

REGION ON THE MOVE

REGIONAL MOBILITY REPORT FOR THE
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA 2021–2022



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This document was produced by IOM MENA Regional Office (RO) Regional Data Hub. This publication was made possible through support provided by IOM's Migration Resource Allocation Committee (MiRAC) funding. The opinions expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of MiRAC.

Publisher: International Organisation for Migration
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Zamalek, Cairo
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Email: ROCAIRODATAHUB@iom.int
Website: mena.iom.int

Cover: Third-country nationals, many of whom are from sub-Saharan African nations as well as South Asia are seen lining up to board buses that will evacuate them from Libya. © IOM 2011

Required citation: International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2023. Region on the Move: Regional Mobility Report for the Middle East and North Africa 2021–2022. IOM, Cairo.

This publication was issued without formal editing by IOM.

ISBN 978-92-9268-758-8 (PDF)

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PUB2023/139/R

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CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES, TABLES AND BOXES	VII
GLOSSARY	X
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	XIV
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	XV
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	XVI
INTRODUCTION	XVIII
METHODOLOGY	XIX
LIMITATIONS	XX
BACKGROUND	XXI
IOM MENA REGIONAL DATA HUB	XXII
ABOUT MENA REGION ON THE MOVE	XXII
1. MIGRATION TRENDS	1
1.1 DEMOGRAPHIC DYNAMICS	2
1.2 GLOBAL TRENDS	3
1.3 REGIONAL TRENDS	4
2. TYPES OF MIGRATION	8
2.1 LABOUR MIGRATION	9
2.2 INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY	13
2.3 FORCED INTERNAL AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION	14
2.4 MIXED MIGRATION FLOW	22
3. MIGRANT PROTECTION	27
3.1 RETURN AND REINTEGRATION	28
3.2 MIGRANTS IN VULNERABLE SITUATIONS	31
3.3 DEAD AND MISSING MIGRANTS	33
4. SOCIOECONOMIC TRENDS	37
4.1 GENDER DISPARITIES AND AGE DISTRIBUTION	38

4.2 HUMAN CAPITAL CHALLENGES	41
4.3 REMITTANCE FLOWS	42
5. ACCESS TO SERVICES	45
5.1 HEALTH	46
5.2 SOCIAL SAFETY NETS	51
6. CLIMATE CHANGE AND FOOD SECURITY	53
6.1 CLIMATE VULNERABILITIES AND RESILIENCE	54
6.2 DISASTER DISPLACEMENT	56
6.3 FOOD INSECURITY	59
7. URBANIZATION	62
7.1 URBANIZATION TRENDS	63
7.2 REFUGEE CAMPS AND INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS	64
8. MIGRATION GOVERNANCE	68
8.1 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: PROGRESS OF THE MENA COUNTRIES	69
8.2 GLOBAL COMPACT FOR SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR MIGRATION: PROGRESS OF THE MENA COUNTRIES	70
9. CONCLUSION	73
9.1 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS	74
REFERENCES	76

LIST OF FIGURES, TABLES AND BOXES

FIGURES

FIGURE 1. CONTRIBUTIONS TO TOTAL POPULATION CHANGE OF THE BALANCE OF BIRTHS OVER DEATHS AND OF IMMIGRATION OVER EMIGRATION IN MENA COUNTRIES FROM 1950 TO 2050	2
FIGURE 2. INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT STOCK VS POPULATION IN THE MENA COUNTRIES 2022	4
FIGURE 3. MAIN REGIONS OF DESINATION FROM THE MENA REGION	5
FIGURE 4. INTRAREGIONAL MIGRATION TRENDS IN THE MENA REGION	5
FIGURE 5. TOP MIGRATION CORRIDORS WITHIN THE MENA REGION, 2020 (MILLION)	6
FIGURE 6. EMPLOYMENT TO POPULATION RATIO	9
FIGURE 7. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	10
FIGURE 8. LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE OF FOREIGN BORN AND NATIVE-BORN RESIDENTS IN SELECT MENA COUNTRIES (%)	11
FIGURE 9. WORKING AGE POPULATION OF FOREIGN-BORN AND NATIVE-BORN RESIDENTS IN SELECT MENA COUNTRIES (THOUSANDS)	11
FIGURE 10. TOTAL INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN AND FROM THE MENA REGION	13
FIGURE 11. LATEST ESTIMATES ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS, REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS, AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN THE MENA REGION	14
FIGURE 12. TOTAL NUMBER OF IDPS IN SELECT MENA COUNTRIES FROM 2010 TO 2022	16
FIGURE 13. NEW CONFLICT-DRIVEN INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN SELECT MENA COUNTRIES FROM 2010 TO 2022	16
FIGURE 14. IDPS AND RETURNEES IN SELECT MENA COUNTRIES (2021–2022)	20
FIGURE 15. CMR ARRIVALS BY SEA TO ITALY AND MALTA FROM JANUARY 2021 TO DECEMBER 2022	22
FIGURE 16. EMR LAND ARRIVALS (LEFT) AND SEA ARRIVALS (RIGHT) IN GREECE FROM JANUARY 2021 TO DECEMBER 2022	23
FIGURE 17. WMR ARRIVALS TO SPAIN BY SUB-ROUTE FROM JANUARY 2021 TO DECEMBER 2022	24
FIGURE 18. ARRIVALS IN LIBYA (ALGATROUN) FROM THE NIGER	25
FIGURE 19. ARRIVALS IN THE SUDAN FROM ETHIOPIA	25
FIGURE 20. TOTAL OF OUTBOUND (LEFT) AND INBOUND (RIGHT) MIGRANTS FOR MENA COUNTRIES (2021–2022)	28

FIGURE 21. TOP SELECT COUNTRIES FOR OUTBOUND MIGRANTS FROM MENA (LEFT) AND INBOUND MIGRANTS TO MENA (RIGHT) (2021–2022)	29
FIGURE 22A. TOP DESTINATION COUNTRIES FOR OUTBOUND MIGRANTS FROM MENA COUNTRIES (2021–2022)	30
FIGURE 22B. TOP COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN FOR INBOUND MIGRANTS TO MENA COUNTRIES (2021–2022)	30
FIGURE 23. TOTAL NUMBER OF VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING (VOT) BY NATIONALITY (2011–2021) (LEFT)	31
FIGURE 24. TOP DESTINATION COUNTRIES FOR VOT ASSISTED IN THE MENA REGION (2022)	31
FIGURE 25. UNACCOMPANIED OR SEPARATED MINORS (UASM) FROM MENA IN 2021 (LEFT) AND 2022 (RIGHT)	32
FIGURE 26. MIGRATORY INCIDENTS THAT OCCURRED WITHIN AND FROM THE MENA REGION (2021–2022)	33
FIGURE 27. DEATHS AND DISAPPEARANCES IN COUNTRIES OF INCIDENTS ON NORTH AFRICAN LAND ROUTES (2020–2022)	34
FIGURE 28. DEMOGRAPHICS OF DEAD MIGRANTS FROM MENA COUNTRIES TO EUROPE (2021–2022)	35
FIGURE 29A. PROPORTION OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS BY SEX IN MENA COUNTRIES (2020)	38
FIGURE 29B. PROPORTION OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS BY AGE IN MENA COUNTRIES (2020)	39
FIGURE 30. PER CENT OF POPULATION WHO DESIRE TO EMIGRATE IN SELECT MENA COUNTRIES (2022)	41
FIGURE 31. EMIGRATION RATE VS HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX IN MENA COUNTRIES	42
FIGURE 32. TOTAL REMITTANCES TO MENA COUNTRIES FROM 2015 TO 2022 (USD MILLIONS)	43
FIGURE 33. REMITTANCE INFLOWS TO MENA COUNTRIES (USD MILLION)	44
FIGURE 34. NUMBER OF NEW HIV INFECTIONS PER 1,000 UNINFECTED POPULATION IN SELECT MENA COUNTRIES (2021)	46
FIGURE 35. TUBERCULOSIS INCIDENCE IN SELECT MENA COUNTRIES (PER 100,000 POPULATION)	47
FIGURE 36. TOP COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN FOR ASSISTED MIGRANTS WITH HEALTH NEEDS FROM MENA OUTBOUND (LEFT) AND TO MENA INBOUND IN 2022 (RIGHT)	48
FIGURE 37. INCLUSION OF MIGRANTS IN THE MENA COUNTRIES COVID-19 VACCINATION PLANS AS OF DECEMBER 2021	49
FIGURE 38. INTERNATIONAL POINTS OF ENTRY (POE) ANALYSIS WITH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS, LAND AND BLUE BORDER CROSSING POINTS (DECEMBER 2022)	50
FIGURE 39. ND-GAIN CLIMATE CHANGE COUNTRY INDEX, 2021	54
FIGURE 40. SUM OF NEW DISASTER DISPLACEMENTS (2011–2020)	56
FIGURE 41. TOTAL NUMBER OF IDPS DUE TO DISASTERS (2011–2022)	57

FIGURE 42. SEVERE FOOD INSECURITY IN SELECT MENA COUNTRIES (2020-2022) AND MODERATE OR SEVERE FOOD INSECURITY IN SELECT MENA COUNTRIES (2020–2022)	59
FIGURE 43. ANNUAL PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION AT MID-YEAR RESIDING IN URBAN AREAS. 1950, 1990 AND 2020	63
FIGURE 44. EMPLOYMENT OF REFUGEES IN SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC, MOROCCO AND JORDAN BY SECTOR	64
FIGURE 45. WASH FACILITIES IN REFUGEE CAMPS IN JORDAN, LEBANON AND IRAQ	65
FIGURE 46. PERCENTAGE OF MENA COUNTRIES ADDRESSING EACH GLOBAL COMPACT FOR MIGRATION OBJECTIVE IN 2022 (%)	70
FIGURE 47. GLOBAL COMPACT FOR MIGRATION STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE PROGRESS OF THE GLOBAL COMPACT FOR MIGRATION IMPLEMENTATION IN ARAB STATES	71
FIGURE 48. TOP 5 GLOBAL COMPACT FOR MIGRATION OBJECTIVES THAT RESPONDENTS' COUNTRIES HAVE MADE THE MOST PROGRESS ON SINCE THE ADOPTION IN 2018	72

TABLES

TABLE 1: LEGAL COVERAGE OF SOCIAL PROTECTION SCHEMES FOR PRIVATE-SECTOR NON-NATIONAL WORKERS	52
TABLE 2: ASSESSMENT OF VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE TO CONFLICT IN THE ARAB REGION	55
TABLE 3: DAFI (ALBERT EINSTEIN GERMAN ACADEMIC REFUGEE INITIATIVE) FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM IN THE MENA REGION	66
TABLE 4: SDG INDICATOR 10.7.2 BY COUNTRY AND DOMAIN	69

BOXES

BOX 1: GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL (GCC) IS A HUB OF LABOUR MIGRATION	12
BOX 2: ALGERIA – THE PERSISTENT CHALLENGE OF PROTRACTED REFUGEE SITUATION	15
BOX 3: THE SUDAN – CONFLICT INDUCED DISPLACEMENT PRIOR TO APRIL 2023 CRISIS	18
BOX 4: IRAQ – TRENDS IN RETURNEE POPULATION GROWTH AND DISTRIBUTION	19
BOX 5: LIBYA – PROGRESS TOWARDS DURABLE SOLUTIONS AND INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT	21
BOX 6: YEMEN – AN INCREASE OF ARRIVALS FROM THE HORN OF AFRICA IN 2022	26
BOX 7: DEATHS AND DISAPPEARANCES OF MENA NATIONALS	36
BOX 8: FEMALE MIGRANTS IN THE MENA REGION	40
BOX 9: DRIVERS OF DISASTER DISPLACEMENT IN IRAQ	58
BOX 10: REGIONAL IMPACT OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE AS A CRISIS MULTIPLIER	60
BOX 11: YEMEN – CLIMATE CRISIS IS BECOMING A MAJOR DRIVER OF FOOD INSECURITY	61
BOX 12. JORDAN – MANAGEMENT OF HOUSING DEMANDS AND INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS	67

GLOSSARY

All definitions below are from the International Organization for Migration Glossary on Migration (Sironi, 2019).

■ ASSISTED MIGRATION

The movement of migrants carried out with the assistance of governments or international organizations, as opposed to spontaneous, unaided migration.

■ ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

Administrative, logistical or financial support, including reintegration assistance, to migrants unable or unwilling to remain in the host country or country of transit and who decide to return to their country of origin.

■ ASYLUM SEEKER

An individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualized procedures, an asylum-seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum-seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every recognized refugee is initially an asylum-seeker.

■ CLIMATE MIGRATION

The movement of a person or groups of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive change in the environment due to climate change, are obliged to leave their habitual place of residence, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, within a State or across an international border.

■ COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

In the migration context, a country of nationality or of former habitual residence of a person or group of persons who have migrated abroad, irrespective of whether they migrate regularly or irregularly.

■ COUNTRY OF TRANSIT

In the migration context, the country through which a person or a group of persons pass on any journey to the country of destination or from the country of destination to the country of origin or the country of habitual residence.

■ DISPLACEMENT

The movement of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters.

DISASTER DISPLACEMENT

The movement of persons who have been forced or obliged to leave their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of a disaster or in order to avoid the impact of an immediate and foreseeable natural hazard.

DISASTER RISK

The potential loss of life, injury, or destroyed or damaged assets which could occur to a system, society or a community in a specific period of time, determined probabilistically as a function of hazard, exposure, vulnerability and capacity.

DURABLE SOLUTION (INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS)

For internally displaced persons, a durable solution is achieved when internally displaced persons no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement.

EMIGRATION

From the perspective of the country of departure, the act of moving from one's country of nationality or usual residence to another country, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence.

IMMIGRATION

From the perspective of the country of arrival, the act of moving into a country other than one's country of nationality or usual residence, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT

Any person who is outside a State of which he or she is a citizen or national, or, in the case of a stateless person, his or her State of birth or habitual residence. The term includes migrants who intend to move permanently or temporarily, and those who move in a regular or documented manner as well as migrants in irregular situations.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT

A person who has moved across an international border away from his or her habitual place of residence for the purpose of undertaking a programme of study.

LABOUR MIGRATION

Movement of persons from one State to another, or within their own country of residence, for the purpose of employment.

MIGRANT

An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students.

MIGRATION

The movement of persons away from their place of usual residence, either across an international border or within a State.

MIGRATION GOVERNANCE

The combined frameworks of legal norms, laws and regulations, policies and traditions as well as organizational structures (subnational, national, regional and international) and the relevant processes that shape and regulate States' approaches with regard to migration in all its forms, addressing rights and responsibilities and promoting international cooperation.

MIGRANTS IN VULNERABLE SITUATIONS

Migrants who are unable to effectively enjoy their human rights, are at increased risk of violations and abuse and who, accordingly, are entitled to call on a duty bearer's heightened duty of care.

MIGRANT IN AN IRREGULAR SITUATION

A person who moves or has moved across an international border and is not authorized to enter or to stay in a State pursuant to the law of that State and to international agreements to which that State is a party.

MIXED MOVEMENTS (MIXED MIGRATION OR MIXED FLOWS)

A movement in which a number of people are travelling together, generally in an irregular manner, using the same routes and means of transport, but for different reasons. People travelling as part of mixed movements have varying needs and profiles and may include asylum-seekers, refugees, trafficked persons, unaccompanied/separated children, and migrants in an irregular situation.

REFUGEE (MANDATE)

A person who qualifies for the protection of the UNHCR, in accordance with UNHCR's Statute and, notably, subsequent General Assembly's resolutions clarifying the scope of UNHCR's competency, regardless of whether or not he or she is in a country that is a party to the 1951 Convention or the 1967 Protocol or whether or not he or she has been recognized by his or her host country as a refugee under either of these instruments.

RETURN MIGRATION

In the context of international migration, the movement of persons returning to their country of origin after having moved away from their place of habitual residence and crossed an international border. In the context of internal migration, the movement of persons returning to their place of habitual residence after having moved away from it.

UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

Children, as defined in Article 1 of the Convention on the Right of the Child, who have been separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so.

URBANIZATION

The occurrence of increasing proportion of a population that is living in urban areas.

URBAN–RURAL MIGRATION

The movement of people from an urban to a rural area for the purpose of establishing a new residence.

VICTIM OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Any natural person subject to trafficking in human beings, regardless of whether the perpetrator is identified, apprehended, prosecuted or convicted.

VOLUNTARY RETURN

The assisted or independent return to the country of origin, transit or another country based on the voluntary decision of the returnee.

VULNERABILITY

Within a migration context, vulnerability is the limited capacity to avoid, resist, cope with, or recover from harm. This limited capacity is the result of the unique interaction of individual, household, community, and structural characteristics and conditions.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AVRR	Assisted voluntary return and reintegration
CMR	Central Mediterranean Route
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
EMR	Eastern Mediterranean Route
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IDMC	International Displacement Monitoring Centre
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILOSTAT	International Labour Organization Department of Statistics
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MiMOSA	Migrant Management Operational Systems Application
MMP	Missing Migrants Project
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund
VHR	Voluntary Humanitarian Return
WAAR	Western African Atlantic route
WMR	Western Mediterranean Route

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The MENA Region on the Move 2021–2022 was led by Rajee Kanagavel (Regional Reporting Officer, RDH) and Modher Alhamadani (Regional Data Hub Coordinator, RO MENA) with support from Carlos Ernesto Ayala (Data and Statistics Officer, RDH), Alaeddine Dridi (Research Officer, RDH), Riham Abouelhassan (Data and Research Assistant) and Khobib Elsayed Awad Mohamed (Information Management Officer, RDH).

The team is grateful to Othman Belbeisi (Regional Director, RO MENA) and the Regional Office Thematic Specialists for their valuable inputs and suggestions. The team wishes to thank the following DTM and Country Office colleagues for their comments, inputs and suggestions: Genevieve Lavoie (Reporting Officer, DTM Libya), Danah Alothman (Project Associate, Kuwait), and Yaseen Alshereda (Programme Coordinator, DTM Sudan).

IOM MENA Regional Data Hub gratefully acknowledges the financial support from the Migration Resource Allocation Committee (MiRAC), which allowed all activities related to this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Migration is deeply ingrained in the lives and livelihoods of people in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The region witnesses three key migration patterns: labour migration, mixed migration, and displacement.¹ Migration in the region in 2021–2022 was influenced by the pull of economic opportunity, push of conflict, environmental degradation, and youth unemployment.

In 2020, the MENA region hosted 14.5 per cent of migrants and refugees worldwide, while globally 9.4 per cent originated from the MENA region.² The MENA region witnessed a growth rate of international migrants that outpaced the global average, surging twice as fast during the 2015–2020 period.³ The predominant portion of migrants in the MENA countries (24%) consist of intraregional migrants.⁴ Within the MENA region, the greater portion of international migrants are male (61.35%), mirroring the preponderance of migrants worldwide originating from the MENA region.⁵

The MENA region has a relatively youthful population compared to the global average, with a larger share falling into the working-age category. In 2019, the Arab States⁶ hosted 24.1 million migrant workers, comprising 41.4 per cent of the region's workforce, in contrast to 4.9 per cent globally.⁷ Notably, the Gulf Cooperation Council countries have attracted a substantial influx of migrant workers.

Some of the most significant migration corridors in the MENA region are driven by different factors. Conflict and displacement have led to movements from Syrian

Arab Republic to Lebanon, while economic motivations drive migration from Egypt to Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates.⁸

The region is at the forefront of the global refugee crisis, producing 8.3 million refugees and asylum-seekers,⁹ which is the largest number of refugees produced compared to other regions in the world. In terms of outward migration, approximately 32.8 million people either migrated voluntarily or were forcibly displaced from Arab countries, with 44 per cent of them remaining within the region.¹⁰

Forced displacement stands out as a defining characteristic of the MENA region, affecting more than eight million individuals as of December 2022.¹¹ Protracted displacement resulting from conflict and violence is particularly concentrated in countries like the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and Iraq.¹² In 2022, the Syrian Arab Republic witnessed a consistently high rate of new displacement compared to other countries. Meanwhile, countries in transition, like Iraq and Libya, experienced a complex mix of returns in some areas and continued displacement in others, emphasizing the need for adaptable transition and recovery support strategies.

Mobility patterns in North Africa pose protection challenges linked to irregular movements. In 2022, there was a notable rise in sea arrivals along the Central and Eastern Mediterranean routes, as well as along the Eastern route from the Horn of Africa to the Arabian Peninsula. The number of missing and dead migrants

1 IOM, 2020c.

2 In the UN DESA International Migrant Stock database, both migrants and refugees are included in the total international migrant stock.

3 UN DESA, 2021b.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 According to ILO (2021), the "Arab States" comprises Middle East countries (Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and the Occupied Palestinian Territory) and GCC countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates).

7 ILO, 2021.

8 UN DESA, 2021b.

9 UNHCR, 2023a.

10 UN DESA, 2021b.

11 IDMC, 2023.

12 IOM, 2020c.

across the Mediterranean remains high, estimated at 2,411 by the end of 2022.¹³ It is important to note that, contrary to common misconceptions, many migrants from West and Central Africa actively choose North Africa as their destination rather than using it solely as a transit point to Europe.

Countries in the MENA region stand out as one of the most vulnerable areas globally, heavily impacted by climate change. In 2022, more than 300 thousand internal displacements or movements occurred due to disasters, with a significant number in Yemen, the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq.¹⁴ Despite steady urbanization, the quality of life for migrants residing in informal settlements and urban areas has not seen significant improvement.

In 2022, there was a significant shift in the host region for returns facilitated by IOM. The MENA region, accounting for 33 per cent of the total caseload, emerged as the primary host region, surpassing the European Economic Area (EEA).¹⁵ IOM provided assistance to a total of 22,551 migrants through its assisted voluntary returns programmes,¹⁶ aiding their returns to their countries of origin from the MENA region.¹⁷ Additionally, 6,452 migrants received support for their returns to the MENA region. The primary region of origin for these assisted returns was West and Central Africa, constituting 61 per cent of the total number of migrants who returned to MENA with IOM's assistance. Notably, approximately 41.5 per cent of these assisted returnees to the MENA region originated from the EEA.¹⁸

MENA country governments are increasingly recognizing the importance of data, with most states taking initiatives and a few now collecting and using some form of migration information and statistics. There is a need for MENA countries to make progress towards achieving the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (Global Compact for Migration). In collaboration with the IOM Regional Office for MENA in Cairo, IOM Country Missions in the MENA region continue to work towards the goals outlined by the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) as part



A truck carrying the personal belongings of displaced persons from the Sudan. ©IOM 2023

¹³ IOM, 2022c.

¹⁴ IDMC, 2023.

¹⁵ IOM, 2023f, 2023g.

¹⁶ Data includes assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) and Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) programmes.

¹⁷ IOM, 2023o.

¹⁸ Ibid.



INTRODUCTION

“Switzerland is the country of peace. It is a neutral country. It doesn’t take part in any conflict, whether regional or international. Switzerland truly is the land of peace. I think that’s the most important thing. Maybe because we were deprived of it, or we suffered a lot. It’s very nice to know that there’s a country that creates peace. If there’s a war, it is the mediator country that unites two countries to resolve their conflicts. Upon hearing Geneva, you are hearing peace. So, Geneva is peace. Peace is Geneva. That’s how it is for us.” Ali, a Syrian refugee resettled to Switzerland. © IOM 2019 / Muse Mohammed

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has more than 40 million migrants and refugees.¹ Migration has been a significant source of development in the region due to access to labour for destination countries, migrants' contribution to the economies or remittances for origin countries. However, internal displacement has been caused by prolonged regional conflicts, in combination of natural hazards and food insecurity.² Within the region, it is noteworthy that in 2020 over a quarter of individuals were internally displaced due to conflict and violence in countries such as the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and Iraq. The same year saw a staggering count of over 22.2 million new instances of internal displacement. The MENA region stands as the world's largest primary origin of refugees. This trend is aggravated by demographic challenges caused by emigration with most of those who emigrate being young. Climate change-related shocks and stresses interact with these underlying challenges, compounding their negative impacts. This situation has been exacerbated by the ongoing regional crises, repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the war in Ukraine.

The Region on the Move report describes migration trends at the regional level with a particular focus on socioeconomic challenges and climate risks in the MENA region. It also discusses the multidimensionality of vulnerability impacting migrants as well as opportunities for migrants in MENA. As the economies in the region recovers from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and strives to overcome existing problems of political crises and disaster risks, the regional report explores the region's migration movements from 2021 to 2022 through post-pandemic vulnerability and climate risks lens considering resilient and inclusive mobility dimensions.

METHODOLOGY

The comprehensive exploration of various facets in the regional report on migratory flows and movements from, to, and within the MENA region draws upon both

Migration has exerted a lasting influence on the MENA region, where numerous countries fulfill roles as sources, transit points, and destinations for migrants. Migration trends in the region witnessed notable shifts between 2015 and 2020. In Western Asia,³ the migrant caseload surged by 6.7 million during this period, while North Africa experienced an increase of 1.1 million. Delving into the percentage changes over these five years, Western Asia's growth rate decreased from 5.2 per cent in 2015 to 3.1 per cent in 2020. Conversely, North Africa saw a substantial rise, escalating from 1.8 per cent in 2015 to an impressive 7.9 per cent by 2020. Moreover, both subregions encountered a rise in emigration during 2015 to 2020, though North Africa's increase was comparatively more gradual. While precise regional data concerning migration caseloads in 2021 and 2022 are yet to be available, existing evidence points to a decline in migrants from South Asian countries like Bangladesh and Pakistan within Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries such as Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

This report offers valuable insights intended to provide better guidance for the governance of migration, a critical stride on the path toward advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (Global Compact for Migration). The first objective of the Global Compact for Migration emphasizes the importance of collecting and utilizing accurate, disaggregated data as a foundation for evidence-based policies. Correspondingly, SDG Target 17.18 calls for data to be disaggregated by various factors, including migratory status. In alignment with IOM's Strategic Vision, IOM Migration Data Strategy, and IOM MENA Regional Strategy, this report presents robust data driven insights to foster evidence-based policymaking within the MENA region.

primary and secondary sources. This report heavily relies on an extensive desk review, conducted through a systematic examination of scientific literature, research

1 In the UN DESA International Migrant Stock database, both migrants and refugees are included in the total international migrant stock.

2 IOM, 2021b.

3 According to United Nations' region classification, Western Asia comprises of countries such as Bahrain, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, Türkiye, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

findings from international organizations, national research centres, and academic institutions focusing on the MENA region.

The main primary data source for results in the bulk of the report is IOM. The in-house data involve primary data collection through surveys, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), Migration Research (RES), and direct beneficiary assistance and case management via the Migrant Management Operational Systems Application

LIMITATIONS

The scope of this report's research is aimed at capturing the most pertinent migration topics within the MENA region, rather than attempting to comprehensively cover all aspects of migration. It is important to highlight that the level of detail in the discussion of certain subjects varies based on the availability of data. Unfortunately, a significant data gap exists in numerous countries within the region, particularly in terms of recent data.

The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) has classified 249 countries and territories into 6 regions and 17 subregions.⁴ However, it is important to note that there is no standardized classification for the MENA region within the UNSD geoscheme. While the UNSD regional and country classification is widely used, it does not always align with geographical definitions used by various United Nations agencies. Because of these variations, this report will utilize regional categories such as “Western Asia and North Africa” or “Arab States” when presenting aggregate data for MENA countries as calculated by the relevant United Nations agency. Any distinctions regarding which countries fall under each category concerning the MENA region will be clearly outlined in the report.

Functioning as the United Nations' migration agency, IOM possesses the capability to offer valuable additional

(MiMOSA). Apart from IOM, the principal data sources for this report encompass the following entities: United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), International Labour Organization (ILO), World Bank, World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and National Statistics Offices.

insights into migration, encompassing its multifaceted dynamics and the diverse needs of migrants. However, it is crucial to recognize the necessity of utilizing alternative data sources to address migration-related topics specific to the region. Diverse sources have been leveraged, though some may lack data for the years 2021 and 2022, compatibility in terms of data disaggregation, or transparency in their methodology. While an effort has been made to provide gender-disaggregated data, it is worth noting that only certain sources provide such information. The bibliography at the end of the report provides a comprehensive list of the sources used.

The data concerning missing or deceased migrants should be regarded as a conservative estimate of the actual count of lives lost during global migration. Regarding the assisted migrants' data linked to 2021–2022, this dataset originates from IOM's Migrants' Protection Division (PXD) and exclusively pertains to direct assistance provided by IOM. It is important to bear in mind that this data undergoes an annual verification and consolidation process, rendering it subject to potential changes. While these data are not universally representative, they do offer insights into the shifts that have transpired in relevant global programming and operations.

4 UNSD, 2023.



BACKGROUND

Murad Ali Ibrahim, from Shobra neighborhood in the north of Cairo, runs a small workshop to repair shoes in Sheik Zayid, at the suburbs of Cairo, Egypt. Murad's stepson, Mohamed Hassan, is attempting to travel irregularly to Europe and Murad is trying to convince him to stay with him and help in the family business. © IOM 2014 / Albert Gonzalez Farran Ibrahim

IOM MENA REGIONAL DATA HUB

IOM started its operations in the MENA region in 1991 in the aftermath of the first Gulf War. Across MENA, IOM employs approximately 1,500 staff and has offices in 13 countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the Sudan, Qatar, Tunisia and Yemen, in addition to the Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa based in Cairo and operational presences in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

The Regional Office in Cairo provides support to IOM offices in MENA through technical advice, training and the formulation of strategies, processes, projects, and programmes; it also promotes and facilitates international dialogue, partnerships and coordinated migration

ABOUT MENA REGION ON THE MOVE

The report Region on the Move aims to offer an in-depth understanding of the key migratory movements in the MENA region, encompassing various migration trends and dynamics. The present report defines the MENA region as comprising 17 countries. They are further divided into three subregions as follows: 1. North Africa: Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Egypt, the Sudan and Tunisia. 2. Middle East: Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. 3. Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC): Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The report is structured into four principal sections: Migration Trends, Socioeconomic Outlook, Environmental Migration, and Migration Governance.

The first section Migration Trends is further divided into three chapters. In Chapter 1, a global and regional overview of international migration trends is provided. Chapter 2 delves into diverse migration categories, spanning from labour migration to student mobility, while also exploring specific mixed movement patterns unique to the region. These patterns include forced internal and international migration, return migration, and perilous migration routes. Chapter 3 sheds light on the multifaceted approaches to safeguarding vulnerable migrants, with a specific focus on addressing the diverse needs, challenges, and vulnerabilities of migrants. This

policy development and programming between States, international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society.

In line with IOM's Regional MENA strategy and Migration Data Strategy, the Regional Data Hub (RDH) aims to produce and facilitate access to evidence on migration to contribute to evidence-based policies and programmes and to achieving positive outcomes for migrants and societies in the MENA Region. The RDH looks to promote better regional and subregional data governance and provide support to Member States on initiatives to enhance the national and regional evidence base and use this evidence for national policymaking and intraregional frameworks.

encompasses those affected by crises, victims of trafficking, unaccompanied children, and those who tragically lose their lives or go missing during their journeys.

The subsequent section Socioeconomic Outlook of the report centres on the socioeconomic dimensions of migration within the region. Chapter 4 delves into sociodemographic facets, including gender and age groups, while also delving into the impact of human capital challenges on emigration. It also scrutinizes economic trends related to labour mobility, encompassing remittances and the rights of migrant workers. In Chapter 5, the discussion pivots to the health conditions of migrants in the MENA region, considering public health concerns and interventions, particularly relevant in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, this chapter addresses migrant workers' access to social safety nets.

The Environmental Migration part of the report dedicated to climate induced mobility, encapsulated in Chapter 6, explores climate-related vulnerabilities and risks, which also extends to the issue of food insecurity within the region. Chapter 7 delves into urbanization trends and discusses different housing situations among migrants such as refugee camps and informal settlements. Finally, Chapter 8 examines the prevailing

migration governance and policies implemented in the region to ensure the protection of migrants. Concluding the report, Chapter 9 provides policy recommendations stemming from the findings of the report.



