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Cover photo: In the context of reintegration activities 355 returning migrants have received vocational training and have been accompanied in the creation of microenterprises or in the search for a job or work experience in Burkina Faso. © IOM 2018/Alexander Bee

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MIGRATION AND MIGRANTS: REGIONAL DIMENSIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS

The previous chapter provides an overview of migration globally, with specific reference to international migrants and migration flows, and to the impacts of COVID-19 on mobility globally. Particular migrant groups – including migrant workers, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs) – as well as international remittances, were also discussed. This chapter focuses primarily on the regional level in order to provide a more detailed picture of migration, which sets out a different, but complementary, perspective of migrants and movements in different parts of the world.¹

Our starting point is geographic, rather than thematic, given that geography is one of the fundamentals underpinning migration today, just as it has been in the past. Notwithstanding increasing globalization, geography remains one of the most significant factors shaping patterns of migration and displacement. Many people who migrate across borders do so within their immediate regions – to countries that are close by, countries to which it may be easier to travel, that may be more familiar, and from which it may also be easier to return. For people who are displaced, finding safety quickly is paramount. People therefore tend to be displaced to safer locations nearby, whether that is within their own countries or across international borders.

This chapter seeks to assist migration policymakers, practitioners, researchers and students to make better sense of international migration globally by using a geographic perspective to present regional migration overviews. The analysis in this chapter focuses on six world regions as defined by the United Nations, and used by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and other organizations:

- Africa;
- Asia;
- Europe;
- Latin America and the Caribbean;
- Northern America;
- Oceania.

For each of these regions, the analysis includes: (a) an overview and brief discussion of key migration statistics based on data compiled and reported by UN DESA, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), the University of Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker and IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM); and (b) succinct descriptions of “key features and developments” in migration in the region, based on a wide range of data, information and analyses from international organizations, researchers and analysts.

To account for the diversity of migration patterns, trends and issues within each of the six regions, the descriptive narratives of “key features and recent developments” are presented at the subregional level. For Asia, for example, this cascade approach allows for the presentation of insights from statistical data on Asia as a whole, followed by summary information on subregions, including Eastern Asia, Southern Asia, South-East Asia, the Middle East and Central Asia. A breakdown of the regions and subregions is provided in Appendix A. These subregional overviews

provide information on migration patterns from, within and to the subregions.² Beyond this, attention has been paid to particular features that exist in a subregion, such as labour migration and international remittances, irregular migration, human trafficking and displacement (both internal and international). The subregional overviews are not intended to be exhaustive, but are designed to be illustrative of key trends and recent changes in migration over the previous two years.

It is important to note that this chapter builds on the previous regional chapters of the *World Migration Reports* of 2018 and 2020 by providing an update on statistics and current issues, including in relation to COVID-19 impacts. Significant changes over the two years since the last edition of the *World Migration Report* have been reflected in this chapter, which incorporates data and information up until the end of June 2021. Recent global events are discussed, such as those related to the impacts of COVID-19 on migration and mobility across various subregions, along with recent conflict and disaster displacement events. The chapter draws on the existing evidence base and sources are provided in endnotes and the references section. We encourage readers to refer to sources cited in this chapter to learn more about topics of interest. Thematic chapters in this volume may also be of interest, including those on COVID-19 (Chapter 5), peace and security and migration (Chapter 6), climate change (Chapter 9) and human trafficking (Chapter 10).

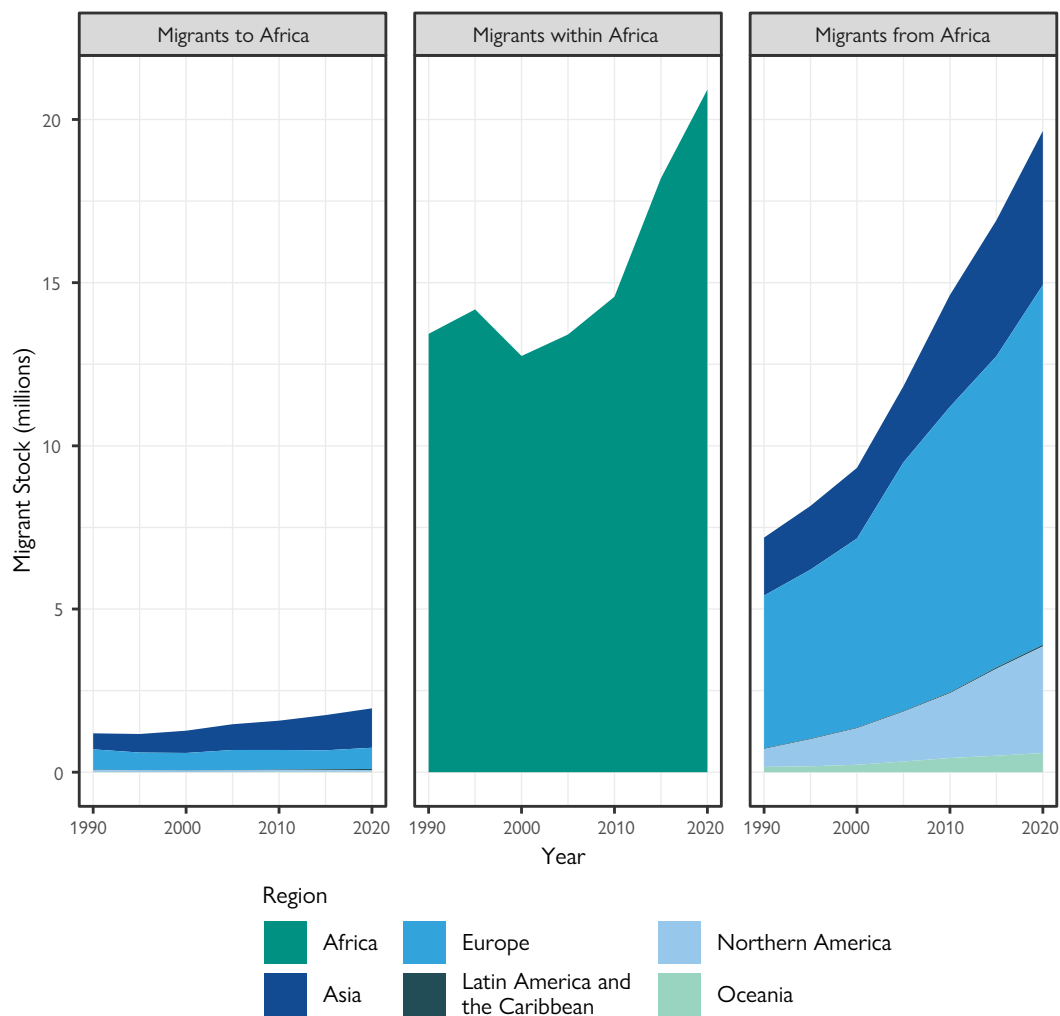
Africa³

Migration in Africa involves large numbers of international migrants moving both within and from the region. As shown in Figure 1, in 2020 around 21 million Africans were living in another African country, a significant increase from 2015, when around 18 million Africans were estimated to be living within the region. The number of Africans living in different regions also grew during the same period, from around 17 million in 2015 to over 19.5 million in 2020.

Figure 1 shows that since 2000, international migration within the African region has increased significantly. Since 1990, the number of African migrants living outside of the region has more than doubled, with the growth in Europe most pronounced. In 2020, most African-born migrants living outside the region were residing in Europe (11 million), Asia (nearly 5 million) and Northern America (around 3 million).

One of the most striking aspects to note about international migrants in Africa, as shown in Figure 1, is the small number of migrants who were born outside of the region and have since moved there. From 2015 to 2020, the number of migrants born outside the region remained virtually unchanged (around 2 million), most of whom were from Asia and Europe.

Figure 1. Migrants to, within and from Africa, 1990–2020

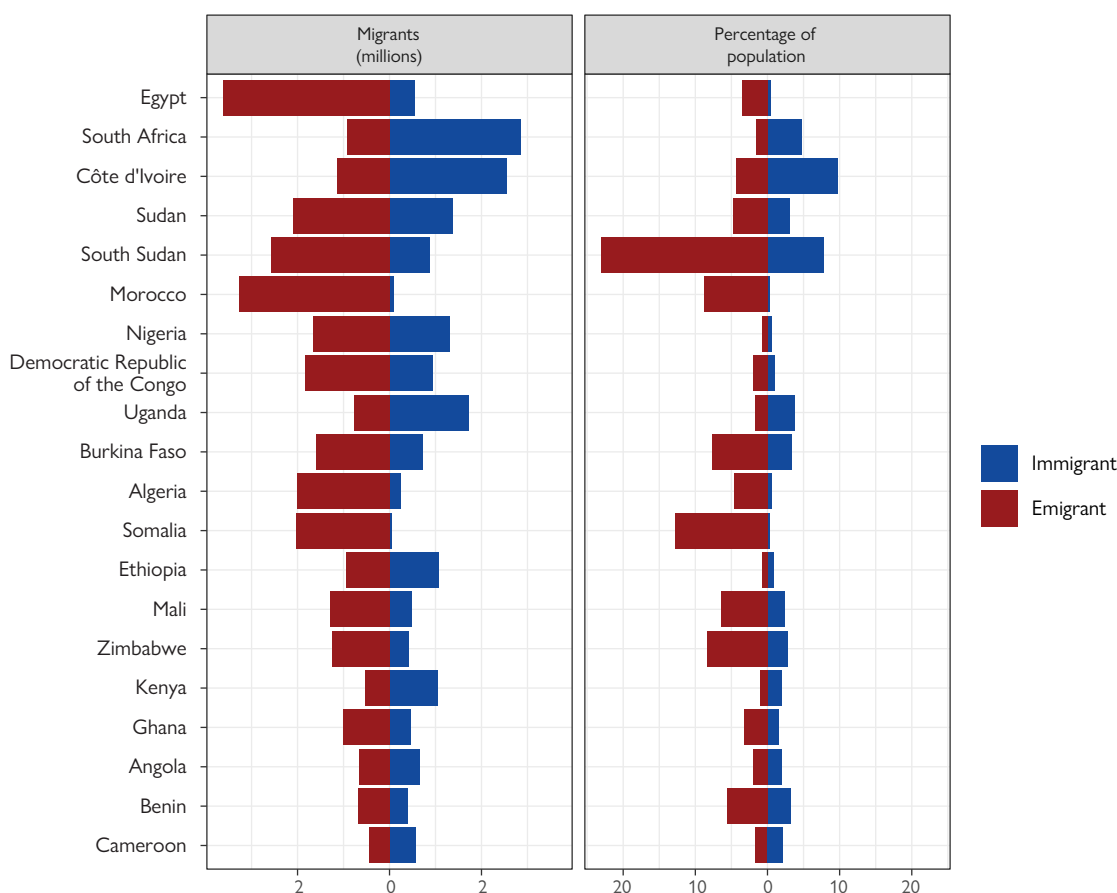


Source: UN DESA, 2021.

Note: "Migrants to Africa" refers to migrants residing in the region (i.e. Africa) who were born in one of the other regions (e.g. Europe or Asia). "Migrants within Africa" refers to migrants born in the region (i.e. Africa) and residing outside their country of birth, but still within the African region. "Migrants from Africa" refers to people born in Africa who were residing outside the region (e.g. in Europe or Northern America).

The African countries with the largest number of emigrants tend to be in the north of the region. These are shown on the left-hand side of Figure 2, where countries are ranked by their overall numbers of migrants (the combination of immigrants in the country and emigrants from the country). In 2020, Egypt had the largest number of people living abroad, followed by Morocco, South Sudan, the Sudan, Somalia and Algeria. In terms of the number of immigrants, South Africa remains the most significant destination country in Africa, with around 2.9 million international migrants residing in the country; however, this is a drop of more than 9 per cent since 2015, when the country had over 3.2 million international migrants. Other countries with high immigrant populations as a proportion of their total populations, but not among the top 20, include Gabon (19%), Equatorial Guinea (16%), Seychelles (13%) and Libya (12%).

Figure 2. Top 20 African migrant countries, 2020



Source: UN DESA, 2021.

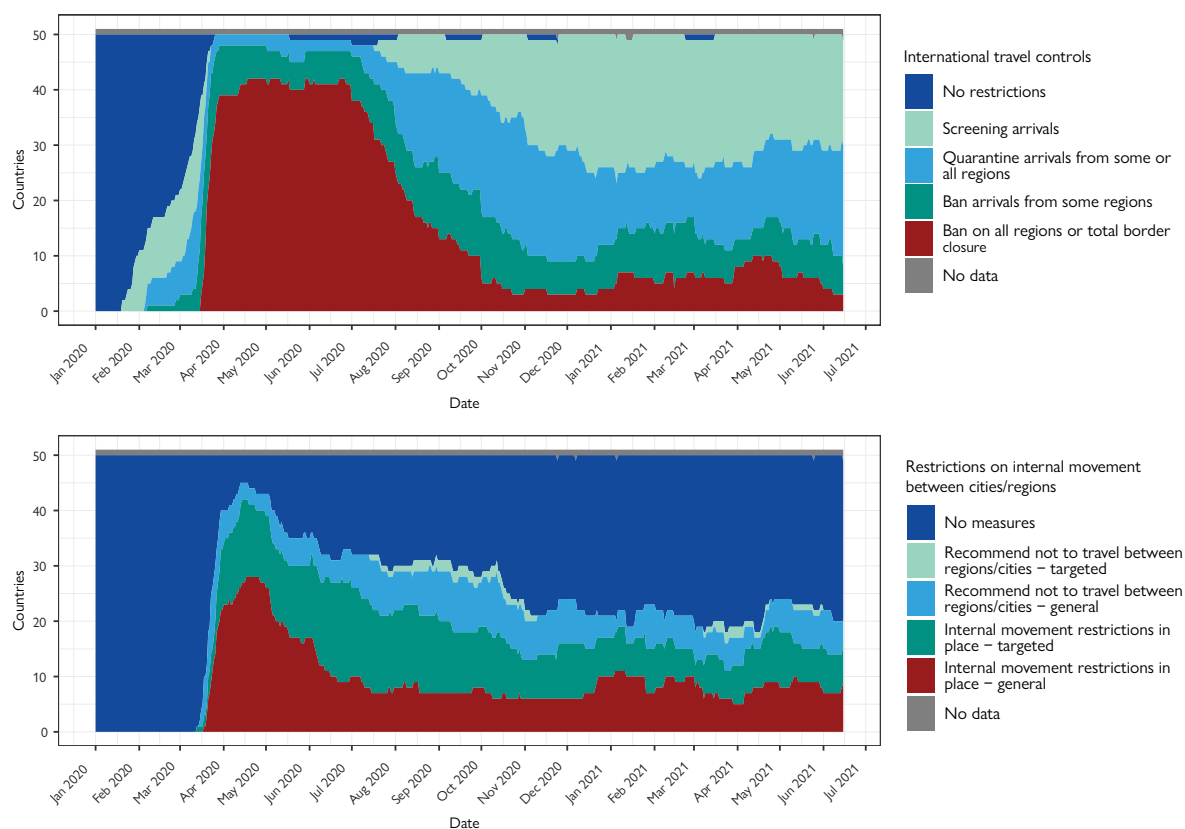
Note 1: The population size used to calculate the percentage of immigrants and emigrants is based on the UN DESA total resident population of the country, which includes foreign-born populations.

Note 2: "Immigrant" refers to foreign-born migrants residing in the country. "Emigrant" refers to people born in the country who were residing outside their country of birth in 2021.

Most African countries enacted a range of COVID-19-related travel restrictions, both international and internal, starting in early 2020. Notably, international travel controls were imposed several weeks before restrictions on internal movements came into force (Figure 3). International control measures such as screening arrivals were put in place earliest and remained in place for nearly all countries in the region. Other international restrictions, however, which peaked between March and June 2020, began to decline in July, with controls such as the ban on arrivals from some regions and total border closures falling sharply and being abandoned by most countries in the region by mid-2021.

Slightly fewer countries in Africa issued restrictions on internal movement when compared with international travel controls. These restrictions, which were at the highest between March and April 2020, began to decline mid-year, with slight upticks during “new waves” of infections.

Figure 3. COVID-19-related travel controls in Africa: International and internal, January 2020 to June 2021

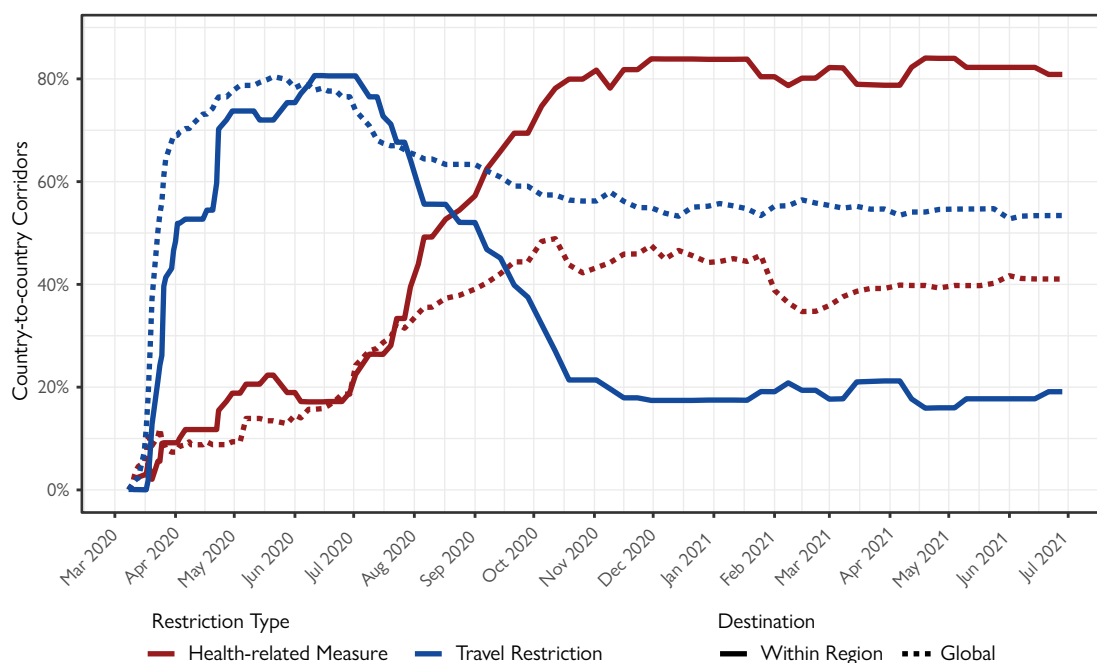


Source: Hale et al., 2021.

Notes: Categories used are those of the Oxford Government Response Tracker; categories included in the data set are for COVID-19-related restrictions only and do not reflect other travel restrictions that may also be in place, such as those related to visa restrictions, entry bans based on citizenship, departure/exit restrictions and internal movement restrictions.

In the early months of the pandemic, there was a sharp increase in COVID-19-related travel restrictions imposed both on countries within Africa (represented by the solid blue line) and those outside region (dotted blue line) (Figure 4). At their peak, around 80 per cent of corridors (intraregional and global) had travel restrictions. These measures levelled off around mid-2020 and soon began to decline, with intra-African travel restrictions falling much more sharply. By late 2020, health-related measures such as quarantine requirements and requiring negative COVID-19 test results had surpassed intra-African travel restrictions. Strikingly, however, unlike travel restrictions – which remained relatively high for countries outside of Africa compared with those within the continent – there were significantly more intra-African health measures when compared with similar controls imposed on countries outside the continent. As shown in the figure below, more than 80 per cent of country-to-country corridors (within the region) had implemented health-related measures as of 30 June 2021.

Figure 4. COVID-19-related international travel measures in Africa: March 2020 to June 2021



Source: IOM, 2021a.

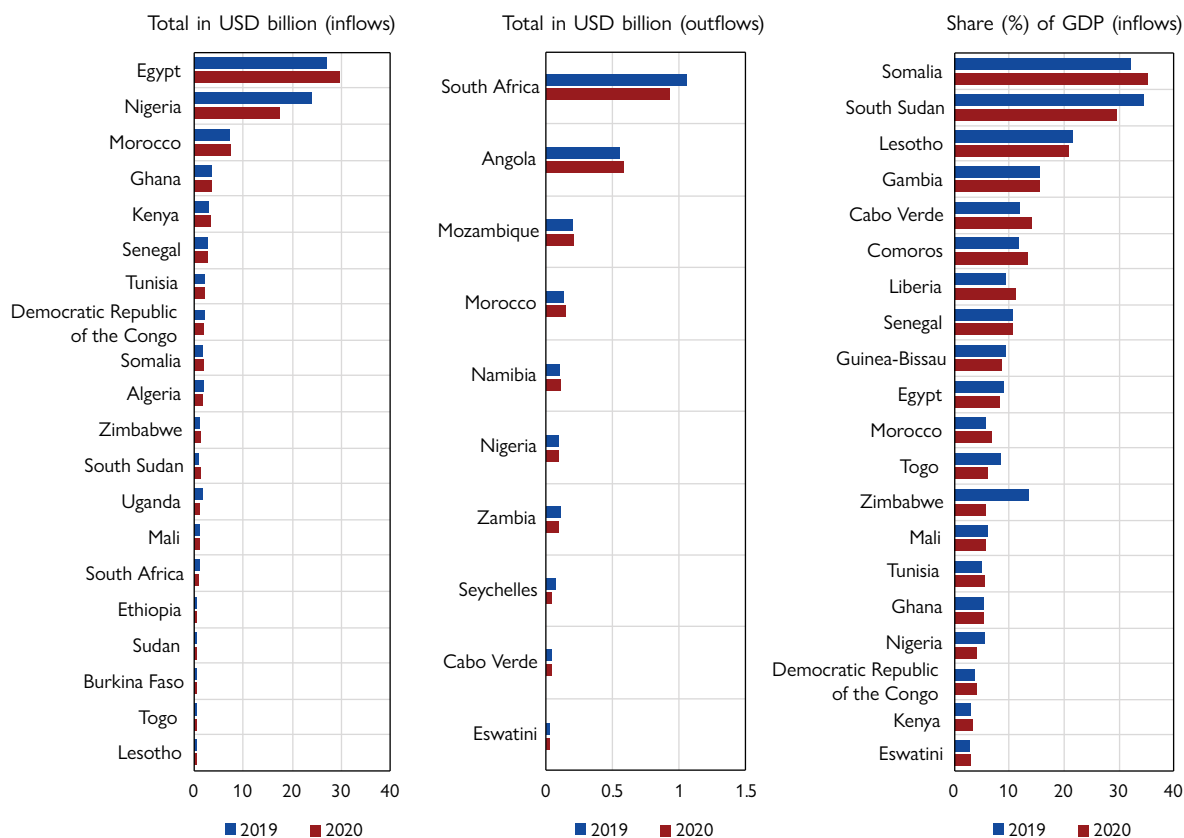
Notes: Health-related measures include health screening and monitoring, testing/medical certificates and quarantine measures. Travel restrictions include passenger restrictions based on nationality or arrival from a geographic location. See the DTM Mobility restrictions page for more information on the methodology.

In 2020, Egypt, Nigeria, Morocco, Ghana and Kenya were the top five international remittance recipient countries in Africa (see Figure 5). Inflows to Egypt and Nigeria alone exceeded USD 15 billion for each country and accounted for 56 per cent of total remittance flows to the region. As a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP), however, the top five remittance-receiving countries in 2020 were Somalia (35%), followed by South Sudan (30%), Lesotho (21%), the Gambia (16%) and Cabo Verde (14%). Overall remittances to Africa decreased by around 3 per cent in

2020 compared with 2019, largely due to a 28 per cent decline in remittance flows to Nigeria, the second largest remittance-receiving country in the region. Excluding Nigeria, however, remittances to the region grew by nearly 6 per cent in 2020 despite the COVID-19 pandemic, driven by unexpectedly strong flows to Egypt and Morocco.

Meanwhile, as shown in Figure 5, South Africa and Angola were the leading remittance source countries in the region, with outflows from the two countries amounting to around USD 921 million and USD 576 million, respectively, in 2020. While remittance outflows from South Africa declined in 2020 compared with 2019, those from Angola, Mozambique and Namibia, the second, third and fifth largest remittance source countries, increased.

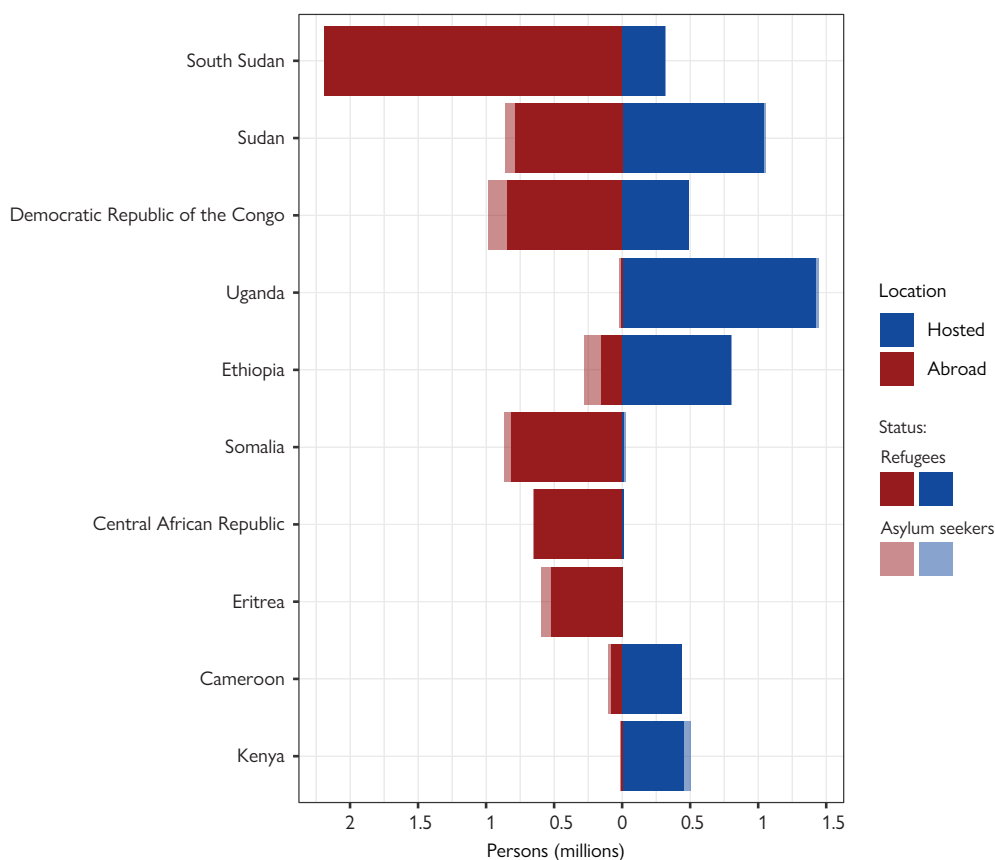
Figure 5. Top African international remittance recipient and source countries, 2019 and 2020



Source: World Bank, 2021.

Displacement within and from Africa is a major feature of the region, as shown in Figure 6. Most refugees and asylum seekers on the continent were hosted in neighbouring countries within the region. The top 10 countries in Africa, ranked by the combined total of refugees and asylum seekers both hosted by and originating from a given country, are shown in Figure 6. South Sudan was the origin of the largest number of refugees in Africa in 2020 (2 million) and ranked fourth in the world after the Syrian Arab Republic, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Afghanistan, with most being hosted in neighbouring countries such as Uganda. With protracted conflicts in both countries, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia were the origin of the second and third highest number of refugees in the region. Most of these refugees are also hosted in neighbouring countries. Other large refugee populations have originated from the Sudan and the Central African Republic. Uganda remained the largest host country of refugees in the region and the fourth largest in the world after Turkey, Colombia and Pakistan, with around 1.4 million living in the country; most were from South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Other large refugee hosting countries in 2020 were the Sudan and Ethiopia.

Figure 6. Top 10 African countries by total refugees and asylum seekers, 2020



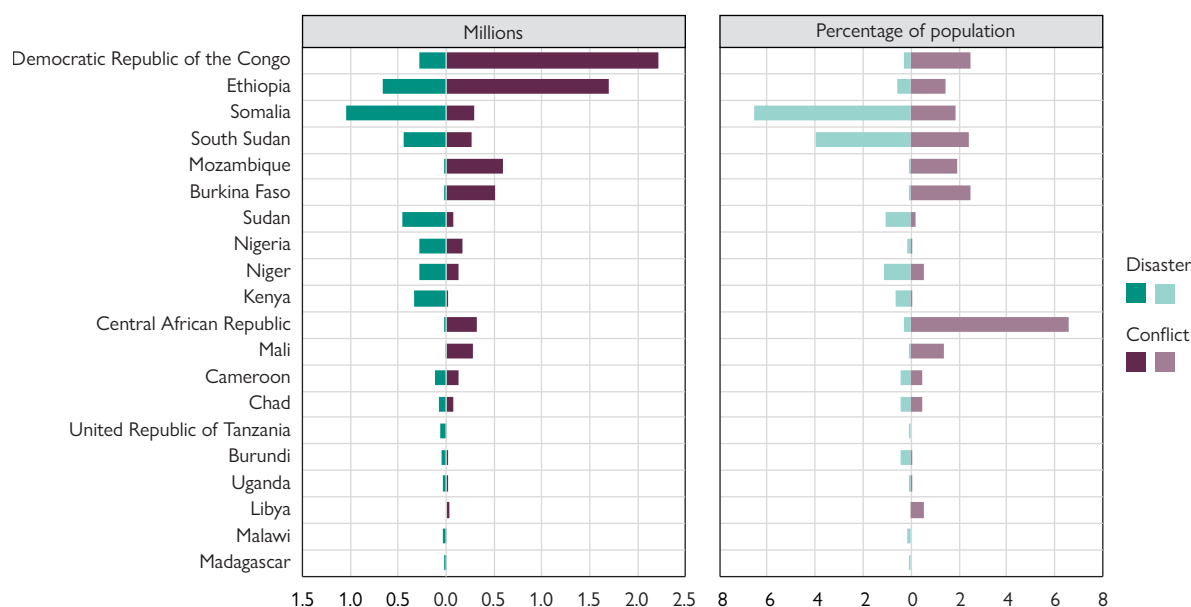
Source: UNHCR, n.d.a.

