

Access to information and decision-making among refugees and migrants in Türkiye

This snapshot focuses on access to information and decision-making among Afghan, Iranian, Iraqi, and Somali refugees and migrants in Türkiye. It presents a comparison of information sources and respondents' means of obtaining information before and during the journey to Türkiye, and considers how information affects respondents' decision-making on migration.

Key findings

- **Most respondents (77%)** reported **obtaining information about routes, destinations, costs, and risks before the journey**, and just over half 51% obtained information during the journey.
- **Social networks are the main source of information, but so are online sources.** Friends or family in another country were the primary source of information, both before (74%) and during (54%) the journey, followed by an online community or network (53% before the journey and 50% during the journey).
- **Friends or family in another country** (56%) and in country of departure (14%), and online community or network (10%) were the **most reliable sources** of information.
- Access to a phone is important: most respondents relied on **phone calls and social media or messaging apps** to obtain information, with WhatsApp being the most widely used social media platform.
- **The most common information gaps reported were** information on official requirements to enter destination country (48%), information on life in destination (36%), and rights and access to justice while on the move (34%).
- Almost all respondents **(91%) reported that they would change their intended destination** under certain circumstances, 42% if policy changes led to lower chances of entering their intended destination.

Profiles

This snapshot draws from 4Mi surveys conducted between January and April 2023 in Türkiye with 1,057 respondents from Afghanistan (38%), Iran (31%), Iraq (21%), and Somalia (10%). Overall, 69% of respondents were men, although this varied by nationality (see Figure 1). A majority of respondents (71%) were under 35 years old. Almost all respondents (94%) had at least completed primary school, with Afghan respondents being the exception - 14% did not complete any schooling.

Figure 1. Profile of respondents

		Afghan (n=405)	Iranian (n=330)	Iraqi (n=218)	Somali (n=104)
Age group	18-25	41%	18%	18%	40%
	26-35	39%	50%	27%	58%
	36-45	15%	21%	35%	1%
	46-55	4%	9%	13%	1%
	55+	1%	2%	7%	0%
	TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%
Gender	Female	24%	42%	27%	28%
	Male	76%	58%	73%	72%
	TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%
Education level	Did not complete any schooling	14%	0%	0%	0%
	Primary school	21%	1%	8%	1%
	Secondary or high school	43%	45%	43%	32%
	University degree	20%	51%	37%	66%
	Vocational training	2%	3%	9%	1%
	Other	0%	0%	2%	0%
	TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