IOM staff await for their ride to take them back to the office to begin another round of pre-departure preparations. Syrian refugees are preparing to depart to Canada from Lebanon. ©IOM 2016 / Muse Mohammed

01

صالة الرحلات الدولية

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS LOUNGE

MIGRATION TRENDS

The IOM's Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) programme in Libya assists migrants in returning safely and voluntarily to Bamako, Mali. © IOM 2023

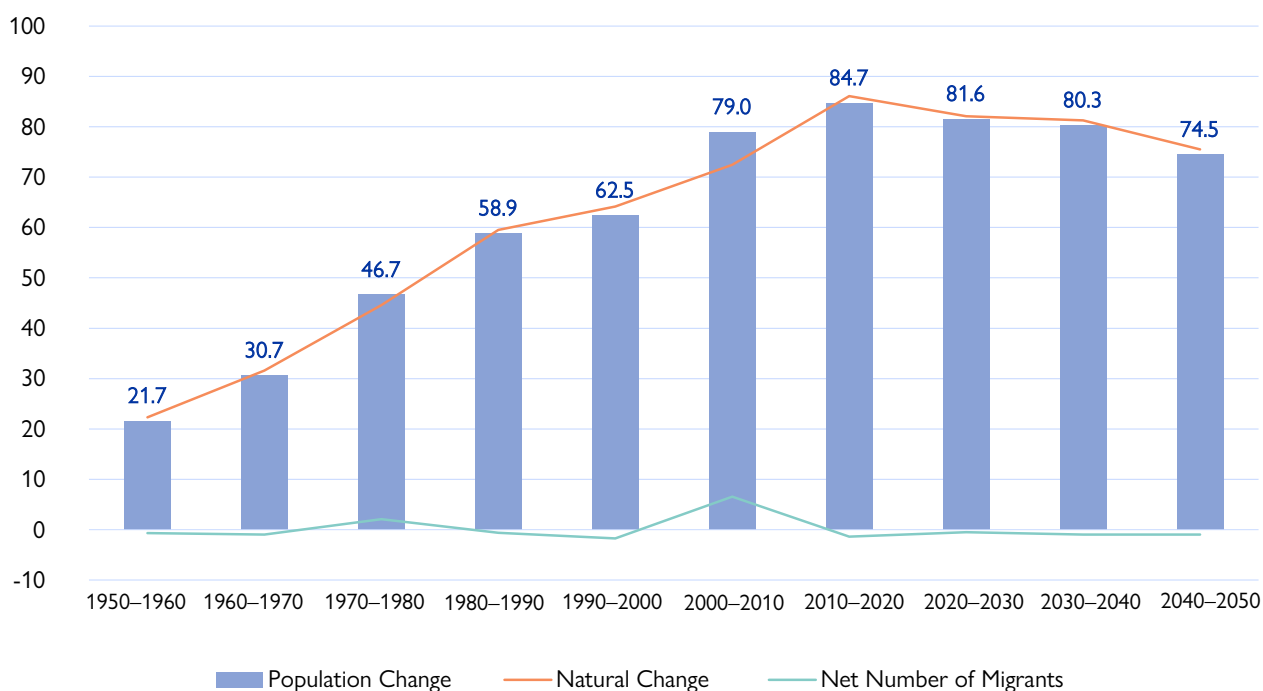
1.1 DEMOGRAPHIC DYNAMICS

The presence of international migrants in the MENA region is growing rapidly compared to the global figure. The migrant population has grown by 44 per cent from 2010 to 2020, while the emigrant population, those who left the region, increased by 70 per cent during the same period.⁵ Considering the intricate nature of migration patterns to and from the MENA region, the initial section of the report explores both MENA countries serving as destination for substantial numbers of international migrant population and the countries outside the MENA region and regions accommodating numerous migrants from the MENA countries.

While job markets and better living conditions allure migrants towards specific destinations, there are driving

factors such as conflict, political instability, disasters, and environmental degradation that cause people to be displaced internally or even leave their countries of origin. Furthermore, intermediary factors such as geographical distance, immigration regulations, social networks, language proficiency, and shared cultural norms and beliefs exert influence over the ease of migration for individuals, consequently impacting their destination preferences. Leveraging data primarily sourced from the UN DESA, collected in mid-2020, this section unravels emerging migration trends on global, regional, subregional and national levels.

FIGURE 1. CONTRIBUTIONS TO TOTAL POPULATION CHANGE OF THE BALANCE OF BIRTHS OVER DEATHS AND OF IMMIGRATION OVER EMIGRATION IN MENA COUNTRIES FROM 1950–2050



Source: UN DESA 2020a, 2021a.

The MENA region observed that international migrants constituted 9.3 per cent of the population.⁶ Despite the

region’s growing population, primarily driven by high total fertility rates and average life expectancy with

⁵ UN DESA, 2020a.

⁶ UNFPA, 2020.

high dependency ratio, there is a higher emigration rate compared to net migration rate. Almost 80 per cent of MENA countries maintain total fertility rates surpassing the replacement level of 2.1 children. The average fertility rate in the region for 2022 stands at 2.6.⁷ Notably, the lowest fertility rates were noted in the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Bahrain, hovering below 2 children. On the other end of the spectrum, the Sudan and Yemen exhibited the highest fertility rates at 4.4 and 3.8 children, respectively. All MENA countries consistently witness more births than deaths. The crude death rate⁸ for the MENA region in 2021 registered at 4.8, nearly half of the global crude death rate of 8.8.⁹

Globally, the international migrant stock surged by 12.3 per cent between 2010 (220 million) and 2015 (248 million), and by 13.2 per cent from 2015 to 2020 (281 million). Meanwhile, the MENA region experienced a more rapid increase of 22.6 per cent from 2010 (28.2 million) to 2015 (34.6 million), followed by a growth of 17.5 per cent from 2015 to 2020 (40.7 million).¹⁰

1.2 GLOBAL TRENDS

Globally, Saudi Arabia stands as the third-largest host of immigrants, totalling 13.5 million individuals. This ranking, after the United States of America and Germany, underscores the country's appeal due to its economic opportunities and highlights the significance of South–South migration trends. Analysing the international migrant population as a fraction of the total populace reveals a wide range in the MENA region, spanning from 0.2 per cent in Morocco to 88 per cent in the United Arab Emirates. The GCC countries display eminent figures, with migrants forming substantial portions of their national populations. In 2020, migrants constituted 88 per cent of the United Arab Emirates's population, around 73 per cent in Kuwait, 77 per cent in Qatar, and 55 per cent in Bahrain (see Figure 2). These figures highlight the considerable reliance on migrant workers in GCC labour markets.

Concerning emigration, the ratio of international migrants relative to the population varies widely

Regarding emigration, the international migrant stock from the MENA region spiked by 42.9 per cent between 2010 (15.5 million) and 2015 (22.1 million), with an additional increase of 19.16 per cent from 2015 to 2020 (26.4 million).¹¹

Based on the UN DESA medium scenario, the fluctuating in-out migration rates from previous decades are projected to persist, though applied to a diminishing population base over time (see Figure 1). This implies that estimates of population growth rates will slightly shift the situation in the MENA region over the next two decades. While individual subregions exhibit diverse trends – such as Iraq projecting population growth and Lebanon anticipating a decrease – GCC countries are generally stable, except for Saudi Arabia. North African countries, on the other hand, face depopulation. The significance of understanding demographic and population trends becomes even more pronounced in comprehending migratory movements within the MENA region.

across MENA countries, ranging from 0.5 per cent in Oman to 39.6 per cent in the Syrian Arab Republic. Remarkably, the Syrian Arab Republic holds the world's fourth-highest number of emigrants, with 8.5 million individuals as of mid-2020.¹² A significant proportion, 78.8 per cent, are refugees who fled due to the civil war's outbreak in 2011.

In recent years, several MENA countries have witnessed substantial shifts in their migrant populations. Notably, Oman experienced the world's most significant positive shift, with the migrant population increasing from 26.9 per cent to 46.5 per cent of its total population between 2010 and 2020. Conversely, Jordan saw the world's most substantial decrease, dropping by 4.5 percentage points since 2010. The Syrian Arab Republic reported the third-largest decrease at 3.4 percentage points.

7 UN DESA, 2020a.

8 The crude death rate is the number of deaths in a given period divided by the population exposed to risk of death in that period.

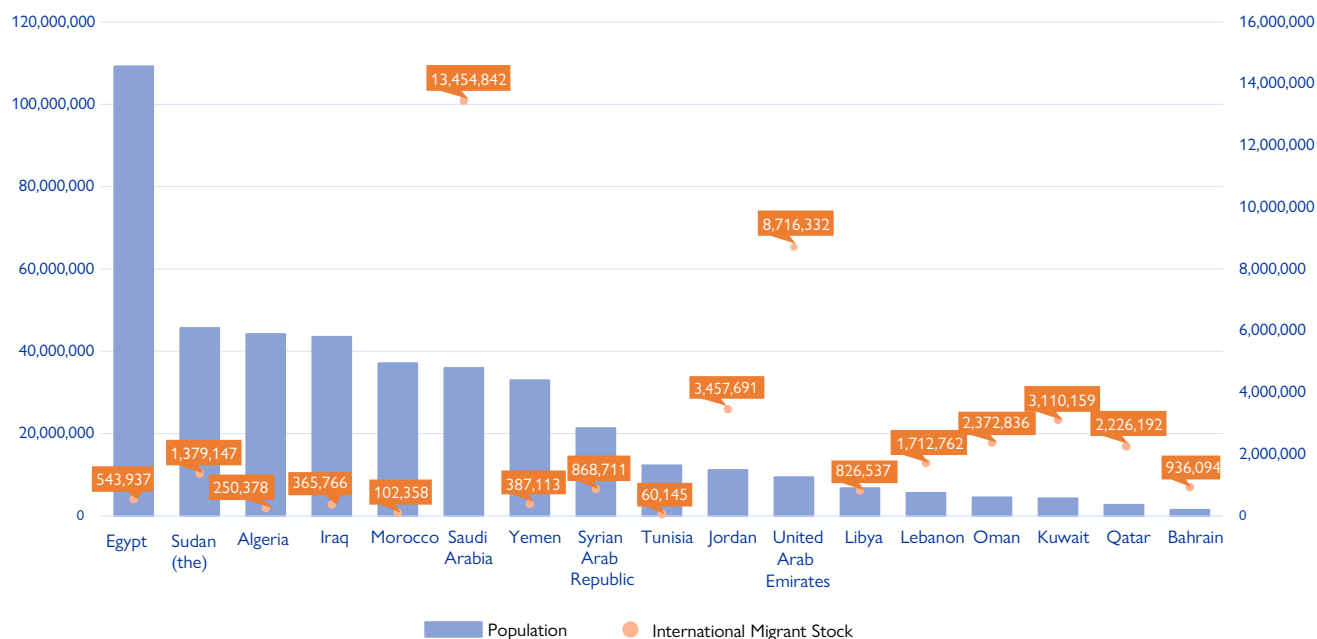
9 UN DESA, 2020a.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

FIGURE 2. INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT STOCK VERSUS POPULATION IN THE MENA COUNTRIES



Source: UN DESA, 2021a.

1.3 REGIONAL TRENDS

1.3.1 INTERREGIONAL MIGRATION

Migrants originating from MENA countries commonly move to other MENA countries, as well as Europe and Northern America (see Figure 4). Western Asia (52.4%) and Western Europe (20.7%) collectively host nearly 75 per cent of the MENA migrant population, while Southern Europe (6.7%) and Northern America (6.9%) together accommodate 14 per cent.¹³ Notably, France houses a fifth of all MENA migrants, followed by Saudi Arabia (14%), the United States of America (6%), the United Arab Emirates and Italy.

When analysing MENA migrants by subregion, about one-third reside in Türkiye (33%), followed by Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Germany and Jordan. This distribution suggests a combination of intraregional movement and migration to Europe. Notably, migrants from Arabian Peninsula countries mainly settle within the subregion (Saudi Arabia 36%, United Arab Emirates 13%, Kuwait 5%, and the Occupied Palestinian Territory 4%) and in the United States of America (9%).¹⁴ Furthermore,

North African countries show a mix of European and GCC countries as primary hosts, including France with more than a quarter (27%) of North African migrants, as well as Saudi Arabia (19%), the United Arab Emirates (9%), Spain (7%) and Italy (6%).

Migration to GCC countries is a longstanding phenomenon driven by abundant labour opportunities (see Box 1). Several GCC countries have even emerged as prominent players in the list of the world's top 20 migration corridors. For instance, the United Arab Emirates stands out as a major destination, attracting over 3 million migrants from India, thus ranking as the third-largest corridor in the world.¹⁵ Furthermore, the bilateral corridor connecting India and Saudi Arabia secures the ninth spot among the world's largest migration corridors.¹⁶ Impressively, Indian nationals alone constitute almost a quarter (24.25%) of the total migrant caseload in the MENA region.

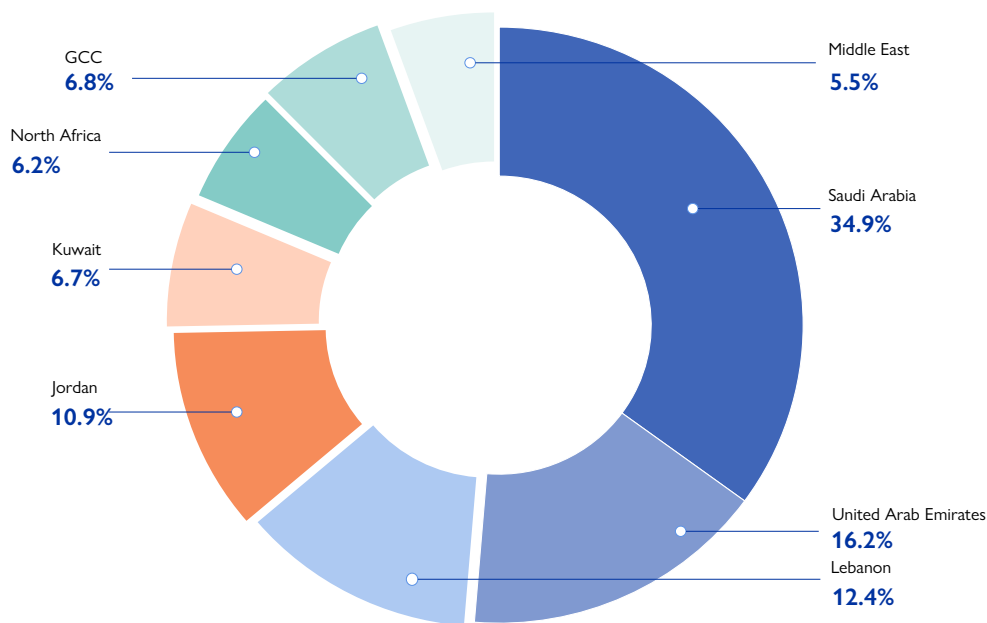
13 UN DESA, 2020a.

14 Ibid.

15 McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021.

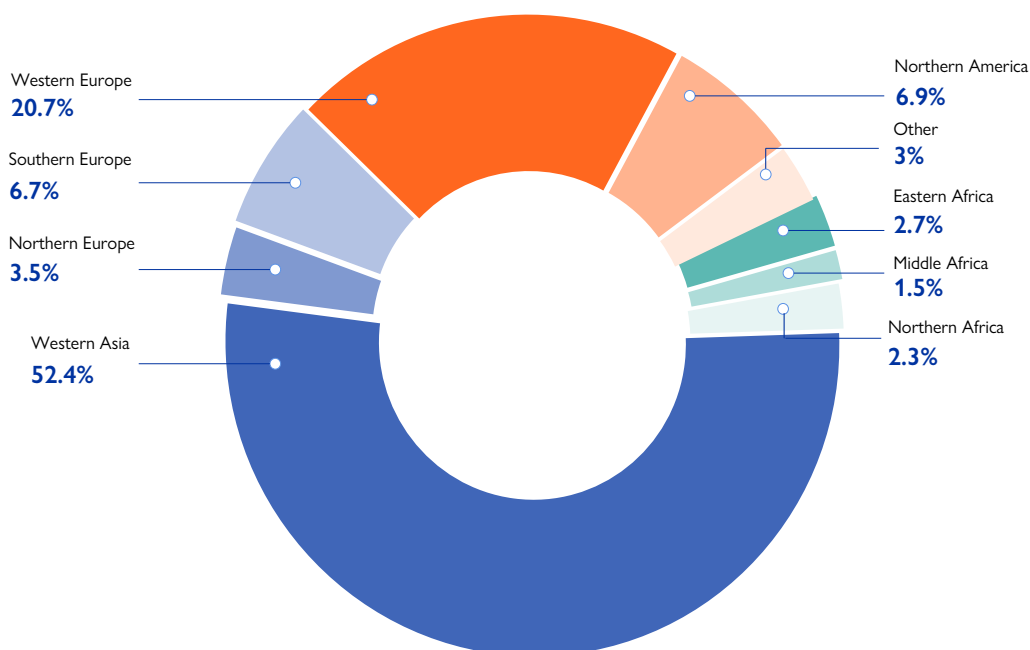
16 Ibid.

FIGURE 3. MAIN REGIONS OF DESINATION FROM THE MENA REGION



Source: UN DESA, 2020a.

FIGURE 4. INTRAREGIONAL MIGRATION TRENDS IN THE MENA REGION



Source: UN DESA, 2020a.

Note: Figure 4 relies on the definition of geographical regions adopted by the United Nations, which defines regions as the following: Western Asia (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Georgia, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, Türkiye, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen and the Occupied Palestinian Territory), Western Europe (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and Switzerland), Northern America (Canada, United States of America, Greenland, Saint Pierre and Miquelon and Bermuda) and Southern Europe (Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Holy See, Italy, Malta, Montenegro, Portugal, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain and Gibraltar).

The MENA region is home to over two million migrants hailing from sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁷ Among these migrants, the Sudan hosts the majority, accounting for nearly 60 per cent.¹⁸ This substantial presence in the Sudan is primarily driven by individuals fleeing political instability and the secession of South Sudan in 2011, with many originating from neighbouring countries such

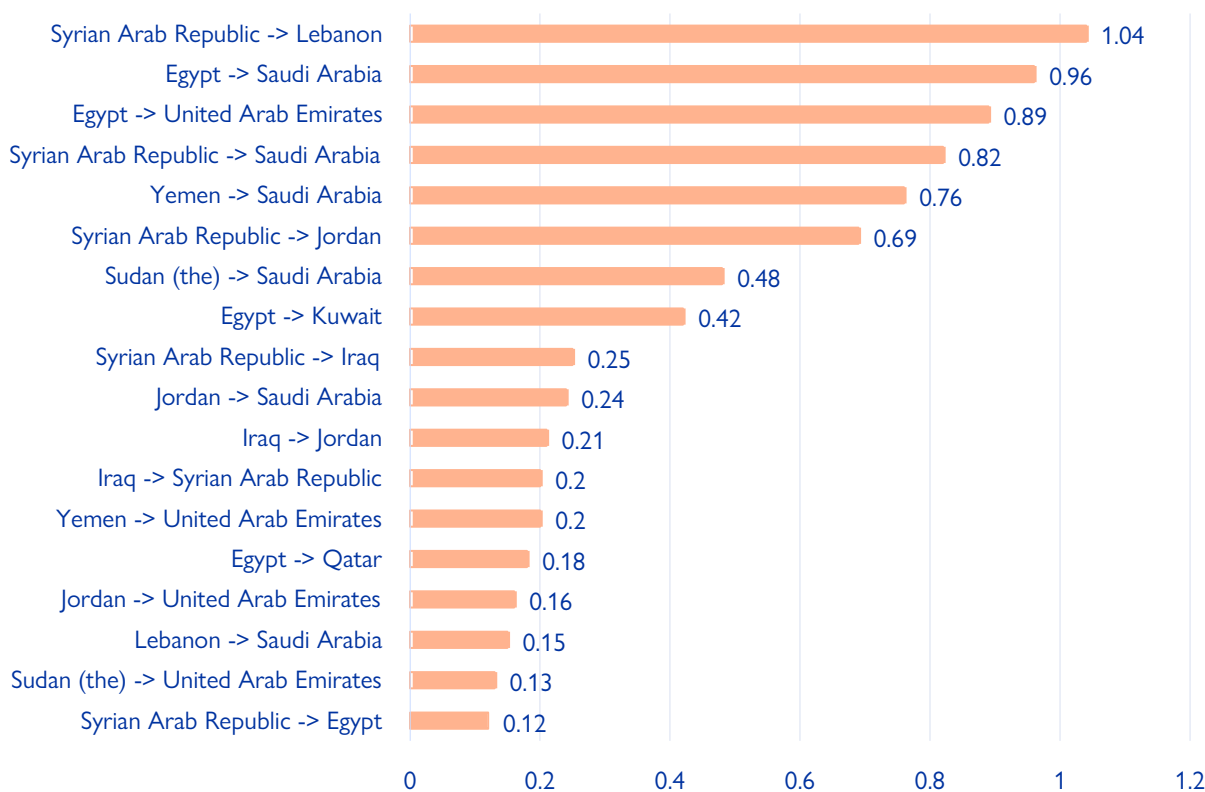
1.3.2 INTRAREGIONAL MIGRATION

Over half (54%) of MENA migrants result from intraregional migration. As shown in Figure 4, Saudi Arabia serves as the main destination for approximately 35 per cent of intraregional migrants, trailed by the

as South Sudan, Chad and Eritrea. Following the Sudan, Yemen (14%) and Saudi Arabia (7%) emerge as the top destinations for sub-Saharan African migrants within the MENA region.¹⁹ In terms of countries of origin in sub-Saharan Africa, South Sudan (39%), Somalia (19%) and Ethiopia (13%) stand out as the primary contributors to this migrant population.²⁰

United Arab Emirates (16.2%), Lebanon (12.4%), Jordan (10.9%) and Kuwait (6.7%). Around 18.5 per cent of intraregional migrants head to other subregions: North Africa (6.2%), GCC (6.8%) and Middle East (5.5%).²¹

FIGURE 5. TOP MIGRATION CORRIDORS WITHIN THE MENA REGION, 2020 (MILLION)



Source: UN DESA, 2020a.

Notably, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are the primary recipients of migrants from the MENA region. While the GCC countries primarily attract

migrant workers, Jordan hosts a considerable refugee population, primarily from the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq. Besides the Syrian Arab Republic, other significant

17 UN DESA, 2020a.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid..

origin countries include Egypt (13.6%) and Morocco (12.3%).²² Most Egyptian immigrants remain within the MENA region, while Moroccan immigrants are more dispersed, residing in France, Spain and Italy due to historical linkages.

Examining migration corridors²³ involving MENA countries reveals evolving trends over time and significant foreign-born populations in specific countries (refer to Figure 5). One prominent corridor links the Syrian Arab Republic to Türkiye primarily comprising refugees fleeing Syrian Arab Republic's civil war. Another major corridor involves India to the United Arab Emirates primarily consisting of migrant workers. In 2020, noteworthy migration corridors in the MENA region include Syrian Arab Republic–Lebanon, Egypt–Saudi Arabia, and Egypt–United Arab Emirates.²⁴

22 Ibid.

23 The size of a migration corridor from country A to country B is measured as the number of people born in country A who were residing in country B in 2020.

24 UN DESA, 2020a.

02



TYPES OF MIGRATION

2.1 LABOUR MIGRATION

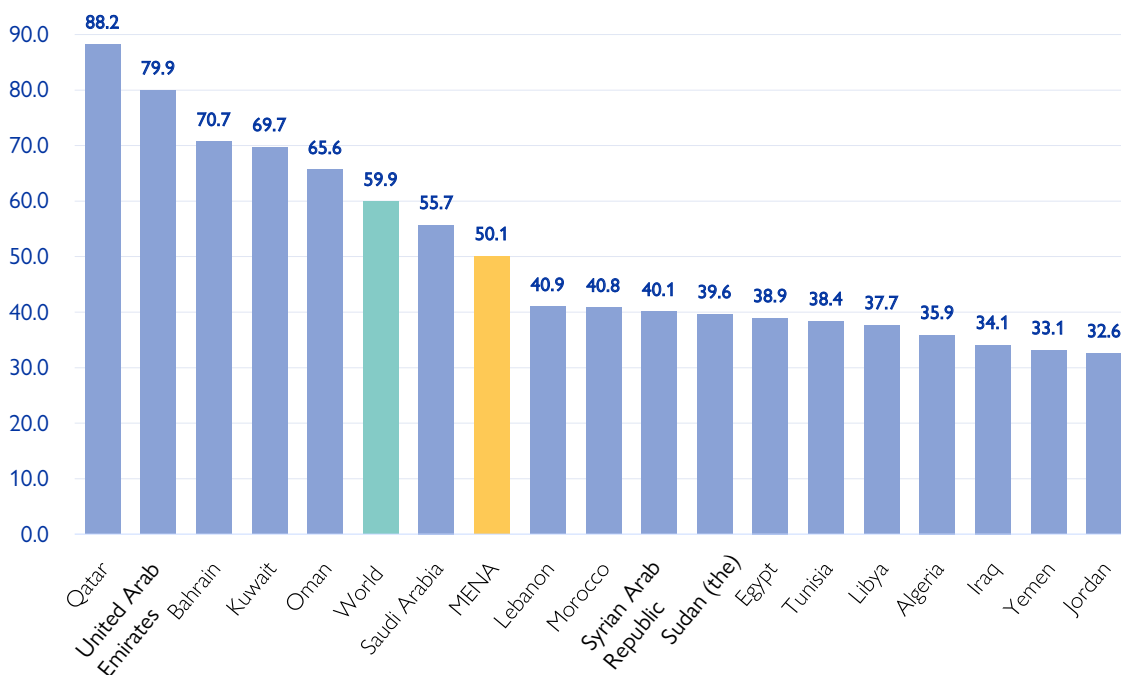
International labour migration is assuming an increasingly significant role within our interconnected global economy. Workers have become notably more mobile, engaging in diverse forms of migration, including temporary, circular, onward and return migration. These dynamics are pervasive throughout the MENA region, impacting migratory patterns, investment trends, and the utilization of remittances in countries of origin.²⁵

The most recent available estimates²⁶ reveal that in 2019, the global count of migrant workers stood at approximately 169 million individuals. This accounted for a substantial two-thirds (62%) of the then 272 million total global stock of international migrants,²⁷ constituting 4.9 per cent of the global labour force in destination countries.²⁸ In a comparison with the worldwide population of working-age international migrants, defined as individuals aged 15 years and older

(totalling 245.6 million), migrant workers in the Arab State region represented 41.4 per cent, including 1.2 million (1.6%) located in Northern Africa.

The Arab States stand out as primary destinations for migrant workers, particularly in key sectors. Based on estimates from the International Labour Organization (ILO), 24.1 million migrant workers were drawn to 12 Middle Eastern Arab countries in 2019, constituting 14 per cent of the global migrant worker population.²⁹ Within this, the GCC countries attracted a large influx of migrant workers, alongside certain Mashreq³⁰ countries, mainly Jordan and Lebanon. An intriguing aspect is the noticeable gender disparity among migrant workers in two regions: Southern Asia (5.7 million males compared to 1.4 million females) and the Arab States (19.9 million males compared to 4.2 million females).³¹

FIGURE 6. EMPLOYMENT TO POPULATION RATIO



Source: ILOSTAT, 2023.

²⁵ IOM MENA, 2021a.

²⁶ It is worth noting that these estimates predate COVID-19, which has affected international labour migration in many ways.

²⁷ ILO, 2021.

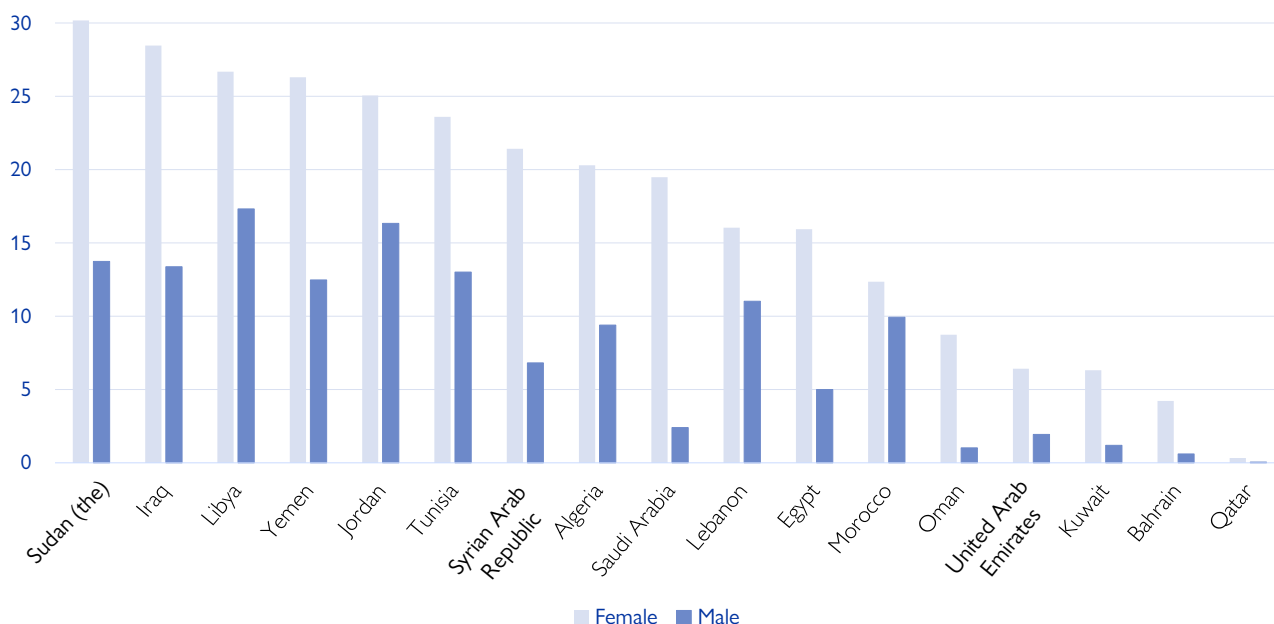
²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ According to IOM MENA Regional Strategy, the Mashreq encompasses: Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syrian Arab Republic.

³¹ ILO, 2021.

FIGURE 7. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (2022)



Source: ILOSTAT, 2023.

As per ILOSTAT (2023) data, only five countries within the MENA region – Qatar (88.2%), the United Arab Emirates (79.9%), Bahrain (70.6%), Kuwait (69.7%) and Oman (65.6%) – exhibit higher proportion of working labour force than the global average (59.9%) compared to their population estimates (see Figure 6). Turning to the context of working poverty,³² Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen exhibit the highest working poverty rates in the MENA region at 32 per cent and 57 per cent,³³ respectively. The Sudan ranks third, with 32 per cent of workers experiencing poverty despite being employed.³⁴ While working poverty predominantly plagues the developing world, unemployment highlights concern in the developed world, particularly within GCC countries. When analysing unemployment rates by gender across different MENA countries, women experience higher

unemployment rates than men in Oman (34% vs. 14%), Yemen (27% vs. 11%) and Syrian Arab Republic (32% vs. 10%).³⁵ The COVID-19 pandemic has also significantly impacted labour markets in the Arab region, prompting countries to implement exceptional measures and policy shifts that have notably affected migrant workers.

The MENA region boasts a younger population compared to the global average, with a larger proportion of individuals falling within the working-age category. The dependency ratio,³⁶ which measures the proportion of the working-age population relative to dependents (such as children and retirees), is lower in the MENA region at 45.7,³⁷ compared to the global average of 54.7.

32 The working poor are employed people who live in households that fall below an accepted poverty line. The poverty rate is calculated based on World Bank's international poverty line of USD 1.90 a day.

33 ILOSTAT, 2023.

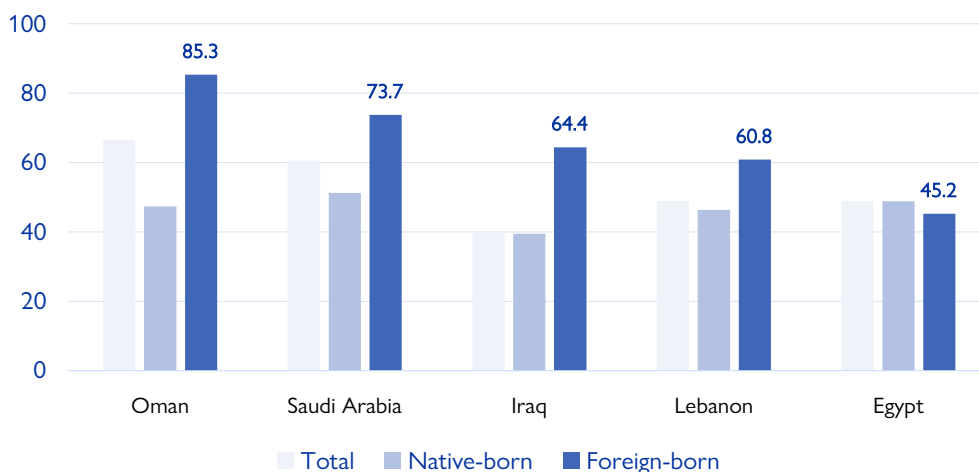
34 Ibid.

