3 MIGRATION AND MIGRANTS: REGIONAL DIMENSIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Introduction

The previous chapter provides an overview of migration globally, with specific reference to international stocks and flows. Particular migrant groups – including migrant workers, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs) – as well as remittances, were outlined. Chapter 3 focuses primarily at 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 was in the past. Notwithstanding increasing globalization, geography is 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 and researchers 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) and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC); 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.

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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. While the report generally does not refer to data or events after June 2019, international migrant stock statistics published by UN DESA on 17 September 2019 have been incorporated to the extent possible.

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 remittances, irregular migration, human trafficking, displacement (internal and international) and integration. The subregional overviews are not intended to be exhaustive, but are designed to be illustrative of key trends and recent changes in migration.

It is important to note that this chapter builds on chapter 3 of the *World Migration Report 2018*, Migration and migrants: Regional dimensions and developments, by providing an update on statistics and current issues. Importantly, it has been produced as a stand-alone chapter and does not require readers to refer back to the previous report.[3] Significant changes over the two years since the last report have been reflected in this chapter, which incorporates data and information up until the end of June 2019. Recent shifts in migration and displacement – such as the large-scale movement through South and Central America from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela – are discussed, as is the mass displacement of Rohingya from Myanmar's Rakhine State in the second half of 2017. The chapter draws on the existing evidence base, and sources are provided in footnotes and the references section. We encourage readers to refer to sources cited in this chapter to learn more about topics of interest.

Africa[4]

Migration in Africa involves large numbers of migrants moving both within and from the region. As shown in figure 1, in 2019, over 21 million Africans were living in another African country, a significant increase from 2015, when around 18.5 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 nearly 19 million in 2019.

Figure 1 shows that, since 2000, international migration within the African region has increased significantly. And since 1990, the number of African migrants living outside of the region has more than doubled, with the growth to Europe most pronounced. In 2019, most African-born migrants living outside the region were residing in Europe (10.6 million), Asia (4.6 million) and Northern America (3.2 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 2019, the number of migrants born outside the region remained virtually unchanged (around 2 million), most of whom were from Asia and Europe.

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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.

3   In order to ensure, to the extent possible, that this chapter provides a comprehensive "stand-alone" overview of regional migration in 2017 and 2018, we have drawn upon relevant material included in the *World Migration Report 2018* (chapter 3), especially that which provides historical context to recent events and migration trends.

4   See appendix A for details on the composition of Africa.

Figure 1. Migrants to, within and from Africa 1990–2019
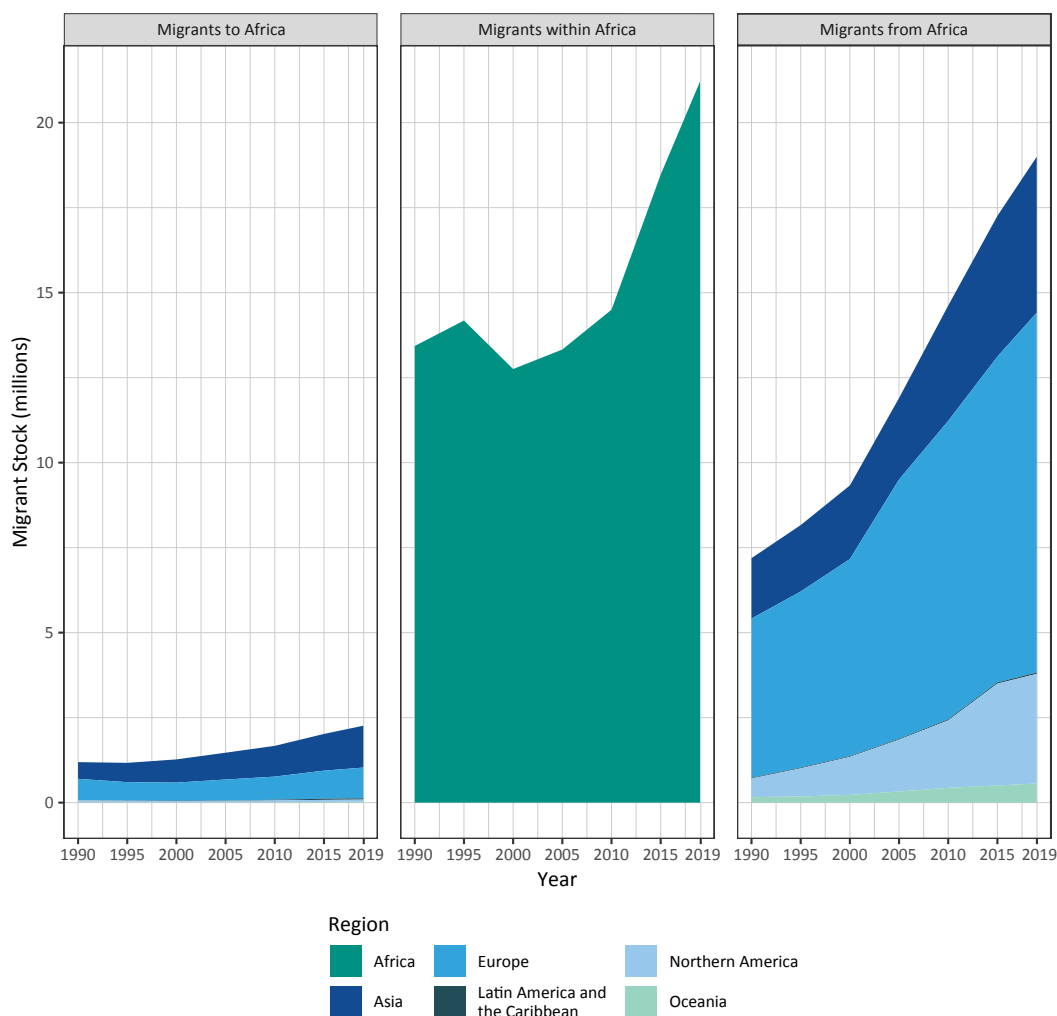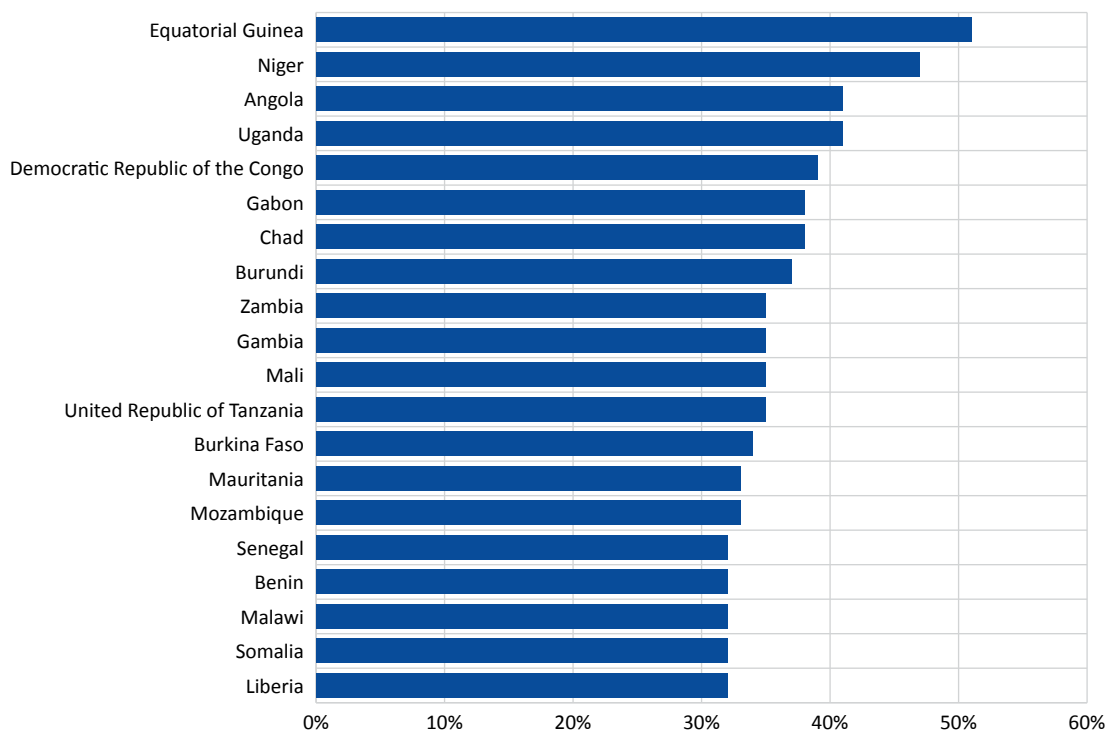

Source: UN DESA, 2019a.

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).

Many African countries have experienced significant changes in the size of their populations in recent years, as shown in figure 2, which ranks the top 20 African countries with the largest proportional population change between 2009 and 2019. All top 20 countries were in sub-Saharan Africa and each underwent substantial population growth during this period. These 20 countries reflect the trend across the continent, with Africa currently the fastest-growing region in the world and expected to surpass 2 billion people by 2050.[5] It is important to note that the largest proportional population changes from 2009 to 2019 occurred in countries with relatively smaller populations, as to be expected. Africa's most populous countries – Nigeria, Ethiopia

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5   UN DESA, 2019b.

and Egypt – are not among the top 20; however, all three countries also experienced increases in their populations.[6] The population growth in Africa is in contrast to population change in Europe, for example, which has experienced slower population increases in some countries and even decline in others over the same period (see figure 14).

The significant increase in international migration *within* Africa (see figure 1) has contributed to the recent population growth at the national level. While migration is not the only factor, with high fertility rates and increasing life expectancy also playing roles,[7] increased intraregional migration within the continent has influenced population changes in some countries. For example, the share of international migrants as a proportion of national population in Equatorial Guinea has sharply increased in recent years. In 2005, international migrants accounted for less than 1 per cent of Equatorial Guinea's population; by 2019, this figure had increased to nearly 17 per cent. South Africa is another example. In 2005, international migrants comprised 2.8 per cent of South Africa's population; by 2019, this figure had risen to 7 per cent.

Figure 2. Top 20 countries with the largest proportional population change in Africa, 2009–2019
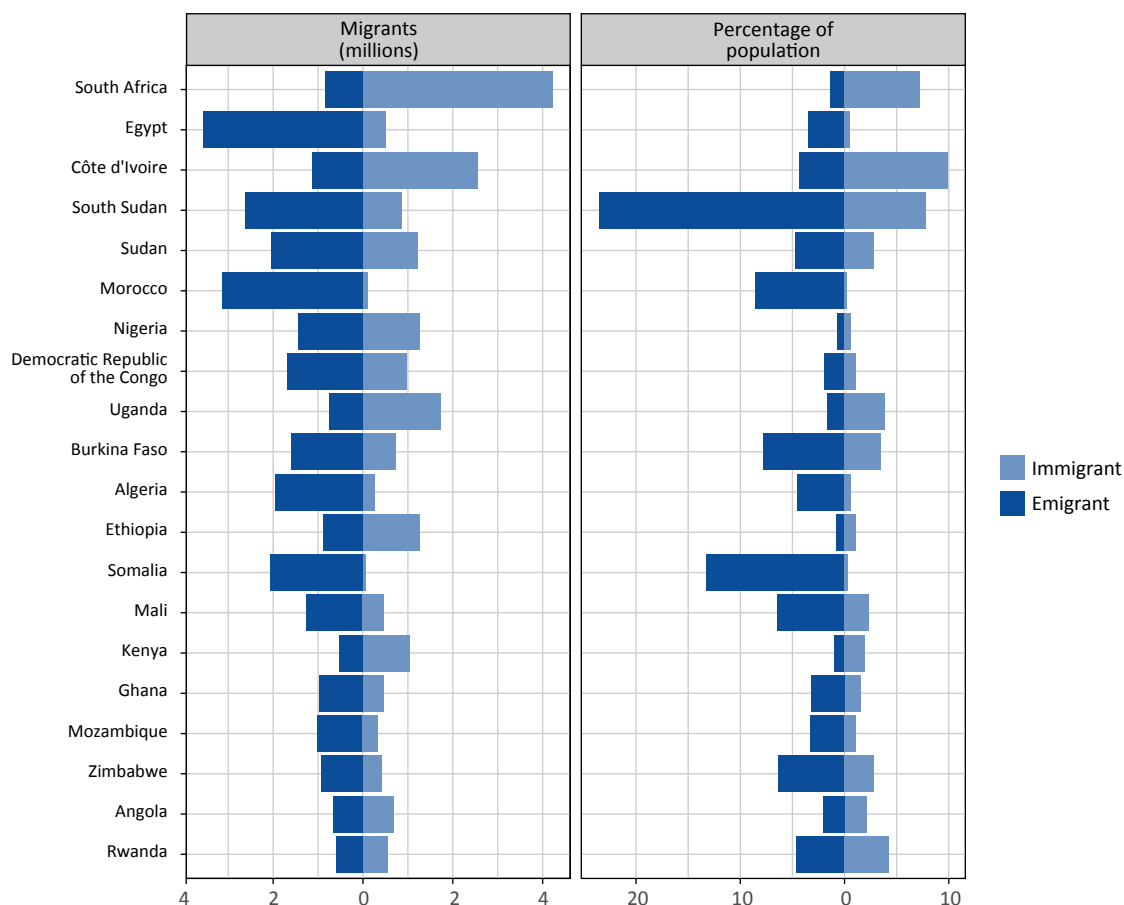

Source: UN DESA, 2019c.

Note: It is important to note that the largest proportional population changes from 2009 to 2019 are more likely to occur in countries with relatively smaller populations.

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6   Ibid.

7   Ibid.

The African countries with the largest numbers of emigrants tend to be in the north of the region. These are shown on the left-hand side of figure 3, where countries are ranked by their overall numbers of migrants (the combination of immigrants in the country and emigrants from the country). In 2019, Egypt had the largest number of people living abroad, followed by Morocco, South Sudan, Somalia, Sudan and Algeria. In terms of the number of immigrants, South Africa remains the most significant destination country in Africa, with around 4 million international migrants residing in the country. Other countries with high immigrant populations as a proportion of their total populations but not among the top 20, included Gabon (19%), Equatorial Guinea (18%), Seychelles (13%) and Libya (12%).

## Figure 3. Top 20 African migrant countries in 2019

Source: UN DESA, 2019a.

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 2019.

Significant migration corridors within and from Africa exist, many of which are related to geographic proximity and historical ties, as well as displacement factors. The size of a migration corridor from country A to country B is measured as the number of immigrants from country A who were residing in country B in 2019. Migration corridors represent an accumulation of migratory movements over time and provide a snapshot of how migration patterns have evolved into significant foreign-born populations in specific destination countries. Some of the largest migration corridors involving African countries, as shown in figure 4, are between North African countries such as Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia to France, Spain and Italy, in part reflecting post-colonial connections and proximity. Others, such as those between South Sudan and Uganda as well as Somalia and Ethiopia are the result of large-scale displacement due to conflict. Significant labour migration corridors to Gulf States also exist, as in the case of Egypt to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Importantly, just over half of the main migration corridors shown in figure 4 were within Africa, with the corridor from Burkina Faso to neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire constituting the second largest for Africa overall.

Figure 4. Top 20 migration corridors involving African countries, 2019
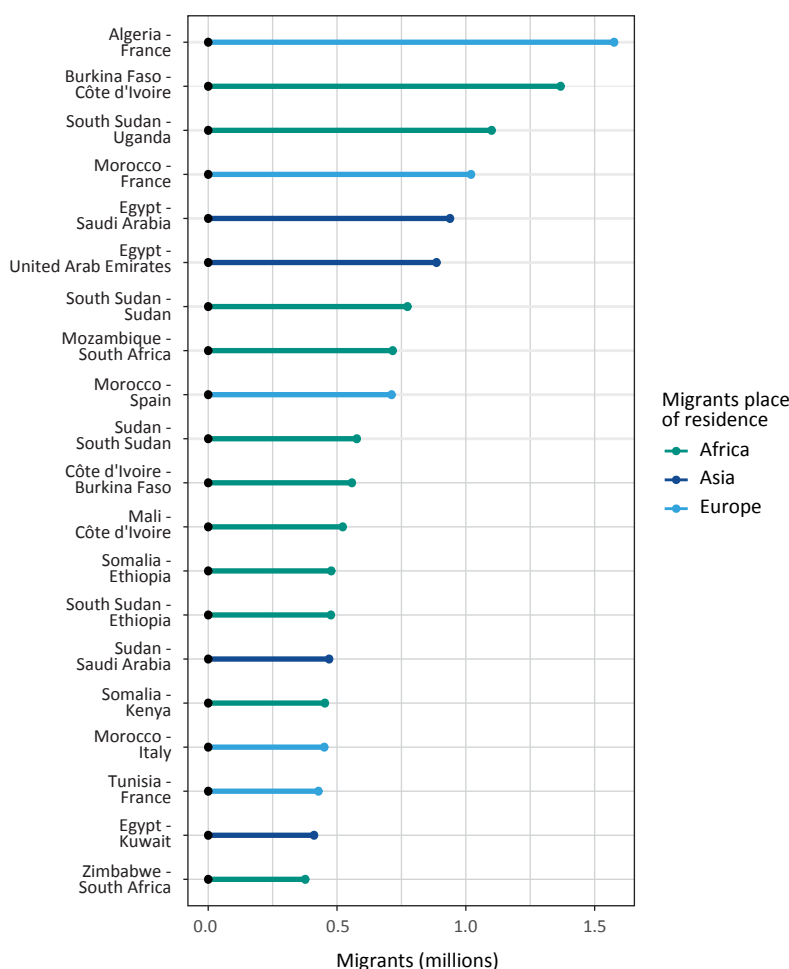

Source: UN DESA, 2019a.

Note: Corridors represent an accumulation of migratory movements over time and provide a snapshot of how migration patterns have evolved into significant foreign-born populations in specific destination countries.

Displacement within and from Africa is a major feature of the region, as shown in figure 5. 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 5. Similar to 2017, South Sudan produced the highest number of refugees in Africa in 2018 (2.3 million), and ranked third in the world, with most hosted in neighbouring countries such as Uganda. After decades of conflict, Somalia produced the second highest number of refugees in the region and the fifth highest in the world, with the majority hosted in Kenya and Ethiopia. Other large refugee populations have originated from Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and Eritrea. Uganda remained the largest host country of refugees in the region, with around 1.2 million refugees living in the country; most were from South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Other large refugee hosting countries in 2018 were Sudan and Ethiopia.

Figure 5. Top 10 African countries by total refugees and asylum seekers, 2018
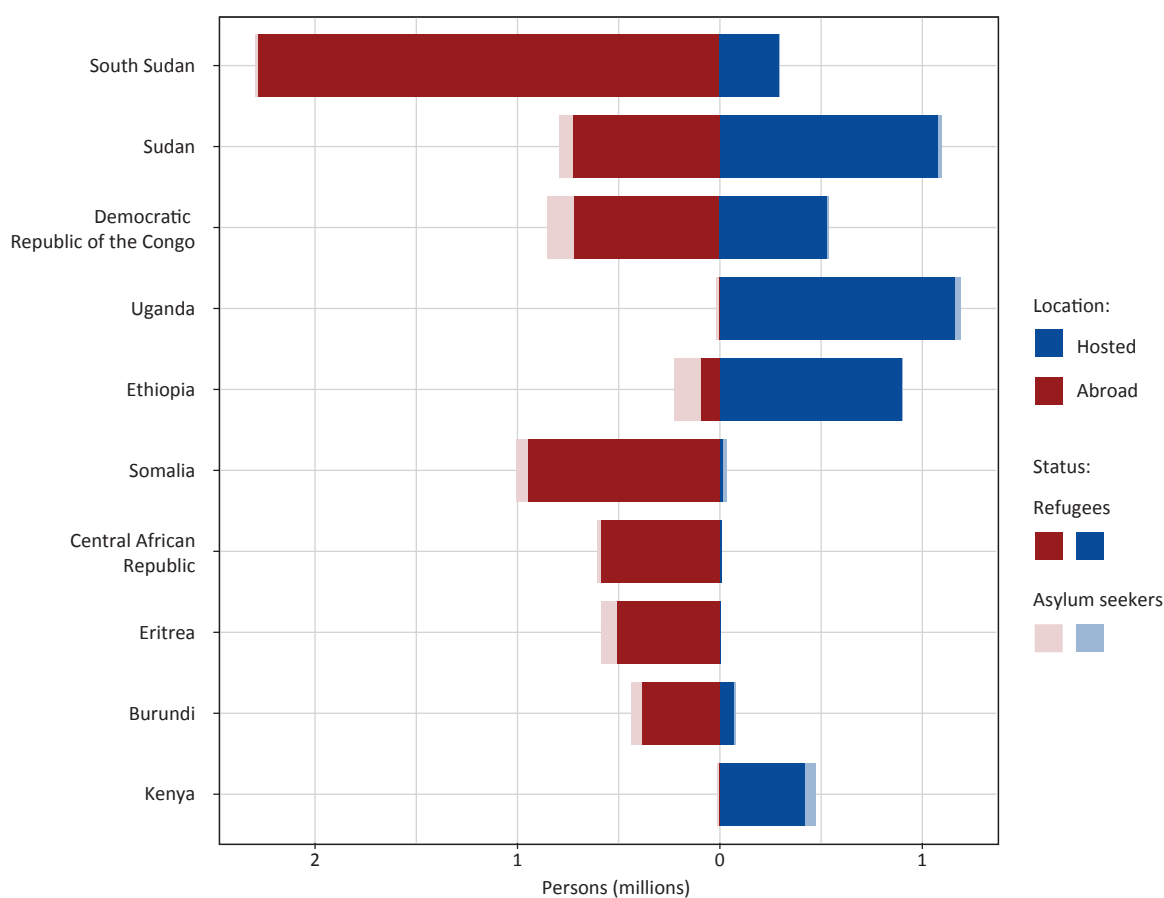
Source: UNHCR, n.d.

*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 2018 data and are calculated by combining refugees and asylum seekers in and from countries.

The largest new internal displacements in Africa in 2018 took place in sub-Saharan Africa, with the majority displaced by conflict, not disasters. This is in contrast to Asia, which experienced a larger number of displacements caused by disasters (see figure 12). Conflict displacement within countries was most pronounced in Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which dwarfed the remainder of the region (figure 6). At the end of 2018, there were 2.9 million new conflict displacements in Ethiopia, the largest number globally, and much higher than the 2017 figure, which was just over 700,000. In addition to those displaced by conflict, there were more than 290,000 new displacements in Ethiopia as a result of disasters. In 2018, the Democratic Republic of the Congo had the second highest number of new conflict displacements both in Africa and globally, with the figure reaching 1.8 million. In the Central African Republic, while the scale of displacement was not as acute as in countries such as Ethiopia, it had the highest proportional rate of internal displacement (11%). Notably, several countries with large numbers of internal displacements – such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Somalia – are also either hosting or producing significant numbers of refugees and asylum seekers (see figure 5). It is also important to mention that countries such as Mozambique, which recently experienced large-scale displacement due to cyclones Idai and Kenneth, are not included in figure 6. This is because the data used only capture the number of new internal displacements during 2018, not 2019. However, the discussion on displacement in Southern Africa due to weather-related events such as cyclone Idai can be found in "Key features and developments in Africa" below.

Figure 6. Top 20 African countries by new internal displacements (disaster and conflict), 2018
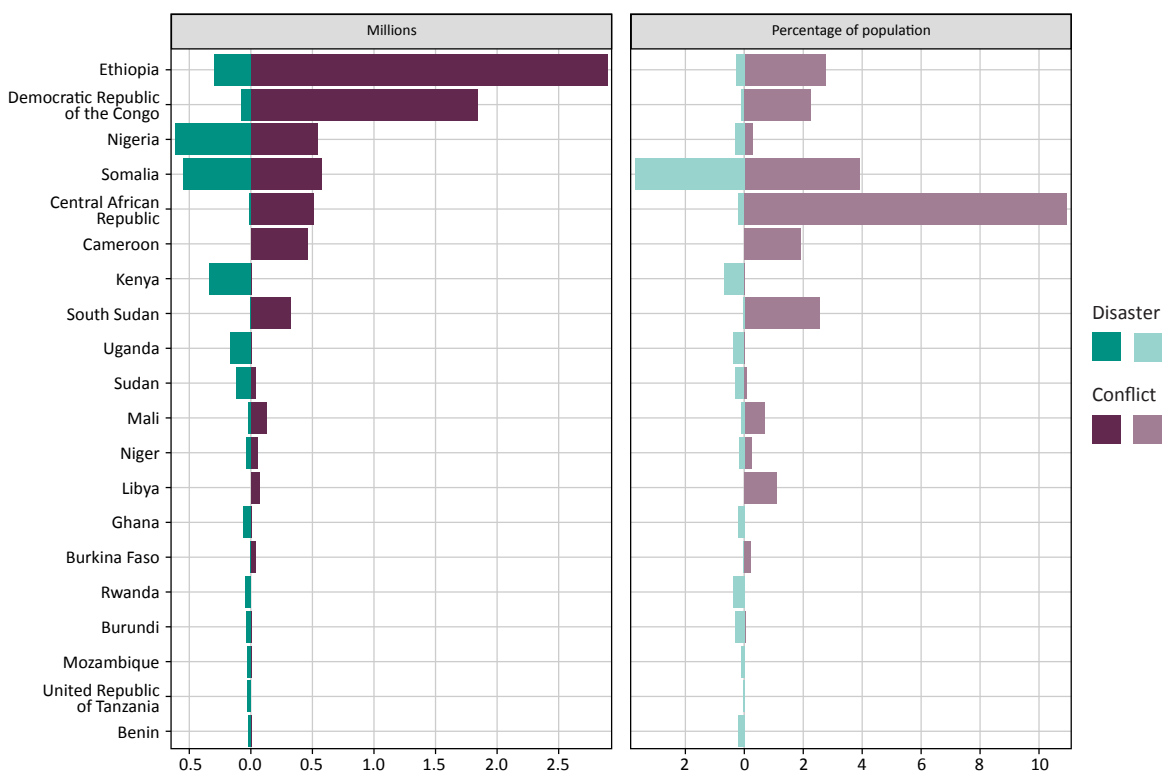
Source: IDMC, n.d; UN DESA, 2017.

Notes: The term "new displacements" refers to the number of displacement movements that occurred in 2018, 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 2017 UN DESA population estimates, and the percentage is for relative illustrative purposes only.

