

# Roots & Routes

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Photo credit Dr. K. Ranju Rangan

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# Editor's Note



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Dear Readers,  
Greetings!

The entire humanity is confronted with the COVID-19 pandemic, and it is being reported that coronavirus infection cases are again on the rise in several parts of the world. It seems that this crisis can last for many months now. Therefore, respective countries need to develop a coherent strategy that can ensure the delicate balance between the survival of people as well as the revival of livelihood sources prioritizing both as per the context. For such a strategy, migration governance will have to be given a lot more attention in terms of formulation and implementation. With such a context, we present to you our organizational newsletter- "Roots and Routes", for the month of March 2021, carrying forward the dissemination of significant ideas relating to migration.

This issue of our newsletter includes one GCM report, two movie reviews and a book review. Michal Tengeri has written a report on the webinar on the 23rd Objective of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM)- "Strengthen International Cooperation and Global Partnership for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration". Besides it, the newsletter contains a Film review titled "Attempts to Discover the Nether Regions of Human Trafficking", which has been reviewed by Solomon Obanla based on the movie [Òlòtùré](#). Another film review has been written by Dr Gulnash Askhat "Turbulent Journey of Little Adu to Find a Secure Place" on the film titled [Adu](#). Additionally, the newsletter has also given space to the book review written by Felix Tombindo reviewing the book titled "Of Myths And Migration: Illegal Immigration into South Africa".

We hope that you will certainly find our newsletter enriching and engaging. We will be happy to know your views on the content of our newsletter, and any suggestion for its improvement will be highly appreciated! Feel free to email at [editorinchief@grfdt.com](mailto:editorinchief@grfdt.com).

Happy Reading!

Abhishek Yadav

## The GCM Objective 23: A Mortar of International Cooperation

On the 2nd of March 2021, the Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism, together with the [Migrant Forum in Asia](#), the Cross Regional Center for Refugees and Migrants, and the [Civil Society Action Committee](#), organized an online webinar on the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) Objective 23. Various experts on migration discussed the topic, “Strengthen international cooperation and global partnership for safe, orderly and regular migration”.

### Diminishing Space for Civil Society Engagements

The moderator of the webinar was William Gois, Regional Coordinator of the Migrant Forum in Asia. He started the webinar by thanking everyone who participated in the GCM webinars this season. Right after, he moved to the first speaker, Colin Rajah, Coordinator of the Civil Society Action Committee. Gois asked him to describe the main challenges and opportunities that global societies are currently facing. According to Colin Rajah, one of the biggest challenges is the shrinking formal intergovernmental space. By shrinking space, he meant the ability to advance critical engagement and push things forward, while being able to sustain main principles. Civil society has played a crucial role over the last twenty years in different topics related to migration. For example, civil societies significantly participated in contemplations and negotiations about the Global Compact for Migration.

***“I saw it (formulation of the GCM) as a critical moment when the civil society came together to ensure that we got the best possible compact”*: Colin Rajah.**

He concluded his speech by expressing concerns related to their shrinking space in formal migra-

tion discourses. Based on the insights of Rajah, the biggest challenge in the future can be stated as an inability to reclaim the main idea of civil society. Consequences of COVID-19 Pandemic on Implementing GCM Policies

Poem Mudyawabikwa, Minister Counselor of [Zimbabwe Permanent Mission to the United Nations Office](#), was the second speaker of the webinar. In his speech, he mentioned the aftermaths of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of GCM policies. He was of the opinion that member states of GCM have not completely enforced negotiated migration policies, laws, and practices in 2020. The effective implementation did not happen despite the fact that not all GCM principles are new. Some of them are continuations of previous policies that are supposed to be updated to deal with the current challenges.

***“It was deemed desirable to have all aspects of international migration in one framework as a basis for member states to recommit themselves to address international migration challenges triggered by large movements of migrants”*:**

**Poem Mudyawabikwa.**

### The Importance of GCM Objective 23 for the Migrant Workers

The importance of implementation of GCM Objective 23 was presented by Sumaiya Islam, Executive Director of the [Bangladesh Nari Sramik Kendra](#). According to her, enforcement of GCM Objective 23 requires cooperation at the grassroots level, national level, and regional level. She insisted that only such cooperation would be able to assist migrant workers efficiently. Many of them are facing a multitude of difficulties due to the COVID-19

pandemic. During times like this, migrant workers are in need of support. Islam stressed the importance of international organizations in ensuring the provision of assistance to migrant workers.

