

MMC Asia and the Pacific

QUARTER 1 2023



Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: Asia and the Pacific

This Quarterly Mixed Migration Update (QMMU) covers Asia and the Pacific. The core countries of focus for this region are Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Malaysia, Myanmar, Australia and Türkiye. Depending on the quarterly trends and migration-related updates, more attention may be given to any of the countries over the rest.

The QMMUs offer a quarterly update on new trends and dynamics related to mixed migration and relevant policy developments in the region. These updates are based on a compilation of a wide range of secondary (data) sources, brought together within a regional framework and applying a mixed migration analytical lens. Similar QMMUs are available for all MMC regions.

MMC is a global network engaged in data collection, research, analysis, and policy and programmatic development on mixed migration, with regional hubs hosted in Danish Refugee Council (DRC) regional offices in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Latin America, and a global team based across Copenhagen, Geneva and Brussels. For more information on MMC, the QMMUs from other regions and contact details of regional MMC teams, visit mixedmigration.org and follow us at [@Mixed_Migration](https://twitter.com/Mixed_Migration)

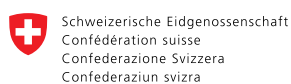
MMC's understanding of mixed migration

"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 engaged in mixed migration 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. Mixed migration describes refugees and migrants traveling along similar routes, using similar means of travel – often traveling irregularly, and wholly or partially, assisted by migrant smugglers.

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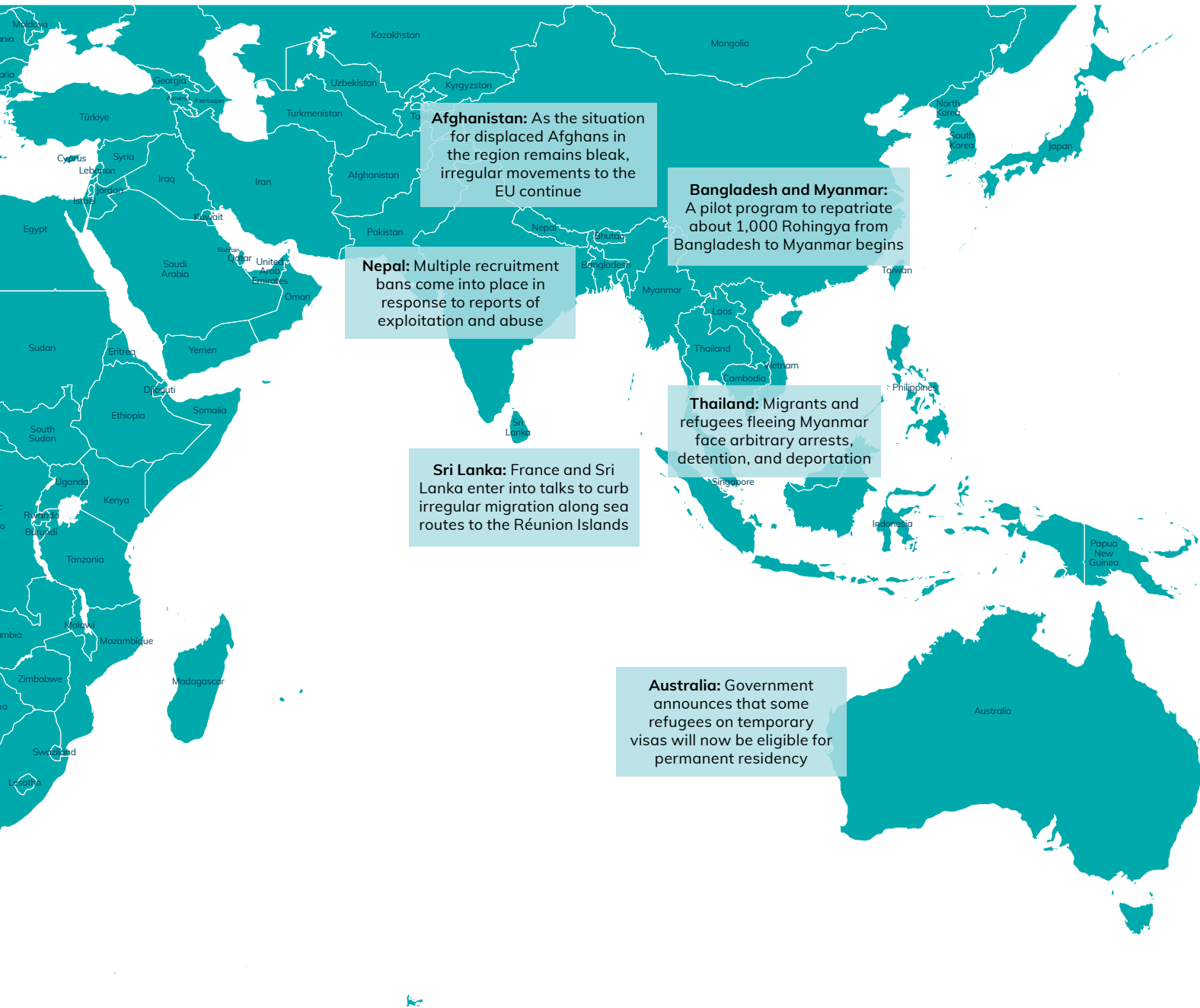
Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: Asia and the Pacific

