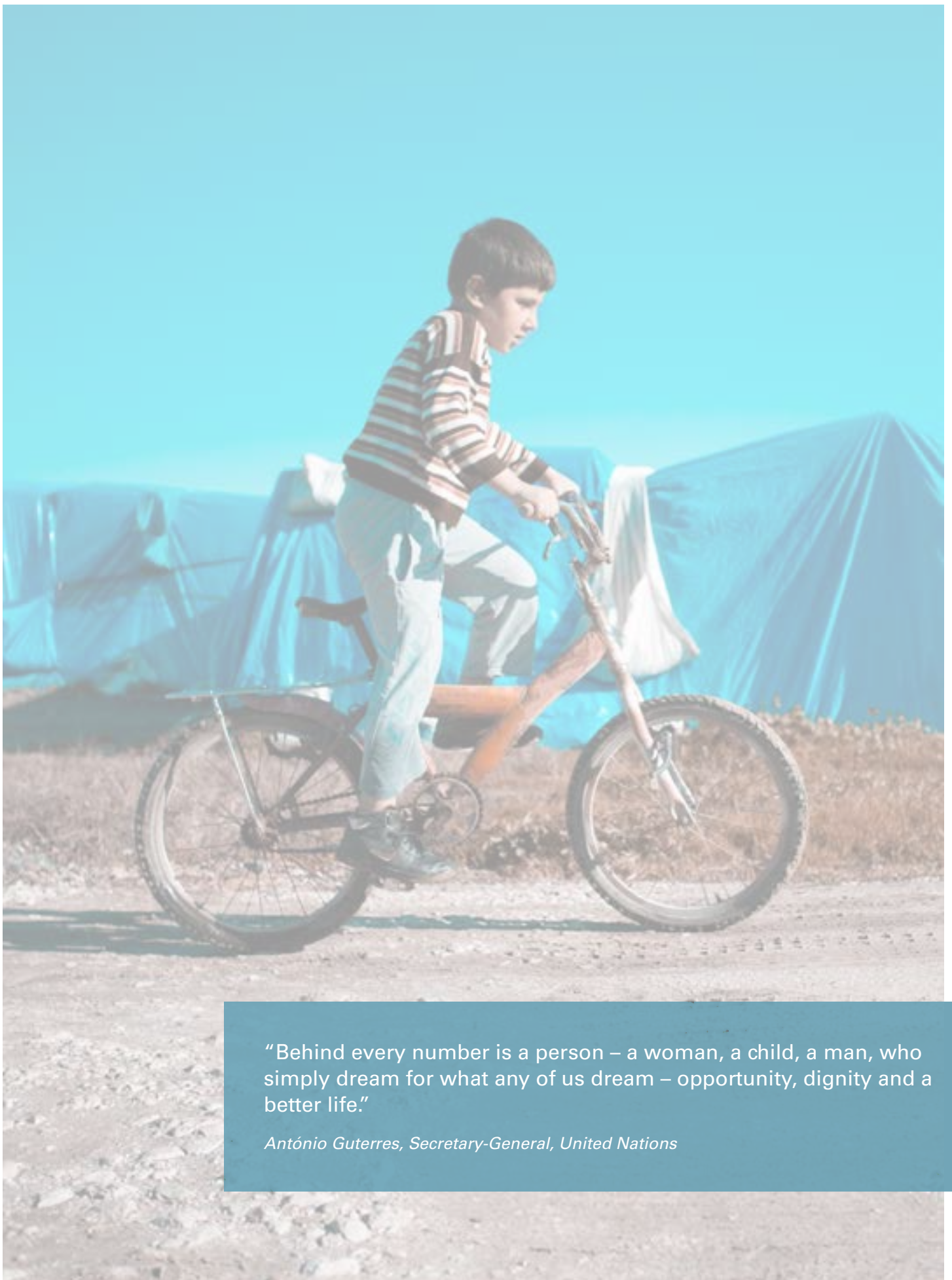


1. Overview of Migration and Displacement Trends in the Arab Region





“Behind every number is a person – a woman, a child, a man, who simply dream for what any of us dream – opportunity, dignity and a better life.”

António Guterres, Secretary-General, United Nations

1. Overview of Migration and Displacement Trends in the Arab Region

Data on migration and displacement trends and patterns are essential for better understanding migration and displacement in the Arab region, and for creating evidence-based policies and programmes. The present chapter provides data demonstrating the main migration trends in the region, including the number of people on the move, and migrants and refugees' countries of origin and destination and their socio-demographic profiles. Chapter 1 provides updates in this regard since the last reporting period, and comparisons of historical trends for the period 1990-2017; owing to the time lag in data availability, it does not cover the most recent developments after 2017. The chapter also includes information on remittances to and from the Arab region, and analysis of the main drivers of migration and displacement in the region.

The main data source for this chapter is the dataset entitled *Trends in International Migrant Stock: the 2017 Revision*, issued by the United Nations Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). In its dataset, DESA defines migrants as those living in a country who are either foreign-born or foreign-citizens (see annex I for definitions of terminology used in the present report). In this dataset, refugees are usually, but not always, included in total migrant estimates (see annexes II and III for total migrant estimates).¹ For more detailed and updated information on refugees, the present report complements DESA data using data produced by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, Population Statistics Database, Mid-Year Trends 2018), and by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA, 2018c).²

The present report analyses migration and displacement patterns at the regional and subregional levels, based on a division of the region into four groups of countries:

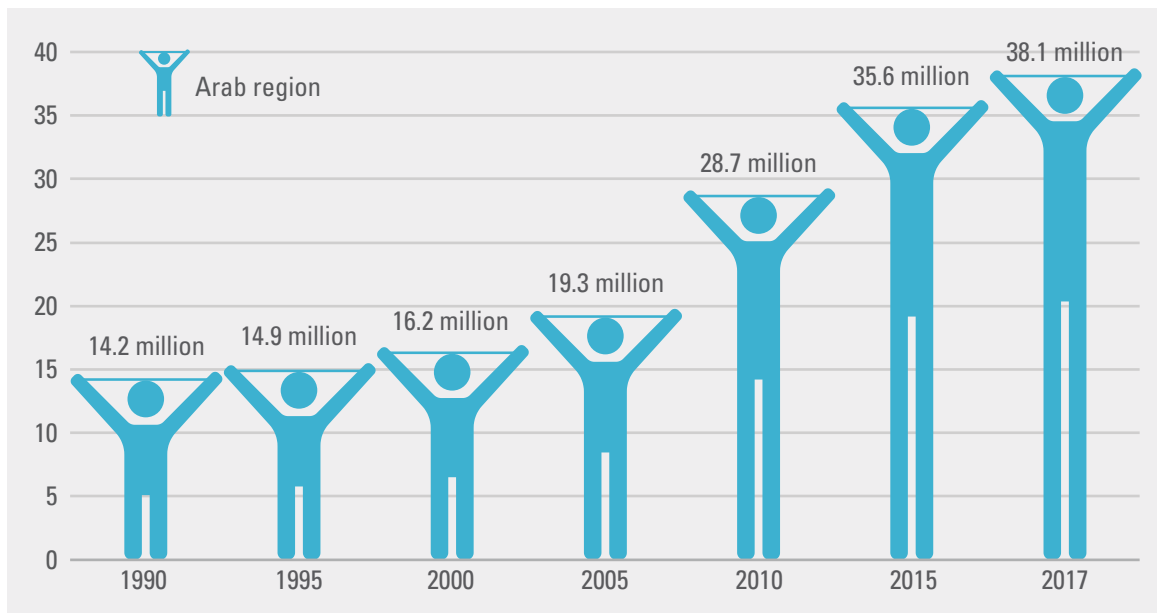
- **Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries:** Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates;
- **Maghreb:** Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia;
- **Mashreq:** Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, the State of Palestine and the Syrian Arab Republic;
- **Arab least developed countries (LDCs):** the Comoros, Djibouti, Mauritania, Somalia, the Sudan and Yemen.

To provide insight into some of the economic dynamics of migration, the present chapter also includes data on remittances sent from and to the Arab region. This is based on information from the 2018 December update of the World Bank's Annual Remittance Data and the World Bank's 2017 Bilateral Remittance Matrix. Other international sources include the Displacement Tracking Matrix of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the International Labour Organization (ILO).

A. Migration to and displacement in Arab countries

Migration and displacement are prominent features of the Arab region, with over 38 million international migrants and refugees in 2017, representing 14.8 per cent of migrants and refugees globally (figure 1).

Figure 1. Number of migrants and refugees in the Arab region (millions), 1990-2017



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

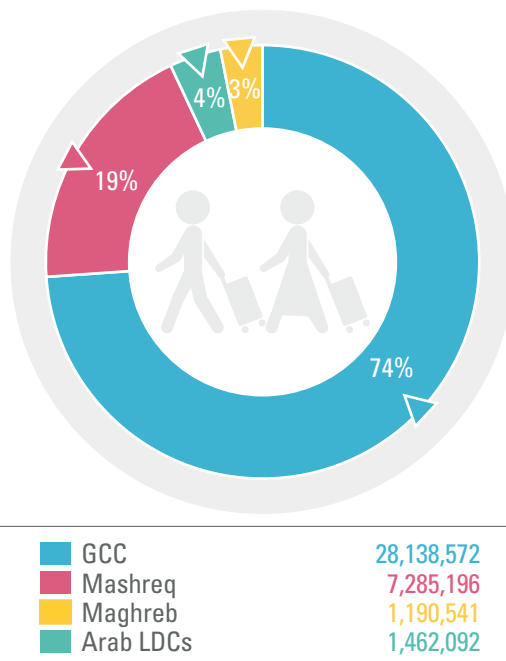
There has been significant growth in the number of international migrants in the region. In 1990, there were 14.2 million international migrants in the Arab region, representing 9.3 per cent of the total number of international migrants worldwide.³

The distribution of migrants and refugees within the Arab region varies across subregions, with GCC countries receiving the most migrants in the region. In 2017, 74 per cent of migrants in the region lived in GCC countries, 19 per cent in the Mashreq, 4 per cent in the Arab LDCs, and 3 per cent in the Maghreb (figure 2).

The migrant population in GCC countries has grown substantially compared with the number of migrants in other subregions, from 8.2 million in 1990 to 28.1 million in 2017. The migrant and refugee population in the Mashreq has also grown significantly, from 2.9 million in 1990 to 7.2 million in 2017. In contrast, the number of migrants and refugees has decreased in the Arab LDCs from 2.5 million in 1990 to 1.4 million in 2017, and has only slightly

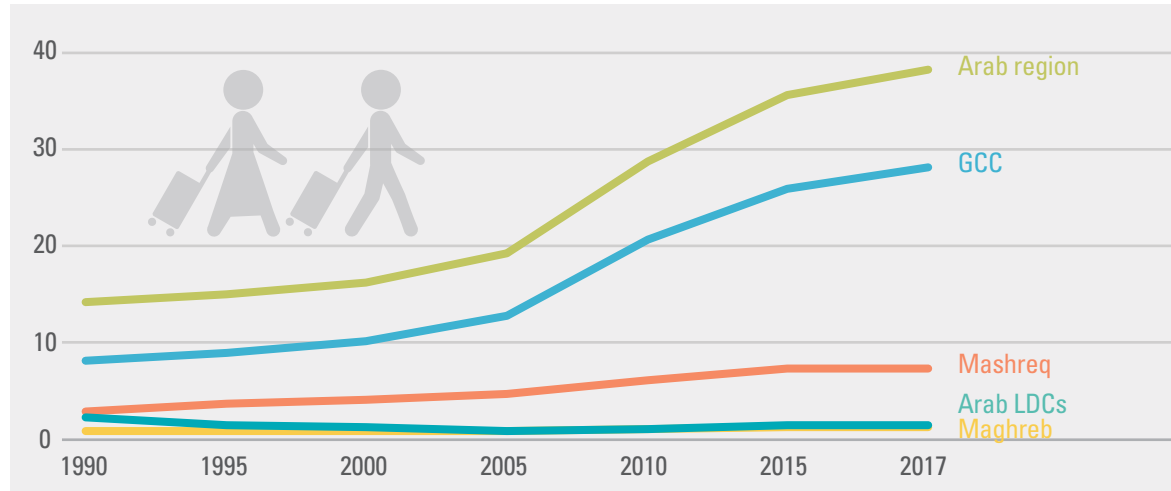
increased in the Maghreb from 0.8 million in 1990 to 1.2 million in 2017 (figure 3).

Figure 2. Number and percentage of migrants and refugees in the Arab region, by subregion, 2017



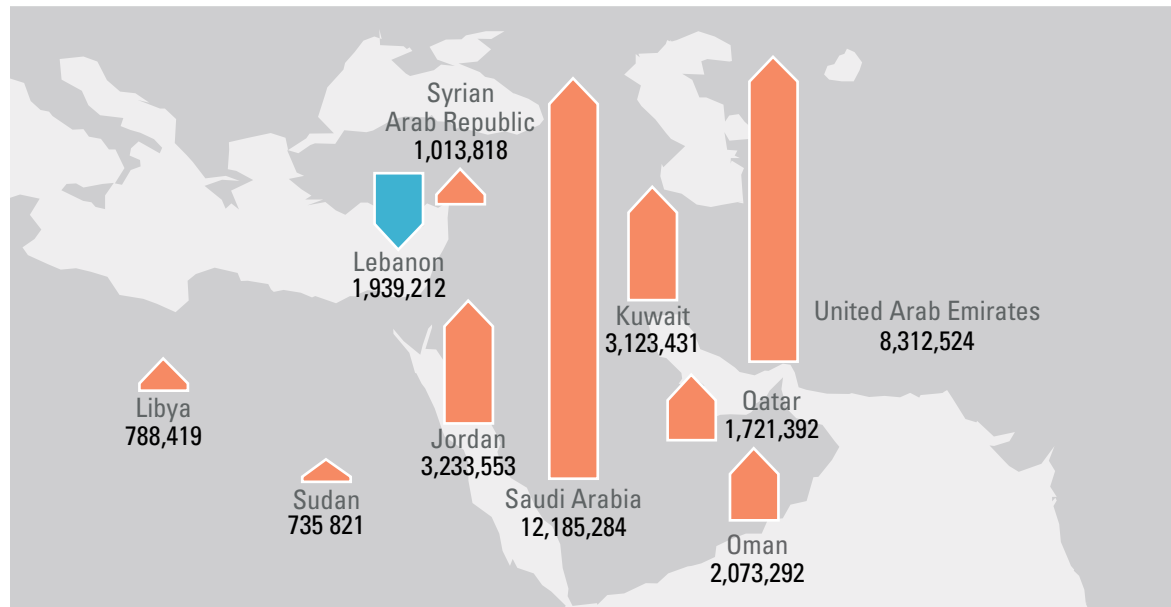
Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 3. Number of migrants and refugees in the Arab region (millions), by subregion, 1990-2017



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 4. Number of migrants and refugees in the top 10 countries of destination in the Arab Region, 2017, and trends since 2015



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

GCC countries, except Bahrain, were among the top 10 countries of destination for migrants in the region in 2017 (figure 4). Of these, Saudi Arabia had the largest number of migrants (accounting for over 12 million), followed by the United Arab Emirates (over 8 million), with the number of migrants in the other GCC countries ranging between 0.7 and 3.2 million. GCC countries

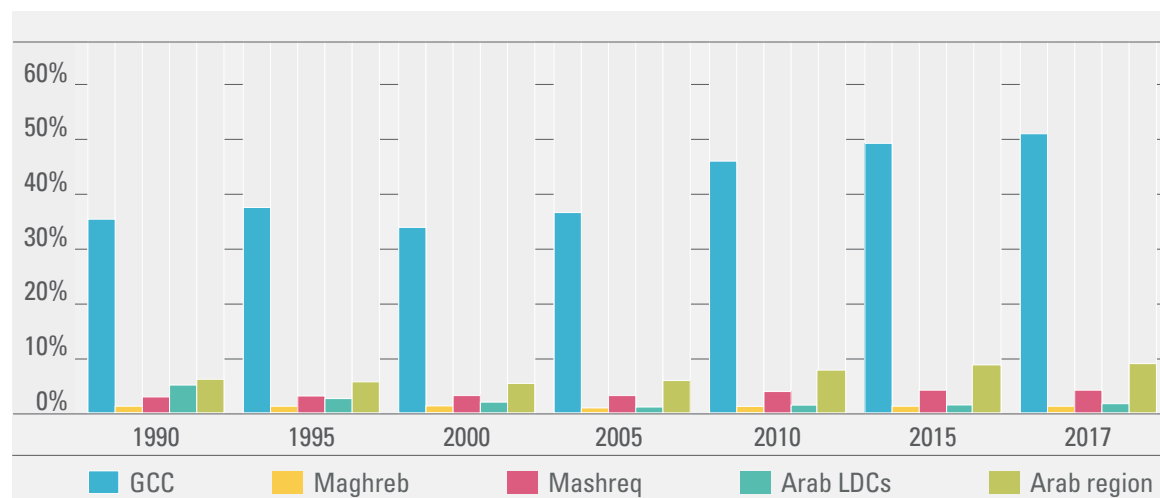
are characterized by their demand for high numbers of migrant workers.

Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Sudan are also among the top 10 countries of destination for migrants and refugees and large proportions of displaced persons owing to ongoing conflicts. In 2017, 3.2 million migrants and refugees were living

in Jordan, 1.9 million in Lebanon, 1 million in the Syrian Arab Republic, and over 0.7 million in Libya and in the Sudan. Except for Lebanon,

all countries saw an increase in the number of migrants and refugees within their borders since 2015, as indicated by the arrows in figure 4.⁴

Figure 5. Migrants and refugees in the Arab region as a percentage of the total population, by subregion, 1990-2017



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Box 1. Migrant workers in the Middle East and North African countries

In 2017, there were 164 million migrant workers worldwide, defined as “international migrant individuals of working age (15 and older) who are either employed or unemployed in their current country of residence”. The number of migrant workers in the 18 Middle East and North African countries* for which data is available amounted to 23.8 million, representing 14.5 per cent of the global number of migrant workers (table A). Of these, 22.7 million migrant workers resided in Middle Eastern countries and 1.1 million in North African countries. Migrants in the Middle East represent 13.9 per cent of global migrant workers, while migrants in North African countries represent 0.7 per cent.

The global average of migrant workers as a proportion of the total workforce is 4.2 per cent compared with 40 per cent in the Middle East, meaning that 2 of every 5 workers are migrants – the highest proportion of all global subregions. However, this share varies widely between countries, especially given that GCC countries have a very high number and share of migrant workers. Jordan and Lebanon are also countries with significant numbers of migrant workers. In contrast, the proportion of migrant workers in North Africa is only 1.6 per cent, highlighting that labour migration is not as dominant in that global subregion.

In both the Middle East and North African subregions, migrant workers have higher labour force participation rates than the non-migrant population. This pattern also holds true for all other global subregions, save Latin America and the Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africa, but the difference in labour force participation rates between migrants and non-migrants is much higher in the Middle East at 33.2 per cent compared with 8.4 per cent globally.

In the Middle East and in North Africa, 8 out of every 10 migrant workers are men. This proportion varies by sector: sectors largely dependent on manual labour are often over-represented by male migrant workers,



whereas a large portion of domestic workers are female migrant workers, although Arab countries host the largest number of male migrant domestic workers of any global subregion. In the Middle East, male migrant workers have a higher labour force participation rate than non-migrant men at 85.9 per cent and 72 per cent, respectively. Conversely, in North Africa, non-migrant male workers have a labour force participation rate of 72 per cent, while the rate for migrant male workers is 70.9 per cent (table A).

In both global subregions, the labour force participation for female migrant workers is higher than that of the female non-migrant population. In the Middle East, the participation rate for female migrant workers is more than three times that of non-migrants (table A). This is due to the low labour force participation rate of women in Middle Eastern countries and the high demand for domestic and hospitality workers, who are often women. The labour force participation rates for migrant women in both global subregions is approximately half of that of migrant men (table A).

In the 18 Arab countries for which data is available, there is a total of 1.5 million youth migrant workers (aged 15-24) and 0.3 million older migrant workers (aged 65+) (table B). According to ILO, in both global subregions, 9 out of 10 migrant workers are aged between 25 and 65, totalling 22 million working-age migrants. Youth migrant workers represent 6.1 per cent of migrant workers in the Middle East and 5.8 per cent in North Africa, and older migrant workers represent just 1.4 per cent of migrant workers in the Middle East and 5.8 per cent in North Africa.

Table A. Migrant workers in the Arab region, by global subregion, 2017

	Middle East			Northern Africa		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Number of migrant workers	22.7 million	19.1 million	3.6 million	1.1 million	0.9 million	0.2 million
Share out of global migrant workers	13.9%	20%	5.3%	0.7%	0.9%	0.4%
Migrant workers as a proportion of all workers	40.8%	41%	39.9%	1.6%	1.6%	1.5%
Labour force participation rate for migrant population	75.4%	85.9%	45.7%	56.7%	70.9%	33.0%
Labour force participation rate for non-migrant population	42.2%	72.0%	13.6%	46.7%	72.0%	21.7%

Source: ILO, 2018.

Table B. Age and sex of migrant workers in the Arab region (millions), by global subregion, 2017

	Middle East			Northern Africa		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Youth (15-24)	1.4	1.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.0
Working age (25-64)	21	17.7	3.3	1.0	0.8	0.2
Older persons (65+)	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
Total	22.7	19.1	3.7	1.1	0.9	0.2

Source: ILO, 2018.

* For this box, the Middle East is understood to be comprised of: Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, State of Palestine, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen; and North Africa is understood to be comprised of: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, and Tunisia.

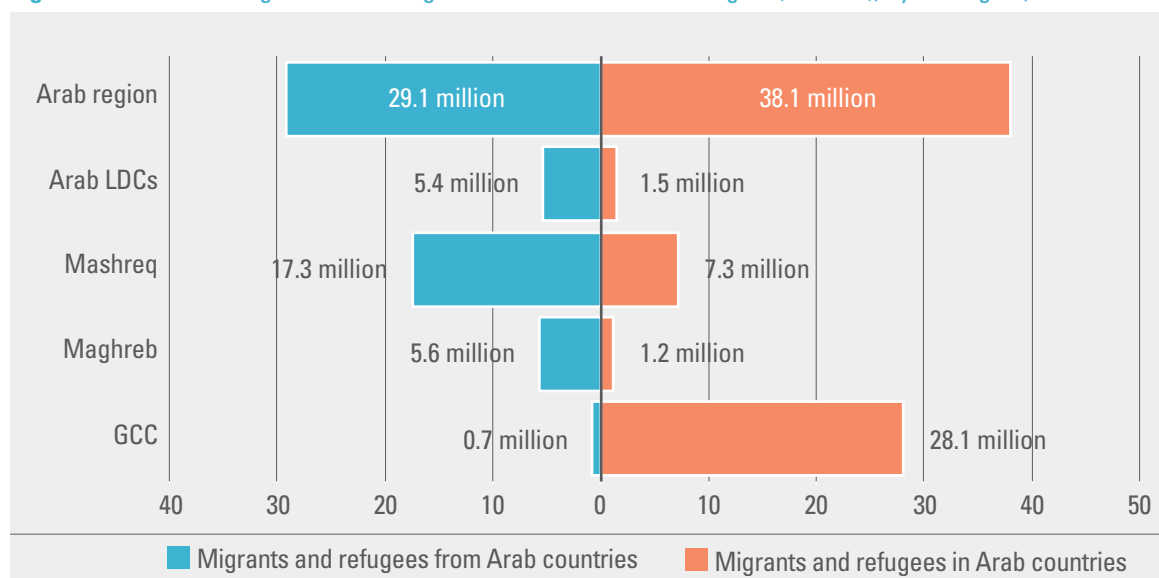
Note: The ILO defines the labour force participation rate as: a measure of the proportion of a country's working-age population that engages actively in the labour market, either by working or looking for work; it provides an indication of the size of the supply of labour available to engage in the production of goods and services, relative to the population at working age. Numbers may not add up due to rounding.

Source: ILO, 2018.

The proportion of migrants and refugees as part of the total population in the Arab region has steadily increased over the last three decades, from 6.3 per cent in 1990 to 9.2 per cent in 2017 (figure 5). The same trend can be observed in

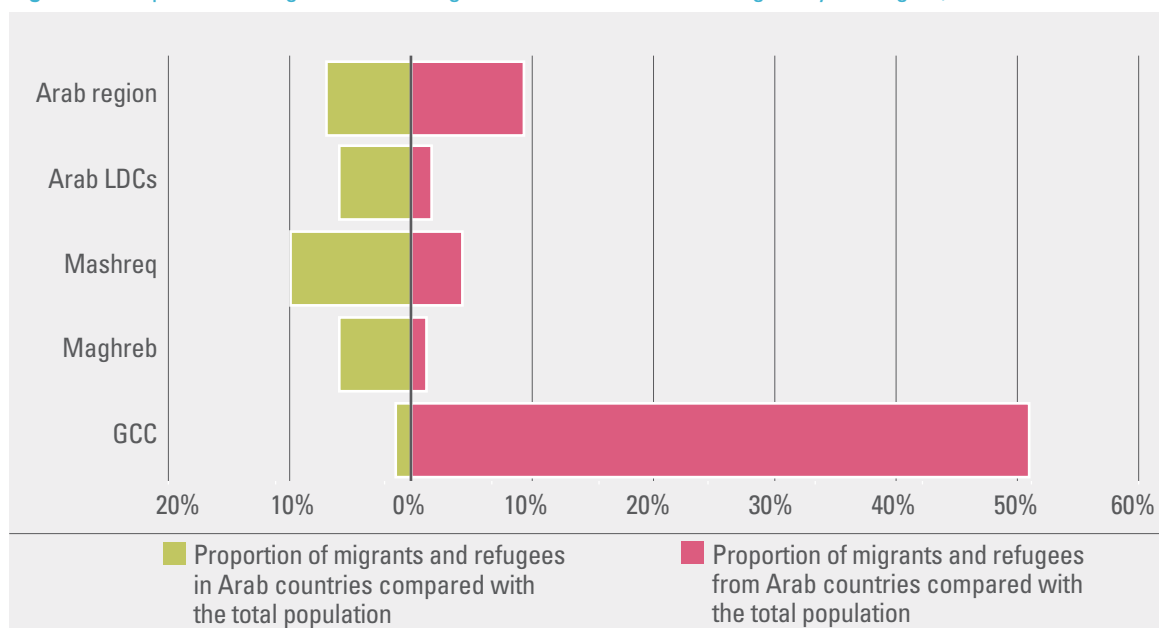
GCC countries, with slight decreases between 1995 and 2000. In contrast, the proportion of migrants and refugees has only slightly increased in the Mashreq, has remained stable in the Maghreb, and has decreased in the Arab LDCs.

Figure 6. Number of migrants and refugees from and in the Arab region (millions), by subregion, 2017



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 7. Proportion of migrants and refugees from and in the Arab region by subregion, 2017



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

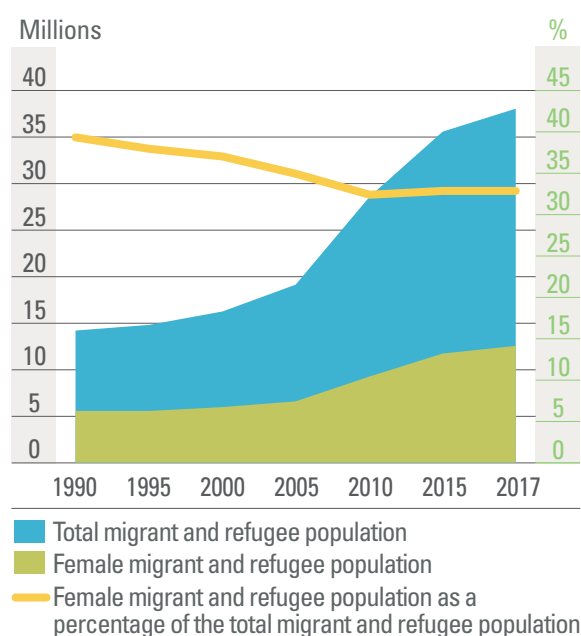
Since 1990, the Arab region has been characterized by more international migrants and refugees living in Arab countries than Arab nationals living abroad (figure 6). However, the trends vary significantly within the subregions. While GCC countries have 40 times more international migrants than nationals living abroad, the other subregions show the opposite trend. The Maghreb has 4.7 times more nationals living abroad than international migrants living in the subregion. The Arab LDCs have 3.9 times more nationals living abroad than international migrants living in the subregion, while the Mashreq has 2.3 times more.

The proportion of international migrants and refugees compared with the total number of nationals also varies considerably (figure 7), ranging from a high of 51 per cent in GCC countries to a low of 1 per cent in the Maghreb. The number of nationals living outside of the country compared to the total population is the highest in the Mashreq (10 per cent) and the lowest in GCC countries (1 per cent).

In 2017, women made up 32.8 per cent of the migrant and refugee population in the Arab region, a proportion that has remained steady since 2010, after slowly decreasing from 39.5 per cent in 1990 (figure 8). Though their proportion has slightly decreased, the number of female migrants and refugees has increased from 5.6 million in 1990 to 12.5 million in 2017, with an additional 766,000 women migrants and refugees in the region since 2015.

