# Global Migration Trends

This inaugural issue of the Data Bulletin provides a brief overview of key global migration trends, based on available statistics and estimates from a variety of sources, to support informed decision-making throughout the global compact for migration process. The document summarizes key facts and figures on a range of migration-related topics, covering the period January 2015–December 2016, and citing more recent figures where available. Although this Data Bulletin is by no means exhaustive, it presents a broad picture of the state of migration around the world. A more detailed report on global migration trends will be published by IOM's GMDAC in early 2018.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRANT STOCK[1]

In 2015, there were an estimated 244 million international migrants – people residing in a country other than their country of birth – compared to about 173 million in 2000, and 102 million in 1980.[2] However, the proportion of international migrants in the world population is only slightly higher than that recorded over the past decades, equalling 3.3 per cent in 2015, compared to 2.8 per cent in 2000, and 2.3 per cent in 1980.

International Migrant Stock, 1970–2015
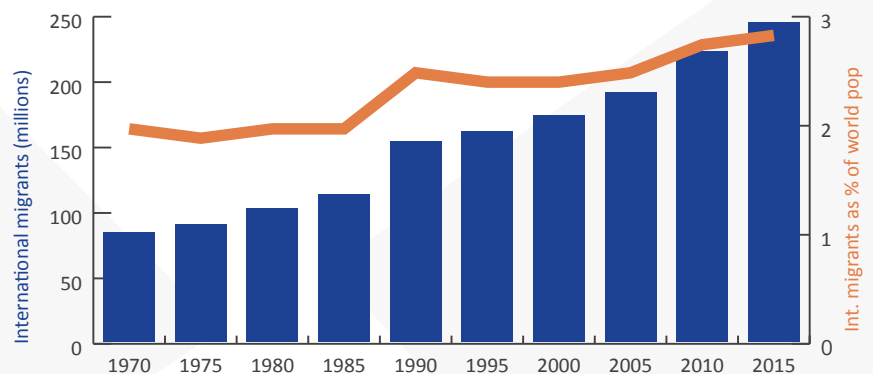
Source: UN DESA, 2009 and 2015.

Women accounted for 48 per cent of the global international migrant stock in 2015, although the share varies widely across major regions (e.g., Asia - 42%, Europe - 52.4%, Northern America - 51.2%).

---

[1] This section is based on data from the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (Trends in International Migrant Stock, 2015 Revision), unless otherwise stated.

[2] The 1998 UN Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration define an international migrant as a person who changes his or her country of usual residence for a period of at least 3 months. However, these estimates refer, for the most part, to people who reside in countries other than their country of birth.

Migrants in the Global North are on average older than migrants in the Global South[3], with a median age of 43 and 33 years, respectively. 72 per cent of international migrants are of working age. The average age an international migrant is 39, and 15 per cent of all international migrants are below the age of 20.

South–South migration exceeded South-North migration by two percentage points in 2015: 37 per cent of the total estimated number of international migrants (90.2 million) were born in a country in the South and resided in a different country in the South.

North–North
55.2m

85.3m
South–North

13.6m
North–South

90.2m
South–South
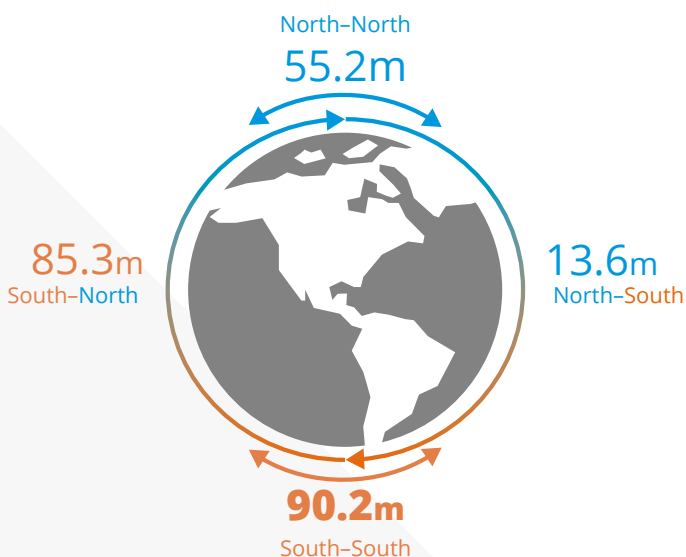
FORCED MIGRATION[4]

By the end of 2016, 65.6 million individuals were forcibly displaced worldwide due to persecution, conflict, generalized violence and human rights violations. This is almost double the number of forcibly displaced people recorded in 1997, and the increase was particularly marked between 2012 and 2015, mostly due to the Syrian conflict.[5]

Refugees

By the end of 2016, the world was hosting 22.5 million refugees – 17.2 million under UNHCR's mandate.[6] During 2016 alone, some 1.1 million people became refugees.

