

DEVELOPING AND ENSURING SAFE MIGRATION PATHWAYS

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MUNFW 73rd Session – International Organization for Migration

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration explains, “Migration is a multi-dimensional reality that cannot be addressed by one government policy sector alone.”¹ It requires international cooperation to strengthen pathways, rapid integration, and measures that provide all migrants with protection of their human rights. Migrants may flee their countries for better opportunities due to poverty, lack of healthcare or education, terrorism, human rights violations, conflict, natural disasters, etc. Of particular concern for this topic, migrants face many barriers that may limit access to opportunities due to difficulties in the paths they must traverse from their home to a host country, and unsafe pathways can hinder migration which is a fundamental freedom set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.² Migrants in vulnerable situations often face life-threatening conditions in the dangerous migration routes they must take such as crossing from South America to Central America through the Darien Gap³, crossing deserts in northern Africa,⁴ or crossing waterways such as the Bay of Bengal⁵.

¹ International Organization for Migration, “The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration,” 2018, Retrieved August 2, 2023 from

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N18/451/99/PDF/N1845199.pdf?OpenElement>

² United Nations, “Universal Declaration of Human Rights – Article 13” accessed June 15, 2023

<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

³ RFI (Radio France Internationale), 1 August, 2023, “Migrants crossing perilous Darien Gap in record numbers : Panama”, accessed August 3, 2023

<https://www.rfi.fr/en/international-news/20230731-migrants-crossing-perilous-darien-gap-in-record-numbers-panama>

⁴ Franziska Grillmeier, et al, 15 June, 2023 “Disappeared in the desert: bodies lie in the sand in Niger while Europe pours millions into blocking migration route”, *The Guardian*, accessed August 3, 2023 at

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2023/jun/15/death-in-the-desert-bodies-lie-in-the-sand-in-niger-while-europe-pours-millions-into-blocking-migration-route>

⁵ Al Jazeera, 10 August 2023, “At least 17 dead as boat carrying Rohingya refugees sinks in Bay of Bengal” Accessed August 13, 2023 from

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/8/10/at-least-17-dead-as-boat-carrying-rohingya-sinks-in-bay-of-bengal>

One of these notable routes is the Darien Gap which is known for its dangerous criminal gangs, swamps and rivers, predator animals, and lack of clear paths or roads along the route with the International Organization for Migration (IOM)'s Missing Migrant's Project reported 141 migrant deaths in 2022.⁶ However, IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix⁷ conducted surveys along this route of those crossing and found that 1 in 25 respondents reported someone crossing with them as missing. These surveys helped provide insight into how scarcity of accurate information can affect what is reported such as tracking of migrant movements and that these numbers may not be representative of the actual number of lives lost. Reports also showed 250,000 people arrived in Darien in 2022 and it is estimated that 400,000 could attempt the crossing in 2023.⁸

The IOM has attempted to address this unsafe pathway "in Panama, providing temporary shelter at government-run reception centres, mattresses, blankets, solar lamps, medicines, food items, and hygiene kits. IOM also continues to coordinate closely with government institutions throughout the region, strengthening migration and border management capacities, and to promote access to regularization programmes." In addition, "IOM also calls for the investigation and prosecution of people smugglers and increased support and investments in host communities to strengthen services that benefit both migrants and refugees as well as the local population."⁹

The US-Mexico border is one of the deadliest land migration routes worldwide but has seen a decrease of deaths by 6 percent since 2021. However in 2022, "Nearly half (307) of the deaths on the United States-Mexico border were linked to the hazardous crossing of the Sonoran and Chihuahuan Deserts, far more than other desert regions where irregular migration is prevalent." In addition, in 2022 the IOM was unable to access some official data that was recorded in the previous year, specifically data from several Texas border county coroner's offices and the Mexican

⁶ International Organization for Migration, 2022, "Missing Migrants Report" accessed August 3, 2023 <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl601/files/publication/file/MMP%20global%20data%20briefing%202022.pdf>

⁷ International Organization for Migration, "Displacement Tracking Index" accessed August 3, 2023 <https://dtm.iom.int/>

⁸ RFI (Radio France Internationale), 1 August, 2023, "Migrants crossing perilous Darien Gap in record numbers : Panama", accessed August 3, 2023

