

# COVID-19 and its impact on Global Migration Trends

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# GMDAC and the Global Migration Data Portal

- IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre established in Berlin in 2015, currently has staff of 40: 8 in IOM regional offices and one on secondment to the African Union's statistical unit in Tunis.
- Global Migration Data Portal launched in 2017.
- More than 2.3 million page views since May 2020
- Published a dedicated section on COVID-19 related migration data
- Launch of new regional sections on South America, Southern, Middle and West Africa, South and South-Eastern Asia, and Oceania.



**MIGRATION DATA PORTAL**

The bigger picture

# Global Travel Restrictions:

As of 14 June 2021, a total of **108,939 travel restrictions** issued by 228 countries/territories/areas (C/T/As) due to COVID-19. 198 C/T/As have also issued exceptions to enable mobility.

## Changes in the number of travel measures over time, by type

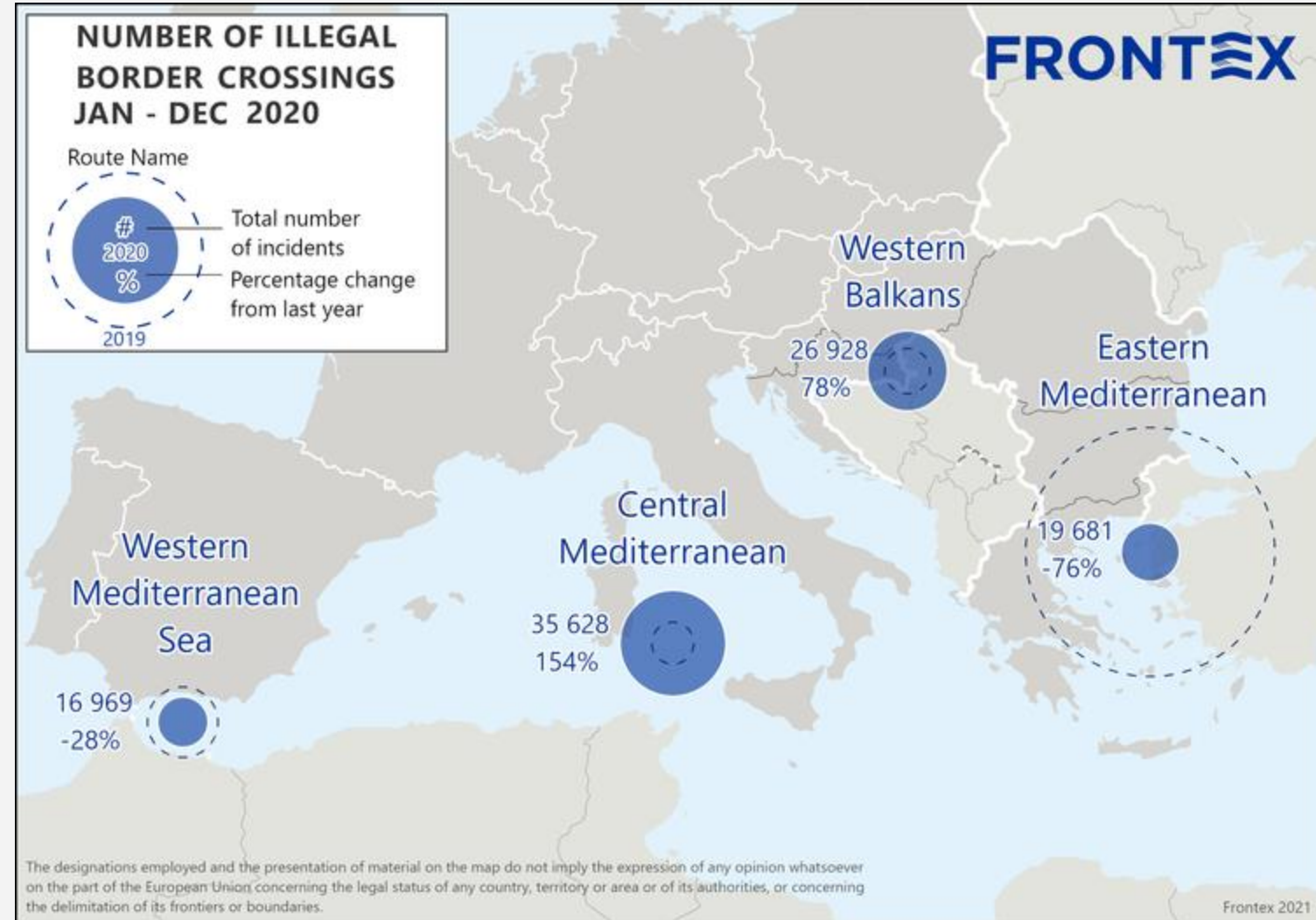


## *Sharp Fall in Global Migration:*

- Migration **flows to OECD countries** – measured by new permits issued – estimated to have **fallen by 46%** in the first half of 2020 (OECD, 2020).
- Such a drop in migration inflows can also have **demographic effects** on countries dependent on migration for population growth:
  - **In Australia**, net migration for 2020/2021 is expected to be negative for the first time since 1945 and will lead to the **lowest population growth in a century** (Australian Centre for Population, 2020).
  - **In Germany**, the significant drop in net migration flow in 2020 played a major role in the **population not growing in 2020** for the **first time in the last decade** (German Federal Statistics Office, 2021).
- **Arrivals of new refugees and asylum-seekers were sharply down** in most regions in 2020; an **estimated 1.5 million fewer people** than would have been expected in non-COVID circumstances (UNHCR, 2021).

