

MMC Asia

QUARTER 4 2021



Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: Asia

This Quarterly Mixed Migration Update (QMMU) covers Southern and Southeast Asia. Depending on the quarterly trends and migration-related updates, more attention may be given to any of the countries over the rest.

The QMMUs offer a quarterly update on new trends and dynamics related to mixed migration and relevant policy developments in the region. These updates are based on a compilation of a wide range of secondary (data) sources, brought together within a regional framework and applying a mixed migration analytical lens. Similar QMMUs are available for all MMC regions.

The Mixed Migration Centre is a global network consisting of six regional hubs and a central unit in Geneva engaged in data collection, research, analysis and policy development on mixed migration. For more information on the MMC, the QMMUs from other regions and contact details of regional MMC teams, visit mixedmigration.org and follow us at [@Mixed_Migration](https://twitter.com/Mixed_Migration)

MMC's understanding of mixed migration

"Mixed migration" refers to cross-border movements of people, including refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, victims of trafficking, and people seeking better lives and opportunities. Motivated to move by a multiplicity of factors, people in mixed flows have a range of legal statuses as well as a variety of vulnerabilities. Although entitled to protection under international human rights law, they are exposed to multiple rights violations along their journey. Those in mixed migration flows travel along similar routes, using similar means of travel - often travelling irregularly, and wholly, or partially, assisted by migrant smugglers.

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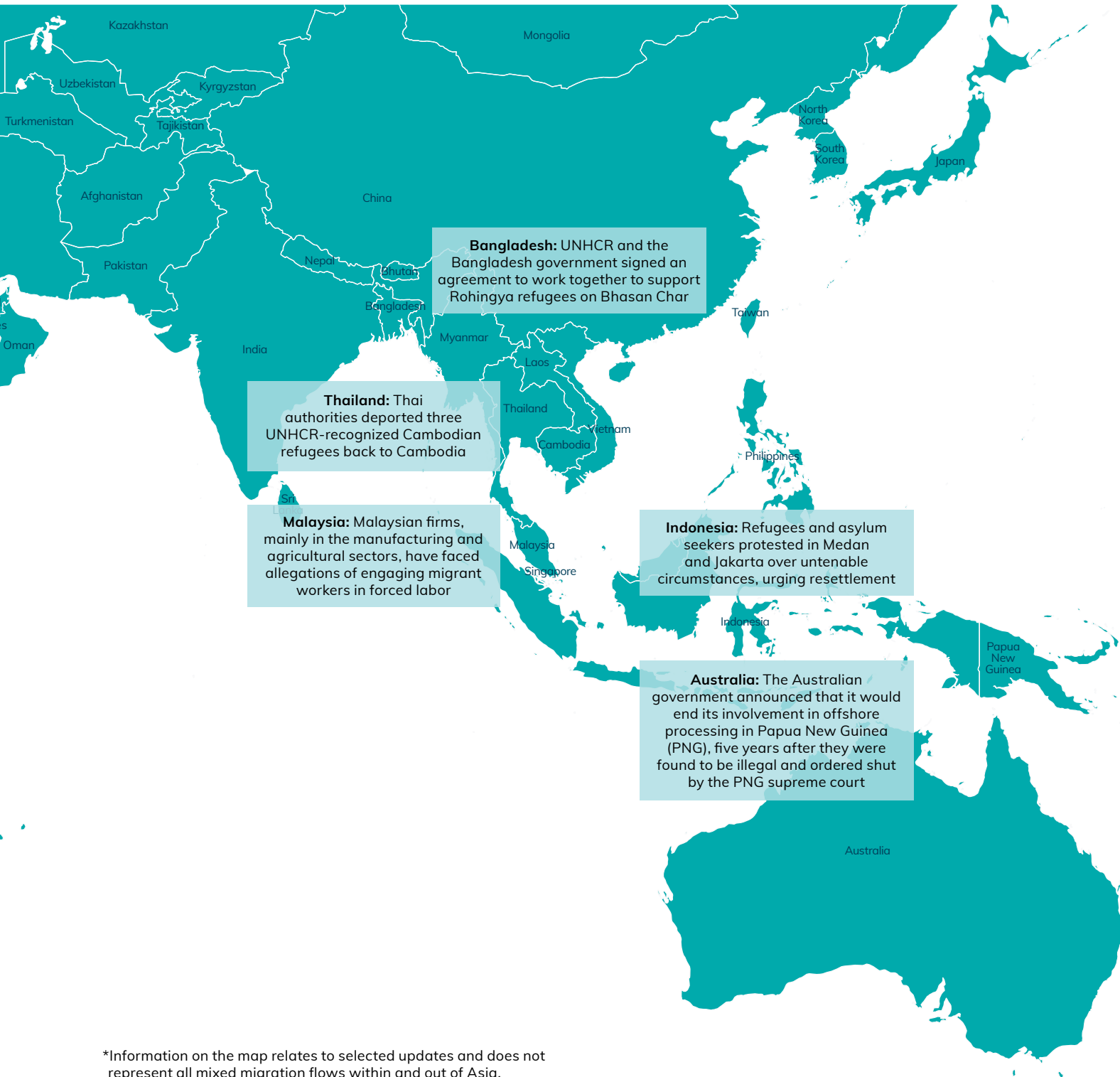
Quarterly Mixed Migration Update: Asia