Quarter 1 - 2023

Key Updates

- **Deportation risks for Afghans in neighbouring countries continue:** Afghans are at increasing risk of being forcibly returned to Afghanistan from [Iran](#), [Pakistan](#), and [Türkiye](#). Although a humanitarian corridor enabled [the arrival of 100 Afghans in Italy](#), and [Iran reportedly approved residence permits for over a million Afghan refugees this quarter](#), options for seeking international protection for Afghans remain limited.
- **Rise in number of Pakistani migrants opting for irregular routes to Europe:** Pakistanis are increasingly embarking on dangerous journeys to Europe via Libya and Türkiye. The [rise in migration](#), to a large extent is driven by the country's [worsening economic crisis](#).
- **New initiatives advance regular migration pathways for Indians:** India continues to facilitate the migration of skilled workers to [Finland](#), [Germany](#), [Italy](#), and [Norway](#), and other countries outside of the South Asian continent. Bilateral migration agreements with [Austria](#) and [UK](#) were signed to address rising irregular migration of Indians to Europe.
- **Recruitment and regularisation of foreign workers scaled up to address labour shortage in Malaysia:** The Malaysian government has launched the [Foreign Worker Recruitment Relaxation Plan](#) during the first quarter of 2023 and extended the [Workforce Recalibration Program](#) for another year to continue regularising undocumented migrants in the country.
- **Viable and sustainable solutions for Rohingya remain distant:** While Rohingya [continue to face protracted displacement outside of Myanmar](#), Bangladesh has reiterated its [inability to host any more Rohingya refugees](#) as well as its intent to [repatriate 1,140 Rohingya](#) to Myanmar.

Regional Overview*



*Information on the map relates to selected updates and does not represent all mixed migration within and out of Asia and the Pacific.

Mixed Migration Regional Updates

Afghan movements

Afghans detained in neighbouring countries face deteriorating conditions and deportation risks

Conditions in Iran and Pakistan continue to worsen for Afghans with thousands detained in prisons, including children. Around [600 Afghans are currently imprisoned in Iran](#) and [thousands of refugees are being detained in Pakistan](#) after recent government crackdowns on irregular migration. During the quarter, reports emerged that at least [four Afghans have died](#) while detained in Pakistan with many more [experiencing inhumane conditions and deteriorating health as a result](#).

The Government of Pakistan is currently reviewing its [policies regarding Afghans](#) and has pledged to further regulate the entry and stay of Afghans and facilitate the return of those without valid documentation. Risk of deportation is also increasing in Iran and Türkiye. Despite pledging to [approve residence permits](#) for over a million Afghan refugees, in January 2023, Iran [deported 3,569 Afghans](#), including 70 families. Denial of asylum applications and deportations have also increased against the backdrop of intensified anti-refugee sentiments in Türkiye. Between January 1 and February 19 2023, [5,112 Afghans were deported from Türkiye](#).

Irregular movements to the EU and UK continue in the absence of safe pathways

During this quarter, a humanitarian corridor enabled [the arrival of 100 Afghans in Italy](#), however, overall humanitarian pathways to the EU remain limited for most Afghans. Data published in February this quarter shows that [129,000 Afghans](#) applied for asylum in the European Union in 2022. During the same timeframe, the number of Afghan arrivals to the UK via the English Channel increased six-fold to 8,633 as compared to 2021 figures, with [71 percent arriving between August and December 2022](#) alone. Meanwhile, only [22 Afghans including eight children](#) have been resettled in the UK under a government scheme that promised to help vulnerable Afghans in the wake of the Taliban takeover.

Bleak prospects in Brazil spur irregular migration towards the U.S.

While Brazil was one of the few nations [issuing humanitarian visas to Afghans](#) in the wake of the Taliban takeover, many arrivals remain camped at the airport, living in cramped conditions and without access to integration support. Faced with limited options in Brazil, some have attempted to continue their journey northward to the United States [through the Darien Gap](#). Reports released this quarter indicate that there has been close to a [30-fold increase in Afghans](#) apprehended at the U.S. border over 2022.

Efforts to secure safety and education opportunities for Afghan women and girls continue

Afghan women and girls who arrive in [Denmark](#), [Sweden](#), and [Finland](#) have been offered protection as the three countries recently announced their intention to grant refugee status on the 'basis of gender'.

During the quarter, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) also continued [facilitating the relocation of Afghan girls to Rwanda](#), where they will be enrolled as students at the School of Leadership, Afghanistan (SOLA) and continue their education. Afghan refugee children in Iran are expected to benefit from improved access to education as [Qatar pledged USD 20 million to develop education programs for Iranian and Afghan refugee children](#) through the Qatar Fund for Development.

