



NHSMUN

IOM

BACKGROUND GUIDE

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Delegate Experience
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Global Partnerships
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Anshul Magal
Analucia Tello
Sofia Velasco
Renata Venzor

Dear Delegates,

I am pleased to welcome you to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) at NHSMUN 2025! My name is Andrea Jurado Pérez, and I am honored to serve as your Director for Session I.

This is my second year as a member of NHSMUN staff. Last year, I had the privilege of serving as the Assistant Director for Session I of the Social, Cultural, and Humanitarian Committee (SOCHUM) during NHSMUN 2024. This will also mark my fifth year attending the conference. Over the years, I have chaired several MUN conferences and had the opportunity to represent various countries in different committees. At NHSMUN 2021, I represented Poland in the World Health Assembly (WHA), at NHSMUN 2022, I represented Poland in UN-Habitat, and in 2023, I represented Singapore in the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). Being a delegate has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life, and I am thrilled to now contribute as a staff member.

I was born in Mexico City, but during my childhood, I lived in Monterrey, Panama, and Brazil before returning to Mexico City, where I have been for the past 10 years. I am currently in my fourth semester studying economics at Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey (TEC). Outside of school, I enjoy spending time with my family, friends, and dog. I love to write, draw, paint, and read, as they are both relaxing and engaging. If you have any book recommendations, I'd love to hear them! I'm also a fan of movies and TV shows, especially romance or musicals. However, my greatest passion is traveling—I love exploring new cultures, meeting people, and experiencing different places.

Getting involved with Model United Nations (MUN) has been one of the best decisions I've ever made. It not only helped me develop my organizational, leadership, and public speaking skills, but it also allowed me to grow as a person. Through MUN, I was able to meet many interesting people who are now some of my closest friends. The experience has pushed me to improve not just academically, but in every aspect of my life. I understand that MUN conferences can be stressful but trust me—it's all worth it. If you believe in yourselves, you'll excel and have an amazing experience. I'm looking forward to meeting all of you and collaborating on a fantastic conference. I can't wait to hear your ideas, research, and solutions. My best advice is to come with an open mind, be ready to work hard, and enjoy the journey!

If you have any questions about the topics or anything else, please don't hesitate to email me. I'm here to help and would be happy to assist you. I'm looking forward to meeting all of you and can't wait for the conference. We're going to have a fantastic time and a great debate!

Andrea Jurado Pérez

Director, International Organization for Migration

Session I

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Hello Delegates,

Welcome to NHSMUN 2024 and the International Organization for Migration! My name is Asher Lee and I am very happy to be your Director for Session II. I look forward to working with and listening to your discussions! To help you with your research, my co-director Andrea Jurado and I have prepared a background guide as an overview of the research for each topic. The background guides contain information that will guide delegates through the complexities of each issue.

I started my Model UN career in high school, first participating in regional events and eventually in national ones. I really liked Model UN because it helped me develop my leadership and communication skills. I also liked researching and discussing a topic that interested me, and it was fun debating solutions with fellow delegates. However, I enjoyed NHSMUN because it was composed of people from all over the world. Each conference room was filled with people who were excited at the prospect of debating and analyzing various issues plaguing the world. They all traveled great distances to meet in New York to meet like-minded others. NHSMUN also welcomed everybody interested in Model UN and encouraged everybody to interact and help others.

Model UN helped me learn how to understand others. The topics we talk about can happen all over the globe, with many different perspectives with their take on it. I liked learning and listening to these opinions and then debating and compromising solutions to the problem. It has helped me a lot in my career. I currently attend the University of Florida and am majoring in biochemistry with a minor in philosophy, to attend medical school. Model UN has helped me a lot so far. It has taught me when to compromise and when to firmly stand my ground. It also gave me a platform to practice my public speaking and how to efficiently communicate an idea and goal. In my free time, I like to make bread and volunteer at the hospital. Some of my hobbies are hiking, kayaking, cooking, and watching movies and TV shows.

I can't wait to see your ideas and solutions in the debate. The two topics we have chosen are important ongoing issues that need to be addressed. The background guide is a wonderful place to start researching. It provides a brief overview of each topic, visiting different aspects of each issue from a different perspective. However, every country has its situation and internal issues. Delegates' countries might have different ways of doing things, and it is important to understand these issues to accurately represent them. By considering all viewpoints, we can make sure we create the best resolution possible. As your director, I'll be very happy to answer any questions! If you have any about the topics or committee in general, feel free to send me an email!

Thank you,

Asher Lee

Director, International Organization for Migration

Session II

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A Note on the NHSMUN Difference

Esteemed Faculty and Delegates,

Welcome to NHSMUN 2025! We are Terry Wang and Jordan Baker, and we are this year's Secretary-General and Director-General. Thank you for choosing to attend NHSMUN, the world's largest and most diverse Model United Nations conference for secondary school students. We are thrilled to welcome you to New York City in March.

As a space for collaboration, consensus, and compromise, NHSMUN strives to transform today's brightest thinkers, speakers, and collaborators into tomorrow's leaders. Our organization provides a uniquely tailored experience for all through innovative and accessible programming. We believe that an emphasis on education through simulation is paramount to the Model UN experience, and this idea permeates throughout numerous aspects of the conference:

Realism and accuracy: Although a perfect simulation of the UN is never possible, we believe that one of the core educational responsibilities of MUN conferences is to educate students about how the UN System works. Each NHSMUN committee is a simulation of a real deliberative body so that delegates can research what their country has said in the committee. Our topics are chosen from the issues currently on the agenda of that committee (except historical committees, which take topics from the appropriate time period). We also strive to invite real UN, NGO, and field experts into each committee through our committee speakers program. Moreover, we arrange meetings between students and the actual UN Permanent Mission of the country they are representing. Our delegates have the incredible opportunity to conduct first-hand research, asking thought-provoking questions to current UN representatives and experts in their respective fields of study. These exclusive resources are only available due to IMUNA's formal association with the United Nations Department of Global Communications and consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. No other conference goes so far to deeply immerse students into the UN System.

Educational emphasis, even for awards: At the heart of NHSMUN lies education and compromise. Part of what makes NHSMUN so special is its diverse delegate base. As such, when NHSMUN distributes awards, we strongly de-emphasize their importance in comparison to the educational value of Model UN as an activity. NHSMUN seeks to reward students who excel in the arts of compromise and diplomacy. More importantly, we seek to develop an environment in which delegates can employ their critical thought processes and share ideas with their counterparts from around the world. Given our delegates' plurality of perspectives and experiences, we center our programming around the values of diplomacy and teamwork. In particular, our daises look for and promote constructive leadership that strives towards consensus, as real ambassadors do in the United Nations.

Debate founded on strong knowledge and accessibility: With knowledgeable staff members and delegates from over 70 countries, NHSMUN can facilitate an enriching experience reliant on substantively rigorous debate. To ensure this high quality of debate, our staff members produce detailed, accessible, and comprehensive topic guides (like the one below) to prepare delegates for the nuances inherent in each global issue. This process takes over six months, during which the Directors who lead our committees develop their topics with the valuable input of expert contributors. Because these topics are always changing and evolving, NHSMUN also produces update papers intended to bridge the gap of time between when the background guides are published and when committee starts in March. As such, this guide is designed to be a launching point from which delegates should delve further into their topics. The detailed knowledge that our Directors provide in this background guide through diligent research aims to increase critical thinking within delegates at NHSMUN.

Extremely engaged staff: At NHSMUN, our staffers care deeply about delegates' experiences and what they take away from their time at NHSMUN. Before the conference, our Directors and Assistant Directors are trained rigorously through hours of workshops and exercises both virtual and in-person to provide the best conference experience possible. At the conference,

delegates will have the opportunity to meet their dais members prior to the first committee session, where they may engage one-on-one to discuss their committees and topics. Our Directors and Assistant Directors are trained and empowered to be experts on their topics and they are always available to rapidly answer any questions delegates may have prior to the conference. Our Directors and Assistant Directors read every position paper submitted to NHSMUN and provide thoughtful comments on those submitted by the feedback deadline. Our staff aims not only to tailor the committee experience to delegates' reflections and research but also to facilitate an environment where all delegates' thoughts can be heard.

Empowering participation: The UN relies on the voices of all of its member states to create resolutions most likely to make a meaningful impact on the world. That is our philosophy at NHSMUN too. We believe that to properly delve into an issue and produce fruitful debate, it is crucial to focus the entire energy and attention of the room on the topic at hand. Our Rules of Procedure and our staff focus on making every voice in the committee heard, regardless of each delegate's country assignment or skill level. Additionally, unlike many other conferences, we also emphasize delegate participation after the conference. MUN delegates are well researched and aware of the UN's priorities, and they can serve as the vanguard for action on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, we are proud to connect students with other action-oriented organizations to encourage further work on the topics.

Focused committee time: We feel strongly that face-to-face interpersonal connections during debate are critical to producing superior committee experiences and allow for the free flow of ideas. Ensuring policies based on equality and inclusion is one way in which NHSMUN guarantees that every delegate has an equal opportunity to succeed in committee. In order to allow communication and collaboration to be maximized during committee, we have a very dedicated administrative team who work throughout the conference to type up, format, and print draft resolutions and working papers.

As always, we welcome any questions or concerns about the substantive program at NHSMUN 2025 and would be happy to discuss NHSMUN pedagogy with faculty or delegates.

Delegates, it is our sincerest hope that your time at NHSMUN will be thought-provoking and stimulating. NHSMUN is an incredible time to learn, grow, and embrace new opportunities. We look forward to seeing you work both as students and global citizens at the conference.

Best,

Terry Wang
Secretary-General

Jordan Baker
Director-General

A Note on Research and Preparation

Delegate research and preparation is a critical element of attending NHSMUN and enjoying the debate experience. We have provided this Background Guide to introduce the topics that will be discussed in your committee. We encourage and expect each of you to critically explore the selected topics and be able to identify and analyze their intricacies upon arrival to NHSMUN in March.

The task of preparing for the conference can be challenging, but to assist delegates, we have updated our [Beginner Delegate Guide](#) and [Advanced Delegate Guide](#). In particular, these guides contain more detailed instructions on how to prepare a position paper and excellent sources that delegates can use for research. Use these resources to your advantage. They can help transform a sometimes overwhelming task into what it should be: an engaging, interesting, and rewarding experience.

To accurately represent a country, delegates must be able to articulate its policies. Accordingly, NHSMUN requires each delegation (the one or two delegates representing a country in a committee) to write a position paper for each topic on the committee's agenda. In delegations with two students, we strongly encourage each student to research each topic to ensure that they are prepared to debate no matter which topic is selected first. More information about how to write and format position papers can be found in the NHSMUN Research Guide. To summarize, position papers should be structured into three sections:

I: Topic Background – This section should describe the history of the topic as it would be described by the delegate's country. Delegates do not need to give an exhaustive account of the topic, but rather focus on the details that are most important to the delegation's policy and proposed solutions.

II: Country Policy – This section should discuss the delegation's policy regarding the topic. Each paper should state the policy in plain terms and include the relevant statements, statistics, and research that support the effectiveness of the policy. Comparisons with other global issues are also appropriate here.

III. Proposed Solutions – This section should detail the delegation's proposed solutions to address the topic. Descriptions of each solution should be thorough. Each idea should clearly connect to the specific problem it aims to solve and identify potential obstacles to implementation and how they can be avoided. The solution should be a natural extension of the country's policy.

Each topic's position paper should be **no more than 10 pages** long double-spaced with standard margins and font size. **We recommend 3–5 pages per topic as a suitable length.** The paper must be written from the perspective of your assigned country and should articulate the policies you will espouse at the conference.

Each delegation is responsible for sending a copy of its papers to their committee Directors via [myDais](#) on or before **February 21, 2025**. If a delegate wishes to receive detailed feedback from the committee's dais, a position must be submitted on or before **January 31, 2025**. The papers received by this earlier deadline will be reviewed by the dais of each committee and returned prior to your arrival at the conference.

Complete instructions for how to submit position papers will be sent to faculty advisers via email. If delegations are unable to submit their position papers on time, please contact us at info@imuna.org.

Delegations that do not submit position papers will be ineligible for awards.

Committee History

The IOM emerged from the tumultuous aftermath of World War II. A conflict that displaced an unprecedented 11 million people across Europe. The scale of this displacement, coupled with the urgent need for resettlement, prompted the establishment of the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe (PICMME) in 1951.¹ The IOM's primary mission was to assist European governments in identifying resettlement countries for these displaced individuals, providing them with a lifeline to new beginnings. During the 1950s, the IOM arranged transportation for nearly a million migrants, offering a critical solution to the urgent humanitarian crisis. Over the years, the IOM has expanded its goal, evolving into a leading international agency that works closely with governments and civil society to address migration issues comprehensively.² IOM is a blend of operational expertise and policy influence, and unlike many UN agencies, the IOM is not a specialized body. Instead, it bridges the gap between humanitarian assistance and sustainable development. Its convening power, extensive field presence, and reputation for efficiency make it a vital player in the global migration landscape.³ The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is a global organization with 175 member states and 171 offices, with a budget of USD 3 billion. It serves global migrants and has over 19,500 staff. Its affiliation with the UN enhances its visibility, allowing it to work more effectively with other UN agencies and advocate for policies promoting safe migration. The IOM became a "related organization" of the UN in 2016.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has collaborated with civil society organizations (CSOs) to address migration issues globally, regionally, nationally, and locally. Its Displacement Tracking Matrix has tracked over 31 million displaced persons in 2021, providing early warning and support. IOM has also established community-based protection mechanisms in Syria, ensuring IDPs access to essential services and protection from harm.⁴

IOM and its engagement with civil society is guided by three major documents: the IOM Constitution, the 2007 IOM Strategy Document, and the 2010 IOM Strategy Review.⁵ The International Organization for Migration (IOM) documents outline its mission, vision, values, and strategic priorities, providing a framework for its policies and decision-making. Its decentralized structure allows it to respond to specific regional and local contexts, with offices in Berlin, Tokyo, Washington, Nur-Sultan, Canberra, and Beijing focusing on regional migration challenges.⁶ All decisions in committees and subsidiary bodies must be made by a simple majority vote, referring to members present and voting.⁷ The IOM's decision-making process, based on a simple majority vote, can be efficient but may not be universally supported, potentially affecting implementation and the organization's reputation. The IOM must carefully weigh the pros and cons of different decision-making methods.

1 Socialhistory.org. "Preliminary Programme | ESSHC," 2014. <https://esshc.socialhistory.org/conference/programme/2014?day=14&time=28&session=573&rnd=2515>.

2 International Organization for Migration. "IOM History," 2021. <https://www.iom.int/iom-history>.

3 Ebrary. "IOM and Its Member States - the International Organization for Migration: Challenges, Commitments, Complexities," 2019. https://ebrary.net/284590/sociology/member_states.

4 United Nations, (n.d.). International Organization for Migration (IOM) - UN system SDG implementation, United Nations, <https://sdgs.un.org/un-system-sdg-implementation/international-organization-migration-iom-49542>".

5 International Organization for Migration. (n.d.). Guiding documents. <https://www.iom.int/guiding-documents>

6 International Organization for Migration. (n.d.). Country offices. <https://www.iom.int/country-offices>

7 International Organization for Migration. (n.d.). IOM constitution. <https://www.iom.int/iom-constitution>.



IOM

NHSMUN 2025



TOPIC A: INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS INTO THE WORKFORCE

Photo Credit: Uwe Aranas

Introduction

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) was created in 1951, to ensure orderly and humane migration for all.¹ With 172 member states, IOM works with governmental and nongovernmental organizations to promote international cooperation on migratory issues.² One out of every 30 people in the world are migrants, meaning there is a very large population of people in the world who need protection in their unfamiliar world. In 2020, there were 281 million international migrants, who were vulnerable to mistreatment or abuse.³ They are often taken advantage of, whether it's being given poor living conditions, unsanitary food/water, or being trafficked. It is IOM's mission to protect migrants from these inhumane conditions.

An important factor for migrants' stability is securing a source of income. The United Nations states that every human should have the right to find decent work.⁴ This means people have the opportunity to jobs in safe working environments that also pay a fair wage.⁵ Informal labor, or labor that is not recognized or regulated by a government, should not be a country's citizens' primary source of income.⁶ However, migrants are frequently taken advantage of, and may sometimes not have access to a decent job. There are many barriers that migrants face and nationals (a person who is a citizen of the country) do not. One of the most prevalent is the lack of cultural and linguistic understanding. Migrants who move to a new country may be unfamiliar with their native language, which can cause them harm, like prolonged detention and difficulty accessing healthcare. Other times, migrants might unknowingly sign contracts with unfair working conditions and wages.⁷ Without knowledge of the language, migrants are subject to being taken advantage of in the workplace.

Other factors like xenophobia and racism can affect the hiring

of migrants. In countries around the world, unemployment amongst migrants is usually higher than nationals.⁸ Part of this reason stems from the fact that some employers consider migrant workers as being insufficient for the job and end up choosing a national worker because of these prejudices. Countless testimonials from countless migrant workers say that customers will even ask for a national rather than be serviced by the migrant.⁹ Not only is this discriminatory, but employers might then fire the migrant for the reason of being ineffective, costing the migrant a decent job.

The rising number of conflicts in the world has generated more migrants, both refugees and voluntary migrants. For example, the Russo-Ukrainian war in 2022 found six million people displaced to foreign countries.¹⁰ These specific people might not have the proper resources to integrate comfortably into their new country and often do not have a choice in their migration. When they settle down, migrants need jobs, but they face various barriers. Myths that immigrants steal jobs from nationals run rampant.¹¹ Migrants create more

1 "International Organization for Migration (IOM)," Migration Data Portal, accessed August 7, 2024, <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/institute/international-organization-migration-iom>

2 "International Organization for Migration (IOM),"

3 "World Migration Report 2024," IOM UN Migration, accessed August 7, 2024, <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/msite/wmr-2024-interactive/>

4 "Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth," The Global Goals, accessed August 7, 2024, <https://www.globalgoals.org/goals/8-decent-work-and-economic-growth/>

5 "Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth,"

6 "Distinguishing the concepts: the informal sector, informal employment and the informal economy," International Labor Organization, December 3, 2015, <https://www.ilo.org/resource/45-informal-economy-workers>

7 "Why is the English Language Barrier a Problem for Immigrants?" Interactive College of Technology, August 24, 2023, <https://www.ict.edu/news-events/why-is-the-english-language-barrier-a-problem-for-immigrants/>

8 International Migration, Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia (ILO, IOM, OHCHR: Geneva, 2001), https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/international_migration_racism.pdf

9 Özden Melis Ulug, Betül Kanik, Selin Tekin, Gurur Deniz Uyanık, Nevin Solak, "Attitudes towards Afghan refugees and immigrants in Turkey: A Twitter analysis," Elsevier, no. 5 (2023); <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666622723000588>

10 Ukrainian refugee crisis: the current situation (Ukraine: reliefweb, 2024), <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/ukrainian-refugee-crisis-current-situation-cnrc>

11 Warren L. Creates, "6 Hiring Myths," Ottawa Board of Trade, accessed August 7, 2024, <https://www.ottawabot.ca/6-hiring-myths/>

opportunities in a country because they create investment opportunities for companies and governments.¹²

Finding a job is one of the most important factors that will guarantee a successful migration. After all, there is no point in traveling to a new country only to not be able to survive there. That is why it is IOM's mission to guarantee every human the right to a safe migration.

History and Description of the Issue

Who Is Migrating?

International migration has been a norm for much of recorded history as populations have shifted across the globe through imperialism, war, and the Industrial Revolution. Today, it is no surprise that international migration continues to be prevalent, though for vastly different reasons. According to the UN International Organization for Migration, a migrant is any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his or her habitual residence.¹³ As broad of a concept as migration seems, migration can nonetheless be broken down into different types of migration and classes of migrants based on distinct situational characteristics, such as. For example, migrants can be anything from migrant workers to refugees or asylum-seekers.¹⁴ As there are an estimated 281 million migrants in the world as of 2020, these classifications serve as a guide to distinguish the unique drivers of migration and its effects on receiving nations.¹⁵ Today, a third of the world's migrants originate from only ten countries including India, Mexico, and Syria.¹⁶ Though they have migrated for varied reasons, a majority about two-thirds of these migrants end up living in only twenty receiving countries (countries that migrants

end up living in) such as the United States, Germany, and Saudi Arabia.¹⁷ Complex international relations provide dual pushing and pulling migratory forces that dictate who will migrate, where they will migrate to, and how well they will be able to integrate into their new homes.

Migration can occur for a variety of reasons including education, employment opportunities, and war. A leading cause of migration is displacement. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that as of June 2023, about 110 million people have been forcibly displaced by events such as persecution, conflict, violence, and human rights violations which are factors that drive the emigration of natives.¹⁸ Emigration is the act of leaving one's country, whereas immigration is the act of moving to a specific country. In the first six months of 2023, the UNHCR identified seven major displacement situations around the world that were considered prominent drivers of migration. Together, these seven situations generated 90 percent of new displacement around the world and provide examples of common causes of migration.¹⁹ The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in February of 2022 is one such instance that has generated a considerable wave of migration. The war has displaced over one-quarter of the Ukrainian population, with most fleeing to other European countries to seek refuge.²⁰ Additionally, the conflict between factional paramilitary forces in Sudan has created intense fighting that has worsened already existing displacement. At the end of 2022, Sudan was already home to nearly one million refugees from South Sudan and other African nations as well as 3.6 million people displaced within the country.²¹ Thus, the intensified fighting only worsened the situation, creating millions of more internally displaced people as well as hundreds of thousands of more asylum-seekers and refugees.²² Similarly, a deadly offensive by the M23 armed group in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has caused

12 Creates, "6 Hiring Myths,"

13 "Fight Racism," United Nations, accessed July 7, 2024, <https://www.un.org/en/fight-racism/vulnerable-groups/migrants>

14 "Asylum and Migration," UNHCR USA, accessed July 7, 2024, <https://www.unhcr.org/us/what-we-do/protect-human-rights/asylum-and-migration>

15 "About Migration," IOM UN Migration, accessed, July 7, 2024, <https://www.iom.int/about-migration>

16 International Migration 2019 Report (New York, United Nations, 2019), https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org/development/desa/pd/files/documents/2020/Jun/international_migration_2019_report_june20.pdf.

17 International Migration 2019 Report.

18 Mid-Year Trends 2023 (UNHCR, 2023), <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/Mid-year-trends-2023.pdf>

19 International Migration 2019 Report.

20 International Migration 2019 Report.

21 International Migration 2019 Report.

22 International Migration 2019 Report.

millions of people to be displaced and around 1.1 million people to become refugees or asylum-seekers in neighboring African countries.²³ Widespread violence in Myanmar as a result of a military takeover has also created 1.3 million refugees and asylum-seekers hosted mostly by neighboring countries such as Bangladesh.²⁴

Even non-political situations have prompted significant migration. For example, flash floods in Somalia inundated the nation, provoking a wave of food insecurity that has displaced hundreds of thousands of people within Somalia and tens of thousands more into Kenya and Ethiopia at refugee camps.²⁵ Though still related to politics in the sense that it occurred because of the Taliban takeover, economic factors have driven migration in Afghanistan. Rising prices in a collapsing economy full of gender restrictions have caused such poverty that over 40 million people face acute food insecurity.²⁶ In turn, nearly 3.3 million people have been displaced within the country and the number of Afghan refugees has increased by 0.4 million.²⁷ 90 percent of these refugees have been hosted by the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan.²⁸ Finally, the UNHCR identified the situation of nationals of Latin America and the Caribbean as a cause of significant migration. These natives alone account for one-third of all new individual asylum applications globally.²⁹

Migration is not driven only by pushing factors, but also by factors that attract migrants to other nations. One such factor is globalization – the integration of nations into a wider, interconnected world order through information availability, communication, travel, foreign direct investment, capital flows, and trade.³⁰ The reason globalization drives migration is

that it often opens up less developed countries to trade which can lead to a surge in migration to other countries prompted by the search for alternative employment opportunities.³¹ This was the case in the 1990s when the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA, was implemented.³² The agreement intensified migration out of Mexico given that many farmers lost their livelihoods as NAFTA eliminated policies protecting small farmers and did not properly limit U.S. farm subsidies.³³ This migration spur has also resulted from similar trade agreements around the world that disadvantage natives, effectively driving them to emigrate in search of better means of subsistence.

It is also common for migration to be unplanned and result from incomplete integration in migrants' prior destinations.³⁴ For example, many Haitians arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border in 2023 had left Haiti after a major earthquake in 2010 but could never successfully integrate into other countries due to rising migration and hard economic conditions.³⁵ Similarly, many Venezuelans who were able to receive temporary immigration statuses in nearby nations still ended up transiting the Americas as they were unable to settle in new nations³⁶. According to the UNHCR, as of 2023, around 70 percent of Venezuelan migrants living in Latin America and the Caribbean struggle to meet their basic needs and exercise their rights.³⁷ Thus, many Venezuelan migrants seek to ultimately find refuge in the United States or Canada.³⁸ These situations exemplify the way that migration is neither always linear nor perfectly traceable.

As already noted, the causes of migration are many, but the final destinations of migrants are few. Whereas some regions

23 International Migration 2019 Report.

24 International Migration 2019 Report.

25 International Migration 2019 Report.

26 International Migration 2019 Report.

27 International Migration 2019 Report.

28 International Migration 2019 Report.

29 International Migration 2019 Report.

30 James Hollifield, Migration, Forced Displacement, and Human Development (Wilson Center, July 25, 2023), <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/migration-forced-displacement-and-human-development>

31 Hollifield, Migration, Forced Displacement, and Human Development

32 Hollifield, Migration, Forced Displacement, and Human Development

33 Alejandro Portes, "NAFTA and Mexican Immigration," items, July 31, 2006, <https://items.ssrc.org/border-battles/nafta-and-mexican-immigration/>.

