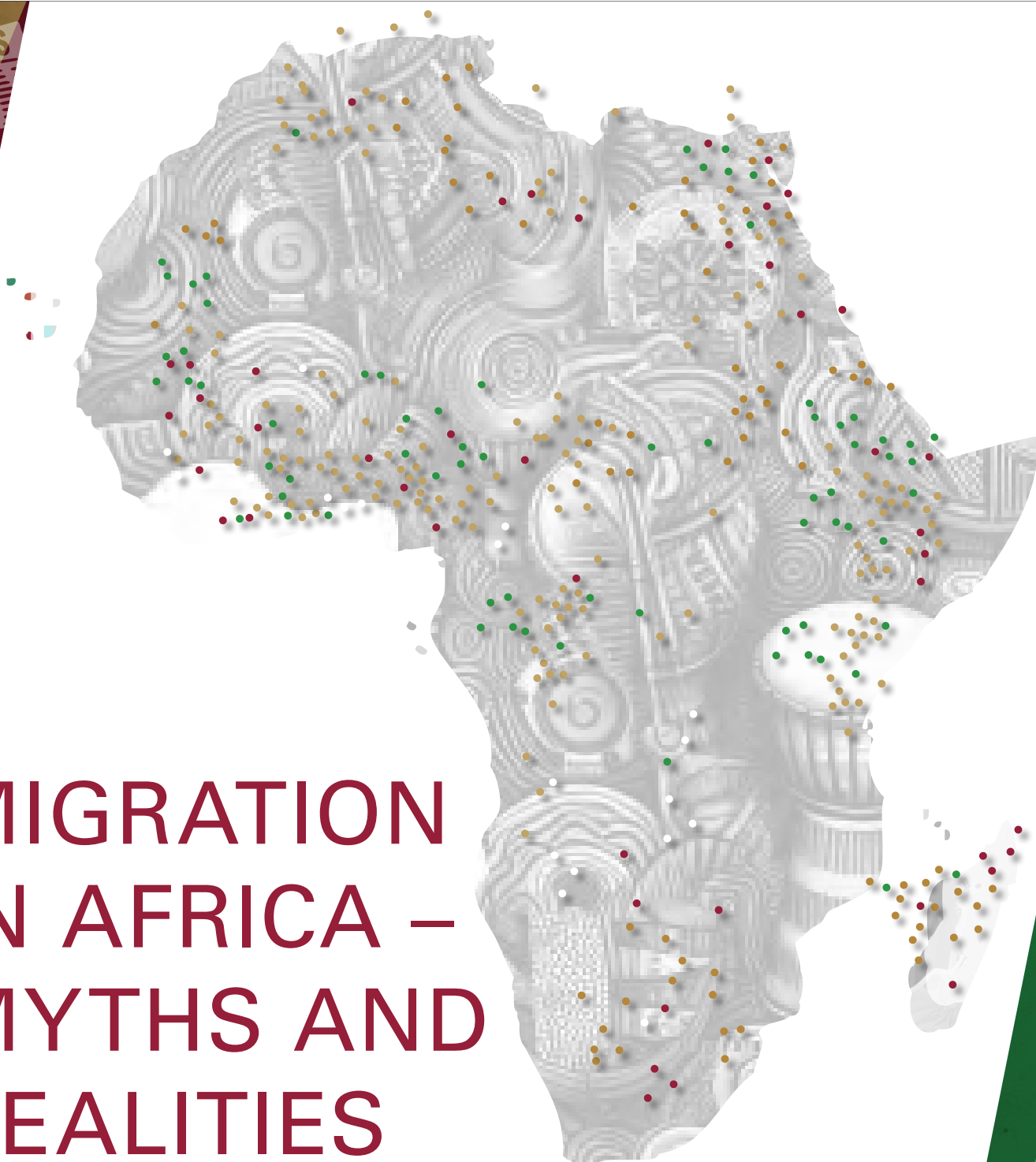
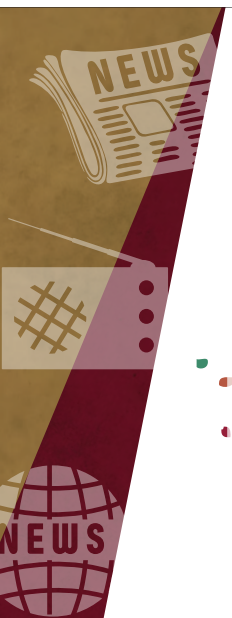




MIGRATION IN AFRICA – MYTHS AND REALITIES

A Manual on Migration Governance
for Media Practitioners and
Communication Specialists in CSOs/NGOs



Talking Drums: Ancient Storytellers of West Africa

With origins in the Ghana Empire between the 7th and 13th centuries, the talking drum is one of the oldest instruments in West Africa, not to mention, one of the oldest instruments still in use today. Unlike other drums, talking drums are constructed and played in such a way that they mimic the tonal qualities of speech. This special quality made talking drums incredibly important as a means of communication for West African cultures throughout history. These drums have a distinctive hourglass shape with a drum head at each end, often made of goatskin. What gives the talking drum its voice are the many leather cords, or ropes, that run along the body from one drum head to the other. To play, the drummer tucks the drum under his arm and taps the head with his hand and a hook shaped drumstick. To mimic the stresses and intonations of speech, the drummer squeezes the drum between his arm and body, causing the leather cords, or ropes, to change shape.

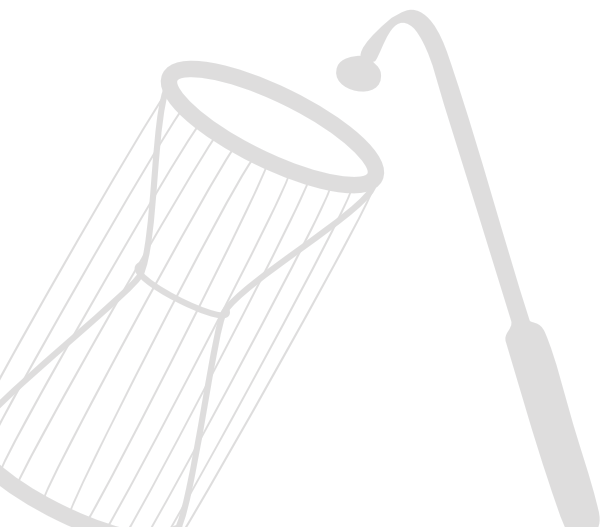
Uses for the talking drum are as diverse as the cultures that utilise it. While it can be played for ceremonial purposes or as entertainment, the real significance of the talking drum lies in the role it plays in communication. In its earliest form, the talking drum served as an aid to ancient Griot or storytellers. These traveling poets and musicians would use the talking drums to carry on the oral traditions of their cultures.

Later, talking drums were used as a means of inter-village communication themselves rather than accompaniment. Instead of hand delivering a summons or warning from one village to another, a message could be sent directly via drum. Players were taught the corresponding drum phrase for any given word. Messages would then be sent between drum players beginning with the name of the recipient, followed by the name of the sender, and then finally the message.

The style of drumming changes from region to region, creating dialects of a sort. For instance, in western areas such as Senegal, Gambia, western Mali, or Guinea, the playing style is characterised by rapid rolls and short bursts of sound. Further east, in Burkina Faso, Ghana, eastern Mali, Niger, or Nigeria, the playing style relies more heavily on long, sustained notes that the player bends. The Hausa tribe call it Kalangu, Dan Kar'bi, the Serer, Wolof, and Mandinka name it Tama, Tamma, and even the Yorubas call it Dündún, Gángan.

Edited from

<https://wadr.org/arts-culture-the-talking-drum>



MIGRATION IN AFRICA – MYTHS AND REALITIES

A Manual on Migration Governance
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Communication Specialists in CSOs/NGOs

Publishing information

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First edition, October 2025

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Maps

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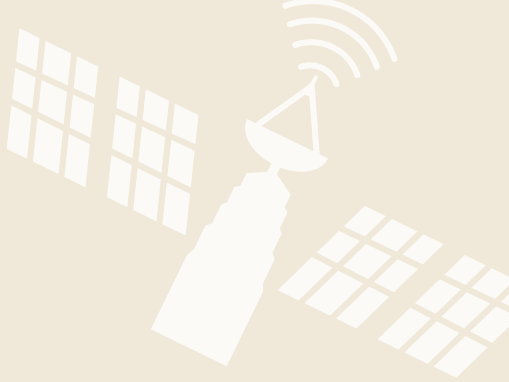


This publication was funded/co-funded by the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.



**Funded by
the European Union**





Acknowledgements

This Trainers' Manual on Migration Governance for media practitioners and communication specialists in CSOs/NGOs, 'Migration in Africa – Myths and Realities', was implemented within the framework of the African Union-European Union Continent-to-Continent Migration and Mobility Dialogue (C2CMMD), and within the wider EU-funded Migration and Mobility Dialogue (MMD) implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). We thank our colleagues from the African Union Commission Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development and ICMPD who provided insight and expertise that greatly assisted the development of the manual. We also thank the International Organization for Migration (IOM) for providing technical expertise, and for their valuable comments that significantly strengthened the manual.



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The Task Team is grateful to Dr. Sabelo Mbokazi, Head of Division for Labour, Employment & Migration at the AUC and Ms Monica Zanette, Head of Pan-African Initiatives at ICMPD for the on-going support throughout the assignment, and to Ms Anne Althaus, International Migration Law Specialist at IOM, for the support on the International Migration Law module.

List of acronyms

ACPMD	African Common Position on Migration and Development
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AHMR	African Human Mobility Review
AIR.....	African Institute for Remittances
AU	African Union
AUC.....	African Union Commission
CAPMD*	Common African Position on Migration and Development
EAC	East African Community
ECOWAS.....	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
GCM.....	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
GOs.....	Governmental Organisations
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
IDP.....	Internally Displaced Persons
IMF	International Monetary Fund.
IOM.....	International Organization for Migration
JLMP.....	Joint Labour Migration Programme
MiGOF	Migration Governance Framework
MMD	Migration and Mobility Dialogue
MPFA.....	Migration Policy Framework for Africa
NCMs	National Coordinating Mechanisms
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGOs.....	Non-Governmental Organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SADC.....	Southern African Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TiP Act.....	Prevention and Combatting of Trafficking in Persons Act
UN.....	United Nations
UNHCR.....	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UN-JMDI	United Nations Joint Migration and Development Initiative
UWC.....	University of the Western Cape
UNDP.....	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA.....	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

* Initially adopted in 2006 as the African Common Position on Migration and Development (ACPMD), on recommendation by Member States the framework was renamed the Common African Position on Migration and Development (CAPMD) following its evaluation and subsequent revision by the AU Commission 2023–2024.



Foreword



This *Trainers' Manual on Migration Governance for Media Practitioners and Communication Specialists in CSO/NGOs* is in response to a need by journalists and civil society in Africa, some of whom work in the migration sector, but also have the potential to play a critical advocacy role. This need was identified during the [*African Journalists' Workshop*](#) that was held on the sidelines of the 32nd As-

sembly of Heads of State and Government of the Union in Addis Ababa in February 2019. The E-Workshop Series on *Uncovering the Role of Civil Society in Migration Governance* within the context of the AU Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) was hosted for civil society by the AU Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) in 2021.

The workshops identified the need for the media in Africa to report accurately on migration issues on the continent from a position of knowledge and facts, instead of just relaying on information from media houses from other regions, which does not necessarily reflect the reality on the ground. In the same vein, both civil society and the media also noted the critical advocacy role they can play for the migration sector in Africa, specifically the African position on migration. In this context, the role of media practitioners and communication specialists within civil society is both powerful and urgent. The reportage and advocacy are best achieved from a position of knowledge and facts about the migration situation in Africa, the migration and development nexus and Africa's response in mitigating the current challenges. These formed the foundation for the development of this training manual. This Manual is, therefore, more than a technical resource, it is a strategic tool for transformation.

Grounded in the African Union's Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) and aligned with Agenda 2063, this manual equips communicators with the knowledge, ethics and practical skills to engage migration with nuance, accuracy and humanity. It challenges myths, elevates realities and empowers communicators to foster inclusive, rights-based narratives that reflect Africa's lived experiences and aspirations.

In targeting the media and civil society in Africa, this Trainer's Manual is part of a set of training manuals on migration governance comprising the following:

- *Making Migration Work for Africa: A Trainers' Manual on Migration Governance for Policy Makers in Africa*; a three-day training targeting Parliamentarians, Policy Makers and Diplomats; and
- *A Trainers' Manual on Migration Governance – [A Handbook for Trainers](#)* a five-day training targeting migration Experts from AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

The training manuals are designed to be delivered collectively to all migration stakeholders within Member States and RECs, ensuring a shared understanding of the migration governance context. This unified approach enables Parliamentarians, Policy Makers, Diplomats, Experts, Media and Civil Society to develop a common vision and collaborate effectively in strengthening migration governance systems through clearly defined complementary roles.

More so, the magnitude and complexity of Africa's migration issues strongly demand the media and civil society working in the migration space to undertake this training on migration governance.

I commend the European Union, our partners, and all contributors to this manual for their commitment to strengthening Africa's migration governance ecosystem. May this resource inspire media and civil society actors to lead with integrity, communicate with empathy and make migration work for Africa.



Amb. Amma A. Twum-Amoah
Commissioner for Health,
Humanitarian Affairs & Social Development

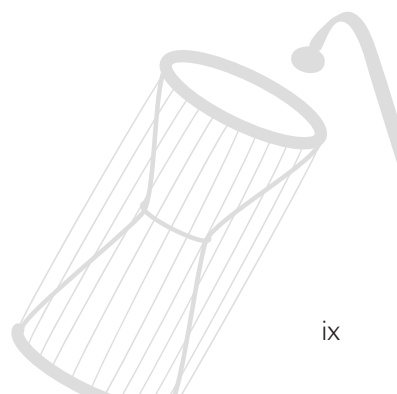


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Glossary of terms¹

Asylum seeker

An individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualised procedures, an asylum seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognised as a refugee, but every recognised refugee is initially an asylum seeker.

Bilateral labour migration agreements

Agreements concluded between two States, which are legally binding and are essentially concerned with inter-State cooperation on labour migration.

Border governance

The legislation, policies, plans, strategies, action plans and activities related to the entry into and exit of persons from the territory of the State, comprising detection, rescue, interception, screening, interviewing, identification, reception, referral, detention, removal or return, as well as related activities such as training, technical, financial and other assistance, including that provided to other States.

Border management

The administration of measures related to authorised movement of persons (regular migration) and goods, whilst preventing unauthorised movement of persons (irregular migration) and goods, detecting those responsible for smuggling, trafficking and related crimes and identifying the victims of such crimes or any other person in need of immediate or longer-term assistance and/or (international) protection.

Note: Measures to manage borders include the imposition by States of visa requirements, carrier sanctions against transportation companies bringing irregular migrants to the territory, and interdictions at sea. Under international human rights law and international refugee law, States have a responsibility to ensure that border management legislation, policies and practices adhere to human rights and refugee law and respect the rights of all people moving across their borders despite their migration status.

¹ IOM (2019): 'Glossary on Migration', in: International Migration Law, Nr. 34. Available at publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_34_glossary.pdf [accessed 25 November 2024] (unless indicated otherwise).

Border officials

An official assigned, in accordance with national law, to carry out tasks related to border management.

C

Circular migration

A form of migration in which people repeatedly move back and forth between two or more countries.

Climate migration

The movement of a person or groups of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive change in the environment due to climate change, are obliged to leave their habitual place of residence, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, within a State or across an international border.

Country of destination

In the migration context, a country that is the destination for a person or a group of persons, irrespective of whether they migrate regularly or irregularly.

Note: In the context of movements of internally displaced persons (IDPs) the term 'place of destination' should be used.

See also *host country*, *receiving country*

Country of origin

In the migration context, a country of nationality or of former habitual residence of a person or group of persons who have migrated abroad, irrespective of whether they migrate regularly or irregularly.

Country of transit

In the migration context, the country through which a person or a group of persons pass on any journey to the country of destination or from the country of destination to the country of origin or the country of habitual residence.

D

Diaspora

Migrants or descendants of migrants whose identity and sense of belonging, either real or symbolic, have been shaped by their migration experience and background. They maintain links with their homelands, and to each other, based on a shared sense of history, identity, or mutual experiences in the destination country.

Displacement

The movement of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters.

Emigration

E

From the perspective of the country of departure, the act of moving from one's country of nationality or usual residence to another country, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence.

Forced migration

F

A migratory movement which, although the drivers can be diverse, involves force, compulsion, or coercion.

Note: While not an international legal concept, this term has been used to describe the movements of refugees, displaced persons (including those displaced by disasters or development projects), and, in some instances, victims of trafficking. At the international level, the use of this term is debated because of the widespread recognition that a continuum of agency exists rather than a voluntary/forced dichotomy and that it might undermine the existing legal international protection regime.

Host country (*Refers to country of destination*)

H

Note: In the context of returns, the term is used, as opposed to country of origin and as an alternative to country of destination or sending country to provide clarity in the identification of the various countries involved. In other contexts, the term 'host country' is generally best avoided, as it may imply a particular relationship between migrants ('guests') and natives ('hosts') which may be misleading and could undermine the integration of migrants.

Human rights

Universal legal guarantees protecting individuals and groups against actions and omissions that interfere with fundamental freedoms, entitlements and human dignity.

Note: At the universal level these rights are contained in the International Bill of Rights, comprising the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) ((adopted 10 December 1948) UNGA Res 217(A)), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ((adopted 16 December 1966, entered into

force 3 January 1976) 993 UNTS 3), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ((adopted 16 December 1966, entered into force 23 March 1976) 999 UNTS 171) and have been developed by other treaties from this core.

I

Immigrant

From the perspective of the country of arrival, a person who moves into a country other than that of his or her nationality or usual residence, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence.

Immigration

From the perspective of the country of arrival, the act of moving into a country other than one's country of nationality or usual residence, so that the country of destination effectively becomes his or her new country of usual residence.

Integration

The two-way process of mutual adaptation between migrants and the societies in which they live, whereby migrants are incorporated into the social, economic, cultural and political life of the receiving community. It entails a set of joint responsibilities for migrants and communities and incorporates other related notions such as social inclusion and social cohesion.

Internal migration

The movement of people within a State involving the establishment of a new temporary or permanent residence. The term also covers both nationals and non-nationals moving within a State, provided that they move away from their place of habitual residence.

Internally Displaced Persons

Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised State border.

International migration

The movement of persons away from their place of usual residence and across an international border to a country of which they are not nationals.

International migration law²

The international legal framework governing migration, deriving from various sources of international law that apply to the movement of persons within or between States and regulate States' competence and obligations, migrants' status, rights and duties, as well as international cooperation.

Note: Rather than an independent legal regime with its own set of rules, International Migration Law is an umbrella term used to describe the various bodies of laws, principles and norms that together regulate migration. The bodies of law that are relevant to migration are, among others: International Human Rights Law, Labour Law, Humanitarian Law, Law of the Sea, Maritime Law, Transnational Criminal Law, Consular Law, Refugee Law and Nationality Law.

International protection³

The protection that is accorded by the international community to individuals or groups who are outside their own country and are unable to return home because their return would infringe upon the principle of non-refoulement, and their country is unable or unwilling to protect them.

Note: As further underlined by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 'risks that give rise to a need for international protection classically include those of persecution, threats to life, freedom or physical integrity arising from armed conflict, serious public disorder, or different situations of violence' (UNHCR, Persons in Need of International Protection (June 2007) p. 1). See also *humanitarian visa, non-refoulement (principle of), refugee (mandate), refugee (1951 Convention)*.

Inter-State Consultation Mechanisms on Migration (ISCM)⁴

State-led, ongoing information-sharing and policy dialogues on the regional, interregional or global level for States with an interest in promoting cooperation in the field of migration.

Note: Inter-State Consultation Mechanisms on migration comprise of global processes on migration, interregional forums on migration (bridging two or more regions) and regional consultative processes on migration (covering one region).

Irregular migrant

See *migrant in an irregular situation*

² International Organization for Migration: Key Migration Terms, www.iom.int/key-migration-terms

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

Irregular migration

Movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations, or international agreements governing the entry into or exit from the State of origin, transit or destination.

Note: Although a universally accepted definition of irregular migration does not exist, the term is generally used to identify persons moving outside regular migration channels. The fact that they migrate irregularly does not relieve States from the obligation to protect their rights. Moreover, categories of migrants who may not have any other choice but to use irregular migration channels can also include refugees, victims of trafficking, or unaccompanied migrant children. The fact that they use irregular migration pathways does not imply that States are not, in some circumstances, obliged to provide them with some forms of protection under international law, including access to international protection for asylum seekers fleeing persecution, conflicts or generalised violence. In addition, refugees are protected under international law against being penalised for unauthorised entry or stay if they have travelled from a place where they were at risk (Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (adopted 28 July 1951, entered into force 22 April 1954) 189 UNTS 137, Art. 31(1)).

L

Labour migration

Movement of persons from their home State to another State for the purpose of employment.

M

Migrant

An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students.

Note: At the international level, no universally accepted definition of migrant exists.

Migrant in an irregular situation

A person who moves or has moved across an international border and is not authorised to enter or to stay in a State pursuant to the law of that State and to international agreements to which that State is a party.

Migrant worker

A person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national.

Migration

The movement of persons away from their place of usual residence, either across an international border or within a State.

Migration management

The management and implementation of the whole set of activities primarily by States within national systems or through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, concerning all aspects of migration and the mainstreaming of migration considerations into public policies. The term refers to planned approaches to the implementation and operationalisation of policy, legislative and administrative frameworks, developed by the institutions in charge of migration.

Mixed movements (mixed migration or mixed flows)

A movement in which a number of people are travelling together, generally in an irregular manner, using the same routes and means of transport, but for different reasons. People travelling as part of mixed movements have varying needs and profiles and may include asylum seekers, refugees, trafficked persons, unaccompanied/separated children, and migrants in an irregular situation.

Receiving country

Usually, the country of destination of a migrant. In the case of return or repatriation, also the country of origin or, in the context of resettlement, a country that has accepted to receive a certain number of migrants, including refugees, on a yearly basis by presidential, ministerial or parliamentary decision. In the context of diplomatic or consular relations, the receiving country is the State which has consented to the establishment of consular posts or diplomatic missions of another State on its territory.

See also *country of destination*, *country of origin*, *third country*

Refugee (1951 Convention)

A person, who 'owing to well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.' (Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, Art. 1A (2), 1951 as modified by the 1967 Protocol).

Note: Instruments adopted at the regional level complement the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees ((adopted 28 July 1951, entered into force 22 April 1954) 189 UNTS 137) and build upon its definition, by including specific reference to a number of objective circumstances which may compel a person to leave their country. Article 1(2) of the Convention Governing Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa ((adopted 10 September 1969, entered into force 20 June 1974) 1001 UNTS 45) includes in the definition of refugees also any person compelled to leave his or her country 'owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country or origin or nationality.'

Regular migration

Migration that occurs in compliance with the laws of the country of origin, transit and destination.

Reintegration

A process which enables individuals to re-establish the economic, social and psychosocial relationships needed to maintain life, livelihood and dignity and inclusion in civic life.

Remittances

Personal monetary transfers, cross border or within the same country, made by migrants to individuals or communities with whom the migrant has links.

Return

In a general sense, the act or process of going back or being taken back to the point of departure. This could be within the territorial boundaries of a country, as in the case of returning internally displaced persons (IDPs) and demobilised combatants; or between a country of destination or transit and a country of origin, as in the case of migrant workers, refugees or asylum seekers.

Return Migration

In the context of international migration, the movement of persons returning to their country of origin after having moved away from their place of habitual residence and crossed an international border. In the context of internal migration, the movement of persons returning to their place of habitual residence after having moved away from it.

Note: For statistical purposes, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) defines returning migrants as 'persons returning to their country of citizenship after having been international migrants (whether short term or long term) in another country and who are intending to stay in the country for at least one year' (UN DESA, Recommendation on Statistics of International Migration, Revision 1 (1998) p. 94).

Safe, Orderly and regular migration

S

Movement of persons in keeping both with the laws and regulations governing exit from, entry and return to and stay in States and with States' international law obligations, in a manner in which the human dignity and well-being of migrants are upheld, their rights are respected, protected and fulfilled and the risks associated with the movement of people are acknowledged and mitigated.

Sending country

In the refugee context, the country from which a refugee is resettled. In the context of diplomatic or consular relations, the State, the interests of which are represented by its diplomatic mission or consular post in the receiving State.

Refer to *country of origin*, *State of origin*

Smuggling (of migrants)

The procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident (Art. 3(a), The *UN Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*, 2000).



Trafficking in persons (TIP)⁵

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. (Art. 3(a), UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the UN Convention Against Organized Crime, 2000).

T

Transit

A stopover of passage, of varying length, while travelling between two or more States.

V

Vulnerability

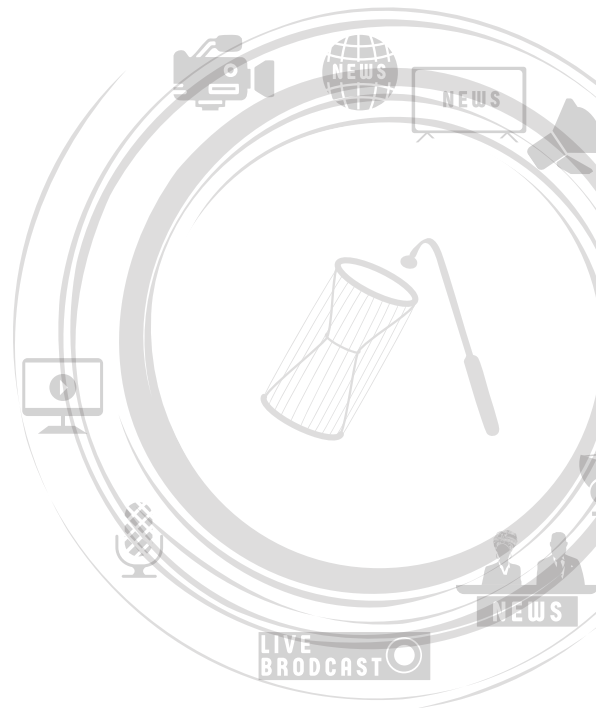
Within a migration context, vulnerability is the limited capacity to avoid, resist, cope with, or recover from harm. This limited capacity is the result of the unique interaction of individual, household, community, and structural characteristics and conditions.

X

Xenophobia

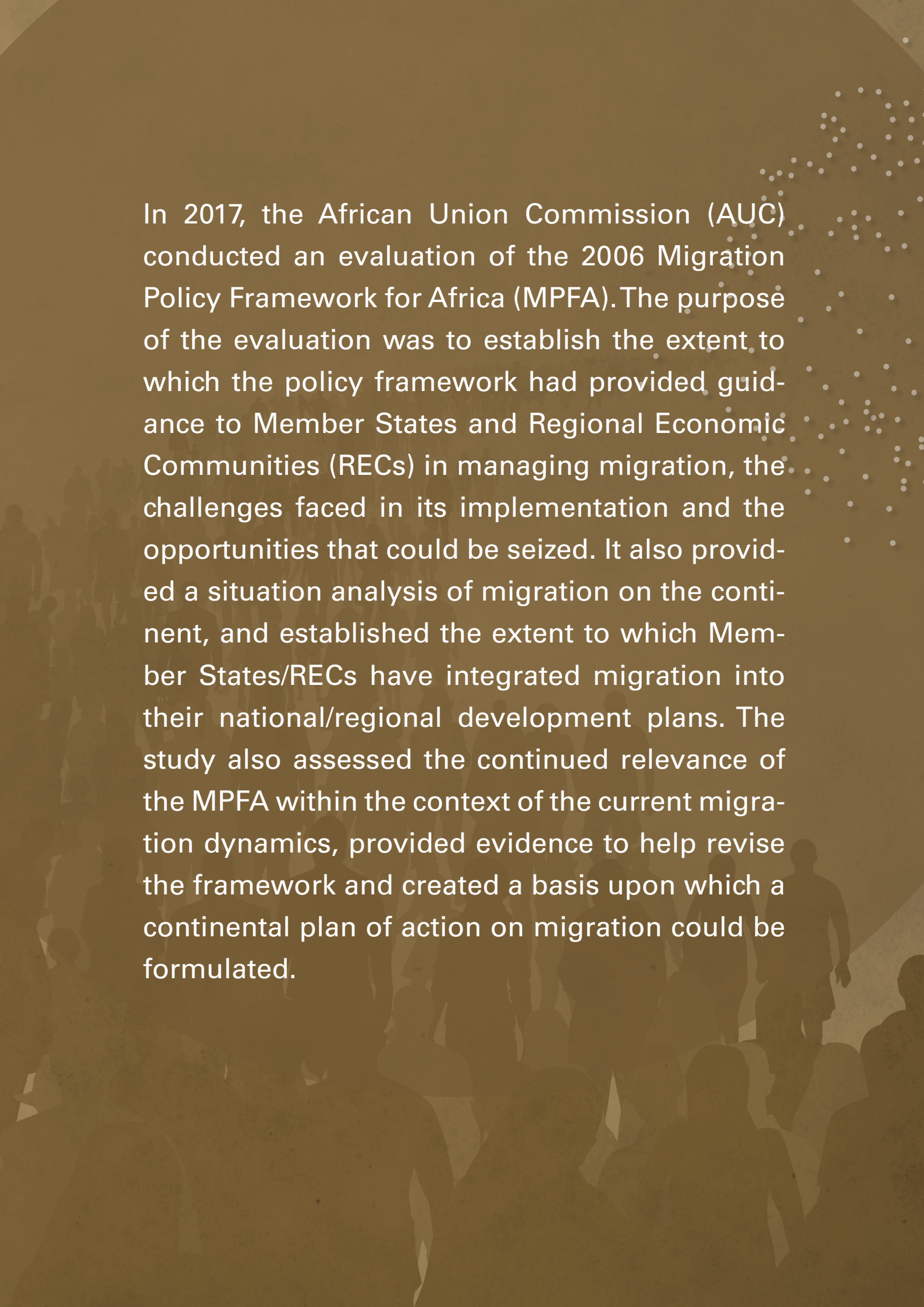
At the international level, no universally accepted definition of xenophobia exists, though it can be described as 'attitudes, prejudices and behaviour that reject, exclude and often vilify persons, based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society or national identity'.

⁵ The EU refers to Trafficking in Human Beings (THB), which is defined as: The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or reception of persons, including the exchange or transfer of control over those persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Source: EMN Asylum and Migration Glossary, accessed on 26 March 2025.



Background





In 2017, the African Union Commission (AUC) conducted an evaluation of the 2006 Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA). The purpose of the evaluation was to establish the extent to which the policy framework had provided guidance to Member States and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in managing migration, the challenges faced in its implementation and the opportunities that could be seized. It also provided a situation analysis of migration on the continent, and established the extent to which Member States/RECs have integrated migration into their national/regional development plans. The study also assessed the continued relevance of the MPFA within the context of the current migration dynamics, provided evidence to help revise the framework and created a basis upon which a continental plan of action on migration could be formulated.

Building the capacities of Member States and RECs on migration governance is among the priorities of the AU Migration Policy Framework for Africa Action Plan.

➤ Assessment of the Capacity Building Needs of Member States and RECs to Manage Migration

Consequent to the evaluation, the AUC revised the 2006 MPFA. The resultant revised framework, the 2018 Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) and Plan of Action (2018 – 2030), was adopted by the AU Executive Council in January 2018. One of the priorities of the 2018 MPFA and Plan of Action (2018 – 2030) is to build the capacity of Member States and RECs on managing migration. Key activities in meeting this priority include developing training manuals on migration governance, and capacity development on migration and development, migration policy formulation and mainstreaming migration in development frameworks as well as conducting trainings on these topics. In line with the 2018 MPFA and Plan of Action (2018 – 2030), the AUC conducted an 'Assessment of the Capacity Building Needs of Member States and RECs to Manage Migration' in 2018. Among others, the assessment identified the need for training for migration stakeholders in Member States and RECs, and recommended that the AUC should embark on capacity development efforts for Member States and RECs in the area of migration management.

In accordance with this recommendation, between 2019 and 2025, the AUC developed three training manuals that form the basis for, and constitute critical elements in the provision of training and technical assistance to Member States and RECs in the area of migration governance. In this regard, the AUC developed the following training manuals:

➤ Training on Migration Governance – A Handbook for Trainers

- i. The five-day '*Training on Migration Governance – A Handbook for Trainers*';
- ii. The three-day '*Making Migration Work for Africa – A Trainers' Manual on Migration Governance for Policymakers in Africa*'; and
- iii. The three-day '*Myths and Reality – A Trainers' Manual on Migration Governance for Media Practitioners and Communication Specialists in CSOs/NGOs*'.

The AUC developed the first manual between 2019 and 2022 with the support of GIZ (the German Corporation for International Cooperation) and developed the last two training manuals between 2023 and 2025 with support from the AU-EU Continent-to-Continent Migration and Mobility Dialogue (C2CMMD), which is implemented by ICMPD within the wider EU-funded Migration and Mobility Dialogue (MMD). It is against this background that the AUC developed the three-day training manual '*Myths and Reality – A Trainers' Manual on Migration Governance for Media Practitioners and Communication Specialists in CSOs/NGOs*'. The training manual is accompanied by a trainer guide to ensure effective preparation and implementation of the training.

Aims of the training

The aims of the three-day training course are two-fold. To equip media practitioners and communication specialists of CSOs/NGOs (for short: communicators) with:

1. knowledge on migration issues in Africa; and
2. the necessary tools to be able to report objectively on migration issues in Africa.

Target group of the training

- Media practitioners at media houses in Africa.
- Communication specialists and persons responsible for communication at CSOs and NGOs in Africa.

Methodological approach

A two-staged approach comprising development of learning materials and methods of instruction was undertaken.

Content development

Drawing on AU migration frameworks and protocols, international migration conventions and compacts, and migration literature, a curriculum of six modules as well as the concomitant content was developed. The content for the course was developed in respect of the following modules:

- **Module 1** Migration in Africa – Facts and Figures for informed migration reporting/communication →
- **Module 2** International Migration Law →
- **Module 3** Navigating the Migration Ecosystem in Africa →
- **Module 4** Is Migration Beneficial for Africa? →
- **Module 5** Legacy media and reporting on migration in Africa →
- **Module 6** Social media and AI reporting on migration in Africa→

Please click on the arrows to navigate directly to the respective module.

Media stories

An extensive list of media stories can be found in the annex. References to selected stories are tagged with the icon on the right in the margins of this manual.



Methods of instruction

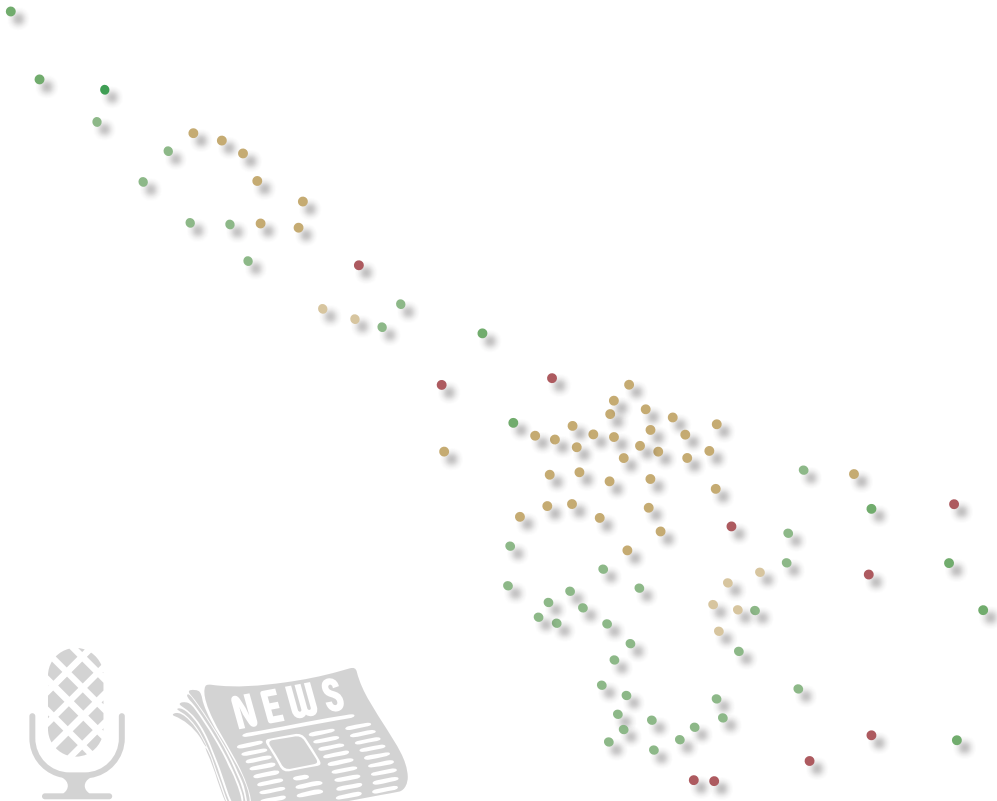
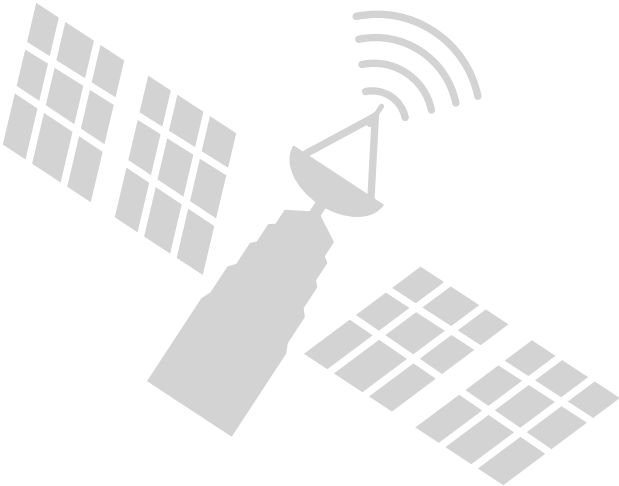
The course is designed to be taught face-to-face to a group of learners in a largely interactive manner. Each of the six modules has its specific objectives, learning outcomes, suggested methods and the necessary study material (e.g. core reading). The face-to-face approach suggested is a mix of knowledge offered and synthesised via a presentation paired with interactive learning methods, such as group discussions, analysis, specific case studies, etc. Results are shared with the wider group and further discussed. This also leads to a common position among participants. At the end of the course, an evaluation is undertaken to inform future training.

Broader learning outcomes

On completion of the course, learners are expected to be equipped with knowledge and understanding of:

- the key facts and figures on migration in Africa to enable evidence-informed reporting and communication;
- the main elements of international migration law;
- the benefits of migration in Africa, its role in development;
- the migration ecosystem in Africa; and
- the role of media practitioners and communicators in CSOs and NGOs in the migration ecosystem.





Module 1

Migration in Africa – Facts and figures for informed migration reporting/ communication

NEWS

NEWS

NEWS

2

3

4

5

6

Module overview 1

Module overview

Objective The objective of this module is to equip media practitioners and communication specialists or persons responsible for communications in CSOs/NGOs with the knowledge of where to access reliable migration data, to allow them to communicate and report on migration issues in an evidence-based manner, using key facts and figures.

Module content Topics covered:

- Africa's migration patterns and trends
- Key migration drivers, and destinations
- Future migration trends and implications
- Reliable migration information and data sources

Learning outcomes By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- explain patterns and trends of migration within Africa and beyond;
- critically discuss drivers of migration;
- outline routes and destinations of migrants within Africa and beyond;
- appreciate the distribution of African migrants in their preferred destinations;
- understand the implications of future migration trends in Africa; and
- identify where reliable migration data and sources can be accessed.

1.1 Introduction

Effective reporting and communication on migration requires one to have a good understanding of the facts and information, especially if they are to influence policy making and public discourse in a positive way. Therefore, it is important for media practitioners and communication specialists or persons responsible for communications in CSOs/NGOs (for short: communicators) to use accurate and factual information that is based on evidence when reporting on, covering or communicating migration-related issues.

Indeed, knowledge and awareness of precise facts and trustworthy sources are necessary for journalists and any other communicator (UNESCO, 2021). By using evidence to inform ideas and narratives that shape institutional agency responsible for the hostile policies in many developing countries, the plight of migrants can be improved in a manner that contributes to the development interests of sending and receiving countries (Vanyoro, 2015). This means that it is also important for mediators to know what counts for reliable data sources.

Considering the growing awareness of the need for communicators to have facts about migration in Africa, this module seeks to equip communicators with key facts and figures that can allow them to communicate and report on migration issues in an evidence-based manner. These include Africa's migration patterns and trends, key migration drivers, destinations, future migration trends and implications as well as reliable migration information and data sources.

NEWS REPORT

Irregular Migration:
1. Human Smugglers
of the Sahara

25 May 2014,
Reuters

1.2 The historical evolution of migration in Africa

Migration is an intrinsic aspect of Africa's historical evolution. Drawing on an array of academic sources, Mudungwe (2025) observes a variety of such patterns including *Homo sapiens* moving from Africa throughout the rest of the world as far back as 80,000 years ago; the shipping of at least 12 million Africans to the Americas as slaves between 1500 and the 1860s; the *Guruuswa* movement of the pastoralist *Shona* people from the Great Lakes region to present-day Zimbabwe and the great *Mfecane* wars between 1820 and 1835 that led to forced migrations in the Southern and Central Africa regions. Following the colonialism of Africa by European countries in the late nineteenth century, labour migration became a key feature of African mobility as Africans were pushed from their homes to work as cheap labourers in cities and other neighbouring countries by harsh land and tax laws. For example, young men migrated from Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Chad and Guinea to work in the cocoa and coffee plantations of Côte d'Ivoire, mines and cocoa farms in Ghana and in the groundnut fields of Senegambia (Adepoju, 2006).

