

PacificMUN

Dare to Speak



UNODC-Topic B
Backgrounder Guide



Mitigation of Urban Youth Gang Violence - UNODC

Topic B

PacificMUN



Letter from the Director

To the Delegates of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime,

Welcome to the UNODC at PacificMUN 2019. My name is Andrew Wang, and I am a junior at Interlake High School, in the land of the free and home of the brave. In the past 3 years, I have delegated and staffed numerous conferences in both the US and Canada, but this is my first time staffing a Canadian conference. I am honored to be directing at such a prestigious conference and alongside such incredible dais members: Nick Young, who will be chairing this committee, and Bridget Young, who will serve as your assistant director. I am thrilled to meet everyone, and eagerly anticipate new learning experiences.

In a 2015 interview, UNODC Executive Director Yury Fedotov exclaimed that “National borders do not stop criminals.” In recent years, international cooperation is more important than ever as crime becomes increasingly international and difficult to resolve. Yet at the same time, many of the UN’s greatest struggles so far have been ensuring the enforceability of their resolutions.

The two topics the UNODC will deal with this year embody these trends. The first topic, the mitigation of urban youth gang violence, is ubiquitous yet often overlooked by international organizations because most youth gangs do not qualify as transnational crime groups. The second topic, migrant smuggling, has largely faded from the public awareness as the Mediterranean refugee crisis diminishes in severity. Nevertheless, both issues remain prominent worldwide and individual country actions have yielded very little results.



In preparing for this committee, delve into the tangled, dynamic web of connections between crime, development, and politics underlying these two topics that has outwitted and outlasted the best efforts our world has offered so far. You will find that the complex world around you has been unravelled a bit more. Most importantly, remember that the welcoming community and educational experiences are the core of Model UN. Regardless of what happens, I sincerely hope delegates will leave this conference with new friends and a richer understanding of global politics.

Until February,

Andrew Wang
Director of UNODC
PacificMUN 2019

Committee Overview

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime was formed in 1997 in accordance to the General Assembly Report 950 A/RES/51/950. Based in Vienna, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime has 21 field offices and operates in over 150 countries. Building upon the work of its predecessors, the UNODC works to “address the interrelated issues of drug control and transnational crime” through field-based technical cooperation projects, research and analytical work, and normative work.

As global economics and politics becomes increasingly interconnected, international crime grows in prevalence, scale, and level of organization. Thus, the multilateral international cooperation facilitated by the UNODC has become essential in addressing issues of crime, drugs, and terrorism.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is separated into four divisions that conduct both policy recommendation and implementation. Policy recommendation is conducted by the Division for Treaty Affairs, which can submit reports and resolutions directly to the ECOSOC and eventually the 3rd Committee of the General Assembly. Implementation of these policies are conducted by the Division for Operations and reviewed by the Division for Policy Analysis and Public Affairs. Additionally, the UNODC is coordinated by the Division for Management, which operates as a secretariat body.



Topic B: Migrant Smuggling

Introduction

Migrant smuggling involves the “procurement of illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident” for obtaining “financial or other material benefit,” as defined by the United Nations Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air.¹ Migrant smuggling is distinct from human trafficking in that while both involve the illegal transport of humans, migrant smuggling involves the consent of the smuggled party and is by definition international in scope.

Admittedly, human trafficking and smuggling reside on a continuum, as they are often carried out by the same criminals or on the same routes, and it is common for both to occur to the same people on the same journey. Migrant smuggling, though more distinct in definition than human smuggling in general, in practice still overlaps with human trafficking. It is due to such overlaps that migrant smuggling is often discussed with human trafficking, a much more favored topic among academics, and has often taken a secondary position of importance behind human trafficking in policymaking.

The exploitation of desperate refugees is carried out on a global scale, particularly in conflict zones and crisis-afflicted regions. According to a UNODC study, at least 2.5 million migrants were smuggled worldwide in 2016.² Practically all countries are involved in a migrant smuggling route, regardless of their level of stability, power, and development. Highly developed nations with stable governments and economies are usually the destinations of smugglers, while refugees originate from countries plagued by political turmoil, economic instability, and gross social inequalities.

The illegal industry of people smuggling is worth more than 10 billion USD annually, a far more impressive sum when considering the struggling financial situation of most smuggled migrants.³ Though the exact scale of those affected is unknown, the UNDP estimated there were 50 million irregular international migrants in 2009.⁴

¹ <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/organized-crime/intro/UNTOC.html>

² <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/unodc-global-study-smuggling-migrants-2018>

³ <https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/smuggling-migrants>

⁴ http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/269/hdr_2009_en_complete.pdf



Migrants are particularly vulnerable to, and indeed are often subject to, inhumane conditions and human rights abuses, and despite paying substantial sums of money, possess little real power over their lives once handed over to smugglers. The sheer quantity of clients has often enabled smugglers to lower their standards and quality, increasing the risk faced by migrants in an already deadly trade, as desperate refugees have few other options. Thus, the illegal transport of refugees has contributed to the more than 5,000 migrant deaths recorded in 2016.⁵ Migrant smuggling not only endangers those directly involved, but is also essential to the illegal influx of refugees that has far-reaching consequences for the origin and destination countries of these migrants.

Besides the physical transport of humans, migrant smuggling includes more expensive services such as the forging of travel and residency documents. The perpetrators of these crimes are diverse, ranging from vast, highly organized criminal networks to individual opportunistic smugglers. Yet, as prolonged conditions forcing refugees to flee are dragged out, formerly loose, informal groups become increasingly corporate, powerful, and determined to maximize their profits.