<https://www.rfi.fr/en/international-news/20230731-migrants-crossing-perilous-darien-gap-in-record-numbers-panama>

⁹ International Organization for Migration, 17 January 2023 "Number of Migrants Who Embarked on the Dangerous Darien Gap Route Nearly Doubled in 2022" accessed August 3, 2023,

<https://www.iom.int/news/number-migrants-who-embarked-dangerous-darien-gap-route-nearly-doubled-2022>

search and rescue agency. Therefore, the 2022 figure is probably lower than the actual number of migrant deaths at this crossing.¹⁰

According to data obtained by the IOM for its Migration's Missing Migrants Project (MMP), the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region reported 3,800 deaths along the Middle East and North Africa route migrants have taken primarily to Europe, showing the highest number since 2017 and an 11 percent increase from the year prior. This region contains more than "half of the total 6,877 deaths recorded worldwide by the MMP". However, limited access to the dangerous routes and scarcity of data for organizations can also imply that reported deaths may be higher than reported.¹¹ Included in this region are high-risk sea routes where migrants may attempt crossing a significant amount of open water and can lead to heightened risks of drowning or "invisible shipwrecks." According to the Global Data Overview of 2022 by MMP, drowning is the main cause of death with more than 3,700 deaths reported in 2022 including 2,257 from the Mediterranean Sea, 479 in North Africa and 337 in the Caribbean.¹²

Addressing these threats to migrants' safety the IOM is building upon the principles set out in the 2016 *New York Declaration* which emphasized the need to "strengthen the global governance of migration by bringing the International Organization for Migration [further] into the UN system."¹³ The Declaration then set the groundwork for the *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*.¹⁴ The *Declaration* and *Compact* outline each Member State's commitment to share responsibility in providing: international protection for migrants and their rights; assistance to host states; and international cooperation to create equitable, sustainable, and predictable measures. Article 41 of the *New York Declaration* states the international commitment to "protecting the

¹⁰ International Organization for Migration, 12 September 2023 "US-Mexico Border World's Deadliest Land Migration Route" accessed October 4, 2023

<https://rosanjose.iom.int/en/news/us-mexico-border-worlds-deadliest-migration-land-route>

¹¹ International Organization for Migration, 13 June 2023 "Deaths on Migration Routes in MENA Highest since 2017: IOM 2022 Data Reveals" accessed October 4, 2023

<https://www.iom.int/news/deaths-migration-routes-mena-highest-2017-iom-2022-data-reveals>

¹² International Organization for Migration, 2022, "Missing Migrants Report" accessed August 3, 2023

<https://missingmigrants.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl601/files/publication/file/MMP%20global%20data%20briefing%202022.pdf>

¹³ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants" accessed August 13, 2023 from <https://www.ohchr.org/en/migration/new-york-declaration-refugees-and-migrants>

¹⁴ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration" accessed August 13, 2023 from

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/migration/global-compact-safe-orderly-and-regular-migration-gcm>

safety, dignity and human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their migratory status, at all times. We will cooperate closely to facilitate and ensure safe, orderly, and regular migration.”¹⁵

As a result the IOM has a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to ensure that migrants’ needs are considered throughout all areas of policy. In addition the IOM works closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Member States, other United Nations agencies, and international financial institutions. As a collaborative effort, the IOM and UNHCR created The Sustainable Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Initiative (CRISP) in 2019 to work on increasing accessibility to safe and complementary pathways for those in need.¹⁶ As part of these efforts the IOM and UNHCR are seeking to provide migrants alternative pathways to avoid irregular migration or unsafe movements such as through land or sea.¹⁷

As the cases outlined above demonstrate, migrants face numerous threats and vulnerabilities that may lead them to encounter irregular situations in deadly routes due to no alternative safe pathways, increasing their risks of falling victim to conditions such as human trafficking, smuggling, and forced labor. Among some of these fatal routes, many deaths go unaccounted for, unidentified migrants remain missing, and data remains limited. This lack of data suggests that there’s been an “undercount of the true number of lives lost during migration in the region due to the lack of official reporting and access”.¹⁸ There is also a lack of data in remote locations where eyewitness testimonies could provide information on migrant deaths.

