

# The Diplomatic Envoy



**A WORLD IN MOTION**

Special Edition on Global Migration

Summer 2022



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# From the Editor

## A Note to the Reader

Dear Reader,

Thank you for taking the time to read The Diplomatic Envoy’s 2022 Summer Edition on Global Migration.

As climate change, war, and extreme poverty drive people from their homes, migratory crises have become a persistent feature of our ever-changing world. As these crises escalate—especially at our own borders—it is clear that new solutions need to be examined and implemented. In this edition on global migration, we aim to bring you in-depth analysis on several facets of this crisis. Within this magazine are six stories written by some of our best staff writers, covering a variety of angles on this issue.

On behalf of the Editorial Board, we hope you enjoy reading our 2022 Summer Edition. If you’d like to become a part of our team, please scan the QR code on the back cover of this magazine or reach out to anybody on the Editorial Board.

*Hazard Zet Forward!*

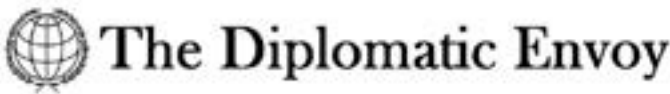
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# EU AND US FUNDING INFLUENCES REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN WEST AFRICA AND CENTRAL AMERICA THROUGH MIGRATION MANAGEMENT

Patrick Condon | Staff Writer

The European Union and the United States are both experiencing increasingly deadly migration crises at their southern borders. From 2000 to 2020, cases of missing or dead migrants are estimated at over 39,000 people in the Mediterranean and around 7,000 people along the U.S.-Mexico border, although humanitarian agencies believe the actual number is much higher. With this scale of migratory insecurity, Western governments provide humanitarian aid to address the immediate impacts of the crises and they control the movement across borders to regulate the influx of migrants and their economic impacts.

International organizations (IOs) are frequently brought in to disperse aid to local communities in an effort to increase the efficacy of government aid distribution. IOs effectually operate as clients of states to deliver humanitarian assistance and manage migration externally. By shifting the management of migration from internal—having to provide assistance to migrants in the host country—to external—providing assistance to other countries to host migrants—governments promote their own “narrow national interests” through client IOs’ administration. This is becoming more popular with rising irregular migration rates in West Africa and Central America, two transit regions for migrants travelling northward. As the EU and the U.S. grow their roles as providers of humanitarian assistance to these regions, there has been a notable shift in the management of migration. Migration management now incorporates trade agreements, security, and international organizations to manage crises internally and externally, defining the present-day effects of migration.

The externalization of migration management derives from when the U.S. sought to reduce the number of Jewish refugees entering the country during World War II. This prompted the League of Nations, controlled by the U.S. and Europe, to provide a state solution for displaced Jewish refugees, partitioning Palestine and displacing 700,000 Palestinians. This has been reflected in numerous conflicts and resolutions since then, de-

picting a trend of European-U.S. delegating asylum to refugees in host countries outside the EU. Migration management has continued shifting toward an even more external focus: preventing migrants from reaching destination countries through international cooperation and project funding. The two most notable cases of this are in West Africa and Central America. According to the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), in 2020, West Africa received a total of \$7.77 billion from donor countries, while Central America received a total of \$3.12 billion. The two largest donors in the OECD are the United States and the European Union. With longstanding colonial structures in many West African states, the EU is the second largest donor of official development assistance (ODA) to the region at \$1.88 billion, following only the United States. In comparison, with primarily American-influenced structures in Central America, the largest donor of ODA to the region is the United States at \$1.1 billion.

The cases selected for this comparison are limited to states sitting on the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD as well as the EU, which provide a majority of humanitarian aid around the world, 70 percent of the near-

West Africa recieved  
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ly \$200 billion donated in 2020. As the two largest donors are the EU and the U.S., their funding is highly impactful, particularly to neighboring regions. While the U.S. provides \$2.5 billion to West Africa and the EU provides \$604 million to Central America, ODA to neighboring regions is intended more on impacting migration and migration policies than general humanitarian assistance. Typically, aid to neighboring regions has a greater focus on security initiatives, largely

due to migration across the donor’s own borders. Thus, the application of humanitarian aid in close proximity to a donor country impacts policies on migration in neighboring countries. This is the case for West Africa and Central America.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the EU have one of the strongest trade relationships in the region. With the signing of an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) in 2014, the EU has become West Africa’s largest trade partner. In 2020, the agreement resulted in \$55 billion in trade between the two regions, around 56 percent of all exports from West Africa. As the EU has been able to retain many colonial institutions, like the use of the West African CFA franc in ECOWAS states, it has politicized its own policies towards West African countries, particularly through incorporating EPAs into negotiations about development assistance. Recently, with growing insecurity in the region due to climate change and increasing violence, the EU has linked security and development policy together. This marks a significant shift in the pattern of ODA provision, incorporating Western governments further into the development of developing countries.

The EU is a primary financial and munitions supporter of the G5 Sahel, a group of five West African countries, which aims to provide security to the region. In recent years, EU foreign policy experts have witnessed the trend that the EU has “increased aid in particular for initiatives related to counter-terrorism and migration control,” linking humanitarian assistance via international organizations to security funding through troops on-the-ground in many West African countries. In West Africa, the EU has taken a central role to the funding of humanitarian aid and resolution of insecurity. This funding has taken form in two main areas, troop and munition supply as well as direct funding toward migration-regulating policies, like the provision of 20 million euros in 2016 and 2017 to Niger’s national budget, to be used for Internal Security Services and to drastically reduce irregular migration. While having boots





The EU has taken a central role in funding aid in West Africa.  
Courtesy of Guillaume Périgois (Unsplash)

on the ground allows for the control of movement, West African migration policies are most often impacted through indirect influence, mainly by the presence of IOs which serve to translate foreign policies into local and regional migration policies. The rise in migratory insecurity has made it more difficult for ECOWAS states to maintain their own migration policies, thus, ECOWAS, and its member states, have relied on EU policies and funding to address irregular migration in the region. In the long run, the IOs that implement EU migration policies retain priority over domestic organizations to administering humanitarian aid and addressing the root causes of irregular migration. In turn, as the primary partner of many NGOs in West Africa, the EU is able to externalize its migration policies and impact further development of national and regional policies on migration.

Central America and the United States have a more convoluted trade relationship than the trade relationship between the West Africa and the EU. Rather than two regional unions contracting a trade agreement with one another, the US has taken a much more individualized approach, under three different Free Trade Agreements (FTA) with Central American countries. In 2021, with Mexico in the new USMCA, Panama in a bilateral agreement, and multiple Central American and one Caribbean country in the CAFTA-DR, total trade value amounted to \$661.1 billion, \$8.89 billion, and \$68.7 billion respectively. While a majority of

the total \$738.7 billion in exchange between the U.S. and most Central American countries is made up trade with Mexico, the U.S.'s influence on migration in the region spans much further than its southern border. Rather than linking humanitarian assistance to regional security, even though violence is rapidly increasing in Central America, the U.S. has approached regulating irregular migration and reducing insecurity through addressing the root causes of irregular migration. In July 2021, the Biden administration released a new Collaborative Migration Management Strategy, which seeks to resolve "high levels of crime and violence, lack of economic opportunity, weak governance, widespread corruption and impunity, the impacts of climate change, food insecurity, and the desire for family reunification."

The U.S. has taken a central role in funding projects to reduce irregular migration and provide economic opportunities in Central America. The new Call to Action will partner with international, private-sector organization to provide more than \$3.2 billion to migrant workers. This further engrains the strength of U.S. investment in Central American countries, bringing the private sector even closer to governments. As this will effectively increase displacement in most Central American countries, the U.S. is also able to offer targeted assistance to governments, in order to develop community integration initiatives and better the experience of settling

migrants. In the long run, this may also lead to a prioritization of trade from the U.S. and collaboration with cooperative private-sector businesses. This new policy, in conjunction with private-sector funding, will effectively establish a system of migration prevention and economic pathways to externalize migration policies to Central American governments.