In 2017, women represented nearly half of the migrant population in the Mashreq and in the Arab LDCs (49.7 per cent and 48.3 per cent, respectively). Women migrants comprised 35.3 per cent of the migrant population in the Maghreb, and 27.6 per cent in GCC countries. These diverging trends can be explained by the proportionally higher number of men who migrate to work in GCC countries and the Maghreb, in contrast to the often conflict-induced displacement dynamic in the Arab LDCs and the Mashreq, which generally includes a

Figure 8. Number and proportion of female migrants and refugees among the total migrant and refugee population in the Arab region, 1990-2017

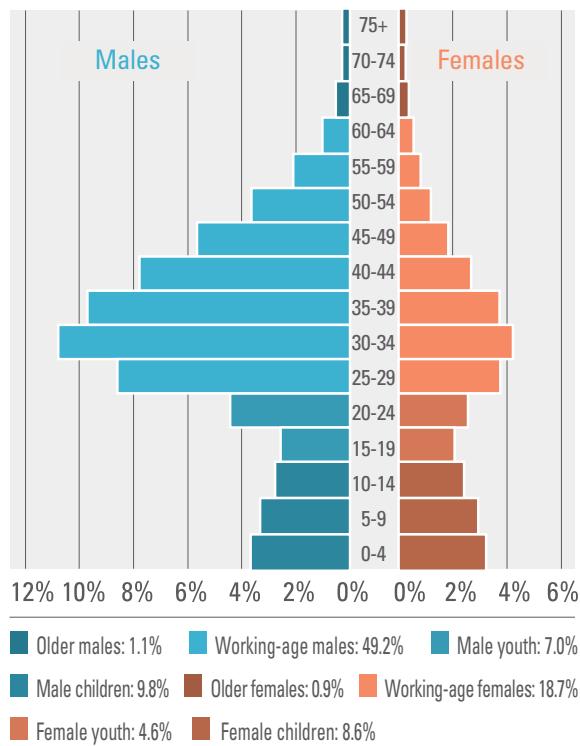


Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

more even gender distribution. For example, in Jordan and Lebanon, which host large numbers of refugees and displaced persons from the State of Palestine and the Syrian Arab Republic, women represented 50 per cent and 52 per cent of the migrant and refugee populations, respectively. In contrast, in GCC countries, which are prominent destinations for male migrant workers, starker differences appear in the gender balance of the migrant population, with the number of women migrants varying from a low of 16 per cent in Oman to a high of 32 per cent in Kuwait.

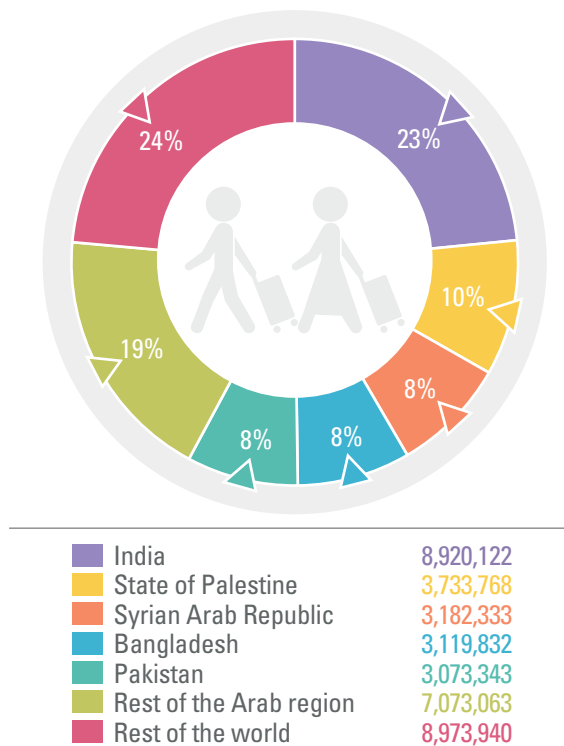
The diversity of migration trends in the Arab region can be further understood through various age groups of migrants living in the region. Working-age (25-64 years old) males represented 49 per cent of all migrants and refugees in the region in 2017 and working-age women represented 19 per cent (figure 9). Children (0-14 years old)⁵ represented 18 per cent of the migrant and refugee population, young people (15-24 years old) constituted 12

Figure 9. Distribution of migrants and refugees in the Arab region by age, age group and sex, 2017



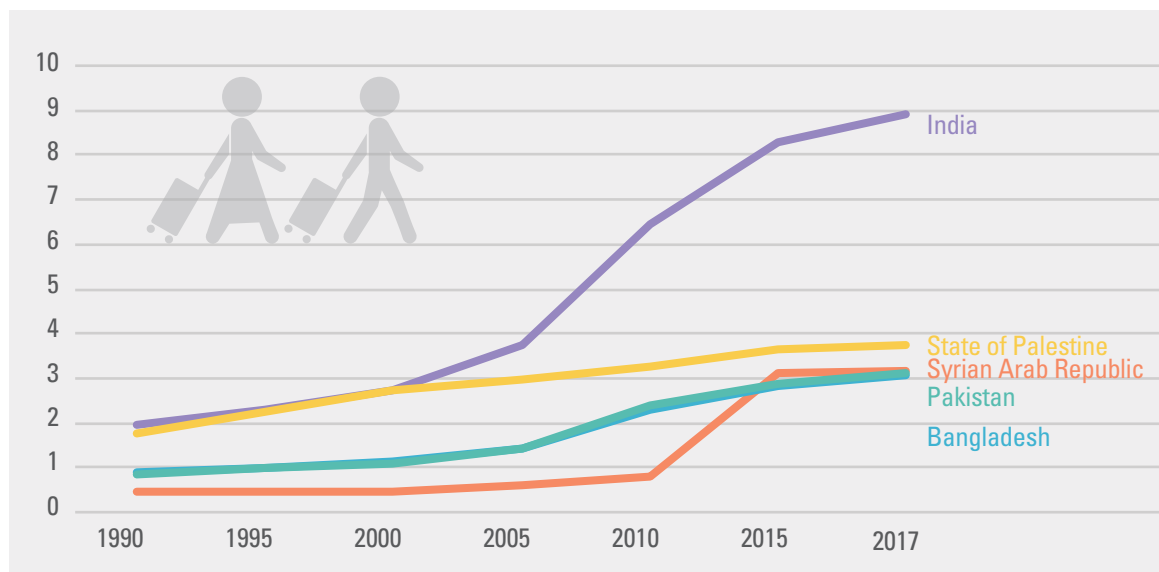
Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 10. Top five countries of origin of migrants and refugees in the Arab region, 2017



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 11. Number of migrants and refugees in the Arab region by top five countries of origin (millions), 1990-2017



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

per cent, working-age persons comprised 68 per cent, and older persons (aged 65 and above) represented 2 per cent. Children, young people and older persons' age groups showed a more even sex distribution, with slightly more males.⁶

In 2017, 37 per cent of migrants and refugees in the Arab region, almost 14 million, originated from within the region, a percentage that has remained consistent since 2015. Non-Arab Asian countries were the origin of 56 per cent of migrants in the Arab region in 2017, predominantly migrant workers. Around 8.9 million migrants living in the Arab region were from India, representing 23 per cent of the region's migrants (figure 10). The number of migrants from India started to rise in 2005, increasing by almost 140 per cent (figure 11). Bangladesh and Pakistan were also among the

top five countries of origin in 2017, with roughly 3.1 million migrants each. Although these countries' migrant population in the region also started increasing in 2005, they did so at a slower pace compared with India's migrant population.

Of the total number of IDPs in the Arab region in 2017, 66 per cent were in the Mashreq, predominantly in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic. With increases of around 460,000 IDPs in 2016 to reach a total of 6.8 million in 2017, the Syrian Arab Republic was the country with the highest conflict-induced displacement in the world in 2017. It is also the country with the highest number of IDPs as a percentage of the total population in the Arab region, at 37.1 per cent. There were also over 2.6 million IDPs in Iraq in 2017, a number that has decreased by 20 per cent since 2016. The number of IDPs in the State of

Box 2. Internally displaced persons in Arab countries

According to data from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, the total number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Arab region reached around 15 million in 2017, accounting for 37 per cent of the world's IDPs. Compared with 2016, the number of IDPs decreased by approximately 1.5 million in 2017 (table A), mainly due to returns in Iraq and the Sudan. However, 5.8 million people were newly displaced in the region in 2017, of which 4.9 million were displaced by conflict and almost 1 million by natural disasters, the vast majority in Somalia owing to drought (table B). Iraq, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Sudan and Yemen are among the top six countries with the most IDPs in the world.

Table A. Internally displaced persons owing to conflict and violence in Arab countries, 2012-2017

Country	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Syrian Arab Republic	3,000,000	6,500,000	7,600,000	6,600,000	6,325,978	6,784,000
Iraq	3,000,000	2,426,700	3,120,000	3,264,286	3,320,000	2,648,000
Sudan	2,100,000	2,100,000	3,276,000	3,290,310	3,034,614	2,072,000
Yemen	385,000	307,000	334,090	2,509,068	1,973,994	2,014,000
Somalia	1,350,000	1,100,000	1,106,751	1,223,000	1,106,751	825,000
State of Palestine	50,000	59,400	400,000	500,000	303,608	231,000
Libya	144,500	146,000	275,000	221,425	193,277	197,000
Egypt				78,000	78,000	82,000
Lebanon	45,000	20,000	20,000	12,000	12,000	11,000
Total Arab region	10,074,500	12,659,100	16,131,841	17,698,089	16,348,222	14,864,000

Source: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2018c.

Note: Data does not include disaster-induced displacement.



Table B. Internal displacement in Arab countries, 2017

Country	New conflict-caused displacements in 2017	New disaster-induced displacements in 2017	Number of IDPs* as at 31 December 2017	IDPs* as a percentage of the total population
Comoros		94		
Egypt	3,800		82,000	0.1
Iraq	1,379,000	3,900	2,648,000	6.9
Jordan		160		
Lebanon	200		11,000	0.2
Libya	29,000		197,000	3.1
Mauritania		2,900		
Oman		320		
State of Palestine	700	77	231,000	4.7
Saudi Arabia		100		
Somalia	388,000	899,000	825,000	5.6
Sudan	17,000	54,000	2,072,000	5.1
Syrian Arab Republic	2,911,000	2,300	6,784,000	37.1
Tunisia		990		
United Arab Emirates		850		
Yemen	160,000	13	2,014,000	7.1
Total Arab region	4,888,700	964,704	14,864,000	3.6

Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017; and IDMC, 2018a.

*IDPs displaced by conflict and violence.

Source: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2018a.

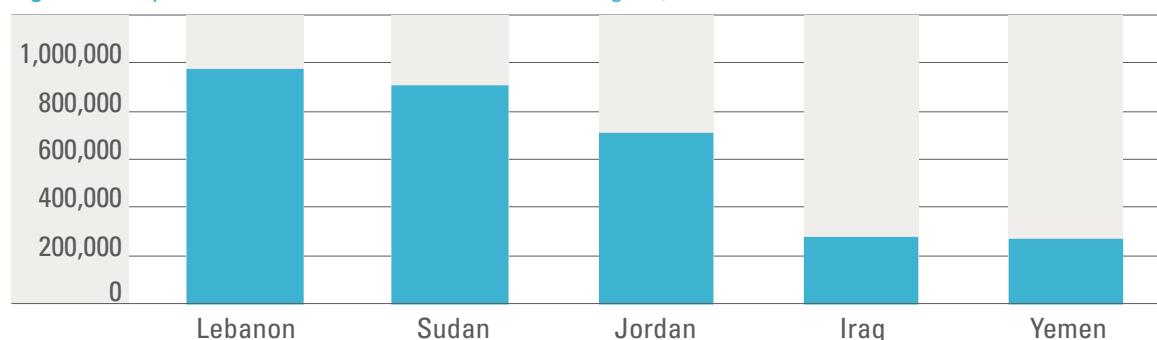
Palestine decreased by almost 24 per cent from 2016, reaching around 230,000 in 2017.

The Arab LDC were the location of almost all disaster-induced displacements in the Arab region in 2017, owing to a severe drought in Somalia that caused the displacement of close to 900,000 persons. In addition, there were more than 5,000 disaster-induced IDPs in the Sudan. Nonetheless, the total Sudanese IDP population decreased by almost a million from 2016, falling to just over 2 million in 2017.

Since 2014, Yemen has experienced a severe seven-fold increase in displacement owing to

conflict and violence, with an IDP population of 2 million in 2017. The IDP population decreased significantly between 2015 and 2016, but slightly increased again in 2017. However, these numbers should be considered an underestimate, since access to IDPs is severely constrained because of widespread insecurity and instability, among other reasons.

People of concern to UNHCR include refugees and persons in refugee-like situations, asylum-seekers, returned refugees, internally displaced persons, returned IDPs, stateless persons, and others of concern. According to mid-2018 UNHCR data, the total population of

Figure 12. Top five Arab countries of destination for refugees, mid-2018

Source: UNHCR, 2019b.

Note: This figure does not include the approximately 5.4 million Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

concern in the Arab region amounted to over 21.2 million.⁷ Of these, over 15.2 million were internally displaced persons and 3.7 million were refugees under the UNHCR mandate.⁸ As reported by UNHCR, by mid-2018, Lebanon had the largest number of refugees in the region (975,000), followed by the Sudan (908,000) and Jordan (705,000) (figure 12). Jordan and Lebanon continue to have the highest global rates of refugees relative to their national populations. Iraq and Yemen each hosted almost 300,000 refugees in mid-2018. Moreover, in January 2018, UNRWA reported 5.4 million registered Palestine refugees under its mandate, including Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip.⁹ Furthermore, UNHCR data shows that there were 370,676 stateless persons in the Arab region in 2018.¹⁰

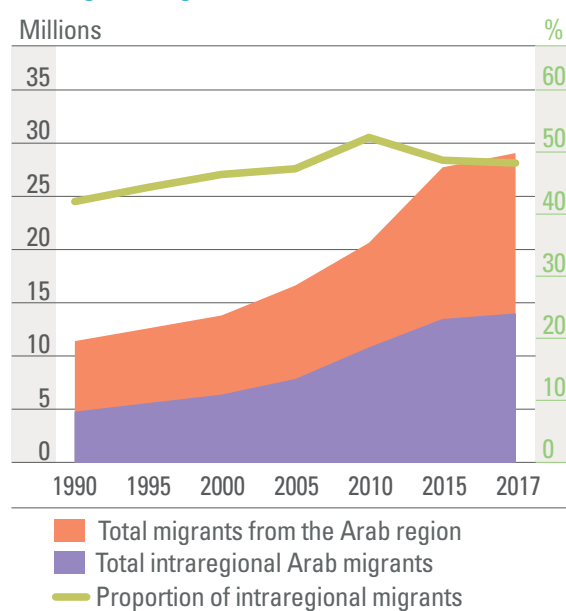
B. Migration and displacement from Arab countries

1. Overall migration and displacement trends

Since the last reporting period, the Arab migrant and refugee population has increased by 1.4 million, or 4.9 per cent. The number of migrants and refugees originating from the Arab region has grown from approximately 11.5 million in 1990 to 29 million in 2017, increasing by 153 per cent in the 27-year span (figure 13). The migrant and refugee

population has been growing at a slower rate since 2015 than it had been in the period 2000-2015.¹¹

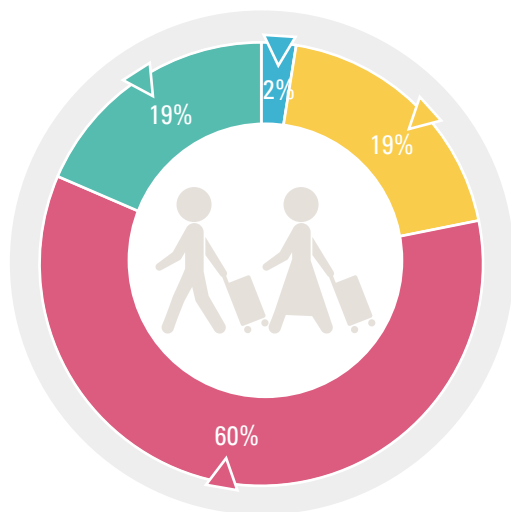
Of those 29 million migrants and refugees from Arab countries, 48 per cent – close to 14 million – remained in the region, a proportion that has slightly increased since 1990, when intraregional migrants and refugees from the Arab region represented 42 per cent, and has remained stable since the last reporting period.

Figure 13. Number of migrants and refugees from Arab countries and number and share of intraregional migrants, 1990-2017

Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Around 60 per cent (over 17.3 million) of migrants and refugees from Arab countries originate from the Mashreq (figure 14). The Maghreb is the origin of 5.6 million migrants and

Figure 14. Number and percentage of migrants and refugees from the Arab region, by subregion, 2017



GCC	732,444
Mashreq	17,327,217
Maghreb	5,617,383
Arab LDCs	5,382,998

Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

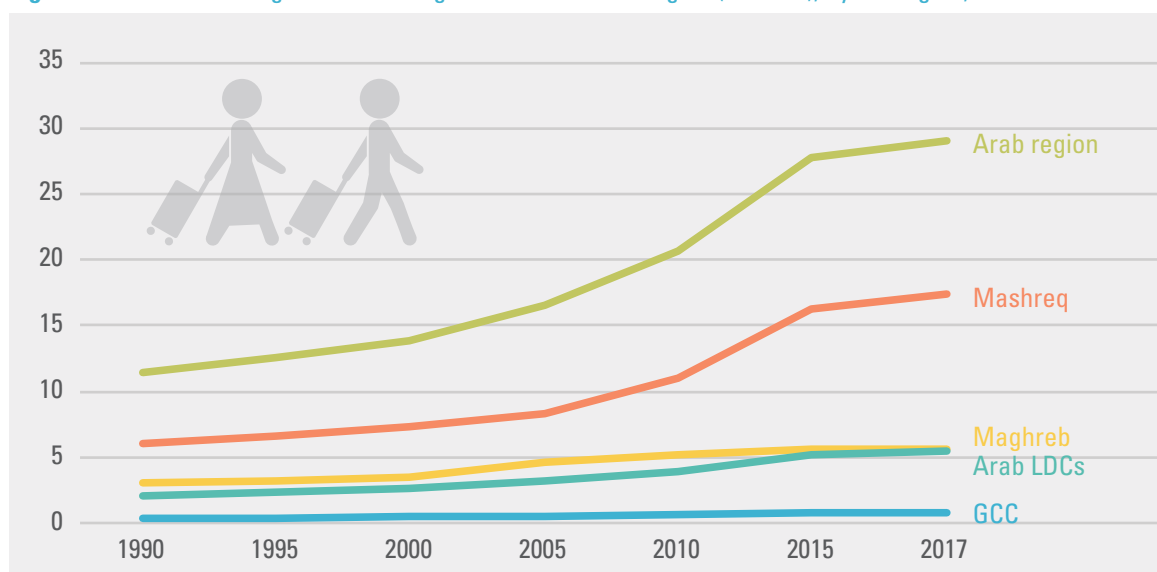
refugees, or 19 per cent of the region's migrants and refugees; while the Arab LDCs account for almost 5.4 million migrants and refugees, also approximately 19 per cent of the Arab migrant and refugee population. The GCC subregion is the origin of around 730,000 migrants and refugees, a share of only 2 per cent of the Arab migrant and refugee population.

This distribution of migrants and refugees from the subregions has remained mostly stable since 1990, except for a slight growth of migrants and refugees from the Mashreq alongside a decrease in the proportion of those originating from the Maghreb (figure 15).

From 1990 until 2010, the top five Arab countries of origin of migrants and refugees were the State of Palestine, Morocco, Iraq, Egypt, and Algeria (figure 16). Since 2015, however, this order has changed with the Syrian Arab Republic, the State of Palestine, Somalia, Morocco and Egypt becoming the top 5 countries of origin.

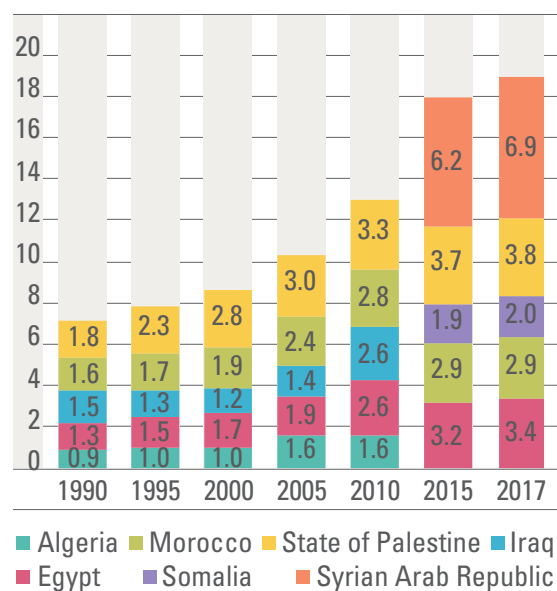
In 2017, female migrants and refugees represented 44.5 per cent of all migrants and refugees from the Arab region, a proportion

Figure 15. Number of migrants and refugees from the Arab region (millions), by subregion, 1990-2017



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 16. Number of migrants and refugees from the top five countries of origin in the Arab region (millions), 1990-2017

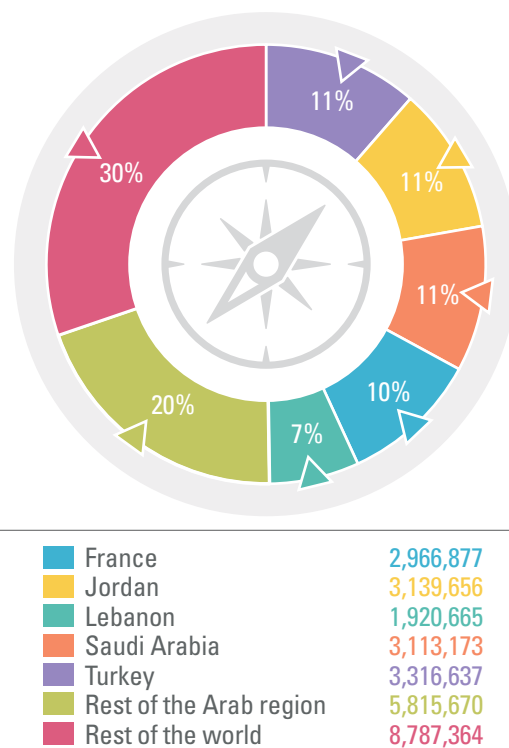


Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

that has remained relatively stable since 1990. The biggest variation in this proportion came between 2010 and 2015, when migrant women and refugee women represented 42.7 per cent and 44.5 per cent of the total migrant population from the region, respectively. The number of female migrants and refugees from the Arab countries in 2017 was over 12.9 million, 4.9 per cent more than in 2015. The share of female migrants and refugees presents little variation – of 2.2 percentage points – across subregions.

Turkey was the top country of destination for migrants and refugees from the Arab region, counting over 3.3 million in 2017 or 11 per cent of the total Arab migrant and refugee population (figure 17). Jordan and Saudi Arabia were the destinations for over 3.1 million migrants and refugees each, while France was the destination for 2.9 million and Lebanon for 1.9 million. The rest of the Arab countries combined received 20 per cent of migrants and refugees from the Arab region, who mostly went to the United Arab Emirates and the Syrian Arab Republic (predominantly

Figure 17. Top five countries of destination for migrants and refugees from the Arab region, 2017

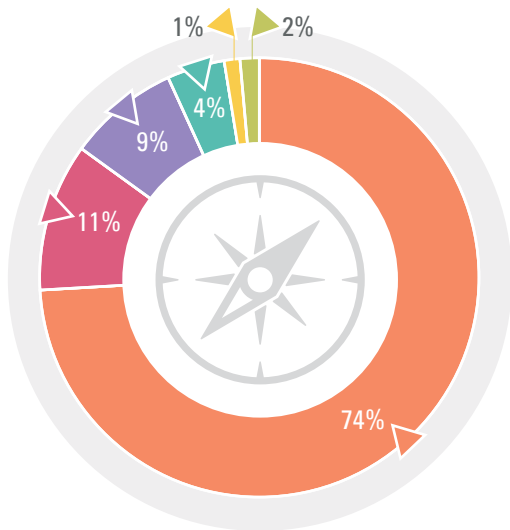


Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

refugees from Iraq and the State of Palestine). Other countries around the world were the destination for the remaining 8.7 million migrants and refugees, or 30 per cent of migrants from the Arab region, most notably Italy, Spain and the United States of America.

According to mid-2018 data from UNHCR, the Arab region was the origin of a total population of concern to UNHCR of approximately 26.3 million persons – which includes refugees and persons in refugee-like situations, asylum-seekers, returned refugees, internally displaced persons, returned IDPs, stateless persons, and others of concern – representing 37 per cent of the global population of concern. Of the population of concern from the Arab region accounted for by UNHCR, over 8.7 million were refugees, who represented 43 per cent of the global refugee population of over 20 million.

Figure 18. Top five countries of origin of refugees from the Arab region, mid-2018

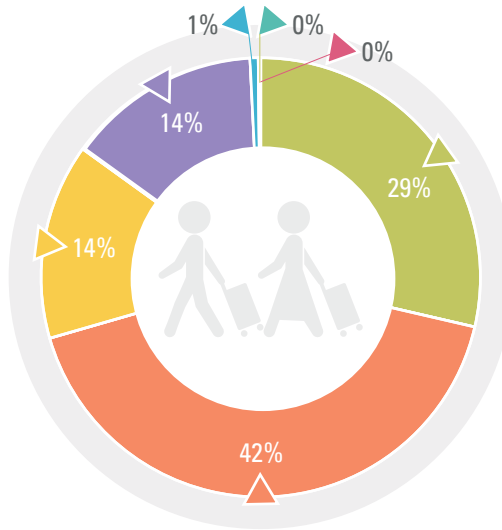


Iraq	372,304
Somalia	954,701
State of Palestine	101,125
Sudan	719,222
Syrian Arab Republic	6,490,950
Rest of the Arab region	123,294

Source: UNHCR, 2019b.

Note: This figure does not include the approximately 5.4 million Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

Figure 19. Refugees from Arab countries by region of destination, mid-2018

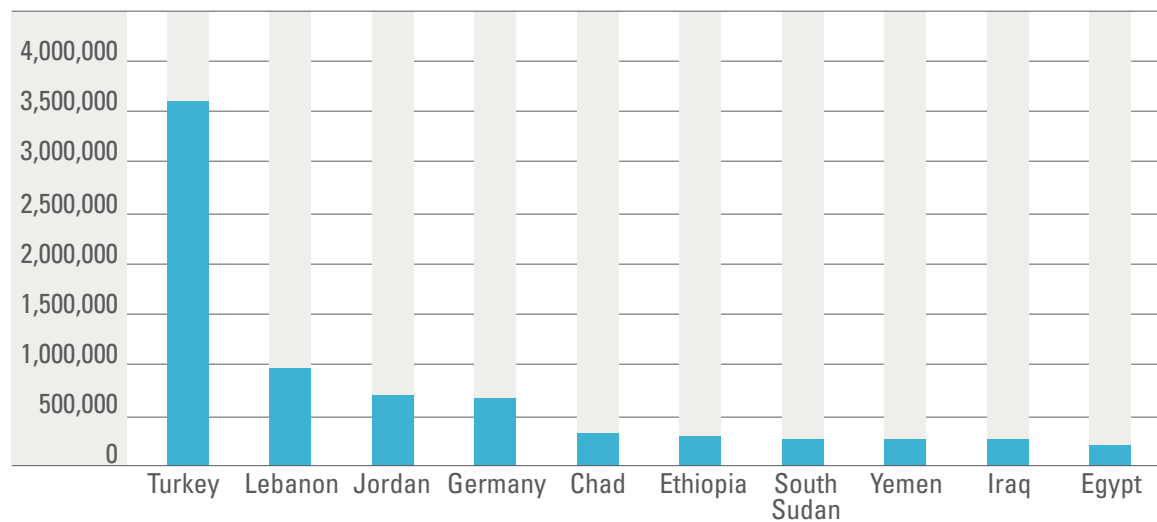


Arab region	2,507,589
Europe	1,262,697
Latin America and the Caribbean	5,793
North America	52,653
Oceania	10,279
Rest of Africa	1,250,240
Rest of Asia	3,671,558

Source: UNHCR, 2019b.

Note: This figure does not include the approximately 5.4 million Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

Figure 20. Top ten countries of destination for refugees from the Arab region, mid-2018



Source: UNHCR, 2019b.

Note: This figure does not include the approximately 5.4 million Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

Table 1. Refugees from the Arab region registered with UNHCR, 2013-2018

Country	Mid-2013	Mid-2014	Mid-2015	Mid-2016	Mid-2017	Mid-2018
Algeria	3,752	3,691	3,541	3,622	3,895	4,236
Bahrain	249	285	373	424	482	529
Comoros	473	528	562	571	584	606
Djibouti	641	809	921	1,113	1,594	2,034
Egypt	9,456	13,050	16,105	18,672	21,088	23,488
Iraq	409,181	426,114	377,747	279,955	349,281	372,304
Jordan	1,588	1,633	1,767	1,903	2,039	2,319
Kuwait	935	990	978	932	1,051	1,122
Lebanon	3,652	4,238	4,329	4,487	5,184	5,598
Libya	3,089	3,353	4,317	6,999	10,059	12,724
Mauritania	34,284	34,340	34,121	36,492	36,390	36,679
Morocco	1,093	1,345	1,559	2,033	2,656	3,607
Oman	24	26	31	41	37	38
State of Palestine	96,801	96,658	97,241	98,767	98,909	101,125
Qatar	15	17	21	21	33	35
Saudi Arabia	439	600	629	752	1,102	1,394
Somalia	1,130,939	1,080,788	1,105,618	1,097,757	989,561	954,701
Sudan	632,014	670,332	640,919	638,986	680,099	719,222
Syrian Arab Republic	1,888,823	3,029,465	4,194,554	5,303,613	5,980,270	6,490,950
Tunisia	1,250	1,368	1,484	1,625	1,781	1,931
United Arab Emirates	74	88	93	106	137	161
Yemen	2,228	2,514	5,832	15,657	21,735	26,793
Total Arab region	4,221,000	5,372,232	6,492,742	7,514,528	8,207,967	8,761,596

Source: UNHCR, 2019a.