Following the liberation wars and attainment of African independence of most African states from the mid to late 20th century, Africa began to experience the movement of its inhabitants mainly as asylum seekers and refugees largely fleeing war and ensuing political instability. This kind of movement has become sustained over the last two decades or so in response to civil wars and other kinds of conflict and challenges on the continent (e.g., genocide, war, or climatic extremes). Equally, however, this period ushered in an era of restrictions on international migration as national governments passed laws and regulations to control immigration into their newly-independent countries in a bid to preserve scarce jobs for nationals to meet their election promises (Adepoju, 2006).



1.3 The magnitude of migration in Africa

Migration in Africa today, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, is characterised by three major features namely: intra-Africa migration prevails over extra-continental migration; rural-urban migration remains prominent – a consequence of the existing large rural populations and the ongoing urbanisation process; and diverse rural-rural, urban-rural and circular migration have also developed, and are recognised as core and part of the growing dynamics.

The patterns of migration differ by region with have varying dynamics, including intra-African movement, urban-rural, or rural-urban migration.

There are, however, sharp differences between North Africans migrating overseas (90 per cent) and sub-Saharan Africans moving mainly within Africa (nearly 70 per cent), often to neighbouring countries. Africans are a highly mobile population composed of refugees, labour migrants, internally displaced people, cross-border traders, irregular migrants, nomads, frontier workers, highly skilled professionals, and undocumented migrants (Adepoju, 2019).

Most migrants are young, and male migrants marginally outnumber female migrants as seen in how in 2020, 53 per cent of international migrants in Africa were male (Mutava, 2023).

1.3.1 Major migration routes in Africa

Routes commonly used by migrants leaving the country can be described as Land routes, Sea routes and Airline routes. According to Marchand et al. (2017), migrants in Africa have primarily moved along four routes, i.e.:

- a. the Northern or Central Mediterranean route uses Libya as the main gateway country between Africa and the European countries along the Mediterranean Sea;
- b. the northern route runs from the East and Horn of Africa through Sudan and Egypt into Israel (since 2012 the number of migrants using this route has been significantly lower, to the point of it being almost inoperative);

- c. the eastern route moves out of the East and Horn of Africa towards Yemen and onwards to Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia; and
- d. the southern migration route connects the East and Horn of Africa to South Africa, with Kenya as one of the main transit countries. Other transit countries on the route include Tanzania, Malawi, and Mozambique. The major routes can also be classified as indicated below.

Figure 1.1 Major migration routes in Africa



Source: Adapted from African Center for Strategic Studies (2021).

1.3.2 Zooming in on key terms⁶

1.3.2.1 Irregular migration

De Haas (2008) defines irregular migration as ‘international movement or residency in conflict with migration laws’. Irregular migration takes place when a migrant is not in possession of the paperwork required to demonstrate his or her regular status in the country and is not entitled to enter and remain under the laws of that State or under international accords to which that State is a party. It often means that the migrant in question has used irregular migration channels outside the official borders to access the territory of that State. However, the boundaries between regular and irregular migration can also be blurred as there is also a distinction between irregular entry (described above) and irregular stay (de Haas, 2008). Irregular stay denotes a situation where people who have entered destination countries legally subsequently overstay their visas, or engage in prohibited work, through which their status becomes irregular (de Haas, 2008).

In the case of Southern Africa, the majority of migrants originate from the region, with the major source countries including Mozambique and Zimbabwe, while South Africa and Botswana are the major destination countries (Mudunigwe, 2014). North Africa also experiences irregular migration when migrants from sub-Saharan Africa use the region as a point of transit to Europe while others remain in the Maghreb region, namely in core Maghreb countries of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia (de Haas, 2008).

It is difficult to measure the magnitude of irregular migration as most census data do not ask for documentation status. The prevalence of this phenomenon does, however, indicate a rise in the practice of smuggling of migrants (SoM), which may also sometimes give way to trafficking in persons (TiP) (see [Module 2](#)).

1.3.2.2 Cross border migration and trade

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2019) defines cross-border migration as a process of movement of persons across international borders. According to Oucho (2006), international migration (which denotes movements comprising both cross-border and ‘transit’ (long-distance) migration) is distinct from ‘cross-border migration’ because it *strictly* refers to migration between states that share a common border. This term thus carries a significant meaning on the continent, particularly in southern Africa where movement tends to be circular, as migrants move for short periods from their country of usual residence to one or more countries for purposes of employment, or to conduct an economic activity such as seasonal agricultural work in

NEWS REPORT

UK media coverage of migration

143.

[Muslim population in parts of Europe could TRIPLE by 2050:](#)

[New study predicts migration and birth rates will lead to dramatic rise in numbers across continent](#) (click to read)

30 Nov. 2017,
Daily Mail (UK)

⁶ Please also consult the [Glossary of terms](#).

NEWS REPORT

**Irregular Migration:
21.**
[Egypt says it has made
'strenuous efforts'
in tackling illegal
migration, calls for
European support](#)
(click to read)

10 April 2024,
Rédaction Africanews

border areas, construction work and informal cross-border trade (Mudungwe, 2014). It is also associated with the combination between a highly formalised and regulated contract system at one end, to the mining industry, which, at the other end, involved informal, unregulated or clandestine movements across borders (Oucho, 2006).

Cross-border trade occupies a central place especially among women as cross-border migration increasingly becomes feminised. Migrant networks and diaspora communities play a crucial role in facilitating trade and investment between African countries, fostering economic integration and cross-border collaboration. Historically, this sector has been resilient amidst border challenges and customs barriers for many years (Gumede et al., 2020). The sector involves the trading of goods such as art and craft materials, clothing and food. The majority of the people who cannot be included in the formal sector are found in this resilient sector of cross-border trading. This sector has managed to sustain the families and livelihoods of millions across the continent.

1.3.2.3 Labour migration

Labour migration is an important feature of African migration. Migrant workers or members of their family can, with permission enter, remain, and engage in a profitable activity in the country where they are employed by virtue of that country's laws and the international accords to which that country is a party (Mena et al., 2011).

1.3.2.4 Internal displacement

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised State border (IOM, 2019). IDPs constitute the majority of the forcibly displaced population globally, some 58 per cent at the end of 2022 (UNHCR, 2022). Mirroring the previous 10 years, sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa had the highest numbers of IDPs (IDMC, 2023).

1.3.2.5 Forced migration

About one-third of all international migration in sub-Saharan Africa was made up of refugees and asylum seekers (UN DESA, 2021). An asylum seeker is a catchall phrase for anyone looking for safety abroad. It is a phrase that is used legally in some countries to describe someone who has sought refugee status or a comparable international protection status but has not yet heard

a decision about their application (UNHCR, 2006). It can also be used to describe someone who has not yet applied for asylum but may do so in the future or who may require international protection. A refugee is anyone who satisfies the requirements of an appropriate refugee definition as set forth in international or regional refugee agreements, the mission of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), or national law. According to international law and the mandate of UNHCR, refugees are outside of their countries of origin and require international protection due to a serious threat to their life, physical integrity, or freedom in their countries of origin as a result of persecution, armed conflict, violence, or serious public disorder (IOM, 2011). With 1.5 million refugees hosted on its territory, Uganda was ranked third in the world and first on the African continent by the end of 2020 (UNHCR, 2021) (see Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2 Refugees, people in refugee-like situations and other people in need of international protection by host country, end-2022

Türkiye	3,568,300
Islamic Rep. of Iran	3,425,100
Colombia	2,455,500
Germany	2,075,500
Pakistan	1,743,800
Uganda	1,463,500
Russian Federation	1,277,700
Sudan	1,097,100
Peru	976,400
Poland	971,100

Source: Adapted from UNHCR (2022: 21).

1.4 Africa's migration patterns and trends

1.4.1 African migration within the context of world migration

In 2022, there were approximately 281 million international migrants globally, which represents about 3.6 per cent of the world's population (World Migration Report, 2022). Sixty-three million (23 per cent) of the 281 million international migrants globally in 2020 were born in Europe, and just 28 million (10 per cent) were born in the Sub-Saharan Africa region (UN DESA, 2021).

1.4.2 African migration on the continent

1.4.2.1 Migration in North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa

Western and Eastern Africa are the most dynamic regions in terms of sending and receiving countries. With respectively 5.7 and 3.6 million intra-regional migrants in 2015 – accounting for 97 per cent and 67 per cent of total migrants – they exemplify Sub-Saharan Africa’s strong intra-regional dynamics, with Côte d’Ivoire, Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya and Ethiopia among the leading hosting countries (UNDESA, 2015a).

There is a significant difference between the pattern of migration in North Africa and that of Sub-Saharan Africa. According to Mercandalli and Losch (2017), the majority of migrants in North Africa move to Europe, while the majority of migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa move mostly to neighbouring countries or within their respective regions. Mercandalli et al. (2019) noted that out of 23 million Sub-Saharan Africa’s international migrants, 70 per cent (16 million) stay in the region. On the other hand, as of 2019, almost 12 million North Africans lived outside their countries of birth, with roughly half in Europe and 3.3 million living in the Gulf States (UN DESA, 2019). The traditional countries of origin in North Africa, namely Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, dominate the African-origin migrant stock (which includes all categories, from refugees to family and employment migrants) of Europe (Landau et al., 2018). However, migration from sub-Saharan Africa to the European Union (EU) is on the rise as seen in how between 2010–2018, at least a million sub-Saharan migrants had moved to the EU (Landau et al., 2018). Nigeria, Guinea, and the Gambia featured among the top five countries of origin of migrants using the Central Mediterranean route to Europe in 2017 (Landau et al., 2018).

It is important not to generalise when speaking of or reporting on migration, as patterns differ significantly depending on region/country of origin.

Table 1.1 Pattern of inter- and intra-regional dynamics of migration in Africa

Regions	Dynamics of migration
East Africa	There is a large number of immigrants to and from East Africa in different forms. Mixed immigrant flows include refugees, asylum seekers, forced immigrants, and immigrants motivated to move due to many different factors. Mixed immigrant flows from East Africa usually follow three main migration routes: the ‘Northern Route’ to North Africa, often to Europe; the ‘Southern Route’ to South Africa; and the ‘Eastern Route’ to Yemen and the rest of the Gulf. East Africa is also increasingly a significant source of migrants moving to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States. This is evident in the large number of low- and semi-skilled East Africans who have, in recent years, moved to the GCC States on temporary work contracts. The Gulf States’ proximity to East Africa and their employment opportunities make them an attractive destination for many East Africans (Atong, Mayah and Odigie, 2018).

South- ern Africa	Southern Africa has experienced various movements, including mixed and irregular migration, labour migration, and displacement due to conflict and natural disasters. Due to its strong economic position on the African continent, Southern Africa has experienced a high level of immigration due to employment opportunities in the mining, manufacturing and agricultural industries (Flahaux and de Haas, 2016). The industrial development of some countries in the region, especially South Africa, Botswana and Zambia, and the rich oil wealth of Angola, have attracted skilled and unskilled migrant workers from the region and other places, especially the Horn of Africa and Western Africa. Southern Africa is also a stepping stone, often used as a place for regular and irregular immigration to Europe and the Americas (Facchini, Mayda, and Mendola, 2013).
West Africa	Intraregional migration in West Africa is characterised by migration flows that are influenced by multiple drivers. While there are significant data deficits on movements, recent estimates indicate that the majority of international migrants in West and Central Africa move within the subregion (Flahaux and de Haas, 2016). Intraregional migration dominates for several reasons, including visa-free movement among the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Member States, the relatively small size of many countries in the region, and the strong networks among the many ethnic groups scattered across the region (Devillard, Bacchi and Noack, 2016). Importantly, intraregional migration within ECOWAS is mostly due to labour mobility, with seasonal, temporary and permanent migrant workers moving largely from countries such as Niger and Mali toward Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire (Devillard, Bacchi and Noack, 2016).
Central Africa	Central Africa is a subregion of the African continent comprising various countries according to different definitions. Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, and São Tomé and Príncipe are members of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) (Moen, 2020). Conflict and instability have played a larger role in displacement to neighbouring countries in Central Africa. However, labour migration is not absent in Central Africa, with Gabon, for example, home to a large number of migrant workers from within Central Africa who work in its oil and lumber industries (Flahaux and de Haas, 2016).
North Africa	The migration of North Africans to Europe and the Gulf States has developed over several decades and continues to be a defining feature of the migration dynamics of the region. Migration of North Africans to countries outside Africa has been, and continues to be, much higher than migration to other countries within the region and within Africa (Flahaux and de Haas, 2016). Two distinct streams of migration have characterised outflows from North Africa. Migrants from the north-west (such as Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia) have historically moved to Europe, owing to their proximity to that continent, previous labour recruitment agreements and post-colonial ties. On the other hand, those from the north-east (such as Egypt and Sudan) have predominantly sought temporary work in GCC countries. Large income disparities between the origin and destination countries, and the high levels of unemployment in North Africa remain significant drivers of migration.

Figure 1.3 Trends of inter-, intra-regional migration in Africa and international migration from Africa



Source: Adapted from Makina and Mudungwe (2024: 84).

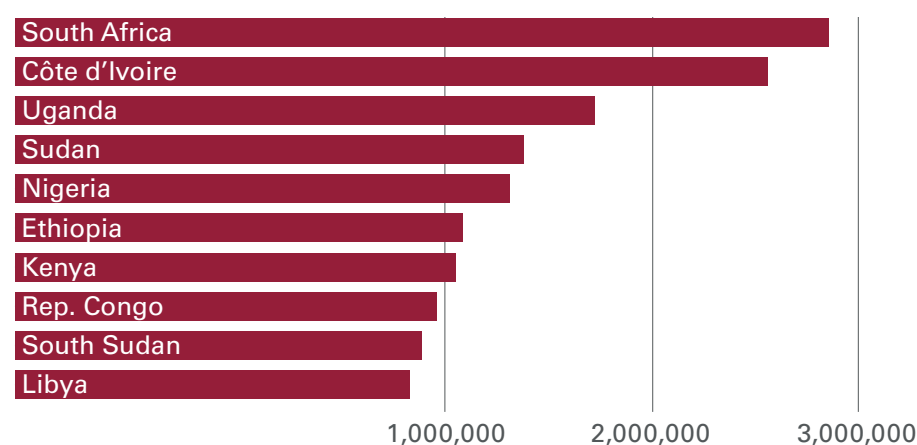
1.4.3 Destination of African migrants

Contrary to the popular belief that most Africans migrate to Europe, most Africans migrate to other countries within the continent (see Figure 1.3). By the end of 2020, 4 million foreign migrants were being hosted on South Africa's territory, making it the continent's top destination country (IOM, 2019). In 2020, the majority of the migrants in Africa migrated within the continent, while only 27 per cent moved to Europe in the same year, and about 12 per cent moved to Asia (UN DESA, 2020). Those that moved to Northern America were only about 8 per cent, and in other regions, less than 2 per cent. By compari-

son, the intra-regional migration pattern was also observed in Europe in 2020. During that year, about 70 per cent of people who left a particular country in Europe moved to other European countries, while 11 per cent moved to Asia, and only about 1 per cent moved to Africa (UN DESA, 2020).

Furthermore, examining the origin and destination of African migrants within the continent, it is apparent that migration patterns in Africa were largely intra-regional than inter-regional, as more than half of the migrants from each region moved within their respective regions (See Table 1.1. The exception was North Africa, where about 46 per cent and 26 per cent of its migrants moved to East and Central Africa, respectively, while only 23 per cent of its emigrants moved to neighbouring countries within the region. The intra-regional migration rate was more prominent in Southern and West Africa, with the percentage of migrants who moved within the regions in 2020 being about 82 per cent and 91 per cent, respectively.

Figure 1.4 Top ten destination countries in Africa for international migrants, 2020



Source: Adapted from Makina and Mudungwe (2024: 85).

1.5 The drivers of migration in Africa

The drivers of migration are generally described as factors or forces – internal or external to the individual(s) or the household – that influence decisions to migrate, as well as the patterns of migration. Table 1.2 below summarises the major drivers of migration in Africa.

Table 1.2 Drivers of migration in Africa

Drivers of migration	Description
Economic	Economic drivers of migration are frequently associated with socio-economic differentials between areas of origin (with less attractive economic conditions, particularly poverty, income levels and opportunities, employment and labour market conditions) and destination (emerging more attractive areas abroad or within the urban areas of a country).
Political	Political drivers refer to the influence of state capacity, the political system, national migration policies and investment policies on the aspirations of people to move or stay where they live. Similarly, at a global level, global and regional governance regimes, geopolitics, and migration policies of destination countries shape the potential destination of migrants as well as the type and intensity of competition between migrants towards countries of destination. At both levels, war and conflicts bring even higher levels of uncertainty that drives migration in Africa.
Social	Social drivers include a demographic dimension (population growth, particularly in cities and urban areas) that, associated with social development levels, the state of institutions in areas of origin and the level of food insecurity, can shape the intensity of migration. While historical and linguistic links and social receptivity are seen as major determinants of the direction of migration, individual characteristics such as education, network connection, and the capability to migrate (associated also with poverty and income levels), also shape migration trends.
Environmental	Environmental drivers stress the influence of energy (type and access) and natural resources, particularly water availability and soil quality (population/resource ratio), on migration. Environmental and climate change may act as a direct cause of forced migration, but in many cases is also inextricably linked to other dynamic and interacting social, political, demographic and economic factors.
Technological	Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in particular, is a determinant factor of migration in Africa. The Internet and social media gives potential migrants access to vital information about the destinations they plan to migrate to, including safe pathways and routes, so people can make well-informed judgments about their relocation plans thanks in large part to the availability of this information. ICT also facilitates communication between migrants and their families back home. While ICTs can be a critical source of information for migrants, caution and vigilance are needed. Some sources of information may present misinformation and 'fake news' on safe travel routes and/or conditions in countries of destination. They may also be misused by traffickers and smugglers.

When speaking of or reporting on migration, it is important to consider internal and external factors that drive migration.

1.6 Future migration trends and possible implications

Africa is projected to have the largest population growth of any geographical region by 2050, which will have important consequences for international migration, and major implications for the continent's economic development (Statista, 2023) (see Figure 1.4). It also means that Africa will continue to have a young population that represents a much-needed labour force in countries outside the continent that have a largely ageing population. In turn, this diaspora can be leveraged towards pro-poor African development.

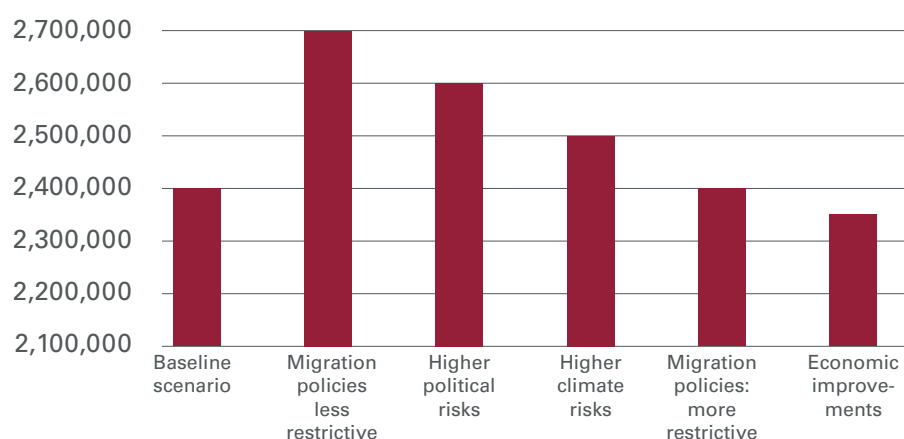
Table 1.3 Regional population change (projected), 2015–2100

Region	2015 Population	2100 Population	Population change (absolute)	Percentage change
Africa	1,186,178,282	4,386,591,069	+3,200,412,787	+270
Asia	4,393,296,014	4,888,652,982	+495,356,968	+11
Northern America	357,838,036	500,143,198	+142,305,162	+40
Latin America	634,386,567	721,128,695	+86,837,620	+14
Oceania	39,331,130	71,128,695	+31,797,565	+81
Europe	735,442,070	645,577,351	-92,864,719	-13

Adapted from Landau et al. (2018: 20) (Source UNDESA)

Even if the emigration rate from sub-Saharan Africa remained the same, the number of migrants making their way to Europe will increase in the coming decades with Frontex projecting that West African migrants will make up an increasing proportion of irregular border crossers (Landau et al., 2018). Several initiatives and partnerships have been put in place focused on addressing the root causes of migration including poverty, but this is unlikely to be effective. If anything, 'economic development in poor countries leads to more, not less, migration! The paradox is that emigration is generally higher in countries and regions that have already achieved a certain level of economic development, urbanisation and modernisation' (de Haas, 2023).

Figure 1.5 Projected Net Mobility from Africa to EU15, 2020–2029



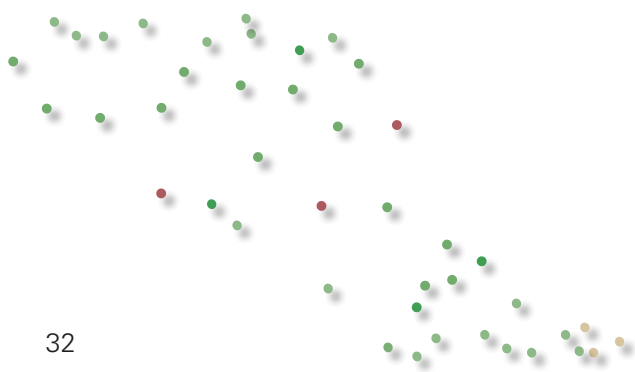
Source: Adapted from Makina and Mudungwe (2024: 93).

1.7 Conclusion

This module provides an overview of some key facts and figures about the magnitude, trends and patterns of migration in Africa, key terminology and the key migration drivers. It introduces migration in Africa against the backdrop of the importance of media practitioners and communications specialists or persons responsible for communications in CSOs/NGOs to have a good understanding of the facts and information about migration, especially if they are to contribute to policy making and public discourse in a positive way. The module seeks to equip journalists and civil society practitioners with key facts and figures that can allow them to communicate and report on migration issues in an evidence-based manner.

1.7.1 Key messages

- **Most Africans migrate to other countries within the continent.** Contrary to the popular belief that most Africans migrate to Europe, most Africans migrate to other countries within the continent.
- However, the majority of **migrants in North Africa move to Europe** and the Gulf States, while the majority of **migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa move mostly to neighbouring countries** or within their respective regions.
- **The drivers of migration** are generally described as factors or forces – internal or external to the individual(s) or the household – that **influence decisions to migrate as well as the patterns of migration.**
- **Africans are a highly mobile population** composed of refugees, labour migrants, internally displaced people, cross-border traders, irregular migrants, nomads, frontier workers, highly skilled professionals, and undocumented migrants.
- To improve migration management and policy, **it is essential that communicators use the correct terminology**, use and understand existing data sources of migration data and information.



1.8 Reliable sources of migration data

Below is a list of international organisations that are involved in collecting and collating migration data (Makina and Mushomi, 2024):

- UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs' (UNDESA's) population division which collects and collates migration data from censuses and surveys of member states
- the International Labour Organization (ILO)
- the World Bank
- the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)
- the International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- the Pew Research Centre
- the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (student mobility)
- the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (child migration)
- the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (human trafficking and migrant smuggling)
- the IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC)

Below is a list of reliable sources for migration data in Africa. The majority of these reports are updated on a regular basis, and readers are encouraged to search for the latest versions periodically.

World Migration Report (IOM, 2022): www.onlinelibrary.iihl.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/2022-IOM-World-Migration-Report.pdf [accessed 1 August 2025].

World Migration Report (IOM, 2024): world-migrationreport.iom.int/msite/wmr-2024-interactive [accessed 1 August 2025].

The 2nd Africa Migration Report – Connecting the threads: Linking policy, practice, and the welfare of the African migrant (African Union Commission/IOM, 2024) au.int/sites/default/files/documents/43660-doc-IOM_AU_Africa_Migration_Report_Second_Edition_MAR2024_web-1.pdf [accessed 1 August 2025].

The 1st Africa Migration Report – Challenging the Narrative (African Union Commission/IOM, 2020): au.int/sites/default/files/documents/39408-doc-africa-migration-report.pdf [accessed 1 August 2025].

Report on Labour Migration Statistics in Africa, Second Edition (African Union Commission, 2017): au.int/sites/default/files/documents/39323-doc-web254_184-10_english_2nd_edition_of_the_africa_labour_migration_statistics.pdf [accessed 1 August 2025].

Migration Data in the Southern African Development Community (SADC): www.migrationdataportal.org/regional-data-overview/southern-africa [accessed 1 August 2025].

Regional Migration Report for Southern Africa (IOM): Unpublished.

The State of Migration in East and Horn of Africa Report (IOM, 2022): publications.iom.int/books/state-migration-east-and-horn-africa-report-2022 [accessed 1 August 2025].

Missing Migrants Project Annual Regional Overview – Middle East and North Africa (IOM): reliefweb.int/report/world/missing-migrants-project-annual-regional-overview-middle-east-and-north-africa-january-2022-december-2022-enar [accessed 1 August 2025].

Routledge Handbook of Contemporary African Migration (Eds Daniel Makina and Dominic Pasura), 2024.

UNHCR Global Trends Report (on refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons) (2022): www.unhcr.org/global-trends-report-2022 [accessed 1 August 2025].

Below are research and higher education institutions conducting research on migration in Africa:

- African Centre for Migration & Society ([ACMS](#)), University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa.
- African Migration and Development Policy Centre ([AMADPOC](#)), Nairobi, Kenya.
- Centre for the Study of Forced Migration ([CSFM](#)), University of Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania.
- Kenyatta University Centre for Refugee Studies and Empowerment ([KU-CRSE](#)), Nairobi, Kenya.
- Scalabrini Institute for Human Mobility in Africa ([SIHMA](#)), Cape Town, South Africa.
- Centre for Migration Studies, University of Ghana, Accra, Ghana.
- Center for Migration and Refugee Studies, American University in Cairo, Cairo, Egypt.

This website also has a list of Africa-based scholars working on migration research who can be contacted as key sources:

ammodi.com/ammodi-recommends/#scholars [accessed 1 August 2025].

Readers may also find this Directory of Migration Research Institutions (DMRI) useful in connecting with institutions working on migration research the world over: public.tableau.com/app/profile/nccr.on.the.move/viz/nccronthemovedirectoryofresearchinstitutions/ResearchDirectory [accessed 1 August 2025].



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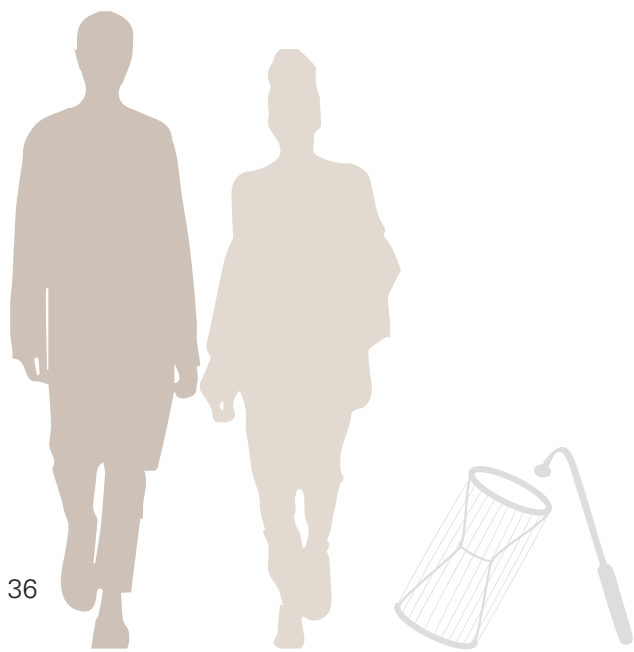
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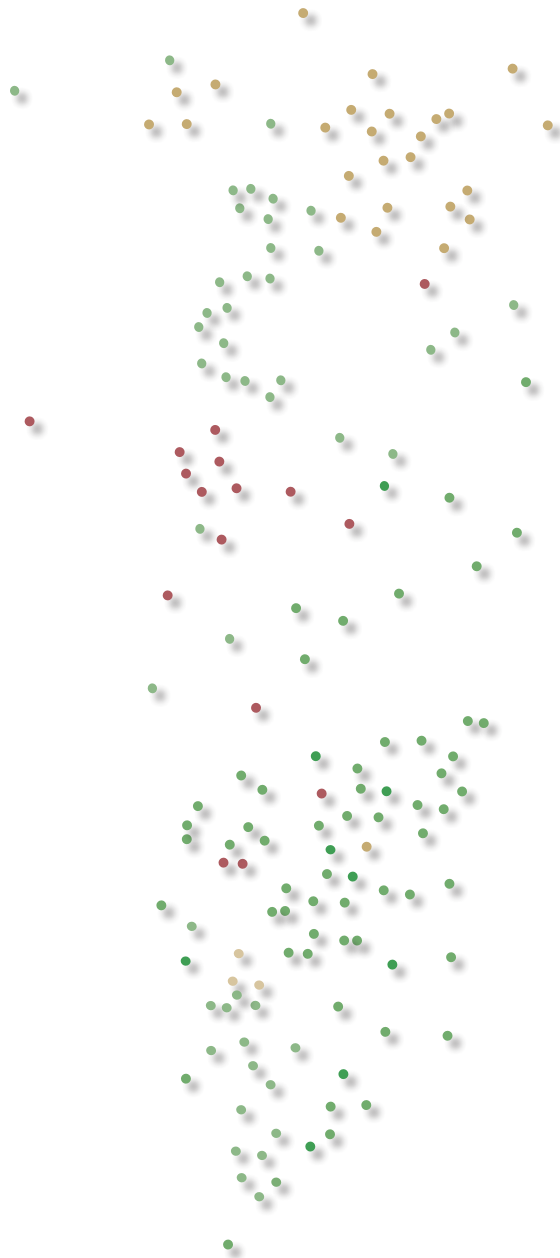
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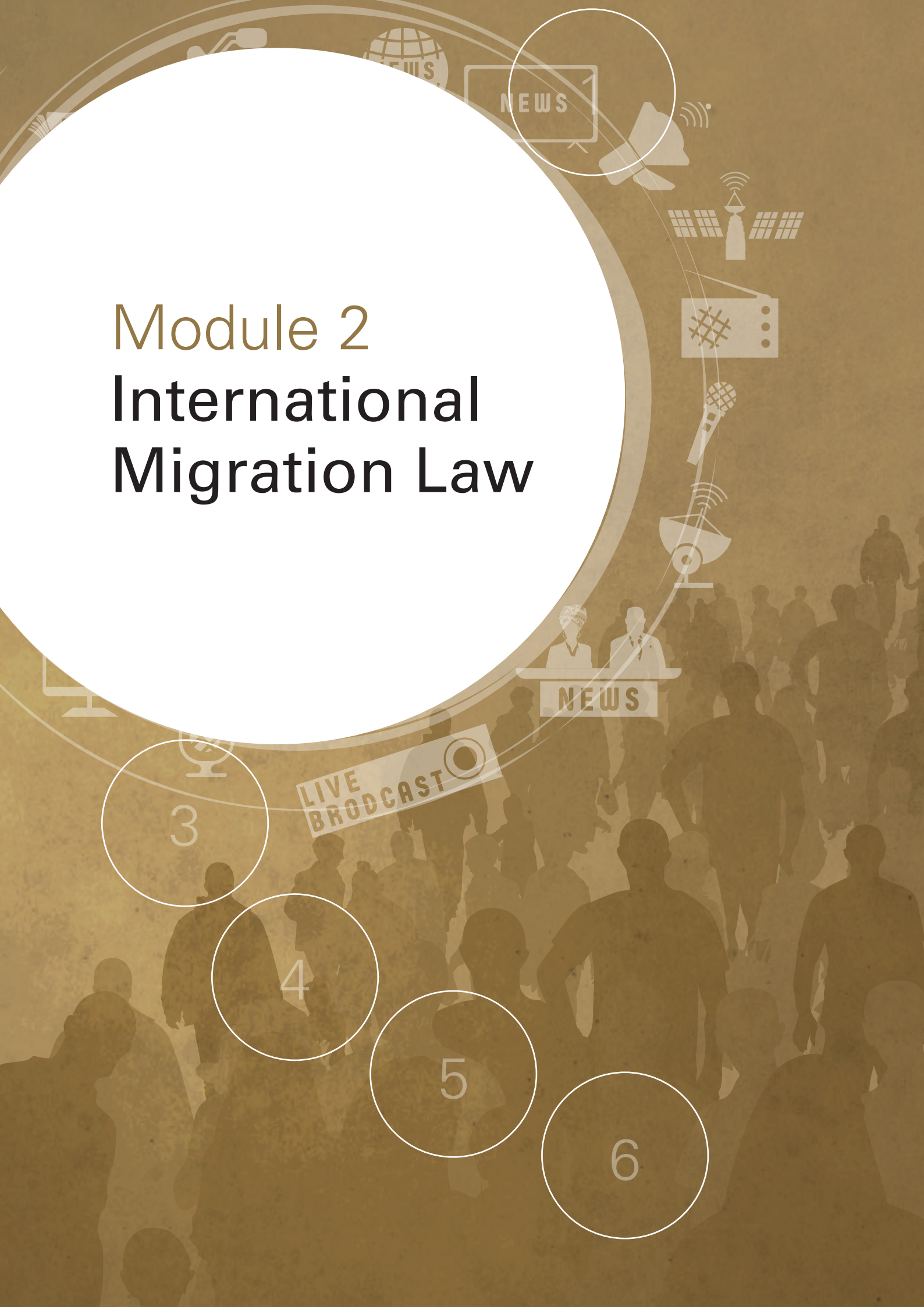
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LIVE
BROADCAST





Module 2

International Migration Law

3

LIVE
BROADCAST

4

5

6

Module overview 2

Module overview

Objective The objective of this module is to equip media practitioners and communication specialists or persons responsible for communications in CSOs and NGOs with an understanding of key terminologies and international standards that are relevant for rights-based migration discussions.

Module content

Topics covered:

- Introduction to international law
- Key migration terminology
- International migration law: sources, branches and key instruments
- Key legal principles and protections under IML
- Key instruments under African regional migration law
- Linkages between IML and regional systems
- State responsibility to respect, protect and fulfil its obligations
- Communicating on migration: importance of terminology
- Freedom of expression and media

Learning outcomes

By the end of this module, participants will be able to understand:

- the foundational concepts of international migration law (IML);
- key terminology, principles and protections under IML;
- key instruments under African regional migration law, linkages between IML and regional systems;
- state responsibility to respect, protect and fulfil its obligations; and
- the relationship between IML and communications.



Having an understanding of the international and regional legal frameworks will allow you to report on migration in a responsible and informed manner.

2.1 Introduction

International migration law is the international legal framework governing migration, derived from various sources of public international law. It consists of international frameworks, principles and norms which govern various aspects of migration, elaborate on the rights of migrants and state sovereignty and the state responsibility towards the protection of migrants.

Adherence to the international and regional legal frameworks governing migration and the resultant State obligations arising therefrom will enable States to adopt rights-based approaches in formulating migration policies at the highest levels of government.

This module is aimed at equipping communicators in CSOs and NGOs with an understanding of the international standards that are the most relevant to migration and reflect upon the needs for using rights-based language in order to contribute to an effective discussion on good governance of migration.

Therefore, this Module provides participants with an introduction to the international and regional legal framework, key terminology, principles and norms which govern migration and state responsibility towards the protection of migrants as outlined under international law.

2.2 Public international law

Public international law (PIL) or the law of nations is the set of legal rules and principles governing the relations between States, and between States and other subjects of PIL. It defines the legal responsibilities (also called obligations) of States in their conduct with each other, as well as towards individuals within their territories, across a broad range of issues, including human rights, refugees, migration, nationality, international crime, and the conduct of war, among others.

The main sources of international law are treaties, international customs, general principles of law recognised by nations and judicial decisions and doctrine.⁷ In addition, with the development of international law in the past few decades, soft law instruments are also considered as sources of international law. These are international instruments developed by States and/or international organisations, which, although not legally binding, reflect political commitments. Soft law instruments relevant to migration include, for instance, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, (1998) and, among the ones adopted more recently, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), 2018.

⁷ Article 38 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

The subjects i.e. the entities that have rights and obligations under international law and upon whom international personality is devolved, are:

- States – traditionally they were considered the subject of international law, with the capability to exercise rights/competence as well as on which the duty to respect, protect and fulfil rights of individuals was vested,
- Inter-governmental organisations such as the United Nations, and
- Other **non-State actors** also have progressively become subjects of international law, including individuals as well as other armed groups, for instance, who have obligations and responsibilities under international humanitarian law and international criminal law.

2.3 International Migration Law

International Migration Law (IML) is the international legal framework governing migration, derived from different branches of public international law which are directly or indirectly concerned with migration and are intersecting. It applies to the movement of persons within or between States and provides for:

- States' competence and obligations,
- migrants' status, rights and duties, as well as
- international cooperation.

Different actors and stakeholders, including communicators, have different roles and responsibilities to uphold the principles of international migration law.

The branches of international law that are relevant to migration include:

Figure 2.1 Branches making up international migration law



The branches of law above that make up international migration law are built on a body of core instruments and have universal application.

2.3.1 International Humanitarian Law

International humanitarian law (IHL) is a body of rules that seeks, for humanitarian reasons, to limit the effects of armed conflicts. It specifically applies during both international and non-international armed conflicts. It is also known as the law of war or the law of armed conflict and outlines the obligations of the particular duty-bearers, including the States involved and parties to the conflict, specifically non-State actors. It protects persons who are not or are no longer participating in hostilities, including migrants and restricts the means and methods of warfare by prohibiting weapons that make no distinction between combatants and civilians or weapons and methods of warfare which cause unnecessary injury, suffering and/or damage (UNOCHA, 2003).

The main sources of international humanitarian law are the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the two Additional Protocols of 1977. The most relevant instruments protecting the rights of foreigners within a territory, during an armed conflict, are:

International humanitarian law is a body of rules which seeks to limit the effects of armed conflicts.

- The 1949 Geneva Convention IV on the protection of civilians deals with the treatment and protection of aliens in the territory of a party to the conflict.⁸
- The 1977 Additional Protocols I and II, respectively on international and non-international armed conflicts, which both concern the protection of victims of these armed conflicts, who might also be migrants, and aim to prevent forced displacement.

2.3.2 International refugee law

International refugee law is the body of international treaties and customary international law that establishes standards for refugee protection. The cornerstone of refugee law is the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (Refugee Convention) and its 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees (UNHCR, 2006). These two universal instruments are complemented by regional instruments, including the 1969 Convention governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa.

The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol define the term 'refugee', outline their rights as well as enumerate the legal obligations of States to protect them. The core principle of non-refoulement, which asserts that a

⁸ Section II (Arts. 35-46), 1949 Geneva Convention IV on the protection of civilians

refugee should not be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom, is laid down in the Refugee Convention and is considered part of customary international law and therefore binding on all states. The principle applies to both return to the country of origin as well as removal to any other country where the person will face a similar risk or faces the risk of being returned to the country of origin.

The principle of non-refoulement is part of customary international law and is thereby binding on all states.

2.3.3 Nationality and statelessness law

Nationality is the legal bond between an individual and a state that confers rights and duties on both parties. The right to nationality is a fundamental human right, in the absence of which access to basic human rights becomes nearly impossible. While States are free to determine how to grant citizenship/nationality, international law places limits on States' power in this respect by:

- preventing circumstances where individuals become stateless by establishing an obligation for State Parties to grant nationality to an individual born on its territory who would otherwise be stateless (Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, 1961); and
- detailing the protection and treatment of individuals who are stateless (Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, 1954).

2.3.4 International labour law

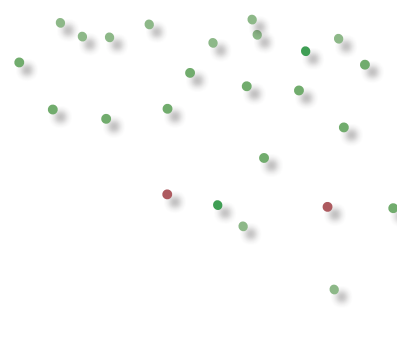
International labour law consists of laws and regulations that govern the world of work and sets down international labour standards (legally binding conventions and non-binding guidelines), developed under the auspices of the International Labour Organization (ILO). While various standards can be relevant to migrant workers, four are specifically devoted to the issue:

- Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97),
- Migration for Employment Recommendation (Revised), 1949 (No. 86),
- Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143), and
- Migrant Workers Recommendation, 1975 (No. 151).

Further, all fundamental labour law standards are applicable to migrant workers. The ILO Governing Body has designated certain conventions as fundamental to the world of work, outlining core principles and rights. The conventions cover the following aspects:

- Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining;⁹

⁹ Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87); Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).



- Elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour;¹⁰
- Abolition of child labour;¹¹
- Elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation; and¹²
- Occupational Safety and Health.¹³

It should be noted that this is not an exhaustive list and unless specifically excluded, all ILO standards are applicable to migrant workers.

2.3.5 Transnational criminal law

Transnational criminal law refers to the legal framework that deals with crime that occurs across, beyond, or through multiple countries (transnational). Of the main international legal instruments dealing with transnational crimes, the ones of significance to migration are those relevant to trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. These are:

- The UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000, and its two protocols:
 - Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, 2000.
 - Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, 2000.

