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THE SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MIGRANTS AND DISPLACED POPULATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

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SPECIAL ISSUE ON
COVID-19'S SOCIOECONOMIC
IMPACT IN THE MENA REGION

Introduction – Assessing COVID-19's socioeconomic impact on migrants and displaced populations in the Middle East and North Africa: What data do we need, and what are the challenges in its collection?

Joris Jourdain and Lorenza Rossi¹

This special issue of *Migration Policy Practice* focuses on COVID-19's socioeconomic impact on migrants and displaced persons in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. It provides an overview of the diverse effects of COVID-19 on a wide range of populations (i.e. labour migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs)) across several countries (Yemen, Libya, Lebanon, etc.) and touches upon various topics (e.g. remittances, access to employment and social protection, mobility). As such, this special issue helps us grasp *how* and *to what extent* migrants and displaced populations across the region have been (and continue to be) affected by the long-term and adverse effects of the pandemic. It also discusses extensively what concrete actions would be needed to ensure that the policy and operational response to the COVID-19 pandemic is adapted to the needs of migrants and displaced populations living in the region.

Since the onset of the pandemic, international organizations, think tanks and academic institutions produced considerable amounts of data on the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 on migration in MENA and, so to say, “mainstreamed” the pandemic in their ongoing research efforts. Despite this, a number of knowledge gaps must still be addressed, and as of this writing, it is difficult to fully comprehend the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on migrants' and displaced populations' socioeconomic outcomes in the MENA region. What data do we need, and how can we get it?

First, we need data covering a larger geographical area. The quantity of migration data in the MENA region is highly variable due to instability, conflict or lack of governmental buy-in, and it differs significantly from one country to another. In some countries of the region, national statistical offices (NSOs) or international organizations are used to collecting and disseminating quality migration data. However, other

countries have traditionally been less inclined to do the same or have less capacity to do so. Ultimately, States' approach and history with migration data has an effect on international organizations' ability to collect data on the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 on migrant populations.

How can we collect data on the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 in a greater number of MENA countries? In the short term, data-producing bodies and international organizations should continue their advocacy efforts with reluctant governments, outlining that data collected on the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 will be beneficial to all parties – governments, international organizations, civil society organizations, host communities and mobile populations alike. In the long term, efforts led by several international organizations to build the capacity of States' statistical offices should continue and intensify.

Second, we need to ensure that data collected on the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 reflects the diversity of mobile populations' situations. The MENA region is witness to a wide range of mobility patterns, including labour migration, forced displacement and mixed migration flows – often characterized by a high number of migrants in irregular situations. These populations are also characterized by a wide range of ages, genders, and socioeconomic and legal status. As such, they face diverse challenges and have various preexisting vulnerabilities, meaning that their lived experiences of the pandemic differ significantly. For instance, and as outlined in several contributions of this special issue, migrants with irregular status do not benefit from social protection and sometimes fear to meet with authorities in public places. As such, they have been particularly exposed to the negative effects of the pandemic, including loss of employment, trafficking and exploitation, compared to migrant populations with regular status. It is essential that organizations providing assistance to migrant and displaced populations consider these vulnerabilities in their response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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As already outlined in a previous *MPP* special issue (Schöfberger and Aggad, 2020), disaggregating data by migratory status and socioeconomic characteristics in the context of the pandemic will allow a better understanding of the factors contributing to the vulnerability or higher resilience of different mobile populations. A number of organizations – including those contributing to this special issue – are already collecting disaggregated data, but this sound practice is not the norm everywhere. Collecting such data is essential, as it will help identify evidence-based policies and programmes to tackle specific vulnerabilities.

Third, we need data that takes into account the evolving and long-term effects of the pandemic. In the early stages of the pandemic, some researchers struggled with determining the impact of COVID-19 on migrants' socioeconomic outcomes, as the baseline data was not always available. As the pandemic advances, researchers are confronted with another challenge – how to disentangle the long-term impacts of the pandemic from other political, social and economic challenges faced by mobile populations. This issue is particularly relevant to the MENA region, where mobile populations are affected not only by COVID-19, but also by conflict, economic and political instability, and natural disasters. Let us look at the case of Sudan. Following the start of the pandemic, the prices of basic goods continuously soared, and the country experienced significant political turmoil. These events interplay and ultimately modify the socioeconomic outcomes of migrant populations (Jourdain and Griesmer, 2022). As such, it is very difficult to conduct a study on the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 in this context.

That being said, it is not impossible, nor irrelevant. One way to overcome this challenge is to implement mixed-methods research protocols, using quantitative and qualitative research methods. While the quantitative component allows the study to assess *to what extent* mobile populations' socioeconomic outcomes have been modified since the beginning of the pandemic, the qualitative component will help determine whether it was the pandemic itself that triggered changes or whether it was another phenomenon. This way, the study not only informs of changes brought by the pandemic, but also provides an assessment of the influence of other factors. Looking into longer-term research efforts, we could imagine mainstreaming data collection on migrants' socioeconomic outcomes, in which the impact of COVID-19 would be only one of the factors under study.

Although vaccination campaigns are currently being rolled out in several countries of the region, the COVID-19 pandemic will likely continue to influence the health and socioeconomic outcomes of mobile populations for many months and years to come. The findings and analysis provided in this special issue reflect only the state of knowledge as of November 2021.

Finally, this special issue of *MPP* also includes an article discussing current migration management processes in North Africa. The article argues that in focusing on halting departures and strengthening search and rescue operations, the European Union, European Union member States, and North African countries have overlooked important and deep-rooted mobility dynamics in the region. Northern African countries, the article shows, are points of both departure and arrival. As such, they require and depend on foreign workers from sub-Saharan Africa and beyond. Against this backdrop, an effective reduction in irregular migration across the Mediterranean requires reducing irregular migration to and within North Africa as well as the promotion of well-managed, sustainable and regular labour migration flows across countries in the region. ■

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COVID-19's socioeconomic impact on migrants and displaced persons: Perspectives from the Middle East and North Africa

Joris Jourdain, Raffaele Bertini, Alexandre Schick and Lorenza Rossi¹

The COVID-19 pandemic is, first and foremost, a global health crisis. The direct effect of COVID-19 has primarily been an increase in the mortality of the elderly, coupled with the significant stress on health systems and their saturation. However, the associated infection prevention and control measures adopted to reduce the spread of the virus have also generated an extraordinary impact on global economies, markets and livelihoods. This includes an unprecedented reduction in human mobility, the shutdown of businesses and factories, disruption to global value chains, and labour market retraction. As the World Health Organization (WHO) marks the one-year anniversary of its declaration of COVID-19 as a global concern, it is clear that the pandemic cannot be viewed solely as a health crisis. It is essential to also consider the far-reaching and pervasive implications that COVID-19 has on the socioeconomic conditions of entire populations.

Even prior to the start of the pandemic, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has been confronted with structural socioeconomic challenges, including high unemployment rates, extreme and growing levels of inequalities, and in some countries, weak or damaged public services – with the impact of protracted conflict in some countries amplifying these problems. In line with global trends, the MENA region has exhibited a high level of vulnerability to the devastating impacts of COVID-19. Its economic growth is estimated to have contracted by 5 per cent in 2020 (World Bank, 2018). This contraction adds to the already-slowing growth in the past years and compounds pre-pandemic per-capita income losses (*ibid.*). Externalities, such as the global drop in oil prices – partly driven by the impact that COVID-19 has had on industry and travel – have compounded

the shrinking fiscal and monetary space, creating a double shock with deep and multifaceted consequences.

Overlaying this context, the MENA region is witness to complex and diverse mobility patterns – including labour migration, forced displacement, and large-scale mixed migration flows in the Gulf of Aden and North Africa, often characterized by high numbers of irregular migrants. It hosts more than 23 million migrant workers and 14 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) (IOM, 2020a), who are significantly affected by the diverse negative effects of the pandemic. Throughout the region, migrants and displaced populations – who often work in the informal sector – have seen their access to livelihood opportunities and employment decrease significantly (IOM, 2020b; OECD, 2020). Furthermore, the decline in remittance flows to the MENA region heightened the socioeconomic vulnerabilities of entire communities, including migrant workers' communities of origin (Voluntās, 2020). In some of the most fragile contexts, remittances from abroad constitute a critical form of income for many migrants and displaced people; thus, there is the threat that poverty rates will increase if things remain unchanged. This is particularly worrying considering that migrants – and to some extent, displaced persons – in the MENA region are often excluded from or face barriers to accessing social protection systems (ILO, 2020; Dafuleya, 2021).

Against this background, the IOM MENA Regional Office gathered information from eight countries in the region² to understand *how* and *to what extent* migrants' socioeconomic outcomes are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Adapting the United Nations' framework for assessing the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic to the case of mobile populations, IOM assessed the impact of the pandemic on six

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² The eight countries included in the study are Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan, Iraq, Libya, the Sudan and Yemen.

key pillars: (a) health services and systems during the crisis, (b) access to social protection and basic services, (c) economic response and recovery, (d) macroeconomic response and multilateral collaboration, (e) social cohesion and community resilience, and (f) mobility. This policy brief aims to present key findings as well as policy and programming recommendations related to the aforementioned work.

Finding 1. Access to health care is more difficult for migrants and displaced populations in the Middle East and North Africa region

The constitution of many countries in the MENA region considers that access to health care is a universal right (ILO, 2020). Despite this, a number of pandemic-specific challenges and constraints impact mobile populations' de facto access to health services. These include limited or reduced financial resources induced by the pandemic and that impede individual capacities to pay for medical services and consumables; discrimination against migrants in regard to access to health care and treatment; and lack of available transportation, partly due to mobility restrictions and national or local lockdown measures – as well as fear of meeting with authorities, for migrants in irregular situation.

Recommendation

Actors involved in providing assistance to migrants should continue to advocate migrants' better access to national health services, irrespective of their migration status. This includes advocating migrants' and displaced persons' access to COVID-19 vaccination and/or treatment. As already outlined by IOM and other United Nations agencies in the global campaign launched to include migrants in national vaccination plans,³ the well-being of everyone can only be achieved if the most vulnerable – including mobile populations – are not left out of global efforts to fight back against COVID-19.

A number of States in the region have already taken steps to ensure better inclusion of migrants in national health services. In particular, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia took several measures to ensure that migrants are

able to access COVID-19 treatment, testing and/or vaccinations in the same way that nationals do (UNNM, n.d.). It is strongly recommended that similar measures are more systematically taken in all countries of the region.

Finding 2. Knowledge about COVID-19's health effects and measures to avoid spreading the virus and protect themselves differ across locations and mobile population types

Throughout the region, virtually all migrants and displaced populations are aware of the existence of the pandemic. However, not all mobile populations are aware of the potential health effects of COVID-19, nor how they can avoid spreading the disease. In several countries of the region, including Jordan and Iraq, it was reported that migrants who did not speak the national language were less likely to know how to identify key symptoms or where to get tested for COVID-19. On the other hand, migrants who already had contact with other communicable diseases (such as Ebola) were more likely to be aware of how the disease spreads. These individuals were also more likely to implement good hygiene practices and exhibit protective behaviour compared to communities that were experiencing an epidemic for the first time.

Recommendation

Humanitarian organizations should continue and amplify efforts to raise awareness of prevention and control measures in migrant and displaced communities, ensuring that all populations, including those who do not speak the national language, have access to relevant information in a language they understand. The Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) recently released a lessons-learned paper (Lamoure and Juillard, 2020), which includes good practices on how to communicate with affected communities during an epidemic. Another relevant resource is the United Nations guideline on how risk communication and community engagement can include marginalized and vulnerable people in the context of COVID-19 (RCCE, 2020). Considering mobility restrictions, it is essential that all possible channels of communications with mobile populations – whether physical or online – are explored.

Some countries in the region have already developed measures to raise awareness of the COVID-19

³ More information is available at www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=gOnMubz1_HQ&feature=youtu.be.

pandemic. For example, the Government of Jordan dedicated a website to the pandemic, created a hotline, and made an agreement with Facebook to launch an awareness campaign on COVID-19, allowing migrants to access up-to-date information and services.⁴ In the early stages of the pandemic, the Tunisian Government also launched campaigns in English, French and Arabic to inform the population – including migrants – about individual measures to prevent infections.⁵ Looking at future interventions, it is essential that governments, international agencies, the media and civil society actors further collaborate through a whole-of-community approach, ensuring that all have access to up-to-date information.

Finding 3. More than ever, legal status (or lack thereof) determines migrants' access to employment and income-generating activities in dignified conditions

A significant proportion of irregular migrants in the MENA region work in the informal sector. As such, they are particularly at risk of the reduced economic activities following the imposition of measures to contain the spread of the disease. This study found that following the start of the pandemic, some employers reduced the salaries of migrants in irregular situations (e.g. construction or factories) to mitigate the impact of the economic crisis on those sectors. This was prompted by the fact that nationals of the countries in question also lost their jobs over the pandemic and applied for jobs in sectors previously left to migrants in irregular situations, thereby increasing the supply of labour and further reducing wages for all. Similarly, in several contexts, including Libya, migrant business owners, who are not always officially registered with national authorities, reported facing significant difficulties to ensure that clients paid their bills (Voluntās, 2020).

Recommendation

In the immediate term, humanitarian organizations should continue to provide immediate cash and in-kind assistance to (irregular) migrants and displaced populations who have lost their income-generating

activities as a result of the pandemic, and have little or no financial resources. In addition, humanitarian and development actors should continue and amplify the support offered to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) owned by migrants and displaced populations, providing them with microgrants or other forms of assistance to cope with the impacts of COVID-19. In the longer term, humanitarian and development organizations should continue to advocate migrants' inclusion in national protection frameworks. One of the reasons why migrants have been so heavily affected by the pandemic's negative effects is that they often have limited or non-existent access to safety nets or social protection systems.

Although this was not necessarily prompted by the pandemic, some countries have taken positive steps towards providing migrants and displaced persons with social safety nets. For instance, the Government of Jordan is currently making progress towards including non-Jordanian nationals in State-led social protection schemes (IOM, 2021a).

Finding 4. COVID-19 led to tensions between mobile and resident populations, but also fostered solidarity and hospitality within and between communities

Similar to other crises, the COVID-19 pandemic led to more competition over key resources, including income-generating activities and certain basic goods, inevitably creating tensions between different communities. Marginalized communities, which can include migrants and displaced persons, often suffer when intercommunity cohesion deteriorates. This has been the case since the onset of the pandemic. Several migrants, especially from sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, reported physical assaults against them due to the perception that they were "disease carriers".

That being said, COVID-19 has concurrently led to increased occurrences of hospitality and solidarity. In Tunisia, landlords of several migrants refrained from evicting them, despite not having received rent for several months, as an act of support. In several countries, including Jordan and Algeria, the youth distributed several food and basic items targeted to support migrants. However, these activities are sporadic, unpredictable, and oftentimes not sufficient to ensure that migrants and displaced persons are able to meet their basic needs.

⁴ See the Jordanian Ministry of Health's website, available at <https://corona.moh.gov.jo/ar>.

⁵ See the Tunisian Ministry of Health's website, available at www.santetunisie.rns.tn/fr/toutes-les-actualites/1123-infection-au-sars-cov-2-covid-19.

Recommendation

As the pandemic becomes more manageable, having a larger focus on community-based initiatives should be a central component of the response plan. Developing a whole-of-community approach focusing on mobile populations and hosts could support community cohesion, with the potential to limit instances of discrimination and/or xenophobia against mobile populations, and to address the drivers of community conflict that were amplified by COVID-19. As per the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration's objective, since COVID-19 does not discriminate, nor should our response.⁶

Despite limits on Internet capacities or the lack of technological tools, several organizations successfully adapted their social cohesion programmes, organizing online meetings through WhatsApp or other social media platforms and leveraging innovative methods for community engagement. In some instances, online platforms offered an opportunity to engage traditionally marginalized groups who are sometimes unable to participate due to geographical barriers or social and cultural sensitivities. Replicating these successful practices when appropriate is essential to ensure a sustainable recovery post COVID-19.⁷

Finding 5. COVID-19 led to national and international restrictions on mobility as well as conversely created additional pressures to migrate

Virtually all countries in the region have implemented mobility restrictions at the local, national and international levels (IOM, 2021b). Despite this, it is not possible to conclude that mobility stopped after the onset of the pandemic. Our study shows that COVID-19 has created new mobility patterns. These include:

- (a) Increased returns due to lack of financial assets or increased vulnerability;
- (b) Forced return to country of origin;

- (c) Secondary internal displacement justified by COVID-19;
- (d) Irregular migration towards Europe and/or to and from the MENA region through increasingly risky routes.⁸

Recommendation

Taking this forward, it is essential that humanitarian organizations continue to provide specific support to migrants and displaced persons based on their migration status. In particular, migrants who have returned or were deported back to their countries of origin are at particularly high risk of being unemployed and experiencing other negative consequences of the pandemic, including trafficking. As such, they are especially in need of assistance, including reintegration support. Complementing this, we have seen that prolonged extensions of travel restrictions by governments of certain destination countries pushed more people towards irregular channels of migration. Therefore, it is essential that legal channels of migration from MENA countries towards Europe are enabled.

Some countries have taken positive steps with regard to returnees and (irregular) migration since the onset of the pandemic. Among others, the Government of Iraq has supported the management of complex return cases by sending ministry officials to Iraqi embassies abroad to enable the dignified return and reintegration of Iraqis, notably those who lack identification documents and legal residency. Other countries such as Algeria, Bahrain, Morocco and Egypt have supported regular migration by extending visas during the COVID-19 pandemic, or enabling migrant children to enrol in schools for the academic year 2020–2021 without requiring valid residence permits (UNNM, n.d.).

⁶ More information is available at www.iom.int/news/covid-19-does-not-discriminate-nor-should-our-response.

⁷ For more information on good practices in the context of COVID-19, please consult this IOM guidance, available at www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl486/files/documents/iom_initiatives_on_xenophobia_and_migrant_inclusion.pdf.

