

Forum: General Assembly 1st Committee

Issue: The Question of Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration

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Introduction

The matter of migration has taken on an ever so important position in the era of heightened global interconnectedness. Its new more complex position in our international community furthers its reach to a variety of social, economic and security related aspects. For ages migration has been able to better the lives of the migrants, and even the lives of the inhabitants of the origin location as well as the host region. Migration can also bring prosperity to states, businesses and other communities through employment, trade and cultural exchange¹. The possibility for all people worldwide to seek improved living conditions legally and safely should be secured. However, migrating across country borders or just inside one's homeland can be hazardous for the health of the migrants and even their safety. Migration routes have been known to be excruciatingly long, done with improper transport methods and inadequately guided. In addition, migrants taking the most popular routes are susceptible to violence and exploitation most often executed by criminal organisations².

In the 21st century the world has seen an immense increase of migrants and internally displaced people trying to evade conflict, persecution, poverty, dangerous alterations of their living environment and environmental disasters³. Although for the most part international migration is carried out legally, serious global distress concerning the growth of irregular migration has arisen. Many nations have also ran into the issue of missing passports and travel documents which makes the identification process arduous⁴. The whole migration process can truly be a ruthless one, especially for the ones coming

¹ https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2018_en.pdf

² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/11/migrant-death-toll-rises-after-clampdown-on-east-european-borders>

³ <http://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/refugees/>

⁴ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36416034>

from developing countries or unstable areas, which is why the global community needs to continue helping nations to improve their ability to secure safe, orderly and regular migration.

Definition of Key Terms

Migration

The movement of a person or multiple people within a country or across international borders.

Emigrant

A person who leaves a country or a region.

Immigrant

A person who has settled to another country or region.

Asylum seeker

A person who is fleeing from conflict, such as war or persecution, in their own land and has applied for a refugee status in a host country.

Refugee

A person who has been displaced and forced to cross international borders. A refugee has applied and been granted the status of a refugee in a host country.

Forced migration

A migratory movement in which people are forced to leave their country due to threats to their lives or livelihood⁵.

Labour migration

⁵ <https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms#Forced-migration>

A migratory movement in which people depart from a country or a region and settle in another area with the intentions of acquiring employment.⁶

Internally displaced people (IDP)

A group of people who have to leave their home but remain in their country of origin.⁷

Irregular migration

There is no universally accepted definition for irregular migration. However, from the outlook of the origin country it is leaving the country without the necessary authorization, and from the perspective of the destination it is entry, stay or work without the required documents⁸.

Orderly migration

The movement of migrants from their country of origin to their destination while obeying the laws and regulations dictating the exit of the origin country as well as travel and entry into the host country⁹.

Smuggling

The phenomenon is a cross-border crime where the smuggler is trying to obtain, most often, financial benefit from the illegal entry of a person to a country of which he or she is not a citizen of¹⁰.

Trafficking in persons

This phenomenon is the transferring and trading of people done by the means of coercion, threatening, deception or abduction. The vital difference of trafficking in persons

⁶ <https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>

⁷ <https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>

⁸ <https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>

⁹ <https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>

¹⁰ <https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>

and human smuggling, is that in the case of smuggling there is consent from the people being transported and trafficking in persons can happen within the borders of one country.¹¹

Explanation of the Question

Migration, as a concept, takes a multiplicity of forms in this day and age. It comprises of a multitude of situations and different ways of travelling with various motivations behind the phenomenon. According to an estimation made by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat (UN DESA) in 2017 the number of international migrants had reached 258 million which is an increase of 49% since 2000. The biennial International Migration Report published by UN DESA also states that 3.4% of the world population are international migrants. This is a moderate growth from the percentage of 2.8% in 2000 and has remained constant in recent years¹².

Even though, a majority of the world population continues to stay in the region in which they were born, greater numbers of people are migrating to find residence in other countries. Labour migration still constitutes the dominant reason for international migration and migrant workers form the largest group of international migrants, approximately 150 million according to the International Labour Organisation¹³.