Key features and developments in Africa

Eastern and Southern Africa

Intractable conflicts, political and communal violence, and peacebuilding setbacks have resulted in the displacement of millions in Eastern Africa, with most countries in the subregion affected. At the end of 2018, for example, there were over 2.2 million South Sudanese refugees and close to 1.9 million IDPs.[8] While the South Sudanese refugee population decreased slightly, from 2.4 million in 2017, it was still the largest in Africa in 2018.[9] In the same year, Somalia was the origin of nearly 1 million refugees and had more than 2.6 million IDPs displaced by conflict and violence.[10] Meanwhile, with 2.1 million IDPs, Ethiopia ranked among the top 10 countries with the largest number of people living in internal displacement as a result of conflict and violence at the end of 2018.[11] In Somalia, the protracted civil war has pushed people into other countries in the subregion, as well as eastward to countries such as Yemen; however, the unrelenting conflict in Yemen has created intolerable conditions, forcing migrants to return to Eastern Africa, while generating new asylum and refugee arrivals, including Yemenis.[12] Thousands of Yemenis have fled to East African countries such as Djibouti, which, relative to its population size, ranked among the top 10 refugee hosting countries in the world in 2018.[13] Other countries – including Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania – continued to host substantial numbers of refugees, predominantly from the subregion, as did South Sudan – notwithstanding the conflict that has prompted large-scale displacement from and within that country.[14] The complex and multicausal factors triggering displacement and inhibiting solutions have meant that these host countries – some of the least developed in the world – continue to provide long-term refuge to a disproportionate share of the world's displaced.[15] In recognition of the challenges that many African countries face hosting large numbers of displaced people, and in an effort to highlight the link between displacement, peace, security and its development dimension, the African Union declared its theme for the year 2019 as "Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa".[16] In 2019, the African Union not only aims to bring greater attention to the challenges of displacement in Africa, but also to foster innovative and robust initiatives to address the root causes and promote lasting solutions to forced displacement on the continent.[17]

Eastern and Southern Africa have long been major destinations for migrants from within Africa and other regions, while Eastern Africa is also increasingly a significant origin of migrant workers going to Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States.[18] Immigration from India has historically been significant in countries such as Uganda, Kenya and South Africa,[19] while recent years have seen a sharp increase in the

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8   UNHCR, 2019a; IDMC, 2019.

9   UNHCR, 2018a, 2019a.

10   UNHCR, 2019a; IDMC, 2019.

11   IDMC, 2019.

12   UNHCR, 2019a; IOM, 2018a.

13   Ibid.

14   UNHCR, 2019a.

15   For internal displacement more generally, see also the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, particularly for Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, South Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

16   African Union, 2019.

17   Ibid.

18   The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is a regional political organization comprised of six countries: Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

19   Flahaux and de Haas, 2016.

number of Chinese migrant workers moving to countries in the subregion.[20] Given its advanced economy and relative political stability, South Africa has also experienced high volumes of immigration in recent years, attracting migrants, asylum seekers and refugees from within and outside Southern Africa. The number of international migrants in South Africa increased from around 2 million in 2010 to over 4 million in 2019.[21] Meanwhile, Eastern Africa continues to experience considerable levels of outward labour mobility, driven by poverty, low wages and high unemployment.[22] This is most evident in the large number of low- and semi-skilled East Africans who have in recent years moved to GCC States on temporary work contracts. The Gulf States' proximity to Eastern Africa and their employment opportunities make them an attractive destination for many East Africans.[23]

In Eastern and Southern Africa, intraregional migration is also driven by the growing demand for high- and low-skilled labour. As East African economies, such as Kenya and Rwanda, are becoming increasingly diversified, demand for workers in the services industry, for example, has drawn migrant workers from other East African countries, including Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. This is especially the case for Rwanda's expanding technology sector, which continues to attract workers from within the subregion.[24] The East African Common Market Protocol, which provides for the free movement of labour, has helped to facilitate labour migration within the subregion.[25] Several countries have ratified the Protocol and some have already abolished work permits for East African citizens, making it easier for people to work across the subregion. Meanwhile, intraregional labour migration is well established in Southern Africa, where significant numbers of people have traditionally migrated from countries such as Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi and Zimbabwe, to work in South Africa and Botswana.[26] While traditional sectors, such as mining, continue to attract migrant workers, other sectors – including finance and information technology – are increasingly drawing migrants to South Africa.[27]

Migration in Eastern and Southern Africa continues to involve high numbers of irregular migrants, characterized by mixed migration flows and underpinned by multiple drivers, including socioeconomic factors, conflict and political instability. Migrant smuggling is particularly prominent in both subregions, with many people using the services of smugglers to reach their intended destinations. Many smuggling networks are based in the Horn of Africa, while countries that are members of the East African Community – such as Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania – are largely transit countries.[28] The Middle East, Europe and Southern Africa are among the major destinations for migrants from Eastern Africa, who use several routes, including the Eastern routes to the Arab Peninsula and other countries in the Middle East, southern routes to Southern Africa, and northern routes to North Africa, Europe and North America. However, the Horn of Africa routes are also significant, with a large number of people moving to or within the Horn of Africa.[29] Similar to Eastern Africa, irregular migration is widespread in Southern Africa, and involves intraregional

20   Cook et al., 2016.
21   UN DESA, 2019a.
22   Manji, 2017.
23   Atong, Mayah and Odigie, 2018.
24   UNCTAD, 2018.
25   East African Community, n.d.
26   Nshimbi and Fioramonti, 2013.
27   UNCTAD, 2018.
28   UNODC, 2018.
29   IOM, 2019a.

migrants, such as those from Zimbabwe and Mozambique, moving to South Africa, as well as those from outside the subregion.[30] Migrant smuggling networks have proliferated over the decades and have become more organized and professionalized, as it has become increasingly difficult to cross borders in Southern Africa.[31] While a significant number of migrants smuggled into Southern Africa are from within the subregion, a large number also originate from outside Southern Africa, most notably from the Horn of Africa. Many migrants often face significant vulnerability, with many experiencing violence and extortion.[32]

Environmental change and disasters in Eastern and Southern Africa are prevalent and increasing, and are influencing human movement and displacement. The subregion has faced increased variability in precipitation and higher occurrence of drought in recent decades.[33] These slow-onset environmental changes have a major impact on food security, given that agriculture is a dominant economic sector in both Eastern and Southern Africa.[34] Droughts have become a regular occurrence in countries such as Somalia, and are a major driver of displacement in the country. In 2018, there were a quarter of a million new displacements in Somalia due to drought.[35] In 2017, drought-related displacements reached more than 850,000 in Somalia.[36] Drought conditions have been responsible for increased malnutrition, food scarcity and increased competition for already limited resources, especially among farmers and pastoralists in the subregion; an estimated 1.2 million children in Somalia were acutely malnourished in 2017.[37] Several countries in Southern Africa also experienced significant displacement due to sudden-onset hazards. From January to June 2018, Eastern Africa accounted for five of the most severe disaster events in the world.[38] And in March 2019, Southern Africa experienced two subsequent cyclones, Idai and Kenneth, which brought torrential rains and winds, leaving a trail of destruction in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi. Cyclone Idai, which made landfall in central Mozambique, is considered one of the worst natural disasters to hit Southern Africa in decades.[39] By April, the cyclone had claimed almost 600 lives and displaced more than 130,000 people in Mozambique alone.[40]

Xenophobic attacks on migrants and the emergence of new armed groups in Southern Africa have contributed to increased displacement in the subregion. Over the last 10 years, migrants in countries such as South Africa have increasingly been subjected to violence, resulting in the destruction of property, injuries and sometimes loss of life. Nationwide xenophobic attacks, such as those that took place in 2008, displaced thousands of migrants and resulted in more than 60 deaths.[41] More recently, xenophobic attacks in 2018 led to several deaths, looting and destruction of property belonging to foreign nationals; the violence has extended into 2019 with more lives lost.[42] Outbreaks of xenophobic violence are most common in South Africa's townships and other economically poor neighbourhoods, where residents often blame foreign nationals for

30   Maher, 2018.

31   Ibid.

32   Ibid.

33   Climate and Development Knowledge Network, 2014a.

34   Tierney, Ummenhofer and deMenocal, 2015; USAID, n.d.

35   IDMC, 2019.

36   IDMC, 2018a.

37   UN Environment, 2018a.

38   IDMC, 2018b.

39   UNICEF, 2019.

40   IOM, 2019b.

41   Landau, 2018.

42   Amnesty International, 2018.

high rates of crime and job losses. In parts of the subregion, armed groups terrorizing communities continue to cause displacement. In northern Mozambique, for example, an armed group known as *Al-Sunna wa Jama'a* remains a potent threat and has driven hundreds of people from their homes.[43]

West and Central Africa

Intraregional migration, which is significant in West and Central Africa, is characterized by migration flows that are influenced by multiple drivers. While there are significant data deficits on movement, and accurate numbers can be difficult to ascertain, recent estimates indicate that the majority of international migrants in West and Central Africa move within the subregion.[44] Intraregional migration dominates for several reasons, including visa-free movement among the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) members, the relatively small sizes of many countries in the subregion and the strong networks among the many ethnic groups scattered across the subregion.[45] Importantly, intraregional migration within ECOWAS is mostly due to labour mobility, with seasonal, temporary and permanent migrant workers moving largely from countries such as the Niger and Mali toward Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire.[46] A large number of migrant workers are in low-skilled sectors, including domestic work, informal trade and agriculture.[47] In parts of West Africa, agricultural labourers often move during the harvest period (July to September), as well as through the off-season harvest that runs until March.[48] Some of the migrant workers are children, as is the case with the movements between Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso.[49] Unlike West Africa, where environmental and economic factors are important drivers of intraregional migration, conflict and instability have played a larger role in displacement to neighbouring countries in Central Africa.[50] However, labour migration is not absent in Central Africa, with Gabon, for example, home to a large number of migrant workers from within Central Africa who work in its oil and lumber industries.[51]

Irregular migration remains prevalent in West and Central Africa, although free movement agreements in the subregion have been designed to facilitate migration and reduce irregularity. The use of smugglers to cross borders even within free movement areas such as ECOWAS is not uncommon, particularly in circumstances where people do not possess identity documents.[52] It is important to emphasize, however, that most West Africans who are smuggled overland begin their journeys as regular migrants under the free movement protocol and only violate immigration laws after exiting the ECOWAS area.[53] Moreover, a number of borders in West Africa are extremely porous, enabling unauthorized movements between countries, with several ECOWAS borders cutting across politically unstable and sparsely populated areas, which are also characterized by security deficiencies.[54] For many West and Central African migrants attempting to cross the Mediterranean to reach Europe, the Niger is an important country of transit as well as a major smuggling

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43 Human Rights Watch, 2018.

44 Adepoju, 2016.

45 Flahaux and de Haas, 2016.

46 Devillard, Bacchi and Noack, 2016.

47 UNCTAD, 2018.

48 ACAPS, 2018.

49 UNCTAD, 2018.

50 IOM, n.d.a.

51 Ibid.

52 Altai Consulting and IOM, 2015.

53 Carling, 2016.

54 Ibid.

hub.[55] The Niger's weak border management capacity has been exacerbated by an increase in attacks by armed and extremist groups operating along the country's borders. Most attacks, including from Boko Haram, have been concentrated in the Niger's Diffa region, located in the south-east of the country, bordering Nigeria. The violence has had a devastating impact on health services and education, and has driven thousands of people from their homes.[56]

Conflict and violence linked to political upheavals, communal and ethnic tensions and Boko Haram extremism, have meant that most countries in West and Central Africa are affected by internal or cross-border displacement, although the magnitude varies dramatically. As with other subregions in Africa, countries in West and Central Africa have long histories of hosting and producing displaced populations, often simultaneously. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is one such example. At the end of 2018, it was home to more than half a million refugees, while at the same time it was the country of origin of over 700,000 refugees, with 300,000 of them residing in Uganda and significant numbers in other neighbouring countries, including Rwanda (77,000) and Burundi (71,000).[57] The protracted nature of conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which involves dozens of armed groups, has had a devastating effect on the country, creating one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world. At the end of 2018, there were 3 million IDPs in the country, the third highest number of people displaced as a result of violence and conflict globally (see chapter 2, figure 11).[58] Meanwhile, with large swathes of the country controlled by armed groups, the civil war in the Central African Republic was reignited in 2016 after a period of relative calm; the conflict spilled over into 2017 and 2018, wreaking havoc and sending hundreds of thousands of people from their homes. Both the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic ranked among the top 10 origin countries of refugees in the world in 2018, with the Central African Republic producing nearly 600,000 refugees and more than half a million conflict IDPs.[59] The Boko Haram insurgency, which began in 2009 in Nigeria's northern State of Borno, combined with counter-insurgency operations and communal clashes over scarce resources, have also led to significant displacement in the Lake Chad region. With more than 2.2 million IDPs, Nigeria ranked among the top 10 countries with the highest number of people displaced due to conflict and violence by end of 2018 (see chapter 2, figure 11).[60] In the same year, there were more than 600,000 IDPs in Cameroon and over 156,000 in the Niger.[61] Some of the violence and displacement in West Africa is linked to conflict between pastoralists and farmers over land and resources, although these conflicts often have ethnic and religious dimensions too.[62]

Environmental changes in West and Central Africa are impacting human livelihoods and mobility. For example, although precipitation events in the Sahel[63] are slowly increasing, they are becoming increasingly unpredictable, leading to the frequent occurrence of droughts and floods.[64] In the Niger, an estimated 40,000 disaster-related displacements were recorded at the end of 2018, while in Nigeria, there were around 600,000

55   Altai Consulting and IOM, 2015.

56   IFRC, 2018.

57   UNHCR, 2019a.

58   IDMC, 2019.

59   UNHCR, 2019a; IDMC, 2019.

60   IDMC, 2019.

61   Ibid.

62   UNOWAS, 2018.

63   The Sahel region is a semi-arid tropical savanna ecoregion spanning many countries in West and Central Africa, including Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, the Niger, Nigeria, Chad and Sudan.

64   Hummel, Doevenspeck and Samimi, 2012.

displacements as a result of floods in the same year.[65] At the same time, rapid population growth has led to the intensification of cropping, deforestation and overgrazing, contributing to land degradation.[66] Despite an increase in the scale of agriculture in the subregion, food insecurity remains rampant.[67] For example, at the end of 2018, more than 3 million people were affected by food insecurity in the Lake Chad Basin.[68] Millions of people in West and Central Africa depend on Lake Chad; however, the lake's volume has decreased by 90 per cent in area in the last 40 years, due to increased drought and human-related causes such as increased irrigation withdrawals.[69] The lake's shrinkage has not only affected the livelihoods of millions of people, but also impacted cattle transhumance, and is increasingly a source of tension and communal conflict;[70] moreover, the deterioration of living conditions, which has made it difficult for people living along the lake to adapt to the harsher conditions, has created an ideal environment for armed groups to emerge.[71] The complex and interconnected environmental changes – such as droughts and floods, overexploitation of resources and climate change – are contributing factors to rural–urban and cyclical mobility within countries and across borders in the subregion. Migration is one strategy used to increase livelihoods and reduce risks in the Western Sahel, particularly in light of uncertain agricultural returns.[72] Research has also highlighted the interconnections between, on the one hand, impacts of climate change on natural-resource-dependent livelihoods and food insecurity and, on the other hand, tensions, conflicts and mobility.[73]

North Africa

Migration of North Africans to Europe and Gulf States continues to be a defining feature of the migration dynamics of the subregion, and one that has developed over several decades. Migration of North Africans to countries outside of Africa has been, and continues to be, much higher than migration to other countries within the subregion and within Africa.[74] Two distinct streams have characterized outflows from North Africa: migrants from the north-west (such as Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia) have historically moved to Europe, owing to their geographic proximity, previous labour recruitment agreements and post-colonial ties,[75] while those from the north-east (such as Egypt and Sudan) have predominantly sought temporary work in GCC countries. Large income disparities between the origin and destination countries, and the high levels of unemployment in North Africa, remain significant drivers of migration. As of 2019, almost 12 million North Africans were living outside their countries of birth, with roughly half in Europe and 3.3 million living in Gulf States.[76]

In addition to being a major migrant transit area, North Africa also hosts notable populations of international migrants, including refugees. Sudan had the largest number of international migrants in

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65   IDMC, 2019.

66   Ibid.

67   UNEP, 2011.

68   European Commission, 2018a.

69   Gao et al., 2011.

70   UN Environment, 2018b.

71   Rudincova, 2017.

72   Hummel and Liehr, 2015.

73   UNEP, 2011.

74   Flahaux and de Haas, 2016.

75   Natter, 2014.

76   UN DESA, 2019a.

the subregion, over 1.2 million in 2019.[77] Sudan was followed by Libya, with over 800,000. The number of international migrants in Egypt increased from 300,000 in 2010 to more than 500,000 in 2019, with migrants primarily originating from the Syrian Arab Republic, Somalia, Sudan and the Palestinian Territories.[78] While Morocco has traditionally been a country of emigration, it is increasingly becoming a destination country, including of migrants from other subregions in Africa, who stay for an indeterminate period while looking for a way to cross over to Europe.[79]

Conflict and violence within North Africa, and in surrounding subregions, have contributed to displacement. At the end of 2018, Sudan was the sixth largest country of origin of refugees globally, with around 700,000 refugees, the majority of whom were hosted by the neighbouring countries of Chad, South Sudan and Ethiopia.[80] Sudan also had approximately 2.1 million IDPs due to conflict and violence.[81] At the same time, Sudan is also a prominent host country of refugees, with over 1 million refugees (this number more than doubling since 2016), most of whom were from South Sudan, Eritrea and the Syrian Arab Republic.[82] Algeria also hosted over 94,000 refugees by the end of 2018,[83] while Egypt hosted over 240,000 refugees, primarily originating from the Syrian Arab Republic, the Palestinian Territories and other African countries and territories.[84] A volatile security and political situation in Libya had contributed to a total population of 221,000 IDPs by the end of 2018 (a drop from over 300,000 in 2016), while also affecting the more than 56,000 refugees and asylum seekers residing in Libya.[85]

As a key hub of transit activity for migrants originating from many countries to the south, the North African subregion is confronted with protection challenges associated with irregular migration to Europe. In 2018, approximately 117,000 migrants arrived in Europe by sea.[86] This is a significant drop compared with 2017 (around 172,000) and 2016, when the number rose to 364,000.[87] There has also been a shift in the routes taken by most irregular maritime migrants; while the majority from Africa who entered Europe in 2016 and 2017 used the Central Mediterranean route (from Libya, mainly to Italy), most irregular maritime arrivals to Europe in 2018 took the Western Mediterranean route (from Morocco, mainly to Spain).[88] There were close to 59,000 sea arrivals in Spain, as opposed to around 23,000 in Italy.[89] The change in major routes, from the Central to the Western Mediterranean, is linked to several factors, including closer cooperation between the European Union (EU) and countries of origin and transit, counter smuggling efforts, as well as increased maritime security patrols off the Libyan coast.[90] Migrants from sub-Saharan African countries comprised the majority of irregular maritime arrivals in Spain, followed by Moroccans.[91] People who travelled the Central Mediterranean route to Italy were mostly Tunisian, followed by Eritreans, Iraqis,

77 Ibid.
78 Ibid.
79 Reifeld, 2015.
80 UNHCR, 2019a.
81 IDMC, 2019.
82 UNHCR, n.d.
83 UNHCR, 2019a.
84 Ibid.
85 IDMC, 2019, UNHCR, 2019a.
86 IOM, n.d.b. This includes arrivals to Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta and Spain.
87 Ibid.
88 Frontex, 2019; MacGregor, 2019.
89 IOM, n.d.b.
90 UNHCR, 2019b; Frontex, 2019; MacGregor, 2019.
91 UNHCR, 2019b.

Sudanese and Pakistanis.[92] From January to November 2018, an estimated 15 per cent of all irregular maritime arrivals in Italy were unaccompanied children.[93]

There are sizeable migrant smuggling routes to, within and from North Africa, with smuggling increasingly concentrated among a few organized criminal networks.[94] With the help of smugglers, migrants from countries in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, often embark on highly dangerous journeys to North Africa, including through the Sahara Desert.[95] One of the main smuggling passageways includes migrants moving from Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia, towards Egypt and Israel.[96] But as socioeconomic conditions in Egypt have deteriorated in recent years, smugglers have turned increasingly to countries such as Libya, which prior to 2011 was a significant destination for migrant workers and, more recently, has become a major smuggling hub and the main departure point for migrants trying to get to Europe via the Central Mediterranean route.[97] The subregion continues to struggle with serious human rights violations and protection challenges; many migrants in transit are exposed to sexual and gender-based violence, forced labour, arbitrary detention, extortion and exploitation, among other abuses. This is especially the case in Libya, where human smuggling often morphs into trafficking. In 2018, IOM assisted over 16,000 migrants to return home after they had been detained or stranded in Libya,[98] some at the hands of smugglers and traffickers. The protracted civil conflict in Libya has created a climate of lawlessness, in addition to severely weakening its institutions and crippling its economy.[99]

Asia[100]

Asia – home to around 4.6 billion people – was the origin of over 40 per cent of the world's international migrants in 2019 (111 million). More than half (66 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 7, intraregional migration within 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 2019, migration from Asia to Northern America reached 17 million, rising from a little over 16 million in 2015, whereas in Europe, migration from Asia stood at nearly 22 million in 2019. 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 44.6 million extra-regional migrants in 2019, an 11 per cent increase from 40 million in 2015.

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.

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92   Ibid.

93   Ibid.

94   UNODC, 2018.
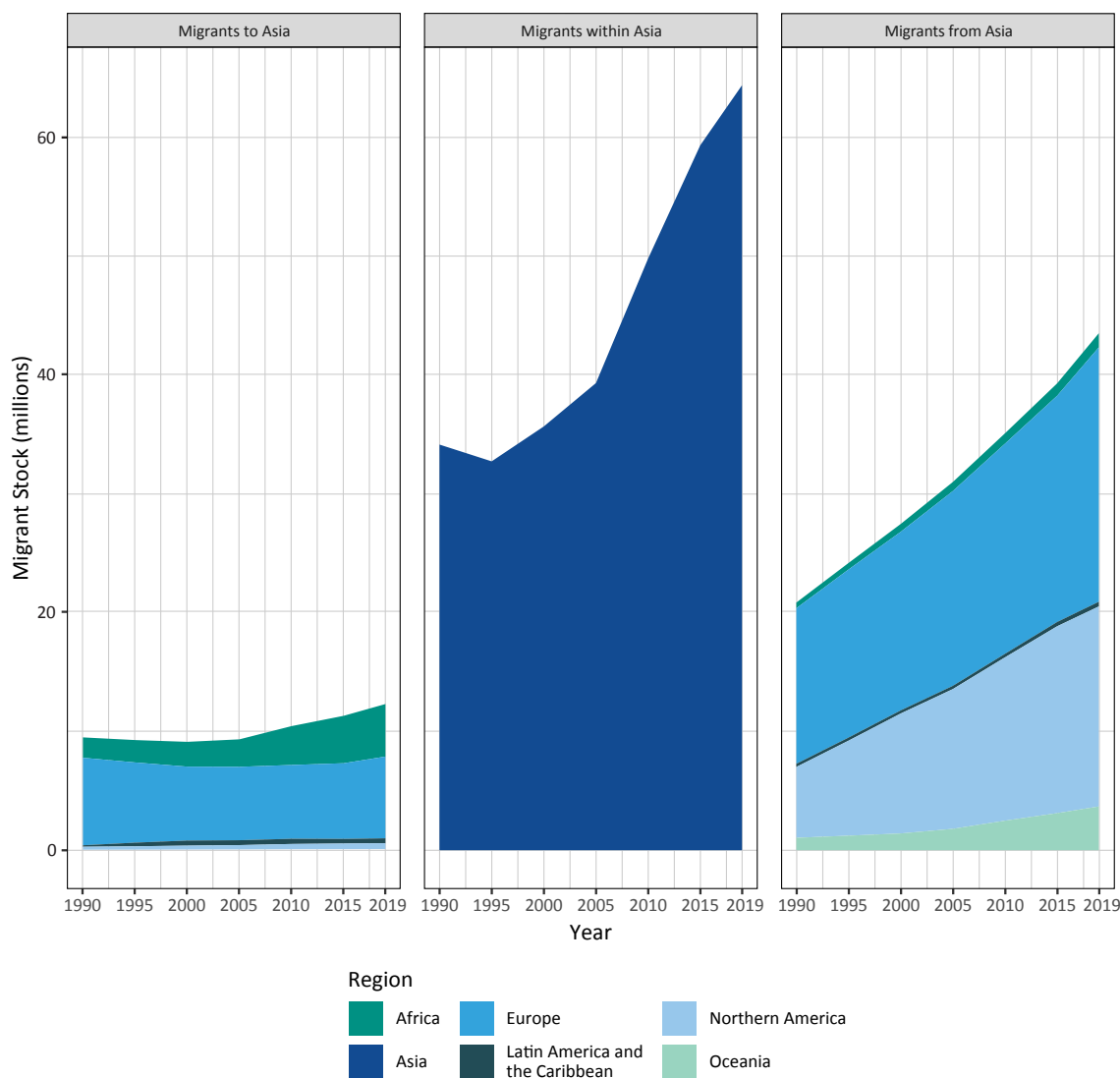
95   Ibid.

96   İçduygu, 2018.

97   Ibid.

98   IOM, 2018b.

99   UNSMIL and OHCHR, 2018.

100 See appendix A for details on the composition of Asia.

Figure 7. Migrants to, within and from Asia, 1990–2019

| Migrants to Asia | Migrants within Asia | Migrants from Asia |

Migrant Stock (millions) — **Year**

Region

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

Source: UN DESA, 2019a.

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).

Several Asian countries have undergone substantial changes in the size of their populations in recent years. These changes are shown in figure 8, which ranks the top 20 Asian countries with the largest proportional population change from 2009 to 2019. Except the Syrian Arab Republic, all top 20 countries experienced increases in their populations during this period. GCC countries, which are all represented among the top 20 countries, underwent some of the most significant population changes over the last decade. International

migration has been a significant determinant of population change in Asia, and especially in GCC States, which continue to be important destinations for migrant workers from within Asia and from outside the region. As illustrated in figure 9, international migrants make up large proportions of national populations in GCC States, with migrants in the United Arab Emirates, for example, accounting for 88 per cent of the country's population.[101]

Figure 8. Top 20 countries with the largest proportional population change in Asia, 2009–2019
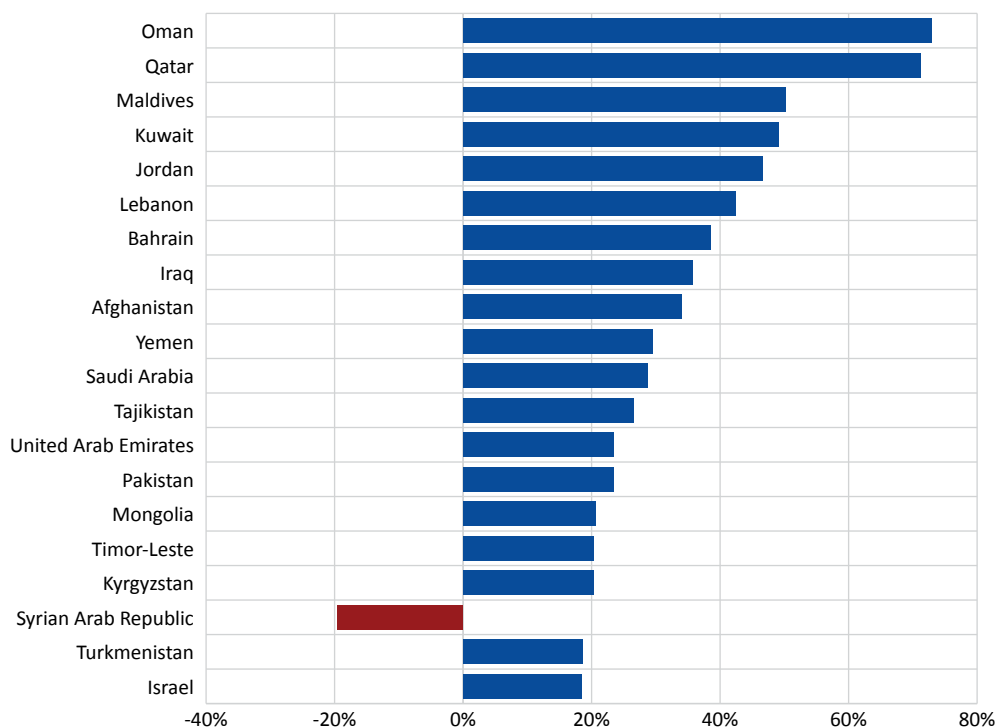
Source: UN DESA, 2019c.