35 World Bank, 2023b.

36 The dependency ratio is the proportion of dependents (under 15 or over 64) to the working-age population (15–64). Data are shown as the proportion of dependents per 100 working-age population.

37 The Sudan is not included in the calculation.

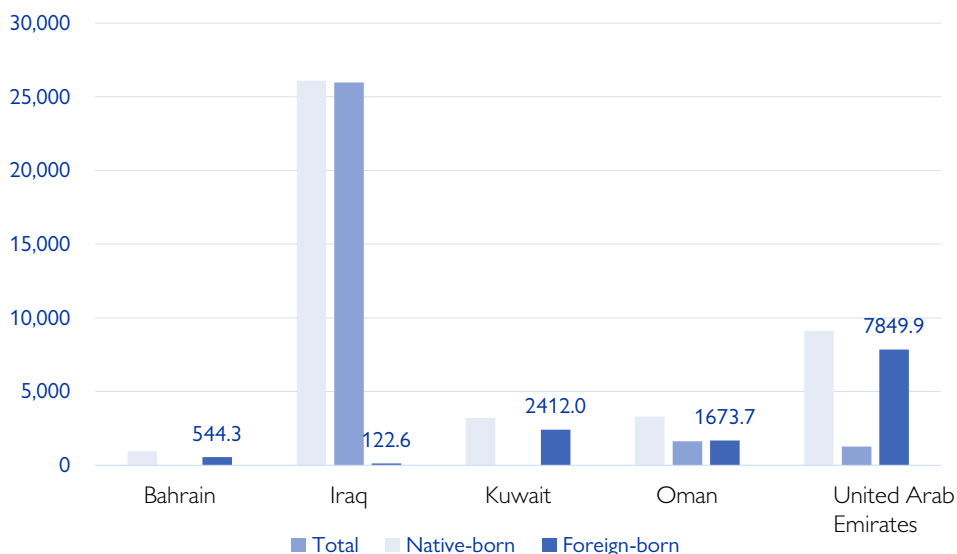
FIGURE 8. LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE OF FOREIGN BORN AND NATIVE-BORN RESIDENTS IN SELECT MENA COUNTRIES (%)



Source: ILOSTAT, 2023.

Note: Data collected from ILOSTAT available for Egypt (2011), Iraq (2021) and Oman (2021). Data for Saudi Arabia from KAPSARC Energy Data Portal refer to 2022 and data for Lebanon from LFS are for 2019.

FIGURE 9. WORKING AGE POPULATION OF FOREIGN BORN AND NATIVE-BORN RESIDENTS IN SELECT MENA COUNTRIES (THOUSANDS)



Source: ILOSTAT, 2023.

Note: Data collected are available for Bahrain (2011), Egypt (2011), Iraq (2021), Kuwait (2014), Oman (2021) and United Arab Emirates (2018).

To explore labour force participation and working-age populations in selected MENA countries, a comparative analysis was conducted between foreign-born and native-born residents, where data was available. Out

of the MENA region's total labour force of 158,634,504, these five countries – Egypt (19%), Saudi Arabia (10%), Algeria (7%), Morocco (7%), and Iraq (7%) – account for an average of 52.5% of the working-age labour force

population aged 15 and above.³⁸ Interestingly, the labour force participation rate among foreign-born residents exceeds that of native-born residents in Oman (85% vs. 47%) and Saudi Arabia (73% vs. 51%), as shown in Figure 8.³⁹ In Egypt, native-born residents (49%) participate more in the labour force than foreign-born residents (45%). Iraq and Lebanon in the Middle East

present a 15 per cent increased rate with more foreign-born residents (64% and 61%, respectively) compared to native-born residents. In terms of the working-age population, it is worth noting that Egypt and Iraq have a smaller portion of their populations within the working-age bracket when compared to the rest of the population (see Figure 9).⁴⁰

BOX 1. GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL (GCC) IS A HUB OF LABOUR MIGRATION

In the subregion of the Gulf Country Council (GCC), labour migration remains a prominent phenomenon. In 2020, the GCC subregion hosted a significant portion of the total migrant population within the Arab region, totalling 30.8 million individuals or 74 per cent. The Gulf Research Centre underscores the prevalence of non-nationals in the GCC countries'^a labour force,^b with the following proportions (in descending order): Qatar (95% non-nationals vs. 5% nationals), Kuwait (85% non-nationals vs. 15% nationals), Bahrain (78% non-nationals vs. 22% nationals), Oman (77% non-nationals vs. 23% nationals) and Saudi Arabia (76% non-nationals vs. 24% nationals).^c

The subregion primarily attracts migrant workers, forming a substantial part of the overall workforce. However, the combined effects of the pandemic and the plummeting oil prices in 2020 have dealt an unprecedented blow to GCC economies, amplifying the risk of migrant workers falling into irregular situations due to job loss, as well as facing immigration detention and forced return.

Promising developments in labour migration governance have taken place within the GCC countries. Recent years have seen policy changes and measures aimed at addressing the kafala (sponsorship) system, which regulates labour migration in various MENA countries. This system mandates migrant workers to have sponsors for entry, stay, employment, changing employers, and sometimes leaving the country. Sponsors, or "kafeels," are responsible for migrants' work and residency conditions, often leading to limited mobility and vulnerability to exploitation. In response to the COVID-19 crisis, numerous developments have also occurred regarding migrant worker recruitment, residency, and work permits, facilitating their engagement in destination countries (see Chapter 9).

a Data for the United Arab Emirates is not available.

b Gulf Labour Markets, Migration and Population (GLMM) Programme, 2019.

c Ibid.

38 ILOSTAT, 2023.

39 Ibid.

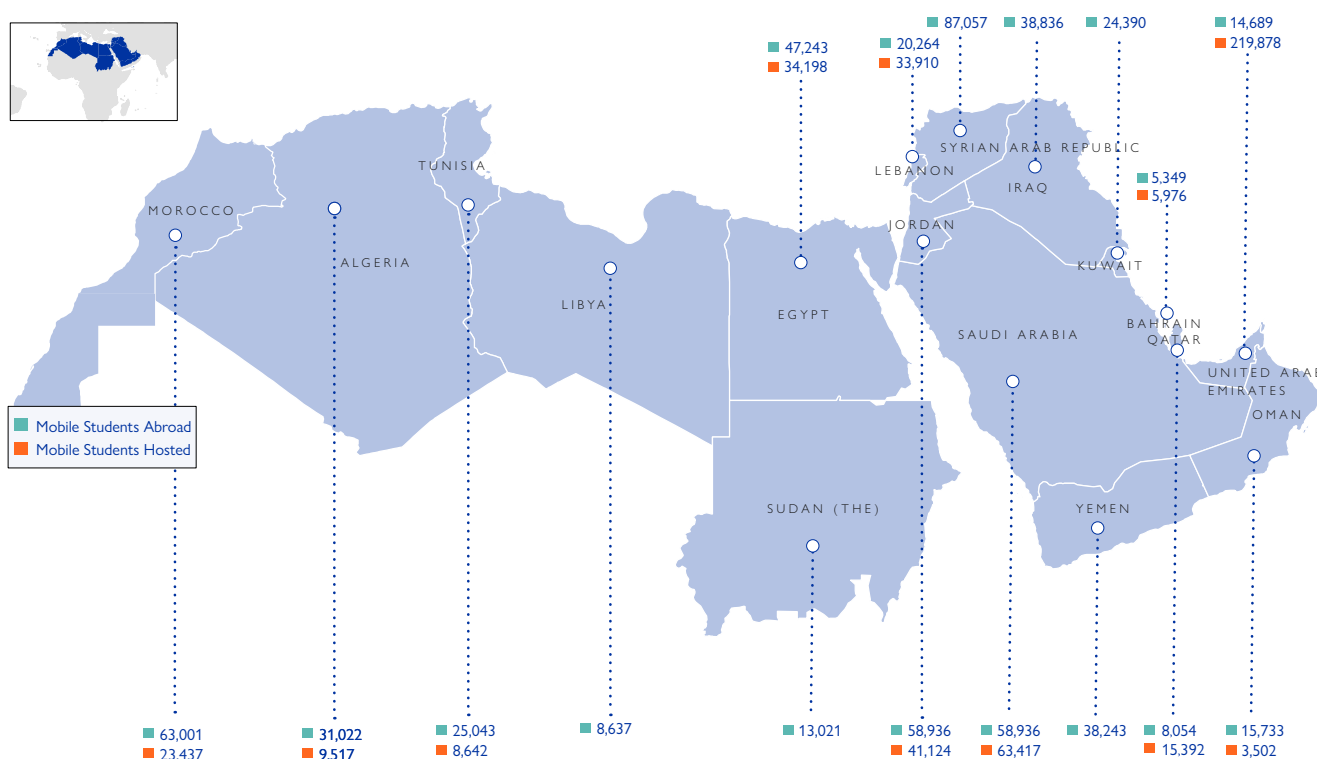
40 Ibid.

2.2 INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MOBILITY

In 2020, there were over 6.3 million international students, in comparison to the 2 million in 2000.⁴¹ More than one third of these were enrolled in educational programmes in six countries: the United States of America (957,475), the United Kingdom (550,877), Australia (458,279), Germany (368,717), the Russian Federation (282,922 in 2019) and France (252,444).

In 2020, the MENA region welcomed more than 458,900 international students: within the region, the United Arab Emirates is the main destination country welcoming 219,878 internationally mobile students, followed by Saudi Arabia with 8.7 million and Jordan with 3.4 million (see Figure 10).⁴²

FIGURE 10. TOTAL INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN AND FROM THE MENA REGION



Source: UNESCO UIS Database, 2022.

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

In general, the number of tertiary students from the MENA region studying abroad rose in 2020: 529 thousand students left their countries of origin for other destinations, with prominent countries of origin of international students in the MENA region including Syrian Arab Republic (87,057), Morocco (63,001) and Saudi Arabia (58,936). The North America and European Union region are the main destination region welcoming two thirds of the total internationally mobile students from the MENA region.⁴³

41 UNESCO, 2022.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

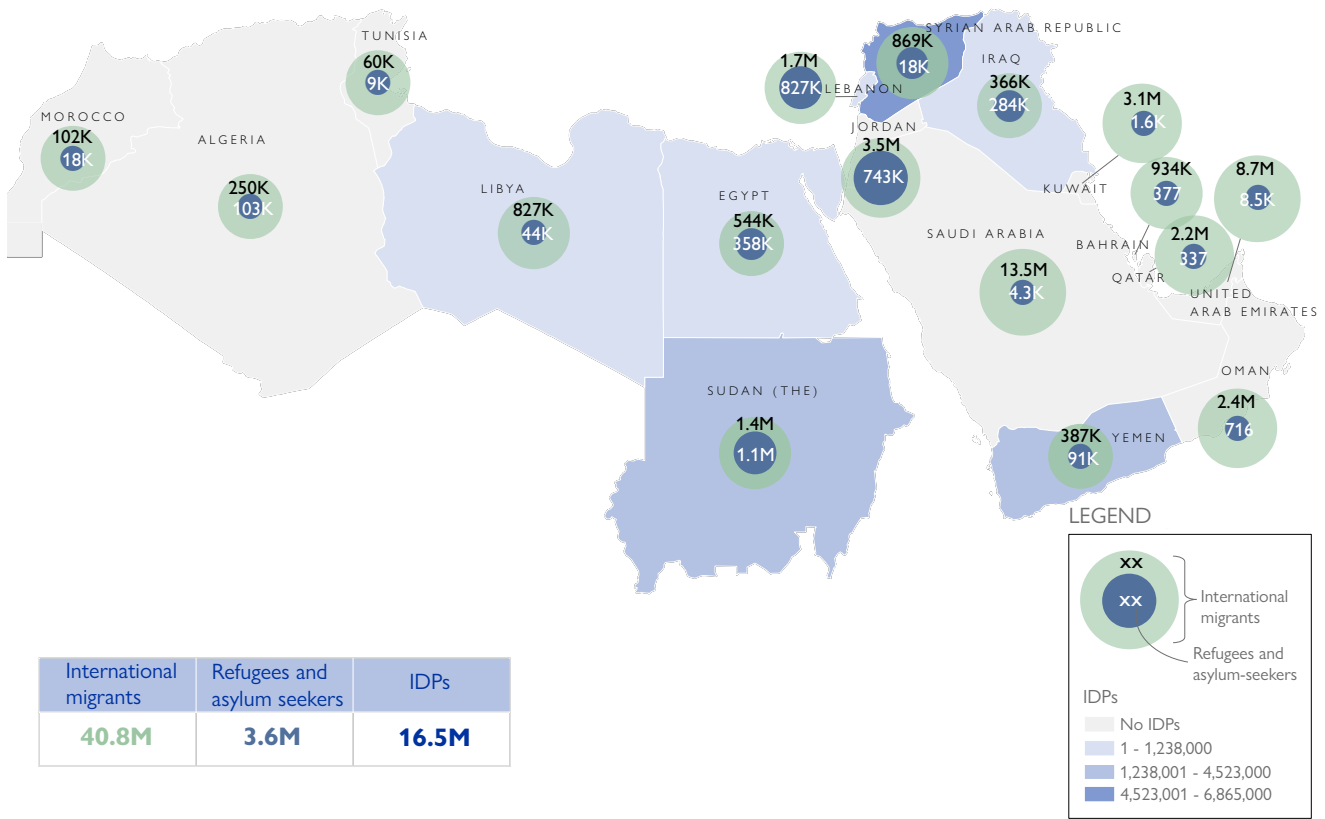
2.3. FORCED INTERNAL AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

2.3.1 REGIONAL DYNAMICS OF FORCED MIGRATION

The MENA landscape of forced migration reveals a staggering figure of nearly 24.6 million individuals⁴⁴ who have been uprooted due to various causes such as persecution, conflict, violence, disasters, human rights

violations, and disruptions to public order in 2022. While internal displacement accounts for a significant portion of this upheaval, the aggregate includes 7.7 million refugees and nearly half a million asylum-seekers.⁴⁵

FIGURE 11. LATEST ESTIMATES ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS, REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS, AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN THE MENA REGION



Sources: UN DESA, 2020a; UNHCR, 2023a; IDMC, 2022a.

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM. The latest available estimates were as of mid-2020 for international migrants (DESA), as of mid-2022 for refugees and asylum-seekers (UNHCR) and as of December 2022 for IDPs (IDMC and IOM).

The MENA region stands at the forefront of the global refugee⁴⁶ crisis, accounting for the largest number of refugees worldwide. In 2022, the Syrian Arab Republic took the lead with more than 6.5 million refugees,

retaining its status as the primary source of global refugee origin.⁴⁷ Notably, the Sudan claimed the top position as the seventh largest refugee-sending country on a global scale. The region hosts over 3.6 million

44 This figure includes refugees (including those not covered by UNHCR’s mandate), asylum-seekers, internally displaced people (IDPs) and other people in need of international protection in Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

45 UNHCR, 2023a.

46 See Glossary IOM Definition for Refugees.

47 UNHCR, 2023a.

refugees⁴⁸ (see Figure 11). Countries such as the Sudan, Lebanon and Jordan emerge as substantial hosts for refugees, with Lebanon and Jordan securing spots among the world's top five hosts in relation to their national populations. This is exemplified by Lebanon, where one in eight people, and Jordan, where one in fifteen people, have been displaced, often hailing from the Syrian Arab Republic or the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

According to the International Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC),⁴⁹ the MENA region has seen the persistence of 16.3 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) by the close of 2022, a majority of whom were displaced due to conflicts, numbering 12.7 million.⁵⁰ It is evident that the numbers of internally displaced people (IDPs) in MENA countries significantly surpass the tally of refugees. Examining this scenario from a year-to-year perspective, conflict-related displacements

have decreased by nearly a million in the MENA region, whereas displacement due to disasters has exhibited an upward trajectory, altering the trend within the past year (as depicted in Figure 12).

Within the MENA region, encompassing five conflict-affected countries, namely Iraq, Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Sudan and Yemen, a distinctive pattern in the trajectory of new conflict-induced internal displacement between 2011 and 2022 is observed. The data indicates a sharp rise from 2011 to 2015, followed by a decrease from 2016 to 2018, a notable spike in 2019, and a more moderate increase in 2021 and 2022. Over this 11-year span, the zenith of new displacement occurred in 2015, affecting a staggering 16 million individuals. The second-highest peak, recorded in 2022, reached 16.2 million, signifying approximately 3.6 million new internal displacements resulting from conflict since 2018.

BOX 2. ALGERIA – THE PERSISTENT CHALLENGE OF PROTRACTED REFUGEE SITUATION

Algeria is estimated to host approximately 250,378 migrants and refugees.^a These individuals primarily originate from sub-Saharan Africa, and they typically enter southern Algeria through the Niger and Mali. Subsequently, they move northward to the coastal cities before proceeding along the Central and Western Mediterranean routes.^b

Around 173,000 Sahrawi refugees in Algeria^c reside in five camps near Tindouf, a remote, arid area marked by extreme temperatures and scarce rainfall. They have been hosted in five refugee camps near Tindouf in south-western Algeria since 1975, making it one of the world's most protracted refugee crises.^d The challenging agroecological environment, infertile soil and limited water resources create difficult living conditions in the camps, resulting in ongoing food insecurity, malnutrition and anemia.

To address the specific needs of refugees in the camps effectively, it is crucial to conduct various assessments, including those related to food security,^e nutrition, gender, and the identification of vulnerable individuals, such as those who are food-insecure, disabled, older or malnourished.

a UN DESA, 2020a.

b ACAPS, 2023.

c Ibid.

d UNHCR, 2023b.

e WFP, 2023.

48 Ibid.

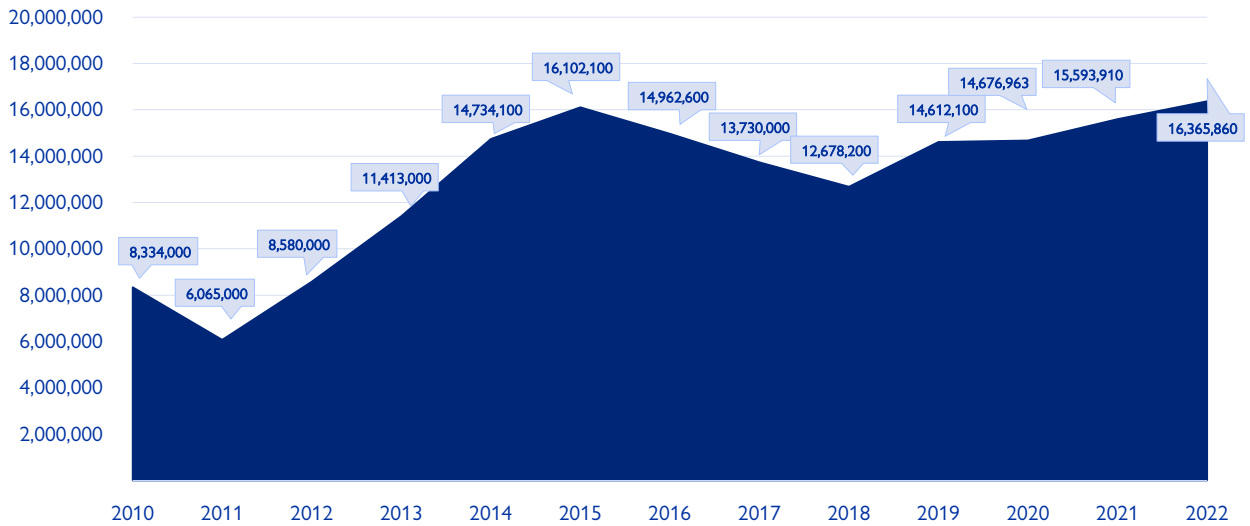
49 The IDMC uses two similar but distinct methodologies to produce displacement estimates related to conflict and violence, and disasters. For more information: www.internal-displacement.org/database/methodology.

50 IDMC, 2023.

The region bears the weight of extensive protracted IDP situations, evident from the cases of Syrian Arab Republic (entering its 13th year of conflict) and Yemen (eight years of turmoil). The Syrian Arab Republic (6.8 million), Yemen (4.5 million), the Sudan (3.5 million) and Iraq (1.1 million) find themselves among the top

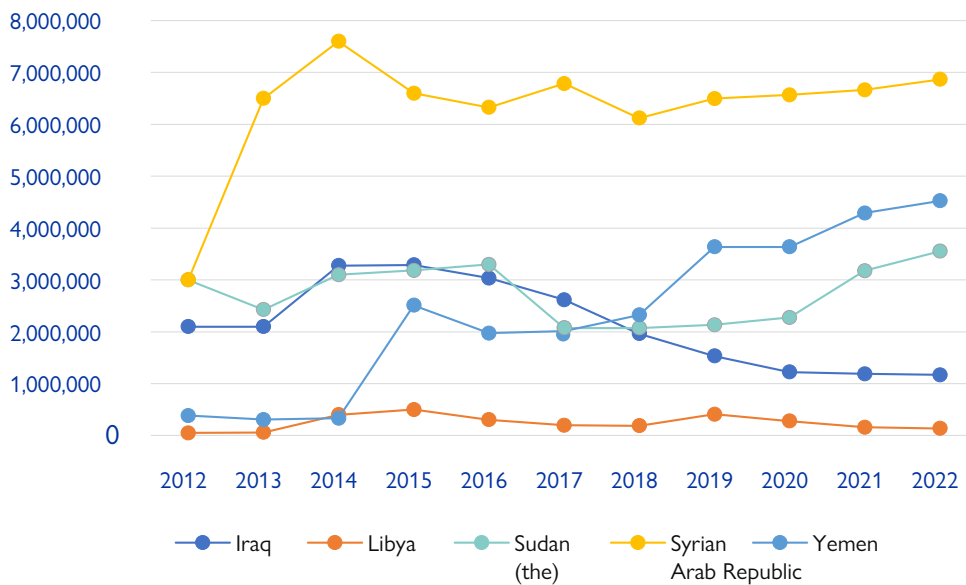
15 countries with the largest IDP populations (refer to Figure 13) in the world. Furthermore, IDMC notes that natural calamities such as earthquakes, floods, wildfires, and landslides led to 305,000 displacements in the MENA region (see Chapter 6 Section 6.2).⁵¹

FIGURE 12. TOTAL NUMBER OF IDPS IN SELECT MENA COUNTRIES FROM 2010 TO 2022



Source: IDMC, 2022.

FIGURE 13. NEW CONFLICT-DRIVEN INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN SELECT MENA COUNTRIES FROM 2010 TO 2022



Source: IDMC, 2022.

51 Ibid.

Examining new instances of displacement in 2022, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Sudan maintain their positions within the top ten contributors to internal displacement. According to IDMC data, the highest surge in new displacement in the Syrian Arab Republic transpired in 2013, with 3.5 million displacements. This spike aligns with pivotal developments in the conflict, including intense clashes between government and non-State armed groups, the emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) within the Syrian Arab Republic, and the involvement of new actors into the conflict. Subsequently, there was a 43 per cent reduction in new displacements between 2017 and 2018, followed by a further 75 per cent decrease between 2020 and 2022.⁵²

Conversely, Iraq (from 1.5 million in 2019 to 1.1 million in 2022) and Libya (from 356,000 in 2019 to 135,000 in 2022) have witnessed a decline and stabilization in the number of new displacements. Due to their history of displacement and subsequent stabilization of conditions, Iraq and Libya have some of the largest returnee populations globally, ranking first and fifth, respectively, amongst all countries (see Box 4). This shift can be attributed to ceasefire agreements and truce efforts that have been in place since 2020. Nevertheless, as indicated by the IDMC, it is important to highlight that a majority of the displaced population continues to grapple with displacement.⁵³



Displaced women go back to their shelter after fetching water from a water point in a remote area on Yemen's west coast. © IOM 2021/Rami Ibrahim

52 IDMC, 2022.

53 IDMC, 2023.

BOX 3. THE SUDAN – CONFLICT INDUCED DISPLACEMENT PRIOR TO APRIL 2023 CRISIS

By the end of September 2023, the Sudan had a total of approximately 7.7 million internally displaced individuals, with 4.4 million of them being newly displaced due to the outbreak of violence in mid-April involving the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and the Sudanese Armed Force (SAF).^a Since this report primarily focuses on events from 2021–2022, this section provides an overview of the displacements that occurred in 2022.

In 2022, DTM Sudan conducted data collection for 83 Emergency Event Tracking (EET) reports, which revealed that an estimated 418,499 individuals experienced displacement as a result of disasters and conflicts from January to December 2022.^b The majority of the flash alerts issued by IOM covered conflicts (147 incidents), floods (82 incidents) and fires (20 incidents).^c

Among these events, approximately 313,683 internally displaced persons (IDPs) were recorded in 2022 due to 21 conflict events spanning regions such as West Darfur, North Darfur, South Darfur, East Darfur, South Kordofan, West Kordofan and Blue Nile. These conflicts were primarily driven by property disputes (35%), armed robberies (28%) and inter-communal conflicts (28%). Notably, DTM Sudan estimated that a total of 141,825 IDPs (45%) were able to return to their original locations in 2022. The largest displacement events resulting from conflicts occurred in Ar Rusayris, Blue Nile, affecting 20,144 households and 127,961 individuals, and in Kreinik, West Darfur, impacting 5,520 households and 28,485 individuals.^d

a IOM, 2023m.

b IOM, 2023n.

c Ibid.

d Ibid.



Al-Taghi (60) returned from Libya in August 2019, where he tried different jobs. He faced hardship in Libya, including spending 34 days in detention until his brother sent him money for his release. Al-Taghi is now making ladies purses, bags and school satchels, all of which his wife sells across the Sudan. "I could say now I am happy; I can provide for my family, and I am building a house, and I am beside my family." © IOM 2021 / Muse Mohammed

2.3.2 RETURN MIGRATION

In Iraq, new displacement reached its zenith in 2014, forcibly displacing over two million individuals. During this period, ISIL resurged, seizing substantial territory, and claiming up to a third of Iraqi land by June 2014. This prompted the United States of America to establish the ‘Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS.’⁵⁴ From 2015 to 2016, new displacement decreased, only to spike again in 2017, affecting 1.4 million individuals. Thereafter, new

displacement steadily declined, maintaining a level of around 1.1 million since 2021 until the beginning of 2023. Concurrently, the number of returnees witnessed a dramatic increase, peaking at 4.8 million in 2021. Subsequently, 2022 saw an increase of 92,664 new returnees, although there was a decline in returnee numbers in 2023 (see Figure 14).⁵⁵

BOX 4. IRAQ – TRENDS IN RETURNEE POPULATION GROWTH AND DISTRIBUTION

By the end of December 2022, Iraq had recorded nearly 5 million returnees, comprising approximately 4,976,286 returnees from 829,381 households across eight governorates.^a DTM Iraq Return Index^b was designed as a tool to measure the severity of conditions in locations of return. Between December 2021 and December 2022, the returnee population increased by 35,232 individuals. This marked a significant slowdown compared to the previous year when 120,666 individuals returned (from December 2020 to December 2021).

The rate of change, that is, the percentage change in the returnee population between data collection rounds, also saw a notable decrease in 2022 (0.5%), in contrast to the higher rates observed in 2021 (2.5%) and 2020 (5%).^c Approximately 51 per cent of returns that occurred between December 2021 and December 2022 were to Ninewa (39%, 13,770) and Anbar (12%, 4,188) Governorates, with Salah al-Din accounting for around one-third of the returns during 2022 (33%, 11,730).^d

In 2022, approximately 12 per cent of returnees were living in severe conditions,^e primarily in Ninewa and Salah al-Din governorates.^f The main obstacles to reintegration faced by returnee households in Iraq as of mid-2020 were related to structural and social concerns.^g While returnees managed to rebuild their lives and sustain their well-being in their places of origin, there were persistent issues such as the risk of violence, the unavailability of courts, the inoperability of certain sectoral jobs beyond individuals’ control, requiring government interventions.^h

a IOM, 2023p.

b The Return Index is based on 16 indicators divided into two scales: Scale 1, on livelihoods and basic services, and Scale 2, centred around social cohesion and safety perceptions. For more information on the methodology, check Methodological Overview.

c IOM, 2023p.

d Ibid.

e The scale of severity is measured by either livelihoods and basic services, or safety and social cohesion.

f IOM, 2023p.

g IOM, 2020b.

h Ibid.

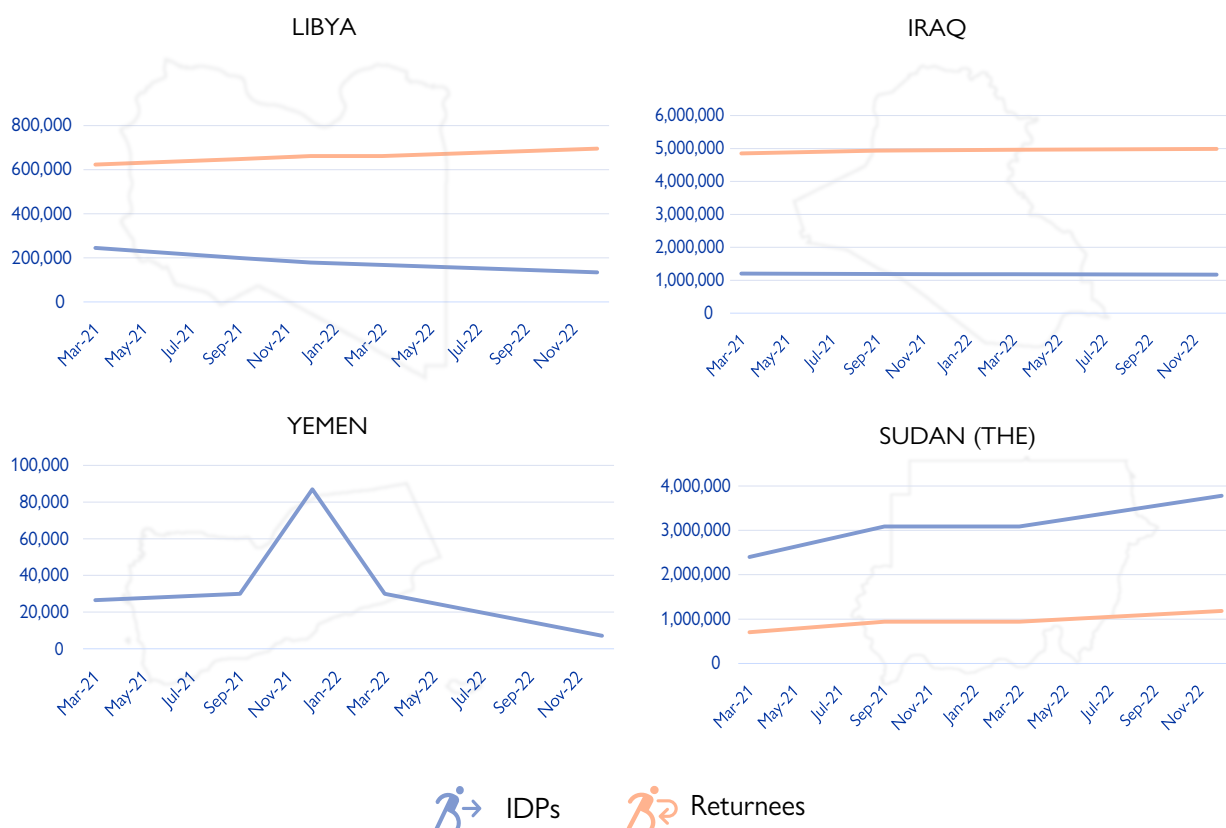
54 US Department of State, 2022.