Mixed migration from Pakistan to Europe increases

Pakistanis, alongside Afghans and Bangladeshis, are increasingly making dangerous irregular journeys to Europe via Libya and Türkiye. The [worsening economic crisis](#) in Pakistan has, to a large extent, contributed to a [rise in irregular migration out of the country](#). In March 2023, [20 Pakistani nationals and Afghan refugees](#), including a famous female Hazara sports star who represented Pakistan in several international competitions, were declared dead in a shipwreck off the eastern coast of Italy, having departed from Türkiye, after leaving Pakistan. In another tragic incident in February 2023, [28 Pakistani nationals](#) died in a shipwreck off the Italian coast. The EU responded by declaring its intent to enter into a [migration agreement with Pakistan to facilitate the return of migrants and prevent irregular departures](#). Failing to keep up with the terms of the agreement could result in Pakistan facing visa sanctions from the EU, which in turn might push more migrants and refugees to opt for irregular routes out of Pakistan.

With a rise in irregular migration out of Pakistan, smuggling networks and exploitative actors targeting migrants and refugees are increasingly coming into wider focus. Pakistani migrants report paying steep prices to smuggling networks to get to Europe. Those working in Spain reportedly paid [USD 12,800 – 21,400](#) per person to smugglers for their journey via the Balkan route. Within Pakistan, it came to light this quarter that prospective migrants were frauded into [paying an immigration firm to secure visas](#) in Australia, Canada, and European countries which turned out to be a scam. The Government of Pakistan is seeking means to compensate those who were victims of this scam.

New initiatives advance regular migration pathways for Indian migrants to Europe and the UK

India continues to foster agreements to facilitate the migration of its skilled workers to [Finland](#), [Germany](#), [Italy](#), [Norway](#), as well as other countries outside of the South Asian region. In January 2023, the [UK included India in its Young Professionals Scheme](#), enabling 3,000 Indians aged between 18-30 to apply to live and work in the UK for up to two years without a sponsor or a job. Simultaneously, however, the UK is also [amending its Graduate Study Visa agreement for Indian students](#), reducing the grace period for seeking employment in the UK after graduation from two years to six months, as the government claims that the current scheme is being [misused by foreign students to stay longer in the UK post-graduation](#).

Migration and mobility agreements between India and UK are moving forward at a time when the number of Indians arriving in the UK irregularly is on the rise. As of February 2023, Indians were the [third largest nationality to cross the English Channel](#), after Afghans and Syrians. Those who do not qualify for refugee status, which is often the case, will likely [face swift deportation from the UK](#). Similarly, in a [migration agreement with Austria](#), India has agreed to accept the return of Indian asylum seekers who do not qualify for refugee status. In exchange, Austria has agreed to issue up to 800 work visas to Indians per year, in addition to visas issued under working holiday and student exchange programs.

Challenges continue for refugees and people seeking asylum in India

In India, accessing protection assistance has been challenging for asylum seekers and refugees. As of January 2023, an estimated [31,050 Myanmar nationals are seeking asylum in Mizoram](#), primarily those arriving from the Chin state, who [have been fleeing intensified airstrikes](#) since the military's seizure of power in Myanmar in February 2021. In January 2023, [80 Myanmar nationals were arrested](#) and imprisoned in Manipur for entering the country irregularly. India is increasingly securitising its borders as local authorities perceive migration from Bangladesh, and Myanmar as a security threat. Local authorities have [urged the government to issue guidelines on the deportation of these groups](#).

[Living conditions of Rohingya in India continue to deteriorate](#) as refugees in detention centres report a lack of access to basic amenities. The Central Government of India also reinstated a policy that foreign nationals without adequate travel documents, including UNHCR refugee card bearers, are deemed "illegal migrants" [subject to deportation](#). India is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and therefore is not obligated to recognise the refugee status conferred by UNHCR.

Remittances from Sri Lankan migrants help bolster economy as labour pathways are strengthened

Migration is supporting Sri Lanka's slow return from the economic crisis. Money remitted by Sri Lankan labour migrants abroad reflected an upward trend this quarter after a temporary slump in 2021-2022. [Incoming remittances](#) in January 2023 stood at USD 437.5 million, as compared to USD 259.2 million in the same period last year.

This quarter, [Israel declared its intent to recruit 2,000 Sri Lankan women](#) in the care sector, urging the Sri Lankan government to prioritise providing care-giving training to its female population. The [Sri Lankan government also engaged with key host countries such as the UAE](#) over the quarter to ensure the safety of Sri Lankan migrant workers seeking employment abroad. Key topics discussed included the prevention of human trafficking, developing a mutually agreed upon system to validate the qualifications of Sri Lankan workers, regulating labour recruitment fees and providing migrant workers with 60 percent of their salary for three months in the event of a job loss as a form of unemployment insurance.

Irregular boat movements from Sri Lanka to French territories continue

Despite discussions of expanding labour pathways for Sri Lankans, many continue to migrate irregularly. This quarter a group of 38 Sri Lankans who were deported from the Réunion Islands in January 2023 reported paying between [USD 1,238 – 3,405 per person to Sri Lankan smugglers](#) for facilitating their journey from Sri Lanka. In response to a rise in Sri Lankan arrivals to Réunion Islands, [France and Sri Lanka entered into talks](#) in February to further develop operational capacities to curb irregular migration along the sea route to the French territories.