In collaboration between the IOM and Member States (including “financial support from the government of Switzerland”) the Missing Migrants Project collects data on migrant deaths and disappearances on routes. Data is crucial to understanding the problem and finding solutions. For

¹⁵ United Nations General Assembly, “New York Declaration” accessed August 13, 2023 from https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_71_1.pdf

¹⁶ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and International Organization for Migration, “CRISP” Accessed August 15, 2023 at <https://resettle.org/>

¹⁷ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Safe Pathways for Refugees”, December 2018, Accessed August 15, 2023 at <https://www.oecd.org/migration/UNHCR-OECD-safe-pathways-for-refugees.pdf>

¹⁸ International Organization for Migration, 2022, “Missing Migrants Report” accessed August 3, 2023 <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl601/files/publication/file/MMP%20global%20data%20briefing%202022.pdf>

example, the Project data shows that in one of the regions on the Horn of Africa-Yemen crossing, there were 867 deaths counted, which showed that high death tolls within routes need attention and more efforts to ensure the security of all migrants. However, the IOM receives its funding from donations from Member States and private sector donors. As with many organizations within the United Nations, the needs of migrants often far exceed the financial resources of the organization.

Another step that some Member States as well as organizations such as the European Union (through its FRONTEX – EU Border and Coast Guard Agency) have attempted to adopt with mixed success are enhancing “Search and Rescue systems” and transnational information sharing mechanisms.¹⁹ In response to these tragedies such as the sinking of the ship that was attempting to reach Greece in June 2023 in which “somewhere between 400 and 750” people are missing, the IOM continues to reiterate that search and rescue at sea is both a legal and humanitarian imperative. It is advancing these efforts in collaboration with the UNHCR to provide support and assistance to survivors of sea routes such as having a station in Greece that would include “ non-food items, hygiene kits, interpretation services and counseling for survivors who are traumatized following the ordeal.”²⁰

In regard to Western African countries’ security, the IOM has partnered with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and United Nations Office on Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) to launch an Integrated Border Stability Mechanism (IBSM). The partnership aims to strengthen border governance, cooperation within actors and border security for areas that require stability. This initiative will increase cooperation between stakeholders in implementing regional and national strategies and carry out policy frameworks that allow sharing of information, promotion of peace and security, and easy movement of people among African Union member states. These efforts also require increased capacity building measures within and between Member States to share knowledge, resources, and funding.²¹

¹⁹ European Parliament Resolution, 13 July 2023, “The need for EU action on search and rescue in the Mediterranean” accessed August 3, 2023

https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0293_EN.html

²⁰ International Organization for Migration, 16 June 2023, “IOM and UNHCR Call for Decisive Action Following Mediterranean Tragedy” accessed on October 4, 2023

<https://www.iom.int/news/iom-and-unhcr-call-decisive-action-following-mediterranean-tragedy>

²¹ International Organization for Migration, 14 September 2023, “Integrated Border Stability Mechanism Set to Strengthen Border Governance and Security in West African Countries” accessed October 4, 2023

<https://www.iom.int/news/integrated-border-stability-mechanism-set-strengthen-border-governance-and-security-west-african-countries>

Additional efforts the IOM is promoting are an awareness campaign with the “aim to target potential or actual migrants on the move to increase awareness of the dangers of irregular migration, promote the use of regular migration pathways and local livelihood opportunities.” However, the IOM is “conducting rigorous impact evaluation studies” to carefully measure whether these campaigns are effective in convincing migrants to be better prepared, take alternative routes or choose not to migrate.²²

The barriers this paper has presented demonstrate the importance of expanding complementary pathways and protections to ensure international cooperation can resolve obstacles migrants face. A crisis is unexpected and when they arise, access to safe and legal pathways can protect refugees from treacherous journeys through land, sea, or risks of exploitation and death. The IOM and other UN organizations, Member States and NGOs can and should develop measures so that migrants can rely on systems that fit their situation, opportunities, and long-term solutions. Progress can be made possible by cooperation to make safe and regular pathways and resettlement easier to access and facilitate rapidly enough to avoid allowing dangerous alternative journeys to continue. Through collaboration amongst Member States, governments, society, and international organizations, we can ensure that migrants are protected, and that Member States meet the objectives in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration.