⁸ IOM continued to register for Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration, doing so in close cooperation with governments in host and origin countries and in full compliance with COVID-19 prevention measures. For more information on this topic, please consult the 2020 Q3 Return and Reintegration Quarterly Bulletin, available at www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl486/files/our_work/DMM/AVRR/2020Q3-returnandreiintegrationquarterlybulletin.pdf.

Concluding remarks: More disaggregated data and broader geographical coverage are needed to understand the full impact of COVID-19 on the socioeconomic outcomes of migrants and displaced populations

This policy brief sketched out some of the ways through which COVID-19 affects the socioeconomic outcomes of migrants and displaced populations in the MENA region, based on limited existing data sources and an initial data-gathering in eight countries. It should be stressed that data are not always uniform or accessible across geographical locations and populations in the region. With solid migration data, it will be easier to develop appropriate responses to the negative socioeconomic effects of COVID-19. Closing this knowledge gap will require researchers to adopt a rigorous mixed-methods strategy, allowing us to uncover unexplored trends and quantify them. Looking to the future, this type of socioeconomic analysis has the potential to help organizations involved in providing assistance to mobile populations, with their future programming and assessments of mobile populations' vulnerability. Ongoing discussions also exist within the United Nations system to use the results of these analyses to feed into the yearly Common Country Analyses (CCAs) and member States' preparation for the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF). ■

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COVID-19 restrictions and smuggling of migrants in North Africa: Findings and policy implications from United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) research

Fabrizio Sarrica, Giulia Serio and Claire Healy¹

Based on the research brief entitled “How COVID-19 restrictions and the economic consequences are likely to impact migrant smuggling and cross-border trafficking in persons to Europe and North America”, prepared by the UNODC Research Team on Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (2020a).

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic radically restructured the nature of social interactions and economic activities in all regions of the world. These changes affected all aspects of life in ways we have yet to fully understand, and smuggling of migrants is no exception. Demand for smuggling of migrants rises when: (a) people wish to, or need to, migrate for a variety of different reasons, including searching for better livelihoods, fleeing conflict and persecution, or reuniting with their families; (b) it is not possible for them to migrate regularly due to travel and immigration restrictions; (c) there are expensive and lengthy procedures to obtain regular travel documents; (d) migrant smugglers market their services and spread misinformation; and (e) smugglers recruit clients, and communities exert pressure to migrate (UNODC, 2018:6).

Restricting domestic and cross-border travel has been a key element of the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The intensification of measures to limit cross-border travel and immigration in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 may have increased the demand for smuggling services, as well as making migrant smuggling more difficult, more expensive and riskier. However, according to UNODC research on West African, North African and Central Mediterranean smuggling routes, the COVID-19 pandemic has not halted irregular crossings on smuggling routes from North African countries to European Union countries. Indeed 2020 saw an increase in people arriving in

the European Union along the Western and Central Mediterranean mixed migration routes (UNODC, 2021).²

This article focuses on the effects of COVID-19 on the smuggling of migrants and refugees from North African countries, particularly Morocco and Libya, to European Union countries, especially Spain and Italy. It highlights the relevant findings and policy implications emerging from the UNODC research published in mid-2020 on the impact of COVID-19 on trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants – part of a series of research briefs produced by the UNODC Research and Analysis Branch on how the pandemic has affected drugs and crime.³ It is also informed by the UNODC thematic brief on the impact of COVID-19 on trafficking in persons (2020b) and by the latest research findings of the UNODC Observatory on Smuggling of Migrants, launched in May 2021.⁴

Migrant smuggling across the Mediterranean

Over the last 15 years, the Western and Central Mediterranean mixed migration routes from North Africa to Europe have seen significant fluctuations in terms of the numbers of people travelling along them. Due to the lack of alternatives for regular travel, the majority of people travelling along these mixed migration routes are smuggled (UNODC, 2018:144). Conflicts and violence, and bilateral agreements between origin, transit and destination countries and regions, are among the factors influencing changes in the numbers of people arriving along the three routes.

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² The UNODC Observatory on Smuggling of Migrant’s research provides an overview of the main dynamics characterizing migrant smuggling operations, facilitating the movement of West Africans by land and sea along West African, North African and Central Mediterranean routes. It is based on field research conducted in 2019 with people smuggled from West Africa. Emerging findings are complemented with academic literature and other sources in order to account for the most recent developments along these routes. Other routes will be covered in future research by the Observatory.

³ See: UNODC, 2020a and n.d.

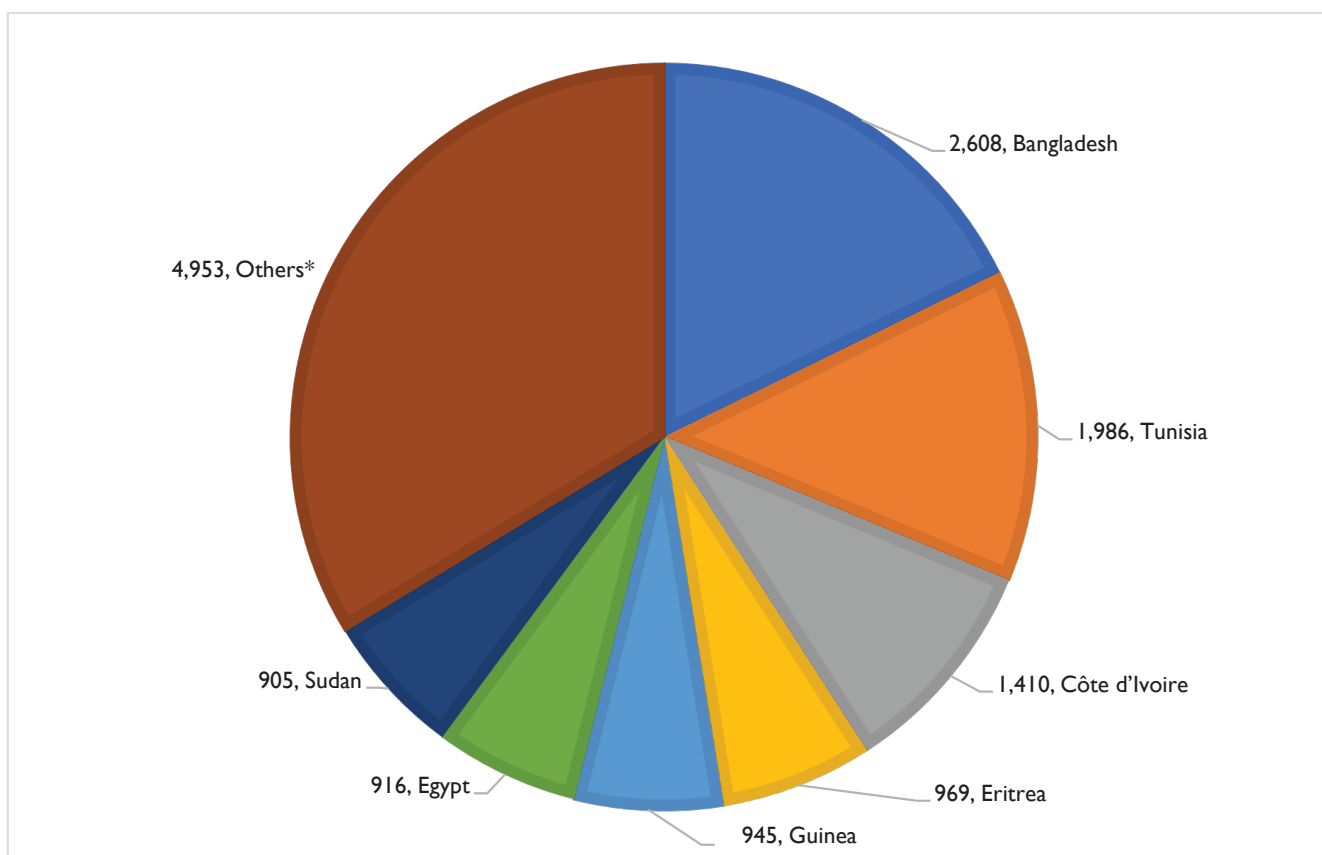
⁴ See: UNODC, 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic emerged in the context of a steady decline in the numbers of people arriving irregularly on these routes, since the peak years of 2015–2016.

A significant proportion of people arriving along these routes are from countries with recognized refugees and beneficiaries of international protection

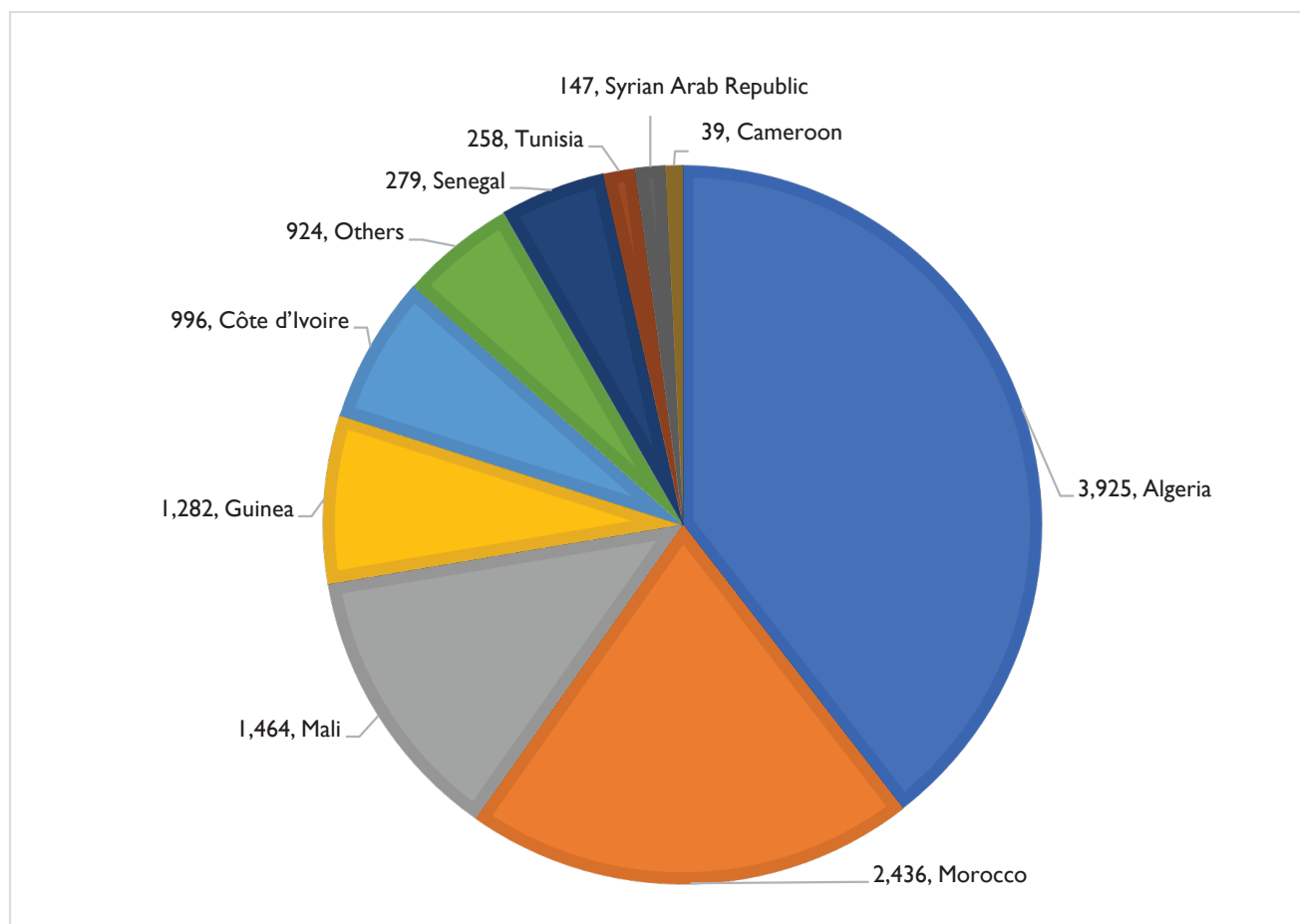
in the European Union, including Eritrea, the Sudan, Somalia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq and Afghanistan. This means that many of those travelling from these countries – as well as some people from other countries, depending on their situation in the country of origin – are forced migrants likely to be entitled to international protection.

Figure 1. Countries of origin of people arriving in Italy, January–May 2021



Note: “Others” includes 328 Somalians, 301 Syrians, 299 Iraqis and 179 Afghans. UNODC’s elaboration of UNHCR data is available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5226>.

Source: Authors’ elaboration based on: IPC-IG, 2021a.

Figure 2. Countries of origin of people arriving in Spain, January–September 2020

Note: UNODC's elaboration of UNHCR data is available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5226>.

Western Mediterranean route: Morocco to Spain

The Western Mediterranean route leads – for the majority of people travelling – from or through Morocco (principally in and around Tangier), across the Strait of Gibraltar and the Alboran Sea to Andalusia in Spain. For a smaller proportion of people, it leads overland from around Tangier in Morocco to the Spanish town of Ceuta, or from around Nador in Morocco to the Spanish town of Melilla. Migrant smugglers provide sea crossings by boat as well as assistance in some cases for those attempting to cross the fortified land borders around Ceuta and Melilla.

The first two confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Morocco were identified in Casablanca on 2 March 2020. On 15 March, the Moroccan Government closed the

country's land, sea and air borders, and the following day, all schools, universities and mosques were closed. The Government announced the "progressive confinement" of the population from 20 March 2020 (Nait Sibaha, 2020). Meanwhile, the Spanish Government imposed a state of emergency and a national lockdown on 14 March 2020, then closed its borders on 16 March, the day after its Moroccan counterpart did. From 29 March, all non-essential workers were ordered to stay home.

Throughout 2020, a total of 40,326 people arrived irregularly by sea and a further 1,535 people by land in Spain from Morocco, with 330 people reported dead or missing. An additional 11,174 people arrived by sea and

425 by land in 2021, and 130 more people were reported dead or missing (as of 6 June 2021).⁵ The numbers of people arriving in 2020 represent a significant increase compared to figures of 26,168 by sea and 6,345 by land in 2019, as well as 679 dead or missing, though the numbers are still lower than during the peak year of 2018.⁶ COVID-19-related restrictions have clearly not reduced the numbers of people smuggled along the Western Mediterranean route.

Central Mediterranean route: Libya and Tunisia to Italy

The Central Mediterranean route leads from Libya or Tunisia to Italy. Migrant smugglers provide passage across the Mediterranean Sea to Italian ports on Sicily (Pozzallo, Trapani, Messina), Lampedusa and the mainland (Taranto). Information from Libya, where around 570,000 migrants and refugees are recorded as present (IOM, 2021), suggests that the COVID-19 public health crisis has not discouraged people from trying to reach Europe from Libya, due to the tense situation in Libya and the exacerbation of the conflict, even if it is more difficult to enter the country irregularly. In December 2019, before the outbreak of the pandemic, the United Nations Security Council expressed concern over the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Libya and called for the closure of migrant detention centres (UNSMIL, 2019). In March 2020, Libyan authorities put in place public health measures aimed at curbing the spread of COVID-19, which include domestic and international travel and mobility restrictions, and specifically ordered the immediate closure of airports and points of entry along land borders and maritime boundaries. The first confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Italy, and indeed in Europe, were identified on 31 January 2020 in Rome. The Italian Government imposed a state of emergency and a national lockdown on 11 March, closed its borders, and requested all non-essential workers to stay home.

On 7 April 2020, the Italian Government declared that due to the pandemic, Italian ports could no longer be considered safe harbours, and thereby prohibited search and rescue (SAR) operations conducted by foreign vessels, apart from the Italian SAR, from docking in Italy (MIT, 2020). Two days after the Italian Government declared that they would not allow SAR vessels to dock, the Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA) refused to allow a border control operation by Libyan Coast Guard vessels to dock, declaring that Libyan ports could no longer be considered safe harbours for the disembarkation of migrants due to the pandemic (IOM, 2020). In assessing this smuggling route, it should be noted that at the end of 2019, Italy and Libya renewed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) aimed at supporting border management in Libya, as well as increasing return operations for refugees and migrants from Libya to their countries of origin or to “safe third countries”.

Despite the limitations to the SAR operations and other COVID-19-related travel restrictions, almost three times as many people arrived along the Central Mediterranean route (Libya and Tunisia to Italy) in 2020 (34,154, with 983 people dead or missing) as in 2019 (11,471, with 1,262 people dead or missing).⁷ In 2021, as of mid-June, 16,819 people had arrived along the route, and the number of dead and missing was 679.⁸ In addition, more than 11,900 people were returned to Libya in 2020 after being intercepted by the Libyan Coast Guard – a practice condemned by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as Libya cannot currently be designated a “safe third country”.

The threat of COVID-19 has not stopped the ongoing conflict in Libya. Before the conflict, many West Africans migrated to Libya in order to find work. Since then, many of those working in Libya have tried to leave, boarding vessels at seaports on the northern coast of the country in order to arrive in Italy. The situation in Libya raises concerns on the conditions of stranded refugees and migrants. It is widely documented how

⁵ UNHCR data is available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5226>. IOM data on people dead or missing on the Western Mediterranean route is available at <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean>.

⁶ UNHCR data is available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5226>. IOM data on people dead or missing on the Western Mediterranean route is available at <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean>.

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⁸ UNHCR data is available at <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/5226>. IOM data on people dead or missing on the Central Mediterranean route is available at <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean>.

they are exposed to systematic extortion, abuses and human trafficking, and the current crisis will likely increase these risks. Furthermore, in times of pandemic, refugees and migrants are also exposed to the health threat of the virus and often have limited or no access to proper treatment or basic sanitary conditions.