2.3.6 Law of the Sea

The law of the sea is a legal framework through which States regulate their relations, rights and duties at sea. The main conventions and treaties here are specifically relevant to the protection of lives of migrants whose migration journey takes them via the sea route. Three main conventions of the law of the sea are relevant to the protection of migrants who migrate by sea:

- The 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea, which provides an obligation to rescue persons in danger at sea (Art. 98).
- The 1974 International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) and the 1979 International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR), which set out States' responsibility for establishing search and rescue operations within designated search and rescue regions/areas and ar-

¹⁰ Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) (and its 2014 Protocol); Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105).

¹¹ Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138); Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

¹² Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100); Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111).

¹³ Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155); Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187).

ranging for the disembarkation of rescued persons in a port of safety as soon as reasonably practicable.

2.3.7 Diplomatic and consular law

Countries of origin have specific obligations towards migrants who are their own nationals:

- under the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, the functions of States of origin and their diplomatic missions in the country of destination encompass the protection of its nationals (Art. 3); and
- under the 1963 Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, nationals have a right to contact and communicate with their consular authorities, especially when arrested or detained.

2.3.8 International human rights law

International human rights law lays down the obligations which States are bound to respect. Under international human rights law, States have a responsibility to respect, protect & fulfil human rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted by the UN General assembly in 1948, outlines the universal human rights principles and fundamental human rights that need to be universally protected. It has found widespread acceptance amongst states and is also the basis for the nine core human rights treaties which lay down the most important human rights available to individuals. The nine core human rights instruments are:

Table 2.1 Core human rights instruments

Human rights instruments
1. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), 1965
2. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 1966
3. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 1966
4. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979
5. Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), 1984
6. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989
7. International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICMW), 1990
8. International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CPED), 2006
9. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), 2006

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights outlines the universal human rights principles and fundamental human rights that need to be universally protected.

NEWS REPORT

Cross border migration and trade/Labour migration: 83. [In a Tunisian migration hub, asylum seekers find little support](#) (click to read)

6 November 2023, *The New Humanitarian*

The UDHR, ICCPR and the ICESCR are also together called the Bill of Rights. All these human rights treaties apply to all individuals under the jurisdiction of a State, including migrants irrespective of their migration status, and entail the obligations of the State party to respect, protect and fulfil the rights enshrined therein.

In addition, within the realm of migration, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) is the first inter-governmentally negotiated agreement, covering all dimensions of international migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner. Prepared under the auspices of the United Nations, it is a non-binding document that respects States' sovereign right to determine who enters and stays in their territory, strives to protect the human rights of migrants and demonstrates commitment to international cooperation on migration. The GCM rests on the UDHR and the nine core international human rights law instruments.

2.3.9 Regional migration law

Regional frameworks are in line with international standards and frameworks and complement these by being contextualised to the regional issues and concerns.

The rights of individuals, including migrants, are also protected at the regional level. Different regional systems are established within regional organisations: the African Union (AU), Organization of American States, the Council of Europe, the European Union, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and League of Arab States are some examples. These regional organisations have formulated key instruments which are both in line with the above mentioned international instruments and supplement them by addressing regional issues and concerns.

2.4 Key human rights instruments in Africa

2.4.1 African human rights framework

The main human rights instruments in the continent are:¹⁴

- **African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, 1981 (Banjul Charter)**

Unanimously adopted at an Organisation of African Unity (OAU) (forerunner of the AU) meeting, the Charter outlines a range of rights and duties that should always be respected, in line with internationally established core human rights treaties and standards. The African Commission was established to oversee the implementation of the charter.

¹⁴ See also [Table 3.1](#) in Module 3 which provides an overview of relevant frameworks

- **African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1990 (ACRWC)**

Ratified by 50 member states, the ACRWC outlines rights and obligations with respect to children in line with the CRC, and, having regard to the Africa cultural context, also addresses specific protection issues and provides for a higher threshold of protection. Migrant children are put in vulnerable situations throughout the migration journey. Protection issues include separation, unaccompanied travel, obstacles for family reunification, vulnerability to violence including physical, emotional and sexual. Under the ACRWC, States are responsible for a broad set of rights of children under the age of 18. It covers virtually every aspect of a child's life – including rights to a name and registration at birth, nationality, health, education, family reunification etc.

- **Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, 2003 (Maputo Protocol)**

A comprehensive instrument outlining the civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights, and group rights of women. It has been ratified by 44 states and provides for the protection of asylum-seeking and refugee women.

The bodies overseeing the effective implementation of these treaties are:

- **African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)**

Established under the Banjul Charter, its mandate is to protect and promote human rights by addressing inter-state and individual complaints on violations of the Banjul Charter.

- **The African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Court)**

Established through a Protocol to the Banjul Charter, its mandate is to interpret and apply the Charter, the Court's Protocol and any other human rights treaty ratified by the state concerned, based on complaints received from the African Commission, African inter-governmental organisations and States that have ratified the Protocol. The Court also can provide advisory opinions based on requests from Member States, the AU, AU organs and entities recognised by the AU.

In addition, there are special mechanisms established by the Commission (ACHPR) including special rapporteurs, working groups and committees, that examine specific issues including, migration, refugee rights and rights of internally displaced persons.

2.4.2 African legal frameworks for the protection of different categories of migrants

i Protection of refugees and asylum seekers

The Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, 1969, is the regional legal instrument governing refugee protection in Africa and has been ratified by 46 states. The definition of a refugee is wider than the 1951 Convention.¹⁵ Under the AU Convention, the term ‘refugee’ is extended to also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination, or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his or her place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside their country of origin or nationality (ACHPR, 1995).

ii Protection of displaced persons

The African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, 2009 (Kampala Convention) is the world’s first regional instrument that legally binds governments to provide protection for the rights and well-being of those forced to flee due to conflict, violence, natural disasters, and human rights abuses and who have not crossed into a State outside their country of origin or habitual residence. A total of 33 countries have ratified the convention.

iii For the free movement of persons

Through the treaty Establishing the African Economic Community, 1991 (Abuja Treaty), State Parties agreed to the ‘gradual removal ... of obstacles to the free movement of persons ... and the right of residence and establishment,’ through individual, bi-lateral and sub-regional measures.

In 2018, the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (AU Free Movement Protocol) was codified. There are presently 32 signatories to the protocol and 4 ratifications. It requires 15 ratifications to enter into force.

¹⁵ ‘Any person who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear or for reasons other than personal convenience, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable or, owing to such fear or for reasons other than personal convenience, is unwilling to return to it.’ Art 1(2) of the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, 1967 read with Art 1(A)(2) of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951.

In addition, at the continental level, several Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have established their own free movement agreements.

- ECOWAS: Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment, 1979
- EAC: Protocol on the Establishment of the East African Community Common Market (the Common Market Protocol), 2009
- Southern African Development Community's (SADC) Protocol on Facilitation of the Movement of Persons, 2005
- IGAD: Protocol on free movement of persons (and transhumance) by decision of the IGAD Council of Ministers on 24 June 2021

The other RECs – COMESA, CENSAD, ECCAS and UMA – continue to consider the adoption of legal instruments that will allow and facilitate free movement of persons in their respective regions. Further, in addition to the African Court, several of the RECs have also established their own courts.

2.5 Major principles of fundamental human rights

Human rights are the fundamental rights that every person enjoys regardless of his or her nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. These rights empower individuals to live a life of dignity and protect them from State actions that would interfere with their enjoyment of these rights. They are universal legal guarantees protecting individuals and groups against actions and omissions that interfere with fundamental freedoms, entitlements, and human dignity.

Human rights are often expressed and guaranteed by law in the form of treaties, customary international law, general principles, and other sources of international law. At the international level, the main human rights guarantees are reflected in the nine core human rights treaties, including the Bill of Rights.

The core principles of human rights are as follows, and are reflected in the UDHR (UNHRC, 1984):

- **Human dignity.** Every human being possesses an intrinsic worth that needs to be respected.
- **Universality and inalienability.** Human rights apply to everyone and cannot be taken away or limited, except in specific situations and according to due process.

- **Interdependency and indivisibility.** Progress in one human right directly affects others. As such, they are all indivisible and interrelated.
- **Equality and non-discrimination.** Human rights are available to all individuals and prohibit any discrimination based on any grounds. They apply thus to migrants on equal basis with nationals.

2.6 Derogation vs limitation of right¹⁶

Not all human rights receive the same level of protection. Some are absolute and non-derogable. In the case of some rights, States can derogate or restrict/limit some of their obligations.

It is critical to differentiate between rights that may be derogated from, subject to provisions in treaties and/or national laws, and rights that are non-derogable, such as right to life, freedom from torture, or freedom from slavery (list in section 1.6.1).

Limitations: States can limit the scope of exercising a right. The conditions for such limitations are usually laid out in the respective treaty that enshrines the right, for example, the right to freedom of expression under Article 19 of the ICCPR. This freedom may be limited by a State in certain circumstances, for instance, respect for the rights or reputations of others, for the protection of national security or public order, or public health or morals.

Some key due process guarantees established for limiting a right include that such limitations are: **provided by law** i.e. national law, are not arbitrary or unreasonable and provide legal safeguards; prescribed in line with the relevant treaty provision; are necessary i.e. such limitations are to respond to a pressing public need, pursue a legitimate aim and the action is proportionate to achieving such aim; in a **democratic society** i.e. any such limitation should not adversely affect the democratic functioning of the country.

Derogation: International human rights law also recognises that States have the power to defend/protect their own security as an essential feature of state sovereignty. Derogation of a right is the suspension of a right for a certain period of time, subject to very specific conditions. According to Article 4 of the ICCPR, derogation must only be resorted to in exceptional circumstances, i.e., real and imminent public emergency which threatens the life of the nation, to the extent strictly required by the exigencies of the situation and should not be applied discriminately, i.e., on the ground of race, colour, sex, language, religion or social origin (UNHRC, 2001). However, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights contains no derogation provision.

¹⁶ UN Commission on Human Rights, The Siracusa Principles on the Limitation and Derogation Provisions in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 28 September 1984, E/CN.4/1985/4, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/4672bc122.html> (accessed 3 August 2023).

2.6.1 Rights that are non-derogable

Non-derogable rights, also known as absolute rights, are fundamental human rights that cannot be suspended or restricted even in situations of emergencies as mentioned above. **States have an obligation to always respect, protect and fulfil the following rights:**

- right to life;
- freedom from torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and from medical or scientific experimentation without free consent;
- freedom from slavery or involuntary servitude;
- no imprisonment merely on the ground of inability to fulfil a contractual obligation;
- the right not to be convicted or sentenced to a heavier penalty by virtue of retroactive criminal legislation;
- the right to recognition as a person before the law;
- freedom of thought, conscience and religion;
- prohibition of genocide;
- prohibition against arbitrary detention;
- prohibition against racial discrimination; and the
- principle of non-refoulement (UNHRC, 2001).

NEWS REPORT

Cross border migration and trade: [124.](#)
[Human trafficking and trade – a growing threat for Africa](#)
 (click to read)

30 July 2024,
 DW

2.7 Human rights of migrants

Human rights are available to all individuals (UNHRC, 1984). States have the obligation to respect, protect and fulfil these rights for all persons within their territory, both its own citizens as well as migrants, including migrants in an irregular situation.

All fundamental human rights are applicable to all migrants. A non-exhaustive list of rights that are available to migrants, throughout the migration journey, include:

- right to life,
- right to nationality,
- right to liberty and security of person,
- right to leave any country, including his/her own, and to return to his/her country,
- right to seek asylum,
- right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state (for persons in a regular situation),
- right to family life (unity and reunification),
- right to privacy,
- right of access to justice,

- right to information,
- right to work and to the enjoyment of just and favourable working conditions,
- right to education,
- right to health,
- right to housing, and
- right to consular access.

Further, there are other important IML norms and principles essential to ensure the protection of the rights of migrants such as:

- freedom from slavery and involuntary servitude,
- freedom from torture and cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment,
- right to equality before the law and non-discrimination,
- principle of non-refoulement,
- prohibition of arbitrary detention and prohibition of arbitrary and collective expulsion, which are considered as *jus cogens* (non-derogable), and others such as
 - the principle of best interest of the child,
 - non-penalisation of irregular entry,
 - search rescue and assistance, which are essential for the protection of the rights of migrants (OHCHR, 2018).

Non-refoulement: This principle prohibits States from extraditing, deporting, expelling or otherwise returning a person to a country where his or her life or freedom would be threatened, or where there are substantial grounds for believing that they would risk being subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, or would be in danger of being subjected to enforced disappearance, or of suffering other irreparable harm. A key customary norm, it has its origins in Article 33 of the 1951 Refugee Convention and is also reflected in other human rights treaties (UNHRC, 1984). The majority of the UN Member States are party to one or more treaties explicitly endorsing the principle of non-refoulement. Examples of risks involved in such cases, include but are not limited to: torture, and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; denial of the right to a fair trial; violations to the rights to life, integrity and/or freedom of the person; sexual and gender-based violence; death penalty; female genital mutilation; prolonged solitary confinement; violations of economic, social and cultural rights (OHCHR, 2018).

Prohibition of collective expulsion: Collective expulsions of individuals from a territory are discriminatory as they have not been provided an opportunity to be individually assessed, which is considered a discriminatory practice.

Prohibition of arbitrary detention: A deprivation of liberty is considered arbitrary when it is not prescribed by law and is not proportional to the aim sought, reasonable and necessary. Detention during migration proceedings

must be an exceptional measure, i.e., alternatives to detention are preferred. If resorted to during migration proceedings, detention must be justified, reasonable, necessary, proportionate and permissible only for the shortest period of time and must be subject to review. In addition, detention of children for immigration-related purposes is considered a child rights violation and as such children should never be detained for migration-related purposes.

2.7.1 Migrants in a vulnerable situation

While migrants inherently are not vulnerable, they can be considered to be in vulnerable situations.

Migrants in vulnerable situations are persons who are unable to effectively enjoy their human rights, are at increased risk of violations and abuse and who, accordingly, are entitled to call on a duty bearer's heightened duty of care.

Factors that generate vulnerability may cause a migrant to leave their country of origin in the first place, may occur during transit or at destination, regardless of whether the original movement was freely chosen, or may be related to a migrant's identity or circumstances (UNHCHR, 2018). In order to respect, protect and fulfil their human rights obligations, States must give due consideration to the vulnerable situations of migrants.

Migrant women, children, migrant workers can all be, subject to their specific circumstances, in a vulnerable situation.

2.7.2 Migrants in an irregular situation

An irregular or undocumented migrant is an individual not authorised to enter, to stay and to engage in a remunerated activity in the State pursuant to the law of that State and to international agreements to which that State is a party. Migrants can be in irregular situations, either because of entering the country irregularly, residing in the country irregularly or being employed in the country irregularly.

While a wide array of terms is used to refer to migrants who do not have the required legal documentation or authorisation to enter and/or reside within a given territory, including illegal, unauthorised, undocumented, non-compliant, prohibited and irregular, the international community has, on several occasions, encouraged the use of the terms 'undocumented' or 'irregular' as an alternative to the term 'illegal' (UNGA, 2018).¹⁷ The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3449 (Measures to Ensure the Human Rights and Dig-

¹⁷ www.unhcr.org/cy/wp-content/uploads/sites/41/2018/09/TerminologyLeaflet_EN_PICUM.pdf

NEWS REPORT

Migration data:

99.
[Refugees, migrants face violence, abuse and death on routes across Africa, new data shows](#)
(click to read)

5 July 2024,
UN News

A mistake often made is referring to migrants in irregular situations as irregular migrants. A person cannot be irregular, but a situation can be.

nity of All Migrant Workers (9 December 1975)) recognised the term ‘undocumented’ or ‘irregular’ for migrants who are in an irregular situation in the country. The term ‘irregular’ is preferable to ‘illegal’ because no human being can be illegal, and the latter carries a criminal connotation. It is undermining of their dignity and weakens respect for the human rights of migrants.

Migrants in an irregular situation are a migrant group in a vulnerable situation who are at a heightened risk of violations and are unable to effectively enjoy their rights. States have the obligation to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of all persons within their territory, irrespective of their migration status and thus have the obligation towards migrants in an irregular situation as well.

Most irregular migrants are not criminals – they are in a country without the necessary documents and, in most countries, this is a violation of administrative regulations and not a criminal offence. There is a consensus among the UN bodies that criminalising migration can subsequently lead to human rights violations such as refoulement or arbitrary detention.

2.7.3 Obstacles to accessing rights

Despite the broad range of rights envisaged under international law, migrants still remain vulnerable to rights violations as well as an inability to access available rights. This can be attributed to:

- lack of familiarity with the legislative and policy framework of the country of destination or employment;
- linguistic and cultural barriers;
- discriminatory laws, policies and practices;
- lack of firewalls, i.e., measures to separate immigration enforcement activities from public service provisions;
- racial hatred, discrimination, and xenophobia; and
- social exclusion.

2.8 State responsibility

State sovereignty conferred upon states under international law gives them power to manage migration (including at borders). States enjoy wide discretion in deciding who is allowed to enter the country and who is allowed to stay. However, States are limited by international law with respect to certain aspects of migration, particularly when these aspects involve the rights of migrants. Thus, States must exercise their powers in full respect of international commitments, specifically in relation to the rights of migrants.

In accordance with Objective 11 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), States have committed 'to manage our national borders in a coordinated manner, promoting bilateral and regional cooperation, ensuring security for States, communities and migrants, and facilitating safe and regular cross-border movements of people while preventing irregular migration. We further commit to implement border management policies that respect national sovereignty, the rule of law, obligations under international law, human rights of all migrants, regardless of their migration status, and are non-discriminatory, gender-responsive and child-sensitive.'

2.8.1 Respect, protect and fulfil human rights

By becoming parties to international treaties, States assume obligations and duties under international law to respect, protect and fulfil human rights.

The obligation to respect: States have an obligation to respect human rights, i.e., States must not interfere or curtail the enjoyment of human rights and must not take actions that violate the rights of individuals.

The obligation to protect: States have an obligation to protect an individual's human rights from being violated by other third parties including other individuals, companies, and other non-State entities. In the event of such violations, States have the obligation to investigate and prosecute the relevant actors and provide redress to the victim.

The obligation to fulfil: States must take positive action to facilitate the enjoyment of basic human rights, i.e., take measures nationally to realise the rights of individuals.

This together can be referred to as a human rights-based approach to migration governance.

2.9 Communicating on migration: Importance of terminology

There is a plethora of terms used to describe migrants and various categories of migrant persons. Terms are often used, especially in common parlance, without much reflection on the implications of their use. For example, the terms migrant, foreigner, non-national, alien, expatriate are often heard being used interchangeably to refer to migrants.

Usage of correct terminology aims to contextualise objectively the situation of an individual and to ensure that there is an accurate understanding among actors working in the field of migration. It also plays a pivotal role in shaping the perceptions about individuals. Negative perceptions can lead to acts of

discrimination and xenophobia, marginalisation and alienation of individuals within society, as well as to rights violations.

This section explains the legally defined categories of migrants and terminology under international law as well as neutral terms used within the migration space. Creating uniformity in language is a fundamental starting point in the migration discourse, especially in reaching a common understanding about the underlying rights of migrants and the corresponding obligations of States, support States in better fulfilling their human rights obligations towards migrants and have a positive impact on State and public perceptions and practices in the context of migration.

There are several legally defined terms with respect to migration. These include:

migrant worker	refugee	internally displaced person	statelessness
migrant in an documented or regular situation	migrant in an undocumented or irregular situation	irregular entry	country of origin
country of employment	country of transit	non-refoulement	forced labour or compulsory work
worst forms of child labour	trafficking in human beings/ persons	smuggling of migrants	

➔ See also
[‘Glossary of terms’](#)

Please refer to the IOM Glossary¹⁸ for the correct definitions for these terms.

¹⁸ IOM, International Migration Law: Glossary on Migration, 2019. This document was published to address variations and inconsistent vocabulary when States and other actors are speaking about migration. This is done by providing definitions of migration-relevant terms, based on binding international instruments.

Migration covers a wide range of issues such as labour migration, mixed migration, irregular migration, smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons, search and rescue at sea, sustainable development, skills mobility, remittances, family reunification, to name a few. While communicating on such a vast array of topics, it is important it is done on neutral and factual grounds. This section furnishes some key terms that are foundational while communicating on migration:

National

“A person having a legal bond with a State.”

It is a term that is used interchangeably with the word ‘citizen’ to denote a person who has the nationality or citizenship of a given State.

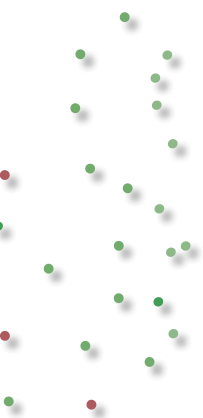
Migrant

The term migrant is not defined under international law. The International Organization for Migration has a working definition for migrants:

*“An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a **person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons.** The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students.”*

It is an inclusivist definition and intends to cover all persons who have moved away from their usual place of residence temporarily or permanently for any reason and can include migrant workers and members of their families, students and trainees, internally displaced persons, refugees and asylum seekers, unaccompanied and separated migrant children, victims of trafficking, smuggled migrants, diaspora and environmental migrants.

While many of the above-mentioned categories have specific legal definitions under various international legal frameworks and standards, the term migrant can be used as a general reference when communicating as it is an inclusivist definition and as such has a general set of rights associated with it that is available to all who come within the ambit of this term.



However, when specific terminology needs to be used, for instance, when an individual has been recognised as a refugee or is a migrant worker, then it needs to be ensured that such a term is used. This is because, in addition to the general set of rights that are available to them as migrants, persons who are identified as such have specific rights and States have specific duties towards such individuals, under the relevant legal regimes.

It is to be noted that the terms foreigner, non-national or non-citizen are sometimes also used to refer to individuals who have crossed international borders and are no longer in their countries of origin. Sometimes the term 'alien' is also used, even in domestic legal settings. However, given that the term 'alien' implies a sense of 'otherness' and tends to have negative connotations, preference is given to using terms such as 'non-nationals' or 'migrants'.

Migrants in an irregular situation

A person who moves or has moved across an international border and is not authorised to enter or to stay in a State pursuant to the law of that State and to international agreements to which that State is a party.

With respect to individuals who are in a country without having the proper authorisation (documentation) to enter or stay in a country, the international community encourages referring to such individuals as migrants in an irregular situation.

Though in many contexts across the global, the term 'illegal migrant' has been used, the international community prefers more neutral terms such as migrant in an irregular situation.

United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3449 (Measures to Ensure the Human Rights and Dignity of All Migrant Workers (9 December 1975)) recognised that the term 'illegal' should not be used to define migrants in an irregular situation. It is inaccurate to refer to a person as 'illegal' as no human being can be illegal. The term 'irregular' is preferable to 'illegal' because the latter carries a criminal connotation, is against migrants' dignity and undermines the respect of the human rights of migrants.¹⁹

Mixed movements (mixed migration)

A movement in which a number of people are travelling together, generally in an irregular manner, using the same routes and means of transport, but for different reasons. People travelling

¹⁹ IOM Glossary 2019, publications.iom.int/books/international-migration-law-ndeg34-glossary-migration

as part of mixed movements have varying needs and profiles and may include asylum seekers, refugees, trafficked persons, unaccompanied/separated children, and migrants in an irregular situation.

Mixed movements is referred to in cases where large numbers of people are travelling together using the same transportation and routes. It is preferable to use the term mixed movements instead of terms such as 'mass migration' or 'mass migration flows', as it conveys the fact that there are different groups of people with different vulnerabilities and needs moving together, and as such require individualised assessment.

Brain drain

Depletion of human capital in a specific occupation or economic sector resulting from the emigration of skilled workers engaged in this occupation or sector from the country of origin to another country (or from one region of a country to another – internal migration).

It is not a term that is defined under international law.

Though the term is widely used, it also reflects the negative connotation attached to the emigration of highly skilled workers from countries of origin.

It should be noted that this type of migration may be a result of lack of opportunities in countries of origin. Conversely, the migration may also have a positive impact on countries of origin including via knowledge transfer and social remittances.²⁰ A more encompassing and positive framework for discussing terms such as brain drain/gain/waste/circulation is to use the term 'skills' instead, such as skills development, skills matching, skills recognition and skills transfer.

Environmental migrant

A person or group(s) of persons who, predominantly for reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are forced to leave their places of habitual residence, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move within or outside their country of origin or habitual residence.

²⁰ The idea of brain drain is connected to human capital (knowledge and skills) and as such we simultaneously talk about knowledge transfer and social remittances as social remittances is the transfer of ideas, behaviours, identities and social capital from migrants to their communities of origin.

There is again no definition under international law and no international agreement on a term to describe persons or groups of persons who move due to environmental factors. This is a working definition used by the IOM.

Though the terms climate/environmental refugee have been used to highlight the conditions that force individuals to move as a result of environment change, it is to be noted that the definition of refugee does not currently cover this aspect. The current definition of a refugee refers purely to movements resulting from

a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion

or in the African continent, movements also resulting from

external aggression, occupation, foreign domination, or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality.

Furthermore, individuals who move as a result of environmental degradation may not necessarily cross an international border and as such, might not fall within the definition of a refugee. To avoid confusion, the term ‘environmental migrant’ or ‘displaced person’ may be used instead.

The above set of terms discussed in this section are not ones that are defined in either international or regional legal frameworks. However, these definitions have been adapted from existing international standards and reflect a neutral terminology to shape perceptions of migration realities and to accurately define realities and rights associated therein.

2.10 Freedom of expression and the media²¹

Freedom of expression is an important and fundamental human right that includes freedom of the press and the protection of the rights of journalists and other media workers. According to the Human Rights Committee, ‘a free, uncensored and unhindered press or other media’ is one of the cornerstones of a democratic society and States are encouraged to have independent and diverse media, with editorial freedom and freedom to carry out their legitimate activities.²²

²¹ See also Global Migration Media Academy, Protection and Safety of Journalists, www.mediamigrationacademy.org/course/coe.

²² UN Human Rights Committee (HRC), General comment no. 34, Article 19, Freedoms of opinion and expression, CCPR/C/GC/34, 12 September 2011.

Art. 19 of the ICCPR provides for freedom of expression, including the right to seek and receive information and to impart information orally, in writing or in print or any other media. Art. 19 (2) highlights the right of access to information, specifically held by public authorities. This includes the right of media to have access to this information and inform public opinion and the right of the public to have access to media output.²³

States can limit freedom of expression, but only to the extent necessary to respect the rights of others or the reputation of others as well as to protect national security, public order or public health. This is provided for in Art. 19(3) of the ICCPR. According to the Human Rights Committee, any framework for regulating the media must be in line with Art. 19(3). As mentioned above, such limitation needs to fulfil the criteria of legality, necessity and proportionality. Accordingly, such restriction must be for the specific content and must not be a generic ban on the media or print outlet or site. Further, penalisation of media outlets or journalists solely for criticism of a government or its policies is not considered as a necessary limitation in line with Art. 19 (3) of the ICCPR.²⁴

2.11 Conclusion

This module has discussed the framework of international migration law that provides for the rights of migrants, the obligation of States to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of migrants, the importance of using rights-based terminology when communicating on migration and being objective when providing context about the situation of an individual. The module has also covered the protection of media practitioners and other communication specialists working for CSOs and NGOs envisaged under international law.

Media practitioners and communications specialists working on migration play a critical role in communicating balanced, genuine and accurate stories about migration. In order to properly fulfil this role and provide much needed context, it is important for media practitioners and communication specialists to be aware of internationally agreed standards and principles, including on the rights of migrants, the duties and obligations of States and the relevant terminology. These standards reflect the will of states and can be barometers for understanding compliance, gaps in implementation and the consequent effects on individuals and communities.

²³ UN Human Rights Committee (HRC), General comment no. 34, Article 19, Freedoms of opinion and expression, CCPR/C/GC/34, 12 September 2011.

²⁴ UN Human Rights Committee (HRC), General comment no. 34, Article 19, Freedoms of opinion and expression, CCPR/C/GC/34, 12 September 2011.

2.11.1 Key messages

- International migration law is the international legal framework, governing migration, deriving from various sources of public international law.
- The branches of law that are relevant to migration include:
 - international human rights law,
 - international labour law,
 - International Humanitarian Law,
 - Law of the Sea,
 - transnational criminal law,
 - consular and diplomatic law,
 - international refugee law, and
 - nationality and statelessness law.
- Protection of the rights of migrants as well as State obligations under international migration law are further complemented by the regional legal frameworks.
- **Human rights are applicable to all human beings including migrants irrespective of their migration status.**
- There are non-derogable rights and principles that are applicable to all stages of the migration journey and to all migrants, including the principles of non-refoulement, prohibition of collective expulsion and prohibition of arbitrary detention.
- States have the right to manage migration and secure their borders in line with the principle of State sovereignty. However, States must exercise their powers in full respect of international commitments under various treaties and conventions.
- States have the obligation to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of all individuals within their jurisdiction including ALL migrants, irrespective of their migration status as well as the respective obligations arising from various treaties under international migration law that the States are party to.
- Usage of correct terminology aims to contextualise objectively the situation of an individual and to ensure that there is an accurate understanding among actors working in the field of migration or reporting on migration.
- Use of correct terminology also ensures that negative perceptions are not communicated.
- Freedom of expression is an important fundamental human right that encompasses media freedom and access to information. States may limit freedom of expression, but only under very strict conditions.

2.12 Core readings and resources

International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families: ICRMW – (1990). Adopted by General Assembly resolution 45/158 of 18 December 1990. Available at www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cmww.aspx [accessed 1 August 2025].

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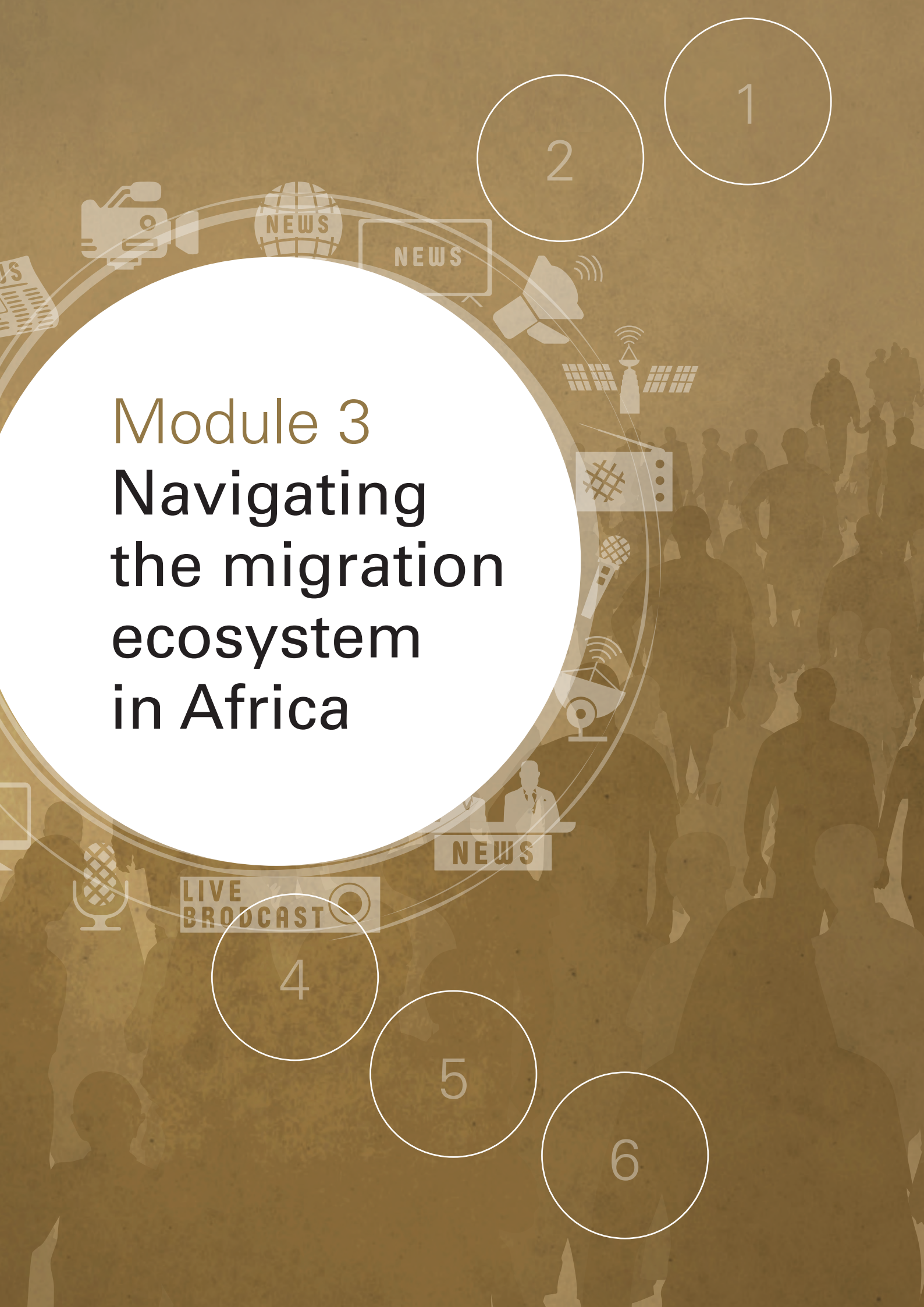
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United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: UNHCR- (1998). Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, 1998. Available at, www.unhcr.org/protection/idps/43ce1cff2/guiding-principles-internal-displacement.html [accessed 1 August 2025].

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: UNHCR – (2000). Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Available at, www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/protocoltraffickinginpersons.aspx [accessed 1 August 2025].

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: UNHCR – (2018) Principles and Practical Guidance on the Protection of the Human Rights of Migrants in Vulnerable Situations, Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Human Rights Council. Available at digitallibrary.un.org/record/1472491?ln=en [accessed 1 August 2025].

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The background is a solid brown color. It features a large, faint circular path that winds across the page. Along this path are various white icons representing media and technology: a video camera, a globe with the word 'NEWS', a television screen with 'NEWS', a satellite dish, a satellite in orbit, a radio tower, a microphone, a person at a news desk with 'NEWS', a 'LIVE BROADCAST' sign with a play button icon, and another microphone. In the lower right area, there is a large, faint silhouette of a crowd of people. Six white circles are scattered around the page, each containing a number from 1 to 6.

Module 3

Navigating the migration ecosystem in Africa

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Module overview 3

Module overview

Objective This module will equip media practitioners and communication specialists or persons responsible for communications in CSOs/NGOs with knowledge on the migration ecosystem in Africa.

Module content Topics covered:

- Migration architecture in Africa
- Africa's response to migration (migration protocols and frameworks)
- Common African Position on Migration and Development
- African priority areas/issues
- Key stakeholders in the migration environment

Learning outcomes By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- understand migration governance systems in Africa;
- outline the AU migration governance frameworks;
- explain the Common African Position on Migration and Development;
- understand the African priority areas and their evolution over time; and
- identify key stakeholders in the migration policy and institutional environment.

3.1 Introduction and background

This module focuses on migration governance in Africa, specifically on the two key aspects of migration governance in a country, that is, the policy/legal instruments and institutional arrangements for managing migration. These provide the facilitatory and regulatory framework for migration, and the institutional arrangements to implement and monitor the implementation of said frameworks. In this regard, this module looks at migration policy and legal instruments at both continental and regional levels, and examines the institutional arrangements for managing migration at national and continental levels.

At the continental level, the AU Commission promulgates broad-based migration policies, guidelines and protocols that guide Member States and RECs in developing their own migration policies/legal frameworks in accordance with their own priorities and resources. It has the institutional arrangements that ensure the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the said policies/legal frameworks by Member States and RECs.

The landscape of migration governance involves actors at the continental and regional levels, as well as at the local levels, including CSOs and NGOs.

RECs, international organisations, media, CSOs, NGOs, and the private sector also contribute to migration governance and need to be engaged in the planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation phases of migration governance.

The role of RECs in migration governance lies in the regional coordination and harmonisation of migration-related standards, policies, initiatives, and laws, among their Member States. Moreover, they are well placed to identify regional trends and enhance regional cooperation through regional policies, dialogue processes, capacity building and programmes.

CSOs and NGOs have a role to play through their grassroots initiatives and direct contact with communities. Their access to communities can be used to gather important information on the impact of migration policies and initiatives, and how they can be improved.

International organisations contribute to migration governance through the technical assistance and capacity building they provide to the actors engaged in the migration governance process, including government agencies and RECs.

The private sector benefits from labour migration, and can contribute to migration and development in a number of ways, such as encouraging labour mobility through international work opportunities, and attracting investments from the diaspora for business opportunities. It is therefore important to involve them in migration governance processes, to ensure that they meet the necessary standards in their provision of services to migrants, and to learn from their experiences on how migration policies can be improved to facilitate migration management and development.



The media plays a similar role to that of CSOs and NGOs, and is an important stakeholder that ensures dissemination of migration-related information as well as complementing the whole migration management process.

3.2 Definition of migration governance

Migration governance is defined by the IOM as the traditions and institutions by which a country exercises authority on migration, mobility and nationality, including the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies in these areas. In other words, it is a 'system of institutions, legal frameworks, mechanisms, and practices aimed at regulating migration and protecting migrants' (IOM, 2015). Agenda 2030 calls for effective migration governance in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10, which urges countries to reduce inequality within and among countries by facilitating orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies. Thus, migration governance encompasses national laws, policies and practices, bilateral and regional cooperation and intergovernmental arrangements or schemes as well as international cooperation.

Migration governance is a system of institutions, legal frameworks, mechanisms, and practices aimed at regulating migration and protecting migrants.

3.3 Africa's response to migration

3.3.1 Continental migration policy frameworks

Cognizant that well-managed migration has substantial positive impact for the development of countries of origin as well as countries of destination, and further recognizing that mismanaged or unmanaged migration can have negative consequences for the welfare of both host States and migrants, including the potential destabilizing effect on national and regional security, the African Union Commission and RECs have adopted several protocols, conventions and policy frameworks to responsibly manage migration within Africa and beyond (see [Table 3.1](#)).

Table 3.1 Summary of the African Union migration policy frameworks

Year	Framework	Aim
1969	<u>OUA Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of the Refugee Problem in Africa</u>	Developed in response to the large movements of refugees as a consequence of civil wars, inter-state conflicts and border conflicts.
1991	<u>Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (Abuja Treaty)</u>	Encouraged regional integration for economic development, including a Protocol on the Free Movement of People.
2006	<u>The Joint Africa-EU Declaration on Migration and Development</u>	Seeks to establish a partnership between countries of origin, transit and destination to better manage migration in a comprehensive, holistic and balanced way, emphasising shared responsibility and cooperation.
2009	AU Commission Initiative against Trafficking (AU.COMMIT)	Galvanises activity undertaken by the AU Commission on human trafficking.
2009	<u>Convention for the Protection and Assistance of IDPs in Africa (Kampala Convention)</u>	Promotes and strengthens regional measures to tackle the root causes of internal displacement; and establishes a legal framework to prevent internal displacement and provide assistance and protection to IDPs.
2015	<u>Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP)</u>	An AU-led initiative supported by the ILO, the IOM and UNECA conceived as a global initiative to ensure effective labour migration and mobility in Africa.
2015	Joint Valletta Action Plan for the EU-AU Partnership on Migration	Highlights the imperative of protecting and saving the lives of migrants and addressing the humanitarian consequences, as well as dealing with the security challenges of affected countries.
2018	<u>Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment</u>	Seeks to overcome the current situation where many African citizens experience difficulty to cross borders on their own continent.
2018	<u>Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018-2030)</u>	A comprehensive policy guideline to assist government and RECs in the formulation and implementation of migration policies. It was adopted in 2006 and revised in 2017.
2022	Policy on the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons in Africa	Provides Member States and RECs with a harmonised approach in the prevention of trafficking in persons on the continent. It supersedes the 2006 'Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings especially Women and Children'.
2022	Policy on the Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants in Africa	Provides Member States and RECs with a harmonised approach in the prevention of migrant smuggling in Africa. It supersedes the 2006 'Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings especially Women and Children'.

3.3.1.1 The Common African Position on Migration and Development (CAPMD)

Cognizant of the nexus between migration and development, and the potential positive impact of the former on the latter, the AU Summit of July 2006 adopted the African Common Position on Migration and Development (ACPMD), which in 2023-2024 was revised and renamed the Common African Position on Migration and Development (CAPMD). The CAPMD prioritises eight thematic areas and nine cross-cutting issues.

African priorities in the Revised CAPMD

In 2024, the AU adopted the revised CAPMD to reflect the current African position on migration and development. Guided by the MPFA and the GCM, eight key thematic areas and seven cross-cutting issues have been proposed to underpin the revised CAPMD. In outline, these are:

- Thematic area 1 – Migration governance
- Thematic area 2 – Labour migration and education
- Thematic area 2 – Diaspora engagement and remittances
- Thematic area 4 – Border governance
- Thematic area 5 – Irregular migration
- Thematic area 6 – Forced displacement
- Thematic area 7 – Internal migration
- Thematic area 8 – Migration, trade and the movement of people

Cross-cutting issues

- Migration and development
- Migration data and research
- The human rights of migrants
- Migration and health
- Migration and the environment
- Migration and gender
- Migration, children and the youth
- Migration and people with special needs or disabilities
- Inter-state and inter-regional cooperation

3.3.1.2 The AU Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Plan of Action (2018–2030)

The AU Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA) was adopted in 2006 in an endeavour by AU Member States to promote migration and development and address migration challenges on the continent. Following its evaluation in 2016, the 2006 MPFA was revised in 2017, and adopted in 2018.