Timeline

May 6, 1882 - The Chinese Exclusion Act is passed by the United States Legislature, causing one of the first spikes in illegal immigration across the US-Mexico border and an early instance of modern migrant smuggling.

1900 - Bernardo and Pascale Greco establish a smuggling ring to transfer children from Roccadorce, Italy, to France. The social dynamics of Greco's relationship with the smuggled children, who were often his neighbors or relatives, demonstrates the complex social position of smugglers which is still relevant today.

July 7, 1937 - The beginning of World War Two spawned over 40 million migrants who were often smuggled out of conflict-ridden nations, assisted by the wartime chaos. Millions of migrants died or disappeared in flight.

July, 1945 - Allied leaders at the Potsdam conference acknowledge the massive refugee crisis that will result at the end of World War Two. By 1950, 11.5 million Germans had been expelled from various

⁵ <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/>



Eastern European countries and nearly one million Jews had fled their homes, where they remained unwelcome despite the end of state-sponsored persecution.

November 9, 1943 - The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration was formed in response to the global refugee crisis in the aftermath of World War Two. It transitioned to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in 1950.

1959-1960 - Designated the "World Refugee Year," efforts were accelerated to clear European refugee camps left over from World War Two, which was almost completely successful by the end of 1960.

1973-1974 - The global oil crisis contributed to worldwide economic declines that diminished faith in the sustainability of economic growth and marked a stark change in European attitudes towards migration. While migration had been generally embraced by both destination and origin nations prior to the oil crisis, the onset of the crisis saw countries such as Switzerland and Sweden quickly tighten borders to immigration.⁶

October 1, 1998 - The European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) is founded. It has contributed greatly to detecting and preventing migrant smuggling in Europe through coordination of border security and law enforcement efforts.

November 15, 2000 - The UN General Assembly adopts resolution GA/RES/55/25, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, including the Protocol against the Illicit Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea, and Air, which remains the foremost document regarding the role of migrant smuggling in international law.

March 15 2011 -- The Syrian Civil War erupts, displacing more than 5 million refugees as of June 2018 and bringing the issue of migrant smuggling to the forefront of international media as thousands of fatalities occur while migrants are being smuggled across the Mediterranean.⁷

Historical Analysis

Human smugglings is far from a recent phenomenon. Sex and labor trafficking was common in ancient societies from the Greeks to Shang China. More recently, the transatlantic slave trade is a prominent instance of human trafficking that began to involve smuggling as countries progressively outlawed the

⁶ https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-21674-4_3

⁷ <http://www.unocha.org/syria>



import of human beings for sale. However, early human smuggling and trafficking rarely included migrant-specific transport until the past few centuries.

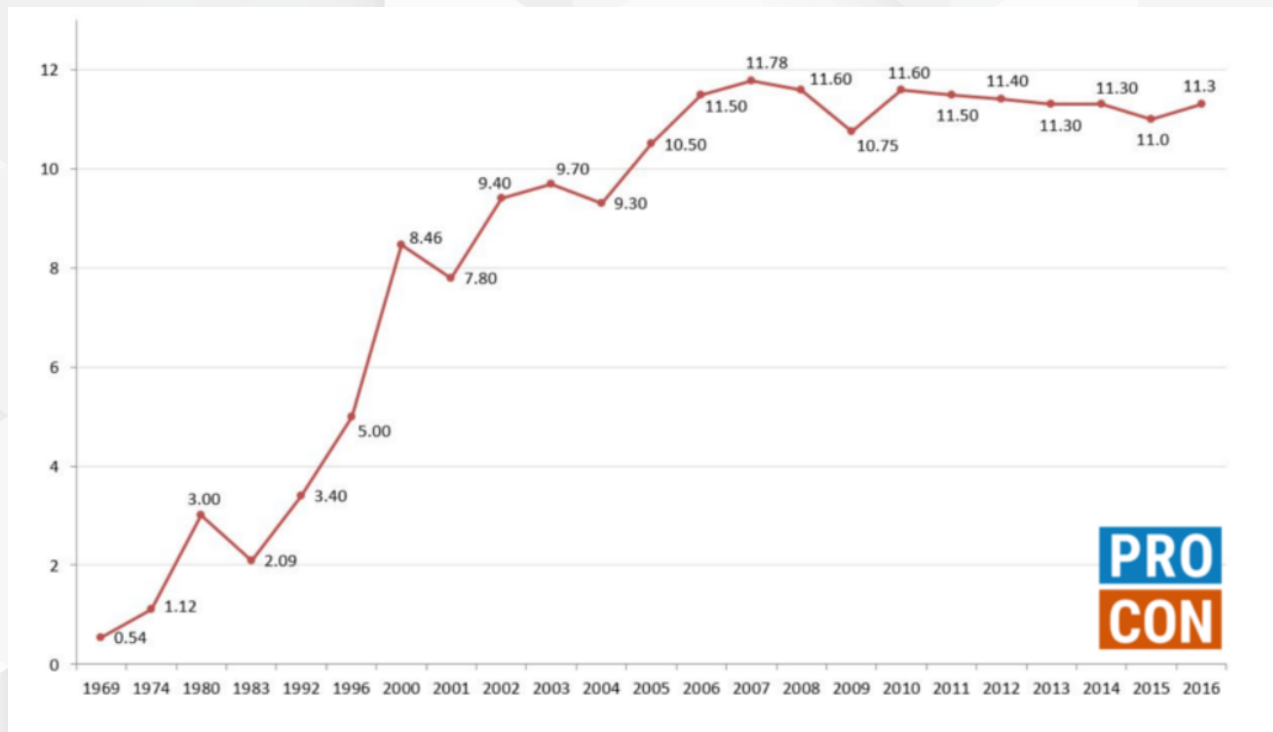
The United States' Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 caused one of the earliest prominent instances of mass migrant smuggling. Thousands of prospective asian immigrants, not just Chinese laborers, sought the assistance of smugglers who would fake identifications or provide instructions and bribe money. After US policy responded by outlawing the return of Asian legal US residents from foreign countries, Chinese migrants used smuggling routes through the wide US-Mexico border en masse.⁸ From this earliest instance of large-scale migrant smuggling, state policies seeking to limit both legal and illegal immigration have ironically contributed to the growth of the illegal smuggling industry.

