The Four Regions at the Heart of the Migration Crisis

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

by Alastair Masser, Will Edwards, and Hannah Rose Thomas
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Cover image credit: EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations follow EU Humanitarian Aid in Nigeria

Binta Ali is a beneficiary of relief items to displaced families living at the Transit Camp in Gwoza (Borno State, Nigeria).

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# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Middle East and North Africa</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Asia</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the Authors</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FOREWORD

Across the world today, there are more vulnerable migrants on the move than ever before. For far too many, this is a journey of necessity, not of choice. Some are driven from their homes by conflict or persecution, while others are desperate to escape environmental catastrophe or extreme poverty.

This issue is fast becoming the humanitarian challenge of our generation. The numbers of forcibly displaced people increased by almost three million in 2017, according to the latest data published by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Of the more than 68 million forcibly displaced people, 40 million are displaced within their own countries, and more than 28 million are refugees or seeking refugee status. Children make up more than half of the world’s refugee population, and conservative estimates suggest that around 174,000 of these are unaccompanied, having been separated from their families and facing unimaginable hardship.

These are staggering statistics. Not only should they command our attention, they should compel us to act. To date, much of the political and public debate has centred on the impact of this phenomenon on Europe’s developed nations, including the UK. But as this report shows, the vast majority of vulnerable migrants seek—and find—sanctuary within either their country or region of origin. Migration is, in other words, a regional phenomenon.

This report presents the true picture of this phenomenon. It examines the dynamics of migration within the four regions at the heart of today’s migration crisis: sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia. Between them, these four regions comprise the countries of origin of more than two-thirds of the world’s migrants, over two-thirds of the world’s refugees, and 92% of the world’s Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

Despite their relevance to the migration debate, the true nature of displacement within each of the four regions is not well-understood. This report, the second in the Legatum Institute’s Global People Movements series, provides a comprehensive analysis of the drivers, individuals, and journeys that shape migration in each of the four regions. In doing so, it identifies the key trends influencing migration and helps clarify the challenges facing policymakers.

This issue is one that the world can no longer ignore. Resolving it will require us to harness our best instincts: collaboration, imagination, and perhaps above all, compassion. This report is designed to not only contribute to the debate on migration, but to help bring us a step closer to finding effective solutions to the challenge it poses. These four regions will be instrumental to that process. The decision of the African Union to make 2019 the year of seeking durable solutions to this issue is a welcome step forward. We stand with them and all those who work to support the most vulnerable as they create their own pathways from poverty to prosperity.

Philippa Stroud
CEO of the Legatum Institute
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The four regions of sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia are at the heart of the migration crisis.

- Between them, they comprise the countries of origin of 68% of the 258 million international migrants worldwide, over two-thirds of the world’s refugees, and 92% of the world’s 38 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

- The principle driver of migration by necessity in all regions is insecurity: human, economic and environmental.

- People fleeing conflict typically seek refugee status in neighbouring countries, but rarely have the means to move on further.

- In all regions, migrants undertaking irregular journeys are extraordinarily vulnerable. In July 2017, a report on human trafficking through the Central Mediterranean Route by the IOM estimated that as many as 80% of girls arriving from Nigeria ‘are potential victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation.’

1a. ‘UN Migration Agency Issues Report on Arrivals of Sexually Exploited Migrants, Chiefly from Nigeria’, IOM Press Release, 21 July 2017. The press release stated that the report was ‘based on data collected by the IOM at landing sites and in reception centres for migrants in the regions of southern Italy, where the IOM carries out the identification of potential victims and assists those who, once identified, decide to escape their exploiters and accept IOM support.’

- The routes used by those trafficking and smuggling migrants are constantly changing, partly in response to new restrictions imposed, which has limited the numbers arriving to Europe through Turkey.

The dynamics of displacement within each region vary. These drivers overlap to create unique regional dynamics:

- An estimated 3% of sub-Saharan Africa’s population lives outside of their country of birth. However, nine out of ten of the world’s fastest growing emigrant populations are from sub-Saharan African countries.

- The region hosts around a third of the world’s refugees. This is a higher proportion of refugees than any other region in the world. Most stay within the region, with countries such as Ethiopia, Sudan and Uganda among the world’s top ten refugee hosts in 2017. Children account for one in two of sub-Saharan African refugees.

- Sub-Saharan Africa is host to the world’s highest number of IDPs, with 12.9 million people displaced within their own countries. Nowhere is this more apparent than the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the number of IDPs doubled in 2017.

- Intra-regional flows define migratory movement in sub-Saharan Africa. 70% of migratory movements in West Africa are linked to employment opportunities within the sub-region.
• In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), migration is largely conflict-driven with profound implications for nations bordering conflict zones. The civil war in Syria has led over 5 million citizens of Syria fleeing to neighbouring states: there are now 3.46 million in Turkey, 950,000 million in Lebanon, 670,000 in Jordan, 250,000 in Iraq, along with an additional 130,000 in Egypt.

• Turkey is host to nearly 5 million migrants, and the country hosts the largest refugee population in the world.

• MENA nations have emerged as one of the three main transit points for irregular migration into Europe. The Gulf nations are the main destination countries in the region, relying largely on South Asian low-skilled labour.

• Drivers of migration in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) vary considerably, prompted by a combination of economic insecurity, rising crime and political instability, and environmental pressures.

• Almost 39 million international migrants come from LAC countries. Despite the region accounting for less than 10% of the world’s population, labour migrants originating from LAC make up 27% of the global total. Economic and political downturn in Venezuela is forcing millions across borders. So far it’s seen a 3 million strong outflow.

• Crime is a prevalent factor in migration, with over 50% of crime victims in El Salvador and Honduras saying that they intended to leave the country, according to one survey in 2016/7.

• In 2017, an estimated 2.7 million people were newly displaced by natural disasters in the region.

• Necessity-driven migration in Asia is disproportionately driven by environmental pressures in comparison to other regions. In 2015, Asia’s 16.2 million internal displacements from natural disasters accounted for 85% of the worldwide total. While conflict created 1.3 million new displacements in 2017, natural disasters created nearly nine times as many at 11.4 million.

• The World Bank warns that by 2050, 40 million people in South Asia could be forced to move within their own countries to escape slow-onset environmental pressures.

• Asia is both a region of origin and destination for vast numbers of economic migrants. India leads the region as a country of origin with 16.6 international migrants. China has 9.7 million, Bangladesh 7.4 million, Pakistan 5.8 million, and the Philippines 5.7 million.
INTRODUCTION

Levels of necessity-driven migration are rising steadily across the world, driven by a complex and diverse range of factors, from civil war to environmental pressures. We are now witnessing the highest levels of displacement on record; an unprecedented 68.5 million people around the world were forced from their homes by the end of 2017, more than the current population of the UK. Among them are nearly 25.4 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18. Today, the UNHCR estimates that one person is displaced every two seconds as a result of conflict or persecution. What is more, levels of migration are likely to continue to increase, with fundamental implications not just for migrants and their countries of origin, but for all of us.

Addressing migration is an urgent humanitarian and policy priority. Protracted human, economic, and environmental insecurity are compelling those affected to place themselves at intolerable risk in an effort to find sanctuary elsewhere. Many are left to rely on people smugglers to facilitate their journeys; the unlucky ones find themselves the victims of traffickers, whilst many others experience exploitation in their country of destination. The challenge of accommodating the current levels of people movement has become too great for traditional approaches. Interventions have become outmoded, with many migrants spending decades in accommodation originally designed for temporary relief.

Though migrant arrivals in countries like the UK have naturally generated much interest, the reality of migration is that it is a largely regional phenomenon. This report, the second in our Global People Movements series, examines the regional drivers of migration and the different types of irregular migrant journey. It focuses upon the four regions at the heart of today’s migrant crisis: sub-Saharan Africa, MENA, LAC, and Asia. Between them, they exemplify the range of issues confronting both policymakers and the migrants themselves; they comprise the countries of origin of 68% of the 258 million international migrants worldwide, over two-thirds of the world’s refugees, and 92% of the world’s 38 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Whilst the four regions face some similar—and familiar—challenges, the dynamics of displacement within each differs, offering a valuable opportunity to assess the factors contributing to migration.

1. For a full list of nations within each of the four regions, see Appendices.
2. Unless otherwise indicated, international migrant stock data points in this report are drawn from: United Nations Population Division, International Migrant Stock, by origin and destination, Table 1, last accessed April 2018.
DRIVERS OF MIGRATION

The principle drivers of necessity-driven migration all have one feature at their heart: insecurity. People migrate when their wellbeing is under immediate threat, or is stymied by a protracted absence of opportunity. Our analysis of these four regions focuses upon the three fundamental drivers of migration: human insecurity, economic insecurity, and environmental insecurity.

Human insecurity

In 2017, 16.2 million people were displaced as a result of persecution, conflict or generalised violence. This equates to 44,400 people every day and is the highest number recorded by UNHCR. A greater degree of ethnic conflict and political violence has brought with it more frequent targeting of civilians and an increasing disregard for international humanitarian norms. This trend can be seen in the patterns of conflict-driven migration around the world; people fleeing conflict typically seek refugee status in neighbouring countries, but rarely have the means to move further afield. Human insecurity, however, can result from causes other than conflict. Political unrest and oppression, religious and ethnic intolerance, and high levels of crime cause people to fear for their freedom and safety, and that of their families.

Economic insecurity

A severe lack of prosperity acts as a significant ‘push’ factor, frequently leaving people with little choice but to migrate. Many of those ranked in the bottom 50 nations in the Legatum Prosperity Index—Libya, Sudan, the Central African Republic, Guinea, Mali, Zimbabwe, Laos and Bangladesh—have recently experienced annual net emigration of 1.5% or more. However, migration is often a pathway to prosperity available only to those with enough funds to begin their journey. Consequently, we see those people living in the most impoverished conditions the least able to migrate; being food-insecure in a non-conflict setting is an indicator that an individual is unlikely to have the means to undertake international migration.

Environmental insecurity

Extreme weather and slow-onset environmental pressures are increasingly reported as a major cause of migration, with an estimated 25.3 million people displaced every year due to environmental insecurity. The International Organization of Migration (IOM) predicts there will be a total of 200 million environmentally-displaced people by the year 2050. Alongside the immediate effects of extreme weather, protracted instances of resource scarcity caused by environmental pressures are fast becoming a major cause of mass displacement, particularly when coupled with other socioeconomic factors. So-called ‘slow-onset’ emergencies often involve the degradation of water resources and arable land, forcing people to leave land that is no longer able to support those that rely on it. Such resource-scarcity is frequently a key driver of conflict.

5. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), The state of food security and nutrition in the world, 21 December 2017.
DYNAMICS OF DISPLACEMENT

Today, there are over 258 million people living outside their country of birth. Though a number of migrant statuses exist, they often fail to reflect the true motivation behind journeys. Many of those driven by economic insecurity are often mistaken for opportunity-driven migrants, seeking employment abroad. Similarly, many migrants fleeing conflict or persecution cannot be granted refugee status until the end of their journeys, having been granted asylum. Until that moment, they are informally classified as living in ‘refugee-like conditions’.

The correlation between migrants and refugees is clear; the highest numbers of international migrants and refugees (and asylum seekers) come from the same countries of origin. In addition, several major source countries for refugees also host tens of thousands of people experiencing conflict in neighbouring countries. Refugees are particularly concentrated in the nations within sub-Saharan African and the Middle East and North Africa, both in terms of numbers and also per population. The regions’ total number of refugees is estimated at 18.3 million, with a further 2.4 million asylum seekers seeking refugee status. Regardless of status, countless migrants have found themselves in situations of extreme vulnerability. Consequently, our analysis focuses upon what we consider to be the three most vulnerable groups: migrants driven by economic necessity, refugees and asylum-seekers, and IDPs.

Migrants driven by economic insecurity

Over 88% of all international migrants of the four regions are classified as opportunity- or necessity-driven. Distinguishing between the two, especially in developing regions of the world, is not always straightforward. Opportunity-driven migration implies a degree of agency in taking the decision to migrate. Those living in extreme poverty have little alternative but to migrate, yet many would still class this as opportunity-driven migration. It is not. The clear correlation between the leading countries of origin for refugees and for non-refugees suggests that, in reality, most migrants leave their home countries out of necessity rather than choice. Nonetheless, necessity-driven migrants do not qualify for international protection.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

More than two-thirds of the world’s refugees originate from just five countries within three of our regions: Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar and Somalia. Refugees were first formally defined by the 1951 UN Refugee Convention as people “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.” At the end of 2017, there were over 25 million registered refugees around the world. In reality, the number of non-registered people meeting the Convention’s definition far exceeds this, whilst the number of those seeking refugee status (asylum seekers) stands at over 3 million.