34 "Top 10 Migration Issues of 2023," Migration Policy Institute, accessed July 7, 2024, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/migration-information-source/top-10-migration-issues-2023>.

35 "Top 10 Migration Issues of 2023,"

36 "Top 10 Migration Issues of 2023,"

37 "Top 10 Migration Issues of 2023,"

38 "Top 10 Migration Issues of 2023,"

of the world are net senders of migrants, other regions are net receivers of migrants. For instance, Central and Southern Asia is considered the largest net sender of migrants. The region has produced a net annual average of 1.5 million people emigrating from the region between 2000 and 2020.³⁹ Natural disasters, coupled with falling qualities of life drive people away from these countries.⁴⁰ By contrast, Europe is considered a net receiver of migrants as the region has experienced an annual net inflow of around 1.6 million migrants between 2000 and 2020.⁴¹ Migrants tend to seek to migrate to Europe because it supplies better economic and political stability. Of all people in refugee-like situations in 2023, around 69 percent were hosted by neighboring countries and about 75 percent were hosted by low and middle-income countries which represent 9 percent of the global population but only 0.4 percent of global GDP.⁴² As shown in the situation of continuously displaced Haitian and Venezuelan migrants, when receiving nations cannot sustain migrants, it creates challenges for migrant integration and can even spur subsequent migration.

Integration of migrants is crucial for both individual migrants and their host societies. The UN's International Organization for Migration defines migrant "integration" as a process of mutual adaptation between the host society and the migrants themselves.⁴³ Migrants who can successfully integrate are those who can support themselves through the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and capital and then apply these traits to effectively contribute to the recipient society.⁴⁴ Broadly speaking, integration can be facilitated by providing migrants with access to a process through which to acquire basic needs and income-generating opportunities which allow them to

become self-sufficient and collaborative.⁴⁵ The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) identifies distinct factors that should be present to enable migrants' successful integration.⁴⁶ These include access to human capital, technical capital, financial capital, and favorable political and sociocultural contexts.⁴⁷

Different host societies take different approaches to migrant integration. For example, refugee integration in the United States (U.S.) is largely facilitated by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) which provides services to make a rapid transition to self-sufficiency.⁴⁸ Through IRC programs, refugees obtain cultural orientation and access to aid for food, housing, and transportation through the Department of State.⁴⁹ This particular program is very effective as more than 92 percent of refugees in the U.S. can find employment within the first six months of receiving services.⁵⁰ A different approach to integration that is more limited but also more economically productive is the use of work visas. Visas are authorizations that allow a person permission to travel work or reside within a country. Without a visa, a country could deem a migrant as an illegal immigrant and either arrest or deport them. For example, the U.S. offers H-1B temporary visas that allow employers to petition for highly educated migrant professionals to work in specialty fields that require the equivalent of at least a bachelor's degree.⁵¹ Though this approach can integrate a very limited number of migrants into society, it does so in a much more successful manner since these migrants arrive with secure employment. The reason H-1B visas are so beneficial for host societies and applicable migrants is that migrant workers have different skill sets to

39 International Migration 2019 Highlights (New York: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, 2019), https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2019_Highlights.pdf

40 "Migration data in Southern Asia," Migration Data Portal, accessed August 13, 2024, <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/regional-data-overview/southern-asia>

41 International Migration 2019 Highlights

42 International Migration 2019 Highlights

43 "IOM and Migrant Integration," International Organization of Migration, accessed June 29, 2024, https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/migrated_files/What-We-Do/docs/IOM-DMM-Factsheet-LHD-Migrant-Integration.pdf

44 "IOM and Migrant Integration."

45 "Smart practices that enhance resilience of migrants," Migrant Protection Platform, accessed July 7, 2024, <https://migrationsmartpractices.ifrc.org/table-of-contents/responses-to-migrant-needs/>

46 "Smart practices that enhance resilience of migrants,"

47 "Smart practices that enhance resilience of migrants,"

48 "Refugee Resettlement: Attaining self-sufficiency," Rescue.org, January 16 2020, <https://www.rescue.org/announcement/refugee-resettlement-attaining-self-sufficiency>

49 "Refugee Resettlement: Attaining self-sufficiency,"

50 "Refugee Resettlement: Attaining self-sufficiency,"

51 "The H-1B Visa Program and Its Impact on the U.S. Economy," American Immigration Council, August 18, 2023, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/h1b-visa-program-fact-sheet>

native workers and thus complement them in the labor market rather than competing for the same jobs.⁵² Therefore, migrant workers provide labor and innovation which allows businesses to expand their operations and also invest their wages in the host society's economy, contributing to overall economic growth.⁵³

Benefits to Integrating Migrants

Different countries have different migration policies, and some are less strict than others, while some systems remain more complicated and tighter than others. Smooth migrant integration often provides many benefits to a country's workforce and overall society. Additionally, good systems of integration can be a sign of well-functioning systems for existing citizens as well.⁵⁴ For example, good systems that integrate migrants well usually have early childhood care, as well as solid education systems, workforce development, and healthcare. In short, an efficient migrant system is a sign of a well-functioning country and society.

Integrating migrants into society boosts economic growth and creates more wealth within a country.⁵⁵ A migrant who has a job produces products for the destination country's citizens (a destination country is a country a migrant move to), and their incomes are spent buying more goods and services, creating more transfers of money. In other words, migrants generate more money and then spend more money in a destination country, boosting its Gross Domestic Product (a common measure of the economic status of a country).⁵⁶ The United States of America is a place where arguments concerning immigration are a highly contested topic, with opposition against immigration claiming that immigrants take away

jobs from US workers.⁵⁷ However, in reality, migrants usually start their businesses or create new opportunities and markets for businesses to expand.⁵⁸ Therefore, if a country relaxes its immigration policy and promotes integrating migrants, a surge in economic output is usually seen.

Technological innovations have changed humanity for most of our existence, and many of these advancements are rapidly developing even today. Ensuring migrants are integrated into society can also help technological innovation within a country. Canada has recently begun to integrate immigrants who originally wanted to migrate to the United States.⁵⁹ Demand for visa availability in the USA far exceeds the supply, and Canada has been accepting migrants who are frustrated with backup in the legal process. This has both harmed the USA's innovation industry and propelled Canada's. In the US, immigrants compose about 16 percent of the US's inventors yet generate 26 percent of the total innovation output (the value of inventions created). These immigrants now migrate to Canada and boost technological change there instead.

Skilled migrants who also find jobs in technology industries bring back foreign techniques.⁶⁰ For example, Taiwan specializes in creating semiconductors, and if a Taiwanese scientist migrates to the US, they bring knowledge and new technology with them that might have not been previously practiced in the destination country.⁶¹ This transfer of knowledge can be done in several ways: mentorship of taking on native-born scientists can directly transfer a way of thinking from a teacher to a student; networking ensures that scientists take notice of their foreign peers' developments in other countries; and new competition to innovate encourages all habitats to continue

52 "The H-1B Visa Program and Its Impact on the U.S. Economy,"

53 "The H-1B Visa Program and Its Impact on the U.S. Economy,"

54 "Immigrant integration," Migration Policy Institute, accessed July 5th, 2024, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/topics/immigrant-integration>.

55 Immigrants and the Economy (American Civil Liberties Union, March 12, 2002), <https://www.aclu.org/documents/immigrants-and-economy>.

56 Tim Callen, "Gross Domestic Product: An Economy's All," International Monetary Fund, accessed July 5th, 2024, <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/Series/Back-to-Basics/gross-domestic-product-GDP>.

57 Amelie F. Constant, "Do migrants take the jobs of native workers?" IZA World Labor (May 2014), doi: 10.15185/izawol.10.

58 Immigrants and the Economy.

59 Cecilia Esterline, "Canada's ploy to use U.S.-trained immigrants to surpass American innovation," Niskanen Center, July 21, 2023, <https://www.niskanencenter.org/canadas-ploy-to-use-u-s-trained-immigrants-to-surpass-american-innovation/>.

60 Nate Karren, "How Do Immigration and Technological Growth Affect One Another? Providing Guiding Principles for Policymakers," The Center for Growth and Opportunity, April 2024, <https://www.thecgo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/CGO-2024-Immigration-RIF-Apr-HowDoImmigrationandTechnologicalGrowthAffectOneAnother-2.pdf>.

61 Amanda Florian, "Taiwan's semiconductor industry is booming, and China has noticed," IT Brew, February 22, 2024, <https://www.itbrew.com/stories/2024/02/22/taiwan-s-semiconductor-industry-is-booming-and-china-has-noticed>

development.⁶² All these methods of information transfer help shape a country's evolution.

A positive example of a successful integration policy can be seen in Scandinavia. Norway has one of the most accessible and workforces for refugees.⁶³ Refugees have an easier time finding jobs that require low-level education. This is because of Norway's advocacy for "equal treatment for migrants", meaning that Norway treats their migrants relatively the same as native citizens in the country.⁶⁴ Two principles govern their immigration policy: immigration must be limited, and all immigrants should have legal and practical opportunities in society.⁶⁵ Essentially, this means that migrants who are permitted to move to Norway must be provided opportunities for work. This has led to an economic boom in Norway. From 2000-, the number of Norway's immigrants hovered around

a consistent 40,000 immigrants per year.⁶⁶ However, when Norwegian immigration policy steadily allowed more migrants to enter the country (peaking at about 80,000 in 2011), the GDP growth of Norway rose as well from 2003 to 2007.⁶⁷ This has also contributed to their high Happiness Index score; they are seventh in the world for the best place to live.⁶⁸

Sweden, however, does particularly well in education, and job placement for migrants.⁶⁹ They are also excellent at giving immigrants with higher education jobs that suit their needs. A 2016 study showed that foreign-born Bosnians in the nation were generally employed at the same rate as Swedish nationals.⁷⁰ This is because Sweden offers many social programs that give refugees and migrants chances to learn Swedish. They also provide secondary schooling to youth.⁷¹ By ensuring that peoples' potential is used, Sweden avoids a phenomenon

62 Nate Karren, "How do Immigration and Technological Growth Affect One Another? Providing Guiding Principles for Policymakers,"
 63 Marte Daehlen, "Who is best at getting refugees into the workforce — Norway, Sweden or Denmark?" Sciencenorway.no, last modified October 4, 2022, <https://www.sciencenorway.no/immigration-integration-refugees/who-is-best-at-getting-refugees-into-the-workforce-norway-sweden-or-denmark/2082005>
 64 Betsy Cooper, "Norway: Migrant Quality, Not Quantity," Migration Policy Institute, last modified May 1, 2005, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/norway-migrant-quality-not-quantity>
 65 Cooper, "Norway: Migrant Quality, Not Quantity,"
 66 Einar H. Dyvik, Number of immigrants to Norway from 2000 to 2022 (Statista, July 4th, 2022), <https://www.statista.com/statistics/586665/immigration-in-norway/>.
 67 Dyvik, Number of immigrants to Norway from 2000 to 2022; Gianfranco Iorio Gnisci, "Norway's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) composition," April 13, 2021, <https://medium.com/ime-dss-sapienza/norways-gross-domestic-product-gdp-composition-a2ba871b0b3>
 68 Happiest Countries in the World 2024 (2024), <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/happiest-countries-in-the-world>
 69 Daehlen, "Who is best at getting refugees into the workforce — Norway, Sweden or Denmark?"
 70 "Sweden and immigration: a lot has to do with jobs," Working Immigrants, accessed August 13, 2024, <https://www.workingimmigrants.com/2018/09/sweden-and-immigration-a-lot-has-to-do-with-jobs/>
 71 "Sweden and immigration: a lot has to do with jobs,"

Medical doctor on a microscope in a medical lab
 Credit: Happi Raphael



known as brain waste.⁷² Brain waste is when a person with exceptional education or qualifications is working a job that does not require full use of that education.⁷³ For example, an immigrant doctor who has gone through ten years of medical school working as a waiter because hospitals are not hiring her is considered brain waste. She is considered overqualified for the job and might better serve society if she were given a place in a hospital or a medical setting.

On the other hand, if migrants are not integrated well into society, more problems can occur, which would cost more time and more resources to fix. One crucial example of how a country would suffer from not integrating migrants is the topic of healthcare. Healthcare is something that affects all people, migrant or not.⁷⁴ When countries do not provide migrants with the proper healthcare, small health issues can be exacerbated into large health issues. In turn, countries must then spend more money and resources to provide help to families who are already struggling to generate a living, and thus can hardly afford to treat such damaging health conditions.⁷⁵ A good example of proactive measures against this phenomenon can again be seen in Scandinavia. Finland has notably stood out in its quest to provide healthcare to all. Recently, Finland has passed a new law that allows undocumented migrants in Finland to receive the necessary care that they need at a price that is affordable to them.⁷⁶ Complete access to maternity and pediatric care (care for mothers and children, respectively) is given to groups as diverse as rejected asylum seekers and people who are waiting for a residence permit.⁷⁷

Another downside of not successfully integrating migrants is a loss of societal unity. Japan experiences heavy amounts

of discrimination towards immigrants.⁷⁸ Migrant workers experience many human rights violations including sub-minimum wages, illegal overtime, and unhygienic conditions.⁷⁹ These are largely based on discrimination towards migrants and create a heavy atmosphere of distaste towards migrant workers. The United Nations has dictated that discrimination is a crime against human rights and that all human beings are born with equal dignity and rights.⁸⁰ The Japanese discrimination against migrants drags down output and creates hate towards a group of people. For example, in 2022, the Justice Ministry received 3,772 applications for refugee status, but only 202, a little over five percent, were accepted.⁸¹ Many of whom were relatives of Japanese government workers. The solution to these problems is not to stop immigration entirely. It's to acknowledge that migrants benefit the host country with their innovation, income, and other factors.⁸² Rather, the solution to these problems is to improve the integration of migrants into communities. Japan's aging population means they are, and have been, relying on importing three million workers to supplement their economy.⁸³ Here, migrant workers play a crucial role in pushing Japanese society into a better place.

The Process of Integration

Migrating to another country is not as simple as finding a new home to live in. To be fully integrated, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) states that there needs to be mutual adaptation between the host society and the migrants themselves.⁸⁴ This means that the responsibility of migrant integration does not fall solely onto the migrant's shoulders, but that the receiving country has a responsibility to provide

72 "Brain Waste & Credential Recognition," Migration Policy Institute, accessed July 6, 2024, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/topics/brain-waste-credential-recognition>

73 "Brain Waste & Credential Recognition,"

74 Infectious Diseases (World Health Organization), <https://www.emro.who.int/health-topics/infectious-diseases/index.html>

75 Mike Woodman, "More countries are including refugees in national health systems, and development partnerships are key to the process," UNHCR Blogs, <https://www.unhcr.org/blogs/more-countries-are-including-refugees-in-national-health-systems-development-partnerships-are-key/>

76 "Health care services," Asylum in Finland, accessed July 6, 2024, <https://migri.fi/en/health-care>

77 Meri Korniloff, "Finland: new law expands health care for undocumented migrants," PICUM, January 24, 2023, <https://picum.org/blog/finland-new-law-expands-health-care-undocumented-migrants/>

78 "Japan: Events of 2023," Human Rights Watch, accessed July 6, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/japan>

79 "Japan: Events of 2023,"

80 "International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 21 March," United Nations, accessed July 7th, 2024, <https://www.un.org/en/observances/end-racism-day>

81 "Japan: Events of 2023,"

82 Nate Karren, "How do Immigration and Technological Growth Affect One Another? Providing Guiding Principles for Policymakers,"

83 Andrew J. Nathan, "Open Borders, Open Society? Immigration and Social Integration in Japan," Foreign Affairs, February 2023, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/reviews/open-borders-open-society-immigration-and-social-integration-japan>

84 "About Migration," IOM UN Migration, accessed, July 7, 2024, <https://www.iom.int/about-migration>

care and opportunities for the migrant. These people should have access to aspects of living, such as labor markets, health and social services, and education.⁸⁵ They should have access to things that will help them get back on their feet. Therefore, the integration of migrants is a multifaceted issue that requires resolving issues in many different systems within a country so that those systems can accommodate more migrants. The core goal of integration is to ensure that migrants are acclimating to the new culture and society, including becoming self-reliant.⁸⁶ Governments are not encouraged to provide migrants indefinite care but should strive to educate them so they can function on their own, and so they have the tools they need to comfortably navigate an unfamiliar country. Therefore, countries should attempt to focus on long-term integration as well as short-term integration.

One of the most difficult aspects of moving to a new country is unfamiliarity with the native language, especially if the country is predominantly composed of one dominant language. The people who come to these countries must navigate confusing and complicated systems without knowing what they are agreeing with. This can lead to many dangers. For example, migrants can sign leases for housing and unknowingly agree to unfair rates.⁸⁷ Or, they are incorrectly diagnosed with the incorrect disease and do not receive the appropriate medical care because they cannot correctly communicate their symptoms to the doctor. However, one of the biggest dangers of not knowing the native language is a reliance on friends and family who do know the native language.⁸⁸ This places trust in other peoples' hands and can lead to, for example, jobs that exploit people. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) discovered that over half of all exploited migrants

find these connections through friends and family and end up being exploited because of relying on a trusted person's recommendation.⁸⁹ Though friends and family can sometimes provide stability, it's still important for migrants themselves to have the ability to know what they are signing up for.

Those who do not have native language speaking abilities become reliant on translators, and if facilities do not have translators, migrants are at the whim of the facility. In other cases, children of migrants act as translators for their parents. Children usually pick up languages faster than their parents, so they might adjust to a native language much faster than their parents will.⁹⁰ Additionally, once kids become enrolled in school, they take classes in the native language and become immersed in learning the language. Parents might learn a few words or phrases in the native language, but this is not enough to communicate more complex things like health and legal issues.⁹¹ This means that children become the translators for their families, translating legal documents and expressing familial situations to humanitarian aid and government workers.⁹² The issue here is that these responsibilities dampen the child's ability to learn in school. These disruptions in their education pull them away from building their future and instead require them to help their parents adjust to the country. The United Nations dictates that every child has a right to education.⁹³ And these disruptions to their education do not follow this dictation. This phenomenon occurs much more than one would think. In Kenya and Pakistan, two countries that have seen a large increase in refugees, secondary school enrollment rates hover at about 10 percent. In Malaysia, these rates can reach as low as two percent.⁹⁴

Education, not just in language, is an important part of

85 "About Migration,"

86 "The Role of Local Communities in Refugee Integration," International Catholic Migration Commission, accessed July 17, 2024, <https://connect.icmc.net/role-of-local-communities-in-refugee-integration>

87 "Why is the English Language Barrier a Problem for Immigrants?" Interactive College of Technology, August 24, 2023, <https://www.ict.edu/news-events/why-is-the-english-language-barrier-a-problem-for-immigrants/>

88 "Language barriers and the importance of language learning for refugee and migrant communities in Europe," Open Cultural Center, August 6, 2021, <https://openculturalcenter.org/language-barriers-and-the-importance-of-language-learning-for-refugee-and-migrant-communities-in-europe/>

89 Protecting migrant workers from exploitation - FRA Opinions (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights), <https://fra.europa.eu/en/content/protecting-migrant-workers-exploitation-fra-opinions>.

90 Dr. Eleonore Smalle, "Why do children learn languages more effortlessly than adults?" news release, February 21, 2022, <https://unric.org/en/why-do-children-learn-languages-more-effortlessly-than-adults/>

91 "Language barriers and the importance of language learning for refugee and migrant communities in Europe,"

92 "Language barriers and the importance of language learning for refugee and migrant communities in Europe,"

93 "Global Issues: Children," United Nations, accessed July 16th, 2024, <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/children>

94 Sarah Dryden-Peterson, *The Educational Experiences of Refugee Children in Countries of First Asylum* (Washington DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2015), https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/FCD_Dryden-Peterson-FINALWEB.pdf

integration as well. In a lot of countries, the issue of education is not as easily solved as enrolling in school. Tuition must be paid, houses must be taken care of, and psychosocial problems (emotional issues related to being in a new society) can all prevent students from learning effectively.⁹⁵ Access to even the most basic education provides stability in a migrant child's life and also increases their self-esteem.⁹⁶ At school, children learn that they have a place in the world, and learn about different ways that they can contribute to the community. It has been documented that Syrian refugees in Turkey do not understand what group of people they are supposed to belong to.⁹⁷ These Syrian child refugees also show more violent tendencies in school, causing disruptions for the refugees themselves and other students.⁹⁸ This problem is not isolated to this specific crisis. It is also observed in German schools that accept Ukrainian refugees from the Russo-Ukrainian conflict. A study done on the mental health of adolescent Ukrainian

refugees found that only 64.3 percent of the participants did not experience any sort of mental health disorder.⁹⁹ The study encourages more mental health testing. In Germany, funding for mental health care for these refugees is lacking, and it is difficult for refugee minors and their families to find support for these diseases.¹⁰⁰ Mental health impacts a child's ability to learn, and if schools want to properly educate the youth, they must factor the background of child migrants into their curriculum. Germany also provides integration education programs for adults, too.¹⁰¹ The integration courses cover everyday activities, such as going to the store, sending a letter, how to participate in job interviews, and more. The program aims to allow adults the ability to tailor their existing skills towards the German workforce.¹⁰²

An often-overlooked aspect of migrant education is foreign skills recognition. Foreign skills recognition is a field that

95 Michaela Martin, Manal Stulgaitis, Refugees' access to higher education in their host countries: overcoming the 'super-disadvantage': policy paper (UNESCO: 2022), <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000381505>

96 Fons Coomans, Education for migrants: an inalienable human right (2018), <https://courier.unesco.org/en/articles/education-migrants-inalienable-human-right>

97 Servet Kardes, Berrin Akman, "Problems encountered in the education of refugees in Turkey," International Journal of Psychology and Educational Studies 9, no. 1, (June 2021): 153-164, <https://doi.org/10.52380/ijpes.2022.9.1.641>.

98 Servet Kardes, Berrin Akman, "Problems encountered in the education of refugees in Turkey,"

99 Claudia Catani, Jasmin Wittman, Sarah Wilker, Sina Neldner, Telja Lucia Schmidt, Frank Neuner, "School-based mental health screenings with Ukrainian adolescent refugees in Germany: Results from a pilot study," Frontiers Psychology 14, no. 1 (April 2023) <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1146282>.

100 Claudia Catani, Jasmin Wittman, Sarah Wilker, Sina Neldner, Telja Lucia Schmidt, Frank Neuner, "School-based mental health screenings with Ukrainian adolescent refugees in Germany: Results from a pilot study,"

101 "Integration courses," Make It In Germany, accessed August 13, 2024, <https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/living-in-germany/learn-german/integration-courses>

102 "Integration courses,"



One-on-one mentorship

Credit: Iosundare

examines how well a country recognizes foreign education and diplomas.¹⁰³ Low foreign skills recognition would be if a country did not recognize a bachelor's degree from abroad, for example, and made foreign workers go back to college in the new country to earn their degree. High foreign skills recognition would be if a country automatically assumed the education an immigrant received abroad was the same as in the new country and allowed them to use their original diploma. This creates a balance between the student and the state. On one hand, the student wants to immediately start work and preferably not go through more schooling. On the other hand, the state wants to ensure the worker is competent enough and up to the state's standard.¹⁰⁴ High foreign skills recognition is something that Sweden is credited with and is one of the reasons why they are considered so good at refugee integration.¹⁰⁵ Being able to transfer a diploma between countries is a huge advantage for a migrant, and saves them a lot of time as immigrants do not have to spend time back in school learning a subject they might already know. In Sweden's case, promoting and funding research into these foreign diplomas and their credibility allows them to gain an edge in finding and employing foreign-educated workers.

People also cannot work if they have no place to live. Stable jobs require stable housing, so workers have a place to sleep and rest. But finding a home is also not easy for migrants. The entry-level jobs many of them take up are often unable to finance these homes and are often thrown into unsafe conditions in urban areas. They can be subject to xenophobia, racism, and overcrowding.¹⁰⁶ The UN states that migrants should be treated as favorably as possible, and generally the same as non-alien.¹⁰⁷ Yet, in some places, migrants still live in unsafe conditions. In Burundi, for example, seven percent

of 80,000 refugees and asylum seekers live in habitable, affordable housing.¹⁰⁸ However, demand for housing can lead to tensions between natives and migrants. In Colombia, 2.9 million displaced Venezuelans had immigrated in search of new homes. This led to a housing deficit, where 3.7 million households had a lack of or had subpar housing.¹⁰⁹

However, the migrant housing crisis does have solutions. Countries are encouraged to work with Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) and landlords to encourage housing of migrants.¹¹⁰ For example, the Welsh government has created a sustainable housing accommodation plan called the Nation of Sanctuary Plan. It includes funding for refugee accommodations, and homelessness prevention strategies, and partners with local landlords to arrange housing for migrants.¹¹¹ Though this is paid by the Welsh government, they acknowledge that migrants who are given a chance to work will earn more money for the economy and society than if they weren't helped. Therefore, countries willing to directly invest in migrants' success by paying for their housing will see their money returned.