²² International Organization for Migration – Migration Data Portal, 25 January, 2023 “ Do awareness-raising campaigns on the risks of irregular migration support safer migration decisions?” accessed on October 4, 2023 <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/blog/new-evidence-awareness-raising-campaigns>

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What challenges do migrants face in your state and region? Are there unsafe pathways in or near your state that contribute to these challenges? If so, what has your state done to address the vulnerabilities the migrants face?
2. What resources, such as data, funding, infrastructure, would your state need to make effective policies to ensure safe migration?
3. What efforts has your state supported to safeguard the right to migration? Are migrants who cross your borders given the resources and protection needed?
4. Does your state, or private businesses or organizations, within your state donate funds to the IOM?

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ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF FORCIBLY DISPLACED PEOPLE

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In 2022 “108.4 million people have been forcibly displaced worldwide”¹ marking the “highest number of forcibly displaced people the world has ever seen”.² The reasons why people may be forcibly displaced (migrate) can be found in both “conflict-induced and disaster-induced” causes.³ In addition, migrants who have been forcibly displaced are a unique category of migrant in contrast to migrant workers.

For the first category of forcibly displaced people, the United Nations has created several shared agreements to protect and assist people who migrate due to conflict with international laws that govern responses by Member States, and to define categories of people within this context. The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol define refugees as a specific group that requires specific responses.⁴ The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), also known as the UN Refugee Agency, is tasked with addressing the needs of refugees and has designated funding and resources for this cause. It is important to note that the mandate for the UNHCR does not apply to the second category of forced displacement (discussed below) as they serve refugees. The people the UNHCR serves can generally be classified into two main categories: refugees and asylum seekers. Refugees are 35.3 million of these forcibly

¹ UNHCR, 2023, “Figures at a Glance” Retrieved June 11, 2023 from <https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-are/figures-glance> .

² UNHCR, 2023, “Refugee Facts and Statistics” Retrieved July 10, 2023 from <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/statistics/> .

³ International Organization for Migration, 2023, “Migration Data Portal Forced Migration or displacement” Retrieved August 1, 2023 from <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/forced-migration-or-displacement> .

⁴ UNHCR, 2023, “Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees” Retrieved October 1, 2023 from <https://www.unhcr.org/media/convention-and-protocol-relating-status-refugees> .

displaced at this time,⁵ and a refugee is defined as a person who has been forced to flee their homes and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country. However, it is important to note that not all migrants are refugees, and not all forcibly displaced people are refugees:

Refugees are people outside their country of origin because of feared persecution, conflict, violence, or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order, and who, as a result, require 'international protection'.⁶

In addition, the UNHCR does not have the staff and financial resources to serve all people who may have fled due to these causes. Additionally, there are 5.4 million asylum seekers⁷ defined as people who may have fled due to the reasons defining a refugee but "whose request for sanctuary and has yet to be processed."⁸

Another category of people who are forcibly displaced are Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), defined as persons who were "forced to flee their homes but have not cross an international border."⁹ According to the International Organization for Migration:

More than 59 million people are currently displaced within their own countries – uprooted by conflict, violence and disasters. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) often live in overcrowded, unsanitary locations where jobs and services are few. These dire circumstances have now worsened due to the health risks and socio-economic impacts of the pandemic.¹⁰

⁵ UNHCR, 2023, "Figures at a Glance." Retrieved June 11, 2023 from <https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-are/figures-glance>

⁶ UNHCR, 2023, "What is a Refugee?" Retrieved July 7th, 2023 from <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/what-is-a-refugee/> .

⁷ UNHCR, 2023, "Figures at a Glance" Retrieved June 11th, 2023 from <https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-are/figures-glance>.

⁸ UNHCR, 2023, "Asylum Seekers" Retrieved July 2nd, 2023 from <https://www.unhcr.org/asylum-seekers>.

⁹ UNHCR, 2023, "Figures at a Glance" Retrieved June 11, 2023 from <https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/who-we-are/figures-glance> .