8. UN, Global Compact for Migration.
9. See Table 2 in Appendices for more detail on each of the four regions.
Internally Displaced Persons

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are defined as those 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.”12 Like refugees, IDPs flee their homes for many different reasons, including armed conflict and human rights violations. Unlike refugees, IDPs do not have legal status under international law and there is no specific international—as opposed to regional—treaty that grants them protection. Instead, their protection is left to their own governments, which may in some cases be the very entity forcing them to flee.13

This report explains why these four regions are of such significance to the current policy and public debate on necessity-driven migration. Its four chapters provide an examination of the key trends across each of the four regions, and are structured as follows:

Drivers of migration: This provides a comparative analysis of the three different drivers of migration—human insecurity, economic insecurity, and environmental insecurity—and their relative impact on the region’s migration dynamic.

Dynamics of displacement: This examines the different experiences of migrants driven by economic necessity, refugees and asylum seekers, and IDPs.

Journey conditions: This assesses the many challenges and risks facing migrants within each region, from geographical and bureaucratic barriers, to people trafficking.

12. UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement
13. In September 2016, the UN General Assembly adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. While a notable commitment to protecting refugee and migrants’ rights, it included just one short paragraph on IDPs, based on “the possibility that such persons might seek protection and assistance in other countries as refugees or migrants”. As such, IDP protection continues to be neglected at an international level.
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

- An estimated 3% of sub-Saharan Africa’s population lives outside of their country of birth. However, nine out of ten of the world’s fastest growing emigrant populations are from sub-Saharan Africa’s countries.
- The region hosts around a third of the world’s refugees. This is a higher proportion of refugees than any other region in the world. Most stay within the region, with countries such as Ethiopia, Sudan and Uganda among the world’s top ten refugee hosts in 2017. Children account for one in two of sub-Saharan African refugees.
- Sub-Saharan Africa is host to the world’s highest number of IDPs, with 12.9 million people displaced within their own countries. Nowhere is this more apparent than the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the number of IDPs doubled in 2017.
- Intra-regional flows define migratory movement in sub-Saharan Africa. 70% of migratory movements in West Africa are linked to employment opportunities within the sub-region.

The pace of migration in sub-Saharan Africa is accelerating and is mostly intra-regional; most African migrants stay within the region. Nine out of ten of the world’s fastest growing emigrant populations are from sub-Saharan African countries, and the region is host to the world’s highest number of IDPs, with 12.9 million people displaced within their own countries.

Sub-Saharan Africa features prominently in the current academic and policy debate on migration. For those of us in Europe, emotive footage of desperate migrants risking their lives to cross the Mediterranean has come to define the issue. The region’s security, economic, and environmental challenges are profound. For more than a decade, it has ranked bottom in the Legatum Prosperity Index, with its nations occupying 17 of the bottom 25 rankings in the 2018 edition. Furthermore, sub-Saharan Africa’s persistent development challenges are likely to be compounded by rapid population growth, with projections estimating that the region will be home to some 2.2 billion people by 2050.

However, contrary to popular perceptions, the majority of sub-Saharan Africa’s migrants do not leave the continent, instead moving within the region, largely to neighbouring countries. In the two years between 2015 and 2017, the number of international migrants living within the region increased from 16 million to around 19 million, three times the rate of increase of those leaving the continent. This reality is, at least in part, a reflection of the stark choices facing many people—especially children—fleeing insecurity. Often devoid of the means of financing a journey to Europe or elsewhere, migrants have little choice but to seek sanctuary in a neighbouring country.

14. Unless otherwise indicated, international migrant stock data points in this report are drawn from: United Nations Population Division, International Migrant Stock, by origin and destination, Table 1, last accessed April 2018.
DRIVERS OF MIGRATION

Human insecurity

Conflict and insecurity are major drivers of migration across sub-Saharan Africa. Of the 11.8 million newly displaced by conflict in 2017, almost half of these (5.5 million) were in sub-Saharan Africa.\(^\text{17}\) In South Sudan, a third of the country’s 12.6-million strong population have been displaced internally and to neighbouring countries, and over two-thirds are severely food insecure.\(^\text{18}\) Conflict has disrupted livelihoods, harvests and market systems. In Nigeria, the region’s most populous nation, the Islamist group Boko Haram has been responsible for displacing an estimated 2.1 million people in the area of the Lake Chad basin,\(^\text{19}\) with those fleeing seeking refuge from grave violations of human rights,\(^\text{20}\) widespread sexual and gender-based violence, forced recruitment and suicide bombings.\(^\text{21}\) Looking at total numbers of IDPs due to conflict, Somalia (800k), Nigeria (1.7m), Sudan (2m), South Sudan (1.9m) and the DRC (4.5m), are among the top five IDP countries in sub-Saharan Africa.\(^\text{22}\) African nations occupy no fewer than 35 of the top 50 positions in the US-based Fund for Peace’s 2018 *Fragile States Index*, while the region has the most conflict-related displaced persons globally.

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Political violence continues to be a major push factor for migration. The recent ‘crackdown’ by Zimbabwe’s police and security forces was reported to have caused the deaths of at least 12 protestors. Violence has frequently marred elections on the continent; more than 37 people were killed following Kenya’s presidential election in 2017, reviving memories of the widespread violence in the aftermath of the 2007 election which killed more than 1,000 and left more than 600,000 people displaced.

A recent OECD study says that a lack of trust in ‘democratic performance’, security services, and the police in particular, is a bigger driver of migration from Nigeria than economic reasons. This reflects a broader trend that political instability and persecution are major drivers of migration on the continent.

In 2019, more than a dozen sub-Saharan African nations are due to conduct elections, including Mozambique, South Africa, Senegal, and Malawi. Nigeria recently held an election on 23 February 2019. In their 2011 election, more than 800 died as a result of post-electoral violence, prompting

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24. The EU+ is composed of 28 EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland.
27. ‘Zimbabwe protests: Crackdown is just a “taste of things to come”’, BBC, 20 January 2019.
fears that a disputed result could lead to widespread unrest this time. Fortunately, violence has not been as widespread during Nigeria’s recent election, but unfortunately clashes still occurred between supporters of opposing parties, mainly in the south. So far, 39 people have been killed across several states and 128 people were arrested for election related offences ranging from homicide to vote-buying. More violence may still occur as we are yet to see the country’s response play out in full. Incumbent President Muhammadu Buhari won, despite facing criticism during his first term that his anti-corruption campaign was used to kill political opposition and that proceeds from the oil industry (Nigeria is Africa’s largest oil-producing nation) were not being channelled towards the country’s development during his first term. After a close fought race and a week’s delay due to logistical problems, he claimed 56% of the vote with a lead of 3 million votes, though voter turnout was lower than in 2015 at only 35.6%. Voters hope that Buhari will maintain a strong campaign to tackle violence by Boko Haram and that he will be more even-handed with his anti-corruption campaign.

Economic insecurity

Sub-Saharan Africa is home to some of the world’s poorest populations, with the region accounting for around half of all global extreme poverty. According to the World Bank’s most recent figures, 41% of the population of sub-Saharan Africa lives on less than $1.90 a day. Though poverty rates across the continent have been in decline over the course of several decades, the absolute number of those living in poverty has risen owing to population growth. In 2018 Nigeria, Africa’s largest economy, overtook India as the country with the largest number of people living in extreme poverty. A lack of economic prospects is prompting a new wave of migration driven by economic insecurity. Those who are able seek work elsewhere in order to support their loved ones who stay behind. Many Africans now say they would move abroad to find work if circumstances permitted, and the highest levels of emigration per capita tend to come from small countries where economic prospects are particularly limited. Economic insecurity is being exacerbated by the region’s rapid population growth. Sub-Saharan Africa’s population is expected to double by 2050, with the working-age share rising from 36.5% to 43.7%. Keeping pace with population growth will require 18 million new jobs each year yet new International Labour Organization (ILO) data shows that job creation is already lagging behind. Despite static unemployment rates, population growth is expected to have driven unemployment up by 1.1 million in 2018. Nine million more people—an estimated 72% of the workforce—are believed to have ‘vulnerable employment’ status, with 61% in working poverty. The resulting urbanisation that is expected to accompany the region’s rapid population growth is likely to place considerable strain on key services, infrastructure and housing stock. With half of the region’s urban population currently living in slums—already the highest incidence in the world—this poses a major challenge for current and future leaders of African nations.

33. ‘Ballots are being counted in a Nigerian election plagued by unrest and other problems’, CNN, 26 February 2019.
37. World Bank, ‘While Poverty in Africa Has Declined, Number of Poor Has Increased’, March 2016.
38. ‘Nigeria overtakes India in extreme poverty ranking’, CNN, 26 June 2018.
Environmental insecurity

Environmental pressures are a growing driver of migration within sub-Saharan Africa. An estimated 2.5 million people in sub-Saharan Africa were displaced by environmental disasters in 2017. However, larger-scale displacement is threatened by slow-onset disasters, caused by poor resilience to environmental pressures. This is exemplified by the case of Lake Chad, which has shrunk by 90% since the 1960s, detrimentally impacting the 25 million people in the region who depend on it for their livelihoods. The dramatic reduction in water levels means that almost 7 million people are currently food insecure.

The European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) identified such changes as compounding other causes of migration from sub-Saharan Africa, asserting that “the combination of poverty, dependence on agriculture, environmental degradation, and population growth are creating a vicious circle, which can be expected to translate into increasing forced migration.”

As in other regions, environmental pressures combine with other push factors to create intolerable conditions for individuals and communities. In the Horn of Africa, the most severe drought in 60 years has exacerbated conflict-driven migration from Somalia, and is pushing others to leave Ethiopia and Eritrea. Five times as many people were reported displaced by drought in 2017 compared to the

41. UNHCR, 13.5 million children now uprooted in Africa - including those displaced by conflict, poverty and climate change, 9 February 2019.
45. ECFR, Climate-driven migration in Africa, 20 December 2017.
The vast majority of Sub-Saharan migration is within Africa. African countries are destinations for African migrants.

Sub-Saharan Africa is host to the highest number of internally displaced persons on the planet, with 12.9 million displaced in 2018.

Sub-Saharan Africa will have a population of 2.2 billion by 2050 with a need today for 18 million jobs per year.

The dynamics of displacement within sub-Saharan Africa

peak of the 2011 famine in Somalia. As of May 2018, 2.7 million people cannot meet their daily food requirements and more than half are on the brink of famine. Another 2.7 million need livelihood support to keep them from sliding into crisis. Vulnerable communities emerging from conflict are also finding their pathways from poverty hampered by environmental insecurity, whilst the sharp rise in regional refugee flows places additional pressure on communities and authorities in drought-affected refugee-hosting countries. Migration-related population pressure may have two negative effects. First, it can increase conflict over scarce resources, as seen with the Fulani Herdsmen conflict in Nigeria. Second, rapid urbanisation to provide for a sudden population influx can result in poor infrastructure. This leaves inhabitants at risk of further displacement, and the cycle begins again.

DYNAMICS OF DISPLACEMENT

Migrants driven by economic insecurity

The notable overlap between the major countries of origin for refugees and for non-refugees suggests that significant numbers of migrants are driven by economic necessity. As of mid-2017, an estimated 1.2 million people had left Sudan, where more than seven million people are currently in need of humanitarian assistance and a further 5.5 million experience food insecurity, according to the USAID.49

47. World Food Programme (WFP), Somalia, accessed 22 March 2019.
49. The majority of such migrants seek economic security in Gulf states; some 436,000 Sudanese nationals are estimated to be in Saudi Arabia, 127,000 in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), 50,000 in Kuwait.
A significant proportion of those undocumented migrants arriving in North Africa are believed to originate in sub-Saharan Africa, though estimates vary considerably. The migrant population in Libya is believed to number between 400,000 and one million, many of whom have begun their journeys south of the Sahara. The 41,016 Sudanese refugees registered in Egypt are likely to represent only a fraction of the overall Sudanese migrant population, estimated by some at over 3 million.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

The sub-Saharan African region hosts about a third of the world’s refugees. However, as with other forms of necessity-driven migration, the vast majority of refugee journeys are intra-regional; some 85% of its 7.4 million refugees and asylum seekers remain on the continent. Persistent conflict in nations like South Sudan, Somalia and the DRC have had a dramatic impact on their neighbours; countries such as Ethiopia, Sudan and Uganda were among the world’s top ten refugee hosts in 2017, highlighting once again that the majority of refugee cross-border movements are toward the closest safe country.

Around half of all Somali international migrants are refugees and asylum seekers who have sought protection in Kenya, Uganda and Europe. In the DRC, conflict continues to drive thousands from their homes, with an estimated 743,000 refugees and asylum seekers as of April 2018 hosted mainly in Uganda (39%), Tanzania (11%), Rwanda (10%), and Burundi (10%). In South Sudan the worsening humanitarian situation has triggered a high influx of refugees and asylum seekers, reaching 2.45 million in March 2018, mainly hosted in Uganda, Sudan, Kenya and the DRC.

Most of the region’s governments have had little choice but to welcome refugees; their preferred approach is the development of designated refugee camps. Conditions within those countries receiving refugees vary considerably. Uganda—which hosts the largest number of refugees in the region—has amongst the most progressive approaches to the receipt and integration of refugees.

Internally Displaced Persons

Sub-Saharan Africa is host to the world’s highest number of IDPs with 12.9 million people displaced within their own countries. However, only five countries account for the majority of IDPs and, according to a study by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), these countries are all among the world’s 10 most neglected displacement crises in terms of media coverage, political will, and the level of economic assistance provided to IDPs.