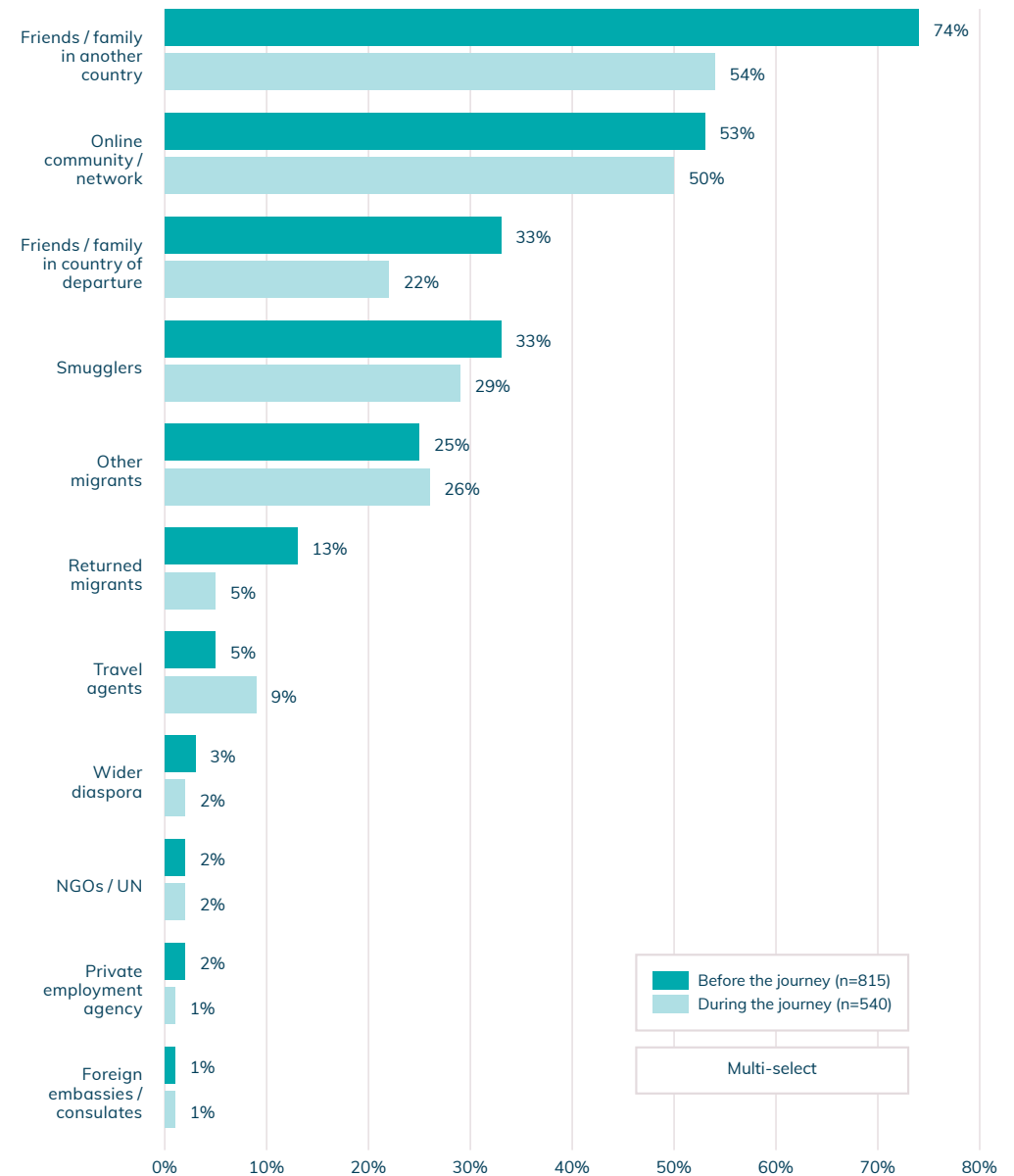
Afghan and Somali respondents had more often used smugglers on their journey – 97% of Afghan and 60% of Somali respondents. Only 29% Iranian and 3% Iraqi respondents reported using smuggler(s). This is likely due to the geographical proximity and fewer entry requirements into Türkiye for Iranian and Iraqi nationals.¹ Almost all Iranian (99%) and Iraqi (99%) respondents arrived in Türkiye directly without any transit. Across all groups, 97% were still on the move, heading to another destination.

Friends or family in another country were primary source of information

More than three quarters of respondents (77%) reported obtaining information about routes, destinations, costs, and risks prior to the journey (67% among Iraqis, 76% among Afghans, 83% among Iranians, and 87% among Somalis). Among these, friends or family in another country (74%) were cited as the primary source of information (87% among Iranian, 74% among Afghan, 70% among Somali, and 50% among Iraqi respondents). This was followed by an online community or network (53%) and friends or family in country of departure (33%).

The number of respondents who obtained information during the journey decreased to 51%, with a large drop observed among Afghan respondents (76% obtained information before the journey and 32% during the journey). As was the case with sources of information before the journey, the two most reported sources of information during the journey were friends or family in another country (54%) and online community or network (50%) (see Figure 2). This varied by nationality. Smugglers (64%) were the most common source of information reported by Afghan respondents, followed by friends or family in another country (45%). For Somali respondents, smugglers (47%) were the second most reported sources of information, after friends or family in another country (49%), indicating the important role of smugglers among those who use them.

Figure 2. What were your sources of information about routes, destinations, costs, risks, etc. before and during the journey?



¹ Iranian nationals can stay in Türkiye for up to 90 days without a visa, while Iraqi nationals can travel to Türkiye with an electronic visa. See Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Türkiye [Visa Information For Foreigners](#).