55 IOM, 2023p.

In Yemen, new internal displacement experienced a significant upsurge in 2015, reaching a level similar to Iraq’s in 2014, with approximately 2.2 million individuals displaced. This surge coincided with the Yemeni civil war evolving into an international conflict following the formation of an Arab coalition to reinstate former president.⁵⁶ In 2016, new displacement dropped to less than a quarter of the 2015 levels. Between 2017 and 2022, the displacement trend increased, culminating in a record high of 4.5 million in 2022 as shown in Figure 14. In terms of households, there was an increase in the total number of displaced households, rising from 3,495 households in 2020 to 10,079 in 2022. Additionally, the number of returnee households exhibited a significant increase, surging from 45 households in 2021 to 825 households in 2022.

In contrast, Libya generally recorded lower displacement levels than other countries, except for the Sudan. A peak of 500,000 individuals displaced by conflict occurred in 2011, coinciding with the start of the Arab Spring uprising, NATO intervention, and the ousting of the former president.⁵⁷ After 2014, displacement generally decreased, with slight increases observed in 2016 and 2019. By the end of 2020, a decrease of 100,000 IDPs was recorded compared to the beginning of the year, resulting in an estimate of approximately 278,000 IDPs. Since then, a gradual decrease continued, with more than 134,700 individuals displaced as of August 2022. Interestingly, the number of returnees has surpassed that of IDPs, with a gradual increase from 448,573 in 2020 to 695,516 returnees in 2022.⁵⁸

FIGURE 14. IDPS AND RETURNEES IN SELECT MENA COUNTRIES (2021–2022)



Source: IOM, 2022e; IOM, 2023n; IDMC, 2022.

56 Center for Preventive Action, 2023.

57 Human Rights Watch, 2012.

58 IOM, 2022d.

In the Sudan, a single year of peak displacement is not readily discernible, as displacement levels rose in 2012, stabilizing at around 500,000 through 2014. This period coincided with the outbreak of conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States. Subsequently, a declining trend in new displacement became evident. However, in 2021, new conflict induced IDPs surged

more than fourfold between 2020 and 2022, aligning with an escalation in inter-communal violence driven by competition for land and resources across the Darfur states, particularly West and North Darfur (see Box 3). Following the crisis in April 2023, a staggering increase in the number of IDPs occurred, reaching nearly 3.6 million in August 2023.

BOX 5. LIBYA – PROGRESS TOWARDS DURABLE SOLUTIONS AND INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

In 2016, IOM adopted the PRDS^a framework to provide guidance and facilitate a comprehensive understanding of forced migration dynamics. This framework assists IOM and its partners in navigating the complexities of forced migration and supports ongoing efforts to resolve displacement situations progressively. DTM Libya employed the Data for Solutions to Internal Displacement (DSID) framework, which operationalizes the IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons and the International Recommendations on Internally Displaced Persons Statistics (IRIS)^b to analyse displacement and assess progress towards durable solutions in 2022.^c

The data from 2022 revealed a total of 831,228 displaced individuals, including 125,802 IDPs (those displaced within their current locations) and returnees (individuals who had previously been displaced but have returned to their places of origin).^d Despite occasional, short-lived spikes in violence in and around Tripoli, the overall displacement situation in Libya remained consistent from October 2022 throughout 2023.^e

As per the DSID framework, approximately 75,643 individuals (IDPs within their current locations) and 616,832 individuals (returnees) are making strides along durable solutions pathways.^f However, it is important to highlight those 54,179 displaced individuals,^g which includes those from Murzuq and Tawergha, continue to face unmet displacement-related needs, primarily related to insufficient access to shelter and accommodation due to damaged housing and infrastructure. These individuals are not accounted for within the solutions pathways estimate.

a IOM, 2018.

b IRIS composite measure adapted from the criteria for durable solutions established within IASC framework, recommends a prioritized use of five criteria: 1. Safety and security, 2. Adequate standard of living, 3. Access to livelihoods, 4. Restoration of housing, land, and property and 5. Access to documentation.

c Datasets used for the analysis are part of the Round 45 data collection (December 2022).

d IOM, 2023e.

e Ibid.

f Ibid.

g Ibid.

2.4 MIXED MIGRATION FLOW

The journeys of migrants are often fraught with perilous and sometimes fatal risks (see Chapter 3 Section 3.3), stemming from a complex interplay of social, political, economic, environmental, and policy factors that profoundly influence the migration process.⁵⁹ This section will focus on arrivals from MENA to Europe

through Mediterranean routes and from sub-Saharan Africa to MENA. It will examine arrivals in North Africa from West African countries, along with the northern route from Ethiopia to the Sudan and the eastern corridor involving the Horn of Africa and Yemen.

2.4.1 ARRIVALS FROM MENA TO EUROPE

North Africa stands out as a significant transit point and departure area for both migrants and MENA nationals, both from the subregion itself and sub-Saharan Africa, as they embark on journeys towards Europe and other destinations. The IOM DTM Europe⁶⁰ tracks and assesses mixed migration flows towards Europe, encompassing both land and sea arrivals, the primary nationalities involved, and their presence in reception facilities. These migratory movements encompass a

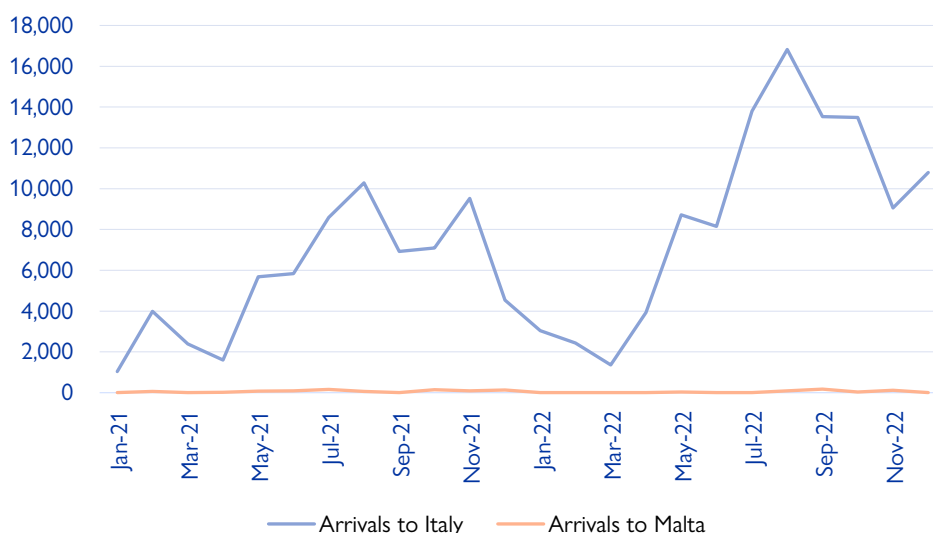
diverse range of individuals, including asylum-seekers, refugees, and migrants including victims of trafficking and unaccompanied migrant children in search of improved prospects, and they are observed along four principal migration routes: the Central Mediterranean route (CMR), the Western Mediterranean route (WMR), the Western African Atlantic route (WAAR), and the Eastern Mediterranean route (EMR).⁶¹

CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE

The CMR comprises migratory maritime crossings from North Africa to Italian territories, and to a lesser extent, Malta. These maritime routes often depart from

Libyan and Tunisian shores,⁶² while attempting to reach European countries.

FIGURE 15. CMR ARRIVALS BY SEA TO ITALY AND MALTA FROM JANUARY 2021 TO DECEMBER 2022



Source: IOM, 2022a.

59 McAuliffe et al., 2017.

60 IOM, 2023f, 2023g.

61 McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021.

62 IOM, 2023g.

For Italy, arrival trends followed an increase in 2021–2022 (see Figure 15). To that extent, the first semester of 2022 (January to June) witnessed a 34.57 per cent increase in arrivals, compared to 2021. More importantly, the highest increase occurred during 2022's second semester (July to December), as arrivals to Italy increased by 2.80 when compared to the preceding semester, reaching a total of 77,498 people by

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE

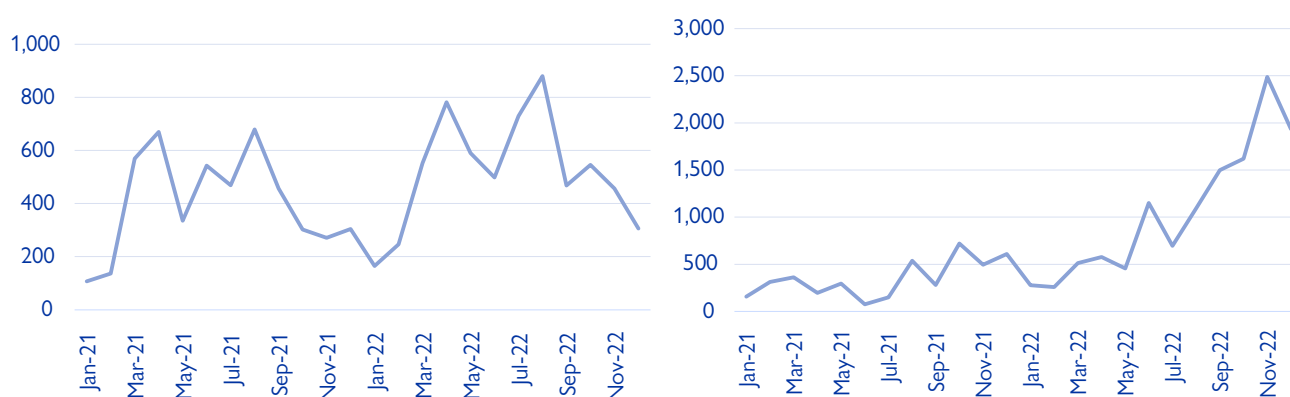
The EMR refers to irregular⁶³ arrivals in Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria and the Balkan route. Greece registers both sea and land arrivals coming from eastern Mediterranean and Balkan routes, respectively. For the past few years, migrants entering Greece came from Middle East countries as Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq, as well as from South Asian countries, such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan.⁶⁴ During 2022, MENA countries as Iraq, Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon continued to be top origin countries for arrivals into Greece.⁶⁵

A rise was registered in the case of land arrivals to Greece. In 2022 first semester (January to June), a total of 2,863 arrivals were registered, accounting for

December 2022. This upward trend appears to spread through the first months of 2023, potentially reaching higher arrival numbers in 2023 to the Italian shores. Arrivals to Malta shore are significantly scarcer, however in 2022 arrivals reached a total of 444, accounting for a reduction of 52.98 per cent when compared to 2021 (838 arrivals).

a 20 per cent increase when compared to the same period in 2021 (2,360). For 2022's last semester (July to December) the total number peaked at 3,386 arrivals, registering an increase of 36.42 per cent compared to the same period of 2021. Land crossings from Türkiye were important for Hellenic immigration in 2022, especially at the crossing point in Evros.⁶⁶ Sea arrivals also registered a stark increase in 2022, with arrivals in the first semester peaking at 3,226 migrants, representing a 2.31-time increase compared to 2021. The rise in figures was stronger in 2022's second semester, as it reached 9,330 arrivals, with an increase of 3.34 times. This upward tendency remains in the first months of 2023 as shown in Figure 16.

FIGURE 16. EMR LAND ARRIVALS (LEFT) AND SEA ARRIVALS (RIGHT) IN GREECE FROM JANUARY 2021 TO DECEMBER 2022



Source: IOM, 2022a.

⁶³ In certain situations, people who have never undertaken migration may be referred to as migrants. For instance, children of people born overseas, who are called as second- or third-generation migrants. This may also apply to statelessness situations, in which entire groups of individuals, despite being born and raised in a country, are unable to attain citizenship. These individuals might even be labeled as irregular migrants by the authorities (Kyaw, 2017).

⁶⁴ IOM, 2021d.

⁶⁵ IOM, 2023f, 2023g, 2022b.

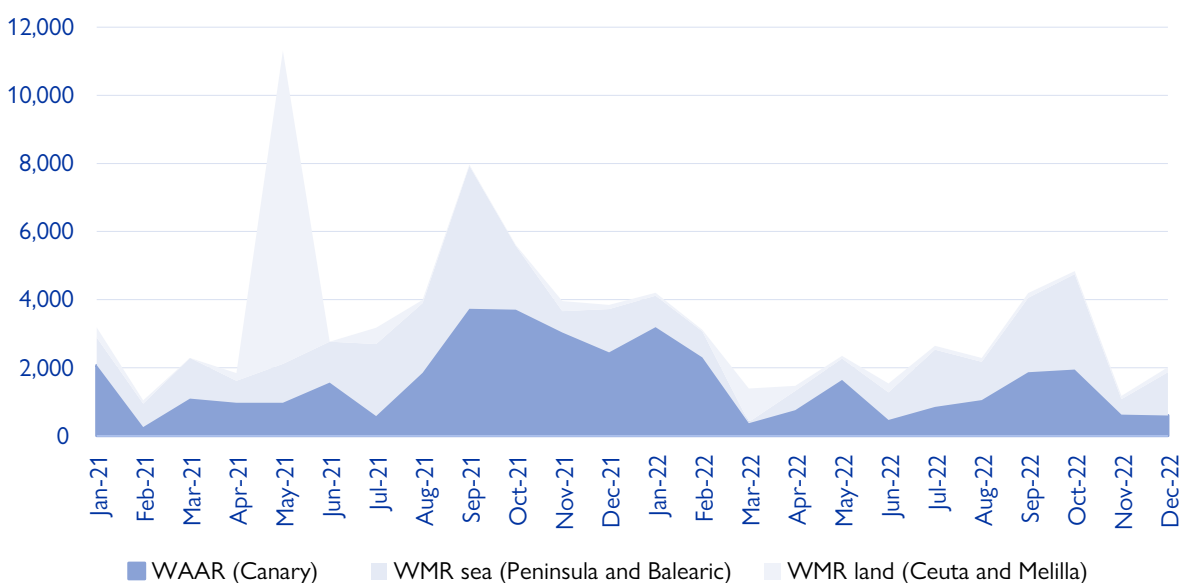
⁶⁶ IOM, 2022b, 2023g.

WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN ROUTE

The WMR refers to irregular arrivals in Spain, both via the Mediterranean Sea from Morocco and Algeria to mainland Spain, and by land from Morocco to the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in North Africa.⁶⁷ IOM identified three main trajectories of the migration

route leading to Spanish territories – the maritime route to the Canary Islands; the maritime route to the Balearic Islands, Iberian Peninsula and the land route to Ceuta and Melilla.

FIGURE 17. WMR ARRIVALS TO SPAIN BY SUB-ROUTE FROM JANUARY 2021 TO DECEMBER 2022



Source: IOM, 2022a.

All migration routes to Spain in the WMR follow a general reduction, both by sea and land in 2022. Between January and June 2022, a total of 5,330 arrivals were registered. The reduction represents a decrease of 65.57 per cent when compared to the same period in 2021 (15,475). Between July and December 2022, this number peaked at 10,207, with a more subtle

reduction of 22.49 per cent when compared to the same period in 2021 (13,169). Despite the general downward tendency, MENA countries continued to play a crucial role in WMRs. To that regard, Morocco and Algeria are two of the main countries of origin of arrivals by sea to Spain.⁶⁸

2.4.2 ARRIVALS FROM SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA TO MENA

Migration dynamics in the MENA region are influenced by several sub-Saharan African countries. In Africa and the Middle East, the Flow Monitoring activities conducted by the DTM meticulously document the movements of migrants, both within countries and

between them. These activities involve the collection of data regarding the numbers and profiles of migrants as they traverse specific high-transit locations, primarily at land border crossing points.

⁶⁷ IOM, 2022b.

⁶⁸ IOM, 2022b, 2023b, 2023f.

FIGURE 18. ARRIVALS IN LIBYA (ALGATROUN) FROM THE NIGER (LEFT) AND FIGURE 19. ARRIVALS IN THE SUDAN FROM ETHIOPIA (RIGHT)



Source: IOM, 2022a.

Over the period from 2021 to 2022, IOM registered a total of 461,101 individuals arriving in North Africa. In the year 2022 alone, there was a substantial influx, with 292,878 arrivals, marking a notable increase of 74.10 per cent compared to the previous year (168,223).⁶⁹ This upward trend remained consistent throughout all quarters in 2022. According to IOM’s registries, the two most significant destination countries were Algeria (235,851) and Libya (340,057), with neighbouring countries to these nations significantly contributing to the influx.

The primary departing country for these arrivals was the Niger, where the movement of persons to Libya recorded an average of 4,220 persons per month, totalling 345,816 (see Figure 18). Other neighbouring

countries, such as Mali (70,875) and Chad (43,899), also featured prominently as top departing countries.

During the second semester of 2022, there was a significant increase in movement between Ethiopia and the Sudan, as seen in Figure 19. According to IOM,⁷⁰ these movements are primarily associated with seasonal and labour migration. Arrivals from Ethiopia to the Sudan initially followed an upward trend; however, starting in April, there was a sharp decline in the number of arrivals, likely due to the resurgence of the conflict in the Sudan. Conversely, there was a total of 27,290 individuals arriving in Ethiopia from the Sudan, indicating a reverse migration trend consisting of Ethiopians returning to their origin country.⁷¹

69 IOM, 2023d.

70 IOM, 2021e.

71 IOM, 2023m.

 BOX 6. YEMEN – AN INCREASE OF ARRIVALS FROM THE HORN OF AFRICA IN 2022

Between 2021 and 2022, there was a substantial increase in migrant arrivals in Yemen from the Horn of Africa, surging from 27,700 to 73,200, nearly tripling in numbers.^a Migration along the Eastern Route, which spans from the Horn of Africa to the Arabian Peninsula, predominantly to Saudi Arabia, experienced a notable 64 per cent rise between 2021 and 2022, escalating from 269,000 to 441,000 migrant movements.^b The shores of Yemen witnessed a significant surge in migrant arrivals from Djibouti and Somalia, more than doubling between 2021 (27,700) and 2022 (73,200). Of these arrivals, a noteworthy 48 per cent were reported in Yemen's Lahj governorate, where migrants traverse the Bab al-Mandab Strait from Djibouti's coastal region of Obock.^c

While comprising only a quarter of all migrant arrivals in 2022, the number of female migrants witnessed a nearly fourfold increase over the past year, rising from 4,800 in 2021 to 17,600 in 2022. Additionally, over 8,000 migrant children arrived in Yemen in 2022, with approximately 200 of them being under five years old, and 1,900 travelling unaccompanied. The primary motivation for most migrants was economic-driven (84%), although 16 per cent of movements were attributed to conflict, violence or persecution.^d

Given the deteriorating situation for migrants in Yemen and the challenges they encountered when attempting to continue their journey towards Saudi Arabia, many migrants have chosen to return to the Horn of Africa. In 2022, a total of 7,440 migrants initiated spontaneous returns from Yemen to Djibouti (79%) and Somalia (21%). Furthermore, 4,081 migrants who were stranded in Yemen were facilitated in returning to their countries of origin in 2022, including 400 unaccompanied minors through the IOM Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR) programme. Notably, the majority of those who received assistance were Ethiopian nationals, accounting for 95 per cent of the total returnees.^e

a Binwaber, 2023.

b IOM 2023i.

c Ibid.

d Ibid.

e Ibid.



03

MIGRANT PROTECTION

IOM staff provide hygiene and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits and conduct medical assessments to stranded migrants at a medical campus outside the Kenyan consulate in Beirut. Those with severe medical conditions were referred to nearby health facilities. They also conducted health assessments, referring people with medical conditions to other health actors. © IOM 2020 / Muse Mohammed

International migration often involves the return and readmission of migrants to their countries of origin or third countries, followed by their reintegration into receiving societies and communities.⁷² IOM identifies, registers, and assists persons returning to their origin countries (outbound flows) and people in third countries returning to MENA (inbound flows). This chapter begins with an exploration of the assistance provided

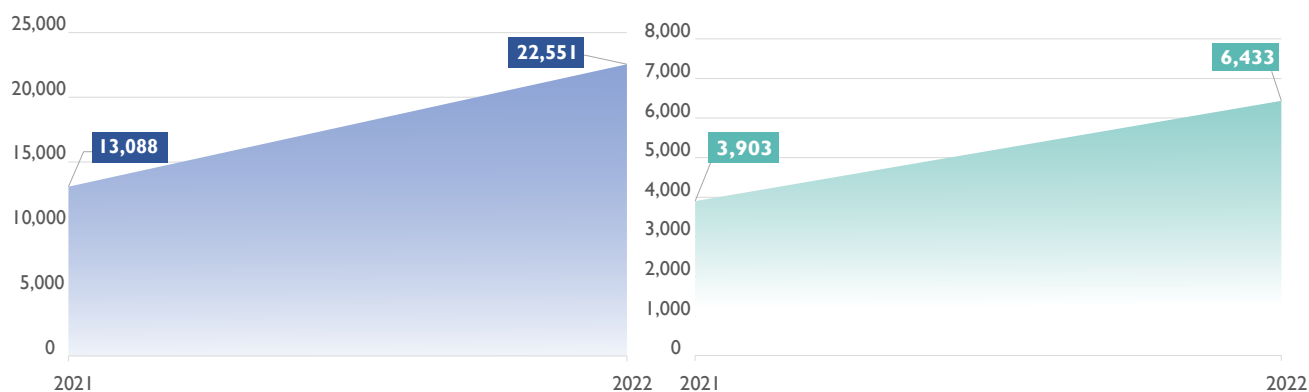
to migrants in need by IOM and concludes by focusing on missing and deceased migrants. The increasingly alarming death toll on migration routes within and from the MENA region demands immediate attention and concerted efforts to enhance the safety and protection of all migrants.

3.1 RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

Through its presence in the MENA region, the IOM Regional Office provides technical support, advice and oversight to IOM offices and partners across the region on issues related to migration management and protection and assistance to migrants and displaced populations. IOM's Migrant Management Operational System Application (MiMOSA) is the institutional global information management system for multiple

operational activities covering Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR)/Voluntary Humanitarian Return (VHR)/Assistance to Vulnerable Migrants (AVM) case management under the Migration Protection and Assistance Division, medical operations, and movement. MiMOSA is one of the most comprehensive datasets on voluntary assisted returns and offers statistical information on the socioeconomic profile of returnees.

FIGURE 20. TOTAL OF OUTBOUND (LEFT) AND INBOUND (RIGHT) MIGRANTS FOR MENA COUNTRIES (2021–2022)



Source: IOM MiMOSA, 2023l.

IOM's AVRR programme provides administrative, logistical and financial support, including reintegration assistance, to migrants who are unwilling or unable to remain in host or transit countries and decide to return to their country of origin. This programme has proven to be an effective tool to assist migrants in distress, who are stranded or destitute, or who lack the means to go back home.⁷³ IOM's Protection Division (PXD)

provides protection and assistance to migrants in need, including but not limited to victims of trafficking, asylum-seekers, those whose claims have not been successful, stranded migrants, unaccompanied and separated migrant children, and migrants subjected to violence, exploitation, or abuse.

IOM's AVRR support to migrants involves a range of activities and typically includes: the provision of

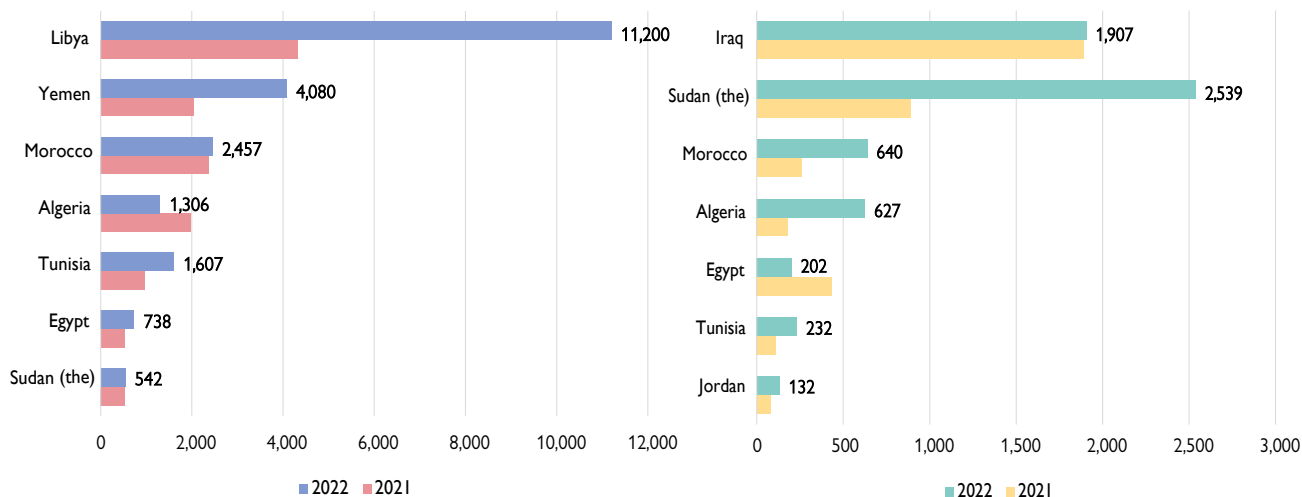
⁷² IOM, 2019.

⁷³ IOM, 2023n.

pre-departure counselling, the purchase of flight tickets, administrative and travel assistance and, where possible, the provision of reintegration assistance.⁷⁴ In 2022, 6,433 migrants returned to MENA region, while 22,551 migrants returned from MENA region through IOM’s

AVRR programme. In 2021, 3,903 migrants returned to MENA region, while 13,903 migrants have been assisted to return to their countries from the MENA region through IOM’s AVRR programme.

FIGURE 21. TOP SELECT COUNTRIES FOR OUTBOUND MIGRANTS FROM MENA (LEFT) AND INBOUND MIGRANTS TO MENA (RIGHT) (2021–2022)



Source: IOM MiMOSA, 2023I.

Migrants assisted to return from the MENA region constituted 33 per cent of the total caseload registered for assistance in IOM offices. Out of the migrants assisted to return to MENA, 68 per cent were voluntary humanitarian returns and 32 per cent were assisted voluntary returns. Within 15,281 voluntary returns, a significant portion three quarters were from Libya (11,200 / 73%) and around 4,080 were from Yemen. The top five countries where migrants were assisted or registered for assistance are as follows: Libya (11,200), Yemen (4,080), Morocco (2,457), Tunisia (1,607), and Algeria (1,306). In terms of social demographic characteristics, sex is disaggregated as follows: 76 per cent are male and 24 per cent are female. 81 per cent

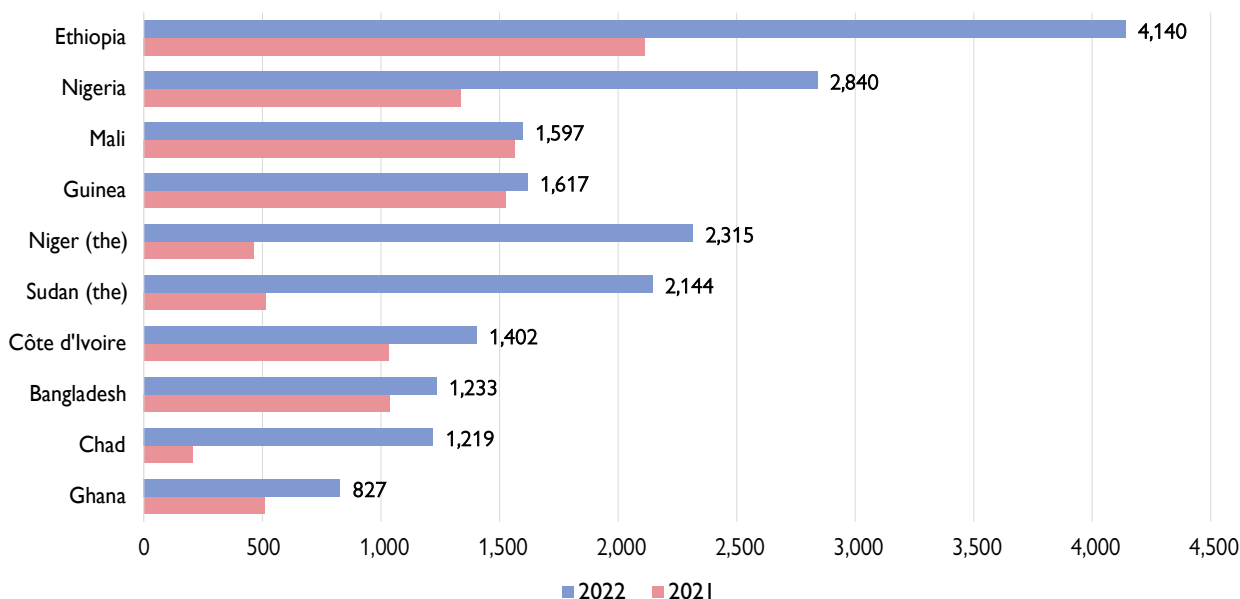
of assisted migrants returned from MENA were below the age of 34, with 16 per cent under the age of 17 who are classified as children.

Looking at the migrants assisted to return to the MENA region, there were 6,452 migrants which constituted 9 per cent of the total caseload. Nearly three quarters of the assisted migrants were below the age of 34, with 15 per cent as children. Within the child migrants, there were 79 per cent were males and the rest were female. The top five countries of origin where migrants were assisted to return were the Sudan (2,539), Iraq (1,907), Morocco (640), Algeria (627) and Tunisia (232).⁷⁵

74 McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021.

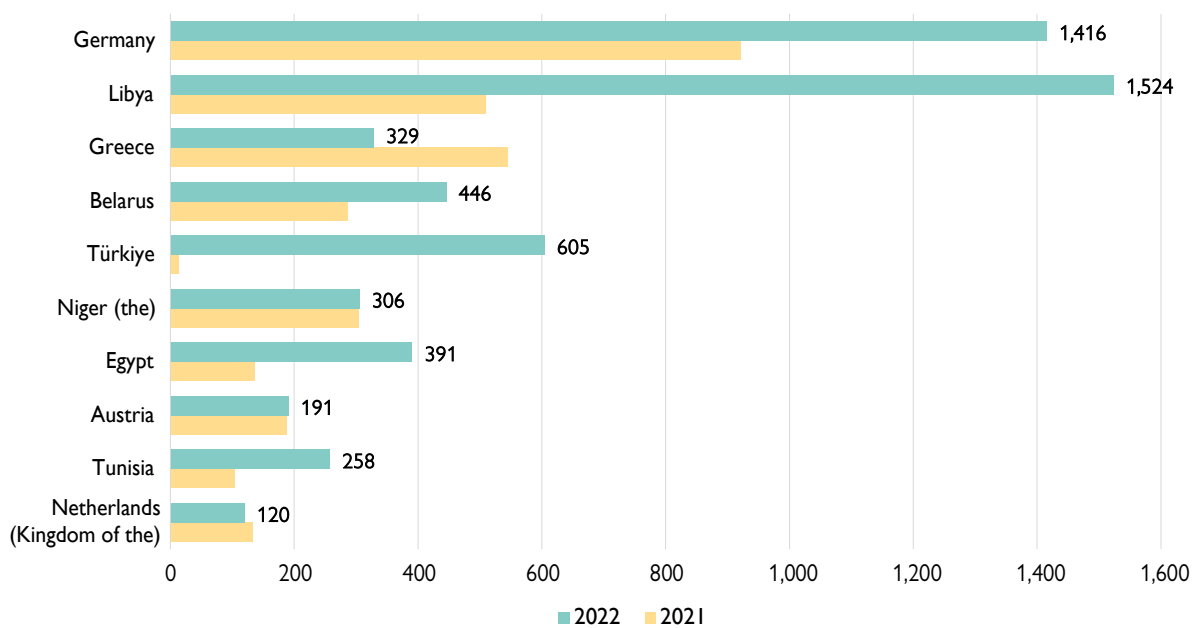
75 IOM, 2023I.

FIGURE 22A. TOP DESTINATION COUNTRIES FOR OUTBOUND MIGRANTS FROM MENA COUNTRIES (2021–2022)



Source: IOM MiMOSA, 2023I.

FIGURE 22B. TOP COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN FOR INBOUND MIGRANTS TO MENA COUNTRIES (2021–2022)



Source: IOM MiMOSA, 2023I.