International migration, although mostly well executed and dealt with, does initiate worry for the completion of the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. Global forced displacement has increased rapidly largely due to the conflicts and natural disasters occurring in North African, Middle Eastern, East Asian countries during the past 20 years. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) in June of 2018 estimated that there are globally 68.5 million forcibly displaced people of which 40 million are IDPs, 25.4 million are refugees and 3.1million are asylum seekers¹⁴.

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre's (IDMC) Global Report on Internal Displacement 2018 reported that in 2017 there were 1.7 million more IDPs in the United States and Cuba, 2.5 million more in the Philippines and 4.5 million more in China all due to disasters. Floods in Bangladesh, tropical cyclones in the US and droughts in North Africa

¹¹ <https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>

¹² <https://www.un.org/development/desa/publications/international-migration-report-2017.html>

¹³ <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/lang--en/index.htm>

¹⁴ <http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>

causing desertification are all massive disruptions to the lives of the people affected¹⁵. In 2017 the number of new internal displacements due to violence or conflict nearly doubled from the figure of 6.9 million in 2016. Syria, Republic of Congo and Iraq were the top three countries contributing to this figure¹⁶. In Colombia an elongated conflict that began in 1995 with the far-right paramilitary forces taking over the lands of the locals in a territorial expansion resulted in 7.7 million people currently internally displaced. In 2017 over 90,000 colombians were forced to flee their homes by armed groups and land grabbers¹⁷

Top origin countries of refugees in 2018 were Syria, Afghanistan and South Sudan due to the countries' ongoing conflicts. The country of Syria still remains to be the world's largest source of refugees. Its conflict started with the Arab spring protests which spiraled into a violent civil war. Afghanistan's first wave of refugees left the country after the Soviet invasion during the 1980s and then the second wave emerged because of the Taliban's rise to power in the 1990s which caused a causal sequence of violent occurrences. The South Sudanese refugee crisis surfaced in 2013 when accusations of a coup arose and ethnic violence ensued¹⁸.

A staggering 85% of displaced people take residence in developing regions, in comparison high-income countries host 64% of all international migrants. The major host countries for international migrants in 2017 were the United States, Saudi Arabia, Germany and the Russian Federation¹⁹. Currently the top refugee-hosting countries are Turkey with 3.5 million refugees, Uganda and Pakistan with 1.4 million refugees and the Islamic Republic of Iran, Germany as well as Lebanon all hosting around a million refugees²⁰. More than half of the current refugees are children with 43.4 per cent younger than 14-years-old²¹.

The most congested migration routes include the Central American, the Southeast Asian, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Mediterranean sea route. In the countries of Central America, such as Mexico and Honduras, corruption and record-high homicide rates have induced many to take refuge in the nearby countries. In 2017 Mexico had 14 000 asylum seekers with the main origin country of applicants being Honduras. Also Mexicans

¹⁵ <http://www.eniscuola.net/en/2017/12/20/climate-changes-natural-disasters-refugees/>

¹⁶ <http://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2018/>

¹⁷ <https://colombiareports.com/colombia-has-highest-number-of-internally-displaced-people/>

¹⁸ <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/refugee-crisis-where-people-are-fleeing-from-and-where-they-are-going/articleshow/60808637.cms>

¹⁹ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/publications/international-migration-report-2017.html>

²⁰ <http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>

²¹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/11/29/americans-like-refugees-better-when-theyre-women-and-children-especially-republicans/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.91d674129500

themselves are seeking refuge from the increasing gang violence to the United States²². The journey north for many of the people can be extremely dangerous. Assault, robberies and abductions, rape, alluring smugglers, devious traffickers and even mistreatment from the police and immigration officials are only some of the menaces these migrants face²³. In addition, the long journey is most often accompanied with heat during the day, the temperatures dropping at night as well as the lack of proper food and clothing. Between 2013 and 2014 the migrant arrivals included 68,000 unattended children attempting to cross the US border²⁴. In May of 2018, around 2,000 of Central American children were separated from their parents as a result of the US policy to detain all migrants trying to cross the border. Video footage of multiple children in detention centres have surfaced and caused an outcry from the public as well as the UN and the Mexican government²⁵.

