



Monthly Summary

The following summary is put together on the basis of available secondary data at the time of publication. It is representative of the available information and therefore indicative of mixed migratory trends in Asia.

The Mixed Migration Centre (MMC) was established in February 2018. Following a change of name of existing entities in different regions the MMC comprises of MMC West Africa, MMC East Africa and Yemen, MMC Middle East, MMC North Africa, MMC Asia and soon MMC Europe. The coordination centre is MMC Geneva.

The Mixed Migration Centre - Asia, provides quality mixed migration-related information for policy, programming and advocacy from a regional perspective. In this report, our core countries of focus are Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Malaysia & Indonesia.

In future reports, primary data from MMC's Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism (4Mi) will also be analysed and visualised contributing to new research trends on mixed migration in the region. Currently, 4Mi primarily collects data on Afghans in mixed migration flows and has a pilot project on Rohingya in Malaysia, which will be expanded to cover regional mixed migration flows.

For more information visit: mixedmigration.org

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Background:

Mixed Migration in Asia

Asian countries have been affected by some of the most complex migration challenges worldwide and since the early 1990s international migration from and interregional migration in Asia has continued to increase. In 2017, it was estimated that more than [59 million people](#) had engaged in South-South movements within the region.

In Asia, as in other world's regions, refugees and asylum seekers' paths overlap with the trajectories of migrants, along similar smuggling and trafficking routes. Today, the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan and the Strait of Malacca (between Indonesia and Malaysia) are among the main migration corridors in the world.

Mixed migration in Asia involves numerous nationalities moving irregularly for a wide variety of reason and responding to a variety of drivers. Those on the move typically comprise of those from refugee-producing countries but also countries without conflict and include, inter alia, men, women and children from Myanmar, Pakistan, India, Nepal, China, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan. As formal protection frameworks remain limited in the region, refugees and asylum seekers often resort to the assistance of smugglers and engage in perilous journeys. However, the extent of the movement, their dynamics and specific conditions are only partially understood.

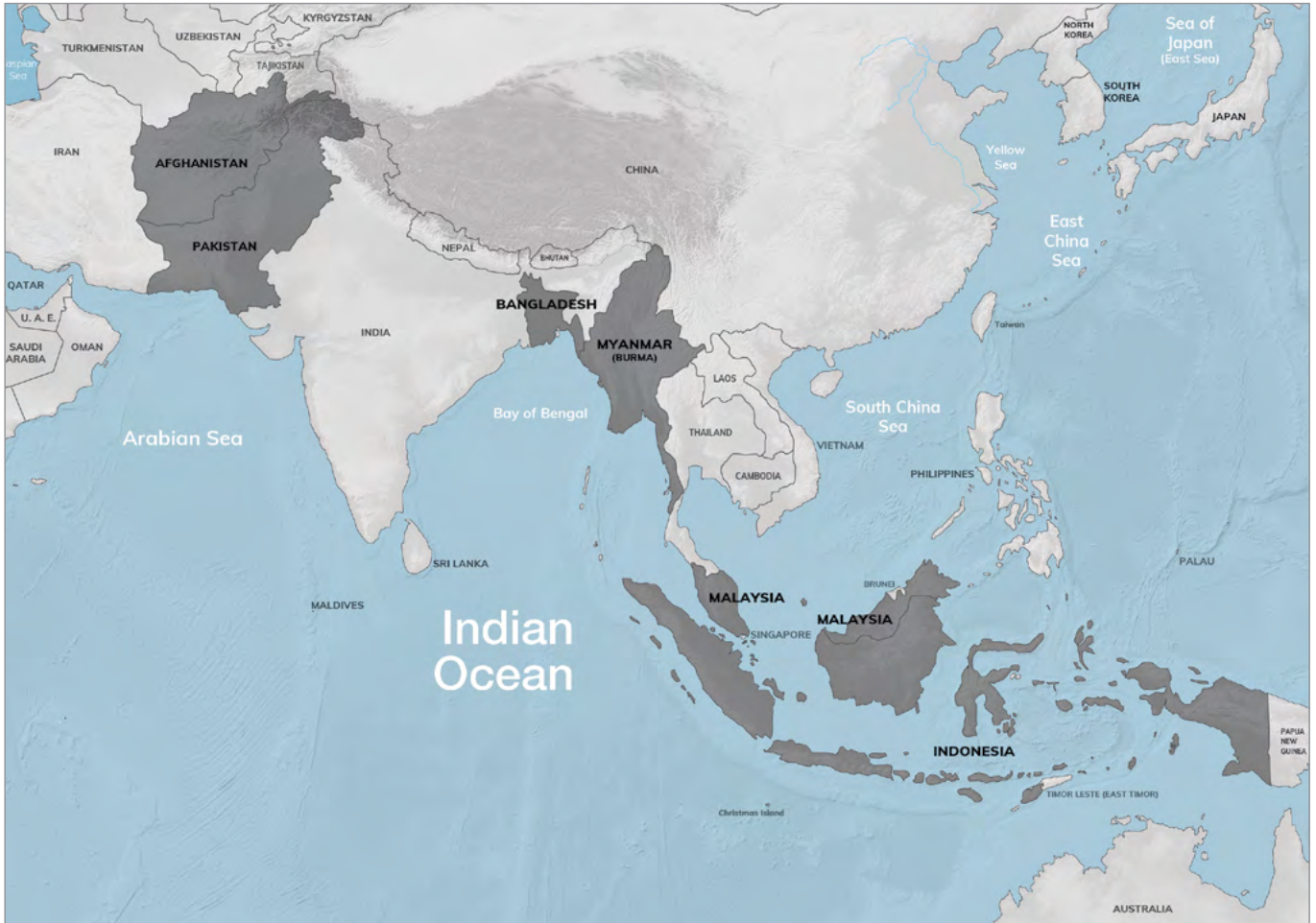
In 2018, after decades of protracted displacement, Afghan refugees still constitute just over [13 per cent](#) of the global refugee population, and [91 per cent](#) of them are hosted in neighbouring Pakistan and Iran. The recent launch of the [Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees \(2018 – 2019\)](#) is expected to foster a more coordinated response to this protracted displacement. Tens of thousands of Afghans also leave looking for new opportunities abroad. In 2016, [56 per cent](#) of Afghans interviewed by the [Asia Foundation](#) stated that they would consider leaving the country due to the lack of employment opportunities. Afghans on the move are found along various migratory routes.

