

*These COVID-19 Analytical Snapshots are designed to capture the latest research, information and analysis in a fast-moving environment. Topics will be repeated from time to time as research and analysis develops. If you have an item to include, please email us at [research@iom.int](mailto:research@iom.int).*



### New research & analysis on the human rights impact of COVID-19

[Human rights law in the time of the coronavirus](#), by A. Ponta

[COVID-19 and inequalities: Protection the human rights of migrants in a time of pandemic](#), by M.G. Giammarinaro and L. Palumbo

[COVID-19 and migrants—Gaps in the international legal architecture?](#), by P. Pillai

[Borders and pandemics: Human rights impacts of COVID-19 technology on migration](#), by D.P. Molnar

[COVID-19 and human rights: Protecting the most vulnerable](#), webinar organized by the UN Global Compact Academy

[Human rights and coronavirus: What's at stake for truth, trust, and democracy?](#) By A.E. Yamin and R. Habibi

### The human rights impacts of measures to combat COVID-19

While COVID-19 threatens the health of all individuals, the measures taken to counter the pandemic have at times impacted the human rights of migrants throughout the migration cycle:

- ⇒ *Departure from the country of origin:* mobility restrictions sometimes impacting the [right to leave any country](#).
- ⇒ *Entry into a transit or destination country:* [border closures](#) and entry restrictions which have at times impacted the [right to non-refoulement](#)
- ⇒ *Stay in a transit or destination country:* insufficient or no [access to basic services](#) for migrants, including health care; continued [immigration detention](#) in unsafe conditions; [discrimination, stigmatization and xenophobia](#); tracing measures which may raise issues with the [right of privacy](#)
- ⇒ *Return to the country of origin:* mobility restrictions impacting one's ability to leave any country and enter into his/her own country; [stigmatization](#) in communities of origin; continued deportation of irregular migrants despite public health risks.

While some of these measures have been adopted by States in the context of a global public health emergency, international human rights law provides that any [limitations](#) or [derogations](#) to one's human rights should be reasonable, necessary and proportionate, including non-discriminatory. Some human rights, such as the [principle of non-refoulement](#), are however absolute and cannot be limited/derogated from.



## 14 principles of protection for migrants, refugees and other displaced persons

Experts from the University of Columbia, Cornell Law School and the Zolberg Institute on Migration and Mobility have identified [14 principles of protection of migrants, refugees and other displaced persons](#), stemming from international law, to inform and guide State action. Endorsed by nearly 800 international experts, these 14 principles concern:

1. Equal treatment / non-discrimination
2. Right to health
3. State obligations to combat stigma, racism and xenophobia
4. Restriction on movement between States
5. Restriction on movement within States
6. Non-return and access to territory
7. Enforcement of immigration law, including detention
8. Right to protection of life and health for persons in camps, collective shelters, and settlements
9. Right to information
10. Protection of privacy
11. Gender considerations
12. Marginalized groups
13. Labor rights of workers
14. Rights and their limitations

In its April report on [COVID-19 and human rights](#), the UN recalls that “[h]uman rights are critical—for the response and the recovery”. Migrants are referred to as a potential vulnerable group.

**COVID-19 and Human Rights**  
We are all in this together

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“ *The Network calls on States to suspend forced returns during the pandemic, in order to protect the health of migrants and communities, and uphold the human rights of all migrants, regardless of status. Successfully tackling the pandemic cannot be achieved without upholding human rights.*

UN Network on Migration  
[Statement](#), 13 May 2020

## Guidance on COVID-19 and the human rights of migrants

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has issued [guidance](#) on the human rights of migrants in the context of the pandemic. The guidance highlights the need to include migrants in public health and recovery response to protect migrants’ rights, avoid xenophobia and protect “the health of society as a whole”, with specific measures to protect those in vulnerable situations. Similar calls have been made by other [UN agencies](#), including IOM and UNHCR. The UN Committee on Migrant Workers and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants have also just issued a [joint guidance note](#) on the topic.

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

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