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# IRREGULAR MIGRATION IN EGYPT

*Heba Nassar*

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**CARIM Analytic and Synthetic Notes 2008/57**

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**Irregular Migration Series**

*Demographic and Economic Module*

Cooperation project on the social integration of immigrants, migration, and the movement of persons (CARIM)

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**CARIM**  
**Euro-Mediterranean Consortium**  
**for Applied Research on International Migration**

**Analytic and Synthetic Notes – Irregular Migration Series**  
**Demographic and Economic Module**

**CARIM-AS 2008/57**

**Irregular Migration in Egypt**

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This publication is part of a series of papers on the theme of Irregular Migration written in the framework of the CARIM project and presented at a meeting organised by CARIM in Florence: "Irregular Migration into and through Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Countries" (6 - 8 July 2008).

These papers will also be discussed in another meeting between Policy Makers and Experts on the same topic (25 - 27 January 2009). The results of these discussions will be published separately. The entire set of papers on Irregular Migration are available at the following address: <http://www.carim.org/ql/IrregularMigration>.

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## **CARIM**

The Euro-Mediterranean Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration (CARIM) was created in February 2004 and has been financed by the European Commission. Until January 2007, it referred to part C - “*cooperation related to the social integration of immigrants issue, migration and free circulation of persons*” of the MEDA programme, i.e. the main financial instrument of the European Union to establish the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Since February 2007, CARIM has been funded as part of the AENEAS programme for technical and financial assistance to third countries in the areas of migration and asylum. The latter programme establishes a link between the external objectives of the European Union’s migration policy and its development policy. AENEAS aims at providing third countries with the assistance necessary to achieve, at different levels, a better management of migrant flows.

Within this framework, CARIM aims, in an academic perspective, to observe, analyse, and predict migration in the North African and the Eastern Mediterranean Region (hereafter Region).

CARIM is composed of a coordinating unit established at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (RSCAS) of the European University Institute (EUI, Florence), and a network of scientific correspondents based in the 12 countries observed by CARIM: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and, since February 2007, also Libya and Mauritania. All are studied as origin, transit and immigration countries. External experts from the European Union and countries of the Region also contribute to CARIM activities.

The CARIM carries out the following activities:

- Mediterranean migration database;
- Research and publications;
- Meetings of academics;
- Meetings between experts and policy makers;
- Early warning system.

The activities of CARIM cover three aspects of international migration in the Region: economic and demographic, legal, and socio-political.

Results of the above activities are made available for public consultation through the website of the project: [www.carim.org](http://www.carim.org)

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## **Abstract**

Egypt's capital Cairo hosts one of the five largest urban refugee populations in the world. For this reason, our paper concentrates on the legal aspect of irregular migration, discussing the characteristics of these migrants as asylum seekers and refugees while also examining transit migrants.

First, the paper tackles associated concepts and data issues, with reference to the existing literature and international standards. In the second part, an overview of the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) situation is given as a prelude to the Egyptian experience. In the third part, the socio-economic profile of refugees and asylum seekers from Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Iraq is given with reference to their legal status, their rights and their living conditions measured in terms of income and sources of income, access to education, employment, health care and social services.

The paper concludes by looking at the socio-economic situation in Egypt and policy recommendations concerning government practices, procedures, mechanisms, policies and laws. Gaps in research have also been highlighted so that these issues can be better addressed in the future.

## **Résumé**

Le Caire, capitale d'Égypte, abrite l'une des cinq plus grandes communautés de réfugiés vivant en espace urbain dans le monde. C'est pour cette raison que cet article s'intéresse principalement à l'aspect légal des migrants irréguliers en Égypte. Il traite des caractéristiques de ces migrants en tant que réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile et mentionne secondairement quelques aspects liés à la migration de transit.

Dans un premier temps, l'article traite des concepts et données relatifs à la problématique en s'inspirant de la littérature existante et des standards internationaux. Ensuite, un aperçu sur la situation dans la région du Moyen Orient et de l'Afrique du Nord (MENA) est donné avant de se concentrer sur le cas égyptien. Dans une troisième partie, le profil socio-économique des réfugiés et demandeurs d'asile originaires du Soudan, Somalie, Éthiopie, Érythrée et Iraq est décrit à travers leur statut légal, leurs droits et à travers leurs conditions de vie mesurées par le revenu et ses sources, l'accès à l'éducation, l'emploi, les services de santé et autres services sociaux.

Le papier conclut par un aperçu sur les conditions socio-économiques en Égypte et les recommandations politiques concernant les pratiques gouvernementales, les procédures, les mécanismes et les lois à mettre en œuvre vis-à-vis du phénomène. Les lacunes relatives à la recherche dans le domaine ont été énumérées à la fin pour améliorer l'étude du phénomène dans le futur.

## Introduction

In the 2002 report "Strengthening the UN: An agenda for further change", Secretary General Kofi Annan characterized international migration as one of the main issues on which the UN has to deepen its knowledge, sharpen its focus and act more effectively. Not only has the number of international migrants more than doubled in the last 45 years, but irregular migration flows across international borders have also increased dramatically.

Irregular migration is a complex concept that requires clarification: there is no clear or universally accepted definition of irregular migration. In fact, analysts of irregular migration are confronted with confused terminology and very inadequate or even confidential data.

According to IOM Glossary; Irregular Migration is: "Movement that takes place outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving countries." From the perspective of destination countries it is illegal entry, sojourn or work in a country, meaning that the migrant does not have the necessary authorization or documents required under that country's immigration regulations. From the perspective of the sending country, irregularity is, for example, seen in cases, when a person crosses an international boundary without a valid passport or travel document or does not fulfill the administrative requirements for leaving the country. (International Organization for Migration - IOM, 2004).

As Egypt's capital Cairo hosts one of the five largest urban refugee populations in the world this paper will for the most part discuss the legal aspects of irregular migrants, their characteristics as asylum migrants and some aspects regarding transit migrants.