Despite improving protections for IDPs, those African countries with the highest or growing number of IDPs—DRC, Sudan, Nigeria, South Sudan, the Central African Republic (CAR)—have faced few concrete sanctions for failure to accommodate and resettle IDP populations. The ongoing failure to legislate and enforce global standards on IDPs protection requires urgent attention.

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50. IOM, Libya Plan, December 2017.
52. Brookings Institution, Who are the 5 million refugees and immigrants in Egypt? 4 October 2016.
53. Ethiopia was host to over 1.2 million regional migrants mainly from Somalia (467,000), South Sudan (417,000), Eritrea (217,000) and Sudan (417,434), most of whom are refugees or in refugee-like situations. Ethiopia has unveiled a new refugee policy committing to longer-term programming for integration and livelihoods, bringing it in line with Uganda in having one of the world’s most progressive refugee policies.
54. The figure of Somali refugees and asylum-seekers is estimated at around one million.
55. Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), The world’s most neglected displacement crises, 1 June 2017.
JOURNEY CONDITIONS

Limited mobility on the African continent makes personal wealth a key determinant of an individual’s ability to migrate and, importantly, of the conditions during their journeys. Free movement of people has been a longstanding goal of African continental integration, yet progress on this issue has to date primarily been at the level of regional economic communities.56 Faced with a limited number of options for regular migration, people have to take extraordinary risks to reach their destinations, and are especially reliant on smugglers to facilitate their journeys. Many are subject to abuse at the hands of their smugglers, whilst others forfeit their freedom altogether, finding themselves trafficked against their will. Women are especially vulnerable; in July 2017, a report on human trafficking through the Central Mediterranean Route by the IOM estimated that as many as 80% of girls arriving from Nigeria ‘are potential victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation.’57 Mixed migration flows within West Africa tend to be fragmented and largely reliant on smuggling networks. These are highly organised and often control the detention centres where migrants are

56. Since March 2018, 49 of Africa’s 55 states have signed a treaty establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA). By contrast, the accompanying Protocol on Free Movement has been signed by only 30 - just over half of Africa’s states. Only one country (Rwanda) has ratified the protocol.

57. ‘UN Migration Agency Issues Report on Arrivals of Sexually Exploited Migrants, Chiefly from Nigeria’, IOM Press Release, 21 July 2017. The press release stated that the report was ‘based on data collected by the IOM at landing sites and in reception centres for migrants in the regions of southern Italy, where the IOM carries out the identification of potential victims and assists those who, once identified, decide to escape their exploiters and accept IOM support.’
held, where they are repeatedly exposed to violence and exploitation. Migrant smuggling, and in some cases labour exploitation, has become a key source of income for many. Smuggling fees can reach around $3,000 for a route from Niger to Libya and smugglers may earn up to $6,000 a week for their work.\textsuperscript{58, 59} Journeys can take years; surveys conducted in Italy by the IOM show that most West African migrants finance each leg of their journey to Europe by working in transit countries.

Until 2017, landlocked Niger was the prime gateway for trans-Saharan smuggling of migrants to Libya and Europe. Niger is a key transit space for migrants, in part because of its location on Libya’s southern border. International efforts to deter human smuggling—most notably Niger’s 2015 law criminalising human smuggling—have displaced, rather than solved, the problem. As smugglers face greater risks, migrants face appalling unintended consequences, including being abandoned in the desert by traffickers desperate to avoid detection. The UN currently estimates that such irregular journeys across the Sahara are twice as deadly as those across the Mediterranean to Europe.\textsuperscript{60, 61}

\begin{quote}
\textbf{Dumped in the desert}

A large and boisterous transit centre in Agadez, central Niger, is home to hundreds of weary, homesick migrants. Conditions in such locations are incredibly poor, with little food, water, or shelter.\textsuperscript{62}

In one large hut around 20 young men from a variety of West African countries attend a class on how to set up a small business when they get home. Among them is 27-year-old Umar Sankoh from Sierra Leone, who was dumped in the Sahara by a trafficker when he was unable to pay him more money. “The struggle is so hard in the desert, so difficult to find your way. You don’t have food, you don’t have nothing [sic], even water you can’t drink. It’s so terrible,” he said. The UNHCR has rescued over 1,200 people who end up in such brutal detention centres.\textsuperscript{63}

On the way, many are lost to the Sahara desert though accurate statistics are hard to find; it’s harder to patrol the Sahara than the Mediterranean. If migrants do reach the Libyan coast, they run the risk of death through boarding un-seaworthy inflatable boats that are prone to capsize on their journey across the Mediterranean Sea. A recent UNHCR study found that an average of six lives a day were lost to the sea in 2018.\textsuperscript{64}

For some, like Mr Sankoh, giving up seems like a better option. He once dreamed of a better life in Europe, but now has only one thought in mind: “I want to go home. My family will be happy because it’s been a long time so they must believe I am dead. If they see me now they’ll think, ‘Oh my God, God is working!’”\textsuperscript{65}
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{58} United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), \textit{Global Study on Smuggling of Migrants 2018}, p. 46
\item \textsuperscript{59} ‘African migration ‘a trickle’ thanks to trafficking ban across the Sahara’, \textit{BBC}, 11 January 2019.
\item \textsuperscript{60} ‘Migrant deaths in the Sahara likely twice Mediterranean toll – UN’, \textit{Reuters}, 12 October 2017.
\item \textsuperscript{61} ‘African migration ‘a trickle’ thanks to trafficking ban across the Sahara’, \textit{BBC}, 11 January 2019.
\item \textsuperscript{63} UNHCR, Grand praises generosity of Niger for hosting thousands of refugees, 20 June 2018.
\item \textsuperscript{64} UNHCR, Desperate Journeys: Refugees and migrants arriving in Europe and at Europe’s borders, 30 January 2019.
\item \textsuperscript{65} ‘African migration ‘a trickle’ thanks to trafficking ban across the Sahara’, \textit{BBC}, 11 January 2019.
\end{itemize}
Migrant journeys north from the Horn of Africa tend to be shorter than from West Africa. Tempting ‘leave no, pay later’ schemes are offered to migrants for a full ‘package’ to North Africa, Southern Africa or Europe. These ‘packages’ mean that migrants place themselves in the hands of smugglers and traffickers for the entirety of their journeys. The migrants’ extreme vulnerability leaves them susceptible to repeated exploitation, with additional payments demanded from relatives to continue the journey. The total reliance upon their smugglers means that most migrants are exploited at some point in transit.\(^{66}\) Though Sudanese migrants pay smugglers between $2,000 and $4,000 per head to facilitate their journeys from Khartoum to Libya,\(^{67}\) conditions are appalling; the border crossing takes places on vehicles carrying migrants and goods along desert tracks, and typically involves days of travel where temperatures can reach 60 degrees Celsius in the trucks and drop below freezing at night.


\(^{67}\) UNODC, *Global Study on Smuggling of Migrants 2018*, p.46.
In MENA, migration is largely conflict-driven with profound implications for nations bordering conflict zones. The civil war in Syria has led over 5 million citizens of Syria to flee to neighbouring states: there are now 3.46 million in Turkey, 950,000 million in Lebanon, 670,000 in Jordan, 250,000 in Iraq, along with an additional 130,000 in Egypt.

Turkey is host to nearly 5 million migrants, and the country hosts the largest refugee population in the world.

MENA nations have emerged as one of the three main transit points for irregular migration into Europe. The Gulf nations are the main destination countries in the region, relying largely on South Asian low-skilled labour.

In MENA, migration is largely conflict-driven with profound implications for nations bordering conflict zones, with over one third (11m) of the region’s international migrants originating from three countries: Syria, Palestine and Lebanon. Over 5 million citizens of Syria have fled to neighbouring states: there are now 3.64 million in Turkey, 950,000 in Lebanon, 670,000 in Jordan, 250,000 in Iraq, and 130,000 in Egypt.

The challenges facing Middle Eastern and North African migrants have grabbed the world’s attention since the onset of the so-called Arab Spring in 2011. Today, more than 30 million international migrants originate in the MENA region, representing 6% of the area’s population, approaching twice the global average. Conflict and instability set in motion by the Arab Spring have profoundly influenced the region’s migration dynamic. Today, Syria is the country of origin for more refugees than anywhere else in the world, whilst neighbouring Turkey has hosted the world’s largest number of refugees for the fourth consecutive year. Elsewhere, recent insecurity in Iraq, Yemen and Afghanistan continues to drive significant migration within the region, exacerbating economic and environmental challenges facing individuals, their families, and communities.

As of the end of 2017, there were 12.6 million forcibly displaced Syrians, comprising around 6.3 million refugees, 146,700 asylum-seekers, and 6.2 million IDPs. See UNHCR, Forced Displacement – Global trends in 2017.
DRIVERS OF MIGRATION

Human insecurity

In September 2018, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights estimated that around 560,000 people had been killed in the country’s civil war since it began in 2011. The latest estimates by UNHCR indicate that 5.6 million Syrians are registered refugees. Meanwhile, 6.6 million remain internally displaced and 13.1 million are considered to be people in need. Islamist extremism has continued to blight the region; though Islamic State have now been successfully driven from Iraq and almost all of Syria, the group’s affiliates remain operational in parts of Libya, Yemen, Algeria, Egypt, and Tunisia.

For many, the Arab Spring has failed to usher in a new era of greater stability and tolerance. Political repression, endemic corruption and sustained intolerance of minorities have created a climate that continues to drive migration. In Tunisia, a recent survey showed that 89% of the interviewees believe that corruption is currently more extensive than before the 2011 uprising that saw the fall of long-

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69. Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), In about 93 months ... about 560 thousand were killed in Syria since the day of claiming rights to the international human rights day, 10 December 2018.
70. UNHCR, Syrian Regional Refugee Response, last updated 12 November 2018.
71. UNHCR, Syria Emergency, last updated 19 April 2018.
72. ‘After the caliphate: Has IS been defeated?’, BBC, 7 February 2019.
time President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Meanwhile in many countries throughout the region, members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community are targeted, and same-sex intercourse is criminalised in most states in the region, carrying the death penalty in Saudi Arabia and Iran.

**Economic insecurity**

More than a quarter of the population in conflict-affected countries such as Syria, Yemen, Iraq, and Libya are undernourished, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation. In Yemen, 40% of the population is in severe multidimensional poverty, with an additional 22.4% near to it. In Iraq, 13.3% of the population is in multidimensional poverty, while 7.4% are near to it. Nearly all the region’s countries report high unemployment rates, especially among the youth. In Morocco, unemployment has been high for decades, reaching around 10%. With the graduation of 135,000 new job-seekers in 2017, the total number of unemployed people has hit 1.2 million, with 42.8% of the urban youth unemployed.

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73. Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights (FTDES), *Migration non réglementaire en Tunisie (3ème trimestre 2017)*, 24 October 2017.

74. UNDP, *International human development indicators*, accessed 27 April 2018. The UNDP defines multidimensional poverty as poverty experienced ‘in multiple and simultaneous ways across three key dimensions: health, education and standard of living’. The UNDP’s Multi-dimensional Poverty Index (MPI) categorises people as multi-dimensionally poor if they experience deprivation in at least one third of the Index’s ten weighted indicators.
In the coming years, the large numbers of unemployed young people present a significant challenge for MENA states.\footnote{The Brookings Institution, Youth Employment in the Middle East and North Africa: Revisiting and reframing the challenge, 26 February 2019.} In 2004, a World Bank report estimated that as many as 80 million jobs would need to be created in the next two decades to absorb the rising numbers of young people entering the labour market.\footnote{World Bank, Unlocking the employment potential in the Middle East and North Africa: toward a new social contract, 2004.} Without adequate employment and prospects for advancement, many young people will seek to create their own pathways from poverty to prosperity abroad.

Environmental insecurity

According to the International Energy Agency, many MENA countries face chronic water insecurity, with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states facing the most acute threat.\footnote{International Energy Agency (IEA), WEO-2018 Special Report: Outlook for Producer Economies, 2018} Changes in environmental conditions are expected to put extra strain on groundwater sources and increase demand for desalinated water. Drought is expected to become more prevalent, leading to a reduction in agricultural output. Rising sea levels could force the evacuation of millions of people from low-lying coastal areas.

The World Resources Institute forecasts that in 2040, 14 of the 33 most water-stressed territories will be in the Middle East, including those considered extremely highly stressed in the Gulf (Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE, Saudi Arabia and Oman) and in the Levant (Lebanon, Israel and Palestinian
The fate of Yazidi women

On August 3, 2014, Daesh attacked Yazidis in Sinjar, Iraq. Thousands of Yazidis were killed or abducted; tens of thousands were forced to flee. According to the International Independent Commission of Inquiry on the Syria Arab Republic (the IICoISAR), more than 3,200 Yazidi women and children have remained in captivity. The IICoISAR reported ‘men being killed or forced to convert; of women and girls, some as young as nine, sold at market and held in sexual slavery by Daesh fighters; and of boys ripped from their families and forced into Daesh training camps.’ Daesh’s genocidal campaign was subsequently unleashed against the Christian community in Nineveh Plains and other religious minorities in the region.

