

Migration Challenges for National and International Security

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1. Migration as a Factor of International Relations: Causes, Scope and Forms

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, migration had become a global process of the multilateral movement of people between states, making it a global factor in the development of societies and economies and providing significant development opportunities for a number of countries through the influx of intellectual capital, labour and financial resources.¹

One of the fallouts of the COVID-19 pandemic is that migration flows have changed significantly in 2020–2021, with far fewer people migrating than before. The pandemic has made migrants one of the most vulnerable categories of the population: many were unable to leave their countries, becoming “hostages” of the lockdown and closed borders, and some groups of migrants were literally “hovering between borders.” Many countries closed their borders and restricted opportunities for migrants to enter, while others did the opposite, removing barriers for certain categories of “undocumented” migrants who found themselves in countries that had been closed completely.

Migration has also become a significant factor in the international situation and international relations, which we saw most clearly during the pandemic. Countries started

to restrict movement and migration both for objective reasons and on the basis of political proclivities and interstate relations. The term “vaccine diplomacy” has even appeared, as migration regimes and travel opportunities now depend on whether or not a given vaccine has been recognized, making the issue a political one.

A report published by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) on December 1, 2021, clearly demonstrates a growth in migration despite mobility constraints. The number of international migrants in 2020 was 2 million fewer than the previous year due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The number of internal migrants has grown significantly as a result of natural disasters, armed conflicts and violence. As IOM Director General António Vitorino has stated, “We are witnessing a paradox not seen before in human history. While billions of people have been effectively grounded by COVID-19, tens of millions of others have been displaced within their own countries.”² The number of air passengers around the world has also decreased significantly, from 4.5 billion in 2019 to 1.8 billion in 2020 (a drop of 60%). At the same time, the number of internally displaced migrants due to natural disasters,

¹ According to the United Nations data for 2020, every seventh person in the world was a migrant. The International Organization for Migration (a UN agency) estimates suggest that there were 244 million international migrants in 2015 (3.3% of the world's population), compared to just 155 million in 2000 (2.8% of the world's population). In 2019, the number of international migrants was estimated at 272 million, or 3.5% of the global population. Internal migration is also a large-scale phenomenon in the world today, with over 740 million people on the planet having moved to live and work inside their own country. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), approximately 83.6 million (31%) of all migrants lived in Asia, 82.3 million (30%) in Europe, 70.3 million (26%) in North and South America, 26.5 million (10%) in Africa, and 8.9 million (3%) in Oceania. The largest recipient countries were the United States (50.7 million people), Germany (13.1 million), Saudi Arabia (13.1 million), Russia (11.6 million) and the United Kingdom (9.6 million). The countries with the highest percentage of migrants are the United Arab Emirates (87.9%), Qatar (78.7%), Kuwait (72.1%), Monaco (68%) and Liechtenstein (67%). The largest sending countries are India (17.5 million), Mexico (11.8 million), China (10.7 million), Russia (10.5 million) and Syria (8.2 million).

² International Migrants Day Statement, IOM Director General António Vitorino: “Harnessing the Potential of Human Mobility”. IOM Global News. 17 December 2021. URL: <https://www.iom.int/news/international-migrants-day-statement-iom-director-general-antonio-vitorino-harnessing-potential-human-mobility>



International migrants^(a)

281 million international migrants globally in 2020, or 3.6 per cent of the world's population — **↑** Up from **272 million** (or 3.5%) in 2019

Females^(a)	135 million international female migrants globally in 2020, or 3.5 per cent of the world's female population	↑ Up from 130 million (or 3.4%) in 2019
Males^(a)	146 million international male migrants globally in 2020, or 3.7 per cent of the world's male population	↑ Up from 141 million (or 3.6%) in 2019
Labour migrants^(b)	169 million migrant workers globally in 2019	↑ Up from 164 million globally in 2017
Missing migrants^(c)	Around 3,900 dead and missing globally in 2020	↓ Down from almost 5,400 in 2019



International remittances^(d)

USD 702 billion in international remittances globally in 2020. Although international remittances declined due to COVID-19, the actual decline (2.4%) was much less than initially projected (20%) — **↓** Down from **USD 719 billion** in 2019

Low- and middle-income countries^(d)	USD 540 billion in international remittances was received by low- and middle-income countries in 2020	↓ Down from USD 548 billion in 2019
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Source: World Migration Report 2022. IOM. Geneva. 2021.
URL: <https://publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2022>

armed conflicts and violence increased to 40.5 million in 2020, from 31.5 million in 2019.

Despite the pandemic-related restrictions and some decline in migration in 2020–2021, the migration challenges have not become less acute, and have even worsened in some regions. The main reasons for the scale and growth of various forms of migration in recent decades are as follows.

1. An economic development gap. Labour migration is the most affordable way for people in many countries to increase their income, allowing them to find work and prosperity

in economically developed countries and provide for their families. With the economic gap widening, the flows of migrant workers are also increasing. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that the number of migrant workers in the world before COVID-19 climbed from 164 million to 169 million between 2017 and 2019, with international migrants accounting for almost 5% of the global economy's workforce.³ Remittances accompanying labour migrant flows have become a more significant form of support for developing countries than

³ ILO Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers Results and Methodology. Third edition. Geneva: ILO, 2021. URL: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_808935.pdf.



Mobility

Mobility was restricted by COVID-19, but internal displacement events increased

COVID-19 restrictions ^(a)	108,000 COVID-19 travel restrictions globally in the first year of the pandemic	New restrictions; nil in 2019.
Global air passengers ^(b)	1.8 billion air passengers globally in 2020 (international and domestic passengers)	↓ Major decline from 4.5 billion in 2019
Internal displacement events (disaster) ^(c)	Internal disaster displacement events were 30.7 million globally in 2020	↑ Significantly up from 24.9 million in 2019
Internal displacement events (conflict) ^(d)	Internal conflict and violence displacement events were 9.8 million globally in 2020	↑ Up from 8.6 million in 2019

Note: See Chapter 2 for elaboration and discussion.

Sources: (a) UN DESA, 2021; (b) ILO, 2021; (c) IOM, n.d.a; (d) Ratha et al., 2021; (e) UNHCR, 2021; (f) IDMC, 2021; (g) IOM, 2021a; (h) ICAO, 2021.

Source: World Migration Report 2022. IOM. Geneva, 2021.

URL: <https://publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2022>

international aid: in 2020, remittances to low- and middle-income countries amounted to \$540 billion.⁴

2. Demographic disparities between the South and the North. High population growth is sustained by high fertility and declining mortality rates in Africa and Asia, which are in the early stages of the demographic transition. Estimates are that by 2050, a total of 26% of the world's population will live in Africa and 54% in Asia. The age structure of the population here is characterized by large cohorts of young people ("youth bubbles"). Without job opportunities and systematic outreach to young people, they become a risk group in terms of potential involvement in conflict and protest (of which the Arab Spring is an example). Migration partially relieves this tension in the migrants' countries of origin as some young people go abroad. Many economically developed countries have a need for migrants as they age and face labour shortages. At the same time, these countries are faced with the need to integrate young migrants and provide them with jobs and educational opportunities.

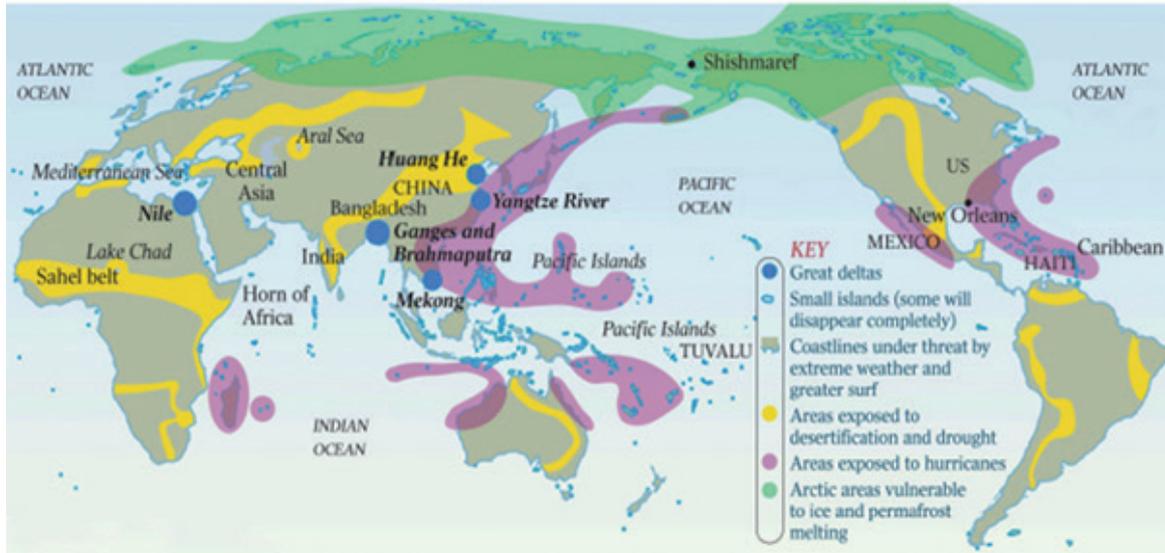
3. The geopolitical environment and political conflicts have a significant impact on the generation of forced migrant flows from countries, as well as from warzones and zones and zones of inter-ethnic conflict. The most problematic countries that have generated key migrant flows in recent years are Afghanistan, Libya, Iraq, Syria, Sudan and the Congo. Migrants, some of whom have been granted formal refugee status, have flocked to the most stable and well-off states with well-developed social assistance systems (the United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe, especially Germany and the Nordic countries). In 2020, UNHCR estimated the number of officially registered refugees to be more than 26 million, with another 4 million seeking an asylum. Some 55 million people have changed their place of residence for refugee-like reasons within their own countries.⁵

4. Climate change, environmental problems and man-made disasters. The main cause of climate and environmental migration is natural disasters, which are on the rise. In 2020, natural disasters led to 30.7 million internal

⁴ World Migration Report 2022. IOM. Geneva, 2021. URL: <https://publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2022>.

⁵ World Migration Report 2022. IOM. Geneva, 2021. URL: <https://publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2022>.

Figure 1.1. Global environmental and climate risk hotspots



Source: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations University.
URL: <https://www.unep.org>

displacements. More than 98% of these displacements were due to severe storms and flooding in East and South Asia and the Pacific, with the number of such climate migrants reaching 7 million people from 104 countries in 2020. All these migrants are commonly defined as internally displaced persons. The five countries with the largest number of climate migrants included Afghanistan (1.1 million), India (929,000), Pakistan (806,000), Ethiopia (633,000) and Sudan (454,000). As the term “climate migrants” or “climate refugees” is not internationally defined, such migrants are usually “transformed” into economic migrants or asylum seekers once they cross national borders.