Correspondingly, early European migrant smuggling is well represented by the Greco smuggling ring, an early 20th century organization that smuggled the children of starving families in Italy's Roccadorce to France, where they had opportunity to work in the textile mills. The Greco organization embodies yet another set of factors that foster migrant smuggling: demand for cheap illegal labor in destination countries and economic turmoil in countries of origin. This case, and that of early Chinese migration into the US, are over a century old, yet they both nevertheless embody trends still relevant to the migrant smuggling issue today.

⁸https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:0rjwb1d5uKcJ:https://canvas.harvard.edu/files/3523205/download%3Fdownload_frd%3D1%26verifier%3D6PbISyCaqZi21pR0RVTs09jE9KKo02yfb0XgayEf+&cd=13&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us



Migrant smuggling is sparsely mentioned among historical records and discussion prior to the past few decades, especially compared to the issue's prevalence in contemporary news media. This is not indicative of the actual scarcity of the occurrence of smuggling, but rather reflects the recent criminalization of the practice. Prior to the 1980's, policy debates centered around the criminology and economic ramifications of illegal immigration, and migrant smuggling itself was not widely recognized as a distinct enabling factor to this illegal immigration or as its own category of organized crime.⁹



*Population Estimates of Immigrants in the United States Illegally in Millions, 1969-2016*¹⁰

Nevertheless, developments in globalization, infrastructure, and transportation by facilitating the activities of migrant smugglers, contributed to a rapid growth of illegal immigration that brought to question the method of entry of so many migrants. Thus, the rise of illegal immigrants, like the sudden influx the US experienced in the 1970's, directly precedes the introduction of migrant smuggling into mainstream US policy and scholarly debates in the 1980's.

Since the turn of the century, various developments have kept the issue of migrant smuggling at the forefront of public attention. Since the decolonization movement in the mid 20th century, Africa has

⁹<http://internationalstudies.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.001.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-216>

¹⁰ <https://immigration.procon.org/view.resource.php?resourceID=000844>



suffered a flurry of brutal conflicts, particularly in sub-Saharan and central Africa, from Mali to West Lake Chad to the Congo river basin. Events such as the infamous Rwandan Genocide, which displaced 3.5 million people in 1994, caused huge outflows of refugees.¹¹ However, as in the case of the Rwandan Genocide, most refugees were distributed among neighboring states such as Zaire and Uganda, which allowed Western observers to place less emphasis on the migrant crisis.¹² Thus, despite the termination of formal colonial rule over the continent's immense wealth of natural resources, much of western and central Africa remain plagued by underdevelopment and political instability. Likewise, North African developments such as the Arab Spring and lengthy conflicts in the Middle East have created political chaos that has led to a rapid outflow of refugees. In Latin America, a high prevalence of organized crime, political strife, and economic turbulence, have led to a similar large-scale flight from Latin America. The gang-plagued Northern Triangle of Nicaragua, Honduras, and el Salvador displaced over 100,000 asylum seekers in 2015,¹³ and since 2012 the region has experienced contraction or very little economic growth,¹⁴ especially in nations such as Venezuela, which have further worsened living standards for many Latin Americans, contributing to the outflow of migrants.

Current Situation

Migrant smuggling occurs primarily on two routes: the Latin America to North America route and the Africa and Middle East to Europe route. The UNODC estimates that these routes alone account for approximately 6.75 billion dollars a year for migrant smuggling.¹⁵ Note that statistics on the current situation of migrant smuggling are notoriously uncertain,¹⁶ and therefore are better suited to provide a general picture rather than supplement policy arguments.

The Western Hemisphere Route

The Latin America to North America route encompasses most of South and Central America, where migrants generally originate, and consists of the northward movement of migrants into US and Canada. The general scope of migrant smuggling along this route is indicated by the number of illegal

¹¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/world/historical-migrant-crisis>

¹² https://www.academia.edu/8045837/Forced_Migration_The_case_of_Rwanda?auto=download

¹³ <https://www.cfr.org/background/central-americas-violent-northern-triangle>

¹⁴ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/lac/brief/global-economic-prospects-latin-america-and-the-caribbean>

¹⁵ http://www.unodc.org/toc/en/crimes/migrant-smuggling.html#_ednref1

¹⁶ https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2018/05/21/are-human-smuggling-cartels-at-the-u-s-border-earning-500-million-a-year/?utm_term=.ee9822bf1378



entries by Latin Americans into the US and Canada, which numbers approximately 3 million and 150,000 each year respectively.¹⁷ The vast majority of these migrants enter the US through the US-Mexico border and Canada through Quebec.¹⁸ However, not all such illegal crossings were conducted through smuggling, as 25-40 percent immigrated by overstaying a visa.¹⁹

Migrant smuggling along the Latin to North America route is a lucrative business. The constant influx of immigrants from Latin America is fuelled by chronic instability in countries such as El Salvador and Guatemala, each afflicted by some combination of violence, poverty, political or social oppression, and lack of upward mobility.²⁰ Furthermore, migrant smugglers are benefitting from an increase in non-Latin American immigrants using this smuggling route as a gateway into North America. Particularly notable is Chinese migrant smuggling, which according to US Customs and Border Protection grew in prevalence by more than 12 times between 2015 and 2016.²¹ Immigrants from similarly better developed but politically restrictive nations contribute greatly to the migrant smuggling industry despite being less common, as they pay much greater sums for smuggling services, typically in the tens of thousands of dollars compared to thousands for Latin American migrants.