## Section 1: Concepts and data

According to the UN Population Division, in 2005, 191 million people, representing 3% of the world's population were living outside their countries of origin – a significant shift compared to 75 million in 1960.<sup>1</sup>

UN estimates suggest that each year between one third and one half of the world's 6-9 million migrants are irregular, while the Council of Europe estimates that every year 30 million people cross an international border illegally. It is estimated by the International Labour Organization that there are 15–30 million illegal migrants in the world today. Overall, these estimates suggest that approximately 12% of the global population are either temporary or permanent migrants, on an annual basis. Data on irregular migration – including both numbers and also demographic and socio-economic profiles are scarce, often unreliable and difficult to compare – different states define irregular migrants in different ways. Moreover, regular migrants can become irregular overnight and *vice versa*. There are also a series of more practical problems. Some irregular migrants are recorded: asylum seekers whose applications are rejected, for example. Most estimates of irregular migration simply present data borrowed from sources like these. Recorded irregular migration represents only a fraction of irregular migration and estimates of what that fraction is are largely guesswork and vary widely. Moreover, access to data that has been collected: never mind how limited that data is (Koser, K. 2005; MacPherson, D. & Brian D. Gushulak, 2004)

The concept of 'transit migration' entered the discourse on migration policy during the early 1990s. Since then, it has been increasingly applied to migration while never becoming widely used. There does not exist a definition for transit migration in international policy or international law.

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<sup>1</sup> The International Organization for Migration (IOM) stated that irregular migration "occurs outside the rules and procedures guiding the orderly international movement of people" (Lupini, L. 2006).

One early definition was offered by UN/ECE that wrote that transit migration was 'migration in one country with the intention of seeking the possibility there to emigrate to another country as the country of final destination'.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, IOM has refined their definition as follows: transit is a 'stopover of passage, of varying length, while traveling between two or more countries, either incidental to continuous transportation or for the purpose of changing planes or joining an ongoing flight or other mode of transport'. IOM also defines transit migrants as 'refugees awaiting resettlement'.

In 1994, the IOM, following a UN conference in 1993 on the same topic, urged its member states to recognize transit migration as an important feature of international migration, and particularly in irregular and asylum migration. In 1998, a strategy paper of the Austrian presidency of the Council of the European Union emphasized (not for the first time) the importance of transit migration and transit countries.

Migrants can become irregular migrants for many reasons. It may be difficult, or impossible to obtain the necessary documents. Official channels for migration may entail an expensive, lengthy and bureaucratic process, making it tempting to avoid these problems through irregular migration. Corruption may be involved as well, further adding to the costs of migrants. It has been well documented that migrants pay exorbitant agency fees to work overseas, which can take several months to pay back.<sup>3</sup>

Instead of the term 'irregular', other terms, like 'illegal', may be used. However the use of the term 'illegal' can be criticized in at least three ways. First, there is its correlation with criminality, while most irregular migrants are not criminals. Second, defining persons as 'illegal' can also be regarded as denying their humanity. Third, there is the possibility that labeling asylum seekers, who find themselves in an irregular situation, as illegal may further jeopardize their asylum claims. There are, of course, other terms that are often used in the context of irregularity, such as 'undocumented' and 'unauthorized'. The former is sometimes used to denote migrants, who have not been documented (or recorded), and sometimes employed to describe migrants without documents (passports, etc.).

Neither situation applies to all irregular migrants as not all irregular migrants are necessarily unauthorized, and so this term too is often used incorrectly (Koser, K., 2005).

Irregular migrants include those who have been trafficked or smuggled, as well as workers who entered the host country with a valid visa or work permit only afterwards becoming irregular. Irregular migrant populations may include refugees and asylum-seekers, as well (Asian Migrant Yearbook, 2005). Another important component of irregular migration is transit migration.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Assembly of Inter-Parliamentary Union in Geneva claims that the international community has a universally accepted definition of migrants in transit, namely: "transit migrants are defined as aliens who stay in the country for some period of time while seeking to migrate permanently to another country". (Düvell, F., 2006).

<sup>3</sup> The IOM glossary defines transit migration as "refugees awaiting resettlement". Transit, that is the stage between emigration and settlement, could be used as an exemplary situation that displays the overlap between asylum and irregular migration. (Roman, H. 2006).

<sup>4</sup> Corrupt agents can cause migrant workers to unknowingly migrate without proper documentation; agents may falsify migrants' documents, may promise them non-existent employers, or agents may traffic them into jobs other than the one promised. (Asian Migrant Yearbook, 2005).

## Section 2: Irregular Migration in the MENA

The MENA Region has become increasingly familiar with irregular migration, especially migrants coming from Sub-Saharan Africa *en route* to Europe, transiting through Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. Transit migration in the MENA region includes undocumented labour migrants, refugees and trafficked migrants. The southern shores of the Mediterranean have emerged as a major transit space for immigrants and refugees trying to reach Europe. This development is due to many factors (Roman, H. 2006):

- Pressure on Sub-Saharan countries in terms of civil war, increased poverty and political instability.
- The key geographical proximity of southern, developing Mediterranean countries to Europe.
- The tightening of European migration policies, adopting tougher rules governing the asylum, entry, and residence of foreign nationals. These measures have limited the opportunities for migrating to and settling in Europe. The hardening of European migration policies have coincided with shrinking employment and migration opportunities in the Gulf oil-exporting countries.

Most Northern African countries and particularly Libya had already witnessed the migration and settlement of migrants from Western African countries. This set the stage for more large-scale, trans-Saharan migration after 1990, especially with well-established smuggling networks helping desperate migrants to cross the Mediterranean to Europe (De Haas, H., 2006).

The forces behind irregular migration are very different from those that are associated with regular migration for tourism, business and temporary or permanent residency. In addition to the assessment of risk and benefits in making a decision to initiate migration, there is a tacit acceptance that the regular and regulated processes are not quick enough, take too much effort, resource allocation, or procedural design to permit success. Seeking asylum or claiming refugee status; often through human smuggling or trafficking, must be or, at least, be perceived to be a lower-risk mechanism to achieve the desired outcome of international relocation.<sup>5</sup>

## Section 3: Irregular Migration in Egypt

Egypt is among the countries in the MENA Region that has become a point of destination as well as of departure for migrants. While, due to the location of Egypt, transit and irregular migration has grown in size as well. Transit migrants, crossing southern Mediterranean countries on their way to the borders of Europe, can resort to land migration via Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean countries to Turkey. This is a popular route not only for Africans, but also for Middle Eastern and (Central) Asian migrants. For example, Egypt and the Suez Canal are on the main transit route for Sri Lankan heading for Italy and Cyprus.