# Key trends Irregular Migration: Maritime migration to Europe

- Detections of **irregular arrivals** on Europe's main migratory routes fell by 13% in 2020, lowest since 2013 (FRONTEX, 2021)
- **Increase** in crossings via **Central Mediterranean** and **Canary Islands** routes compared to 2019 (IOM, 2021)
  - Risk of '**invisible shipwrecks**' due to reduced search and rescue presence during crisis



# Arrivals by sea and deaths in the Mediterranean

TOTAL ARRIVALS BY SEA AND DEATHS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN, 1 JAN TO 16 JUNE, 2021 vs. 2020					
	1 JANUARY – 16 JUNE 2021		1 JANUARY – 16 JUNE 2020		
Country of Arrival	Arrivals		Deaths	Arrivals	Deaths
Italy	18.170		679 (Central Med. route)	6.950	233 (Central Med. route)
Malta	250			1.680	
Greece	1.161 (as of 14 June)		5 (Eastern Med. route)	7.743	72 (Eastern Med. route)
Cyprus	3.820** (as of 31 May)			2.471** (as of 31 May)	
Spain	Atlantic Route	5.749 (as of 14 June)	127 (Atlantic route)	6.466	124 (Atlantic route)
	West Med. Route	4.839 (as of 14 June)	131 (Western Med. route)		71 (Western Med. route)
Estimated Total	33.989		942	23.997	500
Data on deaths of migrants compiled by IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre. **These figures include the number of ALL migrants’ arrivals registered in Cyprus (land +sea)					
All numbers are minimum estimates. Arrivals based on data from respective governments and IOM field offices.					

## *Key trends:*

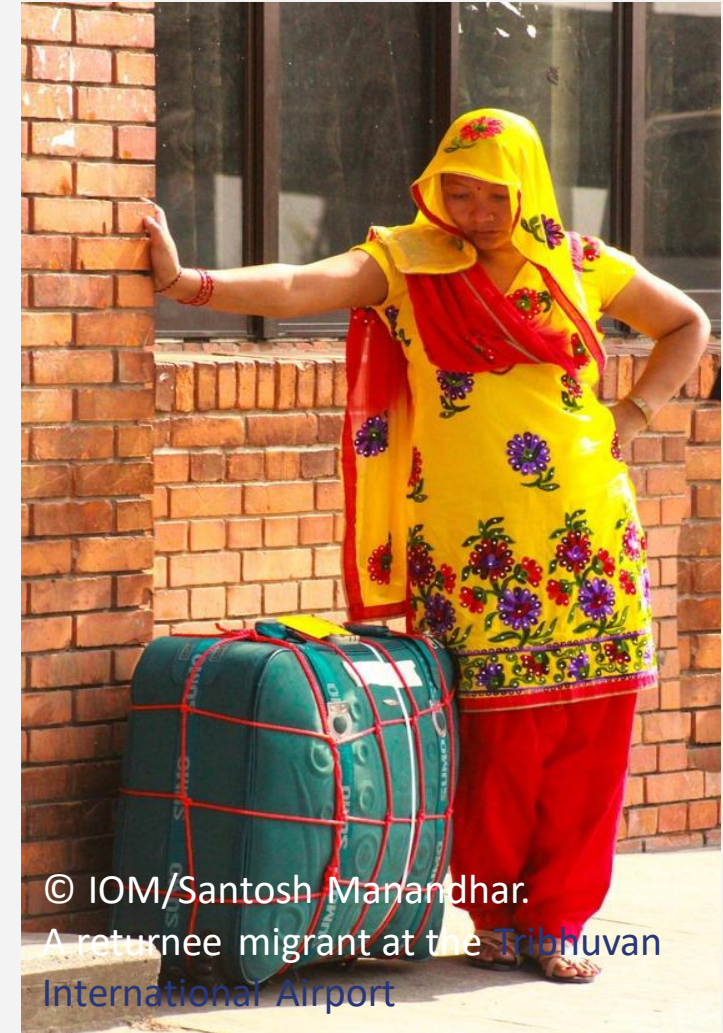
# Missing Migrants

- At least 2,269 people lost their lives in the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean trying to reach Italy, Malta, Greece, Spain and the Canary Islands between March 2020 and February 2021, more than during the same period in 2019/2020.
- Worldwide: more than 3,700 people lost their lives during migration between 1 March 2020 and 28 February 2021 ([IOM Missing Migrants Project](#))
  - Not included in this total are the thousands of deaths linked to COVID-19 cases among migrant workers and deaths related to mobility restrictions and lockdowns.