Since late 2017 more than [723,000](#) Rohingya fled to neighbouring Bangladesh, joining an estimated 200,000 who had left earlier, all of whom are fleeing discrimination and violence in Myanmar. With renewed fighting in several regions in Myanmar (such as Rakhine, but also Chin and Kachin States), ethnic Rohingya and Chin minorities have continued to flee the country, although at a reduced pace. In recent years, Rohingya refugees have joined Bangladeshi migrants on sea-going vessels in mixed flows organised by migrant smugglers in their joint search for better opportunities in Malaysia, Indonesia and previously Australia.

Smuggling networks have [proliferated](#) along the main migration corridors, with some Asian countries [serving simultaneously](#) as source, transit and destination for smuggling of migrants. Pakistan is the most reported destination for Afghan refugees and migrants, while also being a main corridor for Afghans in transit. Many Pakistani refugees and migrants have also moved abroad for diverse reasons, including limited economic opportunities, but also tensions incurred at the borders with Afghanistan and India. While historically being described as a country of emigration, Indonesia has recently hosted a growing number of Rohingya refugees originating from Myanmar, arriving on vessels to the North-Eastern provinces of Indonesia.

In July 2018, the [Bali Process](#)'s meeting promoted enhanced cooperation between private business and government on tackling "people smuggling, trafficking in persons and related transnational crime" in the region.

This brief provides an overview of the key developments in mixed migration that have occurred in 2018 in Asia, and especially focuses on the current situation in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Malaysia & Indonesia.



MMC's understanding of mixed migration

“Mixed migration” refers to cross-border movements of people, including refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, victims of trafficking, and people seeking better lives and opportunities. Motivated to move by a multiplicity of factors, people in mixed flows have a range of legal statuses as well as a variety of vulnerabilities. Although entitled to protection under international human rights law, they are exposed to multiple rights violations along their journey. Those in mixed migration flows travel along similar routes, using similar means of travel — often travelling irregularly, and wholly, or partially, assisted by migrant smugglers.

The Mixed Migration Context in Asia

Afghanistan



Population
36,373,176 (2018)



Number of refugees

75,121 (UNHCR data, updated as of October 2018 / UN est. 2017)



IDPs
554,000 Last updated
9 October 2018

Refugee returnees

1,882,487 (IOM data, updated as of 10 November 2018)

14,424 Refugee returnees to Afghanistan since 1 January 2018 (UNHCR data, updated as of October 2018)

700,056 Undocumented returns since 1 January 2018 (IOM data, updated as of 10 November 2018)

Key developments

Afghan refugees & asylum seekers

After almost four decades of protracted displacement, [2.6 million](#) Afghan refugees are as of October 2018 still dispersed across [more than 80 countries](#) and represent the second largest refugee population in the world, after Syrians. At the same time, [91 per cent](#) (approx. 2.4 million) of Afghan refugees reside in just two countries, namely Pakistan and Iran. It is also from Pakistan and Iran and onwards to Turkey that Afghans attempt to enter the main migration corridor towards Europe. The long history of human mobility, often characterized by intertwined patterns of internal displacement, secondary movements to third countries, and returns, has now impacted over three generations of Afghans.

In 2017, the number of reported security incidents reached their highest level since 2008, marking an intensification of fighting in Afghanistan. According to a [report published by the Asia Foundation in 2016](#), almost [70 per cent](#) of Afghans fear for their personal safety, and around [40 per cent](#) would consider leaving the country. Children represent [half](#) of the total population of Afghan refugees, raising concerns about the limited ability to access basic services, such as health and education, in host countries. According to a research published by [Save the Children](#) in 2018, child-specific support and reintegration plans for children returning from Europe to Afghanistan [remain limited to non-existent](#).

Apart from the intensification of fighting in Afghanistan and weakening security, Afghans also migrate for other reasons. In a 2017 survey conducted by the [Asia Foundation](#), domestic insecurity, unemployment and limited

capacity of the Government were reported as key push factors for Afghan migration. [76 per cent](#) of respondents said that they would leave Afghanistan if given the opportunity because of domestic insecurity (among other reasons). Lack of employment opportunities was then cited by more than [half of the total respondents \(54 per cent\)](#) among the main drivers, while the presence of a “weak government” which inspires no confidence was reported as by [25 per cent](#) of Afghan interviewed.

Key policy and legal developments

In December 2017, the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, and UNHCR have endorsed the [Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees \(2018 – 2019\)](#). The Strategy is a regional multi-year plan resulting from a consultative process initiated in 2011. The plan is designed as a framework for joint interventions, and its objectives are constructed around three pillars: (1) facilitating voluntary repatriation through community-based initiatives in areas of high return in Afghanistan; (2) building Afghan refugees capital in host countries; and (3) promoting refugee protection in host countries.