Though trafficking in human beings is an age-old phenomenon, it was not until December 2000 that the international community reached a consensus on a common normative definition, in the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (hereafter called the Palermo Protocol).

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<sup>5</sup> Similarly, over-staying a legitimate visa and applying for migrant status re-classification through the regular process or “going underground” to avoid or minimize interaction with official authorities is a balancing of risks associated with the existing mechanism for regular migration (MacPherson, D. & Brian D. Gushulak, 2004).

Though not yet in force, the Protocol provides a framework for law reform and the criminalization of this practice.<sup>6</sup>

Meanwhile though in practice there are some problems in distinguishing between trafficking and smuggling, one of the most important results of such a distinction is that it is mainly women and children who are the victims of traffickers. Increasingly, Africa is (according to Interpol) a source region, with more clandestine movements, more diverse transit points and complex, changing dynamics.

It should be noted that trafficking does not occur only between neighboring countries – in some cases women and children pass through transit countries before reaching their final destination. There are two main reasons for a country to be designated as a transit country: proximity and ease of passage.<sup>7</sup>

Table 1 is a summary of the Protection Project which released a global report on Trafficking in 2002. The table shows clearly that the GCC countries are recipients of trafficking, with the Mashrek and Maghreb as transit or transit and destination countries. Three countries – Egypt, Turkey and Jordan – are also source countries. However, the number of cases involved is not reflected in the data, and these are, therefore, potentially misleading.

**Table 1: Trafficking of women & children in the MENA region; characteristics & trafficking routes, 2002**

	Destination	Origin	Transit	Related Countries
Israel	■			Ukraine, Russia, Moldova, Brazil, Dominican Rep., S. Africa, Turkey
Kuwait	■			Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Russia, Ukraine
Lebanon	■			Ethiopia, Madagascar, Poland
Oman	■			Nepal, Asia, Africa
Qatar	■			Bangladesh, South Asia
Saudi Arabia	■			Burma, Indonesia, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Ethiopia
Syria	■			Poland, Russia
U.A. Emirates	■			Eastern Europe, CIS; Asia
Bahrain	■		■	Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Russia, Ukraine; Philippines
Morocco	■		■	Africa, Asia; Spain, western Europe
Egypt	■	■	■	Eastern Europe; Middle East; Israel
Turkey	■	■	■	Bulgaria, India, Iraq, Jordan, Philippines, Romania, Russia, Ukraine; Asia, Saudi Arabia

<sup>6</sup> According to the Palermo Protocol definition; “Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.” (UNICEF, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> Also, Egypt was reported as a country of transit for women who are trafficked from Eastern Europe to Israel. According to the U.S. State Department Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report for 2007, women from Uzbekistan, Moldova, Ukraine, Russia, and other countries in the Region, transit through Egypt to Israel for commercial sexual exploitation (UNICEF, 2005).

Irregular Migration in Egypt

Jordan		■	■	Israel, Turkey; Ukraine, Eastern Europe
Libya			■	Africa, Sri Lanka; Spain, western Europe
Algeria			■	Italy, southern Europe

Source: 'The Protection Project (2002)', John Hopkins University, cited in Martin Baldwin-Edwards (2005), *Migration in the Middle East & Mediterranean*, Regional Study prepared for the Global Commission on International Migration

Egypt is a signatory of several international agreements reflecting serious political will to combat trafficking crime; Egypt is a signatory of (UNICEF, 2005):

- The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime CTOC.
- The Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990) UN
- The Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery
- The Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others
- The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography
- The UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

The establishment of a national coordinating Committee to combat and prevent trafficking in persons in July 2007 was an important step. The decision to establish a national committee to combat trafficking in Egypt is significant because it reflects political will to address the problem of trafficking, which constitutes a gross violation of human rights and is a threat not only to state security, but to the security and dignity of human beings.

The committee would be responsible for:

- Drafting a national plan of action to combat the issue of trafficking in persons; a follow up on its implementation; and the preparation of an annual report to be submitted to the Council of Ministers;
- Preparing and drafting legislation to combat the phenomenon of trafficking in persons;
- Cooperation with the specialized office of the United Nations and other concerned authorities; and the measures to assist and protect the victims of this crime;
- Suggesting policies and programs and research; increasing media awareness campaigns; developing educational curricula, and building the capacity of criminal justice officials, other concerned authorities responsible for the implementation of the criminal justice system, and those in charge of the application of the provisions of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons;
- Preparing a central data bank with the Center of Criminal and Social Research and other research institutes;
- Supporting the international judicial mechanisms of cooperation involved in criminal matters, and reviewing relevant national legislation;
- Creating a specialized Secretariat responsible for studies and research and the preparation of topics that will be submitted to this committee. The committee should take the necessary measures to implement its decisions and recommendations. The committee may be assigned

additional tasks and shall have a unit for documentation and data collection;

- A meeting every month with recommendations and suggestions forwarded through the Foreign Ministry to the Council of Ministers.

### 3.1. General characteristics on Irregular migration and the asylum-seekers in Egypt

Today, Cairo hosts one of the five largest populations of irregular migrants anywhere in the world. This assessment is based on the number of asylum seekers received by UNHCR. However it is impossible to give precise numbers of refugees in Egypt and 'guesstimates' vary from 500,000 to 3 million. (Zohry, A., 2003).

Egypt is seen as one of the few stable countries in the region. Changing patterns of civil conflicts, especially in Sudan and Somalia, as well as political and economic deterioration in Iraq, led people to seek refuge in Egypt.

The flow of refugees and asylum seekers started in the 1990s as a result of civil wars and political instability in the horn of Africa, especially in Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia (Roman, H. 2006). In more recent times Iraqi refugees have come in increasing numbers as a result of the unhappy situation in their homeland.

Since the late 1990s, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Cairo office has seen a significant increase in the number of asylum seekers. So within one year, 1998-1999, the number of asylum seekers doubled. In 2001, the number of asylum seekers was 13,176, which represents a 96 percent increase over 1998.