Quarter 4 - 2021

Key Updates

- **Iran steps up deportations of Afghans:** According to the International Organization for Migration, the number of deportations of Afghans from Iran as of the end of November 2021 was 30 percent higher than the total number of deportations in 2020, [with an average of 20-30,000 Afghans being sent back on a weekly basis](#).
- **Violence soars in Cox's Bazar refugee camps:** Shortly after the murder of [prominent Rohingya leader Mohib Ullah](#), violence by, and conflict among, armed gangs mounted inside the Cox's Bazar refugee camps. As a result, Bangladesh has launched a [crackdown against criminality](#) in the camps and further reduced the freedom of movement of Rohingya refugees.
- **Escalation in violence and poverty triggers more displacement and migration in Myanmar:** Since 1 February, more than [more than 320,000 people](#) were displaced and some [22,000 people](#) were forced to seek refuge in neighboring countries due to political instability and economic difficulty.
- **Mass displacement caused by conflict and violence in Chin State, Myanmar:** Since May 2021, [hundreds of Chin people](#) have been arrested and dozens have been killed by conflict and violence. By the end of December, [some 132,000 people](#) from Chin State and neighboring Sagaing and Magway regions have become internally displaced and a further 15,000 have fled to seek temporary shelter in India.
- **Irregular journeys risk resulting in death:** As countries across the region have [delayed plans to ease travel restrictions](#) for fear of the new COVID variant, refugees and migrants have risked their lives in irregular journeys to find better livelihood opportunities and protection in [Thailand](#) and [Malaysia](#).
- **More action is needed to mitigate climate impact on displaced and stateless people:** The 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties ([COP26](#)) took place in Glasgow from 31 October to 13 November 2021. It provided a platform to discuss the impact of climate change on the most vulnerable populations, including [millions of people](#) forced from their homes every year by weather-related disasters.

Regional Overview*



*Information on the map relates to selected updates and does not represent all mixed migration flows within and out of Asia.

Mixed Migration Regional Updates

Afghanistan: A rapidly worsening humanitarian crisis continues forcing thousands to move irregularly

After the Taliban takeover in mid-August 2021, many crises are [converging](#) in Afghanistan. There are currently an estimated 5.5 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the country, including [664,000 newly displaced](#) by conflict in 2021. Nearly 23 million people, or 55 percent of Afghanistan's population, are facing [extreme levels of hunger](#), and nearly nine million of them are at risk of famine.

The protracted conflicts, as well as political and economic instability, have also forced thousands of Afghans to move abroad. By mid-October 2021, the Norwegian Refugee Council reported as many as [4,000 to 5,000 were crossing the border into Iran every day](#), adding to the total number of Afghans arriving in Iran at [about half a million](#) in 2021. In addition, [more than 300,000 Afghans](#) were recorded to have fled the Taliban rule to Pakistan, comprising 105,000 people who entered on valid visas and the rest with no legal documentation. The journey for some, however, will not end in Iran and Pakistan, but further afield to Turkey and the EU.

The [shrinking legal channels for migration](#), including the recent [closure of the passport department](#) in Kabul, have pushed many into irregular pathways. While smuggling has long been a lucrative market in Afghanistan, the increased demand for smugglers' services since the Taliban takeover has even made it even more profitable. The cost of a journey assisted by smugglers from Zaranj, Nimruz in Afghanistan to Tehran in Iran has increased from USD 250 in January to USD 400 in November. Meanwhile, due to increased patrols and border controls, smugglers have been using new routes, reported by [4Mi](#) enumerators in the field. While [Raja and Mushkil have been the two main routes](#) used over the last decade, recently the Zabul route (via Kang, Makagi, Pashmaki, and Tilayi districts) has become popular again among Afghans traveling to Iran.