Nepali migrant workers face barriers to labour mobility

In January 2023, the [UK, an important destination for Nepali seasonal farm workers, declared that it might not recruit workers](#) from Nepal in the coming year following reports of high recruitment fees, trafficking, and exploitation of workers at the hands of recruitment agencies in Nepal. A [recruitment agency in Nepal was served a notice by the UK court](#) for engaging in acts associated with trafficking and slavery after workers enlisted in the UK through the agency reported paying enormous fees of up to USD 15,000 to secure jobs.

Simultaneously, Nepal issued a [ban on the deployment of Nepalis to Qatar and Dubai to work as bike riders and taxi drivers](#), after receiving complaints of workers unable to secure a licence and being left without a job for months following their arrival. Human rights and labour experts in Nepal have criticised the ban, stating that it will only increase the vulnerability of Nepali workers in the Gulf citing the repercussions of similar measures on women domestic workers in the region. Instead of restricting labour mobility, they argue that the Government of Nepal should focus on ensuring the safety of workers in destination countries and providing more effective pre-departure training.

Malaysia continues ambiguous response to migrants and refugees

In response to [labour shortages](#) in the country, Malaysia launched a [Foreign Worker Recruitment Relaxation Plan](#) this quarter. The plan includes [streamlining processes for hiring migrant workers](#) in five critical sectors, allowing qualified employers to recruit foreign workers from 15 source countries, and bypassing set prerequisites around the sector of employment and qualifications. In addition, the [Workforce Recalibration Program](#), a means of regularising undocumented migrants and employing them in the manufacturing, construction, services, agriculture, plantation, mining, security, and domestic work sectors, has been extended for another year until the end of 2023. As a result, in January 2023, Malaysia recruited [25,000 foreign workers primarily from Bangladesh](#) and approved about [380,000 applications from foreign workers who overstayed and did not have valid documents](#).

Despite some positive measures seen this quarter, concerns remain regarding the conditions migrant workers face in Malaysia. Although attempts have been made to regulate recruitment costs, reports continue to emerge of [workers required to pay well above benchmarked rates](#). During the quarter, employers in the manufacturing sector backed the Prime Minister's call to [abolish the predominant use of private recruitment](#)

[agencies](#), instead advocating to hire foreign workers through agreements made between governments, to reduce recruitment fees and address the exploitation of foreign workers.

Despite measures to regularise some undocumented migrant workers in Malaysia, arrests and detention of undocumented migrants and refugees continued this quarter. Between [February](#) and [March](#) 2023, immigration authorities raided [multiple makeshift settlements](#), leading to the arrest of around [300 undocumented migrants primarily from Indonesia](#). The Government also [detained 544 people, including 30 children](#), during an operation targeting a syndicate accused of issuing fake refugee cards to ethnic Chin from Myanmar.

According to former migrants and refugee detainees [interviewed by Reuters](#), the conditions in Malaysia's detention centres are crowded and unhygienic with inadequate access to food, water and healthcare. Human rights groups have [urged Malaysia to investigate conditions further](#) following reports that 150 foreigners, including 7 children died whilst in detention in 2022.

In February 2023, Malaysia announced that it would start working on [a plan to release all children in detention](#), with assistance from Non-Governmental Organisations that specialise in child-welfare. As of January 2023, 1,179 of the [15,845 refugees and migrants in detention](#), were children.

Rising insecurity in Myanmar remains the primary driver of migration, while difficulties await those who leave

This quarter the de facto authorities of [Myanmar stopped issuing and renewing passports](#) in a move which some claim is politically motivated to prevent anti-government activists from leaving the country and curb remittances funding resistant movements. Labour rights activists in Myanmar believe that the move will [likely increase irregular migration](#) as people seek to leave the country via alternative means.

Meanwhile, refugees who fled Myanmar in the last two years face difficulties in neighbouring countries. Some [1,100 refugees approved for resettlement have been stuck in Thailand for over a year](#), despite having the approval to be resettled to the US or to other countries. Reports of [arrest, detention and deportation](#) are common in Thailand with some being asked to pay up to USD 300 for their release. Over 600 migrants were [detained](#) and deported from Ranong to Myanmar by Thai authorities in February this quarter.

Bangladesh, which currently hosts approximately 1.2 million Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, has continued to indicate its [inability to host any more Rohingya refugees as well as its intent to move ahead with repatriation](#). In February 2023, at the 8th Ministerial Conference of the Bali Process, [Bangladesh restated the need for the international community to address the root causes that fuel irregular migration](#), stressing the role played by protracted conflict, worsening structural inequalities, absence of regular migration pathways, and climate-induced displacement in forcing people to opt for irregular channels. In another development this quarter, Myanmar and Bangladesh began moving forward with a China-mediated [pilot program involving the repatriation of 1,000 Rohingya](#) from refugee camps in Bangladesh to the Rakhine state in Myanmar. However, [UNHCR has voiced concern](#) about the repatriation program not being a safe and viable solution for the Rohingya.