Basse’s daughter was 6 years old when she was taken from her: ‘They took her hands out of my hands, and put her into the hands of the enemy…. every day and night I imagine what Daesh are doing to her.” Basse had found an image of her daughter on a ‘market place’ website of girls for sale. She told me that her daughter’s hair had been cut short and dyed black because “that will have been the preference of the man she was sold to.”

Lelia (31) said “They took my 9 and 11 year old sons: They took my 10 year old daughter: They took my husband. I don’t know if they are dead, or alive. I pray to God that before I die I will see and hold them again.” Lelia describes the moment of separation from her children and husband as death. She re-experiences the profound pain and helplessness that was forced upon her in that one moment through nightmares, which she awakes from screaming.

Hadiya (25) was sold into sexual and domestic slavery to 12 different Daesh fighters. She recalled countless experiences of rape and brutal physical violence, including the time she was beaten unconscious with a belt.

As confirmed in the recent UN Security Council resolution 2379, Daesh has perpetrated crimes including ‘murder, kidnapping, hostage-taking, suicide bombings, enslavement, sale into or otherwise forced marriage, trafficking in persons, rape, sexual slavery and other forms of sexual violence, recruitment and use of children, attacks on critical infrastructure, as well as its destruction of cultural heritage.’ The real extent of the atrocities is yet to be established and mass graves continue to be discovered.

Waso’s (15) message to the world was “Please save our Yezidi people who are still being held captive by ISIS; among them are my parents and my siblings. There are thousands of people out there like me.”

78. The International Independent Commission of Inquiry on the Syria Arab Republic (IICoISAR), ‘‘They came to destroy’’. ISIS Crimes Against the Yazidis,” 15 June 2016.
79. IICoISAR, ‘‘They came to destroy’’. ISIS Crimes Against the Yazidis,” 15 June 2016.
80. Yezidi interview by Dr. Sarah Whittaker-Howe, Dohuk, Iraq-Khuristan, August 2017.
81. Yezidi interview by Dr. Sarah Whittaker-Howe, Dohuk, Iraq-Khuristan, August 2017.
82. Yezidi interview by Dr. Sarah Whittaker-Howe, Dohuk, Iraq-Khuristan, August 2017.
84. Yezidi interview by Dr. Sarah Whittaker-Howe, Dohuk, Iraq-Khuristan, August 2017.
Counting Palestinian migrants

The Palestinian international migrant stock is the second highest in the MENA region, the majority of whom are refugees and asylum seekers. However, the UN’s own estimates of the numbers of Palestinian migrants varies considerably. The UNHCR figure places the number at 3.8 million, whilst the UN Works and Relief Agency for Refugees in the Middle East (UNWRA) places it at over 5 million. UNWRA is a unique body set up by the UN in 1949 to handle the cases of Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Unlike UNHCR, its count includes people who would not normally be considered to be international refugees, including more than two million people residing in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

DYNAMICS OF DISPLACEMENT

Migrants driven by economic insecurity

As in the other regions featured in this report, the majority of journeys undertaken by MENA’s 23 million international non-refugee migrants are intra-regional. The wealthy Gulf countries are an extremely attractive destination, despite their high barriers to entry. GCC states almost never offer citizenship to international migrants.

The economic insecurity driving migration throughout the region takes several forms. Renewed US sanctions on the Iranian regime have increased prices within the country, and are believed to have resulted in an increase in the number of migrants seeking to reach European destinations such as the UK since September 2018. In the third quarter of 2018, the number of Iranian asylum seekers in Britain increased more than 30 percent from the previous year, with the UK Home Office reporting more asylum applicants in 2018 from Iran than any other country.

86. GCC states almost never offer citizenship to international migrants.
87. Migration Policy Institute, Egypt: Migration and Diaspora Politics in an Emerging Transit Country, 8 August 2018.
Refugees and Asylum Seekers

The central role played by conflict in MENA’s migration dynamic is clear; some 25% of migrants in MENA are refugees or asylum seekers, with the largest numbers originating from Syria, Iraq, and Iran.89 Syria’s 6.9 million refugees, (including people in refugee-like situations and asylum seekers) represents over 80% of the region’s total. The UN estimated that as many as three million people remained trapped in refugee-like situations as recently as October 2018, inhabiting towns and villages still besieged or occupied by Islamic State.90

Though Syria is the region’s principle source of refugees, the prevalence of conflict has ensured it is not alone. Iraq has produced over 635,000 refugees and asylum seekers, many of whom have also fled violence at the hands of Islamic State. Following the defeat of Islamic State in Iraq in late 2017, fears of sectarian violence persist.

Internally Displaced Persons

MENA is host to the second highest number of IDPs in the world. The countries of origin for the region’s 12.6 million IDPs correlate strongly with those failed and fragile states whose conflict and insecurity also generates a significant number of refugees; four nations—Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Libya—account for a disproportionate number of MENA’s internally-displaced population. The war in Syria has alone produced

more than 6 million IDPs, while in neighbouring Iraq, approximately 1.8 million IDPs are yet to be resettled following the defeat of IS.91 Elsewhere in the region, an estimated 7% of Yemen’s population are internally displaced, most of whom have resulted from the country’s four-year civil war. The majority of Yemenis are compelled to stay within their own country rather than seek international protection abroad, devoid of the financial means to escape.

JOURNEY CONDITIONS

Stricter EU migration policies have triggered mixed responses from Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, where most of the 6.9 million refugees who have fled the Syrian conflict now live. Border controls are tightening, further limiting the options for Syrians seeking to flee violence. Fearing a threat to internal stability, Jordan sealed its border with Syria in June 2016, following a suicide bombing near the makeshift camp of Rukban. Over 60,000 refugees have since been trapped in no-man’s land, receiving scant aid with no access for UN agencies. Although Jordan reopened its border with Syria in October 2018, the Rukban camp remains isolated and humanitarian supplies limited.

Since January 2015, Lebanon’s General Security service enforced entry regulations that in effect seal the border to many of those fleeing the Syrian conflict. Under the presidency of Michel Aoun, Beirut has further tightened border controls, as well as general policing of Syrians within Lebanon. Routes through the Northern provinces of Iraq and Syria lead irregular migrants into Turkey, and parts of the border area are criss-crossed with tiny trails established to assist smugglers in avoiding border patrols. Turkey has shut 17 of the 19 legal border crossings, regularly using physical force to prevent entry by those fleeing fighting in Syria. Several concrete walls on the border have dramatically reduced illegal crossings.

91. NRC, Iraqis still languishing one year since announced defeat of Islamic State group, 7 December 2018.
Escaping Syria

The 6.9 million citizens of Syria who have fled their homes seek shelter mainly in neighbouring states. 99% of Syrian international migrants are refugees and asylum seekers who have stayed within the region: 3.64 million in Turkey, 950,000 in Lebanon, 670,000 in Jordan, 250,000 in Iraq, and 130,000 in Egypt. Beyond the region, Germany is the main host country for Syrian refugees (496,700), with a total of nearly 700,000 people of Syrian nationality living in Germany as of December 2017.

Turkey is host to the largest refugee population in the world, with 3.9 million currently seeking protection, the majority of whom are Syrians. Turkish concerns over the scale of migration from Syria has made Ankara an increasingly assertive actor in the conflict. Following the March 2016 EU-Turkey agreement, Turkey has made strident efforts to control irregular flows of migrants from Syria. It has shut 17 of the 19 legal border crossings with Syria, regularly using physical force to prevent entry by those fleeing fighting in Aleppo or Idlib. Several concrete walls are nearing completion and have already dramatically reduced illegal crossings. Since the start of 2018, Turkish security forces apprehended over 240,000 irregular migrants.

Many of those Syrians residing in Turkey struggle to find employment, despite the government’s January 2016 decision to grant work permits in order to retain skilled Syrian workers who might benefit the economy. Syrians accounted for 24% of the 87,000 work permits issued to foreigners in Turkey in 2017. Companies that hire Syrians must prove that a Turkish citizen cannot be found to fill the job. About 750,000 to 950,000 Syrians are estimated to work in the informal sector within Turkey, a situation that makes them extremely vulnerable. Legally, Syrians should receive the same wage levels and benefits as Turkish citizens.

In practice, primarily because of working in the grey economy, they can be exploited and paid wages below the national minimum. Syrian children exploited for their labour may earn €35 or less for a 72-hour work week. Unemployment in Turkey has risen from 9% to 13%, reducing the prospects for integration. In some cases, Turkish citizens feel that Syrians are competition for low-wage jobs, sparking numerous instances of intercommunal violence.

The Turkish government plans to offer citizenship to more Syrian refugees. The International Crisis Group has reported that between 25,000 and 30,000 Syrian citizens may have already received citizenship, amid protests from those that oppose the move.

92. UNHCR, Syria Regional Refugee Response database; accessed 15 November 2018.
93. UNHCR, Global Trends 2017
96. Turkish Interior Ministry, Irregular migration, accessed 22 November 2018.
Jordan is also host to high numbers of Syrian and Palestinian refugees. Since 2011, Jordan’s government estimates that it has received 1.3 million Syrian refugees—the equivalent of over 10% of the local population. Only half the refugees in Jordan are registered with UNHCR; dispersed within the big cities, primarily Amman, Irbid, Zarqa and Mafraq, those who are unregistered are unable to access key services as a result.

More than 108,000 Syrians have received Jordanian work permits as of August 2018, many of them finding jobs in special economic zones (mostly for the garment industry) near the large Zaatari refugee camp. However, these zones do not resolve the challenge of providing access to the formal labour market, healthcare, and education, and hundreds of thousands of refugees still live below the poverty line. The widespread presence of refugees has a knock-on effect, and that is a factor in the decision of Jordanian citizens to seek opportunities elsewhere, even if other issues are also at play.

Syrian women and children in refugee camps are vulnerable to exploitation. According to Miraj Pradham, a UNICEF representative based in Amman, between 8,000 and 9,000 refugees living in Jordan have been forced into child marriage since the beginning of the conflict. Reports have indicated that ‘survival sex’ is prevalent among Syrian and Palestinian female refugees in Lebanon, as well as child labour.

An estimated 1 million Syrians have sought refuge in Lebanon since 2011, but only two-thirds are registered with the UN. In 2017, the General Security Office (GSO) of the Lebanese government waived a $200 annual fee for refugees to maintain legal status in the country, but only “for those registered with UNHCR prior to 1 January 2015 who have not renewed under other circumstances”. Without this status many Syrians live in deep poverty, without access to education and public health facilities. International aid packages have not translated into a comprehensive response plan agreed with the government. NGOs struggle to provide for Syrians living in destitution. Many men are in hiding to avoid deportation, while women and children are forced into unregulated, exploitative and unsafe labour.

102. ‘108,000 work permits issued for Syrian refugees since onset of crisis’, Jordan Times, August 2018
106. The Freedom Fund, Struggling to Survive: Slavery and Exploitation of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon, 8 April 2016
In focus: migrant journeys into Europe

Migrant arrivals into Europe have been in steady decline since their peak in 2015, when just over a million people arrived in the EU. A more coordinated and stricter EU response has seen the closure of the so-called Balkan route and more Syrian refugees staying in Turkey as well as neighbouring Lebanon and Jordan. The number of annual arrivals in Italy has declined dramatically from 180,000 in 2016 to 20,120 by mid-September 2018. The drop in numbers reaching Italy is attributed mainly to efforts to increase the rescue and return capability of the Libyan coastguard. Thus migration from Libya into Italy dropped 77% in 2018 because migrants do not get close to Italian shores.

Such measures have resulted in a displacement of sea crossings from the Eastern to the Western Mediterranean. The UNHCR states that routes used by human traffickers are constantly changing, partly in response to the new restrictions. Although these restrictions have led to an estimated reduction of between 55 and 80% in the overall number of migrants making the Mediterranean Sea crossing in 2018, it has led traffickers and smugglers to take greater risks to avoid detection.

The number of migrant deaths across the Mediterranean had reached over 2,000 by November 2018. Greater cooperation between Italian and Libyan authorities since 2017—including European aid to the Libyan coast guard—and stricter Italian asylum policies led Spain to overtake Italy in receiving the highest number of migrants and refugees in 2018—almost 35,000—the majority of them by sea.

Migrants originating from sub-Saharan Africa increasingly see Morocco as a safer and less expensive transit point into Europe than Libya; smugglers charge around $1,000 for the sea voyage from Morocco, compared with anywhere between $2,000 and $8,000 from Libya. Since 2011, large numbers of migrants reported to have suffered from physical violence in Libyan militia-controlled detention centres. Food and water shortages as well as abuses are routinely reported, including rape, torture, forced labour, and kidnap for ransom. The detention system has been described as “a thriving enterprise of kidnapping, torture and extortion” by the head of the NGO Doctors Without Borders.