Iran steps up deportations of Afghans

While Iran has been a major host and transit country for Afghans for decades, the Iranian authorities are taking an increasingly tough line on a growing number of Afghans fleeing into the country. Since 27 December, Iran has closed its border with Afghanistan, citing the outbreak of the new COVID-19 variant. The border closure has left [hundreds of Afghans stranded](#) at Islam Qala. Many reported having paid a large amount of money to get there.

Meanwhile, the deportation of Afghans from Iran has increased significantly during the last quarter of 2021. According to the International Organization for Migration, the number of deportations of Afghans from Iran as of the end of November 2021 is 30 percent higher than the total number of deportations in 2020, [with an average of 20-30,000 Afghans being sent back on a weekly basis](#).

These deportees have usually experienced risks and violations of their rights during both their outward and return journeys. According to media reports, [mistreatments are common protection risks](#) happening

in Iranian deportation camps, perpetrated by Iranian officials and border guards. Coupled with the dire situation in Afghanistan, mass deportations raise the alarm about the vicious effects of the immigration policy of neighboring countries on Afghan refugees and migrants.

Violence soars in Cox's Bazar refugee camps

The murder of a [prominent Rohingya leader](#), Mohib Ullah, on 29 September ignited [grief and anger](#) in Cox's Bazar, the world's largest refugee settlement. Soon after, on 22 October, an armed gang shot and stabbed people attending an Islamic school in the camp, killing [at least seven refugees](#) and injuring an unspecified number, including children. These incidents are indicative of mounting violence by, and among, armed gangs inside the Cox's Bazar refugee camps. Rights groups have since urged the Bangladesh authorities to take [immediate action](#) to improve security in the camps and to prevent bloodshed.

As a result, Bangladesh has launched a crackdown against criminality in the camps in late September. In October alone, [172 Rohingya refugees](#) were arrested and taken into custody. Local police claimed that many of those arrested were involved in [armed violence and drug trafficking](#). In addition, [preventative measures](#) have been implemented by the camp authorities, including the finalization of the barbed wire fence construction around the camps, the installation of several watchtowers to monitor movements, and increasing use of surveillance and border patrols. These measures further reduce the freedom of movement - a fundamental human right under international law - of Rohingya refugees in the already [prison-like conditions](#).

Myanmar: Escalation in violence and poverty triggers more displacement and migration

Ten months after the [military coup](#), poverty, food insecurity, and the collapse of the [healthcare system](#) are putting hundreds of thousands of lives at risk in Myanmar. The UN estimated that by early November, [more than 3 million people](#) in Myanmar were in dire need of humanitarian assistance, including a large share of displaced populations in Rakhine, Chin, Shan, and Kachin states. Meanwhile, the delivery of lifesaving aid has been [obstructed](#) by new travel restrictions imposed on humanitarian workers. The military also blocked access to roads and telecommunications services, and [launched an attack on aid workers](#). At the same time, 256 civil society organizations in Myanmar have called [against any cooperation and engagement](#) of UN agencies with the military that may help legitimize its power. Thailand and the United States are considering jointly providing humanitarian aid via the [Thailand-Myanmar border](#).

Meanwhile, the number of forcibly displaced people continued to rise, including [more than 320,000 IDPs](#) between 1 February and 27 December. Conflict also forced some [22,000 people](#) to seek refuge in neighboring countries. While [India and Thailand](#) remained key destinations for refugees from Myanmar, many are seeking protection beyond the region. By early November, for example, a crewman from Myanmar [jumped off a cargo ship](#) into freezing waters off the coast of New Zealand to seek asylum in the country, gaining international media attention. According to the New Zealand authorities, the asylum seeker will be [allowed to stay](#) in the country while his case is processed by immigration officials.

Mass displacement caused by conflicts and violence in Chin State: Civil society calls on UN Security Council “not to repeat the same mistake”

Following the February coup in Myanmar, Chin State has been at the [forefront of the country’s strongest civilian resistance](#). This stronghold of resistance has been met with [fierce attacks](#) by the military. In September alone, [around 10,000 people](#) fled their homes as the military indiscriminately shot into houses and set fire to Thantlang, a town in Western Chin State with predominantly Christian residents. The attack continued in October, resulting in at least 160 houses, two churches and an NGO office reportedly burned down. The military continued shelling [dozens of houses](#) across Chin State during operations between 6 and 11 November, and more clashes are likely.

