

## GLOBAL PEOPLE MOVEMENTS



JUNE 2018

# Global People Movements

A report published by the Legatum Institute  
Foundation in partnership with Oxford Analytica

by Philippa Stroud, Rhiannon Jones and Stephen Brien

# CREATING THE PATHWAYS FROM POVERTY TO PROSPERITY

## ABOUT THE LEGATUM INSTITUTE

The word 'legatum' means 'legacy'. At the Legatum Institute, we are focused on tackling the major challenges of our generation – and seizing the major opportunities – to ensure the legacy we pass on to the next generation is one of increasing prosperity and human flourishing. We are an international think tank based in London and a registered UK charity. Our work focuses on understanding, measuring, and explaining the journey from poverty to prosperity for individuals, communities, and nations. Our annual Legatum Prosperity Index uses this broad definition of prosperity to measure and track the performance of 149 countries of the world across multiple categories including health, education, the economy, social capital, and more.

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15 May 2017, London

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## FOREWORD



It is nearly three years since the death of Alan Kurdi, the Syrian toddler whose death focused the world's attention on the refugee crisis. The images of his tiny body, washed up on a Turkish beach, rightly shocked and appalled us all. Yet in the period since his untimely death, there is little sign to suggest we are any closer to addressing either the causes or the consequences of the crisis, with the conflict in Syria continuing unabated.

The impact of those images were every bit as powerful as Michael Buerk's unforgettable coverage of Ethiopia's famine in the late 1980s, which galvanised a generation, mobilising everyone from our politicians to our musicians to act. It is time for us to accept that the refugee crisis requires every bit as urgent a response: it is the humanitarian issue of our time.

We are now witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record, as individuals seek to create their own pathways from poverty to prosperity. For far too many, these are journeys not of opportunity but of necessity. Chronic instability and economic stagnation in many countries have seen millions risk their liberty – and their lives – to seek a brighter future elsewhere for themselves and their families.

People undertaking these so-called 'irregular' journeys are remarkably vulnerable. They are likely to face exploitation at the hands of human traffickers, who generate more than \$150 billion in illegal profits each year. Worse still, they may find themselves trapped in a world of modern slavery and sexual exploitation from which they are unable to escape. They are unprotected, accumulate debt, and have no legal recourse.


This phenomenon requires an urgent response. We live in a world where nearly twenty people are forcibly displaced every minute as a result of conflict or persecution, according to the UNHCR. However, we must first improve our understanding of the issue, looking beyond the rhetoric to uncover the facts. Although migration has been a feature of political debate in West European states, their share of immigrants as a percent of their native-born population is considerably smaller than elsewhere, whilst most migrant journeys take place within the region of origin. The lowest income countries host about 30% of the global total of refugees. Of the 66 million people globally who have been forcibly displaced, approximately 40.3 million are displaced within their own countries.

To date, we lack the data to form an accurate appraisal of the motivations behind these extraordinary journeys, and the risks faced by those undertaking them. One figure illustrates this perhaps better than any other: the fact that the number of identified victims of human trafficking could represent less than one per cent of the true number. Furthermore, existing distinctions between 'refugee', 'migrant' and 'trafficking victim' do not appear to reflect the complexity of these irregular journeys, as people take on differing statuses at different moments of what is invariably a long and traumatic road.

Consequently, we are struggling to see the issues with clarity, and to respond with compassion. By its very nature, this is an international issue, with no single, simple solution. It is therefore imperative that we work together, to identify the key trends, and to debate and shape an effective policy response.

It is essential that we remember a simple truth: that behind every statistic is an individual. For each and every one of them, these journeys are motivated by a simple desire we can all identify with: to build a life where we can fulfil our potential, free from the threat of conflict, oppression, poverty and hunger. We must remember that all people, regardless of whether they feature in migration, refugee or trafficking statistic have the potential to be contributors to society.

Each life kept on hold in a refugee camp, devalued through slavery or forced prostitution, or lost in transit is a human tragedy. We owe it to those undertaking these journeys – and to ourselves – to give this urgent issue the attention it deserves.



**Baroness Phillippa Stroud**  
CEO of the Legatum Institute

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **The number of people globally living outside of their country of birth shows an upward trend, from 173 million in 2000 to 258 million in 2017.** Its proportion of the global population remains low: rising from 2.8% to 3.4%.
- **The number of registered refugees, however, has reached a record high.** By mid-2017 there were an estimated 25.9 million refugees and asylum seekers (including 5.3 million Palestinian refugees).
- **Registered refugees represent only a fraction of all migrants who are vulnerable or driven by necessity.** The number of individuals forcibly displaced (internally and cross-border) has reached a record high. In total, at least 66 million people globally are experiencing forced displacement.
- **Most migrant journeys are to neighbouring low – to middle-income countries within the region of origin.** The lowest income countries host about 30% of the global total of refugees. Of the 66 million people globally who have been forcibly displaced, approximately 40.3 million are displaced within their own countries.
- **Although migration has been a feature of political debate in West European states, their share of immigrants as a percent of their native-born population is smaller than that of other states.**
- **Exposure to slow onset emergencies and significant socioeconomic vulnerability are consolidating factors of migration.** While conflict is a well-recognised cause of migration, many more migrants are exposed to high levels of socioeconomic vulnerability, a climate of insecurity and natural hazards. Their number is unknown but the conditions they face can be equally desperate as those who are recognised as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees. These are the individuals who are not accounted for in refugee statistics and their conditions not necessarily reflected in international migrant data.
- **Most migrants are likely to take on different statuses at various points, as they move on multi-stage journeys.** A new but common feature of migration today is the evolving nature of an individual migrant's status. A single term can no longer define individuals on the move, including those that are forcibly displaced. With journeys spanning a greater time period and less linear than in the past, most migrants are likely to take on different statuses at various points as they move. At times, these statuses may even overlap, making the categorisation of migrants a complex undertaking that can diminish, or overstate, a person's vulnerability.
- **Migrants are frequently exposed to intolerable levels of risk in transit.** Irregular migrants face dangerous journeys. They are unprotected, accumulate debt, and have no legal recourse. The limited opportunities for legal migration forces individuals to use people smugglers, where there is a risk of being trafficked. Migrants who fall prey to human traffickers can be exploited in both transit and destination countries.
- **The number of identified victims of human trafficking could represent less than 1% of the true number.** During the migrant journey, the fine line with human trafficking – the acquisition of people by force, fraud or deception with the aim of exploiting them – can be easily crossed.



## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the ease of travel and communication, the global recession and new conflicts have contributed to rising numbers of migrants across the globe. These numbers encompass individuals that are moving internationally, along with those that leave their country of origin, but remain in their home region. Some individuals move against their will, having become victims of trafficking. Many others intend to move internationally or regionally, but fall victim to traffickers or experience exploitation in their country of destination.

The plethora of evolving factors that shape migration show no sign of abating. Furthermore, they pose several important and immediate questions about the risks and opportunities facing migrants, the regions and countries they move through, and the role of the international community.

The existence of such significant migrant flows driven by necessity is an indication that the pathways from poverty to prosperity have broken down for many; and as migrants they are in effect seeking their own such pathways.

However, the challenge of accommodating the current levels of displacement has become too great for 20th Century approaches. Interventions have become outmoded, with many migrants spending decades in accommodation that was originally designed for temporary relief. The social and economic systems in host countries are under strain; and in the US and EU the sense of such strain has contributed to a rise in populism and social fracturing.