Migrant smuggling is facilitated not only by substantial profits, but also very low risk. Even when caught, these smugglers are rarely arrested and often treated as regular migrants and returned to their countries of origin. Although migrants themselves face dehydration and starvation from desert crossings, smugglers themselves usually avoid the most perilous parts of the journeys.

The Middle East and Africa to Europe Route

Conflict and instability in North, West, and East Africa have led to the flight of around 9 million migrants in 2017, of which at least 55,000 migrants were smuggled, contributing approximately 150 million dollars of revenue for smugglers in the region.²² While the scale of the migrant smuggling industry in this region pales in comparison to Western Hemisphere routes, this route has proven far more fatal and dangerous due to the perilous Mediterranean and Saharan crossings.

¹⁷<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-canada-immigration-border/canada-granting-refugee-status-to-fewer-illegal-border-crossers-idUSKCN11N1CO>

¹⁸<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-nearly-96-per-cent-of-illegal-border-crossers-this-year-have-entered/>

¹⁹ <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/central-americas-violent-northern-triangle>

²⁰ <http://www.fmreview.org/latinamerica-caribbean/knox.html>

²¹ <https://www.cfr.org/blog/chinese-human-smuggling-and-us-border-security-debate>

²²http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2017_Highlights.pdf



In the Middle East, conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Afghanistan have displaced up to 54 million people. However, many of these displaced persons are internally displaced and therefore the outflow of refugees is considerably smaller, though still substantial. Europe is particularly attractive for migrants, who often spend years in transit working to pay for each leg of their journey. In 2013, European Union Security forces reported 107,000 cases of detected attempts at illegal entry, and the actual number of attempted illegal entries is likely much higher.²³

The causes and terrible conditions of migrant smuggling in the Middle East and Africa routes are very similar to that of the Western Hemisphere routes. However, Europe-destined routes include considerably greater diversity in the methods of smuggling. Unlike the Latin to North America route, sea routes are far more common a part of a migrant's journey to Europe, as most routes must transit the Mediterranean. The poor condition of the boats migrants are smuggled on, as well as the unpredictable weather on the Mediterranean, has often lead to fatal consequences. In 2017, it was by far the deadliest region, with 3,139 casualties, over half of the global total. Furthermore, many migrants are smuggled through fraudulent visas or travel documents, which are overstayed.

Human Rights

Technically speaking, migrant smuggling is not a human rights offense. However, migrants are extremely vulnerable as they lack legal protection both during their journeys and once they arrive at their destination country. Therefore, they are prone to exploitation by individual smuggling operators and criminal organizations alike. During the journey itself, migrants are subjected to inhumane conditions, and oftentimes smuggled migrants continue to be held in hostage-like situations until they pay off their debts. Migrants sometimes face more egregious abuses as well. Many are subjected to sexual abuse or forced labor, sometimes even being dragged into human trafficking.²⁴

Common throughout all regions is the fact that a combination of individual smugglers and organized crime groups conduct smuggling operations. The participation of organized crime groups creates further opportunities for exploitation of migrants, connecting migrant smuggling ,human trafficking, and extortion. Smuggling has become very sophisticated, with reports from both the US and Europe of purpose-built containers for migrants in dangerous locations on vehicles, such as behind the engines of trucks, and seeing the involvement of major criminal organizations such as Triads, the Ndrangheta, and the Los Zetas cartel.²⁵