Note: "Hosted" refers to those refugees and asylum seekers from other countries who are residing in the receiving country (right-hand side of the figure); "abroad" refers to refugees and asylum seekers originating from that country who are outside of their origin country. The top 10 countries are based on 2020 data and are calculated by combining refugees and asylum seekers in and from countries.

The largest new internal displacements in Africa in 2020 took place in sub-Saharan Africa, with the majority caused by conflict (see Figure 7). The Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ethiopia experienced the largest conflict displacements in the region. By the end of 2020, there were a little over 2 million new conflict displacements in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and more than 1.6 million in Ethiopia. While the scale of displacements due to conflict is not as acute in terms of absolute numbers in the Central African Republic, the country had the largest displacements as a proportion of national population (around 7%).

Somalia and Ethiopia had the largest and second largest disaster displacements, respectively. In Somalia, heavy rains and subsequent flooding drove many of the displacements. Across sub-Saharan Africa, disaster-related events further exacerbated crises, particularly in countries already in conflict, triggering new and secondary movements.

Figure 7. Top 20 African countries by new internal displacements (disaster and conflict), 2020



Source: IDMC, n.d.; UN DESA, 2021.

Notes: The term “new displacements” refers to the number of displacement movements that occurred in 2020, not the total accumulated stock of IDPs resulting from displacement over time. New displacement figures include individuals who have been displaced more than once and do not correspond to the number of people displaced during the year. The population size used to calculate the percentage of new disaster and conflict displacements is based on the total resident population of the country per 2021 UN DESA population estimates, and the percentage is for relative illustrative purposes only.

Key features and developments in Africa⁴

West and Central Africa

The COVID-19 pandemic and related containment measures have had wide-ranging impacts on migration and mobility in West and Central Africa, disrupting intraregional movement and resulting in stranded migrants. Most international migrants from West and Central Africa move within the subregion. Many migrate for economic reasons, including to work in both the informal and formal sectors.⁵ However, in the early months of the pandemic, travel and movement restrictions such as border closures resulted in the suspension of free movement arrangements, such as those of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which had long facilitated greater mobility within the subregion.⁶ Between March and April 2020, up to 12 countries in the subregion closed their borders.⁷ Consequently, intraregional migration flows in West and Central Africa dropped by nearly 50 per cent between January and April 2020 at key transit points.⁸ Border closures also led to thousands of migrants being stranded, including seasonal workers, students and herders such as those who traditionally move along the transhumance corridor between Mauritania and Chad. By mid-2020, an estimated 50,000 migrants had been stranded in quarantine and transit centres and at international borders in West and Central Africa.⁹ Travel restrictions also had devastating impacts on trade and on the livelihoods of border communities, including migrants, many of whom are engaged in the informal sector, which employs most people in both West and Central Africa.¹⁰ Further, with formal recruitment channels suspended and borders closed, some migrants in West Africa resorted to using irregular migration channels and there were reports of smugglers charging higher fees to facilitate travel between countries. However, due to tighter border controls and the general decrease in population movements, migrant smuggling from the subregion decreased in the early months of the crisis, with irregular migration flows to Europe, for example, also temporarily falling.¹¹ While many countries have reopened their borders, various health and travel restrictions remain and continue to have impacts on migration and mobility in the subregion. The pandemic has also complicated political priorities, including those related to migration governance; however, as some analysis suggests, this is also an opportunity to strengthen migration governance and cooperation in the subregion and there is impetus to this end in some countries.¹²

The crisis in Central Sahel, characterized by the recent upsurge in conflict and violence, has resulted in one of the worst humanitarian disasters in Africa. The Central Sahel area, which encompasses Burkina Faso, the Niger and Mali, has experienced an increase in violence in recent years, driven by a combination of factors, including competition over natural resources, underdevelopment and poverty. The violence over access to natural resources has especially been exploited by non-State armed groups in rural areas, as State authorities have increasingly withdrawn into cities. Moreover, intercommunal violence in rural areas, including conflict between farmers and herders around transhumance, has also exacerbated an already difficult humanitarian situation, while the effects of climate change, such as unpredictable weather patterns and record hot periods, have worsened communal tensions and violence. Across the three States, an estimated 1.9 million people were internally displaced by the end of 2020, while thousands died due to violence during the same year.¹³

Climate change and extreme weather events are significant triggers of displacement, while also continuing to affect the livelihoods of millions of people and increasing competition over natural resources. Across Central and West Africa, climate change has contributed to prolonged droughts and unpredictable rainfall, impacting on the land use patterns of farmers and herders.¹⁴ Severe droughts, which have become more frequent, are not only disrupting livelihoods, but are also forcing many pastoralists into displacement.¹⁵ Storm surges and flooding

have also become more common, and in 2020 alone, they affected more than 2 million people across 18 countries in the subregion, resulting in the destruction of livestock, land and goods, and contributing to the ongoing food insecurity.¹⁶ In the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Cameroon, for example, heavy rain and flooding led to around 279,000 and 116,000 new displacements, respectively.¹⁷ Further, climate change has worsened existing tensions in communities over reduced access to water and grazing land, leading to increased violence over these natural resources. Of note is Nigeria's Middle Belt region and the border between Burkina Faso and Mali; this situation has been exploited by extremist groups, which capitalize on current tensions to further their causes.¹⁸

Displacement due to violent extremism continues to be a defining feature in West and Central Africa, with millions of people uprooted from their homes. In the Lake Chad basin, including Nigeria, Chad, the Niger and Cameroon, extremist groups such as Boko Haram have increased their attacks and kidnapping of civilians, while also continuing to recruit children into fighting.¹⁹ New extremist groups have also emerged in recent years, while some have expanded by establishing ties with regional or international groups.²⁰ In addition to Boko Haram, there are several other active groups that have not only caused displacement, but have also led to deaths and set back years of development gains in the Lake Chad basin and the Sahel.²¹ Their expansion across West Africa has been aided, in part, by smugglers and trafficking networks, as well as porous borders in the subregion.²² Extremist groups continue to take advantage of underlying ethnic animosities, poverty and the absence of State control in some rural areas to draw in recruits and advance their agendas.²³ Meanwhile, new coalitions of armed groups in Central Africa have devastated the lives of many people. In the Central African Republic, for example, one in four of the country's population was either a refugee or an IDP, and in the first six months of 2020, nearly as many people had been displaced within the country as had been displaced across the entire year of 2019.²⁴

Women and girls comprise a significant number of migrants in West and Central Africa, with many experiencing a range of gender-based risks. Women in the subregion migrate for various reasons, including in search of economic opportunities, to reunite with their families and to further their education.²⁵ In West Africa, nearly half of all migrants within and from the subregion are female.²⁶ The growing number of women migrants in the subregion is also evident in the number of migrant returns, which are increasingly comprised of women.²⁷ Economic factors remain the primary driver of migration and while women migrants are engaged in both formal and informal employment activities, the majority continue to be employed in the informal economy, including in areas such as trade and domestic work.²⁸ Female migrants from and within the subregion face several challenges and risks, both during migration and following arrival in destination countries. Sexual exploitation and violence during migration journeys, precarious employment conditions in destination countries and low wages are some of the challenges that many experience.²⁹

Eastern and Southern Africa

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a devastating toll on millions of migrants, including refugees, in both Eastern and Southern Africa. In the early weeks and months of the pandemic, several countries in the subregion completely closed their borders and restricted movement, resulting in a significant decline in migration and mobility within the subregion.³⁰ In addition to closing borders, some countries suspended the reception of new asylum seekers and refugees, leaving many people – at least temporarily – without protection.³¹ Uganda, for example, host to one of the largest refugee populations in the world, effectively ceased its “open door” policy to refugees and asylum seekers in early 2020. Further, refugees living in crowded camps and those in remote areas far from government health facilities have faced a range of challenges, including poor or no access to testing and treatment, while at the same time experiencing difficulty adhering to physical and social distancing, making them particularly vulnerable to contracting COVID-19.³² As countries went into lockdown, leaving many migrants without

work and the means to return home, thousands were left stranded in the subregion.³³ The pandemic also had an impact on irregular migration from the region. In the first few months of the pandemic, there was a decline in irregular migrant arrivals from the region to Europe, although by mid-2020, these numbers had risen again.³⁴ The drop in the number of migrants from the Horn of Africa going to Gulf countries through Yemen, however, was much more sustained, declining by 73 per cent in 2020.³⁵ In the same year, thousands of Horn of African migrants also returned from Yemen, often aided by smugglers, as many lost their sources of income due to the disruptions caused by the pandemic, while also experiencing increased human rights abuses.³⁶ The closure of the Yemen–Saudi Arabia border in 2020 also meant that many migrants headed to Saudi Arabia were no longer able to reach their intended destination.³⁷ The pandemic's impacts have extended to disrupting peace processes and operations across the world, including in Eastern Africa, and thus prolonging conflicts, which continue to drive displacement in the subregion.³⁸ Meanwhile, in parts of Southern Africa, the pandemic has been used to instrumentalize xenophobia and to scapegoat migrants.³⁹ Undocumented migrants and asylum seekers, among other migrants, have been hard hit by lockdown measures, which have worsened their already difficult socioeconomic conditions, with many unable to access pandemic-related support services.⁴⁰ While some countries in the subregion included migrants such as refugees and asylum seekers in their COVID-19-related health measures, including vaccinations, some continued to exclude them, with irregular migrants in particular being left out.⁴¹

Labour migration is a key feature in Eastern and Southern Africa, with a significant number of migrant workers within and from the subregion. Intraregional migration in Eastern and Southern Africa has increased over the years, driven in part by the growth of migrant workers in the subregion.⁴² In Eastern Africa, integration efforts such as the East African Common Market Protocol, while still facing major implementation challenges, have gradually made it easier for people to work across borders.⁴³ Recent arrangements, such as the Free Movement and Transhumance Protocol endorsed in June 2021, could also further accelerate intraregional migration once ratified and implemented by the Member States of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD).⁴⁴ Other regional economic communities, such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), have also developed programmes to further facilitate regular labour migration among Member States.⁴⁵ Intraregional irregular migration, including for economic reasons, is also prevalent.⁴⁶ Similar to Eastern Africa, the number of international migrant workers within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has also increased, comprised of labour migrants from within and outside Southern Africa.⁴⁷ An increasingly large number of people also migrate outside the subregion. Traditionally, Northern America and Europe have been the major destinations for emigrants from East African countries such as Kenya. In 2020, the largest Kenyan diaspora resided in the United States (nearly 157,000) and the United Kingdom (around 139,000).⁴⁸ Gulf States have also become a major destination for a growing number of Ugandan, Kenyan and Ethiopian migrant workers.⁴⁹ Large diaspora communities from the subregion have resulted in significant international remittance inflows in recent years. Kenya, for example, the third largest remittance recipient in sub-Saharan Africa after Nigeria and Ghana, received over USD 3 billion in 2020, a 9 per cent increase from 2019.⁵⁰ This growth in remittance flows to Kenya was largely driven by increased flows from the United States.⁵¹ Other countries in the subregion with significant numbers of their populations living abroad, such as Somalia and Uganda, also rank among the top 10 remittance-receiving countries in sub-Saharan Africa.⁵² South Africa is also a major destination for many migrants from the subregion and is the largest source of remittances in Africa.

The surge in terrorist attacks, in addition to persistent conflicts in parts of Southern and Eastern Africa, remain significant drivers of displacement. In northern Mozambique, the intensification of violent attacks by Ahlu Sunna wal Jama has resulted in a sharp increase in displacement. These extremely violent attacks have plunged the country's northern provinces such as Cabo Delgado, which are still dealing with the devastating effects of Cyclone Kenneth, further into crisis.⁵³ By end of 2020, conflict and violence had resulted in over half a million displacements in Mozambique, the fourth largest number of new conflict displacements in the world in 2020.⁵⁴ In Eastern Africa, several countries also continue to experience sporadic violence and intermittent conflict. Al Shabab attacks in Somalia, as well as State and regional armed operations against the militant group, continue to drive people from their homes, while in South Sudan, despite a peace accord that has restored a degree of stability, conflict between community militias continued in 2020.⁵⁵ One of the largest drivers of displacement in the Horn of Africa and that has an effect on Eastern Africa is the ongoing conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia; clashes have cost thousands of lives, and resulted in both internal and cross-border displacement in Tigray and neighbouring Afar and Amhara.⁵⁶ An estimated 1.7 million people had been displaced by conflict and violence in Ethiopia at the end of 2020, the third largest such figure in the world after the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Syrian Arab Republic.⁵⁷ Thousands also fled the country due to the violence, many hosted in neighbouring Sudan.⁵⁸

Eastern Africa continues to simultaneously host as well as be the origin of some of the largest refugee populations in the world. In 2020, South Sudan was origin of the fourth largest number of refugees globally (over 2 million).⁵⁹ Somalia, another country in the subregion affected by years of conflict and violence, was the origin of over 800,000 refugees.⁶⁰ East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes continue to be the origin of most African refugees, with more than 5 million from countries in the region in 2020.⁶¹ The region also hosted a significant number of refugees (around 4.5 million) in 2020.⁶² Uganda, with more than 1.4 million refugees, was the fourth largest host country of refugees in the world, most from South Sudan.⁶³ Several countries in the subregion, such as Uganda, have maintained their open-door policies, while also increasingly adopting progressive national refugee frameworks, partly inspired by the Global Compact on Refugees.⁶⁴

Extreme weather events, including floods, droughts and storms are affecting livelihoods in the subregion, often resulting in large displacements. Several countries in Eastern Africa, already beleaguered by conflict and violence, have experienced devastating disasters over the last two years. Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan, for example, were affected by some of the worst floods in decades, which created the conditions for a catastrophic locust outbreak that damaged livelihoods across the region in 2020.⁶⁵ In South Sudan, disasters, especially floods, were responsible for over 440,000 new disaster displacements in 2020.⁶⁶ In the same year, around 664,000 new disaster displacements were recorded in Ethiopia.⁶⁷ Several countries in Southern Africa were also affected by slow- and rapid-onset disasters. In Mozambique, for example, a country still reeling from the devastating effects of Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, Cyclone Eloise, which made landfall in January 2021, left hundreds of thousands of people in need of humanitarian assistance.⁶⁸ In countries such as the United Republic of Tanzania, recent flooding has also been linked to warming sea surface temperatures in the Indian Ocean, which contributes to La Niña-like conditions, and in parts of the country, severe droughts have resulted in the reduction of water levels in water bodies such as Lake Tanganyika.⁶⁹ These climate effects impact on already existing migration drivers, including those related to economic factors, with communities that depend on rain-fed agriculture being most affected.

North Africa

The effects of COVID-19 and related movement restrictions on migrants and migration in North Africa resulted in changes to irregular migration patterns, involuntary immobility, forced returns and discrimination. While North Africa remains a major area of transit for migrants from other parts of Africa trying to make their way to Europe, border closures in the subregion led to a decline in the overall number of migrants departing to Europe via the Mediterranean Sea in 2020.⁷⁰ However, there was wide variation across the different routes from North Africa, with the number of people using the Central Mediterranean route, for example, increasing in 2020 compared with 2019.⁷¹ The pandemic and related measures to contain it also had adverse and unique impacts on migrants, including those held in detention in countries with major protection challenges such as Libya, where overcrowding, poor sanitation and the lack of safe water have made them vulnerable to contracting COVID-19.⁷² Other migrants in the subregion have found themselves stranded because of border closures or due to the suspension of voluntary return programmes.⁷³ In some cases, migrants have been forcibly returned by authorities, leaving them stranded in the desert.⁷⁴ The forced return of migrants from North Africa and other parts of world prompted the United Nations Network on Migration (UNNM) to issue a statement calling for the suspension of these measures during the pandemic.⁷⁵ However, some countries in North Africa, such as Algeria – in agreement with origin countries including Mali – did temporarily lift travel restrictions and allowed IOM, for example, to facilitate the safe return of stranded migrants.⁷⁶ The pandemic also inflicted a significant financial toll on a large number of migrants in the subregion, as many lost their sources of income. Migrants have also experienced discrimination and stigmatization, compounded with being excluded from vital services such as health care, although some countries, such as Egypt, have included migrants in their health-care responses and vaccination plans.⁷⁷ Furthermore, women migrants have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19, and in countries such as Tunisia, women have not only reported more frequent losses in income than men, but there has also been an increase in the risk of sexual exploitation.⁷⁸

North Africa receives some of the largest international remittances globally, driven by the subregion's significant emigrant population. Emigration, particularly from Maghreb countries such as Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, has long been a feature in North Africa.⁷⁹ Other countries in the subregion, including Egypt, also have large emigrant populations. Europe and Asia are the two major destinations for migrants from North Africa. In 2020, there was a combined total of more than 5 million migrants in Europe from Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia.⁸⁰ While Europe is the primary destination for migrants from these three countries, Asian countries, particularly Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States, are the main destination for migrants from Egypt.⁸¹ Nearly one million Egyptian migrants, for example, were living in Saudi Arabia in 2020, while around 900,000 were in the United Arab Emirates and over 400,000 in Kuwait.⁸² Given its large diaspora, the subregion has over the years become one of the largest recipients of international remittances in the world. In 2020, international remittance inflows to Egypt reached a record USD 30 billion, making it the fifth largest recipient globally.⁸³ Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, remittances to Egypt increased by around 11 per cent, while in Morocco they rose by 6.5 per cent.⁸⁴ Remittances to Morocco and Tunisia account for more than 5 per cent of GDP, while in Egypt this figure is at over 8 per cent.⁸⁵ International remittance flows to the subregion could potentially grow further, as the European Union (EU) seeks to enhance legal migration pathways to the region through instruments such as the EU Talent Pool and Talent Partnerships, part of the New EU Pact on Migration and Asylum; North Africa is one of the subregions that would benefit from these new schemes.⁸⁶

North Africa continues to be the origin and destination of a large number of refugees and IDPs, with conflict and violence playing major roles in driving displacement within and from the subregion. For a decade, countries such as Libya have been embroiled in conflict and political instability, forcing hundreds of thousands of people from their homes and severely limiting access to basic services.⁸⁷ Humanitarian assistance delivery has also often been hampered, while services such as water, health and education infrastructure are

regularly targeted.⁸⁸ In 2020, there were more than 278,000 IDPs in Libya, many displaced by conflict and violence.⁸⁹ While a ceasefire signed in October 2020 has resulted in a reduction in hostilities, over a million people continue to be in need of humanitarian assistance.⁹⁰ The Sudan also continues to experience a complex political, humanitarian and political situation. Violent conflict in areas such as Kordofan and Darfur have displaced many, while the country continues to host one of the largest refugee populations in the world, most from South Sudan.⁹¹ Other refugees in the Sudan include those from neighbouring countries such as Ethiopia and Eritrea, as well as those from more distant countries in conflict, including Yemen and the Syrian Arab Republic.⁹² By the end of 2020, the Sudan hosted around 1 million refugees and over 2.3 million IDPs.⁹³

Many migrants across the subregion continue to endure a multitude of protection challenges, with women and girls particularly vulnerable to abuse. In addition to verbal and physical attacks, migrants have encountered exploitation, as well as poor living conditions.⁹⁴ These realities are further compounded in countries with weak rule of law and where militias or smugglers and traffickers act with impunity. In Libya, migrants have regularly been taken and held in “official” detention centres, where they have faced a multitude of abuses.⁹⁵ Other migrants have ended up in warehouses or unofficial detention centres and left at the mercy of smugglers and traffickers.⁹⁶ International organizations are often denied access to these centres, leaving many in appalling conditions.⁹⁷ However, these realities are not limited only to detained migrants; many in urban settings are confronted with barriers to accessing basic needs and services and are exposed to difficult, impoverished living conditions.⁹⁸ Women and girls have particularly been subjected to abuse such as rape, including during their journeys to and through the subregion.⁹⁹

North Africa remains a major transit hub and point of departure for migrants from the subregion and those from sub-Saharan Africa trying to make their way to Europe and beyond. Tens of thousands of migrants attempt to reach Europe from North Africa using two major routes, the Central Mediterranean routes (mainly from Libya and Tunisia to Italy) and the Western Mediterranean routes (largely from Morocco and Algeria to Spain).¹⁰⁰ Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an increase in arrivals on both the Central and Western Mediterranean routes in 2020. Arrivals in Europe on both routes saw an 86 per cent increase, from more than 41,000 to nearly 77,000.¹⁰¹ Along the Central Mediterranean routes to Italy, Tunisians comprised the largest number of arrivals.¹⁰² The harrowing journeys across both routes result many deaths, and in 2020 alone, more than 1,500 migrants from West and North Africa heading to Spain, Malta and Italy were reported as dead or missing at sea.¹⁰³ Many migrants rely on the services of smugglers to get them to and through North Africa to Europe; those trying to get to Libya from countries in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, are mainly smuggled along two routes, including the Western route (used by West Africans through the Niger, Mali and Algeria), and the Eastern route (used largely by migrants from East Africa through the Sudan and Chad). Migrants often endure abuse during these journeys, with some becoming victims of trafficking, including being in situations where they are unable to pay smugglers upon arrival at their destination.¹⁰⁴

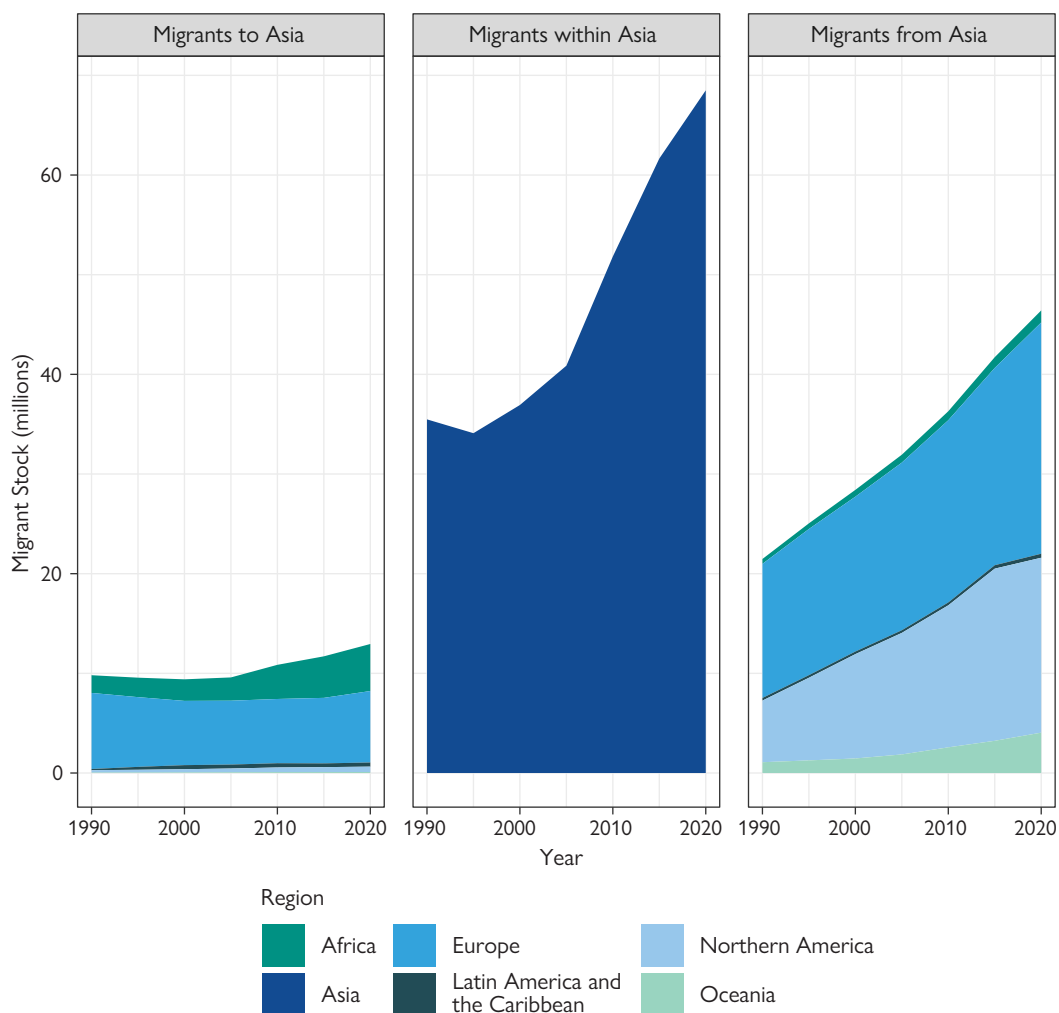
Asia¹⁰⁵

Asia – home to around 4.6 billion people – was the origin of over 40 per cent of the world’s international migrants in 2020 (around 115 million). In the same year, more than half (69 million) were residing in other countries in Asia, a significant increase from 2015, when around 61 million were estimated to be living within the continent. As shown in the middle panel of Figure 8, intraregional migration in Asia has increased significantly over time, rising from 35 million in 1990. Considerable growth has also occurred in Asian-born migrant populations in Northern America and Europe over the last two decades. In 2020, migration from Asia to Northern America reached 17.5 million, rising slightly from 17.3 million in 2015, whereas in Europe, migration from Asia stood at 23 million

in 2020, increasing from almost 20 million in 2015. Migration from Asia to Northern America and Europe drove much of the increase in the number of Asian migrants outside the region, reaching a total of more than 46 million extraregional migrants in 2020.

The number of non-Asian-born migrants in Asia has remained at relatively low levels since 1990. Europeans comprise the largest group of migrants from outside Asia in the region. These numbers include migrants from the European part of the former Soviet Union now living in Central Asia. During the same period, the number of Africans – the other sizable group of migrants in Asia – has grown.

Figure 8. Migrants to, within and from Asia, 1990–2020



Source: UN DESA, 2021.

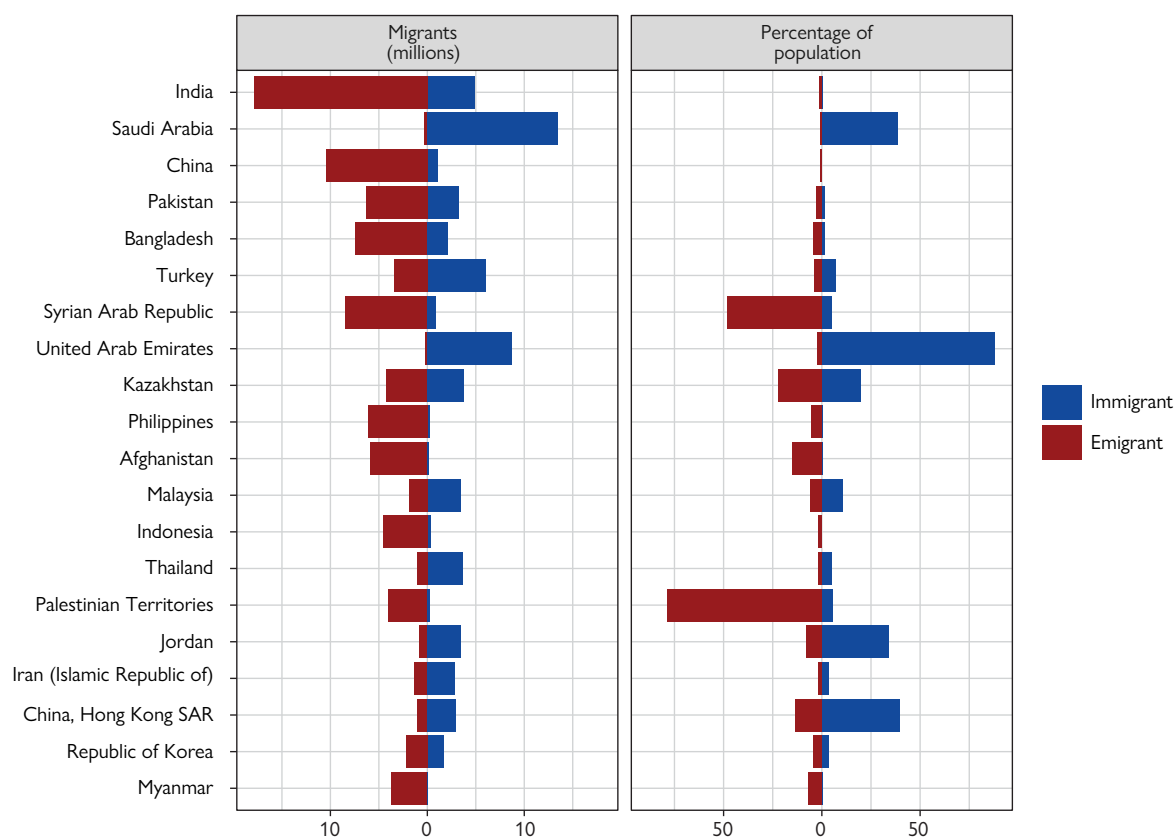
Note: "Migrants to Asia" refers to migrants residing in the region (i.e. Asia) who were born in one of the other regions (e.g. Europe or Africa). "Migrants within Asia" refers to migrants born in the region (i.e. Asia) and residing outside their country of birth, but still within the Asian region. "Migrants from Asia" refers to people born in Asia who were residing outside the region (e.g. in Europe or Northern America).

The two Asian “population giants”, India and China, have the largest absolute numbers of migrants living abroad (Figure 9). It is important to add that these large absolute numbers of emigrants constitute small shares of the total populations of India and China. Migrants from China made up the fourth largest population of foreign-born migrants in the world after India, Mexico and the Russian Federation. Just over 2 million Chinese-born emigrants resided in the United States, which was also home to other large Asian migrant groups from India, the Philippines and Viet Nam. Other countries with large numbers of migrants residing abroad include Bangladesh and the Syrian Arab Republic.

In GCC countries, migrants make up high proportions of the total national populations (Figure 9). For example, in 2020, migrants accounted for 88 per cent of the population in the United Arab Emirates; almost 73 per cent in Kuwait; 77 per cent in Qatar; and 55 per cent in Bahrain. Many migrants came from Africa, South Asia (e.g. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal), and South-East Asia (e.g. Indonesia and the Philippines).