Turkey and Pakistan are the main refugee-hosting countries globally in absolute terms, with, respectively, 2.9 million and 1.4 million refugees registered in the countries by the end of 2016; they are followed by Lebanon (1 million), the Islamic Republic of Iran (979,400), Uganda (940,800) and Ethiopia (791,600).

Asylum-seekers

The number of pending asylum claims globally reached 2.8 million at the end of 2016. According to UNHCR, Germany continued to be the largest single recipient of first-time individual asylum applications, with 722,400 new requests in 2016 – a significant increase compared to 441,900 in 2015.

Conflict-induced internal displacement

The Democratic Republic of the Congo saw the highest numbers of conflict- and violence-induced new internal displacement in 2016, with over 1.3 million people displaced due to the exacerbation of conflict and insecurity within the country, followed by South Sudan (865,000), Libya (630,000), Afghanistan (623,200), Iraq (598,000), and Yemen (467,100).

Colombia was the country with the largest population of internally displaced persons (IDPs) worldwide by the end of 2016, with 7.4 million people displaced within the country. It was followed by the Syrian Arab Republic, which counted about 6.3 million IDPs at the end of 2016.

Disaster-induced internal displacement

More than 24 million people were newly internally displaced by natural disasters in over 110 countries over the course of 2016. Between 2008 and 2016, an average of 25.3 million people per year were displaced by disasters. South and East Asia were the most affected regions: 7.4 million individuals were newly displaced within China, 5.9 million in the Philippines, 2.4 million in India and 1.2 million in Indonesia.[7]

Resettlement

In 2016, refugees of 69 different nationalities were submitted for resettlement to 37 third countries (compared to 33 countries in 2015) from 83 countries or territories of first asylum, according to UNHCR figures. A total of 189,300 refugees were admitted for resettlement – an increase of 77% relative to 2015 (107,100). A total of 204,937 refugees and other individuals in vulnerable situations were resettled to 39 countries under IOM auspices in 2016.
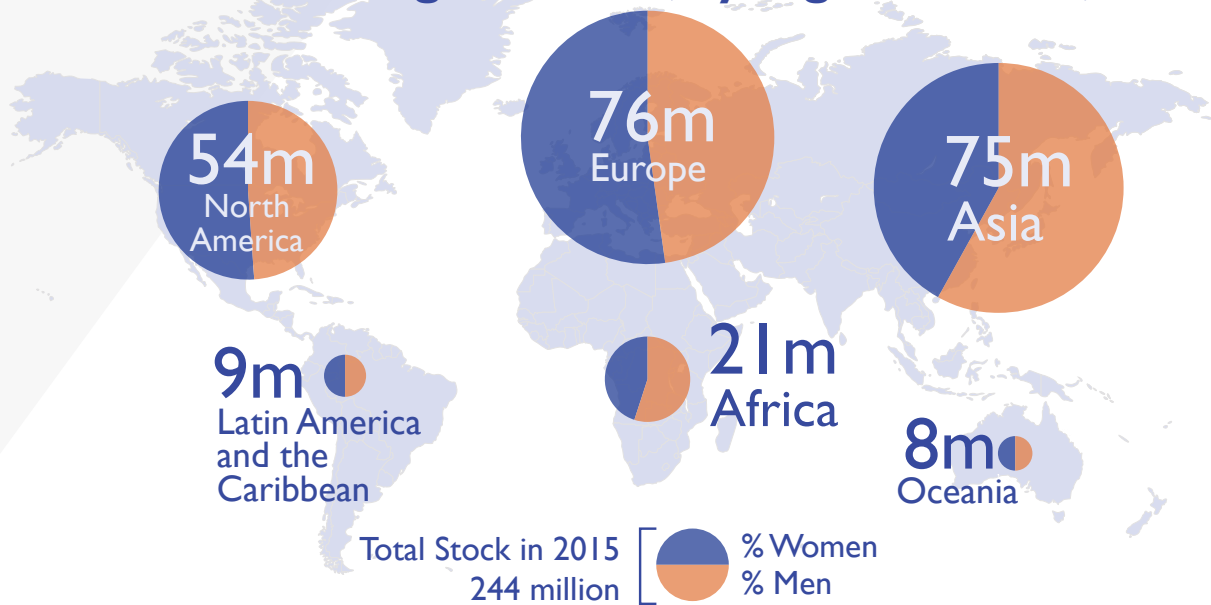
IRREGULAR MIGRATION

The most recent global estimate of irregular migration suggests that there were at least 50 million irregular migrants worldwide in 2010, a large number of whom rely on smuggling services.[8]

---

3   The term "Global South" broadly refers to low- and middle-income countries (World Bank classification), while "Global North" refers to high-income countries.
4   This section is based on data from UNHCR (2017), Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2016. See www.unhcr.org/5943e8a34.pdf, unless otherwise stated.
5   UNHCR, 2017 and IDMC, 2017.
6   The total figure includes about 5.3 million refugees under UNRWA's mandate.

---

7   IDMC, 2017.
8   This figure should be taken with caution given the difficulties in estimating numbers of irregular migrants in one country, let alone around the world.