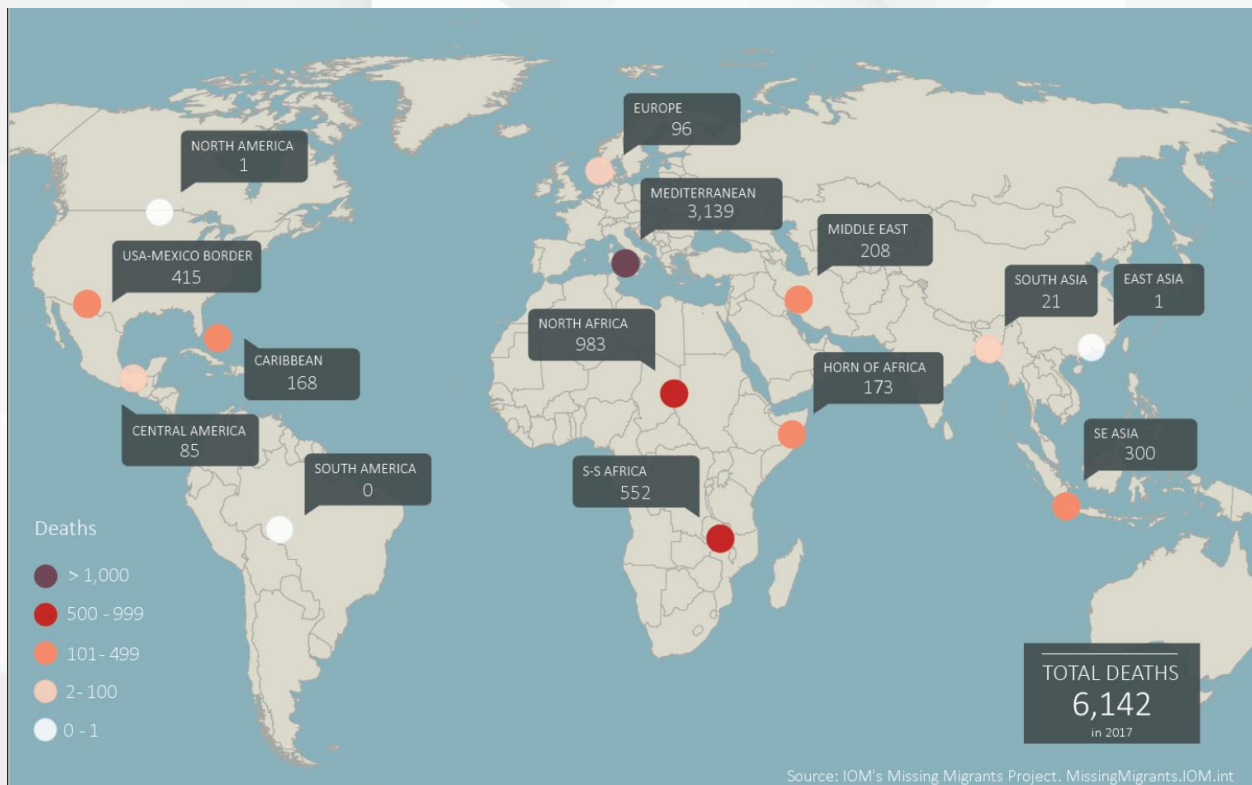
²³ <https://www.havocscope.com/tag/human-smuggling/>

²⁴ <http://www.fmreview.org/sites/fmr/files/FMRdownloads/en/development-induced-displacement/gallagher.pdf>

²⁵ <https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/all-you-need-to-know-about-migrant-smuggling-in-eu>



Migrants often have no alternatives besides being smuggled, as most nations severely limit the legal pathways for refugees to enter a country. Furthermore, they generally are unwilling or unable to seek out legal support when faced with violence or abuse. When criminal organizations willing and able to exploit these vulnerabilities become involved and entrenched in migrant smuggling operations, it is no wonder human rights abuses are so prevalent in migrant smuggling.



Regional Totals of Migrant Deaths and Disappearances in 2017 (from <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/>).²⁶

International Involvement

Individual governments tend to treat migrant smuggling as a border security rather than human rights issue. Most have responded by tightening border security while generally failing to apprehend migrant smugglers.²⁷ Continued tightening of border security further limits the legal pathways for refugees and naturally feeds the migrant smuggling industry. Although resolutions and regulations have been created by the UN, many countries have chosen not to implement them. Thus, any possible solutions have yet to see widespread implementation.

²⁶ <https://missingmigrants.iom.int/infographics-maps>

²⁷ <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep02580.5>.



Many of the UN's actions thus far have consisted of normative work. In December 2000, the UN passed Resolution A/RES/55/25, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which established guidelines and legal responsibility for international legal treatment of human trafficking, human smuggling, and firearms smuggling, known as the Palermo protocols. The UNODC, specifically, is tasked with implementing and enforcing these protocols, and has greatly elaborated on them by creating model laws, training modules, and toolkits for addressing migrant smuggling.

Particularly relevant to this topic is the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea, one of the three supplementary documents to A/RES/55/25. Most countries claim they recognize and follow this treaty, which has 112 signatories.²⁸ Similarly, few countries actively deny the importance of migrant rights or the scope of migrant smuggling. However, countries that are generally the destinations of migrants, particularly North American and European nations, are particularly adamant about control-based responses to migrant smuggling. The UN, meanwhile, has sought to reduce the impact of these policies on migrants to prevent the degeneration of migration to illegal border crossing by creating refugee encampments that provide migrants the opportunity to wait for legal methods of entry. By providing aid such as food, water, and shelter to over 59 million refugees, the UNHCR has alleviated some desperation that drives so many migrants to seek smuggling.²⁹

Furthermore, the UNODC has assisted countries in implementing the reforms of the Smuggling of Migrants protocol. Its Impact Programme focuses on North and West African nations and provides training for law enforcement, guidance for legislative and judicial criminal justice system reformers, and advocacy for the general public.³⁰ Furthermore, the UNODC has conducted a wide array of studies and analysis that culminated in the Global Review on Migrant Smuggling. Ultimately, however, the UN has been able to do very little to pressure western nations to accept more immigrants or create more legal pathways for refugees to enter the country.

Besides the UNODC and UNHCR, other international organizations have sought to address the issue as well. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has supplemented the UNODC's efforts with Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights at International Borders. Outside of the UN bodies, the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) has established a European Migrant Smuggling center, which focuses the

²⁸ https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XVIII-12-b&chapter=18&lang=en

²⁹ <http://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/refugees/index.html>

³⁰ <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/2008/impact-programme.html>



coordinated data and efforts of various European law enforcement agencies, identifying tens of thousands of suspects and dozens of suspicious vessels.³¹

Seeking Resolution

Because regulations and guidelines have already been well-established by various UN and other international organizations, the focus of this committee should be on how to best implement these guidelines. This need not be confined to persuading individual countries to reform their policies, but also include concentrating UN programs, coordinating international law enforcement, and addressing developmental causes of migrant smuggling. Generally, practical solutions must now focus on streamlining the UNODC's limited resources.