About 2 million people have come to Europe by crossing the Mediterranean sea since 2009. In August of 2018 the Morocco-to-Spain route was the most travelled one by migrants with over 28,000 arrivals to Spain. In the same time frame the two other main routes, Africa-to-Italy and Turkey-to-Greece, have both seen 20,000 migrants. Although, over the past decade the Turkey-to-Greece route has overall been the most travelled with 1.2 million arrivals since 2009²⁶. This year UNHCR informed that the death rate for migrants attempting to cross the sea into Europe has risen although the overall number of migrants trying to make the cross has fallen²⁷. The ones migrating from Sub-Saharan and West African countries, such as Gambia, Senegal and Nigeria, to Europe are forced to take journeys of sand and water usually having to heavily rely on smugglers²⁸. An estimate of 1-in-18 migrants have died while crossing the Mediterranean sea in 2018. In comparison, last year 1-in-49 migrants perished while taking the journey²⁹.

Due to the building of restrictive fences on the coasts of arrival countries and strengthening of various border patrols, migrants have been forced to take even less seaworthy vessels to Europe, such as the ones leaving from Libya. These trips are mostly organised by smugglers who are paid huge sums of money by the migrants. People

²² <http://time.com/5318718/central-american-refugees-crisis/>

²³ <https://www.amnestyusa.org/most-dangerous-journey-what-central-american-migrants-face-when-they-try-to-cross-the-border/>

²⁴ <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/09/150919-data-points-refugees-migrants-maps-human-migrations-syria-world/>

²⁵ <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2018-06-21/why-are-central-americans-coming-to-the-united-states>

²⁶ <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/09/18/the-most-common-mediterranean-migration-paths-into-europe-have-changed-since-2009/>

²⁷ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/09/03/migrant-death-rate-mediterranean-rises-despite-fewer-crossings/>

²⁸ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-32912867>

²⁹ <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/09/18/the-most-common-mediterranean-migration-paths-into-europe-have-changed-since-2009/>

smugglers are in no way adequate for preparing or executing such dangerous journeys across the Mediterranean sea. The distributing of fraudulent life jackets and the use of cheap rubber boats are two major factors in these mass drownings and shipwrecks. The increase in the death rate has most likely something to do with the decrease of active rescue boats on the Mediterranean, especially on the Libyan coast. In 2017 there were eight boats overseeing the area and that figure has dropped to only two in 2018³⁰. The Italian government has severely cut down on the NGO boats allowed in the area³¹. The head of mission in Libya for Médecins Sans Frontières told a news outlet in 2017 that most of the people rescued from these boat accidents had been “exposed to an alarming level of violence and exploitation: kidnap for ransom, forced labour, sexual violence and enforced prostitution, being kept in captivity or detained arbitrarily”³². The International Organisation of Migration (IOM) estimated that 4 per cent of all migrants in Libya are in detention centres. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reported that in these facilities migrants suffer from inhuman treatment, such as physical and mental abuse³³.

The Southeast Asian route for migrants has become increasingly unsafe due to restrictive migration customs, political disputes and ethnic hostility in the region. The persecution of Muslim Rohingya executed by the Buddhist extremists in the government and the military has caused a million Rohingyas to cross the Andaman sea and the Strait of Malacca to countries, such as Bangladesh, Malaysia and Indonesia. In 2015 IOM estimated that over 6,000 migrants from Myanmar and Bangladesh were at sea in cramped boats being handled by smugglers. In addition, human trafficking and forced labour are still rampant in the region.³⁴

During these long endeavours migrants have faced document forging carried out by individuals or organised crime groups. Passports, national ID cards, Schengen visas, driving licences, asylum seekers' registration cards and residence permits have been stolen or have gotten lost while migrating³⁵. The rise of populist and nationalist ideologies in our political landscape thriving on provoking fear of immigrants has led to increasingly stricter migration policies hence making it harder for migrants to receive visas or other residence permits. When the migrants finally arrive at their desirable host country they can be accommodated