International migrant stock, by region and sex, 2015[1]

54m North America

76m Europe

75m Asia

9m Latin America and the Caribbean

21m Africa

8m Oceania

Total Stock in 2015
244 million

% Women
% Men
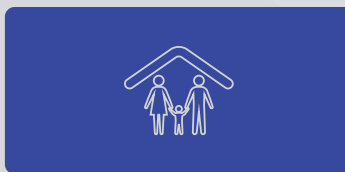
Snapshot of global trends

65.5 million total forcibly displaced in 2016 according to UNHCR's Global Trends report[2]
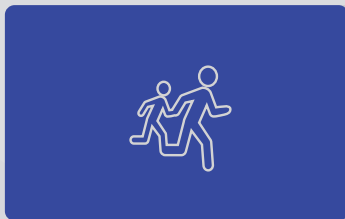
65% Since 2011

Refugees:
22.5 million globally as of the end of 2016, of which Africa now hosts more than a quarter[4]

Internally Displaced Persons: 40.3 million[3]*

Asylum seekers:
In 2016, the number of asylum seekers globally rose to **2,826,508**[5]

10 million stateless[6]

189,300 refugees of 69 different nationalities resettled by **UNHCR**[7]

IDPs (flows):
In 2016, **31 million**[8] people were newly displaced by conflict, violence and disasters.

Labour migrants:
150 million in 2013[9]

Children:
67 million migrants are aged 19 or under and represent almost **half of all asylum seekers globally**[10]

204,937 individuals in vulnerable situations were resettled to 39 countries by IOM in 2016[11]**

98,403 individuals received return and reintegration assistance by IOM in 2016 – an increase of 41% compared to 2015 and the highest figure in 15 years[12]

Sources: (1) UN DESA, 2015; (2) UNHCR, 2017; (3) UNHCR, 2017 based on IDMC, 2017; (4) UNHCR, 2017; (5) Ibid.; (6) Ibid.; (7) Ibid.; (8) IDMC, 2017; (9) ILO, 2015; (10) UNHCR, 2017, UNICEF, 2017; (11) IOM, 2017; (12) IOM, 2017. *Notes:* *Stock figure; due to armed conflict, generalized violence, or human rights violations. ** The figure for IOM-assisted resettlement operations is not directly comparable with UNHCR numbers, as this includes persons participating in (national) humanitarian admission schemes, whilst UNHCR data largely excludes this group. © IOM's GMDAC 2017

IRREGULAR MIGRATION

(Continued from page 2)

An estimated 11.3 million undocumented migrants lived in the United States in 2016. About 66 per cent of the irregular migrant population had lived in the United States for over ten years.

An IOM report details the extent of irregular migration in other regions globally: in Asia, for instance, estimates suggested that there were some 4 million undocumented migrants in Pakistan in 2013.[9]

FORCED AND VOLUNTARY RETURN

In 2016, a total of 176,223 individuals were forcibly or voluntarily returned to their countries of origin or third countries from the 28 EU Member States plus Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, according to Frontex. Out of the total number of effective returns from European States to third countries in 2016, 52 per cent were voluntary and 45 per cent were forced; the rest were unspecified.

98,403 individuals received return and reintegration assistance from IOM in 2016 –an increase of 41 per cent compared to 2015 and the highest figure in 15 years.[10]

MIGRANT DEATHS

In 2016, at least 7,136 migrants lost their lives or went missing during migration – 25% more than the recorded number of dead and missing migrants in 2015 (6,281). Of these fatalities, an estimated 5,143 occurred in the Mediterranean– a 36 per cent increase from fatalities recorded in this region in 2015. The vast majority of deaths occurred along the Central Mediterranean route.[11]

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Estimates from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Walk Free Foundation (WFF), in collaboration with IOM, suggested that 40 million people were victims of modern slavery globally in 2016.[12]

REMITTANCES

The sum of financial remittances sent by international migrants back to their families in origin countries amounted to USD 573.6 billion in 2016, of which 73.5 per cent (USD 421.9 billion) was sent to low- and middle-income economies. This represents a decrease from the total amount estimated in 2015 (USD 581.9 billion), and the second consecutive year of contraction from the (close to) USD 600 billion estimated in 2014.[13]

[9] IOM, Migrant Smuggling Data and Research: A global review of the emerging evidence base, 2016.
[10] IOM, 2017.

[11] IOM, Missing Migrants Project. See http://missingmigrants.iom.int/
[12] ILO, 2017. See www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_575479.pdf
[13] Estimate from World Bank, Migration and Remittances (2017). See www.knomad.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/Migration%20and%20Development%20Brief%2028.pdf.

Data Bulletin: Informing a Global Compact for Migration
Issue No. 1 | NOVEMBER 2017

International Organization for Migration
17 route des Morillons, P.O. Box 17, 1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland
Tel.: +41 22 717 9111 • Fax: +41 22 798 6150
E-mail: hq@iom.int • Website: www.iom.int

IOM•OIM

Funded by the European Union