Of the thirty nationalities of refugees known in Egypt, Palestinians form the largest group, followed by refugees from Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. Other nationalities come in smaller numbers: Afghanistan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Yemen, and Burundi. In Egypt, UNHCR determines refugee status, not the Egyptian government. UNHCR also has responsibility for stateless people in Egypt. However, thousands of refugees denied recognition by UNHCR continue to live in Egypt. Although all refugees in Egypt face similar hardships and most rank among the poorest of the poor, each community in Cairo has its different cultural and religious background (Zohry, A. 2003-b). A significant feature of the refugee and asylum seeker populations in Egypt is the growth of Somali and, more significantly, Iraqi migrants (UNCHR, 2008). In 2005-2006, asylum seekers from Iraq increased about twenty fold from 133 in 2005 to 2,870 in 2006.

**Table 2: Refugee population, end of year - main origin from 1996 to 2005  
(main nationalities in 2005)**

Origin	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
<b>Palestine</b>	15	32	-	-	-	134	70,195	70,215	70,245	70,255
<b>Sudan</b>	1,461	1,587	1,863	2,577	2,833	4,659	7,629	14,178	14,904	13,446
<b>Somalia</b>	3,493	3,546	3,119	2,568	2,610	1,177	1,639	3,068	3,809	3,940
<b>Ethiopia</b>	47	59	44	56	54	102	111	329	481	516
<b>Yemen</b>	559	631	669	678	683	628	412	344	319	209

Source: UNHCR Statistical Yearbook, 2005

**Table 3: Asylum applicants during the year - main origin from 1996 to 2006**

Origin	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006*
<b>Sudan</b>	2,057	1,384	4,953	5,202	12,206	9,529	6,253	5,726	9,720	2,400	2,523
<b>Somalia</b>	113	112	197	647	1,822	2,559	1,977	224	340	538	1,135
<b>Ethiopia</b>	97	384	295	-	547	545	299	325	289	189	193
<b>Eritrea</b>	14	20	-	-	211	224	59	55	106	153	208
<b>Iraq</b>	26	27	-	-	64	23	92	57	20	133	2,870

Source: UNHCR Statistical Yearbook 2005, \*UNCHR 2006 Global Trends: Refugees, Asylum-seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons

**Table 4: Population of concern to UNHCR - demographic characteristics: age and gender**

Age \ Gender	Female	Male	Total
<5	1,568	1,828	3,396
5-17	2,817	3,114	5,931
18-59	6,502	13,855	20,357
60+>	149	118	267
Various	77	19	96
Total	11,113	18,934	30,047
<5 (%)	14%	10%	11%
5-17 (%)	26%	16%	20%
18-59 (%)	59%	73%	68%
60+> (%)	1%	1%	1%
Gender (%)	37%	63%	100%

Source: UNHCR Statistical Yearbook, 2005

Furthermore, Egypt attracts refugees having one of the largest resettlement programs in the world, both through UNHCR and through private sponsorship programs to Canada, Australia, the USA and Finland. With the Sudanese and Somali Diasporas in many of these western states, resettlement programs constitute a huge incentive. At the same time, the number of refugees who remain in Egypt, especially those who were unsuccessful in being granted refugee status, is significant.

### 3.2. Sudanese Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Egypt<sup>8</sup>

#### 3.2.1. Context and Historical Overview

The civil war in Sudan is considered Africa's longest-running civil war. Several factors fire these wars; disputes over religion, resources and governance. The 1983 civil war in Southern Sudan resulted in a massive flight of people to neighboring countries as well as to Khartoum. Overthrowing the Sadiq El Mahdi regime produced large number of refugees and displaced persons. The southern Sudanese were worried and felt insecure under the new Islamist regime and the subsequent demolition of Internationally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps around Khartoum and the conditions in Southern Sudan forced many to flee to Egypt. The new outbreak of fighting in the Western Sudanese region of Darfur in January 2003 resulted in ethnic cleansing, human-rights abuses and population displacement. During the two decades of war, close to five million were internally displaced and over half a million Sudanese fled to neighboring countries, including Chad, Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda and, above all, Egypt.<sup>9</sup>

Until 1995, it was not necessary for Sudanese refugees to seek asylum; they were usually referred to as 'displaced people'. However, the 1995 assassination attempt on President Mubarak in Ethiopia, allegedly by Egyptian Islamists supported by the Sudanese government, changed Egypt's open-door policy toward their southern neighbour.<sup>10</sup>

Rejected refugees represent the majority of Sudanese refugees in Egypt.

Since 1994, when applications of Sudanese arrivals started being screened for asylum, the percentage of those who were rejected, especially between the period 1999 and 2002 reached 67 percent. It is worth noting that the majority of those who have been granted asylum through the UNHCR office arrived between 2002 and 2003.

#### 3.2.2. Profile of Sudanese Refugees in Egypt<sup>11</sup>

The first question will always be why do people leave their home countries. In a survey undertaken by Grabska, 2005 it was indicated that over three quarters of the respondents (208) had left Sudan for political reasons. Southerners usually refer to general security and war conditions in the south, forced conscription, and religious persecution. Others point to their political activities in Sudan, especially common among northerners from Khartoum. The lack of educational opportunities and discriminatory access to jobs were quoted as other reasons behind the decision to seek asylum in Egypt. This was particularly common among young Sudanese men. One of the main factors pulling people to Egypt as opposed to other places was the existence of the resettlement program in Cairo. Over 65 percent of our respondents (177) had relatives and friends living abroad, almost all of whom had been resettled,

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<sup>8</sup> Without legal status and protection in Egypt, and often unable to return to their countries of origin, these people live on the margins of society, struggling to secure their livelihoods as illegal 'aliens' within the socioeconomic and policy context of contemporary Egypt (Grabska, K. 2006).

<sup>9</sup> The relatively easy connection between the two countries and the presence of a large Sudanese expatriate community served as an incentive for those in search of protection (Roman, H. 2006).

<sup>10</sup> Every Sudanese migrant must have a visa to enter Egypt and refugees, must proceed through the refugee status determination process at UNHCR.

<sup>11</sup> This section depends on Grabska, Katarzyna (2005) "Living On The Margins: The Analysis Of The Livelihood Strategies Of Sudanese Refugees With Closed Files In Egypt" The American University in Cairo, Forced Migration and Refugee Studies Working Paper No. 6, June 2005. The study employed the results of a field work which focused on the livelihoods of Sudanese refugees with 269 households of Sudanese refugees in Cairo and Alexandria.

mainly in Canada, Australia, and the USA. Over half of the refugee households interviewed (165) admitted that they knew about UNHCR before coming, and were aware of the possibilities of migrating to the West.