Note: It is important to note that the largest proportional population changes from 2009 to 2019 were more likely to occur in countries with relatively smaller populations.

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 third largest population of foreign-born migrants in the world after India and Mexico. Nearly 3 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 2019, migrants accounted for 88 per cent of the population in United Arab Emirates; 72 per cent in Kuwait;

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nearly 79 per cent in Qatar; and 45 per cent in Bahrain.[102] Many migrants came from Africa, South Asia (for example, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal), and South-East Asia (for example, 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 2019 data, which show that over 5 million and 3 million foreign-born migrants, respectively, resided in the two countries.

## Figure 9. Top 20 Asian migrant countries in 2019
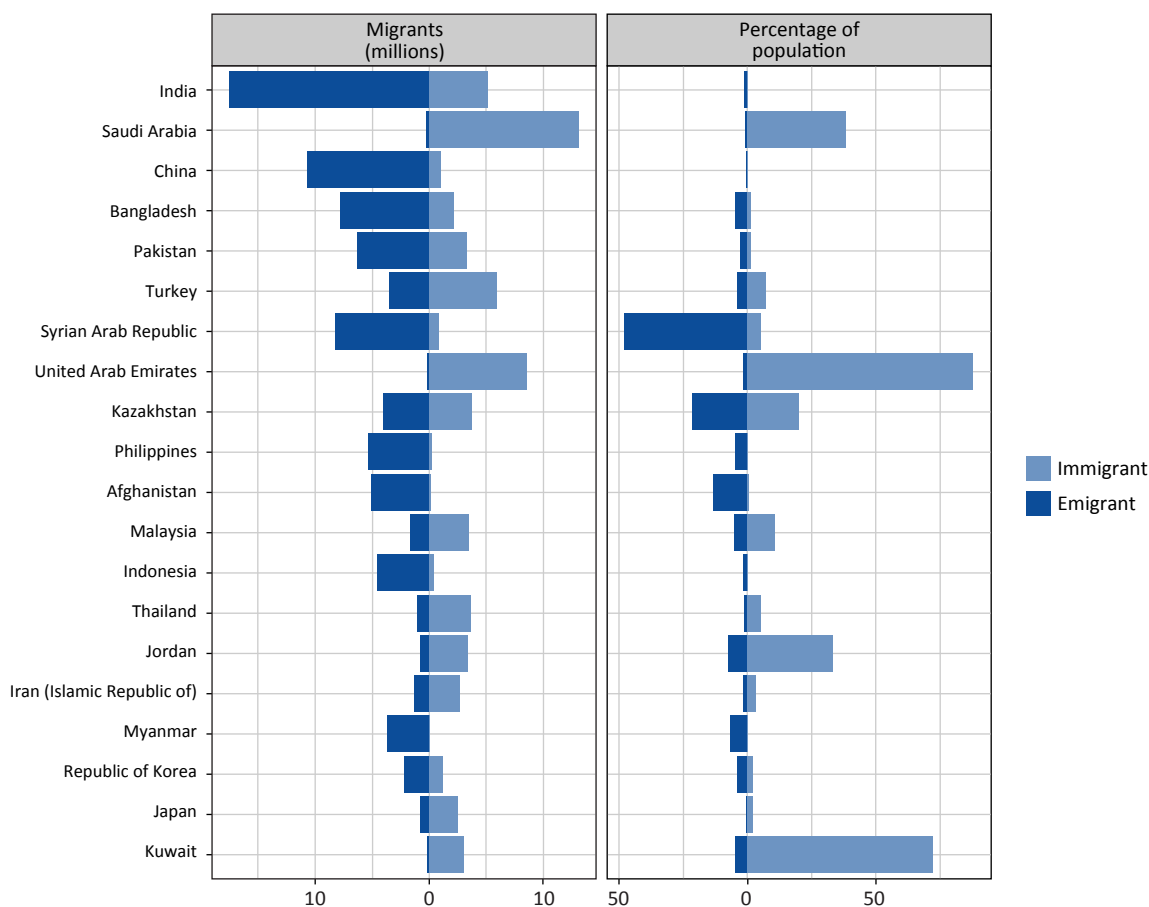
Source: UN DESA, 2019a.

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 2019.

102 UN DESA, 2019a.

Figure 10 shows the top 20 migration corridors from Asian countries, with a little over half of them – 13 of 20 – occurring within the region. These migration corridors represent an accumulation of migratory movements over time and provide a snapshot of how migration patterns have evolved into significant foreign-born populations in specific destination countries. The largest corridor is from the Syrian Arab Republic to Turkey, where over 3.7 million Syrians were residing in 2019. This is a change from 2015 and 2017 when the largest corridor in Asia was India to the United Arab Emirates.

Figure 10. Top 20 migration corridors from Asian countries, 2019
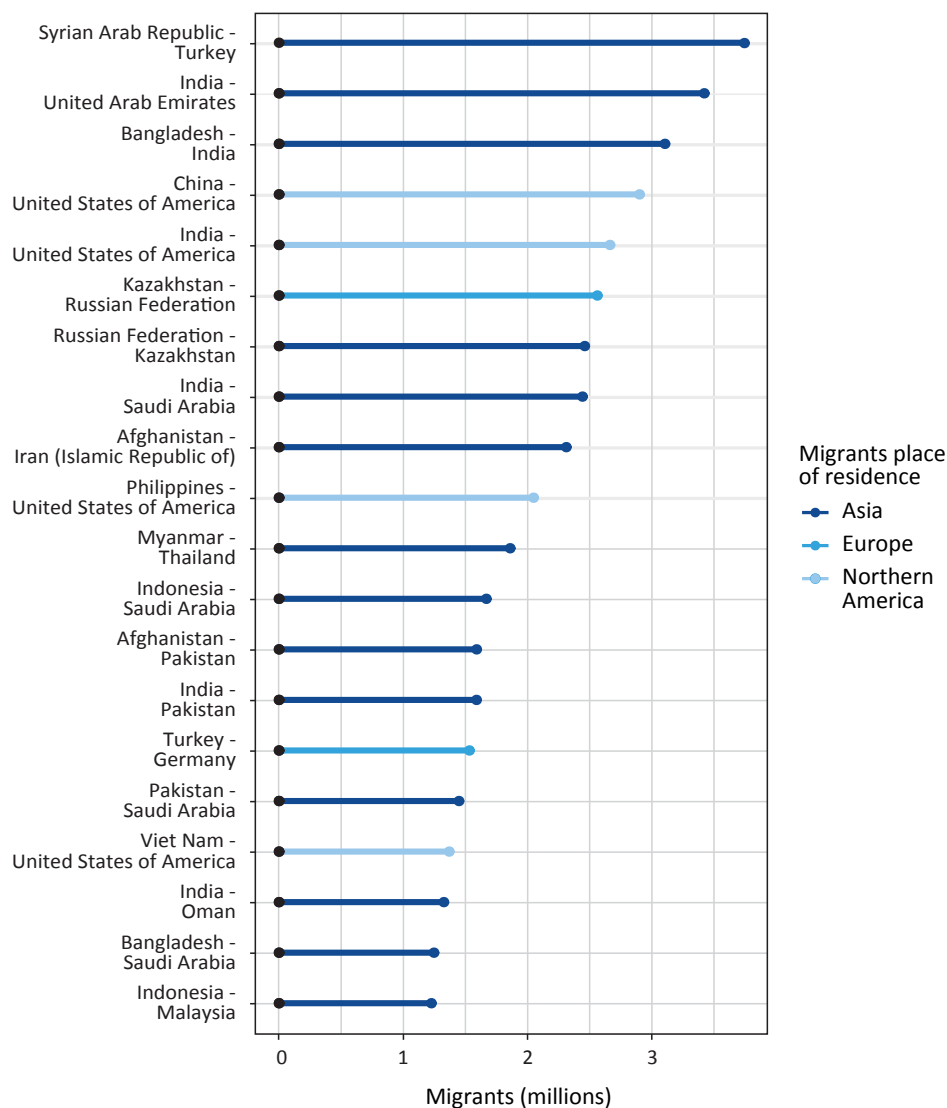

Source: UN DESA, 2019a.

Note: Corridors represent an accumulation of migratory movements over time and provide a snapshot of how migration patterns have evolved into significant foreign-born populations in specific destination countries.

International displacement within and from Asia is a major feature of the region, as shown in figure 11. The Syrian Arab Republic and Afghanistan were the top origin countries of refugees in the world. The impact of the Syrian conflict on displacement can be clearly seen in figure 11, with refugees and asylum seekers from the Syrian Arab Republic dwarfing numbers from Afghanistan. In 2018, 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, Lebanon and Jordan, while refugees from Afghanistan, whose size grew from 2.6 million in 2017 to 2.7 million in 2018 (mostly due to births during the year), were largely hosted in Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Due to violence against and persecution of the Rohingya, Myanmar produced the third largest refugee population in the region and the fourth largest in the world in 2018, with most refugees hosted in Bangladesh. As shown in figure 11, it is also important to note that origin countries such as Pakistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq are also themselves hosting refugees.

Figure 11. Top 10 Asian countries by total refugees and asylum seekers, 2018
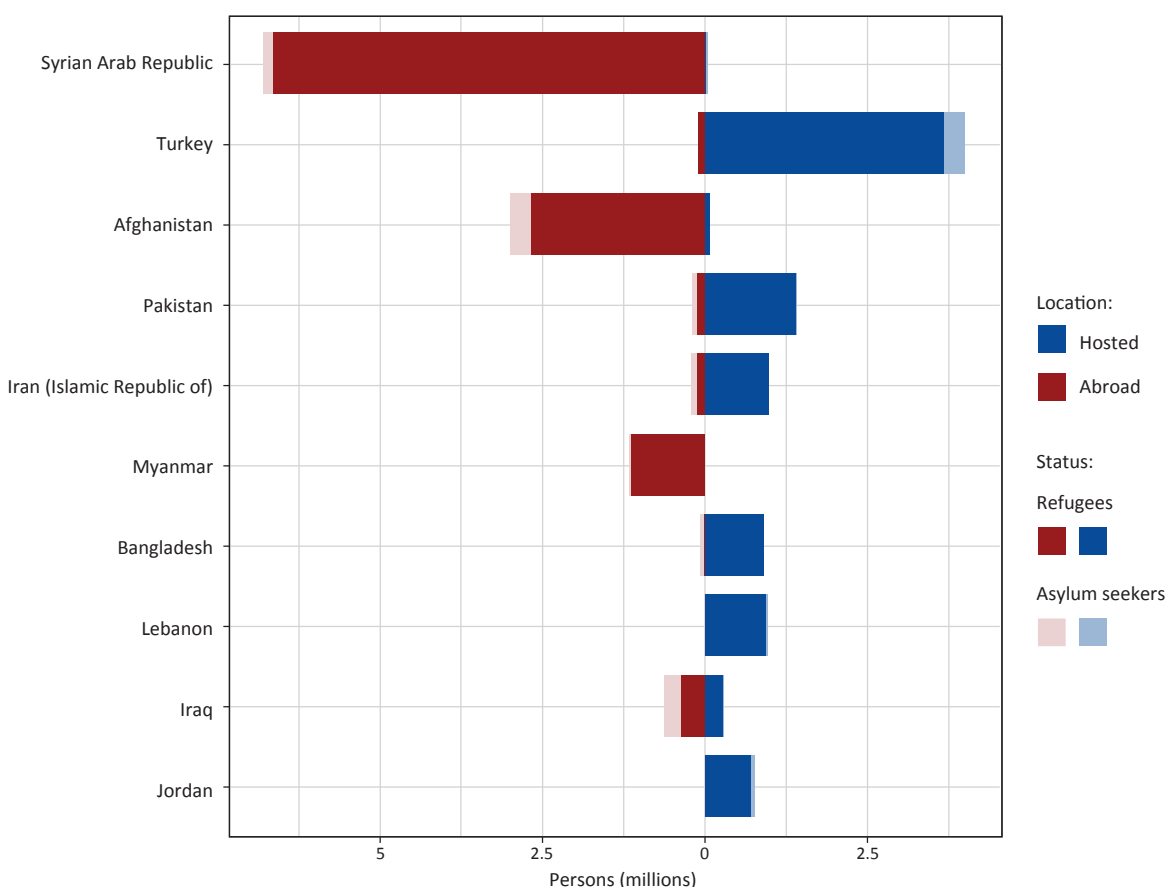
Source: UNHCR, n.d.

*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 2018 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 12). The Philippines, which had 3.8 million new disaster displacements at end of 2018, recorded the largest number globally. The disasters that triggered displacement included volcanic eruptions, and flooding caused by monsoons and landslides. With around 3.7 million displacements, China recorded nearly as many new disaster displacements as the Philippines. China was followed by India (2.7 million) and Indonesia (853,000). Conflict also contributed to a large number of new internal displacements in Asia, with the Syrian Arab Republic recording the largest number (1.6 million), around 9 per cent of its population. Other countries where conflict led to significant internal displacement included Afghanistan (372,000), Yemen (252,000) and the Philippines (188,000).

Figure 12. Top Asian countries by new internal displacements (disaster and conflict), 2018
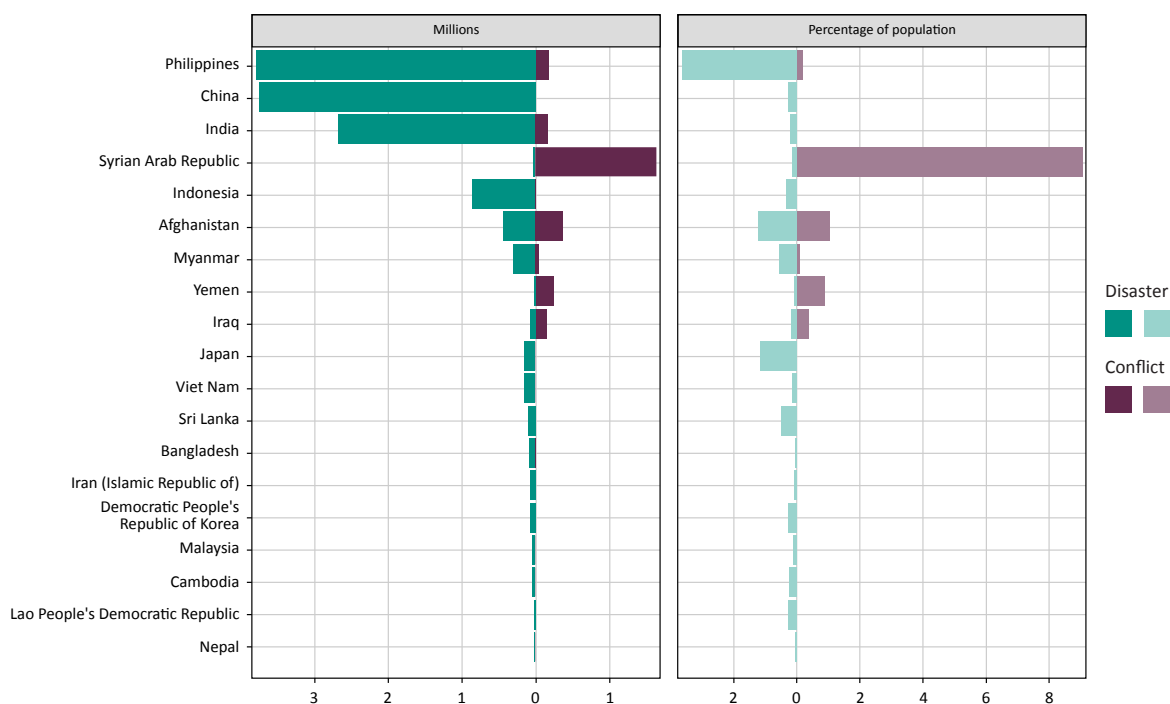
Notes: New displacements refers to the number of displacement movements that occurred in 2018, not the total accumulated stock of IDPs resulting from displacement over time. New displacement figures include individuals who have been displaced more than once and do not correspond to the number of people 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 2017 UN DESA population estimates, and the percentage is for relative illustrative purposes only.

Key features and developments in Asia

South-East Asia

For many countries in South-East Asia, migration entails significant levels of both emigration and immigration, as well as transit migration. Considerable income disparity in the subregion is a major factor underpinning the strong trend of people to migrate from lower-income countries to higher-income countries within (and beyond) the subregion. There are a little more than 10 million international migrants within the subregion and just over 21.8 million total migrants from the subregion, 6.8 million of whom migrated to other countries within South-East Asia.[103] The advanced economies of Malaysia and Singapore are notable destinations for migrants. The efforts of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) toward greater regional integration have contributed to increased intraregional migration. There is also a strong geographic aspect to migration, with higher levels of migration occurring between countries sharing borders, particularly along Thailand's border with neighbours Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar.[104] Intraregional, long-term migration corridors are evident, which are mainly dominated by temporary labour migration, with smaller components of permanent (skilled and family) migration, student migration and forced migration.[105]

Labour migration, a prominent feature in South-East Asia and a key driver of economic growth and development, is also associated with inconsistent human rights practices. Labour migrants have long been integral to the economies of major destination countries within the subregion – such as Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand – where they help fill gaps in labour markets. This is especially the case for lower-skilled sectors such as fisheries, domestic work and construction.[106] Meanwhile, the prospects for employment and higher wages often compel people from countries such as the Philippines and Indonesia to move to more prosperous economies within the subregion.[107] Many migrants send significant shares of their earnings to their families back home, with the Philippines, for example, consistently ranking among the largest remittance-recipient countries in the world. In 2018, the Philippines, whose international remittance inflows amounted to USD 34 billion, was the fourth largest remittance recipient globally after India, China and Mexico.[108] But even as labour migration has helped relieve labour shortages in destination countries, many labour migrants continue to face exploitative conditions. Workers employed in low-skilled, labour-intensive sectors, regardless of their legal status, are most affected, with wage-related abuse the most common.[109] Many labour migrants are required to work extremely long hours for below minimum wages, a consequence of inadequate protection afforded to labour migrants during both recruitment and employment.[110]

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103 UN DESA, 2019a.

104 Hugo, 2014; Hatsukano, 2015.

105 Hugo, 2014.

106 Harkins, Lindgren and Suravoranon, 2017.

107 Pholphirul, 2018.

108 World Bank, 2019a.

109 Harkins, Lindgren and Suravoranon, 2017.

110 Ibid.

Migration involves high proportions of irregular migration, mostly in relation to economic factors such as poverty and lack of employment. Irregular migration flows such as those from Cambodia and the Lao People's Democratic Republic to destinations including Thailand and Malaysia are often facilitated by smugglers. Smugglers also play a significant role in irregular migration out of the subregion, with Vietnamese migrants moving to Europe, for example, often using smugglers to reach their destinations.[111] Mixed migration flows exist (involving movements of people with and without international protection needs), as do migration flows underpinned by mixed motivations. Many migrants face exploitation in South-East Asia, stemming from their irregular status. Migrant workers in particular industries also face forced labour, exploitation and serious abuse (for example, in the fishing, agriculture, construction and manufacturing industries).[112] In addition to smuggling, trafficking of persons continues to be a challenge in South-East Asia, with nearly half of all victims in Asia (46%) trafficked within the subregion.[113] Large numbers of people are trafficked for both sexual exploitation and forced labour, with a larger share of females trafficked for sexual exploitation in 2016.[114] Countries such as Malaysia and Thailand had more victims of forced labour than sexual exploitation in 2016.[115]

There has been an increase in displacement in the subregion due to violence, systemic persecution and marginalization. The Rohingya refugee situation is the most acute, and remains one of the most complex refugee crises in the world. By end of 2018, there were over 900,000 Rohingya in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, and more than 1 million people in need of humanitarian assistance.[116] The Kutupalong-Balukhali site in Cox's Bazar continues to be the biggest and most densely populated refugee settlement in the world; refugees from Myanmar accounted for the fourth largest refugee population in the world in 2018.[117] Due to a surge in targeted killings and human rights abuses in August 2017, a significant number of Rohingya were displaced from Myanmar's Rakhine State, the majority seeking protection in Bangladesh. While this was not the first time that Rohingya fled Myanmar as a result of violence, the August 2017 violence prompted one of the largest waves of displacement in decades. Meanwhile, within South-East Asia, Malaysia continued a long-term trend of hosting a large population of refugees and people in refugee-like situations (over 120,000 in 2018), mainly as a result of displacement caused by civil conflict in Myanmar over many years.[118] Resettlement of refugees from the subregion is mainly undertaken by "traditional" resettlement countries (such as the United States, Canada and Australia), and there is little by way of "protection infrastructure" within the subregion.[119] There are also large populations of IDPs and stateless populations in the subregion, with eight countries in the subregion hosting stateless populations (the largest of which is in Myanmar, which hosted more than 600,000 at end of 2018).[120]

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111 UNODC, 2018.

112 Gois, 2015.

113 IOM, n.d.c.

114 UNODC, 2018.

115 Ibid.

116 IOM, 2018c.

117 UNHCR, 2019a.

118 Ibid.

119 McAuliffe, 2016. "Protection infrastructure" encompasses domestic law, national policies as well as administrative practices on protection; see Sitaropoulos, 2000.

120 Southwick, 2015; UNHCR, 2019a.

Southern Asia

Migration from Southern Asia to other subregions is a key feature, with many temporary migrant workers in the GCC countries originating from this subregion. The prospects of higher wages and accessible employment opportunities have resulted in a significant increase in the number of people leaving the subregion in recent years.[121] For countries in the subregion with significant labour surpluses, migration has relieved labour pressures, while helping to reduce poverty through remittances. Accordingly, Southern Asia is among the largest recipients of remittances in the world. In 2018, remittance inflows to India amounted to USD 79 billion, the largest in the world; and in countries such as Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, remittances exceeded 5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in the same year.[122]

Migration within the subregion is a dominant feature in Southern Asia, driven by economic and labour market differentials.[123] Intraregional movement, both regular and irregular, is related to strong common historical roots, geographic proximity, and cultural and kinship ties between countries.[124] In 2019, just under 80 per cent of the 14 million international migrants in Southern Asia originated from other countries in the subregion.[125] Major migration corridors include Bangladesh–India, Afghanistan–Pakistan, India–Pakistan and Nepal–India; however, it is important to note that these corridors are all quite distinct, reflecting a range of historical and contemporary economic, security and cultural factors. There are millions of Bangladeshi and Nepalese labour migrants currently working in India, for example, primarily in the informal sector as construction labourers and domestic workers, whereas the India–Pakistan corridor in part reflects the mass displacement following the 1947 Partition of India and Pakistan.[126] Further, many of the 3.9 million Afghan international migrants who reside in the subregion (primarily in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan) have been displaced across borders due to conflict and violence within Afghanistan that has waxed and waned since the 1970s.[127] Internal migration within the countries of South Asia is extensive and larger in scale than international migration, related primarily to temporary and seasonal migration from rural to urban areas.[128] From 2001 to 2011, Southern Asia's urban population grew by 130 million people.[129] However, while rural–urban migration has contributed to this growth, it has largely been driven by the reclassification of rural settlement and natural population increase.[130]

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121 Doherty et al., 2014.

122 World Bank, 2019a.

123 Srivastava and Pandey, 2017.

124 Ibid.

125 UN DESA, 2019a.

126 Srivastava and Pandey, 2017.

127 Schmeidl, 2016; UNHCR, 2016.

128 Ibid.

129 Ellis and Roberts, 2016.

130 Ibid.

Irregular migration both within and from the subregion is common in Southern Asia, and is often aided by loose smuggling networks. While the exact number of people undertaking irregular migration within the subregion is not known, there are estimated to be large irregular migrant populations within the subregion.[131] India, for example, is home to significant populations of irregular migrants from Bangladesh, Nepal and, to a lesser extent, Sri Lanka.[132] Regions including Europe, Northern America and Oceania are among the most preferred destinations of irregular migrants from Southern Asia.[133] Socioeconomic and insecurity factors in countries of origin, in addition to better wages and employment opportunities in destination countries, are among the factors associated with irregular migration and migrant smuggling.[134] Migrants from Southern Asia heading to Western Europe are primarily smuggled through Central Asia and the Russian Federation, as well as through the Middle East into the Western Balkans.[135] Other irregular migrants are smuggled through to Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia for work.[136] There have been many documented cases of migrants being exploited and abused by smugglers in Southern Asia.[137] Trafficking of persons remains a serious concern in Southern Asia, although data and information for many countries in the subregion are scarce. A 2018 UNODC report estimates that nearly 60 per cent of victims of trafficking detected in the subregion in 2016 were female, based on information available for four countries, including Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan.[138] In Nepal, there were more child victims than adult victims.[139]

Long-standing conflict, political instability, violence and repression have made Southern Asia a significant source of displacement; the subregion also hosts significant populations of displaced persons. In recent history, every country in the subregion (other than Maldives) has been an origin or a host of displaced populations. Most notably, at the end of 2018, there were 2.7 million Afghan refugees, the second largest refugee population in the world after the Syrian Arab Republic, and 2.6 million Afghan IDPs.[140] The neighbouring countries of Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran hosted the most Afghan refugees and, accordingly, featured among the top host countries in the world.[141] Pakistan, with its porous border and close ethnic, linguistic, religious and economic ties, has been the major host for decades, with around 1.4 million refugees at the end of 2018, almost exclusively Afghans;[142] around 60,000 refugees were repatriated to Afghanistan in 2017, most of them from Pakistan.[143] At the end of 2018, the Islamic Republic of Iran hosted close to 1 million refugees,[144] making it the sixth largest refugee host country in the world, while both India and Bangladesh continued to host large IDP populations.[145]

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131 Srivastava and Pandey, 2017.