## Key recent trends: Return Migration and Development

- As of 13 April 2021, nearly **5.8 million Indians** had been repatriated under India's official repatriation operation (Source: Indian Ministry of Civil Aviation, 2021)
- As of 29 April 2021, nearly **870,000 undocumented Afghans** had returned from Iran and Pakistan since Mar 2020 (Source: IOM, 2021a)
  - Of these, 117,145 undocumented Afghans had returned In the first two weeks of March 2020 alone
- IOM has assisted more than **62,000 migrants** who returned to Ethiopia from Saudi Arabia and other African countries and were quarantined (Source: IOM, 2021b)



© IOM/Santosh Manandhar.  
A returnee migrant at the Tribhuvan International Airport

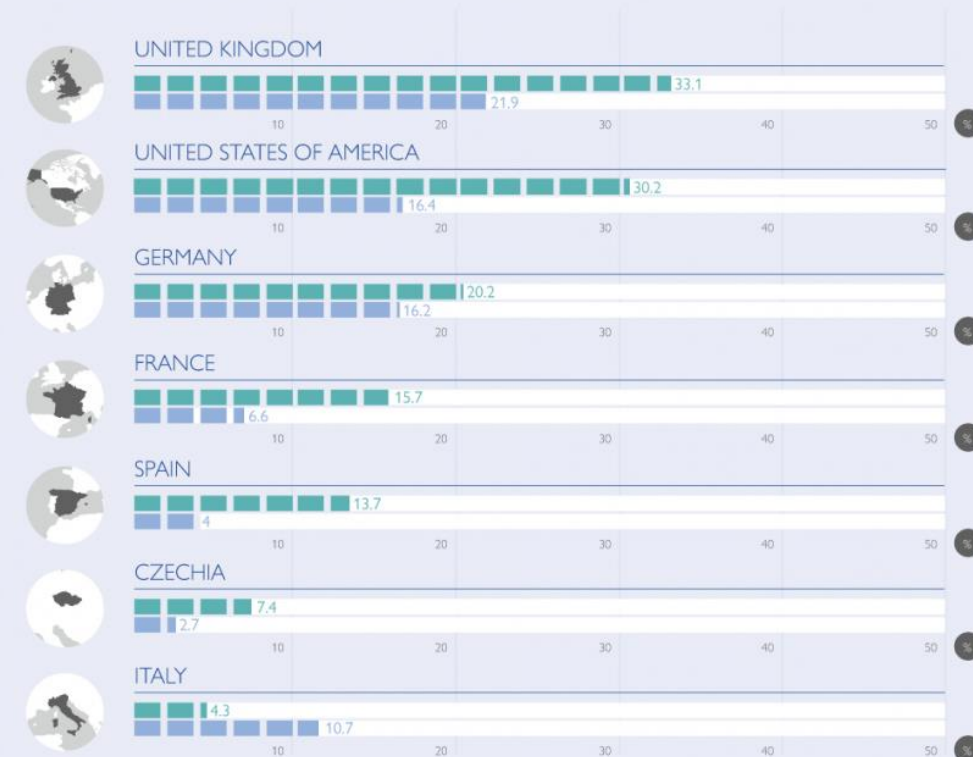


## Impact of Pandemic on Migrants:

# Migrant workers' key role in critical sectors

- Most OECD countries hard-hit by COVID-19 **depend on foreign-born workers in the healthcare sector** (OECD, 2020)
- Foreign-born workers also fill key roles in **services, sales, agricultural, forestry and fishery sectors** (GMDAC analysis based on OECD DIOC 2015/16)
  - More than 13% of sales & service workers were foreign-born in Germany, USA, Spain, Italy, UK, France
  - More than 9% of all skilled agricultural, forestry & fishery workers in Germany, Italy, Spain, UK, USA were foreign-born
- WHO GEHM report: Prioritize **occupational safety and health of all migrant workers**. Prioritize those most exposed and vulnerable to the risks of COVID-19 for vaccination.

SHARE OF FOREIGN-BORN DOCTORS AND NURSES IN SELECTED OECD COUNTRIES, 2015–16



Note: The OECD countries in this infographic are among the 20 countries with the highest number of confirmed cases globally as of 1 March 2021 (WHO, 2021).