Smugglers' significance as sources of information increased during the journey

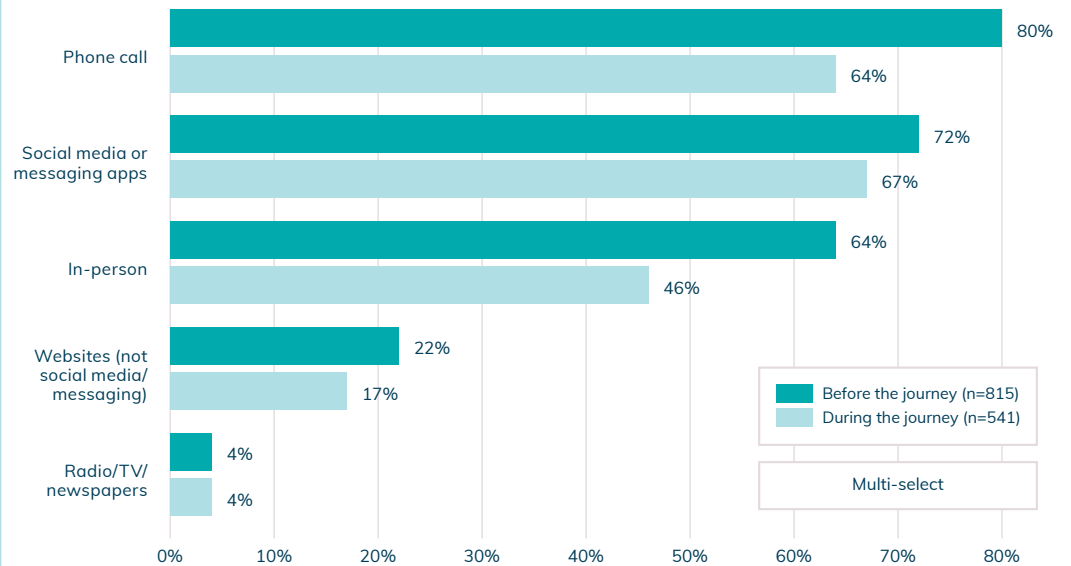
Despite an overall drop from 33% to 29%, smugglers' role as a source of information grew substantially during the journey among those who used them: 64% of Afghan respondents reported smugglers as a source of information during the journey as compared to 47% before the journey. 47% of Somali respondents reported smugglers as a source of information during the journey, as compared to 42% before the journey.

Across all groups, institutional actors including NGOs or UN bodies (2%) and foreign embassies or consulates (1%) were little-used sources of information.

Phone calls and social media or messaging apps were key means of obtaining information before and during the journey

The majority of those who said they obtained information before the journey did it via phone calls (80%) and social media or messaging apps (72%) (see Figure 3). In-person interaction was the third most reported means used in obtaining information - 64% of respondents across all groups. Almost all respondents (92%) reported having access to a functional phone during the journey – 85% with a smartphone and 7% with a basic phone without internet access, with Afghans least often having access to a phone (70% with a smartphone and 10% with a basic phone), and this seems critical to access to information. Respondents who access information during the journey most often reported the use of social media or messaging apps (67%) and phone calls (64%).

Figure 3. What means did you use to obtain information?

