

**REPORT**

**Community Perspectives  
on Border Externalization  
and Militarization  
A Global Analysis**

**JULY 2024**



**American  
Friends  
Service  
Committee**

Written by:  
Teresa Cappiali, Michelle Quiñones, Mahmoud Kaba, Musa Kurt, Abdul Malak  
*with contributions from Eunice Ndonga and Samanta Covic*

**For The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)**

**Date: July 10, 2024**

This report was commissioned by the AFSC International Programs Just Migration Thematic Hub/Lead, and highlights the results of research that was conducted by AFSC to critically examine the global impact of border externalization and militarization on people on the move, border, transit and impacted communities.

# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>PART I: Rationale for a Decolonial-Intersectional Approach</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Background and Rationale of the Research Project .....	8
Using a Decolonial-Intersectional Approach to Challenge Border Externalization and Militarization .....	9
<b>PART II: Key Findings</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Context: Regional Trends from a Comparative Perspective.....	12
Borders Experienced by Impacted Communities .....	23
Advocacy and Resistance Strategies .....	45
<b>PART III: Recommendations for Future Action</b> .....	<b>50</b>
Advancing Decolonial and Intersectional Approaches in AFSC's Work .....	51
<b>APPENDICES</b> .....	<b>55</b>
Appendix 1: Glossary .....	56
Appendix 2: Methodological Insights and Ethical Considerations .....	61
Appendix 3: Recommendations on How to Conduct Ethical Research .....	65
<b>CITATIONS</b> .....	<b>67</b>



# Structure of the Report

## **Part I: Background and Rationale for a Decolonial-Intersectional Approach**

Part I introduces the background of the research and explains the rationale for adopting a decolonial-intersectional perspective to understand and challenge current global practices and narratives surrounding border externalization and militarization. The aim is to demonstrate the potential of this approach, particularly by focusing on perspectives from the Global South.

## **Part II: Key Findings**

Part II presents an overview of the research and key findings, highlighting the significant impacts on affected communities, with special attention to vulnerable groups. This section details lived experiences of impacted people, providing a comprehensive understanding of how a decolonial-intersectional perspective can better center their voices to inform more effective and humane migration policies.

## **Part III: Recommendations for Future Action**

Part III provides actionable recommendations for policy influencers, CSOs, Communities and other key actors, building on region-specific recommendations derived from the research and feedback from Activists, CSOs, community and migrant groups and AFSC staff in each region. It offers a global perspective aiming at illustrating how to better program from an impacted community perspective, using a decolonial-intersectional lens.

## **Research Objectives**

The primary purpose of the research was to uncover and analyze the multifaceted impacts of border externalization and militarization on people on the move seen from the perspectives of affected communities. Using a decolonial-intersectional framework, it sought to challenge dominant narratives and highlight systemic injustices faced by people on the move, especially from the Global South.

## **Methodology**

- Literature review and document analysis to assess regional trends.
- Held focus group discussions and interviews with key NGOs, activists, people on the move and impacted communities, with respect and cultural sensitivity, in the four AFSC International Program regions.
- Selected diverse perspectives from the Global South, prioritizing marginalized voices (e.g., ethnic minorities, race, women, people with disabilities etc).
- Employed critical decolonial and intersectional analysis to examine power dynamics, language, and narratives.
- Synthesized findings to identify gaps and silences, ensuring a nuanced understanding of the experiences of people on the move, border and transit communities.

### ***Translating the Methodology***

By integrating a decolonial -intersectional approach with our methodology, we explored alternative ways to analyze border externalization and militarization and their impact on vulnerable individuals and communities.<sup>1</sup> We endeavor to provide a more just and comprehensive analysis of border externalization and militarization, ultimately contributing to more effective and humane policy interventions. To operationalize the theoretical insights highlighted above, our methodology incorporates the following elements:

- **Community-centered research:** Engaging directly with affected communities to ensure their perspectives shape the research questions, data collection, and analysis.
- **Participatory methods:** Utilizing participatory research methods to empower communities and

validate their experiences and knowledge.

- **Ethical considerations:** Prioritizing the safety, dignity, and rights of participants, particularly those who are most vulnerable to exploitation and harm.
- **Intersectional analysis:** Employing intersectional frameworks to understand the multifaceted impacts of border policies on different social groups.
- **Reflective practice:** Continuously reflecting on and adapting our methods to ensure they remain aligned with decolonial and intersectional principles.

## Critical Findings

1. Externalization policies and practices undermine protections guaranteed under international human rights law, reflecting colonial legacies.
2. Heightened border security measures and militarization disproportionately impact vulnerable groups, exacerbating fear and hostility.
3. Outsourcing migration governance to third countries often leads to conditions rife with violence, abuse, and lack of proper asylum procedures.
4. Treating migration as a criminal act and criminalizing NGOs that assist people on the move exacerbates human rights abuses.
5. Living conditions in refugee camps and detention centers are inadequate, with significant barriers to essential services.
6. People on the move face various forms of violence, including state-sanctioned violence, trafficking, exploitation, gender and sexual abuse throughout their journey.
7. The mental health consequences of displacement, detention, and deportation threats are profound, affecting individuals, families, and communities.
8. NGOs, activists, migrants, refugee and community groups play a critical role in defending the rights of people on the move and providing support, despite facing increasing criminalization.

## Recommendations

This report recommends a shift in how to understand and address migration in relation to border externalization and militarization, emphasizing the potential of using alternative methodologies, such as the decolonial and intersectional perspectives. It also seeks to challenge the legacies of colonialism that persist in contemporary migration policies, advocating for the recognition and redress of historical injustices that shape global power dynamics, while seeking to shift how global social justice issues are understood and addressed. The approaches helped to challenge traditional Eurocentric and androcentric frameworks that have historically dominated academic and policy discourse, while increasing understanding of how multiple forms of oppression intersect or interact to impact levels of inequalities and vulnerabilities among communities.

## **PART I**

# **Background and Rationale for a Decolonial-Intersectional Approach**





## 2. Using a Decolonial-Intersectional Approach to Challenge Border Externalization and Militarization

The decolonial-intersectional approach was chosen from among several methodologies to explore the topic of border externalization and militarization, attempting to highlight alternative narratives and tackle the issue from a different perspective. Further, it was an attempt to challenge the legacies of colonialism that persist in contemporary migration policies, while seeking recognition and redress of historical injustices that shape global power dynamics. The approach sought to shift how we understand and address social injustices by challenging traditional Eurocentric and androcentric frameworks that have historically dominated academic and policy discourses. Intersectionality is increasingly being used to understand how multiple forms of identity such as race, gender, sexuality, and socio-economic status intersect and interact to uniquely impact the experiences of people on the move and impacted communities, especially those facing multiple forms of inequalities and vulnerabilities. This approach further puts into focus how colonial histories shape these overlapping systems of oppression and underscores their importance in achieving justice. It addresses the specific vulnerabilities and amplifies resistance strategies of diverse groups of people on the move, and challenge<sup>2</sup> the systemic inequalities perpetuated by contemporary migration regimes.<sup>3</sup>

In brief, this approach:

- It helps to deconstruct and challenge dominant practices and narratives that marginalize and oppress communities, particularly those from the Global South. It also questions underlying assumptions and biases in traditional social justice work and advocates for a more inclusive and representative understanding of issues.
- It provides a comprehensive understanding of how historical processes of colonization continue to shape contemporary social and political dynamics. This historical context is essential for addressing the root causes of injustice.
- Offers an alternative framework for understanding border externalization and militarization, focusing not just on the surface-level discourse but on the deeper injustices these practices entail. This approach exposes the ways in which border practices are not just security measures, but tools of oppression and control rooted in colonial history.
- Prioritizes the experiences and perspectives of those who have been historically silenced or overlooked, ensuring that their voices are central to the discourse on social justice; ensuring that the voices of those directly impacted by border policies are heard and considered in policy-making processes.
- Advocates for recognizing and valuing different forms of knowledge, particularly those rooted in indigenous and local traditions, which are often dismissed by mainstream discourses.
- By validating and amplifying the voices of marginalized communities, it fosters empowerment and agency, enabling these communities to lead the charge for change and resistance against ongoing oppression.
- By incorporating diverse viewpoints, they challenge the status quo and promote equitable solutions starting from communities' needs.





### 3. Context: Regional Trends from a Comparative Perspective

Part II offers a summary of the research findings, highlighting the profound effects of externalization and militarization of borders on impacted communities, especially vulnerable groups.

Section 3 provides an overview of results from in-depth literature review/ document analysis conducted in each region, identifying general migration trends and the impact of border externalization and militarization across the four AFSC regions, to offer a global perspective.<sup>6</sup> The literature review and analyses was mainly from documents produced by international and national NGOs and community-based organizations. The desk research also involved analysis produced by academic journals, think-tanks, research institutions, and media-outlets.

The results provide a comprehensive view of the regional contexts to better understand global trends. Each region—Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), Africa, the Middle East, and Asia—exhibits unique aspects shaped by specific geopolitical, economic, and social contexts, yet commonalities in the challenges and responses related to border externalization and militarization are evident. Recognizing the contextual differences and similarities is crucial for developing tailored strategies to address migration and border control issues in these regions.

#### The LAC Region<sup>7</sup>

##### **Migration trends**

Migration trends in the LAC region have seen a significant increase in recent years, particularly from South America, Central America, and the Caribbean. According to the Migration Policy Institute, in the last ten years, the number of people on the move doubled from 8.3 million in 2010 to 16.3 million in 2022.<sup>8</sup> Political and economic crises, violence and inequalities, as well as natural disasters, primarily affected nationals from Venezuela, Cuba and Haiti. UNHCR 2022 Global Trends on Forced Displacement indicates that, at the end of that year 800, 600 refugees and 5.2 million other people in need of international protection resided in countries in the Americas region, most of whom were 6 million Venezuelan.<sup>9</sup> There has been a high arrival of people on the move from countries experiencing political and economic crises, as well as natural disasters, such as Venezuela, Nicaragua, Haiti, and Cuba. Additionally, there are extra-continental people on the move from countries like Afghanistan, Cameroon, and Congo.<sup>10</sup>

In the last ten years, the profiles of people on the move have diversified, now including families, children, and unaccompanied minors. According to UNICEF, more than 541,000 nationals from northern Central American countries were recorded at the southern border of the United States in 2022; this included more than 140,000 children and family members, and 114,585 unaccompanied children.<sup>11</sup>

##### **States' policies**

To contain these migration trends, the U.S. has implemented externalization strategies using Mexico as a buffer zone, effectively creating a “vertical border.” Restrictive policies such as “metering,” “Title 42,”<sup>12</sup> and the “Migrant Protection Protocols” (MPPs),<sup>13</sup> which forces asylum seekers to remain in Mexico while their cases are processed. In 2019, there were also U.S. efforts to sign Safe Third Country agreements with El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras to externalize the U.S. asylum system, leaving people on the move unprotected<sup>14</sup>. In 2023, the U.S. opened “Safe Mobility Offices”<sup>15</sup> in Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Ecuador to offer regular migration mechanisms to the U.S., though the lack of

operational transparency has led to criticism that this could become another externalization practice.

**In Mexico**, there has been increased militarization of borders, with the deployment of the National Guard to manage migration trends and enforce U.S. policies.<sup>16</sup> The Mexican government accepted the implementation of the Migrant Protection Protocols, a migration policy promoted by the U.S that forced asylum seekers to wait for their legal claims in Mexican territory from 2019 to 2023, affecting around 80,000 people on the move from Latin America and the Caribbean<sup>17</sup>. People on the move often face arbitrary treatment from migration officers and the National Guard, forcing them to stay longer in informal settlements, with humanitarian visitor cards not always granted. Asylum rates in Mexico have exponentially increased, but the Mexican Commission for the Attention of Migrants has not been strengthened in terms of funds and human resources, making its operational capacity difficult. UN organizations such as UNHCR and IOM, along with shelters and civil society organizations, are the main actors offering attention and integration alternatives for migrant communities.

**In Guatemala**, authoritarian governments have increased the militarization of migration governance. Civil society organizations are accompanying people on the move in seeking justice for migrant murders and disappearances, but there is a lack of protocols for the attention of migrant children and adolescents in transit.<sup>18</sup>

**El Salvador** faces the criminalization of activists and human rights defenders. There are difficulties in integrating returned migrants due to stigmatization, and the presence of militarized forces at the borders shared with Guatemala and Honduras. Despite these challenges, there are strong efforts by migrant–returned communities to develop integration initiatives for returnees.<sup>19</sup>

**Costa Rica** has seen the dismantling of its asylum system. An executive order in 2022 forbade asylum seekers to work, making it more difficult to obtain employment permissions.<sup>20</sup>

### **The role of non-state actors**

Non-state actors play a crucial role in this region. NGOs, international organizations, and community-based groups actively provide services, protection, and advocacy for people on the move. Key organizations include UNHCR, IOM, Doctors Without Borders, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and numerous local NGOs and migrant shelters. These groups collaborate to document human rights violations and bring visibility to the impacts of militarization and externalization.

### **Community-based organizing and mobilization strategies**

Community-based organizing and mobilization have been essential in monitoring and documenting border violence, human rights abuses, and systemic issues faced by people on the move. Legal actions have been taken in Mexican and U.S. courts to challenge human rights violations resulting from externalization measures like MPPs. Public positioning through press releases and collective statements denounces border militarization and externalization. These organizations also bring demands to international bodies such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights<sup>21</sup> to address human rights violations and advocate for policy changes.

### **Key findings highlight significant impacts on people on the move**

There has been a notable increase in asylum seekers in Mexico, with many fleeing violence, economic instability, and natural disasters. Documented cases of human rights violations in detention centers, including the Ciudad Juarez incident where a fire led to the death of 40 people, underscore the severe conditions faced by people on the move.<sup>22</sup> Systematic issues such as arbitrary detentions, poor conditions in detention centers, and lack of access to asylum procedures exacerbate people on the move' vulnerability, particularly for women, children, and LGBTQ+ individuals. People on the move are often forced to stay longer in informal camps in Mexico's southern and northern borders, as well as in Mexico City, which has led to the constitution of a "center border."<sup>23</sup> Militarization has a strong impact on people on the move' safety and mental health, especially for vulnerable groups, as there are no protocols on how to treat women and children on the move. People on the move are exposed to

dangerous routes to avoid criminal groups or state armed forces. In 2023, in the Darien Gap—a jungle between Colombia and Panama considered one of the most dangerous migratory routes in the world—over three hundred thousand people on the move faced health risks, sexual assault, kidnapping, and extortion.<sup>24</sup>

**Community responses** have been effective in documenting and reporting border violence, although there are challenges in pressuring authorities to implement recommended changes. A collective strategy among organizations is needed to address militarization and externalization effectively. Few but effective transnational mechanisms have been established to monitor some migrant families during their routes across countries. Organizations have created mechanisms to incorporate people on the move' needs and initiatives as part of their lines of action. Workshops and roundtables are being organized with people on the move to understand their needs and strengthen their initiatives.<sup>25</sup>

## Africa<sup>26</sup>

### Migration trends

The Mediterranean has a long history of trade in goods and the mobility of people on both sides of the northern, southern and eastern shores, and it is an area that “draws one of the most important fault lines in the world, demographic, political, economic, social, cultural, while remaining an important place of passage, exchange and dialogue because migration crosses it”.<sup>27</sup> Africa, largely separated from Europe by the Mediterranean Sea, shares a long tradition of cultural, commercial and historical exchanges, with the mobility of people integrated into these multiple interactions. Relations between the two geographical areas are also shaped by historical, colonial, and economic ties that strongly influence migration patterns.

In 2023, Africans accounted for 14% of people on the move (40.4 million people) globally, compared to 41% from Asia and 24% from Europe. 28 As of June 2024, about 43.4 million people in the world are refugees or asylum seekers, including 8.9 million African refugees.<sup>29</sup>

The majority of African migration takes place within the continent: 80% of migration was intra-African in 2020,<sup>30</sup> whether it was refugees seeking refuge closest to their country or people on the move migrating to neighboring economic centers. Indeed, regional mobility is facilitated by geographical proximity or by regional agreements such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) or the East African Community (EAC).

