

These COVID-19 Analytical Snapshots are designed to capture the latest information and analysis in a fast-moving environment. Topics will be repeated from time to time as analysis develops.

If you have an item to include, please email us at research@iom.int.

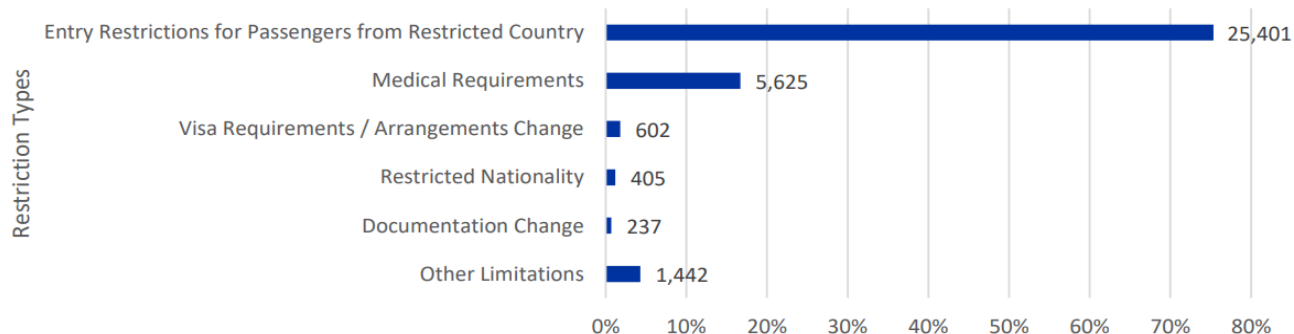
As COVID-19 continues to spread across the world, governments have swiftly moved to impose travel restrictions in an effort to reduce the impact of the pandemic by restricting international mobility. These restrictions have mainly applied to international travel, however, several countries have also implemented strict bans on internal movement.

In addition to travel restrictions, border management measures such as border closures have been introduced, while screening of travelers at airports and border crossings has been enhanced.

IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) is [tracking mobility restrictions](#) around the world at a global, regional and country level and as of 23 March 2020, 174 countries, territories or areas had introduced or updated existing travel restrictions related to COVID-19. The most widely imposed restrictions were based on countries of arrival and passengers with medical requirements.

Most Common Restriction Types

Source: IOM (DTM)



Travel restrictions and international protection

Some travel restrictions by some states have resulted in a ban all entry, including of people seeking protection. This has left some asylum seekers stranded at borders and, in some cases, vulnerable to persecution and other abuse. A [recent paper](#) by UNHCR sets out key considerations regarding the implementation of COVID-19 testing/screening measures of those who seek protection, and the principle of non-refoulement or denial of the chance to seek asylum.

Travel restrictions and the work of humanitarian organizations

There are [growing concerns](#) that blanket travel restrictions are limiting the ability of humanitarian organizations to deliver urgent assistance and services to vulnerable populations, including refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Already, travel restrictions have forced IOM and UNHCR to [suspend](#) resettlement travel for refugees, while leaving some stranded or [separated](#) from their families. In its recommendations [for international traffic](#), the World Health Organization advises against the ‘application of travel or trade restrictions to countries experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks’ and stresses that these restrictions may result in adverse consequences, such as on the delivery of aid and technical support.



Impact on border management

With limited capacity at entry points, some countries have come under pressure to quickly enhance capacity at borders, seaports and airports in order to more quickly and efficiently implement travel restrictions, while also ensuring that frontline workers at entry points are well-trained.

As part of its [strategic response](#), IOM is working with multiple countries to support ministries of health and border authorities and partners to strengthen preparedness of key entry and exit points through a range of activities. Some of these include training immigration and border/port officials on standard operating procedures to better respond to travelers who are sick with COVID-19, support active surveillance, including health screening and improving point of entry infrastructure.



Impact of travel restrictions on migrant workers

Mobility restrictions due to COVID-19 fears are having a significant impact on mobility and migration and carry significant implications for migrant workers. Many migrant workers are already [stranded](#) and unable to return home, while disruptions to visa regimes mean that some cannot assume new work or return to their countries or areas of work. Meanwhile, [some predict](#) that migrants’ inability to travel for work could have devastating impacts on the global food supply chain and, should travel restrictions become prolonged, some work previously occupied by migrants may quickly be automated as companies try to mitigate the impact on their productivity.

Travel restrictions and irregular migration

Even with the most recent travel bans and restrictions, some borders [remain porous](#). As COVID-19-related travel restrictions continue to come into effect, there are [growing fears](#) that increasingly desperate people may turn to smugglers and some may even fall into the hands of human traffickers.

This COVID-19 Analytical Snapshot has been produced by [IOM Research](#) (research@iom.int).

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