Employment and Income

One of the most important hallmarks of successful integration is securing a stable source of income. Jobs allow migrants to become self-sufficient and finally have a solid foundation to build their homes in the receiving country. Migrants can work in all sectors of industry, from service to manual labor. High-skilled workers can use their expertise and knowledge to create a living in the receiving country, while low-skilled workers fill essential occupations and make a living that way.¹¹² In this way, not only does the receiving country benefit from migrants'

103 Elisa Fornalé, PANEL 3: Recognition of skills and qualifications and relevant measures, (Bern, accessed July 7, 2024), https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/ts6_p3_elisafornale.pdf

104 Elisa Fornalé, PANEL 3: Recognition of skills and qualifications and relevant measures,

105 Sophie Hogan, "Sweden: foreign skills recognition benefit women," The Pie, last modified March 27, 2024, <https://thepienews.com/sweden-recognition-statements-significantly-benefitting-women>

106 United Nations General Assembly, A/65/261, para. 9 (August 9, 2010), <https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-housing/migration-and-right-housing>

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108 Benedicta Solf, Lindsey Guerrero, and Selena Sherzad, "Global Affordable Housing Shortages Can Harm Migrant Reception and Integration," Migration Policy Institute, last modified March 20, 2024, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/housing-crisis-immigrants-integration>

109 Solf, Guerrero, and Sherzad, "Global Affordable Housing Shortages Can Harm Migrant Reception and Integration,"

110 Solf, Guerrero, and Sherzad, "Global Affordable Housing Shortages Can Harm Migrant Reception and Integration,"

111 Jane Hutt, Nation of Sanctuary – Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan (United Kingdom: Welsh Government, 2019), https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-03/nation-of-sanctuary-refugee-and-asylum-seeker-plan_0.pdf

112 Florence Jaumotte, Ksenia Koloskova, and Sweta Saxena, Migrants Bring Economic Benefits for Advanced Economies, IMF

labor, but migrants also use their income to build themselves a home. These migrants generate a large percentage of the world's total economic output. As of 2019, the International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that migrant workers compose about 4.9 percent of the world's workforce.¹¹³ This is about 169 million migrants who have moved to another country with self-sufficient jobs. Of these workers, 14.3 percent worked in the Arab States.¹¹⁴ 25.6 percent of migrant workers worked in North and South America, and 37.7 percent worked in Europe and Central Asia.¹¹⁵ 14.2 percent worked in Asia and in Pacific Islands, and 8.1 percent worked in Africa.¹¹⁶ However, though migrants compose a large proportion of the workforce, in places all around the world, a disparity between native and foreign workers exists. In the U.S., the largest sector for migrants to work in is construction. In this sector, migrants earn USD 3.12 less than nationals.¹¹⁷ This is about 15 percent less than the average construction worker's wage.

Unfortunately, migrants often do not have the benefit of good connections and a simple understanding of how a country works. This often leads to workers being taken advantage of and being sent to work in extremely inhumane conditions. Migrant labor exploitation is an issue because these migrants will usually perform "dirty, difficult, and dangerous" jobs that natives will not, and at wages far lower than what should be paid.¹¹⁸ Oftentimes, these people do not have a choice whether

to work for a questionable employer. And these circumstances happen in all countries around the globe. In Italy, a very developed country with a GDP of 2.26 trillion euros (ranked third highest in Europe), migrant exploitation is often seen in their vineyards.¹¹⁹ The Tuscany region of Italy is known for having some of the finest vineyards in Italy, where a hectare of land can cost around 170,000 euros, and also has extremely high amounts of migrant abuse.¹²⁰ Four to five thousand migrant workers in the region work with no running water, toilets, or electricity.¹²¹ These people get paid about three euros an hour for their work, which is more than five times below the average hourly wage in Italy.¹²² Few people will take action against these cruelties. Viticulture is a huge business in the region, with "nobody wanting to talk about it."¹²³ Migrants also fear that they lose their only source of income if they report abuse, and reports are seldom investigated.

Although the vineyard abuse in Italy is drastic, lawmakers are making efforts to stem the violence. A new law has raised jail sentences for exploiting workers and placed harsh sanctions against employers who use unpaid labor.¹²⁴ However, workers are still threatened by employers that they are "replaceable", and this keeps workers from reporting the unsafe conditions.¹²⁵ Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) eight of the UN dictates that every human being has the right to work in a decent job, meaning safely and with fair pay.¹²⁶ People should not be subjected to extremely hazardous work conditions

Blog, October 24, 2016, <https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2016/10/24/migrants-bring-economic-benefits-for-advanced-economies>.

¹¹³ Labour migration (2024), <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/labour-migration>

¹¹⁴ Labour migration

¹¹⁵ Labour migration

¹¹⁶ Labour migration

¹¹⁷ "The perils of Undocumented Construction Workers in the United States," University of Michigan, accessed August 13, 2024, <https://limos.engin.umich.edu/deitabase/2024/05/28/undocumented-construction-workers-us/>

¹¹⁸ François Crépeau, Workplace exploitation of migrants, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/CMW/Discussions/2014/FrancoisCrepeau.pdf>

¹¹⁹ Aaron O'Neill, Comparison of gross domestic product (GDP) and national debt in selected euro area countries in 2023 (2024), <https://www.statista.com/statistics/274182/comparison-of-gdp-and-national-debt-in-selected-euro-countries/>; Ottavia Spaggiari, "Migrant workers exploited, abused in Italy's prized fine wine vineyards," Al Jazeera, March 19, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2024/3/19/migrant-workers-exploited-abused-in-italys-prized-fine-wine-vineyards>.

¹²⁰ Chris Mercer, "Buying a vineyard property in Tuscany: What are the options?" Decanter, July 24, 2020, <https://www.decanter.com/property/vineyard-property-tuscany-buying-options-441534/>; Spaggiari, "Migrant workers exploited, abused in Italy's prized fine wine vineyards."

¹²¹ Spaggiari, "Migrant workers exploited, abused in Italy's prized fine wine vineyards."

¹²² "Average hourly gross pay for employee jobs in Italy from 2011 to 2019," Statista, July 4, 2024, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/667430/average-hourly-gross-pay-for-employee-jobs-in-italy/>; Spaggiari, "Migrant workers exploited, abused in Italy's prized fine wine vineyards."

¹²³ Spaggiari, "Migrant workers exploited, abused in Italy's prized fine wine vineyards."

¹²⁴ Gaia Pianigiani, "Grapes, death and injustice in Italian vineyards," Independent, April 16, 2017, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/long_reads/grapes-death-and-injustice-in-italian-vineyards-a7682921.html

¹²⁵ Pianigiani, "Grapes, death and injustice in Italian vineyards."

¹²⁶ "Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth," The Global Goals, accessed August 13, 2024, <https://www.globalgoals.org/goals/8-decent-work-and-economic-growth/>

without protection, and should not face threats for speaking their minds. The actions in Italy’s vineyards break this SDG.

After Saudi Arabia was selected to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup, about 6,500 migrant workers from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka died working on jobs.¹²⁷ Though the government insists that there were only 37 deaths and the rest were from old age or natural causes.¹²⁸ However, these numbers do not count laborers who died from heart attacks or respiratory symptoms from work. The ILO estimated that at least 50 laborers have died and over 500 were seriously injured from work in 2021 alone. More transparency in governments and workers is needed here. According to estimates by the UN Global Compact for Migration (GCM), most of the payment towards hiring new workers goes to middlemen labor recruiters, who absorb most of the budget.¹²⁹ This means less money is going into workers’ pockets. Additionally, there is little enforcement of laws, and governments often do not know about middlemen labor recruiters and do not bother

to research the pay they take.¹³⁰ The GCM advocates for new registration systems that recruitment agencies could use to promote transparency and safety for migrant workers and companies.¹³¹ These systems would encourage free speech on abuse and guarantee that migrants have an avenue of safe and fair work.

In general, migrants are paid less for their work compared to native workers. According to the ILO, migrants, on average, earn about 13 percent less than native workers in developed countries.¹³² In Austria, the pay gap in hourly wages is as high as 25 percent, and in Italy, the pay gap is about 30 percent. In Cyprus, the hourly pay gap is about 42 percent. To combat this gap, Cyprus has enacted a national statutory minimum wage.¹³³ This means that the government has decreed that companies must pay their employees a certain hourly wage and cannot pay below that number. However, for migrants to enjoy this benefit, they must first apply for a string of legal processes.¹³⁴ For example, most migrants that are accepted must

127 “World Cup 2022: How has Qatar treated foreign workers?” BBC, November 9, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-60867042>

128 “World Cup 2022: How has Qatar treated foreign workers?”

129 Daniel Costa, Philip Martin, Temporary labor migration programs (2018), <https://www.epi.org/publication/temporary-labor-migration-programs-governance-migrant-worker-rights-and-recommendations-for-the-u-n-global-compact-for-migration/>

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131 Costa, Philip Martin, Temporary labor migration programs

132 “Migrant pay gap widens in many high-income countries,” International Labour Organization, December 14, 2020, <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/migrant-pay-gap-widens-many-high-income-countries>

133 Alexandros Perdikes, “Cyprus introduces a national statutory minimum wage,” Eurofound, June 29, 2023, <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/resources/article/2023/cyprus-introduces-national-statutory-minimum-wage>

134 ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET (Cyprus: 2024), <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/cyprus/reception-conditions/employment-and-education/access-labour-market/>

Providing migrant workers with COVID relief items

Credit: Vinayak Mali



work in Cyprus's tourism, food, or construction industries, to name a few.¹³⁵ Additionally, migrants must also contribute part of their salary to the National Health System, a medical care package that provides coverage for contributors.¹³⁶ Yet, migrants are still limited in their hospital selection and are generally confined to public hospitals, instead of private ones that may have better care.¹³⁷

In addition, the European Union (EU) is also expanding the number of migrants it's allowing to work within its borders. The EU Blue Card is a work and residence permit for non-EU nationals and allows those migrants to legally work in the EU.¹³⁸ In turn, migrants are protected by EU laws and can enjoy the same socio-economic rights that nationals enjoy.¹³⁹ In November 2023 in Germany, an exception to the salary threshold for migrants to enjoy pension insurance was lowered to 45.3 percent instead of 50 percent.¹⁴⁰ This means that more migrants in certain sectors of industry will be able to find more work and earn a better living for themselves. These industries include a very varied range, from dentists to construction workers, and information technology to schoolteachers¹⁴¹. A lot of industries receive these benefits, showing that Germany has greatly expanded the rights and job search for migrants.

Cultural Barriers and Discrimination against Migrants

The largest factor in whether a migrant can or cannot successfully integrate into society is if the people around them decide to reject or accept them. Migrants can work hard to secure a future for themselves, but native nationals

can create a barrier that migrants cannot cross. Governments can create policies to help migrants integrate, but if they face constant xenophobia and racism, then their ability to integrate is extremely hindered. The important difference between xenophobia and racism is that racism is a belief that race is a determinant of traits and capacities of a particular race.¹⁴² Whereas, xenophobia is a general fear directed towards people foreign to somebody.¹⁴³ Another important term is discrimination, which is the unjust treatment of a category of people based on a particular trait, whether that trait is ethnicity, age, sex, disability, et al.¹⁴⁴ Today, one in every 50 human beings, more than 160 million people, live outside of their countries of origin as a migrant, immigrant, or refugee.¹⁴⁵ A large percentage of those people live in socially volatile conditions and are particularly vulnerable to discrimination because they are not native to the country.

Discrimination in the workplace can drastically affect migrants' performance in their jobs, and in turn, affect their ability to earn a wage and comfortably live in a country. Studies have shown that in certain developed countries, executives are more racist when hiring migrant staff than nationals.¹⁴⁶ For example, in a study that analyzed the unemployment rates of foreign migrants, the average unemployment rate for non-European Union foreigners in general was 28 percent.¹⁴⁷ However, the unemployment rates for other groups, such as the Turks and Pakistanis are as high as 35 percent. And, recent groups of people who have immigrated, such as the Somalis, experience unemployment rates as high as 60 percent.¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, other immigrant groups, such as the Danish,

135 ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET

136 Panagiotis Petrou, "The 2019 introduction of the new National Healthcare System in Cyprus," Elsevier, vol 125, issue 3 (March 2021): 284-289, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthpol.2020.12.018>

137 ACCESS TO THE LABOUR MARKET

138 "EU Blue Card Network," EU Blue Card, accessed July 18, 2024, <https://www.apply.eu/>

139 "EU Blue Card Network,"

140 "The new Skilled Immigration Act at a glance," The Federal Government, accessed July 18, 2024, <https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/en/visa-residence/skilled-immigration-act>

141 "The new Skilled Immigration Act at a glance,"

142 "'Xenophobia' vs. 'Racism'," Merriam-Webster, accessed July 19, 2024, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/grammar/xenophobia-and-racism-difference>

143 "'Xenophobia' vs. 'Racism',"

144 "Discrimination," Oxford English Dictionary, accessed July 19, 2024, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/discrimination_n?tab=meaning_and_use

145 International Migration, Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia (ILO, IOM, OHCHR: Geneva, 2001), https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/international_migration_racism.pdf

146 International Migration, Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia

147 International Migration, Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia

148 International Migration, Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia

have a relatively low unemployment rate of 9.1 percent.¹⁴⁹ The difference in these numbers can depend on a variety of factors, but there is a general dissent for non-white people.¹⁵⁰ Black people in the EU experience frequent racist remarks, with 45 percent of respondents to a 2023 survey saying that they have experienced racism in the past five years.¹⁵¹ In countries such as Germany and Austria, this number is as high as 70 percent.¹⁵² In their working lives, 34 percent felt racially discriminated against during their job search, and are much more likely to hold temporary contracts and to be overqualified for their job (otherwise known as brain-waste).¹⁵³ Additionally, a study published by the University of Chicago has found that 22 percent of migrants employed in private households in the United States were subject to 12-hour shifts with no breaks or overtime pay.¹⁵⁴ These migrants, primarily women, experience unfair wages, sexual assault, and other forms of abuse.¹⁵⁵ These women usually work in private households as cleaners, maids, cooks, etc, and do not have governmental or outside supervision. This means that there is no one to hold the abusers accountable. Migrants are frightened by the threat of being fired and replaced.

Religion is a contested topic in certain countries and can lead to discrimination in host societies. In Europe, support for far-right parties in several countries is growing.¹⁵⁶ Discrimination towards Muslim migrants is growing. It's being found that these sentiments are being addressed as acceptable and normal across the political spectrum, with new counter-terrorism measures being enacted in Member States.¹⁵⁷ These

measures themselves are not the issues, however, they have led to extreme ethnic profiling and discriminatory policing of migrants.¹⁵⁸ The report shows that harsh treatment against migrants and asylum seekers has risen. With recent terrorist attacks in France and Belgium in 2015 and 2016, these radical treatments have only increased.¹⁵⁹

Independent researchers and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have also reported a toughening of Muslim racism, where Islam is singled out as the “biggest threat to Europe.”¹⁶⁰ The 2015 and 2016 attacks in France and Belgium were by Muslim terrorist groups, and these spread anti-Muslim hate across Europe.¹⁶¹ For example, in Hungary, a research institute found that a year ago, two-thirds of their population supported Muslim migrants and refugees, whereas now only one-third supports foreigners.¹⁶² Part of this decrease in support is due to political leaders both not speaking out against racism, and those who encourage it. In September 2015, Romanian President Traian Basecsu made states that associated Muslims with terrorism.¹⁶³ This has perpetuated the Romanian media to continue feeding the public anti-Muslim sentiment and has led to a general dissent towards those migrants. However, a few actions done by a few people should not lead to stereotypes towards the entire population, and these anti-Muslim sentiments just divide the population and create chaos.

The government does have a role in preventing the spread of racism. They can pass procedures based on evidence and

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150 “Black people in the EU face ever more racism,” European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, October 25, 2023, <https://fra.europa.eu/en/news/2023/black-people-eu-face-ever-more-racism>

151 “Black people in the EU face ever more racism,”

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154 “DISCRIMINATION AGAINST IMMIGRANTS IN SOCIETY WITH EXAMPLES,” United Way NCA, October 24, 2022, <https://unitedwaynca.org/blog/discrimination-against-immigrants/>

155 “DISCRIMINATION AGAINST IMMIGRANTS IN SOCIETY WITH EXAMPLES,”

156 Ojeaku Nwabuzo and Lisa Schaefer, Racism and discrimination in the context of migration in Europe (European Network Against Racism: Brussels, 2016), https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/library-document/racism-and-discrimination-context-migration-europe_en

157 Nwabuzo and Lisa Schaefer, Racism and discrimination in the context of migration in Europe

158 Nwabuzo and Lisa Schaefer, Racism and discrimination in the context of migration in Europe

159 Nwabuzo and Lisa Schaefer, Racism and discrimination in the context of migration in Europe

160 Nwabuzo and Lisa Schaefer, Racism and discrimination in the context of migration in Europe

161 Nwabuzo and Lisa Schaefer, Racism and discrimination in the context of migration in Europe

162 Nwabuzo and Lisa Schaefer, Racism and discrimination in the context of migration in Europe

163 Doru Pop, “Misrepresentation of Muslims and Islamophobic public discourses in recent Romanian media narratives,” Gale Academic Onefile, vol. 15, issue 44 (June 2016), <https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA470368998&sid=googleScholar&v=2.1&it=r&linkaccess=abs&issn=15830039&cp=AONE&sw=w&userGroupName=anon%7E3a4490f5&caty=open-web-entry>

transparency, rather than a few events and memories.¹⁶⁴ Making the legal process more complicated for groups of migrants can also continue the cycle of racism. For example, studies done by the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) discovered that it is much more difficult for migrants to organize themselves into unions.¹⁶⁵ Unions are one of the protections workers can have against companies and employers. Instead of each worker fighting for themselves, they can create an organization that negotiates and enforces contracts with employers, such as fair wages, health care, and job security.¹⁶⁶ It is very difficult for migrants to create these protections for themselves because they do not have the benefit of legal recognition in host countries.¹⁶⁷ A key “justification” that these policies rely on is that migrants are removable and replaceable.¹⁶⁸ When countries experience a high influx of migrants, the perception that there will always be another migrant to replace a resignation creates policies that put migrants low on the employment ladder.

Cultural barriers create fear among migrants and do not allow them to seek out help, and this prevents them from integrating into society. Migrants may be discouraged from applying for jobs or even things as simple as going to the store. In Italy in 2015, the far-right movement Forza Nuova was reported to be involved in attacks on reception centers for asylum seekers in Northern Italy.¹⁶⁹ This attack was the side of Italy that these migrants saw: a country of violence and prejudice. These people escaped violence in Africa and the Middle East to find themselves in a new conflict.¹⁷⁰

However, countries in the past have ended, or at least fixed, discrimination within their borders. Historically, the end of the apartheid era in South Africa in 1991 saw the end of some of the most horrific examples of racism.¹⁷¹ Thailand, in August 2000, announced that it would now grant citizenship to three groups of displaced persons: the Burmese, Nepalese, and Chinese, repelling generations-old teachings that foreigners, particularly the Burmese, are the Thais enemy.¹⁷² More recently, the Innovative Social Project (ISOP) in Austria

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 165 International Migration, Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia
 166 “AFL Homepage,” AFL-CIO, accessed July 19, 2024, <https://aflcio.org/what-unions-do>
 167 International Migration, Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia
 168 International Migration, Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia
 169 Nwabuzo and Lisa Schaefer, Racism and discrimination in the context of migration in Europe
 170 “Anti-immigrant protests break out in Rome, Treviso,” ANSA in English, July 17, 2015, https://www.ansa.it/english/news/2015/07/17/anti-immigrant-protests-break-out-in-rome-treviso_720c8feb-0d85-455f-ab00-3d858a5c1883.html
 171 “Anti-immigrant protests break out in Rome, Treviso,”
 172 “Anti-immigrant protests break out in Rome, Treviso,”



Burmese migrants in Thailand
 Credit: President’s Malaria Initiative

is a government and privately funded organization that aims to facilitate the integration of migrants and refugees into Austrian society.¹⁷³ Not only does it offer training courses for migrants on how to navigate the legal elements of Austria, but it also raises public awareness on anti-discrimination and anti-racism issues.¹⁷⁴ The programs combat prejudices that are already present in Austria, such as against Muslims and black people.¹⁷⁵ Additionally, in November 2015, the Ministry for Integration presented a 50-point action plan to communicate values like gender equality, and secularism for refugees to help break down cultural barriers towards refugees.¹⁷⁶ Though these actions are a step in the right direction, more action can be taken in the fight against discrimination towards migrants. These people come to receiving countries in search of a better life, and cultural barriers do not contribute to that, and instead break their fundamental human right: the right to be treated with dignity.

Current Status

Case Study: Canada's Migration Policies

Immigrants play an extremely important role in Canada's economy. Foreigners make up about 25 percent of Canada's workforce and occupy a large percentage of the Canadian workforce. For example, about 20 percent of construction jobs; over 34 percent of professional, scientific, and technical service jobs; and 38 percent of transportation and warehousing jobs are all held by immigrants.¹⁷⁷ 1.9 million migrants work in healthcare.¹⁷⁸ Immigration has greatly helped Canada, and it is one of the reasons why Canada has been able to continue

to compete with the United States in terms of GDP growth, matching an extremely high growth rate over the past decade.¹⁷⁹

Finding an open job opportunity can be one of the most challenging tasks for a migrant worker. Jobs in Canada have largely and historically been based on a referral system, meaning unless you have experience with a company, a worker's odds of being hired are low.¹⁸⁰ Canada also highlights that people have Canadian experience, and tend to consider foreign experience as not entirely fitted for their mission.¹⁸¹ They hold suspicion for the validity of foreign programs and usually require workers to be relicensed. Getting licensed requires sitting down with a regulatory body that ensures you are qualified up to "Canadian standards".¹⁸² This creates a cycle of unemployment that is hard to break out of. Companies will only hire people with Canadian experience, but without existing experience, it's extremely difficult to get hired. However, the government has realized this issue as being a barrier to migrant workers and has created a hiring system network that provides migrants access to a hiring platform. The Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot (EMPP) was first launched in 2018 and, in 2023, was recently updated with changes to the pilot program.¹⁸³ Now, EMPP works with non-governmental organizations like JVS Toronto. This non-profit non-sectarian (not associated with a particular religious group) group's mission is to help immigrants find jobs.¹⁸⁴ They do this by guiding immigrants through confusing legal processes, explaining the Canadian workplace, and developing necessary skills for the workplace.¹⁸⁵ For example, if a migrant worker needed to update his licensing to Canadian standards, JVS Toronto might first assist the worker in understanding what aspects of his licensing he needs to

173 International Migration, Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia

174 International Migration, Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia

175 Rumeysa Dür-Kwieder and Iris Neuberger, ANTI-RACISM MAP: MAPPING ANTI-RACISM PLANS IN AUSTRIA (Austria: Dokustelle, 2023) <https://www.enar-eu.org/austria-napar/>

176 Nwabuzo and Lisa Schaefer, Racism and discrimination in the context of migration in Europe

177 "Benefits of immigration to Canadian sectors," Government of Canada, modified July 5, 2024 <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/campaigns/immigration-matters/growing-canada-future.html>

178 "Benefits of immigration to Canadian sectors," Government of Canada,

179 Steve Scherer and Fergal Smith, "Canada's immigration creates 'mirage' of economic prosperity, economists say," Reuters, July 26, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/canadas-immigration-creates-mirage-economic-prosperity-economists-2023-07-26/>

180 "How to deal with constant job search rejection as a newcomer to Canada," Arrive, December 6, 2023, <https://arrivein.com/career-ca/how-to-deal-with-constant-job-search-rejection-as-a-newcomer-to-canada>

181 "Overcoming Job-Related Challenges as Newcomers in Canada," JVS Toronto, accessed August 1, 2024, <https://www.jvstoronto.org/blog/overcoming-job-related-challenges-as-newcomers-in-canada/>

182 "Credential assessment process," Government of Canada, accessed August 13, 2024, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/new-immigrants/prepare-life-canada/prepare-work/credential-assessment/process.html>

183 "Benefits of immigration to Canadian sectors," Government of Canada,

184 "Frequently Asked Questions," JVS Toronto, accessed August 1, 2024, <https://www.jvstoronto.org/frequently-asked-questions>

185 "Frequently Asked Questions," JVS Toronto,

update. Then, they might then connect him with an employer or a hiring platform. This program is funded by many levels of government, foundations, corporate grants, and individual donations.¹⁸⁶ However, JVS Toronto emphasizes its focus on the need for direct access and keeps the accessibility cost low. In July 2023, the Canadian government announced they donated over two million dollars to this program, showing their unwavering support for integrating migrants into the workplace. The EMPP itself processes applications in under six months, allowing migrants to find jobs quickly.¹⁸⁷ However, there are requirements migrants must meet. They must be familiar with English or French and they must have finished some form of secondary education or prove they have enough money to relocate themselves and their family.¹⁸⁸ With these requirements, Canada can make sure the migrants they accept will be successful, and it motivates migrants to adjust to the job search and society quickly. These requirements are the fundamentals of integration, and this program helps migrants obtain these fundamentals so they can integrate smoothly.

Canadian programs are also aimed at supporting workers after they've found jobs. The Employment Insurance (EI) offered by the Canadian government provides services to unemployed workers while they search for jobs or improve their skills.¹⁸⁹ The EI is governed by the Canada Employment Insurance Commission (CEIC), and they set the premium rate that members must pay for a year to start receiving benefits.¹⁹⁰ Migrant workers can apply for this program too, protecting themselves from unexpectedly long periods of unemployment, and can also use this time to earn their Canadian licensing.¹⁹¹ From 2022-2023, the EI program had an average of 730,000 beneficiaries.¹⁹² These numbers are similar to pre-pandemic

numbers and signal stability and trust in the EI program.