Reforming Individual Country Policies

Member states are understandably reluctant to devote the necessary resources to ensuring a comprehensive humanitarian treatment of smuggled migrants. Rather, it is far more cost-effective and for these nations to treat the issue as border security issues, an approach that despite ignoring the rights and livelihood of migrants is sufficient to protect their own citizens and residents. Accordingly, the UNODC has had the most success convincing and assisting member parties to strengthen their law enforcement by partnering with the European Union's Europol or the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Destination countries in particular are very willing to enforce anti-corruption policies, embrace officer training, and welcome extra funding regardless of its necessity. Although these methods are certainly useful in addressing migrant smuggling, they offer only temporary and partial solutions, and the extent of the UNODC's provision of assistance to or cooperation with these organizations must be reconsidered.

One would expect that nations' devotion to border security approaches to migrant smuggling would enhance their ability to apprehend migrant smugglers, yet despite recent high-profile arrests of smugglers working for large criminal organizations, the operators of these organizations are rarely apprehended, as they control sufficient resources and influence in origin nations to maintain certain immunity. Furthermore, independently acting smugglers continue to operate with little risk of arrest, as they are much harder to identify due to their lower profile. Although technological improvements

³¹ <https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/europol-launches-european-migrant-smuggling-centre>



provide some opportunities to improve border security itself, it offers little towards identifying and apprehending smugglers. The historical flexibility and unpredictability of migrant smugglers has practically made border security into a sinkhole for funding. Thus, to increase the efficiency of resource allocation, the UNODC must radically reform its approach to border security. It may consider diverting some funding and training resources to asylum programs in transit nations or stabilization in origin nations.

Regardless of what reforms are necessary, the fact of the matter is that no country is willing to have monetary aid revoked. However, within its given budget, the UNODC has enough power to shift funding without the complete consent of its member parties. If delegates decide to push for resource reallocation, delegates should anticipate impassioned debate. Nevertheless, if such a resolution passes, it will mark a profound change in the methods taken to address this issue. Funding shifts, unlike country policy guidelines, are enforceable, and will likely wield greater influence on the policies of member states.

Fostering Interagency Cooperation

The fragmentation and bloating of various UN offices or agencies has led to a thin spread of resources and competition for funding between agencies with overlapping mandates. Despite a fourfold increase in funding in the last 20 years, around one-third UN international offices operate on less than 2 million USD a year.³² In the case of migrant smuggling, a plethora of different UN organizations, including the UNODC, UNHCR, and UNHRC, all seek to address the issue through similar yet uncoordinated efforts. Administration costs for redundant agencies alone unnecessarily consume millions. Delegates may consider merging responsibilities through liaison agencies, or yielding power to an overarching agency that can manage the actions of the various UN bodies addressing this issue.

Yet delegates must also be careful not to further confound the already byzantine structure of the UN bureaucracy. Specifically, this includes creating wholly new offices without eliminating pre-existing structures. Alternatively, delegates may consider expanding or merging structures. A small-scale implementation of such a strategy in human trafficking has proven rather successful, resulting in the creation of the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN.GIFT), which is a joint program between the International Labour Organization (ILO), the OHCHR, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UNODC, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).³³

³² <https://research.un.org/en/docs/uncharter/unreform>

³³ <http://www.ungift.org/about/>



Reinforcing Aid Programs and Relief Efforts

Through structural and budget reforms, the UN can centralize resources and operations, allowing greater control over budget and freeing resources that can be devoted to humanitarian and developmental efforts. If the more than 398 million USD of UNODC support program funds can be reduced, the UNODC's current repertoire of efforts can be expanded.³⁴ For example, the Impact Programme can be expanded beyond West and North Africa, perhaps into Latin America; funding can be issued for more detailed and comprehensive research for essential statistics; training programmes can be provided for law enforcement in more transit and origin nations, in addition to destination states. Ultimately, increased financial operating power provides the UNODC with greater influence over the actions of parties to the Palermo Protocols.

Bloc Positions

There are generally three categories of nations involved in migrant smuggling: origin, transit, and destination nations. Though countries in very different geopolitical regions may occupy the same such category, their policies regarding migrant smuggling will still be generally similar. Almost all nations will advocate for tighter border security and for the reduction of migrant smuggling, yet few destination or transit nations are willing to accept migrants, and migrants themselves are unwilling to return to their origin nations. Therefore, debate on this topic will likely often be traceable to the proper handling of refugees.

Origin Nations

Countries where migrants originate tend to suffer from a combination of low economic development, social disparities, or political instability. These countries include conflict zones in the Middle East and Africa as well as Latin American countries with high crime rates, poverty, or political instability. Their stake in migrant smuggling lies in an outflow of talent and human resources that are often necessary to rebuilding their governments. Thus, most countries where refugees originate from seek to prevent the outflow of refugees enabled by migrant smuggling.

