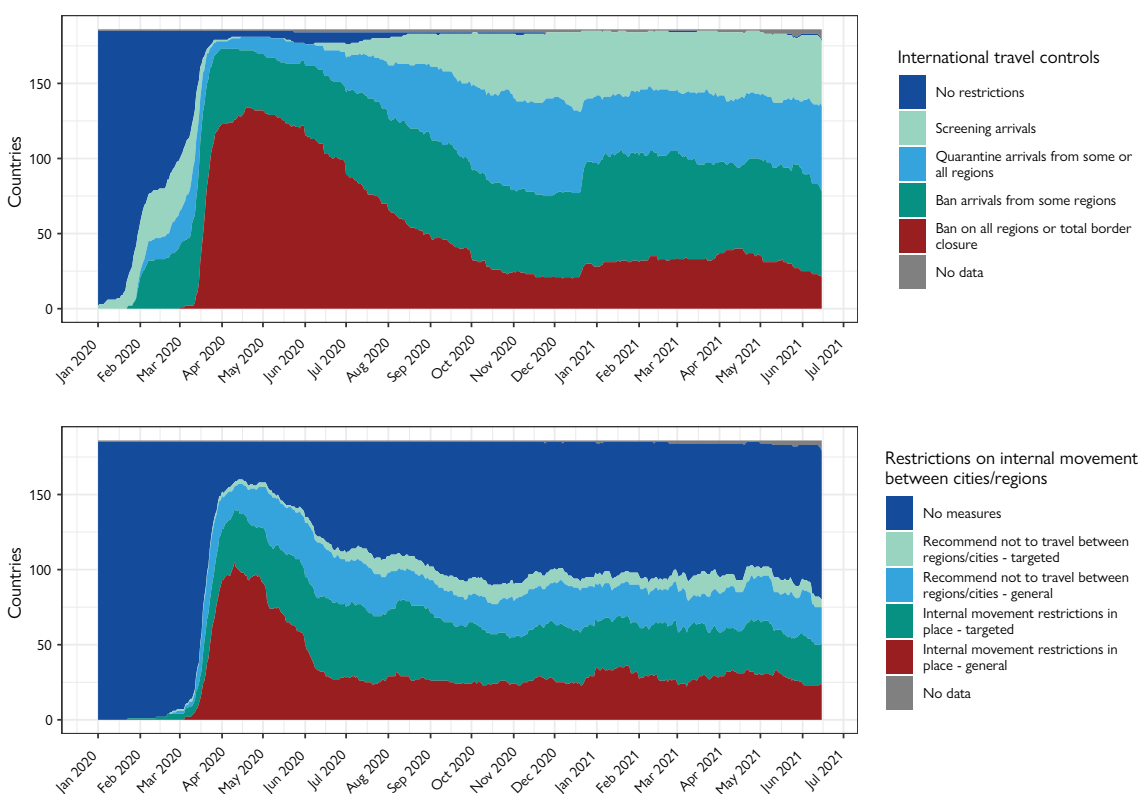
<sup>20</sup> Hale et al., 2021.

<sup>21</sup> See <https://migration.iom.int/>.

<sup>22</sup> Hale et al., 2021.

<sup>23</sup> IOM, 2020b; *Al Jazeera*, 2020.

Figure 7. COVID-19-related travel controls: international and internal, January 2020–June 2021, all countries



Source: Hale et al., 2021.

Notes: Categories used are those of the Oxford Government Response Tracker; categories included in the data set are for COVID-19-related restrictions only and do not reflect other travel restrictions that may also be in place, such as those related to visa restrictions, entry bans based on citizenship, departure/exit restrictions and internal movement restrictions.

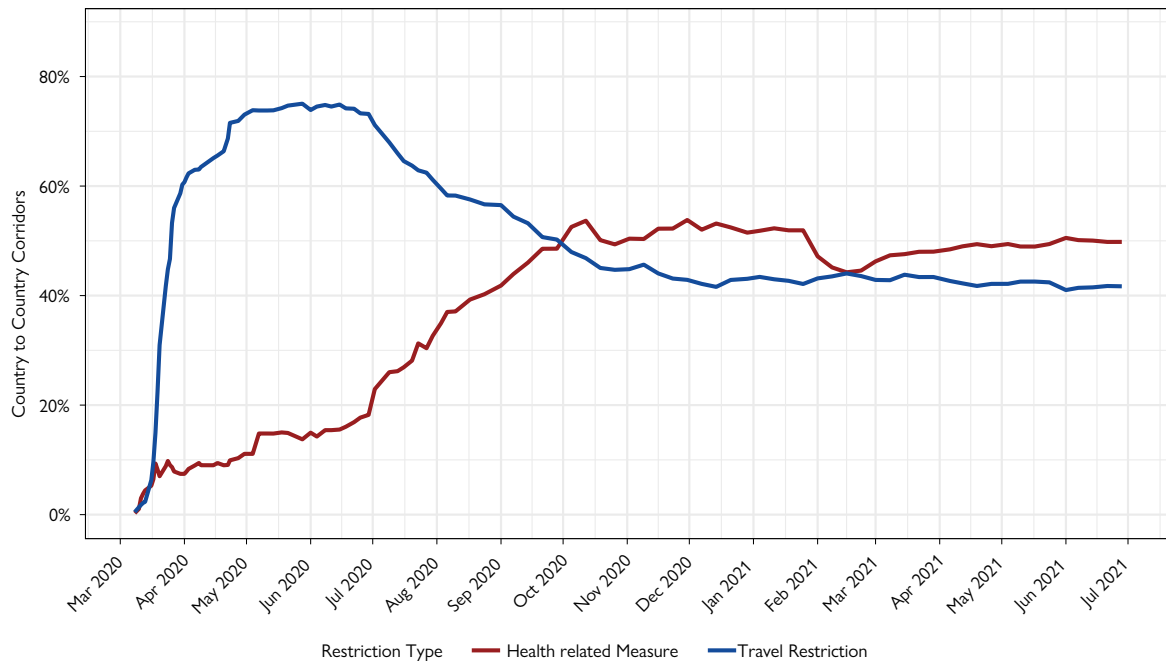
The differences in the evolution of the restrictions can be seen in Figure 7, which shows that COVID-19-related international travel restrictions of some sort remained in place in all countries globally one year after the World Health Organization's (WHO) declaration of the pandemic on 10 March 2020.<sup>24</sup> In contrast, internal restrictions declined over time. That said, there are three key points to highlight from these data:

- While there are international travel restrictions of some sort in all countries, there is a mix of screening, quarantine and bans (total/specific);
- More than half of all countries had travel bans in place (total or specific) one year after the pandemic commenced; and
- More than a third of all countries had internal travel restrictions in place one year after the pandemic commenced.

24 WHO, 2020.

When international COVID-19-related travel restrictions are examined over time, we can see that travel/border restrictions and health-related measures have changed as the technology and logistical capacity supporting health-related measures has been developed and rolled out. Pre-travel testing, quarantine and vaccination-certificated entry being rolled out by different countries saw the travel restrictions being overtaken by health-related measures in October 2020.

Figure 8. COVID-19-related international travel measures: March 2020–July 2021, all countries

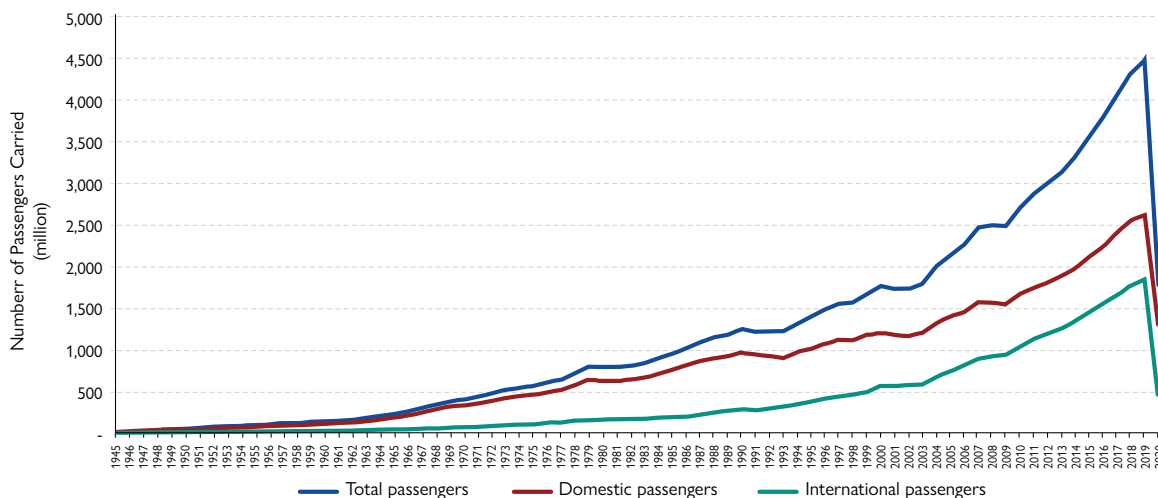


Source: IOM, 2021a.

Notes: Only countries (not territories) are included in this analysis. Health-related measures include health screening and monitoring, testing/medical certificates, and quarantine measures. Travel restrictions include passenger restrictions based on nationality or arrival from a geographic location. See the DTM mobility restrictions page for more information on the methodology.

The impact of the COVID-19-related travel restrictions becomes very clear when air passenger data are examined. We can see from long-term air passenger figures that COVID-19 travel restrictions had a major impact on both international and domestic air travel in 2020. Total air passengers carried dropped by 60 per cent from around 4.5 billion in 2019 to 1.8 billion in 2020 (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Air passengers carried globally, 1945–2020



Source: ICAO, 2021.

Overall, we can see that COVID-19 has had a major impact on travel, and therefore on migration, with the restrictions remaining in place longer than many had anticipated, caused in part by the challenges posed by emerging virus strains and rolling “waves” of infections. The long-term impacts are yet to be fully understood, but the analysis outlined in Chapter 5 points to the transformation of migration and mobility in several key areas.

## COVID-19 and stranded migrants

The mobility restrictions put in place during COVID-19 resulted in major problems for some migrants and exacerbated existing vulnerabilities. The border closures stranded thousands of migrants, including seasonal workers, temporary residence holders, international students, migrants travelling for medical treatment, beneficiaries of assisted voluntary return and reintegration, seafarers and others.

By mid-2020, the pandemic-related restrictions had stranded nearly 3 million people outside of their home countries, most of whom were frequent travellers such as migrant workers, students and tourists. Many of these travellers were left without consular services, including help with their legal status in the country, and some were without enough money to provide food and shelter. The majority were in the Middle East and North Africa (around 1.3 million), followed by Asia and the Pacific (around 977,000).

The specific issues faced by these migrants differed substantially, as did their situations, but in general, challenges fell into two categories. First were movement-related issues. These related to immobility that resulted from the emergency restrictions on transportation and movements. Other significant challenges were the costs and logistics involved in returning home. Moreover, the lack of collaboration between countries of origin, destination and transit further exacerbated movement issues.

Second were the vulnerabilities connected with the migratory status of migrants. Status can preclude the possibility of government support, which exposed people to, or placed them at risk of, extreme poverty. Other vulnerabilities included xenophobia and stigmatization, the stranding of people at sea, and increased health risks for those living in overcrowded shelters and/or those unable to access COVID-19 vaccination programmes.

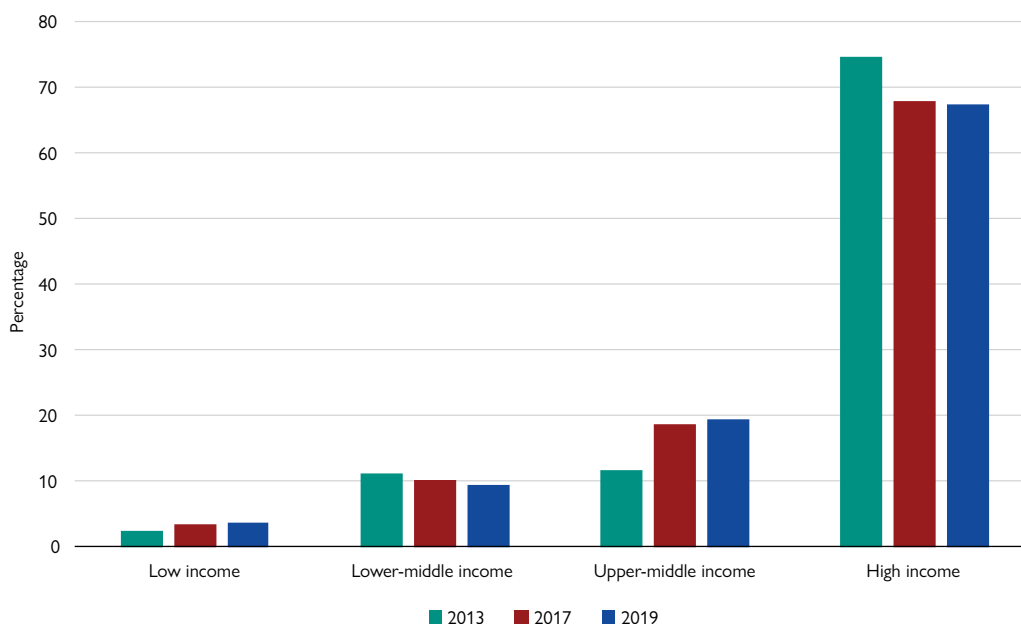
Sources: IOM, 2020c; Benton et al., 2021.

## Migrant workers

The latest available estimates indicate that there were roughly 169 million migrant workers around the world in 2019, accounting for nearly two thirds (62%) of the (then) 272 million global stock of international migrants.<sup>25</sup> It is worth noting that these estimates predate COVID-19, which has affected international labour migration in many ways, although it provides a benchmark against which COVID-19 impacts can be assessed in the future.<sup>26</sup> When compared with the global population of international migrants of working age – regarded as 15 years of age or older (245.6 million) – migrant workers account for 68.8 per cent.

In 2019, 67 per cent of migrant workers were residing in high-income countries – an estimated 113.9 million people. An additional 49 million migrant workers (29%) were living in middle-income countries, and 6.1 million (3.6%) were in low-income countries. While we are unable to compare the numbers of migrant workers over time, it is useful to examine changes in proportional distribution. The concentration of international migrant workers in upper-middle- and high-income countries has remained stable at 86.4 per cent in 2013, 86.5 per cent in 2017 and 86.9 per cent in 2019. However, there was a noticeable change within these two categories over time; that is, from 2013 to 2019, high-income countries experienced a 7.3 percentage point drop in migrant workers (from 74.7% to 67.4%), while upper-middle-income countries observed a 7.8 percentage point increase (from 11.7% to 19.5%) (see Figure 10). This apparent shift may be influenced by economic growth in middle-income countries and/or changes to labour immigration regulations in high-income countries. The share of migrant workers in the total workforce across country income groups was quite small in low- (2.3%) and in lower- and upper-middle-income countries (1.4% and 2.2%, respectively), but much greater for high-income countries (18.2%).

Figure 10. Migrant workers by destination country income level, 2013, 2017 and 2019



Source: ILO, 2018; ILO, 2021.

<sup>25</sup> The content in this subsection is based on and drawn from ILO, 2021. Please refer to this document for explanatory notes, deeper analysis, limitations and caveats associated with the numbers and trends presented. More generally, information on foreign-born employment in OECD countries is available from OECD, n.d.b.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, ILO, 2021.



Male migrant workers outnumbered female migrant workers by 28.8 million in 2019, with 98.9 million males (58.5%) and 70.1 million females (41.5%), in a context where males comprised a higher number of international migrants of working age (128 million or 52.1%, compared with 117.6 million or 47.9% females). This represents a slight shift since 2013, towards an even more gendered migrant worker population, when the share of male migrant workers constituted 55.7 per cent and females 44.3 per cent. See Table 2 for further breakdowns by income level and sex.

Table 2. International migrant workers, by sex and income level of destination country, 2019

	Migrant workers (millions)			Proportion of all migrant workers (%)		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
Low-income	3.7	2.4	6.1	2.2	1.4	3.6
Lower-middle-income	10.5	5.6	16.0	6.2	3.3	9.5
Upper-middle-income	19.5	13.5	33.0	11.5	8.0	19.5
High-income	65.3	48.5	113.9	38.6	28.7	67.4
<b>Global Total</b>	<b>98.9</b>	<b>70.1</b>	<b>169.0</b>	<b>58.5</b>	<b>41.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>

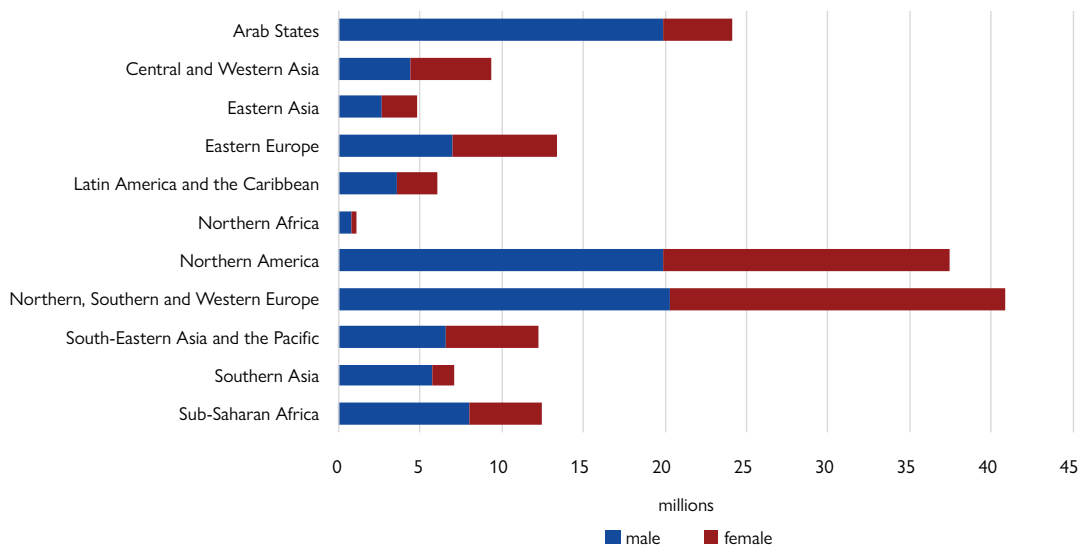
Source: ILO, 2021.

As evident from the data, the international migrant worker population is currently gendered as well as geographically concentrated. There is a much larger number of male than female migrant workers worldwide (see Table 2), with a gender composition that sees much higher numbers of men in low- and lower-middle-income countries compared with women, and in contrast to the gender splits for high-income countries.

In terms of geography, and as seen in Figure 11 below, 102.4 million or almost 61 per cent of all migrant workers resided in three subregions: Northern America; the Arab States; and Northern, Southern and Western Europe.<sup>27</sup> Notably, there is a striking gender imbalance of migrant workers in two regions: Southern Asia (5.7 million males compared with 1.4 million females) and the Arab States (19.9 million males compared with 4.2 million females). The Arab States region is one of the top destinations for migrant workers, where they comprise 41.4 per cent of the entire working population, often dominating in key sectors.

<sup>27</sup> The ILO category of "Arab States" includes the following countries and territories: Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, Yemen and the Palestinian Territories.

Figure 11. Geographic distribution of migrant workers by sex (millions), 2019



Source: ILO, 2021.

Note: The figure reflects ILO geographic regions and subregions, and does not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM. Please see annex A of ILO, 2021 for more information on regional breakdowns. Please note that the rest of this chapter refers to the UN DESA geographical regions.

### IOM's assisted voluntary return and reintegration programmes

IOM has implemented assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) programmes since 1979. IOM's AVRR support to migrants comprises a range of activities and typically includes: the provision of pre-departure counselling, the purchase of flight tickets, administrative and travel assistance and, where possible, the provision of reintegration assistance.

On average, from 2005 to 2014, IOM assisted 34,000 migrants per year with AVRR. In line with the rise in the volume of migration in recent years, the number of returns has also increased (up until COVID-19). In 2019, AVRR support was provided to 64,958 migrants returning from 136 host or transit countries to 164 countries or territories of origin. However, this declined dramatically in 2020 due to COVID-19. Throughout 2020, AVRR support was provided to 42,181 (15,149 in Q1, 2,588 in Q2, 10,521 in Q3 and 13,923 in Q4) migrants returning from 139 (88 in Q1, 41 in Q2, 84 in Q3 and 122 in Q4) host or transit countries or territories to 150 (136 in Q1, 70 in Q2, 110 in Q3 and 132 in Q4) countries or territories of origin.

Sources: IOM, 2020d; IOM, 2020e; IOM, 2020f.

## International remittances

Remittances are financial or in-kind transfers made by migrants directly to families or communities in their countries of origin. The World Bank compiles global data on international remittances, notwithstanding the myriad data gaps, definitional differences and methodological challenges in compiling accurate statistics.<sup>28</sup> Its data, however, do not capture unrecorded flows through formal or informal channels, and the actual magnitudes of global remittances are therefore likely to be larger than available estimates.<sup>29</sup> This issue has come to the fore during the pandemic, following a much more positive outcome in 2020 for international remittance flows, contrary to initial dire projections; this was due in part to a shift from informal channels to formal channels in response to COVID-19 immobility restrictions, among other reasons (see text box below).<sup>30</sup> Despite these issues, available data reflect a long-term increasing trend in international remittances in recent years, rising from USD 128 billion in 2000 to USD 702 billion in 2020.

Despite the initially projected 20 per cent decline in international remittances globally for 2020 (made in April of that year),<sup>31</sup> the annual data show that there was only a slight dip in remittances globally (2.4% decrease) in 2020, amounting to USD 702 billion, down from USD 719 billion in 2019. However, the three consecutive years prior to 2020 all witnessed an increase: from 2016 to 2019, global (inward) flows of remittances increased by an estimated 7.2 per cent, from USD 597 billion in 2016 to USD 640 billion in 2017, and by 8.4 per cent and 3.6 per cent from 2017 to 2018 (from USD 640 billion to USD 694 billion) and from 2018 to 2019 (from USD 694 billion to USD 719 billion), respectively. Consistent with this trend, remittances to low- and middle-income countries (which account for the majority of the global total) decreased in 2020 (from USD 548 billion in 2019 to USD 540 billion) after the positive trend from 2016 to 2018 (from USD 441 billion in 2016 to USD 478 billion in 2017 and USD 524 billion in 2018). Since the mid-1990s, international remittances have greatly surpassed official development assistance levels defined as government aid designed to promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries (see Figure 12 below).<sup>32</sup>

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28 The content of much of this subsection, unless otherwise noted, is based on and drawn from the World Bank's data in relation to migration and remittances (World Bank, n.d.). In particular, the World Bank's annual remittances data sets (ibid.), *Migration and Development Brief 34* (Ratha et al., 2021), and its 12 May press release (World Bank, 2021a) are key sources of information. Please refer to these sources as well as the World Bank's *Factbooks on Migration and Development*, including its latest, published in 2016, for explanatory notes, deeper analysis, caveats, limitations and methodologies associated with the numbers and trends presented.

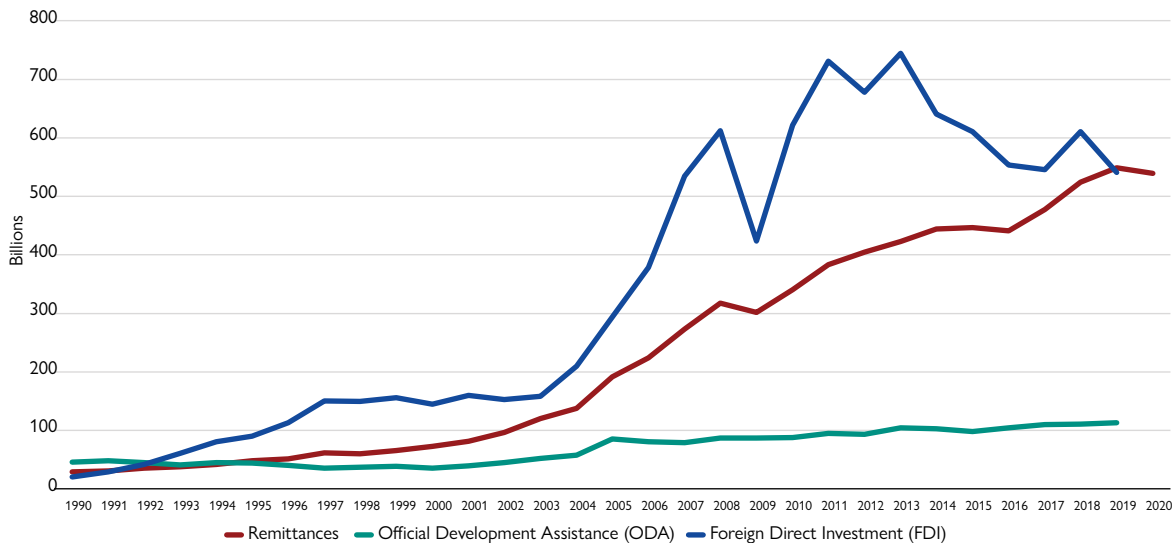
29 World Bank, 2016.

30 IMF, 2020; IOM, 2020g; IOM, 2020h; IOM, 2020i; IOM, 2021b.

31 Ratha et al., 2020a.

32 See, for example, OECD, n.d.c, which also contains data on official development assistance. There is a growing body of work exploring the developmental, economic and social impacts of this trend.

Figure 12. International remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries (1990–2020)



Source: World Bank, n.d. (accessed June 2021).

Note: All numbers are in current (nominal) USD billion.

In 2020, India, China, Mexico, the Philippines and Egypt were (in descending order) the top five remittance recipient countries, although India and China were well above the rest, with total inward remittances exceeding USD 59 billion for each country (see Table 3). G7 countries France and Germany remained in the top 10 of receiving countries globally in 2020, just as they have done since 2005 (see Table 3). It should be noted, however, that the majority of inflows are not household transfers, but relate to salaries of cross-border workers who work in Switzerland while residing in France or Germany.<sup>33</sup>

33 Eurostat, 2020.

Table 3. Top 10 countries receiving/sending international remittances (2005–2020)  
(current USD billion)

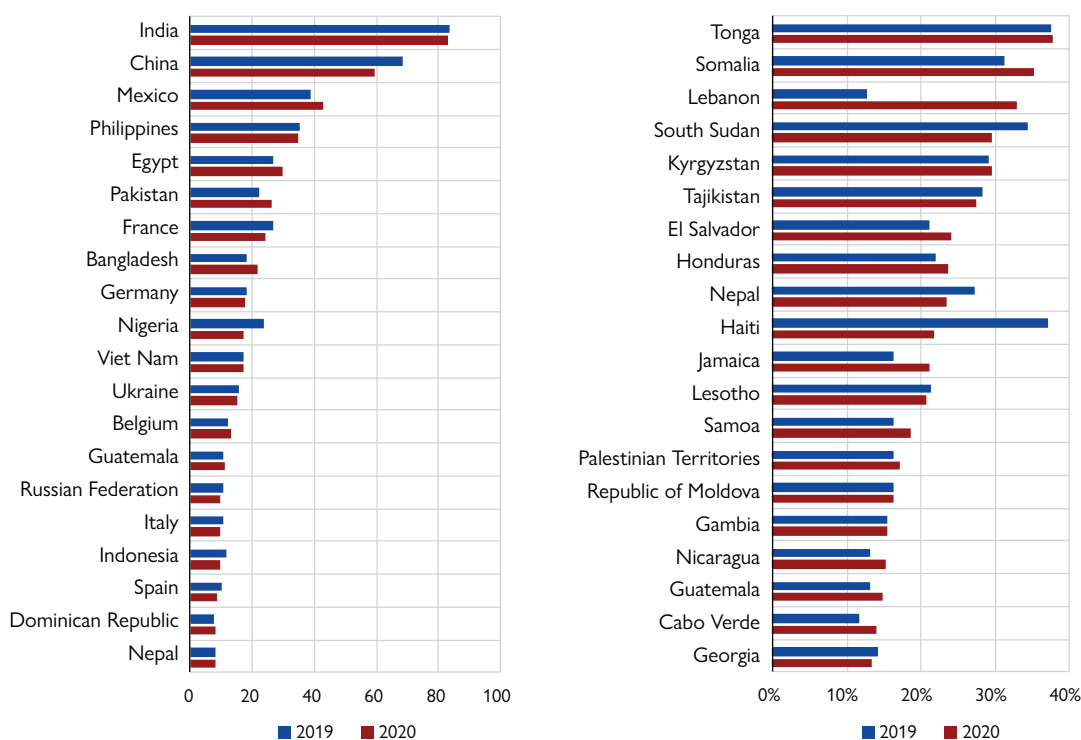
Top countries receiving remittances							
2005		2010		2015		2020	
China	23.63	India	53.48	India	68.91	India	83.15
Mexico	22.74	China	52.46	China	63.94	China	59.51
India	22.13	Mexico	22.08	Philippines	29.80	Mexico	42.88
Nigeria	14.64	Philippines	21.56	Mexico	26.23	Philippines	34.91
France	14.21	France	19.90	France	24.07	Egypt	29.60
Philippines	13.73	Nigeria	19.74	Nigeria	20.63	Pakistan	26.11
Belgium	6.88	Germany	12.79	Pakistan	19.31	France	24.48
Germany	6.86	Egypt	12.45	Egypt	18.33	Bangladesh	21.75
Spain	6.66	Belgium	10.99	Germany	15.58	Germany	17.90
Poland	6.47	Bangladesh	10.85	Bangladesh	15.30	Nigeria	17.21
Top countries sending remittances							
2005		2010		2015		2020	
United States	47.75	United States	50.53	United States	60.72	United States	68.00
Saudi Arabia	14.30	Saudi Arabia	27.07	United Arab Emirates	40.70	United Arab Emirates	43.24
Germany	12.71	Russian Federation	21.45	Saudi Arabia	38.79	Saudi Arabia	34.60
Switzerland	10.86	Switzerland	18.51	Switzerland	26.03	Switzerland	27.96
United Kingdom	9.64	Germany	14.68	Russian Federation	19.69	Germany	22.02
France	9.47	Italy	12.88	Germany	18.25	China	18.12
Republic of Korea	6.90	France	12.03	Kuwait	15.20	Russian Federation	16.89
Russian Federation	6.83	Kuwait	11.86	France	12.79	France	15.04
Luxembourg	6.74	Luxembourg	10.66	Qatar	12.19	Luxembourg	14.20
Malaysia	5.68	United Arab Emirates	10.57	Luxembourg	11.19	Netherlands	13.92

Source: World Bank, n.d. (accessed June 2021).

Note: All numbers are in current (nominal) USD billion.

There is no consensus on how “overreliance” on international remittances can be defined, but dependency on remittances is mostly measured as the ratio of remittances to gross domestic product (GDP). There are currently 29 countries (out of 177 countries reported) that have a remittance-to-GDP ratio above 10 per cent. The top five remittance-receiving countries by share of GDP in 2020 were Tonga (37.7%), followed by Somalia (35.3%), Lebanon (32.9%), South Sudan (29.5%) and Kyrgyzstan (29.4%). While many countries maintained similar levels in 2020 as in 2019, the share of GDP in Lebanon tripled as its GDP plummeted in 2020. By contrast, the Haitian remittance economy as a share of GDP halved in value due to limited access to local currencies and the possible rise in transfer costs. Heavy reliance on remittances can cultivate a culture of dependency in the receiving country, potentially lowering labour force participation and slowing economic growth.<sup>34</sup> Too much dependence on remittances also makes the economy more vulnerable to sudden changes in remittance receipts.<sup>35</sup>

Figure 13. Top 20 recipient countries/territories of international remittances by total in USD billion (left) and share of GDP (right), 2019–2020



Source: World Bank, n.d. (accessed June 2021).

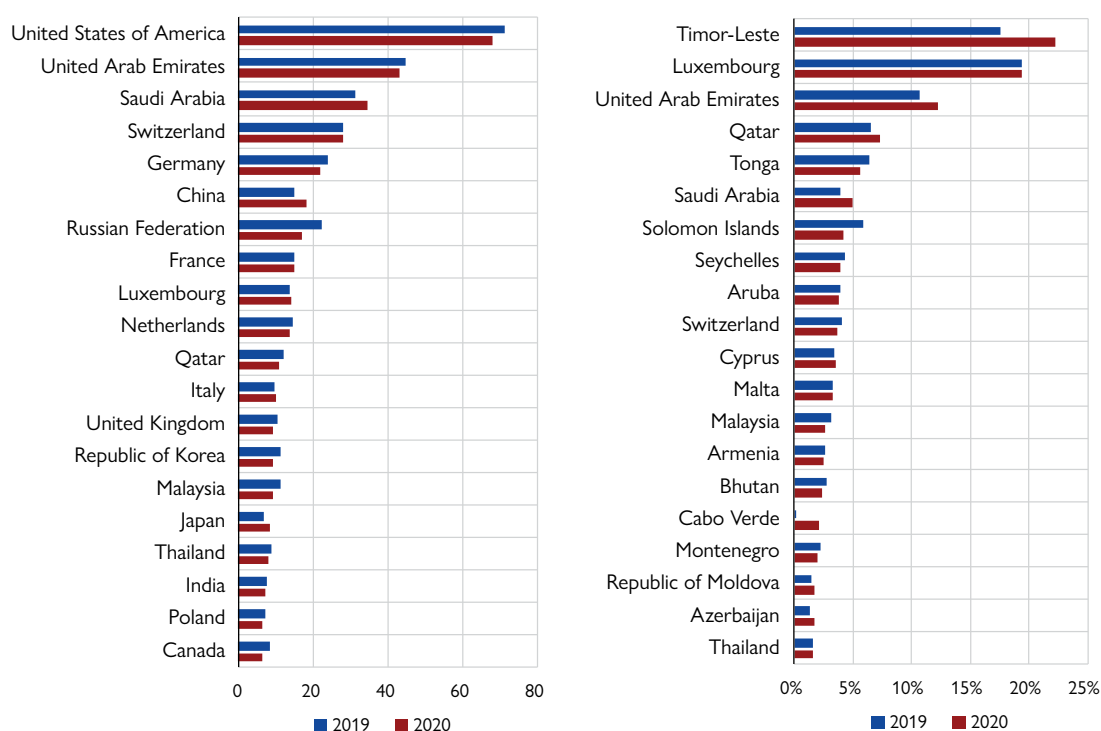
Note: All numbers are in current (nominal) USD billion. Yemen is not included as the remittances data have not been updated.

<sup>34</sup> Amuedo-Dorantes, 2014.

<sup>35</sup> Ghosh, 2006.

High-income countries are almost always the main source of international remittances. For decades, the United States has consistently been the top remittance-sending country in the world, with a total outflow of USD 68 billion in 2020, followed by the United Arab Emirates (USD 43.24 billion), Saudi Arabia (USD 34.60 billion) and Switzerland (USD 27.96 billion). The fifth highest remittance-sending country in both 2019 and 2020 was Germany (with total outflows of USD 23.94 billion and 22.02 billion, respectively). In addition to its role as a top recipient, China (classified as an upper-middle-income country by the World Bank) has also been a significant source of international remittances, with USD 15.14 billion in 2019 and USD 18.12 billion reported in 2020.

Figure 14. Top 20 sending countries/territories of international remittances by total in USD billion (left) and share of GDP (right), 2019–2020



Source: World Bank, n.d. (accessed June 2021)

Note: All numbers are in current (nominal) USD billion.

## COVID-19, international remittances and digitalization

During 2020, many analysts around the world were closely following the latest information and analysis to understand the migration and mobility implications of COVID-19 on international remittances.<sup>a</sup> Throughout 2020, remittances data from several countries defied World Bank projections of major declines globally in remittances, with some countries posting record monthly inflows after mid-2020.

According to World Bank's May 2021 report,<sup>b</sup> remittance flows have proved to be resilient during the COVID-19 crisis. In 2020, officially recorded remittance flows reached USD 702 billion, only 2.4 per cent below the USD 719 billion seen in 2019, which is in complete contrast to the previous estimates (USD 572 billion in April 2020<sup>c</sup> and USD 666 billion in October 2020<sup>d</sup>).

Along with policy responses to support remittances and better economic conditions, a move from informal channels (e.g. carrying cash across borders) towards more formal channels through an increased digitalization of financial transfers appears to be one of the most important factors in explaining the slower-than-expected decline in remittance flows. Therefore, official data are likely to capture more remittances even if the true size of total international remittances (formal and informal) may have fallen. For example, in Mexico, remittance flows shifted from informal to formal as border crossings were constrained during 2020 and electronic wire transfers became the only option to remit.<sup>e</sup>

Several countries have taken measures to encourage the use of digital services during the pandemic, and mobile money platforms have made the transfer of remittances cheaper and faster than the traditional cash and bank transfers. Through mobile money, remittances have become more traceable, making this method safer than informal channels.<sup>f</sup>

However, the costs of sending remittances home, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, still remain high despite global efforts to reduce the cost of international remittances since the late 2000s. As of March 2021, sending remittances globally costs an average of 6.38 per cent of the amount sent (UN SDG target to reduce to less than 3%) and 26 per cent of country-to-country corridors are above a total cost of 5 per cent (UN SDG target to reach zero such corridors).<sup>g</sup>

COVID-19 may provide the extra push to harness technology to further expand remittance channels and drive down costs.

a IOM, 2020g; IOM, 2020h; IOM, 2020i; IOM, 2021b.

b Ratha et al., 2021.

c Ratha et al., 2020a.

d Ratha et al., 2020b.

e Dinarte et al., 2021.

f Aron and Muellbauer, 2019.

g World Bank, 2021b.



## Refugees and asylum seekers

By the end of 2020, there was a total of 26.4 million refugees globally, with 20.7 million under UNHCR's mandate and 5.7 million refugees registered by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) in the Near East.<sup>36</sup> The total number of refugees is the highest on record, although the annual rate of growth has slowed since 2012.

There were also approximately 4.1 million people seeking international protection and awaiting determination of their refugee status, referred to as asylum seekers. In 2020, the global number of first-instance asylum claims lodged was 1.1 million. This 45 per cent drop from the previous year's 2 million represents the largest single-year decrease since 2000, when asylum requests began being aggregated globally by UNHCR, and was a direct result of COVID-19 mobility restrictions. The top recipient remained the United States with around 250,800 claims, a 14 per cent decrease from the previous year (301,000). Second placed was Germany, with 102,600 new claims, a notable decrease from 2019 (142,500), and the lowest recorded in almost 10 years.

At the end of 2020, those under 18 years of age constituted around 38 per cent of the refugee population (8 million of the 20.7 million refugees under UNHCR's mandate). Unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) lodged an estimated 21,000 individual asylum applications in 2020, a decrease from the previous year's 25,000.

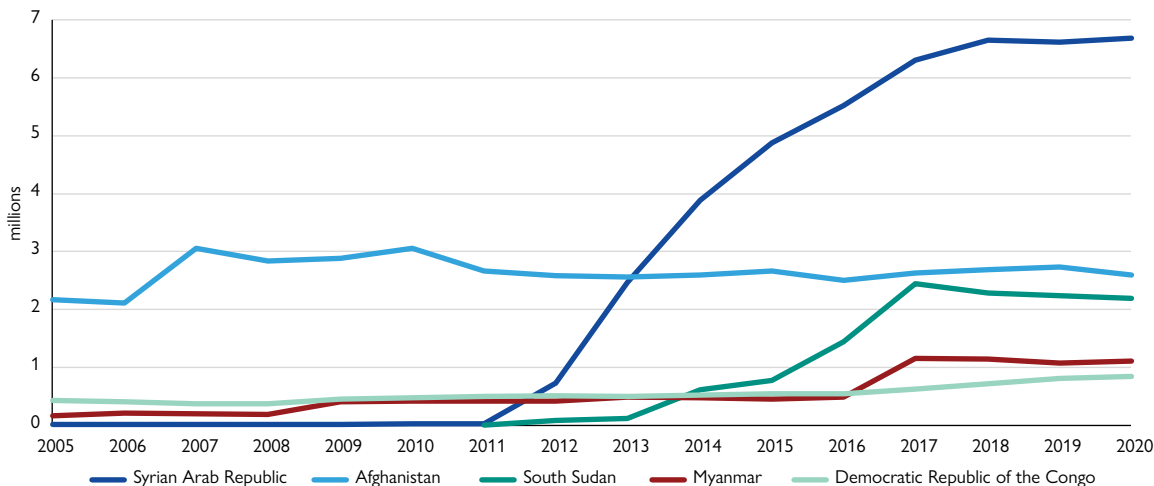
As outlined in previous reports, unresolved or renewed conflict dynamics in key countries contributed significantly to current figures and trends. Of the refugees under UNHCR's mandate at the end of 2020, the top 10 countries of origin – the Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, the Sudan, the Central African Republic, Eritrea and Burundi – accounted for more than 80 per cent of the total refugee population. Many of these countries have been among the top origins of refugees for at least seven years.

The ongoing, decade-long conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic saw the number of refugees from that country reach approximately 6.7 million. This was an approximately 100,000 increase from the previous year and reaching the seventh year in a row as the main origin country of refugees. The instability and violence that has made Afghanistan a major source of refugees for over 30 years has continued, with the country being the second largest origin country in the world, with 2.6 million refugees in 2020; this is a decrease from 2019 figures (2.7 million). South Sudan remained the third largest origin country of refugees since large-scale violence erupted in the middle of 2016, with 2.2 million at the end of 2020. Refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar and the Democratic Republic of the Congo comprised over half of the world's refugee population. Figure 15 shows the trends in refugee numbers for the top five countries of origin from 2005 to 2020. The impact of the Syrian conflict is clearly illustrated; in 2010, the Syrian Arab Republic was an origin country for fewer than 30,000 refugees and asylum seekers, whereas it was the third largest host country in the world, with more than 1 million refugees mainly originating from Iraq.<sup>37</sup>

36 The content in this subsection is based on and drawn from UNHCR, 2021a. Please refer to this documents for explanatory notes, deeper analysis, caveats, limitations and methodologies associated with the numbers and trends presented. UNHCR's previous Global Trends reports, as well as its Population Statistics database (UNHCR, n.d.a) are other key sources of information.

37 UNHCR, 2011.

Figure 15. Number of refugees by top five countries of origin, 2005–2020 (millions)

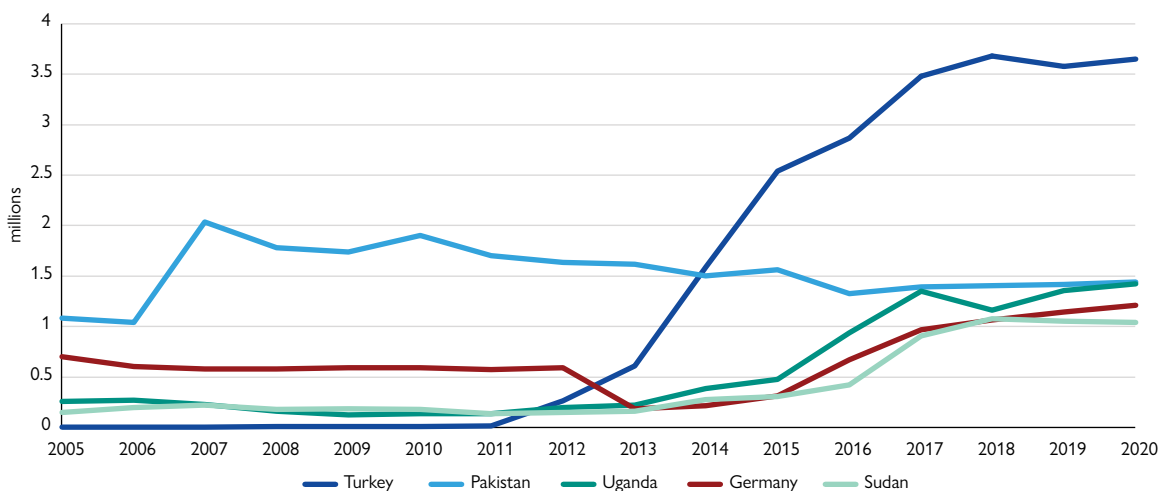


Source: UNHCR, n.d.a (accessed 23 June 2021).

Note: South Sudan became a country in 2011.

Consistent with the previous years, more than half of all refugees resided in 10 countries. In 2020, for the fifth consecutive year, Turkey was the largest host country in the world, with over 3.6 million refugees, mainly Syrians. Reflecting the significant share of Syrians in the global refugee population, the bordering country of Lebanon also featured among the top 10. Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran were also among the top 10 refugee-hosting countries, as the two principal hosts of refugees from Afghanistan, the second largest origin country. Uganda, Germany, the Sudan, Bangladesh and Ethiopia comprised the rest. The vast majority (73%) of refugees were hosted in neighbouring countries. According to UNHCR, the least developed countries – such as Bangladesh, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Rwanda, South Sudan, the Sudan, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Yemen – hosted 27 per cent of the global total (6.7 million refugees).

Figure 16. Number of refugees by top five host countries as of 2020 (millions)



Source: UNHCR, n.d.a (accessed 23 June 2021).

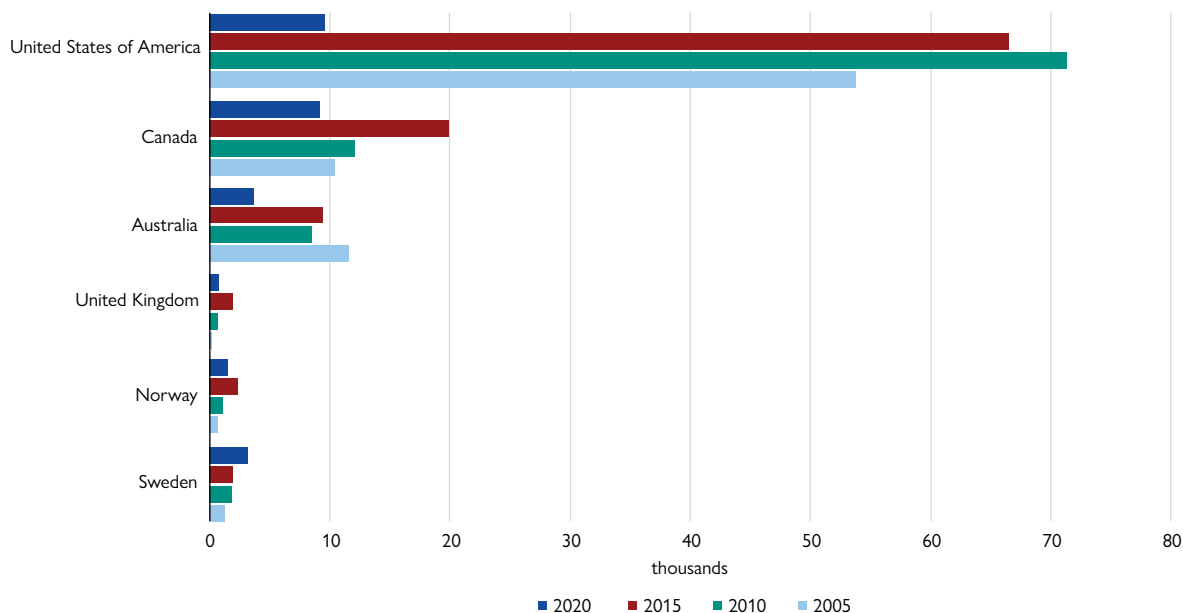
In 2020, over 250,000 refugees returned to their countries of origin, 21 per cent less than in the previous year (317,000). Almost half (122,000) of the returns were to South Sudan, the majority of these being from Uganda (74,000). In 2020, South Sudan surpassed the Syrian Arab Republic for the most refugee returns.

While there are many challenges to measuring those benefiting from local integration, UNHCR estimates that in 2020, 28 countries reported at least one naturalized refugee (compared with 25 countries in 2019), with a total of almost 34,000 naturalized refugees for the year – a notable decrease from the nearly 55,000 newly naturalized refugees in 2019, but still an increase when compared with the 23,000 reported in 2016. In 2020, 85 per cent of naturalizations occurred in Europe, the majority of which (approximately 25,700 refugees) were in the Netherlands. Second and third placed were Canada (approximately 5,000) and France (approximately 2,500).

In 2020, approximately 34,400 refugees were admitted for resettlement globally, representing a huge decrease from 2019, when over 107,700 were resettled. The key resettlement countries were the United States and Canada, with around 9,600 and 9,200 refugees respectively, and an extremely sharp decrease from the previous year of 27,500 (United States) and 30,100 (Canada). The European Union resettled a total of 11,600 refugees. Syrians were the key beneficiaries, accounting for one third of resettled refugees, followed by Congolese (12%).

The sharp fall in refugee resettlement can be partially explained by the effect of the pandemic, which severely limited international movements worldwide. An additional cause of the decline in the number of refugees resettled in the United States was due to a substantial lowering of the refugee admission ceiling (the number of refugees admitted for resettlement each fiscal year) and enhanced security screening for refugees from “high-risk” countries, which has had the effect of decreasing the number of refugee admissions from these countries. Figure 17 provides an overview of resettlement statistics for key countries from 2005 to 2020.

Figure 17. Number of refugees resettled by major resettlement countries in 2005–2020



Source: UNHCR, n.d.b (accessed 23 June 2021).

Over the last 10 years, the number of refugees in need of resettlement has dramatically increased, almost doubling in size. UNHCR estimated that in 2011 there were approximately 805,000 refugees in need of resettlement, which has increased to 1.4 million for 2021.<sup>38</sup>

The number of resettled refugees has fluctuated over the years. In 2005, almost 81,000 refugees were resettled, compared with around 34,000 in 2020. However, in 2019 the number resettled was almost 108,000. Overall, resettlement has not kept up with the significant increase in need (see Table 4).

**Table 4. Number of refugees needing resettlement and number of refugees resettled globally, from 2005**

	Total projected resettlement needs (including multi-year planning), persons	Resettlement arrivals
2005	–	80 734
2006	–	71 660
2007	–	75 271
2008	–	88 772
2009	–	112 455
2010	–	98 719
2011	805 535	79 727
2012	781 299	88 918
2013	859 305	98 359
2014	690 915	105 148
2015	958 429	106 997
2016	1 153 296	172 797
2017	1 190 519	102 709
2018	1 195 349	92 348
2019	1 428 011	107 729
2020	1 440 408	34 383
2021	1 445 383	–

Source: UNHCR, n.d.b (accessed 23 June 2021).

Note: *Projected Global Resettlement Needs Report* by UNHCR is available from 2011.

38 UNHCR, 2021b.

## IOM's role in resettlement

IOM plays a key role in global resettlement. Providing essential support to States in resettling refugees and other humanitarian entrants is a fundamental purpose and is among its largest ongoing activities. Beyond traditional refugee resettlement and humanitarian admission programmes, more States are interested in or are currently carrying out other forms of admission, such as private sponsorships, academic scholarships and labour mobility schemes. IOM's movement data for resettlement assistance refer to the overall number of refugees and other persons of concern travelling under IOM auspices from various countries of departure to destinations around the world during a given period.

In 2019, around 107,000 persons travelled under IOM's auspices through resettlement programmes, with significant operations out of Afghanistan, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine and the United Republic of Tanzania.<sup>a</sup> Of the above-mentioned figure, around 30,000 persons in need of international protection were resettled to 18 different European countries, representing 30 per cent of the global resettlement and humanitarian admission caseload assisted by IOM.

In 2020, IOM supported over 27 States in conducting resettlement, humanitarian admissions and relocation for a total of 40,536 refugees and other persons in situations of vulnerability, with significant operations out of Afghanistan, Greece, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. The top three resettlement countries were the United States, Canada and Sweden. Of the above-mentioned total, 3,063 beneficiaries in need of international protection were relocated from Greece, Italy and Malta to 14 destination countries in the European Economic Area, the majority of whom were moved via charter flights.

IOM supports its Member States in implementing a variety of resettlement, relocation and other humanitarian admission schemes, many of which are well-established programmes, while others are ad hoc responses to specific forced migration crises.

Given the high needs and lack of available places for resettlement, IOM continues to engage with actors on increasing accessibility to safe and legal pathways. Under cooperative agreements, IOM provides stakeholders with necessary information and shares data with key partners, such as UNHCR, resettlement countries and settlement agencies. IOM works in close collaboration with UNHCR on a regular basis to verify and better align aggregate data related to resettlement, specifically around figures for departures. For more information on IOM's resettlement activities, see [www.iom.int/resettlement-assistance](http://www.iom.int/resettlement-assistance).

a IOM, 2020j.

## Internally displaced persons

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) compiles data on two types of internal displacement: new displacements during a given period, and the total stock of internally displaced persons (IDPs) at a given point in time. This statistical information is categorized by two broad displacement causes: (a) disasters, and (b) conflict and violence. However, IDMC acknowledges the challenges associated with distinguishing between disasters and conflict as the immediate cause of displacement, and highlights the growing need to identify better ways to report on displacement in the context of multiple drivers.<sup>39</sup> Measures to curb the spread of COVID-19 have impeded the collection of displacement data.<sup>40</sup>

At an estimated 48 million, the total global stock of people internally displaced by conflict and violence in 59 countries and territories as of 31 December 2020 was the highest on record since IDMC began monitoring in 1998, and represents an increase from the 45.9 million reported in 2019. As with trends for refugees (discussed in the previous section), intractable and new conflicts have meant that the total number of persons internally displaced by conflict and violence has almost doubled since 2000 and has risen sharply since 2010.

Figure 18 shows the world's top 20 countries with the largest number of IDPs displaced due to conflict and violence (stock) at the end of 2020. Most countries were either in the Middle East or sub-Saharan Africa. The Syrian Arab Republic had the highest number of people displaced due to conflict (6.6 million) by the end of 2020, followed by the Democratic Republic of the Congo (5.3 million). Colombia had the third largest number with 4.9 million, followed by Yemen (3.6 million) and Afghanistan (3.5 million). Over 35 million (nearly 74%) of the global total of 48 million people displaced lived in just 10 countries.<sup>41</sup>

In terms of proportion of national population, the Syrian Arab Republic, whose conflict has dragged on for over a decade, had over 35 per cent of its population displaced due to conflict and violence. Somalia had the second highest proportion (19%), followed by the Central African Republic, South Sudan and Yemen (with over 12%). It is important to note, however, that especially for protracted displacement cases, such as in Colombia, some people who have returned to their places of origin and to their homes may still be counted as internally displaced. This is because, in some cases, a durable solution has not been achieved.<sup>42</sup> Organizations such as IDMC follow the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons framework, which stipulates eight criteria that constitute a durable solution in determining when people should no longer be considered internally displaced.<sup>43</sup>

39 IDMC highlights the challenges in collecting data on displacements due to development projects, criminal violence or slow-onset disasters, as well as their efforts to overcome these difficulties. See IDMC, 2019:72–73.

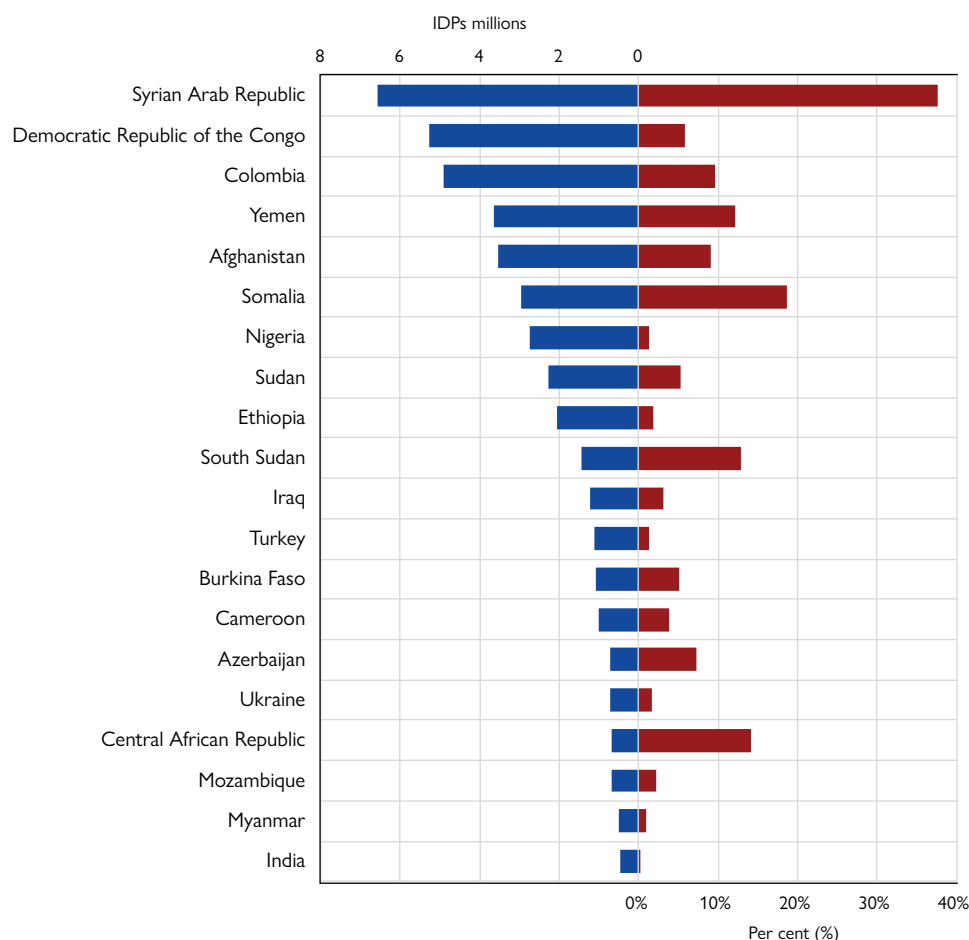
40 IDMC, 2020:4.

41 The 10 countries comprise the Syrian Arab Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Colombia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Somalia, Nigeria, the Sudan, Ethiopia and South Sudan.

42 A durable solution is achieved “when IDPs no longer have specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and such persons can enjoy their human rights without discrimination resulting from their displacement.” See, for example, Brookings Institution and University of Bern, 2010.

43 The criteria include: safety and security; adequate standard of living; access to livelihoods; restoration of housing, land and property; access to documentation; family reunification; participation in public affairs; and access to effective remedies and justice. See, for example, Brookings Institution and University of Bern, 2010; IDMC, 2019.

Figure 18. Top 20 countries with the largest populations of internally displaced persons by conflict and violence at the end of 2020 (millions)



Source: IDMC, 2021.

Notes: IDP populations refer to the accumulated number of people displaced over time. The population size used to calculate the percentage of conflict IDPs is based on the total resident population of the country per UN DESA population estimates (2021a).

In 2020, the global total number of persons displaced by disasters was around 7 million persons across 104 countries and territories. These people were reported to be still living in displacement at the end of 2020 due to disasters that occurred in 2020. As noted by IDMC, this figure is a “highly conservative estimate”, as it does not capture those living in displacement because of disasters that took place before 2020.

## IDP statistics: recommendations

New recommendations<sup>a</sup> were published in January 2021 by the Expert Group on Refugee and IDP Statistics (EGRIS), which was established in 2016 to facilitate the compilation of official statistics on refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons. The recommendations have updated the 2018 technical report,<sup>b</sup> the first globally recognized standards for official statistics on forced displacement, providing recommendations on the production and dissemination of statistics on internal displacement. The Expert Group's report comprises six chapters (excluding introduction and endnotes):

- **Legal and policy frameworks and definitions:** international and regional standards for protecting IDPs, and commonly used non-statistical definitions for IDPs;
- **Statistical framework for internal displacement:** specification of population groups in the scope of the recommendations, and statistical definitions of IDP inflows, stocks and outflows;
- **Durable solutions and key displacement-related vulnerabilities:** analysis of IDP vulnerabilities and assessment of progress towards durable solutions;
- **Outline of key variables and indicators:** recommended variables including age and sex, and tabulations for the different categories of persons that fall within the internal displacement statistical framework;
- **Data sources for collecting statistics on IDPs:** data sources, including censuses and surveys, available to produce IDP statistics, and their respective challenges and advantages; and
- **Principles and mechanisms for the coordination of IDP statistics:** quality standards and the role of coordination over operational data and strengthening statistical systems on forced displacement.

The recommendations will be continually promoted by a group of countries with technical support from EGRIS members to build data systems and statistical capacity.

a EGRIS, 2020.

b EGRIS, 2018.

## New displacements in 2020

By the end of 2020, there had been a total of 40.5 million new internal displacements across 42 countries and territories due to conflict and violence, and 144 countries and territories due to disasters. Seventy-six per cent (30.7 million) of these new displacements were triggered by disasters and 24 per cent (9.8 million) were caused by conflict and violence.<sup>44</sup>

In 2020, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2.2 million) and Syrian Arab Republic (1.8 million) topped the list with the highest numbers of new displacements caused by conflict and violence, considerably influencing global numbers as a result. They are followed by Ethiopia (1.7 million), Mozambique (0.6 million) and Burkina Faso (0.5 million). The Philippines experienced the highest absolute numbers of new disaster displacements in 2020 (approximately 5.1 million).<sup>45</sup>

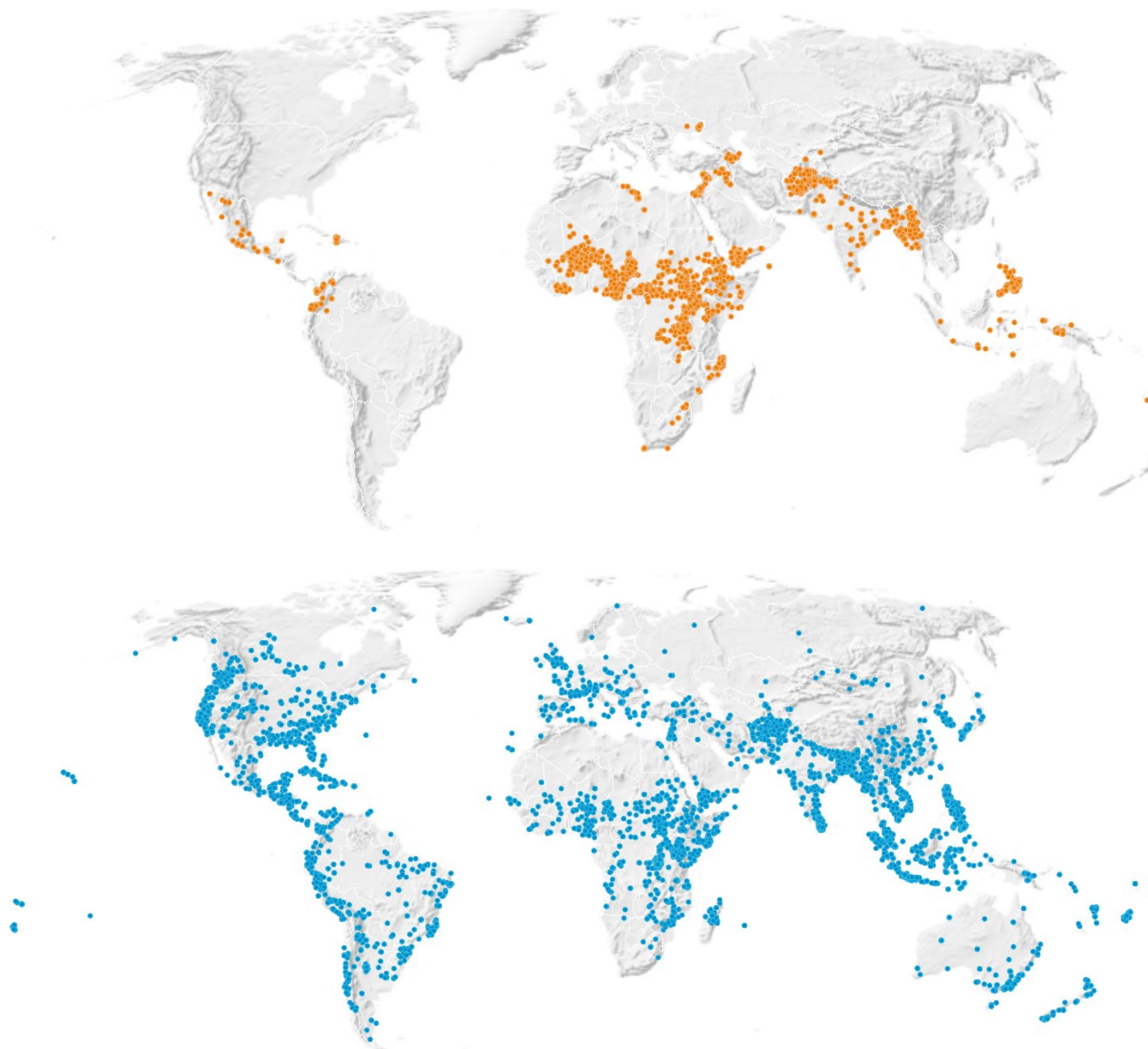
44 The content in this subsection is based on and drawn from IDMC, 2020 and IDMC, 2021. Please refer to these documents for explanatory notes, deeper analysis, caveats, limitations and methodologies associated with the numbers and trends presented. IDMC's previous *Global Estimates* reports (available at [www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/](http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/)), as well as its Global Internal Displacement Database (IDMC, n.d.), are other key sources of information.

45 IDMC highlights possible reasons for these changes, including stabilization of front lines of conflicts, ceasefires, restrictions on freedom of movement and changes in methodology for data collection.



In any given year, many more people are newly displaced by disasters than those newly displaced by conflict and violence, and many more countries are affected by disaster displacement. This is apparent when examining the number of countries and territories in which new displacements occurred in 2020: 144 for disasters, compared with 42 for conflict and violence (see Figure 19). As in previous years, weather-related disasters triggered the vast majority (30 million) of all new displacements, with storms accounting for 14.6 million displacements and floods for 14.1 million.

Figure 19. Conflict displacements (top) and disaster displacements (bottom) in 2020 by location

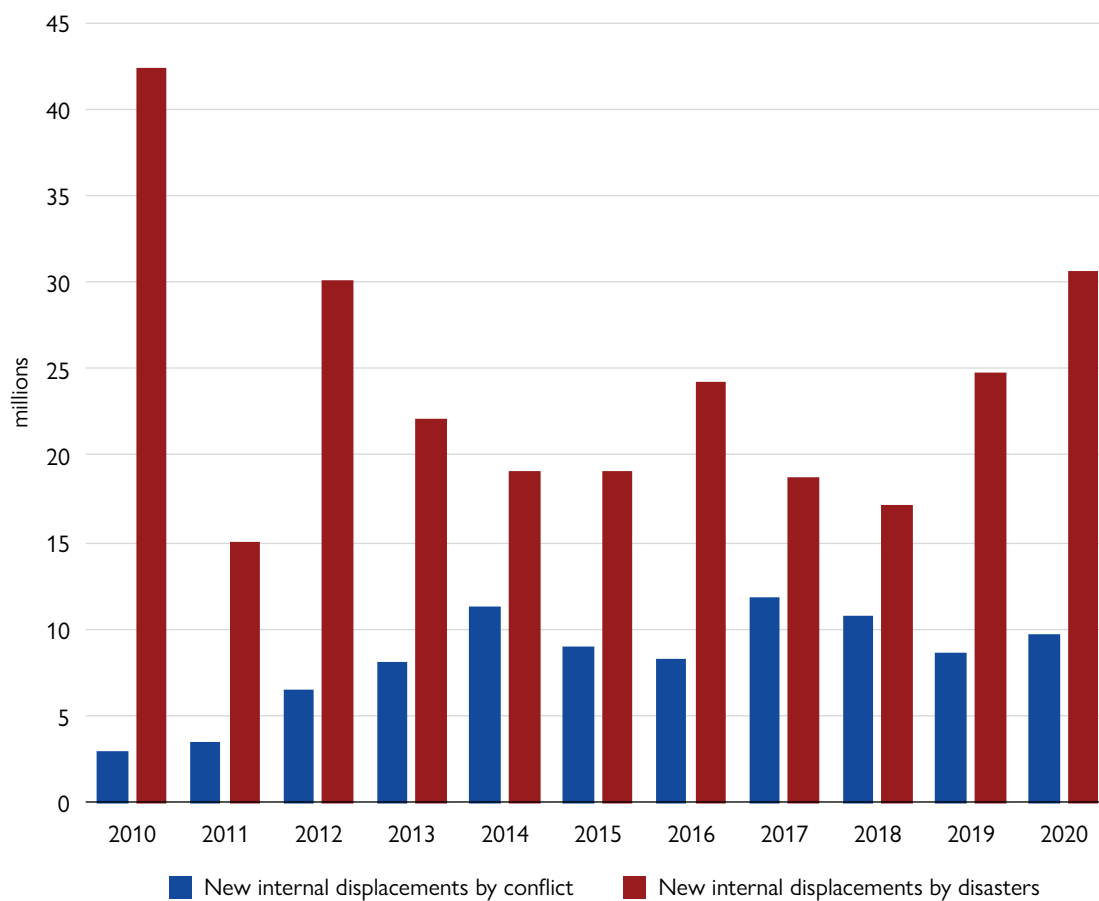


Source: IDMC, 2021.

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

As shown in Figure 20, in previous years, annual new disaster displacements outnumbered new displacements associated with conflict and violence. IDMC notes, however, that a significant portion of the global total of new displacements by disasters is usually associated with short-term evacuations in a relatively safe and orderly manner.

Figure 20. New internal displacements due to conflict and disasters, 2010–2020 (millions)



Source: IDMC, n.d. (accessed May 2021).

Notes: The term “new displacements” refers to the number of displacement movements that occurred in a given year, not the total accumulated stock of IDPs resulting from displacement over time. New displacement figures include individuals who have been displaced more than once, and do not correspond to the number of people displaced during a given year.

## IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix

IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) programme gathers and analyses data to disseminate critical multilayered information on displacement and population mobility. DTM's data collection and analysis enables decision makers and responders to provide these populations with better context-specific and evidence-based assistance. Data are shared in the form of maps, infographics, reports, interactive web-based visualizations, and raw or customized data exports. Based on a given context, the DTM gathers information on populations, locations, conditions, needs and vulnerabilities, using one or more of the following methodological tools:

- Tracking mobility and multisectoral needs at area and location level to monitor needs and target assistance;
- Monitoring movement ("flow") trends and the overall situation at origin, transit and destination points;
- Registering displaced individuals and households for beneficiary selection and vulnerability targeting and programming;
- Conducting surveys, to gather specific in-depth information from populations of interest.

In 2020, operating in more than 80 countries, the DTM tracked over 30 million IDPs, 26 million returnees and 5 million migrants. IOM's DTM database is one of the largest sources for global annual estimates on internal displacement compiled by IDMC. For more information on IOM's DTM, see <http://dtm.iom.int>.

## Conclusions

It is important to understand migration and displacement, and how they are changing globally, given their relevance to States, local communities and individuals. Human migration and mobility may be age-old phenomena that stretch back to the earliest periods of history, but their manifestations and impacts have changed over time as the world has become more globalized.<sup>46</sup> This has been highlighted in stark terms as COVID-19 continues to significantly disrupt international migration and mobility (and many other facets of modern society), more than 18 months since it was first declared a pandemic by the WHO.<sup>47</sup> Ongoing mobility restrictions remain a key feature in many societies around the world as virus strains see confirmed cases rise again and while vaccine roll-outs continue, albeit in a highly uneven way globally. Restrictions to mobility – international and internal – emerged as one of the key pillars of COVID-19 response and, while evolving and fluctuating, have persisted ever since. The thematic chapter on COVID-19 impacts (Chapter 5 of this report) explores these issues in much greater detail, with a focus on the first 12 months of the pandemic and its longer-term implications.

Now, more than at any other time in history, we have more data and information on migration and displacement globally at our disposal; yet the very nature of migration in an interconnected world means that its dynamics can be difficult to capture in statistical terms. That said, we have seen entirely new data sets emerge very quickly during the pandemic, including from IOM (Figure 8) and other United Nations agencies, as well as from academic institutions.<sup>48</sup> Further, some of the large technology companies, including Facebook and Google, began releasing anonymized mobility data early in the pandemic that was based on users' mobility records, providing an indication of the vast amounts of unit record data collected, while also underscoring existing concerns regarding the human rights implications (including privacy) of such data reserves and their usage.<sup>49</sup> We are also seeing how the increasing digitalization of migration and mobility – the lifeblood of which is data – is being increasingly utilized as part of ongoing efforts to develop and implement artificial intelligence technology in migration systems (see Chapter 11 of this report). Reducing global inequality is also supported by data collection and analysis. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration emphasizes a commitment to improving international cooperation on migration, as well as collecting migration data and undertaking research and analysis so that we may better understand trends and evolving patterns and processes, to support the development of evidence-based responses. Recent developments in this area are described in Chapter 4, with particular reference to work being undertaken by the United Nations Network on Migration.

In the context of ongoing globalization, as well as expanding data collection and related digitalization processes, it is increasingly relevant to stay abreast of long-term trends and evolving patterns in migration and displacement. In this chapter, we have provided a global overview of migration and migrants, based on the current data available. Notwithstanding data gaps and lags, several high-level conclusions can be drawn. At the global level, for example, we can see that, over time, migrants have taken up residence in some regions (such as Asia and Europe) at a much greater rate than others (such as Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean); and that this trend is likely to continue over the longer term, notwithstanding the acute impacts of the pandemic in recent months. Likewise, statistics show that migrant workers continue to gravitate toward regions with greater opportunities, as economies

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<sup>46</sup> McAuliffe and Goossens, 2018; Triandafyllidou, 2018.

<sup>47</sup> WHO, 2020.

<sup>48</sup> See, for example, the University of Oxford's Government Response Tracker (used in this chapter) and the Johns Hopkins University COVID-19 data set (referred to in Chapter 5 of this report).

<sup>49</sup> Toh, 2020; Zuboff, 2021.

grow and labour markets evolve, and that some migrant worker populations are heavily gendered (see Figure 11). That said, additional analysis in this report (Chapter 7) indicates that there have been changes in the composition of migration corridors, along with indications that higher mobility has been occurring from highly developed countries in recent years.

The global data also show that displacement caused by conflict, generalized violence and other factors remains at a record high, notwithstanding the additional difficulties in collecting data during the pandemic. Intractable, unresolved and recurring conflicts and violence have led to an increase in the number of refugees around the world. While a handful of countries continue to provide solutions for refugees, overall, these have been profoundly and persistently insufficient in addressing global needs. In addition, there were estimated to be more people displaced internally at the end of 2020 than ever before. Recent tragic events in Afghanistan indicate that we are likely to see global displacement numbers rise even higher in the immediate future as people are displaced within and from that country during the remainder of 2021 and into 2022.







# 3

## MIGRATION AND MIGRANTS: REGIONAL DIMENSIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS

The previous chapter provides an overview of migration globally, with specific reference to international migrants and migration flows, and to the impacts of COVID-19 on mobility globally. Particular migrant groups – including migrant workers, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs) – as well as international remittances, were also discussed. This chapter focuses primarily on the regional level in order to provide a more detailed picture of migration, which sets out a different, but complementary, perspective of migrants and movements in different parts of the world.<sup>1</sup>

Our starting point is geographic, rather than thematic, given that geography is one of the fundamentals underpinning migration today, just as it has been in the past. Notwithstanding increasing globalization, geography remains one of the most significant factors shaping patterns of migration and displacement. Many people who migrate across borders do so within their immediate regions – to countries that are close by, countries to which it may be easier to travel, that may be more familiar, and from which it may also be easier to return. For people who are displaced, finding safety quickly is paramount. People therefore tend to be displaced to safer locations nearby, whether that is within their own countries or across international borders.

This chapter seeks to assist migration policymakers, practitioners, researchers and students to make better sense of international migration globally by using a geographic perspective to present regional migration overviews. The analysis in this chapter focuses on six world regions as defined by the United Nations, and used by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and other organizations:

- Africa;
- Asia;
- Europe;
- Latin America and the Caribbean;
- Northern America;
- Oceania.

For each of these regions, the analysis includes: (a) an overview and brief discussion of key migration statistics based on data compiled and reported by UN DESA, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), the University of Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker and IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM); and (b) succinct descriptions of “key features and developments” in migration in the region, based on a wide range of data, information and analyses from international organizations, researchers and analysts.

To account for the diversity of migration patterns, trends and issues within each of the six regions, the descriptive narratives of “key features and recent developments” are presented at the subregional level. For Asia, for example, this cascade approach allows for the presentation of insights from statistical data on Asia as a whole, followed by summary information on subregions, including Eastern Asia, Southern Asia, South-East Asia, the Middle East and Central Asia. A breakdown of the regions and subregions is provided in Appendix A. These subregional overviews

provide information on migration patterns from, within and to the subregions.<sup>2</sup> Beyond this, attention has been paid to particular features that exist in a subregion, such as labour migration and international remittances, irregular migration, human trafficking and displacement (both internal and international). The subregional overviews are not intended to be exhaustive, but are designed to be illustrative of key trends and recent changes in migration over the previous two years.

It is important to note that this chapter builds on the previous regional chapters of the *World Migration Reports* of 2018 and 2020 by providing an update on statistics and current issues, including in relation to COVID-19 impacts. Significant changes over the two years since the last edition of the *World Migration Report* have been reflected in this chapter, which incorporates data and information up until the end of June 2021. Recent global events are discussed, such as those related to the impacts of COVID-19 on migration and mobility across various subregions, along with recent conflict and disaster displacement events. The chapter draws on the existing evidence base and sources are provided in endnotes and the references section. We encourage readers to refer to sources cited in this chapter to learn more about topics of interest. Thematic chapters in this volume may also be of interest, including those on COVID-19 (Chapter 5), peace and security and migration (Chapter 6), climate change (Chapter 9) and human trafficking (Chapter 10).

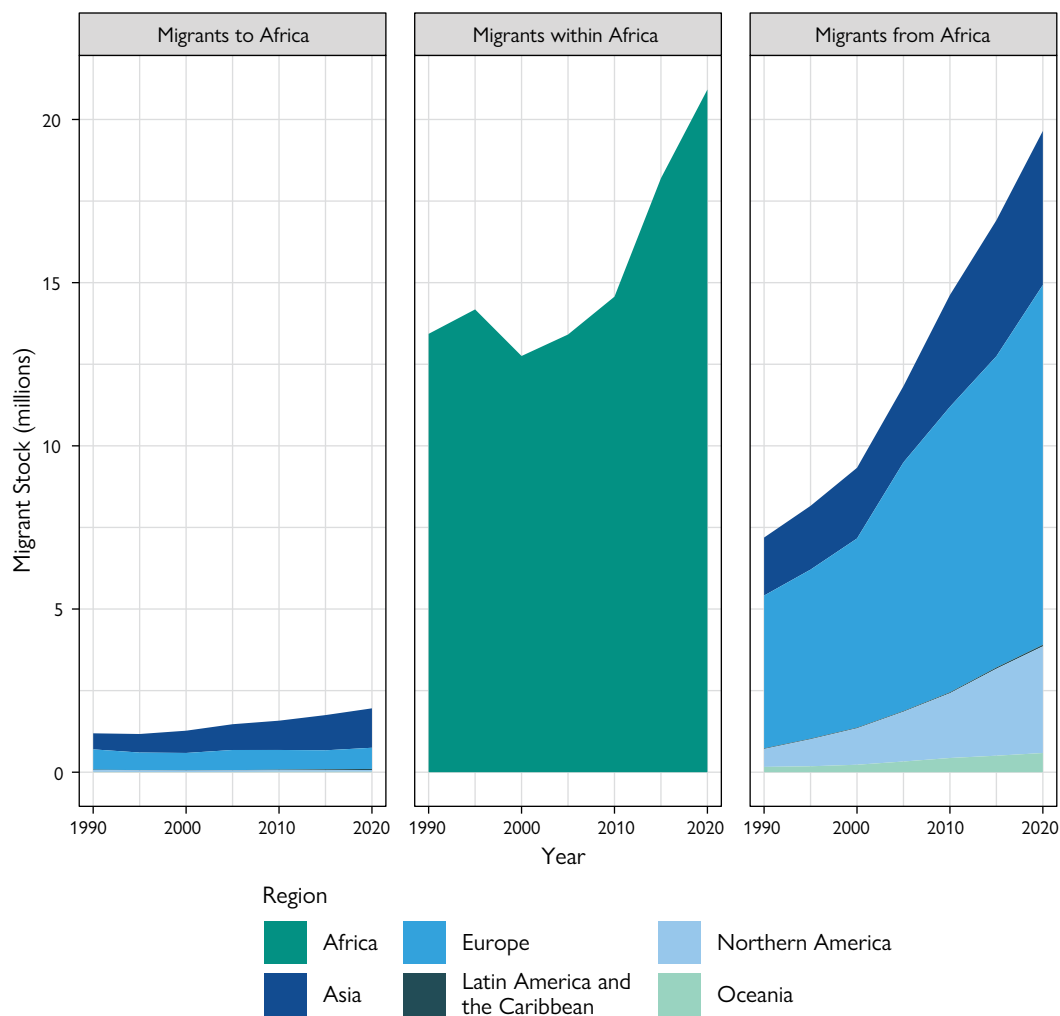
## Africa<sup>3</sup>

Migration in Africa involves large numbers of international migrants moving both within and from the region. As shown in Figure 1, in 2020 around 21 million Africans were living in another African country, a significant increase from 2015, when around 18 million Africans were estimated to be living within the region. The number of Africans living in different regions also grew during the same period, from around 17 million in 2015 to over 19.5 million in 2020.

Figure 1 shows that since 2000, international migration within the African region has increased significantly. Since 1990, the number of African migrants living outside of the region has more than doubled, with the growth in Europe most pronounced. In 2020, most African-born migrants living outside the region were residing in Europe (11 million), Asia (nearly 5 million) and Northern America (around 3 million).

One of the most striking aspects to note about international migrants in Africa, as shown in Figure 1, is the small number of migrants who were born outside of the region and have since moved there. From 2015 to 2020, the number of migrants born outside the region remained virtually unchanged (around 2 million), most of whom were from Asia and Europe.

Figure 1. Migrants to, within and from Africa, 1990–2020

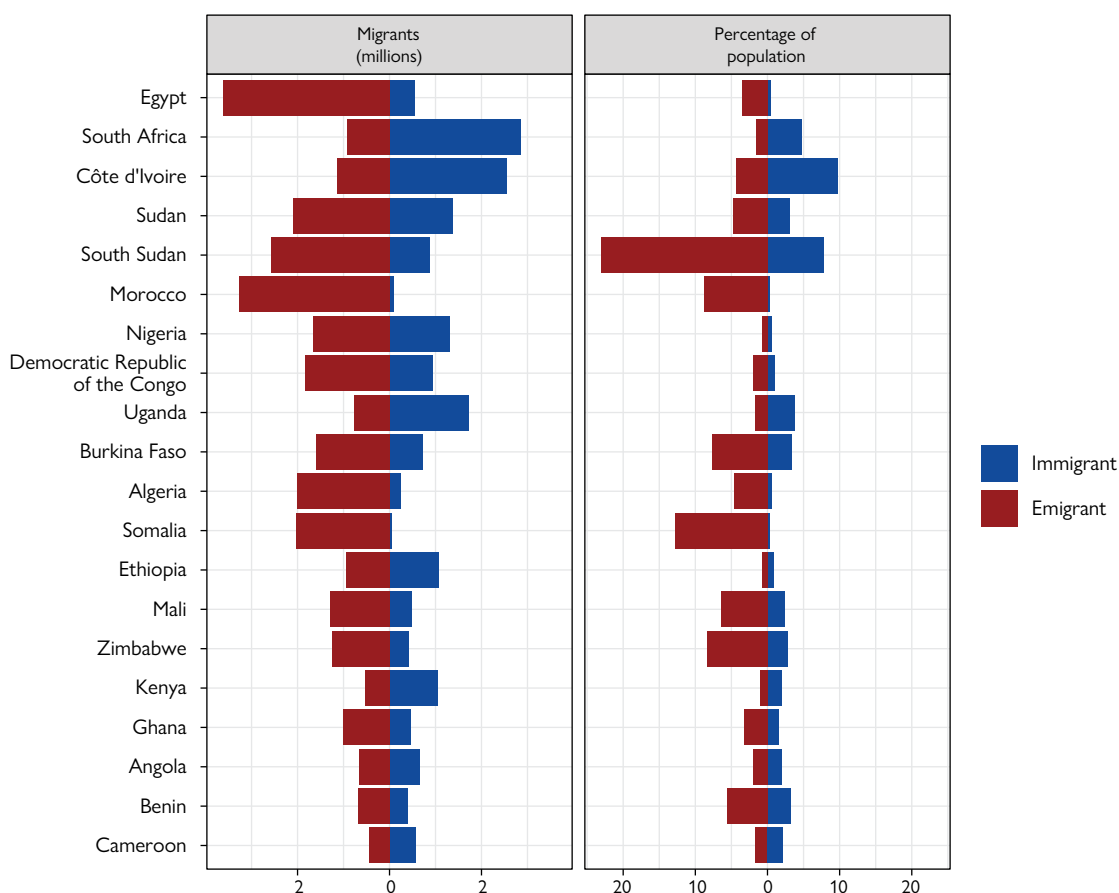


Source: UN DESA, 2021.

Note: "Migrants to Africa" refers to migrants residing in the region (i.e. Africa) who were born in one of the other regions (e.g. Europe or Asia). "Migrants within Africa" refers to migrants born in the region (i.e. Africa) and residing outside their country of birth, but still within the African region. "Migrants from Africa" refers to people born in Africa who were residing outside the region (e.g. in Europe or Northern America).

The African countries with the largest number of emigrants tend to be in the north of the region. These are shown on the left-hand side of Figure 2, where countries are ranked by their overall numbers of migrants (the combination of immigrants in the country and emigrants from the country). In 2020, Egypt had the largest number of people living abroad, followed by Morocco, South Sudan, the Sudan, Somalia and Algeria. In terms of the number of immigrants, South Africa remains the most significant destination country in Africa, with around 2.9 million international migrants residing in the country; however, this is a drop of more than 9 per cent since 2015, when the country had over 3.2 million international migrants. Other countries with high immigrant populations as a proportion of their total populations, but not among the top 20, include Gabon (19%), Equatorial Guinea (16%), Seychelles (13%) and Libya (12%).

Figure 2. Top 20 African migrant countries, 2020



Source: UN DESA, 2021.

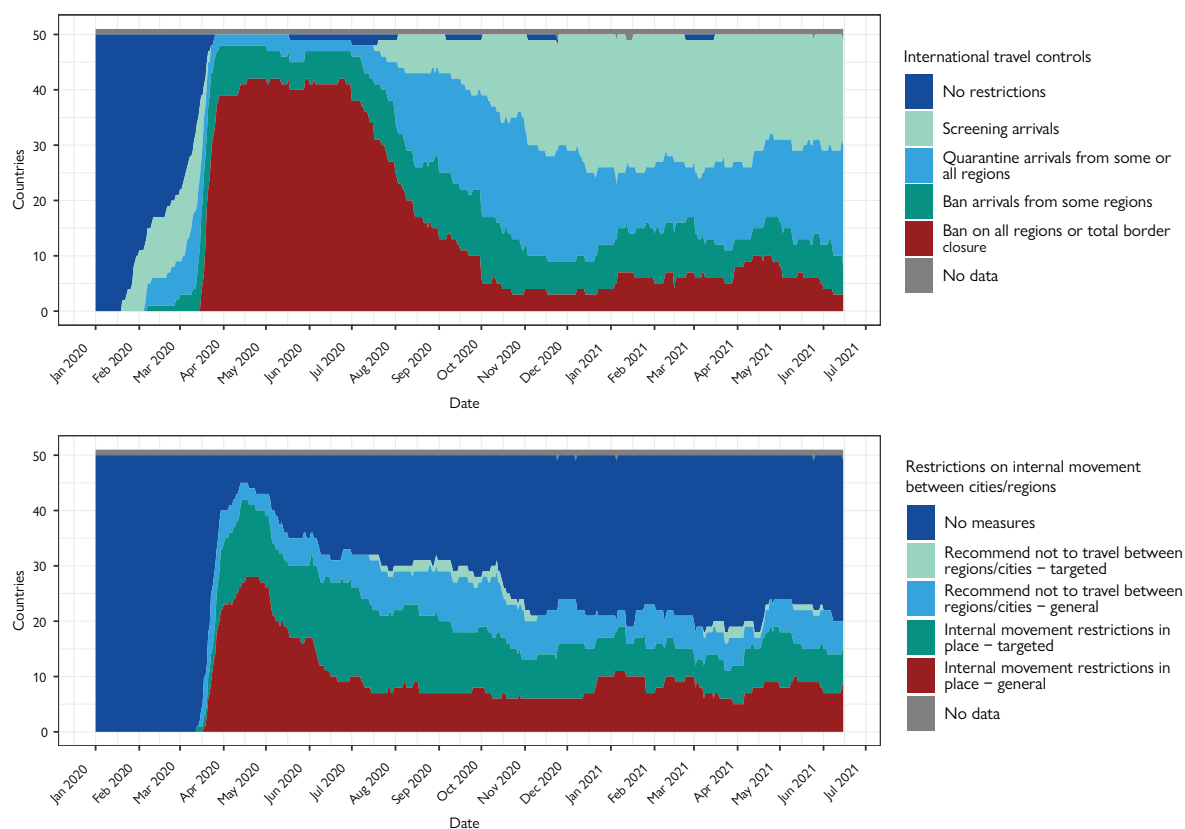
Note 1: The population size used to calculate the percentage of immigrants and emigrants is based on the UN DESA total resident population of the country, which includes foreign-born populations.

Note 2: "Immigrant" refers to foreign-born migrants residing in the country. "Emigrant" refers to people born in the country who were residing outside their country of birth in 2021.

Most African countries enacted a range of COVID-19-related travel restrictions, both international and internal, starting in early 2020. Notably, international travel controls were imposed several weeks before restrictions on internal movements came into force (Figure 3). International control measures such as screening arrivals were put in place earliest and remained in place for nearly all countries in the region. Other international restrictions, however, which peaked between March and June 2020, began to decline in July, with controls such as the ban on arrivals from some regions and total border closures falling sharply and being abandoned by most countries in the region by mid-2021.

Slightly fewer countries in Africa issued restrictions on internal movement when compared with international travel controls. These restrictions, which were at the highest between March and April 2020, began to decline mid-year, with slight upticks during “new waves” of infections.

Figure 3. COVID-19-related travel controls in Africa: International and internal, January 2020 to June 2021

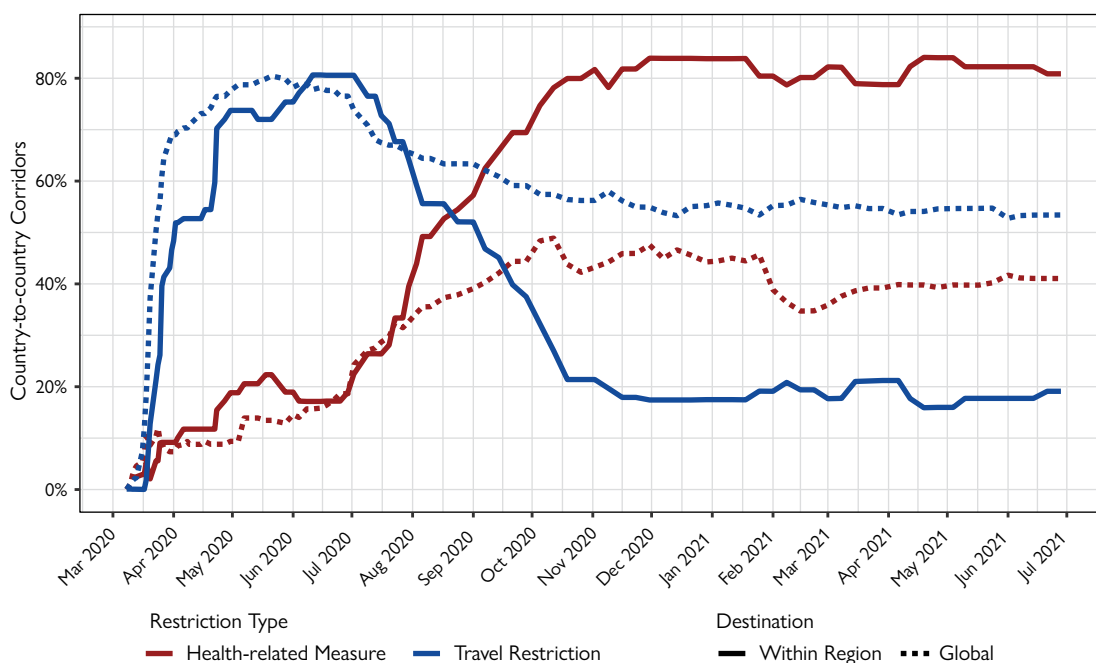


Source: Hale et al., 2021.

Notes: Categories used are those of the Oxford Government Response Tracker; categories included in the data set are for COVID-19-related restrictions only and do not reflect other travel restrictions that may also be in place, such as those related to visa restrictions, entry bans based on citizenship, departure/exit restrictions and internal movement restrictions.

In the early months of the pandemic, there was a sharp increase in COVID-19-related travel restrictions imposed both on countries within Africa (represented by the solid blue line) and those outside region (dotted blue line) (Figure 4). At their peak, around 80 per cent of corridors (intraregional and global) had travel restrictions. These measures levelled off around mid-2020 and soon began to decline, with intra-African travel restrictions falling much more sharply. By late 2020, health-related measures such as quarantine requirements and requiring negative COVID-19 test results had surpassed intra-African travel restrictions. Strikingly, however, unlike travel restrictions – which remained relatively high for countries outside of Africa compared with those within the continent – there were significantly more intra-African health measures when compared with similar controls imposed on countries outside the continent. As shown in the figure below, more than 80 per cent of country-to-country corridors (within the region) had implemented health-related measures as of 30 June 2021.

Figure 4. COVID-19-related international travel measures in Africa: March 2020 to June 2021



Source: IOM, 2021a.

Notes: Health-related measures include health screening and monitoring, testing/medical certificates and quarantine measures. Travel restrictions include passenger restrictions based on nationality or arrival from a geographic location. See the DTM Mobility restrictions page for more information on the methodology.

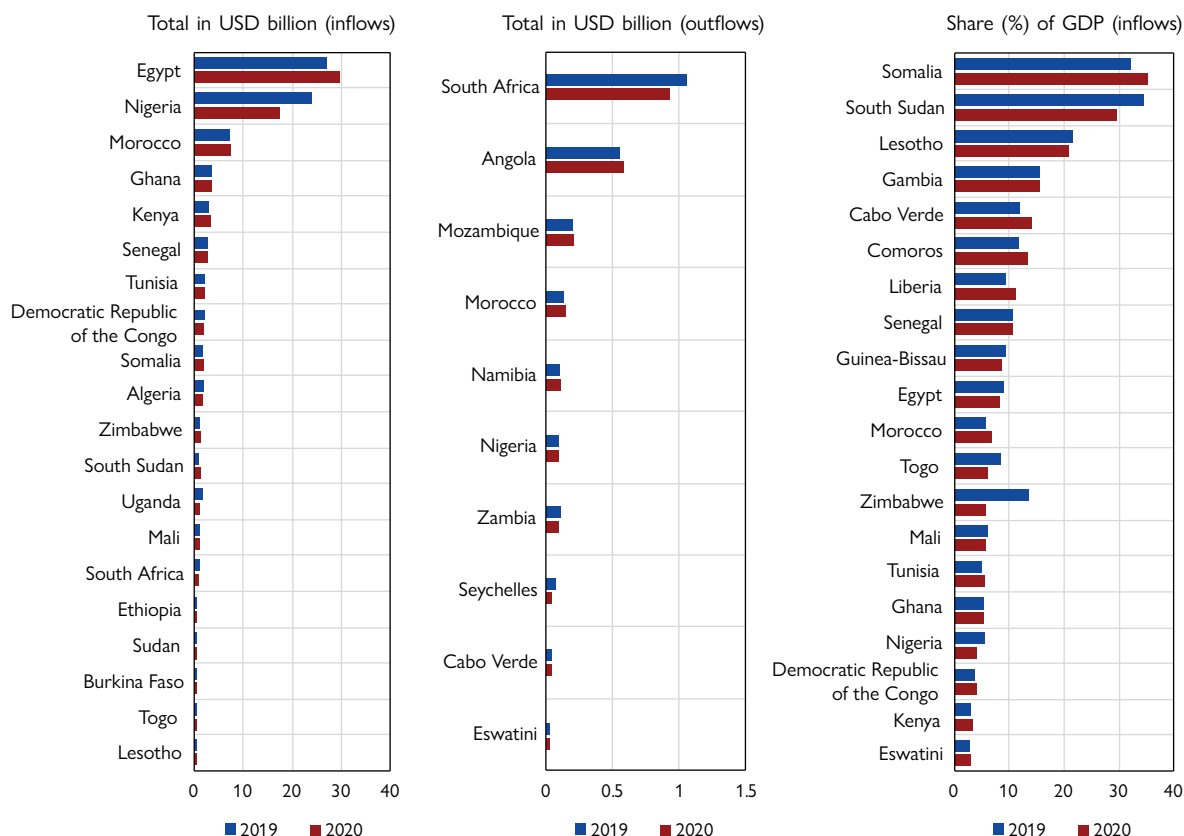
In 2020, Egypt, Nigeria, Morocco, Ghana and Kenya were the top five international remittance recipient countries in Africa (see Figure 5). Inflows to Egypt and Nigeria alone exceeded USD 15 billion for each country and accounted for 56 per cent of total remittance flows to the region. As a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP), however, the top five remittance-receiving countries in 2020 were Somalia (35%), followed by South Sudan (30%), Lesotho (21%), the Gambia (16%) and Cabo Verde (14%). Overall remittances to Africa decreased by around 3 per cent in



2020 compared with 2019, largely due to a 28 per cent decline in remittance flows to Nigeria, the second largest remittance-receiving country in the region. Excluding Nigeria, however, remittances to the region grew by nearly 6 per cent in 2020 despite the COVID-19 pandemic, driven by unexpectedly strong flows to Egypt and Morocco.

Meanwhile, as shown in Figure 5, South Africa and Angola were the leading remittance source countries in the region, with outflows from the two countries amounting to around USD 921 million and USD 576 million, respectively, in 2020. While remittance outflows from South Africa declined in 2020 compared with 2019, those from Angola, Mozambique and Namibia, the second, third and fifth largest remittance source countries, increased.

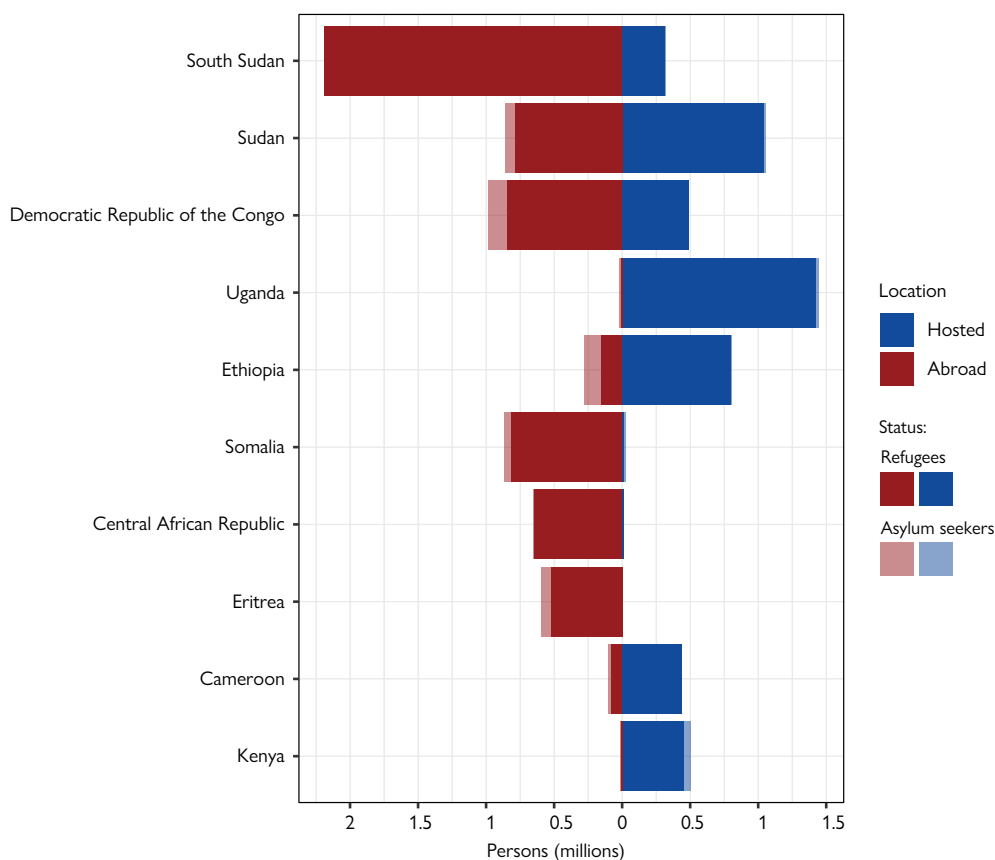
Figure 5. Top African international remittance recipient and source countries, 2019 and 2020



Source: World Bank, 2021.

Displacement within and from Africa is a major feature of the region, as shown in Figure 6. Most refugees and asylum seekers on the continent were hosted in neighbouring countries within the region. The top 10 countries in Africa, ranked by the combined total of refugees and asylum seekers both hosted by and originating from a given country, are shown in Figure 6. South Sudan was the origin of the largest number of refugees in Africa in 2020 (2 million) and ranked fourth in the world after the Syrian Arab Republic, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Afghanistan, with most being hosted in neighbouring countries such as Uganda. With protracted conflicts in both countries, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia were the origin of the second and third highest number of refugees in the region. Most of these refugees are also hosted in neighbouring countries. Other large refugee populations have originated from the Sudan and the Central African Republic. Uganda remained the largest host country of refugees in the region and the fourth largest in the world after Turkey, Colombia and Pakistan, with around 1.4 million living in the country; most were from South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Other large refugee hosting countries in 2020 were the Sudan and Ethiopia.

Figure 6. Top 10 African countries by total refugees and asylum seekers, 2020



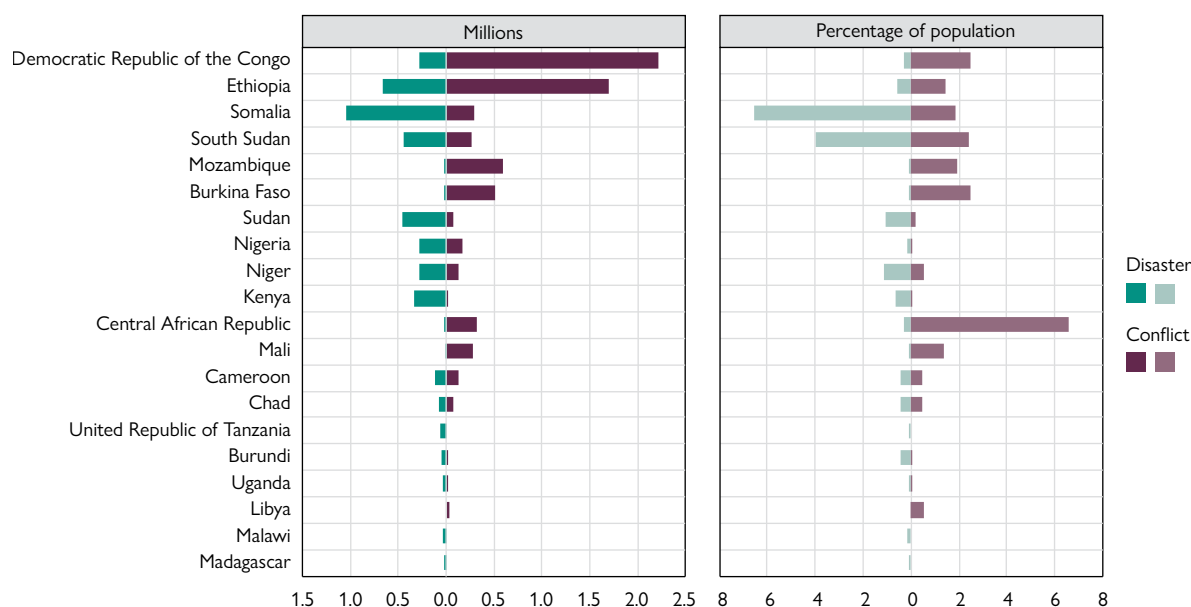
Source: UNHCR, n.d.a.

Note: "Hosted" refers to those refugees and asylum seekers from other countries who are residing in the receiving country (right-hand side of the figure); "abroad" refers to refugees and asylum seekers originating from that country who are outside of their origin country. The top 10 countries are based on 2020 data and are calculated by combining refugees and asylum seekers in and from countries.

The largest new internal displacements in Africa in 2020 took place in sub-Saharan Africa, with the majority caused by conflict (see Figure 7). The Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ethiopia experienced the largest conflict displacements in the region. By the end of 2020, there were a little over 2 million new conflict displacements in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and more than 1.6 million in Ethiopia. While the scale of displacements due to conflict is not as acute in terms of absolute numbers in the Central African Republic, the country had the largest displacements as a proportion of national population (around 7%).

Somalia and Ethiopia had the largest and second largest disaster displacements, respectively. In Somalia, heavy rains and subsequent flooding drove many of the displacements. Across sub-Saharan Africa, disaster-related events further exacerbated crises, particularly in countries already in conflict, triggering new and secondary movements.

Figure 7. Top 20 African countries by new internal displacements (disaster and conflict), 2020



Source: IDMC, n.d.; UN DESA, 2021.

Notes: The term “new displacements” refers to the number of displacement movements that occurred in 2020, not the total accumulated stock of IDPs resulting from displacement over time. New displacement figures include individuals who have been displaced more than once and do not correspond to the number of people displaced during the year. The population size used to calculate the percentage of new disaster and conflict displacements is based on the total resident population of the country per 2021 UN DESA population estimates, and the percentage is for relative illustrative purposes only.

## Key features and developments in Africa<sup>4</sup>

### *West and Central Africa*

**The COVID-19 pandemic and related containment measures have had wide-ranging impacts on migration and mobility in West and Central Africa, disrupting intraregional movement and resulting in stranded migrants.** Most international migrants from West and Central Africa move within the subregion. Many migrate for economic reasons, including to work in both the informal and formal sectors.<sup>5</sup> However, in the early months of the pandemic, travel and movement restrictions such as border closures resulted in the suspension of free movement arrangements, such as those of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which had long facilitated greater mobility within the subregion.<sup>6</sup> Between March and April 2020, up to 12 countries in the subregion closed their borders.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, intraregional migration flows in West and Central Africa dropped by nearly 50 per cent between January and April 2020 at key transit points.<sup>8</sup> Border closures also led to thousands of migrants being stranded, including seasonal workers, students and herders such as those who traditionally move along the transhumance corridor between Mauritania and Chad. By mid-2020, an estimated 50,000 migrants had been stranded in quarantine and transit centres and at international borders in West and Central Africa.<sup>9</sup> Travel restrictions also had devastating impacts on trade and on the livelihoods of border communities, including migrants, many of whom are engaged in the informal sector, which employs most people in both West and Central Africa.<sup>10</sup> Further, with formal recruitment channels suspended and borders closed, some migrants in West Africa resorted to using irregular migration channels and there were reports of smugglers charging higher fees to facilitate travel between countries. However, due to tighter border controls and the general decrease in population movements, migrant smuggling from the subregion decreased in the early months of the crisis, with irregular migration flows to Europe, for example, also temporarily falling.<sup>11</sup> While many countries have reopened their borders, various health and travel restrictions remain and continue to have impacts on migration and mobility in the subregion. The pandemic has also complicated political priorities, including those related to migration governance; however, as some analysis suggests, this is also an opportunity to strengthen migration governance and cooperation in the subregion and there is impetus to this end in some countries.<sup>12</sup>

**The crisis in Central Sahel, characterized by the recent upsurge in conflict and violence, has resulted in one of the worst humanitarian disasters in Africa.** The Central Sahel area, which encompasses Burkina Faso, the Niger and Mali, has experienced an increase in violence in recent years, driven by a combination of factors, including competition over natural resources, underdevelopment and poverty. The violence over access to natural resources has especially been exploited by non-State armed groups in rural areas, as State authorities have increasingly withdrawn into cities. Moreover, intercommunal violence in rural areas, including conflict between farmers and herders around transhumance, has also exacerbated an already difficult humanitarian situation, while the effects of climate change, such as unpredictable weather patterns and record hot periods, have worsened communal tensions and violence. Across the three States, an estimated 1.9 million people were internally displaced by the end of 2020, while thousands died due to violence during the same year.<sup>13</sup>

**Climate change and extreme weather events are significant triggers of displacement, while also continuing to affect the livelihoods of millions of people and increasing competition over natural resources.** Across Central and West Africa, climate change has contributed to prolonged droughts and unpredictable rainfall, impacting on the land use patterns of farmers and herders.<sup>14</sup> Severe droughts, which have become more frequent, are not only disrupting livelihoods, but are also forcing many pastoralists into displacement.<sup>15</sup> Storm surges and flooding

have also become more common, and in 2020 alone, they affected more than 2 million people across 18 countries in the subregion, resulting in the destruction of livestock, land and goods, and contributing to the ongoing food insecurity.<sup>16</sup> In the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Cameroon, for example, heavy rain and flooding led to around 279,000 and 116,000 new displacements, respectively.<sup>17</sup> Further, climate change has worsened existing tensions in communities over reduced access to water and grazing land, leading to increased violence over these natural resources. Of note is Nigeria's Middle Belt region and the border between Burkina Faso and Mali; this situation has been exploited by extremist groups, which capitalize on current tensions to further their causes.<sup>18</sup>

**Displacement due to violent extremism continues to be a defining feature in West and Central Africa, with millions of people uprooted from their homes.** In the Lake Chad basin, including Nigeria, Chad, the Niger and Cameroon, extremist groups such as Boko Haram have increased their attacks and kidnapping of civilians, while also continuing to recruit children into fighting.<sup>19</sup> New extremist groups have also emerged in recent years, while some have expanded by establishing ties with regional or international groups.<sup>20</sup> In addition to Boko Haram, there are several other active groups that have not only caused displacement, but have also led to deaths and set back years of development gains in the Lake Chad basin and the Sahel.<sup>21</sup> Their expansion across West Africa has been aided, in part, by smugglers and trafficking networks, as well as porous borders in the subregion.<sup>22</sup> Extremist groups continue to take advantage of underlying ethnic animosities, poverty and the absence of State control in some rural areas to draw in recruits and advance their agendas.<sup>23</sup> Meanwhile, new coalitions of armed groups in Central Africa have devastated the lives of many people. In the Central African Republic, for example, one in four of the country's population was either a refugee or an IDP, and in the first six months of 2020, nearly as many people had been displaced within the country as had been displaced across the entire year of 2019.<sup>24</sup>

**Women and girls comprise a significant number of migrants in West and Central Africa, with many experiencing a range of gender-based risks.** Women in the subregion migrate for various reasons, including in search of economic opportunities, to reunite with their families and to further their education.<sup>25</sup> In West Africa, nearly half of all migrants within and from the subregion are female.<sup>26</sup> The growing number of women migrants in the subregion is also evident in the number of migrant returns, which are increasingly comprised of women.<sup>27</sup> Economic factors remain the primary driver of migration and while women migrants are engaged in both formal and informal employment activities, the majority continue to be employed in the informal economy, including in areas such as trade and domestic work.<sup>28</sup> Female migrants from and within the subregion face several challenges and risks, both during migration and following arrival in destination countries. Sexual exploitation and violence during migration journeys, precarious employment conditions in destination countries and low wages are some of the challenges that many experience.<sup>29</sup>

### *Eastern and Southern Africa*

**The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a devastating toll on millions of migrants, including refugees, in both Eastern and Southern Africa.** In the early weeks and months of the pandemic, several countries in the subregion completely closed their borders and restricted movement, resulting in a significant decline in migration and mobility within the subregion.<sup>30</sup> In addition to closing borders, some countries suspended the reception of new asylum seekers and refugees, leaving many people – at least temporarily – without protection.<sup>31</sup> Uganda, for example, host to one of the largest refugee populations in the world, effectively ceased its “open door” policy to refugees and asylum seekers in early 2020. Further, refugees living in crowded camps and those in remote areas far from government health facilities have faced a range of challenges, including poor or no access to testing and treatment, while at the same time experiencing difficulty adhering to physical and social distancing, making them particularly vulnerable to contracting COVID-19.<sup>32</sup> As countries went into lockdown, leaving many migrants without

work and the means to return home, thousands were left stranded in the subregion.<sup>33</sup> The pandemic also had an impact on irregular migration from the region. In the first few months of the pandemic, there was a decline in irregular migrant arrivals from the region to Europe, although by mid-2020, these numbers had risen again.<sup>34</sup> The drop in the number of migrants from the Horn of Africa going to Gulf countries through Yemen, however, was much more sustained, declining by 73 per cent in 2020.<sup>35</sup> In the same year, thousands of Horn of African migrants also returned from Yemen, often aided by smugglers, as many lost their sources of income due to the disruptions caused by the pandemic, while also experiencing increased human rights abuses.<sup>36</sup> The closure of the Yemen–Saudi Arabia border in 2020 also meant that many migrants headed to Saudi Arabia were no longer able to reach their intended destination.<sup>37</sup> The pandemic's impacts have extended to disrupting peace processes and operations across the world, including in Eastern Africa, and thus prolonging conflicts, which continue to drive displacement in the subregion.<sup>38</sup> Meanwhile, in parts of Southern Africa, the pandemic has been used to instrumentalize xenophobia and to scapegoat migrants.<sup>39</sup> Undocumented migrants and asylum seekers, among other migrants, have been hard hit by lockdown measures, which have worsened their already difficult socioeconomic conditions, with many unable to access pandemic-related support services.<sup>40</sup> While some countries in the subregion included migrants such as refugees and asylum seekers in their COVID-19-related health measures, including vaccinations, some continued to exclude them, with irregular migrants in particular being left out.<sup>41</sup>

**Labour migration is a key feature in Eastern and Southern Africa, with a significant number of migrant workers within and from the subregion.** Intraregional migration in Eastern and Southern Africa has increased over the years, driven in part by the growth of migrant workers in the subregion.<sup>42</sup> In Eastern Africa, integration efforts such as the East African Common Market Protocol, while still facing major implementation challenges, have gradually made it easier for people to work across borders.<sup>43</sup> Recent arrangements, such as the Free Movement and Transhumance Protocol endorsed in June 2021, could also further accelerate intraregional migration once ratified and implemented by the Member States of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).<sup>44</sup> Other regional economic communities, such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), have also developed programmes to further facilitate regular labour migration among Member States.<sup>45</sup> Intraregional irregular migration, including for economic reasons, is also prevalent.<sup>46</sup> Similar to Eastern Africa, the number of international migrant workers within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has also increased, comprised of labour migrants from within and outside Southern Africa.<sup>47</sup> An increasingly large number of people also migrate outside the subregion. Traditionally, Northern America and Europe have been the major destinations for emigrants from East African countries such as Kenya. In 2020, the largest Kenyan diaspora resided in the United States (nearly 157,000) and the United Kingdom (around 139,000).<sup>48</sup> Gulf States have also become a major destination for a growing number of Ugandan, Kenyan and Ethiopian migrant workers.<sup>49</sup> Large diaspora communities from the subregion have resulted in significant international remittance inflows in recent years. Kenya, for example, the third largest remittance recipient in sub-Saharan Africa after Nigeria and Ghana, received over USD 3 billion in 2020, a 9 per cent increase from 2019.<sup>50</sup> This growth in remittance flows to Kenya was largely driven by increased flows from the United States.<sup>51</sup> Other countries in the subregion with significant numbers of their populations living abroad, such as Somalia and Uganda, also rank among the top 10 remittance-receiving countries in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>52</sup> South Africa is also a major destination for many migrants from the subregion and is the largest source of remittances in Africa.



**The surge in terrorist attacks, in addition to persistent conflicts in parts of Southern and Eastern Africa, remain significant drivers of displacement.** In northern Mozambique, the intensification of violent attacks by Ahlu Sunna wal Jama has resulted in a sharp increase in displacement. These extremely violent attacks have plunged the country's northern provinces such as Cabo Delgado, which are still dealing with the devastating effects of Cyclone Kenneth, further into crisis.<sup>53</sup> By end of 2020, conflict and violence had resulted in over half a million displacements in Mozambique, the fourth largest number of new conflict displacements in the world in 2020.<sup>54</sup> In Eastern Africa, several countries also continue to experience sporadic violence and intermittent conflict. Al Shabab attacks in Somalia, as well as State and regional armed operations against the militant group, continue to drive people from their homes, while in South Sudan, despite a peace accord that has restored a degree of stability, conflict between community militias continued in 2020.<sup>55</sup> One of the largest drivers of displacement in the Horn of Africa and that has an effect on Eastern Africa is the ongoing conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia; clashes have cost thousands of lives, and resulted in both internal and cross-border displacement in Tigray and neighbouring Afar and Amhara.<sup>56</sup> An estimated 1.7 million people had been displaced by conflict and violence in Ethiopia at the end of 2020, the third largest such figure in the world after the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Syrian Arab Republic.<sup>57</sup> Thousands also fled the country due to the violence, many hosted in neighbouring Sudan.<sup>58</sup>

**Eastern Africa continues to simultaneously host as well as be the origin of some of the largest refugee populations in the world.** In 2020, South Sudan was origin of the fourth largest number of refugees globally (over 2 million).<sup>59</sup> Somalia, another country in the subregion affected by years of conflict and violence, was the origin of over 800,000 refugees.<sup>60</sup> East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes continue to be the origin of most African refugees, with more than 5 million from countries in the region in 2020.<sup>61</sup> The region also hosted a significant number of refugees (around 4.5 million) in 2020.<sup>62</sup> Uganda, with more than 1.4 million refugees, was the fourth largest host country of refugees in the world, most from South Sudan.<sup>63</sup> Several countries in the subregion, such as Uganda, have maintained their open-door policies, while also increasingly adopting progressive national refugee frameworks, partly inspired by the Global Compact on Refugees.<sup>64</sup>

**Extreme weather events, including floods, droughts and storms are affecting livelihoods in the subregion, often resulting in large displacements.** Several countries in Eastern Africa, already beleaguered by conflict and violence, have experienced devastating disasters over the last two years. Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan, for example, were affected by some of the worst floods in decades, which created the conditions for a catastrophic locust outbreak that damaged livelihoods across the region in 2020.<sup>65</sup> In South Sudan, disasters, especially floods, were responsible for over 440,000 new disaster displacements in 2020.<sup>66</sup> In the same year, around 664,000 new disaster displacements were recorded in Ethiopia.<sup>67</sup> Several countries in Southern Africa were also affected by slow- and rapid-onset disasters. In Mozambique, for example, a country still reeling from the devastating effects of Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, Cyclone Eloise, which made landfall in January 2021, left hundreds of thousands of people in need of humanitarian assistance.<sup>68</sup> In countries such as the United Republic of Tanzania, recent flooding has also been linked to warming sea surface temperatures in the Indian Ocean, which contributes to La Niña-like conditions, and in parts of the country, severe droughts have resulted in the reduction of water levels in water bodies such as Lake Tanganyika.<sup>69</sup> These climate effects impact on already existing migration drivers, including those related to economic factors, with communities that depend on rain-fed agriculture being most affected.