Returns to Afghanistan

According to [UNHCR](#), over [5.2 million](#) Afghan refugees have since 2002 returned to the country with the support of voluntary repatriation programmes. The number of people returning to Afghanistan has seen a spike in 2016 ([370,000](#)) but decreased in 2017 ([54,591](#)). As of September 2018, [14,296](#) people have officially returned, which represents a [70 per cent](#) reduction compared to the same period of last year.

A variety of factors may influence Afghan refugees' decision to engage in voluntary return. Afghan [returnees interviewed by UNHCR](#) in Pakistan mentioned (1) lack of employment opportunities and high cost of living in Pakistan; (2) stricter border controls resulting in separation of families; and (3) uncertainty over access to legal documentation in the future as key drivers of the decision to leave Pakistan in 2018.

Besides registered refugees who access repatriation programmes, there is also a large number of undocumented Afghans who 'spontaneously' return from neighbouring countries. According to IOM, between January 1st and November 10th 2018, more than [700,056](#) undocumented Afghans have returned from Iran and Pakistan. Among them, [96 per cent](#) left from Iran ([671,065](#)), possibly [driven by](#) the currency devaluation and the general economic downturn in the country.

Finally, In 2016 only, it is estimated that over [one million](#) Afghans were forcibly returned to Afghanistan. According to an EASO report published 2018, Afghans who have been deported from Europe in 2016 have faced [violence, debt and social isolation](#) on their return. In 2018, while Pakistan only [threatened](#) to start deporting undocumented refugees and migrants before extending validity of the Proof of Registration (PoR) cards - which give Afghan refugees and migrants entitlement to temporary legal residency in the country - to June 2019, Turkey [intensified](#) forced returns, repatriating through deportation more than [17,000](#) Afghans in the first six months.

Returnee-IDPs

According to a [report](#) published by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) in 2018, [72 per cent](#) of Afghan returnees are displaced upon return and become de facto IDPs as they are unable to settle in their region of origin, because of (1) insecurity, (2) socioeconomic issues such as the loss of property and assets, or (3) the lack of livelihood opportunities. As highlighted by the Internal [Displacement Monitoring Centre \(IDMC\)](#), returnee-IDPs tend to move to rural rather than urban areas, and their location in less accessible areas often prevent their capacity to access rights and assistance, particularly in terms of registration and access to housing, aid and health services.

Internal Displacement

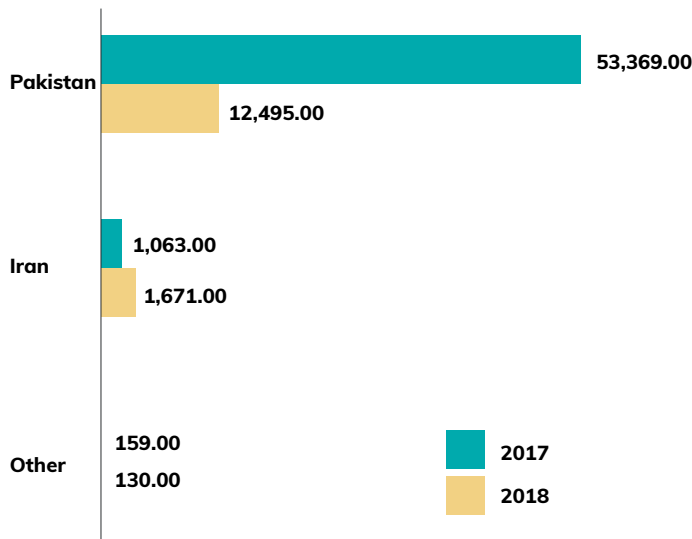
For the past two generations of Afghans, migration has become an essential coping strategy to survive continuous violence and insecurity, as well as lack of livelihood opportunities, especially in rural areas of the country.

In 2017, the security situation in Afghanistan further deteriorated and the country was [reclassified from post-conflict to one of active conflict](#). In the same year, Afghanistan ranked [top three country](#) with most new displacement in the world. In 2018, internal displacement has further intensified across the country, with an estimate of more than [554,000](#) Afghans having to move because of conflict and drought.

Due to the recent drought that affected the Western Region of Afghanistan, the number of internal displacements associated with natural disaster has reached [250,000](#) in September 2018. As of October 4th, it is estimated that [more people](#) have been displaced by the drought than by war in Afghanistan in 2018. With [57 per cent](#) of the Afghan IDPs below the age of eighteen, and [14 per cent](#) displaced in hard-to-reach areas, the population presents a very high vulnerability profile.

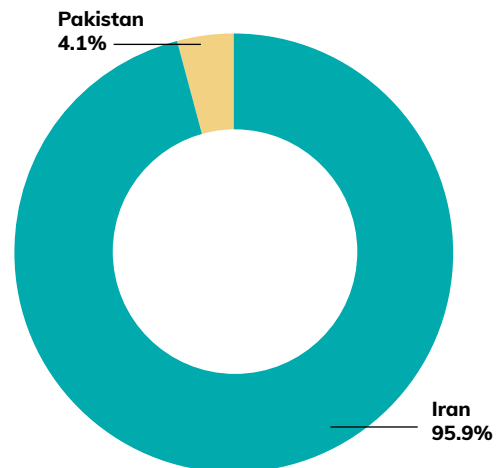
As reliable figures on displacement in areas outside of the control of the Afghan Government are not available, UNHCR and OCHA estimate that there are at least [2 million IDPs](#) in the country as of September 2018.

Graph 1: Number of assisted returns by country of asylum



Source: [UNHCR \(2018\), Afghan Assisted Return Weekly Update, 20 October 2018](#)

Graph 2: Number of undocumented returns by last country of residence, between January 1st and November 10th, 2018.