¹⁰ International Organization for Migration, 2023, "Internal Displacement" Retrieved October 1, 2023 from <https://www.iom.int/internal-displacement>

There are many circumstances that may force individuals to migrate, and the IOM actively seeks to assist all people who are forcibly displaced. As the twenty-first century has brought with it many new changes, so has the number of challenges people face. The second cause of forced displacement includes natural causes such as violent storms, earthquakes or climate change which is causing an increase in temperatures, making farming of crops increasingly more difficult and water less available in certain regions of the world.¹¹ In addition, climate change has also increased the devastating intensity of several natural phenomena, such as hurricanes, tornados, and floods. For example, in 2019 when Tropical Cyclone Idai struck Mozambique twice, over 100,000 people were internally displaced,¹² and the country has been struck by eighteen tropical storms since then, not all causing the same impact as Idai but continuing to cause disruptions in an already heavily impacted region.¹³

All these circumstances result in a lack of basic necessities needed to survive and forces people to seek security elsewhere. However, it is important to note that the circumstances that are not conflict related and cause people to flee means that these migrants are not protected by the same under international laws and norms that apply to refugees. As a result, many of these people are left defenseless, living in poverty and dying from the lack of care and necessities they are unable to receive. The International Organization for Migration has stepped into this void to take a leading role in providing resources and coordinating international efforts to help all forcibly displaced people. For example:

IOM is present before, during and after crises – working alongside national and local authorities and other international organizations. The Organization provided protection and assistance to more than 21 million IDPs and six million people in affected host communities in 2019. IOM also plays an active role in global

¹¹ UNHCR, 2023, "Climate Change and Displacement" Retrieved July 2nd, 2023 from <https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/build-better-futures/environment-disasters-and-climate-change/climate-change-and> .

¹² International Organization for Migration, 2019, "Mozambique-Cyclone Idai" Retrieved October 15, 2023 from <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/mozambique-%E2%80%94-cyclone-idai-snapshot-report-eight-months-after-ida-i-%E2%80%94-november-2019> .

¹³ World Data, 2022, "Cyclones in Mozambique" Retrieved October 15, 2023 from <https://www.worlddata.info/africa/mozambique/cyclones.php> .

initiatives that seek to resolve internal displacement – including the UN High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, an initiative launched by the Secretary-General in February 2020 to drive bold solutions to this global crisis and the GP20 Platform, which promotes the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.¹⁴

The 2018 United Nations General Assembly (A/RES/73/195) Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is the cornerstone of the IOM's efforts towards helping all forcibly displaced people.¹⁵ The IOM engages in efforts such as providing immediate basic needs such as food, shelter, healthcare, and clean water, to steps to help those who wish to return to their home country.¹⁶ The paper will now turn to examining two cases to document how forcibly displaced people facing conflict and natural threats have important experiences and needs, and require unique responses by the IOM and all Member States.

According to the UNHCR, most refugees, 52%, originate from just three countries: Syria, Ukraine, and Afghanistan.¹⁷ Of these forcibly displaced refugees, 38% live in just five central countries. Many of these countries are neighbors to those facing distress, such as Turkey, which has the highest number of refugees worldwide at 3.6 million, with many migrants coming from neighboring Syria. As of 2023, Syria has more than 13 million displaced Syrians, the highest recorded number of refugees from one Member State with 6.8 million of these people being internally displaced.¹⁸ Many of these people are trying to flee the country due to ongoing war and political oppression. Additionally, in February of 2023, a series of earthquakes devastated areas

¹⁴ International Organization for Migration, 2023, "Internal Displacement" Retrieved October 1, 2023 from <https://www.iom.int/internal-displacement> .

¹⁵ United Nations General Assembly, 2018, "Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration" Retrieved on July 15, 2023 from <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N18/451/99/PDF/N1845199.pdf?OpenElement> .

¹⁶ International Organization for Migration, 2023, "Our Work" Retrieved July 15, 2023 from <https://www.iom.int/our-work>.

¹⁷ UNHCR, 2020, "Global Trends - Forced Displacement in 2020" Retrieved July 2, 2023 from <https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends> .