## *North Africa*

**The effects of COVID-19 and related movement restrictions on migrants and migration in North Africa resulted in changes to irregular migration patterns, involuntary immobility, forced returns and discrimination.** While North Africa remains a major area of transit for migrants from other parts of Africa trying to make their way to Europe, border closures in the subregion led to a decline in the overall number of migrants departing to Europe via the Mediterranean Sea in 2020.<sup>70</sup> However, there was wide variation across the different routes from North Africa, with the number of people using the Central Mediterranean route, for example, increasing in 2020 compared with 2019.<sup>71</sup> The pandemic and related measures to contain it also had adverse and unique impacts on migrants, including those held in detention in countries with major protection challenges such as Libya, where overcrowding, poor sanitation and the lack of safe water have made them vulnerable to contracting COVID-19.<sup>72</sup> Other migrants in the subregion have found themselves stranded because of border closures or due to the suspension of voluntary return programmes.<sup>73</sup> In some cases, migrants have been forcibly returned by authorities, leaving them stranded in the desert.<sup>74</sup> The forced return of migrants from North Africa and other parts of world prompted the United Nations Network on Migration (UNNM) to issue a statement calling for the suspension of these measures during the pandemic.<sup>75</sup> However, some countries in North Africa, such as Algeria – in agreement with origin countries including Mali – did temporarily lift travel restrictions and allowed IOM, for example, to facilitate the safe return of stranded migrants.<sup>76</sup> The pandemic also inflicted a significant financial toll on a large number of migrants in the subregion, as many lost their sources of income. Migrants have also experienced discrimination and stigmatization, compounded with being excluded from vital services such as health care, although some countries, such as Egypt, have included migrants in their health-care responses and vaccination plans.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, women migrants have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19, and in countries such as Tunisia, women have not only reported more frequent losses in income than men, but there has also been an increase in the risk of sexual exploitation.<sup>78</sup>

**North Africa receives some of the largest international remittances globally, driven by the subregion's significant emigrant population.** Emigration, particularly from Maghreb countries such as Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, has long been a feature in North Africa.<sup>79</sup> Other countries in the subregion, including Egypt, also have large emigrant populations. Europe and Asia are the two major destinations for migrants from North Africa. In 2020, there was a combined total of more than 5 million migrants in Europe from Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia.<sup>80</sup> While Europe is the primary destination for migrants from these three countries, Asian countries, particularly Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States, are the main destination for migrants from Egypt.<sup>81</sup> Nearly one million Egyptian migrants, for example, were living in Saudi Arabia in 2020, while around 900,000 were in the United Arab Emirates and over 400,000 in Kuwait.<sup>82</sup> Given its large diaspora, the subregion has over the years become one of the largest recipients of international remittances in the world. In 2020, international remittance inflows to Egypt reached a record USD 30 billion, making it the fifth largest recipient globally.<sup>83</sup> Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, remittances to Egypt increased by around 11 per cent, while in Morocco they rose by 6.5 per cent.<sup>84</sup> Remittances to Morocco and Tunisia account for more than 5 per cent of GDP, while in Egypt this figure is at over 8 per cent.<sup>85</sup> International remittance flows to the subregion could potentially grow further, as the European Union (EU) seeks to enhance legal migration pathways to the region through instruments such as the EU Talent Pool and Talent Partnerships, part of the New EU Pact on Migration and Asylum; North Africa is one of the subregions that would benefit from these new schemes.<sup>86</sup>

**North Africa continues to be the origin and destination of a large number of refugees and IDPs, with conflict and violence playing major roles in driving displacement within and from the subregion.** For a decade, countries such as Libya have been embroiled in conflict and political instability, forcing hundreds of thousands of people from their homes and severely limiting access to basic services.<sup>87</sup> Humanitarian assistance delivery has also often been hampered, while services such as water, health and education infrastructure are

regularly targeted.<sup>88</sup> In 2020, there were more than 278,000 IDPs in Libya, many displaced by conflict and violence.<sup>89</sup> While a ceasefire signed in October 2020 has resulted in a reduction in hostilities, over a million people continue to be in need of humanitarian assistance.<sup>90</sup> The Sudan also continues to experience a complex political, humanitarian and political situation. Violent conflict in areas such as Kordofan and Darfur have displaced many, while the country continues to host one of the largest refugee populations in the world, most from South Sudan.<sup>91</sup> Other refugees in the Sudan include those from neighbouring countries such as Ethiopia and Eritrea, as well as those from more distant countries in conflict, including Yemen and the Syrian Arab Republic.<sup>92</sup> By the end of 2020, the Sudan hosted around 1 million refugees and over 2.3 million IDPs.<sup>93</sup>

**Many migrants across the subregion continue to endure a multitude of protection challenges, with women and girls particularly vulnerable to abuse.** In addition to verbal and physical attacks, migrants have encountered exploitation, as well as poor living conditions.<sup>94</sup> These realities are further compounded in countries with weak rule of law and where militias or smugglers and traffickers act with impunity. In Libya, migrants have regularly been taken and held in “official” detention centres, where they have faced a multitude of abuses.<sup>95</sup> Other migrants have ended up in warehouses or unofficial detention centres and left at the mercy of smugglers and traffickers.<sup>96</sup> International organizations are often denied access to these centres, leaving many in appalling conditions.<sup>97</sup> However, these realities are not limited only to detained migrants; many in urban settings are confronted with barriers to accessing basic needs and services and are exposed to difficult, impoverished living conditions.<sup>98</sup> Women and girls have particularly been subjected to abuse such as rape, including during their journeys to and through the subregion.<sup>99</sup>

**North Africa remains a major transit hub and point of departure for migrants from the subregion and those from sub-Saharan Africa trying to make their way to Europe and beyond.** Tens of thousands of migrants attempt to reach Europe from North Africa using two major routes, the Central Mediterranean routes (mainly from Libya and Tunisia to Italy) and the Western Mediterranean routes (largely from Morocco and Algeria to Spain).<sup>100</sup> Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an increase in arrivals on both the Central and Western Mediterranean routes in 2020. Arrivals in Europe on both routes saw an 86 per cent increase, from more than 41,000 to nearly 77,000.<sup>101</sup> Along the Central Mediterranean routes to Italy, Tunisians comprised the largest number of arrivals.<sup>102</sup> The harrowing journeys across both routes result many deaths, and in 2020 alone, more than 1,500 migrants from West and North Africa heading to Spain, Malta and Italy were reported as dead or missing at sea.<sup>103</sup> Many migrants rely on the services of smugglers to get them to and through North Africa to Europe; those trying to get to Libya from countries in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, are mainly smuggled along two routes, including the Western route (used by West Africans through the Niger, Mali and Algeria), and the Eastern route (used largely by migrants from East Africa through the Sudan and Chad). Migrants often endure abuse during these journeys, with some becoming victims of trafficking, including being in situations where they are unable to pay smugglers upon arrival at their destination.<sup>104</sup>

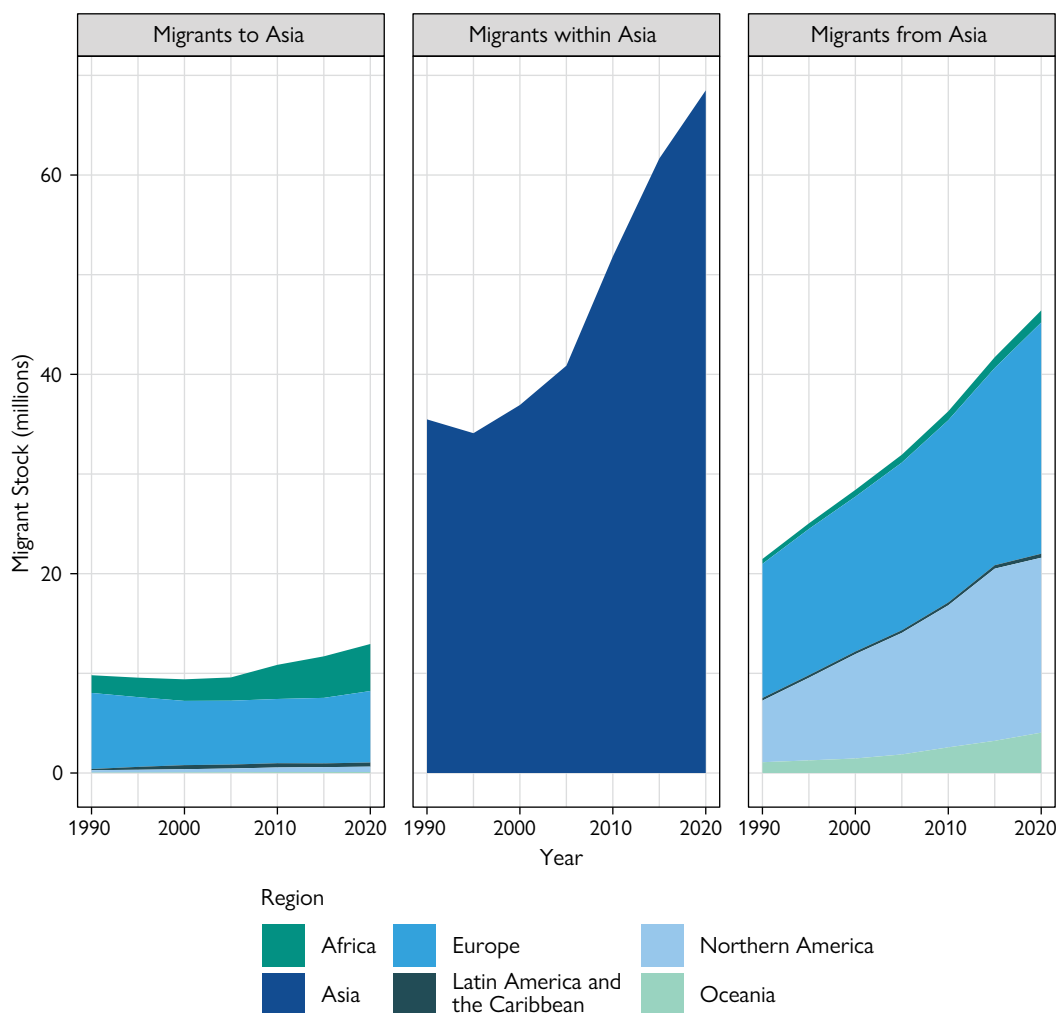
## Asia<sup>105</sup>

Asia – home to around 4.6 billion people – was the origin of over 40 per cent of the world’s international migrants in 2020 (around 115 million). In the same year, more than half (69 million) were residing in other countries in Asia, a significant increase from 2015, when around 61 million were estimated to be living within the continent. As shown in the middle panel of Figure 8, intraregional migration in Asia has increased significantly over time, rising from 35 million in 1990. Considerable growth has also occurred in Asian-born migrant populations in Northern America and Europe over the last two decades. In 2020, migration from Asia to Northern America reached 17.5 million, rising slightly from 17.3 million in 2015, whereas in Europe, migration from Asia stood at 23 million

in 2020, increasing from almost 20 million in 2015. Migration from Asia to Northern America and Europe drove much of the increase in the number of Asian migrants outside the region, reaching a total of more than 46 million extraregional migrants in 2020.

The number of non-Asian-born migrants in Asia has remained at relatively low levels since 1990. Europeans comprise the largest group of migrants from outside Asia in the region. These numbers include migrants from the European part of the former Soviet Union now living in Central Asia. During the same period, the number of Africans – the other sizable group of migrants in Asia – has grown.

Figure 8. Migrants to, within and from Asia, 1990–2020



Source: UN DESA, 2021.

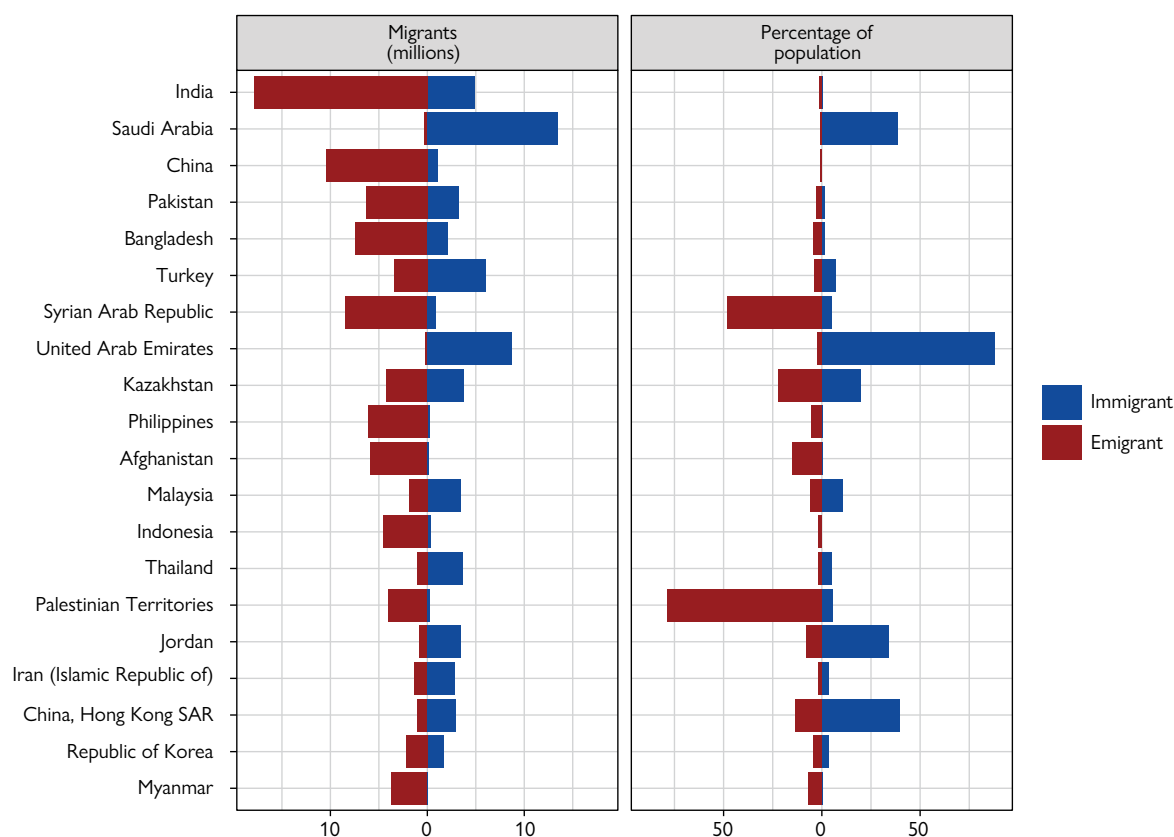
Note: "Migrants to Asia" refers to migrants residing in the region (i.e. Asia) who were born in one of the other regions (e.g. Europe or Africa). "Migrants within Asia" refers to migrants born in the region (i.e. Asia) and residing outside their country of birth, but still within the Asian region. "Migrants from Asia" refers to people born in Asia who were residing outside the region (e.g. in Europe or Northern America).

The two Asian “population giants”, India and China, have the largest absolute numbers of migrants living abroad (Figure 9). It is important to add that these large absolute numbers of emigrants constitute small shares of the total populations of India and China. Migrants from China made up the fourth largest population of foreign-born migrants in the world after India, Mexico and the Russian Federation. Just over 2 million Chinese-born emigrants resided in the United States, which was also home to other large Asian migrant groups from India, the Philippines and Viet Nam. Other countries with large numbers of migrants residing abroad include Bangladesh and the Syrian Arab Republic.

In GCC countries, migrants make up high proportions of the total national populations (Figure 9). For example, in 2020, migrants accounted for 88 per cent of the population in the United Arab Emirates; almost 73 per cent in Kuwait; 77 per cent in Qatar; and 55 per cent in Bahrain. Many migrants came from Africa, South Asia (e.g. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal), and South-East Asia (e.g. Indonesia and the Philippines).

It is also important to note that current data on foreign-born migrants also partly reflect significant historical events, such as the 1947 Partition, resulting in the mass displacement of people from and to India and Pakistan. This is evident in 2020 data, which show that nearly 5 million and over 3 million foreign-born migrants, respectively, resided in the two countries.

Figure 9. Top 20 Asian migrant countries/territories, 2020



Source: UN DESA, 2021.

Note 1: The population size used to calculate the percentage of immigrants and emigrants is based on the UN DESA total resident population of the country, which includes foreign-born populations.

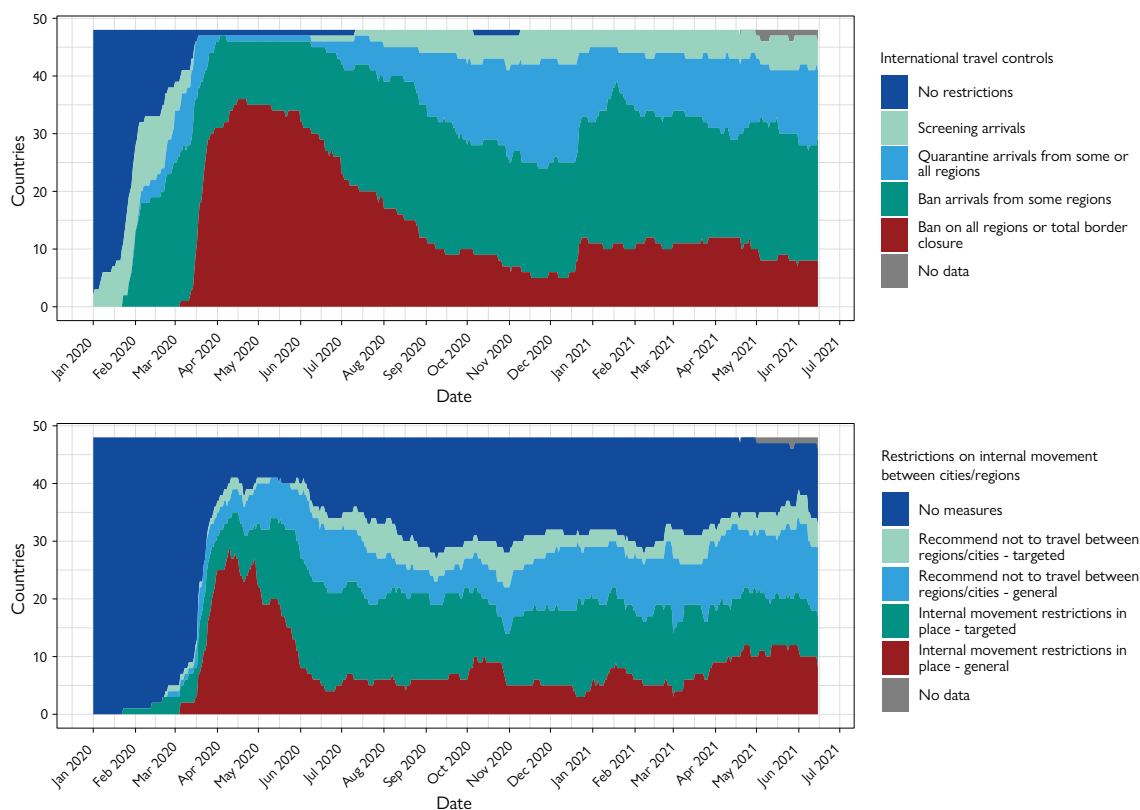
Note 2: “Immigrant” refers to foreign-born migrants residing in the country. “Emigrant” refers to people born in the country who were residing outside their country of birth in 2021.

Asian countries issued some of the very earliest COVID-19-related international and internal movement restrictions to contain the spread of the virus. As in regions such as Africa, international travel controls came into effect earlier than internal restrictions, with measures such as screening arrivals put in place as early as January 2020 (Figure 10). These were quickly followed by quarantine measures and the banning of arrivals from some regions, with total border closures only put in place from around March 2020, by which time virtually all countries in the region had some form of international travel control.

Markedly, nearly all countries in Asia maintained international travel restrictions such as screening arrivals throughout 2020, and by mid-June 2021 this measure was still in place for most countries. Quarantine measures dropped only slightly, while international controls, including bans on arrivals and total border closures, fell over time, with the latter declining much more sharply.

Internal movement restrictions, typically imposed some time after international controls, saw a significant increase from around mid-March 2020, before beginning to decline in mid-May. This decline was not uniform across all measures, however, with restrictions such as recommendations not to travel between regions or cities – both specific and general – falling much more gradually than the rest of the measures. However, all internal controls did see slight increases at various points, including during the first quarter of 2021.

Figure 10. COVID-19-related travel controls in Asia: International and internal, January 2020 to June 2021

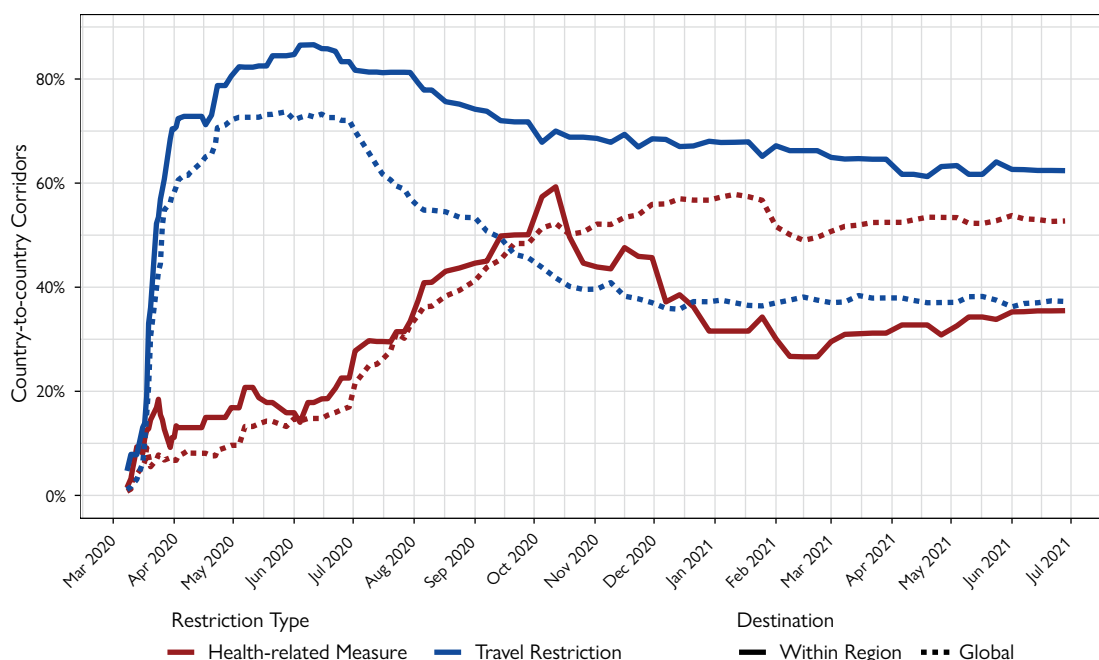


Source: Hale et al., 2021.

Notes: Categories used are those of the Oxford Government Response Tracker; categories included in the data set are for COVID-19-related restrictions only and do not reflect other travel restrictions that may also be in place, such as those related to visa restrictions, entry bans based on citizenship, departure/exit restrictions and internal movement restrictions.

There was a very quick rise in the number of travel restrictions in Asia (intraregional and global) in the early months of 2020. These restrictions began to decline gradually around the middle of that year. However, unlike regions such as Africa, which saw a sharper decline in travel restrictions within the region compared with other global regions, this dynamic is flipped in Asia, with greater intraregional travel controls throughout 2020 and the first half of 2021 (see Figure 11). Health measures increased over time and by late 2020, those imposed on countries outside of Asia had surpassed extraregional travel controls. However, health measures (within the region) began to decline around October 2020, with less than 40 per cent of country-to-country corridors maintaining these measures as of 30 June 2021.

Figure 11. COVID-19-related international travel measures in Asia: March 2020 to June 2021



Source: IOM, 2021a.

Notes: Health-related measures include health screening and monitoring, testing/medical certificates and quarantine measures. Travel restrictions include passenger restrictions based on nationality or arrival from a geographic location. See the DTM Mobility restrictions page for more information on the methodology.

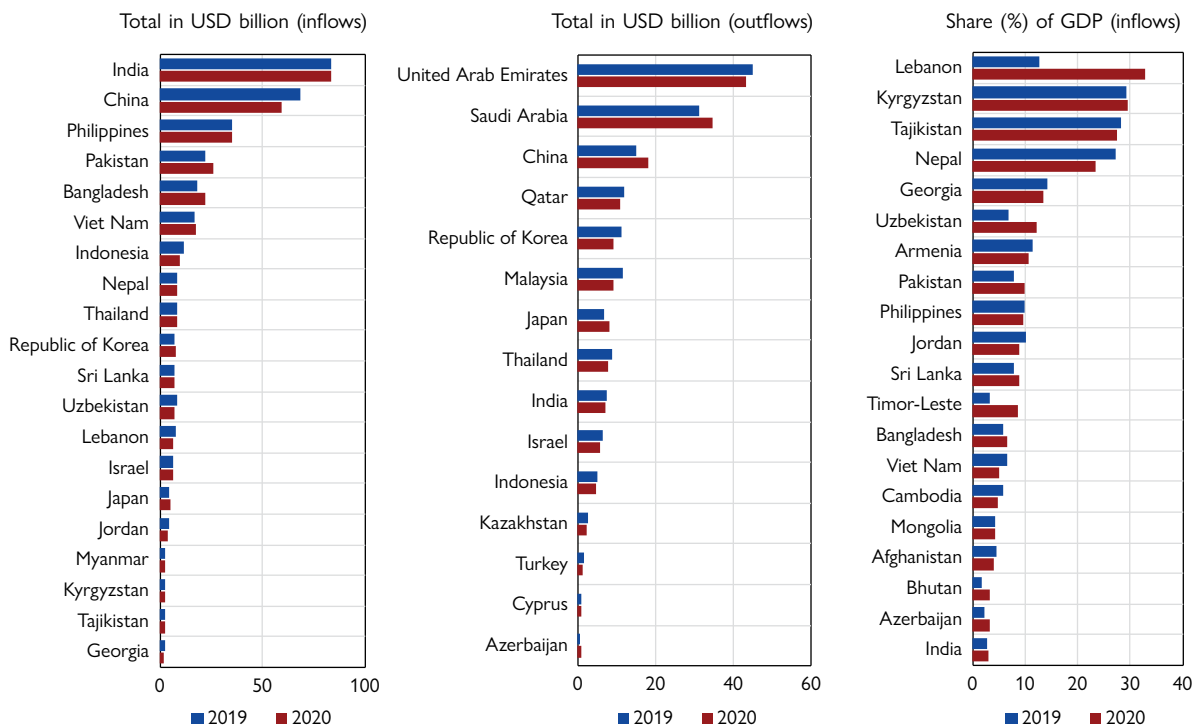
In 2020, India and China received the largest amounts of international remittances in Asia, with a combined total of more than USD 140 billion. Other major remittance recipients included the Philippines, Pakistan and Bangladesh (see Figure 12). As a percentage of GDP, some of the most significant recipients in 2020 were Lebanon (33%), Kyrgyzstan (29%), Tajikistan (27%) and Nepal (24%). Compared with 2019, inward remittance flows to Asia decreased modestly by around 2 per cent in 2020. In India, the region's largest recipient country, remittances fell by just 0.2 per cent, reaching USD 83 billion. In Pakistan, however, remittances rose by over 17 per cent to a record high of USD 26 billion.

In terms of remittance outflows, two GCC countries – the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia – were the largest and second largest source countries of remittances in Asia. Remittances sent from the United Arab Emirates reached USD 43 billion in 2020, although this was a decline from 2019, when outflows amounted to nearly



USD 45 billion. Remittances from Saudi Arabia, however, increased in the same period, rising from USD 31 billion in 2019 to USD 34 billion in 2020. Other countries, such as China, Qatar and the Republic of Korea were also the source of significant remittance outflows.

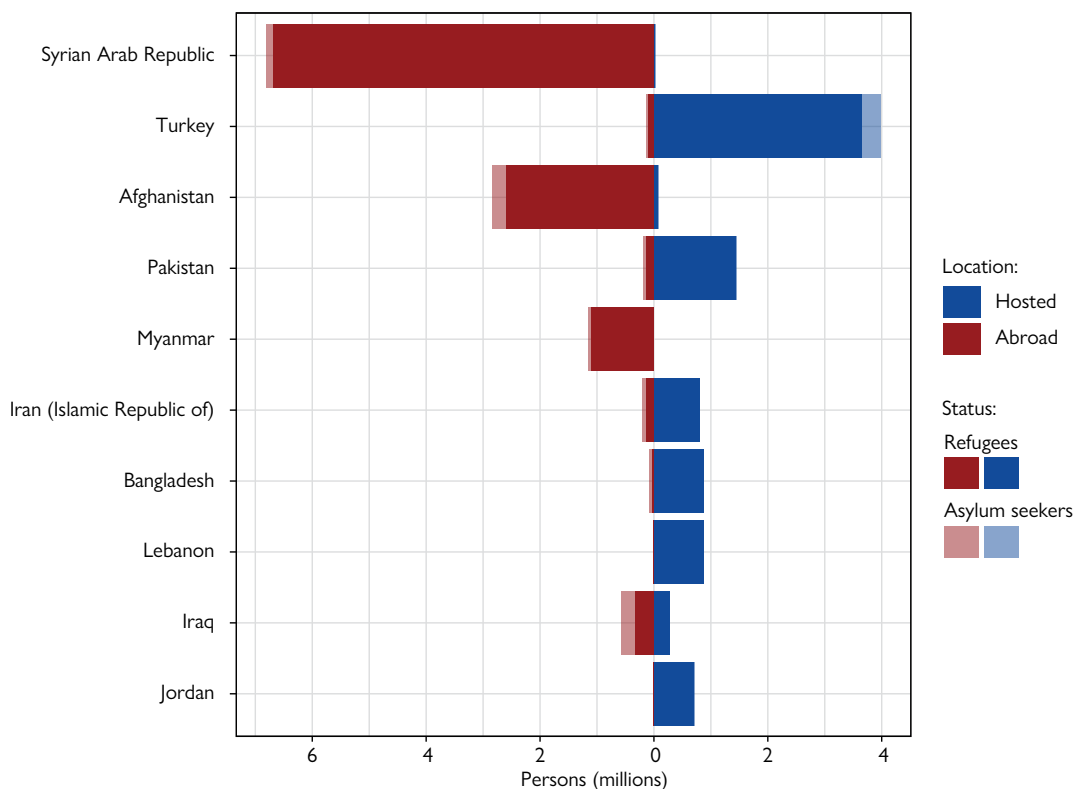
Figure 12. Top Asian international remittance recipient and source countries, 2019 and 2020



Source: World Bank, 2021.

International displacement within and from Asia is a major feature of the region, as shown in Figure 13. The Syrian Arab Republic and Afghanistan were the top origin countries of refugees in the world in 2020. The impact of the Syrian conflict on displacement can clearly be seen in Figure 13, with refugees and asylum seekers from the Syrian Arab Republic dwarfing numbers from the rest of the subregion. In 2020, the vast majority of refugees from Asian countries lived in neighbouring countries. Refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic, for example, were predominantly hosted in Turkey (more than 3.6 million), Lebanon (around 0.9 million) and Jordan (nearly 0.7 million), while refugees from Afghanistan, whose numbers declined slightly from 2.7 million in 2019 to 2.6 million in 2020, were largely hosted in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, events in Afghanistan in mid-2021 related to the withdrawal of allied troops and the speedy resurgence of the Taliban will undoubtedly see the number of refugees from Afghanistan increase for 2021. Due to violence against and persecution of the Rohingya, Myanmar was the country of origin of the third largest refugee population in the region and the fifth largest number of people displaced across borders globally in 2020, with most of these refugees hosted in Bangladesh. As shown in Figure 13, it is also important to note that origin countries such as Iraq, Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran are also themselves hosting refugees.

Figure 13. Top 10 Asian countries by total refugees and asylum seekers, 2020

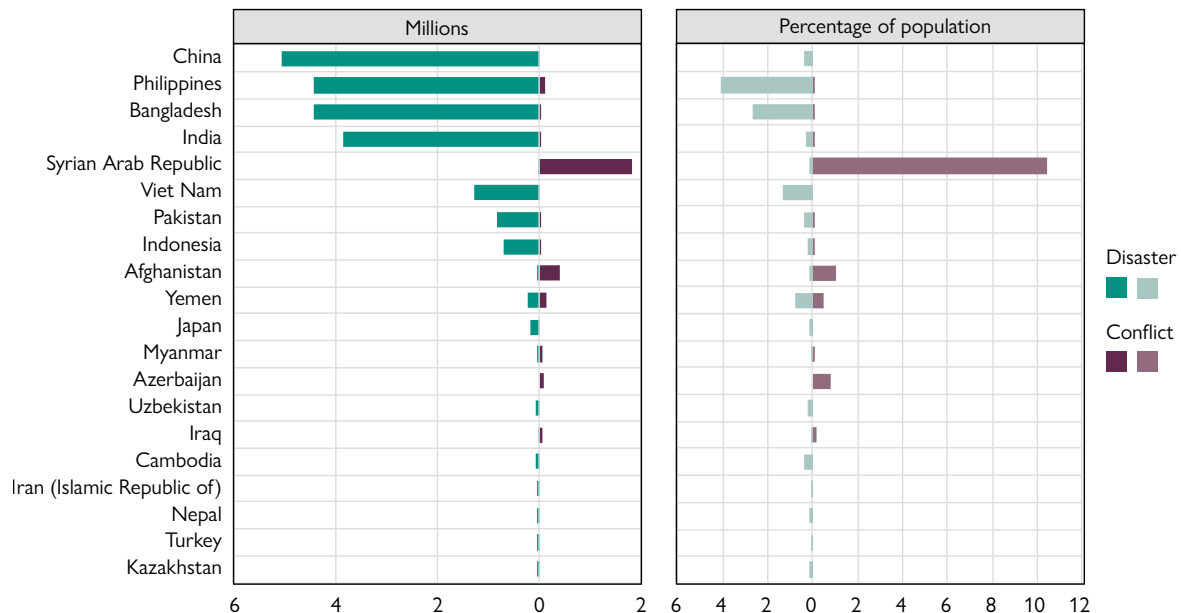


Source: UNHCR, n.d.b.

Note: "Hosted" refers to those refugees and asylum seekers from other countries who are residing in the receiving country (right-hand side of the figure); "abroad" refers to refugees and asylum seekers originating from that country who are outside of their origin country. The top 10 countries are based on 2020 data and are calculated by combining refugees and asylum seekers in and from countries.

The largest new internal displacements in Asia resulted from disasters (Figure 14). China had approximately 5 million new disaster displacements at the end of 2020. Notably, the Philippines recorded nearly as many new disaster displacements as China, with over 4 million new disaster displacements. Moreover, disasters such as flooding caused by monsoons, landslides and intense cyclones triggered large-scale displacements in 2020 in Bangladesh (more than 4 million), India (nearly 4 million) and Viet Nam (around 1 million). Conflicts also contributed to new internal displacements in Asia, with the Syrian Arab Republic recording the largest number (almost 2 million). Other countries that experienced large conflict displacements include Afghanistan (404,000) and Yemen (143,000). The humanitarian crisis in Yemen is one of the most severe globally; two intense rainy seasons between February and September, which displaced over 200,000 people in 2020, exacerbated an already existing humanitarian crisis in the country.

Figure 14. Top 20 Asian countries by new internal displacements (disaster and conflict), 2020



Source: IDMC, n.d.; UN DESA, 2021.

Notes: New displacements refers to the number of displacement movements that occurred in 2020, not the total accumulated stock of IDPs resulting from displacement over time. New displacement figures include individuals who have been displaced more than once and do not correspond to the number of people displaced during the year.

The population size used to calculate the percentage of new disaster and conflict displacements is based on the total resident population of the country per 2021 UN DESA population estimates, and the percentage is for relative illustrative purposes only.

## Key features and developments in Asia<sup>106</sup>

### Middle East

**Migrants in the subregion experienced significant challenges posed by COVID-19 and related travel and movement restrictions, which exacerbated existing health vulnerabilities, worsened their economic conditions, left many stranded and forced thousands to return to their home countries.** In several GCC countries, for example, migrants have been at increased risk of contracting COVID-19 due to overcrowded living conditions and the nature of their work, as well as inadequate access to health care.<sup>107</sup> Moreover, as countries locked down and companies were forced to close their operations, many migrants also lost their jobs or experienced payment delays, affecting their ability to meet basic needs or pay off debts.<sup>108</sup> Many were forced to return to their countries of origin.<sup>109</sup> The *Kafala* system, which ties migrant workers to their employers, exacerbated the poor working and living conditions for many migrant workers in the Gulf. These conditions were particularly difficult for domestic workers, who, due to lockdowns, were sometimes stuck with abusive employers.<sup>110</sup> Irregular migrants in detention centres in countries such as Saudi Arabia and Yemen were a source of concern, with fears that their cramped and unhygienic living conditions made them extremely vulnerable to getting COVID-19.<sup>111</sup> The closure

of borders also left many migrants in the Gulf and elsewhere in the subregion stranded. In Yemen, thousands of migrants trying to cross to Saudi Arabia were left stuck, often with no food, shelter or water.<sup>112</sup> IDPs and refugees in the Middle East were also affected by the pandemic. Their crowded living conditions in countries such as Lebanon meant that many refugees were at increased risk of exposure to COVID-19.<sup>113</sup> However, several countries in the region including Lebanon have over time included migrants in their health-care responses, such as the ongoing vaccination campaigns.<sup>114</sup> Others such as Morocco and Jordan are also including migrants in their national COVID-19 vaccination programmes.<sup>115</sup>

**While there has been progress in terms of conflict resolution and peacebuilding in several countries, conflict and violence remain the biggest drivers of displacement in the subregion.** Ceasefire agreements in countries such as Iraq resulted in a decline of displacements, but new government offensives in the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen were responsible for driving large numbers of people out of their homes.<sup>116</sup> The 2020 Syrian Government offensive in Idlib Governorate resulted in the single largest displacement event since the war started.<sup>117</sup> Meanwhile, fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh in September 2020, following months of tension between Armenia and Azerbaijan, led to many deaths and many thousands displaced during the two months of conflict.<sup>118</sup> This was the biggest escalation of conflict between the two countries since the 1994 truce.<sup>119</sup> While a ceasefire between Azerbaijan, Armenia and the Russian Federation, signed in November 2020, led to a de-escalation of hostilities,<sup>120</sup> many people remain displaced, and by end of 2020, tens of thousands were still in need of humanitarian assistance.<sup>121</sup>

**Some countries in the region have suffered significant disasters in recent years, and there is ongoing concern that displacement due to climate change could sharply increase.** Several countries in the Middle East are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and weather-related disasters, and for some already in conflict, disasters have aggravated ongoing humanitarian crises. In 2020, floods displaced more people in Yemen than conflict and violence, with nearly a quarter of a million new displacements.<sup>122</sup> Yemen's recent twin challenges – large-scale disaster and conflict displacements – underscore the complexity of the country's humanitarian crisis. Other countries such as Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic have also experienced recurrent floods in recent years, exacerbating the conditions of refugees and IDPs living in camps.<sup>123</sup> Further, while identifying displacement driven by slow-onset hazards such as desertification is difficult, there is evidence to suggest that in countries such as the Syrian Arab Republic the extended drought that devastated livelihoods prior to the start to the conflict may have played a role in the complex set of factors that triggered the country's civil war.<sup>124</sup>

**The region continues to host and is the origin of some of the largest number of refugees and asylum seekers globally.** With nearly seven million refugees from the country in 2020, the Syrian Arab Republic remains the largest origin of refugees in the world.<sup>125</sup> Other countries in the subregion such as Iraq also had a significant number of their populations displaced across borders. In addition, the Middle East continues to be one of the largest destinations for refugees, most from countries within the subregion.<sup>126</sup> Lebanon and Jordan, for example, rank among the top five hosts of refugees globally (as a share of national population).<sup>127</sup> One in eight people in Lebanon and one in 15 people in Jordan is a refugee, many of whom are from the Syrian Arab Republic or the Palestinian Territories.<sup>128</sup> Around 5.7 million refugees from the Palestinian Territories, under the mandate of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), are hosted within the subregion, making the Middle East one of the largest host subregions for refugees in the world.<sup>129</sup>

## Central Asia

**Heavily reliant on international remittances, Central Asia suffered a significant decline in remittance inflows in 2020 due to the pandemic.** Because of lockdowns and movement restrictions in key destination countries such as the Russian Federation, many migrant workers from the subregion lost their jobs, incurred significant salary cuts, or were forced to take unpaid leave.<sup>130</sup> The loss of income had large economic impacts, especially on countries such as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan that rely heavily on international remittances. In 2020, for example, remittances made up 29 per cent and 27 per cent of GDP in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, respectively. Remittance flows to Europe and Central Asia declined by nearly 10 per cent in 2020, while those from the Russian Federation to countries such as Tajikistan and the Kyrgyzstan fell by 37 per cent and 17 per cent, respectively – a result of COVID-19 impacts in the Russian Federation.<sup>131</sup> Remittance flows into Central Asian countries largely reflect migration patterns within and from the subregion, which are closely linked to work and income generation. The Russian Federation, the largest destination for migrants from the subregion, remains the biggest source country of remittances to Central Asian countries.<sup>132</sup> Outward migration, which has long featured in Central Asia, all but came to a halt as destination countries closed their borders, leaving many potential migrant workers stuck and unable to leave their country.<sup>133</sup> Meanwhile, border closures also stranded thousands of migrants trying to return to their countries of origin, including while transiting through Kazakhstan, which grants transit permission for those returning by land to Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.<sup>134</sup>

**Central Asia has experienced significant disaster events in recent years, resulting in the displacement of tens of thousands of people.** With the subregion experiencing increasingly warmer temperatures, some recent sudden-onset disasters have been linked to the growing impacts of climate change. In 2020 alone, heavy rains and severe flooding in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan led to 70,000 and 32,000 new displacements, respectively.<sup>135</sup> Environmental changes are projected to increase the occurrence and intensity of these types of disasters and could result in further displacement in the subregion. People living in grasslands face even greater risks than those living in drylands and are more exposed to the damage wrought by torrential rains and floods.<sup>136</sup> These disasters are a threat to people's livelihoods; as severe storms, droughts, wildfires, floods and mudflows intensify, there are increasing risks to agricultural production, causing food insecurity on a large scale in the region.<sup>137</sup>

**Most international migrants in Central Asia moved to other regions, mainly toward the Russian Federation, by far the most important destination for migrants from the subregion.** Nearly 5 million migrants from Central Asia were living in the Russian Federation by end of 2020.<sup>138</sup> Most of these, over 2.5 million, were born in Kazakhstan.<sup>139</sup> Migrants born in Uzbekistan comprised the second largest group (over 1 million).<sup>140</sup> Around 40 per cent of the Russian Federation's international migrants in 2020 were from Central Asia.<sup>141</sup> A significant number of these are migrant workers, who leave their countries due to high levels of unemployment and in search of better remuneration and working conditions in the Russian Federation. Kazakhstan, with its growing economy driven by natural resources such as oil, has also become a destination for migrants from the subregion.<sup>142</sup>

**While migration from Central Asia is overwhelmingly male dominated, women from the subregion are also increasingly moving to countries such as the Russian Federation as migrant workers.** While men have traditionally comprised most migrant workers from the subregion, there has also been a growing number of women labour migrants working in the Russian Federation in recent years.<sup>143</sup> Many women labour migrants in Central Asia are from Kyrgyzstan; around 51 per cent of Kyrgyz migrants in the Russian Federation, for example, are women.<sup>144</sup> Most work in the services sector, including catering and as domestic workers.<sup>145</sup> To a lesser degree, there is also a growing number of women migrants from other countries in the subregion, such as Tajikistan. Women comprise

around 41 per cent of all Tajik migrants in the Russian Federation (42% of Tajik migrants worldwide).<sup>146</sup> The lack of economic opportunities or the search for higher wages and better working conditions explain most emigration from Central Asia. Other factors, however, such as forced, early and servile marriage, also play a role. In Kyrgyzstan, the practice known as “bride kidnapping” has been shown to contribute to emigration, with some women using migration to escape forced and early marriage.<sup>147</sup> While labour migration has helped some of these countries to reduce unemployment by exporting excess workforce and thus benefiting from remittance inflows, it has also put strain on many households and contributed to family breakdown.<sup>148</sup>

### *Eastern Asia*

**The pandemic increased incidents of xenophobia and discrimination against migrants within and from the subregion, while border restrictions had widespread impacts on migration and mobility.** Cases of discrimination and xenophobia against Chinese migrants and their descendants in other parts of the world were widely reported.<sup>149</sup> In some instances, people perceived to be of Chinese descent were physically attacked, as they were increasingly and incorrectly associated with COVID-19 transmission.<sup>150</sup> On the other hand, there was reporting of discriminatory practices toward migrants during early pandemic responses within the subregion in relation to a wide range of measures, such as quarantine requirements, mask rationing, and access to social benefits and local government subsidies, being based on nationality alone.<sup>151</sup> Moreover, lockdown measures and travel restrictions left many migrants unable to return to their countries of employment. In early 2020, for example, Japan prohibited the entry of non-Japanese nationals or permanent residents, as well as people who held work permits, but had temporarily left the country for holiday or work.<sup>152</sup> These restrictions also disrupted recent efforts, including by countries such as Japan, to fill labour shortages by further increasing the number of migrant workers in the country. Similarly, the Republic of Korea also experienced declines in the arrival of migrant workers.<sup>153</sup>

**With millions of its population living abroad, China has one of the largest transnational communities in the world and remains among the top recipients of international remittances.** There were an estimated 10 million Chinese international migrants in 2020, with large numbers living in Canada, Italy, Australia, the Republic of Korea, Japan, the United States and Singapore.<sup>154</sup> China's large diaspora population means that the country receives a significant share (nearly 9%) of the world's global remittances (USD 702 billion). In 2020, inflows of international remittances to China came second only to India, with the country receiving nearly USD 60 billion.<sup>155</sup> In addition to ranking as one of the largest remittance recipients, China was the third largest sender of remittances in Asia (more than USD 18 billion) after the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, a reflection of the growing number of international migrants in the country.<sup>156</sup>

**In addition to being the origin of some of the largest numbers of international students globally, Eastern Asia has increasingly become a key destination for students from other subregions.** China is the largest origin country of international students in the world, with most residing in Northern America.<sup>157</sup> There were an estimated 372,000 Chinese students in the United States during the 2019–2020 academic year, with graduate students driving most of the recent growth.<sup>158</sup> Other countries in the subregion with significant numbers studying abroad are the Republic of Korea and Japan.<sup>159</sup> Eastern Asia has also increasingly become a major destination for international students. Some countries, such as China, have long implemented policies and plans to attract international students and within the last few years, the country had become the largest destination in Asia, with nearly half a million international students.<sup>160</sup> Most of these students came from other countries in Asia and from Africa.<sup>161</sup> Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Republic of Korea and Japan also saw their international student

numbers rise. By April 2020, the Republic of Korea had more than 153,000 international students enrolled in Korean colleges and universities, although this was a decline from the previous year (around 160,000) due to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>162</sup> Like China, most students in the Republic of Korea were from other countries in Asia.

**The subregion has experienced some large disaster displacements in recent years, most occurring in China.** In 2020, there were more than 5 million new disaster displacements in China, the worst in nearly five years.<sup>163</sup> These were also the largest disaster displacement events anywhere in the world.<sup>164</sup> Most displacements took place during the flooding season, and in addition to driving people from their homes, they resulted in hundreds of deaths and billions of U.S. dollars in economic losses.<sup>165</sup> While factors such as land use and construction on floodplains have contributed to the recent displacements, climate change and climate variability also play a role.<sup>166</sup> Natural disasters have become unpredictable and highly destructive in recent years, as heatwaves and severe rains have intensified in China.<sup>167</sup> Indeed, recent floods in China have been caused by extreme precipitation, with the average intensity, as well as the quantity and duration of precipitation in the south of the country, for example, among the highest in decades.<sup>168</sup> Other countries in the subregion, such as Japan, have also experienced large displacements in recent years. Around 186,000 new disaster displacements were recorded in Japan in 2020.<sup>169</sup>

### *Southern Asia*

**The pandemic prompted the mass return of millions of migrant workers to the subregion, while also driving large movements from urban centres to rural areas.** As lockdowns and travel restrictions took shape in 2020, millions of migrants from the subregion lost jobs or were subjected to pay cuts, with some left without shelter.<sup>170</sup> Many of these migrants were also unable to return to their countries of origin in the early weeks and months of the pandemic due to cancelled flights or because of the lack of readiness by their governments to accept a large number of returnees.<sup>171</sup> However, several countries did eventually begin to repatriate their nationals. India, for example, embarked on a mass evacuation and repatriation of its nationals, starting in May 2020.<sup>172</sup> The *Vande Bharat* mission, as it was officially called, initially helped over half a million stranded migrants from more than 137 countries to return home.<sup>173</sup> By the end of 2020, more than 3 million Indian migrants had been repatriated.<sup>174</sup> Other countries in the subregion, such as Nepal, also saw a significant return of their stranded citizens back home. The pandemic also reversed migration patterns within countries. This was particularly evident in India, where millions of migrant workers in cities returned to rural areas, contributing to a new wave of COVID-19 cases in rural India.<sup>175</sup> Travel restrictions also heavily impeded the deployment of migrant workers from the subregion, especially during the first months of the pandemic. Large origin countries of migrant workers, including India and Bangladesh, experienced sharp declines in outflows.<sup>176</sup>

**Both rapid- and slow-onset disasters are important features in Southern Asia, often resulting in millions of displacements.** Southern Asia was among the most affected subregions by disasters in 2020. With 9.3 million new disaster displacements, the subregion accounted for nearly a third of all new global displacements driven by disasters.<sup>177</sup> Southern Asia's average temperatures have been increasing over the last several decades and the subregion is now among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including rising temperatures; the subregion is affected by extreme and frequent weather events, torrential rains and rising sea levels.<sup>178</sup> Heavy rains in the subregion, which impact countries in Southern Asia every year, as well as powerful storms and cyclones, have been exacerbated by climate change. Cyclone Amphan, the largest disaster event in the world in 2020, resulted in the evacuation of millions of people in countries such as Bangladesh and India.<sup>179</sup> Some analysis suggests that the



subregion has the highest flood displacement risk,<sup>180</sup> and that many people in the subregion are also vulnerable to increasingly high temperatures.<sup>181</sup>

**Labour migration from Southern Asia is a key feature, resulting in some of the largest inflows of international remittances in the world.** Unemployment and low wages contribute to large numbers of South Asians leaving the subregion to work in destinations such as the GCC countries. A large number of international migrants in Gulf countries, many of whom are temporary labour migrants, come from India and Bangladesh. An estimated 3.5 million Indians and more than 1 million Bangladeshis were living in the United Arab Emirates in 2020. Saudi Arabia was also the destination of over 2.5 million migrants from India and over 1 million from Bangladesh.<sup>182</sup> With the largest number of international emigrants in the world, India continues to be the biggest recipient of international remittances globally.<sup>183</sup> In 2020, the country recorded USD 83 billion in international remittances. This figure was only a small drop (0.2%) from the previous year, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>184</sup> Pakistan and Bangladesh also rank among the world's top 10 remittance recipients, receiving USD 26 billion and USD 22 billion in 2020, respectively.<sup>185</sup> Both Pakistan and Bangladesh defied projections and saw significant increases in remittances in 2020. Overall remittances to the subregion increased by 5 per cent in 2020.<sup>186</sup>

**As conflicts and violence have become protracted in some countries within the subregion, Southern Asia remains the origin and destination of large numbers of refugees.** Countries such as Afghanistan have experienced more than 20 years of conflict, resulting in 2.6 million Afghan refugees at the end of 2020, the third largest origin country in the world of populations displaced across borders.<sup>187</sup> Most, over 85 per cent, are hosted in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran.<sup>188</sup> Conflict and violence in the country have also led to a large number of IDPs. Around 3.5 million Afghans were living in internal displacement due to conflict and violence at end of 2020, and the country ranked among the top 10 with largest number of new conflict displacements the same year, despite ongoing negotiations and ceasefires.<sup>189</sup> Indeed, while conflict had abated in the months prior to the peace agreement between the United States and the Afghan Taliban in February 2020, violence has picked up pace since.<sup>190</sup> There has been a surge in terrorist attacks, many deliberately targeting civilians.<sup>191</sup> Some of these have included brutal attacks on children. Notably, the May 2021 bombing outside an Afghan Hazara school left 85 people dead, most of them female students.<sup>192</sup> Several countries in the subregion, such as Pakistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Bangladesh continued to host large numbers of refugees at the end of 2020, with all three countries placing among the top 10 host countries in the world.<sup>193</sup> Combined, the three countries hosted 13 per cent of the global total of people displaced across borders.<sup>194</sup>

### *South-East Asia*

**Migration and mobility in South-East Asia have been heavily disrupted by the pandemic, with the measures imposed to control the spread of COVID-19 disproportionately affecting migrants.** By early June 2021, the subregion had recorded nearly 35 million confirmed cases of COVID-19.<sup>195</sup> The Philippines, with over 1.4 million cases, was the most impacted.<sup>196</sup> All countries in the subregion instituted a range of travel restrictions, including quarantine measures, testing and border closures. Several countries also imposed measures on domestic travel and movement, such as suspending public transport and restricting domestic flights. Further, many migrant workers, particularly those in low-skilled sectors, were forced to quarantine in crowded dormitories, making them more vulnerable to contracting COVID-19.<sup>197</sup> Women migrant workers were disproportionately impacted by lockdowns and travel restrictions.<sup>198</sup> In 2020, as countries such as Thailand began to close their borders, thousands of jobless

migrant workers from Cambodia, Myanmar and the Lao People's Democratic Republic rushed to return home while they could still do so.<sup>199</sup> Travel restrictions also resulted in unprecedented immobility. In the Philippines, hundreds of nurses with pending contracts in countries such as Germany, Singapore, Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom were prevented from leaving the country due to restrictions on travel.<sup>200</sup> Meanwhile, several countries, such as Viet Nam and the Philippines, put in place systems to support their migrant workers affected by the pandemic, helping those who had been stranded to return home.<sup>201</sup>

**Some of the largest internal and cross-border displacements in the subregion in recent years have been driven by religious and ethnic tensions, fuelling conflict and violence.** The Rohingya comprise the largest displaced stateless population in the world.<sup>202</sup> Most are hosted in Bangladesh, where they fled after a sharp increase in violence against them in Myanmar, especially in Rakhine State in 2017. Further displacements were recorded in the months following Myanmar's election in November 2020.<sup>203</sup> The Myanmar military takeover of Government in February 2021 resulted in widespread protests and violent military crackdowns, reigniting conflict with non-State armed groups in several states and putting at risk the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) signed in 2015.<sup>204</sup> At the end of 2020, Bangladesh hosted more than 860,000 refugees, the majority of whom were Rohingya.<sup>205</sup> In 2020, more than half of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh were children.<sup>206</sup> Other countries in the subregion, such as Malaysia, also host significant numbers of refugees, many of them Rohingya. In 2021, however, there was widespread alarm, including from United Nations experts, on the decision by Malaysian authorities to deport to Myanmar over 1,000 migrants, some of whom were unaccompanied children and other vulnerable persons.<sup>207</sup>

**Many people in South-East Asia are particularly vulnerable to environmental disasters, which drive large displacements every year.** The subregion recorded significant disaster displacement events in 2020, with countries including the Philippines, Viet Nam and Indonesia most affected.<sup>208</sup> The Philippines alone recorded 4.4 million disaster displacements in 2020, while Viet Nam and Indonesia had 1.3 million and over 700,000 disaster displacements, respectively.<sup>209</sup> Several disaster events, including the typhoon season, the eruption of Mount Taal, cyclones, storms and flooding were responsible for pushing people out of their homes in several countries in the subregion. A significant number of displacements in the Philippines were also due to pre-emptive evacuations.<sup>210</sup> Combined, the Philippines, Viet Nam and Indonesia experienced more than 6 million displacements in 2020 and all three countries ranked among the top 10 with the largest number of disaster displacements in the world.<sup>211</sup>

**Labour migration within and from the subregion remains a key aspect of migration.** With a large number of migrant workers in various parts of the world, the Philippines continues to be among the largest recipients of international remittances in the world. In 2020, international remittance inflows to the country amounted to USD 35 billion (almost 10% of GDP), the fourth largest in the world after India, China and Mexico.<sup>212</sup> Remittances to the Philippines proved resilient in 2020 despite the COVID-19 pandemic, declining by less than 1 per cent, largely owing to growth in inflows from the United States, by far the biggest source of remittances to the country (almost than 40%).<sup>213</sup> Other key sources of remittances to the country include Japan, Singapore and Saudi Arabia, reflecting some of the major destinations for Filipino migrant workers. Viet Nam also placed among the top 10 recipients globally in 2020, recording USD 17 billion.<sup>214</sup> While remittances are important for several countries in South-East Asia, many labour migrants from the subregion are exposed to a multitude of abuses, particularly those in informal sectors, who are more vulnerable to exploitation, including forced labour.<sup>215</sup>

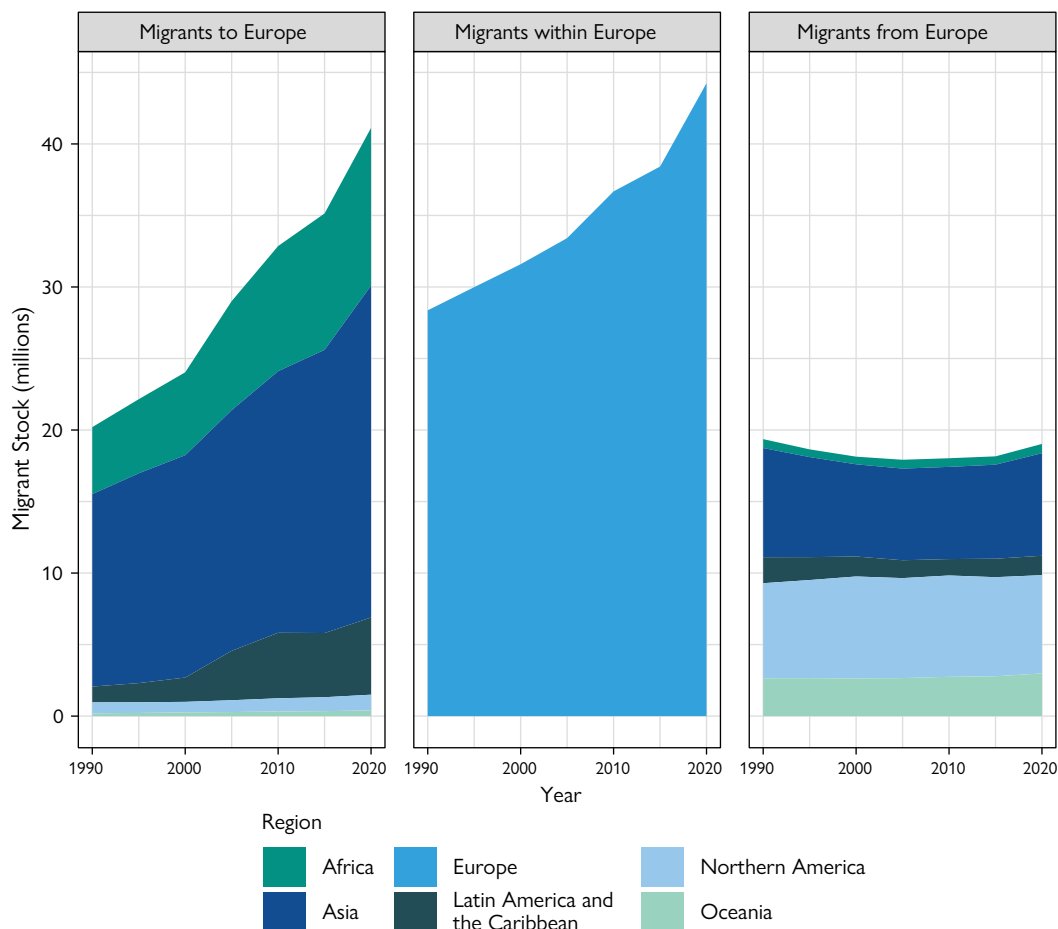
**Irregular migration to, within and from South-East Asia is prevalent and is often facilitated by smuggling networks.** Countries across the region are origin, transit and destinations for irregular migrants. Irregular migration occurs alongside migration that is regular, and the motivations driving both similar, as reflected in the major migration routes taken by migrants.<sup>216</sup> Within the subregion, migrant smuggling occurs along two key routes: Malaysia is the major destination for migrants from the Philippines, Bangladesh and Indonesia, while migrants from Myanmar, Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic largely go to Thailand.<sup>217</sup> Trafficking of migrants is also not uncommon, with the more affluent countries, including Thailand and Malaysia, often the destinations.<sup>218</sup> Other countries outside the subregion, are also key destinations for trafficked migrants from South-East Asia. Within Asia, 75 per cent of victims of trafficking are from South-East Asia.<sup>219</sup> A significant number of victims are trafficked for labour and sexual exploitation.<sup>220</sup>

## Europe<sup>221</sup>

Nearly 87 million international migrants lived in Europe in 2020, an increase of nearly 16 per cent since 2015, when around 75 million international migrants resided in the region. A little over half of these (44 million) were born in Europe, but were living elsewhere in the region; this number has increased since 2015, rising from 38 million. In 2020, the population of non-European migrants in Europe reached over 40 million.

In 1990, there were roughly equal numbers of Europeans living outside Europe as non-Europeans living in Europe. However, unlike the growth in migration to Europe, the number of Europeans living outside Europe mostly declined over the last 30 years, and only returned to 1990 levels in recent years. In 2020, around 19 million Europeans were residing outside the continent and were based primarily in Asia and Northern America (see Figure 15). As shown in the figure below, there was also some gradual increase in the number of European migrants in Asia and Oceania from 2010 to 2020.

Figure 15. Migrants to, within and from Europe, 1990–2020



Source: UN DESA, 2021.

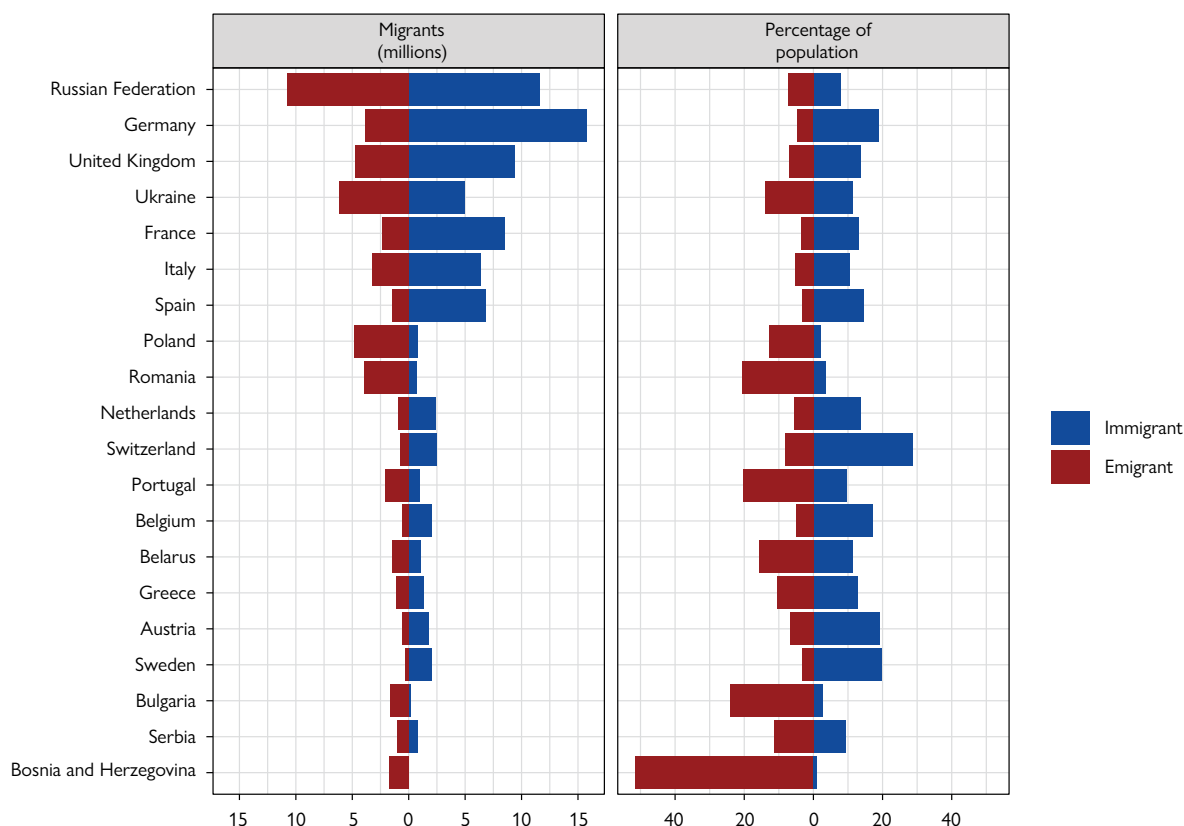
Note: “Migrants to Europe” refers to migrants residing in the region (i.e. Europe) who were born in one of the other regions (e.g. Africa or Asia). “Migrants within Europe” refers to migrants born in the region (i.e. Europe) and residing outside their country of birth, but still within the European region. “Migrants from Europe” refers to people born in Europe who were residing outside the region (e.g. in Latin America and the Caribbean or Northern America).

Many countries in the east of Europe – such as the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Poland and Romania – have some of the largest emigrant populations within the region (Figure 16). At nearly 11 million emigrants in 2020, the Russian Federation had the largest population in Europe living abroad. After the Russian Federation and Ukraine (around 6 million), Poland and the United Kingdom had the third and fourth largest European emigrant populations (4.8 million and 4.7 million, respectively). Bosnia and Herzegovina had the largest share of emigrants as a share of its population in 2020, many of whom left during the break-up of the former Yugoslavia. Portugal, Bulgaria and Romania, countries that have long histories of emigration, also had high shares of their populations living abroad.

With almost 16 million migrants in 2020, Germany had the largest foreign-born population of any country in Europe. The number of immigrants in Germany increased by over 5 million between 2015 and 2020. The largest groups came from Poland, Turkey, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and the Syrian Arab Republic. The populations of

the United Kingdom and France included 9.4 million and 8.5 million foreign-born people, respectively, in 2020. Migrants born in North African countries made up some of the largest foreign-born populations in France. In the United Kingdom, some of the largest migrant populations were from India, Poland and Pakistan. With foreign-born populations of around 6.8 million and 6.4 million, Spain and Italy were respectively the fifth and sixth most popular migrant destinations in Europe in 2020; both countries experienced increases in the number of foreign-born migrants since 2015. Many of the foreign-born populations in Spain and Italy came from elsewhere in Europe – from countries such as Romania and Albania – or from North African and Latin American countries such as Morocco, Colombia and Ecuador. The migration of people from countries of the former Soviet Union – such as Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan – accounted for some of the largest European migrant corridors. As illustrated in Figure 16, of the top 20 migration countries in the region, Switzerland had the largest share of migrants in its population (29%), followed by Sweden (20%), Austria (19%) and Germany (19%).

Figure 16. Top 20 European migrant countries, 2020



Source: UN DESA, 2021.

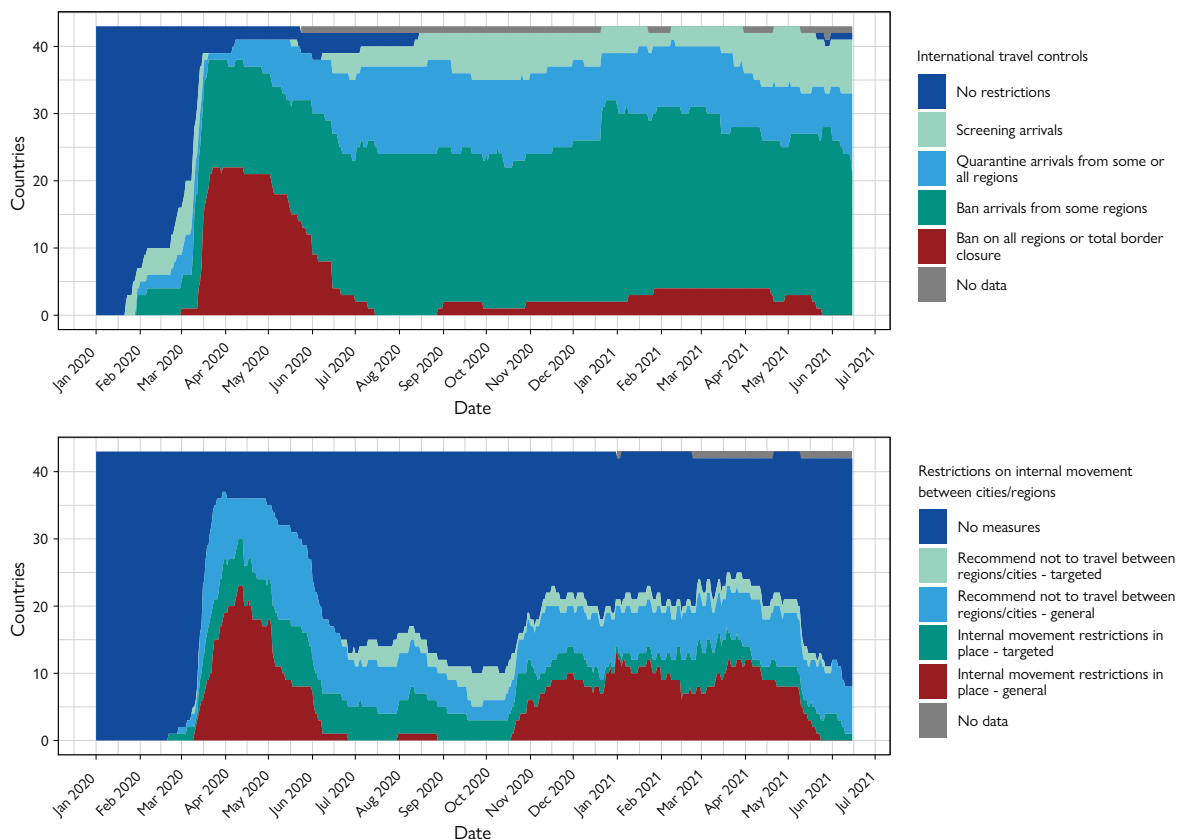
Note 1: The population size used to calculate the percentage of immigrants and emigrants is based on the UN DESA total resident population of the country, which includes foreign-born populations.

Note 2: "Immigrant" refers to foreign-born migrants residing in the country. "Emigrant" refers to people born in the country who were residing outside their country of birth in 2021.

Europe's international and internal travel controls in response to the COVID-19 pandemic came into effect in early 2020, peaking between March and May 2020. While international travel controls such as screening arrivals and quarantine mandates for arrivals remained relatively high, others, such as the ban on all regions or total border closures, declined sharply, and by June 2021, virtually all countries had dropped these measures.

As illustrated in Figure 17 below, restrictions on internal movement, which were at their highest around March and April 2020, started to fall around May. They picked up again in November as the number of COVID-19 cases across the world surged, although they never returned to the same level as in early 2020. There is a noticeable decline, across all internal movement measures, from May 2021. By mid-2020, for example, targeted and internal movement restrictions had all but been dropped by nearly all countries in the region.

Figure 17. COVID-19-related travel controls in Europe: International and internal, January 2020 to June 2021

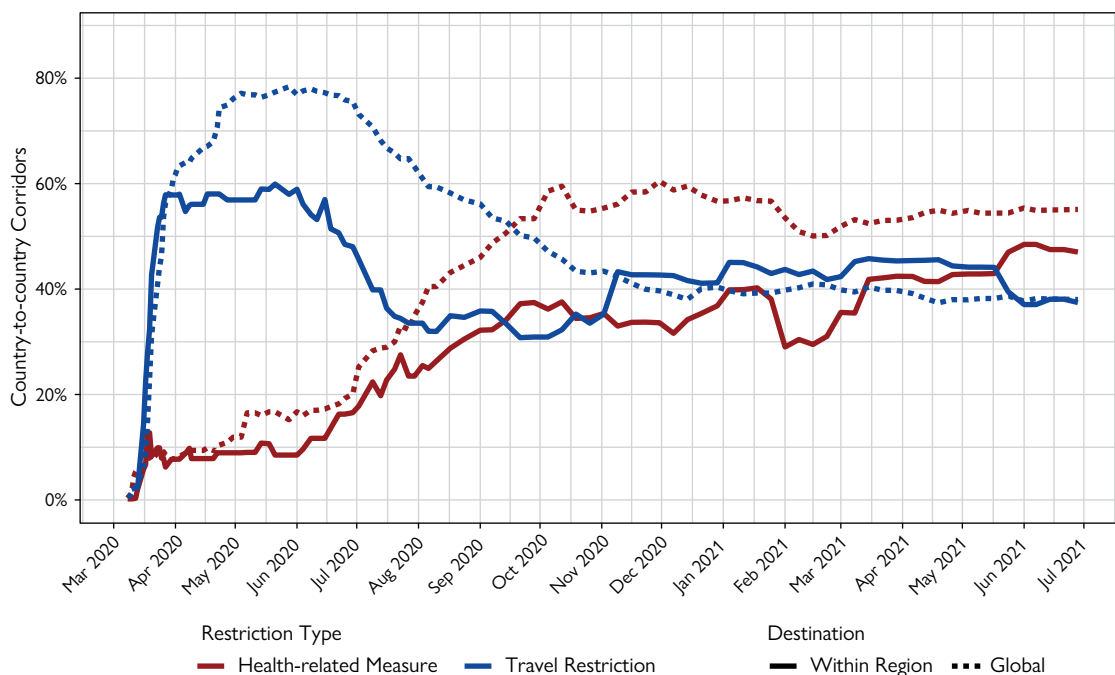


Source: Hale et al., 2021.

Notes: Categories used are those of the Oxford Government Response Tracker; categories included in the data set are for COVID-19-related restrictions only and do not reflect other travel restrictions that may also be in place, such as those related to visa restrictions, entry bans based on citizenship, departure/exit restrictions and internal movement restrictions.

Travel restrictions in Europe grew rapidly in the first months of 2020, with those targeting countries outside the region exceeding intraregional travel controls for most of that year (Figure 18). There was a decline in these restrictions over time, however, and by 30 June 2021, only around 40 per cent of corridors between European countries and those involving countries outside of Europe maintained travel controls. Health-related measures, on the other hand, which increased much more gradually in the early months of the pandemic, went on to surpass travel restrictions towards the end of 2020, with those involving countries outside the region increasing the most. By June 2021, more than 50 per cent of corridors (both global and within the region), had health-related measures.

Figure 18. COVID-19-related international travel measures in Europe: March 2020 to June 2021



Source: IOM, 2021a.

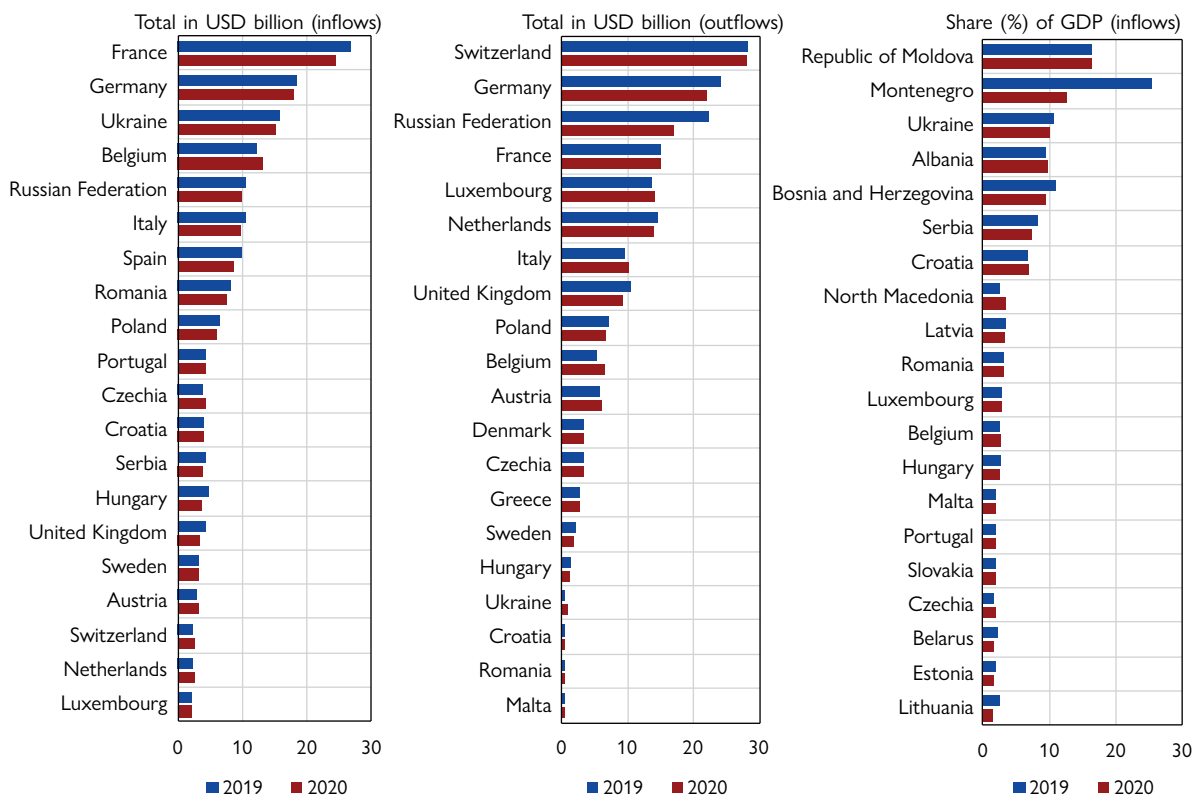
Notes: Health-related measures include health screening and monitoring, testing/medical certificates and quarantine measures. Travel restrictions include passenger restrictions based on nationality or arrival from a geographic location. See the DTM Mobility restrictions page for more information on the methodology.



In 2020, some of the largest economies in the world were the biggest recipients of international remittances in the region (Figure 19). France, for example, received the largest share of international remittances in Europe, followed by Germany. It is important to note that most inflows to these two countries are not household transfers, but relate to salary transfers of cross-border workers who work in Switzerland and reside in France and Germany. As a percentage of GDP, some of the top recipients in 2020 included the Republic of Moldova (16%), Montenegro (13%) and Ukraine (10%). Remittance flows to Europe dropped by 6 per cent in 2020 from the previous year, with eight countries that are among top 10 remittance recipients in the region experiencing declines. France, the region's largest recipient of remittances, received around USD 25 billion in 2020, 9 per cent less than in 2019.

Switzerland was the source of nearly USD 28 billion in remittances in 2020, making it the largest sender in Europe in 2020. It was followed by Germany, the Russian Federation, France and Luxembourg. With the exception of Luxembourg, the top five remittance-sending countries experienced declines in outflows in 2020 when compared with 2019.

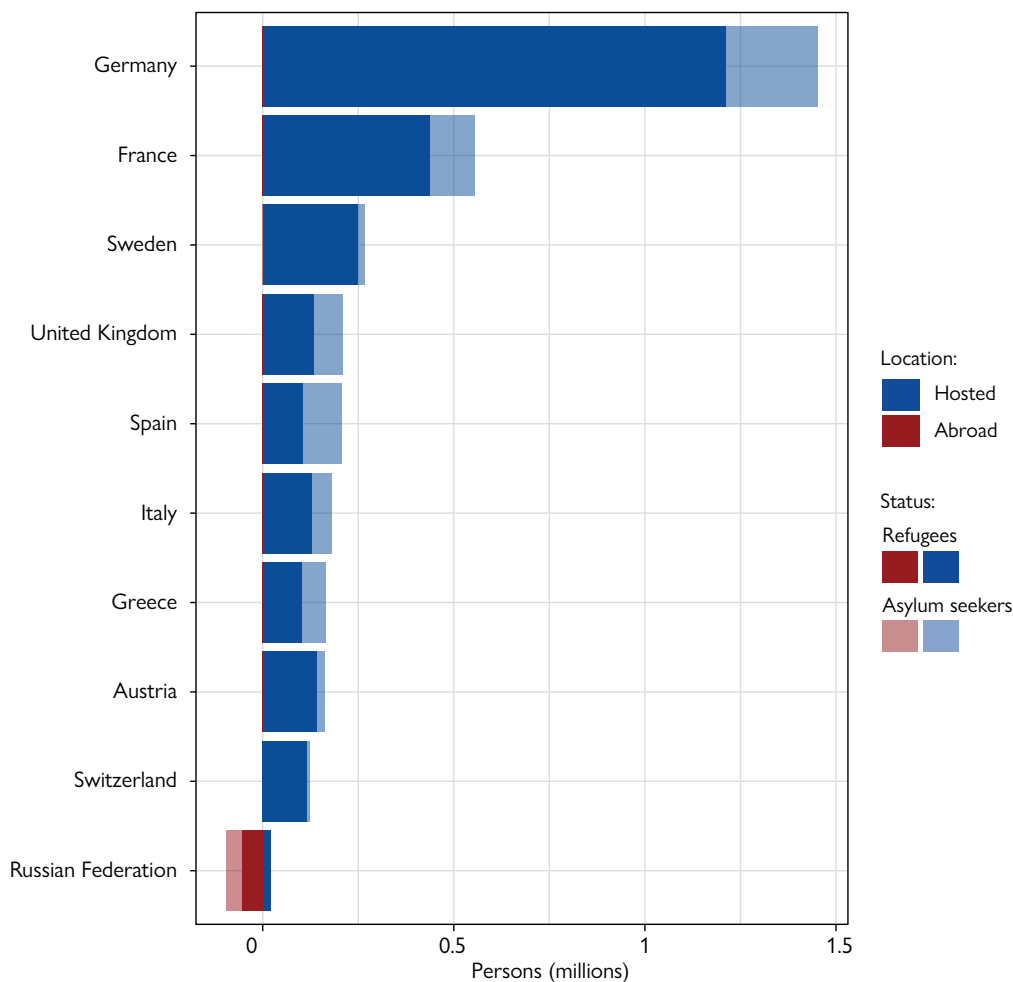
Figure 19. Top 20 European international remittance recipient and source countries, 2019 and 2020



Source: World Bank, 2021.

In 2020, Germany continued to host the largest population of refugees and asylum seekers in Europe (Figure 20). Germany also ranked fifth in the world among the largest refugee host countries in the world. Most, around 50 per cent, came from the Syrian Arab Republic. France and Sweden were the second and third largest hosts of refugees in Europe, with over 436,000 and more than 248,000, respectively. The Russian Federation was the largest origin country of refugees in Europe at the end of 2020, at around 53,000. Other significant origin countries in Europe, but not included in the figure below, include Ukraine (around 35,000) and Croatia (around 23,000).

Figure 20. Top 10 European countries by total refugees and asylum seekers, 2020

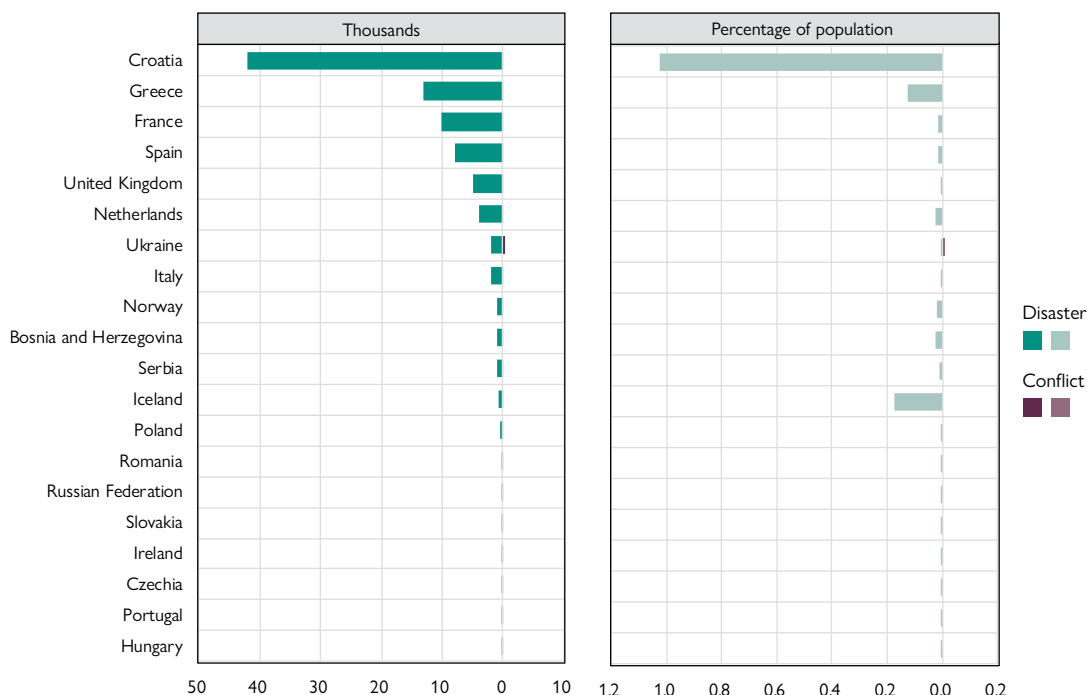


Source: UNHCR, n.d.b.

Note: "Hosted" refers to those refugees and asylum seekers from other countries who are residing in the receiving country (right-hand side of the figure); "abroad" refers to refugees and asylum seekers originating from that country who are outside of their origin country. The top 10 countries are based on 2020 data and are calculated by combining refugees and asylum seekers in and from countries.

Most new internal displacements in 2020 in Europe were the result of disasters, not conflict (Figure 21). Croatia had the largest number of disaster-related displacements (42,000). At the onset of the global pandemic in March 2020, a 5.4 magnitude earthquake hit Zagreb, triggering 1,600 new displacements. Following this event, the country experienced its most powerful earthquake ever recorded, a 6.4 magnitude event just nine months later. The earthquake struck about 50 kilometres south-east of Zagreb, leaving over 10,000 homes uninhabitable and prompting long-term displacement among 40,000 people.<sup>222</sup> Other countries impacted by disaster-related displacements in 2020 included Greece (13,000), France (10,000) and Spain (nearly 8,000), largely due to storms and intense flooding.

Figure 21. Top 20 European countries by new internal displacements (disaster and conflict), 2020



Source: IDMC, n.d.; UN DESA, 2021.

Notes: New displacements refers to the number of displacement movements that occurred in 2020, not the total accumulated stock of IDPs resulting from displacement over time. New displacement figures include individuals who have been displaced more than once and do not correspond to the number of people displaced during the year. The population size used to calculate the percentage of new disaster and conflict displacements is based on the total resident population of the country per 2021 UN DESA population estimates, and the percentage is for relative, illustrative purposes only.

## Key features and developments in Europe<sup>223</sup>

### *South-Eastern and Eastern Europe*

**The COVID-19 impacts on migration in the subregion included further hardening of immigration policies in several countries, while also resulting in the return of large numbers of migrant workers to their countries of origin.** In response to the pandemic, some countries, such as Hungary, passed restrictive measures that were widely viewed as potentially exposing asylum seekers to the risk of refoulement.<sup>224</sup> The new act adopted by Hungary in 2020 requires asylum seekers arriving at the border to be sent back and directed to declare such intent at a Hungarian embassy.<sup>225</sup> As countries and territories started to vaccinate their populations against COVID-19 in the first half of 2021, some migrants in the subregion, particularly those who are undocumented, were left out from vaccination programmes, further making them vulnerable to contracting COVID-19.<sup>226</sup> However, some countries in the subregion, such as Serbia, have included all migrants in their national vaccination strategies.<sup>227</sup> The impact of the pandemic on migrant workers in various parts of Europe has also led to significant return migration to the subregion. Migration dynamics in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe have historically been characterized by emigration, rather than immigration, but the effects of the pandemic in 2020 largely halted and even reversed these patterns. Many migrants from the subregion, including from countries such as Bulgaria and Serbia, chose to return home, driven by unemployment, lack of social protection or the desire to be with their families.<sup>228</sup> Between March and May 2020, for example, more than half a million Bulgarians are estimated to have returned home.<sup>229</sup> These same trends were also visible in Romania, where around one million nationals returned in 2020.<sup>230</sup>

**In addition to being a major origin country of international migrants, the Russian Federation continues to also be an important destination for international migrants globally.** In 2020, the Russian Federation ranked among both the top 10 origin and destination countries for international migrants worldwide.<sup>231</sup> With nearly 11 million people in the diaspora, the country had the third largest number of its population living abroad, after India and Mexico.<sup>232</sup> Most resided in the Commonwealth of Independent States Free Trade Area (CISFTA) Member States, including Kazakhstan, Belarus, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, and in destinations such as the United States and Germany. Around 12 million international migrants lived in the Russian Federation, making it the fourth largest destination globally after the United States, Germany and Saudi Arabia.<sup>233</sup> International migrants in the Russian Federation are largely from Ukraine (more than 3 million), Kazakhstan (over 2.5 million) and Uzbekistan (around 1 million).<sup>234</sup> Because of the large number of international migrants in the country, the Russian Federation continues to be one of the largest sources of international remittances in the world, ranking among the top 10 source countries globally.<sup>235</sup> At the same time, it was also among the top recipients of remittances in Europe in 2020.<sup>236</sup>

**Driven by both conflict and disasters, both cross-border and internal displacement are key features in the subregion.** Thousands of people in the Russian Federation, for example, were driven from their homes due to floods and wildfires in 2019.<sup>237</sup> Cities such as Irkutsk bore most of the brunt of the floods, leaving thousands of homes unfit for occupation.<sup>238</sup> The largest humanitarian situation in the subregion continues to be in Eastern Ukraine, where an estimated 3.4 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in 2021.<sup>239</sup> Across the country, more than 1.4 million people remain in internal displacement, with many having lived under these conditions since hostilities escalated in 2014.<sup>240</sup> While a ceasefire was agreed in 2020 and has reduced fighting, violations persist, with continued insecurity and damage to people's property and livelihoods on both sides of the contact line that runs through the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The conflict has also forced thousands of Ukrainians to leave the country and there were around 35,000 refugees from Ukraine in 2020.<sup>241</sup>

**Several countries in the Western Balkans are key transit zones, characterized by mixed migration flows of migrants from Asia and Africa.** In recent years, tens of thousands of migrants trying to reach Northern or Western Europe have arrived in countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina via the Western Balkans route.<sup>242</sup> While some of them are trying to escape harsh economic conditions, many are also fleeing conflict, insecurity or persecution and include migrants from countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic.<sup>243</sup> Most migrants arriving in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been single men, although they also include unaccompanied and separated children, and families with children.<sup>244</sup> Other countries in the subregion, such as Albania and North Macedonia, have also increasingly become major transit zones for migrants, who often embark on risky journeys through these countries with the aid of smugglers.<sup>245</sup> In early 2021, for example, dozens of Syrians, in an attempt to reach Italy, were stranded for hours in the Adriatic Sea before being rescued and returned to land by Albanian authorities.<sup>246</sup> The increase in the number of irregular migrants in the Western Balkans has raised tensions in some communities, while also being used as a political tool.<sup>247</sup>

### *Northern, Western and Southern Europe*

**COVID-19 had significant ramifications for migration and mobility in the subregion, shifting public attitudes to migration in some countries and affecting labour mobility, while also impacting the human rights of migrants.** Migrants' contributions to essential sectors of many economies during the pandemic seemed to have changed public attitudes, particularly in countries where anti-immigrant sentiments had been on the rise.<sup>248</sup> A 2020 poll in the United Kingdom, for example, revealed that a significant majority of the public (62%) were in favor of granting automatic citizenship to care workers who helped respond to COVID-19, while 50 per cent backed offering citizenship to other essential workers, including supermarket and agricultural workers.<sup>249</sup> This is a significant shift from less than five years ago, when nearly half of the British public preferred a lower number of low-skilled immigrants.<sup>250</sup> In other countries such as Switzerland, respondents demonstrated positive attitudes toward foreigners, and a poll suggested that immigrants have felt supported during the pandemic.<sup>251</sup> As in other regions, lockdowns and travel restrictions impacted labour mobility, with widespread economic repercussions for the subregion. To address labour shortages, however, particularly in essential sectors such as agriculture, health and social care, and transportation, several countries implemented measures that facilitated access to their labour markets by third-country nationals already in the subregion.<sup>252</sup> Meanwhile, measures to contain the virus, including movement restrictions, also adversely affected migrants' rights.<sup>253</sup> In some instances, family reunifications for migrants were halted and some countries temporarily suspended the registration and lodging of asylum applications.<sup>254</sup> Further, some countries temporarily closed their ports and required irregular migrants, including those crossing the Mediterranean, to be quarantined at sea.<sup>255</sup> However, several countries in the region also implemented measures aimed at assisting migrants during the pandemic, including by temporarily regularizing those who are undocumented and including them in health-care responses, such as vaccination programmes.<sup>256</sup>

**Irregular migration remains a significant feature in the subregion, and for some countries the issue continues to dominate policy and political discourses.** As of June 2021, the European Union was still in negotiations on a new EU Pact on Migration and Asylum which, among other areas, seeks to address the challenge of irregular migration through the strengthening of partnerships with countries of origin and transit, improving the management of the bloc's external borders, and promoting balanced distributions of responsibilities.<sup>257</sup> Front-line countries, such as Spain, Italy, Malta and Greece continue to call for more "solidarity" in the new pact in order to ease the irregular migration pressures they face.<sup>258</sup> While migratory routes including the Eastern Mediterranean route saw decreases in arrivals in 2020, routes across the Western Mediterranean and Western African Atlantic to Spain experienced large increases.<sup>259</sup> These challenges, and the human suffering involved, came to the forefront

again in early 2021 when thousands of people, mainly from Morocco, reached the Spanish enclave of Ceuta.<sup>260</sup> In response, Spanish authorities deployed the military to the city; thousands of migrants were also returned to Morocco.<sup>261</sup>

**Recent proposals and changes to asylum policies in several countries have proven controversial, raising concerns about the impact they could have on those seeking protection.** Amendments to Denmark's Aliens Act, for example, which could lead to the forcible transfer of asylum seekers to different countries for processing, have been viewed as a neglect of responsibility under international law and a failure to protect the most vulnerable.<sup>262</sup> The new law would externalize asylum and international protection to "partner countries" outside Europe, a measure that threatens to further complicate negotiations on the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, which seeks, among a range of provisions, to advance solidarity among EU Member States in responding to refugees and asylum seekers.<sup>263</sup> The law is also seen as contravening the spirit of the 1951 Refugee Convention as well as the Global Compact on Refugees.<sup>264</sup> Other countries in the subregion such as the United Kingdom also put forward new immigration plans in 2021 that could severely restrict asylum, including by outsourcing the processing of claims in "safe countries".<sup>265</sup> Some United Nations agencies have warned that such measures, if implemented, would undermine the international protection system.<sup>266</sup> Similar measures have been witnessed in Greece, which sought to return hundreds of migrants to Turkey in early 2021.<sup>267</sup> The country has also taken extraordinary measures to deter migrants from Turkey from entering the European Union, including by using high-tech "sound cannons".<sup>268</sup>

**While low-income countries are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, various rapid-onset disasters, some linked to climate change, have also displaced thousands of people in the subregion.** In 2020, wildfires resulted in 23,000 new displacements in Greece, Spain and France.<sup>269</sup> The year 2020 was Europe's hottest on record, with temperatures rising across all seasons. During the same year, Storm Gloria led to thousands of displacements in France and Spain, as huge waves tore through homes and rivers burst their banks.<sup>270</sup> In Spain, several people lost their lives.<sup>271</sup> Other weather events, such as Storm Dennis, were responsible for more than 1,000 displacements in the United Kingdom and toward the end of the year, flooding in parts of France resulted in nearly 5,000 displacements.<sup>272</sup> The two countries suffered further displacements as the year came to a close when Storm Bella struck, leading to more than 3,000 displacements.<sup>273</sup> In early 2021, the European Commission adopted a new Climate Adaptation Strategy, which "sets out how the European Union can adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change and become climate resilient by 2050."<sup>274</sup> By mid-2021, it was clear that similar displacement patterns across Europe were playing out over the summer, due mostly to extreme wildfires, storms and flooding.

**Women and girls comprise a significant share of irregular migrant arrivals in Northern, Western and Southern Europe, while women migrant workers in the subregion face persistent labour market challenges.** Between 2018 and 2020, women made up 20 per cent of the almost 77,000 people who arrived in Europe by sea and land across Eastern, Central and Western Mediterranean routes as well as the Western African Atlantic route.<sup>275</sup> The majority of these women and girls reached Europe (most to Greece) via the Eastern Mediterranean route (70%), while 21 per cent arrived in Spain through the Western Mediterranean and Western African Atlantic routes and around 9 per cent in Italy and Malta via the Central Mediterranean route.<sup>276</sup> In 2020, however, the number of women irregular migrants entering Europe fell significantly compared with previous years; this was also in line with overall declines in arrivals, largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Women accounted for less than one in 10 detections along the European Union's external borders in 2020, while a year prior they made up one in four.<sup>277</sup> Women migrant workers in the subregion, meanwhile, continue to experience the so-called "double disadvantage", based on being a migrant and a woman.<sup>278</sup> In several countries, migrant women have higher unemployment rates than migrant men and these differences are especially large in Southern European countries

such as Italy, Greece and Portugal.<sup>279</sup> Compared with native-born women, migrant women not only have higher unemployment rates, but also tend to be relegated to low-skilled employment, such as household services.<sup>280</sup> In the subregion and in many parts of the world, the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified these dynamics, while leaving many migrant women, often employed in culturally devalued tasks, more vulnerable to contracting the virus.<sup>281</sup>

## Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>282</sup>

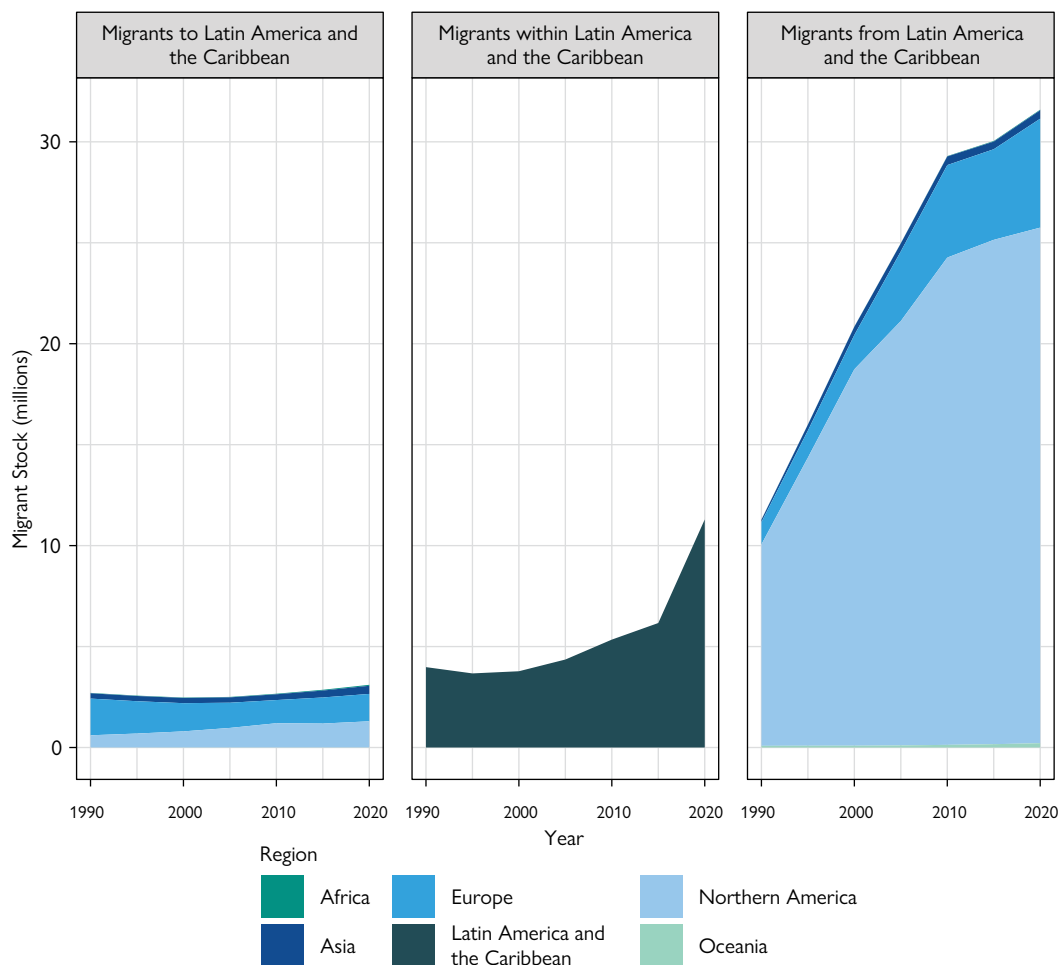
Migration to Northern America is a key feature in the Latin America and Caribbean region. In 2020, over 25 million migrants had made the journey north and were residing in Northern America (Figure 22). As shown in the figure, the Latin American and Caribbean population living in Northern America has increased considerably over time, from an estimated 10 million in 1990. Another 5 million migrants from the region were in Europe in 2020. While this number has only slightly increased since 2015, the number of migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean living in Europe has more than quadrupled since 1990. Other regions, such as Asia and Oceania, were home to a very small number of migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean in 2020 (over 400,000 and 200,000 migrants, respectively).

The total number of migrants from other regions living in Latin America and the Caribbean has remained relatively stable, at around 3 million over the last 30 years. These were comprised mostly of Europeans (whose numbers have declined slightly over the period) and Northern Americans, whose numbers have increased. In 2020, the numbers of Europeans and Northern Americans living in Latin America and the Caribbean stood at around 1.4 million and 1.3 million, respectively. Meanwhile, around 11 million migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean originated from other countries in the region.

The ongoing Venezuelan situation has had a significant impact on migration flows in the region and remains one of the largest displacement and migration crises worldwide.<sup>283</sup> Approximately 5.6 million Venezuelans had left the country as of June 2021,<sup>284</sup> and roughly 85 per cent (approximately 4.6 million) have moved to another country in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>285</sup> The vast majority have left within the past five years.<sup>286</sup> Colombia, Peru, Chile, Ecuador and Brazil are some of the main destination countries of Venezuelan refugees and migrants within the region.<sup>287</sup>



Figure 22. Migrants to, within and from Latin America and the Caribbean, 1990–2020



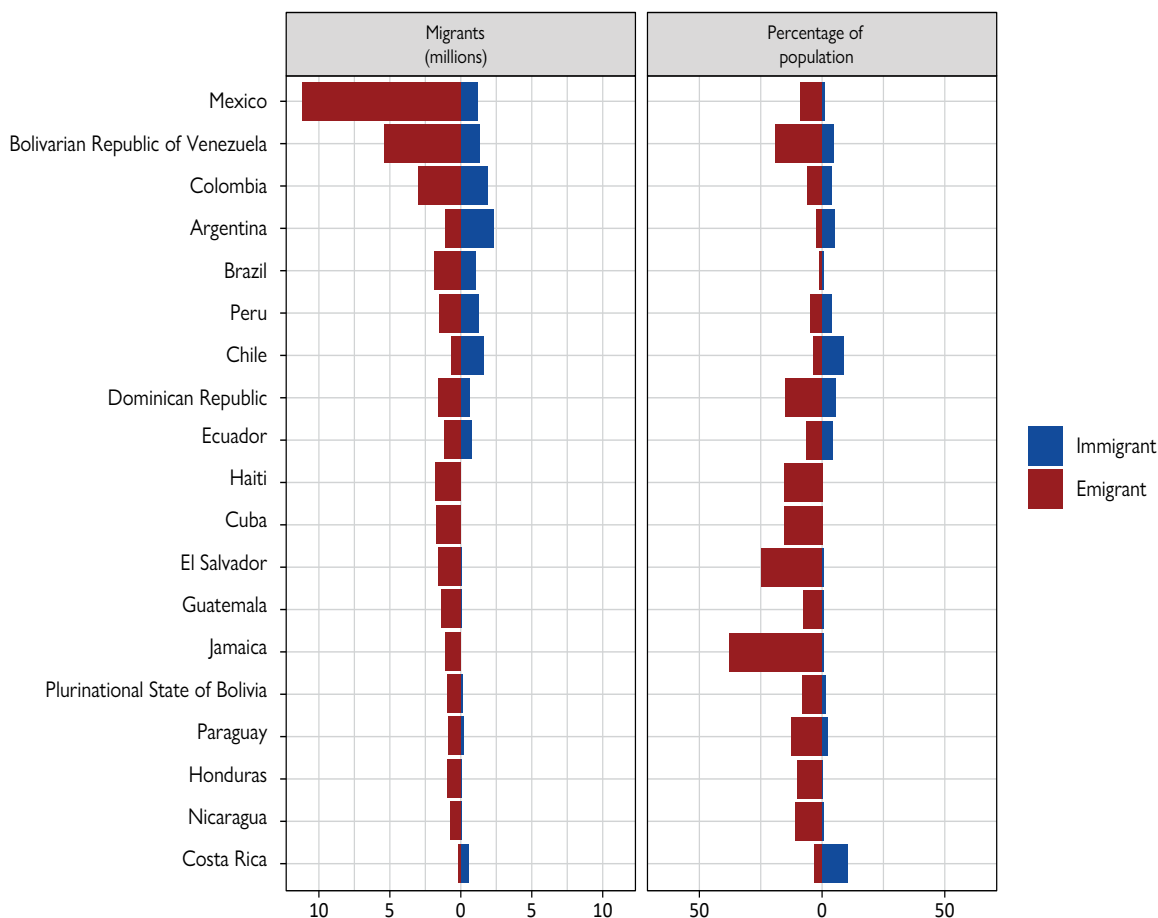
Source: UN DESA, 2021.

Note: "Migrants to Latin America and the Caribbean" refers to migrants residing in the region (i.e. Latin America and the Caribbean) who were born in one of the other regions (e.g. in Europe or Asia). "Migrants within Latin America and the Caribbean" refers to migrants born in the region (i.e. Latin America and the Caribbean) and residing outside their country of birth, but still within the Latin America and the Caribbean region. "Migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean" refers to people born in Latin America and the Caribbean who were residing outside the region (e.g. in Europe or Northern America).

Emigration remains a significant feature in Latin America and the Caribbean. With around 11 million people living abroad in 2020, Mexico continues to be the country in the region with the most emigrants (Figure 23). Mexico also only comes second to India among countries with the largest diasporas in the world, with most living in the United States. Mexico is followed by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Colombia, with over 5 million and more than 3 million emigrants, respectively. As a percentage of population, Jamaica has the largest emigrant population, followed by El Salvador and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. In 2020, Argentina was home to the largest foreign-born population in the region (with over 2 million migrants), mainly from neighbouring countries

such as Paraguay and the Plurinational State of Bolivia. Colombia had the second largest number of immigrants, followed by Chile. Among the top migrant countries, Costa Rica had the largest immigrant share of its population (10%), closely followed by Chile.

Figure 23. Top Latin America and Caribbean migrant countries, 2020



Source: UN DESA, 2021.

Note 1: The population size used to calculate the percentage of immigrants and emigrants is based on the UN DESA total resident population of the country, which includes foreign-born populations.

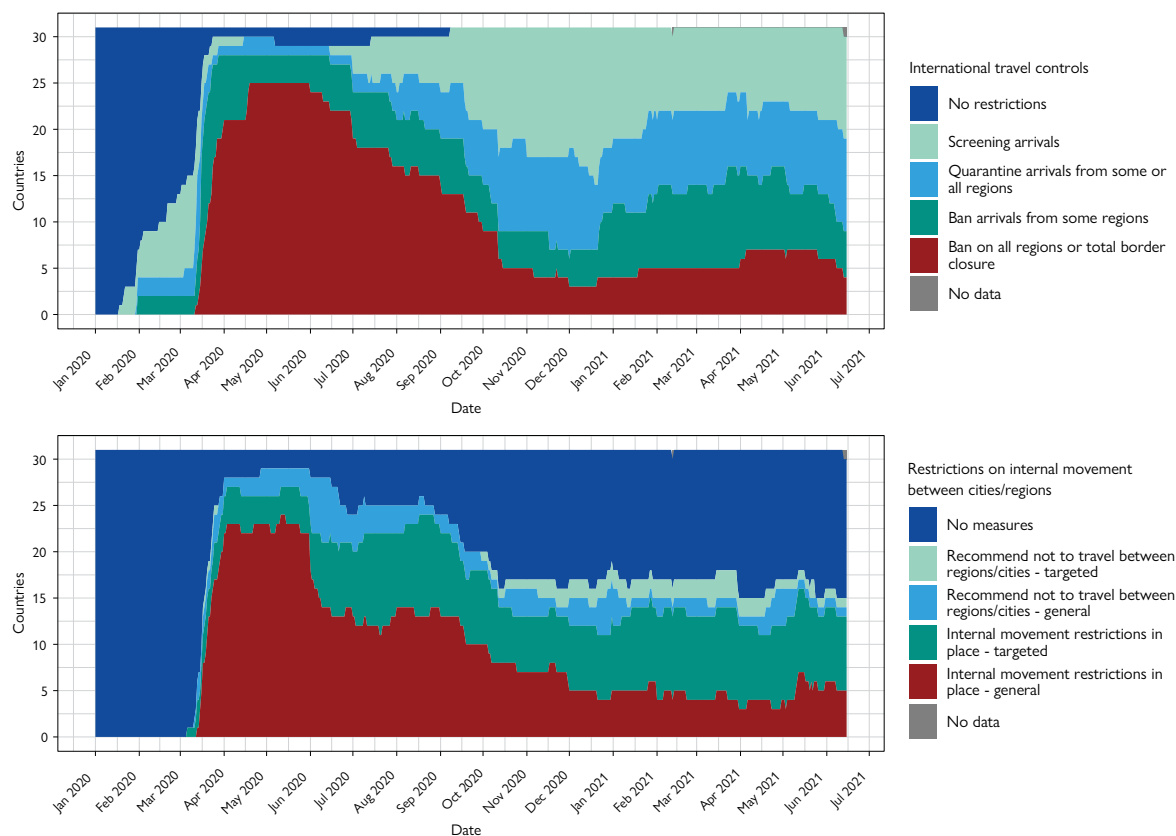
Note 2: "Immigrant" refers to foreign-born migrants residing in the country. "Emigrant" refers to people born in the country who were residing outside their country of birth in 2021.

Similar to other regions, almost all countries in Latin America and the Caribbean enacted travel and movement restrictions, both internal and international, in the first months of 2020. Most international travel controls, put in place several weeks before internal controls came into force, peaked between March and June 2020. Unlike the rest of the international travel controls, which began to decline mid-2020, quarantine mandates were maintained by virtually all countries in the region. As countries in the region experienced new waves of infections in late 2020 and early 2021, several countries that had dropped some of the international travel restrictions reimposed them.

Of the various international travel controls, total border closures declined the most over time, with only a handful of countries maintaining them as of mid-June 2021 (see Figure 24).

Meanwhile, internal movement restrictions also gradually declined from their peak (with nearly 30 countries issuing some form of restriction) at the beginning of the pandemic. By mid-2021, a significant number of countries had dropped these measures, with internal movement restrictions (general) declining the most.

Figure 24. COVID-19-related travel controls in Latin America and the Caribbean:  
International and internal, January 2020 to June 2021



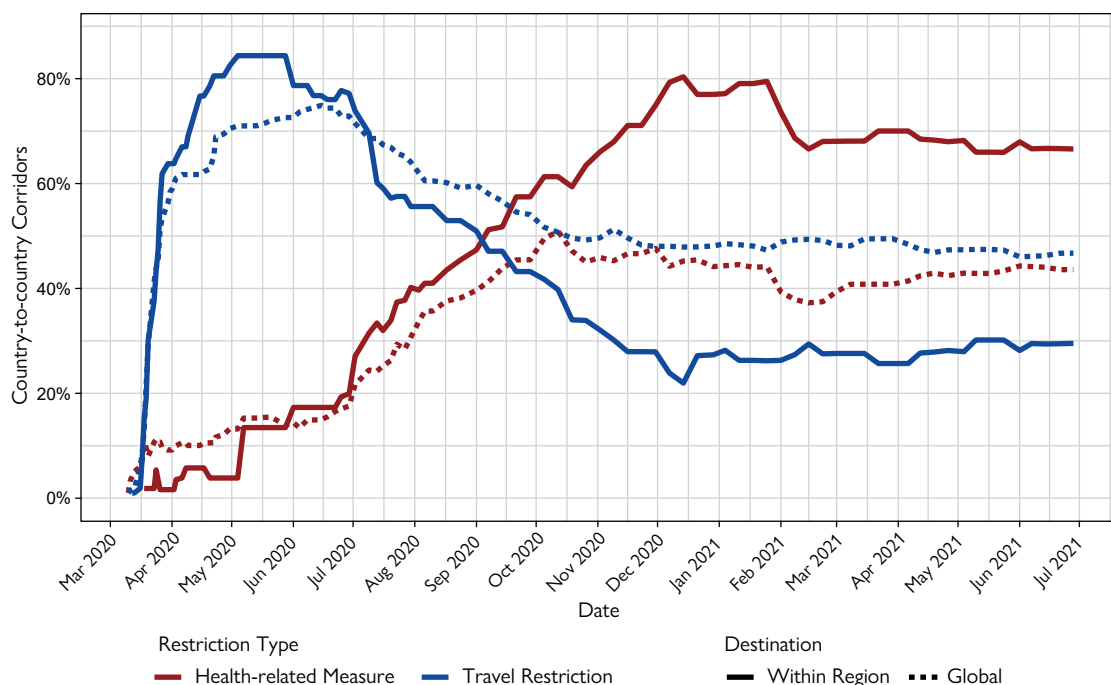
Source: Hale et al., 2021.

Notes: Categories used are those of the Oxford Government Response Tracker; categories included in the data set are for COVID-19-related restrictions only and do not reflect other travel restrictions that may also be in place, such as those related to visa restrictions, entry bans based on citizenship, departure/exit restrictions and internal movement restrictions.

During the first half of 2020, more than 80 per cent of country-to-country corridors within Latin America and the Caribbean had some form of COVID-19-related travel restriction. In the same period, more than 70 per cent of corridors involving countries outside the region (global) also had travel controls. As in regions such as Europe, these travel restrictions declined over time, with intraregional controls declining the most; only around 30 per cent of corridors (within the region) maintained these restrictions by 30 June 2021. Health-related measures, which

increased gradually in the early months of the pandemic, had exceeded intraregional travel restrictions by September 2020. As Figure 25 shows, health-related measures in Latin America and the Caribbean remained in place for around 70 per cent of corridors within the region.

Figure 25. COVID-19-related international travel measures in Latin America and the Caribbean: March 2020 to June 2021



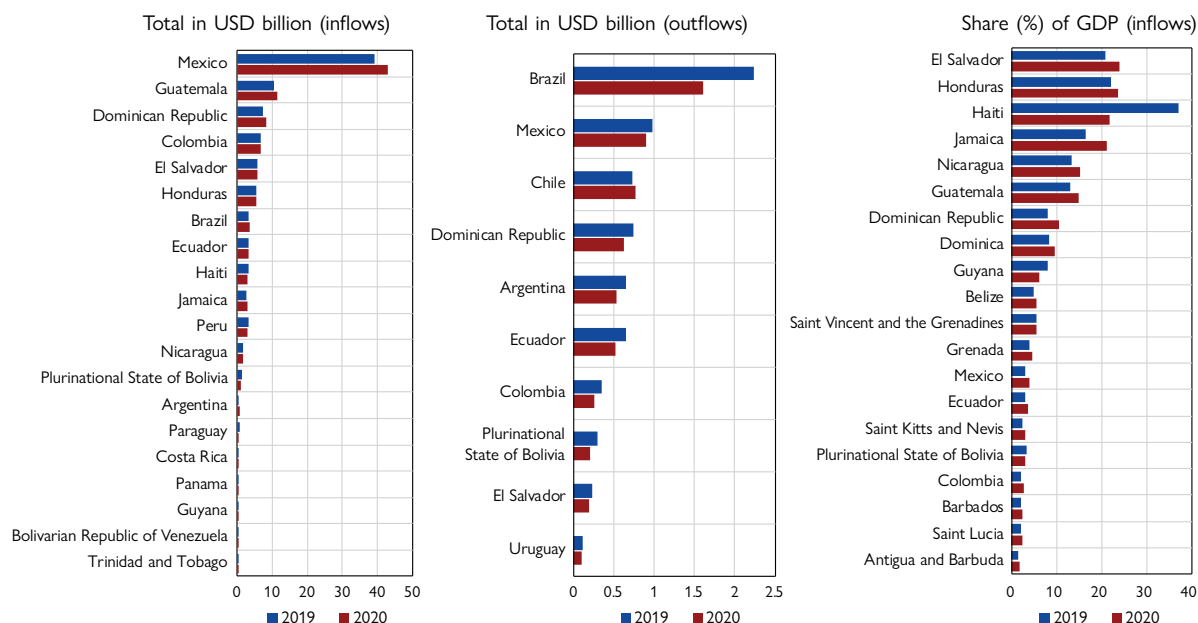
Source: IOM, 2021a.

Notes: Health-related measures include health screening and monitoring, testing/medical certificates and quarantine measures. Travel restrictions include passenger restrictions based on nationality or arrival from a geographic location. See the DTM Mobility restrictions page for more information on the methodology.

In 2020, Mexico was the world's third largest remittance-receiving country after India and China and by far the largest recipient in the region (USD 43 billion) (see Figure 26). Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Colombia and El Salvador were among the top five remittance recipient countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, although their inflows were much smaller than Mexico's. As a percentage of GDP, however, the top five remittance-receiving countries in the region in 2020 were El Salvador (at 24%), followed by Honduras (24%), Haiti (22%), Jamaica (21%) and Nicaragua (15%). Remittance flows to Latin America and the Caribbean reached almost USD 104 billion in 2020, the highest recorded to date and an increase of 6.5 per cent from 2019, having remained more resilient than any other region in the world. The 10 largest recipients in the region, except Haiti, experienced an increase of nearly 8 per cent on average compared to 2019. Several factors contributed to this increase, including the shift from informal to formal remittance-sending channels, the economic stimulus packages in the United States in response to the pandemic, and the continued employment of migrants in essential sectors in destinations.<sup>288</sup>

Brazil was the largest source of remittances in Latin America and the Caribbean, followed by Mexico and Chile. Around USD 1.6 billion in remittances was sent from Brazil alone in 2020, although this was a significant drop from the more than USD 2 billion sent in 2019. With the exception of Chile, remittance outflows from the rest of the top-sending countries declined in 2020 when compared with 2019.