The military’s response in Chin state has prompted fear of another human rights catastrophe in Myanmar. Since May 2021, [hundreds of Chin people](#) have been arrested and dozens have been killed. At the same time, [some 132,000 people](#) from Chin State and neighboring Sagaing and Magway regions have become internally displaced and a further 15,000 have fled to seek temporary shelter in India. Civil society organizations have since called on members of the UN Security Council “[not to repeat the same mistakes](#)” it made in failing to act on the Rohingya situation in 2017, leading to the deaths of [some 24,000 Rohingya people](#) and the mass exodus of nearly one million to Bangladesh.

Refugees and asylum seekers continue to face untenable circumstances despite Australia closing the PNG processing center

On 6 October, the Australian government announced that it would [end its involvement in offshore processing](#) in Papua New Guinea (PNG), five years after it was found to be illegal and [ordered shut by the PNG supreme court](#). The closure came without any viable long-term solutions for [124 refugees and asylum seekers](#) who remain in PNG under Australia’s offshore processing regime. They instead have the [option](#) to transfer to Australia’s other offshore processing centers, or to stay in PNG permanently with purported access to citizenship and family reunification. [Refugees awaiting resettlement](#) to the United States – under the Australia-US refugee swap arrangement – can also await departure while remaining temporarily in PNG. The decision once again put those held by the Australian processing regime, many for up to eight years, in [limbo](#). After the closure, by December, only [seven refugees](#) were resettled from PNG to Canada, thanks to a massive push by civil society organizations in Australia and Canada to arrange and sponsor their private resettlement.

Responding to Australia’s decision to close its PNG processing center, UNHCR and civil society actors voiced grave concerns over the [externalization](#) of asylum and protection, of which Australia is a demonstrated example. The closing of the PNG center does not change [Australian policy on offshore processing](#). The government instead reaffirmed that anyone who attempts to enter Australia “[illegally](#)” by boat will be returned or sent to Nauru, despite protections under international law allowing for [any mode of entry as regards asylum seekers](#).

At the same time, Australia continues its hard stance on migrants more generally. The government is currently considering passing the [Migration and Citizenship Legislation Amendment Bill](#) with a specific Act on “[protected information](#)”, which would allow Australian authorities to cancel visas and deport migrants without providing evidence. Meanwhile, those who are kept in Australia’s immigration facilities continue to face inhumane treatment. According to the Department of Home Affairs, the number of self-harm incidents in the country’s immigration detention centers has [increased](#) over the course of 2020-2021.

Malaysia is urged to act on abuse allegations of migrant workers

Malaysia has faced increasing international pressure to act on allegations of [abusive working and living conditions](#) for foreign workers, predominantly migrants from Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Nepal. On 18 November, hi-tech appliance maker Dyson [cut ties](#) with its biggest Malaysian supplier, ATA, due to concerns over labor conditions. Workers at ATA, primarily migrant laborers, reported working up to [15 hours a day](#) and were often asked to skip rest days to keep up with production demand. The United States Customs and Border Protection also banned imports from the Brightway Group, a major glove manufacturer from Malaysia, in December due to reports of [forced labor and modern slavery](#). In the past two years, seven Malaysian firms, mainly in the manufacturing and agricultural sectors, have faced [US import bans](#) due to allegations of exploitation of migrant workers.

Malaysia is simultaneously facing criticism for failing to act on addressing a severe shortage of labor in major industries where the foreign workforce plays an important role. Due to Malaysia’s delay in its reopening plan, domestic palm oil producers are reportedly racing to adjust to an acute shortage of foreign workers due to the pandemic and [sharply higher costs from improving working and living conditions of workers](#) following accusations of forced labor. The rubber gloves industry also [appealed](#) to the government to allow foreign workers to return to meet growing labor demands for 2021-2022. On 20 December, Malaysia signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MoU) with Bangladesh, ending a freeze of more than three years on Bangladeshi workers’ recruitment in Malaysia. The MoU will be in effect until December 2026 and is designed to create affordable and regular migration pathways for Bangladeshis to come and work in Malaysia.

Thailand is criticized for deporting Cambodian refugees

Between 8 and 22 November, Thai police arrested and deported [three Cambodians](#) who are members of the Cambodia National Rescue Party and were registered refugees under UNHCR’s protection. The refugees are currently imprisoned in Cambodia on charges of [conspiracy and incitement](#) and may face [a serious risk of persecution](#).

Return of these refugees has [caused widespread concern](#) among refugees and asylum seekers in Thailand. Cambodian political refugees in the country say they are [living in fear](#) after the arrests and deportations. [Pressure has since grown](#) on Thailand to protect activists at risk of persecution at home, in line with fundamental refugee protection principles. In its statement on 24 November, the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN) [strongly urged](#) the Thai government to reaffirm its commitment to the principle of non-refoulement in accordance with its international legal obligations.