Note: The table does not include the approximately 5.4 million Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

Refugees were predominantly from the Syrian Arab Republic, which was the country of origin of 6.5 million refugees, constituting 74 per cent of the Arab region's refugee population and 32 per cent of the global refugee population (table 1, figure 18). The number of Syrian refugees increased by close to 1.2 million between 2016 and 2018. Somalia was the second largest country of origin of refugees in the region, with close to 1 million refugees, and the Sudan was the third largest country of origin with almost 720,000 refugees. In 2018, there were 5.4 million Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA, and over 100,000 refugees from the State of

Palestine registered with UNHCR. There were also over 610,000 asylum seekers from the region in 2018, predominantly from Iraq (260,000) and the Syrian Arab Republic (144,000).

Of the total 8.7 million refugees from the Arab region accounted for by UNHCR in 2018, 29 per cent stayed in the region, while 42 per cent travelled to other Asian countries (figure 19). Non-Arab African countries were the third largest region of destination, receiving 14 per cent of refugees from the Arab region, the same proportion as Europe.

The number of refugees from the Arab region increased between 2016 and 2018 by 17 per cent, counting over 1.2 million new refugees, most of whom were from the Syrian Arab Republic.

In 2018, Turkey was the top country of destination for refugees from the Arab region, counting over 3.6 million. Lebanon and Jordan were the second and third destination countries for Arab refugees, with close to 1 million and over 700,000, respectively (figure 20). Germany is the only European country in the top 10, with over 680,000 Arab refugees.

2. Migration and education

Education is an important driver of migration for young people. In 2017, UNESCO reported over 480,000 tertiary students from Arab countries studying abroad.¹² The top countries of origin of internationally mobile students were Saudi Arabia (89,282), Morocco (48,453) and the Syrian Arab Republic (44,791) (figure 21).

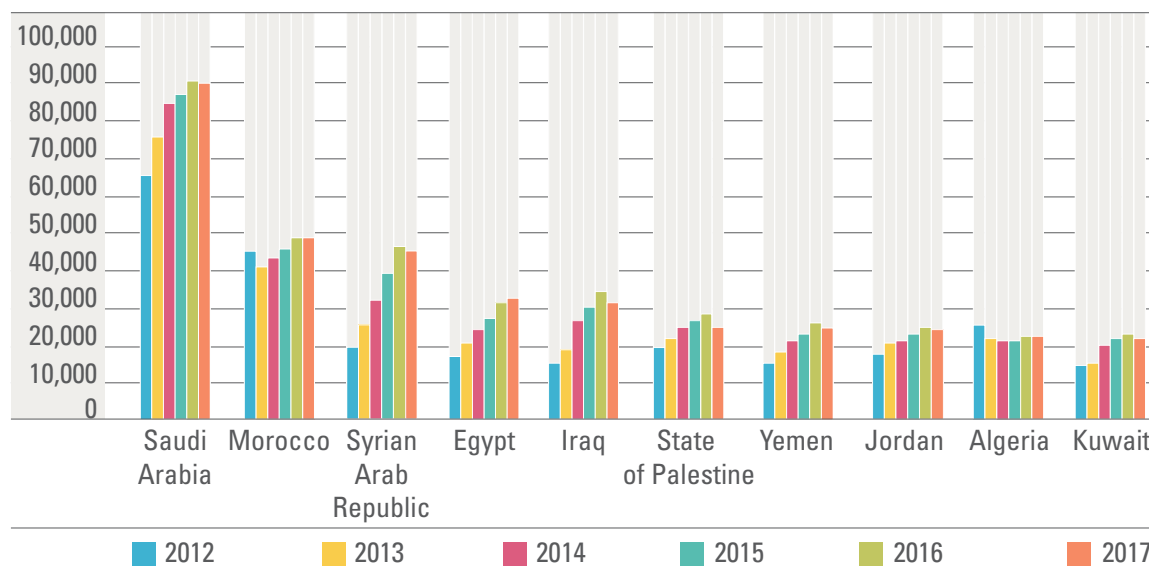
The main destination countries of Arab tertiary students in 2016 were the United States (91,393), France (67,803) and the

United Arab Emirates (44,429) (figure 22). Saudi Arabia received close to 40,000 Arab students, and Jordan close to 35,000.

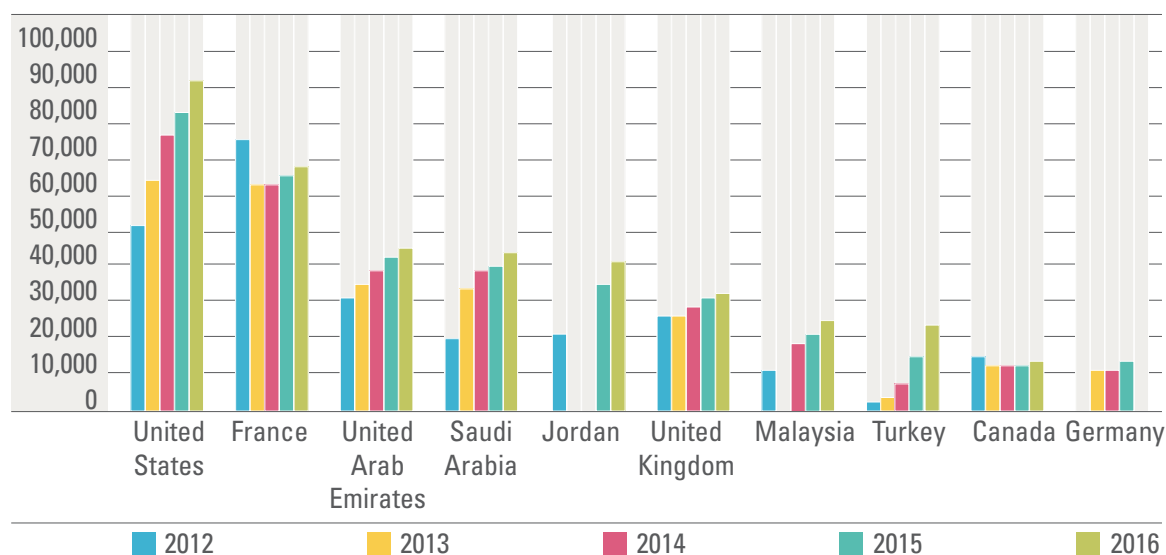
Regarding the education levels of migrants from the Arab region, available data from the 2010/2011 census of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) show that of a total 7.2 million migrants from the Arab region living in OECD countries,¹³ 45 per cent had basic education, 28 per cent had secondary education, and 24 per cent had tertiary education (figure 23). The data disaggregated by sex shows that men had higher rates of completion of secondary and tertiary education than women.

Education levels also vary according to countries of destination. A comparison between the top five OECD destination countries for migrants from the Arab region shows that Canada and the United States had much higher shares of migrants with tertiary education – 58 per cent and 41 per cent, respectively – than France, Spain and Italy, which had shares of 21 per cent, 11 per cent and 10 per cent of migrants with tertiary education, respectively (figure 24).

Figure 21. Number of tertiary students abroad from the top 10 Arab countries of origin, 2012-2017



Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, n.d.

Figure 22. Number of Arab tertiary students abroad by top 10 countries of destination, 2012-2016

Source: UNESCO, n.d.

Note: No information is available for Jordan in 2013 and 2014, for Malaysia in 2013, and for Germany in 2012 and 2016.

Box 3. Education levels of migrant workers in GCC countries

Migrants' level of education is an important determinant of their access to the labour market, and of their wage levels and career prospects, which in turn can influence their access to basic services, protection mechanisms and skills training, and can determine the amount of remittances sent to countries of origin.

The GCC subregion receives most of the migrants in the Arab region, a total of 28.1 million of whom the majority are temporary migrant workers. These countries with a higher labour demand than supply fill the gap with migrant workers, predominantly from Asia.

Most migrants in GCC countries, 57 per cent, have completed primary education (figure A), which includes those with lower-secondary attainment as their highest qualification. Oman has the highest proportion of primary-educated migrants at 72 per cent, and the United Arab Emirates has the lowest share at 44 per cent.

As for migrants with secondary education, which includes secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education, the subregional average stands at 25 per cent, ranging from 12 per cent in Kuwait to 33 per cent in the United Arab Emirates.

The share of migrants with tertiary education in the GCC subregion is 13 per cent. Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have the highest proportion of migrants with tertiary education at around 16 per cent of the migrant population, while Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman have lower proportions of 5-8 per cent.

The proportional distribution of education levels is fairly similar for male and female migrants, with a slightly higher proportion of female migrants with tertiary education than male migrants (figure B). This pattern holds true for all GCC countries, but in Qatar the gender gap is more pronounced: 30 per cent of female migrants have completed tertiary education compared with 13 per cent for male migrants. While the same pattern holds true for other GCC countries, the disparity is less pronounced with a difference of 1-3 percentage points.



Figure A. Migrants' education level in GCC countries

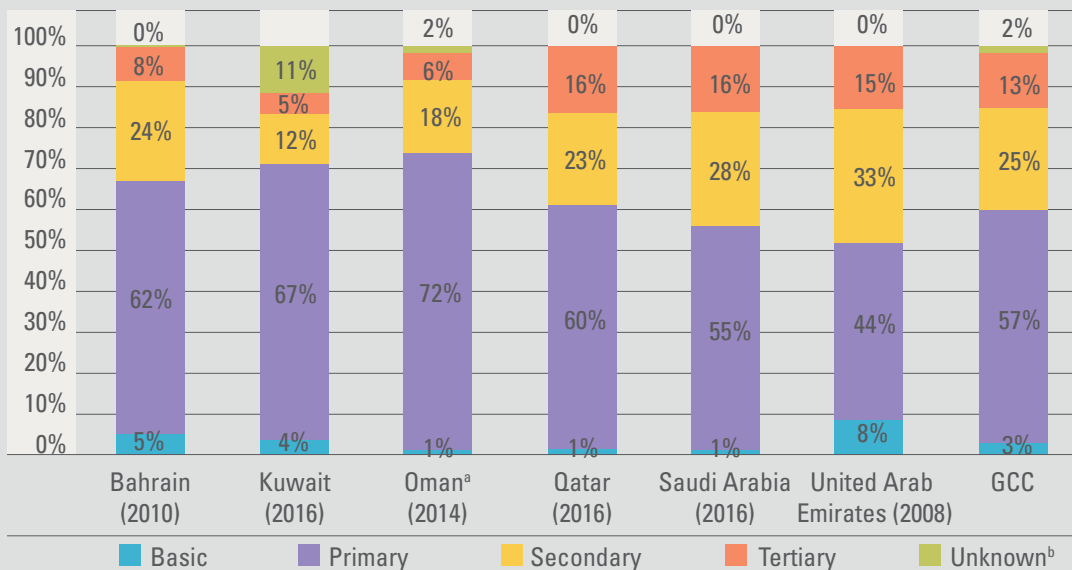
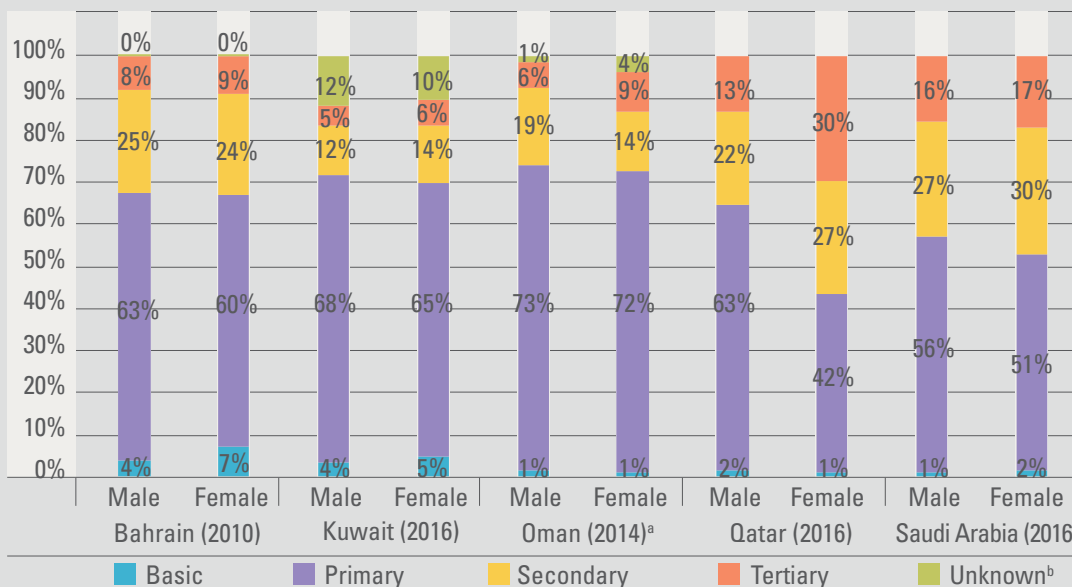


Figure B. Level of education of migrants in GCC countries, by sex



Sources: Gulf Labour Markets and Migration, 2018.

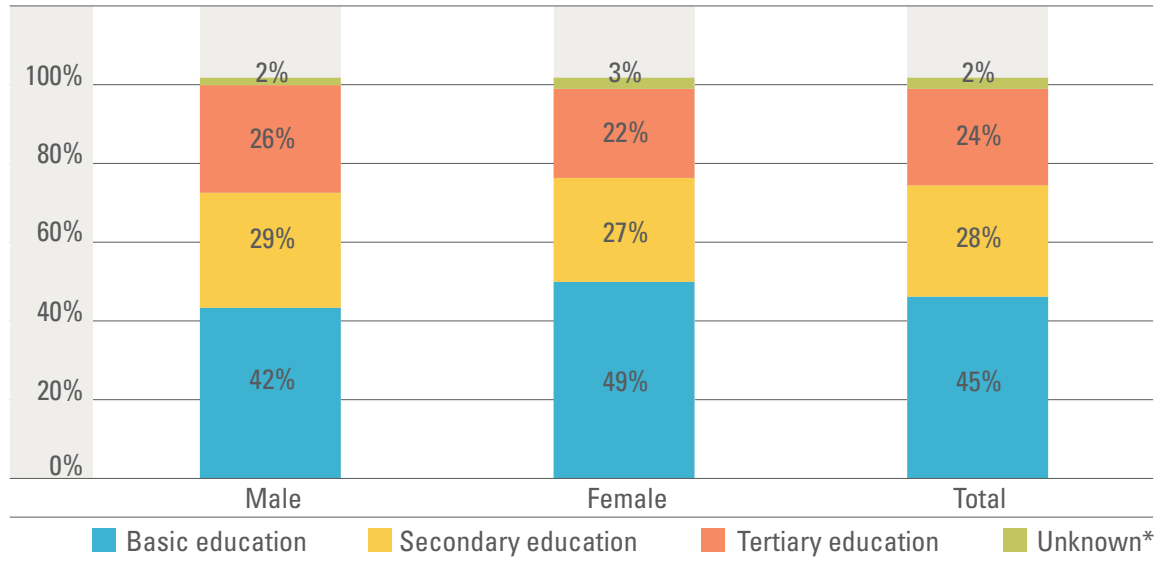
Note: In this figure, basic education corresponds to ISCE level 0, primary education corresponds to ISCE levels 1 and 2, secondary education corresponds to ISCE levels 3 and 4, and tertiary education corresponds to ISCE levels 6 and above.

^a Data for Oman corresponds to employed migrants.

^b The share of persons that are 15 or older with unknown completed education level is on average 2 per cent in the OECD, but varies across countries. Most OECD countries do not collect completed education information for those aged under 15.

Source: Gulf Labour Markets and Migration, 2018.

Figure 23. Education level of migrants from the Arab region in OECD countries, by sex, 2010-2011

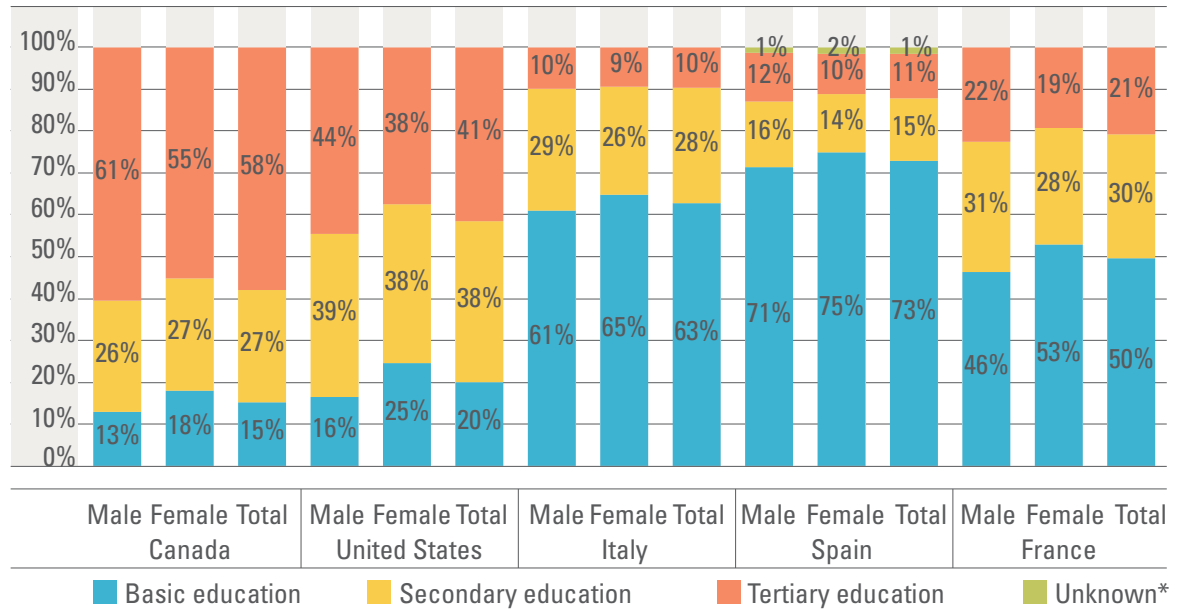


Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, n.d.

Note: For this figure, basic education corresponds to completed International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) levels 0/1/2; secondary education corresponds to completed ISCED 3/4; and tertiary education corresponds to completed ISCED 5/6.

* The share of persons that are 15 or older with unknown completed education level is on average 2 per cent in the OECD, but varies across countries. Most OECD countries do not collect completed education information for those aged under 15.

Figure 24. Education level of migrants from the Arab region in top five OECD destination countries by sex, 2010-2011



Source: OECD, n.d.

Note: For this figure, basic education corresponds to completed International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) levels 0, 1 and 2; secondary education corresponds to completed ISCED 3 and 4; and tertiary education corresponds to completed ISCED 5 and above.

* The share of persons that are 15 or older with unknown completed education level is on average 2 per cent in the OECD, but varies across countries. Most OECD countries do not collect completed education information for those aged under 15.

Table 2. Percentage of population aged 25 years and above with tertiary education living in country of origin or living in an OECD country, ca 2010

Country	Origin	OECD
Algeria	8.0%	16.8%
Bahrain	15.2%	48.5%
Jordan	12.0%	45.1%
Kuwait	8.5%	60.4%
Lebanon	15.4%	34.1%
State of Palestine	21.2%	46.3%
Qatar	20.3%	15.5%
Saudi Arabia	16.0%	60.5%
Syrian Arab Republic	5.8%	37.1%
Tunisia	12.4%	13.8%
United Arab Emirates	18.0%	42.6%

Source: Fargues, 2017b, p. 33.

Furthermore, there was a small gender gap in favour of men in the share of migrants with tertiary education. The gap was of 6 percentage points for Canada and the United States, but was less pronounced, with a difference of just 1-2 percentage points, in the rest of the top five countries.

OECD data on the education level of migrants from Arab countries shows that the proportion of nationals with tertiary education living in countries of origin is much lower than the proportion of migrant nationals with tertiary education living in OECD countries (table 2). This means that migrants with tertiary education have higher migration rates to OECD countries than those with lower levels of education.

Qatar is the only country with available data that has a higher proportion of tertiary-educated persons among its non-migrant national population than among its nationals living abroad. For Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, the State of Palestine, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, the share of persons with tertiary education among their

nationals living abroad is more than twice that of their non-migrant population, and for Kuwait it is seven times more.

C. Migration and displacement by subregion

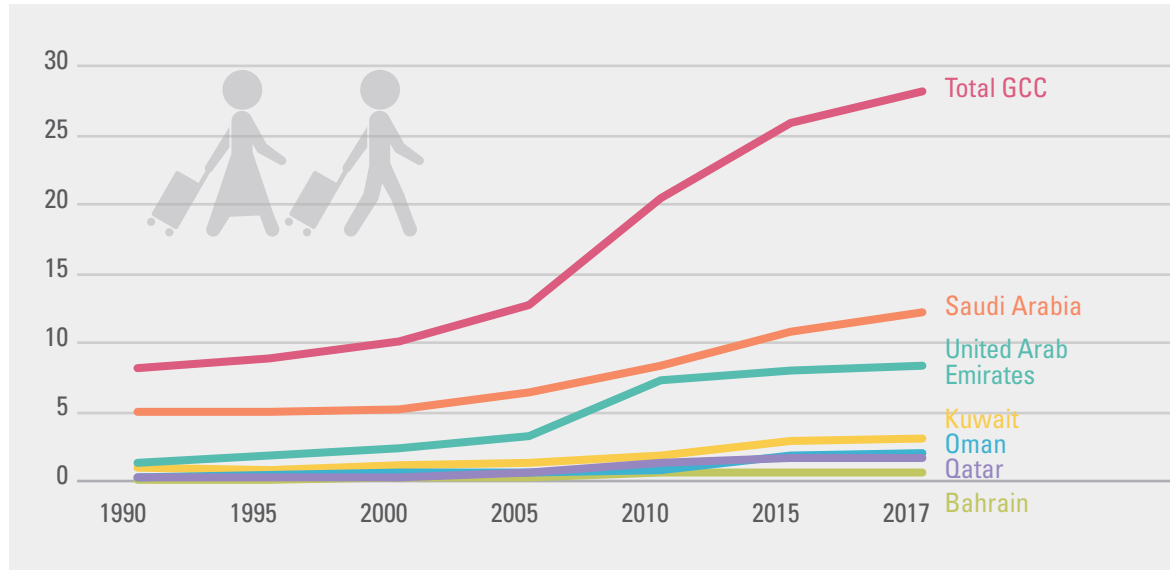
1. Gulf Cooperation Council countries

(a) Migration and displacement to GCC countries

GCC countries were the destination of 74 per cent of the total migrant and refugee population in the Arab region, 28.1 million in 2017. The subregion has witnessed significant growth since 1990, when its migrant and refugee population stood at 8.2 million (figure 25). Since 2015, the migrant population has increased by 8.8 per cent, with 2.3 more million migrants in 2017 than in 2015. Saudi Arabia received the largest number of migrants in the region and in the subregion, with over 12.1 million migrants living in the country in 2017, an increase of 1.4 million migrants or 13 per cent compared with 2015. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia had the second largest number of migrants globally, surpassed only by the United States. The United Arab Emirates was the second-highest destination country in both the region and the subregion, with over 8.3 million migrants, which constitutes an increase of close to 320,000 or 4 per cent compared with 2015. It was also the country with the sixth largest number of migrants globally. The remaining GCC countries had between 700,000 and over 3 million migrants each in 2017.

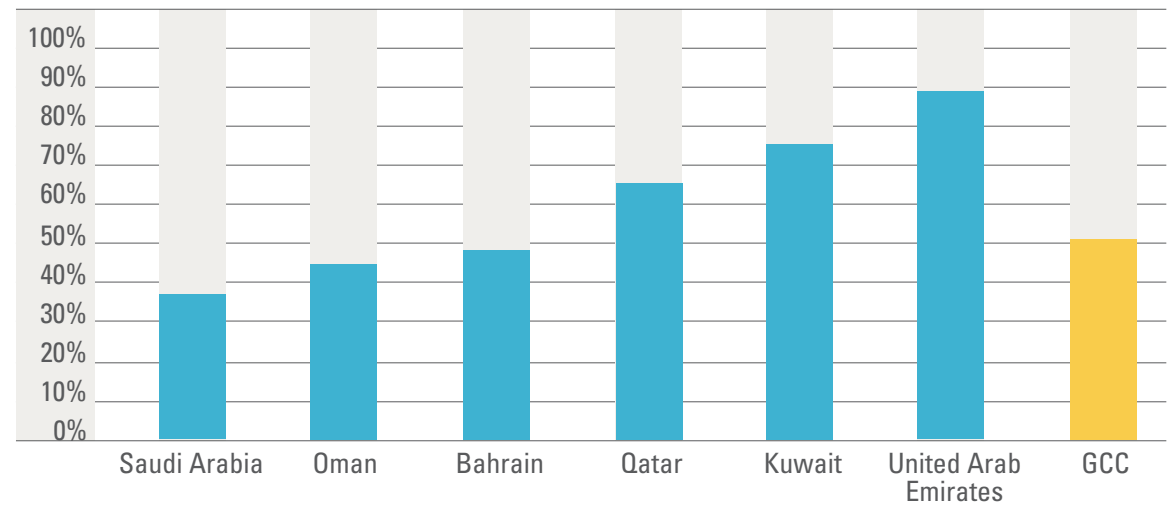
UNHCR reports that the GCC subregion was the destination for 2,501 refugees in 2018, predominantly in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, of which almost three-quarters were from Iraq. There were also 2,684 asylum seekers in the subregion. In addition to those registered with UNHCR as asylum seekers or refugees, large populations from key refugee-producing

Figure 25. Number of migrants and refugees in GCC countries (millions), 1990-2017



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 26. Migrants and refugees in GCC countries as a percentage of the total population, 2017



Source: DESA, 2017.

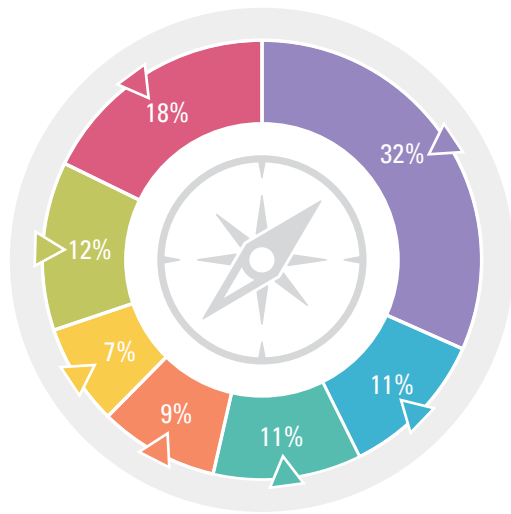
countries such as the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen were present in the GCC as migrant workers. UNHCR also reported 163,200 stateless persons in the subregion.

GCC countries have the highest proportion of migrants and refugees as a percentage of the total population. The regional average in 2017 was 50.9 per cent, ranging from a low of 37 per cent in Saudi Arabia to a high of 88.4 per cent

in the United Arab Emirates (figure 26). The United Arab Emirates and Kuwait ranked first and second worldwide, respectively, with the largest proportion of migrants in their population.