³⁰ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/09/03/migrant-death-rate-mediterranean-rises-despite-fewer-crossings/>

³¹ <https://qz.com/1331069/the-death-rate-for-migrants-crossing-the-mediterranean-is-skyrocketing/>

³² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/11/migrant-death-toll-rises-after-clampdown-on-east-european-borders>

³³ <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22393&LangID=E>

³⁴ <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/09/150919-data-points-refugees-migrants-maps-human-migrations-syria-world/>

³⁵ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36416034>

to crowded refugee camps with little to no chance of real integration to the community. An unruly long process starts where one's intentions and real identity are heavily doubted. Most often than not these people are met with hostility and then receive a rejected asylum claim. Furthermore, these migrants are being deported or forced to return to their homeland which the Foreign Offices of various other countries consider as too dangerous to visit.³⁶

These difficult migration processes have driven migrants to make the decision of irregular migration. An irregular migrant can be in a situation of irregular entry, residence or employment. The migrant may enter the country illegally, for example with a counterfeit document or without crossing a legitimate border crossing point, or the migrant may stay in the country illegally, for instance by violating the term of his or her entry visa or residence permit. Migrant's employment can also be irregular by not having the correct permit to work in the country. In 2013 it was estimated that in Pakistan there were 4 million irregular migrants and in the US around 11 million unauthorized migrants³⁷. Irregular migrants have difficulty accessing health and education services as well as most often live in unhealthy conditions. The President of the United States Donald J. Trump in April of this year established a "zero-tolerance" policy. The policy ordered the prosecution of any migrant attempting to cross the southern border. The Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar estimated that this policy led to the separation of almost 3,000 migrant children from their families³⁸.

Key Member States and NGOs Involved and Their Views

UNHCR (The United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees)

The UNHCR is a global organisation with intentions of saving the lives and securing the human rights of refugees, forcibly displaced and stateless people. This organisation is one the most influential in improving the lives of migrants worldwide. The UNHCR believes in the building of a better future for all migrants.³⁹

IOM (International Organisation of Migration)

³⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34190359>

³⁷ <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/27/5-facts-about-illegal-immigration-in-the-u-s/>

³⁸ <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/07/05/politics/separated-families-border-immigrants-number-of-kids/index.html>

³⁹ <http://www.unhcr.org/about-us.html>

IOM's mission is to ensure orderly and humane migration globally and the organisation does this by providing humanitarian aid to those migrants in need as well as giving educated advice to governments and to migrants themselves on handling migration.⁴⁰

IDMC (The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre)

The IDMC is the leading source for data and analysis on internal displacement and its mission is to better the lives of people living in or at risk of internal displacement. The organisation does this by communicating with policymakers and the global community⁴¹

The EU (European Union)

The European Union has had a huge effect on present-day migration due to the European migrant crisis. The EU's goal is to find balanced policies combating irregular immigration while supervising regular immigration and ensuring the rights of those migrants.⁴²

The Republic of India

The Republic of India continues to be the number one origin country of international migrants with 16.6 million indians living abroad. The Indian government has long been developing their policies on migration due to their long history of emigration. Their systems on preparing the ones who are leaving and the migrants returning have been well beneficial. However, their policies on recognised refugees do not permit them to free movement on the soil of India nor allow them to work.⁴³

The United States

The United States is the top host-country for international migrants and also due to their majorly influential positions in global affairs the United States has a huge impact on the lives of millions of migrants. Over the past few years President Donald J. Trump has suggested controversial strategies relating to migration, such as the building of a border wall between the Mexico-United States border.

⁴⁰ <https://www.iom.int/about-iom>

⁴¹ <http://www.internal-displacement.org>

⁴² <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/152/immigration-policy>

⁴³ <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/emigration-immigration-and-diaspora-relations-india#17>

The Syrian Arab Republic

The Syrian Arab Republic is still, due to the ongoing civil war, the number one source of refugees. In July of this year the Syrian government called for the syrian refugees to return home after more than seven years of civil war⁴⁴. Nonetheless, international organisations and diplomats are still unsure about the safety of returning to Syria⁴⁵

The Republic of Turkey

The Republic of Turkey hosts the most refugees out of any other nation with over 3 million people taking refuge in Turkey⁴⁶. Holding such a powerful position enables the Republic of Turkey to have a huge impact on the lives of refugees.