The externalization of migration management has allowed developed countries to directly impact the flow of migrants coming in and the settlement of migrants in the long term. By shifting funds towards security development in neighboring countries, the EU has effectively controlled the development of security initiatives to retain refugees within West Africa, halting the northward pattern of migration in the region. In the western hemisphere, the U.S. utilizes direct private funding to promote economic development, ultimately reducing irregular migration. Altogether, EU and US funding, in conjunction with client IO administration, is permanently impacting institutions in West Africa and Central America, both regional and domestic. This will likely lead to further manipulation of domestic and regional development by the EU and U.S. while restricting West Africa and Central America from achieving more independent development, dooming West Africa and Central America to fall even further under the influence of EU and U.S. policies.

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# THE IMMIGRATION CRISIS ISN'T IDEOLOGICAL, IT'S SITUATIONAL

Christopher Benítez Cuartas | Associate Editor



Courtesy of U.S. Customs and Border Control (Wikimedia Commons)



The U.S.-Mexico border is notorious for frequent, numerous arrests, smuggling incidents, deportations, and overall mayhem, caused by an uncontrolled influx of migrants attempting to gain entrance into the United States. An overwhelming majority of people stranded at the border trying to enter the U.S. illegally are from Central America, most notably the Northern Triangle, comprising Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua. The story of U.S.-Latin American relations is a complex one, historically revolving around either influence or cooperation between Washington and the region's ruling elite. However, ideology has always played a role in part of the story, especially regarding relations during and after the Cold War. Guatemala and Nicaragua represent opposite sides of the spectrum in how this played out, as their most politically formative years were spent under the influence of opposing sides during the period: Guatemala being influenced by the United States and Nicaragua being influenced by the Soviet Union and Cuba. However, ideology impacts migration patterns less than people often expect, as the corruption and ineffective governance that drive emigration can occur in any type of government.

Guatemala and Nicaragua were influenced by opposing sides during their most politically formative years: The U.S. and The Soviet Union respectively.

Many people in the Northern Triangle states heavily depend on documented and undocumented migration to the U.S. to survive. Over two million individuals have left the region since 2014, according to the Council on Foreign Relations. A 2014 report to Congress cites the region's violence record and links to illicit drug trade coming in from South America and extensive gang violence as significant reasons for this increase.

During the Cold War, Guatemala was ruled as a military dictatorship backed by the United States government. Since the transition to democracy at the beginning of this century, Guatemalan politics have consistently been right of center. The initial dominant party was headed by the former dictator, whose nomination to run in 2003 elections was technically illegal and did not sit well with the public. The rest of the decade was languishing, seeing mostly right-wing parties staying in power with left-wing parties' opposition. The two most recent administrations were particularly scrutinized for corruption.

In April 2015, President Otto Pérez Molina and Vice President Roxana Baldetti were indicted by the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) for establishing a corruption ring within the country's customs system. Massive protests broke out in Guatemala City that day, mostly organized by student groups. Soon after, CICIG and state prosecutors released more evidence of corruption by the administration, prompting in Baldetti's arrest and Pérez Molina's resignation in September.

Former comedian Jimmy Morales was elected to the presidency in October 2015. Largely seen as an outsider in politics, Morales campaigned on a strict anti-corruption platform with the motto of "neither corrupt nor a thief." However, his administration resulted in the same corruption they sought to eliminate. In January 2019, after serving a term plagued with corruption controversies surrounding illicit use of state resources, Morales tried to disband the CICIG by threatening to not renew the mandate that legally allows their investigations and by ordering the diplomats and foreign investigators running the CICIG to leave the country. The decree was blocked by the Guatemalan judiciary, but the mandate was never renewed and the CICIG ceased operations in 2019.

Morales also made unpopular foreign policy moves. In the summer of 2019, the Trump administration at-

tempted to reach an agreement with the Morales government which would make Guatemala a "safe third country" for refugees and asylum seekers from Honduras and El Salvador. A U.S. congressional delegation, made up mostly of Democrats who opposed the agreement, visited Guatemala shortly after to dissuade their Guatemalan counterparts from approving the deal. Morales had intended on signing the agreement, but the Supreme Court of Guatemala ruled that the U.S. Congress should first approve of it, leading Trump to threaten tariffs on Guatemalan imports and the taxing on remittances. The agreements and actions were later undone by U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken under the Biden administration.

In 2019, staunch right-winger Alejandro Giammattei won the presidency after running a campaign advocating for controversial ideas, namely the death penalty. Giammattei proposed replacing CICIG, supported by donations from foreign governments, with a state institution that experts claimed would be susceptible to political influence. This commission was eventually created with the backing of the U.S. government, with which Giammattei pleaded for funding on his first visit to Washington in August 2019. In June 2021, two independent prosecutors from the Special Prosecutor's Office against Impunity were arrested, drawing domestic and international criticism. The U.S. Department of State accused Guatemalan Attorney General María Consuelo Porras as responsible, later sanctioning him. The administration fell into further unpopularity when Congress and the president approved a new budget that decreased funding for education and health, which did not sit well in the immediate aftermath of COVID-19 and Hurricanes Eta and Iota. Protests broke out again, reaching the legislature building. The protests were met with tear gas.

In terms of foreign relations, Guatemala is a traditional holdout in terms of retaining relations with the Republic of China in Taiwan. The Taiwanese delegation recently met with the Guatema-

lan Chancery to reiterate their commitments to Guatemalan industry, mostly in manufacturing industries. However, according to the Bank of Guatemala, over \$9 billion were sent home by Guatemalans abroad in 2018, showing the depths to which emigration, rather than foreign direct investment, supports the Guatemalan economy. The UN Development Program reports Guatemala has a poverty rate of 66.7 percent, despite the National Statistics Institute reporting that 2.8 percent of Guatemalans are unemployed. Crime is also very high, with the Guatemalan police reporting over 3,000 homicides in 2018. Life is difficult for many in Guatemala, particularly in urban areas where gang violence and organized crime is rife, leading to these high levels of emigration among individuals searching for a better life. Guatemala's unpopular, corrupt government, which makes it nearly impossible for individuals to gain economic prosperity, only exacerbates these levels.

The story of modern Nicaragua is one of a failed experiment. In 1979, the Nicaraguan Revolution overthrew the autocratic U.S.-backed regime of the Somoza family. The revolutionaries set up a temporary five-person military junta made up of three representatives of the Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSLN) led by Daniel Ortega and two right-wing former opposition activists. As the FSLN grew more powerful within the junta and aligned Nicaragua in the Eastern Bloc of the Cold War, the two right-wingers, Moisés Hassan and Violeta Chamorro, withdrew and started their own opposition to the FSLN and Ortega, who was elected president in 1984. Chamorro was then elected president in 1990, followed by a string of right-wing governments until Ortega was reelected in 2006.

The growth of frustrated FSLN supporters known as Sandinistas represented initial wane of the FSLN in the early 1990s in the wake of the Cold War. With various reform and movements toward peace, the FSLN was no longer the attractive, populist choice Nicaraguans had yearned for during the

Somoza dictatorship. Instead, the power bounced between the Constitutionalist Liberals and the Liberal Alliance, the result of a split from the former a year before. Ortega, taking advantage of the split, consolidated power for himself in an era of Latin American leftist dominance known as the Pink Tide, and cemented Nicaraguan fears of a return to the former battle days. Ortega pushed for Nicaraguan nationalism as part of his ideological strategy. He commended the strength of the nation for its ability to push off American domination, and his attitude starkly contrasted that of leaders in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador regarding violence and emigration to the United States. Ortega initially sounded convincing, flanked by fellow leftists in power in nations across the continent. However, this mirage was not eternal.

