

Girls and women in international migrations

Definition(s):

There is a lot of differences of status among the person who are pushed into exiling, some naming are officials, others fell in the common language.

We distinguish in particular¹ :

- **The refugees** : according to the Geneva Convention (1951), a refugee is a person « who, (...) is afraid of being persecuted because of its race, its faith, its nationality, its affiliations to certain social group or its political opinions, is situated out of the country of origin and who cannot or, because of this fear, does not want to claim the protection of this country ; or a person who, if she does not have the nationality and is located out of the country in which she used to live after such events, cannot or, because of this reason, does not want to return.² ».

- **The asylum seekers** : the whole persons claiming the international protection. In the countries carrying out the procedure of individual examination, person whose the asylum application does not have a final decision from the potential host country. The entire asylum seeker are not recognized as refugee at the end of the process, but all the refugee was, in a first time, an asylum seeker.

- **The undocumented workers** : in France, this term points out a person living in a irregularly way on the territory, without a residence permit. The latter can be refused, expired, or not requested.

- **The stateless people** : according to the New York Convention (1954), a person is called a stateless person if « not any state consider her / him as an immigrant by the application of its legislation³ ».

- **The displaced people**: a person who is forced to leave its dwelling, but who still remain in its country.

- **The migrants** : the common term, which does not refer to any legal definition, points out a person who left its country of origin. It is a large definition, which concerns just as the banished people for economic, political, environmental reasons, as other people who went to another country in order to study or to work (brain drain). This term, pejorative in French,

¹ Definitions are taken from the book written by Cécile GUIGNARD, *Les différents statuts des personnes primo-arrivantes*, an infographics realized for the program of assistance to firstly-comer person to the association MakeSense, available on : [Drive de ressources MakeSense](#).

² UNHCR, *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, 28.07.1951, available on : <https://www.unhcr.org/fr/4b14f4a62>.

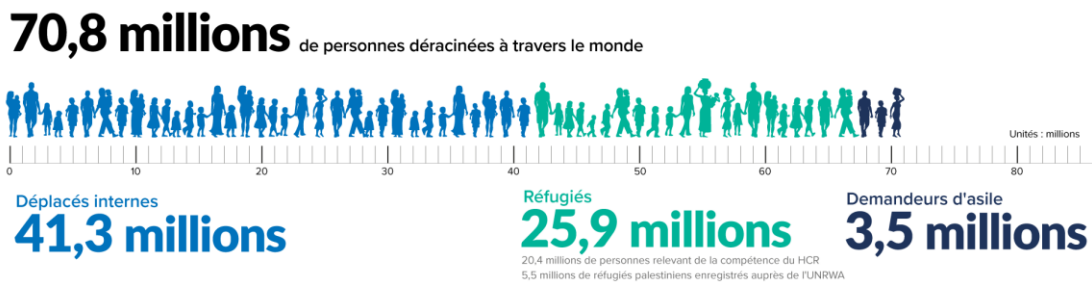
³ ONHCR, *Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons*, 28.09.1954, available on : <https://www.ohchr.org/FR/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/StatelessPersons.aspx>.

has the benefit to be transparent in a multiple languages (*migrant* in english, *migrante* in spanish, *Migrant* in deutsch).

It is necessary to be watchful when we talk about « migrant » because the situations of everyone is extremely diverse.

The current situations about migrations in the world.

Before pointing out of the specific place of woman in the international migrations, we need to make a brief recall of the migratory situations in the world. According to the UNHCR, we count only for 2018⁴ :