Source: [IOM \(2018\), Return of Undocumented Afghans, Weekly Situation Report, 04-10 November 2018.](#)

Pakistan



Population

200,813,818 (2018)



IDPs

176,712 (as of July 2018)



Number of refugees and asylum seekers

1,398,350 (as of July 2018)

Key trends in mixed migration

Afghan refugees

Currently, Pakistan is [the second largest](#) refugee hosting country in the world after Turkey, with Afghan refugees representing the largest group under international protection. The Government of Pakistan manages the registration of Afghan refugees and provides them with administrative documentation, the Proof of Registration (PoR), which grants access to basic services in the country. As of July 2018, [1,394,367](#) Afghan refugees had received the PoR, which has been extended until June 2019. This extension, coupled with the current deterioration of the security situation in Afghanistan, is expected to [slow down returns in 2019](#).

In terms of geographical distribution, the large majority of Afghan refugees ([81 per cent](#)) resides in in the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan ([respectively 58 and 23 per cent](#)). These provinces along the border with Afghanistan are among the most under-developed provinces of Pakistan, presenting the [highest multi-dimensional poverty indices](#) in the country. An increasing number of Afghan refugees have moved from the 54 refugee camps to settle in urban and rural areas next to their host communities. Access to national public services and to the local employment market has now become key for their livelihood.

Key policy and legal developments

Pakistan is not a signatory party to the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol, however, the Government has progressively adopted a number of policies aimed at regulating the stay of Afghan refugees in the country, which adhere to the principles of international refugee protection. Among them, the Government of Pakistan registers refugees on a prima facie basis and provides them with Proof of Registration cards, which give entitlement to temporary legal residency in the country.

Since 2017, the Government of Pakistan has intensified the registration process of undocumented Afghans. After the set-up of 21 centers for the registration and identification of Afghan refugees, the Government is now issuing Afghan Citizen Cards (ACCs) to eligible applicants.

Pakistani migration

In 2017, the Government of Pakistan estimated that approximately [half a million](#) people had migrated overseas through legal channels, the vast majority looking for new work opportunities as labour migrants. Main countries of destination for Pakistanis have historically been Europe and the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

In 2016 and 2017, an [increasing number](#) of Pakistanis has attempted to reach Europe through the Central and Eastern Mediterranean routes. According to an IOM study published in 2017, Pakistanis who arrived in Italy in 2016 and 2017 mainly originated from [Punjab, followed by Khuber Pakhtunkhwa, Baluchistan and the Federal Capital Territory](#).

According to IOM data, the majority of Pakistanis respondents who reached Italy in 2017 through the Central Mediterranean route had engaged in [secondary migration](#) – meaning they had previously applied for asylum and been recognised as refugees elsewhere, or they were already working outside their country before they decided upon secondary movement into Europe. As of October 2018, despite the decrease in arrivals along the Central Mediterranean Route which followed the implementation of tighten border policies by Italy and the European Union, Pakistanis still account for the fifth nationality of sea arrivals to Italy ([1,451](#)) or [7 per cent](#) of total arrivals. At the same time, Pakistanis continue to move along the Eastern Mediterranean Route, and account for [46 per cent](#) of all registered refugees and migrants in Serbia and [34 per cent](#) of newly registered refugees and migrants in Bosnia (as of October 2018). For a non-refugee producing country not at war, the number of Pakistani found in mixed flows is significant.

Smuggling and trafficking dynamics

Pakistan is a major transit country along the migration corridor connecting Asia to Europe. Most common routes are via land, as people cross from Afghanistan into Pakistan, before entering Iran. Smuggling operations mostly take place on an [ad-hoc basis](#), with smugglers playing a variety of roles.

Despite increasing legislation facilitating labour migration to the GCC, according to a study published in 2017 by the Gulf Research Centre, a [large number of undocumented migrants](#) originating from Pakistan can be identified in the Gulf as well as cases of deportation.

In country, trafficking is especially common in the form of bonded labour. The State Department's Trafficking in Persons report estimated in 2018 that [two to four million people](#) are subjected to bonded labour in today's Pakistan. These forms of trafficking are concentrated in the [Sindh and Punjab provinces](#), but have also been detected in [Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa](#), where the majority of Afghan refugees also reside.

Key policy and legal developments

In 2018, the Parliament of Pakistan passed "[The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2018](#)" and "[The Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Act, 2018](#)", which impose long imprisonment terms and substantial fines for traffickers, smugglers and their accomplices, while adopting a non-criminalization regime for smuggled migrants.

Later in 2018, the US Department of State has upgraded Pakistan to [Tier 2 of the Trafficking In Person Report](#), recognizing the increasing efforts made by the Government to comply with the "[minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking](#)".

Internal Displacement

Refugees and migrants living in Pakistan, along with Pakistani nationals have been affected by internal displacement associated with [conflict, sectarian violence, and human rights abuses since 2004](#). As of July 2018, [176,712](#) individuals had been registered as internally displaced due to tensions at the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan and to cross-border firing with India. Among them, almost 54 per cent ([95,040 individuals](#)) were registered in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and the Ex-Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Ex-FATA). However, in other areas, declared safe for return after the fade out of military operations, IDPs are returning ([83,328 individuals](#) since January 2018). A small share among them were returned through voluntary return programmes ([1,710 individuals](#)), while the large majority were recognised as spontaneous returns by the Government of Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan distributes a cash grant of PKR 35,000 (approx. 300 USD) to all returnees at the return embarkation points.