111. UNHCR, Italy weekly snapshot – 24 June 2018, 24 June 2018; ‘Migrant death in Italy points to dire conditions in Libya – aid workers’, Reuters, 14 March 2018.
112. UNHCR, Desperate Journeys: Refugees and migrants arriving in Europe and at Europe’s borders, January – December 2018.
113. UNHCR, Desperate Journeys: Refugees and migrants arriving in Europe and at Europe’s borders, January – December 2018.
116. UNODC, Global Study on Smuggling of Migrants 2018, p. 46.
118. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Libya: Open letter - European governments are feeding the business of suffering, 6 September 2017.
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

- Drivers of migration in Latin America and the Caribbean vary considerably, prompted by a combination of economic insecurity, rising crime and political instability, and environmental pressures.
- Almost 39 million international migrants come from Latin America and the Caribbean countries. Despite the region accounting for less than 10% of the world’s population, labour migrants originating from LAC make up 27% of the global total. Economic and political downturn in Venezuela is forcing millions across borders. So far it’s seen a 3 million strong outflow.
- Crime is a prevalent factor in migration, with over 50% of crime victims in El Salvador and Honduras saying that they intended to leave the country, according to one survey in 2016/7.
- In 2017, an estimated 2.7 million people were newly displaced by natural disasters in the region.

Drivers of migration in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) vary considerably, prompted by a combination of economic insecurity, rising crime and political instability, and environmental pressures. A significant proportion of those leaving the region—more than any other—are driven by economic insecurity. The US is the preferred destination.

The LAC region has featured prominently in the debate on migration, with Venezuela’s political and economic crisis and the Trump administration’s pursuit of more stringent border security shining a spotlight on the drivers and implications of migrant journeys. Almost 38 million international migrants come from LAC countries, which is equivalent to around 6% of the region’s population, approaching twice the global average.119 Migration is a defining characteristic for many of the region’s nations; in 2017, Mexico, LAC’s second most populous nation, was the second largest country of origin for international migrants (13 million).120 Similarly, the emigrant population from smaller countries, especially those in the Caribbean, can equate to around half the size of the country’s population at home.121

LAC is the destination for fewer than 10 million migrants; two-thirds are from nations within the region. Argentina is the primary destination country within LAC, accounting for 22.8% of the international migrants living in the region. It is an especially prominent destination country for people coming from its neighbours, Paraguay and Bolivia, hosting around 705,000 and 435,000 people originating from those countries respectively.

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119. Unless otherwise indicated, international migrant stock data points in this report are drawn from: United Nations Population Division, International Migrant Stock, by origin and destination, Table 1, last accessed April 2018.
DRIVERS OF MIGRATION

Human insecurity

High crime and violence levels are increasingly driving population movements within LAC. Crime and gang-related violence are extremely common, and Central America experienced the highest rate in the world of female deaths as a result of interpersonal violence, at 8.27 per 100,000 inhabitants, compared to a global average rate of 1.93. Victims of crime across LAC are more likely than other people to want to leave their country. In some sub-regions, however, this trend is particularly pronounced. Almost half of the El Salvadorian migrants in a recent survey by the International Organization for Migration said they migrated because of insecurity or violence. Nine out of ten families with children in El Salvador hope to migrate in the future.

Civil unrest and state repression can create a climate of insecurity that prompts many to migrate, beyond those who are individually targeted for dissent. Protests against Nicaragua’s government, which began in April 2018, have triggered a wave of migration into Costa Rica. According to the

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125 "Our country is not a safe place: why Salvadorans will still head for the US", The Guardian, 24 June 2018.
UN, approximately 200 asylum applications are filed each day by Nicaraguans entering Costa Rica, with numbers having “increased exponentially in recent months”. As of late September 2018, approximately 24,000 Nicaraguans had requested refugee status in Costa Rica.126

**Economic insecurity**

This pattern is illustrative of the interrelated nature of causal factors behind migration. Those undertaking journeys from Nicaragua to Costa Rica—one of the wealthiest economies in Central America—are also motivated by economic insecurity. Costa Rica’s GDP per capita, of $11,768 in 2016, is considerably higher than in Nicaragua, where GDP per capita was just $2,144, according to the World Bank. Similarly, whilst Venezuela’s economic collapse and hyperinflation have resulted in food and medicine shortages, they account for only part of the 2.6 million outflow.127

Poverty rates are high in several countries in LAC, placing large numbers in conditions of acute economic insecurity. In 2016 poverty rates in the region as a whole rose to over 30%, after witnessing decades of decline. Although this figure held steady in 2017,128 poverty has declined fractionally to 25% in 2018.129, 130 Such levels of widespread and entrenched poverty constitute a significant push factor, prompting people to migrate from relatively poor countries to wealthier ones.

**Environmental insecurity**

Drought is a regular problem in Central America, exacerbated by poor water infrastructure and management, and the periodic effects of El Niño. Water became a particularly politicised issue in El Salvador during 2018, with apparent efforts to privatise water provision sparking major protests. The countries of Central America are facing increasingly difficult environmental conditions, as the annual dry period in July and August is becoming more intense each year. In 2017, over 1 million farmers were directly affected in an area known as the “dry corridor”, which spans Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua. Indirectly, the impact on food supplies has hit around 3.5 million people, some 2 million of whom were likely to require food aid according to the Rio Lempa Trinational Border Commonwealth. The Central American Agricultural Council has reported the loss of some 80% of bean crops and 60% of corn crops since 2015. Lakes and lagoons have also dried up because of a combination of heat and a lack of rainfall. This has destroyed fish stocks, eliminating livelihoods and exacerbating issues of food insecurity. The worsening farming conditions will drive up outward migration, particularly into Costa Rica, Mexico and the United States. In Mexico, Hurricane Willa displaced at least 10,000 people, whilst in Colombia heavy rainfall caused widespread flooding in the north of the country.131

128. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Poverty Increased in 2016 in Latin America and Reached 30.7% of the Population, a Percentage Seen Holding Steady in 2017, 20 December 2017.
130. ECLAC, Poverty Increased in 2016 in Latin America and Reached 30.7% of the Population, a Percentage Seen Holding Steady in 2017, 20 December 2017.
131. OCHA, Latin America & the Caribbean - Monthly Humanitarian Snapshot, as of 1 November 2018.
In the Caribbean, meanwhile, hurricanes and earthquakes routinely cause massive destruction, creating living conditions that many find intolerable. The region’s poorest country, Haiti, has experienced a series of devastating natural disasters in the past decade; some 2 million of the country’s 10 million-strong population were affected by the 2010 earthquake that claimed an estimated 130,000 lives, and the arrival of Hurricane Matthew in 2016 resulted in an outbreak of cholera and almost $2 billion worth of damage to an already fragile economy. Today, Haiti has almost 38,000 people living as IDPs; housed in 26 camps across the country, as many as 1 million still require humanitarian assistance. Additionally, 1.32 million people are facing severe food insecurity.

## DYNAMICS OF DISPLACEMENT

### Migrants driven by economic insecurity

As in other regions, many migrants are motivated by a desire to escape the economic insecurity they experience in their country of origin. The scale of migration in LAC, as elsewhere, has had a detrimental impact on the skills base of the economies of their countries of origin. While migrant workers originating in LAC are typically unskilled or semi-skilled and have few formal qualifications, indications of a “brain drain” from the region are spreading. Caribbean countries have long experienced such a phenomenon, with 85% of migrants from Jamaica, Grenada and St. Vincent and the Grenadines holders of tertiary education in 2006.

Recent studies suggest increasing numbers of skilled professionals are now emigrating from Mexico. A report by the University of Zacatecas published in March 2018 shows more than 1.4 million Mexicans with postgraduate degrees left the country between 1990 and 2015, due to a lack of professional development opportunities. Since 2000, the number of qualified Mexican migrants has continued to grow, in spite of a significant deceleration in the total number of those leaving. The main factor behind the brain drain has been Mexico’s inability to offer quality jobs and development opportunities for the highly educated. Access to available jobs is difficult, as they are often granted through personal connections or networks, rather than through the open, transparent application processes which tend to be the norm in the main destination markets.

Migrants generated $79 billion in remittances in 2017, up from $74 billion in 2016. Remittances growth was especially strong in Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador, some of which also experienced a major spike in violence and political instability in 2017 and 2018. While the number of Mexican migrants in the United States has slowly declined since 2014, family remittances keep growing year-on-year, totalling $33.7 billion in 2018.

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135. International Monetary Fund (IMF), Emigration and Brain Drain: Evidence From the Caribbean, 1 January 2006.
137. Pew Research Centre, Migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean sent a record amount of money to their home countries in 2016, 23 January 2018.
The posture of the current US administration towards the region’s migrants is expected to result in an increase in intra-regional migration. This is likely to have a knock-on impact on Mexico, which compares well to Central America’s ‘Northern Triangle’ of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador in terms of opportunity and security. Mexico has a far higher standard of living than these nations; in 2017, Mexico’s GDP per capita was $8,902, compared to $4,470 in Guatemala, $3,889 in Honduras and $2,480 in El Salvador. While Mexico has crime rates that are high by global standards, it is also for the most part safer than the Northern Triangle.

### Destination USA

The US remains the preferred extra-regional destination for LAC migrants. However, much of this migration has historically been cyclical (although the length of stay for migrants has varied from one season to a decade or more). Recent figures suggest this trend could be changing. The number of those returning to Mexico (almost entirely voluntarily) has increased dramatically in recent years. According to some studies, such returns meant that net Mexican migration to the US is now in reverse.

Amongst recent changes to US immigration policy enacted under President Donald Trump is the decision to revoke the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) of thousands of migrants from LAC currently resident in the US, who were provided the status several years ago as a result of various natural disasters. Tens of thousands of migrants are now at risk of deportation in the coming year, which threatens to further destabilise the economic and security situation in their countries of origin, which are largely unprepared for their return. In January 2018, the US government announced that it would withdraw TPS from the 200,000 Salvadoran nationals living in the country, the largest group of migrants with TPS, giving them until September 2019 to return home. In El Salvador, remittances of migrants who predominantly live in the United States account for 17% of the country’s GDP. If the population of international migrants were to shrink, this would have knock-on effects on the economy by reducing a vital source of income.

In May 2018, US authorities announced that TPS would also be withdrawn from 60,000 Honduran nationals, giving them until January 2020 to leave the country. This comes despite protests from the government of Honduras on the grounds that their nationals would be at risk from violent criminal activity upon their return. The US had previously withdrawn the TPS of 60,000 Haitians in the country, ordering them to return home by July 2019. Haiti already struggles to provide adequate living conditions for the citizens presently in the country, and will struggle to accommodate the return of tens of thousands more, raising the risk of further humanitarian challenges in the country.

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139. ‘Dispatches from the Field: Return Migration in Mexico’, Americas Quarterly, Summer 2014.
141. ‘U.S. moves toward expelling 200,000 Salvadorans’, Reuters, 8 January 2018.
A combination of underlying necessity and the level of asylum protection in destination countries are likely to be factors in determining the nature of this migration. For example, most Venezuelans have fled to Colombia or other South American countries, where they are afforded temporary forms of protection. Over one million such applications have been made by Venezuelan nationals in Latin American countries since 2015, including temporary residence permits, labour migration visas and humanitarian visas.

This figure is three times higher than the number of asylum applications by Venezuelans between 2015 and 2018. In Costa Rica, 200 applications are submitted each day by Nicaraguan asylum seekers. Border reports indicate that numbers of illegal migrants have surged as many fear rejection of their asylum claim and forced-return to Nicaragua. Others fear entering a lengthy bureaucratic process, and opt simply to move into Costa Rica, find work and attempt to avoid detection. This suggests that both Venezuelans and Nicaraguans are indeed fleeing their home countries, but are not necessarily reflected in refugee statistics.

**Refugees and Asylum Seekers**

With around 1.36 million refugees and asylum seekers originating in the region, LAC has one of the lowest totals of such migrants globally. Refugees and asylum seekers comprise just a small proportion (3.5%) of LAC’s international migrant stock, with two nations—Venezuela and Colombia—accounting for more than two thirds of LAC’s refugee and asylum seeker populations.
Outflows of migrants from Venezuela have spiked in the past year, as the country’s long-running political and economic crisis has worsened. The number of Venezuelans seeking asylum grew by 2,000% between 2015 and 2018. In 2015, 10,208 asylum claims were submitted, a number that rose to 248,669 by the end of 2018. In these three years there was a total of 403,919 asylum claims. About 40% of the claims have been lodged in Peru, whilst Colombia has received the most claims for alternative legal stay. Temporary residence permits or student visas are examples of alternative arrangements refugees can use to stay in a country.

Those who have fled from El Salvador, Mexico and Guatemala, on the other hand, tend to try to reach the United States, where they approach officials at the border to apply for asylum, as this is the only means by which they can obtain protection. Requests for asylum in the US from citizens of Central American countries have recently seen a sizeable increase. The number of Guatemalans, Salvadorans and Hondurans applying for asylum in the US increased by 25% between 2016 and 2017. This comes amid a deterioration of security and a rise in criminal violence across the sub-region of Central America. A major issue in this regard has been the tens of thousands of unaccompanied minors (UAMs) from Central America arriving at the US border over the past five years. They travel by foot, bus, or atop freight trains to seek safety in the US, but also because they lack meaningful economic or educational opportunity in their country of origin. A previous programme established in 2014 to deal with the scale of this migration had allowed Central American UAMs to enter the United States, even if they were denied formal refugee status. The programme was stopped in August 2017.