***“To implement GCM Objective 23, it is more important to support the migrant workers”:* Sumaiya Islam.**

### **The GCM Objective 23 as a Foundation for Post-COVID-19 Recovery**

An obvious movement forward was visible to John K. Bingham, Geneva Representative of the [NGO Committee on Migration](#) in New York, which he explained to be the implementation of GCM Objectives. He stressed the fact that the GCM is not only the product of international cooperation. The GCM was negotiated by states, along with the civil societies, and stakeholders at the grassroots level, among others. Even more, the GCM Objective 23 on cooperation and partnership is the final and integrating Objective.

***“It is the mortar; it is the mortar for the other twenty-two Objectives. Even though it was added last, cooperation runs through it all and should carry it forward and faster”:* John K. Bingham.**

The GCM Objective 23 calls precisely for regional and multilateral action. He also saw possible positive changes during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the appreciation of essential workers and employers. The importance of migrants and migration for recovery has become more obvious.

### **The Future of the GCM**

Nicoletta Giordano, Head of the International Partnership Division of the [International Organi-](#)

[zation of Migration](#) was the last speaker at the webinar. She agreed with the previous speaker, John K. Bingham, and labeled the GCM Objective 23 as the mortar of cooperation. Even more, she believes in partnership as a base for further cooperation.

***“If there is no partnership, if there is no cooperation, there is nothing we can do together”:* Nicoletta Giordano.**

The GCM Objective 23 is a result of such a partnership. Different actors should think of a way to strengthen the cooperation. She assumed that the COVID-19 pandemic has given us an opportunity to think about this cooperation from a different perspective. Later, she also mentioned the importance of regional bodies that are beneficial for inter-state consultations. She finished her speech by asking questions from a theoretical perspective, whether are partnerships better pursued from the intermediate or national level?

### **Further Partnership as a Base for Cooperation**

After the speech of the last speaker, the webinar moved into the discussions, as participants elaborated on various issues related to the GCM Objective 23. All speakers agreed on the importance of cooperation and civil societies for regular migration. Even more, they pointed out that there exists a detachment between what is happening at the global, regional, and national levels. In order to connect all these levels, further partnerships are crucial. Different actors should come together and think about the best possible strategy.

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## Attempt to Discover the Nether Regions of Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is common in Nigeria. Edo State is an especially well-known place, where human traffickers recruit their victims. However, other states like Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Ondo and Delta are not an exception, in the recruitment of victims. *Òlòtūrè* is a movie that shows the vicious game of human traffickers and sex slavery criminal business in Nigeria. *Òlòtūrè* in Idoma language means endurance. The true-life event movie adaptation is about an attempt to discover the nether regions of human trafficking and sex slavery in Nigeria, by an investigative reporter, Tobore Ovuorie.

Her motivation was derived from the death of her friend who was trafficked for sex in addition to her years of research into the plight of trafficked women in Nigeria. She went undercover to discover the multi-billion dollar criminal enterprise and had to relive some of the nasty experiences of prostitution, sex slavery, and trafficking.



Photo Credits: Google Image ( [https://encrypted-tbn2.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcSOR-FLbMKmKqsrvfE5837ofu8Q-t\\_o5U2HMOU-j7AvfeXboP95-3](https://encrypted-tbn2.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcSOR-FLbMKmKqsrvfE5837ofu8Q-t_o5U2HMOU-j7AvfeXboP95-3) )

The story was written by [Mo Abudu](#) and Heidi Uys. It was directed by [Kenneth Gyang](#) and produced by Ebony Life production. The main characters of the movie are Sharon Ooja, Blossom Chukwujekwu. The movie was premiered in Tunisia on October 31, 2019, at [Carthage Film Festival](#) and released on [Netflix](#) on October 2, 2020.