NEWS REPORT

Irregular Migration:
11.
[Rethinking How to
Address Irregular
Migration from Africa](#)
(click to read)

30 June 2024,
IEA

The MPFA recognises that migration is one of the major topics in the 21st century, and articulates the AU's position on migration; that is, that well-managed migration has the potential to yield significant benefits to both origin and destination countries. Mismanaged migration, on the other hand, can lead to tensions between host communities and migrants, and may give rise to xenophobia, discrimination and other social ills. It takes account of the AU's Agenda 2063, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and international migration management policies, standards, and projects that migration will be one of the major topics that will engage African policymakers in the 21st century.

The MPFA provides AU Member States and RECs with policy guidelines and principles to assist them in the formulation of their own migration policies in accordance with their priorities and resources. In this regard it elaborates and provides recommendations on eight migration thematic areas, namely:

- migration governance;
- labour migration and education;
- diaspora engagement;
- border governance;
- irregular migration;
- forced displacement;
- internal migration; and
- migration and trade.

It also reflects on eleven cross-cutting issues, and provides policy recommendations for consideration by AU Member States and RECs under each of the thematic areas and cross-cutting issues. Unlike its predecessor, the revised MPFA also has a plan of action for the period 2018 – 2030.

3.3.1.3 Joint Labour Migration Programme

The AU-ILO-IOM-ECA Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration (better known as the Joint Labour Migration Programme, or JLMP) in Africa is a long-term joint undertaking among the four organisations in coordination with other relevant partners operating in Africa, development cooperation actors, private sector organisations and civil society representatives. Its overall objective is improving the governance of labour migration to achieve safer, orderly and regular migration in Africa as committed in relevant frameworks of the AU and RECs, as well as international labour conventions and other cooperation processes.²⁵ Figure 3.1 below describes the key components of the JLMP.

NEWS REPORT

Irregular Migration:

19. [More than 90 per cent of Africa migrants would make perilous Europe journey again, despite the risks](#)
(click to read)

21 October 2019,
UN News

²⁵ jtmp.au.int/en

Figure 3.1 Overview of the JLMP**JLMP key components**

3.3.1.4 Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (2018)

Adopted in January 2018, the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (the AU Free Movement Protocol) is one of the flagship projects of the AU Agenda 2063. Agenda 2063 seeks to deliver on a set of **Seven Aspirations** each with its own set of goals, which, if achieved, will move Africa closer to achieving its vision by the year 2063.

The AU Free Movement Protocol seeks to remove restrictions on Africans ability to travel, work, and live within the continent as envisioned in the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the 1991 Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community. As of January 2025, seven years after its adoption, the protocol has received 32 signatures²⁶ and 4 ratifications²⁷ from the 55 AU Member States. Fifteen ratifications are required for the Protocol to enter into force.

The ratification of the protocol is directly linked to the implementation of the African Passport which the AU Summit launched in July 2016 during its 27th Ordinary Session held in Kigali, Rwanda. At the time, the AU Assembly requested the African Union Commission to provide technical support to Member States to produce and issue the African Passport to their citizens. Since then, the AU Commission in collaboration with Member States and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), has developed the specifications and security features of the African Passport, which were adopted by the AU Assembly in January 2019. The issuance of the African Passport will be determined by the entry into force of the Free Movement Protocol.

The AUC has embarked on a number of initiatives to promote ratification of the Free Movement Protocol, including with the 2018 'Study on the Benefits and Challenges of Free Movement of Persons in Africa'²⁸, and the 'Study on the opportunities and challenges for the ratification and the popularisation of the African Union Free Movement Protocol, including lessons learned from the RECs, the EU and from Free Movement Regimes from around the world'²⁹. Further, in 2021, the AU Commission held several regional meetings to discuss and appreciate the challenges that the Member States and their

²⁶ The thirty-two member states that signed the Free Movement Protocol include: Angola, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo Cote D'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Kingdom of Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

²⁷ The four member states that have deposited ratifications for the Free Movement Protocol are Mali, Niger, Rwanda, and Sao Tome & Principe.

²⁸ African Union Commission and International Organization for Migration, 2018, the Study on Benefits and Challenges of Free Movement of Persons in Africa, bit.ly/3yrk0Ts.

²⁹ Not published yet at the time of drafting, but pending review by the AUC.

RECs are facing in the area of free movement with a view to crafting strategies for promoting ratification.

Despite these efforts, the pace of ratification remains slow due to a range of complex concerns. These include weak civil registration and identity systems, which undermine the issuance of trusted travel documents; porous borders and limited infrastructure, which complicate mobility regulation; and insufficient interstate coordination in areas such as intelligence sharing and border security. Many Member States continue to express concerns about increased irregular migration, human trafficking, and the strain on public services and labour markets. Compounding these issues are persistent misconceptions about the protocol itself – often wrongly equated with unrestricted or unregulated migration – which have further slowed political commitment and public support.

3.3.2 Continental institutional arrangements for managing migration

3.3.2.1 The Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development

With regard to migration, the Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development's (HHS) mandate is to promote the African Union's agenda migration, free movement, refugees and IDPs. In this regard, the Department houses two Directorates as follows:

The Directorate of Health and Humanitarian Affairs

This Directorate houses the Division of Humanitarian Affairs which provides continental direction to the achievement of durable solutions for addressing humanitarian crises, including actions to alleviate the plight of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The Division is also responsible for implementing the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment (AU Free Movement Protocol – FMP).

The Directorate of Social Development, Culture and Sport

Under this Directorate is the Division of Labour, Employment and Migration which houses a Migration Unit whose responsibility is to spearhead the Commission's agenda on migration and human mobility.

Specialised Technical Offices and Programmes on Migration

In addition to the Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, the Commission has also established specialised technical offices that address specific issues around migration and mobility as follows:

The African Migration Observatory (AMO)

Based in Rabat, Morocco the mandate of the African Migration Observatory is to collect migration data and strengthen the capacity of Member States to collect migration data and produce migration statistics.

The African Centre for the Study and Research on Migration (ACS-RM)

The African Centre for the Study and Research on Migration is based in Bamako, Mali, and its mandate is to conduct research and build the capacity of Member States on migration.

The Continental Operational Centre in Sudan

The mandate of this Centre is to combat irregular migration, specifically human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

The African Institute of Remittances (AIR)

Based in Nairobi, Kenya, the mandate of this institution is to strengthen the capacity of Member States to leverage on the potential impact of remittances on their socio-economic development.

The Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO)

CIDO consists of the civil society and diaspora divisions. The diaspora division serves as a link between the AU and the African diaspora, and facilitates the diaspora's participation in the implementation of the continent's integration and development agenda.

The AU Border Programme (AUBP)

Initiated in 2007 and hosted under the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security, the AUBP consolidates the AU's efforts to promote peace, security and stability on the continent, through effective delimitation and demarcation of borders, cross-border cooperation and capacity building.

Coordination of Migration in the AUC

The AU Coordinating Committee on Migration (AU-CCM)

Chaired by the Division of Labour, Employment and Migration of the Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development, the AU-CCM coordinates all AUC departments, directorates, specialised technical offices and programmes that have a focus on migration and mobility. Thus, the AU-CCM ensures collaboration and coordination of migration activities, thereby eliminating possible duplication.

3.3.3 Regional migration policy frameworks

In Africa, RECs are important stakeholders in the development and implementation of migration frameworks. This is mainly because they have been the primary drivers of economic integration. Most have been instrumental in implementing the Abuja Treaty (1991), especially in terms of promoting free movement of people, goods, and capital.

The RECs' establishing treaties and protocols on free movement of people supplement the AU's migration provisions. Unlike AU treaties which apply to all Member States, RECs' treaties are limited to their member states. RECs are regional groups of African states confirmed or established under the 1991 Abuja Treaty with the purpose of facilitating regional economic integration among African states through the wider AEC. Currently the AU recognises eight RECs as follows:

- the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU),
- the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD),
- the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA),
- the East African Community (EAC),
- the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS),
- the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS),
- the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and
- the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC).

To date, COMESA, ECOWAS, and IGAD have adopted free movement of people protocols, while the EAC covers the issue in its common market protocol. ECCAS, AMU and CEN-SAD also include provisions for free movement of people, capital and the right to establishment in their respective treaties of establishment. Table 3.2 below summarises the state of ratification of protocols on the free movement of persons in the eight AU RECs.

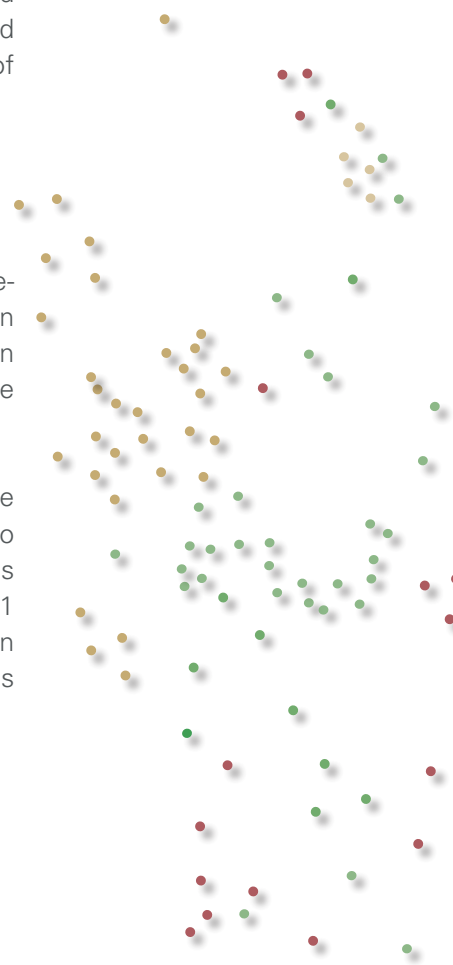


Table 3.2 Ratification of protocols on the free movement of persons

REC (year established)	Membership	Ratification Rate (at the time of publication)
AMU (1989)	Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia	Three of the five members have ratified.
CEN-SAD (1989)	Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, the Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Togo and Tunisia	Still in draft form.
COMESA (1994)	Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eswatini, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Somalia, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe	Though Protocol adopted in 2001, only two of 20 members have ratified. However, 17 of 20 Member States have ratified the Protocol on the Gradual Relaxation and Eventual Elimination of Visa Requirements.
EAC (1992)	Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, United Republic of Tanzania, and Uganda	All members have ratified.
ECCAS (1983)	Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and São Tomé and Príncipe	Only four of 11 members have ratified.
ECOWAS (1975)	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo	All 15 members have ratified.
IGAD (1996)	Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda	Still in draft form although the regional migration policy framework was adopted in 2012.
SADC (1992)	Angola, Botswana, the Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Eswatini, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe	Since its signature in 2005, only seven of 15 members have ratified the Protocol which should be ratified by at least 10 members for it to come into effect.

3.4 Mapping key stakeholders in the migration environment

It is important that media houses, CSOs and NGOs obtain formal and credible data on migration issues, and need to know credible sources of such data. What follows are various stakeholders who collect and process migration data according to their mandates.

From a whole of society perspective, in a typical AU Member State, key stakeholders that are involved in migration issues are multifaceted. They include, among others, the following:

3.4.1 Governmental stakeholders

- **Main Ministry responsible for migration issues**

In most cases, this is the Ministry of Home Affairs or Interior. In some countries, it could be another ministry such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Ministry of Home Affairs or Interior would have a dedicated Department of Immigration that regulates entry and exit of people across borders. In most cases, within the same ministry lies the Commissioner for Refugees dedicated to processing applications of asylum seekers and refugees. In some countries, the Commissioner for Refugees is housed in the ministry responsible for social welfare.

- **Ministry dealing with foreign affairs**

Embassies/consulate offices abroad under this ministry are the interface of the migrants of a Member State in foreign countries. They facilitate interaction with its citizens abroad and foreign nationals regarding consular and migration issues for the home country.

- **Ministry dealing with labour and employment**

This Ministry, in cooperation with the main ministry responsible for immigration (Ministry of Home Affairs or Interior), facilitates the issuance of work permits to foreign nationals as well as facilitating the migration of citizens to work abroad.

- **Ministry dealing with health and social affairs**

The Ministry of Health of a country is an important stakeholder regarding migration and health issues.

- **Ministry dealing with development and planning**

This Ministry, in cooperation with other ministries, is responsible for mainstreaming migration in the development plans of a country.

- **Ministry dealing with education**

This Ministry can play a key role in migration issues by ensuring inclusive access to education for migrant and refugee children, supporting language learning and integration, adapting curricula to reflect cultural diversity, and recognizing foreign qualifications. It also provides teacher training, psycho-social support, and collaborates with other ministries to develop cohesive migration and education policies.

- **Ministry dealing with finance**

This Ministry tracks the trends of remittances and if they are substantial, incorporates them in budget planning. It also incorporates remittances in debt sustainability analysis.

- **Governments at local and municipal levels**

These stakeholders interface with migrants in a country as they are responsible for providing social services at local government level. They usually interact with civil society and diaspora organisations representing the interests of migrants in the host country.

- **Central banks**

The central bank collects and collates remittance data and incorporate the data in the balance of payments calculations in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance. In this regard, it interacts with banks and remittance transfer organisations such as MoneyGram, Mukuru, Western Union, etc.

- **National statistical offices**

Being the national repository of national statistics, the national statistical office is positioned to play a central role in collecting and managing migration data and statistics. It captures migration statistics during censuses and household surveys.

It is important to note that the offices and government bodies listed above might take different form depending on the country, whereby certain competencies may be combined or dealt with separately (e.g. health and social affairs might be in one ministry or in separate ones).

3.4.2 International organisations



- **International Organisation for Migration (IOM)**

The IOM generates statistics from the operational programmes and projects executed in various countries worldwide. These statistics relate to the types of migrants covered by each activity and include resettled refugees, assisted repatriations, return migration of highly skilled persons, victims of trafficking, stranded transit migrants, internally displaced persons and unsuccessful asylum-seekers. Through regular access to the IOM database, the national statistical office of a country could evaluate the accuracy and comparability of migration statistics it collects.

- **International Labour Organisation (ILO)**

The ILO compiles data on migrant workers, especially those generated by developing countries, and disseminates the information via the ILO Database on Labour Statistics (LABORSTA). Every two years, it sends a labour migration questionnaire to national statistical offices and ministries of labour.

- **UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)**

The Statistics Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs compiles time series data on inflows and outflows of international migration recorded by a number of developed countries in collaboration with Eurostat and other UN entities. Through requesting specialised analyses from these bodies, national statistical offices can compile data on their migrants abroad. The data is in the public domain so that any other interested entities, such as the media and civil society, can access it.

- **The World Bank**

The World Bank is promoting improvements in the collection of remittance data through the Group of Eight (G-8) Global Remittance Working Group. From the surveys of central banks in 112 countries it has undertaken, it has observed significant gaps in data collection on remittances, particularly in low-income countries in Africa.

- **Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)**

The OECD compiles and disseminates data on residence permits issued by its Member States, that are reported on annually in the OECD International Migration Outlook. Access to the data would enable interested government and non-governmental stakeholders to glean information on migrants who acquire residence permits in OECD countries.

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3.4.3 Non-governmental actors

● Media

The media play an important role in disseminating information and shaping public opinion around migration and the respective role and responsibilities of host countries.

● Civil society

Civil society comprises grassroots NGOs and diaspora organisations that have interests in migration affairs in the country. In addition to the advocacy role they play, civil society organisations perform relevant research to help governments understand and respond to migration problems and needs on the ground. They monitor the work of courts to ensure that migrant victims' voices are heard and the rights of all are respected.

● Labour unions

Labour unions represent all workers inclusive of migrant workers. They have particular interest on how migrant workers are paid vis-à-vis citizens to promote equal pay among workers.

● Research institutions

Academic institutions conduct various research on migration issues whose goal is to facilitate evidence-informed policy making. They are an important repository of migration information in this regard.

● Private sector

Business organisations representing the private sector are key stakeholders in the migration space. After all, the majority of migrants are employed in the private sector.

A whole-of-society approach involving all stakeholders above, including the media and civil society is important to ensure an inclusive approach.

3.4.4 National Coordination Mechanisms for Migration

Due to its multi-dimensional nature, as noted above, migration is managed by various ministries and organisations in divergent sectors addressing different aspects of the migration phenomenon. To ensure a well-coordinated collaboration, some countries have established a mechanism to coordinate migration-related issues, referred to as National Coordination Mechanisms (NCMs). To this end, the AUC and IOM have been in the forefront of encouraging countries (and RECs) to establish NCMs and Regional Coordinating Mechanisms (RCMs).

An NCM is defined as a government-led inter-agency platform that facilitates cooperation, collaboration and dialogue among relevant stakeholders with migration-related functions and interests in a country (including state and non-state actors). Non-state actors include the media, CSOs and NGOs. This definition also translates to the regional level.

In countries that have such structures, the mechanisms have different legal statuses. Where NCMs/RCMs are in existence, ideally the media, CSOs and NGOs should be part of this structure, and where it is not in existence, they are encouraged to advocate for, and participate in their establishment.

3.5 Conclusion

This module outlined the migration governance architecture in Africa comprising continental migration frameworks, protocols, regional frameworks as well as international migration frameworks such as the GCM. Furthermore, it identified key migration stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental, including the media and civil society.

3.5.1 Key messages

- The **development of migration frameworks** in Africa has been a top-down exercise – from continental, to regional, to national migration policy frameworks – in which the AU plays a prominent role.
- The Migration Policy Framework for Africa is based on the foundation that **well-managed migration benefits both migrant sending and receiving countries** whereas mismanaged migration may create anti-migrant attitudes that can result in discrimination, violation of human rights and even violence against migrants.
- The Common African Position on Migration and Development (CAP) articulates **priority policy issues on migration issues**.
- **RECs, international organisations, media, CSOs, NGOs and the business community also contribute to migration governance** and need to be engaged in the planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation phases of migration governance.
- **The multidimensional nature of migration requires institutional arrangements** in the form of institutional coordinating mechanisms, within and across national and local governments, involving government ministries, agencies and non-state actors to manage migration matters.

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Module 4

Is migration beneficial for Africa?

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Module overview 4

Module overview

Objective This module introduces communicators to the benefits of migration in Africa, by providing evidence on its role in development, discussing topics such as brain drain vs the brain gain (knowledge transfer), the role of remittances, migration and free movement, international trade, labour markets and the integration of Africa. The module also discusses the challenges of migration in Africa.

Module content Topics covered:

- The role of migration in development
- Brain drain vs the brain gain (knowledge transfer) from migration
- Costs and benefits of remittances
- The role of social remittances
- The role migration and free movement play in integration

Learning outcomes By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- explain the role of migration in development;
- debate brain drain vs the brain gain (knowledge transfer) from migration;
- discuss the costs and benefits of remittances;
- outline the role of social remittances; and
- the role of migration in the integration of Africa.

4.1 Introduction

Migration can have a positive impact, such as through remittances, institutional and human capital development, skills and knowledge transfer. It can also pose challenges, including through brain drain, irregular migration, pressures on social services and health care, education, or housing.

Migration has had both positive and negative impacts on Africa (Badewa, and Dinbabo, 2021; Kok, 1999; Gulema, Girma, and Dinbabo, 2024). On the positive side, migration can contribute to economic development through remittances, institutional and human capital development in the country of origin, technology transfer and capacity building, and providing transnational networks that act as conduits of trade and investment. Furthermore, migration facilitates the transfer of skills and knowledge by stimulating brain circulation, as migrants and the diaspora exchange their overseas-acquired expertise. Ultimately, this can stimulate innovation, and economic growth in the country of origin. It can also alleviate poverty and raise standards of living in households and communities that are left behind (Chand, 2016; Dinbabo, 2022).

However, migration also poses challenges for Africa. Brain drain is a concern, as highly skilled individuals may leave their home countries in search of better opportunities elsewhere, leading to a loss of talent and expertise (Dodani & LaPorte, 2005). Additionally, irregular migration can result in human trafficking, exploitation, and other forms of abuse (Dinbabo, Badewa, & Yeboah, 2021). Furthermore, migration can strain social services and infrastructure in both sending and receiving countries. This can include increased pressure on healthcare, education, housing, and employment opportunities in receiving countries. In sending countries, social services such as healthcare are strained when experts leave the country leading to a disproportionate health worker to patient ratio in a growing population. For example, in Ethiopia, 3000 doctors have left, leaving 900 to meet the needs of nearly 78 million people (Chand, 2016). It is important for governments to have effective migration policies in place to manage these challenges and ensure the well-being of both migrants and host communities (Nzabamwita, & Dinbabo, 2022). Overall, the impact of migration on Africa is complex and multifaceted. It is crucial to consider the specific circumstances and context of each migration flow to fully understand its effects on the continent.

The following sections present (a) The role of migration in development; (b) Positive and negative impacts of migration encompassing, remittances, brain gain and brain gain (c) The role migration and free movement play in integration. Finally, a conclusion is provided.

4.2 The role of migration in development

Global social and economic development is greatly impacted by migration, which affects both the origin and destination regions (Sithole, Tevera, and Dinbabo, 2023). In general, migration plays a significant role in the development of both sending and receiving countries. It can contribute to economic growth, social development, and cultural exchange. In sending countries, migration can alleviate poverty and reduce unemployment by creating opportunities for individuals to find better-paying jobs abroad (De Haas, 2010; Bade-wa, and Dinbabo, 2021; Schiller, 2009). Remittances sent back by migrants can also have a positive impact on the economy, as they provide a source of income for families and can be used for investment in education, health-care, and small businesses. Investments in housing, water and sanitation conditions, healthcare, food, and education enhance productivity, well-being, human capital, freedom of choice, and social participation. When these conditions are improved, there is progress in achieving total human development and consequently, the lives of the impoverished will be improved (De Haas, 2005). Additionally, migrants often acquire new skills and knowledge while abroad, which they can bring back to their home countries, contributing to human capital development. In receiving countries, migration can address labour market gaps and skills shortages (Sithole, Tevera, Dinbabo, 2022). Migrants often fill jobs that are difficult to fill locally, particularly in sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, and construction. This can boost productivity and economic growth. Moreover, migrants can bring diverse perspectives, cultural richness, and innovation to their host countries, fostering social and cultural development (Dinbabo, 2022).

However, it is important to note that the benefits of migration are not automatic and can be influenced by various factors such as migration policies, integration measures, and social attitudes. It is crucial for governments to implement inclusive policies that protect the rights of migrants, promote their integration into society, and maximise the potential benefits of migration for development (Dinbabo, 2022; Schiller, 2009).

Overall, migration can be a powerful driver of development, but it requires careful management and policies that ensure the well-being of migrants and host communities while harnessing the potential benefits it offers. Here are some key aspects of the role that migration can play in development.

Migration governance has a key role to play in harnessing the positive impact while addressing the challenges of migration.

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Table 4.1 A brief description of the role of migration in development

Major areas	Brief description on the roles of migration in development
Remittances	Migration often leads to the flow of remittances, which are the funds sent by migrants back to their home countries. These remittances can contribute to economic development by providing financial resources for families and communities, supporting education, healthcare, and investment in local businesses (Ratha et al., 2024; Sithole, Tevera, Dinbabo, 2022).
Brain Drain and Brain Gain	Migration can result in a brain drain, where highly skilled individuals leave their home countries to seek better opportunities abroad. However, it can also lead to a brain gain for destination countries, as they benefit from the skills, knowledge, and expertise brought by migrants. This can contribute to innovation, economic growth, and development in those countries (Gulema, Girma, and Dinbabo, 2024).
Knowledge and Technology Transfer	Migrants often bring new ideas, knowledge, and technologies from host countries back to their home countries. This transfer of knowledge can have a positive impact on various sectors, including education, healthcare, agriculture, and industry, leading to development and progress (Ratha et al., 2024).
Cultural Exchange and Diversity	Migration brings cultural diversity and fosters cultural exchange between different communities and countries. This exchange of ideas, traditions, and perspectives can enrich societies and contribute to social development, tolerance, and understanding (social cohesion) (Bhugra, and Becker, 2005; Vertovec, 2010).
Labour Market Dynamics	Migration can address labour market gaps and shortages in destination countries, particularly in sectors such as healthcare, construction, agriculture, and technology. Migrant workers can fill these gaps, contributing to economic growth and development in those sectors (Joppe, 2012; Chaloff, and Lemaitre, 2009).
Diaspora Engagement	Diaspora communities, consisting of migrants and their descendants, often maintain strong ties with their home countries. They can play a crucial role in development through investments and entrepreneurship (Gulema, Girma, and Dinbabo, 2024).

4.3 Positive impacts of migration

4.3.1 Brain gain

Brain gain refers to the phenomenon where a country or organisation experiences a net inflow of highly skilled or talented individuals from other countries or institutions (Lien, and Wang, 2005). It is the opposite of brain drain, which refers to the emigration of skilled individuals from one place to another. Brain gain occurs when individuals with valuable knowledge, expertise, and

qualifications choose to migrate or join an organisation in a particular location, contributing to its intellectual capital and overall development. This influx of skilled individuals can have positive effects on research, innovation, economic growth, and the overall competitiveness of a country or organisation (Matthews, and Lord, 2017). Brain gain is often facilitated through policies and initiatives such as favourable immigration policies, research grants, career opportunities, and supportive work environments that attract and retain talented individuals.

From the perspective of the country of destination, the inflow of skilled workers constitutes an acquisition of human capital. The country benefits from new skills, innovation and entrepreneurship. From the perspective of a country of origin, the positive spill-over effects of the emigration of highly skilled workers also include the motivational effects of migration that spur aspiring migrants to acquire further skills. Brain gain also occurs when migrants return back to their country or communities of origin and bring back with them new skills and knowledge acquired in destination countries (IOM, 2019: 22).

4.3.2 Remittances

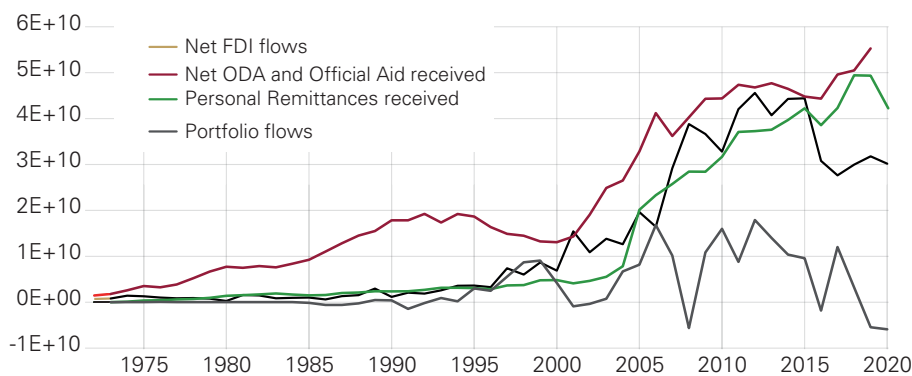
Remittances are composed of two components, which are personal transfers and compensation of employees (World Bank, 2021). Personal transfers refer to all current transfers, in cash or in-kind, made by migrants to individuals in the origin country (Naudé and Bezuidenhout, 2012). Compensation of employees relates to 'the transfer to origin countries of the income of border, seasonal, and other short-term workers who are employed in an economy where they are not resident and of residents employed by non-resident entities' (AU – MPFA, 2018). It consists of wages and salaries in cash, wages and salaries in kind, and employers' social contributions (World Bank, 2021). In low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), remittances have been the main source of foreign financial flows, excluding from China, since 2015 (Ratha et al., 2024). Remittance flows to LMICs are projected to have grown by 0.7 per cent in 2023 to reach USD 656 billion (Ratha et al., 2024). The significance of remittances to African development is recognised by the African Union and the United Nations and takes place in the following ways:

- **Remittances are central to Africa's development, serving as major and dependable source of foreign currency to African countries:** In 2016 Sub-Saharan Africa received USD 33 billion in remittances (World Bank, 2017). This figure increased to USD 48 billion in 2019 (World Bank, 2019), signifying a 31.25 per cent increase within three years. This increase is related to strong economic conditions in the high-income economies where many Sub-Saharan African migrants earn their income (World Bank, 2019).

- **Remittances are a major and more stable source of foreign currency for most African countries than other forms of foreign currency inflows, such as Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Official Development Assistance (ODA) (AU – MPFA, 2018):** In 2018, for example, Nigeria received USD 22.3 billion more in remittances than ODA and FDI combined. Similarly, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal and Zimbabwe received USD 1.8 billion, USD 1 billion, USD 1.5 billion, and USD 1.1 billion more, respectively, in remittances.
- **The contribution of remittances to Gross Domestic Production (GDP) of Sub-Saharan African countries is significant:** In this respect, The Gambia receives the largest share (27 per cent), followed by Lesotho (22.8 per cent), Comoros (18.8 per cent), Cabo Verde (18 per cent), Guinea-Bissau (10.9 per cent), Liberia (9.7 per cent), Senegal (9.6 per cent), Togo (8 per cent), Zimbabwe (6.1 per cent) and Ghana (5.9 per cent) (World Bank, 2022).
- **Remittances play a key role in improving the socio-economic situation of communities:** This includes covering expenses related to necessities such as food, shelter and clothing as well as paying for school fees and health care. Remittances also enhance the capacity of communities to own assets, enable them to invest in land and engage in entrepreneurial activities (AU – MPFA, 2018).
- **Remittances support communities in coping with natural and man-made disasters such as drought and floods:** In this respect, remittances can increase resilience in receiving nations by enabling people to diversify their income sources, purchase more durable and secure homes, maintain their investment in the development of human capital, control consumption, support entrepreneurship, and finance rebuilding projects. (Naudé and Bezuidenhout, 2012). This is strongly relevant to the African continent since some of the countries have faced natural and man-made disasters.

Since the late 2000s, remittances in Sub-Saharan Africa have surpassed Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). As illustrated in Figure 8, the flow of personal remittances received has a fairly stable upward trend as compared to that of FDI and ODA.

Figure 4.1 Net FDI flows, personal remittances received, and net ODA and official aid received in Sub-Saharan Africa (USD) (1970–2020)



Source: Adapted from World Development Indicators (2020)[1].

That being said, there are several impediments and considerations to fully harnessing the positive attribute of remittances, including the following:

- **Sending money across international borders remains expensive, despite technological advances:** Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest cost for transfers to, at 8.8 percent in the second quarter of 2022 (World Bank, 2023). To mitigate these costs, in 2015, the African Institute for Remittances (AIR) (AU–AIR, 2018) was established as a Specialized Technical Office of the AU Commission. Similarly, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, Target 10) also aim to ‘reduce inequality within and among countries’ and aspires to address the existing high transaction costs of remittances. This makes improving remittance transfer mechanisms strongly relevant to the African continent, especially to maximise the development impact of remittances (AU–MPFA, 2018).
- **Influence of the COVID-19 pandemic and related crises on remittance flows:** Despite projections indicating that remittance flows to Africa are expected to decrease significantly due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant restrictions to movement, and their devastating impacts on the global economy (Kalantaryan and McMahon, 2020), recent data releases paint a more mixed picture with a large drop in flows to Nigeria, which accounts for more than half the region’s inflows. However, excluding Nigeria, remittances to Sub-Saharan Africa increased by 2.3 per cent, demonstrating resilience (World Bank, 2021; IMF 2021). This trend is explained in part by the shift from informal to formal channels due to the closure of borders which saw an increase in the volume of remittances recorded by central banks (World Bank, 2021).

4.3.2.1 Social remittances

Social remittances play a significant role in the context of migration. They refer to the transfer of ideas, values, behaviours, and social practices that migrants bring back to their home communities. These non-material aspects of migration can have a profound impact on social and cultural dynamics. One important role of social remittances is the potential for cultural exchange and enrichment (Levitt, and Lamba-Nieves, 2011). Migrants often adopt new cultural practices, norms, and values in their host countries, and when they return home, they may introduce these ideas to their communities. This can lead to the diffusion of new perspectives, attitudes, and behaviours, contributing to cultural diversity and innovation (Vari-Lavoisier, 2020).

Social remittances can also influence social and gender norms. Migrants may bring back new ideas about gender equality, education, or social justice, challenging traditional beliefs and practices in their home communities. This can lead to positive changes in gender roles, empowerment, and social inclusion. Furthermore, social remittances can have economic implications. Migrants may acquire new skills, knowledge, and entrepreneurial practices in their host countries, which they can share with their communities upon their return. This can contribute to local economic development, job creation, and the growth of small businesses (Vari-Lavoisier, 2020; Levitt, and Lamba-Nieves, 2011).

However, it is important to note that the impact of social remittances is not always positive or uniform. They can also lead to tensions and conflicts within communities, as new ideas may clash with existing cultural norms or traditions. It is crucial to foster dialogue, understanding, and acceptance to harness the potential benefits of social remittances while respecting local contexts and values. Overall, social remittances have the potential to shape social, cultural, and economic dynamics in both sending and receiving communities, contributing to the broader impact of migration.

4.3.3 Diaspora participation in development

According to Gulema, Girma, and Dinbabo, (2024), the diaspora community plays a pivotal role in the social and economic development of their countries of origin and destination. They further indicate that harnessing the diaspora community's collective knowledge, skills, and financial resources, contribute significantly to various sectors including education, healthcare, infrastructure, and entrepreneurship. Chand (2016) also shows that the diaspora holds the potential to make a positive impact by transferring knowledge and providing short-term returns to address skills shortages effectively. As indicated by Mudungwe (2017), the diaspora also provides vital contacts and networks in the country of residence that country of origin entrepreneurs can use to help set up and expand their own international businesses. Apart from remittances and investments, the diaspora has also been involved in philanthropy activities.

4.4 Negative impacts of migration

4.4.1 Brain drain

Dodani and LaPorte (2005) note that brain drain refers to the phenomenon where highly skilled or educated individuals migrate or emigrate from their home country to another country, typically in search of better opportunities, higher salaries, or improved living conditions. This migration of talented individuals can have negative effects on the country of origin as it may result in a loss of valuable human capital and expertise (Gulema, Girma, and Dinbabo, 2024; Docquier, Lohest, and Marfouk, 2007). Brain drain can impact various sectors, including academia, research, healthcare, technology, and innovation. It is often a concern for developing countries that invest in education and training, only to see their skilled workforce leave for more favourable conditions elsewhere (Dodani, and LaPorte, 2005).

When the costs of losing a highly skilled person to the receiving society outweigh the advantages of the remittances and knowledge spill overs the worker generates, brain drain can be a development barrier (World Bank, 2023). The brain drain and outflow of skilled human resources can cause a loss of investment in education and training, loss of future skills through emigration of top qualified nationals, shortages in critical skill areas such as health and education and the loss of tax contributions (Docquier, 2014; Mountford, 1995). It is a marked concern in Sub-Saharan Africa where the emigration rates of the tertiary-educated are 30 times higher than those of the less educated (World Bank, 2023).

Another important form of brain drain is de-skilling. This phenomenon describes the shift from high-skilled occupations to low-skilled jobs among migrants, where the new roles are not aligned with their educational or occupational backgrounds. This transition may occur due to various barriers in accessing the labour market, such as challenges with work permits, lack of recognition for qualifications obtained abroad, diminished value placed on professional experience gained before migration, limited demand for their specific skills, or discrimination based on factors like gender or ethnicity (Mudungwe, 2017).

Table 4.2 Costs and benefits of the brain drain

Pros	Cons
• The income-maximizing level of a brain drain is usually positive in developing countries, meaning that some emigration of the more skilled is beneficial. • Brain drain stimulates education, induces remittance flows, reduces international transaction costs, and generates benefits in source countries from both returnees and the diaspora abroad. This means, when professionals come back to countries of origin, they return with new skills, experiences, and networks, which can benefit the country. • Appropriate policy adjustments, which depend on the characteristic and policy objectives of the source country, can help to maximise the gains or minimise the costs of the brain drain.	• The negative effects of brain drain exceed the income maximizing level in the vast majority of developing countries, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, Central America, and smaller countries. • Brain drain may cause fiscal losses (related to government revenue or public finances). For example, when skilled professionals leave, the government loses out on the income tax they would have paid if they had stayed and worked in the country, • Above a certain level, brain drain reduces the stock of human capital and induces occupational distortions.

4.4.2 Remittance-induced inflation

The influx of huge sums of money back into the sending countries has been identified as a driver of inflation. When significant amounts of remittances are converted into local currency, they increase the money supply. If these funds are not directed towards productive sectors or capital investment, they are typically spent on consumption, leading to inflationary pressures. The increasing influx of remittances can stimulate spending, potentially driving up prices for non-tradable goods (Mudungwe, 2017).

4.4.3 Border management costs

Although migration is beneficial in many aspects as highlighted above, irregular migration is costly to manage in several ways. The management of borders requires a lot of resources, expertise, personnel, technology, and collaborations between neighbouring countries in order to curtail unauthorised cross-border movements (Mudungwe, 2017). For example, of the R1 407 692 for 2024-25 that was allocated to the South Africa Border Management Authority (BMA) from the national fiscus, 86 percent was allocated for cost of employment (PMG, 2024), yet it is still considered to be ‘grossly underfunded.’ Irregular migration flows emanating from weak border management

have often increased security concerns in host countries (Adamson, 2006; Koser, 2005), which has led to state expenditure on responses such as deportation. The South African Department of Home Affairs (DHA), for example, deported 46,898 in the 2024/25 financial year that ended on 31 March 2025, which was an 18 per cent increase from the previous year ([DHA, 2025](#)). This is not only the highest number of deportations carried out in at least five years but also exceeds the number of deportations conducted by France (22,000) and Germany (20,000) combined over the same period (DHA, 2025). In the five months between April and the end of August 2024, DHA had deported 19,750 people at a cost of R52 million ([ProtectionWeb, 2025](#)). This translates to a spend of R2 670 per person, which represents almost half the minimum wage of a worker working a 45-hour week.

4.5 The role migration and free movement play in integration of Africa

Migration and free movement play a very integral role in the integration of the African continent in economic, social, cultural and knowledge transfer aspects. Such integration has had positive contributions to the overall development of the continent. Continued efforts in harnessing positive effects of migration will greatly benefit the continent. It is crucial to recognise that the predominant movement of people in Africa occurs within the continent (intra-continental), and this movement is particularly concentrated within African regional blocs, surpassing movement across continents (inter-continental).

NEWS REPORT

Cross border migration and trade: 114.
[Why migration is a model for sustainable development for all](#)
 (click to read)
 15 January 2024, WEF

Table 4.3 Inter- and Intra-regional migration in Africa (percentages)

Origin	Destination				
	East Africa	Central Africa	North Africa	Southern Africa	West Africa
East Africa	60.51	5.30	16.73	17.38	0.08
Central Africa	37.90	47.59	4.38	5.68	4.44
North Africa	46.00	26.70	23.02	0.80	4.12
Southern Africa	15.12	1.66	0.27	82.47	0.48
West Africa	0.24	7.32	0.61	0.74	91.10

Source, UNCTAD (2018:46)

Research suggests that over 80 per cent of African migrants relocate within the continent and typically do not intend to migrate permanently. For instance, out of the estimated 21 million migrants in Africa in 2015, approximately 18 million (72 per cent) originated from Africa. It is important to highlight that a key feature of African migration is its predominantly intra-regional and inter-regional nature, a trend with deep historical roots ([Table 1.3](#)).

Analysis of UNDESA data on migration stocks for the period 1990 till 2019 shows that immigration in Africa is largely intra-African as illustrated in Figure 1.1 (Major migration routes). Furthermore, according to UNCTAD data illustrated in Table 4.4, the regions with significant migration outside Africa are the Northern African region and the Southern African region. The rest of the regions – East Africa, Central Africa and West Africa – have significant intra-African migration as compared to migration out of the continent. Thus, the ability of Africa to capitalise on migration has significant socio-economic benefits which will be discussed further in this section.

Table 4.4 Intra-Africa and extra-continental migration as of 2017

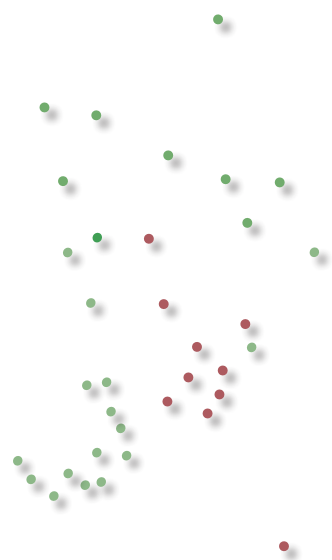
Region	Share of migrants within Africa	Share of migrants outside Africa
East Africa	71.0%	29.0%
Central Africa	78.8%	21.2%
North Africa	13.2%	86.8%
Southern Africa	51.7%	48.3%
West Africa	71.7%	28.3%

Source: UNCTAD (2018).

4.5.1 Economic integration

Economically, migrant networks and diaspora communities play a crucial role in facilitating trade and investment between African countries, fostering economic integration and cross-border collaboration. Human mobility in Africa dates back to the pre-colonial era and has continued to this day (Gumede et al., 2020). The historical trade routes established centuries ago between West Africa, Arabia and India and between both ends of the Sahara through the trans-Saharan caravan trade are still operative facilitating trade and labour movement (UNCTAD, 2018).