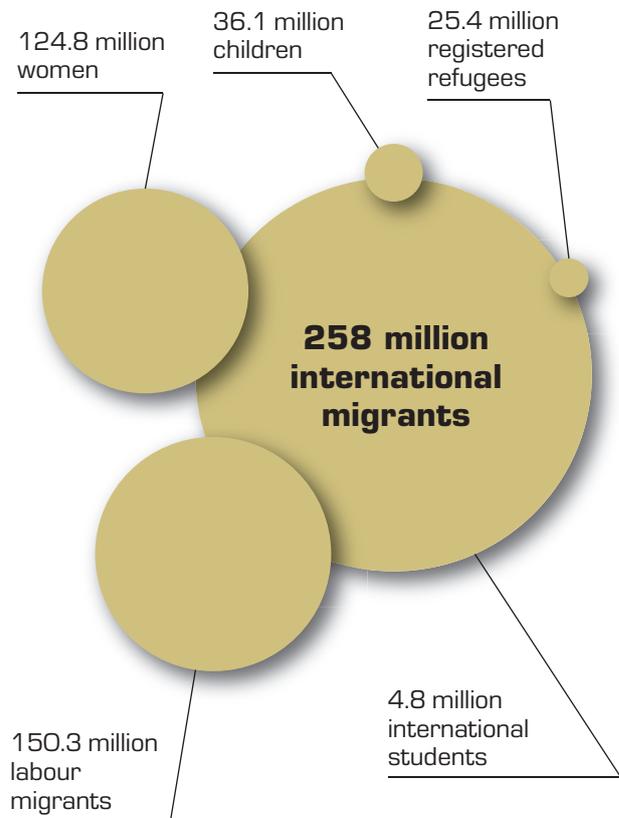
5. *The criminal factor* – the development of the migrant trafficking industry as a form of human trafficking. Organized criminal groups that make money by shipping migrants from Asia and Africa to Europe and North America have become far more active. Rough estimates put the profits of criminal businesses from migrant smuggling at between 3 and 6 billion euros per year.

Let us identify the most relevant types of migration on a global scale.

Before COVID-19, *labour migration* was one of the most widespread and socially and economically significant types of migration worldwide. In 2017, IOM estimated the global

Figure 1.2. Types and numbers of international migrants in 2018

Number of international migrants worldwide



Sources: UN, UNHCR, ILO, UNESCO

IOM 2018

Source: UN data. Global issues on the agenda: Migration.
URL: <https://www.un.org/ru/sections/issues-depth/migration/index.html>

migrant worker population at more than 164 million, or about two-thirds (64%) of the total international migrant population (258 million). Male migrant workers outnumbered female migrant workers by 28 million in 2017, with 96 million males (58%) and 68 million females (42%). In 2017, an estimated 111 million migrant workers (68%) were residing in high-income level countries, while 47 million migrant workers (29%) were living in middle-income countries, and 5.6 million (3.4%) worked in low-income countries.⁶

According to ILO, approximately 66% of labour migrants are employed in services, 27% in industry and 7.1% in agriculture. However, substantial gender differences exist within the sectors, with more women migrant workers in the services industry than in other sectors, partly due to the growing labour demand in the care economy, including in health and domestic work. Male migrant workers are more present in industry. In many regions, international migrant workers account for an important share of the labour force, making vital contributions to their destination countries' societies and economies, and delivering essential jobs in critical sectors like health care, transportation, services, agriculture and food processing.⁷

And while low-skilled and skilled migrant labour are still more in demand globally, competition is growing for highly skilled resources and talent, with highly skilled workers set to play an increasingly important role for the development of a knowledge-based economy. Human resource shortages in engineering, information technology, pharmaceuticals, health care and education are forcing countries to make their migration policies more attractive to highly skilled migrants. Labour migration is increasingly becoming circular labour migration. Migrant

workers are also characterized by return migration, which is becoming increasingly widespread due to the financial and economic crises.⁸

Russia has become a major centre of attraction for migrant workers from a number of neighbouring countries for historical, socio-cultural and economic reasons. By various estimates, an average of 2.5 to 3 million migrant workers are employed in Russia every year. For example, before COVID-19, some 3.2 million documented labour migrants, mostly from Central Asia, were in Russia as of 1 April 2020. Also, some 1.9 million undocumented labour migrants were involved in the informal economy or were not properly documented. On the one hand, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused an exodus of migrant workers from Russia, while on the other hand migrant workers were unable to enter Russia due to closed borders. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the number of labour migrants working in Russia has dropped by a quarter since 2019 to around 1,376,000 (from 1,744,000). The numbers were down in all categories of employees. The number of migrants with patents⁹ has declined by 21% and the number of work permits has fallen by almost 30% (86,000 compared to 122,000 in 2019). The number of Eurasian Economic Union citizens working in Russia has also dropped, by 26% (333,000 in 2020 compared to 450,000 in 2019).¹⁰

6. Another global migration trend in recent years is forced migration. According to the UNHCR, there were 26 million refugees worldwide by 2020, of whom 20.4 million were UNHCR-mandated and 5.6 million were so-called Palestinian refugees under United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) protection. Also,

⁶ World Migration Report 2020. IOM: Geneva. 2017. P. 33-34. URL: https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2020.pdf.

⁷ ILO Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers Results and Methodology. Third edition. Geneva: ILO, 2021. URL: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_808935.pdf.

⁸ Return Migration: International Approaches and Regional Peculiarities of Central Asia. Edited by S. V. Ryazantsev, Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Doctor of Economics. International Organization for Migration (IOM) – UN Agency for Migration, Almaty. 2020. 242 pages, pp. 28–29. URL: http://испи.рф/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Return-Migration-in-CA_RUS.pdf.

⁹ In Russia (and some other countries) a patent can refer to a document granting a migrant the right to engage in certain labour activities

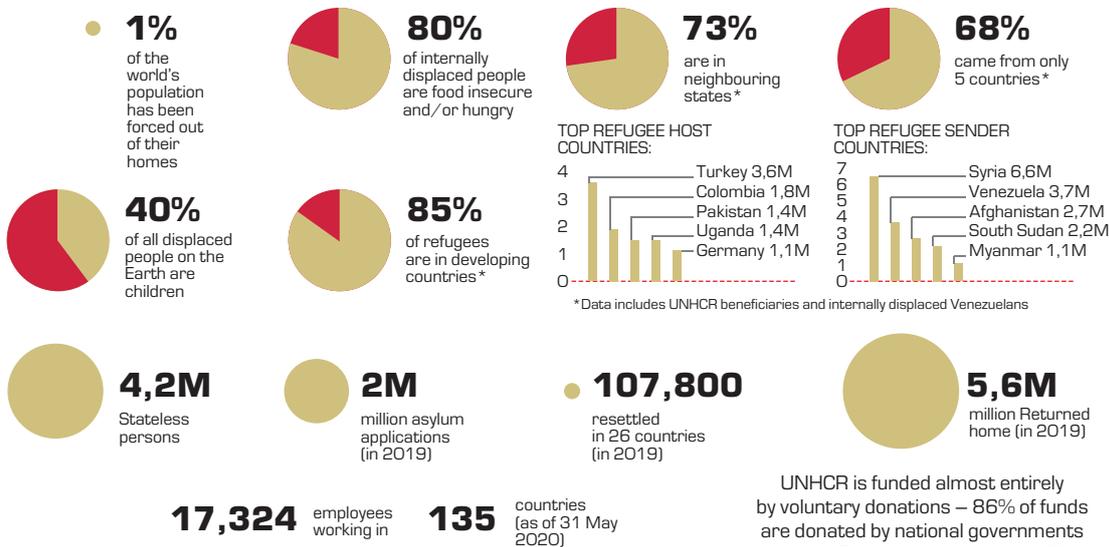
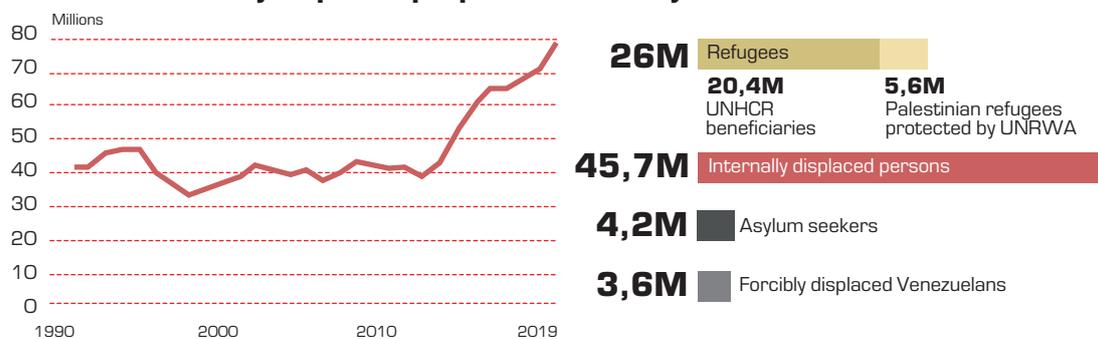
¹⁰ Number of Migrant Workers in Russia Falls by Almost a Quarter in One Year. Interfax. 6 November 2020. <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/735806>.

some 46 million internally displaced persons migrated for refugee-like reasons within their own countries. Some 4.2 million people sought protection in other countries. The situation was particularly difficult for Venezuelan refugees, with 3.5 million forcibly displaced migrants. The main host countries in 2019 were Turkey (3.6 million), Colombia (1.8 million), Pakistan (1.4 million), Uganda (1.4 million) and Germany (1.4 million). The main countries of origin were Syria (6.6 million), Venezuela (3.7 million), Afghanistan (2.7 million), South Sudan (2.2 million) and Myanmar (1.1 million) (figures 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5).¹¹

While slowing down many processes, the COVID-19 pandemic has not stopped conflicts. A record number of people were displaced from their homes in 2020 as a result of climate and natural disasters, along with old and new conflicts that broke out for the second or third time. COVID-19 identified new forms of vulnerability for people displaced from their homes. For example, domestic violence has increased: in Afghanistan, 97% of displaced women reported an increase in violence by a spouse or partner; 69% of displaced women in Jordan reported the same; and 73% in fifteen African countries. Many displaced people

Figure 1.3. Forced migration in the world in 2019

79.5 million internally displaced people worldwide by the end of 2019



UNHCR is funded almost entirely by voluntary donations – 86% of funds are donated by national governments and the European Union, while 10% come from private donors

Source: UNHCR / June 18, 2020

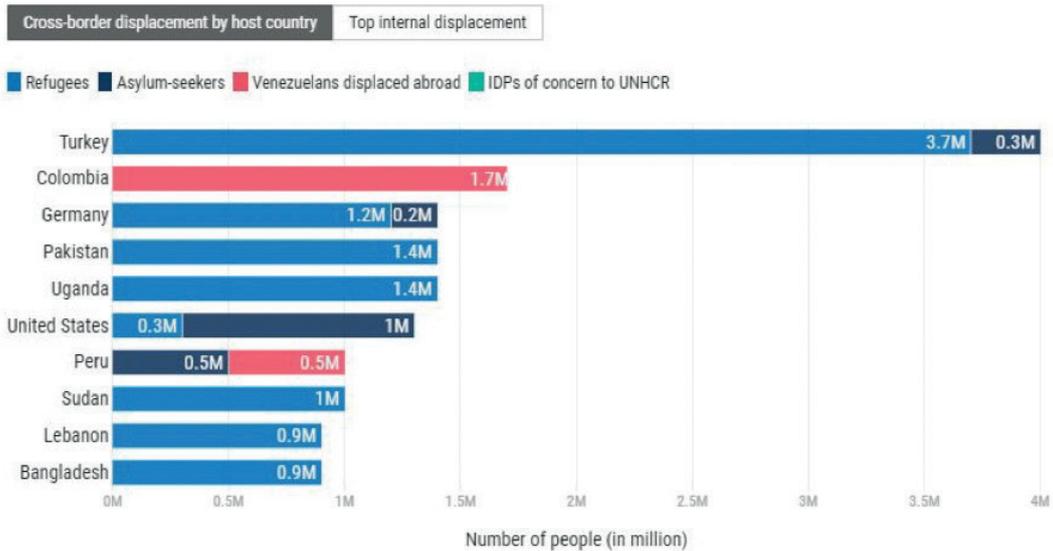
Source: UNHCR data.