The main country of origin of migrants to the GCC subregion is India, with 8.9 million migrants in 2017 – 32 per cent of all migrants in the subregion – increasing from over 8.2 million in 2015 (figure 27). Bangladesh and Pakistan were the countries

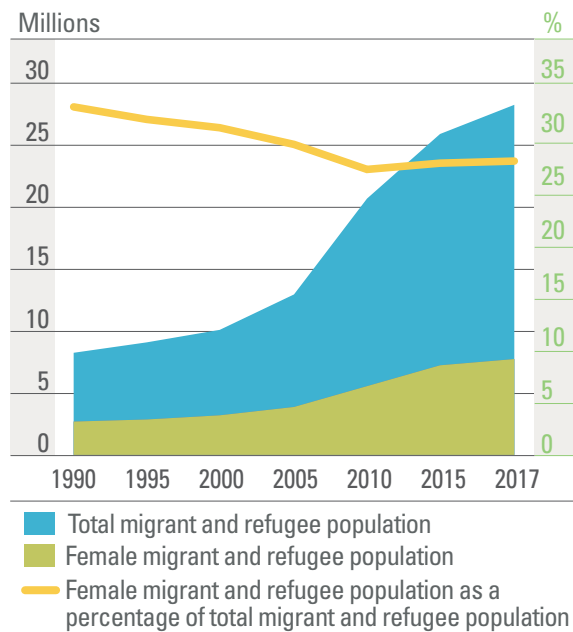
Figure 27. Top five countries of origin of migrants and refugees in GCC countries, 2017



Bangladesh	3,103,607
Egypt	2,479,365
India	8,904,781
Indonesia	2,092,809
Pakistan	3,065,435
Rest of the Arab region	3,494,571
Rest of the world	4,998,004

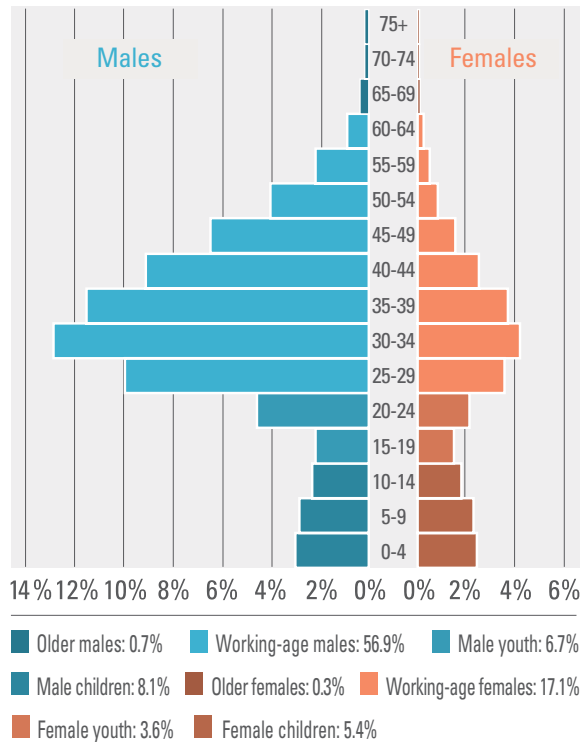
Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 28. Number and proportion of female migrants and refugees among the total migrant and refugee population in GCC countries, 1990-2017



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 29. Distribution of migrants and refugees in GCC countries by age, age group and sex, 2017

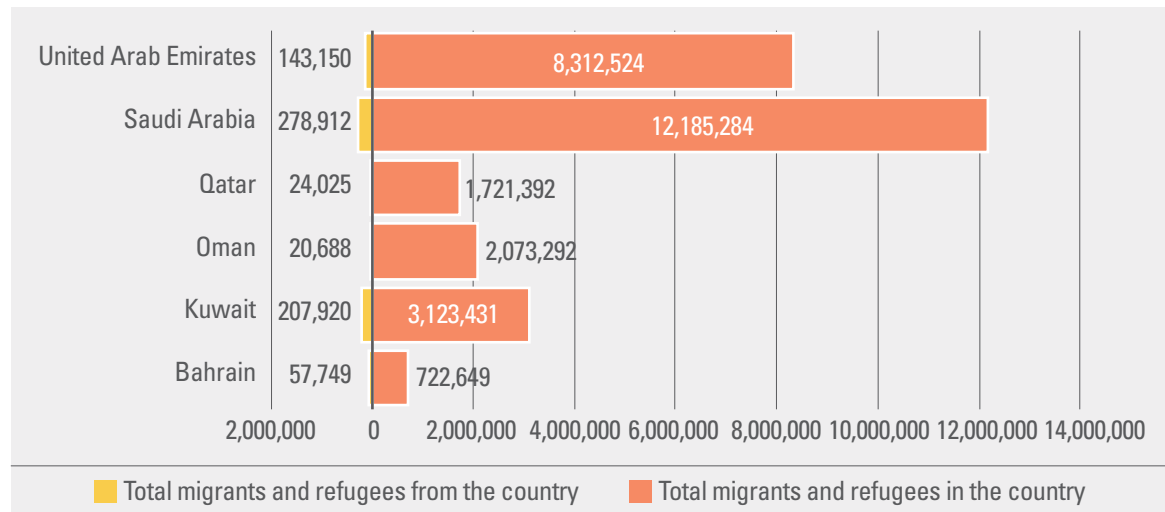


Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

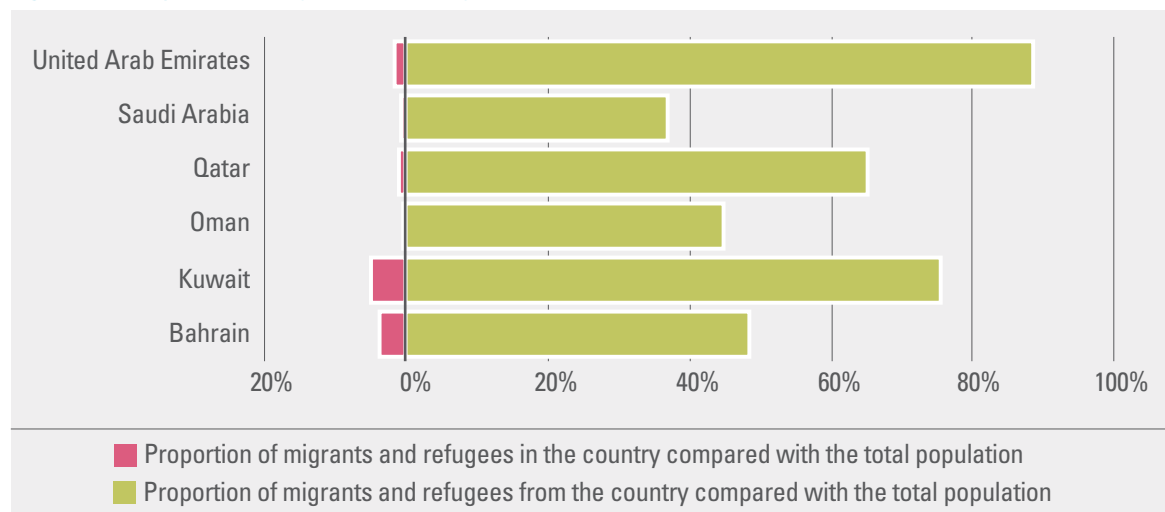
of origin of around 3.1 million migrants each, and Egypt was the main Arab country of origin, with over 2 million migrants living in the subregion. The proportional distribution among the top countries of origin has remained stable since 2015. In total, 21.2 per cent of migrants in the GCC subregion came from Arab countries, constituting almost 6 million persons.

There were over 7.7 million migrant women in GCC countries in 2017, constituting 27.6 per cent of all migrants in the region (figure 28). Their number has increased by 9 per cent – 665,000 women – since 2015, and their proportion has remained stable since 2015. In 2017, there were over 3.8 million female migrants in Saudi Arabia, 2.1 million in the United Arab Emirates, and 1 million in Kuwait.

In 2017, a total of 56.9 per cent of migrants were working age males, while working age females represented 17.1 per cent of

Figure 30. Number of migrants and refugees from and in GCC countries, 2017

Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 31. Proportion of migrants and refugees from and in GCC countries, 2017

Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

the migrant population. In total, working-age migrants represented 74 per cent of the migrant population, while children represented 14.7 per cent, young people constituted 10.3 per cent, and older persons comprised 1 per cent (figure 29).

The GCC subregion has a high number of migrants, both in net numbers and as a

proportion of the total population (figures 30 and 31), owing to the high influx of migrant workers. The number of migrants going to all GCC countries is also much larger than the number of migrants originating from GCC countries, owing to a smaller number of GCC nationals and their low migration rates. The next section will describe the migration patterns from GCC countries.

(b) Migration and displacement from GCC countries

In 2017, a total of 732,444 migrants and refugees originated from GCC countries, a rise of approximately 30,000, or 4 per cent, from 2015 (figure 32). The number of migrants from the subregion has more than doubled since 1990 and has progressively grown since then, albeit at a slower pace since 2015.

The subregion was the origin of 3,279 refugees as at mid-2018, predominantly from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, which were the origin of 1,122 and 1,394 refugees, respectively. Bahrain was the origin of 529 refugees, and Oman and Qatar had less than 40 each. Their most common destinations were Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States. UNHCR also registered 2,840 asylum seekers from the subregion.

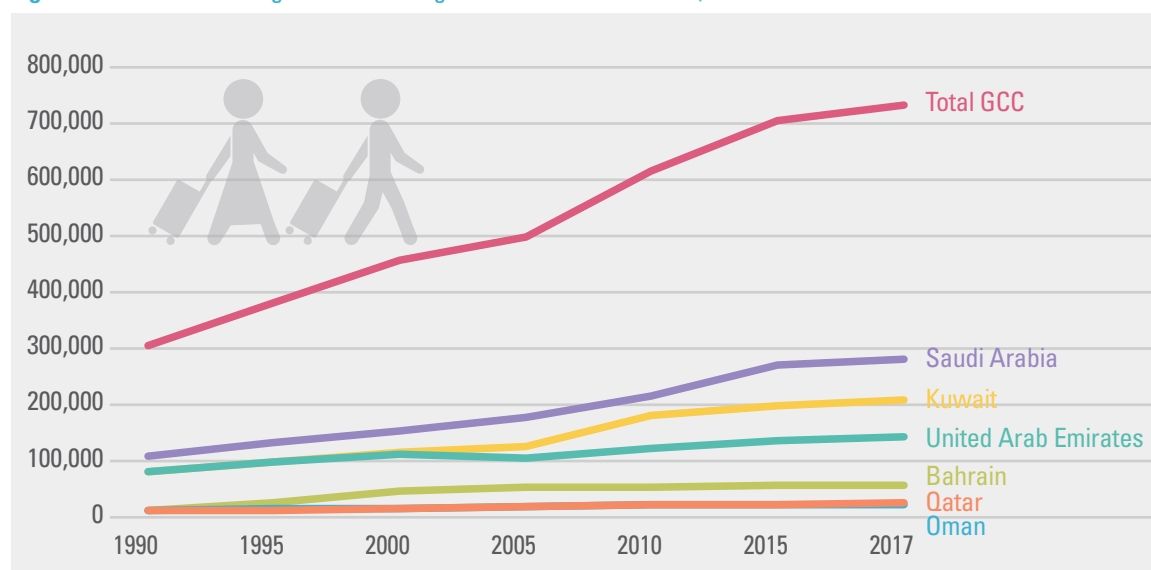
Migrants from GCC countries represented 1.3 per cent of the total population from the subregion in 2017 (figure 33), a percentage that has remained virtually the same since 1990. The proportion of migrants from GCC countries

ranged from 5 per cent in Kuwait to 0.4 per cent in Oman.

In 2017, around 43.1 per cent of migrants from GCC countries stayed in the Arab region, mainly going to the State of Palestine (77,234), the United Arab Emirates (75,128) and Libya (54,310), which are among the top 5 countries of destination (figures 34 and 35). In North America,¹⁴ Canada (53,199) and the United States of America (128,008) were the destination of 25 per cent of migrants and refugees from the subregion. Europe was the third largest region of destination, with the United Kingdom the main European destination and the fourth country of destination overall, receiving 63,356 GCC migrants.

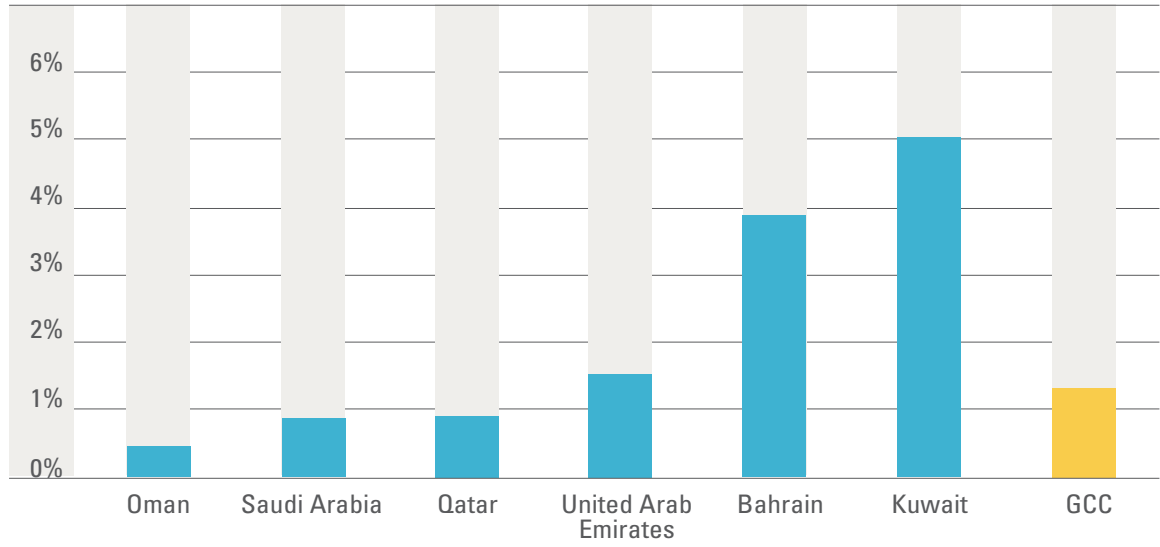
In 2017, a total of 319,471 women migrated from their GCC countries of origin, representing 43.6 per cent of all migrants from the subregion. Their proportion ranged from a high of 49 per cent in Qatar and a low of 38.5 per cent in Kuwait (figure 36). Between 2015 and 2017, the number of female migrants rose for all GCC countries, ranging from an increase of 1.7 per cent in Oman to 5.1 per cent in Kuwait.

Figure 32. Number of migrants and refugees from GCC countries, 1990-2017



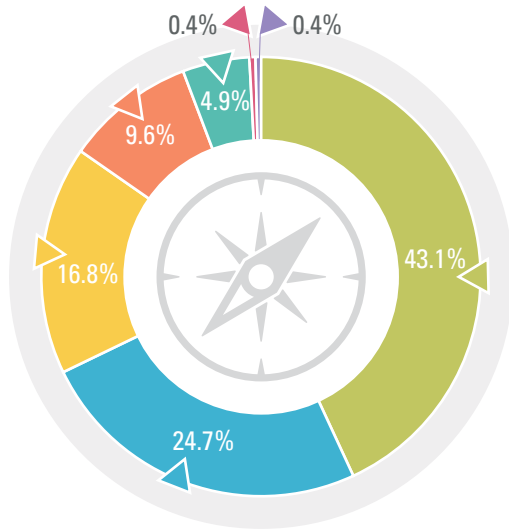
Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 33. Migrants and refugees from GCC countries as a percentage of the total population, 2017



Source: DESA, 2017.

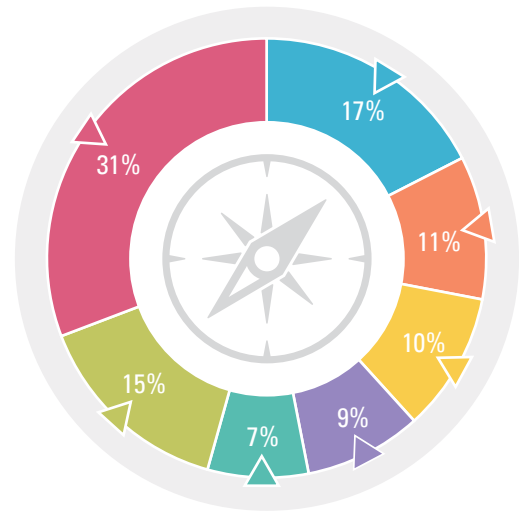
Figure 34. Regions of destination for migrants and refugees from GCC countries, 2017



Arab region	315,633
Europe	123,392
Latin America and the Caribbean	3,251
North America	181,207
Oceania	36,063
Non-Arab African countries	2,929
Non-Arab Asian countries	69,969

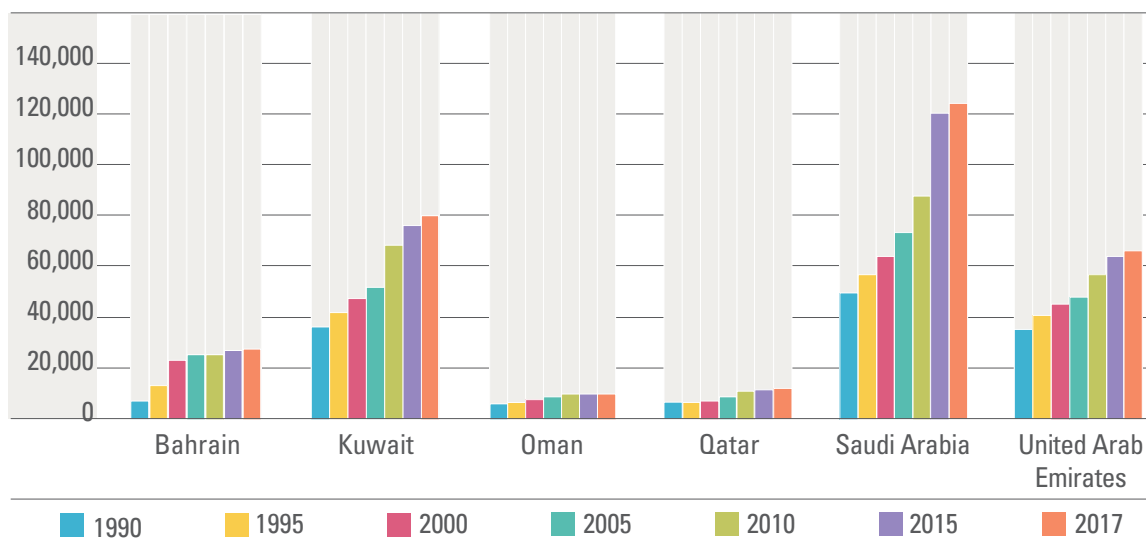
Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 35. Top five countries of destination for migrants and refugees from GCC countries, 2017

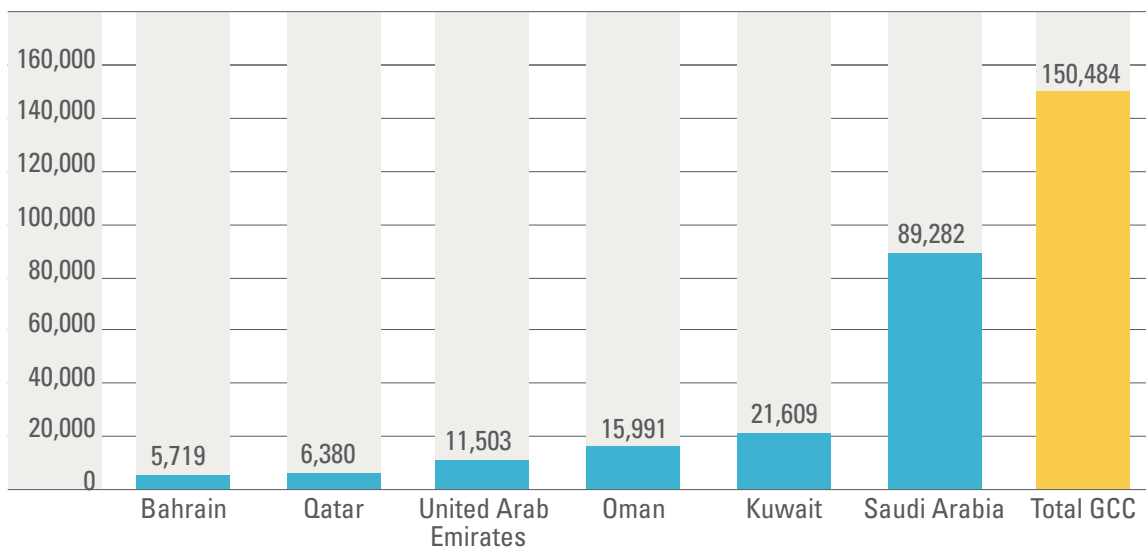


Libya	54,310
State of Palestine	77,234
United Arab Emirates	75,128
United Kingdom	63,356
United States	128,008
Rest of the Arab region	108,961
Rest of the world	225,447

Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 36. Number of female migrants and refugees from GCC countries, 1990-2017

Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 37. Number of tertiary students abroad from GCC countries, 2017

Source: UNESCO, n.d.

Their proportion relative to men slightly decreased for Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, and remained the same for Kuwait, Oman and Saudi Arabia.

UNESCO registered over 150,000 tertiary students abroad from GCC countries in 2017, mostly from Saudi Arabia, which was the origin of almost 90,000 students (figure 37).

The United States was their main destination country, receiving half of all the students from the subregion, followed by the United Kingdom, which received 14 per cent.¹⁵ Other common countries of destination included Australia, Canada, Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates. Saudi Arabia was the fourth country of origin with the most international tertiary students in the United States in 2017.¹⁶

2. Maghreb countries

(a) Migration and displacement to the Maghreb

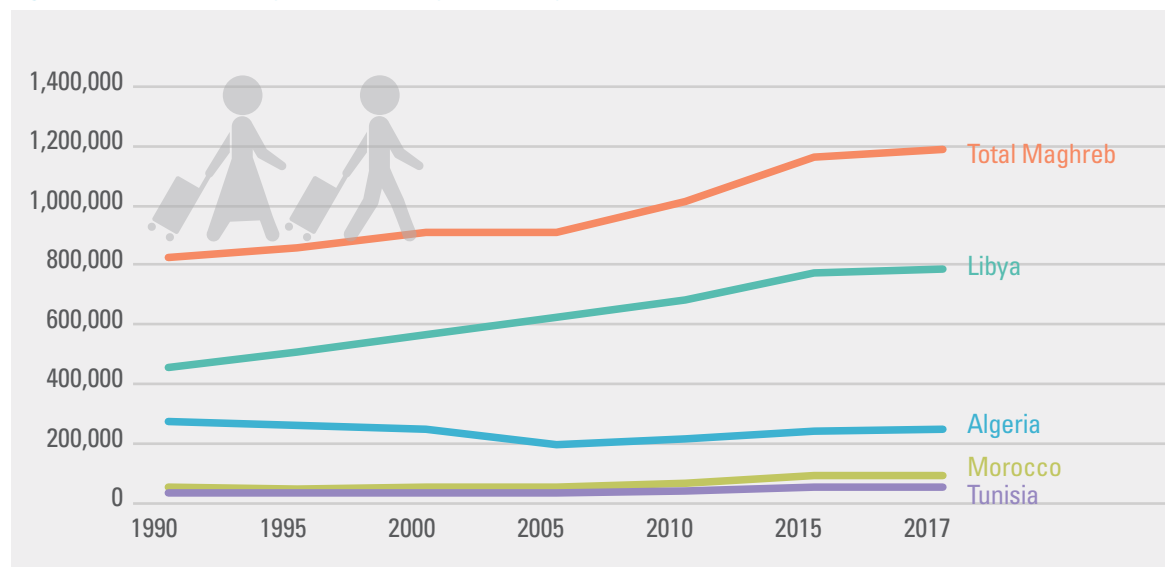
The total migrant and refugee population in the Maghreb stood at almost 1.2 million in 2017, a rise of 2.6 per cent since 2015, which represents close to 31,000 additional migrants and refugees (figure 38). Libya is the country with the largest migrant and refugee population in the subregion: it had 66 per cent (788,419) of migrants and refugees in the subregion in 2017, followed by Algeria at 21 per cent (248,624). While Libya has seen a steady increase in its migrant and refugee population since 1990, Algeria witnessed a decreasing migrant and refugee population from 1990 to 2005, after which the number of migrants and refugees slowly began increasing. Morocco and Tunisia were the destinations of 8 per cent and 5 per cent, respectively, of the migrant and refugee population in the subregion in 2017.

DESA data from 2017 show a total of 150,000 migrants and refugees from sub-Saharan Africa¹⁷ in Maghreb countries, representing

13 per cent of the migrant and refugee population in the subregion. The data show that 71 per cent came from Somalia. There were also 3,412 migrants and refugees from Senegal, 2,027 from Eritrea, 1,360 from Mali, 1,267 from Côte d'Ivoire, and 1,008 from Guinea. In contrast, the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix identified more than 270,000 sub-Saharan migrants in Libya alone in 2017. Over 78,000 came from Niger, 62,000 from Chad, and 31,000 from Ghana. The Matrix also reported approximately 24,000 migrants from Mali, 9,000 from Senegal, 8,000 from Côte d'Ivoire, 4,500 from Guinea, and 2,400 from Eritrea.¹⁸ The differences between the datasets may imply a significant presence of sub-Saharan migrants in the Maghreb who are short-term migrants, in transit, or migrants in an irregular situation who are not reflected in the DESA dataset.

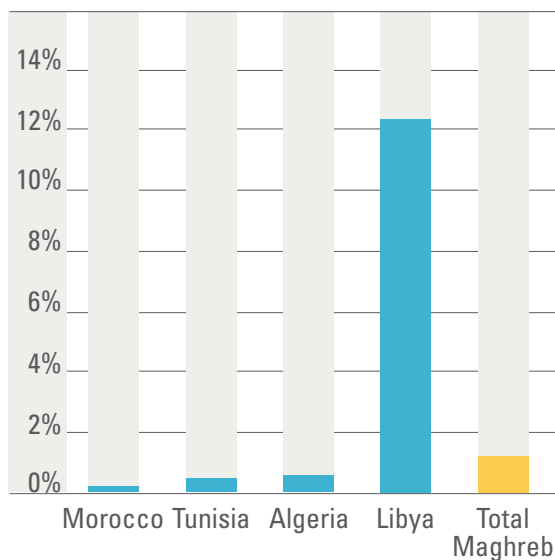
According to UNHCR, a total of 193,192 refugees were living in the Maghreb in mid-2018, mostly in Algeria, which was the destination of 92 per cent (177,881) of the subregion's refugees. In turn, Libya had 9,365 registered refugees, Morocco had 5,069, and Tunisia had 877. Most registered refugees

Figure 38. Number of migrants and refugees in Maghreb countries, 1990-2017



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 39. Migrants and refugees in Maghreb countries as a percentage of the total population, 2017



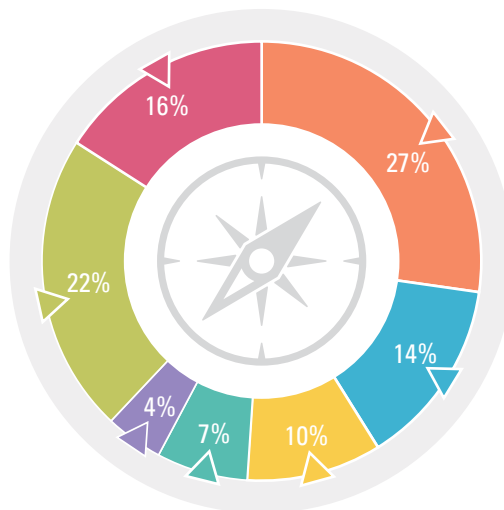
Source: DESA, 2017.

in the subregion come from the territory of Western Sahara¹⁹ and reside in Algeria. Furthermore, UNHCR reported 53,860 asylum seekers in Maghreb countries in 2018, around 81 per cent of them in Libya.

In 2017, migrants and refugees represented 12.4 per cent of the population in Libya (figure 39), a proportion that has slightly increased from 10.3 per cent in 1990. In the remaining Maghreb countries, migrants and refugees have continually made up around 1 per cent of the population or less. The subregional average has also been relatively stable, standing at 1.3 per cent in 2017.

While most migrants and refugees in the Maghreb come from the State of Palestine (324,584), Iraq (79,947) is also a predominant Arab country of origin (figure 40). Western Sahara is the second largest territory of origin, with 164,924 migrants and refugees in the subregion, followed by Somalia (118,379) and France (50,602). Arab countries were the origin of 66 per cent of migrants and refugees in the Maghreb in 2017.

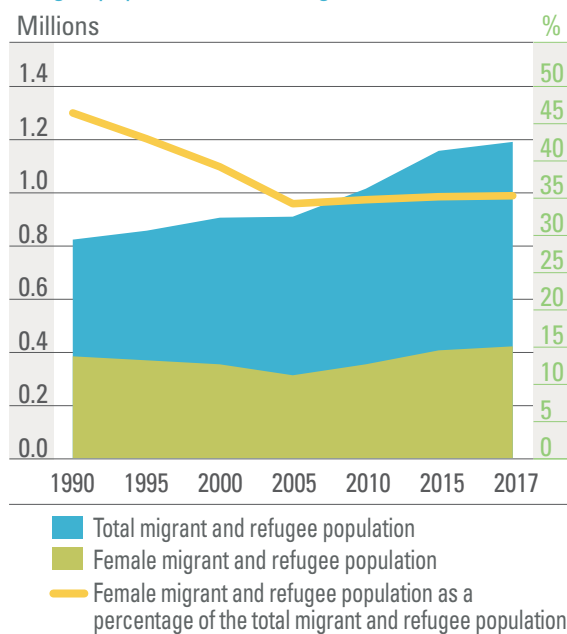
Figure 40. Top five countries or territories of origin of migrants and refugees in the Maghreb, 2017



France	50,602
Iraq	79,947
Somalia	118,379
State of Palestine	324,584
Western Sahara	164,924
Rest of the Arab region	262,292
Rest of the world	189,813

Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 41. Number and proportion of female migrants and refugees among the total migrant and refugee population in the Maghreb, 1990-2017

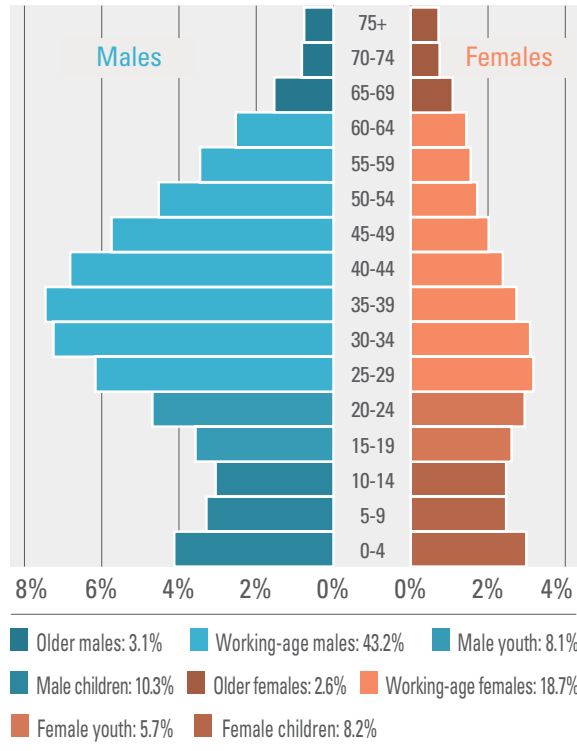


Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

The share of female migrants and refugees in the Maghreb has remained stable at around 35 per cent since 2005, after a dramatic decrease since 1990 when women

represented 46.5 per cent of the migrant population (figure 41). In 2017, there were 419,947 women migrants and refugees in the subregion, 2.8 per cent more than in 2015.