Effective job integration cannot occur without substantial improvements in social issues, primarily discrimination towards migrants. A migrant facing discrimination and stereotypes is heavily limited in the options that they have. A harmful action of discrimination can be as simple as refusing to acknowledge the person in front of you because of where they are from. For example, in Turkey, where a study was conducted that analyzed the foreign worker experience in Turkey.¹⁹³ A participant stated that a customer took one look at him and refused to be serviced by him, and instead asked to be helped by a Turkish worker.¹⁹⁴ These attitudes stem from stereotypes and perceptions about immigrants, and this can lead to lost jobs. If customers don't want to be served by immigrants, the immigrant jobs will be lost. However, Canada has taken heavy measures to combat this discrimination. In 1988, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act was enacted, affirming the policy of the Canadian government to recognize and then promote multiculturalism in Canadian society.¹⁹⁵ Its objectives outline how all citizens should be treated, as well as pledging to eliminate barriers to their participation in Canadian society.¹⁹⁶ It also assures that all individuals should receive equal treatment and equal protection under the law, and prohibits treating people differently because of their culture or heritage.¹⁹⁷ The consequences of not following these laws result in jail time and heavy fines. This is important to job integration because of the difference between finding a job versus finding a viable job. For example, finding a job that makes a foreign worker work unfair shifts and accept low wages does not count as a viable job. In an interview conducted to research the migrant work experience in Canada, testimony

186 "Frequently Asked Questions," JVS Toronto,

187 "Immigrate through the Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot: How the pilot works," Government of Canada, July 29, 2024, <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/refugees/economic-mobility-pathways-pilot/immigrate.html>

188 "Immigrate through the Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot: How the pilot works," Government of Canada,

189 "Employment Insurance (EI)," Government of Canada, April 30, 2024, <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/ei.html>

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192 "Employment Insurance (EI): Chapter 2," Government of Canada, April 30, 2024, <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/ei/ei-list/reports/monitoring2023/chapter2.html>

193 Dalya Alnajjar, Ahmad Alsaman, The experience of Arab workers working in Turkey: Qualitative study (Turkey: Sakarya University, 2020), <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/1183613>

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195 "About the Canadian Multiculturalism Act," Government of Canada, June 3, 2024, <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/about-multiculturalism-anti-racism/about-act.html>

196 "About the Canadian Multiculturalism Act," Government of Canada,

197 "About the Canadian Multiculturalism Act," Government of Canada,

was given. A man who emigrated from South Asia described his horrible work-life balance and his inability to quit his job because of his needs.¹⁹⁸ He says, “[The employers] are taking advantage of my situation.”¹⁹⁹ Examples like this are what Canada has been working to avoid.

Canada has made improvements to breakdown the multicultural barrier and has continuously made improvements to its Multiculturalism Act. In 2023, Canada invested USD 10.8 million to fund projects that address barriers in employment, the justice system, and social participation amongst minority migrants.²⁰⁰ It also signed two four-year agreements with Statistics Canada and Justice Canada to continue researching the effectiveness of its Anti-Racism Strategy.²⁰¹ Here, Canada is working to combat racism, and then transparently evaluating how effective its actions are. Transparent action is something the UN values highly, and as UN Secretary-General António Guterres said in his briefing to the General Assembly meeting in 2024, “transparency improves results, and holds our institutions to agreed standards and commitments.”²⁰² And, there has been progress in Canada because of these actions. It was found that although Canadians were upset about issues like the economy and particularly the housing crisis, Canadians still kept the same values towards immigrants that they had before.²⁰³ They still thought highly of immigrants and their contribution to society.²⁰⁴ Though the issues they were upset about concerned migrants, Canadians were upset because of how the government was handling the issue, rather than at the migrants themselves. Ironically, this shows how the Canadian government has succeeded in its goal to make its

country more understanding towards foreign workers.

Job Disparity between Migrant and National Workers

“They treat us like machines.”²⁰⁵ These are words said by Latin American migrant workers living in London, who described how their company was treating them. In research done on London’s migrant worker population, most migrant workers there had experienced an abuse of power or unfair treatment in the workplace. There is a very large difference in the types of jobs that migrant and national workers accept. When a migrant worker finds a job in a destination country, they are more likely to find jobs that are much lower paying or unjust. In a lot of cases around the world, migrant workers are treated as disposable, with workers frequently being reminded that they are easily replaceable, urging them to accept low wages for backbreaking work.²⁰⁶

Systems of employing migrant workers have a part to play in their mistreatment. One of the most well-known of these systems is the kafala system, a system commonly used in the Middle East to hire foreign workers.²⁰⁷ Kafala works by first having governments give permits to companies to individually hire workers overseas.²⁰⁸ The company is supposed to provide housing, food, and travel for the workers. In exchange, the worker works for the company for a certain amount of time.²⁰⁹ These workers create eight billion dollars’ worth of funds for their home countries and create incentives for origin countries to essentially sell their citizens to others.²¹⁰ However, this system fails because there is no transparency between the company

198 Naimul Karim, “They wanted me to be desperate’: Foreign workers battle fake jobs, exploitation in hunt for citizenship,” *Financial Post*, July 23, 2024, <https://financialpost.com/feature/foreign-workers-battle-fake-jobs-exploitation-canadas-immigration-gets-tougher>

199 Naimul Karim, “They wanted me to be desperate’: Foreign workers battle fake jobs, exploitation in hunt for citizenship,”

200 Annual Report on the Operation of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act 2022-2023 (Canada: Canadian Government, 2024), <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/corporate/publications/plans-reports/annual-report-canadian-multiculturalism-act-2022-2023.html>

201 Annual Report on the Operation of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act 2022-2023

202 “UN System Financial Statistics,” United Nations, accessed August 1, 2024, <https://open.un.org/>

203 Keith Neuman, Canadian Public Opinion About Immigration & Refugees (Canada: Environics Institute), https://www.enviroicsinstitute.org/docs/default-source/focus-canada-fall-2023/focus-canada-fall-2023---canadian-public-opinion-about-immigration-refugees---final-report.pdf?sfvrsn=75312743_2

204 Neuman, Canadian Public Opinion About Immigration & Refugees

205 Sabah Boufkhed, Nicki Thorogood, Cono Ariti, Mary Alison Durand, “They treat us like machines’: migrant workers’ conceptual framework of labour exploitation for health research and policy,” *National Library of Medicine* (9, 2, February 5, 2024) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10860016/>

206 Boufkhed, Nicki Thorogood, Cono Ariti, Mary Alison Durand, “They treat us like machines’: migrant workers’ conceptual framework of labour exploitation for health research and policy,”

207 Kali Robinson, “What Is the Kafala System?” Council on Foreign Relations, November 18, 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/background/what-kafala-system>

208 Robinson, “What Is the Kafala System?”

209 Robinson, “What Is the Kafala System?”

210 Christina Bouri, “The Kafala System Is Facilitating Labor Abuses in the Middle East,” *Lawfare*, September 17, 2023, <https://www.lawfare.com/2023/09/17/the-kafala-system-is-facilitating-labor-abuses-in-the-middle-east/>



Migrant workers in Doha, Qatar

Credit: Alex Sergeev

and the government, and when there is, the government tends to turn a blind eye, the system simply creates too much money for the government. Companies also frequently have inhumane conditions for the worker, with their accommodation needs barely met. Workers must accept low wages, and people who are caught escaping are brought back to the company because their contract has not technically ended.²¹¹ In turn, workers who attempt to break this contract are threatened to have their passports and identification confiscated, and sometimes are even physically abused.²¹² If a migrant has their papers taken away, they are essentially trapped in a foreign country with no way of returning home. Women are especially prone to the system and face challenges. These migrants face extremely high amounts of sexual and physical abuse and usually end up being trafficked and sold to the black market.²¹³ Opponents of the kafala system call it “modern-day slavery” because companies end up owning the migrants.²¹⁴ If migrants wish to leave the country, they need the permission of the company,

but this often proves difficult. For example, in Kuwait (where kafala is much stricter), a migrant requires approval from the Ministry of Interior and Labour Court to transfer jobs, but if they leave the house, then they will be subject to accusations of escape and be deported.²¹⁵

Systems like kafala are being brought into the spotlight due to reports at major events. A major incident was with the World Cup of 2022 in Qatar. Qatar has historically been one of the most avid users of the kafala system, and even after the kafala system was officially banned, similar practices continued to build accommodations for the World Cup. The complaints against this country reached the International Labor Organization, and the country must now make major social reforms that comply with ILO standards.²¹⁶ There is a possibility of reversing this system of modern-day slavery. It is stated that instead of banning kafala altogether, it must be dismantled.²¹⁷ It’s encouraged that governments stop allowing the practice of giving companies free rein. In Bahrain’s case, its

lawfaremedia.org/article/the-kafala-system-is-facilitating-labor-abuses-in-the-middle-east

211 Disempowered, dehumanised, deported: Life under the kafala system (WalkFree, 2020), <https://www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/findings/spotlights/life-under-the-kafala-system/>

212 Bouri, “The Kafala System Is Facilitating Labor Abuses in the Middle East,”

213 Bouri, “The Kafala System Is Facilitating Labor Abuses in the Middle East,”

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215 Disempowered, dehumanised, deported: Life under the kafala system

216 “What has changed for migrant workers in Qatar?” ILO InfoStories, November 2023 <https://webapps.ilo.org/infostories/en-GB/Stories/Country-Focus/world-cup-qatar>

217 Ryszard Cholewinski, “Understanding the Kafala Migrant Labor System in Qatar and the Middle East at Large, with ILO Senior Migration Specialist Ryszard Cholewinski,” Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, February 1, 2023, <https://gja.georgetown.edu/2023/02/01/the-kafala-system-a-conversation-with-ryszard-cholewinski/>

government created the Labor Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA).²¹⁸ The LMRA is now responsible for hiring migrant workers and employing them in companies. The government is now able to more accurately track the conditions of these migrants and take away their dependence on the employer.²¹⁹ Now, migrants are more able to freely change employers, protecting them from potentially dangerous and abusive work conditions.

Recruitment fees are also one of the ways migrant workers are unable to integrate into the workforce. Generally, it's typical to pay a third-party middleman to perform the actual job search, but that sum of money is usually a small percentage of a yearly income, about 20-30 percent, and usually for a few years.²²⁰ However, in some regions of the world, these recruiting fees can cost entire years of wages.²²¹ For example, migrant workers in Taiwan who are from Vietnam can sometimes end up paying 6150 NTD, which is about three times an annual salary in Vietnam.²²² These workers face a lot of other financial challenges, too, like being subject to extremely high interest rates. In the Philippines, the normal interest rate limit for recruitment fees is 8 percent.²²³ However, interest rates can range between 61 percent and 578 percent.²²⁴ These costs are paid to an employment agency, which then ends up controlling the migrant via the contract that they both signed. Migrant workers can't escape debt, and they end up not being able to integrate properly into their jobs. In the United Kingdom, some migrants can earn work visas through their companies. In some cases, if the employment was to end, the migrant's

visa would be canceled by the government.²²⁵ The reason for termination does not matter, even if the reason was unfair to the migrant. As long as the employment ends, the worker's ability to stay in the country and continue working is taken away.²²⁶ Studies done on Bangladeshi workers in 2023 reveal that out of 835 workers, 822 of them had their passports kept by their employers, and 12 percent of them were not receiving the wage that was mutually agreed upon.²²⁷

A reason why migrants tend to occupy lower-paying jobs in countries is because of a mismatch in job skills. Highly skilled workers tend to have to work lower-paying jobs because those are the ones that are accessible to them. This is a phenomenon called brain waste, and it's referred to as a non-recognition of the skills and qualifications of a migrant, causing them to not take advantage of their full potential.²²⁸ A good example of this is when a Filipino doctor moves to Germany and now works in retail. Brain waste theory says that that migrant is not completely using her skills and education. A big reason for this mismatch is that foreign degrees are often not transferable between countries, meaning migrants must either go back to school in the destination country or accept an alternative job.²²⁹ Many choose the latter because their family needs money as soon as possible, and time cannot be spent in school. However, there have been advancements in the world with accepting foreign degrees. In Portugal, the government has declared the necessity and benefits of accepting foreign medical workers, regardless of if their degrees are foreign or not.²³⁰ Portugal's National Health Service has now begun to accept all medical

218 Reform of the Kafala System (Philippines: Migrant Forum in Asia), <https://webapps.ilo.org/dyn/migpractice/docs/132/PB2.pdf>

219 Reform of the Kafala System

220 "Recruitment Fee Agreement Full Guide," Recruiters Lineup, accessed August 2, 2024, <https://www.recruiterslineup.com/recruitment-fee-agreement/>

221 Peter Bengtsen, "Migrant workers squeezed in Taiwan," *Le Monde diplomatique*, February 14, 2023, <https://mondediplo.com/outsidein/migrant-workers-taiwan>

222 Bengtsen, "Migrant workers squeezed in Taiwan,"

223 "Philippines: Recruitment agencies and lenders allegedly collude to exploit migrant workers, amid lack of govt. action to tackle abuse," Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, June 27, 2023, <https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/latest-news/philippines-recruitment-agencies-and-lenders-collude-to-exploit-migrant-workers-amid-lack-of-govt-action-to-tackle-abuse/>

224 "Philippines: Recruitment agencies and lenders allegedly collude to exploit migrant workers, amid lack of govt. action to tackle abuse,"

225 "Migrant care workers: how to stand up to exploitation," Work Rights Center, May 14, 2024, <https://www.workrightscentre.org/care-workers>

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227 "ITUC reports expose regular abuse of migrant workers," International Trade Union Confederation, December 23, 2023, <https://www.ituc-csi.org/ITUC-reports-expose-regular-abuse-of-migrant-workers>

228 Justin-Casimir Braun, Eva Constantaras, Ella Hollowood, Borja Andriano, Daniele Grasso, John Burn-Murdoch, *Brain Waste Methodology* (Lighthouse Reports, 2024), https://www.lighthousereports.com/methodology/brain_waste

229 Will Shadley, "Shadley: The United States Disregards Foreign Education," *The Daily Utah Chronicle*, March 2, 2022, <https://dailyutahchronicle.com/2022/03/02/shadley-united-states-foreign-education/>

230 Bleona Restelica, "Portugal Accelerates Recognition of Foreign Medical Degrees," *Schengen News*, October 13, 2023, <https://schengen.news/portugal-accelerates-recognition-of-foreign-medical-degrees/>

degrees in the European Union.²³¹ Another reason why brain waste might occur is because of a non-familiarity with the native language. Australia is currently tackling this issue with a reform of the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP).²³² This program is open to adult migrants who are hoping to seek jobs in the Australian workforce. The recent changes to the program include removing limits on how much learning and classes they can take.²³³ This means that workers can better study the English language, and this means they can even return to school quicker to get recertified and licensed in their new home.

Oftentimes, a migrant just simply is not paid as much as a national worker. From the employer not being confident in the migrant's language skills, or because they are simply prejudiced against migrants, the reasons can vary. Migrants around the globe typically earn 13 percent less than national workers, according to an ILO report.²³⁴ In some countries, like Cyprus, Italy, and Austria, the gap is at 42 percent, 30 percent, and 25 percent, respectively.²³⁵ Based on Australian data, experts say a migrant worker who just arrived in Australia has double the chance of being underpaid as a migrant who has been here for 10 years.²³⁶ The report states that this may be because migrants usually work jobs where underpayment is more likely to occur, like hospitality and agriculture.²³⁷ A big part of this is that migrants do not have much bargaining power once they enter a new country. They have fewer social networks, meaning it's more difficult for them to find a job, and they often do not understand the country's laws and regulations that protect them.²³⁸

Sustainable Development Goals

Integrating migrants into the workforce lies heavily with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) eight and ten. In 2015, a plan was adopted by all United Nations Member States, called the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.²³⁹ This plan contained a guide to create peace and prosperity for both humanity and the planet.²⁴⁰ At the center of this guide lies the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals, which are seventeen sectors of society that describe different issues and themes that guide development.²⁴¹ While the central goal is to create a better world to live in, the SDGs remind countries what to focus on.

SDG number eight is “decent work and economic growth”. “Economic growth” means the global economy should strive to maintain a stable upward growth.²⁴² This does come with a warning, however. Though the world's economy should grow, it should not come at the expense of the planet's resources. Promoting resource efficiency is goal 8.4, and it states that economic growth should not come alongside environmental degradation.²⁴³ “Decent work” means people should have access to productive work with a fair income and working conditions.²⁴⁴ People should not have to rely on informal work (work that is not registered with the government and therefore not regulated), and should not have to rely on dangerous activities for a living. This means eradicating child labor, and coercive systems, and protecting labor rights.²⁴⁵ SDG goal eight wants the world to find a future where people can safely and happily earn a living. Helping migrants integrate into the

231 Restelica, “Portugal Accelerates Recognition of Foreign Medical Degrees,”

232 “Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP),” Australian Government, July 10, 2024, <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settling-in-australia/amep/about-the-program/background>

233 “Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP),”

234 “Migrant pay gap widens in many high-income countries,” International Labor Organization, December 14, 2020, <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/migrant-pay-gap-widens-many-high-income-countries>

235 “Migrant pay gap widens in many high-income countries,”

236 Brenden Coates, Trent Wiltshire, Tyler Reysenbach, “Up to 1 in 6 recent migrants get less than the minimum wage. Here's why,” The Conversation, May 23, 2023, <https://theconversation.com/up-to-1-in-6-recent-migrants-get-less-than-the-minimum-wage-heres-why-206067>

237 Coates, Trent Wiltshire, Tyler Reysenbach, “Up to 1 in 6 recent migrants get less than the minimum wage. Here's why,”

238 Coates, Trent Wiltshire, Tyler Reysenbach, “Up to 1 in 6 recent migrants get less than the minimum wage. Here's why,”

239 “The 17 Goals,” United Nations, accessed August 2, 2024, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

240 “The 17 Goals,”

241 “The 17 Goals,”

242 “Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth,” The Global Goals, accessed August 2, 2024, <https://www.globalgoals.org/goals/8-decent-work-and-economic-growth/>

243 “Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth,”

244 “Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all,” Sustainable Development Goals, accessed August 2, 2024, <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/economic-growth>

245 “Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all,”

workforce deals directly with goal eight because IOM would be helping migrants find the decent they are looking for. In the latest estimates in 2019, five percent of the world's economy is composed of migrant workers, meaning 169 million migrant workers are particularly affected by this goal.²⁴⁶ Migrants are especially vulnerable to exploitation because they are often unfamiliar with the country and are easy targets of abuse.

SDG number ten is “reduce inequalities within and among countries”. This goal acknowledges the gap in wealth between developed and developing countries, but also within a country. Income inequalities run rampant in the world, and this goal states that the world should facilitate the growth of developing countries.²⁴⁷ Fiscal policies should also be equal towards all people, and discrimination and social equality is another important aspect of goal ten.²⁴⁸ Eliminating discriminatory laws and practices that benefit one population over another is an important direction the world should head in. Additionally, the SDG puts extra emphasis on migrants. For example, reducing transaction costs for remittances (money sent by a migrant back home) and creating well-managed migration policies.²⁴⁹ Since migrants are generally the minority of a country's population, they might get very little say in how they are treated by both the government and its people. People can create misconceptions about people they do not know. Therefore, education about others and promoting understanding is one of the ways governments can help. They can dispel myths and stereotypes that were long held by their people. Migrant workers frequently experience discriminatory practices, and this can have a great impact on the migrant's life and the community.²⁵⁰ The SDGs' goal is to guide member states of the UN towards a better world. If a policy can advance one of these goals without sacrificing any others, then our world is that much closer to being better.

Bloc Analysis

Points of Division

Most countries in the world have foreign workers within their borders, and therefore have systems of controlling these workers. IOM states that these systems should aim to protect and provide assistance to workers who need help.²⁵¹ Migrant workers are often unfamiliar with the place they move to and want to create a living for themselves while contributing to society. Governments should have policies that guide fair and responsible policies, helping migrants create a better life for themselves. However, there is a spectrum that these policies can fall into. Without the government to oversee the work, migrant workers are especially vulnerable to ill-treatment. Some governmental policies might not have any regulation at all, and while this could lead to migrants' freedom to find work, it more often leads to them being taken advantage of by another party.²⁵² However, a government should still have a fair and just policy that treats all migrants the same. Sometimes, a government's policy towards migrants might indirectly fuel xenophobia and discrimination.²⁵³ Both of these can greatly impact the effectiveness of a migrant's integration into the workforce. There are a lot of factors that determine whether a country has effective regulation or not, and the combination of these factors equals the overall experience of the migrant. The UN and IOM believe that every person has the right to work safely and fairly. Therefore, delegates must consider how important an aspect of integration is to their specific country and decide if the migrant workers in their country are treated well or not. The Migrant Integration Policy Index is a fantastic tool to research a country's migration policy.²⁵⁴ This index can measure how well governments facilitate integration into different sectors of society, including the workplace.²⁵⁵

²⁴⁶ “Labour migration,” Migration Data Portal, June 12, 2024, <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/labour-migration>

²⁴⁷ “Goal 10: Reduced inequalities,” The Global Goals, accessed August 2, 2024, <https://www.globalgoals.org/goals/10-reduced-inequalities/>

²⁴⁸ “Goal 10: Reduced inequalities,”

²⁴⁹ “Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all,”

²⁵⁰ “Migration Is an Important Part of the Sustainable Development Goals,” UN Migration IOM: Finland, accessed August 1, 2024, <https://finland.iom.int/blogs/migration-important-part-sustainable-development-goals>

²⁵¹ “The IOM Handbook on Migrant Protection and Assistance,” IOM UN Migration, accessed August 2, 2024, <https://www.iom.int/iom-handbook-migrant-protection-and-assistance>

²⁵² “The IOM Handbook on Migrant Protection and Assistance,”

²⁵³ “What governments can do to help immigrants belong,” Centre for Public Impact, accessed August 2, 2024, <https://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/insights/governments-can-help-immigrants-belong>

²⁵⁴ “Labour Market Mobility,” Migrant Integration Policy Index 2020, <https://www.mipex.eu/labour-market-mobility>

²⁵⁵ “Labour Market Mobility,”

Countries with Highly Effective Regulation of Migrant Workers

Migrants who move to countries in this category often have the same job search experience as a national.²⁵⁶ There are plenty of jobs available that will hire migrant workers, but the characteristic that sets these countries apart from others is an easy transfer of credentials and job type. This means that the jobs provided are good quality jobs that align with the migrant's past experiences and future goals.²⁵⁷ For example, having accessible jobs at every skill level, from perhaps a retail worker who requires no education to a lawyer who requires many years of schooling, is what sets these countries apart from others. One of the largest barriers to these types of policies is a general suspicion of foreign qualifications. Straightforward transfer of experience while still guaranteeing the effectiveness of experience is the key to this category.²⁵⁸ There is also little to no discrimination in hiring practices, and easy avenues are available to migrants to report these incidents. A few examples of countries that have good regulation of migrant workers are Portugal, Sweden, Germany, USA, and Brazil. In these countries, most newcomers have access to public offices, higher education, and vocational training, all of which are provided by the government or government-supported organizations.²⁵⁹ They also have extremely fair and enforced workers' rights, and migrants in these countries are generally treated the same as nationals.

Countries with Moderately Effective Regulation of Migrant Workers

These countries meet the basic needs of migrant workers but might not be extremely flexible or freeing to migrants. Rather than being treated equally to nationals, they may receive

some second-class treatment as non-citizens. However, the difference here is that it is not intentional, and the policy efforts would see success if they were backed by the proper resources. For example, a country might offer many jobs to migrants, but these jobs might all be low-skill and not provide high-skilled migrants with options to pick from.²⁶⁰ These countries face some structural deficits, economic challenges, and social inequalities. However, what sets these countries apart is that although they have these issues, they are currently working towards remedying them.²⁶¹ These efforts can include attending forums, passing legislation, and research attempts. These countries want their migrant workers to have easy access to the job market and want to provide the necessary public resources for them but might not have the funds or resources to do so.²⁶² But, they are acknowledging the issue and working to solve it. Discrimination also plays a large role. These countries sometimes experience discriminatory attitudes but are trying to reverse this. Or a sudden surge in anti-immigrant attitudes prevents migrants from working in the country.²⁶³ Countries that fall into this category include Argentina, Greece, Australia, Mexico, and the United Kingdom.