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is a ground-breaking regional integration agreement aimed at creating a single market for services and goods in Africa. This historic agreement has the potential to increase intra-African trade and investment, thereby driving economic growth, job creation, and poverty reduction across the continent. The interplay between migration and trade can be seen in the context of AfCFTA, which has the potential to generate new prospects for trade and investment in Africa while also providing opportunities for labour migration and remittance flows. This newly created trade can create new job opportunities and stimulate economic growth,

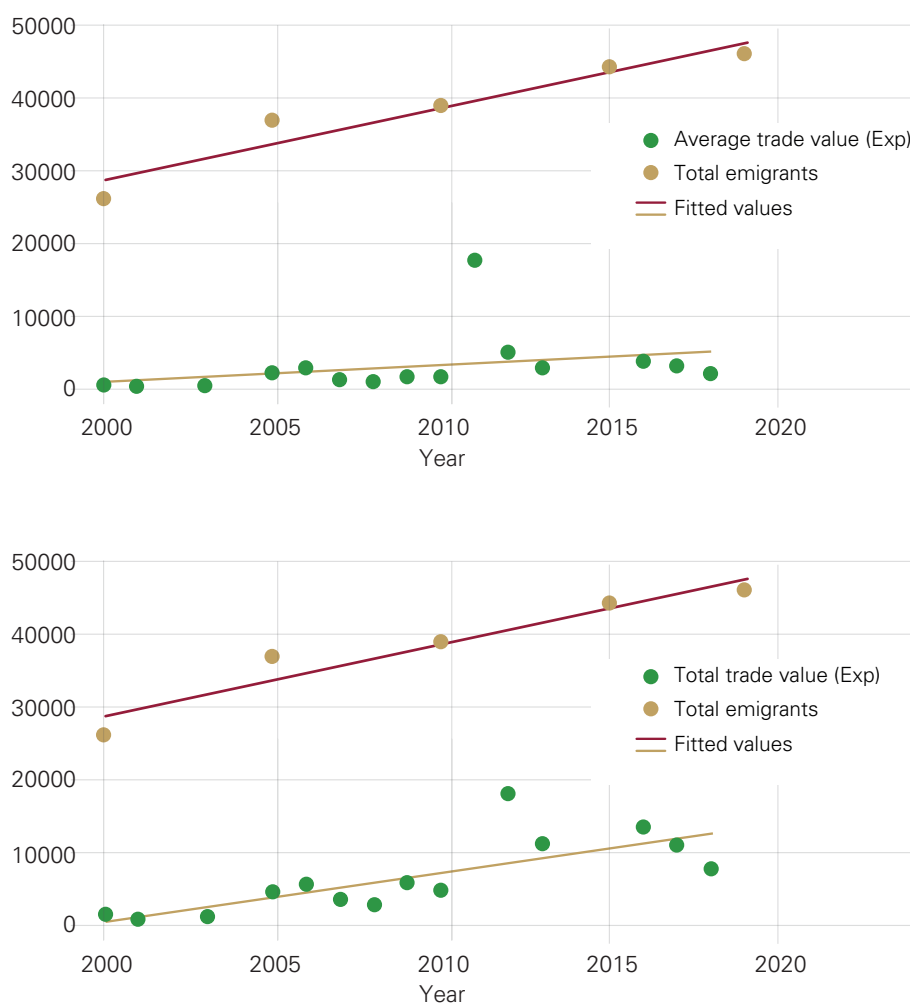


which in turn can attract migrants seeking work (Brunow, Nijkamp, and Poot, 2015; Hermele, 2021). However, these migrations may also lead to difficulties, such as brain drain, where highly trained employees leave their home countries and leave a skills gap (Delgado, 2014). As a result, it's crucial to strike a balance between the demands of labour markets, the defence of workers' rights, and the advancement of sustainable development (Mountford, 1995).

A case study conducted in Ghana aimed to explore whether the patterns in Ghana's trade with fellow ECOWAS nations mirror or are closely tied to trends in the migration of Ghanaians to other ECOWAS member states. Additionally, it sought to determine if this relationship differs from that observed between Ghana and African countries outside the ECOWAS bloc or non-African countries. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between trade and migration (Figure 10). The study indicated that Ghana's trade with ECOWAS member states and migration to and from other ECOWAS member states exhibit a stronger connection compared to interactions involving non-ECOWAS African countries and non-African countries. This association is largely attributed to the institutional framework governing trade relations among ECOWAS member states, particularly the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment, as well as ECOWAS' preferential tariff for intra-ECOWAS trade and common external tariffs for extra-ECOWAS trade (Makina and Pasura, 2023).



Figure 4.2 Ghana's exports and emigration to ECOWAS member states



Source: Adapted from Osarfo et al. (2023).

Therefore, the combination of the AfCFTA, which seeks to reduce tariffs by 90 per cent, and the Free Movement Protocol, which seeks to guarantee free movements of people across the continent, will not only boost trade but also streamline and protect the movement of persons among member states. Consequently, it is essential to bolster institutions to oversee and coordinate the movement of people, aligning with the trade liberalisation efforts across Africa.

On the same note of migration and trade, although it is important to promote formal trade, there are unprecedented socio-economic benefits in cross-border informal trading across the continent. Historically, this industry has been resilient amidst border challenges and customs barriers for many years (Gumede et al., 2020). The industry involves the trading of goods such as art and craft materials, clothing and food. The majority of the people who cannot be

included in the formal sector are found in this resilient sector of cross-border trading. This sector has managed to sustain the families and livelihoods of millions across the continent.

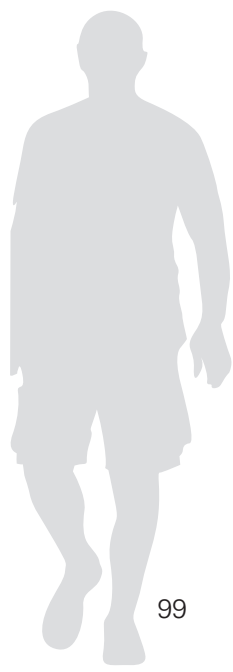
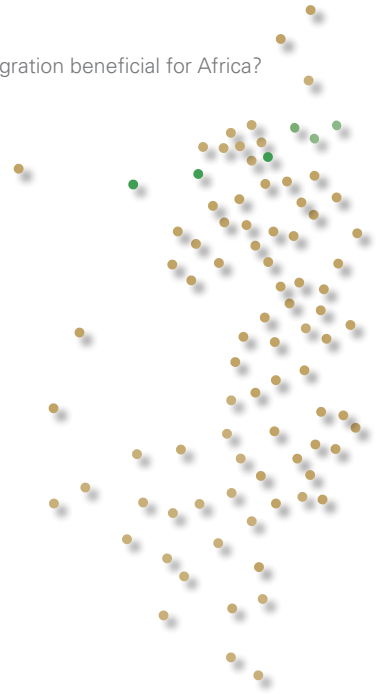
Vital lessons can be learnt from the EAC bloc, especially (Rwanda and Kenya), which have removed restrictions on the mobility of people and have greatly benefited trade and economic growth and development. In the SADC region, South Africa serves as a key destination and market within the bloc. There's a pressing demand for facilitation of cross-border trading. Eliminating visa requirements and lifting the 90-day stay limit could significantly boost regional and intra-African trade, especially in the informal sector. By waiving customs duties and improving free movement, we can foster growth in this industry, leading to increased trade volumes and higher incomes for households involved, not only in SADC but across the entire continent.

Migration in the SADC region and other regions in Africa is likely to continue in the foreseeable future, and no amount of control measures will curtail the influx of migrants into, and migratory movements within the region. It is further argued that since the goal of SADC is regional economic integration, it is imperative that the region seeks to understand the nature, dynamics and impact of migration, and manage it for the benefit of the region (Mudungwe, 2014). SADC aims to promote regional economic integration through trade liberalisation, infrastructure development, and policy harmonisation. Its goals include fostering sustainable economic growth, reducing poverty, and prosperous, and stable Southern African region (Moyo, 2024; Mlambo, 2023).

4.5.2 Social and cultural integration

Migration has facilitated the exchange of ideas, traditions, and cultural practices among different African communities, enriching the continent's cultural fabric and promoting a sense of shared identity. The UNCTAD (2018) provides crucial insights into the importance of cultural exchange, noting that cultural kinships and mutual languages play a vital role in the movements of cross-border migrants in the context of trade and human relations. For example, irregular migrants in East Africa who worked in coffee, tea, and cotton plantations decades ago utilised currencies, languages, cultural kinships and common colonial experiences. Thus, migration can contribute to cultural integration and social cohesion across various nationalities.

A study by Gumede et al. (2020) hence suggests that people-to-people integration is another viable option in Africa. Cross-border trading has promoted social cohesion and economic inclusion across the ECOWAS, EAC and SADC regions and the African continent as language and cultures are learned and shared during the interaction of buyers and sellers. Lasting socio-economic and cultural relationships through relational trading have been established. This has resulted in people-to-people integration across the continent. Mi-



grant populations often maintain strong ties with their home countries while integrating into their host communities, creating networks and fostering social cohesion across national borders.

4.5.3 Knowledge transfer

The continent benefits profoundly as migrants move between countries transferring knowledge, best practices, and technology, promoting the exchange of ideas and fostering regional collaboration in various sectors. This exchange of human capital can promote economic growth, entrepreneurship, and innovation. Various African and regional blocks have collaborated to ease restrictions on human mobility in order to facilitate movement of highly skilled professionals for purposes of skills transfer and filling critical skills gaps. For example, the Kenya-Rwanda relationship, in which Rwanda offers residence permits to skilled workers and work permits to semi-skilled workers from Kenya, is a great example of collaboration (UNCTAD, 2018).

Nations and states of the African continent should be ready to tolerate, accommodate and include immigrants in their socio-economic and political environments if integration is to be effective. Although AU Member States have agreed to migration and regional integration policy framework, policies intended to facilitate increased trade and information exchange progress have been accompanied by policies of closure regarding immigration (Achiume & Landau, 2015). These negative reaction policies of closure are contrary to the vision of integrating Africa and have negative consequences for cross-border trading, which most Africans rely on. The AU member states should prepare for the socio-economic impacts of migration by putting down mechanisms that ensure integration and not securitisation. This will effectively deal with human trafficking, xenophobia and discrimination issues related to migration.

4.6 Conclusion

This module discussed the role of migration in development, the positive and negative impacts of migration and the role migration and free movement play in integrating the African continent. Migration has been identified as a positive contributor to development efforts in Africa and globally by fostering economic, political and social development both in sending and receiving countries. The link between these two phenomena has been extensively deliberated in various academic, social and political platforms. Migration has fostered development through, remittances, economic investments, brain gain, and knowledge transfer among other factors. Remittances have significant benefits to sending countries. These include capital investments, poverty alleviation and livelihood diversification. The receiving countries benefit in expertise and labour supply while the sending countries benefit when the diaspora

share knowledge earned abroad. Migration has the potential to integrate Africa economically, socially, politically and culturally. Removal of trade barriers, and restrictions to free movement can significantly boost formal and informal trade, knowledge sharing, investments and social cohesion, resulting in the integration of the continent.

However, migration requires proper management, clear policy framework among member states and implementation in order to reap the developmental benefits. On the flip side, migration has been linked to brain drain, de-skilling, irregular movement and remittance-induced inflation. Sending countries have lost expertise in key sectors of the economy due to the massive exodus of professionals. This has led to strained social services such as health and education where professionals that remain have to service large populations. The cost of border management to prevent irregular movement has been increasing with the increase of unauthorised cross-border crossings. The main concern of receiving countries is the negative impact of migration on services such as health, education, and infrastructure due to population influx. Nevertheless, migration in Africa can offset economic challenges, hunger and poverty by fostering integration in economic, political, social and cultural activities as seen in SADC, ECOWAS and EAC and other regional blocs.

4.6.1 Key messages

- **Migration has both positive and negative effects in Africa.** The negative impacts of migration include brain drain, remittance-induced inflation, and risk that migration can widen the gap between richer and poorer countries. The positive impacts of migration include poverty alleviation/reduction, diaspora participation in development and efficient labour distribution.
- **There is a two-way relationship between migration and development.** This basically means development might reinforce migration patterns and migration might lead to development. The link between migration and development is multifaceted because the determinants for migration vary and the processes involved are complex.
- **The migration development debate has evolved over time.** There are optimist and pessimist views towards migration and development. The migration optimists view migration as desirable and dynamic. Migration pessimists view the migration dynamic as negative as it results in more entrenched inequality and benefits the destination country to the detriment of the country of origin.
- **Remittances benefit individual recipients, the local and national economies** in which they live, whether consumed or invested. Remittances are central to Africa's migration development discussion, serving as major and dependable source of foreign currency to African countries.

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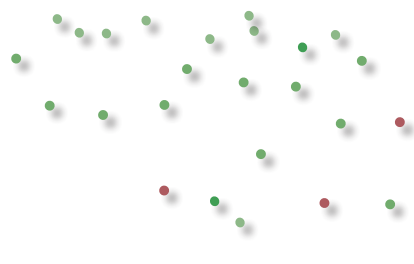
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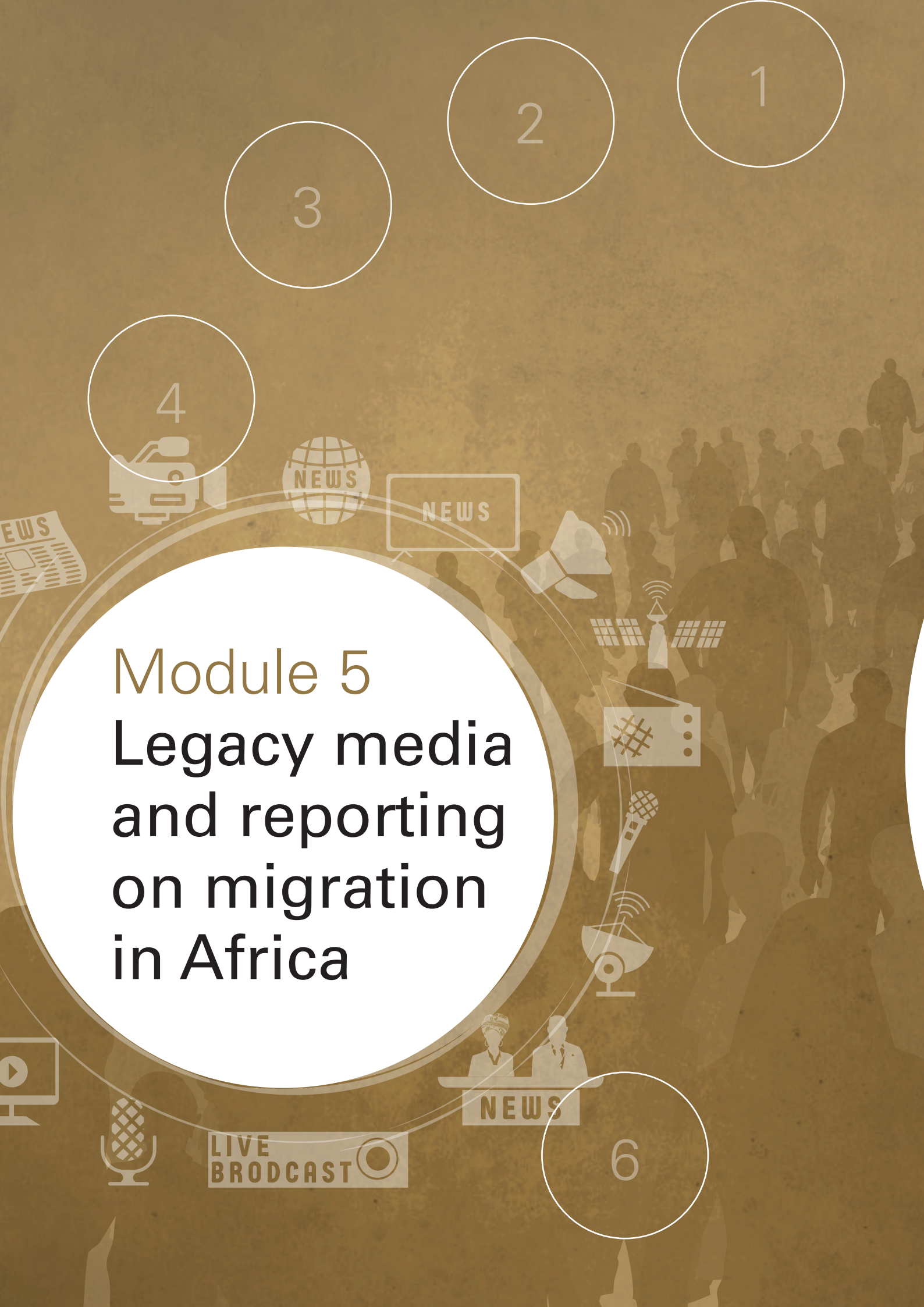
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The background is a textured, olive-brown surface. It features a large, faint circular graphic that acts as a frame for the central text. Scattered around this frame and across the background are various white icons: a newspaper, a video camera, a globe with 'NEWS' written on it, a speech bubble with 'NEWS', a satellite dish, a radio tower, a microphone, a person at a news desk with 'NEWS' on the desk, and a 'LIVE BROADCAST' banner. In the bottom right, there is a large, faint silhouette of a crowd of people. Six white circles containing the numbers 1 through 6 are positioned around the central text area, likely indicating a sequence or steps.

Module 5

Legacy media and reporting on migration in Africa

1

2

3

4

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Module overview

5

Module overview

Objective

The objective of this module, is to equip media practitioners and communication specialists within CSOs and NGOs with an understanding of the language and politics of reporting on migration, and the importance of ethics and evidence-based reporting on migration issues.

Module content

Topics covered:

- The role of media practitioners and communication specialists in CSOs/NGOs in migration reporting in legacy media and social media
- Migrants as a special interest topic
- The ethics of reporting migration issues
- Myths, perceptions and facts about African migration issues
- Terminology, language and politics of migration reporting
- Use of non-discriminatory language
- An alternative vocabulary: recognising a shared humanity
- Evidence – informed reporting practices and authoritative reliable sources on migration information

Learning outcomes

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- explain the role of media (including social media) and CSOs/NGOs in the migration space;
- describe the ethics of reporting migration issues;
- illustrate myths and perceptions of African migration issues;
- understand the language and politics of migration reporting;
- produce pieces in the genres of migration reporting for both media practitioners and CSOs/NGOs; and
- produce evidence – informed texts using reliable sources.

5.1 Introduction

This module aims to build the capacity of media practitioners and communication specialists in CSOs and NGOs to write and report on migration. It encourages journalists, including those writing on social media/new media content producers, and communication specialists in CSOs/NGOs to appreciate the complexities and nuances of the issues being covered and the need to ensure the materials they produce are impartial, fact-based and recognise the humanity and dignity of migrants.

5.2 Role of the legacy media, social media and CSOs/NGOs in the migration space

While media practitioners and communication specialists in CSOs/NGOs may work in similar ways, their professional needs are slightly different – media practitioners focus on objective reporting and storytelling for broad audiences, while communicators in civil society and NGOs prioritise advocacy, stakeholder engagement, and strategic messaging. Nonetheless, media and CSOs/NGOs display special similarities in their functions and operations in relation to the state, governments, society and the markets. Indeed, some literature has located legacy (traditional) media within the domains of civil society (Willems 2013). Ideally, media and CSOs/NGOs should be free from direct ownership, control or interference such as that from powerful actors, for example, the state and government, politicians, the market and people in commerce and business. This independence/autonomy from powerful actors is intended to ensure impartiality and objectivity in the representation or reporting on issues that are of public interest. The media and civil society usually play a representational role especially on behalf of social groups and special interest groups. They play an important role in ensuring that the democratic spaces are open and inclusive of diverse individuals and groups in the larger national, regional and global communities. They protect and promote the rights of individuals and the rights of vulnerable groups.

Protection of human rights is a critical responsibility for different stakeholders in contemporary democratic societies. The state, government, media and CSOs bear this responsibility in different roles and capacities. Rights-holders are individuals or social groups with particular entitlements. They can make legitimate claims to duty-bearers who are obliged to respect, promote and protect the human rights of rights-holders. Duty-bearers are state or non-state actors held accountable for the rights of individuals and social groups. However, since the state and government are often very powerful actors, media and CSOs have traditionally adopted a watchdog role over the state and other powerful actors to ensure that they do not abuse their powers over citizens and non-citizens within or outside their national boundaries.

5.3 The role of media and CSOs in reporting on migration issues

In their reporting of migration issues, media and CSOs/NGOs have similar roles and duties that include but are not confined to the following:

- both the media, CSOs/NGOs are involved in public communication;
- they create, package and disseminate ideas and information to raise awareness of issues and shape perceptions in the public consciousness;
- they set or contribute to policy agendas, or respond to them;
- they publish their texts on different platforms that include traditional/legacy media (radio, television, newspapers and magazines), social media and websites;
- they have an oversight role on the state and powerful institutions, business interests, individuals and other powerful actors; and
- their watchdog or whistle-blower role seeks to ensure transparency, accountability and social justice in a democratic society.

Despite the media's duty to report objectively and impartially, they can lobby and take up social justice causes just as CSOs/NGOs do.

5.4 News sources

Stories about Africans on the continent or abroad must carry a considerably higher number of diverse African voices, including the men, women and children with first-hand experience of migration and other relevant minority groups, as well as African experts, including academics, economists, politicians, lawyers, and business leaders. African think tanks and government agencies, CSOs and supranational institutions such as the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, Afrobarometer, the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), the African Union Commission and Socio-economic Regional bodies should be given more space to contribute their knowledge and reflections on migration issues.

Given the complex nature of migration, it is important that media practitioners and communication specialists in CSOs/NGOs use a range of sources and verify the information they are using. This is both for professional ethical reasons and for proving the credibility of the story. Journalists and CSOs/NGOs should also realise that there are instances when sources prefer to remain anonymous out of fear of possible recriminations. This would be the case, for

example, with vulnerable groups, such as victims of human rights abuses or children or when there are whistle-blowers with sensitive information. In all cases, informed consent should always be sought before publishing.

5.5 Reporting on migration in crisis situations

It is often the crisis situations that attract the most coverage. People are forced to move due to war, disease, hunger, and climate change. Migration movements that account for the rapid and abrupt movement of thousands of people can be triggered by economic, political or climatic factors. Media practitioners and communication specialists in CSOs/NGOs should frame the information and stories sensitively and in ways that do not demean the humanity of those involved. They should verify their information with reliable sources and use correct terminology/rights-based language. Journalism itself can also suffer from a crisis of representation, framing and discourse, and struggles to quickly adopt a language that is sensitive or appropriate to the situation.

Box 5.1 Displaced and exiled journalists and CSO/NGO activists

“Since wars begin in the minds of men and women it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed. (UNESCO 2021: iii)”

Many media practitioners and communication specialists in CSO/NGO find themselves displaced or exiled from their countries of origin. Some seek political asylum and others live as refugees. These people often find it difficult to continue with their original work of reporting on human rights because they are far removed from the source of the news and information. New Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and digital archives and digital connectivity are enabling them to continue with their work. They might not easily find homage in the newsrooms and CSOs/NGOs of the hosting nations, but they need resources and systemic support for them to remain relevant. Their safety and security should be guaranteed under the relevant international laws.

5.6 Five-point guide to reporting on migration

Figure 5.1 Five point guide for migration reporting³⁰



Source: Adapted from Ethical Journalism Network.³¹

³⁰ An alternative resource and guide was developed by ICMPD's Migrant Resource Centre for media in Pakistan, which can be equally useful and relevant, available here: ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Pakistan-migration-reporting-guidelines_ENG_2021-4.pdf.

³¹ ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/ethical-guidelines-on-migration-reporting.

5.6.1 Strategies for media practitioners and communication specialists in CSOs and NGOs reporting on migration issues

Reporting alone does not guarantee that the vital messages on migration and the rights of migrants are immediately imprinted onto audiences' minds. Media practitioners and communications specialists tailor their materials with the different audiences in mind. Knowing who the audiences are helps in crafting a motivating and engaging message.

5.7 Audiences for content on migration

- Government, especially home affairs departments³²
- Immigration departments
- Governments at local and municipal levels
- Business organisations
- Labour unions
- Research institutions and think tanks
- Civil society organisations
- Non-governmental organisations
- Intergovernmental organisations
- International human rights or migration institutions
- Migrants and migrant communities
- Media houses
- Independent content creators
- Social media
- The general public

Journalism can uphold its impartiality while still advocating for human rights and humanity – particularly in reporting on migration – by grounding its coverage in facts and ethical principles, rather than adopting the overt advocacy style typical of CSO/NGO activism.

Journalism and CSO/NGOs can have a symbiotic and complementary relationship. A cause can be taken up in one sector that the other picks up. Campaigns on issues of human rights are good examples of this exchange, synergy and complementarity. Journalism can be an authoritative source for CSO/NGO work, and vice versa. CSOs/NGOs are often media savvy, interacting with journalism or adopting journalistic forms in communicating their own research findings and policy documents. Their campaigns include the use of newsletters, pamphlets, podcasts, t-shirts and regalia with critical messages, commissioned artists, etc. CSOs/NGOs of different persuasions and purpos-

³² Other ministries could include foreign affairs, labour and employment, health and social affairs, education development and planning, finance – [see 3.7.1. Governmental Stakeholders](#).

es now create, publish and manage their websites that encourage audience responses and interactions. They commission journalists to write stories, or their own media and communication departments originate such stories in a similar way to regular newsrooms. CSO/NGO websites, podcasts or newsletters also feature hard news, feature stories, opinion columns and commentary as well as the press statements, research articles and policy briefs normally associated with CSO/NGO communications.

Media practitioners and communication specialists in CSOs/NGOs should always pay close attention to the language they use and should agree on particular forms of language, discouraging terms that demean or dehumanise people. CSOs/NGOs are best positioned to start or lead social movements when migrants' rights are curtailed.

Depending on the focus, message and target, communication campaigns will involve many different stakeholders. Campaigns on migration issues should involve specialists from sectors such as politics, defence and security, migration, human rights advocacy, climate, etc., to ensure key messages are amplified and result in positive change.

5.8 Migrants as a special interest topic

It is important to convey that migrants are not one homogenous group but individuals with different lives, histories and perspectives. They often have different special interests and needs as individuals or groups. Such individual or group interests should not be overlooked or neglected in media reportage or CSO activism. The distinct identities of migrants are likely to inform the particular interests and needs of different groups and individuals, and therefore the different ways of approaching the issue. The broad term 'migrant' includes refugees or migrants, (regular or irregular), people who are undocumented, women, children, the elderly, or people living with physical disabilities such as being deaf or hard of hearing, or with visual impairments or a mental disability. They could be members of ethnic, social, religious or other minorities. They may be from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or intersex (LGBTQ+) community.³³

The protection needs for the specific migrant person or group will thus vary depending on their identity, situation or context. In cases where the human

³³ OpenDemocracy claims that in 2022, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees told the British Government about the discrimination suffered by asylum-seeking members of the LGBTQ+ community when they apply for asylum in Rwanda. (See Bychawski, A. (2024) 'Safe' Rwanda is refusing LGBTQ+ asylum seekers, Home Office was told in 2022. OpenDemocracy 17 January 2024.

rights of an individual or particular group are not recognised or have been violated, journalists and CSOs should bring their situation to wider public attention and demand accountability, transparency, fairness and justice. A victim-centred approach is most desirable. All of these vulnerable groups (often referred to as Special Interest Groups (SIGs)). have special information and communication needs, while others such as the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the blind also require special technologies and formats to access information or communicate.

5.9 The ethics of reporting migration issues

Ethics are professional norms and values that guide proper practice. The media/journalism profession has ethical charters or codes of conduct that include common rules and principles, and guidelines.

Ethics are not about rote learning or just for memorising. They make more sense when put into practice to guide professional behaviour.

Most of these codes are either in-house codes of conduct or national/international professional codes of standards. For instance, the Mail & Guardian of South Africa has an Editorial Code of Ethics as well as a Social Media Policy. Other codes cover the practitioners across the profession in a particular country, and yet others are global and administered by media associations. In December 2019, journalists from Africa, America, Asia and Europe adopted an ethical charter for journalists covering migration at a meeting organised by the IOM in Carthage, Tunisia. Its charter is founded on four major principles of journalism: accuracy, independence, humanity and responsibility.³⁴ The institutional structures and systems for administering codes of conduct vary with broad systems such as self-regulation, co-regulation and statutory regulation. The levels of enforcement of rules and principles also vary depending on the administrative systems and other variables. Media organisations in most African countries prefer self-regulation. The new phenomena of social media and user-generated content (citizen journalism) have also witnessed the crafting of codes of ethics for internet users, especially those who practice mass communication.

Whilst ethics for the media profession are often publicly discussed, it appears that ethics for CSOs/NGOs in Africa are rarely discussed to the extent that there is an assumption that CSOs/NGOs do not adhere to some kind of ethical code, or that they do not have clearly defined published codes of practice, or codes of conduct pertaining to their actual practice as special interest groups

³⁴ [Reporting migration: A handbook on migration reporting for journalists, ICMPD, March 2021](#) (accessed 23 June 2025).

or voluntary associations with special interests on specific issues. However, in 2024, the African Union's Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) published an updated CSO Manual on Advocacy and Policy Writing, which reinforces the importance of a Code of Ethics and Conduct for African CSOs.³⁵ The manual acknowledges that CSOs/NGOs continue to play a pivotal role in advancing social and economic transformation, contributing to policy development at local, national, and regional levels. In many cases, they have taken on responsibilities once held by governments, while holding public institutions to account. Their participation in international forums and influence on legal and policy frameworks underscores their growing authority. As a result, ECOSOCC emphasises the need for CSOs themselves to uphold high standards of transparency, legitimacy, and accountability, stating that with greater influence comes a greater obligation to demonstrate ethical and responsible practice.

Since Ethics are based on practices, and practices become a guide for good ethical behaviour, they are also contextual while balancing with individual rights.

There are common areas in the ethics required for journalistic and CSOs/NGOs practices. Honesty, integrity, impartiality, respect for human rights, protection of confidentiality, etc., all apply in various ways to both professional practices. Besides advancing the best interests in the promotion of human rights, the two professions rely on public trust for their own credibility, hence they are compelled to consistently observe the best ethics and codes of behaviour. In their respective ways, they wield cultural power and professional authority by virtue of their watchdog and whistleblowing roles. They shape or influence public opinion and public perceptions, thus the critical requirement to be factual, honest and trustworthy. In this age of information overload due to the new social media and digital ICTs, it is vital that credible mass communicators use evidence-based sources in order to inspire public trust. The proliferation of new communication actors who use digital platforms and social media, the presence of algorithms, virtual reality, and bots gives space and opportunity for misinformation, disinformation, falsehoods, and digital harassment that makes the news and information landscape problematic.

In addition to adhering to the conventional ethical standards and practices often outlined in most codes of conduct, reporting on migration demands special ethical considerations and practices that are subject specific. The section on the use of language for migration issues provides linguistic and practical guidelines that are closely based on ethical practice. A number of guiding resources exist, including the ICMPD Handbook on Migration Report-

³⁵ African Union ECOSOCC, *CSO Manual: Advocacy and Policy Writing*, May 2024, ecosocc.au.int/sites/default/files/files/2024-05/ecosocccsomanual-advocacyandpolicywritingcompressedcompressed-compressed.pdf (accessed 26 June 2025).

ing³⁶, which demonstrate that language use is not only an issue of grammar and ethical discourse, but that language is ethical praxis. It provides a list of ‘offensive’ words and proposes alternatives. Communicators have an ethical obligation to report with both objectivity and empathy on migrants, a group of people generally considered vulnerable wherever they live in hosting nations (Vanyoro 2024).

Table 5.1 Examples of Do’s and Don’ts on reporting migration issues

Description of activity or person	Definition	Tips on humane reporting
Illegal immigration	Commonly used to describe entering or residing in a country in violation of legal requirements can be an administrative matter or a criminal matter.	Except in direct quotes essential to the story, use ‘illegal’ only to refer to an action, not a person, e.g. ‘irregular migrant’, but not ‘illegal immigrant/migrant’. Irregular migration or irregular migrant is preferable because we do not want to stigmatise the entire migration process, even if certain acts can be termed as illegal such as illegal entry and stay.
Violation of immigration laws	As above.	Be specific whenever possible about how someone entered the country illegally and from where. Do not describe people as violating immigration laws without attribution. Crossed the border? Overstayed a visa? What nationality?
Children as illegal migrants	Children are minors and protected under national, regional and international law.	People who were brought into the country as children should not be described as having migrated illegally, and people should not be called illegals.
Labelling or stereotyping immigrants	In covering both individuals and groups, the goal is to provide relevance and context and to avoid labels. Do not specify a person’s immigration status unless it is relevant to the story.	The term ‘illegal migration’ can be used to describe the phenomenon of entering or residing in a country in violation of the law but the term ‘irregular migration’ can also be used which does not make the presumption of criminality. Avoid using ‘illegal migrant’ to describe individuals except when necessary in direct quotations. Be specific whenever possible in describing an individual’s status, e.g. • ‘Authorities said he/she crossed the border illegally.’ • ‘She/he entered the country to attend college but overstayed her/his student visa’. • ‘He/she was brought here as a child by his/her parents, who entered the U.S without a visa.’

³⁶ [Reporting migration: A handbook on migration reporting for journalists, ICMPPD, March 2021](#) (accessed 23 June 2025).

Inter-viewing migrants	Quite often migrants fear talking to journalists and other public communicators for fear of reprisals, public hostility, stereotyping and negative coverage	Explain why you want to speak to them, how the information will be used and ensure they are aware of potential consequences. Respect their right to privacy and requests for anonymity. Do not disclose their identity without their informed consent. Show empathy and respect. Take care not to re-traumatise.
Photography and filming	Do not film or take photographs without the informed consent of the person(s) being portrayed	Always seek explicit permission to film or take photographs of an individual. In dangerous situations where consent is granted, use discretion whether to publish or not, using the principle of 'do no harm'. Never alter an image that would mislead the audience.

All ethics for both journalists and CSOs/NGOs should be based on the recognition and protection of human rights, humanitarian values and humanism. Mass communicators must avoid insulting and degrading language, and hate speech.

The story of Rwanda in 1994 shows that journalism can fuel tensions that can lead to massacres and genocide. In the aftermath of the genocide, the breach of ethics and human rights resulted in journalists being treated as genocidists. Many were put on trial and convicted by the International Criminal Tribunal (see Thompson 2007).

Reporting on migration can be a highly emotional process that ought to be handled with sensitivity and caution.

The obligation to protect the identity of an asylum-seeker continues indefinitely regardless of the current status of the individual concerned, whether a refugee, or someone whose claim has been rejected (UNHCR Guidelines for Journalists, 7).

5.10 Myths and perceptions of African migration issues

Migration myths are not innocent. According to Hein de Haas (2024: 8) they are systematically produced and 'recycled', to serve powerful interests and political agendas. The myths and misconceptions of migrations should not be evaluated on their own but as 'building blocks of more general stories, or narratives, that the public are being told about immigration'.

NEWS REPORT

Irregular Migration: 22. Europe Sanitizes, Africa Exposes: The Visual Politics of Irregular Migration (click to read)

25 April 2025, Migration Policy Centre

Haas further enunciates,

(Migration) narratives portray migration either as a threat or a solution, or they depict particular groups of migrants alternatively as heroes, victims or villains. By their very nature, such migration narratives are simplistic and biased because they serve particular interests, usually in the form of attracting voters, political support, or funding. In order to be convincing, such storylines need to resonate with people's real concerns, emotions and fears and sound internally coherent. To achieve such coherence, politicians, interest groups and the media tend to cherry-pick facts, leaving in what is convenient, and leaving out what is inconvenient, deliberately not telling the full story or manipulating data to fit their migration narratives. As these stories are being told again and again, until at some point they become conventional wisdoms, self-evidential and self-referential 'truths.' (Haas 2024: 8)

Recent research on migration reveals that reporting on migration issues is informed by the organisations and countries news media and research organisations to which journalists are affiliated (Videler 2017). A study conducted by Cardiff University's School of Journalism, Media and Culture Studies on behalf of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees discovered that between 2014 and 2015, Sweden's print media published fairly positive stories about people migrating to Europe, whereas the UK's media had a relatively negative perspective on migration. These findings are critical because the framing of stories influences public attitudes towards migration (see Module 1). Videler (2017) therefore makes these significant observations:

... (Language) creates reality. This leads us to critically reevaluate exactly how news media cover and should cover (migration) issues. In particular, as not only the tone, style and story, but the choice of terminology matters to people's attitudes towards migration, we ask ourselves: what are the correct and ethical words for talking about migration?

The many myths and misconceptions about African migration issues, often reproduced in the mainstream Western media, are amplified by politicians and shape public perceptions about migration. Given the often highly polarised political environment that journalists and CSOs/NGOs reporting on African migration issues are working in, their communications and reporting on migration needs to be accurate, evidence-based, and verifiable using credible sources. This is only possible when the journalists and CSOs/NGOs build and maintain a trusted network of contacts and conduct thorough research and/ or rely on, or complement other current research from credible sources, think-tanks and research institutions such as the Afrobarometer, Mo Ibrahim Foundation (MIF), the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) and IOM.

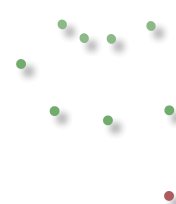
Media practitioners and communications specialists in NGOs/CSOs need to be vigilant about the realities of misinformation, fake news and disinformation on migration issues because of the politics underpinning narratives on migration. Josephine Appiah-Nyamekye Sanny of Afrobarometer and Camila Rocca of MIF write: 'Migration has become a staple of the news in many countries, filled with images of desperate Africans fleeing an impoverished continent. These reports are not necessarily false, and they can be valuable in highlighting the human stories of migration, but they are not a good basis for helpful action'. The co-authors demonstrate the facts and figures of research findings from work done by Afrobarometer and MIF (Sanny and Rocca 2020). This module combines their findings and those of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation (MIF) and the Africa Europe Foundation (AEF) to highlight some common myths.

Table 5.2 Debunking common myths^{37,38}

Myth	Facts
Most Africans travel to Europe and America	- African migrants' most favoured destination is neither Europe nor America. Africa is the most popular destination. - Less than one-third (27.2 per cent) of all African migrants live in Europe. More than 51.6 per cent of African migrants live within the continent.
African migrants are 'overwhelming' Europe	- Africa's migrant population is 14.5 per cent of the global migrant population, much less than Asia's 41.0 per cent and Europe's 22.5 per cent. - African migrants constitute less than 15 per cent of the total migrant population in all world regions outside Africa. - Exaggerated presence of Africans in other world regions perpetuate the stereotype of an African 'invasion'. - Africa hosts a growing part of the global migrant population, hosting +42.6 per cent more migrants in 2020 than in 2010, with the number of migrants in Africa having increased from all world regions.

³⁷ See also [Module 4](#), for more detailed discussion of positive and negative impacts of migration.

³⁸ Africa and Europe: Facts and Figures on African Migration, Mo Ibrahim Foundation (MIF) and Africa Europe Foundation, 2022



Myth	Facts
African migrants are the most desperate and low skilled	• African migrations towards Europe are mainly economic migrations. • African migrants are not the poorest but the youngest and best educated.³⁹ • African migrants are not mostly 'uneducated single men, looking for welfare coverage'. • They are mostly young people, educated, looking for jobs. Almost half of them are women. • Around 80 per cent of African migrations are driven by the search for better economic prospects. • Only 7.2 per cent of African migrants in EU countries are refugees.
African migrations into Europe are mainly irregular	• Most African migrants to Europe or any other destination are documented and use regular routes. This is reasonable when one considers the different purposes for travel that falls within migration. • In 2019, Frontex registered around 40,000 irregular border crossings into the EU from Africa, which represents less than 10 per cent of the regular migrations from Africa to Europe between 2019 and 2020. • According to MIF and AEF, irregular border crossings from Africa to Europe represented less than one-third of all irregular crossings into the Europe in 2019. • IOM states that between 2011 and 2016, about 80 per cent of all those arriving from Northern and Western Africa to Europe migrated through regular channels.
Most Africans are considering emigrating	• Most Africans prefer to live in their country of origin. • Africa is not 'a continent of massive exodus'.
Just as in the US and Europe, most African countries are tightening migration laws	• Most Africans prefer to live in their country of origin. • More African countries are increasingly providing African migrants visas at point of entry. • Some African countries have removed visas for selected African countries. An identity card is enough. More African countries issue visas at the point of entry.
All migrants are exiles and refugees	• Most African migrants acquire formal documentation to live in another country as tourists, students or workers.

³⁹ Africa's population is largely young, with a median of 18.8 years for the over 1.4 billion total population. The median age in Africa is 18.8 years and 44.7 per cent of the population is urban (www.Worldometers.info).

Myth	Facts
African migrants are 'a burden on local services'	• In most countries migrants are often a valuable sought-after resource as both tourists and a key labour force. • Europe has an ageing population hence an increased demand for young African labour. • MIF and AEF note that by 2055, Europe will have 78.2 dependent people per 100 working-age people, and 58.9 in Africa. • In many European countries African migrants constitute a large part of the health care workforce, mainly doctors and nurses. • The COVID-19 crisis made many European countries relax visa and work permit requirements for African foreign medical professionals. • Migrants make a positive contribution to the economy of the hosting country, spending not less than 85 per cent of their incomes there. • MIF and AEF estimate that migrants' contributions to GDP are 19 per cent in Côte d'Ivoire, 13 per cent in Rwanda, and 9 per cent in South Africa.
Migration is all about brain drain from Africa	• Quite often this myth is not supported with statistical evidence of remittances and other benefits that might accrue from migration to the country of origin. • There is a new call to rethink the ideas of brain drain or brain gain and their seeming binaries.
(African) migrants transmit communicable diseases to their host population	• According to the World Health Organisation (2019), 'there is only a very low risk of refugees and migrants transmitting communicable diseases to their host population'.
'Swarms' of migrants are in host nations	• Ordinary citizens in host countries often estimate that there are 3 or 4 times more migrants than those counted using scientific methods (WHO 2019).

NEWS REPORT

Cross border migration and trade: 115.