During the quarter renewed funding was announced from the EU and US to support displaced Rohingya, particularly in Bangladesh. In March 2023, the US Department of State [pledged to provide USD 24 million in humanitarian assistance](#) to Rohingya in Bangladesh. [USAID committed an additional USD 75 million](#) to work in collaboration with the World Food Programme to provide critically needed food and nutrition assistance, infrastructure maintenance, disaster risk reduction, and logistics support. [Sweden committed USD 7.6 million](#) towards providing 19,000 Rohingya households in Cox's Bazaar with cleaner cooking fuel and the [EU allotted USD 47.7 million \(EUR 43 million\)](#) to address the needs of migrants and refugees fleeing Myanmar, as well as Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. However, despite renewed funding by states, in March 2023, the World Food Programme announced a funding shortfall of USD 125 million for their response in Bangladesh. As a result, they have had to reduce monthly food vouchers for Rohingya in Bangladesh from USD 12 to USD 10 per head – a decision likely to [exacerbate food insecurity, malnutrition, and insecurity](#) in the refugee camps.

Faced with uncertainty and worsening conditions in Bangladesh, many Rohingya continue to attempt onward journeys to other countries in the region. In February 69 Rohingya, including 19 men, 22 women and 28 children who set off from Bangladesh were en route to Indonesia when bad weather conditions forced them to divert and [arrive at Andaman and Nicobar Islands in India](#).

Australia amends policy on refugee protection, inhumane conditions in detention centres persist

In February 2023, Australia announced two important changes with respect to its policy on refugees. Firstly, approximately [19,000 refugees holding Temporary Protection Visas \(TPV\) and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas \(SHEV\) will be able to apply for permanent residency](#). Secondly, the government will allow refugees on permanent visas, including those who arrived by boat, [to apply for family reunification visas](#). However, this change in policy would not apply to refugees on TPVs, including the many who arrived after [Operation Sovereign Borders began in 2013](#). These changes were followed by Australia announcing continued efforts to increase in air surveillance and the use of patrol ships to [ensure that irregular migration to Australia does not increase](#) as a result.

Meanwhile, refugees and asylum seekers detained throughout Australia continue to report [inhumane living conditions](#). In January 2023, an Iraqi asylum seeker, detained for five years, tragically [died by suicide](#) in the Villawood detention centre. In February 2023, two Bangladeshi refugees held on Nauru, the offshore immigration processing and detention centre, [sewed their lips shut in protest](#) against being detained for almost a decade with no progress towards resettlement. Research published by the University of New South Wales released this quarter, found that [90 percent of children](#) who were previously detained in Nauru suffered from physical ill-health, 80 percent suffer from mental health issues and almost half (45 percent) reported engaging in self-harm or have attempted suicide.

Border controls along the Europe-Türkiye border as irregular migration stance hardens

After deploying 250 border police near the Turkish border, Greece announced plans to build a [140 km fence](#) along the border, an extension of the 40 km fence completed in 2021. In March 2023, the EU launched a [pilot project](#) with Bulgaria under the bloc's initiative to strengthen its border and migration management. One of the key priorities is to tighten surveillance measures at the Bulgaria-Türkiye border. In addition to tightening the EU's external border surveillance and controls, [other policies](#) including deployment of EU border guards outside the bloc and [developing safe third-country arrangements](#) similar to the [2016 EU-Türkiye deal](#) were also proposed.

The deportation and forced return of migrants and refugees from Türkiye [continues in the wake of upcoming public elections](#). In 2022, Türkiye deported 124,441 irregular migrants and refugees and facilitated the voluntary return of 58,758 Syrians, the highest number of deportations recorded in the country. Türkiye also [denied entry to 280,206 irregular migrants and refugees and detained a further 236,572](#) in 2022. In line with measures Türkiye is taking against irregular migration, [a proposed policy](#) will require migrants entering Türkiye with a visa to be insured before arrival. The insurance is expected to cover any fees incurred during deportation.

The full extent of destruction from the earthquakes in Syria and Türkiye in February continues to unfold. As of March 2023, there were [54,448 earthquake-related deaths](#) reported in Syria and Türkiye, and a total of 3.2 million people displaced, including [850,000 children](#). Syrian refugee populations who have been seeking refuge in the Syrian-Türkiye border region have been disproportionately affected by the earthquakes. [Canada](#) and [European countries](#) including Belgium, Germany, Netherlands, and Switzerland have taken steps to ease migration procedures for Turkish and Syrian citizens affected by the earthquakes. [Australia is planning to expedite visa applications from people affected by the earthquakes](#) and extend the stay of earthquake victims who are already in Australia.

Thematic Focus: Spotlight on Bangladesh: Labour mobility, irregular migration, and human rights protection

In 2022, Bangladesh was the [sixth largest migrant sending country](#) world over. It presents an intriguing case study of a South Asian country from which large numbers of people migrate to seek opportunities across Asia and further afield in Europe and the Middle East. Despite efforts to expand labour migration pathways within the region and beyond, risky irregular migration, particularly towards Europe, continues to increase. Special measures are also required alongside regular pathways to ensure Bangladeshi migrants are free from exploitation and abuse during their migration journeys.