The movie is 106 minutes long and showcased a character named Oloture in Lagos, Nigeria who bravely joins a prostitute ring, as an undercover journalist to expose sex slavery and human trafficking. The opening scene shows how the lead character arrives nightclub on a motorcycle. She faces harassment inside the hall by one of the prostitutes who feel jealous, because one of the male customers abandons them and chooses to patronize Oloture for the night. It is really terrifying to see how she jumps out of the hotel room window with a guy she just met at a club with the main purpose to have sex. She sustains an injury of her arm and treks many distances at that dead hour of the night before she enters a vehicle to get back to her brothel. This scene especially and many others exposes the terrible life experience of prostitutes to the viewers. It allows viewers to understand various reasons that lead many of them into such dehumanizing acts.



Photo Credits : thenativemag.com ( [https://thenativemag.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/120370265\\_272449087158283\\_7703782175991476928\\_n.jpg](https://thenativemag.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/120370265_272449087158283_7703782175991476928_n.jpg) )

The scene where one of the girls is beheaded for being in contact with her mother after strict instruction by the kingpin cartel to not do that is horrific. It elicits fear and anger while watching. The realism was designed to shock viewers. Another shocking scene is when the lead character is drugged and raped by a socialist at one of the orgies. The movie shows men, who are in general regarded as citizens of high moral standards in the society being secretly involved in commercial sexual activities.

One of the breathtaking scenes is where girls are intercepted by the men of the police forces be-

fore they crossed the border, in continuation of their gruesome journey to Italy. Alas, the police officer could not get there on time, which dashed any hope of them being rescued. The movie ended with a climax, which leaves the viewer in anxiety with a question begging for an answer – what would be the fate of these young women? The reality of the situation is that human trafficking channels are heavily systematic, deeply rooted by those in power, shackling those who oppose into fearful silence. The use of costume and makeup in correlation with the theme was adequate.

Netflix's *Oloture* was shot in an ultra-personal way that gives an uncomfortably authentic experience. Some of the direction and shots are questionable, and at times, you could wonder whether they were managing a budget or the director did not do well in planning the location for some shots. Some violent scenes feel jaded or out of place which dampens the experience somewhat. The violence that is implied is ironically more effective than the moments where they tried to get away with sound effects and poor choreography. Overall, the message of existing cartels doing human trafficking and criminal business was well presented.

**Solomon Obanla** is a trained diplomat, migration consultant, social researcher, Gender and Peacebuilding analyst, Peer Educator, facilitator, and community mobilizer. He obtained a master's degree in Gender and Peacebuilding at Cheikh Anta Diop University, Dakar, Senegal, and a Bachelor's degree in International Relations at Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria. Twitter: @obanla\_oluwafe

SAVE THE DATE

# INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION REVIEW FORUM (IMRF) 2022 CIVIL SOCIETY PRIORITIES WEBINAR SERIES

from 13 April to 11 May 2021

## Organizers:

This is a collective civil society process by regional and global civil society networks including:



1 Migration, COVID-19 and a New Social Contract

13 April

2 Race and Discrimination

20 April

8 AM Mexico City

9 AM New York

1 PM Dakar

3 PM CEST

4 PM Beirut

8 PM Bangkok

3 4 May

3 Regular Pathways and Irregular Migration

11 May

4 Detention and Return

This four-part webinar series will be the beginning of an extensive civil society mobilization in the lead-up to the IMRF in May 2022.

More details to follow, incl. Zoom link

Simultaneous interpretation in ARABIC, ENGLISH, FRENCH, SPANISH



## Turbulent Journey of Little Adu to Find a Secure Place



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Adu is a Spanish epic melodrama that had taken place in several African places such as Cameroon, a lower-middle-income country in Central Africa, Morocco, and North African country, directed by Salvador Calvo.

The film is based on the true story that touches upon the problems of global migration crisis, the impact of migration on crime and victimization that are current phenomenon throughout the world. I am glad that such problems are being put on display. The main hero of the film is a 6-year-old boy named Adu who lost his family and witnessed crime, severe difficulties, and traumatic events. These issues are usually faced by those kids who have been displaced by war and deprived of everything- the right to life, to be with family and community, and to access health and protection. Maybe history does not affect any of us, but people with these problems exist, existed before us, and will continue to exist, until right steps are taken for them.