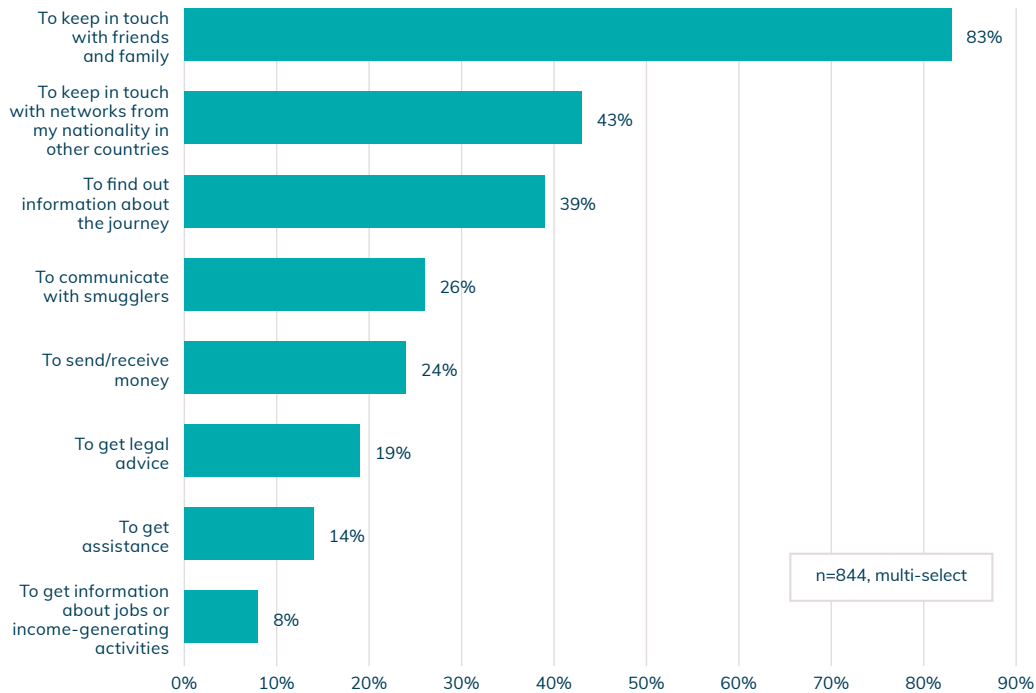


WhatsApp was most widely used

WhatsApp was the most widely reported social media platform used during the journey among respondents across all groups (67% Afghan, 86% Somali, 87% Iranian and 93% Iraqi). Among Afghan respondents, Facebook (35.2%) and IMO (34.9%) were the two other most popular platforms. The two most common social media platforms used among Iranian respondents were Telegram (60%) and Instagram (53%). For Iraqi and Somali respondents, Facebook (reported by 72% Iraqi and 54% Somali respondents) and Messenger (reported by 56% Iraqi and 38% Somali respondents) were used widely in addition to WhatsApp.

The most common use of social media was to keep in touch with friends and family (83%), followed by communicating with networks from their nationality in other countries (43%). Finding information about the journey was reported by 39% of respondents. Social media was also used to communicate with smugglers, more among Afghan respondents (44%), than among Somali (24%).

Figure 4. Have you used social media for the following?



Friends or family in another country were considered most reliable

In addition to being the primary source of information, friends or family in another country were also most often considered the most reliable (56% of respondents who obtained information). This was consistent across all four groups. The second most reliable source of information was friends or family in the country of departure (14%), followed by online community or network (10%). This differs somewhat by nationality, with friends or family in the country of departure ranking second among Afghan (12%) and Iranian (18%) respondents, online community/network among Iraqi respondents (23%), and other migrants among Somali respondents (19%) the second most reliable source of information was friends or family in country of departure (reported by 12% Afghan and 18% Iranian respondents).