It is also important to note that current data on foreign-born migrants also partly reflect significant historical events, such as the 1947 Partition, resulting in the mass displacement of people from and to India and Pakistan. This is evident in 2020 data, which show that nearly 5 million and over 3 million foreign-born migrants, respectively, resided in the two countries.

Figure 9. Top 20 Asian migrant countries/territories, 2020



Source: UN DESA, 2021.

Note 1: The population size used to calculate the percentage of immigrants and emigrants is based on the UN DESA total resident population of the country, which includes foreign-born populations.

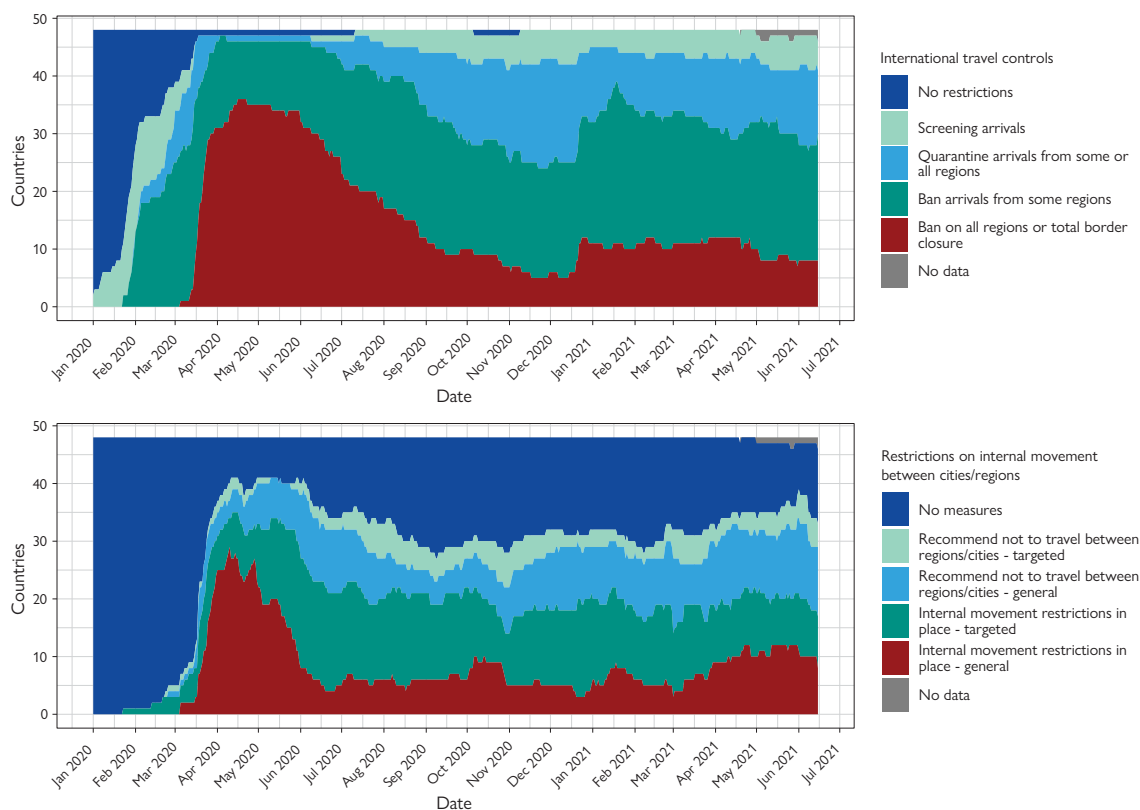
Note 2: “Immigrant” refers to foreign-born migrants residing in the country. “Emigrant” refers to people born in the country who were residing outside their country of birth in 2021.

Asian countries issued some of the very earliest COVID-19-related international and internal movement restrictions to contain the spread of the virus. As in regions such as Africa, international travel controls came into effect earlier than internal restrictions, with measures such as screening arrivals put in place as early as January 2020 (Figure 10). These were quickly followed by quarantine measures and the banning of arrivals from some regions, with total border closures only put in place from around March 2020, by which time virtually all countries in the region had some form of international travel control.

Markedly, nearly all countries in Asia maintained international travel restrictions such as screening arrivals throughout 2020, and by mid-June 2021 this measure was still in place for most countries. Quarantine measures dropped only slightly, while international controls, including bans on arrivals and total border closures, fell over time, with the latter declining much more sharply.

Internal movement restrictions, typically imposed some time after international controls, saw a significant increase from around mid-March 2020, before beginning to decline in mid-May. This decline was not uniform across all measures, however, with restrictions such as recommendations not to travel between regions or cities – both specific and general – falling much more gradually than the rest of the measures. However, all internal controls did see slight increases at various points, including during the first quarter of 2021.

Figure 10. COVID-19-related travel controls in Asia: International and internal, January 2020 to June 2021

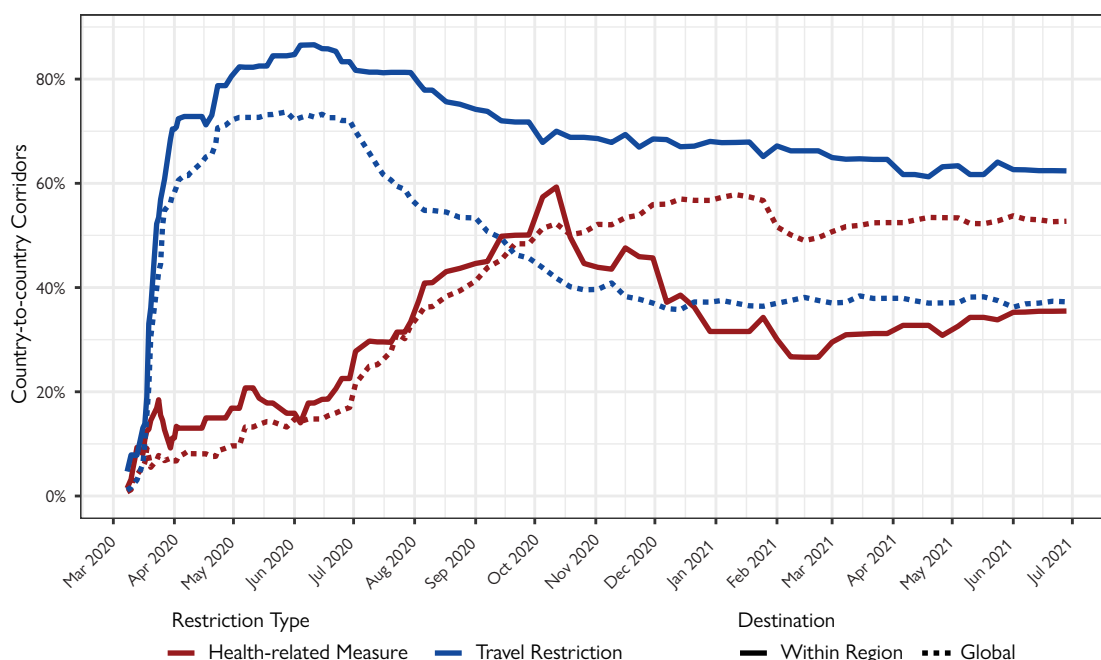


Source: Hale et al., 2021.

Notes: Categories used are those of the Oxford Government Response Tracker; categories included in the data set are for COVID-19-related restrictions only and do not reflect other travel restrictions that may also be in place, such as those related to visa restrictions, entry bans based on citizenship, departure/exit restrictions and internal movement restrictions.

There was a very quick rise in the number of travel restrictions in Asia (intraregional and global) in the early months of 2020. These restrictions began to decline gradually around the middle of that year. However, unlike regions such as Africa, which saw a sharper decline in travel restrictions within the region compared with other global regions, this dynamic is flipped in Asia, with greater intraregional travel controls throughout 2020 and the first half of 2021 (see Figure 11). Health measures increased over time and by late 2020, those imposed on countries outside of Asia had surpassed extraregional travel controls. However, health measures (within the region) began to decline around October 2020, with less than 40 per cent of country-to-country corridors maintaining these measures as of 30 June 2021.

Figure 11. COVID-19-related international travel measures in Asia: March 2020 to June 2021



Source: IOM, 2021a.

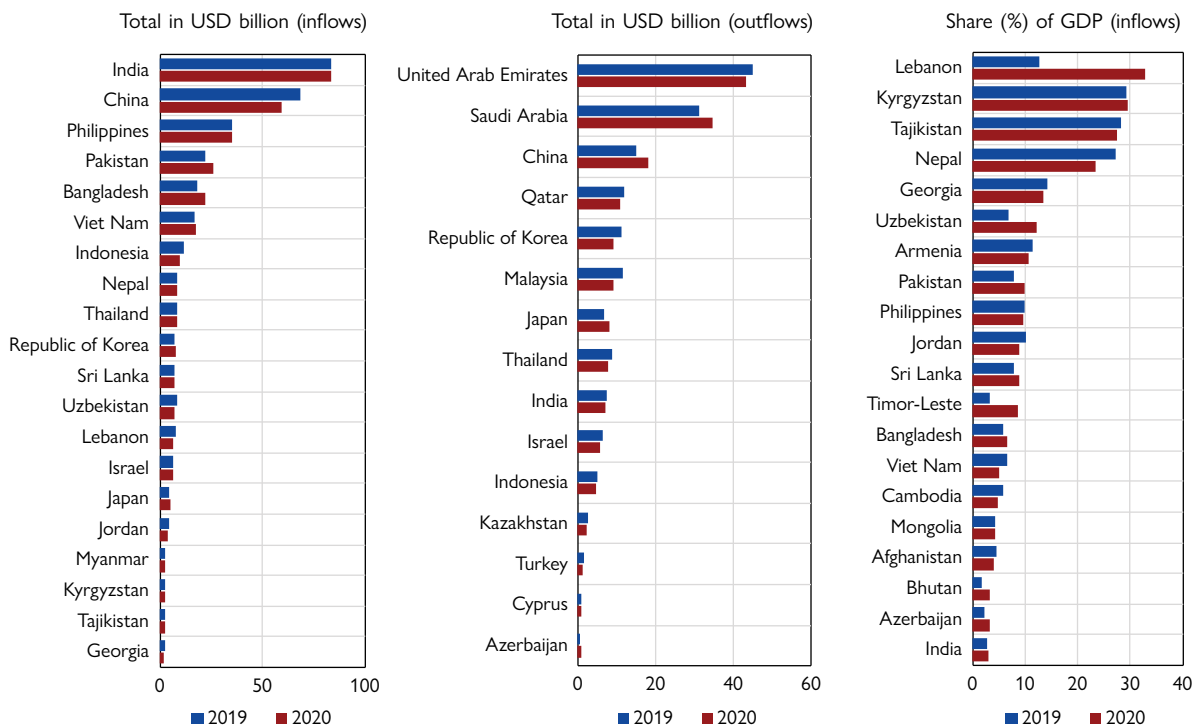
Notes: Health-related measures include health screening and monitoring, testing/medical certificates and quarantine measures. Travel restrictions include passenger restrictions based on nationality or arrival from a geographic location. See the DTM Mobility restrictions page for more information on the methodology.

In 2020, India and China received the largest amounts of international remittances in Asia, with a combined total of more than USD 140 billion. Other major remittance recipients included the Philippines, Pakistan and Bangladesh (see Figure 12). As a percentage of GDP, some of the most significant recipients in 2020 were Lebanon (33%), Kyrgyzstan (29%), Tajikistan (27%) and Nepal (24%). Compared with 2019, inward remittance flows to Asia decreased modestly by around 2 per cent in 2020. In India, the region's largest recipient country, remittances fell by just 0.2 per cent, reaching USD 83 billion. In Pakistan, however, remittances rose by over 17 per cent to a record high of USD 26 billion.

In terms of remittance outflows, two GCC countries – the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia – were the largest and second largest source countries of remittances in Asia. Remittances sent from the United Arab Emirates reached USD 43 billion in 2020, although this was a decline from 2019, when outflows amounted to nearly

USD 45 billion. Remittances from Saudi Arabia, however, increased in the same period, rising from USD 31 billion in 2019 to USD 34 billion in 2020. Other countries, such as China, Qatar and the Republic of Korea were also the source of significant remittance outflows.

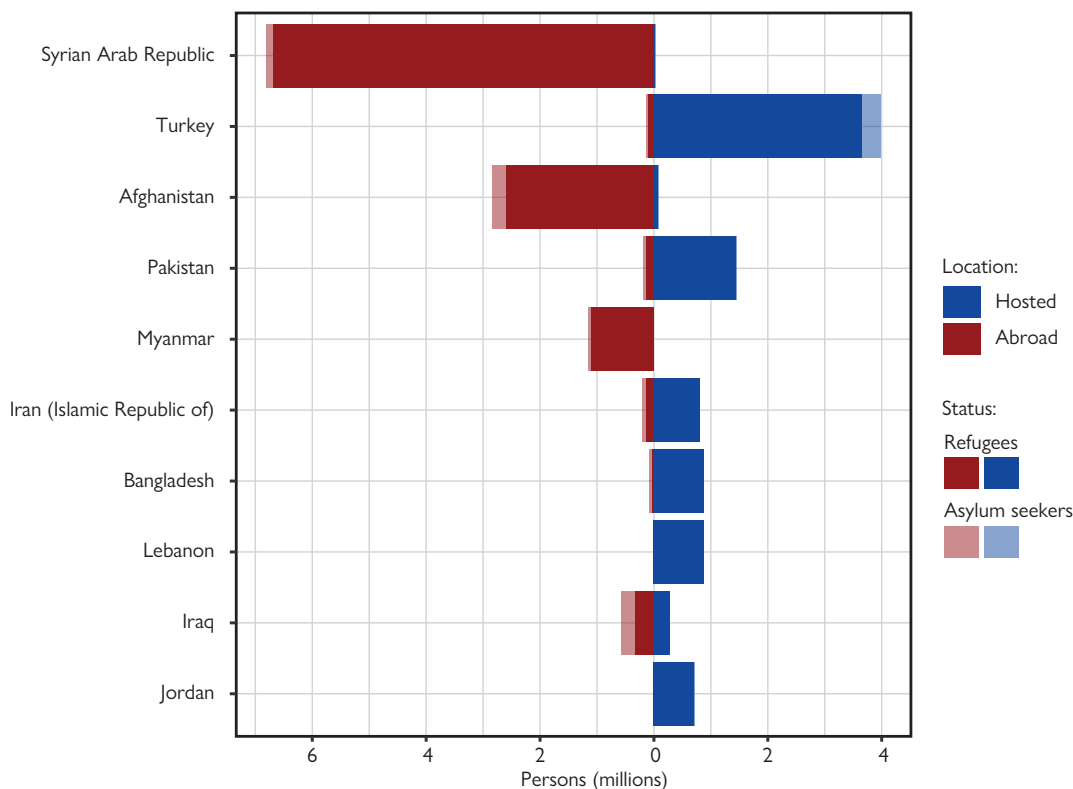
Figure 12. Top Asian international remittance recipient and source countries, 2019 and 2020



Source: World Bank, 2021.

International displacement within and from Asia is a major feature of the region, as shown in Figure 13. The Syrian Arab Republic and Afghanistan were the top origin countries of refugees in the world in 2020. The impact of the Syrian conflict on displacement can clearly be seen in Figure 13, with refugees and asylum seekers from the Syrian Arab Republic dwarfing numbers from the rest of the subregion. In 2020, the vast majority of refugees from Asian countries lived in neighbouring countries. Refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic, for example, were predominantly hosted in Turkey (more than 3.6 million), Lebanon (around 0.9 million) and Jordan (nearly 0.7 million), while refugees from Afghanistan, whose numbers declined slightly from 2.7 million in 2019 to 2.6 million in 2020, were largely hosted in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. However, events in Afghanistan in mid-2021 related to the withdrawal of allied troops and the speedy resurgence of the Taliban will undoubtedly see the number of refugees from Afghanistan increase for 2021. Due to violence against and persecution of the Rohingya, Myanmar was the country of origin of the third largest refugee population in the region and the fifth largest number of people displaced across borders globally in 2020, with most of these refugees hosted in Bangladesh. As shown in Figure 13, it is also important to note that origin countries such as Iraq, Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran are also themselves hosting refugees.

Figure 13. Top 10 Asian countries by total refugees and asylum seekers, 2020

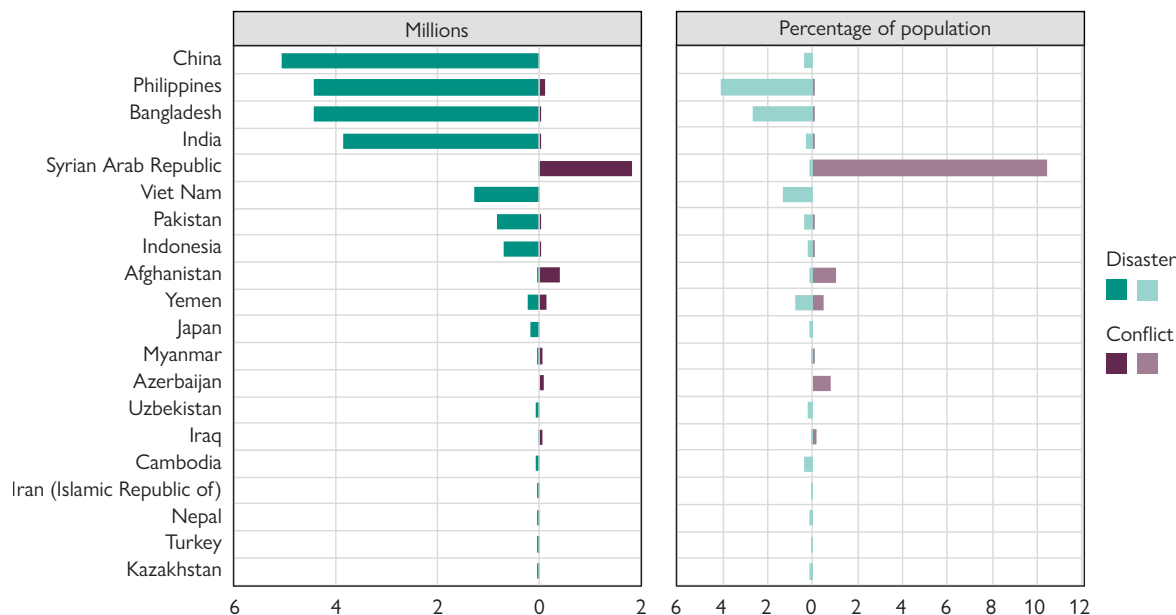


Source: UNHCR, n.d.b.

Note: "Hosted" refers to those refugees and asylum seekers from other countries who are residing in the receiving country (right-hand side of the figure); "abroad" refers to refugees and asylum seekers originating from that country who are outside of their origin country. The top 10 countries are based on 2020 data and are calculated by combining refugees and asylum seekers in and from countries.

The largest new internal displacements in Asia resulted from disasters (Figure 14). China had approximately 5 million new disaster displacements at the end of 2020. Notably, the Philippines recorded nearly as many new disaster displacements as China, with over 4 million new disaster displacements. Moreover, disasters such as flooding caused by monsoons, landslides and intense cyclones triggered large-scale displacements in 2020 in Bangladesh (more than 4 million), India (nearly 4 million) and Viet Nam (around 1 million). Conflicts also contributed to new internal displacements in Asia, with the Syrian Arab Republic recording the largest number (almost 2 million). Other countries that experienced large conflict displacements include Afghanistan (404,000) and Yemen (143,000). The humanitarian crisis in Yemen is one of the most severe globally; two intense rainy seasons between February and September, which displaced over 200,000 people in 2020, exacerbated an already existing humanitarian crisis in the country.

Figure 14. Top 20 Asian countries by new internal displacements (disaster and conflict), 2020



Source: IDMC, n.d.; UN DESA, 2021.

Notes: New displacements refers to the number of displacement movements that occurred in 2020, not the total accumulated stock of IDPs resulting from displacement over time. New displacement figures include individuals who have been displaced more than once and do not correspond to the number of people displaced during the year.

The population size used to calculate the percentage of new disaster and conflict displacements is based on the total resident population of the country per 2021 UN DESA population estimates, and the percentage is for relative illustrative purposes only.

Key features and developments in Asia¹⁰⁶

Middle East

Migrants in the subregion experienced significant challenges posed by COVID-19 and related travel and movement restrictions, which exacerbated existing health vulnerabilities, worsened their economic conditions, left many stranded and forced thousands to return to their home countries. In several GCC countries, for example, migrants have been at increased risk of contracting COVID-19 due to overcrowded living conditions and the nature of their work, as well as inadequate access to health care.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, as countries locked down and companies were forced to close their operations, many migrants also lost their jobs or experienced payment delays, affecting their ability to meet basic needs or pay off debts.¹⁰⁸ Many were forced to return to their countries of origin.¹⁰⁹ The *Kafala* system, which ties migrant workers to their employers, exacerbated the poor working and living conditions for many migrant workers in the Gulf. These conditions were particularly difficult for domestic workers, who, due to lockdowns, were sometimes stuck with abusive employers.¹¹⁰ Irregular migrants in detention centres in countries such as Saudi Arabia and Yemen were a source of concern, with fears that their cramped and unhygienic living conditions made them extremely vulnerable to getting COVID-19.¹¹¹ The closure

of borders also left many migrants in the Gulf and elsewhere in the subregion stranded. In Yemen, thousands of migrants trying to cross to Saudi Arabia were left stuck, often with no food, shelter or water.¹¹² IDPs and refugees in the Middle East were also affected by the pandemic. Their crowded living conditions in countries such as Lebanon meant that many refugees were at increased risk of exposure to COVID-19.¹¹³ However, several countries in the region including Lebanon have over time included migrants in their health-care responses, such as the ongoing vaccination campaigns.¹¹⁴ Others such as Morocco and Jordan are also including migrants in their national COVID-19 vaccination programmes.¹¹⁵

While there has been progress in terms of conflict resolution and peacebuilding in several countries, conflict and violence remain the biggest drivers of displacement in the subregion. Ceasefire agreements in countries such as Iraq resulted in a decline of displacements, but new government offensives in the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen were responsible for driving large numbers of people out of their homes.¹¹⁶ The 2020 Syrian Government offensive in Idlib Governorate resulted in the single largest displacement event since the war started.¹¹⁷ Meanwhile, fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh in September 2020, following months of tension between Armenia and Azerbaijan, led to many deaths and many thousands displaced during the two months of conflict.¹¹⁸ This was the biggest escalation of conflict between the two countries since the 1994 truce.¹¹⁹ While a ceasefire between Azerbaijan, Armenia and the Russian Federation, signed in November 2020, led to a de-escalation of hostilities,¹²⁰ many people remain displaced, and by end of 2020, tens of thousands were still in need of humanitarian assistance.¹²¹

Some countries in the region have suffered significant disasters in recent years, and there is ongoing concern that displacement due to climate change could sharply increase. Several countries in the Middle East are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and weather-related disasters, and for some already in conflict, disasters have aggravated ongoing humanitarian crises. In 2020, floods displaced more people in Yemen than conflict and violence, with nearly a quarter of a million new displacements.¹²² Yemen's recent twin challenges – large-scale disaster and conflict displacements – underscore the complexity of the country's humanitarian crisis. Other countries such as Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic have also experienced recurrent floods in recent years, exacerbating the conditions of refugees and IDPs living in camps.¹²³ Further, while identifying displacement driven by slow-onset hazards such as desertification is difficult, there is evidence to suggest that in countries such as the Syrian Arab Republic the extended drought that devastated livelihoods prior to the start to the conflict may have played a role in the complex set of factors that triggered the country's civil war.¹²⁴

The region continues to host and is the origin of some of the largest number of refugees and asylum seekers globally. With nearly seven million refugees from the country in 2020, the Syrian Arab Republic remains the largest origin of refugees in the world.¹²⁵ Other countries in the subregion such as Iraq also had a significant number of their populations displaced across borders. In addition, the Middle East continues to be one of the largest destinations for refugees, most from countries within the subregion.¹²⁶ Lebanon and Jordan, for example, rank among the top five hosts of refugees globally (as a share of national population).¹²⁷ One in eight people in Lebanon and one in 15 people in Jordan is a refugee, many of whom are from the Syrian Arab Republic or the Palestinian Territories.¹²⁸ Around 5.7 million refugees from the Palestinian Territories, under the mandate of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), are hosted within the subregion, making the Middle East one of the largest host subregions for refugees in the world.¹²⁹

Central Asia

Heavily reliant on international remittances, Central Asia suffered a significant decline in remittance inflows in 2020 due to the pandemic. Because of lockdowns and movement restrictions in key destination countries such as the Russian Federation, many migrant workers from the subregion lost their jobs, incurred significant salary cuts, or were forced to take unpaid leave.¹³⁰ The loss of income had large economic impacts, especially on countries such as Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan that rely heavily on international remittances. In 2020, for example, remittances made up 29 per cent and 27 per cent of GDP in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, respectively. Remittance flows to Europe and Central Asia declined by nearly 10 per cent in 2020, while those from the Russian Federation to countries such as Tajikistan and the Kyrgyzstan fell by 37 per cent and 17 per cent, respectively – a result of COVID-19 impacts in the Russian Federation.¹³¹ Remittance flows into Central Asian countries largely reflect migration patterns within and from the subregion, which are closely linked to work and income generation. The Russian Federation, the largest destination for migrants from the subregion, remains the biggest source country of remittances to Central Asian countries.¹³² Outward migration, which has long featured in Central Asia, all but came to a halt as destination countries closed their borders, leaving many potential migrant workers stuck and unable to leave their country.¹³³ Meanwhile, border closures also stranded thousands of migrants trying to return to their countries of origin, including while transiting through Kazakhstan, which grants transit permission for those returning by land to Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.¹³⁴

Central Asia has experienced significant disaster events in recent years, resulting in the displacement of tens of thousands of people. With the subregion experiencing increasingly warmer temperatures, some recent sudden-onset disasters have been linked to the growing impacts of climate change. In 2020 alone, heavy rains and severe flooding in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan led to 70,000 and 32,000 new displacements, respectively.¹³⁵ Environmental changes are projected to increase the occurrence and intensity of these types of disasters and could result in further displacement in the subregion. People living in grasslands face even greater risks than those living in drylands and are more exposed to the damage wrought by torrential rains and floods.¹³⁶ These disasters are a threat to people's livelihoods; as severe storms, droughts, wildfires, floods and mudflows intensify, there are increasing risks to agricultural production, causing food insecurity on a large scale in the region.¹³⁷

Most international migrants in Central Asia moved to other regions, mainly toward the Russian Federation, by far the most important destination for migrants from the subregion. Nearly 5 million migrants from Central Asia were living in the Russian Federation by end of 2020.¹³⁸ Most of these, over 2.5 million, were born in Kazakhstan.¹³⁹ Migrants born in Uzbekistan comprised the second largest group (over 1 million).¹⁴⁰ Around 40 per cent of the Russian Federation's international migrants in 2020 were from Central Asia.¹⁴¹ A significant number of these are migrant workers, who leave their countries due to high levels of unemployment and in search of better remuneration and working conditions in the Russian Federation. Kazakhstan, with its growing economy driven by natural resources such as oil, has also become a destination for migrants from the subregion.¹⁴²

While migration from Central Asia is overwhelmingly male dominated, women from the subregion are also increasingly moving to countries such as the Russian Federation as migrant workers. While men have traditionally comprised most migrant workers from the subregion, there has also been a growing number of women labour migrants working in the Russian Federation in recent years.¹⁴³ Many women labour migrants in Central Asia are from Kyrgyzstan; around 51 per cent of Kyrgyz migrants in the Russian Federation, for example, are women.¹⁴⁴ Most work in the services sector, including catering and as domestic workers.¹⁴⁵ To a lesser degree, there is also a growing number of women migrants from other countries in the subregion, such as Tajikistan. Women comprise

around 41 per cent of all Tajik migrants in the Russian Federation (42% of Tajik migrants worldwide).¹⁴⁶ The lack of economic opportunities or the search for higher wages and better working conditions explain most emigration from Central Asia. Other factors, however, such as forced, early and servile marriage, also play a role. In Kyrgyzstan, the practice known as “bride kidnapping” has been shown to contribute to emigration, with some women using migration to escape forced and early marriage.¹⁴⁷ While labour migration has helped some of these countries to reduce unemployment by exporting excess workforce and thus benefiting from remittance inflows, it has also put strain on many households and contributed to family breakdown.¹⁴⁸

Eastern Asia

The pandemic increased incidents of xenophobia and discrimination against migrants within and from the subregion, while border restrictions had widespread impacts on migration and mobility. Cases of discrimination and xenophobia against Chinese migrants and their descendants in other parts of the world were widely reported.¹⁴⁹ In some instances, people perceived to be of Chinese descent were physically attacked, as they were increasingly and incorrectly associated with COVID-19 transmission.¹⁵⁰ On the other hand, there was reporting of discriminatory practices toward migrants during early pandemic responses within the subregion in relation to a wide range of measures, such as quarantine requirements, mask rationing, and access to social benefits and local government subsidies, being based on nationality alone.¹⁵¹ Moreover, lockdown measures and travel restrictions left many migrants unable to return to their countries of employment. In early 2020, for example, Japan prohibited the entry of non-Japanese nationals or permanent residents, as well as people who held work permits, but had temporarily left the country for holiday or work.¹⁵² These restrictions also disrupted recent efforts, including by countries such as Japan, to fill labour shortages by further increasing the number of migrant workers in the country. Similarly, the Republic of Korea also experienced declines in the arrival of migrant workers.¹⁵³

With millions of its population living abroad, China has one of the largest transnational communities in the world and remains among the top recipients of international remittances. There were an estimated 10 million Chinese international migrants in 2020, with large numbers living in Canada, Italy, Australia, the Republic of Korea, Japan, the United States and Singapore.¹⁵⁴ China's large diaspora population means that the country receives a significant share (nearly 9%) of the world's global remittances (USD 702 billion). In 2020, inflows of international remittances to China came second only to India, with the country receiving nearly USD 60 billion.¹⁵⁵ In addition to ranking as one of the largest remittance recipients, China was the third largest sender of remittances in Asia (more than USD 18 billion) after the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, a reflection of the growing number of international migrants in the country.¹⁵⁶

In addition to being the origin of some of the largest numbers of international students globally, Eastern Asia has increasingly become a key destination for students from other subregions. China is the largest origin country of international students in the world, with most residing in Northern America.¹⁵⁷ There were an estimated 372,000 Chinese students in the United States during the 2019–2020 academic year, with graduate students driving most of the recent growth.¹⁵⁸ Other countries in the subregion with significant numbers studying abroad are the Republic of Korea and Japan.¹⁵⁹ Eastern Asia has also increasingly become a major destination for international students. Some countries, such as China, have long implemented policies and plans to attract international students and within the last few years, the country had become the largest destination in Asia, with nearly half a million international students.¹⁶⁰ Most of these students came from other countries in Asia and from Africa.¹⁶¹ Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Republic of Korea and Japan also saw their international student

numbers rise. By April 2020, the Republic of Korea had more than 153,000 international students enrolled in Korean colleges and universities, although this was a decline from the previous year (around 160,000) due to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁶² Like China, most students in the Republic of Korea were from other countries in Asia.

