

# Migration

## Migrants and Refugees

### Issues for Discourse with Youth

Bahá'í Discourse - Migration

# Migrant

A migrant is a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons:

- migrant workers
- smuggled migrants
- international students
- search for better opportunities
- forced migration by persecution or climate change

# How Many Migrants?

One in 30 persons are migrants, 3.6 % of the global population

281 million international migrants in the world in 2020: female

135m, male 146m, children 28m, workers 169m

In 1990, 153 million

In 1970, 90 million

8,500 dead and missing in 2023

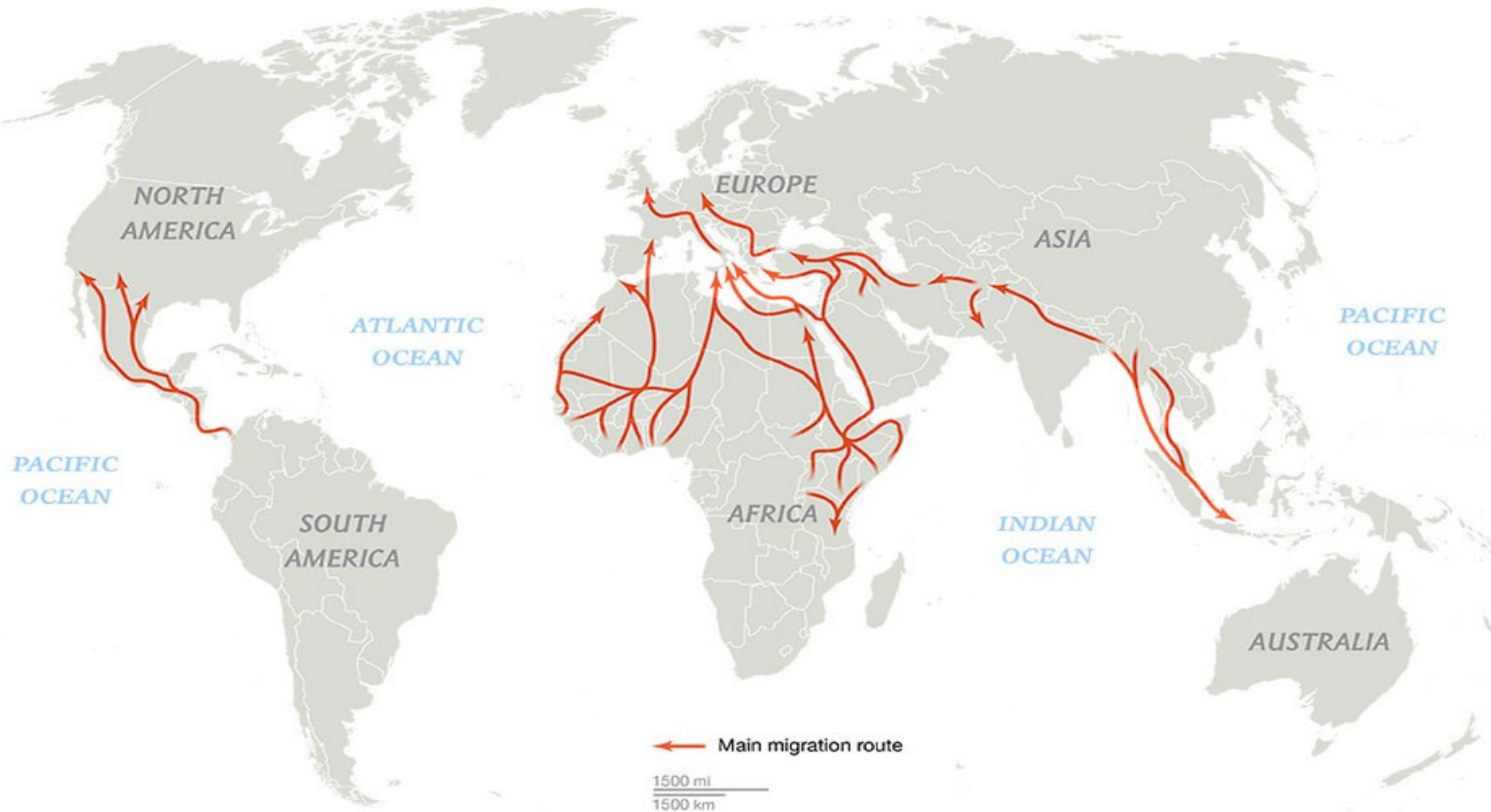
117 million displaced people in the world, and 72 million people

currently displaced within their own countries – uprooted by

conflict, violence and disasters

5.4 million are asylum-seekers

(International Organization for Migration, *World Migration Report 2024*)



