

DOCUMENT EXAMINATION SUPPORT CENTER (DESC) PHASE III

Synopsis - Collective insights into irregular migration in Southeast Asia and South Asia - Emerging trends of travel document & identity frauds -

The report on “*Collective insights into irregular migration in Southeast Asia and South Asia - Emerging trends of travel document & identity frauds*”¹ falls within the framework of the IOM ROAP regional Document Examination Support Centre (DESC) Phase III project. The overall objective is supporting governments in combating smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons through enhanced travel document examination and verification procedures.

Considering how unexplored the thematic area of travel document and identity frauds is, and how patterns evolve rapidly, this analysis provides valuable insights to support evidence-based decision-making by law enforcement agencies. Additionally, the results also aim at fostering an improved and shared understanding among DESC countries, with respect to trends in passports and identity frauds in Asia, as well as to capacity needs in travel document examination and verification procedures. The ultimate goal of this analysis is to support law enforcement agencies to rapidly adapt effective responses to systematically counter irregular migration related crimes, nationally and regionally.

The report analyses evolving regional trends and patterns of irregular migration flows, through the lens of travel documents and identity frauds, focusing on the following key variables:

1. Characteristics of travellers, such as gender and age
2. Characteristics of travels, such as travel documents used and travel routes

The findings are also visually represented on a user-friendly e-based platform² that allows quick digital dashboards to convey key indicators at a glance and enables the user to easily access statistics and graphics in an intuitive way.

The information in the report is based on data collected principally from DESC’s two in-house developed systems:

- ✓ the Verifier Travel Document & Bearer (**Verifier TD&B**) and
 - ✓ the **AFDRS** [ANDEX (Asian Network for Document Examination) Fraudulent Documents Reporting System]
- **Verifier TD&B**, a system developed by IOM in 2014, designed for secondary inspections of travel documents and their bearers. The system is designed to read and check the security digits in the Machine Readable Zone (MRZ) as well as a number of digital security features in the contactless chip of ePassports. Also it compares the biometric identifiers stored in the chip against those of the bearer, thus assisting law enforcement agencies to confirm decisions based on solid evidences.

The exponential growth of the Verifier TD&B network³ in 2017, in particular expanding to land BCPs, bringing the number to a total of 35 workstations installed in 14 countries, considerably strengthened DESC’s capabilities to undertake a broader spectrum of analyses of irregular migration flows.

¹ Link to the report - <https://goo.gl/yuHL2W>

² Link to e-based platform - http://cb4ibm.iom.int/DESC_Trends_Analysis_2017

³ Verifier TD&B geographical coverage – Report, pages 18/19

- **AFDRS** is a web-based information-sharing secured platform, developed by IOM in 2015 at the request of ANDEX Member States⁴, to share non-sensitive and non-personal information on fraud cases intercepted.

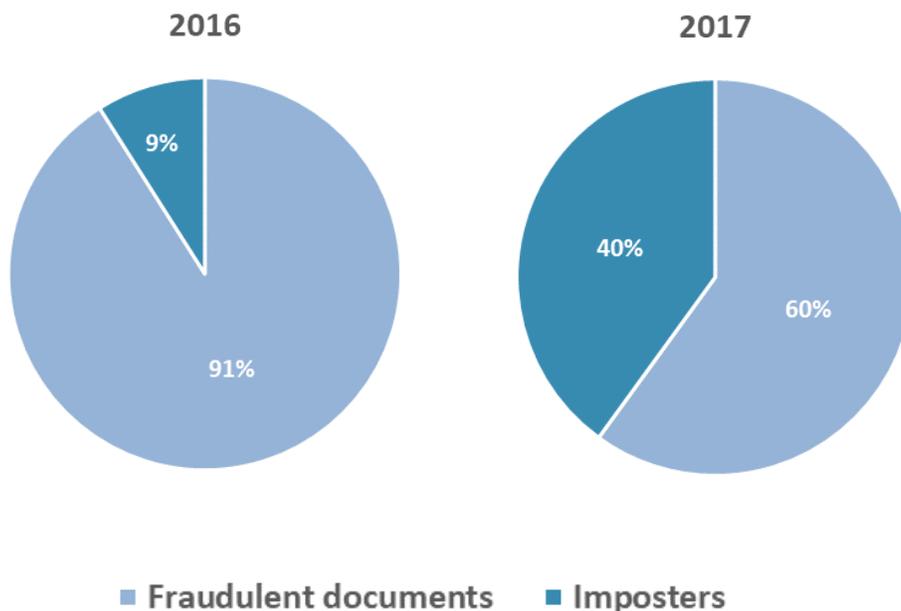
In addition to the above, other information sources of the report were the ANDEX Member States annual meetings, the questioned travel documents submitted to DESC for technical advice, and the official document alerts formally shared among law enforcement networks.