Migration numbers at an all-time high

While migration from Bangladesh temporarily dipped during Covid-19 it has since picked up pace. The number of [Bangladeshis employed abroad rose](#) from 218,000 in 2020 to [1.13 million in 2022, the highest figure ever recorded](#). These figures, however, do not account for Bangladeshis who migrate via irregular channels. Over the past couple of years, an increasing number of Bangladeshis, mostly unaccompanied men, have been migrating irregularly to Europe, with [numbers in 2022 \(16,487 in total\) more than double the numbers in 2021](#).

Efforts to solidify labour pathways across Asia and beyond

Bangladesh is now throwing its weight behind creating regular pathways for its labour force to migrate to countries in the Middle East and Southeast Asia. In the first quarter of 2023, [323,010 low-skilled workers left Bangladesh](#), with the majority (38 percent) migrating to Saudi Arabia, Malaysia (26 percent) and the UAE (8 percent). Prospects for skilled workers to migrate to Saudi Arabia as plumbers, technicians, electricians, welders, and automotive electricians will be further solidified by a new [worker's recruitment and skills verification program](#). Labour migration to Malaysia has resumed after a 2018 Malaysian government [ban on recruiting new Bangladeshi labour migrants](#) was lifted. Around [24,994 Bangladeshi workers migrated to Malaysia in January 2023](#) alone, and 400,000 more workers are projected to leave for Malaysia by the end of 2023.

Further afield, up to 100 low to medium skilled workers are expected to leave per week to [South Korea](#). Labour [migration to Libya through agreements is expected to resume](#) after nearly a decade of a ban imposed by the Bangladeshi government. Moreover, Bangladeshi workers who have worked in the shipbuilding industry in South Korea or Singapore will be eligible to work in [Russia](#) in 2023, following a labour mobility agreement between the two countries.

Regular pathways are not enough to combat risks - mechanisms also needed to prevent the exploitation of labour migrants

Despite scaling up labour migration pathways, Bangladesh's protection mechanisms to support its citizens abroad remain weak. An [assessment of Bangladesh's policies on migration governance by the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights of Migrants in January 2023](#) illustrated a need to strengthen recruitment regulations in order to protect migrants from exploitation and abuse. While the government has capped recruitment costs for workers, [instances of exploitative practices](#) by middlemen and private recruitment agencies in Bangladesh are still commonly reported. As greater numbers of people seek to go abroad and processes become restricted and centralised under registered recruitment agencies, potential migrants are forced to pay exorbitant fees as commission to middlemen and recruitment agents to push their applications forward and compete for limited spots. Though the migration cost for Malaysia is fixed at USD 751 (BDT 78,948) by the government of Bangladesh, [workers report paying as much as USD 4,180 \(BDT 440,000\) in application fees](#).

Irregular migration to Europe continues – at significant cost

While Bangladesh is working hard to expand labour mobility schemes for its citizens, [Bangladeshi migrants continue to undertake risky irregular journeys to Europe](#), transiting through UAE, Egypt, Libya or Türkiye. According to the IOM, in 2022, [16,487](#) Bangladeshis entered Europe via irregular routes. The large majority (15,228) arrived in Italy via the Central Mediterranean Route, with most having transited through Libya.

Hazards faced by migrants and refugees along irregular routes to Europe are well documented. Along the Central Mediterranean route, [exploitation, abuse and deaths are common](#) occurrences, both in Libya and at sea. As of December 2022, [IOM reported that there were 21,653 migrants from Bangladesh in Libya](#), with over 2,000 having been detained in [horrendous conditions](#) throughout the year.

Along with the human costs Bangladeshi migrants face, the financial cost of irregular migration is also high. Bangladeshi migrants report paying significant fees for smuggling services to Europe. For the journey to Italy, on average Bangladeshi [migrants report paying up to USD 8,000](#) – twice the amount they would have to pay to migrate as temporary workers through regular pathways to countries like Malaysia.

However, different to the temporary labour migration of Bangladeshis seen within Asia, many Bangladeshis who migrate to Italy irregularly are looking to [regularise their stay](#) and secure permanent residency, joining the 150,000 Bangladeshis currently living in Italy (the highest Bangladeshi diaspora community within the EU).

Labour mobility and regularisation pathways for Bangladeshis in Europe

In order to address the significant risks facing Bangladeshis on irregular journeys to Europe, safe and regular migration pathways need to be expanded. In 2022, an [MoU between Bangladesh and Greece](#) was signed which seeks to pave the way for the regularisation of the status of up to 15,000 undocumented Bangladeshis in Greece and facilitate the recruitment of 4,000 Bangladeshi seasonal agricultural workers per year. In the same year, Italy announced visas for some [3,500 Bangladeshi labour migrants](#). Bangladesh also expects to send [up to 15,000 workers](#) to work in the construction sector in Romania in 2023. Further EU-wide initiatives could also be considered to complement bilateral efforts between Bangladesh and EU states. This includes pushing for the inclusion of Bangladesh in the [EU's Talent Partnership program](#) – an initiative that would create vocational education and training opportunities, as well as regular pathways for skilled workers to work in sectors such as construction, harbour work, transport and logistics, health and long-term care, agriculture, transport, horticulture, food processing and tourism, throughout Europe.