Countries with Little to No Effective Regulation of Migrant Workers

Here, effective regulation means if a country has a system but does not have desired results. Meaning, that if migrants are treated poorly because of government policies, then those countries fall into this category. An example might be the kafala system frequently used in Middle Eastern countries like Qatar, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and many more.²⁶⁴ This system gives companies most of the control over migrant workers, allowing them to move migrants around and decide how to

²⁵⁶ "Labour Market Mobility,"

²⁵⁷ Madeleine Sumption, Demetrios G. Papademetriou and Sarah Flamm, *Skilled Immigrants in the Global Economy: Prospects for International Cooperation on Recognition of Foreign Qualification* (Migration Policy Institute, 2013), <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/skilled-immigrants-global-economy-prospects-international-cooperation-recognition-foreign>

²⁵⁸ Sumption, Demetrios G. Papademetriou and Sarah Flamm, *Skilled Immigrants in the Global Economy: Prospects for International Cooperation on Recognition of Foreign Qualification*

²⁵⁹ "Labour Market Mobility,"

²⁶⁰ Sumption, Demetrios G. Papademetriou and Sarah Flamm, *Skilled Immigrants in the Global Economy: Prospects for International Cooperation on Recognition of Foreign Qualification*

²⁶¹ Gabriela Agosto and Fabiana Rubinstein, "Migration and the 2030 Agenda in Argentina," *OpenEdition*, no. 14, April 25, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.4000/poldev.4939>

²⁶² Agosto and Fabiana Rubinstein, "Migration and the 2030 Agenda in Argentina,"

²⁶³ "Black people in the EU face ever more racism," European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, October 25, 2023, <https://fra.europa.eu/en/news/2023/black-people-eu-face-ever-more-racism>

²⁶⁴ Robinson, "What Is the Kafala System?"

provide accommodations.²⁶⁵ However, it often leads to cases where migrants get taken advantage of, harmed, or even trafficked. This group differs from the moderately effective as it also includes nations that completely lack regulation. They also often do not attempt or manage successful implementation of policy changes. These countries often do not keep track of what is happening to their migrant workers and can sometimes even turn a blind eye to suffering or complaints. High-skill jobs might also only be given out to nationals because of prejudices or stereotypes. Access to public social services might also be extremely limited in these countries.²⁶⁶ Work visas in these countries also may take a long time to process or are unnecessarily selective, and workers are forced to wait months, or even years, to be officially allowed to work in a country.²⁶⁷ Examples of countries that might fall into this category are India, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, and Turkey.

Committee Mission

The goal of the International Organization of Migration is to ensure humane and orderly migration for all. A difficulty many migrants face is securing a source of income. During this search for a decent job, migrants must avoid exploitation, find legal representation, and fight prejudice. Even skilled migrants find themselves working low-skilled jobs for unfair pay and can do little to fight against this injustice. In worse cases, migrants are extremely vulnerable to being trafficked or even sold. Migrants often have nobody in the destination country to rely on. They do not have the benefit of having existing friends or connections or familiarity in this new country. They must start their entire lives anew, doing things nationals do while navigating challenges associated with migrants. For example, the visa application alone can take months to years to obtain, and that is only the bare legal minimum to begin life in a new country. Securing a stable income through employment is often met with discrimination, unfamiliarity, and a lack of support for migrants, which results in their

acceptance of unsafe jobs or unfair wages. This often results in the average migrant living in conditions far below those that the average national does. In fact, across the world, migrants on average earn between 12.6 percent and 71 percent less than nationals.²⁶⁸ IOM's mission is to enhance the experience of migration and improve the systems that facilitate it. However, though migrants in the world can face a lot of the same challenges, each country has different attitudes, policies, and treatments toward migrants. Additionally, each migrant has their history and experiences that create more challenges for them. The combination of all these different factors can result in negative migrant experiences. The people they interact with, the forms they sign, and the connections they build, all greatly contribute to or hinder migrants' ability to integrate into the workforce. Therefore, delegates must consider all these attributes to create smooth and effective debate during committee. IOM's goal is to create a world where everybody can migrate comfortably, understanding unique situations, and then creating solutions to encompass those issues.

²⁶⁵ Robinson, "What Is the Kafala System?"

²⁶⁶ Priynasha Singh, Rohini Mitra, "Millions Of Indians Seek Better Lives Abroad, But India Treats Immigrants Poorly, New Study Shows," IndiaSpend, January 7, 2021, <https://www.indiaspend.com/governance/millions-of-indians-seek-better-lives-abroad-but-india-treats-immigrants-poorly-study-711347>

²⁶⁷ Singh, Rohini Mitra, "Millions Of Indians Seek Better Lives Abroad, But India Treats Immigrants Poorly, New Study Shows,"

²⁶⁸ The migrant pay gap: Understanding wage differences between migrants and nationals (Geneva: ILO, 2020), https://migrant-integration.ec.europa.eu/library-document/migrant-pay-gap-understanding-wage-differences-between-migrants-and-nationals_en



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TOPIC B: COMBATING MIGRANT SMUGGLING

Photo Credit: Tony Russell

Introduction

Migrant smuggling is defined as the crime of a banned entry and transit of a person across international borders, typically for financial benefit.¹ This affects millions of people worldwide, particularly in regions with conflict, poverty, and limited opportunities. These actions are driven by various important factors such as political crisis, economic hardship, instability, environmental factors, and aspiration to a better life, among others. It is a critical and growing global issue. Smuggling operations are typically run by big smuggling criminal networks that exploit desperate vulnerable individuals to profit from them and take them on dangerous inhumane journeys.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), migrant smuggling is different from human trafficking. While human trafficking involves threats and unfair treatment within a country, migrant smuggling focuses on the transportation and entry of migrants. Kevin Town, a Public Information Officer at UNODC, states that “migrant smuggling is not only a serious crime but also a grave humanitarian issue.”² The most affected by migrant smuggling comes from regions in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East where there are signs of extreme poverty, lack of economic opportunities, bad social services, prosecution, and conflict. All these aspects push migrants to search for a better life often leading them to smugglers. This is because migration policies are long, and it is very expensive. These routes are dangerous, exposing migrants to physical danger, exploitation, and sometimes death. Women and children are particularly vulnerable to abuse and trafficking during their journey.³ The severity of migrant smuggling has increased over the past decade. Factors like rising global conflicts, stricter immigration policies, and the economic fallout from events like the COVID-19 pandemic contribute to the rise in the problem. For example, the ongoing crisis in Syria, Venezuela, and parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, have resulted in unusual levels of displacement that push people to smugglers to escape. One of the obstacles is the adaptive nature of smuggling networks that evade law enforcement and exploit legal loopholes.

Furthermore, corruption within law enforcement agencies and border control complicates efforts to combat smuggling since economic distress and money might turn migrants toward smugglers.

A larger challenge is the lack of international cooperation and coordination. Countries often have different priorities and policies that interfere with strategies. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) emphasizes the need for an approach that includes stronger international cooperation, improved legal frameworks, and protection of the human rights of all migrants to combat migrant smuggling.⁴ The human cost such as loss of life, human rights violations, and the exploitation of vulnerable populations is affecting thousands of individuals around the world. Migrant smuggling undermines the morals of legal migration systems and contributes to the growth of international organized crime. Since 2014, the IOM reports that tens of thousands of migrants have died, or gone missing, along smuggling routes.⁵

To effectively tackle migrant smuggling, it is important to address the broader issue of migration. By addressing the root causes of migration, such as poverty, conflict, and lack of stability in countries, the factors that drive people to resort to smugglers can be reduced. Ensuring safe, legal, and humane pathways for migration, can reduce the demand for smuggling services. That is why countries need to engage in substantive

1 Marika McAdam, Understanding the Smuggling of Migrants Protocol (IOM), Regional Support Office, January 2021, <https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/iscm/materials/understandingthesmugglingofmigrantsprotocol.pdf>

2 Kevin Town, “Smuggling of Migrants: The Harsh Search for a Better Life.” UNODC sponsorship, accessed on August 12, 2024, <https://www.unodc.org/toc/en/crimes/migrant-smuggling.html>.

3 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Migrant Smuggling in Asia and the Pacific: Current Trends and Challenges Volume II, (Bangkok, July 2018) https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Migrant-Smuggling/2018-2019/SOM_in_Asia_and_the_Pacific_II_July_2018.pdf

4 International Organization for Migration Migration Policy and Research, International Dialogue on Migration (IDM), (1211 Geneva 19 Switzerland 2010) <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/idm16.pdf>

5 “Migrant Deaths and Disappearances.” Migration Data Portal, April 2, 2024. <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/migrant-deaths-and-disappearances>.

discussions and collaborate on effective, humane solutions. By doing this, this can end migrant smuggling and protect the rights and dignity of migrants worldwide.

History and Description of the Issue

Border Security and Surveillance

Border security and surveillance are key factors in helping battle migrant smuggling and balance human rights protection to adapt to migrant smugglers.⁶ In a 2022 IOM report, it was estimated that between two and a half million to four million people are smuggled each year across borders.⁷ It cannot be fully measured and expressed in numbers since most of the illegal practices happen in the shadows.⁸ Key smuggling routes around the world are the Mediterranean Sea where migrants from Africa and the Middle East attempt to reach Europe. In Latin America, it is the Mexico-Guatemala border, the Darien Gap between Colombia and Panama, and the Mexico-

US border. In South Asia, it is the Myanmar and Bangladesh Borders.⁹

In the Mediterranean thousands of migrants embark on dangerous sea journeys, often in overcrowded and unseaworthy vessels. IOM reported that over 1,400 migrants died attempting to cross the Mediterranean in 2021 alone.¹⁰ Smugglers exploit these migrants and charge them high fees to guide them through the sea journey and then often abandon them. The US-Mexico border is another hotspot for migrant smuggling, here smugglers known as “coyotes” charge migrants to guide them through the border in dangerous desert terrains. This journey is of high risk since they are exposed to extreme weather, violence from gangs, and exploitation from the smugglers.¹¹ In Southeast Asia, the border between Thailand and Myanmar has significant smuggling activity. Migrants are fleeing extreme poverty, persecution, and the Rohingya. They fall into the hands of smugglers who promise a safe passage and a better form of life but instead are forced into

6 Rebecca Miller and Sebastian Baumeister, “Managing Migration: Is border control fundamental to anti-trafficking and anti-smuggling interventions?” *Anti Trafficking Review*, <https://www.antitraffickingreview.org/index.php/atrjournal/article/view/29/49>.

7 “World Migration Report 2022.” IOM Publications Platform. <https://publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2022>.

8 Kevin Town. “Smuggling of Migrants: The Harsh Search for a Better Life.” <https://www.unodc.org/toc/en/crimes/migrant-smuggling.html>.

9 Diana Roy, “Crossing the Darién Gap: Migrants Risk Death on the Journey to the U.S.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, June 8, 2022. <https://www.cfr.org/article/crossing-darien-gap-migrants-risk-death-journey-us>.

10 “Deadliest Year on Record for Migrants With Nearly 8,600 Deaths in 2023.” *International Organization for Migration*, March 6, 2024. <https://www.iom.int/news/deadliest-year-record-migrants-nearly-8600-deaths-2023>.

11 “Global Study on Smuggling of Migrants” UNODC, 2018. https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glosom/GLOSOM_2018_web_small.pdf



U.S. Customs and Border Protection process unaccompanied migrant children

Credit: U.S. Customs and Border Protection

exploitation, and sexual and labor abuse.¹² To combat migrant smuggling countries have implemented various measures. Physical barriers such as fences, walls, and checkpoints serve as a line of defense. In the US - Mexico border and the Mexico - Guatemala border there is extensive fencing and numerous checkpoints that are aimed to control the migrant flow and serve as security. These measures, while sometimes effective, force migrants to take more dangerous routes which makes them more vulnerable to smugglers and natural hazards.¹³

Technological surveillance has also become essential for border security. Drones, cameras, sensors, and satellites help monitor remote and inaccessible areas. In India, Garuda Aerospace designed the Trishul Border Patrol Surveillance Drone which helped border patrol and guards with monitoring and surveillance. It has wide-angle visibility that supports ground control teams to make informed and timely decisions. The Trishul drone is assured to play a key role in managing natural disasters, emergencies, and traffic situations through its advanced real-time imaging capabilities.¹⁴ Yet, smugglers are highly adaptable, constantly finding new ways to evade detection and exploit the borders' weaknesses. They use methods such as altering documents, GPS technology for alternative routes, and recruiting migrants in exchange for protection. This adaptability increases the risk migrants face and creates a struggle with authorities to counter new methods, balancing enforcement, and human rights protection.¹⁵

Corruption among border officials is a consistent issue that weakens other effective security measures. In many countries, border guards are underpaid and have bad working conditions which makes them victims of bribery. This corruption weakens

trust in border security measures and ruins international cooperation efforts.¹⁶ Financial and logistical restrictions can also limit border security from improving in these struggling countries. Developing nations struggle to distribute their resources while having a financial gap. In wealthier countries, the high cost of technologies and surveillance is a financial burden that stops them from having continued upgrades and maintenance.¹⁷

Latin America holds a key transit for migrant smuggling, with other countries facing unique challenges and implementing diverse strategies to address the issue.¹⁸ The border between Argentina and Brazil is a crucial point for migrant smuggling, especially in the tri-border area that includes Paraguay. This area is consistent with illicit activities of drug trafficking and smuggling of goods and people. Argentina and Brazil have enhanced their border security cooperation, conducted joint patrols and sharing intelligence to combat smuggling networks. They have also introduced technological advancements such as surveillance drones and automated border control systems. Yet despite these measures, the region's complex geography and the involvement of organized crime groups continue to challenge border security.¹⁹ Between Venezuela and Colombia, thousands of Venezuelans cross the border to Colombia daily to escape the regime and living conditions. They often use informal crossing points which makes them prime targets for smuggling networks. To combat migrant smuggling, Colombia has strengthened its border security presence, deploying military, and police forces to monitor illegal activities. Advanced surveillance equipment, such as biometric systems and real-time data analytics, has been key in tracking

12 "A Perfect Storm for Smuggling": New UNODC Research on Migrant Smuggling in Southeast Asia Reveals Why People Seek Out Smugglers." United Nations : UNODC Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific. May 3th, 2024. <https://www.unodc.org/roseap/en/2024/05/migrant-smuggling-southeast-asia/story.html>.

13 Adam Isacson, Maureen Meyer and Gabriela Morales "Mexico's Other Border: Security, Migration, and the Humanitarian Crisis at the Line With Central America." Washington Office on Latin America, June 2014 <https://www.wola.org/files/mxgt/report/>.

14 Miriam McNabb, "Garuda Aerospace Announces Launch of Trishul: Border Patrol Surveillance Drone." DRONELIFE, March 25, 2024. <https://dronelife.com/2024/03/25/garuda-aerospace-announces-launch-of-trishul-border-patrol-surveillance-drone/>.

15 "ANNUAL THREAT ASSESSMENT OF THE U.S. INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY" Office of the Director of National Intelligence, February 6, 2023. <https://www.dni.gov/files/ODNI/documents/assessments/ATA-2023-Unclassified-Report.pdf>

16 "Corruption as a Facilitator of Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking in Persons in the Bali Process Region with a focus on Southeast Asia" UNODOC, 2021. https://www.unodc.org/roseap/uploads/archive/documents/Publications/2021/Corruption_of_SoM_and_TiP_with_focus_on_Southeast_Asia_Mar2021.pdf

17 Giji Gya, Atnas Resev. "Human Trafficking, Border Security and Related Corruption in the EU" Migration and the Security Sector Paper Series, DCAF Brussels, 2018. <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/172156/1310rusev-border-thb.pdf>.

18 "Latin America and the Caribbean." World Migration Report. <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/what-we-do/world-migration-report-2024-chapter-3/latin-america-and-caribbean>.

19 Isabelle Christine Somma De Castro, "The Securitization of the Tri-Border Area Between Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay." *Contexto Internacional* 42 (3): 539-67. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1590/s0102-8529.2019420300002>.

and controlling movements across the border.²⁰

Countries and international organizations that collaborate can strengthen border security. Through joint patrols, sharing their intelligence, and coordinated operations can be crucial in disrupting smuggling networks. For example, the European Union's integrated border management strategy aims to create more cohesive and effective border security frameworks.²¹ Countries can enhance intelligence sharing to create a more unified and effective response. Increased investment in surveillance technologies and proper training for borders can ensure that security measures are both efficient and respectful of human rights.²² Additionally, addressing the root causes of migration, such as poverty and violence, is essential. By improving socioeconomic conditions in migrant-sending countries, the motives for individuals to rely on smugglers can be reduced. International aid and development programs should focus on creating economic opportunities, improving governance, and addressing conflict in these regions.²³

Combating Document Fraud

At EU borders, document fraud is an important migration smuggling issue with thousands of cases detected annually. This makes it one of the most challenging aspects of combating illegal migration.²⁴ Document fraud is the creation, alteration, or use of fake documents such as passports, visas, and identity cards. This is to facilitate the entrance to different countries illegally. It is directly related to migration smuggling and border security and poses a serious safety risk for countries, populations, and the same migrants.²⁵

Migrant smuggling operations use and tend to rely on document fraud to accomplish their operations. Smugglers use various methods to create or obtain fake documentation, such as counterfeiting, alteration of legitimate documents, and using stolen identities. This fake documentation allows migrants to cross the borders and enter countries illegally.²⁶ Most of the documents used by smugglers are of high quality or real, making it easy to fool the system and bypass border control. The impact of migrant smuggling or fraud documentation not only extends to the fact that it makes it easier to enter a country illegally. It also puts migrants at great risk. It exposes them to exploitation, extortion, abuse, and legal consequences since it is a felony to possess and use fake documentation.²⁷

Document fraud is a very broad topic with many areas and strategies that can be used to achieve it. For example, counterfeiting passports and visas is the illegal creation of travel documents using materials and printing techniques that mimic genuine documents. These documents are often high quality, making it easy to deceive authorities.²⁸ The quality of these documents allows smugglers to charge high fees plotting migrants even more. In 2021, an extensive network of production and distribution of counterfeiting was dismantled in Europe. These documents included Schengen visas and were mostly sold to migrants from Asia and Africa making it easy to enter the European Union.²⁹

Another strategy for document fraud is using stolen documents by alternating them. Passports and visas that have been illegally obtained and modified to conceal the identity of the new

20 "Hard Times in a Safe Haven: Protecting Venezuelan Migrants in Colombia | Crisis Group." Crisis Group. December 12, 2022. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/andes/colombia-venezuela/hard-times-safe-haven-protecting-venezuelan>.

21 "Improving border security and management" Border Security and Management, Office of Counter-Terrorism. <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/cct/border-security-and-management>.

22 U.S. Department of Homeland Security. "Fact Sheet: DHS Continues to Strengthen Border Security, Reduce Irregular Migration, and Mobilize International Partnerships | Homeland Security." News release. June 4, 2024. <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2024/06/04/fact-sheet-dhs-continues-strengthen-border-security-reduce-irregular-migration-and>.

23 "U.S. STRATEGY FOR ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF MIGRATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA" White House. July 2021. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Root-Causes-Strategy.pdf>

24 Frontex, "Document Fraud at the Borders." News release, April 26, 2018 <https://www.frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news/news-release/document-fraud-at-the-borders-HTBxu0>.

25 E-Verify, "Fraudulent Documents Awareness." July 31, 2023. <https://www.e-verify.gov/fraudulent-documents-awareness>.

26 Frontex, "Document Fraud at the Borders." News release, April 26, 2018 <https://www.frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news/news-release/document-fraud-at-the-borders-HTBxu0>.

27 "Corruption and the Smuggling of Migrants" UNODC, 2013. https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/2013/The_Role_Of_Corruption_in_the_Smuggling_of_Migrants_Issue_Paper_UNODC_2013.pdf

28 Helena Esteves, "Introduction to Fraudulent Methods used in Travel, Identity and Visa Documents" ICAO, November 29, 2012 https://www.icao.int/Meetings/mrtd-Zimbabwe2012/Documents/2-11-Esteves_Portugal-forensic.pdf

29 "EU serious and organized crime threat assessment 2021" Europol, 2021. https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/socta2021_1.pdf

bearer. They are obtained through theft, pickpocketing, house burglaries, or loss. Once they are obtained, they are altered to match the identity of a new user. This is done by photo substitution, data manipulation, and page replacement. This strategy is not as efficient as counterfeiting since it involves modifications that can affect the quality of the documents. Not only does this affect migrants but also the individuals from whom the documents were stolen, making it harder and delaying their reaves and identity documents.³⁰ In 2019, an undercover ring in Southeast Asia was discovered during an operation. They uncovered over 1,500 stolen passports that had been altered and were being sold to migrants for use in illegal border crossings. These documents were used to enter Europe and North America.³¹ Europol reported that around 4,000 fraudulent documents were intercepted in Europe only in 2019.³²

Technological advancements have made it easier for criminals to produce high-quality fake documents. Staying ahead of every advancement is a huge difficulty since it evolves quickly. New and more sophisticated printers allow documents to be printed in the most realistic looking way possible, evading detection and disguising as genuine ones. The easy access to the dark web makes it even easier for smugglers to obtain the documents and distribute them globally. This expands the reach they have and therefore expands the problem's magnitude.³³ The use of fake documents can also directly affect national security. Using fake documentation allows anyone to enter the country evading detection. Such means no background checks or security screenings. This undermines counter-terrorism efforts, enables transnational crime, allows criminal networks to move freely across borders, and allows all sorts of criminals and terrorists to gain entry to the country.

This undermines national security efforts and creates a great risk for the safety and well-being of all citizens.³⁴

To address the problem, international cooperation is important, but coordination and privacy matters make it even more complicated. Countries have their security measures and privacy laws which makes it complicated to share them with other countries. Data privacy is their top priority when sharing information across borders but protecting it to avoid misuse slows down and limits collaboration.³⁵

Another important obstacle to take into consideration is the legal and regulatory framework since they vary depending on the jurisdiction. Migrant smuggling involves multiple countries which may have different laws and regulations that may contradict each other or affect one another. This allows smugglers to find loopholes and work through exploiting them. These jurisdiction changes make it difficult to prosecute offenders and deter future fraud.³⁶ The border screening procedures to identify and intercept individuals is a complex process. Border officials need to identify individuals involved in terrorist groups, and illegal migrants to keep their nations safe. With this new technology and fake documentation, it makes it even harder for them to achieve their job. Smugglers know the process that is implemented, and they exploit it to find loopholes, inconsistencies, or ways to evade detection. Though border officials need to achieve their responsibilities along with the state, human rights should always be respected and be at heart with every action that is taken. This must be balanced with keeping a tight ship and having the borders needed in order so that there are no security breaches. For this to happen migrants should receive fair and humane treatment respecting individual dignity and rights.³⁷

30 Helena Esteves, "Introduction to Fraudulent Methods used in Travel, Identity and Visa Documents" ICAO, November 29, 2012 https://www.icao.int/Meetings/mrtd-Zimbabwe2012/Documents/2-11-Esteves_Portugal-forensic.pdf

31 "Migrant Smuggling in Asia and the Pacific: Current Trends and Challenges" UNODC, July, 2018. https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Migrant-Smuggling/2018-2019/SOM_in_Asia_and_the_Pacific_II_July_2018.pdf

32 Consolidated Annual Activity Report 2019, (The Hague, 9 June 2020), https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/consolidated_annual_activity_report_2019.pdf

33 Matt Jones, "Understanding document fraud: types, techniques, and detection." Resistant.Ai. June 27, 2024. <https://resistant.ai/blog/document-fraud>.

34 "Irregular migration, state security and human security" International Organization of Migration, September 2005. <https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/2018-07/TP5.pdf>

35 Robert D. Williams, "To Enhance Data Security, Federal Privacy Legislation Is Just a Start." Brookings, December 1, 2020. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/to-enhance-data-security-federal-privacy-legislation-is-just-a-start/>.

36 "Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime." OHCHR. 15 November 2000 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/protocol-against-smuggling-migrants-land-sea-and-air>.

37 "Human Rights and Screening in Border Security and Management." Un.Org. 2018. <https://www.un.org/counterterrorism/sites/www>.

Several strategies can effectively combat document fraud in migrant smuggling. Strategies like implementing biometrics can verify the authenticity of documents and the identity of the holder. Or blockchain technology, which secures and proves digital identities, reducing the risk of document fraud and improving the verification process. Relying on international organizations like the Interpol and the IOM can also be helpful to foster international cooperation, creating multilateral agreements.³⁸

In the European Union, strict biometric checks and enhanced document security features across its member states have been implemented, making fraud documentation less efficient. Programs like the Visa Information System (VIS) and the Schengen Information System (SIS) have significantly improved the detection of fraudulent documents and reduced illegal entry.

The United States has also implemented new strategies such as investing in advanced verification technologies. As well as establishing the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) to pre-screen travelers before they enter the country. This system helps identify fake documents and register every entry to the country. It keeps records and monitors the situation to reduce the use of fraud documentation and increase border security. It has proven to be highly effective in enhancing U.S. border security. It has successfully prevented thousands of high-risk individuals from entering the country by denying over 26,800 applications due to security concerns, including ties to terrorism and the use of stolen passports.³⁹

Combating document fraud in migrant smuggling is essential for maintaining border security and protecting the rights and safety of migrants. Technological solutions, international cooperation, capacity building, and strengthening legal

frameworks are essential and must be merged and balanced for the efforts to fully work. It is also crucial to ensure that human rights are upheld at borders. This helps not only to have more effective and humane border management but also because it aligns with international legal standards. This balanced approach can help mitigate the adverse effects of stringent security measures and reduce the reliance on corrupt practices and organized crime.⁴⁰ This system, along with advanced biometric and Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies, has significantly improved the ability to detect fraudulent documents and ensure that only legitimate travelers are allowed entry.

Increased Migration Due to Natural Disasters and Climate Change

In recent years, the world has witnessed significant increases in migration due to natural disasters and climate change. From devastating hurricanes, floods, and high temperatures, millions of individuals have been forced to flee their homes to go to other countries in search of a better life with more stability and security.⁴¹ Natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes have immediate and devastating effects on communities leading them to large-scale displacement. These mass displacements create a humanitarian crisis.⁴²

In 2010, Haiti had a catastrophic earthquake that caused more than 1.5 million people to become homeless. Haitians were forced to flee and seek asylum in neighboring countries like the Dominican Republic and the United States.⁴³ This disaster highlighted the vulnerability of populations in natural disasters and the urgent need for international support to address displacement challenges. In 2024, Bangladesh had a devastating flood that left eight million people without homes

un.org/counterterrorism/files/englsih-human-rights-booklet_un_13.pdf.