Both in 2022 and in 2021, most of the total migrants returned to the MENA region from Germany (22% in 2022 and 23.6% in 2021 respectively) and Libya (23.6% in 2022 and 13% in 2021). In 2022, Türkiye was the third country (9.4%) for the migrants returning to the

MENA region followed by Belarus (6.9%) and Egypt (6.0%). While in 2021, the second country was Greece (13.9%), followed by the Niger (7.7%) and Belarus (7.3%).⁷⁶

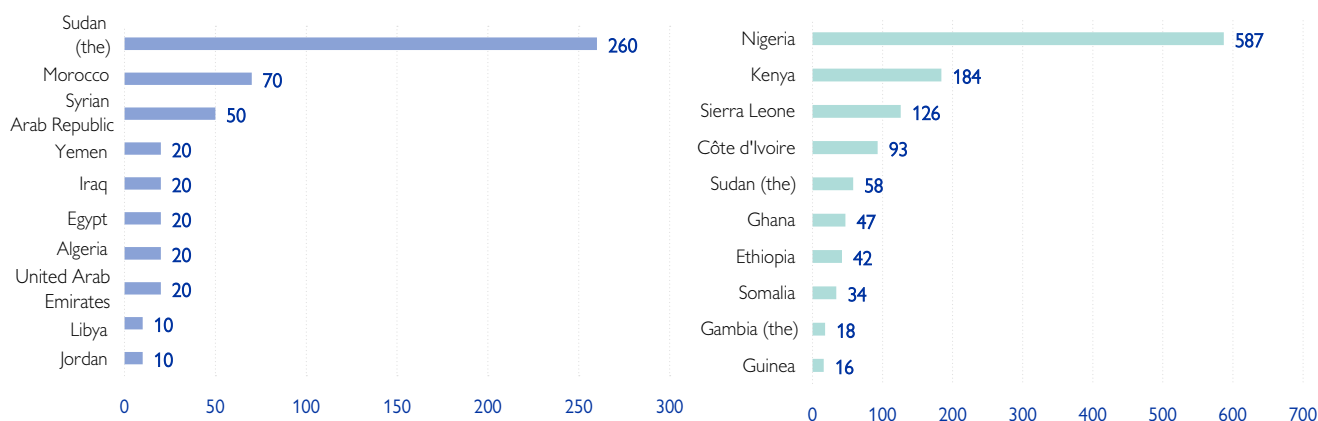
76 Ibid.

3.2 MIGRANTS IN VULNERABLE SITUATIONS

There were 4,315 migrants in vulnerable situations who were assisted by IOM through the AVR program in the MENA region. Nearly half of those assisted migrants from MENA region were migrants with health-related needs (see Chapter 5 Section 5.1.1). Moreover, 39 per cent were identified as victims of trafficking and 15 per cent were unaccompanied or separated children. On the other hand, returns to the MENA region comprised of 621 migrants in vulnerable situations. In terms of vulnerability breakdown, 80 per cent of the migrants returned to MENA were migrants with health-related needs. Apart from those migrants, 17 per cent were identified victims of trafficking and 3 per cent were unaccompanied minors.⁷⁷

In terms of outbound migrants (from MENA to their countries of origin), a total of 4,866 persons with vulnerable situations were recorded as assisted in 2021–2022, accounting for 13.65 per cent of the total two-year period.⁷⁸ In 2021, 1,548 persons were identified as either victims of trafficking, unaccompanied or separated minors or persons with health needs. These subpopulations rose to 3,318 people in 2022, more than double the numbers of the previous year. Vulnerabilities were driven by health needs (3,206) followed by victims of trafficking (1,787) and unaccompanied or separated children (263).

FIGURE 23. TOTAL NUMBER OF VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING (VOT) BY NATIONALITY (2011–2021)(LEFT) AND FIGURE 24. TOP DESTINATION COUNTRIES FOR VOT ASSISTED IN THE MENA REGION (2022)(RIGHT)



Source: Left: Counter-Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC) The Global Synthetic Dataset, 2022; Right: IOM MiMOSA, 2023I.

Migrants presenting vulnerable situations are considerably lower for those returning to MENA countries compared to those leaving the region. In the two-year period, a total of 858 migrants returning to MENA were identified as facing vulnerable situations. The total in 2021 accounted for 281, and this figure increased more than two times in 2022, reaching 577 persons. Victims of trafficking reached a total of 73 assisted persons. Although this relatively low absolute

figure, the number of victims increased by 712 per cent between 2021–2022, accounting to 65 assisted persons in the same year. The most affected were persons of Sudanese origin, followed by Moroccans and Egyptians.⁷⁹

Figure 24 presents nationality or country of destination of trafficking victims. The top four destination countries across the years were Nigeria, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire. Notably, Nigeria nationals continue

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Although this figure mainly refers to out of region AVR recipients, it also includes a small proportion of MENA nationals who were assisted in other MENA countries. This might indicate a small duplication which does not affect the overall trend.

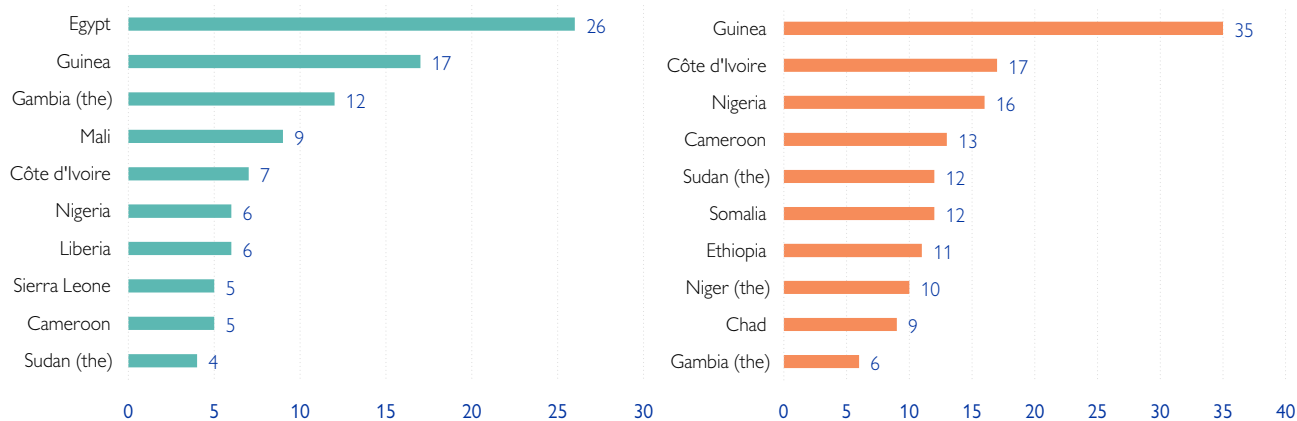
⁷⁹ IOM, 2023I.

to fall victim of trafficking networks, which United Nations institutions have previously highlighted.⁸⁰ Additionally, out of region countries such as Bangladesh and Philippines, also ranked to the top ten assisted in 2021. In 2022, however, other west African countries as Kenya and Sierra Leone peaked to top three nationalities affected by trafficking, with 184 and 126 assisted migrants respectively.⁸¹ This represents a stark increase in both countries, as trafficking victims from Sierra Leone increased by more than three times and those of Kenyan origin multiplied by eight times.

In 2021, 106 unaccompanied or separated minors (outbound) were registered across the region. In that

year, Egyptian national minors peaked to number one. IOM had previously identified protection needs for this type of underage population.⁸² In 2021, other West African countries as Guinea (17) and the Gambia (12) also presented significant numbers. The next year, there was an increase of unaccompanied or separated minors reported, accounting for 157 children or a 48.11 per cent increase.⁸³ Notably, Guinea continues to be one of the main nationalities with these populations, among other west African countries as Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, or Cameroon. Guineans and Ivorian nationals have been identified as origin countries of unaccompanied minors to Europe.⁸⁴

FIGURE 25. UNACCOMPANIED OR SEPARATED MINORS (UASM) FROM MENA IN 2021 (LEFT) AND 2022 (RIGHT)



Source: IOM MiMOSA, 2023I.

Lastly, 67 unaccompanied or separated minors (inbound to MENA) were assisted back to the region according to MiMOSA registries. Contrary to other vulnerable situations, the number of minors affected decreased

48.8 per cent in 2022, reaching a total of 22 persons in the same year. This vulnerability continues to be a pressing issue for countries as the Sudan and Egypt, as previous reports have continued to stress it.⁸⁵

80 IOM, 2006, UNICRI, 2010.

81 IOM, 2023I.

82 IOM, 2016.

83 IOM, 2023I.

84 UNHCR, UNICEF and IOM, 2020.

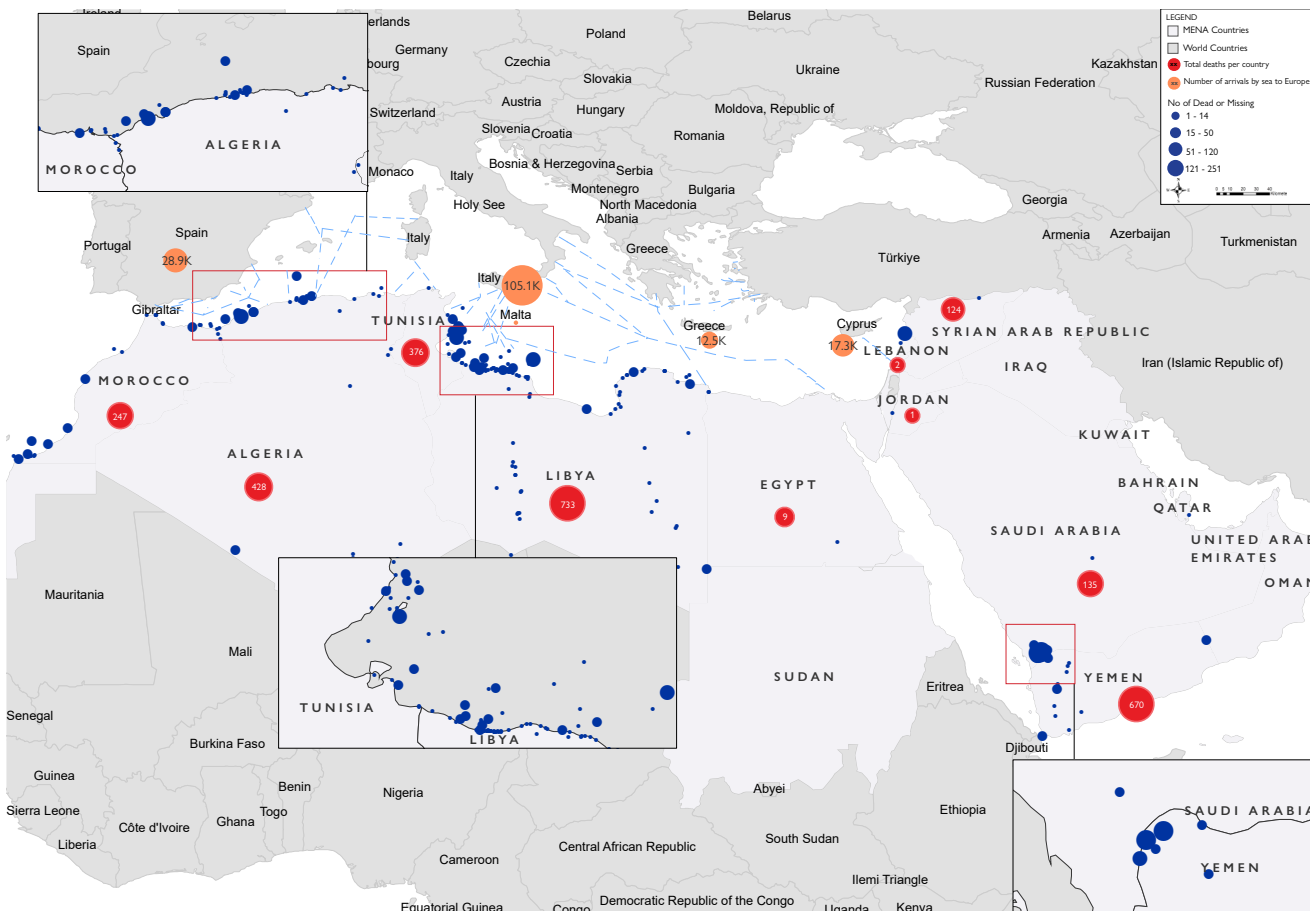
85 IOM, 2016, 2023p.

3.3 DEAD AND MISSING MIGRANTS

The Missing Migrants Project recorded 3,789 deaths and disappearances in the MENA Region in 2022, this represents a significant increase when compared to 3,413 deaths and disappearances recorded in 2021.⁸⁶

There has been an unprecedented number of migrants transiting from and through the region due to economic stagnation, lack of job opportunities and the ongoing conflict in many of the countries in the region.

FIGURE 26. MIGRATORY INCIDENTS THAT OCCURRED WITHIN AND FROM THE MENA REGION (2021–2022)



Source: IOM Missing Migrants Project, 2022f.

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

DEATHS AND DISAPPEARANCES DURING TRANSIT WITHIN MENA

The Northern Africa land routes continue to register a remarkable number of migrants transiting within the MENA region. In 2022, 203 deaths were registered on Northern Africa land routes, a 39 per cent decrease from 2021. The perilous Sahara Desert crossings saw over half of these deaths (125), a slight decrease from

2021's 227 deaths.⁸⁷ Despite the dangers of starvation, dehydration, physical abuse, sickness, and lack of access to medicines which migrants face while crossings the Sahara, the Sahara Desert crossings continues to register the highest number of crossings among the Northern Africa land routes. Deaths on these routes

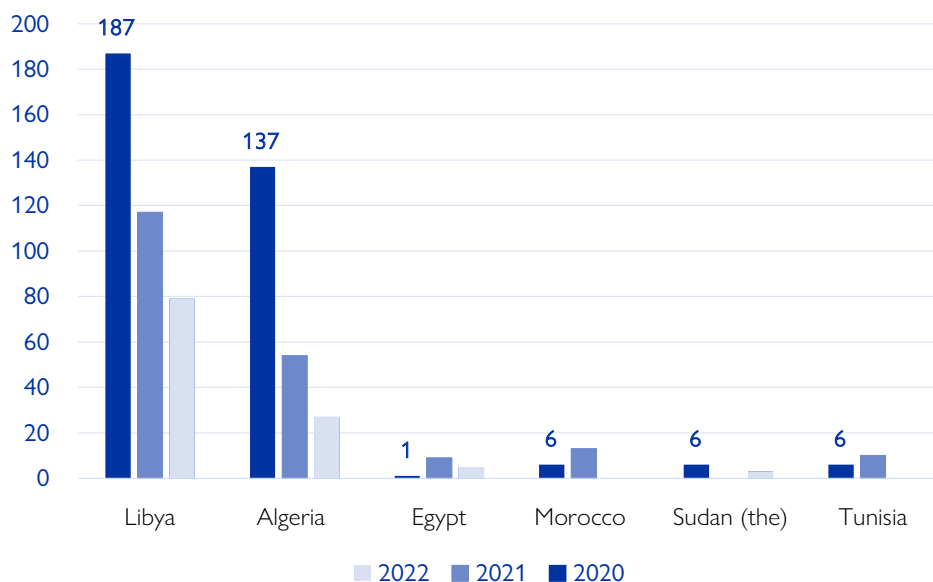
⁸⁶ For latest figures, see IOM, 2023k.

⁸⁷ IOM, 2022f.

are largely undercounted due to limited data access. Libya accounted for most deaths in the past three years (79 in 2020, 187 in 2021, and 117 in 2022), followed by Algeria and Morocco with decreasing death counts. Main causes of death in 2022 were harsh environmental

conditions (53%), vehicle accidents (19%) and violence (9%). In 2021, vehicle accidents were the main cause (46%). Among identified nationalities in 2022, Sudanese, Chadians and Guineans were prominent. In 2021, Sudanese and Egyptians were prevalent.⁸⁸

FIGURE 27. DEATHS AND DISAPPEARANCES IN COUNTRIES OF INCIDENTS ON NORTH AFRICAN LAND ROUTES (2020–2022)



Source: IOM Missing Migrants Project, 2022f.

In the Middle East, 687 deaths occurred on the Horn of Africa to Yemen crossings, with 95 per cent happening between Yemen and Saudi Arabia in 2022. In 2021, 30 out of 98 deaths occurred due to a shipwreck off Yemen,

while 68 happened near Obock, Djibouti. Available data shows that in 2022, 30 were from Ethiopia and the majority were of unknown nationality. In 2021, most victims were believed to be Ethiopians.⁸⁹

DEATHS AND DISAPPEARANCES FROM MENA TO EUROPE

The CMR saw 1,417 deaths in 2022, mainly due to drowning (1,308) and vehicle accidents (24). Off Libya's coasts, 807 deaths occurred in 2022, compared to Tunisia's 462 and Italy's 107. In 2021, Libya reported the highest deaths (994), Tunisia (490) and Italy (56).⁹⁰ "Invisible shipwrecks" contributed, as evidenced by remains washing ashore and lack of comprehensive sea-rescue operations. Meanwhile, the WMR had 611 deaths in 2022, a 59 per cent rise from 2021's 384. Most deaths occurred off Algerian coasts (402), with drowning as the main cause (577).

In the Eastern Mediterranean, deaths increased to 383 in 2022 from 111 in 2021, many between Türkiye and Greece, indicating higher figures due to missing boats.⁹¹ At least 383 migrants perished while crossing the EMR in 2022 which is more than three-fold increase from the number of migrants deaths recorded in 2021 (111). However, multiple social media reports on migrants missing from boats that disappeared indicate that the figures might be even higher. The majority of these incidents occurred between Türkiye and Greece; however, in 2022, one of the deadliest shipwrecks on this route occurred in near the island of Arwad, off

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

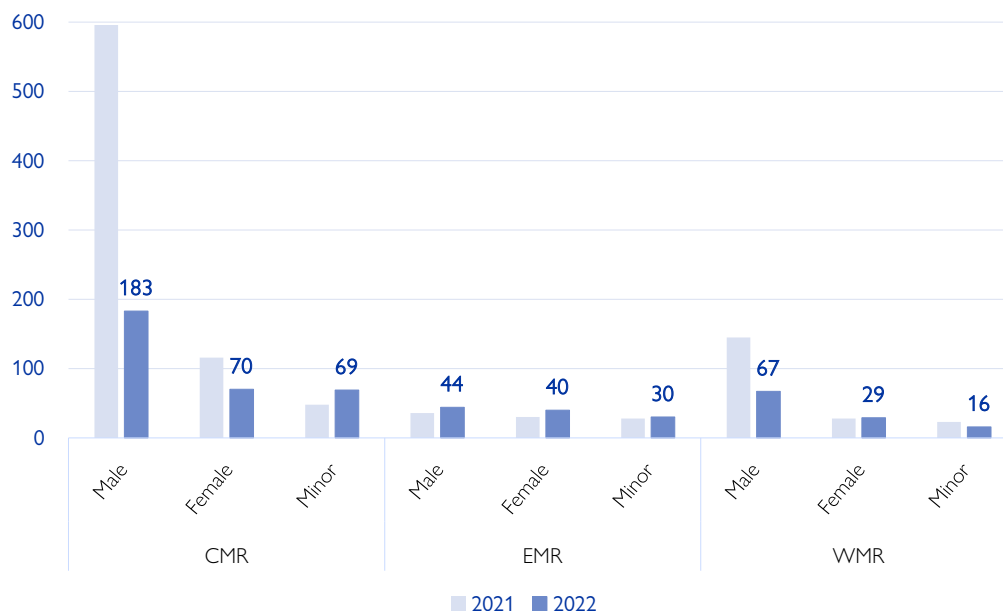
⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ IOM, 2022f.

the coast of Tartus, Syrian Arab Republic which caused the death of 102 individuals while 25 remain missing. In 2022, the main cause of death in EMR is due to drowning 377 compared to 110 deaths which were registered as drowning as the main cause of death in 2021. Sociodemographic data remains sparse on these

routes. On the CMR, the known nationalities in 2022 were Tunisia (160), Syrian Arab Republic (92), and Ethiopia (32). On the WMR, many were presumed Algerian (183) in 2022. In the EMR, Western Asia’s nationals predominated in 2022.

FIGURE 28. DEMOGRAPHICS OF DEAD MIGRANTS FROM MENA COUNTRIES TO EUROPE (2021–2022)



Source: IOM Missing Migrants Project, 2022f.

The Western African Route connects Western African countries and regions with the Canary Islands in Spain. After staying relatively low for many years, the number of deaths, shipwrecks and rescues of migrants trying to cross the Atlantic Ocean from Africa’s north-west coast to Spain’s Canary Islands remains relatively high.

At least 559 migrants lost their lives in forty-three shipwrecks in 2022, compared to seventy-four shipwrecks which caused the death of 1,126 in 2021. Deaths on the West Africa Atlantic Route were due to drowning (479) and harsh conditions (55) in 2022, a significant increase from 2021’s 715 drowning-related deaths. Nationalities for over 440 individuals are unknown, reflecting a gap in information. Most identified were Moroccan (74). Overall, sociodemographic information on migrants is limited, with unknown

nationalities being prevalent. The routes continue to be perilous, with drownings and harsh conditions causing most deaths.

Data on the risks of dying or going missing during migration and migrant deaths within and from the MENA region are still insufficient. However, given the lack of verifiable or accessible sources, these figures are likely an understatement. This is specifically the case for the data on migratory routes within, to and from the MENA region. MMP relies on various sources of information such as national and local authorities, civil society organizations, migrant testimonies, and the media – the latter being the main data source in the region in the absence of inclusive official reporting, which challenges the accuracy and completion of data.

BOX 7. DEATHS AND DISAPPEARANCES OF MENA NATIONALS

While data on fatalities while migrating within and from the MENA are deficient, the MMP documented numerous incidents since 2014 involving people originating from the MENA region on other routes, especially when crossing the Türkiye–Europe land route and Western Balkans. In 2022, a significant proportion of deaths of MENA Nationals happened on Mediterranean routes, followed by the Western-Africa Atlantic Route (74) and then the Sahara Desert crossings (40). Outside the MENA Region, the Türkiye–Europe land route registered the deaths of 26 MENA Nationals and seven in Europe, five on the English Channel to the United Kingdom and two from Italy to France. The highest number of deaths recorded were for Algerians (219), followed by Syrians (184) and Tunisians (160).^a

Similarly in 2021, the MMP recorded the highest number of deaths and disappearances of MENA nationals on Mediterranean routes (311). Followed by the Western-Africa Atlantic Route (96) and then the Sahara Desert crossings (43). Outside the MENA Region, the Western Balkans route registered the deaths of 12 MENA Nationals and 19 on the English Channel to the United Kingdom and 12 on the Belarus–European Union border. The highest number of deaths recorded were for Moroccans (147), followed by Algerians (124) and Sudanese (72).^b

a IOM, 2022f.

b Ibid.



A woman wearing a red headscarf is looking through a structure made of dry sticks and straw. The background is a thatched wall made of dried palm fronds. There are some colorful fabrics, including a purple one on the left and a pink one on the right, draped around the structure.

04

SOCIOECONOMIC TRENDS

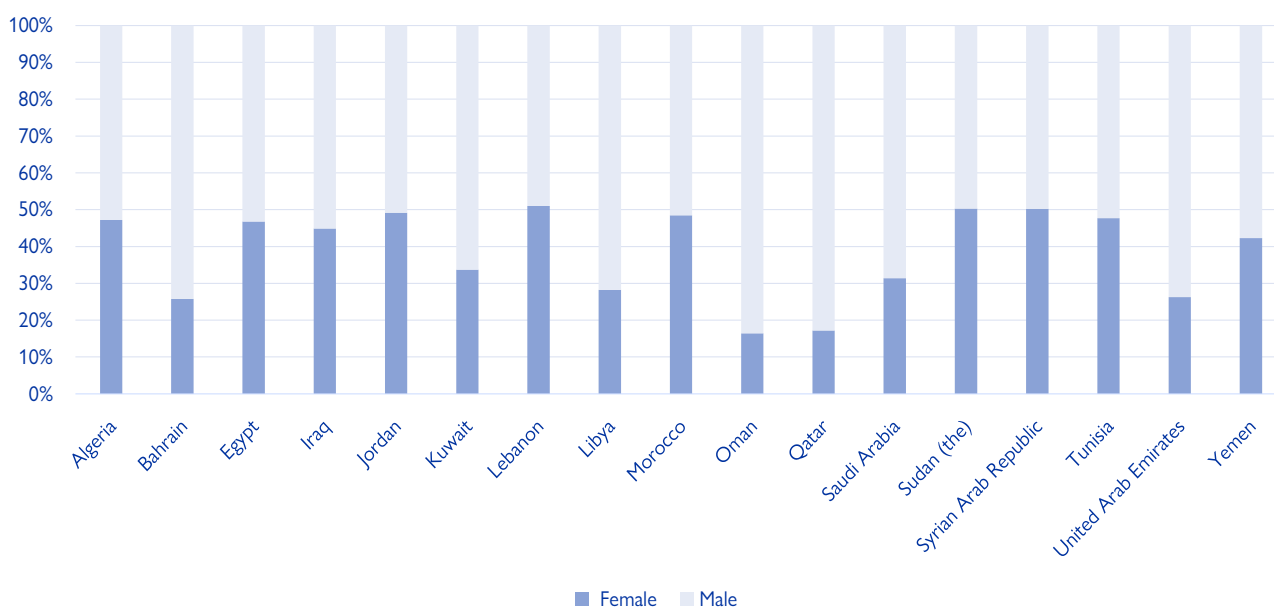
Migrants stay in informal sites in Ma'rib city and remote surrounding areas live in dire conditions © IOM 2021 / Rami Ibrahim

4.1 GENDER DISPARITIES AND AGE DISTRIBUTION

The MENA region boasts a population of over 421 million people.⁹² Interestingly, while 57 per cent of the global population comprises adults, in the MENA region, nearly two-thirds (73.5%) fall within the age range of 20

to 64 years. Moreover, the majority of the total MENA population are male (61.3%), which is two percentage points higher than the global male population incidence (49.7%).

FIGURE 29A. PROPORTION OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS BY SEX IN MENA COUNTRIES (2020)



Source: UN DESA, 2020a.

Currently, there are more male international migrants worldwide, and this gender gap has been widening over the past two decades. In 2020, the gender distribution stands at 51.9 per cent male migrants to 48.0 per cent female migrants, with a total of 146 million male migrants and 135 million female migrants. The share of female migrants has been on a decline since 2000, while the percentage of male migrants has increased by 1.4 points. In the MENA region, a significant majority of migrants are male, accounting for 27.4 million individuals, or 67.3 per cent, which is approximately 14.18 million more men than women, equating to 13.3 million.⁹³

Expanding our analysis of international migration, this section of the report delves deeper into the demographic characteristics of migrant populations, focusing on sex and age. In terms of age, the MENA region reports a higher proportion of migrants aged 19 years and younger compared to the global average (22.5% vs. 14.6%).⁹⁴ More than one-third (37%) of youth in MENA live in fragile and conflict affected countries.⁹⁵ At the country level, Jordan and the Sudan host the fourth and fifth-largest shares of child migrants globally, representing nearly half of the total migrant population in both cases. This trend may be linked to Jordan and the Sudan’s roles as refugee-hosting countries, as children make up nearly half of the world’s refugee population.

92 UN DESA, 2021a.

93 UN DESA, 2020a.

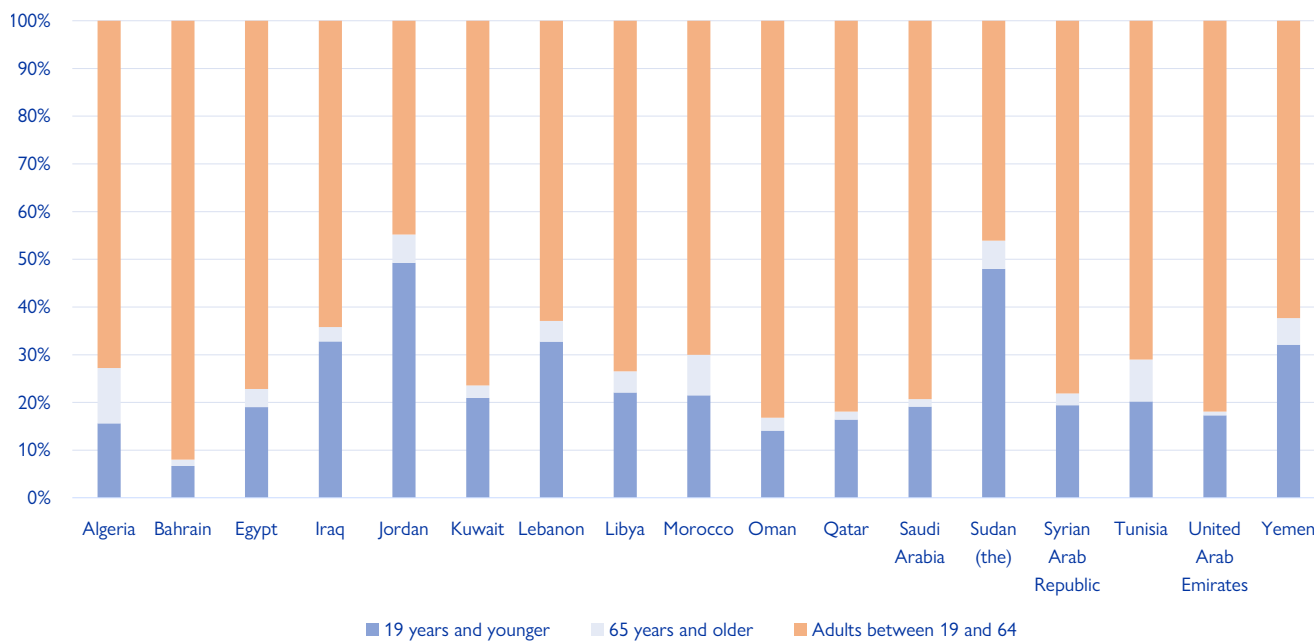
94 Ibid.

95 UNICEF, 2019.

On the other end of the spectrum, the proportion of older migrants (aged 65 and above) in the MENA region is one-fifth of the global average (2.45% vs. 12.2%).⁹⁶ This lower proportion of older migrants may reflect a preference or necessity to return to their home

countries upon retirement, particularly if continued residence is contingent on employment status, given the economic motivations of certain migrants in the MENA region.

FIGURE 29B. PROPORTION OF INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS BY AGE IN MENA COUNTRIES (2020)



Source: UN DESA, 2020a.

Regarding age, focusing specifically within the region reveals a connection between refugee-hosting countries and the prevalence of child migrants. In addition to Jordan and the Sudan, as mentioned earlier, Iraq and Lebanon, which host 286,000 refugees and asylum-seekers and 1.4 million, respectively, have the third and fourth-highest proportions of child migrants. Overall, the share of child migrants in North Africa (32%) is more than ten percentage points higher than in West Asia (21%), primarily driven by child migrants in the Sudan and, to a lesser extent, migrants aged 15–19 in Libya.⁹⁷

The proportion of working-age migrants (ages 20–65) is highest in the GCC countries of Bahrain (92%), Oman (83.2%) and the United Arab Emirates (81.9%),⁹⁸ underscoring the economic motivations drawing migrants to these nations. Although slightly lower, working-age migrants still constitute around three-quarters of the migrant population in Egypt and Algeria in North Africa. Algeria also has the largest share of migrants aged 65 and older, with a proportion close to the global average (11.6% vs. 12.2%).⁹⁹

⁹⁶ UN DESA, 2020a.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

BOX 8. FEMALE MIGRANTS IN THE MENA REGION

On the topic of female migrants, globally, their number increased by 11.8 per cent from 2010 (107 million) to 2015 (119 million) and by 12.7 per cent from 2015 to 2020 (135 million). In contrast, in the MENA region, the number of female migrants increased by 24.3 per cent from 2010 (9.1 million) to 2015 (11.3 million) and by 17.4 per cent from 2015 to 2020 (13.2 million).^a

Unfortunately, limited sex-disaggregated data at the regional level hinders a comprehensive understanding of the gender aspects of migration trends to and from the MENA region. However, general demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of female migrants is gleaned from UN DESA migrant caseload data. Female migrants predominantly originate from the MENA region itself and Southern Asia. India, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Bangladesh, Pakistan and the Syrian Arab Republic are the top five sending countries to the region.