Image credit: BalkansCat/  
Shutterstock.com



**The challenge of accommodating the current levels of displacement has become too great for 20th Century approaches**

The purpose of this initial report on global people movements is to produce a data-driven overview of the current landscape of global migration, which will in turn support the Legatum Institute's commitment to identifying solutions that would assist necessity-driven migrants, refugees and victims of trafficking. This report will focus on those who are forcibly displaced and who undertake three types of overlapping journeys:

- International: a multi-year journey to a destination country in a different region
- Regional: to neighbouring countries, which may also serve as transit points
- Domestic: to safer locations in the country of origin

Along each journey, migrants are vulnerable to exploitation.

We look at the different types of migration, the journeys and their experiences as well as the evolving factors of migration. Our further work will include a thorough review of both push and pull factors; and will evaluate the interventions that are taking place in different regions. Such evaluation will be considered in the context of the needs and desires of not only migrants, but also those of the citizens of the host nations.

We hope that this exercise will provide a fresh evidence-led perspective to the public debate, restore trust into the conversation, and provide genuine solutions to one of the major challenges of our generation: the great people movements of our day.

### Terminology

**Asylum seeker:** An asylum seeker is someone whose request for sanctuary has yet to be processed. **UNHCR**

**Refugee:** A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. **UNHCR**

**People in refugee-like situations:** The category of people in refugee-like situations is descriptive in nature and includes groups of persons who are outside their country or territory of origin and who face protection risks similar to those of refugees, but for whom refugee status has, for practical or other reasons, not been ascertained. **UNHCR**

**Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):** Persons or groups of persons who have been forced to flee, or leave, their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of armed conflict, internal strife, and habitual violations of human rights, as well as natural or man-made disasters involving one or more of these elements, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border. **Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, UNHCR**

**Non-refugee international migrants:** Commonly known as economic or labour migrants. In this report we broaden the definition to shed light on the multiple and overlapping factors of migration. Opportunity-driven migrants chose to move to another country to seek livelihood opportunities while necessity-driven migrants may have no other option but to do so, driven by external factors that are beyond their control. Nonetheless, necessity-driven migrants do not qualify for international protection.



## MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Registered refugees represent only a fraction of all forcibly displaced migrants.

Migration has always been a feature of human history. In recent years, the ease of travel and awareness of life in other countries, the global recession, and environmental changes, together with conflicts both new and protracted have contributed to rising numbers of migrants across the globe. By 2017, the number had reached 258 million, up from 173 million in 2000. This represents 3.4% of the global population. While the number of people living outside of their country of birth – known as the migrant stock – shows an upward trend, as a proportion of the global population that number has remained low over the years.<sup>1</sup>

The number of migrants who have been forcibly displaced has reached a record high

International migrant stock as a percentage of the global population

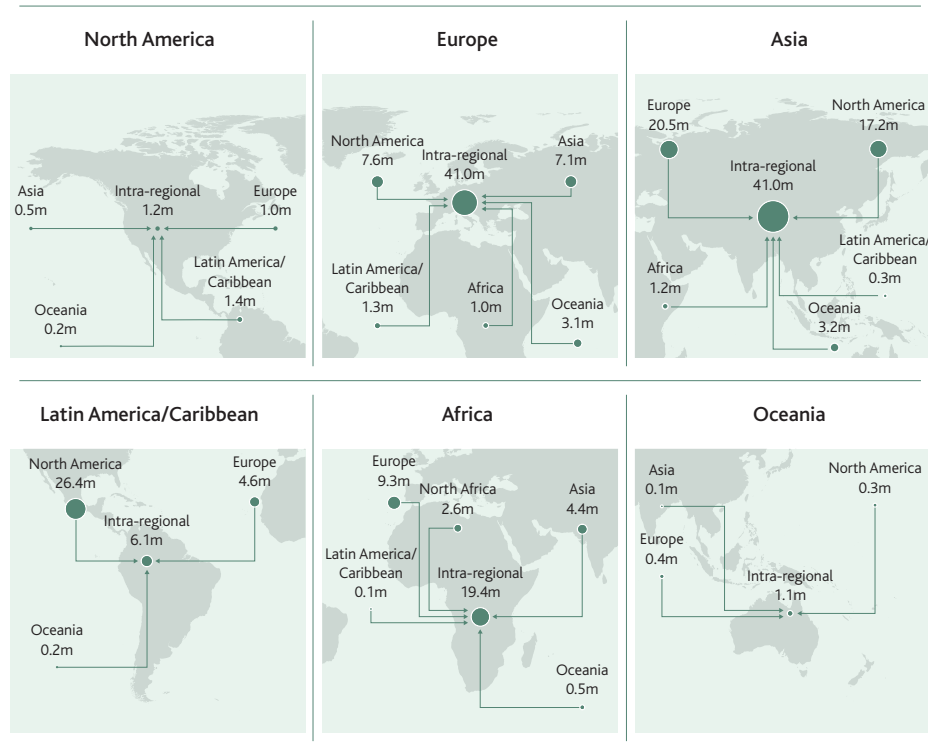
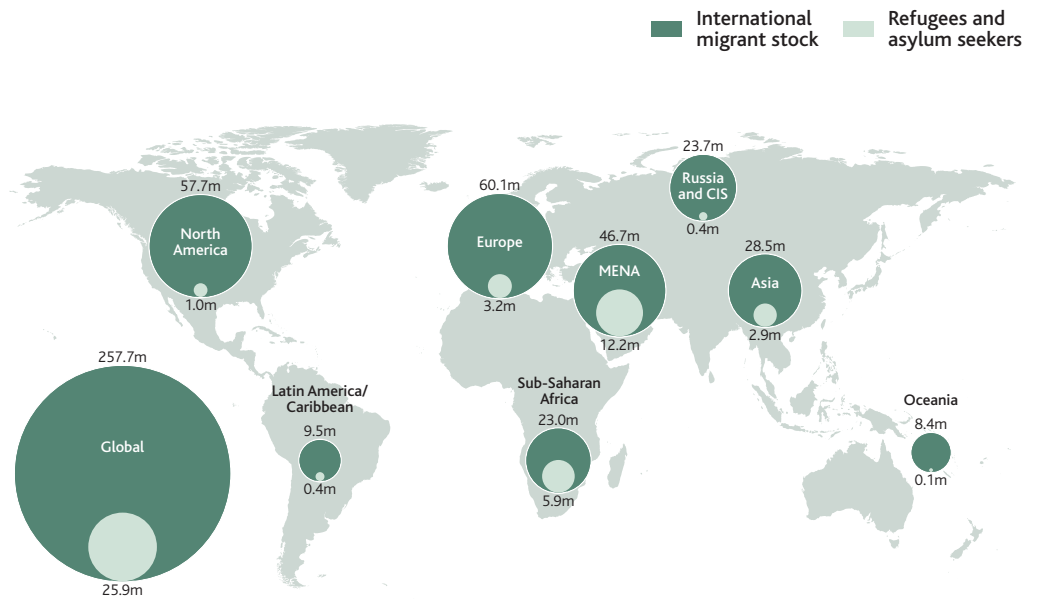
1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2017
2.9%	2.8%	2.8%	2.9%	3.2%	3.4%	3.4%

However, the nature of the migration has undergone a significant shift. The number of migrants who have been forcibly displaced has reached a record high. Refugees and asylum seekers account for approximately 10% of the international migrant stock, or an estimated 25.9 million people at mid-2017. This figure includes 5.3 million Palestinian refugees. In addition, approximately 40.3 million people globally are displaced within their own countries.