[Why migration is a model for sustainable development for all](#) (click to read)

15 January 2024, WEF

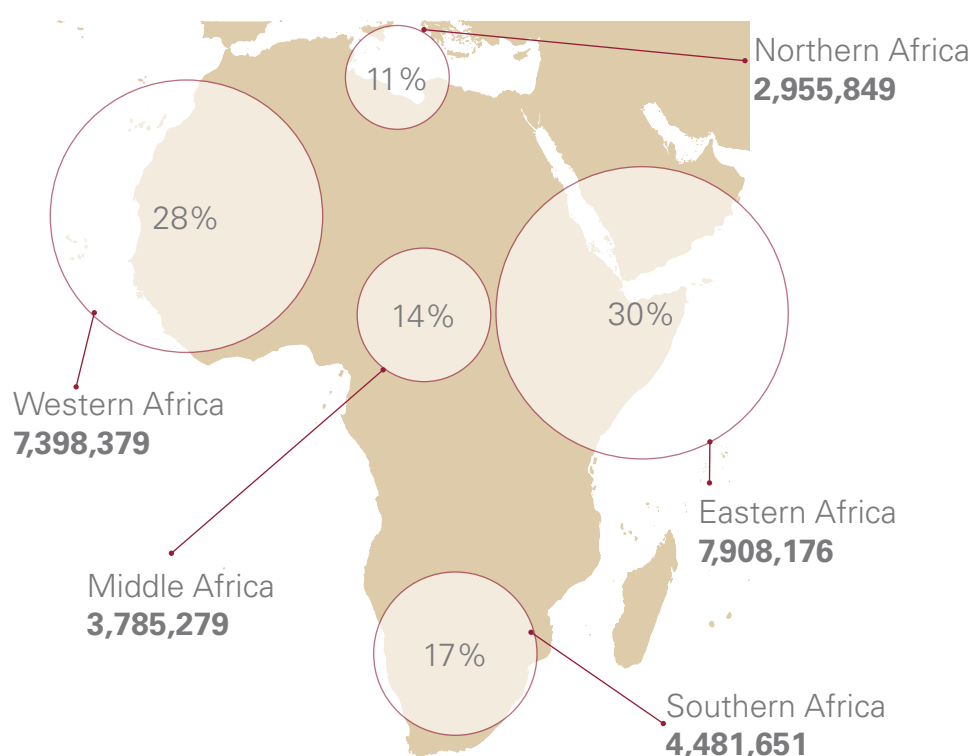
Table 5.3 Share of African migrants of total migrant population (2020)

Continent	Migrants from Africa to Destination	Migrants from other Regions to Destination
Africa	82.4%	17.6%
Europe	12.7%	86.3%
Oceania	6.3%	92.7%
Northern America	5.6%	94.4%
Asia	4.8%	95.2%
Latin America and the Caribbean	0.3%	99.7%

Source: Mo Ibrahim Foundation (MIF) & AEF.

More and more evidence is showing that most of the international migration in Africa takes place within the continent and inter-regionally. In the order of the highest migrant numbers, the main intra-Africa migrant receiving countries are: South Africa, Cote d'Ivoire, Uganda, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Kenya (Makina and Mudungwe 2024: 83; Achieng et al 2020; Yaro and Setrana 2024).

Figure 5.2 Distribution of migrants on the African continent



Source: Adapted from Yaro & Setrana 2024: 187.

5.11 The language and politics of migration reporting

Language is part of communication. Language creates and conveys meanings about ourselves and others. It creates images that carry meanings. Language comes in the form of spoken and written words, and visual signs (as in sign language, pictures and images). Since language creates meanings out of human interactions, it is intricately and unavoidably political as it expresses human relations. In short, language is political. It defines who has power and who is powerless, who are equal and who are not, who is marginalised and who is not, or who is perceived as 'civilised' and human, and who is not. Language makes statements of facts or suppositions with direct implications on

the social status of the person who defines or is defined. Language shapes and prepares its receivers or audiences about the policy decisions made that affect the lives of migrants. In a world where people are more attentive to their similarities with those they recognise as the same as themselves, and alternatively those they perceive as different from themselves, language ought to be used in a very humane and sensitive way. In that regard, language is an ethical tool. Therefore, it should not be used to dehumanise any person or group, or to strip a person or group of their human rights. Reporting on migration demands that the humanity and dignity of all migrants is fully recognised, and their human rights are protected in accordance with international, regional and national laws. While objectivity and impartiality are important in all migration reporting, it is inescapable that whoever writes or broadcasts about migrants is placed in a position where he or she is compelled to write or broadcast as one writing or broadcasting for, or about, or with, or alongside or against the migrants. Use of language in these cases reveals the levels of embeddedness, neutrality/impartiality or detachment a mass communicator adopts in relation to the subject of migration. The choice of language reveals the communicator's positionality, attitude, perspective and perception in relation to both the subject matter and the persons involved in the narrative, discourse or story-telling. In spite of the different ideological positions, attitudes and perspectives that journalists and CSO communicators may hold, they still have an ethical and professional requirement to be fair, truthful and honest in their reporting.

The choice of language reveals the communicator's positionality, attitude, perspective, and perceptions, however, it is important to remain ethical, professional, fair, truthful, honest, objective and impartial.

A challenge for communicators is to ensure that powerful interest groups do not dominate or overly shape the narratives that reach the public. This challenge comes with the background knowledge that what politicians, mass media and various interest groups publicly disseminate as true is 'based on misguided assumptions or 'myths' rather than on facts and scientific evidence' (Haas 2024; 1). Communicators should remain wary that policy makers and decision makers on migration matters often disregard facts, recycle 'the errors of the past', instead of developing 'better, 'evidence-based' policies'⁴⁰. This is because politicians and policy makers are often constrained by the interests, ideologies and agendas of governments and organisations. They often ignore evidence or deliberately 'distort the truth about migration, for instance through migrant scapegoating or migration fearmongering' (de Haas 2023: 2024). Migrants are blamed for socio-economic failures in host nations, and host communities are made to fear migrants for various reasons such as national insecurity, crime, and spread of diseases. Mass media may then 'uncritically amplify and recycle' the myths and disinformation that 'reflect institutional agendas, political ideologies, or electoral strategies' (Haas 2024: 1). Evidence-based information that contradicts myths and misconceptions then crumbles before convenient strategic narratives that promote political interests.

Mass communicators have a responsibility to ensure that what is being communicated is not amplifying or recycling myths and disinformation that reflect institutional agendas, political ideologies, or electoral strategies.

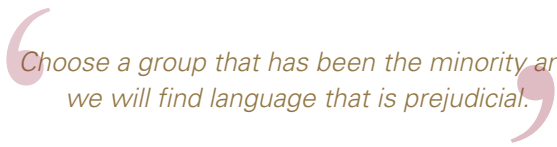
⁴⁰ de Haas, H. (2024). Changing the migration narrative: On the power of discourse, propaganda and truth distortion. IMI Working Paper No. 181/PACES Project Working Paper No. 3. Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam.

5.12 Use of non-discriminatory language

Media practitioners and communication specialists in CSOs and NGOs must avoid using insensitive language that diminishes the humanity or dignity of others. Derogatory language is used to dehumanise people. Such language often appears in the form of cruel names given to others, or the adjectives used to describe other people. Difference is amplified, and those describing and naming conveniently overlook the abundant similarities, culture and common humanity they share with others. Some prejudices and biases are embedded in the language people use. Language use reveals the cultural values a group of people hold about others. History shows that language is a carrier of who is seen in the socio-political-economic and cultural system as superior and who is inferior.

New realities demand new perspectives with an equally sensitive and humane use of language. Mass communicators are pressed nowadays to be more sensitive and abreast of the new realities about civilisation, sociability and civility. Language use should be constantly revisited and revised since language is unstable, fluid and indefinite. Over time, the meaning of words can change and some become obsolete or socially unacceptable and are dropped from common usage. The history of colonisation, imperialism and social class and gender divisions compels any contemporary society that aspires to greater inclusivity, to be more sensitive in addressing persons and groups that have been vilified, demeaned, marginalised and silenced. Hence, the language communicators use in their reporting should convey empathy, compassion and understanding regardless of the differences that still exist amongst different peoples of the world.

William G. Tierney (2023) notes that all nations have histories of using ‘bad words’ about others. He challenges:



*Choose a group that has been the minority and
we will find language that is prejudicial.*

Migration studies show that there is need to use language properly when communicating on migration. Charlotte Taylor from the Centre for Migration at the University of Sussex has called for clear understanding of the implications of using language and words associated with migration (see Kelsey 2019).

5.13 Important terms and definitions

Media practitioners and communication specialists in CSOs and NGOs should use terms and definitions correctly and with care to avoid unnecessary con-



controversies or stereotyping migrants. According to a 2019 Pew Research Centre Survey, terms and definitions are categorising words that influence official and public perceptions. For instance, the citizens of hosting nations are often receptive and supportive of people described as ‘vulnerable refugees’ compared to ‘vulnerable immigrants’. Cognitive science research shows that the way stories are framed and strategic use of migration terminologies have a traceable influence on people’s views about migrants.

Terms such as ‘legal migrant’, ‘unauthorised migrant’, ‘citizen’, ‘foreigner’, ‘alien’, ‘non-citizen’, have a background and history in national legal frameworks, including immigration law. Journalists and communicators in CSOs/NGOs covering migration issues should learn the key terms, understand which ones to use, how to use them correctly and which ones to avoid since the legal basis for some of these terms is not always free from prejudice, negative connotation and discrimination. While terms used in immigration law do not change quickly, they can attract other social and political meanings with demeaning connotations. Words carry socially-constructed meanings and connotations that are context- or situation-based. The way terms are used to describe migrants and related issues is shaped by a combination of factors – including the political and economic climate, popular culture, migrants’ socio-economic and educational backgrounds, their countries of origin, and the context of the host country. For example, the term ‘alien’ is now regarded as outdated, offensive and derogatory. Referring to migrants as ‘aliens’ can shape the way they are seen and potentially whether they receive a positive or negative response. See Table 12 below on terms and definitions. It is important to note that not all the terms below use their specific legal definitions, although they are widely used in the media with more basic general meanings.

Table 5.4 Important terms and definitions

Term	Definition	
Migrant	A person who moves away from his or her usual place of residence, within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons.	Legally defined as per IOM Glossary
Political exile	These terms refer to someone who moves to get away from a certain regime	Not legally defined, but widely used in media
Asylum seeker	A migrant who seeks international protection in another country. Asylum seekers only become refugees when they follow legal processes that allow them to assume the refugee status	Legally defined as per IOM Glossary
A refugee	A person who is forced to leave his or her own country to escape war, persecution, or a natural disaster. The term refugee is used for migrants who have acquired refugee status following a legal process.	Legally defined as per IOM Glossary

Term	Definition	
A climate refugee	A person displaced due to the prevalence of natural disasters or climate change.	Not legally defined, but widely used in media
Human smuggler and human smuggling	A human smuggler is the person who facilitates human smuggling. Human smuggling is generally with the consent of the person(s) being smuggled, who often pay large sums of money for the facilitation, transportation, attempted transportation or illegal entry of people across an international border, in violation of one or more countries laws. The legal definition puts the focus on the crime and not on the person who may have had to use irregular pathways for migration	Legally defined as per IOM Glossary
Human trafficker and human trafficking	Human traffickers is the person who facilitates human trafficking. Transportation of human beings without the consent of the trafficked individual and for the purpose of exploitation of the trafficked person. Fraud, force or coercion all plays a major role in trafficking.	Legally defined as per IOM Glossary

The shift in media language around migration is not a new development, but part of a broader response to how terms are socially constructed and politically used. For example, during the height of the Syrian and Afghan refugee crises, Al Jazeera stopped using the word ‘migrant’ on August 20, 2015, arguing that it had become a dehumanising label used by governments to avoid their responsibilities toward people in need of protection. They contended that the term had strayed from its neutral dictionary definition to become a ‘blunt pejorative’ (Barry Malone, online Editor of Al Jazeera) Similarly, in 2013, the Associated Press removed the term ‘illegal immigrant’ from its stylebook, recognising its problematic and stigmatizing connotations.

A static but selective vocabulary is used alongside corresponding visuals. Alexander Betts, director of the refugee Studies Centre at Oxford University says ‘Words that convey exaggerated sense of threat can fuel anti-immigration sentiment and a culture of intolerance and xenophobia’.

5.13.1 Some Don’ts on reporting migration

Descriptors that should be avoided include ‘wave of migrants/refugees, etc.’, ‘flow’, ‘flooded by’, and ‘invasion of’. Such language can leave people in receiving countries believing that they are under siege. Public discourse around migration has, at times, employed language that dehumanises and criminalises migrants and refugees. For instance, some political figures have described arriving migrants using metaphors such as ‘swarms’ or ‘hordes’, which evoke imagery of invasion and threat. Such language contributes to the hardening

of public sentiment against migrants and constructs migration as a crisis. Official statements in certain contexts have referred to migration as part of a 'criminal plot' to alter the demographic composition of society, using alarmist phrases that associate migrants with crime, violence, and social instability. These portrayals rely on racially coded and xenophobic narratives that frame migration as an existential danger to national identity. In response to this rhetoric and the subsequent rise in racially-motivated violence, some governments facilitated the voluntary return of their nationals. These events sparked broader reflection on regional solidarity and unity across different parts of the continent. Analytical discussions have highlighted how political discourse can shape public perceptions of race and hierarchy, reinforcing social divisions and undermining efforts toward regional cohesion. Right wing political and media discourse perpetuate the stigmatisation, name-calling, scapegoating and fear mongering about migrants ignoring the fact that many immigrants come with proper documentation and authorisation from the receiving country. They carry work permits, study permits, tourist and business visas, etc. The following are examples of language to avoid.

Figure 5.3 Don'ts on reporting migration

Some don'ts on Reporting Migration Issues:

NEVER refer to persons as 'illegal migrants'	!	AVOID reporting on migrants without understanding migration laws
	NEVER refer to children as illegal migrants	
AVOID labelling or stereotyping migrants	NEVER interview refugees and asylum seekers without their explicit consent	NEVER photograph or film migrants without their consent

For some, the word migrant evokes images of people who want to take their jobs and send remittances back to their countries of origin. Some African media carry articles perpetuating myths such as migrants wanting to 'steal' women from local suitors or pander to public prejudices by making too much of a person's migrant origins in cases such as robbery, assault and rape. This can create the impression in the public mind that migrants as a whole are responsible, rather than being the actions of an individual. While the term 'refugee' may evoke in some the image of a dependent foreigner, it has a basis in international law and refers to a person whose claim for asylum has been recognised and accepted by the state as a legal resident.

A descriptor such as 'low-skilled' migrants can be equally detrimental. Low skill connotes manual labour with little or no formal professional qualification. The term devalues the work of the migrants in those sectors. Their contributions to the economy are devalued, just because they are often low wage earners.

The use of the word 'ethnic', as Richard Hoggart (2004: 144-145) previously noted, is both opaque and carries racist connotations when used in public communication. In Africa, the word 'tribe' presupposes an unchanging primitive state of existence. Tribe evokes images of backwardness and irrationality, especially when different groups clash and fight over resources and opportunities. It is a term that connotes inferior levels of socio-economic, political, cultural and technological development. There is a need for deliberate policy instructions in newsrooms and CSO/NGOs boards to cease using this word in the same way that other discriminatory terms have been dropped by the mainstream media elsewhere.

Pejorative names are given to migrants. African migrants within Africa are not spared from this name-calling or hate speech which in extreme cases has triggered violence against migrants. Xenophobia is a likely outcome of this hatred and revulsion. In South Africa, the derogatory name for Zimbabwean and other foreigners is 'Makwerekwere'. It is no mere coincidence that migrants from Zimbabwe and other African countries have suffered most from violent xenophobic attacks. Recent xenophobic attacks on African migrants have been recorded in North African countries, with migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa victimised. African journalism and civil society activism carry the responsibility to go beyond reporting racism, hatred and xenophobia and explain and analyse these issues, highlighting the dangers of using dehumanising names for migrants.

5.14 An alternative vocabulary: Recognising a shared humanity

The language in media reporting of migration or in the reports, campaigns, and policy briefings of CSOs and NGOs should always be humane and ethical, incorporating rights-based terminology. (see also [Module 2](#)). It should show empathy, compassion and understanding of the circumstances of the migrants and explain the context clearly. The voices of the migrants themselves should not be ignored, while always ensuring informed consent. This means explaining fully how the information will be used and any associated risks. Respect the different cultures, traditions, religions, ethnicities and pay particular attention to vulnerable groups such as woman, children or people with disabilities. Be vigilant about your own possible prejudices. If terms such as irregular migrant or undocumented migrant are used in the reporting, explain what they mean. At the same time, unpack the terms, humanise the individuals, and refer to them as people, women, children, sons, etc. to create empathy and understanding in the reader.

African journalists and CSOs should take their cue from global media that are evolving newsroom policies on the use of potentially derogatory or stereotypical terms (Fengler et al 2021). Many no longer use the term 'illegal migrant', but refer instead to undocumented migrants, or to regular or irregular migrants. African media organisations are advised to be guided by resources such as the aforementioned DTIW's 'Journalist Stylebook Reference Guide: Offensive Terms to Avoid (on migration)' ⁴¹ or ICMPD's Handbook on reporting on migration. ⁴² They can update and improve it to incorporate certain derogatory terms that might be Africa specific such as the obnoxious word 'Makwerekwere' that is arguably an instrument for xenophobic attacks in South Africa (see further below).

5.14.1 Examples of language use

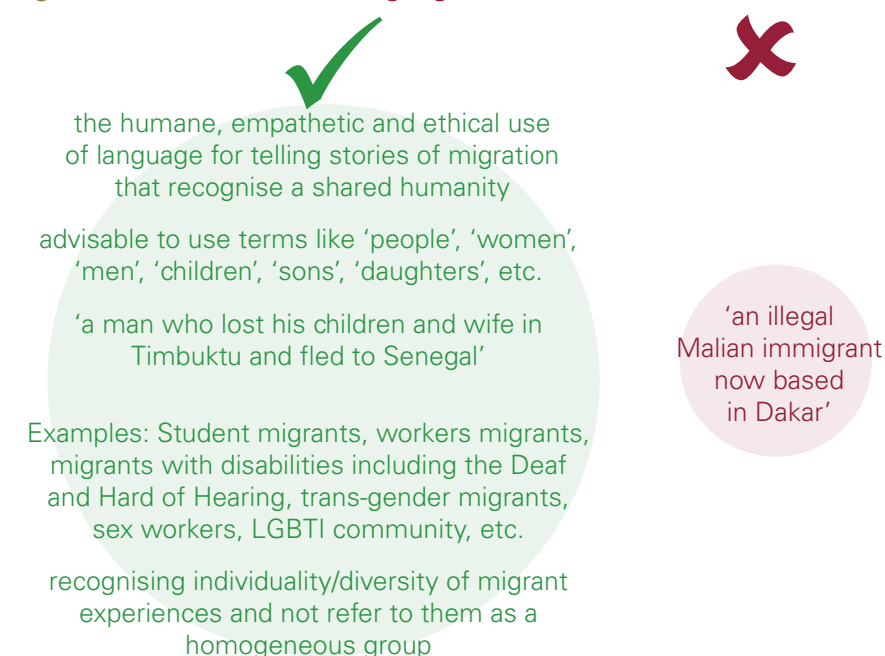
People in receiving and host countries are quicker to recognise the common humanity in those that have crossed borders when public communicators use sensitive and empathetic language. In an article published in The Guardian in 2015, the journalist David Marsh made a call to avoid politically charged expressions such as 'economic migrants', 'illegal asylum seekers', 'genuine' refugees, etc. ⁴³ This call is relevant to African communicators. See examples of alternative humanizing language use in Figure 5.4 below.

⁴¹ www.raceforward.org/sites/default/files/DTIW_Stylebook.pdf.

⁴² [Reporting migration: A handbook on migration reporting for journalists](#), ICMPD, March 2021 [accessed 23 June 2025].

⁴³ www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/aug/28/migrants-people-refugees-humanity.

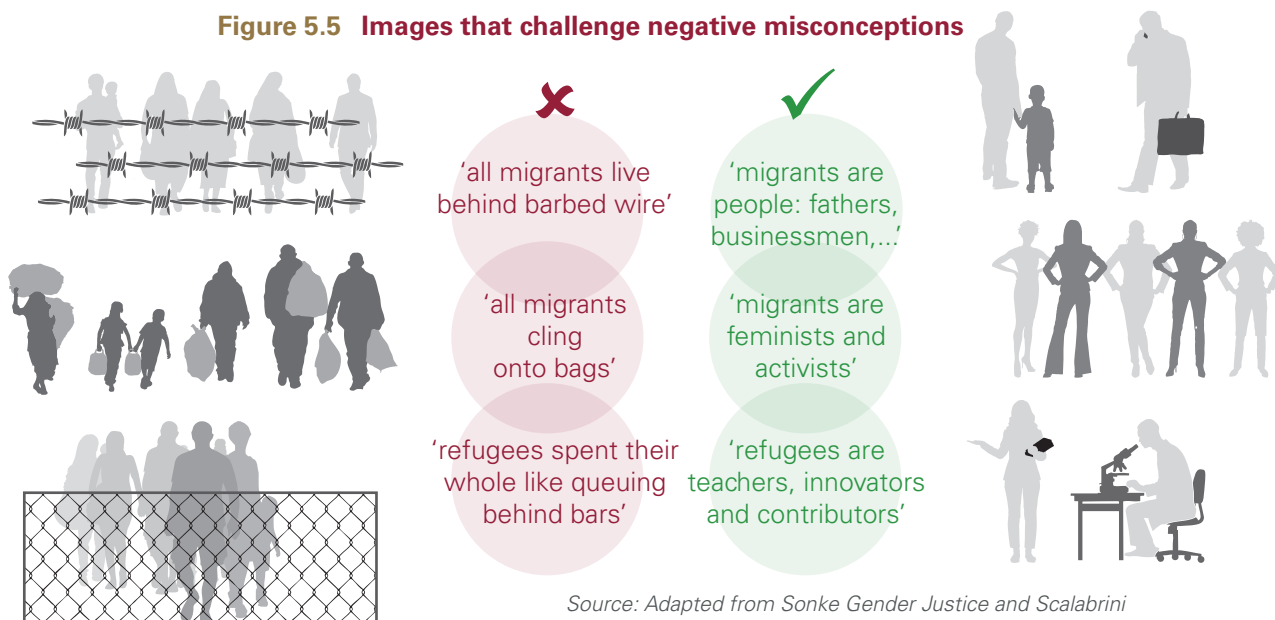
Figure 5.4 Alternatives in language use



5.14.2 Photographic images that challenge misconceptions

Photographs are a relatively easy and accessible means of communication that audiences understand quicker than most other means. They are more effective in conveying meaning when complemented with sparse captions in print, though care needs to be exercised with the captions to ensure the images are not misused. Always ask permission for the image/film to be used. Photographs too need to be used with care and intelligence as shown in Figure 5.5 below.

Figure 5.5 Images that challenge negative misconceptions



Source: Adapted from Sonke Gender Justice and Scalabrini Centre of Cape Town (2019). *Migration in South Africa: A Guide for Journalists and Editors*

5.15 Language and translation services

Both journalists and CSOs should ensure the provision of translation services for migrants who might not speak the language/s of the host nation. When interviewing them, for example, to understand why they migrated, whether they have suffered human rights violations, their current situation and hopes for the future etc, interpreters should be carefully selected and fully briefed beforehand.

5.16 The different genres of migration reporting for both journalists and CSOs/NGOs

The Oxford Languages Dictionary defines ‘genre’ as ‘a style or category of art, music, or literature,’ while Merriam-Webster⁴⁴ offers a similar definition, adding that a genre is ‘characterised by a particular style, form, or content.’ However, both definitions overlook an important aspect: the influence of communication technologies and content distribution platforms on the formation and meaning of genres. Whether through radio, television, print media, websites, search engines, or social media, each medium shapes how genres are created, understood, and experienced – especially across print and audio-visual formats.

Media practitioners covering migration stories work across print journalism which includes news reports, feature stories, opinion pieces or commentary. They also cover migration in broadcast media including TV and radio with documentaries, podcasts, news stories etc. and digital media that encompasses social media, search engines, online platforms, digital devices etc.

CSOs/NGOs produce research reports with case studies, campaign materials, policy briefs, press statements, among other materials.

5.17 Evidence-informed reporting practices and authoritative sources on migration information

Reporting practices and authoritative sources of all types of information are most effective when they inspire trust and confidence in both the creators of content and the receivers of content. Searching for information and attributing it to primary sources is one way of establishing evidence. However, this does not ensure the truth, honesty and veracity of the information. It helps

NEWS REPORT

Diaspora:
136.
[Africa's diaspora
and its impact
on the continent](#)
(click to read)

CNN

⁴⁴ www.merriam-webster.com.

to compare different sources of information on the same issue to ascertain consistency. Where the facts differ, there is need for further verification, and the different perspectives should be presented. Information should be cross-checked, preferably using multiple sources, before the journalist or CSO/NGO can decide the most probable situation out of the differing perspectives. Justification on what is plausible and why it is so can then be reached. Not all sources are credible, and informant differences arise for different reasons, amongst them genuine error or, at worst, deliberate attempts to mislead the journalist or CSO/NGO.

Journalists and CSOs/NGOs rely on both primary and secondary sources of information that are deemed authoritative in their own right at different levels, and for various reasons. Primary sources usually give original first-hand information of an event or action and are regarded as more authoritative.⁴⁵ They include interviews with migrants, migrant communities, other eye-witnesses, academics, politicians, government departments, intergovernmental organisations, activists, immigration officials etc. These are authoritative sources that provide raw information that the media and CSOs/NGOs process and package for dissemination. They also come in the form of original documents (e.g. birth and death certificates, identity card or passport, arrest and trial records), minutes of meetings, interviews, speeches, oral histories, diaries, letters, log books, data entry records (e.g. entry and exit records at border posts), legislative documents, constitutions and international agreements, statistical data, government documents (including population registers, residence permits, labour force surveys and census), newspaper articles, etc. They provide direct evidence of events, allow multiple perspectives, introduce the human element and so on. Secondary sources present analysis, synthesis, interpretation and evaluation of primary sources.

Journalists and CSOs/NGOs mostly produce primary sources of information and academics and policymakers use these if they trust them. This underlines why the media and CSOs/NGOs must produce trustworthy evidence-based stories and reports lest they misinform those who depend on their work. The primary and secondary information categories often overlap in communication texts. Scholarly publications and some media genres such as editorials and opinion columns are usually based on both primary and secondary sources.

While databases and new technologies can provide important information on migration, the information can still be incorrect, inaccurate, biased etc., and it is still very important for journalists and CSO/NGO communication specialists to get on the ground and search for/verify information from migrants and others and collect eye witness testimonies where possible, especially when research demographics show that the elderly, those living in rural areas and immigrants are more susceptible to misinformation (Lepro 2024).

⁴⁵ www.merriam-webster.com.

Journalists and CSOs/NGOs should remain aware that there are times when government immigration officials may not be free to divulge certain types of information as they are restricted by national security laws or bound by Official Secrecy legislation. In such cases journalists and CSOs/NGOs balance these restrictions against the public's right to know and protection of human rights of the migrants concerned. Access to information laws assist journalists to conduct their work or they resort to investigative journalism.

5.17.1 Resources in archives

Documents and statistical data can be found in both electronic and physical archives and libraries belonging to organisations, including national and international statistical organisations and academic institutions. The information should be cross-checked with other sources to verify its accuracy.

5.17.2 Online resources

- Websites of immigration requirements for airports, harbour and border entry points to countries (border posts).
- Government portals especially those managed under relevant ministries that deal with immigration, e.g. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Embassies and High Commissions) and Home Affairs.
- Portals of respective country official statistics offices.

5.18 Intergovernmental organisations, NGOs, think tanks and other institutions working on migration

- African Union Commission, Department of Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development (AUC)
- International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants (OHCHR)
- International Labour Organization (ILO)
- Global Commission on International Migration
- Statistics Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
- Mo Ibrahim Foundation (MIF)
- Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

- Research and Evidence Facility (REF) – focuses on migration in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel Region

5.18.1 Databases

- Statista – www.statista.com
- Fragomen – www.fragomen.com

5.19 Conclusion

This module has focused on the importance of ethics and practice in migration reporting. Language is a critical tool in humanising or dehumanising migrants. The module discusses common myths and stereotypes and provides guidance on language and discourse in order to promote empathy and social justice.

5.19.1 Key messages

- Journalists and CSO communicators carry **ethical responsibilities** to humanise migrants and avoid reinforcing negative stereotypes or myths.
- Migration narratives must be **grounded in verified data**, and reflect the lived realities of migrants – not only sensational crises. For example, recent research from organisations such as IOM, ICMPD and the African Union Commission reveals that the majority of Africans are migrating within the African continent. Africans that migrate to Europe and America are often young and highly skilled.
- Use of accurate, respectful, and **non-discriminatory language** is central to fair migration reporting.
- It is important to **challenge the myth** that African migrants are all desperate or headed to Europe; Africa is both a source and destination of migration.
- Migration reporting should **strive to build empathy, dismantle xenophobia**, and **promote social justice** through inclusive language and diverse storytelling formats.

5.20 Core readings and resources

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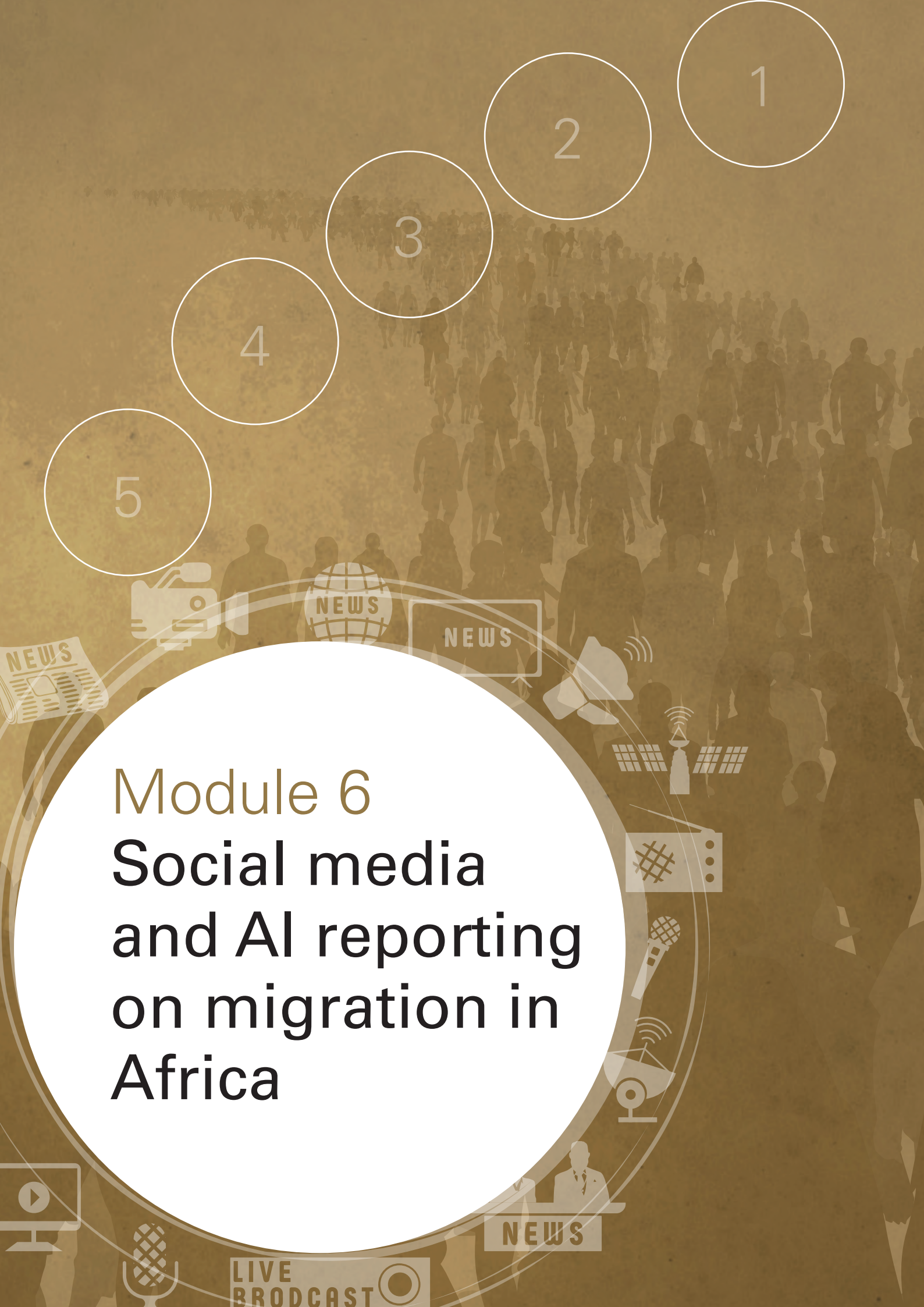
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Module 6

Social media and AI reporting on migration in Africa

Module overview

6

Module overview

Objective The objective of this module is to equip media practitioners and communication specialists in CSOs and NGOs with an understanding of the role of social media and Artificial Intelligence (AI) in reporting migration, and how Africa's migration reporting can, or is, responding to new media technologies. Communicators are encouraged to do due diligence with fact-checking using credible fact-checking engines.

Module content Topics covered:

- The interface of media practitioners and communication specialists and persons responsible for communication in CSOs
- How to leverage social media in reporting on African migration
- Social media and misinformation
- The importance of factual storytelling of African migration issues
- The advantages and challenges of using social media in migration reporting
- AI and reporting on migration issues
- Different target audiences for information on migration

Learning outcomes By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- describe the interface of CSO/NGO communication and journalistic reporting;
- explain how to leverage social media in reporting migration issues in Africa;
- understand the importance of factual storytelling of African migration issues;
- demonstrate the advantages and challenges of using social media in migration reporting; and
- create information on migration for different target audiences.

6.1 Introduction

This module encourages media practitioners, including social media/new media content producers, and communication specialists in CSOs and NGOs reporting on migration to appreciate the complexities and nuances of publishing on migration using different social media and internet platforms. The role of the media and CSOs/NGOs in reporting on migration issues and the interface and commonalities of CSO/NGO communication and journalistic reporting on migration issues, discussed in [Module 5](#), remain relevant and pertinent in this module which focuses on social media. Brief references are made to traditional/ legacy media, including radio broadcasting, television and printed publications, since these co-exist with the emergent social media.

6.2 How to leverage (social) media in reporting on African migration issues

The contemporary information and communication environment has become increasingly complex and dynamic. The production and dissemination of news is no longer the sole domain of governments, mainstream media, or civil society organisations. Radio remains a dominant medium in many regions, particularly in Africa, where it continues to reach an estimated 60 per cent to 80 per cent of the population (Nkoala et al., 2024). The rise of social media has introduced new actors into the public communication sphere, including citizen journalists, bloggers, and social media influencers – individuals and groups who may not conform to traditional definitions of mass communicators. There is now a two-way interaction between online and legacy media, with stories flowing in both directions. This evolving media ecosystem presents both opportunities and risks. On the positive side, it allows for greater diversity of voices and faster dissemination of information. However, it also opens the door to misinformation, disinformation, and manipulation. One notable example involved a widely circulated false narrative that alleged asylum-seekers in Sweden escalated rape and sexual violence in the country. Subsequent fact-checking revealed that the story was based on exaggerations and inaccuracies, ultimately serving the interests of far-right, anti-immigration agendas (Rusbridger, 2018: xi-xvii).

We are living in a world of ‘information’ abundance, and not all this information is factual, hence the need for fact-checking to establish its veracity. Living in a world of information plenty is partly a result of technological developments and partly a result of innovations in content production. Argentinian media scholar Pablo Boczkowski (2021; 1) posits ‘(T)o understand how people experience the growth of information available in contemporary society it is essential to attend to both the technological and the content dimensions. Just a glimpse at a few indicators on each dimension gives an initial impression of the scale and scope of this growth over the past decades. Personal screens such as laptops and smartphones are now the main devices through which people worldwide are accessing information.’

The evolving media ecosystem presents both opportunities and risks. It allows for greater diversity in voices and faster dissemination of information, however it also allows for misinformation and manipulation.

The International Data Corporation (IDC) says that in the second quarter of 2023, Africa's smartphone market saw shipments grow 7.6 per cent year on year to a total of 19.6 million units. Africa is experiencing a growth in smartphone ownership per person, and Statista predicts that by 2025 the market volume of smartphones in Africa will grow by 4.2 per cent. According to the Groupe Spéciale Mobile Association (GSMA) in *The mobile economy Sub-Saharan Africa Report of 2023*, the region had about 287 million (20.5 per cent) mobile internet subscribers in 2022. The mobile internet landscape varied, with penetration rates above 50 per cent in Mauritius, South Africa and Seychelles, but still below 15 per cent in Benin, Chad and the DRC. Accessing social media content is a major factor in the use of smartphones and computers. According to Statista, as of 2022, the number of social media users in Africa was 384 million (27.4 per cent). Social media use is also relatively higher in Northern and Southern Africa than in other African regions, with Central Africa lagging behind with a share of 8 per cent.

There were 271 million Facebook users in Africa, expected to reach 377 by 2025. YouTube had around 180 million users, and X (formerly Twitter) stood at 24 million. Social media penetration is higher in Northern and Southern Africa, while Central Africa significantly lags behind. WhatsApp is preferred over other social media platforms. (Statista 2024).

Table 6.1 Overview of African WhatsApp users by country in 2024

Country	Statistics in Millions (M) and Thousands (K)
Egypt	56 M
Nigeria	51 M
Ghana	10.1 M
South Africa	28 M
Ivory Coast	9.1 M
Kenya	13.9 M
Republic of the Congo	1.9 M
Democratic Republic of Congo	9.7 M
South Sudan	219.7 K
Seychelles	43.5 K

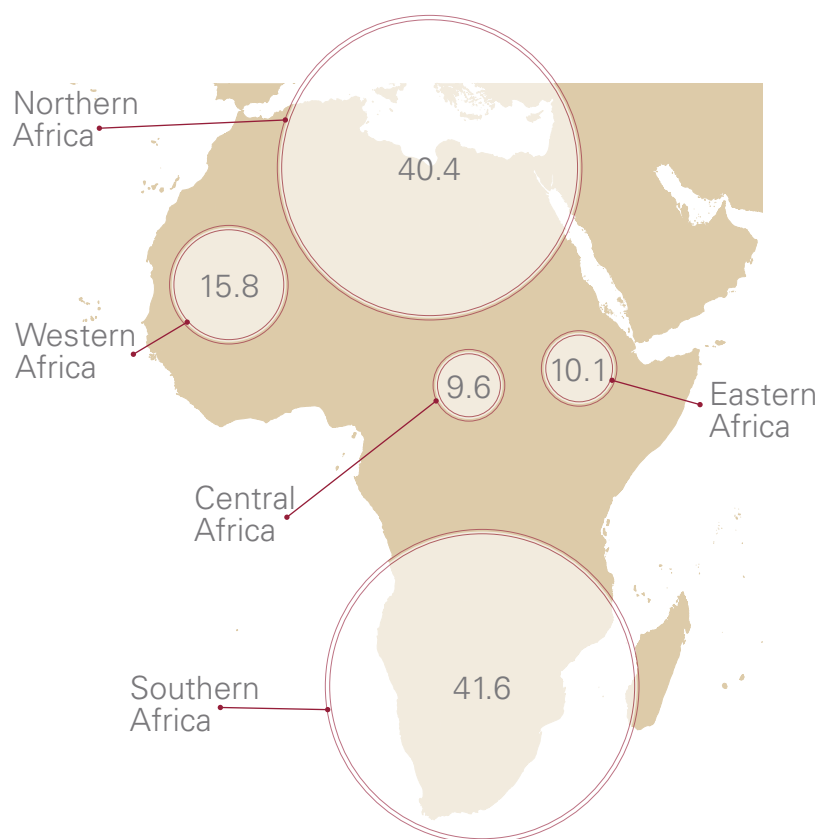
Compiled from World Population Review.⁴⁶

6.2.2 Social media penetration in Africa in 2024, by region

A general understanding of the state and prevalence of social media use in Africa enables communicators to choose the most effective and most accessible platform vis-à-vis traditional media or other social media platforms.

⁴⁶WhatsApp Users by Country 2024. World Population Review.
worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/whatsapp-users-by-country [accessed 5 July 2024].

Figure 6.1 Media penetration in Africa in 2024, percentage by region



Source: Adapted from Statista (2024).

The 2022 report *Africa and Europe: Facts and Figures on African Migration* published by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation (MIF) and the Africa Europe Foundation (AEF) gives important information on digital connectivity in Africa. This data is useful for migration mass communicators in understanding the potential and effectiveness of digital or online platforms. It notes that:

- Different sectors of African societies adopted and enlarged digital connectivity as a coping measure to COVID-19
- The digital divide remains a challenge in terms of physical access to ICTs and the resources and skills needed to use the technology effectively
- In 2019 only 10 African countries had 50 per cent of households with internet access; the disparities are such that Morocco's population had 80.8 per cent internet access, while Burundi's had less than 1 per cent
- The rural-urban divide continues, with most rural areas lacking internet connectivity.

- There are also more male users of internet as compared to female ones
- Almost 600 million Africans are still not connected to the electricity grid (MIF & AEF), which is 40 per cent of Africa's population of 1.4 billion people (www.worldometers.info).

All these factors generally limit access to information for Africans, hence the need to combine the use of internet platforms and traditional/legacy platforms for better penetration.