The subregion has experienced some large disaster displacements in recent years, most occurring in China. In 2020, there were more than 5 million new disaster displacements in China, the worst in nearly five years.¹⁶³ These were also the largest disaster displacement events anywhere in the world.¹⁶⁴ Most displacements took place during the flooding season, and in addition to driving people from their homes, they resulted in hundreds of deaths and billions of U.S. dollars in economic losses.¹⁶⁵ While factors such as land use and construction on floodplains have contributed to the recent displacements, climate change and climate variability also play a role.¹⁶⁶ Natural disasters have become unpredictable and highly destructive in recent years, as heatwaves and severe rains have intensified in China.¹⁶⁷ Indeed, recent floods in China have been caused by extreme precipitation, with the average intensity, as well as the quantity and duration of precipitation in the south of the country, for example, among the highest in decades.¹⁶⁸ Other countries in the subregion, such as Japan, have also experienced large displacements in recent years. Around 186,000 new disaster displacements were recorded in Japan in 2020.¹⁶⁹

Southern Asia

The pandemic prompted the mass return of millions of migrant workers to the subregion, while also driving large movements from urban centres to rural areas. As lockdowns and travel restrictions took shape in 2020, millions of migrants from the subregion lost jobs or were subjected to pay cuts, with some left without shelter.¹⁷⁰ Many of these migrants were also unable to return to their countries of origin in the early weeks and months of the pandemic due to cancelled flights or because of the lack of readiness by their governments to accept a large number of returnees.¹⁷¹ However, several countries did eventually begin to repatriate their nationals. India, for example, embarked on a mass evacuation and repatriation of its nationals, starting in May 2020.¹⁷² The *Vande Bharat* mission, as it was officially called, initially helped over half a million stranded migrants from more than 137 countries to return home.¹⁷³ By the end of 2020, more than 3 million Indian migrants had been repatriated.¹⁷⁴ Other countries in the subregion, such as Nepal, also saw a significant return of their stranded citizens back home. The pandemic also reversed migration patterns within countries. This was particularly evident in India, where millions of migrant workers in cities returned to rural areas, contributing to a new wave of COVID-19 cases in rural India.¹⁷⁵ Travel restrictions also heavily impeded the deployment of migrant workers from the subregion, especially during the first months of the pandemic. Large origin countries of migrant workers, including India and Bangladesh, experienced sharp declines in outflows.¹⁷⁶

Both rapid- and slow-onset disasters are important features in Southern Asia, often resulting in millions of displacements. Southern Asia was among the most affected subregions by disasters in 2020. With 9.3 million new disaster displacements, the subregion accounted for nearly a third of all new global displacements driven by disasters.¹⁷⁷ Southern Asia's average temperatures have been increasing over the last several decades and the subregion is now among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including rising temperatures; the subregion is affected by extreme and frequent weather events, torrential rains and rising sea levels.¹⁷⁸ Heavy rains in the subregion, which impact countries in Southern Asia every year, as well as powerful storms and cyclones, have been exacerbated by climate change. Cyclone Amphan, the largest disaster event in the world in 2020, resulted in the evacuation of millions of people in countries such as Bangladesh and India.¹⁷⁹ Some analysis suggests that the

subregion has the highest flood displacement risk,¹⁸⁰ and that many people in the subregion are also vulnerable to increasingly high temperatures.¹⁸¹

Labour migration from Southern Asia is a key feature, resulting in some of the largest inflows of international remittances in the world. Unemployment and low wages contribute to large numbers of South Asians leaving the subregion to work in destinations such as the GCC countries. A large number of international migrants in Gulf countries, many of whom are temporary labour migrants, come from India and Bangladesh. An estimated 3.5 million Indians and more than 1 million Bangladeshis were living in the United Arab Emirates in 2020. Saudi Arabia was also the destination of over 2.5 million migrants from India and over 1 million from Bangladesh.¹⁸² With the largest number of international emigrants in the world, India continues to be the biggest recipient of international remittances globally.¹⁸³ In 2020, the country recorded USD 83 billion in international remittances. This figure was only a small drop (0.2%) from the previous year, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁸⁴ Pakistan and Bangladesh also rank among the world's top 10 remittance recipients, receiving USD 26 billion and USD 22 billion in 2020, respectively.¹⁸⁵ Both Pakistan and Bangladesh defied projections and saw significant increases in remittances in 2020. Overall remittances to the subregion increased by 5 per cent in 2020.¹⁸⁶

As conflicts and violence have become protracted in some countries within the subregion, Southern Asia remains the origin and destination of large numbers of refugees. Countries such as Afghanistan have experienced more than 20 years of conflict, resulting in 2.6 million Afghan refugees at the end of 2020, the third largest origin country in the world of populations displaced across borders.¹⁸⁷ Most, over 85 per cent, are hosted in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran.¹⁸⁸ Conflict and violence in the country have also led to a large number of IDPs. Around 3.5 million Afghans were living in internal displacement due to conflict and violence at end of 2020, and the country ranked among the top 10 with largest number of new conflict displacements the same year, despite ongoing negotiations and ceasefires.¹⁸⁹ Indeed, while conflict had abated in the months prior to the peace agreement between the United States and the Afghan Taliban in February 2020, violence has picked up pace since.¹⁹⁰ There has been a surge in terrorist attacks, many deliberately targeting civilians.¹⁹¹ Some of these have included brutal attacks on children. Notably, the May 2021 bombing outside an Afghan Hazara school left 85 people dead, most of them female students.¹⁹² Several countries in the subregion, such as Pakistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Bangladesh continued to host large numbers of refugees at the end of 2020, with all three countries placing among the top 10 host countries in the world.¹⁹³ Combined, the three countries hosted 13 per cent of the global total of people displaced across borders.¹⁹⁴

South-East Asia

Migration and mobility in South-East Asia have been heavily disrupted by the pandemic, with the measures imposed to control the spread of COVID-19 disproportionately affecting migrants. By early June 2021, the subregion had recorded nearly 35 million confirmed cases of COVID-19.¹⁹⁵ The Philippines, with over 1.4 million cases, was the most impacted.¹⁹⁶ All countries in the subregion instituted a range of travel restrictions, including quarantine measures, testing and border closures. Several countries also imposed measures on domestic travel and movement, such as suspending public transport and restricting domestic flights. Further, many migrant workers, particularly those in low-skilled sectors, were forced to quarantine in crowded dormitories, making them more vulnerable to contracting COVID-19.¹⁹⁷ Women migrant workers were disproportionately impacted by lockdowns and travel restrictions.¹⁹⁸ In 2020, as countries such as Thailand began to close their borders, thousands of jobless

migrant workers from Cambodia, Myanmar and the Lao People's Democratic Republic rushed to return home while they could still do so.¹⁹⁹ Travel restrictions also resulted in unprecedented immobility. In the Philippines, hundreds of nurses with pending contracts in countries such as Germany, Singapore, Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom were prevented from leaving the country due to restrictions on travel.²⁰⁰ Meanwhile, several countries, such as Viet Nam and the Philippines, put in place systems to support their migrant workers affected by the pandemic, helping those who had been stranded to return home.²⁰¹

Some of the largest internal and cross-border displacements in the subregion in recent years have been driven by religious and ethnic tensions, fuelling conflict and violence. The Rohingya comprise the largest displaced stateless population in the world.²⁰² Most are hosted in Bangladesh, where they fled after a sharp increase in violence against them in Myanmar, especially in Rakhine State in 2017. Further displacements were recorded in the months following Myanmar's election in November 2020.²⁰³ The Myanmar military takeover of Government in February 2021 resulted in widespread protests and violent military crackdowns, reigniting conflict with non-State armed groups in several states and putting at risk the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) signed in 2015.²⁰⁴ At the end of 2020, Bangladesh hosted more than 860,000 refugees, the majority of whom were Rohingya.²⁰⁵ In 2020, more than half of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh were children.²⁰⁶ Other countries in the subregion, such as Malaysia, also host significant numbers of refugees, many of them Rohingya. In 2021, however, there was widespread alarm, including from United Nations experts, on the decision by Malaysian authorities to deport to Myanmar over 1,000 migrants, some of whom were unaccompanied children and other vulnerable persons.²⁰⁷

Many people in South-East Asia are particularly vulnerable to environmental disasters, which drive large displacements every year. The subregion recorded significant disaster displacement events in 2020, with countries including the Philippines, Viet Nam and Indonesia most affected.²⁰⁸ The Philippines alone recorded 4.4 million disaster displacements in 2020, while Viet Nam and Indonesia had 1.3 million and over 700,000 disaster displacements, respectively.²⁰⁹ Several disaster events, including the typhoon season, the eruption of Mount Taal, cyclones, storms and flooding were responsible for pushing people out of their homes in several countries in the subregion. A significant number of displacements in the Philippines were also due to pre-emptive evacuations.²¹⁰ Combined, the Philippines, Viet Nam and Indonesia experienced more than 6 million displacements in 2020 and all three countries ranked among the top 10 with the largest number of disaster displacements in the world.²¹¹

Labour migration within and from the subregion remains a key aspect of migration. With a large number of migrant workers in various parts of the world, the Philippines continues to be among the largest recipients of international remittances in the world. In 2020, international remittance inflows to the country amounted to USD 35 billion (almost 10% of GDP), the fourth largest in the world after India, China and Mexico.²¹² Remittances to the Philippines proved resilient in 2020 despite the COVID-19 pandemic, declining by less than 1 per cent, largely owing to growth in inflows from the United States, by far the biggest source of remittances to the country (almost than 40%).²¹³ Other key sources of remittances to the country include Japan, Singapore and Saudi Arabia, reflecting some of the major destinations for Filipino migrant workers. Viet Nam also placed among the top 10 recipients globally in 2020, recording USD 17 billion.²¹⁴ While remittances are important for several countries in South-East Asia, many labour migrants from the subregion are exposed to a multitude of abuses, particularly those in informal sectors, who are more vulnerable to exploitation, including forced labour.²¹⁵

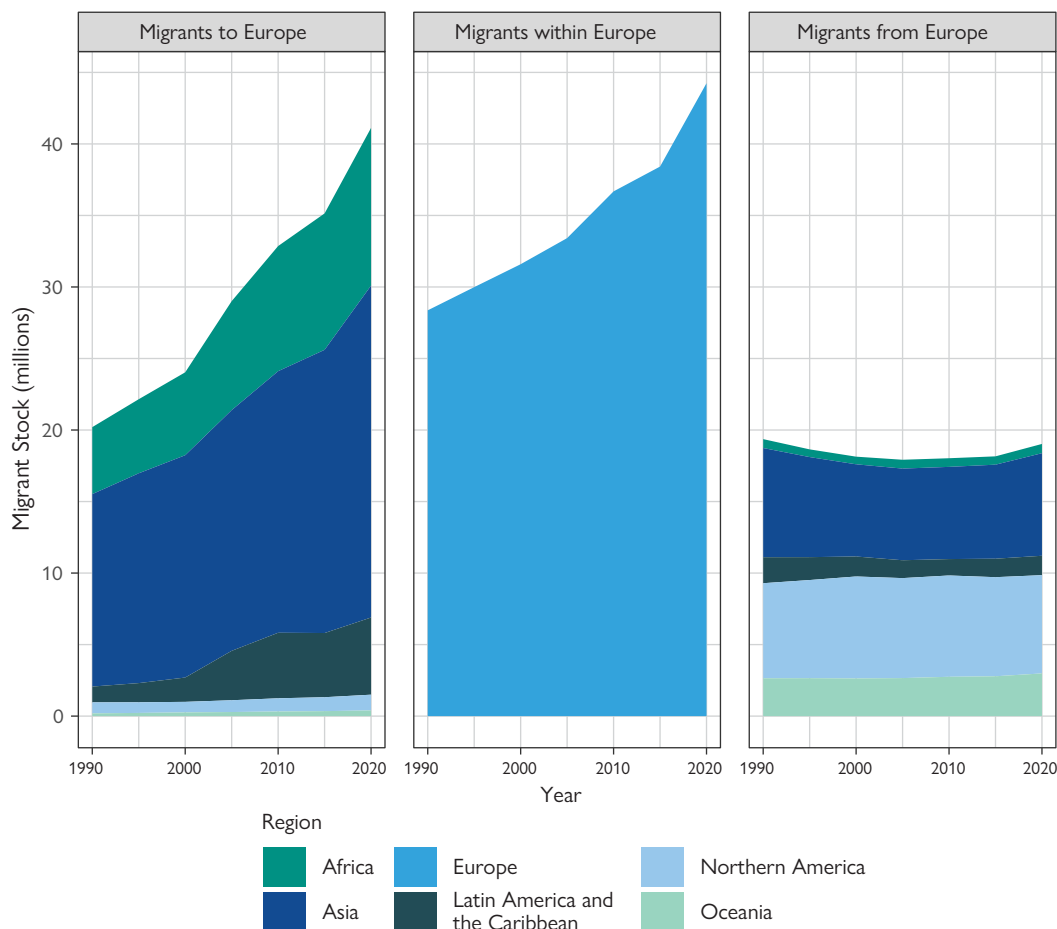
Irregular migration to, within and from South-East Asia is prevalent and is often facilitated by smuggling networks. Countries across the region are origin, transit and destinations for irregular migrants. Irregular migration occurs alongside migration that is regular, and the motivations driving both similar, as reflected in the major migration routes taken by migrants.²¹⁶ Within the subregion, migrant smuggling occurs along two key routes: Malaysia is the major destination for migrants from the Philippines, Bangladesh and Indonesia, while migrants from Myanmar, Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic largely go to Thailand.²¹⁷ Trafficking of migrants is also not uncommon, with the more affluent countries, including Thailand and Malaysia, often the destinations.²¹⁸ Other countries outside the subregion, are also key destinations for trafficked migrants from South-East Asia. Within Asia, 75 per cent of victims of trafficking are from South-East Asia.²¹⁹ A significant number of victims are trafficked for labour and sexual exploitation.²²⁰

Europe²²¹

Nearly 87 million international migrants lived in Europe in 2020, an increase of nearly 16 per cent since 2015, when around 75 million international migrants resided in the region. A little over half of these (44 million) were born in Europe, but were living elsewhere in the region; this number has increased since 2015, rising from 38 million. In 2020, the population of non-European migrants in Europe reached over 40 million.

In 1990, there were roughly equal numbers of Europeans living outside Europe as non-Europeans living in Europe. However, unlike the growth in migration to Europe, the number of Europeans living outside Europe mostly declined over the last 30 years, and only returned to 1990 levels in recent years. In 2020, around 19 million Europeans were residing outside the continent and were based primarily in Asia and Northern America (see Figure 15). As shown in the figure below, there was also some gradual increase in the number of European migrants in Asia and Oceania from 2010 to 2020.

Figure 15. Migrants to, within and from Europe, 1990–2020



Source: UN DESA, 2021.

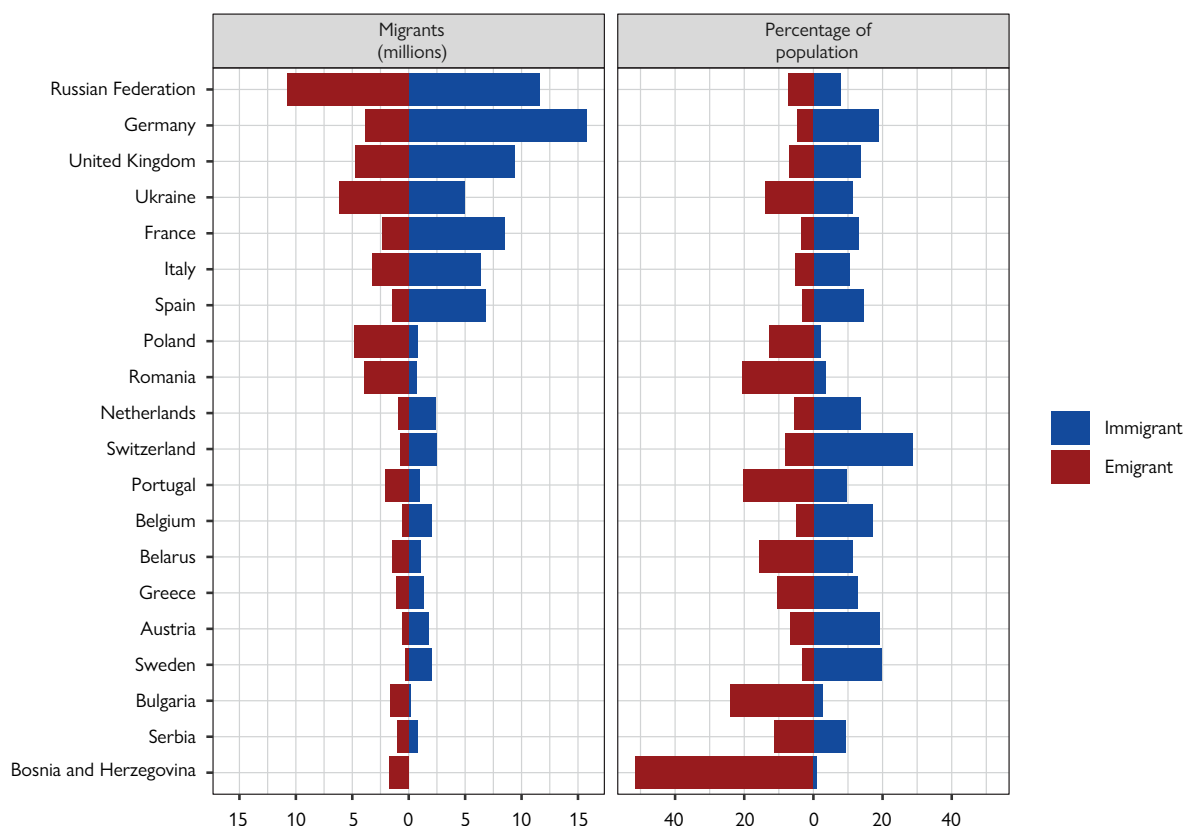
Note: “Migrants to Europe” refers to migrants residing in the region (i.e. Europe) who were born in one of the other regions (e.g. Africa or Asia). “Migrants within Europe” refers to migrants born in the region (i.e. Europe) and residing outside their country of birth, but still within the European region. “Migrants from Europe” refers to people born in Europe who were residing outside the region (e.g. in Latin America and the Caribbean or Northern America).

Many countries in the east of Europe – such as the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Poland and Romania – have some of the largest emigrant populations within the region (Figure 16). At nearly 11 million emigrants in 2020, the Russian Federation had the largest population in Europe living abroad. After the Russian Federation and Ukraine (around 6 million), Poland and the United Kingdom had the third and fourth largest European emigrant populations (4.8 million and 4.7 million, respectively). Bosnia and Herzegovina had the largest share of emigrants as a share of its population in 2020, many of whom left during the break-up of the former Yugoslavia. Portugal, Bulgaria and Romania, countries that have long histories of emigration, also had high shares of their populations living abroad.

With almost 16 million migrants in 2020, Germany had the largest foreign-born population of any country in Europe. The number of immigrants in Germany increased by over 5 million between 2015 and 2020. The largest groups came from Poland, Turkey, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and the Syrian Arab Republic. The populations of

the United Kingdom and France included 9.4 million and 8.5 million foreign-born people, respectively, in 2020. Migrants born in North African countries made up some of the largest foreign-born populations in France. In the United Kingdom, some of the largest migrant populations were from India, Poland and Pakistan. With foreign-born populations of around 6.8 million and 6.4 million, Spain and Italy were respectively the fifth and sixth most popular migrant destinations in Europe in 2020; both countries experienced increases in the number of foreign-born migrants since 2015. Many of the foreign-born populations in Spain and Italy came from elsewhere in Europe – from countries such as Romania and Albania – or from North African and Latin American countries such as Morocco, Colombia and Ecuador. The migration of people from countries of the former Soviet Union – such as Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan – accounted for some of the largest European migrant corridors. As illustrated in Figure 16, of the top 20 migration countries in the region, Switzerland had the largest share of migrants in its population (29%), followed by Sweden (20%), Austria (19%) and Germany (19%).

Figure 16. Top 20 European migrant countries, 2020



Source: UN DESA, 2021.

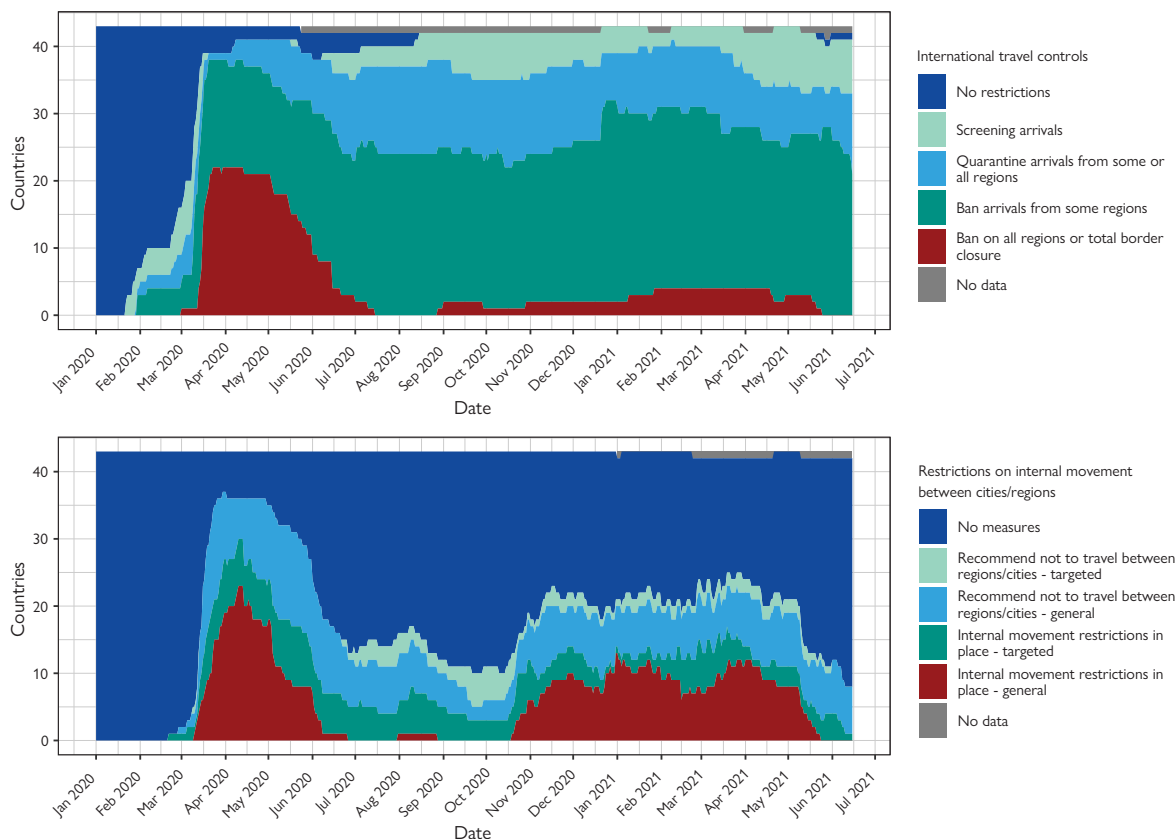
Note 1: The population size used to calculate the percentage of immigrants and emigrants is based on the UN DESA total resident population of the country, which includes foreign-born populations.

Note 2: "Immigrant" refers to foreign-born migrants residing in the country. "Emigrant" refers to people born in the country who were residing outside their country of birth in 2021.

Europe's international and internal travel controls in response to the COVID-19 pandemic came into effect in early 2020, peaking between March and May 2020. While international travel controls such as screening arrivals and quarantine mandates for arrivals remained relatively high, others, such as the ban on all regions or total border closures, declined sharply, and by June 2021, virtually all countries had dropped these measures.

As illustrated in Figure 17 below, restrictions on internal movement, which were at their highest around March and April 2020, started to fall around May. They picked up again in November as the number of COVID-19 cases across the world surged, although they never returned to the same level as in early 2020. There is a noticeable decline, across all internal movement measures, from May 2021. By mid-2020, for example, targeted and internal movement restrictions had all but been dropped by nearly all countries in the region.

Figure 17. COVID-19-related travel controls in Europe: International and internal, January 2020 to June 2021

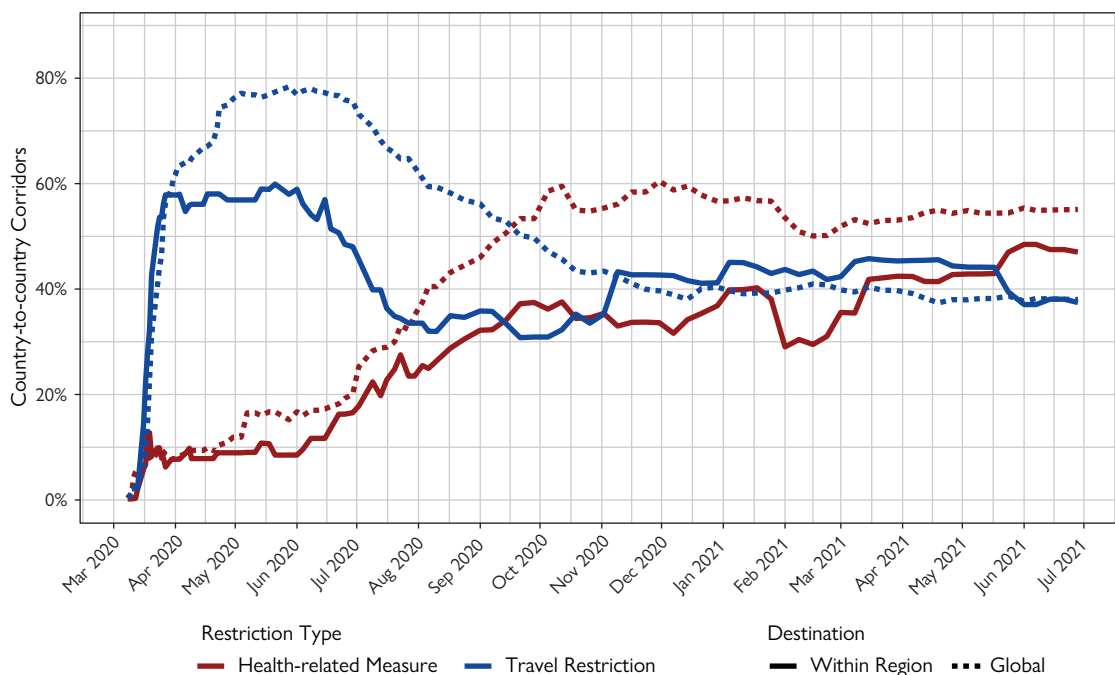


Source: Hale et al., 2021.

Notes: Categories used are those of the Oxford Government Response Tracker; categories included in the data set are for COVID-19-related restrictions only and do not reflect other travel restrictions that may also be in place, such as those related to visa restrictions, entry bans based on citizenship, departure/exit restrictions and internal movement restrictions.

Travel restrictions in Europe grew rapidly in the first months of 2020, with those targeting countries outside the region exceeding intraregional travel controls for most of that year (Figure 18). There was a decline in these restrictions over time, however, and by 30 June 2021, only around 40 per cent of corridors between European countries and those involving countries outside of Europe maintained travel controls. Health-related measures, on the other hand, which increased much more gradually in the early months of the pandemic, went on to surpass travel restrictions towards the end of 2020, with those involving countries outside the region increasing the most. By June 2021, more than 50 per cent of corridors (both global and within the region), had health-related measures.

Figure 18. COVID-19-related international travel measures in Europe: March 2020 to June 2021



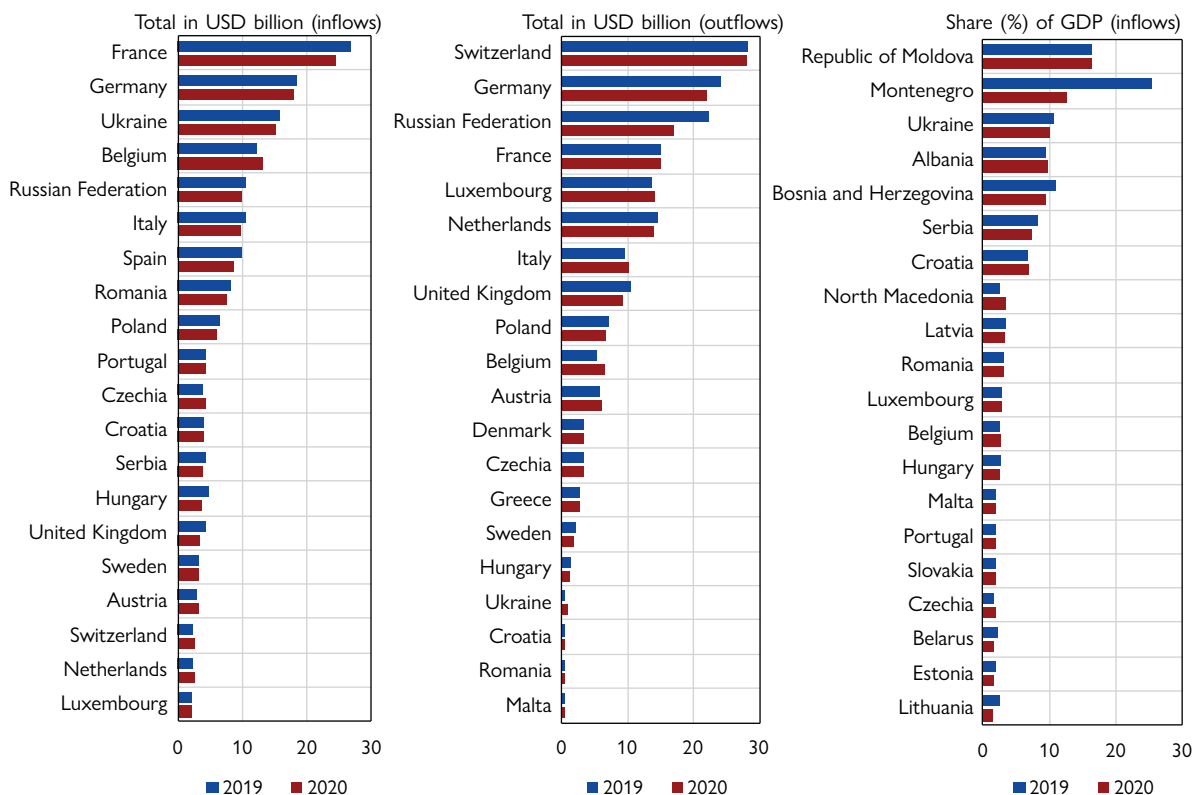
Source: IOM, 2021a.

