

Welcome to

Strategic Intelligence Briefing:
The Impacts of COVID-19 on Migration

The webinar will begin shortly

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OF THE WORLD

Strategic Intelligence

Briefing:

The Impacts of COVID-19 on Migration

Featuring

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World Economic Forum

The views expressed by the presenters do not necessarily reflect those of the Forum or IOM.

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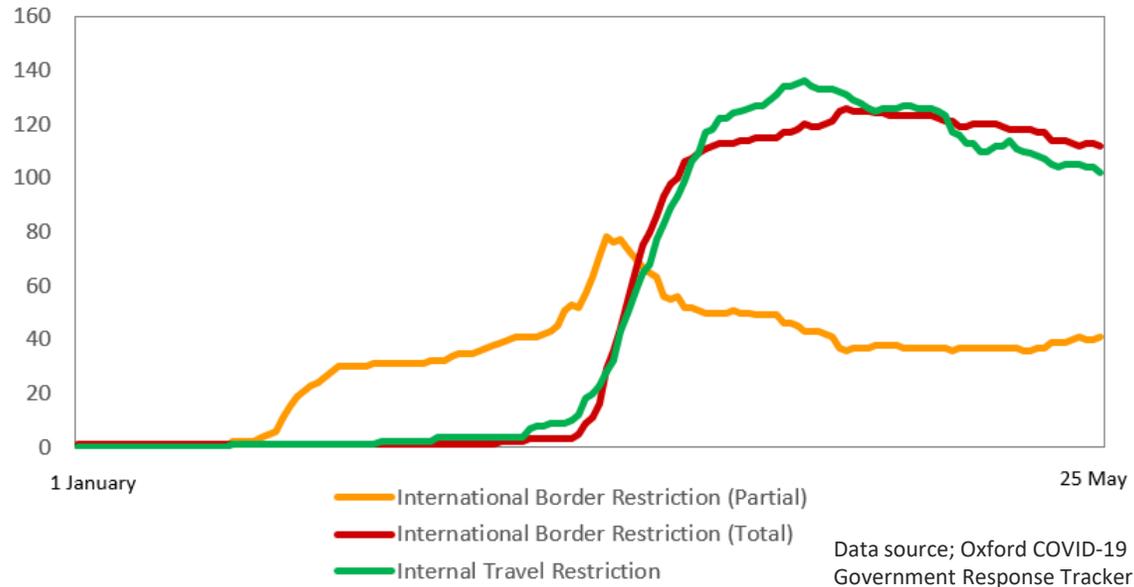


Key takeaways

1. This pandemic is a seismic geopolitical event that will transform migration and mobility systems globally. But how?
2. COVID19 has become “The Great Disrupter”; travel restrictions are causing unprecedented disruption to migration and migrants
3. Initial research and analysis shows that the most vulnerable in society are most affected by COVID-19 – this includes migrants (including refugees) in different settings
4. Post-pandemic recovery will be strongly linked to migration and mobility systems
5. Are we seeing COVID-19 being used to further “securitize” migration?



Border/travel Restrictions, by number of countries



By end of May, **100% of countries globally** continued to have some form of COVID-19-related travel restrictions. However, several countries (**3% of global destinations**) are now taking steps to ease travel restrictions. Partial international border restrictions, then total restrictions and internal restrictions (now slightly easing).

- Millions of people stranded globally – travelers, students, workers – massive repatriation efforts.
- Social protection limited for migrants, many stuck and without income facing homelessness and starvation
- Regularisation programmes, health services access, food/shelter support, cash payments
- Border closures have prevented asylum seeker access and other movements, and affected global food supply chains (e.g. harvesting)

Immediate Impacts

By 12 June, there were over **7.5 million** confirmed COVID-19 cases in the world. Deaths surpass **420,000**.

Migrants on the frontline

- health care workers
- aged/child care workers
- domestic workers
- transportation workers
- seasonal agriculture workers

“One of the things that this current crisis is teaching us is that many people that we consider to be low skilled are actually pretty crucial to the smooth running of our country and are in fact recognized key workers.”

UK Member of Parliament, Steve Double

In many countries, migrant workers perform the so-called ‘3D’ jobs essential to society; the dirty, dangerous and demeaning jobs.