Data and information have been collected and presented on a quarterly basis since 2014, mainly through the Verifier TD&B Newsletters. This report is the culmination of all the efforts rooted in one of the main aims of the project, that is *“to build sustainable capacities in passport examination and verification procedures, especially by intensifying the exchange of information, expertise, skills and best practices, nationally and regionally”*.

In this regard, trainings, installations of the Verifier TD&B workstations, successful incorporation of the Verifier TD&B into national projects by respective IOM Country Offices, synergies between DESC and IOM Country Offices, expansion of the base of users, continuous system enhancement and remote support provided by DESC Team, were important cornerstones for the development of the report.

Main Findings:

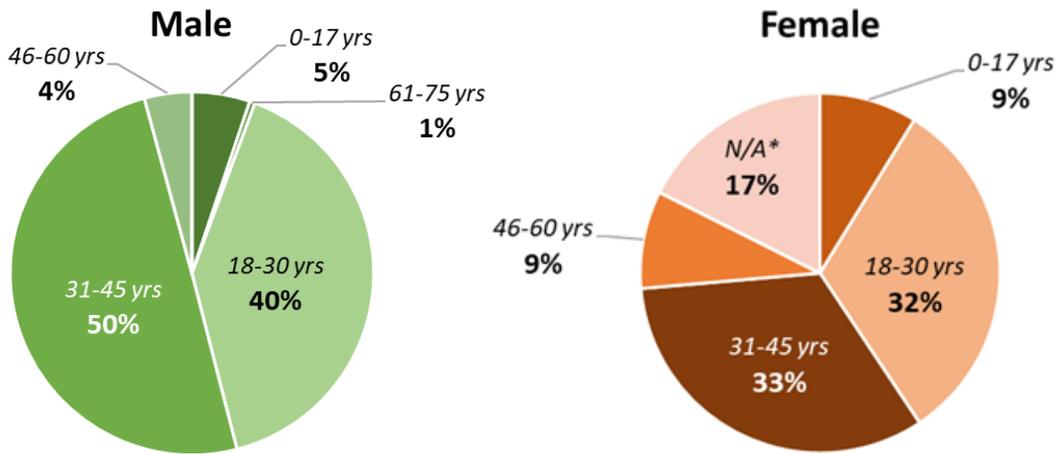
1. Fraud cases
 - By the end of 2017 more detailed trends of fraud cases emerged, indicating a fall in number of fraudulent documents and a rise in number of imposters.



⁴ Link to ANDEX Factsheet - <https://goo.gl/viXR6b>

2. Gender and age⁵

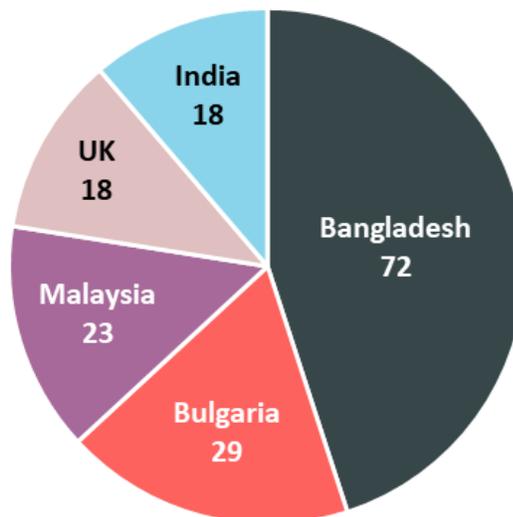
- Out of the total fraud cases intercepted between July and December 2017:
 - The majority were male (70%)
 - The predominant age groups of both male and female were 18 to 30 and 31 to 45
 - 19 were minors (0-17 years), with 15 of them carrying fraudulent travel documents



*N/A: Not Applicable

3. Most frequently used travel documents in fraud cases:

Top 5 Travel Documents Used in Fraud Cases



⁵ Source: Verifier TD&B