Among all female migrants from the region, the top five countries of origin include the Syrian Arab Republic (32%), Morocco (14%), Egypt (11%), Iraq (9%) and the Sudan (8%).^b These proportions are largely comparable to those observed for male MENA migrants. Nonetheless, a slightly higher proportion of male MENA migrants originate from Egypt, whereas a slightly greater share of female MENA migrants come from Iraq.

In terms of destination, Türkiye (15%), France (14%), Saudi Arabia (10%), the United States of America (6%) and Lebanon (6%) constitute the primary destination countries for female migrants from the region.^c Türkiye and Lebanon host significant proportions of female MENA migrants from the Syrian Arab Republic, while in the case of Türkiye, migrants also come from Iraq. The female MENA migrant population in France mainly hails from North African countries, while similar caseloads in Saudi Arabia and the United States of America come from across the region. Proportions are roughly equivalent between sex groups, although a slightly higher share of male MENA migrants travel to GCC countries like Saudi Arabia (15% vs. 10%) and the United Arab Emirates (7% vs. 5%).^d

a UN DESA, 2020a.

b Ibid.

c Ibid.

d Ibid.

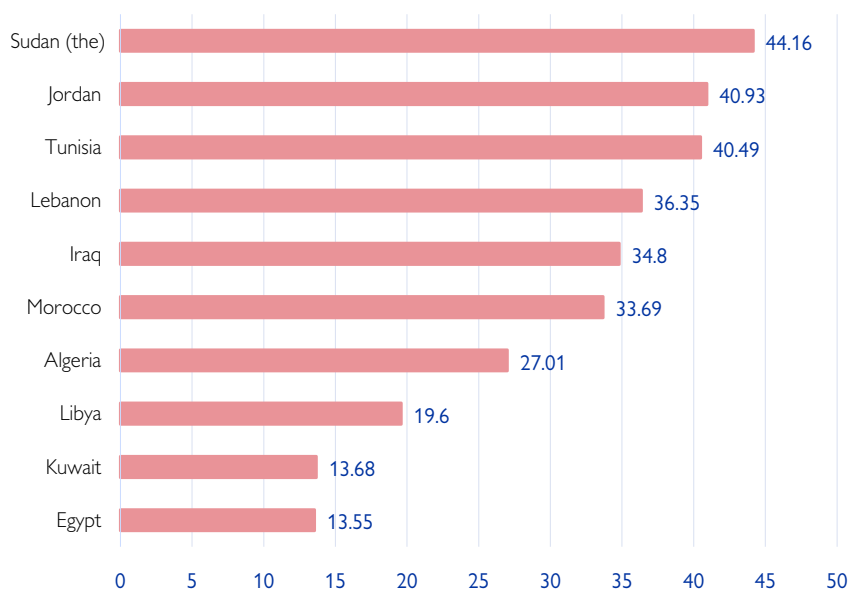


4.2 HUMAN CAPITAL CHALLENGES

The MENA region has seen limited human development progress since the 1990s, despite improvements in life expectancy and a reduction in infant mortality rates. As of 2020, the average Human Development Index (HDI)¹⁰⁰ for MENA countries stands at 0.73. However, there is a substantial disparity among subregions. North Africa and the Middle East fall into the category of medium human development, with HDIs of 0.68 and 0.63, respectively, while the GCC countries are classified as “very high” with an HDI of 0.83.¹⁰¹ Human development advancements have slowed in recent years, with these nations grappling with declining populations, educational disparities and human capital loss.

Interestingly, countries with lower HDI scores tend to experience higher rates of emigration. A significant portion of their citizens contemplate leaving their home countries.¹⁰² The desire to emigrate is prevalent across the region, remaining at pre-COVID-19 levels. Notably, this desire is most pronounced in Jordan and the Sudan and least pronounced in Egypt (see Figure 30).¹⁰³ Those aspiring to emigrate are more likely to be male and come from the younger, well-educated segments of the population. Furthermore, the primary motivation for wanting to emigrate is economic factors. Several factors influence people’s choice of a destination country, including historical migration trends, language, proximity and perceived opportunities.

FIGURE 30. PER CENT OF POPULATION WHO DESIRE TO EMIGRATE IN SELECT MENA COUNTRIES (2022)



Source: Arab Barometer, 2022.

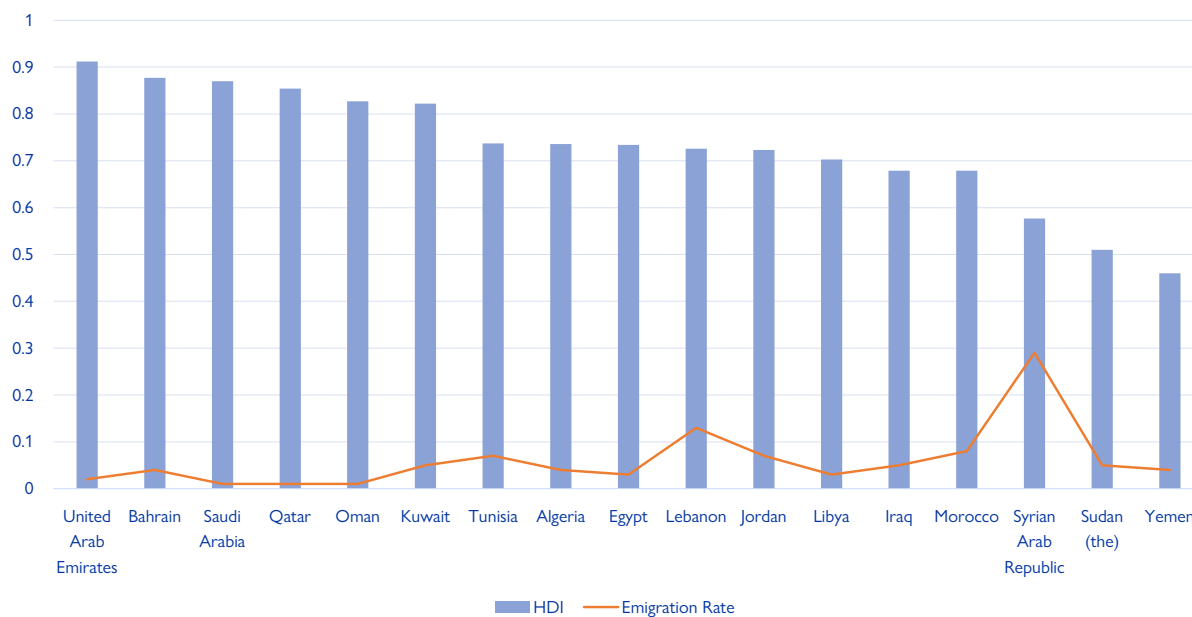
¹⁰⁰ According to UNDP, the Human Development Index (HDI) is the geometric mean of normalized indices for each of the three dimensions: Life expectancy, Education, and Gross National Income.

¹⁰¹ The HDI is weighted by the population of each country.

¹⁰² Arab Barometer, 2022.

¹⁰³ These are some of the main findings of ten nationally representative public opinion surveys conducted across the Middle East and North Africa from 2021–22 as part of Arab Barometer Wave VII.

FIGURE 31. EMIGRATION RATE VERSUS HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX IN MENA COUNTRIES



Source: HDI – UNDP, 2022; Emigration rate – UN DESA, 2020a.

A higher proportion of young people wish to emigrate from the region compared to other age groups. Specifically, 44 per cent of individuals aged 0–29 years in MENA have reported considering emigration, while this percentage is lower for those aged 30–49 at 36 per cent and significantly lower for respondents aged 50 or above at 20.5 per cent.¹⁰⁴ Young people in the MENA economies face greater challenges in finding employment. Moreover, the MENA region¹⁰⁵ exhibits

a significant presence of young individuals aged 15–24 who are not engaged in employment, education, or training (NEET), with an average NEET rate of 29 per cent across the MENA region. This rate varies from 11 per cent in Qatar to 45 per cent in Iraq as of 2020.¹⁰⁶ Weak education systems, long-term unemployment, and high-level skill mismatch are some of the factors that have contributed significantly to the high emigration rates among young people in the region.

4.3 REMITTANCE FLOWS

Apart from grappling with issues related to employment and underemployment, countries in the MENA region have additionally shouldered heavier debt burdens in response to the economic repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. While economic stimulus and support initiatives are vital for upholding the welfare of mobile populations during lockdowns, these actions compound the preexisting issue of soaring public debt levels in countries spanning all three subregions.

Economic remittances hold a pivotal role in bolstering household income within low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), serving as a potent tool for poverty

alleviation and fostering national development. On a global scale, remittance flows to LMICs surged by a substantial 17.6 per cent in 2022, reaching a notable milestone of USD 596 billion, marking a significant recovery since the onset of the pandemic. In that same year, the MENA region witnessed a remarkable uptick of approximately 33 per cent in remittance inflows, reaching a total of USD 63 billion. This surge can be attributed primarily to robust economic activities within the MENA region and the resurgence of global commodity prices.¹⁰⁷

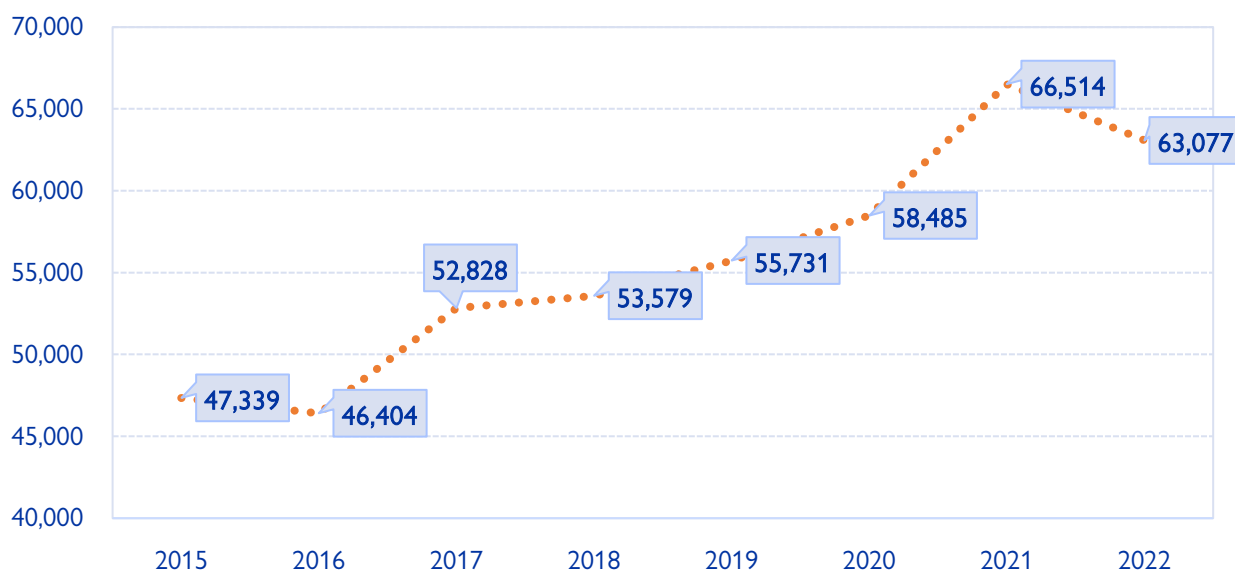
¹⁰⁴ Arab Barometer, 2022.

¹⁰⁵ Includes Mauritania, Djibouti, and the Occupied Palestinian territory.

¹⁰⁶ OECD, 2020.

¹⁰⁷ World Bank, 2022.

FIGURE 32. TOTAL REMITTANCES TO MENA COUNTRIES FROM 2015 TO 2022 (USD MILLIONS)



Source: World Bank KNOMAD Database, 2023c.

Egypt, as the region's largest recipient of remittances, recorded a historic high with inflows totalling USD 31.4 billion. In 2022, the top three nations receiving substantial remittance inflows were Egypt (USD 32.3 billion), Morocco (USD 11.1 billion) and Lebanon (USD 6.8 billion). In terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) share, the MENA region boasts high remittance rates among low-income countries, with remittances accounting for 27.5 per cent of Lebanon's GDP, 9.8 per cent in Jordan, 8.3 per cent in Morocco and 6.8 per cent in Egypt in 2022.¹⁰⁸

North Africa stands as one of the world's largest recipients of international remittances, driven by the subregion's substantial emigrant population. In 2022, Egypt secured its position among the top five remittance-receiving countries globally, ranking third, after India and Mexico, with a total inward remittance surpassing USD 32 billion. While Europe serves as the primary destination for migrants from Maghreb countries like Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, GCC States emerge as the key destination for migrants from Egypt. For

instance, in 2022, nearly 1.5 million Egyptian migrants resided in Saudi Arabia,¹⁰⁹ while over 900,000 were in the United Arab Emirates,¹¹⁰ and more than 510,000 were in Kuwait.¹¹¹ It is worth noting that this surge in remittance receipts is primarily fueled by returns from GCC countries, as Egyptian nationals bring back their savings accumulated abroad.¹¹² Given its expansive diaspora, the subregion has evolved over the years into one of the world's largest recipients of international remittances.

Typically, high-income countries serve as the primary sources of international remittances. Regarding remittance outflows from the MENA region, transfers from GCC countries experienced an uptick in 2021, driven by improved economic activity levels. For decades, the United States has consistently held its position as the world's foremost remittance-sending nation, with a total outflow reaching USD 79.15 billion in 2022, followed closely by Saudi Arabia (USD 39.34 billion).¹¹³ Approximately 42 per cent of remittances are sent within the region, with 16 per cent directed to

¹⁰⁸ World Bank, 2023c.

¹⁰⁹ Saudi General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT), 2023.

¹¹⁰ UN DESA, 2020a.

¹¹¹ World Population Review, 2023.

¹¹² If re-migration to these countries does not occur due to COVID-19 mobility restrictions, financial barriers and restrictive immigration policies, this trend would increase remittance receipts in the short-term while decreasing them in the medium to longer term.

¹¹³ In 2020, IOM World Migration Report noted that the United Arab Emirates stood second with USD 43.24 billion. However, United Arab Emirates numbers are not reported in World Bank KNOMAD database anymore.

Egypt from the GCC subregion. In 2021, inter-regional transfers to the MENA region from Saudi Arabia (USD 11.6 billion) and the United Arab Emirates (USD 9.7 billion) surpassed remittance flows from France (USD 6.6 billion) and the US (USD 4.4 billion).¹¹⁴ Southern Asia has emerged as a significant recipient of remittance inflows from the MENA region in recent years, alongside

South-Eastern Asia and the MENA region itself. The cost of sending remittances from GCC countries and Jordan remains considerably lower than that observed for extraregional transfers. However, unlike the cost of extraregional transfers, the cost of intraregional transfers has not necessarily decreased over the course of the pandemic.

FIGURE 33. REMITTANCE INFLOWS TO MENA COUNTRIES (USD MILLION)



Source: World Bank KNOMAD Database, 2023c.

At the macroeconomic level, remittance inflows to the MENA region have consistently surpassed other transnational monetary flows, including Overseas Development Assistance and Foreign Direct Investment. Remittance transfers often assume heightened importance during periods of crisis, displaying a countercyclical pattern. Although the far-reaching impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic initially posed challenges to the ability of migrants to sustain these financial flows, by the end of 2021,¹¹⁵ remittance

transfers to and from the MENA region had largely rebounded from their initial decline. Nevertheless, remittances paid by MENA migrants experienced a dip in 2022, returning to pandemic-era levels.¹¹⁶ Looking ahead, as key destination countries for MENA migrants gradually withdraw economic support programmes instituted in response to the pandemic, the growth in remittance receipts across the region is expected to contract significantly, shrinking nearly three-fold to 3.7 per cent.

114 World Bank, 2023c.

115 IOM, 2021a.

116 World Bank, 2022.

05

ACCESS TO SERVICES

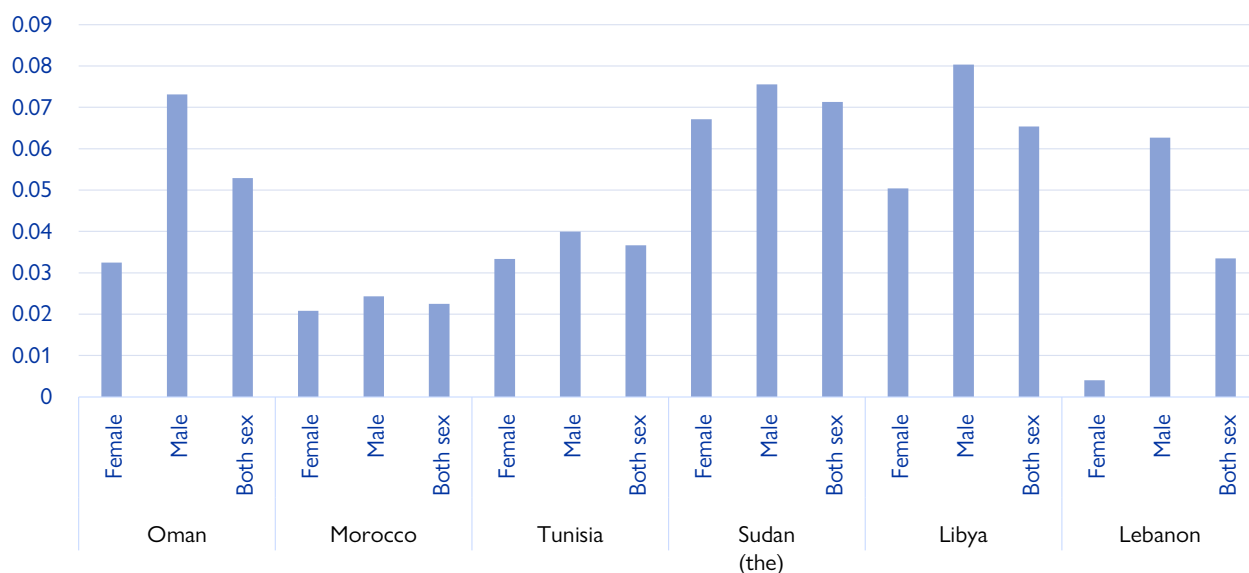
An IOM health team provides health consultations and primary health care services at the Al Jasha Health Center on the West Coast of Yemen. © IOM 2022/Majed Mohammed

5.1 HEALTH

Migrants and refugees often find themselves in precarious situations, whether in their war-torn or economically distressed home communities, during their arduous journeys to their intended destinations, or in their host communities marked by insufficient access to essential services like water, food, and sanitation.¹¹⁷ These circumstances expose them to a range of environmental health risks, including hypothermia, communicable diseases due to overcrowding, complications related to maternity, and various non-communicable

diseases (NCDs) such as diabetes and cardiovascular ailments.¹¹⁸ Moreover, they often grapple with mental health challenges. The MENA region grapples with substantial health disparities, encompassing variations in health-care accessibility and quality, as well as discrepancies in disease incidence, prevalence, and mortality. For instance, a study in the Sudan¹¹⁹ unveiled that only 47 per cent of children aged 12 to 23 months had received full vaccinations.¹²⁰

FIGURE 34. NUMBER OF NEW HIV INFECTIONS PER 1,000 UNINFECTED POPULATION IN SELECT MENA COUNTRIES (2021)



Source: UNAIDS, 2022.

In countries like Iraq, Syrian Arab Republic, and Yemen, which have fragile health-care systems battered by prolonged conflict, most health facilities lay in ruins. Scarce infrastructure, equipment, health-care personnel, and resources exacerbate the situation. Even in host countries for displaced populations such as Jordan and Lebanon, the influx of refugees has overwhelmed their health-care systems. These countries have seen their

populations swell by a third, straining social support and economic frameworks. In response to these complex and acute emergencies, the Global Fund introduced the Middle East Response Initiative (MER) in 2017. MER aims to deliver essential HIV, TB, and malaria services to key vulnerable populations, including refugees, internally displaced individuals, women, and children in Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen, Jordan and Lebanon.¹²¹

117 WHO, 2022b.

118 Ibid.

119 Ismail et al., 2014.

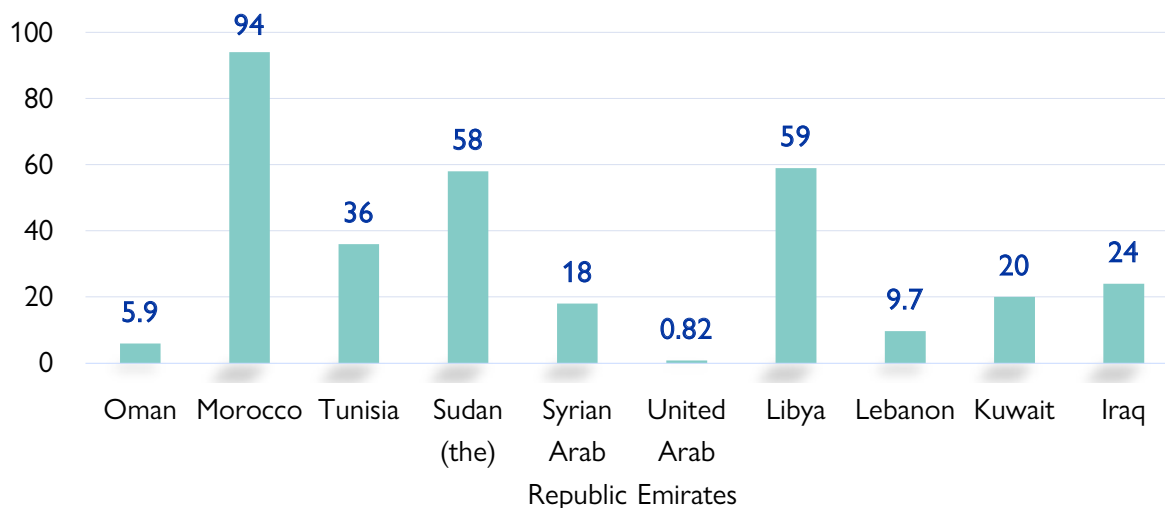
120 Including BCG, measles, DTP, hepatitis B and haemophilus influenzae type B.

121 The Global Fund, 2022.

With the backing of the Global Fund partnership, health programmes have saved 47,000 lives, reported 78,000

TB cases, distributed 3.9 million mosquito nets, and conducted HIV testing for 94,000 individuals.¹²²

FIGURE 35. TUBERCULOSIS INCIDENCE IN SELECT MENA COUNTRIES (PER 100,000 POPULATION)



Source: WHO, 2022.

A pressing public health concern confronting both nationals and migrants in the MENA region is the prevalence of communicable diseases such as tuberculosis (TB) and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). In the case of TB, Morocco leads with 94 incidences per 100,000 population. Meanwhile, the HIV epidemic remains a persistent issue in the MENA¹²³ region, witnessing a 61 per cent increase in newly infected individuals since 2010, soaring from 11,000 to 20,000 cases.¹²⁴ The MENA region's prominent role in major drug trafficking routes has indirectly contributed to the HIV/AIDS epidemic by facilitating illicit drug access and use.¹²⁵

In 2021, Libya, the Sudan and Oman reported the highest number of new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected individuals. Several countries in the MENA region impose restrictions on entry, stay, or residency for people living with HIV, which often infringe upon

their human rights. These restrictive laws have been implemented in Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Arab Emirates, some of which are major destinations for migrant workers, particularly from Asia.¹²⁶ These restrictions do not solely impact individuals migrating from other parts of the world but also affect those living with HIV within the region. For instance, Jordan has reported the use of restrictions on migrants from neighbouring countries (including Egypt, Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic) and the consequences of mandatory HIV screening policies on the estimated one million Jordanians employed abroad in GCC countries. The region still faces substantial challenges in managing its HIV epidemic, with low HIV treatment coverage, as only 38 per cent of people living with HIV accessed HIV treatment in 2019, resulting in 8,000 AIDS-related deaths in the region.¹²⁷

122 Ibid.

123 The UNAIDS classification for MENA includes countries Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

124 UNAIDS, 2022.

125 Karbasi et al., 2023.

126 UNAIDS, 2018.

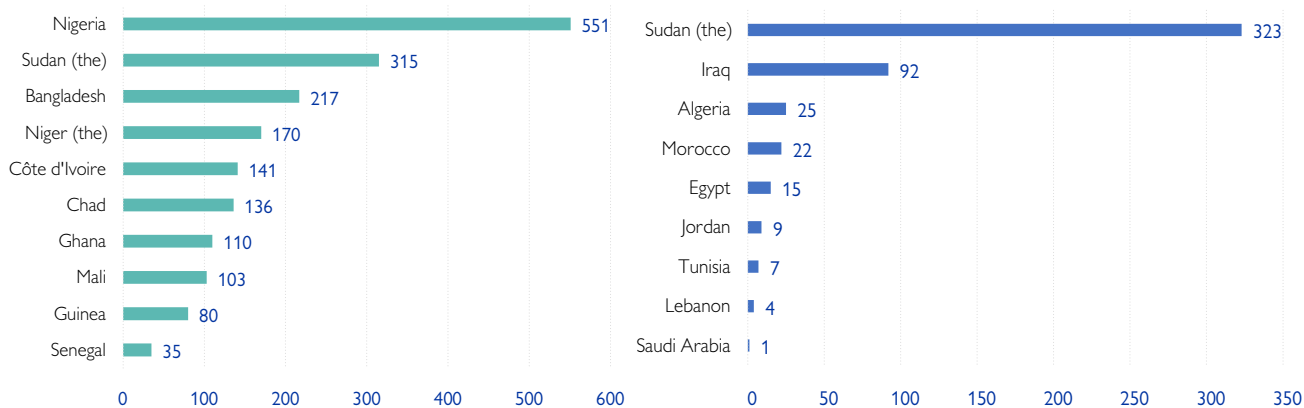
127 UNAIDS, 2022.

5.1.1 ASSISTED MIGRANTS WITH HEALTH NEEDS

The IOM’s assistance to migrants in the MENA region for their health-care needs saw a substantial rise, surging from 1,064 individuals in 2021 to 2,142 in 2022, effectively doubling the number, as depicted in Figure 36. Amongst these migrants, those hailing from Nigeria continued to top the list in both years, while Bangladeshi nationals consistently secured the third position for

two consecutive years. It is worth highlighting those individuals from the Sudan experienced a remarkable 6.42-fold increase between 2021 and 2022, a matter of concern given the resurgence of the Sudanese conflict in early 2023.¹²⁸ Additionally, migrants from other West African nations such as Mali, the Niger and Côte d’Ivoire remained significant in terms of health-care assistance.¹²⁹

FIGURE 36. TOP COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN FOR ASSISTED MIGRANTS WITH HEALTH NEEDS FROM MENA OUTBOUND (LEFT) AND TO MENA INBOUND IN 2022 (RIGHT)



Source: IOM MiMOSA, 2023I.

Regarding inbound migrants to the MENA region and their health-care requirements, there was a notable surge, with the number of assisted individuals increasing by a factor of 2.15 between 2021 and 2022.¹³⁰ The figures climbed from 231 migrants in 2021 to 498 in

2022. Over these two years, nationals from Iraq and the Sudan emerged as the most frequently assisted migrants in the region, with Sudanese nationals witnessing a staggering six-fold increase in 2022, reaching a total of 323 assisted migrants.¹³¹

5.1.2 COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Throughout 2021, millions of COVID-19 vaccine doses were administered across the MENA region. However, refugees, migrants, and displaced populations often found themselves excluded from National Deployment

and Vaccination Plans (NDVPs). When comparing vaccine access for migrants in the MENA region,¹³² as outlined in NDVPs with the actual practice,¹³³ Figure 37 reveals that refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants in

128 IOM, 2023I.

129 Ibid.

130 Ibid.

131 Ibid.

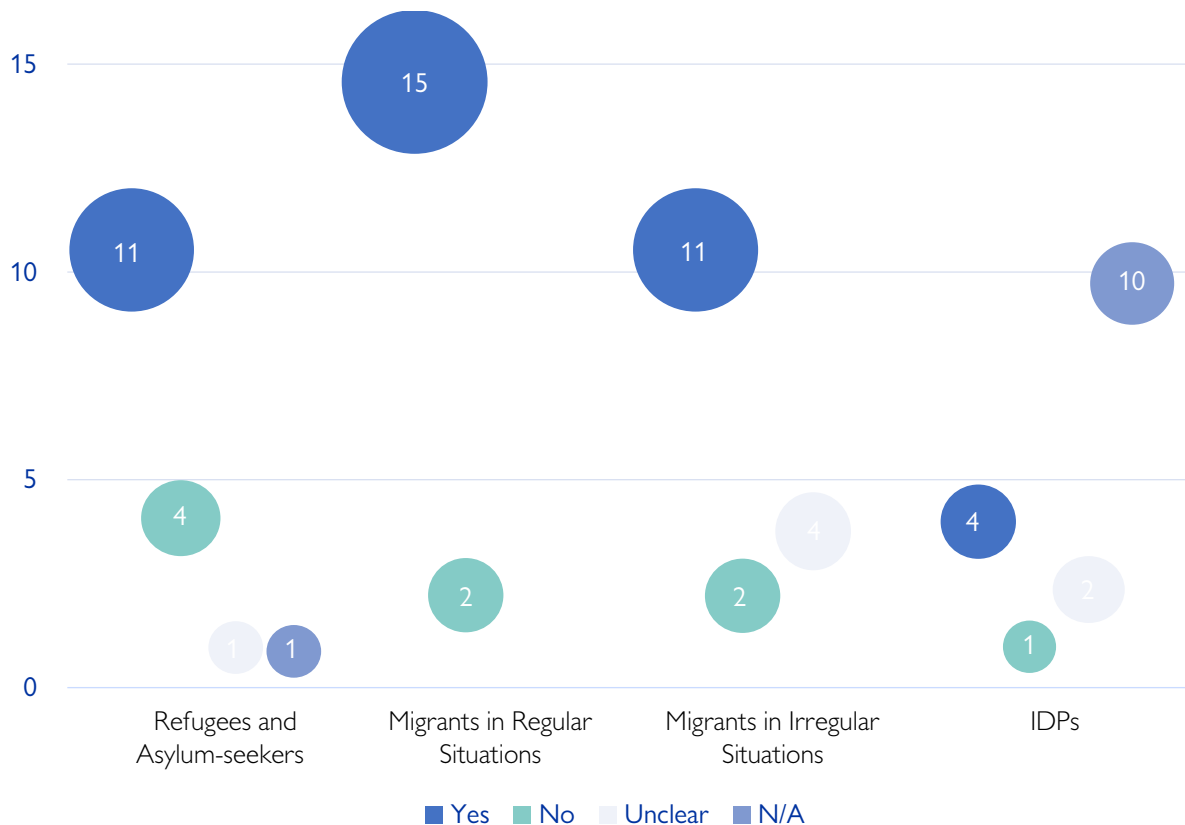
132 This analysis includes 17 countries, one with no change reported from the previous report and lacks information from one country.

133 Based on WHO analysis, where available, or IOM analysis – against observations made by IOM regarding access in practice.

regular situations generally had access to vaccinations as planned. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that only 8 out of 11 countries executed their plans to include migrants

in irregular situations in their COVID-19 vaccination strategies as initially intended.

FIGURE 37. INCLUSION OF MIGRANTS IN THE MENA COUNTRIES COVID-19 VACCINATION PLANS AS OF DECEMBER 2021



Source: IOM, 2022e.

While the primary focus has understandably centred on addressing the global health crisis, including virus testing, disease treatment, and vaccination efforts, another facet of the response has led to significant alterations in mobility patterns and the freedom of movement for people worldwide. COVID-19-related restrictions on mobility have emerged as a major disruptor of migration.¹³⁴ These mobility constraints and border closures during the pandemic left thousands of migrants stranded, including seasonal labourers, temporary residents, international students, individuals seeking medical treatment, beneficiaries of assisted voluntary return and reintegration programs, seafarers, and others. Out of the approximately 3 million people stranded outside their home countries, the majority were in the MENA, numbering around 1.3 million,

followed by Asia and the Pacific, with approximately 977,000 affected individuals.

The forced return of migrants from North Africa and various parts of the world prompted the United Nations Network on Migration to issue a statement advocating for the suspension of such measures during the pandemic.¹³⁵ However, certain North African countries, like Algeria, in collaboration with origin countries such as Mali, did temporarily lift travel restrictions and allowed organizations like IOM to facilitate the safe return of stranded migrants.¹³⁶ Additionally, the pandemic imposed a significant financial burden on a substantial number of migrants in the subregion, as many lost their sources of income. Migrants have also grappled with discrimination and stigmatization, compounding their exclusion from essential services such as health-care.