The Trump administration continues to promote regional development, through the previous administration’s ‘Alliance for Prosperity’ plan. However, it also pursued tougher border security, and carried out deportations and a “zero-tolerance” crackdown on illegal immigration. Illegal migrants were arrested and separated from their children as part of the crackdown. This prompted international condemnation as babies and minors were sent to relatives, foster homes, and other older minors were corralled into detention centres.

**Internally Displaced Persons**

The scale of internal displacement as a result of conflict in LAC is significant, but originates almost exclusively from one country: Colombia. 89% of the region’s IDPs are Colombian, uprooted by decades of violent conflict and systemic poverty that have caused millions to flee rural areas and settle in urban slums, unoccupied land and abandoned buildings nationwide. Measuring the true number of IDPs in the region is problematic. The informal nature of internal displacement has hindered collection of reliable estimates about the number of IDPs. Estimates at the regional level are undoubtedly incomplete, with the underreporting exacerbated by two factors: first, people do not recognise themselves as IDPs; and second, governments in LAC do not necessarily recognise internal displacement as a unique status. In El Salvador, for example, official statistics on internal displacement are unavailable. The government informed the Special Rapporteur to the UN in 2018 that the number of IDPs was only in the hundreds, while international organisation estimates range between the tens and hundreds of thousands.

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Violence caused by crime and gang-related activity is a major contributor toward internal displacement. This reality further clouds the estimates, as individuals displaced by threats or intimidation seek to remain anonymous, in contrast with mass displacement caused by internal conflict. Such dispersed displacement is evident in Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras, where violence has contributed to the internal displacement of 345,000, 242,000 and 190,000 people respectively.\textsuperscript{149} The average homicide rates for these three countries in 2017 was 30.4 murders per 100,000 inhabitants.\textsuperscript{150} By contrast, the UK experienced a rate of around 12. By contrast, the UK experienced a rate of around 1.2.

Environmental factors are also a major cause of internal displacement that may be only temporary. In 2017, an estimated 2.7 million people were newly displaced by natural disasters in the region.\textsuperscript{151} Many Latin American nations lie on fault lines and include large mountainous and remote regions that can be severely affected by flooding. Costa Rica, El Salvador and Guatemala all experienced flash flooding and landslides in October 2018, affecting over 200,000 people. At least 5,300 people have been displaced and the economic losses due to extreme weather in Central America amount to $117 million in the agriculture and farming sectors.

**JOURNEY CONDITIONS**

As in other regions, those undertaking migrant journeys both inside and outside the region face extraordinary dangers. Traditionally, the most common way for undocumented migrants to reach the United States has been to pay people smugglers. Irregular migrants from Central America and South America, when transiting Mexico in an effort to reach the United States, face extremely hazardous and difficult travelling conditions. A significant number seek to enter the country through its southern border into the state of Chiapas, where Mexican immigration officials have recently intensified border control operations.\textsuperscript{152} They often transit the country by riding atop freight trains, a practice believed to have resulted in numerous deaths.\textsuperscript{153} Those transported by smuggling gangs are frequently transported in overcrowded trucks, where they lack food and water. In some cases, over 100 migrants have been discovered crammed into a single truck.\textsuperscript{154}

Irregular migration routes are controlled by Mexico’s powerful drug cartels, who are known to rape, torture and murder migrants, as well as subject them to forced labour.\textsuperscript{155} In theory, the smugglers lead the migrants up the isthmus and help them to cross the border. In practice however, migrants can become victims of modern slavery en route. As the 2018 Trafficking in Persons report says, ‘Mexico is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor’. It also raises questions about the motives and ability of officials to identify victims of trafficking.\textsuperscript{156}

\textsuperscript{149} IDMC, Total number of IDPs (Conflict and violence) as of 31 December 2017.
\textsuperscript{150} InSight Crime, 2017 Homicide rates in Latin America and the Caribbean, 19 January 2018.
\textsuperscript{151} IDMC, New displacements (Disasters), 1 January – 31 December 2017.
\textsuperscript{152} ‘Mexico Deploys A Formidable Deportation Force Near Its Own Southern Border’, NPR, 7 May 2018.
\textsuperscript{153} ‘Riding ‘the beast’: child migrants reveal full horror of their journeys to America’, The Guardian, 5 October 2017.
\textsuperscript{154} ‘Human trafficking operations busted in Mexico’, Deutsche Welle, 4 February 2018.
\textsuperscript{155} Central America North America Migration Dialogue (CANAMID), Central American Migration; between transit and settlement, 25 May 2017.
The migrant journey through Mexico typically takes several weeks. The difficulty of crossing the US border and winning the right to stay in the country is becoming increasingly daunting, but even the journey itself is gruelling. Some migrants do not even reach the border, but are abandoned partway having already paid their fee for the entire journey. The walk is arduous, especially for children, and often involves crossing difficult terrain. Constant walking in the sun can lead to sunburn and dehydration, while the lack of sanitation can lead to illness. Obtaining sufficient food and drink is challenging, which often creates competition, especially in remote areas.

In an effort to mitigate some of these risks, migrants are increasingly forming “caravans”, comprising hundreds of people for solidarity and protection.\textsuperscript{157} Migrant caravans are not a new phenomenon, but the most recent ones are unusual both for their size, about 6,000 people, and for their highly publicised intentions. While the caravans are often more appealing than travelling in small groups or using people smugglers, they are far from safe. More than 100 migrants in the latest wave are thought to have been kidnapped by organised crime groups, and there are regularly reports of assaults among members of the caravans. Migrants traditionally have tried to weigh up these pros and cons, creating modestly sized caravans to make the journey that often break up into smaller units before attempting to cross the border.

The strategy of banding together in groups makes sense as a means of ensuring safety in numbers and avoiding the smugglers’ high fees. A survey conducted by the IOM among migrant caravans crossing the border between El Salvador and Guatemala in October 2018 highlights the security concerns of the migrants. Reasons cited for travelling in a large group include lower costs, support between members of the group and protection from unreliable smugglers.\textsuperscript{158}

However, traveling in a migrant caravan does not lend itself to keeping a low profile and trying to reach and cross the border without attracting official attention. A large public relations-driven march may not have been the organisers’ intention—it appears that social media messages between a group of Hondurans planning a more traditional journey north were shared more widely than expected—but they have embraced it, regularly talking to local and international reporters about their plight. People leave despite the increasing difficulty of entering the United States.

For those migrating within the region, border controls are less of an obstacle to entry, so people smugglers play less of a role. The journey conditions of those migrating within the region differ, as people smugglers play less of a role, as border controls are less of an obstacle to entry.\textsuperscript{159} Migrants who remain in the region frequently undertake physically arduous journeys by foot. Venezuelans, for example, cross into Colombia or head to Brazil. Colombia, which shares a 2,000-kilometre border with Venezuela, is the most accessible destination for most of the country’s migrants, many of whom have ended up living rough and working informally. From there, the Colombia-Ecuador border is porous, providing ample opportunities for migrants to cross illicitly, especially through the Amazon region. Most Venezuelans who leave Ecuador cross into Peru where they either seek refuge or continue travelling south, especially to Chile. Venezuelan migrants arrive exhausted and malnourished, having left their home on foot with few economic resources.

\textsuperscript{157} “Migrant caravan: What is it and why does it matter?”, \textit{BBC}, 26 November 2018.

\textsuperscript{158} IOM, DTM El Salvador: Flow monitoring survey on profiles and humanitarian needs of migrants in transit, round 2, 31 October 2018.

\textsuperscript{159} Oxford Analytica, interview with US-based academic specialising in Latin America conducted, 1 April 2018.
In focus: Venezuela

Venezuela represents a prominent example of restrictions on freedoms. Free speech is severely curtailed and any form of dissent against the government carries the threat of criminal prosecution or violence. In September 2018, the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution on Venezuela that expressed deep concern about systematic human rights violations. Six countries have requested a formal International Criminal Court (ICC) investigation in Venezuela following a preliminary examination into human rights abuses and violence since April 2017, including the state’s use of excessive force against anti-government demonstrators as well as violence instigated by protesters which resulted in casualties on the government side.\textsuperscript{160} In May 2018, an OAS expert panel investigated human rights abuses in Venezuela, concluding that crimes against humanity had been committed by state institutions.\textsuperscript{161}

Until relatively recently, Venezuela was a destination for migrants from other nations. Principle among these were Colombians fleeing the insecurity caused by the conflict between successive governments and the FARC guerrilla movement, which persisted for over half a century. Of the roughly 1.43 million international migrants estimated to be living in Venezuela in mid-2017, around two thirds came from Colombia. However, the economic meltdown in Venezuela has reversed this process. Recent reports indicate that large numbers of Colombian migrants in Venezuela have already left the country.

Venezuelan migrant numbers have exploded as economic and political conditions in Venezuela have deteriorated. As of September 2018, some 2.6 million people have left the country since 2014.\textsuperscript{162} The Venezuelan government has denied this claim, putting migrant outflows at some 600,000 in the past two years—and accused “enemy countries” of inflating the crisis to justify military intervention. About 70% of Venezuelan migrants are in South American countries. Yet, the figure is likely to be higher as most data sources do not account for Venezuelans with irregular status. In some countries the numbers of Venezuelans arriving increased by around 1,000% between 2015 and 2017, placing a heavy burden on host countries such as Colombia, Brazil and Panama and generating animosity towards the migrants. While there are fewer Venezuelans living in Ecuador than in Colombia and Peru, Ecuador’s population is significantly smaller than those of its neighbours, meaning the relative size of the migrant population is comparable. The migrants are concentrated mostly in major cities but are living across the country, with virtually every town and city now housing Venezuelan communities.

\textsuperscript{160} International Criminal Court (ICC), Statement of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Mrs Fatou Bensouda, on opening Preliminary Examinations into the situations in the Philippines and in Venezuela, 8 February 2018.

\textsuperscript{161} Oxford Analytica, interviews with Venezuelan asylum seekers in Spain; Una Ventana a la libertad, Informe sobre la situación de los Derechos Humanos de las personas privadas de libertad en los calabozos del SEBIN en el Helicoide y Plaza Venezuela, 22 June 2017; ‘Venezuela using excessive force, arrests to crush protests: U N ,’, Reuters, 8 August 2017.

\textsuperscript{162} Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform, SITUATION REPORT No. 1, September 2018
Regional tensions are set to mount as the Venezuelan government’s economic policies accelerate migrant outflows. The rising number of Venezuelan migrants has had a particular impact on Colombia and Peru, while Brazil has sent troops to affected border areas. A two-day meeting of 11 Latin American countries to discuss the Venezuelan crisis in September 2018 ended with an 18-point statement calling on Caracas to accept humanitarian assistance and to issue identity documents and passports to citizens seeking to leave. This marks the first region-wide attempt to address the Venezuelan migrant crisis. Participating countries also committed to accepting expired Venezuelan travel documents and to measures to impede acts of hostility against migrants.

Given the weakness of regional governments and institutions, the onus of ensuring Venezuelans are offered a safe and dignified route out of the crisis may fall upon the UN. Colombia has already asked the UN to designate a special envoy to coordinate aid. Nevertheless, there exists a real risk of a race to the bottom, with South American governments introducing ever-tougher restrictions to prevent Venezuelans entering and remaining in their countries. The combination of increasingly tough stances by governments and hardening attitudes among local populations raises the risk that such factors will perpetuate each other, exacerbating threats to human rights and making the South American continent an increasingly hostile environment for some of its most vulnerable people.
Necessity-driven migration in Asia is disproportionately driven by environmental pressures in comparison to other regions. In 2015, Asia’s 16.2 million internal displacements from natural disasters accounted for 85% of the worldwide total. While conflict created 1.3 million new displacements in 2017, natural disasters created nearly nine times as many at 11.4 million.

The World Bank warns that by 2050, 40 million people in South Asia could be forced to move within their own countries to escape slow-onset environmental change.

Asia is both a region of origin and destination for vast numbers of economic migrants. India leads the region as a country of origin with 16.6 international migrants. China has 9.7 million, Bangladesh 7.4 million, Pakistan 5.8 million, and the Philippines 5.7 million.

Asia’s migration dynamic is largely intra-regional. The region’s geographical size means that the different sub-regional dynamics driving migration are extremely varied. As with other regions, the major drivers of migration from Asian countries varies. In some countries such as Myanmar, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, conflict and insecurity are the principle motivations behind migrant journeys. However, amongst the region’s more stable nations, the picture is more complex, with a wider range of drivers emerging.

Human rights are factors causing religious minorities to leave both Pakistan and China in ever greater numbers, whilst worsening environmental insecurity is increasingly shaping the region’s migration, especially in South Asia. One third of all Asian migrations originate from just two countries: China and India. Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Philippines are the origin countries of another third of Asian migrants. Most migration to India is opportunity or necessity driven, particularly from Bangladesh. Unemployment, poverty and political instability are the main reasons given for migration to India.