Notes: Health-related measures include health screening and monitoring, testing/medical certificates and quarantine measures. Travel restrictions include passenger restrictions based on nationality or arrival from a geographic location. See the DTM Mobility restrictions page for more information on the methodology.

In 2020, some of the largest economies in the world were the biggest recipients of international remittances in the region (Figure 19). France, for example, received the largest share of international remittances in Europe, followed by Germany. It is important to note that most inflows to these two countries are not household transfers, but relate to salary transfers of cross-border workers who work in Switzerland and reside in France and Germany. As a percentage of GDP, some of the top recipients in 2020 included the Republic of Moldova (16%), Montenegro (13%) and Ukraine (10%). Remittance flows to Europe dropped by 6 per cent in 2020 from the previous year, with eight countries that are among top 10 remittance recipients in the region experiencing declines. France, the region's largest recipient of remittances, received around USD 25 billion in 2020, 9 per cent less than in 2019.

Switzerland was the source of nearly USD 28 billion in remittances in 2020, making it the largest sender in Europe in 2020. It was followed by Germany, the Russian Federation, France and Luxembourg. With the exception of Luxembourg, the top five remittance-sending countries experienced declines in outflows in 2020 when compared with 2019.

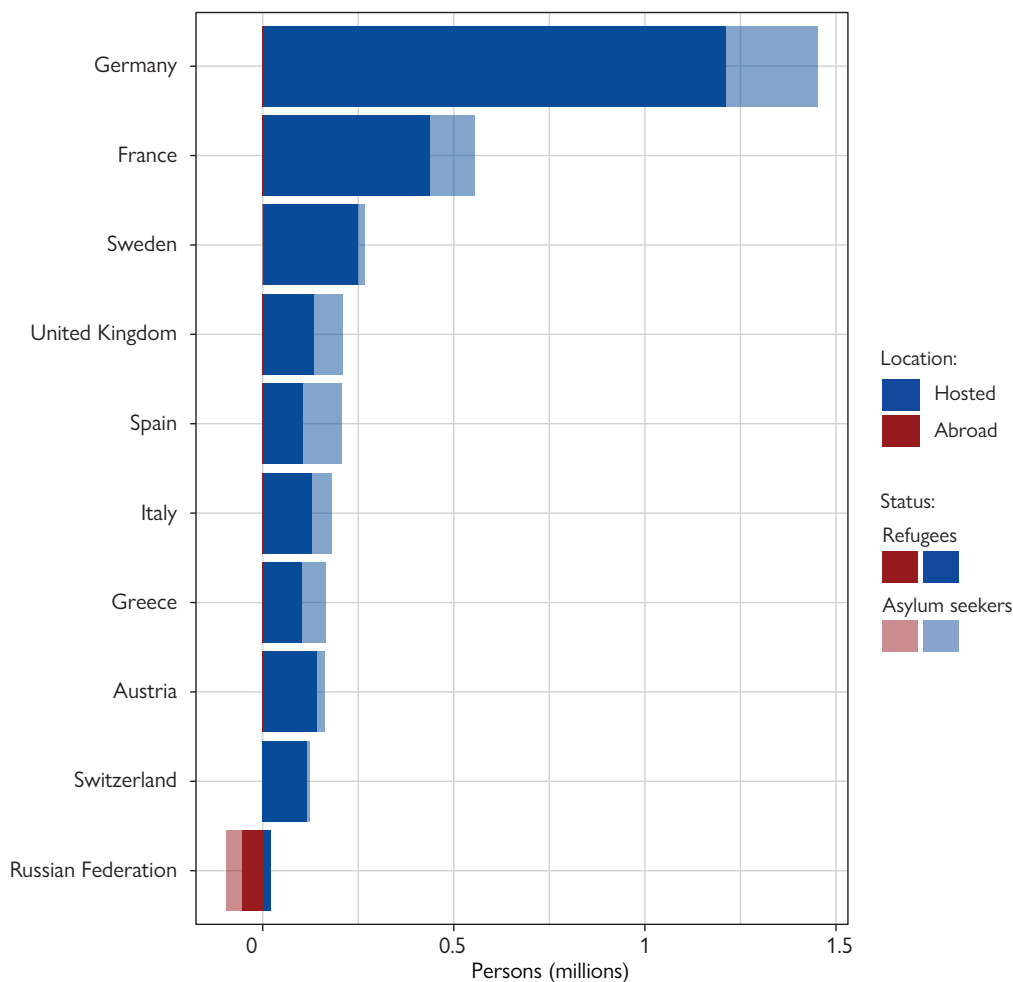
Figure 19. Top 20 European international remittance recipient and source countries, 2019 and 2020



Source: World Bank, 2021.

In 2020, Germany continued to host the largest population of refugees and asylum seekers in Europe (Figure 20). Germany also ranked fifth in the world among the largest refugee host countries in the world. Most, around 50 per cent, came from the Syrian Arab Republic. France and Sweden were the second and third largest hosts of refugees in Europe, with over 436,000 and more than 248,000, respectively. The Russian Federation was the largest origin country of refugees in Europe at the end of 2020, at around 53,000. Other significant origin countries in Europe, but not included in the figure below, include Ukraine (around 35,000) and Croatia (around 23,000).

Figure 20. Top 10 European countries by total refugees and asylum seekers, 2020

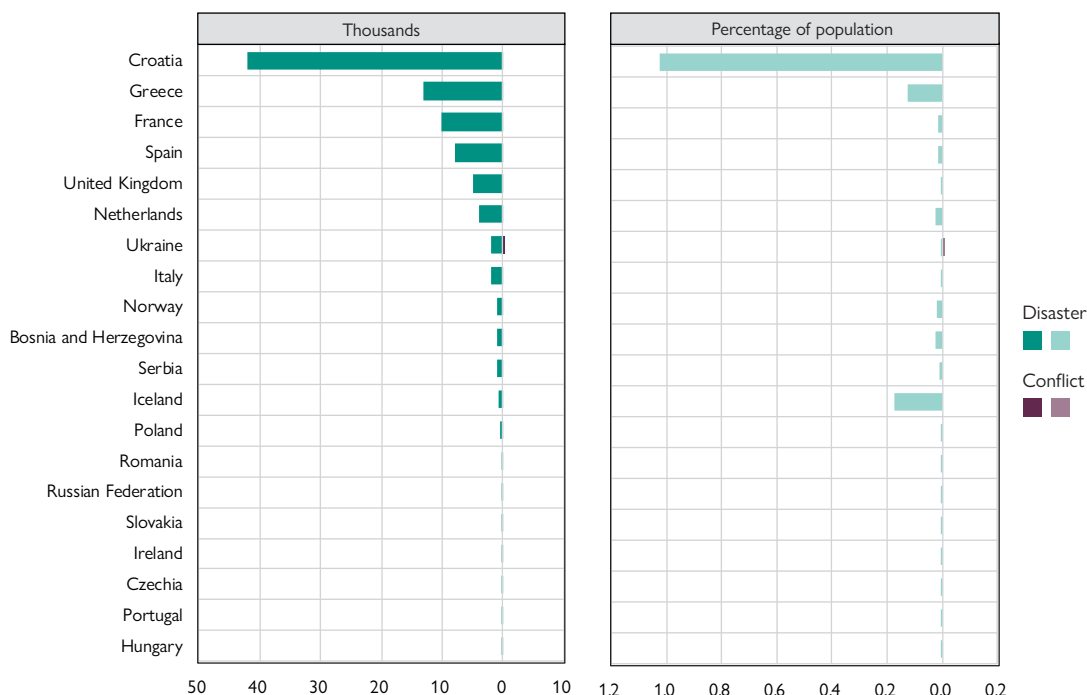


Source: UNHCR, n.d.b.

Note: "Hosted" refers to those refugees and asylum seekers from other countries who are residing in the receiving country (right-hand side of the figure); "abroad" refers to refugees and asylum seekers originating from that country who are outside of their origin country. The top 10 countries are based on 2020 data and are calculated by combining refugees and asylum seekers in and from countries.

Most new internal displacements in 2020 in Europe were the result of disasters, not conflict (Figure 21). Croatia had the largest number of disaster-related displacements (42,000). At the onset of the global pandemic in March 2020, a 5.4 magnitude earthquake hit Zagreb, triggering 1,600 new displacements. Following this event, the country experienced its most powerful earthquake ever recorded, a 6.4 magnitude event just nine months later. The earthquake struck about 50 kilometres south-east of Zagreb, leaving over 10,000 homes uninhabitable and prompting long-term displacement among 40,000 people.²²² Other countries impacted by disaster-related displacements in 2020 included Greece (13,000), France (10,000) and Spain (nearly 8,000), largely due to storms and intense flooding.

Figure 21. Top 20 European countries by new internal displacements (disaster and conflict), 2020



Source: IDMC, n.d.; UN DESA, 2021.

Notes: New displacements refers to the number of displacement movements that occurred in 2020, not the total accumulated stock of IDPs resulting from displacement over time. New displacement figures include individuals who have been displaced more than once and do not correspond to the number of people displaced during the year. The population size used to calculate the percentage of new disaster and conflict displacements is based on the total resident population of the country per 2021 UN DESA population estimates, and the percentage is for relative, illustrative purposes only.

Key features and developments in Europe²²³

South-Eastern and Eastern Europe

The COVID-19 impacts on migration in the subregion included further hardening of immigration policies in several countries, while also resulting in the return of large numbers of migrant workers to their countries of origin. In response to the pandemic, some countries, such as Hungary, passed restrictive measures that were widely viewed as potentially exposing asylum seekers to the risk of refoulement.²²⁴ The new act adopted by Hungary in 2020 requires asylum seekers arriving at the border to be sent back and directed to declare such intent at a Hungarian embassy.²²⁵ As countries and territories started to vaccinate their populations against COVID-19 in the first half of 2021, some migrants in the subregion, particularly those who are undocumented, were left out from vaccination programmes, further making them vulnerable to contracting COVID-19.²²⁶ However, some countries in the subregion, such as Serbia, have included all migrants in their national vaccination strategies.²²⁷ The impact of the pandemic on migrant workers in various parts of Europe has also led to significant return migration to the subregion. Migration dynamics in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe have historically been characterized by emigration, rather than immigration, but the effects of the pandemic in 2020 largely halted and even reversed these patterns. Many migrants from the subregion, including from countries such as Bulgaria and Serbia, chose to return home, driven by unemployment, lack of social protection or the desire to be with their families.²²⁸ Between March and May 2020, for example, more than half a million Bulgarians are estimated to have returned home.²²⁹ These same trends were also visible in Romania, where around one million nationals returned in 2020.²³⁰

In addition to being a major origin country of international migrants, the Russian Federation continues to also be an important destination for international migrants globally. In 2020, the Russian Federation ranked among both the top 10 origin and destination countries for international migrants worldwide.²³¹ With nearly 11 million people in the diaspora, the country had the third largest number of its population living abroad, after India and Mexico.²³² Most resided in the Commonwealth of Independent States Free Trade Area (CISFTA) Member States, including Kazakhstan, Belarus, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, and in destinations such as the United States and Germany. Around 12 million international migrants lived in the Russian Federation, making it the fourth largest destination globally after the United States, Germany and Saudi Arabia.²³³ International migrants in the Russian Federation are largely from Ukraine (more than 3 million), Kazakhstan (over 2.5 million) and Uzbekistan (around 1 million).²³⁴ Because of the large number of international migrants in the country, the Russian Federation continues to be one of the largest sources of international remittances in the world, ranking among the top 10 source countries globally.²³⁵ At the same time, it was also among the top recipients of remittances in Europe in 2020.²³⁶

Driven by both conflict and disasters, both cross-border and internal displacement are key features in the subregion. Thousands of people in the Russian Federation, for example, were driven from their homes due to floods and wildfires in 2019.²³⁷ Cities such as Irkutsk bore most of the brunt of the floods, leaving thousands of homes unfit for occupation.²³⁸ The largest humanitarian situation in the subregion continues to be in Eastern Ukraine, where an estimated 3.4 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in 2021.²³⁹ Across the country, more than 1.4 million people remain in internal displacement, with many having lived under these conditions since hostilities escalated in 2014.²⁴⁰ While a ceasefire was agreed in 2020 and has reduced fighting, violations persist, with continued insecurity and damage to people's property and livelihoods on both sides of the contact line that runs through the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The conflict has also forced thousands of Ukrainians to leave the country and there were around 35,000 refugees from Ukraine in 2020.²⁴¹

Several countries in the Western Balkans are key transit zones, characterized by mixed migration flows of migrants from Asia and Africa. In recent years, tens of thousands of migrants trying to reach Northern or Western Europe have arrived in countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina via the Western Balkans route.²⁴² While some of them are trying to escape harsh economic conditions, many are also fleeing conflict, insecurity or persecution and include migrants from countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Syrian Arab Republic.²⁴³ Most migrants arriving in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been single men, although they also include unaccompanied and separated children, and families with children.²⁴⁴ Other countries in the subregion, such as Albania and North Macedonia, have also increasingly become major transit zones for migrants, who often embark on risky journeys through these countries with the aid of smugglers.²⁴⁵ In early 2021, for example, dozens of Syrians, in an attempt to reach Italy, were stranded for hours in the Adriatic Sea before being rescued and returned to land by Albanian authorities.²⁴⁶ The increase in the number of irregular migrants in the Western Balkans has raised tensions in some communities, while also being used as a political tool.²⁴⁷

Northern, Western and Southern Europe

COVID-19 had significant ramifications for migration and mobility in the subregion, shifting public attitudes to migration in some countries and affecting labour mobility, while also impacting the human rights of migrants. Migrants' contributions to essential sectors of many economies during the pandemic seemed to have changed public attitudes, particularly in countries where anti-immigrant sentiments had been on the rise.²⁴⁸ A 2020 poll in the United Kingdom, for example, revealed that a significant majority of the public (62%) were in favor of granting automatic citizenship to care workers who helped respond to COVID-19, while 50 per cent backed offering citizenship to other essential workers, including supermarket and agricultural workers.²⁴⁹ This is a significant shift from less than five years ago, when nearly half of the British public preferred a lower number of low-skilled immigrants.²⁵⁰ In other countries such as Switzerland, respondents demonstrated positive attitudes toward foreigners, and a poll suggested that immigrants have felt supported during the pandemic.²⁵¹ As in other regions, lockdowns and travel restrictions impacted labour mobility, with widespread economic repercussions for the subregion. To address labour shortages, however, particularly in essential sectors such as agriculture, health and social care, and transportation, several countries implemented measures that facilitated access to their labour markets by third-country nationals already in the subregion.²⁵² Meanwhile, measures to contain the virus, including movement restrictions, also adversely affected migrants' rights.²⁵³ In some instances, family reunifications for migrants were halted and some countries temporarily suspended the registration and lodging of asylum applications.²⁵⁴ Further, some countries temporarily closed their ports and required irregular migrants, including those crossing the Mediterranean, to be quarantined at sea.²⁵⁵ However, several countries in the region also implemented measures aimed at assisting migrants during the pandemic, including by temporarily regularizing those who are undocumented and including them in health-care responses, such as vaccination programmes.²⁵⁶

Irregular migration remains a significant feature in the subregion, and for some countries the issue continues to dominate policy and political discourses. As of June 2021, the European Union was still in negotiations on a new EU Pact on Migration and Asylum which, among other areas, seeks to address the challenge of irregular migration through the strengthening of partnerships with countries of origin and transit, improving the management of the bloc's external borders, and promoting balanced distributions of responsibilities.²⁵⁷ Front-line countries, such as Spain, Italy, Malta and Greece continue to call for more "solidarity" in the new pact in order to ease the irregular migration pressures they face.²⁵⁸ While migratory routes including the Eastern Mediterranean route saw decreases in arrivals in 2020, routes across the Western Mediterranean and Western African Atlantic

to Spain experienced large increases.²⁵⁹ These challenges, and the human suffering involved, came to the forefront again in early 2021 when thousands of people, mainly from Morocco, reached the Spanish enclave of Ceuta.²⁶⁰ In response, Spanish authorities deployed the military to the city; thousands of migrants were also returned to Morocco.²⁶¹

Recent proposals and changes to asylum policies in several countries have proven controversial, raising concerns about the impact they could have on those seeking protection. Amendments to Denmark's Aliens Act, for example, which could lead to the forcible transfer of asylum seekers to different countries for processing, have been viewed as a neglect of responsibility under international law and a failure to protect the most vulnerable.²⁶² The new law would externalize asylum and international protection to "partner countries" outside Europe, a measure that threatens to further complicate negotiations on the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, which seeks, among a range of provisions, to advance solidarity among EU Member States in responding to refugees and asylum seekers.²⁶³ The law is also seen as contravening the spirit of the 1951 Refugee Convention as well as the Global Compact on Refugees.²⁶⁴ Other countries in the subregion such as the United Kingdom also put forward new immigration plans in 2021 that could severely restrict asylum, including by outsourcing the processing of claims in "safe countries".²⁶⁵ Some United Nations agencies have warned that such measures, if implemented, would undermine the international protection system.²⁶⁶ Similar measures have been witnessed in Greece, which sought to return hundreds of migrants to Turkey in early 2021.²⁶⁷ The country has also taken extraordinary measures to deter migrants from Turkey from entering the European Union, including by using high-tech "sound cannons".²⁶⁸

While low-income countries are the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, various rapid-onset disasters, some linked to climate change, have also displaced thousands of people in the subregion. In 2020, wildfires resulted in 23,000 new displacements in Greece, Spain and France.²⁶⁹ The year 2020 was Europe's hottest on record, with temperatures rising across all seasons. During the same year, Storm Gloria led to thousands of displacements in France and Spain, as huge waves tore through homes and rivers burst their banks.²⁷⁰ In Spain, several people lost their lives.²⁷¹ Other weather events, such as Storm Dennis, were responsible for more than 1,000 displacements in the United Kingdom and toward the end of the year, flooding in parts of France resulted in nearly 5,000 displacements.²⁷² The two countries suffered further displacements as the year came to a close when Storm Bella struck, leading to more than 3,000 displacements.²⁷³ In early 2021, the European Commission adopted a new Climate Adaptation Strategy, which "sets out how the European Union can adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change and become climate resilient by 2050."²⁷⁴ By mid-2021, it was clear that similar displacement patterns across Europe were playing out over the summer, due mostly to extreme wildfires, storms and flooding.

Women and girls comprise a significant share of irregular migrant arrivals in Northern, Western and Southern Europe, while women migrant workers in the subregion face persistent labour market challenges. Between 2018 and 2020, women made up 20 per cent of the almost 77,000 people who arrived in Europe by sea and land across Eastern, Central and Western Mediterranean routes as well as the Western African Atlantic route.²⁷⁵ The majority of these women and girls reached Europe (most to Greece) via the Eastern Mediterranean route (70%), while 21 per cent arrived in Spain through the Western Mediterranean and Western African Atlantic routes and around 9 per cent in Italy and Malta via the Central Mediterranean route.²⁷⁶ In 2020, however, the number of women irregular migrants entering Europe fell significantly compared with previous years; this was also in line with overall declines in arrivals, largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Women accounted for less than one in 10 detections along the European Union's external borders in 2020, while a year prior they made up one in four.²⁷⁷ Women migrant workers in the subregion, meanwhile, continue to experience the so-called "double disadvantage", based on being a migrant and a woman.²⁷⁸ In several countries, migrant women have higher

unemployment rates than migrant men and these differences are especially large in Southern European countries such as Italy, Greece and Portugal.²⁷⁹ Compared with native-born women, migrant women not only have higher unemployment rates, but also tend to be relegated to low-skilled employment, such as household services.²⁸⁰ In the subregion and in many parts of the world, the COVID-19 pandemic has amplified these dynamics, while leaving many migrant women, often employed in culturally devalued tasks, more vulnerable to contracting the virus.²⁸¹

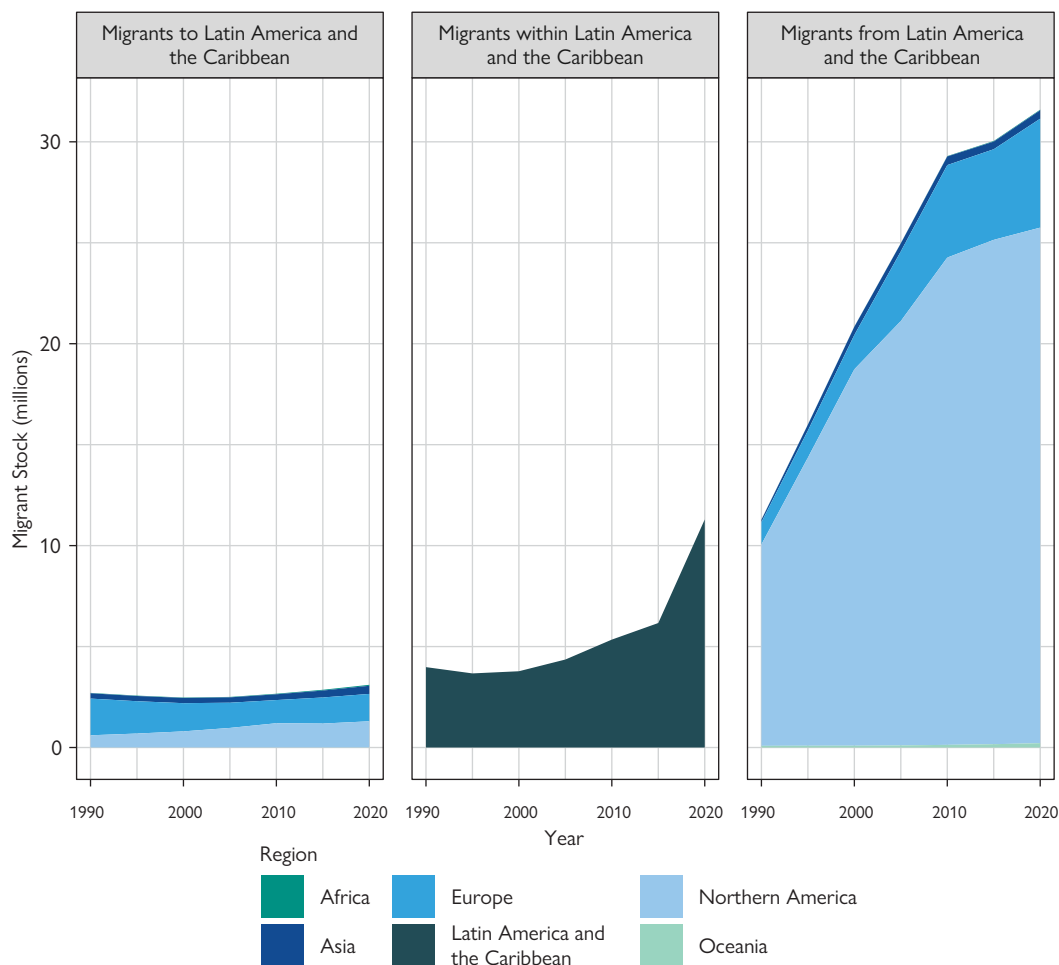
Latin America and the Caribbean²⁸²

Migration to Northern America is a key feature in the Latin America and Caribbean region. In 2020, over 25 million migrants had made the journey north and were residing in Northern America (Figure 22). As shown in the figure, the Latin American and Caribbean population living in Northern America has increased considerably over time, from an estimated 10 million in 1990. Another 5 million migrants from the region were in Europe in 2020. While this number has only slightly increased since 2015, the number of migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean living in Europe has more than quadrupled since 1990. Other regions, such as Asia and Oceania, were home to a very small number of migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean in 2020 (over 400,000 and 200,000 migrants, respectively).

The total number of migrants from other regions living in Latin America and the Caribbean has remained relatively stable, at around 3 million over the last 30 years. These were comprised mostly of Europeans (whose numbers have declined slightly over the period) and Northern Americans, whose numbers have increased. In 2020, the numbers of Europeans and Northern Americans living in Latin America and the Caribbean stood at around 1.4 million and 1.3 million, respectively. Meanwhile, around 11 million migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean originated from other countries in the region.

The ongoing Venezuelan situation has had a significant impact on migration flows in the region and remains one of the largest displacement and migration crises worldwide.²⁸³ Approximately 5.6 million Venezuelans had left the country as of June 2021,²⁸⁴ and roughly 85 per cent (approximately 4.6 million) have moved to another country in Latin America and the Caribbean.²⁸⁵ The vast majority have left within the past five years.²⁸⁶ Colombia, Peru, Chile, Ecuador and Brazil are some of the main destination countries of Venezuelan refugees and migrants within the region.²⁸⁷

Figure 22. Migrants to, within and from Latin America and the Caribbean, 1990–2020



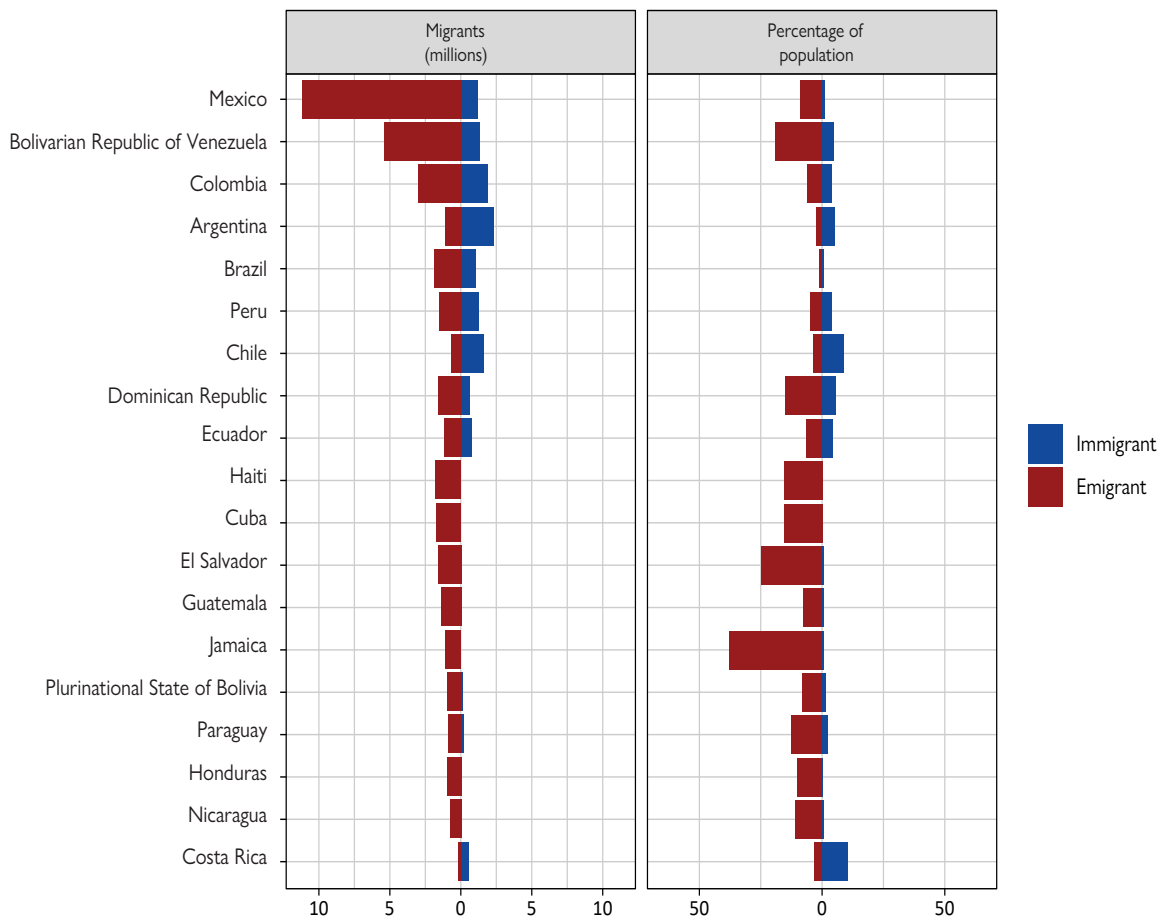
Source: UN DESA, 2021.

Note: "Migrants to Latin America and the Caribbean" refers to migrants residing in the region (i.e. Latin America and the Caribbean) who were born in one of the other regions (e.g. in Europe or Asia). "Migrants within Latin America and the Caribbean" refers to migrants born in the region (i.e. Latin America and the Caribbean) and residing outside their country of birth, but still within the Latin America and the Caribbean region. "Migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean" refers to people born in Latin America and the Caribbean who were residing outside the region (e.g. in Europe or Northern America).