Table 1: Refugees by country of origin and status

Country of Origin	Population
Afghan	1,397,858
Afghan refugee Proof of registration (PoR) cardholders	1,394,367
Afghan mandated refugees without PoR cards	3,491
Somali	187
Others	305
Total	1,398,350

Bangladesh



Population
166,368,149 (2018)



IDPs
952,000 (as of July 2018)



Number of refugees and asylum seekers in Cox's Bazar Province

932,334 (UNHCR data, updated as of October 2018)

Estimated number of Rohingya refugees arrived since 25 August 2017

710,000 (IOM data, updated as of October 2018)

Key developments

The Rohingya displacement

Representing one of the most oppressed minority groups in Myanmar, Rohingya have fled to Bangladesh since 1971. Prior to August 2017, there were between [200,000 and 500,000 people](#) of Rohingya ethnic group living in informal settlements and camps in Kutupalong and Nayapara, in Cox's Bazar province.

Since the 25th August 2017, [710,000](#) people of Rohingya ethnic origin have fled into Bangladesh from neighbouring Myanmar's Rakhine state. In September 2017, the magnitude of the displacement reached its peak, with an average of [14,500](#) people crossing the border between Myanmar and Bangladesh per day. In 2018, a significantly lower number of Rohingya have fled, with only [110](#) new arrivals registered between September 27th and October 10th. Most of them [arrived by boat](#) to the Southern peninsula of Cox's Bazar, including Sabrang, Teknaf and surrounding areas.

Displaced Rohingya are hosted in the Cox's Bazar District, which [has become the largest and most densely populated refugee settlement in the world](#). The population is highly concentrated in the Kutupalong Balukhali Expansion site, where [67 per cent](#) of recently displaced Rohingya are settled. Overcrowding is especially a concern, as it may entail a higher risk of landslides, disease outbreaks and tensions within the community. Several incidents due to landslide/erosion, water logging, extreme wind, lightening and flooding have been recorded since the beginning of the year, reportedly affecting around [55,086](#) people. In October and November 2018, [weather-related hazards](#) are expected to increase risks for the most vulnerable, including the risks of family separation due to relocation in new sites.

Slightly more than half of the displaced population of Rohingya are children ([54.2 per cent](#)), and [16 per cent](#) are single mothers. In Cox's Bazar settlements, the trafficking of young girls sold into forced labour has emerged as a negative [coping mechanism](#), due to the lack of resources for families in need.

Key policy and legal developments

The Government of Bangladesh is not a signatory party to the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol. [Administrative mechanisms](#) provide de-facto protection to refugees in the country, within the more general framework of the 1946 Foreigners Act.

The Government of Bangladesh registered the Rohingya population arriving in Bangladesh as refugees until 1992, when they were labelled as “undocumented Myanmar nationals” and considered to be illegally residing in Bangladesh. Since 2017, the Government has changed this position and has engaged in a registration exercise aimed at issuing ID cards to Rohingya refugees, in a view to increase access to service provision for the affected populations. However, as of October 2018, only [18,500](#) individuals had been registered through the joint Government of Bangladesh-UNHCR verification exercise.

Bangladeshi migration

Bangladeshi are among the top five nationalities of migrants in the world, with around [7.5 million](#) Bangladeshi residing overseas. According to a study published by IOM in April 2018, [90 per cent](#) of interviewees among potential Bangladeshi migrants indicated GCC and South-East Asia as [most reported destinations](#). In the same study, [56 per cent](#) of interviewees added that they would consider migrating to Europe as a secondary movement after having spent up to five years in GCC.

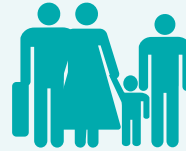
The IOM study suggests that, regardless of the level of access to legal documentation, Bangladeshi tend to move along the same routes. [Almost half](#) of the potential Bangladeshi migrants interviewed by IOM would reportedly resort to regular channels, either public or private, while [42 per cent](#) would rely on irregular channels, with the support of family, friends and brokers.

Bangladeshis arriving in Europe, include both those who decided to travel to Europe as a secondary destination, and those – potentially representing a [growing group](#) – which considered Europe as their first destination. The two groups travel along the same routes, via Libya, Turkey or the GCC, and face similar protection risks. In 2017, Bangladesh were among the [top four](#) countries of origin of sea arrivals to Italy ([8,995](#)), and [20,000](#) Bangladeshi workers were estimated to be in Libya. Bangladeshis who attempt reaching Europe through either the Central Mediterranean Route (via the Gulf Countries and then Libya) or the Eastern Mediterranean route are frequently exposed to severe protection risks. According to a IOM study published in April 2018, [92 per cent](#) of respondents reported having suffered from at least one trafficking or exploitative practice while in transit.

Myanmar



Population
53,855,735 (2018)



IDPs
408,000 (2017)

Key trends in mixed migration

Myanmar refugees

Decades of discrimination against ethnic minorities, armed conflict, and ethnic cleansing have resulted in displacement of Myanmar people to neighbouring countries and beyond.

Since 2012, renewed ethnic hostilities between Buddhist and Muslim minorities in Rakhine State have led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people in the region. As of today, around [100,000 people](#), mostly originating from the Muslim Rohingya minority, still live in camps on the outskirts of Sittwe, the Rakhine state capital. In August 2018, the IDP camps in Sittwe, Kyauktaw and Myebon towns were closed down. At the country level, there are currently [18 IDP](#) camps open. Rohingya are denied of citizenship, which prevents them from enjoying freedom of movement, work legally in the country or accessing basic services such as education and health. Since August 2017, [710,000](#) Rohingya have fled Myanmar and settle in refugee camps in the neighbouring Cox's Bazar province of Bangladesh.