**Human insecurity**

Conflict and insecurity are key drivers of migration in the region. In Myanmar, government policies have subjected the country’s Rohingya ethnic and religious minority to decades-long systematic discrimination and persecution. In June 2012, violence erupted within Myanmar towards the Rohingya, leaving hundreds dead, entire neighbourhoods razed to the ground and tens of thousands...
confined to internment camps. The military crackdown in August 2017 forced over 650,000 Rohingya to flee to neighbouring Bangladesh. According to the UN Human Rights Council (OHCHR), several factors indicate that Myanmar’s military had “genocidal intent.” The UN Human Rights chief has further urged Bangladesh to halt plans to repatriate Rohingya refugees, as conditions in Myanmar’s Rakhine State are not yet conducive to a return. Bangladesh now faces the question of how to handle the potentially long-term presence of the Rohingya on its territory.

Violence in Afghanistan is ongoing, with 8,050 civilian casualties recorded by the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) between 1 January and 30 September 2018. Extremist organisations in Afghanistan, which include the Taliban and Islamic State, specifically target civilians, especially religious minorities. More than 40% of the country’s population is thought to live in the 120 most conflict-affected areas, and 71% of Afghans are still afraid for their personal safety. The consistent ability of extremist groups to carry out attacks in government-held areas, such as the capital Kabul, has undermined confidence in the government.

166. United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Afghan civilians continue to be killed in record high numbers – UN report, 10 October 2018.
Civil liberties and free expression are severely restricted in many Asian countries.168 Migrating is sometimes the only way to escape oppression and intimidation by those in power. For example, China restricts the public and private practice of religion for the 10 million strong Uyghur Muslim population living in the country’s north-west. In light of this persecution, many Uyghurs have left China, often travelling to Turkey, which is more welcoming given its Islamic affinity.169 Oppression of religious minorities occurs elsewhere too. In Pakistan, Shia Pakistanis and other religious minorities including Ahmadis and Christians face violence and discriminatory legislation despite constitutional guarantees against this.170 Forced conversions in the country are reportedly widespread, while blasphemy laws are also used against religious minorities.171 In 2016, it was reported that thousands of Pakistani Christians were being detained after fleeing to Thailand, although no official figures are kept on this group.172

**Economic insecurity**

Many of those who leave their home countries in Asia have had little choice but to migrate simply to survive, due to poverty, food shortages, corruption and a lack of employment opportunities. Low-skilled migrants move within their own sub-regions from poorer to richer countries in search of better economic prospects. For example, migration from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal to India, or from Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos to Thailand. The same motivations drive people to migrate outside the region. The movement of cheap labour from poor to (relatively) rich nations can be beneficial for the country of origin, as emigration provides revenues in the form of remittances. Consequently, many Asian countries actively encourage segments of their population to migrate as part of the government’s economic policy.

East Asia and Pacific ($133 billion) and South Asia ($117 billion) were the two largest remittance receiving regions in the world in 2017, according to the World Bank.173 The three largest remittance receiving countries in the world were also in Asia, namely India, China and the Philippines.174 Skilled migration from certain Asian countries is heavily concentrated in specific sectors and industries. India, for example, has a large number of IT professionals, many of whom leave for high-income countries. As these countries often lack such skills among their own populations, they represent lucrative opportunities for migrants.

At present, international migrants from the lower middle-income South East Asian countries tend to look to wealthier ASEAN nations for opportunities. Often, they are poor, low-skilled migrants who lack the resources to reach countries beyond their immediate neighbours. There are other major destination countries within the region, whose continued economic growth is often at least partially dependent on migrant workers from the poverty-stricken neighbours. Like Singapore for example that has 1.4 million registered foreign workers.175 This is a significant portion of its total population of

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172 The Christians held in Thailand after fleeing Pakistan’, BBC, 26 February 2016.
Japan is a net importer of migrants, with almost three times as many foreign nationals living in the country (2.3 million) than there are Japanese living abroad, yet foreign residents still only make up 2% of the total population. The resident foreign workforce has grown 40% since 2013 and the country has recently passed a new policy that allows foreigners to work in unskilled labour in order to offset the effects of an ageing local population and declining workforce. The greatest political impact may lie further in the future: the proposal includes a scheme for long-term residency, even as Japanese workers face languishing real wages and temporary jobs displace regular ones.

Thailand hosts almost 3.5 million documented foreign workers, including over 1.8 million migrants from Myanmar, a further 923,000 from Laos and 680,000 from Cambodia. In 2014, migrants made up 75% of the workforce in Thailand’s fisheries, and 80% in the construction industry. Most of these migrants come from poorer ASEAN countries, whose economies are only now beginning to recover after years of centralised governance that have left large populations lacking in investment, education and opportunity. In 2017, Malaysia was home to 2.5 million documented migrants, including around 1 million Indonesian nationals.

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Environmental insecurity

Environmental insecurity is increasingly shaping the Asian migration dynamic. Natural disasters in Asia created nearly nine times (11.4 million) as many new displacements as conflict (1.3 million) in 2017. Earthquakes and flooding caused by monsoons and tropical storms are a constant feature and driver of (usually temporary) displacement in many Asia countries. In 2017, 1.6 million people were displaced by flooding in China’s Hunan province; monsoon floods displaced 1.3 million people in eight Indian states; 478,000 were displaced by tropical cyclone Mora in Bangladesh. In total, China saw the highest number of new displacements (4.5 million)—not surprising given its total population size—followed by the Philippines (2.5 million), India (1.3 million), and Bangladesh (946,000).

However, slow-onset environmental pressures are perhaps a greater threat to the future of Asian countries. The World Bank warns that by 2050, 40 million people in South Asia could be forced to move within their own countries to escape the slow-onset impacts of environmental degradation. As a deltaic and coastal country, Bangladesh is particularly vulnerable to environmental pressures, due to the compounded impact of increased temperature, flooding, rising sea levels, and increasingly intense tropical cyclones. In a 2014 speech at the United Nations, Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina claimed that a one-meter rise in sea levels would submerge one-fifth of the country and could force 30 million citizens to become ‘climate migrants’.

Additionally, water security in Asia is threatened by insufficient investment in infrastructure, including protection against natural disasters, and unresolved regional water disputes. The main Asian countries are already in or near conditions of water stress. China supports 19% of the world’s population on its territory with a 6.7% share of global water resources; India has 17.8% of the global population but just 4.3% of the world’s water. That means more than 300 million people in India face water shortages, whilst both Pakistan and Bangladesh rely heavily on water sources beyond their borders. Throughout Asia, one billion people could face water shortages leading to drought and land degradation by 2050. According to the UN World Water Development Report, by 2030, only 60% of the world’s demand for water will be met by existing resources at the current rate of use. Currently, there is no international protection system in place for people who are displaced by slow onset environmental disasters.

DYNAMICS OF DISPLACEMENT

Migrants driven by economic insecurity

Most Asian international migrants seek low-skilled and semi-skilled work in wealthier countries in the region or in the GCC states. India leads the region in terms of non-refugee international migrants, with 16.6 million. China has 9.7 million, Bangladesh 7.4 million, Pakistan 5.8 million, and the Philippines 5.7 million. In recent years, a large number of Indian migrants have gone to the United Arab Emirates (UAE)—over 2 million now live there. Emigration from Pakistan is focused on Saudi Arabia, the UAE and the United Kingdom, with a significant, but smaller, number in North America. While significant numbers of low-skilled Asian workers go to the MENA region, they usually find working conditions with a high degree of vulnerability. Gulf countries also do not offer pathways to integration, and Asian migrants tend to work in them temporarily before moving on or returning home.

The largest Chinese diasporas are in Thailand (around 10 million) and Malaysia (around 7 million). Emigration from Bangladesh is largely concentrated in India. These migrants tend not to settle abroad permanently, as host countries do not offer pathways to integration; instead, they work abroad temporarily, sending money home before ultimately returning. In 2017, seven of the top ten countries by value of remittances received were in Asia. East Asia and Pacific area received $130 billion in remittances, and South Asia received $117 billion. The high value of remittances show how

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188. World Bank, Migration and Development Brief 29, April 2018.
Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh

Myanmar contributes the next highest proportion of Asian refugees to the international migrant stock. Since August 2017, more than 650,000 Rohingya have fled violence and persecution in Rakhine State in Myanmar, bringing the total number of Rohingya in Bangladesh to over 900,000. 189

A 444-page report from a UN fact-finding mission explored in excruciating detail how the Myanmar military has followed a pattern of abuse and violence across other ethnic minority states, such as Shan and Kachin. It also described the crackdown against the Rohingya as having “genocidal intent.” 190

The UN believes that the violence inflicted against the Rohingya constitutes ethnic cleansing, though the Myanmar government denies this. The state-sanctioned process of systematic de-humanisation and marginalisation of the Rohingya began decades ago. 191 Amnesty International has declared the Rohingya “one of the most persecuted minority groups in the world.” 192 Denied citizenship by the Myanmar government and without refugee status in Bangladesh, the Rohingya are stateless.

Refugee repatriation is now the key issue in relations between Bangladesh and Myanmar. However, in August 2018 the UN declared that “conditions are not yet met for the safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable return of Rohingya refugees.” 193 Indeed, according to the UN fact-finding mission on Myanmar, the estimated 250,000 to 400,000 Rohingya who have remained in Rakhine State face “an ongoing genocide.” 194

Although some Rohingya refugees have said they would be willing to return if their safety, human rights and citizenship were guaranteed, many refuse repatriation under present circumstances. 195 Due to a lack of security and the widespread military deployment in their home area, repatriation from Bangladesh is unlikely to occur in the short to medium-term.

There is urgent need, therefore, for the international community to support Bangladesh’s authorities, ensuring they can better receive and assist the refugee population. The international humanitarian appeal for the Rohingya crisis remains significantly underfunded at 33%. 196 The status quo is not sustainable—politically, economically, socially and environmentally—for Bangladesh’s government.

193. Guterres, A, Remarks to the Security Council meeting on Myanmar, UN Secretary-General, 28 August 2018.
194. ‘Rohingya genocide is still going on, says top UN investigator’, The Guardian, 24 October 2018.
196. Guterres, A, Remarks to the Security Council meeting on Myanmar, UN Secretary-General, 28 August 2018.
important migration is, not only to individuals, but also Asian economies more broadly. An exception to this trend are Asian diaspora populations in Western countries, many of whom are high-skilled migrants who are now well-established and have little interest in returning to their country of origin. For example, large numbers of Indian migrants—many of whom are highly skilled—have gone to the United States and other developed economies. Two million Indians currently live in the US, with many more across Western Europe. The United States currently has a Chinese population of around 5 million, and Canada has around 2 million, with a further 1.5 million in Western Europe.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

4.6 million individuals out of the international migration stock from Asia are refugees, people in refugee-like situations, and asylum seekers, a remarkably low figure when compared with other regions. This represents about 6% of the total migrants and 0.1% of the region’s population. The countries with the highest proportions of refugees are Afghanistan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Vietnam. International migrants originating from Afghanistan include 2.9 million who are either refugees, people in refugee-like situations, or asylum seekers. Refugees and asylum seekers from Afghanistan represent 64% of the total refugee population from Asia.

Another of Asia’s largest refugee populations, those from Vietnam, have continued to live outside their homeland for decades after the end of the conflict that displaced them. Around 300,000 fled their country amid a war with Cambodia in 1979, and have been living in China since that time, where they are now well integrated. As in other regions of the world, many migrants are not represented in official figures (especially the poorest and most vulnerable). In Pakistan, estimates suggest that there are up to a million undocumented Afghans living in refugee-like conditions on top of the 1.4 million officially registered.\textsuperscript{197} Asian governments also do not systematically keep comprehensive records on migrant workers, so comprehensive statistics are hard to come by. For example, while there are officially around 8 million Bangladeshis residing outside their homeland, estimates suggest the true number is closer to 10 million.\textsuperscript{198}

One of the reasons for anomalies is perhaps the temporary nature of much of migration, especially in South Asia. Many migrants enter India from neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan to perform seasonal agricultural work, before returning home after a few months. This may mean that the real migrant population in India at certain times of the year can be much higher than the official figure of 5.2 million.

Millions of undocumented migrants from Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia have travelled to Thailand to work. Many more are likely to be in the country illegally. Although Thailand has launched initiatives to allow these migrants to obtain documentation or else leave, the registration process can be complicated and costly, and regulatory burdens have often not stopped irregular migrants from arriving, but instead have pushed them to taking more dangerous journeys.\textsuperscript{199} Migrants from neighbouring countries looking for opportunities in Thailand make irregular crossings on routes managed by smuggling networks, with employment arranged for them through brokers. When a prospective economic migrant cannot pay the broker’s fee, they risk being sold into forced labour.