URL: https://www.unhcr.org/ru/wp-content/uploads/sites/73/2020/06/GLOBAL-STATS_RUS-2.png

¹¹ World Migration Report 2018. Chapter 2. IOM. Geneva. 2017. P. 1. URL: <https://publications.iom.int/books/world-migration-report-2018-chapter-2-migration-and-migrants-global-overview>; Return Migration: International Approaches and Regional Peculiarities of Central Asia. Edited by S.V. Ryazantsev, Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences. International Organization for Migration (IOM) – UN Agency for Migration, Almaty. 2020. 242 pages, pp. 28–29. URL: http://испи.рф/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Return-Migration-in-CA_RUS.pdf.

Figure 1.4. Forced migration in the world in 2019

Top conflict displacement crises, end-2020

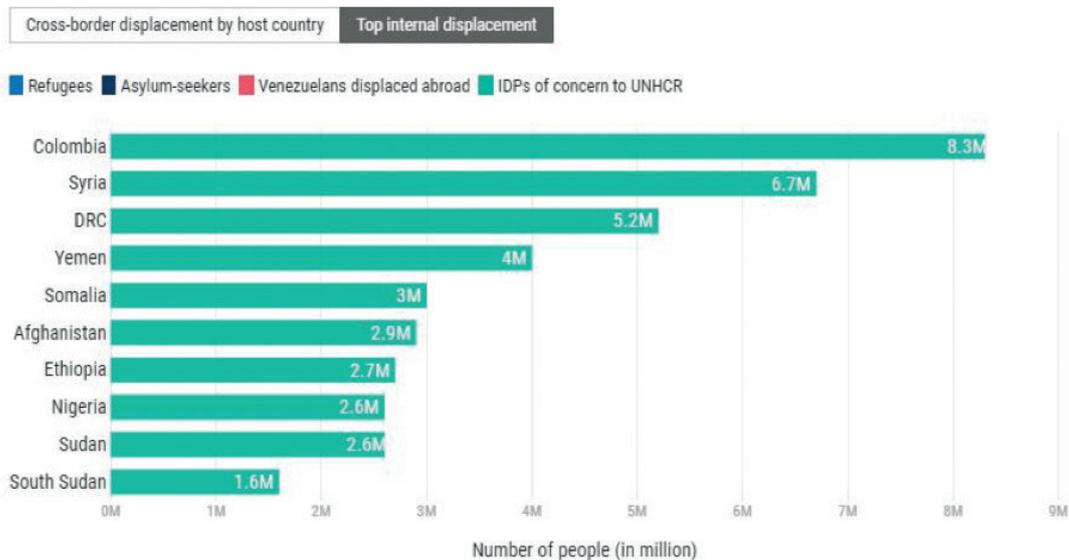


Source: UNHCR Refugee Data Finder • Cross-border displacement excludes Palestine refugees under UNRWA's mandate.

Source: UNHCR data. URL: <https://www.unhcr.org/flagship-reports/globalreport/>.

Figure 1.5. Forced migration in the world in 2019

Top conflict displacement crises, end-2020



Source: UNHCR Refugee Data Finder • Cross-border displacement excludes Palestine refugees under UNRWA's mandate.

Source: UNHCR data. URL: <https://www.unhcr.org/flagship-reports/globalreport/>.

lacked access to national health or social services that were vital to reducing the risks and impact of the pandemic.¹²

Even before COVID-19, the international reception and assistance system for refugees

was on the verge of collapse due to the prevalence of so-called forced migration, and the use of forced migration channels by economic migrants from poor developing countries in the absence of legal employment

¹² Global Report 2020. URL: <https://www.unhcr.org/flagship-reports/globalreport/>.

opportunities in economically developed ones. A large flow of migrants from Asia and the Middle East headed for the European Union, and from South and Central America for the United States and Canada. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the problems posed by such migration: UNHCR experts estimate that the number of forced migrants worldwide has reached an unprecedented 92 million.¹³

Educational migration. Before COVID-19, many economically developed countries implemented programmes to attract foreign students to universities, seeing them as human and demographic potential. In addition, young people in developing countries have become more mobile, tending to travel more and study abroad. Some regions and countries with a young age structure have become more actively involved in international educational migration. The number of Chinese citizens studying at foreign universities has more than doubled in the past ten years, reaching 662,100 in 2018.¹⁴ According to UNESCO, 5.1 million students studied outside their home countries.¹⁵ The OECD reports that the number of international students enrolled in tertiary education programmes rose from 2.1 million to 5.6 million between 1998 and 2018.¹⁶ Only 25–30% of international students return to their countries of origin from economically developed countries.¹⁷

The cultural and economic contribution that international students make to host economies has prompted major countries to step up their efforts to facilitate the entry and integration of international students. Many states allow students to work during their studies, thus gradually establishing them in the country, and then grant them residence permits, supplementing their populations with young

and educated people. A number of OECD states have made their migration and labour laws more lenient with regard to the employment of foreign students and graduates of their universities, thus increasing the number of skilled professionals in such countries. As a general rule, foreign students are granted a work permit if, during the period of validity of their work permit, they find a job that suits their qualifications and they meet certain criteria.¹⁸

The COVID-19 pandemic has made a difference to international students, many of whom left for their home countries and are now unable to return to their place of study, while many of those students who chose not to return to their home countries now see no prospect of remaining in their countries of study. The global education services market has been severely disrupted by the pandemic. In addition, the migration policies of sending and receiving states for international educational migrants are being reviewed. The governments of host countries are, it seems to them, preoccupied with more pressing social and economic problems than the situation of international students. Given that borders in many countries remain closed, migration policies towards educational migrants are tightening: study visas are not being issued, visas are being revoked for citizens of certain countries, and procedures for issuing visas and residence permits are becoming more complicated. According to UNESCO, the controversial measures taken by states to prevent the spread of COVID-19 have affected 70% of the global student population.¹⁹

The U.S. authorities have honoured international students who were already studying in the country when the pandemic

¹³ Global Report 2020. URL: <https://www.unhcr.org/flagship-reports/globalreport/>.

¹⁴ S. S. Donetskaya, M. Li. Chinese Students Abroad: Dynamics of Numbers and Purposes of Departure. URL: <https://doi.org/10.31992/0869-3617-2020-6-153-168>.

¹⁵ UNESCO data. URL: <http://data.uis.unesco.org/>.

¹⁶ OECD. Education at a Glance 2020: OECD Indicators, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2020. URL: <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserv-er/b35a14e5-en.pdf?expires=1631985279&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=3254EE76BA1D6AC1C6CF88EABEF473E2> (accessed 15 July 2021).

¹⁷ Gribble C. Policy Options for Managing International Student Migration: The Sending Country's Perspective. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*. Vol. 30, No. 1. 2008, pp. 25–39.

¹⁸ S. V. Ryazantsev, T. K. Rostovskaya, V. I. Skorobogatova, V. A. Bezverbny. International Academic Mobility in Russia. Trends, Types, State Incentives. *Ekonomika Regiona (Regional Economy)*. 2019., Vol. 15, Issue. 2. pp. 420–435. DOI: 10.17059/2019-2-9.

¹⁹ COVID-19 Educational Disruption and Response. URL: <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse> (accessed: 15 July 2021).

struck, and had a valid non-immigrant student visa to continue their studies online regardless of their location, retaining their immigration status. They also allowed international students who were enrolled before COVID-19 to continue their studies online from abroad and re-enter the United States even if their studies were fully converted online. On the other hand, such conditions have not been extended to freshmen enrolled after March 9, 2020. According to the requirements, foreign first-year students cannot take the entire programme online from abroad and must take at least one course in person.

The United Kingdom has shown flexibility in dealing with visa issues for international students: international students who could not leave the country were given the option of extending or changing their visa category within the country. The government has also confirmed that during the pandemic, all foreign students, regardless of their form of study, can obtain student and post-education work visas if they meet the remaining requirements.²⁰

Canada is trying to maintain its educational export and migration appeal by relaxing the conditions for work permits issued to foreign students at Canadian universities – those who were enrolled before March 2020 or between spring 2020 and autumn 2021 are eligible for work permits after graduation, even if their entire education programme was completed online from abroad.

In the aftermath of the pandemic, international educational migration destinations are diversifying. On the one hand, this is due to new players strengthening their position on the global export market of educational services, while on the other hand, the criterion of security comes to the fore. Foreign university applicants now have to consider many factors: the measures introduced to combat COVID-19; the

presence/absence of open borders and transport accessibility; the possibility of obtaining a student visa and extending it without leaving the country of study; the provision of face-to-face classes or a developed online platform; financial assistance from the state in case of general quarantine; the possibility of extending a student's stay after graduation for employment purposes; and the anti-immigration sentiments in the country of study.

Educational migration. An increasing number of migrants are now returning to their home countries occasionally or periodically due to various circumstances. Although there are no global estimates of the scale of return migration and national estimates are imprecise, the available data suggests that return migration is becoming increasingly widespread alongside an increase in overall migration flows.²¹ In 2019, IOM defined return migration in the context of international migration (the movement of persons returning to their country of origin after leaving their place of habitual residence and crossing an international border) and in the context of internal migration (the movement of persons returning to their place of habitual residence after moving from it).²²

Two streams of return migrants can be distinguished in the current context. The first group is “*forcibly returned migrants*” – persons deported or expelled to their country of origin by the authorities of the host country. The second category is “voluntary returnees” – those who return to their country of origin of their own free will, without any interference from the host country. Voluntary repatriation can be either organized (carried out under the auspices of the governments concerned and UNHCR) or spontaneous (refugees return by their own means, with UNHCR and governments having little or no involvement in the return process).²³

²⁰ Covid-19: Guidance for Student sponsors, migrants and Short-term students. URL: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/998895/Student_Guidance-_Covid-19_response_01072021_FINAL.pdf (accessed on 18 July 2021).

²¹ Return Migration: International Approaches and Regional Peculiarities of Central Asia / Edited by S. V. Ryazantsev, Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Doctor of Economics. International Organization for Migration (IOM) – UN Agency for Migration, Almaty. 2020. 242 pages, pp. 28–29. URL: http://испи.рф/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Return-Migration-in-CA_RUS.pdf.

²² Ibid.

²³ Glossary on Migration. International Migration Law. IOM. 2019, p. 225. URL: https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_34_glossary.pdf.

The formula used is “*assisted voluntary return migration*” – a process facilitated by the return and reintegration programmes of international organizations or host countries that concerns migrants who have no legal right to remain in the host country and who wish to return to their countries of origin. These are the so-called voluntary return and reintegration programmes (VRRP). Back in 2016, IOM supported over 98,000 migrants (32% of whom were women, 27% were children, and 3% were victims of trafficking) who returned from 110 host or transit countries to 161 countries of origin.²⁴ The majority of VRRP participants (83%) returned from Germany,

Switzerland, Greece, Austria, the Netherlands and Belgium. The main regions of origin of migrants benefiting from VRRP programmes were Southeast Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia (49%), Asia-Pacific (16%), and the Middle East and North Africa (16%). In total, the top 10 countries of origin account for 72% of all recipients of the VRRP support.²⁵

The pandemic has served to increase return migration to specific regions and countries, with many governments having to organize “getaway flights” to rescue citizens “stranded” in other countries or between borders. The reintegration of returnees is also often an a sensitive issue.