Effects of the COVID-19 crisis on the smuggling of migrants in North Africa

The COVID-19 crisis has had different effects on the smuggling of migrants, depending on whether people travelling are forcibly displaced due to conflict, persecution, or violence or for other reasons, such as securing economic livelihoods for themselves and their families. People who are forcibly displaced often have limited options and thus resort to travelling irregularly, which may be facilitated by smugglers, even in the context of restricted mobility – for example, those fleeing the violence and crisis in Libya. However, in the medium term, also for people travelling in search of better economic prospects, in the context of unequal economic recovery from the crisis,⁹ their journeys will be irregular and smuggler-facilitated if there are no legal channels. While the inability to pay higher fees may cause some people to reconsider embarking on the journey, this is often not an option, and so the desperate need for additional funds renders people even more vulnerable to violence, deprivation of liberty for extortion, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), exploitation and human trafficking (UNODC, 2020a).

Border closures and mobility restrictions also have the effect of shifting smuggler-facilitated journeys to alternative routes, which are generally riskier in terms of travel conditions; access to food, water and shelter; and abuses and exploitation perpetrated by smugglers or other actors. There were reports in 2020, for example, from Kufra in south-east Libya – at the border with Chad, the Sudan and Egypt – and from Sabha in central Libya, of migrant smuggling through these two hubs being temporarily suspended (GI-TOC, 2020). Furthermore, both an increase

in control along existing routes and the shift to alternative routes mean additional costs of operating for migrant smugglers, costs that are ultimately borne by the refugees and migrants contracting the smuggling services (INTERPOL, 2020).

Indeed, the COVID-19 crisis may itself encourage people to leave their country of origin or to move on from a transit country, and in the absence of regular opportunities to do so, the demand for migrant smuggling increases. In addition, irregular migration journeys facilitated by migrant smugglers often create situations that make refugees and migrants vulnerable to trafficking in persons (UNODC, 2020b). Traffickers may recruit victims by inducing them to contract a debt to pay for a migration journey or for recruitment fees. En route or at the destination, victims are exploited to pay back this debt (UNODC, 2014:47). Incidents of deprivation of liberty for extortion, abuse, violence, and trafficking affecting refugees and migrants stranded en route have been widely documented in many parts of the world in recent years and may increase as a result of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the major consequences of the pandemic is economic recession. This will affect the origin countries of migrants and refugees smuggled to Europe from North African countries as well as from sub-Saharan African countries. According to the African Development Bank, before the outbreak of the pandemic, economic growth in North Africa was projected at 4.4 per cent in 2020 and 4.5 per cent in 2021. Revised projections for growth in 2020 in North Africa indicated a loss of 6.7 per cent, with a growth rate of -2.3 per cent (AfDB, 2020). The combination of a global economic downturn and intensified migration restrictions creates a tension between increased interest among potential migrants in labour migration and limited options for regular migration. This may increase the demand for smuggling services and the risks of being trafficked (UNODC, 2020a). In the medium to long term, unequal economic recovery will increase labour migration, and without increased possibilities for regular migration, this is likely to increase smuggling of migrants towards countries that have faster recovery.

⁹ The International Monetary Fund (2020) estimated that global economic growth in 2020 will decrease to -3 per cent. This is a downgrade of 6.3 percentage points from January 2020, a major revision over a very short period. This would make the Great Lockdown the worst recession since the Great Depression in 1929, and far worse than the Global Financial Crisis at the end of the last decade.

This suggests that COVID-19 travel and movement restrictions are not stopping the movement of people fleeing conflict, violence, and dangerous and inhumane conditions (as currently experienced by many refugees and migrants in Libya), who generally

have no option but to use migrant smugglers. The closure of land, sea and air borders may increase the smuggling of migrants, because people have an even greater need for the services of smugglers in order to cross borders. Closures and restrictions often result in the use of riskier routes and conditions, along with higher prices for smuggling services, exposing migrants and refugees to increased abuse, exploitation and trafficking. Smugglers may also benefit from a situation of increased demand by raising the prices of their services.

Across the Mediterranean routes, migrants and refugees are caught between the need to flee conflicts, human rights abuses and poverty, dangerous open waters, the reduced SAR operations at sea and the risks of COVID-19 transmission. The living conditions of these migrants and refugees should be of primary concern for the international community.

The medium- to long-term economic consequences resulting from the lockdown measures introduced to reduce the spread of COVID-19 may have an impact on smuggling flows. This will be even more dramatic if the economic downturn is combined with continued stringent mobility restrictions. The potential human rights impact of COVID-19-related restrictions on travel, movement and economic activities – and of the consequent economic downturn – on smuggling of migrants may be severe.

Policy implications

The inclusion of migrant populations in the responses to address the effect of COVID-19 is critical, not only for humanitarian and economic reasons, but also as a sound public health measure and in order to build back better.

In the immediate term, the key issues arising from these findings are:

- (a) Provision of health care for migrants and local populations alike, including access to testing, vaccination and hospitalization if needed.
- (b) Protection of front-line responders from COVID-19 and ensuring adequate access to testing, vaccination and hospitalization. These will include, for example, law enforcement officials at border crossings, prosecutors, judges, labour inspectors and social workers.
- (c) Continuity in services, so that migrants in an irregular situation, asylum applicants, refugees and victims of trafficking can access health, social and legal services, and so that access to justice is not denied to these vulnerable populations.
- (d) Regular monitoring of the effects of public measures to mitigate the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on vulnerable people, including smuggled refugees and migrants.
- (e) Advocacy efforts to combat stigma faced by migrants, asylum applicants and refugees, if they are “blamed” for the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- (f) Research to inform measures to protect the rights of smuggled refugees and migrants, and to combat migrant smuggling, in the context of the pandemic.

In the medium term (three to five years), and as there is a better understanding of the health and economic consequences of the pandemic, migrant communities need to be included in the considerations of a national response. These negative impacts can be mitigated by investments in job creation and economic recovery across both developed and developing countries.

The consequences in terms of increased crime, abuse, violence, exploitation and trafficking can be ameliorated by ensuring that providing avenues for safe and regular migration journeys for refugees and migrants, and regular immigration status in destination countries, is a key element of post-COVID-19 recovery plans. ■

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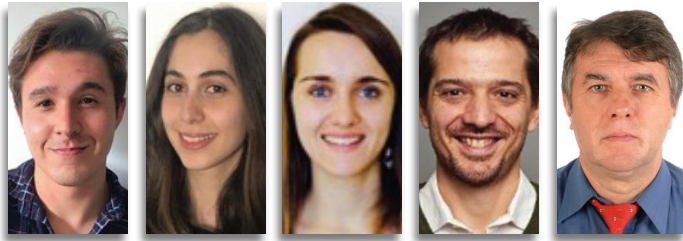
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Social protection and COVID-19: Inclusive responses for international migrants and forcibly displaced persons in the Middle East and North Africa

Lucas Sato, Maya Hammad, Charlotte Bilo, Luca Pellerano and Ryszard Cholewinski¹

Introduction

Forcibly displaced populations and migrant workers are groups particularly vulnerable to the COVID-19 crisis and its socioeconomic effects, such as increased unemployment and poverty. In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), the pandemic along with factors such as the global drop in oil prices caused an estimated contraction of 5.2 per cent of the economic growth in 2020 (Arezki et al., 2020). In the labour market, International Labour Organization (ILO) estimations show that in the second quarter of 2020, the Arab States suffered a loss of 10.3 per cent of the hours worked compared to the last pre-crisis quarter, which is equivalent to 6 million full-time jobs (48 hours per week). These dynamics directly result in income losses and increased poverty (ILO, 2020a). According to estimations, the pandemic will push a further 8.3 million people into poverty in the region (ESCWA, 2020).

The MENA region hosts over 13 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), 10 million refugees² (UNHCR, 2020a; UNRWA, 2020) and 23 million migrant

workers³ (ILO, n.d.), who comprise a large share of some of the sectors most affected by the economic downturn (Jourdain et al., 2021). Some of these sectors (e.g. domestic, health care, manufacturing and construction) were especially exposed to the health risks of the pandemic, while other sectors (e.g. hospitality, manufacturing, wholesale and retail) were particularly exposed to the risk of loss of employment. Moreover, migrant workers usually occupy precarious, informal and low-paid jobs with less access to social protection and health insurance, reducing their ability to cope with the socioeconomic effects of the pandemic (ILO, 2020b). For forcibly displaced populations, the pandemic represented a “crisis within a crisis” (OECD, 2020a). It further aggravated the humanitarian situation of these populations by reducing their access to livelihood opportunities (SACD, 2020; OECD, 2020b), making their access to humanitarian actors more difficult (OECD, 2020b; Trotsenburg, 2020). Moreover, there are strong indications that the pandemic has caused increased return rates to countries of origin among migrants (e.g. outflow of migrant workers in Oman) and forcibly displaced populations (e.g. return of Afghan refugees that were living in the Islamic Republic of Iran) (IOM, 2020a and 2020b; OECD, 2020b; ESCWA et al., 2020).

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² This considers the figures available as of end-2019 for Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen and the Palestinian Territories.

³ This considers the ILO’s estimations for 2017 in the Arab States (Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen and the Palestinian Territories).

Social protection has played a fundamental role in responding to the socioeconomic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in the MENA region: all countries and territories⁴ adopted at least one social protection response (IBC-SP, 2020; IPC-IG, 2021a). Yet, despite being a particularly vulnerable segment of society, non-nationals continue to have limited access to social protection systems and current social policy responses, which has greatly reduced their ability to cope with the negative socioeconomic effects of the pandemic.

Non-nationals' access to social protection systems in the MENA region was severely limited before the pandemic due to a mix of legal, administrative, informational and labour market-related barriers. Closing the coverage and adequacy gaps of national social protection systems for non-national workers, informed by the principle of equality of treatment in access to national social protection schemes, has been a long-standing concern in the region (ILO, 2017). As the crisis has exacerbated pre-existing structural inequalities in access to social protection, including migrants and forcibly displaced populations into the national social protection response has remained very limited during the COVID-19 crisis.

Against this background, this policy brief aims to identify good practices of social protection responses to COVID-19 in the MENA region, which included migrant workers and their families, as well as forcibly displaced populations. It documents governmental and humanitarian practices of inclusive social protection responses, such as social assistance, social insurance and labour market policies, aiming to feed into the policy discussions and future structural reforms in the region that may lead to more inclusive social protection systems.⁵

Inclusive social protection responses in the MENA region

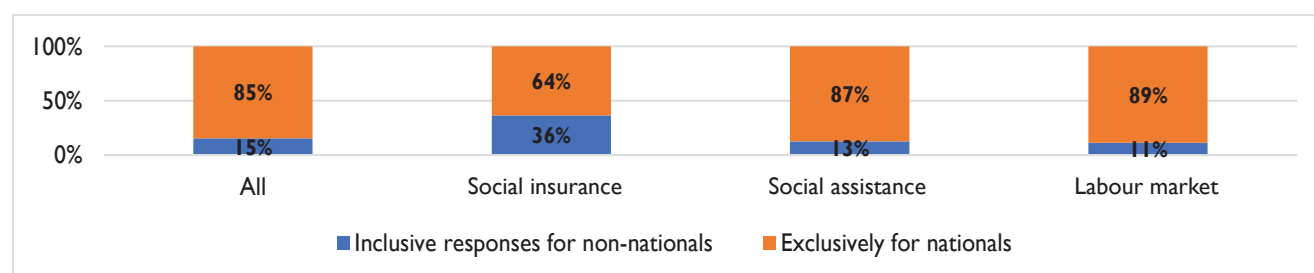
The International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) mapped 162 governmental social protection responses in 20 MENA countries up to March 2021.⁶ Most measures announced and implemented in the early stages of the pandemic (i.e. from March to June 2020) focused on providing access to testing and health care, as well as emergency cash and in-kind assistance to affected households, especially those whose main breadwinners are informal workers. Later stages of the pandemic (i.e. from September to December 2020) saw the announcement and implementation of more occupation-based measures such as unemployment benefits and wage subsidies focused on supporting workers in particular sectors that have been affected for long periods of time.

Only 15 per cent (25 of 162) of the government measures mapped expanded social protection systems explicitly guaranteeing some access of non-nationals to social protection responses. Considering the proportion of inclusive responses from the total measures mapped per social protection component (see Figure 1 below), 36.4 per cent of social insurance responses included non-nationals (8 out of 22), 12.7 per cent of social assistance responses (10 out of 79), and 11.5 per cent of labour market measures (7 out of 61).

⁴ These are Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen and the Palestinian Territories.

⁵ This brief is based on a desk review of the most recent sources, mainly drawing on periodic reports published by United Nations agencies; the IBC-SP publication "Social protection responses to the COVID-19 crisis in the MENA/Arab States region" (2020); and "Social protection responses to COVID-19 in the Global South" (IPC-IG, 2021a).

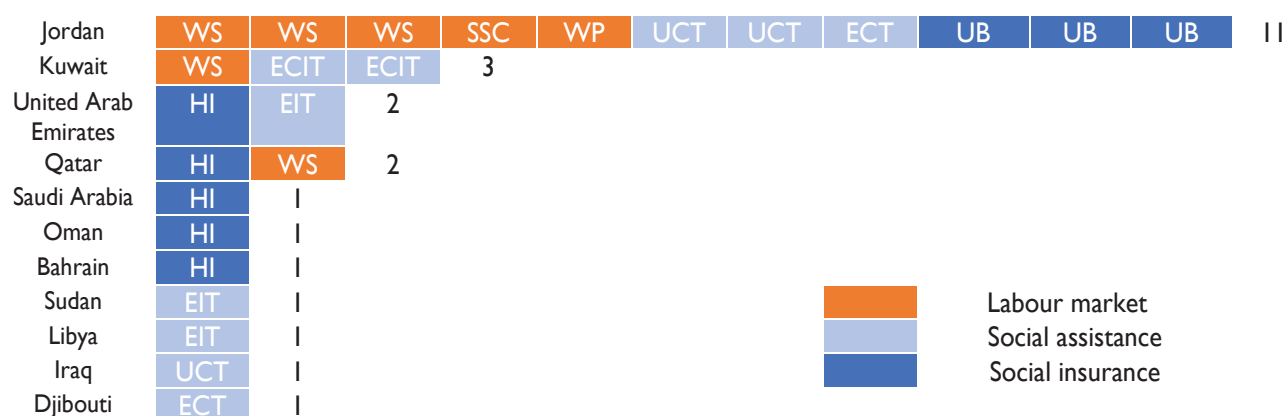
⁶ It is worth noting that the mapping includes only social protection measures that were adopted in response to the COVID-19 crisis (i.e. new interventions or modifications to existing interventions). The mapping does not include regular measures that consider non-nationals, but which were not adjusted in response to the pandemic.

Figure 1. Proportion of governmental response that included some protection to non-nationals

Source: Authors' elaboration based on: IPC-IG, 2021a.

In absolute terms, labour market policies had the least common social protection response that included non-nationals (7 programmes), followed by social insurance (8) and social assistance (10). Figure 2 shows that almost half (11) of the migrant-inclusive

programmes were mapped in Jordan. However, it is essential to highlight that most of the measures in the country were limited to a small subset of the non-national population.

Figure 2. Governmental response per country and type

Legend: Social assistance: ECT – emergency cash transfer, EIT – emergency in-kind transfer, ECIT – emergency cash and in-kind transfer, UCT – unconditional cash transfer; social insurance: HI – health insurance, UB – unemployment benefit; labour market: WS – wage subsidy, SSC – lowering/deferring social security contributions, WP – waiving/deferring rent/reducing rent/loan/tax payments.

Note: See all measures in [Annex 3](#).

Source: Authors' elaboration based on: IPC-IG, 2021a.

Social assistance: Providing inclusive emergency income support

Providing emergency income support, either through cash or temporary food distributions, is a good practice to protect the most vulnerable non-nationals – which was observed in a few MENA countries. This form of support was especially relevant considering the large number of migrant workers and refugees who suddenly lost their jobs and were not registered in contributory insurances, given the predominance of informal work arrangements (ILO, 2020b). In Jordan, *Takaful 2* provided three parcels of monthly benefits to informal workers living in households below a determined income threshold,⁷ and Gazan families – a small segment of non-national workers in Jordan (see [Annex 3](#)) – were also among the potential beneficiaries. Iraq implemented horizontal and vertical expansions of its Social Safety Net programme (unconditional cash transfer), benefiting IDP families. In the Sudan, the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, supported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF, provided food and hygiene packages for 300,000 families in Khartoum, including refugee households. In Djibouti, a partnership between UNHCR and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Solidarity allowed the inclusion of refugees under a food voucher system. Moreover, UNHCR started an operation to promote the biometric registration of refugee families in order to include their data in the national social registry (United Nations Djibouti, 2020).

Zakat – a key component of social protection systems in the MENA region (Machado et al., 2018) – was used as a source of financing and for the delivery of support to non-national workers. According to recent estimations, *Zakat* funds contributed to financing 9.1 per cent of social assistance measures mapped in the MENA region (IPC-IG, 2021b). In Libya, the *Zakat* Fund provided emergency one-off in-kind assistance for families affected by the pandemic, including IDPs, under the *Taraahamo wa Taraahamo* initiative. In Kuwait, *Zakat* House provided cash and in-kind assistance for 15,642 undocumented migrant families. There were also some noteworthy examples of good administrative practices of inclusive governmental responses. Some social assistance schemes included undocumented families and accepted alternative

documents (e.g. expired passports, work permits, identity cards) to guarantee the provision of benefits, which is a fundamental good practice to protect the most vulnerable non-nationals. In Kuwait, migrant workers and vulnerable families (including stateless individuals) who lost their jobs and/or were placed in quarantine were able to register online to receive cash and in-kind assistance provided by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour in cooperation with national charities under the *Fazaa Al-Kuwait* campaign.