These nations should advocate for international efforts to prevent refugees from fleeing in the first place. Besides allowing for the retention of human resources as previously described, this position

³⁴ https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND/Drug_Resolutions/2010-2019/2017/Resolution_60_10_Rec_2017.pdf



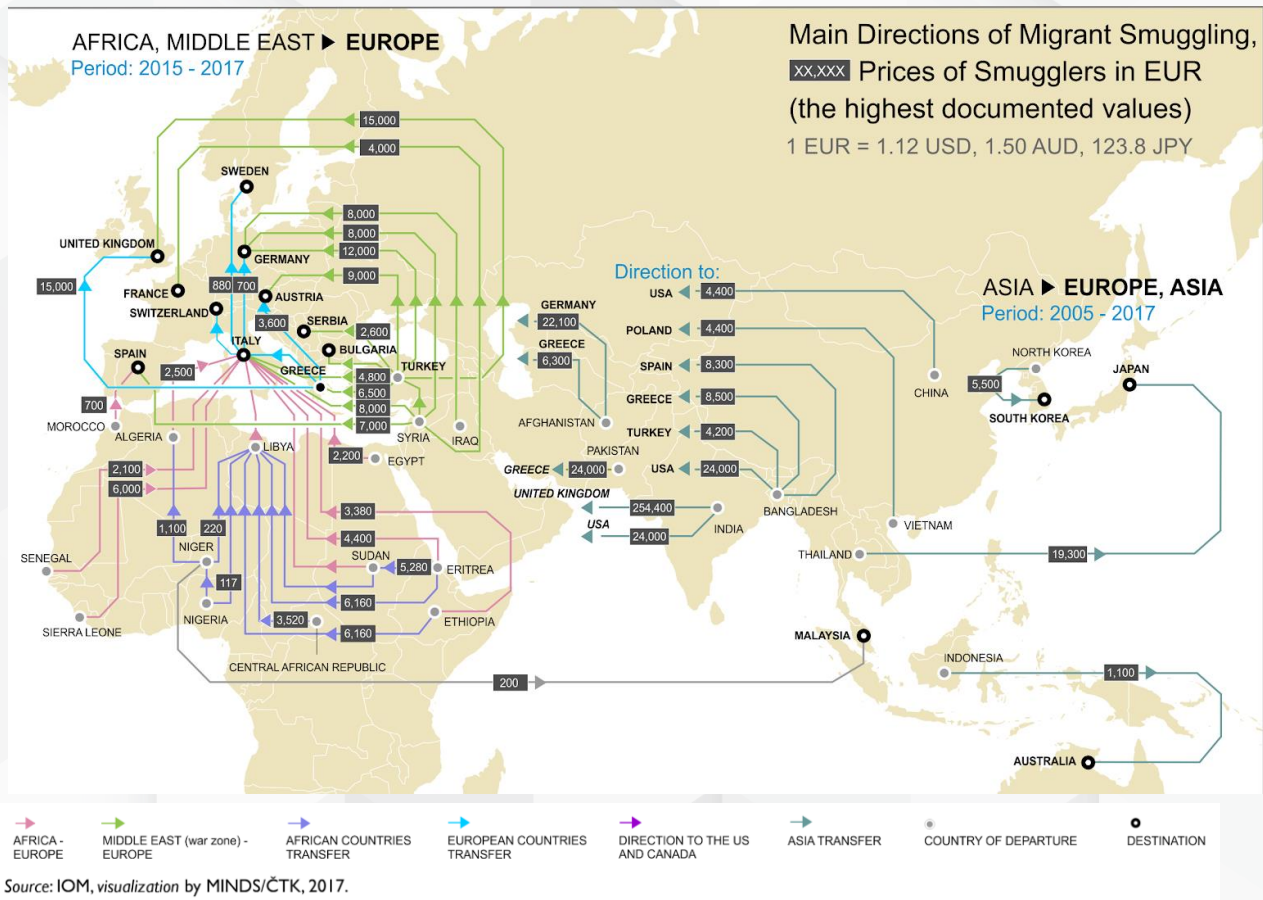
provides yet another reason for origin nations to request greater developmental aid, which destination or transit nations may be open to provide to reduce the number of refugees they face. These nations will also likely advocate for a concentration of UN budget on development.

There are some nations whose regimes may benefit from the outflow of refugees, who are often political dissenters. The flight of such opposition strengthens the ruling party in nations such as Cuba. Nevertheless, these states generally still prefer to retain even dissenters, as they can maintain greater control of dissent.

Transit Nations

Many nations are neither the source nor destination of migrants, but are on major migrant smuggling routes and thus experience the passage of large numbers of migrants. Because of their position between origin and destination states, transit nations are often the headquarters of smuggling networks. These nations, therefore, wield considerable influence over the direction of UN policy-making regarding this issue. Furthermore, transit nations often receive the brunt of migrations, as migrants who are denied access into destination states are often stuck in transit nations. Nations unwilling to accept migrants often pressure transit nations to accept a share of asylum seekers and place blame the border security of transit nations for allowing the passage of refugees.

Transit nations must defend against pressure to accept more refugees. They may accept strengthening of border security but are likely unwilling to devote significant resources to preventing the passage of refugees that often do little harm to their own nations. Thus, they will likely advocate for the UNODC to maintain its focus on law enforcement in order to reduce their individual obligation to keeping out migrants who do not seek to settle in their countries. Furthermore, they should emphasize the importance of rooting out criminal organizations involved in migrant smuggling. This should be used as incentive for the UNODC or its members to provide aid for law enforcement in general, not just border security. Even when not considering migrant smuggling, the elimination of criminal organizations is beneficial to these transit nations.