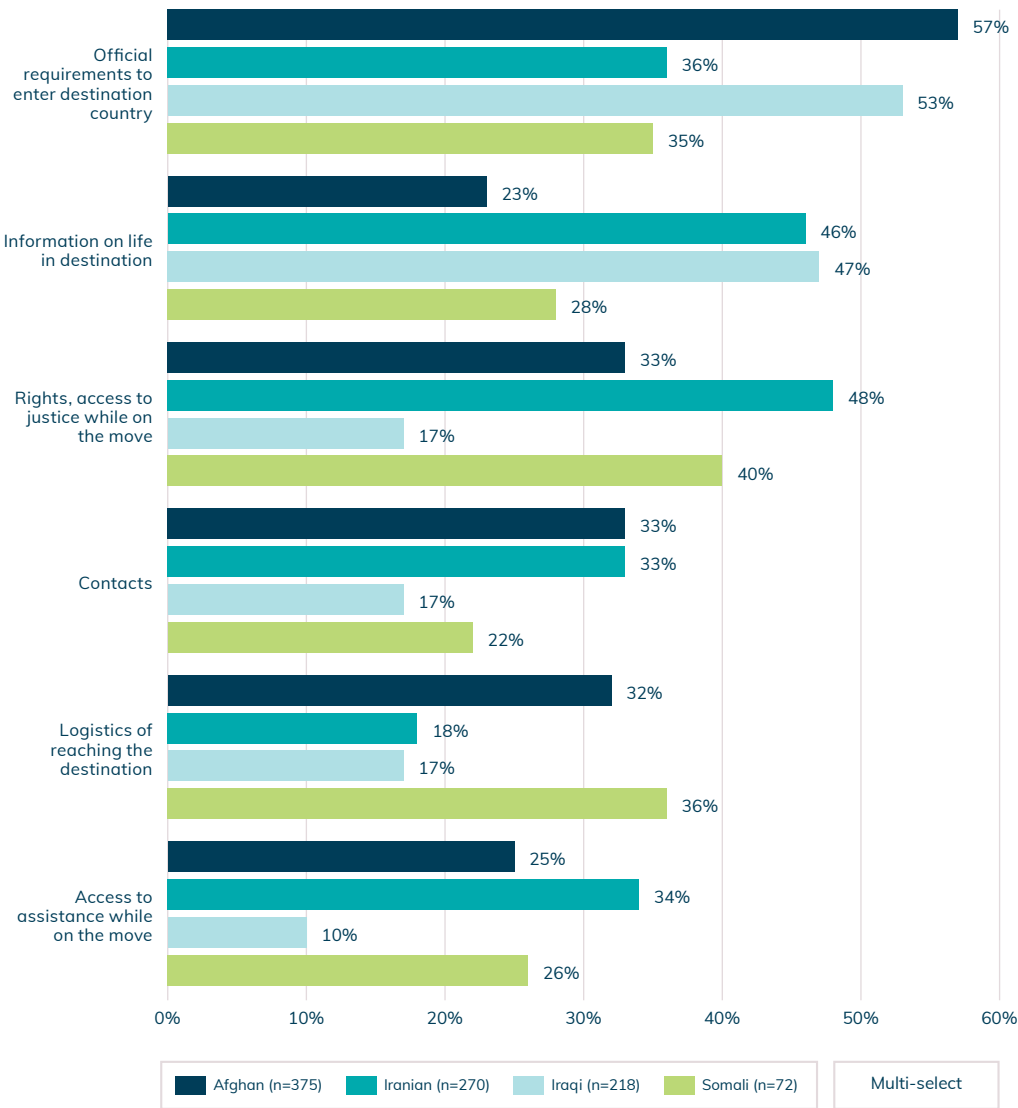
Despite being a frequent source of information, only 9% of Afghan and 5% of Somali respondents cited smugglers as a reliable source of information.

Information gaps on legal requirements to enter destination country and life in destination

77% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that "before I started my journey, I believed that I would be successful in reaching my final destination and living there". However, it seems that information at that stage was incomplete for some. As the journey started, one third (33%) of respondents (42% Afghan, 29% Iranian, 24% Iraqi, and 27% Somali) did not think that they had access to all the information about the next steps of their journey and intended destination (reported disagree or strongly disagree).

The top three gaps in information reported at the time of interview were official requirements to enter the destination country (48%), information on life in destination (36%), and rights and access to justice while on the move (34%). Iranian (48%) and Somali (40%) respondents most often reported missing information on rights and access to justice while on the move. Most Afghan (57%) and Iraqi (53%) respondents said they did not have information about official requirements to enter destination country (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. What information is missing?