The film consists of several episodes and starts with an episode where refugees are trying to pass the high wired fence and one of them falls to his death during clashes with border guards. It is really scary to describe the feeling of these refugees who are crying and calling their friend's name. It is obvious that they are simply struggling for their very existence.

Another scene is taking place in Cameroon where Adu with his sister witnesses how an elephant is being killed by poachers while they are taking a bicycle ride. They had to leave their bicycles and escape from that place just to be safe, while at the same time local wardens are hurrying to save one of the scared animals in the park but are too late. One of the members of the preservers is Gonzalo who becomes angry that they are not able to defend animals. He is rich person who came here from Spain for charity. He takes the bike and gives it to his daughter who had always criticized her father for everything and who came to visit her in Africa.



Meanwhile, the poachers kill Adu's mother just to erase the evidence of killing the elephant and these two children had to flee to Spain with the hope to find their father after they met their aunt. But, the person who promised to give a lift to their destination changes his mind and recommends them to fly Paris in the wheel which was very dangerous and horrifying. With desperation, they follow the instruction of the man and decided to fly, it is really scary and pity to see how Adu's sister dies in the freezing cold during their flight and she falls through the hole of the plane while it was landing and the little boy was left absolutely alone. Adu became unconscious and was handed to immigration police by the staff of the airport where he meets Massar. Massar is a 15-year-old runaway who is in the same situation as Adu. They became friends and were always together. Massar cares for him like a sibling.

Another episode that has taken place in Cameroon is the high tension between Gonzalo and the local wardens. Gonzalo is an external adviser of the reserve, who is engaged in charity, fights against animal cruelty and funds the reserve. But the local wardens didn't let him work. As his life is under a big risk, Gonzalo decides to leave Cameroon and he takes his daughter. It is the best decision that he starts to pay more attention to his daughter, takes her to visit a psychologist and his attentiveness saves his daughter in the end from drug addiction. At the same time Massar and Adu started their journey to Melilla (Spanish city located on the northwest coast of Africa) through the river which is very dangerous. As Adu was too small to swim the river, Massar drags his balloon with a rope.

Unfortunately, their rope broke just at the border but they miraculously survived as they were caught by the guards. Massar is detained and Adu is sent into Malilla as a child refugee.

The film depicts very difficult situations and real hard life stories. There's a lot to think about and analyze the myriad problems that exist in our society; the fate of innocent people, starvation, deprivation of healthcare, the issues of human rights, security, kidnapping, drug abuse, the list is endless. Those people who are in such an unbearable condition are just victims. I've been forced to rethink some aspects of life and attitudes to many things.

One more thing to highlight about this movie is definitely the high quality of production. Beautiful scene and the life of Africa is shown well and delicately. The actors performed well. Filmmakers could reveal the real life of refugees who have lived through these challenges. However, the film was very strangely linked by three stories. In fact, it was not that much needed, because the other two stories have mediocre relevance to everything that's going on with Adu.

I strongly recommend and do hope the person who watches this film will enjoy it. The film is highly recommended for everyone and anyone.

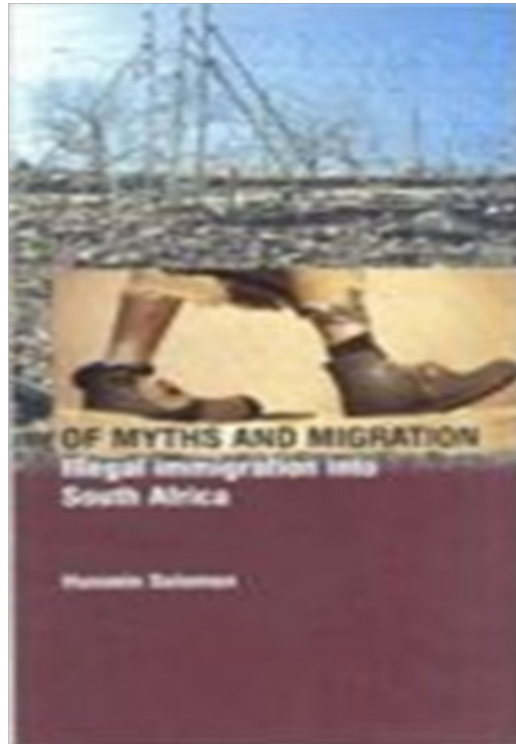
**Dr. Gulnash Askhat** holds a doctorate in International Relations. She is the Head of the Department of Professional International Relations at Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International Relations and World Languages, Kazakhstan.