132 Jayasuriya and Sunam, 2016.

133 McAuliffe and Jayasuriya, 2016.

134 Ibid.

135 Sengupta, 2018.

136 Gallagher and McAuliffe, 2016.

137 UNODC, 2018.

138 Ibid.

139 Ibid.

140 UNHCR, 2019a; IDMC, 2019.

141 UNHCR, 2019a.

142 Ibid.

143 IOM and UNHCR, 2018.

144 UNHCR, 2019a.

145 IDMC, 2019. For internal displacement more generally, see also the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, particularly for Afghanistan, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Southern Asian populations are particularly vulnerable to slow-onset and rapid-onset disasters related to natural hazards and climate change. Except for Afghanistan, where conflict and violence played a larger role in driving people from their homes, disasters were responsible for most displacements in Southern Asia in 2018.[146] There were an estimated 3.3 million new displacements in Southern Asia due to sudden-onset hazards in 2018, with most of those affected in India, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Relative to its population size, Southern Asia has the highest number of people at risk of displacement as a result of sudden-onset hazards, with Bangladesh, India and Pakistan having the highest disaster risk.[147] India bore most of the brunt of the disasters in the subregion, with more than 2.7 million displacements as a result of tropical storms and floods.[148] Afghanistan had the second highest number of disaster displacements in the subregion, with 371,000 new displacements, mostly due to drought conditions. Thousands of people were also displaced in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh as a result of monsoons.[149] The scale of disaster-related destruction and displacement in Southern Asia in recent years has in part been attributed to poor planning and lack of preparedness in the subregion.[150] Migration and mobility are particularly important coping strategies in response to environmental change events in Southern Asia – including sea-level rise, coastal erosion, flooding and groundwater depletion – all of which pose considerable challenges in the subregion.[151]

Eastern Asia

Eastern Asia is undergoing significant demographic change, with several countries experiencing low fertility rates and ageing populations, leading to revisions of immigration policies. Countries such as Japan are already experiencing negative population growth, while the Republic of Korea's fertility rate is well below the replacement rate of 2.1 required to sustain a population.[152] In 2019, Japan had the lowest potential support ratio in the world (the number of workers per retiree) and, along with China, was among the top 10 most populous countries with fertility rates that are below replacement.[153] These demographic changes have far-reaching implications for public debt, the welfare state and labour markets. Japan, for example, is grappling with an acute labour shortage.[154] These realities are prompting policymakers to reassess historically restrictive approaches toward immigration, which have been associated with a relatively high degree of cultural homogeneity in some countries, more limited experience in immigration policy compared with other regions and subregions, and the relative unpopularity of immigration in many countries.[155]

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146 IDMC, 2019.

147 Ibid.

148 Ibid.

149 Ibid.

150 IDMC, 2018a.

151 Climate and Development Knowledge Network, 2014b. See also Ionesco, Mokhnacheva and Gemenne, 2017.

152 UN DESA, 2019c.

153 Ibid.

154 Nye, 2019.

155 Staedicke, Batalova and Zong, 2016.

As key Eastern Asian countries experience declines in their populations, several countries have passed new immigration laws or implemented programmes meant to attract foreign workers. In December 2018, Japan's Parliament approved a new immigration law easing restrictions on foreign workers in industries facing labour shortages, with the changes expected to bring in more than 300,000 workers.[156] Recent changes to Japan's immigration laws are also partly a response to the surge in demand for workers in areas such as construction, as the country prepares to host the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo.[157] Meanwhile, through the Employment Permit System, which allows inflows of foreign workers from partner Asian countries[158] that have signed memorandums of understanding, the Republic of Korea is expected to accept 56,000 foreign workers in 2019, in an effort to address labour shortages.[159] China, primarily a country of origin of migrant workers, has also recently sought to attract workers in high-skilled and low-skilled sectors, both through changing its immigration policies and signing bilateral agreements. Attracting an increasing number of foreign workers is not only designed to address skills gaps, but is also part of the country's efforts towards more economic openness and inclusiveness. In 2018, for example, China relaxed its visa requirements for professionals and high-skilled workers, in a bid to attract top foreign talent[160] to join an economy that is gradually transitioning from manufacturing to services. In the same year, the country established, for the first time, the State Immigration Administration. The new immigration bureau is a response to both a growing number of international migrants in China and the need to streamline and better manage immigration.[161] Additionally, China and the Philippines signed an agreement in 2018 that will allow 300,000 Filipino workers, including 100,000 English language teachers, to work in China.[162]

Migration in Eastern Asia is increasingly characterized by significant outward and inward student mobility. The number of international students from Eastern Asia, particularly at the tertiary level, has increased rapidly in recent years, while the number of foreign students within the subregion also continues to grow. Driven by the prospect of better-quality education, a high number of international students from Eastern Asia study in destinations such as the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. China continued to a major source of international students globally in 2018, with over half a million of its students embarking on further studies abroad, an increase of more than 8 per cent from 2017.[163] However, Eastern Asia is not only a major origin of international students, it is also gradually becoming an important destination for foreign students, many of them coming from within the subregion. The number of international students at higher education institutions in China was over 490,000 in 2018.[164] Students from the Republic of Korea accounted for the largest number of international students in China in 2018.[165] They were followed by students from Thailand, Pakistan and India.[166]

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156 McCurry, 2019; BBC, 2018.

157 Tian and Chung, 2018.

158 The Employment Permit System partner countries as of 2019 include Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Timor-Leste, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, the Philippines, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam.

159 Ju-Young, 2018.

160 Ning, 2018.

161 The State Council, the People's Republic of China, 2018.

162 Jennings, 2018.

163 Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2019a; Shuo, 2019.

164 Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2019b.

165 Ibid.

166 Ibid.

Outward labour migration, particularly from China, has meant that the subregion is one of the largest recipients of international remittances in the world. In 2019, Chinese-born international migrants were the third largest foreign-born population in the world after Indians and Mexicans, with nearly 11 million Chinese migrants living outside of China.[167] Global remittance flows in 2018 amounted to nearly USD 690 billion, with China receiving over USD 67 billion, the second largest share of international remittances worldwide after India.[168]

While this chapter is focused primarily on international migration, it is important to note that, in this context, internal migration has been a significant feature in Eastern Asian countries, involving unprecedented movement of people from rural areas to urban centres. While the pace of urbanization has slowed and even decreased in parts of the continent such as Western Asia, Eastern Asia has undergone one of the fastest rates of urbanization over the last few decades.[169] By 2015, the share of urban population in the subregion had risen to 60 per cent, more than tripling since 1950.[170] This has most notably been the case in China, where the economic and social reforms of the 1980s initiated one of the largest human migrations in history. Among the reforms was the relaxation of the Hukou system, devised to record and control internal migration, which tied people's access to services to their residential status. As a result, hundreds of millions of workers, driven by the prospect of employment and higher wages, left the countryside for the cities, where most economic activities were concentrated and in demand of both unskilled and skilled labour migrants.[171] Most people have migrated from China's western provinces to its eastern provinces. The socioeconomic dynamics between western and eastern China are important factors, with the west characterized by high population growth rates, a surplus of workers and lower incomes, while the east contends with a shortage of workers in metropolitan areas and records both higher incomes and higher education levels.[172]

A recent new (atypical) feature in Eastern Asia's migration dynamics was the arrival of hundreds of asylum seekers from countries ravaged by conflict and violence. In 2018, over 500 Yemeni asylum seekers arrived on the Republic of Korea's Jeju Island, gaining entry through the Island's visa-free policy designed to attract tourists.[173] The arrival of Yemenis generated intense public debate and some anti-immigrant sentiment, in a country where asylum applications have historically been low. The Republic of Korea has not previously been much of a destination country for those seeking protection (except those from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea).[174] By the end of 2017, China and the Republic of Korea had around 600 and nearly 20,000 asylum seekers, respectively.[175]

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167 UN DESA, 2019a.

168 World Bank, 2019a.

169 UN DESA, 2018.

170 Ibid.

171 Hu, 2012; Qin et al., 2016.

172 Hugo, 2015.

173 Kwon, 2019.

174 People from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea who move to the Republic of Korea seeking protection are not considered asylum seekers, but are recognized as citizens under the Republic of Korea's Constitution.

175 UNHCR, 2019a.

Central Asia

Migratory movements in Central Asia occur in large part out of the subregion, and most noticeably northward to the Russian Federation. In 2019, for example, there were just under 5 million migrants born in Central Asia who were living in the Russian Federation.[176] With significantly higher wages and better employment opportunities,[177] the Russian Federation has long been a leading destination for labour migrants from Central Asia.[178] For people in rural Kyrgyzstan, for example, labour migration has become a livelihood strategy, with many Kyrgyz migrant workers seeking employment in the Russian Federation, with provinces such as Siberia becoming increasingly popular.[179] The Russian Federation is also attractive because of the large number of Kyrgyz who are already well-established in the country and provide assistance in terms of finding suitable accommodation and work for new arrivals.[180] But not all migrants from Central Asia to the Russian Federation are low-skilled labour migrants; migrants from Kazakhstan, for example, are largely composed of students and highly skilled professionals.[181] People from Central Asia also migrate to other parts of Europe and China, where work and family ties are relatively strong. An increasing number of Central Asians are also moving to destinations such as Turkey and the Republic of Korea to find work; movements to the Republic of Korea have been facilitated by bilateral labour agreements with countries such as Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.[182]

Intraregional migration is a key feature in the subregion and is underpinned by geographic, cultural, economic, political and social links that are historical in nature. Central Asia is home to millions of international migrants, mainly from within the subregion, but also from further afield. Migrants primarily originate from countries of the former Soviet Union, many of which are current members of the Commonwealth of Independent States.[183] In 2019, Kazakhstan, for example, had a substantial foreign-born population (3.7 million), of whom 2.4 million were born in the Russian Federation.[184] Kazakhstan is now predominantly a country of transit and of immigration, attracting skilled workers from various countries and, increasingly, becoming a destination for low-skilled migrant workers from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In recent years, Central Asian countries have revised policies regulating intraregional migration, including through the conclusion of bilateral agreements on entry and readmission.[185] For example, the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union in 2015 has allowed people from its member States – including Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan – to move freely to live, work and study in other member States of the Union.[186] Further cooperation is currently occurring in the region on enhancing the management of mixed flows, including on aspects related to border management, migrants' rights and protection, and irregular migration.[187] There is a growing recognition of the importance of undertaking proactive migration policies and programmes in order

176 UN DESA, 2019a.

177 Sengupta, 2018.

178 Turaeva, 2018.

179 Sengupta, 2018.

180 Ibid.

181 Nikiforova and Brednikova, 2018.

182 Eurasianet, 2019; Matusevich, 2019.

183 Ibid.

184 UN DESA, 2019a.

185 OSCE, 2016.

186 Eurasian Economic Union, n.d.

187 IOM, 2016a.

to protect the rights and dignity of migrants, as well as their families and communities. Both male and female migrant workers from Central Asia can be vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, particularly within informal employment, such as construction, agricultural and domestic work.[188]

International remittances play an important role in Central Asian economies, especially for the less developed countries in the subregion. Two of the world's top 10 remittance-receiving countries relative to GDP are in the subregion – Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.[189] In Kyrgyzstan, remittances have been estimated to reduce the national poverty rate by 6–7 per cent.[190] Remittance flows into Central Asian countries largely reflect migration patterns within and from the subregion, which are closely linked to work and income generation. Remittances from the Russian Federation, for example, have been substantial over time, aided by the relatively low transfer costs from the Russian Federation to the Central Asian countries. After a few years of consecutive decline, driven by economic slowdown and policy changes in the Russian Federation, remittances to Europe and Central Asia bounced back in 2017, growing by 21 per cent and reaching USD 48 billion in 2017.[191] This figure further increased to USD 59 billion in 2018.[192] Among the factors behind this growth was the continued recovery of economic activity in the Russian Federation.[193]

Irregular migration is a feature in Central Asia, although exact numbers are difficult to ascertain. Irregular migrants come from both within and outside the subregion, with those transiting through Central Asia often moving toward Western Europe. Most migrants' first points of entry are Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan before being smuggled through Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation to Western Europe.[194] Factors such as weak border management, combined with isolated borders, have contributed to irregular migration across the subregion.[195] Migrant smuggling in Central Asia is a complex process, and involves both formal and informal arrangements at various border points within the subregion, as well as transborder activities that help facilitate the movement of people beyond Central Asia.[196]

Middle East

Gulf countries have some of the largest numbers of temporary labour migrants in the world. Driven by oil wealth, GCC countries have undergone remarkable economic development over the last few decades, drawing both skilled and semi-skilled workers to various sectors, including construction and maintenance, retail and domestic service. In countries such as Qatar, the recent increased demand for workers in areas such as construction is partly driven by the country's preparation for the 2022 World Cup.[197] The increase in labour migration to GCC States has created tremendous demographic change. In 2019, migrants made up the majority of the population in half of the GCC countries – comprising 88 per cent of the population

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188 IOM, 2016b.

189 World Bank, 2019a.

190 UNDP, n.d.

191 World Bank, 2018a, 2018b.

192 World Bank, 2019a.

193 Ibid.

194 Sengupta, 2018.

195 Ibid.

196 Ibid.

197 Buckley et al., 2016.

in the United Arab Emirates, around 79 per cent in Qatar and 72 per cent in Kuwait.[198] Labour migrants in GCC countries primarily originate from Asia and Africa. Income differentials between origin and destination countries are a key driver of migration, with the Gulf countries providing higher wages and employment opportunities to labour migrants.[199] Despite some progress, regulation and protection of migrants' rights remain a challenge in the subregion. The *Kafala* sponsorship system,[200] which ties migrant workers to their employers and is practised across a number of GCC States, has come under scrutiny. Although several Gulf States have implemented reforms to the *Kafala* system, the changes have been minimal and have had little positive effect on migrants.[201] The sponsorship system remains widespread and continues to contribute to the vulnerability of labour migrants in the Gulf, including to conditions of forced labour and wage exploitation.[202]

Civil conflict, intensification of sectarian violence and the proliferation of terrorism (particularly by Daesh) have resulted in extensive levels of internal and international displacement in the subregion in recent years. Two countries in the subregion – the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen – are facing "level 3" emergencies (the global humanitarian system's classification for the most severe, large-scale humanitarian crises) and are key contributors to the world's total displacement figures.[203] The conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, occurring now for over seven years, has displaced well over half of the country's population, with over 6.6 million refugees and over 6.1 million IDPs, and had produced close to 140,000 asylum seekers by the end of 2018.[204] Successive waves of displacement in Iraq – a feature since the beginning of the century – continued and intensified in 2016 and into 2017. This occurred in the context of efforts to retake territory and counter Daesh. While over 1.9 million Iraqis remained internally displaced by end of 2018, this was the first time in nearly over four years that this number fell to under 2 million.[205] A growing number of Iraqis have also returned home, as Daesh has increasingly been pushed back and lost territory in both Iraq and in the Syrian Arab Republic; the militant group has lost more than 90 per cent of the territory it controlled in both countries.[206] Yemen's political and security situation continued to deteriorate, and the ensuing violence and volatility left the country with over 2.3 million IDPs at the end of 2018.[207] By the end of 2018, more than 8 per cent of Yemen's population had been internally displaced.

The Middle East continues to host a significant share of the world's refugees. At the end of 2018, the Middle East subregion hosted the largest number of refugees globally, including the refugees registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).[208] Neighbouring countries inevitably share a disproportionate burden when it comes to hosting people seeking refuge in other countries, and this dynamic is a key feature of contemporary displacement patterns in the subregion. As countries bordering the Syrian Arab Republic and the principal hosts of Syrian refugees, Turkey, Lebanon

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198 UN DESA, 2019a.

199 Jacobsen and Valenta, 2016.

200 "The Kafala system restricts family reunification for unskilled migrants, ties them to a single employer, disallows them from marrying locals, and enforces other restrictions on rights and movements so that migrants stay as transient workers in the Gulf countries" (Rahman, 2013).

201 Diop, Johnston and Le, 2018.

202 Ibid.

203 OCHA, n.d.

204 UNHCR, 2019a; IDMC, 2019.

205 IDMC, 2019; IOM, 2018d.

206 Seligman, 2018.

207 IDMC, 2019.

208 UNHCR, 2019b.

and Jordan were all among the top 10 host countries in the world in 2018 (Turkey is 1st, Lebanon 7th and Jordan 10th).[209] The depth of their responsibility is particularly apparent when the number of refugees in each country is compared against the national population – in Lebanon, there were 156 refugees per 1,000 inhabitants; in Jordan, 72 per 1,000; and in Turkey, 45 per 1,000.[210] Other countries in the subregion, including those affected by conflict, also host many refugees, including Yemen and Iraq, and even the Syrian Arab Republic.[211] The almost 5.5 million refugees registered with UNWRA are also located in the subregion.[212]

Irregular migration within and from the subregion continues to pose challenges for migrants and States. Political instability and protracted conflicts in the Middle East are major drivers of irregular migration and migrant smuggling in the subregion.[213] Most smuggled migrants in the subregion are people escaping conflict and violence. Migrant smuggling and irregular migration often go hand in hand with refugee and asylum movements.[214] As conflicts have proliferated across the subregion, so has the number of smuggled migrants and countries affected by smuggling networks. Moreover, smuggling networks have become a lot more diversified and complex.[215] The very large numbers of Syrian refugees hosted in neighbouring countries, together with the protracted conflict and the low probability of return to the Syrian Arab Republic, have seen refugees undertaking irregular migration onward to other countries, most notably those in Europe via the Eastern Mediterranean route.

Europe[216]

Over 82 million international migrants lived in Europe in 2019, an increase of nearly 10 per cent since 2015, when 75 million international migrants resided in the region. A little over half of these (42 million) were born in Europe but were living elsewhere in the region; while this number has only moderately increased since 2015, it was much lower in 1990, at around 28 million (figure 13). From 2015 to 2019, the population of non-European migrants in Europe increased from a little over 35 million to around 38 million.

In 1990, there were roughly equal amounts 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 during the last 30 years, and only returned to 1990 levels over recent years. In 2019, European-born migrants living outside the continent were based primarily in Northern America (7.4 million). There was also some gradual growth of European migrants in Asia and Oceania from 2010 to 2019.

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209 Ibid.
210 UNHCR, 2019a.
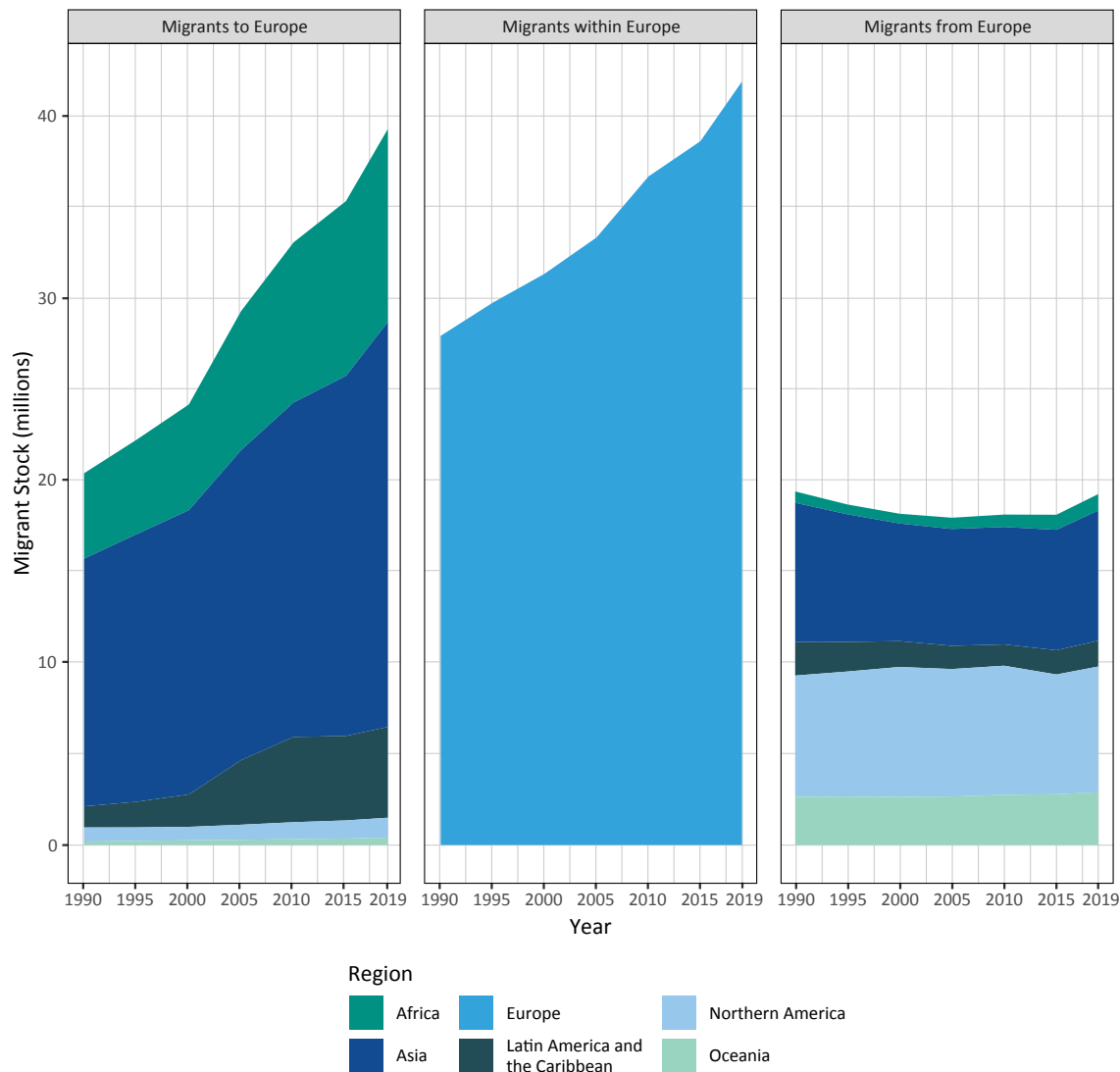211 Ibid.
212 UNRWA, n.d.
213 İçduygu, 2018.
214 Ibid.
215 Ibid.
216 See appendix A for details of the composition of Europe.

## Figure 13. Migrants to, within and from Europe, 1990–2019

Source: UN DESA, 2019a.

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).

Several European countries have experienced large changes in the size of their populations over the last decade. Figure 14 ranks the top 20 European countries with the largest proportional population change from 2009 to 2019. While some countries, such as Luxembourg, Norway and Switzerland experienced population growth, others underwent substantial population decline over the last 10 years. Lithuania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Latvia experienced the steepest population declines (more than 10%). Low fertility rates are the most important driver of negative population change in parts of Europe. However, negative net migration,

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where the number of emigrants exceeds the number of immigrants, has also contributed to population decline on the continent, especially in countries such as Lithuania and Latvia. A discussion on demographic changes in Europe, and their link to migration, can be read below under "Key features and developments in Europe".

Figure 14. Top 20 countries with the largest proportional population change in Europe, 2009–2019
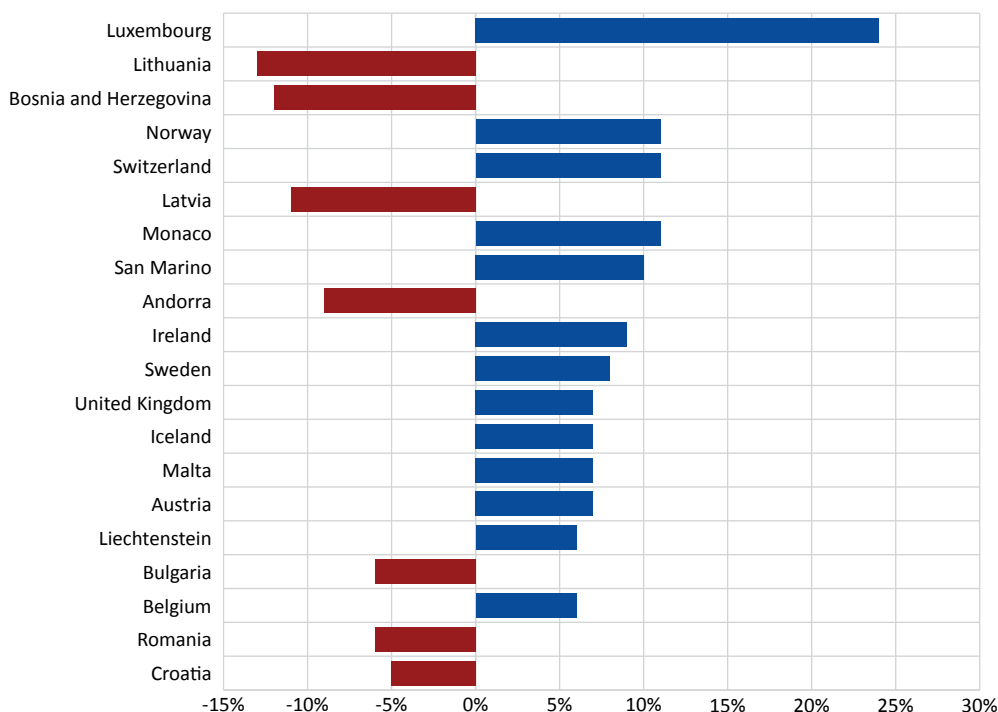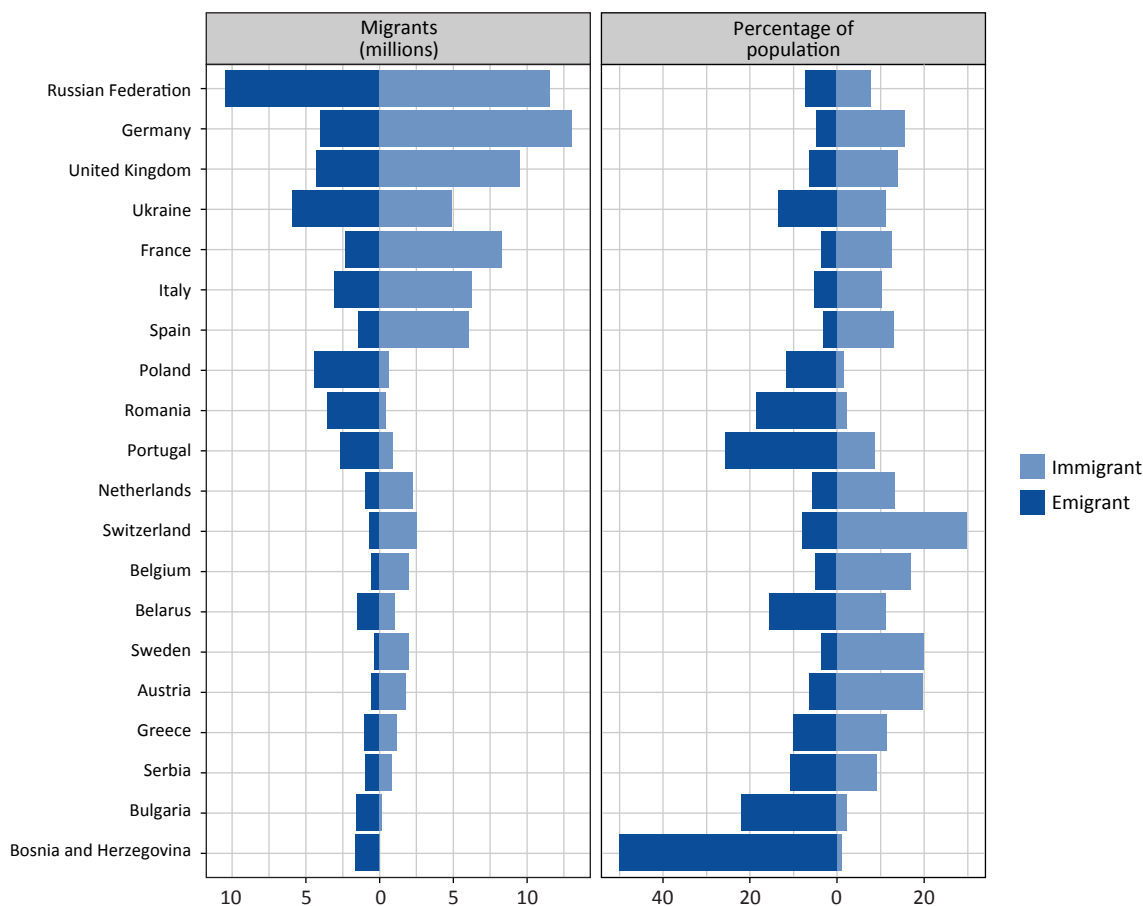

Source: UN DESA, 2019c.