38 Charo Palomo, "Identification of False Documents Essential in the Fight Against Trafficking." FIIAPP. August 9, 2023. <https://www.fiiapp.org/en/noticias/identification-of-false-documents-essential-in-the-fight-against-trafficking/>.

39 "Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) | Homeland Security." U.S. Department of Homeland Security. September 30, 2020 <https://www.dhs.gov/electronic-system-travel-authorization-esta>.

40 "Toolkit to Combat Smuggling of Migrants" UNODC, July, 2010. https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/SOM_Toolkit_E-book_english_Combined.pdf

41 Abrahm Lustgarten, "The Great Climate Migration Has Begun." The New York Times. December 16, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/23/magazine/climate-migration.html>.

42 "Climate Change and Displacement | UNHCR." UNHCR - The UN Refugee Agency. <https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/build-better-futures/climate-change-and-displacement>.

43 Haiti revised, (IOM, Humanitarian Appeal, February 18, 2010) https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/published_docs/brochures_and_info_sheets/un_haiti_full_appeal.pdf

leading to substantial internal and cross-border migration to India.⁴⁴ This mass displacement damaged infrastructures, and resources, and triggered a humanitarian crisis with an urgent need for food, water, and medical care. The flood also severely impacted the agricultural sector affecting the economy and having long-term consequences such as increased poverty and social instability. This disaster highlights the vulnerability of a country to natural disasters and the great threat of climate change.

Natural disasters do not only displace populations. They also cause significant property and infrastructure destruction, affecting the livelihood of the area. The damage to roads, bridges, schools, and hospitals makes it difficult to rebuild and hampers recovery efforts. The lack of basic services and facilities can prompt prolonged or permanent migration.⁴⁵ Emergency evacuation and the destruction of homes and infrastructure leave communities with no choice but to move, often temporarily at first, but frequently resulting in permanent migration. The aftermath of natural disasters tends to involve significant economic disruption. Loss of jobs, infrastructure, basic living needs, agricultural land, and essential services make it impossible for affected populations to remain in their locations. This economic instability drives people to migrate in search of better opportunities and living conditions.⁴⁶ This displacement creates a vulnerable population susceptible to exploitation by smugglers. In the aftermath of a disaster, the lack of resources and support force individuals to seek alternative means of survival, including risky illegal migration.⁴⁷

Climate change acts as a long-term cause of migration by gradually altering the environment and making certain areas

inhabitable. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports that global mean sea levels have risen by about 15 centimeters during the 20th century.⁴⁸ By 2100, sea levels could rise by 0.6 to 1.1 meters. Rising temperatures and changing weather patterns slowly make living conditions worse. These patterns disrupt traditional livelihoods, particularly in regions dependent on agriculture and fishing.⁴⁹ In 2022, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) reported that there were 31.7 million new internal displacements due to natural disasters.

In the Pacific Islands, the rising levels of the sea threaten to submerge entire nations such as Kiribati and Tuvalu. These communities face the imminent loss of their homes and way of life, forcing them to consider migration as a means of survival.⁵⁰ Research by the University of Hawaii projects that some low-lying Pacific Islands, including Kiribati and Tuvalu, could become uninhabitable as soon as 2050. This is due to a combination of sea-level rise, saltwater intrusion, and extreme weather events.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, climate change has increased during the years. It has exacerbated desertification and water scarcity. This has reduced agricultural productivity and food security. Over 45 percent of Africa's land area is affected by desertification, with the Sahel region being one of the most severely impacted. This region stretches across multiple countries like Mali, Niger and Chad. The combination of climate change effects and conflict in the region has resulted in complex migration patterns with individuals migrating north to Europe.⁵¹

The desperation induced by natural disasters and climate change creates high migration patterns and immediate migration. This

44 UNFCCC, Climate Displacement in Bangladesh | The Need for Urgent Housing, Land and Property (HLP) Rights Solution, (Portsea, Australia, Geneva, Switzerland, May 2012) https://unfccc.int/files/adaptation/groups_committees/loss_and_damage_executive_committee/application/pdf/ds_bangladesh_report.pdf

45 "Economic Recovery After Natural Disasters | United Nations." United Nations. May 2016 <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/economic-recovery-after-natural-disasters>.

46 "Economic Recovery After Natural Disasters | United Nations." United Nations.

47 Fiona David, Katharine Bryant and Jacqueline Joudo Larsen, MIGRANTS AND THEIR VULNERABILITY TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING, MODERN SLAVERY AND FORCED LABOUR, IOM (Geneva 19 Switzerland, 2019) https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/migrants_and_their_vulnerability.pdf

48 IPCC. "Choices Made Now Are Critical for the Future of Our Ocean and Cryosphere — IPCC." Accessed on August 25, 2024, <https://www.ipcc.ch/2019/09/25/srocc-press-release/>.

49 Lawrence Huang, "Climate Migration 101: An Explainer." Migrationpolicy.Org. November 16, 2023. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/climate-migration-101-explainer>.

50 "Climate Change-induced Sea-Level Rise Direct Threat to Millions Around World, Secretary-General Tells Security Council | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases." United Nations, February 14, 2023. <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15199.doc.htm>.

51 "The Sahel: One Region, Many Crises." Africa Renewal, March 3, 2014. <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2013/sahel-one-region-many-crises>.



A destroyed house on the outskirts of Tacloban on Leyte island after Typhoon Haiyan
Credit: Trocaire

leaves affected populations with little time to migrate legally since it is urgent to escape and find safety. Also, destruction might make it impossible to access documentation, and local administrative services to go through the legal migration channels. Because of the threats and need to flee, they rely on illegal migrations and turn to smugglers for help, who usually abuse their desperation and vulnerability. Due to the big demand, smuggling networks thrive. These smugglers offer dangerous and illegal paths exposing migrants to numerous risks including human rights abuses, exploitation, extortion, lack of food and water, exposure to criminal elements, and even death.⁵²

Neighboring countries often find it hard to help nations in need due to their problems and needs regarding their resources and limitations. The sudden influx of individuals seeking refuge can overwhelm them, especially since it is so abrupt and quick. Their health care, social services, and infrastructures cannot take it all at once, creating a crisis in the nation. This strain increases their existing economic and social pressures, increasing tension and competition. The inability to effectively manage and support large-scale migrations caused by natural

disasters causes human suffering in the whole region. Because of this, migrants are forced to seek asylum in nations far from where they are. This makes the journey longer and even more dangerous and increases their chances of falling into the hands of smugglers.⁵³

The Central American migration crisis is heavily influenced by environmental factors such as hurricanes, floods, and droughts. All of this affects the agricultural communities which is a big economic and survival factor in these countries. In 2018, a huge migrant caravan composed of thousands of migrants from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, fled their countries because of environmental degradation. With political instability in these countries and panic among individuals, they are forced to run and migrate. In this caravan, smuggling networks thrived and capitalized off the crisis. They took thousands of migrants through dangerous routes toward the United States and abandoned hundreds through the journey, leaving them to die.⁵⁴

In Southeast Asia, climate-induced displacement has risen throughout the years. This is due to the increased sea levels and

⁵² The White House, Report on the impact of climate change on migration, (The white house, October, 2021.) <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/report-on-the-impact-of-climate-change-on-migration.pdf>

⁵³ “Rich Nations’ Self-interest Means Refugee Crisis Set to Get Worse, Not Better.” Amnesty International. August 8, 2022. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2016/10/refugee-crisis-set-to-get-worse/>.

⁵⁴ “In Central America, Disasters and Climate Change Are Defining | Environmental Migration Portal.” International Organization for Migration, June 15, 2024. <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/blogs/central-america-disasters-and-climate-change-are-defining-migration-trends>.

monsoon changes, which have weakened trafficking routes. For example, the Rohingya Crisis is caused not only by political and ethnic discrimination but also by environmental pressures. This has made the territory increasingly uninhabitable. Smugglers have taken advantage of this crisis and exploited the plight of the Rohingya by using the territory and sea as a trafficking route. This has allowed them to smuggle thousands of migrants and become a hot spot for smuggling. With a dangerous sea, alternated water temperatures, and uncertainty, it becomes one of the most dangerous smuggling journeys that kills thousands and violates human rights.⁵⁵ In 2013, the Philippines government's inadequate response to Typhoon Haiyan, including poor disaster preparedness and slow relief efforts, left many communities devastated and vulnerable. The resulting displacement created internal and external migration, increasing urban poverty and straining social resources in already crowded cities like Manila.⁵⁶ Addressing the root cause of climate change and natural disasters induced migration is essential. International cooperation is required to achieve it, governments and international organizations must work together to tackle climate change and all the impact that it can have. The development of regional disaster response teams, cross-border collaboration, emergency management, and financial support from other countries is crucial in this battle. Investing in climate resilience and disaster preparedness can help the communities adapt and reduce impact therefore reducing migration. Sustainable solutions are also applicable. Solutions like strong infrastructures designed to battle natural disasters can help communities adapt and mitigate the pressure.⁵⁷

The United Nations Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration focuses on the need for and importance of addressing causes of migration such as environmental causes,

degradation, and natural disasters. With comprehensive strategies and cooperation measures that can be implemented, they can reduce the risk of migrants and therefore the vulnerability they have towards smugglers.⁵⁸ Similarly, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction focuses on enhancing resilience and reducing disaster risks. By prioritizing resilience and reduction of casualties the framework can decrease the vulnerability of the communities in natural hazards, the need to migrate, and migration-related problems.⁵⁹

Stigmas in Migration

Migration has been an important part of human history. Through the years people have been traveling and moving in search of a better life for different reasons. Societies and cultures around the globe have been formed and remade due to migration. Yet, with all the change that comes with it, stigmas have been created leading to discrimination, especially in the contemporary time. This has an impact not only on the migrants but on the whole society as well. Stigmatization surrounding migrants carries significant social, economic, and legal implications. They need to be addressed to foster a more inclusive and humane approach to migration, fair and dignified to all. With migrants facing strong stigmas and discrimination, it makes it harder for them to migrate legally, driving them to resort to smuggling as a desperate means of seeking a better life.⁶⁰

Historically, migration has been viewed through a fluctuating lens of acceptance and rejection. In the 20th century, migrants were welcomed since they were essential contributors to industrial development and countries' growth, like in the United States. In Europe, migrants were essential to the growth of infrastructure and the building of railroads and

55 Michael Kugelman "Climate-Induced Displacement: South Asia's Clear and Present Danger." Wilson Center, September 30, 2020 <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/climate-induced-displacement-south-asias-clear-and-present-danger>.

56 Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) 2013 the Philippines, Post-Disaster Needs Assessment, 2013, https://wrd.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-02/Typhoon%20Yolanda%20%28Haiyan%29%202013%20the%20Philippines%2C%20Post-Disaster%20Needs%20Assessment_0.pdf

57 "Strengthening Global Cooperation Vital in Addressing Climate-Induced Migration: IOM." International Organization for Migration, February 26, 2024. <https://www.iom.int/news/strengthening-global-cooperation-vital-addressing-climate-induced-migration-iom>.

58 Global Compact for Migration, Intergovernmentally negotiated and agreed outcome, GLOBAL COMPACT FOR SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR MIGRATION, July 13, 2018. https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/180713_agreed_outcome_global_compact_for_migration.pdf

59 "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 - 2030" UNDRR, <https://www.undrr.org/media/16176/download?startDownload=20240812>

60 "Migration Is Our History, Reality and Future." IOM Blog, July 10, 2024. <https://weblog.iom.int/migration-our-history-reality-and-future>.

factories. Yet, migrants have also been seen as enemies or competitors. In the Great Depression, migrants were seen as competitors that stole jobs and limited the economy.⁶¹ Due to the job scarcity and resentment, the Immigration Act of 1924 created more restrictive policies aiming to curb the influx of migrants.⁶² All of these historical views and events and the back and forth between acceptance and rejection, have laid a firm foundation and created stigmas against migrants. When political and economic crises occur, these stigmas are enhanced. In 2015, Europe faced a migrant crisis, leading to a rise in anti-migration sentiment. Many countries responded by tightening border controls and making asylum policies stricter.

Regarding migration stigmas, the media has also had a very important role in the current years. They have a pivotal role in shaping and sharing with the public the perception of migrants. Sensationalist reporting and negative stereotypes dominate the news, overshadowing the positive aspects and contributions of migrants around the world. A clear example of how negative news overshadows migrants is when in the 2015 European migrant crisis reporters and media focused only on showing incidents regarding crimes involving migrants, creating a fearful public. It was more evident in Germany, where tabloids like Bold and Breitbart reported excessively on alleged crimes committed by migrants, exaggerating and misleading information and headlines.⁶³ The negative portrayal in the media not only increases the accusations that exist against migrants but also fuels xenophobia that supports restrictive immigration policies. Xenophobia is the fear or dislike of people from other countries or cultures, often leading to hostility and discrimination. If positive stories about migrants and how they contribute to the economy,

society, and successful integration into the communities were published, it would foster a more accepting society. However, since they are covered and overshadowed, the media creates a perception of migrants that fosters suspicion and hostility. This makes life even more difficult for migrants, pushing them towards desperate measures like smuggling.⁶⁴

Another aspect that affects how migrants are viewed is how migrants are portrayed and addressed by politicians. Politicians often exploit migration issues to gain political support and acceptance, making migrants look like the enemy, a national security threat, and a main factor in the economy's instability. In 2016 during the Brexit campaign in the United Kingdom, migrants were painted as a burden to the United Kingdom. It was emphasized how they affected the quality of public services and threatened local jobs. This created a high anti-immigration sentiment.⁶⁵ Similarly in the United States, former President Donald Trump frequently attacked migrants directly, using sensitive language describing them as "rapists," "criminals," and blaming them for what was wrong in the country.⁶⁶ He also advocated for a border wall construction. All this created resentment for migrants creating a violent approach and hostility. This political approach not only dehumanizes migrants and increases stigma, but it also serves as a justification for discrimination and harsh immigration policies. These actions also make migrants feel unwanted and unwelcome, pushing them to take illegal measures to enter the country and for basic survival, putting them at great risk. For example, Donald Trump's zero-tolerance policy regarding illegal migration led to the separation of thousands of children from their parents, deporting migrants and forcing parents to seek help from smugglers and gangs to protect their families.⁶⁷

61 "The Labour Market Effects of Immigration - Migration Observatory." Migration Observatory. March 27, 2024. <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/the-labour-market-effects-of-immigration/>.

62 "Milestones in the History of U.S. Foreign Relations - Office of the Historian." <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/immigration-act>.

63 Daniel Trilling, "How The Media Contributed to the Migrant Crisis." The Guardian. October 31, 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/aug/01/media-framed-migrant-crisis-disaster-reporting>.

64 Georgiou, Myria and Zaborowski, Rafal. "Media Coverage of the 'Refugee Crisis': A cross-European Perspective." Council of Europe, and Department of Media and Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science. Report DG1(2017)03. <https://rm.coe.int/1680706b00>.

65 "UK Public Opinion Toward Immigration: Overall Attitudes and Level of Concern - Migration Observatory." Migration Observatory. September 28, 2023. <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/uk-public-opinion-toward-immigration-overall-attitudes-and-level-of-concern/>.

66 Michelle Ye Hee Lee, "Donald Trump's False Comments Connecting Mexican Immigrants and Crime." Washington Post. December 7, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2015/07/08/donald-trumps-false-comments-connecting-mexican-immigrants-and-crime/>

67 Congressional Research Service. R45266. "The Trump Administration's 'Zero Tolerance' Immigration Enforcement Policy." February 2,

Gender also plays a significant role in the stigmatization of migrants. Women face unique and increased challenges. Female migrants are frequently subjected to gender-based violence and exploitation, adding to the already stigmatization and discrimination they face for being migrants. They are exploited both during their journey and in the country where they migrate. The IOM reports that female migrants are even more vulnerable to human trafficking, sexual violence, and abuse.⁶⁸ Another aspect that affects them is society's view of women. Women are often thought of as being weak and dependent, overshadowing their resilience and contributions. These gender-specific stigmas make it even harder for women to get access to legal protection, employment, and social services forcing them to seek smugglers. In Italy and Greece, there is a huge gender base stigma and discrimination. In domestic work, they are often isolated and subjected to long hours with low pay and physical and sexual abuse. They have limited access to legal protection making them even more vulnerable. In the agriculture aspect, they endure harsh working conditions, low wages, and exposure to extreme heat. The lack of enforcement of labor laws and migrant protection makes them fear deportation and they do not report the abuse creating a cycle of vulnerability and marginalization.⁶⁹

All the stigmas create an environment of social exclusion and isolation for migrants. They are seen as outsiders and threats, facing discrimination and hostility from local communities. This social isolation can make it difficult for migrants to have access to housing, education, legal aid, and employment. For example, in Europe, there are a lot of countries where migrants are forced to live separately in their neighborhoods. This limits their access to essential services, excluding them, and fostering marginalization in the younger generations. In France, many migrants live in makeshift suburbs called "banlieues," where

they face social exclusion and have trouble fitting into society. Opportunities for moving up in life are rare.⁷⁰ Due to all the exclusion and extreme immigration policies, migrants may see smuggling as their only viable option to escape and find a better life. They believe that the only way to reach countries is by being smuggled. The Calais Jungle in France is a makeshift camp for migrants trying to reach the United Kingdom. This camp has a lot of segregation and discrimination, treating these migrants as criminals and depriving them of their human rights.⁷¹ This pushes migrant to seek smugglers and find illegal measures to get across the English Channel. Smugglers know about the situation and hunt in the camp trying to convince migrants that they are their only hope. Making them believe that they do what is best for them.

The stigmatization and criminalization of migrants not only affect them but also create a huge stain on society and community relations. The marginalization and fear of migrants can increase social tension and conflict. It can also increase crime rates. People attack migrants and take matters into their own hands thinking they are acting in a good interest. As well as because smugglers have more power and profit putting national security at risk. The reliance on smuggling networks fuels organized crime and corruption undermining the law and the stability of transit, security, and border control in the destination country.⁷² In Mexico, the smuggling of Central American migrants has boosted the power of criminal cartels and increased violence, insecurity, and instability. These cartels exploit stigmas against migrations and marginalization telling migrants that they are their only hope. Then, they charge them high fees for their services and subject them to kidnapping, extortion, and forced labor. This example is a clear example of how it affects the countries, society, and migrants.⁷³

2021. <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/homesec/R45266.pdf>.

68 "What Makes Migrants Vulnerable to Gender-based Violence? | OIM Oficina Regional Para Centroamérica, Norteamérica Y El Caribe." IOM, June 4, 2024. <https://rosanjose.iom.int/en/blogs/what-makes-migrants-vulnerable-gender-based-violence>.

69 Letizia PALUMBO and Alessandra SCIURBA. The Vulnerability to Exploitation of Women Migrant Workers in Agriculture in the EU: The Need for a Human Rights and Gender Based Approach. Study. Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, (Directorate General for Internal Policies of the Union PE 604.966, May 2018) <https://www.statewatch.org/media/documents/news/2018/may/ep-study-migrant-women.pdf>.

70 Paul Soto Hardiman and Frédéric Lapeyre. Youth and Exclusion in Disadvantaged Urban Areas: Policy Approaches in Six European Cities. Trends in Social Cohesion. (Council of Europe Publishing. Vol. No. 9, 2004) <https://rm.coe.int/youth-and-exclusion-in-disadvantaged-urban-areas-policy-approaches-eng/16809391c6>.

71 "France: Degrading Treatment of Migrants Around Calais," Human Rights Watch. October 7, 2021. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/10/07/france-degrading-treatment-migrants-around-calais>.

72 "Migrants | United Nations." United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en/fight-racism/vulnerable-groups/migrants>.

73 "Mexico's Southern Border: Security, Violence and Migration in the Trump Era | Crisis Group." International crisis group, May 9,

The focus on strict measures and policies to regulate and or decrease migration instead of focusing on the root problems of migration causes more stigmas and makes every policy ineffective. This causes division and inefficiency. For instance, the European Union has invested heavily in border security. Yet, there are still hundreds of problems, showing that comprehensive and humane policies are vital.⁷⁴ The construction of the border wall and implementation of fences in the Mexico - United States border is a clear example of the misallocation of resources. This approach conserves and increases a cycle of stigmatization, driving more migrants into smugglers. By failing to provide legal and safe paths and policies for migrants, the government pushes illegal and dangerous migration. This cycle not only endangers migrants but does not address the key factors that drive migration, like poverty and conflict. Though it is important to create policies and laws regarding migration it cannot be the only focus. A balance must be found between policies and root causes.⁷⁵

To combat stigmas, it is required to try to educate the public about the realities of migration. Including the positive impacts, they have on the country, history, success story, and the importance of respecting human rights regardless of who they are. Public awareness campaigns and responsible true media can help shift perceptions, foster empathy, and educate about the topic.⁷⁶ IOM's campaign, "I am a migrant," focused on highlighting the positive contributions made by migrants and showing the challenges that they face due to stereotypes.⁷⁷ Also, documentaries such as Ai Weiwei's "Human Flow" help provide visual narratives that show migrants' journey and humanize migrants to the public.⁷⁸

Providing support systems for migrants is crucial to reduce their reliance on smugglers. Legal assistance, protection, and integration programs will make it easier for migrants to navigate the challenges of migration and have a support system that will help them. In Sweden, language training, civic education, and employment support are included in the refugee programs. This helps migrants have better integration and become self-sufficient. These support systems are essential to help migrants.⁷⁹

Combating stigmas related to migration is crucial. Stigmatization leads to discrimination, marginalization, and increased vulnerabilities for migrants. Countries like Canada, Germany, and Australia have implemented strategies to reduce stigmas. They have used public awareness campaigns, integration courses, and community engagement initiatives to change the perception of migrants. These efforts have fostered inclusion and helped reduce illegal migration by encouraging migrants to pursue legal pathways. Yet, the impact of smuggling and illegal migration is complex. While reducing stigma can decrease reliance on smugglers, it is still important to implement different solutions to address root causes. This should be aimed to fully disrupt smuggling networks and reduce illegal migration.

Economic Motivations

Migration is a phenomenon that has shaped societies and the economies of different countries throughout history. Today migration across borders has been driven by complex factors such as economic motivations. The primary economic motivation that pushes migrants to leave their countries and

2018. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/latin-america-caribbean/mexico/66-mexicos-southern-border-security-violence-and-migration-trump-era>.

74 Joanna Apap and Anja Radjenovic with Alina Dobrova Members' Research Service, The migration issue, (EU policies – Delivering for citizens, PE 635.542 – March 2019) [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/635542/EPRS_BRI\(2019\)635542_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/635542/EPRS_BRI(2019)635542_EN.pdf)

75 Denise-Marie Ordway, "Building Border Walls and Barriers: What the Research Says." The Journalist's Resource. December 5, 2020. <https://journalistsresource.org/politics-and-government/border-walls-barriers-migrant-research/>.

76 "New Global Campaign Celebrates Positive Impact of Migration on Communities Worldwide." International Organization for Migration. March 29, 2021. <https://www.iom.int/news/new-global-campaign-celebrates-positive-impact-migration-communities-worldwide>.

77 International Organization for Migration (IOM), CONFERENCE ON MIGRANTS AND CITIES, INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON MIGRATION, (Palais des Nations, Geneva 26–27, No. 25, October 2015) https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/our_work/ICP/IDM/RB-25-CMC-Report_web-final.pdf

78 Babrams, Susannah. "Ai Weiwei's Heartbreaking, Mesmerizing Documentary Human Flow." Motion Picture Association. January 18, 2018. <https://www.motionpictures.org/2017/10/ai-weiweis-heartbreaking-mesmerizing-documentary-human-flow/>.

79 Mr Domagoj HAJDUKOVIC, Croatia, Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group, Integration of migrants and refugees: benefits for all parties involved, (Doc. 15785 05 June 2023) <https://rm.coe.int/integration-of-migrants-and-refugees-benefits-for-all-parties-involved/1680aa9038>

search for a better life is rooted in poverty and unemployment. In many developing countries, a shortage of jobs leads to economic instability, causing individuals and their families to struggle and feel desperate. This makes it hard for them to access basic needs like food, healthcare, and other services, pushing them to seek a better life by migrating.⁸⁰ For example, in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador there is widespread poverty and limited job opportunities. According to the World Bank, nearly half of the population in these countries live below the poverty line, making them seek better opportunities and migrate to the United States.⁸¹ Political conflicts and instability worsen economic struggles, causing widespread displacement. In Syria, ongoing conflict and crisis have triggered a major economic collapse, resulting in one of the largest refugee crises in modern history. Many Syrians have been forced to flee and migrate to Europe.