Routes and Prices of Migrant Smuggling in the World (Eastern Hemisphere) ³⁵

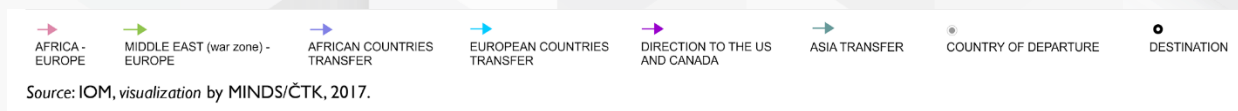
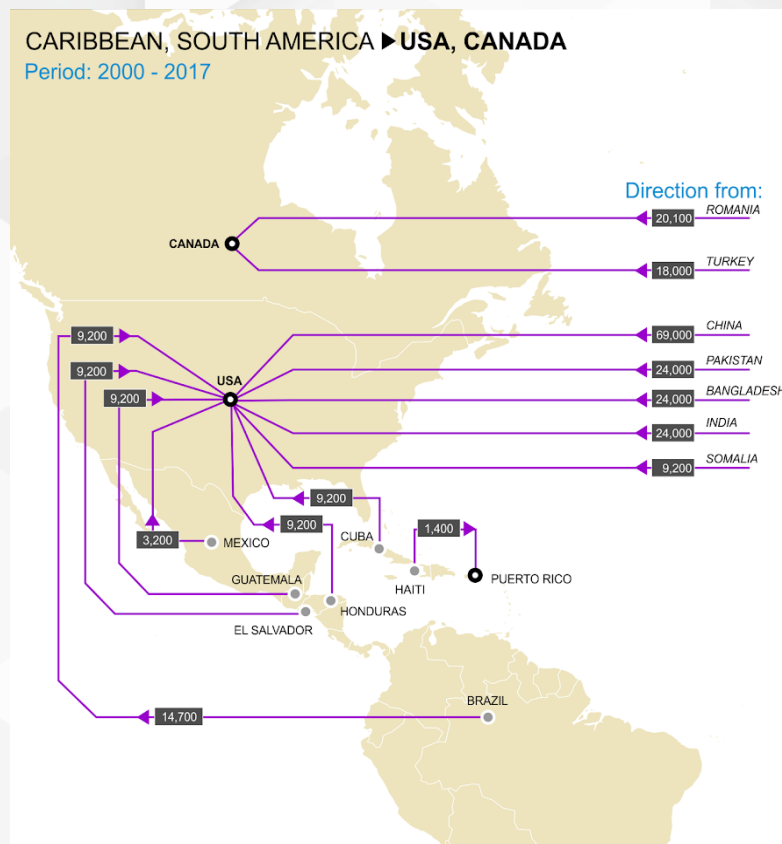
Destination Nations

Nations in North America and the European Union are extremely appealing to migrants and are the destination most refugees seek to reach. The inflow of so many refugees is logistically difficult to handle, and most fear accepting too many refugees will have economic and social ramifications on their way of life. Therefore, these nations are almost universally against accepting more than a tiny proportion of migrants. In order to alleviate the burden of so many migrants, these nations will generally use two methods: pushing the responsibility of accepting refugees onto other nations and reinforcing border security.

³⁵ <https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/smuggling-migrants>



Although these methods have been historically been imperfect in preventing the illegal entry of migrants, they are very effective in distancing these nations from human rights obligations. Therefore, these nations will likely advocate for a minimal amount of involvement in the issue, basically limiting their action to increasing cooperation with international law enforcement. Many nations in this bloc have no strong desire to change the status quo, and although providing developmental assistance to states that spawn migrants is a viable long-term solution, nations are often unwilling to devote substantial effort. However, depending on the opinions of specific nations' leadership, there are some who may seek to increase their international prestige by expanding foreign aid programs while simultaneously addressing refugee problems.



Routes

and

Prices of Migrant Smuggling in the World (Western Hemisphere)

Discussion Questions

1. What are some factors that limited the UN's efforts at reducing migrant smuggling?
2. What is the role of the UNODC within the UN's broad set of agencies that address migrant smuggling?



3. How should the UNODC exert influence upon nations to enforce the legally binding agreements regarding migrant smuggling?
4. On what underlying cause of migrant smuggling should the UNODC focus?
5. How will potential solutions best make use of a limited budget?
6. What is your country's place in migration routes?
7. To what extent should migrant smuggling be treated as a border security issue?
8. What responsibilities does the UNODC have, as opposed to those of the UNHCR, UNHRC, or other refugee agencies, and how should overlapping action be prevented?

Further Research

A very comprehensive collection of migration statistics since 2014.

<https://missingmigrants.iom.int/>

OECD Migration Policy Debates: "Can We Put an End to Migrant Smuggling?" A discussion of possible approaches to migrant smuggling.

<https://www.oecd.org/migration/Can%20we%20put%20an%20end%20to%20human%20smuggling.pdf>

A comprehensive website with data and overview of various aspects of migrant smuggling, among other topics related to migration.

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/>

Highlights of the United Nations 2017 International Migration Report.

http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/publications/migrationreport/docs/MigrationReport2017_Highlights.pdf

Chapter 1 of *Migrant Smuggling in Turkey: The 'Other' Side of the Refugee Crisis*: "Migrant Smuggling: An International Problem."

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UNODC 2018 Global Study on the Smuggling of Migrants.

https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glosom/GLOSOM_2018_web_small.pdf



UNODC Global Review and Annotated Bibliography of Recent Publications on the Smuggling of Migrants.

https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Migrant-Smuggling/Smuggling_of_Migrants_A_Global_Review.pdf

The International Framework for Action to Implement the Smuggling of Migrants Protocol.

https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/Migrant-Smuggling/Framework_for_Action_Smuggling_of_Migrants.pdf



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