Figure 26. Top remittance recipient and source countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2019 and 2020

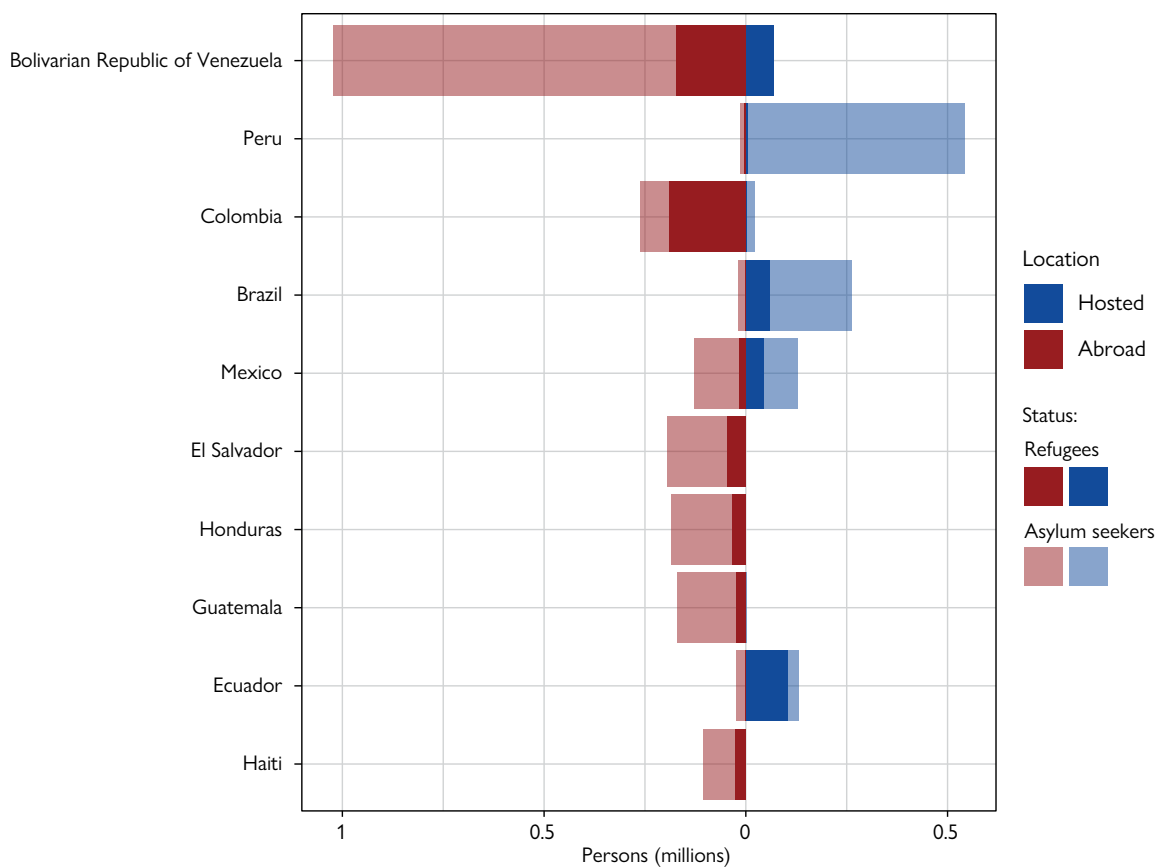


Source: World Bank, 2021.

In 2020, Venezuelans constituted the second largest population of people displaced across borders in the world, following Syrians. The United Nations Refugee Agency identifies “Venezuelans displaced abroad” as a separate category to reflect the ongoing displacement crisis; this category does not include Venezuelan asylum seekers and refugees. By the end of 2020, there were approximately 171,000 registered refugees from the Bolivian Republic of Venezuela and nearly 4 million Venezuelans displaced without formal refugee status. Approximately 73 per cent of refugees and migrants seek refuge in neighbouring countries. Colombia continues to host the majority of Venezuelan refugees and migrants (more than 1.7 million).

At the end of 2020, around 450,000 people from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras were seeking asylum in other countries (Figure 27). More information on refugees and asylum seekers can be found in the “Key features and developments in Latin America and the Caribbean” section below.

Figure 27. Top 10 Latin America and Caribbean countries by total refugees and asylum seekers, 2020

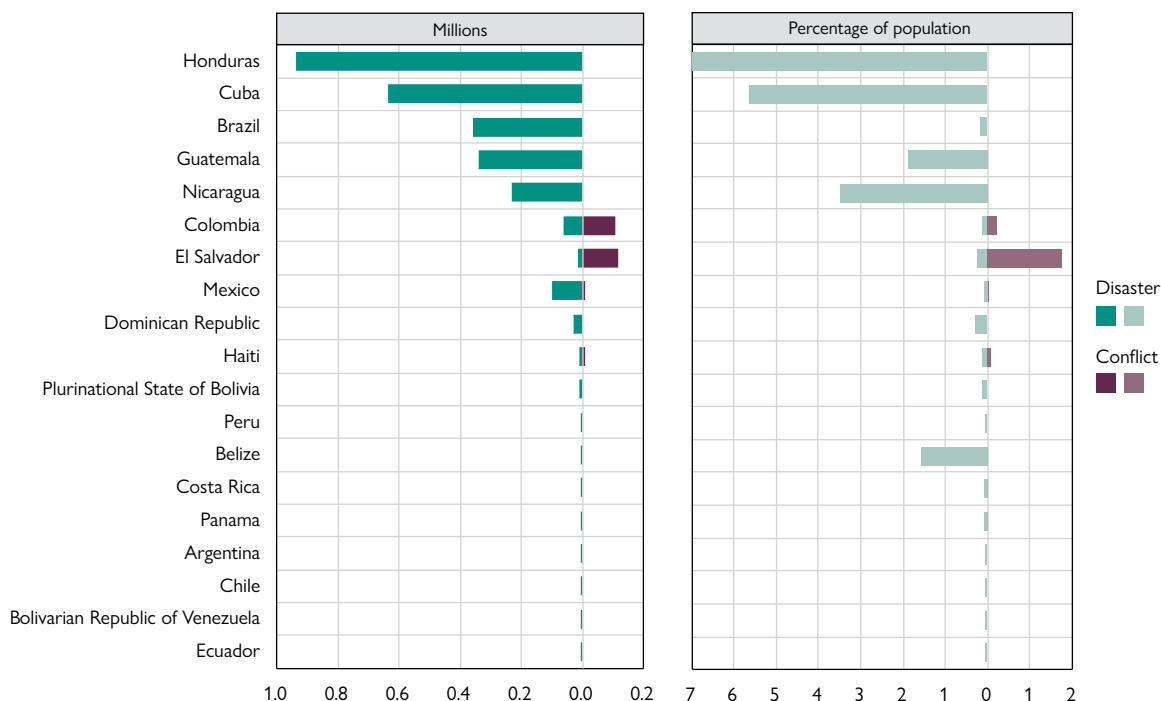


Source: UNHCR, n.d.b.

Note: “Hosted” refers to those refugees and asylum seekers from other countries who are residing in the receiving country (right-hand side of the figure); “abroad” refers to refugees and asylum seekers originating from that country who are outside of their origin country. The top 10 countries are based on 2020 data and are calculated by combining refugees and asylum seekers in and from countries.

Most new internal displacements in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2020 were due to disasters, not violence and conflict (Figure 28). Honduras recorded the largest number of internal displacements triggered by disasters (937,000), followed by Cuba (639,000), Brazil (358,000) and Guatemala (339,000). Weather-related events including Hurricane Laura (in August 2020) and Hurricanes Eta and Iota (in November 2020) triggered these large-scale displacements. Colombia and El Salvador recorded the highest number of new internal displacements related to violence and/or conflict in 2020 – 106,000 in Colombia and 114,000 in El Salvador.

Figure 28. Top Latin and Caribbean countries by new internal displacements (disaster and conflict), 2020



Source: IDMC, n.d.; UN DESA, 2021.

Notes: New displacements refers to the number of displacement movements that occurred in 2020, not the total accumulated stock of IDPs resulting from displacement over time. New displacement figures include individuals who have been displaced more than once and do not correspond to the number of people displaced during the year.

The population size used to calculate the percentage of new disaster and conflict displacements is based on the total resident population of the country per 2021 UN DESA population estimates, and the percentage is for relative, illustrative purposes only.

## Key features and developments in Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>289</sup>

### *Central America and the Caribbean*

**The COVID-19 pandemic has deeply impacted migration and mobility in Central America and the Caribbean, while also exacerbating existing vulnerabilities among migrants, including those in transit.**

Border closures and other movement restrictions due to COVID-19 resulted in the decline in the number of migrants from the subregion heading north in the early weeks and months following the onset of the pandemic.<sup>290</sup> Many migrants either postponed their journeys or were left stuck in transit.<sup>291</sup> The pandemic and related restrictions also forced some migrants to take even more dangerous journeys, including through the Darién Gap, considered one of the most perilous migration routes globally.<sup>292</sup> Further, despite restrictions on mobility due to the pandemic, recent reports have shown that the use of smugglers continued in the subregion.<sup>293</sup> In addition to disrupting asylum processes and other resettlement programmes across several countries in the subregion, mobility restrictions forced many migrants to stay in makeshift camps in inadequate hygiene conditions, with limited supply of food and water.<sup>294</sup> For example, in Panama's Darién province, many irregular migrants, including those from within and outside the subregion such as Africans, Cubans and Haitians, were left stranded as several countries closed their borders.<sup>295</sup> Several countries in the subregion, however, provided some assistance to migrants, such as facilitating the return and repatriation of those who had been stranded abroad and including them in vaccination campaigns.<sup>296</sup> The pandemic also had wide-ranging impacts on key sectors, such as tourism, on which several countries in the subregion, including those in the Caribbean, rely heavily.

**Migration northward remains a significant trend, with mixed migration from the northern region of Central America, in particular, proving to be challenging and dynamic due to rising immigration controls.**

Migration from and through Central America is driven by a complex set of factors, including economic insecurity, violence, crime and the effects of climate change, with many individuals moving northward in pursuit of financial and human security.<sup>297</sup> At the end of 2020, nearly 900,000 people from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador had been forcibly displaced (both within and across borders).<sup>298</sup> Of these, more than half a million had been displaced across borders, with the vast majority (79%) hosted in the United States.<sup>299</sup> Migrant caravans, a term used to describe the cross-border movement of large groups of people by land, have increased in number and frequency since 2018 and have often included families with children.<sup>300</sup> There has been a rise in the number of children journeying through the Darién Gap.<sup>301</sup> Of the 226,000 migrants from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador arriving at the United States border in the first half of fiscal year 2021, approximately 34,000 were unaccompanied minors.<sup>302</sup> In response, the Mexican and United States Governments have bolstered immigration enforcement, including by implementing measures aimed at preventing the transit of migrants, a surge in active-duty military officers at the United States–Mexico border, an increase in migrants being detained and deported, and reports of migrants being met with excessive force by security officials.<sup>303</sup> In January 2020, a migrant caravan leaving Honduras was denied permission to transit through Mexico to the United States at the border between Guatemala and Mexico.<sup>304</sup> As a result, an estimated 2,000 migrants were returned to Honduras by the Guatemalan and Mexican authorities.<sup>305</sup> Moreover, the number of detentions in Mexico increased from approximately 8,500 in January 2019 to 13,500 migrants in January 2020.<sup>306</sup>

**Migration dynamics in the Caribbean remain largely characterized by emigration, although the recent arrival of Venezuelan refugees and migrants has added to the complexities in the subregion.** Most international migrants from the Caribbean are extraregional migrants, with Northern America (largely the United States) and Europe the two key destination regions. Some of the largest corridors are between Cuba and the United States



as well as the Dominican Republic and the United States.<sup>307</sup> While intraregional migration remains relatively low, it has also increased steadily over time, and by mid-2020 there were almost 860,000 international migrants from within the subregion, nearly doubling since 1990.<sup>308</sup> Regional intergovernmental organizations and initiatives, such as the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are committed to enhancing free movement, have contributed to the increase in migration within the subregion. There has also been a significant increase in immigration to some Caribbean countries in recent years, driven in large part by the arrival of Venezuelan migrants and refugees. Around 100,000 Venezuelans lived in the Caribbean in September 2019, but by the end of 2021 the number of Venezuelans is expected to grow to more than 220,000.<sup>309</sup> Some of the main destinations for Venezuelans include the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Curaçao.<sup>310</sup> By August 2020, more than 100,000 Venezuelans resided in the Dominican Republic, representing over 1 per cent of the total population.<sup>311</sup> In places such as Aruba and Curaçao, Venezuelan migrants make up a significant share of the population (more than 10%).<sup>312</sup> In response to the growing presence of Venezuelans in the Caribbean, regularization programmes are being adopted by, for example, Trinidad and Tobago, the Dominican Republic and Curaçao to provide legal status to applicable Venezuelans.<sup>313</sup>

#### **Environmental change and disasters are influencing human movement and displacement in the subregion.<sup>314</sup>**

Intense weather-related events – including tropical storms and hurricanes – directly and indirectly impact migration in the subregion. Hurricane Laura, for example, triggered more than a million displacements across the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba and the United States in 2020, while Hurricanes Eta and Iota resulted in around 1.7 million displacements in several countries in the subregion.<sup>315</sup> In Central America, environmental shocks in pre-mountain zones range from floods and storms, mudslides and landslides, while arid areas are mostly affected by droughts.<sup>316</sup> In Guatemala, for instance, it is common for people to migrate due to the droughts and floods that damage crops and consequently cause food insecurity and poverty.<sup>317</sup> To further address the challenge of climate change and migration, several countries in Central America and the Caribbean are incorporating migration and mobility into their climate strategies. For example, Guatemala's climate strategy includes a focus on human mobility,<sup>318</sup> while Mexico's new Nationally Determined Contribution calls for enhanced attention to climate migration.<sup>319</sup>

### *South America*

#### **The global pandemic disrupted migration in South America, impacting return migration and displacement.**

The first confirmed COVID-19 case in South America was in Brazil in February 2020, and by late July the subregion had the highest number of confirmed cases globally.<sup>320</sup> By April 2020, 92 per cent of the Americas had closed their borders to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus.<sup>321</sup> Several countries also implemented periods of lockdown and quarantine measures. Countries such as the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru put in place some of the longest and strictest lockdown measures worldwide.<sup>322</sup> These public health measures hindered migration and mobility, leading to precarious conditions for many migrants. Some migrants residing in countries with deteriorating socioeconomic conditions, and who lost work as a result of the pandemic, made the difficult decision to return to their countries of origin.<sup>323</sup> Those returning home included Bolivian and Peruvian migrants from Chile and Paraguayan migrants from Brazil.<sup>324</sup> Mass returns, often taking place by foot, in conjunction with mobility restrictions, led to many migrants being stranded in border cities in poor sanitary conditions.<sup>325</sup> Returning migrants also faced socioeconomic and legal challenges, such as finding employment, obtaining legal status and facing xenophobic backlashes.<sup>326</sup> With many people remaining on the move, countries like Guyana, Ecuador and Peru are prioritizing displaced people in their COVID-19 vaccination strategies.<sup>327</sup>

**Regularizing displaced Venezuelans remains a challenge for countries in South America as the region confronts one of the largest humanitarian crises in its recent history.**<sup>328</sup> Since 2015, over five million people have left the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela due to the ongoing economic and political instability in the country.<sup>329</sup> More than four million Venezuelans have moved to other South American countries.<sup>330</sup> Colombia hosts the largest number of Venezuelans, with more than 1.7 million entering the country by July 2021.<sup>331</sup> As of July 2021, the remaining top South American countries hosting Venezuelans following Colombia were Peru (more than 1 million), Chile (nearly 460,000) and Ecuador (more than 360,000).<sup>332</sup> Mass regularization initiatives have been implemented to support Venezuelans, as more than half lack regular status.<sup>333</sup> In February 2021, Colombia implemented a policy providing displaced Venezuelans with temporary protection status for the next 10 years.<sup>334</sup> Regularization will have lasting positive impacts, as it fosters social inclusion and economic contributions via labour market integration and access to health care, housing, education and other necessary protections.<sup>335</sup> Since many countries have never experienced migrant inflows at this scale, issuing visas and granting asylum has been challenging. An August 2020 study revealed that countries such as Brazil and Peru granted humanitarian visas to a substantial proportion of Venezuelans.<sup>336</sup> While several countries have issued residency permits to a significant number of Venezuelans, many continue to have an irregular status.<sup>337</sup>

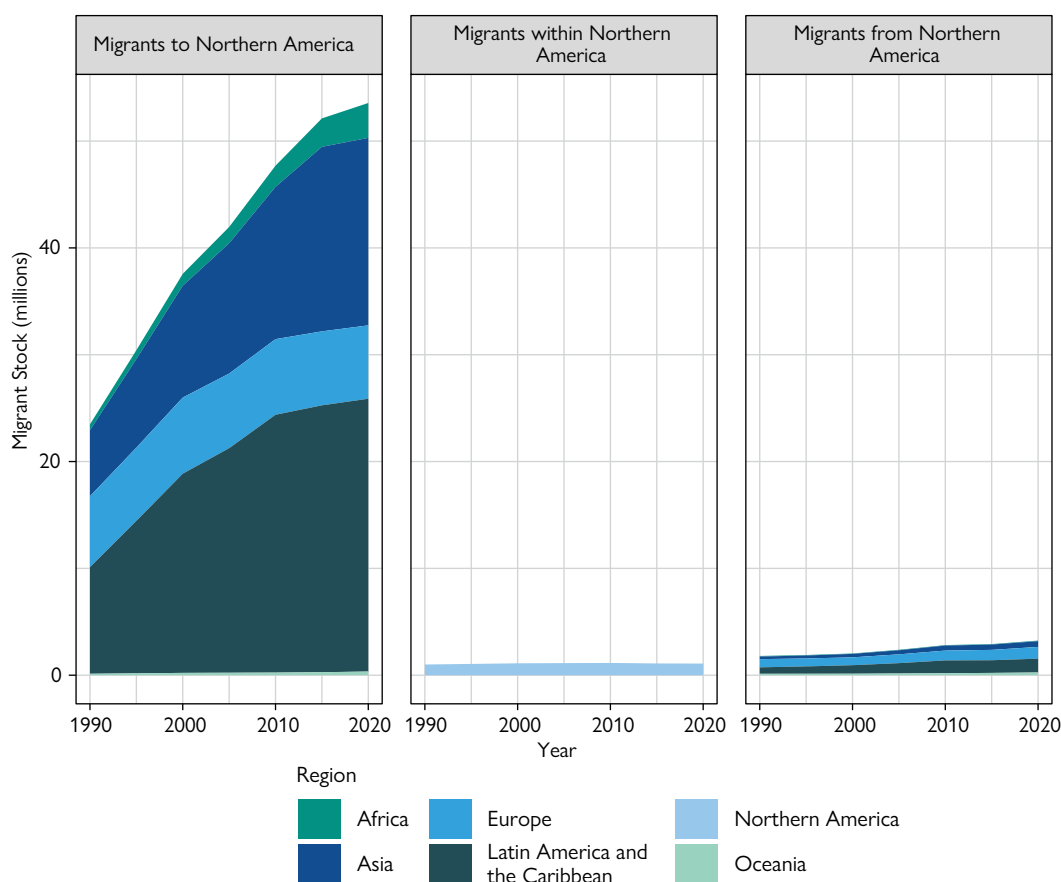
**Intraregional migration has grown at a fast rate in South America, with women migrants contributing to this increase.**<sup>338</sup> Approximately 80 per cent of migrants in South America are intraregional migrants.<sup>339</sup> Since 2010, the number of intraregional migrants in South America has grown to almost equal the number of South Americans living outside of the subregion.<sup>340</sup> This growth is the result of several factors, including the decline in immigration to Europe,<sup>341</sup> the hardening of immigration policies abroad,<sup>342</sup> positive developments in migration policies at a regional and national level, greater employment opportunities within South America,<sup>343</sup> increases in communication means and lower transportation costs,<sup>344</sup> and the cross-border displacement from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.<sup>345</sup> Significantly, in the largest destination countries of Argentina and Chile, women make up the larger share of South American migrants. Immigrant women predominately take up domestic and caring roles due to ageing populations and increased labour force participation among middle-class women.<sup>346</sup>

**Violence, conflict and disasters are significant drivers of internal displacement in the subregion.** Violence triggered by political and security crises continues to contribute to large-scale internal displacement. Violence in Colombia, driven partly by territorial control exercised by paramilitary groups, resulted in more than 100,000 new displacements in 2020.<sup>347</sup> Displacement in Colombia due to conflict and violence continued to intensify in 2021, with more than 27,000 people displaced in the first quarter, an increase of 177 per cent compared with the same period in 2020.<sup>348</sup> The subregion is also severely affected by natural disasters, triggering mobility and displacement; both rapid- and slow-onset disasters, such as floods, landslides and droughts have had widespread impacts on the subregion.<sup>349</sup> For example, the extreme rainy season in Brazil, between January to March, resulted in approximately three quarters of the country's 358,000 disaster displacements in 2020.<sup>350</sup>

## Northern America<sup>351</sup>

Migration in Northern America is dominated by migration into the region, primarily to the United States. As shown in Figure 29, nearly 59 million migrants were residing in Northern America from a variety of regions in 2020. This number has increased by around 3 million since 2015, when around 56 million migrants were living in the region. As of 2020, most of these migrants were from Latin America and the Caribbean (around 26 million), followed by Asia (18 million) and Europe (around 7 million). During the last 30 years, the number of migrants in Northern America has more than doubled in size, driven by emigration from Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia, as well as by economic growth and political stability in Northern America. The number of Northern American migrants living within the region or elsewhere was very small compared with the foreign-born population in the region. In contrast to regions such as Asia and Africa where intraregional migration is significant, more Northern American-born migrants lived outside the region (around 3 million) than had moved elsewhere within the region (a little more than 1 million) in 2020.

Figure 29. Migrants to, within and from North America, 1990–2020

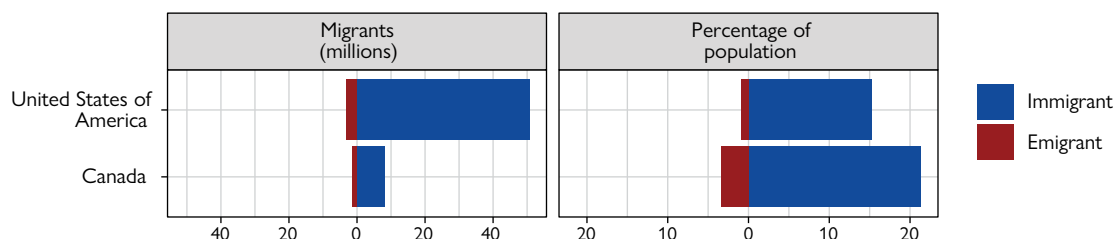


Source: UN DESA, 2021.

Note: "Migrants to Northern America" refers to migrants residing in the region (i.e. Northern America) who were born in one of the other regions (e.g. Europe or Asia). "Migrants within Northern America" refers to migrants born in the region (i.e. Northern America) and residing outside their country of birth, but still within the Northern American region. "Migrants from Northern America" refers to people born in Northern America who were residing outside the region (e.g. in Europe or Africa).

In 2020, the United States had the largest foreign-born population in the world (Figure 30). Over 86 per cent of the foreign-born population in Northern America lived in the United States. However, as shown in Figure 30, the share of Canada's total population that was foreign-born (at over 21%) was considerably higher than that of the United States in 2020 (15%). Canada also had a larger share of its population who had emigrated compared with the United States.

Figure 30. Main migration countries in Northern America, 2020



Source: UN DESA, 2021.

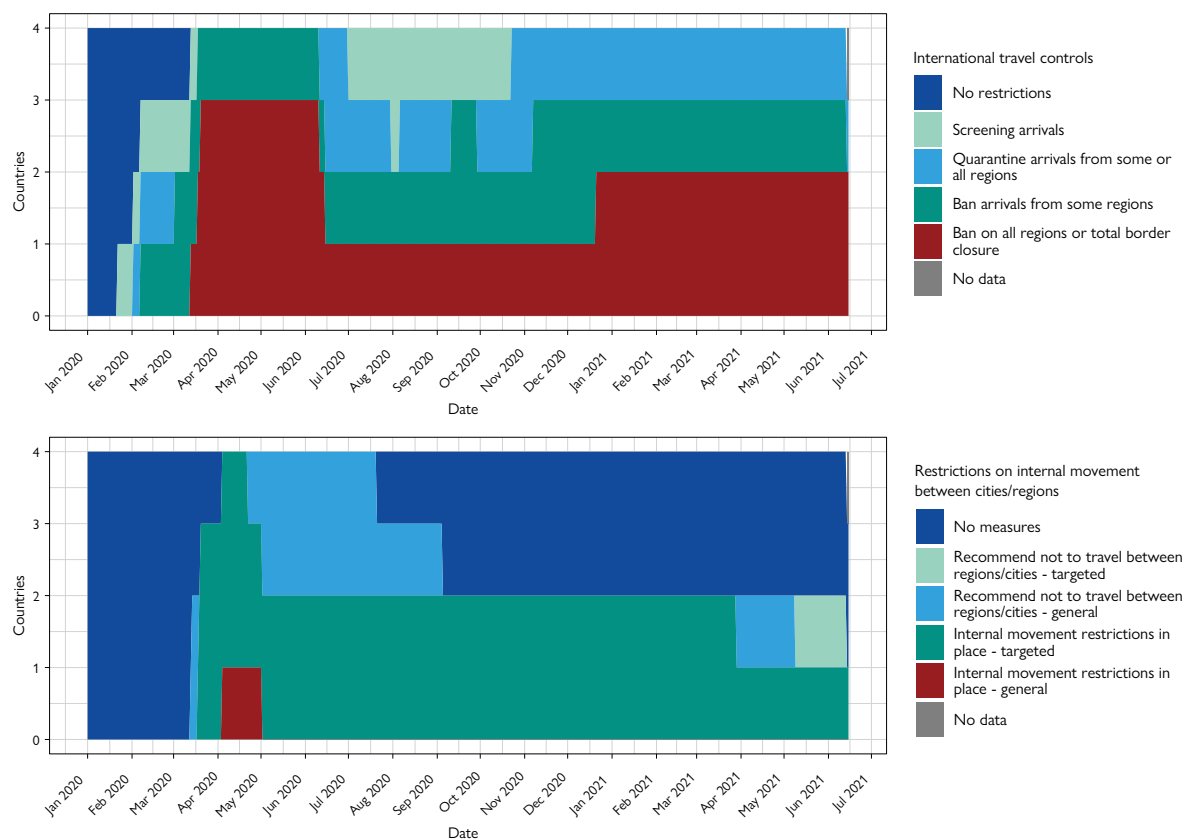
Note 1: The population size used to calculate the percentage of immigrants and emigrants is based on the UN DESA total resident population of the country, which includes foreign-born populations.

Note 2: "Immigrant" refers to foreign-born migrants residing in the country. "Emigrant" refers to people born in the country who were residing outside their country of birth in 2021.

All countries in Northern America quickly put in place international and internal travel controls at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Similar to the rest of the regions, restrictions on international travel started weeks earlier than internal controls. Restrictions such as screening arrivals and quarantine measures were maintained throughout 2020 and remained in place for all countries in the region as of mid-June 2021 (Figure 31). However, other international travel controls, such as the ban on arrivals from some regions and total border closures declined from mid-2020, only rising again toward the end of the year as several countries experienced an increase in or new waves of COVID-19 infections.

In the early weeks of the pandemic, all countries in the region imposed some form of internal movement restrictions. However, by around September 2020, about half had dropped all of these measures. The internal restrictions that remained for some countries included targeted and general recommendations not to travel between regions or cities. Interestingly and unlike other regions, nearly all countries in Northern America never imposed general internal movement restrictions.

Figure 31. COVID-19-related travel controls in Northern America: International and internal, January 2020 to June 2021

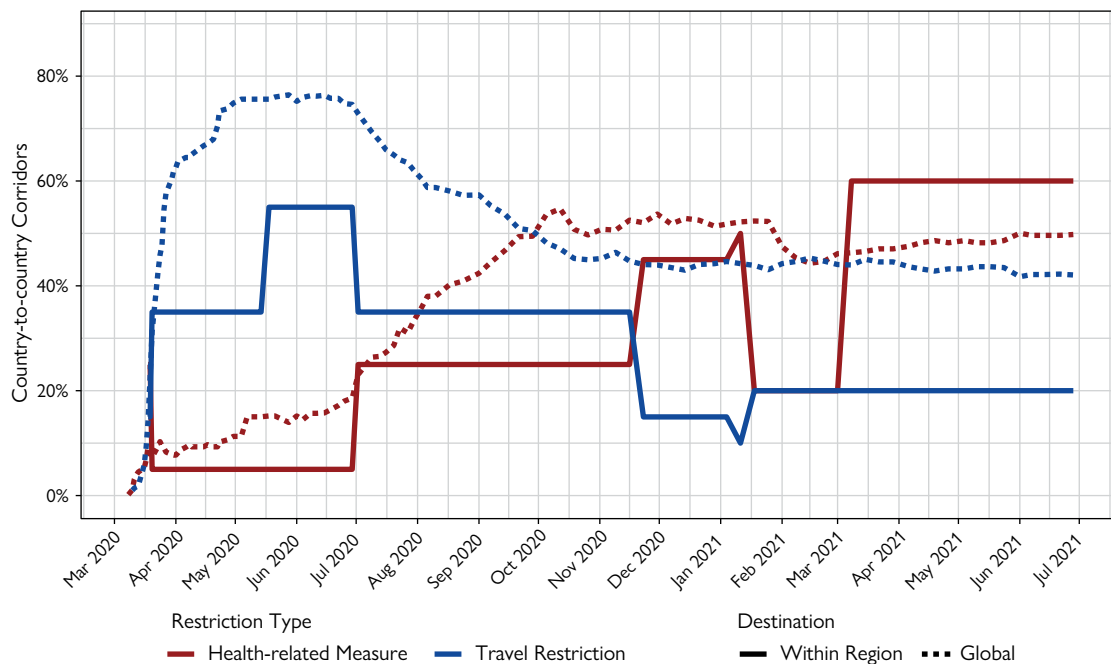


Source: Hale et al., 2021.

Notes: Categories used are those of the Oxford Government Response Tracker; categories included in the data set are for COVID-19-related restrictions only and do not reflect other travel restrictions that may also be in place, such as those related to visa restrictions, entry bans based on citizenship, departure/exit restrictions and internal movement restrictions. This graph only includes four countries, which affects the output and appearance of the area chart.

Travel restrictions and health-related measures in Northern America have evolved over time since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. As Figure 32 shows, there were more travel restrictions than health-related measures in the early months of the pandemic. Over time, however, health-related measures overtook travel restrictions. Of note, however, by end of June 2021 there were more intraregional health-related measures than those involving countries outside Northern America (global). This is in contrast to earlier on in the pandemic and throughout 2020, when there were more global health-related measures than intraregional ones.

Figure 32. COVID-19-related international travel measures in Northern America:  
March 2020 to June 2021

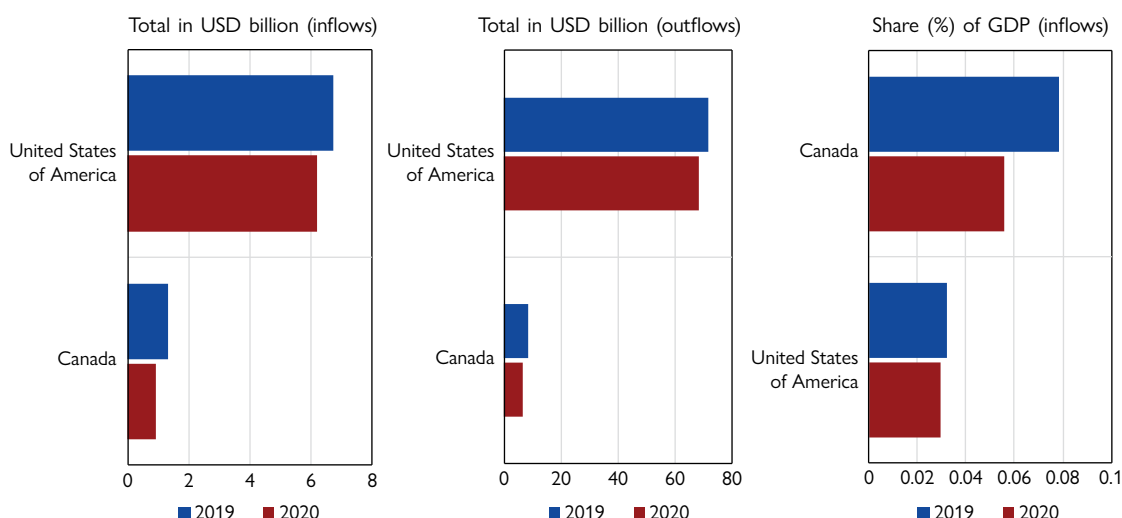


Source: IOM, 2021a.

Notes: Health-related measures include health screening and monitoring, testing/medical certificates and quarantine measures. Travel restrictions include passenger restrictions based on nationality or arrival from a geographic location. See the DTM Mobility restrictions page for more information on the methodology. This graph only includes four countries, which affects the appearance of the area chart.

The United States, the world's largest economy, has traditionally been one of the largest sources of remittances globally. In 2020, around USD 68 billion was sent from the country, making it the largest sender in the Northern America and the world (Figure 33). However, remittance outflows from the country declined in 2020, dropping from more than USD 71 billion in 2019.

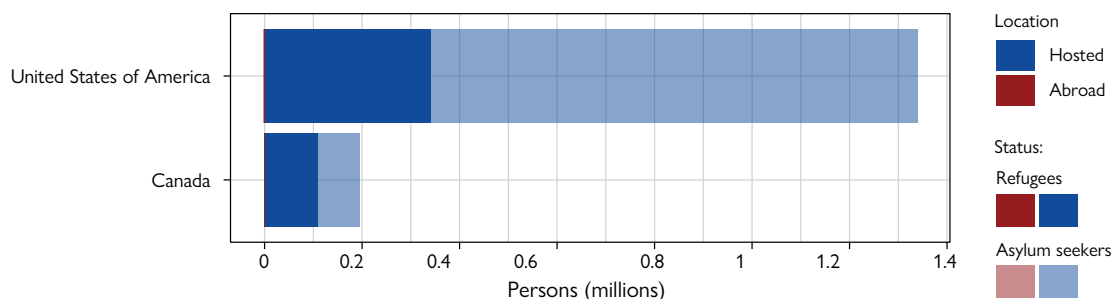
Figure 33. Remittance recipient and source countries in Northern America, 2019 and 2020



Source: World Bank, 2021.

The United States hosted nearly 341,000 refugees in 2020. In the same year, and as shown in Figure 34, the country was home to close to one million asylum seekers. Most asylum seekers in the United States came from Latin American countries such as the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Mexico and from countries in Northern Central America including Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras where a complex mix of socioeconomic and political factors have forced a significant number of people to leave. Canada, meanwhile, hosted nearly 110,000 refugees and more than 85,000 asylum seekers in 2020. A significant number of refugees in Canada came from countries such as Nigeria, Turkey and Pakistan.

Figure 34. Number of refugees and asylum seekers in and from Northern American countries, 2020

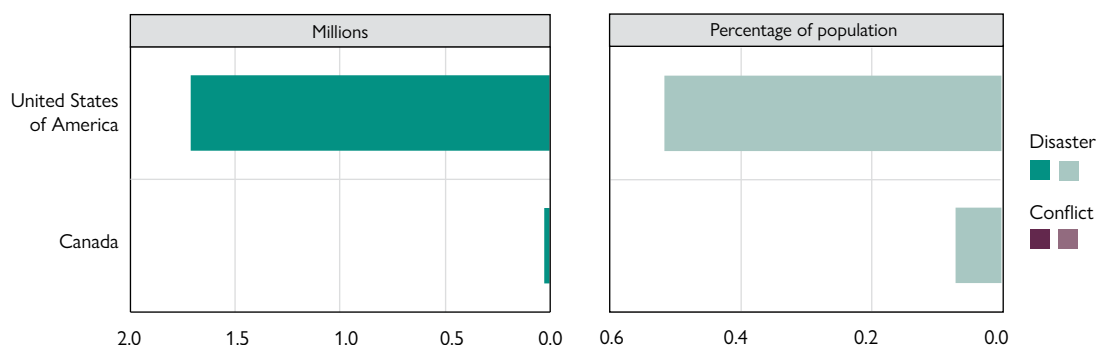


Source: UNHCR, n.d.a.

Note: "Hosted" refers to those refugees and asylum seekers from other countries who are residing in the receiving country (right-hand side of the figure); "abroad" refers to refugees and asylum seekers originating from that country who are outside of their origin country.

All new internal displacements in Northern America in 2020 were due to disasters (Figure 35).<sup>352</sup> The United States recorded the largest number, with more than 1.7 million new displacements due to flooding and wildfires. Globally, wildfires accounted for 1.2 million new displacements in 2020, with more than one million new displacements taking place in the United States, primarily in the western states of California, Colorado, Utah, Oregon and Washington. Wildfire season in Canada also triggered new displacements, however, the scale of these displacements was much lower compared with the United States. Overall, Canada recorded 26,000 new displacements in 2020, with the major fire in Red Lake, Ontario accounting for 3,800 new displacements. The United States consistently ranks first among the countries of the Americas and the Caribbean in terms of new disaster displacements annually.

Figure 35. Northern American countries by new internal displacements (disaster and conflict), 2020



Source: IDMC, n.d.; UN DESA, 2021.

Notes: New displacements refers to the number of displacement movements that occurred in 2020, not the total accumulated stock of IDPs resulting from displacement over time. New displacement figures include individuals who have been displaced more than once and do not correspond to the number of people displaced during the year. The population size used to calculate the percentage of new disaster and conflict displacements is based on the total resident population of the country per 2021 UN DESA population estimates, and the percentage is for relative, illustrative purposes only.

## Key features and developments in Northern America<sup>353</sup>

**Despite the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on migration and mobility in Northern America, migrants in the region have played key roles in the socioeconomic response.** Travel restrictions, consular and border closures, and visa processing and immigration court hearing delays, among other factors, have contributed to the notable decrease in registered arrivals of migrants to Canada and the United States since the start of the pandemic.<sup>354</sup> In Canada, for example, the number of new applications and extensions approved for temporary residents decreased by 48 per cent (from 2.4 million to 1.3 million) between 2019 and 2020, while authorizations and visas issued for permanent residents decreased by 50 per cent (from 341,000 in 2019 to 172,000 in 2020).<sup>355</sup> The total number of immigrant and non-immigrant visas issued for the United States was just over 4 million for fiscal year 2020, a decrease of 54 per cent compared with the 9.2 million visas issued in fiscal year 2019.<sup>356</sup> However, while COVID-19 travel and movement restrictions diminished opportunities for many migrants to enter Northern America, both the United States and Canada maintained certain channels, particularly for temporary foreign workers in essential front-line sectors.<sup>357</sup> Further, migrants have been key to the subregion's economy and



its overall COVID-19 response. For example, many migrants are employed as health-care workers or in critical sectors such as food and agriculture.<sup>358</sup> However, because migrants are overrepresented in front-line industries, in combination with other socioeconomic factors related to poverty, housing, access to social and health services, lack of documentation and more, they are disproportionately affected by the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic and are potentially at greater risk of infection.<sup>359</sup> An estimated 6 million foreign-born workers in the United States are employed in front-line industries, with an additional 6 million migrants in industries negatively impacted by the pandemic, such as hotels and restaurants and personal services (e.g. nail and hair salons).<sup>360</sup> The same pattern is reflected in Canada, as 34 per cent of front-line workers self-identify as visible minorities and are more likely to work in industries negatively affected by the pandemic, compounding health and economic challenges.<sup>361</sup> Moreover, the global pandemic has significantly also disrupted refugee resettlement schemes, as discussed above in the regional overview.<sup>362</sup> However, there have been initiatives to support refugees and migrants in the subregion. The United States, for example, committed to making free vaccines available regardless of immigration status.<sup>363</sup> In Canada, the Federal Government was granting permanent residency to asylum seekers working in the health-care sector during the pandemic.<sup>364</sup>

**The United States and Canada remain significant migrant destinations, with increasingly diverse origin countries.** In 2020, around 51 million international migrants resided in the United States, by far the largest such population in the world. In the same year, more than 8 million international migrants lived in Canada; while this is a much smaller figure compared with the United States, Canada was the eighth largest migrant destination in the world in 2020, with most coming from India, China and the Philippines. Migrants to the United States have traditionally come from Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia, including from countries such as Mexico, India and China. Over the years, however, there has been a diversification in origin countries. For example, while Mexican-born migrants continue to comprise the largest number of international migrants in the United States, their numbers have been falling over time.<sup>365</sup> The numbers of migrants from countries such as the Dominican Republic, the Philippines and El Salvador in the United States, on the other hand, have been increasing.<sup>366</sup> There has also been a notable increase in migrants from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Afghanistan and Nigeria, which have experienced some of the fastest growth over the last decade.<sup>367</sup>

**With an ageing population, Canada continues to increase immigration targets.** Canada's 2021–2023 Immigration Plan will target levels of immigration not seen since 1913.<sup>368</sup> The plan sets out to welcome 401,000 immigrants in 2021, 411,000 in 2022 and 421,000 in 2023.<sup>369</sup> The goal reflects the changing demographics in Canada, where immigration currently drives 82 per cent of the country's population growth.<sup>370</sup> Canada's fertility rate averages around 1.5, falling well below the replacement rate of 2.1.<sup>371</sup> The country's labour force is also rapidly changing. By 2036, the worker-to-retiree ratio will be 3:1 and by 2040 over 23 per cent of the population is projected to be over the age of 65.<sup>372</sup> The imperative to sustain and grow Canada's labour market is reflected in the 2021–2023 Immigration Plan, which aims to admit 60 per cent of all immigrants under economic class programmes.<sup>373</sup> At the local level, strategies to support the Canadian economy uniquely target immigrant entrepreneurs, as many small and medium-size business owners plan to retire in the coming years.<sup>374</sup> Additionally, there are programmes aimed at achieving a more equitable distribution of immigrants in response to the long-standing challenges to regionalization, a process that aims to promote immigration to smaller provinces and cities across Canada.<sup>375</sup>

**While immigration policies in the United States have hardened in recent years, new policy changes are reshaping the immigration system.** The country's 2020 decennial census revealed a near-record decline in population growth, showing a 7.4 per cent growth between 2010 and 2020, the second lowest rate since 1790.<sup>376</sup> Partly in response to these demographic changes, there are efforts to expand immigration to the country to help maintain population growth and the current labour force.<sup>377</sup> Meanwhile, over the last few years several

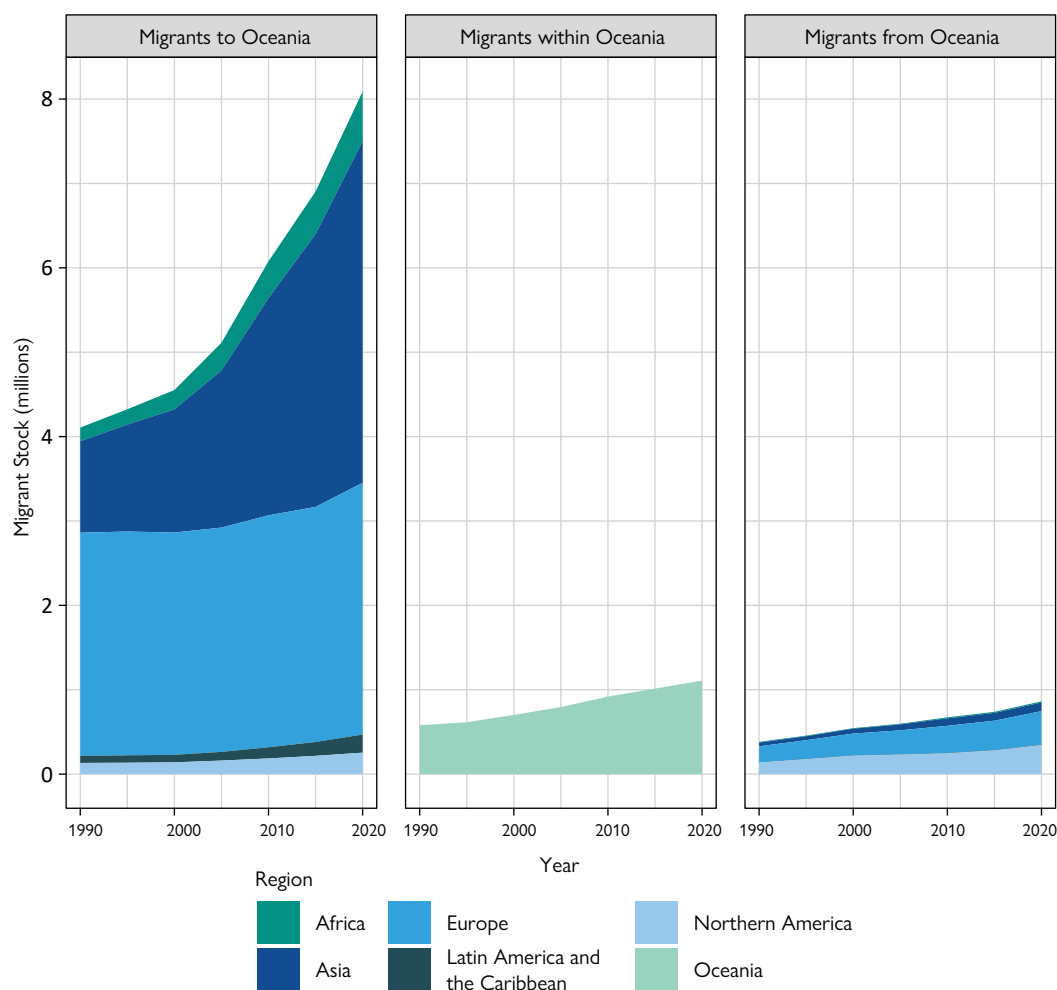
“interlocking measures” implemented by the United States Government made it increasingly difficult for migrants and asylum seekers to gain entry into the United States.<sup>378</sup> Immigration was framed as a threat to the national economy, with restrictive policies and legislation aimed to dissuade migration.<sup>379</sup> Since early 2021, however, the new United States administration enacted rapid changes to the immigration system, including the rescission of the United States travel ban on primarily Muslim-majority and African countries,<sup>380</sup> the restoration of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) programme, the suspension of wall construction at the southern border, and a proposal that would instate an eight-year path to citizenship for all unauthorized immigrants.<sup>381</sup> Moreover, in the early months of 2021, the United States Government suspended three Asylum Cooperative Agreements with El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, which required asylum seekers from the subregion to first seek protection in these countries and allowed for the removal and transfer of some migrants from the United States to the three countries.<sup>382</sup> In March 2021, Venezuelans residing in the United States were granted Temporary Protection Status (TPS), allowing them to live and work legally in the country.<sup>383</sup> Further, in May 2021, the United States Government revised the refugee admission cap from 15,000 up to 62,500 in 2021; it is set to increase even further to 125,000 in 2022.<sup>384</sup> There were also ongoing efforts to reunite migrant families that had been separated in previous years.<sup>385</sup>

**The number of irregular migrants continues to decline in the United States, in part due to return migration to Mexico.**<sup>386</sup> The total population of irregular migrants in the United States as of 2018 was estimated to be between 11 and 11.4 million.<sup>387</sup> A recent publication from the Center for Migration Studies estimated that by 2019 the irregular migrant population in the United States had decreased by 12 per cent since 2010, driven in large part by the return of an estimated 1.9 million irregular migrants to Mexico during this period.<sup>388</sup> Mexican nationals are now estimated to account for less than half of the irregular migrant population in the United States.<sup>389</sup> However, there is growing diversity in the countries of origin of irregular migrants living in the United States. In recent years, there has been an increase in undocumented populations from Central America and Asia, primarily from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and India.<sup>390</sup>

## Oceania<sup>391</sup>

In 2020, almost 8.3 million international migrants from outside Oceania were living in the region. As shown in Figure 36, the foreign-born migrant population was primarily composed of people from Asia and Europe. During the last 30 years, the number of migrants in Oceania born in Asia has grown, while the number of those from Europe has remained steady. Out of all of the six global regions, Oceania had the lowest number of migrants outside its region in 2020, partly a reflection of its smaller population size compared with other regions. Migrants from Oceania living outside the region mainly resided in Europe and Northern America.

Figure 36. Migrants to, within and from Oceania, 1990–2020

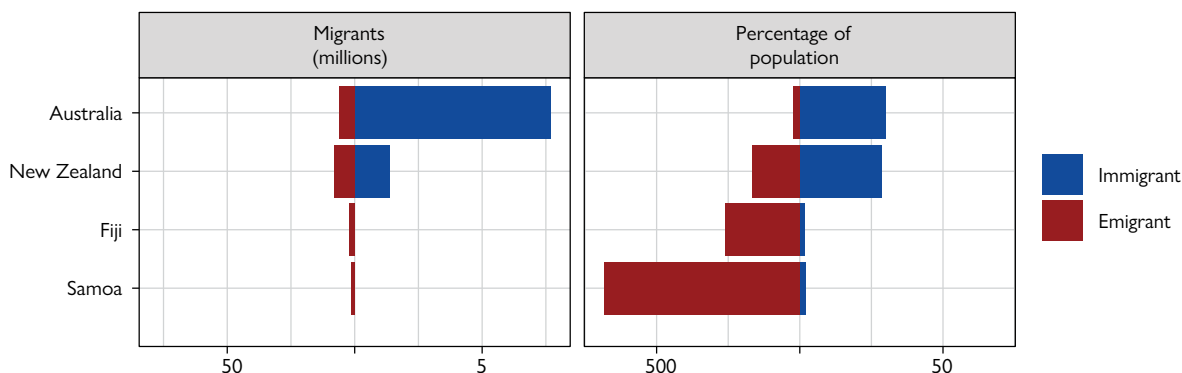


Source: UN DESA, 2021.

Note: "Migrants to Oceania" refers to migrants residing in the region (i.e. Oceania) who were born in one of the other regions (e.g. Europe or Asia). "Migrants within Oceania" refers to migrants born in the region (i.e. Oceania) and residing outside their country of birth, but still within the Oceania region. "Migrants from Oceania" refers to people born in Oceania who were residing outside the region (e.g. in Europe or Northern America).

The vast majority of international migrants in Oceania were living in either Australia or New Zealand (Figure 37). Most countries in the region have skewed migration profiles, being either large net origin or net destination countries. For example, Samoa and Fiji have high counts of emigrants in comparison with their native population, and very low shares of foreign-born populations. Their emigrants were located primarily in New Zealand and Australia. Australia and New Zealand have high shares of foreign-born populations as a portion of their total population, comprising around 30 per cent and 29 per cent, respectively.

Figure 37. Main migration countries in Oceania, 2020



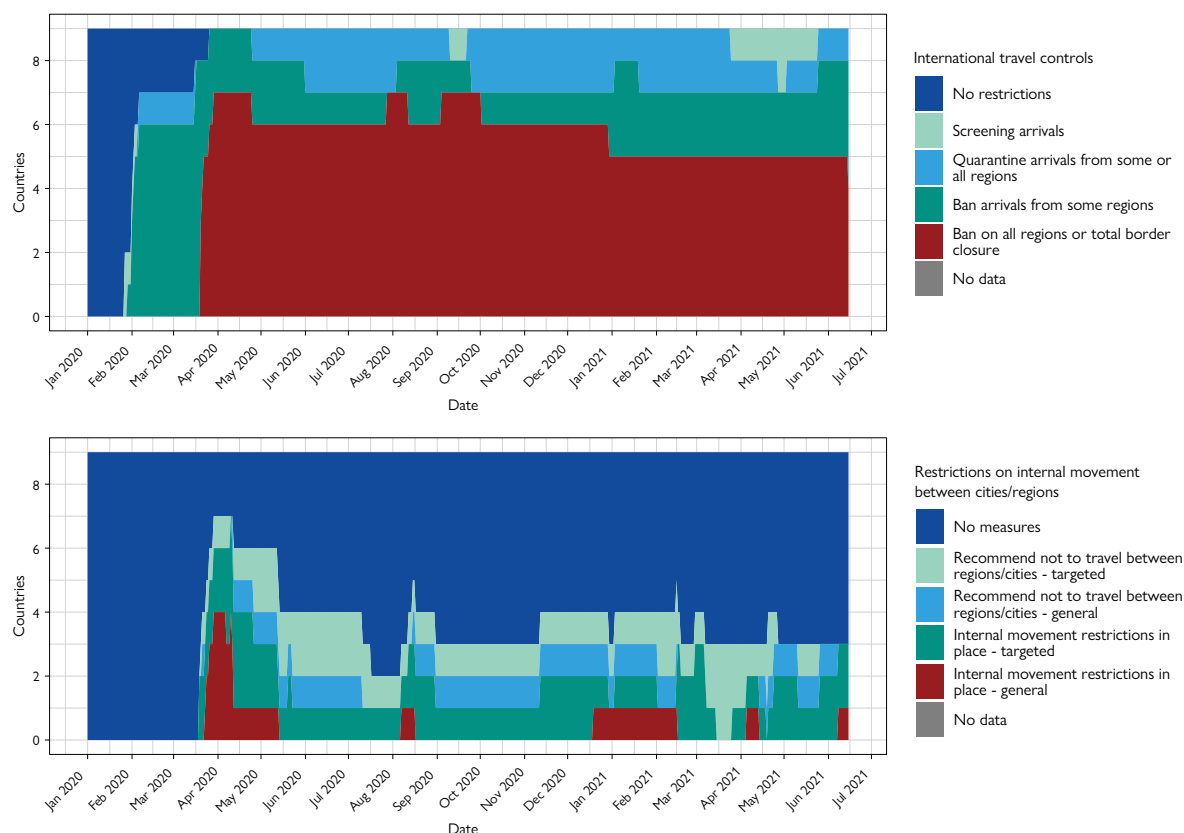
Source: UN DESA, 2021.

Note 1: The population size used to calculate the percentage of immigrants and emigrants is based on the UN DESA total resident population of the country, which includes foreign-born populations.

Note 2: "Immigrant" refers to foreign-born migrants residing in the country. "Emigrant" refers to people born in the country who were residing outside their country of birth in 2021.

Several countries in Oceania put in place international travel controls in the very early weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic. Internal movement restrictions followed a few weeks later. By around April 2020, virtually all countries in the region had imposed some form of international travel control (Figure 38). As of mid-June 2020, measures such as screening arrivals and quarantine mandates were still in place for nearly all countries. While other restrictions declined slightly, such as banning arrivals from some regions and total border closures, they too remained in place for several countries in the region. This contrasts with regions such as Africa, Asia and Europe, which saw most countries drop controls such as total border closures. Internal movement restrictions, meanwhile, which peaked in the early months of the pandemic, declined over time, but remain in place for some countries in the region.

Figure 38. COVID-19-related travel controls in Oceania: International and internal, January 2020 to June 2021

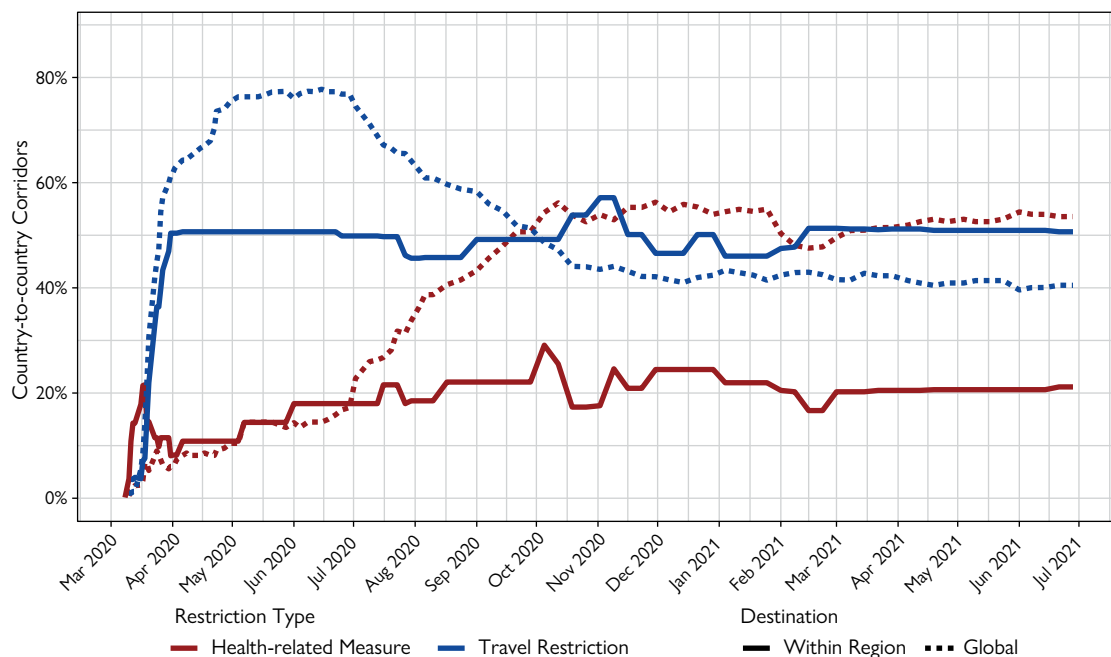


Source: Hale et al., 2021.

Notes: Categories used are those of the Oxford Government Response Tracker; categories included in the data set are for COVID-19-related restrictions only and do not reflect other travel restrictions that may also be in place, such as those related to visa restrictions, entry bans based on citizenship, departure/exit restrictions and internal movement restrictions.

The majority of countries in Oceania quickly enacted travel restrictions, with health-related measures increasing much more gradually in the early months of the pandemic (see Figure 39). By mid-2020, as the figure below shows, around 80 per cent of corridors in Oceania had some form of travel restriction (global). These dynamics began to change over time, as health-related measures, particularly those involving countries outside the region, increased and even surpassed travel restrictions during some periods. Notably, unlike other regions (except Asia), intraregional health-related measures remained relatively low (under 30% of corridors) by June 2021. Moreover, Oceania and Asia are also the only regions where, overall, travel restrictions within the region (both internal and global) were greater than health-related measures by mid-2021.

Figure 39. COVID-19-related international travel measures in Oceania: March 2020 to June 2021

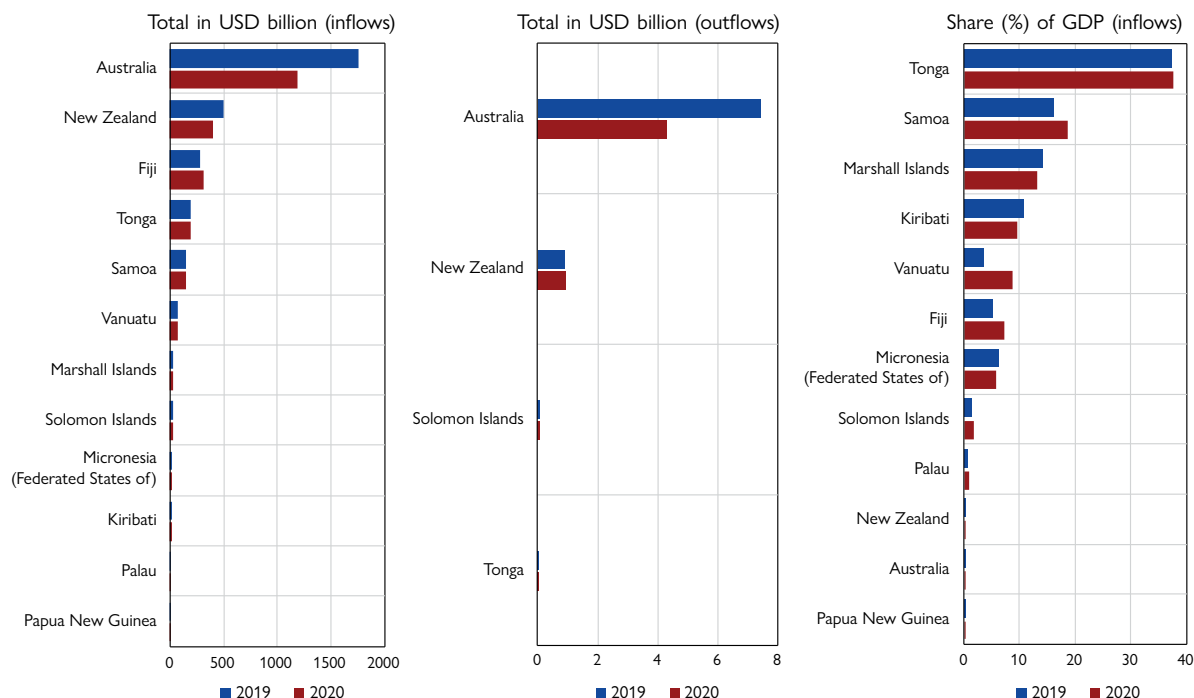


Source: IOM, 2021a.

Notes: Health-related measures include health screening and monitoring, testing/medical certificates and quarantine measures. Travel restrictions include passenger restrictions based on nationality or arrival from a geographic location. See the DTM Mobility restrictions page for more information on the methodology.

Australia received the largest international remittances in the region in 2020, followed by New Zealand and Fiji. Overall remittance flows to Oceania dropped by around 15 per cent in 2020, with the region's largest economies, Australia and New Zealand, experiencing 32 per cent and 20 per cent declines, respectively. The top recipients, as a share of GDP in 2020, include several smaller economies such as Tonga, Samoa and the Marshall Islands. In addition to being the largest recipient of international remittances in the region, Australia was also the largest source of remittances in Oceania in both 2019 and 2020. Remittance outflows from Australia surpassed USD 4 billion in 2020, although this was a decline from more than USD 7 billion in 2019.

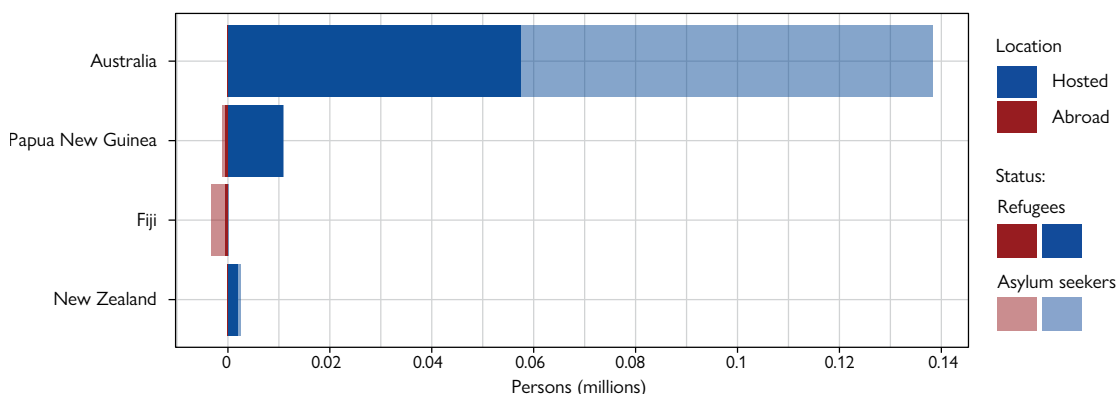
Figure 40. Top international remittance recipient and source countries in Oceania, 2019 and 2020



Source: World Bank, 2021.

In 2020, Oceania hosted over 150,000 refugees and asylum seekers. Australia was the largest host country in the region, followed by Papua New Guinea and New Zealand (Figure 41). Refugees originated from a range of countries including Afghanistan, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq.

Figure 41. Numbers of refugees and asylum seekers in and from Oceania countries, 2020

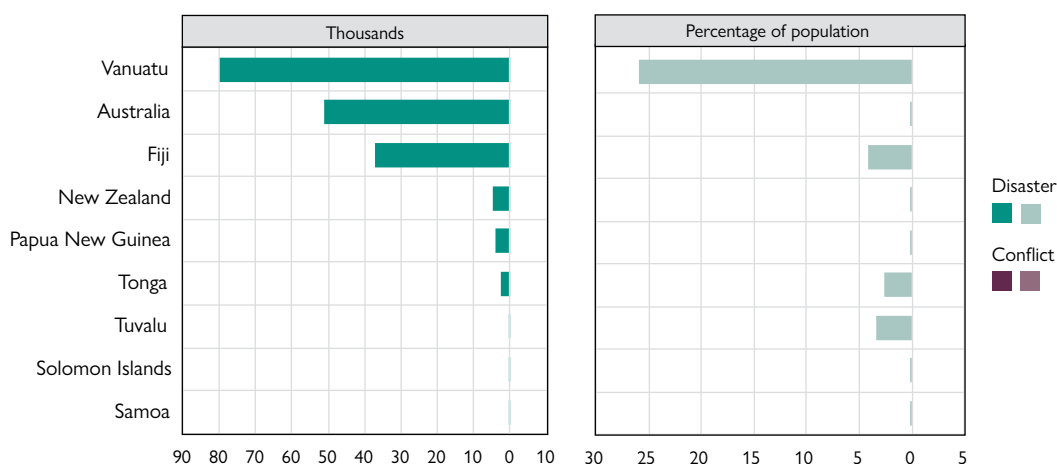


Source: UNHCR, n.d.a.

Note: "Hosted" refers to those refugees and asylum seekers from other countries who are residing in the receiving country (right-hand side of the figure); "abroad" refers to refugees and asylum seekers originating from that country who are outside of their origin country. The figures are based on 2020 data and are calculated by combining refugees and asylum seekers in and from countries.

Most internal displacements in Oceania in 2020 resulted from disasters, not conflict. Vanuatu recorded the highest number of disaster displacements (80,000), largely triggered by Cyclone Harold (Figure 42). This category five storm in 2020 impacted nearly one quarter of the population in the country. Other large-scale internal displacements triggered by disasters were recorded in Australia (51,000), Fiji (37,000) and New Zealand (almost 5,000). In Australia, the new displacements were largely pre-emptive evacuations due to the intense bushfire season between July 2019 and February 2020. The fires destroyed more than 3,000 homes and approximately 17 million hectares of land, heavily impacting the south-eastern states of Victoria and New South Wales.<sup>392</sup>

Figure 42. Top countries in Oceania by new internal displacements (disaster and conflict), 2020



Source: IDMC, n.d.; UN DESA, 2021.

Notes: New displacements refers to the number of displacement movements that occurred in 2020, not the total accumulated stock of IDPs resulting from displacement over time. New displacement figures include individuals who have been displaced more than once and do not correspond to the number of people displaced during the year. The population size used to calculate the percentage of new disaster and conflict displacements is based on the total resident population of the country per 2021 UN DESA population estimates, and the percentage is for relative, illustrative purposes only.



## Key features and developments in Oceania<sup>393</sup>

**The Covid-19 pandemic has led to economic hardship in the Oceania region due to labour immobility and major disruptions to key sectors such as tourism, hospitality and trade.** Governments in the Oceania region implemented a range of public health safety measures to curb the transmission of COVID-19 and have managed to minimize the number of cases. However, these pre-emptive actions, which included travel restrictions, border closures, the suspension of flights and quarantine measures, have negatively impacted migrants working in key industries. In particular, labour migrants within the region have faced major challenges. For instance, migrants from the Pacific Islands participating in seasonal worker programmes in Australia and New Zealand were in limbo, as some migrants in Tonga, Fiji, Tuvalu and Vanuatu were unable to depart for their preassigned employment and those already employed abroad had to negotiate continued work with their existing employers or find employment with an alternative employer.<sup>394</sup> Others in the seasonal worker programme faced challenges returning home and securing employment beyond their initial contract.<sup>395</sup> Another sector devastated by the pandemic was tourism and hospitality, which is a major source of revenue for the Pacific Islands. For example, in Fiji, tourism is the most important sector, and the downturn is expected to impact the overall GDP by approximately 38 per cent.<sup>396</sup> Due to the economic hardship, the flow of remittances is a cause for concern for Pacific island countries that rely strongly on these transfers. While lockdown measures resulted in reduced access to cash-based services, central banks reported significant shifts to the use of digital platforms;<sup>397</sup> for example, the Bank of Fiji reported an overall increase of 68 per cent from FJD 2.75 million in March 2020 to FJD 4.62 million in April 2020.<sup>398</sup>

**Seasonal labour migration regimes continue to facilitate emigration from Pacific island countries to Australia and New Zealand.** Labour migration programmes such as the Seasonal Workers Programme and Pacific Labour Scheme in Australia and the Recognized Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme in New Zealand recruit migrants primarily from the Pacific and South-East Asia to occupy jobs in agriculture and accommodation (in Australia) and horticulture and viticulture (in New Zealand).<sup>399</sup> The emigration from Pacific island countries to Australia and New Zealand is significant due to the relatively small population sizes and the pace at which participation in these programmes has grown, particularly in Australia, where there is no cap.<sup>400</sup> The majority of migrants that participate in these seasonal migrant worker programmes are from Vanuatu and Tonga. For example, it is estimated that in 2018, 13 per cent of the Tongan population aged 20–45 emigrated to work in Australia and New Zealand.<sup>401</sup> An evaluation of the seasonal worker programmes demonstrates that while the economic opportunity for migrants from the surrounding Pacific island countries drives participation, the departure of migrants can impact population growth and traditional social systems, and pose opportunity costs to local production in these regions.<sup>402</sup> Additionally, it is recorded that the vast majority of workers are male.<sup>403</sup> In Australia for example, only 14.6 per cent of participants in the 2017–2018 cohort were women.<sup>404</sup> With regard to gender equality, this is a cause for concern as women have to carry out unpaid work in their households in the absence of men and may miss the opportunity for work experience and financial gain.<sup>405</sup>

**Environmental change and natural hazards play a significant role in mobility and displacement in the region.** The Pacific region is disaster prone with high vulnerability to earthquakes, floods, forest fires and droughts. The intensity and frequency of such events are of concern, marked recently by the devastating bushfires in Australia that blazed from July 2019 until February 2020, burning 17 million hectares of land.<sup>406</sup> This historic event triggered 65,000 new displacements, mostly from pre-emptive evacuations.<sup>407</sup> Natural hazards and displacement can be more acute relative to population size, such as the volcano eruptions in Papua New Guinea in June 2019, which triggered an estimated 20,000 displacements,<sup>408</sup> and Cyclone Harold, which hit Vanuatu in April 2020 displacing around 80,000 individuals, approximately a quarter of the population.<sup>409</sup> Environmental change and natural hazards lead

to a spectrum of mobility decisions among individuals and communities.<sup>410</sup> Coping and adaptation strategies, along with resources and social networks may inform decisions to stay in high-risk environments.<sup>411</sup> People's migration decisions as they relate to environmental change will continue to influence demographic change in the region.

**Asylum seekers and refugees are a prominent feature of the region.** The top three countries hosting asylum seekers and refugees are Australia (138,000), Papua New Guinea (11,000) and New Zealand (2,500).<sup>412</sup> In the last decade, approximately 11 per cent of all resettled refugees were welcomed in Australia.<sup>413</sup> The number of places under Australia's Humanitarian Programme rose to 18,762 in 2018/2019.<sup>414</sup> In 2019/2020, Australia provided 13,170 Humanitarian Programme places out of the total 18,750 allocated for the reporting year.<sup>415</sup> The programme was not fully delivered in 2019/2020 due to the temporary suspension of granting of all offshore humanitarian visas in March 2020 because of COVID-19 travel restrictions.<sup>416</sup> In its annual Budget for 2020/2021, the Australian Government reduced its humanitarian places by 5,000, returning to the pre-2017 level of 13,750 places per annum.<sup>417</sup> COVID-19 travel restrictions have meant that by July 2021, it is estimated that around 10,000 people granted humanitarian visas overseas will remain offshore and be unable to enter Australia due to continuing significant international travel restrictions.<sup>418</sup> The subsequent federal budget (2021/2022) confirmed that programme places would remain at 13,750 for several years to come.<sup>419</sup> By May 2021, there were just over 230 people remaining offshore (around 100 on Nauru and 130 in Papua New Guinea), many having been transferred from Australia more than seven years prior.<sup>420</sup> Overall, it is estimated that Australia allocated around AUD 8.3 billion toward offshore processing of around 4,000 asylum seekers between 2012 and 2020.<sup>421</sup>

## Endnotes

- 1 All reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of the data referred to in this chapter, including through data verification. We regret, however, any data errors that may remain.
- 2 Please note that subregions relate largely to migration dynamics and so may differ from those of UN DESA. Details are provided in Appendix A.
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- 6 Teye, 2020.
- 7 Hamadou, 2020.
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- 10 African Union, 2020a; Eyebiye, 2020.
- 11 Litzkow, 2020; Schöfberger and Rango, 2020.
- 12 Le Coz and Hooper, 2021; IOM, 2021c.
- 13 IOM, 2021d; ICRC, 2020.
- 14 Muggah, 2021.
- 15 IDMC, 2021.
- 16 OCHA, 2020.
- 17 IDMC, 2021.
- 18 Muggah, 2021.
- 19 UN, 2020.
- 20 Frimpong, 2020.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Blake, 2020.
- 23 ICG, 2020.
- 24 ICRC, 2021; IDMC, 2020.
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- 43 Okunade, 2021.
- 44 IGAD, 2021.
- 45 COMESA, 2019.
- 46 IOM, 2020c; Black, 2020.
- 47 African Union, 2020c.
- 48 UN DESA, 2021.
- 49 ILO, n.d.
- 50 World Bank, 2021.
- 51 Ibid.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 Kleinfeld, 2020.
- 54 IDMC, 2021.
- 55 UNHCR, 2020b; Mednick, 2021.
- 56 IOM, 2021g; UNHCR, 2021a; Mednick, 2021.
- 57 IDMC, 2021.
- 58 OCHA, 2021a.
- 59 UNHCR, 2021a.

- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Ibid.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 UNHCR, 2021a.
- 65 IDMC, 2021.
- 66 Ibid.
- 67 Ibid.
- 68 ACAPS, 2021a.
- 69 Blocher and Kileli, 2020.
- 70 UNHCR, 2021b.
- 71 Ibid.
- 72 OCHA, 2021b; McAuliffe and Bauloz, 2020.
- 73 Schöffberger and Rango, 2020.
- 74 Fargues et al., 2020.
- 75 UNNM, 2020.
- 76 IOM, 2020d.
- 77 MMC, 2020a; UNHCR, 2021c.
- 78 MMC, 2021.
- 79 Idemudia and Boehnke, 2020.
- 80 UN DESA, 2021.
- 81 Ibid.
- 82 Ibid.
- 83 World Bank, 2021.
- 84 Ibid.
- 85 Ibid.
- 86 Dempster and Clemens, 2020; Hein, 2021.
- 87 IOM, 2021h.
- 88 ACAPS, 2021b.
- 89 IDMC, 2021.
- 90 OCHA, 2021c.
- 91 UNHCR, 2021a.
- 92 Ibid.
- 93 UNHCR, 2021a; IDMC, 2021.
- 94 Knoll and Teevan, 2020.
- 95 UNHCR, 2020c.
- 96 Ibid.
- 97 Ibid.
- 98 European Commission, 2021a.
- 99 UNHCR, 2020c.
- 100 Black, 2020; MMC, 2020b.
- 101 MMC, 2020b.
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- 105 See Appendix A for details on the composition of Asia.
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- 107 Smith and Zimmer, 2020; Babar, 2020; Hennebry and KC, 2020.
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- 109 Slater et al., 2020.
- 110 Ibid.
- 111 OHCHR, 2020.
- 112 IOM, 2021i.
- 113 UN, n.d.; McAuliffe and Bauloz, 2020.
- 114 World Bank, 2021.
- 115 UNHCR, 2021h.
- 116 IDMC, 2021.
- 117 Ibid.
- 118 ACAPS, 2020.
- 119 Ibid.
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- 121 IOM, 2020e; UNHCR, 2021e.
- 122 IDMC, 2021.
- 123 Ibid.
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- 127 Ibid.
- 128 Ibid.
- 129 Ibid.
- 130 UNDP, 2020.
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- 142 Madiyev, 2021.
- 143 King and Dudina, 2019.
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- 159 Republic of Korea, Ministry of Education, n.d.; JASSO, n.d.
- 160 Qi, 2021.
- 161 Cai, 2020.
- 162 Yonhap, 2020; Republic of Korea, Ministry of Education, n.d.
- 163 IDMC, 2021.
- 164 Ibid.
- 165 Ibid.
- 166 Ibid.
- 167 Zhao, 2020.
- 168 Guo et al., 2020.
- 169 IDMC, 2021.
- 170 ILO, 2021.
- 171 ADBI et al., 2021.
- 172 İcduygu, 2020.
- 173 ABDI et al., 2021.
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- 178 NUS, 2020.
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- 180 Ibid.
- 181 Karim, 2021.
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- 184 Ibid.
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- 194 Ibid.
- 195 WHO, 2021b.
- 196 Ibid.
- 197 Vandergeest et al., 2021.
- 198 IOM, 2021j.
- 199 IOM, 2020f.
- 200 Ortiga, 2020; Lema and Baldwin, 2020.
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- 218 Ibid.
- 219 IOM, n.d.b.
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- 221 See Appendix A for details of the composition of Europe.
- 222 IDMC, 2021.
- 223 See Appendix A for details on the composition of Europe.
- 224 UNHCR, 2020d.
- 225 Ibid.
- 226 Vallianatou et al., 2021.
- 227 Šantić and Antić, 2020; WHO, 2021a; WHO, 2021b.
- 228 Georgiev, 2020; Oruc et al., 2020.
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- 233 Ibid.
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- 237 IDMC, 2020.
- 238 Ibid.
- 239 OCHA, 2021d.
- 240 IOM, 2020g.
- 241 UNHCR, 2021a.
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- 243 IOM, 2021k.
- 244 Ibid.
- 245 Marusic, 2020.
- 246 *Al Jazeera*, 2021a.
- 247 IOM, 2020h.
- 248 IOM, 2020i.
- 249 Carter, 2020.
- 250 Kaur-Ballagan and Mortimore, 2017.
- 251 Wanner and Wisniak, 2020.
- 252 European Commission, 2021b.
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- 256 Fanjul and Dempster, 2020; European Commission, 2021c; Sköld, 2021.
- 257 Kirişçi et al., 2020.
- 258 Tagaris, 2021.
- 259 Frontex, 2021; IOM, 2021l.
- 260 *BBC News*, 2021a.
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- 279 Ibid.
- 280 Ibid.
- 281 Foley and Piper, 2020.
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- 283 UNICEF, 2020.
- 284 R4V, 2021a.
- 285 ILO and UNDP, 2021; R4V, 2021a.
- 286 R4V, 2021a.
- 287 Ibid.
- 288 World Bank, 2021.
- 289 See Appendix A for details on the composition of Latin America and the Caribbean.
- 290 Ernst, 2020.
- 291 Ibid.
- 292 MSF, 2021; McAuliffe et al., 2017.
- 293 IOM, 2020j.
- 294 Manzi, n.d.; Bojorquez et al., 2021; UNHCR, 2021a.
- 295 Teran, 2020.
- 296 ECLAC, 2020; Escobar, 2021.
- 297 Angelo, 2021; IDMC, 2020; Call, 2021.
- 298 UNHCR, 2021a.
- 299 Ibid.
- 300 Astles, n.d.; Menchu and Palencia, 2021.
- 301 MMC, 2020c; Meyer, 2021.
- 302 Meyer, 2021.
- 303 MMC, 2020c; Astles, n.d.
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- 308 Ibid.
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- 310 Ibid.
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- 317 Watkins and Garcia Salinas, 2020.
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- 327 Diaz et al., 2021.
- 328 R4V, 2020.
- 329 IOM, 2020l.
- 330 Chaves-González and Echeverría-Estrada, 2020.
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- 337 R4V, 2021b; Chaves-González and Echeverría-Estrada, 2020.
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- 340 Ibid.
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- 342 Cerrutti, 2020.
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- 345 IOM, 2020m; Cerrutti, 2020.
- 346 Cerrutti, 2020.
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- 348 *Al Jazeera*, 2021b.
- 349 IDMC, 2020.
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- 379 Chishti and Pierce, 2021.
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- 381 Chishti and Pierce, 2021.
- 382 Rodriguez, 2021.
- 383 United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2021.
- 384 White House, 2021.
- 385 Jordan, 2021.
- 386 Warren, 2021.
- 387 Baker, 2021; MPI, n.d.; Lopez et al., 2021.
- 388 Warren, 2021.
- 389 Passel and Cohn, 2019.
- 390 Ibid.
- 391 See Appendix A for details on the composition of Oceania.
- 392 IDMC, 2021.
- 393 See Appendix A for details on the composition of Oceania.
- 394 IOM, 2020n.
- 395 Ibid.
- 396 KPMG, 2020.
- 397 IOM, 2020n.
- 398 Ibid.
- 399 ESCAP, 2020.
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- 413 Ibid.
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United Nations | Central  
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Response  
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**IOM**

**IN MIGRATION**



# 4

## MIGRATION RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS: RECENT UNITED NATIONS CONTRIBUTIONS

### Introduction

Previous editions of the *World Migration Report* have pointed to a dramatic increase in research and analysis on migration, referring to an “era of information overload”.<sup>1</sup> Few issues have been as prominent and enduring in political and public discourse as migration. Its political salience remains very high, including amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The rapid expansion of disinformation on migration and migrants witnessed in real time in recent years has influenced the public discourse as never before (see Chapter 8 of this report). Media reports on migration are often unduly negative, and key issues in migration have too often been hijacked by those who peddle misinformation and disinformation on migrants and migration.<sup>2</sup> As a result, it has become more important than ever to ensure that policymakers have access to, and recognize the value of, rigorous analysis and research. Among the actors carrying out such analysis and research on migration today are many organizations in the United Nations system, producing different types of migration-related data, research and knowledge.

As the nature of publishing itself changes, these organizations have adapted and are increasingly using a diverse range of supports, such as data visualization, portals, blog and journal articles, webinars, videos and podcasts to reach wider audiences. Previous editions of the *World Migration Report* have highlighted the fundamental differences in the publishing processes of academic research (referred to as “white” literature) and non-academic research (referred to as “grey literature”) published by a variety of actors, including intergovernmental organizations, such as those in the United Nations system.<sup>3</sup> Both types of research outputs have strengths and weaknesses, as summarized in the table below.

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1 IOM, 2017.

2 McAuliffe et al., 2019.

3 IOM, 2017; IOM, 2019a.



Table 1. Strengths and weaknesses of academic and non-academic research

	Academic research (white literature)	Non-academic research (grey literature)
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-quality research usually ensured through peer review by experts;</li> <li>• Must refer to and build upon existing scientific evidence;</li> <li>• Built on networks of expertise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible to wide audiences, as usually freely available online and with less technical terminology used;</li> <li>• Rapid publishing processes enabling timely updates for policy deliberations;</li> <li>• Usually of a shorter format;</li> <li>• Ability to draw on expertise in academic and policy spheres.</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not freely accessible, as often behind paywalls managed by commercial publishers;</li> <li>• Long publishing timelines due to peer review processes, not meeting policymakers' needs for rapid research and analysis, and at times using out-of-date data;</li> <li>• Not easily accessible to a non-expert audience as highly technical and/or theoretical, with academic terminology used;</li> <li>• Lengthy written outputs, particularly in the case of monographs and handbooks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Varying quality due to lack of quality assurance mechanisms of certain outputs;</li> <li>• Possible to ignore the existing evidence base, thereby diminishing overall quality and relevance;</li> <li>• Certain outputs may be more focused on advocacy and policy change or driven by a political agenda.</li> </ul>

Sources: Banks, 2012; Pappas and Williams, 2011; IOM, 2017; IOM, 2019a.

Most published academic research outputs are behind paywalls (i.e. are not freely accessible) and are often managed by commercial publishers. The dissemination of academic research has, to date, rested on getting works published by commercial publishers, with some forms of publication (such as specific academic journals) having much greater credibility and weight than others. A key strength of academic publications is that they have usually been peer-reviewed by experts in the field, which typically enhances the robustness and credibility of the research, including by ensuring that existing evidence is adequately incorporated and built upon. The downside is that this results in long lead times, impacting on the usefulness for policymakers, who often need material more quickly than academic research methodologies and publishing regimes can accommodate. Academic researchers are increasingly being encouraged to disseminate their work beyond academic spheres; in particular, researchers analysing policy-relevant issues are often keen to engage with policymakers to impart knowledge that can inform policy deliberations and help shape policymaking. This is especially the case in migration. Effective research contributions for policy audiences tend to take the form of short papers, podcasts and blog articles, as well as policy workshops and interactive expert meetings.

Some of the advantages of grey literature, in turn, relate to its accessibility and faster publishing processes, enabling research to respond to issues as they emerge. Contributions from grey literature (such as research reports, working papers and government/official documents) are usually freely available. Other merits of this literature include shorter production times, greater access to unpublished research and data sets, and the ability to draw on expertise in academic and policy spheres.<sup>4</sup> However, recent developments are increasingly blurring the distinction between

<sup>4</sup> Pappas and Williams, 2011.



the two types of research. On the one hand, academics are increasingly evaluated on the policy relevance of their research for extension of their contracts and/or tenure. They increasingly disseminate their research beyond academic spheres to impart knowledge that can inform policy deliberations and help shape policymaking, this again being especially the case in migration. Yet, some disincentives persist for academics to engage in policy research, such as insufficient professional reward, difficulties in securing funding, and navigating an often complicated, bureaucratic and politicized field. On the other hand, while grey literature has sometimes been criticized for inconsistent quality and review standards,<sup>5</sup> efforts have been made in some quarters to increase rigour by improving quality assurance mechanisms.<sup>6</sup> Some contributions, such as those made by several international organizations, are seen as a key source of evidence in policymaking, at times on par with the quality of academic literature.

In a context of a rapidly changing publishing environment, organizations in the United Nations system are also adapting by increasingly using a diverse range of knowledge tools and platforms to reach wider audiences. This chapter aims to provide an overview of recent research and analysis on migration, focusing on the contributions of organizations in the United Nations system. Two key events have marked the production of research and analysis within the system over the last five years: the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in December 2018, which led to multiple implementation efforts at national and regional levels; and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, officially declared in March 2020,<sup>7</sup> which brought along widespread border closures and mobility restrictions, impacting on global migration patterns.

This chapter is structured around two main sections: the first looks at the role of the United Nations system as a producer of migration knowledge, while the second features selected recent contributions from relevant United Nations organizations.

## The United Nations system and the production of knowledge

Although definitions of intergovernmental organizations may vary, the term refers to “formal, continuous structures founded by an authoritative instrument of agreement between members (including two or more sovereign States) or an existing international organization through which members pursue their common interest”.<sup>8</sup> Since the first half of the twentieth century, the number, diversity and influence of intergovernmental organizations have grown.<sup>9</sup> The United Nations system comprises, in addition to the United Nations itself, many funds, programmes, specialized and related agencies, all of which have their own missions and areas of work, as well as their own leadership and budget. The programmes and funds are financed through voluntary, rather than assessed contributions. The specialized agencies are international organizations funded by voluntary, assessed and private donor contributions, and are focused more on the technical work of the United Nations; they report to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), but do not report to the Fifth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on administrative and budgetary matters. Related organizations have cooperation agreements with the United Nations, with many points in common with those of specialized agencies; but unlike them, they are not brought into relationship by means of Article 57 of the United Nations Charter, and agreements are not established with ECOSOC on the basis of Article 63 of the same charter. They are, nonetheless, members of the Chief Executives

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5 Banks, 2012; Pappas and Williams, 2011.

6 This report, for example, is peer reviewed by academic and IOM experts and is subjected to an extensive data-checking process.

7 WHO, 2020a.

8 Davies and Woodward, 2014:13.

9 Davies and Woodward, 2014.

Board for Coordination, a 31-member body that provides strategic guidance and coordination to the United Nations system (see Appendix A).

Organizations in the United Nations system are uniquely placed to gather data, owing among other factors to their presence in the field, as well as their relationship with governmental bodies. While there has been an increased focus in streamlining data collection and the production of research and knowledge to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, capacity issues remain. Scholarly publications note that intergovernmental organizations are now among the main producers of information on migration, a reflection of a broader growing interest in the topic itself.<sup>10</sup> As publishers and institutional authors and research partners with academia, the organizations in the United Nations system make a wide variety of contributions to the knowledge base on migration and migrants. In some circumstances, such organizations may be the only source of information, and multiple references to publications by them are therefore often found in academic and policy literature. Over the years, the United Nations has engaged with the academic world and research institutions in the field of migration, including through three of its research institutes: the United Nations Research Institutes for Social Development, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, and the United Nations University (UNU). The last hosts a network on migration, which includes all UNU institutes working on the topic of migration, with the view of sharing knowledge and research practices and informing policy development.

The United Nations system also acts as a bridge between the research community and policymakers. Much has been written about the tensions between the policy and research worlds.<sup>11</sup> Through the advocacy work carried out within the United Nations system, its organizations have been able to “plug in” evidence-based research in policymaking spaces,<sup>12</sup> thereby informing policy processes and allowing for cross-fertilization between these two worlds. A key global network designed to support such cross-fertilization is the Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS). Founded in 1987, ACUNS is an independent non-profit association of scholars, practitioners, institutions, and individuals active in the work and study of the United Nations. ACUNS stimulates and supports dialogue and research about issues of global concern and international cooperation.<sup>13</sup>

## Collaboration in the United Nations system on migration research

Since the turn of the millennium, attempts have been made to streamline inter-agency collaboration on migration issues in the United Nations system. In December 2003, the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) was officially launched by the United Nations Secretary-General and several governments. It constituted the first-ever global panel addressing international migration. In its final report,<sup>14</sup> the GCIM recommended the establishment of a global migration facility “that should ensure greater co-ordination, efficiency and policy consistency among all relevant global bodies, and also allow the sharing and pooling of institutional expertise.”

As a response to this recommendation, the Global Migration Group was established in early 2006 by building on an existing inter-agency group, the Geneva Migration Group. At the time of its cessation, following the creation of the United Nations Network on Migration (UNNM), the Global Migration Group brought together 22 agencies in the United Nations system to encourage the adoption of more coherent, comprehensive and better-coordinated approaches to the issue of international migration. Part of its work focused on sharing information, research findings

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, Mason, 1999; Pécoud, 2015.

<sup>11</sup> Nutley et al., 2003.

<sup>12</sup> UNDG, 2017.

<sup>13</sup> ACUNS, 2021.

<sup>14</sup> UNGA, 2005; GCIM, 2005.

and statistical data on migration, as well as developing a joint research network on migration and development, with particular emphasis on building research capacity in developing countries.

In December 2018, the United Nations General Assembly formally endorsed the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the culmination of 18 months of wide-reaching informal consultations, followed by intergovernmental negotiations. In parallel with the Global Compact for Migration process, the UNNM was established by the United Nations' Secretary-General to ensure effective, timely and coordinated system-wide support to Member States in their implementation of the Global Compact for Migration (see Appendix B). In support of the Global Compact for Migration development process, the Migration Research Leaders' Syndicate was established to help build bridges between policy and research (see discussion in the next section).

The UNNM consists of those members of the United Nations system that wish to be a part of it and for whom migration is of relevance to their mandates. The IOM is the coordinator of the UNNM and houses its secretariat. Within the network, an executive committee comprises nine entities with clear mandates, technical expertise and capacity in migration-related fields. According to its terms of reference, the Network sets itself the objective of acting as a source of ideas, tools, reliable data and information, analysis and policy guidance on migration issues.

**Table 2. United Nations Network on Migration members, including Executive Committee members**

UN Secretariat Bodies	Chief Executives Board Secretariat (CEB) Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)* Department of Public Information (DPI) Inter-Agency Standing Committee Secretariat (IASC) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)* Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)*
Special Funds and Programmes, under the United Nations General Assembly	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)* United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)* Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO) United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) Secretariat World Food Programme (WFP)

Specialized agencies, coordinated by the Economic and Social Council	Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) International Labour Organization (ILO)* International Maritime Organization (IMO) United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) Universal Postal Union (UPU) World Bank World Health Organization (WHO)*
Regional Commissions, under the Secretariat, coordinated by the Economic and Social Council	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA) United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC)
Related organization to United Nations, under the General Assembly	International Organization for Migration (IOM)*†
Training and research organizations, coordinated by the Economic and Social Council	United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) United Nations University (UNU)
Other entities under the General Assembly, coordinated by the Economic and Social Council	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)*

\* Member of the Executive Committee.

† Coordinator of the Network.

The mandates, missions, or competencies of some of the organizations (such as IOM and UNHCR) are focused on specific forms of migration and displacement, while others have responsibilities relevant to particular aspects or groups of people: UN DESA for data; the ILO for migrant workers; OHCHR for migrants' rights; UNICEF for migrant children; UNODC for transnational criminal aspects, such as human trafficking and migrant smuggling; and UNDP for development aspects. Their various mandates enable these intergovernmental organizations to collect significant quantities of data and/or access data from States. Many of these organizations also convene and report on dialogues and conferences related to migration and mobility, in addition to generating and publishing background, technical, operational, state-of-the-art and agenda-setting research and analysis, including on global statistical data.

The importance of collaborative research on migration had already been highlighted in the report of the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), *Strengthening Policy Research Uptake in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, published in 2018. Featuring a case study on migration research, and pre-empting the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration, it made two pertinent recommendations for interdisciplinary and collaborative research on migration, while also noting “the presence of IOM as a specialized partner in most of the collaborations identified”.<sup>15</sup> First, through inter-agency collaboration, it encouraged organizations in the United Nations system to take the necessary measures to establish a global knowledge platform, as stipulated in the Global Compact for Migration. Second, it recommended that United Nations system members of the future Network on Migration should assess the option of inter-agency collaboration with regard to decision-making on migration-related research priorities.

## The United Nations system: data collection and capacity-building

The demands for migration data arising from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development have prompted the international statistical community to review the use of traditional sources for migration data, such as population and housing censuses, household surveys and administrative records. Furthermore, through the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration, United Nations Member States recognized the “...need for international efforts to strengthen our knowledge and analysis of migration”<sup>16</sup> and the importance of collecting and disseminating clear, evidence-based information on migration. Central to this commitment is Objective 1: to collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies. Beyond building much-needed capacity to collect comparable migration data, this commitment aims to strengthen partnerships, enhance collaboration and create the conditions needed to develop research and studies on the interlinkage between migration and sustainable development.

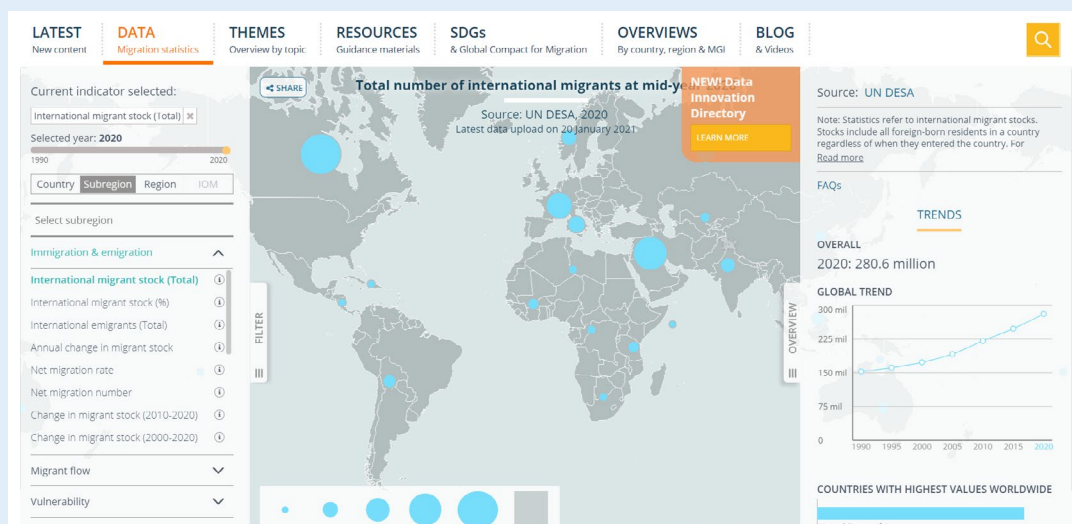
There is an increased interest in looking for alternative sources to enhance the collection and analysis of migration data. The better use and understanding of existing data sources are essential to improve migration management and policy. Information about migration comes from a variety of data sources that have different strengths and limitations and can be used to produce different migration statistics. In order to facilitate access to and understanding of the different data sets collected by the different organizations in the United Nations system, IOM launched the Migration Data Portal in December 2017. It aims to serve as a unique access point to timely, comprehensive migration statistics and reliable information about migration data globally. The site is designed to help policymakers, national statistics officers, journalists and the general public interested in the field of migration to navigate the increasingly complex landscape of international migration data, currently scattered across different organizations and agencies.

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15 JIU, 2018:40.

16 UNGA, 2018a.

## Migration Data Portal



This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

The Migration Data Portal was launched in December 2017 and is managed and developed by IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC).<sup>a</sup> It aims to facilitate the understanding of migration data by making them more accessible, more visible and easier to understand. The Portal is currently available in English, French, Spanish and German. Based on user feedback, the Portal's new dashboard was launched in June 2021. The interactive dashboard integrates the Portal's map with two comparative sections that enable easier analysis of international data, as well as a national data pilot section. The latter brings together national data from different sources, including government data, visualized in one place. As of June 2021, the national data section had nearly 40 national data indicators from government sources of four pilot countries and WorldPop estimates. The international data section provides access to nearly 80 migration data indicators from over 20 international sources. All indicators are updated as new data sets become available.

True to its objective of making migration data easier to understand, the Portal offers a variety of tools and additional resources, including written reports, blogs, handbooks and interviews with data experts, in view of offering contextual information. It provides access to over 45 thematic pages divided under five pillars, in which concepts and definitions are discussed, the strengths and limitations of available data are explained, and useful infographics and data visualizations can be accessed.

The portal also provides a dedicated section on migration governance, which includes country profiles. This section tracks, through data, progress made by United Nations Member States in achieving migration-relevant Sustainable Development Goals and in their implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

<sup>a</sup> Available at <https://migrationdataportal.org/>.

Aligned to the JIU recommendation previously mentioned, the Global Compact for Migration, in paragraph 43, calls for the establishment of a capacity-building mechanism (CBM) in the United Nations, building upon existing initiatives, that supports efforts of Member States in its implementation. The CBM was intended to comprise of a start-up fund (Migration MPTF), the Connection Hub and the Global Knowledge Platform. It emphasizes the need to draw on the technical, financial and human resources, on a voluntary basis, of Member States, the United Nations system, and all stakeholders in order to strengthen capacities and foster multi-partner cooperation. The Migration MPTF contributes to the financing of migration research by providing funding for projects on data collection under its first thematic cluster. The Migration Network Hub,<sup>17</sup> combining both the Global Knowledge Platform and the Connection Hub, was launched in March 2021 and is a vital element of the Global Compact for Migration to ensure that relevant knowledge, experience, and expertise can be drawn upon in developing tailor-made solutions in response to Member State requests.

The Network is committed to developing the components of the Migration Network Hub as building blocks for the other workstreams, ensuring that the “state of knowledge” is constantly refined and provides support for the working groups, by collating migration evidence, migration policies and practices from existing expertise. At the same time, each workstream will inform the Hub on a continuous basis, emphasizing national and regional experiences.

### The United Nations Migration Network Hub

The Migration Network Hub was launched on 18 March 2021 and represents the first knowledge platform and connection hub to support United Nations Member States in the implementation, follow-up and review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. It is a virtual meeting space that aims to create a community of practice, where users can share knowledge on migration and identify good practices and initiatives related to the Global Compact for Migration. Information is curated and peer reviewed to ensure high quality; users are able to access resources, participate in webinars, discover Global Compact for Migration-related publications and take part in online discussions on relevant topics. Moving forward, the platform will also feature a practice repository and allow governments to access services and support.

The Hub is part of the capacity-building mechanism envisaged by paragraph 43 of the Global Compact for Migration, which together with the Multi-Partner Trust Fund aims to bring cohesion to the work of all actors involved in the UNNM. Content available can be filtered by choosing any of the 23 Global Compact for Migration objectives, one of 10 cross-cutting themes, or by geographic scope. Users can also consult information made available by the different UNNM working groups, access all documents related to the regional review process of the Global Compact for Migration, including inputs by Member States and other stakeholders, and take part in moderated discussions through the online discussion space.

Another key feature of the Hub is the Experts Database, which provides access to a range of migration experts from around the world, including academics, researchers and practitioners. The database can be consulted by geographic location, area of expertise and type of organization.

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<sup>17</sup> Accessible at <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/hub>.

## Collaboration between the United Nations system and the scientific community on migration research

Different organizations in the United Nations system support the publication of academic journals. Notable examples are WHO, the ILO and UNESCO, each of which publishes a number of academic journals in their specific fields of expertise. In the area of migration, IOM has been publishing the journal *International Migration* for the past 60 years. It is a refereed scientific journal on migration issues as analysed by social scientists from all parts of the world. It covers the entire field of policy relevance in international migration, giving attention to topics reflective of policy concerns, but also offering coverage of all regions of the world. Geographic diversity and contributions based on multidisciplinary research are priorities of the journal. Both UNHCR and IOM also offer ad hoc contributions, as well as funding, to the journal *Forced Migration Review*, a widely read publication on forced migration published by the Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford.

### *International Migration: 60th Anniversary*

In 2021, the journal *International Migration* turned 60. As early as 1961, IOM's leadership recognized the central role of scientific research on migration, arguing the need for technical research on migration to supplement the political dimensions that migration raises. Initially focusing on Europe, the scope of the journal was broadened to a global focus in 1963, over time becoming the editorially independent scientific journal we know today.

Prior to the establishment of the journal, advice was sought from leading academics and practitioners on the need and nature of research functions as part of organizational contributions to the field of migration research. In a 1959 memo, a strong case was made for scientific scholarship on migration:

There are plenty of descriptive accounts of migratory movements, but no serious study explaining the direction and the magnitude of the flows in the post-war period... [I]n scientific inquiries it has been accepted that governments cannot be granted any monopoly of truth...[W]hen research is undertaken on migration problems, as on any other problems of international bearing, the purely political problem has, so to speak, to be de-emphasised...[I]t is necessary and considerably advantageous to tackle the migration problems separately and in technical terms.

The arguments put forward in 1959 are just as relevant today, but perhaps not in the way it was then imagined. We have seen massive changes in migration patterns, from rapid urbanization to increased roles that digital technologies play in our lives. As we witness the rapid expansion of disinformation on migration and its impacts on migrants, it is both important and timely to reflect on the contributions of social scientists worldwide working on international migration in order to better understand its many dimensions and manifestations. As recently articulated by IOM's Director General, António Vitorino:

The need for accurate, rigorous and authoritative accounts of migration is more important than ever before as fake news proliferates, risking the systemic erosion of societal values that are based on truth, science and law, including in relation to migrants' rights...In reaffirming IOM's active support of *International Migration*, now in its sixtieth year, we believe the need for the journal's contribution has never been greater.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Vitorino, 2021.



It is important to note that organizations in the United Nations system contribute funding to academic journals in order to support peer-refereed, policy-oriented academic publishing. This does not result in interference in editorial discretion over the content of the journals, which, in recognition of scholarly independence, remains the responsibility of the editors.

In 2017, IOM convened the Migration Research Leaders' Syndicate to better support and facilitate knowledge and expertise on migration during the development of the Global Compact for Migration. The Syndicate comprised migration experts from around the world with deep knowledge of a wide variety of aspects of migration. Its 36 members were academic and applied researchers from a range of disciplines, supported by nine advisers with vast experience in policy setting and in bridging policy and research, which enabled leading migration experts to inform the Global Compact for Migration process with the latest thinking in academic and applied research on key migration issues, such as human trafficking, irregular migration, migration narratives, migrants' rights, and return and reintegration.<sup>18</sup>

The Global Compact on Refugees, also adopted in December 2018, proposed that "a global academic network on refugee, other forced displacement, and statelessness issues will be established, involving universities, academic alliances, and research institutions, together with UNHCR and other relevant stakeholders."<sup>19</sup> In 2019, during the first Global Refugee Forum, the Global Academic Interdisciplinary Network (GAIN) was launched to advance deliverables in three areas: producing research to support the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees; facilitating teaching, training and knowledge-sharing on refugee, forced displacement and statelessness issues; and promoting solidarity with forcibly displaced scholars within the academic community and providing concrete support for them, such as scholarships.

It has also been noted that the scientific community can play a critical role in the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees through the production of policy-relevant research, by facilitating academic exchange and through the education of students on the importance of both compacts.<sup>20</sup> In particular, it has been suggested to build on initiatives that took place during the Global Compact for Migration negotiations, which created collaborative spaces between academia and civil society actors, enhancing the effectiveness and influence of their participation.<sup>21</sup>

## United Nations as a global disseminator of facts and knowledge during the COVID-19 pandemic

In recent years, there has been an increase in interest on research in misinformation and disinformation. Academic researchers from a range of disciplines have focused on aspects such as fact checking, the role of online technology in the spread of misinformation and disinformation, and ways to minimize its impact.<sup>22</sup> With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the spread of false information has increased exponentially.<sup>23</sup> An overabundance of information – some accurate and some not – has made it hard for people to find trustworthy sources and reliable guidance when they need it. This phenomenon has prompted UNESCO and WHO to coin new terms, such as

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18 IOM, 2017.

19 UNGA, 2018b.

20 Appleby, 2020.

21 Gottardo and Rego, 2021.

22 Fernandez and Alani, 2018; McAuliffe et al., 2019; Pasquetto et al., 2020; Walter et al., 2020.

23 WHO, 2020b.

“misinfodemic”<sup>24</sup> and “infodemic”<sup>25</sup> to describe “a parallel misinformation pandemic directly impacting lives and livelihoods around the world”.<sup>26</sup>

The rise of misinformation has also impacted on how the academic field has been responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Several scientific publishers made COVID-19 research accessible online free of charge, while others are fast-tracking the publication of COVID-19 articles. While much of the research conducted remains in the medical field, there have been calls made to increase the volume of much-needed social science research and to ensure that these findings are not overlooked when informing effective responses.<sup>27</sup> Despite this, researchers have also expressed concern that this rush to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic may compromise research integrity, by pushing researchers to take shortcuts in the research process, impacting on quality and limiting the ability to develop interdisciplinary collaboration.<sup>28</sup> Many academics are concerned about the possible consequences of this “covidization”<sup>29</sup> of research, including in terms of availability of funding to develop other research areas in the social sciences.

The United Nations system has sought to minimize the spread of misinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic. The United Nations Department of Global Communications launched a new COVID-19 Communications Response Initiative based on science, solutions and solidarity to fight misinformation. A rapid-response team was formed to help share facts and science to overcome this surge, which included producing and disseminating facts and accurate information, partnering and working together with businesses, media and journalists, mobilizing civil society organizations and being vocal about the rights of those affected by misinformation. As part of its response, the United Nations launched Verified, an initiative to increase the volume and reach of trusted information, and Pledge to Pause, a campaign encouraging people to pause and take care before they share online information.

How migrants are perceived is linked to and shaped by social, economic and political events, and the COVID-19 pandemic is no exception. The spread of disinformation has had a more severe impact on groups considered to be in a vulnerable situation, including migrants. They have at times been accused of bringing the virus to a certain country, or of causing the increase in cases, despite limited evidence to support these assertions.<sup>30</sup>

In response to increased misinformation and the rise in xenophobic attitudes, IOM, in partnership with the Global Forum on Migration and Development, has launched *It Takes a Community*, a digital communications campaign sharing inclusive stories about social cohesion and the positive impact that migration can have on communities as a means to counteract negative public narratives and disinformation about migration and promote a more balanced conversation. The campaign relies on engagement from IOM, national governments, cities, businesses and civil society.

Combating the spread of hate speech and deliberate distortions of truth on media is increasingly recognized as an international priority.<sup>31</sup> Media play a critical role in how the public thinks about migration and how policies are shaped, hence IOM has launched the Global Migration and Media Academy to support the media’s role in bringing to light the different dimensions of this expansive topic, including coverage of underreported areas such as migrants’ contributions to global development.

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24 Posetti and Bontcheva, 2020.

25 PAHO and WHO, 2020; WHO, 2020c.

26 UNESCO, 2020.

27 Middlemass, 2020; UN, 2020.

28 Bramstedt, 2020.

29 Pai, 2020.

30 Chugh, 2020.

31 UN, 2019.

## Global Migration and Media Academy

On 18 December 2020, the International Organization for Migration and Irish Aid, the Irish Government's programme for overseas development, launched the Global Migration and Media Academy, a worldwide academy for journalists and communications students to tackle the spread of misinformation and xenophobia in the media.

The project will be coordinated by the National University Ireland, Galway and anchored in universities in Mexico, Morocco, the Philippines and Serbia. The Academy will partner with media organizations and journalism faculties to equip students of journalism and media worldwide with the online tools, contextual knowledge and ethical standards they will need to report fully on migration in this fast-evolving information age.

The Academy will provide insight into trends, data, and global and regional developments, covering topics ranging from environmental migration to gender-inclusive reporting. Anyone will be able to access the courses via the website. Taught modules will be introduced in undergraduate media studies and journalism programmes in the four pilot countries.

The Academy supports Objective 17 of the Global Compact for Migration, "Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration" and its objectives are in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## Recent contributions from the United Nations system: 2019 and 2020 in focus

The contributions of the organizations in the United Nations system reflect how their specific mandates intersect with international migration, including how they respond to key emerging issues, such as COVID-19 or the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration. As previously outlined, both topics have dominated the production of research and knowledge on migration during 2019 and 2020. As evidenced in the table below, compared with previous years, less material on migration was published by organizations in the United Nations system over the period covered by this report. This is particularly the case for those organizations whose core mandate is not directly linked to the topic. Due to mobility restrictions and health measures in place, the ability to carry out field research has been greatly impacted. This has been reflected in the type and volume of publications, with shorter pieces and policy positions and briefs being preferred. These obstacles have also resulted in multiple project extensions and delays in the publication of many final reports and other outputs.

Just as in academia, organizations in the United Nations system rushed to address multiple aspects associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and to position their responses in accordance with their mandates. This is also reflected in their publications, which have focused on the topic since the beginning of the pandemic. Table 3 below provides some examples of key migration-related publications produced by organizations in the United Nations system, selected from an expansive volume of material published by the United Nations between 2019 and June 2021.

Table 3. Examples of key global material published from 2019 until June 2021

IOM	Advancing a Common Understanding of Migration Governance Across Regions		2020
	Contributions and Counting: Guidance on Measuring the Economic Impact of your Diaspora beyond Remittances		2020
	World Migration Report 2020		2019
	Migration Governance Indicators: A Global Perspective		2019
	Reintegration Handbook - Practical guidance on the design, implementation and monitoring of reintegration assistance		2019
UN DESA	International Migration Highlights 2020		2021
	International Migration Highlights 2019		2019
	International Migration Report 2019		2019
	International Migrant Stock		Ongoing
	International Migration Flows		Ongoing
	United Nations Global Migration Database		Ongoing
	Dataset on International Migration Flows		Ongoing
UNHCR	Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2019		2020
	Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2018		2019
	Population Statistics Database		Ongoing
ILO	ILOSTAT		Ongoing
UNODC	Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2020		2021
	Smuggling of Migrants Knowledge Portal		Ongoing
UNDP	Human Mobility, Shared Opportunities: A Review of the 2009 Human Development Report and the Way Ahead		2020
	Migrant Union: Navigating the Great Migration		2019
	Promoting Development Approaches to Migration and Displacement		2019
World Bank	Private Sectors & Refugees: Pathways to Scale <sup>a</sup>		2019
	Migration and Jobs: Issues for the 21st Century		2019
	Migration and Remittances Data		Ongoing
Economic and Social Commissions	ESCAP – Asia-Pacific Migration Report 2020: Assessing Implementation of the Global Compact for Migration		2020
	ESCWA-IOM: Situation Report on International Migration 2019: The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in the Context of the Arab Region		2020
	UNECE – Guidance on Data Integration for Measuring Migration		2019
	CEPAL – Demographic Observatory of Latin America 2018: International Migration		2019
Inter-agency Collaboration	UNHCR and World Bank	The Global Cost of Inclusive Refugee Education	2021
	OECD, ILO, IOM and UNHCR	G20 International Migration and Displacement Trends Report 2020 <sup>b</sup>	2020
		G20 International Migration and Displacement Trends Report 2019 <sup>b</sup>	2019

Note: This table does not include all outputs, such as working papers; only key material is included.

a Produced by The Bridgespan Group and the International Finance Corporation, World Bank Group.

b Led by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), jointly published with the ILO, IOM and UNHCR.

IOM publishes, in its own right, over 100 publications on migration every year through its publications platform, including those emanating from research projects undertaken in various locations throughout the world. In recent years, the IOM online publications platform has been upgraded and improved. As of the end of 2020, the platform contained 2,247 electronic publications in 34 different languages, most of which could be accessed free of charge. IOM published a wide range of research and analysis materials in 2019 and 2020, most notably in the form of standalone studies and reports, many of which stemmed directly from specific projects produced both at Headquarters and locally by IOM missions. For example, the report *Migration Governance Indicators: A Global Perspective* constitutes a first global overview of the state of national migration governance across the world. It analyses migration governance indicators (MGI) data to show and discuss policy trends in a number of policy areas that relate to migration (health, education, security and economics, among others). It results from the roll-out of the MGI process in 50 countries.<sup>32</sup>

The *World Migration Report* is IOM's flagship publication, and the 10th edition of this biennial publication was published in 2019. It draws on a vast amount of data and research from around the world and is a highly collaborative venture involving IOM experts globally, as well as migration researchers and United Nations colleagues (see text box below). IOM also continues to support migration journals – *International Migration* and *Migration Policy Practice* – providing an important contribution to migration research. The publication of the Migration Research Series has also continued. It showcases policy-relevant research and analysis on diverse and complex migration issues. Calls for abstracts that circulated in 2019 and 2020 addressed topics such as the links between migration and technology; youth and migration; migration, mobility and innovation; and under-represented geographies.

UN DESA coordinates the assembly of data, including in relation to international migration – a process that has highlighted limitations in the capabilities of national statistics offices. Its biennial publication *International Migration Report* was last published in 2019 and highlights levels and trends in international migration for major geographic areas, regions and countries of the world. It also provides the ratification status of migration-related legal instruments. The Population Division maintains the United Nations Global Migration Database, a comprehensive collection of empirical data on the number of international migrants by country of birth and citizenship, sex and age as enumerated by population censuses, population registers, nationally representative surveys and other official statistical sources from 232 countries and territories in the world. It produces two data sets, International Migrants Stock, last updated in January 2021, and International Migrant Flows, a smaller data set covering 45 countries, measuring the number of migrants entering and leaving a country or territory in a given period of time. It was last revised in 2015. See Chapter 2 of this report for discussion of the two datasets.

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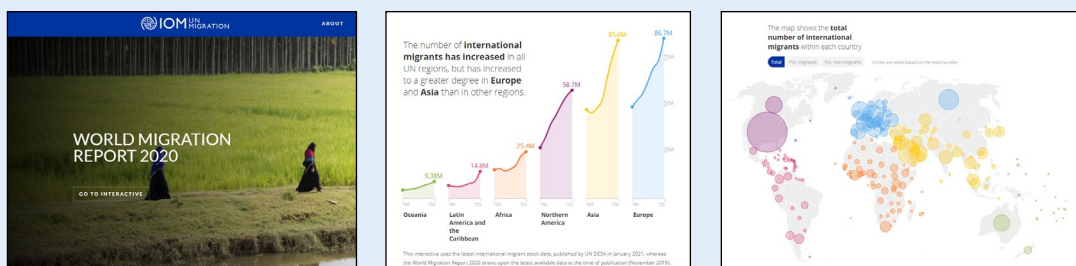
32 IOM, 2019b.

## Award-winning *World Migration Report 2020*

The *World Migration Report* is the most rigorous and trusted resource on global migration data, research and analysis. In an era that saw disinformation spread at an alarming rate around the world, objective, balanced research and analysis on human migration and mobility is essential. Increasingly used as a fact-checking tool to counter disinformation, since its last edition the *World Migration Report* has scaled up its dissemination and digital presence. Available in all six United Nations languages and with selected chapters translated into German, Portuguese, Swahili and Turkish, it is the most accessible flagship publication of any United Nations agency.



In May 2021, IOM launched a new *World Migration Report* web portal that integrates fact-based migration narratives with interactive data visualizations on the most up-to-date global migration data and trends.<sup>a</sup> In mid 2021, the *World Migration Report 2020* received two awards in the 2021 International Annual Report Design Awards for its online platform and report design.<sup>b</sup>



A digital toolkit for educators was also finalized in late 2021,<sup>c</sup> and a digital toolkit for policy officers to inform migration policy deliberations and multilateral discussions is forthcoming in collaboration with the Global Migration Centre at the Graduate Institute for International Development Studies, supported by the Geneva Science Policy Interface.<sup>d</sup>

a Available at <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/wmr-2020-interactive/>.

b IADA, 2021.

c Available at <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/toolkits>.

d Available at <https://gspi.ch/activities/announcing-icp-2021-selected-projects/>.

As a United Nations agency with a mandate to pursue protection, assistance and solutions for refugees, UNHCR produces a wealth of publications and has a dedicated research repository – Refworld. Released annually in June, *Global Trends* is UNHCR's flagship publication. It presents and analyses annual trends worldwide in relation to refugee and other populations of concern to UNHCR. UNHCR is also the key source of global statistics on refugees and other populations of concern, as reported in its online Population Statistics Database.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is a standards-setting body responsible for coordinating the development and supervising the implementation of international labour standards. In the context of its efforts to improve the collection and production of labour migration statistics, ILO Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers provides estimates of the proportion of migrant workers among the total number of migrants worldwide. It was last revised in June 2021. The ILO also maintains ILOSTAT, a database that in addition to labour migration data contains diverse statistics related to the labour market, which are also relevant to labour migration.

In December 2018, UNICEF published *A Right to Be Heard: Listening to children and young people on the move*. It highlights the results of a survey conducted via a social messaging tool that reached over 4,000 migrant respondents between the age of 14 and 24. This non-representative survey offers an insight into their experiences, often hidden from public view.

Within its mandate to assist States in addressing international crimes, UNODC undertakes efforts to combat transnational organized crime, including human trafficking and migrant smuggling, and produces a variety of publications on these themes. The fifth *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, published in March 2021, provides an overview of patterns and flows of trafficking in persons and is based primarily on trafficking cases detected between 2017 and 2019. UNODC also maintains a Smuggling of Migrants Knowledge Portal on information to support the implementation of the 2000 Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air (i.e. case law, annotated bibliography and legislation).

As the United Nations global development agency, UNDP's commitment towards the Sustainable Development Goals translates into a broad range of programmes, including initiatives for building long-term development responses to migration and displacement. UNDP regularly publishes reports on the intersection of migration and development, including 2020's *Human Mobility, Shared Opportunities: A Review of the 2009 Human Development Report and the Way Ahead*, which looks at new patterns of human mobility, reviews progress made on recommendations in the 2009 report, analyses emerging challenges and sets out next steps in the context of the two Global Compacts and the 2030 Agenda.

The Economic and Social Council established five Regional Commissions: in Europe, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America, Africa and Western Asia. They are the regional outposts of the United Nations in their respective regions. They promote multilateral dialogue, knowledge-sharing and networking at the regional level, and work together to promote intraregional and interregional cooperation, both among themselves and through collaboration with other regional organizations. They also work to promote the implementation of internationally agreed development goals, and in the case of migration, they have specific competence over the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration and its review at a regional level, taking place over the 2020–2021 period, which is also reflected in their publications over the past years.