\textsuperscript{197} Migration Policy Institute, Afghanistan: Displacement Challenges in a Country on the Move, 16 November 2017.
\textsuperscript{198} Oxford Analytica, Skype interview, East Asia expert, conducted 13 April 2018.
\textsuperscript{199} UNHCR, Agreement For Better Access To Legal Aid For Refugees In Malaysia, 30 January 2018.
Despite attempts to prevent this, Thailand’s fishing industry is still believed to rely on large numbers of such unpaid workers, who can be held against their will for years aboard the country’s numerous trawlers.\textsuperscript{200} Human trafficking is also widespread in Asia, especially in the south-east of the continent. Thailand in particular is widely reported to be a hub for forced labour and sex trafficking. 76% of migrant workers in the Thai fishing industry had been held in debt bondage and almost 38% had been trafficked into the Thai fishing industry in that time-frame.\textsuperscript{201} The illegal status of trafficked migrants means that they are unlikely to be accounted for in statistics. Around 2 million Burmese refugees hold work permits in Thailand, but the Myanmar government has stated that the real number of its nationals living and working in the country could be 5 million.\textsuperscript{202} It is likely that many of the undocumented migrants work in forced or precarious underground labour environments.

**Internally Displaced Persons**

There are around 1.9 million IDPs in Asia. Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Myanmar face significant challenges related to internal displacement. In Afghanistan, a deterioration in the national security picture, with insurgents making territorial in-roads in many areas, occurred amid a retrenchment in international aid. The result is about 1.4 million IDPs across the country, with many more facing possible displacement. Those displaced lack basic necessities, including adequate shelter, food, and clean water.

Myanmar has endured protracted ethnic conflict, especially in its border regions. The country’s largest IDP population is in the south-western Karen State, where many have been displaced amid decades of violence between the Tatmadaw (Myanmar’s armed forces) and the insurgent Karen National Liberation Army. There are no recent figures on IDPs in the area, but their number is likely to be in the region of 400,000.\textsuperscript{203} IDP numbers in other areas of ethnic conflict such as Rakhine State (around 129,000 IDPs) and Kachin State (100,000 IDPs) are also substantial.\textsuperscript{204}

**JOURNEY CONDITIONS**

In Asia and elsewhere, the migrant journeys can involve multiple stages, and these journeys are often fraught with danger. Reliance on so-called agents means that migrants can reach their destination deeply in debt. In Bangladesh, people originating from rural areas often transition from being internal migrants to international migrants over the course of several years. In the first instance, unskilled young men from villages move to Dhaka and Chittagong in search of employment in the cities’ burgeoning construction industries.

After spending some time working there, Bangladeshis acquire enough skills and experience to enable them to migrate to Malaysia and the GCC countries, where they can earn more money. At this point, their travel is often negotiated by informal networks of migrants already in the destination country.


\textsuperscript{201} The Walk Free Foundation, *The Global Slavery Index* 2018.

\textsuperscript{202} ‘34,000 Migrant Workers Return from Thailand’, *The Irrawaddy*, 6 July 2017.

\textsuperscript{203} Oxford Analytica, interview with Oxford-based academic specialising in Myanmar humanitarian issues, conducted 10 April 2018.

\textsuperscript{204} UNHCR, *Myanmar: IDP sites in Rakhine State*, 28 February 2018.
or through the hundreds of government-sanctioned agencies in Bangladesh that recruit low-cost labour on behalf of big Middle Eastern employers. Migrants pay between $1,700 and $5,200 for the services of such agencies. Fees are much higher than the actual estimated cost of recruitment ($400–$650), which is attributable to the existence of several layers of agents and the cost of bribes and kickbacks to officials.

Migrant journeys evolve as they progress, from labour migration to the Gulf countries and Libya to irregular migration to Italy. Libya was an attractive destination for labour migrants under the rule of Muamar Qaddafi. Following his overthrow in 2011, Bangladeshis continued to arrive, still seeing potential work in the oil sector. Eventually, increasing insecurity compelled many to leave. With an expensive and dangerous journey back to Bangladesh, many pressed on to Italy by sea.

The use of sea routes by migrants in South East Asia became infamous in the 2010s, but has subsequently declined in use. Between 2012 and 2015, many migrants from Myanmar and Bangladesh attempted to reach Malaysia by sea, travelling in poor conditions on overcrowded boats. The UNHCR estimates that 1,800 migrants drowned on such voyages, while 112,500 Burmese refugees made it to Malaysia between 2012 and 2015. These migrants were often subjected to abuse, trafficking and even murder at the hands of smugglers. After the discovery of mass graves of murdered migrants in Thailand and Malaysia in 2015, the two governments adopted policies of towing migrant boats back out into international waters rather than letting them land, leaving thousands stranded at sea.

In late 2018, boats have been detected traveling southwards from Myanmar and Bangladesh, with Rohingya attempting the hazardous sea journey to Malaysia. Authorities are concerned that increased numbers of Rohingya may attempt to make the crossing in the coming months, as they continue to face a lack of long-term livelihood opportunities and insecurity in both Myanmar and Bangladesh. The current crisis may give renewed momentum to sea-based smuggling networks operating from the Bangladesh-Myanmar border.

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205. Oxford Analytica, Skype interview, South-East Asia expert, conducted 17 April 2018.
207. UNHCR, Mixed Movements in South-East Asia 2016, 3 May 2017.
208. ‘Rohingya in Myanmar, Bangladesh board boats bound for Malaysia’, New Straits Times, 9 November 2018.
CONCLUSION

Migration is the result of a complex mix of social, political, and economic pressures for which there is no quick solution. The exact motivations that lie behind the extraordinary journeys undertaken by irregular migrants are as varied as the individuals themselves. Yet each journey is prompted by a very human desire: to escape a life of acute insecurity, whether human, economic or environmental.

Despite the variety of these extraordinary journeys, a number of general trends emerge:

- Insecurity in all its forms is the principle driver of migration in each of the four regions.
- These causes of migration overlap to create unique regional dynamics.
- Given the overlapping causes, attempts to distinguish between voluntary and involuntary migration are increasingly meaningless.
- As a result, current protection mechanisms do not reflect the experiences of many migrants.
- The most desperate have neither the ability nor the resources to flee. The world’s poorest are the least able to migrate across borders.
- The challenge posed by migration is set to increase as the impact of environmental degradation and demographic pressures are increasingly felt.

The experiences of irregular migrants in the four regions featured in this study offer important insights into our understanding of global people movements. Our analysis shows each developing a distinct regional migration dynamic.

Sub-Saharan Africa hosts about a third of the world’s refugees and most stay within the region. It also hosts the world’s highest number of IDPs, with 12.9 million people displaced within their own countries. Most migratory movement is intra-regional. The region also saw over 2 million displaced by environmental pressures and it faces increasing threats from slow-onset environmental challenges.

In MENA, migration is largely conflict-driven with profound implications for nations bordering conflict zones. Over one third (11m) of the region’s international migrants originate from three countries: Syria, Palestine and Lebanon. Turkey hosts the largest refugee population in the world and the Gulf states are destination countries for large numbers of South Asian low-skilled labour.

Drivers of migration in Latin America and the Caribbean vary more than in other region, prompted by a combination of lack of economic security, rising crime and political instability, and environmental pressures. LAC provides 27% of global labour migrants; Venezuela’s economic and political downturn has seen over 3 million leave the country; the prevalence of crime is enough to drive some from Central American countries, and environmental disasters displaced 2.7 million people in 2017.

In Asia, migration is disproportionately caused by environmental pressures. In 2015, Asia’s 16.2 million internal displacements from natural disasters accounted for 85% of the worldwide total. The World Bank warns that by 2050, 40 million people in South Asia could be forced to move within their own countries to escape the slow-onset impacts of environmental challenges.
Behind each migration statistic lies an individual. Much of the world’s attention has been rightly focussed on the immediate need of refugees and asylum-seekers fleeing life-shattering conflict. But we must remember that refugees and asylum-seekers represent those at the end of an often extraordinarily dangerous pathway. Many remain trapped in refugee-like situations, unable to escape.

The issue of necessity-driven migration is fast becoming the humanitarian challenge of our generation. Over the past decade, the number of forcibly displaced people has increased by nearly 30%. Today one in every 110 people in the world is displaced, compared with one in 157 ten years ago. This trend is set to continue, as demographic, environmental, and economic pressures increase.

Though the issue of migration by necessity has been the subject of considerable public and political debate since the onset of the migrant crisis in 2015, it is these four regions—and not nations like the UK—that are on the frontline of the greatest humanitarian challenge of our generation. Germany is the only European nation to feature in the top eight recipient nations for refugees.

As this report shows, the vast majority of migration is intra-regional. And it requires an urgent response.
# APPENDICES

## Table 1. Regions as origins (number of migrants and % of resident population)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Internally Displaced Persons</th>
<th>International Migrant Stock (IMS) originating from countries in region</th>
<th>Intraregional Migrants (i.e. Resident within Region)</th>
<th>Interregional Migrants (i.e. Resident outside Region)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>4,117m</td>
<td>1.9m (0.05%)</td>
<td>74.2m (1.8%)</td>
<td>25.8m (0.6%)</td>
<td>48.4m (1.2%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>646m</td>
<td>7.7m (1.2%)</td>
<td>37.7m (5.8%)</td>
<td>6.1m (0.9%)</td>
<td>31.6m (4.9%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>1,063m</td>
<td>12.9m (1.2%)</td>
<td>27.0m (2.5%)</td>
<td>18.7m (1.8%)</td>
<td>8.3m (0.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MENA</td>
<td>524m</td>
<td>12.6m (2.4%)</td>
<td>30.0m (5.7%)</td>
<td>16.9m (3.2%)</td>
<td>13m (2.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Table 2. Migrant categories from each region (number of migrants and % of resident population)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Internally Displaced Persons</th>
<th>International Migrant Stock (IMS) originating from countries in region</th>
<th>Opportunity and Necessity-driven migrants</th>
<th>Refugees and asylum seekers</th>
<th>Refugees</th>
<th>Asylum seekers</th>
<th>Refugees as a % of IMS</th>
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<td>74.2m (1.8%)</td>
<td>69.6m (1.7%)</td>
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<td>36.4m (5.6%)</td>
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<td>0.5m</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
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<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>1,063m</td>
<td>12.9m (1.2%)</td>
<td>27.0m (2.5%)</td>
<td>19.7m (1.8%)</td>
<td>7.4m (0.7%)</td>
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<td>24.6%</td>
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<td>30.0m (5.7%)</td>
<td>22.6m (4.3%)</td>
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<td>6.8m</td>
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<td>22.6%</td>
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</table>
# Table 3. Regions as destinations (number of migrants and % of resident population)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Internally Displaced Persons</th>
<th>Destination IMS</th>
<th>Resident International Migrants from within Region</th>
<th>Resident International Migrants from outside Region</th>
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<td>1.9m (0.05%)</td>
<td>28.5m (0.7%)</td>
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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Alastair Masser

Alastair leads our Global People Movements programme, which examines the unprecedented numbers of worldwide refugees and migrants. Prior to joining us, he spent almost a decade in politics serving latterly as a Special Adviser in two posts under David Cameron. He is an alumnus of the US State Department's International Visitor Leadership Programme (IVLP) and was awarded an MA (Distinction) in War Studies from King's College London in 2007. He is undertaking a part-time PhD at the same institution, examining UK-Nigerian development and security cooperation during the coalition government. Alastair is an Associate of the King's Centre for Strategic Communications (KCSC) and has taught at the Ministry of Defence's Joint Services Command Staff College (JSCSC) at Shrivenham.

Will Edwards

Will is Research Assistant for the Global People Movements programme. He is passionate about equality of opportunity and eager to understand how regional dynamics affect the movement of people across the globe. Prior to joining the Legatum Institute, Will was Operations Associate at Fire Tech, a pioneering company that inspires children to become confident technology users and prepare them for a tech-driven world. He organised technology camps across the UK and internationally, and was a curriculum author. Will is also a professional drummer, composer, and music producer. He has played at the legendary Ronnie's Scott's Jazz Club, Cheltenham Jazz Festival, and elsewhere. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in academic Music from the University of York and a Master of Arts in Jazz from the Royal Academy of Music.

Hannah Rose Thomas

Hannah is a Research Analyst within the Global People Movements programme. An English artist and Durham graduate in Arabic and History, she has organised art projects with Syrian refugees for UNHCR. Hannah subsequently began painting portraits of refugees she had met, to show the people behind the global crisis, whose personal stories are often shrouded by statistics. Hannah's portraits have been shown at the Houses of Parliament, European Parliament, Scottish Parliament, GCHQ, DFID, Lambeth Palace, The Saatchi Gallery and Durham Cathedral. Three of Hannah's paintings of Yezidi women were chosen by HRH The Prince of Wales for his exhibition "Prince & Patron" in Buckingham Palace the summer of 2018. In August 2017 Hannah organised an art project in Northern Iraq with Yezidi women who had escaped ISIS captivity, and in April 2018 for Rohingya children in refugee camps on the Myanmar border. Her most recent project has been with survivors of Boko Haram and Fulani violence in Northern Nigeria. Hannah has been selected for the Forbes 30 Under 30 2019 and is a recipient of the European International Women's Leadership Award 2019.