# Environmental Migration

Increasingly people are moving to escape the intensification of ecologically negative human activity due to overconsumption and overproduction causing:

- unsustainable economic growth, resource depletion and biodiversity collapse
- ongoing climate change (including global heating)

Major impacts will occur without adequate preventative actions related to carbon emissions and green technology uptake

# Recent Displacements

In 2022-2023, major displacements were caused by:

- Conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza, Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan, Ethiopia and Myanmar
- Climate-related disasters in Pakistan, the Philippines, China, India, Bangladesh, Brazil and Colombia

(International Organization for Migration, *World Migration Report 2024*)

# Migration as a political tool

A rise in anti-immigrant sentiment in Europe, USA, North and Southern Africa, South-East Asia and the Middle East.

(International Organization for Migration, *World Migration Report 2024*)

Migrants are a convenient scapegoat to shift the blame for problems.

# Global Migration

Mass migration has challenged us to look beyond the nation state, to perceive the world from a global perspective and has heightened our awareness of the interconnectedness of humanity. Indeed, “in a world of interdependent peoples and nations the advantage of the part is best to be reached by the advantage of the whole”. (Shoghi Effendi, *Promised Day is Come*, p. vi.)

(Baha'i International Community, *Migration: A Chance to Reflect on Global Well-Being*, 2018)



# Global Migration

The mass movement of populations has made it clear that the peace, stability and prosperity of different regions of the world are interconnected and that solutions cannot be intelligently considered in isolation from this global reality. Indeed, understanding the root causes of mass migration and displacement and identifying durable solutions for the myriads of crises causing people to flee their homes deserve the highest attention of the international community.

*(Baha'i International Community, Migration: A Chance to Reflect on Global Well-Being, 2018)*

# Global Migration

The movement of populations has, over the centuries, allowed civilisations to come into contact with insights and advances made elsewhere, and enabled entire societies to emerge. Today, it is one of the means by which the bonds between peoples of diverse backgrounds are continuously strengthened and is a key catalyst in the emergence of a world community.

*(Baha'i International Community, Viewing the movement of populations in the larger context of humanity's collective life, 2018)*

# Global Migration

In its current form, however, the movement of populations, often prompted solely by the desperate need of individuals to seek a viable future elsewhere, is shedding light on the urgent necessity to revisit the way in which humanity is organised.

*(Baha'i International Community, [Viewing the movement of populations in the larger context of humanity's collective life](#), 2018)*

# Global Migration

What is becoming increasingly apparent is that those forms of mobility, which are caused by despair and the need to survive, cannot merely be the object of an expedient political or humanitarian solution, nor can they fundamentally be addressed by the adoption of one or the other form of migration policy. The need for a long-term approach, which addresses the underlying causes that give rise to and perpetuate movements, has never been more keenly felt.

*(Baha'i International Community, Viewing the movement of populations in the larger context of humanity's collective life, 2018)*

# Drivers of Global Migration

Any framework claiming to address movements caused by the lack of hope in a viable future, cannot shy away from looking at the continuously widening economic disparity existing at the global scale, the generation, distribution and utilisation of wealth, the organisation of the world's raw materials, or the coordination of markets. After all, it would not be reasonable to expect to minimise the drivers of migration while neglecting to reconsider economic processes that leave some countries with little chance to prosper.

*(Baha'i International Community, Viewing the movement of populations in the larger context of humanity's collective life, 2018)*

# Migration

We should not be mixed up in the political divisiveness migration-related issues are now generating. It is more productive to consider the underlying drivers of migration and displacement and the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith that address them.

