

This snapshot updates #3. 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.

Increase in mobility restrictions



As governments around the world continue to try to contain the spread of COVID-19, the number of mobility restrictions, both internationally and domestically, has risen sharply in recent weeks. This has included measures such as border closures and the enforcement of quarantines and lockdowns. By early April, more than [9 in 10 people globally](#) lived in countries with travel restrictions. And [recent estimates](#) by IOM show that by April 23, 2020, COVID-19-related travel restrictions had reached 52,262, implemented by 215 countries, territories and areas. The number of restrictions has significantly increased since 1 April 2020, when they stood at [43,781](#).



Nearly all global destinations impose restrictions

A [new report](#) by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) shows that by 6 April 2020, 96% of global destinations had introduced travel restrictions:

- ⇒ 100% of Africa
- ⇒ 100% of Asia and the Pacific
- ⇒ 100% of Middle East
- ⇒ 93% of Europe
- ⇒ 92% of Americas

Training of border staff

As part of its response to COVID-19, IOM continues to [train](#) officials on surveillance in airports, sea ports and land border crossings.

In countries such as Costa Rica, in anticipation of increased migration flows from Nicaragua and Cuba, IOM has provided technical assistance on how to implement [safe and appropriate](#) border management measures.

While in Bangladesh, IOM is supporting [the government](#) “at sea, land and air borders through the provision of equipment, training of health and immigration staff, and strengthening inter-agency coordination at points of entry.”



NEW IOM Migration Data Portal Page

The newly released thematic page, [Migration data relevant for the COVID-19 pandemic](#), compiles and analyses existing data on migrants, including in the countries hardest hit by COVID-19.

Restrictions at airports

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) is providing regular updates on airports around the world. The [website](#) lists countries and the restrictions they have imposed at airports.



International protection

People seeking asylum are among the most affected by travel restrictions. Several countries have closed entry to all foreigners, including asylum seekers. Countries such as Uganda, which long had an open door policy to asylum seekers and refugees, [suspended](#) receiving new arrivals as part of its overall response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the United States, the recent decision to [expel/return](#) undocumented migrants upon arrival, as a measure to limit the spread of COVID-19, is feared to constitute [refoulement](#), potentially exposing asylum seekers to further persecution. In the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman sea, hundreds of Rohingya are stuck on boats, after being [denied entry](#) into Malaysia due to COVID-19 fears. There are [growing fears](#) of a repeat of the [2015 crisis](#), when smugglers abandoned Rohingya at sea on unsafe, crowded boats.

Discriminatory movement restrictions

The manner in which some countries/areas have implemented mobility restrictions is coming under increasing scrutiny, particularly in relation to migrants, including refugees.

[Recent media reports](#) show that measures such as curfews, in some locations have targeted specific groups of migrants. This has raised concerns that harsh restrictions aimed at migrants could hamper their ability to access basic care and services.

The UN Network on migration recently released a [statement](#) emphasizing that “any limitations on freedom of movement do not unduly affect human rights and the right to seek asylum, and that restrictions are applied in a proportionate and non-discriminatory way.”



Implications for gender-based violence

Some refugee camps have seen a rise in gender-based violence, as GBV services are scaled back and as restrictions on movement prevent those affected from seeking help.

In Cox’s Bazar, where hundreds of thousands of Rohingya refugees continue to live, there has been [an increase](#) in both intimate partner violence and child marriage. Strictly enforced movement restrictions are limiting the ability of women and girls to access support services.

In response and to mitigate the increased risk of gender-based violence, some Rohingya women have [self-mobilized](#) to raise awareness on COVID-19 in the camps, including conducting door-to-door visits.

Suspending immigration



While travel restrictions have been widely imposed around the world, some countries, such as the United States, have gone further- suspending immigration altogether. The United States’ government, on April 23 2020, [temporarily suspended](#) immigration to the country for a period of 60 days, but with some [exemptions](#), such as seasonal farm workers, who can still enter the country.

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

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