### States' policies

Over the past decade, African migration to Europe has become a growing concern, often referred to as the so-called “uncontrolled migration” by European states. This discourse has been accompanied by actions that undermine people on the move' rights and through externalization and militarization of EU borders. In addition, EU has developed stricter migration policies, and adopted security approaches and the externalization of their governance of migration to “third countries,” particularly in Africa, which has had an impact on the rights of people on the move and those forcibly displaced especially refugees. “Outsourcing has been done through a process whereby the European Union carries out or subcontracts part of the control of its borders outside its territory”.<sup>31</sup>

The adoption of the European Pact on Migration<sup>32</sup> in 2024 by the EU supports European states in controlling their European borders and accelerates the return of migrants deemed “undesirable” to “third countries”. Among other things, it provides for an accelerated procedure to examine asylum applications near the external borders, through a mandatory “screening” system before a migrant enters the European Union. An agreement denounced by several NGOs including Amnesty International, Oxfam, Human Rights Watch “because of the devastating consequences on the right to international protection in the European Union as well as the risks of racial profiling, de facto detention and refoulement that its implementation could cause”.<sup>33</sup>

This outsourcing policy has a significant impact on migrant communities. People on the move from African countries who attempt to migrate to Europe by land or sea, in an unregulated manner, face physical violence, deportations and pushbacks at borders, as well as disappearances. Since 2014, the “Missing Migrant Project”<sup>34</sup> has reported the disappearance of 15,682 people in Africa during their migrations, and more than 29,967 people in the Mediterranean Sea.

In addition, throughout the migratory journey, people are exposed to health risks due to violence but also to poor hygiene and living conditions. People are also exposed to risks to their health and mental health due to precarious living and hygiene conditions, violence, trauma and psychological suffering.

## Examples from the region

**Libya:** On 2 February 2017, with the support of the European Union, Italy concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with Libya to combat “undocumented” migration. The agreement establishes a long-term basis for cooperation that delegates patrols in the Central Mediterranean to the Libyan Coast Guard, providing boats, a maritime coordination center and training, and other material and financial support from the EU. Most of those intercepted at sea while trying to flee Libya are forcibly returned by the Libyan Coast Guard, and often end up in detention centers in Libya. In 2023, the NGO MSF “Médecins Sans Frontières” published a report entitled *You will die here*<sup>35</sup>, based on testimonies of people on the move who were victims of violence and torture in Libyan detention centers. Despite these violations of people on the move’ rights, the European Council extended its financial and logistical support to the Libyan authorities for a period of two years, from 20 March 2023 to 31 March 2025.

**Morocco:** In 2024, the European Union is expected to conclude a new agreement on migration with Morocco. Although the two partners have not signed a specific pact on migration, the European Union has been cooperating with Morocco in the field of migration for a long time, more precisely since 2004. According to a joint investigation<sup>36</sup> by “Le Monde”, the non-profit media outlet “Lighthouse Reports” and seven other international media outlets, including “Enass Media”, in May 2024, people on the move trying to reach Europe were apprehended in large numbers and deported to desert areas in Morocco, Tunisia and Mauritania. These actions are accompanied by human rights violations and are supported by European resources.

**Tunisia:** The Memorandum of Understanding<sup>37</sup> between Tunisia and the EU of 16 July 2023 provides for €900 million in aid for various areas such as trade, digital and energy transition. However, the €105 million allocated under the Partnership is to Combat Irregular Migration. This agreement aimed at strengthening financial and technical support to Tunisia to fight undocumented migration to Europe, has seen increased the repatriation of Tunisians expelled from Europe. It has also facilitated the return of people on the move of other nationalities transiting through the country. A presidential statement<sup>38</sup> on February 21, 2023, referring to “sub-Saharan migrant groups” and highlighting a threat to the country’s “demographic composition,” provoked violent attacks on Black people, as well as arbitrary arrests, housing evictions, and sudden layoffs.

**Niger:** In 2015, Niger adopted a law to crack down on “migrant smuggling”, with EU support. A law that has had an impact on migrant and refugee communities with the restriction of mobility in the country and violations of the rights of people on the move. A situation that had raised concerns about freedom of movement within ECOWAS. In 2023, the Nigerien military junta annulled this law in a context of high tensions with European states.

**Rwanda:** In September 2021, Rwanda struck a controversial deal with the UK to facilitate the deportation of migrants or asylum seekers from the UK to Rwanda. The agreement was strongly criticized by the UN and several NGOs, who considered it to violate the International Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Before it came into force, the new Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced on 6 July 2024 that the plan to deport<sup>39</sup> asylum seekers and people on the move without documentation arriving in the United Kingdom to Rwanda would be abandoned.



## **The role of non-state actors**

Intergovernmental or UN organizations such as IOM, UNHCR, or ICMPD (The International Centre for Migration Policy Development), offer technical and political support to States in the field of migration, position themselves as defenders of the rights of people on the move and support people “in need”, including in the form of humanitarian aid. This situation tends to make the demands of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers invisible.

For the EU and its Member States, “IOM is a key cooperation partner, a reliable and trustworthy service provider, capable of establishing and maintaining stable relations with the States in which projects are to be implemented.”<sup>40</sup>

The organization is a key partner of European states in the governance of migration in “third countries”. It intervenes in the capacity building of state agents, journalists, NGOs and intervenes in the development of migration policies in “third countries”. It promotes migration governance and control, which aims to subject migration to effective state control around the world, preferably without causing too much unrest, criticism or death. Organizations such as Frontex or the ICMPD are working to monitor the external borders and strengthen measures to combat migration without documents.

## **Community-based organizing and mobilization strategies**

In a context marked by the criminalization of people in migration situations and the shrinking civic space of civil society in North and West Africa and the Sahel, it is becoming increasingly difficult for people on the move themselves to make their voices heard. “The activities of NGOs and volunteers to ensure that people on the move have access to basic rights and services when the state does not provide them are increasingly presented by politicians as a form of collusion with smuggling and trafficking in human beings.”<sup>41</sup>

Many individuals and collectives of people on the move seek to tell their stories, to make their experiences known and to claim their rights, but it is clear that the informal situation of their initiatives (association or collective not recognized by the State) make it difficult to recognize and listen to their situations.

Despite these challenges, migrant communities, as well as associations and activists, are organizing to make their voices heard and implement actions to defend the human rights of people on the move. Referring to the “tragic event in Melilla”<sup>42</sup>, where at least 23 young men lost their lives while trying to cross borders between Morocco and Spain, many refugees and migrants gathered to demonstrate in front of the Moroccan parliament<sup>43</sup> as well as in front of the offices of UN organizations<sup>44</sup>, demanding justice and recognition of their rights.

In other situations, people on the move organize themselves to find solutions to the problems they encounter. For example, to find housing in Morocco,<sup>45</sup> migrant women sometimes organize themselves into communities in certain neighborhoods, buildings and apartments. A sharing system is set up: those who work and live with their employer during the week sublet their rooms to other women while they are away. They are also looking to be led by women who have been established for a longer time, which offers them the opportunity to create a network of mutual aid and knowledge.

Several organizations are working to highlight rights violations while advocating with the European Union, African states, UN organizations, etc. They seek to influence institutions such as the EU, which provides financial and technical support for the migration policies of countries of “origin” and “transit”, so that this support is conditional on respect for the human rights of the people concerned and not on security imperatives. Several civil society organizations intervene to address issues relating to access to healthcare, justice, the protection of minors, the rights of LGBTIQ+ people, women’s rights, and more broadly human rights.

Activist organizations, such as AlarmPhone Watch the Med and [AlarmoPhone Sahara](#), are stepping up



measures to rescue people on the move at sea or in the desert and are publishing reports about people on the move. Other organizations such as MSF – Médecins Sans Frontières, by intervening in the medical field, play a crucial role in highlighting the situation of people on the move, while illustrating the impact of EU support. Like this report, entitled *You will die here*,<sup>46</sup> which is based on testimonies collected in migrant detention centers in Libya. The latest report “Death, Despair and Destitution: The Human Costs of EU Migration Policies”<sup>47</sup> details the disastrous consequences of the political crisis Europe is experiencing at its borders and beyond.

Networks of civil society organizations bringing together organizations, activists or researchers from different European and African countries, such as EuroMed Rights, the Trade Union Network for Mediterranean-Sub-Saharan Migration, Migreurop, the Loujna-Touankaranké Collective as well as NGOs such as Oxfam, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch works to influence decision-makers in African countries as well as in Brussels at the European level. Their aim is to encourage bilateral or multilateral cooperation with the aim of protecting the rights of people on the move, while criticizing outsourcing policies in the region. They often take a stand through political statements in favor of human mobility, freedom of movement and oppose security policies. Organizations, activists and activists maintain links of exchange and sharing around the situation and the evolution of rights. In this spirit, regional meetings are organized, both face-to-face and online. These include the Maghreb Social Forum or CommemorAction, which are actions that commemorate people who have died, disappeared or been forcibly disappeared on migration routes. They are therefore spaces to collectively denounce the political responsibilities of this violence and build a network of solidarity with families for truth and justice.

All these civil society initiatives contribute to making the voices of people on the move and their family members heard and to providing a space for political engagement for these different profiles.

## Middle East<sup>48</sup>

### Migration trends

The Middle East is a region of complexities that has been significantly impacted by migration dynamics. These dynamics have been shaped by a range of factors, including ongoing civil wars and regional conflicts, foreign military interventions, economic disparities, increasing environmental degradation, and demographic shifts.

Over the past two decades, the region has experienced unprecedented levels of forced displacement and migration and has the highest density of forced displaced people in the world. According to data from the UNHCR, 15.8 million individuals, including stateless persons, have been displaced in the Middle East and North Africa, accounting for 12% of global displaced people<sup>49</sup>. 2.3 million out of 15.8 million are seeking refugee outside the region in almost 131 countries around the world<sup>50</sup>.

More than a decade after the outbreak of the so-called “refugee crisis” reaching its peak in 2014-2015, Syria continues to be the world’s largest refugee crisis, with over 12 million forcibly displaced persons, including 7.2 million internally displaced since 2011<sup>51</sup>. Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon have been the most affected by the crisis in the region, hosting over 5.3 million Syrian refugees in the region<sup>52</sup>. Turkey remains the world’s largest refugee-hosting country in the world, with over 4.6 million regular migrants<sup>53</sup>, including 3.1 million registered Syrian refugees<sup>54</sup>. Jordan follows with over 730,000 registered refugees<sup>55</sup>. Lebanon has the highest number of refugees per capita in the world, with an estimated 1.5 million refugees according to the government<sup>56</sup>.

Over two decades ago, the US invasion of Iraq has created widespread violence, internal displacement, and the emergence of insurgent groups that have forced millions of Iraqis to be internally and externally displaced in neighboring countries. The sectarian violence worsened the situation, leading to increased internal displacement and refugees’ mobility. As of 2024, Iraq has an internally displaced

population of 1.14 million people and hosts over 300,000 refugees and asylum-seekers in the region<sup>57</sup>. Of these, more than 90% are Syrians, totaling around 270,000 individuals.

Since 2015, millions of Yemenis have been forcibly displaced as a result of armed conflict involving proxy groups, making it the most severe humanitarian crisis in the world. According to UNHCR, more than 4.3 million people have been displaced internally and 23 million people require humanitarian assistance, making it as the fourth largest population of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world due to conflict<sup>58</sup>.

The displacement of millions of Palestinian refugees in the occupied territories are included in the statistics of UNRWA, the UN Relief and Work Agency for Palestinian Refugees. According to this agency, there are approximately 6 million Palestinian refugees displaced both within and outside of Palestine due to ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. About 1.5 million registered Palestinian refugees reside in 58 recognized Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Gaza and the West Bank, including eastern Jerusalem<sup>59</sup>. Since October 2023, more than 31 thousand people have been killed and around 75 thousand have been wounded in Gaza by the Israeli occupation forces<sup>60</sup>.

Furthermore, the increasing environmental degradation in the region represents an additional critical factor contributing to the displacement of people, which is further exacerbated by the prevailing political and socio-economic instability. Water scarcity, drought, food insecurity and extreme weather events in the region are making life even more difficult and pushing more people onto existing migration routes. According to Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC), more than 230 thousand people were internally displaced by disasters in the MENA region in 2021, mostly due to climate-related disasters<sup>61</sup>. The IOM in Iraq documented the displacement of over 130 thousand people in September 2023 due to adverse effects of climate change, particularly in southern parts of the country<sup>62</sup>. Environmental challenges and poor governance in Yemen, Syria and Lebanon could exacerbate vulnerability and spark conflict over resources, leading to further displacement of people.

## **States' policies**

In response to the displacement of refugees, neighboring countries such as Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon initially adopted open-door policies and humanitarian approaches, allowing Syrian refugees to cross their borders with the expectation of a temporary crisis<sup>63</sup>. However, as Syria's war dragged on and the number of refugees surged, these countries shifted to more restrictive policies, closing their borders to new arrivals and implementing structured, often restrictive, measures to manage the influx of people.

Furthermore, as individuals and communities displaced by conflict, natural disasters and other forms of persecution in the region increasingly seek refuge in neighboring and European countries, the most prevalent approach to this issue, as employed by EU countries in both transit and first arrival countries, involves the externalization of border control responsibilities to third countries<sup>64</sup>. Following 2015 refugee crisis migration issues have become central between the EU and the countries in the region with the EU outsourcing and strengthening its border controls to other countries.

To contain the arrival of people on the move, the EU has implemented external border management policies, particularly through agreements such as the 2016 agreement with Turkey. Under this deal, the EU provided financial aid to Turkey to manage people on the move trying to reach Europe. Similarly, the EU aids the Lebanese security forces in the management of border controls and the prevention of human trafficking. The 2018 Jordan Compact, which forms part of the Global Compact on Refugees, sought to prevent the movement of refugees to Europe by providing financial assistance and creating employment opportunities for Syrian refugees in Jordan. The examples from Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan exemplify the intricate and contentious responses of states in the Middle East to the refugee crisis. Nevertheless, the agreements to restrict migration in transit countries are accompanied by human rights violations. Outsourcing EU's humanitarian responsibilities through these agreements to countries with inadequate resources and weaker human rights protections often leads to violation of refugee rights, including the right to seek asylum and access to essential services. These

deals also lead to arbitrary detention and forced deportation of refugees in the third countries. Furthermore, the agreements have the potential to exacerbate existing political and social tensions in host countries, where the presence of large numbers of refugees can strain resources and services, leading to resentment among local populations and the possibility of conflict<sup>65</sup>.

As countries in the region grapple with their domestic political interests, economic crisis and foreign policy objectives, they have adopted different approaches to refugee governance, influenced by their unique social and political contexts and interactions with regional and global actors<sup>66</sup>.

### **The role of non-state actors**

In the Middle East, non-state actors, including international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and local civil society groups, play a central role in the migration landscape, frequently assuming responsibilities that are not adequately addressed by state institutions. However, these actors encounter considerable obstacles due to political instability, security concerns, and bureaucratic impediments, which result in the criminalization of people on the move and the undermining of humanitarian efforts<sup>67</sup>. The externalization of policies and the invocation of national security concerns serve to exacerbate this issue, resulting in the curtailment of access to services and protection for people on the move.

At the grassroots level, community-based organizing in the Middle East reflects the region's history of social and political activism, driven by the urgent needs of displaced and marginalized people. Local actors, including refugees and host community members, collaborate to address migration issues like access to services, rights protection, and social integration. These initiatives focus on advocacy, creating support networks, and fostering dialogue to promote inclusion. Despite restrictive policies and limited resources, these groups provide essential assistance and protection, showcasing refugees as resourceful agents.

### **Key Findings**

Forcibly displaced communities in the region face significant challenges including poor living conditions, lack of access to basic services and human rights violations.

The movement of people throughout the region has had a significant impact on neighboring countries, including Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon, resulting in major socio-economic and political challenges. In response to the influx, various policies have been implemented, ranging from open-door humanitarian approaches to more restrictive measures. These have had a significant impact on the infrastructure, resources, and social dynamics of the affected countries.

The restrictive state policies, geopolitical dynamics, and security concerns leads to criminalization of both refugee communities and community organizations. This not only hinders humanitarian efforts but also limits access of impacted communities to basic services and protection. In addition, the EU's externalization strategy also often results in the criminalization of refugees, as host countries implement strict measures to prevent migration without documents and comply with international agreements.

Community-based organizations play a critical role in supporting and advocating for the rights of displaced populations, often filling gaps left by state responses. These initiatives provide essential services and foster resilience within refugee communities, despite facing significant challenges due to limited resources and lack of formal recognition. Their efforts highlight the importance of local involvement in addressing complex migration issues.

# Asia<sup>68</sup>

## Migration trends

Asia has large internal and international migration movements as a result of a number of issues including urbanization, economic inequality, geopolitical turmoil, and environmental degradation.<sup>69</sup> Important recipient nations include Malaysia, Singapore, the Gulf States, and others; important sending nations include China, India, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Nepal.<sup>70</sup> Asia has seen a variety of migratory patterns, such as labor migration, family reunions, and forced relocation brought on by natural disasters, conflict, and persecution.<sup>71</sup> Maltreatment, access restrictions, and legal challenges are among the problems that people on the move must deal with.