Emigration remains a significant feature in Latin America and the Caribbean. With around 11 million people living abroad in 2020, Mexico continues to be the country in the region with the most emigrants (Figure 23). Mexico also only comes second to India among countries with the largest diasporas in the world, with most living in the United States. Mexico is followed by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Colombia, with over 5 million and more than 3 million emigrants, respectively. As a percentage of population, Jamaica has the largest emigrant population, followed by El Salvador and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. In 2020, Argentina was home to the largest foreign-born population in the region (with over 2 million migrants), mainly from neighbouring countries

such as Paraguay and the Plurinational State of Bolivia. Colombia had the second largest number of immigrants, followed by Chile. Among the top migrant countries, Costa Rica had the largest immigrant share of its population (10%), closely followed by Chile.

Figure 23. Top Latin America and Caribbean migrant countries, 2020



Source: UN DESA, 2021.

Note 1: The population size used to calculate the percentage of immigrants and emigrants is based on the UN DESA total resident population of the country, which includes foreign-born populations.

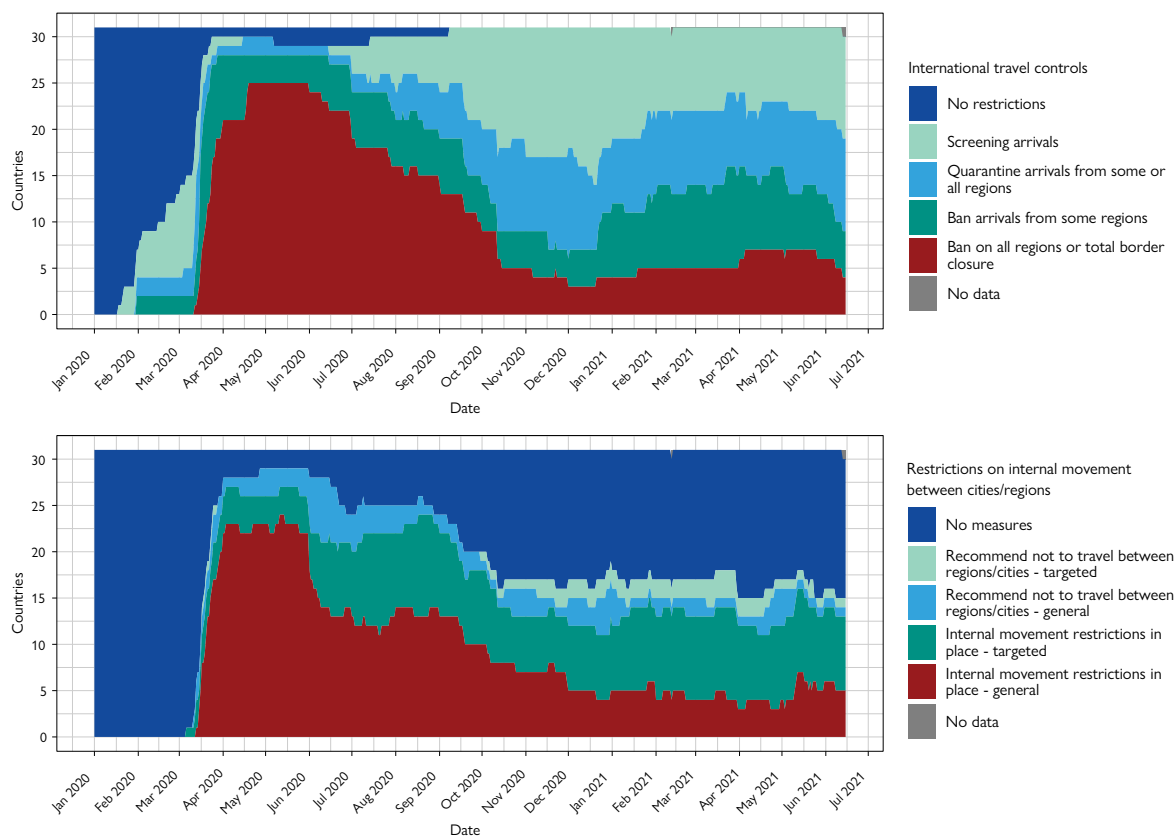
Note 2: "Immigrant" refers to foreign-born migrants residing in the country. "Emigrant" refers to people born in the country who were residing outside their country of birth in 2021.

Similar to other regions, almost all countries in Latin America and the Caribbean enacted travel and movement restrictions, both internal and international, in the first months of 2020. Most international travel controls, put in place several weeks before internal controls came into force, peaked between March and June 2020. Unlike the rest of the international travel controls, which began to decline mid-2020, quarantine mandates were maintained by virtually all countries in the region. As countries in the region experienced new waves of infections in late 2020 and early 2021, several countries that had dropped some of the international travel restrictions reimposed them.

Of the various international travel controls, total border closures declined the most over time, with only a handful of countries maintaining them as of mid-June 2021 (see Figure 24).

Meanwhile, internal movement restrictions also gradually declined from their peak (with nearly 30 countries issuing some form of restriction) at the beginning of the pandemic. By mid-2021, a significant number of countries had dropped these measures, with internal movement restrictions (general) declining the most.

Figure 24. COVID-19-related travel controls in Latin America and the Caribbean:
International and internal, January 2020 to June 2021



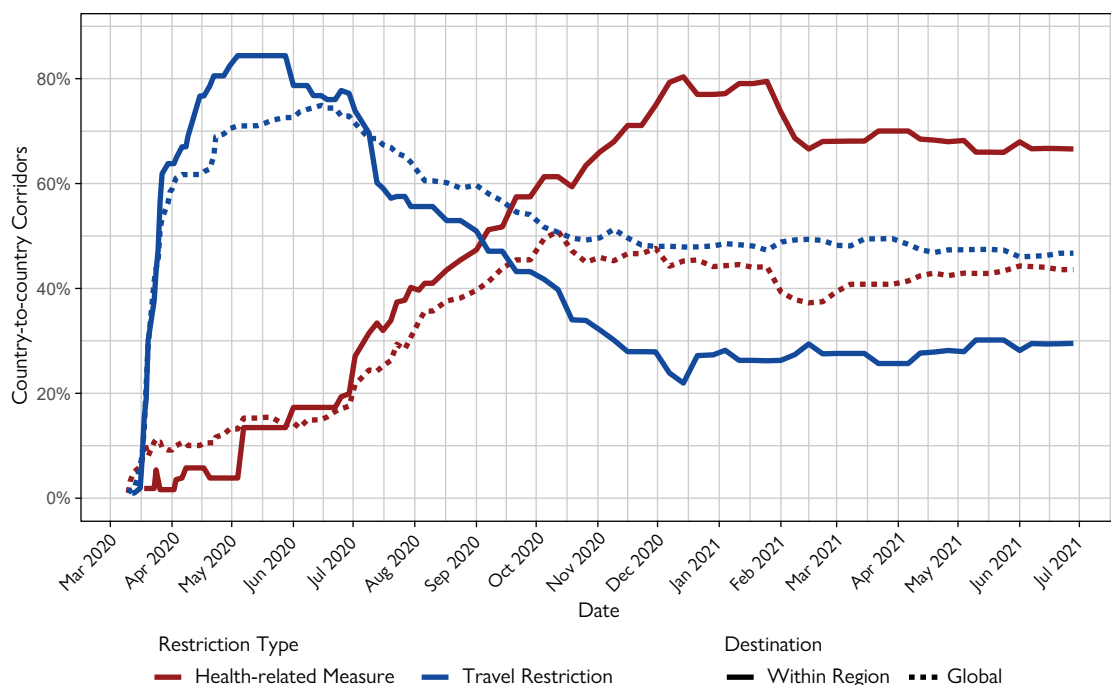
Source: Hale et al., 2021.

Notes: Categories used are those of the Oxford Government Response Tracker; categories included in the data set are for COVID-19-related restrictions only and do not reflect other travel restrictions that may also be in place, such as those related to visa restrictions, entry bans based on citizenship, departure/exit restrictions and internal movement restrictions.

During the first half of 2020, more than 80 per cent of country-to-country corridors within Latin America and the Caribbean had some form of COVID-19-related travel restriction. In the same period, more than 70 per cent of corridors involving countries outside the region (global) also had travel controls. As in regions such as Europe, these travel restrictions declined over time, with intraregional controls declining the most; only around 30 per cent of corridors (within the region) maintained these restrictions by 30 June 2021. Health-related measures, which

increased gradually in the early months of the pandemic, had exceeded intraregional travel restrictions by September 2020. As Figure 25 shows, health-related measures in Latin America and the Caribbean remained in place for around 70 per cent of corridors within the region.

Figure 25. COVID-19-related international travel measures in Latin America and the Caribbean: March 2020 to June 2021



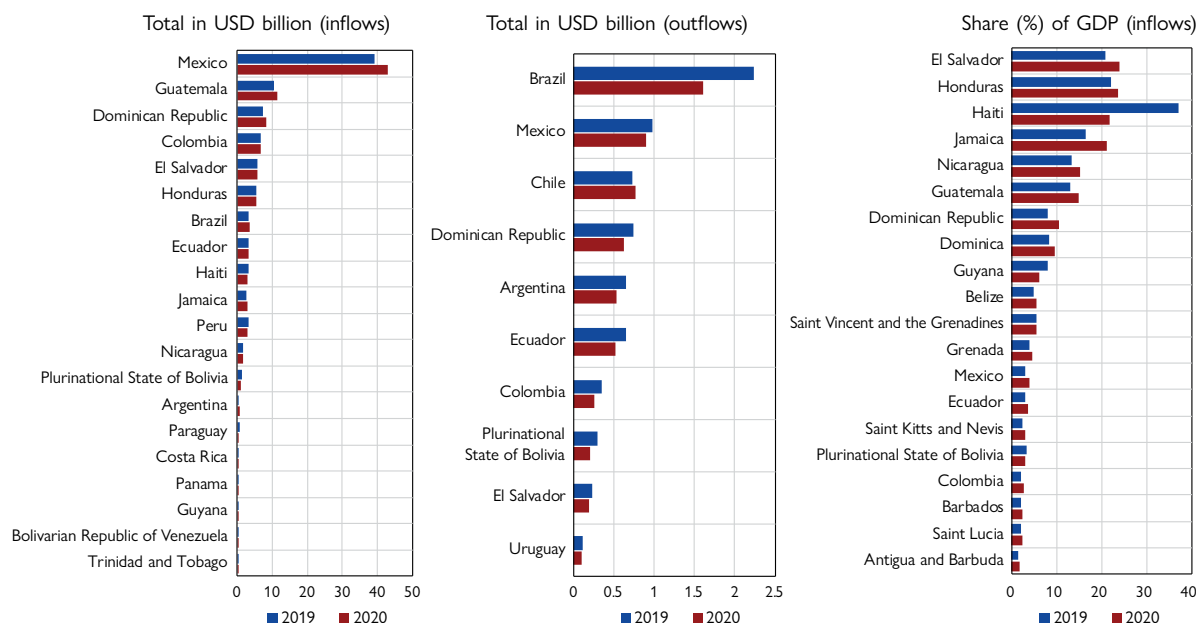
Source: IOM, 2021a.

Notes: Health-related measures include health screening and monitoring, testing/medical certificates and quarantine measures. Travel restrictions include passenger restrictions based on nationality or arrival from a geographic location. See the DTM Mobility restrictions page for more information on the methodology.

In 2020, Mexico was the world's third largest remittance-receiving country after India and China and by far the largest recipient in the region (USD 43 billion) (see Figure 26). Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Colombia and El Salvador were among the top five remittance recipient countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, although their inflows were much smaller than Mexico's. As a percentage of GDP, however, the top five remittance-receiving countries in the region in 2020 were El Salvador (at 24%), followed by Honduras (24%), Haiti (22%), Jamaica (21%) and Nicaragua (15%). Remittance flows to Latin America and the Caribbean reached almost USD 104 billion in 2020, the highest recorded to date and an increase of 6.5 per cent from 2019, having remained more resilient than any other region in the world. The 10 largest recipients in the region, except Haiti, experienced an increase of nearly 8 per cent on average compared to 2019. Several factors contributed to this increase, including the shift from informal to formal remittance-sending channels, the economic stimulus packages in the United States in response to the pandemic, and the continued employment of migrants in essential sectors in destinations.²⁸⁸

Brazil was the largest source of remittances in Latin America and the Caribbean, followed by Mexico and Chile. Around USD 1.6 billion in remittances was sent from Brazil alone in 2020, although this was a significant drop from the more than USD 2 billion sent in 2019. With the exception of Chile, remittance outflows from the rest of the top-sending countries declined in 2020 when compared with 2019.

Figure 26. Top remittance recipient and source countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2019 and 2020

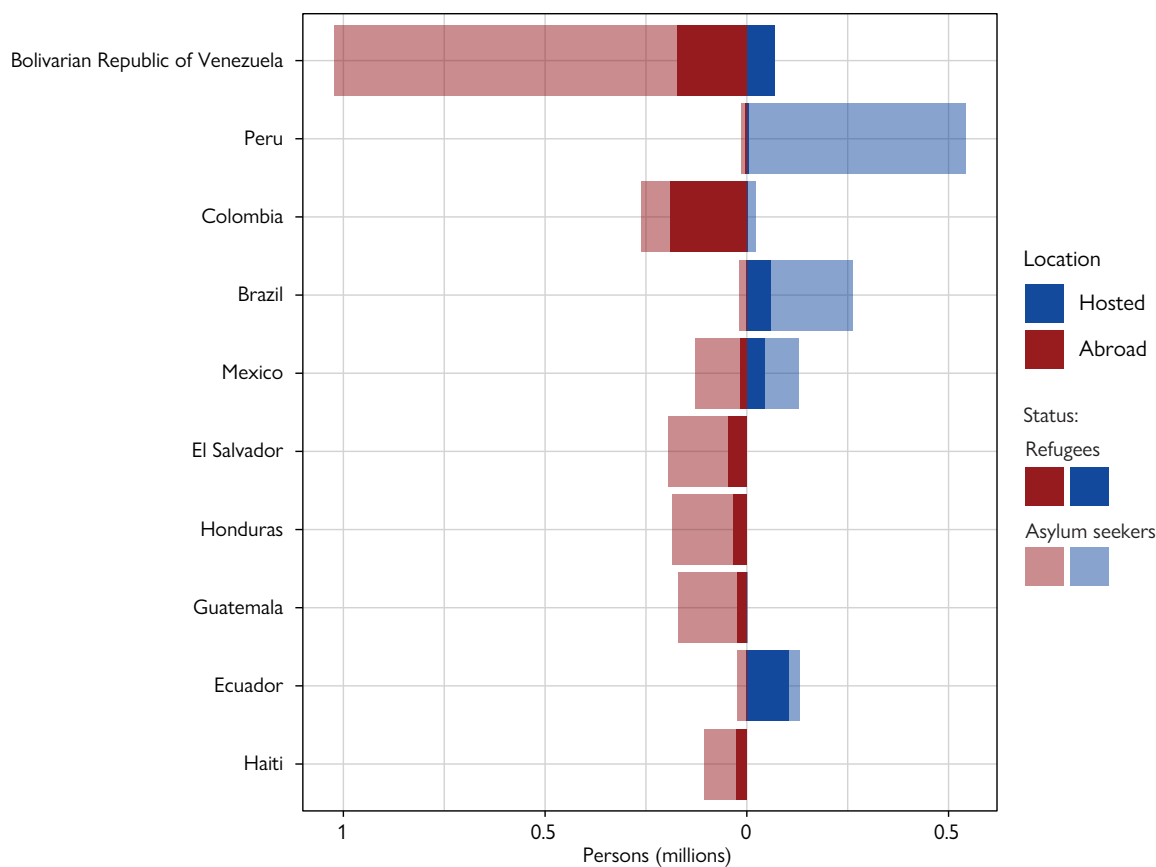


Source: World Bank, 2021.

In 2020, Venezuelans constituted the second largest population of people displaced across borders in the world, following Syrians. The United Nations Refugee Agency identifies “Venezuelans displaced abroad” as a separate category to reflect the ongoing displacement crisis; this category does not include Venezuelan asylum seekers and refugees. By the end of 2020, there were approximately 171,000 registered refugees from the Bolivian Republic of Venezuela and nearly 4 million Venezuelans displaced without formal refugee status. Approximately 73 per cent of refugees and migrants seek refuge in neighbouring countries. Colombia continues to host the majority of Venezuelan refugees and migrants (more than 1.7 million).

At the end of 2020, around 450,000 people from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras were seeking asylum in other countries (Figure 27). More information on refugees and asylum seekers can be found in the “Key features and developments in Latin America and the Caribbean” section below.

Figure 27. Top 10 Latin America and Caribbean countries by total refugees and asylum seekers, 2020

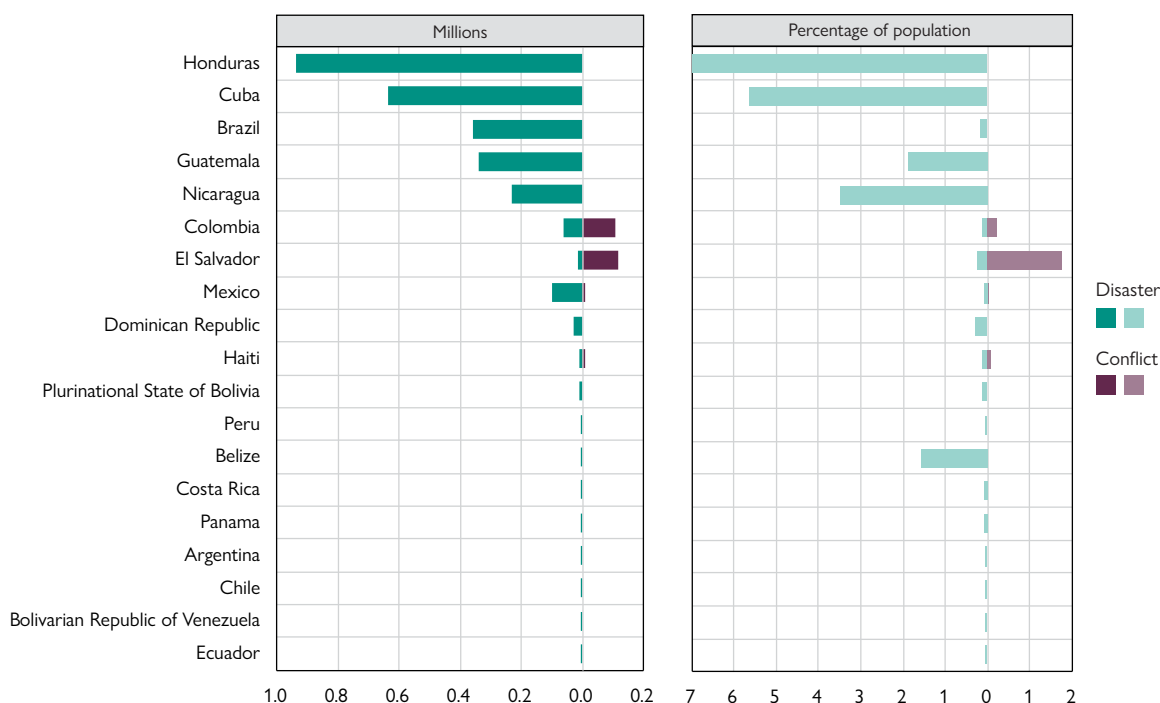


Source: UNHCR, n.d.b.

Note: “Hosted” refers to those refugees and asylum seekers from other countries who are residing in the receiving country (right-hand side of the figure); “abroad” refers to refugees and asylum seekers originating from that country who are outside of their origin country. The top 10 countries are based on 2020 data and are calculated by combining refugees and asylum seekers in and from countries.

Most new internal displacements in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2020 were due to disasters, not violence and conflict (Figure 28). Honduras recorded the largest number of internal displacements triggered by disasters (937,000), followed by Cuba (639,000), Brazil (358,000) and Guatemala (339,000). Weather-related events including Hurricane Laura (in August 2020) and Hurricanes Eta and Iota (in November 2020) triggered these large-scale displacements. Colombia and El Salvador recorded the highest number of new internal displacements related to violence and/or conflict in 2020 – 106,000 in Colombia and 114,000 in El Salvador.

Figure 28. Top Latin and Caribbean countries by new internal displacements (disaster and conflict), 2020



Source: IDMC, n.d.; UN DESA, 2021.

Notes: New displacements refers to the number of displacement movements that occurred in 2020, not the total accumulated stock of IDPs resulting from displacement over time. New displacement figures include individuals who have been displaced more than once and do not correspond to the number of people displaced during the year.

The population size used to calculate the percentage of new disaster and conflict displacements is based on the total resident population of the country per 2021 UN DESA population estimates, and the percentage is for relative, illustrative purposes only.

Key features and developments in Latin America and the Caribbean²⁸⁹

Central America and the Caribbean

The COVID-19 pandemic has deeply impacted migration and mobility in Central America and the Caribbean, while also exacerbating existing vulnerabilities among migrants, including those in transit.

Border closures and other movement restrictions due to COVID-19 resulted in the decline in the number of migrants from the subregion heading north in the early weeks and months following the onset of the pandemic.²⁹⁰ Many migrants either postponed their journeys or were left stuck in transit.²⁹¹ The pandemic and related restrictions also forced some migrants to take even more dangerous journeys, including through the Darién Gap, considered one of the most perilous migration routes globally.²⁹² Further, despite restrictions on mobility due to the pandemic, recent reports have shown that the use of smugglers continued in the subregion.²⁹³ In addition to disrupting asylum processes and other resettlement programmes across several countries in the subregion, mobility restrictions forced many migrants to stay in makeshift camps in inadequate hygiene conditions, with limited supply of food and water.²⁹⁴ For example, in Panama's Darién province, many irregular migrants, including those from within and outside the subregion such as Africans, Cubans and Haitians, were left stranded as several countries closed their borders.²⁹⁵ Several countries in the subregion, however, provided some assistance to migrants, such as facilitating the return and repatriation of those who had been stranded abroad and including them in vaccination campaigns.²⁹⁶ The pandemic also had wide-ranging impacts on key sectors, such as tourism, on which several countries in the subregion, including those in the Caribbean, rely heavily.

Migration northward remains a significant trend, with mixed migration from the northern region of Central America, in particular, proving to be challenging and dynamic due to rising immigration controls.

Migration from and through Central America is driven by a complex set of factors, including economic insecurity, violence, crime and the effects of climate change, with many individuals moving northward in pursuit of financial and human security.²⁹⁷ At the end of 2020, nearly 900,000 people from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador had been forcibly displaced (both within and across borders).²⁹⁸ Of these, more than half a million had been displaced across borders, with the vast majority (79%) hosted in the United States.²⁹⁹ Migrant caravans, a term used to describe the cross-border movement of large groups of people by land, have increased in number and frequency since 2018 and have often included families with children.³⁰⁰ There has been a rise in the number of children journeying through the Darién Gap.³⁰¹ Of the 226,000 migrants from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador arriving at the United States border in the first half of fiscal year 2021, approximately 34,000 were unaccompanied minors.³⁰² In response, the Mexican and United States Governments have bolstered immigration enforcement, including by implementing measures aimed at preventing the transit of migrants, a surge in active-duty military officers at the United States–Mexico border, an increase in migrants being detained and deported, and reports of migrants being met with excessive force by security officials.³⁰³ In January 2020, a migrant caravan leaving Honduras was denied permission to transit through Mexico to the United States at the border between Guatemala and Mexico.³⁰⁴ As a result, an estimated 2,000 migrants were returned to Honduras by the Guatemalan and Mexican authorities.³⁰⁵ Moreover, the number of detentions in Mexico increased from approximately 8,500 in January 2019 to 13,500 migrants in January 2020.³⁰⁶

Migration dynamics in the Caribbean remain largely characterized by emigration, although the recent arrival of Venezuelan refugees and migrants has added to the complexities in the subregion.

Most international migrants from the Caribbean are extraregional migrants, with Northern America (largely the United States) and Europe the two key destination regions. Some of the largest corridors are between Cuba and the United States

as well as the Dominican Republic and the United States.³⁰⁷ While intraregional migration remains relatively low, it has also increased steadily over time, and by mid-2020 there were almost 860,000 international migrants from within the subregion, nearly doubling since 1990.³⁰⁸ Regional intergovernmental organizations and initiatives, such as the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are committed to enhancing free movement, have contributed to the increase in migration within the subregion. There has also been a significant increase in immigration to some Caribbean countries in recent years, driven in large part by the arrival of Venezuelan migrants and refugees. Around 100,000 Venezuelans lived in the Caribbean in September 2019, but by the end of 2021 the number of Venezuelans is expected to grow to more than 220,000.³⁰⁹ Some of the main destinations for Venezuelans include the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Curaçao.³¹⁰ By August 2020, more than 100,000 Venezuelans resided in the Dominican Republic, representing over 1 per cent of the total population.³¹¹ In places such as Aruba and Curaçao, Venezuelan migrants make up a significant share of the population (more than 10%).³¹² In response to the growing presence of Venezuelans in the Caribbean, regularization programmes are being adopted by, for example, Trinidad and Tobago, the Dominican Republic and Curaçao to provide legal status to applicable Venezuelans.³¹³

Environmental change and disasters are influencing human movement and displacement in the subregion.³¹⁴

Intense weather-related events – including tropical storms and hurricanes – directly and indirectly impact migration in the subregion. Hurricane Laura, for example, triggered more than a million displacements across the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba and the United States in 2020, while Hurricanes Eta and Iota resulted in around 1.7 million displacements in several countries in the subregion.³¹⁵ In Central America, environmental shocks in pre-mountain zones range from floods and storms, mudslides and landslides, while arid areas are mostly affected by droughts.³¹⁶ In Guatemala, for instance, it is common for people to migrate due to the droughts and floods that damage crops and consequently cause food insecurity and poverty.³¹⁷ To further address the challenge of climate change and migration, several countries in Central America and the Caribbean are incorporating migration and mobility into their climate strategies. For example, Guatemala's climate strategy includes a focus on human mobility,³¹⁸ while Mexico's new Nationally Determined Contribution calls for enhanced attention to climate migration.³¹⁹

South America

The global pandemic disrupted migration in South America, impacting return migration and displacement.

The first confirmed COVID-19 case in South America was in Brazil in February 2020, and by late July the subregion had the highest number of confirmed cases globally.³²⁰ By April 2020, 92 per cent of the Americas had closed their borders to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus.³²¹ Several countries also implemented periods of lockdown and quarantine measures. Countries such as the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru put in place some of the longest and strictest lockdown measures worldwide.³²² These public health measures hindered migration and mobility, leading to precarious conditions for many migrants. Some migrants residing in countries with deteriorating socioeconomic conditions, and who lost work as a result of the pandemic, made the difficult decision to return to their countries of origin.³²³ Those returning home included Bolivian and Peruvian migrants from Chile and Paraguayan migrants from Brazil.³²⁴ Mass returns, often taking place by foot, in conjunction with mobility restrictions, led to many migrants being stranded in border cities in poor sanitary conditions.³²⁵ Returning migrants also faced socioeconomic and legal challenges, such as finding employment, obtaining legal status and facing xenophobic backlashes.³²⁶ With many people remaining on the move, countries like Guyana, Ecuador and Peru are prioritizing displaced people in their COVID-19 vaccination strategies.³²⁷

Regularizing displaced Venezuelans remains a challenge for countries in South America as the region confronts one of the largest humanitarian crises in its recent history.³²⁸ Since 2015, over five million people have left the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela due to the ongoing economic and political instability in the country.³²⁹ More than four million Venezuelans have moved to other South American countries.³³⁰ Colombia hosts the largest number of Venezuelans, with more than 1.7 million entering the country by July 2021.³³¹ As of July 2021, the remaining top South American countries hosting Venezuelans following Colombia were Peru (more than 1 million), Chile (nearly 460,000) and Ecuador (more than 360,000).³³² Mass regularization initiatives have been implemented to support Venezuelans, as more than half lack regular status.³³³ In February 2021, Colombia implemented a policy providing displaced Venezuelans with temporary protection status for the next 10 years.³³⁴ Regularization will have lasting positive impacts, as it fosters social inclusion and economic contributions via labour market integration and access to health care, housing, education and other necessary protections.³³⁵ Since many countries have never experienced migrant inflows at this scale, issuing visas and granting asylum has been challenging. An August 2020 study revealed that countries such as Brazil and Peru granted humanitarian visas to a substantial proportion of Venezuelans.³³⁶ While several countries have issued residency permits to a significant number of Venezuelans, many continue to have an irregular status.³³⁷

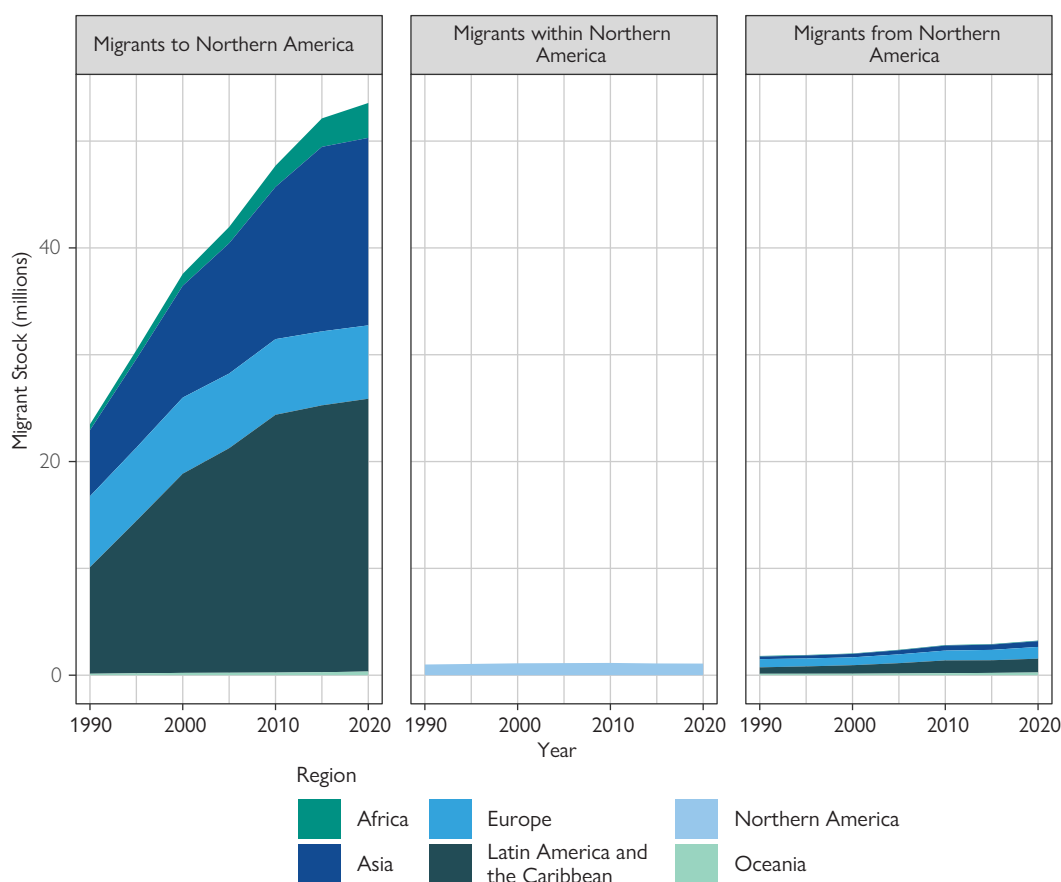
Intraregional migration has grown at a fast rate in South America, with women migrants contributing to this increase.³³⁸ Approximately 80 per cent of migrants in South America are intraregional migrants.³³⁹ Since 2010, the number of intraregional migrants in South America has grown to almost equal the number of South Americans living outside of the subregion.³⁴⁰ This growth is the result of several factors, including the decline in immigration to Europe,³⁴¹ the hardening of immigration policies abroad,³⁴² positive developments in migration policies at a regional and national level, greater employment opportunities within South America,³⁴³ increases in communication means and lower transportation costs,³⁴⁴ and the cross-border displacement from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.³⁴⁵ Significantly, in the largest destination countries of Argentina and Chile, women make up the larger share of South American migrants. Immigrant women predominately take up domestic and caring roles due to ageing populations and increased labour force participation among middle-class women.³⁴⁶

Violence, conflict and disasters are significant drivers of internal displacement in the subregion. Violence triggered by political and security crises continues to contribute to large-scale internal displacement. Violence in Colombia, driven partly by territorial control exercised by paramilitary groups, resulted in more than 100,000 new displacements in 2020.³⁴⁷ Displacement in Colombia due to conflict and violence continued to intensify in 2021, with more than 27,000 people displaced in the first quarter, an increase of 177 per cent compared with the same period in 2020.³⁴⁸ The subregion is also severely affected by natural disasters, triggering mobility and displacement; both rapid- and slow-onset disasters, such as floods, landslides and droughts have had widespread impacts on the subregion.³⁴⁹ For example, the extreme rainy season in Brazil, between January to March, resulted in approximately three quarters of the country's 358,000 disaster displacements in 2020.³⁵⁰

Northern America³⁵¹

Migration in Northern America is dominated by migration into the region, primarily to the United States. As shown in Figure 29, nearly 59 million migrants were residing in Northern America from a variety of regions in 2020. This number has increased by around 3 million since 2015, when around 56 million migrants were living in the region. As of 2020, most of these migrants were from Latin America and the Caribbean (around 26 million), followed by Asia (18 million) and Europe (around 7 million). During the last 30 years, the number of migrants in Northern America has more than doubled in size, driven by emigration from Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia, as well as by economic growth and political stability in Northern America. The number of Northern American migrants living within the region or elsewhere was very small compared with the foreign-born population in the region. In contrast to regions such as Asia and Africa where intraregional migration is significant, more Northern American-born migrants lived outside the region (around 3 million) than had moved elsewhere within the region (a little more than 1 million) in 2020.