*The educational and professional background* of the refugees as shown by Grabska indicate that among the Sudanese respondents, the majority were well educated, with nearly half having finished secondary school, one fifth having graduated from university, and only 10 percent being illiterate, mostly those respondents from the South of Sudan.<sup>12</sup>

Among the respondents, 63 percent were previously employed in Sudan either in the formal sector, running private business or (predominantly) working in agriculture, while the rest were either unemployed or students.

*Legal status is of paramount importance for refugee assessment.* Grabska showed that only 35 out of 181 respondents with closed files managed to legalize their residence in Egypt which means that they have the assurance that they will not be returned to their country of origin. Such protection is a fundamental right of all refugees. Those who arrived prior to 1995, have valid passports and renew their residence permits every year, are legal in Egypt and have access to some of the rights previously granted to Sudanese nationals. The rest do not have documents giving them a legal status. With expired passports, invalid visas and no residence permits, these individuals are at constant risk of being arrested, and can be deported back to Sudan. Moreover, the illegal status of parents has immediate consequences for the legality of their children. The children are left without any papers to prove their existence. As a result, they have no way of claiming their rights, including the right to education.

Among the asylum seekers and recognized refugees (84 respondents), 44 had acquired residency in Egypt. Recognized refugees and those seeking asylum complain about the bureaucratic and lengthy process necessary for obtaining a residence permit. Many pursue their resettlement options with the Australian and Canadian embassies.

*Concerning the work status of the refugees it was indicated that* almost three quarters (179 respondents) were involved in some type of work, usually in the informal sector. Almost all of the rejected respondents were working, whereas fifty percent of those recognized were not economically active. For Sudanese migrants, the most easily available work is in low-skilled jobs, such as domestic service, which are more readily available to women. Domestic work is also relatively better paid (on average from LE 450 to over LE 800 per month). As a result, the majority of the women interviewed were the family breadwinners. Domestic work is usually found through Sudanese friends or churches. Some women respondents worked as cleaners in the churches or in pastors' homes. Most jobs for men are also in the low-skill sectors, particularly street vending. Others worked as day laborers, construction workers, or in factories (they usually earn LE 10-20 per day). Some worked as security guards, office cleaners, teachers in refugee schools, or office assistants. In order to assist families and contribute to the household income, children often have to drop out of school and work.

The respondents often had more than one job. Women often engaged in additional income-generating activities, such as sewing and knitting traditional Sudanese table cloths and bed sheets, which were usually sold to those traveling to the West. The low-skilled jobs performed by poor Egyptians (street vending, shoe polishing, domestic work, day labor) paid slightly better than those of Sudanese refugees in comparable jobs. The most profitable type of work found was that of selling passports and canceling entry stamps to Egypt on refugees' documents.

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<sup>12</sup> As with most refugee populations, the Sudanese see education for their children as the only way out of poverty, but they have been barred from the free Egyptian public school system. Christian churches and refugee-run NGOs are the only source of education for refugees in Cairo (Zohry, A. 2003).

**Table 5: Type of employment of respondents**

Sector	Percent	Frequency
Handcraft	3.4	6
Selling	24.6	44
Domestic Cleaner	27.4	49
Catering	2.2	4
Construction	2.2	4
Factory	6.7	12
Teaching	2.2	4
Translation	2.2	4
Tourism	1.1	2
Office	5.6	10
Cleaning	5.0	9
Driver	1.1	2
Tailor	.6	1
Consultant	.6	1
Technician	.6	1
Hair dresser	1.1	2
Other	12.3	22
Total	98.9	177
No answer	1.1	2
Total	100.0	179

*Remittances from relatives and friends abroad were the major source of support* and significantly contributed to the inflow of hard currency into the Egyptian economy. And, in fact, with remittances from the Sudanese in the Gulf, Europe, North America and Australia, the flow of capital has become easier. In a previous survey it was indicated that a good number of the respondents relied completely on the financial assistance received from relatives and friends abroad (including Sudan). Among those who did not earn any income (90 respondents), almost half (40) lived exclusively on remittances from abroad through Western Union offices, Thomas Cook or Norta wire-transfer services. The Sudanese, especially southerners, often use small telephone shops and internet cafes. Those who lack the identity documents necessary to collect money must rely on close kin or trusted friends to be the 'official' receiver of funds.

Usually, money is spent on necessary goods as well as weddings, funerals, and departure parties for those leaving for resettlement. In emergency situations, relatives and friends send money to cover medical treatment, children's education, or the cost of travel to Australia for those accepted under the private sponsorship scheme.

### 3.3. Somali Refugees

After the fall of the Barre regime, a violent power struggle erupted among the various opposition groups. Thousands of Somalis were killed in the civil war, many fleeing to Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Egypt as well as the USA, Canada, Europe and Australia (Roman, H. 2006).

Somalis are concentrated in two districts of Cairo, Ard El-Liwa and Nasr City. Many Somalis receive remittances from relatives in Western countries and Saudi Arabia, in addition to their income from the informal sector in Cairo (Zohry, A. 2003)

These refugees flew to Cairo and entered the country on an entry visa purchased with the help of a family member or a friend who was already living in Egypt.<sup>13</sup>

Somali refugees were mostly from an urban background, had college degrees, and had held professional or administrative jobs in the homeland or in Gulf countries. Some of the male refugees already had wives and children who were living in Cairo when the war began. Since 1999, the profile of the Somali refugee population has changed. A large number of both groups have since resettled in the West. The current groups are a more heterogeneous mix of Somalis of rural and urban background (Sharmani, M. 2004)

**Educational and occupational backgrounds shows that** 3% of the interviewees have university degrees, while 30% of the interviewees went no higher than high school, 22% finished their education at Grade 8 in junior high school, 15% in primary school, 11% of only went to Quranic School, and 1% took literacy classes and 7% received no education at all.

**The Legal status of the interviewees shows that** a third were asylum seekers who were still applying for refugee status. Another third had been rejected by UNHCR, 9 had their files closed, 72 were recognized refugees, one had withdrawn from the application process and five had decided not to apply to become refugees.