After the 2015 Andaman Sea crisis, limited accounts of sea crossing of refugees and migrants from Myanmar to Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia have been reported. In 2018, three boats carrying [140](#) Rohingya refugees have been intercepted at sea by Indonesian and Malaysian authorities, while [several boats](#) have been reportedly identified and returned by the Myanmar Navy. Movements across the Andaman Sea usually follow seasonal trends, with the majority of sea crossing taking place between November and March. As the 2018 monsoon season came to an end, the [UNHCR spokesperson for Myanmar has revealed](#) having been informed of reports of boats leaving the country, and expressed concerns over the risk of increasing departures. On November 8, [dozens of Rohingya have reportedly](#) left from Bangladesh and Myanmar on several vessels trying to reach Malaysia, and were intercepted and returned by the Myanmar Navy.

Chin minority

Since the victory of the National League of democracy (NLD) in the Myanmar 2015 general elections, progress has been made in terms of restoration of peace and security in the country. In June 2018, UNHCR has declared that as of January 2020 all [protection for Chin refugees will end](#) as the situation in Myanmar Chin State can now be considered stable and secure. Largely Christian, Chin account for one of the major ethnic groups in Myanmar and have long been considered as one of the most persecuted minority groups in Myanmar. However, the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN) has [expressed concern](#) stressing that despite the improvements that followed 2015 general elections, substantive change has still not materialized in terms of higher safeguards for the minority groups. The ongoing military presence and the recent accounts of human rights violations perpetuated from the official army in Chin state [raise doubts about the effective state of peace](#). In addition, the APRRN pointed out that the return of former refugees may exacerbate tensions. In response to these criticisms, UNCHR has [postponed](#)

[the start of the repatriation programme](#) from Malaysia and has instead performed an [investigative mission](#) in September and October 2018.

Migration from Myanmar

Thailand and Malaysia host the largest share of refugees and migrants originating from Myanmar abroad. An estimated [1.9 to 3 million](#) refugees and migrants originating from Myanmar reportedly live and work in Thailand, a large proportion of whom are unregistered. According to the UN Department and Social Affairs figures, more than [250,000](#) were officially registered in Malaysia in 2015. Singapore has also emerged in the last ten years as top destination for Myanmar people migrating abroad, with more than [200,000](#) people originating from Myanmar reportedly residing in the country in 2018. According to the Livelihoods and Food Security Trust Fund (LIFT), a nongovernmental organization (NGO) based in Yangon, [lack of economic opportunity and fragile livelihoods](#) represent the key drivers of migration from Myanmar. In April 2018, human rights activists have denounced the [increasing barriers](#) faced by refugees and migrants originating from Myanmar when trying to gain a legal status in Thailand. Refugees and migrants from Myanmar are now asked to provide [additional documentation](#) proving their citizenship in order to obtain the legal status, which would oblige them either to go back to Myanmar – and be potentially exposed to violence and persecution - or to resort to expensive brokers.

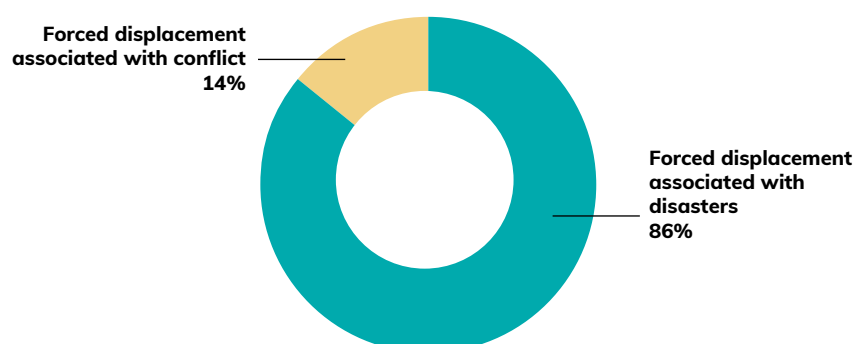
Migrants from Myanmar in Thailand are often [victims of trafficking](#). Accounts of sex trafficking cases especially targeting children and exploitative practices of forced labour on Thai and foreign-owned fishing boats have been frequently [reported](#) in recent years. As of October 2018, [170 human trafficking cases](#) have been reported by authorities by the beginning of the year, including the forced selling of children and illegal surrogacy. The victims were being deported to China and Thailand.

Internal Displacement

It is estimated that there are currently more than [400,000](#) people who have been forcibly displaced in Myanmar. The majority of these forced displacements are associated with disasters ([351,000](#)), while the remaining are related to enduring ethnic conflicts ([57,000](#)). However, access constraints registered in Rakhine state since August 2017 prevent the international community from gaining an accurate understanding of the scale of internal displacement there.

Considered one of the world's longest-running civil wars, the armed conflict in Northern Myanmar has displaced about [100,000](#) people in camps in the Kachin state. Since the beginning of 2018, clashes between the Myanmar military (Tatmadaw) and the Kachin Independence Army have intensified, leading to the displacement of more than [20,000](#). A recent [report](#) by the United Nations Secretary General and published in October 2018, unveiled the grave violations against the [48,000](#) displaced children in Kachin.

Graph 3: Forced displacement in 2017



Source: IDMC Grid

Indonesia



Population

266,794,980 (2018)



Number of refugees and asylum seekers

13,800 (2017)



IDPs

432,015 (2018)

Key trends in mixed migration

Refugees and asylum seekers

The refugee population in Indonesia encompasses people originating from [49](#) different countries of origin, including Hazara from Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as Rohingya from Myanmar. By the end of 2017, there were [9,800](#) refugees and [4,000](#) asylum seekers in Indonesia. It is estimated that around a [third among them](#) lives independently without receiving any form of assistance. More than half ([55 per cent](#)) of the total population of refugees and asylum seekers originates from Afghanistan. Other top nationalities of refugees and asylum seekers in Indonesia are Somali (11 per cent) and Iraqi ([6 per cent](#)). Overall refugees' presence in Indonesia is likely to be underestimated due to the lack of a legal and policy framework ensuring refugee rights.