Figure 29. Migrants to, within and from North America, 1990–2020

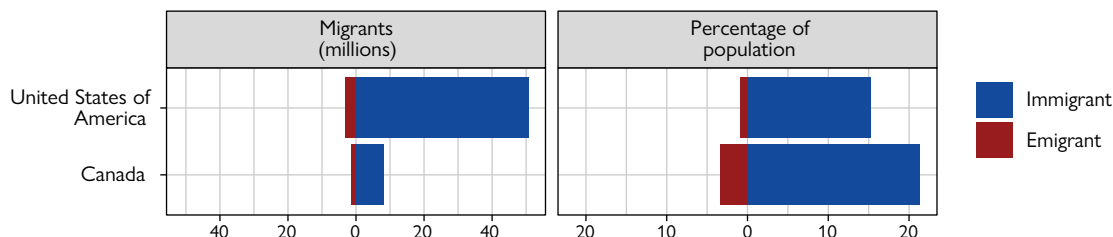


Source: UN DESA, 2021.

Note: "Migrants to Northern America" refers to migrants residing in the region (i.e. Northern America) who were born in one of the other regions (e.g. Europe or Asia). "Migrants within Northern America" refers to migrants born in the region (i.e. Northern America) and residing outside their country of birth, but still within the Northern American region. "Migrants from Northern America" refers to people born in Northern America who were residing outside the region (e.g. in Europe or Africa).

In 2020, the United States had the largest foreign-born population in the world (Figure 30). Over 86 per cent of the foreign-born population in Northern America lived in the United States. However, as shown in Figure 30, the share of Canada's total population that was foreign-born (at over 21%) was considerably higher than that of the United States in 2020 (15%). Canada also had a larger share of its population who had emigrated compared with the United States.

Figure 30. Main migration countries in Northern America, 2020



Source: UN DESA, 2021.

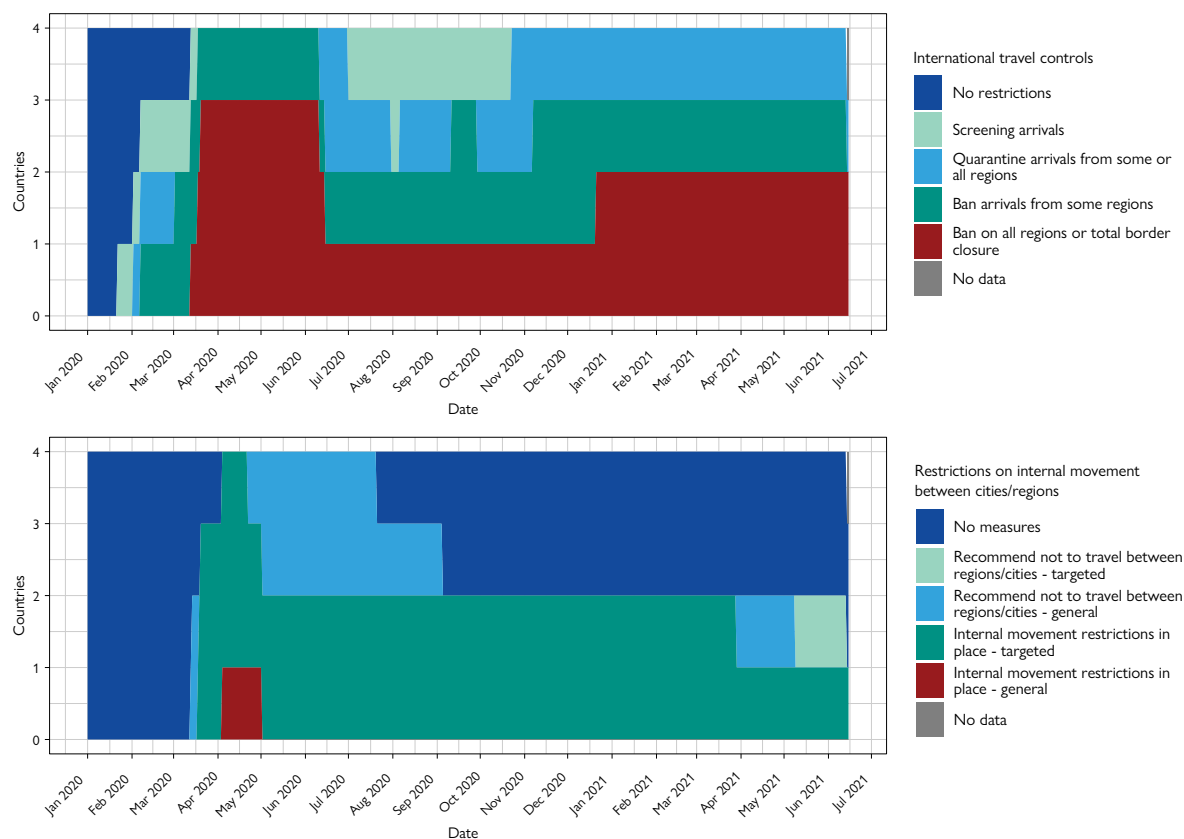
Note 1: The population size used to calculate the percentage of immigrants and emigrants is based on the UN DESA total resident population of the country, which includes foreign-born populations.

Note 2: "Immigrant" refers to foreign-born migrants residing in the country. "Emigrant" refers to people born in the country who were residing outside their country of birth in 2021.

All countries in Northern America quickly put in place international and internal travel controls at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Similar to the rest of the regions, restrictions on international travel started weeks earlier than internal controls. Restrictions such as screening arrivals and quarantine measures were maintained throughout 2020 and remained in place for all countries in the region as of mid-June 2021 (Figure 31). However, other international travel controls, such as the ban on arrivals from some regions and total border closures declined from mid-2020, only rising again toward the end of the year as several countries experienced an increase in or new waves of COVID-19 infections.

In the early weeks of the pandemic, all countries in the region imposed some form of internal movement restrictions. However, by around September 2020, about half had dropped all of these measures. The internal restrictions that remained for some countries included targeted and general recommendations not to travel between regions or cities. Interestingly and unlike other regions, nearly all countries in Northern America never imposed general internal movement restrictions.

Figure 31. COVID-19-related travel controls in Northern America: International and internal, January 2020 to June 2021

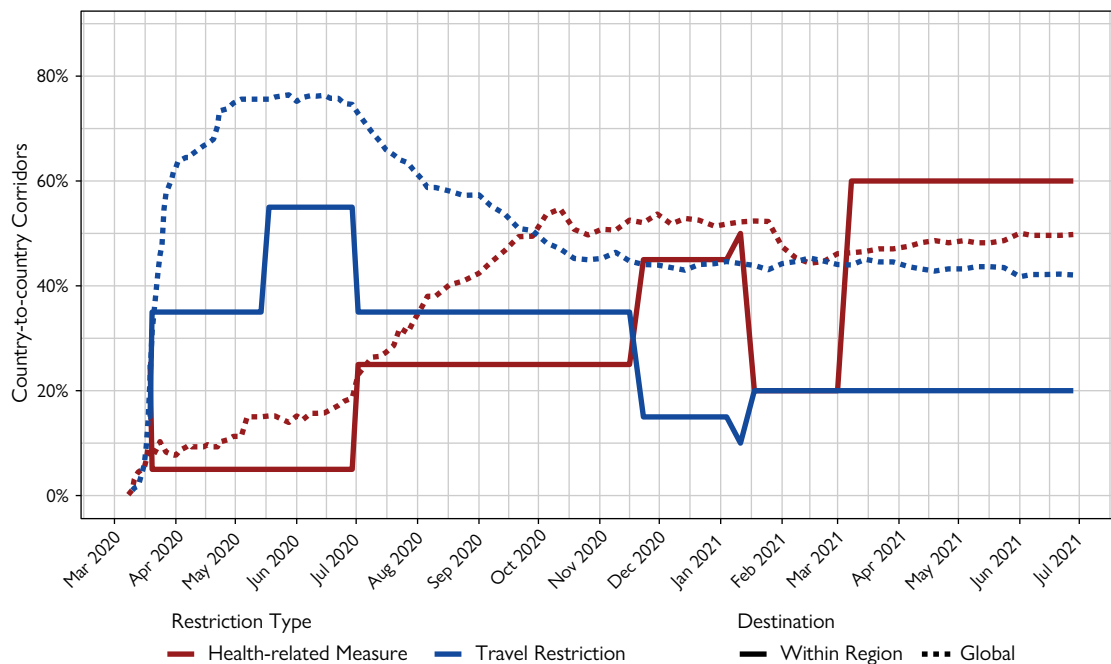


Source: Hale et al., 2021.

Notes: Categories used are those of the Oxford Government Response Tracker; categories included in the data set are for COVID-19-related restrictions only and do not reflect other travel restrictions that may also be in place, such as those related to visa restrictions, entry bans based on citizenship, departure/exit restrictions and internal movement restrictions. This graph only includes four countries, which affects the output and appearance of the area chart.

Travel restrictions and health-related measures in Northern America have evolved over time since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. As Figure 32 shows, there were more travel restrictions than health-related measures in the early months of the pandemic. Over time, however, health-related measures overtook travel restrictions. Of note, however, by end of June 2021 there were more intraregional health-related measures than those involving countries outside Northern America (global). This is in contrast to earlier on in the pandemic and throughout 2020, when there were more global health-related measures than intraregional ones.

Figure 32. COVID-19-related international travel measures in Northern America:
March 2020 to June 2021

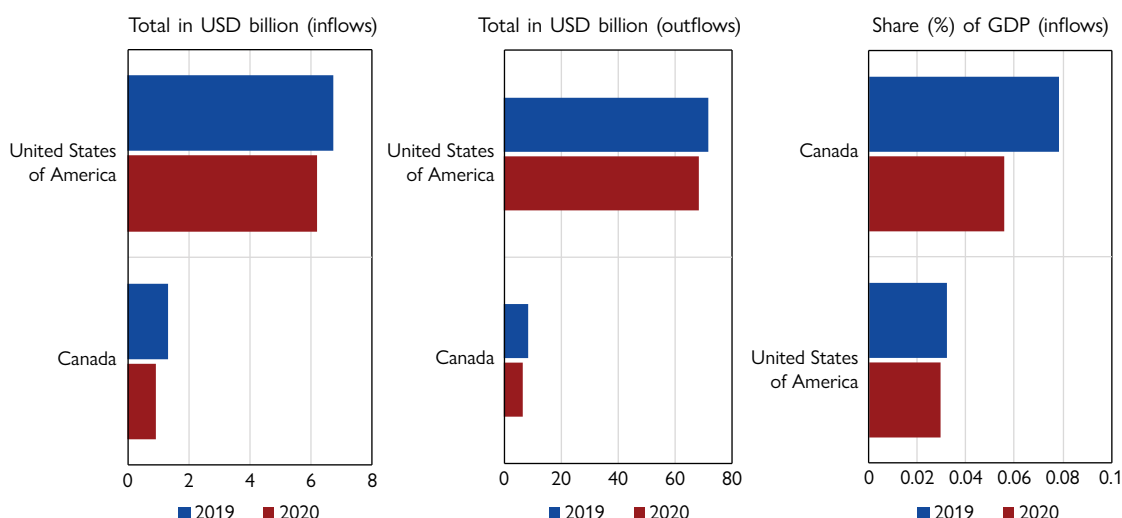


Source: IOM, 2021a.

Notes: Health-related measures include health screening and monitoring, testing/medical certificates and quarantine measures. Travel restrictions include passenger restrictions based on nationality or arrival from a geographic location. See the DTM Mobility restrictions page for more information on the methodology. This graph only includes four countries, which affects the appearance of the area chart.

The United States, the world's largest economy, has traditionally been one of the largest sources of remittances globally. In 2020, around USD 68 billion was sent from the country, making it the largest sender in the Northern America and the world (Figure 33). However, remittance outflows from the country declined in 2020, dropping from more than USD 71 billion in 2019.

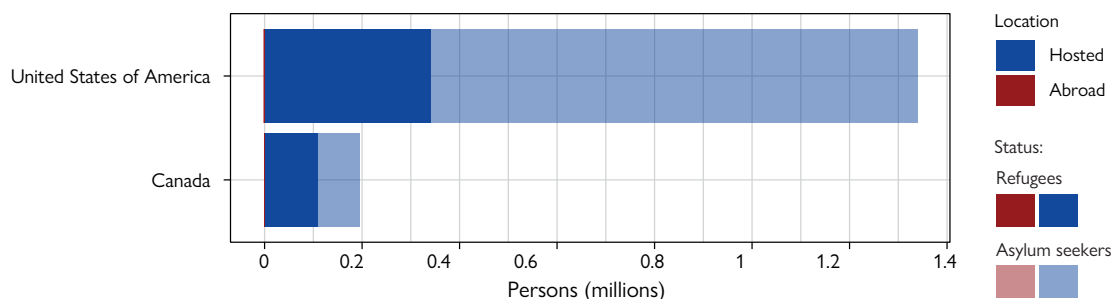
Figure 33. Remittance recipient and source countries in Northern America, 2019 and 2020



Source: World Bank, 2021.

The United States hosted nearly 341,000 refugees in 2020. In the same year, and as shown in Figure 34, the country was home to close to one million asylum seekers. Most asylum seekers in the United States came from Latin American countries such as the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Mexico and from countries in Northern Central America including Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras where a complex mix of socioeconomic and political factors have forced a significant number of people to leave. Canada, meanwhile, hosted nearly 110,000 refugees and more than 85,000 asylum seekers in 2020. A significant number of refugees in Canada came from countries such as Nigeria, Turkey and Pakistan.

Figure 34. Number of refugees and asylum seekers in and from Northern American countries, 2020

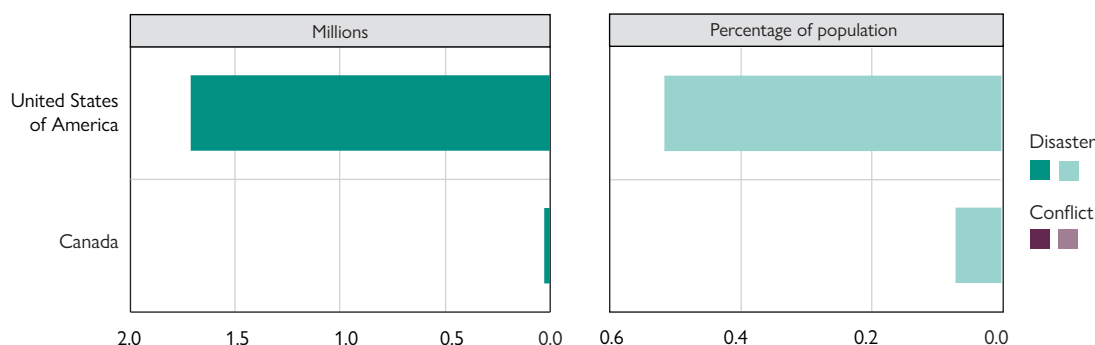


Source: UNHCR, n.d.a.

Note: "Hosted" refers to those refugees and asylum seekers from other countries who are residing in the receiving country (right-hand side of the figure); "abroad" refers to refugees and asylum seekers originating from that country who are outside of their origin country.

All new internal displacements in Northern America in 2020 were due to disasters (Figure 35).³⁵² The United States recorded the largest number, with more than 1.7 million new displacements due to flooding and wildfires. Globally, wildfires accounted for 1.2 million new displacements in 2020, with more than one million new displacements taking place in the United States, primarily in the western states of California, Colorado, Utah, Oregon and Washington. Wildfire season in Canada also triggered new displacements, however, the scale of these displacements was much lower compared with the United States. Overall, Canada recorded 26,000 new displacements in 2020, with the major fire in Red Lake, Ontario accounting for 3,800 new displacements. The United States consistently ranks first among the countries of the Americas and the Caribbean in terms of new disaster displacements annually.

Figure 35. Northern American countries by new internal displacements (disaster and conflict), 2020



Source: IDMC, n.d.; UN DESA, 2021.

Notes: New displacements refers to the number of displacement movements that occurred in 2020, not the total accumulated stock of IDPs resulting from displacement over time. New displacement figures include individuals who have been displaced more than once and do not correspond to the number of people displaced during the year. The population size used to calculate the percentage of new disaster and conflict displacements is based on the total resident population of the country per 2021 UN DESA population estimates, and the percentage is for relative, illustrative purposes only.

Key features and developments in Northern America³⁵³

Despite the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on migration and mobility in Northern America, migrants in the region have played key roles in the socioeconomic response. Travel restrictions, consular and border closures, and visa processing and immigration court hearing delays, among other factors, have contributed to the notable decrease in registered arrivals of migrants to Canada and the United States since the start of the pandemic.³⁵⁴ In Canada, for example, the number of new applications and extensions approved for temporary residents decreased by 48 per cent (from 2.4 million to 1.3 million) between 2019 and 2020, while authorizations and visas issued for permanent residents decreased by 50 per cent (from 341,000 in 2019 to 172,000 in 2020).³⁵⁵ The total number of immigrant and non-immigrant visas issued for the United States was just over 4 million for fiscal year 2020, a decrease of 54 per cent compared with the 9.2 million visas issued in fiscal year 2019.³⁵⁶ However, while COVID-19 travel and movement restrictions diminished opportunities for many migrants to enter Northern America, both the United States and Canada maintained certain channels, particularly for temporary foreign workers in essential front-line sectors.³⁵⁷ Further, migrants have been key to the subregion's economy and

its overall COVID-19 response. For example, many migrants are employed as health-care workers or in critical sectors such as food and agriculture.³⁵⁸ However, because migrants are overrepresented in front-line industries, in combination with other socioeconomic factors related to poverty, housing, access to social and health services, lack of documentation and more, they are disproportionately affected by the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic and are potentially at greater risk of infection.³⁵⁹ An estimated 6 million foreign-born workers in the United States are employed in front-line industries, with an additional 6 million migrants in industries negatively impacted by the pandemic, such as hotels and restaurants and personal services (e.g. nail and hair salons).³⁶⁰ The same pattern is reflected in Canada, as 34 per cent of front-line workers self-identify as visible minorities and are more likely to work in industries negatively affected by the pandemic, compounding health and economic challenges.³⁶¹ Moreover, the global pandemic has significantly also disrupted refugee resettlement schemes, as discussed above in the regional overview.³⁶² However, there have been initiatives to support refugees and migrants in the subregion. The United States, for example, committed to making free vaccines available regardless of immigration status.³⁶³ In Canada, the Federal Government was granting permanent residency to asylum seekers working in the health-care sector during the pandemic.³⁶⁴

The United States and Canada remain significant migrant destinations, with increasingly diverse origin countries. In 2020, around 51 million international migrants resided in the United States, by far the largest such population in the world. In the same year, more than 8 million international migrants lived in Canada; while this is a much smaller figure compared with the United States, Canada was the eighth largest migrant destination in the world in 2020, with most coming from India, China and the Philippines. Migrants to the United States have traditionally come from Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia, including from countries such as Mexico, India and China. Over the years, however, there has been a diversification in origin countries. For example, while Mexican-born migrants continue to comprise the largest number of international migrants in the United States, their numbers have been falling over time.³⁶⁵ The numbers of migrants from countries such as the Dominican Republic, the Philippines and El Salvador in the United States, on the other hand, have been increasing.³⁶⁶ There has also been a notable increase in migrants from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Afghanistan and Nigeria, which have experienced some of the fastest growth over the last decade.³⁶⁷

With an ageing population, Canada continues to increase immigration targets. Canada's 2021–2023 Immigration Plan will target levels of immigration not seen since 1913.³⁶⁸ The plan sets out to welcome 401,000 immigrants in 2021, 411,000 in 2022 and 421,000 in 2023.³⁶⁹ The goal reflects the changing demographics in Canada, where immigration currently drives 82 per cent of the country's population growth.³⁷⁰ Canada's fertility rate averages around 1.5, falling well below the replacement rate of 2.1.³⁷¹ The country's labour force is also rapidly changing. By 2036, the worker-to-retiree ratio will be 3:1 and by 2040 over 23 per cent of the population is projected to be over the age of 65.³⁷² The imperative to sustain and grow Canada's labour market is reflected in the 2021–2023 Immigration Plan, which aims to admit 60 per cent of all immigrants under economic class programmes.³⁷³ At the local level, strategies to support the Canadian economy uniquely target immigrant entrepreneurs, as many small and medium-size business owners plan to retire in the coming years.³⁷⁴ Additionally, there are programmes aimed at achieving a more equitable distribution of immigrants in response to the long-standing challenges to regionalization, a process that aims to promote immigration to smaller provinces and cities across Canada.³⁷⁵

While immigration policies in the United States have hardened in recent years, new policy changes are reshaping the immigration system. The country's 2020 decennial census revealed a near-record decline in population growth, showing a 7.4 per cent growth between 2010 and 2020, the second lowest rate since 1790.³⁷⁶ Partly in response to these demographic changes, there are efforts to expand immigration to the country to help maintain population growth and the current labour force.³⁷⁷ Meanwhile, over the last few years several

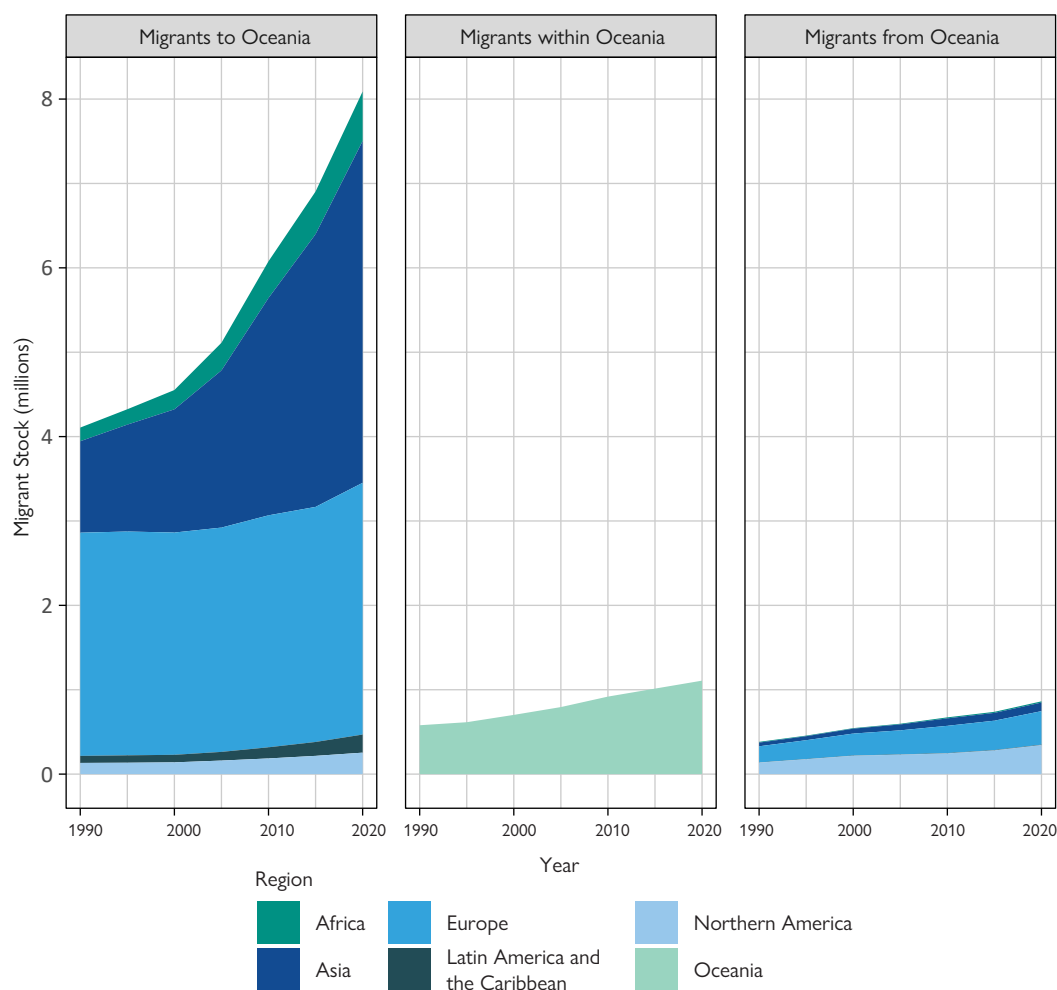
“interlocking measures” implemented by the United States Government made it increasingly difficult for migrants and asylum seekers to gain entry into the United States.³⁷⁸ Immigration was framed as a threat to the national economy, with restrictive policies and legislation aimed to dissuade migration.³⁷⁹ Since early 2021, however, the new United States administration enacted rapid changes to the immigration system, including the rescission of the United States travel ban on primarily Muslim-majority and African countries,³⁸⁰ the restoration of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) programme, the suspension of wall construction at the southern border, and a proposal that would instate an eight-year path to citizenship for all unauthorized immigrants.³⁸¹ Moreover, in the early months of 2021, the United States Government suspended three Asylum Cooperative Agreements with El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, which required asylum seekers from the subregion to first seek protection in these countries and allowed for the removal and transfer of some migrants from the United States to the three countries.³⁸² In March 2021, Venezuelans residing in the United States were granted Temporary Protection Status (TPS), allowing them to live and work legally in the country.³⁸³ Further, in May 2021, the United States Government revised the refugee admission cap from 15,000 up to 62,500 in 2021; it is set to increase even further to 125,000 in 2022.³⁸⁴ There were also ongoing efforts to reunite migrant families that had been separated in previous years.³⁸⁵

The number of irregular migrants continues to decline in the United States, in part due to return migration to Mexico.³⁸⁶ The total population of irregular migrants in the United States as of 2018 was estimated to be between 11 and 11.4 million.³⁸⁷ A recent publication from the Center for Migration Studies estimated that by 2019 the irregular migrant population in the United States had decreased by 12 per cent since 2010, driven in large part by the return of an estimated 1.9 million irregular migrants to Mexico during this period.³⁸⁸ Mexican nationals are now estimated to account for less than half of the irregular migrant population in the United States.³⁸⁹ However, there is growing diversity in the countries of origin of irregular migrants living in the United States. In recent years, there has been an increase in undocumented populations from Central America and Asia, primarily from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and India.³⁹⁰

Oceania³⁹¹

In 2020, almost 8.3 million international migrants from outside Oceania were living in the region. As shown in Figure 36, the foreign-born migrant population was primarily composed of people from Asia and Europe. During the last 30 years, the number of migrants in Oceania born in Asia has grown, while the number of those from Europe has remained steady. Out of all of the six global regions, Oceania had the lowest number of migrants outside its region in 2020, partly a reflection of its smaller population size compared with other regions. Migrants from Oceania living outside the region mainly resided in Europe and Northern America.