6.3 Social media and misinformation

Many people believe that social media platforms are among the biggest sources of misinformation, often referred to as fake news. These platforms also feature automated accounts that spread propaganda (known as bots), hidden algorithms that control what users see, and highly opinionated voices that push biased views. In this environment, media literacy – the ability to critically assess and verify information – is more important than ever. However, research reveals that searches can often result in fake news being picked up online and reproduced far and wide, hence the importance of fact-checking engines. Fact-checking websites such as Snopes or PolitiFact often do not post their findings immediately which means, as Benton (2024) notes, that 'the bunkers always have a time advantage over the debunkers'. To guard against misleading and false information being taken up and spread, media literacy programs should understand the real challenges of verifying information. Search engines should invest in solutions to address the problems of the information void, and how false news is amplified.

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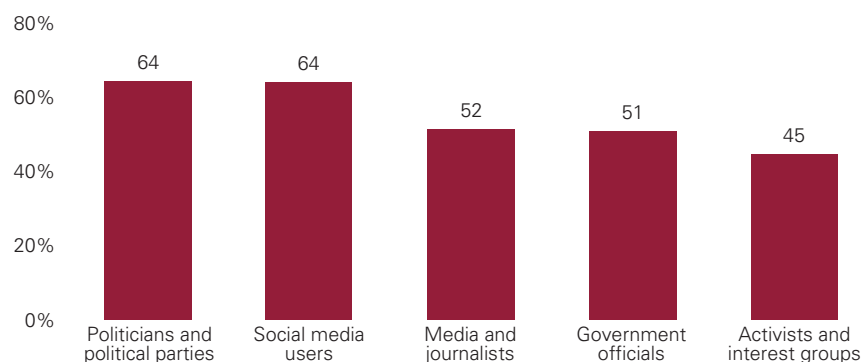
Migration data:
90.
[African migration to Europe: A fact check](#)
(click to read)

16 November 2024,
DW

6.3.1 Who spreads false news?

The inception of social media poses new questions on what is news. Traditional characteristics of news include values such as information that is based on facts, is neutral and has some relevance or significance to the public. These are qualities largely associated with traditional mainstream media. People using social media may not realise that the information is false or may not know how to distinguish between what is true and what is false. If it matches their own beliefs, they are more likely to take it as fact because of confirmation of bias or what they feel to be true. Nowadays, false or fake news is a reality and audiences have expressed their perceptions on this as shown in Figure 18 below.

Figure 6.2 Who spreads false news?



Respondents were asked: Please tell me how often, in this country, you think people from each of the following groups spread information that they know is false. (% say 'sometimes' or 'often')

Source: Adapted from Conroy-Krutz & Kone 2022: 15.

According to Swart and Broersma (2023), the concept of 'news' is shifting, especially among younger audiences who engage with information across different platforms. In traditional mainstream media, news is still largely framed as urgent, fact-based, and of public importance. However, on platforms like Instagram, news tends to be interpreted more subjectively – as content that is personal, emotional, or socially relevant rather than formally pressing. This shift means that what is considered 'news' increasingly depends on what individuals feel is meaningful or share-worthy, rather than on established journalistic criteria such as timeliness, objectivity, or public significance (Swart and Broersma 2023).

6.3.2 Africa Facts Network membership and contacts

It is important that there are now fact-checking organisations and search engines with special focus on Africa. This means information and data on African migration is likely to receive greater attention. Some of these are evenly spread across the continent, with Africa Check playing a leading role. Some organisations focus on a specific country, while others have a transnational reach (see Table 6.2 below).

Table 6.2 Africa Facts Network membership and contacts

Organisation	Country	Website
AFP Fact Check	Several	factcheck.afp.com
Africa Check	Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria, Senegal	africacheck.org
Congo Check	DRC	congocheck.net
Dubawa	Nigeria, Ghana	dubawa.org
Ethiopia Check	Ethiopia	ethiopiacheck.org
FactCheckHub (International Centre for Investigating Reporting)	Nigeria	factcheckhub.org
Faso Check	Burkina Faso	fasocheck.org
GhanaFact	Ghana	ghanafact.org
HumAngle Media	Nigeria	Humangle.ng
INK Centre for Investigative Journalism	Botswana	inkjournalism.org
Kenya Community Media Network	Kenya	kcomnet.org
MISACheck	Mozambique	misa.org.mz
Namibia Fact Check	Namibia	namibiafactcheck.org.na
PesaCheck	Several	pesacheck.org
The Stage Media	Liberia	thestagemedia.com
TogoCheck	Togo	togocheck.com
Vox Populi	Uganda	Voxpopuli.ug/category/ukwe-li-check
West Africa Democracy Radio	Senegal	wadr.org
ZimFact	Zimbabwe	zimfact.org
Zim Tracker	Zimbabwe	Zimtracker.org

Adapted from Wu 2022:20.

6.4 The importance of factual storytelling of African migration issues

Sensationalism is a tempting frame for casting migration stories. Most migration stories inflect a human interest angle. Communicators can be tempted to attract readers and audiences by exaggerating something about this often human interest story. Sensationalism on social media and the mainstream media can start with clickbait. Clickbait is tweets or headlines that grab the reader's attention and direct it to an article whose content does not deliver the expected news or information.

6.5 The advantages and challenges of using social media in migration reporting

Social media platforms have different capacities for disseminating news and fostering discussion and debate on migration issues. Understanding the particular features of the different social media platforms should enable media practitioners and communication specialists in CSOs/NGOs to choose the type of content suitable for a particular platform. Billions of people around the world now use social media. They not only consume the content, they also produce it, share it or respond to online posts on the various platforms.

With the sheer number of posts and information overload, communicators covering migration-related themes must be strategic and target their audiences purposefully, identifying which platform is suitable for what/which type of audiences and for what purpose. Popular social media platforms include, but are not limited to, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, X (previously Twitter), Snapchat and TikTok. Boczkowsky notes that use and access of social media platforms depends on factors such as age of users, gender, and socio-economic status. He also observes that users tend to access different platforms sequentially or concurrently.

Another critical challenge posed by the use of social media and digital sources, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), is the possibility of reproducing long-standing racial and xenophobic stereotypes and myths. The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) warns that AI and facial recognition used at immigration points can reinforce racial bias and xenophobia that result in human rights violations. This happens if systems use 'inherently biased' data already stored in the cyber sphere (www.fragomen.com).

6.5.1 Pros and cons of WhatsApp and how to use it



WhatsApp is generally present in the daily lives of most people with more than 2 billion people using it worldwide (Tameez 2024b) which is more than Facebook or X. Billions of WhatsApp groups of all types are in existence across Africa, stretching from family groups, students and former students' groups, workplace groups, residential area groups, politicians and political parties, groups, marketing and business groups, etc. WhatsApp is currently the most widely used platform with users that cut across gender, age and socioeconomic status. It is very popular because it also allows users to send voice messages, still and moving pictures, and people can talk directly internationally at no charge.

Migration communicators can harness the WhatsApp platform to support coverage and reporting on migration. Designed for simplicity, WhatsApp is generally more user-friendly than platforms like Instagram, which tend to require more technical skill. This makes it especially accessible for users with limited digital literacy. Warnings and human-interest stories – such as those about human trafficking, modern-day slavery, or other migration-related issues – can be easily shared within WhatsApp groups, whether among close contacts or more widely in specialised networks such as residents' associations.

In Africa's family-oriented cultural context, journalists and civil society organisations (CSOs) reporting on migration and human rights can use WhatsApp to dispatch content, raise awareness, organise campaigns, and coordinate collective actions. The platform supports communication within smaller publics and encourages more intimate conversations. Given that many individuals know someone who has migrated or is considering migration, WhatsApp offers a familiar and trusted space for sharing relevant information.

Warnings and human-interest stories can easily be shared within WhatsApp groups.

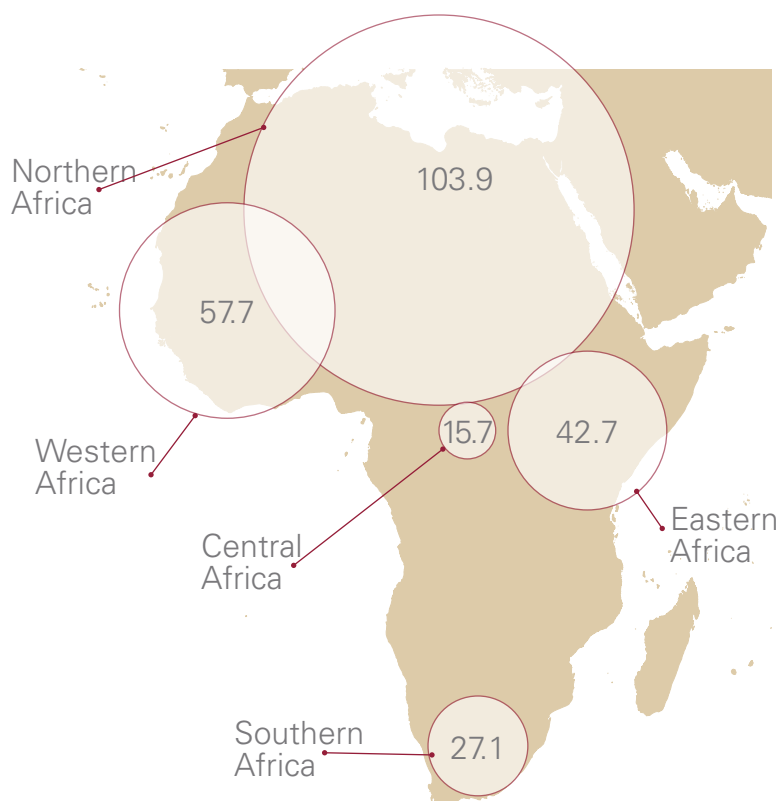
Leading news organisations, including The Financial Times, have launched WhatsApp Channels as 'one-way broadcast tools for Admins to send text, photos, videos, stickers, and polls.' These posts can then be forwarded by users to their own contacts and group chats, increasing their reach organically. Since WhatsApp is primarily used to maintain connections with family and friends, it offers mass communicators a valuable opportunity to align with natural patterns of audience behaviour. To be effective, communications should be short, and use plain, accessible language.



6.5.2 Pros and cons of Facebook and how to use it

Facebook, like WhatsApp, cuts across all demographic groups. However, it is a less personal space than WhatsApp. Amongst other uses, Facebook is popular for accessing news, for commerce and for political activism. News is often either posted by groups linked to the Facebook member or the individual comes across it during a random search.

Figure 6.3 Facebook users in Africa by region, in Millions



Source: Adapted from Statista 2025.⁴⁷

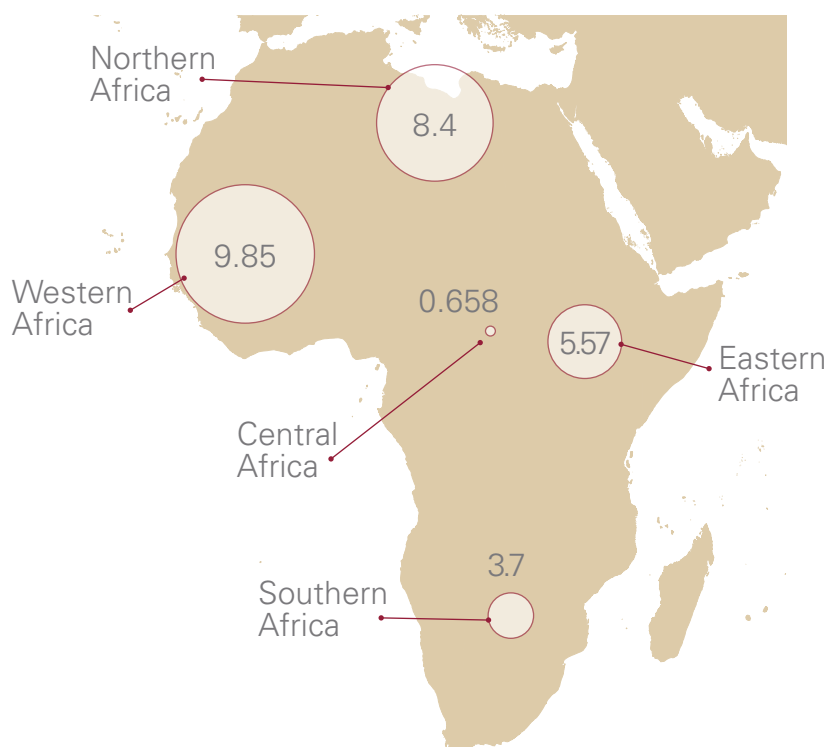
⁴⁷ See www.statista.com/statistics/1326446/number-of-facebook-users-in-africa
(Accessed 16 May 2025)

6.5.3 Pros and cons of X (formerly Twitter) and how to use it



This digital platform is a less social and intimate space than Facebook and WhatsApp. It tends to be more news-focused and users largely look to it for breaking or current news stories and information. Boczkowski (2021: 76) says 'interactions at this fixture ...tend to be brief and information-centred, in which a few regulars mix with a larger cast of more transient people'. X is particularly popular among young people and more men than women use it.

Figure 6.4 X (formerly Twitter) users in Africa by region, in Millions



Source: Adapted from Datareportal – datareportal.com.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ See www.statista.com/statistics/1326475/number-of-twitter-users-in-africa (Accessed 4 June 2024)



6.5.4 Pros and cons of TikTok and how to use it

According to Investopedia, 'TikTok is a social media app dedicated to short-form videos created for and consumed by users.' The length of videos is 15 to 60 seconds. Wikipedia notes that the length of a video can be between 3 seconds and 10 minutes. Amateur and professional creators use the app and platform. By 2022 it registered about 1 billion users daily worldwide. The format is popular for entertainment and comedy, and infotainment (media content that combines information and entertainment to engage audiences in an accessible or appealing way). Mass communicators on migration issues can take the opportunity to disseminate information using a lighter tone and focusing on positive stories e.g. ones that show the contributions migrants have made to communities. CSOs/NGOs can commission animation specialists and video creators to produce relevant content for a mass audience. Art and activism are merged to produce appealing texts on migration; 'artivism'. However, the platform can also pose risks, as it may be exploited by traffickers or other criminal actors to spread misleading content, target vulnerable individuals, or facilitate illicit activities.

In an era of user-generated content, migrant communities have the potential to use their creative agency and tell their own stories about their identities, aspirations and the numerous forces that work against their own interests through the adoption of creative spaces like TikTok (Jaramillo-Dent et al 2022).

Besides the creative infotainment, some CSOs/NGOs and political actors are using TikTok to show short extracts of serious speeches that directly address issues of global concern.

6.6 Social media as facilitators of migration

Social media platforms are not only used as communication channels in migration networks but actively facilitate migration. Without forgetting that digital access is not universal in Africa, social media helps in building family and friendship ties over space and time, and beyond immediate geographical boundaries. It provides a useful means for people to exchange information on migration, and make preparations for integration into the migrant-receiving country. According to Dekker and Engbersen (2012: 1) this networking 'makes potential migrants 'streetwise' with regard to the undertaking of migration.' Civil society organisations (CSOs) and NGOs can leverage these same platforms to share accurate information, counter misinformation, and support safe and informed migration practices.

6.7 Social media and internet links and verification of information

Social media is fast proving to be a 'breeding ground for misinformation' (Lepro 2024). Media practitioners and communication specialists in NGOs/CSOs using social media to put out information on migration are encouraged to use hyperlinks (URL links) as a way for readers to verify the information or get further information on the issue/story. Academics usually include links to their sources of information, especially primary and secondary sources. Journalists rarely provide links to already published relevant sources such as reports, legislative documents or court judgements though former Guardian editor Alan Rusbridger says a link is a 'pathway to trust'. He argues: 'Don't take my word for it; here's how I know what I know'. The reader is free to verify the sources and decide if they are reliable and if they have been used faithfully without distortion or misrepresentation (Rusbridger 2018: 376).

More tools are now available for people to verify information, but bot detection and other online tools useful in verifying sources of disinformation become obsolete when social media platforms change their standards, ban or dismantle them. Global examples include the case for [Bot Sentinel](#), the former graphical Twitter analysis tool [WhoTwi](#), and the social media monitoring tool [CrowdTangle](#). (Lepro, 2024). For photographic images and videos, Sensi.ai and Google reverse image search help with identifying altered or de-contextualised texts. Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) techniques are able to pick out misinformation and disinformation and correct fabricated stories. PEN America, an organisation that reports on human rights violations and freedom of expression, has developed a very useful Facts Forward hub which contains vital tools for navigating and detecting disinformation.⁴⁹

6.7.1 Algorithms and the politics of social media

Social media platforms use algorithms. The information and news items people consume depends on algorithms. The online Oxford Language dictionary defines an 'algorithm' as 'a process or set of rules to be followed in calculations or other problem-solving operations, especially by a computer'. It is a finite sequence of instructions or orders that lead to a specific result or solution. Algorithms now permeate all facets of information and news production and dissemination including: curation, filtering, editing and gatekeeping, proprietary algorithms and audience-targeting and segmentation (Lawrence and Napoli 2023). Media practitioners and communication specialists in CSOs/

NEWS REPORT

Migration data:
93.
[New Report
Challenges Narrative
About African
Migration](#)
(click to read)

15 October 2020,
VOA

⁴⁹ See 'A Journalist's Guide to Navigating Disinformation when Covering Breaking News'. pen.org/a-journalists-guide-to-navigating-disinformation-when-covering-breaking-news and 'Detecting Disinformation: How to Use Online Verification and Bot Detection Tools', pen.org/detecting-disinformation-how-to-use-online-verification-and-bot-detection-tools-to-spot-disinformation [accessed 8 July 2024].

NGOs should remain conscious of the ownership and control mechanisms inherent in social media platforms. Proprietary algorithms enable platform owners and those with the power to control content and exert traceable influences over the content that is produced and circulated. For example, Elon Musk bought Twitter and renamed it X, after which more and more of the content favoured Musk's political opinions and affiliations. Chinese social media and AI models – Baidu's Ernie or Doubao by ByteDance and Liang Wenfeng's DeepSeek – are programmed to avoid politically sensitive questions (Ng et al 2025). They automatically censor content that the Chinese Communist Party deems politically inappropriate.

6.8 AI and reporting on migration

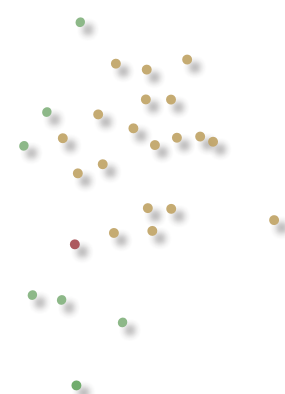
It is critical to understand the limitations and risks to scientific and intellectual integrity of AI, particularly for the production of content.

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the production of news and information is now topical, and Africa cannot be left out in this great discussion. AI is on the ascendency as a communication tool and journalism and mass communication is not spared from this communication revolution. AI consists of large language models (LLMs), the most popular of which include ChatGPT and Copilot. Martin Bekker, a South African academic on AI ethics, social movements and digital society (2024) reminds AI users that they should not abdicate their creative role to AI generative tools. He disapproves of the approach that presupposes 'AI thinks, therefore I am!'. LLM-assisted writing has transformed all types of writing skills, bringing speed and 'efficiency' to the copy production process. However, AI also places the production processes at serious risk, especially concerning scientific and intellectual integrity. He warns against 'the loss of the ability to construct well-crafted arguments'. Furthermore, and on the level of ethical principles, 'intellectual process and ownership ought to be protected against the vague accountability of black-box algorithms with respect to published or submitted work' (Bekker 2024). It is possible that denigrating images and descriptions of migrants may seep through copy generated using AI due to its reliance on algorithmic databases.

The new field of digital ethics in mass communications sees the intersection of ethics, information and communication studies, and computer science. It is concerned with principles of morality and moral action, where morality is about what is right and wrong, proper and improper in the use and application of digital/computer technologies for the purposes of mass communication (Fuchs 2023).

Table 6.3 Some ethical considerations when using AI in migration reporting

Lack of established ethics codes	There are as yet no widely recognised ethics codes for AI use in journalism and for CSOs/NGOs.
Algorithm bias	AI algorithms trained on biased or incomplete datasets can perpetuate and amplify societal misconceptions such as those on reporting migration.
Privacy and data protection	AI generates vast data. Steps must be taken to protect private migrant information and data to ensure that it is not misused or mishandled, especially in sensitive cases concerning refugees and asylum seekers who may prefer anonymity.
Human oversight	Humans (journalists and CSO communications specialists) must ensure that AI systems produce texts that comply with human values, and regulations.
Proliferation of deepfakes	An image of a person can be substituted with someone else's in a synthetically generated text or video. Generative AI may be misused to create false or inaccurate information especially where scapegoating and fearmongering about migrants is concerned.
Copyright ambiguities	There is uncertainty around the authorship of AI-generated texts, even though journalists and publishers remain responsible and accountable for the content. While AI cannot assume responsibility for its outputs, humans are ultimately obliged to do so.



The opportunities offered by AI are immense. In turn, there are serious discussions to be had about the challenges and dangers posed by AI and the reliability of information production and its dissemination. For instance, Open AI's ChatGPT is now used for a variety of actions including improving news products and production processes, strengthening investigative journalism especially in the area of big data journalism, covering public meetings and enhancing translation services. All these areas are important for mass communicating migration issues. However, as discussed AI has some flaws including misinformation and the adoption and regeneration of old writing habits.

AI systems rely on existing data-bases and are prone to reproduce the dominant myths, inaccuracies, stereotypes and misrepresentations that already exist in the cyberspaces.

Migration journalism and CSO/NGO activism should be wary of unwittingly reproducing the very same things that they want to weed out from new migration narratives. Algorithmic news curation can store content that is filtered out by social media platforms using algorithms built into the platforms based on past consumption patterns, thereby strengthening preconceived notions and posing the risk of heightened disinformation. Those against the free movement of people across borders can also generate fabricated materials on African migrations within the continent or beyond.

African communicators should remain vigilant and use fact-checking AI tools to correct the record. To avoid AI ‘hallucination’ (misleading/false information that sounds plausible), communicators should use a technique called retrieval-augmented generation that links a language learning model to a specific reliable database. The credibility and reliability of a database should be investigated preferably using databases already known by the journalist or CSO/NGO (see Temez 2024). Elizabeth Lepro’s (2024) advice remains very pertinent: ‘When it comes to debunking disinformation, use technology, but prioritise people.’

6.8.1 Some generative AI platforms

- ChatGPT
- Microsoft built Copilot for Office 365
- Google built Gemini into Google Workspace
- X Sora AI (Creating Videos)
- Meta AI

The generative AI platforms can:

- answer questions on any topic,
- help with creating and brainstorming content, and
- generate high-quality images and edits them on the spot.

Users ought to be careful when using these platforms since they rely on existing databases that still archive non-factual, biased and stereotypical information on African migration.

6.9 Different target audiences for information on migration

The identification of target audiences for information on migration is difficult without understanding how publishers of migration content (both journalists and CSOs) operate as ‘creatives’ who use different platforms and communication technologies with the aim of attracting audiences. Both legacy media and social media publishers should understand the characteristics of audiences and participants. Social media’s audiences are interesting because they are not just consumers of information but highly interactive ‘prosumers’ on these interactive platforms. This is due to the horizontal structure of communication systems which allow ordinary people free participation on the platforms, unlike the vertical top-down (editor to reader) structure that was typical of legacy media. As legacy media adopt social media platforms, their own strategies are becoming more responsive to the prism of platforms (Reuters Institute Report 2017). In African countries, no single traditional media or new

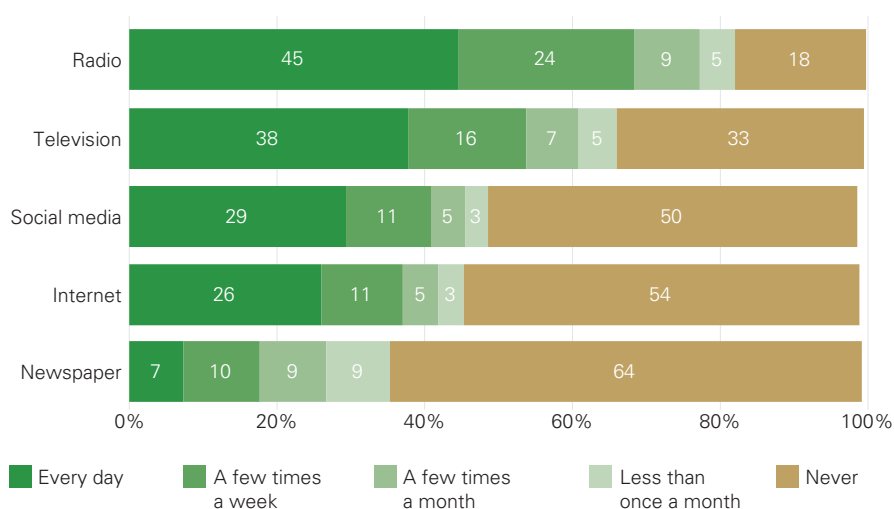
media offers universal access for all people at all times. It is therefore wise to use a wide range of media platforms and languages to ensure the widest possible audience reach (Wu 2022: 3).

6.9.1 Landscape of audience news consumption

Various news and information sources have differing popularity amongst audiences or readers. The popularity is at times determined by gender, age and socio-economic status among other demographic variables (Boczkowski2021: 95). In most developing regions, Africa included, broadcast media (Television and radio) are the two most popular choices, followed by social media, then newspaper, websites and magazines in that order.

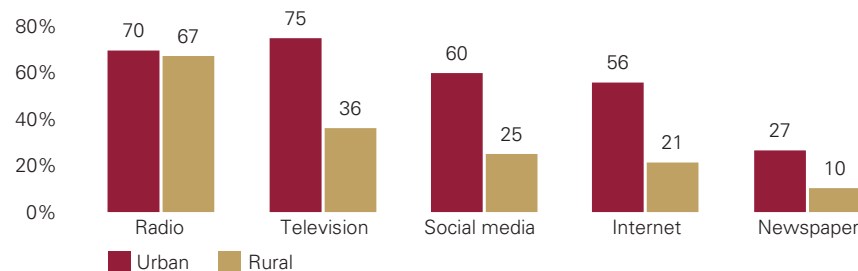
Writing for Afrobarometer, Conroy-Krutz and Kone (2022: 1) note that radio remains the most popular medium for Africa due to its accessibility and reach. The Afrobarometer report claims that ‘radio remains the king’, while ‘social media (is) on the rise’. The report compiled from a survey of 34 countries states, ‘(R)adio is the mass medium commonly used by people looking for news... Two thirds (68 per cent) of respondents say they use it at least a few times a week, including 45 per cent who tune in every day. Television comes second, with more than half (54 per cent) of adults watching the news at least a few times a week, followed by social media (41 per cent) and the internet (37 per cent). Only one in six (18 per cent) regularly reading a newspaper’. Notwithstanding the in-roads that social media has made into African’s media consumption, there is wariness about the abundance of false news, misinformation and disinformation.

Figure 6.5 News media consumption, 34 countries, 2019/2021



Source: Adapted from Conroy-Krutz & Kone 2022: 3.

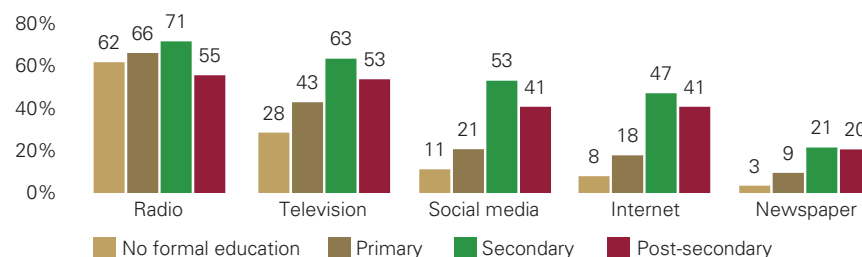
Figure 6.6 Regular news media consumption – by rural-urban residence, 34 countries, 2019/2021



Respondents were asked: How often do you get news from the following sources?
(% who say 'every day' or 'a few times a week')

Source: Adapted from Conroy-Krutz & Kone 2022: 6.

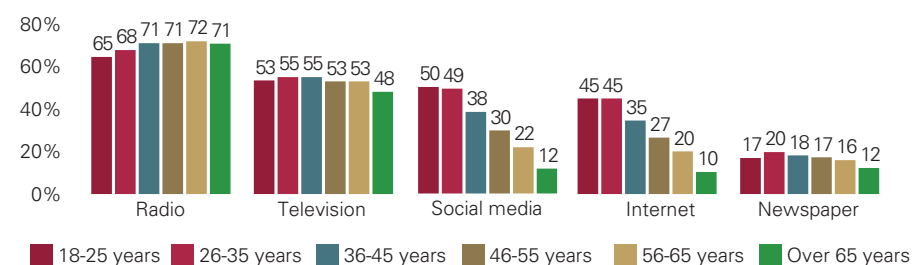
Figure 6.7 Regular news media consumption – by education level, 34 countries, 2019/2020



Respondents were asked: How often do you get news from the following sources?
(% who say 'every day' or 'a few times a week')

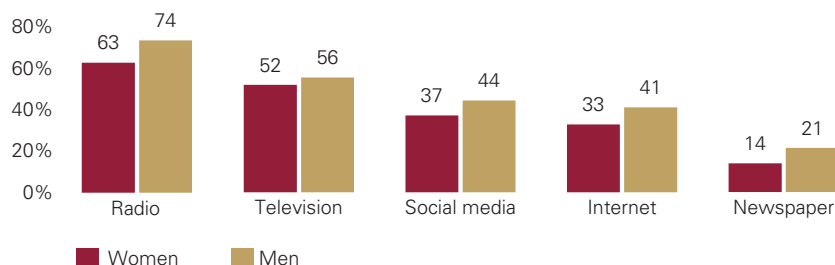
Source: Adapted from Conroy-Krutz & Kone 2022: 6.

Figure 6.8 Regular news consumption – by age



Respondents were asked: How often do you get news from the following sources?
(% who say 'every day' or 'a few times a week')

Source: Adapted from Conroy-Krutz & Kone 2022: 7.

Figure 6.9 Regular news consumption – by gender

Respondents were asked: *How often do you get news from the following sources?*
 (% who say 'every day' or 'a few times a week')

(Source: Conroy-Krutz & Kone 2022: 7).

Strategies for winning over audiences for information on migration should therefore remain alert to the fact that social media is a vital link to the next generation of audiences – the youth (Rusbridger 2018). The Hootsuite Social Media Trends 2024 notes that 'content ought to be tailor made for the unique audiences, lingo, trends, hashtags, word counts, and visual specs of each platform'. The upsurge in internet users mean newsrooms and CSOs/NGOs have to plan and work harder to identify and attract fragmented and scattered audiences. Human-centred journalism and CSO/NGO activism is now more necessary. Audiences are now best won over through the use of new formats, topical issues and imaginative approaches to journalism and mass communication. Jacob Granger and Marcela Kunova (2023) of the International Center for Journalism compiled some tips from leading media personnel that are relevant for targeting and winning over audiences.

Write for people, not for platforms': Sofia Delgado, audience growth director, Metro.co.uk.

Sofia Delgado, audience growth director for the online news website of the Metro, a UK-based free newspaper advises media to write more for people and not for platforms and algorithms since internet users are now increasingly vigilant. They prioritise their needs and product relevance. 'People want quality and expertise from those with lived experiences'. Audiences now want more expert knowledge hence knowledgeable subject experts should be preferred over generalists. Factual stories with incisive analysis are more attractive, especially when data and statistics are used to build the stories. Such resourceful stories are useful for policy makers as audiences. The stories ultimately have social, political, economic and environmental impacts on communities. They have the potential to unite people, shape democracy and change behaviours due to their sound information. The use of data and statistics in stories makes the impact of migration journalism measurable.



Lisa MacLeod, Director of FT Strategies urges publishers to move away from browsers so that they get to know their readers on a one-to-one basis (see Granger and Kunova 2023). That is possible if readers create online accounts and register. The registration statistics let publishers know who their followers are, and how best to produce content that satisfies their needs.

*Young audiences will be swayed by optimism and solutions':
Liesbeth Nizet, managing editor, Mather Economics
(Granger and Kunova 2023).*

In order to reconnect with young audiences and earn their trust in an age when all forms of media suffer from a crisis of trust, journalists ought to use solution-focused journalism. Nowadays most news is preoccupied with the negative.

Solution journalism offers refreshing perspectives, from gloom to hope.

Solution journalism both informs and lifts the spirits of audiences. Audiences then have the capacity to feel they are part of the solutions instead of being spectators of problems. Solution journalism and its CSOs activism equivalent builds a relationship with audiences that fosters common values and promotes a shared vision to improve the world.

According to Farrah Storr, head of partnership UK, Substack, despite the reservations about AI, it still assists creatives as content producers and culture makers whether they like it or not. It is true that applications such as ChatGPT are taking jobs of skilled media workers but it still helps journalists to create stronger relationships with their audiences. AI allows journalists and CSOs that do original diligent work to expand their outreach and influence. AI enhances the original work when it is used to generate images to complement the words. Audio transcriptions can be produced instantly for separate content. This captivates audiences.

6.10 Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) as a special audience

The communication and access to information needs of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) are usually overlooked by journalists and CSOs/NGOs. The DHH get their information through visual platforms that use sign language. The media, CSOs/NGOs and government immigration agencies rarely provide content that is suitable for the DHH. This interest group is thus open not only to a lack of information, but also to misinformation and disinformation. There are also no sound fact-checking resources for the DHH after they access digital content. The emerging fact-checking systems in Africa do not cater for the

sign language needs of users who are deaf or hard of hearing. Video footage with a sign language interpreter or with subtitles/captions would make information on migration accessible to deaf and hard of hearing people. The video should include verified information on migration that can be transmitted via digital platforms.

6.11 The blind and persons with visual impairments as a special interest group

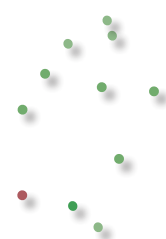
Blind and visually impaired people who want to be or are migrants are another special group whose media, information and communication needs deserve attention. This group includes the totally blind, those who are both blind and deaf, and those with extremely low sight. Their media and information materials, assistive technologies and digital media platforms differ or vary depending on an individual disabled person's circumstances. Radio, braille (print form) and interpersonal communication have traditionally played a key role in their information and communication needs as creators or receivers of content, but new digital technologies, social media platforms and websites now provide newer opportunities. Factors such as availability of technology, internet connectivity, proficiency at using ICTs and personal preference impact on the ability to use digital media. People variously rely on braille, audio formats (e.g. talking books and audio magazines), screen readers and smartphones. Print text is now easily converted to speech or braille. To this constituency, social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube are also popular due to their social character and their compatibility to screen readers.

6.12 Conclusion

This module has presented the significance of social media, websites and online platforms and AI in the production and dissemination of stories on migration for both the media and CSOs. Extra attention has been given to the need to rigorously verify the content with reliable and verifiable sources before disseminating the information further.

6.12.1 Key messages

- While digital platforms and AI offer opportunities in migration storytelling, **fact-checking and digital literacy are vital** to responsible communication, and to mitigate risks that arise through such platforms. Communicators must verify content rigorously before dissemination, especially when AI-generated content or social media trends are involved.



- Social media platforms and AI texts are capable of **presenting journalistic stories, documentaries and fictional stories** on migration targeting to satisfy different audience tastes.
- Social media can both **spread and combat misinformation**; understanding how platforms function helps communicators tailor accurate content.
- Journalists and CSOs must **develop strategies** for engaging diverse audiences, including youth, rural populations, and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- **Solution-oriented storytelling** and **audience trust-building** are essential, especially in an era of media fatigue and declining trust.



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Annex

Some illustrative news reports on coverage of African migration



Irregular Migration

1. Human Smugglers of the Sahara

25 May 2014, Reuters

This in-depth photo essay and investigation explores how Agadez has long served as a gateway for migrants heading north through the Sahara toward Libya and Europe. Despite government crackdowns, smuggling networks continue to operate, charging desperate migrants high fees for dangerous desert crossings.

2. Yemen: Dozens of African Migrants Killed in US Strike, Houthi Say

April 2025, BBC News

At least 68 African migrants – mostly Ethiopians – were reportedly killed in a U.S. airstrike on a detention centre in Saada, Yemen, according to Houthi-run media. The migrants were being held in overcrowded conditions when the facility was bombed.

3. Hundreds of west African migrants returned from Tunisia through IOM program

1 June 2025, The Jerusalem Post

The returns took place on Tuesday and Thursday, involving 146 people from Gambia, 167 from Guinea, and another 66 from Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Sierra Leone.

4. Tunisia says it will not be 'reception centre' for returning migrants

17 July 2023, The Guardian (UK)

North African country, which agreed €1bn deal with EU to stem irregular migration, says it will take back only Tunisians.

5. Refugees, migrants face horrors while crossing African continent

5 July 2024, VOA

Thousands of refugees and migrants who risk their lives on dangerous land routes across the African continent are subject to violence, abuse and exploitation, according to a report released Friday by the U.N. Refugee Agency, International Organization for Migration and the Mixed Migration Center research group.

6. African migrants 'forgotten' on dangerous treks to US: Report

7 October 2021, Aljazeera

Migration Policy Institute says African migrants crossing several Latin American countries to reach US need protection.

7. Maghreb migrations: How North Africa and Europe can work together on sub-Saharan migration [Opinion]

5 September 2024, ECFR Policy Brief

Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria are becoming key destinations for sub-Saharan migrants. Each country is adopting 'security first' migration policies due to public dissatisfaction with the increasing migrant presence, especially in urban coastal areas.

8. Irregular migration into European Union fell sharply in 2024 – Border agency

15 January 2025, Africanews with AP

In 2024, irregular migration into the EU dropped 38 per cent, reaching its lowest level since 2021, due to stronger efforts against smuggling networks, Frontex reported. While arrivals decreased on the Central Mediterranean and Western Balkan routes, the Canary Islands saw an 18 per cent increase – the highest since 2009.

9. UK pledges £84m to Africa, Mideast in bid to stop illegal migration 'at source'

13 August 2024, Rédaction Africanews and AP

The UK has committed £84 million (approximately \$108 million) to tackle the root causes of illegal migration, focusing efforts on Africa and the Middle East. Prime Minister Keir Starmer unveiled this initiative at the European Political Community summit. The funds will be directed towards providing humanitarian aid, healthcare, skills development, job creation, and improved access to education in these regions.

10. FG proffers solutions to irregular migration to Europe

14 May 2024, Nannews (Nigeria)

Speaking at the Rabat Process meeting in Abuja the Nigerian Federal Government has outlined three key strategies to address irregular migration from Africa to Europe: promoting digital skills, establishing a unified migration policy, and funding youth innovation.

11. Rethinking How to Address Irregular Migration from Africa

30 June 2024, IEA

Expert opinion from an African Development Bank official says irregular migration from Africa, especially to Europe, remains a critical issue fueled by political instability, economic struggles, climate change, and limited opportunities. Many Africans embark on risky journeys in search of better futures. To combat this, fostering opportunities for young people – Africa's majority demographic – is vital.

12. Djibouti: Dozens of migrants thrown into the sea still missing

10 April 2024, Rédaction Africanews

The story citing IOM says rescuers are searching for dozens of African migrants missing after smugglers forced them off two boats in the Red Sea near Djibouti. At least 48 people are presumed drowned. The boats, carrying 310 migrants, had departed Yemen. Survivors recounted being forced to swim far from shore.

13. African migrant workers stuck in Lebanon as Israel's war expands

10 August 2024, Africanews with CCTV

Lebanese activists are aiding African migrants caught in the country's conflict while advocating to abolish the Kafala system, which restricts workers by withholding their passports. Migrants like Mary Koroma and Hassanatu Conteh face homelessness and joblessness, unable to return home.

14. South Africa: Nearly 100 Ethiopian migrants rescued by police

5 August 2024, By Rédaction Africanews

South African police said they rescued 90 Ethiopian migrants who were being held against their will at a property in Johannesburg.

15. Rethinking how to address irregular migration from Africa [Opinion]

30 June 2024, Arab News

This expert opinion article by Linguere Mously Mbaye from African Development Bank highlights the persistent issue of irregular migration from Africa, especially from West Africa to Europe, driven by factors like political instability, economic challenges, climate change, and lack of opportunities. It emphasises the need to address root causes by creating better living conditions and opportunities within Africa, particularly for the youth.

16. Spain's leader in Senegal concludes West Africa tour aimed at tackling irregular migration

29 August 2024, APN News

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez visited Mauritania, Gambia, and Senegal to address irregular migration to Spain's Canary Islands. In Senegal, he met with President Bassirou Diomaye Faye, signing agreements to promote temporary work opportunities in Spain for Senegalese nationals and vocational training in Senegal. Sánchez emphasised the benefits of regulated migration to combat people-smuggling networks and xenophobia.

17. Spain sees opportunity in African migrant influx, bucking EU trend

22 October 2024, VOA

Spain approaches migration differently than many EU nations, viewing the arrival of African migrants as a solution to its aging population and declining birth rates. Over 42,000 irregular migrants have reached its shores this year, mainly via hazardous routes to the Canary Islands. Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez advocates for managed migration to counter Europe's 'demographic winter.' Spain is drafting a 'Strategy for Africa' to promote development, while forging agreements with African countries to combat illegal migration. Amid efforts to open legal migration pathways and bolster border security, migrants like Ahmed Qarrab urge others to opt for safer alternatives.

18. Senegal announces plan to tackle illegal migration

13 August 2024, By Rédaction Africanews

Senegal has unveiled a 10-year strategy, the National Strategy to Combat Irregular Migration (SNLMI), to tackle illegal migration by 2033. The plan prioritises prevention, border control, action against traffickers, migrant support, and reintegration of returnees. Interior Minister Antoine Felix Abdoulaye Diome highlighted the urgency of combating this perilous issue.