The World Bank Group is a family of five international organizations, most notably the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Development Association, jointly referred as the World Bank. The agencies of the Group are part of the United Nations system, but maintain their own governance structure. They publish a variety of books, reports and working papers on the interlinkage of migration and economic growth, and monitor data on migration and remittances through their own data set covering inflows and outflows. They regularly collaborate with agencies in the United Nations system, as is the case for *The Global Cost of Inclusive Refugee Education*, a joint publication with UNHCR interrogating “what would it take” to ensure access to education for all refugee students in developing countries, where 85 per cent of the world’s refugees live. The World Bank also implements the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD), which is a multidisciplinary knowledge partnership that draws upon migration experts to create and synthesize knowledge for use by policymakers in countries of origin and destination. Established in 2013, its second phase runs from 2018 until 2023, and its activities are organized around 11 thematic working groups.<sup>33</sup>

## Conclusions

This chapter has provided an overview of how organizations in the United Nations system contribute to migration research and analysis and to our collective understanding of migration. We found that migration continues to be a prominent topic in public discourse and public policy, and that despite a significant increase in the interest in migration as a topic over time, including by some of the major producers of research and analysis, it remains a contested and polarizing subject. This has been aggravated by the increase in misinformation, originating from a variety of sources and spreading rapidly through the Internet and social media platforms. While this phenomenon predates the COVID-19 pandemic, it has grown exponentially through it. The COVID-19 pandemic has also affected resource allocations in the field of research, with many research priorities being shifted to address the consequences of the global pandemic. The United Nations system, as a key producer of knowledge and analysis, has been both impacted by and responsive to these trends.

This chapter has shown how the United Nations system contributes to the processes of knowledge production and dissemination on migration. Its organizations are key producers of grey literature, which, as the chapter has shown, offers greater accessibility when compared with academic peer-reviewed research. Its shorter production time and the ability to draw on expertise in academic and policy spheres lends itself to contribute to evidence-based policymaking.

Throughout the chapter, different examples of the migration-related data, research and knowledge produced in the United Nations system have been provided. These include data collection, statistics and statistical analyses; knowledge platforms; country and regional reports; comparative studies; and testimonials, among others. In fact, the increased emphasis placed on research and analysis informing policies and programmatic responses in migration offers the opportunity for a greater role to be played by United Nations organizations in the field of migration research, through the leveraging of its networks in governmental, academic and policy circles.

The stigmatization of migrants and instances of discrimination against them, resulting directly or indirectly from the spread of misinformation and the politicization of migration, also make it timely to reflect on how organizations in the United Nations system can provide critical and evidence-based analysis based on scientific data. It is equally important to reflect on how they can act more effectively to dispel incorrect, and often dangerous, misinformation.

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33 See [www.knomad.org](http://www.knomad.org).



Today, more than ever, we encourage policymakers, practitioners, researchers and others to explore and exploit the wealth of written material on migration with a critical eye. We continue to underscore the importance of activities and initiatives that bridge the gap between the research and policy spheres by bringing together migration scholars, researchers, practitioners and policymakers, including through workshops, conferences, briefing sessions and related consultations. Here, too, there is a critical role for organizations in the United Nations system. The opportunity to listen and share knowledge on migration can support new lines of thinking, dispel myths and untruths, and help craft more effective policy responses that are based on evidence and rigour.

# PART II

## COMPLEX AND EMERGING MIGRATION ISSUES







NOTRE AÉRO  
MON HISTOIRE  
➤ [www.gva.ch/100](http://www.gva.ch/100)

100 ANS  
NOTRE AÉROPORT  
MON HISTOIRE  
7 septembre 2023

BAGGAGE

GENÈVE

GENÈVE

GENÈVE

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MARIE MCAULIFFE  
LUISA FELINE FREIER  
RONALD SKELDON  
JENNA BLOWER

## 5

THE GREAT DISRUPTER: COVID-19'S IMPACT  
ON MIGRATION, MOBILITY AND MIGRANTS  
GLOBALLY<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

The year 2020 will go down in history as the “Year of COVID-19”, when a new coronavirus emerged and spread across the world in a series of waves that by 2021 had impacted the lives of almost every person on the planet. New words emerged in common discourse that just a year prior would have had different or little meaning: “zoom”, “lockdown”, “social distancing”, “PPE”, “face mask” or “contact tracing”. Two other words have particular implications for migration: “border closure” and “quarantine”.

Over the course of the first year of the pandemic, more than 108,000 COVID-related international travel restrictions were put in place by countries, territories or areas, in addition to the rolling implementation of internal movement restrictions within countries.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, the global travel industry has been decimated by the pandemic. The initial race to implement restrictions had a significant and immediate impact on air travel around the world. By early May 2020, for example, the number of international flights had decreased by around 80 per cent globally.<sup>3</sup> As a result, tourism – one of the largest industries in the world – faced a similar decline in 2020, with losses of about USD 2 trillion or 2 per cent of global GDP.<sup>4</sup> Further, COVID-19 acted as a brake on international migration, with the United Nations estimating that the pandemic had slowed the growth in the stock of international migrants by around two million by mid-2020, or 27 per cent less than the growth expected.<sup>5</sup>

Although the COVID-19 pandemic is first and foremost a health crisis, it is also an economic crisis, with businesses forced to close and workers laid off or furloughed. Economies went into recession with a 5.2 per cent decline globally for 2020, the deepest recession since the end of the Second World War.<sup>6</sup> In the initial phase of the pandemic, priorities shifted as low-paid (often undocumented) workers emerged as providers of “essential services”, harvesting crops, processing, packing and delivering food, serving in supermarkets and caring for the vulnerable in residential and care homes. Nurses and doctors became heroes, and many other professionals began to work from home, transforming the nature of work.

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1 Marie McAuliffe, Head, Migration Research and Publications Division, IOM; Luisa Feline Freier, Professor in the Department of Social and Political Sciences at the Universidad del Pacífico; Ronald Skeldon, Emeritus Professor in the Department of Geography at the University of Sussex; Jenna Blower, Research Consultant in Migration Research and Publications Division, IOM.

2 IOM, 2021a (as at 8 March 2021).

3 Santos, 2020.

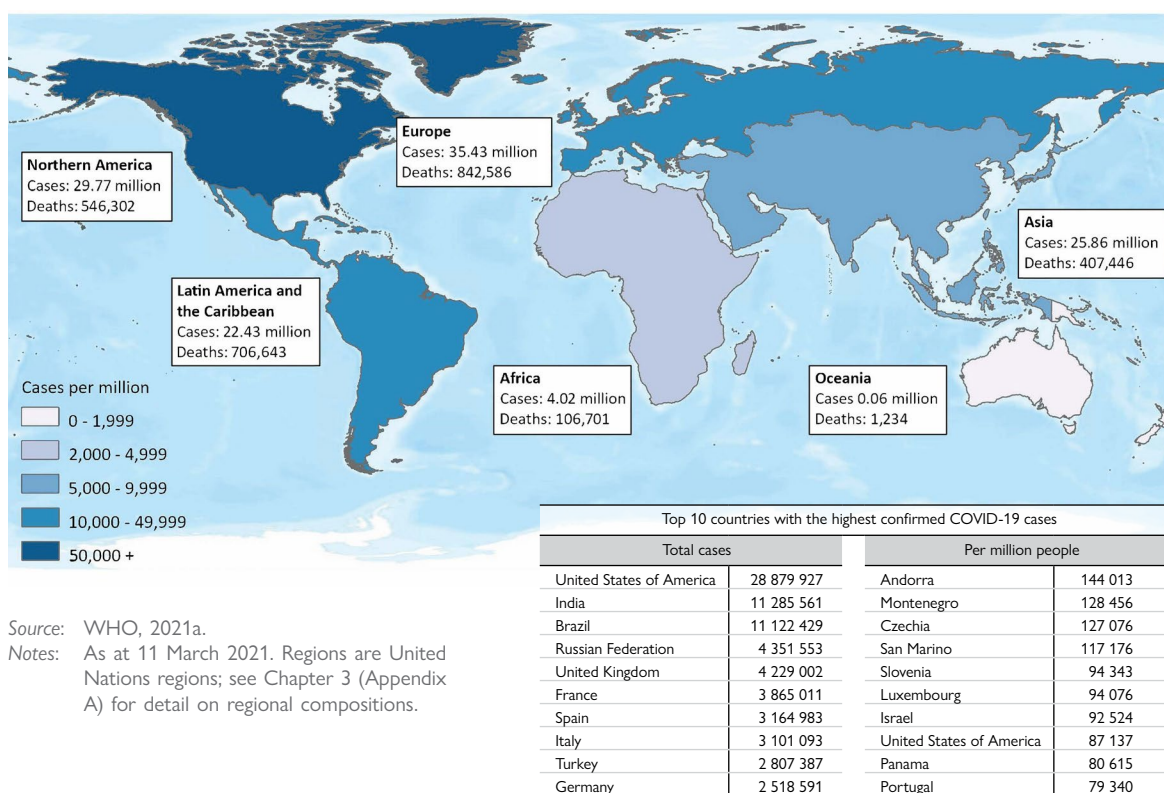
4 UNWTO, 2021.

5 UN DESA, 2021a.

6 World Bank, 2020a.

By the end of the first year,<sup>7</sup> around 116.2 million cases of COVID-19 had been recorded globally and 2.58 million people had died.<sup>8</sup> Much remains unknown about the disease, but what is clear are the variations across the world in terms of its spread and impact: variations by age, sex, class, ethnicity and country. An important contributor to this variation has been the type and effectiveness of government policy around the world, which has varied from effective response through complacency to denial. As a new disease with no available vaccine, COVID-19 had already killed far more people in 2020 than the annual expected number of deaths from influenza in any year, which ranges between 290,000 and 650,000.<sup>9</sup> It was also far deadlier than malaria, which caused some 409,000 deaths in 2019.<sup>10</sup> Further, “excess mortality” estimates indicate that the total number of global deaths attributable to COVID-19 in 2020 is at least 3 million, representing 1.2 million more deaths than officially reported.<sup>11</sup>

Figure 1. COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths by United Nations region after one year



Source: WHO, 2021a.

Notes: As at 11 March 2021. Regions are United Nations regions; see Chapter 3 (Appendix A) for detail on regional compositions.

While the focus of this chapter is on migration and mobility, the pandemic has had significant impacts on a wide range of social, economic and environmental issues globally, as summarized in Appendix A.

<sup>7</sup> The virus was first reported on 21 December 2019; WHO declared COVID-19 a global public health crisis on 30 January 2020 and declared a pandemic on 11 March 2020 (WHO, 2020a).

<sup>8</sup> WHO, 2021a; Johns Hopkins CRC, 2021.

<sup>9</sup> Steenhuisen, 2017.

<sup>10</sup> WHO, 2021b.

<sup>11</sup> WHO, 2021c. “Excess mortality” is defined by WHO as “the difference in the total number of deaths in a crisis compared to those expected under normal conditions.” In relation to COVID-19, excess mortality accounts for both the total number of deaths directly attributed to the virus as well as the indirect impact, such as disruption to essential health services or travel disruptions. See WHO, 2021c for further information.

This chapter provides an analysis of the impacts of the pandemic on migration and mobility, with particular reference to migrants' immobility and vulnerabilities. It provides examples of country responses in policy and practice and considers the longer-term consequences of the pandemic on migration and migrants. In doing so, it is important to note that the aim of this chapter is to provide an analytical overview of the main impacts and implications of the pandemic in its first year.<sup>12</sup> Given the volume of material produced on COVID-19 and the ongoing production of new findings and knowledge, the chapter does not attempt to capture all aspects or explore every nuance related to COVID-19 and human mobility. Rather, it includes new statistics, such as data on COVID-19 confirmed cases, deaths and travel restrictions, but does so in the context of existing, long-term statistics and other information on migration. Understanding COVID-19 impacts requires a big-picture analysis of a seismic global event within the context of long-term trends,<sup>13</sup> all the while recognizing that the precise consequences of the pandemic will continue to unfold over years to come.

## Unpacking “migration” and “mobility” through a COVID-19 lens

According to current estimates of international migrants, there were some 281 million migrants in the world in mid-2020.<sup>14</sup> Estimates of the number of internal migrants are more problematic, but more than 10 years ago the estimate was 740 million, or over three times the number of international migrants at the time.<sup>15</sup> These estimates of both internal and international migrants are crude; based on stock data to measure migration from one large geographical unit to another, they are of limited use in tracking human movement related to the spread and impact of a disease such as COVID-19.

In the context of a global pandemic, policymakers need information on movements over both short and long distances, particularly on local interactions and on short-term movements, precisely the kinds of movements that are excluded from the international migrant estimates referred to above. Hence, the focus needs to be on “mobility”, a term that covers short-term movements such as international business and tourist movements, as well as commuting, cross-border workers and other forms of short-distance interaction, as well as longer-term migration and displacement. The need to rethink conceptualizations of “migration” and “mobility” has been recognized by many experts, as highlighted in the last edition of the World Migration Report as well as by the expert task force on conceptual frameworks as part of the United Nations' review of the 1998 Recommendations on Statistics on International Migration.<sup>16</sup> Migration-related policy settings extend well beyond immigration and asylum, and are principally related to public health, internal movement and international travel, which significantly impact upon planning. COVID-19 has intensified the tensions between migration and mobility by drawing further attention to how mobility underpins and enables different forms of migration, as well as the fact that immobility can act as a major disrupter to migrants throughout the “migration cycle”, as shown in the next section.

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12 The first year is defined as 11 March 2020 (when WHO declared the pandemic) to 10 March 2021.

13 McAuliffe et al., 2020.

14 UN DESA, 2021b. See the IOM *World Migration Report 2020*, Chapter 2 for discussion and definitions.

15 UNDP, 2009.

16 IOM, 2019:5; Skeldon, 2018; United Nations Statistical Commission, 2021. An extract of the expert task force's final paper can be found in Appendix A of Chapter 2 of this report.



One of the key aspects of the response to COVID-19 has been the various attempts to curtail, if not stop completely, the movement of people as hosts of the virus. From a biological perspective, the virus does not discriminate or show a preference for particular human hosts. The virus is oblivious to citizenship, ethnicity, sex, age, creed and migration status. Whoever is in proximity of the virus is susceptible to becoming infected. For this reason, and consistent with previous pandemics, migrants have not been the main priority in pandemic response:

Evidence and experience resulting from practically all significant events...has demonstrated that while international and domestic travel are important factors involved in the spread of infection, migration (in terms of both traditional regular immigration and irregular migration) has not been a large risk factor.<sup>17</sup>

In fact, people have been largely unable to undertake migration during the pandemic, as is discussed in the next section. However, the degree to which people are in proximity to the virus does relate to systemic inequalities and socioeconomic factors, such that international migrants already in destination countries, particularly the lower-skilled/lower-paid, are more likely to be working in jobs that place them at risk of coming into contact with the virus.<sup>18</sup> Migrants have often erroneously become targets for xenophobic racism during this and previous crises – especially those of Asian descent during COVID-19 – regardless of facts and evidence.<sup>19</sup>

### *COVID-19 in context*

COVID-19 has been the most acute pandemic in over a century and since the 1919 (so-called “Spanish”) flu pandemic. It resulted in 10,185,374 confirmed cases and 503,863 deaths in the first six months after the virus was detected.<sup>20</sup> This far exceeds other recent coronavirus pandemics, such as SARS (2003) and MERS (2012), and has seen much larger initial infection numbers compared with previous severe pandemics, such as those experienced in 1957 (so-called “Asian flu”) and 1968 (so-called “Hong Kong flu”). Evidence from previous modern-day pandemics indicates that a key response has been on preventing the movement of people (as transmitters of the virus) internationally and within countries.<sup>21</sup> This has become much more challenging as globalization has deepened transnational connectivity, with global reliance on international transportation surging in recent years (see Figure 2).<sup>22</sup>

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17 Greenaway and Gushulak, 2017:322.

18 IOM, 2020a.

19 IOM, 2020b; Hennebry and KC, 2020; Majidi et al., 2019.

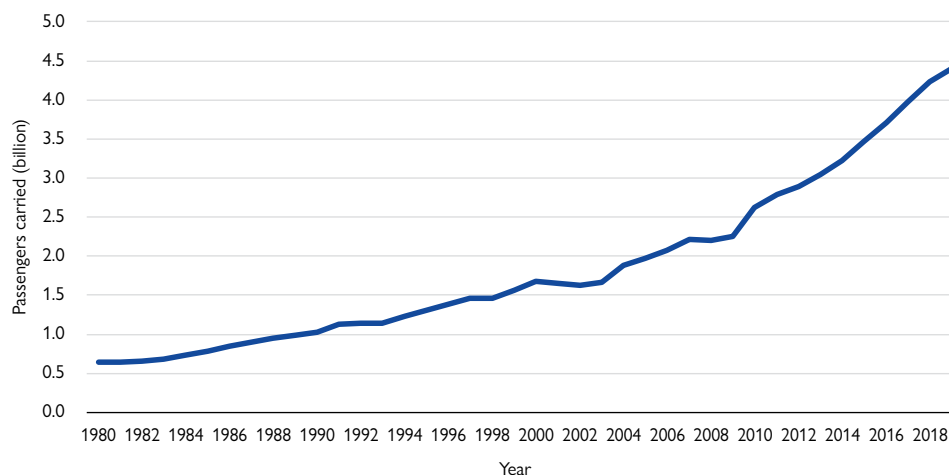
20 WHO, 2020b.

21 Greenaway and Gushulak, 2017.

22 McAuliffe et al., 2017.



Figure 2. Air transport passengers carried, 1980 to 2018



Source: ICAO, 2021.

The increase in international air travel and the heightened risks of zoonotic coronaviruses due to an increase in human–animal interactions led public health experts to warn over several years of the impending “big one”.<sup>23</sup> In a 2014 book on globalization, the authors warned of the major looming risks caused by intensifying globalization, including the risk of an extreme global pandemic:

It is almost inevitable that as we connect more, as more and more people live in big cities close to airports, which are not only the super-spreaders of the “goods” of globalization, but also the “bads”, that contagion would cascade around the world.<sup>24</sup>

Despite warnings of a global pandemic and the urgent need to strengthen preparedness, the earliest stage of the pandemic placed extreme pressure on governments, the World Health Organization (WHO) and non-State actors to respond urgently to COVID-19.<sup>25</sup> A combination of high rates of transmission and severity forced many policymakers worldwide into uncharted territory. As a result, governments implemented a range of measures to limit the spread of the virus, including restrictions on movements (international and internal) as well as on assembly for public events. Businesses and schools were forced to close, public and private transport systems were shut down, and social activities were severely discouraged or prohibited.<sup>26</sup> Some countries, such as El Salvador, Israel and Qatar, quickly imposed significant international restrictions on movement in early to mid-March, while others took similar action weeks later. Some countries banned the entry of citizens of specific (high-risk) countries, others banned entry of all foreign nationals, or completely closed borders to departures and entries of all people, including their own citizens.<sup>27</sup> That said, there were exceptions to closures for a range of different reasons, as discussed in the text box below.

23 Hoffower, 2020. Warnings have been issued by many, including Bill Gates, Vaclav Smil, Michael Osterholm and Robert G. Webster.

24 Goldin and Mariathan, 2014.

25 Goldin, 2014; Greenaway and Gushulak, 2017; McAuliffe et al., 2020.

26 In addition, public health measures such as mandatory quarantine have been implemented.

27 McAuliffe, 2020.

### Exceptions for society's essentials workers

International travel was banned in many countries early in the pandemic, although selective exemptions emerged.<sup>a</sup> Even where lockdowns were rigorously imposed, certain mobilities persisted to ensure the continued provision of essential goods (e.g. food, medicines, medical products) and services (e.g. hospital/health, food retail/delivery, sanitation, postal, security). The lowly paid, in positions often filled by migrant workers, were in the “front line” with greater exposure to the virus, while more highly paid professionals had the ability to restrict their mobility. Some of the most low-paid and precariously employed migrant workers, such as seasonal agricultural workers, were recognized as essential to the functioning of societies and exempted from travel restrictions, thereby highlighting the long-standing tension between the critical role some play in the day-to-day functioning of societies, despite their low status.<sup>b</sup>

a EC, n.d.

b ILO, 2020a.

Analysis of international travel restrictions over the first 12 months of the crisis pointed to three different phases of (im)mobility, as summarized below in the extract of the Migration Policy Institute and IOM report of April 2021.<sup>28</sup>

### COVID-19 and the State of Global Mobility in 2020

Cross-border mobility in 2020 can be divided into three phases:

**1. Mobility lockdowns:** January to May 2020. In this early phase, countries introduced a raft of travel restrictions and health requirements to respond to the fast-evolving public health situation. In the first three months of the year, many completely closed most points of entry and/or banned travel from affected regions. The scale of border closures was unprecedented – even countries in Europe's border-free Schengen Area reimposed makeshift borders with their neighbours – and many closures occurred with limited planning and coordination. By the end of March, governments and authorities in subnational regions had issued or extended 43,300 travel measures, and every country, territory and area worldwide was subject to at least 70 travel bans. Movements of all kinds were dramatically curtailed from March to May as populations sheltered under national lockdowns.

**2. Phased reopening:** June to September 2020. The next phase of the crisis response brought the staggered reopening of some points of entry, especially of airports but also, to a lesser extent, land and maritime ports. Bans on travellers from or crossing through particular areas were increasingly replaced during this period by health measures, including certificates of pre-departure COVID-19 tests, quarantine measures or health declaration forms. In many areas, air travel was the first to open back up because of the greater capacity to implement new health measures and/or regional arrangements, such as “travel bubbles”.

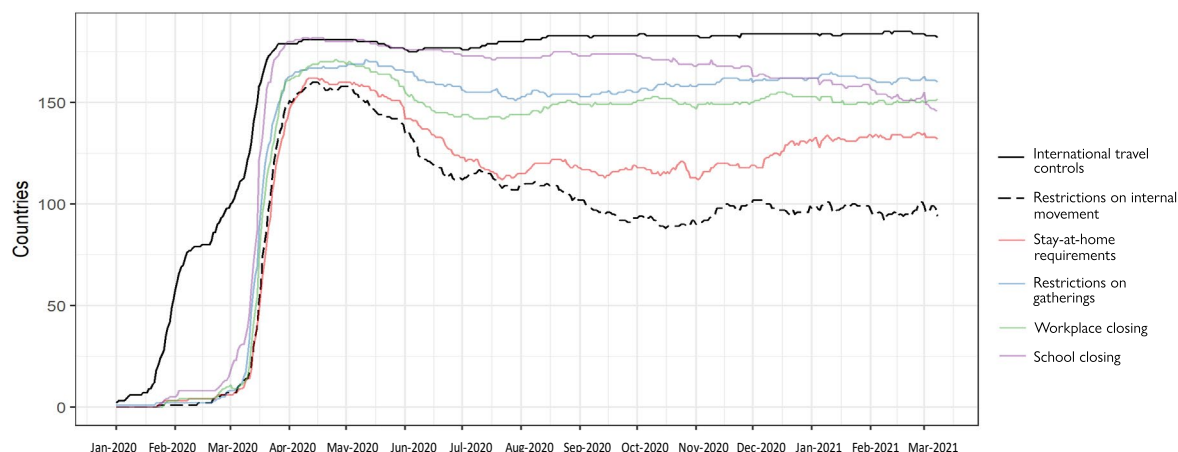
28 Benton et al., 2021.

**3. Responses to new outbreaks and virus mutations:** October to December 2020. The remainder of the year was a mixed picture, as countries sought to both build their capacity to operationalize health measures in place of travel restrictions, while battling a second (and in some cases, third) wave of infections and grappling with the emergence of new variants of the virus. Some countries, including Chile, Mexico and the United Arab Emirates, opened even to tourists. Health certificates became the most common health-related travel measure, while quarantine requirements and screenings became less widespread over time (perhaps because quarantine had been shown to be costly and screenings to be ineffectual). In December, governments implemented route restrictions against the United Kingdom and, to a lesser extent, South Africa in response to the B.1.1.7 and B.1.351 variants of the virus identified in those countries.

Source: Abridged extract from Benton et al., 2021:1–2.

Travel restrictions were only one type of measure, but one of the most significant. This was especially the case for international travel restrictions, which were implemented quickly and largely remained in place over the course of the first year. Nevertheless, when the broader suite of government responses to minimizing the transmission of COVID-19 is examined globally, we can see different patterns emerge following the initial rapid imposition of a wide range of measures between March and May 2020. The University of Oxford's Government Response Tracker data (Figure 3) show that international travel controls related to COVID-19 consistently remained the highest throughout the period January 2020 to March 2021.<sup>29</sup> Other measures, such as school closures and internal movement restrictions, have gradually declined over time, while key measures involving workplace closures, restrictions on gatherings and “stay-at-home” requirements all declined in mid-2020, only to creep back up as transmission rates increased and new variants were detected.

Figure 3. Government responses to minimize COVID-19 transmission, by number of countries



Source: Hale et al., 2021.

Notes: As at 10 March 2021. The term “international travel controls” is used by Oxford, and includes screening arrivals, quarantining arrivals, banning arrivals or total border closure. It is also important to note that categories are COVID-19-related only and do not reflect other travel restrictions that may have already been in place, such as those related to visa restrictions, entry bans based on specific citizens, and departure/exit restrictions.

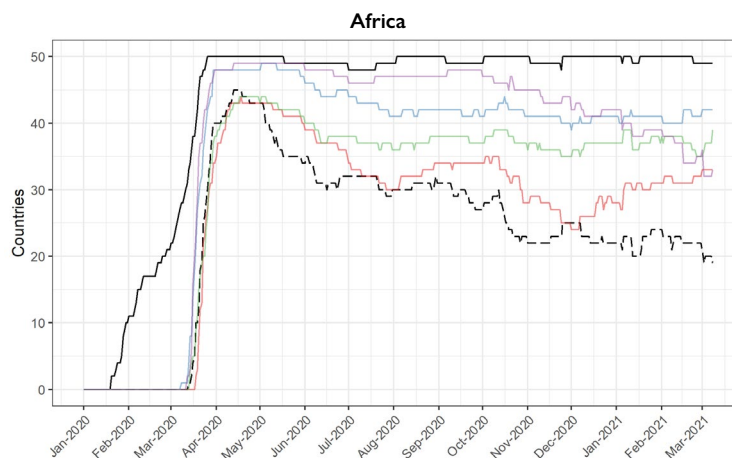
<sup>29</sup> The term “international travel controls” is used by Oxford – see notes under Figures 3 and 4 for details. Also note that the passing of restrictions did not necessarily lead to effective implementation. The complexity of types of movement across borders at times resulted in confused messaging and uneven application of legislation.

In constantly adjusting policy on measures to reduce virus transmission, governments have had to grapple with rapidly evolving epidemiological situations, the need to mitigate the negative economic impacts, and reduce or counter negative social and educational impacts, while ensuring that the health impacts remain the foremost concern. The need for trade-offs in juggling the implementation of complex multitudes of measures and their impacts is connected to broader governance and political considerations, of which human mobility is a key part:

All countries therefore face a difficult task in balancing the uncertain and unequal impacts of public health and social measures on health, income, liberty, education and other goods. In making such decisions, there is reason to believe that the degree of trust in government and consensus on public measures substantially influence which policies are feasible and the balance of benefits and burdens of those policies.<sup>30</sup>

We can see signs of this interplay when we disaggregate government measures by region (Figure 4). Feasibility as well as public consensus were key considerations in some parts of the world, for example, as the very different patterns by region show. Asia maintained the highest level of all restriction measures throughout the first 12 months of the pandemic, whereas Africa experienced gradual declines in all measures except international travel restrictions. The patterns in Europe differ markedly from the other regions. Europe was the only region that saw a dip in international travel restrictions while also seeing large declines (with subsequent reimposition) in internal movement and “stay-at-home” measures. The European summer holiday period placed economic pressure on authorities to open up tourism, as well as meet the expectations of customers for holiday-related travel access. These market-related pressures appear to have resulted in policy trade-offs facilitating greater international travel over summer.<sup>31</sup> This was despite predictions from some health experts that European summer holiday travel would result in winter lockdowns.<sup>32</sup>

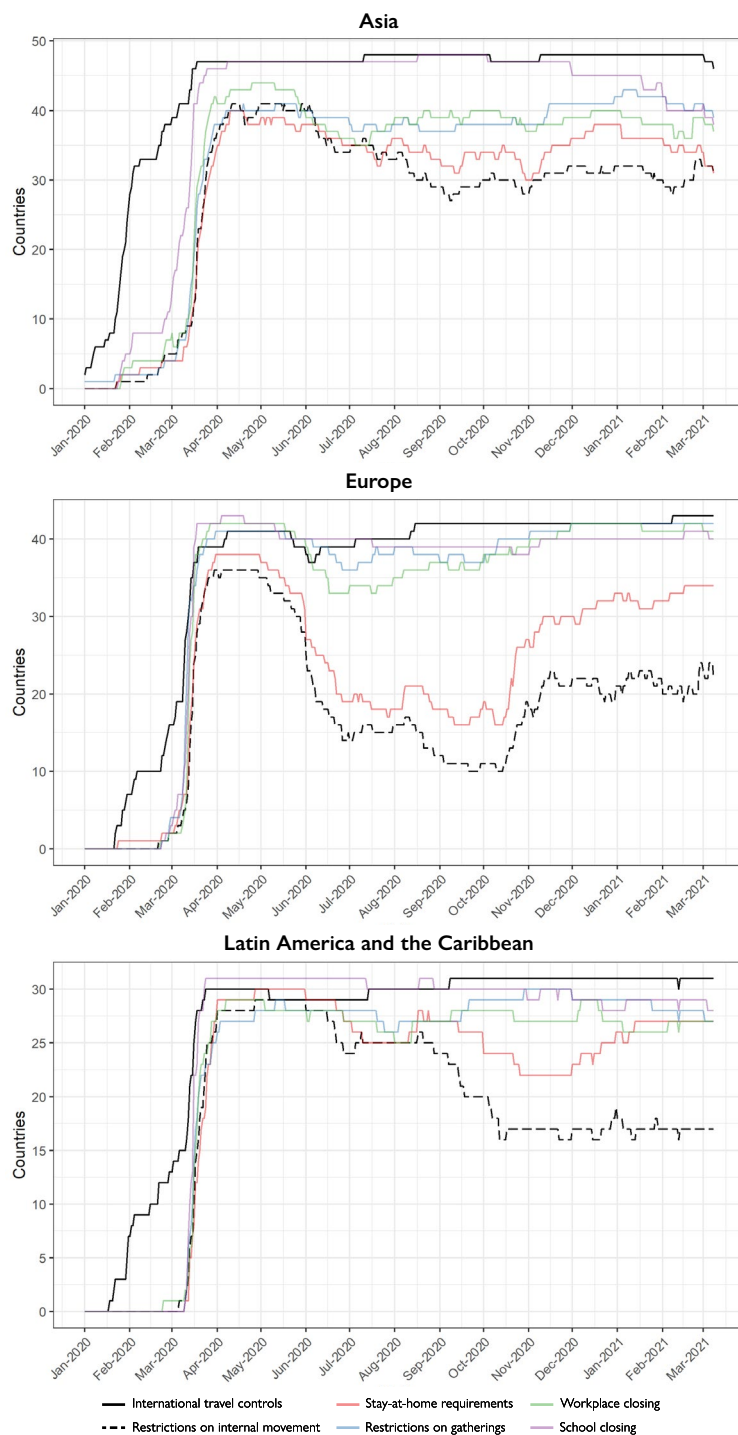
Figure 4. Government responses to minimize COVID-19 transmission in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean, by number of countries



30 Norheim et al., 2020.

31 Dole and Whalan, 2020; Grech et al., 2020.

32 Sridhar, 2020.

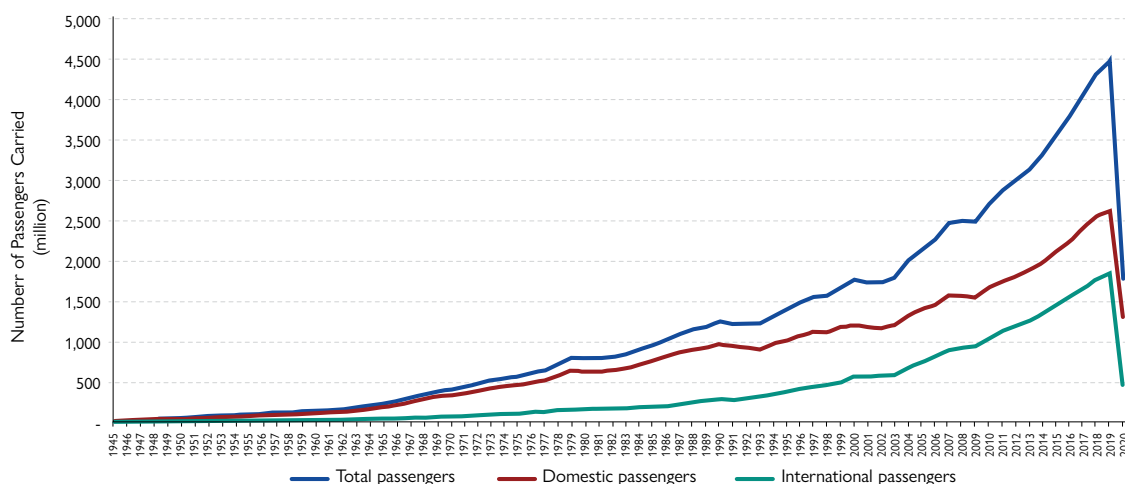


Source: Hale et al., 2021.

Notes: As at 10 March 2021. The term “international travel controls” is used by Oxford, and includes screening arrivals, quarantining arrivals, banning arrivals or total border closure. It is also important to note that categories are COVID-19-related only and do not reflect other travel restrictions that may have already been in place, such as those related to visa restrictions, entry bans based on specific citizens, and departure/exit restrictions.

The large-scale impact of the COVID-19-related travel restrictions becomes very clear when air passenger data are examined. We can see from long-term air passenger figures that COVID-19 travel restrictions had a major impact on both international and domestic air travel in 2020. Total air passengers carried dropped by 60 per cent from around 4.5 billion in 2019 to 1.8 billion in 2020 (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Air passengers carried globally, 1945–2020



Source: ICAO, 2021.

### More on COVID-19 mobility restrictions

Further analysis of COVID-19-related international and internal travel restrictions, as well as the evolution of international travel restrictions by border and health aspects, are provided in Chapters 2 and 3 of this report. Chapter 2 provides global data and analysis, while Chapter 3 provides analysis at the United Nations regional level.

## Impacts and implications of COVID-19 on forced immobility and migrant vulnerability

COVID-19 has proved to be a great disrupter, negatively impacting migrants throughout the international migration cycle, starting with departure from countries of origin, entry into transit and destination countries, stay in transit and destination countries, and the return to countries of origin.<sup>33</sup> COVID-19 forced immobility, emphasizing certain types of mobility, or by pushing mobility into informal channels. However, the form, effectiveness and relative impact of these measures has varied depending upon context. This section will briefly examine the types of measures

33 Gmelch, 1983; McAuliffe and Koser, 2017; IOM, 2020c.

and variations of origin and destination countries, following the trajectory of migration through transit countries. It will then discuss forced immobility and the increased vulnerability of migrants in more detail. In all contexts, a tension has emerged between migrations brought about through the loss of opportunity (essentially jobs, but also education) and the policies implemented to stop movement because of the pandemic, a tension that has brought hardship for many migrants. In this section, the emphasis is on international migration and migrants, rather than on short-term mobility or internal movements. Table 1 presents a summary of these disruption impacts.

Table 1. Impacts of COVID-19 throughout the migration cycle

Setting	Impacts
Departure from countries of origin	Migrants have been unable to depart on planned migration journeys, such as for work, study or family reunion. People needing to seek asylum or otherwise depart unstable countries have been prevented from leaving, exposing them to the risk of violence, abuse, persecution and/or death.
Entry into transit or destination countries	Migrants (including refugees and asylum seekers) have been increasingly unable to enter transit and destination countries, as restrictions have been progressively implemented and/or strengthened. Impacts have been felt acutely in specific sectors, such as agriculture during harvest seasons, and global food supply chains have been disrupted.
Stay in transit and destination countries	Impacts on migrants have been profound, especially for the most vulnerable in societies, who are without access to social protection and health care, and have also faced job loss, xenophobic racism and the risk of immigration detention, while being unable to return home. Further, refugees and internally displaced persons in camps and camp-like settings are subject to cramped and poor living conditions that are not conducive to physical distancing and other COVID infection-control measures.
Return to countries of origin	Border-closure announcements in some countries caused mass return to origin for fear of being stranded without income or access to social protection. The inability to return has resulted in large numbers of migrants being stranded around the world. Some States implemented mass repatriation operations, but many others have been unable to afford or organize repatriations, leaving migrants at risk.

Source: McAuliffe, 2020.

Issues arising from COVID-19 often reflect historical and contemporary emigration, immigration and displacement dynamics and policies within country and regional settings. While this chapter is not able to cover the breadth of impacts around the world, the short case studies in Appendix B help to show the diversity of issues and impacts being felt by different countries. These studies cover one country per United Nations region:

- Kenya (Africa) – mobility hub of East Africa;
- Bangladesh (Asia) – international remittances;
- Germany (Europe) – recognition of migrant/refugee skills in COVID-19 response;
- Colombia (Latin America and the Caribbean) – displaced populations;
- United States of America (Northern America) – hardening immigration policy and practice;
- Fiji (Oceania) – reliance on tourism.

From the case studies, we can see that the pandemic's impacts and implications can differ by country. In Fiji, for example, the travel restrictions have devastated the tourism industry, from which the country has historically generated 40 per cent of its GDP, with major economic consequences. In Bangladesh, the restrictions to movement and closures of public services like banks, along with experiences of unemployment among its diaspora community, have meant unpredictability in the flow of remittances, the country's second largest source of foreign income. In Germany, immobility disrupted long-standing migration patterns and processes, causing significant labour shortages in key sectors such as the agriculture and horticulture. As a regional transit hub for both passengers and cargo, Kenya has been impacted significantly by major threats to the aviation industry and key export industries, exacerbating health concerns at busy border points and impacting the food security of individuals across the region. In Colombia, the pandemic has heightened political tensions and the conditions of precarity among its growing displaced population, prompting a mass regularization initiative and the need for greater humanitarian assistance. Further details are in Appendix B.

### *Forced immobility*

Aspiring migrants were severely affected by COVID-19-related border closures and travel restrictions. As discussed above, virtually all countries introduced some form of restrictions on entry early in the pandemic. Four major interrelated measures acted to slow, or even stop, migration: (a) border restrictions/closures; (b) visa programme disruptions; (c) quarantine measures; and (d) no/limited flights. Integral to the achievement of halting mobility was the closure of borders to all but essential travellers. People were prevented from leaving their home countries due to border closures and exit restrictions imposed by their own governments, but especially by the entry restrictions of destination countries. Countries introduced such restrictions despite WHO's recommendations not to implement travel restrictions, following the International Health Regulations (IHR) agreed by WHO Member States.<sup>34</sup> The IHR state a preference for borders remaining open and for controls being put in place in only very limited circumstances,<sup>35</sup> which include not only public health issues, but also national security or emergency situations.<sup>36</sup>

The IHR are consistent with existing human rights law, which provides for the right to leave any country and return to one's own country.<sup>37</sup> The implementation of departure restrictions preventing States' own citizens from leaving are of special historic significance, given that in the post-Cold War era such restrictions were limited to a few authoritarian countries prior to COVID-19.<sup>38</sup> The right to leave one's own country under international law does not come with a corresponding right to enter another country, and the decision to let in most migrants (usually exercised in the form of entry visas) is made at the State level, on the basis of bilateral relations in the context of political, economic and other considerations.<sup>39</sup> Based on the principle of non-refoulement, this should not apply to refugees. Nevertheless, during the pandemic countries even excluded asylum seekers from entry at land borders and pushed them back into countries of transit. It is worth noting that while exceptions to travel restrictions were commonplace for essential workers based on economic considerations (e.g. agricultural workers), few such exceptions were made on the basis of human rights considerations.<sup>40</sup>

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34 Ferhani and Rushton, 2020. The current IHR, as agreed by Member States of WHO, were revised after SARS. The IHR institutionalize the concept of "global health security", stressing that the security of individual States is dependent on the security of all.

35 Ibid.; Greenaway and Gushulak, 2017.

36 Chetail, 2020; Ponta, 2020.

37 As per the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNGA, 1948) and the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (UNGA, 1966).

38 Czaika et al., 2018.

39 Stringer, 2004.

40 Chetail, 2020; Crawley, 2020; Gonzalez Morales, 2021.



Indeed, asylum seekers, refugees and other displaced people were disproportionately affected by travel restrictions. Asylum seekers were routinely blocked from making claims at borders in the context of the pandemic. For example, in April 2020, hundreds of Rohingya were left stranded in the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea after their boats were turned away by Malaysia, citing fears over the virus.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, along Europe's Mediterranean coastline people were increasingly pushed back, with analysts noting that while such practices occurred prior to COVID-19, the pandemic was used as a means to further legitimize these operations.<sup>42</sup> In some countries, travel restrictions resulted in the reduction of irregular migration and asylum claims.<sup>43</sup> In other countries, governments voiced COVID-related concerns not only for border closures, but also for the militarization of borders, which led to an increase in irregular migration and migrant smuggling.<sup>44</sup> Migrants' vulnerability increased, especially when not supported by measures aimed at the protection of vulnerable populations in the context of ongoing humanitarian displacement.<sup>45</sup> Restrictions also limited the access to basic public goods, including health care, for migrants with a structural dependence on neighbouring countries' public services through cross-border migration, such as in the case of Venezuelans' dependence on Colombia's public health-care system.<sup>46</sup>

Migrants around the world became stranded in transit and destination countries for reasons that go beyond international travel restrictions. Loss of jobs and income, lack of employment, lack of flights, loss of residence permits and lack of resources to return home are among the factors that have affected mobility.<sup>47</sup> Many migrant workers were held in crowded workers' accommodation in environments ripe for the rapid spread of disease, as they were held in limbo waiting for their destination countries to reopen,<sup>48</sup> or faced harsh restrictions on movement while living in migrant worker dormitories with little or no possibility of return.<sup>49</sup> In West and Central Africa, 25,000 migrants became stranded in detention centres with no option but to wait for borders to reopen.<sup>50</sup> In North African countries such as Libya, and Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia and Yemen, detained migrant workers faced ill treatment and unhygienic living conditions.<sup>51</sup> In parallel, COVID-19 outbreaks were detected in camps or migrant reception centres in the United States,<sup>52</sup> Greece, Malta, Germany and the Netherlands.<sup>53</sup> In some countries, such as Portugal, people in immigration detention were released due to public health concerns related to higher risks of transmission within facilities.

### *Return and quarantine*

Border closures also trapped thousands of migrants, who lost their jobs or were in fear of losing their jobs, preventing them from returning home. In developing countries, returning populations included migrant workers who had established themselves in destination countries that were within the vicinity of their countries of origin, such as was witnessed in South-East Asia when thousands of migrant workers departed Thailand to the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Cambodia and Myanmar early in the pandemic.<sup>54</sup> Migrants tried to escape from the virus

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41 IOM, 2020d; *BBC News*, 2020.

42 *Al Jazeera*, 2020a; Crawley, 2020.

43 OECD, 2020.

44 Freier et al., 2021.

45 Ibid.; MMC, 2021; UNODC, 2020.

46 Freier, 2020.

47 IOM, 2020l.

48 ABDI et al., 2021.

49 McDonald, 2021.

50 IOM, 2020l.

51 OHCHR, 2020a.

52 Center for Migration Studies of New York, 2020.

53 ECDC, 2020.

54 Thegumpant, 2020.

itself, as well as economic hardship, given that the lack of social protection for many migrant workers would mean that not returning to their home countries (and suffering job loss in destination countries) would risk starvation and homelessness.<sup>55</sup> The pandemic created such despair that migrants decided to return home to countries they had fled due to socioeconomic hardship. However, not all migrants could successfully return, either independently or through repatriation schemes sponsored by their governments. For example, thousands of Nepalese workers were left stranded at different points of the 1,700 km border with India after complete lockdown was imposed in that country.<sup>56</sup> Tensions also emerged between destination countries and origin countries that were unwilling or unable to provide repatriation flights.<sup>57</sup> In some cases, such as the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, governments even refused to grant their own citizens unlimited access to their territory.<sup>58</sup>

Rather than impose blanket limitations on mobility and migration, some countries moved towards a more targeted and indirect form of control: quarantine. Many States imposed 7- to 14-day periods of isolation on people arriving from locations seen to have a prevalence of the pandemic and who might pose a risk to the home population. Quarantine regimes allowed for residents to return home, for example, but often at substantial financial cost, which some analysts argued was designed as a disincentive to return.<sup>59</sup> Some quarantine regimes applied to entire countries, causing resentment among those coming from parts of those countries little affected by the virus, while other regimes were implemented at subnational levels.

In some countries, returning migrants were criminalized. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Government initially criminalized returnees as “bioterrorists” guilty of the transmission of the virus,<sup>60</sup> and proceeded to jail its own returning citizens who tried to bypass official border crossings. Also, upon return, the mandatory quarantines were often carried out in unhealthy conditions, in some cases without access to running water and health-care services; returnees were often locked in government facilities without certainty about the timing of their release. These situations resembled arbitrary detention rather than protection measures.<sup>61</sup>

### Return from the Gulf – but now what?

On 7 May, Kerala waited with bated breath for the first Vande Bharat repatriation flight from Abu Dhabi to land at the Cochin International Airport. At 10:57 p.m., Air India touched down on the runway with 177 Malayalis. Television cameras zoomed into the arrival terminal exit to catch a glimpse of the first passenger to step out of those glass doors. What was his or her story? Terminated from his company or expiry of job visa? Pre-existing medical conditions or a wife who is pregnant? COVID-positive or not? Whatever be the reason, the expat has got to be relieved to return, for sure.

That was two months ago.

Today, his sense of relief has been replaced by something more sinister. The compulsory quarantine period is over; the voluntary self-isolation week is also complete. It's not the likelihood of mortality that's worrying him now. He's faced with a deeper, disturbing fear – what next?

55 IOM, 2020l.

56 *Al Jazeera*, 2020b.

57 Information in this paragraph is from Cole, 2020.

58 OAS, 2020.

59 Taylor and Mills, 2020.

60 *La Vanguardia*, 2020.

61 Grattan, 2020; HRV, 2020a; OAS, 2020.

“We knew things were turning for the worse when my salary payment started to get delayed from February itself,” says Shelton Das, 36, who was working in the sales section of a prominent real estate company in Doha. “My wife, who is a nurse, also had February’s salary pending. Once COVID-19 struck, her clinic cut down her hours and days of work. It was an excuse to reduce her salary. My company terminated five of us within a week after that. We were stuck with two kids aged 4.5 and 1.5 years, my mother-in-law was also staying with us. We had already booked our tickets home for the summer in April. But that got cancelled without refund. The second time, friends and family back home wired the money to us. Even the vehicle I owned in Doha there was no time to sell, so I transferred the ownership to a friend of mine.”

Shelton is now living with his parents, older brother, his family and an unmarried younger brother, all in the same house. “Where can I go?” he asks. His wife’s family supported him during the quarantine phase by giving them a house to stay in. “But I can’t depend on either of our folks to support my family. I have to go back or re-migrate to some other country. I have no options here.”

According to Irudaya Rajan, professor, Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum, it is not the first time that Malayali NRIs [non-resident Indians] in the Gulf are being forced to return. “We had the Iraq–Kuwait invasion in the 1990s, the enforcement of the Nitaqat law in Saudi Arabia and the recessions in Dubai – all of which caused scores of Malayalis to return. Also, the concept of ‘return’ is a certainty for all Gulf Malayalis. Unlike in the West, these countries do not offer permanent resident status. So even if he has worked there for 30 to 40 years, he still has to return.”

*Source: Abridged extract from George, 2020.*

### *Increased vulnerability*

Migrant workers who stayed in their destination countries, and particularly low-paid workers employed in the informal economy and/or in economic sectors that were highly affected during lockdowns, often faced significant economic hardship. This has been especially true for migrants from developing countries caught in destination countries without social welfare systems, as is typically the case in the Gulf region and parts of South-East Asia.<sup>62</sup> Loss of income impacted the quality of life of the migrant population in diverse aspects, such as access to and quality of housing, but also affecting the possibility of sending remittances to their families. Additionally, migrants (in particular, irregular migrants) were often excluded from public benefits, including health insurance or unemployment insurance,<sup>63</sup> and irregular migrants were especially excluded from health services or feared approaching hospitals or health institutions for fear of being detained or deported.<sup>64</sup>

Additionally, xenophobia and especially anti-Asian racism rose worldwide, with some mass media, public figures and political groups erroneously linking migrants to the spread of the virus.<sup>65</sup> Hate and discrimination against migrants in many countries globally was exacerbated due to misinformation and fears associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the beginning of the pandemic, numerous xenophobic incidents, on the basis of real or perceived national origin, have been reported.<sup>66</sup> In May 2020, the Secretary-General of the United Nations referred to COVID-19-related incidents as “a tsunami of hate and xenophobia”.<sup>67</sup>

62 ADB Institute et al., 2021.

63 Martin and Bergmann, 2020.

64 Zambrano-Barragán et al., 2021.

65 HRV, 2020b.

66 OHCHR, 2020b.

67 UN SG, 2020.

All of these issues negatively affected the mental health of migrants worldwide. As mentioned above, migrant populations tend to have less access to health care, including services related to mental health, while there are specific stressors affecting this population.<sup>68</sup> Some migrants are on the front line, working in essential sectors. This includes both high-skilled migrants (particularly in the health-care sector) and low-skilled migrants (for example care workers, hospital cleaners, security guards and workers in agriculture or in retailing, particularly supermarkets). More vulnerable migrants have lost their jobs and are homeless or forced to live in overcrowded conditions. Also, being in irregular situations, lacking social support networks from family and friends, and not understanding the language of the destination country are factors that worsen the emotional situation of migrants worldwide. International students, who were often left stranded in destinations after their institutions moved to off-campus learning, also faced financial and emotional hardship. In countries where student housing closed down due to lockdown, many international students had to find and pay for a place to live on their own, without strong support networks in their destination countries.<sup>69</sup>

## Longer-term migration and mobility implications of COVID-19

As highlighted in the preceding section, some of the most disturbing impacts of the pandemic on migrants are related to forced immobility and resultant vulnerabilities arising from radical shifts in the imposition of emergency powers,<sup>70</sup> thereby creating a high degree of uncertainty and instability persisting well beyond the initial phase of COVID-19. Some commentators have questioned whether the so-called “age of migration” may be coming to an end, brought about by the pandemic intensifying some important longer-term trends, such as the growth in autocratic tendencies that restrict diversity in populations and fuel anti-immigrant sentiment.<sup>71</sup> The growth in misinformation and disinformation (e.g. false news) related to COVID-19 – the so-called “misinfodemic”<sup>72</sup> – has also underscored the emergence of tech-enabled tribalism used to deliberately undermine and obscure the many benefits of migration in the modern era,<sup>73</sup> making the environment for post-pandemic migration and mobility recovery more challenging.

We have also witnessed the initial impacts of the pandemic being highly variable, depending upon location within the global system. Variations in demographic structures include situations where older populations have higher mortality rates than youthful populations; varying seasonal, climatic and air-quality conditions; and the uneven effectiveness of policies and government responses. In terms of control of migration and mobility, all of these factors have been important. The recessions in some developed destination countries, and the related restructuring of economies, may well result in a decline in international migrant numbers, with profound implications for countries of origin. While economic impacts have been uneven globally, there is no doubt that COVID-19 has reduced migration. The most recent international migrant stock estimates indicate that migration has been sharply disrupted, with migrant stock lower by around 2 million globally compared with (pre-pandemic) long-term trends.<sup>74</sup> With this in mind, two aspects are likely to have significant long-term implications for what migration and mobility will look like in years to come: socioeconomic impacts and deepening digitalization.

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68 IOM, 2020e.

69 Beckstein, 2020.

70 Chetail, 2020; Ponta, 2020.

71 Gamlen, 2020; Castles and Miller, 1993; de Haas et al., 2020.

72 “Misinfodemic” combines the concepts of misinformation and pandemic. See WHO et al., 2020.

73 Gyenes and Mina, 2018; McAuliffe et al., 2019.

74 UN DESA, 2021a.

## *Socioeconomic impacts*

The long-term socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19 are potentially as great as the acute public health issues, with response measures designed to cushion the socioeconomic impact ranking high on international and national agendas. It is estimated that around 49 million people worldwide could be pushed into extreme poverty in 2020 because of COVID-19.<sup>75</sup> The pandemic has already revealed and exacerbated pre-existing socioeconomic inequalities, including those of migrants, and will also affect their countries and communities of origin.<sup>76</sup> Despite migrants' contributions to the pandemic response worldwide,<sup>77</sup> migrants risk being particularly vulnerable as labour markets contract and job opportunities tighten significantly.

Despite the initially projected 20 per cent decline in international remittances globally for 2020 (made in April 2020 by the World Bank),<sup>78</sup> the annual data show that there was only a slight dip in remittances globally (2.4% decrease) in 2020, down from USD 719 billion in 2019.<sup>79</sup> International remittances displayed resilience, with some corridors posting record highs. Four key factors appear to have affected international remittances:

- (a) the move from informal channels to formal channels, as COVID-19 has seriously impacted or closed off informal remittance channels, such as carrying cash across borders and increased digitalization of remittance flows;<sup>80</sup>
- (b) the fact that migrants remit more in times of crisis to home countries and communities, when they are able;<sup>81</sup>
- (c) the “maturity” of key migration corridors, as more established diaspora were able to maintain more stable economic conditions and managed to continue sending money, unlike some newer corridors with migrants in more precarious economic and immigration status situations, less able to build reserves;<sup>82</sup> and
- (d) the fact that essential workers in affected countries often have high shares of migrants, which softens overall increases in unemployment rates of migrant worker populations.<sup>83</sup>

The revision of the global projections indicates that informal remittances, not included in official statistics, were likely to have been higher than previously imagined.<sup>84</sup> This is supported by household survey results in some countries that indicate an overall decline in remittances received during COVID-19 (households not distinguishing between formal and informal), despite formal remittance channels remaining high.<sup>85</sup> This is also supported by some countries (e.g. Mexico, Bangladesh, Pakistan) posting record high inflows by the end of 2020 due to formal channel uptake.<sup>86</sup> Impacts on inflows, however, have not been not uniform, with countries hardest hit over the short to medium term including those that have very high reliance on international remittances as a share of GDP (such as in Central Asia). Further, countries with concentrations of migrant workers located in deeply affected sectors, such as travel and tourism, are also facing negative impacts to a greater degree than other countries. However, it is also important to note that we are witnessing some remittance corridors (such as those from the United States and the United Kingdom to Pakistan) shift out of necessity from informal remittances (such as cash being brought back

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75 Mahler et al., 2020.

76 Crawley, 2020.

77 IOM, 2020f.

78 Ratha et al., 2020.

79 World Bank, 2021.

80 Bradbury et al., 2021; Dinarte et al., 2021; Jawaid, 2020.

81 Kalantaryan and McMahon, 2020.

82 The Kenyan diaspora in North America, for example, sent far larger amounts in remittances compared with the amounts sent from Kenyan migrants in other regions (Oucho, 2021). See also IFAD, 2021; Mandelman and Vilán, 2020.

83 Foresti, 2020; Oxford Business Group, 2020.

84 World Bank, 2021.

85 Avdiu and Meyer, 2021.

86 IOM, 2021b.

home on return trips) to the use of formal remittance channels via money transfer operators and banks.<sup>87</sup> This is just one example of COVID-19's digitalization multiplier effect.

Long-term trend analysis of international remittances, including recent COVID-19 impacts, is included in Chapter 2 (global) and Chapter 3 (regional) of this report.

### *Complex digitalization of migration, including via artificial intelligence*

Alongside other key domains, international migration as a growing phenomenon in recent years and decades is increasingly affected by digitalization processes and related technological advances. Migration scholarship has resulted a rich body of knowledge on the impacts of technology throughout history.<sup>88</sup>

In migration policy and practice, there has been significant investment by States in digitalization and automation over recent years (and in some cases, decades), to realize efficiencies and manage significant increases in volume, among other applications. Digitalization has impacted all aspects of migration management, such as information collection/dissemination, visa application and processing systems, border management systems, identity management (e.g. biometrics) and identity documents, integration support and related programming, integrity checking, compliance and fraud prevention, and refugee resettlement. Profound technological change was deepening before COVID-19, but has significantly intensified during the pandemic, as States, industries and communities have needed to adapt quickly.

At the same time, we are witnessing the intensification of the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in migration. While AI has increasingly being deployed in migration management settings since at least the 1990s, initially in visa entry and border processing systems, but increasingly throughout the entire migration cycle (see Chapter 11 of this report), the pandemic has intensified the race for AI solutions to the rolling COVID-19 crisis. This has been most evident in the public health context and its intersection with mobility. Contact tracing, population surveillance and quarantine tracking have been quickly developed as digital tools, albeit with remarkably different efficiencies in terms of policy implementation, building on recent developments in machine learning such as those related to facial recognition and biometric analysis. The implications for privacy during and after the pandemic is a topic of intense scholarly and policy interest.<sup>89</sup>

Migrants themselves are using the new technologies in innovative ways and a recent focus has been on the realm of information and communications, and how migrants, potential migrants and their families and networks engage with migration through ICT (including mobile money transfers).<sup>90</sup> The focus on ICT and migrants was heightened during the 2015–16 mass migration to and through Europe, when online apps were heavily relied upon by migrants during their journeys.<sup>91</sup>

The intensification of reliance on digital solutions brought on by the pandemic, as States, industry, communities and the migrants themselves needed to adapt quickly to physical isolation and immobility, has presented challenges, but also demonstrable opportunities and efficiencies. On the one hand, greater digitalization offers improved access

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87 Dinarte et al., 2021; Iqbal, 2020; IOM, 2020g; IOM, 2021b.

88 The industrial revolution, for example, spawned Ravenstein's "laws of migration" in late nineteenth century United Kingdom (Ravenstein, 1885).

89 Humer and Taylor, 2020; Privacy International, 2020.

90 Metykova, 2010; Nedelcu, 2013.

91 McAuliffe, 2016; Sanchez, 2018; Zijlstra and van Liempt, 2017.

to virtual platforms for work, study and socialization, as well as for information dissemination in real time. Digital platforms enable a great diversity of inputs and experiences to be communicated through practical inclusion; examples include United Nations and other multilateral engagements on COVID responses, the proliferation of COVID online information platforms, COVID webinars, online conferences and virtual workshops, as well as the increase in day-to-day virtual meetings and initiatives transcending geographic divides. On the other hand, challenges such as the rise in surveillance tech capabilities by States, the inequality of access to digital solutions and initiatives (the so-called digital divide), as well as the increasing need for people to demonstrate “digital literacy” in navigating everyday life, pose difficulties for many migrant groups, including those who have been displaced. Further, indications are that States and industry are increasingly turning to automation and AI for key sectors, such as agriculture and social care, in order to minimize risk and reduce labour costs in a post-COVID-19 world (and in anticipation of the next “big one”).

### Strategic migration futures and COVID-19: is it too early to predict?

COVID-19 came at a time of tremendous global change, when decades-old systems, standards and assumptions about security, politics and economics were already being challenged.<sup>a</sup> In assessing what migration and mobility systems might look like in the future, it is important to situate them within the broader systemic change that is acting to shape, facilitate and impede responses by both government and non-State actors. While it is too early to determine the key features of migration in future decades, and the extent to which these systems have been reshaped by COVID-19, three significant geopolitical and technological transformations remain central in strategic analysis of migration futures (see Chapter 1 of this report for discussion):

- (a) Technological advances since 2005 resulting in the so-called “fourth industrial revolution” are profoundly changing how social, political and economic systems operate globally;<sup>b</sup>
- (b) Increased competition between States is resulting in heightened geopolitical tension and erosion of multilateral cooperation;<sup>c</sup>
- (c) Intensification of ecologically negative human activity: overconsumption, unsustainable economic growth, resource depletion and biodiversity collapse, climate change.<sup>d</sup>

Profound technological change was deepening before COVID-19, but has significantly intensified during the pandemic, including in relation to migration and mobility. The environment of intensifying competition between key States (and involving a larger number of States) is rendering international cooperation via multilateral mechanisms more difficult;<sup>e</sup> however, the finalization and implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration demonstrates the importance of migration to the vast majority of States.<sup>f</sup> While COVID-19 has dampened human activity in key spheres (e.g. transportation/travel), enabling a mini environmental recovery,<sup>g</sup> it may just be a pause. Intense human activity may rebound once the pandemic is over, wiping out the pandemic-related environmental benefits.

a Muggah and Goldin, 2019.

b Friedman, 2016; Schwab, 2016.

c Menon, 2015.

d UNEP, 2019.

e Natalegawa, 2020.

f Newland et al., 2019.

g Arora et al., 2020.

## Conclusion

Taking stock of the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic one year after the WHO declaration in mid-March 2020 highlights just how much migration and mobility have been disrupted, and how sustained the disruptions have been. COVID-19 has not only taken millions of lives globally; it has changed our daily lives. No community has been left untouched by the pandemic, but for people who had migrated, been displaced and/or were part of a highly mobile group of workers/travellers prior to COVID-19, the likelihood of having been directly affected by the pandemic is especially high. Aside from health-related impacts, many became trapped in immobility and unemployment, without income support or other social protection. COVID-19 has led to large-scale stranding of migrant populations, with some experiencing destitution, detention and abuse.

International travel is no longer taken for granted by those who had previously experienced easy access to most of the world.<sup>92</sup> Those with “strong” passports enabling visa-free travel to large sections of the globe have been unable to travel, with many States being on “high-risk country” lists and their citizens banned from entering other countries. The inability to travel, the loss of income and the high degree of uncertainty experienced by many in high-income countries provides an insight into the daily lives of many of the world's poor before the pandemic.<sup>93</sup> That some of the most marginalized in our communities were also the most essential during a time of crisis should further underscore the systemic and increasing inequality brought about by unbalanced economic, fiscal and social systems.<sup>94</sup> Whether these experiences will enable empathy to inform responses designed to “build back better” remains to be seen. Ultimately our pattern of increased consumption of travel may prove to be unsustainable.

The manifestations of COVID-19-related impacts and implications will, without any shred of doubt, vary significantly across different locations. This has been highlighted in the country-level case studies that cover each of the six United Nations regions (see Appendix B). The country case studies show that during its first year, COVID-19 posed very significant challenges to migration systems (especially the regulation of mobility) and had highly variable impacts on migrants, including displaced populations, that related to underlying pre-pandemic socioeconomic, geographic and political contexts and histories. The pandemic is by no means over, with new challenges emerging regarding vaccination roll-outs, virulent new variants, and public fatigue and impatience at ongoing COVID-19 measures. And yet, the first year has shown us that COVID-19 massively disrupted migration and migrants around the world, while also placing high demands on how such impacts were being measured, so as to inform responses to what was (is) a rapidly evolving global health emergency.

In terms of disruptions to migration and mobility systems, and migrant populations globally, analysis of the first year has highlighted that:

- The imposition of emergency powers resulted in major disruptions right the way through the migration cycle, as the **previously widely accepted norms considered to be cornerstones of international mobility were set aside** by countries very early in the pandemic. The right to leave one's country (including for protection reasons), as well as the right to return to one's country, were both upended; the principle of non-refoulement as a cornerstone of human rights globally was severely tested or set aside, including by some of the initial architects of the international protection system.<sup>95</sup> On the one hand, the desire to return to the pre-pandemic

92 See, for example, the Henley Passport Index (Henley & Partners, 2019).

93 McAuliffe and Bauloz, 2020; McAuliffe et al., 2017.

94 Crawley, 2020; Hickel, 2020.

95 At the time of writing, for example, the United States continued to maintain Title 42, allowing for expulsion of non-citizens at borders on the basis of health emergency grounds.



“normal” with more predictable travel, visa, border and migration systems is clearly evident in many parts of the world, especially those that rely heavily on high mobility, such as destinations for international tourism. Reopening migration-related services and offices and the dismantling of total or strict travel bans is being carefully considered in the context of new variants and vaccination programming. On the other hand, deepening digitalization and the rapid development of technologies to support greater automation suggest that for some migrant workers there will be no return to normal, as industry and governments seek to expand digitalization for efficiency, responsiveness and risk mitigation, thereby reducing reliance on migrant workers.

- Previously held assumptions concerning high mobility within migration systems, including the supply of essential goods and services, point to **longer-term globalization as well as pervasive inequalities that are deeply rooted in modern-day societies around the world**. Structural settings and barriers shaping migration patterns, as well as exploitation of migrant workers over recent years and decades, were laid bare during the early stages of the pandemic, in which many industrialized economies needed to ensure that travel exemptions were provided for some of the most marginalized international labour (e.g. seasonal migrant workers). For origin countries, the extent of the consular assistance needs of citizens working and living overseas highlighted how quickly migrant workers can find themselves in situations of vulnerability, especially in countries that provide little or no social protection to non-citizens. This placed additional strain on countries battling to contain the virus at home, while also responding to citizens overseas. Contrary to predictions, some origin countries posted record high international remittances, as migrants and diaspora turned to formal digital channels to help support families back home during the crisis – further highlighting the extent to which international labour flows and remittances are shaping societies and economies.
- The pandemic **further exposed harsh realities in relation to forced migration, displacement and humanitarian response**. While travel exemptions for essential workers became key features in many domestic policy settings, similar exemptions were not routine for people seeking protection. Borders remained closed and, in some countries, expulsions were enabled by the use of emergency powers based on health concerns. In other countries, however, measures such as mass regularization programmes, release of people from immigration detention and wide access to health care regardless of immigration status demonstrated the primacy of public health for entire populations.



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# 6 PEACE AND SECURITY AS DRIVERS OF STABILITY, DEVELOPMENT AND SAFE MIGRATION<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

In early 2020, as COVID-19 was beginning to spread globally, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres appealed for a global ceasefire, calling on all warring parties to “silence guns” and focus on fighting a pandemic that had left no country untouched.<sup>2</sup> The Secretary-General’s words recognized that despite an ongoing global health crisis, insecurity, violence and conflict continued to ravage many countries across the world, with catastrophic implications for millions of people.

In addition to the terrible loss of lives, injuries and destruction of property that result from conflicts, many people who live in these settings are also often compelled to leave their homes, communities and even countries in search of safety and security. In 2020 alone, there were 26.4 million refugees and 4.1 million asylum seekers globally.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, in the same year, an estimated 48 million people were living in internal displacement due to conflict and violence,<sup>4</sup> the highest figure on record. This is by no means a new phenomenon. In the last decade, the number of people displaced due to armed conflict, violence and various forms of persecution has increased by more than 100 per cent,<sup>5</sup> while global peacefulness has deteriorated in the same period.<sup>6</sup> Conflicts are now responsible for most humanitarian needs globally, and by 2030, an estimated two thirds of the world’s poorest people could potentially live in societies that are highly insecure, conflict-ridden or violent.<sup>7</sup> Currently, almost nearly 86 per cent of the world’s refugees are hosted in developing countries.<sup>8</sup>

Conflicts have also undermined the ability of many countries to make progress on development, to the point of eroding previous gains. These realities have placed the need to address the underlying causes and dynamics of conflict and to foster more peaceful societies high on the global agenda. This is most clearly reflected in several global processes and outcomes, notably the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with target 16, for example, committing States to promoting “peace, justice and strong institutions”.<sup>9</sup>

While conflicts have undoubtedly proliferated in recent years, some countries remain much less affected by instability, conflict and violence and have greater levels of peace and security. These countries and the people who live in them enjoy overall higher levels of human development, including economic prosperity, and are much less

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2 UN, 2020.

3 UNHCR, 2021.

4 IDMC, 2021.

5 Ibid.

6 IEP, 2020.

7 World Bank, 2020.

8 UNHCR, 2021.

9 See goal 16 of the SDGs, UN DESA, n.d.

likely to experience unsafe forms of migration or displacement caused by conflict. For example, people from stable and wealthier countries are highly mobile and mostly do not have to make the agonizing decision as to whether to embark on irregular migration journeys under life-threatening conditions, as do many people from fragile and less developed countries. This is not an accident. People from developed and peaceful societies have a wider variety of options for safe migration and mobility, unlike those from more fragile contexts, whose options are much more limited. To some degree, access to regular migration channels depends not just on a country's economic standing or status and how it interacts with the broader international community, but also on how safe, prosperous and stable it is.<sup>10</sup> The "lottery of birth" means that people from less peaceful and underdeveloped countries are at a greater disadvantage when it comes to access to safe migration and mobility options (see Chapter 7 of this report for a trend analysis of migration patterns in terms of the Human Development Index).<sup>11</sup>

Recent international agreements, such as the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees, have been developed in response to these realities and challenges. In addition to committing States to reducing negative and structural drivers of migration, such as conflict, violence and climate change, the Global Compact for Migration stresses the need to support legal migration pathways, which are especially needed by people living in countries affected by conflict and underdevelopment, and who are often the ones compelled to undertake irregular and unsafe journeys.<sup>12</sup> The Global Compact on Refugees, meanwhile, also complements other efforts by the United Nations in areas such as migration, peace and security, conflict prevention and peacebuilding.<sup>13</sup> Further, in recognition of the ever-growing number of refugees and asylum seekers globally, the Global Compact on Refugees seeks to foster "more cooperation in distributing the responsibility of hosting and supporting the world's refugees".<sup>14</sup>

This is the context within which this chapter discusses the links between peace, security, development and migration. Using existing evidence and research, it explores the interaction between conflict, instability and insecurity; development; and migration, showing that instability or conflict feed negatively on development and hence drive displacement, asylum-seeking and unsafe migration. The chapter seeks also to go beyond these obvious and well-documented links to show how migration can contribute to stability and development and thus mitigate the conditions that lead to irregular migration and displacement.

The next section provides a brief overview of the context and key concepts relevant for this chapter. This is followed by analysis of the links between peace, security, migration and development, using recent data and information from key indices, including the Global Peace Index (GPI), the Human Development Index (HDI) and the Fragile States Index (FSI). The chapter also discusses current initiatives, responses and challenges to fostering peace and security, before providing conclusions.

## The relationship between peace, security and development

Peace, security and development are complex concepts that need to be unpacked before they can be operationalized and the links between them explored. Conventionally, peace has been defined as the absence of war, conflict or violence within or between countries.<sup>15</sup> However, this conceptualization (negative peace) has long been challenged

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10 McAuliffe et al., 2017.

11 Ibid.

12 UN, 2019.

13 UNHCR, 2018.

14 Newland et al., 2019.

15 See Galtung, 1969; Höglund and Kovacs, 2010.

as insufficient to understand fully what peace entails. There is a broad consensus that peace also encompasses a range of factors that entrench it (positive peace), such as justice, human rights and accountability, among other factors.<sup>16</sup> The meaning of “security” has also evolved over time from its traditional focus on the national security of the State. The emergence of concepts such as “human security” was an attempt to bring together and link aspects of development, human rights and national security.<sup>17</sup>

The three concepts – peace, security and development – have not always been seen as interlinked. Prior to the end of the Cold War, they were viewed as distinct in both policy and academic spheres.<sup>18</sup> However, this changed with the end of the Cold War and in light of a new political context in the 1990s.<sup>19</sup> Since then, there has been wide recognition that countries in which conflicts and violence are widespread also tend to underperform on various dimensions of socioeconomic development.<sup>20</sup> The link is also apparent in the opposite direction: low levels of socioeconomic development are associated with high levels of insecurity and conflict. Further, it has become increasingly clear that fostering peace and security enables development, and that development also seems to enhance stability.<sup>21</sup>

Indeed, the links between peace, security and development are broadly accepted in international development, with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, for example, clearly reflecting this wide consensus: “there can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.” The Sustaining Peace approach,<sup>22</sup> which is informed by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also stresses the significance of inclusive and sustainable development in preventing risks of violent conflict.<sup>23</sup> Meanwhile, the emergence of the “triple nexus” concept – the humanitarian, development and peace nexus (HDPN) – is also an effort to capture the interlinkages between the three areas and to ensure more coherence in meeting people’s various needs and reducing vulnerabilities, while enhancing peace.<sup>24</sup> The concept also recognizes that sustaining peace is fundamental to meeting all the SDGs.<sup>25</sup>

While peace and security are evidently not the only factors that underpin economic growth and development,<sup>26</sup> there is wide consensus that they are important elements in creating environments that allow countries to prosper. Recent work by the Institute for Economics and Peace, for example, demonstrates that less peaceful countries not only experience more economic volatility, but are also associated with poor macroeconomic performance.<sup>27</sup> In fact, over the last six decades, per capita GDP growth in highly peaceful countries has been almost three times higher

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16 Diehl, 2016.

17 See Igbuzor, 2011; Hussein et al., 2014.

18 Hussein et al., 2014.

19 Ibid.

20 See, for example, Collier et al., 2003.

21 Martínez-Solímán, 2017; Stewart et al., 2011; Geneva Declaration, 2010.

22 The Sustaining Peace approach is based on twin groundbreaking resolutions passed in 2016, whose aim is to help sustain peace “at all stages of conflict and in all its dimensions”, while also preventing “the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict” (Ponzio, 2018).

23 UN, 2018.

24 Caparini and Reagan, 2019.

25 ECOSOC, n.d.

26 This chapter uses the term “development” to refer to both economic growth and human development, while cognizant of the fact that even though economic growth does not always go hand in hand (or is positively correlated) with various dimensions of development such as education and increase in per capita incomes, it is still an important element in contributing to economic prosperity, as acknowledged by SDG 8 in that “sustained and inclusive economic growth can drive progress, create decent jobs for all and improve living standards.”

27 IEP, 2020.

than in those that are less peaceful.<sup>28</sup> Other empirical studies on the links between prosperity and peace have found that peace does not just provide a “suitable environment” for economic prosperity, but that it has a “mechanical” impact on countries’ economic prosperity, with a clear positive link between peace and economic prosperity.<sup>29</sup>

More recent research and analysis seeking to establish the relationships between the 17 SDGs finds that there is a strong positive correlation between SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth).<sup>30</sup> These links extend beyond growth and are apparent in other dimensions of development; in terms of poverty reduction, countries that have higher levels of peace and stability have historically outpaced those in conflict. Conflict-affected countries have seen their poverty levels rise over the years.<sup>31</sup> Peace, justice and strong institutions have also been strongly linked to other key dimensions of development, such as “quality education”.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, countries that are able to create resilient societies through inclusive and sustainable development are also less likely to descend into crises, such as conflict, underscoring the mutually reinforcing links between peace, security and development.<sup>33</sup> It is worth mentioning that some analysis has questioned these links, suggesting that the evidence showing the correlations between insecurity and underdevelopment is stronger than those between peace and development,<sup>34</sup> as there are several peaceful countries with low levels of development.

## Conflict, displacement and irregular migration

While significant research exists on how conflict and violence can lead to irregular migration when no protection pathways are available, we know less about how peace and security are linked to migration. We need to understand better the positive equation: how peace and security are related to international migration. There is a relative dearth of literature on how peace and security not only minimize displacement and irregular migration, but also on how they enable migration that is more regular, safe and predictable. It is unsurprising, however, that available research and analysis overwhelmingly focuses on conflict-induced migration and displacement, given the proliferation of conflicts and violence in recent years,<sup>35</sup> which have wrought devastation among millions of people. Indeed, notwithstanding the fact that conflict and violence are not the only factors that contribute to displacement and irregular migration, they remain some of the biggest drivers.

Considerable research and other evidence shows how wars, conflict and violence generate threats to people’s lives, forcing many to leave or flee their homes.<sup>36</sup> In 2020 alone, millions of people were living in internal displacement driven by conflict and violence in nearly 60 countries and territories, most of these low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).<sup>37</sup> In recent years, research has shown that a combination of factors, including conflict, political instability and economic insecurity, are behind the significant increase in the number of people attempting to enter Europe via irregular means, including during the so-called “2015 European migration crisis”.<sup>38</sup> It is important to add,

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28 IEP, 2018.

29 Ho and Dinov, 2013.

30 Fonseca et al., 2020.

31 Hong, 2015.

32 Fonseca et al., 2020.

33 World Bank, 2018a.

34 Denney, 2013.

35 See Appendix A on trends and drivers of conflict.

36 See for example Schmeidl, 1997; Castles, 2006; Hayes et al., 2016; Adhikari, 2013.

37 IDMC, 2021.

38 Cummings et al., 2015.

however, that many who entered Europe via irregular channels were subsequently recognized as refugees. Research explains how conflict and persecution were the main reasons given for embarking on irregular migration journeys by the majority of people from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, Somalia, the Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic who entered Europe irregularly in 2015 and 2016.<sup>39</sup> These dynamics are not limited to people resorting to irregular entry to Europe. The recent increase in irregular arrivals in the United States of America from Northern Triangle countries — including El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala — has also largely been attributed to high levels of insecurity and unprecedented levels of violence orchestrated by gangs and other criminal organizations.<sup>40</sup> However, it is important to stress that conflict and violence are only part of the story; irregular migration is a complex process that often involves a range of factors, including socioeconomic and political dimensions.<sup>41</sup> The limited nature of regular migration channels for people in low-income and fragile contexts, for example, is another important determinant of irregular migration.<sup>42</sup>

## Key Definitions

### Irregular migration

Movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the State of origin, transit or destination.

### Regular migration

Migration that occurs in compliance with the laws of the country of origin, transit and destination.

### Displacement

The movement of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters.

Source: IOM, 2019a.

## A tale of two different migration experiences

Access to regular migration channels remains highly unequal, with citizens of certain countries enjoying much greater migration and mobility options than those from other countries. This gap — in terms of who can and cannot access regular migration channels — is related to several factors, including socioeconomic, political and security reasons. Unlike nationals from low-income and politically unstable countries, citizens of more privileged countries that are both politically stable and economically prosperous are often able to travel visa-free or, where visas are required, are more likely to be granted visas and entry permits.<sup>43</sup> As some analysis points out, those who do not need visas tend to be considered low risk and “desirable”, while people from more fragile contexts are perceived as posing a greater risk — often linked to overstaying or security — and are regarded as “undesirable”, and thus are mostly required to apply for visas prior to entry.<sup>44</sup>

39 Aksoy and Poutvaara, 2019.

40 Carlson and Gallagher, 2018; Clemens, 2017; MSF, 2017.

41 McAuliffe and Koser, 2017; de Haas, 2011; Jayasuriya, 2014.

42 McAuliffe et al., 2017; Triandafyllidou et al., 2019.

43 McAuliffe et al., 2017; Neumayer, 2005.

44 Neumayer, 2005.

Early research on visa restrictions, analysing how these controls perpetuate uneven access to foreign countries, concludes that “for passport holders from OECD [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development] countries the world appears in easy reach with relatively few restrictions imposed. But for passport holders from poor, authoritarian countries with a history of violent political conflict, travel remains severely restricted.”<sup>45</sup> A separate study on visa waiver programmes finds that while these schemes have greatly increased since the late 1960s, they have not benefited everyone.<sup>46</sup> Non-OECD countries, especially fragile and underdeveloped countries in Africa, have not only been excluded from the expansion of waiver programmes, but saw their mobility rights decline in 2010 when compared to 1969.<sup>47</sup> The 2020 Henley Passport Index and *Global Mobility Report* bear this out, showing that while there has been a significant increase over time in the number of countries an individual can visit without needing a visa beforehand, this trend has largely been driven by high-income countries, with low-income countries remaining static.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, States in conflict have seen their scores substantially deteriorate over the last 10 years, with countries such as Yemen and the Syrian Arab Republic ranking toward the bottom of the passport index.<sup>49</sup>

Other recent analysis examining who gets a United States B visa further underlines these dynamics, showing that nationals of poorer countries were less likely to be granted short-term travel visas than those of wealthier nations.<sup>50</sup> As the gross domestic product (GDP) of a potential migrant’s country of origin increased, the rate of visa denial decreased. The costs of applying for visas reveal broadly similar patterns, with large disparities in visa prices across the world.<sup>51</sup> Citizens of politically unstable and poorer countries are subjected to much higher visa prices compared with those from wealthier and more stable countries. This, some argue, further deters citizens from certain countries from accessing regular migration channels to wealthier destinations.<sup>52</sup>

The Global Compact for Migration, the most comprehensive framework for cooperation on international migration, is partly a response to the lack of avenues for regular migration and the increased concerns over unsafe and irregular migration. Addressing irregular migration is a key component of achieving the Global Compact’s overall goal of safe, orderly and regular migration; among its shared responsibilities, for example, the Global Compact aims “to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration while reducing the incidence and negative effects of irregular migration through international cooperation...”<sup>53</sup> Several Global Compact commitments have a direct bearing on irregular migration, such as “ensuring that desperation and deteriorating environments do not compel them to seek a livelihood elsewhere through irregular migration” (objective 2). The Global Compact further aims at “ensuring security for States, communities and migrants, and facilitating safe and regular cross-border movements while preventing irregular migration” (objective 11).<sup>54</sup> Most notably, objective 5 of the Global Compact commits States to enhancing the “availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration”.<sup>55</sup>

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45 Ibid.

46 Mau et al., 2015.

47 Ibid.

48 Henley & Partners, 2020.

49 Ibid.

50 Zhou, 2020.

51 Recchi et al., 2020.

52 Ibid.

53 UN, 2019.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.



## Understanding the links between peace, fragility, migration and development

International migration by citizens of peaceful and economically prosperous countries is largely safe, orderly and regular. By contrast, migration by many citizens of low-income and insecure settings is more likely to be unsafe and irregular, often propelled by crises.<sup>56</sup> Almost half of all international migrants from low-income countries were asylum seekers or refugees.<sup>57</sup> Further, mass movement and displacement events in low-income, fragile contexts have characterized some of the most significant inflows to several high-income countries in recent years. For example, the 2015/16 mass migration to Europe or the recent large movements from the Northern Triangle countries of Central America to the United States comprised citizens from politically unstable and developing countries, many of whom embarked on irregular journeys to reach their destinations.

Table 1 illustrates some of these dynamics, showing how peace and fragility are correlated to development and displacement.

Table 1: Global peace, State fragility, human development and displacement (selected countries)

Country (in GPI rank order)	Global Peace Index (GPI), 2021 Rank	Fragile States Index (FSI), 2021 Rank	Human Development Index (HDI), 2019 Rank	Refugees and asylum seekers (country of origin), 2020	Number of IDPs (conflict and violence), 2020
Iceland	1	177	4	10	
New Zealand	2	176	14	67	
Austria	6	166	18	33	
Canada	10	171	16	192	
Singapore	11	165	11	116	
Japan	12	161	19	162	
Norway	14	178	1	21	
Sweden	15	172	7	41	
Australia	16	170	8	40	
Germany	17	167	6	242	
Bhutan	22	96	129	7,219	
United Kingdom	33	150	13	259	
Costa Rica	39	149	62	1,033	
Botswana	41	122	100	344	
Sierra Leone	46	45	182	14,151	5,500
Uruguay	47	158	55	455	
Chile	49	144	43	2,792	
France	55	159	26	222	

<sup>56</sup> UN DESA, 2021.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

Country (in GPI rank order)	Global Peace Index (GPI), 2021 Rank	Fragile States Index (FSI), 2021 Rank	Human Development Index (HDI), 2019 Rank	Refugees and asylum seekers (country of origin), 2020	Number of IDPs (conflict and violence), 2020
Republic of Korea	57	159	23	854	
Dominican Republic	82	107	88	4,806	
Bangladesh	91	39	133	83,583	427,000
China	100	95	85	283,451	
Côte d'Ivoire	103	28	162	71,815	308,000
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	105	73	107	1,923	
Guatemala	111	59	127	170,668	242,000
Thailand	113	87	79	3,918	41,000
Uganda	114	24	159	19,136	1,000
Myanmar	131	23	147	1,096,724	505,000
Ethiopia	139	11	173	276,393	2,060,000
Mexico	140	90	74	127,137	357,000
Colombia	144	61	83	152,008	4,922,000
Nigeria	146	12	161	426,013	2,730,000
Mali	148	19	184	175,730	326,000
Russian Federation	154	74	52	97,133	1,100
Libya	156	17	105	23,034	278,000
Somalia*	158	2		868,351	2,968,000
Iraq	159	20	123	574,121	1,224,000
South Sudan	160	4	185	2,193,685	1,436,000
Syrian Arab Republic	161	3	151	6,782,383	6,568,000
Yemen	162	1	179	54,904	3,635,000
Afghanistan	163	9	169	2,833,569	3,547,000
A number 1 ranking means	Very high peacefulness	Most fragile country	Very high human development		
A low ranking means	Very low peacefulness	Least fragile country	Low human development		

Sources: Global Peace Index 2020 (IEP, 2020); Fragile States Index 2020 (Fund for Peace, 2021); Human Development Index 2019 (UNDP, 2020); Refugees and asylum seekers (UNHCR, 2021); IDPs (IDMC, 2021).

Note: Somalia is not ranked on the HDI.

Several key aspects are evident from Table 1. First, countries that rank highly on the Global Peace Index (GPI) tend to perform well on the Human Development Index (HDI), a composite measure of countries' performance across several dimensions, including health, education and a decent standard of living. While there are some exceptions, with countries such as Sierra Leone, Bhutan and Botswana ranking relatively highly on the GPI, but exhibiting low human development, the general trend seems to suggest that higher human development goes hand-in-hand with high levels of peace.

Second, countries that rank towards the bottom of the Fragile States Index (FSI), thus being more stable, seem to have high levels of human development, with those that are highly fragile – in almost all cases – associated with low HDI. Also clear, however, is that not all countries that are stable or with low fragility have high human development. In other words, stability does sometimes coexist with low HDI, suggesting perhaps that stability is a necessary, but not a sufficient factor for development.

Third, countries that score high on the peace index also produce fewer refugees and asylum seekers, and have a lower number or are completely without conflict-induced internally displaced persons (IDPs). The number of refugees and asylum seekers that originated from countries such as Singapore, Sweden, Chile or the Republic of Korea in 2019 starkly contrasts with the number of those from less peaceful countries such as Myanmar, Ethiopia, Yemen and South Sudan. This reality is especially acute in countries such as the Syrian Arab Republic, whose protracted conflict means that more than half of its population is still forcibly displaced.<sup>58</sup> A closer look at where most refugees and asylum seekers are hosted mirrors this trend; while refugees and asylum seekers comprised only about 3 per cent of all international migrants in high-income countries, this number was as high as 50 per cent in low-income countries,<sup>59</sup> partly a reflection of the fact that several low-income countries are in proximity with countries in conflict and continue to bear most of the burden of hosting the vast majority of refugees. These glaring differences – between high-income, peaceful countries and more fragile and less developed countries – are also visible in the number of conflict-induced IDPs. Less peaceful countries, perhaps unsurprisingly, have a much larger number of conflict-induced IDPs, with countries such as South Sudan, Afghanistan and Somalia having millions of IDPs in 2020, while more stable countries, such as Uruguay, Japan and Botswana recorded zero conflict-induced IDPs in the same year.<sup>60</sup> These observations further underpin how peace and security not only help to foster development, but also contribute to less volatile population movements.

While the number of migrant workers is not reflected in Table 1, their distribution across various regions and income groups further illustrates how peaceful and economically prosperous countries foster migration by choice, which is regular and more predictable. For example, while the number of international migrants from both low-income and high-income countries has increased over the last 20 years, in the former, this growth has largely been driven by displacement. In high-income countries, however, migrant workers have significantly contributed to much of this increase in international mobility.<sup>61</sup> This is especially the case in the European Union (EU), where people are highly mobile, often motivated by work-related factors such as employment and higher wages.<sup>62</sup> High-income countries remain the major destinations for migrant workers and in 2019, of the 169 million migrant workers globally, 67.7 per cent were employed in these countries, while only 3.6 per cent were employed in low-income countries.<sup>63</sup> Migrant workers in high-income countries were largely concentrated in Northern, Southern and Western Europe (almost 24%) and Northern America (around 22%).<sup>64</sup>

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58 UNHCR, 2021.

59 UN DESA, 2021.

60 IDMC, 2021.

61 UN DESA, 2021; Strey et al., 2018.

62 Ibid.

63 ILO, 2021.

64 Ibid.

## Community stabilization and the prevention of displacement

As conflicts have increased in recent years,<sup>65</sup> efforts to foster peace and stability have taken on heightened importance. Through various peacebuilding initiatives and approaches, there has been a particular focus by international organizations on addressing the drivers of conflict and violence, and seeking to prevent countries previously in conflict from falling back into crisis. The adoption of ideas such as the HDPN across various organizations reflects these efforts, as the nexus seeks “to better address both the immediate needs of people affected by conflict as well as the underlying causes of protracted crises.”<sup>66</sup> Organizations such as IOM regularly work alongside other United Nations agencies to contribute to various system-wide peacebuilding efforts on the mobility dimensions of crises and sustaining peace.<sup>67</sup> This has encompassed key areas such as displaced persons and host community relations; elections support to governments in expanding migrants’ access to electoral processes in their countries of origin; preventing violent extremism (PVE), covering aspects such as supporting at-risk youth and providing psychosocial prevention and recovery services; and, importantly, community stabilization.<sup>68</sup>

Community stabilization, a non-coercive approach to restoring stability at a community or local level in contexts affected by crises, has particularly emerged as central to peacebuilding efforts. Community stabilization is increasingly seen as key to helping communities to transition away from crisis, while laying the foundations for achieving durable solutions.<sup>69</sup> This approach seems to have emanated from the broader concept of “stabilization”. While stabilization has no universal definition, some conflict analysts have defined it as “efforts to end social, economic and political upheaval, and reconstruction, which includes efforts to develop or redevelop institutions that foster self-governance, social and economic development, and security, are critical to securing political objectives before, during, or after conflict.”<sup>70</sup> Other researchers stress that despite lacking a unifying definition, what is clear is that the application of the concept is increasingly limited to several realistic and pragmatic activities and objectives instead of promoting democracy or building liberal States.<sup>71</sup> Some analysts contend that stabilization is rooted in the nexus between insecurity, underdevelopment and fragility, and explain that it “problematises instability in terms of weak governance and poverty, and therefore responds to instability accordingly.”<sup>72</sup>

Community stabilization, in the context of migration and displacement, aims to both lessen “the likelihood of (re) emergent crises and further displacement” and build “resilience at community levels towards destabilizing influences in future”.<sup>73</sup> Through community stabilization organizations such as IOM seek “to provide assistance to governments, States and communities undergoing significant socioeconomic and political changes during and following a crisis, in order to (re)establish stability and security, prevent further forced migration, restore trust among community members, vulnerable populations and local authorities and lay the foundations for durable solutions, lasting peace and sustainable development.”<sup>74</sup>

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65 See Appendix A on trends and drivers of conflict.

66 Interpeace, n.d.

67 IOM, 2020.

68 IOM, n.d.a.

69 Grundy and Zingg, 2020; IOM, 2020. A durable solution is achieved “when IDPs no longer have specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and such persons can enjoy their human rights without discrimination resulting from their displacement.” See for example IASC, 2010.

70 Bensahel et al., 2009.

71 Pedersen et al., 2019.

72 Carter, 2013.

73 Grundy and Zingg, 2020.

74 IOM, 2016.

The community stabilization approach to peacebuilding cuts across multiple sectors and employs various initiatives in responding to the drivers of insecurity and instability. These include supporting local governance capacity, improving access and provision of essential services such as education, water and health, and resolving grievances, among others. Importantly, to ensure its success and sustainability, community stabilization is community-owned and driven, with communities and vulnerable populations such as refugees and IDPs empowered to play key roles at all stages of project design, implementation and monitoring.<sup>75</sup> Community stabilization has proven especially effective as a peacebuilding approach, not only because it involves affected local communities and populations in efforts to restore peace and stability, but also because it is adaptable, with initiatives designed to respond to the specific and evolving needs and challenges of fragile and crisis contexts.<sup>76</sup> Community stabilization programmes have been implemented in several States undergoing conflict-related crises, most recently in countries such as Chad,<sup>77</sup> Iraq<sup>78</sup> and Somalia.<sup>79</sup> Further, these initiatives can and have also been applied not just in communities, but also in migrants' transit routes and areas of settlement. It is worth pointing out, however, that while community stabilization has become increasingly important in peacebuilding efforts, targeting or implementing this approach can be difficult in some contexts, particularly those highly impacted by or at risk of large-scale irregular outward migration. Moreover, while community stabilization is fit for purpose at a microlevel, given that it is a localized approach, other interventions are required at a macrolevel, since many of today's conflicts and insecurity issues that drive irregular migration and displacement are macro in nature. In other words, both global/regional and local interventions are needed.

### Lebanon: Building relationships between refugees and host communities through community stabilization activities

In various parts of the globe, IOM's work focuses on building relationships between groups, particularly displaced populations and host communities, in order to ease tensions and prevent violent incidents fuelled by, among others, perceived differences and relative deprivation. An example of this work is conducted in Lebanon, where many displaced persons from the Syrian Arab Republic are hosted.

Over the years, basic services have been insufficient to cover local communities and the displaced population. Integrating refugee youth has been particularly difficult in northern Lebanon, where refugee communities have been blamed by host communities for the rise in crime and increased environmental degradation.

IOM implemented a project funded by the Government of Canada from 2017 to 2019 in Lebanon to reduce tensions by promoting a culture of constructive collaboration through activities such as road rehabilitation and clean-up campaigns, among others. The project also reinforced local government's and civil society's capacity to respond to and mitigate tensions. Beneficiaries reported that the activities enabled communities to broaden their networks and create new relationships with members of different communities. It was noted that the relationships that were built led to changes in perceptions about other groups, contributing to a reduction in tensions.

*Source: Abridged excerpt from Lukunka and Grundy, 2020.*

75 IOM, n.d.b.

76 IOM, 2016.

77 IOM, 2020.

78 IOM, 2019b.

79 Grundy and Zingg, 2020.

## Migrants as active players in peace and security

The discourse on diaspora engagement in peacebuilding has often focused on migrants' negative roles in peace and security, such as fuelling conflict, exacerbating tensions and even representing security threats to their countries of origin.<sup>80</sup> Such discourses, however, fail to adequately acknowledge the wide-ranging nature of diaspora, or are limited by their focus on small elements within these communities.<sup>81</sup> This has been changing over time, and the diasporas are increasingly seen as key to various peacebuilding efforts in conflict-affected countries. In particular, their knowledge of local customs and traditions, as well as their in-depth understanding of ongoing conflicts, are a comparative advantage to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and aid agencies.<sup>82</sup> The diasporas' vast transnational networks, as well as their ability to pull together significant financial resources, also enable them to make positive impacts on their countries of origin.<sup>83</sup>

There is growing research and analysis on the various ways that migrants have contributed to peace.<sup>84</sup> One avenue has been through activism, with the diasporas, for example, campaigning against ongoing conflict and speaking out, raising awareness and drawing attention to issues in their countries of origin. The Irish diaspora activities in the United States during the 1980s and 1990s have often been cited as an example of successful campaigning and lobbying for political involvement of their countries of destination and residence to help speed up peace processes in their country of origin or heritage.<sup>85</sup> Efforts by various other diaspora groups, such as the political activism of Zimbabwean migrants in the United Kingdom to bring about socioeconomic and political changes in their country of origin, have also been well documented.<sup>86</sup>

### Refugee-led South Sudanese NGOs and peacebuilding in Ugandan refugee settlements

Uganda is home to nearly 900,000 refugees from South Sudan, who fled the civil war that broke out in 2013. Prior to the creation of a unity government in 2020, delays in the implementation of peace agreements signed in 2015 and 2018 had troubled prospects for the return of refugees to South Sudan, but they also fuelled refugee-led grassroots advocacy, education and peace work in refugee settlements. Refusing to rely solely on political leaders and international institutions, civil society actors strategically focused most of their efforts on the grassroots, proactively attempting to build "the South Sudan we want", starting in Ugandan settlements.

Sensitizing refugee populations on political processes surrounding the 2018 peace agreement is a key priority for South Sudanese civil society in Uganda. Through information sessions and workshops in settlements, where access to information and the Internet is often limited, refugee-led organizations shed light on the details of the agreement and provide a space for participants to openly express their views on the implementation process, including their doubts and frustrations. When possible, organizers relay this information to decision

80 Nordien, 2017; Toivanen and Baser, 2019.

81 Féron and Lefort, 2019.

82 Nordien, 2017.

83 Osman, 2008.

84 Freitas, 2012; Turner, 2008; Leung et al., 2017.

85 Vanore et al., 2015.

86 Kuhlmann, 2010.

makers. Yet the work of South Sudanese groups in Uganda does not stop at high-level negotiations and peace agreements, or at sensitizing refugee populations about their content. With international funding, grassroots peacebuilding initiatives aim to impart non-violent conflict resolution skills and to lessen ethnic stereotypes through cross-cultural dialogues and performances, as well as through projects aimed at mitigating hate speech.

Abridged excerpt of Gatkuoth and Leter, 2020.

In addition to activism and raising awareness, migrants have also facilitated peace processes – either as negotiators or as active participants in talks – in which they act as bridge-builders and foster constructive dialogue. Their contextual knowledge can help mediators locate various parties engaged in conflict, while sometimes also being able to urge these groups to take part in peace negotiations.<sup>87</sup> Their insights, as research has shown, play a big role in inspiring confidence and trust among both those involved in conflict, as well as mediators.<sup>88</sup> The Afghan diaspora, for example, continues to be very active in its home country's peace processes, including by organizing and participating in peace talks.<sup>89</sup> Migrants from several countries, such as Somalia and the Sudan, are also making significant contributions to peace processes and negotiations in their countries of origin.<sup>90</sup> These efforts have also extended to areas such as transitional justice, where they can and have bolstered processes of truth and reconciliation.<sup>91</sup> Migrants' contributions to peacebuilding have also encompassed restoring and creating key institutions, such as diaspora agencies,<sup>92</sup> which may not have existed or may have been undermined during conflict.<sup>93</sup> In addition to engaging in discussions and in drafting key political documents and legislation that may determine a country's political future,<sup>94</sup> migrants have also returned to run community and social cohesion programmes, been appointed to key roles in government or run for political office, as was notably the case in countries such as Latvia and Benin.<sup>95</sup>

Perhaps migrants' most documented peacebuilding contributions are those directed toward post-conflict reconstruction and development. As this chapter has already suggested, just as peace is fundamental to driving development, so is development fundamental to sustaining peace. Migrants' contributions to development, including to countries transitioning from conflict, are longstanding and have been studied over several decades. International remittances, for example, have been widely researched and shown as fundamental not only to supporting families and local communities, but also as important economic assets at a macrolevel, making up large shares of GDP in some countries.<sup>96</sup> As shown in Figure 1 below in low- and middle-income countries, remittances exceed both official development assistance and foreign direct investment<sup>97</sup> – see Chapter 2 of this report for trend analysis of international remittances globally.

87 Vanore et al., 2015.

88 Ibid.

89 Schlein, 2019.

90 Brinkerhoff, 2011.

91 Haider, 2014; Wiebelhaus-Brahm, 2016.

92 Schöffberger, 2020.

93 Vanore et al., 2015.

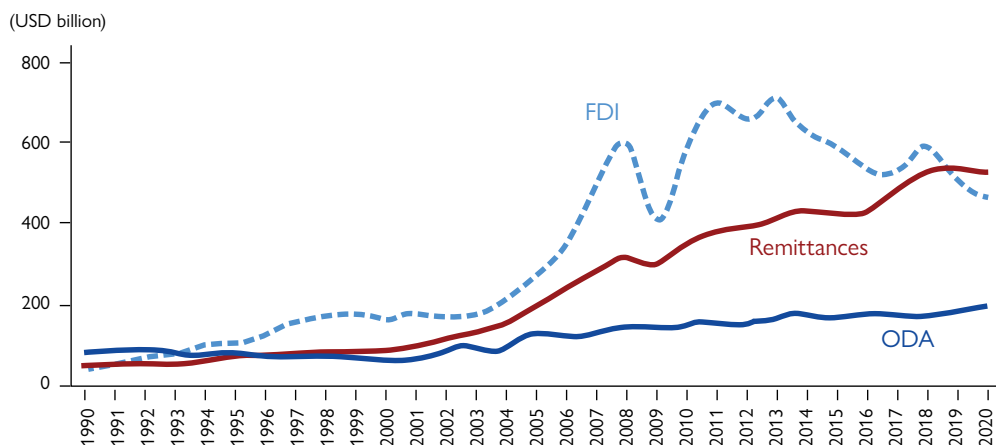
94 Ibid.

95 BBC News, 2019.

96 McAuliffe et al., 2019.

97 World Bank, 2021a.

Figure 1. Remittances, foreign direct investment (FDI) and official development assistance (ODA) flows to low- and middle-income countries, 1990–2020



Source: World Bank, 2021a.

Further, there is evidence showing that for people in some settings, particularly those in economic distress or in crisis and at risk of conflict, an increase in remittances can reduce the risk of conflict.<sup>98</sup> Remittances, it is argued, can diminish incentives for civil war in times of economic distress by helping to address the welfare needs of citizens when States are unable to do so.<sup>99</sup> In line with these findings, some researchers have shown that by reducing poverty and shoring up both average incomes and human capital, remittances discourage and disincentivize violence and thereby lessen violent social and civil strife.<sup>100</sup> In other words, with improving economic prospects, individuals are less likely to engage in violence.<sup>101</sup> Even where countries are already in conflict, remittances seem to play a positive role, contributing to a de-escalation of hostilities. Relatively recent work on whether remittances can “buy peace” demonstrates a negative causal effect on both the incidence and continuation of conflict, as remittances diminish or change the incentives for engaging in civil war.<sup>102</sup> It is important also to acknowledge, however, that remittances are not always associated with activities that foster peace or reduce conflict. Some research has, for example, linked these contributions to supporting armed groups or rebel movements.<sup>103</sup> Some have also noted the negative effect of remittances on the quality of a country’s governance, lowering civic engagement in some contexts and, as a result, diminishing the quality of institutions.<sup>104</sup> Beyond remittances, migrants’ other contributions to development, such as through investment in diaspora bonds, innovation and entrepreneurship, human capital stocks (including returning with new and specialist knowledge, skills and expertise) and helping to fill labour shortages also remain hugely important to peacebuilding.<sup>105</sup> Additionally, migrants’ “social remittances” or the ideas, values and practices that they bring with them<sup>106</sup> can also “contribute to local attitudes that are more receptive to peacebuilding processes”.<sup>107</sup>

98 Regan and Frank, 2014.

99 Ibid.

100 Hassan and Faria, 2015.

101 Ibid.

102 Batu, 2019.

103 Brinkerhoff, 2011.

104 Abdih et al., 2008.

105 McAuliffe et al., 2019.

106 Levitt, 1998.

107 Vanore et al., 2015.



## Conclusion

There have been substantial international efforts in recent years to foster migration that is safe, orderly and regular. The Global Compact for Migration, adopted by most United Nations Member States in 2018, is a culmination of and a significant step forward in such efforts. Migration by choice that is safe and more predictable, as this chapter has demonstrated, is in fact the norm for citizens in many countries that enjoy high levels of peace and stability. This is what we have sought to explore and underscore: to provide a better understanding of the connections between peace, security, development and migration and to engage a perspective that is often missing in discussions on population movements.

This chapter does not overlook or ignore some of the negative determinants of migration, notably conflict and violence. It would be impossible to explore how peace and security enhance more predictable population movements without discussing how the absence of peace and security undercuts and even impedes the kind of migration we all seek to see. Rather, in addition to demonstrating how conflict and underdevelopment result in displacement and irregular migration, our aim and key contribution lies in showing how peace and security underpin and are indeed a prerequisite for migration that is safe, orderly and regular.

Irregular migration and displacement remain key areas of concern for governments across the world. The devastating stories and images of migrants suffering abuses and even death during irregular migration journeys, coupled with the significant increase in displacement due to conflict and violence, continue to dominate international headlines. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, many people have continued to embark on dangerous journeys across the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, for example, with hundreds dying or going missing along the way. As the world continues to grapple with such humanitarian disasters, and as various actors, including policymakers, consider how to respond and prevent such tragedies from happening in the first place, it is important to reflect on how and why citizens of some countries are less affected by such events and are much more able to remain internationally mobile without undergoing the same harrowing experiences.

This chapter answers these questions by demonstrating that peace and security are key to understanding these dynamics and differences in migration experiences. Peace and security, where they are present, not only enable population movements that are more predictable and less defined by displacement, but also play a major role in driving economic growth and development which, in turn, also reduces irregular migration and lessens the possibility of countries falling into conflict. As the evidence suggests, conflict-induced displacement and irregular migration are simply much less present in highly peaceful and economically prosperous countries. What is also clear is that citizens of these countries, unlike those in unstable and fragile States, enjoy much more access to regular migration channels.

Addressing the underlying factors that drive conflict and violence is vital to building and maintaining peaceful and stable societies, which in turn foster migration that is safe. This chapter has highlighted some of the pragmatic peacebuilding initiatives, such as community stabilization, that have proven key within the context of migration and displacement to building and sustaining peace at a local level. We have also demonstrated how migrants, through a range of activities, contribute to peacebuilding. They do this by advocating for peace, through mediation, building public service institutions, and supporting their families and communities through remittances. Examples included in this chapter illustrate some of these key contributions.

Looking ahead, it will remain important for all relevant actors – including governments and international organizations – to further acknowledge as well as harness the many positive and unique contributions that migrants can and continue to make towards peace, stability and development. Further, it is critical for all key stakeholders to continue working towards the implementation of both the Global Compact for Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees, as central to both Compacts is a commitment to fostering peace by reducing and preventing negative drivers of migration, such as conflict and violence. The Global Compact for Migration's call for broader legal and regular migration pathways, moreover, has also never been more urgent, and its implementation will help narrow the gap in terms of who can and who cannot legally and safely access travel abroad or migrate to foreign countries.





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# 7 INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AS A STEPLADDER OF OPPORTUNITY: WHAT DO THE GLOBAL DATA ACTUALLY SHOW?<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

International migration is strongly associated with opportunity for positive advancement, most typically in economic terms. A long-standing, influential international migration narrative is deeply intertwined with the notion of betterment, whether this relates to individual attainment, household income or community resilience and coping strategies.<sup>2</sup> People migrate for better lives. This has long been a cornerstone of international migration research, analysis and policy:

Like many birds, but unlike most other animals, humans are a migratory species. Indeed, migration is as old as humanity itself. ... A careful examination of virtually any historical era reveals a consistent propensity towards geographic mobility among men and women, who are driven to wander by diverse motives, but nearly always with some idea of material improvement.<sup>3</sup>

There are many stories of the migrant who arrived in a new country with little and managed to build a successful business, become a respected civic leader, fund the education of an entire generation of extended family members back home or personally achieve the highest levels of academic attainment through sustained hard work. Likewise, we have also read complaints from some critics about people moving to access welfare regimes or certain jobs, mostly in negative and sometimes politicized terms. While these somewhat superficial narrative examples might be quite different in framing and perspective, they are both strongly associated with attainment and the fact that migration offers the person(s) migrating some positive and tangible benefit. In other words, it is difficult to contemplate someone actively migrating into a worse situation. To have moved internationally and to be worse off is more likely to be associated with “forced migration” (otherwise referred to as displacement) and can be due to war, persecution, disaster or other reasons. Unsurprisingly, displacement is strongly related to unanticipated and profound loss.<sup>4</sup>

Beyond narratives of migration, international *emigration* has been a policy pursued by some national governments over many decades as part of broader economic agendas.<sup>5</sup> Emigration has supported the development of international trade, diplomacy and peace, and helped to forge cultural ties as well as provide a source of foreign income. In other countries, *international immigration* has been a significant policy lever in the journey of “nation building”

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2 Castles et al., 2014; Massey et al., 2005.

3 Massey et al., 2005:2.

4 Ayeb-Karlsson, 2020; Ibáñez and Vélez, 2008; Turton, 2003.

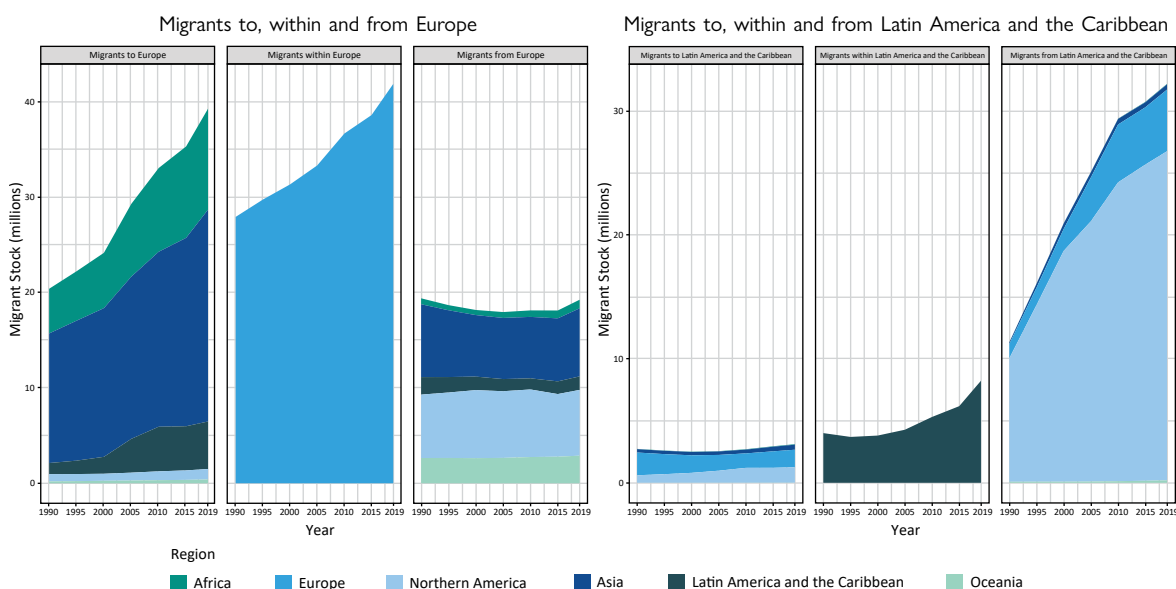
5 Lee, 2016; Premi and Mathur, 1995; Xiang, 2016.



during a period in which international competition between States has intensified and the search for “global talent” amplified.<sup>6</sup>

In numerical terms, the number of international migrants has grown from around 84 million globally in 1970 to 281 million in 2020, although when global population growth is factored in, the proportion of international migrants has only inched up from 2.3 to 3.6 per cent of the world's population.<sup>7</sup> However, the change in the number and proportion of international migrants has not been uniform, with significant variation in migration rates around the world. Distinct regional patterns have emerged over time (see Figure 1), often underpinned by large, historical migration corridors linked to geographic proximity as much as geoeconomic disparity.

Figure 1. International migrants by region 1990 to 2019: Migrants to, migrants within and migrants from Europe, and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)



Source: UN DESA, 2019.

Note: “Migrants to Europe” refers to migrants residing in the region (i.e. Europe) who were born in one of the other regions (e.g. Africa or Asia). “Migrants within Europe” refers to migrants born in the region (i.e. Europe) and residing outside their country of birth, but still within the European region. “Migrants from Europe” refers to people born in Europe who were residing outside the region (e.g. in Latin America and the Caribbean or Northern America).

Note: “Migrants to Latin America and the Caribbean” refers to migrants residing in the region (i.e. Latin America and the Caribbean) who were born in one of the other regions (e.g. in Europe or Asia). “Migrants within Latin America and the Caribbean” refers to migrants born in the region (i.e. Latin America and the Caribbean) and residing outside their country of birth, but still within the Latin America and the Caribbean region. “Migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean” refers to people born in Latin America and the Caribbean who were residing outside the region (e.g. in Europe or Northern America).

<sup>6</sup> Alarcón, 2011; Bhuyan et al., 2015; Fargues, 2011; Moran, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> UN DESA, 2021. See Chapter 2 for a discussion of definitions. While internal migration (especially urbanization) has also played a significant role in the provision of opportunities via mobility, this chapter focuses on international migration.

We can see from Figure 1 that very distinct trends have emerged at the regional level over the last 30 years, such as the strong preference of people from Latin America and the Caribbean to migrate to Northern America, and the almost doubling of migration to Europe from other regions. Within these regional pictures, additional variability is apparent at the country level, with some countries accounting for a greater share of international migrants over time (e.g. the proportion of migrants in the United Arab Emirates has risen from 71% in 1990 to 88% in 2019), while other countries face increasing emigration and declining fertility such that “depopulation” challenges are looming (Latvia, Lithuania and Bosnia and Herzegovina all experienced more than 10% declines in population since 2009).<sup>8</sup>

In this chapter, we examine the key questions of “who migrates internationally and where do they go?” We analyse a range of statistical data at the country and regional levels and draw upon some of the existing body of research on migration determinants and decision-making. The next section summarizes some of the key debates in international migration, including those in the development context. The following section presents an analysis of migration between 1995 and 2020,<sup>9</sup> with reference to human development, before discussion in the third section on policy levers. The chapter then concludes by outlining some of the key policy and programmatic implications and challenges ahead.

## Concepts and context

There has been considerable research and enquiry over many decades into the reasons underpinning migration, both internal and international, stretching back in the modern era as far as the 1880s.<sup>10</sup> Ongoing examination of migration drivers and factors principally involves attempts to explain migration patterns as well as the structures and processes that influence and shape the movement of people from one country to another. As a result, there is a substantial body of research and analysis on the determinants of international migration that has identified multiple factors underpinning migration patterns and processes, including those related to economics and trade, social and cultural links, demography and demographic change, and safety and protection, as well as geography and proximity.<sup>11</sup>

There has been a considerable focus on agency and structure, and how people contemplating migration navigate through a range of “intervening obstacles”, with the number and nature of those obstacles being related to human capability in the context of development.<sup>12</sup> While the populist view remains that so-called “economic migrants” are active in their pursuit of migration and exercise a considerable degree of agency, this is too simplistic. While acknowledging long-term evidence reflected in academic outputs on the political economy of migration, research and analysis in more recent decades has, for example, found wide variation in the ability of labour migrants to make choices, depending on the policy constraints and options they face; these constraints include conditions of bonded labour, as well as labour migration that involves people trading off their rights in pressurized environments.<sup>13</sup> For example, the extent to which labour migrants are able to exercise self-agency and choose aspects of their migration

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8 See the *World Migration Report 2020*, Chapter 3, for discussion.

9 The chapter draws upon international migrant stock data for 2020 (UN DESA, 2021) and human development index data for 2019 (UNDP, 2020), these being the latest data available at the time of drafting.

10 Ravenstein, 1885; Ravenstein, 1889.

11 See for example writings on cumulative causation (Massey, 1990), neoclassical economics (Todaro, 1989), world system theory (Portes and Walton, 1981), social capital theory (Massey et al., 1987), new economics of labour migration (Stark and Bloom, 1985) and social network theory (Boyd, 1989).

12 Lee, 1966; Sen, 1999.

13 Ruhs, 2013.

can be heavily circumscribed, although in most circumstances some choice remains, including as to whether to migrate, where to migrate, how to migrate, and whether or when to return home.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, the ability of (potential) migrants to exercise choice in international migration can be extremely limited, depending on where they were born and the circumstances in which they live.

### *Migration and the lottery of birth*

Examining the overall quality of life by country, and the ability to migrate in terms of visa access, reveals that availability of migration options is partly related to the lottery of birth and in particular the national passport of the potential migrant. For instance, some nationality groups appear to be much less likely to have access to visas and visa-free arrangements.<sup>15</sup> Table 1 below summarizes global indices of human development (see Appendix A for a discussion of the Human Development Index), fragility and visa access for selected countries.<sup>16</sup> The Passport Index, a global ranking of countries according to the entry freedom of their citizens,<sup>17</sup> reveals for example that an individual's ability to enter a country with relative ease is in many respects determined by nationality. Entry access also broadly reflects a country's status and relations within the international community and indicates how stable, safe and prosperous it is in relation to other countries. The data also show two other aspects: that there are some significant differences between highly ranked human development countries and others; and that mid-ranked development countries can be significant source, transit and destination countries simultaneously. Nationals from countries with very high levels of human development can travel visa free to most other countries worldwide.<sup>18</sup> These countries are also significant and preferred destination countries.<sup>19</sup> Toward the bottom of the table, however, the entry restrictions in place for these countries indicate that regular migration pathways are problematic for citizens. Irregular pathways are likely to be the most realistic (if not the only) option open to potential migrants from these countries. It is also important to note that low HDI countries are also much more likely to have large populations of internally displaced persons and/or to be origin countries of large numbers of refugees.<sup>20</sup>

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14 Khalaf and Alkobaisi, 1999; Ullah, 2011.

15 We note here that different types of visas involve different levels of processing and scrutiny; however, the Henley index provides a useful synthesis of access to regular migration at the global level by country.

16 The Human Development Index is a composite index measuring average achievement in three basic dimensions of human development: life expectancy, education and a decent standard of living. The Passport Index measures visa restrictions in place in 227 countries, territories and areas and indicates the capacity of individuals to travel to other international destinations with relative ease. The higher the rank, the more countries an individual with that passport can enter visa free. The Fragile States Index, produced by the Fund for Peace, is an annual ranking of 178 nations based on their levels of stability and the pressures they face. The index includes social, economic, political and military indicators.

17 Henley & Partners, 2021.

18 Ibid.

19 Esipova et al., 2018; Keogh, 2013; McAuliffe and Jayasuriya, 2016; UN DESA, 2021.

20 IDMC, 2020; UNHCR, 2020.



Table 1. Human development, fragility and passport rankings for selected countries

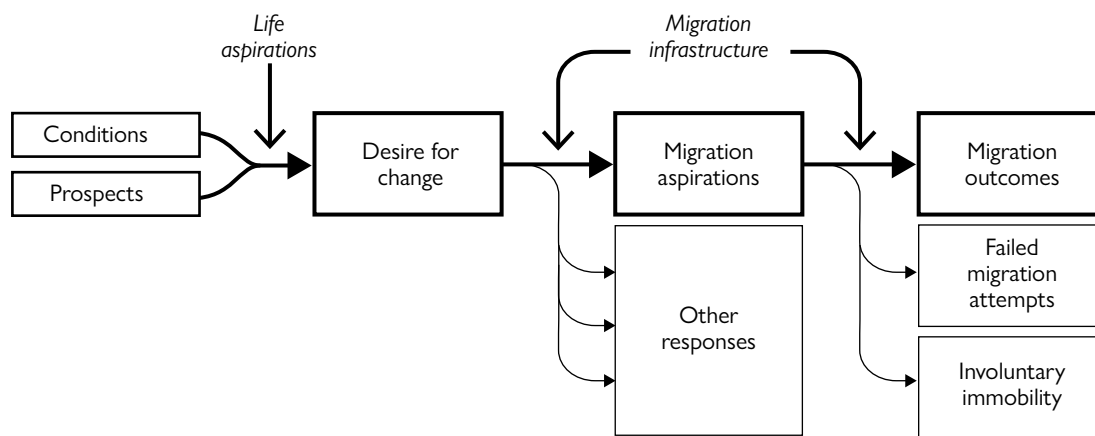
	Country (in HDI rank order)	Human Development Index 2019	Passport Index 2021	Fragile States Index 2020
		Rank	Rank	Rank
Very High Human Development	Norway	1	8	177
	Germany	6	3	166
	Australia	8	9	169
	Singapore	11	2	162
	Canada	16	9	171
	United States	17	7	149
	France	26	6	160
	Italy	29	4	143
	Malaysia	62	12	120
High Human Development	Sri Lanka	72	99	52
	Mexico	74	23	98
	Thailand	79	65	82
	Tunisia	95	72	95
	Lebanon	92	100	40
	Libya	105	101	20
	Indonesia	107	72	96
	Egypt	116	90	35
Medium Human Development	Kyrgyzstan	120	79	73
	Iraq	123	109	17
	Morocco	121	78	80
	India	131	84	68
	Bangladesh	133	100	39
	Cambodia	144	88	55
	Kenya	143	72	29
	Pakistan	154	107	25
Low Human Development	Uganda	159	75	24
	Sudan	170	100	8
	Haiti	170	92	13
	Afghanistan	169	110	9
	Ethiopia	173	96	21
	Yemen	179	106	1
	Eritrea	180	98	18
A number 1 ranking means:		Very high human development	Most mobile passport citizenship	Most fragile country
The lowest ranking means:		Low human development	Least mobile passport citizenship	Least fragile country

Sources: UNDP, Human Development Index 2019 (Human Development Report 2020); Henley & Partners, Passport Index 2021 (The Henley Passport Index 2021, Q2); The Fund for Peace Fragile States Index 2020.