Humanitarian interventions financed by the international community were crucial to provide emergency support for non-nationals, filling gaps in national emergency schemes that concentrated primarily on nationals. Humanitarian measures were especially relevant for countries where functional social protection systems do not exist or need support to cover a high number of forcibly displaced families. In these contexts, humanitarian actors were crucial to support non-nationals, especially refugees, by creating and implementing emergency in-kind and cash transfers, as well as scaling up existing ones. [Annex 3](#) details 36 responses led by IOM, UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF in countries and territories facing humanitarian crisis (Yemen, the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, the Sudan, the Palestinian Territories) as well as those hosting large forcibly displaced populations (the Islamic Republic of Iran and Jordan).

Extending access to health care to non-nationals and other social insurance measures

One of the most common good practices under the social insurance responses observed in MENA countries consisted of guaranteeing health care for all, including non-nationals regardless of their migratory status (UNICEF, 2020; ILO, 2020b). The extension of health insurance for migrant workers was particularly common in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, where the poor working and living conditions and lack of access to adequate sanitation made the share of COVID-19 infections exceptionally high among migrant workers (ILO, 2020b). In response, countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain gave migrant workers access to free tests and free treatment for COVID-19. Saudi Arabia and Qatar are noteworthy examples, as migrants in these countries could have access to treatment irrespective of their migratory status. In Saudi Arabia, clear instructions determined that all people, irrespective of their migratory status,

⁷ This is below JOD 100 (USD 141) per person per month.

could have access to tests for COVID-19 using the Ministry of Health app (*Sehhaty* App), and all those infected would be offered free treatment. In Qatar, all residents could get free testing and treatment, with no need to possess a health card or Qatar ID.

In other countries, the existence of a universal health system and subsidized schemes for refugees contributed to guaranteeing access to COVID-19 testing and treatment for forcibly displaced populations. These cases are not listed as responses in Figure 2 above, since they already existed before the crisis. Nevertheless, they are noteworthy practices because they guaranteed the continuation of provision of services during the pandemic. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, for example, the Government guaranteed that refugees, including undocumented Afghan refugees, have access to health-care services, free testing and treatment for COVID-19 (UNHCR, 2020b). The Government also extended the annual insurance validity for all refugees. It is important to note that UNHCR pays for the premium fees for the most vulnerable refugees, resulting from a long-standing partnership between the Government and UNCHR (UNHCR, 2020c). In Jordan, prior to the crisis (March 2019), the Government reinstalled subsidized access to public health care for Syrian refugees (IRC, 2019). Since the COVID-19 crisis has started, the Ministry of Health has been conducting testing for the virus in the main refugee camps in the country (UNHCR, 2020d).

Labour market: Unemployment insurance and wage subsidies, including for non-national workers

While unemployment insurance and other wage subsidy schemes have been extensively used to protect wages and incomes of vulnerable national workers in the MENA region, the extension of such schemes to non-national workers has been rare and limited.

Prior to the pandemic, unemployment insurance schemes already existed in 8 countries out of 20, but non-nationals are allowed to register only in 2 cases (Jordan and Bahrain), and coverage is limited to formal workers. In Jordan, the eligibility criteria for unemployment benefits were extended during the COVID-19 period – through the *Musaned* programmes – for the benefit of both national and non-national insured workers. More flexible conditions to access benefits were introduced for national workers, including Gazan refugees and children of Jordanian mothers (see Annexes 1 and 2), as opposed to other

insured non-national workers, somewhat weakening the principle of equal treatment of nationals and non-nationals on which the Jordanian Social Security Law is based. In the case of Bahrain, while contributions to the unemployment scheme are paid on behalf of non-national workers, effective access to benefits is hindered by administrative and regulatory matters. In 2020, nearly 2,000 workers benefited from unemployment insurance in the country. Despite the legal coverage of migrant workers under this scheme, a statement from the Minister of Labour and Social Development indicates that all beneficiaries were Bahraini.⁸

Similar to the case of unemployment insurance schemes, a few migrant-inclusive labour market policies were observed. Most of them (5 out of 7 responses) consisted of providing wage subsidies. Examples of these policies include the case of Kuwait, where the salaries for national and non-national staff working in the public sector continued to be paid in full during lockdown. Also, Qatar established a directive determining that companies should pay the wages of foreign workers who are in quarantine or undergoing treatment for COVID-19 whether they are entitled to sick leave or not, besides creating a fund of over USD 800 million to support companies in fulfilling this obligation. However, evidence shows important gaps in implementation as many companies across all sectors are not complying with this directive (Equidem, 2021). It reveals that even when comprehensive legislations are in place, ensuring compliance can be challenging due to administrative barriers (e.g. limited inspection mechanisms), lack of awareness among migrant workers of their rights, and lack of protection to demand these rights.

In Jordan, workers contributing to the Social Security Corporation (SSC) can also benefit from wage subsidy schemes. The *Tadamun* programme and more recently the large *Estidama* wage subsidy scheme explicitly allowed only national workers, insured children of Jordanian mothers, and Gazan refugees who had their salaries reduced and were employed at eligible businesses to benefit from allowances, leaving concerns as to the mechanisms for wage support for other non-Jordanian workers registered and insured with SSC. To overcome these limitations, with support from international donors, SSC is about to launch

⁸ More information is available at www.alayam.com/alayam/first/891423/News.html.

an Emergency Unemployment and Employment Stabilization Fund to extend coverage to uninsured national and non-national workers in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. [Annex 1](#) summarizes some of the main good practices adopted by governments and humanitarian actors in the context of the crisis.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 crisis has brought to the fore social protection needs of non-nationals in the MENA region and the weaknesses of national social protection systems in addressing those needs. As this policy brief has demonstrated, only a few governmental responses to COVID-19 explicitly covered and addressed the needs of non-nationals, reproducing pre-existing exclusion

from national social protection systems and further aggravating the vulnerabilities of migrant workers and forcibly displaced populations in the region.

The level of protection offered to non-nationals has depended greatly on the extent to which they were already accessing social protection systems before the crisis. Emergency expansionary social protection measures introduced by most countries during the COVID-19 response can be a springboard to accelerate reforms and set foundations for stronger national systems, in so far as they lead to addressing structural exclusionary barriers in social protection systems. Leveraging the increased relevance of the topic and good practices developed across the region, the following points should be taken into account:

MAKING SOCIAL ASSISTANCE SCHEMES MORE INCLUSIVE

The exclusion of non-nationals from most emergency national social assistance measures points to the necessity of **reviewing national legislation so as to ensure that social protection inclusion in social assistance measures is premised on a human rights–based approach, including the principle of non-discrimination**, as opposed to a one-off practice in crisis situations.

Humanitarian actors have played an important role in cushioning the effects of the pandemic on non-national workers; however, interventions have been relatively small in terms of coverage and tend to have shorter duration than governmental responses and have financial sustainability concerns. It is necessary to **improve the nexus between humanitarian and development actors to build stronger national social assistance schemes**, including by supporting efforts to include non-nationals' social registries (e.g. Djibouti), improving access to health care (e.g. the Islamic Republic of Iran), and aligning cash assistance such that non-nationals enjoy the same rights as nationals.

The provision of non-contributory and emergency benefits for non-nationals in Jordan (refugees), Kuwait (stateless individuals and migrant workers), Libya (IDPs), and the Sudan and Djibouti (refugees) are **examples that should be built upon to ensure that inclusion of non-nationals becomes a cornerstone of national social protection and health systems, and not an exception in times of crises**.

MAKING SOCIAL INSURANCE, THE LABOUR MARKET AND HEALTH CARE MORE INCLUSIVE

Working to include migrant workers in contributory schemes and promoting formal work opportunities by eliminating legal, administrative, informational and labour market–related barriers is necessary in the medium and long term. It can result in gains not only for workers and their families but also for the host country, as these workers will make more contributions to the fiscal sustainability of the national social protection system.

Protecting the rights of migrant workers includes **equal treatment in social security coverage and entitlements**, and the **maintenance and portability** of social security rights through bilateral or multilateral treaties.

Good practices such as the ones observed in Jordan regarding access to the unemployment insurance scheme of all registered nationals and non-nationals are positive. However, it is necessary to consider the importance of **extending coverage to informal workers** and **facilitating the access of migrant workers to the formal labour market**.

Good practices observed in systems that extended access to health care or already provided universal access to health care indicate the need to improve investments in health care and guarantee legal frameworks that allow all individuals to benefit from **universal health care**.

INVESTING IN ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS FOR MORE INCLUSIVE SHOCK-RESPONSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS

In order to improve the shock-responsiveness and efficiency of social protection systems, MENA countries should **set up social registries, or strengthen existing ones**. These efforts should take into account the **importance of including non-nationals in social registries and eliminate legal and administrative barriers that can lead to their exclusion**.

The experience of GCC countries in expanding health care to migrant workers irrespective of migration status demonstrates the **significance of easing identification requirements and considering their contribution to exclusion errors** in times of crises (i.e. high cost of renewing a work permit or refugee identification card that is necessary to benefit from emergency programmes).

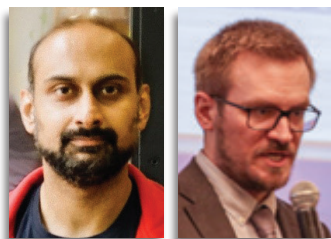
The **social registry expansion to refugees** in Djibouti, for example, is a good case that can lead to structural gains towards more inclusive social protection systems. ■

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Migrant remittances during armed conflict and pandemic – A Libya case study

Asfand Waqar and Tassilo Teppert¹

Introduction

In many decades, Libya has been a key destination for migrant workers. Prior to the 2011 civil war, the migrant population in Libya was estimated to be as high as 2.5 million migrant workers, constituting a critical part of the workforce in a country of less than 7 million inhabitants (Borgnäs et al., 2020). Historically, migrants have been employed in various economic sectors in Libya, such as construction, agriculture, health and other services, as well as the energy sector (oil production and processing), among others. Competitive salaries vis-à-vis other countries in the region have played an important role in attracting migrant workers, particularly those from Libya's neighbouring countries (ibid.).

Despite the political turmoil that erupted after 2011, subsequent armed hostilities and related economic challenges, Libya continues to host a significant number of migrants as the demand for migrant workers remains substantial. According to IOM Libya's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) programme, as of April 2021 more than 590,000 migrants have reported to be in the country (IOM, 2021a). Among those, migrants from neighbouring Chad, the Niger, Egypt and the Sudan accounted for almost 69 per cent of Libya's migrant population, while overall, migrant workers from more than 41 different countries were identified.

However, since 2019 migrants in Libya have faced significant challenges – first, due to the armed conflict in western Libya, and subsequently because of the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout this time, IOM Libya via its various DTM surveys with migrants² has continued to collect a range of data to support evidence-based humanitarian interventions and migration management programming (IOM, 2019a and 2021b).

A thematic module in these surveys has been continuously implemented since 2019 to collect data on self-reported migrant remittances. This paper presents a brief overview of findings based on DTM Libya's experience in continued data collection on self-reported migrant remittances as an indicator. Furthermore, it argues for assessment experts and researchers to consider data collection on remittances as an explanatory tool for understanding complex migration dynamics and their impact on migrants, even in the context of armed conflict or other crises.

Indicators on remittances reflect socioeconomic status and well-being of migrants

The set of indicators adopted to collect data on remittances via DTM surveys were designed using the new economics of labour migration (NELM) theory at its foundation, with the aim of understanding links between remittances and migration to Libya. However, analysis of the data obtained over the course of two years also points towards the utility of migrant remittances data in understanding the overall situation of migrants in crisis contexts. Furthermore, understanding remittance flows in the context of crises may help understand complex migration dynamics as remittances could result in enhanced capabilities, while in contrast reduction in remittance flows may indicate reduced capabilities (de Haas, 2021).

From 2019 to 2020, 41,095 migrants were asked to self-report whether they had sent remittances home – and if so, the net amount remitted. A total of 83 per cent of the migrants interviewed on remittances in Libya reported that they intended to send remittances, while 33 per cent reported that they had already sent remittances by the time of the interview. Analysis of drivers of migration based on the data collected via DTM surveys shows that economic motives were the primary driver of migration to Libya for a vast majority of migrants. Up to 90 per cent of the surveyed migrants cited various economic motivations for migrating to Libya, such as limited employment opportunities and lower income levels in their countries of origin (IOM, 2021c).

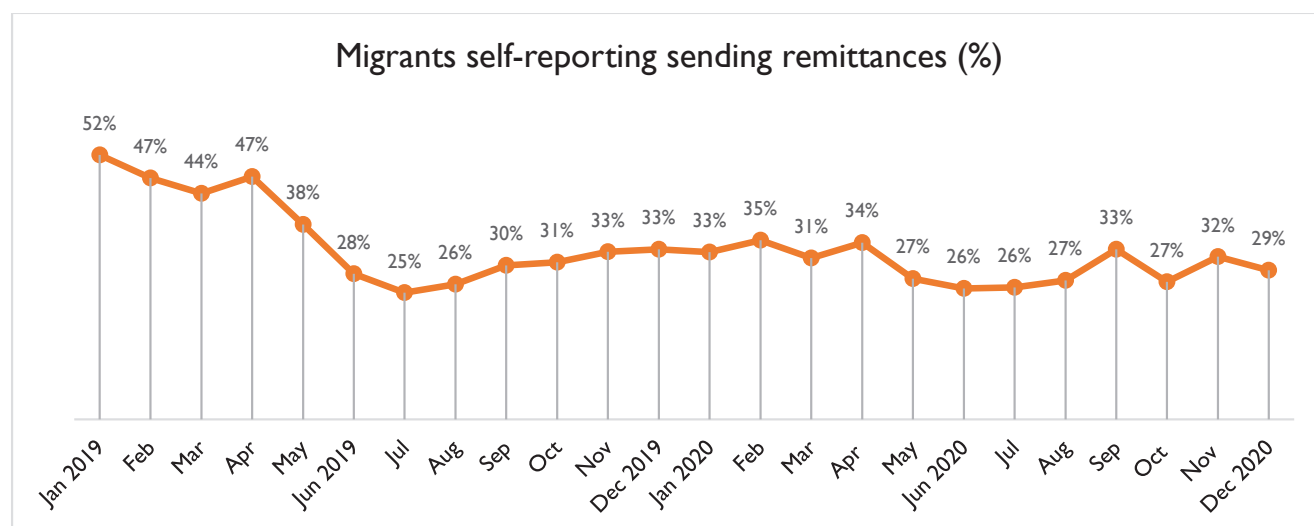
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² Such as DTM Flow Monitoring Surveys (FMS) and Thematic Migrant Surveys.

Trend analysis of data collected over 24 months indicates that conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic may have negatively affected migrants' capacity to send remittances. In January 2019, 52 per cent of the migrants interviewed reported to have sent remittances, which decreased to the lowest recorded proportion of migrants sending remittances (25%) by July 2019, when conflict in western Libya had intensified, as can be seen in Figure 1 below. Furthermore, the second subsequent reduction in the percentage of migrants sending remittances seems to follow the COVID-19 mobility restrictions implemented in Libya starting in April 2020. During

the months when decline in percentage of migrants sending remittances was reported, DTM's other assessments, such as those focusing on food security, also highlighted increased humanitarian needs (IOM, 2019b and 2020). While a causal relationship between events such as intensification of armed conflict or mobility restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the observed decline in percentage of migrants sending remittances cannot be established, the trend still shows the potential for such continuous data collection on remittances to serve as an indicator reflecting the overall socioeconomic status and well-being of migrants.

Figure 1. Percentage of migrants sending remittances from Libya by month in 2019–2020



The Libyan economy suffered substantially in 2020, contracting by 31 per cent in 2020 with not only severe drops in the oil sector but also a reduction in agricultural production and other non-oil sectors (World Bank, 2021a). The analysis conducted deems migrants' access to livelihoods in Libya as a central aspect for the dynamics of migration to the country, and migrant workers' engagement in the domestic labour market as a capability-enhancing factor which helps reduce vulnerabilities to financial shocks and negative humanitarian consequences.

The downward trend of the Libyan economy also impacted migrant remittances in 2020, as a year-on-year reduction in the value of remittances sent per month was recorded via DTM surveys.

In 2019, remittance-sending migrants reported sending USD 146 per month, while in 2020 this figure fell to USD 123 per month, indicating at least a 15 per cent reduction in migrant remittances. The World Bank had projected a global 20 per cent reduction in remittances in 2020 and predicts a further 14 per cent slump in remittances for 2021 (World Bank, 2020a and 2020b). While various interesting trends are being observed, as the projections are revised, especially from the perspective of remittance-receiving countries and regions (World Bank, 2021b), IOM in Libya via its DTM programme will continue to collect microlevel self-reported data on migrant remittances sent from Libya throughout 2021.

Remittances and migration to Libya

Several DTM studies and assessments in Libya identify that migration to Libya for a vast majority of migrants is motivated by economic factors such as lack of job opportunities or inadequate income to meet their basic needs in the country of origin (IOM, 2019a, 2021b, 2021c). Data on employment status collected throughout 2019–2020, despite the shocks faced by migrants in Libya, shows that a higher proportion of migrants were able to improve their employment prospects by migrating to Libya, as more migrants who were unemployed in their countries of origin were able to find jobs in Libya than the opposite (IOM, 2019a and 2021d). Unemployment rate among the sample migrants was higher in their respective countries of origin than in Libya.

Furthermore, 1 in 3 migrants surveyed in 2019–2020 reported sending remittances to their countries of origin from Libya. This shows that the ability to send remittances home as an outcome of improved employment prospects and relatively higher income after migration plays a role in the dynamics of labour migration to Libya.