## States' policies

Migration-related state policies in the Asia-Pacific area vary greatly, impacted by issues related to politics, economy, and security.<sup>72</sup> Strict border restrictions have been implemented by nations like Malaysia, as seen by the Employment Act and Immigration Act, to manage foreign nationals' access and working conditions.<sup>73</sup> The complicated system controlling foreigners' admission and departure is reflected in India's migration laws, which include the Foreigners Act and Emigration Act.<sup>74</sup> China's policies, which include the hukou system and skilled migrant programs, aim to address both internal rural-urban mobility and international immigration.<sup>75</sup> Policies like India's Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the militarization of borders in other nations are clear examples of the securitization of migration.<sup>76</sup>

## Examples from the Region

**Myanmar and Thailand:** To handle the large number of people on the move from Myanmar, Thailand has adopted border externalization and militarized policies. Due to security concerns and ethnic conflicts, the border between Thailand and Myanmar has become more militarized; armed groups have contributed to this militarization. In addition, Thailand's measures include making "undocumented" migrant labor illegal and stepping up military presence at borders to stop unlawful crossings and stop smuggling.<sup>77</sup>

**Cambodia and Thailand:** As a result of its economic expansion and demand for foreign labor, Thailand has grown to be a major destination for labor migrants from Cambodia and other nearby countries. Following crackdowns on foreign workers following the 2014 military coup, Thailand's immigration restrictions changed, forcing many Cambodians to flee to Thailand.<sup>78</sup> The implementation of "pink cards" for temporary work permits successfully achieved its goal of controlling migrant labor; however, numerous individuals encounter difficulties in acquiring the necessary paperwork due to expensive fees, red tape, and corruption.<sup>79</sup>

**Bangladesh and Myanmar:** Bangladesh and Myanmar are experiencing heightened tensions due to the Rohingya refugee crisis, which has resulted in increased border militarization and security issues. Allegations suggest that the Rohingya have faced serious human rights violations due to reported violence by Myanmar's Border Guard Police. Because of clashes between Myanmar forces and rebel groups like the Arakan Army, violence and instability in the area have increased<sup>80</sup>

**China and Myanmar:** Burmese migrant workers are marginally integrated into Chinese border cities, where they are subjected to both physical and economic captivity. Although this compromise-oriented approach to border control permits people on the move to reside and work in major cities, it also exposes them to prejudice, exploitation, and detention. The imposition of these restrictions in the border cities through police, surveillance, and instilling fear exposes a permissive but flexible approach to border control that puts capital accumulation, labor supply, and national security ahead of the welfare of migrant workers.

**Malaysia:** With millions of migrants residing and working there, undocumented migration has become a major concern for the state of Malaysia. Strict enforcement of the Immigration Act results in

penalties, expulsion, and imprisonment for infractions such as overstaying visas.<sup>81</sup> Malaysia has performed legalization and amnesty operations, as well as enacted regulations such as the foreign worker policy, to address undocumented migration.

**Indonesia:** Because of its advantageous location halfway between Australia and other parts of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, Indonesia is an important transit nation for “undocumented” migration. However, corruption and inefficiency frequently impede border security procedures, making crossings without documents possible.<sup>82</sup> Indonesia has created a people-smuggling unit within the super-ministry POLHUKAM to handle these issues. The Directorate General for Immigration plays a major role in the unit’s limited operational capability, even with efforts to improve border security.<sup>83</sup> This demonstrates the ongoing difficulties Indonesia has in handling problems with border control and migration without documents.

### **The role of non-state actors**

Non-state actors along with international organizations like IOM, UNHCR, HRW, and Amnesty International to address migrant issues in Asia. The focus of these players is to offer advocacy, legal aid, and humanitarian assistance to displaced individuals in Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Myanmar.<sup>84</sup> Through their collaborative efforts, these non-state actors work to enhance migration governance frameworks, strengthen border control capabilities, offer humanitarian relief at border crossings, provide education, healthcare, shelter, and legal support to refugees and asylum seekers, and document human rights abuses related to border security and immigration laws.<sup>85</sup> However, non-state actors face challenges such as restricted access to certain areas, political sensitivities, and security concerns while carrying out their work in conflict-affected regions and border areas.

### **Community-based organizing and mobilization strategies**

Human rights groups and UN agencies, such as UNICEF, among others, are crucial in advocating for the rights of people on the move and providing essential services like healthcare, education, and legal assistance. Furthermore, they work to combat xenophobia, promote social inclusion, and address the needs of marginalized individuals in immigrant populations.<sup>86</sup> Dealing with migration and border-related concerns, like improving member state cooperation, preventing illegal migration, and strengthening border security, necessitates collaborative efforts within regional organizations such as ASEAN (The Association of Southeast Asian Nations). These organizations collaborate with governments, NGOs, and civil society organizations to support people on the move and protect their rights.<sup>87</sup> In general, mobilization tactics emphasize social inclusion, safeguarding and empowering people on the move, and tackling the many issues that immigrant populations confront.

### **Key findings**

Asia’s migrant population faces numerous obstacles, including subpar living circumstances, restricted access to essential services, and breaches of human rights. Their vulnerabilities are made worse using border externalization and militarized policies, which also limit their access to stability and asylum. Due to these behaviors, people on the move find it more difficult to ask for help and protection, which puts them at risk of being taken advantage of, discriminated against, and abused in their new country. Many people on the move are compelled to live in filthy, cramped quarters with little access to legal, medical, or educational resources.<sup>88</sup> The criminalization of migration increases the likelihood of exploitation by traffickers and criminal networks and marginalizes people on the move even more.<sup>89</sup> In general, people on the move in Asia endure a range of cruel treatment that robs them of their rights and dignity while they make their way through difficult and merciless immigration procedures. Community-based organizations that support and fight for the rights of people on the move in Asia are essential. These organizations work to ensure that people on the move have access to essential services including healthcare, education, and legal assistance while combating xenophobia and discrimination against them.<sup>90</sup> However, because they receive little funding and attention, grassroots projects have several difficulties. Human rights watchdogs such as Human Rights Watch look at abuses of human rights committed against people on the move, but they sometimes lack the resources and assistance they need to do their jobs well. Community-based organizations frequently lack the fund-

ing and assistance necessary to adequately address the complex difficulties that people on the move from Asia experience, despite their hard work and dedication.

## 4. Borders Experienced by Impacted Communities

Sections 4 and 5 explore communities' perspectives, highlighting both the impacts of these policies and the responses from communities, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted challenges faced by people on the move and affected communities, and emphasizing the often-overlooked human element in policy discussions. This section relies on the analysis of the focus groups and interviews conducted in the selected regions during Phase 2 of the research (cf. **Appendix 2**). Direct quotes are used throughout the analysis to highlight the connection between our findings and the real-world experiences of the communities affected by migration policies.<sup>91</sup> Participants were asked about their personal journeys to anchor their work in their everyday realities and experiences, using an approach rooted in decolonial theories and intersectional methodology. This involved understanding their narratives from their specific identities and locations, as well as their experiences of discrimination based on gender, race, class, and other axes. We examined the effects on different groups, especially vulnerable populations, and the community's responses to these policies. Our goal was to determine whether and how participants promote alternative viewpoints and counter-narratives to official policies and narratives surrounding border processes and militarization. Building on this, below we highlight the most significant impacts of border externalization and militarization participants have witnessed in their communities.

The findings presented in this section underscore the multifaceted challenges faced by people on the move due to externalization policies and NGOs working at their side, inadequate humanitarian conditions, and systemic inequalities perpetuated by biometric surveillance and technological oppression.



## 1. Externalization as a hub of opaque practices focused on contention

During the focus groups and interviews, participants shared their understanding of “externalization” based on their direct experiences as human rights defenders and community leaders. They discussed the migration policy changes they have witnessed in recent years. Participants’ reflections revealed that externalization encompasses a collection of opaque practices designed to prevent, deter, and restrict the free movement of people, regardless of their status.

### Example from the LAC Region

Organizations perceive externalization as a regional approach to migration policies focused on securitization and containment rather than direct measures to attend to people on the move’ needs. Political leaders in El Salvador and Mexico support and justify these measures with a humanist narrative focused on “addressing the root causes of migration.” However, this narrative reveals a strategy to evade the restrictive border measures and their negative impact. When organizations confront the violent nature of restrictive policies with state authorities, these latter avoid referring to these issues and insist on their approach focused on root causes, making the organizations feel unprotected and ignored.

*“One of the greatest problems in Mexico, especially in this presidency, is this massive gaslighting that we are subjected to every day, we are being told daily that the current migration policy is humanist, that they are addressing the root causes, that it is a lie that the National Guard is repressing. They refuse to accept what the National Guard does, and it does become a super solid barrier”*

— Woman, from Mexico, representative of a nonprofit organization

Similarly, the current government of El Salvador deny the risks and instability in their own territories, which makes it difficult to asylum seekers to sustain their cases:

*“Many asylum requests from Salvadorans, not only in the United States but also in other parts of the world, are being denied because of this official discourse that permeates internationally as a country without problems. Let’s put it this way, emphasizing that there is security in the country, allows to justify that one’s request for asylum is no longer valid because one can now return to a ‘safe country.’ So, there are people who have already been notified that their asylum process has been denied based on this official discourse and the presumed security situation in the country.”*

— Woman, from El Salvador, representative of a nonprofit organization



## Example from the Asian Region

The empirical research shows how the act of externalization is making the vulnerabilities of asylum seekers worse. Through the enforcement of measures that block people from reaching lawful routes to security, externalization forces people on the move into perilous circumstances where their rights are ignored, and they face potential physical and psychological injury. Externalization also leads people on the move to feel desperate, believing they have no choice but to embark on dangerous journeys, such as being smuggled across borders. This not just endangers their lives, but also leaves them vulnerable to being exploited and mistreated by criminal organizations. Externalization threatens the basic human right to seek asylum. Individuals are compelled to stay in unsafe circumstances, such as detention centers or refugee camps, where their safety and respect are not assured.

*“Externalization is preventing people from seeking asylum, risking their human rights violators, and fearing mental and physical harm. So externalization is encouraging those who want to migrate despite the risks. They do not have the opportunity to go properly, and they are victims of various risky journeys, such as smuggling.”*

— Woman, representative of a nonprofit organization in Bangladesh

## Security measures, militarization, and the military-industrial complex

Participants acknowledged that working closer to the borders directly influences their understanding of migration policies and recent trends. Their everyday reality and work as human rights defenders have been negatively affected by these processes. This awareness is particularly pronounced among activists with migrant backgrounds and those whose families have been impacted by border externalization and militarization. Communities impacted by security measures and military presence face heightened levels of fear and insecurity. The use of the military and security industry plays a crucial role in this dynamic. These industries benefit from the implementation and reinforcement of strict border controls and militarization.

### Example from the LAC Region

In Mexico, organizations have observed that the armed forces—such as the National Guard, the forces of the Secretary of National Defense, and the Navy—have taken on most of the responsibilities related to direct attention to people on the move. This has resulted in people on the move feeling more threatened when intercepted by these armed forces. These developments have a particularly negative impact on vulnerable groups, such as young women, girls, and the elderly, who experience increased vulnerability and human rights violations compared to other groups.

*“These people are on their journey, where they are already exposed to organized crime, high temperatures, and highly hostile contexts where they are not welcome... They are now also confronted by an agent of the National Guard, or forces of the Secretary of National Defense, or the Navy with a long gun who tells them to demonstrate why they are here. It is very shocking to see women, girls, and elderly people being confronted by military bodies that, I repeat, are prepared for military combat and can use lethal force, confronting entire families who are already unprotected, who are already fleeing violence in their countries.”*

— Woman, from Mexico, currently living in Mexico City,  
representative of a nonprofit organization

## Example from the African Region

The militarization of borders and the outsourcing of migration management to third countries continue to reshape mobility in West Africa. By reinforcing controls and deploying military resources, states aim to secure their borders, often at the expense of people on the move' rights and safety. This approach increases risks for people on the move, exposing them to perilous travel conditions and exploitation by criminal networks. An activist fighting against the outsourcing of European policies in West and North Africa explained:

*“Outsourcing policies continue to be negotiated in Africa, especially in Senegal and Mauritania. The EU’s main negotiations in Africa are under the ‘Working Agreement’ with Frontex in West Africa. This agreement allows Frontex to patrol Mauritanian waters with assistance from the Mauritanian and Senegalese navies, without deploying its own soldiers. Under this agreement, the EU can bring personnel, equipment, and Frontex drones into Mauritania and Senegal. Currently, progress on this agreement is on hold in Senegal, while it has advanced in Mauritania. In 2015, a project was initiated: a satellite was installed to track and monitor individuals crossing, including migrants.”*

— Man, from Senegal, living in Senegal, after spending many years in North African countries

## Example from the Asian Region

Community leaders who actively engage with people on the move affected by militarization and undemocratic governments comprehend the destructive impacts on both individuals and communities. Regarding Myanmar, the displacement of the Rohingya people shows that military regimes can play a significant role in carrying out ethnic cleansing and violating human rights. Community leaders working with Rohingya refugees directly see the crimes committed by the military government and the difficulties encountered by those escaping their households for security. These actors frequently observe a trend in which governments utilize militarization to suppress opposing views, deprive people of their rights, and focus on vulnerable groups. This may result in restrictions on freedom of expression, human rights abuses, and disregard for the rights of people on the move, who are typically the most marginalized and vulnerable individuals in society.

*“Militarization is a critical concept. If we look at some recent cases like Myanmar, the Rohingya displacement is a major influencing factor. A lot of undemocratic governments, or what we call military governments, are behind the issues of ethnic cleansing. Whenever there is such a system in the government, you will understand that there is a hamper to freedom of speech, there are violations of human rights, and there are rights neglected in the case of migrants.”*

— Man, an academic from higher education institute from Bangladesh, currently living in Bangladesh

### 3. Ramification of borders within and across third countries

Border externalization is now being implemented not only at geographical borders but also within countries and across other nations, leading to an internal and external ramification of borders. This phenomenon manifests as an intricate network of controls that extend beyond traditional borderlines, infiltrating everyday spaces and distant territories.

Internally, countries are increasingly establishing border-like controls within their own territories. Checkpoints, surveillance systems, and identity verification processes are being set up far from the actual borders, affecting the daily lives of residents and people on the move alike. These measures lead to increased monitoring and restrictions on the movements of people on the move, effectively creating invisible borders within a country.

Externally, the concept of borders is being extended to “Third countries,” or countries that serve as transit points or “buffer zones.” In the context of migration, buffer zones often refer to areas created near borders to control of movement of people on the move (migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers alike). These zones can include transit camps, detention centers, or designated regions where people on the move are held while their cases are processed.<sup>92</sup>

Through agreements and collaborations, often influenced by powerful nations or regional entities like the European Union, these third countries are pressured or incentivized to implement strict migration controls. This results in the policing of migration routes far from the intended destination countries, shifting the burden of migration management to regions that are often less equipped to handle such responsibilities.

The ramifications of this extended border regime have a significant impact on communities. People on the move and refugees face heightened risks as they navigate a maze of bureaucratic and physical barriers, both within and outside their countries of origin. This can lead to increased vulnerability to exploitation, human trafficking, and other human rights abuses. Moreover, the imposition of these external borders can strain diplomatic relations and contribute to regional instability, as countries grapple with the containment of arrivals of people on the move and the pressure to enforce stringent controls.

#### Example from the LAC Region

In the case of Mexico, organizations have observed the development of policies forcing people to stay in informal and insecure camps in Mexico City and other metropolitan areas far from the US-Mexican border. In response, they have created a monitoring group to address what they call Mexico’s “Center Border,” emphasizing the internalization of border controls within Mexico. This notion of a border within the central region of Mexico illustrates how organizations are developing new conceptualizations of borders based on their lived experiences.

*“We have reflected with the shelters and organizations here in Mexico City. With the arrival of more people and the installation of more camps, we see the formation of a ‘center border,’ as Mexico City is now operating in the same way as the Chiapas border. This reflects the exhaustion and pressure on people, essentially creating an internal border holding them back.”*

— Woman, from Mexico, currently living in Mexico City,  
representative of a nonprofit organization

---

The arbitrary application of migration procedures and the discrepancies noted above cause desperation and anxiety among people on the move. Some NGOs interviewed indicate that this situation also pushes people on the move to abandon their attempts to continue their journeys:

*“We call it a policy of fatigue. They are forcing people to get tired, to give up, to break their will to continue. All these policies of identification, retention, detention, deportation, and a constant merry-go-round where you might be able to move to another state, but then they return you and deport you or detain you or keep you in a camp with inhumane conditions—all of this fractures people’s will.”*

— Woman from Mexico, currently living in Tapachula,  
representative of a nonprofit organization

#### **4. Outsourcing migration management and the discourse on “safe countries”**

Delegating migration control to third countries often results in environments where abuses are prevalent and proper asylum processes are lacking, putting people on the move in dangerous situations. States often describe these countries as “safe,” but the reality is often quite the opposite.