By the late 2010s, the new Sandinista government in Nicaragua was struggling, ranked 145th out of 176 in the 2016 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index. This struggle was exacerbated by three incidents that triggered mass demonstrations of public discontent. One was the Nicaragua Canal. Proposed for over two centu-

ries, it would provide a deeper and wider alternative to the Panama Canal, speeding up transoceanic shipping voyages. The Ortega administration planned to bring the idea to fruition through the Chinese corporation HKND. However, the proposal would have resulted in mass expropriations from mostly rural and indigenous small landowners, as well as massive contamination of the already polluted Lake Nicaragua. When protests erupted, HKND lost investment capital and closed in 2018.

Additionally, the Nicaraguan Social Security system was starting to run out of money for welfare. The International Monetary Fund advised in 2017 that to extend the country's reserves, the government would need to enact reforms, including raising of the retirement age from 60 to 65. Ortega refused to do this, citing the incapability of older people to find work. Another recommendation was that the private sector start supporting the pension system, something the sector was not consulted about when the meager reforms were implemented. The solution the Ortega administration devised was to simply raise taxes, causing outrage.

Lastly, the Indio Maíz Nature re-



Rural land owners in Nicaragua could face mass expropriations from the creation of the Nicaragua Canal.  
Courtesy of Joe Townsend (Flickr)





**Guatemalan flag flies over Antigua’s main square.**  
 Courtesy of David Salamanca (Unsplash)

serve near the border with Costa Rica was declared a nature reserve by the first Sandinista government, and to this day is the home of indigenous groups who have a degree of autonomy. The area has also been subject to colonization and exploitation of natural resources, leading to pollution and massive forest fires in 2018 that were sluggishly put out by the state. Protests over these conditions broke out in mid-April 2018 and were responded to with intense brutality by the Nicaraguan police. Ortega eventually cancelled the tax and pension reforms, but with the added issue of police brutality, many sectors of society, including the Catholic Church and progressive organizations, called for state accountability and the resignation of Ortega. These three events disillusioned many Nicaraguans. These incidents, and the significant public backlash that they drew, show that an incompetent, unpopular government that does nothing to alleviate poverty, hands over parts of the country to foreign corporations, or fails to address dangerous fires causes a major outflow of people. Many people had already been

leaving the country, mostly for the U.S., neighboring Costa Rica, and Spain, and these events only increased the emigration rates. However, Nicaraguan immigrants, particularly women immigrating to Spain, often suffer poor treatment at the hands of locals, causing a difficult situation for many Nicaraguans. Despite their differences, ideology has played little to no role in determining events in these two countries. Ultimately, their difficulties resulted from circumstance. Nicaragua’s more stable, yet authoritarian, government has harbored nationalism, but failed to deliver tangible results. Guatemala’s recent history has shown what an unhealthy democratization process can do to a nation. Both Guatemala and Nicaragua rank low on the 2022 Transparency Index (150 and 164 out of 180, respectively) and the Human Development Index (0.663 for Guatemala and 0.660 for Nicaragua). Poverty, insecurity, and distrust of the government are rampant. Guatemala and Nicaragua, both largely agriculture-based economies, receive 14.6 percent and 17 percent respectively of their GDP through remittances. Trying to get their states to improve

the situation has proven futile in recent years, with China being either abusive or unwilling to help and the domestic private sector incapable to reach foreign markets without massive investment. In short, kleptocracies and unpopular states result in border crises, no matter the ideology that drives this circumstance.

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Courtesy of Adedotun Oluwatosin Ajibade (Wikimedia Commons)

# WATER SCARCITY AND ARMED CONFLICT SHAPING MIGRATION PATTERNS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Katherine Dorrer | Communications Liason





In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), water scarcity, worsened by climate change, has contributed to a rise in global migration. Climate change, environmental degradation, and water stress drive extreme migration patterns throughout the MENA region. As climate change intensifies in states with weakened central government authority, armed groups, and extremist organizations exploit these challenges and weaponize water. These water-stressed countries, which already face high levels of poverty, are extremely vulnerable to negative climate and water-related impacts on agriculture and health. If the world continues on this path of environmental destruction, the tactical weaponization and denial of water to civilians will continue to place strain on political systems, causing mass migrations and internal displacement across the MENA region.

In the 1990 and 1992 reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, migration was projected to be one of the most considerable global challenges caused by climate change. The World Bank reports that the MENA region is a “global hotspot of unsustainable water use.” The United Nations World Water Assessment Program estimates 1.8 billion people will inhabit regions with absolute water scarcity by 2025. Extreme weather conditions and the severe imbalance of power in the Middle East exacerbate the region’s existing water scarcity, as do poor governance and water management. Extremist groups then take advantage of nations’ fragility, resulting in widespread interstate conflict and further mass displacement.

The United Nations World Water Assessment Program estimates 1.8 billion people will inhabit regions with absolute water scarcity by 2025.

Water stress across the Middle East

and Africa allows armed groups to manipulate water as a weapon. Since 2011, there have been more than 180 instances of water infrastructure—which can include drinking water, irrigation, sanitation, and purification of water—being targeted in Middle Eastern nations. As water and food supplies become limited, tensions over access to these resources can trigger violent conflicts in already fragile states. Furthermore, a World Bank report suggests that at least 60 percent of water resources in the region are transboundary, necessitating international cooperation and management. Since these underground aquifers cross international borders and are not defined by the political landscape, effective management of its resources demands cooperation between all parties involved. Israel and Palestine, for example, are forced by their geographic and political situations to share water resources, which can become a source of disagreement. Under the Oslo II Accord, Israel controls approximately 80 percent of all transboundary water reserves, leaving Palestine with limited resources. As in other conflict zones in the Middle East, competition over secure water supplies can fuel violent conflicts.

Recognizing the connection between environmental weaknesses and the advancement of armed groups is critical to understanding water-war strategy and its contribution to increasing in migration. The manipulation of the Tigris and Euphrates river systems as an instrument of violence is a reoccurring feature in Iraqi history. Extremist groups take direct, deliberate actions, such as forcefully flooding an area to displace communities, that can cause damaging economic. The self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) is one such extremist group that uses hydro-terrorism to strengthen its ideology and increase the size of its force. For example, IS saw a 60-70 percent increase in Syrian fighters locally after it manipulated the Islamic Administration for Public

The MENA region is a “global hotspot of unsustainable water use.”

Services and polluted local water shelters. The rise of militant extremism allowed IS to exploit the vulnerability of local communities with the promise of its private resources.

The Islamic State has integrated the weaponization of water into its ideology, leading to long-term and permanent migration. The use of water in violent conflicts is not new, but it became more prevalent during the Syrian and Iraqi civil wars. For example, in response to the Marsh Arabs’ 1991 post-Gulf War rebellion against the Iraqi government, Saddam Hussein diverted water flow to the southern marshes, displacing over 100,000 families. States and armed groups can meet political goals and gain control over territories by manipulating the region’s water infrastructure and contaminating reserves. The Islamic State, for example, has strategically weaponized water in several instances. In 2014, IS took control of a dam in Fallujah and deliberately held back water reserves and orchestrated severe floods, forcing families to seek refuge. IS, by reducing water flow and contaminating the existing water supply, forced people in southern Iraq to flee after their scant water supply became undrinkable. IS also employed this strategy with the Tigris River; they diverted the river water to flood areas of Mansouriya in Iraq, destroying agricultural lands and homes and suspending clean drinking water.