■ % FOREIGN-BORN DOCTORS ■ % FOREIGN-BORN NURSES

Sources: OECD, Recent Trends in International Migration of Doctors, Nurses and Medical Students (Paris, 2019).  
OECD, Contribution of Migrant Doctors and Nurses to Tackling COVID-19 Crisis in OECD Countries (Paris, 2020).

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www.migrationdataportal.org

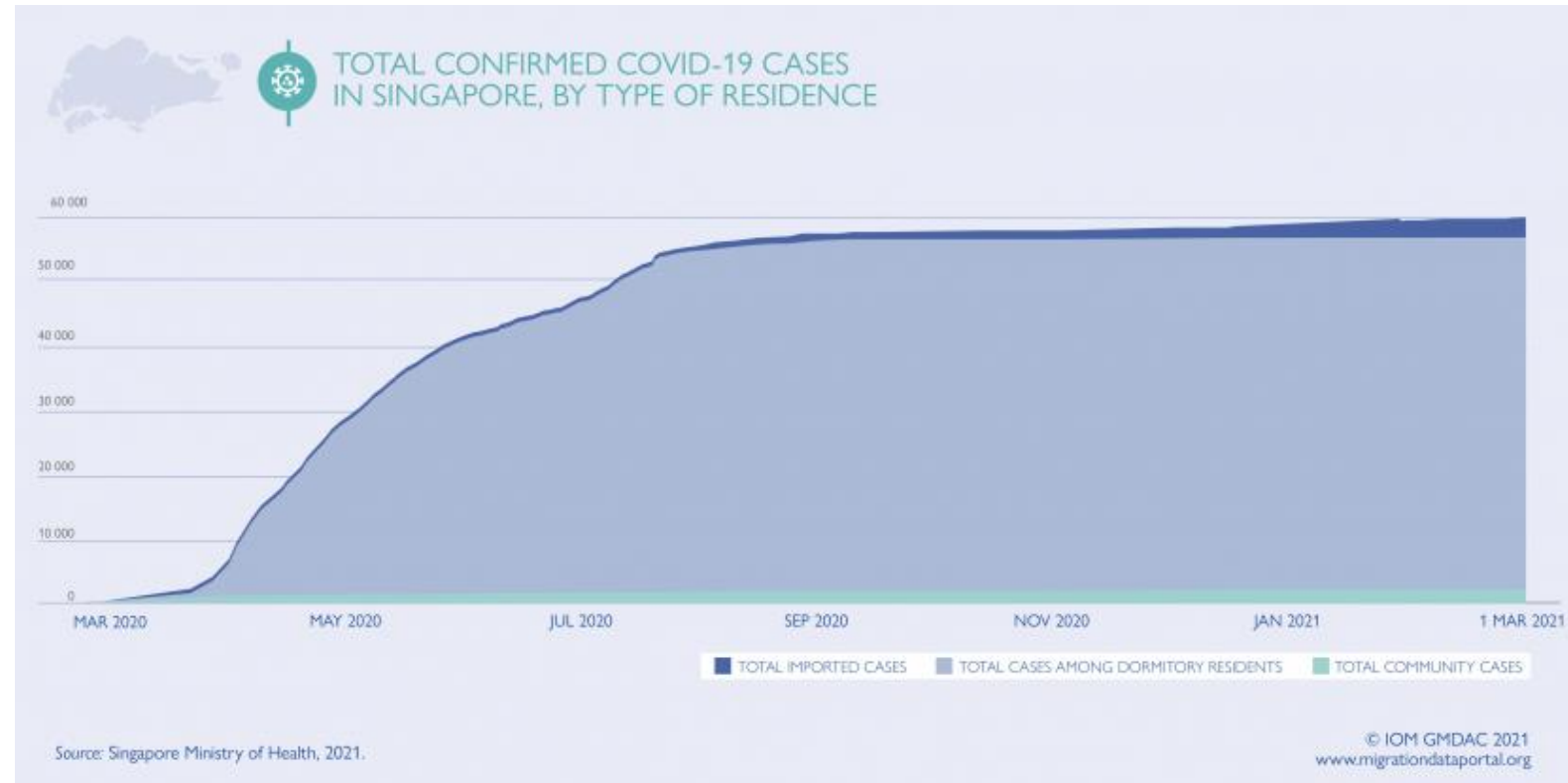
# Infection and death rates among migrants

- The **incidence rates** of COVID-19 among migrants and forcibly displaced persons appear to be consistently **higher than among non-migrant groups** (Hintermeier et. al., 2020).
  - All studies included in this review focused on migrant and forcibly displaced persons who were at a **higher risk of becoming infected due to their living and working conditions**
- **Migrants** in high-income countries are at **increased risk of infection and death due to COVID-19** (Hayward et. al., 2020).
  - In addition to migrants' living and working conditions, the study also attributes this disproportionate representation of migrants **to limited access to healthcare**

