



Human Security And Human Development For Migrants on the Move

Women In Migration

GFMD-Civil Society Days 2015, Istanbul, Turkey

'An increasingly large number of migrants at borders and in transit are women and children'

-Migrants in Crisis-

- The current focus on refugees and asylum-seekers, which requires urgent, rights-based responses, should not divert our attention from the ongoing realities of economic migrants seeking livelihoods across borders and the overlap between the two categories.
- An increasingly large and visible number of migrants at borders and in transit are women and children, which brings additional concerns to ensuring protection for migrants and refugees due to vulnerabilities linked to age and gender. This includes the experience of rape and other gender-based violence. More women are risking dangerous routes on their own and growing numbers are dying in transit.
- According to UNICEF, 12 per cent of refugee women, the majority from Syria and Afghanistan, arriving in Macedonia are pregnant. This is not a unique situation. Displaced women and migrant women, be they refugees or migrant workers, have no access to sexual and reproductive health services and are unable to avoid pregnancies. Some may have already been pregnant before being compelled to leave. Pregnancy in itself does not constitute a "crisis". However, the situation for pregnant women is increasingly aggravated by the causes of the migration; poor conditions in transit and in camps, including lack of safe drinking water, lack of adequate food, lack of healthcare, unsanitary conditions, as well as obstructionist policies that seek to turn thousands of refugees away.
- The impact of climate change has a direct gender and migration-related impact, particularly for rural women farmers, displacing women within countries and across borders. According to UNFPA, an estimated 87% of unmarried women and 100% of married women lost their main source of income when Cyclone Nargis hit the Ayeyarwaddy Delta in Myanmar in 2008. States must recognize the gendered nature of agriculture in addressing migrants in crisis.
- The welcome initiative on Migrants in Countries in Crisis, MICIC, should also contemplate flows of refugees fleeing state and para-state violence as well as economic migrants facing crisis and violence in transit and at borders, bringing a gender analysis to the effort.

-Human Security, Human Development and Human Rights-

Treating "human development" in the context of national-level data and then ranking nations according to scores, as is done through the UN Human Development Index, has at least two major problems when it comes to understanding obstacles to human development and human needs fulfillment: 1) The focus is on national processes of development, while in reality the causes of low levels of development are often attributable to international and global processes; and 2) the realities and needs of those living in irregular circumstances may not even be captured in the data at all, so they and their needs disappear from the picture.

Women migrants who are displaced, who become refugees, are trafficked, deported, or living undocumented in destination countries live in precarious conditions, yet their “human development” remains unaddressed. We reaffirm states obligations to promote, protect and fulfill all international human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights, regardless of migration status.

-Recommendationsⁱ-

1. States must ratify the 1951 Refugee Convention, as well as fulfill their obligations under the Convention and their customary law obligations, if not ratified.
2. Destination countries must establish safe and regular channels for migrants and refugees to come, erasing the need for smugglers and precarious or deadly transit created by current migration and border enforcement policies.
3. States must adhere to and implement commitments to human rights at international borders as outlined in OHCHR *Recommended Principles and Guidelines for Human Rights at International Borders* which states that, “the human rights of all persons at international borders must be respected in the pursuit of border control, law enforcement and other State objectives, regardless of which authorities perform border governance measures and where such measures take place.” States must ensure that all border governance measures protect the right of all persons to leave any country, including their own, and that border management measures do not adversely affect the human rights and dignity of migrants.
4. State policies and practices should end criminalization of migration and migrant detention, including for women and children migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers. States should address monitoring and implementation of minimum standards for the treatment of women and children in transit. In addition, states should commit to a principle of not detaining children or families.
5. The right to due process of all migrants regardless of their status shall be respected and promoted by all states. This includes the right to an individual examination, the right to a judicial and effective remedy, and a right of appeal and access to justice and redress mechanisms for all victims of crime irrespective of residence status.
6. States should bring both gender and migration lenses to the deliberations, honoring the voices of those communities already impacted by various means of displacement, including climate change particularly for indigenous women.
7. States must address the needs of people on the move first and foremost. As people are in transit or move across borders, their needs and rights take priority over security and enforcement regimes. Saving lives must be paramount, be it in moments of “crisis” or ongoing irregular migration flows made necessary due to the lack of regular channels. States must not respond with efforts to turn back migrants in transit, arrest, detention and deportation. Instead, states must ensure migrants’ safety and address their needs.
8. States should pay particular attention to the support needs of survivors of gender-based violence, to ensure effective protection for all migrant women experiencing violence. They must also give specific attention to migrant women’s health, sexual and reproductive rights.
9. States and the global community must implement a people-centered development model that adequately addresses climate change, which is at the heart of many of the current refugee and migrant realities. Governments gathering at COP21 in Paris from Nov. 30 - Dec. 11 must make firm commitments to keep 80% of fossil fuels in the ground and finance a just transition to 100% renewable energy by 2050.

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ⁱ See also Women and Migration 2013 Advocacy Document in English, Spanish, French: <http://wgmwq.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/final-advocacy-doc-ENGLISH.pdf>