Note: Data were the latest available at the time of writing.

We also know, however, that nationality alone does not account for evolving migration patterns, as visa and mobility policy settings are one (albeit important) factor in explaining who migrates and where people migrate over time. Within the context of the broader discussions on migration drivers and the development of discernible migration patterns over recent years and decades, models to explain migration, as shown in Figure 2, seek to account for both structural aspects and migrants' agency.

Figure 2. A model of the mechanisms that produce migration



Source: Carling, 2017.

Importantly, this model recognizes that a desire for change does not necessarily result in a desire to migrate, and that where it does exist, a desire to migrate does not necessarily result in migration – the existence of migration infrastructure<sup>21</sup> (or lack thereof) is an important factor in migration outcomes, with migration infrastructure defined as diverse human and non-human elements that enable and shape migration (e.g. migration “agents” operating commercially, including smugglers; regulatory regimes and policy frameworks; technological aspects such as ICT and transport; and transnational social networks).<sup>22</sup>

As part of this migration infrastructure, the (in)ability to access a visa can be profoundly important, not least because it is the one element that has not radically expanded over time, unlike the marked growth in “agents”, ICT, transport and connected networks.<sup>23</sup> On the contrary, recent analysis shows that visa access has resulted in a bifurcation of mobility, with citizens of wealthy countries much more able to access regulated mobility regimes than those from poor countries.<sup>24</sup> This is important because, wherever possible, migrants will opt to migrate through regular pathways on visas.<sup>25</sup> There are stark differences between travelling on a visa and travelling unauthorized without a visa. From a migrant’s perspective, the experience can be profoundly different in a number of important ways that can impact on the migrant as well as his/her family, including those who may remain in the origin country. First, visas denote authority to enter a country and so offer a form of legitimacy when arriving in and travelling

<sup>21</sup> Xiang and Lindquist, 2014.

<sup>22</sup> Carling, 2017.

<sup>23</sup> Lahav, 1999; McAuliffe., 2017a; Triandafyllidou and McAuliffe, 2018.

<sup>24</sup> Mau et al., 2015.

<sup>25</sup> Jayasuriya et al., 2016; Koser and Kuschminder, 2015; Marouf, 2017; McAuliffe et al., 2017. Please note that while “regular” migration does not necessarily require visas, the discussion refers to visas because these are often a requirement, most especially for migrants from developing countries. In addition, the term “visa” is much more widely understood than “regular” by migrants and the general public.

through a country. A valid visa provides a greater chance of being safeguarded against exploitation. Conversely, travelling without a visa puts people at much greater risk of being detained and deported by authorities, or exploited and abused by those offering illicit migration services, such as smugglers or traffickers, and having to operate largely outside of regulated systems.<sup>26</sup> Second, travelling on visas is undoubtedly much easier logistically, as the availability of travel options is far greater. In some cases, it can mean the difference between a journey being feasible or not. Third, visas provide a greater level of certainty and confidence in the journey, which is much more likely to take place as planned, including in relation to costs.<sup>27</sup>

Unsurprisingly, there is thus often a strong preference for travelling on a visa. Access to visas within decision-making contexts, therefore, features heavily in the minds of potential migrants and has been shown to be a key factor when the possibilities of migrating are explored while in the country of origin.<sup>28</sup> In recent research on online job search and migration intentions, for example, the availability of visas was found to be a determining factor in how people conducted online job searches.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, changes in visa settings have been found to have an impact on potential migrants' perceptions of opportunities afforded by migration, as well as their eventual migration.<sup>30</sup>

The intentions of (potential) migrants as part of individual and collective migrant decision-making processes has been a significant focus of migration research and analysis for many years, and remains of particular interest to scholars and policymakers alike.<sup>31</sup> As highlighted in Figure 2 above, intentions do not always result in migration outcomes, and much of the research has adopted a tiered approach to contemplations of migration that involve different stages (such as “desire”, “exploration/planning”, “preparation” and “down/actual payment”), finding overall that as the process progresses over time, fewer and fewer people are able to maintain their desire and realize their migration intention, and those in the final “payment” category are typically very small in number and proportion.<sup>32</sup> Intentions to migrate – even if carefully refined and nuanced – can only take us so far in understanding migration.<sup>33</sup>

### *Migration and development: mobility transitions and “hump migration”*

The significant limitations or obstacles facing people (especially in countries with low levels of human development) in accessing visa regimes to pursue international migration is also reflected in macroeconomic analysis of migration. One line of research on the links between “maturity” of migration and human development, for example, shows that low-income countries have low emigration rates, an explanation being that low income levels are an obstacle in accumulating the funds needed to undertake migration, acknowledging that other factors (e.g. demography) also play a role.<sup>34</sup> Resource consideration is related to the concept of “involuntary immobility”, in which people who would like to migrate internationally are unable to do so for a number of reasons, including costs.<sup>35</sup>

Further, analysis of the relationship between country income and international migration shows that emigration increases with higher income levels, and that at a certain point, higher incomes enabling increased emigration can then become a stabilizing influence and reduce outward migration. In other words, as GDP per capita increases,

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26 McAuliffe, 2017a.

27 McAuliffe et al., 2017.

28 Jayasuriya, 2014; Manik, 2014.

29 Sinclair and Mamertino, 2016.

30 Czaika and de Haas, 2016; Gaibazzi, 2014; Jayasuriya et al., 2016; Manik, 2014; McAuliffe and Jayasuriya, 2016.

31 Clemens and Mendola, 2020; Lee, 1966; McAuliffe, 2017b; Neumayer, 2010; Van Hear et al., 2012.

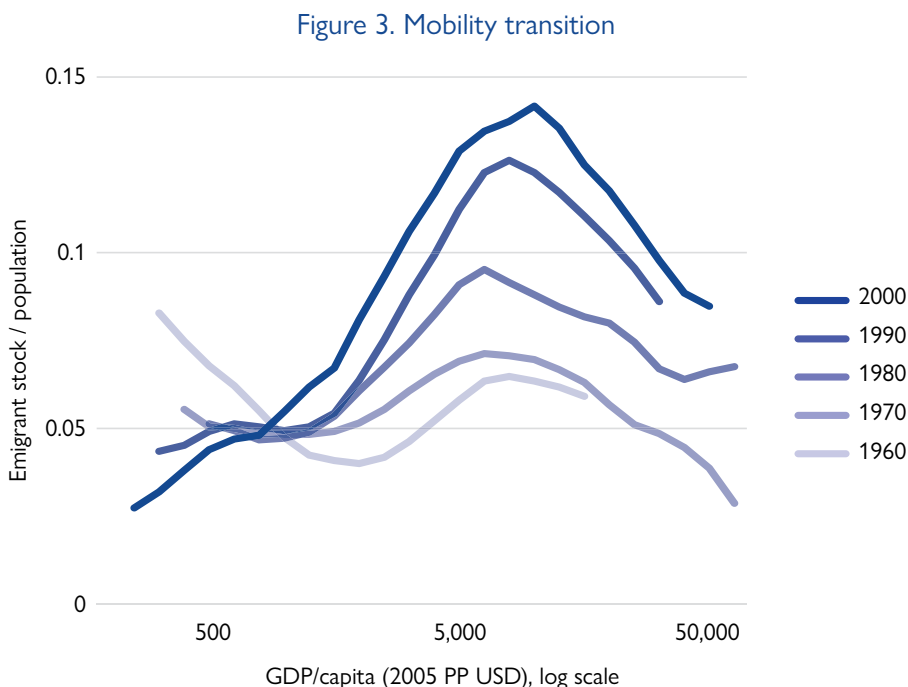
32 McAuliffe and Jayasuriya, 2016.

33 Tjaden et al. (2018) examined the links between intentions and migration flows, however, this is limited to a narrow and specific geography.

34 Clemens, 2014; Dao et al., 2018; Zelinsky, 1971.

35 Carling, 2002.

emigration initially increases and then decreases. This phenomenon, depicted in Figure 3,<sup>36</sup> has been referred to by some analysts as the “mobility transition”.<sup>37</sup>



Source: Adapted from Clemens, 2014:7–8.

Notes: Clemens found that overall higher economic development (higher income) is associated with reduced emigration. Refer to Clemens (2014) for further discussion of data analysis.

As shown in Figure 3, Clemens's analysis estimates that emigration rates start to decrease if countries rise above GDP per capita income levels of USD 7,000–8,000, which at the time of the analysis (using 2005 GDP data) included countries such as Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji and North Macedonia.<sup>38</sup> Further, as income levels rise, emigration rates decline, as illustrated by the so-called “migration hump”.<sup>39</sup>

The interaction of economic development and international migration – or “mobility transitions” – has been of intense interest to researchers and policymakers globally, as it calls into question the commonly held notion that overseas development assistance will act to “stabilize” populations and dampen emigration rates from low-income countries by providing greater opportunities at home.<sup>40</sup> Analysts have found that economic development of low-income countries is positively correlated with emigration: “economic growth has historically raised emigration in almost all developing countries”.<sup>41</sup> However, more recent analysis has found that when shorter time periods

<sup>36</sup> Clemens, 2014.

<sup>37</sup> Akerman, 1976; Clemens, 2014; Dao et al., 2018; de Haas, 2010; Gould, 1979.

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, the interactive World Bank dashboard on GDP per capita (PPP) at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.PP.CD>.

<sup>39</sup> Zelinsky, 1971. See discussion in de Haas (2010) of the difference between “mobility transition” and “migration hump”, which has become confused/conflated over time.

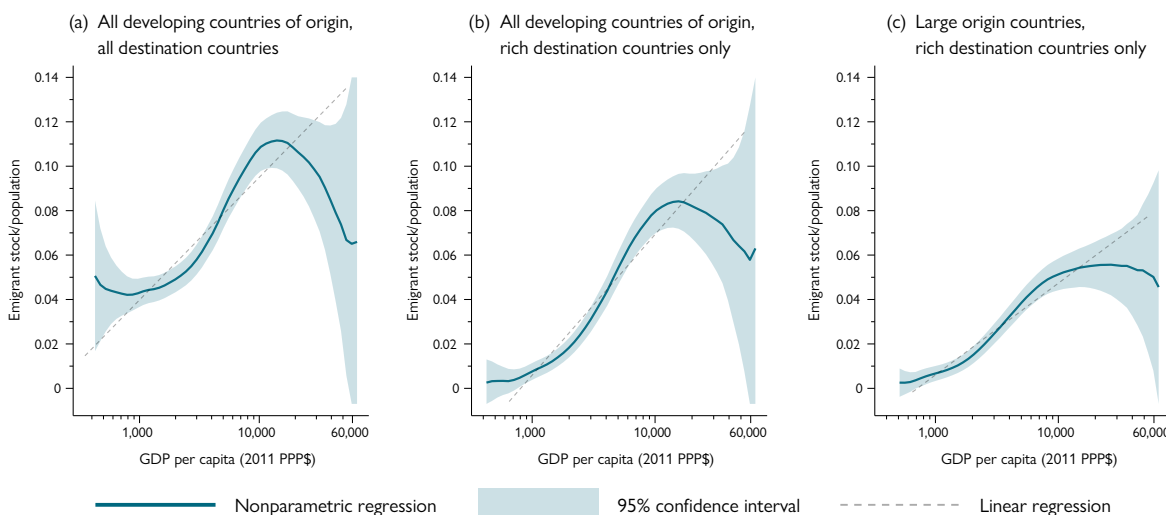
<sup>40</sup> Clemens, 2020; de Haas, 2010, 2020.

<sup>41</sup> Clemens and Postel, 2018.

are examined, the relationship between country income levels and emigration is less clear, with the finding that economic growth in poor countries coincides with less emigration.<sup>42</sup> This finding, however, has been hotly contested with the discussion focusing on technical errors in modelling (please see Appendix B for further background).<sup>43</sup> Importantly, much of the research and analysis on mobility transitions focuses on emigration from low-income countries, almost certainly due to the preoccupation in policy and academic spheres with (irregular) migration to very high HDI countries.<sup>44</sup>

As can be seen from Figure 3, as country income levels rise, emigration decreases, forming a so-called “hump” pattern. However, rather than a migrant “hump” involving a trailing off of emigration rates as incomes rise, a so-called “plateau” has previously been identified by scholars who call into question the notion that emigration rates decline as countries develop over time.<sup>45</sup> Others have questioned the time periods applied to theorizing underlying migration dynamics related to “humps” or “mobility transitions”.<sup>46</sup> However, as the overall quantity and quality of data related to migrants, human development (including economic indicators), mobility and migration policy improves over time, it is possible that a divergent picture is emerging. One perspective shows that emigration to and from wealthy countries is a key feature of recent migration patterns, while migration from developing countries remains much more limited. This is highlighted in recent analyses, with particular reference to the very wide confidence bands evident in Figure 4, meaning that we cannot be certain that emigration declines with higher incomes; however, emigration prevalence is non-linear (meaning that there is not a straightforward positive relationship between emigration rates and country income levels).

Figure 4. Emigration prevalence, 1960 to 2019



Source: Clemens, 2020.

42 Benček and Schneiderheinze, 2020.

43 Vermeulen, 2020.

44 See, for example, Carling et al., 2020; Czaika and Hobolth, 2016; de Haas, 2020; and Tjaden et al., 2018, which do not address emigration from highly developed countries.

45 Martin and Taylor, 1996.

46 See, for example, discussion in de Haas, 2010; and Clemens, 2020.

## Who migrates internationally and where do they go? International migration globally between 1995 to 2020

In seeking to answer this question, it is important to acknowledge that the ability to offer a perspective at the global level – as part of this World Migration Report – is challenging. As widely acknowledged over many years, statistics to support our collective understanding of international migration patterns and trends are not as well developed as those available in other domains. However, there has been renewed interest in and action on migration statistics, with several major initiatives launched or under way in recent years.<sup>47</sup>

While migration flow statistics are limited to specific, narrow geographies (see Chapter 2 for discussion),<sup>48</sup> a global picture on international migration patterns and trends can be drawn from international “foreign-born” migrant population data.<sup>49</sup> Analysis of long-term migrant stock trends allows for insights into where people migrate to, and which countries they emigrate from.<sup>50</sup> The UN DESA statistical estimates are widely acknowledged as the main data source on international migrants globally, with separate databases compiled on various categories of migrants (such as migrant workers, missing migrants, internally displaced persons, refugees and asylum seekers).<sup>51</sup>

Since this chapter re-examines international migration from the perspective of opportunity (or lack thereof), the circumstances of forced displacement are set to one side, in recognition of the lack of choice and the related losses associated with being forcibly displaced. Data on international displacement (refugees and asylum seekers) have, therefore, been subtracted from the international migrant statistics collected by UN DESA in order to produce an estimated total of international migrant stock minus forcibly displaced.<sup>52</sup> For a full description of the methods, see Appendix C.

For this analysis, we have also used HDI, which allows for a complementary perspective to that provided by macroeconomic analysis based on country income data. Such macroeconomic contributions to our understanding of global migration have analysed migration-related data against economic indicators, such as gross domestic product or the average income of a household. The outcome of this research has been fruitful, but there is a substantial body of literature suggesting that migration is motivated by income considerations as well as a range of other factors.<sup>53</sup> Just as development is more than economic, opportunity to improve well-being beyond economic aspects affects migration trends worldwide. Our analysis, therefore, draws upon the broad set of indicators represented in the HDI (see discussion of the HDI in Appendix A). More specifically, our analysis utilizes HDI and migrant stock data from 1995 to 2020. Beginning the analysis in 1995 allows for the inclusion of more countries that did not have reportable data when the HDI was first published; it also allows for geopolitical changes in Eastern Europe following the dissolution of the former Soviet Union. At the time of writing, the most current migrant stock data available are from 2020. However, the effects of COVID-19 on migrants and migration are likely to be significant and may have important impacts on migration patterns well into the future (see Chapter 5 for further discussion).

47 See, for example, the [International Forum on Migration Statistics](#) (co-led by IOM, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development OECD, and UN DESA), the [Global Migration Data Analysis Centre](#) and the [UN Expert Group on Migration Statistics](#).

48 Migration flow estimates are published by UN DESA for 47 countries (see UN DESA, 2021) and annually by the OECD for its 30+ member States.

49 See UN DESA, 2021.

50 Abel and Sander, 2014; IOM, 2017; IOM, 2019.

51 See Chapter 2 of this report for analysis and data sources.

52 We note that this may not include disaster and other displacement outside of the categories of refugees and asylum seekers; however, this type of displacement is not consolidated in any existing data set.

53 See discussion earlier in this chapter.

### Who has migrated?

As noted above, while the global number of international migrants has increased substantially over the past 25 years, rising from approximately 161 million migrants in 1995 to 281 migrants in 2020, the proportion of international migrants has only slightly increased, rising from 2.8 to 3.6 per cent of the global population over the intervening years. Table 2 shows the difference between 1995 and 2020, disaggregated by United Nations region.<sup>54</sup> While absolute numbers of immigrants have increased by tens of millions across all regions, the share of international migrants as a proportion of each region's population has only marginally increased in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean, while Europe, Northern America and Oceania have seen the proportion of international migrants rise by around 4 percentage points or more in each.

Table 2. Immigrants by United Nations region, 1995 and 2020

Region	Year	Immigrant stock (millions)	Immigrant share of population (%)
Africa	1995	10.1	1.4
	2020	15.8	1.2
Asia	1995	39.2	1.1
	2020	71.1	1.5
Europe	1995	50.8	7.0
	2020	81.7	10.9
Latin America and the Caribbean	1995	6.2	1.3
	2020	13.3	2.0
Northern America	1995	30.7	10.4
	2020	53.3	14.5
Oceania	1995	4.9	16.8
	2020	9.0	21.2

Source: UN DESA, 2021.

Table 3 shows both emigrants (origin) and immigrants (destination) further disaggregated at the country level, with the top 20 countries for each category listed in descending order. Countries in Europe and Asia feature as both origin and destination countries for tens of millions of migrants.

<sup>54</sup> A breakdown of UN regions can be found in Appendix A of Chapter 3 of this report.

Table 3. Top 20 countries of origin and destination,  
by number (millions) and proportion of total population

Origin						Destination					
1995			2020			1995			2020		
Country	Emigrants	(%)	Country	Emigrants	(%)	Country	Immigrants	(%)	Country	Immigrants	(%)
Russian Federation	11.38	7.1	India	17.79	1.3	United States of America	24.60	9.3	United States of America	43.43	13.1
India	7.15	0.7	Mexico	11.07	7.9	Russian Federation	11.91	8.0	Germany	14.22	17.0
Mexico	6.95	7.0	Russian Federation	10.65	6.8	Germany	7.28	9.0	Saudi Arabia	13.00	37.3
Ukraine	5.60	9.9	China	9.80	0.7	India	6.69	0.7	Russian Federation	11.58	7.9
Bangladesh	5.37	4.5	Bangladesh	7.34	4.3	France	5.96	10.3	United Kingdom	8.92	13.1
China	4.70	0.4	Pakistan	6.14	2.7	Ukraine	5.77	11.3	United Arab Emirates	8.43	85.3
United Kingdom	3.61	5.9	Ukraine	6.05	12.2	Saudi Arabia	4.94	26.5	France	8.09	12.4
Pakistan	3.33	2.6	Philippines	6.01	5.2	Canada	4.69	16.1	Canada	7.81	20.7
Kazakhstan	3.30	17.2	Poland	4.82	11.3	Australia	4.11	22.9	Australia	7.41	29.1
Italy	3.20	5.3	United Kingdom	4.62	6.4	United Kingdom	3.99	6.9	Spain	6.63	14.2
Germany	3.04	3.6	Indonesia	4.58	1.6	Kazakhstan	2.89	18.3	Italy	6.13	10.1
Turkey	2.73	4.5	Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of	4.49	13.6	Pakistan	2.46	2.0	Ukraine	4.57	10.4
Philippines	2.43	3.4	Kazakhstan	4.20	18.3	China, Hong Kong SAR	2.09	34.4	India	4.48	0.3
Indonesia	1.93	1.0	Romania	3.98	17.1	Côte d'Ivoire	2.02	14.2	Thailand	3.53	5.1
Portugal	1.91	15.9	Germany	3.85	4.4	United Arab Emirates	1.78	73.6	Kazakhstan	3.39	18.1
Morocco	1.88	6.5	Egypt	3.57	3.4	Italy	1.70	3.0	Malaysia	3.08	9.5
Poland	1.76	4.4	Turkey	3.28	3.7	Israel	1.55	29.5	Kuwait	2.98	69.8
Belarus	1.74	14.7	Morocco	3.25	8.1	Jordan	1.53	33.4	China, Hong Kong SAR	2.85	38.1
Republic of Korea	1.68	3.6	Italy	3.25	5.1	Argentina	1.51	4.3	Jordan	2.69	26.4
Afghanistan	1.67	8.5	Viet Nam	3.07	3.1	Uzbekistan	1.43	6.3	Japan	2.49	2.0

HDI:

Low Medium High Very High

Sources: UNDP, 2020; UN DESA, 2021.

Note: Uzbekistan did not receive an HDI score until 2000. At that time, the HDI classified Uzbekistan as a medium HDI country. As per UN DESA definitions, emigrants are “foreign born” such that major political changes (e.g. 1947 Partition, dissolution of the Soviet Union) can be reflected in data (further discussion of definitions can be found in Chapter 2). Some categories of international migrant are not included (see methods in Appendix C).



Between 1995 and 2020, only a few countries changed from being among the top 20 migrant origin countries (with Portugal, Belarus, the Republic of Korea and Afghanistan included among the top 20 in 1995, but replaced by 2020 by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Romania, Egypt and Viet Nam). We can see, however, that there are far fewer medium HDI countries of origin by 2020 and no low HDI countries; however, this relates in part to the development progress by countries and their recategorization (discussed further below). The prevalence of high and very high HDI countries as origin countries is quite stark by 2020, accounting for 16 of the 20 top origin countries.

In terms of destination countries as at 1995 and 2020, compared with the top 20 origin countries, there was greater change evident, with five countries dropping out of the list (Pakistan, Côte d'Ivoire, Argentina, Israel and Uzbekistan), being replaced by Spain, Thailand, Malaysia, Kuwait and Japan. With the exception of the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, India, Jordan and Ukraine, all of the destination countries in both the 1995 and 2020 top 20 lists experienced increases in numbers and proportions of immigrants over this period. Further, Table 3 shows the substantial increase in numbers of immigrants experienced in many destination countries, most notably in the United States of America, Saudi Arabia, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates. This highlights that while it may be useful to discuss international migrants at the global and regional levels, there are distinct long-term country-to-country corridors that account for large proportions of international migration, potentially masking the extent to which migration remains highly uneven globally.<sup>55</sup>

### *Migration trends through the prism of human development*

Current data indicate that most international migrants (79.6% or 190 million) reside in very high HDI countries. We can see, for example, that all of the top 10 countries of destination in Table 3 are very high HDI countries, and the majority of the remaining top destination countries in Table 3 are also very high HDI (with the rest being high HDI countries). This is consistent with long-term trends and existing knowledge that shows that international migration has developed over time as a means for households, families and communities to realize opportunities, including substantial increases in household income via international remittances.<sup>56</sup>

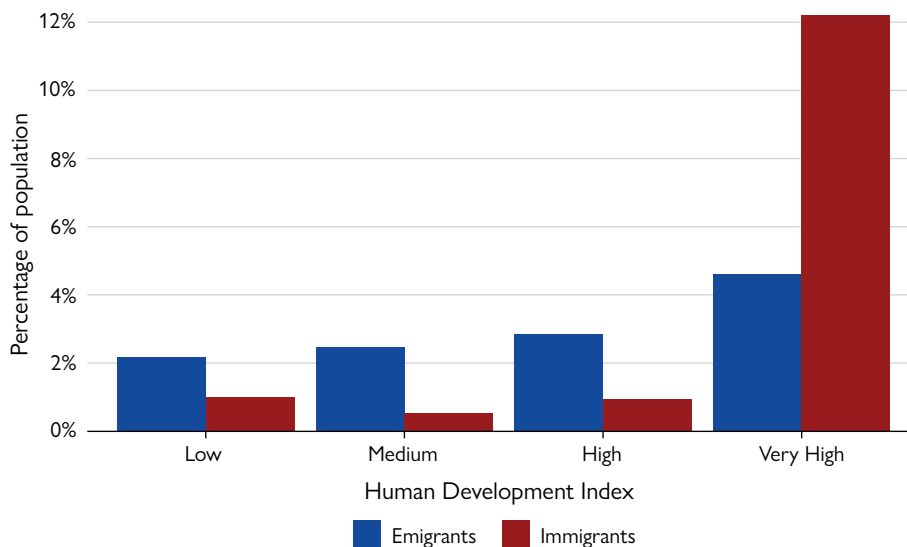
The current data also highlight that most of the top 20 origin countries are very high (8) or high (8) HDI countries. By 2020, the remaining four origin countries were medium HDI countries.

This is also shown in Figure 5 below, which clearly highlights that international migrants are concentrated in very high and high HDI countries, being most pronounced for immigrants, but also showing significant prevalence among emigrants. In other words, there is a lot more migration occurring in the more developed countries in the world, with lower numbers and proportions in medium and low HDI categories. Interestingly, and contrary to the mobility transitions analysis discussed above (see Figure 3), the very high HDI countries combined have produced a high proportion of emigrants relative to the aggregate population (4.6%), which is higher than high, medium and low HDI categories. Further, in numerical terms, very high HDI countries produced 76 million migrants, second only to high HDI countries (86 million).

55 Migration corridors are discussed in detail and graphically present in the *World Migration Report 2020*, Chapter 3 (IOM, 2019).

56 Clemens and Pritchett, 2008; de Haas, 2005; Ratha, 2013.

Figure 5. Immigrants and emigrants by Human Development Index country category, 2020

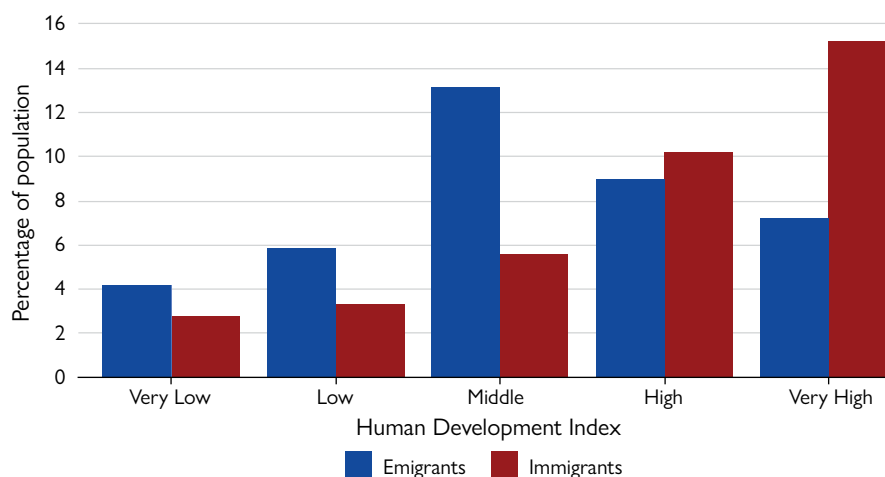


Sources: UN DESA, 2021; UNDP, 2020.

Note: Some categories of international migrant are not included (see methods in Appendix C).

This snapshot in Figure 5 shows that many more emigrants were born in wealthier countries and seem to have moved to other wealthier countries. Other earlier analysis, however, seems to show very different patterns to Figure 6 below, in which 2005 HDI data are used.<sup>57</sup>

Figure 6. Association between Human Development Index scores and immigrant/emigrant stocks, 2005



Source: de Haas, 2010:4, reproduced in de Haas, 2020.

Note: Categorization by author (not UNDP's HDI 4 categories).

<sup>57</sup> de Haas, 2010; de Haas, 2020.

In Figure 6, the association between HDI and international migrants is represented, although an author-created fifth category of “very low HDI” based on HDI scores is used (not among UNDP’s four categories), and “average migration values” are applied rather than aggregated migrant stock and population data by category.<sup>58</sup> Figure 5 shows that emigrants as a percentage of population are lower from high and very high HDI categories compared with medium HDI, which appears consistent with the “mobility transitions” analysis (Figure 3), but different to the current empirical evidence in Figure 6 above.

Lower levels of emigration from low HDI countries is apparent in both figures; however, the two sets of bivariate analyses highlight different rates of emigration from wealthier countries. To explore the difference between the emigration data for high HDI categories represented in Figures 5 and 6, we first looked at changes since 1995. Overall, there appear to be two important but distinct change processes occurring:

- Significant changes in HDI classification; and
- Intensifying migration to, as well as from, highly developed countries.

These are now discussed in turn.

### *Human development index changes since 1995: the up and up*

The HDI was developed by economist Mahbub ul Haq and first used by UNDP in 1990 as the centrepiece of its 1990 Human Development Report in an effort to better encompass human aspects in the analysis of development, previously dominated by economic indicators.<sup>59</sup> Initially, the HDI covered 130 countries, increasing to 163 in 1995 and progressively reaching a total of 189 countries (see Table 4). All countries that have been reclassified over time have moved into a higher classification in accordance with HDI methods, with the exception of the Syrian Arab Republic (dropping from medium to low in 2015).<sup>60</sup> By 2019, 66 countries (or 34%) were classified as very high HDI, and a further 53 (or 27%) were high HDI.<sup>61</sup>

**Table 4. Number of countries in HDI classifications, 1995 to 2019**

Classification	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2019
Very High	23	31	43	48	62	66
High	27	36	45	57	54	53
Medium	59	62	54	46	46	37
Low	54	60	59	52	41	33
No data	49	23	11	9	9	6

Source: UNDP, 2020.

<sup>58</sup> de Haas, 2010.

<sup>59</sup> Stanton, 2007.

<sup>60</sup> See discussion on methods in Stanton, 2007 and UNDP, 2020.

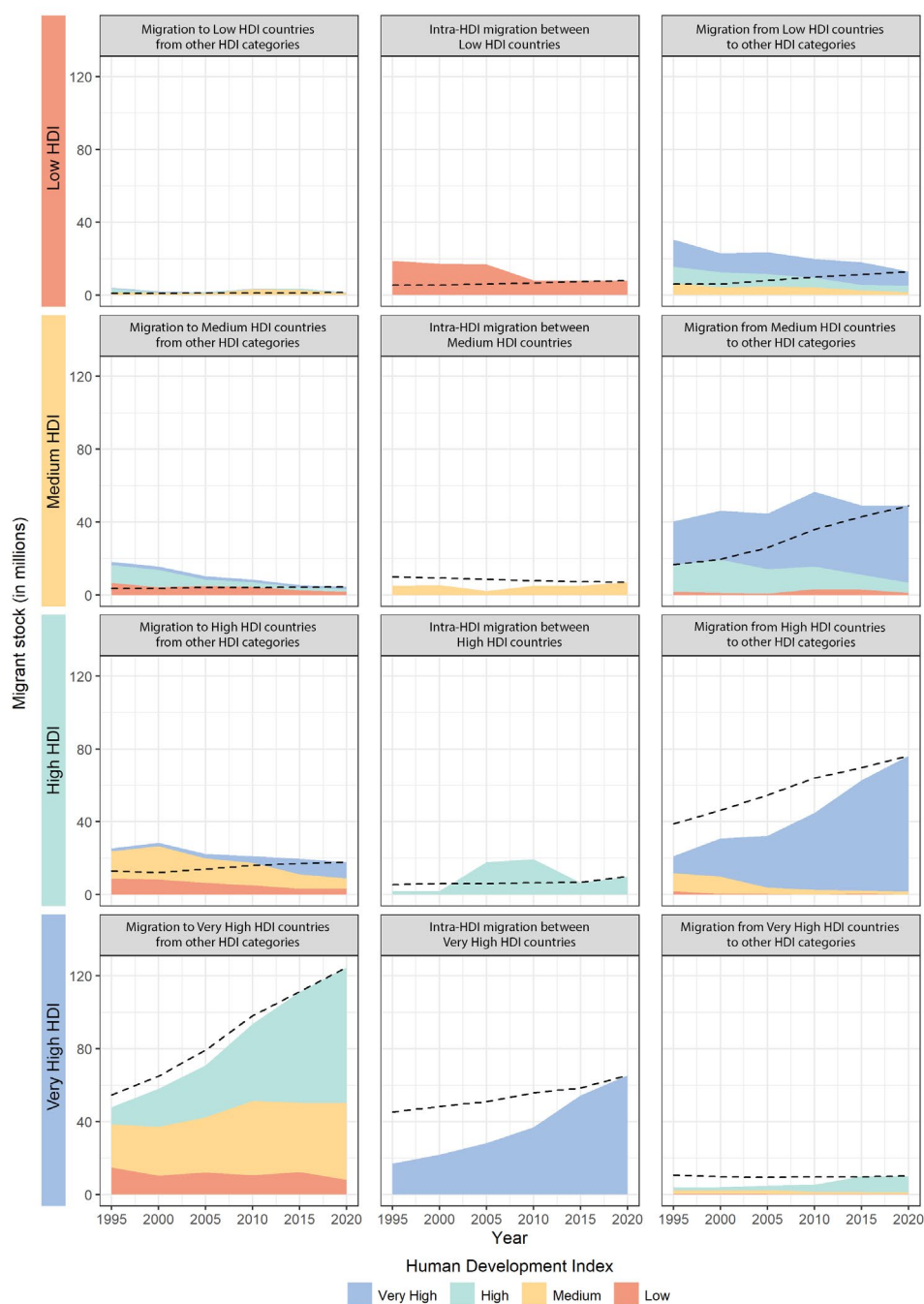
<sup>61</sup> Refer to Wolff et al., 2011, for criticism of HDI methods and UNDP, 2011, for the UNDP’s response.

So, in part, we can see that reclassification of countries helps explain different migration patterns at different points in time. However, when keeping the 1995 HDI classifications constant (i.e. not adjusting outputs for reclassifications over time), we can also see that there are specific underlying migration dynamics occurring beyond reclassification issues.

Figure 7 below shows the “stepladder” phenomenon over time, even when 2019 classifications are applied across all years (represented by the black dotted lines), so that:

- There is a marked increase in “migration to” by HDI category (graphs on the left of the series), so that very few people migrate to a low HDI country, more migrate to a medium HDI country, more again to a high HDI and the largest number to a very high HDI country (even when applying 2019 categories).
- There is a distinct pattern across Figure 7, which shows that “migration from” one HDI classified country to another category (graphs on the right) also follows the “stepladder” principle of moving up. However, reclassifications have clearly impacted on this pattern over time, resulting in a more pronounced emphasis on the very high HDI category.
- Of particular interest is the “migration within” data (middle graphs), which show significant differences by HDI classification: higher levels of migration to a country with the same HDI classification occur for low to low HDI countries and very high to very high HD countries. We can also see the impact of reclassification, most pointedly for very high HDI countries. Nevertheless, emigration both to and from very high HDI countries is a distinct and clear feature in current migration trends.

Figure 7. Migrants to, between and from each of the four HDI categories (low, medium, high and very high), 1995–2020



Sources: UNDP, 2020; UN DESA, 2021.

Notes: "Migration to" plots refer to migration to that HDI category from the other HDI category countries; "Migration from" plots refer to migration from that HDI category to the other HDI categories. The data points at the five-year intervals in the colour bands reflect the HDI categorization at that time; the black dotted lines use 2020 HDI classifications across all data points (i.e. 1995 through to 2020). Some categories of international migrant are not included (see methods in Appendix C).

Two important conclusions can be drawn from these data:

1. It is clear that migration from high and very high human development countries to other high and very high countries is pronounced and has increased significantly since 1995 (even accounting for recategorization of countries).
2. A question arises as to whether the degree of shift relevant to the migration “hump” model is as relevant today as it previously has been – the bivariate data analysis shows correlations that would benefit from deeper examination.

Of particular relevance is the important factor of policy, and how countries’ visa and mobility policies have evolved over time. As highlighted in the discussion above (and modelled in Figure 2), such policies can enable migration options to be transformed from “impossible dreams” into concrete options, and recent research has pointed to growing mobility inequality.<sup>62</sup> To explore this further we examine mobility agreements at the regional level (e.g. the Schengen agreement and the ECOWAS free movement protocol).

## Why is understanding migration patterns important for policy development processes?

Migration policies are developed and administered predominantly at national level and are often influenced by the geopolitical relations between countries at the bilateral level (i.e. between two entities) and can result in visa-free arrangements agreed between two (or more) countries. Examples of bilateral agreements include the Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement between Australia and New Zealand,<sup>63</sup> the Agreement on Mutual Abolition of Visa Requirements between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Korea,<sup>64</sup> and the Agreement between the European Community and Barbados on the short-stay visa waiver,<sup>65</sup> although many hundreds of similar bilateral arrangements currently exist.<sup>66</sup>

Policies help countries to create systems that respond to changes within a country (e.g. skills shortages), as well as outside a country (e.g. bilateral relationships), and determine who can access a country. Data are therefore important to determine trends and flows from, to and within a region in order to inform policy processes. Countries with the available resources, knowledge and expertise are able to capture, analyse and present data for policy responses, especially with regard to regular migration. On the other hand, data on irregular migration occurring outside of, or in contravention of, regulated systems are based on estimations and predictions of available small-scale data sets that can be used to inform the policy development process. However, for States to develop migration policy processes, such as bilateral visa agreements or bilateral labour migration agreements, they require systematic procedures to consider relevant data and trends in origin and destination countries guided by a comprehensive analytical framework.<sup>67</sup> To a large extent, the focus is necessarily on migration dynamics, trends and data at the country level, as the main focus is on bilateral negotiations and agreement-making.

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<sup>62</sup> Mau et al., 2015; Triandafyllidou et al., 2019.

<sup>63</sup> Australian Productivity Commission and New Zealand Productivity Commission, 2012.

<sup>64</sup> Government of the Russian Federation and Government of the Republic of Korea, 2020.

<sup>65</sup> European Community and Barbados, 2009.

<sup>66</sup> European Union, 2021.

<sup>67</sup> de Haas, 2011.

Importantly, visa policies are designed as control measures for mobility, allowing each individual country to exercise its extraterritorial control over potential entrants (e.g. business travellers, tourists, students and migrant workers).<sup>68</sup> Given the volume and complexity of country-specific policies on the entry and stay of non-nationals, most analysis undertaken around the world is conducted at the country level (i.e. focusing on a single country). The DEMIG project,<sup>69</sup> however, analysed the evolution of migration policies since the 1850s with the aim of evaluating their impact on international migration patterns and trends. Researchers found that visa policies had evolved between 1995 and 2019, resulting in border control, entry and exit policies that were more restrictive over time.<sup>70</sup> Other analysis points to destination countries formulating agreements that grant free visa access to their allies, while imposing restrictions on poorer countries or those they deem unfriendly.<sup>71</sup> This may create more opportunities for citizens in high HDI countries to migrate, in comparison with those in developing countries, who face more restrictions. On a long-term basis, this could lead to systemic inequality between countries and further deepen mobility inequality between countries and regions, while placing greater migration “pressures” that could significantly increase human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

Strictly enforced laws and requirements may dissuade some migrants from selecting one destination over another,<sup>72</sup> while countries with weaker regulatory regimes may unwittingly create an environment in which irregular migration thrives due to a lack of effective regulation and adequate resources. Ensuring a safe environment for regular migration to take place is important to reduce the risks faced by migrants who would otherwise have little choice but to move irregularly. Free movement of persons, goods and services and a labour environment based on a mutual understanding between member States can reduce some migration-related risks within regional blocs.

### *Regional agreements facilitating mobility*

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Schengen area have illustrated how mobility agreements achieved through multilateral approaches, which build upon bilateral arrangements, can open up further mobility opportunities and support development and greater equality, while reducing pressures (including those related to trafficking and smuggling). They have, however, evolved differently through time, with clear contrasts in the way free movement is implemented.

The European Union Schengen agreement has seen gradual progress since 1985, with the process of removing internal border checks between member States taking place at the same time that the external border has been strengthened around the Schengen area. Notwithstanding events (such as the large-scale movement of people into and through the Schengen area in 2015–16 and the COVID-19 pandemic) that exerted considerable pressure on aspects of European Union border, entry and asylum/refugee policies, the Schengen agreement has remained intact, providing mobility opportunities for 400 million European citizens.<sup>73</sup>

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68 Mau et al., 2015.

69 Determinants of International Migration: A Theoretical and Empirical Assessment of Policy, Origin and Destination Effects (DEMIG) was conducted in 45 countries in Western Europe, North America, Latin America, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East, Australia and New Zealand. See EC, 2016 and de Haas et al., 2016.

70 de Haas et al., 2019.

71 Czaika and Neumayer, 2017.

72 Helbling and Leblang, 2018.

73 European Commission, 2020.

Figure 8. Schengen area member States



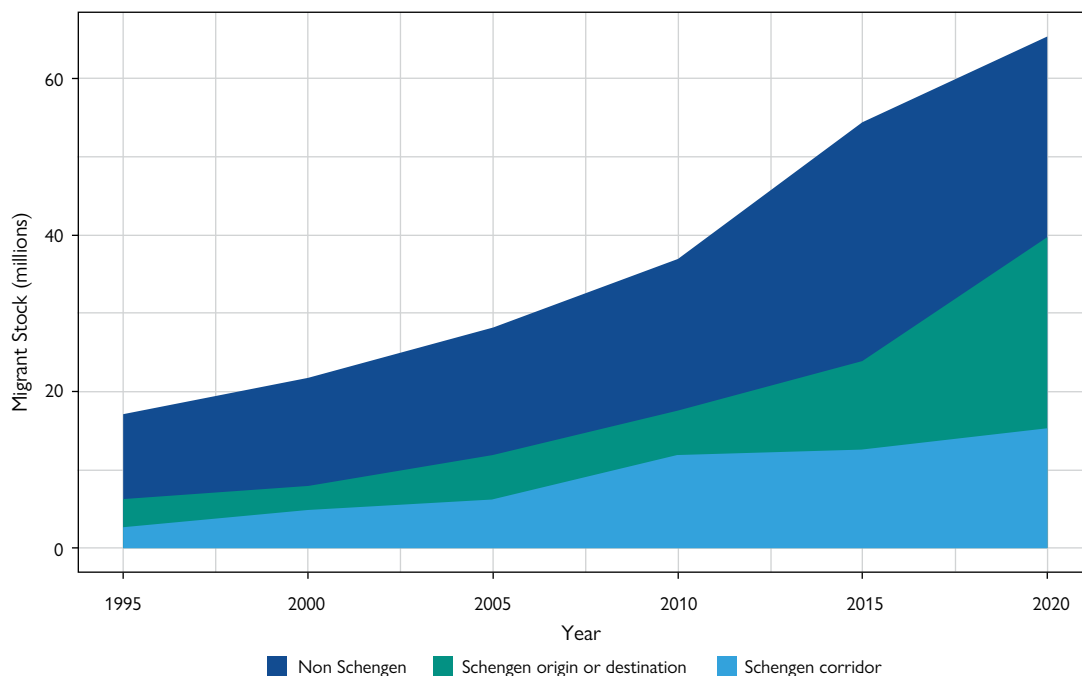
Source: ArchaeoGLOBE Project, 2018.

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

The significance of the Schengen mobility agreement can be seen in Figure 9. Though Schengen countries made up only 39 per cent of countries classified as very high HDI in 2020 globally (26 out of 66), and a fraction of the total population of the aggregated total populations in very high HDI countries, the proportional growth in very high HDI country migration was much higher for Schengen countries than non-Schengen countries between 1995 and 2020.



Figure 9. Migration between very high HDI countries



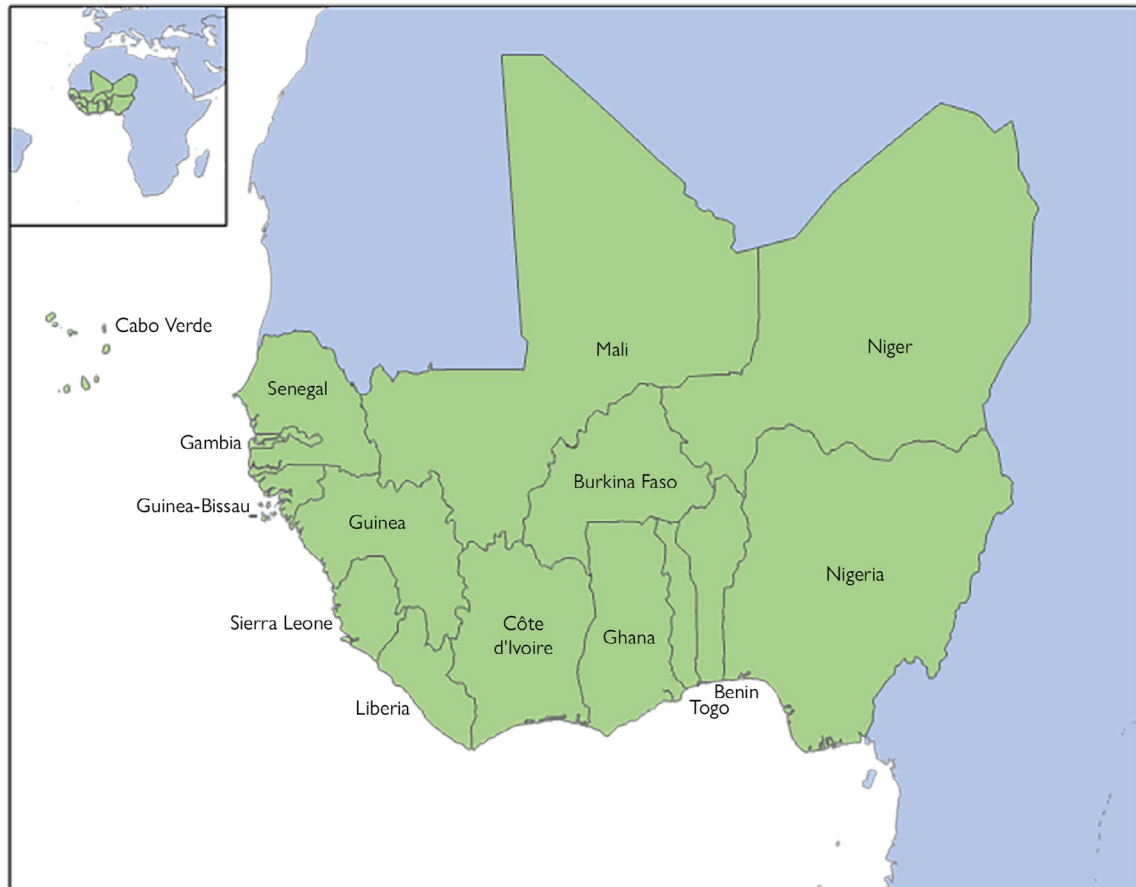
Sources: UNDP, 2020; UN DESA, 2021.

Notes: The data points at the five-year intervals in the colour bands reflect whether the migration corridor (i) did not feature Schengen countries; (ii) featured a Schengen country either at origin or destination; or (iii) featured Schengen countries at both origin and destination. Designation as a Schengen country coincides with implementation of Schengen area policies (see Schengen Visa Info, 2020). All Schengen countries are very high HDI countries.

In ECOWAS, the process of achieving free movement in the region has been an ongoing process since 1979. In the initial years, free movement of goods, services, people and labour occurred with limited restrictions. However, as countries in the region began to develop and as conflict arose in some member States, cross-border movements became more restrictive as countries responded with national laws that undermined the notion of free movement. The conflict in Liberia over competition for resources and the rise of irregular migration between member States has weakened some of the implementation strategies adopted, as security was prioritized over the benefits of trade.<sup>74</sup> ECOWAS also lacked an established and efficient mechanism that could monitor trafficking of persons, weapons and drugs, among other issues. The approach to reduce irregular migration from West African States, however, has not been to restrict mobility, but to generate greater awareness of the risks of irregular migration, as well as to enhance the opportunities available within the region and facilitated by mobility, especially for the youth.

74 Opanike and Aduloju, 2015.

Figure 10. ECOWAS member States

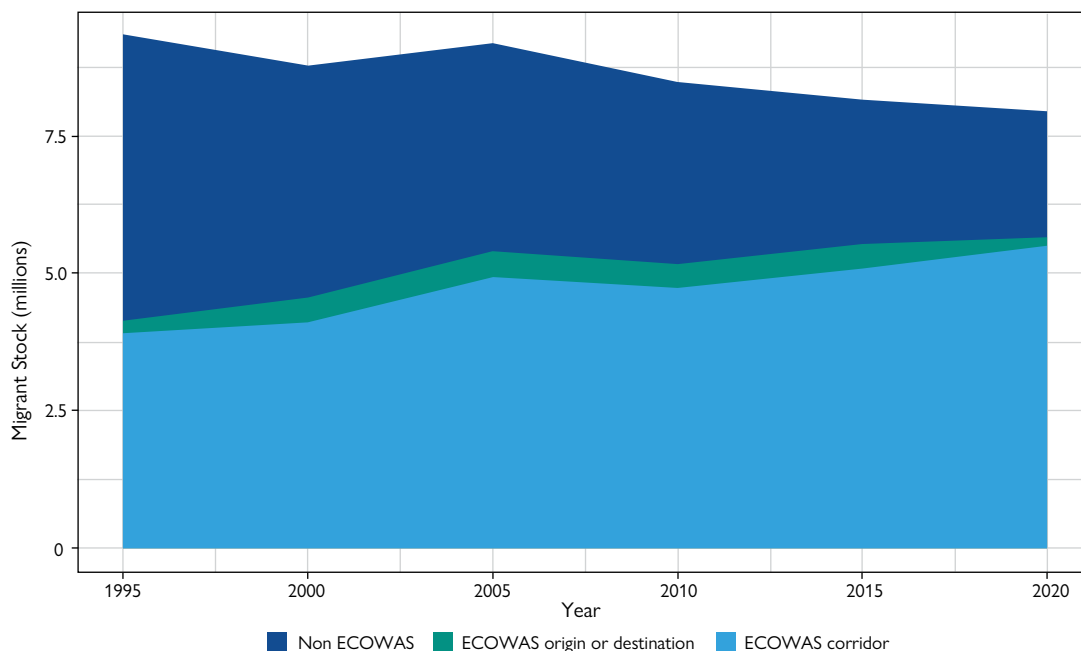


Sources: ArchaeoGLOBE Project, 2018.

Notes: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

Figure 11 illustrates how migration involving ECOWAS countries is almost completely made up of migration between regional member States of the economic organization. The scale of migration is smaller compared with the Schengen zone, and the majority of countries in ECOWAS are classified as low HDI, but despite these differences, the same dynamics manifest in similar proportions. Out of the 10 million international migrants moving to or from ECOWAS countries in 2020, more than 6 million moved within ECOWAS. When people have the ability to move in order to obtain access to a greater range of opportunities, many will do so.

Figure 11. Migration between low HDI countries



Sources: UNDP, 2020; UN DESA, 2021.

Notes: The data points at the five-year intervals in the colour bands reflect instances in which the migration corridor (i) did not feature an ECOWAS country; (ii) featured an ECOWAS country at either origin or destination; or (iii) featured an ECOWAS country at both origin and destination. With one exception, membership in ECOWAS has been consistent throughout the timeframe examined here (ECOWAS, 2021). ECOWAS includes Ghana (medium HDI); non-ECOWAS does not include India and Pakistan.

## Conclusions

The long-term narrative of migration has been based on the notion of opportunity, that people who migrate internationally do so in order to forge better lives. Migration has become strongly associated with attainment, with social and economic progress of individuals, of families, of communities and of nations. While this may have reflected a long-term reality stretching back well before the modern era, there may be reason to conclude that international migration no longer affords opportunity to the degree it has historically. Current data suggest that instead of serving as a stepladder of opportunity, international migration pathways for millions of people in developing countries have further narrowed.

Our analysis of global international migrant stock and HDI data show that between 1995 and 2020, migration from low and medium HDI countries increased, but only slightly. The combination of migration aspirations and migration infrastructure (or lack thereof) did not result in high growth rates of international migration from low and medium HDI countries, even when accounting for recategorization of HDI ratings over time. This is consistent with existing macroeconomic analyses, which show that international migration from low-income countries has historically been very limited.

On the other hand, the analysis in this chapter shows that contrary to previous understandings on the migration of people from high income countries – namely, that as country income levels increase above a threshold, international migration rates decline – the scale and proportion of outward migration from high and very high HDI countries has increased significantly. In fact, this bivariate analysis of migration stock across the last quarter century indicates that there has been a “polarizing” effect, with migration activity increasingly being associated with highly developed countries. This correlation raises the key issue of visa access and related migration policies, especially in the context of migration aspirations (Figure 2) held by potential migrants around the world who may wish to realize opportunities through international migration, but are unable to do so. New research shows that citizens of wealthy countries are much more able to access regulated mobility regimes than those from poor countries.<sup>75</sup>

The need to reassess migration as a stepladder of opportunity has implications for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.<sup>76</sup> In an environment in which restrictive migration-related policies, such as border management, entry requirements and stay limitations, have become more prominent across the globe, it appears that there are systemic risks to the full realization of the SDGs and gains in human development (as flagged in the Human Development Report 2019). The situation has been further complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which is temporarily stalling migration and mobility across the globe and forcing all countries to re-evaluate their migration and border policies for the new post-pandemic world.

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75 Mau et al., 2015.

76 The Global Compact for Migration guides source, transit and destination countries by providing strategies that will create an enabling environment in which safe and orderly migration can take place in a more regular manner.



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## DISINFORMATION ABOUT MIGRATION: AN AGE-OLD ISSUE WITH NEW TECH DIMENSIONS<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Many spheres of life have become subject to disinformation. Across the world, it is implicated in the resurgence of vaccine-preventable diseases, the disruption of politics and the amplification of social divisions. Disinformation may be an age-old phenomenon, but it thrives in a digital environment. Digital technologies have been revolutionary in expanding access to information and opportunities for expression, but they have also created a world in which it is relatively easy to manipulate information and to coordinate harmful campaigns against individuals and groups, including migrants, as well as organizations and even countries.

Regulation has not kept pace with these changes. Roughly half of the global population and almost 70 per cent of 15–24-year-olds access the Internet.<sup>2</sup> Much of this online activity is dominated by a few tech companies. Facebook, the world's largest social media platform, has 2.85 billion users and it owns WhatsApp, which has one billion users.<sup>3</sup> Across these and other platforms, disinformation travels at speed and scale. To take one example, a conspiracy-theory video about COVID-19 was viewed more than eight million times within a week of its release.<sup>4</sup> Platforms struggled to block the video as users across the world uploaded new versions and translated it into multiple languages.

Platforms have long struggled to contain disinformation about migration and the extremists who propagate it. However, anti-migrant disinformation cannot be blamed on technology alone. Far-right actors mobilize online and offline, while news media and politicians stand accused of distorting migration issues and leaving the public misinformed.<sup>5</sup> Against this background, the COVID-19 pandemic intensified disinformation about migrants, who were variously attacked for introducing the virus or causing an increase in cases.<sup>6</sup> Health crises have historically been exploited to advance xenophobic agendas,<sup>7</sup> but the pandemic coincided with a resurgence of far-right and extremist ideologies in many countries. At the same time, disinformation has direct impacts on migrants and potential migrants. Many lack reliable information to inform their migration choices<sup>8</sup> and must negotiate the rumours and false claims that circulate in their networks.

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2 ITU, 2020.

3 Tankovska, 2021.

4 Morrish, 2020.

5 Ekman, 2019; McAuliffe et al., 2019.

6 Maniatis and Zard, 2020.

7 Fidler, 2019.

8 Crawley and Hagen-Zanker, 2019; Vammen et al., 2021.

Developing effective countermeasures for online disinformation is clearly an urgent goal. It is also a challenging one. The issues are complex and difficult to disentangle, while scientific research is in its infancy and tends to be concentrated in rich, well-resourced countries. Current countermeasures may be grouped into three broad areas: technological approaches that aim to automate the evaluation of online content and behaviour; audience approaches that aim to upskill the public and build resilience to manipulation; and regulatory and policy approaches that aim to increase transparency and accountability in the digital environment.<sup>9</sup> Activities in these areas are being advanced by a wide range of stakeholders, including tech companies, policymakers, researchers, NGOs, journalists and entrepreneurs. Given the complexity of the problem, it seems clear that no single approach will be sufficient.

These issues are examined in this chapter. Although some examples of anti-migrant disinformation are cited, we aim to avoid the unnecessary and unethical amplification of hateful content. Instead, the aim is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the structural features of the information environment that enable anti-migrant disinformation, as well as an overview of proposed countermeasures. The Concepts section outlines the key definitions for understanding disinformation and presents a transmission model of the online disinformation process. The Context section examines the factors shaping disinformation about migration in terms of society, politics, media and technology. It then outlines best practices in building public resilience to disinformation and the major insights from current research. The Issues and Challenges section focuses on major gaps in our understanding of disinformation and the current barriers to advancing this work. Finally, the Conclusion identifies broad suggestions and implications for policymakers and other stakeholders seeking to counteract disinformation generally and about migration specifically.

## Concepts

This section introduces key definitions and presents a model of the online disinformation process. Here, we focus on the definitions necessary for a broad understanding of the topic. The lexicon of terms and concepts describing online disinformation is ever evolving as new practices emerge in response to countermeasures and technological trends. For a regularly updated overview of manipulation tactics and related resources, see the *Media Manipulation Casebook*.<sup>10</sup>

Although definitions vary, disinformation is typically defined by its nefarious intent.<sup>11</sup> **Disinformation** is false information that is created or disseminated with the intention to deceive the public for financial, political or social gain. In contrast, **misinformation** is false information that is shared without an intention to deceive. For example, a journalist might misprint a financial sum, but such unintentional mistakes will be acknowledged and corrected. In practice, disinformation and misinformation often overlap. For example, disinformation actors may promote a false story about migrants and members of the public may believe and share the story on the assumption that it is true. Audience research in Kenya and Nigeria, for example, found that people have a strong desire to keep up with the latest news and this enables the dissemination of disinformation, even when those sharing it have good intentions about verifying information.<sup>12</sup>

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9 Culloty and Suiter, 2021.

10 <https://mediamanipulation.org/>.

11 Wardle and Derakhshan, 2017.

12 Chakrabarti et al., 2018.



## Key Definitions

<i>Disinformation:</i>	false information that is deliberately created and disseminated.
<i>Misinformation:</i>	false information that is created or disseminated by mistake.
<i>Information void:</i>	a salient topic about which there is a lack of reliable information.
<i>Illusory truth effect:</i>	the tendency to believe false information after repeated exposure.
<i>Bad actors:</i>	people who intentionally create and propagate disinformation.
<i>Coordinated campaign:</i>	a bad actor network that cooperates to manipulate opinion.
<i>Amplifiers:</i>	influential people who spread disinformation among their networks.
<i>Hyperpartisan media:</i>	media outlets with a strong ideological position.
<i>Fabricated content:</i>	content that is entirely false.
<i>Manipulated content:</i>	genuine content that has been distorted.
<i>Decontextualized content:</i>	genuine content that is removed from its original context.
<i>Disinformation harms:</i>	the negative impacts of disinformation on individuals, groups and societies.
<i>Hate speech:</i>	pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are. <sup>a</sup>
<i>Xenophobia:</i>	when individuals are denied equal rights on account of the real or perceived geographic origins of the said individuals or groups. <sup>b</sup>

a UN, 2019.

b UNHRC, 2017.

An information void occurs when there is high demand for information about a topic, but a lack of reliable information.<sup>13</sup> In the early months of COVID-19 there was high demand for information about the virus, but the supply of reliable scientific information was low. This deficit created a vacuum in which disinformation and rumours could circulate. Over time, repeated exposure to disinformation can create an illusory truth effect. This phenomenon is linked to memory, as familiar information is more easily recalled and appears more reliable as a result.<sup>14</sup> On this basis, best practice in correcting disinformation recommends avoiding any unnecessary repetition of false claims.<sup>15</sup>

13 Shane and Noel, 2020.

14 De Keersmaecker et al., 2020; Hasher et al., 1977.

15 Wardle, 2018.

Bad actors is a generic term for those who intentionally create and propagate disinformation. They may be States, corporations, social movements or individuals and their motivations span a spectrum of political, ideological and financial interests. They also vary considerably in terms of the audiences they target and the levels of coordination involved. Amplifiers are the media pundits, politicians, celebrities and online influencers who help popularize disinformation – whether intentionally or not – by spreading it among their large networks. Finally, hyperpartisan media are ideological outlets that frequently amplify disinformation. In the United States of America, for example, hyperpartisan media regularly give credence to disinformation stories and thereby push disinformation agendas on topics from economics to international relations.<sup>16</sup> Disinformation campaigns against migrants are heavily aligned to right-wing political and media actors, including the resurgence of far-right, nationalist and xenophobic ideologies.<sup>17</sup>

*Fabricated* content includes content that is entirely invented. This includes fake news stories, such as the false story about Pope Francis endorsing Donald Trump's 2016 election campaign,<sup>18</sup> or “deep fake” videos that are generated entirely from computer technology. *Manipulated* content includes genuine content that has been distorted, such as selectively edited video clips. For example, an online video from 2019 deceptively combined quotes from a talk by Bill Gates to create the impression that he supports sterilization and population control. The video resurfaced in 2021 across multiple social media platforms.<sup>19</sup> *Decontextualized* content is genuine content that has been removed from its original context, such as old photographs that are accompanied with false captions linking them to present-day events. An analysis of almost one million tweets during the United States–Mexico border crisis found that decontextualized images were the most prominent type of disinformation.<sup>20</sup> This visual disinformation was also more likely to be shared and amplified by high-profile individuals.

To date, much of the popular discussion on disinformation has focused on content. However, focusing on content alone can obscure the operation of coordinated disinformation campaigns whereby a network of bad actors cooperates to manipulate public opinion. Across its platform, Facebook uses the concept of “coordinated inauthentic behaviour” to describe networks of pages and accounts that “work together to mislead others about who they are or what they are doing”.<sup>21</sup> In reality, coordinated campaigns extend across multiple platforms and the power of these campaigns lies in the cumulative effect of endlessly repeating negative stories about migrants and minorities.

In addition, less attention has been given to understanding and measuring disinformation harms. A harm-based approach requires considering the impact on those targeted and affected by disinformation campaigns, as well as wider impacts on society.<sup>22</sup> In the case of migration, disinformation harms are associated with hate speech and xenophobia, which promote hostility and discrimination towards migrants, which in turn can help legitimize anti-migrant policy approaches.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, disinformation and the absence of reliable information can cause harm to migrants by negatively influencing their decisions and awareness of rights.<sup>24</sup>

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16 Vargo et al., 2018.

17 McAuliffe et al., 2019.

18 Evon, 2016.

19 Reuters, 2021.

20 McAweeney, 2018.

21 Gleicher, 2018.

22 Pasquetto, 2020.

23 Mossou and Lane, 2018.

24 Carlson et al., 2018.

## Coordinated campaigns by the far right

Far-right disinformation attacks have increased by 250 per cent since 2014; this trend is expected to continue, as the extended economic downturn caused by COVID-19 is likely to create political instability.<sup>a</sup> Online, there is considerable evidence of increased cooperation among far-right actors. A study of almost 7.5 million tweets during the refugee crisis of 2015–2016 identified a surge in far-right activity whereby refugees were framed in xenophobic terms and presented as a threat to Europe's security, economy and culture.<sup>b</sup> Subsequent studies have identified coordinated campaigns ahead of national elections,<sup>c</sup> and in opposition to the 2018 Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.<sup>d</sup> Proponents of this campaign were responsible for almost half of the most popular YouTube videos about the Global Compact and promoted a false claim about a requirement for States to outlaw criticism of migration.<sup>e</sup> As much of this activity coalesces around the issue of Muslim migration, Islamophobia appears to be a uniting factor for different far-right groups.<sup>f</sup>

a Institute for Economics and Peace, 2020.

b Siapera et al., 2018.

c Avaaz, 2019; Davey and Ebner, 2017.

d McAuliffe, 2018.

e ISD, 2019.

f Froio and Ganesh, 2018.

The online disinformation process: reduced to its basic constituents, online disinformation, when it is successful, is a process that involves different actors and consecutive stages. In essence, bad actors create and push disinformation using online platforms as a means of distribution and promotion, while audiences give disinformation meaning and impact through their willingness to engage with it (see Figure 1). Of course, any given scenario of online disinformation is more complex than this simple transmission model suggests. Nevertheless, it provides a means of identifying how various countermeasures attempt to intervene and disrupt this process.

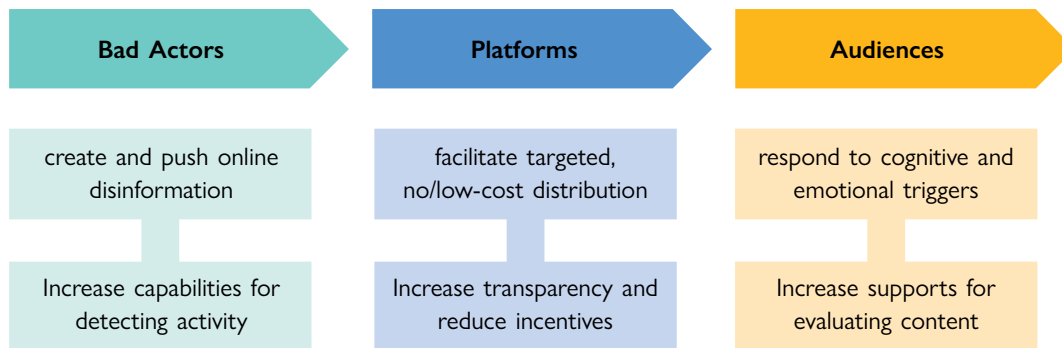
As noted, bad actors may be defined collectively by their common intention to deceive or manipulate the public. Much of what is known about bad actors comes from researchers and investigative journalism, rather than data supplied by technology platforms. The aim of this work is to identify the extent of disinformation and the nature of manipulation techniques. For their part, platforms have taken steps to remove fake accounts, while independent technology developers have developed many publicly available tools to identify manipulated content and deceptive activity.

Platforms enable disinformation by facilitating no-cost or low-cost and targeted distribution. Engagement metrics, recommendation algorithms and the online advertising industry also incentivize low-quality and sensational content. On this basis, platforms are the focus of policy and civil society efforts to reduce incentives for bad actors and to increase transparency and accountability. For example, under the European Union's self-regulatory Code of Practice of Disinformation,<sup>25</sup> platforms provide greater transparency about online advertising; although the European Union's own evaluation of the Code identified serious shortcomings with it.<sup>26</sup>

25 European Commission, 2018.

26 ERGA, 2020.

Figure 1. The online disinformation process



Source: Authors' own work.

Finally, audiences are arguably the most important component of the process. After all, disinformation only becomes a problem when it finds a receptive audience willing to support or share it. Many factors influence audience receptivity to disinformation, including prior knowledge and bias, repeated exposure to false claims, and willingness or capacity to critically examine new information. Disinformation content often appeals to the existing biases of target audiences and is highly emotive in attempting to provoke outrage.<sup>27</sup> A core focus of interventions in this area is on educational and empowering initiatives that help audiences evaluate the credibility of content.

However, while highlighting the central role of technology, it is also important to recognize that technology does not operate in isolation from other social forces. A recent comparative analysis of 18 countries examined national levels of resilience to online disinformation.<sup>28</sup> It identified the following factors as likely predictors of vulnerability: a political environment characterized by populism and social polarization; and a media environment characterized by low trust in news, weak public service media, large advertising markets and high use of social media. As such, all these factors need to be considered and addressed for a comprehensive response to disinformation.

## Contexts

This section examines how factors relating to society and politics, media and technology influence disinformation about migrants and migration. It then outlines current thinking about best-practice approaches to increasing societal resilience to disinformation.

There is a long global history of disinformation campaigns against migrants and minorities. One illustrative example is the *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which emerged in Russia in 1903. It foreshadows the fake stories, fabricated evidence and high-profile amplifiers that animate contemporary disinformation. A fake document was presented as a leaked plot for Jewish domination. This conspiracy theory gained traction and spread internationally through the press and pamphlets and through the endorsement of major public figures including the American industrialist Henry Ford. Two important lessons can be drawn from this case: successful disinformation amplifies existing prejudices and relies on structures of communication power and influence.<sup>29</sup> In other words, specific instances of

<sup>27</sup> Bakir and McStay, 2018; Paschen, 2019.

<sup>28</sup> Humprecht et al., 2020.

<sup>29</sup> Culloty and Suiter, 2021.

disinformation need to be contextualized against wider historical patterns of prejudice, inequalities and access to power.

**Society and politics:** In many countries, high-profile political actors have normalized disinformation about migration and rely on sympathetic media to do so.<sup>30</sup> Often, these arguments centre on economics. Public anxieties about economic implications and social change are channelled against migrants, even though unemployment rates and wage deflation are the result of State economic policies and not migration.<sup>31</sup> In South Africa, for example, studies consistently find that migration is a net economic benefit for the country, but migrants are scapegoated as a cause of high unemployment.<sup>32</sup> In the United States, Donald Trump's 2016 election campaign generated fears about Mexicans "swarming" over the southern border and promised to "build a wall" to protect the integrity of the State. Although Trump's rhetoric was largely directed at Mexicans, hyperpartisan media outlets extended the fearmongering to include Muslims.<sup>33</sup> In the United Kingdom, pro-Brexit rhetoric focused heavily on migration from Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Legal European Union migration was frequently confused with asylum-seeking as the Vote Leave campaign stoked up fears of an imminent arrival of millions of Turks<sup>34</sup> and the right-wing press amplified these views.<sup>35</sup>

At the same time, bad actors actively promote distrust in elites and institutions. In many respects, the so-called "post-truth crisis" is a crisis of trust. Over the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to further declines in trust. The 2021 Edelman Trust Barometer found that a majority of respondents across 27 countries believe that government leaders (57%), business leaders (56%) and journalists (59%) are purposely trying to mislead the public.<sup>36</sup> However, while these figures provoke alarm in Western countries, Eurocentric ideas about audience trust in government and traditional media are not easily translated to any country where there has been a historical lack of media freedom.<sup>37</sup> Across North Africa, for example, social media have presented new opportunities for freedom of expression in counterpoint to State-aligned media.<sup>38</sup> At the same time, social media give migrants and people on the move opportunities for self-expression and the ability to raise human rights concerns.<sup>39</sup>

**Media:** Journalists are frequently criticized for providing negative coverage of migration. In some outlets, the use of fear as a framing device results in a perpetual flow of "bad news" about migrant crime, public unrest and violence.<sup>40</sup> As such, news media provide bad actors with stories that can be repurposed and decontextualized to promote their own agenda.<sup>41</sup> During the so-called refugee crisis of 2015–2016, European news media played a central role in framing the arriving refugees and migrants as a crisis for Europe, while affording little attention to migrants and their experience.<sup>42</sup> This narrative also prevails in North Africa, where media coverage often accentuates discrimination and racism.<sup>43</sup> Stereotyped and negative images of migrants perpetuate a discourse of migration as an "invasion" or

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30 Crandall et al., 2018.

31 Hogan and Haltinner, 2015.

32 McKaiser, 2019.

33 Benkler et al., 2018.

34 Ker-Lindsay, 2018.

35 Morrison, 2019.

36 Edelman, 2021.

37 Schiffrin, 2018.

38 Deane et al., 2020.

39 Creta, 2021.

40 Philo et al., 2013.

41 Ekman, 2019.

42 Georgiou and Zaborowski, 2017.

43 ICMPD, 2017; Pace et al., 2020.

a “burden”, which exacerbates prejudice and hostile attitudes. These views have been linked to the rise in anti-immigrant political parties and the intensification of anti-immigrant rhetoric in politics.<sup>44</sup>

Of course, there are also examples of news media exposing injustices in the way that migrants are treated, but investigative journalism is under pressure. Contemporary newsrooms are under-resourced and journalists often lack the time and money to provide in-depth, contextual coverage. Journalists may also lack adequate training to achieve this, while some newsrooms are subject to capture and control by political and financial interests, resulting in a culture of self-censorship.<sup>45</sup> Consequently, much media coverage of migration lacks the necessary context and is superficial, simplistic and ill-informed, if not also politically biased. Even in countries with high levels of media freedom, news coverage tends to reflect the priorities and concerns of governments.<sup>46</sup>

### Encouraging better media practices

Several organizations – including IOM, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and the OPEN Media Hub – launched the Migration Media Award in 2017.<sup>a</sup> This initiative aims to reward journalists for providing high-quality reporting about migration in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Similarly, in 2017 IOM launched the South American Migration Journalism Award to recognize the work of journalists who adopt a human rights approach to migration coverage. This includes highlighting the positive contributions of migrants, challenging the negative perception of migrants and contributing to the prevention of xenophobia, racism and discrimination.<sup>b</sup> Announced in 2020, the Global Migration Media Academy will provide a free platform for journalists and students to learn best practices in reporting migration and countering disinformation.<sup>c</sup> Encouraging fair, evidence-based reporting, in line with standard requirements of ethical journalism, may in turn create a space for evidence-based debates about migration policy.

Migrants and potential migrants also need reliable information about transit and their destination countries. Digital technologies provide a means of supporting migrants in their decision-making.<sup>d</sup> The online platform InfoMigrants was developed by a consortium of European media outlets and agencies.<sup>e</sup> Co-financed by the European Union, it aims to counter rumours and disinformation by providing objective and balanced news about the countries migrants have left, the countries they travel through and the countries in which they hope to settle. The news service is provided in five languages: French, Arabic, English, Dari and Pashto.

a See details at [www.migration-media-award.eu](http://www.migration-media-award.eu).

b IOM, 2017.

c IOM, 2021.

d McAuliffe, 2016.

e See details at [www.infomigrants.net/en/](http://www.infomigrants.net/en/).

**Technology:** While the advent of the Internet promised a new frontier for freedom of expression and access to information, the online world is dominated by a small group of companies. These have grown far beyond their original focus – online shopping, web search, social networking – to become vast infrastructures upon which entire sectors of social and economic life are dependent. The business model is relatively simple: they offer users free

44 Allen et al., 2017.

45 Schiffrin, 2018.

46 Allen et al., 2017.

access to content and services, while accumulating data that generate revenue through personalized advertising and other data-based services.<sup>47</sup>

As these platforms are designed to maximize engagement, rather than information exchange or civil debate, they provide multiple opportunities for disinformation to flourish. Engagement metrics – views, likes, shares, fans and followers – incentivize attention-grabbing content, including disinformation,<sup>48</sup> while opaque algorithms influence the content that people see and can sometimes push them into “rabbit holes” of extremist and conspiratorial discourse.<sup>49</sup> As advertising businesses, Google and Facebook are implicated in financing disinformation. For example, Google provides three quarters of the advertising revenue earned by disinformation websites.<sup>50</sup> In this context, some argue that social media platforms have given rise to a culture of digital hate.<sup>51</sup> Nativist, racist and xenophobic narratives that were previously marginalized on fringe websites – where people had to actively seek them out – now reach a wider audience on popular social media platforms.<sup>52</sup>

While technology platforms have amassed an unprecedented influence on daily life, they have not developed – or been required to develop – commensurate structures of governance and accountability. To counteract disinformation, technology platforms partner with fact-checkers and media outlets and experiment with audience interventions. To varying degrees, they rely on human moderators to evaluate content. However, technological or automated approaches to content moderation form the core of the platforms’ responses.<sup>53</sup> The chief advantage of a technological approach is the promise of moderating content at speed and scale, but there are also major shortcomings in terms of accuracy, reliability and oversight. Moreover, human oversight for content moderation is often outsourced to poorly resourced contractors.<sup>54</sup> In 2018, the United Nations accused Facebook of playing a “determining role” in the incitement of genocidal violence against Myanmar’s Rohingya population. An investigation by Reuters revealed that Facebook’s human moderators and its algorithmic moderation system were unable to comprehend the regions’ languages.<sup>55</sup>

### Disinformation as a catalyst for harmful views

A recent study investigated how disinformation drives hostility towards Rohingya refugees on Facebook. Over a nine-month period beginning in January 2020, the study analysed posts and comments on Facebook pages in Bangladesh and Malaysia. The vast majority of posts in both Bangladesh (80%) and Malaysia (77%) were either positive or neutral in their sentiment towards Rohingya refugees. However, the majority of comments generated by these posts were negative: 58 per cent in Bangladesh and 70 per cent in Malaysia. A prevalent theme within these negative comments alleged that refugees benefit from preferential treatment – from NGOs, governments and the international community – while placing a strain on the resources of the host countries. These and related claims intensified throughout the period, resulting in a social media persecution of Rohingya occurring in parallel to their offline persecution.

*Source: Urquhart, 2021.*

47 Wu, 2017.

48 Shao et al., 2018.

49 Hussein et al., 2020.

50 GDI, 2020.

51 Ganesh, 2018.

52 Ekman, 2019; Farkas et al., 2017.

53 See Alaphilippe et al., 2019; Bontcheva et al., 2020.

54 Roberts, 2019.

55 Stecklow, 2018.

As noted, the post-truth crisis is in some ways a crisis of trust. The rapid evolution of digital communication has occurred without adequate development of norms to guide people in their decisions about whom or what to trust online. As a result, many researchers and entrepreneurs have developed new tools to detect disinformation and provide guidance to users. For example, InVid<sup>56</sup> is a free verification platform that evaluates the credibility of online videos, while Logically<sup>57</sup> combines artificial and human intelligence to evaluate the credibility of online sources and stories. More recently, major tech companies and media – including Microsoft, Twitter, BBC and Adobe – have formed the Content Authenticity Initiative to set standards for trustworthy online content.<sup>58</sup> While these and many similar innovations are locked in an “arms race” with bad actors, who will inevitably seek new ways to evade detection, the lasting significance may be the development of norms and standards for the production and reception of information online.

## Building societal resilience to disinformation

Certain traits are associated with susceptibility to disinformation, including low cognitive ability, low topic knowledge, motivated reasoning and weak levels of media literacy. For example, some studies find that older people and those with strong partisan bias are more likely to believe disinformation.<sup>59</sup> In many countries, disinformation about migration is subject to low levels of public knowledge<sup>60</sup> and a resurgence of nationalist sentiment, which is linked to hostility towards migrants.<sup>61</sup> These factors contribute to anti-immigrant disinformation. However, other researchers argue that situational factors (e.g. pausing to consider accuracy) and cognitive factors (e.g. the ability to evaluate information) are more important than prior knowledge or partisan bias.<sup>62</sup> This is important, because it suggests that audience-focused countermeasures may have a significant impact.

Information corrections and pre-bunking: There is growing evidence that succinct and repeated corrections can reduce misperceptions. A study of misperceptions about migration found that providing correct information reduced negative attitudes towards migrants, while also increasing factual knowledge.<sup>63</sup> However, the content and format of a correction matter. Content matters, because simply stating that information is wrong may do little to dislodge misperceptions. In contrast, providing an explanation is more effective, because it helps the audience to update their knowledge. Format matters, because audiences might only skim the content. If the correction fails to prioritize correct information or puts undue emphasis on false claims, then the important facts may be lost. To avoid these scenarios, best practice recommends a “truth sandwich” approach, whereby the correction begins with correct information before explaining the nature of the disinformation and why it is incorrect. In the final step, the correct information is reinforced again.

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56 [www.invid-project.eu/](http://www.invid-project.eu/).

57 [www.logically.ai/about](http://www.logically.ai/about).

58 <https://contentauthenticity.org/>.

59 Guess et al., 2020.

60 Alesina et al., 2018; Grigorieff et al., 2020.

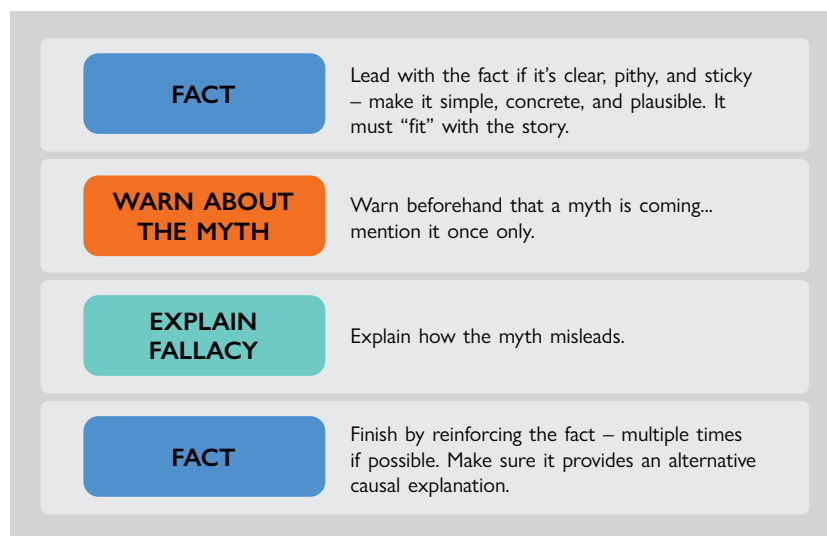
61 Hiers et al., 2017; Feinstein and Bonikowski, 2021, McAuliffe et al., 2019.

62 Pennycook and Rand, 2019.

63 Grigorieff et al., 2020.



Figure 2. Debunking Steps



Source: Lewandowsky et al., 2020.

Corrections are a defensive strategy that responds to disinformation after it has been disseminated. There are obvious limitations, given the volume of disinformation in circulation and the challenge of reaching all those who have been exposed to it.

Alternatively, pre-bunking is an offensive strategy that anticipates disinformation and forewarns the public about manipulation tactics.<sup>64</sup> This approach is sometimes compared with an inoculation. The core idea is that once people have learned to recognize manipulation tactics and are already armed with correct information, they will be able to reject disinformation when they encounter it. The advantage of pre-bunking is scale, as the technique can be embedded in media literacy materials and disseminated through online games and other engaging materials. In 2018, Dutch researchers developed the Bad News game in collaboration with the media platform DROG.<sup>65</sup> In this free online game, players use misleading tactics to build their own fake news empire. A large-scale evaluation with 15,000 participants found that people's ability to identify and resist disinformation improved after game play, irrespective of their education, age, political ideology and cognitive style.<sup>66</sup> A more recent version of the game, Harmony Square,<sup>67</sup> was developed to focus on manipulation tactics during election campaigns.

<sup>64</sup> Cook et al., 2017; Roozenbeek et al., 2020.

<sup>65</sup> [www.getbadnews.com](http://www.getbadnews.com).

<sup>66</sup> Roozenbeek et al., 2020.

<sup>67</sup> <https://harmonysquare.game/en>.

Stopping the spread of disinformation: Within popular discussions of disinformation, there is an unfortunate tendency to assume that disinformation-sharing metrics are an indicator of public belief levels. In contrast, audience studies from Africa, Asia and Europe indicate that people share disinformation for a variety of reasons, including self-expression, entertainment and a desire to warn others about potential danger.<sup>68</sup> The last motivation is notable, because disinformation often plays on people's emotions by generating fear about threats to the safety of loved ones and communities. In these circumstances, the civic desire to inform others and the social desire to be the first to share new information contribute to the spread of disinformation.<sup>69</sup> The challenge then is to find ways to harness people's sense of civic duty to encourage positive practices.

A promising strand of research in this area finds that simply prompting people to pause and think about the accuracy of a message greatly improves their ability to reject disinformation, while also reducing the intention to share disinformation.<sup>70</sup> Most platforms have explored a limited version of this approach by attaching information labels to content, while Twitter additionally prompts people to open a news link before retweeting it. More generally, many media literacy campaigns endorse a "stop and think" message. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Nations Pause campaign<sup>71</sup> encouraged people to reflect before sharing information online. The campaign consists of videos, graphics and colourful animations that emphasize the importance of only sharing trusted and accurate science-based social media content.

Trusted and accessible information sources: Disinformation corrections typically rely on expert sources, which are generally considered to be more credible than peers.<sup>72</sup> However, credibility concerns perceptions of trustworthiness in addition to expertise,<sup>73</sup> and in some scenarios, trustworthiness may matter more than expertise.<sup>74</sup> Efforts to provide accurate information about the risks of migration must contend with the fact that potential migrants have a general distrust of official information campaigns and authorities, including governments and international organizations.<sup>75</sup> Similarly, relying on news media or governments to correct false information may be ineffective in cases where people already distrust these institutions.

In this context, trusted peers play an important role in promoting reliable information. To counteract COVID-19 disinformation, the United Nations' Verified initiative relied on a novel approach to engaging citizens as trusted community messengers.<sup>76</sup> The initiative invited people to become information volunteers who receive a daily feed of reliable information that is optimized for social sharing. While COVID-19 served as a catalyst for the advancement of peer-led campaigns, they have been employed previously in the context of migration. For example, the Mistakes by Word of Mouth campaign in Costa Rica relies on participatory principles and trusted peers to counteract rumours about migration regularization.<sup>77</sup>

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68 Banaji and Bhat, 2019; Chadwick and Vaccari, 2019; Chakrabarti et al., 2018.

69 Chakrabarti et al., 2018.

70 Pennycook et al., 2020.

71 [www.takecarebeforeyoushare.org/](http://www.takecarebeforeyoushare.org/).

72 Vraga and Bode, 2017.

73 Swire-Thompson and Ecker, 2018.

74 Benegal and Scruggs, 2018.

75 European Commission, 2018; Vammen et al., 2021.

76 <https://shareverified.com/en/>.

77 <https://somoscolmena.info/en/cr>.



**KANERE migrant-led news:** Kakuma in north-western Kenya is the site of one of the world's largest camps for displaced people. It is also home to KANERE,<sup>a</sup> the world's first fully independent refugee-camp news outlet. The name KANERE is short for

Kakuma News Reflector. Founding editor Qaabata Boru is a refugee himself. He now lives in Vancouver, Canada where he edits KANERE remotely and oversees a multinational team of 17 reporters. KANERE began in 2008 with a mission "to create a more open society in refugee camps and to develop a platform for fair public debate on refugee affairs." It has focused on issues that matter to refugees, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the legal rights of refugees and the alarming suicide rate among female residents. Boru explained, "We are the first contact with the community. Through this, we're able to build trust." As a trusted news source, KANERE has been on the front line of countering false information and ensuring that refugees have access to reliable information. During COVID-19, KANERE monitored and debunked the myths and rumours about COVID-19 circulating in the camp. These rumours undermined public health care and, in some cases, stigmatized certain groups. To counteract the false information, KANERE published reports online and reached out to different parts of the camp using a loudspeaker to broadcast credible information.

a <https://kanere.org/>.

Finally, reliable information needs to be accessible for target audiences. By tailoring information to audiences' preferred formats and channels, the message is more likely to be received and shared. For many people, visual information is more engaging and accessible than text. Providing accessible information requires effort – not least because accurate information may be more complicated than rumours. Studies indicate that information corrections are more likely to gain attention when they are visual.<sup>78</sup>

## Issues and challenges

This section outlines the key challenges for countering disinformation about migration. As online disinformation is a relatively new phenomenon, these challenges primarily concern gaps in knowledge and associated issues with data access and the unequal distribution of platform and research resources.

**Knowledge gaps:** There are significant knowledge gaps concerning the impact of disinformation and the long-term effectiveness of countermeasures. Regarding impact, big-data studies reveal the scale or volume of false information about migration. However, evidence of disinformation campaigns does not necessarily translate into an impact on society or democracy. Further research is needed to understand the mechanisms through which disinformation has influence. This is important to ensure that attention and resources are focused on disinformation that is likely to have an impact. Regarding countermeasures, although the emerging consensus holds that information corrections are effective in terms of reducing false beliefs, there is much that is not well understood. In particular, longitudinal studies are needed to understand whether the effects are long-lasting. Current research indicates that corrections are less effective when the disinformation was originally attributed to a credible source; when people have been

78 McAweeney, 2018.

exposed to the disinformation multiple times prior to correction; and when there is a time delay between the initial exposure and the correction.<sup>79</sup> Other studies indicate that corrections may reduce false perceptions, but do little to challenge underlying attitudes.<sup>80</sup>

A related issue concerns the lack of diversity in research. Much of the funding and resources is concentrated in wealthy nations and there is a considerable lack of quantitative and qualitative research from other regions. In addition, the various platforms have largely declined to share relevant data with independent researchers, which greatly impedes efforts to assess the scale and nature of the problem and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. Moreover, platform interventions are highly selective and tend to be concentrated in Western countries, where they face intense scrutiny from policymakers. For example, the major platforms intervened to counteract disinformation during the 2020 presidential election in the United States, but did not provide the same supports for contemporaneous elections in Sri Lanka and Nigeria.

Platform regulation: The persistence of major knowledge gaps surrounding disinformation on technology platforms is indicative of the failure of self-regulation. In response to concerns about disinformation and related issues, the platforms have engaged in transparency initiatives. Aside from the fact that these initiatives have been found wanting,<sup>81</sup> transparency without accountability achieves very little. Accountability implies independent oversight or audits by experts who have the capacity and remit to evaluate the situation with the interests of the public and the protection of fundamental rights in mind. Stronger regulation could also compel platforms to cooperate with vetted disinformation researchers and investigators to identify disinformation threats and to evaluate the effectiveness of countermeasures.

Definitional ambiguities: There is a risk that the term “disinformation” will be extended to all kinds of content that is deemed problematic or distasteful. Some countries have already introduced new laws against disinformation,<sup>82</sup> which have been criticized for their potentially chilling impact on freedom of expression. There are ongoing debates about how to balance fundamental rights with the need to mitigate public harms.<sup>83</sup> The definitional ambiguity surrounding disinformation presents a challenge in this process and has wider implications.

In many cases, the boundaries between false information, opinions and interpretations of evidence are unclear. In contrast with scientific issues about which there is an established consensus, such as climate, issues of a social and political nature pose particular difficulty, because the facts are often not absolute. Regarding migration, for example, there are ongoing academic debates about how to assess statistics on migration and crime,<sup>84</sup> a topic that animates sensational media coverage and activism by anti-immigrant actors.

In other cases, the types of content produced by bad actors are inherently not factual. For example, campaigns targeting migrants exhibit a “malevolent creativity” in their use of sarcasm, in-jokes and memes.<sup>85</sup> Such cultural content is problematic,<sup>86</sup> but often falls outside the remit of factual claims, and its ambiguous nature can create difficulties in establishing intention. Thus, there is much work to be done across conceptual, practical and policy levels.

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<sup>79</sup> Walter and Tukachinsky, 2020.

<sup>80</sup> Nyhan and Reifler, 2015.

<sup>81</sup> ERGA, 2020.

<sup>82</sup> Funke and Flamini, 2020.

<sup>83</sup> Bontcheva et al., 2020; Ponsetti and Bontcheva, 2020.

<sup>84</sup> Ousey and Kubrin, 2018.

<sup>85</sup> de Saint Laurent et al., 2020.

<sup>86</sup> Marwick and Lewis, 2017.

## Conclusion

This chapter has examined the factors shaping disinformation about migration and a range of countermeasures that seek to improve the information environment. In many respects, current efforts to counteract online disinformation appear to be piecemeal and uncoordinated. However, disinformation, including disinformation about migration, is a multifaceted problem. Building resilience to disinformation is a long-term project that needs to address overlapping societal issues, including declining levels of trust and increasing polarization. In the immediate term, greater cooperation is required across sectors and across borders to detect and counter disinformation campaigns. This is especially true in the context of migration, where migrants need access to reliable information as they cross borders and where coordinated disinformation campaigns are already transnational. One positive outcome of the COVID-19 crisis has been the consolidation of international collaborations such as the CoronaVirusFacts Alliance.<sup>87</sup> Launched in January 2020, it united more than 100 fact-checkers from 70 countries who benefit from shared resources and pooled expertise.

Consolidating the issues discussed in the chapter, we highlight the following as a non-exhaustive set of broad suggestions for policymakers, technology platforms, NGOs, media and researchers:

### Policymakers:

- Require greater accountability from digital platforms;
- Develop mechanisms for co-regulatory oversight of digital platforms;
- Protect media freedom and freedom of expression;
- Engage with stakeholders to ensure that responses are appropriate and in line with evidence-based best practices;
- Invest in initiatives to monitor, assess and counter disinformation.

### Platforms:

- Provide sufficient data access for research and oversight;
- Roll out interventions in all regions at risk of harmful disinformation campaigns, particularly during elections;
- Work with vetted stakeholders to identify threats in good time;
- Develop and embed best-practice norms for labelling online information.

### NGOs, journalists and other media stakeholders:

- Ensure that migrants have access to reliable and accessible information;
- Provide training and resources for journalists to report responsibly on migration and disinformation about migration;
- Provide repeated corrections in accessible formats to counter false claims;
- Educate the public about media literacy and disinformation.

### Researchers:

- Conduct studies on the effectiveness of countermeasures;
- Cooperate with researchers from poorly resourced countries to reduce geographical knowledge gaps.

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87 [www.poynter.org/coronavirusfactsalliance/](http://www.poynter.org/coronavirusfactsalliance/).





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# 9

## MIGRATION AND THE SLOW-ONSET IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE: TAKING STOCK AND TAKING ACTION<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

The relationship between climate change and migration has clearly gained increasing visibility on the policy agenda over the last decade and there is now much more awareness of the need to address this complex topic.<sup>2</sup> This growing political interest is evidenced by the development of global principles, such as those articulated under the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration<sup>3</sup> and in the Recommendations developed under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)<sup>4</sup> through its Task Force on Displacement.<sup>5</sup> In parallel with global discussions, regional policy dialogues – both on climate change and migration – are also exploring how to develop solutions that can support States to manage migration in a changing climate in ways that benefit affected populations.<sup>6</sup>

We now find ourselves at a crossroads – policy principles need to be translated into actionable activities on the ground, especially at national and local levels. Some countries have already developed national policies and frameworks that seek to address the challenges linked to the adverse impacts of climate change on migration,<sup>7</sup> even if such efforts remain relatively limited. One major difficulty in developing policies on climate and migration is the complex nature of the issues involved. Migration in the context of adverse climate impacts is mostly multicausal, as the decision to migrate is often shaped by a combination of different factors, including climate drivers. At the same time, a wide range of environmental and climate factors can influence the decision or necessity to migrate, from sudden-onset disasters such as typhoons and floods, to slow-onset processes like sea-level rise and land degradation.<sup>8</sup>

Another intricacy relates to the many forms that migration can take in the context of environmental change, with people moving near or far, internally or across borders, for a limited period of time or permanently. The 2010 Cancun Adaptation Framework, the first major climate policy document to include migration issues, refers to the notion of climate change-induced displacement, migration and planned relocation to outline the continuum from forced forms to voluntary forms of migration.<sup>9</sup> In addition, the impacts of climate change on immobile and

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1 Mariam Traore Chazalnoël, Senior Policy Officer, IOM; Alex Randall, Programme Manager, Climate and Migration Coalition.

2 Traore Chazalnoël and Ionesco, 2018a.

3 UNGA, 2018.

4 UNFCCC, 2019.

5 The Task Force on Displacement comprises 14 members, including IOM, from both within and outside the UNFCCC, chosen for their complementarity of expertise. See <https://unfccc.int/> for more information on the Task Force.

6 Traore Chazalnoël and Ionesco, 2018b.

7 IOM, 2018a.

8 Ionesco et al., 2017.

9 UNFCCC, 2010.

“trapped” populations left behind, which do not have the means to migrate out of degraded areas, should also be further researched and considered in relevant policies.<sup>10</sup>

In the last decade, a vast amount of knowledge has been produced on the climate change and migration nexus. A recent meta-analysis of available literature concludes that “slow-onset climatic changes, in particular extremely high temperatures and drying conditions (i.e. extreme precipitation decrease or droughts), are more likely to increase migration than sudden-onset events.”<sup>11</sup> Migrants moving to adapt to slow-onset impacts might have more time to gather the resources needed to migrate, while sudden-onset events reduce the ability to move by rapidly depleting resources.<sup>12</sup>

### Migrants’ testimony: the multicausal nature of climate migration

“And since there was the war, we did not receive any support from the government. Therefore, there are combined factors that made us suffer: droughts and war. If war did not exist, then we might have been able to stay, but now that the land is looted, there is no way for us to claim it.”

Climate-related events most frequently create patterns of internal mobility, however when the changes are combined with other factors such as armed conflict more complex patterns of mobility can result. In this testimony we can see someone crossing an international border as a result of a complex combination of altered rainfall, armed conflict and a failure of government institutions and support.

#### Context:

This testimony was collected by researchers working for UNHCR and the United Nations University as part of an investigation into the experiences of refugee and internally displaced persons in East Africa.

Sources: Afifi et al., 2012; Brzoska and Fröhlich, 2016.

This chapter focuses on migration in the context of the slow-onset impacts of climate change, an area where policy and knowledge gaps remain.<sup>13</sup> It presents some of the key challenges associated with understanding and taking action on slow-onset climate impacts and migration issues, and will explore how migration policy and practice can play a role in responding to some of the most pressing challenges. Throughout the chapter, migrants’ testimonies vividly illustrate how people are impacted on the ground and what the realities are that policymakers need to consider when translating principles into practices.

10 Heslin et al., 2019.

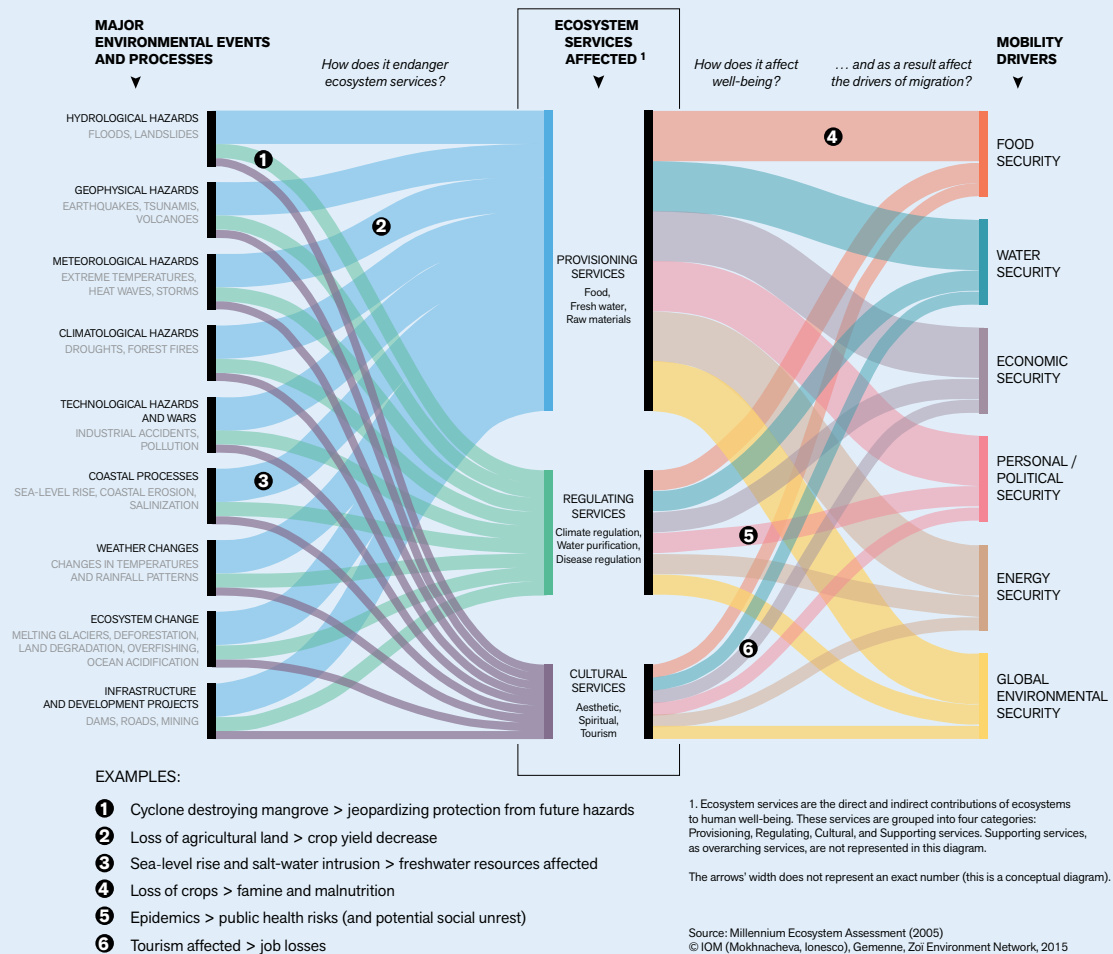
11 Šedová et al., 2021:3.

12 Ibid.

13 IDMC, 2019.



## Links between environmental change, ecosystems and human mobility



Ecosystems are increasingly endangered by slow-onset environmental events and processes. For instance, heat waves might lead to loss of agricultural land and decrease in productivity, while Sea-level rise and saltwater intrusion might threaten freshwater resources. The depletion of ecosystem services due to slow-onset processes might impact human security directly, for example through the reduction of essential resources such as food and water; and indirectly, such as when conflicts erupt over scarce natural resources. Threats to human security might in turn drive people to migrate in search of alternative income and ways to meet their basic needs.

Adapted from IOM, 2015a.

## Slow-onset climate-change impacts and migration: key concepts and current state of knowledge

This chapter uses the word “migration” as an umbrella term to refer to forced and voluntary forms of movement that can occur in the context of climate and environmental change. This terminology is aligned with the ongoing contribution of IOM, which has developed comprehensive working definitions of key terms relevant to the migration and climate-change nexus (see Appendix A). These definitions are not normative, nor are they internationally agreed upon – they seek to provide a broad framing of the topic for working purposes. This is particularly useful when discussing migration in the context of slow-onset climate impacts, as such migration can take many forms and be linked to multiple drivers.

### Migrants’ testimony: migration in the context of slow-onset events can take different forms...

“My grandfather, father and I have worked these lands. But times have changed ...

“The rain is coming later now, so that we produce less. The only solution is to go away, at least for a while. Each year I’m working for 3 to 5 months in Wyoming. That’s my main source of income. But leaving my village forever? No. I was raised here and here I will stay.”

When people move as a way of coping the livelihood consequences of altered rainfall, they often engage in a pattern of circular or seasonal migration, moving repeatedly between different locations rather than making one permanent move. The goal of this pattern of migration is to replace lost income during periods of rainfall irregularity, but to maintain connections with family and community who have stayed behind.

#### Context:

This testimony was collected by the EACH-FOR research programme. The interviewee is describing the situation in rural Mexico and his migration to the United States.

Sources: Afifi et al., 2012; Brzoska and Fröhlich, 2016.

...and result in different outcomes:

“I moved to a nearby market town to sell products. The town was five hours away [walking].. I also worked as a carpenter in the town. When the rain came, I would return to farm... But because of my absence, my wife wasn’t able to sustain the farming work by herself. So at one point, when it hadn’t rained for a long time, the whole family decided to move to the market town.”

When people move in order to cope with lost income they rarely cross international borders. People often move the shortest distance possible to find alternative work.

In this case we can see that the family did not initially move together. One family member moved first, but as the situation deteriorated the whole family moved to the new location.

#### Context:

This testimony was recorded as part of the research project carried out by UNHCR and the United Nations University. Researchers spoke to refugees and IDPs living in camps across East Africa about the causes of their displacement.

Sources: Afifi et al., 2012; Brzoska and Fröhlich, 2016.

Very closely linked with the question of how to define people migrating in the context of climate impacts is the question of data. Defining what climate migration is shapes what kinds of data are collected and analysed. In the absence of a universally agreed-upon definition, no single set of data is fully applicable to climate migration as defined by IOM. However, different data sources enable the creation of a general picture of how slow-onset events currently influence migration patterns and of what emerging future key trends are. Three types of data are especially useful in this context: existing data on people moving in the context of adverse climate and environmental impacts; projections related to the number of people potentially migrating in the future; and data on populations at risk. Taken together, these different sources can help policymakers to make changes that can shape future trends, particularly at the national level.

### *Data on current migration linked to climate and environmental impacts*

In recent years, the production of knowledge and evidence on the linkages between migration, the environment and climate change has increased substantially,<sup>14</sup> allowing for a better understanding of how environmental impacts – including slow-onset events and disasters – influence migration patterns globally, regionally, nationally and locally. Drought and desertification, both slow-onset events, are the most-studied hazards in the case studies related to climate migration collected in the CliMig Database.<sup>15</sup> Significant knowledge gaps nevertheless remain, such as the lack of long-term longitudinal data on migration that would better accommodate the slow timescales of environmental change,<sup>16</sup> and the absence of harmonized data sets and of disaggregated data.<sup>17</sup>

One of the most-cited and widely recognized data sources is the annual report of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) on disaster displacement, which compiles information on displacement related to disasters at the country level.<sup>18</sup> In 2020, 30.7 million new displacements were triggered by disasters in 145 countries and territories.<sup>19</sup> Important to note is that these numbers mostly focus on new displacements in reaction to a sudden-onset disaster and within their own countries – the data regarding slow-onset events and disasters, and data on cross-border movements remain incomplete. IDMC also releases limited data related to slow-onset disasters, with an estimated 46,000 new displacements due to extreme temperatures, and 32,000 new displacements due to droughts in 2020.<sup>20</sup> Over the period 2008–2020, over 2.4 million new displacements were caused by droughts and over 1.1 million by extreme temperatures.<sup>21</sup> However, these data only paint a partial picture, as small-scale events that lead to displacement occur more frequently than larger-scale disasters, but are usually underreported and not all countries report displacement triggered by slow-onset events.<sup>22</sup>

However, such data are useful when discussing slow-onset impacts and migration, notably to identify “hotspots” where repeated disaster displacement occurs. Slow-onset events can contribute to sudden-onset disasters; for instance, sea-level rise can trigger flooding and rising temperatures may result in heat waves.<sup>23</sup> People who live in

14 For instance, the CliMig Database on Migration, Climate Change and the Environment, produced by the Université de Neuchâtel, records a sharp increase in the number of yearly publications from 2008 onwards (Université de Neuchâtel, 2018). See also Ionesco et al., 2017.

15 Piguet et al., 2018.

16 Flavell et al., 2020.

17 Some of the key gaps related to displacement and slow-onset data are identified in IDMC, 2018a.

18 IDMC, 2021.

19 Ibid.

20 IDMC, 2020.

21 IDMC, 2021.

22 IDMC, 2019.

23 IDMC, 2018a.

areas with high levels of disaster displacement might progressively become unable to cope with the impacts of slow-onset events on environmentally based livelihoods, such as fishing or agriculture.<sup>24</sup> In such contexts, like the coastal areas of West Africa, a combination of slow-onset processes and sudden-onset hazards might influence the decision to migrate.<sup>25</sup>

Other types of data also help inform policy responses, such as IOM operational data providing a snapshot of current trends in specific countries. In Madagascar, for example, monitoring of drought impacts revealed that the prolonged drought experienced in the south of the country since 2013 resulted in increasing migration movements from the south to other regions of the country, with some villages experiencing a 30 per cent decrease in their populations.<sup>26</sup> In Mongolia, operational data clearly reveal that *Dzuds* (a cyclical, slow-onset phenomenon specific to Mongolia characterized by a summer drought followed by harsh winter weather and deterioration of pasture and shortages of water in spring) were linked to the migration of hundreds of thousands of people from rural areas within the same provinces, towards the cities, including the capital Ulaanbaatar.<sup>27</sup> In Somalia in 2019, data collected in displacement sites revealed that 67 per cent of the almost 700,000 internally displaced persons had moved because of drought.<sup>28</sup>

Data collected during the implementation of specific projects can also be useful, such as the information collected by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in Morocco, which highlighted how environmental changes intertwined with other migration drivers shaped the decision to migrate. In this specific survey, most respondents indicated that lack of employment was their primary reason to migrate. However, respondents also highlighted that environmental changes, such as drought and declining agricultural productivity, played a major or partial role in their decision to migrate.<sup>29</sup>

Operational data can provide a valuable resource for national policymakers, who need a broad understanding of how and where current climate impacts affect migration at the national level. However, this kind of data only offers a partial snapshot: information related to slow-onset hazards other than drought is very limited and the ad hoc nature of operational data, collected within the framework of time-bound projects that generally have a restricted geographical coverage, does not necessarily result in a long-term understanding of the patterns of recorded movements.

### *Future projections*

Another type of data that is often in the spotlight relates to future projections of the number of climate migrants. Projections can bring attention to the potential scale of future issues and instill a sense of urgency in policymakers. However, it is important to be careful when presenting projections, especially on a polarized topic such as migration.<sup>30</sup> Simplistic analyses of big numbers can trigger a fearmongering narrative that could negatively influence public perceptions and policymaking choices. Projections often highlight what could happen if nothing or too little is done by policymakers and other actors to mitigate climate impacts.

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24 IDMC, 2018b.

25 IOM, 2020a.

26 IOM, 2017a.

27 IOM, 2020b.

28 Ibid.

29 IOM and UNCCD, 2019.

30 Gemenne, 2011.

In terms of global projections, one seminal 2018 report from the World Bank<sup>31</sup> estimated that 143 million people could be moving within their own countries by 2050 because of adverse climate impacts in three regions of the world (sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America) in the absence of urgent global and national climate action. The report highlights that the poorest people might be forced to migrate due to slow-onset climate-change impacts, such as decreasing crop productivity, shortages of water and rising sea levels. Further, a UNCCD study indicates that the number of migrants in the context of droughts could increase by approximately 22 million in Africa, 12 million in South America and 10 million in Asia by 2059 when compared with the 2000–2015 period, with large distinctions between climate models and high uncertainty.<sup>32</sup> Modelling of migration patterns at the national level also points towards an increase in migration linked to sea-level rise in the United States<sup>33</sup> and Bangladesh<sup>34</sup> by 2100, while some researchers highlight that an increase in temperatures could lead to growing asylum applications to the European Union.<sup>35</sup>

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) expresses “low confidence in quantitative projections of changes in mobility, due to its complex, multi-causal nature”.<sup>36</sup> It does, however, note that there is medium confidence, but high agreement that “climate change over the 21st century is projected to increase displacement of people.”<sup>37</sup> Importantly, the IPCC highlights that changes in migration patterns can occur in response to slow-onset impacts such as longer-term climate variability and change, and indicates that migration can be an effective adaptation strategy in these contexts.<sup>38</sup> However, the IPCC also highlights that there is only “medium evidence and low agreement as to whether migration is adaptive, in relation to cost effectiveness and scalability concerns”.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, some researchers posit that migration is sometimes used as an adaptation strategy in response to governance voids, such as when communities rely on migrants’ remittances to finance climate resilience efforts.<sup>40</sup> At the time of finalizing this chapter, the IPCC had just released its latest output, as discussed in the text box below.

### IPCC’s Sixth Assessment Report (as at August 2021)

The latest output by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) signals “a code red for humanity”, according to UN Secretary-General António Guterres.

The IPCC released the first part of the Sixth Assessment Report, *Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis* (Working Group I’s contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report) on 9 August 2021. This part, prepared by 234 scientists from 66 countries, highlights that human influence has warmed the climate at a unprecedented rate and emphasizes the urgency of the action needed on climate change, which is widespread, rapid, intensifying and even irreversible.

31 Rigaud et al., 2018.

32 Laurent-Lucchetti et al., 2019.

33 Robinson et al., 2020.

34 Bell et al., 2021.

35 Missirian and Schlenker, 2017.

36 IPCC, 2014:20.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 IPCC, 2018.

40 Vinke et al., 2020.

Along with the first part, the Sixth Assessment Report (to be finalized later in 2022) will include the three most recent IPCC Special Reports – Global Warming of 1.5°C, Climate Change and Land, and The Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate, as well as the contribution of other two Working Groups: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability, and Mitigation of Climate Change. The report will provide policymakers with the most up-to-date scientific information related to climate change impacts.

Source: IPCC, 2021.

### *People at risk*

Other critical sources of information focus on people residing in climate-vulnerable areas where adverse impacts of slow-onset events are expected to worsen. Data on people at risk are available for many parts of the world.<sup>41</sup> Rising temperatures are a growing concern as exposure to high heat threatens habitability and can lead to loss of labour productivity. For instance, a 2017 report estimates that with a 1.5°C global temperature rise, 30 to 60 million people will live in hot areas where the average heat in the hottest month is likely to be too high for a human body to function well.<sup>42</sup> A warmer world will put millions of people at threat of sea-level rise,<sup>43</sup> and a world warmer by 1°C could directly expose 2.2 per cent of the world's population to rising seas.<sup>44</sup>

As with reporting the data on future projections, special care should be taken to present the caveats inherent to such numbers. While it is possible that many individuals and families will migrate to cope with climate impacts, it is also clear that not all people living in at-risk areas will want or have the opportunity to migrate. Scenarios arising where such projections become realities – leading to people at risk migrating out of affected areas – will only occur if appropriate and evidence-based policymaking decisions are not taken. It is therefore critical to remember that there is a window of opportunity to ensure that the worst predictions do not come to pass, and that policymakers need support to analyse existing knowledge, make appropriate connections and take decisions that address both the mobility and immobility dimensions of climate change.

The lack of comprehensive data on migration linked to slow-onset climate events remains a barrier in developing evidence-based policymaking. In many cases, it is difficult to isolate climate factors from other social, economic, political and security drivers that motivate the decision to migrate. This is especially true in relation to slow-onset events, as they do not usually lead to immediate large-scale movements. Therefore, it is possible for instance that many migrants who are understood to be migrating for economic reasons, also migrate in part because of climate impacts on their livelihoods.<sup>45</sup> Another example relates to conflict and security. When political, economic and social factors of instability intersect, population movements might exacerbate State fragility and contribute to increasing conflict. The Syrian civil war, where exceptional drought contributed to population movements towards urban areas that were not addressed by the political regime, is often cited as an illustration of these linkages.<sup>46</sup> However, existing evidence does not allow the firm conclusion that there exists a direct link between migration, climate change and conflict.<sup>47</sup> In terms of policymaking, it is however important to consider that climate change often acts as a threat multiplier in fragile contexts.

41 Ionesco et al., 2017.

42 IOM, 2017b.

43 McMichael et al., 2020.

44 Marzeion and Levermann, 2014.

45 Bendandi, 2020.

46 Maertens and Baillat, 2017.

47 Ionesco et al., 2017.

Even if this multicausal nature makes it impossible to offer a global overview of hard numbers of people migrating in the context of slow-onset climate impacts, there is enough information available to understand the scale of the issue. In this respect, researchers can best support policymakers by providing context-specific analyses of converging sources. However, policymakers will need to accept that there is no clear-cut way to obtain hard numbers and that policymaking decisions need to acknowledge this complexity. As described in the next section, multilateral United Nations policy dialogues are increasingly discussing policy stakes related to climate migration, including slow-onset dimensions. These global policy discussions are already impacting national- and regional-level policymaking, with several countries developing national policy frameworks that align with global discussions. However, better data and analysis would help operationalize national responses to migration linked to slow-onset climate impacts.

## Slow-onset climate impacts in global policy developments: where do we stand?

### *Global developments in climate policy and migration policy*

The topic of migration and climate change has increasingly been included in global policy discussions conducted under United Nations frameworks and beyond.<sup>48</sup> Especially significant is the progress made in including migration dimensions within the climate change negotiations agenda and the implementation of the Paris Agreement by State parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).<sup>49</sup> In 2015, the Paris Climate Change Agreement mandated the creation of the UNFCCC Task Force on Displacement within the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage (WIM),<sup>50</sup> an expert body comprising members with complementary expertise. Through a consultative process,<sup>51</sup> the Task Force developed recommendations on how to address displacement in the context of climate change.<sup>52</sup> These recommendations are addressed to UNFCCC State parties, the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders. These recommendations are applicable in the context of slow-onset events, as they seek to address all forms of human mobility linked to the adverse impacts of climate change, including slow-onset events.

Salient points formulated in these recommendations include: inviting States to formulate laws, policies and strategies that address all forms of migration linked to climate impacts, while taking into account States' human rights obligations; strengthening research and analysis on the topic; inviting States to facilitate orderly, safe and regular migration in the context of adverse climate impacts; and creating synergies with the work conducted under the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. State parties to the UNFCCC endorsed these recommendations in 2018 and renewed the mandate of the Task Force on Displacement until 2021, a sign of political interest to keep migration discussions on the agenda of the climate negotiations. Furthermore, members of the Task Force on Displacement have been producing dedicated knowledge products<sup>53</sup> that seek to raise awareness on what forms of migration occur in the context of slow-onset events and to map current United Nations mandates to address displacement linked to climate impacts, including slow-onset processes.<sup>54</sup> This policy work is starting to influence policymaking at the national level. For instance, the Governments of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are reviewing the extent to which

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48 IOM, 2018b.

49 Traore Chazalnoël and Ionesco, 2016.

50 See UNFCCC, n.d.e, Task Force on Displacement.

51 IOM, 2018c.

52 UNFCCC, 2021.

53 IOM, 2018b.

54 PDD, 2018.

their national policy frameworks are aligned with the recommendations of the Task Force on Displacement, with a view to identifying relevant mechanisms and gaps, and formulating specific recommendations to address migration and climate-change issues nationally.<sup>55</sup>

It is important to note that the migration-related policy work conducted under the UNFCCC is connected institutionally to other strategic workstreams under the climate negotiations that are of great relevance to migration in the context of slow-onset events and processes. The human mobility strategic workstream is situated under the overall work programme on loss and damage,<sup>56</sup> alongside strategic workstreams dedicated to slow-onset events and non-economic losses.<sup>57</sup> Clearly, these dimensions are of great relevance when discussing migration in the context of slow-onset environmental degradation, as affected populations, including migrants, can suffer both economic losses such as loss of income, infrastructure and property,<sup>58</sup> and non-economic losses such as loss of cultural heritage<sup>59</sup> and traditional knowledge.<sup>60</sup> There is an increasing recognition that stronger connections between these work programmes need to be established.

Discussions on migration under the UNFCCC were originally related to the adaptation workstream,<sup>61</sup> before being moved to the loss and damage workstream. This shift opened the possibility of an alternative framing of climate migration: migration can be a way to adapt to climate impacts and reduce loss and damage, but it can also be a source of loss and damage for the migrants and their host communities.<sup>62</sup> Depending on the context, forms of mobility such as voluntary migration and planned relocation<sup>63</sup> can be both a form of loss and damage as well as an adaptation measure.<sup>64</sup> There is, however, the risk that an excessive focus on migration as a source of loss or damage, in particular for host communities, could be negatively politicized and lead to policies that seek to limit all migration, including when it can be a form of adaptation.<sup>65</sup>

Looking forward, a better understanding of how loss and damage issues relate to migration may be critical in guiding the development of migration policies and practices that consider slow-onset climate impacts. However, it is important to acknowledge that this step could trigger politically difficult discussions, as questions of loss and damage are very much linked to issues of compensation, a sensitive topic for both developed and developing countries.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, at the request of a developed country,<sup>67</sup> the decision of the 2015 Paris Agreement that created the Task Force on Displacement under the loss and damage workstream explicitly stated that this exercise did not provide a basis for any liability or compensation.<sup>68</sup>

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55 IOM, 2021a; IOM, 2021b.