¹³⁴ McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

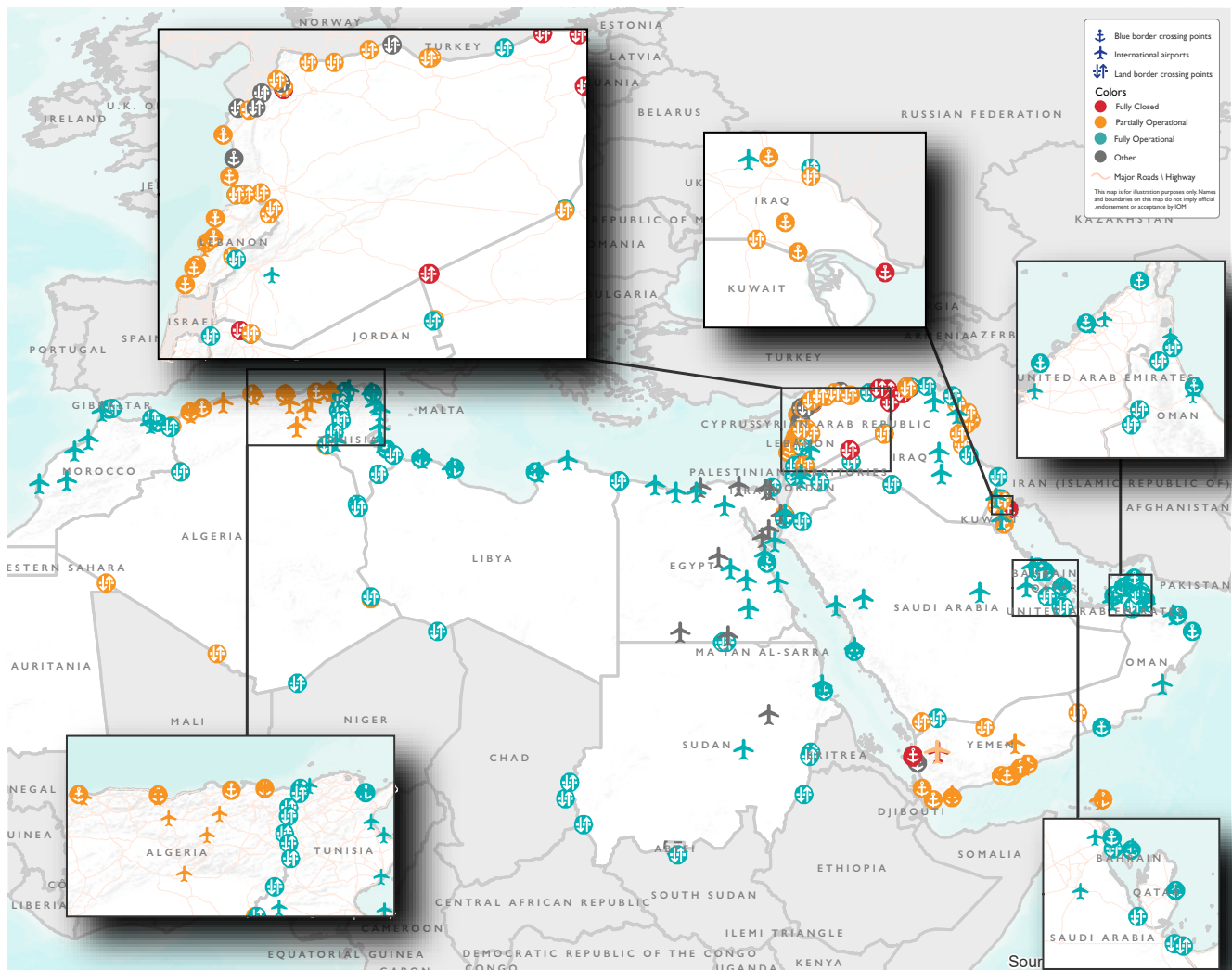
¹³⁶ Benton et al., 2022.

Nevertheless, some countries, like Egypt, have included migrants in their health-care responses and vaccination plans.¹³⁷ Furthermore, the impact of COVID-19 has disproportionately affected women migrants, with countries like Tunisia witnessing not only more frequent income losses among women compared to men but also an increased risk of sexual exploitation.

The lack of epidemiological data on migrants' health, including disease prevalence, outbreaks, and vaccine coverage, poses challenges for policymaking and health service delivery. For example, there is insufficient reliable data on COVID-19 morbidity and mortality among

migrants in the MENA region, despite migrants being disproportionately affected due to various risk factors. To address this gap, a consortium in collaboration with IOM is developing the Migrant Health Country Profile tool (MHCP-t)¹³⁸ in seven countries (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, the Sudan and Yemen). This tool aims to compile country-level migrant health data on various diseases and vaccination coverage. More tools are needed to collect comprehensive data to assess the health needs of migrants and individuals on migrant journeys, ultimately reducing health inequalities and enhancing service delivery.

FIGURE 38. INTERNATIONAL POINTS OF ENTRY (POE) ANALYSIS WITH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS, LAND BORDER CROSSING POINTS, AND BLUE BORDER CROSSING POINTS (DECEMBER 2022)



Source: IOM, 2023j.

Note: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

137 UNHCR, 2021b.

138 At the time of writing, results from study employing MHCP-t had not been published and the project runs between 2022 and 2025.

5.2 SOCIAL SAFETY NETS

Many countries in the MENA region especially countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council rely heavily on migrant workers for various sectors such as oil and gas industry, agriculture, transportation, and hospitality. However, there is a huge concentration of migrant workers in construction, agriculture, and domestic work sectors.¹³⁹ There are many challenges that face migrant workers in the region, including poor working conditions and low safety levels.¹⁴⁰

Partial inclusion of migrant workers in labour laws, especially domestic workers, means that these workers are excluded from legislative protections that the law might provide. Furthermore, migrant workers have limited access to justice systems and limited ability to join an association or to formally unionize or join a trade union. All these challenges make life harder for migrants living in the region and further reduce any social development efforts undertaken previously.

In the Arab region, there are notable gaps in social protection coverage for migrants employed by private employers (see Table 1). In some countries, migrants face legal barriers that hinder their access to social insurance systems. However, several countries do provide national insurance systems that cover migrant workers for old age and disability. These countries include Iraq, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, the Sudan and Egypt.¹⁴¹ In terms of employment benefits, Bahrain stands out as the only country in the GCC that

extends unemployment schemes to non-nationals. On the other hand, countries such as Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait do not offer any employment injury insurance to migrants.¹⁴² Additionally, family and maternity benefits are not widely available across the region.

Understanding the determinants of key socioeconomic trends and structural transformations within economic activities and informal sectors is crucial for promoting the economic growth and inclusion of migrants in the MENA region. Identifying spatial and physical disparities in human capital outcomes, including differences in education, health-care access, labour market entry, and employment opportunities, can guide policymaking.¹⁴³ Survey indicators such as productivity, informal job sectors, coping mechanisms, and female labour market participation can help measure the economic insecurity of migrant households. To develop policies tailored to informal workers and address their needs in terms of social safety nets, comprehensive evidence and monitoring of informal economic activities are essential. Using alternative data sources like mobile GPS datasets, movement within informal market areas, activity hotspots, and analysing the impact of government policies during crises can help identify and analyse critical trends related to migrants' economic activities and livelihoods.

139 ILO, 2016.

140 Ibid.

141 ILO, 2023.

142 Ibid.

143 IOM, 2015.

TABLE 1: LEGAL COVERAGE OF SOCIAL PROTECTION SCHEMES FOR PRIVATE-SECTOR NON-NATIONAL WORKERS

	ALGERIA	BAHRAIN	EGYPT	IRAQ	JORDAN	KUWAIT	LEBANON	LIBYA	MOROCCO	OMAN	QATAR	SAUDI ARABIA	SUDAN (THE)	SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC	TUNISIA	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	YEMEN
Old age, disability and survivors																	
National	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	L	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Non-national	M	-	M	M	M	-	L	M	M	-	-	-	L	-	M	-	-
Employment injury																	
National	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Non-national	M	M	M	M	M	-	-	M	-	-	-	M	-	-	M	-	-
Unemployment																	
National	Y	Y	Y	N	L	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	N
Non-national	M	M	M	-	M	-	-	-	M	-	-	-	-	-	M	-	-
Sickness																	
National	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N
Non-national	M	-	M	M	-	-	-	M	M	-	-	-	-	-	M	-	-
Medical care																	
National	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
Non-national	M	P	M	M	-	P	L	M	M	P	P	P	M	P	M	P	-
Maternity																	
National	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N
Non-national	M	-	-	M	M	-	-	-	M	-	-	-	-	-	M	-	-

Source: ILO, 2023.

Note: L = Limited or special system; M = Mandatory; N = No; P = Private mandatory; V = Voluntary; Y = Yes.

06

CLIMATE CHANGE AND FOOD SECURITY

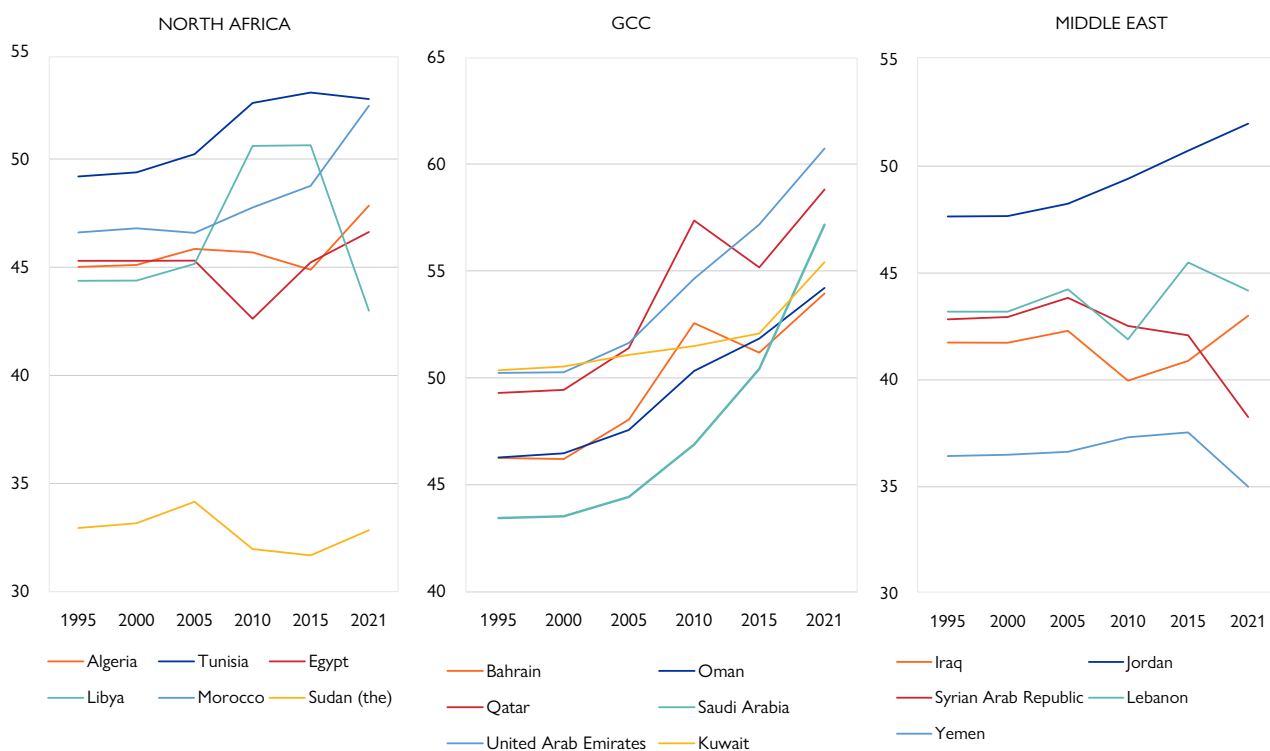
Mohsina's hand holding the dry soil which is affected by growing salination caused by the reduced flow of the Tigris and Euphrates. © IOM 2022 / Anjam Rasool

6.1 CLIMATE VULNERABILITIES AND RESILIENCE

The MENA region stands out as one of the world’s most vulnerable areas significantly affected by climate change.¹⁴⁴ Deteriorating environmental conditions, coupled with a rising frequency of extreme weather events such as droughts, severe heatwaves and erratic rainfall patterns, carry profound ramifications for livelihoods in both rural and urban settings. These changing conditions contribute to the complex and multifaceted issue of migration within the region. The

relationship between migration and climate change is intricate, influenced by multiple causes, and characterized by non-linear dynamics. Climate change interacts with various other factors, shaping the sustainability of both rural and urban livelihoods. These intricate connections are most apparent within the intersection of political, environmental, and economic factors in the MENA region.

FIGURE 39. ND-GAIN CLIMATE CHANGE COUNTRY INDEX (2021)



Source: University of Notre Dame, WDI, 2021.

The Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN)¹⁴⁵ assesses a country’s vulnerability to climate change alongside its readiness to enhance

resilience. MENA countries hold a medium Climate Change Country Index score, averaging 48.72 in 2021.¹⁴⁶ Although the vulnerability scores in the MENA region

144 The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change defines climate change as ‘a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to other natural climate variability that has been observed over comparable time periods.’ see IOM, Migration, Environment and Climate Change: Evidence for Policy Glossary (Geneva, 2014).

145 University of Notre Dame, 2021.

146 Ibid.

are relatively consistent (with lower scores indicating lower vulnerability), readiness scores show signs of underperformance. Although the MENA countries' scores exhibited improvement between 2000 and 2015, they have stagnated since then.

The MENA region has experienced a substantial temperature increase of 0.46°C per decade between 1980 and 2022, surpassing the global average of 0.18°C.¹⁴⁷ Simultaneously, shifts in precipitation patterns have aggravated water scarcity in specific MENA countries especially in Iraq, the Sudan and Yemen.¹⁴⁸ Instances of drought, such as those witnessed in Morocco in 2022 and Tunisia in 2023, alongside severe floods in 2022 across the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman and Yemen, have vividly illustrated the far-reaching consequences of these climatic shifts. Given the arid nature of the region, the soil's reduced capacity to absorb water exacerbates the problem. Declining water availability, primarily resulting from reduced precipitation in southern and eastern Mediterranean countries (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia), is projected to negatively impact fossil-fueled

thermal power plants. These plants are responsible for 91 per cent of their electricity generation and rely heavily on freshwater for cooling.

The MENA region primarily experiences sudden-onset disaster displacement caused by floods (see Chapter 6 Section 6.2). In 2020, floods displaced more people in Yemen than conflict and violence, with nearly a quarter of a million new displacements.¹⁴⁹ This scenario in Yemen, with its dual challenges of extensive disaster and conflict displacements, exemplifies the complexity of the country's humanitarian crisis. Other countries such as Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic have also witnessed recurrent floods in recent years, exacerbating the living conditions of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) residing in camps.¹⁵⁰ Moreover, although identifying displacement driven by slow-onset hazards such as desertification is challenging, there is evidence suggesting that in countries like the Syrian Arab Republic, the prolonged drought that devastated livelihoods before the conflict's onset may have played a role in the complex set of factors that triggered the country's civil war.¹⁵¹

TABLE 2: ASSESSMENT OF VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE TO CONFLICT IN THE ARAB REGION

Vulnerability				Resilience			
Driver	2010	2015	2021	Driver	2010	2015	2021
Disaster Impact	0.11	0.16	0.18	Adaptation Finance	0.31	0.35	0.33
Water Scarcity	0.75	0.78	0.79	Adaptation Strategies	0.29	0.36	0.7
Reliance on Agriculture	0.17	0.19	0.18	Water Stress	0.26	0.26	0.26
				Land Stress	0.52	0.52	0.5

Source: Arab Risk Monitor, ESCWA, 2023.

147 International Energy Agency (IEA), 2022.

148 UNDRR, 2021.

149 IDMC, 2021.

150 Ibid.

151 Ibid.

6.2 DISASTER DISPLACEMENT

Concerning new internal displacement caused by disasters, the year 2022 saw approximately 305,000 displacements, marking a 25 per cent increase compared to the previous year (see Figure 40). From 2013 to 2017, there was a general decrease in disaster displacements,¹⁵² albeit with a slight increase in 2016. However, starting from 2017 through 2020, new

disaster displacements surged dramatically, peaking at 703,000 in 2020, mainly driven by events in Sudan¹⁵³ and Yemen. In contrast, the following year, in 2021, there was a significant 61 per cent decrease in new disaster displacements, although it remained elevated compared to the period between 2011 and 2017.

FIGURE 40. SUM OF NEW DISASTER DISPLACEMENTS (2011–2020)



Source: IDMC, 2022.

Analysing disaster displacement among these five countries encounters data limitations for certain years in Iraq, Libya and the Syrian Arab Republic. Among the countries considered, the Sudan stands out, consistently experiencing higher levels of disaster displacement in the observed years, often due to flash and riverine floods during the rainy season.¹⁵⁴ Displacement levels rose significantly from 2011 through 2013, followed by a steep drop from 2013 to 2015.

Displacement figures fluctuated from 2015 to 2017, then saw a dramatic increase from 2017 through 2020.¹⁵⁵ In 2021, new disaster displacements totaled 99,000, reflecting a 78 per cent decrease from the

previous year. However, in 2022, the number climbed to 105,000, surpassing the 2021 figure by 6,000.¹⁵⁶

The Sudan encountered record-breaking floods during the 2020 rainy season, with IOM Sudan estimating over 103,091 individuals displaced due to flooding and an additional 1,725 due to fires. In 2021, the number of individuals newly displaced by disasters dropped by 78 per cent, yet it remained high compared to other countries under examination as shown in Figure 41. Yemen, on the other hand, accounted for 170,000, or roughly 81 per cent, of the total 209,000 displacements across the region in 2022. Yemen had previously recorded its second-highest level of disaster

¹⁵² See Glossary for disaster displacement IOM definition.

¹⁵³ Ahmed et al., 2021.

¹⁵⁴ IOM, 2021f.

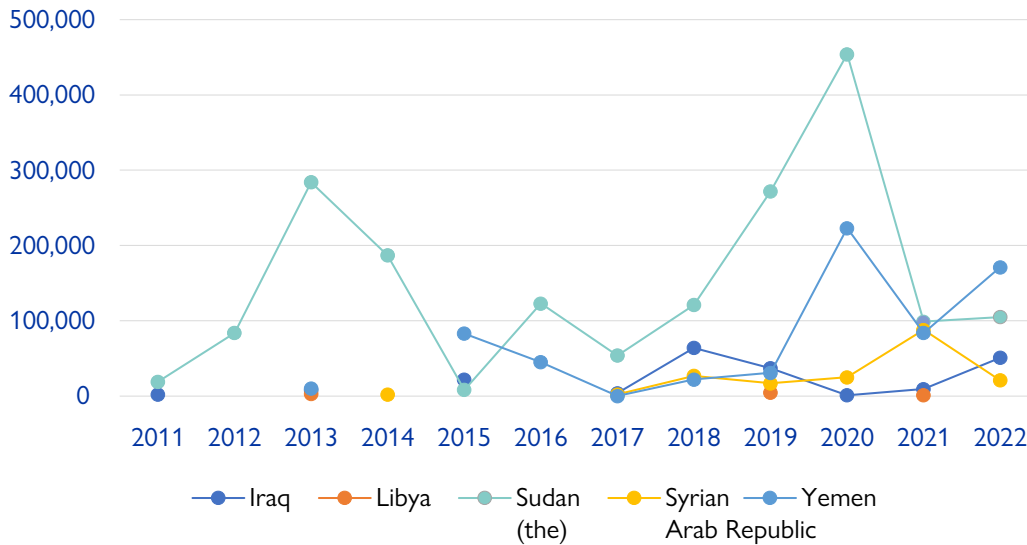
¹⁵⁵ IDMC, 2023.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

displacement in 2020, attributed to floods during the rainy season. Notably, in 2015, there were relatively high

levels of disaster displacement with 83,000 individuals affected.

FIGURE 41. TOTAL NUMBER OF IDPS DUE TO DISASTERS (2011–2022)



Source: IDMC, 2022.

In Iraq, disaster displacement levels were moderate compared to the Sudan and Yemen, reaching a peak of 51,000 in 2022 due to floods and drought.¹⁵⁷ The country faced one of the most severe droughts on record in the past four decades in 2021, resulting in a six-fold increase in disaster displacements compared to 2020. Eight governorates were affected, particularly Thi-Qar, where the Mesopotamian Marshes are located.¹⁵⁸ However, due to the lack of comprehensive monitoring of disaster displacements in Iraq, these figures are likely undercounts.

The Syrian Arab Republic experienced relatively lower levels of disaster displacement compared to Iraq, the

Sudan and Yemen. The highest figure was 21,000 in 2022, with 27,000 recorded in 2018, primarily caused by floods and storms. Notably, wildfires in October 2020 alone displaced an estimated 25,000 individuals. Additionally, disaster displacement more than triple between 2020 and 2021, triggered by sudden-onset hazards like floods and storms, as well as slow-onset hazards such as droughts. Limited available data from Libya make it challenging to analyse time trends, but the data suggest that disaster displacement in Libya was significantly lower than in the other countries considered.

157 IDMC, 2023.

158 Conflict and Environment Observatory (CEO), 2021.

BOX 9. DRIVERS OF DISASTER DISPLACEMENT IN IRAQ

Climate crisis and environmental degradation led to the displacement of at least 55,290 individuals in assessed locations in central and southern Iraq between January 2016 and October 2022,^a representing an estimated 13 per cent of the original population that used to reside in these areas. The IOM DTM Iraq introduced a tool to gauge the vulnerability of various locations to disaster displacement, assessing four key dimensions: environmental events and water access, access to basic services, livelihoods and mitigation measures, and tension and conflict.

In a substantial portion of locations, nearly three-quarters experienced 6 to 8 types of extreme weather events and slow-onset environmental changes.^b These included widespread droughts and sand/dust storms, reported in over 85 per cent of locations, as well as deteriorating water quality, soil degradation, and shifting rainfall patterns. Access to basic services, particularly water, presented challenges in most locations, with less than 75 per cent of households having sufficient water for drinking or domestic use in just under two-thirds of areas. Specific governorates like Thi-Qar had particularly severe service access issues, with nearly half of locations lacking access to nearly all services assessed.^c

The impact of environmental factors on livelihoods was substantial, with almost all locations reporting losses in crop production, livestock, and fishing yields, while a similar proportion struggled to feed their livestock. In 71 per cent of locations, over half of households no longer practiced these activities. Conflicts related to natural resources appeared localized, affecting only seven districts, including Nassriya, Kut and Suq Al-Shoyokh districts.^d Disputes over natural resources, particularly water, grazing land, livestock, and arable land, led to household displacement in these areas, especially in Al-Khalis and Kut districts.

The key findings reveal that the displacement of populations due to environmental factors in Iraq, is primarily influenced by multiple water-related issues, including reduced rainfall, lower water allocation, and inefficient water infrastructure. Additionally, the struggle of families to meet basic food needs is the second most significant predictor, highlighting their vulnerable economic status.^e Difficult access to services and infrastructure in remote rural areas is the third predictor, while the reliance on land for livelihoods, particularly for farmers, livestock herders, fishers, and pastoralists, is the fourth predictor. Lastly, the adoption of unsustainable coping strategies by families, such as sending members to other locations for income, indicates negative environmental impacts and a lack of alternative livelihood opportunities, potentially leading to displacement if the situation persists.

a IOM, 2023a.

b IOM, 2023b.

c IOM, 2023c.

d Ibid.

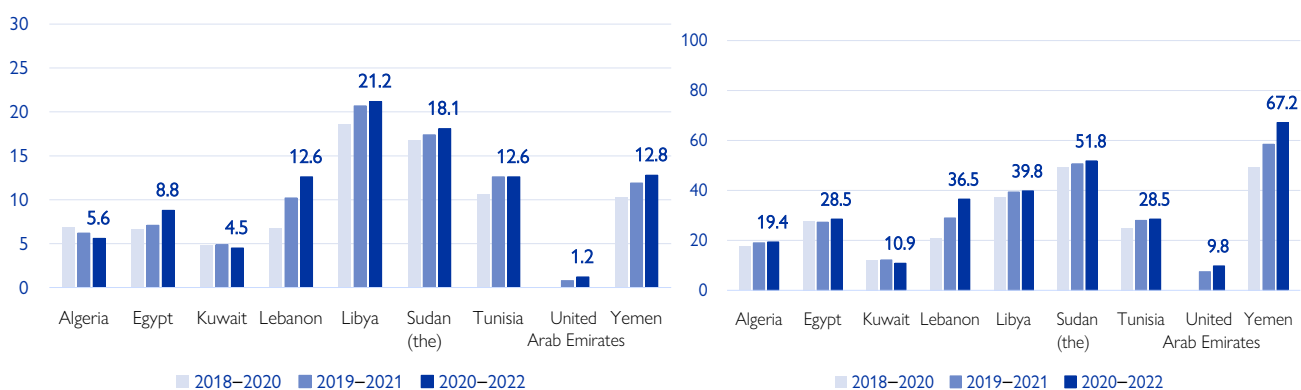
e Ibid.

6.3 FOOD INSECURITY

In 2021, a staggering 29.3 per cent of the global population, equivalent to 2.3 billion people, faced moderate to severe food insecurity, indicating their struggle to access adequate nourishment. In the Arab region, this vulnerability was primarily driven by factors like water scarcity, food insecurity, and corruption.¹⁵⁹ According to the Food and Agriculture Organization

(FAO), the Western Asia and Northern Africa¹⁶⁰ region experienced severe food insecurity affecting 10.4 per cent of its population.¹⁶¹ This marked a one per cent increase compared to the preceding year, 2020, when the world was grappling with the challenges posed by the pandemic.

FIGURE 42. SEVERE FOOD INSECURITY IN SELECT MENA COUNTRIES (2020–2022) MODERATE OR SEVERE FOOD INSECURITY IN SELECT MENA COUNTRIES (2020–2022)



Source: FAO, 2023.

The percentage of individuals experiencing moderate food insecurity¹⁶² surged to 33.8 per cent in 2021. Over the period from 2014 to 2021, the number of people¹⁶³ severely affected by food insecurity increased by 6 million, rising from 43.5 million in 2014–2016 to 49.7 million in 2019–2021. Northern Africa, while having a lower prevalence of food insecurity compared to sub-Saharan Africa, witnessed a concerning deterioration in its food security situation from 2020 to 2021.

When examining the prevalence of severe food insecurity within the population based on the Food

Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)¹⁶⁴ for specific MENA countries, Libya tops the list at 21.2 per cent, followed by the Sudan at 18.1 per cent, and Yemen at 12.8 per cent. When considering both moderate and severe food insecurity, the numbers paint an even more alarming picture. Yemen, in particular, saw a drastic increase from 2020 to 2022, reaching a staggering 68 per cent. Lebanon (36.5%) and several North African countries, including Egypt and Tunisia, reported medium levels of food insecurity, with both nations recording the same percentage of 28.5 per cent (see Figure 42).¹⁶⁵

159 FAO, 2023.

160 According to FAO regional classification Western Asia and Northern Africa combines two subregions. Western Asia: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Georgia, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, Türkiye, United Arab Emirates, Yemen and the Occupied Palestine Territory and Northern Africa: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, the Sudan and Tunisia.

161 FAO, 2023.

162 To reduce the margin of error, estimates are presented as three-year averages.

163 FAO estimates of the number of people living in households where at least one adult has been found to be food insecure.

164 The severity of food insecurity is measured using data collected with the Food Insecurity Experience Scale survey module (FIES-SM), a set of eight questions asking respondents to self-report conditions and experiences typically associated with limited access to food.

165 FAO, 2023.

 BOX 10. REGIONAL IMPACT OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE AS A CRISIS MULTIPLIER

Across the MENA region, the ongoing war in Ukraine has caused a surge in food and fuel prices and disrupted supply chains. These factors have also raised the costs associated with delivering humanitarian aid to refugees and displaced populations. The global supply chains have been thrown into disarray, leading to fluctuations in grain, fertilizer, and energy prices.^a This upheaval in international markets has prompted concerns about food reserves in MENA countries.

Several MENA countries, including Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, heavily rely on wheat, a staple cereal in the region, and other essential food items like sunflower oil. In 2020 and 2021, these countries ranked among the world's foremost importers of these commodities from the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Consequently, they found themselves particularly susceptible to disruptions in trade flows from this region during the early months of 2022.^b An illustrative case is Egypt's decision in March 2022 to impose an export ban on wheat, flour, lentils and beans. This move aimed to safeguard its domestic food supply and underscored the fragility of food security amid global disruption.^c

The MENA region faces additional challenges due to climatic factors that, combined with ongoing conflicts and the Ukraine war, serve as crisis multipliers. Prolonged dry conditions in key rainfed agricultural areas of the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq significantly reduced cereal production in 2022. This, in turn, escalated the region's demand for cereal imports.^d In Yemen, where agriculture plays a vital role in rural income, moderate to severe droughts followed by heavy rainfall in August 2022 triggered floods, negatively impacting crop areas.^e This low domestic agricultural production made Yemen, import over 85 per cent of staple grains, while experiencing heightened vulnerability to global market fluctuations.^f

The war in Ukraine has also diverted attention away from concurrent crises, including those affecting the MENA region. This diversion has led to reduced assistance levels and increased needs among refugees and their vulnerable host communities.^g These compounding challenges underscore the urgent need for sustained international efforts to address the multifaceted crises affecting the MENA region.

a FAO, 2023.

b UNCTAD, 2022; FAO, 2022.

c Ibid.

d FSIN, 2023.

e IPC, 2022.

f FAOSTAT, 2023.

g FSIN, 2023.

BOX 11. YEMEN – CLIMATE CRISIS IS BECOMING A MAJOR DRIVER OF FOOD INSECURITY

Yemen is one of the most food insecure countries in the world.^a There was an estimated 4.5 million IDPs, and more than 72,000 refugees and asylum-seekers in 2022.^b Climate crisis has been posing significant challenges in Yemen driving food insecurity prior to the civil war erupted. However, eight years of conflict have exacerbated this issue, placing immense strain on already scarce resources. The breakdown of essential government services and the imposition of blockades by warring factions have only intensified the preexisting shortages of water and food, which in turn has caused instability of humanitarian aid.

In 2022, Yemen witnessed a staggering 209,000 displacements due to floods, with a substantial majority, approximately 170,000 or 81 per cent, occurring in the country.^c The intensity of the rains in 2022 was exceptionally high, at 300 per cent above the average annual levels, impacting roughly 80 per cent of the country.^d These floods caused secondary movements of individuals who had previously fled conflict and were already living in precarious conditions. The most affected areas during the June-to-August rainy season were Taiz, Marib and Hajjah governorates.^e Additionally, contaminated water sources aggravated the crisis, reducing access to safe drinking water and elevating the risk of waterborne diseases, a situation exacerbated for internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in camps lacking adequate water and waste management infrastructure.

Based on the IPC acute malnutrition (AMN) analyses for the year 2022, Yemen emerged as one of the countries facing a dire nutritional crisis, particularly in areas where the prevalence of wasted children exceeded 30 per cent, categorizing it as an ‘Extremely Critical’ situation (IPC AMN Phase 5).^f By mid-2022, the crisis had affected 17.4 million people in need of assistance, with 31,000 individuals facing extreme levels of hunger, classified under IPC Phase 5 Catastrophe.^g

a IPC, 2023.

b UNHCR, 2023a.

c IDMC, 2023.

d Ibid.

e Ibid.

f IPC, 2023.

g Ibid.

An aerial photograph of a densely populated urban area, likely a coastal city. The foreground shows a hillside with dry, brownish vegetation and some greenery. The middle ground is filled with a dense cluster of multi-story buildings, many with red-tiled roofs and numerous water tanks on their flat roofs. In the background, the city meets the sea under a clear, bright sky. A large, semi-transparent blue banner is overlaid across the top and bottom of the image, containing the page number and the main title.