**Of Myths And Migration: Illegal Immigration into South Africa**  
[Hussein Solomon, 2003, South Africa: Unisa Press, ISBN:  
1868882063, 9781868882069; 175 pages]

**By Felix Tombindo\***

In 'OF MYTHS AND MIGRATION: Illegal Immigration into South Africa', Hussein Solomon explores the 'global migration crisis' focusing on the threats posed by international migration on host countries. The study specifically focuses on rampant clandestine immigration in South Africa. Hussein frames the study within the broader Southern African regional security framework. The book provides policy-relevant insights on how South Africa and by extension other African countries, can possibly deal with irregular immigration and its adverse effects on the host population. South Africa is a major destination for regular and irregular migrants within the Southern African region because of its relatively stronger economy compared to its neighbors and the rest of the African continent. Irregular immigrants from Zimbabwe, for instance, have increasingly 'trekked' to South Africa in search of employment in the wake of an incessant economic decline and political turmoil in their home country in the past twenty years.

Focusing on the underexplored subject of irreg-



ular immigrants in South Africa – who he notes are usually not keen to be researched on – Hussein lays bare a grey area on the character, nature, and impact of irregular immigrants in South Africa. He lays a foundation for further research on the impact of irregular migrants both on the sending and receiving countries despite saying very little about the everyday experiences of the irregular immigrants themselves.

International migration is complex and has repercussions on both the sending and receiving countries that are not easily generalisable. The lack of generalisability is more pronounced regarding irregular migrants. Yet, irregular migrants are often framed under a monolithic worldview which castigates them as a threat to the security of the host population. 'Putting a strain on government service delivery', 'stealing jobs from locals' and 'criminality' are common descriptors associated with irregular immigrants in South Africa. Hussein's study is no exception as it bemoans the burden that irregular migrants in South Africa put on the South African population and its government.

\* Felix Tombindo is a doctoral student in African Studies and Anthropology at the University of Birmingham, UK. He has ongoing research interests in migration and development, particularly the potential role of diasporas towards reconstruction and development of their home countries. Here is his latest publication on migration and development: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9781003026327-15>.

However, the book is silent about the cheap migrant labour exploited by South African firms, especially commercial farms where most irregular migrants are employed.

Consequently, Hussein depicts irregular immigrants in South Africa as posing a threat to the security of the local population. Through the International Relations (IR) perspective, Hussein discusses security and security studies, themes upon which the book is mainly predicated. Contrary to a narrow conceptualisation of security that focuses on the military and defence, the author engages with human security from a perspective which has been hitherto less explored in studies of migration. Defining security in a broad sense as the “the absence of threat to human life, lifestyle and culture through the fulfilment of basic needs” (Omari, 1995), Hussein reveals the links between, for instance, economic decline and human insecurity. He observes that such a broad conceptualisation of security means regional organisations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) which started off as primarily geared towards militaristic defence, are now oriented towards development.

Although ‘development’ is an elusive concept that evades a simple definition, achieving it entails ensuring the wellbeing of a given population. As such, the incorporation of ‘development’ by African regional organizations as a goal towards attaining human security means respective governments must safeguard the wellbeing of their populations. This explains the reason why Hussein perceives irregular immigrants as a threat to human security because they arguably put pressure on resources that are meant for the wellbeing of the host population. Paradoxically, however, because they are regarded as a threat to human security, irregular immigrants are excluded from respective governments’ efforts towards meeting their local populations’ basic needs. As such the broad goal of promoting human security is left unachieved because irregular immigrants are left behind by the host government.