¹⁸ UNHCR, 2022, "Eleven Years of Mounting Challenges Push Many Displaced Syrians to the Brink" July 2, 2023 from <https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing-notes/eleven-years-mounting-challenges-push-many-displaced-syrians-brink> .

along the border of Syria and Turkey, disrupting these peoples' already difficult lives by leaving many people in need of emergency care and, in some cases, homeless again.¹⁹

Because of these circumstances, over 77% of Syrians now reside in neighboring countries such as Turkey in camps where there is a widespread need for food, shelter, and other necessities. Many of these camps were meant as temporary solutions but with nowhere else to go, these camps have become permanent homes.²⁰ Many of the camps lack sanitation and proper medical care, causing diseases to spread quickly, and easily treatable illnesses and diseases to become life-threatening.²¹ In addition, because these people are forced to live in cramped conditions, many of these people also lack security. As a result, there is rampant crime, such as assault, gender-based violence, and human trafficking.²² Addressing these issues is critical to ensuring the health and safety of forcibly displaced peoples.

While many of these migrants have been able to migrate to European states seeking shelter and asylum, their situation is not necessarily stable, as there has been a high rise in center-right National parties in Turkey and across Europe. This rising nationalism and, with it, anti-refugee sentiment can be attributed to the fact that countries such as Turkey have been home to millions of refugees for over a decade. The mass influx of refugees has created "major economic and social problems," such as "increases in food and house prices and property rents."²³ This anti-refugee sentiment is understandable as geographically closer states face a disproportionate burden in assisting asylum seekers, while other states that are geographically farther away face little to no responsibility.

The IOM and other United Nations agencies have been working hard to address these issues by fighting for the Syrian peoples to receive the care they require. The IOM has dedicate

¹⁹United Nations, "Turkey-Syria Earthquake Response" Retrieved October 1, 2023 from <https://www.un.org/en/turkiye-syria-earthquake-response>.

²⁰ UNHCR, "Refugee Camps," Retrieved October 1, 2023 from <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/camps/>.

²¹ World Health Organization, 2023, "Refugee and Migrant Health" Retrieved October 1, 2023 from https://www.who.int/health-topics/refugee-and-migrant-health#tab=tab_1.

²²UNHCR Egypt, 2023, "Gender-Based Violence" Retrieved October 1, 2023 from <https://www.unhcr.org/eg/what-we-do/las-cooperation/gbv>.

²³ European Institute of the Mediterranean, 2016, "Syrian Refugees in Turkey: Between Heaven and Hell" Retrieved October 1, 2023 from <https://www.iemed.org/publication/syrian-refugees-in-turkey-between-heaven-and-hell/>.

specific resources and support for the Syrians through its Syrian Mission.²⁴ The UN has also provided financial support to host countries and their governments “enabling them to include refugees in national programmes” and particularly in response to the recent earthquakes.²⁵ So far, the IOM and United Nations agencies have been working alongside non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to help provide enormous amounts of aid to refugees by building shelters and providing necessities such as food, water, and essential healthcare, such as “administering vaccine campaigns”²⁶ and even providing education to those in need.²⁷

Afghanistan has the third most forcibly displaced people worldwide as “more than 8 million Afghans have been driven out of their homes.” Afghanistan is a country that has been in conflict for many decades, leaving much of the country in ruin, and the country has experienced numerous severe earthquakes. Over the past year, the Taliban have quickly retaken the country, causing many more Afghans to flee their homes to escape conflict and persecution.²⁸

Today, 85% of Afghan refugees are living in neighboring Pakistan.²⁹ “With 1.3 million refugees living in Pakistan” many of these refugees are grateful to have a place to seek sanctuary. However, many Afghanistan people living in Pakistan face several threats. First, many do not have legal documents that allow them to stay in Pakistan or their visas have expired, and those who lack documentation “face severe economic difficulties” and are unable to find work or are exploited for cheap labor. Second, they face a new problem, the Pakistan government is wanting the Afghans to leave. While “Pakistan, in the past, has been lenient about Afghanistan refugees crossing over their borders” in recent months, the Pakistan government has become increasingly stricter. This has left

²⁴ International Organization for Migration, 2023, “IOM – Syrian Arab Republic” Retrieved October 1, 2023 from <https://syria.iom.int/> .

²⁵United Nations, 2023, “With Conflicts, Climate Change Pushing Displacement to Record Levels, Third Committee Highlights Need to Ramp Up Refugee Funding, Address Root Causes” Retrieved October 1, 2023 from <https://press.un.org/en/2023/gashc4395.doc.htm>.