Note: It is important to note that the largest proportional population changes from 2009 to 2019 are more likely to occur in countries with relatively smaller populations.

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 15). At over 10 million emigrants in 2019, the Russian Federation had the largest population of its citizens living abroad in Europe. After the Russian Federation and Ukraine, Poland and the United Kingdom had the third and fourth largest European emigrant population (4.4 million and 4.3 million respectively). Bosnia and Herzegovina had the highest share of emigrants in comparison with the resident population in 2019, many of whom left during the breakup of the former Yugoslavia. Portugal and Bulgaria, two countries that have long histories of emigration, also had high shares of populations abroad.

With over 13 million migrants in 2019, Germany had the largest foreign-born population of any country in Europe; the number of immigrants in the country increased by nearly 3 million between 2015 and 2019. The largest groups came from Poland, Turkey, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and the Syrian Arab Republic. The populations of the United Kingdom and France each included over 9.5 million and around 8 million foreign-born people, respectively, in 2019. Migrants born in French-speaking 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 million, Italy and Spain were the fifth and sixth most popular migrant destinations in Europe in 2019; both countries experienced slight increases in the number of foreign-born migrants since 2015. Many of the foreign-born populations in these countries came from elsewhere in Europe – such as Romania, Albania and the Germany – or from North African countries such as Morocco. 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 (see figure 16). As illustrated in figure 15, of the top 20 migration countries in the region, Switzerland had the highest share of migrants in its population (29.9%) followed by Sweden (20%), Austria (19.9%) and Belgium (17.2%).

Figure 15. Top 20 European migrant countries in 2019

Source: UN DESA, 2019a.

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 2019.

Figure 16 shows the top 20 migration corridors involving European countries, representing an accumulation of migratory movements over time, and providing a snapshot of how migration patterns have evolved into significant foreign-born populations in specific destination countries. One of the more striking features of the main migration corridors involving European countries is that most are intraregional corridors. The Russian Federation features heavily in the main corridors. Russian-born populations in former member States of the Soviet Union – such as Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan – formed some of the largest European migrant corridors in 2019. However, it is important to note that these Russian-born populations only became international migrants after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991; before that, they were internal migrants within the Soviet Union. The Russian Federation was also the second largest destination of migrants in Europe after Germany.

Figure 16. Top 20 migration corridors involving European countries, 2019
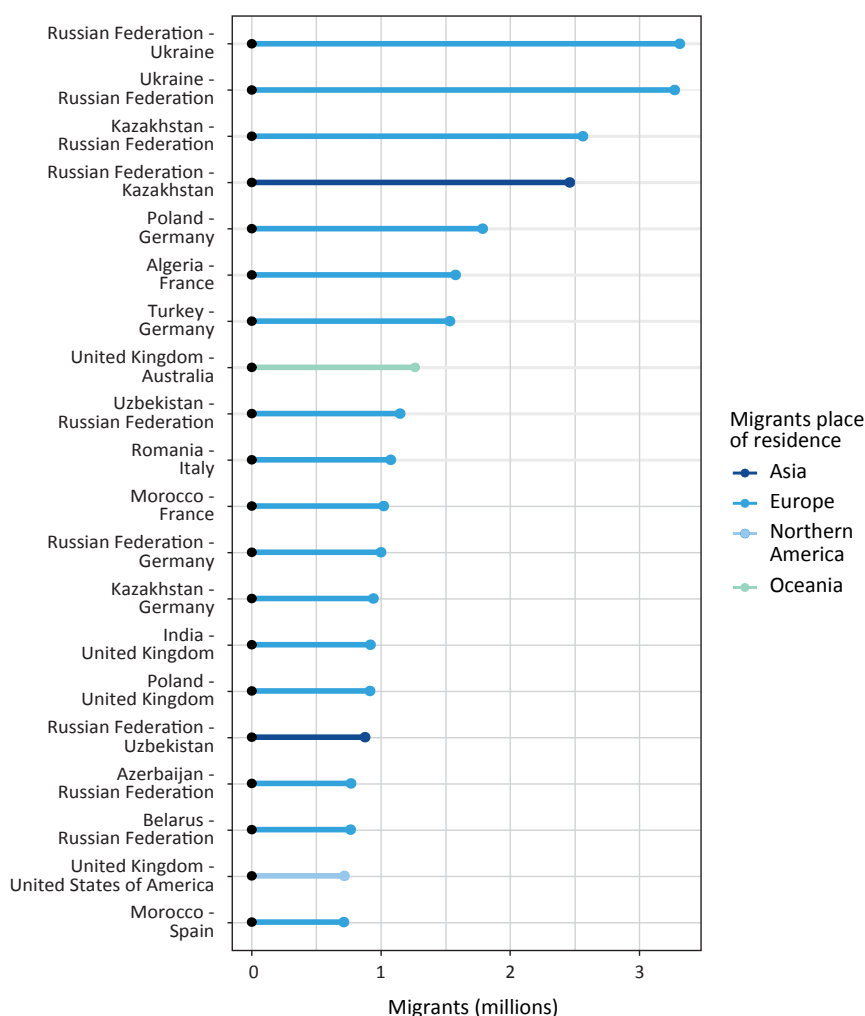
Note: Corridors represent an accumulation of migratory movements over time and provide a snapshot of how migration patterns have evolved into significant foreign-born populations in specific destination countries.

In 2018, Germany continued to host the largest population of refugees and asylum seekers in Europe and the fifth largest in the world (figure 17). The largest number of refugees in Germany came from the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq and Afghanistan. France and Sweden were the second and third largest hosts of refugees in Europe, with over 368,000 and over 248,000, respectively. Ukraine and the Russian Federation produced the largest refugee population in Europe at the end of 2018, around 93,000 and 61,000 respectively.

**Figure 17. Top 10 European countries by total refugees and asylum seekers, 2018**
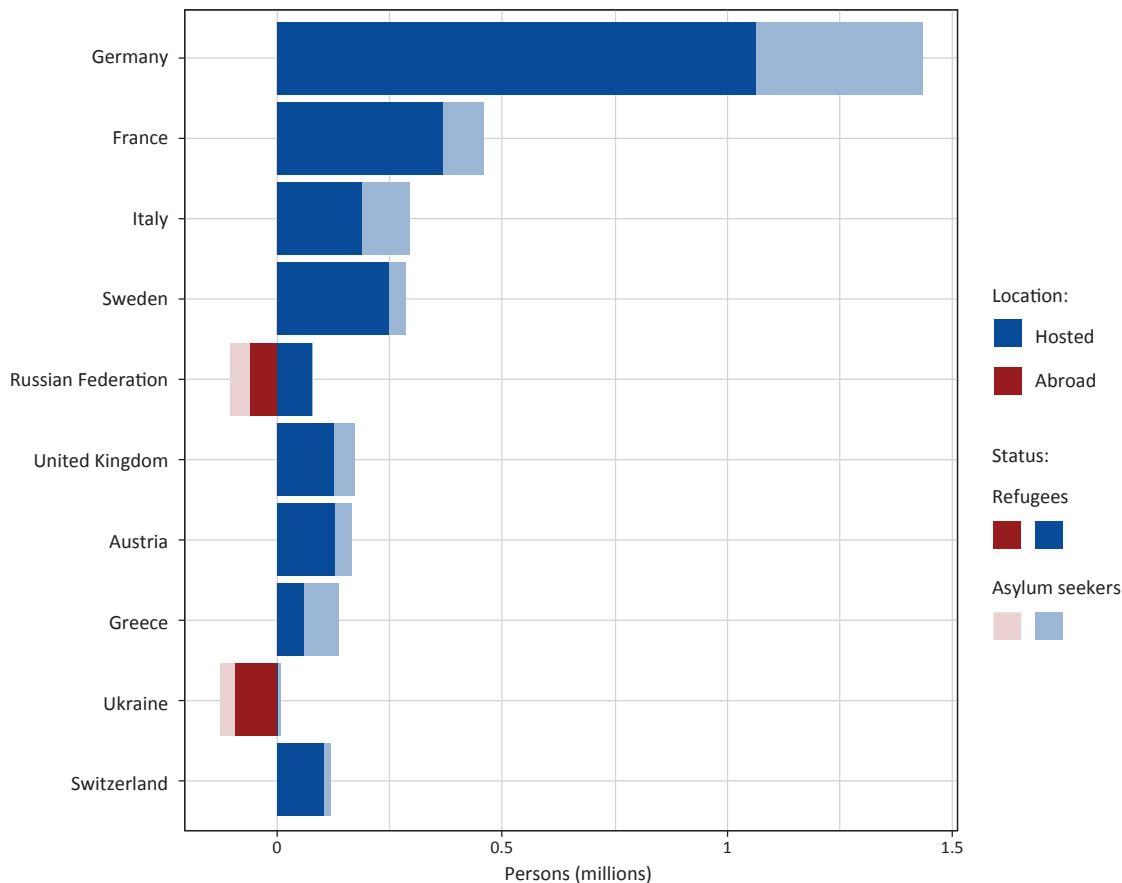
Source: UNHCR, n.d.

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 2018 data and are calculated by combining refugees and asylum seekers in and from countries.

Most new internal displacements in 2018 in Europe were the result of disasters, not conflict (figure 18). Ukraine was the only country in Europe with new conflict-related internal displacements in 2018, with an estimated 12,000 new displacements due to conflict and violence during the year. The rest of the new internal

displacements were triggered by disasters, with Greece recording the largest number of disaster-induced displacements (9,200) followed by France (6,300). Both countries suffered from significant floods and storms. The Russian Federation, Spain and Italy recorded over 3,000 new disaster displacements in 2018.

Figure 18. Top 20 European countries by new internal displacements (disaster and conflict), 2018
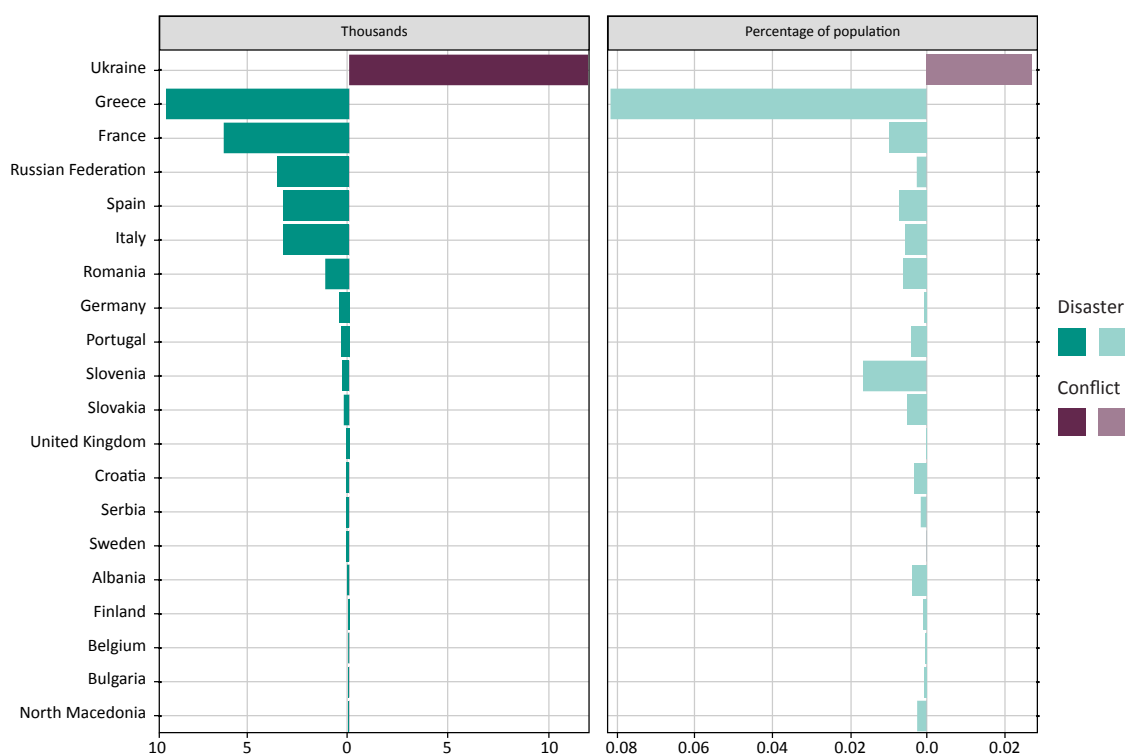
Source: IDMC, n.d; UN DESA, 2017.

Notes: New displacements refers to the number of displacement movements that occurred in 2018, 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 2017 UN DESA population estimates, and the percentage is for relative, illustrative purposes only.

Key features and developments in Europe

South-Eastern and Eastern Europe

For most South-Eastern and Eastern European countries, emigration rather than immigration has been the key feature over recent years and decades, with fairly low levels of immigration compared with other subregions of Europe. Due to this and other factors, several countries in Europe are projected to experience very significant population decline by 2050 (including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Romania, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine).[217] Emigration from Eastern European countries to Western Europe has been a growing trend, particularly since the expansion of the EU in both 2004 and 2007 to encompass more Eastern European member States, while extending the external borders of the EU outward towards non-member countries in the East.[218] Emigration from Eastern and Southern Europe largely comprises labour migrants in high-skilled and low-skilled occupations. Recent years have, for example, seen a sharp increase in the number of medical professionals moving to Western Europe. Attracted by higher wages, a significant number of medical professionals from countries such as Romania, Poland and Slovakia have left their countries to work in Western Europe.[219] It is estimated that, by 2015, Romania had lost half its doctors.[220] The emigration of high-skilled professionals, in addition to a declining population, has created a severe shortage of workers in some sectors in several countries in Eastern Europe.

Despite the anticipated demographic decline across Europe, with Eastern Europe experiencing some of the most dramatic population changes, some countries are resistant to immigration as part of a broader response. As fertility rates in Europe fall, the number of elderly continues to rise. More people are living longer and life expectancy in Europe and Northern America reached 78.7 years in 2019 and is projected to increase to 83.2 years by 2050.[221] Globally, an estimated 962 million people were over the age of 60 in 2017, with Europe having the largest percentage (25%).[222] As the number of elderly expands, the social protection systems in Eastern European countries will come under significant strain, with public spending on health care and pensions expected to significantly increase.[223] Meanwhile, a decline in the number of people of working age will have key implications for Europe's labour force, with the average age of people participating in the labour force reaching 42.6 years by 2030.[224] Even as Eastern Europe's population grows older, many countries in the subregion are reluctant to embrace immigration as one part of the longer-term solution to impending demographic crises. Countries such as Hungary are already beginning to feel the negative effects of a declining labour force. In response to a shortage of workers and the impact this is having on the country's economy, in 2018 the Government of Hungary passed a controversial law that generated mass protest action; the so-called "slave law" could require people to work up to 400 hours of mandatory overtime.[225] In February 2019, Hungary also announced new loan and tax benefits aimed at boosting the country's low birth rate, while

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217 UN DESA, 2015.
218 Kahanec and Zimmermann, 2009.
219 Hervey, 2017.
220 Ibid.
221 UN DESA, 2019c.
222 Ibid.
223 ILO, 2018.
224 Ibid.
225 Karasz and Kingsley, 2018; Peto, 2019.

it remains openly opposed to immigration.[226] However, while attitudes and political discourse on immigration remain negative across Eastern Europe, countries such as Poland have increasingly been tapping into foreign labour, particularly Ukrainians, to address labour shortages. The number of Ukrainians in Poland has sharply increased since fighting began in Eastern Ukraine in 2014. In 2017, Poland issued more than 660,000 residence permits to foreigners, with the majority (more than 85%) going to Ukrainians.[227]

The Russian Federation remains the major destination country in the subregion (and one of the most significant in the world). In 2019, the country hosted around 11.6 million international migrants.[228] Most immigrants have come from neighbouring countries, most notably members of the Commonwealth of Independent States.[229] Immigrants from Ukraine comprised the largest number of foreign born populations in the Russian Federation (over 3 million), followed by Kazakhstan (around 2.5 million) and Uzbekistan (1.1 million).[230] The Russian Federation's large number of international migrants, many of whom are labour migrants, means that the country is also one of the biggest origins of remittances in the world. In 2018, remittances from the Russian Federation amounted to USD 21 billion, owing to the slow and but steady rebound of the country's economy, which continues to attract labour migrants.[231] In 2019, Ukraine also had a significant foreign-born population at around 5 million, with migrants originating in large part from the Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation and Uzbekistan.[232]

The subregion has experienced increased displacement in recent years, largely as a result of the protracted conflict in Eastern Ukraine. The conflict, now in its fifth year, has resulted in significant internal displacement and generated an outflow of refugees and migrants to neighbouring States. By the end of 2018, Ukraine was the origin of nearly 93,000 refugees and around 800,000 IDPs.[233] In 2018 alone, there were 12,000 new conflict/violence displacements in Ukraine (see figure 18).[234] A significant number of refugees from Ukraine were living in the Russian Federation. Since the start of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine in 2014, an estimated 400,000 people moved to the Russian Federation, with a large number having gained refugee status or temporary asylum.[235]

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226 Szakacs, 2019; Walker, 2019.

227 Eurostat, 2018.

228 UN DESA, 2019a.

229 The Commonwealth of Independent States consists of nine member States: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan; as well as two associate States: Turkmenistan and Ukraine.

230 UN DESA, 2019a.

231 World Bank, 2019a; Hickey, 2019; World Bank 2018a.

232 UN DESA, 2019a.

233 UNHCR, 2019a; IDMC, 2019.

234 IDMC, 2019.

235 UNHCR, 2019c.

Northern, Western and Southern Europe

Intraregional migration within Europe is particularly dynamic, continuing to increase over time. As of 1 January 2017, there were 22 million persons living in one of the EU member States with the citizenship of another member State, up from 16 million a year prior.[236] Such a high degree of intraregional migration is made possible by free movement arrangements, which enable citizens to cross borders without being subjected to border checks. The Schengen Area, which comprises 22 EU member States and 4 non-EU member countries, guarantees free internal movement to over 400 million citizens.[237] In 2017 Romania, Poland, Italy, Portugal and Bulgaria had the highest numbers of their citizens living in other EU member States.[238] However, free movement in Europe faces challenges. In 2015, the arrival of large numbers of migrants and refugees to Europe via the Mediterranean put pressure on the common European asylum system and affected the functioning of the Schengen rules. This led to a temporary suspension of the Dublin system and the introduction of border checks by several member States.[239] There is also a degree of uncertainty, particularly for migrant workers, following the June 2016 EU membership referendum in the United Kingdom about future migration settings arising from "Brexit" negotiations. However, the bigger issue is the finalization of Brexit itself, and whether/ how it will be implemented.

Immigration continues to be a contentious issue in Europe and remains on top of the political agenda across the region. While balanced debates on the issue are not absent, political rhetoric and public discourse on migration have at times been dominated by anti-immigrant sentiments. Over the course of 2017 and 2018, far-right wing groups across Europe promoted myths or "fake news" about migration.[240] This was most evident in the coordinated online campaigns against the Global Compact for Migration by far-right activists, including through social media, online petitions and videos. The negative campaigns played a significant role in generating backlash against the Global Compact for Migration in several European countries, prompting some governments to withdraw from the migration pact.[241] General attitudes toward immigration also remain polarized, while negative anti-immigration political rhetoric continues to take centre stage in several national elections across Europe.[242] A 2018 European Commission survey found that four in ten Europeans view immigration as more of a problem than an opportunity.[243] In a separate survey conducted in 10 EU countries[244] by the Pew Research Centre, more than half said they want fewer immigrants in their countries.[245]

Irregular migration continues to pose challenges to the region, and remained high on the European agenda in 2017 and 2018. By the end of 2018, the largest number of irregular maritime arrivals to Europe used the Western Mediterranean route, which leads to Spain.[246] This marked a change from 2016 and 2017, when irregular maritime migrants arrived to Europe in the greatest numbers via the Central Mediterranean route from Libya (mainly to Italy) or from Turkey to Greece on the Eastern Mediterranean route. In 2018, over

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236 Eurostat, 2019.

237 European Commission, n.d.

238 Eurostat, 2019.

239 Ibid.

240 McAuliffe, 2018.

241 Ibid.

242 Diamant and Starr, 2018.

243 European Commission, 2018b.

244 The 10 EU countries surveyed included Greece, Hungary, Italy, Germany, Sweden, Poland, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Spain.

245 Connor and Krogstad, 2018.

246 Frontex, 2019; MacGregor, 2019.

117,000 and more than 26,000 migrants arrived in Europe by sea and land, respectively.[247] There were around 59,000 sea arrivals in Spain and 23,370 in Italy in the same year.[248] More than 2,000 migrants died in the Mediterranean in 2018, with the Central Mediterranean route by far the deadliest route for irregular migrants in 2018 (over 1,300 deaths).[249] While the number of migrants who died at sea trying to reach Europe dropped in 2018 due to fewer overall crossings, the death ratio along the Central Mediterranean route increased from 2.6% in 2017 to 3.5% in 2018 and, by April 2019, it had reached 10 per cent.[250] A large number of maritime arrivals in 2018 came from countries that continue to be affected by violence and conflict, including Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq, especially to Greece. North and sub-Saharan Africans also continued to make up a significant portion of migrant flows to Europe, especially to Italy and Spain.

Human trafficking remains a major challenge in Europe, and the region has seen a rise in both trafficking for labour and sexual exploitation. Trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation remains the predominant form of human trafficking in Europe (56%), followed by labour exploitation (26%) and other forms of exploitation, such as forced begging or organ removal (18%).[251] Women and girls continue to be the most vulnerable group (68% of victims), often exploited in care and domestic work and forced prostitution.[252] Two important trends reported by EU member States are the sharp increase in child trafficking (23% of all victims) and the growth of intra-EU trafficking (44% of victims are EU citizens).[253] Profiles of traffickers and modus operandi have changed, with an observed increase in the number of women and younger perpetrators, and a growing role of Internet and social media for recruitment and distribution of exploitation material. Despite growing awareness and knowledge of trafficking practices, prosecution and conviction rates remain low. Irregular migrants are especially vulnerable, as traffickers often take advantage of their status to lock them into cycles of exploitation. In 2018, a case of migrant fishermen working on Irish registered trawlers was brought to the Republic of Ireland's High Court; some of the migrants were believed to have been trafficked and worked under harsh conditions, including being racially abused, underpaid and overworked.[254]

Latin America and the Caribbean[255]

Migration to Northern America is a key feature in the Latin America and the Caribbean region. In 2019, over 26 million migrants had made the journey north and were residing in Northern America. As shown in figure 19, the Latin American and the Caribbean population living in Northern America has increased considerably over time, from an estimated 10 million in 1990 and 25.5 million in 2015 to 26.6 million in 2019. Another 5 million were in Europe in 2019; 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 2019 (400,000 and 200,000 migrants, respectively).

247 IOM, n.d.b.

248 Ibid.

249 IOM, n.d.d.

250 IOM, 2019c.

251 European Commission, 2018c.

252 Ibid.

253 Ibid.

254 O'Faolain, 2018.

255 See appendix A for details of the composition of Latin America and the Caribbean.

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 2019, the number of Europeans and Northern Americans living in Latin America and the Caribbean stood at 1.4 million and 1.2 million, respectively.

Figure 19. Migrants to, within and from Latin America and the Caribbean, 1990–2019
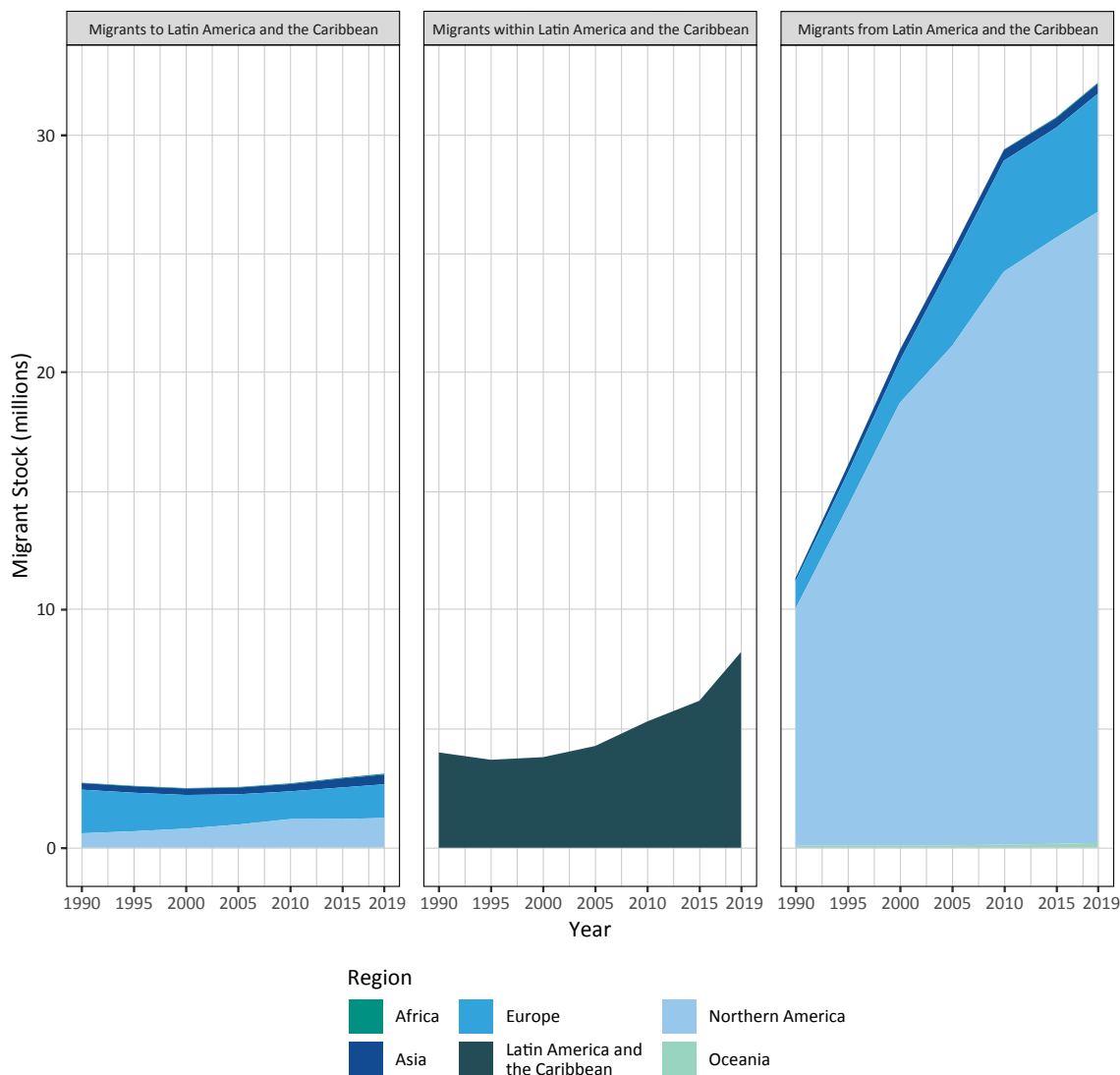
Source: UN DESA, 2019a.