As mentioned by Mulki unemployment is an acute problem for refugees who have no employment rights whether or not they are recognized and whether or not they receive remittances. Most remittances come from family members in the USA and Europe (31% and 35% respectively), whereas 10% of remittance money is sent from Saudi Arabia. It is important to note that in many cases, remittance money is not a sufficient and secure source of income to be counted upon.

Remittance is received through a Somali-based transfer system called "Hawala" via Western Unions and banks (\$5 for every \$100) that delivers the money quickly. The family member who is sending the money from a Western Union or any other money transfer channel gives the amount of money to be remitted, the charge fee, and the name and phone number of the family relative in Cairo to the representative of a particular 'hawala' system in the home city. (2) The representative calls his colleagues in Cairo and asks them to call the family relative to whom the money has been sent and deliver the amount. It usually takes a couple of days for the refugee to collect the money.

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<sup>13</sup> This section depends on results from field questionnaires and in-depth interviews with 300 Somali refugees of different age groups, sex, clan affiliation, patterns of flight and displacement, and legal status. Al-Sharmani, Mulki (2004) "Livelihood and diasporic identity constructions of Somali refugees in Cairo", Forced Migration and Refugee Studies Program (FMRS) Working Paper No. 104. The American University in Cairo, Egypt. Others, who were not recognized as refugees and had a residence permit, obtained it through enrolling themselves or their children in Al-Azhar school or private Egyptian schools or purchased it from Somali and Egyptian middle men for \$200. Many fewer migrants obtained residence permits through their spouses or parents who were already legal residents in Egypt.

Almost all of the interviewees said that they spend the remittance money on living costs in Cairo such as rent, utilities, food expenses, health and education services, and donations for community charity work.

Mulki found that some refugees are engaged in income-generating activities that are mostly carried out within the Somali refugee community: housekeeping and childcare, Quran and Arabic or English teaching to Somali refugee children and adults, selling entry visas to other Somalis and working in real estate. Sale businesses, housekeeping and childcare are done exclusively by female refugees. Teaching jobs are exclusively held by male refugees. Both male and female refugees engage in selling entry visas. Some women also participate in very small-scale sales businesses that target other refugees and Somali expatriates who have moved from the West. The income-generating activities that Somali refugees engage in still remain mostly within the Somali community. Contact with Egyptians through work is limited and is mostly confined to providing housekeeping and childcare services to Egyptian families: though note Somali expatriates from the West outnumber those Egyptians who hire Somali maids and nannies. Recently there are signs of more contact and coordination among Egyptians and Somalis in regard to employment and joint business ventures.

Concerning education, Zohry found that Somalis suffer from restrictions over attendance in public schools. Self-help schools organized by the Somali Refugee Committee of Egypt (SRCOE), and other small NGO initiatives, provide an alternative for a few children.<sup>14</sup>

Two-thirds of the adult interviewees do not receive any kind of education (200 people). Of the remaining third, 18 are enrolled either in Al Azhar-run high school, adult education programs, or universities; 23 take English and computer classes at private Egyptian institutes; 24 take language and computer classes at a Somali-run educational center; 9 take Arabic classes at private Islamic educational centers; 11 take tutorials in Quran, Arabic, and English at home with Somali tutors; 4 take Arabic and English tutorials with tutors from other African countries; 5 are enrolled in church-run education programs; 3 go to literacy programs run by the local government in different neighborhoods; and 3 go to national universities other than Al Azhar.

### **3.4. Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees**

From 1977-1979, Ethiopian refugees came to Egypt in order to escape the Mengistu regime's 'Red Terror'. Another influx of refugees came in 1991-1992 when the Mengistu regime fell. Some were members of the military. The recent border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea (1998-2000), the suppression of civil liberties in both countries, and the downturn in the economy are all reasons why Eritrean and Ethiopians have continued to flee to Egypt. During the early 1990s most Ethiopians and Eritreans in Cairo were skilled and educated single young men from urban areas and from both Muslim and Christian backgrounds. Financial support mainly stemmed from relatives in the West and local churches. More recent data on the make-up of the Ethiopian and Eritrean refugee population in Egypt are not available.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The survey showed that the interviewees lack educational resources for themselves and their children. Many cite lack of legal residence, financial resources, and a sense of instability as the reason for their failure to pursue education. It was found that almost all interviewees have no or very little interaction with Egyptians (Zohry, A. 2003-B).

<sup>15</sup> However, if trends from the early 1990s hold true, the profile of refugees from Ethiopia and Eritrea will have changed greatly (Zohry, A. 2003).

### 3.5. Iraqi Refugees

Over two million Iraqi refugees have fled their country since the American-led invasion that overthrew the regime of Saddam Hussein. And although the largest concentrations are in Syria and Jordan, up to 150,000 Iraqis have settled in Egypt.

Early arrivals immediately following Saddam's fall were mostly Sunni, but now include significant numbers of Iraqi Shi'ites and Christians. The inability of refugees to work legally causes enormous distress. The only significant niche in Egypt's informal labour market is domestic work, something Iraqis' wives are completely unaccustomed to doing for others.<sup>16</sup>

## Section 4: Interaction between Irregular Migrants' Rights and Socio-Economic Conditions in Egypt

### 4.1. Socio-Economic Conditions of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Egypt

Egypt is a signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. However, Egypt has signed the Convention with opt outs on provisions granting refugees the right to work and access public services (e.g. Health & Education).

#### 4.1.1. Access to Work and Job Opportunities

As a result of the opt outs demanded by the government on the right to work, refugees are treated as any other foreign national and are thus required to obtain a work permit. Until 2003, refugee blue cards (the refugee identity document issued by UNHCR on behalf of the government and on which permits of residence are stamped by the government) were stamped 'Not permitted to work'. Although there are obstacles to accessing the labour market legally, refugees are permitted to work in Egypt. Application for a work permit has to be made by the employer and is subject to several criteria, including the number of Egyptians working in the organization and the activities of the organization. Once the application is approved, the employee has to submit an HIV test result, travel documents, a copy of his or her passport or any other legal document such as a UNHCR refugee card, and a reference letter. Subsequently, the employer has to pay a work permit fee amounting to LE 1,000.<sup>17</sup>

The 2003 decree also capped the number of foreign nationals who could work in any establishment at 10 percent. The 2003 Labor Law required reciprocity on the part of the foreign national's state toward Egyptians, effectively excluding Palestinian refugees from practising professions. Employers had to prepare detailed biannual registers of all foreign nationals they employed, including listings of

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<sup>16</sup> At the end of 2005 only some 250 Iraqis were registered with UNHCR in Egypt. By the end of 2006, that number had gone up to 3,000 and by September 2007 some 10,000 Iraqis were registered with UNHCR (UNHCR Global Appeal, 2008-2009).