## Key trends: Migrants more at risk

# Low-skilled migrant workers disproportionately affected by COVID-19 pandemic

- As of 1 Mar 2021, **91%** of cumulative COVID-19 cases in **Singapore** were among migrants residing in dormitories (Singapore Ministry of Health, 2021)
- As of 7 May 2020, **75%** of newly confirmed COVID-19 cases in **Saudi Arabia** were migrants (Saudi Ministry of Health, 2020)

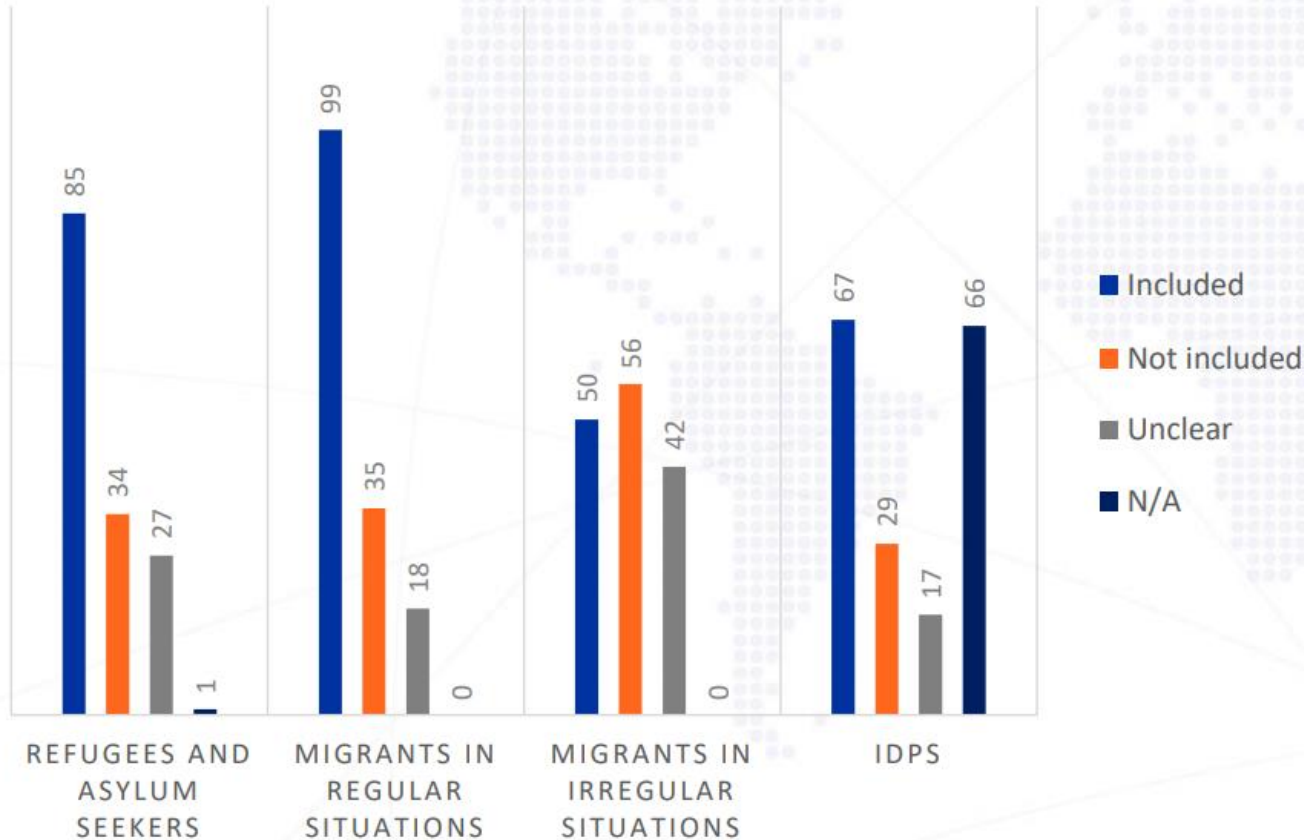


Learn more at

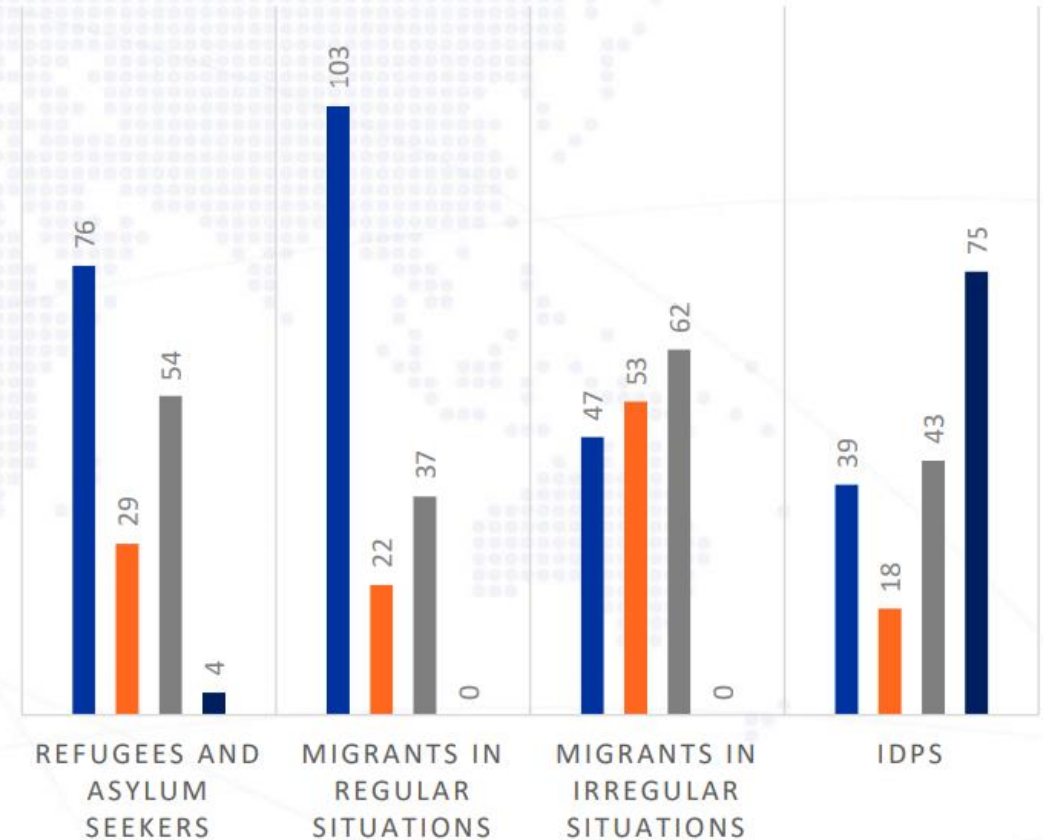
[migrationdataportal.org/themes/migration-data-relevant-covid-19-pandemic](https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/migration-data-relevant-covid-19-pandemic)