Timeline of Events

December 14, 1950 The establishment of UNHCR due to the migration crisis that followed the Second World War.⁴⁷

1951 The establishment of IOM due to the migration crisis that followed the Second World War.⁴⁸

1979 The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan causing a wave of internal displacement and refugee flow to nearby countries.

1991 Somali government collapses resulting in a civil war and millions of people are displaced.

April, 1992 The Afghan civil war forces people to flee their homes again.

March 15, 2011 The Syrian Civil War begins which results in 11 million people being displaced during the following years.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/syrian-government-calls-refugees-return-home-n888791>

⁴⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/30/we-cant-go-back-syrias-refugees-fear-for-their-future-after-war>

⁴⁶ http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/popfacts/PopFacts_2017-5.pdf

⁴⁷ <http://www.unhcr.org/history-of-unhcr.html>

⁴⁸ <https://www.iom.int/iom-history>

⁴⁹ <https://www.worldvision.org/refugees-news-stories/syrian-refugee-crisis-facts>

- December, 2013 The South-Sudanese Civil War begins. The rise of famine and violence leads to a refugee crisis.
- 2015 The European migrant crisis begins due to a rapid influx in the migrants entering Europe.⁵⁰
- 2015 The Rohingya refugee crisis begins due to ethnic persecution.
- 2016 The UNHCR reports that the number of displaced people is now at its highest ever and has even exceeded the post Second World War numbers.⁵¹
- December 19, 2016 The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants is adopted by the General Assembly.⁵²

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- The 1951 Convention on Refugees
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 18 December 1990, 45/158
- Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, 3 October 2013, (A/RES/68/4)
- New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, 19 December 2016, (A/RES/71/1)
- International migration and development, 21 December 2016, (A/RES/71/237)
- Modalities for the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, 22 January 2018⁵³

Possible Solutions

⁵⁰ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911>

⁵¹ <https://edition.cnn.com/2016/06/20/world/unhcr-displaced-peoples-report/index.html>

⁵² <http://www.unhcr.org/new-york-declaration-for-refugees-and-migrants.html>

⁵³ <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/resolutions/index.shtml>

Managing migration is one of the preeminent challenges of our international community in the 21st century. A multitude of issues must be dealt with educated and humane policymaking as well as effective agreements, because still millions of migrants find themselves travelling unsafe journeys through land and sea, stuck in refugee camps, detention centres or even jails and in a situation of despair unable to return home.

Firstly, the xenophobic attitudes of some countries need to be disapproved and the prevalent beneficial sides of migration should be brought up more frequently in public discussions. Changing the course of international conversation on migration with programmes would be of great advantage.⁵⁴

Secondly, the anti-immigration policies causing an increase in irregular migration and migrants to take more dangerous routes should be reconsidered. Member States, such as Italy and Malta, should allow more rescue boats on the Mediterranean sea. A clampdown on NGO rescue ships on these main migration routes is causing multiple preventable migrant drownings.⁵⁵

International cooperation on securing the safety of migrants needs to be strengthened. Migrants at risk of forced labour, acute violence or human trafficking have to be protected with uniform systems and special attention has to be paid to the security of unaccompanied children on these migration routes. Also child detentions should be put an end to immediately and family reunions need to be actively arranged.⁵⁶

In addition, more safe and legal pathways for migration need to be constructed. This has been recognised to be hugely effective in reducing of irregular migration. Severe restrictions on migration have proved to be simply more harmful for the destination countries as well as the migrants.⁵⁷

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⁵⁴ <http://www.oecd.org/dev/38295367.pdf>

⁵⁵ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/09/03/migrant-death-rate-mediterranean-rises-despite-fewer-crossings/>

⁵⁶ https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/180711_final_draft_0.pdf

⁵⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/soteu2018-factsheet-legal-pathways_en.pdf

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