Indonesia: Lengthy resettlement process has led to despair

This quarter saw several [refugee protests](#) in front of IOM and UNHCR offices in Medan and Jakarta, Indonesia, to urge the UN agencies to speed up their resettlement. Many refugees who joined the protests spent [nearly a decade](#) in limbo in Indonesia awaiting resettlement. Simultaneously, Afghan diaspora groups led an online campaign on Twitter with hashtags [#EndTo10yearsInLimbo](#) and [#HelpRefugees_Indonesia](#) to support the Afghan community in Indonesia and demand a solution for their protracted situation in the country.

On 30 November, an Afghan asylum seeker [set himself on fire](#) outside the UNHCR's office in Medan in protest of his seven-year wait for resettlement. The man suffered severe burns and was sent to the hospital after the incident. Since 2016, [at least 13 Afghan refugees](#) have died by suicide in Indonesia. This has raised urgent concern about the impact of the lengthy resettlement process and conditions in host countries on the mental health and wellbeing of refugees in indefinite transit.

COP 26: More action is needed to mitigate climate impact on displaced and stateless people

The 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties ([COP26](#)), which took place in Glasgow from 31 October to 13 November 2021, provided a platform to discuss the impact of climate change on the most vulnerable populations, including [millions of people](#) forced from their homes every year by weather-related disasters. Displaced communities living in climate-vulnerable hotspots also face threats to their lives and livelihoods, with women, children, older people, and people with disabilities being [disproportionately affected](#).

Despite [calls](#) for action to address the impact of climate change on the most affected communities, including displaced and refugee populations, many believe COP26 [did not go far enough](#). For instance, governments made little progress in [providing direct financial support](#) to developing countries where climate change has resulted in [irreversible losses](#), including mass displacement.

Large-scale displacements caused by climate change and natural disasters continued during the last quarter of 2021 in Asia and the Pacific. Tropical storms, floods, heavy rain, and earthquakes have reportedly affected [thousands of people](#) across the region, in [countries](#) including the Philippines, India, Indonesia, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand. According to the [Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre](#), the region hosted the largest number of new displacements in the world in 2020, mostly triggered by natural disasters and conflict.

Irregular journeys risk resulting in death

As countries across the region [delayed plans to ease travel restrictions](#) for fear of the COVID Omicron variant, migrants have risked their lives in irregular journeys, most commonly by land or sea, in search of better livelihood opportunities and protection. These journeys are often facilitated by smugglers and can result in injuries, death, and other protection risks for migrants.

In early November, Thai police and local officials found [23 migrants](#) left in a rubber plantation in the border province Kamphaeng Phet after an accident involving the vehicle transporting them. The migrants, all from

Myanmar, reportedly paid brokers who arranged a pickup truck and transported them into Thailand. The accident took the lives of [three migrants](#) and injured others. Similarly, [at least 11 Indonesian migrants died and 27 remain missing](#) after a boat sank in Johor, Malaysia, in mid-December. According to the media, the migrants were making an irregular crossing by boat to Malaysia to look for jobs when the accident happened. Those missing are believed to have drowned or fled into hiding from the local authorities.

While irregular journeys continue putting the lives of migrants at risk, undocumented migrants also face crackdowns in host countries. Thailand, for example, [arrested more than 42,400 migrants in 2021](#) for entering the country irregularly. The immigration crackdown in Thailand comes as a growing number of businesses struggle with a shortage of migrant labor and blame the government for [not making efforts](#) to allow foreign migrant workers in.

Thematic Focus:

Bhasan Char one year on: Warehousing is undermining fundamental rights

December 2021 marked one year since Bangladesh [began relocating](#) thousands of Rohingya refugees from Cox's Bazar to Bhasan Char - a remote silt island in the Bay of Bengal. The Bangladesh government has repeatedly claimed the move to be "[imperative](#)" in order to decongest the overcrowded camps in Cox's Bazar, the world's largest refugee settlement with [more than 900,000 Rohingya residents](#). However, civil society actors have voiced concerns that refugees on Bhasan Char are forced to live in "[prison-like](#)" conditions that restrict their mobility and abridge human rights.

Within a broader context, the Bhasan Char relocation constitutes a bigger problem: the regularization of [refugee warehousing](#) – a practice of keeping refugees in protracted situations of restricted mobility. Warehousing refugees and people seeking asylum offers no solution to the refugee crises, but further challenges access to basic human rights. Durable solutions for the Rohingya and other groups of refugees in the region lie in the facilitation of their rights and contributions to the social-economic development of host communities.