IS continues to be a powerful insurgent force in the Middle East, particularly in Iraq and Syria, contributing to forced displacement and migration. Though political violence and armed conflict drive families to seek refuge, climate change and water scarcity contribute more significantly to rural-to-urban migration, which exacerbates existing water demand



Water scarcity pushes families into already dense cities.  
Courtesy of Mahmoud Sulaiman (Unsplash)

issues. Water scarcity and weaponization encourage migration, which increases pressure on the area where migrants have relocated to. The increased demand for water with no corresponding increase in supply, especially in developing countries already facing environmental challenges, results in a water shortage that further impacts refugees and migrants.

The growing population of urban areas imposes great burdens on water supply, and the loss of livelihood due to increasing water scarcity in communities already vulnerable to climate-related crises thus exacerbates migration. Migration is often recognized as an adaptive response to socio-environmental conditions; therefore, various implications of water availability push families to move from rural to urban areas. Furthermore, high population density and limited water resources directly impact migration patterns in conflict-affected areas. The population in the MENA region more than doubled between 1970 and 2001,

increasing from 173 million people to 386 million. Overpopulation in rural communities increases competition for employment, driving the need to search for jobs elsewhere. Both cities and rural areas are dealing with this increased population density, but families continue to move from rural to urban areas in search of economic opportunities. Lack of water security contributes especially to the migration of lower-income individuals, as they are unable to sustain agricultural practices.

The Syrian conflict forced many families to abandon their rural farmlands in favor of urban areas, hoping for new opportunities; their hopeful migration, however, brings further sociopolitical stressors. The drought between 2006 and 2011 in the Levant region in Syria led to widespread failures of agricultural systems and social structures, internally displacing more than 6.7 million Syrians since 2011. While conflict and political disputes are a major driving force for Syrian refugees and displaced people within

The drought between 2006 and 2011 in the Levant region displaced more than 6.7 million Syrians.

the country, poor governance places increased pressure on the country’s already failing water management system. The World Water Development Report of 2016 explains that there is a “clear connection between water scarcity, food insecurity, and social instability and potentially violent conflicts, which in turn can trigger and intensify migration patterns through the world.”

The lack of water negatively impacts crop cultivation and harvest practices, such that agricultural practices produce fewer food resources and higher prices in an already impoverished society. According to a U.N. Security Council report from October 2021, Syrians continue to struggle with access to sufficient and safe water, which has led to high rates of food insecurity





African woman carrying water across dried up land.  
Courtesy of Gaurav Bhosle (Wikimedia Commons)

and negative health implications. Food insecurity and poor healthcare are recognized as both drivers and consequences of migration. Lack of access to healthcare, clean water, and food during mobility creates poor living conditions within the migration process. Climate variability, food insecurity, and migration within the MENA region are thus interconnected.

Migration exacerbated by water scarcity is one of the foremost issues on the global political agenda. Due to poor governance and water management, millions of families migrate to increase their chances of survival, especially as extremist groups exploit their vulnerability. Climate change disrupts weather activity, making the availability of water unpredict-

able, and extreme weather patterns prevent communities from accessing clean water. As the Middle East and North African region continues to face increasingly harmful impacts of climate change, its instability and inability to protect refugees, due to both environmental challenges and preexisting political and social issues, presents a significant threat to international security. The breakdown of governmental authorities and the rise of armed groups in Middle Eastern nations continue to displace millions of people and strain bordering nations. If current climate and conflict trends continue, the risk of wars being fought over water access will only increase. Humanitarian agencies and the international com-

munity must act now to ensure sustainable governance and protection for both refugees and host states.

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# THE COMPOUNDING TERROR AND MIGRATION CRISES

Madeline Field | Staff Writer



Courtesy of Mstyslav Chernov (Wikimedia Commons)



Violent, Islamic-extremist terrorism has captured headlines around the world for much of the last two decades, with the number of deaths attributable to Islamic terrorism, sharply increasing in both the West and the Middle East and North African (MENA) region. This rise in terrorism across the Middle East has spurred a migration crisis, as desperate people flee to neighboring countries and across the sea to Europe in hopes of escaping violence, economic despair, and civil repression.

The most recent Middle Eastern migration crisis peaked in 2015 when roughly 1.3 million migrants arrived in Europe, primarily leaving Syria due to the civil war. The 2015 migrant crisis was the culmination of many long-standing issues that were exacerbated by the instability of the post-Iranian Revolution Middle East and brought to a head by the 9/11 attacks. Compounding the crises were the Arab Spring revolutions in the early 2010s, which led to increased conflict and political instability and allowed terror groups, such as ISIS, to flourish in conflict-ridden regions like Syria.

In addition to terrorism increasing post-9/11, new, destabilizing approaches to counterterrorism by both Middle Eastern and Western nations—such as the 2003 invasion of Iraq—have created more wars and conflict, forcing

millions more to flee. Counterterrorism expert Alex Schmid of the International Centre for Counter-terrorism says, “the common people [paid] the largest price” for anti-terrorism zealotry.

In retrospect, the 2015 crisis proved to be an impossibly difficult immigration and counter-terrorism problem that continues to affect involved countries today. During the crisis, security lapses occurred in several EU countries such as France, where some of the terrorists that later perpetrated the November 2015 Paris attacks took advantage of overwhelmed border security and managed to enter France legally. These lapses have diminished public support for taking in massive flows of migrants from Middle Eastern countries. Many Europeans believe that the flood of migrants is at least slightly correlated with heightened terrorism.

Parallel widespread European fears of a ‘migrant invasion’ and concrete increases in crime and terrorism have deeply shaken Europe’s political and social order, with the European media playing a particularly influential role. Such popular hysteria, often perpetrated by British tabloids and right-wing sites, has led many experts to attribute the withdrawal of Britain from the EU as a reaction to fears sparked by influxes of migrants from non-European

states. One University of Chicago study indicates that “within the EU, negative attitudes towards immigrants are also associated with higher levels of Euroscepticism” as the lack of borders and free movement associated with EU membership “increase feelings of exposure to security threats and terrorism.”

Many European intelligence officials feared that terrorists would be able to capitalize on many European countries’ security vulnerabilities, whether crossing through established human smuggling routes, by using fake identification and passports, or simply posing as refugees in order to gain citizenship.

Looking at ICCT data, these fears were not unfounded. During the 2015 migrant crisis, it became clear that uncontrollable numbers of disorderly migrant crossings pushed the Schengen Borders Code system, temporarily adopted by the EU, to a “de facto” breaking point. Initially generous refugee policies were soon untenable given the very apparent threat that terrorism- and in particular, the Islamic State- posed to Europe. In a little over two years, beginning in 2015, various radical Islamic-extremist groups planned and executed eight mass-casualty events in the countries most intimately involved in the migrant crisis.

The truth, however, is not as clear-cut as it appears. While large numbers of forced and voluntary migrants increase the likelihood of terrorism in host countries, the heightened numbers of migrants who flee their homes are directly correlated to increased acts of terror in their original country. Most migrants flee terrorism, only to experience it in their new homes.

With the very notable exception of the 9/11 attacks, Western countries from 2001-2016 comprised a mere .5 percent of global terrorism fatalities, according to the ICCT. While attacks were terrifying when they did occur, such as the 2004 Madrid train bombings or the 2017 Manchester Arena bombings, they are rare. It remains unclear whether the relatively low terrorism fatality rate in the West can be attributed to stringent migrant and security policies, or the

more stable socio-economic situations migrants and refugees find themselves in when they reach developed nations.

There are steps along a migrant’s journey where radicalization and subsequent recruitment into terrorist groups are possible. Many radical groups exploit the vulnerable socio-economic situations most migrants find themselves in, indicating that European agencies should remain vigilant in accepting refugees. However, the European Institute of the Mediterranean found that the majority of European Islamic terrorists are “homegrown” and tend to be unqualified immigrant workers, suggesting that radicalization becomes more pervasive once individuals have arrived in their countries.