The pull factor that compels migrants to a specific country and destination is very important. The promise of higher wages, better healthcare, and improved living conditions draws migrants to seek a better life elsewhere. Especially if they live in developing countries and have the hopes and aspirations to migrate to a developed country. In Mexico and Central America, there are thousands of migrants hoping to get to the United States. In Honduras, the average monthly income is around USD 200. Similar work in the United States can increase their income about ten times more.⁸²

Though it is a better economic opportunity, the journey is hard and risky. Yet, to migrants, they believe it is worth it. An aspect that helps is the fact that in some countries there are established communities of migrants that help each other and offer information and assistance. This makes it even more appealing and feasible. In the United States, cities like Miami, Los Angeles, and Houston have a large Latino population providing migrants with support and resources.⁸³ The money

sent back to their home countries by migrants is also an important aspect to consider. While migrating might be hard once they arrive at their destination, not only will their lives be better and more economically stable, but they will be able to financially help relatives who stayed back home. In 2020, the World Bank reported that remittance to low and middle-income countries will reach approximately USD 540 billion. These funds are crucial for the relatives left behind especially if their countries are in crisis and or economically desperate.⁸⁴

Another important and appealing aspect is that due to a better economic situation, migrants have access to better education and healthcare abroad. In the long term, this offers better economic benefits for them and their future generations. Migrants from Saharan Africa move to Europe not just for better jobs and economic opportunities, but also to invest in their children's education. They seek higher-quality schooling and healthcare, hoping to improve their family's socio-economic status for future generations.⁸⁵

Despite the strong economic motivation to migrate, it is still a hard journey. Legal pathways for migrants are often limited and challenging, making it inaccessible. Strict and complex immigration policies and costly visas create huge potential barriers. For example, in the United States, the migration process is long and complicated, filled with lengthy complex procedures. Migrants must face years-long wait times and high application fees. In Europe, countries have tightened their immigration policies, making them harder and more complex and complicating the right to obtain legal entry. These barriers make legal migration impossible, especially for those who already have an economic disadvantage. For example, a family from Eritrea, one of the poorest countries in the world, may struggle to afford the necessary funds and application fees to move to Europe, especially for the entire family. This often drives them toward illegal routes, falling into the hands of

80 "Exploring Migration Causes: Why People Migrate | Topics | European Parliament." Topics | European Parliament. January 7, 2020. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20200624STO81906/exploring-migration-causes-why-people-migrate>.

81 "Overview." World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/guatemala/overview>.

82 "The Push-pull Factors of Migration." Reference Library | Geography | Tutor2u. March 22, 2021 <https://www.tutor2u.net/geography/reference/the-push-pull-factors-of-migration>.

83 "Unprecedented Migrant Surge in Central America and Mexico; IOM Calls for Regional Action." International Organization for Migration. September 27, 2023. <https://www.iom.int/news/unprecedented-migrant-surge-central-america-and-mexico-iom-calls-regional-action>.

84 "Remittances: Funds for the Folks Back Home." IMF. February 5, 2019. <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/Series/Back-to-Basics/Remittances>.

85 Evie Browne, "Evidence on Education as a Driver for Migration." Helpdesk Report, K4D, January 1, 2017. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/598086a0ed915d022b00003c/K4D_HDR_Migration_and_Education.pdf.

smugglers.⁸⁶ Smuggling services seem more accessible and offer a quick way out, making them an attractive, yet dangerous, option for migrants. If these migrants have an economic urge and need to migrate quickly smuggling may seem to them as the perfect solution. Smugglers promise faster and more direct routes to the destination with little risk. For example, migrants from West Africa use smugglers to help them cross and navigate the Sahara Desert and Mediterranean Sea. They believe that this is the safest and quickest route and even more reliable than waiting to take the legal migration process.⁸⁷

The immediate cost of smuggling is lower compared to the expensive legal process. While it may be a high cost, smugglers often appear flexible, providing different options such as deferred payment plans and debt arrangements making the service even more appealing and seem more affordable in the short term. The problem is that migrants find themselves in debt to smugglers and are forced to work illegal quick jobs to pay their debt, putting them at risk. These perceived benefits make smuggling an attractive viable option knowing that they can find a way to pay and can arrive quickly, this outweighs the greater risks such as abuse, exploitation, and death.⁸⁸

The economic desperation driving migrants to seek smuggling services significantly amplifies migration flows. More individuals and families undertake the dangerous journey to flee their countries with smugglers' help. All of this also increases and strengthens smuggling networks. For example, the Mediterranean migration crisis saw a sharp rise in the number of migrants from Africa and the Middle East who wanted to go to Europe.⁸⁹ The surge in migration driven by economic factors results in migrants being exploited and abused. Smugglers operate outside the law making hard and dangerous conditions. Reports of migrants being abandoned in the Sahara Desert, locked in overcrowded boats, left in

the ocean, and/or held in detention centers under inhumane conditions are common. The economic exploitation of migrants, coupled with the physical dangers of smuggling routes, underscores the high human cost of this practice.⁹⁰

Tackling the economic causes of migration and reducing dependence on smugglers requires coordinated policy efforts. Strengthening economic opportunities in migrants' home countries is key. Developing programs that create jobs and provide financial stability can help reduce the factors driving migration. By investing in infrastructure, improving education, and supporting local industries, countries can promote sustainable economic growth, lessening the need for people to seek a better life abroad.⁹¹

Costa Rica has successfully used its natural resources to build a thriving eco-tourism industry, creating jobs and stimulating local economies. The country's investments in education, healthcare, and infrastructure have resulted in a high quality of life, significantly reducing economic migration. Another example is Morocco, which has made economic diversification efforts, particularly in sectors like renewable energy and manufacturing, which have created new job opportunities, especially in urban areas. Additionally, the government's focus on improving human development through education and social services has led to better living standards and reduced migration pressures.

Enhancing legal migration pathways is also crucial. Creating more accessible and affordable legal migration options, streamlining visa processes, and reducing associated costs can provide viable alternatives to smuggling. For example, expanding temporary work visa programs in countries with labor shortages can offer a legal pathway for migrants. International cooperation and support are also essential in

86 Evie Browne, "Evidence on Education as a Driver for Migration." Helpdesk Report, K4D, January 1, 2017. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/598086a0ed915d022b00003c/K4D_HDR_Migration_and_Education.pdf.

87 UNODC, Global Study on Smuggling of Migrants 2018, (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.18.IV.9, , June 2018). https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glosom/GLOSOM_2018_web_small.pdf

88 Kevin Town "Smuggling of Migrants: The Harsh Search for a Better Life." <https://www.unodc.org/toc/en/crimes/migrant-smuggling.html>.

89 Stefano M. Torelli, "Migration Through the Mediterranean: Mapping the EU Response." Comms, Ecfr, and Ecfr Comms. ECFR. April 8, 2021. https://ecfr.eu/special/mapping_migration/.

90 UNHCR UK, "Thousands of Refugees and Migrants Suffer Extreme Rights Abuses on Journeys to Africa's Mediterranean Coast, New UNHCR/MMC Report Shows." Press release, December 12, 2022. <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/press-releases/thousands-refugees-and-migrants-suffer-extreme-rights-abuses-journeys-africas>.

91 "Global Compact Thematic Paper | Countering Migrant Smuggling." IOM.Global Compact Thematic Paper. 19 September 2016 https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/our_work/ODG/GCM/IOM-Thematic-Paper-Counter-Smuggling.pdf.

addressing the economic conditions in origin countries and promoting safe and legal migration. Collaborative initiatives such as the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM) aim to address these issues by promoting shared responsibilities and comprehensive strategies among countries.⁹² Adopted in 2018, the GCM non-binding United Nations agreement aimed at improving international cooperation on migration and ensuring that it is managed in a safe, humane, and predictable manner.

Victim Protection Assistance

According to the IOM, approximately 60,000 migrant deaths have been recorded worldwide since 2014. Many of these are linked to dangerous smuggling routes where migrants face extreme risks of violence, exploitation, and death. It also stated that 71 percent of smuggled migrants endure extreme violence or exploitation during their journey.⁹³ Migrant smuggling is a pervasive global issue, the illicit activity not only undermines the sovereignty of nations but also places the lives and well-being of migrants in great danger and risk. Protecting victims of migrant smuggling is essential for safeguarding human rights, ensuring justice, and preventing further exploitation. Special attention to these victims helps break the cycle of abuse and provides them with the support they need. Effective victim protection assistance is essential to mitigate the harms faced by smuggled migrants and support their recovery and integration into society.⁹⁴

In 2017, IOM's report "Fatal Journeys Volume 3: Improving Data on Missing Migrants" revealed that approximately 60-80 percent of women and girls crossing Mexico to reach the United States are raped during their journey. The report also highlighted that thousands of migrants face violence, with

an estimated 5,000 migrant deaths occurring annually, many of which are linked to smuggling attempts.⁹⁵ In the report, María, a 19-year-old girl from Honduras, who embarked on a perilous journey to the United States, tries to flee the violence and poverty that plagued her home country. She trusted a smuggler to guide her, but she soon found herself trapped in a nightmare of repeated sexual violence, with the smugglers and others in the group assaulting her at gunpoint. The abuse extended beyond physical harm. María was starved, dehydrated, and forced into terrifying situations where her only option was to comply to survive. Enduring the unimaginable, she was abandoned in the desert and nearly drowned crossing a river. Though she eventually reached the United States, the trauma of her journey left deep psychological scars that she continues to battle to this day.⁹⁶ Another testimony is the one of Aisha, a 24-year-old from Nigeria, who fled her home seeking a better life in Europe but was trapped in a nightmare of violence. Smuggled through the Sahara Desert, she endured repeated rapes by traffickers who controlled her group, threatening them with death if they resisted. Beaten with sticks and guns, often starved and dehydrated. Aisha's suffering continued in a Libyan detention center with inhumane conditions. After surviving a near-fatal Mediterranean crossing, she reached Italy, but the trauma of the abuse and violence she faced remains with her.⁹⁷

These statistics and stories reflect the severe risks that migrants face during their journeys. They highlight the urgent need for increased protection and support for vulnerable populations. Because of this, victim protection assistance programs are essential to address the needs of smuggled migrants. These programs involve identification of the migrants, rescue operations, health services, and integration into society.

92 "Regular Pathways for Admission and Stay for Migrants in Situations of Vulnerability." Global Forum on Migration and Development. July 2021. https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/g/files/tmzbd1416/files/docs/guidance_note_-_regular_pathways_for_admission_and_stay_for_migrants_in_situations_of_vulnerability_final.pdf.

93 "Deadliest Year on Record for Migrants With Nearly 8,600 Deaths in 2023." International Organization for Migration. March 6, 2024. <https://www.iom.int/news/deadliest-year-record-migrants-nearly-8600-deaths-2023>.

94 "Global Compact Thematic Paper | Countering Migrant Smuggling." IOM. Global Compact Thematic Paper. 19 September 2016 https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/our_work/ODG/GCM/IOM-Thematic-Paper-Counter-Smuggling.pdf.

95 International Organization for Migration. Fatal Journeys Volume 3, Part 1: Improving Data on Missing Migrants. (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2017.) <https://publications.iom.int/books/fatal-journeys-volume-3-part-1-improving-data-missing-migrants>

96 International Organization for Migration. Fatal Journeys Volume 3, Part 1: Improving Data on Missing Migrants. (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2017.) <https://publications.iom.int/books/fatal-journeys-volume-3-part-1-improving-data-missing-migrants>

97 Amnesty International, "Libya's Dark Web of Collusion: Abuses Against Europe-Bound Refugees and Migrants," 2017. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde19/7561/2017/en/>

Frontex, the European Border, and Coast Guard Agency, conducts joint operations to rescue migrants at sea and identify victims of smuggling. These operations are critical in preventing further harm to migrants who are often found in perilous conditions, such as overcrowded and unseaworthy boats or remote desert areas. Once migrants are identified, they are brought to safety through coordinated missions and receive further assistance. These rescue missions are hard and complicated since they require extensive planning and collaboration among countries and organizations.⁹⁸ For example, the Italian Coast Guard, in partnership with NGOs like SOS Mediterranee and Sea-Watch, has been involved in numerous operations in the Mediterranean Sea, rescuing thousands of migrants from drowning.

Another important factor is legal aid and advocacy, providing victims with legal representation and access to asylum procedures. Migrants often face complex legal systems and bureaucratic hurdles, making it difficult for them to assert their rights and seek protection. Organizations like Refugee Legal Aid Information provide resources and support migrants to navigate these challenges. These organizations offer services such as legal counseling, assistance with asylum

98 Carling, Jørgen, Ahmet İcduygu, Deniz Karcı Korfalı, and International Organization for Migration, PROMOTING INNOVATIVE IDEAS AND SUPPORTING NEW MODELS OF COOPERATION IN ADDRESSING MIGRANT SMUGGLING. (Geneva 19 Switzerland, 2018.) https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/promoting_innovative_ideas.pdf.

99 “Tipping the Scales: Access to Justice in the Asylum System - Refugee Action.” Refugee Action. January 31, 2023. <https://www.refugee-action.org.uk/tipping-scales-access-justice-asylum-system/>.

applications, and representation in court. This helps migrants with extensive problems that they may not understand and may not be able to communicate due to language barriers. Also, this aims to influence policy and promote the rights of smuggled migrants at the national and international levels. To achieve this in the best way possible, NGOs and human rights organizations work hard to raise awareness about the plight of smuggled migrants and to push for reforms that enhance their protection. A clear example is the Amnesty International campaigns for the protection of migrant rights and lobbies governments to adopt humane migration policies.⁹⁹

After dangerous journeys, it is crucial to have medical and psychological support services. Especially since migrants have experienced traumas and need help to recover from certain experiences. During the journey, migrants endure severe physical and psychological harm such as injuries, malnutrition, dehydration, and mental health issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Organizations like Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) provide medical care to migrants in transit and detention centers. They address their immediate health needs and ensure they receive necessary follow-up care. It is also equally important to receive



The UK assists migrants by supplying tents and blankets
Credit: UK Department for International Development

psychological support since migrants face significant trauma including violence, abuse, exploitation, and even loss of a loved one during the journey. Counseling and mental health services help migrants cope with the experiences they just lived and begin to heal and work on them. For instance, the IOM offers psychosocial support programs that include individual and group counseling, recreational activities, and community-based support networks.¹⁰⁰

Social integration and rehabilitation programs facilitate the reintegration of migrants into society, providing them with the tools and the support they need to rebuild their lives. These programs include vocational training and education which allows migrants to have important and necessary skills to find employment and become self-sufficient. For example, the International Rescue Committee offers programs that help migrants learn new skills, find employment, and integrate into their new communities.¹⁰¹ These programs often include language classes, job training, and certification courses which will be helpful once they enter society. Housing and community support are also crucial, and they go hand in hand with reintegration. Many migrants arrive at their destinations with only the clothes on their backs, lacking housing arrangements and a support network. This leaves them without a place to live and without assistance during a vulnerable time. Some programs provide temporary housing, financial assistance, and community integration activities to help migrants establish a stable foundation. Organizations like Caritas and the Red Cross offer housing assistance and work to connect migrants with local community resources.

Despite all these programs, there are significant gaps that remain in the implementation of laws and policies. Inconsistent enforcement and varying levels of commitment among countries hinder effective victim protection. For example, although the European Union has comprehensive policies, their implementation varies widely across member countries. Additionally, a lack of resources and funding limits

the capacity of assistance programs to reach all of those in need. Many NGOs providing critical support services operate with limited budgets and rely heavily on donations. Improved international cooperation is required to enhance information sharing, coordinate resources and efforts, dismantle smuggling networks, and reach the biggest number of migrants possible to help them out. Efforts such as the Khartoum Process, which promotes cooperation between European and African countries to combat human trafficking and smuggling, need to be expanded and strengthened.¹⁰² To achieve this, it is important to strengthen legal frameworks and ensure their consistent enforcement is their top priority. Countries must ratify and implement international protocols and harmonize their national laws to protect smuggled migrants and make the whole process even more efficient. Increasing funding and resources will enable a more efficient and provision support system. Promoting public awareness and education about the realities of migrant smuggling while also contributing to preventing exploitation and supporting vulnerable populations is key to ensuring better opportunities for them. It is key to understand the challenges faced by smuggled migrants, the existing legal frameworks and policies. There needs to be effective measures and strategies that can be implemented to support and protect individuals and families.

Current Status

Migrant Smuggling and Instability in the Sahel Region

The Sahel region, a vast expanse stretching across Africa from Senegal in the west to Sudan in the east, has been a focal point for various crises. One of the most important crises that they are facing is migrant smuggling. Security threats in the region have worsened human suffering and contributed to instability.¹⁰³ In recent years, the smuggling crisis has been increasing significantly due to a combination of economic and

100 “Mental Health and Psychosocial Support | Emergency Manual.” February 21, 2023 <https://emergencymanual.iom.int/mental-health-and-psychosocial-support>.

101 “How to Help Refugees.” The International Rescue Committee. June 17, 2024. <https://www.rescue.org/article/how-help-refugees>.

102 “EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative (Khartoum Process) | International Organization for Migration.” International Organization for Migration, African Union Commission (AUC) and European Commission (EC) 2014 <https://www.iom.int/eu-horn-of-africa-migration-route-initiative-khartoum-process>.

103 “Sahel Should Be Seen as Region of ‘Opportunity’ Despite ‘Multiple Crises.’” UN News. June 1, 2022. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/05/1118892>.

political instability, as well as environmental factors in the countries across the Sahel region.¹⁰⁴

The Sahel is full of conflicted factors that create an easy path for smugglers to provide their services. Due to unemployment, poverty, and lack of economic opportunities, people are compelled to migrate and seek better opportunities. As a result, they often turn to smugglers who promise a quick and “safe” solution. Since it is geographically near Europe, it makes it a good prospect to cross and end up there. For them, Europe seems like a better life opportunity with better jobs, economy, and life quality. This drives individuals to undertake journeys across the desert.¹⁰⁵ Not only does Europe look appealing but the constant and growing political conflict in the countries in the Sahel region and the south of Africa lead to desperate measures. Countries like Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso face insecurity and desperation. Given the fact that they are in the Sahel region, it makes it easier for them to smuggle people into the region since there is a big instability and gaps in law enforcement and security. Weak borders and ungoverned areas provide a gold mine for smugglers and make it easier and more efficient to provide their services.¹⁰⁶ For example, the existing situation in Sudan has continued to deteriorate because of conflict and economic collapses, driving more people to flee through the Sahel.¹⁰⁷

Another factor that also plays a significant role is environmental problems such as climate change. This crisis has led to devastating and severe problems in the Sahel region, such as droughts and desertification. This has diminished agricultural

productivity and pushed rural populations to migrate. The environmental crisis creates more devastation, making it necessary for individuals to migrate and seek smugglers for help. This provides and strengthens smuggling networks while leaving vacant territories, allowing them to be used as headquarters for their activities.¹⁰⁸

Being smuggled through the Sahel region is a very dangerous journey. In the desert, migrants face extreme weather conditions. During the day, intense heat can cause dehydration, and lack of food and water leads to health problems. At night, the temperatures drop significantly, which can also result in serious health issues due to the sudden change in weather. Smugglers must cram individuals in vehicles to transport everyone and, with the extreme heat, this causes suffocation and death.¹⁰⁹ In July 2023, over 40 migrants were found dead in Niger after they were abandoned by smugglers in the desert. This caused them to dehydrate, leading to their deaths. This incident underscores the extreme risks faced by migrants and the ruthless nature of smuggling operations.¹¹⁰

The act of smuggling is often intertwined with other criminal activities such as drug trafficking and terrorism.¹¹¹ Making migrants even more exposed to abuse, exploitation, and trafficking. This can also get them involved in criminal activities against their will to survive. Women and children in particular are at high risk of sexual violence and other forms of abuse.¹¹² In 2017, Doctors Without Borders reported that one-third of women surveyed who were migrants and involved in smuggling activities from Mexico to the United

104 “Sahel Should Be Seen as Region of ‘Opportunity’”

105 “STRATEGIC FORESIGHT ANALYSIS REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES REPORT ON NORTH AFRICA AND THE SAHEL” https://www.act.nato.int/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/NU_SFA_Report_North_Africa_and_the_Sahel_SACT_approved_final_edited_version.pdf.

106 ECDPM. “The EU in the Sahel: Be Patient, United and Critical.” Commentary, 25 March 2024 <https://ecdpm.org/work/eu-sahel-patient-united-critical>.

107 “The World’s Most Neglected Displacement Crises in 2023 | NRC.” NRC, <https://www.nrc.no/feature/2024/the-worlds-most-neglected-displacement-crises-2023/>.

108 “The World’s Most Neglected Displacement Crises in 2023 | NRC.”

109 Jonathan Gibbons, Smuggling of Migrants in the Sahel Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment — Sahel, (Transnational Organized Crime Threat Assessment, UNODC Research and Trend Analysis Branch, e UNODC Regional Office for West and Central Africa) https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/tocta_sahel/TOCTA_Sahel_som_2023.pdf.

110 Katy Fallon, “Disappeared in the Desert: Bodies Lie in the Sand in Niger While Europe Pours Millions Into Blocking Migration Route.” The Guardian, June 15, 2023. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2023/jun/15/death-in-the-desert-bodies-lie-in-the-sand-in-niger-while-europe-pours-millions-into-blocking-migration-route>.

111 UNODC, Links Between Smuggling of Migrants and Other Forms of Organized Crime Along the Central and Western Mediterranean Routes, https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/2024/New-publications/Links_between_smuggling_of_migrants_and_organized_crime_along_the_Central_and_Western_Mediterranean_routes_Digital.pdf

112 Katharina Kiener-Manu. “Trafficking in Persons & Smuggling of Migrants Module 7 Key Issues: Root Causes.” <https://www.unodc.org/e4j/zh/tip-and-som/module-7/key-issues/root-causes.html>.

States reported that along the journey they experienced sexual violence and abuse.¹¹³ This shows the grave risk of sexual abuse that women and children face when involved in smuggling operations. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) have been known to profit from smuggling operations. These groups use the proceeds to fund their activities and abuse migrants to fulfill their sexual and labor needs. This connection between smuggling and terrorism further destabilizes the region and poses a significant security threat.¹¹⁴

A new and concerning aspect that has been established in the last few years is hybrid smuggling. Hybrid smuggling is when traditional migrant smuggling is combined with other illicit activities such as drug trafficking or weapons smuggling. This merge may occur both willingly and by force. Migrants may accept to smuggle the drugs or weapons in exchange for security or a lower price for the journey. Migrants may be threatened and forced to smuggle other illicit materials.¹¹⁵ In 2011,

113 Doctors Without Borders - USA. "The Facts About the Humanitarian Crisis in Mexico and Central America." News release, <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/facts-about-humanitarian-crisis-mexico-and-central-america>.

114 "Exploiting Disorder: al-Qaeda and the Islamic State | Crisis Group." June 16, 2021. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/exploiting-disorder-al-qaeda-and-islamic-state>.

115 "Migrant Smuggling." OIM Oficina Regional Para Centroamérica, Norteamérica Y El Caribe. <https://rosanjose.iom.int/en/migrant-smuggling>.

116 Olga Sheean, MIGRANTS CAUGHT IN CRISIS The IOM Experience in Libya, (1211 Geneva 19 Switzerland, 2012) file:///Users/andreaip/Downloads/migrationcaughtincrisis_forweb.pdf

117 Flore Berger and Alice Fereday, Human Smuggling and Trafficking in North Africa and the Sahel - 2024 | Global Initiative, (Global Initiative, August 8, 2024.) <https://globalinitiative.net/analysis/human-smuggling-and-trafficking-in-the-sahel-2024/>.

118 "IMMC.COM%282021%29%20final.ENG.xhtml.1_EN_ACT_part1_v8.docx." EUROPEAN COMMISSION, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0591>.

Libya's form of migration became very popular starting from the fall of Muammar Gaddafi, creating political instability and civil conflict. Because of the geographical location, it has been a hot spot for smugglers not only for migrants but for drugs and weapons too, making it easier to merge the activities. This has allowed smuggling networks to grow and become more resilient, making it harder to dismantle and posing big national and regional security threats.¹¹⁶

In recent years, there have been specific situations that have made the Sahel region even more dangerous for migrants. For example, embarkations by foreign migrants in Tunisia increased regardless of the lockdown, and Sudanese refugees continue moving throughout the Sahel.¹¹⁷

The European Union is aware of the high smuggling activities occurring in the Sahel region. There have been international efforts to combat this situation.¹¹⁸ The European Union has funded and supported countries in the region so they can

The Sahel region

Credit: Adam Jones, Ph.D.



strengthen their border, enhance their security, and develop aid and capacity-building programs in the Sahel. The EU Trust Fund for Africa was created in 2015 and aims to support projects focused on dismantling criminal networks involved in migrant smuggling and human trafficking. Yet, despite these efforts, the gravity of the challenges faced in the Sahel region make progress slow and are often hampered by local political and security dynamics.¹¹⁹ Countries in the Sahel have sought to enhance their border security and improve coordination among security forces. Because of this coordination and cooperation, a big initiative was created which was the G5 Sahel joint force. The force comprises troops from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. It aims to improve regional cooperation in tackling smuggling and terrorism. Despite these efforts, the effectiveness is often limited by local political dynamics with their own agendas and resource constraints.¹²⁰

Non-governmental organizations have also played a crucial role in aiding and trying to face this battle. They have mainly focused on providing humanitarian assistance and advocating for their human rights. Organizations like Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) offer medical care, shelter, and legal aid to migrants in distress in this region. Their work mainly focuses on mitigating the human suffering associated with smuggling and raising awareness about the plight of migrants.¹²¹ While these efforts are commendable, they still face multiple challenges and criticism. The approaches are sometimes counterproductive since they don't address the root problem of migration, and they push smugglers to search for different and more dangerous routes to smuggle. This puts migrants in bigger danger and makes it even harder to track and defeat smugglers. Funding is also heavily criticized. In countries facing ongoing economic distress, local authorities may be more vulnerable to corruption. This can worsen the problem,

as corrupt officials may allow smugglers to continue their operations in exchange for bribes.