Outsourcing migration management to so-called “safe countries” means that the responsibility for upholding human rights and proper asylum procedures is transferred to nations that may not have the resources or political will to provide adequate protection. This practice leads to a delegation of responsibility, where powerful states, like those in the EU and the US, can claim they are not directly violating human rights, shifting the blame onto the third countries instead.

This strategy also transforms the concept of borders. Borders are no longer seen as strict lines on maps but rather as an archipelago of controlled areas where border rules apply far from the actual geographic boundaries. By outsourcing, countries create a dispersed network of checkpoints and holding areas that function as de facto borders, extending the reach of their migration policies far beyond their own territories. 93

Affected communities emphasize the risks and mistreatment they encounter in transit nations. Non-governmental organizations are pushing for global accountability and enhanced protections for people on the move.

### Example from the African Region

The European Union (EU) and its member states are intensifying agreements with several African countries to designate them as “safe countries.” This initiative aims to expedite the repatriation process for people on the move whose asylum applications have been rejected in Europe, as well as for individuals without documents, permissions or visa.

*“In Guinea, the Minister of Security went to Italy, they are in the process of signing protocols for the deportation of Guineans who have been denied papers. It’s not just Italy; negotiations are underway for Germany and other countries. To deport these migrants, they are accompanied, and the state covers the costs.”*

- Man, from Guinea, a returnee migrant from Libya, serving as the head of a nonprofit association

### Example from the Middle East Region

Border externalization has increased in the Middle East, with countries such as Turkey and Jordan implementing extensive border controls within their territories, effectively acting as buffer zones for Europe. This has led to heightened surveillance and the imposition of restrictions on people on the move (migrants, refugees and asylum seekers alike). This has served to exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, leading to an increased risk of exploitation, forced deportation and human rights abuses, while also placing strain on regional relations and contributing to a climate of political instability.

*“We started our work with communities after the Jordanian government deported around four hundred Sudanese refugees back to Sudan in 2016. In this sense, we do not define border externalization as only a policy done by the EU but also by Jordanian government internally”.*

- Woman from Jordan, co-founder of a nonprofit organization, currently residing in the US

## 5. Progressive dismantling of protection mechanisms for asylum

The dismantling of asylum mechanisms is a critical example of how recent trends in border externalization are impacting people on the move globally. Participants from all regions have highlighted the undermining of mechanisms designed to guarantee the right to asylum and the increasing difficulties in accessing asylum.

### Example from the Middle East Region

In the Middle East, the weakening of asylum systems is also evident, with people on the move facing substantial legal and bureaucratic barriers to accessing asylum. Strict border controls and restrictive migration policies, which are also influenced by border externalization and regional dynamics, have created significant obstacles for access to documentation, essential services and legal rights for asylum seekers.

*“Since UNHCR stopped doing registrations in 2015 in Lebanon, the biggest obstacle has been the lack of legal documentation of birth certificates which prevent children accessing basic services such as health and education.”*

— Woman from Syria, a representative of a nonprofit organization, currently residing in Lebanon



## 6. Criminalization of people on the move

Treating migration as a threat or as criminal (especially those without documents) has severe legal and social consequences, disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups and exacerbating human rights abuses. People on the move and their advocates report increased harassment and violence due to criminalization processes. Legal aid organizations are challenging punitive measures and working to decriminalize migration. These trends have disproportionate effects on vulnerable groups, with punitive measures exacerbating the plight of people on the move and leading to widespread human rights abuses.

Additionally, biometric surveillance and technology are being used as tools of racialization and oppression. These methods contribute to the criminalization and further marginalization of people on the move.

### Example from the African Region

A person currently seeking asylum in France after being detained for a few weeks in Tunisia due to his activism, told us:

*“Under Tunisian President Kais Saied, there have been increasing abuses: taking fingerprints and saliva in 2022, and in 2023 they escalated to harsh methods to arrest migrants. In all discussions in Tunisia, there is a conspiracy somewhere. Even in taxis, migrants were asked to show their residency permits in Tunisia. The state implemented its plan, neutralizing associations and human rights defenders. Tunisia is in a dark phase. My residence permit was denied, and when I asked why, I was arrested. I had to leave Tunisia. If there hadn’t been people supporting me, I could have been sent to the desert or disappeared. Filing a complaint is useless.”*

— Man, from Cameroun, leading an organization advocating for migrant rights in Tunisia.

### Example from the Middle East Region

*“In Jordan, Sudanese refugees are criminalized through stereotypes perpetuated by Jordanian security forces, labeling Sudanese as troublemakers or militants. This stereotype coming from Jordanian security forces even influences UNHCR and other international entities while approaching the community”*

— Man from the US, co-founder of an organization focusing on Sudanese refugees in Jordan

### Example from the Asian Region

Criminalization of people on the move plays a major role in migration policies affecting several Asian countries, working to strengthen border security and discourage migration.

*“Undocumented migrants from Bangladesh, face inhumane torture in the camps or the places where they have been kept. They are unable to seek any legal support. They are treated like criminals in European countries. Also, some of them stay in jails for a longer period.”*

— Woman, representative of a nonprofit organization in Bangladesh, currently living in Bangladesh, working for returnee migrants

## 7. Humanitarian conditions and difficult access to services

Living conditions in refugee camps and detention centers are often inadequate, with significant barriers to essential services like healthcare, education, and legal assistance. These barriers hinder effective humanitarian response and service delivery, leaving refugee communities frustrated with the lack of basic services and overcrowded conditions.

### Example from the Middle East Region

Humanitarian conditions in the Middle East are severely hampered by several restrictions to access services. This prevents organizations from accurately assessing and responding to needs, especially among vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, the sick, the disabled and female-headed households. The dominance of national security apparatuses has further reduced the operational space for international humanitarian actors, hampering effective relief efforts.

*“In Turkey, many refugees, particularly those without identity documents, face significant challenges in accessing basic services. This situation is exacerbated by frequent reports of abuse and harassment by military personnel in detention centers, highlighting the urgent need for improved humanitarian assistance and protection for these vulnerable groups”*

— Woman from Afghanistan, president of a nonprofit organization, currently residing in Turkey

### Example from the Asian Region

Community advocates frequently see the difficult challenges experienced by undocumented migrant laborers from Myanmar, Indonesia, and Bangladesh. These workers do not have the necessary paperwork and are therefore not covered by local labor regulations, which means they are missing vital protections. Participants pointed out that these workers face dangerous working conditions, long hours, and low pay with no legal protection or assistance. Lack of medical and insurance protection makes them more susceptible to financial and personal challenges from injuries or illnesses. Participants also highlighted the exploitation by traffickers and money launderers who take advantage of the vulnerability of these people on the move. Community advocates claim that lack of proper enforcement of rules allows for exploitation to thrive without any consequences. They work to bring attention to these issues by advocating for stronger enforcement of labor laws and improved protections for undocumented workers. They aim to enhance the lives of these individuals by offering legal help, medical support, and educational resources to improve their situation and protect their fundamental human rights.

*“People from Myanmar, Indonesia or Bangladesh who come here to work without proper documentation, are not under the protection of the local labor law. They are not medically or insurance-protected. Undocumented migrant workers have no choice but they continue to work as well. And in between, there are traffickers or there are money launderers that are making money out of this, and there isn’t good enforcement of regulations in place.”*

— Woman, an independent researcher and community activist from Malaysia, currently living in Malaysia, working for migrants

## 8. Increasing violence, human rights abuses, and vulnerability

People on the move in all regions face significant challenges, including poor living conditions, lack of access to basic services, and human rights violations. People on the move face various forms of violence and abuse, including state-sanctioned violence, human trafficking, and abuse within detention facilities. The lack of accountability mechanisms is a major concern. Affected individuals and communities report systemic violence and a lack of recourse. Advocacy groups are documenting abuses and calling for stronger protection measures and accountability.

### Example from the LAC Region

In Mexico, organizations emphasize how violence has a differentiated impact on the most vulnerable groups, such as entire families, pregnant women, newborn children, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities. These policies of terror and fragmentation have led to significant psychosocial impacts, with many people suffering from mental health issues due to depression and multiple violations along their journey.

*“For me, something that helps to exemplify the effect of militarization is to put a face to the people affected. They are entire families, they are pregnant women, they are newborn children of one year, of months, they are elderly people, people with some kind of mobile disability, with neurodivergent disabilities, and even with all this policy of terror, of fragmentation of will, we are also seeing many psychosocial impacts on people. A year ago, we began to detect many cases of people suffering from mental health problems because of these impacts, as a result of being depressed, as a result of suffering multiple violations along the way.”*

— Woman from Mexico, currently living in Tapachula (Mexico’s southern border), representative of a nonprofit organization

Women, children, LGBTQ+ individuals, and people with disabilities face heightened risks of trafficking, violence, and exploitation, compounded by inadequate protections and services. The militarization of borders disproportionately impacts these groups, who face heightened risks of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment and exploitation.

### **Example from the African Region**

People on the move face dangers along their journey, confronted by individuals who rob them and threaten violence. Children and women are made particularly vulnerable during these perilous migrations. Gender and migration present complex realities where women, children, and LGBTQ+ individuals are particularly vulnerable. Women and girls face heightened risks of sexual violence, exploitation, and discrimination, often exacerbated during crossings and in refugee camps.<sup>94</sup> Children are frequently separated from their families and exposed to serious dangers such as economic exploitation and trafficking. LGBTQ+ people encounter specific challenges due to widespread homophobia and transphobia, placing them at risk of violence and social rejection both in their home countries and during their migratory journey. Addressing these diverse realities is crucial in asylum and immigration policies in both the Maghreb and Europe to ensure the protection and rights of all people on the move, regardless of their gender or sexual orientation.

*“Throughout the journey, there are rebels, jihadists who take your money and threaten you with violence. There are many children and women migrating. At the time I was making the journey, I was 14 years old. There was war in Mali at that time. Life in Algeria was difficult, I was in houses that were still under construction. It was cold. Finding work was hard, and even when we did, we weren’t always paid.”*

— Man from Guinea, currently living in France, who has moved from West Africa to Europe when he was a minor.

## 9. Racial discrimination and other intersecting axes

Racial discrimination is a common phenomenon across regions, increasing exposure to violence, and discrimination, but also to labor exploitation. People on the move and refugees are often racialized and portrayed through intersecting stereotypes that depict them as threats or victims. These portrayals intersect with other identities, leading to unique forms of discrimination and marginalization.<sup>95</sup>

### Example from the African Region

Policies of externalization of borders have recently taken a particular form with the agreements signed between European countries and those of the Maghreb, called memoranda (Tunisia, Mauritania, Egypt, etc.). These agreements clearly show an intention to entrust the surveillance of Europe's borders to the countries of the southern shore of the Mediterranean. These policies are not limited to security concerns; they are accompanied by a racist discourse by the elites. This xenophobic discourse has become part of these policies: it is a question of closing borders to prevent the entry of specific groups of people into a country. This top-down approach has opened the "Pandora's box" of xenophobia, racism, and violence, a box that is difficult to close. People who are already vulnerable and discriminated against are thus deprived of their rights and their dignity is violated.

*"The Tunisian president thinks he has the right to do what he wants, to criminalize a race. He believes that migrants are in Tunisia to change the geopolitics or geography of Tunisia. The president is racist. By taking money from the EU and Italy, he criminalizes migrants, kills them and gives them to Libyans. The Tunisian soldiers went to the houses to get the migrants out, the Libyan soldiers are the ones who wanted to give the migrants something to drink in the desert."*

— Man from Senegal, a returnee who has been on the move in most North African countries

### Example from the Asian Region

In the context of Asia, participants emphasized how migrant workers in Bangladesh often receive lower wages compared to other migrant workers from different countries and face discrimination based on their race. The lack of appropriate authorities to address their concerns, no increment in pay, and the fear of being deported if they speak up further exacerbate their difficulties. Additionally, the lack of initiative from their home country to address these issues adds to their sense of helplessness and injustice.

*"We get paid less than other migrant workers from other countries all over the world. We face discrimination in the name of race. We don't get any increments. There is no concerning authority regarding this. We get deported if we raise our voice. Our country also doesn't take initiative for this."*

— Man from Bangladesh, returnee migrant from UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia; currently living in Bangladesh

Women and girls go through both racial and gender-based discrimination and violence, including sexual harassment and rape. These can be clearly observed across the four regions.

### **Example from the LAC Region**

*“Migrant women are more vulnerable to sexual harassment: ‘And well something that we have also identified very much is that the abuses of authority continue permanently. As you know we are handling the case where they declared the immigration checks as unconstitutional to date, they continue to be implemented they are not respected at all, and we continue to identify that each immigration check will cost at least 300 to \$1000 (Mexican pesos) and in the case of women there is also a lot of harassment and sexual abuse during these checks.’*

— Woman from Mexico, currently living in Mexico City, representative of a nonprofit organization

### **Example from the Asian Region**

When questioned about intersectionality, activists from Community-based organizations revealed that numerous women on the move opt to go back to their countries of origin because they have faced gender-based violence, such as torture, while living abroad. These women frequently encounter different types of mistreatments, spanning from physical harm to mental and emotional distress. These encounters prompt them to make the challenging choice to go back home, looking for safety and help from their communities.

*“Most of the women migrants return due to torture, which is gender-based violence. We have found many cases of people who have been tortured and later chose to return to their country.”*

— Man from Bangladesh, representative of a nonprofit organization, currently living in Bangladesh

## 10. Economic exploitation and intersectional labor dynamics

People on the move are often employed in low-wage, precarious jobs in sectors such as domestic work, agriculture, and care work. These labor conditions reflect colonial patterns of economic exploitation and are marked by intersecting inequalities related to gender, race, and class.

### Example from the African Region

The restrictions on the regularization of migrant workers make them vulnerable to economic exploitation. While initiatives may exist sporadically in some countries to facilitate their access to economic rights, these efforts are not always sustainable. For example, during the COVID-19 period, several states implemented economic measures to support workers who were under lockdown. In many countries, migrant individuals, whether in regular or irregular legal or administrative situations, were deprived of these benefits.

*“In Morocco, there was a new immigration policy in 2013 that initially pleased everyone who received their residency card. In 2014, obtaining the residency card was straightforward without complications. Subsequently, there were programs to settle migrants, with the majority receiving training so they could work like Moroccans, accessing healthcare, education, and more. However, starting in 2018, 2019, and 2020, the discourse began to change. Many returned to square one. Of the 50,000 who were regularized, today there are far fewer, not even surpassing 10,000, because the conditions for regularization have become very complicated.”*

— - Woman, from Congo, head of a nonprofit organization in Morocco, working on social protection for migrant women and migrant rights

## Example from the Asian Region

The study shows the horrifying ordeal of a Bangladeshi migrant worker who returned from Saudi Arabia and endured exploitation and cruel treatment. At first, the man was tricked into a job at a family's home where he did manual work like cleaning cars, looking after animals, and tending to the garden. Even though he worked hard, he had to live in poor conditions in a small house next to the main house, and frequently did not have access to basic needs such as food. Being a Bengali (Bangladeshi) worker led to discrimination against him, as his employers viewed him and his coworkers as inferior beings. Without a valid Akama work permit, he was at risk and unprotected by law, which allowed his employers to take advantage of him more easily. They refused to pay him his wages by taking advantage of his undocumented status, showing no regard for his well-being and human rights. After enduring mistreatment for three months, he reached a breaking point and made the decision to leave, despite the uncertainty and potential risks.

*“An Arabian man came to the place where we have been kept. He said that I had been hired to work in their house. The first day I worked. I used to wash cars, take care of the animals and garden. And I used to live in a small house next to their main house. They discriminated against me from other workers in the house as I was Bangali (Bangladeshi). They were reluctant to give me food when I was hungry. They do not think of us as human beings. Then after three months, I said that I would not stay here anymore. They didn't pay me as I didn't have an Akama (work permit). then I left the place without seeing any other way out.”*

— Man from Bangladesh, returnee migrant from UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia; currently living in Bangladesh



## 11. Negative mental health impact

The mental health consequences of displacement, detention, and deportation threats are profound, affecting the well-being of individuals, families, and communities, and perpetuating trauma. Migrant communities emphasize the psychological toll of their experiences. Mental health professionals and NGOs are providing psychosocial support to address these issues. One also needs to consider the broader impacts on family unity and community well-being.