While the solution for many countries lies in better understanding the psychology of terror, many Western states and citizens fail to grasp more complex understandings of terrorism beyond traditional stereotypes on both sides of the political spectrum. These stereotypes range from the extreme right-wing point of view, which asserts that terrorists are rabid religious fanatics out to destroy Western civilization (see Samuel Huntington’s book *Clash of Civilizations* for a particularly troubling depiction of Islam), to those on the sympathetic left, which paints terrorists as hapless participants in an oppressive global society, itching to strike out against the forces that oppress them.

A collection of evidence collected on the reasoning for Islamic terrorism suggests that both stereotypes are largely incorrect. Primarily, “radical Islamic

Only 17 percent of polled Muslims see religion as the key factor in recruiting for ISIS, according to CSIS.

terrorism,” a phrase typically wielded by Western media to describe attacks perpetrated by Muslim terrorists, is much less Islamic than portrayed; the vast majority of victims of Jihadist terrorism are Muslim. According to the Cen-

ter for Strategic International Studies (CSIS), 85 percent of Islamic terrorist attacks are perpetrated in Muslim-majority countries, with many migrants themselves falling victim to terrorist activity at home. Data collected by the ICCT from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria indicates that immigration to another country is directly correlated with the number of deadly terror attacks and terrorism deaths in a migrant’s home country.

Only 17 percent of polled Muslims see religion as the key factor in recruiting for ISIS, according to CSIS. The Quran expressly prohibits the murder of Muslims and non-Muslims alike, indicating to many Muslims that if Islamic terrorism was solely about Islam, it would be difficult to justify the killing of innocent civilians.

However, that is not to say that terrorism is the other extreme; completely religiously separated, unavoidable, or low-IQ. Researchers examining Islamic State fighters have discovered a strong corollary between the highly skilled attackers, suicide bombers, planners, and executioners that aim to further the ideological goals of their organization, and high education levels combined with either underemployment or unemployment. The Brookings Institute reports that the “frustrated expectations of individuals for economic improvement and social mobility,” or “relative deprivation” of well-educated individuals within a population pushes them to adopt radical social theories, perhaps as a means of political expression or frustration.

This data suggests that terrorism is more politically motivated than anything else- a means by which repressed voices can make themselves heard, given the devastating effects of counter-terrorism, and the sheer number of violent, corrupt autocracies in the region which arose from a lack of civil service reform and the privatization of oil-rich lands by ruling figures following colonialism. One group of authors believe that “terrorism resembles a violent form of political engagement,” of which “educated people from privileged backgrounds are more likely to participate in.” The surprising lack of

terrorist violence in wealthy democratic countries, versus the multitude of terrorist attacks in countries that are corrupt and politically and civilly repressed (i.e. Syria), supports this evidence.

Regardless, the whole world feels the effects of “Islamic” jihadists, and host governments must take advantage of the lull in the security situation to take concrete steps toward diminishing migrant radicalization.

The first thing states can do is strengthen their administrative control and bureaucracy. Research indicates that in more developed countries, “stronger bureaucratic capacity, improved ability to screen refugees, and enhanced security measures” all lower radicalization rates. Weaker state governments, such as those in the MENA region where terrorism proliferates, are lacking in the aforementioned areas and thus more vulnerable. Furthermore, poor border control allows terrorists to utilize common smuggling routes for more sinister activity, increasing security vulnerability.

Maintaining state control through a combination of both national and international funding is key to diminishing state weaknesses that terrorists can take advantage of. Increased border security measures, while unpopular, ensure that unvetted, dangerous migrants are less likely to cross into a Europe that may soon be unable to accommodate their needs. It also lowers the ability of terrorists to exploit the refugee process to slip into countries, as was the case with many of the Paris ISIS attackers.

Another important step is maintaining clean refugee camps and intermediary homes that shelter migrants. Many host countries, left to their own devices and forced to deal with an expensive and difficult security situation without international assistance, push refugees into crowded and dangerous camps.

A study published by RAND on refugee radicalization points at data in Kenya indicating that the further a refugee camp is from the center of state control (and thus military, state, and political control), the more likely it is to allow crime to spiral out of control. Data indicates that “the longer refugees



Azaz, Syria during the Syrian civil war.  
Courtesy of Cess Joppe (Flickr)





Tents found in Dadaab refugee camp in northern Kenya.  
Courtesy of UK Department for International Development (Wikimedia Commons)

are confined to camps and the lower the likelihood that the initiating crisis will be resolved quickly, the greater the risk of radicalization” and lowered compassion by the host state. Many states, aware of the domestic backlash that growing refugee populations will bring, limit migrants’ economic and social integration, even preventing them in some cases, as in Kenya, from owning land or obtaining a job.

Stories from the Al Hawl camp, the largest IDP camp in Northeastern Syria, emphasize the importance of this factor. ISIS members and supporters have turned a once-peaceful camp into a hub for “terrorist indoctrination, radicalization, human smuggling, document fraud, forgery and financing,” allowing its militancy to remain strong in the region despite territorial losses elsewhere.

In Europe, ghettos, where many new migrants end up living, are, according to the IEMED, “hotbeds of jihadism” due to “unemployment rates, delinquency, and sentiments of social and geographical marginalization experienced by youth” who are then radicalized by extremist religious leaders and zealots. Ensuring that migrants are met with proper resources and access to employment upon arriving in Europe, as well as the embrace of supportive religious communities, is essential as they settle into their new lives.

However, these points, when implemented singularly, still fail to completely address the radicalization of some mi-

grants in Europe, leading to the final strategy: protecting migrants from discrimination and promoting their involvement and integration into society. The likelihood that migrants commit terrorism remains incredibly low. However, discrimination, according to an article published in the British Journal of Political Science, is a “powerful predictor for terrorism.”

Quite simply, migrants, barred from traditional non-violent forms of religious, economic, and political participation, are easier to radicalize. For some migrants (particularly those who are less likely to assimilate into the host’s economic market), terrorism becomes a “means to voice dissent and achieve politico-economic relief.” One article published in the Conflict Management and Peace Science journal found that “socioeconomic discrimination against minorities is the only consistently significant and highly substantive predictor of terrorism.”

Migrants are vulnerable to terrorism in their host country if the nationals of the host country perceive them as a grave threat to their economic or social well-being. The tendency to scapegoat migrants for increased crime and civil unrest is most present among nationalist and isolationist factions of the population, ideologies which tend to proliferate with the presence of more refugees. Bettering attitudes towards migrants and lessening the impact of nationalist fear

campaigns will reduce the likelihood of migrant terrorism and nationalistic backlash in countries that host them.

Terrorism, whether manifested through direct conflict perpetrated by state and non-state actors or reduced economic opportunity and quality of life, pushes people out of their homelands and to areas that are sadly unable (and unwilling) to socially and economically accommodate heightened numbers of migrants who arrive with nothing at their doorstep.

It is not possible to stop the continuous migrant crisis completely. However, there are steps nations around the world, and particularly those in Europe, can take to alleviate the crisis. Given the serious intersections between lack of economic opportunity, migration, and terrorism, all states need to improve attitudes surrounding migration. This can be done through creating stronger refugee integration programs, enhancing bureaucratic and national security procedures, and establishing the infrastructure to justly and equitably ensure that not only are migrants taken care of, but that the states they flee to can benefit from their presence.

While migration regimes that affirm both the human dignity of migrants and the sovereignty and security of nations may be difficult to implement, they can go a long way in ensuring the safety of host-country citizens as well as migrants in their new homes.