In total, at least 66 million people globally are experiencing forced displacement; and many more are exposed to high levels of socioeconomic vulnerability, facing insecurity and natural hazards. Their number is unknown but the conditions they face can be equally desperate as those who are recognised as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Population Division, International migrant stock: the 2017 revision, accessed 21 February 2018.

Figure 1. International  
migrant stock



## INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS

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The term “international migrant” refers to all individuals residing in a different country than the one they were born in. It has traditionally encompassed economic and labour migrants as well as refugees and asylum seekers. In principle, individuals from the former category leave their home countries out of choice to pursue livelihood opportunities, while individuals from the latter are forced to leave by the need to escape persecution, war or violence.

However, some international migrants face environmental or socioeconomic challenges that undermine the concept of choice and leave them with limited options in their home countries. These are the individuals who are not accounted for in refugee statistics; and their conditions are not reflected in international migrant data.

Most migrants come from middle or low middle-income countries, not poor ones. It is in these countries that people have enough information, education and money that they can pursue a life abroad. None of the lowest-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa are amongst the top 10 source countries for international migrants. This is because financing, connections, and access to information are prerequisites for undertaking an international migration journey.

## REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

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The 1951 UN Refugee Convention states that a refugee is a person ‘who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion...’<sup>2</sup> The worldwide number of registered refugees forcibly displaced by war, persecution and violence continues to climb. However, not all regions are affected equally. Just three nationalities account for more than half of the refugees registered with UNHCR, with 5.5 million Syrian refugees, 2.5 million Afghans and nearly 2 million South Sudanese.

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR, The 1951 Refugee Convention, accessed 15 February 2018.

## INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) estimates that 40.3 million people globally were displaced internally by conflict and disasters by the end of 2016. During the first half of 2017, IDMC estimates that over 9 million people were newly displaced. IDPs are often overlooked in the global migration discourse, mainly due to the limited ability to report on their situations but also because their journeys involve shorter distances within borders and thus appear less dramatic. Nonetheless, the conditions that compel people to undertake a cross-border journey are often the same as those that prompt people to flee their home to a neighbouring area. The characteristics of the journey, however, differ greatly. In Nigeria, the 1.8 million people internally displaced by Boko Haram violence in the north of the country are less likely to undertake an irregular journey to Europe than individuals from Nigeria's southern states. Still, Nigerians accounted for the most common nationality detected on Italian shores in 2017.<sup>3</sup> Nigerian IDPs are destitute, face food insecurity, and are unlikely to have the means for a longer distance journey. Nonetheless, the existence of a large IDP population may also signal a potential refugee crisis. The 700,845 Rohingya who fled Myanmar to Bangladesh between August and December 2017<sup>4</sup> were largely already displaced within Myanmar, living at the margins of society.

## UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS

**In 2017, nearly 100,000 returned to Afghanistan, despite the war and harrowing conditions, fearing deportation by the Pakistani government**

Beyond the three categories outlined above are irregular, undocumented migrants whose vulnerability is a direct function of their lack of a legal status that would offer protection. An estimated 1 million undocumented Afghans are believed to be living in Pakistan, fleeing similar conditions faced by the 1.4 million who are registered as refugees. In 2017, nearly 100,000 returned to Afghanistan, despite the war and harrowing conditions, fearing deportation by the Pakistani government.<sup>5</sup> At the end of 2017, Egypt hosted 35,227 Sudanese refugees, a figure that is dwarfed by the decade-old estimate that three to five million Sudanese migrants are living in Egypt.<sup>6</sup> Undocumented migrants not only face the challenges of integration but also the dangers of irregular routes and the threat of exploitation. A destination country's informal labour market further exposes irregular migrants. Citizens of Latin American countries who travel on an irregular basis to the United States often live in the shadows, working for low wages and facing deportation if detained in one of the frequent raids by immigration police.<sup>7</sup> Such challenges, however, are not exclusive to undocumented migrants.

<sup>3</sup> Frontex, *Detections of illegal border-crossings statistics*, updated monthly.

<sup>4</sup> UNHCR, *Bangladesh Refugee Emergency*, Population Infographic, 18 March 2018.

<sup>5</sup> IOM DTM, *Flow Monitoring of Undocumented Afghan Returnees from Pakistan* (10 – 16 December 2017), 27 December 2017.

<sup>6</sup> UNHCR, *Egypt Fact Sheet September 2017*, September 2017; Brookings, *Who are the 5 million refugees and immigrants in Egypt?*, 4 October 2016.

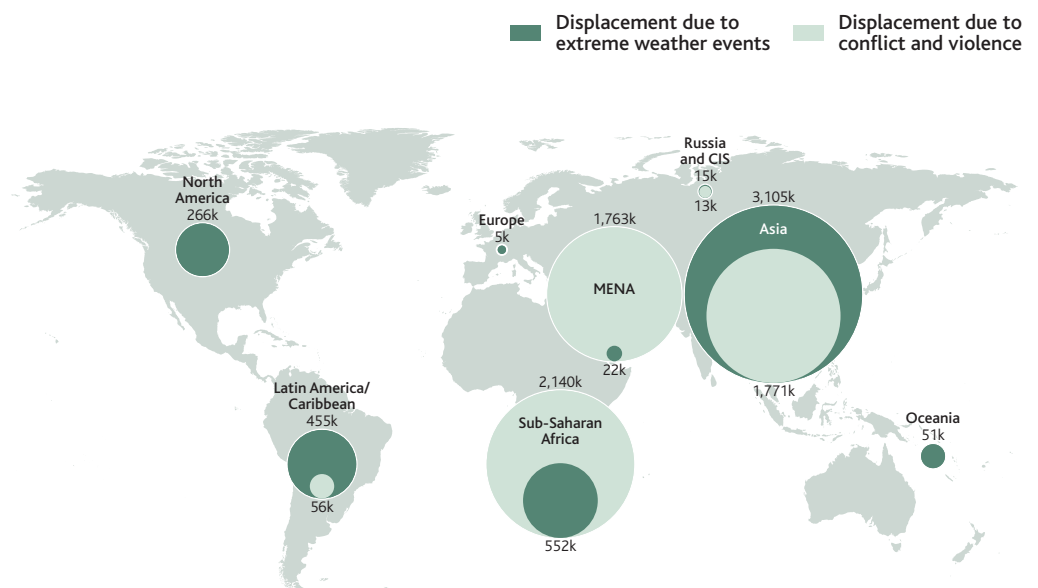
<sup>7</sup> IOM, *World Migration 2018* – pg. 21, 1 December 2017.

## EXPANDING DISPLACEMENT FACTORS

Exposure to slow onset emergencies and significant socioeconomic vulnerability are consolidating drivers of migration.

Conflict is acknowledged as the primary cause of forced displacement. However, the causes of necessity-driven migration are evolving beyond conflict and persecution. Many more migrants have also been exposed to natural disasters, slow onset emergencies and high levels of socioeconomic vulnerability (see below).