A relationship between motivations for migration to Libya and remittances also exists, as there is a higher proportion of migrants who have migrated to Libya due to economic factors that reported sending

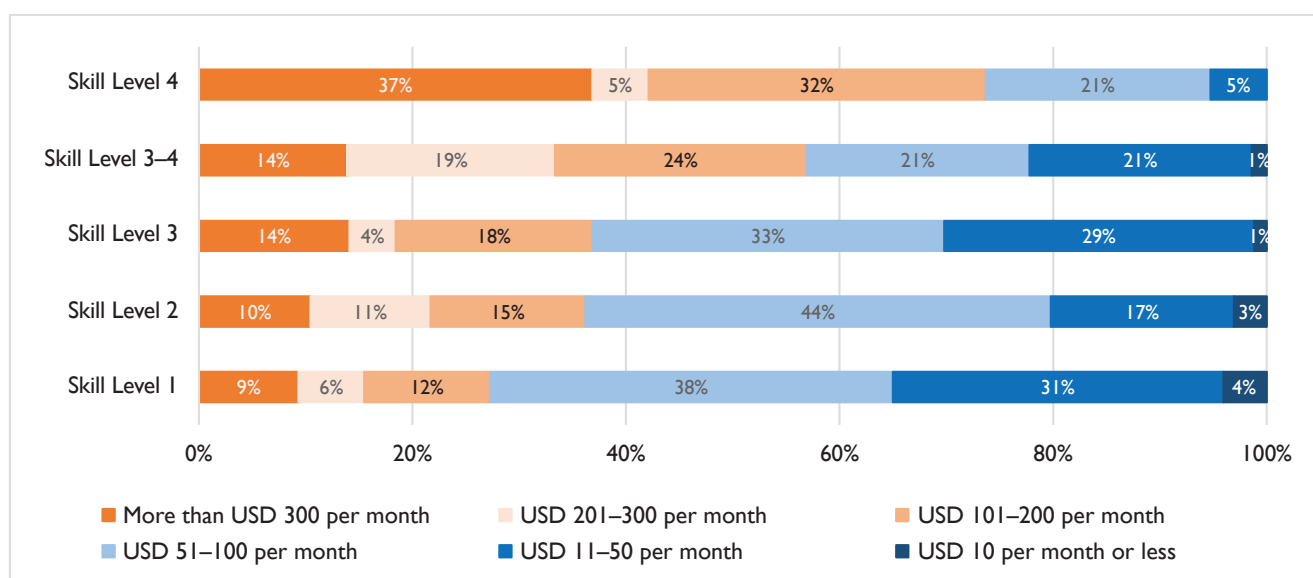
remittances from 2019 to 2020, than migrants reporting other motivating factors. Similarly, there is a higher proportion of migrants intending to stay in Libya that reported sending remittances than those intending to return or migrate onward. Migrant workers arriving in Libya as a country of destination, who were able to send remittances even during the two years of labour market disruptions caused by armed conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic, could be considered to have enhanced their capabilities via the act of migration.

Furthermore, a majority of migrant workers sending remittances from Libya did not identify their remittances as a primary source of income for their families in the country of origin. This indicates that remittances sent from Libya, in addition to covering daily household needs, also function as a financial risk mitigation and income diversification strategy for migrant workers' households in their countries of origin.

Who sends remittances from Libya?

Analysis of determinants of migrant remittances from Libya shows that migrants from all education and skill levels who have been employed in Libya reported sending remittances. However, migrants with higher education and skill levels were able to send relatively higher values of remittances compared to others (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Self-reported value of migrant remittance sent per month shown in United States dollar brackets as per migrants' skill levels



Furthermore, an analysis of migrants' occupations at the time of the interview shows that a majority of migrants employed in occupations related to services and the sales category³ reported sending remittances. While migrants who were employed as professionals and managers – constituting an overall minority of the sample and the broader migrant population in Libya – reported sending comparatively higher values of remittances than migrants employed in other occupational categories. Further study on the links between occupations and skill levels, and their relationship with migrant remittances from Libya, is recommended to better understand these links and their underlying dynamics.

However, migrants who were not successful in sending remittances also identified several challenges that they faced in sending remittances from Libya, including insecure livelihoods, unstable employment prospects, and inadequate income in some cases. Furthermore, the lack of access to reliable money transfer services was widely reported, as 99 per cent of the migrants reported being unbanked in Libya and admitted to using informal fund transfer systems (such as *hawalas*) for remittance transactions.

What the future may hold

Secondary data and projections predict that migrant remittances could further stagnate or drop in 2021 due to the economic crises resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic (World Bank, 2020a and 2020b). The ability of migrant workers to maintain their livelihoods in Libya and send remittances is critical for their families in countries of origin, as in many cases remittances pay for essential needs such as food and education, apart from acting as an income diversification and risk mitigation strategy (IOM, 2019b and 2021c). Similarly, the ability to successfully send remittances is also a protective factor indicating reduced vulnerabilities of the individuals surveyed. Thus, if the global projections of decline in remittances were to be proven true for migrant workers in Libya, an increase in migrant vulnerabilities and humanitarian needs in the country cannot be ruled out in 2021. Therefore, DTM Libya will continue to collect data on migrant remittances as an indicator reflecting the overall socioeconomic status and well-being of migrants.

Further research to better understand the links between remittances and migration dynamics to Libya, from the perspective of a capability framework, is recommended (de Haas, 2021; Sen, 1999). Lastly, programming aimed at exploring the potential for improving migrant workers' access to formal financial services in Libya, including reliable money transfer services that provide secure and cost-effective means of transferring remittances, is also recommended. ■

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The socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 in Yemen: Migrants and displaced persons

Marius Olivier¹

Context

The impact of COVID-19 on mobile populations in Yemen must be understood against the background of the devastating impact of the ongoing conflict in the country. Yemen is in its seventh year of conflict and continues to face the world's worst humanitarian crisis. It is beset by a declining economy, the breakdown of public institutions and services, as well as extreme levels of poverty and food insecurity. As noted, "Millions are projected to experience alarming levels of acute malnutrition and food insecurity in 2021, with an estimated 80 per cent of the population to remain in need of humanitarian assistance." In 2020 alone, amid the rampant impact of COVID-19, over 170,000 people were displaced, with the opening of over a dozen new front lines and the escalation of hostilities in governorates like Ma'rib: "Without a peaceful resolution of the conflict, the severity of needs and suffering is expected to worsen across the country."² Around 98 per cent of people in need – 17.8 million – are living in hard-to-reach areas, mainly as a result of bureaucracy-related factors like permit denials and movement blockages (IOM, 2021a).

Over the years, Yemen has also been serving as a transit country for irregular migrants from Africa, en route to seeking job opportunities in Saudi Arabia (Koh, 2020). IOM estimates that more than 32,000 migrants are stranded across Yemen in dire conditions, with extremely limited to no access to essential services like shelter, food, water and health care (IOM, 2021b). The numbers of those affected are high, and the circumstances of their deprivation particularly nuanced, accentuating the need for a COVID-19 response that prioritizes reaching out to mobile populations. In fact, there are worrying signs that discrimination, stigmatization and marginalization are

on the rise. The 422,000 migrants, asylum seekers and refugees who are in Yemen are at extreme risk; many are subjected to inhumane conditions that clearly violate international norms. Marginalization also affects the Muhamasheen – an underclass that has experienced centuries of discrimination, exploitation and poverty (Al-Warraq, 2019).

In addition, 3.65 million Yemenis are displaced – Yemen has the fourth largest number of displaced persons in the world. Their vulnerability is compounded by the fact that 76 per cent of internally displaced persons (IDPs) are women and children. Furthermore, 21 per cent of IDP households are headed by women under the age of 18. Many of them are displaced as a result of the ongoing conflict. However, sizeable numbers are also displaced due to climate change events. The treatment of climate-affected IDPs requires an understanding of their specific protection needs and the introduction of dedicated interventions, as their large-scale displacement has put considerable pressure on available, but limited, resources – with limited cash and in-kind forms of support available, IDPs are one of the most marginalized groups in Yemen, and the climate change impact on them has been significant. In addition, climate change IDPs are often unable to return to their respective areas of origin (UNDP, 2020a:16, 65 and 70).

The COVID-19 response and its impact have been influenced by the context described above: "There is limited testing and reporting, and a fear of seeking medical attention. However, the impact of the pandemic is clearly evident in nearly all facets of life across the country: communities have seen loved ones fall ill and die, and the economy has declined severely while remittances from abroad have dropped drastically, putting millions of people's survival on the line. The number of lives lost to COVID-19 in Yemen is sadly unknown but haunting images of mass grave sites tell their own story" (IOM, 2021a).

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² More information is available at www.iom.int/countries/yemen.

Finally, designing responses and delivering COVID-19 interventions are influenced by a range of Yemen-specific factors:

- (a) Conducting vulnerability assessments is key to ensuring that COVID-19 support is appropriately targeted at those most in need. Differences exist with reference to COVID-19 mobility restrictions and spatial, gender, and migration criteria – while bearing in mind intersectional vulnerability and multidimensional deprivations. However, identifying specific COVID-19 vulnerabilities is difficult as most Yemenis need assistance and limited COVID-19 evidence is available (UNDP, 2020a:32).
- (b) The ability of the State – at the central, regional (governorate) and local levels – to provide and deliver a meaningful COVID-19 response is extremely limited. The ongoing conflict has effectively divided the country in areas controlled by different military and governing institutions, including a number of warlords. This has a severe impact on accessing several areas where mobile populations are located. Simultaneously, much of the effort to reach and support mobile populations has fallen on donor and humanitarian organizations, causing the relief and assistance effort to be subject to the availability of increasingly dwindling donor support.

Much has been done and proposed to address the impact of COVID-19. Below we reflect briefly on three of the five pillars embedded in the United Nations framework for immediate socioeconomic response to COVID-19, as adjusted (United Nations, 2020), building largely on the *Framework* endorsed by United Nations agencies and donors involved in Yemen (UNDP, 2020a:65 and 70):

- (a) Health first: Protecting health services and systems during the crisis;
- (b) Protecting people: Social protection and livelihood protection;
- (c) Social cohesion and community resilience.

Addressing health concerns

As noted in *A Strategic Framework for an Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19 in Yemen* (ibid., 8), COVID-19 may be more devastating in Yemen because the ongoing conflict has decimated an already weak health system, which has severely compromised the system's ability to deliver key services including immunizations. Only 55 per cent

of health-care facilities are fully or partially in service, and 160 health centres and hospitals have been damaged in the conflict. The facilities that are operational lack specialists, equipment, medicines and access to power. Also, new demands generated by COVID-19 have increased pressure on the existing health system capacity, due to both direct mortality from the outbreak and indirect mortality from vaccine-preventable and treatable conditions. Even beyond COVID-19, geographically, Yemenis in 203 of the 333 districts have severe health needs due to poor health services access. Many have weakened immune systems from malnutrition and multiple infectious disease outbreaks such as malaria, dengue fever, cholera and diphtheria. Since the conflict started, immunizations have decreased by as much as 30 per cent. And now physical distancing and good hygiene are difficult in areas such as IDP camps, where many have little access to clean water.

The COVID-19 health response has required new and enhanced systems, capabilities and supplies: “WHO – in consultation with authorities in Sana’a and Aden, UNICEF and other health partners – has developed a national plan based upon agreed strategic actions. The plan will prepare the public health sector to respond to COVID-19 by improving controls at the border, scaling up prevention and treatment capacity, and maintaining the safety of the health care system and other core functions. Implementation has already started. There is also a keen interest among the health community to strengthen the health system and make progress toward universal health care” (ibid., 34).³

The role of trusted community institutions like local media, health facilities and hospitals, schools, and mosques is crucial. Communication for development is critical for preventive work in a successful COVID-19 socioeconomic framework response. The rich experience from the 2017 cholera outbreak and response, and the large network of volunteers across the country, can be drawn upon. Yemenis receive their information largely from traditional and social media. Therefore, as indicated in the *Strategic Framework*, communications and outreach efforts must involve and empower journalists,

³ More specifically, the plan outlines actions across eight major areas of public health preparedness and response: (a) country-level coordination, planning and monitoring; (b) risk communication and community engagement; (c) surveillance and rapid-response and case investigation; (d) controlling points of entry; (e) beefing up the capacity of national laboratories; (f) infection, prevention and control; (g) case management; and (h) operational support and logistics.

civil society groups and the youth. Aid agencies have activated approximately 26,000 community-based volunteers and influencers to raise awareness of how the virus is transmitted, how people can protect themselves, and the steps to take if illness strikes. Together with mass media messaging, these activities have reached millions of people, and evidence indicates that the messaging has promoted action.

To achieve this, close humanitarian and development coordination is needed. The whole population is in need of interventions in this regard. However, services must be prioritized for the most vulnerable groups, including IDPs, refugees and migrants, among others.

Also, operationalization of the national plan entails strategic and operational coordination of health and non-health actors, including respecting the ceasefire, eliminating humanitarian access limitations and ceasing attacks on health-care facilities. In addition, safeguarding essential health services must include maintaining safe health care. In addition to health products, an efficient COVID-19 response must support critical needs such as the provision of water and sanitation, fuel, energy, food and nutrition, telecommunications/Internet, financial resources and transportation services (*ibid.*).

Strengthening social protection and livelihood protection

From a short-term perspective, the main strategic challenge is that social protection needs have risen sharply in response to COVID-19 at a time when humanitarian assistance – an important pillar of the social safety net – has shrunk. COVID-19 has placed significant mobility constraints on aid delivery. For example, humanitarian and implementing agencies have adapted intervention strategies and operations such as social distancing-sensitive school meal distribution and cash-for-work arrangements, but fear of infection has impacted access to health care and other services, quarantine measures delay food imports, and work/services are suspended when a COVID-19-safe work environment is not guaranteed (*ibid.*).

Those to receive priority attention must be defined in consultation among major stakeholders. However, it is evident that IDPs and migrants, among others, would fall under this priority category.⁴ For those most in

need, including IDPs and migrants, in-kind assistance and unconditional cash transfer programmes may be called for. The positive impact of such programmes on child nutritional status, for example, has been proven in Yemen (Ecker et al., 2019).

Over the medium to long term, an overarching model for improved social protection and food security is needed, within the framework of the need to develop an agreed-upon primary social protection programming, aimed at creating sustainable livelihoods, including the provision of minimal cash and food support, ensuring access to essential services and health care, and enhancing income-generation potential to address multidimensional deprivations – in so doing, being also aimed at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

There is, therefore, a need to move away from an almost singular focus on humanitarian assistance to integrated developmental and peace-seeking and peace-building objectives: a humanitarian–development–peace (HDP) nexus approach should be emphasized. This would, among others, require enhanced institutional coordination and cooperation, and joint programming, to achieve better outcomes, avoid duplications and ensure coverage of those who otherwise may be falling through. Already being discussed in the donor community and among United Nations agencies, moving from in-kind aid to cash assistance would help operational savings and usher in much-needed foreign exchange.

It has been recommended that in the medium term, the three pillars of livelihood intervention – food, cash and work – must be integrated in a more coordinated manner to reduce double-dipping, avoid “misses”, and develop a clearer poverty reduction model for Yemen, from which IDPs and migrants should also benefit. In addition, cash and food programmes so transformed should be embedded into a broader environment to help facilitate access to a wider range of social services, reflected in the current “cash plus” approaches. This would imply that involved social protection partners build on existing work already done and invest in developing and agreeing upon a common template for evidence-based vulnerability assessment to inform interventions across the HDP nexus, including underserved vulnerable populations to achieve the SDG objective of leaving no one behind (UNDP, 2020a).

⁴ See: ACAPS, 2020a and 2020b; MOPIC, 2020.

Finally, it is recommended that the current range of fragmented cash-for-work and similar programmes be embedded in an integrated, coordinated and developmental model. To achieve this, it is necessary to scale up the work pillar as much and as quick as possible. Therefore, in the medium to long term, there is a need to federate and scale up work programmes into a national public works programme for households affected by poverty shocks, with members still able to work and move to a national productive safety net. Comparative models operating in countries such as Ethiopia and India may be of value in this context (*ibid.*). This would create employment, ensure income-generation and contribute to community resilience. In addition, part of the public works programme could be tailored to support much-needed local food production.

Supporting social cohesion

Conflict as well as displacement as a result of climate change, as indicated above, have accentuated issues between various groups in Yemen. Communities have been affected by various levels of division and conflict over scarce resources, to which COVID-19 has contributed. IDPs, returnees, migrants and refugees have been impacted most – including in relation to xenophobia (HRC, 2017). Traditional Yemeni institutions have done much over the years to build and preserve community resilience, but tribal, political and religious cleavages have been accentuated by the conflict over scarce resources and IDP return, and are being aggravated by COVID-19's impact. Dimensions of disadvantage and vulnerability strongly overlap with gender as women (and children) are the most affected. Furthermore, attitudes are determined by culture and do not quickly change, while interventions work largely through progressive advocacy and engagement – particularly by the media, civil society organizations (CSOs) and other associations specializing in these areas (UNDP, 2020a:65–66).

In addition to measures indicated in the concluding part below, it is necessary to support communities' ability to cope with insecurity and injustice by attempting to improve relations with authorities and enhance their capacity to deal with protection needs efficiently and respectfully. Additionally, individual and collective grievance redress systems and social accountability structures should be included in projects. Mechanisms require support and awareness-raising to ensure that they take root in the community (*ibid.*).

Also, peace-building initiatives are needed to achieve mutual respect, tolerance, and social cohesion in respect of relationships marked by conflict and division. Coherence and understanding between communities, local institutions, tribal authorities, and militia must be improved – starting in local areas by investing in formal and informal conflict-resolution modalities (Maktary and Smith, 2017).

Conclusions

Even before COVID-19, there has been some deliberate attempt on the part of several relief agencies in Yemen to prioritize the needs of IDPs and target them. A recent United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) social protection programming lessons-learned report stresses the unintended positive benefits derived from the programme in terms of the improvement of health, and that across a range of programme areas, equal opportunities for IDPs have been achieved (UNDP, 2020b:94). In its conclusion, the report echoes the findings of a European Union evaluation report that the programme has contributed to the mitigation of the current humanitarian crisis in households and communities, with a focus on IDPs, among others (UNDP, 2020c:2). For international migrants though, the burden has largely fallen on organizations such as IOM.