56 For more details, see UNFCCC, n.d.b.

57 Non-economic losses are additional to the loss of property, assets, infrastructure, agricultural production and/or revenue that can result from the adverse effects of climate change. It covers loss and damage that is not easily quantifiable in economic terms, such as loss of life, degraded health and losses induced by human mobility, as well as loss or degradation of territory, cultural heritage, indigenous knowledge, societal/cultural identity, biodiversity and ecosystem services. For more details, see UNFCCC, n.d.c.

58 UNFCCC, 2020.

59 Heslin, 2019.

60 UNFCCC, 2013.

61 Mayer, 2016.

62 Ibid.

63 Hirsch, 2019.

64 UNFCCC, 2013.

65 Mayer, 2016. Also note that some researchers argue that the framing of climate migrants as potential security threats can lead to exclusionary and containment policies (Telford, 2018).

66 Hirsch, 2019.

67 Verchick, 2018.

68 UNFCCC, 2015.



In 2019, at the 24th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP24), a WIM review exercise offered State parties to the UNFCCC the opportunity to share their views on the work of the WIM to date, including the work of the Task Force on Displacement, and provide recommendations for future orientations.<sup>69</sup> There was wide acknowledgement that the Task Force on Displacement had not only successfully delivered on its mandate to develop recommendations, but had also achieved other positive impacts, such as offering a space to discuss “difficult and sensitive issues related to loss and damage”.<sup>70</sup> It was also highlighted that the involvement of external operational actors was instrumental to the success of the Task Force.<sup>71</sup> As an outcome of the WIM review exercise, the Least-Developed Countries Group recommended the establishment of a displacement facility to support countries to address internal and cross-border displacement and migration related to climate-change impacts, and greater involvement of operational actors to build capacities at the national level to better exploit knowledge related to loss and damage.<sup>72</sup> These recommendations are in line with the strong calls from developing countries to facilitate availability of and access to financing mechanisms and enhance the operationalization of the WIM at the national level.<sup>73</sup> On the other hand, European Union countries, for example, highlighted that the current structure of the WIM was adequate, and had enabled it to deliver its core functions.<sup>74</sup> It is too soon to determine precisely how the various State interests at stake will shape the future of migration-related work under the UNFCCC. However, the slow pace of the discussions conducted under the UNFCCC makes it unlikely that further operationalization of the WIM can occur rapidly. In terms of addressing slow-onset impacts on migration, one of the most effective ways forward may be to empower external operational actors to support the implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force on Displacement at the national level.

Global migration policy discussions have increasingly acted in parallel to integrate climate and environmental dimensions, building upon the work conducted under the UNFCCC. In this respect, critical milestones were the adoption by United Nations Member States of the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (New York Declaration),<sup>75</sup> followed by the 2018 adoption by States of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The Global Compact for Migration includes several actions that States can implement to: (a) address environmental and climate drivers of migration, including slow-onset drivers (objective 2); and (b) to enhance the availability and flexibility of regular migration pathways, such as visa options for those affected by climate impacts, including slow-onset events (objective 5).

However, it is important to recall that the Global Compact for Migration is only concerned with international migration, while much migration in the context of slow-onset degradation takes place internally, from rural to urban areas for instance. From an implementation perspective, the focus on international migration gives a leading role to ministries of foreign affairs and/or home affairs, and it may prove difficult to ensure the coherent participation of governmental actors that are not traditionally involved with migration, yet are in charge of climate or disaster risk-reduction issues. Nonetheless, a sound implementation of the Global Compact for Migration’s objectives, especially those related to addressing drivers of migration and promoting adaptation and resilience in countries of origin, can have positive effects on both internal and international migration. The Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund, established to support the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration, has started funding joint programmes related to climate migration.<sup>76</sup> While being too soon to evaluate operational results, it is encouraging

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69 UNFCCC, n.d.d.

70 Government of Finland and EC, 2019.

71 Ibid; Government of Bhutan, 2019.

72 Ibid.

73 Government of Guatemala, 2019; Government of the Philippines, 2019; AOSIS, 2019.

74 Government of Finland and EC, 2019.

75 Martin and Weerasinghe, 2017.

76 MPTF, 2020.

that States have supported the funding of migration programmes. The International Migration Review Forum,<sup>77</sup> scheduled to take place in 2022 to review the status of implementation of the Global Compact for Migration, will offer important indicators on States' willingness, including through action, to implement the Compact's objectives related to climate migration.

The objectives outlined under the Global Compact for Migration are aligned with the UNFCCC Task Force on Displacement Recommendations and echo many of its points, such as the need for better data and knowledge and the necessity to support populations to develop resilience strategies, including those for slow-onset events and processes. Both documents spell out global policy principles that could be instrumental in guiding policy development at the national level. Some countries such as Peru are already developing national plans that build upon the principles outlined in these global policy documents,<sup>78</sup> a sign that they can play a catalytic role in national policy development.

Other ongoing initiatives are relevant in supporting the development of policy on migration in the context of slow-onset events (see a summary of other relevant initiatives in the United Nations system in Appendix B). Slow-onset dimensions are therefore relatively well integrated into the main relevant global policy discussions, even if data and knowledge on this specific topic need to be strengthened. The various recommendations and principles articulated at the global level highlight the complex nature of migration linked to slow-onset climate impacts and the need for policymakers from different areas to work together to develop comprehensive solutions. In this respect, migration policymakers have a leading role to play in translating global principles into national- and regional-level policies that provide assistance and protection to affected migrants and communities. The following section will focus on how migration policy can be reshaped to respond to some of the identified issues, in line with global principles.

### Migrants' testimony: the multicausal nature of climate migration

"Rains recently have been very intense – very intense. Without comparison, like nothing seen before. Years ago the rainy season lasted two months, November and December, and water levels reached 20 to 30 centimetres. Now, in the last six to seven months, they've reached over two metres. We've never seen this before. **We don't want to leave our land: here are our past, our memories, our ancestors. We don't want to move to other parts, we don't know what to do there.**"

Even in the face of extremely difficult consequence of environmental change, many people wish to remain in their current location, rather than migrating to find alternative work. As we can see from this testimony, historic and cultural connections to locations are important to many and form a key part of someone's decision to stay or leave.

#### Context:

This testimony was recorded by NGO Refugees International. The interviewee is speaking as part of its video series reporting on the consequences of flooding in Colombia in 2012.

Sources: Adams, 2016; Refugees International, 2012.

<sup>77</sup> UNNM, n.d.

<sup>78</sup> Peru is in the process of preparing a specific Plan of Action on Climate Migration, as requested by the Climate Change law of 2018 and its 2019 Regulation Law. See Parliament of Peru, 2019 and Government of Peru, 2019.

## Migration in the context of slow-onset climate impacts: moving from frameworks to migration policy action

Due to the multicausal nature of climate migration,<sup>79</sup> policymakers from different areas can help address various sides of the nexus. Climate and disaster risk-reduction specialists play a leading role in addressing adverse drivers of internal climate migration. For instance, migration issues have been included in national climate and disaster risk-reduction policies in several countries, such as Colombia and Togo.<sup>80</sup> This section focuses on examining how migration policymaking can help address some of the key challenges linked to climate migration. Migration policymakers seeking to adapt existing frameworks or develop new ones to respond to migration in the context of slow-onset events face a difficult task. They have to take into account a number of complex points that can influence how national and regional policy frameworks are developed. One key point outlined in global principles is the recognition that in some cases, it will not be possible for people to remain in areas devastated by slow-onset events, or to return to these areas; and that in such contexts, facilitating regular migration is a needed policy response. This dimension is one of the key areas of work in which migration policymakers can play an important role, for instance by negotiating bilateral labour migration agreements that can potentially offer regular migration options.

The notion that migration can be one of the available ways for individuals to adapt to climate impacts has been thoroughly discussed over the last decade, with diverging views.<sup>81</sup> On the one hand, the “migration as adaptation” framing allows policymakers to consider how voluntary migration could help reduce exposure and vulnerability to physical risks associated with climate impacts, and boost the resilience both of migrants and the households left behind, through livelihood diversification and remittances, for instance.<sup>82</sup> On the other hand, it has been argued that this framing could dilute the responsibility of political forces by shifting the focus to individual resilience and opportunities to move, weakening considerations linked to issues of inequality, injustice and reparations.<sup>83</sup> Whether migration results in mostly positive consequences will be context-specific, with additional factors such as gender dimensions<sup>84</sup> and age<sup>85</sup> influencing outcomes. Available literature usually emphasizes that migration linked to climate impacts takes place along a voluntary to forced continuum;<sup>86</sup> and in most cases, even so-called “voluntary” movements will be motivated by external pressures that shape and limit individuals’ migration options.<sup>87</sup> Likewise, there is increasing recognition that even in situations of “forced” migration, individuals and households can exert some agency in migration decisions, such as deciding when, where and how to move to a new location.<sup>88</sup>

Beyond the debate on whether migration constitutes a reasonable and desirable adaptation option and whether migration is mostly forced or voluntary, it is important to acknowledge that movements are already taking place and will continue to occur and probably grow. What is at stake therefore is how to develop realistic policy approaches that acknowledge the fact that migration might be inevitable in certain contexts and that help reduce migrants’ vulnerabilities and enhance the positive impacts of migration for migrants and communities. Looking ahead, developing new safe and legal migration pathways to cope with adverse impacts of climate might be an immense but probably necessary challenge, likely to prompt difficult political discussions on the perils of offering

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79 United Kingdom Government Office for Science, 2011.

80 IOM, 2018a.

81 Oakes et al., 2020.

82 IOM, 2015b; IOM, 2017c.

83 Bettini et al., 2017.

84 Gioli and Milan, 2018.

85 Ionesco and Pawliczko, 2014.

86 Flavell et al., 2020.

87 McAuliffe et al., 2017.

88 Akesson and Coupland, 2018; Oakes et al., 2020.

more migration pathways. Migration policymakers continue to assess how existing current approaches to migration management could be adjusted or expanded to address the specific challenges of people moving in connection with climate impacts.<sup>89</sup> Reviewing and expanding existing policies and practices has potential to lead to relatively fast positive changes for migrants, increasing their protection when moving in response to extreme climate impacts and providing alternative choices to those unable to remain in or return to areas devastated by slow-onset environmental impacts.

In terms of cross-border migration, one obvious response is to develop more visa options available to those who cannot remain in, or return to, areas of origin due to slow-onset impacts of climate change, as outlined under Global Compact for Migration objective 5h. Such visas could for instance be granted on humanitarian and compassionate grounds to those fleeing extreme environmental degradation, on the model of humanitarian visas offered by Brazil to Haitian migrants after the 2010 earthquake or temporary visas in Peru granted for humanitarian reasons.<sup>90</sup> Other migration management options could be applied to migrants who are already abroad, but are facing difficulties in returning due to slow-onset climate impacts, such as implementing broad regularization programmes, adjusting immigration enforcement activities or granting individuals residency permits. Existing practices can also be enhanced, such as using bilateral agreements on education, training or labour to offer alternative options to those most vulnerable to climate impacts,<sup>91</sup> and using provisions under regional free-movement agreements to admit migrants affected by climate impacts.<sup>92</sup> The specific challenges linked to voluntary return and reintegration policies and programmes are also of critical importance in cases where return is possible, but where areas of return are environmentally fragile. This includes providing options for returning migrants to work in the green or blue economy and in environmentally sustainable occupations.<sup>93</sup>

In terms of facilitating internal migration, ensuring that migration policies consider urbanization issues is particularly important. Many regions of the world experience migration from rural areas – which might be affected by slow-onset events – towards urban centres,<sup>94</sup> where migrants might seek diverse livelihood opportunities or better access to essential services. However, cities can become hotspots of risks,<sup>95</sup> as many densely populated urban centres are exposed to slow-onset events and processes such as heat waves, coastal erosion, droughts and sea-level rise. Migration management policies therefore need to take these dimensions into account, such as in the Bangladesh-led initiative that encourages internal migrants not to move to major cities, but to instead move to secondary cities that are more climate-resilient and migrant-friendly.<sup>96</sup>

Planned relocation policies could also be critical in facilitating safe and orderly migration. Planned relocations of entire communities living in areas that are irreversibly damaged due to slow-onset degradation, such as sea-level rise, are already taking place in over 60 countries and territories across all continents.<sup>97</sup> It is likely that more planned relocations will need to be managed in the future, even if they are usually considered to be a last-resort option. However, very few countries have developed domestic laws and policies focused solely on planned relocation.<sup>98</sup> Policies on planned relocation need to consider several complex factors to avoid worsening the vulnerabilities

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89 IOM's definition of migration management reads as follows: "planned approaches to the implementation and operationalization of policy, legislative and administrative frameworks, developed by the institutions in charge of migration" (IOM, 2019:248).

90 Nansen Initiative, 2015b.

91 For example, Spain and New Zealand have expanded the use of pre-existing temporary work quotas to target migrants originating from areas affected by climate impacts. For more details, see Nansen Initiative, 2015b.

92 Foreigners affected by slow-onset disasters and environmental stress have relied on free-movement agreements between Nepal and India. See Nansen Initiative, 2015b.

93 IOM, 2020c.

94 FAO et al., 2018.

95 Schreiber et al., 2016.

96 Alam et al., 2018.

97 Bower and Weerasinghe, 2021.

98 Ibid.

of those relocated, such as the physical impacts of relocation on the landscape of receiving places, employment opportunities, access to essential services, and social cohesion between relocated communities and communities of destination.<sup>99</sup> Even if it is anticipated that most planned relocations will take place within countries, for instance in small island developing States threatened by sea-level rise, such relocations could potentially take place across borders. This could in turn trigger extremely complex international legal challenges. From the perspective of a loss and damage framing of climate migration, such policy choices can be a double-edged sword. Facilitating migration and planned relocation can potentially reduce loss and damage by reducing exposure to adverse climate impacts, but can also incur loss and damage for the migrants and/or the host communities.<sup>100</sup>

Migration management policy and practice should strive to support in parallel migrants' efforts to mitigate and to adapt to slow-onset events, both in their areas of origin and destination. Such policy options could include reducing the cost of transferring remittances towards areas that experience serious environmental degradation, and incentivizing the skills and financial investments of migrants towards climate action in areas of origin. These policies would also contribute to addressing climate drivers of migration by reducing vulnerabilities in areas of origin. Furthermore, migrants' inputs could be actively sought and integrated within national- and local-level policy planning, to ensure that specific challenges experienced by mobile populations are reflected.

Countries could find it useful to undertake comprehensive review exercises to analyse how their existing migration management policies can be applied or modified to respond to new environmental challenges. Such reviews could also evaluate whether there is a need to develop new migration management tools to support populations moving in the context of slow-onset climate impacts.

### Maximizing migrants' contributions to climate action

Financial remittances are often a lifeline for the poorest households, allowing them to meet their basic needs. Financial remittances are mostly used for poverty reduction as opposed to investment in longer-term adaptation.<sup>a</sup> However, remittances have the potential in some contexts to constitute an alternative source of climate finance in developing countries, such as in Pacific small island developing States.<sup>b</sup> Financial remittances can contribute to building resilience at both the individual and community level, for instance when migrants are able to build climate-resilient houses or invest in climate-proof community infrastructure. Social remittances might also play a key role in building resilience to climate shocks when migrants acquire new skills and education.<sup>c</sup> In Tajikistan, for instance, a study highlights that migrants' remittances are increasingly used for business creation and community-based farming, creating opportunities for a more climate-resilient future.<sup>d</sup> However, incentives need to be provided to encourage migrants' investments in national and community resilience to climate change, as migrants might not have the necessary information or the technical know-how to channel remittances into climate action.<sup>e</sup> Examples of policy measures that support migrants' investments include the 3×1 Program for Migrants in Mexico, through which national authorities provide three dollars for every one dollar of remittances invested in community projects; or loans offered by the Senegalese Government to diasporas.<sup>f</sup>

a IOM, 2017c:81; Musah-Surugu et al., 2018.

b Samuwai and Maxwell Hills, 2018.

c IOM, 2017c.

d Babagaliyeva et al., 2017.

e Bendandi and Pauw, 2016.

f Ibid; Villegas Rivera, 2014.

99 IOM et al., 2017; Brookings Institution et al., 2015.

100 Mayer, 2016.

### *Examples of existing practices*

Relevant national and regional policy responses have been developed in recent years to address migration linked to climate impacts and environmental change.<sup>101</sup> This development in policymaking at the national and regional levels could be partially linked to the greater visibility given to the topic in global agendas. It also indicates that there is increasing awareness of climate migration, as well as political will to address it. Existing policies do not generally distinguish between migration linked to slow-onset events and movements linked to sudden disasters. These policies can be stand-alone frameworks that specifically seek to address issues linked to climate change and migration. Other frameworks highlight climate and migration dimensions in other areas, such as migration and human mobility policies, climate adaptation and mitigation policies, and disaster risk-reduction policies. The scope of these policies also differs: some seek to address internal migration movements, while others look at how to manage migration flows originating from other countries.

The section below presents some recent examples of migration policy initiatives that address climate impacts on migration, including slow-onset dimensions. Further examples can be found in the Migration, Environment and Climate Change: Policy Brief Series.<sup>102</sup>

#### *Vanuatu National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-Induced Displacement (2018)*

Vanuatu developed a policy targeting all causes of displacement in the country, including movements linked to slow-onset impacts, such as coastal erosion, environmental degradation, sea-level rise and drought.<sup>103</sup> This policy seeks to facilitate a whole-of-government approach to minimize drivers of displacement; ensure that facilitated migration, such as planned relocation, takes place with dignity and in full respect of human rights; and develop durable solutions for populations on the move. This national policy also highlights that well-managed and safe internal migration can be an adaptation strategy to climate impacts. This national policy clearly aligns with global policy frameworks such as the Recommendations of the Task Force on Displacement and regional policy efforts ongoing in the Pacific.

Selected key measures:

- Strengthen institutional governance to address mobility linked to climate impacts;
- Develop evidence-based approaches through better data collection and monitoring measures, such as the creation of a displacement-tracking mechanism;
- Develop guidelines and standard operational procedures to ensure common standards for protection of all people affected by displacement;
- Incorporate displacement and migration considerations into land management, housing and environmental planning.

#### *South America: non-binding regional instrument on the protection of people displaced across borders and on migrants in countries affected by disasters linked to natural hazards (2019)*

Member countries of the South American Conference on Migration, a regional consultative process on migration, developed and adopted non-binding guidelines to protect persons displaced across borders due to disasters.<sup>104</sup> The guidelines mostly focus on sudden-onset events, but could potentially be applicable to movements connected to

<sup>101</sup> IOM, 2018a; UNHCR, 2018.

<sup>102</sup> See <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/policy-briefs>.

<sup>103</sup> Government of Vanuatu, 2018.

<sup>104</sup> CSM, 2018.

slow-onset disasters and processes. The guidelines build on existing practices that promote the use of regular and exceptional immigration law on humanitarian grounds. Even if non-binding, the guidelines represent an innovative policymaking example of how countries can cooperate at the regional level to minimize environmental drivers of migration and manage the admission and stay of affected people. These regional guidelines can also guide national policymaking efforts and contribute to the development of solid national frameworks across the region.

Selected key measures:

- Enhance institutional coordination and develop procedures in each country to anticipate and respond to movements linked to natural disasters;
- Identify protection needs of persons displaced across international borders and unable to return to their country of origin;
- Facilitate immigration procedures for regular entry, including the issuing of humanitarian visas and temporary agreements.

*Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD): Protocol on Free Movement of Persons in the IGAD Region (2020)*

Regional free-movement policies can also be leveraged to address the specific concerns of people moving within a region in response to climate impacts, including slow-onset processes. A recent regional free-movement protocol adopted in East Africa exemplifies how this type of agreements can contribute to protecting those moving across borders because of environmental impacts.<sup>105</sup> IGAD, representing seven East African countries, in 2020 adopted a Protocol on Free Movement of Persons in the IGAD Region. The protocol uses a broad definition of disasters, including both sudden events and slow-onset environmental damage. It highlights States' responsibility to facilitate entry, registration and stay of citizens of other Member States affected by disasters.

Key measures:

- Facilitate entry and registration of citizens of other Member States moving in anticipation of, during, or in the aftermath of disasters;
- Facilitate the extension of stay for these citizens.

*Pacific climate change-related displacement and migration: a New Zealand action plan (2018)*

This action plan was developed by the Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and adopted by the New Zealand cabinet in 2018.<sup>106</sup> An update was provided in 2019.<sup>107</sup> The action plan recognizes that climate impacts in Pacific island countries have implications for New Zealand, including issues of migration. The plan acknowledges the wish expressed by Pacific island countries to focus first and foremost on addressing climate drivers of migration, so that people can remain and lead productive lives in their own countries. As a result, the plan emphasizes that New Zealand should provide financial support to these countries to advance effective climate action, as one way to anticipate and prepare for cross-border climate migration. In a long-term perspective, the plan recommends considering options for regular migration pathways, such as expanding labour mobility schemes and the use of humanitarian visas, once a clearer picture of Pacific needs and priorities emerges.

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<sup>105</sup> IGAD, 2020.

<sup>106</sup> Government of New Zealand, 2018.

<sup>107</sup> Government of New Zealand, 2019.

Selected key measures:

- Using Official Development Assistance to support Pacific communities to avert climate-related displacement and prepare for climate migration, through investments in climate resilience and adaptation measures;
- Promoting regional dialogue and exploring potential regional approaches that outline a collective Pacific response to internal and cross-border climate migration;
- Strengthening international frameworks through multilateral action, including the UNFCCC Task Force on Displacement and the Global Compact for Migration;
- Commission robust research and analysis of hazards and vulnerabilities to prepare for climate migration.

These selected policymaking examples present characteristics that are of wider relevance to States seeking to strengthen their migration policy frameworks to address international and cross-border climate migration.<sup>108</sup> These examples all align with the recommendations and practices adopted at the global level, while developing contextualized responses to address their specific needs. They demonstrate in different ways how global frameworks can be actioned at both regional and national levels. At the national level, policies mostly seek to address internal climate drivers of migration and manage internal movements. However, a successful implementation of these types of policies would not only support internal migrants, but would probably also reduce the environmental drivers that contribute to international migration. Developed countries increasingly seek to understand how climate change in developing countries could impact migration flows towards their territories.<sup>109</sup> For instance, the 2021 United States Executive Order on Rebuilding and Enhancing Programs to Resettle Refugees and Planning for the Impact of Climate Change on Migration requests the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs to work with the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development and the Director of National Intelligence to prepare and submit to the President a report on climate change and its impact on migration, including forced migration, internal displacement and planned relocation.<sup>110</sup> The report is to identify security implications of climate-related movements and options to protect and resettle individuals displaced directly or indirectly by climate impacts. The report will also articulate proposals on how the use of foreign assistance from the United States can reduce the negative impacts of climate change. The production of this report, involving high-level national stakeholders across the policy spectrum, demonstrates a willingness to address the national implications of a major contemporary issue by working in close collaboration at both global and local levels with other countries, international and regional agencies, and non-governmental organizations.

Policies originating from developed countries could potentially help enhance investments in national climate action and development measures in countries vulnerable to climate impacts, with a view to minimizing drivers of cross-border migration. Regional policy examples highlight that States can make use of regular and exceptional migration measures to manage mobility linked to disasters. These developments are promising. However, we do not yet have enough hindsight to evaluate the results of these policy efforts, especially as they mostly remain non-binding and/or have not yet been widely implemented.

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108 Other examples of policy developments can be found in *Submission on Slow-Onset Internal Displacement* (for more details, see IOM, 2020d) and *Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change, Volume II* (for more details, see Nansen Initiative, 2015b.)

109 IOM, 2017d.

110 United States White House Executive Order, 2021.



### Key findings on migration in the context of slow-onset events relevant to policymaking

- Slow-onset events and processes may result in diverse migration outcomes: a continuum of voluntary to involuntary migration; short-term, circular, longer-term and permanent movements; internally or across borders; over short or long distances; migration of individuals, whole households and entire communities (planned relocation); and immobility of trapped populations.
- The choice to migrate in the context of slow-onset events and processes often involves complex decision-making and is shaped by multiple socioeconomic and environmental factors.
- Slow-onset processes affect more directly the lives and livelihoods of those who depend on local natural resources for their livelihoods and security (e.g. farmers, herders, fishers and indigenous peoples).
- Migration in the context of slow-onset impacts can be difficult to distinguish from other types of movements (e.g. labour migration, shorter-term circulation).
- Communities of origin, migrants' families left behind and trapped populations are also concerned with migration in the context of slow-onset events.
- Migration in the context of slow-onset processes often results in differentiated impacts for women, boys and girls, and the elderly, linked to a number of factors such as family separation, disempowerment and increased dependency on other household members.
- Slow-onset events and processes occur in some contexts with situations of intercommunal tensions and conflict. Their combined impacts can lead to population movements, which in turn further exacerbate environmental degradation and conflicts.
- Urban areas are often the main destinations for people moving in the context of slow-onset events. However, these urban areas can become hotspots of risk related to the impacts of environmental change.
- Data on migration in the context of slow-onset events are limited, but provide a broad picture of the issues at stakes and the scale of the phenomenon.
- Migrants can act as agents of change and contribute positively to climate action.

*Note:* This summary is drawn from IOM institutional submissions, available on the IOM Environmental Migration Portal at <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/>.

## Conclusion

Looking ahead at a future in which slow-onset climate events are expected to worsen, appropriate migration management policies and practices can and should be part of the solution. Global policy discussions have identified some entry points where migration policymakers could be instrumental in promoting positive changes, notably in terms of facilitating migration in the context of slow-onset climate events. Attempting to develop legal pathways to enhance the protection of people migrating in the climate context might prove difficult in some countries where a growing hostility emerges towards hosting more migrants. Yet, at the same time, there has clearly been a growing political interest among both developed and developing States in discussing migration linked to climate impacts – and this growing awareness is already influencing how policies are developing at national and regional levels.

Therefore, there may not be a better time to intensify and expand initiatives designed to translate global frameworks into action and support the unique role that migration policymakers could play to address slow-onset drivers of migration. Looking ahead, some points that will need to be carefully considered include:

- Ensuring that knowledge providers better collect and analyse evidence specifically related to slow-onset events and processes, promoting an understanding of the uniqueness and complexity of the nexus, and making these data available to migration policymakers to support evidence-based policymaking.
- Facilitating effective regional policy dialogue to support the development and implementation of regional responses.
- Understanding how developed countries can best support countries most vulnerable to climate change and promote win–win policy solutions related to migration and slow-onset impacts.
- Ensuring that migration policy developments are complementary to other policy developments at the national level, notably policies related to climate-change adaptation and mitigation and disaster risk reduction.
- Setting up monitoring and evaluation systems to assess the impact of existing policies and analyse lessons learned.





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# 10 HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN MIGRATION PATHWAYS: TRENDS, CHALLENGES AND NEW FORMS OF COOPERATION<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

Trafficking of migrants has made horrific headlines in recent years, with migrants sold at slave markets, tortured for ransom and exploited across a range of industries. Organized crime groups traffic migrants in virtually every country today.

The global scope of this crime reflects broader challenges. Victims are often from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds and/or lower-income countries and are usually trafficked to richer countries where traffickers obtain the highest financial returns on their exploitation. Human trafficking is therefore explicitly recognized as a development challenge in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which refers to the eradication of forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking in its Target 8.7.<sup>2</sup> Sustainable development and counter-trafficking are interrelated; eradicating trafficking requires poverty eradication (goal 1), gender equality (goal 5), increased opportunities for decent work (goal 8) and access to justice (goal 16). The interlinkages between human trafficking and development are complex, as trafficking finds its roots to a certain extent in inequality and constitutes, by the same token, an obstacle to the development and well-being of societies in terms of the denial of people's human dignity.<sup>3</sup>

Human trafficking challenges migration governance at global, regional and national levels, as trafficking risks for migrants are greater when migration is unsafe, disorderly and/or irregular. Irregular migration can be unsafe, with lower access to protection and support networks and greater risks of trafficking.<sup>4</sup> To “prevent, combat and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration” is thus central to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration as set out in Objective 10, in addition to other Global Compact objectives that are relevant to counter-trafficking.<sup>5</sup> Target 10.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which seeks to achieve safe, orderly, regular and responsible migration, also recognizes that realizing the benefits and full potential of migration while addressing human trafficking risks requires well-managed and well-governed approaches to migration and human mobility.

Although there are no systematic and complete data on the proportion of migrants who are trafficked, existing evidence suggests that trafficked migrants represent a small share of the 281 million international migrants in 2020,<sup>6</sup> but the practice has serious consequences for its victims, their families and communities in origin and destination countries. Human trafficking has negative economic and social impacts, long-term mental and physical health

1 Céline Bauhoz, Senior Research Officer, IOM; Marika McAdam, Independent Researcher; Joseph Teye, Professor and Director of the Centre for Migration Studies, University of Ghana.

2 See <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal8>.

3 Kotiswaran, 2019; Danailova-Trainor and Laczko, 2010.

4 Triandafyllidou and McAuliffe, 2018.

5 UNGA, 2018.

6 UN DESA, 2020.

repercussions, and human rights implications. Trafficking is highly gendered; women and girls are more susceptible to trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, forced marriage and domestic servitude, while men and boys are more commonly victims of trafficking in the fishing and mining industries.

The complex nature of the crime is a major obstacle in disrupting traffickers.<sup>7</sup> Where migrants are trafficked transnationally, another layer of complexity is added to criminal justice response efforts and victim protection. Human trafficking networks span multiple countries, often intersecting with the commission of other criminal activities, such as migrant smuggling. Organized criminals are adept at leveraging the latest digital technologies, including social media, the darknet and cryptocurrencies, to commit crimes and conceal their profits.

This chapter explores some of the current and emerging challenges of confronting human trafficking in migration pathways. While aiming to provide a balanced picture of the geographic reach of migrants' trafficking worldwide, examples used in this chapter are not representative of the prevalence of the crime, nor the challenges it presents in some countries and regions that remain under-researched. Moreover, while this chapter focuses on international migration, trafficking within countries is also prevalent, sometimes as a result of internal displacement triggered by crises.

The first section of this chapter introduces the legal definition of human trafficking, differentiating it from the distinct but related crime of smuggling of migrants. The second section then provides an overview of current trafficking trends and patterns, looking at the available data on migrant victims of human trafficking and traffickers. The third section explores current challenges and promising avenues for the prevention of trafficking of migrants, including prosecuting traffickers, protecting victims and cooperating for counter-trafficking efforts. Finally, building on the findings of earlier sections, the conclusion outlines policy and programmatic implications and offers recommendations for further research.

## Defining migrant trafficking

The concept of human trafficking emerged from centuries' worth of international law, on issues including the suppression of trading in white women and girls for sexual exploitation, trafficking in women and children, and slavery and practices similar to it, as well as trafficking and exploitation involving the prostitution of others.<sup>8</sup> Yet it was not until 2000, with the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Trafficking Protocol) supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, that an international definition to criminalize "trafficking in persons" was agreed upon and accepted.<sup>9</sup>

The definition of human trafficking, as deconstructed in Figure 1 below, comprises three elements: an "act", a "means" by which the act is done, and a "purpose" of the action and means, being exploitation. One of each of the three elements is required, except where the victim is a child (any person under age 18), where only an "act" and an exploitative "purpose" need to be established.<sup>10</sup>

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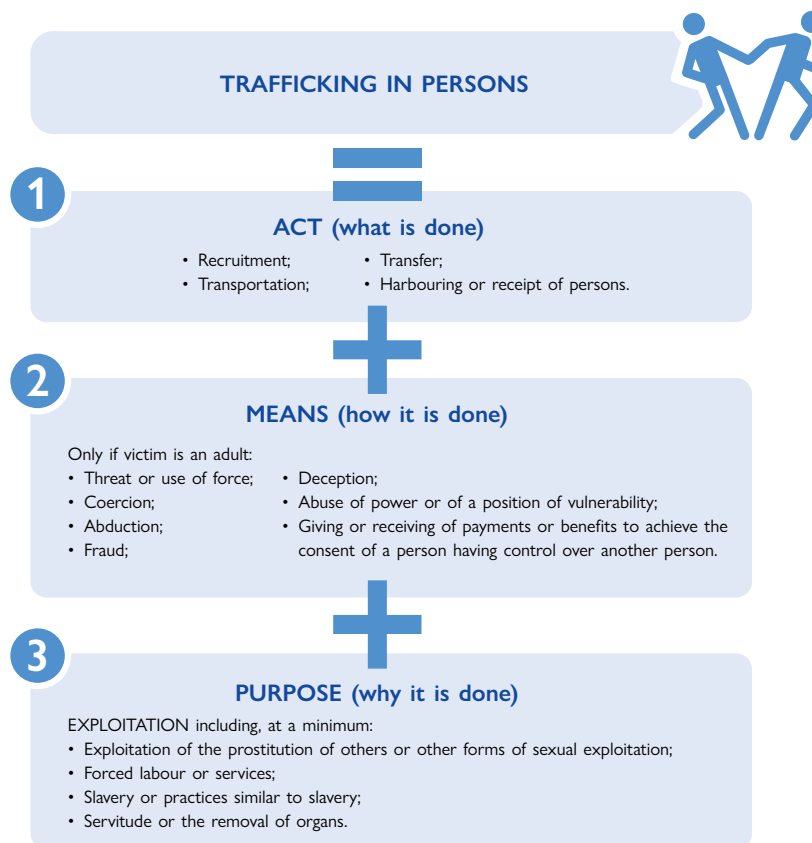
<sup>7</sup> Gallagher, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> LoN, 1904, 1921, 1926, 1933; UN, 1949; UN, 1956; McAdam, 2019.

<sup>9</sup> UN, 2000a.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., Articles 3(c) and (d).

Figure 1. The three cumulative elements of trafficking in persons as defined in Article 3(a) of the Trafficking Protocol



*Note:* As set out in Articles 3(c) and (d) of the Trafficking Protocol, the second element referring to the means of trafficking does not apply to children. For children, an act and the purpose of exploitation are thus sufficient for a crime to be considered as trafficking in persons.

Trafficking “acts” can occur within a country (domestic trafficking) or involve the crossing of international borders (transnational trafficking). In the international migration context, migrants not only become victims of transnational trafficking, but also of domestic trafficking, when for instance they are recruited for the purpose of exploitation once in the destination country.

These acts are performed through diverse “means” that vitiate the victim’s consent, rendering it irrelevant. For instance, a victim’s consent is irrelevant where it has been achieved by force, where a person has been deceived, or where their vulnerable position has been abused. This element is not required for children, who lack legal capacity to consent to such acts for the purposes of exploitation.<sup>11</sup> As a definitional element of trafficking in adults, the “abuse of a position of vulnerability” does not refer specifically to a person’s vulnerability to human trafficking, but in the criminal justice context requires credible evidence to prove that a trafficker has intentionally abused or taken advantage of a victim’s position of vulnerability for the purpose of exploiting him or her.<sup>12</sup>

11 UNODC, 2014.

12 UNODC, 2011; UNODC, 2013; UNODC, 2018a.

Vulnerability to trafficking generally refers to factors such as age, gender or socioeconomic conditions that may render a person at risk of being trafficked. For migrants, additional factors of vulnerability may include, but are not limited to:<sup>13</sup>

- **Drivers of migration, especially when adverse**, that may lead migrants to be deceived in exploitative recruitment abroad.
- **Migration routes** that may lead migrants into the hands of organized trafficking networks, exploitative employment or situations of extortion.<sup>14</sup> Refugees and other migrants escaping conflict and violence may be particularly vulnerable, as evidenced by the trafficking of Syrians in the Syrian Arabic Republic's neighbouring countries and along the Balkan route.<sup>15</sup>
- **Migration status**, especially when irregularity exposes migrants to possible negative legal consequences, from fines to detention or deportation. Moreover, irregularity often leads migrants to work in sectors prone to exploitation, such as in the fishing industry in South-East Asia,<sup>16</sup> the agricultural sector in Europe,<sup>17</sup> and construction jobs in Northern America.<sup>18</sup>

### The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbating and creating vulnerabilities to human trafficking

Increased insecurity, poverty and marginalization induced by the virus outbreak can be drivers of human trafficking.<sup>a</sup> The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is difficult to quantify precisely, but, as noted by UNODC, it will probably have the most dramatic implications in countries with the highest and fastest increase in unemployment rates, and for individuals with the lowest salaries, as is the case for some migrants.<sup>b</sup> Substantial rises in human trafficking in different locations have already been reported, such as in the United States of America, where a human rights organization has estimated a 185 per cent increase in human trafficking cases compared to the previous year.<sup>c</sup> Closed borders may also increase the market for irregular channels to circumvent them, provided by organized criminal smugglers and traffickers.

The dire economic situation may curb the livelihood options of the many migrants who work in industries most affected by the crisis, creating incentives to turn to more precarious and dangerous earning solutions, increasing the risk of falling prey to exploitative trafficking networks. Many migrants search for opportunities online and risk being deceived by traffickers.<sup>d</sup> In other cases, people remain in jobs, but conditions worsen. Those working in domestic settings whose employers have shifted to work-from-home arrangements often face increased demands, accompanied by decreased pay, liberty and ability to leave.<sup>e</sup> Migrant workers who lack access to health, social, legal and other services also quickly become vulnerable not only to the pandemic itself, but also to falling victim to traffickers and other criminals, as, in the absence of official and reliable safety nets, traffickers increasingly appear to be the only “last resort solution” available.

<sup>13</sup> For migrants' factors of vulnerability to human trafficking, see IOM, 2019a.

<sup>14</sup> UNODC, 2013.

<sup>15</sup> See respectively ICMPD, 2015 and Brunovskis and Surtees, 2019.

<sup>16</sup> Marschke and Vandergeest, 2016; ILO, 2013.

<sup>17</sup> Monzini, 2015.

<sup>18</sup> Buckley et al., 2016.



The plight of the more than 5 million Venezuelan migrants who have left their country since 2014 is illustrative of how such external factors can exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities.<sup>f</sup> Some of these migrants lacked regular status and access to social protection, and were reliant on the informal labour markets prior to the pandemic. Since 2014, many have lost their jobs, been evicted from their accommodation and found themselves living on the streets.<sup>g</sup> In this context of increased vulnerability, estimates show that the first four months of 2020 accounted for a 20 per cent increase in the number of victims of trafficking in Colombia when compared with the entire year 2019, the majority being Venezuelan migrants.<sup>h</sup> The decision of the Colombian Government in February 2021 to regularize Venezuelan migrants who were irregularly in the country with a 10-year temporary protection status constitutes a major step forward in improving their protection and safety, and decreasing their vulnerability to human trafficking.<sup>i</sup>

The pandemic has not only increased the risk of trafficking for migrants and others in vulnerable situations, but has also curtailed efforts to identify victims, due to measures of confinement and shifting priorities of law enforcement towards implementing measures to curb the spread of the pandemic. The closure of social services has also diminished identification of and support to victims.<sup>j</sup>

a UNODC, 2021; Polaris, 2020a; Worsnop, 2019.

b UNODC, 2021.

c Blake et al., 2020.

d Europol, 2020.

e UNHRC, 2020; Giammarinaro, 2020; McAdam, 2020.

f UNODC, 2021; R4V, 2020.

g For survey data in Peru and Colombia, see Equilibrium CenDE, 2020a, 2020b. See also Freier et al., 2020.

h Observatorio del Proyecto Migración Venezuela, 2020.

i See UNHCR and IOM, 2021.

j UNODC, 2020a; CoE GRETA, 2020; Teixeira, 2020.

The third and most central element of the definition of trafficking is the exploitative purpose. While the Trafficking Protocol does not define exploitation, it does offer a non-exhaustive list of examples, some of which are defined in international law (e.g. slavery, practices similar to slavery, and forced labour) while others are not defined in international law (e.g. sexual exploitation).<sup>19</sup> States take various approaches in their domestic law, whether by including the same list of exploitation examples from the Trafficking Protocol, or by omitting some examples while adding others.<sup>20</sup> The exploitation must be of significant gravity to reach the threshold of trafficking as a serious crime, but in practice it may be difficult to differentiate between a migrant enduring exploitative labour conditions and a migrant who has been trafficked into forced labour, particularly when the exploitation is yet to take place.

Challenges in understanding the definition and how its components interact in migration dynamics impact on whether victims are identified, which cases are investigated and prosecuted, and what sentences are imposed. Expansive understandings can cast the net too broadly, capturing as situations that may not be trafficking, while overly narrow understandings deny protection and justice to victims who are not recognized as such.<sup>21</sup>

19 See respectively, LoN, 1926; UN, 1956; ILO, 1930.

20 States have added forms of exploitation including forced begging, illegal adoption, commercial surrogacy, exploitation in criminal activities, and removal of body parts and fluids, as well as major organs.

21 The analysis of the trafficking definition in this section extensively draws on a series of issue papers authored by A. Gallagher and M. McAdam and commissioned by the Working Group of States Parties to the Trafficking in Persons Protocol. See UNODC, 2018a.

Another challenge in the migration context is the differentiation between trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants, with the two concepts often being confused by the media and other stakeholders. Migrant smuggling is captured in a distinct legal instrument – the 2000 Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air – as “the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or permanent resident.”<sup>22</sup> In other words, while the criminal purpose of trafficking is exploitation, for smuggling it is achieving a “financial or other material benefit” by facilitating another person’s irregular border crossing.<sup>23</sup> Smuggling typically occurs in the context of irregular international migration, while trafficking may occur in the course of regular migration or internal migration. The two types of crime may intersect, as organized crime groups interact across irregular migration routes, passing migrants between each other or controlling or taxing sections of a route.<sup>24</sup> While relying on smugglers’ services to cross international borders, smuggled migrants may fall victim to trafficking and other crimes in the course of being smuggled or as a consequence of it. This could occur, for instance, when smuggling fees result in debt that can be leveraged for exploitation. In extreme cases they can end up suffering from coercion, extortion, violence and even torture, as evident in the movement of Rohingya refugees in the Andaman Sea.<sup>25</sup>

### Conflation of smuggling and trafficking along irregular migration routes: a migrant’s testimony

My name is Deborah, I’m 20 years old and I’m from Nigeria. I went through Libya to Malta. This is my story.

Life in Nigeria was very hard. ... A friend of mine introduced me to someone, a man who said he’d take me to Europe. The agreement was that when I’d reach Europe I’d work as a fashion designer so I could pay them.

...

The ... first day we reached Libya, he sold me to a woman. I told them I wasn’t going to work, this wasn’t where they promised to bring me. The woman said no, here is where I was headed. I told them to take me back. ... They said that was impossible.

The first woman I was sold to was Abigail. She took me to her place and told me to start working. I asked her, what work? ... She said I’d work as a prostitute. I told her I wouldn’t because that wasn’t the work I was told I’d be doing here. She said this wasn’t Europe, this was Libya and you must work. ... I refused.

...

I didn’t want to work because in Libya people have a lot of diseases. I am still young, and I don’t have children yet. Then, they would pour cold water from the fridge on my body, beat me and say I must work.

After all the beating I decided to [work] and pay them their money. So that was it. I was surprised I ended up in Libya using my body to work, that wasn’t what we had agreed.

22 Article 3(a), Smuggling Protocol, UN, 2000b.

23 McAdam, 2021.

24 Sanchez and Achilli, 2019, 2020; Triandafyllidou and McAuliffe, 2018.

25 Kontinentalist, 2020; McAuliffe, 2016.

When I had finished paying them, I still had to pay money to a woman called Fatima. I gave her money to take me to Tripoli. She took me from Murzuq to Sabha. Then she took me to Sabratha, but she didn't pay the smugglers. Even in Sabratha, they still wanted to sell me because I still owed money. It was there that I met my husband. My husband paid the money and rescued me from there. I went to stay with him. We left Sabratha to Sorman and still faced other challenges. We went from one smuggler to another, but didn't succeed. It was only on the sixth attempt that we reached Malta. ...

Listen to the full story from Deborah on the Telling the Real Story website, available at [www.tellingtherealstory.org/en/stories/video/deborahs-story/](http://www.tellingtherealstory.org/en/stories/video/deborahs-story/).

Notwithstanding its complexities, the Trafficking Protocol has achieved almost universal ratification, unlike most migration-related instruments; as of 30 June 2021, 178 States had become party to it (see Appendix A). The fact that States aspire to a common understanding of trafficking is evident in the transposition of the international definition into regional instruments. As detailed in Appendix B, these transpositions have, however, taken different forms, with some regional instruments replicating the protocol definition verbatim (e.g. the Council of Europe and Association of Southeast Asian Nations conventions on human trafficking), with others more or less following it and adding some forms of exploitation (e.g. the European Union Directive). The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Convention diverts significantly from the protocol, limiting trafficking to “selling or buying of women and children for prostitution”, excluding male victims and most other forms of exploitation. Where the definition of trafficking is not effectively transposed into the local context, there is a risk that it will be understood too expansively, thereby diluting the serious nature of trafficking; or, conversely, too narrowly, leaving some victims unidentified and unprotected, as they are not recognized as trafficked victims.

Conceptual confusions and definitional divergences aside, the adoption of regional instruments is testament to a widespread commitment to counter-trafficking and endorsement of the Trafficking Protocol as the appropriate framework for response. There has been significant progress in the 21 years since the protocol was adopted. What was once understood as a crime that victimized females for sexual forms of exploitation is now widely understood as a crime that can affect anyone across a wide range of exploitative purposes.

## The scope of human trafficking

Despite the commitment to address human trafficking worldwide, human trafficking remains a growing and lucrative criminal activity. The latest estimates from the International Labour Organization (ILO) indicate that forced labour alone generates some USD 150 billion in illegal profits per year.<sup>26</sup> This figure remains a conservative estimate, as the profits generated by human trafficking go beyond forced labour and often evade financial monitoring, through money-laundering, the use of cryptocurrencies and other new payment methods.<sup>27</sup> As highlighted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), there is scarce information on traffickers' profits.<sup>28</sup> Review of trafficking court cases indicate, however, that their financial gains also depend on their structure and scale, with larger profits deriving from large criminal organizations and networks trafficking a higher number of victims. These profits are also often blurred with gains generated by other transnational criminal activities. Human traffickers are often involved in other organized transnational criminal activities to mitigate risks, reduce operational costs and increase profit margins, as for instance in the case of drug cartels in Mexico.<sup>29</sup>

More generally, the clandestine nature of human trafficking constitutes one of the main impediments to collecting accurate data on gains generated and the scope of trafficking worldwide. Broadly, two main sources of data can be identified: administrative (or operational) data, and data collected for research purposes.<sup>30</sup> Data collected for research purposes mainly focus on qualitative data, through surveys and interviews with victims and key informants. These data provide useful insights into human trafficking, complementing administrative or operational data collected within the mandates of diverse organizations. However, these types of data remain difficult to obtain, due to obstacles in reaching out to victims through traditional sampling methods, especially for victims of sexual exploitation and child victims. These obstacles include resource constraints, security issues and ethical considerations regarding the sensitivity of certain questions.

Administrative or operational data are collected by a range of different actors, including law enforcement and judicial authorities, as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations providing protection and assistance to victims. While today's trend towards datafication – or quantification – entails the risk of focusing on measuring the prevalence of trafficking worldwide, to the detriment of examining other important qualitative dimensions of trafficking,<sup>31</sup> these data constitute the main window into this criminal activity, as they provide detailed insights into the profiles and experiences of the victims, the forms of human trafficking and information on perpetrators.

UNODC provides a valuable overview of human trafficking worldwide in its Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, relying on official national statistics, together with qualitative information from investigative files.<sup>32</sup> UNODC surveys governments on trafficking victims identified in their respective countries, using a common questionnaire with a standard set of indicators, and then aggregates the results. Another data collection endeavour is the Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC), the first inter-agency global data hub on human trafficking, led by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). CTDC releases harmonized data with the assistance of counter-trafficking organizations, including IOM, which has been assisting victims of trafficking since the mid-1990s with approximately 8,000 victims assisted each year globally.<sup>33</sup>

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26 ILO, 2014.

27 Europol, 2017.

28 UNODC, 2021.

29 Rabasa et al., 2017.

30 Grant et al., 2018.

31 Yea, 2017.

32 UNODC, 2021.

33 CTDC, 2020.

Such data are highly sensitive and pertain to individuals, raising a range of privacy concerns when it comes to collecting, managing and sharing them. Victims of trafficking are a particularly sensitive population, in that the risk of identification of a single victim in a data set can be high and the consequences severe. Data privacy, confidentiality and victim protection are important considerations in ensuring that publicly available data sets do not identify individual trafficked victims, as set out in the text box below, but they may also limit the scope of available data. Data are also to be approached cautiously, as they can be manipulated to promote political goals, biased by focusing on quantitative aspects of trafficking to the detriment of qualitative ones, and/or distorted, for instance from the use of “modern slavery” framings in efforts to quantify exploitative practices that may entail or overlap with trafficking in persons.<sup>34</sup>

### The Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative: data-sharing, de-identification and anonymization

IOM first launched the Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC) in 2017 as the first global repository of primary data on human trafficking contributed by multiple organizations. CTDC was launched in partnership with Polaris and Liberty Shared. It combined the three biggest victim case data sets in the world, resulting in one centralized data set with information on over 108,000 trafficking cases, comprising 164 nationalities exploited in 175 countries across the five regions, namely Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and Oceania.

Because data on human trafficking are not publicly available most of the time due to confidentiality, data protection and content sensitivity, the goal of CTDC is to break down information-sharing barriers and provide counter-trafficking actors with up-to-date information to support effective counter-trafficking strategies. The publicly available data set is de-identified via k-anonymization, a data anonymization technique that redacts cases falling into sets with fewer than  $k - 1$  members, where each set is defined by a unique combination of values of the different variables in a data set. Based on research and testing, CTDC data have been set at  $k = 11$ , so that queries cannot return fewer than 10 results. The full, non-anonymized data set is also available through the detailed visualizations and maps available on the site.

However, more work is needed throughout the counter-trafficking community to agree on common standards and methods of data sharing. For instance, IOM is working with UNODC to establish the first set of international data standards on human trafficking administrative data, so that governments and organizations around the world can collect data that are comparable and of high quality, and can be safely shared and used to develop the evidence base. Since 2019, IOM has also been working with Microsoft Research to develop a new approach to the de-identification of human trafficking administrative data that could be used by governments and other stakeholders. The solution will allow organizations to publish an unredacted data set while preserving the confidentiality of victims, by modelling a synthetic data set based on the original data set. The resulting synthetic data set no longer contains “real” data on “real” individuals, but retains the statistical properties of the original data set, allowing users to continue to perform meaningful analyses. This de-identification solution has been made available online,<sup>a</sup> together with an article detailing the algorithm used.<sup>b</sup>

See the CTDC at [www.ctdatacollaborative.org/](http://www.ctdatacollaborative.org/).

a See <https://github.com/microsoft/synthetic-data-showcase>.

b See <https://arxiv.org/abs/2005.05688>.

34 Kenway, 2021; Gallagher, 2017; Harkins, 2017.

The availability of administrative data on identified victims of trafficking depends on a range of factors, such as whether counter-trafficking organizations are operational or able to consistently collect or share data in any given country/location. As UNODC points out, the existence of rigorous data also depends on States' data-collection capacities, which are low in some regions, such as in sub-Saharan Africa and East Asia.<sup>35</sup> It follows that the existence of large quantities of human trafficking data may not necessarily indicate higher prevalence. In addition, identified cases should be understood as a sample of the unidentified population of victims, not as attempts to measure the prevalence of human trafficking. If some types of trafficking cases are more likely to be identified than others, this sample could be biased. The extent of this bias is rarely known, since the unidentified population is, by definition, unknown.

Beyond the question of the value and effectiveness of measuring the prevalence of trafficking for informing counter-trafficking policies and programmes,<sup>36</sup> estimations of such prevalence are being carried out using new methodologies based on administrative data. For instance, UNODC is supporting countries in using a multiple systems estimation (MSE) methodology to generate estimates of the number of trafficked victims who have not been identified, based on solid national data.<sup>37</sup> When implemented in the Netherlands, the MSE methodology revealed that non-identified trafficked victims may be four to five times more numerous than detected ones. Surveys can also be used to estimate prevalence, as done for example for the related crimes of forced labour and forced marriage in the Global Estimates of Modern Slavery by the ILO, Walk Free Foundation and IOM.<sup>38</sup>

In its latest Global Report, UNODC indicates that the number of detected victims of trafficking reported by countries per year increased from fewer than 20,000 in 2003 to about 49,000 in 2018, the most recent figure available.<sup>39</sup> The number of trafficking convictions has also increased globally. However, these data do not necessarily entail an increase in human trafficking worldwide, as they also reflect the greater capacity of some States to identify trafficking and collect data.

Although victims of trafficking were historically stereotyped as vulnerable women and children trafficked for sexual exploitation, the gender profile of victims has changed over time. Females still make up the largest share of identified victims (around 65% in total, with 46% women and 19% girls), yet males are also victims of trafficking (20% men and 15% boys), especially for forced labour, in which they constitute nearly 60 per cent of detected victims.<sup>40</sup> Victims' gender and age vary among regions; more children than adults are detected in sub-Saharan Africa, while adult females make the greatest share of identified victims in Europe, North America and Asia, and adult male victims are more frequently detected in North Africa and the Middle East.<sup>41</sup>

According to the latest data collected by UNODC, 45 per cent of all identified victims were trafficked across borders.<sup>42</sup> However, migrants can also be among the victims reported as domestic trafficking when they are trafficked once in the country of destination. While no data exist on the number of identified victims of trafficking who are migrants, the citizenship of detected trafficked victims often correlates with that of regular migrants.<sup>43</sup> This suggests that trafficking flows show similarities in patterns when compared with migration flows, usually heading

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35 UNODC, 2018b.

36 For different opinions, see for instance, David, 2017; Feingold, 2017; Robinson et al., 2017; and Dottridge, 2017.

37 UNODC, 2016a.

38 ILO, 2017.

39 UNODC, 2018b:21; UNODC, 2021:25. As set out by UNODC, while 2018 is the reference year, "most recent" data from 2019, 2017 or 2016 were used for countries for which 2018 data were not available.

40 UNODC, 2021:31–36. Similar rates are reported by CTDC, with women and girls making up about 70 per cent of victims in the data set: CTDC, n.d.a.

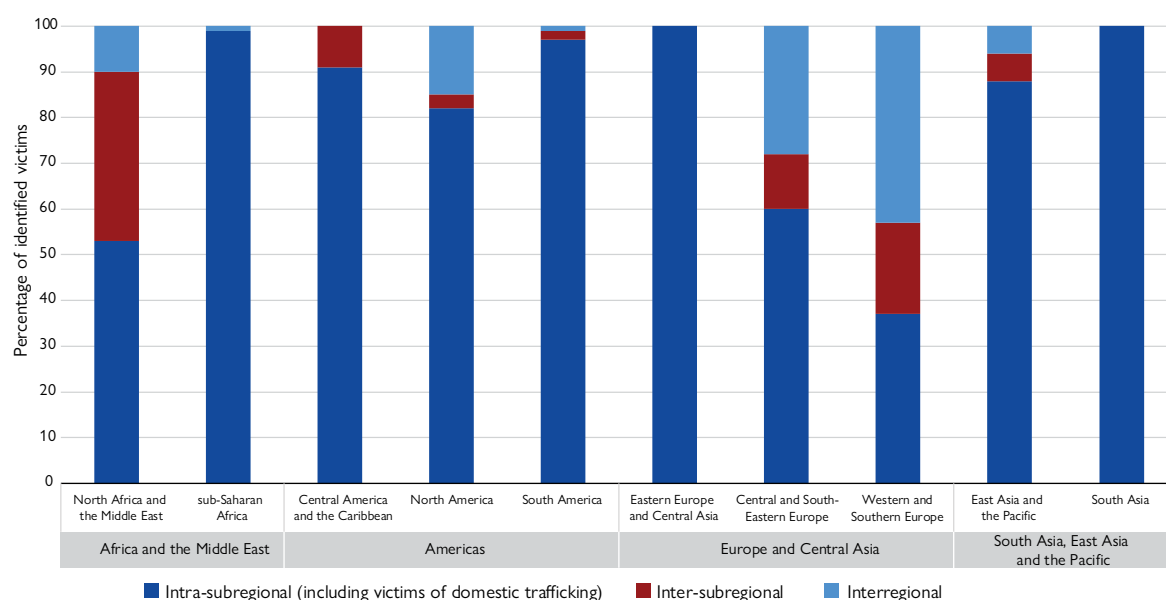
41 Ibid.

42 UNODC, 2021:55.

43 UNODC, 2016b:9, 58.

towards richer countries where exploitation is more profitable due to higher demand and prices.<sup>44</sup> Like migration flows, transnational trafficking flows are first and foremost intra(sub)regional: among the identified victims reported to UNODC, 12 per cent were subject to trafficking within the same subregion, 8 per cent within the same region and 15 per cent interregionally.<sup>45</sup> The largest share of victims being trafficked clearly appears as intraregional in Figure 2 below, although it should be noted here that available statistics on victims of intra-subregional trafficking captured in this figure also include victims of domestic trafficking. Data on repatriation of victims to their country of origin nevertheless confirm the prevalence of intra-subregional and intraregional trafficking over interregional flows.<sup>46</sup> With regards to interregional trafficking, nearly all regions report a large number of victims identified as being from East Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>47</sup>

Figure 2. Percentage of detected victims by type of trafficking flows and subregions, 2018 (or most recently available)



Source: UNODC, 2021.

Note: Categorization based on UNODC geographic regions as used in its report and detailed in *ibid.*:26.

According to CTDC, transnational trafficking may in large part use official border control points, with nearly 80 per cent of journeys (especially those of women) crossing official border control points, such as airports and land border control points.<sup>48</sup> Children are more likely than adults not to be trafficked through official border control points, with an estimated 44 per cent having used routes without any official border control point during their trafficking journeys. CTDC indicates a difference in the means of trafficking depending on the type of migration route: trafficking is mostly achieved through debt bondage, threats, and restrictions on freedom of movement when victims are trafficked through official border control points, whereas confiscation and destruction of documents

44 *Ibid.*:58.

45 UNODC, 2021. The highest share of detected victims (65%) were victims of domestic trafficking.

46 *Ibid.*:60.

47 According to the classification of (sub)regions used by UNODC, East Asia includes Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Timor-Leste. See *ibid.*: 26.

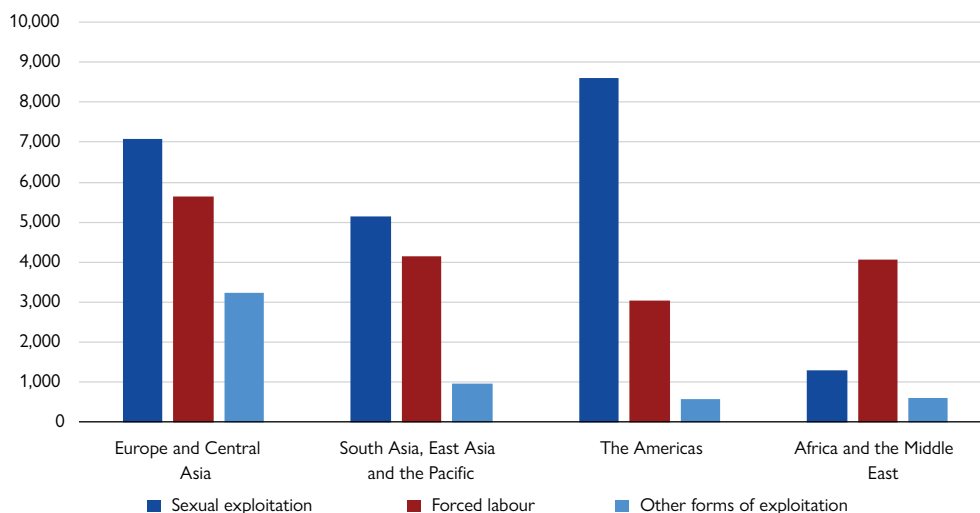
48 CTDC, n.d.b.

is more likely to occur where trafficking journeys do not involve crossing through official border control points. In fact, the same data indicate that most victims (about two thirds) are exploited at some point during their journeys, regardless of whether they are trafficked through an official border control point or not. In both cases, migrants' trafficking may be facilitated by officials corrupted by traffickers.<sup>49</sup> Following the outbreak of COVID-19, in December 2020 the Prime Minister of Thailand ordered a crackdown on corrupt officials who may have assisted traffickers, following a reported inflow of migrants from Myanmar smuggled and trafficked to work in shrimp markets.<sup>50</sup>

The predominant type of trafficking is for forced labour irrespective of the type of border crossings (83% through official border control points and 64% through non-official ones), followed by trafficking for sexual exploitation (15% and 22% respectively) and other forms (2% and 13% respectively).<sup>51</sup> Interestingly, these shares diverge from more general findings on the main exploitation types when domestic and transnational trafficking are considered together, where sexual exploitation ranks in first position (around 54%), followed by forced labour (around 42%) and other forms of exploitation (including slavery and similar practices at 0.56%, forced marriage at 0.45%, organ removal at 0.03%, forced military service at 0.01% and other forms at 10.46%).<sup>52</sup> This could mean that, more than for other forms of exploitation, trafficking for sexual exploitation not only occurs in transnational instances of trafficking, but is also prevalent in domestic cases.

As noted by UNODC, there are disparities in the forms of exploitation among regions: while trafficking for sexual exploitation is predominant in most regions, the most prevalent form of exploitation in Africa and the Middle East is forced labour (at least among identified victims; see Figure 3 and text box below).<sup>53</sup>

Figure 3. Number of detected trafficking victims, by form of exploitation and region of detection, 2018



Source: UNODC, 2021.

49 UNODC, 2011; Bali Process and UNODC, 2021.

50 Zsombor, 2020.

51 CTDC, n.d.b.

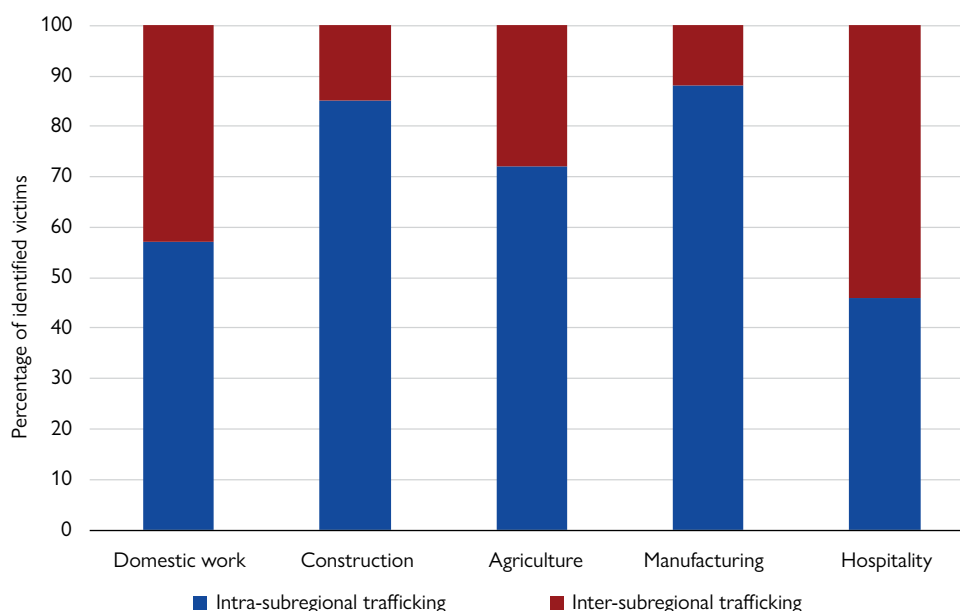
52 CTDC, n.d.c. These forms of exploitation can be cumulative, hence the total percentage surpasses 100 per cent. Similar shares are reported by UNODC, with 50 per cent of detected victims being trafficked for sexual exploitation, 38 per cent for forced labour and 12 per cent for other purposes: UNODC, 2021:34.

53 UNODC, 2021.



The main sectors of trafficking for forced labour are domestic work (30% of identified victims), construction (16%), agriculture (10%), manufacturing (9%) and hospitality (8%).<sup>54</sup> As for other forms of exploitation, trafficking in these sectors tends to be highly intraregional, and even intra-subregional. However, as apparent in Figure 4 below, among identified victims in the CTDC data set, exploitation in the hospitality sector and, to a lesser extent, in domestic work, are more likely to span beyond the victims' subregions of origin, with 54 per cent and 43 per cent of victims respectively identified outside their subregions. Victims trafficked in the hospitality sector predominantly come from Eastern Europe (43%) and South-East Asia (26%) and are exploited in North America (19%) and Eastern Europe (19%).<sup>55</sup> Victims of trafficking in domestic work are mainly from South-East Asia (66%) and Eastern Europe (9%) and are exploited in South-East Asia (37%), Western Asia (20%) and North America (16%).<sup>56</sup>

Figure 4. Percentage of identified victims, by exploitation sector and intra-/inter-subregional trafficking



Source: CTDC, n.d.d–n.d.h.

Note: Intra-subregional trafficking also covers domestic trafficking.

Trafficking for forced labour can also take the form of forced begging, peddling and the commission of illicit activities as detailed in the text box below in the African context, though these forms are not prevalent.

Compared with other forms of exploitation, trafficking for organ removal remains limited. This may be at least partially owing to the fact that it is often addressed outside of the trafficking framework and so may not be counted as a trafficking-driven phenomenon.<sup>57</sup> UNODC notes traffickers' increased ability to operate across borders and to collude with medical professionals abroad.<sup>58</sup>

54 CTDC, n.d.c.

55 CTDC, n.d.d.

56 CTDC, n.d.e.

57 UNODC, 2015.

58 UNODC, 2018b:30–31.

Trafficking for other purposes may include forced, arranged and sham marriages, as victims often face violence, abuse, exploitation and restrictions on movement.<sup>59</sup> This type of trafficking is highly gendered, with victims being mainly women and girls from disadvantaged backgrounds, although some cases of LGBTI persons forced into heterosexual marriages by their families have been reported.<sup>60</sup> These “marriages” tend to be organized for bride price by family members and/or brokers who are motivated by financial and material gain. However, there are also cases where brides have been deceived or kidnapped. Migrants may also enter into sham marriages to enter a country regularly, or to regularize their migration status when already in the destination country, rendering them vulnerable to subsequent exploitation. Cases are also reported of Eastern European women who are promised well-paid employment by brokers in Western Europe and who, upon arrival, end up being trafficked into forced marriages with irregular migrants who seek to regularize their stay by obtaining a European Union passport through marriage.<sup>61</sup> There are also cases in the Middle East of women and girls being entered into “tourist” or “temporary” forms of marriage, for the purposes of being sexually exploited.<sup>62</sup>

### Trafficking of migrants from and within Africa

African victims are predominantly trafficked within their region of origin. According to CTDC data, 75 per cent of African victims are trafficked within Africa, with 13 per cent trafficked to Europe, 7 per cent to Asia, and 5 per cent to the Americas.<sup>a</sup>

Trafficking in Africa has two main particularities compared with other regions of the world. First, rather than sexual exploitation, trafficking in Africa is for forced labour, especially for begging (more than 25%) and domestic work (over 40%).<sup>b</sup> Second, the majority of victims are children, accounting for over 50 per cent of victims detected in the continent.<sup>c</sup> Trafficking of African children is particularly detected in West African countries,<sup>d</sup> such as in Ghana, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo. In rural areas, children are mainly trafficked for farming and fishing. In urban areas, children are trafficked for forced begging, peddling and the commission of illicit activities.<sup>e</sup> An operation coordinated by Interpol in Benin and Nigeria in 2019 rescued some 220 trafficking victims, mostly children from West African countries, who were forced to work in markets all day or as housemaids, or who were sexually exploited.<sup>f</sup>

Trafficking patterns differ in other African subregions. Forced labour remains the prime form of trafficking in Southern Africa, which nonetheless also features a comparatively high rate of forced marriages.<sup>g</sup> In East Africa, trafficking mostly concerns adults trafficked for domestic work.<sup>h</sup> In North Africa (especially Libya), sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery and forced marriage are all prevalent.<sup>i</sup>

a CTDC, n.d.i.

b Ibid.

c CTDC data show that 55 per cent of victims detected in Africa were children, while UNODC estimates of trafficking victims in sub-Saharan Africa report that 59 per cent were children.

d UNODC, 2021:165.

e Sawadogo, 2012.

f Interpol, 2019.

g UNODC and SADC, 2017.

h IOM, 2008.

i Van Reisen and Estefanos, 2017.

59 UNODC, 2020b.

60 Ibid.

61 BBC News, 2017.

62 UNODC, 2020b.

## Challenges and responses to the trafficking of migrants

The Trafficking Protocol primarily takes a criminal justice approach to human trafficking, advocating for its criminalization, investigation and prosecution, and calling for trafficked persons to be protected and assisted as victims of serious crime.<sup>63</sup> This approach is often referred to as the “3P approach”, entailing prosecution, protection and prevention. A fourth “P” of partnership emphasizes the need to strengthen criminal justice cooperation between States.

A social justice approach that ensures that counter-trafficking measures are human rights-based, victim-oriented and gender-sensitive is also essential.<sup>64</sup> The primacy of the rule of law is not only central in order to avoid victims becoming collateral damage of anti-trafficking efforts,<sup>65</sup> but also to ensure that criminal justice measures are not counterproductive and detrimental to the fight against human trafficking and, more broadly, the governance of migration.

### *Preventing trafficking of migrants*

In addition to proactive investigation and disruption of transnational organized crime, other measures are key in addressing the trafficking of migrants. Among these are most notably the following complementary measures:

1. Address individual, household, community and structural vulnerability factors;
2. Raise awareness about risks;
3. Enhance availability of regular migration pathways;
4. Curb demand for goods and services entailing exploitation;
5. Secure labour rights and working conditions.<sup>66</sup>

These measures are complementary and require migrants’ involvement in their development to be appropriately targeted and tailored to migrants at risk of trafficking.<sup>67</sup>

Reliable and accurate information about trafficking risks, among other issues, is essential for migrants to make informed decisions about their migration journeys. Yet the effectiveness of awareness-raising campaigns is increasingly questioned, especially when implemented with the objective of deterring irregular migration, or of deflecting scrutiny from migration policy for its role in the exploitation of migrants. The intention to migrate irregularly is not outweighed by risks when no regular migration alternative exists.<sup>68</sup> Awareness campaigns may also have the unintended consequence of stigmatizing trafficking victims returning to their country of origin, especially when they have been sexually exploited.<sup>69</sup>

While the impact of awareness campaigns remains unclear, as few of such campaigns have been evaluated, they seem to be more effective when targeting specific populations, adapting to local contexts and directly involving

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<sup>63</sup> ICAT, 2012.

<sup>64</sup> ECOSOC, 2002.

<sup>65</sup> GAATW, 2007.

<sup>66</sup> Adapted from UNGA (2010).

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Tjaden, 2020; McAuliffe et al., 2017.

<sup>69</sup> Kiss and Zimmermann, 2019; UNGA, 2010: para. 45.

migrants, since prospective migrants consider migrants to be the most trusted source of information.<sup>70</sup> Hence, information crowdsourcing is used in some technology-based initiatives through which migrants share experiences of their migration journeys.<sup>71</sup>

Concerning trafficking for forced labour, consumer moves towards ethical consumption through increased attention to the environmental, human rights and socioeconomic conditions in which goods are produced has improved trafficking prevention by enhancing the focus on accountability of the private sector. If States' implementation of national legislation in accordance with ILO instruments constitutes a first step, global initiatives have followed to better regulate activities of public and private recruitment agencies and avoid deceptive recruitment practices leading to trafficking. In addition to the ILO's Fair Recruitment Initiative,<sup>72</sup> private recruitment agencies can obtain a certificate when meeting the standards set by the International Recruitment Integrity System (IRIS).<sup>73</sup> Similar licencing schemes have been implemented at the national level, such as in the Philippines, where certificates are supported by a mobile app for prospective migrant workers to check whether a specific recruitment agency is allowed to recruit Filipinos abroad.<sup>74</sup> Corporate responsibility also concerns (migrant) workers' working conditions.<sup>75</sup> A growing number of companies now consider social sustainability as a key marketing feature and strive for supply chain transparency and traceability through blockchain technology to ensure that their products do not involve exploitative practices, including trafficking.<sup>76</sup> This provides an opportunity to build on the impetus for transparency and achieve corporate accountability for failures to report and for infractions identified.

However, these recent developments have not undermined the importance of more traditional measures that are essential and still effective in preventing trafficking, nor should they detract from State responsibility to introduce measures to prevent trafficking and amend the migration and labour policies that fuel it. The historic step taken by Qatar in August 2020 to abolish its sponsorship system tying migrant workers to their employers, and to adopt non-discriminatory minimum wages, is emblematic of the increased momentum towards protecting labour rights and working conditions in the context of labour migration.<sup>77</sup> Another fundamental measure is to ensure the rights to unionize and bargain collectively, which empower workers, including migrant workers; these rights recognize their agency and constitute an important safety net in avoiding exploitation in workplaces. For instance, in countries where prostitution is legal, sex workers' organizations are recognized as playing a crucial role in ensuring decent and safe working conditions, including preventing abuse, exploitation and trafficking.<sup>78</sup> However, challenges remain despite increased trade union activism, as migrant workers may still be prohibited from joining trade unions in some countries, based on their foreign nationality.<sup>79</sup>

Countries of origin of migrant workers also have a critical role to play in protecting their citizens from being trafficked abroad, including the provision of pre-departure information, the removal of migrant-paid recruitment agency fees and other costs in favour of employer-pays models, and the regulation of recruitment agencies to reduce the vulnerability of their nationals to exploitation and trafficking abroad.<sup>80</sup>

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70 Bryant and Landman, 2020; Tjaden, 2020; Koser and McAuliffe, 2013.

71 OSCE and Tech Against Trafficking, 2020; McAuliffe et al., 2017.

72 ILO, 2015.

73 See the IRIS website at <https://iris.iom.int/>. Concerning migrant domestic workers more specifically, see IOM, 2020.

74 See <https://poea-mobile.soft112.com/>.

75 See for instance IHRB, 2012; ILO, n.d.

76 ILO et al., 2019; Bateman and Bonanni, 2019; Feasley, 2015. However, also see Taylor, 2020.

77 ILO, 2020a.

78 Lepp and Gerasimov, 2019.

79 Marks and Olsen, 2015.

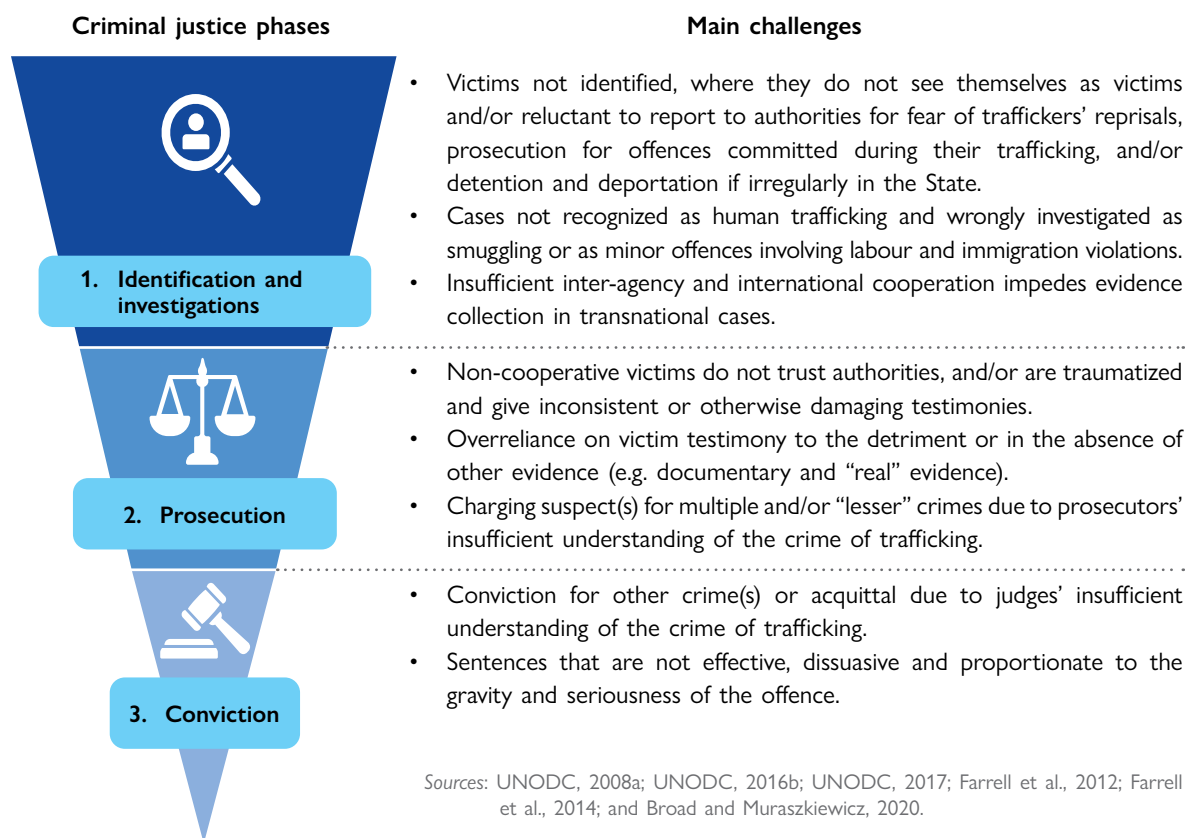
80 See for instance ILO, 2020b, 2021a. See also the Dhaka Principles for Migration with Dignity in IHRB, 2012.

## Prosecuting traffickers

The criminal justice approach to counter-trafficking is essential for the dismantling of trafficking networks, preventing trafficking and protecting its victims. Victims have the right to access justice.

The great majority of countries have criminalized trafficking in persons,<sup>81</sup> and while the trend of trafficking convictions has increased since 2007, absolute numbers remain low.<sup>82</sup> This reality reflects what is referred to as a criminal justice “funnel”.<sup>83</sup> As set out in Figure 5 below, each of the different phases of this funnel entails its share of challenges, progressively reducing the number of cases resulting in successful convictions.

Figure 5. Criminal justice funnel for trafficking cases and main challenges



81 According to UNODC, “[a]s of August 2020, 169 countries among the 181 assessed have legislation in place that criminalizes trafficking in persons broadly in line with the [Trafficking Protocol]”: UNODC, 2021:61.

82 UNODC, 2018b:23.

83 UNODC, 2016b:51.

The majority of challenges identified above relate to the capacity of criminal justice practitioners to grapple with the complexity of the crime of human trafficking. Capacity-building thus traditionally constitutes one of the main measures taken to strengthen the criminal justice response to human trafficking.<sup>84</sup>

Beyond capacity-building, cooperation among different stakeholders is essential in improving the prosecution of traffickers. Recent initiatives highlight the importance for law enforcement and prosecution authorities of collaborating with financial institutions to identify potential instances of human trafficking and to gather evidence in trafficking cases. Among these, the Finance Against Slavery (FAST) initiative, a public–private partnership previously known as the Liechtenstein Initiative, aims to strengthen the financial sector’s compliance with antislavery and human trafficking laws, including through improved enforcement of anti-money-laundering laws.<sup>85</sup> This entails due diligence and risk assessment by financial institutions and the reporting of suspicious activities to law enforcement authorities, in line with data privacy and confidentiality requirements.

Strengthening the involvement of the finance sector is a promising avenue for improving the identification of trafficking cases. Accordingly, providing clear guidance to financial institutions on reporting suspicions of slavery and human trafficking risks has at times resulted in an increase of up to 1,000 per cent of reported suspected cases.<sup>86</sup> Collaboration between law enforcement and financial institutions is also enhanced through technological innovations. The online Human Trafficking Fusion Center developed by Collective Liberty creates an online expert community of practice through which interagency collaboration can be enhanced; it also supports law enforcement investigations using artificial intelligence that identifies individuals potentially involved in human trafficking, money-laundering, wage theft or tax evasion.<sup>87</sup>

Evidence gathered from the finance sector is also crucial in avoiding overreliance on victims’ testimony during prosecutions.<sup>88</sup> Overreliance on victim testimony as the main or only source of evidence can hamper their protection, as victims are treated as mere “witnesses” without due regard for their human rights.<sup>89</sup> Victims may be revictimized when their protection is made contingent on their participation in criminal proceedings, or when their return and reintegration is delayed by these procedures and they are made to remain in destination countries, sometimes in closed shelters. These outcomes may also be detrimental to criminal proceedings, as victims are disincentivized to report trafficking cases and cooperate during the investigation and prosecution phases.<sup>90</sup> The quality of their testimony may also deteriorate over time as they lose trust in authorities.

### *Protecting migrant victims of trafficking*

Identification of victims of trafficking is fundamental not only for criminal proceedings against traffickers, but also, in the first place, for the protection of victims. The diversity of actors who may be in contact with potential victims requires referral mechanisms to be in place so that victims can quickly benefit from services to which they are entitled.<sup>91</sup> Hotlines have been set up in some countries. The independent non-profit organization Polaris is for instance operating the National Human Trafficking Hotline in the United States, which victims can contact via phone, text, online chat or email before being redirected to relevant support services. Polaris has since helped

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84 Police Executive Research Forum, 2020.

85 Liechtenstein Initiative, 2019.

86 Ibid.

87 Police Executive Research Forum, 2020. See [https://htfusion.org/#ab\\_our\\_mission](https://htfusion.org/#ab_our_mission).

88 Liechtenstein Initiative, 2019.

89 Broad and Muraszewicz, 2020.

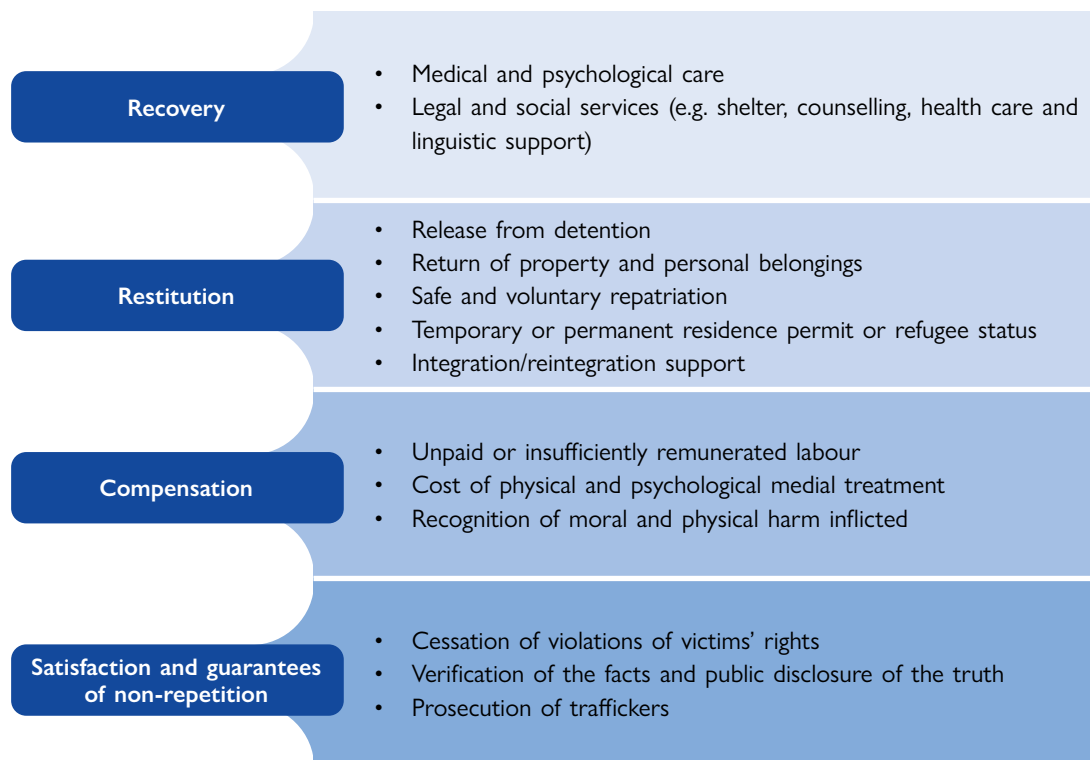
90 UNODC, 2008b.

91 Liu, 2017.

some 15 countries to set up similar hotlines, including Kuwait, Mexico, Oman, Qatar, South Africa, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates.<sup>92</sup>

Referral to appropriate services constitutes the first step to protect victims from their traffickers and fulfil their human right to an effective remedy. In addition to procedural rights, such as the right for victims to be informed, this right entails four main components, as illustrated in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6. Main components of the right to an effective remedy for victims of trafficking



Source: UNGA, 2011; UNHRC, 2014.

Note: The list of measures under each component only serves illustrative purposes.

While there is consensus on the principle of non-punishment of victims for offences they have committed as a consequence of their trafficking,<sup>93</sup> victims too often continue to be detained and prosecuted. This is especially the case for victims of sexual exploitation in countries where sex work is prohibited, but also for criminal offences they may be forced to commit, such as drug trafficking. A 2016 study by the National Survivor Network in the United States highlighted that, out of 130 trafficking victims surveyed, about 91 per cent had been arrested, and over half considered that their arrest concerned offences committed as part of their trafficking.<sup>94</sup> According to these victims, the stigma attached to their incarceration had long-term impacts, with difficulties accessing employment, housing,

92 See <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/national-hotline-overview> and <https://polarisproject.org/global-hotline-consulting/>.

93 OHCHR, 2020; ICAT, 2020.

94 National Survivor Network, 2016.

credit or educational loans. Among their recommendations to the authorities, victims called for non-punishment of their trafficking offences and the cleansing of their criminal history:

“Our criminal history should be wiped clean as we deserve a fresh start. We may not only have prostitution charges as we are also used to facilitate drug trafficking and that leads to various other charges all related. My theft charges were for food or clothing during times I ran from my pimp in order to survive but went to jail.”<sup>95</sup>

As this study also illustrated, release from detention, access to recovery support measures and withholding deportation with the granting of temporary residence permits are too often made contingent on victims' cooperation in criminal proceedings.<sup>96</sup> Pressure exerted on victims to testify against their traffickers fails to recognize them as rights-holders, and does not give them the possibility to make an informed decision about their collaboration with authorities and on their potential return to their country of origin.<sup>97</sup> Adopting a victim-centred approach, some countries are granting reflection periods with temporary residence permits during which victims can benefit from the necessary support measures to start recovering and (re)gain trust in the authorities, increasing the likelihood of their cooperation in criminal proceedings. That being said, reflection periods are usually for 30 days only, although some States extend it to 60 days (Croatia, Czechia and Lesotho), 90 days (Maldives and Montenegro) and even six months in Finland.<sup>98</sup>

While migrant victims of trafficking are ideally safely and voluntarily repatriated to their country of origin, victims may not be able to return when they face threats from traffickers or will be at high risk of being re trafficked. They also may not want to be repatriated, because they may be stigmatized in their communities of origin; experience difficulties in reintegrating, particularly in countries that do not support reintegration; or simply want to stay to obtain better life opportunities offered in the destination country.<sup>99</sup> Some destination countries provide the option of applying for long-term residence permits, although these are usually not automatically granted and remain at the authorities' discretion. When victims face serious risks of being re trafficked or suffering retaliation from traffickers in their country of origin, they are eligible for international protection and can be granted refugee status.<sup>100</sup>

### *Partnering to counter human trafficking in migration pathways*

In the criminal justice context, partnership refers to cooperation among States in exchanging information on transnational trafficking networks and practical law enforcement collaboration, such as those operations carried out by multiple States under the auspices of Interpol.<sup>101</sup> Given States' widespread commitment, cooperation on counter-trafficking is also common in policy dialogues on migration at the global and (inter)regional levels.<sup>102</sup> As detailed in Appendix C, a wide range of inter-State consultation mechanisms on migration address human trafficking, given its

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> UNGA, 2020; Brunovskis and Skilbrei, 2016.

<sup>97</sup> UNHRC, 2014: para. 21.

<sup>98</sup> See respectively Government of Croatia, 2013; EU, n.d.; Government of Lesotho, 2011; Government of Maldives, 2013; Government of Montenegro, 2018; Government of Finland, 2004.

<sup>99</sup> Pandey et al., 2018.

<sup>100</sup> UNHCR, 2006.

<sup>101</sup> For illustrations of recent antitrafficking operations led by Interpol with multiple countries, see for instance Interpol (2020) concerning an operation in South-East Asia; and Interpol (2018) for an operation in Latin America and the Caribbean.

<sup>102</sup> Bauloz, 2017.



relationship with migration. Among these, the Bali Process is the only interregional forum on migration explicitly focused on human trafficking (see text box below). Other initiatives have stemmed from interregional dialogues, such as the African Union Commission Initiative against Trafficking in Human Beings (AU COMMIT), launched with IOM under the auspices of the Africa–EU Partnership to raise awareness and improve the implementation of the Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children in Africa.<sup>103</sup>

### The Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime

Launched in 2002, the Bali Process is a non-binding policy dialogue forum for members to exchange information and best practices, strengthen cooperation and build capacity, including addressing trafficking in persons in the context of irregular migration. The Bali Process is co-chaired by Australia and Indonesia and gathers 45 member States and four United Nations agencies (IOM, the ILO, UNHCR and UNODC) in addition to observer countries and international organizations. The Bali Process regional support office was established in 2012 to provide technical support to the Bali Process and take practical initiatives on these issues.

Two Bali Process working groups specifically concern human trafficking, these being the Working Group on Trafficking in Persons established in 2013 and the Working Group on Disruption of People Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons Networks, established in 2014. Further, the Government and Business Forum was launched in 2017 in recognition of the need to strengthen cooperation with the private sector.

The 2016 Bali Declaration on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime, endorsed at the Sixth Bali Process Ministerial Conference, points to the interlinkage between the abuse and exploitation of migrants and refugees at the hands of smugglers and traffickers and the overlap between these distinct types of crime. In that Declaration, ministers and representatives of member States and organizations, while recognizing “the sovereign rights and legitimate interests of states to safeguard their borders and determine their migration policies, consistent with international law” also “emphasized the need for a comprehensive regional approach, based on the principles of burden sharing and collective responsibility” and “underlined the need to translate political commitments into concrete actions.”<sup>a</sup>

Those commitments were reaffirmed in the 2018 Declaration,<sup>b</sup> yet questions have been asked as to whether the Bali Process has effectively championed its fulfilment, including in the context of the movement of Rohingya in the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea in 2015, 2020 and 2021.<sup>c</sup> The 2022 Ministerial Conference will offer Bali Process members an opportunity to reflect on whether Bali Process mechanisms serve the purposes for which they were established and promote constructive dialogue on issues the Bali Process was created 20 years ago to address, including the trafficking of migrants.

More information on the Bali Process is available at [www.baliprocess.net/](http://www.baliprocess.net/).

a Bali Process, 2016.

b Bali Process, 2018.

c McAuliffe, 2016; UNHCR, IOM and UNODC, 2020.

The understanding of the partnership has evolved since the adoption of the Trafficking Protocol to include a multiplicity of actors beyond States. Diverse cooperation initiatives at the global level are testament to these forms of partnerships not explicitly recognized in the protocol. The Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons is for instance mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to enhance collaboration and coordination between the various United Nations agencies and other intergovernmental organizations working on human trafficking.<sup>104</sup>

The role of civil society organizations has long been recognized and new forms of cooperation have also emerged among non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to foster coordination, such as the Swedish Platform Civil Society against Human Trafficking.<sup>105</sup> However, research underlines that NGOs tend to primarily focus on trafficking for sexual exploitation, especially of children, and are underrepresented in certain regions, such as in Central and South America, the Middle East and North Africa, as well as sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>106</sup> Yet exceptions are also emerging, with stakeholders like the Labour Protection Network in Thailand, which works at the local level to protect migrant labourers against trafficking by advocating against discrimination and inequality.<sup>107</sup>

The most significant development, however, relates to State cooperation with the private sector. In line with broader efforts to strengthen accountability of businesses in the field of human rights,<sup>108</sup> emphasis is now placed – with varying success – on the responsibility of private sector actors in countering human trafficking, *inter alia* in the area of goods and services production throughout their supply chains. In addition to certification schemes for recruitment agencies, the involvement of businesses has materialized in other global initiatives more broadly concerning social corporate responsibility and sustainability. The United Nations Global Compact, the largest corporate sustainability initiative, supports some 12,000 companies in their social and supply chain sustainability strategies, for instance by sharing diverse resources, tools and best practices concerning social sustainability.<sup>109</sup> Other initiatives tackle human trafficking more specifically, such as the Responsible and Ethical Private Sector Coalition against Trafficking (RESPECT) led by the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, which seeks to enhance public–private partnerships.<sup>110</sup>

Partnership with financial actors has also recently attracted increased attention in recognition of their role in identifying financial flows, including money-laundering connected to human trafficking networks. For instance, in January 2020, the non-profit organization Polaris started a new partnership with Paypal, the global digital payment platform, to create a financial intelligence unit to team up with law enforcement to devise new ways of identifying transactions linked to human trafficking.<sup>111</sup> The role played by the financial sector is also broadening, not only to support prosecution efforts, but also to prevent trafficking and ensure the protection of victims. The FAST initiative mentioned earlier in this chapter aims not only to support criminal investigations, but also to prevent human trafficking by investing in digital finance that supports people who may be vulnerable to trafficking.<sup>112</sup> Through its survivor inclusion initiative, FAST also participates in victim protection through the provision of basic

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104 See <https://icat.un.org/>.

105 See <https://manniskohandel.se/english/>. See also Erikson and Larsson, 2020.

106 Limoncelli, 2016.

107 See [www.lpnfoundation.org/about](http://www.lpnfoundation.org/about).

108 See for instance the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in OHCHR, 2011.

109 See UN Global Compact, n.d. See also IOM Corporate Responsibility in Eliminating Slavery and Trafficking (CREST), available at <https://crest.iom.int/>.

110 See <https://globalinitiative.net/initiatives/respect/>.

111 Polaris, 2020b; Laviertes, 2020.

112 Liechtenstein Initiative, 2019.

banking services, especially when the financial identities and/or banking accounts of the victims have been hijacked by traffickers.<sup>113</sup>

Cooperation is also increasingly fostered with tech companies to design innovative solutions for countering human trafficking by leveraging new technological developments, such as artificial intelligence or mobile technology. Coalitions of technology companies are emerging, such as Tech Against Trafficking launched in 2018 by technology companies, civil society and intergovernmental organizations to identify new technological developments to prevent and disrupt human trafficking and support its victims.<sup>114</sup> While acknowledging the extent to which technology is used today by traffickers, together with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the coalition identified some 305 technology tools and initiatives existing in 2019 to fight human trafficking.<sup>115</sup>

The main partnership trend over the last decade has hinged on the establishment of global coalitions of diverse stakeholders. There is, however, a lack of research evaluating the impact and effectiveness of these global coalitions on antitrafficking efforts in general, and victim protection in particular. In the migration context too, consideration must be given as to whether efforts effectively prevent trafficking, instead of simply impeding migration. Scant research exists on partnerships at the local level, despite the importance of urban and local community spaces for implementing antitrafficking activities and offering assistance to victims.<sup>116</sup> While it is commonly agreed that partnerships must be comprised of multisector stakeholders, research appears to predominantly focus on the traditional State-to-State notion of partnerships, particularly with respect to the prosecution of traffickers.

## Conclusion

There is widespread national, regional and global consensus on the urgent need to prevent and combat human trafficking in migration pathways. Indeed, few other migration-related issues have attained as much agreement within the international community. However, there is less consensus on how to achieve this in practice, and there remains a shortfall in political will to introduce effective policies to that end.

Confronting the trafficking of migrants specifically brings unique challenges. This chapter has endeavoured to highlight some of these challenges and showcase promising avenues, new trends and developments in addressing them. Three main lessons can be drawn, with implications for future research, as well as policy and programmatic responses:

- **Strengthening the understanding of migrants' trafficking:** Trafficking of migrants is still too often confused with other crimes, especially migrant smuggling. This conflation is made by a variety of actors, from media outlets that use trafficking and smuggling interchangeably, to State authorities that misappropriate the discourse of trafficking in their "fight" against irregular migration. Whether through lack of understanding on the issue or by design, the implications of this conflation are far from semantic: migrant victims may not be identified, which in turn impacts the investigation and prosecution of traffickers, the disruption of organized crime networks and, more importantly, the protection to which migrant victims are entitled. Moreover, there is a risk that counter-trafficking is leveraged as political currency to confront irregular migration, or that responsibility to address it

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113 See [www.fastinitiative.org/implementation/survivor-inclusion/#1590953818950-c3e528d7-fe15](http://www.fastinitiative.org/implementation/survivor-inclusion/#1590953818950-c3e528d7-fe15).

114 See Darnton and Nestor, 2019.

115 OSCE and Tech Against Trafficking, 2020.

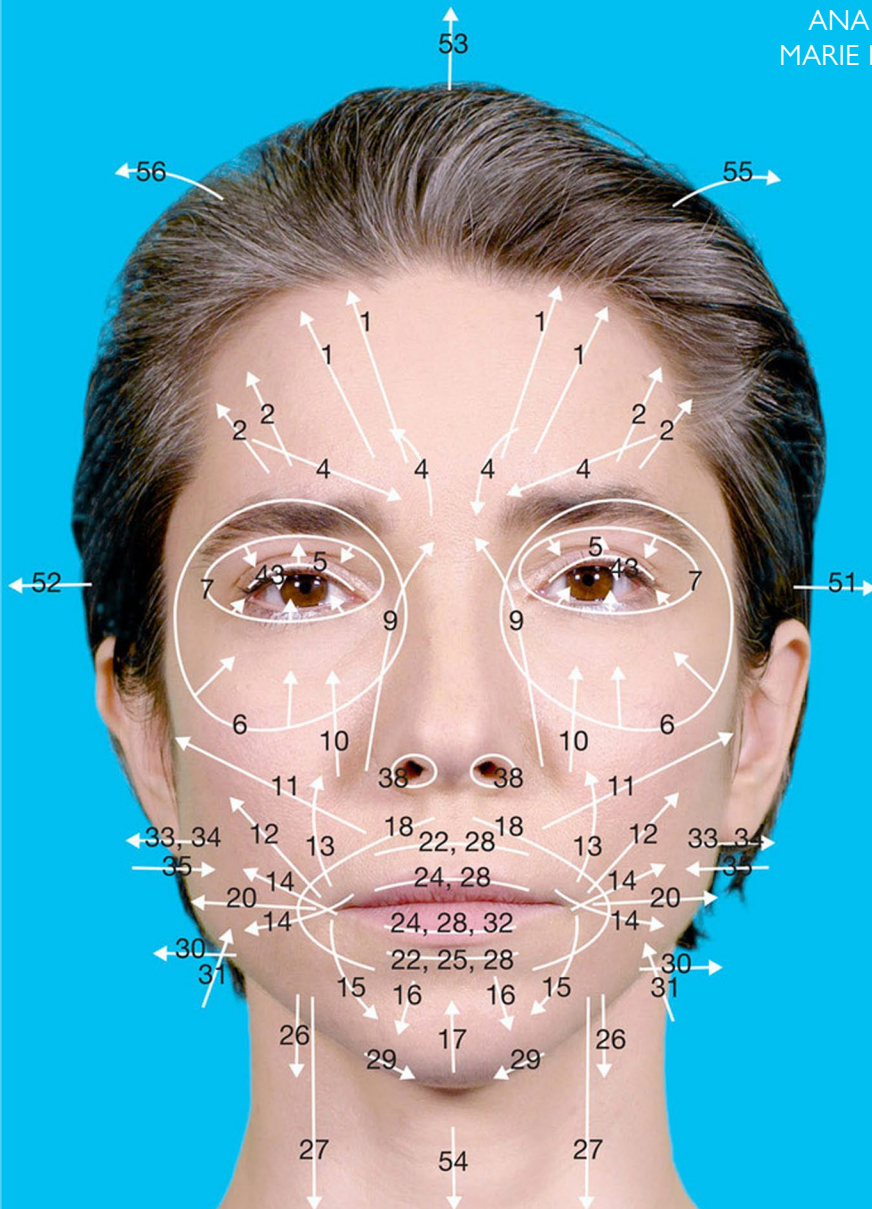
116 Winterdyk, 2018; Kim et al., 2018.

is deflected from States onto the private sector and other non-State actors. Improving the understanding and evidence base of migrant trafficking calls for capacity-building efforts not only of State authorities, but also of other relevant stakeholders, including the media. Capacity-building, from this perspective, is to be understood broadly, beyond the technical legal definition of human trafficking to cover also the dynamics behind the trafficking of migrants, including the impact of migration policies in countries of origin, transit and destination that may drive trafficking and exploitation of migrants. Research, data collection and analysis will continue to be essential, especially for under-researched subregions and countries. Evidence-based analysis provides useful insights into the changing dynamics of migrant trafficking, in order to further enhance antitrafficking policies and programmatic responses. More regular and rigorous monitoring and evaluations of the outcomes of antitrafficking programmes are vital to contribute to the evidence base.

- **Adopting tailor-made protection responses for migrant victims of trafficking:** Every victim of trafficking is a unique individual with specific protection and assistance needs. There are factors that make individual migrants vulnerable to trafficking and that shape their experience of being trafficked. Those outside their country of origin have protection needs that are specific to their migration situation, in addition to more general protection and assistance needs as victims of serious crime. For instance, migrant victims in irregular situations may be reluctant to report to the authorities for fear of deportation or punishment for their irregular status or irregular migration. Overlooking the specific situations in which migrant victims find themselves is detrimental to antitrafficking efforts; migrants may avoid cooperating with authorities in criminal proceedings against traffickers, and re-enter into cycles of re-trafficking. Likewise, human trafficking and its implications are highly gendered, calling for gender-sensitive responses throughout the 4P approach. Recognizing these realities, some countries have adopted not only victim-centred approaches, but also migrant-specific victim-centred responses, for instance, by granting reflection periods and residence permits. While the granting of such permits remains the decision of each sovereign State, international migration governance forums offer a potential avenue for some States to highlight this approach as best practice to be emulated and for others to learn from. Similarly, concerning the return of migrant victims to their country of origin, the reintegration process needs to be tailored to their specific protection needs, taking due account of their age, gender, vulnerabilities and potential stigmatization upon return.
- **Transforming cooperation into effective and impactful collaboration:** Cross-border cooperation among States is essential for countering transnational trafficking of migrants. Since the adoption of the Trafficking Protocol in 2000, the understanding of cooperation has dramatically evolved. Cooperation is now multi-stakeholder, whole-of-government, whole-of-society and cross-sectoral. The recent involvement of the financial and technology sectors is a major development, as it mirrors traffickers' modes of operating through multiple types of criminality, including money-laundering and leveraging of new technologies. Overall, however, the impact and effectiveness of cooperation initiatives is unclear. More research is needed to better understand the extent to which cooperation has translated into concrete, meaningful and measurable actions to effectively counter human trafficking in migration pathways, without hampering migration itself and the development that is advanced by it.



ANA BEDUSCHI  
MARIE MCAULIFFE



- |                         |                        |                               |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 Inner Brow Raiser     | 16 Lower Lip Depressor | 32 Bite                       |
| 2 Outer Brow Raiser     | 17 Chin Raiser         | 33, 34 Blow & Puff            |
| 4 Brow Lowerer          | 18 Lip Pucker          | 35 Suck                       |
| 5 Upper (Eye)Lid Raiser | 20 Lip Strecher        | 36 Bulge                      |
| 6 Cheek Raiser          | 22 Lip Funneler        | 37 Lip Wipe                   |
| 7 Eyelid Tightner       | 24 Lip Presser         | 38 Nostril Dilator            |
| 9 Nose Wrinkler         | 25 Lip Parting         | 43, 45 Close Eyes/ Blink      |
| 10 Upper Lip Raiser     | 26 Jaw Open            | 51, 52 Head Left / Right      |
| 11 Furrow Deeper        | 27 Jaw Lowering        | 53, 54 Head Up / Down         |
| 12 Lip Corner Puller    | 28 Lip Sucks           | 55, 56 Head Tilt Left / Right |
| 13 Sharp Lip Puller     | 29 Jaw Thrust          | 57, 58 Head Front / Back      |
| 14 Dimpler              | 30 Jaw Sideways        | 61, 62 Eyes Left / Right      |
| 15 Lip Corner Depressor | 31 Jaw Clencher        | 63, 64 Eyes Up / Down         |

# 11 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, MIGRATION AND MOBILITY: IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) technologies underpin everyday activities in more ways than many people imagine. Just as personalized newsfeeds utilize AI to service many millions of people worldwide, every Google search relies on AI algorithms to produce search results in mere milliseconds. AI-driven “smart” phones, “smart” appliances, “smart” houses and “smart” digital voice assistants (e.g. Alexa and Siri) are becoming increasingly commonplace in societies, enabling people to better manage their time, information and energy consumption. However, the development of AI capabilities has also triggered dire warnings from some futurists, including Stephen Hawking, Steve Wosniak and Elon Musk, who express concern over the long-term AI implications for humanity.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the most significant aspect relates to AI weapons development, but the broader difficulties in aligning AI with human values underpin many concerns.<sup>3</sup>

Alongside growth in other sectors, AI has been increasingly used in the context of migration and mobility. The deployment of such technologies is not new, although there has been a recent surge in interest in AI utilization in migration as part of the broader raised profile of AI and related concerns about its development.<sup>4</sup> For many years, migration-related State authorities have used a variety of technologies, including AI systems, to support administrative processing and decision-making in matters related to migration. AI is increasingly used throughout the migration cycle, for example to facilitate pre-departure identity checks, support visa application lodgement and processing, enhance border procedures, produce data analytics on lodgement, applications and compliance with visa conditions (amongst other aspects), as well as to forecast migration trends. There can be benefits in applying AI technologies that are able to increase efficiency of systems and reduce processing times for clients, as well as better manage the increasing demand for migration-related services.

However, AI poses a variety of issues for policymakers, practitioners and migrants, including concerns about technology-enabled surveillance of individuals, the potential for systemic bias in AI decision-making in the areas of migration and mobility, the increased interactions between public and private sectors and their competing interests, and the negative impact of AI technologies on the protection of migrants' human rights.

Data-driven AI technologies also occupy a central role in the fight against COVID-19. Many governments around the world have implemented measures to monitor public health, such as mobile phone applications for contact tracing and digital health passports.<sup>5</sup> Such measures may disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, including migrant communities, thus impacting the protection of their human rights.

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1 Ana Beduschi, Associate Professor of Law, University of Exeter; Marie McAuliffe, Head, Migration Research and Publications Division, IOM.

2 Mack, 2015.

3 Wolchover, 2015.

4 Tegmark, 2016.

5 McAuliffe and Blower, 2021.



This chapter examines implications of AI for policy and practice in the context of migration and mobility through the prism of the existing international human rights framework of rules, standards and principles.<sup>6</sup> This is important because of the potential for human rights to be eroded – or bolstered – as a result of the design, development, implementation and expansion of AI technologies around the world.<sup>7</sup> The next section outlines key concepts and definitions, which is then followed by a brief precis of the current AI context. The use of AI across the migration cycle is then examined, with reflections on key strategic challenges and opportunities in this important area of new technology, including as it relates to the “future of work” and long-term migration trends.

## Key concepts and definitions

There is no single, universally agreed definition of AI, although in a broad sense it can be thought of as “the programming of computers to do tasks that would normally require human intelligence”.<sup>8</sup>

With its roots in computer science of the 1950s, AI was originally conceived to convey the aspirational development of a computer that would deliver the high-level or cognitive capability of humans to reason and to think – otherwise referred to as “general AI”.<sup>9</sup> More than six decades later, however, high-level reasoning and thought remain elusive, and most of what is referred to as AI in non-technical discourse is a significant step down from this and is often more akin to a particular branch of AI called “machine learning”.<sup>10</sup> This lower-order AI is referred to as “narrow AI”, as it relates to the performance of narrow tasks, such as matching facial features in images or calculating the relevance of written material to specific search terms, rather than broader, more general “thinking”.<sup>11</sup>

From its historical emergence in computer science, AI has developed over time to encapsulate different streams that utilize machine capabilities for such work as natural language processing, speech processing, machine learning, visual recognition, neural networks and robotics.<sup>12</sup> In reality, AI is not a single thing, but is a group of related technologies designed to match or replace human intelligence.<sup>13</sup> An overview of different definitions of AI offered by organizations and leading scholars can be found in Appendix A.

AI-based systems can be purely software based, acting in the virtual world (e.g. voice assistants, image analysis software, search engines, and speech and face recognition systems) or AI can be embedded in hardware devices (e.g. advanced robots, autonomous cars, drones and Internet of Things applications).<sup>14</sup> It is also useful in the context of this chapter on migration and mobility to offer definitions of commonly used terms that relate to AI technologies, such as:

- **Algorithms:** These are sets of machine instructions used to process and solve problems. AI algorithms can analyse data, find patterns, make inferences and predict behaviour at a level and speed greatly surpassing human capabilities.<sup>15</sup>

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6 E.g. UN, 1966; UNHRC, 2011; UNHRC, 2008.

7 UN SG, 2020; Pizzi et al., 2020.

8 Mehr, 2017.

9 Jordan, 2019; Tegmark, 2016.

10 Jordan, 2019.

11 Tegmark, 2016.

12 McLaughlin and Quan, 2019.

13 Duan et al., 2019; Walsh et al., 2019.

14 European Commission, 2018: para. 1; Accenture, 2018.

15 LeCun et al., 2015.



- **Machine learning:** Machine learning is one of the techniques by which machines are trained to perform tasks that are generally associated with human intelligence, such as natural language processing.<sup>16</sup> Machines learn from vast amounts of data, including big data sets, using algorithms.
- **Deep learning:** A subset of machine learning, deep learning imitates the functioning of the human brain and is increasingly being relied upon for image and face recognition.<sup>17</sup> Deep learning applications structure algorithms into layers to create an artificial neural network, enabling machines to learn and make decisions on their own.<sup>18</sup> This makes it difficult or even impossible to explain how the machines reach specific decisions.<sup>19</sup>
- **Big data:** Big data can be defined as the “large volumes of high velocity, complex and variable data that require advanced techniques and technologies to enable the capture, storage, distribution, management, and analysis of the information.”<sup>20</sup>
- **Digital identity:** A digital identity refers to a set of attributes available in digital format and relating to a person or entity.<sup>21</sup> These attributes include biometric data (e.g. fingerprint, eye scan, 3D face map), and demographic data (e.g. date and place of birth). They can also be combined with evidence of government-issued ID (e.g. passport, driver’s licence) and digital activities on social media, including search history online and geotagging data. Existing digital identity platforms use AI as well as blockchain-related technologies to verify the identity of individuals by enabling “digital identity wallets” to run via online platforms and mobile phone devices.<sup>22</sup>
- **Chatbot:** A computer programme designed to converse with humans, especially over the Internet.<sup>23</sup>

### How are digitalization and AI related?

AI technologies rely on underlying data capture and digital capabilities in order to be applied. “Digitalization” of aspects of migration systems is, therefore, a necessary condition for the application of AI technologies. However, digitalization does not necessarily result in AI technologies being developed and implemented. Compared with digitalization, AI in migration and mobility is currently much more limited.

AI is routinely used in a variety of sectors, including agriculture, finance and banking, education and health care, as summarized in Appendix B.

16 Flach, 2012; Nilsson, 1982; Ertel, 2017.

17 LeCun et al., 2015.

18 Ibid.

19 Rudin, 2019; Angelov and Soares, 2020; Watson and Floridi, 2020.

20 TechAmerica Foundation, 2012.

21 ISO, 2019.

22 E.g. Sovrin, available at <https://sovrin.org> and Digital Identity Alliance, available at <https://id2020.org>.

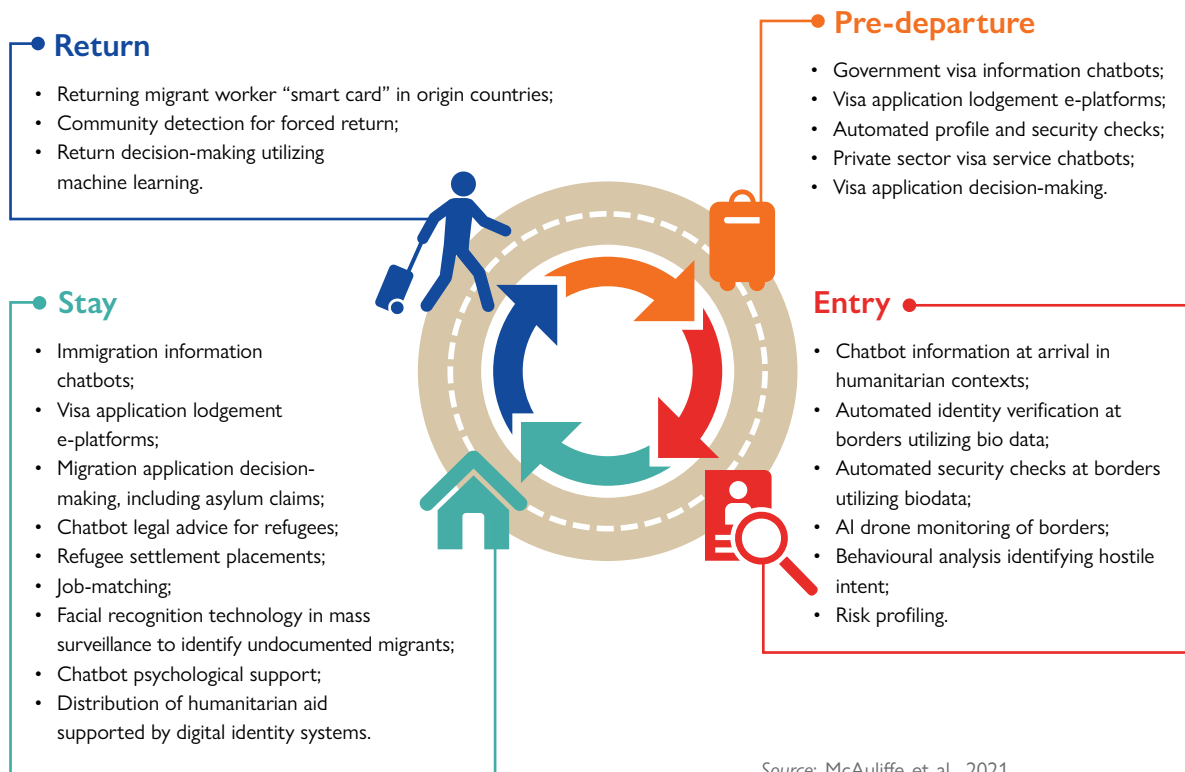
23 Cambridge Dictionary definition available at <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/chatbot> (accessed 14 January 2021).

## AI technologies throughout the migration cycle

Notwithstanding a recent surge in interest, AI technologies have actually been used in the fields of migration and mobility for many years.<sup>24</sup> For instance, AI and related technologies have been used in Australia, the United States of America, Japan, many European countries and the European Union to manage increasing numbers of cross-border movements.<sup>25</sup>

This section situates the analysis within the historical context of uses of AI technologies in migration and mobility. It describes the key uses of AI throughout the migration cycle,<sup>26</sup> providing examples of AI capability and deployment at the different stages: pre-departure, entry, stay, and return, noting that more examples can be found in relation to entry and stay. This section also describes the application of AI technologies in migration forecasting, through for example the use of predictive analytics. A summary of AI technologies throughout the migration cycle is provided in Figure 1. The next section then provides an analysis of the key issues and challenges, as well as the main benefits, that result from the increasing use of AI technologies in migration and mobility processes, especially in the context of human rights.

Figure 1. Artificial Intelligence and the migration cycle



Source: McAuliffe et al., 2021.

<sup>24</sup> ANAO, 2008.

<sup>25</sup> ANAO, 2012.

<sup>26</sup> Gmlech, 1983; McAuliffe and Koser, 2017.

AI technologies have been developed and deployed over many years to support pre-departure aspects of migration and mobility management. Several government authorities have for example harnessed emerging technologies in the areas of visa application lodgement e-platforms and pre-departure checking, including the use of biometric data.<sup>27</sup> In anticipation of the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, the Australian Government introduced a system of pre-departure checking of bio-data linked to passenger boarding, so that airlines could not board passengers and crew onto an aircraft unless they had been cleared to do so.<sup>28</sup> Referred to as advanced passenger processing, this system was designed to draw on new technology and enhanced connectivity supporting real-time checking through border security systems. The more generic versions of these types of systems, known as advanced passenger information (API) systems, have subsequently been regulated by international guidelines covering their development and use globally.<sup>29</sup> API systems are seen as a way to overcome a range of problems in managing the movements of people internationally, most especially related to the significant growth in global travel and projected further growth, but also in relation to security threats, including terrorism and drug smuggling; significant carrier penalty regimes; and efficiency gains for border agencies through greater automation.<sup>30</sup> API requires automation of cross-checking processes involving multiple systems by utilizing AI capability to conduct searches and match biodata and other variables stored in different domains.

Alongside the growing use of AI technologies in border systems, online visa application platforms and the development of “e-visas”, processing systems have also allowed automated systems utilizing the analytical capability of machine learning to process routine visa applications and refer more complex applications to case officers.<sup>31</sup> Again, one of the first automated systems was developed by Australia in 1996 in anticipation of the surge of visitors attending the Olympics, which then led to further developments over subsequent years and reductions in staffing levels overseas previously needed to process routine visa applications.<sup>32</sup> One of the early online visa application systems resulted in between 15 and 20 basic application checks being automated, thereby significantly reducing processing time and staffing costs.<sup>33</sup> In the first online system, human visa officers were still required to make the final decision on the application. However, these online platforms have been further developed over time so that they can provide automated decisions for low-risk applications, including the use of profiling techniques that do not require a human visa officer to be involved.<sup>34</sup> More complex cases or applications that do not “fit” the processing algorithms are then referred to visa officers for assessment and final determination.

More recently, there have been increased efforts to develop chatbots for information service functions provided by government authorities, as well as for private sector service providers such as commercial migration agents or visa application centres, to assist potential clients exploring opportunities to migrate for work or family reasons, study overseas or work temporarily in other countries.<sup>35</sup> Chatbots have also been developed by migrants who themselves had struggled to navigate the vast amount of information (and misinformation) on visa and immigration regulations.<sup>36</sup>

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27 ANAO, 2008; DIAC, 2008; Shelfer and Verner, 2003.