In Indonesia, Rohingya are considered [as illegal migrants](#), and remain largely unaccounted. In April 2018, two boats carrying [84 refugees and migrants](#) of Rohingya ethnic origin arrived in the western province of Aceh, Indonesia. These arrivals accounted for one of the [main confirmed](#) maritime movements of Rohingya refugees through the Andaman Sea since May 2015, when interceptions and delays in the disembarkation led to dozens of deaths at sea.

Key policy and legal developments

Indonesia is not a signatory party to the 1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol. However, since 2017 the [Presidential Regulation on the Handling of Refugees from Abroad](#) provides a framework for the coordination of Safe and Rescue (SAR) operations and the implementation of UNHCR identification and registration activities in Immigration Detention Centers.

Migration from Indonesia

Indonesia has a long history of emigration. In 2018, [9 million](#) Indonesians worked overseas, representing almost [7 per cent](#) of the country's labour force. Traditionally, migration from Indonesia has mostly been directed towards neighbouring Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong SAR (China) and Saudi Arabia. Indonesians often have to pay high recruitment fees in order to be able to work abroad, which may account for almost [60-70 per cent](#) of their salary in the country of destination.

Key policy and legal developments

The Government of Indonesia has not ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO) Private Employment Agencies Convention of 1998, which prohibits charging workers placement fees. However, in 2017, the Government passed Law No. 18/2017 on the Protection of Indonesian Migrant Workers, which oversees the provision of predeparture vocational training and the placement of workers, in a view to tighten control over the private recruitment firms' practice of charging migrants' substantial fees.

Smuggling and trafficking dynamics

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) estimate private recruitment firms to be responsible for [more than half](#) of Indonesian female trafficking overseas. Debt bondage, withholding of documents, and threats of violence have been reported as frequent practices used to keep victims in forced labour.

Traditionally being a major country of origin in the region, Indonesia has recently emerged as [transit and destination country](#). With its 3,000 islands, Indonesia naturally offers a significant number of entry and transit points for undetected illegal movements throughout the country. The Straits of Malacca in particular, is a global hotspot for the smuggling of goods, and people. Refugees and asylum seekers originating from the South-Asian region and heading to Australia (although the numbers have substantially decreased since 2013), as well as Indonesian workers abroad, travel along the same routes with the help of [smugglers](#).

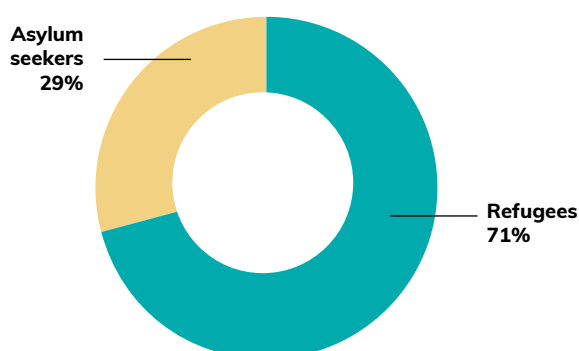
Key policy and legal developments

In August 2018, Indonesia hosted the [Seventh Bali Process Ministerial Conference](#) and Second Bali Process Government and Business Forum. Since 2002, the Bali Process has been a forum for policy dialogue, information sharing and inter-governmental cooperation to fight against smuggling of people. The Process is co-chaired by Indonesia and Australia and today counts 49 members, including several UN agencies. Its strategic document, the [Bali Process Strategy for Cooperation](#), aims at fostering cooperation between private business and government on tackling modern slavery.

Internal Displacement

In 2018, a series of earthquakes struck central Sulawesi province of Indonesia, causing severe disruptions, resulting liquefaction and landslides. The earthquake also triggered a tsunami which hit the provincial capital, Palu, and Donggala. The Red Cross estimates that more than [50 per cent](#) of the buildings have collapsed or are severely damaged. More than [220,000](#) people have been forcibly displaced by this natural disaster, and have now been sheltered in [980](#) formal and informal camp sites in the three most affected districts.

Graph 4: Refugee population in Indonesia (2018)



Source: UNHCR 2018

Malaysia



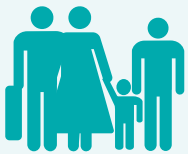
Population

32,042,458 (2018)



Number of refugees and asylum seekers

161,140 (2018)



IDPs

765,000 (2017)

Key trends in mixed migration Refugees and asylum seekers

Out of the total population of [161,140](#) registered refugees in Malaysia, the large majority group - accounting for almost [87 per cent](#) of the total population (139,740) - originate from Myanmar. Among them, almost half ([48 per cent](#)) are Rohingya, with the remaining being mostly Chins ([19 per cent](#)), Myanmar Muslims ([6 per cent](#)), Rakhines and Arakanese ([2 per cent](#)). Malaysia has also been a country of destination for refugees originating from other countries in Asia, such as Pakistan ([5,810](#)), Sri Lankans ([1,840](#)), and Afghans ([1,680](#)). Furthermore, Malaysia is one of the few countries that allow Syrians to [obtain a visa](#) upon arrival. Recent estimates set the size of the unregistered refugee and migrant population between [40,000 and 100,000](#) individuals.

Registered refugees can access public healthcare in Malaysia, which is however generally [unaffordable](#) as they are granted no medical subsidy or discount. At the same time, refugees are [prevented access](#) to the education system.

Key policy and legal developments

Malaysia is not a signatory party to the [1951 Refugee Convention or the 1967 Protocol](#). There is currently [no comprehensive domestic legal or policy framework](#) aimed at identifying and protecting refugees. Under the Malaysian Immigration Act, refugees are considered undocumented migrants and are at risk of arrest, detention, deportation and refoulement. However, an Attorney General's Circular issued in 2005 provides a degree of immunity from prosecution for asylum-seekers and refugees registered with UNHCR.