Critics argue that more emphasis should be placed on creating economic opportunities, addressing migration causes, and improving governance in the countries to end migration and smuggling. To create sustainable change, it is essential to foster regional cooperation, bolster economic development, and strengthen institutional capacities. Only through a direct approach can the international community hope to address the root causes of migrant smuggling in the Sahel and reduce the devastating impact on human lives and regional stability.

Joint Task Force Alpha (JTFA)

In Latin America, inequality is a grave issue due to the many crises that cause instability in the region. There are thousands of people all over Latin America migrating to the US and Canada to have a better life and opportunities. As a result, policies have become very strict, and it is difficult for people to get their visa. This forces people to seek smugglers and find a way to cross Latin America to get to Mexico and from there travel to the United States and Canada.¹²² Because of this the United States, in collaboration with Central American countries and Mexico, has intensified efforts to dismantle smuggling networks.

The Justice Department, in partnership with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), launched the Joint Task Force Alpha (JTFA) in June 2021 to combat human smuggling. This initiative targets smuggling networks operating through Central America and Mexico. These regions serve as critical corridors for migrants attempting to reach the United States.¹²³ With cooperation from Mexico and Central American countries, the task force creates strategic approaches to disrupt smuggling routes. They apprehend key figures from the networks, and secure assets derived from illicit activities.

119 Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, "EU working together with African partners on migration: Launch of Team Europe initiatives" European Commission, 12 December 2022, https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/eu-working-together-african-partners-migration-launch-team-europe-initiatives-2022-12-12_en.

120 "G5 Sahel." <https://www.interpol.int/es/Delitos/Terrorismo/Proyectos-de-lucha-contra-el-terrorismo/G5-Sahel>

121 McAuliffe, M. and L.A. Ocho, World Migration Report 2024. (International Organization for Migration, Geneva 19 Switzerland, 2024) https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/pub2023-047-l-world-migration-report-2024_0.pdf

122 "Latin America and the Caribbean." World Migration Report. <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/what-we-do/world-migration-report-2024-chapter-3/latin-america-and-caribbean>.

123 Office of Public Affairs, Department of Justice "Justice Department Expands Efforts to Dismantle Human Smuggling Operations and Support Immigration Prosecutions." Press Release, May 31, 2024. <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-expands-efforts-dismantle-human-smuggling-operations-and-support>.

The JTFA's efforts have had significant results. Since its creation, the JTFA has made approximately 300 domestic and international arrests of smugglers and high-power people from the networks. These arrests have led to 240 convictions.¹²⁴ They have also disrupted multiple smuggling routes and dismantled high-profile networks, mainly in Mexico. Additionally, substantial asset seizures, including millions of dollars in cash and property have been secured, creating a financial gap in the infrastructure of the networks weakening them.

A major success for the Force was sentencing the leader of a smuggling organization to ten years in prison. This group was responsible for orchestrating the smuggling of over 100 migrants from Honduras to the United States.¹²⁵ Due to privacy matters, the names were kept confidential. This case is a clear example of the JTFA's commitment to holding perpetrators accountable and dismantling the infrastructure that supports human smuggling.¹²⁶ Yet, the problem remains a huge matter, with hundreds of large smuggling networks operating across Latin America. As a result, devastating accidents continue to occur. Especially in Mexican territory where it has become a focus point for the authorities. Due to the huge territory and the merger of smuggling networks with the Mexican drug cartels, it is hard to address all the root problems.¹²⁷

In December 2021, a devastating accident occurred in Chiapas Mexico. A smuggling network cramped over 160 migrants in a trailer truck making its way to the US border. On the highway, there was a large accident that overturned the truck and caused 56 deaths. The accident injured dozens of migrants.¹²⁸ After further investigation, it was revealed that the

routes used were controlled by the Chamula Cartel, a criminal organization exploiting vulnerable individuals by transporting them in perilous conditions.¹²⁹

The JTFA's efforts to hold those responsible for the Chiapas tragedy accountable have encountered significant obstacles. Limited multilateral action and enforcement challenges have impeded progress. This shows the importance of stronger international cooperation and stronger enforcement mechanisms. This incident served as a reminder of the human cost of smuggling, and the need for comprehensive strategies to protect migrants from such dangers. Because of this, the JTFA reprogrammed and strengthened their policies with the Mexican authorities to increase coordination and address these challenges effectively.¹³⁰

There have also been high-profile cases in the United States that have highlighted the ongoing battle with migrant smuggling networks and the important role that the JTFA plays. In this case, it highlights the dangerous and violent nature of smuggling operations. In July 2024, Felipe de Jesus Rosales-Herrera pleaded guilty to leading a smuggling organization responsible for bringing over 100 unauthorized migrants into the U.S. He revealed that his operations involved high-speed chases that endangered both law enforcement and migrants' lives. His tactics were ruthless and reckless, putting human life in danger and not caring if he made a profit. He revealed that as long as he had a big paycheck, he didn't care how the migrants wreaked their destination.¹³¹ Rosales-Herrera's case underscores the extreme risks that migrants face at the hands of ruthless smugglers who prioritize profit over human life.

124 Office of Public Affairs, Department of Justice "Readout of Joint Task Force Alpha's Third Anniversary Meeting." Press Release, June 11, 2024. <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/readout-joint-task-force-alphas-third-anniversary-meeting>.

125 "Honduras-Based Leader of Migrant Smuggling Organization Sentenced." Press Release, May 28, 2024. <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/honduras-based-leader-migrant-smuggling-organization-sentenced>.

126 Office of Public Affairs, Department of Justice "Honduras-Based Leader of Migrant Smuggling Organization Sentenced." Office of Public Affairs, Department of Justice, May 28, 2024. <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/honduras-based-leader-migrant-smuggling-organization-sentenced>.

127 Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, *Organized Crime and Illegally Mined Gold in Latin America*, (Avenue de la Paix CH-1211 Geneva 1 Switzerland, April 2016) <https://globalinitiative.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Organized-Crime-and-Illegally-Mined-Gold-in-Latin-America.pdf>

128 Oscar Lopez. "Mexico Migrant Truck Crash Leaves at Least 54 Dead." The New York Times, December 10, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/09/world/americas/mexico-migrants-killed-accident.html>.

129 Angeles Mariscal, María Teresa Ronderos, Jody García and Brenda Medina "Migration in Chiapas: Crime, Impunity and Death - Contra Corriente." *Contra Corriente Honduras*. - Migration in Chiapas: Crime, Impunity and Death Centro Latinoamericano De Investigación Periodística. May 2, 2024. <https://contracorriente.red/en/2024/04/29/migration-in-chiapas-crime-impunity-and-death/>.

130 Secretaría De Relaciones Exteriores "Creation of an Immediate Action Group Against the International Smuggling Network Responsible for the Tragedy in Chiapas." Press Release 576, December 10, 2021 <https://www.gob.mx/sre/prensa/creation-of-an-immediate-action-group-against-the-international-smuggling-network-responsible-for-the-tragedy-in-chiapas?idiom=en>.

131 Offices of the United States Attorney, "Leader of Major Migrant Smuggling Ring Pleads Guilty." Press Release, July 11, 2024 <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdca/pr/leader-major-migrant-smuggling-ring-pleads-guilty>.

These smugglers, driven by quick profits, exhibit a disregard for human life, engaging in reckless and dangerous tactics that put both migrants and law enforcement at severe risk. This callous indifference is not unique to Rosales-Herrera's operations, as seen in the case of Saul Torres-Martinez, also known as "Cobra." A man who was sentenced to over nine years in prison. Torres-Martinez led a smuggling network responsible for moving numerous undocumented migrants from the Mexican border to Houston.¹³² His conviction demonstrated the importance and successful efforts of the JTFA and law enforcement in dismantling smuggling networks and bringing perpetrators to justice.

While these examples and more cases show that substantial progress has been made, there are still huge important challenges in the fight against migrant smuggling. A huge challenge is that smuggling networks are highly adaptable, constantly changing their methods to evade detection and capture making it hard to track and take them down. Despite there being international cooperation, there are still communication and agenda problems that interfere with the collaboration, especially with the security and law enforcement agencies.¹³³ Currently, the JTFA continues to adapt its strategies to address the evolving tactics of smuggling networks. Smuggling networks are increasingly using advanced technologies to boost their efficiency, including data analytics to identify patterns and trends within smuggling operations. This helps them refine their strategies and stay ahead of enforcement efforts. This includes tracking financial transactions, communication logs, drones, satellite imaging, and thermal cameras to monitor smuggling corridors and border areas.¹³⁴ Yet, not only are they using new technologies to track and capture, but they are also expanding to help victim migrants and give assistance once they dismantle the networks. The JTFA is collaborating with NGOs to address the needs of migrants, especially immediately after the networks are dismantled. Immediate medical attention is provided addressing injuries, dehydration,

malnutrition, and other health issues. Also, JTFA works with legal aid organizations to provide migrants with information, legal representation, and assistance in navigating the legal system.

The JTFA exemplifies an evolving effort to combat the issue of migrant smuggling across Latin America. With collaboration from Mexico and Central America, the JTFA has achieved significant success in dismantling smuggling networks. They have apprehended key figures and seized assets thereby helping migrants ensure security and tweaking the illicit networks. However, the tragedy of migrant smuggling, exemplified by the devastating Chiapas accident and high-profile cases like those of Rosales-Herrera and Torres-Martinez, underscores the urgency and size of the challenge. While technological advancements and expanded victim assistance programs represent crucial steps forward, the persistence of these networks reveals the need for even greater international cooperation and resource allocation.

Sustainable Development Goals

Migrant smuggling is a pervasive issue with significant implications for global development. It not only poses risks to the safety and well-being of migrants but also impacts the social, economic, and political fabric of societies. Every world problem has a direct relation with different Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Migrant smuggling is no different. There is a direct relationship between migrant smuggling and SDG 8, which covers Decent Work and Economic Growth. The topic also relates to SDG 10, which focuses on Reduced Inequality. As well as SDG 16, whose main subject is Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. By examining these connections, it is easier to understand the multifaceted challenges of the problem and identify strategies to combat its roots.¹³⁵

SDG 8 promotes sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and

¹³² George W. Grayson, *La Familia Drug Cartel: Implications for U.S.-Mexican Security*, (U.S. Army War College, 122 Forbes Ave, Carlisle, December 2010) <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/125622/pub1033.pdf>

¹³³ UNODC, *Global Study on Smuggling of Migrants 2018* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.18.IV.9, June 2018). https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glosom/GLOSOM_2018_web_small.pdf

¹³⁴ Department of Homeland Security, *U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Budget Overview*, (Department of Homeland Security, Fiscal Year 2025) https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2024-03/2024_0308_us_immigration_and_customs_enforcement.pdf

¹³⁵ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Toolkit to combat the smuggling of migrants*, (Publishing and Library Section, United Nations Office at Vienna, July 2010) https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/SOM_Toolkit_E-book_english_Combined.pdf

decent work for all. Migrant smuggling negatively impacts these objectives in several ways. Starting with coerced labor and exploitation. Migrants that are smuggled are exposed to extreme circumstances and dangerous conditions. Smugglers exploit migrants and force them to work in inhumane conditions, with no pay or low wages, and face abuse. They are also exposed to informal or illegal work sectors with little to no labor rights. This problem also affects economic growth and contribution because migrants are sometimes unable to participate in formal and legal work activities. This is due to their legal status and the nature of their employment, causing an impact on their contributions to the economy and overall economic growth.¹³⁶

Migrants that are smuggled face a lot of inequality which goes directly against SDG 10. They are exposed to economic, social, and policy inequality. In the economic aspect, it is related because due to the lack of opportunities, jobs, and extreme poverty, they are forced to migrate and leave their country. This reflects directly on the global economic crisis and how there is a huge inequality between social classes affecting living conditions and quality.¹³⁷ Regarding social inequality, migrants tend to face a lot of discrimination and are victims of stigmas and social barriers. This discrimination blocks their access to basic services such as health and education, making their lives even harder. These social marginalizations hurt their ability to adapt to the new country and integrate and contribute. This makes their lives harder and makes them face different and unfair challenges in the host community despite escaping the horrible situations in their native countries. Policy inequality is directly linked to migrant smuggling.¹³⁸ There is a huge inequality in policies since the visas and citizenships that are given are directly related to your host country. It is easier to receive a visa if you are from a developed country than it is if you are from an underdeveloped country. This is not only policy inequality, but also social inequality because of the discrimination.

SDG 16 aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels. Migrant smuggling operates outside legal frameworks. The operations involve corruption, bribery, and collusion with law enforcement agencies. This goes against the rule of law and weakens public trust in institutions meant to protect citizens, directly attacking justice for all. Migrants are subjected to exploitation, abuse, and violence, and with a lack of protection and access to justice, these individuals are failed by the system and institutions. They do not have their human rights protected.

Migrant smuggling also affects societies and their security. It creates instability and allows smuggling networks to increase crime rates, and traffic drugs and weapons. Smuggling exacerbates violence and insecurity, disrupting peace for all.¹³⁹

For countries to effectively address and solve the migrant crisis it is important that they integrate SDGs into their national agendas and policies. This will provide a comprehensive framework that focuses on economic development, social inclusion, justice, and sustainability. These are key factors in creating stable humane conditions for migrants and reducing root problems. By aligning their policies with SDGs, countries can ensure equitable access to resources. This, in turn, can help with the protection of human rights which then contributes to helping migrants face challenges. Failure to do so risks perpetuating the cycles of poverty, conflict, and instability that drive migration.

Bloc Analysis

Points of Division

The Net Migration Rate (NMR) is a crucial demographic indicator that measures the balance between the number of people entering a country (immigrants) and those leaving it

¹³⁶ “Goal 8 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs.” Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Sustainable Development <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal8>.

¹³⁷ “SDG10: Reduce Inequalities.” United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime. https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/about-unodc/sustainable-development-goals/sdg10_-reduce-inequalities.html.

¹³⁸ “UNODC Research on Smuggling of Migrants.” United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime. <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/es/data-and-analysis/som-observatory.html>.

¹³⁹ Martin. “Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions - United Nations Sustainable Development.” United Nations Sustainable Development. October 20, 2023. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/peace-justice/>.

(emigrants) per 1,000 inhabitants over a year.¹⁴⁰ This indicator helps quantify migration and its pattern, it also allows the country to understand the impact it has on population, economy, and composition.

The NMR emerged from the need to quantify and understand the movement of people across the globe, through the borders. As societies moved from pre-industrial to industrial economies, especially after World War II, understanding population changes became key for economic planning, labor market management, and rebuilding efforts. With fast urbanization and globalization in the 20th century, tracking migration patterns also became crucial.¹⁴¹ With these events, the NMR was developed over time by demographers, statisticians, and population researchers to standardize the measurement of migration trends across countries. Key contributors include government agencies and international organizations like the United Nations, which helped refine and promote the use of NMR as a crucial demographic indicator.

Understanding the NMR is crucial for those who make policies, study the economy, and analyze population trends as it directly influences decision-making for the country. It is directly related and affects population size, economic health, and social dynamics. It also has a link with the labor market, economic growth, and demographic trends. A positive NMR can lead to a larger workforce and labor growth, while a negative one can pose economic challenges and harm social welfare. With understanding this, better decisions can be made, specifically in jobs.

Separating NMR into high, medium, and low categories is important because each level of migration has different impacts and requires different responses. This also allows for a more thorough analysis of the NMR, allowing better decisions and addressing potential challenges in each country.

Countries with a Net Migration Rate (NMR) greater than 5

Countries with an NMR greater than 5 indicate that there

is an extremely high number of people moving into the country. This influx leads to rapid population growth and increased diversity, which can enhance cultural richness and foster innovation. For example, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, have a high NMR because of the large number of foreign workers entering the countries because of the great economic opportunities. This leads to the country having a diverse community full of migrants and an economy that grows due to their hard work. Yet, there is also a negative impact in the countries with high migration rates since it can strain resources, such as housing, jobs, healthcare, and public services. The sudden increase in population can lead to housing shortages, increased competition for jobs, and overburdened healthcare and education systems.

In Lebanon, the high NMR is largely due to the influx of Syrian refugees. The country faces significant challenges, compounded by the ongoing crises and the new wave of people entering Lebanon. Specifically in providing adequate services such as healthcare education and employment for both residents and migrants.

To manage these challenges, countries with high NMRs need to implement robust immigration policies and invest in infrastructure and public services to accommodate the growing population. Creating affordable housing, and expanding healthcare and education are also essential to make living conditions better and humane for everyone, including locals and migrants.

Countries with a Net Migration Rate (NMR) between 1 and 5

Countries with an NMR between 1 and 5 experience moderate immigration levels that they can typically manage effectively. These countries benefit from the steady influx of migrants, which can fill labor market gaps and contribute to economic growth. Canada and Australia have a medium migration rate. They have implemented policies that attract people to the country.^{142,143} They have aligned policies with economic

¹⁴⁰ "Net Migration Rate - the World Factbook." CIA gov, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/field/net-migration-rate/>.

¹⁴¹ "Population Division ." United Nations Population Division, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/>.

¹⁴² "OECD: Findings on the Effects of Migration on Australia's Economy | Centre for Population." Centre for Population <https://population.gov.au/publications/research/oecd-findings-effects-migration-australias-economy>.

¹⁴³ "A Growing Problem: How to Align Canada's Immigration With the Future Economy - RBC Thought Leadership." RBC Thought

demands, like filling gaps in healthcare and technology, and ensuring social cohesion. Geographic factors and strong social integration programs help maintain a balanced flow of migrants. This allows countries to benefit economically from immigration while avoiding issues like overpopulation and social strain. With these policies, people migrate to the country, start working, and contribute to the country's economy and other important sectors, increasing diversity in the country.

In the United Kingdom, they have a medium migration rate reflecting its balanced approach to immigration. International students, skilled professionals, and workers are attracted to the country and contribute significantly to sectors like healthcare, technology, and education. The policies that have been implemented to achieve this are the Health and Care Visa for healthcare workers and the Global Talent Visa for leaders in fields like technology and research. Additionally, the Graduate Route allows international students to remain and work in the UK after completing their studies, further contributing to the economy.¹⁴⁴ This steady influx of migrants helps address shortages and supports economic growth.

This moderate level of migration helps address demographic challenges such as aging populations and skill shortages. By introducing a younger workforce, migrants help balance the age structure, reducing the economic burden on social welfare systems. Migrants bring diverse skills fostering fresh perspectives that enhance innovation and productivity. Additionally, migrants contribute to entrepreneurial activities, driving economic growth and creating new job opportunities in host countries.

Although there are a lot of benefits, it is important that countries with medium NMRs still ensure that their immigration policies are adaptable and change depending on the changing economic and social conditions. They need to maintain a balance between welcoming newcomers and integrating them into the society so they don't overwhelm the

existing resources and infrastructure.

Countries with a Net Migration Rates (NMR) between -1 and 1

These rates indicate that the number of people entering the country is almost equal to the number of people moving out of the country. This balance results in steady population levels and minimal strain on resources, allowing for stable economic and community growth. For example, Italy has a low NMR, which aligns with its current demographic trends and economic conditions, allowing it to have a perfect migration balance based on the country's needs.¹⁴⁵

Low migration rates can be advantageous for countries looking to have stability and gradual growth. They do not face sudden pressures on housing, jobs, or public services with a big wave of migration. They get the amount needed to grow and develop. This helps maintain social cohesion and resource sustainability. Still, with low levels of migration acceptance and integration risk the countries are missing out on significant advantages. A diverse workforce can drive innovation, as individuals from different backgrounds bring unique perspectives and problem-solving approaches. Cultural enrichment through migration enhances social cohesion and broadens cultural understanding. It can also lead to a more inclusive and dynamic society. By failing to embrace these benefits, countries experience slower economic growth and reduced global competitiveness. As well as missed opportunities for cultural exchange that can foster better international relations.¹⁴⁶ To maximize the benefits of migrants in the countries they should focus on creating policies that encourage balanced demographic growth and create selective migration policies to address specific labor market needs without disrupting social stability.

Committee Mission

IOM plays a key role in addressing migration smuggling. They

Leadership. April 15, 2024. <https://thoughtleadership.rbc.com/a-growing-problem-how-to-align-canadas-immigration-with-the-future-economy/>.

¹⁴⁴ Migration Advisory Committee, Impact of international students in the UK, (Marsham Street London, September 2018) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b928cc1e5274a4242d1adf3/Impact_intl_students_report_published_v1.1.pdf

¹⁴⁵ "Italy: Selected Issues." International Monetary Fund. European Dept. IMF eLibrary, July 2023. <https://doi.org/10.5089/9798400249280.002.A001>.

¹⁴⁶ "Global Trade Liberalization and the Developing Countries -- an IMF Issues Brief." International Monetary Fund November 8, 2001. <https://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/ib/2001/110801.htm>.

focus on promoting humane and orderly migration to benefit everyone. This ensures the safety and dignity of migrants worldwide. Migrant smuggling directly hurts the IOM's mission by exposing migrants to great dangers exploitation and human rights abuses.¹⁴⁷

Addressing this issue is a big challenge for global migration management. It requires efforts to increase international cooperation and strengthen legislative frameworks. Furthermore, it increases the capacity of countries to prevent and fight migrant smuggling. By facilitating dialogue and cooperation among member states, IOM aims to create a united approach to dismantle smuggling networks and protect the rights of migrants.¹⁴⁸

Migrant smuggling is a cruel industry that exploits vulnerable people. This forces them into dangerous journeys and exposes them to exploitation and abuse. It weakens the rule of law and crushes the dreams of those seeking a better life. Managing migration flows, providing direct assistance, and supporting members of states are the necessary tools needed in this fight. However, large obstacles remain- there is still a huge gray area. Therefore, it is important to address the root causes of migration.

The IOM faces global challenges. This includes the limited power to enforce laws, and the secrecy of smuggling operations. This makes it difficult to tackle, without strong information sharing and cooperation across borders. International cooperation on migration has failed thus far. Due to conflicting national interests, economic disparities, national security, and a lack of accountability. This leads to fragmented and inefficient policies. With growing humanitarian crises, and a moral duty to protect vulnerable populations the IOM and the world need to act immediately. Therefore, robust intelligence and cross-border collaboration are needed. Once coordinated and concrete actions are implemented, this ensures the prevention

of future crises and that the dignity and rights of migrants are always respected.¹⁴⁹

IOM looks to reduce the demand for smuggling services and encourages informed decision-making among migrants. Advocating for the creation of comprehensive policies, strengthening partnerships, and increasing support services for smuggled migrants is crucial in this fight.¹⁵⁰

147 International Organization for Migration. "Home." July 30, 2024. <https://www.iom.int/>.

148 International Organization for Migration (IOM), GLOBAL APPEAL 2024, (Geneva 19 Switzerland, 2024) https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/appeals/iom-global-appeal-2024_final.pdf

149 IOM African Capacity Building Centre, TRAINING MANUAL ON COUNTER MIGRATION SMUGGLING (BENIN, GHANA AND TOGO), (Old Moshi Road, United Republic of Tanzania, 2018) https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/training_manual_on_migrant_smuggling.pdf

150 International Organization for Migration (IOM), The UN migration Agency, IOM's COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO COUNTER MIGRANT SMUGGLING, (DEPARTMENT OF MIGRATION MANAGEMENT, 1211 GENEVA 19, SWITZERLAND) https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/our_work/DMM/IBM/IOM-Approach-to-counter-migrant-smuggling-Brochure.pdf

Research and Preparation Questions

Your dais has prepared the following research and preparation questions as a means of providing guidance for your research process. These questions should be carefully considered, as they embody some of the main critical thought and learning objectives surrounding your topic.

Topic A

1. What are some of the key causes of migration? Are these causes avoidable? Should certain reasons for migration be prioritized over others?
2. How can IOM incentivize companies and organizations to prioritize the integration of migrants into their workforce?
3. What has your country done to better efforts of integration of migrants in the workplace? How does it compare to other countries around the world? Is your country in need of severe improvement, or is it considered a role model in the field?
4. What are some of the consequences of not integrating migrants into the workforce? Has your country suffered from these consequences? How did these problems originate?
5. What programs or resources can IOM provide to make the integration process for migrants more seamless? Has your country implemented some of these policies in the past?
6. What can be done about the migrant housing crisis that the world possibly faces? Does your country suffer from this housing crisis? If so, what policies do you currently have in place to combat it? And if not, how can other countries thrive in the same way?

Topic B

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current international legal framework for combating migrant smuggling?
2. What are the most effective strategies for reintegrating and rehabilitating victims of migrant smuggling, considering the diverse needs of different groups such as children, women, and those with disabilities? How can countries ensure that all survivors have access to necessary support services, tailored to their specific circumstances?
3. What are the long-term economic, social, and psychological consequences of migrant smuggling for individuals, communities, and countries, and how can these impacts be mitigated?
4. How do climate change and environmental degradation contribute to forced migration and, in turn, the demand for migrant smuggling? What are the potential long-term implications of these factors?
5. How do gender and social inequalities intersect with migrant smuggling? Are there specific vulnerabilities faced by women, children, and marginalized groups?
6. How do economic disparities between countries contribute to the demand for migrant smuggling services, and how do smugglers exploit these vulnerabilities to profit from human migration? What measures can be implemented to address both the underlying economic inequalities and the exploitation tactics of smugglers?

Important Documents

Topic A

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- “IOM and Migrant Integration.” International Organization of Migration. Accessed June 29, 2024. https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/migrated_files/What-We-Do/docs/IOM-DMM-Factsheet-LHD-Migrant-Integration.pdf.
- Mid-Year Trends 2023 (UNHCR, 2023). <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/Mid-year-trends-2023.pdf>.
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Topic B

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