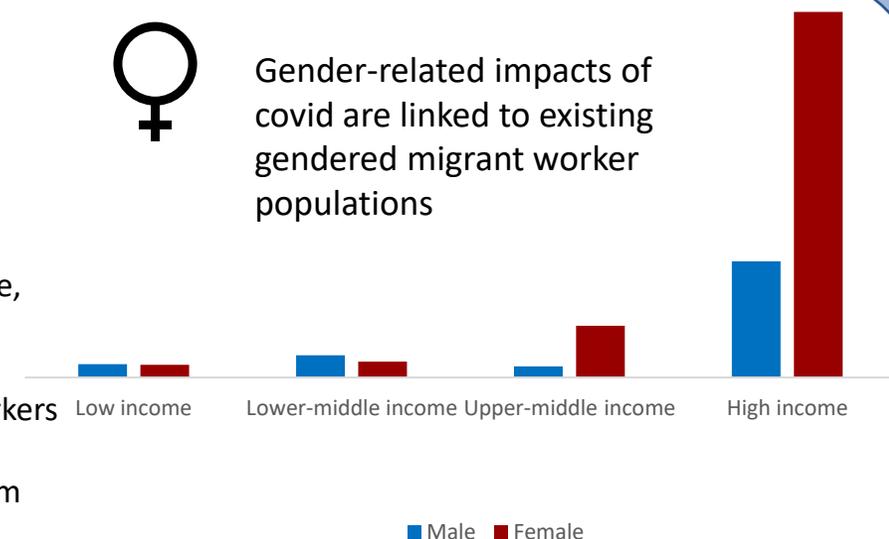
Migrants make up almost 20% of all domestic workers globally.

Three-quarters of migrant domestic workers were female, with most in high income countries.

Female migrant workers also feature in care sectors, making them more likely to be exposed to COVID-19.



Gender-related impacts of covid are linked to existing gendered migrant worker populations



Source: IOM World Migration Report 2018, using ILO data

Medium-term Impacts

XENOPHOBIC RACISM

Significant increases in racism and discrimination – especially toward Asians – has been felt across the work. Far-right groups operating transnationally are exploiting the racism expressed during the pandemic as a way of targeting and recruiting socially isolated individuals.

INCREASED RISK OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND MIGRANT SMUGGLING

With travel restrictions still in place in many parts of the world and as many people escape conflict, violence, human rights abuses, and poor living conditions, we are likely to see an increase in both smuggling and trafficking. This will be more pronounced in sea corridors.

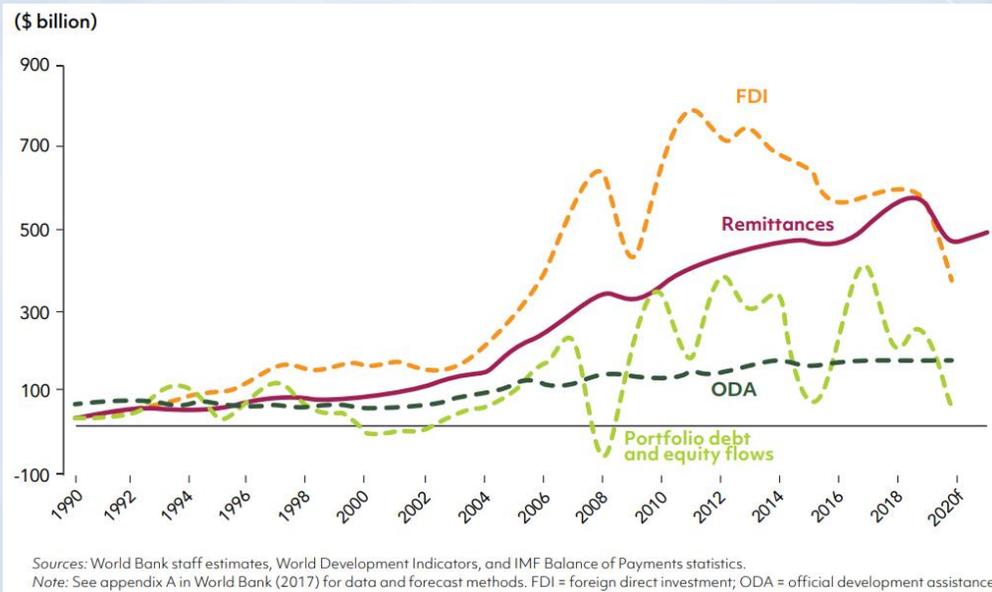
MUTED HUMANITARIANISM

Donor states, reeling from the economic effects of COVID-19, will be under pressure to divert development and humanitarian funding toward domestic issues. Already stretched humanitarian response, including refugee and IDP support, will be even further challenged.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology has been central to government efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19, particularly through contact tracing apps and using AI to develop solutions. Concerns persist that governments could re-purpose surveillance technology to track and monitor groups of interest, including migrants after crisis is over.