It was also suggested that mistrust between segments of the Iraqi population is hampering the development of self-support networks. (Yoshikawa, I. 2007).

<sup>17</sup> Based on bilateral agreements and special relations, some foreign nationals, including Sudanese workers, Palestinians, Italians and Greeks are exempted from paying the high fees. With regard to the Sudanese, a potentially significant development was the signing of the Four Freedoms Agreement in September 2004 between the governments of Egypt and Sudan, guaranteeing freedom of movement, residence, work and ownership of property for nationals of these two countries (Grabska, K. 2006).

As foreign nationals are not allowed to compete with the local workforce, they are barred from certain professions such as tourism, oriental dancing, exports and customs-related jobs (Grabska, K. 2006).

the Egyptian assistants they were training. Finally, the 2003 Decree prohibited foreign nationals from working as tourist guides and in export industries – though with the second exception was made for Palestinians. A 2004 decree on the issuance of work permits exempted those married to nationals, stateless persons with permanent residence, "political refugees" (in the narrow sense of the Constitution), those born in the country, Palestinians, and those with special or ordinary residence from the non-competition requirement. The 2004 decree, however, also restricted professions to Egyptians unless the regulations of a profession allowed exceptions. It also excluded foreign workers from the export and import sectors, customs clearance, and tourism.<sup>18</sup>

#### *4.1.2. Access to Health Care*

Egyptian national policies on health care consider refugees as foreign nationals in terms of access to services. Until recently, recognized refugees were referred by UNHCR to Caritas, one of the implementing partners of UNHCR that provides services for refugees. When a recognized refugee fell sick, he or she could get subsidized treatment through the Caritas office, which covered 50 percent of total medical expenses. In a study of Sudanese refugees, almost all recognized refugees among the respondents had used Caritas medical services with three of the respondents resorting to private clinics or the All Saints Clinic, a church offering a variety of services to refugees in Cairo. However, the subsidized services did not address all the medical needs of refugees. In the event that expensive treatment is required, and refugees cannot afford to pay even half the cost, they have to forgo medical care. As in the case of rejected asylum seekers, refugees depend on relatives and friends who have resettled in the West, asking them for financial assistance, especially in cases of pregnancies or more complicated illnesses such as tuberculosis.

In February 2005, the Minister of Health issued a new regulation allowing access to public primary and preventive healthcare services for all foreign nationals residing in Egypt. It was agreed that forced migrants would pay domestic fees for the services.<sup>19</sup>

#### *4.1.3. Access to Education*

Taking the right to education for refugees from theory to practice "is a complex and difficult process which will require flexible thinking and active collaboration between refugee families, UNHCR, the Egyptian government, educators, and other interested parties".<sup>20</sup>

The right to education and access to education for refugees have to be seen in the context of the more general educational situation in Egypt, which is characterized by high illiteracy rates and a large number of dropouts. The government of Egypt is unable to provide access to school even for every Egyptian child and one has to take this failing into account.

The quality of education in Egypt is another significant issue. The problems are numerous, ranging from an inadequate curriculum, emphasis on rote learning, the poor quality of teachers, overcrowding in schools and sub-standard facilities.

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<sup>18</sup> The 2006 decree restricted earlier liberalization of work permits for domestic workers, requiring the personal approval of the Minister and limiting them to "cases necessitated by humanitarian, social or practical circumstances" (United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2007).

<sup>19</sup> This change in policy will have a direct impact on the possibilities of accessing public hospitals and government clinics by recognized refugees as well as those without legal status in Egypt (Grabska, K. 2006).

<sup>20</sup> Both flexible thinking and active cooperation between all parties involved are essential ingredients to providing greater access education to a greater number of refugees. (Wesal Afifi, 2003).

## 4.2. Socio-Economic Situation in Egypt

According to the UNDP Human Development Index, Egypt is categorized as a lower middle income country. It was ranked 112 out of 177 states in 2007/2008 coming below Iran, Algeria and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Poverty is a major problem with 43.9% of the population living below \$2 a day (Human Development Report, HDR - 2007/2008). In addition, Egypt suffers from two great problems: high rates of illiteracy and population growth.<sup>21</sup>

Approximately 37% of the population is under the age of 15, leading to predictions that the population will almost double by 2030. An important implication of the relatively high population growth is the large investment requirements prompted by this growth. In Egypt and in light of the different estimates for the growth rate (low: 1.44% and high: 2.3%), a study showed that the minimum investment needed to create new employment opportunities during 2002-2017 for a population growth rate of 1.44% would be EGP 1529 billion, EGP 2.3 billion for provision of pre-university education opportunities, EGP 45.2 billion for health, EGP 871.9 billion for housing and EGP 2.128 billion for government subsidies.<sup>22</sup>

In addition, unemployment constitutes a major challenge for the Egyptian economy.

The Egyptian labour market is facing the problem of generating enough jobs for the increasing number of new entrants: 800.000 each year.

According to official estimates, unemployment now stands at 9%. However, unofficial estimates give nearly double this percentage. An important characteristic of the Egyptian unemployment problem is that unemployment is mainly concentrated among new entrants (age categories 15-30 as well as intermediate education and university education). Another important aspect of job creation in Egypt is the major role of the informal sector which is now considered to be the major employer in the Egyptian labour market (46.4% of total working individuals in 2005, versus 22.4% for the formal private sector).

To conclude, Egypt continues to face enormous development challenges and to struggle with a number of socio-economic problems, including the reform of social welfare, the subsidy system, reform of the health system, housing and the provision of services, including education. The overall difficult social and economic environment in Egypt has therefore continued to constitute real obstacles hindering the full and active integration of refugees into development programs.