The pressure that is put on national service delivery and resources by irregular immigrants, Hussein argues, is a threat to the local population’s security. This argument augurs well with commonplace arguments that are used in support of xenophobic attacks against African and other immigrants in contemporary South Africa. However, at the same time, the book is silent on the fact that most of these irregular immigrants – those from Zimbabwe for instance – migrate because of livelihood and other insecurities in their home countries. As such, while irregular immigrants may pose a security threat to the host population, it is also important to recognize that they are running away from insecurities back in their home countries. As such, while Hussein makes a notable contribution with policy suggestions towards curbing irregular immigration in South Africa, such policy measures should consider cooperative efforts that improve conditions in the home country.

The author suggests two notable policies that may be adopted to curb the ‘crisis of migration’. First, control measures that include deportation are propounded but these come with costs on the part of the South African government as the author rightly notes because the government will have to pay for repatriating irregular migrants. Additionally, irregular immigrants from South Africa’s neighbors often return to South Africa immediately after being deported. Second, he argues convincingly that states should be left to retain their sovereignty but on the condition that they cater to the security and welfare of their citizens. This is an interesting proposition which, however, may not be feasible to implement. States such as Zimbabwe (authoritarian and in persistent economic decline), Mozambique, and the DRC (bedeviled by civil strife) would need sanctioning to check the abuse of power by the state and thus promote human security. And doing so means undermining their sovereignty.

Hussein’s use of the IR approach to the study of migration also raises critical issues regarding the challenges surrounding policy on international migrants. Bakewell (2008) for instance argues for the promotion of transnational citizenship for



international migrants. Having read Hussein's book, however, one wonders about the feasibility and repercussions of such a policy. If irregular immigrants are perceived as a security threat, then affording them transnational citizenship will be difficult.

The book critiques Pan-African imaginations of a 'United States of Africa' that African people may have. The author critiques the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which, through its 1995 and 1997 protocols sought to promote regional integration in Southern African. He argues convincingly that unrestrained migration within the Southern African region is impractical. He emphasizes that South Africa as the major economic power in the region would stand to lose because most migrants would be enticed to migrate to South Africa. Hussein argues that unrestrained migration in the Southern African region would lead to increased organized crime because irregular immigrants in South Africa have already been seen to contribute to organized crime. However, this argument ignores the possibility that irregular immigrants may engage in organized crime because they are deprived of proper economic opportunities and are not assimilated into mainstream South African society. It also reads as simplistic to hold a monolithic view that characterizes all irregular immigrants as criminals.

The author provides important insights into the growing xenophobic sentiments against irregular migrants because of the threats they pose on employment opportunities. Irregular immigrants' willingness to work for long hours for low pay (in the process undermining the power of industrial action by local South Africans as they try to negotiate for better wages and working conditions) and

the strains that immigrants put on service delivery. Five years after the publication of Hussein's book, there were explicit manifestations of xenophobia in South Africa in the form of violent attacks in 2008 and more recently in 2015 and 2019, South Africa has witnessed attacks and looting of foreign-owned businesses especially shops. As such, Hussein's book also contributes to understanding and thinking around the sources of xenophobia in South Africa.

Overall, the book reveals that globalization is a façade. Xenophobia in South Africa and the calls for controlled migration point to this. It substantiates Nyamnjoh's (2006:1) position that globalization is characterized by "accelerated flows and paradoxically, accelerated closures through the intensified reality of borders". Hussein's descriptions of the contemporary international migration trends as leading to a 'global migration crisis' provide alarmist warnings against mass population movements. One can argue, in concurrence with Bakewell (2008) that the world is characterized by an anti-population movement and is obsessed with a ubiquitous concern to keep migrants and would-be migrants rooted in their home countries. By depicting irregular immigrants as a threat to local South Africans, Hussein's book adds the general picture of globalization as mere rhetoric. The book contributes to the literature on migration in profound and critical ways. For scholars and students interested in the relationship between migration and development and migration and livelihoods outsourcing, this is a good basic book from which to start thinking about thematic areas on such topics. It is also relevant for policymakers, students of IR, Migration Studies, and Development Practitioners.