Access to service is very limited for asylum seekers and refugees. UNHCR recently pointed out the situation of refugee children, which are currently unable to access the formal education system in Malaysia. At present, it is estimated that only [35 per cent](#) of school-age children regularly attend informal schools run by faith-based and charitable groups supported by UNHCR. This parallel system does not provide official certification, meaning that children are unable to continue to secondary schools.

Migration to Malaysia

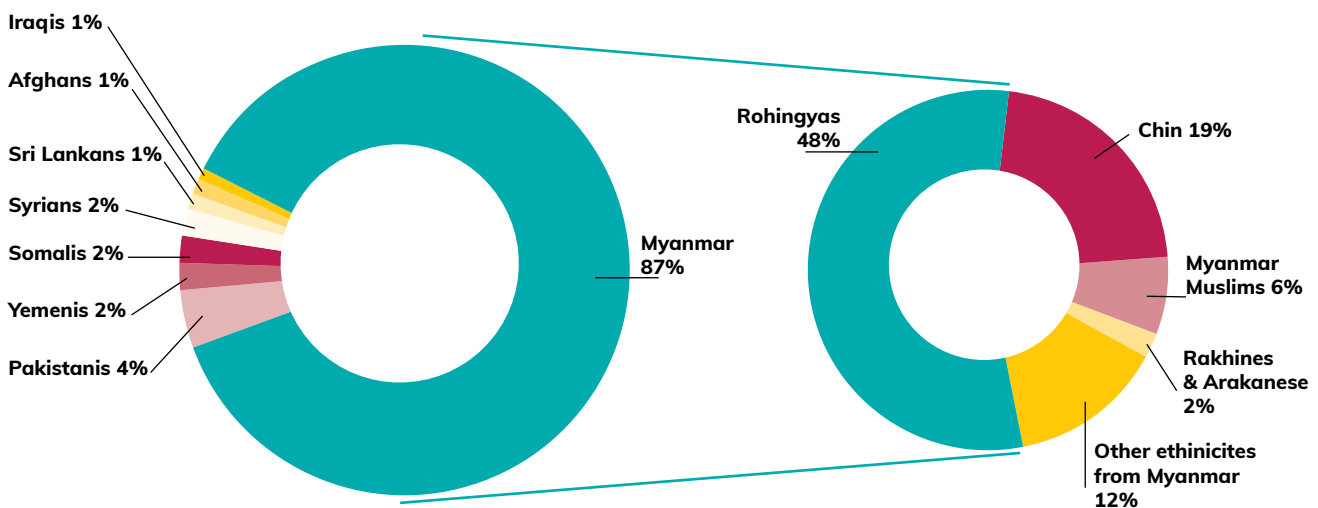
With over 2 million registered migrants, the Malaysian economic heavily relies on migrant workforce from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal and the Philippines, among others. Since 2017, the Government of Malaysia has intensified the persecution of undocumented refugees and migrants employed in Malaysia, by increasing penalties and authorizing detention in case of lack of official documents. In the first six months of 2018, [19,969](#) undocumented refugees and migrants have been arrested and subjected to detention. Among them, says [Amnesty International](#), there are victims of human trafficking.

Smuggling and trafficking dynamics

Malaysia is a natural transit corridor between Asian countries and Australia and has emerged as major hub for smuggling and trafficking networks.

Media reporting on the discovery of migrant camps and mass graves along the border with Thailand in 2015 and 2017 raised concerns on alleged complicity of border officials in facilitating migrant smuggling and trafficking. Following the increase in the account of victims of trafficking registered in 2017, the US State Department announced the [downgrade](#) of Malaysia in its 2018 report on human trafficking. The overwhelming majority of victims are estimated to be foreign workers, who constitute more than [20 per cent of Malaysian workforce](#).

Graph 5: Registered refugees by country of origin and ethnicity



Source: UNHCR

Highlighted Research and Reports for 2018

- [The Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees \(2018 – 2019\)](#) was published in [October 2018](#) in a view to promote a coordinating framework for the identification and implementation of durable solutions for Afghan refugees.
- In October, IOM released an [analysis of the profiles and vulnerabilities of Myanmar migrants to Thailand](#). This Flow Monitoring Surveys aims at providing an enhanced understanding of a displacement pattern that concerns around [63 per cent](#) of Myanmar's overall migrant population.
- A report of the Secretary General published in October 2018, unveiled the grave human rights violations suffered by [children affected by the conflict](#) in Myanmar.
- In September 2018, MMC published new report on the [experiences of female refugees and migrants in origin, transit and destination countries](#), providing a comparative study of women on the move originating from Afghanistan, West & East Africa.
- Volume II of UNODC report on [Migration Smuggling in Asia: Current Trends and Related Challenges](#) was released in July 2018. The report outlines the current patterns of migrant smuggling in Asia and the Pacific and provides recommendations in a view to support governments in providing effective responses to human smuggling.
- In April 2018, IOM published a new [study on attitudes and practices](#) of Bangladeshi migrants, analysing intentions and risk attitudes of potential migrants.
- In April 2018, the Lowy Institute published a report exploring the [role of migration as complementary pathways for refugees in the Asia-Pacific region](#). The study examines whether present legal labour migration schemes can be opened to humanitarian migrants who may otherwise become targets for smugglers and/or human traffickers.
- In January 2018, NRC published a report on the [protection challenges of IDPs in Afghanistan](#).
- With a recently published report, Save the Children shed lights on the protection risks and vulnerabilities of [Afghan children](#) returned from Europe in 2016.

For more information visit:
mixedmigration.org