²⁴ World Migration Report 2018. Chapter 2. IOM: Geneva. 2017, p. 1. URL: https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/country/docs/china/r5_world_migration_report_2018_en.pdf .

²⁵ Ibid.

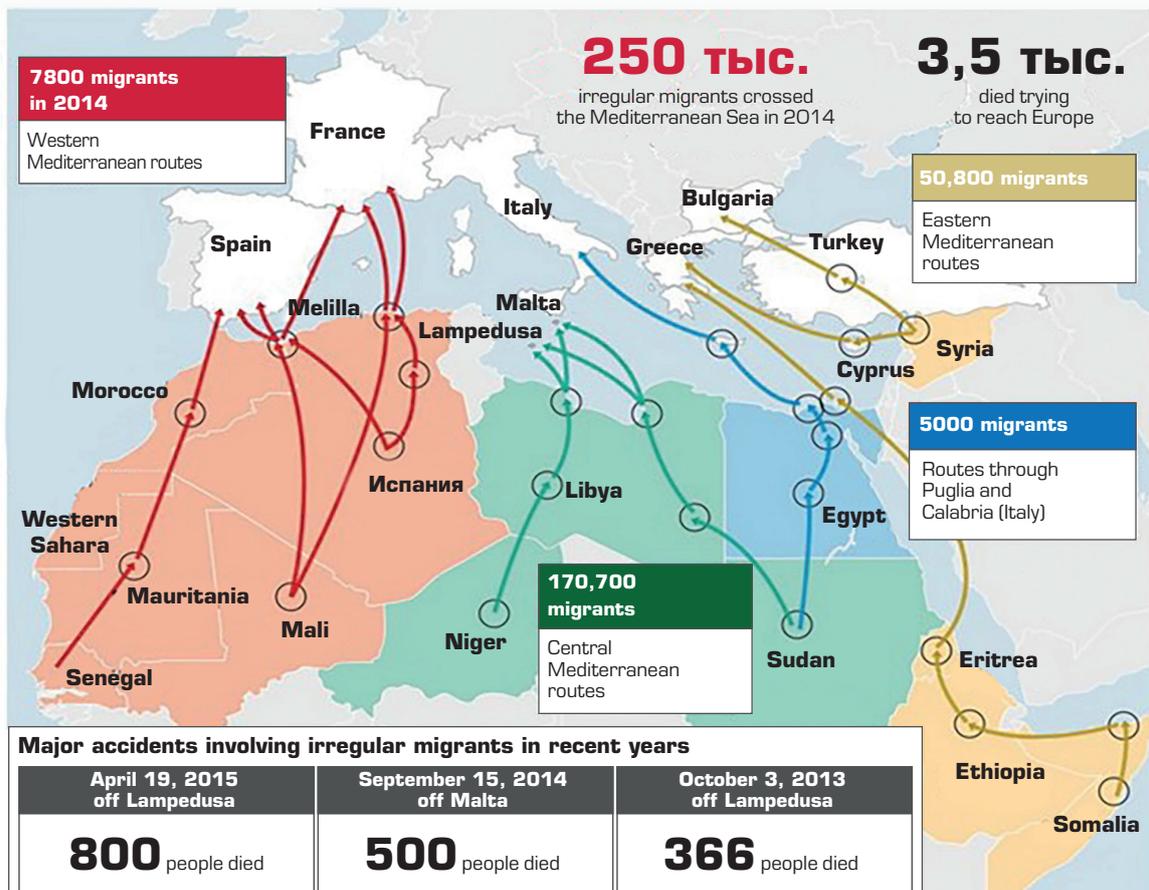
2. Migration Crises as a Challenge to International Relations and National Security

In recent years, migration crises have gained in importance as a factor of international relations. The term “migration crisis” was first used in April 2015, when the flow of migrants from Africa to Europe across the Mediterranean Sea increased manifold. The event that prompted such a notion was the sinking of several boats carrying African migrants in the Mediterranean Sea, accompanied by a massive loss of life, which caused a public outcry. Many publications came out with headlines using the term “migration crisis.”

The peculiarity of the current stage is that forced migrants in migration flows are mixed with economic and so-called family migrants, and it is not possible to distinguish one from the other correctly. As a result, the global asylum system has come under threat, as receiving countries are unwilling to accept large contingents of ostensibly forced migrants. In the European Union, for example, the authorities of the Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary are known for their tough stance on forced migrants, with

Kommersant. 09.09.2015, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2806383>

Figure 2.1. The main routes for migrants to Europe through the Mediterranean Sea



The main routes for migrants to Europe through the Mediterranean Sea

their leaders having at various times spoken out against quotas for the admission of asylum seekers.

A migration crisis can be understood as a large-scale influx of migrants over a relatively short period of time into a fairly limited territory. Such a crisis is often triggered by some extraordinary events such as civil war, external invasion, armed conflict or ethnic cleansing. And in such large-scale migration flows it can be rather difficult to separate migrants of different categories from each other.

The migration crisis reveals disparities and conflicts – which were usually previously hidden – in the demographic, economic, social and political spheres. Most significant is the difference in demographic potential, reflected in gender and age disparities, labour shortages and oversupply, and unoccupied or overpopulated territories. Differences in socio-economic potentials are most often expressed in the number of employed and unemployed people, levels of wages and incomes, and the development and availability of social guarantees and benefits. In this sense, the European migration crisis of 2015–2016 was not only the result of significant disparities

between Asian and African countries on the one hand and European countries on the other, but also exposed the capacity gap between the less developed countries of Eastern and Southern Europe on the one hand and the more affluent countries of Western and Northern Europe on the other.

The following specific features of migration crises can be identified.

First, a migration influx takes place over a relatively short period of time. A migration crisis is typically characterized by a dramatic increase (surge) in the migrant population. For example, while an average of 20,000–25,000 people travelled illegally to Europe per year between 2000 and 2010, in 2014 the number jumped to 900,000 (according to IOM). According to the EU Border and Coast Guard Agency, the number peaked in 2015 at 1.8 million, while IOM data suggests 1.1 million. Then the figures went down, with “just” 290,000 migrants arriving in Europe in 2016, according to IOM. Therefore, the migration crisis in Europe had a distinct time span (2014–2016), with a pronounced peak in 2015. We have witnessed a new surge (echo?) of such events has in 2021 – the situation with

Associated Press, https://perconcordiam.com/perCon_V7N1_RUS.pdf



Irregular migrants from the Middle East on their way to Europe in 2015



Irregular migrants from the Middle East in Serbia in 2015

migrants at the border between Belarus and Poland that was also characterized by a sharp, sudden influx of them from a number of Middle Eastern countries.

Second, the large-scale influx of migrants in a short period of time jeopardizes the functioning of social infrastructure, as it involves costs for the reception and maintenance of migrants, social and medical care, and policing of the territories adjacent to the camps in question. This requires substantial budgetary expenditure by the host states, diverting funds from social programmes aimed at their own citizens, hampering socio-economic development and worsening the socio-cultural environment.

Third, the ineffectiveness of migration policy instruments that has developed over the years. The migration crisis has exposed several previously latent or hidden problems inherent in pan-European migration policies, including the aforementioned difficulty or even impossibility of clearly categorizing migrants; a deep ideological divide over the reception and integration of such migrants,

often indiscriminately referred to as refugees; as well as inter- and intra-state tensions over quotas for their accommodation. The example of quotas is the most illustrative. In May 2015, the European Commission proposed accommodation quotas for all EU countries. In June 2015, an agreement was reached to accommodate 40,000 people, and in September 2015 a further 120,000 people from camps in Italy and Greece. However, the Visegrad Four countries (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia) have refused to accept their “share” of migrants, with Bulgaria, Slovenia and Croatia also opposing. In the end, only 35,000 people were accommodated, or 2% of the 1.6 million irregular migrants who arrived in the European Union between 2015 and 2018. Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Norway, Slovenia and Sweden introduced controls at national borders in response to the migration crisis of 2015–2016. In March 2016, Slovenia and Croatia, in cooperation with Serbia and Macedonia, closed the so-called Balkan route to Europe for migrants (see Figure 2.2). In 2021, Poland



Routes to Europe for irregular migrants.

refused to accept migrants seeking to enter its territory from Belarus, where migrants “got in” with tourist visas bought for between \$2500 and \$5000 in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan. The “great migrant standoff” at the border between Belarus and Poland involved, according to various estimates, between 5000 and 10,000 migrants.

Fourth, traditional migration flow analysis schemes often do not work during migration crises. For example, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine over Crimea and the Donetsk and Luhansk regions led to a mass exodus of refugees from Ukraine in 2015–2016. It would seem that the refugees would have left Ukraine for the West, but some 1 million people went to the Russian Federation. This led to a humanitarian crisis in some of Russia’s border regions, above all in the Rostov and Belgorod regions. Forced migrants were provided with housing and material, humanitarian and psychological assistance. Most migrants from Ukraine preferred to move to Russia, where they had relatives, social ties and could find work more easily than in Europe. Thanks to Ukrainian migrants, some Russian regions have been able to replenish their populations not only with qualified specialists, but also

with people of virtually the same culture as their native population.

Fifth, the most serious humanitarian consequence of the migration crisis can be seen as the devaluation of human life. According to rough estimates, while 500 people drowned in the Mediterranean Sea in 2012, the number of victims in 2014 was 1500. This number grew to 3800 in 2015 and 5100 in 2016. Migrants have been drowning in boats in unsuccessful attempts to cross the sea and reach Italian or Greek shores. There were also numerous deaths in trucks and refrigerator trucks in attempts to enter Europe overland. The Italian government launched the Mare Nostrum programme in 2013, which was followed by the European Union’s Triton and Poseidon programmes in 2014, to prevent the loss of life. A military operation called EUNAVFOR Med was conducted in 2015, which ran until the end of 2018, saving some 25,000 lives. The 2015–2016 migration crisis showed how fragile human life is when migration is illegal or criminal.

The consequences of migration crises need to be considered for both receiving and “sending” countries. In countries affected by the large-scale “export” of migrants, there is a loss of

human potential involving the most educated, business-minded and active people, as well as young people, and people of working and reproductive age. In out-migration countries, the number of citizens declines, birth rates fall, labour shortages arise and the ageing trend intensifies. For example, there are some localities in Moldova with hardly any young women left, as most of them have emigrated to Russia and Europe in search of work. This has the potential to reduce marriage rates in the short term and birth rates in the medium term. In economic terms, an outflow of labour resources, active entrepreneurs and skilled and highly qualified professionals (brain drain) is a real danger.

Conversely, countries with a massive influx of migrants face the problem of demographic pressures in the short term, i.e. there is an

increase in the number of young and working-age people who are not always able to enter the labour market and get jobs due to different circumstances. In the medium term, the influx of workers and young people is a positive trend for the receiving countries, as ageing societies gain young people and scarce labour markets gain labour. It is for a good reason, for example, that then Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel received the backing of big German employers during the migration crisis. But in order to reap these demographic dividends, costs must first be incurred for integration programmes and labour force training and retraining programmes. Ultimately, host economies, especially in the face of unfavourable demographic trends, gain a working age population and labour force and can partially offset negative population ageing trends.

Reuters, https://ria.ru/docs/about/copyright_reuters.html



Detention of irregular migrants from the Middle East on their way to Europe

3. International Responses to Global Migration Challenges Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Currently, there is no unified approach to the management of international migration and migration crises. Moreover, amid growing political tensions and conflicts, the international asylum and assistance system for forced migrants has come under threat of revision.