Figure 42. Distribution of migrants and refugees in the Maghreb by age, age group and sex, 2017

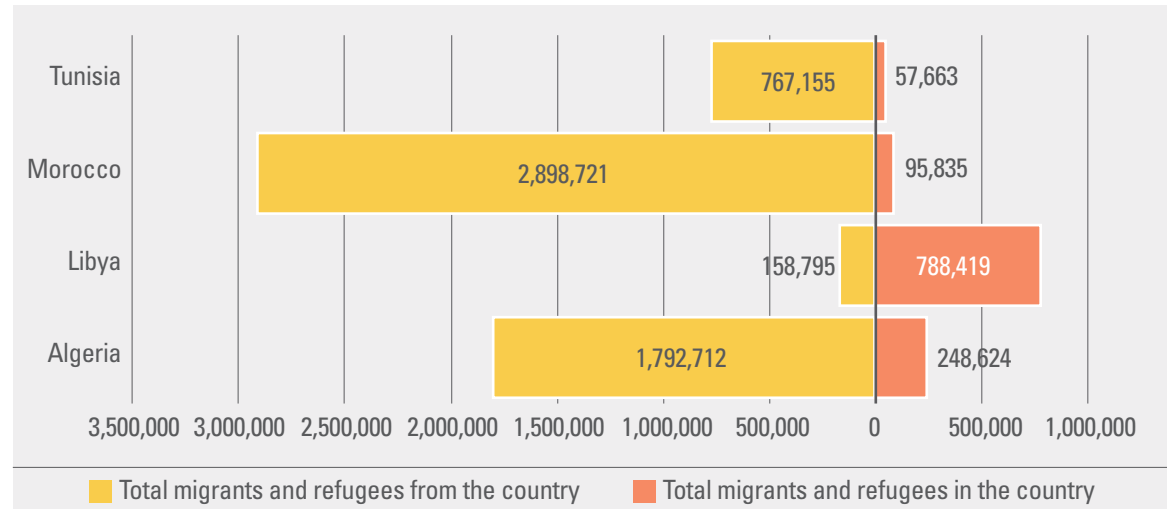


Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

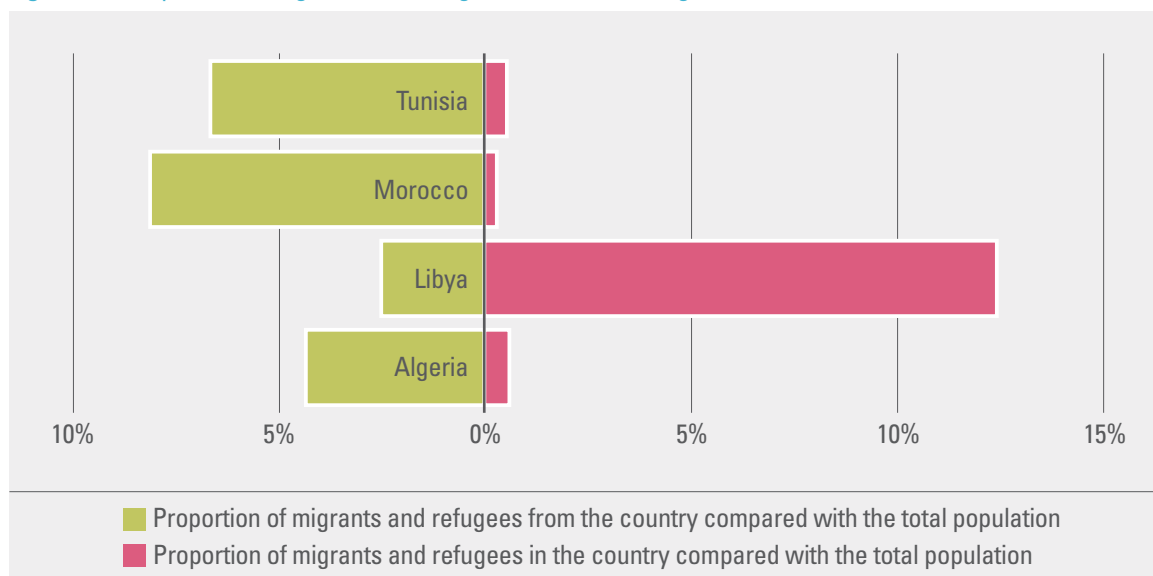
In 2017, children represented 18.5 per cent of the total migrant and refugee population in the subregion, while young people represented 13.9 per cent. The total working age population represented 61.9 per cent, with working-age men comprising 43.2 per cent of the total migrant and refugee population, and working-age women constituting 18.7 per cent. Older persons comprised 5.7 per cent of the total migrant and refugee population (figure 42).

The Maghreb subregion is characterized by migrants and refugees predominantly from other Arab countries and, to a lesser extent, from sub-Saharan Africa. The subregion also has significant patterns of transit migration towards Europe (box 4). In Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, there are significantly more nationals leaving the country than migrants and refugees entering the country, both in terms of absolute numbers and when compared with the total population, while Libya shows the opposite pattern (figures 43 and 44). The next section describes the characteristics of migration patterns from Maghreb countries.

Figure 43. Number of migrants and refugees from and in Maghreb countries, 2017



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 44. Proportion of migrants and refugees from and in Maghreb countries, 2017

Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Box 4. Mixed movements across the Mediterranean

Movement across the Mediterranean to Europe has three main routes: the Eastern Route from Turkey to Greece; the Central Route from North Africa, mainly Libya, towards Italy and Malta; and the Western Route departing mainly from Morocco to Spain. Migration across the Mediterranean has dramatically decreased since 2015, and has shifted from a predominance of the Eastern route in 2015 towards a preference for the Central route in 2016 and 2017, and to a more recent increase in the use of the Western route in 2018 (figure A).

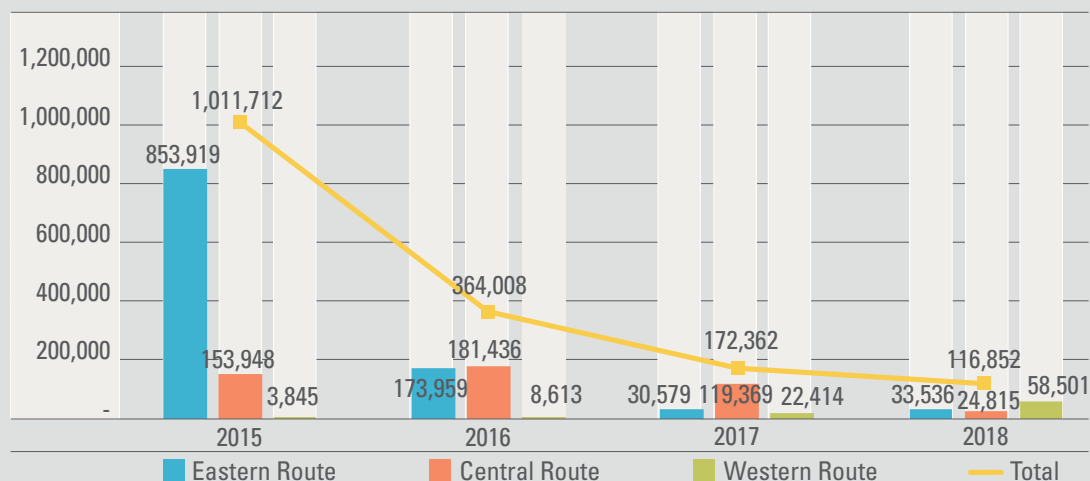
The number of migrants crossing the Mediterranean dropped from over a million persons at the height of the migration crossings in 2015 to almost a tenth of this figure in 2018. The number of migrants also decreased by almost a third between 2017 and 2018, from over 170,000 to around 117,000, respectively.

Between 2017 and 2018, the patterns of migratory flows shifted: while crossings through the Central route decreased by 80 per cent, crossings through the Eastern route increased by 10 per cent, and crossings through the Western route more than doubled, increasing by 158 per cent.^a

Almost 34,000 migrants and refugees were reported to have died or gone missing between 2000 and mid-2017 while crossing the Mediterranean. Even though the numbers of migrant and refugee crossings have significantly decreased, and the numbers of dead or missing migrants and refugees have dropped (table A), journeys have become more dangerous. Since the most common and shortest routes have been closed off, migrants and refugees are opting for longer and more dangerous journeys.^b In 2017 there was an estimated 1 death for every 77 arrivals through the Western route, but that ratio slightly increased to 1 in every 73 arrivals in 2018. In the Central Mediterranean, known as the deadliest route, the ratio increased significantly from an estimated 1 in 42 arrivals in 2017, to 1 death for every 18 arrivals in 2018. And through the Eastern route, the death to arrivals ratio went from 1 in 318 in 2017 to 1 in 165 in 2018.^c The risks of irregular and dangerous journeys also include violence, abuse, exploitation, human trafficking and slavery.



Figure A. Mixed movements through the Mediterranean, 2015-2018



Source: IOM, 2015, 2016, 2017a, 2018f.

Note: Figures for the Eastern Route comprise arrivals by sea to Cyprus and Greece; for the Central Route to Italy and Malta; and for the Western Route to Spain.

Table A. Total migrants and refugees reported dead or missing in the Mediterranean, 2015-2018

2015	2016	2017	2018
4,054	5,143	3,139	2,299

Source: IOM, 2019a.

Migrants and refugees crossing the Mediterranean in 2018 were predominantly from Arab countries (44 per cent) and from sub-Saharan Africa (42 per cent). The top five countries of origin in 2018 were Guinea, Morocco, Mali, the Syrian Arab Republic and Afghanistan (table B). Among migrants from Arab countries, the most common country of origin was Morocco, followed by the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq and Tunisia.^d

Of all migrants and refugees crossing the Mediterranean in 2018, 64 per cent were adult males, 14 per cent were adult females, and 21 per cent were children.^e

Table B. Top 10 countries of origin for Mediterranean land and sea arrivals, 2018

Country of origin	Percentage	Country of origin	Percentage
Guinea	12%	Algeria	6%
Morocco	11%	Côte d'Ivoire	5%
Mali	9%	Tunisia	5%
Syrian Arab Republic	9%	Gambia	4%
Afghanistan	7%	Others	25%
Iraq	7%		

Source: UNHCR, 2018c.

^a IOM, 2017a, 2018f

^b Fargues, 2017a.

^c UNHCR, 2018b.

^d UNHCR, 2018c.

^e Ibid.

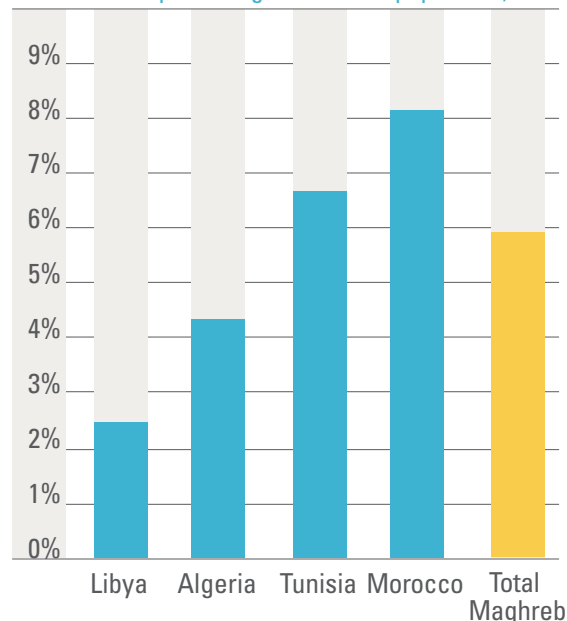
(b) Migration and displacement from the Maghreb

In 2017, around 19 per cent (over 5.6 million) of all migrants and refugees from the Arab region were from the Maghreb. Morocco was the top country of origin in the subregion, with almost 2.9 million migrants and refugees, followed by Algeria with almost 1.8 million (figure 45). Tunisia was the country of origin of over 750,000 migrants, and Libya of 155,000. Since 2015, migration from the subregion has remained relatively stable, increasing 1.3 per cent in the following two years.

Maghreb countries were the origin of 22,498 refugees as at mid-2018, with 57 per cent coming from Libya (12,724). The number of refugees increased by 58 per cent from mid-2016 to mid-2018, mostly owing to an upsurge of refugees from Libya. There were also 21,351 asylum seekers from the subregion.

Migrants and refugees from the Maghreb made up 5.9 per cent of the total subregional population in 2017, an increase from 4.8 per cent in 1990 (figure 46). Libya was the country with the lowest proportion of

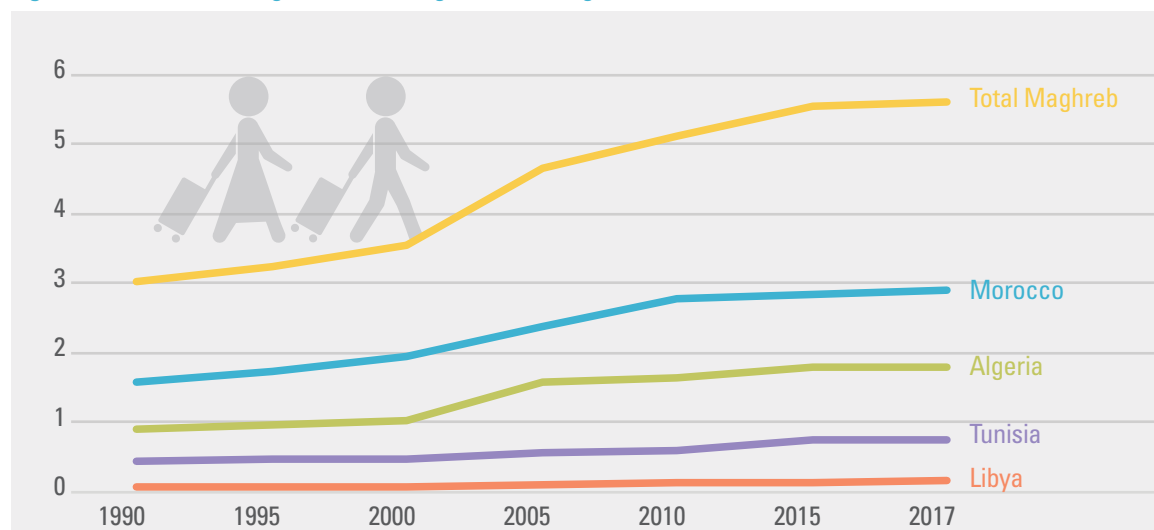
Figure 46. Migrants and refugees from Maghreb countries as a percentage of the total population, 2017



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

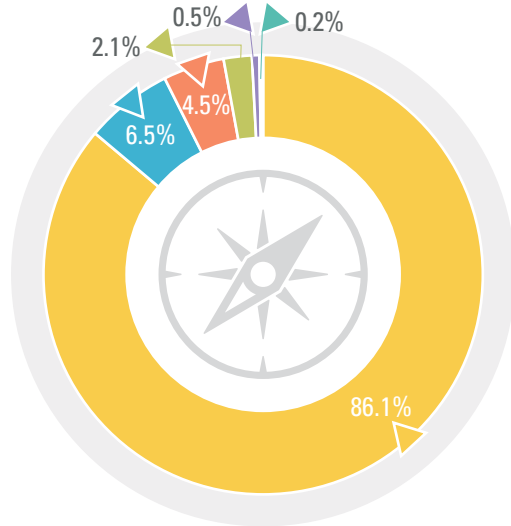
nationals living abroad relative to the total national population, at 1.7 per cent in 1990 and 2.5 per cent in 2017. Morocco, in contrast, was the country with the largest proportion of nationals living abroad, ranging from 6.4 per cent in 1990 to 8.1 per cent in 2017.

Figure 45. Number of migrants and refugees from Maghreb countries (millions), 1990-2017



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

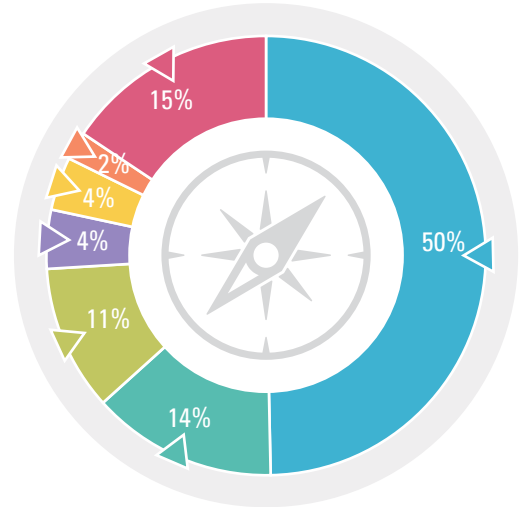
Figure 47. Regions of destination for migrants and refugees from the Maghreb, 2017



Arab region	116,626
Europe	4,838,542
Latin America and the Caribbean	4,327
North America	363,395
Oceania	11,025
Non-Arab African countries	30,430
Non-Arab Asian countries	253,038

Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

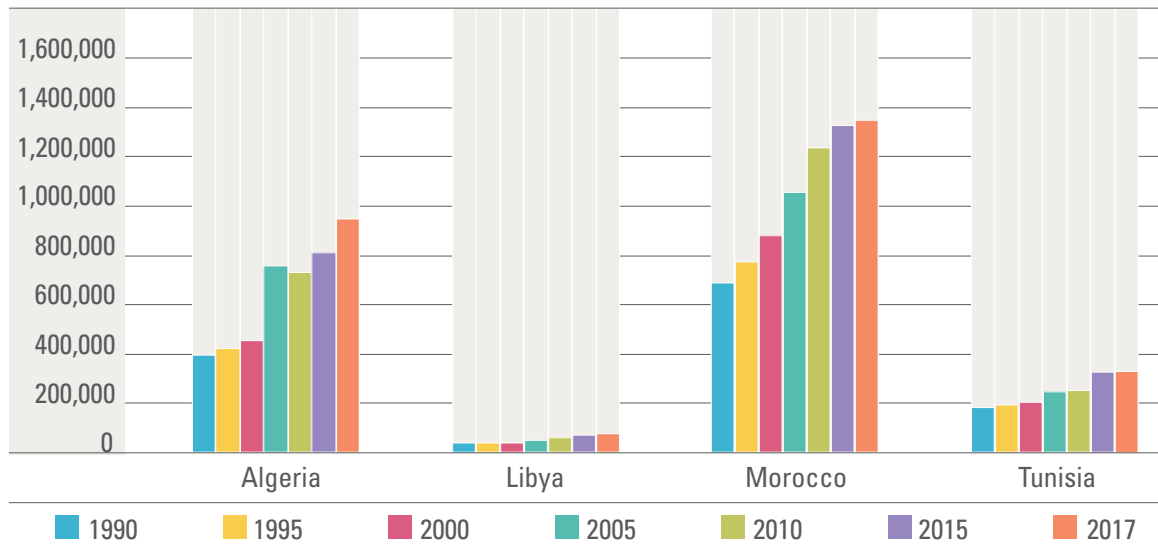
Figure 48. Top five countries of destination for migrants and refugees from the Maghreb, 2017



Arab countries	116,626
France	2,789,853
Italy	602,008
Israel	243,453
Spain	766,823
United States	220,330
Rest of the world	878,290

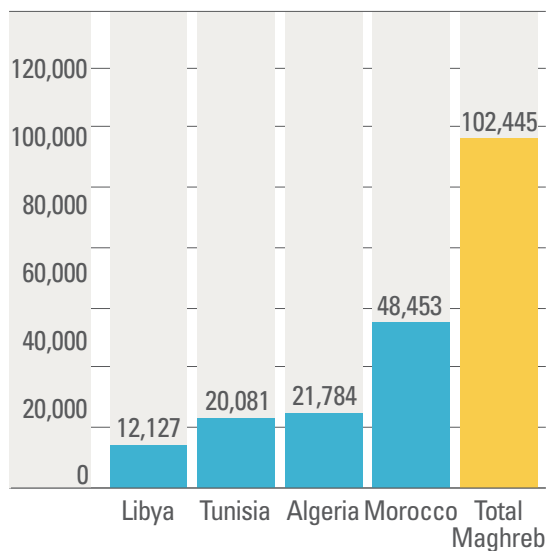
Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 49. Number of female migrants and refugees from Maghreb countries, 1990-2017



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 50. Number of tertiary students abroad from Maghreb countries, 2017



Source: UNESCO, n.d.

In 2017, Europe was the predominant region of destination, receiving 86.1 per cent of migrants and refugees from the Maghreb, mostly in France (2,789,853), Spain (766,823), and Italy (602,008) (figures 47 and 48). France alone was the destination for 50 per cent of migrants from the Maghreb.

Women made up 45.8 per cent of the migrant population from the Maghreb in 2017, with over 2.5 million women leaving their countries (figure 49). Morocco was the origin of the largest number of women migrants (1,350,929), followed by Algeria (816,509), Tunisia (330,806), and Libya (73,593).

In 2017, over 102,000 tertiary students left their home countries in the Maghreb, most of them from Morocco (figure 50). Algeria was the origin of over 21,700 students, Tunisia of over 20,000, and Libya of over 12,000. In 2016, France was their main country of destination, receiving over 54,000 students, 57 per cent of the total. Other top countries of destination, such as Canada, Germany, Malaysia and the United States, received around 4 per cent of Maghreb students each.²⁰

3. Mashreq countries

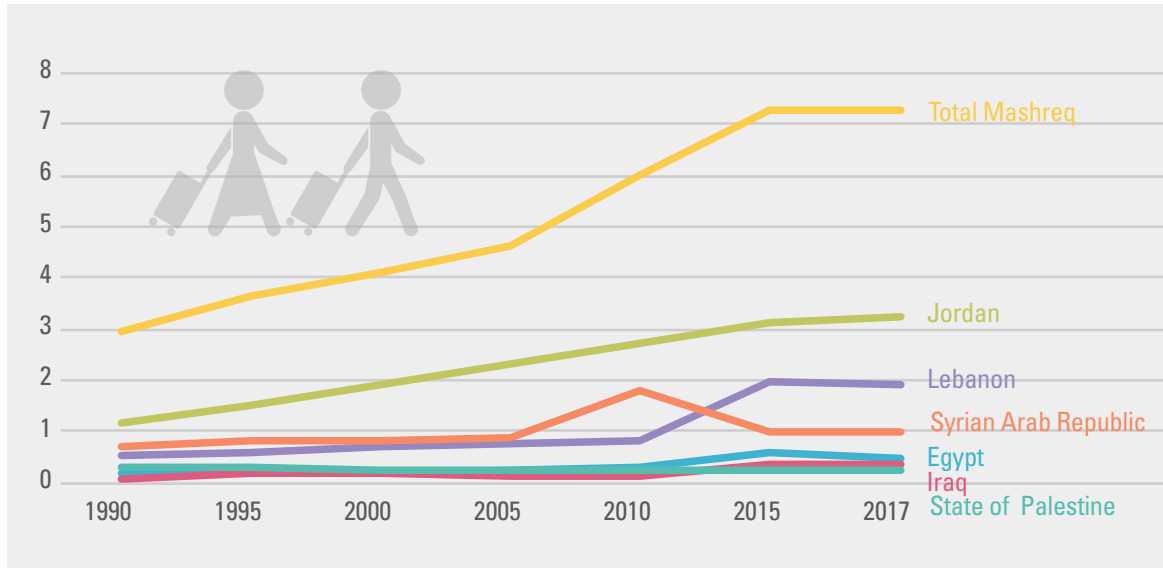
(a) Migration and displacement to the Mashreq

The Mashreq countries had almost 7.3 million migrants and refugees in 2017, around 19 per cent of the Arab region's migrant and refugee population (figure 51). After steady growth in the migrant and refugee population since 1990, which increased at a faster rate from 2005 to 2015, the size of the migrant and refugee population has since stabilized.

Jordan has had the largest number of migrants and refugees in the subregion since 1990, rising steadily from 1.1 million in 1990 to over 3.2 million in 2017. Starting in 2012, Lebanon became the country with the second largest migrant and refugee population in the subregion. Lebanon saw a steep rise in its migrant and refugee population from 2010 to 2015, mainly owing to the influx of Syrian refugees, but this population actually decreased by 1.7 per cent (34,000) from 2015 to 2017. In contrast, the migrant and refugee population in the Syrian Arab Republic, which has slowly increased since 1990, saw a sharp increase between 2005 and 2010 when it doubled in size, and then almost halved in size from 2010 to 2015. The number of migrants and refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic increased by almost 20,000, or 2 per cent, between 2015 and 2017. Migrant and refugee populations in the three remaining countries in the subregion, Egypt, Iraq and the State of Palestine, remained mostly stable between 1990 and 2010, saw an important increase between 2010 and 2015, and then stabilized again in the following two years.

As at mid-2018, 60 per cent of the refugees under the UNHCR mandate in the Arab region lived in the Mashreq. Of the 2.2 million UNHCR reported refugees in the subregion, over 974,000 were in Lebanon, and over 700,000 in Jordan. Iraq had 281,905 refugees, Egypt had 239,741, and the Syrian Arab Republic had

Figure 51. Number of migrants and refugees in Mashreq countries (millions), 1990-2017



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

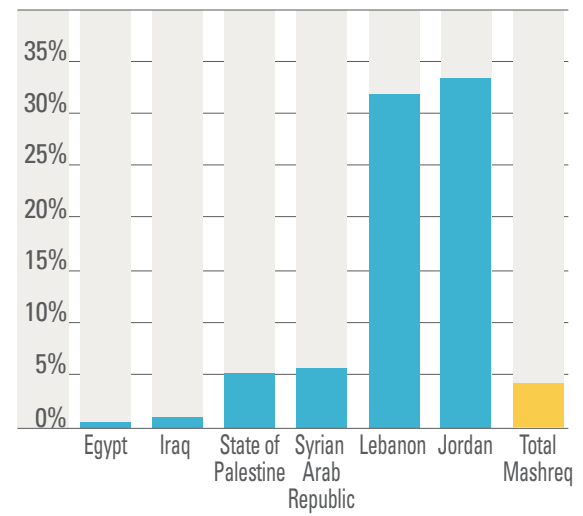
18,490. Moreover, UNRWA reported 5.4 million Palestine refugees in its countries of operation, which are Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip in 2018. Over 550,000 Palestine refugees were still living in the Syrian Arab Republic, close to 470,000 were registered in Lebanon,²¹ and over 2.2 million were in Jordan. There were an additional 1.4 million registered Palestine refugees in Gaza, and 828,000 in the West Bank.²²

Migrants and refugees represented 4.2 per cent of the total population in the Mashreq in 2017, virtually the same proportion as in 2015 (figure 52). However, migrant and refugee shares show considerable variations between countries. While Jordan and Lebanon had high numbers of migrants and refugees relative to their populations (33.3 per cent and 31.9 per cent, respectively), the migrant and refugee population in the remaining Mashreq countries made up less than 6 per cent, with a share as low as 0.5 per cent in Egypt.