Alongside labour mobility and regularisation pathways, the EU has been directing resources towards [the sustainable return and reintegration](#) of migrants back to Bangladesh. Under the EU's [Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 for Bangladesh](#), 52 percent of funding is reserved for capital development. Through this programme Bangladesh can dedicate resources to setting up technical training centres that help both returnees and potential migrants upskill with the aim of securing better paid and protected jobs in the future.

Bangladesh contributes significantly to the global migrant workforce. Efforts to expand and strengthen labour migration pathways within the region and further afield are needed to provide opportunities for those wishing to migrate and to provide alternatives to risky irregular journeys. Alongside expanding regular migration pathways, Bangladesh, as well as key host countries, need to create and enforce mechanisms to protect Bangladeshi migrant workers from facing exploitation and abuse.

Highlighted New Research and Reports



[Disaster Displacement: Indonesia Country Briefing](#)

Asian Development Bank and Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre | January 2023

This Indonesia country briefing outlines how events such as floods, earthquakes, and tsunamis force thousands from their homes each year and shows how data can improve assistance as climate vulnerability and low development raise disaster risk. It explains how 6.5 million new displacements were sparked by 1,845 events from 2010-2021 and assesses the impact of disasters including riverine floods on health, housing, and livelihoods. It outlines policies to improve

data collection and limit the financial burden of disasters as unplanned urbanization and climate change threaten to exacerbate displacement across Indonesia's 17,000 islands.

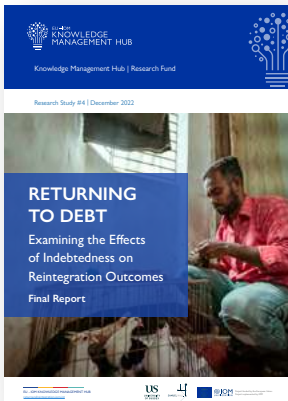


[Protecting Migrants through Good Security Sector Governance in Southeast Asia](#)

Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance | January 2023

This thematic brief looks at several direct links between security sector governance and the needs of migrant communities in Southeast Asia. The study analyses the existing environment and the several layers of local, national, regional and international laws, policies and norms that shape the nexus between SSG and migration. It also assesses the roles and responsibilities of different security sector actors, including non-state security providers and

oversight mechanisms, and sketches the existing cooperation mechanisms, the shortcomings, and the challenges that lie ahead.

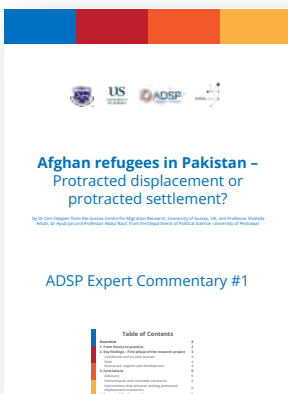


Returning to Debt: Examining the Effects of Indebtedness on Reintegration Outcomes

International Organization for Migration and Samuel Hall | February 2023

This study analyses migrant returnees' and their households' experiences with debt in five countries - Bangladesh, Cameroon, El Salvador, Ghana, and Iraq. It expands this emerging evidence base on why, and in what ways, debt impacts returnees' reintegration experiences and the experiences of their households. It also explores how returnees and their households cope with debt. The report findings show that debt impacts all aspects of the migration cycle and

experience and can take diverse forms. Debt and indebtedness are common in migrants' and returnees' lives and are not inherently negative for reintegration, but specific debt characteristics can be. There is a need to advocate to reduce costs of migration while also making structural legal changes to ease the burden of indebtedness on migrants.



Afghan refugees in Pakistan – Protracted displacement or protracted settlement?

Asia Displacement Solutions Platform and Samuel Hall | March 2023

This expert commentary explores what protracted displacement in Pakistan means for Afghans, as well as the possibility of durable solutions in the short- and medium-term. The commentary is based on ongoing work for the Protracted Displacement Economies project, an international research project that explores how displacement economies operate and if there are ways they can be supported to thrive, rather than merely survive. We start with a

brief overview of how we have framed the Protracted Displacement Economies research, before sharing findings from the first phase of data collection for the project in Pakistan, which indicate some of the livelihood-related challenges faced by displacement-affected communities. We conclude with suggestions for operational and advocacy activities that could support Afghans in Pakistan.