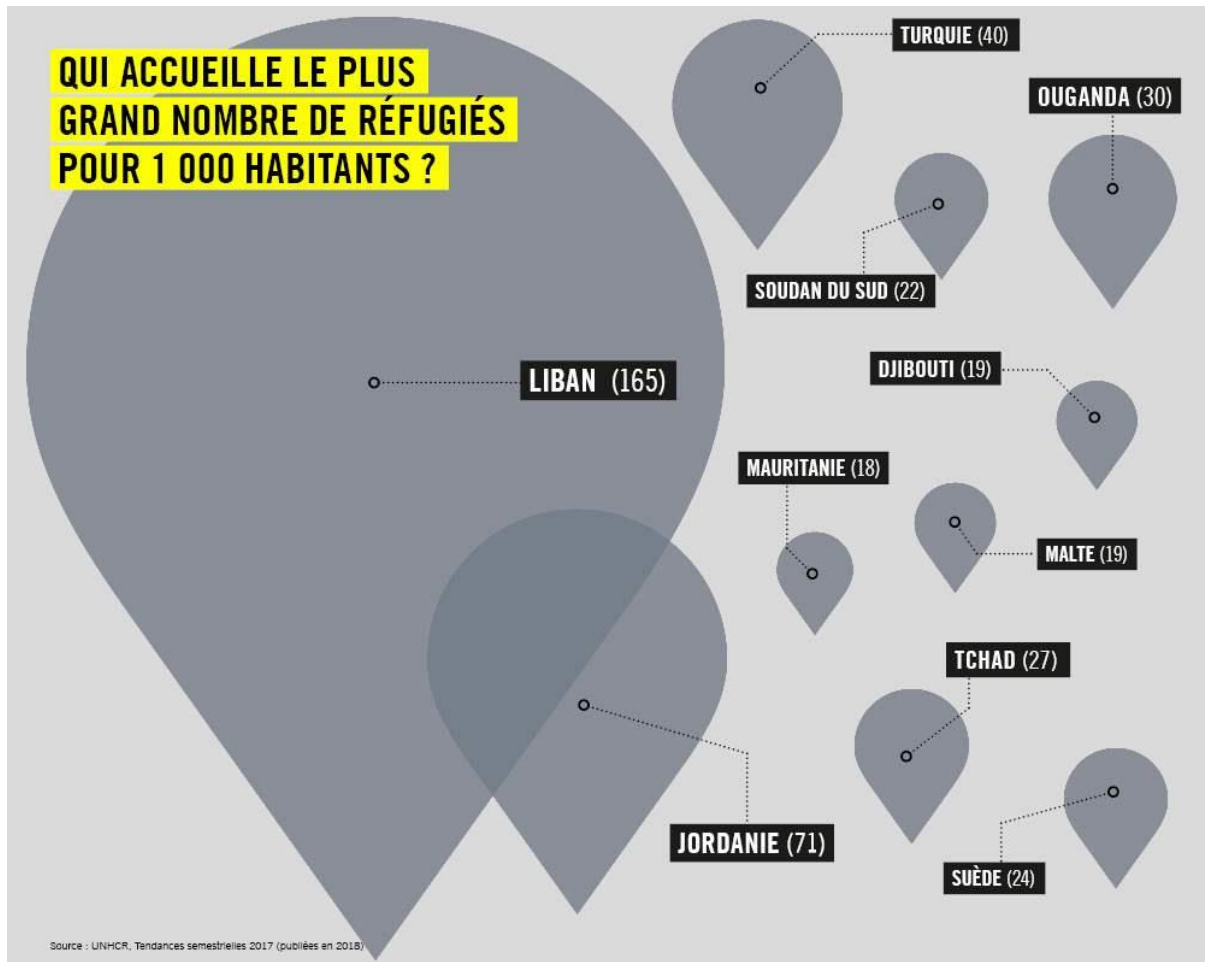


<p>Où sont accueillies les personnes déracinées à travers le monde</p> <p>80%</p> <p>Environ 80% des réfugiés vivent dans des pays voisins de leur lieu d'origine</p>	<p>57% des réfugiés relevant de la compétence du HCR sont originaires de trois pays</p> <p>6,7M Syrie 2,7M Afghanistan 2,3M Soudan du Sud</p>	<p>Principaux pays d'accueil</p> <p>Allemagne 1,1 million Soudan 1,1 million Ouganda 1,2 million Pakistan 1,4 million Turquie 3,7 millions</p>
<p>Le HCR a collecté des données sur 3,9 millions d'apatrides</p> <p>On estime qu'il y en a des millions d'autres</p>	<p>341 800 nouveaux demandeurs d'asile</p> <p>Le plus grand nombre de dépôts de nouvelles demandes d'asile en 2018 provient des Vénézuéliens</p>	<p>37 000 personnes sont forcées chaque jour de fuir les conflits et la persécution</p>

Source: UNHCR

⁴ UNHCR, Aperçu statistique, visited on the 01.06.2020, available on : <https://www.unhcr.org/fr/aperçu-statistique.html>.