In 2017, around 93 per cent of migrants and refugees in the Mashreq came from Arab countries, a significant number of them

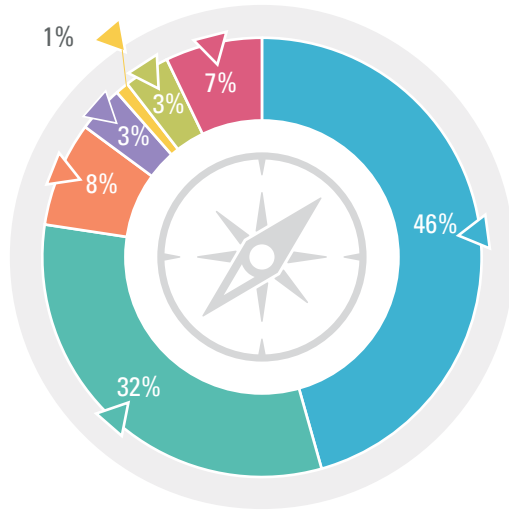
refugees. The State of Palestine was the country of origin of over 3.2 million migrant and refugees (46 per cent of the migrant and refugee population in the subregion), followed by the Syrian Arab Republic, which was the origin of over 2.3 million migrants and refugees (32 per cent of the migrant and refugee population in the Mashreq) (figure 53). Iraq was the third country of origin for

Figure 52. Migrants and refugees in Mashreq countries as a percentage of the total population, 2017



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

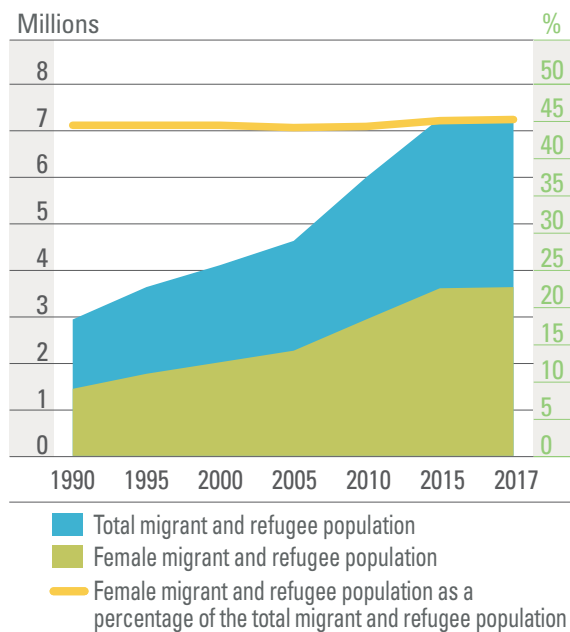
Figure 53. Top five countries of origin of migrants and refugees in the Mashreq, 2017



Egypt	247,601
Iraq	562,856
Jordan	71,277
State of Palestine	3,323,583
Syrian Arab Republic	2,314,676
Rest of the Arab region	245,849
Rest of the world	519,354

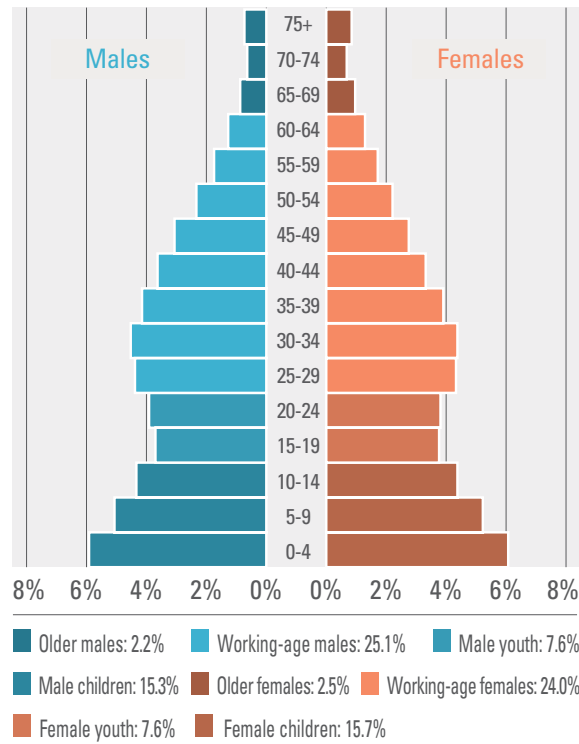
Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 54. Number and proportion of female migrants and refugees among the total migrant and refugee population in the Mashreq, 1990-2017



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 55. Distribution of migrants and refugees in the Mashreq by age, age group and sex, 2017

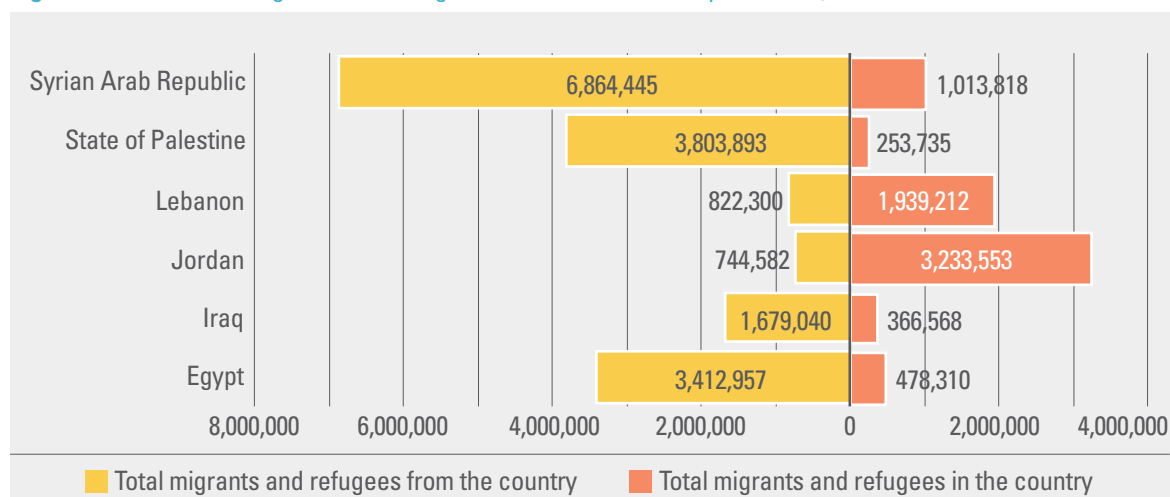


Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

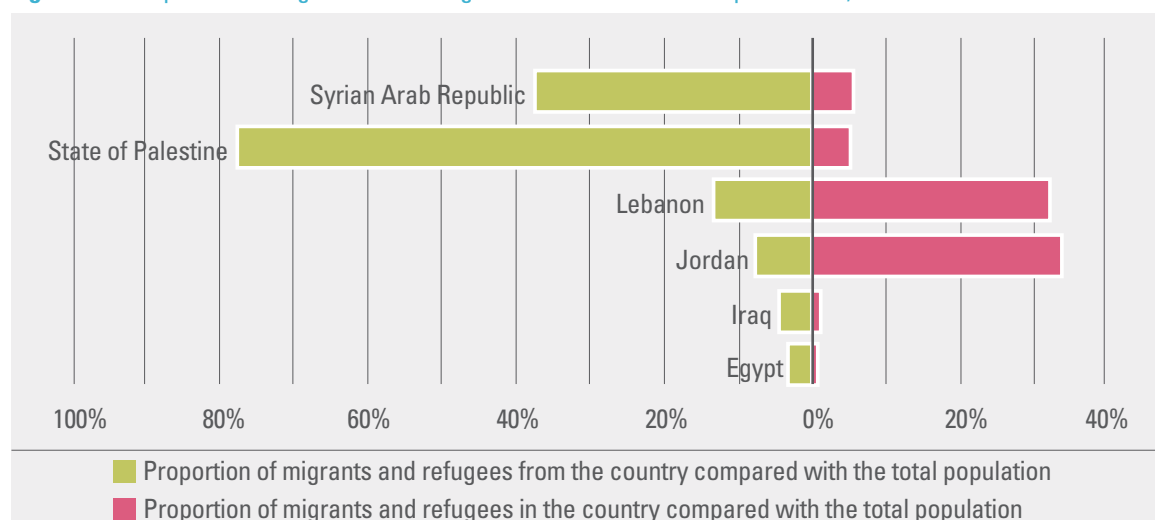
migrants and refugees in the subregion, comprising 8 per cent (over half a million) of migrants and refugees.

Women make up almost half (49.7 per cent) of the migrant and refugee population in the Mashreq (figure 54), a share that has remained virtually stable since 1990. The number of women migrants and refugees slightly increased by less than 1 per cent from 2015, to reach over 3.6 million in 2017.

Child and youth migrants and refugees are more common in the Mashreq than in the other subregions, comprising 31 per cent and 15.2 per cent, respectively, of the migrant and refugee population, and a conjoint total of 46.2 per cent of the migrant and refugee population in the subregion in 2017 (figure 55). Working-age persons constituted 49.1 per cent of the total migrant and refugee population, while older persons represented 4.7 per cent.

Figure 56. Number of migrants and refugees from and in Mashreq countries, 2017

Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 57. Proportion of migrants and refugees from and in Mashreq countries, 2017

Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Distribution between males and females along all age groups was virtually even.

Large numbers of persons are displaced within the region. When comparing migrants and refugees living in a country to nationals moving from the country (figures 56 and 57), there is a prominent pattern of nationals leaving from countries that have experienced conflict and occupation, like Iraq, the State of Palestine and the Syrian Arab Republic, compared with migrants and refugees in those

countries. In the State of Palestine and the Syrian Arab Republic, significant proportions of the population have migrated or have been displaced compared with the total number of nationals, reaching 77 per cent and 38 per cent, respectively. Egypt also has a much higher number of migrants from the country than migrants present in the country, due to the high rates of labour migration from the country, and low rates of labour migration and refugee movement into the country. In contrast, in Jordan and Lebanon, the main

destination countries of refugees from the subregion, there is a larger net number of migrants and refugees living in the country than of nationals living abroad. The numbers of migrants and refugees hosted by these countries are equivalent in both cases to more than 30 per cent of their nationals. The next section will explore the characteristics of migration and displacement patterns from Mashreq countries.

(b) Migration and displacement from the Mashreq

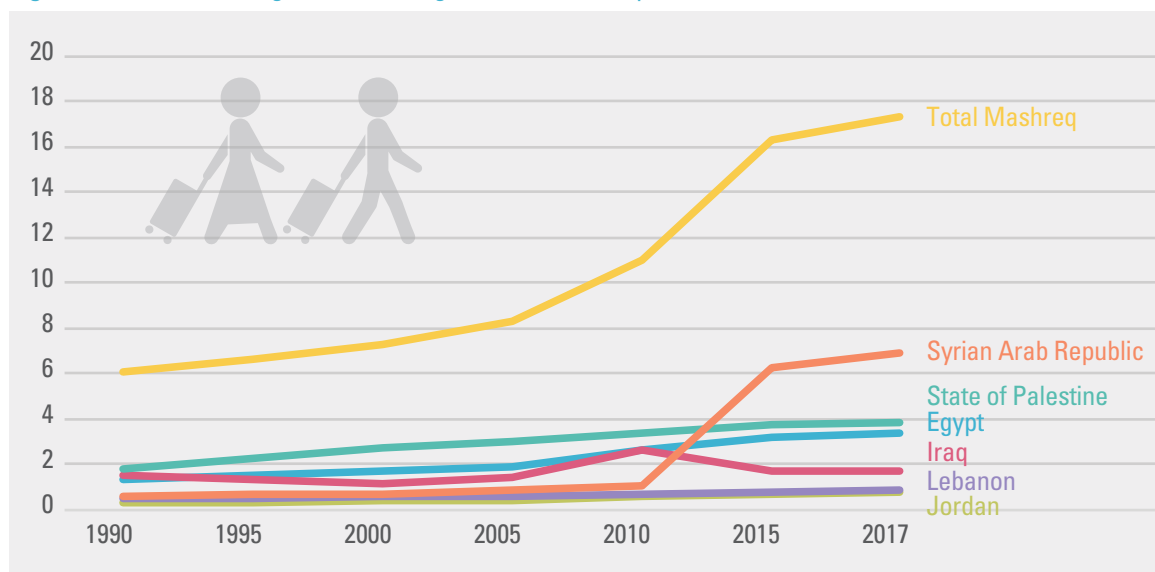
Migration and displacement from Mashreq countries have almost tripled since 1990 when there were 6 million migrants and refugees, reaching 17.3 million in 2017 (figure 58). The migrant and refugee population from the subregion saw a drastic increase between 2005 and 2015, mostly because of conflict, but the rate of growth has since decelerated.

In 2018, around 80 per cent of the region's refugees originated in the Mashreq, predominantly owing to conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, which was the country of origin of 6,490,950 refugees, representing 74

per cent of refugees from the Arab region in that year. Moreover, there were over 372,000 refugees from Iraq, over 23,000 from Egypt, over 5,000 from Lebanon and over 2,000 from Jordan. Furthermore, over 101,000 refugees from the State of Palestine were registered with UNHCR, and 5.4 million Palestine refugees were registered with UNRWA in 2018.²³ UNHCR also reported 440,828 asylum seekers from the Mashreq, mostly from Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, in 2018.

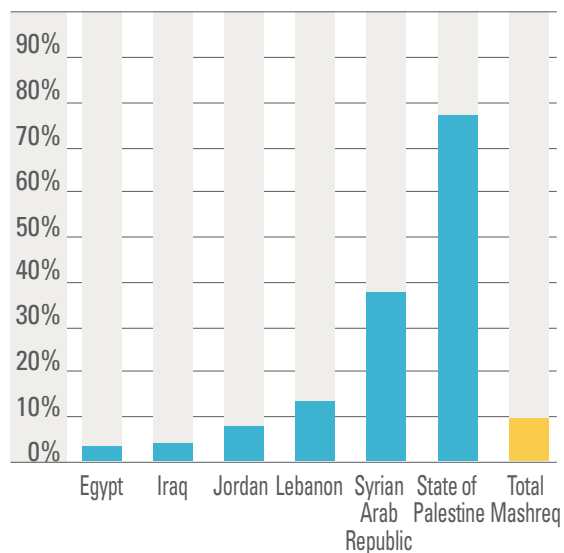
The State of Palestine had the largest population abroad before 2010, when it was surpassed by the Syrian Arab Republic. The migrant and refugee population from the State of Palestine has been slowly and steadily increasing, from 1.8 million in 1990 to 3.8 million in 2017, as reported by DESA. In contrast, the migrant population from the Syrian Arab Republic was slowly increasing until 2010 (less than doubling in a twenty-year span), and then grew six-fold in just five years between 2010 and 2015 owing to the conflict in the country resulting in large scale refugee movements. Growth rates have slowed since 2015 and there were 6.8 million Syrian migrants

Figure 58. Number of migrants and refugees from Mashreq countries (millions), 1990-2017



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 59. Migrants and refugees from Mashreq countries as a percentage of the total population, 2017



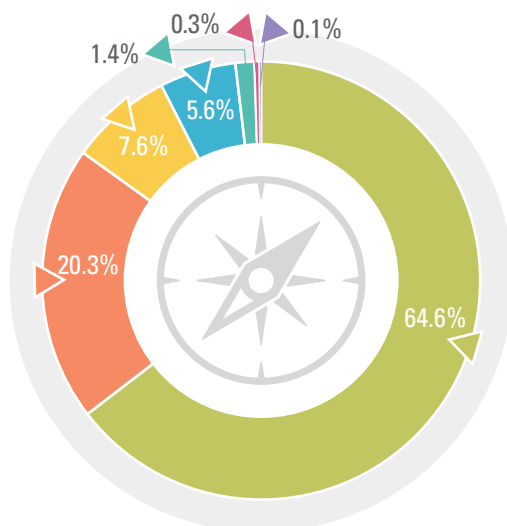
Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

and refugees in 2017, which is over 625,000 people (10 per cent) more than in 2015.

Iraq is the only country in the subregion that has seen its national migrant and refugee population decrease despite ongoing political instability. From 2005 to 2010, there was a big increase in Iraqi migrants and refugees of almost 80 per cent, or close to 1.2 million persons, reaching a high of 2.6 million in 2010. However, by 2017, the migrant and refugee population decreased to slightly more than its 2005 level, reaching close to 1.7 million migrants and refugees owing to return.

The proportion of nationals living abroad for the Mashreq subregion was 9.9 per cent in 2017 (figure 59). However, those numbers vary extensively between countries. For the State of Palestine, migrants and refugees represented 77.3 per cent of the population. The share was 37.6 per cent for the Syrian

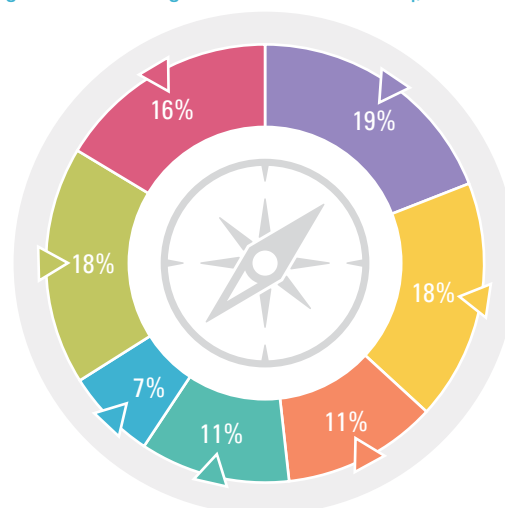
Figure 60. Regions of destination for migrants and refugees from the Mashreq, 2017



Arab region	11,187,932
Europe	1,310,723
Latin America and the Caribbean	60,074
North America	976,422
Oceania	242,846
Non-Arab African countries	23,662
Non-Arab Asian countries	3,525,558

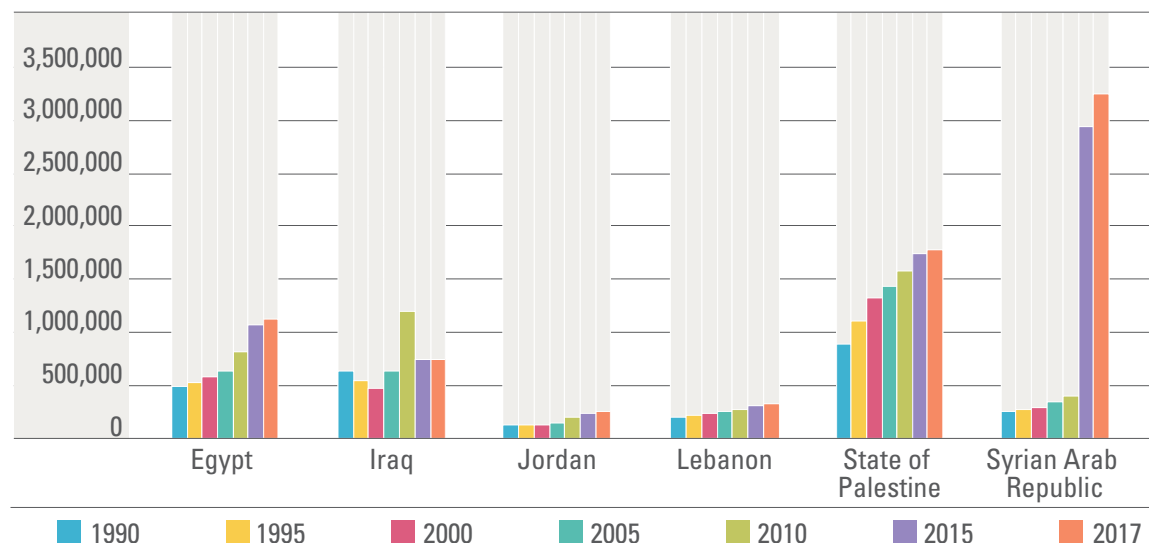
Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 61. Top five countries of destination for migrants and refugees from the Mashreq, 2017



Jordan	3,077,262
Lebanon	1,917,308
Saudi Arabia	1,980,067
Turkey	3,302,223
United Arab Emirates	1,165,133
Rest of the Arab region	3,048,162
Rest of the world	2,837,062

Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

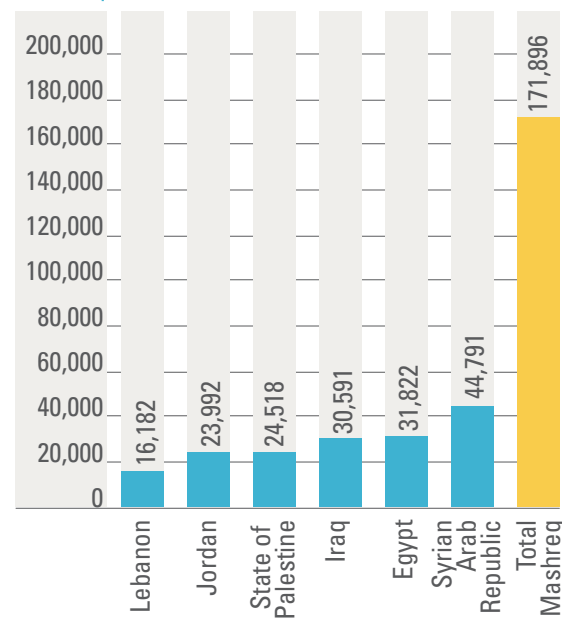
Figure 62. Number of female migrants and refugees from Mashreq countries, 1990-2017

Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Arab Republic, and less than 14 per cent for the remaining Mashreq countries.

Turkey was the main country of destination for migrants and refugees originating from Mashreq countries in 2017, over 3.2 million of whom were refugees (figure 61). This is a steep rise from the close to 1.4 million migrants and refugees it had in 2015, when it was the fourth country of destination. Jordan was the second country of destination for migrants and refugees from the subregion, and Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates also counted significant numbers. Arab countries received 65 per cent of migrants and refugees from the subregion – mainly in Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates – and non-Arab countries, excluding Turkey, received 2.8 million or 16 per cent (figures 60 and 61).

There were 7.7 million female migrants and refugees from the Mashreq in 2017, representing 44.4 per cent of the migrant population from the subregion (figure 62). Their number has grown by 6.2 per cent since 2015, and almost tripled since 1990. Egypt and Jordan had the lowest share of female migrants and refugees among their migrant

Figure 63. Number of tertiary students abroad from Mashreq countries, 2017

Source: UNESCO, n.d.

and refugee population, representing 34.1 per cent and 35.7 per cent, respectively. In contrast, the State of Palestine and the Syrian Arab Republic had the highest proportions, with women making up 48.5 per cent and 47.9 per cent of their migrant and refugee population, respectively.

In 2017, almost 172,000 tertiary students left their Mashreq countries of origin (figure 63). Their top three countries of destination were in the Arab region, namely Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, each receiving between 15 per cent and 17 per cent of students from the Mashreq. Other prominent countries of destination were France, Malaysia, Turkey and the United States.²⁴

4. Arab least developed countries

(a) Migration and displacement to the Arab least developed countries

In contrast to the above subregions, which have witnessed a continuous upward trend in their migrant and refugee population since 1990, the Arab LDCs witnessed a significant drop in the number of migrants and refugees between 1990 and 2005, contracting by 60 per cent from 2.2 million to less than 900,000 (figure 64). This decrease is due to the numbers of migrants and refugees in Somalia and the Sudan. The migrant and refugee population started growing in the Arab LDCs after 2005, reaching almost 1.5 million in

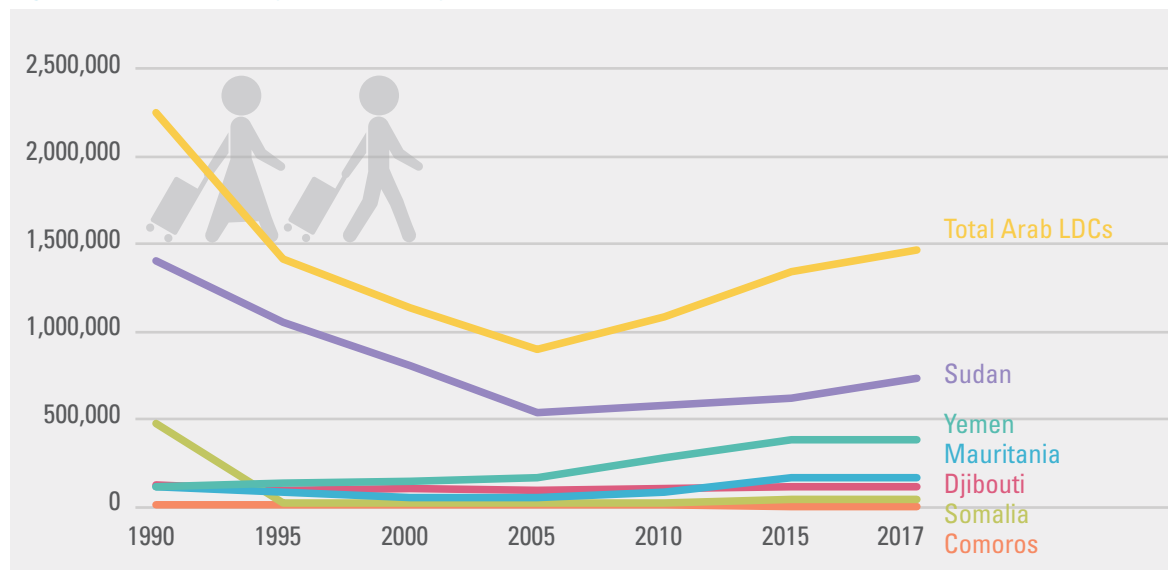
2017. Between 2015 and 2017, the Arab LDCs had 125,000 more migrants and refugees, constituting a 9.4 per cent increase.

Based on mid-2018 UNHCR data, Arab LDCs were the destination of 1,297,052 refugees, the majority of whom resided in the Sudan, which had 908,692 refugees. The number of refugees in the Arab LDCs has increased by 80 per cent since 2016. There were 271,554 registered refugees in Yemen; 84,078 in Mauritania; 17,302 in Djibouti; and 15,426 in Somalia. The majority of refugees in the Arab LDCs came from one of the other Arab LDCs or from neighbouring countries, predominantly from Eritrea, Somalia and South Sudan.

The Sudan had the largest migrant and refugee population among the Arab LDCs in 2017, hosting close to 736,000 migrants and refugees. Though the migrant and refugee population in Yemen has been growing since 2005, it started increasing at a much faster pace after 2005, and slowed down between 2015 and 2017, reaching over 384,000 migrants and refugees in 2017 (box 5).

In 2017, migrants and refugees comprised 1.6 per cent of the population of the Arab LDCs, a significant drop from 5.3 per cent

Figure 64. Number of migrants and refugees in the Arab LDCs, 1990-2017



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Box 5. Internally displaced persons, migrants and refugees in Yemen

An upsurge in conflict in Yemen since 2015, exacerbated by famine and outbreaks of disease, has had a dire impact on the Yemeni population. In 2018, over 22 million people, 75 per cent of the population, were in need of urgent humanitarian assistance, constituting the largest humanitarian crisis in the world.^a Organizations striving to provide food, medicine, and other essentials have encountered major obstacles in their aid assistance, leaving people (including migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons) in the country vulnerable to starvation and disease.

At the end of 2017, there were an estimated 2 million IDPs in Yemen, including 160,000 newly displaced that year.^b Furthermore, there were over 142,000 new displacements between January and June 2018, which is considered a conservative estimate owing to limited comprehensive data.^c Refugees and asylum seekers from Yemen, totalling over 280,000, have sought refuge in other countries, most notably Djibouti and Somalia.^d

Yemen is a prominent transit country between the Horn of Africa and Gulf countries, and a destination country for migrants from neighbouring countries. There are an estimated 279,000 refugees and asylum seekers in the country, almost exclusively from Ethiopia and Somalia.^e One of the main routes of mixed movement towards the Arabian Gulf is from the Horn of Africa – mainly from Djibouti and Somalia – to Yemen and then from Yemen to Saudi Arabia.

DESA reported 384,321 migrants in Yemen in 2017, of which 72.6 per cent were Somali.^f However, owing to the nature of the conflict, restrictions in accessing and counting migrants under these circumstances, and the transit and irregular nature of migration to and through Yemen, the accuracy of this estimate is difficult to ascertain.

The total number of arrivals to Yemen peaked in 2016 at 117,107 persons, and decreased slightly in 2017 by just 0.15 per cent despite the dire humanitarian situation in the country. According to the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, in 2017, a total of 99,516 migrants arrived in Yemen, of which 11 per cent were children and 89 per cent were adults (77 per cent males and 13 per cent females). In turn, 98 per cent of those assisted at migrant response points had no documents. The vast majority of migrants interviewed by IOM intended to reach Saudi Arabia, while the remaining few were on their way to the Sudan. Ethiopia was the country of origin of around 95 per cent of migrants in Yemen, 5 per cent were Somali and 0.1 per cent came from other countries. Through a flow monitoring point at the border with Saudi Arabia, IOM also recorded a total of 9,563 returned irregular Yemeni migrants in 2017.^g

In 2017, IOM provided assisted voluntary return and reintegration to 1,942 migrants in Yemen, the majority to Somalia and the rest to Ethiopia.^h The UNHCR assisted spontaneous return programme helped 2,591 Somalis return to Somalia in 2018. UNHCR assisted with the resettlement of 114 refugees who were identified as being particularly at risk: 60 Eritreans, 51 Ethiopians and 3 Somalis were resettled.ⁱ

Sources:

^a UNHCR, 2018e.

^b Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, 2018a.

^c Internal Displacement Monitoring Center, 2018b.

^d UNHCR, 2018e.

^e UNHCR, 2018d.

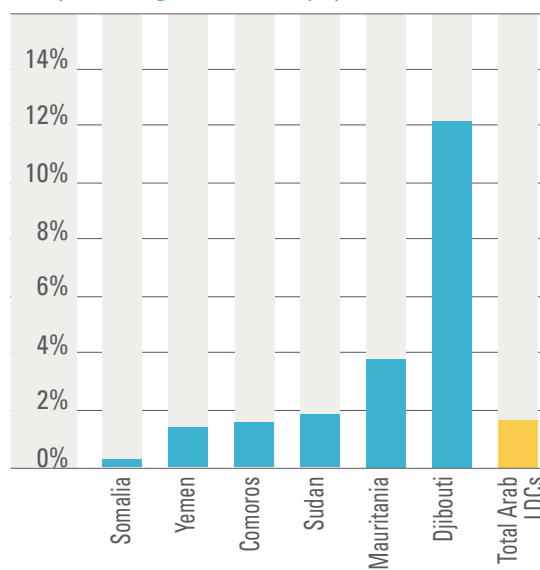
^f DESA, 2017.

^g IOM, 2017c.

^h IOM, 2018a.

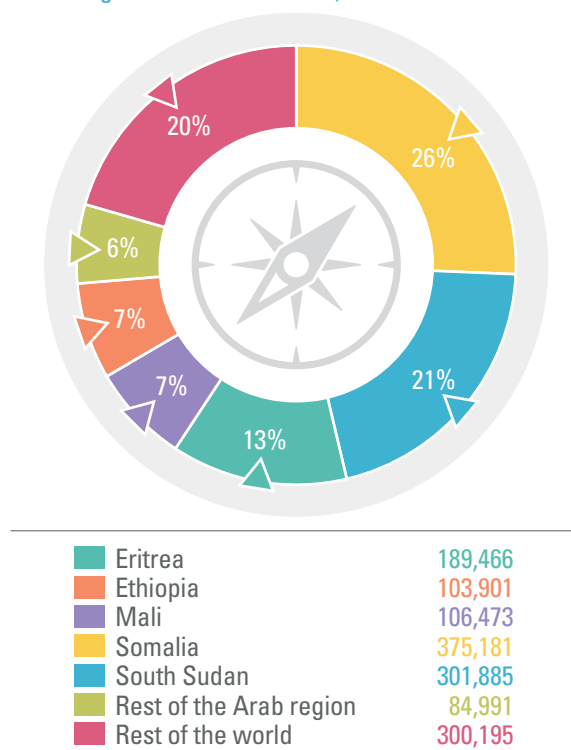
ⁱ Data from UNHCR focal point to the Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region.