### Example from the LAC Region

Organizations based in the Mexico-US border emphasized that migrants who are forced to long waiting periods in shelters have a strong impact on their mental health, which specially affects women in the exercise of their maternity, as well as migrant children:

*“In such long waiting periods their mental health is obviously affected because the stress increases, because they must rethink new decisions they have to make. Staying in a shelter for such a long time is not healthy, it is complicated in large shelters, living with 500 people on a daily basis. And then everything that has to do with living together, although they have a roof over their heads and food, the food is not as varied or adequate to their cultures. They also have repercussions on sleep, some people can’t sleep, but there are also people who sleep day and night, who don’t want to get up. And then it adds to the fact that if they have children, then who is taking care of these children? So yes, everything has an impact, everything has to do with it.”*

— Woman from Mexico, currently living in Tijuana, director of a nonprofit organization

### Example from the African Region

Some countries have established legal frameworks aimed at enhancing access to rights for specific population groups. These initiatives are often complemented by measures to promote psychological and psychosocial well-being among citizens, including people on the move. However, sometimes these advancements are lost for people on the move.

*“There have been laws adopted in Tunisia that protect minorities, including laws against racial discrimination, laws on violence against women, and laws combating human trafficking. Each of these laws also provided protection under Tunisian jurisdiction for migrants. For example, the law on violence against women included all women within the national territory, including migrant women. Regarding minors, Tunisia’s child code applied universally without distinction between Tunisians and migrants. There was also an increasingly tolerant framework for the LGBTQI+ minority. However, with the implementation of externalization policies, administrative discrimination in law enforcement has emerged. Today, there are laws being applied differently. Individuals seeking protection in Tunisia and who previously could receive support are now unable to do so.”*

— Man from Cameroun, director of a nonprofit organization; currently seeking asylum in France after being harassed by the Tunisian police due to his work on migration

## Example from the Asian Region

Leaders in the community have observed considerable mental health issues among the people on the move who have returned. Almost all returnees are facing mental health problems, as a lot of them have been through trauma from both physical and mental mistreatment overseas. Many returning individuals are often left without the essential mental health care and support they need due to this gap. Community leaders push for mental well-being factors to be incorporated into these policies to guarantee a more comprehensive approach to migrant reintegration. Incorporating mental health into policy can greatly enhance outcomes for returnees. Sufficient mental health support can assist in their recovery, lessen the lasting effects of trauma, and enhance their reintegration into society.

*“What we have seen while working, almost all of the returnees have mental well-being issues, and many are traumatized due to physical and mental torture. So what we do is that every returnee, whether he considers himself fit or not, is given professional counseling when he is admitted to our program. Later on, it is assessed that if he needs further treatment, he is counseled. Our government’s policies are very good but there is a gap in implementation. However, if this issue of mental well-being can be brought into the policy, the result will be very good.”*

– Woman from Bangladesh, representative of a nonprofit organization, currently living in Bangladesh

## 12. Criminalization of NGOs and human rights defenders

We found the growing trend of criminalizing non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that aid people on the move. These organizations are accused of human trafficking, restrictive regulations, and legal harassment. This criminalization not only undermines the ability of these organizations to operate effectively but also deprives migrants and refugees of essential support and advocacy, exacerbating their vulnerability and marginalization. 96

### Example from the LAC Region

Community organizations and human rights defenders are being more criminalized throughout the region by being accused of trafficking, censorship, money laundry (this especially in the case of El Salvador) and sometimes are subject to violent treatment from the National Guard in the case of Mexico,

*“Another situation that has occurred recently has been the visit of the immigration police to some organizations that are working with migrants indicating that these organizations or that our organizations that work with the population are providing shelter or that we are being accused of trafficking or of covering up for the migrant population or etc.”*

— Man from Costa Rica, currently living in San José, director of a nonprofit organization

*“Recently a law was created in El Salvador that has a lot to do with NGOs. It started to say that NGOs were laundering money. Why? Because we are the counterbalance here. Any organization is now being targeted. This is a big problem because when you go to renew your organization or your association they put a lot of obstacles in your way they even search underneath you but only to find something to get you out of the way legally.”*

— Man, Salvadorian returnee migrant, nonprofit organization founder and community leader

State violence in countries like El Salvador is causing human rights defenders and journalists to migrate for safety, while women are particularly persecuted by the state:

*“As there is an authoritarian regime in place in the country, we have an unconstitutionally re-elected president, who is prolonging his term in power for a second period. This national context, in broad terms, has led to attacks on human rights defenders and activists, journalists too, many of whom have had to leave the country. They have suffered in the flesh the issue of migration as a means of seeking international protection because there is a serious risk of being captured in the country. Likewise, in some way, we as women human rights defenders have experienced very particular attacks also in relation to gender; generally, men would not have been attacked for the same issues.”*

— Woman, returnee migrant from El Salvador, representative of a nonprofit organization

For NGOs with mixed groups or those with an immigrant background, the challenges are even more pronounced. Racial discrimination and differential treatment of people on the move significantly impact their work, particularly when these organizations are composed of diverse nationalities and backgrounds. Additionally, it is even more complicated to formalize an organization if it is led by migrants or refugees, making their work more precarious and exposed to state repression.

### **Example from the Middle East Region**

The intense scrutiny and control over non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the Middle East create a precarious environment for NGOs and other community organizations, limiting their ability to advocate effectively for refugee and migrant rights. The criminalisation of NGOs not only hinders their operations but also threatens the support and services they provide to vulnerable communities.

*“We have to be very careful because the authorities are over controlling organizations... if we are too vocal or too critical, we might face (problems) simply like our projects will not be approved. The organization or the decision might be canceled. So it’s a very challenging environment to work in.”*

– Woman from Italy, a representative of a nonprofit organization, currently residing in Jordan

## 5. Advocacy and Resistance Strategies

This section offers some key examples of proactive steps being taken by grassroots organizations and community advocates to resist current trends, while exploring the primary goals and strategies of participants' advocacy work related to migration. This involved examining their collaborations with other organizations or networks, both locally and globally, and identifying effective methods and tools for enhancing understanding of migration issues. Participants were asked about specific changes they would recommend to the current migration policies to better address the needs and rights of their communities. This included discussing community-driven solutions and leveraging intersectional insights for more equitable migration governance.

Below are some key examples.

### 1. Resisting colonial legacy and power dynamics from an intersectional perspective

The analysis reveals that some organizations are critically aware of how colonialism established not only racial hierarchies but also entrenched systems of gender, class, and other forms of social stratification. These legacies continue to affect contemporary migration policies and practices, with intersecting impacts on different groups of people on the move, reinforcing racial, gender, and socio-economic inequalities. Participants highlighted that a deeper analysis of the specific impacts including human rights violations inherent in current border governance is needed, and those experiencing the multiple violations must be part of this analysis. Some of the participants argued, for instance, that the Western-centric humanitarian system perpetuates colonial attitudes and practices. The humanitarian funding system is inherently discriminatory and colonial, often with conditions that dictate how local organizations should operate and prioritize, undermining their autonomy and relevance.

*“The humanitarian funding system is inherently discriminatory and colonial. Funding often comes with conditions that dictate how local organizations should operate, undermining their autonomy and relevance.”*

— Woman from Syria, representative of a nonprofit organization, currently residing in Lebanon

As a solution, they proposed to create coalitions that challenge neo-colonial practices perpetuated by states in collaboration with key non-state actors.

*“We need to have coalitions and new networks that will challenge the rhetoric used in this context. (We need) South-to-South learning support and new funding resources that are not based on the current mainstream powers that are trying to keep us at status quo. Decoloniality requires creating funding mechanisms and policies shaped by the needs and voices of local and refugee-led organizations, rather than imposing external agendas.”*

— Woman from Jordan, co-founder of a nonprofit organization, currently residing in the US

### 2. Building communities and creating safe spaces through an ethics of care

Many organizations focus on providing direct support to people on the move, such as legal assistance, healthcare, and safe shelter. These services are often critical for the survival and well-being of people on the move but are sometimes targeted by authorities, leading to criminalization of the NGOs involved. Creating and nurturing supportive communities is a fundamental aspect of advocacy work according to many of our participants. Organizations and advocates focus on building strong, interconnected networks that can mobilize quickly in response to emerging threats or opportunities. In addition to providing practical support such as food, shelter, and legal aid, community-building efforts often include educational initiatives aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of people on the move' rights and issues. Workshops, cultural events, and community meetings are used to foster solidarity and collective action.

*“Building community is fundamental and necessary. The caravans were not only a strategy to move forward but also a strategy of care. Camps operate with the logic of being together to try to take care of each other. These efforts reflect migrants’ agency and resistance.”*

— Woman from Mexico, representative of a nonprofit organization

### **3. Strengthen collaborations with local and global networks**

Collaboration with other organizations and networks enhances the effectiveness of advocacy work. By joining forces, groups can pool resources, share expertise, and strengthen their collective voice. International alliances, such as those formed during regional conferences and global forums, play a crucial role in advocating for systemic change and holding governments accountable on a larger scale. Participants recommended intensifying efforts to support projects and initiatives led by people on the move themselves. These projects are essential in addressing the unique needs and challenges faced by these communities. These collaborations often result in the development of comprehensive advocacy strategies that address both immediate needs and long-term goals. By working together, organizations can ensure that their efforts are not duplicated and that they can respond more effectively to the multifaceted challenges faced by people on the move.

#### **The key role of networks and alliances within and across borders**

Creating networks within and across borders to reinforce advocacy work is a central aspect of NGOs’ efforts in the region, as highlighted in previous sections of this report. These networks often extend beyond national borders to address current developments in border externalization, enabling comprehensive and coordinated responses to these challenges.

Organizations repeatedly emphasized the importance of strengthening collaborations and networks. Most of the discussions encouraged mobilization and activism through networks. These networks are not only helpful for advancing a common agenda, but for promote self-care and solidarity ties among defenders, which strengthens the efforts to resist violence and securitization.

### **5. Diverse advocacy methods**

Effective advocacy and resistance strategies are diverse and multifaceted. They include legal challenges to unjust policies, public campaigns to shift narratives, and direct action to protest and disrupt harmful practices. Collaboration is key, with many organizations working together to amplify their impact and reach.

For example, legal advocacy involves challenging discriminatory laws and practices in courts, often drawing on international human rights standards to hold governments accountable. Public campaigns utilize media, art, and storytelling to humanize migration issues and counter negative stereotypes. Direct actions, such as protests and demonstrations, visibly challenge injustices and demand change.

## The key role of digital advocacy

Participants also recognize the importance of advocacy and digital communication campaigns. Social media platforms and online campaigns allow advocates to reach wider audiences, share real-time updates, and mobilize supporters across geographic boundaries.

In North Africa, for instance, online disinformation campaigns, especially on social media, as well as hate and racist incitements, have contributed to the spread of false information about people on the move. States have exploited this situation in a populist approach to legitimize their security policies regarding migration.<sup>97</sup>

For example, before the racist statements on February 21, 2023, by the Tunisian president on migration, a party claiming to be nationalist launched a large-scale hate campaign on social media against black people, people on the move, and associations. This contributed to the demonization of these groups. To counter this trend, activists launched a counter-campaign by publicizing violence against people on the move and demystifying prejudices. They also alerted the media and UN institutions such as the UNHCR via platforms like Twitter. Campaigns were conducted to highlight abuses against people on the move, leading several African states and institutions like the African Development Bank to sanction Tunisia during this period.

## 6. Workshops for addressing trauma and empowering women

Organizations have also highlighted their efforts to attend women on the move's requests concerning specific needs. One example is the development of workshops and activities focusing on supporting migrant women who have experienced trauma in their journey, with a particular focus on gender-based discrimination and sexual violence and abuses.

*“Migrants themselves have expressed that they would like to receive guidance on specific aspects. This is exemplified in a workshop on positive parenting that was requested by migrant women. We know that many of our users leave their countries because of gender violence and throughout their lives they have been victims of violence, and when they become mothers sometimes, they also reproduce this same violence. So, we organized this workshop on positive parenting with the mothers and their children to provide them with these tools.”*

— Woman, from Mexico, representative of a nonprofit organization

Some other workshops are aimed at creating spaces for people on the move to express their needs and perspectives on the solutions, thereby amplifying the voices in their advocacy work. Organizations also show great awareness of the need to further promote women on the move's agency and empowerment. They are not only the ones who can better express their needs because they are directly involved, but they are also considered as capable of expressing their needs. As such some platforms are created to facilitate this process of both healing and empowering.

### 5.2 Identifying Opportunities for Humane and Rights-Centered Border Governance

In our research, we examined the challenges faced in border governance from a human rights perspective and asked participants to identify opportunities for global or regional actions that could promote more humane, rights-based approaches. They also suggested advocacy strategies to foster positive change. Below we present some examples emerging from our investigation.

## Examples from the LAC Region

### 1. Trans-regional networks

In Central America and along Mexico's southern border, significant efforts have been made to develop "trans-regional networks" that offer dedicated support to migrant families throughout their journey across regions. These networks provide cross-border support and manage cases from the countries of origin to Mexico, providing joint support to families.

*"One of the most valuable aspects of this network is the cross-border support it provides to people in need of international protection. This collaborative work is incredibly valuable."*

— - Woman from Mexico, representative of a nonprofit organization

### 2. Unified policies for returnee communities

In Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, there are initiatives to create a unified policy for returnee communities. Efforts include standardizing diplomas and school certificates to ensure recognition across borders and proposing closer collaboration with municipalities.

*"We are working on a tripartite policy involving Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador to provide attention and benefits for returnees."*

— Man, Salvadorian returnee migrant, founder of a nonprofit organization

### 3. Legal advocacy and forensic commissions

Organizations in Guatemala accompany legal efforts to achieve justice for affected communities, allowing these communities to voice their experiences directly. Additionally, there is a strong initiative to support a forensic commission seeking justice for massacre and forced disappearance cases.

*"A key advocacy practice is allowing families to speak for themselves. This direct testimony is more effective than us explaining their situation on their behalf."*

— - Woman from Guatemala, representative of a nonprofit organization

### 4. Promoting intercultural respect

At Mexico's northern border, organizations are collaborating with local governments to promote intercultural respect through gastronomic and cultural events. These initiatives aim to acknowledge and celebrate cultural diversity and integrate the voices of people on the move into the migration dialogue.

*"The 'Miradas Fronterizas' festival integrates art, cuisine, and the voices of migrants and refugees, putting them at the forefront of the migration dialogue. This festival could serve as a model globally."*

— - Woman from Mexico, director of a nonprofit organization

### 5. Developing transnational protocols for migrant children

In El Salvador, efforts are ongoing to develop a transnational protocol for the protection of migrant children and adolescents. This initiative aims to establish uniform guidelines across the region to ensure consistent and adequate care.

*"We are collaborating with a network focused on child and adolescent protection to create a transnational protocol for the care of migrant children."*

— - Woman, returnee migrant from El Salvador, representative of a nonprofit organization

## Examples from the Asian Region

### 1. Addressing border governance issues



Participants describe the difficulties and abuse experienced by people trying to move from Bangladesh to Malaysia. The difference between the stated migration costs and the real expenses reveals the systemic problems and lack of oversight in the migration procedure. Many people on the move have no choice but to depend on brokers who demand extremely high fees, rendering the journey out of reach for the majority. Community activists are calling for more compassionate and rights-oriented border governance policies considering these challenges. This involves promoting openness during the migration process, acting against unlawful brokers, and implementing measures to prevent people on the move from being financially abused. Community activists aim to establish safe and affordable migration opportunities in partnership with the Bangladeshi and Malaysian governments, maintaining respect for people on the move' rights and dignity.

*“It takes less than 1500 BDT to go from here to Malaysia officially without any kind of broker everyone knows that going to Malaysia costs 4 to 5 lakh BDT, but the Malaysian government also knows that those who are coming from Bangladesh have to go through such a situation. This lack of governance is a big problem.”*

— - Man from Bangladesh, currently living in Bangladesh, an academic working on Rohingya refugees

## **2. Impartial immigration system**

The research results outlined the challenges experienced by marginalized groups in navigating complicated and frequently biased immigration systems. Giving preference to certain countries for visas can continue and worsen inequalities, making it harder for people trying to immigrate for different purposes. Community activists support fair and transparent immigration processes that prioritize the needs and rights of all individuals, irrespective of their nationality, to advance humane and rights-centered border governance. This could include advocating for changes that focus on humanitarian issues, like ensuring visa applications are processed quickly and preventing restrictive immigration policies from disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations.