In total, the UN estimate that in 2019, there was 272 millions internationales migrants in the world.⁵ Contrary to the received ideas in France, those migrants are not omnipresent in developed countries : 84% of refugees are received by developing countries.⁶



Source: Amnesty International

⁵ The 70,8 million quoted before corresponds to the rootless person during 2018. They are added to the 272 millions counted in 2019.

UN INFO, *Le nombre de migrants internationaux atteint 272 millions, en hausse dans toutes les régions du monde*, 17.09.2019, available on : <https://news.un.org/fr/story/2019/09/1051802>.

⁶ Amnesty International, « Les réfugiés dans le monde en chiffres », available on : <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/what-we-do/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants/global-refugee-crisis-statistics-and-facts/>.

Portion of girls and women in the internationales migrations.

In 2019, among those 272 millions of migrants, 48% were women⁷. Sometimes, it is difficult to determine the number of women in the migrants populations, because of several crooked : presupposition that the « migrant » is a man, unclear counting of women and children. In this way, we often consider that the family gathering concerns only women and children joining their husband and father, whereas the « grouped » are men in 1/3 of the cases in France⁸. In addition, the proportion of women in the migrations varies a lot in accordance with the ethnic origins⁹ and places establishments :

« The migrants are more abundant than males migrants in Europe, in North America, in Oceania, in Latin America and in the Caribbean whereas in Africa and in Asia, in particularly in West Asia, migrants are mainly men.¹⁰ »

Specifics consequences of migrations for girls and women.

The consequences on the people forced to exil are extremely diverses : physical, psychological, equipment, economical, sanitary. For women, there are more important¹¹. First of all, women and girls are equally vulnerable to sexist and sexual violences : HCR quotes for example « rape, forced impregnation, forced abortion, slave trade, sexual slavery and intentional propagation of sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV¹² ». Women and girls are exposed to particular danger which are often a reason for migration in case of conflict. When rape is used as art of war, escape from a conflict zone might be the only way to hope to escape from it.

Young girls are also exposed to forced marriages, with can be a way for family to protect them during the exil or to insure their economical survival. Thus we evaluate that there is four times more forced mariages in the Syrian refugee population than there was in Syria before the war¹³. Those marriages expose girls who are in danger : sexual abuse, high risk-pregnancy, distance from the family, hard labor, psychological violences¹⁴.

⁷ UN INFO, « Le nombre de migrants internationaux atteint 272 millions, en hausse dans toutes les régions du monde », 17.09.2019, available on : <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/what-we-do/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants/global-refugee-crisis-statistics-and-fact>

⁸ BEAUCHEMIN Cris et al., « Les immigrés en France : en majorité des femmes », 2013, INED, Population & Sociétés n°502, available on : <https://www.ined.fr/fr/publications/editions/population-et-societes/immigres-france-majorite-femmes/>.

⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰ INED, « Les migrations dans le monde », 28.03.2018, available on ; <https://www.ined.fr/fr/tout-savoir-population/memos-demo/focus/les-migrations-dans-le-monde/>.

¹¹ It concerns also the LGBTQI+ community, whose specific situation I won't evoke in the present note card.

¹² UNHCR, *Manuel du HCR pour la protection des femmes et des filles*, 2008, available on : <https://www.unhcr.org/fr/fr/protection/women/4c8f3fd96/manuel-hcr-protection-femmes-filles.html>.

¹³ UNFPA, « New study finds child marriage rising among most vulnerable Syrian refugees », 31.01.2017, available on : <https://www.unfpa.org/news/new-study-finds-child-marriage-rising-among-most-vulnerable-syrian-refugees>.