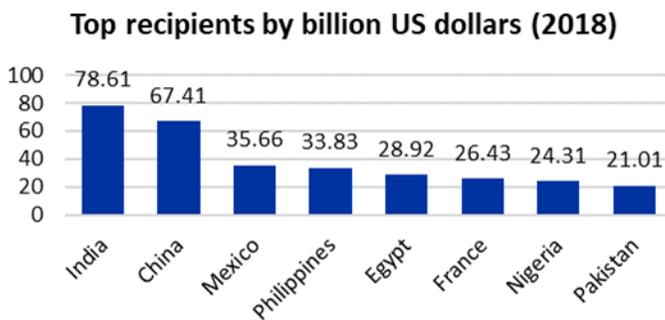
Tech is also being used to connect for information, education, work, social and political activism in response to COVID-19, including by migrants. But access issues for many migrants remains.



INTERNATIONAL REMITTANCES

International remittances are projected to fall by 20% in 2020. COVID-19 has been devastating for millions of migrant workers, many of whom are unable to work due to lockdowns, movement restrictions or job losses.

Top recipients of remittances



Source: IOM World Migration Report 2020 using World Bank data

In US dollar terms, the top remittance receiving countries have larger economies, with India, China, France and Germany among the top 10 recipients.

When considered as a percentage of gross domestic product, however, the top recipients are countries with smaller economies, such as Tonga, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Haiti.

Long-term Impacts – what can we say?

MIGRATION AS A SECURITY ISSUE

The “securitization” of migration has been further bolstered, but is it migration or mobility that is central to this global health crisis? The focus on international and internal travel restrictions says a lot. Commentators argue that some are instrumentalizing COVID-19 in migration terms as a means to “harden policy”.

“MOBILITY PROTECTIONISM” VS MOBILITY-LED RECOVERY

So-called travel bubbles are emerging but what of the existing mobility inequality globally? These are likely to intensify as human development suffers a major setback. We likely to see a focus on maintaining mobility restrictions by some countries long after the pandemic crisis has eased, while others will be seeking to maximize mobility as part of recovery.

REMITTANCE DROP CONSEQUENCES

Impacts will be highly uneven, with countries heavily reliant on remittances most affected. Poverty is expected to increase and recent gains in human development wiped out. Reduced access to education will be felt by children in developing countries, having long term socio-economic impacts for societies.

SUBNATIONAL GOVERNMENTS INCREASINGLY INFLUENTIAL

Cities and local authorities continue to prove increasingly influential in migration as urbanization and city-to-city migration has intensified, making cities the nodes in global migration and mobility systems.

MNCs AND OTHER BUSINESSES AS REFORMERS

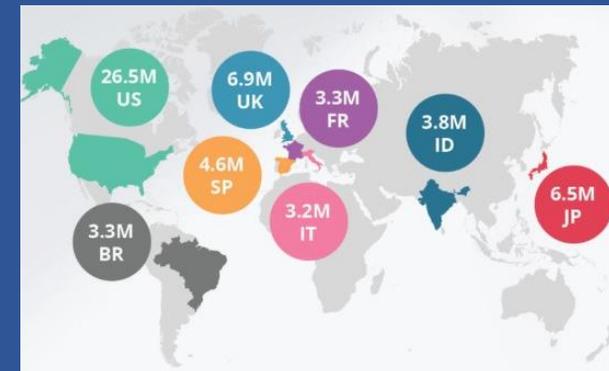
Globalized industry will continue pushing for reforms to secure and expanded global supply chains, seeking to maximize virtual work and connections wherever possible, while drawing more red lines on delivery of services.

TECH, TECH AND MORE TECH

- Contact tracing apps
- Population surveil capabilities
- AI and borders
- Mobility monitoring/analysis
- Virtual work
- Virtual education
- Human rights advocacy
- Information and misinformation
- Mobile money

SOCIAL MEDIA AND MISINFORMATION: WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

There were **204 million** organic mentions of COVID-19 weekly in March, spanning the globe. While this dropped to **71 million** by late May, social media will remain hugely influential in promulgating (mis)information.