On December 16, 2016, the UN General Assembly held a high-level meeting where the UN Secretary-General presented the report “In Safety and Dignity: Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants.” The forum resulted in the adoption by a number of heads of state of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, which advocates a fair sharing of responsibility for refugees globally. A process has also been launched for the preparation of a global compact for safe, orderly and managed migration.

The Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration took place in Marrakech, Morocco, on December 10–11, 2018. The Global Compact is a framework document for a cooperation mechanism. It is not legally binding and is based on the sovereignty of nation states on the one hand, and on the recognition of universal human rights on the other. The compact states important and relevant objectives for regulating global migration: 1) minimise the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin; 2) facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work; 3) strengthen the transnational response to smuggling of migrants; 4) prevent, combat and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration; 5) use immigration detention only as a measure of

last resort and work towards alternatives; 6) create conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries; 7) strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration.

The United States, Australia, Austria, Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Italy all spoke out against the Global Compact, arguing that the balance of interests in the draft Global Compact is skewed in favour of states that send large numbers of emigrants, while the United Nations tries to place an additional burden of responsibility for receiving immigrants on receiving countries. And although the United States accepts up to 1 million immigrants a year, it has not yet joined UNHCR as a full member. Thus, at the global level, there has been a split between states on the international migration management agenda.

The migration policy of the Russian Federation, as a large and relatively “migrant-attractive” country, is inconsistent and sometimes in conflict with the country’s demographic situation. The conceptual provisions of migration policies diverge significantly from their practical implementation at the level of migration procedures. Migration policies are restrictive and can at times be quite harsh on immigrants. For example, the procedures for admission to citizenship were gradually tightened over time, culminating in the adoption of a new citizenship law in 2002. Even today, despite some concessions for certain categories of immigrants, the policy of granting temporary residence permits, permanent residence permits and citizenship to foreign nationals remains rather rigid. This migration policy is not conducive to pulling

the country out of the depopulation trap and runs counter to the officially declared goal of building demographic potential. The Russian Federation is a signatory to the Global Compact on Migration and has also recently become a full member of IOM, the UN agency, which demonstrates Russia's involvement in the global migration management agenda.

The socio-economic crisis triggered by COVID-19 is already being labelled by many experts as the biggest crisis of the 21st century. This crisis has engulfed every country in the world without exception and has entailed a profound transformation of international relations. In the context of restricted mobility, migrants who are already in destination countries, as well as those potential migrants who were planning to leave to work or study, find themselves in a more vulnerable position than the local population. The closure of state borders and the contraction of the labour market due to restrictive measures in the national economies have made it impossible for some labour migrants to return to their countries of origin, while leaving others with a loss or significant reduction in income, limited access to health care, and difficulties in renewing work permits.

Border closures, cancellation of regular flights between countries, restrictions imposed in national labour markets (in particular the shift to remote working) have led to significant and lasting changes in the scale and direction of migration flows. Even short-term restrictions imposed by states to prevent the spread of COVID-19 have had very tangible long-term effects on the global economy and movement of labour.

As the ILO report notes, "many migrant workers are often to be found in temporary, informal or unprotected jobs, which has exposed them to an even greater risk of insecurity, layoffs and worsening working conditions. Moreover, the COVID-19 impacts on women migrant workers appear to have

intensified already existing vulnerabilities, as they are over-represented in low-paid and low-skilled jobs and have limited access to and fewer options for support services."²⁶ According to ILO experts, "The pandemic has exposed the precariousness of their situation. Migrant workers are often first to be laid-off, they experience difficulties in accessing treatment and they are often excluded from national COVID-19 policy responses [...] Women face more socio-economic obstacles as migrant workers and are more likely to migrate as accompanying family members for reasons other than finding work. They can experience gender discrimination in employment and may lack networks, making it difficult to reconcile work and family life in a foreign country."²⁷

A number of risks for migrants arising from anti-COVID-19 measures should be highlighted:

- the closure of national borders and restrictions on mobility have made it impossible to travel other countries in search of work or, conversely, to return to one's home country;
- the suspension or restriction of the activities of a number of government agencies responsible for issuing and renewing permits for migrants has put those migrants whose documents expired during the pandemic in a vulnerable position;
- changes in the working conditions of both the local population and labour migrants have increased the likelihood of job losses or a significant reduction in income, and the need to reorient to other forms of employment, while also raising the share of migrants in the informal sector and the risks of labour exploitation associated with it;
- the significant drop in the volume of labour migrants' remittances to their countries of origin has had negative consequences for the national economies

²⁶ ILO Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers. Results and Methodology. Third edition. Geneva: ILO, 2021. URL: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_808935.pdf.

²⁷ Global Labour Migration Increases by Five Million. Labour Migration. ILO News. June 30, 2021. URL: https://www.ilo.org/moscow/news/WCMS_809365/lang--ru/index.htm.

of those countries, resulting in lower household incomes, increased volatility of national currencies in relation to the U.S. dollar and the euro, and the need to review the structure of public spending in order to allocate substantial funds for supporting low-income populations;

- the return of some migrant workers during the pandemic exacerbated the problem of high unemployment, including youth unemployment, in the countries of origin – mostly countries with a progressive demographic structure and a high proportion of young people, with population growth rates outpacing job creation;
- high unemployment and low incomes for a large part of the population have triggered a wave of discontent in the countries of origin with the actions of governments, which, in a negative set of circumstances, could lead to political transformations in society.

The resolution of issues related to international labour mobility, the restoration of international migration, and the minimization of the negative effects of restrictive measures in national economies on employment and migrant workers will to a large extent depend on the coherence of government action and the efforts of international UN organizations (IOM, ILO, UNHCR).

During the pandemic, countries have focused their migration activities primarily on the following key areas:

- ensuring the safety of their nationals remaining abroad and taking them back home (“outbound flights”);
- coordinating with the embassies of foreign countries whose nationals

(various categories of migrants) are affected by restrictive economic measures and are in a vulnerable situation;

- cooperating with international organizations in the field of migrant rights and the provision of various types of assistance to those in need;
- extending the status and permits of regular migrants;
- gradually returning international flights (including tourist flows) as the health and epidemiological situation improves.

The effectiveness of international cooperation on migration issues is closely linked to solving a whole set of problems that have emerged in national economies as a result of enforced restrictive measures: maintaining backbone enterprises and industries as well as small and medium-sized businesses; the need to maintain local employment as much as possible, through fiscal incentives for employers, the creation of new jobs (including temporary positions), and the reorientation to remote business operations; preventing an explosion of unemployment, especially in sectors most severely affected by the restrictive measures; providing financial support to the population (the vulnerable groups here are primarily families with children, the elderly and the unemployed).

In this context, an additional vulnerability for migrants is that in the vast majority of cases they cannot claim the financial support that is available to the local population. At the same time, the risk of losing a job and with it earnings is much higher for migrant workers. Migrant workers generally do not have savings that would allow them to live a more or less normal life for a few months under restrictive conditions.

4. Migration Processes in the Russian Federation Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Scale and types of migration. The Russian Federation is one of the largest host countries, receiving different categories of migrants, including migrants for permanent residence, labour migrants (migrant workers), and educational migrants (foreign students). Immigration has played a crucial role in post-Soviet Russia: between 1992 and 2020, it compensated for more than 75% of the natural population decrease, with a total migration gain of more than 10 million people. Russia is one of the top countries for immigrants, second only to the United States and Germany.

In 2007, Russia launched a state programme to encourage the return of compatriots, which enabled more than 950,000 people to immigrate to the country. Most of them are Russians and representatives of Russian peoples from the post-Soviet republics. An even greater number of immigrants came to the Russian Federation through family and personal ties. Since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in 2014, between 1 and 2 million Ukrainian migrants, mostly ethnic Russians or those from mixed families, have moved to Russia. There are no exact statistics, but many migrants have stayed in Russia permanently. Initially, their naturalization procedures were facilitated by a special presidential decree, but by the end of 2016 this influx had abated.

According to Ministry of Internal Affairs data, 19.5 million foreigners were temporarily or permanently registered in the country in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic brought their numbers down to 9.8 million in 2020. The main problem with the statistical recording system is the lack of information on the number of those individuals who received their temporary registration on a repeat basis in each year. Registration figures are therefore

rather tentative about the number of migrants, it is more about the number of registrations, including re-registrations.

According to the federal executive authorities, 15–19 million foreign nationals had been entering the Russian Federation each year until 2020, of whom only around 2 million entered for the purpose of employment. An average of 10–12 million foreign nationals may have been in the country at any one time during the year, with 3–4 million of them arriving for temporary work.

Although fewer foreign nationals entered Russia in 2020, their number still amounted to almost 9 million. This demonstrates the appeal of the Russian Federation to foreigners (Table 4.1).

A number of migration corridors run through the Russian Federation: the Caucasian corridor (with South Caucasus countries), the Slavic corridor (with Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Republic of Belarus), and the Eurasian corridor (with Central Asian countries). For example, the Eurasian corridor includes, according to various estimates, between 2.7 million and 4.2 million people, representing between 10% and 16% of the economically active population in the Central Asian region. In 2019, a total of 9.6 million Central Asian nationals were registered at their place of residence and reside in the Russian Federation. The same migrant could be granted short-term temporary registration two or three times during the year. In 2020, the number of registered migrants dropped to 6.6 million due to travel restrictions. In 2020, the following numbers were registered at their place of residence and stay in the Russian Federation, respectively: citizens of Uzbekistan (57,000 and 3,405,000), Tajikistan (105,000 and 1,829,000), Kyrgyzstan (15,000 and

Table 4.1.

Key migration indicators in the Russian Federation for 2017–2021

	2017 r.	2018 r.	2019 r.	2020 r.	2021 r. (January to September)
Number of registrations of foreign nationals and stateless persons	15 710 227	17 764 489	19 518 304	9 802 448	9 209 258
Temporary residence permits issued to foreign nationals and stateless persons (first-time permits)	295 761	268 200	234 705	120 653	94 322
Permanent residence permits issued to foreign nationals and stateless persons (first-time permits)	185 800	191 445	182 079	220 013	171 116
Number of persons granted Russian citizenship	257 822	269 822	497 817	656 347	549 814
Patents issued to foreign nationals and stateless persons	1 682 622	1 671 706	1 767 254	1 132 593	1 606 348
Work permits issued to foreign nationals and stateless persons	148 326	130 136	126 879	62 686	62 706
Number refusals of entry into the Russian Federation for foreign nationals and stateless persons	210 708	253 581	250 823	189 448	140 317

Sources: Statistical data on migration in the Russian Federation.

URL: <https://мвд.рф/деятелност/statistics/migracionnaya>

723,000), Kazakhstan (56,000 and 369,000) and Turkmenistan (4000 and 84,000).

The numbers of both documented and undocumented migrants in the Russian Federation fluctuate and depend on several factors: first, the general economic situation in the countries of origin of migrants and the needs of employers in the Russian Federation; second, the regime of entry into the Russian Federation, procedures of registration and access to the Russian labour market; and third, the restrictions (“barriers”) to migrant employment imposed by the authorities to regulate the labour market (such as employment quotas by sector of the economy, price of patents, etc.). According to estimates by First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Alexander Gorovoy, as many as 700,000

migrants from the CIS countries are employed in the shadow sector of the Russian Federation.

Migrant workers are distributed unevenly within the Russian Federation. Most are attracted to the Central Federal District (primarily Moscow and the Moscow Region), the Northwestern Federal District (St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Region), the Russian Far East and the Volga Federal District. Most migrants are concentrated in large cities.