(based on Kerilyn Schewel, Rethinking Migration from a Global Perspective, *The Baha'i World*, 22 July 2020)

# Bahá'í Approach to Migration

“It is all too easy to be swept up in the immediacy of the crisis and echo the cries arising on one side or another of the contemporary debate surrounding the flow of refugees and migrants, seeking a rapid solution to a problem which is but the latest symptom of a much deeper and far-reaching concern.”

(Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly, 1 October 2015, )

# Migration

Migration is a process of social transformation. Human beings have always moved. Migration is the means by which human beings throughout history have solved their problems, explored the world and improved their lives.

(based on Kerilyn Schewel, Rethinking Migration from a Global Perspective, *The Baha'i World*, 22 July 2020)



# Migration

But the forces driving and shaping migration patterns have changed in rather dramatic ways. The unjust social structures that widen inequalities between people and places also motivate population movements.

(based on Kerilyn Schewel, Rethinking Migration from a Global Perspective, *The Baha'i World*, 22 July 2020)

# Bahá'í Approach to Migration

We are living through a period of global transformation, in which humanity is progressing towards its collective maturity, characterized by the unity of the human race within one social order.

(based on Kerilyn Schewel, *Rethinking Migration from a Global Perspective*, *The Baha'i World*, 22 July 2020; UHJ to Iran 2 March 2013)

# Bahá'í Approach to Migration

Bahá'ís are “encouraged to see in the revolutionary changes taking place in every sphere of life the interaction of two fundamental processes. One is destructive in nature, while the other is integrative; both serve to carry humanity, each in its own way, along the path leading towards its full maturity.”

(based on Kerilyn Schewel, *Rethinking Migration from a Global Perspective*, *The Baha'i World*, 22 July 2020; UHJ to Iran 2 March 2013)

# Bahá'í Approach to Migration

In our future global society unified in all aspects of its political and economic life, “the flow of goods and persons from place to place is vastly freer than anything which now obtains in the world as a whole.”

The principle of the oneness of humankind “implies an organic change in the structure of present-day society, a change such as the world has not yet experienced.”

(based on Kerilyn Schewel, Rethinking Migration from a Global Perspective, *The Baha'i World*, 22 July 2020; UHJ 13 November 1985; Shoghi Effendi, WOB p.43)

# Bahá'í Approach to Migration

*Let them see no one as their enemy, or as wishing them ill, but think of all humankind as their friends; regarding the alien as an intimate, the stranger as a companion, staying free of prejudice, drawing no lines.*

*(Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p-1-2)*



Integrating new arrivals into Canadian society

# Strangers and Foreigners

*When a man turns his face to God he finds sunshine everywhere. All men are his brothers.*

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Kindness and Sympathy towards Strangers and Foreigners, *Paris Talks* 1)

# Strangers and Foreigners

*Let not conventionality cause you to seem cold and unsympathetic when you meet strange people from other countries. Do not look at them as though you suspected them of being evildoers, thieves and boors. You think it necessary to be very careful, not to expose yourselves to the risk of making acquaintance with such, possibly, undesirable people.*

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Kindness and Sympathy towards Strangers and Foreigners, *Paris Talks* 1)



# Strangers and Foreigners

*Be kind to the strangers, whether come they from Turkey, Japan, Persia, Russia, China or any other country in the world.*

*Help to make them feel at home; find out where they are staying, ask if you may render them any service; try to make their lives a little happier.*

*(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Kindness and Sympathy towards Strangers and Foreigners, Paris Talks 1)*

# Strangers and Foreigners

*In this way, even if, sometimes, what you at first suspected should be true, still go out of your way to be kind to them—this kindness will help them to become better.*

*After all, why should any foreign people be treated as strangers?*

*(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Kindness and Sympathy towards Strangers and Foreigners, Paris Talks 1)*

# Strangers and Foreigners

*Let it be seen that you are filled with universal love. When you meet a Persian or any other stranger, speak to him as to a friend; if he seems to be lonely try to help him, give him of your willing service; if he be sad console him, if poor succor him, if oppressed rescue him, if in misery comfort him. In so doing you will manifest that not in words only, but in deed and in truth, you think of all men as your brothers.*

*(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Kindness and Sympathy towards Strangers and Foreigners, Paris Talks 1)*

# Unity

*The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established.*

*(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 286)*