Figure 2. New displacements, weather and conflict





## CONFLICT, WAR AND PERSECUTION

According to UNHCR, there are currently 23 refugee situations due to conflict that have lasted over 20 years.<sup>8</sup> Somalia, for example, has been in a perpetual state of conflict since 1991. Persecution and human rights violations have also driven millions to leave. As of May 2018, 713,909 Rohingya people have fled from Myanmar to Bangladesh since August 2017,<sup>9</sup> while 5.6 million Syrians are registered refugees.<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile, 6.6 million remain internally displaced and 13.1 million are considered people in need.<sup>11</sup> Rwanda, has been a good example in repatriating refugees since the genocide in 1994, in which millions of people fled the country. However, it still faces some challenges. Fifteen years later, 60,000–65,000 Rwandans still lived in asylum in neighbouring countries of Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Uganda.

## NATURAL DISASTERS

Extreme weather events are increasingly reported as a major cause of displacement, with a commonly cited estimate of 25.3 million people displaced annually.<sup>12</sup> The growing intensity of meteorological disasters, coupled with the effects of environmental degradation, is likely to remain a factor driving human displacement. The International Organization of Migration (IOM) predicts there will be 200 million environmentally-displaced people by the year 2050 with major effects on countries of origin and transit countries, as well as destination countries.<sup>13</sup>

Coastal areas and some of the world's poorest regions, including large parts of Central and Southwest Asia, and the Horn of Africa and North Africa, are especially vulnerable. While extreme weather events trigger large, immediate displacement, those displaced may be able to return within 12 months after a reconstruction effort. Between January and June 2017, 4.5 million people were reportedly displaced by extreme weather events globally. With over 3 million, Asia saw the most displacement, followed by sub-Saharan Africa (552,080), and then Latin America and the Caribbean with 455,770.<sup>14</sup>

The above figures depict the scale of direct displacement caused by extreme weather events. However, they do not reflect indirect displacement caused by slow onset emergencies.

## SLOW ONSET EMERGENCIES

Scarcity of resources caused by environmental changes is a cause of mass displacement, when coupled with other socioeconomic factors. If the effects of a drought in an agricultural area are not alleviated so that local livelihoods can be sustained, residents will migrate. While not a direct cause of displacement, slow onset emergencies cause people to leave because they affect livelihoods and reduce the ability to procure food.

<sup>8</sup> UNHCR, Forced Displacement – Global trends in 2015, 20 June 2016.

<sup>9</sup> UNHCR, Refugee Response in Bangladesh, last updated 30 April 2018.

<sup>10</sup> UNHCR, Syrian Regional Refugee Response, last updated 26 April 2018.

<sup>11</sup> UNHCR, Syria Emergency, last updated 19 April 2018.

<sup>12</sup> IDCM, Global Report on Internal Displacement 2017, June 2017.

<sup>13</sup> UN Environment, *Displacement and Environment in Africa: What is the relationship?*, accessed 23 February 2017.

<sup>14</sup> IDMC, *Displacement Data*, accessed 16 February 2017.

In the Horn of Africa, the most severe drought in 60 years is intensifying migration already underway due to conflict in Somalia and is pushing others to leave Ethiopia and Eritrea. About three million people require food assistance due to drought in Ethiopia's Somali region,<sup>15</sup> from where 806,913 are currently displaced.<sup>16</sup>

## SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS

The convergence of these factors feeds into the overall sense of insecurity that drives displacement. Insecurity comes from multiple sources, and governments can make their own citizens feel vulnerable. Just as prosperous countries can act as a magnet attracting people from all over the world, a severe lack of prosperity has the opposite effect. The Legatum Prosperity Index™ has measured prosperity around the world for over ten years – and this pattern has become increasingly clear. For example, many countries ranked below 100 in the Prosperity Index – Libya, Sudan, Central African Republic, Guinea, Mali, Zimbabwe, Laos and Bangladesh – have recently experienced net emigration rate<sup>17</sup> of 1.5% p.a. or more.

While people can be displaced by a lack of economic development as well as by conflict and environmental factors, poverty itself is a symptom more than a direct cause of displacement. The most impoverished persons travel the least, with international migration usually requiring some funds or backing at the outset of the journey.

Beyond the narrow concept of forced displacement due to conflict and persecution, the convergence of factors beyond the control of individual citizens can prompt them to leave their homes, taking what may be the first step of a multi-year and multi-country journey marked by uncertainty.

Image credit: Janossy  
Gergely/Shutterstock.com



<sup>15</sup> IPS, *Ethiopia's Internally Displaced Overlooked Amid Refugee Crises*, 5 September 2017.

<sup>16</sup> IOM, *Displacement Tracking Matrix Somali Region, Ethiopia Round 8: November – December 2017*, 5 February 2018.

<sup>17</sup> World Bank Development Indicators, 2012 – Net Migration: SM.POP.NETM

## GLOBAL MIGRATORY FLOWS

**A single term can no longer define individuals on the move, including those who are forcibly displaced**

- Most refugee journeys are to neighbouring low – to middle-income countries within the region of origin.
- Most migrants are likely to take on different statuses at various points, as they move on multi-stage journeys.

The largest international migrant flows comprise migration from middle – to higher-income countries. In contrast, most refugee journeys are to neighbouring low – to middle-income countries within the region of origin. For example, Uganda, Ethiopia and Kenya host large numbers of refugees from neighbouring countries. Even Rwanda, a low-middle income country that has been working to overcome its own internal challenges in the wake of years of conflict, hosts some 172,000 refugees from neighbouring countries. This includes nearly 46% from the DRC, hosted in five camps, and 53% from Burundi in Mahama camp and neighbouring areas.

A new but common feature of migration today is the evolving nature of an individual migrant's status. As we have seen, a single term can no longer define individuals on the move, including those who are forcibly displaced. With journeys spanning a greater time period and less linear than in the past, most migrants are likely to take on different statuses at various points as they move. At times, these statuses may even overlap, making the categorisation of migrants a complex undertaking that can diminish, or overstate, a person's vulnerability.

### ECONOMIC MIGRANT FLOWS

Labour and economic migrants largely tend to reach higher-income countries, in order to seek livelihood opportunities. The top 10 host countries for international migrants comprise the world's most powerful economies; whilst among the top 10 source countries, most are middle or lower-middle income countries, including Bangladesh and the Philippines.<sup>18</sup> Based on mid-2017 estimates, the largest international migratory flow from a single country of origin to a single country of destination is the 12.7 million Mexicans living in the United States. The second most significant flow from one country to another, although much smaller, has seen 3.3 million Indians migrate to the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

<sup>18</sup> Top 10 host countries (estimates mid-2017): United States (49.8 million), Saudi Arabia (12.2 million), Germany (12.2 million), Russia (11.7 million), United Kingdom (8.8 million), the United Arab Emirates (8.3 million), France (7.9 million), Canada (7.9 million), Australia (7 million) and Spain (5.9 million). Top 10 source countries: India (16.6 million), Mexico (13 million), Russia (10.6 million), China (10 million), Bangladesh (7.5 million), Syria (6.9 million), Pakistan (6 million), Ukraine (5.9 million), the Philippines (5.7 million), the United Kingdom (4.9 million). UN Population Division, International Migration Report 2017 highlights, 18 December 2017.