## Section 5: Policy Recommendations

It has been emphasized that irregular migration is a complex and varied phenomenon. Different policies will be appropriate in different contexts and at different times. This paper would suggest that the main principles to be taken into consideration in designing a unified policy for irregular migration. Policy should be guided by the following underlying principles:

- A long-term approach taking into account the causes and effects of irregular migration;
- A balanced approach that reconciles state sovereignty with the rights of individuals;
- A unified approach that incorporates dialogue between different parts of government; between

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<sup>21</sup> According to the Human Development Report 2007/2008, the literacy rate for population 15 years and over averaged about 71.4% in 1995-2005. The rate was better among the young (15-24) 84.9% in 1995-2005. However, it is worth mentioning that illiteracy rates in Egypt are among the highest in the MENA region (HDR 2007/2008) (CAPMAS 2005).

<sup>22</sup> As for a population growth rate of 2.3%, the minimum investment requirements are: EGP 1657.7 billion for employment opportunities, EGP 13.54 billion for pre-university education, EGP 65.5 billion for health, EGP 912.3 billion for housing, and EGP 3.658 billion for government subsidies, during the same period, 2002-2017 (Nassar, H. et al.2003).

governments, NGOs and civil society and between governments in different countries;

- Policy should usually incorporate the following key components:
  - Control measures and law enforcement;
  - Regular and organized migration programs;
  - Return programs;
  - Strategies for combating migrant smuggling and human trafficking;
  - Special programs for ensuring the protection of refugees within broader migration movements;
- i. Political will: This issue may be sensitive, but it needs to be addressed. Irregular migration cannot be managed on a unilateral basis by individual destination states, but requires meaningful cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination. In certain parts of the world, it may be that the changing geography of irregular migration provides incentive enough for states to act, as their countries become not just countries of origin but also receiving countries.<sup>23</sup>
  - ii. The economic potential of refugees should be recognized and harnessed to help meet the needs of the Egyptian economy with developmental policies targeting assistance to both refugees and the host population. The impact of refugees on the host society should not be overlooked. By paying high rents and being consumers in the Egyptian market, even the most marginalized refugees infuse substantial amounts of money into the Egyptian economy. The hard currency from remittances constitutes a significant annual cash inflow. Thus, it should be clear that even trapped in the most marginalized conditions, refugee groups can significantly contribute to the economy.
  - iii. UNHCR in Cairo focuses on the vulnerability of refugees as criteria for assistance and resettlement. This approach prompts many refugees to use marginalization as a strategy for receiving assistance from UNHCR. There is a need for clarification and transparency of UNHCR policies with refugees.<sup>24</sup>

In this regard, important provisions were tackled in the Singapore Declaration, provisions that could be relevant to the Egyptian context:

### **5.1. Concerning Government Practices, Procedures, Mechanisms, Policies and Laws**

- Regarding the prevalence of inconsistent and/or conflicting governmental policies on irregular migrants, we urge governments to: a) Conduct the repatriation of migrants with due process, rather than relying by default on mass deportation measures; b) Examine existing policies and practices to identify inconsistencies between different governmental policies and their corresponding departments (e.g. homeland security/ internal affairs ministry, immigration, labor, health/social welfare, and other departments); c) Create a transparent inter-agency steering committee on migration that facilitates the implementation of a coordinated national, rights-based migration strategy and protection regime; and d) Create and publicize a transparent, rights-based national migration strategy and policy regime in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations, especially migrants' organizations and migrant-support groups.

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<sup>23</sup> This would appear to be the case in Central and Eastern Europe, and in the countries of Northern Africa (Koser, K. 2005)

<sup>24</sup> Better communication and direct contact with refugee communities would create an environment of trust and improve the relations between the two groups (Grabska, K. 2005).

- Regarding practices of arrest, detention and deportation that are often not well regulated and that lead to human rights abuses (such as exploitation, extortion, violence against migrants, deaths, poor and abusive conditions of detention, arbitrary and indefinite detention), we strongly urge governments to: a) Review arrest and detention procedures; b) Sending countries should monitor and provide support for the reintegration of those that are arrested and / or deported c) At the international level, sending countries should have their embassies provide services for all migrant workers, including legal support.
- Regarding the lack of information and research on irregular migrants, we recommend governments: a) Conduct dialogues between the respective responsible ministries / departments at the highest level of sending and receiving countries, including civil society groups in such dialogues for a holistic and deeper understanding of irregular migration, with the objective of addressing causes and response to situations of irregular migration. b) The outcome of these dialogues feed into the making of public policy that is socially just and based on a human rights protection framework.

## 5.2. Civil Society

- Considering that CSOs have limited resources, cannot provide for all the needs of migrant workers, and are focused in capital cities with lack of or limited NGOs working in border zones and transit areas we recommend the following: a) Capacitate NGOs to fund raise and access resources, b) Strengthen the capacity of NGOs working on providing services to migrants in remote areas, c) Share information on donor agencies, d) Strengthen and broaden advocacy networks including pooling of resources, improved sharing of information, and cooperation on advocacy.
- Considering that initiatives of civil society organizations and governments to address issues are not mapped out we recommend the following: a) To map out information on services provided by governments and NGOs b) NGOs and government agencies should work together in providing services for migrant workers.
- Considering that there is poor a information flow to the public and lack of information on the plight of irregular migrants, not to mention distortion by the media we recommend the following: a) broad-based awareness-raising campaigns on the positive economic, social and cultural contributions of irregular migrants to home and host countries. b) Use of all forms of media (including alternative, community radio, local TV, others) as a tool for advocacy. c) the development of media advocates on migrants rights d) the involvement of the media in trainings on migrants' human rights.

## 5.3. Research gaps

- Despite the quantity of literature on migration to and from Egypt, important gaps remain. Forced migration has been the lot of an estimated 6 million people in the Middle East. The national, regional, and global policy environment in which these movements and the conditions that cause them are enacted is another important area of study. Forced migration has been subject to some study, but the articulation of this system with the conditions and structures in Egypt has not been properly addressed.
- A big gap in the Egyptian migration literature is the absence of a systematic conceptual overview of the causes/dynamics of migration (forced and voluntary) and links with poverty/ livelihood issues. The relationship between migration and poverty has not been properly researched in relation to Egypt. The implications of these dynamics for governance, policy-making and citizenship merit study and contemplation.

- More attention also needs to be paid to the gender dimension of migration. What role do women play in migration decisions? What are women's views about the extra responsibilities that they must shoulder? And what views do they have about the future of their families, households and children?

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