More Rohingya refugees are being held on the disaster-prone island

Bangladesh first brought more than [300 Rohingya refugees](#) to Bhasan Char in May 2020, after they were rescued from a stranded boat attempting to travel to Malaysia from Cox's Bazar. While the island was initially presented as a quarantine facility to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the camps, the refugees have been kept on the island since that time, and have faced punishment [for any attempt to leave Bhasan Char](#).

In December 2020, Bangladesh authorities officially [started relocating hundreds of Rohingya refugees from Cox's Bazar to Bhasan Char](#), reneging on promises to allow an independent technical assessment of the protection needs, safety, and habitability of the island. According to local authorities, all those relocated had given consent for the move. However, media reports have indicated that many received very [limited information](#) prior to relocation, and were [coerced](#) to move.

The number of Rohingya refugees on Bhasan Char is now estimated to be [19,000 people](#). UNHCR and rights groups have been concerned that the island has a very [limited capacity](#) for evacuation of a large number of people in the event of cyclones or other natural disasters. However, according to the Bangladesh Refugee Commissioner, the government will send [some 81,000 Rohingya refugees](#) once the monsoon storms end to complete the [100,000 relocation quota](#).

Warehousing denies Rohingya's refugees fundamental needs

In addition to environmental susceptibility, Bhasan Char also [does not provide a suitable environment](#) for the development of a stable, self-sufficient community in the long term due to its lack of community infrastructure. The economic and social consequences are considerable, not to mention longer term dependency concerns and the denial of fundamental rights.

The Bhasan Char relocation from Cox's Bazar further limits access to durable solutions and refugees' rights, including rights to freedom of movement, education, healthcare, and family unity. Healthcare and education facilities on the island are gravely [inadequate](#). In early July, [more than 5,000 Rohingya](#) refugees reportedly suffered from a diarrhea outbreak, and at least [three children](#) died in Bhasan Char, according to news reports. The forced relocation has also taken a toll on mental health, as refugees remain isolated and separated from support systems, as well as face risk of arrest if they try to escape. Amid criticism, Bangladesh authorities allowed [68 Rohingya](#) to leave Bhasan Char on 30 November to visit family members in Cox's Bazar for the first time since relocations began.

Warehousing refugees on Bhasan Char risks creating systems of dependency on external support. While [an agreement](#) between UNHCR and the government of Bangladesh in October opens the door to humanitarian assistance on the island, serious concerns remain as the deal offers no guarantee that refugees will be permitted to [move freely to the mainland](#) or to engage in economic activities on Bhasan Char. The lack of livelihood opportunities undermines refugees' contributions to the development of host communities. Meanwhile, research has shown that Bangladeshi residents increasingly see the refugees in Cox's Bazar as both a [burden on the local economies](#) and a source of insecurity. The remote location of Bhasan Char risks augmenting negative attitudes, undermining opportunities for positive interaction.

Durable solutions require considerable shifts across a number of actors

Despite its significant human rights and economic implications, refugee warehousing has a considerable history across Asia and the Pacific, tracing back to the Vietnam war and beyond. Particularly notable current cases include [Australia's immigration processing centers, Thailand's immigration detention centers](#) and northern camps, and Bangladesh's Rohingya refugee settlements in Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char. This trend threatens rights to freedom of movement which are fundamental to all other rights.

Most Rohingya refugees will likely continue to stay in Bangladesh as the prospect of repatriation has [dwindled](#) following the military coup and refugees face greater difficulty to [move onwards to countries such as Malaysia](#). Durable solutions require considerable shifts across a number of actors. Bangladesh's regularization of refugees could allow for considerable Rohingya contributions to host communities. Increased resettlement could ease pressures in Cox's Bazar and Bhasan Char, as well as demonstrate regional and global solidarity in responding to refugee situations. Rohingya people must also be provided with legal avenues to pursue grievances in the event of abuse, harassment, and other forms of violence, and rights under international and domestic instruments. Without effective coordination between governments involved, the international community and regional networks, the situation facing Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh will remain very fragile.

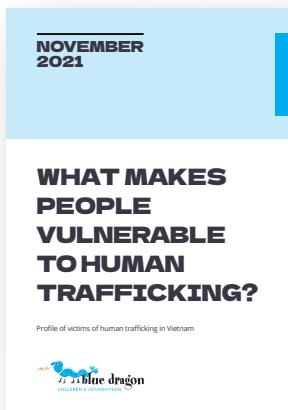
Highlighted New Research and Reports



[Participation and inclusion in the Rohingya refugee response in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh: “We never speak first”](#)

ODI | October 2021

This study explores issues related to participation and inclusion in the humanitarian response in Cox's Bazar. It examines where and how Rohingya refugees are involved in decisions that affect their lives, the mechanisms through which this happens, and the link between these dynamics and a more inclusive response. It forms part of a wider project by the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) at ODI examining inclusion and exclusion in humanitarian action.