# Migrants' access to COVID-19 vaccines, as of 17 May 2021

## INCLUSION IN NDVP



## INCLUSION IN PRACTICE

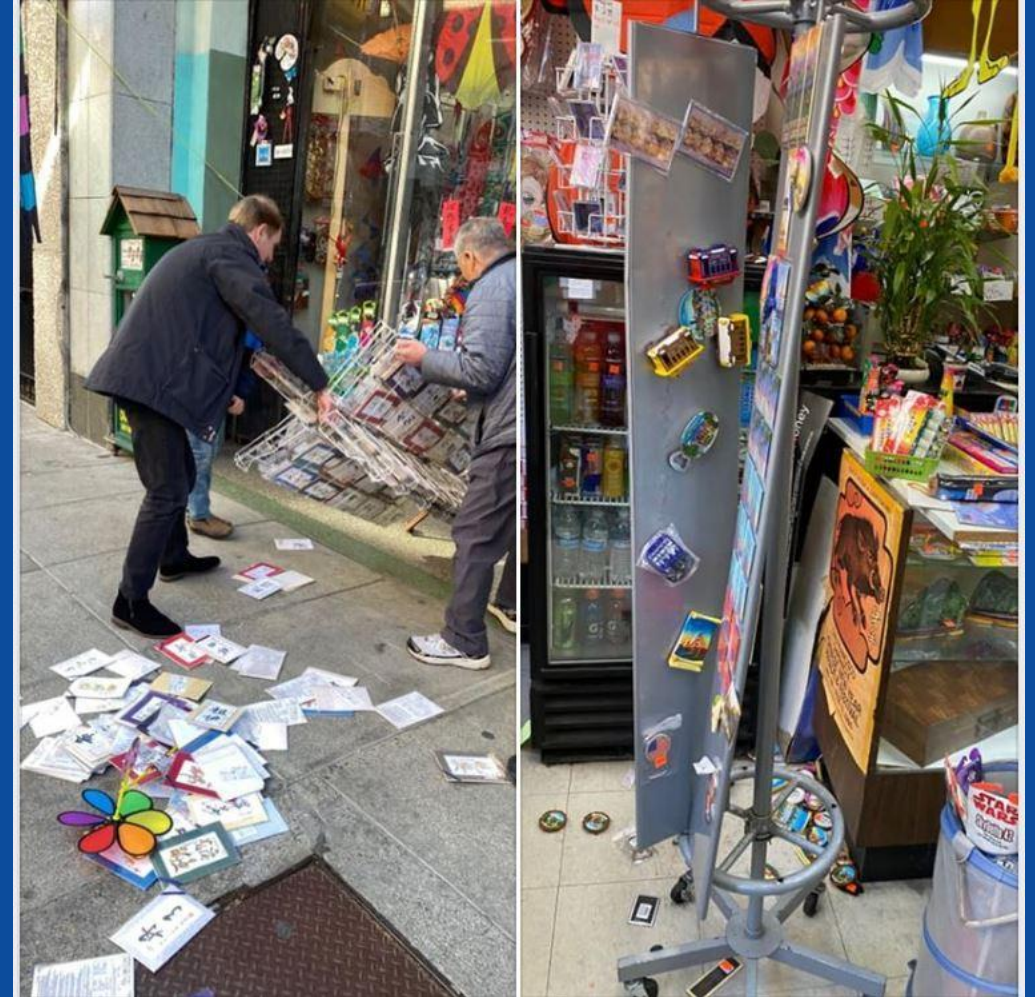


Source: IOM Migrant Inclusion in COVID-19 Vaccination Campaigns, May 2021



# Key trends: Increasing anti-migrant sentiment

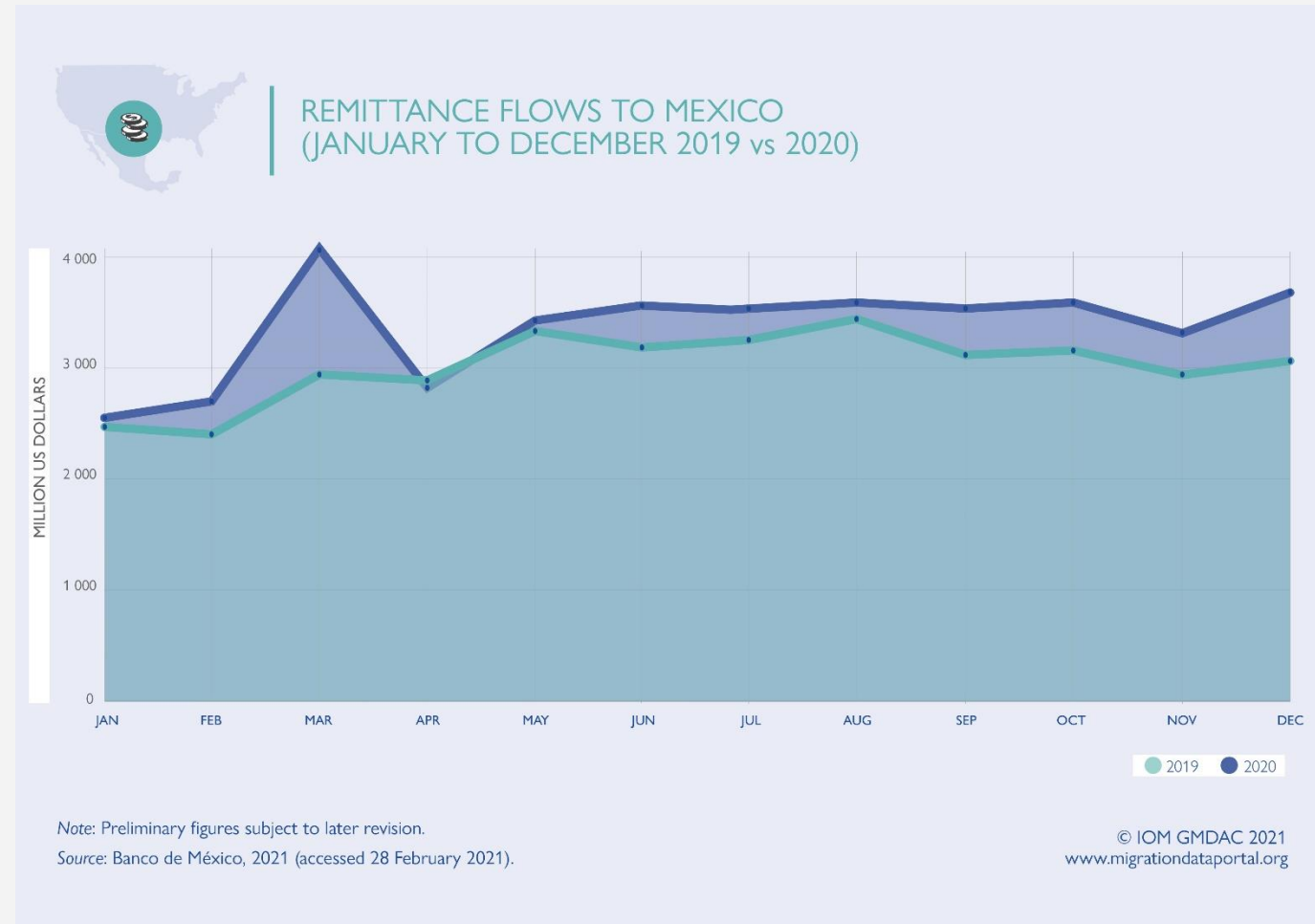
- Data from 46 countries shows that incidents of **xenophobia and racism related to COVID-19** pandemic are widespread and growing
  - E.g. 267 **hate crimes against Asian immigrants** in the UK between Jan-Mar is higher than all of 2018-2019 combined (HRW, 2020)
- **Immigration was viewed as the number one public issue in Europe from 2014 to 2019, but in 2020 this decreased** due to concerns over the overall economic situation in Europe ([ODI, 2018](#))