*“VFS Global is going to Italy. Thousands of visa passports are stuck, it's been a long time and some have been for a year but they're not processing visas because they're getting visas for people from Indians and other South Asian countries. These are what I will say when it comes to border governance, every country will have its interest, and if we do not address the problems of our country's population, then we will have a major issue.”*

— - Man from Bangladesh, currently living in Bangladesh, an academic working on Rohingya refugees

## **3. Collaborative and rights-based approach to border governance**

Participants highlighted governance challenges due to disparities in human resources among countries. Nations with a demographic bonus can more easily assist people on the move, while others may struggle, leading to unfair treatment and human rights abuses. To address this, all stakeholders—governments, NGOs, and community activists—must collaborate on a human rights-focused border management approach. This involves safeguarding the rights of all individuals, ensuring fair and equitable policy enforcement, and promoting compassionate treatment of people on the move. An inclusive strategy supports regional and global initiatives to improve protections, services, and accountability for migrant communities.

*“Some countries are ahead in the area of human resources due to the demographic dividend, while others lag. To achieve good governance, all parties must work together to implement a human rights-centered approach. There are many opportunities for regional and global actions to promote this”*

— -Man from Bangladesh, representative of a nonprofit organization, working for reintegration of returnee migrants and refugees

## PART III

# Recommendations for Future Action

## 6. Advancing Decolonial and Intersectional Approaches

To ensure the recommendations are actionable, specific, and tailored to the needs and capabilities of AFSC, partners, and other organizations, insights from the community perspectives emerging from the independent research conducted for this report were integrated, as well as continuous feedback from AFSC staff in each region.<sup>98</sup>

The recommendations are divided into three main groups, taking into consideration regional and global perspectives

### 6.1 Grounding Work on Migration in Decolonial and Intersectional Perspectives

By acknowledging and confronting the historical and systemic roots of border externalization and militarization practices, the research sought to identify ways in which organizations such as AFSC, civil society organizations, and migration policy makers could further align their work and or policies with the lived experiences and narratives of these communities. This approach was also chosen in an attempt to strengthen advocacy for policies that uphold human dignity, justice, and equity.

It is important to note that this is just one approach among many other approaches and strategies, being cognizant that several initiatives are already underway within the grassroots work done by communities in the different regions globally, including regions where this research was conducted. This contribution is intended to add elements to an ongoing conversation within these organizations and communities, recognizing the complexity and diversity of contexts. It is essential to maintain flexibility and context sensitivity, as the realities on the ground often require adaptable approaches that can resonate across different regions.

To amplify alternative voices and perspectives—such as Indigenous knowledge and ways of life—future efforts could be even more deeply rooted in decolonial and intersectional perspectives from the Global South. Efforts should focus on developing common languages and narratives grounded in various decolonial and Indigenous perspectives and knowledge, combining insightful research with ethical practices. Many of these practices are already happening on the ground. However, there is a need to ensure that this common language is both flexible and agile, allowing it to be contextualized to the specific needs of each region. Moreover, future work should include tools and strategies to connect various initiatives, communities, and actors, thus promoting a transnational network that supports community-driven advocacy.

### Key issues to address

#### *Reframing concepts and perspectives*

- Shift towards decolonial and intersectional perspectives in practices and discourses that address the challenges faced by people on the move, grounded in principles of solidarity, equality, and human rights. This shift should not assume that current practices lack these perspectives but rather focus on enhancing and making them more explicit.
- Adopt decolonial-intersectional perspectives in advocacy efforts, bringing a particular focus on how various forms of oppression and injustices (based on race, gender, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation, age, among others) intersect and influence the experiences of people on the move and impacted communities. Make sure this intersectionality includes diverse groups such as LGBTQ+ communities, and consider the political and cultural conditions that impact these communities.
- Address the internal prejudices and stereotypes that activists and NGOs might hold, recognizing that personal challenges and biases can influence how they engage with the issues at hand.

### ***Bringing forward community practices and narratives***

- Provide alternative perspectives that challenge dominant narratives, centering the voices and agency of people on the move and affected communities. This should include stories and experiences from communities, particularly from missing persons and other excluded groups.
- Meaningful inclusion of communities concerned in the development of actions and ensure their perspectives are central in shaping policies. This includes engaging with a variety of stakeholders, such as community organizations and local leaders, in the decision-making process.
- Articulate clearly the specific needs of diverse groups, including children, women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and other vulnerable populations. Strengthen the language and practices to be more community-centered, ensuring that the needs and perspectives of these groups are fully integrated.

### ***Policy and advocacy***

- Build a plurality of alternative narratives that include community perspectives from the Global South.
- Incorporate context-sensitive decolonial and intersectional perspectives to shape tailored arguments that are relevant for specific locations and regions.
- Address the challenges of integrating decolonial and intersectional approaches into migration programs, ensuring they remain flexible and responsive to contextual realities.
- Affirm the importance of centering advocacy on the narratives and recommendations of the communities affected by externalization policies.

### ***Recommended actions***

1. Develop a common language that different regions can comfortably use, ensuring that this language is flexible, agile, and appropriately contextualized to the specific needs and realities of each region.
2. Create narratives that reflect community perspectives and diverse global viewpoints.
3. Develop a glossary of decolonial and intersectional terminology related to migration.
4. Engage ethically with communities, ensuring respectful and responsible interactions.
5. Compile a database of researchers working on migration with decolonial and intersectional perspectives.
6. Promote training and educational opportunities to learn more about decolonial and intersectional perspectives developed by communities around the world.
7. Appoint focal points responsible for understanding and promoting decolonial and intersectional approaches sensitive to local and regional perspectives.

## 6.3 External Recommendations

### **Community engagement/community-centered programs**

- Engage directly with communities affected by border externalization and militarization, adhering to core decolonial and intersectional ethical guidelines. Support community-driven initiatives in advocacy and policy-making processes.
- Involve communities and stakeholders in advocacy efforts and migration research initiatives. Support community-based advocacy efforts by actively engaging with migrant- and refugee-led organizations leading advocacy and policy change initiatives.
- Develop mechanisms to incorporate and strengthen initiatives and projects driven by people on the move and impacted communities. This includes ensuring the protection rights of people on the move to access basic rights, regardless of their documentation status.

### **Build strategic partnerships**

- Form and strengthen alliances with local NGOs, community associations, international organizations, and academic institutions to enhance advocacy efforts and support impacted communities. Strengthen cooperation with organizations that incorporate migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers into their structures or activities.
- Establish more partnerships or advocacy actions with organizations operating in the Global South, and seek horizontal and equitable partnerships with international organizations to disseminate decolonial and human narratives on migration that transcend securitized perspectives.
- Promote the decolonization of humanitarian aid by recognizing and dismantling power imbalances and supporting initiatives that empower local communities rather than imposing external solutions.

### **Public awareness campaigns**

- Initiate campaigns to educate the public on border policies and advocate for humane treatment and policies using diverse media platforms.
- Increase the inclusion of communities in public awareness campaigns and develop key messages in collaboration with migrant and refugee communities.
- Connect the work to existing initiatives promoted especially by consolidated transnational networks.
- Expand social media as a strategy for both public awareness campaigns and advocacy engagement.

### **Advocacy and policy engagement**

- Develop and disseminate position papers and policy briefs to influence policymakers and stakeholders. Promote coalition-building with other NGOs and leverage international legal frameworks for humane border policies.
- Engage in advocacy efforts with organizations in the Global South, such as regional institutions and Southern country embassies in AFSC's operational areas. Collaborate with Global South organizations to conduct advocacy initiatives and develop regional and global advocacy campaigns to influence policy changes.
- Advocate for the legal documentation of refugees and include other forms of documentation beyond legal documentation to ensure they have access to fundamental rights and services.

### **Support for global and regional policy reforms**

- Advocate for the reform of international policies that contribute to harsh conditions due to border externalization.
- Challenge agreements that shift border control responsibilities to "Global South" countries.

## **Education and awareness raising for NGOs, people on the move, and affected communities**

- Provide targeted training to NGOs working on the ground to enhance their ability to advocate for the rights of people on the move. This training should include a focus on addressing discrimination, fostering stronger alliances, and building solidarity with migrant communities.
- Ensure that people on the move and affected communities are well-informed about their rights, empowering them to navigate challenges and advocate for themselves.

## **Education and awareness raising for the general public**

- Develop and implement training programs aimed at raising awareness about the impacts of border externalization and militarization. These programs should be designed to engage various segments of the public.
- Transform the documentation produced by ASFC and its partners over the years into educational materials for both formal and non-formal education settings, creating sensitization programs that reach broader audiences.
- Focus efforts on reshaping public perceptions and counteracting negative narratives surrounding people on the move

# APPENDICES

# APPENDIX 1

## Glossary

**Note:** In this Glossary, we define key terms through a decolonial-intersectional lens, recognizing that although these words are also used by states and various stakeholders, they carry distinct meanings and implications from this perspective that diverge from their conventional interpretations. Understanding these terms from a decolonial-intersectional perspective highlights the need to critically analyze contemporary issues with an awareness of historical contexts and power dynamics, aiming for a more just global society that rectifies historical wrongs and promotes equality and respect for diverse ways of life.

## Key concepts

### **Decolonial-Intersectional Approach**<sup>99</sup>

This approach involves a critical examination of the colonial legacies that are deeply embedded within contemporary societal structures, institutions, and knowledge systems. It recognizes that colonialism not only exploited and oppressed people but also imposed a hierarchical worldview that privileged Western ways of knowing, being, and doing while marginalizing or erasing others. The decolonial-intersectional approach seeks to dismantle these enduring legacies by challenging the dominance of Western-centric narratives and advocating for the recognition and valorization of knowledge, cultures, and perspectives that have been historically marginalized or suppressed by colonial powers. In addition to addressing colonialism, this approach also integrates an intersectional lens, which considers how various forms of oppression—such as race, gender, class, sexuality, and ethnicity—intersect and compound the experiences of marginalized communities. By acknowledging these intersecting identities and power dynamics, the decolonial-intersectional approach offers a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of injustice.

### **Border Externalization**

This term refers to the policies and practices by which countries extend their border controls to foreign territories, often through agreements with other nations, to prevent people on the move from reaching their soil. From a decolonial viewpoint, this practice can be seen as a continuation of colonial dynamics, where powerful countries impose their will on less powerful ones, undermining their sovereignty and affecting the movement of people, often based on racial and economic hierarchies.

### **Militarization**

In a decolonial context, militarization often refers to the increased presence and role of military forces in civilian areas or in international relations, which can perpetuate forms of control and domination reminiscent of colonial times. This can include the suppression of dissent, enforcement of neoliberal policies, and protection of the interests of former colonial powers or multinational corporations at the expense of local populations.

### **Migration**

Migration refers to the movement of people from one area to another, often crossing international borders, in search of better living conditions, safety, or opportunities. From a decolonial-intersectional



perspective, migration is not merely a demographic phenomenon but is deeply intertwined with histories of colonialism, imperialism, and global inequalities. This viewpoint examines how colonial legacies and neo-colonial practices such as economic exploitation, conflict, and environmental degradation in the Global South drive migration. Moreover, it critiques how policies of the Global North often frame migration as security threats, leading to stringent border controls and militarized responses that reflect broader power imbalances and perpetuate colonial attitudes towards freedom of movement and human rights.

### **Intersectionality**

Developed by Kimberlé Crenshaw, this framework analyzes how various social identities (race, gender, class, etc.) intersect to create unique modes of discrimination and privilege. A decolonial approach using intersectionality allows us to examine how colonial legacies and racial hierarchies inform these intersections, influencing who is marginalized and how they are affected by overlapping systems of oppression.

### **Racism**

From a decolonial-intersectional perspective, racism is not only a matter of interpersonal bias or discrimination but is deeply rooted in the histories and structures of colonialism which institutionalized racial hierarchies. This perspective emphasizes the ongoing effects of these structures in maintaining systemic inequalities and calls for their profound transformation to achieve racial justice.

### **People of Color**

This term specifically refers to people on the move who are identified as non-white and often originate from the Global South. From a decolonial-intersectional perspective, “people of color” underscores the intersection of race and migration, highlighting how racial identities shape the experiences and perceptions of people on the move. This lens reveals how racialized narratives and policies disproportionately impact these groups, leading to stricter border controls, greater surveillance, and harsher immigration enforcement. It critiques how these practices continue colonial legacies of racism and discrimination, marginalizing people of color in destination countries. The term also prompts an examination of how global structures of power, economics, and politics are racialized, affecting the mobility and rights of people based on their color and origin.

### **Gender**

Gender refers to the social, behavioral, and cultural attributes, expectations, and norms associated with being male, female, or non-binary. From a decolonial-intersectional perspective, analyzing gender involves recognizing how colonial histories and contemporary neo-colonial practices influence and perpetuate gender roles and disparities. This viewpoint critically examines how policies and power dynamics disproportionately affect women and gender-diverse individuals, especially in contexts of migration, conflict, and economic exploitation. It highlights how gendered violence and discrimination are often exacerbated by militarization and stringent border controls, where women and non-binary people frequently face higher risks of abuse, trafficking, and marginalization. A decolonial approach to gender also advocates for dismantling patriarchal structures inherited from colonial systems and for promoting gender equity as integral to achieving social justice and decolonization.

### **Violence**

In a broad sense, violence encompasses physical, psychological, economic, and structural harm inflicted upon individuals or communities. From a decolonial-intersectional perspective, violence is not only understood as direct aggression but also as systemic and institutionalized practices that emerge from and perpetuate colonial legacies, creating multiple and intersecting layers of harm to communities. This includes the enforcement of border controls, militarization, racial discrimination,

and gender-based violence, all of which can be seen as forms of colonial violence perpetrated against marginalized populations. Decolonial analysis emphasizes how these practices maintain the power structures established during colonial times and how they are replicated in contemporary policies and interactions. This perspective also involves acknowledging and addressing the violence embedded in the suppression of indigenous and non-Western knowledge, cultures, and identities by dominant global powers.

### **Agency**

Agency refers to the ability of individuals or groups to act independently, make choices, and enact change in their lives and communities. From a decolonial-intersectional perspective, agency is critically examined within the context of historical and ongoing colonial influences that have often sought to suppress or control the agency of colonized peoples. This approach emphasizes the importance of recognizing and empowering the self-determination and resilience of marginalized groups, particularly those in the Global South and indigenous communities, in resisting and challenging colonial and neo-colonial structures. It also involves acknowledging the ways in which these groups navigate, resist, and transform oppressive systems to assert their rights, preserve their cultures, and influence policies affecting them. Decolonial-intersectional analysis of agency highlights the creative and often subversive ways marginalized communities sustain their livelihoods, cultural identities, and political activism against systemic constraints.

### **Global North/Global South**

This term generally refers to wealthier, more industrialized countries in North America, Western Europe, and parts of East Asia and Oceania. A decolonial-intersectional approach to the “Global North” highlights its role in maintaining contemporary forms of coloniality through economic policies, cultural imposition, and political interventions that perpetuate global inequalities. It critiques the power dynamics that continue to disadvantage the Global South and calls for a reevaluation of these relationships in the pursuit of a more equitable global order. The term “Global South” is used to refer to countries typically considered part of the developing world, primarily located in Latin America, Africa, and parts of Asia. From a decolonial-intersectional perspective, the “Global South” represents not just a geographic expression but a critical concept reflecting a common history of colonialism, neo-colonialism, and resistance against economic and cultural domination by the Global North. It emphasizes solidarity among these nations in their efforts to assert sovereignty, cultural identity, and economic independence.

### **Security Discourses/Narratives**

This term refers to the ways in which states justify practices like militarization and border externalization under the guise of national security. From a decolonial-intersectional perspective, analyzing security discourses reveals how they often reinforce racial and cultural biases, depicting people on the move from certain regions as threats and legitimizing harsh policies and state violence. These narratives not only stigmatize and criminalize people on the move, but also exacerbate existing inequalities, disproportionately affecting marginalized communities. By framing specific populations as security risks, these discourses prioritize state security over human rights, intersecting with issues of race, gender, and class to uphold systems of oppression.

### **Human Rights**

Integrating the concept of human rights is essential when discussing the impact of border externalization and militarization on both individual and collective rights. Human rights encompass a broad range of fundamental freedoms and protections that all individuals are entitled to, regardless of nationality, race, or status. In the context of migration, these rights are often jeopardized by state practices that prioritize sovereignty and security over the dignity and well-being of people on the move.