07

URBANIZATION

Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis in 2011, IOM has helped more than 100,000 refugees to resettle from Lebanon to third countries around the world. ©IOM 2019 / Angela Wells

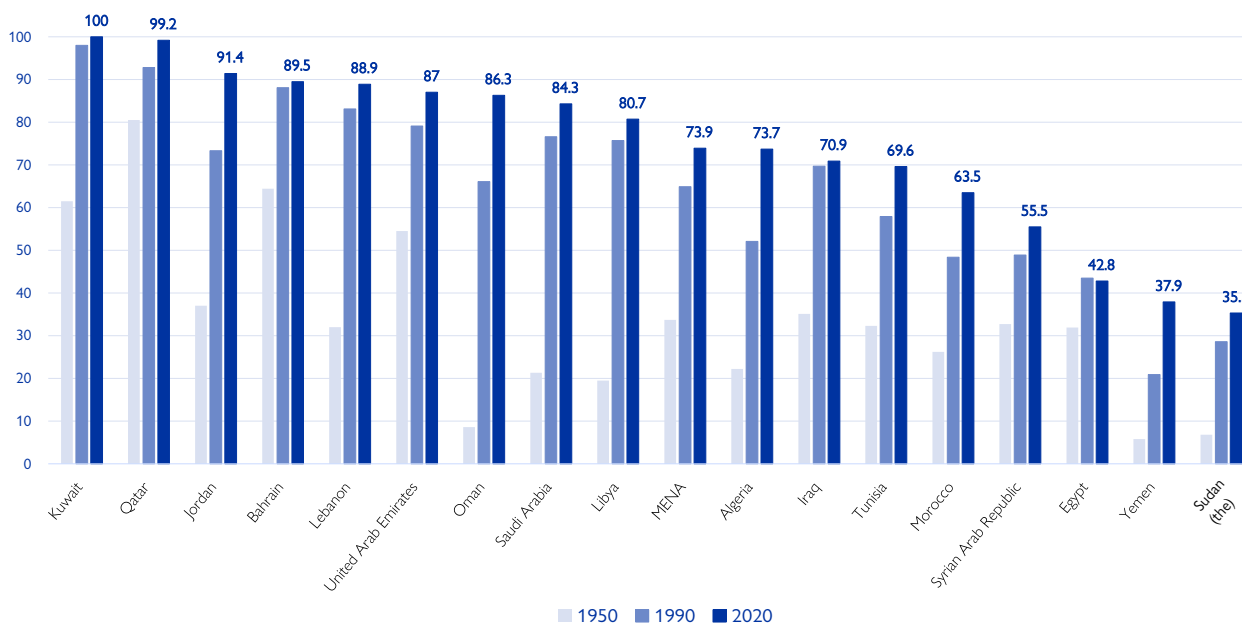
7.1 URBANIZATION TRENDS

In recent decades, urban areas across the MENA region have witnessed unprecedented rates of expansion. This growth has been driven by a combination of population increase and the significant influx of migrants from surrounding rural regions and politically unstable areas.

During the 1960s, the urban population in the Middle East accounted for approximately 35 per cent of the total regional population, as reported by the World Bank.¹⁶⁶ Over the subsequent years, this figure doubled to reach 65 per cent, surpassing the global average of 55 per cent. It is worth noting that in the 1960s, the urban

population was growing at a remarkable rate of 5 per cent, and it maintained a consistent pace of over 4 per cent for the following three decades. This urbanization outpaced the overall population growth rate in the region, which averaged around 3 per cent during the same period. This trend underscores that the population dynamics in the Middle East, especially in the late 2000s, were shaped not only by demographic factors but also by significant internal and cross-border migrations. This shift was not solely about people moving from rural to urban areas; it also involved the relocation of refugees from neighbouring countries to urban centres.

FIGURE 43. ANNUAL PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION AT MID-YEAR RESIDING IN URBAN AREAS. 1950, 1990, AND 2020



Source: UN DESA, 2021b.

As illustrated in Figure 43, the level of urbanization varies considerably across MENA countries in 2020. For instance, Egypt has experienced relatively slow urbanization over the past seven decades, with the urban population edging up modestly from 31 per cent in 1950 to 43 per cent in 2020.¹⁶⁷ In contrast, Jordan has undergone a much more rapid urbanization process during the same period, with its urban population

soaring from 37 per cent to a remarkable 91 per cent. Notably, Jordan's urbanization was not a linear progression but rather marked by spikes coinciding with regional conflicts in the 1960s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s.

Interestingly, the Gulf's coastal states have exhibited exceptional urbanization rates, with exceedingly high proportions of their populations residing in urban areas. Qatar, for example, started with 80 per cent of its

¹⁶⁶ World Bank, 2023a.

¹⁶⁷ UN DESA, 2021b.

population living in urban areas and has now reached a staggering 99 per cent. Kuwait also witnessed an impressive transformation, shifting from 62 per cent urban population in 1950 to 100 per cent. In the past three decades, the United Arab Emirates experienced a 10 per cent increase, reaching 87 per cent, while Oman recorded a 20 per cent increase, reaching 86 per cent urbanization.¹⁶⁸ This distinctive trend can be attributed to the harsh climate of the Arabian Peninsula, marked by limited water resources and biocapacity. These constraints inhibited the development of rural regions, particularly in activities such as agriculture and grazing. However, with the advent of the oil industry, coupled with advancements like desalination and air

conditioning, small human settlements quickly evolved into bustling Gulf cities.

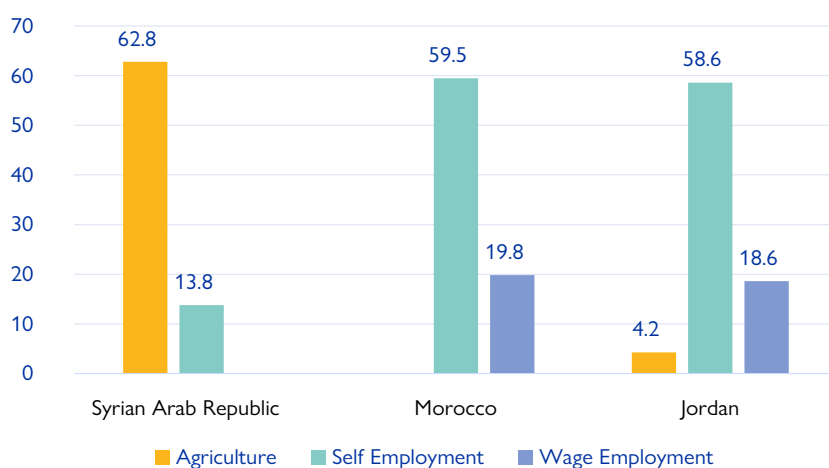
Despite higher rural poverty rates worldwide, the number of poor individuals in urban areas has increased, particularly in MENA countries affected by fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV). Strategically coordinating investments in transportation networks, electrification, sanitation, and safe drinking water across key cities can address multiple dimensions of poverty and reduce income inequality within cities. Analysing rural-urban disparities in public infrastructure and social protection coverage will shed light on access to basic services in urban and informal settlements.

7.2 REFUGEE CAMPS AND INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

Refugee and internally displaced populations, often residing in camps or informal settlements, face the risk of secondary displacement due to extreme weather events. In addition to sudden-onset disasters, the MENA region is highly susceptible to slow-onset environmental hazards such as increased temperature, aridity, sea level rising, desertification, and increased salinization.

These environmental challenges can act as conflict multipliers in already fragile and crisis-ridden settings, driving migration and hindering return efforts. Factors like droughts, desertification, and land degradation can erode agricultural livelihoods, intensify resource competition, and trigger rural-to-urban migration.

FIGURE 44. EMPLOYMENT OF REFUGEES IN SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC, MOROCCO AND JORDAN BY SECTOR



Source: UNHCR Livelihood Survey, 2022.

The impact of sudden-onset disasters on displaced populations can be exacerbated in urban areas due to higher population density and the prevalence of informal shelters. There have been instances of violence forcing residents of IDP camps to flee once more,

as witnessed in the North-west of the Syrian Arab Republic. Paradoxically, adverse climatic events have sometimes prevented civilians from escaping conflict zones. For example, during the 2017 battle between the Government of Iraq and ISIL in Mosul, residents

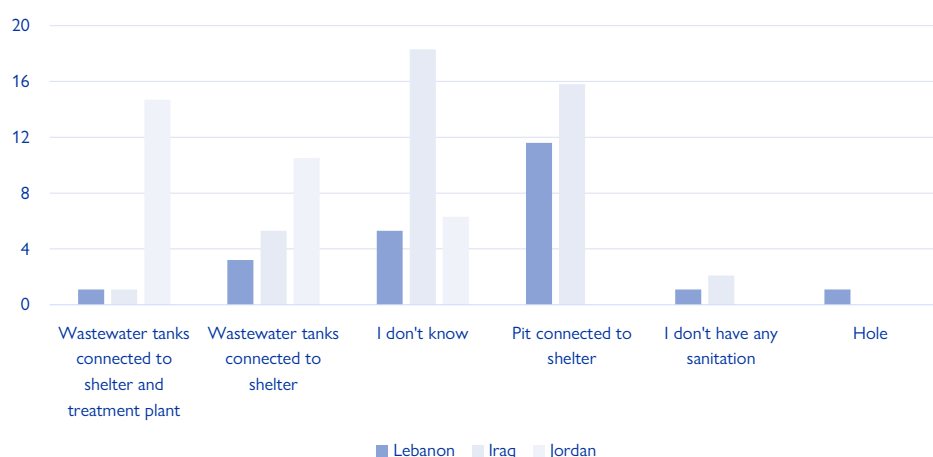
¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

were trapped within the city due to route blockages caused by the overflowing Tigris River.¹⁶⁹ In some cases, safer rental options located away from flood-prone areas may be financially out of reach for urban-dwelling displaced populations, a situation observed in Yemen’s Sana’a city.

To enhance resilience for refugees and their host communities in refugee camps, it is imperative to improve access to essential services such as water, sanitation, education, and employment. An examination

of water and sanitation practices in refugee camps reveals disparities. An academic study¹⁷⁰ indicates that refugees in Lebanon faced greater challenges compared to those in Jordan and Iraq. In Middle Eastern countries bordering the Syrian Arab Republic, a significant portion of respondents (35% in Iraq and 50% in Lebanon) reported using pits connected to shelters that required regular emptying. In contrast, 81 per cent of respondents in Jordan reported having family-cluster wastewater storage tanks linked to their shelters.¹⁷¹

FIGURE 45. WASH FACILITIES IN REFUGEE CAMPS IN JORDAN, LEBANON AND IRAQ



Source: Wardeh and Marques, 2023.

Refugees’ livelihoods and economic inclusion¹⁷² were explored through surveys conducted in Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan and Morocco in 2021 by UNHCR. Findings indicate that employment trends vary across these regions. In the Syrian Arab Republic, the majority of refugees (63%) were engaged in the agricultural sector, while self-employment was more prevalent in Morocco (59%) and Jordan (58%).¹⁷³

Refugees’ access to education is a critical aspect to consider. UNHCR’s DAFI (Albert Einstein German Academic Refugee Initiative)¹⁷⁴ refugee education

programme in 2021 enrolled 8,307 young refugee women and men from 53 different countries in 55 nations worldwide.¹⁷⁵ Of these, 1,857 students (22%) were in the MENA region. Syrian refugees represented the largest cohort, accounting for 21 per cent of DAFI students, with Egypt (530 students) and Algeria (205 students) among the top ten countries where refugees pursued higher education.¹⁷⁶

In the Middle East, access to education for refugees varies by country. In Iraq,¹⁷⁷ refugees have free access to primary and secondary education but are required

169 UNEP, 2017.

170 Wardeh and Marques, 2023.

171 Ibid.

172 UNHCR, 2022.

173 Ibid.

174 UNHCR, 2021a.

175 UNHCR, 2022.

176 Ibid.

177 In KRI (Kurdish region of Iraq) the federal Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) and the KRI MoHE have reduced higher education tuition fees for refugees.

to pay international student fees if they pursue higher education.¹⁷⁸ In Jordan, only Syrian refugee children can attend national public schools, and access to tertiary education depends on the possession of specific documents.¹⁷⁹ In Lebanon, refugees from the Occupied Palestinian Territory pay the same tuition fees as nationals, while the Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic allow refugees access to primary and

secondary education in the public-school system and national plan (see Table 3). However, access to higher education may involve higher tuition fees in the Syrian Arab Republic. In Yemen, despite ongoing efforts to integrate refugee education into the national system, a significant number of refugee children remain out of school.¹⁸⁰

TABLE 3: DAFI (ALBERT EINSTEIN GERMAN ACADEMIC REFUGEE INITIATIVE) FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME IN THE MENA REGION

ACCESS TO EDUCATION			
Access to education at all levels	(Free) Access to education at primary and secondary levels	Access to tertiary level	Access to education for specific refugee contexts
Algeria	Iraq KRI	Iraq KRI — fee- based Morocco (with legal status documents)	Egypt (only for Sudanese and Syrian refugees) Lebanon (only for Syrians) Jordan (only for Syrians)
Sudan (the) Syrian Arab Republic (the)			
TERTIARY EDUCATION FEES			
Same as nationals	Higher than nationals	Higher fees for both nationals and refugees	Reduced fees or free tertiary
Algeria Sudan (the)	Lebanon Iraq KRI	Morocco Syrian Arab Republic (the)	Egypt (same as nationals for Sudanese and Syrians)
POST-GRADUATION OPPORTUNITIES			
(Full) Access to labour market	Legal restrictions with documentation, work permit needed	Restricted legal access to labour market (certain fields of employment)	No access to formal labour market
Iraq KRI Yemen	Morocco	Egypt, Jordan Sudan (the) (only to private sector) Lebanon (access for Syrian refugees in certain fields)	Algeria, Syrian Arab Republic (the)

Source: UNHCR, 2021a.

178 UNHCR, 2021a.

179 Ibid.

180 Ibid.

BOX 12. JORDAN – MANAGEMENT OF HOUSING DEMANDS AND INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

Jordan has experienced significant population growth since the mid-20th century, primarily driven by substantial refugee influxes from Occupied Palestinian territories and, more recently, from Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq. The nation currently hosts one of the highest per capita shares of refugees worldwide.^a There are around 2.4 million registered refugees from the Occupied Palestinian Territory living in Jordan.^b Aside from this, more than 760,000 refugees are registered with UNHCR, predominantly from the Syrian Arab Republic, with large groups from Iraq, Yemen, the Sudan and Somalia.^c Around 80 per cent of refugees in Jordan reside in urban areas, with the rest living in refugee camps across the country.^d

Recent years have witnessed substantial rural-to-urban migration, partially due to land and water resource limitations.^e This rapid urbanization has strained already limited resources and services, increased energy demands, and pushed agriculture toward more arid and degraded regions in the eastern and southern parts of the country, while also leading to congestion and pollution issues in the cities, particularly noticeable in Amman. Informal settlements have exacerbated these challenges.

Jordan is a pioneer country in upgrading informal settlements in the Middle East, through the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDC).^f Following the war in the Syrian Arab Republic in 2011, housing units were upgraded, and urban plans and makeshift camps developed to meet the rising demand of affordable housing. One of the important achievements of Jordan's urban development strategy is assisting equal distribution of economic and social activities to all districts within the municipality and integrate the informal settlements contexts.^g However, there is a need for extensive study on management of informal areas developed in the periphery of the camps and in cities in Jordan.^h

a UNHCR, 2023a.

b UNRWA, 2023.

c UNHCR, 2023a.

d Ibid.

e Wenger and Abulfotuh, 2019.

f UN Habitat, 2020.

g Ibid.

h Ibid.



08

MIGRATION GOVERNANCE

At the Choucha refugee camp near the Ras Djir, Tunisia-Libya border crossing. © IOM 2011 / Emiliano Capozoli

8.1 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: PROGRESS OF THE MENA COUNTRIES

Ensuring the rights of migrants, irrespective of their migration status, is imperative for their active and well-integrated participation in host countries. SDG Target 10.7¹⁸¹ is specifically designed to promote safe, orderly,

regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people, urging countries to implement carefully planned and well-managed migration policies.

TABLE 4: SDG INDICATOR 10.7.2 BY COUNTRY AND DOMAIN

Country	SDG indicator 10.7.2 - Overall summary	DOMAIN 1. Migrant rights	DOMAIN 2. Whole-of-government/ Evidence-based policies	DOMAIN 3. Cooperation and partnerships	DOMAIN 4. Socioeconomic well-being	DOMAIN 5. Mobility dimensions of crises	DOMAIN 6. Safe, orderly and regular migration
Algeria	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Bahrain	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Egypt	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Iraq	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Jordan	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Kuwait	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Lebanon	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Libya	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Morocco	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Oman	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Qatar	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Saudi Arabia	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Syrian Arab Republic	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Sudan (the)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Tunisia	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
United Arab Emirates	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

● Fully meets
 ● Meets
 ● Partially meets
 ● Requires further progress
 ● Did not answer

Source: UN DESA, 2020b.

181 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 10.7.2, "Number of countries with policies to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people" was developed by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to inform the global review of SDG target 10.7.

Among the MENA countries that provided data on migration policies related to SDG 10.7.2 in 2021, measures to protect migrants' rights and ensure access to welfare benefits and essential services varied (refer to Table 4). All governments in Northern Africa and Western Asia reported the existence of interministerial coordination mechanisms on migration.¹⁸² In North Africa, Egypt claimed to fully meet goals related to the "socioeconomic well-being" of migrants and "mobility dimensions of crises". Tunisia expressed the need for further progress in most areas but achieved domains related to "whole-of-government/evidence-based policies" and "cooperation and partnerships." Libya reported full compliance with the domain of "safe, orderly, and regular migration."

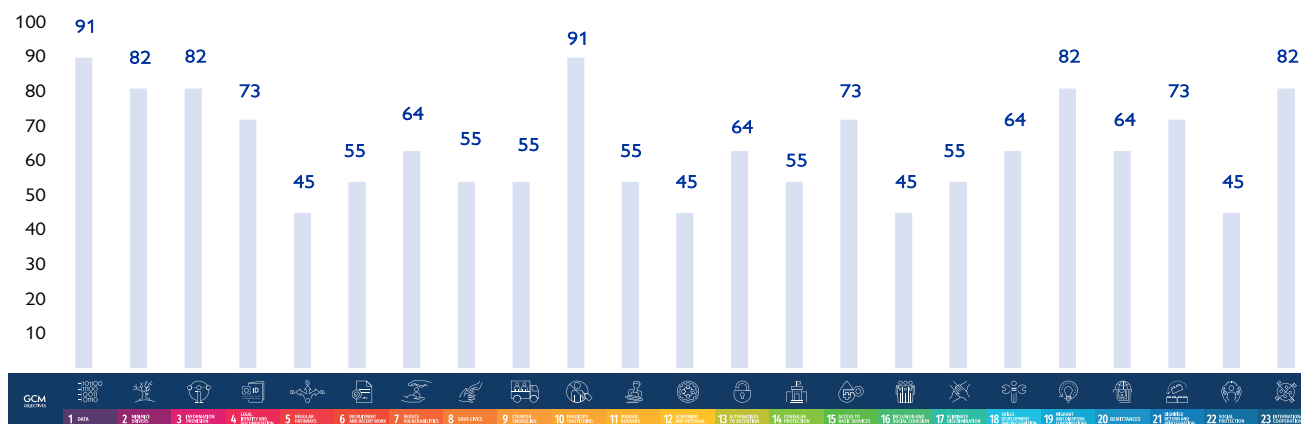
All 11 governments in the MENA countries that provided data reported having policies to grant non-nationals, i.e., foreign citizens, equal access to essential or emergency health care,¹⁸³ regardless of their immigration status. Four countries (Jordan, Lebanon, Oman and Qatar) extended public education services, including public primary and secondary schools, to all non-nationals regardless of immigration status, while Egypt, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia provided them only to those with legal status. Moreover, governments with available data indicated that they ensured equal access to justice for non-nationals, although Saudi Arabia and Lebanon provided access only to migrants with legal migration status and documents.

8.2 GLOBAL COMPACT FOR SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR MIGRATION: PROGRESS OF THE MENA COUNTRIES

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (Global Compact for Migration)¹⁸⁴ represents the first-ever intergovernmentally negotiated United Nations agreement on a common approach to managing international migration. By establishing a cooperative

framework on international migration, Member States have developed a shared terminology for discussing key migration issues, creating fertile ground for comprehensive, rights-based migration policies.

FIGURE 46. PERCENTAGE OF MENA COUNTRIES ADDRESSING EACH GLOBAL COMPACT FOR MIGRATION OBJECTIVE IN 2022 (%)



Source: United Nations Network on Migration, 2021b.

Note: Libya abstained from adoption of the Global Compact but, regardless of adoption status, submitted Voluntary review reports on the Global Compact for Migration and has contributed to the Compact Regional review process.

182 UN DESA, 2020a.

183 Essential or emergency health care refers to any medical care that is urgently required for the preservation of a person's life or the avoidance of irreparable harm to their health. Refer to UN DESA, 2020a.

184 IOM, 2023h.

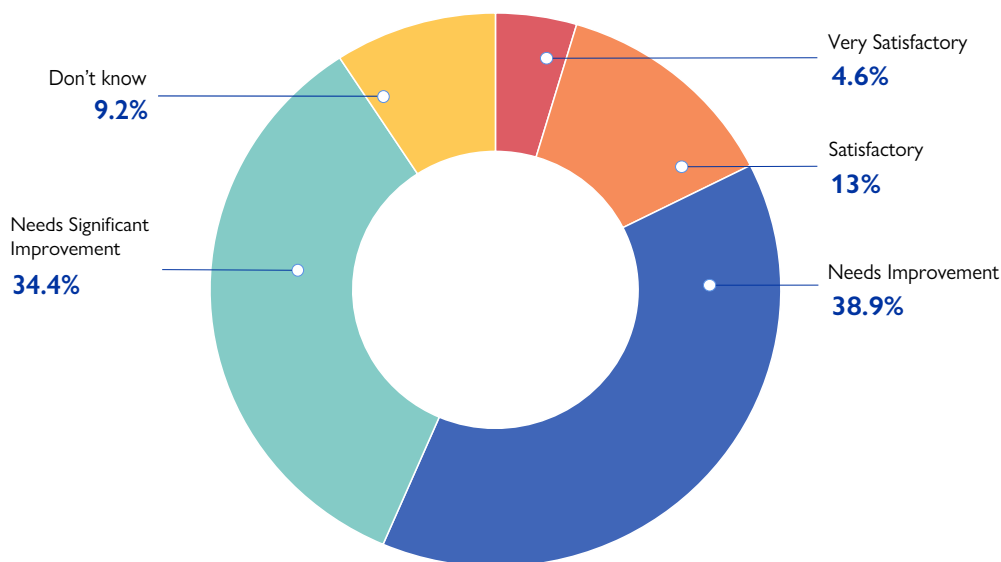
The Global Compact for Migration is built on 23 objectives and 10 cross-cutting guiding principles, covering all aspects of migration (a “360-degree” approach). While not legally binding, the guiding principles, objectives, and actions of the Global Compact for Migration are rooted in established obligations and principles, supported by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and international law.

The Global Compact for Migration Regional Review Report¹⁸⁵ highlights the importance of effective policies to address migration inequalities in the Arab region. In recent times, countries in the Arab region have recognized the significance of using data to inform migration-related policies and key decisions, as well as to monitor and measure progress in Global Compact for Migration implementation. Among North African countries (Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia) and GCC countries (Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar), along with other Middle Eastern countries like Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon, progress has been reported in data collection.¹⁸⁶ Regarding vulnerabilities, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait,

Lebanon, Morocco and Qatar have made efforts to expand migrant protection, both among their citizens living abroad and for migrants residing within these countries.

A workshop organized by the IOM MENA Regional Data Hub in August 2023, attended by delegates from Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, highlighted the need for standardized migration data and coordination among different country offices to enhance the use of data in policymaking for sustainable development at both national and regional levels. Host countries in the MENA region have recently taken measures to reduce disparities between migrants and nationals and facilitate migrant integration. Some countries have actively promoted evidence-based public discourse to address negative perceptions of migrants and dispel misconceptions. In pursuit of inclusion and social cohesion between migrants and their host societies, Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Morocco and Qatar have reported various laws, policies, and mechanisms that allow migrants to enjoy their human rights and practice their cultural and religious freedoms.¹⁸⁷

FIGURE 47. GLOBAL COMPACT FOR MIGRATION STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE PROGRESS OF THE GLOBAL COMPACT FOR MIGRATION IMPLEMENTATION IN ARAB STATES



Source: United Nations Network on Migration, 2021c.

When inquired about the progress of the Global Compact for Migration implementation among stakeholders, including academic organizations, civil

societies, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector, 39 per cent indicated that it needs improvement, and 34 per cent said it requires significant

185 United Nations Network on Migration, 2021b.

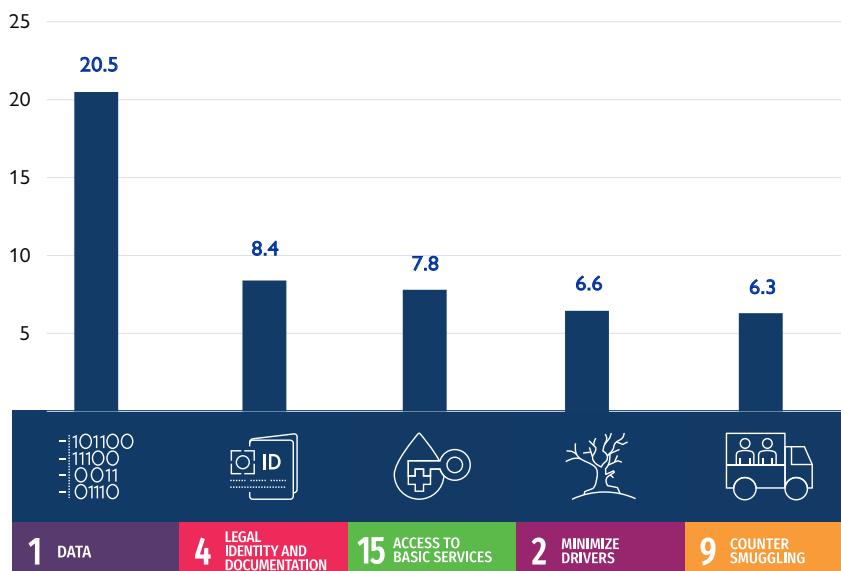
186 Ibid.

187 Ibid.

improvement (see Figure 47). It is worth noting that 20.5 per cent of stakeholders agree that the most

progress has been made on Objective 1, which focuses on data collection of migrant-related data.

FIGURE 48. TOP 5 GLOBAL COMPACT FOR MIGRATION OBJECTIVES THAT RESPONDENTS' COUNTRIES HAVE MADE THE MOST PROGRESS ON SINCE THE ADOPTION OF THE GLOBAL COMPACT FOR MIGRATION IN DECEMBER 2018



Source: United Nations Network on Migration, 2021c.

A notable achievement is that Morocco, Egypt and Iraq have become Global Compact for Migration Champion countries, receiving targeted support from the United Nations Network on Migration. These countries also provide valuable insights, lessons learned, and positive practices that can be shared in dedicated spaces and with other Member States. Furthermore, out of the 201 pledges submitted ahead of the IMRF, 11 were from the MENA region, with Iraq having submitted the highest number (7).¹⁸⁸ Additionally, 11 MENA countries submitted a Global Compact for Migration Voluntary National Report to the IMRF.¹⁸⁹ In line with promoting the whole-of-society approach promoted by the Global Compact for Migration, an analysis of

stakeholders in the region was conducted to observe how their work contributes to Global Compact for Migration Objectives.

To encourage the commitment of the countries in the region to the implementation, review, and follow-up of the Global Compact for Migration, the Regional Office in Cairo, in partnership with the League of Arab States (LAS) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), in collaboration with the Regional Network on Migration for the Arab States,¹⁹⁰ provided a platform for Member States in the region to discuss progress and challenges in implementing the Global Compact for Migration.¹⁹¹

188 IOM, 2022c.

189 United Nations Network on Migration, 2021a.

190 Previously known as Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region.

191 McAuliffe and Triandafyllidou, 2021.

09



CONCLUSION

Othmane Belabsir returned from Tunisia to Morocco with the help of IOM in the framework of the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration after attempting his way to Europe and ending up stranded in Tunisia with an irregular status. Upon return, he reunited with his family in Khouribga, where he has been supported by Echerki, an IOM mentor, in his reintegration journey. © IOM 2022/ Beyond Borders Media

9.1 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Twelve years following the Arab Spring, the dynamic landscape of migration in the MENA region reflects multiple conflicts and socioeconomic changes. Prominent among these changes are the diverse migration patterns seen across the region. As such, there is a growing need for robust policies and regulations governing migration, active diaspora engagement, enhanced migration cooperation, protection mechanisms for refugees, and effective reintegration agreements and climate migration policies.

The GCC countries, for instance, is home to substantial numbers of migrant workers who play a pivotal role in contributing to the region's economies.¹⁹² Simultaneously, the Middle East subregion bears the weight of hosting over a quarter of all individuals displaced by conflict and violence, particularly in countries like the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and Iraq.¹⁹³ North African countries have witnessed burgeoning mobility trends in recent years, characterized by both inward and outward flows of migrants.¹⁹⁴

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, migrant workers in the GCC faced heightened vulnerabilities, repatriation to their home countries, and limited progress in labour mobility policies. In 2021-2022, new reforms, such as loosening restrictions and extending visa regulations, were introduced to mitigate the pandemic's impact and address fiscal crises.¹⁹⁵ Furthermore, legislative actions were taken to improve working conditions in several GCC countries, especially following criticism of the Kafala system and human rights abuses exposed during the FIFA World Cup in Qatar.¹⁹⁶ Despite these measures, there remains a pressing need for robust social safety nets for migrant workers in the subregion.

Migrants travelling to or through North Africa, on their way to other destination countries, face unique vulnerabilities and protection barriers due to deteriorating socioeconomic conditions, rising insecurity, and violence. The complexity of migration routes along the Mediterranean as well as the Arabian

Peninsula underscores the importance of adaptability and responsiveness in addressing unsafe migration dynamics. Addressing these challenges requires a focus on establishing legal pathways and expanding employment opportunities for migrants.

The protracted displacement situation in conflict and fragile countries, such as the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and the Sudan, necessitates a transition from humanitarian aid to recovery. Addressing the root causes of conflict and displacement is essential to create an environment conducive to resolving displacement situations. This includes ensuring, at a minimum, safety, security, and freedom of movement; providing an adequate standard of living; granting access to services and housing; and addressing land and property issues or providing appropriate compensation, with inclusive governance as a key enabler.

Over the past decade, the MENA region has witnessed an increase in disaster displacement resulting from sudden-onset hazards like floods and cyclones, partly due to improved data collection capabilities. In conflict-ridden MENA countries, sudden-onset disasters can exacerbate insecurity and increase the vulnerability of affected migrant populations, acting as a threat multiplier. Weak governance systems and limited resources can hinder disaster preparedness, mitigation and adaptation, and response to environmental changes. Prioritizing the collection of weather events and migration data can strengthen early response and crisis management systems. Utilizing dynamic population maps, incorporating population density, displacement, and mobility data, can provide a deeper understanding of structural poverty and the exposure of migrant populations to climate hazards.

While the immediate consequences of sudden-onset hazards are evident, slow-onset events deserve more attention due to their potential for long-term damage, which can often be prevented. For instance, the arid environment can lead to a lack of flood systems in

192 ILO, 2021.

193 IOM, 2020c.

194 IOM, 2021c.

195 Nazir, 2022.

196 Sherman, 2022.

community planning. Further research and data collection efforts should focus on understanding how factors such as drought and water scarcity contribute to migration and conflict in the MENA region, as the current evidence base remains underdeveloped. Moreover, there is a need for additional research on the interactions between climate change and peacebuilding,¹⁹⁷ as the impacts of climate change are likely to jeopardize human security, potentially having significant implications for peace and stability in the region.

Migration is a multifaceted issue encompassing all aspects of the 2030 agenda and is relevant to all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is crucial to

emphasize Target 17.18, which calls for greater support to developing countries in providing “high-quality, timely, and reliable data, disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, and migratory status.” It is important to note that available migrant information and statistical data in the MENA region are often incomplete, incomparable, and limited in timeliness. Effective data collection during emergency phases remains challenging, despite its essential role in informing planning and assistance efforts. To comprehend migration dynamics fully, MENA country governments and statistical offices need to integrate migration modules into census surveys and other data collection efforts.

197 IPCC, 2022.

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