Figure 65. Migrants and refugees in the Arab LDCs as a percentage of the total population, 2017



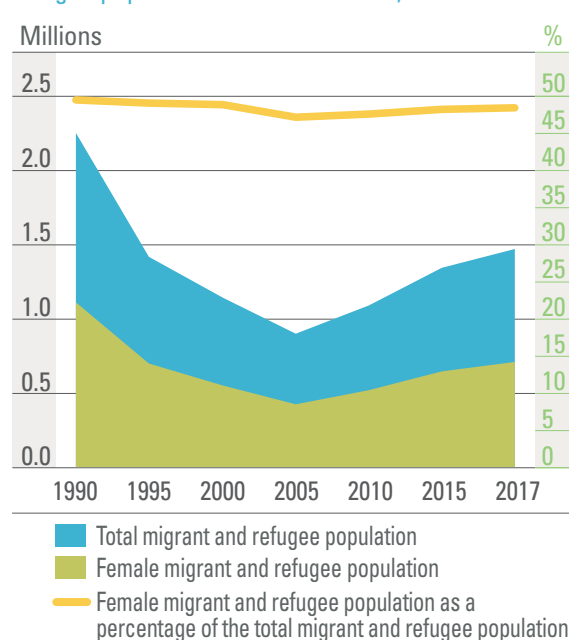
Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 66. Top five countries of origin of migrants and refugees in the Arab LDCs, 2017



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 67. Number and proportion of female migrants and refugees among the total migrant and refugee population in the Arab LDCs, 1990-2017



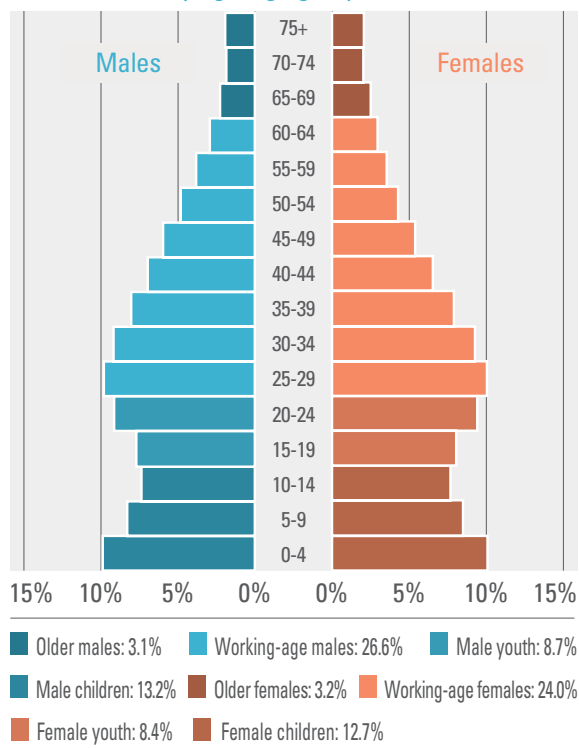
Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

in 1990 (figure 65). Countries had diverging proportions of migrants and refugees, representing a wide range between a high of 12.1 per cent in Djibouti and a low of 0.3 per cent in Somalia, although, excluding the former, all had migrant and refugee shares of less than 4 per cent.

In 2017, Somalia was the origin of over 375,000 migrants and refugees, 26 per cent of the migrant and refugee population in the Arab LDCs (figure 66). South Sudan, which in 2015 was the country of origin of over 135,000 migrants and refugees in the Arab LDCs, more than doubled its number of migrants and refugees to over 300,000 by 2017, owing to violence, drought and famine that have displaced millions.²⁵ Overall, migrants and refugees from Arab countries represented 46 per cent of migrants and refugees in the Arab LDCs, mostly from Somalia and the Sudan.

There were over 700,000 migrant and refugee women in 2017 in the Arab LDCs, comprising

Figure 68. Distribution of migrants and refugees in the Arab LDCs by age, age group and sex, 2017



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

48.3 per cent of the migrant population, a proportion that has remained stable since the last reporting period (figure 67).

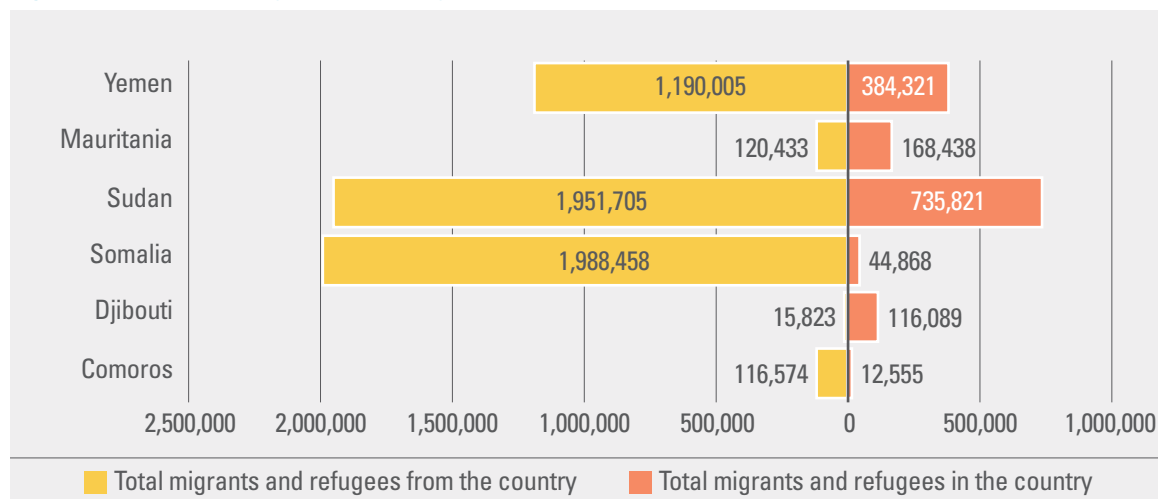
Migrants and refugees are evenly distributed between men and women across all age groups, with a slight proportional advantage for males over females below 65 years old (figure 68). In total, counting males and females, children represent 25.9 per cent of the migrant and refugee population, young people represent 17.1 per cent, working age persons constitute 50.7 per cent, and older persons comprise 6.3 per cent.

With the exception of Djibouti and Mauritania, the Arab LDCs have a much larger number of nationals living abroad than of migrants and refugees in their territory (figure 69). Migration from the Comoros and Somalia is especially significant, reaching almost 15 per cent compared to the total population in both countries (figure 70). The following section will describe the patterns of migration and displacement from the Arab least developed countries.

(b) Migration and displacement from the Arab least developed countries

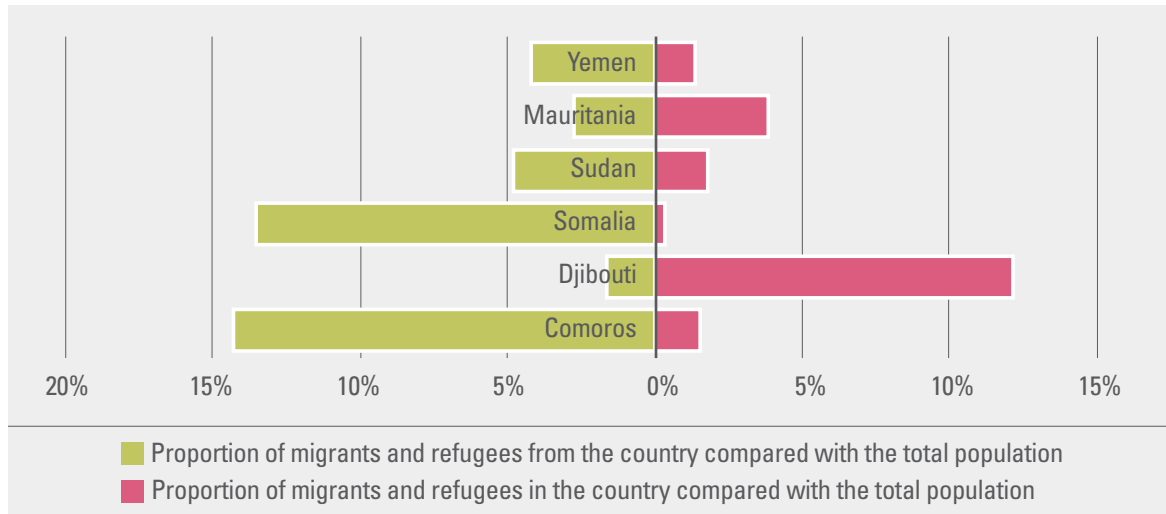
Migration and displacement from the Arab LDCs have grown by 160 per cent since 1990, increasing from 2 million migrants and refugees

Figure 69. Number of migrants and refugees from and in the Arab LDCs, 2017



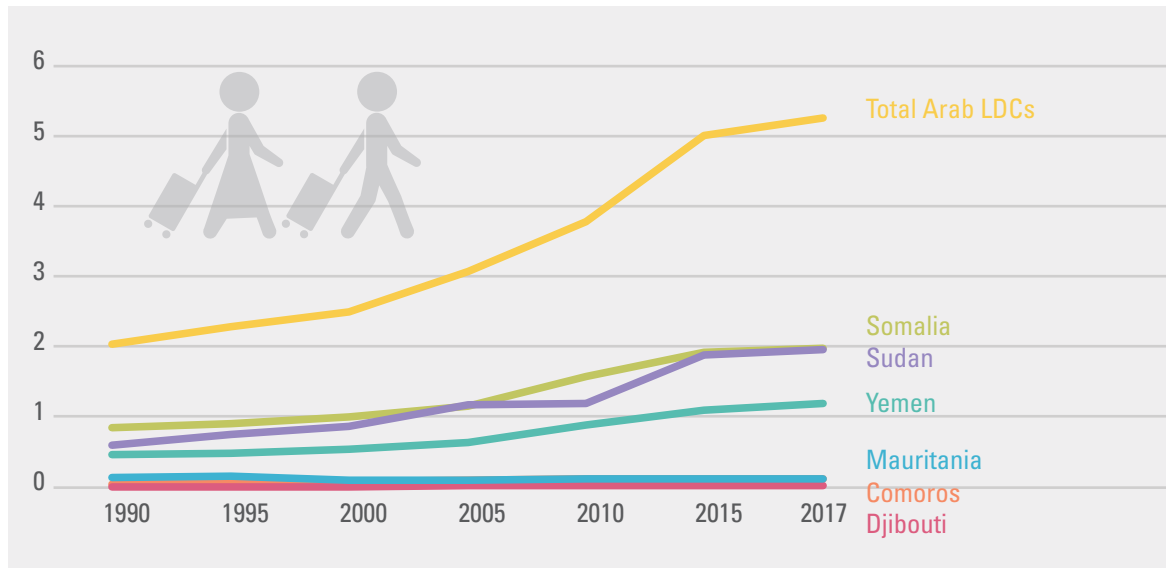
Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 70. Proportion of migrants and refugees from and in the Arab LDCs, 2017



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 71. Number of migrants and refugees from the Arab LDCs (millions), 1990-2017



Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

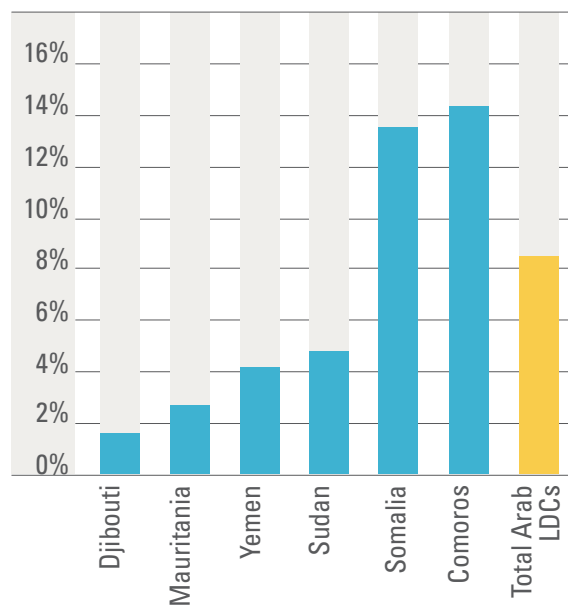
in 1990 to over 5.3 million in 2017 (figure 71). This number increased by over 200,000 migrants and refugees, or 4.8 per cent, between 2015 and 2017. Migrants and refugees from the Arab LDCs represented 19 per cent of all migrants and refugees from the Arab region in 2017.

mostly coming from Somalia (954,701) and the Sudan (719,222). There were also 36,679 refugees from Mauritania; 26,793 from Yemen; 2,034 from Djibouti; and 606 from the Comoros. There were also 146,875 asylum seekers from the Arab LDCs reported by UNHCR in 2018.

Registered refugees with UNHCR from the Arab LDCs amounted to over 1.7 million in 2017,

Somalia and the Sudan are the two top countries of origin among the Arab LDCs, each

Figure 72. Migrants and refugees from the Arab LDCs as a percentage of the total population, 2017

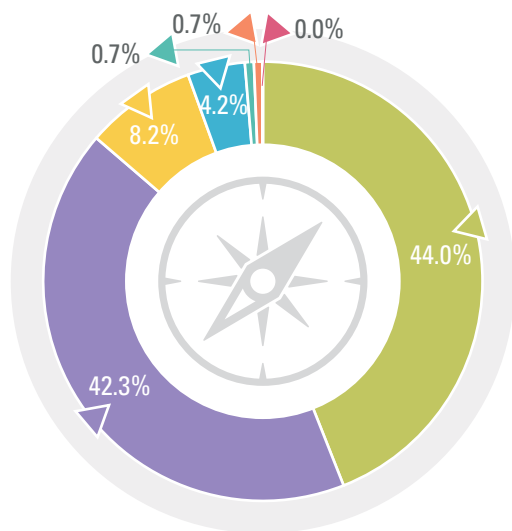


Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

with almost 2 million nationals living abroad in 2017. Yemen was the country of origin of almost 1.2 million migrants and refugees in 2017, and the number of Yemeni migrants and refugees increased by 9.3 per cent between 2015 and 2017, the largest increase among the Arab LDCs. Around 120,000 migrants originated from the Comoros, and 116,000 from Mauritania. Djibouti was the country of origin of the fewest migrants and refugees in the Arab region, with less than 16,000 nationals living abroad.

In 2017, around 8.6 per cent of the population of Arab LDCs were living outside their country of origin (figure 72), an increase from 6.6 per cent in 2015. The Comoros is the country with the largest proportion of its population living abroad among the Arab LDCs at 14.3 per cent, followed closely by Somalia at 13.5 per cent. All other countries have migrant populations of below 5 per cent.

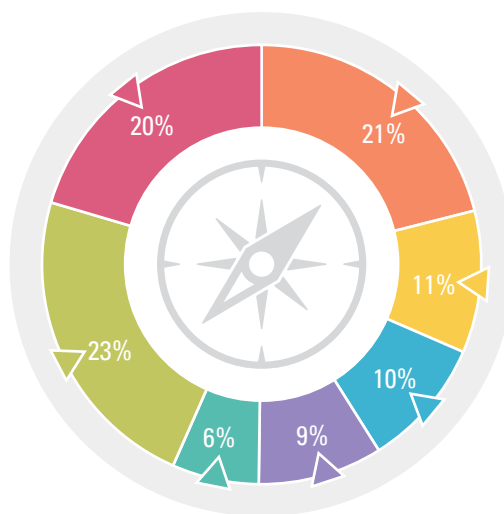
Figure 73. Regions of destination for migrants and refugees from the Arab LDCs, 2017



Arab region	2,368,973
Europe	439,400
Latin America and the Caribbean	153
North America	227,154
Oceania	35,373
Non-Arab African countries	2,276,908
Non-Arab Asian countries	35,037

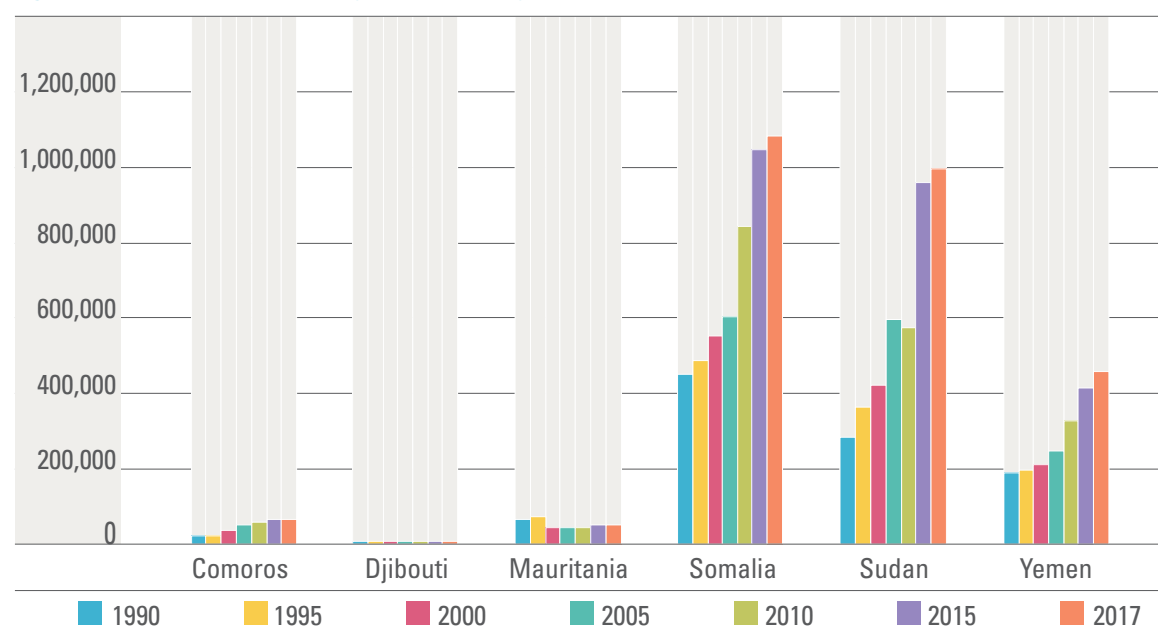
Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 74. Top five countries of destination for migrants and refugees from the Arab LDCs, 2017

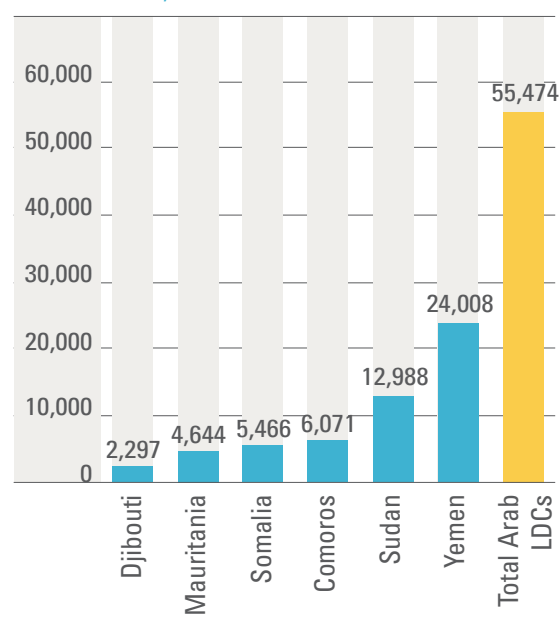


Chad	344,286
Ethiopia	513,305
Kenya	493,437
Saudi Arabia	1,133,106
South Sudan	563,135
Rest of the Arab region	1,235,867
Rest of the world	1,099,862

Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 75. Number of female migrants and refugees from the Arab LDCs, 1990-2017

Source: ESCWA calculations based on DESA, 2017.

Figure 76. Number of tertiary students abroad from the Arab LDCs, 2017

Source: UNESCO, n.d.

In 2017, around 44 per cent of migrants and refugees from the Arab LDCs (over 2.3 million) resided in other Arab countries (figure 73). Saudi Arabia, which was the destination for 21 per cent of the total migrant population from

the Arab LDCs, or 1.1 million persons, was the top country of destination (figure 74). Non-Arab Africa was the second largest destination region, with migrants and refugees going to Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya and South Sudan, all among the top five destination countries.

Women represented 43.6 per cent of migrants and refugees from the Arab LDCs in 2017, accounting for over 2.3 million women and girls (figure 75). This proportion has remained virtually stable since 1990, with the number of women migrants and refugees increasing by 100,00 between 2015 and 2017. In 2017, Yemen was the country with the lowest proportion of female migrants and refugees at 34 per cent, and the Comoros was the country with the highest proportion at 50.7 per cent.

UNESCO reported approximately 55,000 tertiary students from the Arab LDCs studying abroad in 2017 (figure 76). Their top country of destination was Saudi Arabia, which received 26 per cent of students, followed by Malaysia, which received around 18 per cent, and the United Arab Emirates, which received 13 per cent.²⁶

D. Inflows and outflows of remittances in the Arab region

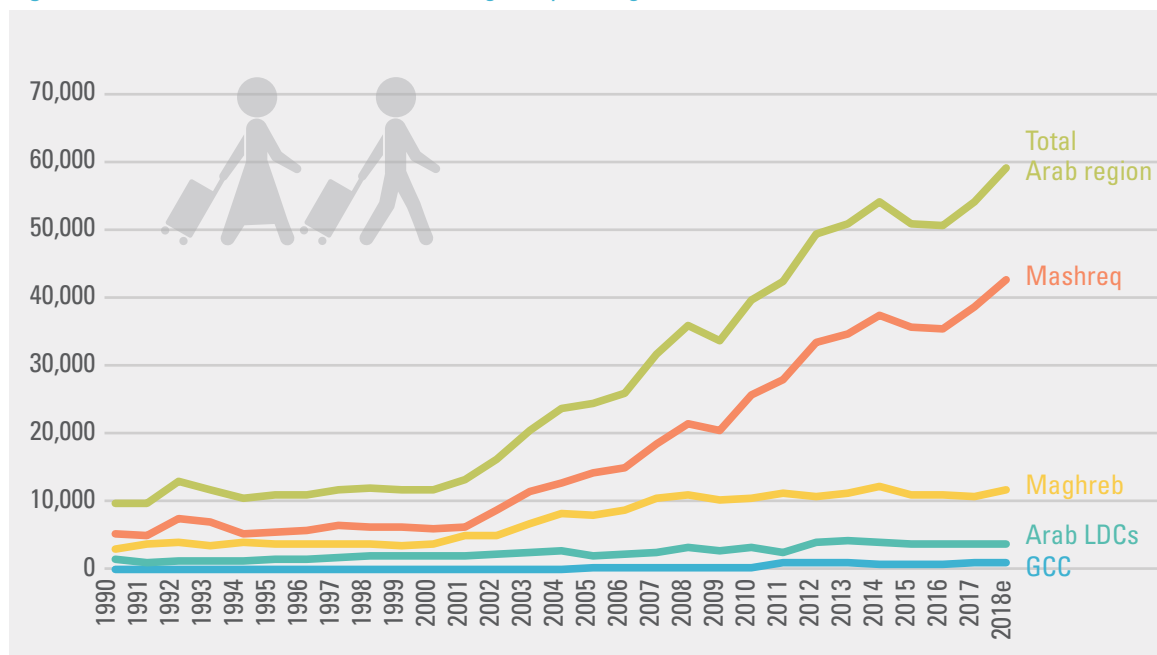
The Arab region is a major source of global remittances, particularly the GCC subregion. Remittances are also a significant source of income for several Arab countries. Remittances can enhance sustainable development by contributing to poverty reduction, financing education and health, providing a capital source for spending and investment, and increasing the flow of foreign currency, among other benefits.

The Arab region received \$54.1 billion in remittances in 2017, constituting 8.7 per cent of global remittance inflows. Although this amount had been in decline since 2014, when it reached a historical high of \$54.2 billion, 2017 figures show a recovery and an estimated increase for 2018 (figure 77). The Mashreq received the largest amount of remittances at \$38.6 billion in 2017, representing 72 per cent of all remittances sent to the region. Egypt is the

top Arab receiving country with \$22.5 billion in 2017, followed by Lebanon at \$7.4 billion (annex IV). The Maghreb received \$10.7 billion, predominantly in Morocco, which received \$6.8 billion. The Arab LDCs received \$3.7 billion, of which Yemen received the majority at \$3.3 billion. The GCC was the subregion with the lowest inflow of remittances in 2017, receiving less than 2 per cent of all remittances to the region, or \$1 billion. Qatar was the main receiving country in the subregion, with over \$666 million.

In 2017, remittances almost doubled (1.9 times) the amount the region received in official development assistance and official aid, totalling \$29.1 billion (table 3).²⁷ Remittances were also 1.8 times the amount the region received in net foreign direct investments, constituting \$30.1 billion.²⁸ Remittances were a significant source of income in some countries: they represented 14.8 per cent of GDP in the State of Palestine, 13.9 per cent in Lebanon, 12.4 per cent in the Comoros, 11.1 per cent

Figure 77. Remittance inflows to the Arab region by subregion (millions USD), 1990-2018*



Source: World Bank, 2018a.

Note: * Data for 2018 are estimates.

Table 3. GDP, official development assistance, foreign direct investment and remittance inflows by country, 2017

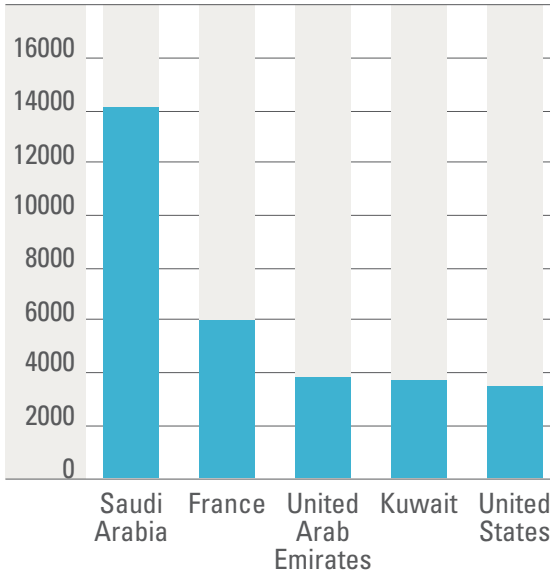
	GDP (millions)	Net official development assistance and official aid received (millions)	Foreign direct investment, net inflows (BoP, current US\$, millions)	Remittance inflows (millions)	Remittances as a percentage of GDP	Remittances as a percentage of official development assistance	Remittances as a percentage of foreign direct investment
Algeria	167,555	189	1,201	2,000	1.2%	1057%	167%
Bahrain	35,307	..	519	..	..	..	..
Comoros	1,068	67	9	132	12.4%	198%	1,535%
Djibouti	1,845	134	165	58	3.1%	43%	35%
Egypt	235,369	-114	7,392	22,524	9.6%	..	305%
Iraq	192,061	2,907	-5,032	474	0.2%	16%	..
Jordan	40,068	2,921	2,030	4,432	11.1%	152%	218%
Kuwait	120,126	..	113	23	0.0%	..	20%
Lebanon	53,577	1,306	2,559	7,440	13.9%	570%	291%
Libya	38,108	432	..	..	..	..	..
Mauritania	5,025	284	588	..	..	..	..
Morocco	109,709	1,885	2,680	6,847	6.2%	363%	255%
Oman	72,643	..	2,918	39	0.1%	..	1%
Qatar	166,929	..	986	666	0.4%	..	68%
Saudi Arabia	686,738	..	1,421	291	..	..	20%
Somalia	7,052	1,760	384	..	..	..	..
Sudan	117,488	840	1,065	213	0.2%	25%	20%
State of Palestine	14,498	2,111	203	2,143	14.8%	101%	1,054%
Syrian Arab Republic	..	10,361	..	1,623	..	16%	..
Tunisia	39,952	776	810	1,890	4.7%	244%	233%
United Arab Emirates	382,575	..	10,354	..	..	..	..
Yemen	31,268	3,234	-270	3,351	10.7%	104%	..
Total Arab region	2,518,960	29,094	30,095	54,145	2.1%	186%	180%

Source: For GDP, ODA and FID see World Bank, 2019; and for remittances see World Bank, 2018a.

in Jordan, and 10.7 per cent in Yemen.²⁹ Remittances also exceeded the amount of foreign direct investment received by the Comoros by 15 times, the State of Palestine by 10 times, and Egypt and Lebanon by three times.