At the same time, there is an increasing labour shortage in Russia. While the workforce stood at 76.2 million people in 2018, it dropped to 75.4 million in 2019 and 74.7 million in the first five months of 2020. During the pandemic, the shortage worsened due to the reduced influx of labour migrants, and is estimated at around 1 million people in early

2021. The most acute labour shortages are seen in construction, trade, some industrial sectors and agriculture in the Krasnodar Territory, Moscow Region, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Tyumen Region, Astrakhan Region and Sverdlovsk Region. Work is currently under way between Russia and the Central Asian states to develop mechanisms for the organized recruitment of labour. The creation of an organized labour migration mechanism has long been talked about as the ideal model for migration relations. Active efforts are being made with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan on the basis of bilateral agreements.

One of the most important forms of migration in the former Soviet Union is also academic migration, which includes the movement of students, post-graduate students, interns and scholars. In 2019, a total of 256,000 foreign students studied at universities in the Russian Federation, including 103,000 from Central Asian countries (of whom 41,000 were from Kazakhstan, 22,000 from Turkmenistan, about 17,000 from Uzbekistan and 16,300 from Tajikistan). The Russian Federation provides scholarships to Russian universities for almost all former Soviet republics (about 11,000 per year). At the same time, Chinese universities are playing an increasingly active role in the region's education market, attracting students to study in their country. In addition, the Chinese government is encouraging the opening of Confucius Centres and holding Chinese language classes in Central Asian republics in an effort to build a new elite oriented towards China.

Russia is also pursuing an active policy to attract foreign students. During the pandemic, admission procedures were simplified, including online application, online entrance tests, and deferred submission of original documents.²⁸ Many universities went out of their way to accommodate students who, for objective and subjective reasons related to

the pandemic, could not travel to Russia to study, and provided remote access to lectures, seminars and exams. An appealing factor is the cost of studying and living in Russia, which is often an order of magnitude cheaper than in European and English-speaking countries. Moreover, the Russian government is gradually increasing its education quotas for foreign citizens and stateless persons from the federal budget: from 18,000 in 2021 to 23,000 in 2022, and up to 30,000 starting in 2023.²⁹

In this situation, Russia has a chance to gain a stronger foothold in the global market for educational services, as well as in specific regions. This requires the development of universities, in particular in terms of their technical equipment, language training of teaching staff, educational programmes (in line with international standards), and housing. It also requires the further humanization of migration policy in relation to foreign students and graduates of Russian universities.

While migrant workers are officially considered by the Russian authorities to be temporary labour, in practice, many temporary labour migrants upgrade their status to long-term migrants and then Russian citizens. In recent years, citizens from Central Asian states have been actively acquiring documents entitling them to long-term residence in Russia – temporary residence permits and permanent residence permits, as well as Russian citizenship. Among Central Asian countries, the absolute leaders in obtaining Russian citizenship are natives of Tajikistan. Tajik nationals are permitted to hold dual nationality in accordance with a Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan on the Resolution of Dual Nationality Issues (ratified by Federal Law No. 152 dated December 15, 1996). In 2004, Russia imposed restrictions on persons with dual citizenship from holding public office, while also banning them from working in security or other law

²⁸ Order No. 726 of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation "On the Features of Admission to Higher Education Programmes – Bachelor's, Specialist and Master's Degree and Postgraduate Scientific and Pedagogical Programmes for the 2020/21 Academic Year" dated June 15, 2020. URL: <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202006180038?index=4&rangeSize=1> (accessed on July 15, 2021).

²⁹ Decree No. 2150 of the Government of the Russian Federation "On Setting Education Quotas for Foreign Nationals and Stateless Persons in the Russian Federation" dated December 18, 2020. URL: <http://government.ru/docs/all/131611/> (accessed on 28 July 2021).

enforcement agencies. Tajikistan did the same in 2017.

During the pandemic, the number of residence permits and Russian passports issued to Tajik citizens increased, reaching 48,700 and 63,400, respectively, in 2020 (compared to 29,600 and 44,700 in 2019). Only the number of temporary residence permits issued has decreased to 31,400 in 2020 from 46,000 in 2019 (see Table 1). Overall migration of Tajik nationals to Russia has decreased, with most holding temporary residence permits. The majority of foreigners who obtained Russian citizenship between 2016 and 2020 were Ukrainian nationals, accounting for 47%, or 678,800 people, of all newly naturalized Russian citizens during that period. Second place was taken by Kazakh nationals (13%), followed by Tajiks (10%).³⁰ In 2020, citizens of Tajikistan (63,400) formed the second largest group after Ukrainian nationals (409,600) among those receiving Russian citizenship, overtaking Kazakhs behind.³¹

Russia's policy on granting citizenship provides for shorter processing times for citizens of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Belarus, which are reduced to three months compared to six months under the simplified procedure for granting Russian citizenship in accordance with the respective quadripartite agreement of 26 February 1999 (which entered into force on November 4, 2000).

The situation of migrant workers in Russia during the COVID-19 pandemic. The President of the Russian Federation set March 30 to April 3, 2020 as nonworking days with pay for employees. The regime was then extended from April 4 to 30, 2020. In fact, during this period, most trade (except for food retailers and pharmacies), hotel and restaurant businesses (except for food delivery), construction and transport were suspended. From March 27, 2020, Russian airspace was effectively closed –

flights with other countries were cancelled, except for the return of Russian citizens and the export of foreign nationals. Gyms, fitness clubs and swimming pools were closed from March 21, 2020. From March 28 to April 5, 2020, the operation of restaurants, cafes, canteens, bars, snack bars and other public catering facilities (except takeaways), retail trade (except pharmacies, grocery shops and essential commodities shops), beauty salons, hairdressing salons and massage parlours was suspended in Moscow. The restrictions were then extended until May 1, 2020. From April 13, 2020, car rental services, taxi services (except official carriers), construction and repair work were suspended. From April 15, 2020, digital passes were introduced for travelling around Moscow. These measures directly affected labour migrants, many of whom lost their jobs while at the same time being unable to leave Russia.

However, a sociological survey conducted by the Institute for Demographic Research of the Russian Academy of Sciences in April 2020 (with a sample size of 717 respondents from Central Asian countries) showed that 66% of labour migrants, despite the restrictions, closures and loss of jobs, did not intend to leave Russia.³² The main reason for this is low income and lack of work in migrants' home countries. A second sociological survey in February 2021 (with a sample size of 245 respondents from Central Asian countries) showed that 62% of labour migrants did not try to leave Russia during the pandemic, and about 31% tried to leave but were unable to do so. That is, most migrant workers lived through the pandemic in the Russian Federation.

In April 2020, it was found that the most pressing life problems of labour migrants at the beginning of the pandemic were inability to pay for housing (about 57%), loss of employment and inability to find a job (40%), and lack of

³⁰ In 2020, the Ministry of Internal Affairs Issued More Russian passports to Foreigners. Pravo.RU. 19 May 2020. URL: <https://pravo.ru/news/221908/>.

³¹ Selected Indicators Of Migration In The Russian Federation For January–December 2020, By Country And Region. Statistical Data on Migration. Reference Data. Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation. URL: <https://мвд.рф/Deljatelnost/statistics/migracionnaya/1/>.

³² S. V. Ryazantsev, Z. K. Vazirov, and F. M. Garibova, "Hanging at the borders" between Russia and Their Homeland: Migrants from Central Asian Countries During the COVID-19 Pandemic. Scientific Review. Series 1: Economics and Law. 2020, No. 3, p. 52.

Table 4.2.

Central Asian nationals who obtained temporary residence permits (TRP), permanent residence permits (PRP) and citizenship of the Russian Federation in 2019–2020, persons

	Number of TRPs issued during the year	Had a valid TRP at the end of the year	Number of PRPs issued during the year	Had a valid PRP at the end of the year	Number of decisions to grant Russian citizenship (acquisition, reinstatement) during the year
Total number of foreigners, including:					
2016 г.	330 872	620 530	186 090	495 114	265 319
2017 г.	304 119	569 924	181 536	570 651	257 822
2018 г.	271 462	512 852	189 955	630 610	269 362
2019 г.	244 691	419 555	184 362	626 501	497 817
2020 г.	125 806	306 567	223 221	620 338	656 347
Nationals of the Republic of Tajikistan					
2016 г.	33 157	54 896	17 882	55 328	23 012
2017 г.	40 887	62 399	19 563	63 905	29 039
2018 г.	39 954	65 125	24 778	72 196	35 732
2019 г.	46 004	63 990	29 635	80 232	44 707
2020 г.	31 416	53 220	48 691	94 502	63 389
Nationals of the Republic of Uzbekistan					
2016 г.	41 547	78 349	19 918	62 728	23 216
2017 г.	36 469	77 837	18 605	71 288	23 334
2018 г.	27 768	68 828	21 488	80 099	21 067
2019 г.	25 022	53 823	20 888	81 624	19 388
2020 г.	14 624	42 465	24 055	86 191	23 131
Nationals of the Kyrgyz Republic					
2016 г.	7 125	18 292	6 338	12 378	9 316
2017 г.	7 572	14 131	4 986	13 705	8 777
2018 г.	7 771	13 244	5 006	14 110	8 793
2019 г.	7 638	11 660	5 086	12 965	9 371
2020 г.	3 814	8 650	9 087	14 812	11 865
Nationals of Afghanistan					
2016 г.	470	851	458	2 764	300
2017 г.	594	827	427	2 921	441
2018 г.	782	1 064	539	2 902	461
2019 г.	914	1 052	689	3 248	501
2020 г.	614	1 135	874	3 472	982

Source: Selected Indicators Of Migration In The Russian Federation For January–December 2016–2020, By Country And Region. Statistical Data on Migration. Reference data. Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation. URL: <https://xn--b1aew.xn--p1ai/Deljatelnost/statistics/migracionnaya/1/>.

money for food (29%). Approximately 14% had problems with police checks; 8% had poor living conditions; and 1% of respondents could not pay their patent. A survey conducted in April 2020 also showed that 88% of migrants suffered a decrease in income. In February 2021, a total of 56% of labour migrants surveyed said that their income had decreased during the pandemic. But there was a noticeable increase in the proportion of those whose expenditures did not change (8% and 36%, respectively). The proportion of migrants whose income rose, from 1% to 8%. In general, it can be said that labour migrants have adapted to the labour market situation.

According to a survey conducted in April 2020, approximately 28% of migrants polled had been dismissed and were unemployed, and 39% had been sent on unpaid leave. In fact, 67% of the migrants interviewed were unemployed and had almost no sources of income at the start of the pandemic. Calculations showed that during March–April 2020, the employment of migrant workers fell by 60% amidst restrictions and self-isolation.

During the pandemic, migrant workers staged strikes in Russia over redundancies, non-payment of wages and a lack of social support.³³ Despite the initial shock associated with job cuts, the employment situation of migrant workers in the Russian labour market had gradually recovered by February 2021. This recovery was accompanied by some regional and sectoral transformations, as well as a reduction in wages and a fall in migrant workers' incomes.