A decolonial-intersectional approach critically examines how these practices frequently lead to violations of human rights, especially among marginalized and oppressed populations. For instance, people on the move from the Global South, particularly those who are racialized, often face systemic discrimination, violence, and denial of asylum, which are justified through securitization narratives. These violations can include arbitrary detention, forced deportation, and inhumane treatment at borders, all of which undermine the principles of human dignity and equality. Furthermore, this approach also considers how intersecting identities—such as race, gender, class, and ethnicity—affect the experience of human rights violations. Women, children, LGBTQ+ individuals, and those with disabilities often suffer compounded forms of discrimination and violence due to the intersectional nature of their identities. Thus, a decolonial-intersectional analysis of human rights in the context of border externalization and militarization not only reveals the extent of these violations but also challenges the underlying power structures that perpetuate them. This perspective calls for a reimagining of human rights frameworks to be more inclusive and responsive to the needs of those most vulnerable to these state practices.

### **Sovereignty**

This term can provide insight into how nations' rights to govern themselves are often compromised by external pressures, especially in the contexts of border externalization and militarization. A decolonial perspective allows us to explore how sovereignty is undermined by the imposition of border controls outside a nation's territory or through military interventions, reflecting a continuation of colonial practices.

### **Neo-Colonialism**

Neo-colonialism refers to the practice by which former colonial powers and other developed nations maintain control over less developed countries through indirect means such as economic, political, and cultural pressures, rather than direct political rule. This form of control often operates under the guise of globalization, development aid, or international cooperation, ensuring that wealth and resources continue to flow to powerful nations while keeping local economies dependent and underdeveloped. From a decolonial-intersectional perspective, neo-colonialism perpetuates the exploitation and cultural domination established during the colonial era. It reinforces global hierarchies by promoting Western values and ideologies, often marginalizing non-Western cultures and knowledge systems. This approach critiques neo-colonial practices by revealing how they intersect with issues of race, gender, and class, among others, deepening the marginalization of vulnerable populations and advocating for more just and equitable global relationships.

### **Imperialism**

This term addresses the historical and contemporary forms of dominance by powerful nations over less powerful ones, often through economic, political, and military means. In the context of border externalization and militarization, imperialism can be discussed to highlight how these practices are used to exert control over geopolitical spaces, influencing migration trends and regional stability.

### **Justice**

Justice involves the fair and equitable treatment of individuals and communities, along with the rectification of wrongs and the distribution of benefits and burdens in society. From a decolonial-intersectional perspective, justice extends beyond legalistic frameworks to address the deep-seated inequalities and injustices rooted in colonial and neo-colonial histories. This approach calls for acknowledging and rectifying the systematic disenfranchisement of marginalized populations, particularly those in formerly colonized regions. Decolonial justice seeks to dismantle oppressive structures, promote the sovereignty and self-determination of indigenous and Global South communities, and restore the rights and resources that have been historically denied. It also emphasizes reparative justice, which involves repairing the damages caused by colonial practices

through measures like restitution, cultural revival, and the reaffirmation of indigenous lands and rights. Decolonial justice aims to create a world where equity, respect, and mutual recognition replace colonial legacies of exploitation and domination.

### **Community-based approach**

A community-based approach centers the perspectives, needs, and knowledge of the communities directly impacted by the issues being studied or addressed. This approach emphasizes active participation, where community members are not just subjects of research or beneficiaries of programs but active collaborators in the process. It seeks to empower communities by validating their experiences, incorporating their insights into decision-making, and ensuring that their voices drive the development and implementation of solutions. In the context of migration, a community-based approach involves working closely with people on the move and affected communities to understand their challenges, amplify their narratives, and support their agency in resisting oppressive practices such as border externalization and militarization. This method prioritizes ethical engagement, respects local knowledge and traditions, and strives to create sustainable change that is rooted in the lived realities of the communities involved. By fostering co-participative processes, it aims to build trust, ensure inclusivity, and address power imbalances, while being mindful of the risks and ethical challenges that may arise in working with vulnerable groups.

# APPENDIX 2

## Methodological Insights and Ethical Considerations

### 1. Overview of the Research

To achieve the main research objectives, the team developed a comprehensive methodology and ethical considerations to ensure successful completion while prioritizing participant safety and protection. The research lasted six months, from February to June 2024.

We sought to provide a comprehensive analysis of the impact of border externalization and militarization on people on the move and affected communities, as well as their perspectives and responses to recent developments. We sought to operationalize the decolonial, intersectional, and community-based perspectives into a tailored methodology to provide a deeper understanding of the impacts of bordering and criminalization on people on the move and supported the development of more equitable policies and practices.

Using a decolonial and intersectional approach to study the impact of bordering and criminalization of people on the move, involves integrating principles that acknowledge and address power dynamics, inequalities, and the multifaceted experiences of people on the move. This approach not only enriches understanding of the impacts of bordering and criminalization but also contributes to a more equitable and just representation of communities' experiences. Our methodology aimed to uncover layers of oppression and resistance while elevating the voices and agency of those most impacted by migration policies. Adopting a decolonial-intersectional approach requires a commitment to critically examining power relations, elevating marginalized voices, and challenging conventional narratives found in mainstream research and migration policy alike.

Finally, our methodology aimed to ensure that the findings and recommendations presented in this report are deeply rooted in the lived experiences of those most affected by border externalization and militarization, providing AFSC and its partners with actionable insights to enhance its advocacy and policy efforts. To this purpose, we engaged in parallel conversations with AFSC staff and its partners across the four regions selected for this study, to ensure the relevance of the research.

### 2. General Framework

Below we explain how we operationalized the decolonial, intersectional, and community-based perspectives into our study.

#### *Decolonial approach*

This approach enables a examination of Eurocentric and androcentric underpinnings of current research orientations, aiming to align research practices with social justice demands made by historically and currently oppressed individuals and peoples.<sup>100</sup>

This approach involved focusing on dismantling colonial legacies and power structures within the context of migration and border politics. We centered marginalized voices, challenged colonial narratives, and acknowledged the impacts of colonialism on migration patterns and border regimes. We prioritized indigenous knowledge and perspectives throughout our research.

#### **Key elements:**

**Challenge traditional conceptions:** Ensuring the research challenges traditional knowledge

attribution, acquisition, and justification practices that disadvantage formerly colonized and racialized people.

**Incorporate marginalized voices:** Promoting “stronger objectivity” by incorporating voices and everyday realities of marginalized groups into research analyses.

#### *Gender-sensitive and intersectional analysis*

We examined how gender and various forms of social stratification (e.g., race, class, gender, legal status) interconnect and affect people on the move’ experiences. We utilized tools considering gender, class, migratory paths, discrimination, and ethnicity to guarantee a plurality of voices and perspectives.

#### **Key elements:**

**Gender approach:** We focused on challenges faced by women and girls on the move.

**Intersectional approach:** We examined how different individuals and communities are affected by various factors, such as social class, citizenship/migration status, nationality, age, ethnicity, religion, ability, and sexual orientation.

#### *Community-centered and contextualized research approach*

This involved active collaboration between researchers, AFSC staff and its partners, and the community leaders of migrants and refugees, and members of NGOs, emphasizing inclusion and participation throughout the research process, from identifying research questions to interpreting results and implementing findings.

The team of researchers sought to:

Work as equal partners with community members, building trusting relationships and exchanges.

Conduct collaboratively to ensure culturally sensitive interpretations aligned with community perspectives.

Produce actionable results aiming to benefit affected communities and implement community-driven initiatives

### **3. Phases of Implementation and Methodology**

The data collection and analysis for this research were structured into two interconnected phases. These phases were carefully coordinated to ensure that in-depth analysis was conducted in each selected region while maintaining consistency across all regions.

In **Phase 1**, the focus was on a literature review and document analysis. The objective of this phase was to establish a foundational understanding of border externalization and militarization, approached through a decolonial and intersectional lens. To achieve this, the researchers conducted comprehensive literature reviews and analyzed documents to gather existing knowledge and identify gaps in the current understanding. This phase involved reviewing a wide range of materials, including academic articles, policy papers, and reports from international organizations, NGOs, and community groups, to build a robust knowledge base.

**Phase 2** centered on community engagement and data collection, with the primary objective of collecting qualitative data to understand the lived experiences of communities affected by border externalization and militarization in the four regions. The methods employed in this phase included focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Focus groups were facilitated among community members to explore collective experiences and perspectives, with most discussions conducted online. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals and groups, both in-person and online, to gather more in-depth insights into the issues being studied. The researchers worked closely with AFSC staff and its partners, local NGOs, and community leaders to identify participants, organize and conduct the interviews and focus groups, and ensure that all ethical considerations were carefully upheld throughout the data collection process.

## 4. Research Strategies

### Phase 1: Criteria for Conducting the Literature Review and Document Analysis

In Phase 1, a thorough literature review and document analysis were undertaken, with a focus on including decolonial and intersectional perspectives, as well as community-based insights whenever possible. The selection process involved identifying relevant academic and subject-specific databases, such as JSTOR, Web of Science, and the International Migration Institute's database, to ensure a comprehensive gathering of literature. Keywords were strategically chosen to combine main themes like "migration," "border externalization," and "criminalization" with methodological approaches such as "decolonial" and "intersectional," alongside community perspectives like "community-based perspectives" and "migrant rights organizations."

To identify sources, documents reflecting diverse perspectives, particularly those of marginalized communities impacted by border policies, were prioritized. This included policy documents, organizational reports, community publications, and media coverage. Emphasis was placed on selecting sources produced by scholars, activists, and communities from the Global South or those critically engaging with Western-centric views on migration. Additionally, studies employing an intersectional analysis of migration were sought, focusing on how various identities and social positions influence experiences with bordering and criminalization.

### Phase 2: Criteria for Selecting the Focus Groups and Interviews

In Phase 2, the focus was on selecting participants for focus groups and interviews. Key stakeholders within organizations and communities working on borders were identified to ensure diverse representation in the study. The preparation process involved developing interview protocols that prioritized decolonial principles, centered marginalized voices, and acknowledged the historical context of the issues being studied. When conducting the interviews, a respectful and culturally sensitive approach was employed, with open-ended questions designed to encourage dialogue and allow participants to express their perspectives freely.

The thematic analysis of the interview transcripts focused on identifying recurring patterns, perspectives, and power dynamics within the data. This analysis aimed to reveal the complex and intersecting factors that shape the experiences of communities affected by border externalization and militarization, further enriching the study's findings with deep, contextually grounded insights.

The content analysis involved a critical examination of the selected documents through a decolonial lens, with particular attention to language, narratives, and power dynamics. The analysis questioned whose voices were represented and whose were silenced, exploring how power structures in the bordering and criminalization of people on the move were discussed and whether they were resisted or reinforced. A significant focus was placed on perspectives centered on communities. The analysis also sought out works that challenged dominant narratives around migration and criminalization, particularly those that questioned state-centric and securitized approaches. In synthesizing the findings, intersectional insights into migrant experiences were combined with decolonial critiques of power and knowledge production, offering a nuanced understanding of the impacts of bordering and criminalization.

## 5. Ethical Considerations

The project involved volunteer participation, including interviews on sensitive issues and collection of sensitive data. We reflected on the ethics of our research approach, ensuring respect for the dignity, rights, and voices of people on the move and impacted communities. We considered how our work could contribute to decolonizing knowledge production and elevating migrant voices without appropriation or misrepresentation.



In this regard, the team developed a methodology adhering to international standards and best practices in participant protection, utilizing the following approaches and principles:

1. **Obtaining informed consent:** Secured informed consent from participants, ensuring they understood the research foundations and what was expected of them. Used culturally sensitive and appropriate language tailored to the participants' level of understanding.
2. **Respecting participants' privacy:** Obtained consent and protected participants' identities, ensuring collected data remained confidential and secure.
3. **Prioritizing safety and well-being:** Ensured participants were not exposed to physical, emotional, or psychological harm. Developed appropriate measures for potential threats to participant safety and well-being (see also section on "Anticipated Challenges and Contingency Plans").
4. **Addressing power differentials and minimizing risks:** Respected participants' political, socio-economic, and psychological vulnerabilities, creating conditions that allowed them to speak comfortably. Guaranteed complete anonymity and avoided collecting non-essential data. Ensured the research did not result in discriminatory practices or unfair treatment, always using the principles of reciprocity.
5. **Attention to language and cultural codes:** Employed methodological tools suitable for participants' needs and understanding. Paid attention to how questions were formulated and to the responses of interviewees.
6. **Anonymization to ensure protection:** Implemented strict anonymization procedures to ensure that participants' identities were protected throughout the research process. This included removing any identifying information from transcripts and reports and securely storing data to prevent unauthorized access.



# APPENDIX 3

## Recommendations on how to conduct ethical research

This appendix offers insights concerning additional recommendations that should be taken into consideration in future AFSC's research, aligning with the decolonial and intersectional perspectives emphasized.

These recommendations aim to foster ethical, inclusive, and socially responsible research practices that honor the perspectives and well-being of all participants, particularly those from marginalized and diverse communities.

### 1. Ensure respect and dignity of participants

- Conduct research in a manner that respects the dignity, rights, and autonomy of all participants.
- Obtain informed consent, ensuring participants are fully aware of the research objectives, methods, potential risks, and benefits.
- Assure that the questionnaire avoids issues that could imply revictimization or trigger anxiety and trauma among participants.

### 2. Promote inclusivity and representation

- Ensure diverse and marginalized voices are included in the research process.
- Engage community leaders and representatives to provide input and guidance on research design and implementation.

### 3. Address power dynamics

- Be aware of and actively address power imbalances between researchers and participants.
- Ensure that the research process does not reinforce existing inequalities or create new forms of marginalization.
- Identify and recognize existing power barriers or obstacles that curtail meaningful participation

### 4. Cultural sensitivity and awareness

- Conduct research with a deep understanding and respect for the cultural contexts of the communities involved.
- Avoid imposing external perspectives or solutions that may not be culturally appropriate.

### 5. Transparency and accountability

- Maintain transparency throughout the research process, including sharing findings with the communities involved.
- Establish mechanisms for accountability, allowing participants to voice concerns or provide feedback.

### 6. Ethical use of data

- Ensure data is used ethically and responsibly, protecting the confidentiality and privacy of participants.
- Avoid the exploitation of data for purposes not aligned with the original research goals or participant consent, or any kinds of data extractivism.

### 7. Benefit to the communities

- Ensure that the research provides tangible benefits to the communities involved, whether through direct outcomes or longer-term advocacy and policy changes.
- Collaborate with communities to identify and prioritize research topics that are most relevant and beneficial to them.

**8. Continuous ethical reflection**

- Encourage ongoing ethical reflection among researchers, adapting methods and approaches as needed to address emerging ethical challenges.
- Provide training and resources for researchers on ethical issues specific to decolonial and intersectional research.