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## THE DOUBLE STANDARD OF MIGRATION CRISES

Elsie Tierney | Staff Writer

Courtesy of Ukraine Ministry of Internal Affairs (Flickr)



Due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, Europe is facing its largest migrant crisis since 2015 when 1.3 million migrants applied for asylum in the 28 European Union (EU) member states, Norway, and Switzerland. The majority of the asylum seekers in 2015 originated from three countries: Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Many were fleeing conflicts, both long-standing and fresh, including the Syrian civil war. Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February, 12 million people have left their homes. This vastly exceeds the previous record of 700,000 in 1992 after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the Soviet Union.

Five million Ukrainians have successfully fled to other countries and seven million are still displaced in Ukraine. The EU unanimously enacted the never before used Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) on March 3. The TPD was developed in 2001 after the Yugoslav Wars in the former

The EU unanimously enacted the **Temporary Protection Directive** for the first time in response to the Ukraine crisis.

Yugoslavia during the 1990s. It allows a specific, clearly defined group fleeing a conflict to receive a collective protection status in the EU. Unlike national temporary status, this also allows Ukrainians to move through the EU to reunite with their personal ties.

In the specific instance of Ukrainian refugees, the TPD gives them residence permits to stay in the European bloc for one year, which can be renewed for as long as three years. Under the TPD, Ukrainian refugees and their families are granted access to education, health, employment, and housing. This protection can be granted in any EU country, not just the first country the refugee arrives in.

With the implementation of the TPD, the EU is showing what has

been deemed, “uncharacteristic flexibility” for those who were forced to flee their homes without passports or any other means of identification. The European Commission says that member states can relax border controls and allow people to enter, so they can be brought to a safe location where ID checks are then conducted.

The TPD does not automatically grant these refugees asylum status. For those under this special protection regulation, they can submit asylum applications at any point during their stay. However, there inevitably will be backlogs of asylum cases due to the substantial number of people entering the EU in search of asylum. 3.5 million Ukrainians had already registered for temporary protection in the EU by the end of June 2022.

There are a lot of bureaucratic hurdles that the EU must overcome to ensure these people are not stuck in limbo. Some of the smaller, poorer countries—such as Moldova or Slovakia—do not have much space capacity, and, due to their geographic location, are prime destination countries for these Ukrainian refugees. Any Ukrainians seeking asylum in the United States and join family members there are having difficulty crossing the ocean. The Biden administration has offered to take 100,000 people, which is nothing compared to how many are displaced in Europe.

Europe responded to the Ukrainian refugee crisis incredibly quickly and was much more accommodating than the region has been in the past to incoming refugees. Many observers have noted as this conflict progresses that many other refugees have often been shunned by Western countries, while fleeing Ukrainians have been welcomed. In an interview with Al Jazeera, Oksana Pokalchuk, the head of Amnesty International Ukraine stated, “this is the biggest armed conflict or war since the Second World War in Europe, which might be one of the reasons why the level of solidarity is higher in European countries.” Despite this, he also noted the “double standard” in the treatment of refugees that this crisis has revealed. He cited

an incident that occurred at the end of June 2022 in which 23 migrants died during an attempt to flee to Spain from Morocco. The United Nations denounced the authorities on the Spanish Moroccan border for using, “excessive force” and deeming it, “unacceptable.”

Pokalchuk emphasized that different refugee groups had not been treated equally in their reception by EU members, citing instances within the Ukrainian refugee crisis that were racialized, including non-nationals living in Ukraine at the time of the invasion who did not speak the local language, the majority of whom were students from Africa and India. Many of those students became trapped in Ukraine. At the borders, busses taking people to safety have been prioritizing Ukrainian nationals. There have been accusations that the Ukrainian or other local police and military have committed acts of violence against these students at the borders.

Since the migrant crisis in 2015, Europe implemented external border controls which reduced irregular arrivals to the EU by 90 percent. There is a general theme that can be noted in migration policies in the EU in the past seven years. The response in 2015 focused mostly on strengthening the borders and managing the different routes migrants were taking. The most recent response in 2022, focuses on those things as well, but there are also more policies directly related to humanitarian aid. The response in 2022 is significantly more immediate than in 2015.

A direct example of this is on April 4, 2022, when approximately \$17 billion of EU funds became available to help refugees from Ukraine. The European Council (EC) adopted a new regulation on Cohesion Action for Refugees in Europe (CARE) which allows for the quick release of cohesion policy funding. In addition to this, member states of the EC were allowed to use the Recovery Assistance for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe (REACT-EU) which was created as one of the largest post-pandemic EU public investment programs.



Europe and the West have united in support of Ukraine.  
Courtesy of Markus Spiske (Unsplash)

On the opposite end, the policies adopted in 2015-2016 did not focus on humanitarian aid as urgently as the current response. On September 23, 2015, there was an informal meeting with the heads of state or government in the EU. They set a list of priorities for action, including responding to urgent needs of refugees, assisting the Western Balkan countries in managing their refugee influx, and handling the situation at the EU's external borders—but this was only a discussion. On October 8, 2015, there was a conference held to address the Western Balkan routes, marking the first step to addressing any of these issues.

The first concrete step towards humanitarian aid did not come until February 3, 2016, in which the member states agreed to finance an approximately \$3 billion EU refugee facility for Turkey that would allow the EU to deliver more humanitarian assistance to the refugees in Turkey and their host communities. More of the same came on February 4, 2016, when the former EC president Donald Tusk announced an approximately \$3 billion contribution to assist the Syrian people, both in the country as well refugees who had already fled.

While these each were a step in the right direction, these reactions were nowhere near as urgent as the policies put forward in 2022. Hungary

closed its borders on September 15, 2015, barring anyone from entering the country. Upon this move, the UN refugee agency warned refugees could, “find themselves moving around in legal limbo” and different border control measures by European states “only underlines the urgency of establishing a comprehensive European response.”

2015 may have taught the EU lesson because their response in 2022 was much more comprehensive, unified, and prepared than their response in 2015. Regardless of whatever policy responses happened in the past, there is an ongoing refugee crisis now that needs to be addressed.

The migrant crisis is a direct result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine but another direct result of this is the current energy crisis in Europe. There is an energy scarcity in Eastern Europe right now due to Russia curbing gas exports. The uncertain energy supply is causing an unprecedented price increase across the EU. Market intervention, protectionism and price capping have become part of the transatlantic energy policy agenda. In the EU, the highest inflation rate due to this gas shortage was in Estonia at 20.1 percent. However, the effects of this were felt all over the world with the U.S. reaching a 40-year high of 8.6 percent inflation in May 2022. There

are also major fuel shortages in Ukraine due to the war. Before the war, 80 percent of the country's fuel was imported, mostly by rail from Russian ally, Belarus.