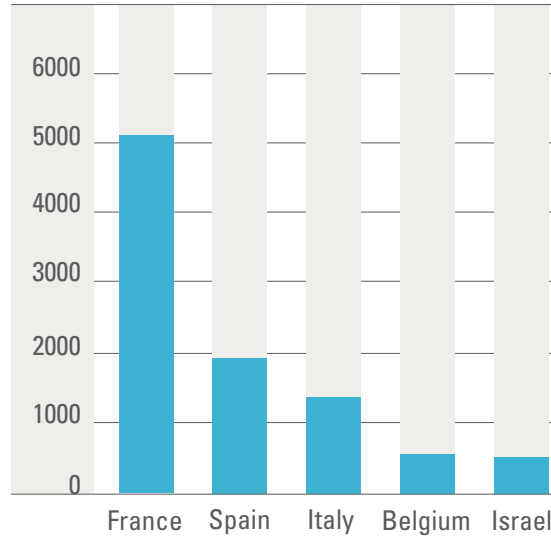
In 2017, approximately \$29 billion in remittances to the Arab region came from other Arab countries, representing 50 per cent of the region’s remittance inflows, predominantly from Saudi Arabia (\$14.1 billion)

Figure 78. Top five remittance-sending countries to the Arab region (millions USD), 2017



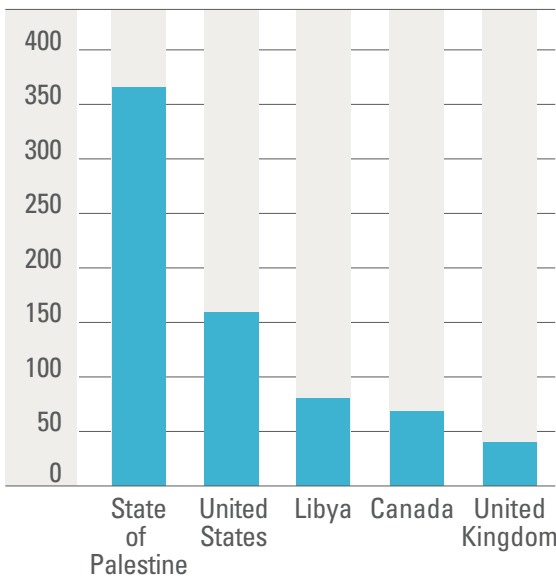
Source: World Bank, 2018b.

Figure 80. Top five remittance-sending countries to the Maghreb (millions USD), 2017



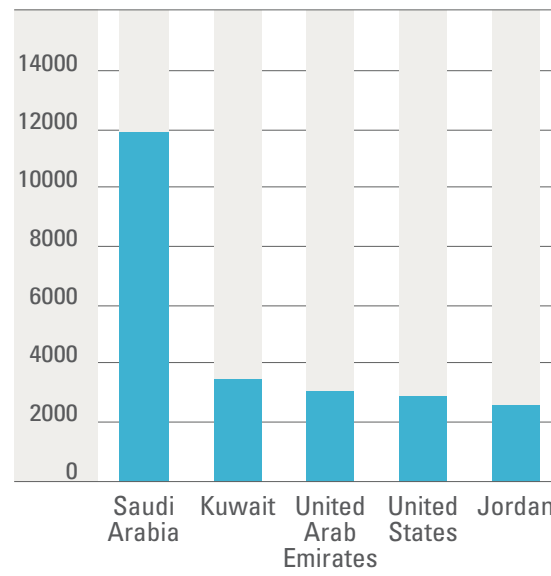
Source: World Bank, 2018b.

Figure 79. Top five remittance-sending countries to the GCC (millions USD), 2017



Source: World Bank, 2018b.

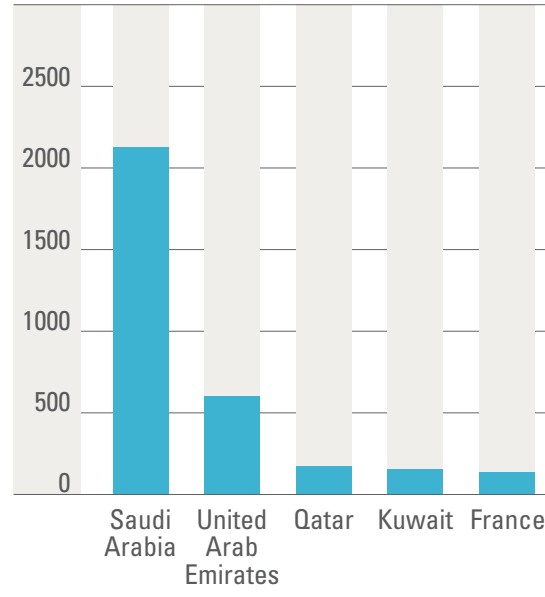
Figure 81. Top five remittance-sending countries to the Mashreq (millions USD), 2017



Source: World Bank, 2018b.

(figure 78). In turn, over \$14.8 billion, or 28 per cent, came from Europe, notably from France (\$5.9 billion), Italy (\$2 billion), Spain (\$2 billion), and Germany (\$1.6 billion). An additional \$4.9 billion, 9 per cent of the region’s inflow of remittances, came from North America.

Figure 82. Top five remittance-sending countries to the Arab LDCs (millions USD), 2017



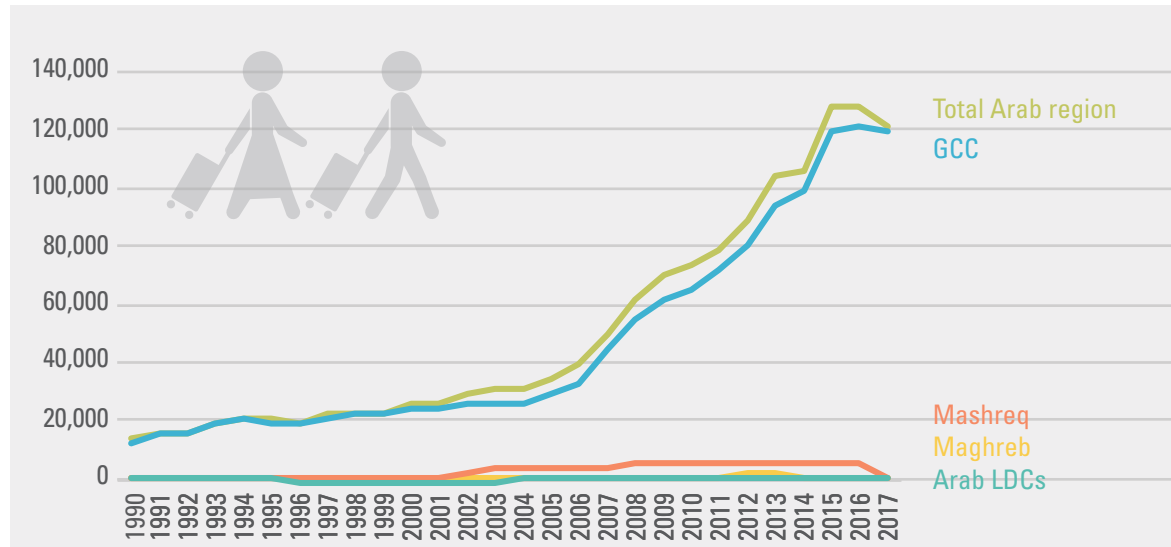
Source: World Bank, 2018b.

A subregional breakdown of remittances sent to Arab countries is provided in figures 79-82.

Close to a third (27 per cent) of global remittance outflows in 2017 came from the Arab region, estimated at \$120.6 billion (figure 83), almost all of them (98.9 per cent or \$119.3 billion) from GCC countries. Mashreq countries were the origin of \$962 million in remittances, the Maghreb was the origin of \$206 million, and the Arab LDCs sent out \$139 million. Top remittance-sending countries from the region were the United Arab Emirates at \$44.3 billion; Saudi Arabia at \$36.1 billion; and Kuwait, Oman and Qatar ranging from \$9 billion to over \$14 billion each. Resulting from considerably higher remittance outflows compared with remittance inflows to Arab countries, the net annual outflow of remittances from the region totalled \$66.5 billion in 2017.

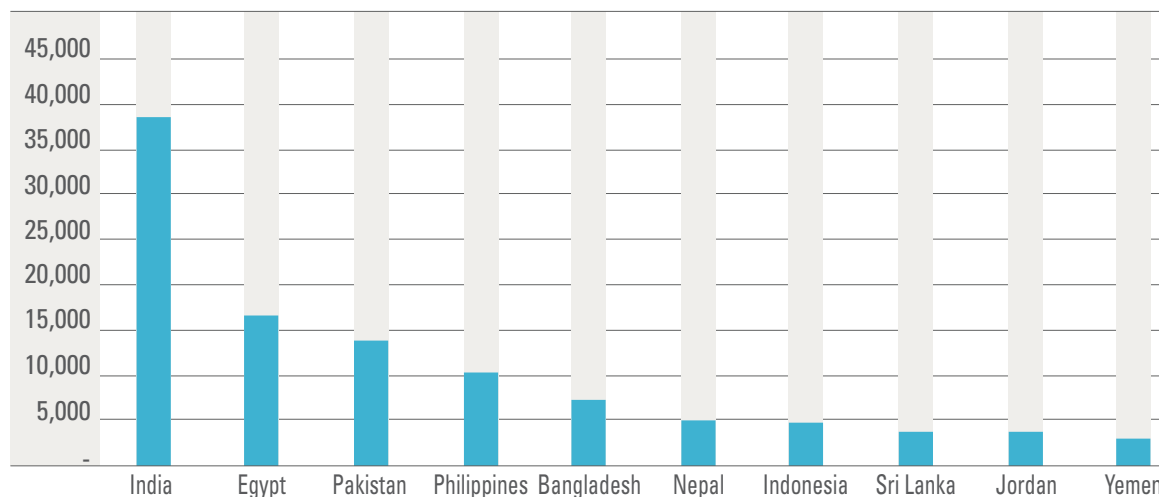
India received the largest amount of remittances from the Arab region, estimated at \$38.4 billion in 2017, followed by Egypt at \$16.7 billion, Pakistan at \$13.7 billion, the Philippines at \$10.4 billion, and Bangladesh at \$7.3 billion (figure 84).

Figure 83. Remittance outflows from the Arab region by subregion (millions USD), 1990-2017



Source: World Bank, 2018a.

Note: No data are available for Somalia and the Syrian Arab Republic, and there are gaps in data for Djibouti, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya and Yemen (see annex IV for yearly country data).

Figure 84. Top 10 countries receiving remittances from the Arab region (millions USD), 2017

Source: World Bank, 2018b.

E. Drivers of migration and root causes of displacement in the Arab region

Interconnected factors influence individuals' decisions to leave their country of origin or place of habitual residence. This is certainly seen in the Arab region, as multiple and complex considerations often shape migrants' decision-making. Violence and conflict are among the key determinants of forced population movements. For example, in 2017, the Syrian Arab Republic was the top country of origin of both refugees and internally displaced people in the region. The search for better opportunities and living conditions also plays an important role in the decision to migrate. This is seen in the case of mobile tertiary students who choose to migrate to destinations such as Europe or the United States for higher education, or migrant workers who seek work opportunities in high-income GCC economies.

These macro and individual factors collectively interplay to influence migrants' choices and movements, with an increasing overlap between forced and voluntary migration flows. While conflict and violence may force individuals and families to leave

out of fear for their lives, the search for better economic opportunities and living conditions can often lead to secondary movements. The opposite can also occur, such as in the case of Libya, where many migrants who initially arrived in the country for work have been leaving the country owing to violence and so as to escape inhumane living conditions. The phenomenon of environment-related migration is another example of the multiplicity and intersecting nature of factors explaining migrants' choices and movements, as environmental pressure often acts as a magnifier of existing drivers of migration. The Arab region is considered one of the world's most water-scarce and dry regions. Insufficient access to water affects people's livelihoods, especially in agriculture-dependent rural communities, driving human mobility and shaping migration patterns.

1. Economic and social factors

One of the most notable impacts of the migration-development nexus is how development, or the lack thereof, shapes migration patterns and migrants' motivations. Studies show that poverty, inequality, difficulties in accessing economic opportunities,

and gentrification resulting from non-inclusive urban development significantly influence migrants' decisions to leave low-income countries for high-income countries. In the region, average unemployment rates were estimated at 10 per cent in 2017, with higher rates in countries such as the State of Palestine at 27.4 per cent, Libya at 17.1 per cent, Tunisia at 15.4 per cent and Jordan at 14.9 per cent.³⁰ This particularly affects young people, with over 25 per cent of young people aged 15-24 in the region suffering from unemployment. Youth unemployment is significantly high in some countries, such as the State of Palestine at 43.1 per cent, Libya at 41.2 per cent, Jordan at 34.9 per cent, Tunisia at 34.7 per cent, and Egypt at 33 per cent, according to 2017 estimates. Such high rates contribute to population movements, especially when combined with low wages and poor returns on education, which influence migrants' decisions to leave in search for better living conditions. In Egypt, for example, 54 per cent of young people aged 15-24 with an advanced level of education were unemployed in 2017. In Tunisia, this rate reached 67.5 per cent in 2013.³¹

Research also shows that the poorest groups often do not have the resources and networks required for migration,³² therefore middle-income countries have higher migration rates.³³ In this regard, Egypt and Morocco, both lower-middle income countries, are amongst the top five countries of origin of migrants in the region. Improved economic opportunities and better education and infrastructure in these countries tend to increase people's resources, assets and capabilities to migrate. The persistence of modest economic growth and their proximity to countries with significantly higher development levels, namely the GCC subregion and Europe, influence migrants' motivation and decisions, particularly with regard to their intended final destination country. GCC countries offer better economic prospects to migrants and thus are some of the top countries of destination in the region. Likewise, aspirations for better standards of

living in Europe are among the main factors attracting North African migrants. Improved social and economic conditions can increase the appeal of these regions to migrants from middle- and low-income countries. This dynamic is further reinforced by the labour market structure in both GCC and European countries. The GCC subregion is characterized by a small national workforce, particularly in Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. Moreover, Europe is defined by an ageing and shrinking national workforce, resulting in high demand for foreign labour in both regions. In contrast, the labour markets of North Africa and the Mashreq are known for high unemployment rates.³⁴ Consequently, as large numbers of young dependents from these subregions reach working age each year, they are inclined to seek opportunities abroad in countries with a high demand for labour, as an alternative to their saturated labour markets.

2. Conflict induced displacement

Conflicts, occupation and violence are key influences on people's decisions to flee their areas of origin. The political instability and civil unrest that swept across the region in 2011 have resulted in a number of deadly conflicts, causing the destruction of civil and social infrastructure and threatening and claiming the lives of civilians. As a consequence, the region has witnessed the fastest increase of forced displacement, with millions of people fleeing their homes. The number of internally displaced persons in the Syrian Arab Republic in 2017 exceeded 6.8 million people (Box 2). Yemen accounts for over 2 million internally displaced persons. The destruction of housing and infrastructure and disruption to basic services, especially in urban settings, are also major barriers to return and to durable solutions for displaced people.³⁵

While conflict and instability are decisive factors pushing people to flee, the impact of conflict on livelihoods also plays an important

Box 6. Drivers of rural migration in the Near East and North Africa

Migration out of rural areas is a growing global trend, also witnessed in the Near East and North Africa^a region. Young people, an important demographic in the Arab region, have higher average rates of unemployment than any other region worldwide (more than twice the world average of 13 per cent); these rates are even higher in rural areas.^b Rural young people are among the most likely to migrate, either internally or internationally. With lower educational attainment than their urban counterparts and limited access to land and other productive assets, rural young people are increasingly forced to choose between low-wage, seasonal and often informal employment in agriculture and internal or international migration.

The region's rural population, as a percentage of the total population, has been declining steadily over the last 50 years, dropping from just over 60 per cent in 1970 to 38 per cent in 2017.^c As economies undergo structural transformation and the agricultural sector becomes diminished, the movement of people within and across borders is inevitable. This process of transformation – combined with declining agriculture productivity and widening rural-urban disparities in development – is pushing rural populations to migrate in search of higher wages and living standards.

In addition to agriculture sector decline, generally low levels of rural development are further driving regional migration trends. In most countries of the Near East and North Africa region there is a focus on urban development, leaving a widening rural-urban gap in the provision of public services. Across a sample of nine countries, it was found that access to education, health, electricity, sanitation, drinking water and flooring is between 3 and 20 times lower in rural areas.^d

Source: Compiled by FAO.

^a For this box, the Near East and North Africa region is understood to be comprised of: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, West Bank and Gaza, and Yemen.

^b International Labour Organization, 2017b.

^c DESA, 2017.

^d Alkire and Robles (2017).

role. Conflict causes food insecurity, disrupt access to basic services and precipitate households' decision to move. Famine, disease, hostilities and difficulties in accessing basic services are considered the top push factors for displacement in Yemen. In Libya, conflict has not only created significant internal displacement of populations, but has also placed the country at the crossroad of significant irregular flows towards Europe.³⁶ The consequences of the conflict in Libya, notably the liquidity crisis that followed, have affected the situation of many migrants employed in Libya who were initially seeking better economic prospects, with many of them either deciding to continue their journey to another country or returning to their home countries.³⁷

3. Environmental factors and migration

The Arab region has been identified as particularly vulnerable to the impact of climate change. Water security, defined by United Nations Water, as "the capacity of a population to safeguard sustainable access to adequate quantities of acceptable quality water for sustaining livelihoods, human well-being, and socio-economic development, for ensuring protection against water-borne pollution and water-related disasters, and for preserving ecosystems in a climate of peace and political stability",³⁸ is a key concern in the region. In 2019, 18 of 22 Arab countries fall below the renewable water resources annual threshold of 1,000m³ per capita per year, and 13 that fall below the absolute water scarcity threshold of 500m³ per

Box 7. Drivers of urban displacement in the Arab region

Over the last decade, large numbers of people have been moving into cities and urban areas in the Arab region* from within and across borders, voluntarily seeking better living conditions and sustainable livelihood opportunities, or forcibly escaping natural or human-made disasters. This movement of people has been among the main drivers increasing the urban population in Arab countries four-fold, from 39 per cent in 1970 to 58 per cent in 2018, and expected to reach 70 per cent by 2050.

The outbreak of conflict in major cities across Arab countries, and the resulting mass destruction of infrastructure and disruption of basic services, triggered unprecedented levels of internal, interregional and international displacement, segregation and exclusion. Moreover, the protracted character of conflicts, the slow process of post-conflict reconstruction, and a lack of funding for restoring basic services leave large numbers of displaced persons and migrants trapped in a vicious cycle of vulnerability, unable to return to their areas or countries of origin.

Several factors contribute to people migrating from urban areas, including poor urban planning, highly centralized governance frameworks, limited public participation in urban development, poor human and financial resources at the local level, dysfunctional municipalities in crisis contexts, weak enforcement of land use and zoning regulations, and inadequate building standards.

Given that cities are at the forefront of efforts to fulfil the needs and rights of migrants and their host communities, the acknowledgement of cities' role as key partners is instrumental to accelerating the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees, and to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Leveraging the positive impact of including migrants and refugees in local life generates additional benefits for economic development and cultural diversity in the Arab region. Arab cities can be catalysts for the inclusion of migrants and displaced persons if they are well-planned, affordable, efficiently governed and sustainable. This requires effective, comprehensive, cross-sectorial and multi-stakeholder actions to address the root causes of conflict, bringing together humanitarian and development actors to develop long-term recovery and development plans that bring stability, peace and resilience to Arab cities.

Source: Compiled by UN-Habitat.

*The Arab region includes the 22 Arab countries belonging to the League of Arab States. Discrepancies in numbers between box 6 and 7 result from the different countries included in the analysis.

capita per year.³⁹ Regional water governance is essential, given that a significant part of water resources in the region stem from transboundary water flows. This is of utmost importance in countries such as Iraq, where only 8 per cent of fresh water comes from within the country, and 71 per cent come from Turkey, 7 per cent from Iran, and 4 per cent from the Syrian Arab Republic. Another example is the case of the transboundary Yarmouk-Jordan River flow from the Syrian Arab Republic, where forecasts suggest that Jordan would receive 51-75 per cent less water compared to historical flow.⁴⁰

Environmental pressure aggravated by the effects of climate events, such as drought, sea level rise, flash floods and desertification, often acts as a threat multiplier exacerbating other drivers of migration.⁴¹ It can also protract displacement, given that people who bear the burden of displacement rarely have the resources to cope with the results of environmental pressures and climate change. It is thus extremely challenging to clearly identify and quantify their direct effects on displacement and migration. Pressure on natural resources, water stress,

land degradation and natural disasters may result in damage to strategic economic sectors, putting additional burdens on populations' livelihoods and thus forcing them to leave their places of origin in search for alternatives. Climate change, for example, has both direct and indirect impacts on agricultural assets and production, and thus on the livelihoods of households involved in agricultural activities. The impacts of climate change can therefore increase the vulnerability of populations, especially rural populations with a high dependency on natural resources, which may be forced to seek alternative income-generating activities and access basic services in other rural areas, urban centres or abroad.

Urban expansion, land degradation and competition over increasingly scarce resources may also exacerbate conflicts and tensions leading, in turn, to more displacement and migration. For example, studies⁴² link the three-year drought in the Syrian Arab Republic from 2007 to 2010, which aggravated existing water and agricultural insecurity and caused massive agricultural failures and livestock mortality,⁴³ with the eruption of civil unrest in the country in 2011. This severe drought that critically impacted agricultural production, and hence the livelihoods of rural populations, caused the displacement of approximately 1.5 million people from farming areas in the Syrian Arab Republic to the peripheries of urban centres.⁴⁴ Similarly, Iraq is suffering from a lack of water, particularly in the southern and central regions, with some of the affected governorates, such as Najaf, receiving families displaced by the water crisis.⁴⁵

4. Facilitating and mediating factors

The presence of diaspora networks and strong connections with individuals abroad are factors that can shape migrants' decisions about their destinations. In the same way, the existence of historic ties and education links influence migration patterns, and partly explain

the presence of some migration corridors in the region. Such is the case of the corridor between Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia to France, Italy and Spain, where migratory movements can also be linked to post-colonial connections and to geographic, language and education proximities.

The intensive use of new communication channels allowing the instantaneous flow of information and communication can also improve the experiences, reduce risks and shape the decision-making of people on the move. These social media networks are actively used by migrants to communicate with fellow migrants, and to obtain additional information on the journey and on a country of destination's immigration policies, procedures and access conditions. Consequently, these new tools can increase migrants' awareness about a journey's risks and opportunities.

Changes to migration governance and policies in destination countries also impact migrants' perceptions of the relative dangers or ease of travel, and therefore also influence their decision-making process. Labour agreements, for example, have an important role in facilitating migrants' admission and employment in host societies. Temporary labour migration from South Asia to the GCC subregion is steered by recruitment and placement agencies, which act as intermediaries between prospective workers and their foreign employers. They contribute to organizing migratory movements and shaping the migration experience. Labour agreements and thorough follow-up of their measures also decrease the cost of migration resulting from recruitment malpractices, collusion between recruiters in origin and destination countries, and bureaucracy and poor regulations.⁴⁶ Labour agreements therefore have the potential of unleashing the benefits of migration for development, given that they increase migrants' capacity to adapt and their prospects for inclusion in host countries through easier access to the job market.

In conclusion, the movement of people across borders is often categorized as either ‘voluntary migration’, encompassing migrants who are primarily motivated by improving their economic perspective, or ‘forced displacement’ as the movement of populations escaping wars and persecution. However, this distinction is increasingly blurred, and it is difficult to fit all people on the move with their various situations and motivations into these narrow categories. Each individual has a personal story and specific reasons to move, often stemming from a combination of different considerations. Migration and displacement in the Arab region is characterized by mixed flows and underpinned by multiple drivers, including socioeconomic factors, conflict and political instability, as well as environmental pressures that have various effects on populations’ livelihoods, sometimes rendering crossing borders their only alternative coping strategy.

F. Summary of key findings

- The Arab region hosted over 38 million migrants and refugees in 2017, who make up 14.8 per cent of global migrants and refugees. Half of all migrants and refugees in the region are working-age (25-64) males and one in five are working-age females; almost one in five migrants and refugees are children;
- Displacement continues to be a prominent trend in the region: in 2018, the total population of concern living in the region amounted to over 21.2 million, of which almost 15.2 million were internally displaced persons and 3.7 million were refugees under the UNHCR mandate. Moreover, in 2018, UNRWA reported 5.4 million registered Palestine refugees under its mandate;
- The number of migrants and refugees originating from the Arab region reached 29 million in 2017, of which almost half remained in the region;
- In 2018, the Arab region was the origin of a total population of concern to UNHCR of almost 26.3 million persons. Over 8.7 million of them were refugees, of which 29 per cent remained in the region. Of every five refugees in the world, two come from the Arab region. The number of refugees from the Arab region increased between 2016 and 2018 by 17 per cent (over 1.2 million new refugees), most of whom were from the Syrian Arab Republic;
- The Arab region received \$54.1 billion in remittances in 2017, while remittance outflows from the Arab region were estimated at \$120.6 billion;
- GCC countries are the destination of the largest number of migrants among the Arab subregions. Three of every five migrants and refugees in the Arab region reside in GCC countries, of whom most are migrant workers. Owing to the high influx of migrant workers, GCC countries have the highest proportion of migrants as a percentage of the total population. In 2017, working-age migrants (25-64) represented three quarters of the migrant population, and almost three quarters of migrants in the subregion were male. Migration from GCC countries is less common, both in terms of net number of migrants and as a percentage of the national population;
- Migration to the Maghreb is a less prominent feature than in other subregions, as the subregion is not a destination for a high number of migrant workers nor refugees. However, there is a significant trend of transit migration through the subregion, which is harder to document in terms of numbers of migrants owing to its irregular and varying nature. Libya was the main country of destination in the Maghreb

subregion, where 1 out of 10 residents is a migrant. In contrast, there is a continuing historic pattern of migration from Maghreb countries to Europe, predominantly to France, Italy and Spain;

- Most population movements in the Mashreq subregion are due to forced displacement, although there are high numbers of migrant workers in Jordan and Lebanon. Both countries are also the destination of the largest numbers of refugees, and they have the highest proportions of refugees as a percentage of their population. Nine out of every 10 migrants and refugees in the subregion came from other Arab countries. As at mid-2018, around 60 per cent of refugees living in the Arab region lived in the Mashreq;
- The Sudan and Yemen are both countries of origin and of destination for a significant number of migrants and refugees. Yemen continues to be a transit country for migrants

and refugees on their way to GCC countries, even amid conflict and famine. Somalia is the origin of the largest number of migrants and refugees from the subregion.

The present chapter focused on trends, patterns and drivers of migration and displacement in the Arab region, providing an overview of the main characteristics – country of origin, country of destination, and demographic profiles – of migrants and refugees travelling into, within and from Arab countries. The following chapter provides a description of recent policy developments regarding migration governance in Arab countries at the national, bilateral, regional and global levels.

Endnotes

Chapter 1

1. For detailed information on how migrant stock data is calculated by DESA, see POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2017. Palestine refugees living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are not included in this definition and estimate.
2. Pursuant to the *Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees as modified by the 1967 protocol*, UNHCR defines a refugee as “a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership to 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” (article 1A(2)); *The UNRWA definition of Palestine refugees is* “persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine during the period 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948, and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict”. The descendants of Palestine refugee males, including legally adopted children, are also eligible for registration.
3. See annex II.A for detailed data on migration to the Arab region.
4. In May 2015, registration of Syrian refugees by UNHCR in Lebanon was suspended by the Government, which may be a contributing factor to the decline in the number of migrants since 2015 due to Syrian refugees being unable to renew permits or deciding to leave the country.
5. The Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as every human being below the age of 18. The report classifies children as aged 0-14 for statistical purposes and in order to highlight the specific experiences of youth defined as between the age 15 and 24.
6. See annex III to the present report for detailed data on migrant stocks disaggregated by age.
7. UNHCR, 2019b.
8. Ibid.
9. UNRWA, 2018a.
10. UNHCR, 2019b.
11. See Annex II.B for detailed data on migration from the Arab region
12. UNESCO, n.d.
13. OECD countries with available migrant data included in the census and analysed in this section were: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Spain, Estonia, Finland, France, United Kingdom, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Iceland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxemburg, Latvia, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, and United States.
14. As per DESA categorization, North America comprises Bermuda, Canada, Greenland, Saint Pierre and Miquelon, and the United States.
15. UNESCO, n.d.
16. Institute of International Education, 2018.
17. DESA, 2017.
18. IOM, 2017b.
19. Persons from Western Sahara are counted separately by DESA and UNHCR, the sources used to provide data for the present report. The designation of Western Sahara as a territory and its presentation separately in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations, the International Organization for Migration or any of the organizations engaged in the Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region on the status of the territory or its authorities, or about the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.
20. UNESCO, n.d.
21. UNRWA reports that many of the 469,555 Palestine refugees registered in Lebanon left the country without providing notification. While an official Lebanese-Palestinian census conducted in 2017 counted 174,422 Palestine refugees in the country, the census was not exhaustive. A 2015 survey by the American University of Beirut calculated that there were between 260,000 and 280,000 Palestine refugees in Lebanon (UNRWA, 2018a).
22. UNRWA, 2018c.
23. UNRWA, 2018c; UNHCR, 2019b.
24. UNESCO, n.d.
25. Gebrekidan, 2017.
26. UNESCO, n.d.
27. World Bank, 2018e.
28. World Bank, 2018c.
29. World Bank, 2018d.
30. ILO, 2017d.
31. Ibid.
32. Sørensen, Van Hear and Engberg-Pedersen, 2003.
33. Hakimi, 2016.
34. Egypt at 54.5 per cent, Iraq at 71.6 per cent, Syrian Arab Republic at 61.9 per cent, and Yemen at 69.8 per cent.
35. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2018a; IOM Yemen, 2018.
36. The central Mediterranean route is accounting for the largest number of missing or deceased migrants while crossing to Europe by sea. IOM’s Global Migration Data Analysis Centre accounts for 1,306 deaths in sea in the Central Mediterranean route from January 1st to December 9th 2018
37. Reach Initiative, 2018.
38. UN WATER, 2013.
39. IOM, 2019b.
40. Ibid.
41. Mixed Migration Platform, 2017.
42. Gleick, 2014.
43. Trigoa, Gouveiaa and Barriopedroa, 2010.
44. Werrell and Femia, 2013.
45. IOM, 2018c.
46. ILO, 2015.