One of the key lessons learned from the Yemeni experience is the need to move to a more developmental approach, embedded in peace objectives. Yemen's major players and donors have developed innovative programmes in recent years and have shown that humanitarian, development and political actors can find innovative ways to collaborate around the HDP nexus (UNDP, 2020a).

As noted in a recent policy brief,⁵ the need to explore linkages and pathways between humanitarian assistance and measures to attain longer-term developmental objectives is informed by the importance of reconceptualizing the nature and impact of settlement by affected migrants, including populations affected by displacement, in the area/country of destination – and also where the settlement occurs within the framework of prolonged transit.

⁵ The rest of this part is taken from: IOM, n.d.

Displaced persons who do not return to their respective places of origin attempt to adapt and develop new livelihood strategies. These strategies are invariably linked to their active participation in the informal economy at the place of destination, as a means to progressively resolve the vulnerabilities that emerge during the period of displacement. There may be strong justification to replace the classic three-pronged solution options (i.e. return, local integration, and resettlement) by a “human settlement” approach, which requires the adoption of a dynamic approach recognizing change in livelihood patterns due to changing environments.

Based on the understanding that core protection and life-saving needs have been met, IOM, through its Progressive Resolution of Displacement Situations (PRDS) Framework, recognizes this. It emphasizes mobility as key to allowing people to preserve or enhance available resources and opportunities, increasing access to basic assistance and better livelihood opportunities, and enabling them to save their lives. The PRDS acknowledges that displacement vulnerabilities are progressively resolved, and therefore focuses on strengthening coping capacities, fostering self-reliance and creative conducive environments (IOM, 2016).

Therefore, an integrative approach that focuses on the context, realities, and (social protection) needs of displaced persons and societies is needed – a development-directed approach sensitive to the nexus between movement/displacement, settlement/urbanization and changing livelihoods. Such an approach must seek to navigate the complexity of forced migration dynamics and support efforts to progressively resolve displacement situations in the pursuit of durable solutions, with particular reference to the social protection and economic (including labour market) dimensions of strengthening resilience at the community, household/family and individual levels. Simultaneously, solutions must adopt a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach, mindful of the perspective on host communities, the interplay with immigration law and policy, the need for labour market interventions, and the adoption of context-sensitive governance arrangements.

Evident in this latter regard is the need for government ownership and leadership; institutional coordination; cooperation with international (including cross-border) institutions, regional and local governmental structures, and the private sector; appropriate funding arrangements; and dedicated management and operational arrangements. In essence, what is needed is a whole-of-government approach, also to social protection responses, which places the emphasis on a comprehensive strategic approach by national governments, rather than fragmented interventions directed by external actors. To this extent, governments will be fulfilling their “social contract” with the affected populations at the locations of destination, accentuated by the fact that the reasons why people leave their places of original habitat often are the result of the failure of the State to protect them, and emphasizing that governmental efforts to deal with the impact of displacement need to involve displaced societies, host communities and other migrant groups potentially affected.

Much the same can be said in relation to the need to find sustainable solutions for migrants looking to improve their socioeconomic situation. Special and dedicated approaches are also needed in respect of both regular and irregular migrant workers who find themselves embedded in the informal economy. Furthermore, in this context, in fulfilling their social contract obligations, governments are required to find ways and adopt measures to extend appropriate social protection to those so affected. ■

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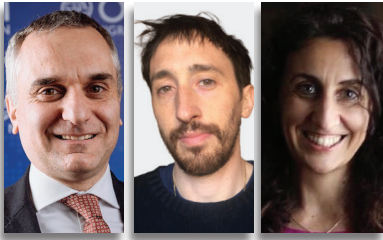
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The Sahel, North Africa and Mediterranean nexus: Towards a holistic approach to migration management

Federico Soda, Corrado Fumagalli and Claudia Natali¹

Our article advocates a holistic approach to migration management in North Africa. Facing a significant share of irregular migration between Africa and the European Union, the European Union and its member States have focused their efforts on containing migration in neighbouring countries and regions. However, in so doing, the European Union, its member States, and partner countries of origin and transit have overlooked important and deep-rooted mobility dynamics in the region. As this article shows, Northern African countries are points of both departure and arrival. As such, they require and depend on foreign workers from sub-Saharan Africa and beyond. Against this backdrop, we argue that an effective reduction in irregular migration across the Mediterranean requires strengthening migration governance and protection in North Africa through the promotion of well-managed, sustainable and regular labour migration flows – particularly between North and sub-Saharan Africa, as the irregular status of migrants from sub-Saharan Africa in Northern African countries is a key accelerator of risks and vulnerabilities.

Introduction

Following a recent wave of migrant boat arrivals from North Africa, migration has returned as a hotly debated issue in European Union politics. Yet the public debate around migration continues to frame mobility dynamics and migration governance from a partial and inaccurate Eurocentric perspective. The emphasis on border management, as we argue in this paper, reflects a too narrow understanding of mobility patterns in North Africa, as a destination, port of transit and point of departure of migration journeys. Approaching migration to, within and from North Africa holistically, we claim, means challenging Eurocentric narratives, rejecting the overfocus on irregular migration, connecting migration with other policy domains, and ensuring a strong involvement of civil society groups and regional economic and security great powers in the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa.

Unpacking the assumptions behind the New Pact on Migration and Asylum

The European Commission presented the New Pact on Migration and Asylum almost a year ago. The Pact includes several initiatives, whose centrepieces are the robust and fair management of external borders, a new solidarity mechanism for situations of pressure and crisis, and a push to develop partnerships with countries of origin and transit (European Commission, 2020:2).

The Pact reflects a sentiment towards migration that has permeated political and policy debates at the national and supranational levels (Panebianco, 2020). When the number of migrant arrivals and asylum applicants soared, the European Union's primary response has been to turn North African countries into a buffer zone. The European Union's policy agenda continues to make the assumption that recent mobility patterns are unprecedented and largely directed to Europe. Moreover, the overfocus on irregular flows tends to neglect, and therefore not capitalize on, key policy developments within the African context, such as the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (Free Movement Protocol), which show an increasingly widespread commitment to consider migration as a key development ingredient.

Even in relation to regional mobility to, from and within North Africa, the Pact does not shift from previous paradigms. On the one hand, the Pact incentivizes countries in Northern Africa to continue using migration as a foreign policy tool to pursue national interests at the regional and international levels. On the other hand, it maintains the long-standing commitment to prioritize protection of European Union borders through externalized and deterritorialized migration policies in the region, which so far has resulted in several cooperation agreements between the European Union or its member States and countries in North Africa as ways to keep irregular migrants at bay in exchange for various development incentives (Mouthaan, 2021).

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According to estimates, Africa's population is expected to grow from about 900 million in 2013 to about 2.8 billion by 2060. Moreover, the working-age population that usually comprises migration flows is forecast to grow even more rapidly, from about 480 million in 2013 to 1.3 billion in 2050. When migration from Africa is solely conceived as a linear movement from Africa to Europe, such data nurtures populist narratives about an approaching "African invasion".

In reality, one of the main characteristics of African migration, albeit too often overlooked, is that about two thirds of all migration in Africa remains within Africa. In line with this trend, migration across the Sahara between the Sahel and the Maghreb has been a long-lasting and key feature marking the two subregions. For instance, between November 2017 and 2018, refugees and asylum seekers interviewed by IOM in the north of Mali indicated Algeria as their primary destination (IOM, 2018). Moreover, Libya, even if its number of migrant workers has declined since the beginning of a political turmoil in 2011, is still a destination for a significant number of migrant workers from neighbouring countries (Horwood et al., 2019). Before 2011, it is estimated that Libya hosted between 1.5 and 3 million migrant workers compared to an estimated 580,000 in 2021. Even today, the majority of migrants in the country are from neighbouring places and of nationalities that are not registered in high numbers in the European Union (i.e. Chad, the Niger, Egypt and the Sudan), demonstrating that most migrants come to Libya to stay and look for better economic opportunities rather than transit to Europe (IOM, 2021a).

Over time, migration movements and routes across the Sahel and beyond have been shaped by local development needs. Immigration into the Maghreb increased in the postcolonial era, in the 1960s and 1970s, as the labour force of sub-Saharan migrants was needed in the newly established gas and oil exploitation sites in the very sparsely populated areas of southern Algeria and Libya, such as Tamanrasset and Sebha respectively (Bensaad, 2016). This is how the sub-Saharan diaspora's presence started expanding in the Maghreb. Concomitantly, States and multinational companies developed sites to exploit uranium in the Sahel, primarily in the Niger, which contributed to the exponential population growth of cities like Arlit. This was primarily due to seasonal migrant workers employed in the service businesses surging (DIIS, 2018). Such trend coincided with the population boom in the Sahel, which is still ongoing

– in 2020, the G5 Sahel (Mauritania, Burkina Faso, the Niger, Mali, Chad) hosted 8.4 per cent of the total African population.

In the early 2000s, it was estimated that about one and a half million sub-Saharan migrants were living in Libya, about 300,000 in Mauritania, as many in Algeria, and a couple of tens of thousands in Tunisia and Morocco, while about a hundred thousand others would pass through Agadez in the Niger each year as part of the seasonal pattern of labour migration (DIIS, 2018). Although Libya was, prior to the fall of Gaddafi, the main receiver of migration in North-West Africa, Tamanrasset, a city in Algeria, has 40 per cent of its population consisting of immigrants. Algiers and Oran also have large immigrant populations in their urban centres.

This sub-Saharan migration trend, however, went unnoticed because of its informality and initial concentration within the Sahara regions or along a few coastal roads of North Africa. It only started attracting the European public debate's attention a few years later, in the early 2000s, when the flows began to directly touch Europe through the first movements of a minority of sub-Saharan migrants across the Mediterranean. Flows remained predominantly composed of Moroccans and Algerians at the beginning of the new millennium. In 2000, for instance, it was estimated that 11 times more Moroccans were crossing into Spain than sub-Saharan Africans, of all nationalities put together (DIIS, 2018). Progressively, and as migration trends shifted in the region, the Niger, from being just a country of emigration and immigration, turned into a country of transit for migrants from Western Africa travelling north towards Libya (through the Central Mediterranean route) and Algeria (through the Western Mediterranean route). In the same way, Mali began serving as a transit country for migrants from West Africa in their journeys towards Algeria. Morocco also began attracting significant shares of migrants for its access to the West Africa Atlantic route (WAAR) (IOM, 2021a).

North African countries remain predominantly as destination countries for most migrants who are able to reach them. Therefore, unlike what is often said, or believed, and largely assumed in overarching migration policy frameworks, such as the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, only a minority of the migrants who reach the Maghreb attempt the dangerous crossing of the Mediterranean towards Europe (28,000 or 5% of

the 580,000 total migrants in Libya have attempted to cross the Mediterranean in 2020) (IOM, 2021b). To be clear, in 2020, about half of this minority of migrants reached European Union shores, while the rest were intercepted/rescued at sea and returned to Libya, and 978 died at sea or went missing. Meanwhile, in North African countries, a very large number of migrants continue to fill jobs that nationals are not willing to do, including construction work, agriculture and elderly care, as the income differentials with their countries of origin remain high even if they may be underpaid in said destination countries.

Towards a holistic approach to migration management between the Sahel, North Africa and the Mediterranean

The standard account, as we have seen in the previous section, misconstrues population dynamics in Africa and neglects the fact that most migrants remain in expanding African cities or in the surrounding areas. If the real characteristic of mobility trends within and to North Africa remains outside the purview of migration policy management in the Mediterranean, there is a serious risk of wasting the development potential of population growth, and eventually continuing to push migrants to embark on dangerous journeys across the Mediterranean. In this vein, both Europe and Africa should make efforts to ensure that mobility within the continent, and especially towards North African countries, whose economies could absorb such an expanding and young labour force, becomes more accessible and safer.

Improved stability, rule of law, and strengthened governance in Libya and other North African countries are the key ingredients that can reduce migration pressures to Europe, while maximizing the development impacts in North and sub-Saharan Africa. Nowadays the systems and frameworks to manage migration holistically between sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa are not in place, and until they are, migration flows farther north are likely to continue.

To date, the European debate on migration across the Mediterranean has shown a clear lack of understanding regarding the role of a holistic migration governance approach. Such an approach would help to better manage mobility between sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa, would reduce irregular migration between the two regions and to other regions, and

would be a driver of development for Africa as whole by strengthening ties between African countries and economies. In other words, addressing migration holistically means taking a wider geographic, political and temporal perspective on present challenges, ensuring that other policy domains, beyond security, are integrated in the analysis of migration flows, and that regional economic and security great powers in the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa are involved in transregional and transcontinental decision-making processes.

A holistic approach to migration *to, within and from* North Africa should also take the local dimension of migration governance very seriously. Since 2015, the European Committee of the Regions has tried to help Libyan cities join international communities and mobilize partnerships. Within this framework, it is very important to mainstream migration governance in city and peer-to-peer diplomacy.

While prevailing narratives tend to portray North Africa mainly as a place of transit in a longer journey to Europe, high numbers of West African and Central African migrants finish their journeys in cities like Tunis and Algiers. In some cases, the decision to settle in North African cities is adaptive and reflects the unpredictable temporality of migration. In other cases, migrants chose to seek working and educational opportunities in the cities of North Africa as a way to join social networks and communities of co-nationals. Against this backdrop, a holistic approach to migration should contribute to transforming sprawling cities into engines for the sustainable integration of migrants. Supporting the inclusion of Northern African cities in the expanding network of European cities, which are already teaming up in skills development, resource mobilization and cooperative policymaking, is a first step in this direction.

Moving forward, the European Union could perhaps gain much more by focusing on establishing systems not only to keep people from moving, but also to support them to regularly migrate within the growing economies of the African continent alone. Similarly, North African countries would benefit from the large pull of labour force entering and working legally in their economies and contributing to national economic growths, and as such the European Union should aim at, and should be supported in, negotiating and establishing effective labour migration mechanisms with North Africa. In turn, such well-regulated migration would have a direct spillover effect on

sub-Saharan countries of origin that would benefit from remittances sent back by migrants, along with the skills and competencies transfer when migrants are able to return anytime to their countries of origin. A win-win situation in Mediterranean migration management could take place if the European Union addressed the underlying mobility dynamics in the region and promoted sustainable migration management policies that are also in the interest of North African countries that require and depend on foreign workers from sub-Saharan Africa and beyond. While the benefits of migration are enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, migration policies, including in the North African and European Union regions, rarely establish the maximization of migration potentials as their overall objectives. Such an approach would also contribute to providing long-lasting security when it comes to preventing radicalization, as economic growth and meaningful youth employment are probably the most effective ingredients for doing so.

Both Europe and Africa would benefit from giving the right weight to the importance of improving transregional integration across the Sahara as well as cooperation between the more powerful North African States and their less consolidated Sahel counterparts. As migration management in the Mediterranean cannot be addressed without taking a step back and looking at the bigger picture, it is crucial to consider all factors that push and pull people across those regions (DIIS, 2018). It is against this backdrop that promoting well-managed and regular labour migration flows, as opposed to attempts to stop flows, can have a much more effective impact on reducing irregular migration, including migration to Europe, and hence reducing those same tragedies that continue to ignite public policy discussions on mobility in the Mediterranean Sea. ■

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Annexes

Annex 1. Summary of good practices

Table 1 below summarizes some of the main good practices adopted by governments and humanitarian actors in the context of the crisis, in three dimensions: (a) responsiveness, (b) registration and targeting, and (c) communication and community engagement.

Table 1. Summary of good practices

	Good practice	Why?	Examples
Responsiveness	Horizontal expansion of existing programmes	Enhance the number of beneficiaries	Iraq expanded its Social Safety Net programme, including new beneficiaries such as IDP families (IPC-IG, 2021a). Djibouti expanded its voucher system programme, including refugee families (ibid.).
	Vertical expansion of existing programmes	Enhance the value/quantity of benefits	WFP in Algeria will scale up the number of monthly food rations by 14 per cent to support refugee families who depend on small businesses (Meyer-Seipp, 2020).
	Provision of emergency income support through new emergency programmes	Enable livelihoods during shocks	Libya's <i>Taraahamo wa Tarahamo</i> programme provided one-off in-kind assistance for families affected by the pandemic, including IDPs (ibid.).
	Guarantee access to health care		Qatar and Saudi Arabia provided free testing and treatment for COVID-19 for migrants in the country, including undocumented migrants (ibid.).
Registration and targeting	Include non-national workers in social insurance system, including for short-term risks such as unemployment	Eliminate legal barriers that can prevent non-nationals to benefit	Jordan allows non-national workers to contribute to the country's unemployment scheme, and this has allowed extending wage and income protection to non-national workers during COVID-19, though some elements introduced better treatment of Gazan refugees and non-national children of Jordanian mothers compared to other non-nationals.
	Alternative and simplified methods to identify beneficiaries, accepting undocumented migrants	Expand access to the most vulnerable	Kuwait offered emergency cash and in-kind benefits through its Zakat House to undocumented migrant households (ibid.).
	Working with the waiting lists and existing databases	Rapid identification of new beneficiaries	UNICEF Jordan's Hajati database allowed the rapid inclusion of 21,000 refugee households in WFP- and UNICEF-led programmes (WFP, 2020; de Hoop et al., 2020).