## TOP INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION LEVELS (AS OF 2016)<sup>19</sup>

	Origin	Destination	Number of Resident Migrants
1	Mexico	USA	12.7m
2	India	UAE	3.3m
3	Russia	Ukraine	3.3m
4	Ukraine	Russia	3.3m
5	Syria	Turkey	3.3m
6	Bangladesh	India	3.1m
7	Kazakhstan	Russia	2.6m
8	China	USA	2.4m
9	Russia	Kazakhstan	2.4m
10	China	Hong Kong	2.3m
11	Afghanistan	Iran	2.3m
12	India	USA	2.3m
13	India	Saudi Arabia	2.3m
14	Philippines	USA	2.1m
15	Palestine	Jordan	2.0m

## REFUGEE FLOWS

Most refugee movements remain intracontinental. Turkey hosts 3.9 million refugees, 94% of whom are Syrian.<sup>20</sup> About one million Syrians are also hosted in Lebanon and 660,000 in Jordan.<sup>21</sup> In Asia, Pakistan hosts 1.4 million Afghan refugees and Iran nearly 1 million.<sup>22</sup> In sub-Saharan Africa, the number of refugees in Uganda has now exceeded 1 million, driven by an inflow from South Sudan since 2016.<sup>23</sup> South Sudanese nationals have also sought refuge in Ethiopia, which hosts 900,000 registered refugees and asylum seekers at the end 2017.

<sup>19</sup> IOM International Migration Report 2017.

<sup>20</sup> ECHO, Turkey Factsheet, last updated 6 April 2018.

<sup>21</sup> UNHCR, UNHCR, Syrian Regional Refugee Response, last updated 26 April 2018.

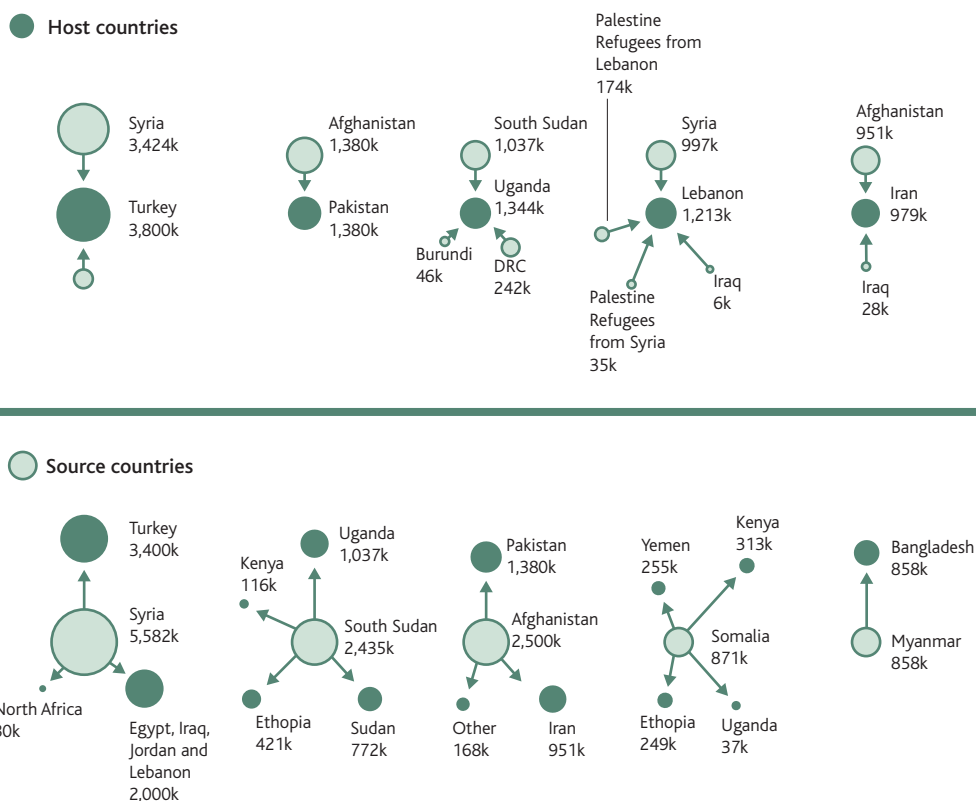
<sup>22</sup> UNHCR, *Pakistan – Country Fact sheet, Monthly Update (January 2018)*, 6 March 2018; UNHCR, *Iran Factsheet (1 July 2017)*, 10 August 2017.

<sup>23</sup> UNHCR, *South Sudan Situation*, last updated 30 April 2018.

Ethiopia's refugee population also includes 250,000 Somalis, and Somalis also account for the majority of the 587,000 refugees registered in Kenya.<sup>24</sup> Chad, meanwhile, is host to 400,000 refugees, mainly from Sudan. The lowest income countries, among which are Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan and Uganda, host about 30% of the global total of refugees.<sup>25</sup>

The only European country that ranks amongst the top ten refugee hosting countries is Germany, with a total of nearly 700,000 people of Syrian nationality living in Germany as of December 2017.<sup>26</sup> Although migration dominates political debate in West European states, their share of immigrants as a percent of their native-born population is smaller than that of other states.

Figure 3. Refugees: host and source countries



<sup>24</sup> UNHCR, Ethiopia Country Refugee Response Plan, 4 April 2018.

<sup>25</sup> UNHCR, Forced Displacement in 2016, 20 June 2017.

<sup>26</sup> Destatis, *Ausländerzentralregister*, accessed April 14, 2018.

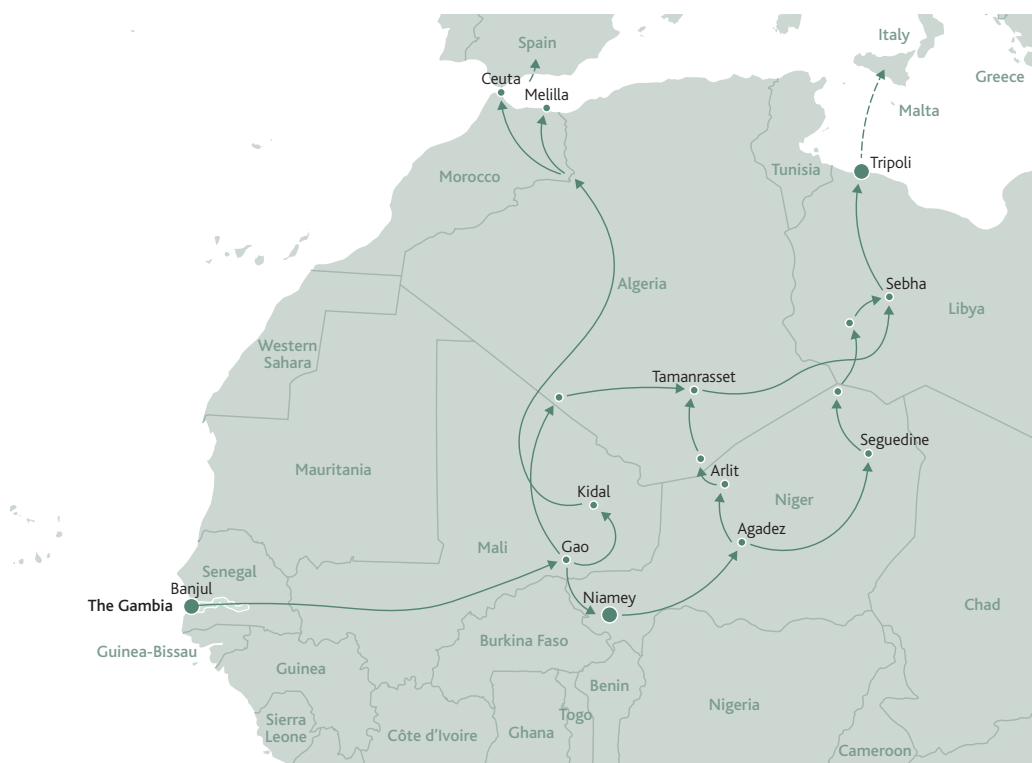


## EVOLVING MIGRANT STATUS

Oil wealth in Libya once enticed thousands of Bangladeshi citizens with employment prospects. However, as conditions deteriorated severely since 2011, these migrants were trapped for years by the spiralling conflict, facing abuse at the hands of employers and Libya's array of militia groups. In 2017, many were forced to leave. One escape route consists of travelling by sea to Europe, where Bangladeshis can seek international protection. In 2017, nearly 20,000 Bangladeshis applied for first-instance international protection in the EU+, ranking eighth among the most common citizenships of origin of applicants.<sup>27</sup>