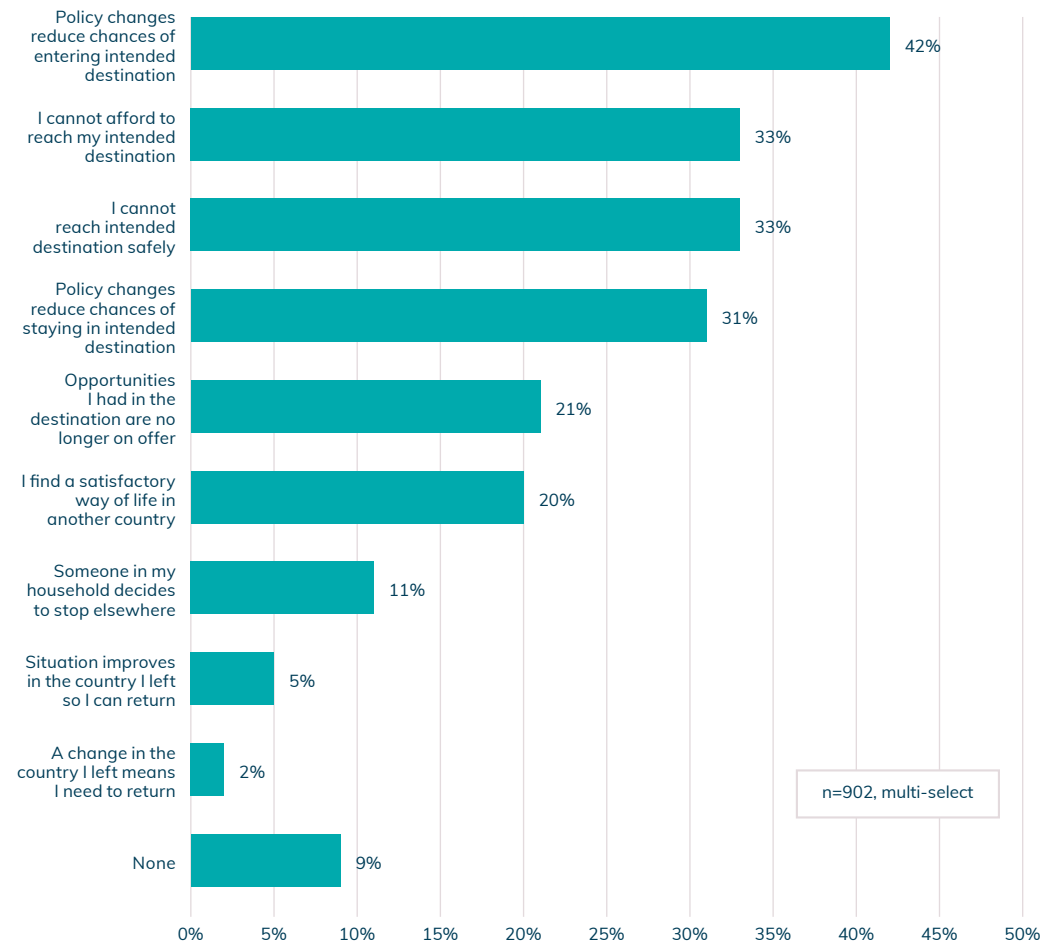
Policy changes in destination would influence some to change destination

Despite the gaps cited above, 66% of respondents reported having received information about policies and restrictions on entering their intended destination country. For 76% of these respondents, access to this information did not change their intentions. 22%

reported that the information made them consider their intended destination more carefully; 2% changed their intended destination.

Almost all respondents (91%) said they would change their destination under certain circumstances, and the most common reason was if policy changes reduced their chances of entering the destination country (42%). This was followed by financial constraints (33%) and safety reasons (33%) (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Under what circumstances would you change your intended destination?



Access to information was not the primary determinant in decision making on migration

Despite being aware of possible risks and challenges prior to starting the journey, about half of respondents decided to migrate, suggesting that access to information on dangers and obstacles does not necessarily deter people from migrating, since decision-making on migration involves a multitude of factors. (When asked if respondents were aware beforehand of difficulties and risks that they might face during the journey, 54% agreed that they were while 24% respondents disagreed). Most respondents (76%) reported that in retrospect, they would have still started the journey if they had the information they currently have on the nature of the journey.

The results here indicate that refugees and migrants in Türkiye rely a lot on existing social networks including friends, family, and online communities for information about their migration journey, and that these are the most trusted sources. While often confident of their decisions and awareness about the journey and destination, there are still information gaps, and often on technical subjects such as asylum processes and entry requirements, where other sources – which are rarely used – could potentially be more informative. There seems to be some ambiguity about the extent to which access to information influences decision-making, which is worth exploring further, but it seems clear that many are prepared to embark on or continue their journeys even with full knowledge of the risks, challenges, and obstacles to reaching their intended destination.



4Mi data collection

[4Mi](#) is the Mixed Migration Centre's flagship primary data collection system, an innovative approach that helps fill knowledge gaps, and inform policy and response regarding the nature of mixed migratory movements and the protection risks for refugees and migrants on the move. 4Mi field enumerators are currently collecting data through direct interviews with refugees and migrants in Asia and the Pacific, Eastern and Southern Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North Africa, and West Africa.

Note that the sampling approach means that the findings derived from the surveyed sample provide rich insights, but the figures cannot be used to make inferences about the total population. See more 4Mi analysis and details on methodology at:

www.mixedmigration.org/4mi