Figure 36. Migrants to, within and from Oceania, 1990–2020

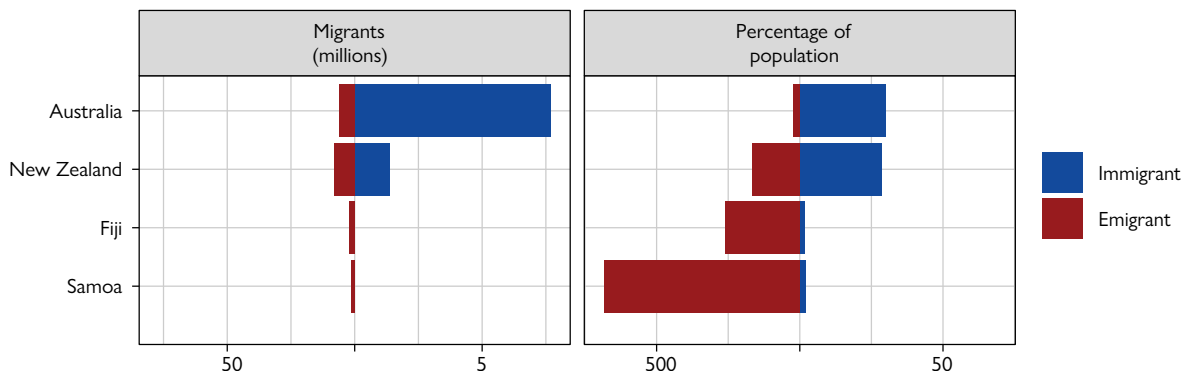


Source: UN DESA, 2021.

Note: "Migrants to Oceania" refers to migrants residing in the region (i.e. Oceania) who were born in one of the other regions (e.g. Europe or Asia). "Migrants within Oceania" refers to migrants born in the region (i.e. Oceania) and residing outside their country of birth, but still within the Oceania region. "Migrants from Oceania" refers to people born in Oceania who were residing outside the region (e.g. in Europe or Northern America).

The vast majority of international migrants in Oceania were living in either Australia or New Zealand (Figure 37). Most countries in the region have skewed migration profiles, being either large net origin or net destination countries. For example, Samoa and Fiji have high counts of emigrants in comparison with their native population, and very low shares of foreign-born populations. Their emigrants were located primarily in New Zealand and Australia. Australia and New Zealand have high shares of foreign-born populations as a portion of their total population, comprising around 30 per cent and 29 per cent, respectively.

Figure 37. Main migration countries in Oceania, 2020



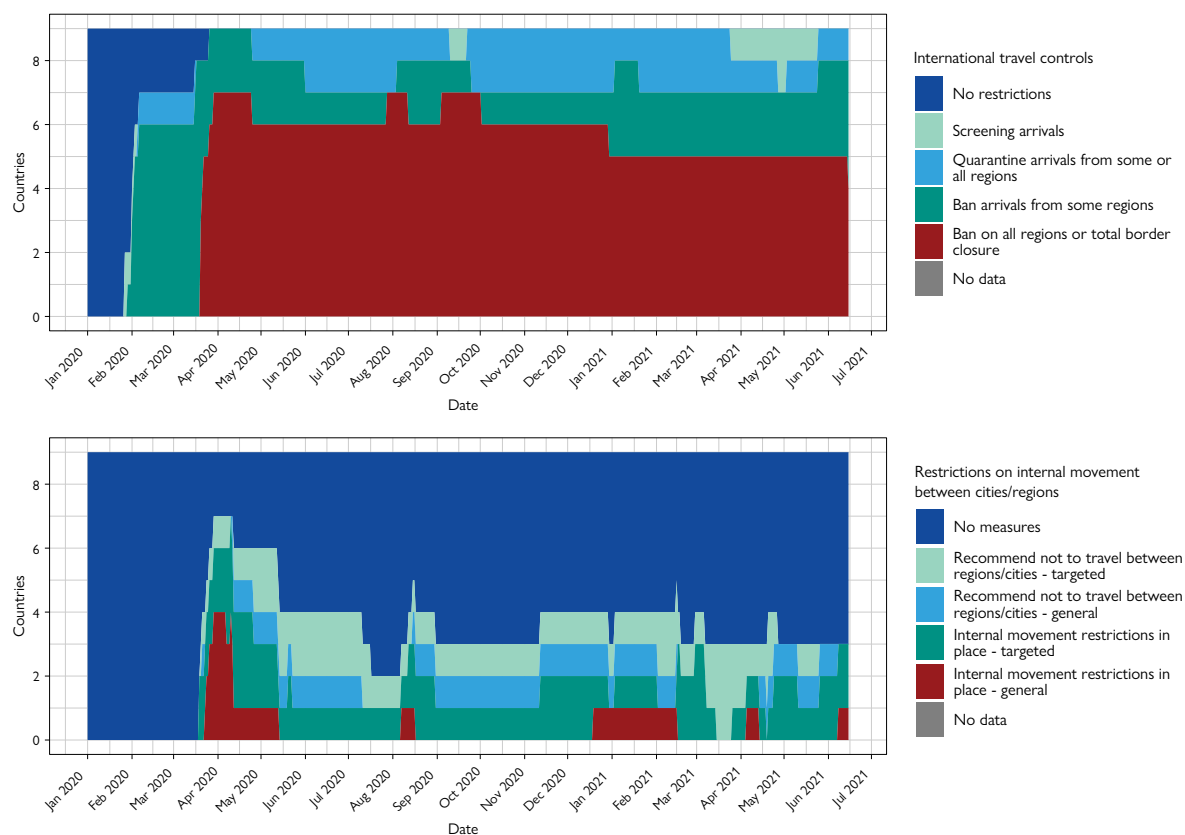
Source: UN DESA, 2021.

Note 1: The population size used to calculate the percentage of immigrants and emigrants is based on the UN DESA total resident population of the country, which includes foreign-born populations.

Note 2: "Immigrant" refers to foreign-born migrants residing in the country. "Emigrant" refers to people born in the country who were residing outside their country of birth in 2021.

Several countries in Oceania put in place international travel controls in the very early weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic. Internal movement restrictions followed a few weeks later. By around April 2020, virtually all countries in the region had imposed some form of international travel control (Figure 38). As of mid-June 2020, measures such as screening arrivals and quarantine mandates were still in place for nearly all countries. While other restrictions declined slightly, such as banning arrivals from some regions and total border closures, they too remained in place for several countries in the region. This contrasts with regions such as Africa, Asia and Europe, which saw most countries drop controls such as total border closures. Internal movement restrictions, meanwhile, which peaked in the early months of the pandemic, declined over time, but remain in place for some countries in the region.

Figure 38. COVID-19-related travel controls in Oceania: International and internal, January 2020 to June 2021

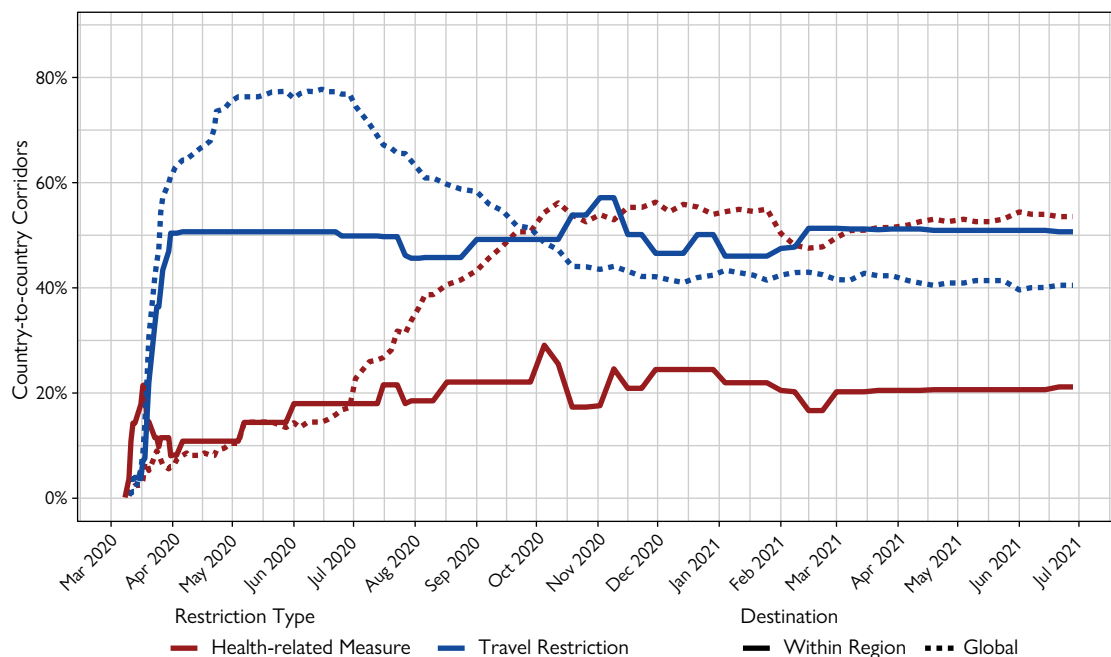


Source: Hale et al., 2021.

Notes: Categories used are those of the Oxford Government Response Tracker; categories included in the data set are for COVID-19-related restrictions only and do not reflect other travel restrictions that may also be in place, such as those related to visa restrictions, entry bans based on citizenship, departure/exit restrictions and internal movement restrictions.

The majority of countries in Oceania quickly enacted travel restrictions, with health-related measures increasing much more gradually in the early months of the pandemic (see Figure 39). By mid-2020, as the figure below shows, around 80 per cent of corridors in Oceania had some form of travel restriction (global). These dynamics began to change over time, as health-related measures, particularly those involving countries outside the region, increased and even surpassed travel restrictions during some periods. Notably, unlike other regions (except Asia), intraregional health-related measures remained relatively low (under 30% of corridors) by June 2021. Moreover, Oceania and Asia are also the only regions where, overall, travel restrictions within the region (both internal and global) were greater than health-related measures by mid-2021.

Figure 39. COVID-19-related international travel measures in Oceania: March 2020 to June 2021

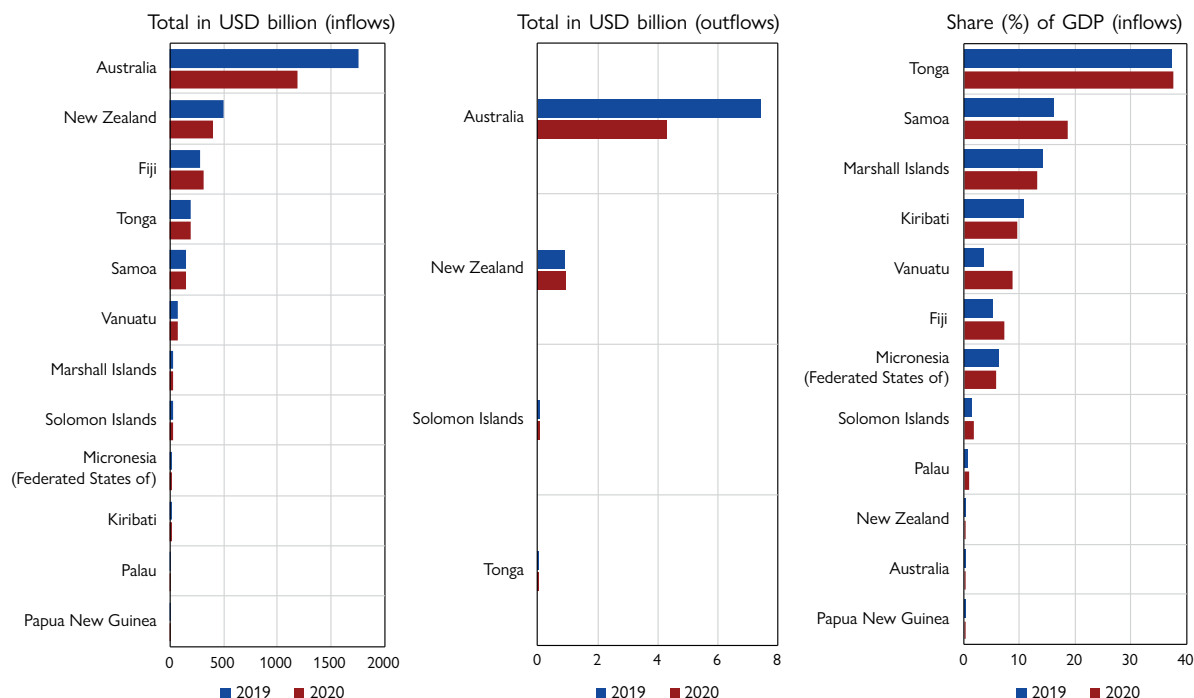


Source: IOM, 2021a.

Notes: Health-related measures include health screening and monitoring, testing/medical certificates and quarantine measures. Travel restrictions include passenger restrictions based on nationality or arrival from a geographic location. See the DTM Mobility restrictions page for more information on the methodology.

Australia received the largest international remittances in the region in 2020, followed by New Zealand and Fiji. Overall remittance flows to Oceania dropped by around 15 per cent in 2020, with the region's largest economies, Australia and New Zealand, experiencing 32 per cent and 20 per cent declines, respectively. The top recipients, as a share of GDP in 2020, include several smaller economies such as Tonga, Samoa and the Marshall Islands. In addition to being the largest recipient of international remittances in the region, Australia was also the largest source of remittances in Oceania in both 2019 and 2020. Remittance outflows from Australia surpassed USD 4 billion in 2020, although this was a decline from more than USD 7 billion in 2019.

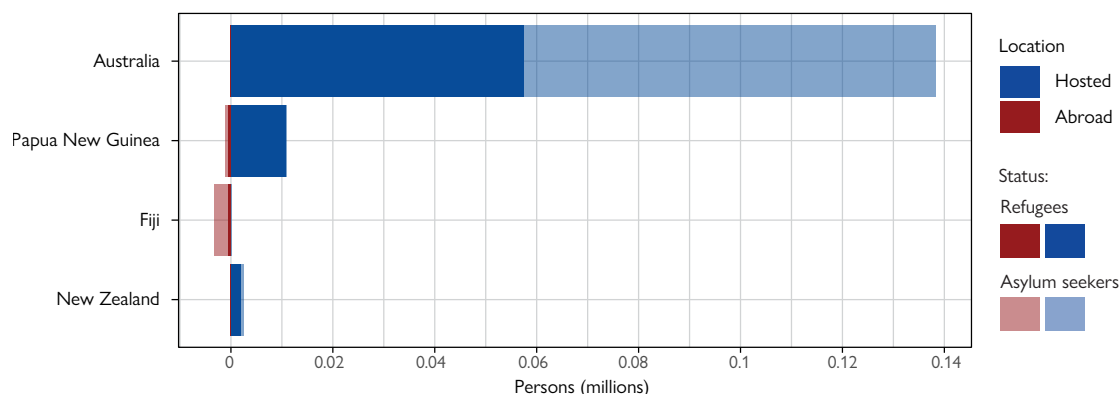
Figure 40. Top international remittance recipient and source countries in Oceania, 2019 and 2020



Source: World Bank, 2021.

In 2020, Oceania hosted over 150,000 refugees and asylum seekers. Australia was the largest host country in the region, followed by Papua New Guinea and New Zealand (Figure 41). Refugees originated from a range of countries including Afghanistan, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq.

Figure 41. Numbers of refugees and asylum seekers in and from Oceania countries, 2020

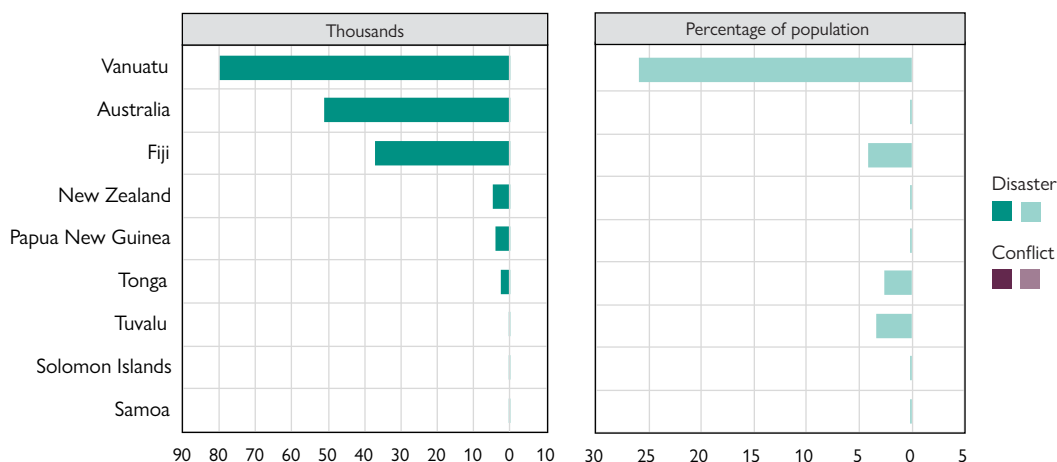


Source: UNHCR, n.d.a.

Note: "Hosted" refers to those refugees and asylum seekers from other countries who are residing in the receiving country (right-hand side of the figure); "abroad" refers to refugees and asylum seekers originating from that country who are outside of their origin country. The figures are based on 2020 data and are calculated by combining refugees and asylum seekers in and from countries.

Most internal displacements in Oceania in 2020 resulted from disasters, not conflict. Vanuatu recorded the highest number of disaster displacements (80,000), largely triggered by Cyclone Harold (Figure 42). This category five storm in 2020 impacted nearly one quarter of the population in the country. Other large-scale internal displacements triggered by disasters were recorded in Australia (51,000), Fiji (37,000) and New Zealand (almost 5,000). In Australia, the new displacements were largely pre-emptive evacuations due to the intense bushfire season between July 2019 and February 2020. The fires destroyed more than 3,000 homes and approximately 17 million hectares of land, heavily impacting the south-eastern states of Victoria and New South Wales.³⁹²

Figure 42. Top countries in Oceania by new internal displacements (disaster and conflict), 2020



Source: IDMC, n.d.; UN DESA, 2021.

Notes: New displacements refers to the number of displacement movements that occurred in 2020, not the total accumulated stock of IDPs resulting from displacement over time. New displacement figures include individuals who have been displaced more than once and do not correspond to the number of people displaced during the year. The population size used to calculate the percentage of new disaster and conflict displacements is based on the total resident population of the country per 2021 UN DESA population estimates, and the percentage is for relative, illustrative purposes only.

Key features and developments in Oceania³⁹³

The Covid-19 pandemic has led to economic hardship in the Oceania region due to labour immobility and major disruptions to key sectors such as tourism, hospitality and trade. Governments in the Oceania region implemented a range of public health safety measures to curb the transmission of COVID-19 and have managed to minimize the number of cases. However, these pre-emptive actions, which included travel restrictions, border closures, the suspension of flights and quarantine measures, have negatively impacted migrants working in key industries. In particular, labour migrants within the region have faced major challenges. For instance, migrants from the Pacific Islands participating in seasonal worker programmes in Australia and New Zealand were in limbo, as some migrants in Tonga, Fiji, Tuvalu and Vanuatu were unable to depart for their preassigned employment and those already employed abroad had to negotiate continued work with their existing employers or find employment with an alternative employer.³⁹⁴ Others in the seasonal worker programme faced challenges returning home and securing employment beyond their initial contract.³⁹⁵ Another sector devastated by the pandemic was tourism and hospitality, which is a major source of revenue for the Pacific Islands. For example, in Fiji, tourism is the most important sector, and the downturn is expected to impact the overall GDP by approximately 38 per cent.³⁹⁶ Due to the economic hardship, the flow of remittances is a cause for concern for Pacific island countries that rely strongly on these transfers. While lockdown measures resulted in reduced access to cash-based services, central banks reported significant shifts to the use of digital platforms;³⁹⁷ for example, the Bank of Fiji reported an overall increase of 68 per cent from FJD 2.75 million in March 2020 to FJD 4.62 million in April 2020.³⁹⁸

Seasonal labour migration regimes continue to facilitate emigration from Pacific island countries to Australia and New Zealand. Labour migration programmes such as the Seasonal Workers Programme and Pacific Labour Scheme in Australia and the Recognized Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme in New Zealand recruit migrants primarily from the Pacific and South-East Asia to occupy jobs in agriculture and accommodation (in Australia) and horticulture and viticulture (in New Zealand).³⁹⁹ The emigration from Pacific island countries to Australia and New Zealand is significant due to the relatively small population sizes and the pace at which participation in these programmes has grown, particularly in Australia, where there is no cap.⁴⁰⁰ The majority of migrants that participate in these seasonal migrant worker programmes are from Vanuatu and Tonga. For example, it is estimated that in 2018, 13 per cent of the Tongan population aged 20–45 emigrated to work in Australia and New Zealand.⁴⁰¹ An evaluation of the seasonal worker programmes demonstrates that while the economic opportunity for migrants from the surrounding Pacific island countries drives participation, the departure of migrants can impact population growth and traditional social systems, and pose opportunity costs to local production in these regions.⁴⁰² Additionally, it is recorded that the vast majority of workers are male.⁴⁰³ In Australia for example, only 14.6 per cent of participants in the 2017–2018 cohort were women.⁴⁰⁴ With regard to gender equality, this is a cause for concern as women have to carry out unpaid work in their households in the absence of men and may miss the opportunity for work experience and financial gain.⁴⁰⁵

Environmental change and natural hazards play a significant role in mobility and displacement in the region. The Pacific region is disaster prone with high vulnerability to earthquakes, floods, forest fires and droughts. The intensity and frequency of such events are of concern, marked recently by the devastating bushfires in Australia that blazed from July 2019 until February 2020, burning 17 million hectares of land.⁴⁰⁶ This historic event triggered 65,000 new displacements, mostly from pre-emptive evacuations.⁴⁰⁷ Natural hazards and displacement can be more acute relative to population size, such as the volcano eruptions in Papua New Guinea in June 2019, which triggered an estimated 20,000 displacements,⁴⁰⁸ and Cyclone Harold, which hit Vanuatu in April 2020 displacing around 80,000 individuals, approximately a quarter of the population.⁴⁰⁹ Environmental change and natural hazards lead

to a spectrum of mobility decisions among individuals and communities.⁴¹⁰ Coping and adaptation strategies, along with resources and social networks may inform decisions to stay in high-risk environments.⁴¹¹ People's migration decisions as they relate to environmental change will continue to influence demographic change in the region.

Asylum seekers and refugees are a prominent feature of the region. The top three countries hosting asylum seekers and refugees are Australia (138,000), Papua New Guinea (11,000) and New Zealand (2,500).⁴¹² In the last decade, approximately 11 per cent of all resettled refugees were welcomed in Australia.⁴¹³ The number of places under Australia's Humanitarian Programme rose to 18,762 in 2018/2019.⁴¹⁴ In 2019/2020, Australia provided 13,170 Humanitarian Programme places out of the total 18,750 allocated for the reporting year.⁴¹⁵ The programme was not fully delivered in 2019/2020 due to the temporary suspension of granting of all offshore humanitarian visas in March 2020 because of COVID-19 travel restrictions.⁴¹⁶ In its annual Budget for 2020/2021, the Australian Government reduced its humanitarian places by 5,000, returning to the pre-2017 level of 13,750 places per annum.⁴¹⁷ COVID-19 travel restrictions have meant that by July 2021, it is estimated that around 10,000 people granted humanitarian visas overseas will remain offshore and be unable to enter Australia due to continuing significant international travel restrictions.⁴¹⁸ The subsequent federal budget (2021/2022) confirmed that programme places would remain at 13,750 for several years to come.⁴¹⁹ By May 2021, there were just over 230 people remaining offshore (around 100 on Nauru and 130 in Papua New Guinea), many having been transferred from Australia more than seven years prior.⁴²⁰ Overall, it is estimated that Australia allocated around AUD 8.3 billion toward offshore processing of around 4,000 asylum seekers between 2012 and 2020.⁴²¹

Appendix A. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Regions and Subregions

Please note that this table reflects the UN DESA geographic regions and subregions and does not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

Africa				
Eastern Africa ^a	Middle Africa ^b	Northern Africa ^c	Southern Africa ^d	Western Africa ^e
Burundi	Angola	Algeria	Botswana	Benin
Comoros	Cameroon	Egypt	Eswatini	Burkina Faso
Djibouti	Central African Republic	Libya	Lesotho	Cabo Verde
Eritrea	Chad	Morocco	Namibia	Côte d'Ivoire
Ethiopia	Congo (the)	Sudan (the)	South Africa	Gambia (the)
Kenya	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Tunisia		Ghana
Madagascar	Equatorial Guinea			Guinea
Malawi	Gabon			Guinea-Bissau
Mauritius	Sao Tome and Principe			Liberia
Mayotte				Mali
Mozambique				Mauritania
Réunion				Niger
Rwanda				Nigeria
Seychelles				Saint Helena
Somalia				Senegal
South Sudan				Sierra Leone
Uganda				Togo
United Republic of Tanzania				
Zambia				
Zimbabwe				

a Eastern Africa has been combined with the Southern Africa subregion in this chapter, although the countries/territories/areas remain the same.

b This subregion has been renamed “Central Africa” in this chapter and combined with Western Africa.

c This subregion has been renamed “North Africa”.

d This subregion has been combined with Eastern Africa.

e This subregion has been renamed “West Africa” and combined with Central Africa (UN DESA Middle Africa) in this chapter.

Asia				
Central Asia	Eastern Asia	South-Eastern Asia ^f	Southern Asia	Western Asia ^g
Kazakhstan	China	Brunei Darussalam	Afghanistan	Armenia
Kyrgyzstan	China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region	Cambodia	Bangladesh	Azerbaijan
Tajikistan	China, Macao Special Administrative Region	Indonesia	Bhutan	Bahrain
Turkmenistan	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Lao People's Democratic Republic	India	Cyprus
Uzbekistan	Japan	Malaysia	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Georgia
	Mongolia	Myanmar	Maldives	Iraq
	Republic of Korea	Philippines (the)	Nepal	Israel
		Singapore	Pakistan	Jordan
		Thailand	Sri Lanka	Kuwait
		Timor-Leste		Lebanon
		Viet Nam		Oman
				Qatar
				Saudi Arabia
				Syrian Arab Republic
				Turkey
				United Arab Emirates
				Yemen

^f This region has been renamed "South-East Asia".

^g This subregion has been renamed "Middle East".

Europe ^h			
Eastern Europe ⁱ	Northern Europe	Southern Europe	Western Europe
Belarus	Channel Islands	Albania	Austria
Bulgaria	Denmark	Andorra	Belgium
Czechia	Estonia	Bosnia and Herzegovina	France
Hungary	Faroe Islands	Croatia	Germany
Poland	Finland	Gibraltar	Liechtenstein
Republic of Moldova	Iceland	Greece	Luxembourg
Romania	Ireland	Holy See	Monaco
Russian Federation	Isle of Man	Italy	Netherlands (the)
Slovakia	Latvia	Malta	Switzerland
Ukraine	Lithuania	Montenegro	
	Norway	North Macedonia	
	Sweden	Portugal	
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	San Marino	
		Serbia	
		Slovenia	
		Spain	

^h Some countries in this subregion, particularly members of the European Union, may have been included both in the discussion of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, as well as the subregional discussion on Northern, Western and Southern Europe within the chapter.

ⁱ Northern, Western and Southern Europe are combined in the chapter; excluding the following countries in Southern Europe: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and North Macedonia, which have been included in South-East Europe in the chapter, under the subregion South-Eastern and Eastern Europe.

Latin America and the Caribbean		
Caribbean	Central America ^j	South America
Anguilla	Belize	Argentina
Antigua and Barbuda	Costa Rica	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
Aruba	El Salvador	Brazil
Bahamas	Guatemala	Chile
Barbados	Honduras	Colombia
Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba	Mexico	Ecuador
British Virgin Islands	Nicaragua	Falkland Islands (Malvinas)
Cayman Islands	Panama	French Guiana
Cuba		Guyana
Curaçao		Paraguay
Dominica		Peru
Dominican Republic		Suriname
Grenada		Uruguay
Guadeloupe		Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Haiti		
Jamaica		
Martinique		
Montserrat		
Puerto Rico		
Saint Kitts and Nevis		
Saint Lucia		
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines		
Sint Maarten (Dutch part)		
Trinidad and Tobago		
Turks and Caicos Islands		
United States Virgin Islands		

^j The subregion “Central America” has been combined with Mexico and the Caribbean in this chapter.

Northern America
Bermuda
Canada
Greenland
Saint Pierre and Miquelon
United States of America

Oceania			
Australia and New Zealand	Melanesia	Micronesia	Polynesia
Australia	Fiji	Guam	American Samoa
New Zealand	New Caledonia	Kiribati	Cook Islands
	Papua New Guinea	Marshall Islands	French Polynesia
	Solomon Islands	Micronesia (Federated States of)	Niue
	Vanuatu	Nauru	Samoa
		Northern Mariana Islands	Tokelau
		Palau	Tonga
			Tuvalu
			Wallis and Futuna Islands

Legend:

Region
Subregion ⁱ
Country/territory/area ^{ii,iii}

Note: For methodology as well as explanatory notes, see International Migrant Stock 2020: Documentation, available at www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org.development.desa.pd/files/undesa_pd_2020_international_migrant_stock_documentation.pdf.

- i Subregions utilized within the chapter may differ from those utilized by UN DESA's Statistical Division either by name, or by countries/territories/areas included within.
- ii "The names of countries or areas refer to their short form used in day-to-day operations of the United Nations and not necessarily to their official name as used in formal documents. These names are based on the United Nations Terminology Database (UNTERM), which can be found at <https://unterm.un.org/UNTERM/portal/welcome>. The designations employed and the presentation of material at this site do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations [or the International Organization for Migration (IOM)] concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries." For further information, see <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/>.
- iii The entities included in this table, which the previous chapter draws upon, comprise countries, as well as territories, areas and special administrative regions. Please note that this table is not intended to be fully comprehensive.

Endnotes

- 1 All reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of the data referred to in this chapter, including through data verification. We regret, however, any data errors that may remain.
- 2 Please note that subregions relate largely to migration dynamics and so may differ from those of UN DESA. Details are provided in Appendix A.
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