Infographic: Synthesio, 2020

Immobility: the ultimate migration disrupter

As a result of COVID19 movement and border restrictions, migration programming and services are being disrupted right along the migration cycle, with significant implications for human rights.

Setting

Departure from countries of origin

Impacts

- Migrants unable to depart on planned migration journeys.
- People seeking asylum or departing unstable countries unable to do so, leaving them at risk of violence, abuse, persecution and/or death.

Entry into transit or destination countries

- Migrants (including refugees and asylum seekers) have been largely unable to enter transit and destination countries.
- Consequences felt acutely in specific sectors, such as agriculture during harvest seasons, resulting in food supply disruptions.

Stay in transit and destination countries

- Impacts on migrants has been profound, especially for the most vulnerable who are without access to social protection, health care, and have also faced job loss, xenophobic racism, and the risk of immigration detention, while being unable to return home.
- Refugees and IDPs in camps/camp-like settings subject to cramped, poor living conditions not conducive to physical distancing and other infection control measures.

Return to countries of origin

- Border closure announcements in some countries caused mass return to origin for fear of being stranded without income and no access to social protection.
- The inability to return has resulted in large numbers of migrants being stranded around the world.

Source: McAuliffe, 2020 (forthcoming)

COVID-19 Analytical Snapshot #45: Travel restrictions and mobility UPDATE
Understanding the migration & mobility implications of COVID-19

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.

New research & analysis on travel restrictions & COVID

Stranded: the impacts of COVID-19 on irregular migration and migrant livelihoods by Gabriella Sanchez and ...

In recent months, the world has witnessed unprecedented levels of mobility restrictions, as countries across the world try to reign in the spread of COVID-19. As reported by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 100% of global destinations had imposed travel restrictions by April 20, with far-reaching socio-economic impacts on many countries. However, as COVID-19 infections in some parts of the world, the UN, and several countries are loosening travel restrictions.

COVID-19 Analytical Snapshot #43: Migration research & analysis UPDATE
Understanding the migration & mobility implications of COVID-19

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

New research on the migration and mobility aspects of COVID-19

Migration and Mobility after the 2020 Pandemic: The End of an Age? by Alan Gamlen

Stranded: The impacts of COVID-19 on irregular migration and migrant livelihoods by Gabriella Sanchez and Luigi Achilli

Why xenophobia is likely to be bad news for Europe's refugee crisis by James Dennison and Andrew Geddes

How Should Policy Respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic Outbreak in the Developing World? by Alan et al.

Migration and development: what now with COVID-19? by Tanya Basia & Ronald Skeldon

Migration and immigration: Uganda and the COVID-19 pandemic by Agnes Igwe of the Ugandan Ministry of Internal Affairs

From Low-Skilled to Key Workers: The Implications of Emergency for Immigration Policy by Mariela Fernandez-Rene, Madeleine Sumption and Carlos Vargas-Silva

The challenge of real-time analysis: making sense of the migration and mobility implications of COVID-19 by Marie McAuliffe, Catherine Bauloz and Adrian Kibombo

COVID-19 and migration governance: A holistic approach by Andrea Milan and Reshma Cunnocciamy

COVID-19 research and analysis from IOM

The latest Migration Research Series paper (no 60) is [Migrants and the COVID-19 pandemic: an interim update](#) by Lorenzo Guadagnoli.

There is also a new [Migration Evidence Briefing](#) issue on COVID-19 migrants and migration policy across the world.

European countries and which highest lockdowns, triggered by a rise in Europe on June 3. However, a rise in travel between the two continents - were among the first to a "travel bubble", allowing free movement between Europe and South Africa, also concerned. Lockdowns are having on their own to ease internal lockdowns, continue to rise.

The Migration Health Evidence Portal for COVID-19 contains an open-source searchable repository of COVID-19 research publications relating to migrant, migration and mobility, and Evidence Briefs, which synthesize key information relevant to IOM's COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan.

IOM's Migration, Environment and Climate Division are hosting a new [forum](#) where practitioners and researchers can share experiences, knowledge and ideas on the linkages between COVID-19 and aspects of environmental migration, disaster displacement and the environmental impact of people's movement decisions.

IOM COVID19 Analytical Snapshots on migration and mobility impacts

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