²⁶ UNICEF Press Releases, 2023, “WHO and UNICEF launch cholera vaccination campaign in northwest Syria amidst earthquake” Retrieved October 1, 2023 from <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/who-and-unicef-launch-cholera-vaccination-campaign-northwest-syria-amidst-earthquake>.

²⁷ UNHCR Press Releases, 2023, “UN and partners appeal for US \$97 million to respond to urgent needs of refugees and their hosts” UNHCR Press Releases. Retrieved November 9, 2023 from <https://www.unhcr.org/us/news/press-releases/un-and-partners-appeal-us-97-million-respond-urgent-needs-refugees-and-their->

²⁸ UNHCR, 2023, “Afghanistan Refugee Crisis Explained” Retrieved November 9, 2023 from <https://www.unrefugees.org/news/afghanistan-refugee-crisis-explained/>.

²⁹ UNHCR, 2023, “Afghanistan Emergency” Retrieved November 9, 2023 from <https://www.unrefugees.org/emergencies/afghanistan/>.

many Afghan refugees in fear as they may no longer live in Pakistan and returning to their home country of Afghanistan is not safe.³⁰

The IOM, other United Nations agencies and organizations as well as numerous NGOs have provided support to the Afghani refugees. The IOM has a dedicated Afghanistan Mission that is helping with diverse needs such as humanitarian responses, health care and assisting Afghans with migration to safe countries such as Canada.³¹ The UNHCR has provided services but because of the enormous need "other humanitarian organizations are very limited" and many refugees struggle to meet basic needs such as food and shelter.³² These circumstances also significantly affect children as many of these families live primarily in rural areas far away from schools and lack sufficient transportation; as a result, many children are unable to get to school, let alone pay tuition costs.³³

When looking at the larger picture of the needs of forcibly displaced people, whether they migrate due to conflict or natural causes, the migrants face similar challenges. They must leave the stability of their homes, leaving everything behind including their possessions, legal documents, and sources of income from employment, and even family members. This leaves many people vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, and without the basic needs for survival. In these situations, it is the children who suffer the most. For the people able to flee to another country, this does not mean that their problems have been necessarily solved, as many still struggle to find support in a host country with the resources required to escape poverty. Life as a forcibly displaced person is a challenging, complicated, and never-ending nightmare. Sadly, in the future due to conflict and the increase in climate change, we are much more likely to see a rise in forcibly displaced people worldwide. Climate change will affect not only Developing Member States as hurricanes, floods, and droughts increase but also Developed Member States as they will face mass migration to areas where necessities are less scarce, and they are not invulnerable to natural disasters themselves. The important challenge of assisting forcibly displaced people requires all Member

³⁰ United Nations News, 2023, "UN agencies call on Pakistan to protect Afghan refugees" Retrieved October 10, 2023 from <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/10/1142022>.

³¹ International Migration Organization, 2023, "IOM Afghanistan Mission" Retrieved October 10, 2023 from <https://afghanistan.iom.int/>.

³² Minority Rights Group International, 2023, "Afghanistan-Pakistan" Retrieved October 10, 2023 from <https://minorityrights.org/programmes/library/trends/trends2022/afghanistan-pakistan/>.

³³ UNICEF Afghanistan, 2023, "Education." Retrieved October 10, 2023 from <https://www.unicef.org/afghanistan/education>.

States to take responsibility and to agree on unified action to protect all migrants and in particular the more vulnerable group of forcibly displaced people. The solutions of today have proven insufficient to withstand the ever-increasing flood of forcibly displaced people.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

1. Has your country been affected by forcibly displaced people, either by your own population having to flee from conflict or natural disasters, or from people fleeing to your state?
2. How has your state prepared for migrants and what is the status of migrants in your state? Are there protections in place, does your population welcome them, etc.?
3. Does your state support the IOM and other organizations such as UNICEF, UNHCR or NGOs in their efforts to protect forcibly displaced people? If yes, in what ways and if no, why is it unable or unwilling to do so?
4. What potential conflicts or natural causes may impact the population in your own state that might cause internal and/or external migration?
5. What actions has your state taken to support your own population if there was a conflict or natural disaster? If your state has specific responses prepared, could the preparation steps apply to other states (knowledge sharing, resources, etc.)?

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