# Citations

1. See Appendix 2 for a comprehensive overview of our research design and methodology.
2. Jones, C. (2017). *Market Forces: The Development of the EU Security-Industrial Complex*. Transnational Institute. <https://www.tni.org/en/publication/market-forces-the-development-of-the-eu-security-industrial-complex>
3. See Cappiali, T. M. and A. Pacciardi (2024), p. 6-7.
4. Walia, H. (2013) *Undoing Border Imperialism*. Institute for Anarchist Studies. Oakland, CA
5. Achiume, T. (2019) "Migration As Decolonization" *Stanford Law Review* 1509 (2019), UCLA School of Law, Public Law Research Paper No. 19-05, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3330353>
6. An in-depth analysis can be found in the dedicated regional reports: (1) Quiñones Guzmán, M. (2024) *Regional Report 1: The Impact of Border Externalization and Militarization in the LAC Region*. (2) Kaba, M. (2024) *Regional Report 2: The Impact of Border Externalization and Militarization in Africa*. (3) Kurt, M. (2024) *Regional Report 3: The Impact of Border Externalization and Militarization in the Middle East*. (4) Malak, A. (2024) *Regional Report 4: The Impact of Border Externalization and Militarization in Asia*.
7. See Quiñones Guzmán, M. (2024) *Regional Report 1: The Impact of Border Externalization and Militarization in the LAC Region*.
8. Andrew Selee et al. "In a Dramatic Shift, the Americas Have Become a Leading Migration Destination" Migration Policy Institute. April 11, 2023. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/latin-america-caribbean-immigration-shift>
9. UNHCR, *Tendencias Globales. Desplazamiento forzado en 2022*, June 2023, <https://www.acnur.org/tendencias-globales>
10. International Organization for Migration (IOM), Reporte "Tendencias Migratorias en las Americas". June 2023. Accessed in March 2024 [https://robuenosaires.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl626/files/documents/2023-09/es\\_tendencias\\_marzo\\_junio\\_2023\\_vf.pdf](https://robuenosaires.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl626/files/documents/2023-09/es_tendencias_marzo_junio_2023_vf.pdf)
11. UNICEF. "Number of migrant children moving across Latin America and the Caribbean hits new record amid violence, instability and climate change" September 7, 2023. Accessed in March 2024 <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/number-migrant-children-moving-across-latin-america-and-caribbean-hits-new-record>
12. "Title 42 Expulsions and Regular Apprehensions of All Migrants at the U.S.-Mexico Border," Border Oversight, WOLA. Accessed in February 2024. <https://borderoversight.org/2023/05/17/title-42-expulsions-and-regular-apprehensions-of-all-migrants-at-the-u-s-mexico-border/>
13. Vanessa Ceceña. (2020) "Dismantling Asylum: A year into the Migrant Protection Protocols". American Friends Service Committee. <https://www.afsc.org/document/dismantling-asylum-year-migrant-protection-protocols>
14. U.S. Department of Homeland Security. "Northern and Central America Agreements." Department of Homeland Security Publications, October 2019. [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/19\\_1028\\_opa\\_factsheet-northern-central-america-agreements\\_v2.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/19_1028_opa_factsheet-northern-central-america-agreements_v2.pdf)
15. International Organization for Migration. "Oficinas de Movilidad Segura: Conocimiento, Interés y Posible Influencia en las Dinámicas de Migración Mixta en América Latina y el Caribe, Marzo 2024." ReliefWeb, March 2024. <https://reliefweb.int/report/venezuela-bolivarian-republic/oficinas-de-movilidad-segura-conocimiento-interes-y-posible-influencia-en-las-dinamicas-de-migracion-mixta-en-america-latina-y-el-caribe-marzo-2024>
16. Alicia Moncada and Eduardo Rojas. "Bajo la bota. Militarización de la política migratoria mexicana" May, 2022. Fundación para la Justicia y el Estado Democrático de Derecho (FJEDD), Sin Fronteras IAP, Derechos Humanos Integrales en Acción (DHIA), Derechosocopia, Uno de Siete Migrando e Instituto para las Mujeres en la Migración (IMUMI). <https://bajolabota.com.mx>
17. "MPP (Remain in Mexico) Deportation Proceedings—All Cases," TRAC, University of Syracuse. consulted on August 18, 2023, <https://trac.syr.edu/phptools/immigration/mpp4/>
18. This was highlighted in the interviews with Guatemalan organization's representatives.
19. This was highlighted in the interviews with Salvadoran organization's representatives.
20. International Rescue Committee. "Análisis de Emergencia: Crisis de Desplazamiento en Costa Rica." IRCA Casa Abierta, Refugees International. December 2023. <https://ircacasabierta.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Costa-Rica-DEC-2023-ESP.pdf>
21. Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. "CIDH expresa profunda preocupación por la situación de personas migrantes y refugiadas en Estados Unidos, México y Centroamérica". July 23, 2019.
22. Amnesty International. "Mexico: Fatal fire in migrant detention center is result of inhumane policies."

- March 29, 2023. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/03/mexico-fatal-fire-immigration-detention-cinhumane-policies>
23. Programa de Asuntos Migratorios IBERO. “Instituto Nacional de Migración y Guardia Nacional desalojan a familias migrantes del campamento en la plaza Giordano Bruno en CDMX”, June 2024. <https://prami.iberomx/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Comunicado-Desalojo-GB-6-de-junio.pdf>
  24. Doctors Without Borders. “Darién Gap: ‘We Crossed the Jungle Looking for a Better Future, Not for Our Lives to End.’” Doctors Without Borders, June 27, 2023. <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/darien-gap-we-crossed-jungle-looking-better-future-not-our-lives-end>
  25. All these community efforts were mentioned during Focus Groups and interviews with organizations’ representatives from all LAC region.
  26. See Kaba, M. (2024) *Regional Report 2: The Impact of Border Externalization and Militarization in Africa*.
  27. Wihtol de Wenden, Catherine, “Mediterranean migrations”. *Pouvoirs* 183, n° 4 (2022): 8797. <https://doi.org/10.3917/pouv.183.0087>
  28. Studies, the Africa Strategic Center, “Migration trends to watch in Africa in 2023”. Africa Center for Strategic Studies (blog). <https://africacenter.org/fr/spotlight/tendances-migratoires-a-surveiller-en-afrique-en-2023/>
  29. UNHCR’s “Global Trends Report 2023 <https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends-report-2023>
  30. IOM, “Africa Migration Report: Challenging the Narrative | IOM Publications Platform”. <https://publications.iom.int/books/rapport-sur-la-migration-en-afrique-remettre-en-question-le-recit>
  31. Rodier, C. “Externalisation of the control of migration flows: how and with whom Europe pushes back its borders”. <https://www.cairn.info/revue-migrations-societe-2008-2-page-105.htm&wt.src=pdf>
  32. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/fr/policies/eu-migration-policy/eu-migration-asylum-reform-pact/timeline-migration-and-asylum-pact/>
  33. The cimade. <https://www.lacimade.org/presse/plus-de-160-organisations-de-la-societe-civile-appellent-les-deputes-europeens-a-rejeter-le-pacte-europeen-sur-les-migrations/>
  34. Missing Migrants Project, <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/fr/donnees>
  35. MSF, <https://www.msf.fr/actualites/libye-l-enfer-des-centres-de-detention-raconte-de-l-interieur>
  36. The world, [https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2024/05/21/comment-l-argent-de-l-union-europeenne-permet-aux-pays-du-maghreb-de-refouler-des-migrants-dans-le-desert\\_6234489\\_3212.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2024/05/21/comment-l-argent-de-l-union-europeenne-permet-aux-pays-du-maghreb-de-refouler-des-migrants-dans-le-desert_6234489_3212.html)
  37. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/es/ip\\_23\\_3887](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/es/ip_23_3887)
  38. Amnesty International, <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/latest/news/2023/03/tunisia-presidents-racist-speech-incites-a-wave-of-violence-against-black-africans/>
  39. [https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2024/07/08/le-premier-ministre-britannique-keir-starmer-confirme-la-fin-de-la-politique-d-expulsion-des-migrants-vers-le-rwanda\\_6247952\\_3212.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2024/07/08/le-premier-ministre-britannique-keir-starmer-confirme-la-fin-de-la-politique-d-expulsion-des-migrants-vers-le-rwanda_6247952_3212.html)
  40. Oleg Korneev (2014) “Exchanging Knowledge, Building Capacity, Developing Mechanisms: IOM’s Role in the Implementation of the EU-Russia Readmission Agreement”, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 40 (6), 2014
  41. EuroMed Right. “The Restriction of Civic Space” 2019. <https://euromedrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Curbing-the-space-Fr-final.pdf>
  42. The world, [https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2022/07/08/drame-de-melilla-comment-une-tentative-d-entree-en-europe-a-conduit-a-la-mort-de-dizaines-de-migrants\\_6134032\\_3212.html](https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2022/07/08/drame-de-melilla-comment-une-tentative-d-entree-en-europe-a-conduit-a-la-mort-de-dizaines-de-migrants_6134032_3212.html)
  43. <https://fr.africanews.com/2022/07/04/maroc-la-tension-reste-vive-apres-la-mort-de-migrants-a-melilla/>
  44. <https://fr.africanews.com/2022/06/29/maroc-manifestation-contre-le-traitement-inflige-aux-migrants/>
  45. <https://igg-geo.org/?p=15645#f+15645+3+3>
  46. <https://www.msf.fr/actualites/libye-l-enfer-des-centres-de-detention-raconte-de-l-interieur>
  47. <https://www.msf.org/death-despair-and-destitution-human-costs-eu-migration-policies>
  48. See Kurt, M. (2024) *Regional Report 3: The Impact of Border Externalization and Militarization in the Middle East*.
  49. UNHCR *Global Appeal Report* (2024). <https://reporting.unhcr.org/global-appeal-2024-6383>
  50. UNHCR, *Ibid*.
  51. UNHCR, *Syria Situation*, (<https://reporting.unhcr.org/operational/situations/syria-situation>)
  52. UNHCR *Global Appeal Report* (2024).
  53. Refugees Association. Number of Syrian in Turkey February 2024 (<https://multeciler.org.tr/turkiyedeki-suriyeli-sayisi/>)
  54. Presidency of Migration Management. Temporary Protection (<https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638>)
  55. UNHCR Jordan (<https://www.unhcr.org/countries/jordan>)
  56. UNHCR Lebanon (<https://www.unhcr.org/lb/at-a-glance>)

57. UNHCR Iraq. (<https://www.unhcr.org/countries/iraq>)
58. UNHCR Yemen. (<https://www.unhcr.org/countries/yemen>)
59. UNRWA (<https://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees>)
60. Al Jazeera. Israel On Gaza: Live Updates (March 2024) <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/3/22/israels-war-on-gaza-live-the-choice-is-clear-a-2-state-solution>
61. Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) (<https://story.internal-displacement.org/mena-2021index.html>)
62. The IOM Global Data Displacement Tracking Matrix (September 2023) (<https://dtm.iom.int/reports/iraq-climate-induced-displacement-southern-iraq-1-15-september-2023>)
63. Şahin-Mencütek, Zeynep. (2020). *Refugee Governance, State and Politics in the Middle East*, Routledge Global Cooperation Series. p.342 ISBN 9780367664404
64. Frelick, B., Kysel, I. M., & Podkul, J. (2016). The Impact of Externalization of Migration Controls on the Rights of Asylum Seekers and Other Migrants. *Journal*, p.191.
65. Frelick, B., Kysel, I. M., & Podkul, J. (2016), *Ibid*, p.197.
66. Şahin-Mencütek, Zeynep. (2020). p.71.
67. Stock, I., Üstübcü, A. & Schultz, S.U. Externalization at work: responses to migration policies from the Global South. *CMS* 7, 48 (2019) p.4. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-019-0128-4>
68. See Malak, A. (2024) *Regional Report 4: The Impact of Border Externalization and Militarization in Asia*.
69. Takenaka, A. K., Gaspar, R., & Park, C. (2019). International migration in Asia and the Pacific: Determinants and role of economic integration. <https://doi.org/10.22617/wps190473-2>
70. Benefits and challenges of migration outlined in new Asia-Pacific report. (2016, March 1). International Organization for Migration. <https://www.iom.int/news/benefits-and-challenges-migration-outlined-new-asia-pacific-report>
71. Hugo, G. (2016). Internal and international migration in East and Southeast Asia: Exploring the linkages. *Population, Space and Place*, 22(7), 651–668. <https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.1930>
72. Inglis, C. (2007). Transnationalism in an uncertain environment: Relationship between migration, policy and theory. *International journal on multicultural societies*, 9(2), 185-204.
73. Nah, A. M. (2012). Globalisation, sovereignty and immigration control: The hierarchy of rights for migrant workers in Malaysia. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 40(4), 486-508.
74. Khadria, B., Kumar, P., Sarkar, S., & Sharma, R. (2008). *International migration policy: Issues and perspectives for India*. IMDS Working Paper 1. New Delhi: International Migration and Diaspora Studies Project, ZHCES, JNU.
75. Richter, E. L. (2023). *The Legal Framework for Skilled Labour Migration to China*. Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG.
76. Khan, A. (2020). *The psychosocial impact of labour trafficking in Asia: a study of returned Bangladeshi survivors*.
77. Chotisut, K., Bunyavejchewin, P., Krisathian, W., & Promprasit, N. (2023). Policy Regime Analysis of Border Security Governance in Myanmar: A Preliminary Case Study of Myawaddy (2020–2021). *FWU Journal of Social Sciences*, 17(3).
78. Kittivorapoom, M. S., & Patchimnan, A. (2019). *US-Thailand security relations after the 2014 Thailand military coup d'état* (Doctoral dissertation, Thammasat University).
79. Reid, M. B. a. G. (2020, December 2). Criminalizing irregular migrant labor: Thailand's crackdown in context. [migrationpolicy.org. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/criminalizing-irregular-migrant-labor-thailands-crackdown-context](https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/criminalizing-irregular-migrant-labor-thailands-crackdown-context)
80. Rahman, M. H. (2024, February 7). Crisis at the Bangladesh-Myanmar Border: a looming regional challenge. *The Diplomat*. <https://thediplomat.com/2024/02/crisis-at-the-bangladesh-myanmar-border-a-looming-regional-challenge/>
81. Nah, A. M. (2012). Globalisation, sovereignty and immigration control: The hierarchy of rights for migrant workers in Malaysia. *Asian Journal of Social Science*, 40(4), 486-508.
82. Hugo, G., Tan, G., & Napitupulu, C. J. (2017). Indonesia as a transit country in irregular migration to Australia. A long way to go: Irregular migration patterns, processes, drivers and decision-making, 167-191.
83. Hugo, G., Tan, G., & Napitupulu, C. jonathan. (2014). *Indonesia as at transit country in irregular migration to Australia*.
84. Moretti, S. (2021). Between refugee protection and migration management: the quest for coordination between UNHCR and IOM in the Asia-Pacific region. *Third World Quarterly*, 42(1), 34-51.
85. Thynne, K. (2019). Implementation of International Humanitarian Law in Southeast Asia: Challenges in the Prevention of Violations. *Asia-Pacific Perspectives on International Humanitarian Law*.

86. GAL, S. (2012). COMBATING TRAFFICKING AS MODERN-DAY SLAVERY: A MATTER OF NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EMPOWERMENT.
87. Petchamesree, S. (2017). ASEAN and its approach to forced migration issues. In *Comparative regional protection frameworks for refugees* (pp. 21–38). Routledge.
88. Ngin, C. (2018). *Identities on trial in the United States: asylum seekers from Asia*. Rowman & Littlefield.
89. Keeping them out, killing them off. (2018, November 28). <https://jacobin.com/2018/11/european-union-migration-borders-criminalization-refugees>
90. GAL, S. (2012). COMBATING TRAFFICKING AS MODERN-DAY SLAVERY: A MATTER OF NON-DISCRIMINATION AND EMPOWERMENT.
91. See the four dedicated Annexes for an overview of the profile of participants for each region.
92. Several scholars and organizations have written about buffer zones in migration topics, focusing on their implications for human rights, security, and international relations See for instance:
  - (1) Bigo, D. (2002) “Security and Immigration: Toward a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease.” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 27 (1), 63–92
  - (2) Ticktin, M (2011) *Casualties of Care: Immigration and the Politics of Humanitarianism in France*. University of California Press.
93. Mounz, A. (2020) *The Death of Asylum: Hidden Geographies of the Enforcement Archipelago*. University of Minnesota Press.
94. In a recent report EuroMed Rights (2023), one can read that “Women’s freedom of movement is generally more restricted than men’s for a variety of reasons, including economic resource inequalities between genders, gender-specific childcare responsibilities, and the risks of gender-based violence along migration routes.”see EuroMed Rights (2023) ANALYSE DE GENRE DE L’EXTERNALISATION DES POLITIQUES MIGRATOIRES DE L’UE, p. 12.
95. (1) Cappiali, T. M. (2024) “Scratching the Surface of a Deep-Rooted Problem? Racism, and Intersectional Discrimination against Black Immigrants in Morocco” *Comparative Migration Studies*  
 (2) Tyszler, E. (2019) “From Controlling Mobilities to Control over Women’s Bodies: Gendered Effects of EU Border Externalization in Morocco” *Comparative Migration Studies*, 7(1), 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-019-0128-4>
96. In the context of Asia, our research did not find similar trends. Future research should explore whether criminalization of NGOs is also pronounced in this region.
97. <https://nawaat.org/2023/02/14/parti-nationaliste-tunisien-racisme-autorise-par-letat/>
98. They are listed under internal recommendations in “Research Enhancement and Ethical Issues.”
99. For our use of the concept “Decolonial-intersectional approach” to study border externalization see Cappiali, T. M. and A. Pacciardi (2024) “Reorienting EU Border Externalization Studies: A Decolonial Intersectional Approach.” *Geopolitics*, 1-25, DOI: 10.1080/14650045.2024.2311175.
100. See Cappiali, T. M. and A. Pacciardi (2024) “Reorienting EU Border Externalization Studies: A Decolonial Intersectional Approach.” *Geopolitics*, 1-25, DOI: 10.1080/14650045.2024.2311175.

# AVAILABLE ONLINE

This report and a summary of its key findings and recommendations are available on the AFSC website, which you can visit at the following link or by scanning the QR code:

[afsc.org/borderanalysis](http://afsc.org/borderanalysis)