A different case is that of an irregular migrant from The Gambia who seeks economic opportunities abroad. This individual might spend a few years working in Ivory Coast, move on to Niger and then Libya, hoping to cross the Mediterranean Sea to Europe. In Libya he may be held for ransom, tortured and enslaved. Under a new mechanism, the Gambian migrant may be evacuated to Niger until his status is determined.<sup>28</sup>

Figure 4.  
Multi-stage journeys



Source: Oxford Analytica

<sup>27</sup> EASO, Latest Asylum Trends, March 2018.

<sup>28</sup> UNHCR, *Flash Update Libya*, 23 February 2018.

These two journeys represent a common feature of migration today – the evolving nature of an individual migrant’s status. A single term can no longer define individuals on the move, including those who are forcibly displaced. With journeys spanning a greater time period and less linear than in the past, most migrants, as they move, are likely to take on different statuses at various points (including for some being trafficked). At times, these statuses may even overlap, making the categorisation of migrants a complex undertaking that can diminish, or overstate, a person’s vulnerability.

The irregular nature of migrant movements presents a complex set of challenges. This is not only because an intention to remain hidden is inherent to most irregular journeys. Lack of data limits the understanding of irregular migratory movements – people who are unprotected, accumulate debt, and have no legal recourse.

Many irregular migrants are dependent on human smugglers to move, and reliance on smugglers has seen the worst forms of violence against migrants. Somalis travelling to Yemen across the Gulf of Aden have been forced into the sea to drown, so that the smugglers transporting them could avoid detection by security forces. Upon arrival, migrants can be beaten, starved, sexually violated, and chained so that they pay a ransom fee to the smugglers.<sup>29</sup>

Migrant smugglers are not necessarily perceived negatively in countries of origin. They facilitate journeys where an individual citizen would not be able to do so. Nonetheless, during the journey, the fine line with human trafficking – the acquisition of people by force, fraud or deception with the aim of exploiting them – is easily crossed. Some migrants who are smuggled can end up in a situation of trafficking when they are deceived, coerced or forced into an exploitative situation, either during the journey or in the destination country (see below).

## VULNERABLE DESTINATIONS

While the average time spent outside of one’s country of birth is unknown, the reality is that refugees are spending longer outside of their home countries. Due to the protracted nature of several crises it is estimated that two thirds of all refugees cannot go home. Hence, their experience in their destination countries cannot be viewed simply as a temporary situation, but instead needs to be viewed as a longer-term way of life.

An estimated 60% of registered refugees live in urban settings alongside the local population yet access to basic services and employment remains unequal. Little research has been conducted into tangible outcomes for refugees in host countries. A recent study in Kenya’s Kakuma refugee camps shows that refugee entrepreneurs are disproportionately more likely to incur a formal “business tax” than local businesses.<sup>30</sup>

29 WSI Mag, African Migrants Beaten, Chained, Violated, 24 August 2017.

30 Betts A., Omata N., Sterck O., Refugee Economies in Kenya, Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford, February 2018.

In Turkey, where Syrian migrants are treated as guests, the government requires companies to give Syrians the same pay and benefits as Turkish citizens. However, as of January 2017, only about 14,000 Syrians had work permits. Companies must apply for the worker, pay a fee, and prove that a Turkish citizen cannot be found to fulfil the job. For non-Syrian migrants, employment opportunities are few. Those who do work are engaged in the grey economy and are vulnerable to abuse and lower wages than Turkish citizens, and late or non-payment.

In Egypt, discrimination, language barriers, concerns over safety and high living costs have all acted to keep refugees separate from local society. There continues to be limited opportunities for work and unequal levels of assistance between refugees of different nationalities; Syrians and Sudanese have access to public schools and primary health care services, while individuals from Eritrea do not have the right to work and are forced to rely on money from relatives or find jobs in the informal economy.<sup>31</sup>

Legal stay in a destination country does not necessarily protect migrants from exploitation. Migrants from East Asian and East African states such as the Philippines, Ethiopia and Somalia may arrive in Gulf Arab states legally, with the assistance of local sponsors who provide work permits. Despite working legally, low wages, dependence on the sponsor through the kafala system that limits the ability to change employer, and minimal legal protections mean that these migrants remain highly vulnerable to exploitation.

Some migrants undertake life-threatening journeys to flee conflict, persecution and extreme poverty at home. While external conditions in destination countries do mark an improvement, the risk of exploitation remains prevalent throughout their journeys.

Image credit: Svetlana  
Eremina/Shutterstock.com



31 UNHCR, *Egypt 2017 Planning summary*, 2 December 2016.

## MIGRANT VULNERABILITY

The number of identified victims of human trafficking could represent less than 1% of the true number.

### MODERN SLAVERY

An estimated 40.3 million people are in modern slavery according to the International Labour Organization (ILO) and Walk Free Foundation. Approximately 24.9 million of these are victims of forced labour globally, 8 million of whom are held in debt bondage, a practice of forcing an individual to work to repay a debt for little or no pay.<sup>32</sup> In the context of global migration, migrant workers often pay fees to agencies and brokers for recruitment into jobs abroad; these are sometimes set up as loans with high rates of interest, trapping the individual into working for little or no pay until the debt is repaid. Examples of such bonded labour include the construction sector and domestic workers in Gulf countries, and men on fishing boats.

New forms of abuse are also emerging. Children and adults, predominantly from South East Asia, are trafficked by criminal networks across Europe and made to work in cannabis farms. Commercial sexual exploitation of children involving technology is also gaining pace, with reports of children trafficked to Bangkok or Manila, where they are abused on camera by an adult at the direction of an individual in a wealthier country. In some cases, the child may have been sold to traffickers by his own parents. Eastern European and other workers are also brought to the United Kingdom where they live in inexpensive accommodation and claim social benefits. Their bank accounts are controlled by a trafficker, who takes the money and threatens the workers with physical violence if they do not comply. Migrants may also be exploited by traffickers to commit a crime, such as claiming social benefits on arrival or taking out loans on credit cards.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> ILO and Walk Free Foundation, *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery* 2017, 17 September 2017.

<sup>33</sup> Anecdotal examples provided by experts on human trafficking interviewed by Oxford Analytica.

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING

More people are on the move today than in the past, and consequently with more people being vulnerable human trafficking practices appear to be expanding accordingly.<sup>34</sup> Although data on human trafficking is scarce, 66,520 cases of human trafficking were identified in 2016, a 40% increase in comparison to 2012.<sup>35</sup> The IOM estimates that the number of victims identified each year globally could represent less than 1% of the true number of victims.<sup>36</sup>

Human trafficking entails the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by various means including deception and coercion, for the purpose of exploitation. Much trafficking is for sexual exploitation; however people are increasingly trafficked for labour exploitation, including in construction, agriculture, tourism and domestic work. People are also trafficked for forced criminality and forced begging.<sup>37</sup>

Trafficked people are at risk of sexual and/or labour exploitation, as well as other types of exploitation, including the forced transplantation of their organs. This raises serious issues for European states, which have significant protection and assistance obligations towards trafficked persons under EU law and human rights law. The effective protection of trafficked persons, as well as those at risk of being trafficked, depends upon them being identified as such, and not merely as irregular migrants.