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).

Several countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have undergone considerable population change over the last decade. Figure 20 shows the 20 countries in the region which have experienced the largest proportional population change from 2009 to 2019. All the top 20 countries experienced an increase in the size of their populations during this period, with the largest proportional population changes occurring in Central America. Belize had the greatest percentage change, with its population increasing by 24 per cent from 2009 to 2019. It was followed by Guatemala and Honduras, whose populations grew by nearly 23 and 20 per cent respectively.

Figure 20. Top 20 countries with the largest proportional population change in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2009–2019
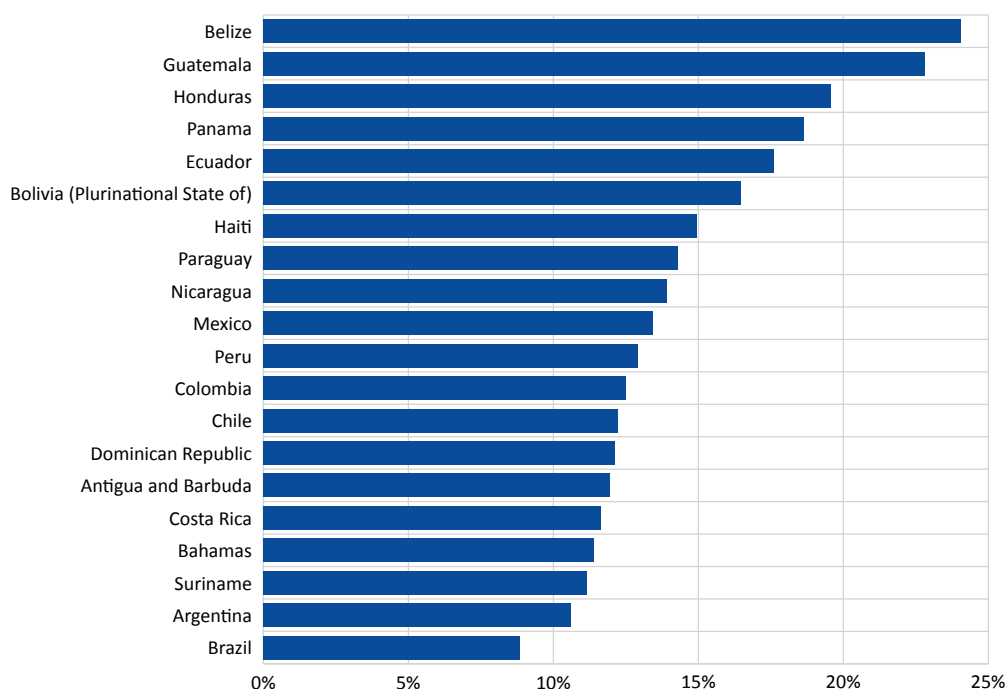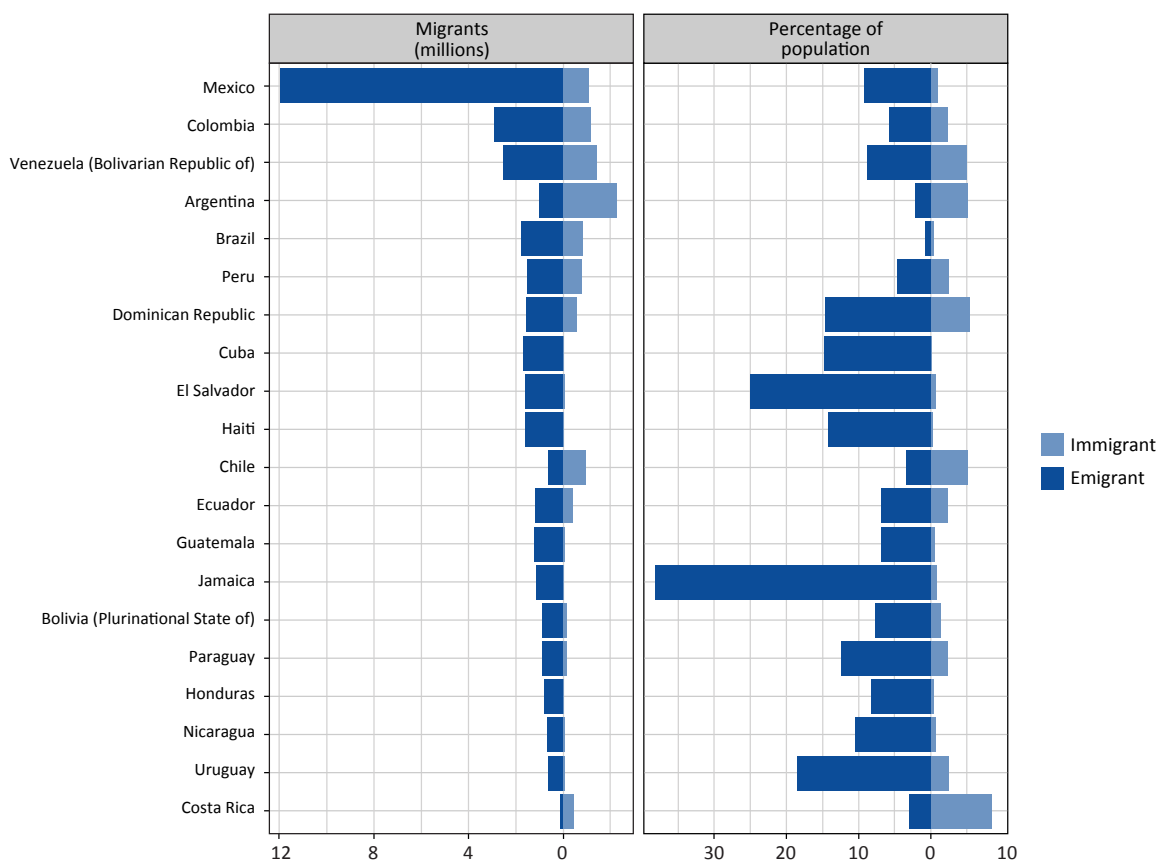

Source: UN DESA, 2019c.

Note: It is important to note that the largest proportional population changes from 2009 to 2019 are more likely to occur in countries with relatively smaller populations.

Mexico was by far the largest emigration country in Latin America and the Caribbean (figure 21). Around 12 million Mexicans lived abroad in 2019. Mexico is also the second largest migrant origin country in the world after India. Most Mexican emigrants lived in the United States, which continues to be the largest country-to-country migration corridor in the entire world (figure 22). Many other Central American countries – such as El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras – also have large migrant populations in the United States, as do South American countries such as Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil and Peru. Large populations of South American migrants resided elsewhere in the region. Colombia and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had the second and third highest number of emigrants in the region in 2019 (2.9 million and 2.5 million respectively). Around 1 million Venezuelans lived in Colombia, reflecting recent cross-border displacement from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

In 2019, 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. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had the next largest migrant population, followed Colombia and Mexico. In 2019, Mexico had over 760,000 migrants born in the United States. As illustrated in figure 21, of the top 20 migrant countries in the region, Costa Rica had the highest immigrant share of its total population (8%), due to long-standing migration from neighbouring Nicaragua. Other countries in the region outside of the top 20 had higher migrant populations as a proportion of the total population, such as Belize at 15 per cent.

Figure 21. Top 20 Latin America and Caribbean migrant countries in 2019

Source: UN DESA, 2019a.

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 2019.

The most striking feature of the main migration corridors within and from the region (figure 22 is the dominance of the United States as the main country of destination. Most of the corridors in 2019 were to the United States, with the remainder all occurring within the Latin American and Caribbean region (for example,

the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to Colombia). These migration corridors represent an accumulation of migratory movements involving countries in Latin America and the Caribbean over time, and provide a snapshot of how migration patterns have evolved into significant foreign-born populations in specific destination countries.

Figure 22. Top 10 migration corridors involving Latin America and Caribbean countries, 2019
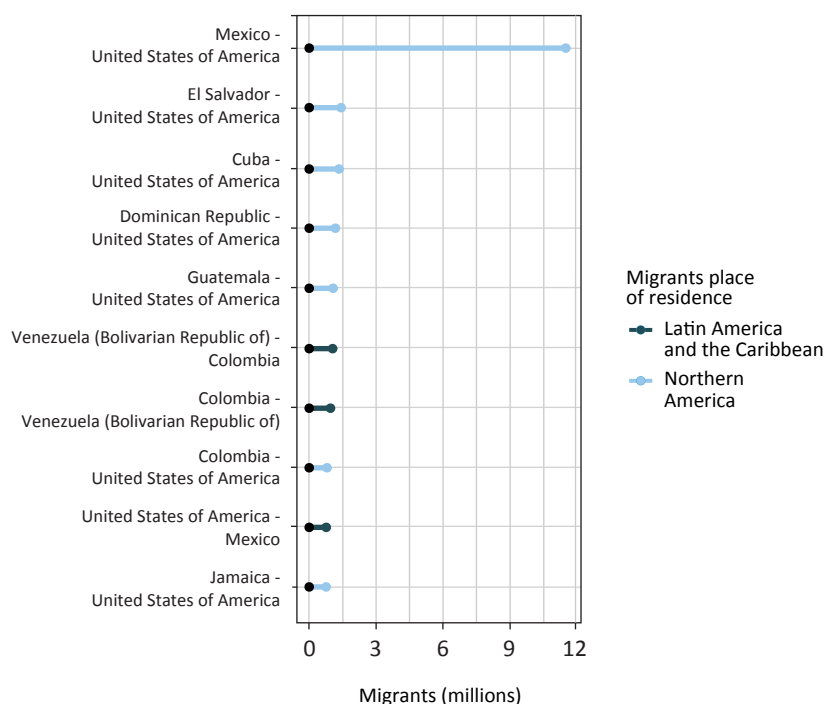

Source: UN DESA, 2019a.

Note: Corridors represent an accumulation of migratory movements over time and provide a snapshot of how migration patterns have evolved into significant foreign-born populations in specific destination countries.

In 2018, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was the largest source country of asylum claims in the world, with over 340,000 new asylum claims submitted by the end of the year. This is a sharp increase from 2017, when new asylum claims numbered just over 100,000. An estimated 3 million Venezuelans had left their country at the end of 2018 due to several factors, including violence, persecution and economic/political crisis. The vast majority of Venezuelans displaced abroad lived in Colombia (around 1 million). Colombia was the largest country of origin of refugees in the Latin America and Caribbean region. Most of the refugees from Colombia were hosted in the neighbouring countries of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Ecuador. El Salvador was the second largest country of origin of refugees and the second largest source of new asylum claims in the region, after the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. El Salvador was followed by Haiti, which was the third largest origin of refugees in Latin America and the Caribbean at the end of 2018.

Figure 23. Top 10 Latin America and Caribbean countries by total refugees and asylum seekers, 2018
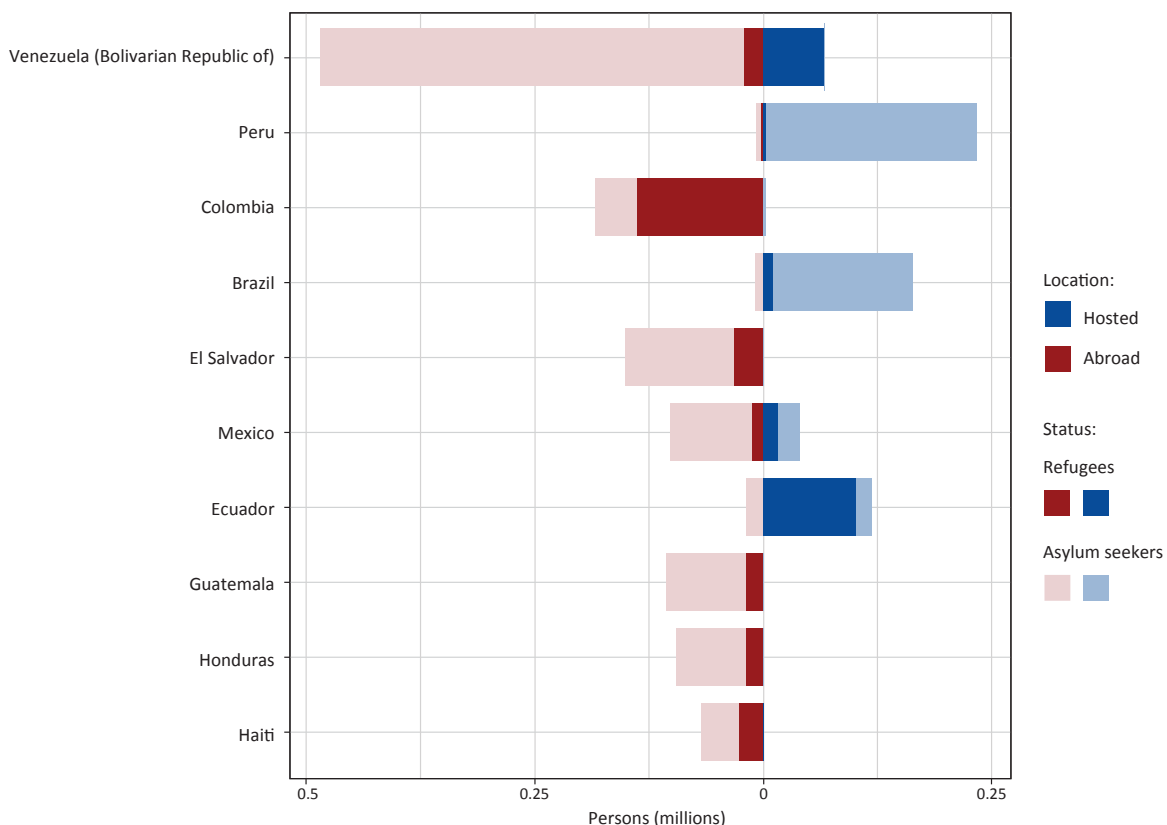

Source: UNHCR, n.d.

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 2018 data and are calculated by combining refugees and asylum seekers in and from countries.

Most new internal displacements in Latin America and the Caribbean were due to violence and conflict, not disasters. Figure 24 shows the top 20 countries in the region with the largest new internal displacements triggered by both conflict and violence and disasters. El Salvador and Colombia recorded the highest numbers of new internal displacements in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2018, with most displacements driven by violence and conflict in both countries. There were 246,000 new conflict-related displacements in El Salvador (nearly 4% of the country's population), while Colombia recorded 145,000. With 11,000 new displacements due to violence and conflict, Mexico recorded the third highest number in the region. The rest of the large internal displacements in the region were triggered by disasters, with Brazil recording the largest number (86,000), followed by Colombia (67,000) and Cuba (52,000). While the number of new internal conflict

displacements in Latin America and the Caribbean are much lower compared with Africa, these are the only two regions where the number of new displacements due to violence and conflict is higher than those caused by disasters.

Figure 24. Top Latin America and Caribbean countries by new internal displacements (disaster and conflict), 2018
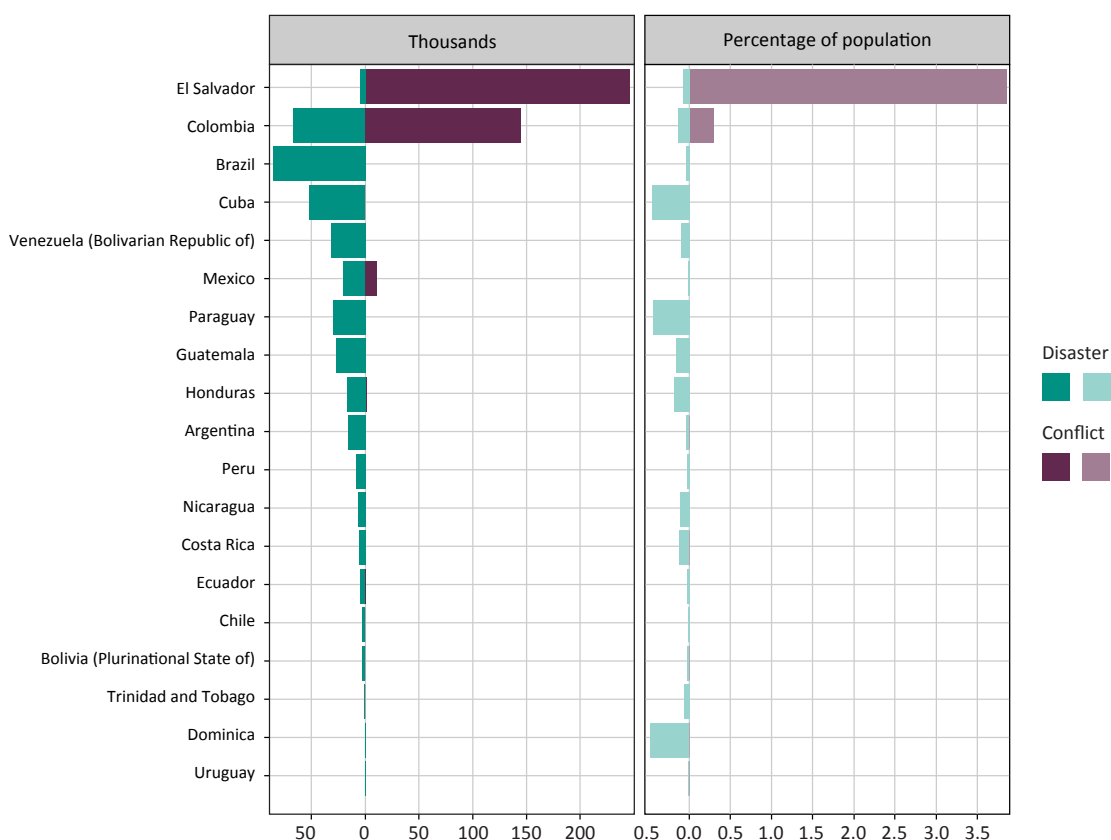
Source: IDMC, n.d; UN DESA, 2017.

Notes: New displacements refers to the number of displacement movements that occurred in 2018, 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 2017 UN DESA population estimates, and the percentage is for relative, illustrative purposes only.

Key features and developments in Latin America and the Caribbean

South America

Political and economic turmoil in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has resulted in one of the most acute humanitarian crises in the world, displacing millions of people from the country. By the end of 2018, the number of displaced Venezuelans worldwide had surpassed 3 million;[256] by mid-2019, this number had risen to 4 million.[257] The large majority were hosted in neighbouring countries such as Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Argentina, Chile and Brazil, although an increasing number of Venezuelans are also moving to countries in Central America and the Caribbean.[258] Colombia and Peru hosted the largest number of Venezuelans at the end of 2018, over 1 million and 500,000 people, respectively.[259] With the economy collapsing, a dire economic crisis has left millions of people unable to afford basic needs such as food, medicine and medical supplies. The poor state of the health-care system and increasing levels of malnutrition among children resulted in multiple deaths in 2018.[260] The International Monetary Fund estimated that hyperinflation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would reach over 1 million per cent in 2018, and would increase to 10 million per cent in 2019.[261] In addition to the economic crisis, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is experiencing a deteriorating political situation, which involves targeting of political opponents and the arrest of thousands of protesters.[262] The rise in violent crimes in the country also continues to force more people to seek protection in other countries. Asylum applications lodged by Venezuelans arriving in the United States, for example, reached nearly 28,000 by the end of June 2018.[263]

Intraregional migration within South America is very significant, with the large majority of international migrants currently moving within the subregion. Most migrants in countries such as Argentina and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the two countries with the largest number of international migrants in South America in 2019, were from within the subregion.[264] Argentina's international migrants were mainly from Paraguay, the Plurinational State of Bolivia and Chile, while those in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela were largely from Colombia.[265] Most of the foreign-born population in Chile is also primarily comprised of migrants from South American countries such as Peru, Argentina and the Plurinational State of Bolivia.[266] The Residence Agreements adopted by the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) – an economic and political body made up of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela[267] – have played a significant role in enhancing intraregional labour migration, while at the same

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256 IOM, 2018e.

257 UNHCR, 2019d.

258 UNHCR, 2019a.

259 Ibid.

260 OHCHR, 2018a.

261 Werner, 2018; Reuters, 2018.

262 Human Rights Watch, 2019.

263 UNHCR, 2019a.

264 UN DESA, 2019a.

265 Ibid.

266 Ibid.

267 Chatzky, 2019.

time reducing irregular migration within the subregion.[268] These agreements allow nationals of MERCOSUR to reside and work in member States for a period of two years, provided they have no criminal record and can prove citizenship.[269] As a result, low- and semi-skilled migrants in sectors such as agriculture, fishing and domestic work, who comprise the majority of labour migrants in South America,[270] have been able to move and work more freely within the subregion.

Millions of South Americans continue to reside outside of the subregion, while at the same time the number of migrants from outside the subregion is slowly growing. Emigration from South America is mostly related to work, fuelled by economic crises and political instability in origin countries.[271] The United States is the largest destination country of South American migrants, with 3.4 million.[272] The countries with the highest numbers of emigrants residing outside of South America in 2019 were Colombia (around 1.57 million), followed by Brazil (1.5 million) and Ecuador (around 1 million).[273] At the same time, reduced opportunities in labour markets abroad, as well as improved economic conditions in the subregion, are contributing to the return of many South American migrants and a decrease in the rate of extraregional migration.[274] The number of migrants in South America from outside the subregion is also growing. For example, since 2010, more people have emigrated from the EU to Latin America and the Caribbean overall, than from Latin America and the Caribbean to the EU.[275] Many of these people are not return migrants, but rather EU nationals, primarily from Spain, Italy and Portugal.[276] Migrants from these three origin countries collectively represented a population of over 800,000 people in South America in 2019.[277] Increased numbers of Haitians, Cubans and Dominicans have also migrated to South America.[278]

Though localized to particular countries, conflict and violence contribute to human displacement and migration in the subregion. In Colombia, over 5.7 million people remained internally displaced as of the end of 2018 – the second highest number of IDPs in the world.[279] In the same year, around 139,000 Colombians were living as refugees or in refugee-like situations abroad, a drop from more than 190,000 in 2017 and around 300,000 in 2016.[280] There were around 1 million Colombians in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Ecuador in 2019. However, as Colombia begins to transition out of five decades of violence with peace talks in late 2016 and 2017, deteriorating economic and social conditions in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela are leading many Colombians to return home.[281]

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268 Acosta, 2016; Aimsiranun, 2018.