¹⁴ DELCAMP Laura, « Le mariage précoce », 23.05.2020, Institut du Genre en Géopolitique, available on : <https://igg-geo.org/?p=1061>.

Sanitary consequences of an exil life reach also more hardly women and girls. Besides the physical difficulties that every migrant can meet (disease, wound, deficiency, knock) women are exposed to specific pressure linked to their genre : menstrual precarity, risk labor¹⁵. A study realized by Lisa MERRY shows for example that a whole factor (socio-economical difficulties, psychological fragility, language barrier) increases the exposition of migrants women to risky caesarean. Those sanitary difficulties are also visible in the lack of access to the contraception whose consequences are dramatic for women : in the refugees communities, it is common to become a a young mother and a lot of children, a direct obstacle to the economical emancipation of women (they can not access to a pay job because they have to look after them).

Marked by the patriarchal schema which prevail in their country of origin and are reinforced by the exil, moreover women are often prisoner in camps where the can not leave in order to work or include them in their host society. Roxane CARON and Dominique DAMANT note that « it is not easy to contest the family - the only durable institution in the exil. Consequence : the reinforcement of the family and patriarchal power, with specific effect on women¹⁶ ». The latter are seen by their own family are fragiles, to protect from the present threat outside of the camp and especially men stranger to the community. However women are not in security in the camp, where the psychological, physical and sexual violences are abundant and some of them evoke a kind of suffocation and absence of total privacy. The term « jail » comes back regularly in the interview brought but R.CARON and D.DAMANT¹⁷.

When they have the capacity to work, women who escaped from their country are often facing the impossibility to practice legally a work and to get known their diploma from their country of origin. For example, in France, only the person who received a residence permit can work legally¹⁸. Thus the migrants women are exposed to a huge economical precarity and must accept dangerous job and less qualified. International Labour Organization considers that one servant on six is a migrant, and 73,4% among them are women¹⁹. Women are also exposed to the sexual forced exploitation, whose represent 99,4% of the victims²⁰. Finally, the exil can lead women to take on « nontraditional role and consequently confronted to discriminations and damages²¹ », which can harm to their return to their country of origin or to their integration to the host country. Thus, a lot of women whose husband is dead are

¹⁵ MERRI Lisa et al., « International migration as a determinant of emergency caesarean », 2016, *Women and Birth* 29 (2016) e89–e98, available on : <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wombi.2016.04.001>.

¹⁶ CARON Roxane et DAMANT Dominique, *Survivre dans un camp de réfugiés : entre réel et symbolique (note de recherche)*, 2014, *Erudit, Anthropologie et Société* vol.38 n°2, available on : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1026175ar>.

¹⁷ *ibid*

¹⁸ Or those whose the asylum application is on the drawing board since more than six month.

¹⁹ OIT, « ILO global estimates on migrant workers », 2015, available on : http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/publications/WCMS_436343/lang--fr/index.htm.

²⁰ NANKO SAMAKÉ Aline, « Les femmes dans l'esclavage moderne : une réalité cachée du quotidien », 24.05.2020, Institut du Genre en Géopolitique, available on : <https://igg-geo.org/?p=1066>.

²¹ UNHCR, *Manuel du HCR pour la protection des femmes et des filles*, 2008, available on : <https://www.unhcr.org/fr-fr/protection/women/4c8f3fd96/manuel-hcr-protection-femmes-filles.html>.

forced to work in other to provide for the need of their family, living their traditional role, which aimed to make them stay at home in order to look after their children. Back to their society of origin, they are denigrated for having infringe the tradition. Moreover, the ones who are victims of sexual violence (rape, exploitation, forced pregnancy) risk by the way to be rejected by their community²².

Finally, the lesser access to education for women (they constitute 2/3 of illiterate adults in the world²³) is often correlated to a weak knowledge of their rights and which expose them to additional difficulties. Council of Europe notes for example : « The ignorance of their rights or discriminations linked to their status can (...) considerably hamper the access to migrants women, refugees and asylum seeker.²⁴ » It can be also applied to the process to obtain a residence permit, to access to the treatment, to learn the language of the host country.