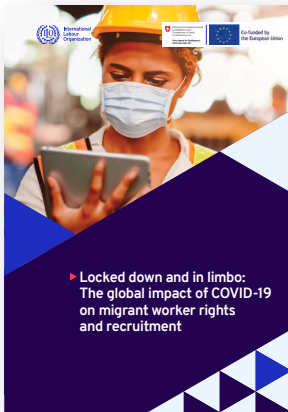


[What makes people vulnerable to human trafficking? Profile of victims of human trafficking in Vietnam](#)

Blue Dragon Children's Foundation | November 2021

Statistics published by the Vietnamese government indicate that the majority of Vietnamese victims of human trafficking are women and children, subjected to sexual exploitation abroad. Many are misled by fraudulent employment opportunities and sold into forced marriages in China; or to brothel operators in China, Myanmar, along Vietnam's borders or other Asian countries. Some Vietnamese women who travel abroad for internationally brokered marriages

or jobs are subjected to domestic servitude or forced prostitution. Traffickers include extended family members and small-scale networks which exploit Vietnamese men, women, and children—including street children and children with disabilities. Although comprehensive data on these cases is unavailable, one study suggests that 5.6 percent of children in Vietnam have experienced situations consistent with, or indicative of, trafficking.

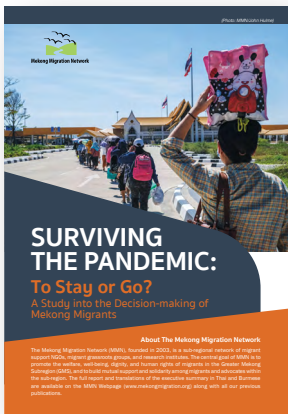


[Locked down and in limbo: The global impact of COVID-19 on migrant worker rights and recruitment](#)

ILO | November 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on migrant workers and their access to work. Public health response measures, including lockdowns and border closures, had considerable implications for the hiring and employment conditions of migrant workers. These measures have increased the vulnerability of migrant workers and the economic dependence on migrant workers who deliver essential services such as healthcare and sanitation has deepened. This report

provides a global overview of the impact of COVID-19 on migrant workers – with a focus on recruitment – drawing on rapid assessments conducted by the ILO in early-mid 2020.



[Surviving the Pandemic: To Stay or Go? A Study into the Decision-making of Mekong Migrants](#)

Mekong Migration Network | November 2021

This study provides an in-depth analysis of the individual decisions migrants make to cope with the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on their livelihoods and physical and mental health. Based on qualitative interviews with migrant workers from Cambodia and Myanmar in Thailand, and recent returnees of those nationalities, and supplemented by key informant interviews, the study examines what factors shaped their decisions to either remain in Thailand or return to countries of origin. It provides a textured account of the decisions

made by migrants already in precarious positions as they weathered the wave of redundancies and border closures, along with thoughts on how migrant decision-making can inform policy as we move through the pandemic era.



[Malaysia's human trafficking routes: what the collective data tells us about migrant worker exploitation](#)

Freedom Collaborative | December 2021

This report maps relevant routes taken by migrants from Asia to destinations in Malaysia. It also highlights cases of exploited Nepali and Bangladeshi workers under Malaysia's rehiring scheme, in which employers engaged in four sectors – construction, manufacturing, plantations and agriculture – can apply to hire undocumented workers, as per a quota fixed by the Department of Labor. The submission notes that workers were exploited after being hired under the