A man helps a shop owner pick up a display stand after a group of teenagers vandalized the store in San Francisco's Chinatown on March 16, 2020. © 2020 CrimesAgainstAsians / Facebook

# Key trends: Remittances (un)impacted by COVID-19?

- Smaller decline than initially forecast: **Remittance flows remained relatively stable in 2020.** Remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries was 1.6% below that in 2019 (Ratha et al., 2021).
- GMDAC analysis of national bank data show that after an initial dip in the first half of 2020, remittances appear to have rebounded to pre-COVID-19 rates and historical highs in several countries.

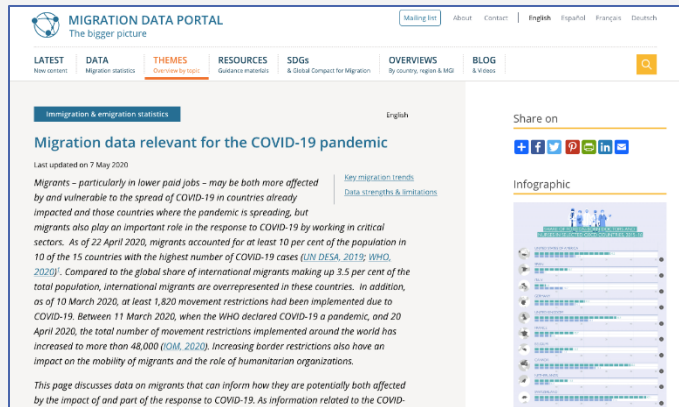


Learn more at [migrationdataportal.org/themes/migration-data-relevant-covid-19-pandemic](https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/migration-data-relevant-covid-19-pandemic)



# Resources: Migration Data Portal pages on COVID-19

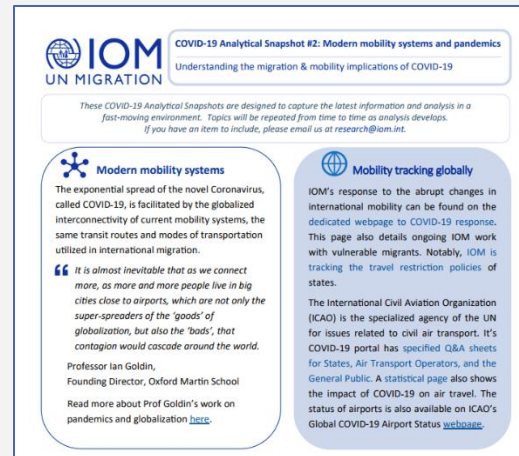
## Thematic page



- Overview of migration data relevant to COVID-19
- Infographic on the share of foreign-born doctors and nurses

[migrationdataportal.org/themes/migration-data-relevant-covid-19-pandemic](https://migrationdataportal.org/themes/migration-data-relevant-covid-19-pandemic)

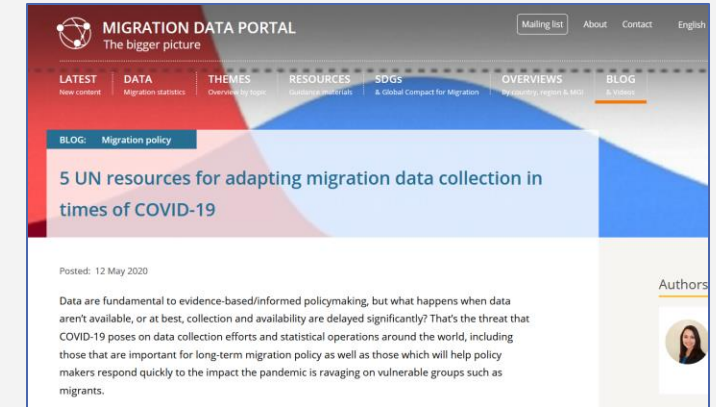
## Resources



- IOM's COVID-19 Analytical Snapshots
- UNFPA brief on COVID-19 and census data
- Migration Practice Policy Special Issue on COVID-19

[migrationdataportal.org/resources](https://migrationdataportal.org/resources)

## Blogs



- Key UN resources for the international statistical community
- Inclusion of migrants in pandemic preparedness and response

[migrationdataportal.org/blog](https://migrationdataportal.org/blog)

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