28 DIAC, 2008; Franzi, n.d.; WCO, IATA and ICAO, 2010.

29 WCO, IATA and ICAO, 2010.

30 Ibid.

31 Aggarwal, 2018; PwC, 2011; Molnar, 2018.

32 PwC, 2011.

33 Rizvi, 2004.

34 Ibid.

35 E.g. <https://hellotars.com/chatbot-templates/travel/H1mUrB/immigration-services-chatbot>.

36 Hemmadi, 2017.

## Entry

In a similar vein to changes in pre-departure processes, the management of entry-related processes, especially those directly focused on borders, has seen automation and enhanced analytical capability being increasingly utilized to improve efficiency and manage increasing passenger numbers. Automated border gates using biometric and biographical data for identity and security-related checking require substantial investments in data collection, IT systems and AI capabilities such as machine learning.<sup>37</sup> As a result, many countries are unable to roll out such sophisticated systems, leaving them to rely on manual systems and traditional border guard assessment protocols to detect potential integrity issues.<sup>38</sup> In addition, there can be challenges in initial implementation and questions regarding sustainability. In South Africa, for example, the introduction of biometric technology (fingerprint and facial recognition technology) as part of the government's modernization programme, initially at O.R. Tambo International Airport, caused delays due to the time required to collect passenger biometrics.<sup>39</sup> As a result, only non-nationals' details were collected, which goes to the broader issue of digital capabilities underlying the implementation of AI functionality. The broader issue of asymmetrical power between States in relation to AI migration technologies is discussed in the text box below.

Other areas that have seen a rapid rise in AI technologies have been in border detection systems, such as AI-backed drone technology,<sup>40</sup> as well as behavioural analysis in public locations, including airports and other mass transit facilities.<sup>41</sup> This AI-driven behavioural analysis utilizes machine learning to read biometric data such as facial (micro)expressions, gait and other physical movements to identify those intent on causing potential harm to others, although such approaches have been highly contested for reasons related to (in)accuracy, intrusiveness and privacy.<sup>42</sup> Other highly contested initiatives include the so-called "virtual border wall" between the United States and Mexico, currently being developed by United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP) in partnership with leading tech firms as part of CBP's innovation programme.<sup>43</sup> If this goes ahead, the "virtual border wall" will involve mass surveillance via drones and towers deploying capabilities similar to Google's Vision AI product, which can rapidly detect and categorize people and objects in an image or video file.<sup>44</sup>

### Deepening asymmetries between States

The deployment of AI technologies can deepen such asymmetries in two main ways. First, it can amplify the so-called digital divide between States with more advanced technological capabilities and those lacking such technologies.<sup>a</sup> AI enthusiasts' main claim is that it can be used to cut costs and increase efficiency.<sup>b</sup> AI technologies would, therefore, be advantageous for migration and asylum procedures, which are normally lengthy, primarily manual, and largely based on migrants' and asylum-seekers' claims.

Accordingly, AI technologies could cement the leading position of those AI-capable States, which would be placed at the forefront of the global efforts to manage migration in the years to come. Such a situation would create an AI divide. In this new paradigm, States with less advanced technological means could be

37 Thales Group, n.d.; WCO, 2019.

38 Heath, 2019; IOM, 2016.

39 Darch et al., 2020.

40 Campbell, 2019; Koslowski, 2005.

41 Al Hamar et al., 2018; Rawlings, 2019.

42 Al Hamar et al., 2018; Huszti-Orbán and Ní Aoláin, 2020; Jupe and Keatley, 2019.

43 Fang and Biddle, 2020.

44 Ibid.; Google Cloud, 2020.

further isolated. ... Besides, the AI divide could either reinforce or, conversely, represent a shift from the North–South paradigm.<sup>c</sup> If those AI capabilities concentrate in the global North, the AI divide would rather reinforce the existing North–South paradigm. However, if States in the global South take the opportunity to develop their AI capabilities, this could give them an additional means to exert influence in matters related to migration management as fully fledged AI-capable States. ... Accordingly, the AI divide could simultaneously contribute to deepening the already asymmetrical relationships between North–South States, while shifting the focus slightly towards what could come to be the “AI-capable States and the others” split in international migration management.

Source: Abridged extract from Beduschi, 2020a.

a Norris, 2001.

b Chui et al., 2018.

c Chetail, 2008.

## Stay

Chatbots are increasingly featuring in the provision of information and advisory services to migrants in destination countries, and have been developed by government authorities, such as Finland’s immigration robot assistant, called Kamu,<sup>45</sup> as well as by civil society organizations supporting migrants. For example, a chatbot called Mona, designed to provide refugees with basic legal advice, has been developed by the United States-based startup Marhub in an effort to provide accurate information in real time.<sup>46</sup> We have also seen the development of chatbots that provide psychological support to refugees and internally displaced persons, who are often extremely vulnerable and unable to access mental health services. One such initiative by United States-based tech company X2AI involved partnering with a non-governmental organization in Lebanon to provide Arabic-language support via a chatbot called Karim, which delivers personalized text messages to Syrian refugees, using natural language processing and cognitive behavioural therapy capabilities.<sup>47</sup> Karim is an offshoot of an initial mental health chatbot called Tess, which delivers services to more than 19 million people worldwide.<sup>48</sup>

Application e-platforms and visa-related decision-making are similar to the pre-departure processes discussed above; however, after people have entered a country they may have ongoing interactions with immigration authorities, such as to renew visas, apply for a new visa type, or demonstrate compliance with visa conditions through staged processing. The use of AI has been found to reduce the need for manual processing and in-person appointments, such as has been achieved in Hong Kong SAR, China, where the immigration department’s eBrain system reduced processing times and community costs, as described in the text box below.<sup>49</sup>

45 Miessner, 2019.

46 Peters, 2019.

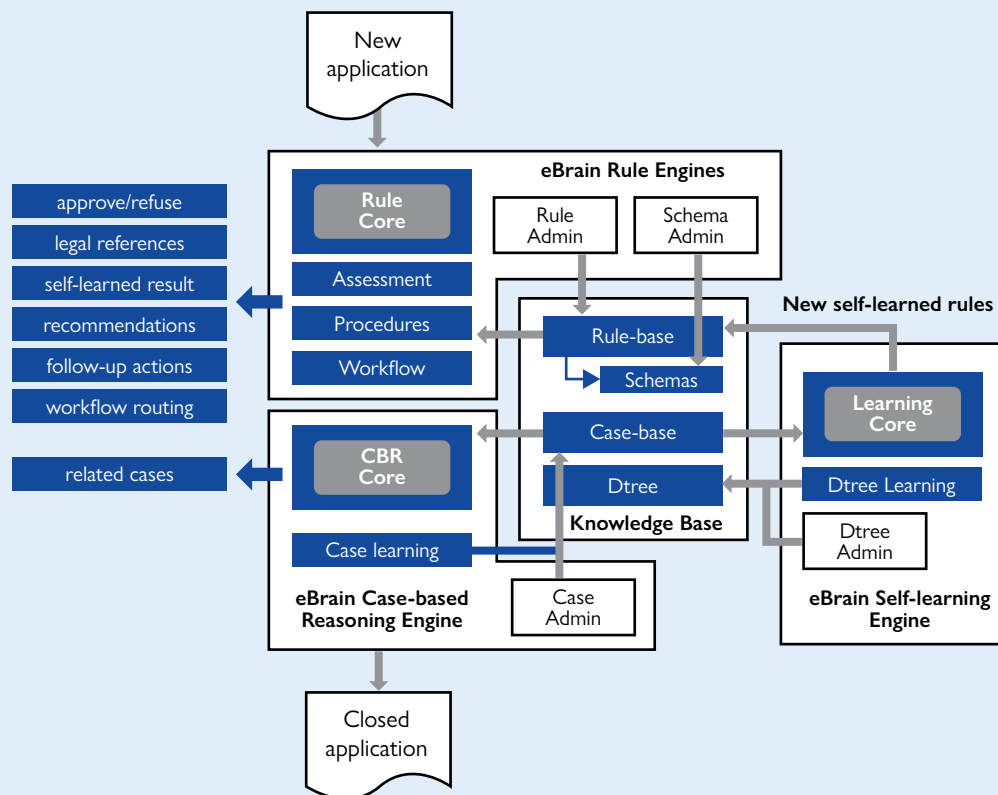
47 Solon, 2016; Sengupta, 2019.

48 See [www.x2ai.com](http://www.x2ai.com).

49 Wong and Chun, 2006.

### Hong Kong SAR, China immigration department's eBrain system

In early 2006, the Hong Kong SAR, China immigration department introduced a new eBrain system using AI capability to improve case processing. A visual representation of eBrain's overall AI architecture demonstrates the complexity of the overall scheme and the way in which machine-learning aspects feature within its architecture.



In addition to e-lodgement of applications, the eBrain system is used for case management and decision-making. After lodgement, the eBrain schema-based reasoning engine generates a set of suggested actions, such as requesting additional documentation, to get the application to a state that can be assessed. Machine learning is used to build procedural knowledge of typical steps taken for different kinds of cases.

Source: Wong and Chun, 2006.

Machine learning incorporating algorithmic data analysis has also been tested and used to support better refugee resettlement placement in Switzerland, which had previously been performed by human case officers, resulting in improved outcomes for refugee integration.<sup>50</sup> Other similar initiatives – such as the global Matching and Outcome Optimization for Refugee Empowerment (MOORE) initiative – utilize machine learning, integer optimization and

matching theory to determine the best matches between refugees and local communities.<sup>51</sup> Refugee resettlement optimization applications using AI technologies are fairly limited and specialized, although it is not clear whether similar systems are already in place for other migration programmes in destination countries, such as those for skilled workers.

One deployment of AI technologies that existed well before COVID-19, but which came under the spotlight during the pandemic, was related to the use of AI surveillance technology to track and monitor groups of interest, including migrants.<sup>52</sup> In the United States, for example, AI facial recognition technology has been used by immigration authorities to conduct mass monitoring of people in traffic flows to detect undocumented migrants.<sup>53</sup> Similar capabilities relying on facial recognition software have been implemented in many other countries, as outlined in the text box below.

### Global expansion of AI surveillance

AI surveillance technology is spreading at a faster rate to a wider range of countries than experts have commonly understood. At least 75 out of 176 countries globally are actively using AI technologies for surveillance purposes. This includes: smart city/safe city platforms (56 countries), facial recognition systems (64 countries), and smart policing (52 countries).

Liberal democracies are major users of AI surveillance. The index shows that 51 percent of advanced democracies deploy AI surveillance systems. In contrast, 37 percent of closed autocratic states, 41 percent of electoral autocratic/competitive autocratic states, and 41 percent of electoral democracies/illiberal democracies deploy AI surveillance technology. Governments in full democracies are deploying a range of surveillance technology, from safe city platforms to facial recognition cameras.

Governments in autocratic and semi-autocratic countries are more prone to abuse AI surveillance than governments in liberal democracies. Some autocratic governments are exploiting AI technology for mass surveillance purposes. Other governments with dismal human rights records are exploiting AI surveillance in more limited ways to reinforce repression. Yet all political contexts run the risk of unlawfully exploiting AI surveillance technology to obtain certain political objectives.

*Source: Abridged extract from Feldstein, 2019.*

### Return

In the context of return migration, there appears to be much less utilization of AI technologies. Insofar as return relates to programme integrity, such as the return of failed asylum seekers, visa overstayers or unlawful non-citizens, AI technology does appear to be utilized to facilitate return processes; however, its implementation appears to be more related to mass population surveillance initiatives to detect potential undocumented migrants for forced return.<sup>54</sup> There are also indications in court documents from the United States showing that private sector data

51 Trapp et al., 2018.

52 IOM, 2020.

53 Matyus, 2020.

54 Majidi et al., 2021.

brokers, which use AI algorithms to pull together a wide range of data on individuals to create “data dossiers”, are being utilized to identify potential deportees.<sup>55</sup> In this sense, both physical surveillance and virtual surveillance techniques that utilize AI technologies are being drawn upon to identify potential returnees.

The consequences of relying on AI technologies in forced return can be very significant, especially if there is overreliance on such systems without other forms of human assessment or verification. In 2016, the United Kingdom revoked the visas of around 34,000 international students on the basis of a contracted language services company’s AI human voice recognition analysis indicating that the students had used proxies in English language tests needed to secure visas. However, subsequent human analysis found that around 7,000 (or 20%) of these students had been falsely accused of cheating, with the United Kingdom immigration appeals tribunal finding that the evidence used by the Home Office to deport the students had “multiple frailties and shortcomings”.<sup>56</sup>

The use of AI technologies in the return of migrant workers back to their origin countries has had some traction, but appears to suffer sustainability and implementation obstacles. In Bangladesh, for example, the introduction of “smart cards” in 2010 to support smoother departure processes of migrant workers has been useful for border processing and data collection purposes, but calls to utilize these cards also for returning migration workers have not eventuated.<sup>57</sup> Multipurpose smart cards would assist in further movement away from a paper-based migration management system to a digital system, enabling better data collection and related analysis for policy and programming purposes.<sup>58</sup>

### *AI as a tool to predict movements, while also shaping long-term trends*

Forecasting migration and mobility has been undertaken for many years and has typically relied on statistical modelling, as well as expert insights. With the expansion of data sets, especially in humanitarian displacement contexts (such as IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix), there is an increasing focus on the use of AI technologies to leverage these data.<sup>59</sup> Unsurprisingly, predictive analytics is increasingly being used in the context of humanitarian settings; recent research has highlighted the growth in AI technologies to predict humanitarian crises, including displacement impacts due to conflict and violence, food insecurity, disease outbreaks and disaster.<sup>60</sup> Of 49 initiatives utilizing AI technologies, such as machine learning, big data and statistical modelling, the researchers found that the focus was on where humanitarian crises will occur (71% of initiatives) and who will be affected (40%).<sup>61</sup> Less emphasis was placed on what such predicted crises will involve and when crises are likely to occur.

While we see a trend relating to the scaling-up of predictive analytics technologies and forecasting applications, the analysis of how AI technologies are likely to impact international migration patterns over time is of more significance in strategic terms. This is because more and more occupations are being automated or otherwise replaced by computers, which in turn has the potential to affect migration dynamics worldwide. AI and the future of work is a strategic topic of keen interest to many, with some arguing that it is the traditional white-collar jobs that are most at risk.<sup>62</sup> This highly topical issue is summarized in the text box below.

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55 Currier, 2019; Molnar 2019; Rivlin-Nadler, 2019.

56 Baynes, 2019.

57 Bhuyan, 2018; Rashid and Ashraf, 2018.

58 Rashid and Ashraf, 2018.

59 Bither and Ziebarth, 2020.

60 Hernandez and Roberts, 2020.

61 Ibid.

62 Hanke, 2017.



### How will AI impact long-term migration patterns?

While it is unclear exactly how migration patterns will be affected, analysis points to significant shifts over time as countries seek to invest in AI in an increasingly diverse range of sectors, from health and social care, to agriculture, education and finance (see Appendix B). As part of the broader considerations of the future of work, automatization utilizing AI is expected to affect the economics that underpin migration, reducing the demand for migrant workers over the long term. These changes are likely to affect many labour markets globally, with significant destination regions for migrants workers not immune. In a report focusing on Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, for example, researchers find that the automation of routine work is particularly relevant to migrant workers in these countries, as the majority are low skilled. In the United Arab Emirates, for example, more than 93 per cent of automation potential affects jobs held by migrant workers.

Sources: aus dem Moore et al., 2018; Ernst et al., 2018; Hanke, 2017; Hertog, 2019.

## AI technologies in migration and mobility: key issues, challenges and opportunities

As AI systems become increasingly common throughout the migration cycle, they give rise to a variety of issues and pose significant challenges for the protection of migrants' human rights.

This section analyses these issues through the prism of the human rights law framework, identifying challenges, but also possible available opportunities. It elaborates on the descriptive analysis presented in the previous section by focusing on critical areas in which AI has a significant impact: visa and asylum processing and decision-making; border security and migration management; support to migration management; and migration and mobility in an interconnected world.

### *Visa and asylum processing and decision-making*

AI technologies are frequently used for visa and asylum processing and decision-making. A key advantage of using AI systems is that they can speed up visa and asylum application processing while screening for security threats and reducing irregular migration. However, AI technologies make it possible to automate, often in untransparent ways, large-volume processing involving risk profiling, with limited transparency and often without the possibility of recourse.<sup>63</sup>

The lack of transparency and the presence of biases in AI algorithms is a widespread concern, extending well beyond migration. While humans also display biases in their decision-making independently of the use of AI, AI systems can amplify existing human biases, not just encode them. AI thus has the potential to institutionalize and systematize human bias. This can ultimately lead to discrimination and exclusion of people based on protected

63 McCarroll, 2020; Molnar and Gill, 2018.

characteristics, including race and ethnicity.<sup>64</sup> Bias is a common issue that permeates AI systems in a variety of sectors.<sup>65</sup>

### Typology of biases in algorithms

1. **Historical bias** arises when there is a misalignment between the world as it is and the values or objectives to be encoded and propagated in a model. It is a normative concern with the state of the world, and exists even given perfect sampling and feature selection.
2. **Representation bias** arises while defining and sampling a development population. It occurs when the development population under-represents, and subsequently fails to generalise well, for some part of the use population.
3. **Measurement bias** arises when choosing and measuring features and labels to use; these are often proxies for the desired quantities. The chosen set of features and labels may leave out important factors or introduce group or input-dependent noise that leads to differential performance.
4. **Aggregation bias** arises during model construction, when distinct populations are inappropriately combined. In many applications, the population of interest is heterogeneous and a single model is unlikely to suit all subgroups.
5. **Evaluation bias** occurs during model iteration and evaluation. It can arise when the testing or external benchmark populations do not equally represent the various parts of the use population. Evaluation bias can also arise from the use of performance metrics that are not appropriate for the way in which the model will be used.
6. **Deployment bias** occurs after model deployment, when a system is used or interpreted in inappropriate ways.

*Source:* Abridged extract from Suresh and Guttag, 2020.

In the context of migration and mobility, the consequences of biased AI algorithms can be life-changing. For example, there is potential for visa applications to be rejected because the AI algorithms used for the initial triage do not correctly recognize darker skin complexions and misidentify applicants. Such a scenario is not far from reality. Facial recognition technologies are considerably less accurate when used to recognize darker-skinned female faces when compared with white male faces.<sup>66</sup> Commercially available facial recognition AI systems were also proven to be more prone to misidentifying black people's faces and matching them with faces of people who had previously been arrested by the police, in an investigation in the United States.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Eubanks, 2018; Ferguson, 2017; Noble, 2018; Zuboff, 2019.

<sup>65</sup> Creemers et al., 2015; Zou and Schiebinger, 2018.

<sup>66</sup> Buolamwini and Gebru, 2018.

<sup>67</sup> Snow, 2018.

These inaccuracies in identifying darker-skinned people's faces may be caused by a representation bias, due, for example, to a lack of diversity in the data sets used to train the AI algorithms. This effect may also be the result of a historical bias, reflecting decades of preconceptions and stereotypes in society. Technology is indeed shaped by long-standing cultural and context-based perceptions about race, ethnicity, gender and other inequalities prevalent in society.<sup>68</sup>

These illustrations are an important reminder that technology is not a neutral tool and that it can also make mistakes. Decision makers should be aware of this. They should also take into consideration the propensity of human beings to favour the suggestions presented by AI systems, even if there are indications that these are mistaken, a phenomenon known as automation bias.<sup>69</sup> Further, biometric matching involving algorithmic capabilities can be very difficult for humans to refute, especially where technology is able to extract information not able to be detected by the human eye (e.g. gait patterns, facial recognition and iris matching).<sup>70</sup> Therefore, procedures should be in place to allow individuals to obtain redress in case mistakes in the AI systems lead to erroneous decisions or even to violations of their human rights. Individuals should be able to challenge decisions made by or with the assistance of AI systems before an independent and impartial tribunal or authority, including through administrative procedures.<sup>71</sup> To enable procedural fairness, State authorities need to be transparent about how they use AI in visa and asylum processing and decision-making.

Despite recent progress, there are still many technical hurdles preventing AI systems from being fully explainable by humans, notably the more complex AI models, such as deep neural networks.<sup>72</sup> These are systems designed to learn by themselves through "thought processes" that are not fully explicable. Increasing reliance on AI technologies for visa and asylum processing, given this inherent unpredictability and opacity, risks compromising fairness and equity of processes.

### *Border security and migration management*

As discussed above, AI systems are also present in the field of border security and migration management. They are used, for example, to automate identity verification at borders, to automate security checks and monitor hostile intention at borders, or even to monitor borders remotely using sensors and AI-powered drones.

There are advantages in using AI in the context of border security and migration management. AI systems can analyse vast amounts of data, including big data, to identify patterns and predict behaviour.<sup>73</sup> They do so at speeds vastly surpassing human capability. AI algorithms can thus increase efficiency by streamlining repetitive tasks that depend on the review of large amounts of data.<sup>74</sup> Depending on how they are designed, developed, and deployed, AI systems can fast-track identity verification at border crossing points. They can also contribute to better identification of individuals posing potential threats to national security, public safety and immigration programme integrity.

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68 See UNGA, 2011; UNHRC, 2020a.

69 Huszti-Orbán and Ní Aoláin, 2020; Wickens et al., 2015.

70 Israel, 2020.

71 This is according to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (UN, 1966: art. 14) and UN HRCtee (2007).

72 Graves and Clancy, 2019; Pasquale, 2015; Watson and Floridi, 2020; Vilone and Longo, 2020.

73 Burrell, 2016.

74 Chui et al., 2018.

However, AI systems also bring many risks for the protection and respect of migrants' human rights in the context of border security and migration management. First, there are significant concerns about the respect for individuals' right to privacy. Under international human rights law, everyone has the right to respect for their private life and correspondence, which includes personal information in digital formats.<sup>75</sup> Measures restricting the right to privacy must only be taken to safeguard a legitimate interest, which includes national security and public safety. They must also satisfy the cumulative tests of legality, necessity and proportionality.<sup>76</sup> The legality test requires that measures adopted by States have a legal basis in domestic law and are compatible with the rule of law. They must be accessible and foreseeable and afford adequate legal protection against arbitrariness.<sup>77</sup> The necessity test demands that the measures adopted address a pressing social need.<sup>78</sup> The proportionality test requires that the measures taken by public authorities are proportionate to their legitimate aims and represent the least-restrictive viable solution.<sup>79</sup>

Second, there are concerns about the collection and use of sensitive personal information, such as biometric data. In particular, a central problem relates to the modalities of storage, processing and access to the data by different public authorities and services. These concerns are heightened by the establishment of interoperable information technology (IT) systems. Interoperability allows data to be available and easily shared between different IT systems, including those used for the management of border security and migration. In the European Union, a dedicated agency called eu-LISA oversees the implementation of interoperable IT systems concerning asylum, border management and migration.<sup>80</sup>

There is no doubt that, on the one hand, interoperability can improve AI systems, enhance security and provide for better identity management.<sup>81</sup> For example, if data sets lack interoperability because they are only available in incompatible or different proprietary software, AI systems that are heavily data-driven will not reach their full potential. However, on the other hand, interoperability may also allow for mistakes in one data base to be cascaded forward if they are not quickly identified and corrected. For example, a person could be erroneously identified as a security threat with this information being recorded in one data base. If this mistake is not promptly corrected, border authorities that might access information in that data base could refuse entry and unfairly place this person in detention. The person in this scenario may not even be aware of the mistake in the data base. The lack of transparency could make it more difficult to rectify the error and allow the individual to obtain redress for the violation of his or her right to liberty.<sup>82</sup> Accordingly, interoperable IT systems should be developed in line with the basic principles of data protection. These involve lawfulness, fairness and transparency, purpose limitation, data minimization, accuracy, storage limitation, integrity, confidentiality and accountability.<sup>83</sup>

Third, there is a growing risk that the technologization of borders, using AI technologies such as AI-powered drones and/or AI-driven behavioural analysis of biometric data, may lead to excessive technology-enabled surveillance of individuals.<sup>84</sup> While surveillance may be necessary to meet national security and public safety interests, measures that disproportionately interfere with people's privacy are not tolerated in a democratic society.<sup>85</sup>

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75 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNGA, 1948: art. 12). See also ICCPR (UN, 1966: art. 17); European Convention on Human Rights (CoE, 1950: art. 8); American Convention on Human Rights (OAS, 1969: art. 11); UNGA, 2014; UN HRCttee, 1988.

76 UNGA, 2014: para. 23.

77 UNGA, 2014: para. 23; UN HRCttee, 1988; ECtHR, 2008: para. 95.

78 UNGA, 2014: para. 24; ECtHR, 2008: para. 101.

79 Ibid.

80 Available at [www.eulisa.europa.eu](http://www.eulisa.europa.eu).

81 European Commission, 2017.

82 ICCPR (UN, 1966: art. 9).

83 EU, 2016: art. 5.

84 E.g. UNHRC, 2020b.

85 UNGA, 2014: para. 24; Molnar, 2020.

## *AI supporting migration management*

AI systems are also used to facilitate access to services and the integration of migrants and refugees throughout the migration cycle. For example, chatbots can now provide legal advice and psychological support to migrants and refugees, AI-powered applications can assist with refugee settlement placements, and digital applications can be used to support migrant integration in the host country. Chatbots have also been developed by migrants as a result of their own experiences in navigating vast amount of (mis)information on visa regulations and processes, as highlighted in the text box below.

### **Botler: the A.I. chatbot developed by a migrant**

Amir Moravej's body may have been in Tehran, but his mind was in Montreal. The engineer had spent a half decade in Canada, but an expiring work permit forced him to leave the country and return to his native Iran. Back home, Moravej scoured immigration forums and joined group chats where applicants shared advice and information about their cases. "It was impossible for me to read all of it," he recalls. "So I wrote a bot to go and read all the forum posts, and find the ones that were most relevant to my own case."

A little over a year ago, Moravej landed in Montreal once more, this time as a permanent resident. His creation has become Botler, an immigration tool powered by artificial intelligence... The first scheme Botler is being applied to: the Programme de l'expérience québécoise (PEQ), for foreign workers and students residing in Quebec. "Imagine you don't have any information about the [program] but you want to apply," instructs Moravej. "You can use this bot for the whole process, from the very beginning to the very end."

Users start by answering questions about their qualifications and circumstances, which allows Botler to determine if they're eligible for the program. Would-be applicants who meet the criteria then upload their documents, which the tool reviews. "If everything is fine, the bot will create an application package" that can be submitted to the immigration ministry, explains Moravej. Users who miss the mark get to see what gaps remain in their application, and what conditions they must meet to become eligible.

Botler's machine learning engine uses the guidelines published by Quebec's immigration department, and was trained on anonymized data from real cases. Lawyers at Montreal firm Campbell Cohen, which is partnering with the startup, conducted the product's quality assurance testing.

*Source: Abridged extract from Hemmadi, 2017.*

At the same time, this trend has also raised concerns about the limits of "techno-solutionism", or the attempt to use technology to fix all sorts of problems.<sup>86</sup> Migration is indeed a complex phenomenon that cannot be easily managed.<sup>87</sup> In this sense, it cannot be easily "fixed" by technology either.

Technology may indeed enable capabilities and function as an equalizer of societal disparity.<sup>88</sup> For example, digital identity initiatives may provide excluded individuals, such as migrants and refugees who cannot prove legal identity, with the means to open a bank account and access a variety of services in a host country.<sup>89</sup> AI technologies can

86 Latonero and Kift, 2018; Morozov, 2014.

87 Castles, 2004.

88 Haensslen and Ariana, 2017; Beduschi, 2019.

89 See, for example, Digital Identity Alliance, available at <https://id2020.org> and The Rohingya Project, available at <https://rohingyaproject.com>.

also reduce processing times and eliminate or reduce the inconvenience and time required for in-person interviews with immigration case officers, which often need to be booked weeks in advance (see text box below). However, their implementation is not without risks, as discussed in the next section.

### AI visa e-platforms and client service processing improvements

Paper-based manual visa application lodgement and processing systems require hard copies of application forms to be submitted by the applicant, together with copies of relevant documents. Case officers knowledgeable about the relevant laws, regulations and guidelines then review applications and often request additional supplementary documents from the applicant. When all the supporting documents have been submitted, and an interview (if needed) conducted, the case officer will then make an assessment, which may require endorsement by a more senior colleague. The entire process may require several visits by the applicant; total processing times can be from several days to several months, depending on the visa type and complexity of the case.

Through the use of AI technologies, visa application lodgement processes can become much faster and eliminate the need for visits to immigration offices. Straightforward, low-risk applications can be submitted online, paid for and processed within minutes, reducing the inconvenience of in-person visits and allowing much faster decisions. These capabilities also allow for the more complex and/or higher-risk cases to be handled by human immigration officers. Such systems, as highlighted above, have been in place in some countries for more than two decades; however, they require significant information and communication

technology (ICT) investment and they can only work effectively where the ICT accessibility for clients is high. In some regions and countries, the lack of ICT risks undermining service delivery and can result in inability to access online e-platforms. For example, there exists a digital divide between developed and developing countries, with 81 per cent of individuals using the Internet in developed countries, compared with 40 per cent in developing countries and only 15.6 per cent in the least developed countries. Further, there is also a digital gender gap, with higher Internet access rates for men than for women in all regions of the world; globally, men's access rate is 51 per cent and women's is 44.9 per cent.

Sources: Aggarwal, 2018; IOM, 2016; ITU, 2019; Rizvi, 2004; Wong and Chun, 2006.

### *Migration and mobility in an interconnected world*

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, technology gives people the means to access more and more sources of information. This profoundly influences and impacts people's strategies and decisions to move.<sup>90</sup> For example, mobile phone technology enables migrants to stay in touch with family, friends and humanitarian organizations, but it is also exploited by smugglers and a variety of criminal networks, including via social media applications.<sup>91</sup> GPS and geolocation technologies embedded in mobile phones allow people to find and compare routes while on the move. Search engines are frequently used to gather information about transit and destination

<sup>90</sup> McAuliffe and Goossens, 2018.

<sup>91</sup> McAuliffe, 2016.

countries. While using these technologies, people leave behind significant digital footprints that can be exploited and analysed. Data-driven AI systems build on such varieties of available data.

Two main sets of challenges are particularly relevant for data-driven AI systems used in migration and mobility. First, the growing “datafication” of migration management, whereby different types of data including biometric, satellite and big data are increasingly collected, stored and used for migration management, can lead to critical issues.<sup>92</sup> Poor practices in the collection, including storage and analysis of data from vulnerable groups such as some migrants and refugees, can have significant consequences. Cybersecurity flaws and poor storage practices could expose sensitive information about migrants and refugees.<sup>93</sup> This can have dangerous consequences for their safety if the data fall into the hands of malicious actors or persecuting agents. Further, mistakes in data sets used to train AI algorithms can be cascaded forward if they go undetected. If these are proprietary algorithms or “black boxes”, they can be even more difficult to audit, making it harder to identify any errors.<sup>94</sup> Such mistakes can have devastating effects. For instance, people may be denied access to essential services if they are misidentified due to an error in the software used to collect biometric data or to recognize people’s faces. If these are humanitarian services provided within the context of a situation of conflict, the consequences for the affected people can be even more ravaging.<sup>95</sup>

Second, such concerns about the “datafication” of migration and mobility are further exacerbated by the increasingly common interactions between the public and private sectors. The private sector plays a central role in designing and developing the technologies that will later be deployed by States and international organizations at all stages of the migration cycle. Technology companies have been positioning themselves in the humanitarian and migration arena for many years.<sup>96</sup> Such public–private interactions raise concerns for data protection. For instance, data-sharing practices and access to sensitive data by private corporations should only occur when there are sufficient measures in place to safeguard the basic principles of data protection.<sup>97</sup>

More broadly, States, international organizations and the private sector are often motivated by potentially conflicting interests. For example, private companies may logically follow their commitment towards profit-making and the safeguarding of the interests of their shareholders; whereas States defend the public interest, while international organizations need to act within the limits of their mandate to protect the interests of their beneficiaries. These different motivations are subsequently reflected in the design and development of AI systems. Some argue that profit-making interests frequently prevail.<sup>98</sup> Conversely, migrants’ interests and the protection of their rights are often unaccounted for in the design, development and deployment of these technologies. For example, activists and experts have raised the alarm about private sector access and control over migrants’ data, often without any meaningful consent.<sup>99</sup> There are also reservations about international organizations’ practices in the field, which create additional bureaucracies and may hinder the protection of migrants and refugees.<sup>100</sup> Scholars have also pointed out the challenges concerning the monetization of the insights gathered from migrants’ data and the incentives in maintaining a crisis narrative.<sup>101</sup>

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92 Broeders and Dijstelbloem, 2016:242–260; Beduschi, 2019.

93 Parker, 2020a; Parker, 2020b.

94 Pasquale, 2015.

95 See International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, *Humanitarian Crises Digital Dilemmas*, available at <https://digital-dilemmas.com>.

96 Molnar, 2019; Parker, 2019; Kinstler, 2019.

97 Kuner and Marelli, 2020.

98 Madianou, 2019; Zuboff, 2019.

99 See, for example, Molnar, 2019 and Madianou, 2019. See also UNGA, 2019; UNHRC, 2020a; UNHCR, 2020b.

100 Duffield, 2016; Read et al., 2016; Latonero, 2019.

101 Taylor and Meissner, 2019.

A human rights-based approach is, therefore, needed to address these issues and rebalance the power structures at play. International human rights treaties and the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights offer a comprehensive framework for algorithmic accountability.<sup>102</sup> Similarly, States, international organizations and technology companies should adhere to the humanitarian “do no harm” imperative when designing, developing and deploying AI systems throughout the migration cycle.<sup>103</sup> This ensures that once deployed, such AI systems do not damage the populations they are intended to serve. Moreover, States and international organizations can require that providers of AI technologies, including private sector suppliers, abide by human rights standards and basic principles of data protection. They can use public procurement processes for this purpose.<sup>104</sup> These can include specific clauses in public procurement notices requiring that suppliers implement technical and organizational measures to integrate data protection principles into AI systems by design and by default.<sup>105</sup> They can also request that AI technology providers assess the impact of their products against human rights standards before the deployment of these AI systems.<sup>106</sup> Such practices can increase algorithmic fairness and accountability and prevent situations in which these technologies are tested on vulnerable populations, such as some migrant groups, without the prior assessment of risks.

## Conclusion

AI in migration and mobility is not a new phenomenon. However, the increase in computational power, advances in technologies and the availability of large amounts of data have provided fertile ground for the contemporary development and expansion of AI in this area.

This chapter framed the analysis of the uses of AI within each stage of the migration cycle, demonstrating that such technologies have already influenced pre-departure, entry, stay and return policies and practices. Additionally, it acknowledged how the expansion of AI in labour markets is expected to impact long-term migration patterns, as technologies and automation increasingly affect the future of work around the world.

AI certainly brings about a series of advantages for policy and practice. For example, AI systems can increase the efficiency of migration management by streamlining repetitive tasks that depend on the review of large amounts of data. Depending on how they are designed, developed and deployed, AI systems can fast-track identity verification at border crossing points. They can also contribute to better identification of individuals posing potential threats to security. In this regard, good practices include machine-learning tools incorporating algorithmic data analysis to support refugee resettlement placement through chatbots providing information and advisory services to migrants in destination countries. There is also a growing focus on the use of AI to predict the likelihood of displacement events and populations at risk of displacement, ostensibly in order to support and avoid such events.

Such predictions could help authorities to prepare more efficiently for large influxes of people. This could contribute towards fulfilling their human rights obligations.<sup>107</sup> For example, State authorities could act swiftly and better prepare their reception facilities, based on migration and movement forecasts. However, these predictions could

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<sup>102</sup> McGregor et al., 2019.

<sup>103</sup> Sandvik et al., 2017.

<sup>104</sup> Martin-Ortega and O'Brien, 2019; Beduschi, 2020b.

<sup>105</sup> Kuner and Marelli, 2020.

<sup>106</sup> Danish Institute for Human Rights, 2020.

<sup>107</sup> UN HRCttee, 2004.



also be used to reinforce non-entrée policies, understood as measures aimed at obviating access by migrants and asylum seekers to a State's territory.<sup>108</sup> These include unlawful non-refoulement practices, as forbidden by Article 33 of the Refugee Convention and human rights treaties.<sup>109</sup> Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that AI systems also present many risks for the protection and respect of migrants' human rights in the context of migration and mobility.

Three main implications for policy and practice can be drawn from this chapter:

- AI systems can amplify existing human biases, not just encode them. This can ultimately lead to discrimination and exclusion of people based on protected characteristics, including race and ethnicity. Bias is a common issue that permeates AI systems in a variety of sectors. Therefore, AI systems need to be developed in a way that deliberately and systematically seeks to remove or reduce bias throughout the process, from data collection and analysis to the reporting and assessment stages. Further, there is much greater awareness that overreliance on AI systems can result in incorrect and biased decisions, requiring policymakers and systems architects to ensure that regular monitoring and recalibration of systems, as well as human verification protocols, are in place.
- The increasing datafication of migration and mobility can create and magnify vulnerabilities. Datafication refers to the different types of data, including biometric, satellite and big data, which are increasingly collected, stored and used for migration management. Poor data storage practices and cybersecurity flaws can expose migrants' sensitive information. This can have dramatic consequences for migrants if the information falls into the hands of malicious actors. Such concerns are further exacerbated by the interactions between the public and private sectors. Technology companies have been positioning themselves in the humanitarian and migration arena for many years, raising concerns about data protection. Therefore, data-sharing practices and access to sensitive data by private corporations should only occur when there are sufficient measures in place to safeguard the basic principles of data protection.
- One of the key aspects currently underpinning analysis in this salient and strategic area of migration policy and practice is the extent to which a lack of transparency dominates. To some extent, this is likely to be fuelled by the risk of malicious acts of cybersecurity to undermine or control AI systems.<sup>110</sup> However, this in itself creates different risks, especially as they relate to the erosion of human rights.

Accordingly, a human rights-based approach is needed to address these issues and rebalance the power structures at play. For instance, human rights impact assessment tools could be used before the deployment of AI systems. This would increase algorithmic fairness and accountability and prevent situations in which AI technologies are tested on vulnerable populations, such as migrants and refugees, without prior assessment of the risks. Adherence to the "do no harm" imperative during the design, development and deployment of AI systems could help to mitigate some of the risks brought about by these technologies throughout the migration cycle.


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108 Hathaway, 2005; Gammeltoft-Hansen and Hathaway, 2014.

109 UN, 1951. See also ICCPR (UN, 1966: art. 7), as interpreted in UN HRCttee, 1992.

110 Lohn, 2020.





MARIE MCAULIFFE  
ADRIAN KITIMBO  
BINOD KHADRIA

### WMR 2020 REPEAT

*Editor's Note:* This chapter first appeared in the *World Migration Report 2020*. The research for this chapter inspired us to delve deeper into the topic of disinformation, resulting in Chapter 8 on disinformation about migration (in this volume). The last two years, however, have shown us that the issue has not abated. In fact, with COVID-19 disinformation, the massive challenges concerning balanced and accurate accounts of migrants' contributions have only become worse. So, here it is again, repeated in this volume, to remind us of the importance of the topic and so additional readers can draw upon its contents.



# 12 REFLECTIONS ON MIGRANTS' CONTRIBUTIONS IN AN ERA OF INCREASING DISRUPTION AND DISINFORMATION<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

A glance through previous World Migration Reports, and other policy and scientific publications on international migration, shows that at least two observations have been prevalent over time: i) recognition that migration, particularly immigration, has emerged as a prominent international and national policy issue; and ii) that the public discourse on migration has increasingly become polarized with the space for balanced, rigorous, and evidence-based analyses having diminished over time.<sup>2</sup> While the nature of the public discourse has changed over time, there is widespread recognition that the “toxicity” of the migration debate has further intensified over the last few years, with the politics of fear and division increasingly framing discussions.<sup>3</sup> Disruption and disinformation are increasingly being deployed as part of tactical pursuits of power, with negative impacts on public, political and social media discourse, on societal values, and on public policy issues such as migration, displacement and migrants (including refugees).<sup>4</sup>

In the face of often negatively skewed discussions on migration and migrants, one can lose sight of the fact that human endeavours to improve peace and prosperity in modern times that are underpinned by migration have been on the whole successful, and in specific key areas very successful (such as the eradication or control of specific, deadly diseases and the dramatic decline in infant mortality following the efforts of Nations under the 2000–2015 Millennium Development Goals).<sup>5</sup> Migrants provide a source of dynamism globally, and are overrepresented in innovation and patents, arts and sciences awards, start-ups and successful companies. Such historical and contemporary contributions have become increasingly overlooked or ignored in recent discussions on international migration, with many contributions being “normalized” over time but nevertheless evident (at times conspicuously so).

It is also easy to lose sight of the fact that international migration remains a relatively uncommon phenomenon, with a mere 3.5 per cent of the world's population being international migrants (see Chapter 2 of this report for details). Notwithstanding this small proportion, the total number of international migrants has increased in recent decades to reach as high as 272 million, or close to the national population of Indonesia (269 million).<sup>6</sup> What we currently know is that mobility, as opposed to migration, is becoming much more prevalent, making some argue that now is the time to rethink how we conceptualize and discuss these issues.<sup>7</sup>

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1 Marie McAuliffe, Head, Migration Policy Research Division, IOM; Adrian Kitimbo, Research Officer, Migration Policy Research Division, IOM and Binod Khadria, Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University.

2 GCIM, 2005; Martin, Larkin and Nathanson, 2000; McAuliffe and Ruhs, 2017.

3 Fisher, 2017; Kaufmann, 2017; Zappettini and Krzyzanowski, 2019.

4 Morgan, 2018.

5 Mathers et al., 2018.

6 UN DESA, 2019.

7 Deutschmann and Recchi, 2019; Skeldon, 2018. See also the discussion on mobility in Chapter 1.

In this context, revisiting the many ways in which migrants have contributed – at the transnational, national and local levels – is important in presenting a balanced discussion on migration. This is not to suggest that international migration and displacement do not pose challenges for communities in origin, transit and destination countries (as well as migrants) – many other chapters in this report are focused on such challenges. However, in writing this chapter, we acknowledge that the many ways in which migrants contribute to societies are currently being overlooked, downplayed or taken for granted, and it is the purpose of this chapter to bring these contributions of migrants to the forefront.

The next section describes key concepts related to contributions, providing an analytical framework for this chapter in the context of a rich body of academic and policy work on the topic. We then go on to describe and analyse migrants' contributions globally, with reference to sociocultural, civic–political and economic aspects. The chapter then discusses emerging impediments to the recognition of migrants' contributions globally, before outlining the implications for policy deliberations and for further research.

## What are “contributions”?

To contribute means to give something – money, time, ideas, labour, material goods – in order to achieve something with other people.<sup>8</sup> Outside of personal relationships, such as those with family and friends, and in the context of sociology and social change theory, “contributions” are part of broader interactions and engagement with individuals, groups and institutions in society. In other words, contributions occur as part of broader structural settings and social processes that support and shape societies. They can be broadly categorized as being in sociocultural, civic–political or economic domains (see text box for definitions).

*Sociocultural* relates to different groups of people in society and their habits, traditions and beliefs.

*Civic–political* relates to participation in civic duties in the context of accepted authority of the State.

*Economic* relates to aspects concerned with trade, industry or money.

Sources: Cambridge Dictionary, 2019; Almond and Verba, 1963.

As the salience of migration has risen in public policy and research spheres, there has been a new and greater focus on migrants per se – as distinct subpopulations within larger national populations, with reference to the structural settings they encounter, especially in the destination countries.<sup>9</sup> The way in which people enter, stay and settle in a new country occupies the time of an increasing number of researchers, policymakers and those in the media:<sup>10</sup> the first focusing on understanding the demographic, geographic, economic, legal/policy and other factors;<sup>11</sup> the

8 Cambridge Dictionary, 2019.

9 Dennison and Drazanova, 2018.

10 Chapter 4 quantifies the increase in research output; Chapter 11 discusses global migration governance.

11 See, for example, writings on cumulative causation (Massey, 1990), neoclassical economics (Todaro, 1989), world system theory (Wallerstein, 1974; Portes and Walton, 1981), new economics of labour migration (Stark and Bloom, 1985) and social network theory (Boyd, 1989).

second on how best to meet policy objectives (however defined); and the third scrutinizing and commenting on both. Research continues to explore the dynamic relationships that exist between migrants (including potential migrants) and migration processes and related factors. We know from existing evidence and analysis, for example, that the contributions migrants are able to make in destination as well as origin settings do partly depend on legal–policy frameworks, such as those impacting the ability of both regular and irregular migrants to stay, participate in civic activities, work lawfully and send remittances, as well as to return home (see Chapter 6 of this report).<sup>12</sup> Contributions are also related to demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, with those who choose to migrate having higher skills, education and opportunity, ultimately also reflecting a greater likelihood of contributing in origin and destination countries in a variety of ways.<sup>13</sup>

Consistent with migration research more generally (see Chapter 4 of this report), there is recognition that much of the analysis on migrants has been undertaken from a destination country perspective,<sup>14</sup> with some arguing that the most significant immigration country in the world – the United States – has disproportionately influenced the study of migrants globally.<sup>15</sup> With this in mind, this chapter attempts to reflect broader experiences of international migrants' contributions by incorporating recent research and analysis focusing on destination *and* origin.<sup>16</sup> In scoping and presenting the chapter in this way, we acknowledge that we are not seeking to summarize all existing literature, nor are we suggesting that the findings highlighted in the chapter are representative. What we do recognize, however, is the importance of encapsulating a reasonable geographic and thematic *diversity* of research and analysis on the topic in what, after all, would make a migration report truly a *World Migration Report*.

Importantly, this chapter does not assess the overall impacts of migration in these settings. Studies on the impacts of migration are numerous and well documented (see examples in the text box below);<sup>17</sup> they provide important insights and analyses. This body of work is focused mainly on economic impacts rather than sociocultural or civic–political impacts, including because economic variables are to a greater extent standardized, thereby supporting comparative analysis. Some examples of recent publications on the economic impacts of migration, including some empirical estimates, are included in the text box below.

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12 Baldwin-Edwards, 2008; Kanko and Teller, 2014; Shah, 2009.

13 Goldin, 2018; Hunt, 2010.

14 Carling, 2015; Castles, 2010; McAuliffe and Laczko, 2016; Morawska, 2008.

15 FitzGerald, 2014.

16 While this chapter focuses on *international* migration, we acknowledge that it may also be relevant to internal migration in some countries. See Weiner (1978) for examples of disruptions and disinformation leading to conflict and discrimination faced by inter-State migrants within India.

17 See also the *World Migration Report 2005* (IOM, 2005).

## Assessing the economic impacts of migration

Estimating overall economic impacts of migration is a topic of intense debate in political and policy circles. Some recent publications on the topic include:

- *Exceptional People: How Migration Shaped Our World and Will Define Our Future*, by Goldin, Cameron and Balarajan, shows that there is broad consensus among economists that, for destination countries, immigration is a catalyst for economic growth at an aggregate level and produces net economic benefits. However, the authors also acknowledge that there are ongoing debates on how to measure these effects.<sup>a</sup>
- The McKinsey Global Institute's report, *People on the Move: Global Migration's Impact and Opportunity*, echoes these findings, showing that migrants contributed over 9 per cent, or USD 6.7 trillion, to global gross domestic product (GDP) in 2015.<sup>b</sup>
- *International Migration: Recent Trends, Economic Impacts, and Policy Implications*, by the International Monetary Fund, concludes that the economic impacts of migration vary across countries, and that, while migration brings challenges, it also confers benefits to origin and destination countries.<sup>c</sup>
- *Migration and the Economy: Economic Realities, Social Impacts and Political Choices*, by Goldin et al., affirms that immigration impacts positively on economic growth, and that this happens in a number of ways: many migrants are comparatively younger than local populations and thus have a significant positive impact on both GDP per capita and overall (aggregate) GDP; migration enhances output per worker by increasing human capital; and migration bolsters total factor productivity as well as innovation. The report finds that, had immigration to the United Kingdom and Germany ceased in 1990, both countries' real GDP in 2014 would have been lower by GBP 175 billion and GBP 155 billion, respectively.<sup>d</sup>
- The impacts on labour markets, including on wages, vary widely, are often negligible and are largely driven by how complementary migrants' skills are to those of local workers;<sup>e</sup> these may be reversible in the longer run, as economies adjust to immigration, as Ruhs argues in *The Price of Rights: Regulating International Labor Migration*.<sup>f</sup>
- *The Economic and Fiscal Effects of Granting Refugees Formal Labor Market Access*, by Clemens, Huang and Graham, suggests that most evidence shows that the average effect of refugee inflows is on labour markets for both developed and developing countries is small or null.<sup>g</sup>

a Goldin, Cameron and Balarajan, 2011.

b McKinsey Global Institute, 2016.

c IMF, 2015.

d Goldin et al., 2018.

e Ibid.

f Ruhs, 2013.

g Clemens, Huang and Graham, 2018.

### WANT TO READ MORE?

Please click on this link to access the full chapter and references: <https://publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2020-chapter-5>.









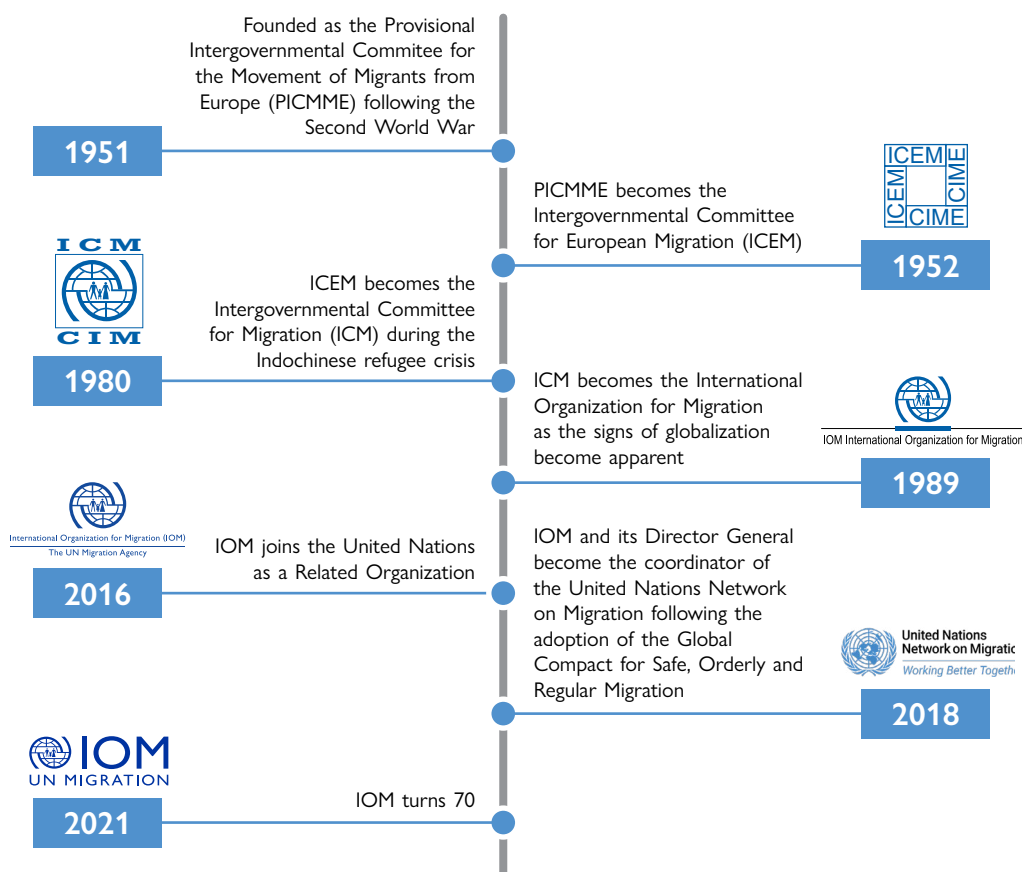
## Appendices

### Chapter 1

#### Appendix A. The International Organization for Migration: 70th anniversary

The year 2021 marks the 70th anniversary of IOM, which was established as a committee to work on resettling people displaced by the Second World War. After more than 65 years of operations, in 2016 IOM formally entered into the United Nations system as a related organization.

#### KEY DATES IN IOM'S HISTORY



Since 2016, IOM has further confirmed its status as the leading agency on migration globally, a status it has progressively earned over its 70 years of existence. The different names of the Organization since its inception are a testament to its ability to respond to major geopolitical events and disasters, and to the recognition of migration as a global issue. Upholding the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and societies, IOM's activities in supporting migrants, communities and diverse stakeholders now extend throughout the migration cycle and to central cross-cutting issues, such as sustainable development, health, and environment and climate change. As IOM's work and role has grown, so too has the number of its Member States, as shown in the figure below.

# The Organization's membership at its...

inception in 1951

16

Founding States\*

10th anniversary in 1961

29

Member States

30th anniversary in 1981

30

Member States

50th anniversary in 2001

91

Member States

70th anniversary in 2021

174

Member States

+83 admissions since 2001

Afghanistan, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil,<sup>b</sup> Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, China, Comoros, Cook Islands, Cuba, Djibouti, Dominica, Eritrea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, Holy See, Iceland, India, Ireland, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Libya, Malawi, Maldives, Malta,<sup>b</sup> Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, New Zealand,<sup>b</sup> Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Samoa, Seychelles, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Sudan, Spain,<sup>b</sup> Suriname, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe

+62 admissions since 1981

Albania, Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Australia,<sup>b</sup> Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belize, Benin, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Canada,<sup>b</sup> Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czechia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Finland, France,<sup>b</sup> Gambia, Georgia, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Hungary, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liberia, Lithuania, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Senegal, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa,<sup>b</sup> Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden,<sup>b</sup> Tajikistan, Thailand, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom,<sup>b</sup> United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen, Zambia

+10 admissions since 1961

Cyprus, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Malta,<sup>a</sup> Nicaragua, Peru, Portugal, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)<sup>b</sup>

+8 admissions since 1954

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Ecuador, New Zealand,<sup>a</sup> Panama, Rhodesia and Nyasaland,<sup>a</sup> South Africa,<sup>a</sup> Spain,<sup>a</sup> United Kingdom<sup>a</sup>

24 Member States in 1954\*\*

Argentina, Australia,<sup>a</sup> Austria, Belgium, Brazil,<sup>a</sup> Canada,<sup>a</sup> Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, France,<sup>a</sup> Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Paraguay, Sweden,<sup>a</sup> Switzerland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)<sup>a</sup>

Notes: The figure uses the official names of countries as at 16 September 2021, with the exception of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, which was ended in 1963.

\* Refers to States that signed the Resolution adopted on 5 December 1951 that created the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe (PICMME), namely: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States of America. The membership process formally started after the prolongation of PICMME's mandate as the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) in 1952.

\*\* Refers to States that initially adhered to the Organization prior to the entry into force of ICEM's Constitution on 30 April 1954. While Uruguay was initially considered as a member, it only formally became so upon ratification of the Organization's Constitution in 1965.

a States that subsequently withdrew from the Organization.

b States that were readmitted as members of the Organization.

This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

Since 2016, four major developments have consolidated IOM as the leading global organization on migration.

### *2018 – IOM and its Director General become the coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration*

After supporting States throughout the development process of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, IOM was appointed as the coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration (UNNM) established in 2018 to assist States in implementing the Global Compact for Migration.<sup>1</sup> IOM's Director General serves in this capacity, which entails the primary responsibility for fostering collaborations among UNNM members on the functioning of the network and action priorities; ensuring the smooth functioning of the network, including by maintaining an effective secretariat hosted in IOM; facilitating regular interactions between the executive committee's principals; briefing the United Nations system and other stakeholders on new developments and achievements; and fundraising for UNNM with the support of the executive committee.<sup>2</sup>

### *2019 – IOM adopts its Strategic Vision 2019–2023*

IOM Strategic Vision was adopted in recognition that IOM's status as the global leader on migration and ongoing emerging challenges in the field of migration requires a strategic approach and planning for the Organization.<sup>3</sup> The Strategic Vision represents IOM's reflection on its needs and priorities, based on landscape assessment of what the next decade will bring. It also sets the direction for the development of the Organization during a five-year period, based on three main pillars and a series of strategic priorities.

### *2020 onwards – IOM supports communities in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic*

IOM quickly demonstrated its agility in response to the spread of COVID-19. In February 2020, IOM launched its Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan COVID-19, subsequently updated to reflect the changing operational realities and needs and appealing for a total of USD 618.9 million targeting 140 countries.<sup>4</sup>

In 2021, IOM adopted a new Strategic Response and Recovery Plan COVID-19 for the year 2021, initially appealing for USD 822,868,000 targeting 141 countries.<sup>5</sup> While building on the 2020 plan, the 2021 plan focuses on recovery based on four strategic objectives:

1. Ensure continuation of services, mitigate risks and protect people;
2. Scale up public health measures and strengthen mobility-sensitive health systems;
3. Mitigate socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19, restart human mobility and empower societies; and
4. Inform response and recovery efforts and strengthen evidence-based decision-making.

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1 See [www.iom.int/gcm-development-process](http://www.iom.int/gcm-development-process) and <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/>.

2 See <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/coordinator>.

3 See [www.iom.int/strategy](http://www.iom.int/strategy).

4 IOM, 2020b.

5 IOM, 2021c.

## IOM's responses to the COVID-19 pandemic: 2020 highlights

- Over 37 million beneficiaries reached for risk communication and community engagement efforts relating to COVID-19;
- Over 107,000 individuals receiving some return-related assistance, with over 2,600 stranded migrants receiving direct support for safe and dignified return;
- Over 21.8 million non-food item supplies procured and distributed globally;
- More than 19 million people reached with critical water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) supplies globally, including +5 million in camps and/or camp-like settings;
- More than 2 million people in camps and camp-like settings benefiting from COVID-19-related site upgrades;
- Over 109,000 COVID-19 tests provided by IOM globally; and
- Around 239,000 individuals provided with livelihood support globally.

See IOM's *COVID-19 Preparedness and Response: Achievements Report 2020* (IOM, 2020c).

## 2021 – IOM appoints two new Deputy Directors General



António Vitorino  
Director General



Ugochi Florence Daniels  
Deputy Director General for Operations



Amy E. Pope  
Deputy Director General for Management  
and Reform

The appointment of two new Deputy Directors General, selected by Director General António Vitorino on 31 May 2021, constituted a major breakthrough in IOM's senior management history. Since its inception in 1951, IOM has been managed by one Director General supported by one Deputy Director General, with a total, over the years, of nine Deputy Directors General. As proposed by the IOM Director General, IOM Member States agreed it was time to strengthen IOM's senior leadership structure through the establishment of two Deputy Director General positions, one focusing on operations and the other on management and reform.<sup>6</sup>

The appointments of Ms Ugochi Florence Daniels as Deputy Director General for Operations and of Ms Amy E. Pope as Deputy Director General for Management and Reform have set a new strategic direction for the Organization, starting with IOM's Headquarters, which is currently being restructured.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See [https://governingbodies.iom.int/system/files/en/council/4h\\_Special/C-Sp-4-RES-1385%20-%20Strengthening%20the%20senior%20leadership%20structure%20of%20the%20Organization.pdf](https://governingbodies.iom.int/system/files/en/council/4h_Special/C-Sp-4-RES-1385%20-%20Strengthening%20the%20senior%20leadership%20structure%20of%20the%20Organization.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> See [www.iom.int/news/iom-announces-appointment-new-deputy-directors-general](http://www.iom.int/news/iom-announces-appointment-new-deputy-directors-general).

## Appendix B. Highlighting the work of IOM's regional offices during the Organization's 70th anniversary<sup>8</sup>

### AFRICA<sup>9</sup>

#### *Regional Office for East and Horn of Africa*

IOM has been operational in the East and Horn of Africa (EHOA) region since 1985 and its Kenya office was the first in Africa. The IOM Regional Office in Nairobi coordinates IOM activities in 10 countries in the region.<sup>10</sup> IOM's Ethiopia Office doubles as a Special Liaison Office to the African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, while IOM's African Capacity-Building Centre is located in the United Republic of Tanzania. IOM works closely with the East African Community (EAC) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). It has Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with both institutions that facilitate the Regional Office's liaison and coordination role to enhance regional cooperation and dialogue on migration. This relationship has enabled IOM to translate political decisions into practical programmatic and policy responses at the regional and national levels. The region hosts several Inter-State Consultation Mechanisms on migration (ISCMs),<sup>11</sup> to which IOM has an observer status and either provides or supports the secretariats.

Key facts and figures for EHOA Regional Office Nairobi, 2020	
<i>Number of migrants assisted</i>	1 479 370
<i>Number of IOM projects</i>	246 active IOM projects by management location and 545 projects by implementation location
<i>Number of Member States in the region</i>	10
<i>Number of offices</i>	101
<i>Number of staff</i>	5 686 <sup>12</sup>
<i>Number of nationalities represented among staff</i>	28

8 Please refer to regional office websites (as provided) for further details, including on regional projects, regional publications and regional data. Please note that data provided in this appendix were from regional offices and subject to their verification processes, not those of the report research team.

9 IOM regions do not reflect United Nations geographic regions and subregions. See Chapter 3, Appendix A for United Nations regional compositions.

10 Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea (pending opening), Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

11 Migration Dialogue for IGAD Region (MID-IGAD); African Union–Horn of Africa Initiative on Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (AU–HoAI); the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States–European Union Dialogue on Migration (ACP–EU MD); the Pan-African Forum on Migration (PAFOM); and the Regional Ministerial Forum on Migration for East and Horn of Africa (RMFM), the Migration Dialogue for COMESA (MIDCOM), the Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration, MID-IGAD, MIDCOM and PAFOM.

12 Please note that this includes staff, consultants, interns, United Nations Volunteers, etc.

Key areas of work	Emergency and humanitarian responses, refugee resettlement and health assessments; migration, environment and climate change; immigration and border management; migration and health; labour migration; migration and development; diaspora engagement; migrant protection and assistance; counter-trafficking; return and reintegration; and migration governance, policy, data and research.
Key publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A Region on the Move</i> report series illustrates the main humanitarian situations and mixed migration flows along the major migration corridors.<sup>13</sup></li> <li>• Eastern Route Research series investigates migration drivers, the decision-making process and migration experiences.<sup>14</sup></li> <li>• <i>Gendered Patterns of Women and Girls' Migration Along the Eastern Corridor</i> (December 2020).<sup>15</sup></li> <li>• <i>Impact Study: Methodological Report. The Methodological Report to Evaluate the Impact of the EU–IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Horn of Africa Region</i>.<sup>16</sup></li> <li>• <i>Life Amidst a Pandemic: Hunger, Migration and Displacement in the East and Horn of Africa</i> (June 2021) is a joint IOM and World Food Programme publication analysing how COVID-19 has affected food security, displacement, migration and protection outcomes in the region.<sup>17</sup></li> </ul>
Regional webpage	<a href="https://ronairobi.iom.int/">https://ronairobi.iom.int/</a>
Regional Strategy	<i>East and Horn of Africa Regional Strategy 2020–2024</i> . <sup>18</sup>

### Key developments in EHoA region since IOM joined the United Nations system

Regional integration: IOM is working with Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to facilitate mobility and support regional integration, including through programmatic technical guidance.

- (a) **Crises increasingly protracted, creating fragility and potential ruptures:** In the past 12 months the progress towards peace has been challenged. Most countries in the region continue to be affected by disasters induced by natural hazards, climate change and environmental degradation, as well as desert locust invasion that has affected food security. Accordingly, the East and Horn of Africa region hosted an estimated 6.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 3.6 million refugees and asylum seekers at the end of 2020.
- (b) **Transnational organized crime increasingly entrenched:** The greater Horn of Africa is an easy target for organized transnational criminal networks involved in human smuggling, trafficking, illicit money transfers and violent extremism, among other activities. In response to this, IOM is actively supporting Member States in the coordination of real-time information exchanges and intelligence sharing through the promotion and support of the Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS), an entry and exit system that captures, cross-checks, verifies and stores traveller data, and which contributes to addressing both human trafficking and migrant smuggling in the East and Horn of Africa.

<sup>13</sup> IOM, 2021d.

<sup>14</sup> IOM, 2020d.

<sup>15</sup> IOM, 2020e.

<sup>16</sup> IOM, 2020f.

<sup>17</sup> IOM, 2021e.

<sup>18</sup> IOM, 2020g.

(c) **Persistent vulnerability of migrants in irregular situations:**

Cross-regional socioeconomic inequalities motivate people to migrate irregularly out of the region, mainly looking for better economic opportunities. In response to this, IOM provides vital assistance to vulnerable and stranded migrants through protection services and lifesaving assistance along the migration routes in the Horn of Africa, with particular attention to victims of trafficking, minors and other migrants in vulnerable situations. In its programming, IOM uses a route-based approach, involving relevant governments and partner organizations in the design and implementation of activities.

(d) **The continuous re-emergence of outbreaks, epidemics, pandemics, zoonotic diseases and other public health threats:**

The region is characterized by countries with fragile and inadequate health systems, including the human mobility aspects of the public health agenda. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed these challenges, leading to the exclusion of migrants from national response plans, leaving them stranded and unable to access testing and essential medical care, or being forcibly returned. In response to this, IOM provides direct assistance to migrants and other vulnerable groups on the move and works closely with other United Nations agencies to strengthen Member States' capacities to address human mobility during outbreaks.

**Highlights: IOM's response to COVID-19 in EHoA Regional Office Nairobi, 2020**

**9** countries where IOM implemented COVID-19-related operations.

**USD 21.2 million** spent on COVID-19 activities.

**7,023,392** beneficiaries reached for risk communication and community engagement efforts related to COVID-19.

**6,917** individuals received some return-related assistance.

**472,367** people reached with critical water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) supplies.

**53,067** COVID-19 tests supported.

**8,189** provided with livelihood support.

**Over 1.1 million** individuals in camps or camp-like settings benefited from COVID-19-related site upgrades.

**3** countries, Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti, were assisted with quarantine management.

In December 2020, IOM EHoA together with ministers of all Member States of the region and the heads of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the East African Community (EAC) launched its regional strategy 2020–2024.

In April 2020, IOM EHoA launched its 2020 COVID-19 regional strategic response appeal with a funding need of USD 73.9 million, of which it managed to secure nearly 70 per cent.

**Labor migration:** The Regional Ministerial Forum on Migration for East and Horn of Africa (RMFM) on “Harmonizing Labour Migration Policies in East and Horn of Africa – A United Approach on Safe, Regular and Humane Labour Migration” was launched during a high-level ministerial conference in Nairobi in January 2021. The RMFM brought together 11 EHoA countries.<sup>19</sup>

- **Migration, Environment and Climate Change (MECC):** The creation and growth of the Regional MECC Division was achieved through the appointment of a regional thematic specialist in 2018. The MECC portfolio has since grown significantly, with expanded regional and national networks (governments, United Nations and

<sup>19</sup> Kenya, Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.



others), State-level projects and a regional, multi-agency joint Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) Migration funded programme.

- Regional Data Hub (RDH) for East and Horn of Africa: Established in early 2018, the RDH supports evidence-based, strategic and policy-level discussion on migration through a combination of initiatives. RDH's published papers have contributed significantly to IOM's capacity to produce knowledge drawn from its rich operational experience.
- Implementation of the EU–IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in the Khartoum Process Countries in the Horn of Africa: This flagship Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) and capacity-building programme is funded by the European Union Trust Fund. Under the programme, IOM's Integrated Approach to Reintegration was rolled out in the Horn of Africa, providing not only economic, but also social and psychosocial reintegration assistance to over 8,500 returnees,<sup>20</sup> as well as host community members, in close coordination with government counterparts and 67 local State and non-State reintegration partners.
- Border management: IOM has undertaken various interventions focused on supporting the East and Horn of Africa region's integration within the domain of digitized border management information systems. This specifically refers to the Migration Information Data Analysis System (MIDAS) for border and data management and through partnership with Interpol with the I-24/7 alert system, which addresses the reduction of the mobility of known and suspected terrorists.
- Health programming has been primarily geared towards responding to emergencies and protracted crises, thus positioning IOM among the front-line health agencies running primary health-care facilities in different settings with outreach interventions, risk communication and community engagement, as well as assisting Member States in enhancing their International Health Regulations capacity at points of entry. The Migration Health Division (MHD) is currently working to move from emergency services to health system development, with a vision to include migrants within national health plans, including preparedness, response and universal health coverage.

### *Regional Office for West and Central Africa*

The IOM Regional Office for West and Central Africa (WCA) was established in 1998 in Dakar, Senegal, and covers 23 countries.<sup>21</sup> Since its establishment, the Regional Office for WCA has been working with governments and other stakeholders in the West and Central Africa region in the field of migration to address the challenges and opportunities presented by dynamic migratory patterns and trends. IOM's activities have been focused on building links between migration and development; counter-trafficking activities; assisted voluntary return and reintegration support for migrants returning to the region; pursuing robust collective outcomes across the humanitarian–development–peace nexus; building community resilience; improving access to critical health services; supporting the management of communicable diseases; and strengthening capacities in labour migration management and migration policy development.

20 The total as of 31 December 2020.

21 Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

Key facts and figures for the Regional Office for West and Central Africa, 2020	
Number of migrants assisted	Reintegration cases in 2020: 22 210
Number of IOM projects	139
Number of Member States in the region	22 (from 23 countries covered)
Number of offices	19 country offices and 44 sub-offices
Number of staff	2 004
Number of nationalities represented among staff	74 (among a total of 2 018 staff)
Key areas of work	Migrant assistance and protection; policy support; border management; emergencies; labour migration and human development; migration and health; and migration, environment and climate change.
Key publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>West And Central Africa – A Region on the Move: Mobility Trends in West and Central Africa (January – December 2020)</i>.<sup>22</sup></li> <li>• <i>An Exploratory Study on Labour Recruitment and Migrant Worker Protection Mechanisms in West Africa: The Case of Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal</i>.<sup>23</sup></li> <li>• <i>Promoting Safe Migration in 2020 West and Central Africa</i>.<sup>24</sup></li> <li>• <i>Smuggling of Migrants on the Central Mediterranean Route: Issues, challenges and perspectives</i>.<sup>25</sup></li> <li>• <i>Intégration du Lien entre Migration, Environnement et Changement Climatique dans la Planification Locale: Cas des communes de Mané et de Bokin dans les régions du Centre-Nord et du Nord du Burkina Faso</i>.<sup>26</sup></li> </ul>
Regional webpage	<a href="https://rodakar.iom.int">https://rodakar.iom.int</a>
Regional Strategy	<i>West and Central Africa Regional Strategy 2020–2024</i> . <sup>27</sup>

22 IOM, 2021f.

23 IOM, 2020h.

24 IOM, n.d.b.

25 IOM, 2021g.

26 IOM, 2020i.

27 IOM, 2020j.

### Key developments in the IOM West and Central Africa region since IOM joined the United Nations system

The West and Central Africa region exhibits varied migration patterns and flows driven by a multitude of interconnected drivers. Intraregional migration is a predominant characteristic across the region, while irregular migration remains prevalent, and instability and conflict continue to precipitate mass displacements within countries and across borders. At the same time, rapid population growth, environmental change, natural resource depletion and an increase in the frequency and intensity of disasters, aggravated by climate change, are accelerating urbanization and spurring migration. The COVID-19 pandemic has provided further evidence of the urgency to enhance cross-border cooperation. Considering this, IOM Regional Office for WCA and the 19 country offices in the region have supported migrants, governments and other stakeholders to work through several programmes towards a migration framework that benefits all.

Knowing that migration and mobility are an important factor in the spread or control of diseases and pandemics, IOM has been actively engaged in preparedness and response to epidemic-prone diseases, including COVID-19, by using its expertise from the strong response to the 2014–2016 Ebola virus disease outbreak in West Africa. During crises, IOM has the lead in the WHO epidemic response pillar that focuses on points of entry. Further, the Regional Office raised awareness on COVID-19. From March 2020 to March 2021, IOM helped with COVID-19 prevention efforts in the region by conducting 5,133 on-the-ground activities and engaging 862,460 people in more than 1,728 communities. In addition, through 751 television airings and 7,452 radio broadcasts, IOM reached a potential audience of more than 19 million people with information on COVID-19.

COVID-19 preventive measures have also highlighted the importance of border management. Porous borders, insecurity and governance deficits within several countries continue to present challenges in ensuring safe and orderly migration. IOM has been engaging strongly in single- and multi-country responses to strengthen the presence and capacities of States in border management, especially through the integrated border management approach, to ensure cohesive and rights-based migration governance and management. The Immigration and Border Management portfolio has expanded during the last five years to an overall budget of USD 70 million covering 18 countries in West and Central Africa.

As the protracted crises in the Lake Chad Basin and in the Central African Republic persist and new crises emerge in the Sahel, impacting regional stability in West and Central Africa, IOM has amplified its capacity to respond to the humanitarian needs of the increasing numbers of internally displaced persons, while augmenting its work on prevention, recovery and peacebuilding to support Member States as they cope with the impact of conflict on their communities. In line with its commitment during the World Humanitarian Forum in 2016, IOM's Emergencies and Operations portfolio in West and Central Africa spans the humanitarian–development–peace nexus to include over 135 projects totalling over USD 325.5 million ongoing simultaneously (as of mid-July 2021) to address root causes and effects of conflict throughout the region. IOM's emergency and post-crisis efforts in WCA include sectoral

#### Highlights: IOM's response to COVID-19 in West and Central Africa, 2020

**12 countries** where IOM implemented COVID-19-related operations.

**USD 14.27 million** spent on COVID-19 activities.

**862,460** beneficiaries reached for risk communication and community engagement efforts relating to COVID-19.

**3,364** individuals receiving some return-related assistance.

**23,535** people reached with critical WASH supplies, including masks.

interventions, such as shelter and non-food Items (NFI); camp management and camp coordination (CCCM); water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) provision; mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS); data collection through its well-established Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), which includes tools contributing to the creation of an evidence base on displacement figures; IDP needs; sudden emergency event tracking; early warning systems for conflict prevention, including issues related to transhumance mobility and stability in contexts poised for recovery; and prevention, community stabilization, peacebuilding and post-crisis recovery for durable solutions.

An important achievement for the governance and management of migration was the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, urging for comprehensive legislative and administrative frameworks covering migration. IOM has been supporting Member States in West and Central Africa in adopting comprehensive migration policies, such as Guinea, Senegal, Sierra Leone, the Gambia and Côte d'Ivoire, and in mainstreaming migration in other relevant policy sectors (development, environment, urban policies, etc.) to reduce adverse effects and maximize positive impacts. This is also visible with regard to international environmental migration. While the predominance of internal environmental human mobility should not be overlooked, the major step of having agreed to a set of principles and objectives in the Global Compact for Migration stimulated knowledge production and policy dialogue initiatives on human mobility in the context of climate change and environmental degradation, especially in West Africa. The activation of the thematic working group of the Migration Dialogue for West Africa (MIDWA) on the effects of climate change, land degradation, desertification and environment on migration represents one such promising initiative.

The need to promote safe and informed migration and to protect and assist migrants en route or stranded is more important than ever, as the rates of deaths, exploitation and abuse recorded on the Central Mediterranean migration route are at an all-time high. To improve migrant protection and voluntary return and reintegration along the Central Mediterranean route in Africa, the European Union – through the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) and with contributions from Germany (EUR 48 million) and Italy (EUR 22 million) – in 2016 launched with IOM the Joint Initiative (JI) for Migrant Protection and Reintegration in Africa to strengthen migration governance and respond to the urgent need to protect and save the lives of migrants along the Central Mediterranean migration route. In Central and West Africa, the JI is implemented in 13 countries (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Nigeria and Senegal) through 14 specific actions. It aims to ensure that the migration process is safer, more informed and better governed for both migrants and their home communities and is mobilizing media, public and political support for migrants in the region to promote their protection and assistance.

Last but not least, the Regional Office has contributed to rewrite the narrative on migration in the region through its communications and visibility activities, enhancing public understanding and knowledge of the current migration situation. Highlights include the Migrants as Messengers campaign, working with returnee migrants on peer-to-peer communication;<sup>28</sup> WAKA Well (IOM X West Africa), which applies a communication for development (C4D) approach to empower young people in making informed migration-related decisions;<sup>29</sup> and CinemArena's mobile cinema touring across the region.

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28 IOM, n.d.c.

29 WAKA Well, n.d.

### *Regional Office for Southern Africa*

The IOM Regional Office for Southern Africa, based in Pretoria, covers 15 countries in the Southern African region. IOM operates through 5,865 staff members located in 24 offices across the region. The Regional Office provides technical backstopping and programme support to IOM country offices in the Southern African region. The strategic location of the Regional Office in one of the largest diplomatic capitals in the world gives it access to a wide number of partners. All countries in the Southern African region are also IOM Member States. This provides a unique opportunity in terms of applying a comprehensive and systematic approach based on a holistic and timely engagement with national governments that feeds into a solid regional partnership on migration. As the preferred partner of States on migration-related issues, IOM has played an important role over the years by contributing to migration governance and management efforts in the region. Key areas of focus include: (a) advancing migrants' rights; (b) establishment of a regional policy dialogue on migration; (c) development of migrant-friendly policies; (d) facilitation of South–South labour mobility; (e) trade facilitation, human mobility and border management; (f) capacity-building of government and non-governmental actors on migration management; (g) prevention, preparedness response and recovery in migration crises, as well as cross-border and internal humanitarian emergencies; and (h) reduction of HIV, tuberculosis and other communicable diseases in migration-affected communities.

IOM has provided leadership on migration issues by coordinating efforts of various partners at the national and regional levels. As recognized in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and promoted in the IOM Institutional Strategy on Migration and Sustainable Development, human mobility is inextricably linked with sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – and their commitment to “leave no one behind” and to “reach the furthest behind” – will not be achieved without due consideration of migration. This includes considering the impacts of income inequalities on human mobility dynamics and the ways in which migration and migrants themselves can contribute to reducing inequalities.

Southern Africa is a region historically characterized by dynamic human mobility that contributes to the economies of countries and the livelihoods of communities. Even today, the interwoven solidarity and common vision among Southern African States continues to be the driving force towards regional integration and overall socioeconomic development. In the coming four years, IOM will invest more strategically in the design and implementation of new, innovative and responsive policies and programmes to support Southern African governments in building capacities for effective and rights-based management of migration that contributes to sustainable development outcomes and protects the fundamental rights of migrants.

In addition to the well-established labour migration patterns within the region, major migration routes come into Southern Africa, predominantly constituted by mixed migration flows originating from the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region. Addressing these complex movements, which cut across several countries and multiple subregions, requires strong cross-regional partnerships, which IOM will strive to support through existing frameworks for cooperation, including the various State-led consultative processes convened within the region and with neighbouring regions. Some of the world's most hazard-prone countries are situated in the region, with vulnerabilities to a range of hazards, such as droughts, floods, storms, epidemics, landslides, volcanic activity and wildfires, as well as conflict.

Key facts and figures for the Regional Office for Southern Africa, 2020	
<i>Number of migrants assisted</i>	1 899 (1 469 under the AVRRE project)
<i>Number of IOM projects</i>	1. Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and HIV Knows No Borders <sup>30</sup> 2. Africa Regional Migration Programme (ARMP) <sup>31</sup> 3. Southern Africa Migration Management (SAMB) project
<i>Number of Member States in the region</i>	15
<i>Number of offices</i>	24
<i>Number of staff</i>	969
<i>Number of nationalities represented among staff</i>	61
<i>Regional webpage</i>	<a href="https://ropretoria.iom.int/">https://ropretoria.iom.int/</a>
<i>Regional Strategy</i>	<i>Southern Africa Regional Strategy 2020–2024.</i> <sup>32</sup>

### Key developments in Regional Office Pretoria since IOM joined the United Nations system

Since the establishment of the United Nations Network on Migration (UNNM), regional and national structures have been rolled out under the leadership of IOM. As a member of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG), IOM has a clear responsibility to articulate its activities and mandate in relation to the 2030 Agenda, to report on its activities to support Member States in achieving the commitments therein and to contribute to regional discussions on migration and sustainable development. The Regional Office in Pretoria therefore recognizes the need to leverage existing structures of the Regional United Nations Sustainable Development Group (R-UNSDG) to strengthen interagency cooperation on migration for more consolidated support to Member States in the subregion to ensure implementation of the Global Compact for Migration. The cross-regional dimension of migration trends and patterns in Eastern and Southern Africa requires a holistic approach that looks at the most adequate support that the United Nations could provide to countries of origin, transit and destination in the subregion within the framework of the 2030 Agenda and the Global Compact for Migration. It is with this understanding that the Regional Network for Eastern and Southern Africa has been established as a common platform, bringing together the IOM Regional Office for Southern Africa (Pretoria), the IOM Regional Office for Eastern and Horn of Africa (Nairobi) and other United Nations agencies to support the implementation, follow-up and review of the Global Compact for Migration in a holistic manner. As part of the United Nations system-wide reprofiling exercise towards enhanced inter-agency collaboration, the Regional Network will serve as a forum to champion migration as a key transboundary issue under the framework of the Regional Collaborative Platform led by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). IOM will support the Member States in the region in line with national and regional priorities, leveraging the potential of migration through a whole-of-government approach to achieve sustainable development outcomes for all. It is a direct contribution to the Decade of Action to fast-track progress towards the SDGs, bringing greater coherence and developmental impact to the Organization's activities and allowing for a connected approach in the way it designs and delivers its operations.

30 IOM, 2021h.

31 IOM, 2021i.

32 IOM, 2020k.

Insecurity, lack of economic livelihood, drought and crop failure are some of the push factors that motivate migrants to choose risky migratory routes in search of better opportunities in Southern Africa. Labour mobility remains one of the dominant forms of migration in this region, despite sporadic incidents of xenophobia, discrimination and violence against migrants. As is the case in other parts of the world, the profound impact of migration on the societies and institutions of receiving countries in Southern Africa cannot be overstated. The nexus between population mobility and health remains a challenge for migrants, as well as for the communities in which they live. The negative narrative about migration and migrants fuels adverse public perceptions of foreigners and, in turn, affects social cohesion. It is therefore important that migration governance policies and programmes consider the sensitivities around the issue to address them effectively. Additionally, the Southern African and Western Indian Ocean regions are vulnerable to a range of hazards, as they are increasingly affected by climate change that causes more extreme weather events and increased frequency and intensity of disasters, leading to both chronic and sudden displacements of populations (including floods, disease outbreaks, storms and droughts, as well as earthquakes, wildfires, landslides, extreme weather, volcanic activity and insect infestations), making the region a host to over 6 million internally displaced persons.

**IOM's objectives in Southern Africa are to:**

- Promote tapping into the mutually reinforcing links between migration and development for the benefit of countries of origin and destination, as well as migrants themselves (in line with SDGs 1, 10, 11 and 16).
- Ensure that vulnerable migrants benefit from increased protection provided by State and non-State actors, while supporting governments in addressing irregular migration (in line with SDGs 5, 8, 16 and 17).
- Provide assisted voluntary return and reintegration services to migrants returning from various countries of destination, including those in Southern Africa (in line with SDGs 10 and 17).
- Work towards well-managed labour migration that benefits migrant workers and employers, as well as the sustainable development of countries of origin and destination (in line with SDGs 1, 4, 5, 8 and 10).
- Protect vulnerable migrants and communities at risk and ensure they are more resilient throughout all phases of human-induced and natural crises (in line with SDGs 1, 2, 6, 9, 11, 13, 15, 16 and 17).
- Build the capacity of vulnerable communities to demonstrate enhanced coping mechanisms and resilience to environment-related and climate-induced change (in line with SDGs 10, 11, 13 and 17).
- Improve standards of physical, mental and social health and well-being of migrants and migration-affected populations (in line with SDGs 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 11, 16 and 17).
- Strengthen migration management at borders across the region to facilitate safe, orderly and regular cross-border mobility (in line with SDGs 8, 9, 10 and 16).
- Facilitate intraregional and interregional cooperation and coordination in migration governance among Member States and RECs (in line with SDGs 10, 16 and 17).
- Continue working on resettlement assistance to refugees as a positive element of the migration continuum made possible through international solidarity and burden-sharing (in line with SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4 and 8).

**The strategic priorities are:**

- Resilience;
- Strengthening of early-warning systems;
- Supporting durable and safe solutions for return and/or resettlement; and
- Understanding the drivers of migration.



### *Regional Office for Middle East and North Africa*

IOM started its operations in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region in 1991 in the aftermath of the first Gulf War. The first Mission with Regional Functions was established in Cairo in 1998 and since then it has greatly evolved.

The Regional Office in Cairo provides support to IOM offices in the Middle East and North Africa through technical advice, training and the formulation of strategies, processes, projects and programmes; it also promotes and facilitates international dialogue, partnerships and coordinated migration policy development and programming between States, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society.

Migration has long shaped the Middle East and North Africa, with many countries in the region simultaneously representing points of origin, transit and destination. The number of international migrants (including registered refugees) residing in the MENA region reached 40.8 million in 2020. The region hosts over a quarter of all people internally displaced by conflict and violence in the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and Iraq. In 2020, there were more than 22.2 million new internal displacements. The MENA region is the world's largest source region of refugees. The region has been further impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic since early 2020. While the short-term impacts are already being felt most acutely by vulnerable groups, the longer-term and socioeconomic, development-related and humanitarian consequences are yet to be fully determined.

The region is host to several inter-State consultation mechanisms on migration (ISCMs), to which IOM is an observer and either supports or provides the secretariats. These include the Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration and Refugees Affairs (ARCP); the Horn of Africa Initiative on Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (Khartoum Process); the Euro–African Dialogue on Migration and Development (Rabat Process); and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, a Ministerial Consultation on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin and Destination in Asia.

The region features five Migration Resource and Response Mechanisms (MRRMs) in Libya, specifically in Bani Walid, Qatroun, Sebha, Tripoli and Zwara. The main functions of the MRRMs are to offer a wide range of IOM services and needs-based assistance to vulnerable migrants, including health and psychosocial support and needed humanitarian items. In the Sudan, a Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) in Gedaref addresses migrants' immediate protection and assistance needs, as well as assisting them with access to information, while a Migration Resource and Response Centre (MRRC) in Khartoum provides migrants with medical assistance, counselling and information on the risks of irregular migration, and has established a programme for assisted voluntary return and reintegration to countries of origin.

In addition, IOM operates seven Migration Health Assessment Centres (MHACs) in six countries, namely Egypt (Cairo), Iraq (Baghdad, Erbil), Jordan (Amman), Lebanon (Beirut), Libya (Tripoli) and Yemen (Sana'a). Their main functions are to offer full health assessments to all applicants, including immunization and pre-departure medical screening with presumptive treatment, based on the respective receiving countries' relevant guidelines. MHACs are a one-stop-shop for all activities related to health screening, including registration, counselling, nursing operations, physical examinations, phlebotomy and laboratory services, radiology and vaccination.

Key facts and figures for Regional Office Cairo, 2020	
<i>Number of migrants assisted</i>	813 837
<i>Number of IOM projects</i>	436
<i>Number of Member States in the region</i>	8 Member States: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, the Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen 4 Observer States: Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar
<i>Number of offices</i>	There are offices in 13 countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Qatar, the Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen, in addition to the Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa based in Cairo and an operational presence in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.
<i>Number of staff</i>	1 850 (excluding consultants, subcontractors and hourly staff)
<i>Number of nationalities represented among staff</i>	95
<i>Key areas of work</i>	The Regional Office and country offices are working hand-in-hand to implement the Organization's full programmatic spectrum, including movement and resettlement; emergency preparedness and response; post-crisis transition and recovery; migration health; labour migration and migration and development; counter-trafficking; migrant return and reintegration assistance; immigration and border management; and migration policy and research.
<i>Key publications</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Situation Report on International Migration in the Arab Region.</i></li> <li>• <i>Women Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon: A Gender Perspective.</i><sup>33</sup></li> <li>• <i>Promoting Fair and Ethical Recruitment in a Digital World: Lessons and policy options.</i><sup>34</sup></li> <li>• <i>Assessing the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Migrants and Displaced Populations in the MENA Region.</i><sup>35</sup></li> <li>• <i>IOM Regional COVID-19 Situational Report: Stories from the Field Compilation.</i><sup>36</sup></li> <li>• <i>Diaspora Engagement in Health in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: A desk review of experiences.</i><sup>37</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Regional webpage</i>	<a href="https://rocairo.iom.int/">https://rocairo.iom.int/</a>
<i>Regional Strategy</i>	<i>Middle East and North Africa Regional Strategy 2020–2024.</i> <sup>38</sup>

33 IOM, 2021l.

34 IOM, 2020l.

35 IOM, 2021m.

36 IOM, n.d.e.

37 IOM, 2021n.

38 IOM, 2020m.

### Key developments in Regional Office Cairo since IOM joined the United Nations system

Regional Office Cairo is a member of the Regional Collaborative Platform under the United Nations Reform at regional level. It provides specific technical support and coordination to country missions and (co)leads national United Nations Networks on Migration in respective countries in the region. This furthermore entails dedicated training to support the coordination of the local/national Network and positioning IOM in the United Nations Reform roll-out towards mainstreaming migration in key United Nations Country Team documents, such as the Common Country Assessment (CCA), the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and the Annual Joint Workplan.

The Regional Office supports regional dialogue processes, such as the Abu Dhabi Dialogue and the Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration and Refugee Affairs; maintains liaison and partnerships with regional organizations, in particular the League of Arab States and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia – with which IOM co-convenes the Issue-Based Coalition on Migration in the Arab Region under the Regional Collaborative Platform – and regional networks, such as the Regional UNNM, for the implementation and review of the Global Compact for Migration. It contributes also to the work of the Regional UNNM for Africa and the Opportunity/ Issue-Based Coalitions (O/IBCs) on Migration under the Africa Continental Regional Collaborative Platform.

Some of the most important developments in the MENA region since IOM joined the United Nations system in 2016 are reflected in the major steps taken to enhance the protection of migrant workers; develop strategies addressing irregular migration and trafficking in persons; open pathways for regular migration for the purpose of labour; and offer education and protection for refugees, among many other new developments in migration governance.

The adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration in 2018 in Marrakech, Morocco, embodies a resolutely people-centred approach for migration to benefit all – migrants, as well as host communities in origin and destination countries. The overwhelming adoption of the Global Compact for Migration in the region marked a historic turning point in migration governance showcasing the pressing need for well-managed and evidence-based policies on migration. Anchored in human rights, the Global Compact for Migration presents an international framework for enhancing cooperation between relevant actors to improve the protection of migrants and maximize their contributions to sustainable development. At the same time, the “no one size fits all” nature of the Global Compact enshrines countries’ national sovereignty and their rights to determine their migration policies in accordance with their national priorities, needs and capacities.

#### Highlights: IOM's response to COVID-19 in Regional Office Cairo, 2020

**16** countries where IOM implemented COVID-19-related operations.

**USD 70.75 million** spent on COVID-19 activities.

**USD 7.8 million** to beneficiaries tasked with risk communication and community engagement efforts related to COVID-19.

**7,160** individuals received some return-related assistance.

**878,000** people reached with critical WASH supplies.

**109,191** COVID-19 tests provided.

The combination of precarious situations in countries of origin and reduced access to regular migration pathways often leads to migrants being in an irregular situation when they enter, stay or work in a country without required documents or authorization. Countries in the region have taken significant steps to tackle irregular migration through regularization campaigns, granting migrants in irregular situations the possibility of regulating their status or leaving the country. In addition, countries have deployed efforts to ensure that migrants in irregular situations are not returned to conflict countries, nor are forcibly or collectively returned without due process and consideration of their individual circumstances.

To encourage the engagement of the countries of the region in the Global Compact for Migration implementation, review and follow-up, Regional Office Cairo, in partnership with the League of Arab States (LAS), the United Nations Economic Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in collaboration with the then Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region, later the Regional Network on Migration for the Arab States, provided a platform for Member States in the region to discuss progress and challenges in implementing the Global Compact for Migration. This series of open and inclusive events represented the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach promoted by the Global Compact. It entailed various dialogues and consultations in preparation for the first Global Compact for Migration Regional Review Conference for the Arab States, which took place on 24 and 25 February 2021, and the Multi-stakeholder Consultations on 23 February 2021. Two capacity-building workshops were held in June and August 2020 to introduce guiding templates for countries' Global Compact for Migration voluntary national reports and to consult representatives of Member States on the modalities and format of the Global Compact Regional Review process. In the build-up of the Global Compact review conference, additional stakeholders' dialogues took place in the region, notably with inter-State consultation mechanisms, parliamentarians, civil society, the private sector and academia, among others. All meetings were held online due to COVID-19 restrictions, with simultaneous interpretation in English, French and Arabic.

Economic and political instabilities shape mobility (including displacement) and demographic changes in countries in the MENA region. As a consequence, countries of the North African and the Mashreq subregion are confronted with protection challenges associated with irregular movements, as well as job nationalization policies in Gulf Cooperation Council countries that may impact access to their labour markets. As countries are experiencing economic challenges and mitigating or recovering from prolonged conflicts, IOM seeks to enhance its response in coordination with countries of origin and receiving countries alike. In the same light, Regional Office MENA has sought to support missions to capture the impacts of COVID-19 through tools established from socioeconomic impact assessments.

The 2020–2024 IOM MENA Regional Strategy foresees engagement in evidence-based policy and programming with a focus on three main pillars of resilience, mobility and governance, with specific regional priorities under each. In addition to building on the outlined policy engagement and knowledge management of migration in the region, IOM MENA aims to create closer interlinkages between data collection and migration policy design through utilizing the Global Compact for Migration knowledge platform and the United Nations Network on Migration's Knowledge Platform and Connection Hub. For example, the IOM Sudan Data Unit has established, and co-leads with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Data and Evidence Working Group under the Durable Solutions Working Group.

Regional Office Cairo has enhanced partnerships with governments, other United Nations agencies, media, NGOs and local communities and leads conversations on migration (including displacement), building on its credibility and positioning. By expanding partnerships with national, regional and international stakeholders, it continues to support the region in achieving adequate policy reforms that consider migration as a positive engine for achieving sustainable development.

## ASIA and OCEANIA

### *Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific*

IOM in Asia and the Pacific has ongoing activities in 40 countries, including 34 Member States and two Observer States. The Asia and Pacific Region is divided into five subregions: the Pacific, South-East Asia, East Asia, South Asia and South-West Asia.

A wide range of migration issues and priorities is present across the region. Some of the destination countries remain focused on policies restricting migration. There is also limited investment in integration, and returns are seen as a positive policy option in a limited number of countries (e.g. Australia). Notably, several countries in the region are not signatories to the Refugee Conventions, which creates a challenge in addressing complex mixed migration flows. Internal migration is very significant, but has only slowly emerged in the last few years as an interest linked to urbanization.

Regional cooperation and migration dialogue has been increasing in recent years at both bilateral and regional levels. This has resulted in arrangements to facilitate mobility and combat trafficking, notably in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Most positively, migration is now integrated in national development plans in some countries such as the Philippines and Bangladesh, but needs wider acceptance. However, there is support by several countries through the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration for a “whole-of-society/government approach”. Several countries also recognize that insufficient attention is paid to migration statistics and evidence-based policy formulation.

Key facts and figures for Regional Office Asia and the Pacific, 2020	
<i>Number of migrants assisted</i>	7 036 (AVRR); 793 (counter-trafficking), plus COVID-related figures below
<i>Number of IOM projects</i>	365
<i>Number of Member States in the region</i>	34 (2 Observer States)
<i>Number of offices</i>	Present in 30 countries and ongoing activities in 40 countries
<i>Number of staff</i>	Total in region: 4 275 (total in the Regional Office: 52)
<i>Number of nationalities represented among staff</i>	50
<i>Key areas of work</i>	Emergency and post-crisis; migrant protection and assistance; immigration and border management; migration health; labour migration and human development; and migration, environment and climate change.
<i>Key publications</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Asia and the Pacific – Regional Strategy 2020–2024</i>.<sup>39</sup></li> <li>• <i>IOM Asia–Pacific Regional Data Hub: Regional Secondary Data Review March 2021</i>.<sup>40</sup></li> <li>• <i>Asia–Pacific Migration Data Report 2020</i>.<sup>41</sup></li> <li>• <i>IOM Asia–Pacific Remittance Inflows 2021</i>.<sup>42</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Regional webpage</i>	<a href="http://www.iom.int/asia-and-pacific">www.iom.int/asia-and-pacific</a>
<i>Regional Strategy</i>	<i>Asia and the Pacific Regional Strategy 2020–2024</i> . <sup>43</sup>

39 IOM, 2020n.

40 IOM, 2021o.

41 IOM, 2021p.

42 IOM, 2021q.

43 IOM, 2020n.

## Key developments in the Regional Office Asia and the Pacific since IOM joined the United Nations system

Since 2016, IOM in the Asia and the Pacific region has worked to achieve the following outcomes:

- Enhanced protection of and assistance to migrants in need;
- Reduced health vulnerability among migrants and migration-affected communities;
- Strengthened systems and tailored solutions that harness the benefits of migration;
- Access for migrants and other vulnerable populations affected by crises to essential humanitarian services;
- Strengthened capacity to manage migration crises across the region;
- Empowerment and strengthening of migrants' and affected communities' resilience to natural disasters and adaptation to climate change;
- Ensuring that policies and programmes are based on evidence and systematic monitoring and analysis of migration dynamics;
- Enhancing partnerships and dialogues in the region to address migration challenges and opportunities.

### Highlights: IOM's response to COVID-19 in Asia and the Pacific, 2020

**28** countries where IOM implemented COVID-19-related operations.

**USD 71.5 million** spent on COVID-19 activities.

**9,769,184** beneficiaries reached for risk communication and community engagement efforts related to COVID-19.

**188,544** individuals receiving some return-related assistance.

**703,889** people reached with critical WASH supplies.

**24,759** COVID-19 tests provided.

**445,346** most vulnerable individuals provided with livelihood support.

More details in the *IOM Asia and the Pacific COVID-19 Achievements Report 2020*.<sup>44</sup>

## EUROPE

### *Regional Office for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia*

IOM has been active in the South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia (SEECA) region from the early 1990s. During that time, many countries in the region were experiencing a complex mix of migration and displacement challenges resulting from huge geopolitical changes. Three decades later, IOM continues to provide comprehensive support to governments in refining their policies, frameworks and practical mechanisms for migration management and governance at national and multilateral levels. IOM brings extensive migration management and governance expertise closer to all its beneficiaries and the Member States it serves.

The IOM Regional Office, established in Vienna in 2011, supports further improvement in quality and diversification of programmatic activities at the country level, promotes regional initiatives and facilitates better support to inter-State dialogue and cooperation. Regional Office Vienna is responsible for project review and endorsement, policy development and the formulation of regional migration strategies. This is done in partnership with governments, development partners and civil society organizations within the region. The Regional Office employs technical experts in project development and thematic fields of migration management, including migrant protection and assistance, labour mobility and human development, immigration and border management, operations and emergencies, migration, environment and climate change, and migration health, complemented by policy and liaison, as well as support from migration data and research experts. It also deals with various cross-cutting issues and

provides support in the field of resource management, media and communications, and programme development, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

Key facts and figures for Regional Office Vienna, 2020	
<i>Number of migrants assisted</i>	15 000 (migrant protection and assistance) Migration Health Division, labour mobility, human development and others
<i>Number of Member States in the region</i>	19
<i>Number of offices</i>	19, plus additional sub-offices
<i>Number of staff</i>	1 714
<i>Key areas of work</i>	Project development and thematic fields of migration management, including migrant protection and assistance; labour mobility and human development; immigration and border management; operations and emergencies; migration, environment and climate change; and migration health.
<i>Key publications</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Displacement Tracking Matrix Reports.<sup>45</sup></li> <li>• GCM Regional Review for the UNECE Region Summary Report.<sup>46</sup></li> <li>• Gender, SOGIESC and Migration in the 2030 Agenda and Global Compact for Migration.<sup>47</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Regional webpage</i>	<a href="https://rovienna.iom.int/">https://rovienna.iom.int/</a>
<i>Regional Strategy</i>	South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Strategy 2020–2024. <sup>48</sup>

### Key developments in Regional Office Vienna since IOM joined the United Nations system

IOM has coordination roles in a number of humanitarian crises in the region. These include leading the United Nations response clusters along the Eastern Mediterranean route, as well as in protracted conflicts such as that in eastern Ukraine.

In the region, COVID-19 prevention, mitigation and response measures implemented by IOM and its partners were crucial. In 2020, IOM was part of 15 United Nations coordination groups in the region on the COVID-19 response, reaching over 1.4 million people with risk communication or community engagement efforts, supporting nearly 200 points of entry in preparing for and responding to COVID-19, procuring and distributing over 4.5 million items of personal protective equipment and other non-food items in the response, and adapting sites that hosted over 60,000 migrants throughout the year with COVID-19-related upgrades.

Covering a region with some of the largest and most complex migration corridors in the world, IOM continued to focus on identifying opportunities to leverage migration to support development efforts, but also on mitigating risks related to labour migrant protection and social tensions, contributing directly to the achievement of a

<sup>45</sup> IOM, n.d.f.

<sup>46</sup> UN, 2020.

<sup>47</sup> IOM, n.d.g.

<sup>48</sup> IOM, 2021s.



number of SDG targets. In addition to its long- and newly established programmes targeted at facilitating labour mobility between the Russian Federation and Central, Eastern Partnership countries and the European Union, IOM initiated innovative collaborations with social psychologists to evaluate and improve the impact of its social cohesion programming (Turkey, Kosovo<sup>49</sup>), thus institutionalizing the intergroup contact theory approach both for the Regional Office Vienna region and beyond. During the COVID-19 pandemic, IOM also began cooperation with behavioural scientists and economists to develop interventions that trigger behaviour change towards greater use of digital remittance services and increase remittance use towards savings for predictive livelihood development. Furthermore, IOM made far-reaching changes to classical approaches to diaspora engagement by introducing and applying big data, including Google Analytics and onomastic analysis for diaspora mapping (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova); by developing guides for diaspora strategies (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina); and implementing concrete diaspora investment interventions (Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine). Regional Office Vienna also initiated a Migration Data Platform for Evidence-based Regional Development (M-Powered),<sup>50</sup> designed to help decision makers to leverage migration in support of the advancement of the Global Compact for Migration and the SDGs. The tool is being further developed for migration forecasting and modelling to enhance its impact on sustainable development (Germany, Republic of Moldova, Portugal). Regional Office Vienna also developed a Gender and Migration in the Global Compact for Migration and the 2030 Agenda project,<sup>51</sup> to support anyone working in migration programming and policy with mainstreaming, gender equality and gender sensitivity issues in the implementation of the Global Compact and SDGs.

Co-chaired by IOM, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Issue-Based Coalition (IBC) on Large Movements of People, Displacement and Resilience (LMPDR) serves as a platform to exchange information on public policy dialogues and legislative changes affecting persons of concern to the IBC. It also aims to provide coherent United Nations support at the country level towards nationalization of the SDGs, inclusive of key issues related to large movements of persons. The IBC bolsters over 100 members from 15 United Nations agencies and regional and country offices throughout the 18 United Nations programme countries in the Europe and Central Asia region. IOM's Regional Office in Vienna is also an active member of the Issue-Based Coalitions<sup>52</sup> on Gender Equality,<sup>53</sup> Health,<sup>54</sup> Youth and Adolescents,<sup>55</sup> and Environment and Climate Change,<sup>56</sup> as well as in the United Nations Regional Coordination Group on Data and Statistics. Regional Office Vienna, together with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNHCR co-produces biannual Inter-Agency Factsheets on refugee and migrant children arriving in Europe.

Without prejudice to the mandates and roles of the participating agencies, the IBC also assumed the functions of a Regional UNNM, with the aim of capitalizing on the synergies between the global level UNNM and the IBC, while recognizing the programme of action and follow-up mechanisms of the Global Compact for Migration.

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49 References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

50 IOM, n.d.h.

51 IOM, n.d.g.

52 UNECE, n.d.a.

53 UNECE, n.d.b.

54 UNECE, n.d.c.

55 UNECE, n.d.d.

56 UNECE, n.d.e.

To date, a total of 14 Country Networks have been established in the 18 United Nations Programme Countries of the Eastern Europe and Central Asia (ECA) region, all of which are co-chaired by IOM and the United Nations Resident Coordinator (except in the Republic of Moldova, where it is co-chaired by IOM and UNDP).

Moreover, IOM's Regional Office in Vienna – in support of an initiative led by the Regional Collaborative Platform for Europe and Central Asia, which was chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General and with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Executive Secretary and the UNDP Regional Director as co-vice-chairs, and of which of IOM is a permanent member – is contributing to the establishment of an information and knowledge management website that aims to improve the capacity of the United Nations system in Europe and Central Asia to support resident coordinators, United Nations country teams and governments in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Additionally, five years into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) invited governments, United Nations entities and stakeholders from all sectors to share inspiring breakthroughs and success stories that are showing results and impacts, and which can also be replicated and scaled up. In response, IOM submitted several projects, of which 10 were selected and recognized as inspiring accelerators to the 2030 Agenda, four of which are from the SEECA region.<sup>57</sup>

More broadly, we can confidently say that migration is reflected in all the United Nations Common Country Analyses, as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs). Additionally, at the request of the United Nations Resident Coordinators (UNRCs) in the 18 programme countries in the ECA region, Regional Office Vienna coordinated the roll-out of the “Stronger UN system for GCM implementation” training. The training was delivered to the United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs) in Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine in July 2021 and Bosnia and Herzegovina in November by IOM and UNDP as the lead on the Network's Core Working Group 2.1.<sup>58</sup>

Since advocacy for the inclusion of migrants in COVID-19 vaccination plans is a global priority this year, Regional Office Vienna, with the support of Regional Office Cairo, produced a short video designed to assist missions in their advocacy efforts.<sup>59</sup>

#### Highlights: IOM's response to COVID-19 in Regional Office Vienna, 2020

**19** countries and Kosovo<sup>a</sup> where IOM implemented COVID-19-related operations.

**USD 5.8 million** spent on COVID-19 activities.

**1,411,253** beneficiaries reached for risk communication and community engagement efforts related to COVID-19.<sup>b</sup>

**6,638** migrants that were stranded due to COVID-19 and received return support.<sup>b</sup>

**1,950,481** people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services to support the adoption of COVID-19 prevention measures.<sup>b</sup>

**2,384** COVID-19 tests provided by IOM.<sup>b</sup>

**2,134** individuals provided with livelihood support.

*Notes:* (a) references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999); (b) figures from the global survey conducted by Headquarters, totals for the SEECA region.

<sup>57</sup> Pre-Employment Support Programme for Syrians Under Temporary Protection and Host Communities in Turkey (Turkey); SME Strengthening and Support Programme (Let's Grow this Business) (Turkey); Armenian diaspora supports to COVID-19 response (Armenia); National Strategy on Migration and Action Plan 2019–2022 (Albania).

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Video available at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=42x2iBqJJFM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42x2iBqJJFM).

### *Regional Office for the European Economic Area, the European Union and NATO*

The IOM Regional Office for the European Union (EU), the European Economic Area (EEA) and NATO, Regional Office Brussels, was established in September 2011 at a time when the Treaty of Lisbon (2009), European Union enlargement and deeper cooperation had reinforced the centrality of migration and asylum policy. Europe was also dealing with uneven recovery from the global economic and financial crisis – with unemployment rates in some countries remaining stubbornly high – and multiple crises in North Africa and the Middle East, which increased concerns about migration pressures. The combined internal and external challenges contributed to a deterioration of public perception towards certain categories of migrants, increasing xenophobia. At the same time, facilitating highly skilled immigration, migrant integration and refugee resettlement were highlighted as part of the EU's “global approach” to migration.

In this context, the new Regional Office in Brussels set out to advance IOM's global objectives through strategic partnerships with the European Union institutions, EU Member States and other countries in the region to promote a migrant-centred, rights-based migration management approach and to work with States to respond to migration issues, including complex crises, emergencies, socioeconomic challenges and mixed flow movements. Regional Office Brussels was tasked to strengthen and ensure the quality and coherence of policy, programming, project development and implementation in the region, and globally for EU-funded programming. IOM established (July 2012) and expanded (February 2016) a Strategic Cooperation Framework with the European Commission Directorates General for Migration and Home Affairs (HOME), International Partnerships (INTPA), Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (NEAR) and the European External Action Service (EEAS).

Key facts and figures for Regional Office Brussels, 2020	
<i>Number of migrants assisted</i>	Under humanitarian programming in the Region: 50 534 Within European Economic Area (EEA) resettlement (RST), relocation (REL) and humanitarian assistance programme (HAP) programming: 14 329 (11 266 resettlements and humanitarian admissions, 3 063 relocations) Migrants assisted under assistance to vulnerable migrants (AVM): 2 259 Migrants assisted under assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR): 16 449
<i>Number of IOM projects</i>	Within EEA RST/REL/HAP programming: 30 Humanitarian programming in the region: 6 Active projects under counter-trafficking: 29 Active projects under AVRR/RST: 41 Global programme support for projects implemented outside the region: 105 Migration health: 7 Labour mobility and human development: 54 active projects in 2020
<i>Number of Member States in the region</i>	32
<i>Number of offices</i>	28 country offices
<i>Number of staff</i>	2 853
<i>Number of nationalities represented among staff</i>	103

Key areas of work	<p>Migrant protection and assistance (assistance to vulnerable migrants, assisted voluntary return and reintegration, counter-trafficking in human beings, protection of children in migration, resettlement, complementary pathways and relocation);</p> <p>Transition and recovery from crises (recovery, durable solutions and disaster risk reduction, transition and stabilization, election support);</p> <p>Humanitarian aid and civil protection (fundraising for humanitarian projects, policy and strategy on humanitarian aid);</p> <p>Immigration and border management (including the EU Readmission Capacity-Building Facility [EURCAP], migrant inclusion and social cohesion, labour mobility and ethical recruitment, migration and development);</p> <p>Migration health (health policy and legal frameworks, migrant-sensitive health systems, migrant health monitoring);</p> <p>IOM–EU cooperation around the world (Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe); and</p> <p>Communications and policy outreach.</p>
Key publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainstreaming Migration into International Cooperation and Development (MMICD) toolkit for development partners on “Integrating Migration into COVID-19 Socio-economic Response”.<sup>60</sup></li> <li>• <i>Driving Migrant Inclusion Through Social Innovation: Lessons for Cities in a Pandemic</i> (joint publication with MPI Europe, produced under the ADMIn4ALL project).<sup>61</sup></li> <li>• <i>Principles and Approaches to Guide the Relocation and Integration of UAC from Greece to Other EU Member States</i>.<sup>62</sup></li> <li>• <i>IOM’s Recommendations to the German Presidency of the Council of the EU as well as to the Croatian Presidency</i>.<sup>63</sup></li> <li>• <i>IOM Views on the Roadmap for the EU’s New Pact on Migration and Asylum</i>.<sup>64</sup></li> </ul>
Regional webpage	<a href="https://eea.iom.int/">https://eea.iom.int/</a>
Regional Strategy	<i>European Economic Area, Switzerland and the United Kingdom Regional Strategy 2020–2024</i> . <sup>65</sup>

### Key developments in Regional Office Brussels since IOM joined the United Nations system

Migration management, European Union coordination and cooperation remained atop the political agenda in the region following the arrival of over one million migrants and refugees to Europe in 2015–2016. By 2016, the EU had extended the mandate of Frontex and it officially became the European Border and Coast Guard Agency. The EU–Turkey Statement of March 2016 and other factors contributed to reducing the number of sea crossings and irregular arrivals to the EU in the following years. With tens of thousands of migrants and refugees in Greece, IOM scaled up to support the Government through several EU-funded programmes, including site management support, protection of vulnerable groups and refugee integration. Between 2016 and 2018, IOM supported the relocation of

<sup>60</sup> IOM, 2020o.

<sup>61</sup> MPI and IOM, 2020.

<sup>62</sup> IOM, 2020p.

<sup>63</sup> IOM, 2020q.

<sup>64</sup> IOM, 2020r.

<sup>65</sup> IOM, 2020s.

some 35,000 asylum seekers from Greece and Italy to other EU States under the scheme. Today, IOM continues to assist through separate projects initiated by Greece, Italy and Malta with the relocation of vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers to other European countries.

The number of asylum applications lodged in the EU remained higher between 2016 and 2020 than the number of irregular arrivals at the sea and land borders; and while sea arrivals on the Eastern Mediterranean and the Central Mediterranean Routes declined significantly after 2016, the Western Mediterranean and the Western Africa–Atlantic route to the Canary Islands saw a sharp increase in activity between 2018 and 2021. The arrival of more than 23,000 people in the Canary Islands by sea in 2020 strained the islands' reception capacity, while COVID-19 further complicated the response. In February 2021, IOM began supporting Spain with EU funding through an Emergency Reception Facility on Tenerife to provide shelter, protection services, medical, legal and other types of assistance to the migrants. Despite reduced overall migrant arrivals, migrant deaths in the Mediterranean remained alarmingly high, while impassable search and rescue and the disembarkation of rescued migrants made headlines as NGO rescue operations became a source of controversy. IOM and UNHCR in June 2018 responded with a joint proposal to the EU on a regional arrangement to ensure predictable disembarkation of persons rescued at sea.

The EU and its Member States extended further cooperation with IOM in the framework of the EU Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) and the African Union–European Union–United Nations Tripartite Taskforce on the Situation of Stranded Migrant and Refugees in Libya. In December 2016, the EU, the Governments of Germany and Italy, and IOM launched the EU–IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration through the EUTF to support African countries in strengthening migration governance and to save lives and protect and assist migrants along key migration routes in Africa. Through its policy and programming, IOM in the region is working with States and EU institutions in the interest of harmonizing the management of irregular migration and borders with the facilitation of labour migration and skills mobility to address demographic trends and labour market requirements. The Organization has expanded programmes promoting the mainstreaming of migration into development cooperation and is strongly engaged on migration and climate-change policy through the European Green Deal. IOM has also contributed its recommendations on the European Commission proposals for a new European Pact on Migration and Asylum, which was tabled in September 2020.

Regional Office Brussels in February 2021 published its strategic priorities for the EEA, Switzerland and the United Kingdom for 2020–2024, integrating key elements of the overall IOM Strategic Vision to respond to emerging needs within the region. Reflecting on migration realities and policy trends in each country in the region, the overall strategic goal is to pursue safe, orderly and regular migration to enhance the well-being of migrants and societies through a rights-based and whole-of-government approach to the governance of migration and mobility to, from and within the region that is coherent, holistic and balanced. The strategy also outlines how IOM in the region will seek to address current and future regional and cross-regional migration and displacement trends, challenges and opportunities, including through collaboration with United Nations agencies and other partners.

The COVID-19 pandemic engendered a mobility crisis with unprecedented economic, social and humanitarian impacts in the region, as border closures and in-country travel restrictions changed patterns in mobility through the shutdown of airline services, altered border and migration management systems, and growing distrust of cross-border movements and non-residents. Migrants, including seasonal workers, refugees and asylum seekers, became stranded after sudden and uncoordinated border closures, unable to move from temporary locations. At the same time, many countries in the region experienced an acute shortage of agricultural and other key workers due the disruption in seasonal and circular migration. Pandemic restrictions in neighbouring countries and regions led to

a marked reduction of irregular arrivals by sea and land across all routes to the EU in late 2020, but irregular movements re-emerged in early 2021 on the West Africa/Atlantic and Central Mediterranean routes.

IOM's response to the pandemic in the region in 2021 was guided by a robust Strategic Response and Recovery Plan (SRRP), which built on the 2020 Plan, encompassing life-saving assistance and response to humanitarian needs, initiatives to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on migrants and societies, and support for recovery and resilience, integrated with longer-term sustainable development planning. Regional Office Brussels and the offices in the region also adapted work modalities, services and assistance to migrants by negotiating with the EU and Member States for more flexibility in programming and by transferring services online, moving to remote programming modalities and digital communications, while direct assistance for stranded migrants was provided in the framework of its protection activities whenever feasible. Assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR), resettlement and relocation movements were temporarily halted, but were resumed as soon as possible. Registration modalities, virtual counselling and referrals were also tested in the framework of AVRR. Information on COVID-19 measures was provided.

## **LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN AND NORTHERN AMERICA**

### *Regional Office for South America*

IOM offices were established in Argentina in 1953 to develop technical cooperation programmes between countries in the region. In 2011, the country office for Argentina was created to carry out projects addressing specific needs at the local level, and the Southern Cone Office then became the Regional Office with coordination functions and support for IOM activities in the region. Currently, the Regional Office covers 10 countries in South America (see Figure 1) and works in close coordination with the Office of the Special Envoy for the Venezuela Situation (OSE) created in 2018 and based in Panama.

The IOM Regional Office in Buenos Aires functions as the technical secretariat for the South American Conference on Migration (SACM) and works closely with the South American Common Market and its different bodies, more importantly with the Specialized Forum on Migration (FEM-MERCOSUR, for its acronym in Spanish). It also works closely with the Interamerican Network on Migration (RIAM, for its acronym in Spanish). With the former Argentine Presidency Pro Tempore of the SACM, IOM coordinated the establishment of six working groups on key thematic areas in 2020, on gender and migration; migration, environment and climate change; labour integration; border management; trafficking in persons; and migrant children and adolescents. The Regional Office facilitated a meeting in September 2021 between the SACM and the Regional Conference on Migration<sup>66</sup> (CRM for its acronym in Spanish) to define a joint workplan on migration, which marked a milestone in collaboration on migration management across Latin America and the Caribbean.

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66 The Regional Conference on Migration is a regional consultative process, known as the Puebla Process, including Member States from North and Central America.