269 Ibid.

270 Aimsiranun, 2018.

271 IOM, 2017.

272 UN DESA, 2019a.

273 Ibid.

274 IOM, n.d.e.

275 IOM, 2015.

276 Ibid.

277 UN DESA, 2019a.

278 IOM, 2017.

279 IDMC, 2019.

280 UNHCR, 2018a, 2019a.

281 UNHCR, 2019a.

Central America and the Caribbean

Migration northward continues to be the predominant trend in Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean. Mexico remains a prominent origin country, with thousands emigrating mainly to the United States each year. It is also a significant transit country for migrants travelling northward to the southern United States border. However, within a context of improving economic conditions and rising educational levels in the country, as well as stricter immigration enforcement in the United States, Mexico is an increasingly significant destination country for international migrants, some of whom may have been unable to enter the United States as initially planned.[282] The total number of foreign-born persons in Mexico increased from around 970,000 in 2010 to a little over 1 million in 2019 – a majority of whom were North Americans, but also an increasingly larger portion of whom were migrants from other Latin American and Caribbean countries.[283] However, the United States is by far the most popular destination for Central American migrants, with more than 90 per cent of Central American migrants living in the United States in 2017.[284] Violence and insecurity, poverty and family reunification remain important drivers of migration from Central America.[285] The most prominent intraregional migrant corridors involve Nicaraguans, Panamanians and other Central Americans moving to Costa Rica for temporary or permanent labour, and Central Americans (primarily from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador) migrating to Belize because of instability and a lack of employment opportunities.[286] In the Caribbean, the most prominent intraregional migrant corridors include Haitians migrating to the Dominican Republic.[287] There is also an increasing number of migrants from other regions, including those from Africa, transiting through Central America toward the United States.[288]

Irregular migrant flows in the subregion are dynamic, becoming increasingly complex as well as diverse. Mexicans represented the vast majority of irregular migrants apprehended while attempting to cross the United States–Mexico border for many years. However, in recent years, apprehensions of Central Americans originating from the "Northern Triangle" region of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador exceeded that of Mexicans at the United States–Mexico border.[289] Fleeing violence, persecution and poverty, thousands of migrants from Central America trekked for thousands of miles toward the Mexico–United States border. The most recent so-called "migrant caravan" began in Honduras in October 2018. As Honduran migrants made their way toward the United States–Mexico border, thousands more migrants from countries such as El Salvador and Guatemala joined the group. By the end of 2018, the migrant caravan had grown to thousands of migrants, many of them children.[290] Several factors drove people to the caravan, including escaping violence in countries such as Honduras, fleeing extreme poverty and seeking better economic opportunities. The migrant caravan resulted in fierce political debate in the United States and prompted the Government to deploy more than 7,000 active-duty military officers to the border with Mexico.[291] By early 2019, a few thousand migrants who managed to reach the United States border had been apprehended. Some received Mexican humanitarian visas, while others were deported or chose to return to their countries of origin.[292] Hundreds of migrants remain in Tijuana, Mexico. In February 2019, a caravan of Cubans and Haitians, including some Africans

282 Dominguez-Villegas, 2019.

283 UN DESA, 2019a.

284 Ibid.

285 FAO, 2018a; CEPAL, 2019.

286 ILO, 2016.

287 Ibid.

288 Solomon, 2019.

289 Bialik, 2019.

290 UNICEF, 2018.

291 Meissner, 2018.

292 Dominguez-Villegas, 2019; BBC, 2019.

and Asians, entered Panama from Colombia and later reached Mexico. In a shift from its more open policy announced at the start of 2019, Mexico began detaining migrants from Central America in April 2019.[293]

Migrant smuggling is also a major feature of the subregion, as people attempt to bypass border controls in Central America and Mexico. Along the United States–Mexico border, smuggling networks are a profitable industry overseen by international crime groups.[294] Smuggled migrants are known frequently to fall victim to predatory practices ranging from demands for bribes to mass kidnapping and extortion.[295] Migrants have also been subjected to execution, physical and sexual assault, torture and disappearance; this is especially the case in Mexico, where it has been reported that some smuggling networks are often managed by drug trafficking organizations.[296] Migrant smuggling has also long enabled irregular migration in and through Central American countries such as Guatemala, especially with migrants moving to the United States. Both Guatemalan nationals and international migrants transiting through Guatemala have historically heavily relied on smuggling, locally known as *Coyoterismo,* to reach their final destinations.[297] There is growing concern in Latin America that visa regimes are exploited to enable migrants to enter countries in the region before they are smuggled onward to other destinations.[298] Moreover, a significant number of people have died while making irregular migration journeys across Central America.[299]

Socioeconomic conditions and generalized community-level violence in a number of Central American countries contribute to migration, notably of high numbers of women and children. There has been a significant increase in the number of asylum claims from Central America. Applications from Central America and Mexico comprised 54 per cent of all asylum claims in the United States in 2017.[300] Migrants from El Salvador made up the majority of applicants (over 33,000), followed by those from Guatemala (around 33,000) and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (27,500).[301] There has been an increase in the number of family units apprehended at United States–Mexico border; in 2018, around 163,000 family members were apprehended, accounting for 35 per cent of all border apprehensions and more than three times the number of family apprehensions in 2017.[302] Unaccompanied children remain a significant part of irregular migration flows, with about 54,000 unaccompanied children apprehended at the border in 2018.[303]

Climate change appears to be impacting on human mobility in Central America and the Caribbean, although isolating the environmental drivers of migration remains a complex task. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the rise in global temperature is associated with outmigration in communities dependent on agriculture.[304] In 2018, drought conditions in Central America were responsible for an estimated 82 per cent loss of maize and bean crops in Honduras, putting nearly 3 million people at risk of food insecurity.[305] In countries such as El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, a large share of the populations live in rural areas and heavily rely on agriculture for their livelihoods, making

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293 Cullell, 2019.
294 Sanchez, 2018.
295 Ibid.
296 Ibid.
297 Velasco, 2018; Sanchez, 2018.
298 Ibid.
299 IOM, n.d.d.
300 UNHCR, 2019a.
301 Ibid.
302 Bialik, 2019.
303 Ibid.
304 IPCC, 2018.
305 Palencia, 2014; FAO, 2018b.

them especially vulnerable to environmental changes such as droughts.[306] The effects of climate change may have played a role in recent migration dynamics in Central America, with a significant number of people who were part of the caravan, for example, engaged in activities such as agriculture, forestry, cattle raising and fishing prior to embarking on the journey northward.[307] Meanwhile, the Caribbean is located in an area highly prone to both seismic activity and climate-related disaster risks. Countries in the Caribbean are among the most vulnerable to natural disasters and climate change. With a significant share of the Caribbean population living in areas exposed to sea-level rise, recent disasters have resulted in large-scale displacement and loss of life. Hurricane Irma, for example, which swept across parts of the Caribbean and Northern America, was the largest disaster event globally in 2017, displacing more than 2 million people in both regions.[308] In addition to the loss of life, the hurricane left catastrophic damage to property and infrastructure in several Caribbean areas, including Puerto Rico, Cuba and the United States Virgin Islands.[309] Many Caribbean islands are also heavily reliant on sectors such as agriculture and tourism, and disasters have taken a significant toll on their economies. As these disasters increase in frequency and intensity due to climate change, health risks and food insecurity are expected to worsen, in addition to increasing damage to biodiversity.[310]

Emigration to the United States is a key feature in the Caribbean, with Caribbean-born immigrants among the largest groups in the country. Historical ties between the Caribbean and the United States, as well as geopolitics, have significantly influenced migration northward. In 2017, 10 per cent of all immigrants in the United States were from the Caribbean, making it the largest destination for Caribbean migrants outside the subregion.[311] Other main destinations include Canada, Spain and the United Kingdom. Over 65 per cent of Caribbean immigrants in the United States in 2019 came from just five countries (Haiti, Trinidad and Tobago, Cuba, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic), with the majority of these coming from Cuba.[312] The increase in the Cuban population in the United States post-mid-1960s was to a large extent driven by two laws that offered unique treatment to immigrants from Cuba: the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act and the 1994 and 1995 United States–Cuba Migration Accords, which made it possible for Cubans (who had arrived in the United States via land) to gain permanent residence after living in the country for one year. This came to be known as the "wet foot, dry foot" policy.[313]

Northern America[314]

Migration in Northern America is dominated by migration into the region. As shown in figure 25, over 58.6 million migrants were residing in Northern America from a variety of regions in 2019. This number has increased by around 3 million since 2015, when around 55.6 million migrants were living in the region. The largest group was from Latin America and the Caribbean (26.6 million), followed by Asia (17.4 million) and Europe (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 American and the Caribbean, and Asia, as well as by economic growth and political stability in Northern America.

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306 CEPAL, 2019.

307 IOM, 2018f.

308 IDMC, 2018a.

309 Ibid.

310 Otker-Robe, 2019.

311 Zong and Batalova, 2019.

312 UN DESA, 2019a.

313 CEPAL, United Nations and IOM, 2017; Zong and Batalova, 2019.

314 See appendix A for details on the composition of 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 dominant, more Northern American-born migrants lived outside the region (around 3 million) than had moved elsewhere within the region (1.4 million).

Figure 25. Migrants to, within and from Northern America, 1990–2019
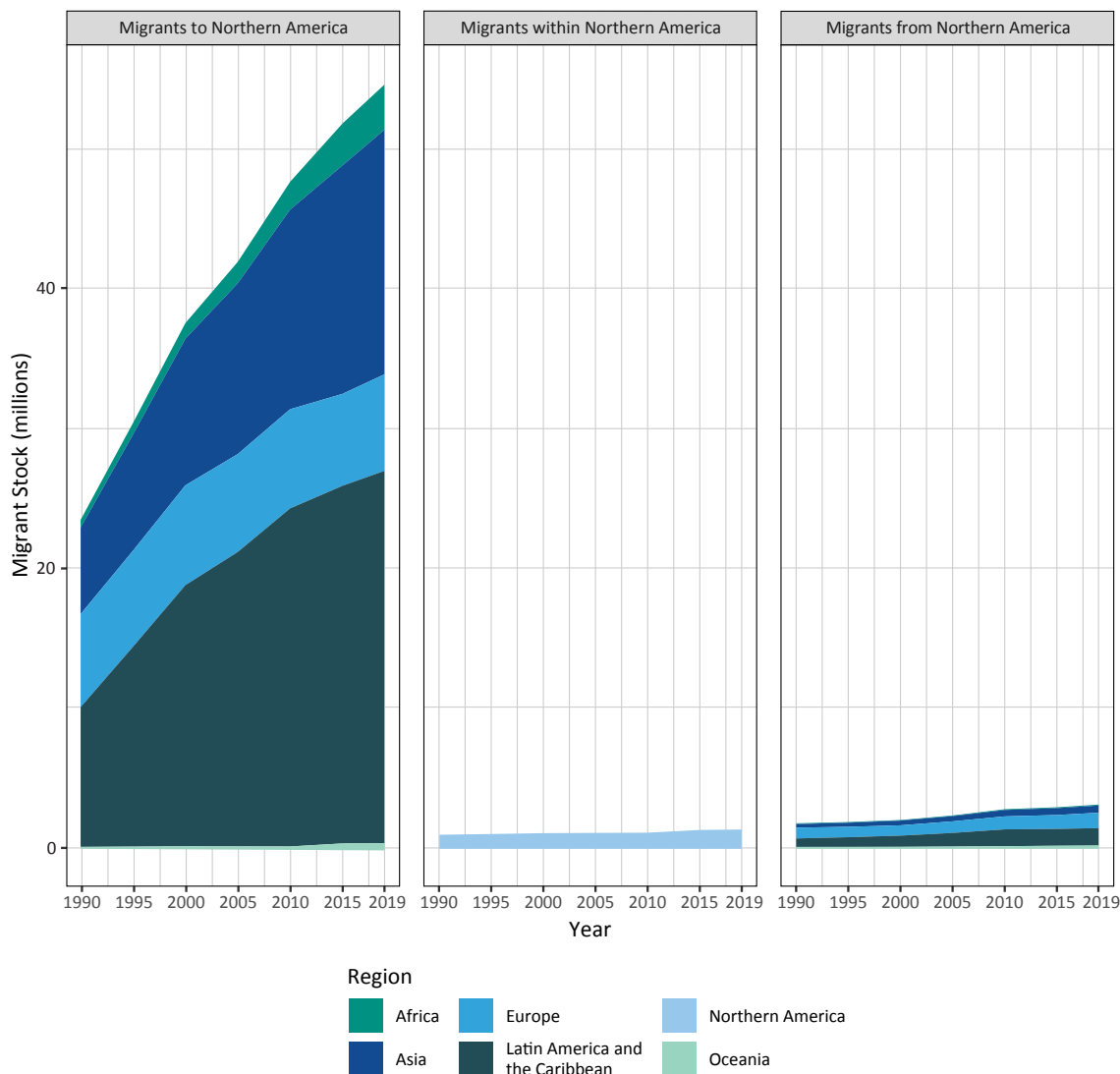
Source: UN DESA, 2019a.

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).

Figure 26 shows the countries with the largest proportional population change in Northern America between 2009 to 2019. The population changes in both Canada and the United States were in terms of growth, with Canada experiencing the largest change in the size of its population over the last decade (11%). The United States' population also expanded during the same period, increasing by around 7 per cent. In Canada, recent population changes have largely been driven by immigration, which remains the main driver of population growth in the country.

Figure 26. Countries with the largest proportional population change in Northern America, 2009–2019
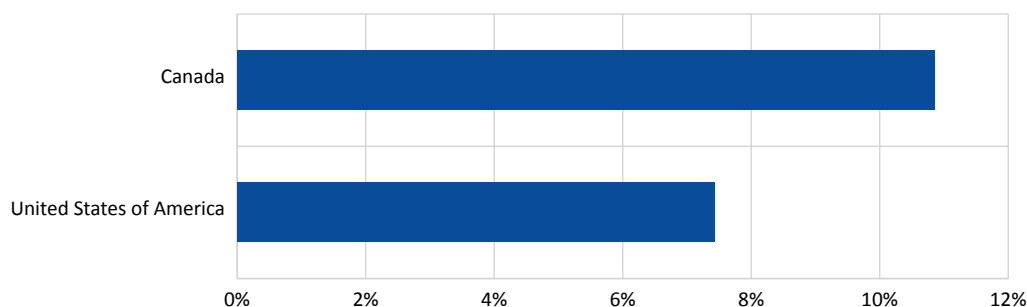
Source: UN DESA, 2019a.

Note: It is important to note that the largest proportional population changes from 2007 to 2019 are more likely to occur in countries with relatively smaller populations.

In 2019, the United States had the largest foreign-born population in the world, while Canada had the eighth largest. Over 86 per cent of the foreign-born population in the region lived in the United States. As shown in figure 27, the share of Canada's total population that was foreign-born (at over 21%) was considerably higher than in the United States in 2019 (15%). Canada also had a larger share of its citizens who had emigrated (as a percentage of its total home population) compared with the United States.

Figure 27. Main migration countries in Northern America in 2019
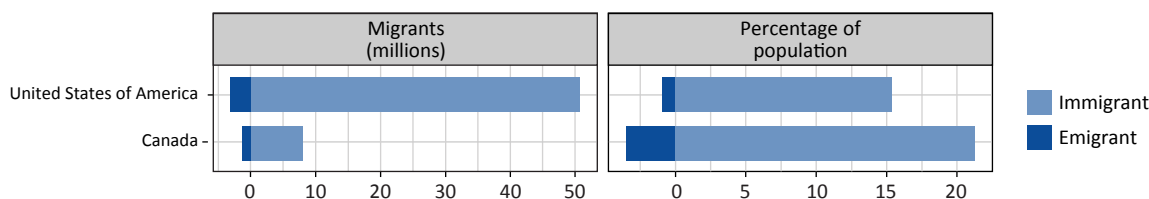
Source: UN DESA, 2019a.

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 2019.

Figure 28 shows the top 10 migration corridors involving Northern American countries, representing an accumulation of migratory movements over time and providing a snapshot of how migration patterns have evolved into significant foreig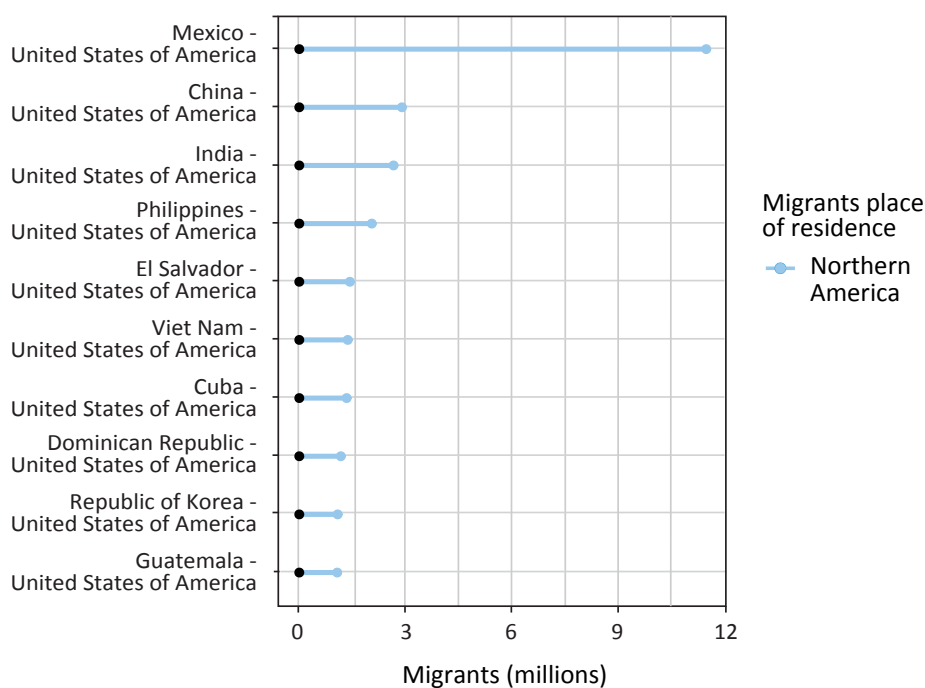n-born populations in specific destination countries. The largest migrant corridors in Northern America all involve migrants either from Asia or Latin America and the Caribbean, to the United States. Mexican-born migrants form the biggest migrant group, with over 11 million living in the United States in 2019. The next largest migration corridors involve populous Asian countries, including China, India and the Philippines. Some of the other large migration corridors from Viet Nam, the Republic of Korea and Cuba to the United States grew rapidly after conflicts or political changes in origin countries many years ago.

Figure 28. Top 10 migration corridors involving Northern American countries, 2019

The United States hosted over 1 million refugees and asylum seekers in 2018. As apparent from figure 29, the majority, over 700,000, were asylum seekers. The United States also remained the largest recipient of new asylum claims in the world in 2018 (over 250,000), although this was a decrease from 2017, when asylum claims surpassed 300,000. Asylum seekers in the United States came from a vast range of countries; however, the largest populations were from El Salvador, Guatemala, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Honduras. Canada is also host to a large number of refugees and asylum seekers. In 2018, Canada hosted over 190,000 refugees and asylum seekers, an increase from 2017, when the country hosted about 150,000. Recent changes in refugee resettlement to the United States and Canada are discussed in the "Key features and developments in Northern America" section below.

Figure 29. Numbers of refugees and asylum seekers in and from Northern American countries, 2018
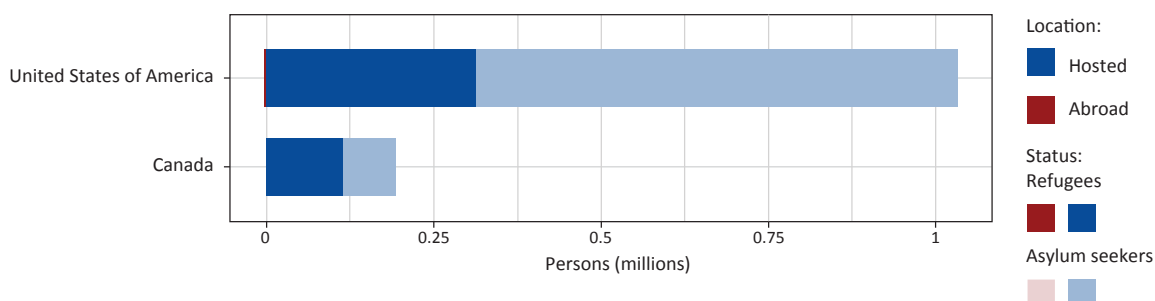
Source: UNHCR, n.d.

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 were due to disasters (figure 30). The United States recorded the highest number, with more than 1.2 million people displaced as a result of two major hurricanes and wildfires. The scale of displacement in the rest of Northern America was much lower compared with the United States; Canada, for example, recorded 19,000 new displacements in 2018. The number of new internal displacements due to disasters in Northern America came second only to Asia, which experienced more disaster-driven displacement than conflict (see figure 12).

Figure 30. Top Northern American countries by new internal displacements (disaster and conflict), 2018
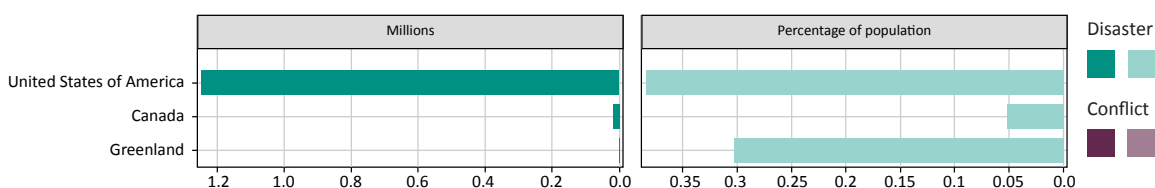
Source: IDMC, n.d; UN DESA, 2017.

Notes: New displacements refers to the number of displacement movements that occurred in 2018, 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 2017 UN DESA population estimates, and the percentage is for relative, illustrative purposes only.

Key features and developments in Northern America

Migration trends in the United States are characterized by high levels of immigration, primarily from Latin America and Asia, although the demography of international migrants continues to evolve. The United States' foreign-born population increased by 5 per cent from 2015 to 2019, reaching nearly 51 million people.[315] As of 2019, Mexican-born migrants were still by far the largest foreign-born population living in the United States, at just over 12.4 million, accounting for around 22.7 per cent of the total number of immigrants in the United States.[316] However, while Mexicans have historically comprised the largest inflows of migrants to the United States (at least since 1970), their numbers have dropped over the last few years.[317] Recent arrivals have mainly come from Asia – particularly India, China and the Philippines – as well as from other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, such as the Dominican Republic, Cuba and El Salvador.[318] In 2019, China was the origin of the second largest number of immigrants to the United States, and Asia is projected to become the largest origin region by 2055.[319] The largest immigration pathway for Asians migrating to the United States is through family-sponsored visas,[320] although many are also students; there were more than 360,000 Chinese international students in the United States in the academic year 2017/2018.[321]

Migrant populations in Canada continue to increase, representing a growing percentage of the country's total population. In 2000, foreign-born persons represented about 18 per cent of Canada's total population, increasing to nearly 19 per cent in 2005, around 20 per cent in 2010 and over 21 per cent in 2019.[322] However, while migrant populations in Canada have originated primarily from European countries in the past, the composition of the country's foreign-born population has shifted to include large populations of migrants from Asian countries. For example, in 2000, the largest origin country of international migrants in Canada was the United Kingdom (608,000), followed by China (412,000), India (319,000) and Italy (315,000). By 2019, India and China had surpassed the United Kingdom as the two largest origin countries, with around 709,000 and nearly 700,000 migrants respectively.[323] Other Asian countries such as the Islamic Republic of Iran also featured in the top 10 largest populations within Canada's total 7.9 million total foreign-born population in 2019.[324] In 2017, Canada admitted over 286,000 new permanent residents, with India, the Philippines and China representing the top three countries of origin.[325]

The estimated number of irregular migrants in the United States is thought to be lower than a decade ago, but remains much larger when compared with Canada. An estimated 10.5 million irregular migrants were living in the United States in 2017, accounting for 3.2 per cent of the total population.[326] The number

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315 UN DESA, 2019a.

316 Ibid.

317 Zong, Batalova and Burrows, 2019.

318 UN DESA, 2019a.

319 Radford, 2019; UN DESA, 2019a.

320 Malik, 2015.

321 IIE, 2018.

322 UN DESA, 2019a.

323 Ibid.

324 Ibid.

325 IRCC, 2018.

326 Krogstad, Passel and Cohn, 2019.

of irregular migrants has been decreasing, falling from a high of 12.2 million in 2007.[327] For the first time, Mexicans comprised less than half (47%) of all undocumented migrants in the United States.[328] The number of Central American irregular migrants – most from the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras – increased from 1.5 million in 2007 to 1.9 million in 2017.[329] A significant number of adult irregular migrants in the United States are not new arrivals; more than 65 per cent of adults in 2017 had lived in the United States for more than 10 years.[330] Irregular migrants may enter the country without authorization; however, a large number are visa overstayers who initially entered the United States regularly. In the fiscal year 2018, for example, there were more than 600,000 foreigners who overstayed their visas in the United States.[331] Canada also has a significant number of irregular migrants, although estimates vary widely, and accurate numbers are difficult to establish. However, in the two years prior to June 2019, more than 45,000 migrants were reported to have crossed into Canada irregularly.[332]

The United States and Canada have resettled significant numbers of refugees, representing the two largest resettlement countries in the world. In 2018, Canada resettled more refugees than the United States, the first time that the United States has not taken the lead globally. Out of the 92,400 refugees resettled around the world in 2018, Canada admitted around 28,000, while the United States took in a little less than 23,000.[333] The number of refugees resettled in the United States has been declining over the last two years; in 2016, for example, the United States admitted nearly 100,000 refugees.[334] This number dramatically dropped to 33,000 the following year.[335] There has also been a significant increase in the number of United States citizens applying for asylum in Canada since 2016. In 2017 alone, more than 2,500 citizens of the United States applied for asylum in Canada,[336] six times the number of applications in 2016 and the highest number on record since Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) began reporting on the number of asylum seekers more than two decades ago.[337] The majority of asylum applications from United States' citizens were made by children of parents without United States residency.[338]

Immigration policies in the United States have hardened, slowing immigration inflows and humanitarian intakes. For example, in 2018, overall visa issuances for both immigrant and non-immigrants declined for a second year in a row.[339] More than 10 million non-immigrant visas were issued in 2016; by the end of 2018, this number had fallen to a little over 9 million. The United States' travel ban – which first came into effect in January 2017 and originally included citizens of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen – has contributed to a reduction in the number of immigrants and visitors entering the United States. After it was challenged in court, the revised

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327 Ibid.
328 Ibid.
329 Ibid.
330 Ibid.
331 United States Department of Homeland Security, 2018.
332 Connolly, 2019.
333 UNHCR, 2019a.
334 UNHCR, 2018a.
335 Ibid.
336 Patriquin, 2018.
337 Ibid.
338 Ibid.
339 United States Department of State, n.d.

travel ban, which added more names to the list of banned countries, came into effect in September 2017. It included the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Chad, Yemen, Somalia and Libya, although Chad was later removed from the list.[340] The most controversial change began in June 2018, when the Government put into effect the so-called "zero-tolerance policy", applying to migrants, including asylum-seeking families crossing the United States border without documentation. The policy was meant to serve as a punitive deterrent for irregular border crossing,[341] and its implementation led to the separation of over 2,600 children from their parents,[342] but the public outcry that ensued forced the Government to quickly reverse course. Tougher immigration policies have come on the back of widespread anti-immigrant rhetoric, which has sought to characterize migrants as both a danger and drain on United States society; conspiracy theories about immigration have also been widespread, creating an atmosphere of mistrust and fear.[343] A 2018 poll found that more than half of United States citizens believed their Government to be withholding information on the real cost of immigration to society and taxpayers.[344] Recent data also reveal that the number of hate crimes in the United States increased in 2017, with many victims targeted because of their race or ethnicity.[345]

As immigration policies become more restrictive at the national level, "sanctuary cities" in the United States have stepped in, offering protection to undocumented migrants whose status puts them at risk of either being detained or deported. While the concept of sanctuary cities exists in other parts of the world, it is most commonly applied in the United States, where many local jurisdictions – such as cities, counties or States – are in open defiance of national immigration laws[346] and have passed legislation aimed at protecting undocumented residents.[347] In 2018, California – the most populous state in the United States, and with the largest number of undocumented migrants – signed into law statewide measures that limit local law enforcement cooperation with federal authorities on immigration enforcement.[348] Sanctuary cities have generated backlash from federal authorities, including attempts to punish jurisdictions that do not comply with federal immigration ordinances.[349]

Oceania[350]

In 2019, around 7.7 million international migrants from outside Oceania were living in the region. As shown in figure 31 the foreign-born migrant population was primarily composed of people from Asia (49%) and Europe (38%). Throughout the last 30 years, the Asian migrant group has grown, while the number from Europe has remained steady.

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340 Chishti and Bolter, 2019.

341 OHCHR, 2018b.

342 Mittelstadt, 2018; Shapiro and Sharma, 2018.

343 Gaston and Uscinski, 2018.

344 Ibid.

345 FBI, 2018.

346 Duncan and Popp, 2017.

347 Bauder, 2016.

348 Raphelson, Hobson and Bentley, 2018.

349 Chishti and Bolter, 2019.

350 See appendix A for details on the composition of Oceania.

Out of all of the six world regions, Oceania had the lowest number of migrants outside its region in 2019, partly a reflection of the low total population size of the region, although there was an increase in their number during the previous 30-year period. Most of those born in Oceania living outside the region resided in Europe and Northern America.

