

This snapshot provides an update to snapshot #13. These COVID-19 Analytical Snapshots are designed to capture the latest information, research 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.

Building back better: Improving access to rights for vulnerable migrants is key to lasting resilience

As States being to prepare for the aftermath of the pandemic, while still battling resurgence, concerns grow over migrant communities being left behind, in particular those most at risk of exploitation and in need of protection.

“In a context of a continuing global health crisis that also has a severe impact on the governance of migratory movements, we must remind States to treat **all** migrants with dignity and provide them with equal access to services, benefits, information, and assistance.”

- UN and Regional Experts Felipe González Morales, Can Ünver, Siobhán Mullaly, Julissa Mantilla Falcón and Sahli Fadel Maya

Click [here](#) for the press briefing note.



Regularization

Falling into irregularity exposes migrants to vulnerability and precarious life conditions. As a result of the pandemic, at least ten [European](#) countries introduced measures to maintain or extend legal status. [Elsewhere](#), at least five countries in Asia and three in Africa, have done the same.

Governments of [Italy](#) and [Thailand](#) have introduced large-scale regularizations for undocumented workers which could benefit up to 220,000 and 800,000 migrants respectively. Regularization is a [key means](#) to reduce the exploitation of migrants in irregular situations and to [guarantee access](#) to vital health services during the Covid-19 pandemic. Other countries considering similar measures include Ireland where a commitment to regularizing undocumented migrants was introduced in the latest [Programme for Government](#) and South Africa where an extension of the [Documentation of Zimbabweans Project \(DZP\)](#) is to be decided this year.

New research and analysis on COVID-19 and irregularity, smuggling and protection

[Migrants with irregular status during the COVID-19 pandemic: Lessons for local authorities](#) by Maria Mallet-Garcia and Nicola Delvino

[Assessing the impact of Covid-19 on the EU's response to irregular migration](#) by Nadia Petroni

[Stranded: The Impacts of COVID-19 on Irregular Migration and Migrant Smuggling](#) by Gabriella Sanchez and Luigi Achilli

[Protection of forced migrants with irregular status during the pandemic generated by Covid-19: An analysis of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights on Migrants' Rights](#) by Eveline Viera Brigido and Fabiola Wust Zibetti

[Moving Beyond Pandemic: Human Smuggling in an Age of Pandemic](#) Audio interview with Matt Herbert

[How COVID-19 restrictions and the economic consequences are likely to impact migrant smuggling and cross-border trafficking in persons to Europe and North America](#) by UNODC Research



Alarming Trends

Since the start of the Covid-10 pandemic there were several reports from [Asia](#) and [Europe](#) of migrants being stranded, at risk to their lives, resulting from States failing to respond to situations of distress, including when adrift at sea. Elsewhere, in [Africa](#) and [North America](#), summary returns, excessively lengthy border procedures and inability to access protection led to precarious and dangerous conditions and even deaths.

Recently, IOM has [expressed concern](#) over reports of pushbacks at the EU border with Turkey, and has called on Greek authorities to investigate these allegations, which according to the [Council of Europe](#) may result in migrants being at risk of inhuman and degrading treatment. UN agencies and humanitarian organizations have also [alerted](#) to the deteriorating situation at the location of the former Lipa Camp in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where stranded migrants' lives are at immediate risk due to a lack of adequate shelter solutions.

Accessing International Protection



States have an obligation to protect public health and to let asylum-seekers access international protection procedures. Many states have managed to strike the balance through screening and quarantine measures. Nonetheless, currently 64 countries impose restrictions in access to their territory, which may adversely impact on the right to seek asylum.

During the first wave of the pandemic, many countries halted procedures, including reception, registration and documentation. Over the past months, practices have significantly improved, and 111 countries have been able to maintain their asylum procedures fully or partially operational despite second and third waves.

Source: [UNHCR COVID-19 Platform – Temporary Measures and Impact on Protection](#)

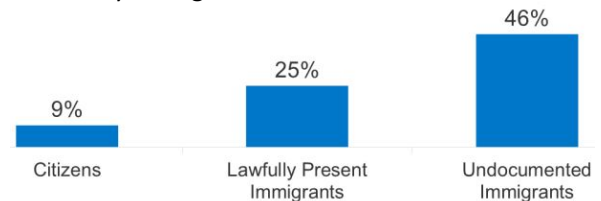


Access to healthcare and vaccinations

In response to the pandemic, a number of countries and local authorities have extended partial or full healthcare coverage to undocumented migrants. Examples at a national level include [Ireland](#) and [Portugal](#), and at a regional or local level: [Ontario](#), [California](#), [Gdansk](#) and [Milan](#).

IOM has [urged](#) governments to include all migrants, irrespective of legal status in their vaccination plans, and the WHO has [called](#) for their inclusion in prioritization roadmaps. Concerns have been raised about barriers in accessing vaccines for undocumented migrants in the [USA](#), [Colombia](#) and in [Europe](#).

Uninsured rates among the non-elderly population by Immigration status in the USA, 2019



Source: [Immigrant Access to COVID-19 Vaccines: Key Issues to Consider](#)

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

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