Registration and targeting	Creating coordination groups	Prevent duplication and cover as many people as possible	<p>UNHCR in Egypt developed a mapping tool for agencies and partners (de Hoop et al., 2020).</p> <p>In Kuwait, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour along with Zakat House coordinated with 30 other non-governmental offices (NGOs) through the <i>Fazaa Al-Kuwait</i> campaign to provide beneficiaries, including migrants in irregular situations, with assistance.</p>
	Distributing benefits in advance	Ensure livelihoods, prevent queues in delivery points and the necessity of displacement	WFP in Jordan delivered existing financial and food aid ahead of the usual schedule (Elmasri, 2020) and implemented an extended staggered reload schedule for food assistance in camps (WFP, 2020).
	Expanding the automated teller machine (ATM) networks, scheduling payments on different days, and providing home delivery and mobile teams	Cope with movement restrictions, reduce risks of agglomerations and costs of transportation	<p>In Jordan, a new joint initiative of Jordan Ahli Bank and WFP enhanced the number of ATMs available to refugees receiving cash assistance. For refugees living in locked-down areas, WFP provided their monthly assistance through the Cash on Wheel ATM service of Cairo Amman Bank (UNHCR, 2020d).</p> <p>UNHCR in Algeria provided cash assistance to 550 persons of concern from March to June 2020 using home delivery and mobile distribution teams (UNHCR, 2020h).</p>
	Provide digital payment modalities	Ensure safety and the continuity of cash-based assistance, cope with liquidity limitations and movement restriction	<p>WFP and UNHCR in Iraq introduced digital payments for refugees in camps (IPC-IG, 2021a).</p> <p>The Central Bank of Jordan created specific permissions to recognize refugee IDs issued by UNHCR to enable them to open mobile wallets and receive assistance (ibid.).</p>
Communication and community engagement	Guarantee community engagement	Facilitate the implementation of safety measures and adapt previous works developed by local networks	<p>UNDP in Sudan has established more than 150 local networks, including management committees, peace committees, volunteer groups, and farming and water management groups (UNDP, 2020).</p> <p>UNHCR in Egypt trained volunteers and community leaders to deliver psychological first aid and non-specialized psychosocial support, as a rise in anxiety and depression among refugees has been observed (UNHCR, 2020f).</p>
	Dissemination of quality information using multiple platforms and different languages	Guarantee the safety of non-nationals and access to social protection rights	<p>UNHCR in Sudan successfully reached most refugees using multilanguage short message service (SMS), billboards, posters and community networks (UNHCR, 2020e).</p> <p>UNHCR in the Syrian Arab Republic mobilized 250 health volunteers to support COVID-19 awareness-raising campaigns (UNHCR, 2020g).</p>

Source: Author's elaboration.

Annex 2. Enabling factors of migrant-inclusive social protection responses in Jordan

National social protection measures implemented in Jordan extended access to a particular group of Palestinian refugees known as Gazan refugees, along with non-nationals whose mothers are Jordanian (with only a few programmes extending access to other non-national migrant workers). This inclusion comes after years of civic mobilization and grass-roots activism by both groups to increase the Government's respect of their civil, economic and social rights.

Jordanian Law No. 6 on Nationality (1954) discriminates against women by allowing only the transfer of nationality paternally,² yet approximately 90,000 Jordanian women are married to non-nationals, 59 per cent of whom are Palestinian refugees.³ The **non-national children of Jordanian mothers** were excluded from health insurance coverage, labour market engagement, and higher education enrolment at national fees. They were also unable to open bank accounts, join professional organizations or own cars. In response to such exclusions, a group of Jordanian women established the “My mother is Jordanian, and her nationality is my right” campaign in the last decade. They worked alongside other NGOs by holding protests and submitting multiple reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (Hammad, 2018b), which supervises the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which Jordan ratified in 1992. This activism eventually led to the issuance of a Children of Jordanian Mothers Card to each non-Jordanian individual whose mother is Jordanian, which includes the mother's national ID number. The card extended the following rights and benefits: the right to own, the right to invest, access to health-care services, access to free high school education, the right to obtain a service driving licence, the right to join the labour market and exemption from the need for work permit fees.⁴ However, based on 2018 statistics,

only 20 per cent of children of Jordanian mothers have been issued the card.⁵

As for **Gazan refugees** which have been displaced from Gaza after the 1967 war, they hold temporary Jordanian passports that have no ID numbers, and they are required to routinely renew their residency permits/passports. Gazan refugees face the same exclusions as children of Jordanian mothers, and they are excluded from 19 professions in the labour market (Hammad, 2018a). Prompted by the marginalization of their community, the Popular Committee for the Children of the Gaza Strip in Jordan held consecutive protests in 2017 to demand a number of rights (ibid.). In response, a number of benefits were extended, including: the right to own property, the right to health insurance for those below 6 years of age, and access to subsidized health-care services at 15 to 20 per cent of the cost.⁶

This provision of rights and benefits to both Gazan refugees and children of Jordanian mothers in the last few years also extended into the social protection system, whereby the two groups were included in the legal frameworks of newly established programmes, such as the Bread Subsidy Cash Compensation Programme and the Takmeely Quarterly Cash Assistance Programme.

² According to Article 3, a Jordanian is “[a]ny person whose father holds Jordanian nationality”; and according to Article 9, “The children of a Jordanian man shall be Jordanian wherever they are born”. More information is available at www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b4ea13.html.

³ More information is available at www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/jordan0418_web2.pdf.

⁴ More information is available at www.vista.sahafi.jo/art.php?id=65dcc35987d5f466ab6bb9721209876600ea8f7a.

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⁶ More information is available at <https://alrai.com/article/10510179/اهتادھعتب-فت-مل-لمعلا/تاي لحم>; see also: Hammad, 2018b.

Annex 3. Inclusive social protection responses for non-nationals in the Middle East and North Africa

Country/ Territory	Hum/Gov	Social protection component	Response name	Brief description	Groups of interest that were explicitly included	Sources
Bahrain	Gov	Social insurance	Free testing/ treatment for COVID-19 patients	The Ministry of Health will cover the treatment expenses of COVID-19 patients, including testing and quarantine services, for all citizens and residents.	Residents	Source 1
Djibouti	Gov	Social assistance	Voucher system for vulnerable families	Vulnerable families that are part of the social registry, day labourers unable to work due to COVID-19, as well as refugee households will receive vouchers valid for two months. UNHCR started an operation of active biometric registration of refugee families to include their data in the national social registry.	Refugees	Source 1 Source 2 Source 3
Islamic Republic of Iran	Hum (WFP)	Social assistance	Procurement of nano masks for refugees	WFP procured nano masks (in small and large sizes for children and adults) produced by the Sarvestan tailoring workshop. The reusable masks were distributed to refugees inside settlements, settlement authorities, and provincial and central Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA) staff.	Refugees, including children	Source 1
	Hum (UNHCR)	Social assistance	Multipurpose cash	As of the end of September, 1,400 households (6,551 individuals) have received multipurpose cash from UNHCR, out of a total of 1,900 refugee households (9,500 individuals) who will benefit from multipurpose cash support from UNHCR in 2020.	Refugee households	Source 1
	Hum (UNHCR)	Social assistance	One-off cash transfer to extremely vulnerable refugee households	UNHCR is providing a one-off cash assistance to extremely vulnerable refugee households that have a family member that contracted COVID-19, is at risk due to COVID-19, or has suffered immediate income loss combined with having specific protection vulnerabilities, to help them cover basic needs for up to three months.	Refugee households	Source 1 Source 2

Country/ Territory	Hum/Gov	Social protection component	Response name	Brief description	Groups of interest that were explicitly included	Sources
Iraq	Gov	Social assistance	Social Safety Net	Inclusion of new beneficiaries (poor households working in the informal economy, those who have lost their jobs, IDPs, large households (with children)) to the country's main cash assistance programme and providing a one-off top-up for certain existing beneficiaries.	IDP families	Source 1 Source 2 Source 3 Source 4 Source 5 Source 6 Source 7 Source 8 Source 9 Source 10
	Hum (UNICEF)	Social assistance	Distribution of learning materials	UNICEF reached children with the provision of stationary and supplementary learning materials (SLM) in Baghdad, Najaf, Salah al-Din, Babil, Dohuk, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Ninawa. In addition, in collaboration with implementing partners, UNICEF supported IDP children in camp settings through blended learning and homeschooling, as well as by reaching their parents with educational messages.	IDP children	Source 1
	Hum (WFP)	Social assistance	Food for assets and urban livelihoods	Cash and food assistance for IDPs, refugees, schoolchildren, and returnees and people from vulnerable communities.	IDPs, refugees and returnees, including children	Source 1
	Hum (UNHCR)	Social assistance	Hygiene items distribution	UNHCR has distributed over 77,780 sanitary kits, including hygiene and sanitary items for women and girls of reproductive age, living in IDP and refugee camps.	IDPs and refugee women and girls	Source 1
	Hum (WFP)	Social assistance	Emergency food items distributions	WFP is providing assistance to returnees in Sinjar through emergency food items, while also implementing livelihood/resilience projects there.	Returnees	Source 1

Country/ Territory	Hum/Gov	Social protection component	Response name	Brief description	Groups of interest that were explicitly included	Sources
Iraq	Hum (WFP)	Social assistance	Hybrid cash- based transfers (CBT) and in-kind food	WFP concluded distributions of “hybrid” CBT and in-kind food, using a variety of CBT delivery mechanisms, including mobile money transfers and electronic vouchers.	IDPs, returnees and refugees	Source 1 Source 2 Source 3
	Hum (UNHCR)	Social assistance	UNHCR cash assistance	UNHCR has distributed cash assistance for 100,335 displaced families.	Displaced families	Source 1
	Hum (IOM)	Social assistance	Cash assistance to vulnerable migrants	IOM provided migrants in Iraq who have lost their incomes due to the COVID-19 pandemic with cash assistance to enable them to meet essential needs such as food, rent and utilities.	Migrants	Source 1
Jordan	Gov	Labour market	Tadamun 1 Programme	Insured private-sector employees of businesses which had to reduce workers’ salaries by up to 50 per cent, or have had to freeze operations entirely, can benefit from unemployment allowance consisting of 50 per cent of their salary, for two months.	Children of Jordanian mothers, and Gazan refugees employed at eligible businesses	Source 1 Source 2 Source 3 Source 4 Source 5 Source 6
	Gov	Labour market	Tadamun 2 Programme	Insured private-sector employees of businesses (with contributions for less than 12 months) which had to reduce workers’ salaries by up to 50 per cent, or have had to freeze operations entirely, as well as uninsured employees of businesses can benefit from an unemployment monthly allowance for two months.	Children of Jordanian mothers, and Gazan refugees employed at eligible businesses	Source 1 Source 2 Source 3 Source 4 Source 5 Source 6 Source 7

Country/ Territory	Hum/Gov	Social protection component	Response name	Brief description	Groups of interest that were explicitly included	Sources
Jordan	Gov	Labour market	Tamkeen 1 Programme	Reduction of social security contributions for the private sector from 21.75 per cent to 13.5 per cent for one year.	Gazan refugees, and foreigners with Jordanian mothers residing in the Kingdom	Source 1 Source 2
	Gov	Labour market	Tamkeen 2 Programme	Insured workers can borrow one-off JOD 200 max to be paid at a later date with no interest.	Gazan refugees, and foreigners with Jordanian mothers residing in the Kingdom	Source 1 Source 2
	Gov	Labour market	Himayah Programme	Employees in the most affected sectors (transportation, tourism, food and beverages) received 50 per cent of their salaries (min: JOD 220, max: JOD 400) as unemployment allowance.	Gazans and Children of Jordanian Mothers residing in the Kingdom	Source 1 Source 2 Source 3 Source 4 Source 5 Source 6
	Gov	Social assistance	Bread Subsidy Cash Compensation Programme	Cash compensation provided to 70 to 80 per cent of the population following the removal of the bread subsidy.	Children of non-Jordanian men and Gazan	Source 1 Source 2 Source 3 Source 4 Source 5 Source 6

Country/ Territory	Hum/Gov	Social protection component	Response name	Brief description	Groups of interest that were explicitly included	Sources
Jordan	Gov	Social assistance	Takaful 1 (Takmeely Support)	A quarterly conditional cash transfer programme for vulnerable households that has expanded to include new beneficiaries (horizontal and vertical expansion).	Households with Jordanian women married to non-Jordanian men and Gazan families	Source 1 Source 2 Source 3 Source 4 Source 5 Source 6 Source 7 Source 8 Source 9
	Gov	Social assistance	Takaful 2 (Emergency Daily Wage Worker Cash Assistance Programme)	Social Protection Programme to support daily wage workers – a three-month emergency cash transfer programme targeted at informal workers, providing a monthly benefit depending on household size.	Households with Jordanian women married to non-Jordanian men and Gazan families	Source 1 Source 2 Source 3 Source 4 Source 5 Source 6 Source 7
	Gov	Social insurance	Musaned 1 Programme	Provides insurance against unemployment for those employees whose service was terminated or whose work was suspended at an establishment that has frozen operation, with JOD 150–350 (USD 212–494) per month.	Includes Gaza Strip and children of Jordanian women	Source 1 Source 2 Source 3 Source 4 Source 5 Source 6
	Gov	Social insurance	Musaned 2 Programme	Provides insured Jordanians and non-Jordanians with a one-off benefit of JOD 450 (USD 634).	Non-Jordanians residing in the Kingdom	Idem

Country/ Territory	Hum/Gov	Social protection component	Response name	Brief description	Groups of interest that were explicitly included	Sources
Jordan	Gov	Social insurance	Musaned 3 Programme	Provides those who are SSC subscribers whose last deductible salary does not exceed JOD 500 with a one-off benefit of JOD 450 (USD 634).	Non-Jordanians residing in the Kingdom	Idem
	Hum (UNICEF)	Social assistance	Supporting distance learning of vulnerable children without access to Internet	UNICEF supported distance learning of vulnerable children without access to Internet through the provision of printed materials for 12,000 students in Grade 1 to Grade 6 (Arabic and math) in camps.	Refugee children living in camps	Source 1
	Hum (UNICEF)	Social assistance	Providing tablets, computers and data packages for e-learning	UNICEF Jordan is supporting its beneficiaries with access to data packages, as well as tablets, to enhance their access to and meaningful participation in learning.	Refugee children living in camps	Source 1 Source 2
	Hum (UNICEF)	Social assistance	Horizontal expansion of Hajati Programme	New vulnerable households were added to the Hajati cash transfer programme.	Refugee children, poorest and most vulnerable children – irrespective of their nationality or legal status	Source 1 Source 2 Source 3 Source 4
	Hum (UNHCR and others)	Social assistance	Basic needs COVID-19 emergency cash response led by UNHCR	New exceptional support to help refugee families cope with COVID-19 consequences.	Refugee families	Source 1 Source 2 Source 3 Source 4

Country/ Territory	Hum/Gov	Social protection component	Response name	Brief description	Groups of interest that were explicitly included	Sources
Jordan	Hum (UNHCR)	Social assistance	Implementation changes of UNHCR monthly cash assistance	UNHCR enacted a series of implementation changes in its pre-existing monthly cash assistance programme.	Refugee families	Source 1 Source 2 Source 3
	Hum (WFP)	Social assistance	General Food Assistance (GFA) programme horizontal expansion	WFP has included an additional 15,608 refugees under its General Food Assistance (GFA) programme to help households mitigate the economic impact of the pandemic.	Refugee families	Source 1 Source 2 Source 3
	Hum (WFP)	Social assistance	Food Assistance Programme horizontal expansion	WFP expanded coverage of refugee beneficiaries under its Food Assistance Programme.	Refugee families	Source 1
	Hum (UNRWA)	Social assistance	Cash distribution for ex-Gazans in Jerash Camp	A total of 20,500 of the most vulnerable Palestine refugees residing in Jerash Camp (targeting within this group the elderly, female-headed households, and families with children under the age of 5 years) received a one-time cash assistance of JOD 50.	Palestinian refugee households living in Jerash Camp	Source 1 Source 2 Source 3 Source 4
	Hum (UNRWA)	Social assistance	Social Safety Net Programme (SSNP) vertical expansion	UNRWA provided additional JOD 182 for beneficiary families enrolled in SSNP.	Palestinian refugee households	Source 1 Source 2 Source 3
	Hum (UNRWA)	Social assistance	Emergency cash transfer for refugees	UNRWA provided an emergency one-time cash assistance of JOD 182 each for ex-Gazan families.	Palestinian refugee households	Source 1 Source 2 Source 3

Country/ Territory	Hum/Gov	Social protection component	Response name	Brief description	Groups of interest that were explicitly included	Sources
Jordan	Hum (IOM)	Social assistance	Delivery of food baskets	IOM mobile teams in Jordan expanded activities with distribution of food packages to vulnerable tuberculosis patients from different nationalities and those who reside in different governorates, including refugees inside the camps.	Migrants and refugees living in camps	Source 1
	Hum (IOM)	Social assistance	Basic needs cash assistance	IOM provided a basic-needs cash assistance to support families during the COVID-19 crisis.	Migrants and refugees	Source 1 Source 2
	Hum (IOM)	Social assistance	Distribution of hygiene kits	IOM in Jordan distributed 1,000 boxes of hygiene kits to refugees in different governorates and remote areas of the country, along with more than 2,000 washable masks.	Refugees	Source 1
Kuwait	Gov	Social assistance	Emergency cash and in-kind assistance	Emergency cash and in-kind assistance have been provided to migrant workers in the private sector, vulnerable families, and those in quarantine, on an ad hoc basis. Assistance is funded by a national campaign including the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour as well as national charities.	Migrant workers in the private sector and vulnerable families, including stateless individuals	Source 1 Source 2 Source 3 Source 4
	Gov	Social assistance	Financial aid to Zakat Fund beneficiaries	The Kuwaiti Zakat House indicates that it provided 15,642 households of irregular migrants with assistance amounting to KWD 14,498,000 last year – 2,160 benefiting from monthly payments and 13,482 benefiting from one-off payments, with 4,173 families receiving in-kind assistance.	Non-national households, including undocumented migrants	Source 1 Source 2 Source 3 Source 4
	Gov	Labour market	Paid leaves for all public sector workers	Salaries for Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti staff working in the public sector will continue to be paid in full during lockdown.	Non-Kuwait staff working in the public sector	Source 1 Source 2 Source 3