19. More than 90 per cent of Africa migrants would make perilous Europe journey again, despite the risks

21 October 2019, UN News

A UNDP study reveals that 93 per cent of African migrants who traveled to Europe via irregular routes would do it again, despite the risks. The report, based on interviews with nearly 2,000 migrants, shows that many were educated and employed before leaving but sought better opportunities due to limited prospects at home. Financial pressure to support families and lack of opportunities were key motivators.

20. Flow of irregular migration from North Africa to Spain continues to grow: Spanish Coast Guard

11 November 2024

The Spanish Coast Guard reports that irregular migration from North Africa to Spain is steadily increasing. Over the weekend, 483 migrants, including women and children, reached Tenerife, El Hierro, and La Gomera in the Canary Islands. In the first 10 months of 2024, around 32,000 migrants arrived in the Canary Islands, marking an 80 per cent rise compared to the same period in 2023. Additionally, the Balearic Islands saw their highest weekly arrival last week, with over 840 migrants, bringing the total to 4,675 this year – double last year’s figure. The situation highlights the growing pressure on these regions.

21. Egypt says it has made ‘strenuous efforts’ in tackling illegal migration, calls for European support

10 April 2024, By Rédaction Africanews

At the EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative meeting, Egypt’s Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty highlighted Egypt’s successful efforts in controlling migration, with no boats leaving the country since 2016 due to its national strategy. He urged European support to provide basic services like healthcare and education, and to invest in job creation for the 10 million refugees in Egypt, warning that without assistance, refugees might embark on dangerous illegal migrations to Europe.

22. Europe Sanitizes, Africa Exposes: The Visual Politics of Irregular Migration

25 April 2025, Migration Policy Centre

This article by Diego Caballero-Vélez explores the contrasting ways migration is visually portrayed in Europe and Africa and how these representations shape public perception. European media often depict migrants as health or security risks, using images of overcrowded boats and biohazard-suited officers, even in the absence of actual health crises. In contrast, African media, particularly in Libya and Niger, focus on land-based migration with visuals of desert patrols, detention centres, and military control, portraying migration as a security threat rather than a humanitarian issue.

23. Addressing Irregular Migration from Africa

6 September 2024, The Times (Malawi)

The article ‘Addressing Irregular Migration from Africa’ from The Times Group explores the growing issue of irregular migration from Africa, particularly to Europe, and emphasises the need to tackle its root causes.

24. Violence Engulfs Besieged Zamzam Camp in Sudan’s Darfur Region

May 2025, Reuters

This report documents the violent takeover of the Zamzam displacement camp in Darfur by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which left at least 300 people dead and forced around 400,000 to flee. While not exclusively about migrants, the camp has long been a waypoint for displaced people – including those attempting to reach Libya, Egypt, or the Middle East. The story reflects the extreme vulnerability of African migrants and refugees caught in regional conflicts.



25. 'I can't survive': Malawians hit hard by South Africa's crackdown on illegal migration

10 October 2024, The Guardian

Malawians, like Collins Kamoto, are facing hardships due to South Africa's strict crackdown on illegal immigration. Kamoto, who migrated to support his family, endured poor living conditions and low wages but still sent money home. Arrested for lacking documentation, he was deported after four months in jail. Rising deportations stem from South Africa's efforts to address unemployment and xenophobia.

26. Conflict, irregular migration tunnel EU-Africa relations

23 May 2025, The East African (Kenya)

The article from The EastAfrican titled 'Conflict, irregular migration tunnel EU-Africa relations' explores how ongoing conflicts and irregular migration are straining the relationship between the European Union (EU) and African nations.

27. Niger: 83 irregular migrants rescued in Sahara Desert

8 September 2020, Anadolu Agency

Migrants bound for Libya found dehydrated in Niger's desert Agadez region, says IOM.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) recently rescued 83 irregular migrants, including twin four-year-old girls, stranded for three days in Niger's Sahara Desert. The group, mostly Nigerians along with individuals from Togo, Mali, and Ghana, had been abandoned by smugglers fleeing military vehicles. Severely dehydrated, they were urgently provided with water, food, and medical care.

28. South African elections: Rising tension over illegal migration | BBC News

2 April 2024, BBC News YouTube

There is rising tension in South Africa over illegal migration – and it's dominating the political agenda in the run up to next month's general election.

29. Europe's migration block crumbles in Niger

5 February 2025, DIIS Denmark

Russia's growing influence in the Sahel and North Africa raises concerns over African migration. Frontex has warned that Russia could leverage migration and growing influence in Libya and the Sahel to put pressure on Europe. Based on fieldwork in Niger, this policy brief analyses the shifting political realities on the ground. *Hans Lucht*

30. Tunisia: No Safe Haven for Black African Migrants, Refugees

19 July 2023, HRW

Security Forces Abuse Migrants; EU Should Suspend Migration Control Support.

Black African migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers are subject to critical mistreatment at the hands of Tunisian security forces, including the police, military, and coast guard. Human Rights Watch has reported cases of violence, unlawful arrests, and forced deportations. Despite these ongoing issues, the EU recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Tunisia, which allocates funding for tighter border control. However, this agreement fails to include safeguards for the protection of migrants' rights. Human Rights Watch is urging the EU to halt its migration-related funding to Tunisia until human rights standards are properly upheld. Meanwhile, the Tunisian government is being called upon to investigate these violations, hold those responsible accountable, enforce meaningful reforms, and work towards ending racial discrimination. Let's stay engaged and hopeful for positive progress!

31. [Tunisia: Crisis as Black Africans Expelled to Libya Border](#)

6 July 2023, HRW

Tunisian security forces have collectively expelled several hundred Black African migrants and asylum seekers, including children and pregnant women, since July 2, 2023 to a remote, militarised buffer zone at the [Tunisia-Libya](#) border, Human Rights Watch said today. The group includes people with both regular and irregular legal status in Tunisia, expelled without due process. Many reported violence by authorities during arrest or expulsion.

32. [Irregular migration into EU dropped sharply in 2024: Border agency](#)

14 January 2025, Aljazeera

Despite falling total, number of people crossing the border from Belarus and Russia jumped 192 percent.

The number of people entering the European Union by irregular crossings dropped almost 40 percent in 2024, according to the bloc's border agency Frontex.

Preliminary data reveal a significant 38 percent drop in irregular border crossings into the EU in 2024, 'reaching the lowest level since 2021, when migration was still affected by the COVID pandemic,' Frontex said in a statement on Tuesday.

33. [The President of the Government of Spain argues for a comprehensive migration policy in Mauritania, Gambia and Senegal](#)

29 August 2024, President's News

The President of the Government of Spain, Pedro Sánchez, today ended his tour of Africa in Senegal, during which he also visited Mauritania and Gambia with the aim of strengthening bilateral cooperation with these countries in order to take a comprehensive approach to tackling the migration challenge. During his visit to Senegal, the president was accompanied by the Minister for Economy, Trade and Enterprise, Carlos Cuerpo, and the Minister for Inclusion, Social Security and Migration, Elma Saiz.

34. [Libya calls for effective support against illegal migration](#)

18 March 2025, Xinhua

The Libyan Interior Minister, Emad al-Tarabelsi, on Monday called on the European Union and the countries affected by illegal migration flows from Libya to provide effective support to the North African country against illegal migration.

35. [Mali criticizes Mauritania for ill treatment of irregular migrants](#)

28 March 2025, InfoMigrants

The government of Mali has criticized authorities in neighboring Mauritania, accusing the Sahel nation of committing acts of violence against Malian citizens as part of its deportation measures.

For several weeks, there have been mounting reports of authorities in Mauritania expelling migrants, coming mostly from neighboring countries in west Africa like [Senegal](#), Ivory Coast, Guinea – and also Mali.

36. 'We failed to reach Europe – now our families disown us'

14 November 2019, BBC World Service

Most of the West African migrants who fail to reach Europe eventually return to their own countries, but it can be a bitter homecoming. In Sierra Leone, returnees are often rejected by relatives and friends. They're seen as failures, and many stole from their families to pay for their journey.

37. Poland launches campaign in African and Asian countries warning against illegal migration

30 May 2025, Notes From Poland

Poland has launched a campaign in seven African and Asian countries warning potential migrants not to believe claims by people smugglers and Belarus that they can help them enter the European Union across the Polish border.

38. Mauritania becomes a launchpad for irregular migration to the EU

16 October 2024, GIS Reports Online

EU leaders are worried about a surge in undocumented migrants as more Africans head to Mauritania and attempt to enter Europe via the Canary Islands.

39. Morocco: Over 78K illegal migration attempts aborted in 2024

23 January 2025

Rabat, Jan. 23 (BNA): Morocco aborted 78,685 irregular migration attempts in 2024, thanks to the resilience of its border and coastal surveillance systems, according to data from the Ministry of the Interior.

According to the Maghreb Arabe Press (MAP), the ministry stated that 58 per cent of irregular foreign migrants came from West Africa, 12 per cent from the Maghreb, and 9 per cent from East and Central Africa.

40. Irregular migrants, Central Mediterranean remains the most active route. West African route sees sharp increase

14 August 2024, EU News

Preliminary data from Frontex show a 36 percent drop in irregular arrivals in the first seven months of the year. Decisive commitments by Libya and Tunisia to limit departures towards Italy.

41. Irregular Migration to Italy Dramatically Decreases as Migrants Accumulate in Tunisia

14 June 2024, Debbie Mohnblatt

As a result of the Italian-Tunisian partnership to mitigate migration, thousands of would-be migrants to Europe are stuck in Tunisia amid rising anti-immigrant rhetoric and violence.

42. UK hosts first major international summit to tackle illegal migration

31 March 2025, UK Home Office

The UK has mobilised over 40 countries and organisations to launch an unprecedented global fight against ruthless people smuggling gangs.

43. 'It's the only way': Migrants, army face-off along S Africa-Zimbabwe border

7 January 2025, Aljazeera

South Africa's military has enhanced border operations along the Limpopo River to halt smugglers and illegal crossings from Zimbabwe.

44. [North Africa bears the brunt of Europe's externalisation policies: Analysts](#)

27 March 2024, Aljazeera

Desperate people are still seeking safety in Europe via North Africa in spite of the systems being set up to stop them. This story highlights the struggles of migrants and refugees from Africa trying to reach Europe, despite the European Union's externalisation policies aimed at preventing migration.

45. [Tunisia: The migration trap](#)

10 May 2024, Al Jazeera Staff

Refugees and migrants from across Africa are becoming stranded, unable to return and persecuted by authorities.

46. [UN calls for safer migration from Horn of Africa to Gulf countries](#)

9 October 2024, VOA

The head of the U.N. International Organization for Migration, or IOM, is calling for safe migration to and from the Gulf countries as the dangerous eastern Horn of Africa route claims more lives.

Cross border migration and trade / Labour migration

47. [Why do so many young Africans want to leave their continent?](#)

6 September 2024, Deutsche Welle

A staggering 60 per cent of African youth are considering leaving their home countries due to corruption. Many of them believe graft leads to a downward spiral, resulting in a lack of services and jobs and more corruption.

49. ['Labour migration recruiters creating artificial opportunities'](#)

1 April 2025, The Guardian Nigeria

This story highlights the challenges and opportunities surrounding labour migration, particularly in Africa. Joel Odigie from ITUC-Africa emphasises the need for better awareness, education, and protection for migrant workers, addressing misconceptions and ensuring their rights are upheld. He discusses the exploitation by recruitment agencies creating false narratives and artificial opportunities, leading to issues like trafficking and slavery.

48. [In search of economic boost, some African countries send workers abroad](#)

11 February 2025, Reuters

African countries need jobs for growing populations. Kenya plans to send 1 million workers abroad each year. Anti-migrant sentiment in Germany and other countries may threaten the strategy. Wealthier nations require workers to sustain their economies. Critics argue Kenya's migration plan could lead to skills loss domestically.

50. What it's like to move from Africa to the Gulf States for work

14 May 2025, Development and Cooperation

Migrant labourers make up the majority of the working population in the Gulf States. More and more workers are coming to Riyadh, Doha or Dubai from Africa. Their experiences are diverse and range from violence and discrimination to financial independence and personal growth. We spoke with two people who left Kenya for the Gulf.

51. 7 African countries affected as Saudi Arabia suspends blockwork visa

30 May 2025, Business Insider Africa

Saudi Arabia has suspended the issuance of Block Work Visas for nationals from seven African countries, a move that could disrupt labour migration and remittance flows.

52. Saudi Arabia: Migrant domestic workers face severe exploitation, racism and exclusion from labour protections

13 May 2025, Amnesty

Kenyan women working as domestic workers in Saudi Arabia face severe abuse, exploitation, and racism, as highlighted in a report by Amnesty International. Many are deceived by recruiters and subjected to harsh conditions, including 16-hour workdays, withheld wages, confiscated passports, and isolation. They endure physical and sexual abuse, inadequate living conditions, and racial discrimination, often being called derogatory names. The kafala sponsorship system perpetuates these injustices, leaving workers powerless.

53. African diplomatic missions strengthen capacities to protect migrant workers in Arab States

15 May 2025, Myjoyonline.com

Forty-two (42) Government officials from ten African countries, including Ghana, participated in a four-day training programme to enhance protection for their citizens working in Arab states.

54. New laws for worker quotas to South Africa

5 June 2025, BusinessTech (South Africa)

South Africa has approved the National Labour Migration Policy 2025 White Paper for implementation, which will see worker quotas imposed on various sectors in the economy.

The white paper has been under consideration for several years, looking to make significant changes and bring tighter controls to the movement and hiring of foreign workers in the country.

55. Labour migration: AU taps African journalists to change narrative

9 August 2024, The Citizen, Tanzania

The article from Nation Africa reports on the African Union's initiative to reshape the narrative around labour migration by engaging senior African journalists. During a workshop in Dakar, Senegal – organised in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration and the Federation of African Journalists – AU officials emphasised that labour migration is often misrepresented as a problem rather than a driver of socio-economic development.

56. Germany to welcome Kenyans in labour deal

14 September 2024, BBC News, Nairobi

Berlin has agreed to allow skilled and semi-skilled Kenyan workers into Germany in a controlled and targeted labour migration deal.

57. Free movement in west Africa: three countries leaving Ecowas could face migration hurdles

21 February 2024, *The Conversation*

For Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso, a recent decision to withdraw from the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) has thrown up questions about how they will navigate regional mobility in future.

58. Stakeholders convene to discuss labour migration governance

9 April 2025, *Kenya News*

Seven countries in East Africa and the Horn of Africa (EHOA) have met in Mombasa, Kenya, to discuss ways that would protect migrant workers and ensure that labour migration promotes social development in the region.

59. Trade unions take Saudi Arabia to UN labour body over exploitation and deaths of migrant workers

4 June 2025, *ITUC*

Workers' representatives at the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) have formally filed a complaint against the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, citing widespread violations of migrant workers' rights.

60. African migrant workers stuck in Lebanon as Israel's war expands

8 October 2024, *By Africanews with CCTV*

A group of Lebanese activists have taken the initiative to assist African migrants affected by the ongoing conflict in the country, while leading advocacy efforts to release the workers from a Kafala labour system that allows their employers and agents to withhold their passports, making it impossible for them to leave.

61. Stranded African migrants in Lebanon feel abandoned

8 October 2024, *DW*

Thousands of African nationals are currently stuck in Lebanon. As the conflict intensifies, many are also facing discrimination, exposing them to further danger.

62. Sub-saharan African migrant workers fill gaps in Tunisian labour market

29 March 2022, *Rédaction Africanews*

Migrants are often recruited for jobs in construction, cafes and restaurants in Tunisia. But as many came illegally, they don't benefit from employment rights leaving some unscrupulous employers to exploit that vulnerability.

63. Ghanaian citizens can now travel to Morocco without a visa

6 June 2025, *Africanews*

Ghanaian citizens no longer need traditional visas to travel to Morocco, following a new agreement between the two countries.

64. Remittance startups ride Africa's migration wave

27 January 2025, *Semafor*

Startups that help Africans overseas send money home are rapidly expanding their businesses as remittances to sub-Saharan Africa scale new heights.

65. Hundreds of African migrants in Lebanon await repatriation after Ceasefire

12 December 2024, *Rédaction Africanews*

Hundreds of migrant workers in Lebanon are waiting to be repatriated after the ceasefire ending the 14-month war between the Lebanon-based Hezbollah and Israel went into effect last month.

66. Protecting migrant workers in Arab states: African diplomatic missions build capacity

17 May 2025, *Daily Graphic*

Forty-two government officials from 10 African countries, including Ghana, participated in a four-day training programme to enhance protection for their citizens working in Arab states.

67. Russian firms looking for migrant workers in Africa due to labour shortages

17 July 2024, *Economichna Pravda*

Russian companies have started looking for workers in Africa amid a growing labour shortage caused by the war in Ukraine. The newspaper notes that the number of vacancies for African workers increased 10-fold in the first half of 2024.

68. Let's not forget the migrant workers who end up being exploited in Spain

26 February 2025, *The Guardian (UK)*

Neal Haddaway lays bare the reality of the thousands of people who make their way to the country only to find themselves homeless and jobless.

69. Fifa rejects request for monitoring of migrant workers' conditions in Saudi Arabia

27 January 2025, *The Guardian (UK)*

Fifa has rejected calls for an independent monitor to assess migrant workers' conditions in [Saudi Arabia](#) in the buildup to the 2034 World Cup.

70. Remittances soar as African migrants ignore new controls and head to the West

10 January 2024, *African Business*

Demographic trends in Europe such as an ageing population and a low birth rate are creating a need for continued migration, while global remittances from diaspora Africans are set to pass \$100bn a year.

71. Why Algeria Is Emptying Itself of African Migrant Workers

10 July 2018, *The New Humanitarian*

The campaign to detain, harass and deport thousands of African migrants is about politics, not past agreements with Niger. Debora Del Pistoia looks past the excuses at the reality of a xenophobic crackdown.

72. Why Maids Keep Dying in Saudi Arabia

16 March 2025, *New York Times*

East African leaders and Saudi royals are among those profiting off a lucrative, deadly trade in domestic workers.

73. 'She just vanished': Ethiopian domestic workers abused in Lebanon

16 June 2021, *Aljazeera*

For decades Ethiopians have flocked to Lebanon in search of work. But many find a cycle of abuse that's hard to escape.

74. Abandoned by employers, Ethiopian domestic workers are dumped on Lebanon's streets

25 June 2020, *France24*

The economic crisis in Lebanon, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, has sparked a distressing phenomenon of predominantly Ethiopian migrant domestic workers being fired and dumped outside their country's consulate in Beirut. Ethiopian authorities haven't been much help, leaving NGOs to provide as best they can.

75. Xenophobia flare-up as hundreds of foreign migrant workers evacuated from Addo after murders

27 May 2025, *Daily Maverick (South Africa)*

The Valencia community near the town of Addo in the Eastern Cape remained tense on Tuesday night after three foreign nationals were killed. Hundreds of foreign nationals have been evacuated from the area.

76. Ethiopia Repatriates Over 700 Citizens from Myanmar: Foreign Ministry

29 May 2025, *ENA*

Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that it has repatriated over 700 Ethiopians from Myanmar who were living in difficult conditions.

77. Home Affairs slammed for chasing away 'swallow' visitors

1 Febraury 2024, *Moneyweb (South Africa) (paywall)*

A Department of Home Affairs (DHA) directive demanding that short-term visitors who have not received visa renewals by 23 February must immediately leave the country has been slammed for laying waste to SA's encouraging tourism recovery.

78. Take a hike: Home Affairs' memo on visas is chasing away our seasonal expats or 'swallows'

23 January 2024, *Daily Maverick (South Africa)*

The Department of Home Affairs has told international visitors hoping to extend their stay by a further 90 days that they must leave two months earlier than they would otherwise have expected. It's another own-goal for the country.

79. Searching for a better life, young Ethiopians risk all to reach Saudi Arabia

26 May 2025, *The New Humanitarian*

'People were fighting over the food, and then the guards would come in and make us lie on our chests. Then they would spray water on us and beat us with different sticks.'

Last year, nearly 235,000 people left Ethiopia and headed towards the Red Sea coastline, according to the International Organization for Migration, the UN's migration agency. The country is Africa's second largest by population, but it has been wracked in recent years by successive crises, including various ethnic armed conflicts and related economic instability.

80. 'I am going to Saudi Arabia, or my grave': The exodus of Ethiopia's frustrated youth

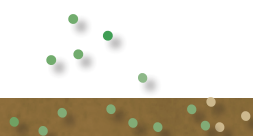
23 April 2025, *The New Humanitarian, News feature*

The anger that spurred the Qeerroo movement a decade ago has faded into despair. For many disillusioned young Oromos, there seems to be no point in protesting or demanding change. Thousands are deciding the only way out of their misery is to migrate.

81. Tunisia accused of 'mass desert dumping' of migrants

7 May 2024, *The New Humanitarian*

Tunisian police rounded up hundreds of migrants and asylum seekers and left the men, women, and children stranded at the Algerian border, according to the Refugees in Libya NGO, which called it a 'mass desert dumping' in a 3 May post on X (formerly known as Twitter).



82. How growing hostility in South Africa impacts South-South migration

9 April 2024, *The New Humanitarian*

‘Sometimes we didn’t eat for seven days. If you got sick, they left you behind; if you died, nobody buried you.’

83. In a Tunisian migration hub, asylum seekers find little support

6 November 2023, *The New Humanitarian*

‘I thought Tunisia would be safer; the worst would be less bad than what I experienced in Libya.’

84. Is the EU doubling down on a deadly, failed migration strategy?

19 October 2023, *The New Humanitarian*

‘With all these measures, you’re pushing people to use more dangerous routes.’

85. From Ethiopia to South Africa: The human cost of a neglected migration route

22 November 2023, *The New Humanitarian*

‘You have no phone, no control, and that’s when abuse can start.’

Sometime in October last year, a truck stopped on a quiet road in northern Malawi’s Mtangatanga forest and offloaded 29 bodies. They had suffocated in the back of the vehicle and were hastily buried in shallow graves. The dead were Ethiopian men, aged between 25 and 40 – victims of a lucrative transnational smuggling network that funnels tens of thousands of people into southern Africa each year, with little regard for their safety.

86. The EU is fueling migration from Tunisia, not stopping it

4 July 2023, *The New Humanitarian*

‘The EU is also showing itself to be ever-more desperate to strike a senseless deal with Tunisia to reduce migration, with very little regard for human life.’

By legitimising Tunisian President Kaïs Saïed’s increasingly authoritarian grip and bolstering the country’s security apparatus in the name of stopping migration, the EU is not only turning a blind eye to the worsening corruption, collapsing economy, and deteriorating human rights situation in Tunisia – it is actively contributing to the factors pushing more to migrate and risk their lives.

87. African migrants stranded in Tunisia amid rising xenophobia

6 April 2023, *The New Humanitarian*

‘The world needs to know we’re not safe in Tunisia.’

Six weeks after an incendiary speech by Tunisian President Kais Saied triggered a surge in racist violence against sub-Saharan migrants, hundreds of its victims are still camped on a cobblestone lane outside the headquarters of the UN’s migration agency, IOM, asking for emergency evacuation.

88. Interactive: The European approach to stopping Libya migration

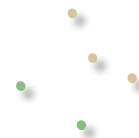
16 June 2022, *The New Humanitarian*

Every day last year, more than four people on average died attempting to cross the central Mediterranean from North Africa to Europe, and around 90 were intercepted by the EU-supported Libyan Coast Guard – returned to detention centres where they face a cycle of torture, extortion, and sexual abuse.

89. [Why South Africa's new plan to fortify its borders won't stop irregular migration](#)

20 September 2020, *The Conversation*

South Africa has just passed a [new law](#) in response to growing concerns in the country about its porous borders. The socioeconomic and [security dangers](#) posed by having large numbers of undocumented migrants have become key political issues in the country in recent times.



Migration data

90. [African migration to Europe: A fact check](#)

16 November 2024, *DW*

Overloaded smugglers' boats attempting the risky journey across the Mediterranean – the image springs to mind when African migration to Europe is discussed. In reality, they're only a small part of the bigger picture.

92. [African migrants are not made up of only those fleeing danger: UN Report](#)

21 October 2019, *SABC News*

A new UN report reveals that most irregular migrants from Africa to Europe would still make the journey despite the dangers. Interestingly, they aren't fleeing immediate threats but are driven by unfulfilled aspirations and limited opportunities in their home countries. The study, involving nearly 2,000 migrants from 39 African nations, challenges stereotypes about migration.

91. [Migration myths vs. facts: Numbers show a decline in Europe](#)

13 September 2024, *Africanews*

Unauthorised migration to the European Union has significantly dropped in 2024, with irregular crossings down 35 per cent compared to last year. However, the Canary Islands have seen a sharp increase in arrivals via the Atlantic route, with over 25,500 migrants arriving so far. This route, primarily used by migrants from West Africa, remains dangerous, with many lives lost at sea.

93. [New Report Challenges Narrative About African Migration](#)

15 October 2020, *VOA*

The African Union and International Organization for Migration released a report challenging misconceptions about African migration. Contrary to popular belief, most African migrants move within the continent by land rather than attempting dangerous sea crossings to Europe. The report highlights that 80 per cent of African migrants have no intention of leaving Africa, yet policies often focus on preventing migration to Europe, neglecting critical intra-African migration issues.

94. The overlooked complexities behind African migration

10 January 2025, DW

European debates on immigration tend to examine only the effects of migrants on host countries. But in Africa, what happens to the countries and societies migrants leave behind?

95. Irregular migration into EU dropped sharply in 2024: Border agency

14 January 2025, Al Jazeera

Despite falling total, number of people crossing the border from Belarus and Russia jumped 192 percent.

In 2024, irregular migration into the European Union dropped by nearly 40 per cent, marking the lowest level since 2021, according to Frontex, the EU border agency. This decrease, attributed to stronger cooperation against smuggling networks, was especially significant along the Western Balkans route, which saw a 78 per cent drop. However, not all trends were positive. Crossings from Belarus and Russia surged by 192 per cent, reaching 17,000, while the Eastern Mediterranean and Western African routes also saw increases. Frontex emphasised the need for flexibility to address these shifting migration patterns effectively.

96. Millions of migrants across Africa remain undocumented

1 June 2025, BusinessDay (Nigeria)

Millions of African migrants face significant barriers due to the absence of legal documentation, excluding them from vital services like education, healthcare, and employment. A workshop in Harare, led by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and partners, stressed the urgency of strengthening ID systems across the continent. Delegates from ten countries examined solutions, including a new Good Legal Identity Toolkit to overcome legal and policy obstacles.

97. African Migrants: Where Are They Going and Why?

This story explores migration trends in West and Central Africa, focusing on why people move and where they go. While many assume most African migrants aim for Europe, research shows only 10 per cent have that intention. Instead, 74 per cent migrate due to economic pressures, and most stay within Africa, often moving to neighboring countries.

98. Record number of migrants, refugees reached Canary Islands by sea in 2024

2 January 2025, Aljazeera

Spain received 63,970 migrants and refugees who arrived through irregular routes last year, including 46,843 people in the Canary Islands.

99. Refugees, migrants face violence, abuse and death on routes across Africa, new data shows

5 July 2024, UN News

Refugees and migrants continue to face extreme forms of violence, exploitation and death on sea and on land across Africa as they move through the continent, UN agencies said on Friday, in an appeal to border authorities to do more to protect them.

100. 21 Million Africans Migrating Within Africa, Says Morocco's Amina Bouayach

1 February 2025, News Central

The President of Morocco's National Council for Human Rights (CNDH), Amina Bouayach, called for stronger action to address Africa's [migration crisis](#) during a meeting of the African National Human Rights Institutions Network (NANHRI) Working Group on Migration held on Friday.

101. [African Union condemns Tunisia's 'hate speech' against migrants](#)

25 February 2023, *Aljazeera*

The African Union (AU) has criticised Tunisia and urged it to avoid 'racialised hate speech' following President Kais Saied's [comments](#) directed at migrants from elsewhere on the continent. President Kais Saied claimed migration from sub-Saharan Africa was aimed at changing his country's demographic makeup.

102. [AU expresses 'deep shock' over deaths at Spain-Morocco border](#)

27 June 2022, *Aljazeera*

The African Union chief has expressed 'deep shock' over the death of nearly two dozen people while trying to break through a border fence between Morocco and the Spanish enclave of Melilla and called for an immediate investigation into the matter.

103. [Migration through the Mediterranean: A Perilous Passage](#)

18 February 2024, *Modern Diplomacy*

The history of migration in Africa is deep-rooted and multifaceted, with significant dark chapters including the Atlantic slave trade and colonial labour movements.

104. [Many more Africans are migrating within Africa than to Europe \(paywall\)](#)

30 October 2021, *The Economist*

Some governments are trying to make moving easier.

105. [Border Management Authority hails new drones as 'game-changer' at SA ports of entry](#)

28 April 2025, *Daily Mevrick (South Africa)*

Over the Easter period about 6,000 people were apprehended or intercepted trying to come into South Africa or exit via ports of entry. This is almost double the previous year's 3,841. The difference this year? The implementation of drones.

106. [More than 1 000 migrants caught at Beit-bridge during Easter](#)

May 2025, *MSN*

The Border Management Authority (BMA) intercepted more than 1 000 undocumented migrants attempting to cross into South Africa at the Beit-bridge border post over the Easter holiday.

107. [From Pakistan to Spain via the Canaries, smugglers are using longer, more dangerous migration routes](#)

7 June 2025, *AP*

A failed crossing from Mauritania's coast towards Spain's Canary Islands in which 44 Pakistanis perished earlier this year has cast a spotlight on how globalised and sophisticated smuggling networks on the West African coast have become. [AP](#)

108. [Trump's new travel ban takes effect as tensions escalate over immigration enforcement](#)

9 June 2025, *AP*

President Donald Trump's new ban on travel to the US by citizens from 12 mainly African and Middle Eastern countries took effect Monday amid rising tension over the president's escalating campaign of immigration enforcement.

109. World Migration Report 2024: Climate impacts will force 216 million people to move within their countries by 2050

9 May 2024, Down to Earth

Climate change, while not the sole driver of displacement and migration, increases pressure on existing systems and communities.

110. African migration to Europe: A fact check

16 November, 2024, DW

Overloaded smugglers' boats attempting the risky journey across the Mediterranean – the image springs to mind when African migration to Europe is discussed. In reality, they're only a small part of the bigger picture.

111. UN warns of rising displacement, spreading cholera in Sudan amid aid shortfalls

4 June 2025, Sudan tribune

Conflict-driven displacement and a persistent cholera outbreak are exacerbating humanitarian needs across Sudan, a United Nations spokesperson said on Wednesday, calling for increased funding and unimpeded aid access. IOM is mentioned.

112. Africa could face 113 million climate migrants by 2050, warn researchers

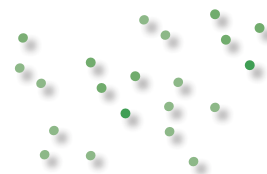
22 May 2025, The Nation (Nigeria)

Africa is at risk of experiencing a massive human migration crisis, with researchers projecting that over 113 million people could become climate migrants by 2050 due to the escalating impacts of climate change.

113. Mozambique: 'Triple crisis' leaves 5.2 million in need of humanitarian assistance – UN

26 May 2025, Club of Mozambique

The UN says that almost 5.2 million people in Mozambique are in need of assistance due to a 'triple crisis' comprising 'armed conflict and displacement, recurring extreme weather events, and months of post-electoral unrest'.



Cross border migration and trade

114. African freedom of movement can turn brain drain into brain gain

31 May 2024, *The Africa report*

The book 'Borderless Africa: A Sceptic's Guide to the Continental Free Trade Area' by Francis Mangeni and Andrew Mold emphasises that the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) needs to fully embrace freedom of movement to reach its full potential. The authors argue that restricted movement within Africa contributes to brain drain, with many trained professionals leaving for Western countries, costing Africa billions. They propose that freedom of movement could transform this into a 'brain gain' by fostering skills, knowledge, and technology transfer.

115. Why migration is a model for sustainable development for all

15 January 2024, *WEF*

Amy Pope, Director General, International Organization for Migration (IOM).

For centuries, migration has been a key driver of development as people move in search of safety and better opportunities or escape conflict. Today, factors like climate change, economic imbalances, and political unrest are increasing migration to unprecedented levels. Nonetheless, much of this movement is safe and work-oriented, offering significant growth potential. With aging populations and a youthful labour force in various regions, migration bridges labour gaps. Expanding migration pathways and connecting talent globally can enhance economies, align skills, and reduce the need for unsafe journeys. By collaborating with governments, private sectors, and migrants, we can establish a sustainable migration model that benefits all. Migration is not just a challenge but a crucial solution for building a resilient future.

116. Trade, migration bring life to Ethiopia-Eritrea border

20 October 2018, *By Africanews*

Flights between Addis Ababa and Asmara resumed in July, embassies reopened and in September, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Eritrean President Issaias Afewerki reopened the border crossing at Zalambessa, a historic crossing point between the two countries.

117. Tunisia, EU sign 'strategic' deal on economy, migration

17 July 2023, *Rédaction Africanews*

The European Union and Tunisia signed a 'strategic partnership' in Tunis on Sunday, focusing on the fight against illegal immigration, but also designed to support the North African country in the face of serious economic difficulties.

118. Botswana/Namibia: Accord on free movement between countries a 'step in the right direction'

24 February 2023, *Amnesty International*

This agreement, which marks the first of its kind in Southern Africa, is a step in the right direction. In a region where irregular migrants have repeatedly been criminalised, this accord will not only reduce barriers to migration but also increase trade, offering a much-needed economic boost to each country and their people.

119. African migration: Five things we've learnt

26 March 2019, BBC News

More than one in three Africans have considered emigrating, researchers for Afrobarometer say.

Their continent-wide survey also found that young and educated people were more likely than others to want to leave their home country.

For those who do leave, it is not to Europe or North America that most go to, but another African country.

120. Border barriers hurt EAC's trade ambitions with Africa [paywall]

18 December 2022, The East African

The article 'Border barriers hurt EAC's trade ambitions with Africa' from The EastAfrican highlights how immigration restrictions among East African Community (EAC) member states are undermining the bloc's efforts to align with broader continental free trade goals.

121. Efficient border crossing to boost trade between Kenya and Uganda with launch of Busia one stop border post

24 February 2018, EAC

H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya and H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni President of the Republic of Uganda joined by Amb. Liberat Mfumukeko, East African Community Secretary General, officially launched the Busia One Stop Border Post (OSBP) located on the Kenya/Uganda border, today.

122. Ruto outlines measures to boost regional integration

7 May 2023, Daily News (Tanzania)

KENYA President William Ruto has called on East African Community (EAC) member states and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to remove barriers to the free movement of people, goods and services in order to enhance regional integration in Eastern Africa.

123. A connected Africa will be a rich Africa

5 September 2024, African Business

Africans are seeking ways and means to inter-connect – but a massive infrastructure boost is required, says AFC CEO Samaila Zubairu.

124. Human trafficking and trade – a growing threat for Africa

30 July 2024, DW

Seven million Africans live under various forms of modern slavery. Many of them have fallen into the clutches of human traffickers in an attempt to improve their own living conditions. Migrants are at particular risk.

125. Visa-free travel for Africans: why Kenya and Rwanda have taken a step in the right direction

10 November 2023, The Conversation

When people cannot travel, business people cannot travel, entrepreneurs cannot travel, we all become net losers.

126. [Free movement of people across Africa: regions are showing how it can work](#)

19 January 2023, *The Conversation*

The end of January 2023 will mark five years since the African Union Free Movement of Persons protocol [was signed by the African Union](#). A parallel initiative to the [African Continental Free Trade Agreement](#), it was designed to reduce barriers to Africans crossing African borders. The benefits of freer movement include trade, investment, cultural understanding and scientific cooperation. Along with several colleagues at the New South Institute, Alan Hirsch is [researching](#) pathways towards freer movement. He explains what lies behind the hesitancy of countries to commit to the protocol. And points to ways in which the initiative can move forward.

127. [Why cross-border traders mean business \(paywall\)](#)

28 March 2009, *The East African*

128. [New roads, border posts open trade routes to DRC \(paywall\)](#)

11 December 2021, *The East African*

Diaspora

129. [African diaspora remittances reached \\$52.9bn in 2024 – IOM](#)

6 May 2025, *The Tribune (Nigeria)*

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has revealed that African diaspora remittances reached a staggering \$52.9 billion in 2024, with Nigeria accounting for 38 per cent of the total remittances in Africa.

130. [10 African countries benefiting most from diaspora remittances](#)

7 January 2025, *Chisom Michael Business Day (Nigeria)*

131. [Emigration from Africa will change the world \(paywall\)](#)

24 April 2025, *The Economist*

As other countries age, they will need African youth

132. [Can diaspora bonds bridge Africa's USAID funding gap?](#)

10 March 2025, *The Banker*

Kenya looks to expatriate communities amid worsening debt crisis.

133. [Diaspora dollars: How Africa's diaspora can fuel startup growth](#)

16 August 2024, Techpoint Africa

134. [10 African countries with the highest diaspora remittances in 2024](#)

3 January 2025, Africa Business Insider

Diaspora remittances are a vital lifeline for African economies and communities, driving socio-economic development and serving as a significant source of external financing.

135. [African diaspora remittances down as a result of global conflict, crises \(paywall\)](#)

8 August 2024, The Africa Report

In 2023, Africans living abroad sent fewer funds home than they did in 2022, yet remittances are still 1.5 times greater than foreign direct investment flows on the continent. Here's our analysis in infographics.

136. [Africa's diaspora and its impact on the continent](#)
CNN

The African diaspora is still very much connected to the continent – sending remittances and investing in their home countries. CNN's Eleni Giokos speaks to businesspeople in Rwanda, the UK, the Bahamas, and the US to find out how they're keeping their African roots strong.

137. [524 Diaspora Members Gain Ghanaian Citizenship In Historic Ceremony](#)

21 November 2024, African Business

A historic moment unfolded at the Accra International Conference Centre on Tuesday, November 19, 2024, as 524 members of the African diaspora were officially granted Ghanaian citizenship. This event, the third of its kind under President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo's administration, celebrated the enduring bond between Ghana and its global diaspora. The ceremony [...].

138. [Hundreds of women and children chased from their homes in deadly xenophobic attacks](#)

29 May 2025, The Zimbabwean

Xenophobic attacks in the Eastern Cape on Sunday left four people dead and 10 injured, and forced hundreds of immigrants, including women and children, to seek refuge outside the Addo Police Station.

139. [People in Burundi struggle amid Lake Tanganyika's endless flooding](#)

2 June 2025, Aljazeera

Climate change drives severe flooding, displacing families, spreading disease, and leaving urgent aid gaps in one of the world's poorest and most vulnerable countries.

140. [Morocco at the heart of rising migrant deaths on irregular routes in 2024, report finds](#)

23 May 2025, Yabiladi

Morocco remains a pivotal and sensitive hotspot on irregular migration routes across the Middle East and North Africa. In 2024, hundreds of migrant deaths and disappearances were recorded along its borders. These figures reflect a continued surge in activity on maritime migration routes, both across the Mediterranean Sea and along the Atlantic route toward the Canary Islands.

UK media coverage of migration

141. Illegal migrants surge caused by people smugglers claiming there is a rush to avoid Rwanda

4 May 2022, Express (UK)

CYNICAL people smugglers have caused a rush for the Channel by lying to illegal immigrants that they need to get over to the UK quickly or face being sent to Rwanda, security sources have told Express.co.uk. The Daily Express understands that a surge in illegal immigrants in small boats with by Nigel Farage earlier today has been partly fuelled by scare tactics used by human traffickers over Home Secretary Priti Patel's plan to take back control of the borders.

142. 'Rwanda about to rebound' Farage warns 100k migrants to arrive unless Brexit is completed

5 May 2022, Express (UK)

NIGEL FARAGE has issued Boris Johnson with a Channel crossing warning as the ex-UKIP leader claims 100,000 migrants could arrive on British shores in 2022.

143. Muslim population in parts of Europe could TRIPLE by 2050: New study predicts migration and birth rates will lead to dramatic rise in numbers across continent

30 November 2017, Daily Mail (UK)

The Muslim population in parts of Europe – including Britain – could triple by 2050, researchers say.

Figures in a new report suggest a stark east-west divide, with the Muslim share of the UK's population rising from 6.3 per cent in 2016 to 16.7 per cent in one scenario.

The study by the Pew Research Centre concludes that Europe's Muslim population would continue to grow over the next several decades even if immigration to the continent were halted.

144. Migration to be main driver of UK population growth as birth rate slows

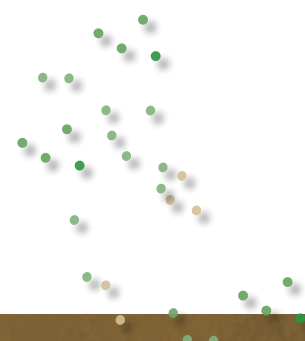
13 January 2022, Standard (UK)

Net migration will account for all the population growth of the UK over the coming years as the number of the people living here rises to nearly 70 million by 2030 official figures show.

145. 'No ifs, no buts ... flights going to Rwanda': UK PM Sunak says illegal migrants to leave in 10 to 12 weeks

22 April 2024, Firstpost

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Monday said that the first flight carrying illegal migrants would depart for Rwanda within the next 10 to 12 weeks come what may and asserted that all necessary arrangements have been made to initiate the process once the long-awaited legislation clears Parliament.



Notes

