



MOROCCO

The increase in the numbers of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers traveling in mixed migratory movements constitutes a major political and humanitarian challenge. North Africa is affected by such movements as a region of origin, transit and destination.

European restrictions on inward regular migration processes has contributed to the rise of irregular migration flows.¹ These restrictions have forced those on the move to find other ways to reach European shores, which, has resulted in a surge in the activities of organized transnational criminal networks operating smuggling and trafficking rings across the region. Migrants continue to face abuse and exploitation at the hands of these smugglers and traffickers who promise passage across the Mediterranean Sea and national borders.



These movements are driven by those who are fleeing war and searching for security; those looking for better opportunities and future; Geographic proximity and historical ties have also contributed as drivers for North Africans to migrate to Europe (particularly those from Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia) and to the Gulf countries (particularly those from Egypt and Sudan).²

BACKGROUND

The history of migration in Morocco is both long and complex with various phases shaping the contemporary situation. Morocco has, until recently, been considered primarily as a country of origin. This is in large part due to the migration of large groups of Moroccans to Europe through the years. However, in recent years, Morocco has also become a country of destination. Morocco signed the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees in 1956.³

In 2016, the government passed draft law 27-24 on combatting human trafficking.⁴

MIGRANT PROFILE

INBOUND

As of June 2017, there were 95,835 migrants in Morocco.⁵

Issues of trafficking in persons particularly of a significant number of Nigerian women, are a concern.⁶ Victims of trafficking are often promised employment in Europe and then held captive by traffickers in Morocco where they are made to pay for their freedom.⁷

OUTBOUND

It is estimated that more than five million Moroccans are currently residing in Europe.⁸ France and Spain constitute the first two destinations for Moroccans with an estimated 1,600,000 Moroccans living in the two countries. While some Moroccans may migrate through irregular means, most migrate regularly in pursuit of educational or employment opportunities.

Additionally, a number of Sub-Saharan migrants continue their migration journeys through Morocco and onward to Spain via land and sea crossings to the two Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and the Melilla.⁹ In 2017, more than 6,245 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arrived in Spain through the two points, the majority of whom were Moroccan and Algerian.¹⁰ In comparison, 5,932 migrants, refugees and asylum seekers arrived in Spain through these two entry points in 2016.¹¹

ROUTES TO AND FROM EGYPT

INBOUND

The majority of migrants arriving in Morocco arrive by plane.¹² Others arrive in the country with the assistance of smugglers through land borders. Migrants who enter the country by land come through either the Algerian or Mauritanian borders.

OUTBOUND

Migrants who attempt to reach Europe from Morocco typically travel to Spain through the Ceuta and Melilla Spanish enclaves or journey by sea to Andalucía (South of Spain).¹³ However, some Sub-Saharan migrants who reach Spain are returned to Morocco, a measure the European Court of Human Rights has ruled is a breach of human rights law.¹⁴

MIGRATION MOTIVATIONS

Migrants who travel to Morocco have mixed motivations, including seeking refuge from war and violence at home and escaping poverty. While some intend to move onwards to Europe, others view Morocco as their final destination. Notably, many of the migrants who arrive in Morocco have at least a high school, if not a university education, and are seeking employment opportunities that utilize their educational backgrounds and skills.¹⁵

THE MIGRANT EXPERIENCE IN EGYPT

ACCESS SERVICES

In October 2013, Ministerial Note no. 13-487 provided an order authorizing access to formal education to regular and irregular migrant children.

Access to non-emergency secondary health care, care for persons with mental health problems, protection and assistance for survivors of sexual violence and health assistance to migrants living in camp remains limited.¹⁶

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

In 2013, King Mohammed VI announced a campaign to regularize foreigners with an irregular administrative status based on recommendations by the National Human Rights Council (CNDH). During the 2014 regularization campaign, 27,332 applications were submitted and 17,916 (65.5%) were accepted.¹⁷ Migrants came from 116 countries, with Senegalese (6,600), Syrians (5,250) and Nigerians (2,380) being the three top nationalities of applicants. The same year, a National Immigration and Asylum Strategy was launched, including eleven immigrant integration programs. In 2016, a second regularization campaign was announced and of 2017, 25,690 applications were submitted.¹⁸

In order to qualify, migrants must either be married to Moroccan nationals or other foreigners who are legally resident in Morocco, be children born from the above two cases, have valid work contracts, have resided in Morocco for five or more years, or be suffering from a serious illness.¹⁹

INTEGRATION

Under the 2016 campaign regularized migrant's opportunity to achieve economic integration was also improved. The new permits allow for a longer term of stay of three years and this has had a positive impact on migrants' entry to the formal labor market. Regularized migrants are currently exempt from the requirement of permission certificate issued by the ANAPEC (the National Agency for the Promotion of Employment and Skills) and contracts are now issued directly by the Ministry of Employment which will create more employment opportunities for migrants since employers will not be subject to restrictive policies.²⁰

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3. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). [States Parties to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol](#) (April 2015).
4. Kingdom of Morocco: Ministry of Culture and Communication. "[Lower House Adopts Draft Law on Combating Human Trafficking](#)" (June 2016).
5. UNDESA. [International migrant stock: The 2017 version](#) (June, 2017). These numbers are based on census data that is collated by UNDESA. As such, these figures may include irregular migrants and refugees as well as regular migrants.
6. Hassouri, Parastou. "[Refugees or Migrants? Difficulties of West Africans in Morocco](#)" (September 2017).
7. Ibid
8. UN Women, [La Traite Des Femmes et Des Enfants au Maroc](#) (March 2015).
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10. Lani, Alessandro. "[A political laboratory: how Spain closed the borders to refugees](#)" (February 2016).
11. UNHCR, [Mediterranean Situation: Spain](#).
12. Ibid
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14. Hassouri, Parastou. "[Refugees or Migrants? Difficulties of West Africans in Morocco](#)" (September 2017).
15. Council of Europe, "[Spain: Court backs migrants over 'collective expulsion' human rights complaints](#)" (October 2017).
16. Lindsey, Ursula. "[Studying new forms of migration in Morocco](#)" (October 2017).
17. Upcoming MHub publication on Morocco's regularization campaigns.
18. De Bel-Air, Françoise. [Migration Profile: Morocco](#) (April 2016).
19. Morocco World News, "[Morocco's 2nd Regularization Campaign to Settle 82% of Undocumented Migrants' Requests](#)" (November 2017).
20. Hassouri, Parastou. "[Refugees or Migrants? Difficulties of West Africans in Morocco](#)" (September 2017).
21. Upcoming MHub publication on Morocco's regularization campaigns.



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

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