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Tajikistan Imomuddin Sattorov noted in an interview in November 2020: “The majority of our citizens have returned to their jobs as the construction and service sectors have recovered. And we are grateful to the Russian side for the timely measures taken to provide social support to migrant workers during the pandemic. As we

can see, the package of measures taken by the Russian government has not only provided social support to migrant workers in general, but has also contributed positively to the recovery process in the areas of the economy most affected by the temporary restrictions. Overall, the situation is now getting better. Most of our citizens have returned to their jobs as the construction and service sectors recover.”³⁴

Due to the suspension of businesses and construction sites, many migrant workers in large Russian cities found themselves in confined spaces, with poor hygienic conditions (hostels, boarding houses, cheap hotels, construction trailers, etc.). Only a small number of migrants can afford to rent accommodation on their own, and most often migrants co-renting flats, with several relatives and fellow countrymen living together. In April 2020, the average number of labour migrants living in a flat (house) was four people, dropping to 3.8 in February 2021. A significant proportion of labour migrants live in quite cramped conditions: in April 2020, one in every five respondents (22%) lived with four roommates or flatmates, and in February 2021, one in every three respondents lived with three roommates or flatmates. Such living conditions make it impossible to maintain a physical distance within residential areas and consequently lead to a higher risk of COVID-19 infection. Many migrant workers contracted the coronavirus and compromised their psychological and physical health.

During the COVID-19 pandemic in Russia, migrant workers received support from NGOs, ethnic entrepreneurs and employers. The high degree of cohesion, the solidarity shown by community representatives in difficult times, and the assistance provided to migrants who have been left without jobs and means of livelihood are all worth noting here. Some experts in Russia proposed paying unemployment benefits to migrant workers

³³ A. Sokolov, How Migrants Survive the Pandemic. *Vedomosti*, July 16, 2020. URL: <https://www.vedomosti.ru/society/articles/2020/07/16/834690-migranti-vizhivayut>.

³⁴ N. Kozlova, Builders to Moscow, Teachers to Dushanbe. *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*. The Federal Issue, November 19, 2020. URL: <https://rg.ru/2020/11/19/sattorov-bolshinstvo-grazhdan-tadzhikistan-vernulis-k-rabote-v-rossii.html>.

during the pandemic. For example, in April 2020, the Agency for Strategic Initiatives suggested that the government should temporarily equate migrants who worked in Russia and had lost their jobs during the pandemic with Russian citizens in order to pay them unemployment benefits.

Portugal followed this path, equating 580,000 migrants with its nationals in terms of social rights while battling COVID-19 and its economic implications. All foreigners who have already applied for a residence permit in Portugal were able to receive social support on

an equal footing with nationals until at least July 1, 2020.³⁵

Understanding the difficult situation of Tajik nationals, Tajik Ambassador to the Russian Federation Imomuddin Satorov, together with the Government of Uzbekistan and President of the Federation of Migrants of Russia Vadim Kozhenov, asked the Russian government to provide “holidays” for migrant workers in payment of patents during the period of quarantine measures.³⁶ Unfortunately, the idea of direct payments and tax relief for migrants was not implemented.

³⁵ Galcheva A., Starostina Yu., Parfentjeva I. ASI proposes to equate migrants and Russians in social rights // RBC. 20 April 2020. URL: <https://www.rbc.ru/economics/20/04/2020/5e99977a9a79476eebb62cd5>

³⁶ Khurramov Kh. Self-isolation in the crowd: Tajik migrants in Russia complain of difficulties during lockdown. 11 April 2020. URL: <https://rus.ozodi.org/a/30547366.html>

5. The Migration Policy of the Russian Federation: Problems and Prospects

A number of state doctrinal documents set out the foundations for attracting migrants to Russia. In the 1990s, migration flows consisted mostly of ethnic Russians who were repatriating to Russia, whereas in the 2000s, they were dominated by other ethnic groups. Migration flows are therefore increasingly seen in the context of Russian national security.

In 2003, Russia adopted the Concept for the Regulation of Migration Processes in the Russian Federation. The declared objectives of migration regulation were to “ensure sustainable socio-economic and the demographic development of the country, national security [...], meet the needs of the growing Russian economy for labour resources, the rational distribution of the population within the country, the use of the intellectual and labour potential of migrants to achieve well-being and prosperity...”.³⁷ The document outlined priorities for attracting compatriots and young people from the CIS and Baltic countries.

In 2007, the Concept of the Demographic Policy of the Russian Federation was approved, with migration seen as an element of the country’s efforts to enhance its demographic potential. The document planned to boost the number of permanent migrants to Russia by 2016, ensuring an annual migration increase of at least 200,000 people. By 2025, it was

planned to have more than 300,000 migrants per year.³⁸ Emphasis was placed on quantitative indicators, as well as certain qualitative characteristics of migrants (compatriots, qualified specialists, young people).

The State Program of Assistance to Voluntary Resettlement to the Russian Federation of Compatriots Living Abroad was launched in 2007 (Presidential Decree dated June 22, 2006).³⁹ In 2012, the programme was made permanent. In fact, the programme, which was conceived as a repatriation scheme for the return of the Russian-speaking population, has turned into an organized recruitment programme with elements of ethno-politics, as participation in it is closely linked to employment opportunities in a particular region of Russia. Upon resettlement, the programme participants receive various payments and compensations, as well as Russian citizenship under a simplified procedure. According to data from the Main Directorate for Migration Affairs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, some 960,000 people returned to Russia between 2007 and 2020.⁴⁰ In 2020, a total of 62,900 compatriots arrived in Russia, which is less than in 2019 (108,500) due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A large proportion of the programme participants (83%) in 2020 were from Central Asian states, including Kazakhstan (38%), Tajikistan (35%), Uzbekistan (5%), Kyrgyzstan (4%) and Turkmenistan (1%).⁴¹

³⁷ Concept for the Regulation of Migration Processes in the Russian Federation. Approved by Resolution No. 256-r of the Government of the Russian Federation dated March 1, 2003. URL: <https://rg.ru/2003/03/11/migraciya-site-dok.html>.

³⁸ The Concept of the Demographic Policy of the Russian Federation for the Period until 2025 (approved by Presidential Decree No. 1351 dated October 9, 2007) // GARANT system. URL: <http://base.garant.ru/191961/53f89421bbdaf741eb2d1ecc4ddb4c33/#ixzz60-jAHDs00>.

³⁹ Decree No. 1289 of the President of the Russian Federation “On the Implementation of the State Program of Assistance to Voluntary Resettlement to the Russian Federation of Compatriots Living Abroad” dated September 14, 2012 (amended on 24 July 2020).” URL: http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_135348/9cf95e1cef34d74eca9a5792671e8c9e40db0c88/.

⁴⁰ Almost 1 Million People Have Moved to Russia under the Resettlement Programme over 13 Years. Interfax.ru. October 14, 2020. URL: <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/731533>; Key Migration Indicators for the Russian Federation, January–December 2019. January 22, 2020. URL: <https://мвд.рф/Deljatelnost/statistics/migracionnaya/item/19364859/>.

⁴¹ Monitoring the Implementation of the State Program of Assistance to Voluntary Resettlement to the Russian Federation of Compatriots Living Abroad, in the Territories of the Consituent Entities of the Russian Federation in the Fourth Quarter of 2020. Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation. URL: https://мвд.рф/mvd/structure1/Glavnie_upravljenija/guvm/compatriots/monitoring/2020.

In 2012, the new Concept of the State Migration Policy of the Russian Federation through to 2025 was approved, where migration was seen as an important element of the country's socio-economic and demographic development, and migration growth as a means to compensate for natural population decline. The declared goal was to attract immigrants to the country for permanent residence in order to replenish the population of the country as a whole, and of its regions; foreign workers in priority professional and qualification groups according to the needs of the Russian economy; compatriots living abroad; entrepreneurs and investors; and highly qualified and skilled specialists of various profiles demanded by the economy on a long-term basis.⁴² This document refers to the CIS countries, the Customs Union and the Single Economic Space.

In 2018, the Concept of the State Migration Policy of the Russian Federation for 2019–2025 was approved once again. It defined immigration as an additional source (after natural reproduction) for replenishing the population of the Russian Federation and providing the national economy with labour resources. And migration policy was described as “an auxiliary tool for solving demographic problems and related economic problems. It should aim to create a favourable regime for the voluntary resettlement in Russia of persons who are able to organically integrate into a system of positive social ties and become full members of Russian society.” The Concept declares “facilitation of procedures for granting Russian citizenship, obtaining the right to stay (residence) in the Russian Federation, including for the purpose of employment; improvement of mechanisms for implementing the State Programme of Assistance to Voluntary Resettlement to the Russian Federation of Compatriots Living

Abroad, including adjustment of conditions for voluntary resettlement of specialists in demand (including scientific and educational workers, engineers, doctors), farmers, entrepreneurs, investors and prominent cultural and artistic figures, taking into account their expectations and requests, as well as support for Russian organizations attracting such persons.”⁴³

In 2019, President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin initiated a set of measures to reform the migration regime and the acquisition of citizenship in Russia in terms of simplifying the procedures for compatriots, particularly migrants from Central Asia. The documents point out that “targeted changes in migration-related legislation, as well as the tightening of legal liability, will not lead to a qualitative improvement in the field of migration.”⁴⁴ Migrants are seen as human capital, as well as demographic, intellectual and labour resources for the country. And the government's efforts in this area should be aimed at removing obstacles and barriers to obtaining legal status for people who consider moving to Russia for permanent residence in the future. The temporary residence permit is abolished as an unnecessary link in the system of migration statuses, opening up a channel for migrant workers to acquire Russian citizenship.

To reduce undocumented migration, an immigration amnesty for migrants living in Russia without legal status is envisaged: “Simultaneously with the enactment of the new migration legislation, it is important to ensure provisions that give foreign nationals who have violated the migration legislation but do not pose a serious threat to the Russian Federation the opportunity to regularise their status without having to leave the Russian Federation and without being prosecuted.”⁴⁵ Solving this problem could regularise the legal status of hundreds of thousands of irregular migrants.

⁴² Concept of the State Migration Policy of the Russian Federation through to 2025 dated June 13, 2012. President of Russia. Official website. URL: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/15635>.

⁴³ Decree “Executive Order on Russia's State Migration Policy Concept for 2019–2025” dated October 31, 2018. President of Russia. Official website. URL: <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/58986>.

⁴⁴ List of Instructions on the Implementation of the State Migration Policy Concept for 2019–2025. President of Russia. Official website. March 6, 2020. URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/assignments/orders/62960>; Resolution No. 58-rp of the President of the Russian Federation “On the Working Group for the Implementation of the State Migration Policy Concept of the Russian Federation for 2019–2025.” URL: <http://pravo.gov.ru/proxy/ips/?docbody=&prevDoc=102603009&backlink=1&nd=102525921>.

⁴⁵ List of Instructions on the Implementation of the State Migration Policy Concept for 2019–2025. President of Russia. Official website. March 6, 2020. URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/assignments/orders/62960>.

Table 5.2.

Number of foreign nationals subject to administrative liability in Russia in 2015–2020, persons

	2015 г.	2016 г.	2017 г.	2018 г.	2019 г.	2020 г.
Banned from entering Russia	490 893	229 013	210 708	253 581	250 823	189 448
Foreign nationals expelled	177 800	142 700	137 200	130 131	252 000	250 000
Prosecuted for administrative offences	369 287	271 014	334 145	н/д	н/д	н/д

Source: Based of data provided by the Main Directorate for Migration Affairs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs,⁴⁷ court statistics⁴⁸ and a review of court statistics on the activities of federal courts of general jurisdiction and justices of the peace in 2019 by the Judicial Department of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation.⁴⁹

Many of the ideas set out in the doctrinal documents on demographic and migration policy have not been implemented in practice. Government migration services often do not work efficiently enough. For example, migrants often encounter difficulties in registering at their place of residence, obtaining work and residence permits in Russia, and obtaining Russian citizenship. The strict rules on residence registration, which are among the key sources of undocumented migrants in Russia, need to be reformed. Registration can be notification-based and reflect a person's actual place of residence and domicile, rather than being a barrier to the legalization of a particular migrant. Currently, many migrants are unable to register at their actual place of residence due to the reluctance of their landlords.

