



General Assembly

Distr.: General
21 June 2024

English only

Human Rights Council

Fifty-sixth session

18 June–12 July 2024

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Associazione Comunita Papa Giovanni XXIII, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[24 May 2024]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Human Rights of Migrants

The overwhelming conflicts ongoing around the world are leading to several consequences among which the increasing flows of refugees and migrants moving along increasingly dangerous routes.

Mobility has always been an essential factor in human development; the world scenario clearly shows that migratory phenomena represent one of the biggest challenges contemporary society has to face. Displacement keeps being driven by conflicts, violence, discrimination and persecution, including based on religious beliefs, as well as the effect of climate change.

At this point, the need for complex and adequate responses to migratory issues to overcoming legal and physical barriers through holistic and human rights-based approaches is urgent.

According to the latest available global data, international migrants worldwide are around 281 million, including children. About 3.6 per cent of the global population has been forced to flee for different reasons. Furthermore, around 8,500 millions of migrants are dead and missing globally in 2023 (1).

Such numbers and data stand for human beings, ordinary people, each with their own story and suffering, forced to run away from their countries to reach a future that otherwise would be uncertain.

It is imperative to underline how many migration policies and border management in different countries still show several criticalities; instead of promoting inclusion, fostering mutual respect and solidarity, they are still based on discrimination and exclusion, painting migrants and refugees as a potential threat to security and enemies to eliminate rather than human persons to welcome and help.

For instance, the systematic pushbacks along several migration routes, the building of walls to protect national frontiers and the externalisation of the European Union's borders reflect such restrictive attitudes in implementing current migration strategies.

All such failure policies, implemented in different parts of the world, build legal and physical barriers to deterring migration. Moreover, many governments managing migration give greater priority to political consensus than to human rights and dignity. As a result, migrants are more than ever pushed to travel irregularly.

The limited access to safe and regular migration pathways increases the risk of suffering from abuses and discrimination and being exposed to trafficking, smuggling, forced labour, and other forms of exploitation.

The condition of irregularity that migrants experience has to be never considered a crime; it is a vulnerability that has to be decreased and overcome by policies aimed at protecting human lives and ensuring the enjoyment of human rights and access to fundamental services, including healthcare and justice, in line with the international legal framework.

According to the World Development Report 2023, “Global imbalances, local shocks, and societies’ evolving needs will continue to generate cross-border movements. Yet, the way in which migration is currently managed is failing many migrants and nationals, causing immense suffering for tens of millions, polarising politics, and creating large inefficiencies and economic losses across both destination and origin countries. The challenge is to manage cross-border movements in a way that benefits migrants and refugees, as well as origin and destination societies” (2).

In this regard, both the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) and Global Compact for Refugees (GCF), clearly pave the way to design a cooperative and holistic legal framework by facing migration comprehensively and realising a coordinated and humane global migration governance.

Even if many countries are engaged in such pathways, many others keep denying the need for a global response to migration based on a human-rights approach and mutual action.

As a result, migrating is still considered a fault; in several countries, migrants are detained as criminals, or repatriated to no-safe countries, increasing the risk of being arrested or killed.

Associazione Comunita Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23), working on the grounds, meets every day with migrants facing many barriers and suffering several violations. Along the borders, in refugee camps or informal shelters, life for the people on the move is very challenging. Pushbacks happen regularly and border management takes place in the absolute violation of human rights, through an indiscriminate use of violence and in breach of all regulations for the protection of asylum seekers and migrants.

In addition, in transit or destination countries, job and housing insecurity, lack of food and health care services and marginalisation increase migrants' vulnerability, jeopardising not only their lives, their well-being and the enjoyment of their human rights, but also avoiding their inclusion into society and hindering the opportunity to make an active contribution to the community that hosts them.

As stated in the NY declaration of 2016 “the benefits and opportunities of safe, orderly and regular migration are substantial and are often underestimated”.

It is crucial to provide long-term support in terms of job opportunity creation and housing to migrants, asylum seekers and refugees to fulfil their right to work, housing and an adequate standard of living to realise a better integration and an opportunity to contribute to the host country.

Instead, access to a decent house and dignified work is still a critical issue; in some countries refugee camps are located very far from the urban areas, making migrants marginalised and invisible and making it more difficult to find proper employment. The resulting lack of a job and a fair salary is strictly linked to house insecurity. Having stable and safe accommodation is therefore crucial for facilitating migrants' integration into society and their inclusion process.

Moreover, people living in the camps often resort to informal work without getting a fair salary, with inhuman conditions and running the risk of being exploited by criminal networks or traffickers.

Furthermore, a misrepresented, discriminatory and dehumanising narrative increasingly focuses on the criminalization of migrants and the NGOs rescuing them, ignoring the massive and systematic violations of human rights perpetrated along the migration routes or in the formal or informal camps. Even information in the media mainstream contributes to amplifying the political propaganda, by distorting the perception and visibility of the events and processes related to migration, and by misrepresenting their deep causes and the connection with events like wars or climate catastrophes.

Rethinking and changing narratives on people on the move require seeing and communicating migration not as a problem but as a natural phenomenon that has always been present in our human history, and that will be present in our future as a direct consequence of globalisation or environmental and humanitarian crisis.

Fostering fair and balanced information, increasing knowledge, spreading awareness about such migratory processes on one hand and combatting deep attitudes of prejudice, discrimination, racism and xenophobia, to the other hand, is a fundamental key to foster a narrative change about migration at all levels and guarantee that migrants human rights being fully respected, protected and fulfilled.

Rejecting any discriminatory attitude that criminalises migrants, and non-governmental organisations' solidarity actions worldwide is of utmost urgency.

Associazione Comunita Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23) believes that the full implementation of the international legal and humanitarian framework to protect and respect the human rights of people on the move, in transit and those living in the camps, is needed. As Pope Francis reminds us, “welcome, protect, promote and integrate” (3) are critical actions to build a pathway of justice aimed at respecting migrants' human rights and lives.

Protecting migrants' fundamental human rights and saving lives has to be a priority for all of us and the central core of each political agenda concerning migration management.

We reiterate the need for a global solution that encompasses and harmonises “a migration policy system with safe and orderly regular channels as the creation of safe pathways” (4).

Migration has always to be managed humanely and effectively. In this regard, international solidarity and the operationalization of the right to development can pave the way to fully realise migrant rights by eliminating obstacles, ensuring equality of opportunity for all and fully realise their inclusion into society.

(1) <https://worldmigrationreport.iom.int/news/world-migration-report-2024-reveals-latest-global-trends-and-challenges-human-mobility>

(2) <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2023>

(3) https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20170815_world-migrants-day-2018.html

(4) <https://www.iom.int/global-compact-migration>.