Key facts and figures for Regional Office Buenos Aires and country offices in the region, 2020	
<i>Number of migrants assisted</i>	2 722 524 migrants assisted through COVID-19 operations in 2020
<i>Number of IOM projects</i>	86 (as of June 2021)
<i>Number of Member States in the region</i>	10
<i>Number of offices</i>	10 country offices, 1 Office of the Special Envoy for the Venezuela situation, 1 Regional Office, 59 sub-offices (as of September 2021)
<i>Number of staff</i>	1 004 (as of September 2021)
<i>Number of nationalities represented among staff</i>	29 (as of September 2021)
<i>Key areas of work</i>	Protection and assistance to vulnerable migrants; migration and development; labour migration; migration, environment and climate change; emergencies and risk management; migration and health; policies and liaison; data and information management; migration research; knowledge management; communication and press; migration and cities; and integrated border management.
<i>Key publications</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Review of the Normative Frameworks of Argentina, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Chile, Peru and Uruguay.</i><sup>67</sup></li> <li>• <i>Diagnosis of the Situation and Incidence of Human Trafficking in Humanitarian Contexts in South America.</i><sup>68</sup></li> <li>• <i>Contributions from Colombia to the International Initiative for Reparations to Victims of Sexual Violence in the Framework of the Armed Conflict.</i><sup>69</sup></li> <li>• <i>Migrants in the Argentine Republic: Integration into the labour market.</i><sup>70</sup></li> <li>• <i>Evaluating the Evidence: Climate change and migration in Peru.</i><sup>71</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Regional webpage</i>	<a href="http://www.robuenosaires.iom.int">www.robuenosaires.iom.int</a>
<i>Regional Strategy</i>	<i>South America Regional Strategy 2020–2024.</i> <sup>72</sup>

67 Veiga, 2021.

68 Ferreira, 2020.

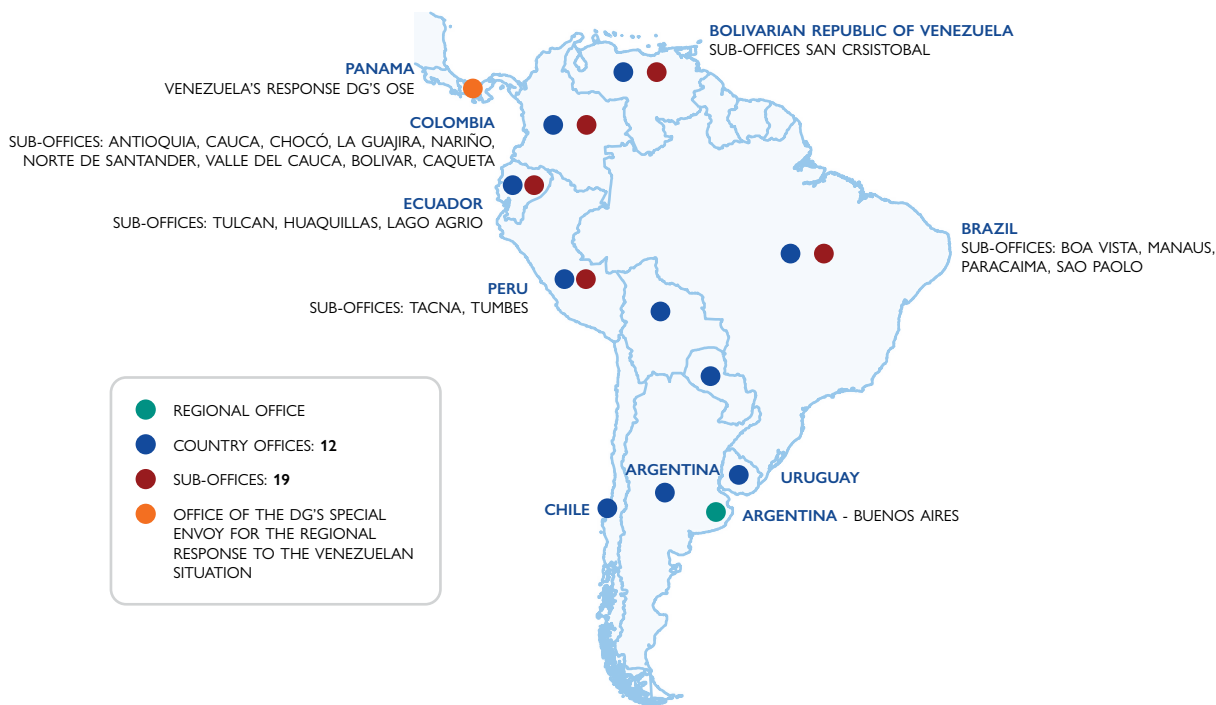
69 IOM, 2020t.

70 Rubinstein and Lieutier, 2020.

71 Bergmann et al., 2021.

72 IOM, 2020u.

Figure 1. IOM in South America (offices and sub-offices)



Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

### Key developments in Regional Office Buenos Aires since IOM joined the United Nations system

The structural socioeconomic inequality that characterizes the region, exacerbated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with processes of political instability, violence and episodes of disaster, have increased and diversified migratory processes in the region in recent years. In a pandemic context and with unprecedented related border closures, new migration patterns emerged, including irregular movements.

As of mid-2020, about 10.9 million international migrants live in South America, coming from different countries in the region and the world.<sup>73</sup> Eighty per cent of them are intraregional migrants, with Venezuelan migration being the most important in quantitative terms (over 4.6 million Venezuelan nationals were estimated to have left the country as of 30 June 2021).<sup>74</sup> The internal conflict in Colombia has caused substantial movement and displacement both internally and outwards, particularly to neighbouring countries (mainly Chile, Ecuador and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela).<sup>75</sup>

Over the past decade, the region has experienced growing movements of Caribbean migrants (specifically Haitians and Cubans) and extraregional migrants from Africa and Asia. Irregular extraregional migration has been registered in both South America (beginning in some cases in Chile) and Central America, in particular in 2021; however, these movements are most noticeable in the Darien Gap, located on both sides of the Colombia–Panama border. Many

73 UN DESA, 2021.

74 R4V, 2021.

75 UN DESA, 2021.



Caribbean migrants transiting across the region previously resided legally in countries such as Brazil and Chile, with children born there having acquired those citizenships, and then moved on due to several push and pull factors.<sup>76</sup>

The Regional Office for South America guides its actions within the framework of IOM's Strategic Vision, among other global frameworks, operationalized through the Regional Strategy 2020–2024 that defines priorities for action in South America and aligns with five key regional operational priorities, which comprise: (a) humanitarian and emergency assistance; (b) regularization; (c) integration; (d) combating xenophobia; and (e) migration, environment and climate change.

### **Programmatic Highlights**

**Regional response to Venezuelan mixed migration flows.** The Office of the Special Envoy for the Regional Response to the Venezuela Situation works closely with UNHCR and with the Joint Special Representative for IOM–UNHCR. Following the nomination of both organizations as co-leaders of the regional response, IOM and UNHCR have set up a Regional Inter-agency Coordination Platform (called R4V, Response for Venezuela) that covers 17 countries and is comprised of around 200 organizations, including United Nations agencies and NGOs.

**Strengthening IOM's role as coordinator of the UNNM in South America.** Regional Office Buenos Aires has participated actively in the establishment of the Issue-Based Coalition on Human Mobility of the United Nations, which functions as the regional UNNM, and in particular of its Working Group 1: Regional United Nations Network for the implementation, follow-up, and review of the Global Compact for Migration in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNNM-LAC). As of September 2021, seven UNNMs have been established; six countries have approved the terms of reference for their Network; and two countries have started developing their workplans.

In the area of humanitarian and emergency assistance, specifically as part of COVID-19 response and recovery, the Regional Office publishes monthly COVID-19 situation reports and, in coordination with Regional Office San José, recently published the *Strategic Response and Recovery Plan for COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean*.<sup>77</sup> Further, to address the health needs of migrants and to improve the access to and availability of health services, particularly in the COVID-19 pandemic context, the Regional Office also coordinates and supports the delivery of **comprehensive health programmes in South America, including** direct health assistance through community-based interventions and disease surveillance, health promotion and education, preventive care and screening, and curative care to migrants and mobile populations. Furthermore, IOM works in the area of protection of migrants in vulnerable situations with assistance and support.

#### **Highlights: IOM's response to COVID-19 in Regional Office Buenos Aires, 2020**

**10** countries where IOM implemented COVID-19-related operations.

**USD 17.3 million** spent on COVID-19 activities (as of June 2021).

**2,373,389** beneficiaries reached for risk communication and community engagement efforts relating to COVID-19.

**8,426** individuals receiving some return-related assistance.

**255,418** people reached with critical WASH supplies.

**1,000** COVID-19 tests provided.

**84,291** individuals provided with livelihood support.

<sup>76</sup> Yates, 2021.

<sup>77</sup> IOM, 2021t.

Furthermore, the Regional Office is strengthening its knowledge management activities within IOM and its partners by developing a regional hub and a regional knowledge management strategy to foster a culture of sharing, learning and using existing experiences and good practices, including on regularization. This approach is particularly relevant in the context of the middle-income countries of the region with high levels of institutionalization.

Two regional projects on human mobility and border management are under way for (a) a pilot feasibility study of an electronic personal health record for migrants in Colombia and Ecuador to ensure continuity of treatment for migrants and mobile populations; and (b) a digital COVID-19 platform that features current mobility restrictions by country.<sup>78</sup>

Among others, a study in Chile and Paraguay with the Office of the Special Envoy for the Venezuela Response (OSE) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) (forthcoming) looks into opportunities for migrants to support the economic recovery in the region after COVID-19, which will result in a methodological guide for conducting such studies. In addition, a toolkit for governments in South America will be developed to provide stakeholders with good practices and tools on socioeconomic integration and reintegration.

To combat xenophobia, the Regional Office developed a training programme for journalists in coordination with the Gabo Foundation, as well as an award ceremony and learning workshop organized with key journalists from the region to raise awareness on the positive contribution migration has on sustainable development.

To raise policy awareness and enhance interventions on migration, environment and climate change, the Regional Office organized a workshop with SACM Member States to advance the regional guidelines on cross-border displacement and assistance to migrants in disaster contexts.

Finally, in relation to migration and development, IOM is supporting governments in the region to empower their respective diasporas, among other issues. A groundbreaking diagnostic assessment was implemented in 2021 in countries across the region and in Europe that also analyses trends, challenges and opportunities offered by the recognition that diasporas often organize themselves in broader regional groupings and associations.

### *Regional Office for Central America, North America and the Caribbean*

As part of organizational reform efforts and in response to the increasing complexity and scope of migration in the region, IOM established the Regional Office in San José in 2011. It oversees and coordinates IOM activities implemented by country offices and sub-offices in close collaboration with Member States, regional organizations, processes and initiatives, United Nations agencies, civil society and other relevant stakeholders. The region is also home to the Country Office with Resource Mobilization Functions in Washington, D.C., the country office with coordinating functions for the Caribbean in Guyana, the Office of the Director General's Special Envoy for the Regional Response to the Venezuelan Situation based in Panama, the Panama (Global) Administrative Centre and the Special Liaison Office in New York.

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78 Suramérica Abierta, n.d.

Key facts and figures for Regional Office San José, 2020	
<i>Number of migrants assisted</i> <sup>79</sup>	Countering-trafficking and addressing migrants' vulnerabilities to violence, exploitation and abuse: 14 165 Progress towards durable solutions: 148 042 Transition, recovery and stabilization: 36 257
<i>Number of IOM projects</i>	104
<i>Number of Member States in the region</i>	25
<i>Number of offices</i>	country offices: 20; sub-offices: 41
<i>Number of staff</i>	1 017
<i>Number of nationalities represented among staff</i>	72
<i>Key areas of work</i>	Supporting the implementation, follow-up and review of the Global Compact for Migration; reducing disaster risks, preventing displacement and assisting displaced populations; migration, environment and climate change; migrant protection and assistance to returnees and migrants in situations of vulnerability, including extraregional migrants; counter-trafficking; combating xenophobia and discrimination; border management; promoting regular pathways and regularization, including labour migration schemes; supporting countries with migration data for evidence-based policymaking; and engaging diaspora for sustainable development.
<i>Key publications</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>La Movilidad Humana Derivada de Desastres y el Cambio Climático en Centroamérica</i>.<sup>80</sup></li> <li>• <i>Mecanismos Sobre Migración Laboral en Mesoamérica</i>.<sup>81</sup></li> <li>• <i>Informe Anual Programa de Retorno Voluntario Asistido (RVA). México y países del norte de América Central</i>.<sup>82</sup></li> <li>• <i>El Tráfico Ilícito de Migrantes en América Central y México en el Contexto de la COVID-19</i>.<sup>83</sup></li> <li>• <i>Migración Extraregional en Sudamérica y Mesoamérica: Perfiles, experiencias y necesidades</i>.<sup>84</sup></li> <li>• <i>DTM: Countries Impacted by Hurricanes Eta and Iota in Latin America and the Caribbean</i>.<sup>85</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Regional webpage</i>	<a href="https://rosanjose.iom.int/site/en">https://rosanjose.iom.int/site/en</a>
<i>Regional Strategy</i>	<i>Central America, North America and the Caribbean Regional Strategy 2020–2024</i> . <sup>86</sup>

79 Showing totals of migrants assisted on more representative topics and/or those with more data available. Numbers drawn from IQ 2020 Country reports.

80 IOM, 2021u.

81 Chaves and Aragón, 2021.

82 IOM, 2021v.

83 IOM, 2020v.

84 IOM, 2019b.

85 IOM, 2020w.

86 IOM, 2020x.

### Key developments in Regional Office San José since IOM joined the United Nations system

Central America, North America and the Caribbean is a highly diverse region comprising 25 countries and numerous territories with a total population of 589.03 million in 2020. Large income disparities exist not only among countries, but also within them. Most countries in Central America and the Caribbean face elevated risks resulting from exposure to hazards, both natural and human-induced, and specific vulnerabilities such as poverty and inequality, as well as a lack of coping capacity. Lack of employment opportunities, low incomes, poor or informal working conditions, violence (including gender-based violence), organized crime, persecution, insecurity combined with poverty, and droughts and floods exacerbated by a lack of access to effective social services, alongside the proximity to the United States of America, sets the stage for a region highly prone to migration.

To ensure a coherent and comprehensive strategic approach in line with IOM's Strategic Vision, the Regional Office in San José has developed a Regional Strategy for Central America, North America and the Caribbean for 2020–2024. It identifies key migration challenges, opportunities and priorities centred around three pillars: (a) resilience: addressing the adverse drivers of migration; (b) mobility: facilitating safe, regular and orderly forms of migration; and (c) governance: serving as a trusted and effective leader and partner in relevant bilateral, regional and global initiatives and processes.

Programmatic approaches include several topics:

In response to multiple sudden and slow-onset natural hazards, IOM has helped governments advance public policy to reduce disaster risks, prevent displacement and assist displaced populations. IOM has also undertaken post-crisis transition and recovery programming, particularly in the Caribbean.

In 2020, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and IOM signed an agreement to improve the health of 75 million migrants in the Americas by scaling up coordinated interventions and strengthening advocacy to include the specific needs of migrants in health. IOM's COVID-19 response focuses on prevention, access of affected people to basic services and mitigation of the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic.

As for migrant protection and assistance, IOM supports returnees in El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti and Honduras and by providing humanitarian assistance, food, transportation, medical and psychosocial services. Along the border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, Border Resource Centres established with IOM's help orient vulnerable returnees. IOM also helps governments with the reception of returnees and their sustainable reintegration beyond the initial assistance.

IOM and UNHCR co-lead the regional response to the situation of refugees and migrants from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela seeking access to basic rights, services and protection, as well as self-reliance and socioeconomic integration. Working with other United Nations agencies, IOM helps address the challenges of extraregional migrants entering Panama, including data collection through the Displacement Tracking Matrix and support to migrant reception centres.

An inter-agency collaboration has helped Regional Consultations on Migration (RCM) Member States develop child protection guidelines. In Nicaragua, IOM has trained officials in attending to unaccompanied children and adolescent migrants, complemented by communication campaigns on the topic using the methodology of Communication for Development (C4D).

IOM's counter-trafficking efforts have produced standard operating procedures, training, research to partners, and continued support to National Coalitions against Human Trafficking and the Regional Coalition against Trafficking and Smuggling. Providing urgent, short- to medium-term assistance to victims of trafficking, including basic needs, medical services and legal assistance, remains a top priority for IOM.

IOM programmatic support to RCM on gender and women in the context of mobility includes the development of guidelines on assistance and protection and the organization of three annual meetings.

Throughout the region, IOM has promoted regular migration paths and regularization with best practices that resulted in up to 14,400 visas facilitated every year through the Brazil Visa Application Centre (BVAC) in Haiti; a registration plan for more than 16,000 Venezuelan migrants in Trinidad and Tobago; and C4D campaigns and workshops to prevent irregular migration.

IOM has assessed border management systems and biometric data initiatives. In Haiti, IOM is helping to equip the official points of entry with the Migration Information and Data Analysis System (MIDAS) to register and identify travellers. With IOM support, the RCM developed a multiannual workplan on counter-smuggling to implement in 11 countries of the region.

IOM has helped governments review and develop labour migration policies in line with international standards, which resulted in legislation, studies, technical advice and capacity-building. IOM Costa Rica supported the establishment of a Labour Migration Traceability System to track migrants' health conditions and movements, which allowed the circular flow of 15,000 labour migrants in 2020 and 2021.

IOM in the region has implemented targeted actions to engage diaspora, through mapping initiatives that identify available skills and interests in supporting countries of origin and destination, developing diaspora investment toolkits in Jamaica and strengthening Venezuelan diaspora organizations in Panama.

IOM has supported Central American and Caribbean governments to enhance their capacity to collect, analyse and use migration data to advance in developing national migration policies and strategies.

As the Coordinator of the UNNM, IOM has made significant progress in building support capacity at the country and regional level. There are seven national Networks on Migration and/or equivalent working groups in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico and Panama. Canada, El Salvador, Honduras and Mexico are part of the Champion Country initiative.

IOM co-leads with ECLAC, UNHCR and UNICEF the Issue-Based Coalition on Human Mobility (IBC-HM). As a working group of the IBC, the Regional UNNM, co-led by IOM and ECLAC, successfully undertook the first Global Compact for Migration Regional Review.

IOM has incorporated migration in Common Country Analyses (CCA) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs). In Cuba, IOM for the first time joined the UNSDCF 2020–2024.

#### Highlights: IOM's response to COVID-19 in Regional Office San José, 2020

**15** countries where IOM implemented COVID-19-related operations.<sup>a</sup>

**USD 19 million** spent on COVID-19 activities.<sup>b</sup>

**7.5 million** people reached for risk communication and community engagement efforts relating to COVID-19.<sup>a</sup>

**460** individuals receiving some return-related assistance.<sup>a</sup>

**292,300** people reached with critical WASH supplies.<sup>a</sup>

**15,558** COVID-19 tests provided.<sup>b</sup>

**9,185** individuals provided with livelihood support.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Bahamas, Belize, Costa Rica, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, and Trinidad and Tobago.

<sup>b</sup> COVID-19 Funding Tracker. July 2021.

## Chapter 2

### Appendix A. Abridged extract: *Final Report on Conceptual Frameworks and Concepts and Definitions on International Migration* (27 April 2021)

Full report available at <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/migration-expert-group/task-forces/TF2-ConceptualFramework-Final.pdf>.

#### *Introduction and Background*

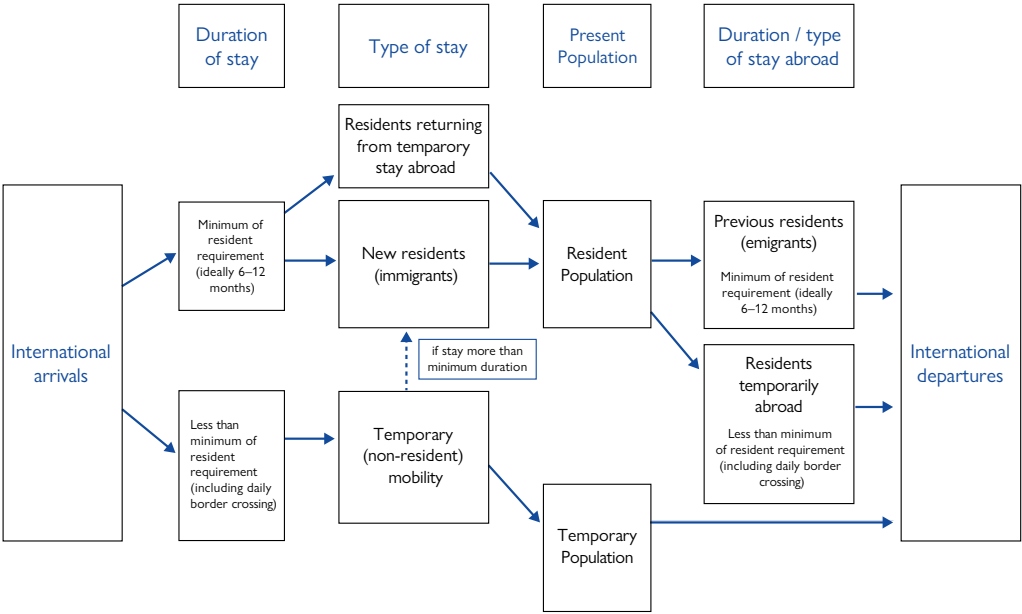
1. The United Nations Statistics Division, under the guidance of the United Nations Expert Group on Migration Statistics, has initiated revisions of the 1998 Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration (referred to as the 1998 Recommendations hereafter). Up until now, the definition of international migrant as stipulated in the 1998 Recommendations has supported to a certain degree comparability across countries. However, more than 20 years have passed since the 1998 Recommendations were published. Up until the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the obstacles of international migration were reduced. In particular, modern communication technologies and the increased convenience of travel lessened the psychological burden of living in other countries as migrants were able to remain in frequent contact with their families and friends in their origin countries. This includes both temporary and permanent moves associated with education or job opportunities and those due to political or environmental circumstances. Regional agreements have also been made that allow free movements amongst certain countries, raising new measurement challenges even for countries with relatively developed statistical systems.
2. Increases in the levels and changing patterns of international migration, including asylum seekers and refugees, have raised the demand for accurate and timely data. Calls for better data from a number of initiatives have stressed the need to collect and use migration statistics to develop evidence-based migration policies and guide the integration of migrants into national development planning. These data are also needed for estimating populations and understanding demographic change. With increasing life expectancy and declining fertility across most countries in the world, migration has become an increasingly important component of both demographic and social change.
3. Quality and timely data on international migration are needed for many reasons. They are increasingly related to population growth or decline, economic development and environmental concerns. For example, local actors need timely counts of persons who use local services (e.g. housing, health and social services, schools), while national stakeholders may be more interested in the size, characteristics and dispersion of migrants across the national territory to assess the effects on population change and domestic labour markets, for instance. As international mobility involves movements of persons from one country to another, there is a need for sharing data on these movements and ensuring they are comparable over time. Without such data, it is not possible to estimate the size of countries' diasporas abroad or to benchmark the size and characteristics of international migration stocks and flows. Nor is it possible to meet the data requirements of the United Nations' Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and Sustainable Development Goals. As many countries struggle to collect statistics on population movements, having a mechanism for building capacity in the development and improvement of migration statistics could prove very valuable.

### *Reconceptualising International Migration and Mobility*

17. In this section, we outline the key conceptual framework for international mobility and migration. International mobility includes all movements that cross international borders within a given year. International migration is defined more narrowly as a change in the country of residence and is considered a subset of international mobility. These flows are integral for understanding resident population change, which is the main population used for international comparison. In our conceptual framework, we split populations and their corresponding international mobility into two distinct groups: (i) resident population and international migration and (ii) temporary (non-resident) population and international temporary mobility. International temporary mobility includes all international border crossings (events) except those related to changes in the resident population.
18. We define residence in line with the UN Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses (Revision 3, par. 2.50). That is, it is recommended that countries apply a threshold of 12 months when considering place of residence according to one of the following two criteria:
  - a. The place at which the person has lived continuously for most of the last 12 months (that is, for at least 6 months and one day), not including temporary absences for holidays or work assignments, or intends to live for at least 6 months and one day;
  - b. The place at which the person has lived continuously for at least the last 12 months, not including temporary absences for holidays or work assignments, or intends to live for at least 12 months.

...
27. In Figure 2, we present a conceptual framework that links international arrivals to the present population, which includes all persons present in the country at a particular time, excluding residents temporarily abroad. The key distinguishing factor between international migration and other international population movements is duration of stay in the country or abroad. The criterion for defining a migrant, therefore, should be the duration required in order to be considered part of the resident population. In practice, this would imply a duration either 6 months or 12 months (see paragraph 18) so that flows of migration coincide with annual resident population change. The same situation occurs for departures: persons need to be away and stay in another country long enough based on minimum residence requirement to be considered part of another country's resident population. Persons who stayed temporarily in more than one country for less than minimum duration criteria cannot establish a new residence, therefore are still part of the resident population of their country of origin. In the framework, we include individuals who never become part of the resident population. We also include changing status from temporary population to resident population for persons who stay more than the minimum duration criteria while they are still present in the country. Persons who stayed longer than minimum duration criteria and do not possess a valid visa or other immigration documentation should be considered part of the resident population.

Figure 2. Conceptual framework on intersection between duration of stay and international mobility





## Chapter 3

### Appendix A. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Regions and Subregions

Please note that this table reflects the UN DESA geographic regions and subregions and does not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

Africa				
Eastern Africa <sup>a</sup>	Middle Africa <sup>b</sup>	Northern Africa <sup>c</sup>	Southern Africa <sup>d</sup>	Western Africa <sup>e</sup>
Burundi	Angola	Algeria	Botswana	Benin
Comoros	Cameroon	Egypt	Eswatini	Burkina Faso
Djibouti	Central African Republic	Libya	Lesotho	Cabo Verde
Eritrea	Chad	Morocco	Namibia	Côte d'Ivoire
Ethiopia	Congo (the)	Sudan (the)	South Africa	Gambia (the)
Kenya	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Tunisia		Ghana
Madagascar	Equatorial Guinea			Guinea
Malawi	Gabon			Guinea-Bissau
Mauritius	Sao Tome and Principe			Liberia
Mayotte				Mali
Mozambique				Mauritania
Réunion				Niger
Rwanda				Nigeria
Seychelles				Saint Helena
Somalia				Senegal
South Sudan				Sierra Leone
Uganda				Togo
United Republic of Tanzania				
Zambia				
Zimbabwe				

a Eastern Africa has been combined with the Southern Africa subregion in this chapter; although the countries/territories/areas remain the same.

b This subregion has been renamed "Central Africa" in this chapter and combined with Western Africa.

c This subregion has been renamed "North Africa".

d This subregion has been combined with Eastern Africa.

e This subregion has been renamed "West Africa" and combined with Central Africa (UN DESA Middle Africa) in this chapter.

Asia				
Central Asia	Eastern Asia	South-Eastern Asia <sup>f</sup>	Southern Asia	Western Asia <sup>g</sup>
Kazakhstan	China	Brunei Darussalam	Afghanistan	Armenia
Kyrgyzstan	China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region	Cambodia	Bangladesh	Azerbaijan
Tajikistan	China, Macao Special Administrative Region	Indonesia	Bhutan	Bahrain
Turkmenistan	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Lao People's Democratic Republic	India	Cyprus
Uzbekistan	Japan	Malaysia	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Georgia
	Mongolia	Myanmar	Maldives	Iraq
	Republic of Korea	Philippines (the)	Nepal	Israel
		Singapore	Pakistan	Jordan
		Thailand	Sri Lanka	Kuwait
		Timor-Leste		Lebanon
		Viet Nam		Oman
				Qatar
				Saudi Arabia
				Syrian Arab Republic
				Turkey
				United Arab Emirates
				Yemen

<sup>f</sup> This region has been renamed "South-East Asia".

<sup>g</sup> This subregion has been renamed "Middle East".

Europe <sup>h</sup>			
Eastern Europe <sup>i</sup>	Northern Europe	Southern Europe	Western Europe
Belarus	Channel Islands	Albania	Austria
Bulgaria	Denmark	Andorra	Belgium
Czechia	Estonia	Bosnia and Herzegovina	France
Hungary	Faroe Islands	Croatia	Germany
Poland	Finland	Gibraltar	Liechtenstein
Republic of Moldova	Iceland	Greece	Luxembourg
Romania	Ireland	Holy See	Monaco
Russian Federation	Isle of Man	Italy	Netherlands (the)
Slovakia	Latvia	Malta	Switzerland
Ukraine	Lithuania	Montenegro	
	Norway	North Macedonia	
	Sweden	Portugal	
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	San Marino	
		Serbia	
		Slovenia	
		Spain	

<sup>h</sup> Some countries in this subregion, particularly members of the European Union, may have been included both in the discussion of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, as well as the subregional discussion on Northern, Western and Southern Europe within the chapter.

<sup>i</sup> Northern, Western and Southern Europe are combined in the chapter, excluding the following countries in Southern Europe: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and North Macedonia, which have been included in South-East Europe in the chapter; under the subregion South-Eastern and Eastern Europe.

Latin America and the Caribbean		
Caribbean	Central America <sup>j</sup>	South America
Anguilla	Belize	Argentina
Antigua and Barbuda	Costa Rica	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
Aruba	El Salvador	Brazil
Bahamas	Guatemala	Chile
Barbados	Honduras	Colombia
Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba	Mexico	Ecuador
British Virgin Islands	Nicaragua	Falkland Islands (Malvinas)
Cayman Islands	Panama	French Guiana
Cuba		Guyana
Curaçao		Paraguay
Dominica		Peru
Dominican Republic		Suriname
Grenada		Uruguay
Guadeloupe		Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Haiti		
Jamaica		
Martinique		
Montserrat		
Puerto Rico		
Saint Kitts and Nevis		
Saint Lucia		
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines		
Sint Maarten (Dutch part)		
Trinidad and Tobago		
Turks and Caicos Islands		
United States Virgin Islands		

j The subregion “Central America” has been combined with Mexico and the Caribbean in this chapter.

<b>Northern America</b>
Bermuda
Canada
Greenland
Saint Pierre and Miquelon
United States of America

<b>Oceania</b>			
Australia and New Zealand	Melanesia	Micronesia	Polynesia
Australia	Fiji	Guam	American Samoa
New Zealand	New Caledonia	Kiribati	Cook Islands
	Papua New Guinea	Marshall Islands	French Polynesia
	Solomon Islands	Micronesia (Federated States of)	Niue
	Vanuatu	Nauru	Samoa
		Northern Mariana Islands	Tokelau
		Palau	Tonga
			Tuvalu
			Wallis and Futuna Islands

Legend:

<b>Region</b>
Subregion <sup>i</sup>
Country/territory/area <sup>ii,iii</sup>

Note: For methodology as well as explanatory notes, see International Migrant Stock 2020: Documentation, available at [www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/undesa\\_pd\\_2020\\_international\\_migrant\\_stock\\_documentation.pdf](http://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/undesa_pd_2020_international_migrant_stock_documentation.pdf).

- i Subregions utilized within the chapter may differ from those utilized by UN DESA's Statistical Division either by name, or by countries/territories/areas included within.
- ii "The names of countries or areas refer to their short form used in day-to-day operations of the United Nations and not necessarily to their official name as used in formal documents. These names are based on the United Nations Terminology Database (UNTERM), which can be found at <https://unterm.un.org/UNTERM/portal/welcome>. The designations employed and the presentation of material at this site do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations [or the International Organization for Migration (IOM)] concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries." For further information, see <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/>.
- iii The entities included in this table, which the previous chapter draws upon, comprise countries, as well as territories, areas and special administrative regions. Please note that this table is not intended to be fully comprehensive.

## Chapter 4

## Appendix A. Chart of the United Nations System



## Appendix B. Summary of the United Nations Compacts and Network on Migration process timelines

United Nations General Assembly, September 2016 - New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants - IOM becomes a United Nations-related organization					
Global Compact on Refugees		Global Compact for Migration		United Nations Network on Migration	
<i>Jan. 2017 – Dec. 2017</i>	Thematic consultations	<i>Apr. 2017</i>	United Nations resolution on the modalities of the Compact process		
<i>Jun. 2017</i>	NGO consultations	<i>Apr. 2017 – Nov. 2017</i>	Informal consultation phase; 6 thematic sessions		
<i>Dec. 2017 – Jan. 2018</i>	Stocktaking consultations	<i>Dec. 2017 – Jan. 2018</i>	Stocktaking phase	<i>Dec. 2017</i>	Secretary-General initiates internal United Nations consultations
<i>Feb. 2018 – Jul. 2018</i>	Formal consultations	<i>Dec. 2017</i>	Secretary-General's report ( <i>Making migration work for all</i> ) published	<i>May 2018</i>	Executive Office of Secretary-General decision on proposed model
		<i>Feb. 2018 – Jul. 2018</i>	Intergovernmental negotiation phase	<i>Jun. 2018</i>	Deputy Secretary-General briefs Member States on United Nations Network
				<i>Jul. 2018</i>	Final Global Compact for Migration text welcomes Secretary-General decision to establish the Network
				<i>Oct. 2018</i>	United Nations framing meeting on the Network
				<i>Nov. 2018</i>	Network Terms of Reference adopted
<i>Dec. 2018</i>	General Assembly adoption of the Global Compact on Refugees	<i>Dec. 2018</i>	International conference to adopt the Global Compact for Migration and then General Assembly endorsement of the Global Compact for Migration	<i>Dec. 2018</i>	Secretary-General launches Network at international conference
Sep. 2016 – Dec. 2018 Application of CRRF				<i>Jan. 2019</i>	United Nations Network in place; successor to the United Nations Global Migration Group

Source: Newland et al., 2019.

## Chapter 5

## Appendix A

Health (non-virus)	Environmental	Social	Economic	Education
A significant decrease in HIV testing services was reported in nearly all countries with available data between January and July 2020. <sup>a</sup> However, in many cases the disruption to HIV treatment had been reversed by July 2020. <sup>b</sup>	The pandemic has led to a proliferation in the use of single-use plastics – including an estimated monthly usage of 129 billion face masks – which is driving the accumulation of waste. <sup>a,b</sup>	While violence against women and girls has intensified since the onset of COVID-19, lockdowns have made it difficult to request help, with fewer requests made in areas where movement has been restricted. <sup>a</sup>	The ILO estimates that global working time declined in the second quarter of 2020 (compared with the final quarter of 2019) by 17.3%, equivalent to 495 million full-time jobs. <sup>a</sup>	According to UNESCO, in April 2020 75% of enrolled learners (over 1.32 billion learners) were affected by school closures, with 139 nationwide closures. <sup>a</sup>
Vehicular collisions in the United States are estimated to have fallen by 50% following the introduction of lockdowns. <sup>c</sup>	Across all major regions, the power mix has shifted towards renewable energy following lockdowns, due to depressed electricity demand and lower operating costs. <sup>c</sup>	In El Salvador, gangs announced mandatory curfews in areas where government presence is weak, with reports of “violent punishments” of individuals who disobey public health measures. <sup>b</sup>	According to World Bank predictions, between 88 and 115 million people will be pushed into poverty – defined as living on less than USD 1.90 per day – due to the pandemic. <sup>b</sup>	While distance learning reaches around 80% of learners in high-income countries, this reach drops to less than 50% in low-income countries. <sup>b</sup>
By disrupting services and increasing stress and isolation, public health measures such as lockdowns are likely to negatively impact the mental health status of people with severe mental illness. <sup>d</sup>	Tropical deforestation increased in Africa, Latin America and Asia-Pacific following the imposition of lockdowns, particularly in areas where legal enforcement plays a key role in reducing forest loss. <sup>d</sup>	Several studies have found that the gender care gap has narrowed during COVID-19 lockdowns; however, this is largely dependent on changes in men’s employment status out of paid work. <sup>c</sup>	Despite predictions that international remittances would decline by 20% globally in 2020, remittances to some countries have increased during COVID-19. <sup>c</sup>	It has been predicted that the United Kingdom’s university sector could incur long-run losses of up to GBP 19 billion, with institutions that have a large share of international students most affected. <sup>c</sup>
Marie Stopes International estimates that the closure of their reproductive health services across 37 countries has led to 1.5 million additional unsafe abortions and 3100 pregnancy-related deaths. <sup>e</sup>	The restrictions of economic activity caused by lockdowns led to improvements in air quality, with a decline in nitrogen dioxide concentration levels across the world. <sup>e</sup>	The Republic of Korea saw a 30% increase in mobile game downloads in the first quarter of 2020 following the imposition of mobility restrictions. <sup>d</sup>	Commuting time in the United States of America is estimated to have fallen by 62 million hours per day, with 35% of workers using this time to work on their primary job and 30% on leisure activities. <sup>d</sup>	Using overhead cameras, medical students at a Tokyo university are able to livestream surgeries with real-time communication between the surgeon and students. <sup>d</sup>
Under pessimistic scenarios, COVID-19-related disruption to malaria control in Africa could almost double malaria mortality in 2020, with potentially greater increases in subsequent years. <sup>f</sup>	Sightings of wildlife, including whales and turtles, increased at Ecuadorian beaches following a reduction in noise levels. <sup>f</sup>	Of the adults from the United States of America who reported watching religious services online in July 2020, over half of them – 18% of all adults – only began doing so since the onset of the pandemic. <sup>e</sup>	A huge rise in the use of video conferencing platforms has been recorded. For example, daily meeting participants on the Zoom platform increased by 300 million in the first half of 2020. <sup>e</sup>	A Canadian study has estimated that school closures induced by COVID-19 could widen the socioeconomic score gap by up to 30%. <sup>e</sup>

## Sources:

- Health
- a UNAIDS, 2020a.  
b UNAIDS, 2020b.  
c Brodeur et al., 2020.  
d Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine, 2020.  
e Marie Stopes International, 2020.  
f Weiss et al., 2020.
- Environment
- a Love and Rieland, 2020.  
b Adyel, 2020.  
c International Energy Agency, 2021.  
d Brancalion et al., 2020.  
e Narain, 2020.  
f Ormaza-González and Castro-Rodas, 2020.
- Social
- a UN-Women, 2020.  
b Sandin and Topa, 2020.  
c UN DESA, 2020.  
d Kang, 2020.  
e Cooperman, 2020.
- Economic
- a ILO, 2020a.  
b Lakner et al., 2020.  
c IOM, 2020h.  
d Barrero et al., 2020.  
e Zoom, 2020.
- Education
- a UNESCO, 2021.  
b UNSDG, 2020.  
c Drayton and Waltmann, 2020.  
d Jack et al., 2021.  
e Haack and Lefebvre, 2020.



## Appendix B

### Country case study (Africa): Kenya

#### Key statistics

<b>Total population (2020)</b> <sup>a</sup>	53.77 million
<b>Human Development Index category</b> <sup>b</sup>	Medium
<b>GDP (2020)</b> <sup>c</sup>	USD 98.84 billion
<b>GDP per capita (2020)</b> <sup>c</sup>	USD 1 838
<b>Immigrants (2020)</b> <sup>d</sup>	
<i>Millions</i>	1.05
<i>Percentage of population</i>	1.95%
<b>Emigrants abroad (2020)</b> <sup>d</sup>	
<i>Millions</i>	0.53
<i>Percentage of population</i>	1.00%
<b>Refugees and asylum seekers hosted (2020)</b> <sup>e</sup>	505 000
<b>Internally displaced persons (as at end 2020)</b> <sup>f</sup>	394 000
<b>COVID-19 confirmed cases (as of 11 March 2021)</b> <sup>g</sup>	
<i>Total</i>	109 643
<i>Per million</i>	2 039
<b>COVID-19 deaths (as of 11 March 2021)</b> <sup>g</sup>	
<i>Total</i>	1 886
<i>Per million</i>	35
<b>Air passengers (2019)</b> <sup>h</sup>	6.42 million

Sources: a) UN DESA, 2019; b) UNDP, 2020b; c) World Bank, n.d.; d) UN DESA, 2021b; e) UNHCR, n.d.; f) IDMC, 2021; g) WHO, n.d.; h) ICAO, n.d.

### COVID-19 and Kenya as a mobility hub

#### Major impacts on populations

For over a decade, the Government of Kenya has been seeking to make the country a regional transit hub for both passengers and cargo. As part of its Kenya Vision 2030 programme, the Government modernized and expanded its aviation facilities, and the number of passengers carried in the country reached 6.4 million in 2019, an increase of more than 120 per cent compared with 2008, when the programme was launched.<sup>87</sup> Vision 2030 also led to an increase in the capacity of the Port of Mombasa, the African point of entry for billions of dollars' worth of goods that are subsequently transported by road to inland countries across East and Central Africa.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Government of Kenya, 2008; World Bank, 2020b.

<sup>88</sup> Kenya Ports Authority, 2020; IOM, 2020i.

This trend towards increased mobility was dramatically reversed following the onset of COVID-19. On 15 March 2020, travel was suspended for almost all persons entering Kenya from a country with reported COVID-19 cases, with only Kenyan citizens and those with valid residence permits allowed to enter.<sup>89</sup> Further, by 29 March 2020 the country's borders with Ethiopia, South Sudan and Uganda had been closed, while the borders with Somalia and the United Republic of Tanzania were closed on 16 May 2020.<sup>90</sup> One year later in March 2021, new waves of the virus had again impaired mobility, as no road, rail or air transport was permitted in Nairobi, Kajiado, Kiambu, Machakos and Nakuru.<sup>91</sup> Additionally, international travel was allowed, but subject to proof of a negative COVID-19 test, along with curfew measures reflecting the increasing COVID-19 positivity rate and hospital admissions in Kenya.<sup>92</sup> Such a turbulent year therefore created significant mobility challenges across all modes of transport, and in turn for the Kenyan economy and the food security of individuals across the region.

### Key challenges for authorities and practitioners

Passenger aviation fell sharply following the imposition of mobility restrictions, with international visitor arrivals 72 per cent lower between January and October 2020 than in the same period a year earlier.<sup>93</sup> This decline in air traffic had a major economic impact on airlines, including Kenya Airways, which reported a decrease in total revenue by 48 per cent in the six months to June 2020.<sup>94</sup> Yet this collapse also impacted the wider Kenyan economy: the cut flowers industry – which in 2018 was the second most exported good or service in Kenya – experienced a sharp decline in exports between March and May 2020 due to the suspension of international flights.<sup>95</sup> As European markets began to open after lockdowns in July 2020, the flower industry in Kenya slowly began to recover, with some companies reporting that demand rose back up to 85 per cent.<sup>96</sup> To sustain growth, the Kenyan Government worked with multiple stakeholders to ensure operations, which contributed to an increase in demand for four months from November 2020, despite new waves of the virus and subsequent lockdowns.<sup>97</sup>

While the Port of Mombasa was largely unaffected by mobility restrictions, the closure of borders created difficulties for the transportation of cargo via road.<sup>98</sup> Despite being exempt from Kenya's border closures, truck drivers were identified as a high-risk group for the spread of COVID-19. As a result, they were required to either show a negative test taken in the previous 14 days or to take a test before being permitted to cross the border.<sup>99</sup> This led to queues at one-stop border points of up to 60 kilometres, in some cases taking drivers between five and 10 days to clear.<sup>100</sup>

This disruption had severe implications in light of the largest locust outbreak seen in some East African countries for decades in 2019.<sup>101</sup> Indeed, the United Nations World Food Programme warned that bottlenecks at borders were putting the delivery of vital food supplies at risk, including food destined for refugee camps.<sup>102</sup> Concerns were also

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89 Kenyan Ministry of Health, 2020.

90 KTN News, 2020; Malak, 2020; Tubei, 2020.

91 Africanews and AFP, 2021.

92 Ibid.

93 Kenyan Tourism Research Institute, 2020.

94 Dar es Salaam Stock Exchange, 2020.

95 Mold and Mveyange, 2020; Banga et al., 2020.

96 Mohammed, 2020.

97 Kantaria, 2021.

98 Hellenic Shipping News, 2020.

99 Ratner, 2020.

100 Ibid.

101 FAO, 2020.

102 Biryabarema and Obulutsa, 2020.

raised that these queues were facilitating the spread of COVID-19, as drivers were required to sleep in unsanitary conditions and, because they had no food or water, to interact with the local communities near the border.<sup>103</sup> Food security in the region was further threatened by the inability to engage in agriculture and informal activities amid the restrictions to mobility and the precarity of remittances.<sup>104</sup>

### Good practices

Although passenger flights endured acute disruption due to the pandemic, cargo flights continued at higher levels. The airline Astral Aviation increased its air traffic within Africa, operating cargo freighters between its Nairobi hub and 13 destinations on the continent, while Kenya Airways converted some of its passenger aircraft into cargo flights.<sup>105</sup> This not only bolstered the airlines themselves, but also increased exports, such as for the cut-flowers industry.<sup>106</sup> The Government also moved to nationalize Kenya Airways in an attempt to financially support the airline, although this stalled in September 2020 following the rejection of a key bill by the Kenyan Lawyers Lobby, which cited “significant legal issues”.<sup>107</sup>

Further, in order to strengthen Kenya’s COVID-19 testing capacity at two of its busiest border points, the East African Community (EAC) provided the Kenyan Government with two mobile laboratories in May 2020, which were built using funding from the German Federal Government.<sup>108</sup> IOM also helped clear the queues of trucks through the deployment of medical staff, which enabled the testing of 400 samples per day.<sup>109</sup> However, a more permanent solution emerged in September 2020 when the EAC launched the Regional Electronic Cargo and Driver Tracking System, a mobile contact-tracing application that issued drivers with a digital health declaration recognized by all EAC members.<sup>110</sup> This minimized the need for multiple COVID-19 tests on a single trip and reduced bottlenecks at borders.<sup>111</sup>

### Lessons learned after 12 months of COVID-19

Following their pivot towards cargo flights, towards the end of 2020 Kenyan airlines moved to play a role in the vaccination phase of the pandemic: in preparation for the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines, Kenya Airways invested in a pharmaceutical facility located at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport in Nairobi, while Astral Aviation announced that it would offer an on-demand charter service for vaccines to Africa.<sup>112</sup> By March 2021, Kenya received the first batch of COVID-19 vaccines and launched a national campaign prioritizing front-line health workers and essential staff.<sup>113</sup>

Meanwhile, in light of the disruption to the transportation of cargo caused by the virus, the Kenyan Government sought to enhance the efficiency and coordination of the transport sector through the creation of the Kenya Transport and Logistics Network (KTLN) in August 2020. Upon its formation, the Government declared that the KTLN would help achieve Kenya’s strategic agenda of becoming a regional logistics hub by allowing the centralization of operations and the lowering of transportation costs.<sup>114</sup>

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103 Mold and Mveyange, 2020; Muhumuza and Odula, 2020; Kazibwe, 2020.

104 Nechifor et al., 2021.

105 Gledhill, 2020; IOM, 2020i.

106 Banga et al., 2020.

107 Ombok, 2020.

108 EAC, 2020a; EAC, 2020b.

109 IOM, 2020i.

110 EAC, 2020a.

111 Ibid.

112 Brett, 2020; Astral Aviation, 2020.

113 WHO, 2021d.

114 *Kenyan Digest*, 2020

## Country case study (Asia): Bangladesh

### Key statistics

<b>Total population (2020)</b>	164.69 million
<b>Human Development Index category</b>	Medium
<b>GDP (2020)</b>	USD 324.24 billion
<b>GDP per capita (2020)</b>	USD 1 968
<b>Immigrants (2020)</b>	
<i>Millions</i>	2.11
<i>Percentage of population</i>	1.28%
<b>Emigrants abroad (2020)</b>	
<i>Millions</i>	7.40
<i>Percentage of population</i>	4.49%
<b>Refugees and asylum seekers hosted (2020)</b>	866 000
<b>Internally displaced persons (as at end 2020)</b>	772 000
<b>COVID-19 confirmed cases (as of 11 March 2021)</b>	
<i>Total</i>	553 105
<i>Per million</i>	3 358
<b>COVID-19 deaths (as of 11 March 2021)</b>	
<i>Total</i>	8 496
<i>Per million</i>	52
<b>Air passengers (2019)</b>	5.96 million

Sources: Please refer to the (Africa) Kenya country case study table for sources.

### COVID-19 and remittances in Bangladesh

#### Major impacts on populations

Despite living beyond the country's borders, Bangladesh's diaspora plays a key role in its development. The World Bank estimates that the emigrant population together sent home over USD 18 billion in 2019, with 73 per cent coming from Bangladeshi labourers working in predominantly "low-skilled" jobs in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.<sup>115</sup> These remittances, which account for over 6 per cent of GDP and represent the country's second largest source of foreign income, are a lifeline for many Bangladeshis. Remittances account for 85 per cent of daily expenditures for the families of overseas migrants, with 60 per cent of these families totally dependent on remittances for their daily expenses.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>115</sup> World Bank, 2020c; Sorkar, 2020.

<sup>116</sup> Sorkar, 2020; Fitch Ratings, 2020.

Disruptions induced by the COVID-19 pandemic posed a serious threat to the financial security of dependants back home. The World Bank initially projected a 20 per cent decline in total remittances to Bangladesh, and in the months of March, April and May 2020 these projections were confirmed.<sup>117</sup> Yet in contrast with pessimistic predictions, international remittances to Bangladesh rose overall between January and October 2020; for example, they were 17 per cent higher than over the same period a year earlier, and a record figure of USD 2.6 billion was remitted in July 2020.<sup>118</sup> This was in contrast to the wider South Asia region, where remittances were forecast by the World Bank to fall by 4 per cent in 2020 and around 11 per cent in 2021.<sup>119</sup> Since the surge in May and June 2020, the remittances flow accumulated above USD 2 billion monthly for the remainder of 2020.<sup>120</sup> As recently as March 2021, the Bangladeshi diaspora were reported to have sent USD 1.91 billion, up 50.16 per cent from the same month the previous year, owing to government and central bank initiatives to boost remittances, as well as Bangladeshi expatriates sending more money to relatives who have lost their sources of income.<sup>121</sup>

The long border between Bangladesh and India posed challenges for containing the highly infectious Delta variant, with Bangladesh regions bordering India being the first to report major surges in infections due to cross-border movement.<sup>122</sup> Further, and despite internal travel restrictions, the rapid rise in infections caused thousands of internal migrants living in the capital Dhaka to return to their villages, prompting further concerns of transmission.<sup>123</sup>

### **Key challenges for authorities and practitioners**

The surge in international remittances was unexpected and made it difficult for the Government and financial institutions to determine the correct policy response. Although the headline figure was positive, it was suggested that this was caused in part by a diversion of remittances from informal to formal channels, due to difficulties carrying money by hand under COVID-19 travel restrictions and a narrowing in the discrepancy in exchange rates of U.S. dollars between the two channels.<sup>124</sup>

More significant, however, was the suggestion that remittance growth was due to migrant workers repatriating their savings before returning home, implying not only a longer-term decline in remittances, but also signalling an intensification of unemployment in Bangladesh: before borders closed in Bangladesh in March 2020, approximately 400,000 workers returned, mostly due to the pandemic.<sup>125</sup> Among migrant workers who had returned from abroad since the onset of the pandemic, a July 2020 report found that 70 per cent were unemployed.<sup>126</sup> Unemployment within Bangladesh and abroad is reflected in the disruption to migrant outflows, where the number of emigrants between January to May 2020 was only 181,200 compared with 302,400 for the same period in 2019.<sup>127</sup> The challenge to secure employment among Bangladeshi migrant workers continues as the second and third waves of the coronavirus pandemic disrupt cross-country travel.<sup>128</sup> This is particularly true for South Asian migrant workers in GCC countries, where there has been a steep decline in the demand for migrant workers in sectors such as food service, hospitality

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117 Chowdhury and Chakraborty, 2021, using data from Bangladesh Bank.

118 Fitch Ratings, 2020; Bangladesh Bank, 2020.

119 World Bank, 2020c.

120 Chowdhury and Chakraborty, 2021.

121 *Dhaka Tribune*, 2021.

122 Alam, 2021.

123 *DW*, 2021.

124 World Bank, 2020a; Mahmud and Uddin, 2020.

125 UNDP, 2020b.

126 Fitch Ratings, 2020; IOM, 2020j.

127 Chowdhury and Chakraborty, 2021.

128 *Ibid*.

and manufacturing.<sup>129</sup> The prolonged lockdowns and consequential unemployment will impact migrant workers' incomes and their ability to send remittances, making families in Bangladesh vulnerable and potentially unable to meet immediate needs such as food, clothing and education.<sup>130</sup>

### Good practices

While the growth may have been due (in part) to shifts between remittance channels, it was also the result of actions by policymakers to encourage and facilitate the sending of remittances. The Central Bank more than tripled the ceiling on its 2019 cash incentive scheme – whereby remittance beneficiaries receive a two per cent bonus on transfers made using formal systems – up to USD 5,000, while some commercial banks provided an additional one per cent incentive to further increase the attractiveness of sending remittances.<sup>131</sup> A partnership between mobile financial service providers and commercial banks also facilitated the sending of remittances via online-to-wallet money-transfer companies, increasing the daily average amount sent by 150 per cent in April 2020.<sup>132</sup> Meanwhile, the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MoEWOE) sought to address the potential for worsening unemployment announcing loans of up to USD 8,260 for returning migrant workers to pursue income-generating activities, particularly related to agriculture.<sup>142</sup>

However, the most significant driver of international remittance growth was the agency of migrants themselves. While interest rates on deposits in the United States and European countries fell to around zero, the 5 per cent rates offered by Bangladeshi banks became more appealing, as did Bangladeshi land.<sup>143</sup> Expatriates also sent money to support relatives who had suffered a loss in their income due to the pandemic or had been impacted by the severe floods that followed Cyclone Amphan in May 2020, inundating a quarter of Bangladesh's landmass.<sup>135</sup>

### Lessons learned after 12 months of COVID-19

The pandemic has led to a push for the development of a formal and widely accepted skills recognition system to improve the perceived economic value of migrant workers. Anticipating large arrivals of expatriates following the resumption of international travel, the MoEWOE looked to strengthen its Recognition of Prior Learning system, which, according to the International Labour Organization, enables returning migrants to reintegrate themselves within the domestic job market more easily.<sup>136</sup> Similarly, the Embassy of Bangladesh in Saudi Arabia initiated a dialogue with two agencies responsible for the Skills Verification Programme in the country, with the intention of boosting the earnings and facilitating the career progression of Bangladeshi migrant workers and, in turn, increasing the value of remittances sent in the longer term.<sup>137</sup>

Moreover, the Government of Bangladesh is working to diversify work opportunities for migrant workers specifically in the agricultural and health-care sectors in Africa and Europe, given the disruption to traditional labour markets in the GCC countries and South-East Asia.<sup>138</sup> Amid the challenges to mobility and migrant workers, Bangladesh is in dialogue with Malaysia to regularize the estimated 200,000 undocumented Bangladeshi migrant workers in the country.<sup>139</sup>

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129 Ibid.

130 Ibid.

131 HSBC, 2020; Aneja and Islam, 2020.

132 Aneja and Islam, 2020.

133 Karim et al., 2020.

134 Mahmud and Uddin, 2020.

135 BRAC, 2020.

136 ILO, 2020b.

137 Ibid.

138 UNDP, 2020b.

139 Ibid.

## Country case study (Europe): Germany

### Key statistics

<b>Total population (2020)</b>	83.78 million
<b>Human Development Index category</b>	Very high
<b>GDP (2020)</b>	USD 3 806 billion
<b>GDP per capita (2020)</b>	USD 45 723
<b>Immigrants (2020)</b>	
<i>Millions</i>	15.76
<i>Percentage of population</i>	18.81%
<b>Emigrants abroad (2020)</b>	
<i>Millions</i>	3.85
<i>Percentage of population</i>	4.60%
<b>Refugees and asylum seekers hosted (2020)</b>	1 453 700
<b>Internally displaced persons (as at end 2020)</b>	—
<b>COVID-19 confirmed cases (as of 11 March 2021)</b>	
<i>Total</i>	2 518 591
<i>Per million</i>	30 061
<b>COVID-19 deaths (as of 11 March 2021)</b>	
<i>Total</i>	72 489
<i>Per million</i>	865
<b>Air passengers (2019)</b>	109.63 million

Sources: Please refer to the (Africa) Kenya country case study table for sources.

### COVID-19 and the recognition of migrants' skills in Germany

#### Major impacts on populations

With 1.2 million unfilled vacancies in 2018 and a net loss of 300,000 employees per year, labour shortages pose a significant risk for the German economy.<sup>140</sup> Attracting migrant workers is viewed as central to responding to these shortages, with 73 per cent of the German population believing that migrants “help to fill jobs for which it's hard to find workers in Germany”.<sup>141</sup> However, it has been argued that many of the shortages that migrants currently attenuate are in industries that are characterized by low wages and poor working conditions, while administrative hurdles have prevented the hiring of migrants in occupations classed by the German Government as “high skilled”.<sup>142</sup>

140 ODI, 2020.

141 EC, 2018.

142 Duell and Vetter, 2020.

With 35 per cent of migrants classed as key workers, compared with under 30 per cent of German-born workers, they are also overrepresented in “key worker sectors” – such as teaching, health care and agriculture – which came to the forefront following the onset of COVID-19.<sup>143</sup> As a result, the German Government was required to go to unprecedented lengths to keep key sectors running, addressing both obstacles to migrant employment induced by lockdowns, as well as longer-term obstacles that hindered migrant labour market integration prior to the pandemic.

### **Key challenges for authorities and practitioners**

Lockdown-induced immobility represented the biggest driver of labour shortages in key sectors. In the agriculture and horticulture sector, for example, the imposition of travel restrictions in March 2020 prevented the arrival of the 286,000 seasonal migrant workers from Eastern Europe on which the sector relies.<sup>144</sup> The agriculture ministry sought to mitigate this disruption to the sector by launching an online platform to match German volunteers with farmers, but the number of volunteers registered fell far short of what the sector required.<sup>145</sup> Similar difficulties were experienced in the care sector, which is dependent on live-in carers from Poland who work 2- to 12-week shifts before returning home over the border, often on minibuses organized by care agencies. The reinstatement of border controls, and the requirement to undergo a 14-day quarantine upon arrival, made these working patterns unfeasible, and led many live-in carers to return home.<sup>146</sup>

Another key driver of labour shortages was a lack of qualified professionals in the face of increased demand, which was exacerbated by the design of recent labour migration policies. For example, would-be migrant workers with vocational skills have struggled to gain recognition for their qualifications when applying for certain categories of visa, while asylum seekers living in Germany whose applications have previously been refused cannot apply for newly created visa categories unless they travel to the German embassy in their home country.<sup>147</sup> The effect of these administrative obstacles became more acute during the COVID-19 pandemic: in the health-care sector, for example, existing staff were required to increase their working hours as their colleagues entered quarantine.<sup>148</sup>

### **Good practices**

In March 2020, state governments sought the help of migrant doctors whose accreditation to practice medicine was pending. The Saxon State Medical Association used social media to appeal for support, which was followed by a similar appeal from the Bavarian State Medical Association and the expediting of applications to recognize foreign qualifications by the administration of North Rhine-Westphalia.<sup>149</sup> More drastic efforts were taken to address the shortage of labour in the agricultural sector. Following intense pressure from the German Farmers Union and regional farmers associations, the German Government reopened its border for 40,000 seasonal workers across April and May 2020, with one of the reasons cited for this decision being that German-born workers were slower than migrant workers and often quit after a short period.<sup>150</sup> The maximum period for which foreign workers were allowed to work in Germany without needing to contribute to the German social security system was also raised, which enabled

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143 Fasani and Mazza, 2020.

144 Hooper and Le Coz, 2020.

145 Buck et al., 2020.

146 Safuta and Noack, 2020.

147 Gröll, 2020.

148 Kramer et al., 2021.

149 Goßner, 2020.

150 U.S. Foreign Agricultural Service, 2020.



seasonal workers already in Germany to remain there for longer.<sup>151</sup> As the 2021 season begins, seasonal migrant workers will have to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test upon arrival and receive a test again on the farm.<sup>152</sup>

### **Lessons learned after 12 months of COVID-19**

By highlighting the crucial role that migrants play in key sectors, the pandemic has led to calls for more accurate data to be collected so that Germany's true dependence on migrant workers can be gauged and safe legal mechanisms developed to facilitate their arrival.<sup>153</sup> Yet it has also opened up a wider discussion about the conditions under which migrants work: in May 2020, the German Government announced a series of reforms of the meat industry following outbreaks of COVID-19 – in part due to poor working and living conditions for migrant workers – while changes to the wage structure in the care sector were also discussed.<sup>154</sup>

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151 Ibid.

152 Kinkartz, 2021.

153 Popp, 2020.

154 Young, 2020; Bruzelius and Ratzmann, 2020.

## Country case study (Latin America): Colombia

### Key statistics

<b>Total population (2020)</b>	50.88 million
<b>Human Development Index category</b>	High
<b>GDP (2020)</b>	USD 271.35 billion
<b>GDP per capita (2020)</b>	USD 5 332
<b>Immigrants (2020)</b>	
<i>Millions</i>	1.90
<i>Percentage of population</i>	3.74%
<b>Emigrants abroad (2019)</b>	
<i>Millions</i>	3.02
<i>Percentage of population</i>	5.94%
<b>Refugees and asylum seekers hosted (2020)*</b>	1 750 000
<b>Internally displaced persons (as at end 2020)</b>	4.94 million
<b>COVID-19 confirmed cases (as of 11 March 2021)</b>	
<i>Total</i>	2 282 372
<i>Per million</i>	44 855
<b>COVID-19 deaths (as of 11 March 2021)</b>	
<i>Total</i>	60 676
<i>Per million</i>	1 192
<b>Air passengers (2019)</b>	37.03 million

Sources: Please refer to the (Africa) Kenya country case study table for sources.

\* Includes displaced Venezuelans

## COVID-19 and vulnerable and displaced populations in Colombia

### Major impacts on populations

Over five million people have left the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela since 2015, when the country entered a period characterized by violence, persecution, and economic and political instability.<sup>155</sup> Colombia has been the major destination for the displaced, with almost 1.8 million Venezuelans entering the country by the end of January 2021.<sup>156</sup> Despite going to great lengths to accommodate these arrivals – including the creation of mass regularization initiatives – 56 per cent of Venezuelans lack regular status.<sup>157</sup> On regularization, Colombia implemented a policy in February 2021 that provides Venezuelan migrants and refugees with a 10-year temporary protection status, giving them access to essential services like national health care.<sup>158</sup>

155 IOM and UNHCR, 2021.

156 Ibid.

157 Migración Colombia, 2021.

158 UNHCR, 2021a.

Among challenges to obtain legal status, other barriers, including limited access to finance and discrimination in hiring, have meant that many face difficulties accessing education, employment and health care.<sup>159</sup> The pandemic has made the situation of displaced Venezuelans in Colombia even more precarious. In an attempt to slow the spread of the virus and reduce the significant pressure that had been placed on the already-strained health system, in March 2020 Colombia's national Government imposed restrictions on mobility and economic activity.<sup>160</sup> This added an economic dimension to the health crisis and deepened the support required by these vulnerable groups.

### **Key challenges for authorities and practitioners**

First and foremost, the pandemic presented a threat to displaced Venezuelans' health, with migrants tending to face a greater risk of exposure to COVID-19 than Colombian-born individuals – many live in overcrowded households, with an average occupancy of five to nine people depending upon the city, while others live in informal settlements with little access to drinking water, bathrooms and other basic needs.<sup>161</sup> Moreover, despite being eligible for some health services – regardless of status – displaced Venezuelans also have limited access to health care, particularly in border regions where they are most populous, as in many of these regions the level of demand for health services exceeds the capacity.<sup>162</sup>

The health risks of the virus are compounded by the economic impacts. Venezuelans are observed to be 36 per cent more likely to be financially impacted by the global pandemic than Colombians.<sup>163</sup> Venezuelan migrants are more likely to work in Colombia's informal sector, which overlaps significantly with those sectors that were more highly impacted by the country's economic lockdown.<sup>164</sup> Indeed, 64 per cent of Venezuelans were working in highly impacted sectors prior to the pandemic, with this figure rising to 78 per cent among Venezuelan women.<sup>165</sup> The impact of the lockdown could be seen in an August 2020 assessment by IOM and the United Nations World Food Programme: 72 per cent of Venezuelan migrants and refugees living in Colombia, Ecuador or Peru reported concerns about food security, a 10 percentage point rise compared with the pre-pandemic period.<sup>166</sup> Mass evictions also occurred following the lockdown as migrants were unable to pay rent, leading to protests in the capital city of Bogotá.<sup>167</sup>

As a result, some migrants opted to return to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in spite of the acute risk the journey entailed, with the suspension of public transport and closure of border crossings leaving returnees vulnerable to armed groups and human traffickers.<sup>168</sup> By the end of October 2020, over 120,000 Venezuelans had made the journey.<sup>169</sup> By May 2021, the border crossings between the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Colombia had become increasingly dangerous as gangs incited violence for control over illicit pathways and the spread of COVID-19 became more rampant amid the outbreak of new variants.<sup>170</sup>

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159 Graham et al., 2020; UNHCR, 2020b.

160 Graham and Guerrero Ble, 2020.

161 IOM and UNHCR, 2021; Rotunno, 2019.

162 Quintero and Hodgson, 2020; Panayotatos and Schmidtke, 2020.

163 Center for Global Development, 2020.

164 Graham and Guerrero Ble, 2020.

165 Ibid.

166 IOM and WFP, 2020.

167 Panayotatos and Schmidtke, 2020.

168 UNHCR, 2020a.

169 IOM and WFP, 2020; Luzes and Freier, 2020.

170 McColl, 2021.

## Good practices

Apart from its large-scale regularization policy, Colombia's national Government took several measures in the early weeks of the pandemic. In light of the decision to close migration services offices, on 26 March 2020 it was announced that expiration terms and processing deadlines for migrant permits and documents would be suspended, reducing the risk of detention or deportation of Venezuelans without valid documentation.<sup>171</sup> In early April a six-point plan was announced, which detailed how Venezuelans would be integrated into the national COVID-19 response. The plan sought to guarantee health-care access for all migrants, regardless of their documentation status, while regular migrants were included in food distribution and economic support initiatives, such as the "solidarity income programme", which provided assistance to those working in the informal sector (and so were ineligible for other support programmes).<sup>172</sup> A moratorium on evictions was also announced in April 2020, with government officials fining those who subsequently evicted vulnerable populations, although evictions continued to be reported after its introduction.<sup>173</sup>

Humanitarian organizations also played a key role in supporting vulnerable Venezuelans. For example, as of June 2020 IOM had provided over 85,000 Venezuelans with non-food items, including hygiene kits and personal protective equipment, while UNHCR helped migrants through the regularization process via 59 helplines, and other aid organizations distributed cash assistance through debit cards.<sup>174</sup> A web platform titled "Response for Venezuelans" also exists to strengthen data management and coordination efforts among organizations and agencies aiming to assist and protect refugees and migrants from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.<sup>175</sup> Access to vaccination programming has also been critical.

## Lessons learned after 12 months of COVID-19

The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on displaced Venezuelans in Colombia has underscored the vulnerability of those facing barriers to social and economic inclusion, leading some to call for these barriers to be eliminated.<sup>176</sup> Yet the pandemic has also drawn attention to the Colombian Government's lack of resources to meet the needs of these vulnerable groups, and the need for international organizations and national governments from around the world to help meet the shortfall.<sup>177</sup> As of April 2021, UNHCR and IOM jointly lead the coordination of 73 international organizations and agencies, currently working across 14 states in Colombia in alignment with existing national humanitarian efforts.<sup>178</sup>

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171 Migración Colombia, 2020.

172 Van Praag and Arnson, 2020; Fradique-Mendez and Rodriguez, 2020.

173 Van Praag and Arnson, 2020.

174 IOM, 2020k; UNHCR, 2020a; USAID, 2020.

175 IOM and UNHCR, 2021.

176 Graham et al., 2020.

177 Ibid.

178 Frydenlund et al., 2021.

## Country case study (Northern America): United States of America

### Key statistics

<b>Total population (2020)</b>	331.00 million
<b>Human Development Index category</b>	Very high
<b>GDP (2020)</b>	USD 20 937 billion
<b>GDP per capita (2020)</b>	USD 63 543
<b>Immigrants (2020)</b>	
<i>Millions</i>	50.66
<i>Percentage of population</i>	15.30%
<b>Emigrants abroad (2020)</b>	
<i>Millions</i>	2.99
<i>Percentage of population</i>	0.91%
<b>Refugees and asylum seekers hosted (2020)</b>	1 338 800
<b>Internally displaced persons (as at end 2020)</b>	126 000
<b>COVID-19 confirmed cases (as of 11 March 2021)</b>	
<i>Total</i>	28 879 927
<i>Per million</i>	87 250
<b>COVID-19 deaths (as of 11 March 2021)</b>	
<i>Total</i>	523 986
<i>Per million</i>	1 583
<b>Air passengers (2019)</b>	926.74 million

Sources: Please refer to the (Africa) Kenya country case study table for sources.

### COVID-19 and the hardening immigration policy and practice in the United States

#### Major impacts on populations

Following the outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020, the United States enacted a range of far-reaching policy changes relating to migrants and migration. While many of these policies had been replicated in other nation States – such as travel bans on countries with high incidences of COVID-19, for example – others were viewed as doing more to advance the then administration's long-standing migration goals than to halt the spread of the virus.<sup>179</sup>

These policy changes – which were both rapid and widespread – can be grouped into one of two broad policy areas. The first relates to the tightening of entry to the United States, encapsulated by the suspension of routine visa services and closure of the United States–Mexico border for “non-essential travel” in March 2020, as well as the subsequent halting of the issuance of visas, including for permanent immigration categories in April 2020 and for temporary work

<sup>179</sup> Pierce and Bolter, 2020.

visas in June 2020.<sup>180</sup> These changes were enacted with the stated aim of preserving employment opportunities for United States citizens affected by the economic impact of the pandemic.<sup>181</sup> In March 2020, the practice of expelling individuals who arrived at the Mexican or Canadian borders also began following an order issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), otherwise known as “Title 42”, which cited a danger to public health, with those expelled being returned predominantly to Central American countries.<sup>182</sup>

The second area concerns the interior enforcement of migration rules, and notably the restricted access for migrants to COVID-19 economic support programmes, such as the USD 2.3 trillion CARES Act. For example, under the Act, economic impact payments were restricted to those in households where all individuals filed federal taxes using a social security number.<sup>183</sup> This therefore excluded not only migrants who entered the United States through irregular pathways or were residing on temporary visas, but also their United States-born household members.<sup>184</sup> Further, despite calls to release people from immigration detention due to concerns of transmission in facilities, immigration detention policies were maintained, with people continuing to be detained (albeit at reduced rates).<sup>185</sup> In addition, despite borders being largely closed or severely contained, deportations continued during the pandemic, including to high-risk COVID-19 locations.<sup>186</sup>

With the change of administration in January 2021, a number of immigration policies were reversed, including the rescission of the travel ban, the suspension of construction at the southern border, and the restoration of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) programme.<sup>187</sup> However, there was also an influx at the southern border, posing challenges to the reformation of the immigration system and the implementation of public health safety measures concerning the monitoring of outbreaks and testing individuals at the border.<sup>188</sup>

### **Key challenges for authorities and practitioners**

Aspects of federal policy introduced during the pandemic were criticized for hindering the ability of the United States to respond effectively. In March 2020, for example, a coalition of agriculture trade groups wrote to the Secretary of State to warn that the decision to suspend routine visa services would “undoubtedly cause a significant disruption to the US food supply”, while in July 2020 the American Medical Association called upon the Secretary of State to reopen visa processes for physicians seeking to join residency programmes, in order to avoid significantly compromising the health of the country’s “most vulnerable patients”.<sup>189</sup> Concerns over visa issuances continued under the subsequent administration, where the Department of State faces new lawsuits for refusing to issue visas in countries where there are high COVID-19 incidences.<sup>190</sup> The refusal of visa issuances is argued as not advancing the protection of public health, as individuals who acquire a visa must show proof of a negative COVID-19 test before arriving in the United States and can quarantine.<sup>191</sup>

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180 Ibid.

181 Loweree et al., 2020; McAuliffe, 2020.

182 Pierce and Bolter, 2020; AIC, 2021.

183 U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee, 2020.

184 IRS, 2021.

185 Loweree et al., 2020.

186 Blitzer, 2020; Loweree et al., 2020.

187 Chishti and Pierce, 2021.

188 Banco and Rodriguez, 2021.

189 Agriculture Workforce Coalition, 2020; American Medical Association, 2020.

190 Anderson, 2021.

191 Waldron and Ali, 2021.

A further subset of policies was considered to inhibit the spread of the virus. For example, there was concern that the decision to exclude migrants from social support was interacting with the Public Charge Rule – which enabled migrants who were deemed “more likely than not” to use public benefits at any point in the future to be denied permanent residence – to discourage migrants from accessing health care and, in turn, “impeding efforts to stop the spread” of COVID-19.<sup>192</sup>

Other policies were perceived not as exacerbating the response to the pandemic, but instead to be eroding humanitarian protections. Among those expelled under the CDC’s March 2020 order were unaccompanied migrant children, with UNICEF warning that those who were returned to their countries of origin were a protection risk, as they faced violence and discrimination upon their return.<sup>193</sup> The New York City Bar raised similar concerns, arguing that safety protocols could have been implemented at the border that would have protected public health while simultaneously preserving the rights of asylum seekers.<sup>194</sup>

### Good practices

The United States outlined a number of exceptions to border restrictions with the aim of supporting essential services. Shortly following the decision to suspend routine visa services, the Department of State acknowledged H-2 visa holders as essential to the United States economy and food security, and announced that the visa interview requirement would be waived for a range of applicants, including some agricultural workers, while emergency visa services were restarted for medical professionals.<sup>195</sup> The United States also continued to permit “essential travel” across the United States–Mexico border, which included the movement of agricultural workers, individuals engaged in cross-border trade, and those travelling for emergency response and public health purposes.<sup>196</sup> In August 2020, exceptions were announced following the suspension of certain types of temporary work visa, including public health or health-care professionals and researchers whose work would “help alleviate the effects of the pandemic”.<sup>197</sup>

A number of state governments introduced policies to support migrants. In California, for example, one-time cash payments of USD 500 were distributed to those who were ineligible for support under the CARES Act because of their immigration status, while migrant and refugee communities in Chicago were able to access the city’s COVID-19 Housing Assistance Grant programme.<sup>198</sup> Meanwhile, other policies were suspended at the federal level. The Public Charge Rule was temporarily halted after a federal judge in New York issued a nationwide injunction in July 2020, although this was subsequently overturned in September 2020 by the United States Court of Appeal for the Second Circuit.<sup>199</sup> Further, in November 2020 the expulsion of unaccompanied migrant children was blocked by a federal judge on the grounds that the minors could be subject to sexual abuse, torture or death upon returning to their country of origin.<sup>200</sup> The vaccine roll-out has also included migrants and refugees, ensuring that every individual, regardless of their immigration status, can access a vaccine.<sup>201</sup> As of 10 March 2021, close to 10 per cent of the population was fully vaccinated,<sup>202</sup> and by April 2021, the CDC reported that 40.9 per cent of the population had received at least one dose.<sup>203</sup>

192 U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee, 2020; City of New York, 2020.

193 UNICEF, 2020.

194 New York City Bar, 2020.

195 U.S. Department of State, 2020a; U.S. Department of State, 2020b.

196 U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 2020.

197 U.S. Department of State, 2020a.

198 California Department of Social Services, 2021; City of Chicago, 2020.

199 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2020.

200 Hesson and Rosenberg, 2020.

201 U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2021.

202 AJ/MC, 2021.

203 CDC, 2021.

## Lessons learned after 12 months of COVID-19

Changes to United States migration policy settings – as well as the Federal Government’s broader COVID-19 response – largely reflected the change in administration in January 2021. Extensive criticisms of the previous administration’s handling of the pandemic, predominantly around public health, but also including migration aspects, were voiced from early in the pandemic when its response measures were inadequate, delayed and/or fragmented.<sup>204</sup> The strong focus on the United States’ domestic economic considerations within the context of a global public health emergency were compounded by what some experts considered to be discriminatory and ineffective measures that locked out migrants across the country from economic relief available to others.<sup>205</sup> While the immigration system has seen some important changes under the new administration (such as rescinding the so-called “Muslim ban” and increasing the refugee resettlement programme cap), changes related to COVID-19 aspects have also come about through the expiry of previous orders (such as those related to COVID-19 travel bans or restrictions).<sup>206</sup> At the time of writing, other COVID-19 measures, such as Title 42 allowing for the expulsion of people at United States borders, remained in place, despite calls for their removal as the United States incrementally improves its COVID-19 situation and response.<sup>207</sup> The need to reduce COVID-19 barriers has been offset by concerns over the increased arrivals at the southern border, where nearly 180,000 people arrived between January and March 2021.<sup>208</sup>

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204 Altman, 2020; Lipton et al., 2021.

205 Goodwin and Chemerinsky, 2021; Loweree et al., 2020.

206 Montoya-Galvez, 2021.

207 UNHCR, 2021b.

208 Zakaria, 2021.



## Country case study (Oceania): Fiji

### Key statistics

<b>Total population (2020)</b>	0.9 million
<b>Human Development Index category</b>	High
<b>GDP (2020)</b>	USD 4.38 billion
<b>GDP per capita (2020)</b>	USD 4 882
<b>Immigrants (2019)</b>	
<i>Millions</i>	0.01
<i>Percentage of population</i>	1.57%
<b>Emigrants abroad (2020)</b>	
<i>Millions</i>	0.23
<i>Percentage of population</i>	26.09%
<b>Refugees and asylum seekers hosted (2020)</b>	19
<b>Internally displaced persons (as at end 2020)</b>	14 000
<b>COVID-19 confirmed cases (as of 11 March 2021)</b>	
<i>Total</i>	66
<i>Per million</i>	74
<b>COVID-19 deaths (as of 11 March 2021)</b>	
<i>Total</i>	2
<i>Per million</i>	2
<b>Air passengers (2019)</b>	1.70 million

Sources: Please refer to the (Africa) Kenya country case study table for sources.

### COVID-19 and tourism in Fiji

#### Major impacts on populations

When COVID-19 reached the Pacific island State of Fiji, the country moved swiftly to halt the spread of the virus. On 25 March 2020, six days after the country announced its first confirmed case, the main airport was closed, while a curfew was enacted and quarantine measures for returning nationals were introduced.<sup>209</sup> As a result, Fiji was spared the worst of the health crisis, and on 4 November 2020 marked 200 days without any transmission in the community,<sup>210</sup> recording 66 cases and two deaths as of 11 March 2021, one year after the onset of the global pandemic.<sup>211</sup>

However, these actions simultaneously shut down the tourism sector on which the economy relies: the sector directly or indirectly employs approximately 140,000 people and contributes to 40 per cent of its GDP.<sup>212</sup> Tourism revenue

209 Chanel, 2020; WHO, 2020c.

210 WHO, 2020c.

211 Worldometer, 2021.

212 United Nations Pacific, 2020.

was 99.4 per cent lower in June 2020 than a year earlier and, according to a July 2020 report, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) involved in the sector had lost seven times more income than MSMEs in non-tourism sectors, while large tourism businesses lost twice as much as non-tourism businesses.<sup>213</sup> The restrictions on mobility therefore had significant ramifications for the tourism sector and those reliant upon it.

### Key challenges for authorities and practitioners

The shutdown created immediate difficulties for those working in the sector: about 45 per cent of the labour force in Fiji works in the tourism industry,<sup>214</sup> with only 21 per cent of those employed prior to the pandemic still working full time in July 2020, while 52 per cent were either on leave without pay or working reduced hours.<sup>215</sup> This aligned with a survey of tourism-dependent communities in the Pacific, which found that almost 90 per cent of respondents lived in households that had seen a significant reduction of their usual income, with 85 per cent of those who owned tourism-related businesses losing over three-quarters of their usual income.<sup>216</sup> This decline in income was particularly significant for women and vulnerable groups, who the UNDP notes typically lack access to social protection and safety nets. Indeed, they predicted that the severe downturn of the tourism sector would push marginal groups below the poverty line, exacerbate the income gap between high- and low-income earners and reinforce pre-existing gender inequalities by increasing the burden of domestic and care work for women.<sup>217</sup> The Fiji Ministry of Women reported a significant increase in assaults against women, observing a tenfold increase between March and April 2020, with cases correlated with COVID-19, the strain on families and mobility restrictions.<sup>218</sup>

Between April and June 2020, Fiji garnered around FJD 4.2 million from tourist activities, compared with FJD 528.8 million earned in the previous year. Remaining stagnant, Fiji welcomed just over 1,000 tourists in the month of September 2020, compared with around 81,000 in the previous year.<sup>219</sup> It is clear that the pandemic poses a long-term threat to the tourism sector, with a July 2020 survey finding that 60 per cent of tourism businesses anticipated either closure or moving away from the sector if international travel did not resume in the subsequent six months.<sup>220</sup> This was in large part due to financial pressures, with 29 per cent of those surveyed expecting bankruptcy in this time frame, driven by a sharp decline in occupancy rates and forward bookings.<sup>221</sup>

### Good practices

In their immediate COVID-19 response, the Government worked with the Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF) – which collects compulsory contributions towards the retirement savings of Fijian workers and provides preretirement benefits – to reduce employers' and employees' mandatory contributions to the FNPF, with both schemes used by around 30 per cent of businesses. However, tourism businesses that operated informally were ineligible for this support.<sup>222</sup> Other initiatives were also introduced to support MSMEs, including short-term loans and loan repayment holidays, although take-up was initially low for these schemes, in part due to a lack of awareness among businesses.<sup>223</sup>

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213 Pacific Community Statistics for Development Division, 2020; IFC, 2020.

214 Connell, 2021.

215 IFC, 2020.

216 Scheyvens et al., 2020.

217 UNDP, 2020a.

218 Connell, 2021.

219 Ibid.

220 IFC, 2020.

221 Ibid.

222 Ibid.

223 Ibid.

Support was also provided for workers, with impacted tourism employees eligible to access monetary support through the FNPF, although again informal workers did not qualify for the initiative.<sup>224</sup> As a result, many Fijians turned to traditional skills. Over half of respondents to the survey of tourism-dependent communities reported growing food for their household to adapt to the pressures of the pandemic, while many had begun fishing. In the absence of cash, 35 per cent also reported trading or bartering goods, with a Facebook page titled “Barter for a Better Fiji” amassing over 100,000 members in the weeks following the closure of the tourism sector.<sup>225</sup> Support from NGOs such as the Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises and Development (FRIEND) supplied staple food packages for food banks in Fiji.<sup>226</sup>

The Fijian Government also sought a reopening of the sector. After stalled negotiations to open a “Bula Bubble” – whereby travel between Fiji, New Zealand and Australia could restart without the requirement to undergo quarantine – they instead allowed limited levels of “VIP tourism”. In September 2020 a “Blue Lane” for superyachts was announced, where crew were permitted to arrive on the island if they had made no contact with people outside of their yacht for 14 days prior to arrival, while a luxury island resort opened for private hire – including chartered flights – in November 2020, so long as guests passed rigorous screening procedures beforehand.<sup>227</sup>

### **Lessons learned after 12 months of COVID-19**

By highlighting the overreliance of the Fijian economy on tourism, the COVID-19 pandemic led to a push for its diversification. The UNDP, for example, proposed the upscaling of Fiji’s agricultural response package, positing that this would not only create employment opportunities, but also reduce dependence on imports and improve food security.<sup>228</sup> It has also drawn attention to the vulnerability of informal workers, with the Fiji Trades Union Congress calling for an extension of formal legal rights and protections to address gender imbalances in the labour market and alleviate poverty.<sup>229</sup>

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224 Ibid.

225 Scheyvens et al., 2020; Tora, 2020.

226 Connell, 2021.

227 Rosen, 2020; Carruthers, 2020.

228 UNDP, 2020a.

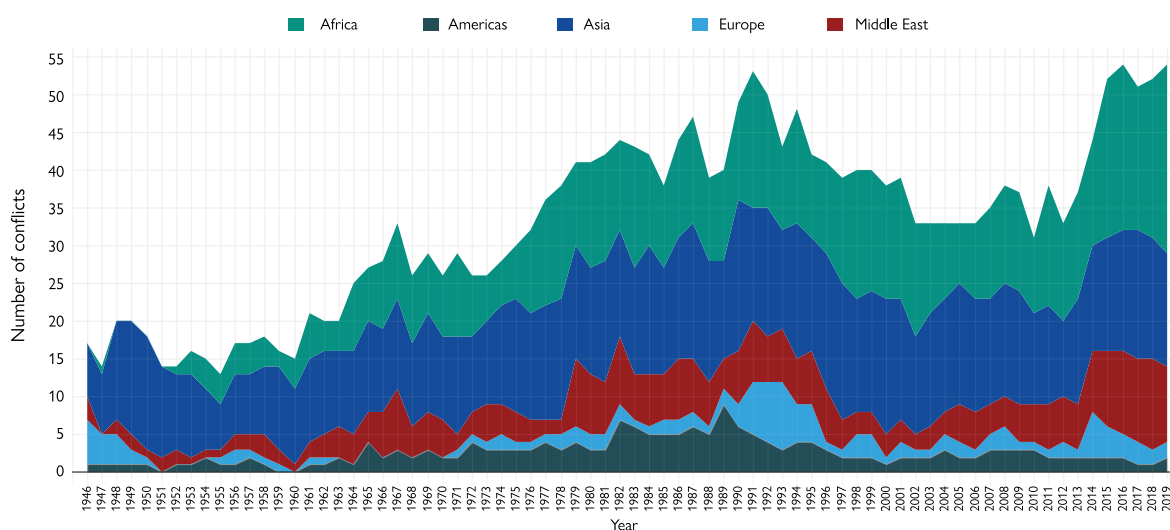
229 ILO, 2020c.

## Chapter 6

### Appendix A. Trends and drivers of conflict

During the last decade, conflicts have proliferated globally, reversing the trend set in the years following the end of the Cold War when the world was becoming more peaceful as the number and intensity of most types of conflicts declined over the subsequent decade (see Figure 1).<sup>230</sup> Today, more than 40 per cent of those who are poor live in countries affected by fragility, conflict and violence.<sup>231</sup> Conflicts across the world have become more fragmented, complex and protracted.<sup>232</sup> While the number of inter-State conflicts (conflicts between States) has significantly declined, intra-State conflicts (those within States) have escalated. Increasingly, however, internal conflicts are fueled by external actors in the form of proxy wars.<sup>233</sup> The decline in direct conflict between States has been attributed to a combination of factors, including the emergence of international norms that have increasingly been embraced globally, the rise of more effective international organizations to enforce these norms, and the fact that previous key drivers of conflicts between States, such as the seizure and annexation of land, have become less appealing and less rewarding in a globalized economy.<sup>234</sup>

Figure 1: Armed conflict by region, 1946–2019



Source: UCDP, n.d.

In addition to being largely characterized by civil wars, contemporary conflicts have taken on new forms, comprising not just armies of States, but also non-State armed groups, terrorists and even criminal gangs. They have also become internationalized, often spilling across borders and aided by regional and global links, underscoring how transnational various groups engaged in conflict have become.<sup>235</sup> While it is all too common to try and reduce various conflicts to a single cause or driver, conflict and violence are in fact often influenced by an interplay of

<sup>230</sup> World Bank, 2018b.

<sup>231</sup> World Bank, 2021b.

<sup>232</sup> UN, n.d.a.

<sup>233</sup> Dupuy and Rustad, 2018; Collier et al., 2003.

<sup>234</sup> Szayna et al., 2017.

<sup>235</sup> Avis, 2019.

factors and processes and are often underpinned by socioeconomic and political dimensions. The causes of conflict have been analysed through a range of drivers, those related to poverty, inequality and exclusion and those based on material interests, such as natural resources.<sup>236</sup> Much attention in recent years has focused on inequality and social exclusion, linking many of today's conflicts to these drivers. Inequalities and exclusion do not in themselves directly lead to conflict, but create conditions needed for grievances to fester.<sup>237</sup> These drivers do not exist in a vacuum and are often steeped in a set of underlying conditions, including historical and development patterns, such as colonial era and post-colonial development strategies, the institutional capacity of States, and international policies.<sup>238</sup>

### Advancing peace: The UN and regional bodies

Various actors, including the United Nations, have long worked to advance peace and security globally by both resolving and preventing conflicts. The creation of the United Nations in 1945 in the aftermath of the Second World War was driven by the single objective to maintain international peace and security;<sup>a</sup> and today, the United Nations Security Council has the primary responsibility for international peace and security.<sup>b</sup> The Organization has pursued global peace and security through a range of mechanisms, such as preventive diplomacy and mediation, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, counter-terrorism and disarmament.<sup>c</sup> The United Nations has also promoted the rule of law at both national and international levels, as this is seen as key to lasting peace and to “the effective protection of human rights, and to sustained economic progress and development”.<sup>d</sup> Further, the Organization has facilitated the adoption of resolutions as well as global norms and values that have played a major role in managing conflict-related challenges. Recently, for example, the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council adopted twin resolutions on sustaining peace, which set out an ambitious and comprehensive agenda for peacebuilding.<sup>e, f</sup> The Global Compact on Refugees, adopted in 2018, is an effort to foster international cooperation on “more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing”, given the sharp increase in the number of refugees and asylum seekers globally, and also commits States to preventing and addressing the root causes of large-scale refugee movements and protracted refugee situations, including bolstering their international efforts to prevent and resolve conflict.<sup>g</sup> The Global Compact also aims to pursue a multi-stakeholder and partnership approach, including leveraging the United Nations system to ensure on-the-ground cooperation that aligns with the United Nations Secretary-General’s reform agenda in the areas of peace, security and development.<sup>h</sup> Regional organizations, including regional economic communities, have stepped up their peace efforts and play an increasingly vital role in resolving and preventing conflict within their regions. Organizations such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), for example, are heavily involved in peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts within their regions.<sup>i</sup>

a UN, n.d.b.

b Ibid.

c Ibid.

d UN, 2007.

e Ibid.

f The United Nations’ long focus on peace and security is also reflected in the several Secretary-General reports that have been published over the years (see Appendix B).

g UNHCR, 2018.

h Ibid.

i Obi, 2009; Nathan, 2010.

236 Collier and Hoeffler, 2005; Kett and Rowson, 2007; World Bank, 2018b.

237 World Bank, 2018b.

238 Goodhand, 2001.

## Appendix B. UN documents for peacebuilding: Secretary-General's reports

30 July 2020, <a href="#">S/2020/773</a>	Report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, submitted in connection with the 2020 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture.
30 May 2019, <a href="#">S/2019/448</a>	Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/276 and Security Council resolution 2413.
18 January 2018, <a href="#">S/2018/43</a>	Secretary-General's implementation report on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.
23 September 2014, <a href="#">S/2014/694</a>	Report on peacebuilding in the aftermath of conflict.
6 January 2014, <a href="#">S/2014/5</a>	Secretary-General's report on civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict.
8 October 2012, <a href="#">S/2012/746</a>	Secretary-General's report on peacebuilding in the aftermath of conflict.
18 February 2011, <a href="#">S/2011/85</a>	Secretary-General transmitting the report of the independent review on civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict.
7 September 2010, <a href="#">S/2010/466</a>	Report on women and peacebuilding.
16 July 2010, <a href="#">S/2010/386</a>	Progress report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict.
11 June 2009, <a href="#">S/2009/304</a>	Report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding in the immediate aftermath of conflict.
4 August 2008, <a href="#">S/2008/522</a>	Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund.
28 November 2006, <a href="#">S/2006/922</a>	Third report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone.
23 October 2006, <a href="#">S/2006/838</a>	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia.
29 August 2006, <a href="#">S/2006/695</a>	Second report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone.
14 August 2006, <a href="#">S/2006/429/Add.1</a>	Addendum to the seventh report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB), providing specifics on the mandate and structure of the integrated office in Burundi.
21 June 2006, <a href="#">S/2006/429</a>	Seventh report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB), proposing the establishment of a UN integrated office.
21 August 2000, <a href="#">S/2000/809</a>	Report of the Panel on the United Nations Peace Operations (also known as the Brahimi Report).
11 February 2000, <a href="#">S/2000/101</a>	Report on the role of the United Nations in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) that included small arms and light weaponry among the primary targets of DDR operations, and highlighted the importance of tracing small arms and combating the illicit trade in small arms.
25 January 1995, <a href="#">S/1995/1</a>	Position paper of the Secretary-General, Supplement to <i>An Agenda for Peace</i> , on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.
17 June 1992, <a href="#">S/24111</a>	Report <i>An Agenda for Peace</i> in which Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali noted that peacebuilding after civil or international strife must address the serious problem of landmines.

Source: United Nations Security Council Report, 2021.

## Chapter 7

### Appendix A. Opportunity, migration and the Human Development Index

The Human Development Index (HDI), as published annually in the UNDP's Human Development Report, is premised on the view that people are not generally driven by a singular desire to gain increased income, but instead puts forward the idea that people seek the "capabilities to exercise their freedoms to be and do what they aspire to in life".<sup>239</sup> Grounded in the work of Amartya Sen and developed by Mahbub ul Haq, the HDI takes a "a people-centred view" by incorporating three streams of data, each representing some of the basic opportunities conducive to expanding human capabilities.<sup>240</sup> First, the education of a country or a subnational jurisdiction is measured, mostly in terms of years of schooling for children. Second, health is measured by the life expectancy of a child at birth. Third, the HDI utilizes an economic indicator, represented by the average income measured in the context of the local currency (purchasing power parity or PPP). By integrating these three categories into a single index, the HDI seeks to obtain a more nuanced perspective of the qualities that contribute to individual and collective well-being in a society.

The HDI's limitations are well known. Reducing the index to health and education, and then quantifying these categories based on a limited series of variables, can risk oversimplification. The classification system – the numerical cut-offs for determining country's level of development – can be perceived as arbitrary. Most pointedly, the HDI can be politicized, as some countries make concerted pushes to receive superior scores on one or more of the indicators.<sup>241</sup> However, economic indices are prone to worse sorts of manipulation, as most recently evidenced by the suspension and review of the World Bank's Doing Business Report, an annual overview that features an index of business regulations and economic factors, but which has been criticized for methodological irregularities and for neglecting the role of social protection systems in human development.<sup>242</sup>

The use of the HDI in this chapter recognizes, first, that the introduction of numerous variables does not inevitably lead to a more accurate representation of development. The simplicity of the HDI is one of its virtues. Second, regarding the classification systems, while these can sometimes be found to be arbitrary, they do help the human mind to conceptualize patterns in development.<sup>243</sup> Finally, while the politicization of the HDI is inevitable, it remains an index of record for journalists, scholars and policymakers alike to provide an accurate measure for understanding the opportunities available to people around the world.<sup>244</sup>

The 2009 edition of the Human Development Report featured a thematic focus on migration, remarking, "better policies towards human mobility can enhance human development".<sup>245</sup> From an HDI perspective, the decision to migrate does not rest solely on the realization of greater incomes, or as an investment for future potential earnings. Migration, instead, is a strategy engaged to secure access to some of the basic goods – health and education – that lead to increased opportunities for oneself and one's children. Notwithstanding the attempt at quantifying global internal migration, a fraught exercise given the definitional vagaries and the paucity of reliable migration event data, the Human Development Report 2009 demonstrated that migration can be analysed in the context of a wider set of variables and that doing so can result in robust evidence for migration with policy implications.

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239 UNDP, 2019.

240 Ibid.; Sen, 1985; Stanton, 2007.

241 Wolff et al., 2011.

242 Davis and Kruse, 2007; World Bank, 2020.

243 Davis et al., 2012.

244 Stanton, 2007.

245 UNDP, 2009.

## Appendix B. How I ended up in a scientific spat about migration figures and what I learned from it

By Maite Vermeulen

*Note:* This is an abridged extract of the original article published in the now defunct publication *The Correspondent*. The full text can still be accessed here: <https://thecorrespondent.com/747/how-i-ended-up-in-a-scientific-spat-about-migration-figures-and-what-i-learned-from-it/98789433039-1dadd2ed>.

I have to tell you how the debunking of an important theory about migration was itself debunked. You probably had to read that sentence twice, and I get that...I learned a lot from this experience. About how science works, and how we as journalists contend with that. About what expertise actually is, and why it is so limited. And about certainty, doubt and being right. So buckle in and brace yourself for a story about that time I said I was wrong – and turned out to be mistaken.

### *How it all started: the migration hump*

It all started a few months ago when I read a new study about the migration hump. I was immediately interested, since “the hump” is a well-known, very influential theory about the relationship between migration and development. Basically, the theory states that as poor countries become richer, outward migration increases rather than decreases. This may seem counter-intuitive: we might expect that when countries get richer, reasons to leave will diminish because life there is better now, right? But the migration hump shows that this is only the case above a certain income level, starting from about USD 7,000 to USD 10,000 per person per year.

Many poor countries are a long way away from that, which means that economic development in those countries will lead to more migration, not less. That’s because migration costs money, and when people who were previously very poor have some, they are more likely to leave. Come up with a graph comparing income and emigration, and you’ll see a more or less hill-shaped curve showing the lowest rate of emigration in poor countries, the highest rates in middle-income countries, and falling rates for rich countries: the migration hump.

I frequently reference the migration hump in my articles, especially to criticize European migration policy. And there’s a reason for that: the European Union is spending more and more money on development aid to reduce migration. But the migration hump shows that this policy is based on a misconception: if more aid leads to more development in poor countries, that funding will cause net migration to increase, not decrease. And then that new study came across my desk, released under the MEDAM research project. The researchers were quite blunt: their analysis of migration data showed that the migration hump was an oversimplification. In actual fact, their models produced opposite results. They calculated that when a poor country becomes richer, emigration to rich countries goes down. Their explanation was that their method was different: instead of comparing emigration in poor and rich countries, they compared countries with themselves, over time. Why? Because a comparison between poor and rich countries overlooks the differences between those countries: differences that can affect income as well as migration.

I had colleagues and migration experts with more knowledge of econometrics take a look at the new paper; I spoke to the researchers, and then decided to write an update. The research looked convincing, and I wanted to hold myself accountable, because a theory I had often cited in my pieces did not seem to hold up. I thought that was the end of my hump saga. But then I was tagged in a Twitter thread by Michael Clemens, a leading development economist at the Center for Global Development. The new research, he tweeted, was based on a statistical error.



### *Clemens and his calculations*

There was nothing wrong with my article as such, Clemens told me in a private message. “The problem is with the research itself.” All very friendly, of course. But I wasn’t so sure. Could I have seen this coming? Should I have done something differently? What could I learn from this?

I took another in-depth look at the paper, and delved into Clemens’s criticism. I looked at his charts, tables, formulas. The only slight problem was I didn’t understand any of it. This wasn’t really all that strange, because Clemens’s criticism targets researchers’ statistical methods. If you don’t have a degree in econometrics, the analysis is almost impossible to follow. In fact, it’s almost impossible for people who have studied advanced statistics. My colleague Sanne Blauw – with a PhD in econometrics – called me after spending three hours analysing both papers: “I think I more or less understand Clemens’s criticism.”

I asked more experts for assistance: professors and PhD students who could explain the statistics to me, who had experience with time series and cross-sectional panel data, who knew more about spurious regressions and non-stationary variables. I had long phone calls with Michael Clemens and Claas Schneiderheinze, one of the researchers who authored the original MEDAM paper. I can’t say I’ve completely mastered the maths. But here’s what I now understand of the discussion.

### *What I learned from this*

Whether or not this paper is based on a statistical error (this discussion will probably be settled in academic journals in the next few months), all this commotion makes me wonder about my relationship with science as a journalist: what it is – or what it should be. Every single person – including a journalist – has a limited framework that shapes their ability to understand something. I went to university, but I never took advanced statistics. Nor do I understand topics like the nitrogen cycle, Japanese grammar or the mathematics behind climate models. There is simply so much more that we don’t know than what we do.

Sometimes that doesn’t matter. I don’t have to understand Newton to say something meaningful about poverty alleviation. But often it does matter, even if we don’t realize it. As journalists, when our own knowledge and skills fall short, we rely on experts to fill in the gaps. But even for those experts, what they don’t know extends far beyond what they do know. Especially when it comes to statistics. Many biologists, medical professionals, psychologists, economists or social scientists hire specialized colleagues to run their statistical analyses. And those specialists design models that are so complicated that only a handful of people can really understand them, or provide critical commentary. The mathematical calculations behind the models are so far removed from reality that results pop out like a rabbit out of a top hat: we have no idea how it works, but the outcome is self-evident.

Who knows how the statistical stage magic actually works? We can draw an obvious parallel with the epidemiological models being used to predict the course of the coronavirus pandemic: who has any idea exactly how those models work?

And that’s how a journalist – or policymaker – can end up in a tricky situation when two experts are making contradictory claims. Can you place two non-stationary variables on one side of a panel data regression without losing the long-term trend? Yes you can; no you can’t! How on earth can a journalist possibly figure out who is right? The only solution seems to be cumulative knowledge: asking all the smart people you can find to give it their best shot too. At its very best, that’s how science should work.

And when that happens, it often turns out not to be about what's true or false. Instead, it's about which question we want to answer. The MEDAM paper answers an interesting question – just not the question of whether or not the migration hump holds true. And maybe the researchers subconsciously fell into a pitfall that science has created for itself: contentious studies that debunk something major are considered more prestigious than studies that confirm the prevailing assumptions. Just think about it: this was a study that I (a journalist) decided to focus attention on. I probably wouldn't have taken such a close look if their model had once again supported the famous migration hump.

This discussion shows that the best thing we can do is to keep being critical: constantly doubting, questioning and admitting that what we know – and what experts know – is limited. Had I dug deeper I might have been able to raise some questions about the data set used in the MEDAM paper. But then again: there is no such thing as an unproblematic data set when it involves something as complicated as migration figures. And the concept that two non-stationary variables cannot be regressed if you are controlling for a cointegrated third variable – that's not a question I could even have imagined asking in the context of this paper. And neither have many, many scientists, because the MEDAM paper has been read and widely acclaimed by lots of other smart people.

Actually, I've started thinking that journalists, scientists and policymakers are all in the same boat here: we would love for the world to be simpler than it can be. We want to be able to capture it in a nice, neat model, and then wrap it all up in a nice, neat article. But reality is so much more capricious and complex than any model can capture.

Seeing more shades of grey is also a way to understand the world better – but it's not quite as simple to put into a pithy headline. It's easier to just say: I was right after all.

## Appendix C

For the purposes of this chapter, in order to determine an estimated number of migrants who inhabit a jurisdiction due to factors not related to forced migration, we utilized the forced migration data base produced by UNHCR along with international migrant stock numbers produced by UN DESA.<sup>246</sup> Since these United Nations agencies collect data and make estimations based on disparate methods, sources and time frames, it is worth mentioning a few details about the computations featured in this chapter.

For each country in each year, the stock of forced migrants – made up of those legally designated as refugees by UNHCR plus UNHCR's estimate of asylum seekers – is subtracted from the overall migrant stock. In cases where a country's number of forced migrants (from UNHCR) exceeds the total migrant stock of an origin or destination country, the number of “non-forced-migrants” is reduced to zero to avoid a nonsensical “negative” stock.

To calculate migrant stock as a proportion of population, different computations are required in the case of emigration (the movement of people away from an origin country) than in situations of immigration – the movement of people to a destination country. In both cases, we used migrant stock data and population data, published most recently by UN DESA in 2020.

In cases of immigration, calculating the migrant stock for an HDI classification follows the equation:

$$Proportion_{immigrant} = \frac{\text{sum of migrant stocks living in destination countries}}{\text{sum of total populations}}$$

For cases of emigration, diaspora populations have to be included in the denominator of the formula to ensure correct proportionality. Thus, the equation for each HDI classification is:

$$Proportion_{emigrant} = \frac{\text{sum of migrant stocks from origin countries}}{\text{sum of migrant stocks from origin countries} + \text{sum of total populations}}$$

Since the accurate, anonymous and consistent collection of migration flow data remains difficult, the use of migrant stock has become a standard, if indirect way to assess migration flows.<sup>247</sup> As with previous studies using bilateral migrant stock data, we are bound by the same limitations, most prominent of which is an assumption that migrants are leaving their country of birth or citizenship, which might not always be the case.<sup>248</sup> By measuring migrant stocks in discrete intervals over time, one has a broad sense of movements of people between places, at least in the form of snapshots over time. As noted by Clemens, measuring migrant stock in this way does not account for migrant deaths, one of the other pillars of demographic change. A more precise term for the calculations completed in this chapter would be to call this the “incidence” of migration. To avoid technical jargon for a broader readership, we have chosen to avoid this discussion in the main text, while recognizing the conceptual distinctions here.

246 UNDP, 2019; UN DESA, 2021; UNHCR, 2020.

247 Clemens, 2020.

248 Abel, 2016.

## Chapter 9

### Appendix A. Key definitions

**Environmental migration** is the movement of persons or groups of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are forced to leave their places of habitual residence, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move within or outside their country of origin or habitual residence.

**Climate migration** is a subcategory of environmental migration; it defines a singular type of environmental migration, where the change in the environment is due to climate change. Migration in this context can be associated with greater vulnerability of affected people, particularly if it is forced. However, migration can also be a form of adaptation to environmental stressors, helping to build resilience of affected individuals and communities.

**Trapped populations** do not migrate, yet are situated in areas under threat ... at risk of becoming “trapped” or having to stay behind, where they will be more vulnerable to environmental shocks and impoverishment.

**Planned relocation** in the context of disasters or environmental degradation, including when due to the effects of climate change, is a planned process in which persons or groups of persons move or are assisted to move away from their homes or place of temporary residence, are settled in a new location and provided with the conditions for rebuilding their lives.

All definitions above are from the International Organization for Migration *Glossary on Migration* (IOM, 2019).

**Slow-onset events:** The impacts of climate change include slow-onset events and extreme weather events, both of which may result in loss and damage. Slow-onset events, as initially introduced by the Cancun Agreement (COP16), refer to the risks and impacts associated with increasing temperatures; desertification; loss of biodiversity; land and forest degradation; glacial retreat and related impacts; ocean acidification; sea-level rise; and salinization. See: <https://unfccc.int/process/bodies/constituted-bodies/executive-committee-of-the-warsaw-international-mechanism-for-loss-and-damage-wim-excom/areas-of-work/slow-onset-events>.

**Adaptation:** Adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities. See: <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-convention/glossary-of-climate-change-acronyms-and-terms#a>.

**Mitigation:** In the context of climate change, this is a human intervention to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases. Examples include using fossil fuels more efficiently for industrial processes or electricity generation, switching to solar energy or wind power, improving the insulation of buildings, and expanding forests and other “sinks” to remove greater amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. See: <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-convention/glossary-of-climate-change-acronyms-and-terms#m>.

## Appendix B. Additional United Nations policy initiatives related to slow-onset events and migration

Ongoing initiatives are especially relevant to support the development of policy on migration in the context of slow-onset events. The summary below briefly outlines selected recent significant developments that could influence policymaking at national and regional levels.

Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) are increasingly discussing actions to be taken to address migration linked to specific slow-onset events: desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD).<sup>249</sup> Parties to the Convention committed to reduce forced migration linked to DLDD<sup>250</sup> and adopted decisions in 2017<sup>251</sup> and 2019<sup>252</sup> on the topic. These decisions outline specific solutions, such as promoting the restoration of degraded land to provide alternative opportunities to populations and supporting the Initiative on Sustainability, Stability and Security in Africa (3S Initiative),<sup>253</sup> which seeks to create green jobs for vulnerable groups, including youth in high outmigration areas, migrants, migrants in transit and returning migrants.

In July 2020, the United Nations General Assembly released a thematic report on internal displacement in the context of the slow-onset adverse effects of climate change produced by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Cecilia Jimenez-Damary.<sup>254</sup> The report analyses how slow-onset impacts of climate change affect the enjoyment of human rights by internally displaced persons, including specific groups. The report provides recommendations to States, the international community, businesses and national human rights institutions to address internal displacement in the context of slow-onset events. These recommendations are aligned with the recommendations of the UNFCCC Task Force on Displacement and the commitments made under the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. They highlight among other issues the need to integrate climate-related displacement in laws, policies and programmes on human mobility and to enhance climate mitigation efforts in order to reduce drivers of displacement linked to climate impacts.

In January 2020, a landmark decision from the United Nations Human Rights Committee<sup>255</sup> recognized that States shall refrain from sending people back to situations where the impacts of climate change in the country of origin pose a risk to their life with dignity (principle of non-refoulement). This decision also highlights that the affected States need the support of the international community to address the immense challenges posed by climate change, including slow-onset events. The Committee's conclusions underscore the urgency for States to open new regular migration pathways and provide temporary and longer-term forms of protection to people who would face life-threatening climate risks, including those linked to slow-onset events, if they returned to their country of origin.<sup>256</sup>

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249 IOM and UNCCD, 2019.

250 UNCCD, 2017a.

251 UNCCD, 2017b.

252 UNCCD, 2019.

253 For details, see 3S Initiative, n.d.

254 UNGA, 2020.

255 United Nations Human Rights Committee, 2020.

256 IOM, 2020e.

In March 2015, the United Nations Member States signed the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (SFDRR)<sup>257</sup> to prevent and reduce disaster risk, including risks linked to slow-onset disasters. The Sendai Framework highlights the need to include migrants in disaster risk-reduction and management action and acknowledges that migrants should contribute to resilience building.<sup>258</sup> The 2015 Nansen Initiative<sup>259</sup> takes into consideration how slow-onset disasters and environmental degradation, including the effects of climate change, impact human mobility. The Nansen Agenda highlights existing practices applied by States worldwide to provide protection and assistance to people displaced by disasters.<sup>260</sup>

Other policy discussions focusing on slow-onset events and migration are taking place, for instance under the International Law Commission,<sup>261</sup> the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights,<sup>262</sup> the Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) thematic working group on environmental change and migration,<sup>263</sup> and the International Labour Organization.<sup>264</sup>

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257 UNDRR, 2015.

258 Guadagno, 2016.

259 Nansen Initiative, 2015a.

260 Nansen Initiative, 2015b. The implementation of the Nansen Agenda is spearheaded by a follow-up initiative, the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD).

261 Aurescu et al., 2018.

262 OHCHR, 2018.

263 KNOMAD, n.d.

264 ILO, n.d.

## Chapter 10

### Appendix A. Ratification status of international instruments relevant to migration

Instrument	No. of State parties as at 30 June 2021
United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000	190
Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000	178
Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000	150
Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951	146
Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1967	147
International Convention of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families, 1990	56
United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982	168
International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 as amended	165
International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, 1979, as amended	113
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966	173
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966	171
Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989	196
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979	189
Slavery Convention, 1926	99
Protocol amending the Slavery Convention, 1953	61
Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, 1956	124
ILO Convention No. 97 concerning Migration for Employment (Revised, 1949)	51
ILO Convention No. 143 concerning Migrations in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers, 1975	26
Fundamental ILO Conventions	
Freedom of Association and the Protection of the Rights to Organize Convention, 1948 (No. 87)	157
Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)	168
Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)	179
Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention, 2014	53
Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)	176
Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)	173
Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)	187
Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)	173
Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)	175

Sources: ILO, 2021b; IMO, 2021; UNTC, 2021.

## Appendix B. Forms of exploitation captured in regional instruments

Trafficking in Persons Protocol supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000)	Exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation	Forced labour or services	Slavery or practices similar to slavery and servitude	Removal of organs	Other forms	All potential victims
Inter-American Convention on International Traffic of Minors (1994)	Prostitution, sexual exploitation	No	Servitude only	No	Any other unlawful purpose.	No. Minors only.
ECOWAS Declaration on the Fight against Trafficking in persons (2001)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes. Adopts the international Protocol definition.	Yes
SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution (2002)	No	No	No	No	Only includes buying or selling for prostitution.	No. Only women or children.
Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (2005)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes – “at a minimum”.	Yes
European Council Directive 2011/36/EU (2011)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes. Adds forced begging, exploitation in criminal activities, illegal adoption, forced marriage.	Yes
ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2015)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes – “at a minimum”.	Yes



## Appendix C. Inter-State consultation mechanisms relevant to human trafficking

Inter-State consultation mechanisms on migration (ISCMs) are “State-led, ongoing information-sharing and policy dialogues on the regional, interregional or global level for States with an interest in promoting cooperation in the field of migration.”<sup>265</sup> While ISCMs may be focused on specific aspects of migration, they usually tackle human trafficking, given its close relationship with migration.

The table below provides an illustrative list of ISCMs that are relevant to human trafficking and is structured along the three main types of ISCMs, namely, regional consultative processes on migration (RCPs), interregional forums on migration (IRFs) and global processes on migration.<sup>266</sup> Each ISCM’s name is hyperlinked to the relevant website/page.

Regional consultative processes on migration (RCPs)	Africa	<p>African Union – Horn of Africa Initiative on Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (AU-HoAI)</p> <p>Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration and Refugee Affairs</p> <p>Intergovernmental Authority on Development Regional Consultative Process on Migration (IGAD-RCP)</p> <p>Migration Dialogue from the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa Member States (MIDCOM)</p> <p>Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa (MIDSA)</p> <p>Migration Dialogue for West Africa (MIDWA)</p>
	Americas	<p>Caribbean Migration Consultations (CMC)</p> <p>Central American Commission of Migration Directors (OCAM)</p> <p>Regional Conference on Migration (RCM or Puebla Process)</p> <p>South American Conference on Migration (SACM)</p>
	Asia and Pacific	<p>Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Trafficking</p> <p>Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC)</p> <p>Regional Consultative Process on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin in Asia (Colombo Process)</p>
	Europe	<p>Almaty Process on Refugee Protection and International Migration</p> <p>Prague Process</p>
	Middle East	<p>Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration and Refugee Affairs (ARCP)</p>

<sup>265</sup> IOM, 2019b.

<sup>266</sup> For more information on ISCMs, see [www.iom.int/inter-state-consultation-mechanisms-migration](http://www.iom.int/inter-state-consultation-mechanisms-migration).

Interregional forums on migration (IRFs)	Africa–Europe	5+5 Dialogue on Migration in the Western Mediterranean EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative (Khartoum Process) Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development (Rabat Process)
	Americas–Europe	Ibero-American Forum on Migration and Development (FIBEMYD) Ibero-American Network of Migration Authorities (RIAM)
	Asia–Europe	Budapest Process
	Asia–Middle East	Abu Dhabi Dialogue among the Asian Labor Sending and Receiving Countries
	Europe–Asia–Americas	Inter-Governmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC)
	Europe–Asia–Americas–Middle East	Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime
	Intra-African	Pan-African Forum on Migration
Global processes on migration	State-led	Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD)
	Facilitated by an intergovernmental organization (IOM)	International Dialogue on Migration (IDM)

## Chapter 11

### Appendix A. Definitions of AI

There is no universal definition of artificial intelligence (AI), which is a generic term with wide applicability to many contexts. Some useful definitions that assist in explaining the term include:

Source	Definition
The Canadian Information and Communications Technology Council <sup>267</sup>	A multidisciplinary subject, involving methodologies and techniques from various fundamental disciplines such as mathematics, engineering, natural science, computer science and linguistics, to name a few. Over the last few decades, AI has evolved into a number of technological areas such as planning, natural language processing, speech processing, machine learning, vision recognition, neural networks and robotics, among others.
International Telecommunication Union (ITU) AI for Good Global Summit 2017 <sup>268</sup>	A set of associated technologies and techniques that can be used to complement traditional approaches, human intelligence and analytics and/or other techniques.
High-Level Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence set up by the European Commission <sup>269</sup>	<p>AI refers to systems that display intelligent behaviour by analysing their environment and taking actions – with some degree of autonomy – to achieve specific goals.</p> <p>AI-based systems can be purely software-based, acting in the virtual world (e.g. voice assistants, image analysis software, search engines, speech and face recognition systems) or AI can be embedded in hardware devices (e.g. advanced robots, autonomous cars, drones or Internet of Things applications).</p>
World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) <sup>270</sup>	AI is generally considered to be a discipline of computer science that is aimed at developing machines and systems that can carry out tasks considered to require human intelligence. Machine learning and deep learning are two subsets of AI. In recent years, with the development of new neural network techniques and hardware, AI is usually perceived as a synonym for “deep supervised machine learning”.
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) <sup>271</sup>	An AI system is a machine-based system that can, for a given set of human-defined objectives, make predictions, recommendations, or decisions influencing real or virtual environments. AI systems are designed to operate with varying levels of autonomy.

267 McLaughlin and Quan, 2019.

268 ITU and XPrize, 2017.

269 European Commission, 2019.

270 WIPO, n.d.

271 OECD, 2019.

United Kingdom Government Digital Service and Office for Artificial Intelligence <sup>272</sup>	<p>At its core, AI is a research field spanning philosophy, logic, statistics, computer science, mathematics, neuroscience, linguistics, cognitive psychology and economics.</p> <p>AI can be defined as the use of digital technology to create systems capable of performing tasks commonly thought to require intelligence.</p> <p>AI is constantly evolving, but generally it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• involves machines using statistics to find patterns in large amounts of data;</li> <li>• is the ability to perform repetitive tasks with data without the need for constant human guidance.</li> </ul>
Nils J. Nilsson <sup>273</sup>	AI is that activity devoted to making machines intelligent, and intelligence is that quality that enables an entity to function appropriately and with foresight in its environment.
Hila Mehr <sup>274</sup>	AI is the programming of computers to do tasks that would normally require human intelligence. This includes the ability to understand and monitor visual/spatial and auditory information, reason and make predictions, interact with humans and machines, and continuously learn and improve.
John McCarthy <sup>275</sup>	It is the science and engineering of making intelligent machines, especially intelligent computer programmes. It is related to the similar task of using computers to understand human intelligence, but AI does not have to confine itself to methods that are biologically observable.
Dario Gil et al. <sup>276</sup>	AI is a field of computer science that studies how machines can be made to act intelligently. AI has many functions, including, but not limited to: learning, understanding, reasoning and interacting.
Ronald Ashri <sup>277</sup>	AI refers to the effort to create machines that are able to tackle any problem by applying their skills. Just like humans, they can examine a situation and make best use of the resources at hand to achieve their objectives.
Jerry Kaplan <sup>278</sup>	The essence of AI is the ability to make appropriate generalizations in a timely fashion based on limited data. The broader the domain of application, the quicker conclusions are drawn with minimal information, the more intelligent the behaviour.

272 United Kingdom Government Digital Service and Office for Artificial Intelligence, 2019.

273 Nilsson, 2010.

274 Mehr, 2017.

275 McCarthy, 2007.

276 Gil et al., 2020.

277 Ashri, 2020.

278 Kaplan, 2016.

## Appendix B. AI usage in different sectors

**Agriculture:** AI is largely present in the farming and agriculture industry, especially with the increase in the use of intelligent tractors and plucking machines during harvest days. In addition, the agricultural sector relies on harvesting robots handling essential agricultural tasks such as planting seeds and monitoring crop and soil health. Flying and floating drones with AI capabilities are also being used to detect the quality of soil and water in order to improve the quality and quantity of crop yield.<sup>279</sup>

**Business and finance:** AI applications and usage have become essential for companies to save costs while improving outreach and quality of services. Computer algorithms and data-mining interfaces are allowing companies to improve the quality of their services by ensuring these better match customers' expectations and needs. For instance, Netflix and Amazon recommendation lists provide a more personalized experience by capturing their engagement patterns through data mining. Human agents are also being replaced by intelligent software robots such as chatbots that can provide customers with instant answers to their queries,<sup>280</sup> while reducing the cost of hiring human assistants.

**Education:** AI applications in education include adaptive learning technology,<sup>281</sup> which tailors content to students based on their abilities. AI is also used for plagiarism checking (e.g. Turnitin) and automated grading, as well as autocorrect and grammar checking (e.g. Grammarly).

**Environment:** AI has been integrated in ecological policy plans and has played a vital role in search and rescue missions in the responses to natural and human-made disasters. Examples include robots with AI capabilities that can sort recyclable material from waste, as well as using AI on satellite data to map and predict the progression of wildfires and find missing persons.<sup>282</sup>

**Governance and security:** Governments are using AI to improve security apparatuses. AI systems and autonomous flying machines such as drones are being used for surveillance to help automate the detection of, and response to, threats and patterns of criminal behaviour.<sup>283</sup>

**Science and health care:** Investment in the field of AI in science and health care has witnessed a significant uptake, especially after the emergence of COVID-19.<sup>284</sup> Using AI in science has proved to be indispensable, as it allows for cheaper experimentation, enables faster scientific discoveries and improves the effectiveness and efficiency of the health-care system. AI technologies are now able to monitor patients' health, provide automated diagnostic support systems in hospitals and complement the work of physicians in the operation room. They are also being widely used in scientific research and experimentation, especially in magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) segmentation and statistics.

**Transportation:** The transportation industry is one of the sectors benefiting most from the surge of AI, through research and investment in autonomous vehicles with virtual driver systems by car companies such as Tesla.<sup>285</sup> The sector has also been leveraging AI algorithms to optimize public transport for scheduling, routing and traffic light management.<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> Walch, 2019.

<sup>280</sup> Nguyen, 2020

<sup>281</sup> Haoyang Li, 2020.

<sup>282</sup> Chui et al., 2018.

<sup>283</sup> OECD, 2019.

<sup>284</sup> Sivasubramanian, 2020.

<sup>285</sup> Niestadt et al., 2019.

<sup>286</sup> Takyar, 2020.







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## Chapter 11

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