There is a trend towards stricter migration controls in Russia since 2013, when the Code of Administrative Offences was amended. The legal categories of “expulsion” and “deportation” differ significantly in terms of grounds and procedures: expulsion is a type

of administrative punishment and can only be ordered by a court, while deportation can be ordered by an official of a migration authority (Main Directorate for Migration Affairs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs) or by the Border Service of the Federal Security Service of Russia. Formal grounds for the expulsion and deportation of migrant workers from Russia are quite varied, with a large portion of expulsions related to the breach of the residence regime – absence or expiry of registration at the place of stay, lack of a patent.⁴⁶ A patent is a document that allows citizens of five states, including Azerbaijan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine, to work in Russia. The share of minor violations is high: lack of health insurance, working in a profession other than one stated in their work permit (which is considered illegal labour activity), etc.

Migrants were also deported for administrative offences (traffic fines, traffic violations). There have been cases where migrant workers have even been deported for outstanding mobile phone bills. All this shows that the excessively tough migration policy

⁴⁶ The European Court of Human Rights. Case of Kim v. Russia. Judgment of 17.10.2014. (Application no. 44260/13); Migrants, Mi-grant-Phobia and Migration Policy, Ed. V. I. Mukomel. Moscow: Moscow Bureau for Human Rights. Akademia, 2014, p. 114.

⁴⁷ Data from the Main Directorate for Migration Affairs of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs. URL: <https://мвд.рф/Deljatelnost/statistics/migracionnaya>.

⁴⁸ Court Statistics. Judicial Department at the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation. URL: <http://www.cdep.ru/index.php?id=79>.

⁴⁹ Review of Court Statistics on the Activities of Federal Courts of General Jurisdiction and Justices of the Peace in 2019. Judicial Department at the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation. Moscow, 2020. URL: http://www.cdep.ru/userimages/sudebnaya_statistika/2020/Obzor_sudebnoy_statistiki_o_deyatelnosti_federalnih_sudov_obschey_yurisdiksii_i_mirovih_sudey_v_2019_godu.pdf.

pursued by the Russian government is in fact not so much directed against real lawbreakers as it is against ordinary people who lack information and are not sufficiently familiar with Russian laws, or those who objectively cannot get registered in the flat they are renting, turning them into irregular migrants.

In 2019, the number of foreigners expelled from Russia peaked at 252,000. Even during the pandemic, in 2020, some 250,000 people were expelled from the country (see Table 2). For example, more than 300,000 citizens of Tajikistan were deported and expelled from the Russian Federation between 2015 and 2020 due to tightened migration policies.

In 2015, a ban was introduced prohibiting certain categories of foreigners from re-entering Russia. Offenders are typically banned from entering Russia for up to five or ten years.⁵⁰ Restrictions on entry can be imposed by various state authorities for different offences, including minor ones (e.g. failure to pay a fine). More often the bans are related to the lack or illegality of registration at the place of residence.⁵¹ Experts estimate that a total of 1 million foreigners are now banned from entering the country.⁵² According to the Main Directorate for Migration Affairs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 253,600 entry bans were issued in 2018, 250,800 in 2019, and 189,400 during the pandemic, in 2020. In total, 1.6 million people (mostly Central Asian nationals) have been banned from entering Russia since 2015.

The situation of migrants in detention centres for foreign nationals (DCFN) deserves special attention. These centres are facilities where foreign nationals wait for their administrative deportation (until the opportunity arises, until family and friends buy them tickets or, in rare cases, they are sent home at the expense of the Russian budget). There are two such centres in Moscow that accommodate 1400 people, and 76 in Russia as a whole. Observations show that the centres are mainly filled with Tajik and Uzbek nationals. The monthly costs declared by the authorities for the upkeep of each foreigner awaiting deportation amount to approximately 20,000 roubles, while deportation itself costs the budget up to 40,000 roubles.⁵³ In such centres, migrants may have waited years for deportation even before the pandemic. During the pandemic, it is unclear how long a migrant's stay in a centre can last.⁵⁴ From May 19 to 30, 2020, the Tajik authorities repatriated 680 of their nationals from Russian DCFNs by special flights.⁵⁵

A study carried out in April 2020 found that police had stepped up checks on migrants since the start of the isolation regime in Russian cities, and many were subjected to expulsion for formal violations. Although the Russian authorities have simplified migration procedures (registration, patents, work permits, temporary residence permits and visas were extended until 15 June 2020), in practice police officers increased the pressure and frequency of inspections.

⁵⁰ Vulnerability of Migrants and Integration Needs in Central Asia: The Main Causes and Socio-Economic Consequences of Return Migration. A Regional Field Assessment in Central Asia. Astana, 2016. 288 p.

⁵¹ S. V. Ryazantsev, A. A. Baikov, and V. M. Morozov. Socio-Economic Status and Legal Status of Kyrgyz Labour Migrants in Russia in the Context of Kyrgyzstan's Integration into the EAEU. Migration Law. 2019, No. 1, p. 3–8.

⁵² A. Musina. Russia: Migrant Outflow Threatens Economic Development. URL: <https://russian.eurasianet.org/россия-отток-мигрантов-ставит-под-угрозу-экономическое-развитие>.

⁵³ Interview with Aslambek Paskachev, Head of the Russian Congress of Caucasian Peoples and Member of the Russian Presidential Council on Interethnic Relations. Izvestia. April 28, 2017. URL: <https://iz.ru/news/694817>. In March 2021, Aslambek Paskachev was convicted of extortion by the Tverskoi court in Moscow.

⁵⁴ Hundreds of Central Asian Migrants Stuck in Russian Deportation Centres. *Nastoyashchee Vremya*. March 25, 2020. URL: https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1610480819115470&id=953100708186821&__tn__=-R.

⁵⁵ Tajik Citizens Detained in Russian Detention Centres Return to Their Home Country. *Muhojir.info*. June 1, 2020. URL: <http://muhojir.info/news/1069>.

The following two policy documents of recent years are aimed at streamlining Russia's migration policy: Resolution No. 58-rp of the President of the Russian Federation "On the Working Group for the Implementation of the State Migration Policy Concept of the Russian Federation for 2019–2025" and the List of Instructions on the Implementation of the State Migration Policy Concept of the Russian Federation for 2019–2025, both of which were approved by the President on March 6, 2020.

The List states, among other things, that "targeted changes in migration-related legislation, as well as the tightening of legal liability, will not lead to a qualitative improvement in the field of migration." The document details many provisions of the Concept of the State Migration Policy of the Russian Federation for 2019–2025. The instructions are provided in the following six sections: improvement of the institutions of permanent residence (permanent residence permit) and citizenship of the Russian Federation; the creation of a unified migration regime for long-term residence in the Russian Federation; the modernization of labour migration regulation mechanisms; the improvement of security and law enforcement mechanisms in the migration sphere; the informatization of the migration management sphere; and additional measures to ensure the implementation of the reform.

The first instruction to the working group for the implementation of the State Migration Policy Concept prescribes that work should be organized to reform migration regimes and the acquisition of citizenship of the Russian Federation. This means that the government's efforts, expressed in concrete migration policy measures, should be aimed at ensuring that people contemplating moving to Russia for permanent residence should not encounter artificial obstacles and barriers to the regularisation of their legal status.

The intention is to eliminate unnecessary steps in the regularization of legal status (temporary residence permit) for different

categories of migrants who enter the country in order to work, do business or receive an education. It appears that, since it has been in force, the institution of temporary residence permits has not proven its practical usefulness. In this regard, it is proposed to establish three methods of admission to citizenship of the Russian Federation: general, simplified and special. As a general rule, it is additionally proposed to introduce a points-based system for assessing applicants for citizenship.

Foreign nationals, primarily those coming to the Russian Federation for the purpose of work, often try to circumvent the existing difficulties in obtaining migration status by going "into the shadows" or by acquiring temporary and permanent residence status and Russian citizenship (hidden temporary labour migration). At the same time, situations have not been completely eliminated where people who are able to organically integrate into the system of positive social ties and become full members of Russian society face unreasonable difficulties in obtaining Russian citizenship. The document notes that measures restricting the admission of foreign nationals to the labour market do not apply to nationals of member states of the Eurasian Economic Union. Such restrictions should also be lifted for foreign nationals who already have residence permits in Russia.

It is necessary to organize Russian language courses for migrants free of charge. Knowing and using the country's language as the main means of communication with the host population is one of the prerequisites for the successful integration of immigrants. Reducing tensions between migrants and Russian citizens is one of the most important tasks of immigration policy. As experience in many countries shows, the main cause of conflicts with migrants is the lack of attention to the most complex component of migration policy: integration policy. Due to the intense influx of migrants from countries with a "large cultural distance," there is growing public anxiety about their readiness and ability to adapt to the norms of social life in Russia.

The Instructions indicate the need to strengthen the chain of command in order to ensure the strict implementation of instructions by migration authorities at the regional level. Increased staffing, both in the centre and in the regions with the largest number of migrants, will enhance their access to the necessary legal, economic and social support.

The state migration policy should be based on quality information and analytical support. A specific instruction from the President of the Russian Federation is aimed at solving this problem: “The level of application of information technologies in providing state services and exercising state control in the sphere of migration remains low [...] The information and analytical support of migration policy needs further improvement, first of all in terms of improving the completeness and objectivity of data on the migration situation. The lack of sufficient data, in particular on the labour needs of economic entities and on the real distribution of foreign nationals in the labour market, complicates the development of regulatory measures and heightens the risk of a regulatory impact inadequate to the economic situation and the real needs of businesses.” The creation of a digital platform and the integration of data collected from different sources would seem to enable a comprehensive understanding of migration processes.

In order to reduce the level of irregular migration, which is often caused by circumstances related to gaps in legislation or errors in law enforcement practice, the instructions of the President of the Russian Federation provide for the development and implementation of an immigration amnesty for compatriots who have long lived in Russia without legal status. The document highlights the need for measures to prepare a migration

amnesty: “Simultaneously with the enactment of the new migration legislation, it is important to ensure provisions that give foreign nationals who have violated the migration legislation but do not pose a serious threat to the Russian Federation the opportunity to regularize their status without having to leave the Russian Federation and without being prosecuted.”

The resolution of this highly complex and controversial task should lead to the regularization of the legal status of hundreds of thousands of migrants on Russian territory. Issuing them a document, following identification procedures, which will be recognized in all subsequent regularization matters up to the acquisition of citizenship and entitle them to leave the country, will greatly reduce the criminal element that often accompanies the irregular situation of migrants. The establishment of non-judicial appeal mechanisms against decisions to deny a status or citizenship is mandated.

Still outstanding are highly topical issues in facilitating the regulation of the legal status of migrants. It would be advisable to provide for the recognition of Russian citizenship by birth for former citizens of the USSR born on the territory of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. Mechanisms are also needed to revoke previous deportation decisions and bans on entry into Russia for persons who have stable family ties with Russian citizens and have not committed socially dangerous offences.

The implementation of the Presidential Instructions on the Implementation of the State Migration Policy Concept of the Russian Federation for 2019–2025 should have a positive impact on attracting migration potential to Russia to achieve the country’s demographic security.

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