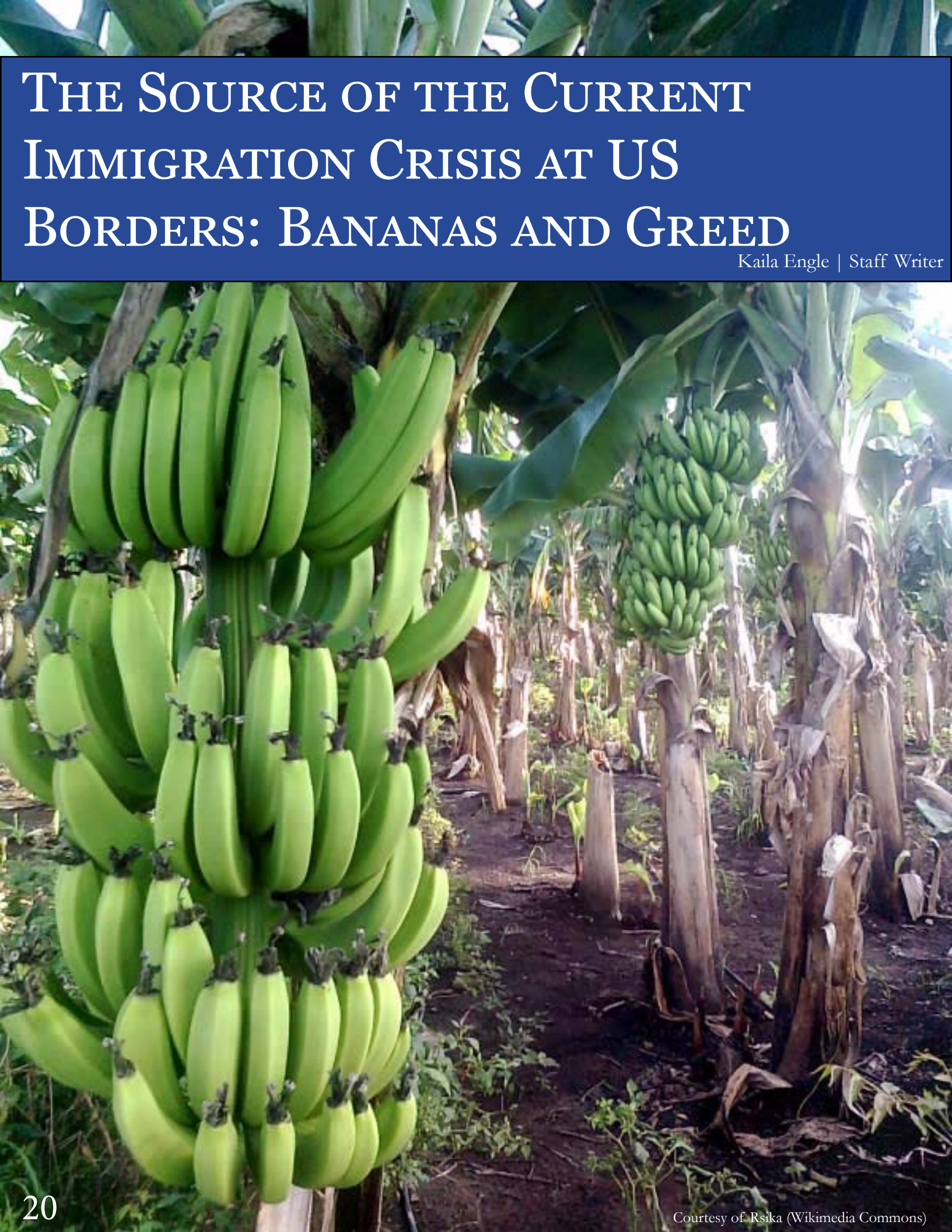
There are some steps currently being taken to help this situation. The Slovak Economy Minister Richard Sulík announced that the Druzhba pipeline, which delivers Russian oil to Central Europe could be converted to send this fuel back into Ukraine. Additionally, the Ukrainian energy company Ukrtransnafta recently signed a contract with the Hungary-based company MOL to upgrade infrastructure and supply to 35,000 tons of fuel per month. However, the current delivery capacity is a maximum 5,000 tons per month—a seventh of Ukraine's monthly fuel consumption.

Ukraine and the rest of the EU need to find a solution to the energy crisis before winter. This situation is exacerbated by the extensive damage to many of the buildings in Ukraine's urban center. Even if there was enough fuel for heating, there are houses with shattered windows and general damage which would require more energy. The UNHCR has already published a winterization strategy that includes handing out building materials to Ukrainians.

The February 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine has cause Europe to encounter its largest migrant crisis since 2015. The response in 2022 has been far more urgent and more based in humanitarian aid than in 2015, which could be due to preparedness or solidarity, but it could also be due to racial biases. Overall, this invasion has caused widespread problems including an energy crisis that will worsen the effects of the migrant crisis as well.

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# THE SOURCE OF THE CURRENT IMMIGRATION CRISIS AT US BORDERS: BANANAS AND GREED

Kaila Engle | Staff Writer

Throughout the twenty-first century, there has been a rapid increase in Central American emigration, especially from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala, known together as the “Northern Triangle.” The Migration Policy Institute found that in 2019, out of all the Central American immigrants in the United States, 37.3 percent (1,412,000 people) were from El Salvador, 29.4 percent (1,111,000 people) were from Guatemala, and 19.7 percent (746,000 people) were from Honduras. Migrants have flooded the United States-Mexico border to the point where President Biden is faced with overcrowding, a lack of resources, the separation of families, and minimal protection of immigrants. The Washington Post describes this influx as “the biggest surge in twenty years,” and Rio Grande Valley’s Border Patrol Chief tweets, “There is no end in sight.” This widespread migration continues to challenge the United States’ foreign and domestic policy, but this immigration crisis primarily reflects the failures of U.S. intervention in foreign affairs.

The U.S.-Mexico border is overwhelmed, with the borders flooded with migrants, underfunded, and understaffed. Border Patrol Sector Chief of Yuma, Arizona Chris Clem explains that “there’s just so many of them that it is posing a challenge to the workforce” and estimates that almost 1,000 migrants are detained in his sector daily. These challenges are harmful to the safety and health of the migrants themselves, as investigations into the conditions of migrant camps along the border have exposed the poor resources and environment of these facilities. Reports have indicated that children are being fed raw meat and becoming ill, waiting hours for medical care, and being laughed at for asking for medicine and aid. Mass outbreaks of lice, COVID-19, and other viruses have also been reported at these camps. An anonymous employee said that approximately 800 young girls were

quarantined for a month because of a lice breakout. There are also many reports of sexual abuse being rampant within detention centers, especially those for women and children.

The crisis occurring at the borders today reflects the consequences of selfish, failed U.S. foreign policy, especially for migrants from the

Border Patrol Sector Chief of Yuma, Arizona claims almost 1,000 migrants are detained in his sector each day.

“Northern Triangle.” The United States’ interference in Guatemala primarily began during the Jorge Ubico’s term as president from 1931 to 1944. Ubico aligned himself with the largest landowner in the country at the time, the United Fruit Company (UFCO). UFCO is a U.S.-owned company that held significant power and influence under Ubico’s rule and is known for selling bananas. According to the Zinn Education Project, Ubico had enforced laws that pushed poor laborers, mainly homeless Mayans, to work for big landowners such as UFCO and granted the company an extensive amount of land. In addition, he had imprisoned or killed anyone who opposed him. Since UFCO benefited greatly from these actions, the United States is quoted to have “simply ignored it so long as U.S. investment in the country flourished.” In 1944, the Guatemalan middle class launched a democratic uprising against his oppressive rule. Such political pressures forced Ubico to resign and to be replaced by President Juan Arevalo, Guatemala’s first democratically elected leader.

After six years in office, Arevalo was succeeded by disciple Jacobo Arbenz. Arbenz furthered Arevalo’s liberal agenda by taking on a “spiritual socialism” that called for social and economic reform. One of his

main initiatives was redistributing land to peasants and the landless. At the time, “only 2 percent of the landholders owned 72 percent of the arable lands,” according to the Zinn Education Project. Arbenz aided the Guatemalan Congress in passing Decree 900, which ordered all uncultivated land greater than 600 acres to be distributed to the poor and landless. The original landowners would be compensated with government bonds based on the land’s tax value, and “of the 341,000 landowners [in Guatemala at the time], only 1,700 holdings came under those provisions.” Despite the seemingly insignificant impact on land holdings, this decree was viewed as a threat to the U.S. since it negatively impacted UFCO’s holdings. They had “owned some 600,000 acres, with most of it unused.” Arbenz offered the UFCO \$1.2 million for a large section of land, refusing the company’s counteroffer for \$16 million for the land which the U.S. State Department approved. With the confiscation of land and the presence of the Communist party in Guatemala, U.S. President Eisenhower and his administration, who had ties to UFCO, decided that Arbenz needed to be removed from office. Even though Arbenz himself was not a communist, he became the scapegoat of the Eisenhower administration to conceal their true motivation of greed in controlling the banana trade over democracy.