Human trafficking is sometimes described as a violation of human rights. The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, which has now been in force for ten years, says exactly that in its preamble. But trafficking itself is simply a crime. The violation of human rights occurs when the destination state fails to address trafficking or even tolerates it; where it fails to provide the necessary protection and assistance that victims of trafficking, who may have suffered significant physical, sexual and psychological violence. That failure violates the duty to protect victims, which constitutes a violation of human rights.

Most of the detected victims of human trafficking are women and girls (71%); however the trend for detections of men has increased over the past decade, and between 2012–14 more than one in five detected trafficking victims were men. Migrants who fall prey to human traffickers are likely to be exploited in both transit and destination countries. About 40% of victims detected between 2012 and 2014 were trafficked for forced labour, and 63% of those victims were men. The share of detected trafficking cases that are domestic has also increased in recent years. This may be in part due to differences in reporting methods, but countries are clearly detecting more domestic trafficking.

34 Oxford Analytica: Expert interview.

35 US State Department 2017 Trafficking in Persons Report, page 34. [www.state.gov/documents/organization/271339.pdf](https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/271339.pdf)

36 IOM, Global Trafficking Trends in Focus, 31 August 2017.

37 Anecdotal examples provided by experts on human trafficking interviewed by Oxford Analytica.



### Human trafficking: from East to West

Jana lives in Moscow. She answers an advertisement on social media, seeking young women for modelling careers in New York. The organiser is a Russian who shows the audience of young women many pictures, which he claims are of young Russian women who, through his promotion, have become successful models in the US. He is accompanied by a Russian woman, Svetlana, who claims that she has made thousands of dollars in this way. Jana takes part in a photo-shoot and is selected. The organiser arranges her passport and visa. She is sixteen years old and her parents are reluctant to let her leave but she goes anyway. On arrival in New York her passport is taken from her. She is locked in a van with three other young Russian women. They are driven to a house where they are locked in separate rooms. Jana is gang-raped and forced into prostitution the next day. She is told that she has a large debt to repay to those who facilitated her travel. One of the rapes is filmed and Jana is informed that, if she does not cooperate, the recording will be sent to her parents.

According to the US State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report for 2017, the Russian authorities have little information on the numbers of people trafficked from Russia, but it cited reports of Russian women and children being trafficked for sexual exploitation in Northeast Asia, Europe, Central Asia, Africa, the United States and the Middle East. This has been taking place for many years. In 2010, on the case of *Rantsev v Cyprus and Russia*, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that the trafficking of a woman from Russia to Cyprus for sexual exploitation violated the prohibition on slavery, forced labour and servitude.<sup>38</sup>

**66,520 cases of human trafficking were identified in 2016, a 40% increase in comparison to 2012**

In recent years, the share of identified cases of trafficking for forced labour and various types of marriage has increased compared to the share of sexual exploitation.

According to a 2017 IOM survey of migrants who travelled along the Central Mediterranean route through North Africa, 76% of male and 67% of female respondents experienced human trafficking and other exploitative practices during their journey. While the threat of being trafficked does not apply to all migrants, all irregular migrants are at risk of falling victims to traffickers, as they are especially vulnerable.

Trafficking in persons and regular migration flows broadly resemble each other; the citizenship of trafficking victims in a specific country is often correlated with the citizenship of the flows of regular migrants in that country during the same period. For example, in Germany, 65% of victims of trafficking come from Central and South-Eastern Europe<sup>39</sup> at the same time migrants from Central and Southern-Eastern Europe compose most of the recent migrant flows into Germany. This pattern can be seen in different regions and countries. The majority of adult, detected victims entered human trafficking processes through labour migration; however, most children are sold by their families or enter the trafficking process through relatives.<sup>40</sup>

38 Case of *Rantsev v. Cyprus and Russia*, no. 25965/04, ECHR 2010.

39 UNODC, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2016*, 21 December 2016.

40 <https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/human-trafficking> + corroborated by Oxford Analytica interview.

Figure 5. Human  
trafficking

Intraregional  
trafficking



There are many factors that contribute to a trafficker's ability to exploit migrants in destination countries,<sup>41</sup> including a lack of economic alternatives in their home country, absence of legal protections of migrant workers in destination countries (or awareness of laws offering protection), a threat of reporting migrants to the police or immigration services, combined with fear for the safety of family at home.

## PEOPLE SMUGGLING

Irregular migration is currently one of the major human, political and legal challenges confronting major destination countries, such as European states.

Regular migration is strictly controlled both by law and in practice. However, the factors that prompt people to migrate – in particular armed conflict and economic privation – are so powerful that people choose to migrate, sometimes aware of the risks they will face during the journey and at their destination, if they ever get there.

It is almost impossible for most people to migrate to Europe through lawful means, so they seek assistance to do so from people smugglers: they pay them to organise and facilitate their journey to Europe, either across the Mediterranean Sea or overland through the Middle East and Turkey.

People smuggling is a criminal offence, but the primary offenders are the smugglers, rather than the people who pay to be smuggled. The offence of irregular migrants pertains to their illegal status in the country of destination, not to the means they used to reach it.

41 Oxford Analytica Analysis.

### People Smuggling: from Afghanistan to Turkey

An Afghan from the western province of Herat, Abdullah's family members have allotted a large proportion of their savings and the proceeds from the sale of personal possessions to finance his journey to Turkey. They will transfer the money to people smugglers as Abdullah reaches various waypoints in the journey, using informal Hawala networks. Abdullah first travels to Afghanistan's south-west border with Pakistan. With the help of people smugglers, he crosses the border and moves undetected through Pakistan. After transiting several small villages where the smugglers have well established connections, Abdullah arrives at the border with Iran.

Unlike Iran's border with Afghanistan, which is secured by a wall and landmines, here the border is comparatively more accessible. Abdullah succeeds in reaching the east Iran city of Zahedan. He intermingles with the high number of Afghan migrant labourers who come to Iran for work, moving across the country using public transportation. In the western city of Urmia, he connects with a smuggler introduced over a social network by his cousin, who two years before successfully travelled from Iran to Turkey with the help of the same man.

The smuggler introduces him to a group of five other Afghan migrants who are seeking to irregularly enter Turkey. They start their journey in a car, then travel by foot into the mountains along the Iran-Turkey border. One of the other migrants, a 14-year-old boy, is moving slower than the rest, struggling with the difficult terrain and cold weather. The smugglers draw pistols. The boy is to remain behind or will be killed. He is left on the mountainside without food or water. Kurdish militants and criminal groups are active in the area. But Abdullah crosses into Turkey without meeting them, or any of the border guards. In the Turkish city of Van, Abdullah feels relief. A contact of the smugglers in Istanbul receives the final payment on their behalf from Abdullah's family. Glad to be out of the mountains, the smugglers drink tea and socialise with a group of local Kurds. Abdullah is free to move on, to stay in Turkey or perhaps he will continue onward to Europe, a journey which he would also rely on smugglers to make.