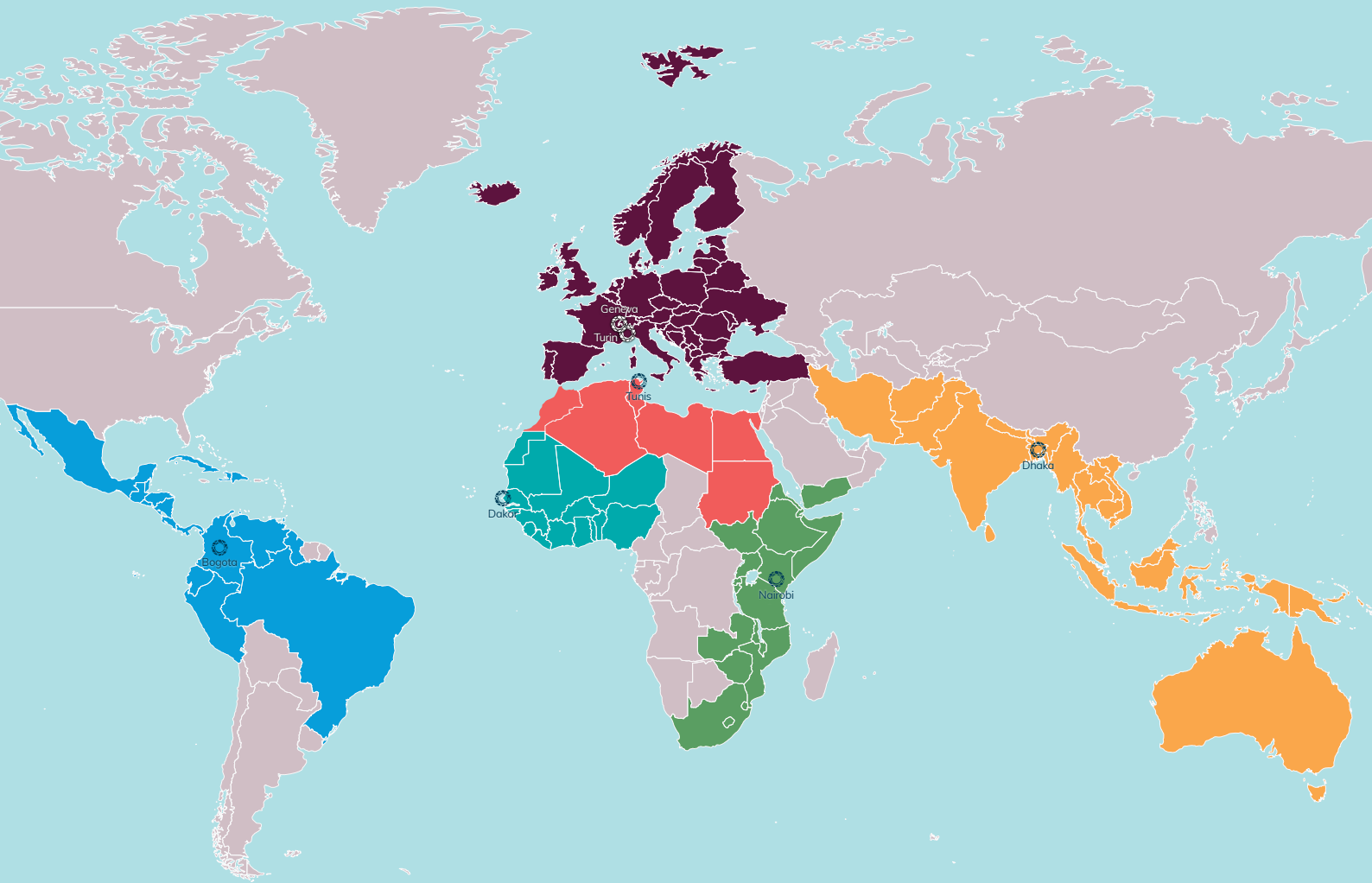
scheme, and in cases were then detained and arrested by Malaysian immigration authorities, accused of abusing their employment passes.



[Spotlight on Labour Migration in Asia: A factor analysis study](#)

IOM | December 2021

This report explores how low-wage international labor migration in Asia has changed over the last two decades. It identifies the drivers behind these changes, and analyses how risks and vulnerabilities faced by migrants have evolved in parallel. Based on current economic, social, political and technological trends, it explores how migration dynamics in the region may evolve over the coming years and decades, and considers the steps needed to maximize the benefits and mitigate the risks of this critical but often dangerous journey.



The MMC is a global network consisting of six regional hubs and a central unit in Geneva engaged in data collection, research, analysis and policy development on mixed migration. The MMC is a leading source for independent and high-quality data, research, analysis and expertise on mixed migration. The MMC aims to increase understanding of mixed migration, to positively impact global and regional migration policies, to inform evidence-based protection responses for people on the move and to stimulate forward thinking in public and policy debates on mixed migration. The MMC's overarching focus is on human rights and protection for all people on the move.

The MMC is part of and governed by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). Global and regional MMC teams are based in Geneva, Turin, Dakar, Nairobi, Tunis, Bogota and Dhaka.

For more information visit:

mixedmigration.org and follow us at [@Mixed_Migration](https://twitter.com/Mixed_Migration)