Figure 31. Migrants to, within and from Oceania, 1990–2019
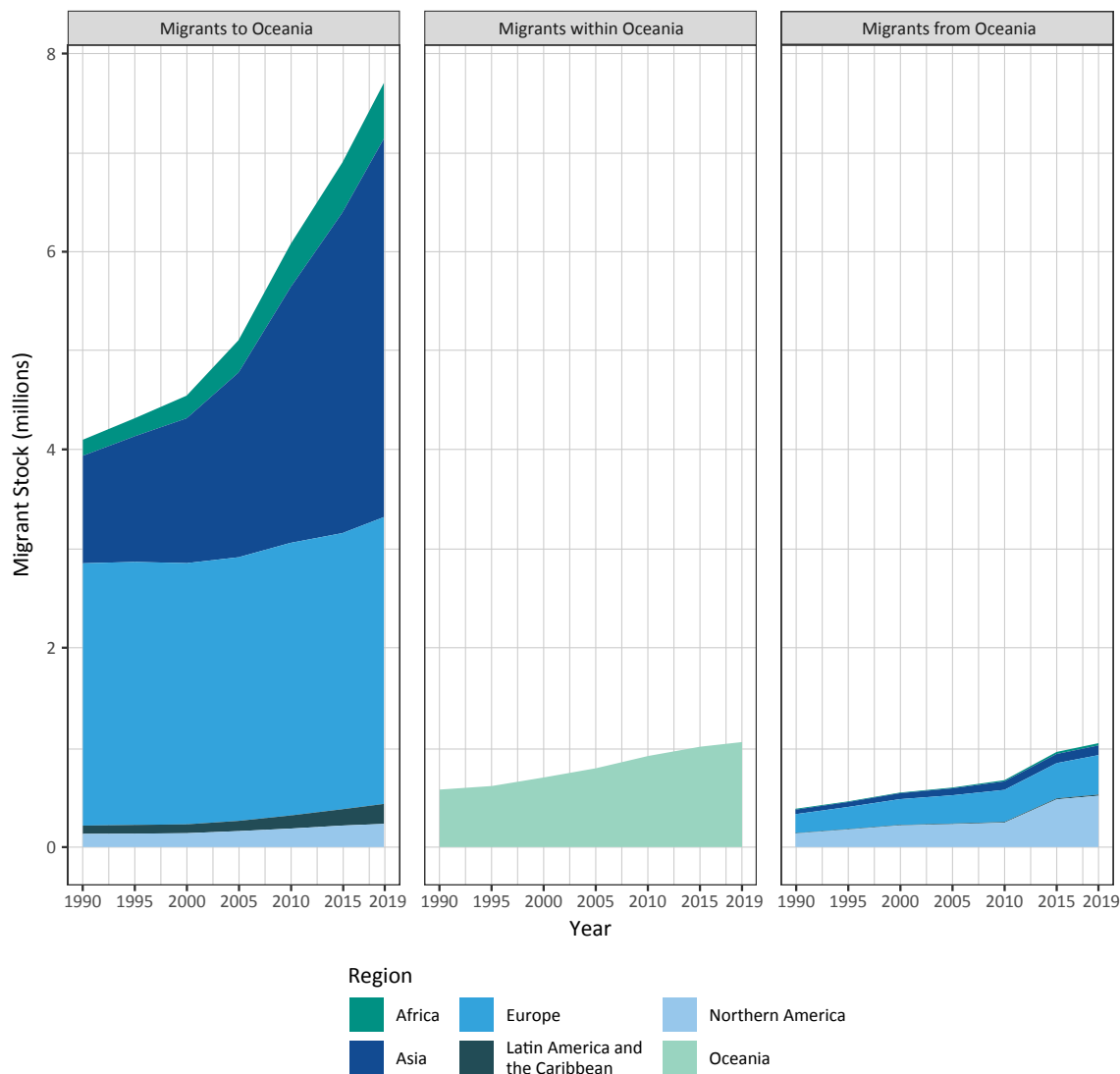
Note: "Migrants to Oceania" refers to migrants residing in the region (i.e. Oceania) who were born in one of the other regions (e.g. Europe or Asia). "Migrants within Oceania" refers to migrants born in the region (i.e. Oceania) and residing outside their country of birth, but still within the Oceania region. "Migrants from Oceania" refers to people born in Oceania who were residing outside the region (e.g. in Europe or Asia).

Several countries in Oceania have experienced significant changes in the size of their populations over the last decade. The largest changes, as shown in figure 32, occurred in Vanuatu and Solomon Islands, whose populations increased by around 30 per cent between 2009 and 2019. The population change in the rest of the countries was also in terms of growth.

Figure 32. Countries with the largest proportional population change in Oceania, 2009–2019
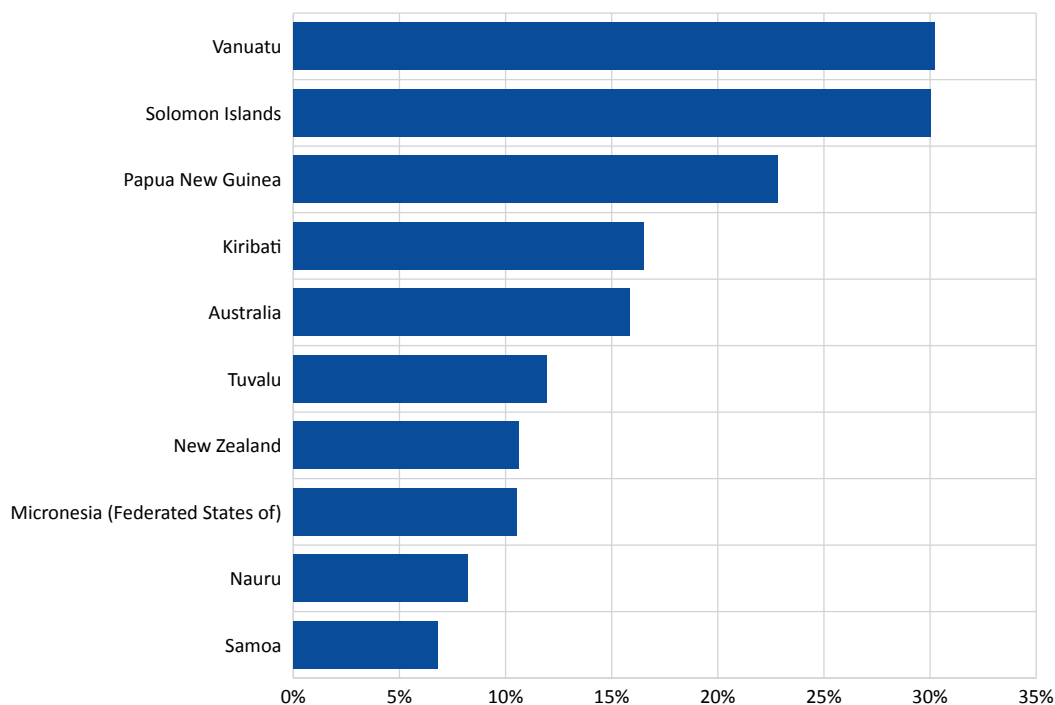
Source: UN DESA, 2019c.

Note: It is important to note that the largest proportional population changes from 2009 to 2019 are more likely to occur in countries with relatively smaller populations.

The vast majority of international migrants in Oceania were living in either Australia or New Zealand (figure 33). Most countries in the region have skewed migration profiles, being either large net origin or net destination countries. For example, Tonga, Samoa and Fiji all 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, to a lesser extent, in Australia. Australia and New Zealand have high shares of foreign-born populations as a portion of their total population, comprising around 29 per cent and 22 per cent, respectively.

Figure 33. Oceania migrant countries in 2019
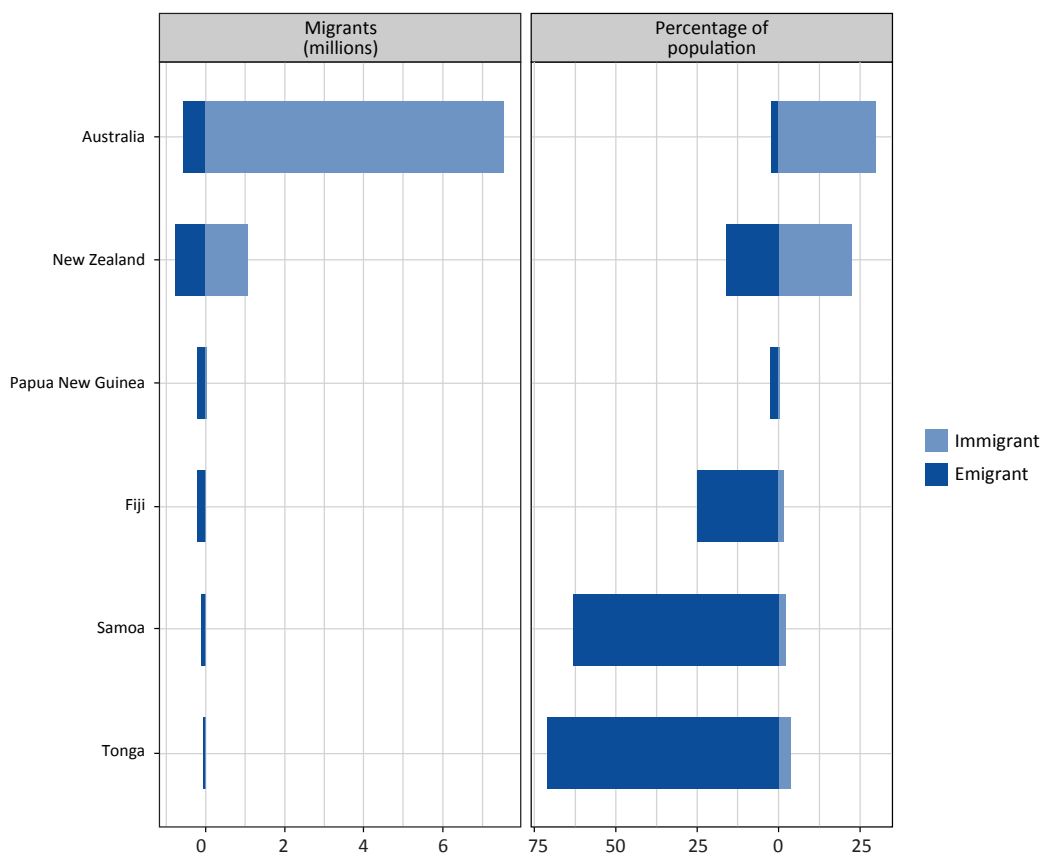
Source: UN DESA, 2019a.

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 2019.

Figure 34 with the top 10 migration corridors involving Oceania countries shows an accumulation of migratory movements over time, and provides a snapshot of how migration patterns have evolved into significant foreign-born populations in specific destination countries. Eight out of the 10 top migration corridors in the region involve migrants to Australia, with the largest being of migrants from the United Kingdom. These

larger corridors also include migrants from a variety of countries from outside Oceania – including China, India, Viet Nam and the Philippines – many of which have experienced rapid population growth over recent decades. Migrants from Oceania were more likely to end up within the region than in other regions. For example, New Zealand had high shares of migrants abroad, with the vast majority residing in Australia.

Figure 34. Top 10 migration corridors involving Oceania countries, 2019
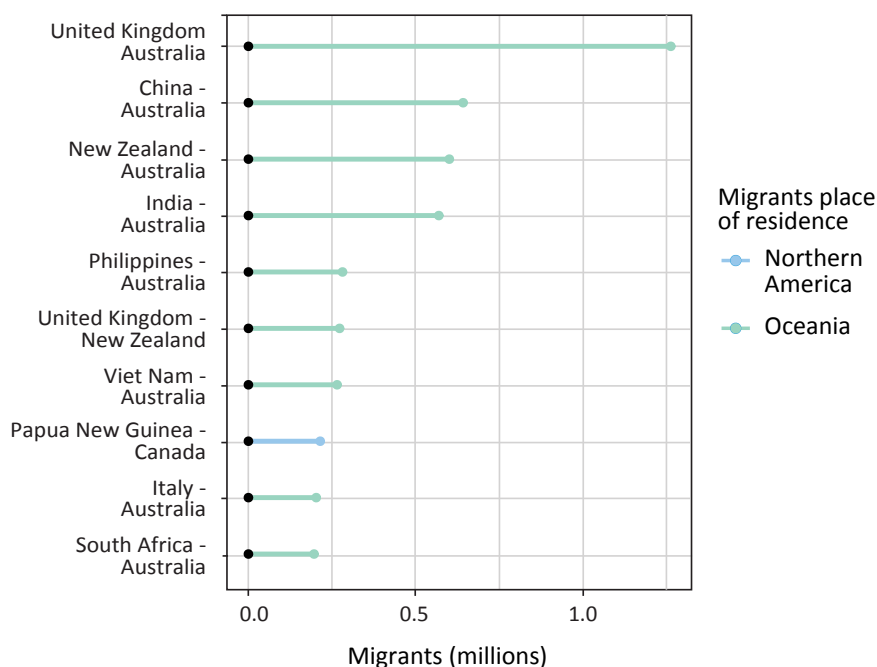
Source: UN DESA, 2019a.

Note: Corridors represent an accumulation of migratory movements over time and provide a snapshot of how migration patterns have evolved into significant foreign-born populations in specific destination countries.

In 2018, Oceania hosted a little more than 126,000 refugees and asylum seekers. Australia was the largest host country in this region, followed by Papua New Guinea and New Zealand. Most of the refugees in these countries originated from Asia, such as Indonesians in Papua New Guinea or Afghans and Iranians in Australia. Globally, there were around 3,000 refugees and asylum seekers from countries in the Oceania region in 2018.

Figure 35. Numbers of refugees and asylum seekers in and from Oceania countries, 2018
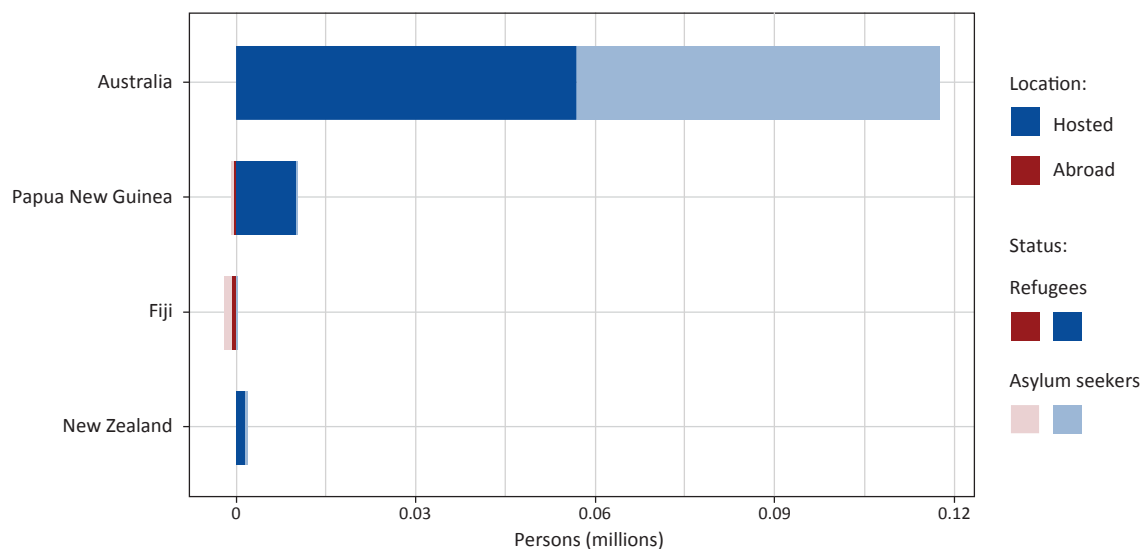
Source: UNHCR, n.d.

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 figure is based on 2018 data and are calculated by combining refugees and asylum seekers in and from countries.

Most new internal displacements in Oceania in 2018 resulted from disasters, not conflict (see figure 36). Papua New Guinea recorded the highest number of internal disaster displacements (61,000), which were largely triggered by an earthquake. Other large displacements associated with disasters were recorded in the Northern Mariana Islands (14,000), Vanuatu (13,000) and Australia (11,000). Volcanic activity led to most internal displacements in Vanuatu, while in Australia, bush fires were responsible for most of the displacements recorded in 2018. With 360 new conflict displacements, Papua New Guinea was the only country in Oceania that experienced displacements driven by violence and conflict.

Figure 36. Top countries in Oceania by new internal displacements (disaster and conflict), 2018
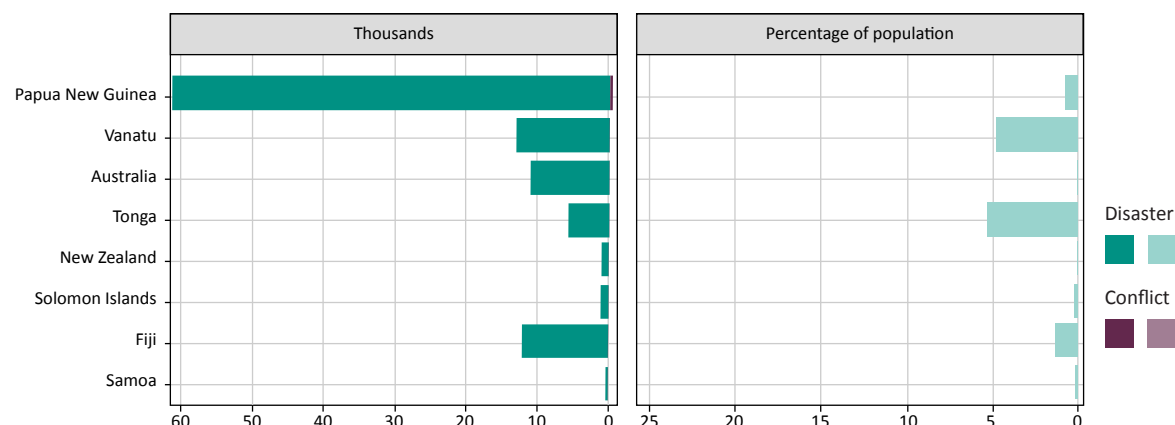
Source: IDMC, n.d.; UN DESA, 2017.

Notes: New displacements refers to the number of displacement movements that occurred in 2018, 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 2017 UN DESA population estimates, and the percentage is for relative, illustrative purposes only.

Key features and developments in Oceania

Annual net migration to both New Zealand and Australia has declined. In the year that ended November 2018, New Zealand had a net migration of a little over 51,000, slightly down from around 52,000 in the year ending December 2017;[351] estimates for Australia's net overseas migration in the year ending June 2018 was 237,200 people, a 10 per cent drop from the year ending June 2017.[352] The regions where migrants to Australia are born have changed in recent years; since 2014, the largest number of immigrants have largely come from Asia as opposed to traditional regions of origin, including Oceania and Europe.[353] For example, the number of migrant arrivals from South and Central Asia have now surpassed those from North-West Europe and Oceania.[354] In 2019, 30 per cent of Australia's population was foreign born, in comparison with 21.3 per cent in Canada and 15.4 per cent in the United States.[355] The United Kingdom has consistently been the main origin country of migrants in New Zealand for decades, with a notable increase in the number of Asian migrants, particularly from China and India, as well as a considerable population of people from the Pacific

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351 Stats, New Zealand, 2019.

352 Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2019.

353 Ibid.

354 Ibid.

355 UN DESA, 2019a.

Islands, including Fiji, Samoa and Tonga.[356] In 2017, New Zealand's foreign-born population constituted nearly 23 per cent of the country's total population.[357] In both Australia and New Zealand, there are a significant number of temporary workers. Over 209,000 people were granted work visas in New Zealand in 2016/2017, an increase of 9 per cent from 2015/2016.[358] The largest origin country of temporary migrant workers in New Zealand was India in 2016/2017, followed by the United Kingdom, China and Germany.[359] Both countries also attract a large number of international students. The number of international students has increased since 2012 in Australia, reaching a record high of nearly 700,000 in 2018,[360] while there were over 91,000 student visa holders in New Zealand in the year 2016/2017, with most students primarily from China and India.[361]

Both Australia and New Zealand participate in refugee resettlement. Australia's refugee resettlement programme is the third largest in the world, with nearly 13,000 refugees resettled in the country in 2018.[362] Under Australia's Humanitarian Program, an additional 12,000 humanitarian places were made available in 2015 for people displaced by conflicts in the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq.[363] The number of places under Australia's Humanitarian Program rose to 16,250 in 2017/2018 and was expected to further increase to 18,750 place from 2018 to 2019.[364] Australia's policy is to transfer those who arrive irregularly by boat as asylum seekers to offshore processing centres on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea and in Nauru.[365] In July 2013, Australia also announced that all persons arriving by boat and found to be in need of international protection would not be resettled to Australia.[366] As part of a 2016 bilateral resettlement arrangement between the United States and Australia, the United States agreed to resettle up to 1,200 refugees from Nauru and Papua New Guinea's Manus Island.[367] By early 2019, only around 500 refugees from these offshore processing centres had been resettled in the United States under the arrangement.[368] At the same time, around 1,000 of those who were transferred to Manus Island and Nauru remain there, some of whom were experiencing severe physical and mental health needs.[369] New Zealand is also a refugee resettlement country, resettling 1,000 refugees annually through its Refugee Quota Programme.[370] This also includes 250 places specifically set for Syrian refugees in 2016/2017 and in 2017/2018.[371] New Zealand has also established an additional quota of 300 places per year that allow extended family members of refugees in New Zealand to apply for Permanent Residence.[372]

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356 Ibid.

357 Ibid.

358 New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 2018.

359 Ibid.

360 Australian Department of Education and Training, 2018.

361 New Zealand Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 2018.

362 UNHCR, 2019a.

363 Australian Department of Social Services, 2019.

364 Ibid.

365 Refugee Council of Australia, 2017.

366 Ibid.

367 Andrew and Renata Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, 2019.

368 Davidson, 2019.

369 UNHCR, 2019e.

370 New Zealand Immigration, n.d.

371 UNHCR, 2018b.

372 Ibid.

Economic challenges influence emigration from Pacific Island countries. Many Pacific Islands continue to experience persistent challenges related to poverty and inequality. The Islands' economic growth has also been hampered by their remoteness or vast distances between them and larger markets, limited natural resources and narrowly-based economies.[373] Additionally, the subregion is experiencing a significant "youth bulge", with 70 per cent of the population in Solomon Islands, for example, under the age of 34.[374] This has resulted in a significant number of young people struggling with unemployment, leading to a high degree of labour emigration. Since 2007, seasonal labour migration schemes have helped to relieve labour shortages in the Pacific Islands, with the establishment of New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme and Australia's Seasonal Worker Programme in 2012, aimed at meeting labour needs, mainly in the horticulture and viticulture industries.[375] Over 9,600 people from the Pacific Islands were granted visas under New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme during the 2017/2018 season and more than 8,000 under Australia's Seasonal Worker Programme during the same season.[376] In 2018, a new labour scheme, the Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS), was established to fill gaps in low- and semi-skilled jobs in both rural and regional Australia.[377] Importantly, while Australia and New Zealand remain the major destinations for labour migrants from Pacific Islands, labour emigration from these Islands has diversified, with Fijians and Tongans, for example, increasingly moving to countries such as Japan.[378]

Environmental change and degradation are also among the array of factors influencing many Pacific Islanders to migrate. The Pacific region is extremely vulnerable to natural hazards, some of which are linked to climate change. Vulnerability to climate change and associated migration, displacement and planned relocation varies among Pacific Island countries and territories. Half the population in Kiribati and Tuvalu lives in overcrowded urban areas on atolls of narrow strips of coral with limited access to water and land.[379] Incremental sea-level rise, saltwater intrusion and drought are important factors, among others, impacting people's decisions to migrate in the region, both internally and internationally.[380] In this context, there is also growing discussion around the need for the planned relocation of groups and communities.[381] For example Kiribati, one of the States most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, promoted the "Migration with Dignity" policy as a long-term adaptation measure.[382] The policy aims to facilitate both permanent and temporary labour migration on a voluntary basis as a way of coping with the effects of climate change.[383] Meanwhile, the Government of Fiji has been relocating people from several coastal villages that have been identified as highly vulnerable to the impacts of environmental change and degradation.[384]

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373 World Bank, 2019b.

374 Vanderwey, 2019.

375 ILO, 2019.

376 Ibid.

377 Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2019.

378 Ibid.

379 Curtain et al., 2016.

380 ESCAP, 2015.

381 See, for example, Georgetown University, n.d., for a range of resources on planned relocation.

382 Farbotko, 2018; Curtain and Dornan, 2019.

383 Ibid.

384 Ibid.

Conclusion

This chapter has drawn on a wide range of statistics and information to provide regional overviews of international migration around the world, with emphasis on changes occurring in calendar years 2017 and 2018 (and drawing on material published up until the end June 2019). The chapter focused on six broad world regions (Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern America and Oceania), and provided discussion of key issues as well as recent developments at the subregional level.

Overall, and as is highlighted by the graphs presented at the regional level, there are clear geographic aspects to migration and displacement. A quick scan of figures in the chapter shows visually the significant differences in migration patterns between regions: migration in Africa has been predominantly intraregional (from one African country to another) with migration also occurring to other regions of the world (from African to non-African countries), whereas in Latin America and the Caribbean, migration is dominated by emigration to other world regions, especially Northern America, with intraregional migration playing a more limited role.

The addition of two regional graphs in this edition of the *World Migration Report* – one on population change over a decade and one on new internal displacements for 2018 – highlights and reinforces some interesting dynamics at the regional level. For example, we can see that, while the most significant proportional population change over the last decade has been mostly in terms of growth, parts of Europe have experienced significant population decline; this is exceptional globally, with no other region experiencing such results. The curious anomaly of population decline, long-term emigration trends, ageing populations and hostility toward immigration raises a number of strategic policy questions that some European countries will likely face for years to come. At the same time, demographic challenges are being addressed in other parts of the world, including in several North Asian countries, which are reassessing their approaches to immigration with a keen eye to labour markets, meeting key occupation and sectoral needs and preparing further for ageing populations. The addition of the new internal displacement graphs highlights the stark differences between conflict-related displacement and disaster displacement globally, with strong variations evident at the regional level.

At the subregional level, we can see that key features may remain largely the same from year to year, with only incremental change evident. It is, however, in the examination of recent developments that we can see substantial change occurring in some areas of the world. In part, this change is due to significant migration "events", such as the large-scale outflow of people from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, or the mass displacement of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar. We are also seeing change occurring on migration governance as subregions experience shifts in migration patterns and underlying population change. In North Asia, for example, China established its first immigration agency, bringing together functions from a number of agencies into one consolidated authority. Meanwhile, the Republic of Korea experienced large arrivals of asylum seekers from the Middle East not previously seen before, prompting intense public debate on related policy issues.

The regional differences and complexities, as well as recent developments, provide an important perspective to understanding migration. So often, we read and hear about migration from a national perspective, most commonly in recent times portrayed as a critical (negative) domestic political issue. But this dominant focus can mask the reality that migration patterns and processes are very closely linked to geography, and that key regional features developed over decades, if not centuries, continue to play a central role in how and where people migrate internationally. Greater recognition of regional and subregional migration patterns, variations and complexities can assist in formulating strategic and sustainable policy responses.Appendix A. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Regions and Subregions

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	South Africa	Gambia (the)
Kenya	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Tunisia		Ghana
Madagascar	Equatorial Guinea			Guinea
Malawi	Gabon			Guinea-Bissau
Mauritius	São Tomé and Príncipe			Liberia
Mayotte				Mali
Mozambique				Mauritania
Réunion				Niger (the)
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 the chapter, although the countries/territories/areas within remain the same.

b   This subregion has been renamed "Central Africa" in the chapter and combined with Western Africa.

c   This subregion 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 the 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 subregion renamed "South-East Asia".

g   This subregion 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		(Bolivarian Republic of) Venezuela
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 2019: Documentation, available at www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/docs/MigrationStockDocumentation_2019.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, from which the previous chapter draws upon, include countries, as well as territories, areas and special administrative regions. Please note that this table is not intended to be fully comprehensive.

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*   All hyperlinks provided were operating at the time of publication.

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