45,259 irregular Afghan migrants were detained by Turkish security forces in 2017. Among the top 10 nationalities of irregular migrants detained in Turkey, only Syrians ranked higher, with 50,217 detentions. The high figure illustrates the scale of the irregular Afghan migration into Turkey, many of whom are reliant on smugglers who bring them over the border from Iran.

## BLURRED BOUNDARIES: PEOPLE SMUGGLING AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Migrants might start a journey by agreeing to be smuggled into a country illegally and might end up being a victim of human trafficking. The risks to migrants being smuggled include sexual and physical violence, and death by drowning if they are at sea. An even greater threat to those being smuggled is that, while they may believe that they will become free agents when they reach

Europe, they are in reality being trafficked, or else traffickers take control over them while they are in transit. The smugglers and traffickers know that these people are vulnerable and desperate. Some are held hostage and forced to call their families to urge them to pay a ransom for their release.

It is important to recognise the differences between human trafficking and migrant smuggling, namely consent, exploitation, trans nationality, and source of profit. Migrant smuggling involves consent, but victims of human trafficking have either never consented, or their consent has been rendered meaningless by coercive, deceptive, or abusive actions by the trafficker. In human trafficking, there is ongoing exploitation either in transit or in the destination country. Migrant smuggling is always transnational, but trafficking can occur within a country. Migrant smugglers profit from providing transportation and facilitation of illegal entry, while traffickers derive profit from exploitation.

### From smuggling to trafficking: from Nigeria to Italy

John's journey begins in the southern Nigeria state of Benin. Because of both a lack of employment prospects and the high number of Nigerians from the state who have previously migrated to Europe and sent back remittances, many Benin residents see migration as an attractive means to improve their livelihoods and that of their family members, even if a degree of risk is necessary.

Not long after crossing from Nigeria into Niger, John's bus is stopped at a security checkpoint. Niger is a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as is Nigeria. Under an ECOWAS agreement, John can legally move through Niger without a visa. Despite this, the uniformed men at the checkpoint claim John is in Niger illegally. In fact, they've identified him as a migrant who is likely to be carrying a significant amount of cash to finance his journey. John is forced to pay them a bribe.

Agadez is the next stop in his journey. In the famed migration hub he meets a group of smugglers that drives him to the border with Libya. They pass him, along with ten other migrants, to a different group of smugglers. They are taken to a detention centre in a town whose name and location John does not know. He is forced to work without pay. Eventually, after his family back in Nigeria pays a ransom, he is freed and able to continue to Tripoli. He boards the boat to Italy and the operator offers to help secure him work. When John arrives in Italy he is taken to a refugee camp, but an associate of the boat operator tells John he has a job for him, on a farm. John goes to the farm. There he is locked up with other men in huts at night, while during the day they are forced to work for no money. Guards threaten violence against anyone who objects.

Nigerians were the second most common nationality reaching the EU irregularly in 2017, just behind Syrians. This is despite the overall number of Nigerians detected by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX) attempting irregular entries having fallen to 18,309 in 2017 from 37,811 the year before. According to the IOM, 96% of Nigerian women who reach Italy are believed to be sexually exploited.



The trafficking of Nigerians to Europe has occurred for decades. The victims are usually young women, including minors, recruited from impoverished communities. Former prostitutes who have joined the smugglers recruit other women, offering the prospect of a job or education abroad. The women consent to being moved to Europe, yet ultimately find themselves in situations of human trafficking. The traffickers are known to be brutal. Often women avoid turning to the authorities for fear of what members of the trafficking network will do to their family members back home.

Human rights are also violated when a country returns a trafficked person to their home country, when there is a real risk that they will be re-trafficked or be under threat of retribution by the traffickers. That threat places a duty of international protection upon the destination state.

People who have been smuggled or trafficked to another country remain migrants. Whereas the smuggled person has consented to participate in the process, the trafficked person does not give real consent to the control and exploitation. While in some cases they believe they are being smuggled and consent to that, they do not, and cannot legally, consent to the exploitation and control to which they are subjected.

Image credit: Ververidis  
Vasilis/Shutterstock.com





## CRISES AHEAD

**The risks to migrants being smuggled include sexual and physical violence, and death by drowning if they are at sea**

The same convergence of factors will continue to drive migratory movements in 2018. Policy responses, however, are evolving as the international community seeks to define a global compact for migration, providing a framework for responding to the crises ahead.

Developments will include further instability in the Lake Chad region where Boko Haram is far from defeated, despite the government's claim to be winning its war against the insurgents. Meanwhile, the government of Cameroon is facing an insurgency that is prompting internal displacement, along with outflows of people to neighbouring countries, placing further strain on already weak governance structures. Renewed violence for the past two years in the Democratic Republic of the Congo's eastern provinces has triggered the world's worst displacement crisis. More than 1.7 million fled their homes in 2017 and 7.7 million are experiencing acute food insecurity. Two million people have fled South Sudan while seven million are internally displaced after nearly five years of intermittent civil conflict.

In Latin America, Venezuelans are expected to flee their country in greater numbers as the political and economic crisis deepens. Many Venezuelans will seek refuge in neighbouring Colombia, while others will travel to Brazil. A smaller number will apply for asylum in European states, with Spain the main destination.

Nearly one million Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh face an uncertain future, including possible expulsion. Neighbouring India has sought to block their entry and a return home to Myanmar is not an option for most given that they are seen as a security threat. The view South Asian governments take of the Rohingya will encourage them to stay in camps within Bangladesh, placing a strain on state infrastructure. Meanwhile, Bangladeshi citizens will continue to leave a country beset by economic and political challenges, along with environmental changes that will cause sea levels to rise and encroach on land used for agriculture.

While the conflict in Yemen has not produced migratory outflows on the scale seen in Syria, the challenges faced are equally serious. Three years of civil conflict that also involves external powers has produced a humanitarian disaster of unprecedented size. Out of a population of 29 million, 22.2 million need humanitarian assistance and two million are displaced, according to the UN.

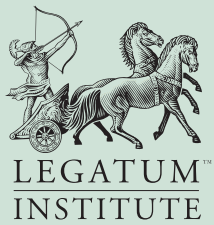
## THE NEED FOR DIAGNOSIS

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As this report illustrates, the reality of this phenomenon is frequently at odds with the rhetoric. The factors that lie behind the hazardous journeys undertaken by migrants, refugees and victims of trafficking are both varied and complex. Understanding these factors, as well as the journeys themselves, is essential if we are to formulate the effective response we all want to see.

As part of a relevant diagnosis of the phenomenon, it is essential to recognise that it is at heart a regional issue, rather than national or global. Despite the attention this challenge has received in Western Europe, the scale of the challenge is at its greatest elsewhere, particularly in the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa. Secondly, the drivers are complex – a combination of push and pull factors. Finally, it is not at all clear that the needs and aspirations of migrants driven by necessity are adequately considered in the current interventions and systems provided to support them. It is only when we are properly informed of these issues that we are able to contribute to identifying practical solutions, and to garner public support for their application.

In future work, the Legatum Institute will analyse the nature of necessity-driven migration in more detail across different regions of the world, identify the push and pull factors behind the major flows, and review the nature of the interventions in place today in light of the needs of refugees and the victims of trafficking, as well as the needs of host communities. With such a diagnosis, we will be in a better position to propose effective solutions to governments, the international community, charities and philanthropists.



The Legatum Institute is an international think tank and educational charity whose mission is to promote policies that create the pathways from poverty to prosperity

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