Country/ Territory	Hum/Gov	Social protection component	Response name	Brief description	Groups of interest that were explicitly included	Sources
Lebanon	Hum (UNICEF)	Social assistance	Distribution of soap with handwashing- awareness campaign	UNICEF with the support of partners reached Syrian refugees living in informal settlements and collective shelters through a door-to-door handwashing-awareness campaign, complemented by the distribution of critical water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) supplies and services.	Syrian refugees	Source 1
	Hum (WFP)	Social assistance	Cash-based transfers	WFP assisted beneficiaries through cash-based transfer modalities amounting to USD 21 million and through distribution of family food parcels as part of the COVID-19 and economic crisis response.	Syrian refugees and refugees from other nationalities	Source 1
	Hum (IOM)	Social assistance	Food basket distribution to migrants	IOM in Libya distributed food baskets to migrants who are not able to work due to lockdowns/curfews.	Migrants	Source 1
	Hum (IOM)	Social assistance	One-off emergency multipurpose cash assistance for migrants	IOM in Lebanon assisted stranded and vulnerable migrant workers through basic-needs assistance programmes.	Migrants	Source 1
Libya	Gov	Social assistance	<i>Tarahamo wa Tarahamo</i> (Have mercy and be kind)	Emergency one-off in-kind assistance was provided by the Zakat Fund to its existing beneficiaries as well as new ones.	IDP families	Source 1 Source 2
	Hum (UNICEF)	Social assistance	Distribution of cleaning and disinfection kits to IDPs	UNICEF and partners distributed cleaning and disinfection kits to IDPs in Tripoli and other camps.	IDPs living in camps	Source 1
	Hum (UNHCR and WFP)	Social assistance	Distribution of rations	UNHCR and WFP jointly resumed distributions of ready-to-eat (RTE) rations in February, reaching vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers.	Refugees and asylum seekers	Source 1

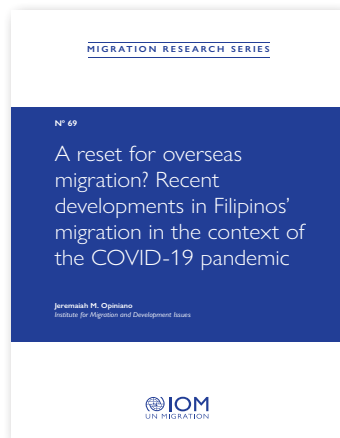
Country/ Territory	Hum/Gov	Social protection component	Response name	Brief description	Groups of interest that were explicitly included	Sources
Libya	Hum (IOM and WFP)	Social assistance	Distribution of RTE food kits to migrants in urban areas	IOM and WFP have partnered to facilitate the timely provision of RTE food assistance to migrants in urban locations.	Migrants	Source 1
Oman	Gov	Social insurance	Expand the services covered by the health insurance scheme	The health insurance scheme will include medical tests and treatment costs for insured members with COVID-19, nationals and expatriates. Residents and citizens without health insurance or sponsors will get free treatment, paid by the Government.	Expatriates covered by health insurance and all residents	Source 1
Qatar	Gov	Social insurance	Free testing/ treatment for COVID-19 patients	Free testing/treatment for COVID-19 patients provided through the public health system to all nationals and residents.	All residents; observation: the possession of a health card and/or Qatar ID (QID) is not necessary in order to be tested and/ or receive treatment	Source 1 Source 2
		Labour market	Paid leaves for migrant workers	Qatar has set aside over USD 800 million to pay the wages of foreign workers who are in quarantine or undergoing treatment for COVID-19, whether they are entitled to sick leave or not.	Migrant workers	Source 1 Source 2
Saudi Arabia	Gov	Social insurance	Free testing/ treatment for COVID-19 patients	All people can get tested for COVID-19 using the Sehaty App, and all coronavirus patients will be provided with free treatment.	All migrants, regardless of their migratory status	Source 1 Source 2

Country/ Territory	Hum/Gov	Social protection component	Response name	Brief description	Groups of interest that were explicitly included	Sources
Sudan	Hum (UNICEF)	Social assistance	Distribution of infection prevention and control (IPC) supplies	IDPs, South Sudanese refugees, rural/urban populations, entry-point arrivals, and prisoners were supported with distribution of IPC supplies, including handwashing soaps, face masks, hand sanitizers, water jerricans, chlorine supplies, and information, education and communication (IEC) materials.	IDPs, refugees	Source 1
	Gov	Social assistance	Provision of food and hygiene packages	UNHCR supports the Ministry of Labour and Social Development together with WFP and UNICEF in their programme to support 300,000 vulnerable families, including refugee households, in the Khartoum area with food and hygiene packages.	Refugee households	Source 1
	Hum (UNHCR)	Social assistance	One-off support to individual emergencies	For individual emergencies, when refugees cannot afford food or other basic needs, UNHCR provides a one-off support of SDG 2,400.	Refugee households	Source 1
	Hum (UNHCR)	Social assistance	Delivery of soaps	UNHCR has delivered over 2.2 million bars of soap to refugees, IDPs and their vulnerable Sudanese neighbours across the entire country.	Refugee households	Source 1
Syrian Arab Republic	Hum (UNICEF)	Social assistance	Provide micronutrients	UNICEF enhanced the provision of micronutrients for children suffering from malnutrition.	Refugee children living in camps	Source 1
	Hum (UNRWA)	Social assistance	Distribution of self-learning materials (hard copies)	Self-learning materials (hard copies) have been distributed to 10,000 students who do not have online access in the Neirab, Khan Danoun, and Khan Eshieh camps and in the Ramadan gathering (unofficial camp).	Refugee children	Source 1
	Hum (UNHCR)	Social assistance	Emergency cash transfer for refugees	UNHCR provided 511 refugee households a one-time emergency cash grant of approximately USD 50 (SYP 65,000) per family to support them in addressing income losses as a result of COVID-19 preventive measures.	Refugee households	Source 1 Source 2

Country/ Territory	Hum/Gov	Social protection component	Response name	Brief description	Groups of interest that were explicitly included	Sources
Syrian Arab Republic	Hum (UNHCR)	Social assistance	Multipurpose cash grants (MPCGs) – anticipation of parcels	UNHCR transferred MPCGs upfront to cover two months.	Refugee households	Source 1 Source 2
	Hum (UNRWA)	Social assistance	Emergency cash transfer for refugees	UNRWA provided emergency cash transfer for 415,781 refugees to provide them with five months' worth of cash assistance.	Palestinian refugee households	Source 1 Source 2
	Hum (UNRWA)	Social assistance	Emergency Food Assistance	UNRWA provided two rounds of food distribution as a response to the current crisis.	Palestinian refugee households	Source 1 Source 2 Source 3 Source 4
	Hum (IOM)	Social assistance	Distribution of hygiene kits	IOM distributed COVID-19 hygiene kits to households residing in the planned camps, reception centres and other locations.	Refugees and migrants living in camps	Source 1 Source 2
United Arab Emirates	Gov	Social insurance	Free testing and health coverage for people affected by COVID-19	Citizens, residents and tourists have access to free tests for COVID-19, and those infected or who were exposed to the virus get full health coverage during their treatment and quarantine period.	Residents and tourists	Source 1
	Gov	Social assistance	Al Meer Initiative	The Al Meer Initiative led by the Ministry of Community Development and the Ministry of Economy provided 12,000 vulnerable families and foreign workers with essential food supplies.	Migrant workers	Source 1 Source 2
Yemen	Hum (UNICEF)	Social assistance	Provision of cash incentives to teachers	To prevent the collapse of the education system, UNICEF continued the provision of cash incentives to teachers who are not in receipt of a salary or temporary teachers in schools located in areas with a high number of displaced families.	Displaced families	Source 1 Source 2

Country/ Territory	Hum/Gov	Social protection component	Response name	Brief description	Groups of interest that were explicitly included	Sources
Yemen	Hum (UNHCR)	Social assistance	Cash distributions for displaced families in the northern governorates of Yemen	UNHCR and partners began cash distributions for 26,500 displaced families in the northern governorates of Yemen, with some 80 per cent of the families already receiving support.	Displaced families	Source 1 Source 2
			Home delivery of food baskets	New home delivery of food baskets was started in Gaza in April to mitigate community transmission of the virus	Refugee households in Gaza	Source 1
Palestinian Territories	Hum (UNRWA)	Social insurance	Emergency Food Assistance	UNRWA distributed food baskets, including home delivering baskets to some beneficiaries. In West Bank, 10,445 refugee households will receive assistance for three months	Refugee households in Gaza and West Bank	Source 1 Source 2
			Distribution of hygiene kits	UNRWA distributed emergency hygiene kits	Palestinian refugees	Source 1

Publications



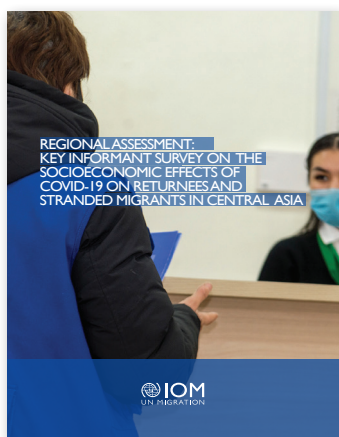
A Reset for Overseas Migration? Recent Developments in Filipinos' Migration in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic
Migration Research Series Nº 69
2021 | 18 pages | ISBN 978-92-9268-114-2 (PDF)
[English](#)

Authored by Jeremaiah M. Opiniano, this Migration Research Series paper explores some of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Filipino overseas migrants and the responses and measures adopted by the Philippines in 2020. It reviews the main implications and challenges that were raised by the pandemic between 25 March 2020 and 24 March 2021, from issues concerning repatriations and returns, to decreasing overseas employment and the impact on international remittances.



Sentiment towards Migration during COVID-19: What Twitter Data Can Tell Us
2021 | 38 pages | [English](#)
ISBN 978-92-9268-139-5 (print)
ISBN 978-92-9268-002-2 (PDF)

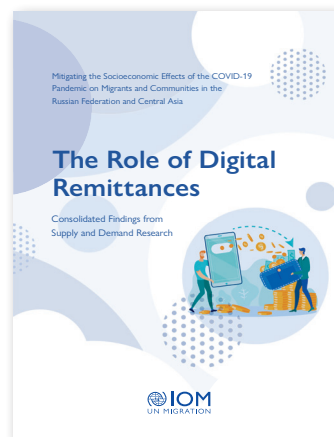
This report discusses the essential findings and learnings from a collaborative research project with the University of Liverpool, investigating the use of Twitter data to track immigration sentiment during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the report will (a) demonstrate how immigrants have experienced acts of discrimination and racism in five countries (the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy and Germany); (b) determine to what extent (anti-)immigration sentiment has shifted in reaction to increasing geographical spreads and fatality rates of COVID-19; and (c) assess how acts of discrimination and racism towards immigrants during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic vary by country.



Regional Assessment: Key Informant Survey on the Socioeconomic Effects of COVID-19 on Returnees and Stranded Migrants in Central Asia
2021 | 68 pages | [English](#)

This report is part of the outputs under the project “Mitigating the effects of COVID-19 Pandemic on migrants and their families from Central Asia” produced with the financial support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. Editorial support was provided by IOM’s Global DTM Support Team.

The findings of this study can be used as a basis to identify new migration patterns, common problems and vulnerabilities, and better inform policy makers working on international migration challenges. In addition, the population numbers and locations identified under this study represent a unique type of baseline data which can be used to run additional surveys and research studies.

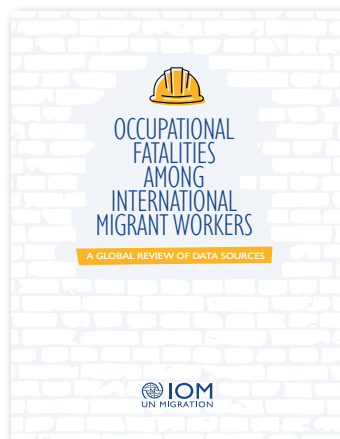


The Role of Digital Remittances: Consolidated Findings from Supply and Demand Research
2021 | 88 pages | ISBN 978-92-9268-085-5 (PDF)
[English](#)

This report is part of the outputs under the regional initiative “Mitigating the effects of COVID-19 Pandemic on migrants and their families from Central Asia” produced with the financial support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and implemented by IOM.

This research project aims to examine the digital remittance systems and usage in the Russian Federation and Central Asian countries, the legal infrastructure, and the perception and behavioural barriers that may be limiting the uptake of digital financial services among migrants and remittance recipients. The research focuses particularly on the behavioural aspects of the process that may limit the engagement of migrants and remittance recipients in digital remittances and adjacent financial services. The results of this research will contribute to the evidence base for designing programmes to enhance the use of digital remittances among migrants and their recipient families, and ultimately to improve the financial inclusion of this target group using digital services.

The report was developed by: Donhatai Harris (lead author) and Anna Prohorova working under the supervision of Michael Newson (Senior Labour Mobility and Human Development Specialist, Regional Office for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, IOM, Vienna, Austria).



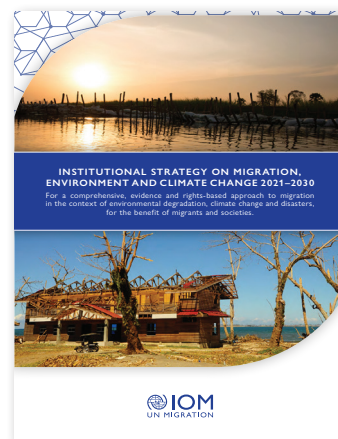
Occupational Fatalities among International Migrant Workers

2021 | 46 pages | [English](#)

ISBN 978-92-9268-026-8 (print)

ISBN 978-92-9268-025-1 (PDF)

This report provides an initial examination of available sources of data on migrant worker fatalities at the global, regional and country levels. The existence and quality of data are highly variable across countries, with knowledge concerning migrants mostly coming from middle- and high-income regions. Data on deaths of migrant workers in much of the developing world remain extremely scarce. The presence of relatively large informal sectors and loose health and safety regulation likely entail higher risks for native and migrant workers in regions of the world precisely where data are most lacking. However, poor quality and gaps in coverage limit the current usefulness of these data both for deepening understanding of trends and guiding intervention efforts. Measuring occupational fatalities is particularly challenging among undocumented and informal migrant populations, the groups most likely to have poor health and safety outcomes. Finally, although national population/labour statistics estimate that work-related diseases kill six times more people than fatal injuries, virtually no data are regularly and systematically produced at the national or international level documenting occupational diseases among migrants.



Institutional Strategy on Migration, Environment and Climate Change 2021–2030

2021 | 56 pages | [English](#)

For a comprehensive, evidence- and rights-based approach to migration in the context of environmental degradation, climate change and disasters, for the benefit of migrants and societies.

The IOM Institutional Strategy on Migration, Environment and Climate Change aims to guide IOM efforts to strengthen its capacity to develop and implement a comprehensive approach to migration in the context of climate change, environmental degradation and disasters due to natural hazards, in line with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement for Climate Change, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Nansen Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change. Moreover, the Strategy emphasizes that IOM approach on this issue is anchored in human rights norms and principles, and relevant across the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus.

The Strategy highlights IOM commitment to support the development of enabling environments that can help migrants, diasporas and their communities directly contribute to climate action and sustainable development in places of origin and destination.

As part of the IOM Strategic Vision 2019–2023: Setting a course for IOM and in order to achieve these objectives, the IOM Institutional Strategy on Migration, Environment and Climate Change aims to take stock of existing knowledge and establish institution-wide priorities and processes, in line with the three pillars articulated in the IOM strategic vision: resilience, mobility and governance.



Call for authors/Submission guidelines

Since its launch in October 2011, Migration Policy Practice has published over 267 articles by senior policymakers and distinguished migration policy experts from all over the world.

Past authors have included, *inter alia*:

Eric Adja, Director General of the International Migrants Remittances Observatory (IMRO) and Special Adviser to the President of Benin; John K. Bingham, Global Coordinator of civil society activities in the United Nations High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development and the Global Forum on Migration and Development; Ambassador Eva Åkerman Börje, Chair of the GFMD 2013–2014; Mark Cully, Chief Economist at the Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection; António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations; Khalid Koser, Chair of the World Economic Forum Global Agenda Council on Migration; Khalid Malik, Director of the Human Development Report Office, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); Cecilia Mamlström, EU Commissioner for Home Affairs (2010–2014); Ali Mansoor, Chair of the GFMD 2012; Andrew Middleton, Director of Culture, Recreation and Migrant Statistics, Australian Bureau of Statistics; Najat Maalla M’Jid, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2008–2014); Robert A. Mocny, Director of the Office of Biometric Identity Management (OBIM), formerly US-VISIT, US Department of Homeland Security; Imelda M. Nicolas, Secretary of the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO), Office of the President of the Philippines; Ignacio Packer, Secretary-General of the Terre des Hommes International Federation; Kelly Ryan, Coordinator of the Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees – IGC, Geneva; Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament (2012–2014); David Smith, Director of Economic Analysis Unit, Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection; Sir Peter D. Sutherland, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Migration (2006–2017); Ambassador William Lacy Swing, Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM); Myria Vassiliadou, EU Anti-Trafficking Coordinator, European Commission; Catherine Wiesner, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, US Department of State.

Migration Policy Practice welcomes submissions from policymakers worldwide. As a general rule, articles should:

- Not exceed five pages and be written in a non-academic and reader-friendly style;
- Cover any area of migration policy but discuss, as far as possible, particular solutions, policy options or best practice relating to the themes covered;
- Provide, as often as applicable, lessons that can be replicated or adapted by relevant public administrations, or civil society, in other countries.

Articles giving account of evaluations of specific migration policies and interventions, including both findings and innovative methodologies, are particularly welcome.

To discuss any aspect of the journal, or to submit an article, please contact:

Solon Ardittis (sardittis@eurasylum.org)
Frank Laczko (flaczko@iom.int)

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