Perspective forecasting.

With the climate change and a lot of socio-economic and political consequences it involves, internal migrations have vocation to accentuate between now and the next years. World Bank values in 2018 we could count 143 million of climatic refugees before 2050.²⁵ According to United Nations we could count 1 billion of displaced²⁶. Moreover, the proportion of 50% of women could maintain and with her, the specific discrimination to whom they face.

Gradually, the genre is recognized as a factor discrimination as it is: thus, in 1922-23, Canada started to recognize the persecutions linked to the genre and to the sexual orientation as a motive for asylum application²⁷. Istanbul Convention, which defines measures against violence with regard to women and domestic violence, specifies that the status of the refugees could not be a discriminating factor in the access to the protection and to the respect of women's rights.²⁸

Nevertheless, it is not enough: it is essential to take account of girls and women rights accounting to an intersectional approach, considering both discrimination that they are victim by being migrants et as women, within the host society and own community. Thus, it is crucial to consider the patriarchal structures from their community which has a negative impact on

²² The HCR manuel quotes the situation of Marion, an intern displaced in Sierra Leone : « Rebels brought me, and (...) raped me. (...) I was their inmate during one year. I got pregnant and decided to escape. When I arrived at Freetown, I was rejected by my family and my community. »

²³ UNESCO, « Education des filles et des femmes – Statistiques », 2014, available on : <http://www.unesco.org/>.

²⁴ European Council, « Protéger les droits des femmes et filles migrantes, réfugiées et demandeuses d'asile », 2018, available on : <https://rm.coe.int/prems-089219-fra-2573-femmes-migrantes-brochure-web-a5/16809663fd>.

²⁵ World Bank, « Les migrants climatiques : visages humains d'un dérèglement planétaire », 19.03.2018, available on : <https://www.banquemondiale.org/fr/news/feature/2018/03/19/meet-the-human-faces-of-climate-migration>.

²⁶ ALLARD (d') Marion, « Réfugiés climatiques, la crise du siècle », 15.11.2016, L'Humanité, available on : <https://www.humanite.fr/refugies-climatiques-la-crise-du-siecle-626101>.

²⁷ JORDAN Sharalyn et MORRISSEY Chris, « « Pour quels motifs ? » Les demandes d'asile présentées par les personnes LGBT au Canada », 2013, Revue des Migrations Forcées n°42, available on : <https://www.fmreview.org/fr/osig/jordan-morrissey>.

²⁸ Convention of the European Council of the prevention and fight against violence with regard to women and domestic violence, told the Istanbul Convention, 11.05.2011, available on : <https://www.coe.int/fr/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168008482e>.

them, and the obligations traditionally linked to their genre, during the arrangement of accompany package: child care, lack of contact with unknown men (in certain Muslim refugees' communities), arranged hours. It is necessary to look after specific traumatism that they could have lived in order to not revive them: a benevolent and non-mixed talking circle, feminine psychologist, access to the contraception. Last, it is important to ensure that girls and women speaking are request, enhance and hear, where women tend to be excluded from the process of reconstruction and peace.²⁹ A lot of organization, UNHCR ahead, suggests solutions in order to fight against those discriminations. Among them, it is possible to note a better access to health, a specific protection in front of patriarchal « traditional » discriminations, the arranging of places of hosting no-mixed, efforts in the domain of education in favor of women, or access to the tools allowing the economical emancipation.³⁰

²⁹ BELL Christine, « Women and peace processes, negotiations, and agreements », 2013, NOREF,, available on : <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/f04c/bbe572b70c7f6047b4dcdd744f0cf834d80f.pdf>.

³⁰ UNHCR, Manuel du HCR pour la protection des femmes et des filles, 2008, available on : <https://www.unhcr.org/fr-fr/protection/women/4c8f3fd96/manuel-hcr-protection-femmes-filles.html>.

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