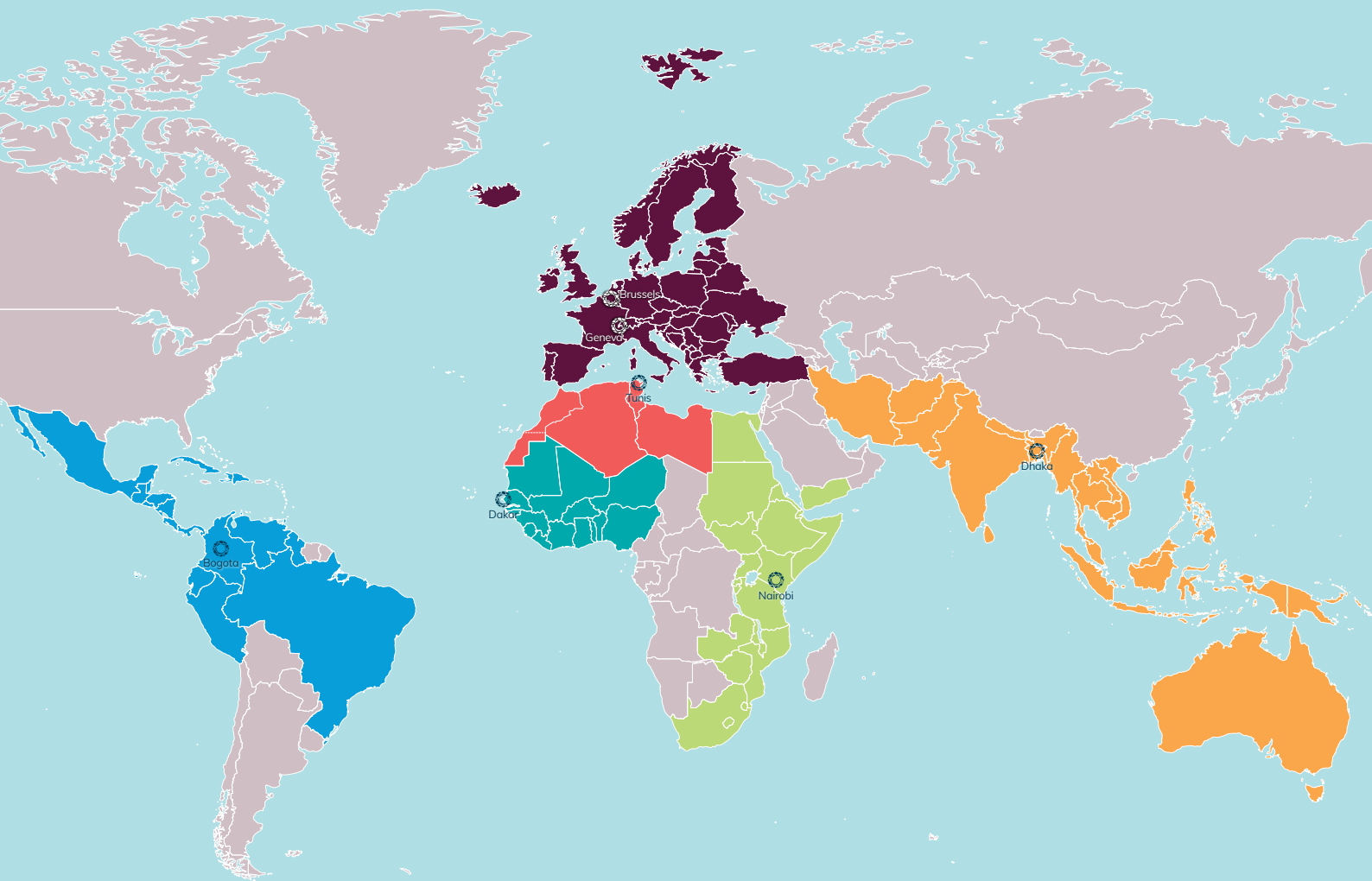


Pakistan — Flow Monitoring of Undocumented Afghan Migrants: Summary Report 2022

International Organization for Migration | March 2023

This yearly summary report, in addition to bi-weekly and quarterly reports, aims to contribute to a better understanding of return movements of undocumented Afghan returnees by conducting more in-depth analysis on the data that was collected in 2022.

According to the analysis, the number of undocumented Afghans returning from Pakistan has increased significantly, nearly threefold, in comparison to 2021. This rise in returns can be attributed to the significant geopolitical changes that took place in Afghanistan between 2021 and 2022. The data also shows that the number of undocumented Afghans leaving the country was higher in the last quarter at the Torkham border and in the first quarter at the Chaman border. This increase in undocumented returnees is mostly due to the relaxation of border restrictions compared to the previous year.



MMC is a global network engaged in data collection, research, analysis, and policy and programmatic development on mixed migration, with regional hubs hosted in Danish Refugee Council regional offices in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Latin America, and a global team based across Copenhagen, Geneva and Brussels.

MMC is a leading source for independent and high-quality data, research, analysis and expertise. MMC aims to increase understanding of mixed migration, to positively impact global and regional migration policies, to inform evidence-based protection responses for people on the move and to stimulate forward thinking in public and policy debates on mixed migration. MMC's overarching focus is on human rights and protection for all people on the move.

MMC is part of the Danish Refugee Council (DRC).

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