After deeming Arbenz and his policies to be against American interests, Eisenhower authorized the CIA to start planning operation PBSUCCESS, which worked to overthrow Arbenz. The mission was a coup that included spreading propaganda around Guatemala about Arbenz’s communist involvement and poor leadership to undermine his people’s support for him, supporting and arming the rebel of rival Carlos Castillo Armas, and backing Armas’s invasion and presidency. Despite his illegal rise to power and the destruc-



tion of Guatemala’s democracy, the U.S. quickly supported and recognized Castillo’s authority. He returned over 1.5 million acres to UFCO and prohibited more than 500 unions. In addition, Castillo reversed all the work Arbenz and his predecessor had done, allowing the oppression of thousands of poor farmers to continue. Democracy was destroyed under the United States’ influence, despite being a country founded on spreading democratic liberal ideals.

Castillo’s coup and rise to power divided the state, resulting in a 36-year civil war with dictators coming into power and constantly being overthrown. The resulting power gap within the state allowed organized crime groups to gain power and influence with no consequences or punishment by the government. The violence and insecurity that stems from a cartel-ruled country is detrimental to the state’s citizens and is why thousands of Guatemalans are fleeing and seeking safety in the United States. The United States government’s choice to prioritize the domination of the banana trade and policy power has greatly influenced the conditions inciting the current mass migration of Guatemalans to the United States.

For several years, Mexican drug cartels have encouraged poor indigenous farmers in western Guatemala to replace their regular crops, such as corn and potatoes, with poppy plants used to make heroin. Then, when faced with pressure from the U.S., the Guatemalan government began destroying all the poppy seeds they could. Afterward, with “no other high-value crop to replace the poppies, and no program available to help replace farmers’ income,” farmers began to fall into poverty. According to the World Bank, the poverty rate in 2019 was 47.8 percent of the population and increased to 52.4 percent during the pandemic. Indigenous communities are most impacted by poverty, “with 79 percent living in poverty, on the less than \$5.50 a day, and 40 percent living in extreme pov-

erty, on less than \$1.90 a day.” The current living conditions faced by Guatemalans raise the question that if Decree 900 was never removed and Castillo never rose to power, would a good portion of Guatemala’s population still live off \$1.90 a day? Also, if the U.S. government asked the Guatemalan government to remove poppy fields and then offered aid for the farmers, perhaps fewer migrants would feel less insecure in their economic opportunities. Instead, Guatemalan migrants feel forced to depart their country in hopes of a better life in the United States.

Another contributing factor to the mass migration from Guatemala to the US is food insecurity and widespread malnutrition. The Washington Post reports that in Guatemala, “the chronic child malnutrition rate hovers around 70 percent, higher than any country in the world.” In 2015, the Obama administration tried to offset waves of migration by providing a \$1 billion aid package to tackle food insecurity. However, the aid increased the malnutrition rate due to natural disasters, economic setbacks, and an uncooperative government. Carlos Carrera, the country director for UNICEF,

said, “at this pace, it will require 100 years for Guatemala to eradicate chronic malnutrition.” As prices continue to rise due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war, and the supply chain crisis, less food is available, more families and children are starving, and more people feel that their only option for safety is to migrate from their home country.

The connection of failed U.S. foreign involvement leading to poor living conditions and mass migration is common throughout all the countries encompassing the Northern Triangle. For example, during his term in the 1980s, President Ronald Reagan and his administration decided to support the El Salvadorian government during the country’s civil war. This decision was based on the Communists gaining a foothold in Nicaragua at the time and the fact that the El Salvadorian government was already known for brutal violence. Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter had withheld aid to El Salvador years before Reagan took office because the government sanctioned the rape and murder of four U.S. missionaries. Despite the risk, Reagan had decided to support the government of El Salva-

dor and granted aid in the form of monetary and military support. The domestic tension within El Salvador eventually came to a head. With the United States’ support, the El Salvadorian military committed severe humanitarian and war crimes against its people and started 12 years of instability within the region. In 1993, the United Nations released a report documenting the human rights violations committed by the Salvadoran army.

As a result of the violence inflicted upon the El Salvadorian people, a rapid amount of them began to migrate North to the U.S. According to the Migration Policy Institute, “in 1980 95,000 Salvadoran immigrants lived in the U.S., compared to 1.17 million” in 2015. The migrants came to the U.S. with little to no education and money, and most fell prey to the gang culture prominent in the poor areas of large American cities, such as Los Angeles. As more people fled the instability and violence of their motherland, there was a spike in organized crime activities within the U.S. In 1996, the U.S. government decided to resolve this issue by deporting Salvadorians back to the environment they were fleeing, thus continuing and adding to a constant cycle of violence. An unintended consequence of these actions was the U.S.-style gang culture spreading across El Salvador and strengthening its unstable and violent political and social environments. In a paper featured in the American Economic Review, Maria Sviatschi conducted a study about the correlation between U.S. deportation policies and the prevalence of gang violence within El Salvador. Sviatschi found a substantial correlation between the two factors, stating that “this gang-related violence in areas of El Salvador increased child migration to the United States.” The United States’ decision to use deportation techniques is as useful as placing a bandage on a gunshot, influencing more and more Salvadoran refugees to flee to the United States, further

contributing to the current border crisis. The conditions in El Salvador reflect a pattern of short-lived United States foreign policy, South American countries war-torn and impoverished after a domestic interest was fulfilled.

This same trend is also seen in the relationship between the United States and Honduras. Like Guatemala, a large portion of Honduras’s land was owned by United States fruit companies that specialized in selling bananas. Also, in the 1960s, Honduras was a prominent ally of the United States and received American troops from former President Ronald Reagan to train Nicaraguan rebels in the Iran-Contra affair. With President Reagan’s aid, more Honduran-U.S. military bases were established, political repression became prominent in Honduras, and many economic reforms took place that shook up the agricultural norms and increased poverty among farmers. However, after President Reagan left office and U.S. interests were focused elsewhere, Honduras was left with an abusive military, a divided public, growing poverty rates, and a failing democracy that officially ended after a military coup in 2009. Abandoned by its main ally, Honduras crumpled into a land of corruption, violence, and oppression, driving more migrants to the U.S.-Mexico border every day.

Physicians for Human Rights reports that “in the four months following the coup, there was a 4,000 percent spike in human rights violations.” Such poor humanitarian conditions, coupled with growing poverty within the region, have caused many Hondurans to trek to the United States. Also, more migrants found the journey worth it under Biden’s administration since his immigration plan is less restrictive than his predecessor Donald Trump.

These circumstances of today reflect failed U.S. interventions in foreign policy. As President Biden and his administration continue to battle with this aftermath, they are faced with ei-

ther increasing involvement in South American politics or allowing today’s current crisis to continue. Children are starving, people are barely surviving in poverty, nations are governed by violence and organized crime, and people are migrating to the United States at a rate the United States border control cannot keep up with. These factors all directly result from non-sustainable, United States foreign policies that pursue intervention and benefits short-term U.S. interests with little regard for the safety and stabilities of countries affected by said policies. President Biden is faced with the choice of finally addressing the consequences of these failures or following in the steps of his predecessors.

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Former President Reagan and Vice-President Bush at the 1984 Republican Convention. Courtesy of the National Archives.









# The Diplomatic Envoy

*The Official Undergraduate Foreign Affairs Paper of Seton Hall University's School of Diplomacy*



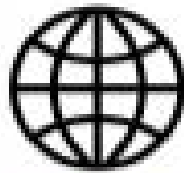
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