

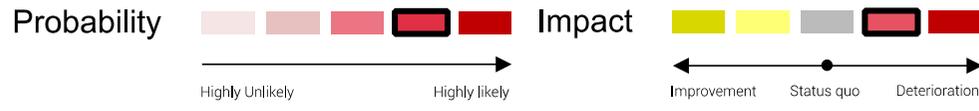
MIDDLE EAST — EU MIGRATION: SCENARIOS

POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS IN MIGRATION VIA TURKEY AND GREECE OVER THE NEXT 6 MONTHS

9 February 2017

SUMMARY

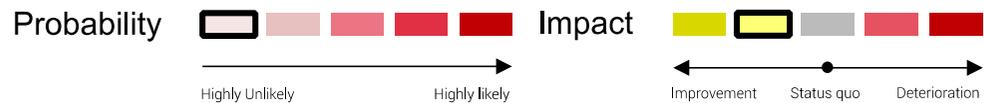
Scenario 1: Continued restricted migration



Internal displacement in Syria continues while border restrictions severely limit the number of people able to reach neighbouring countries. The number of refugees and other migrants entering Turkey from Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere remains steady. Relatively low numbers of asylum-seekers continue to enter Greece by land or sea while fewer leave Greece due to the slow processing of asylum applications. The overall asylum-seeker population in Greece slowly rises, despite the irregular onward movement of people assisted by smugglers continuing, primarily via the western Balkan route.

Conditions on the islands deteriorate and conflict with the host community increases. Increasing numbers of people attempt to leave by irregular means, which become progressively more dangerous. Protection needs grow.

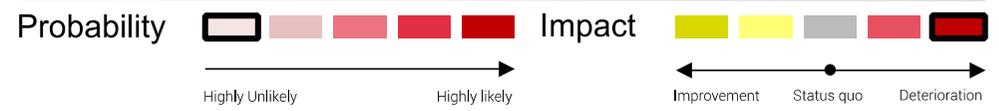
Scenario 2: Number of asylum-seekers in Greece falls



The overall number of asylum-seekers in Greece reduces significantly due to a combination of three main factors: 1) EU member states honour their commitment to relocate the 66,400 asylum-seekers from Greece who arrived before March 2016; 2) Greece grants asylum to, and integrates, many others; and 3) the EU increases the speed of resettlement from Turkey, which results in fewer people resorting to irregular methods of travel to Europe, reducing the rate of new arrivals to Greece.

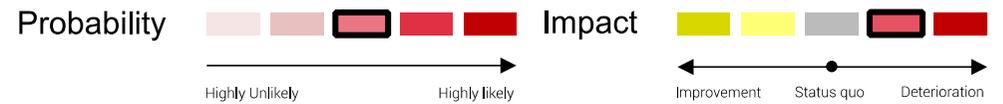
The scale of need in Greece falls substantially although those not relocated or resettled, primarily non-Syrians, become more vulnerable as support decreases. People relocated to countries with inadequate support services struggle to integrate and have physical and psychological support needs.

Scenario 3: Number of asylum-seekers in Greece increases



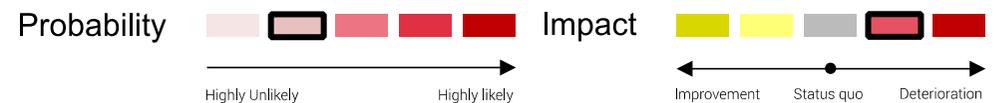
Up to 150,000 migrants and asylum-seekers transit to Greece by both land and sea as Turkey relaxes movement controls to either force movement on elements of the EU-Turkey deal or to gain domestic political support. Greece's northern neighbours increase border security. State authorities and NGOs are overwhelmed and asylum-seekers face serious health and security risks, especially on overcrowded islands.

Scenario 4: Increased returns to Syria



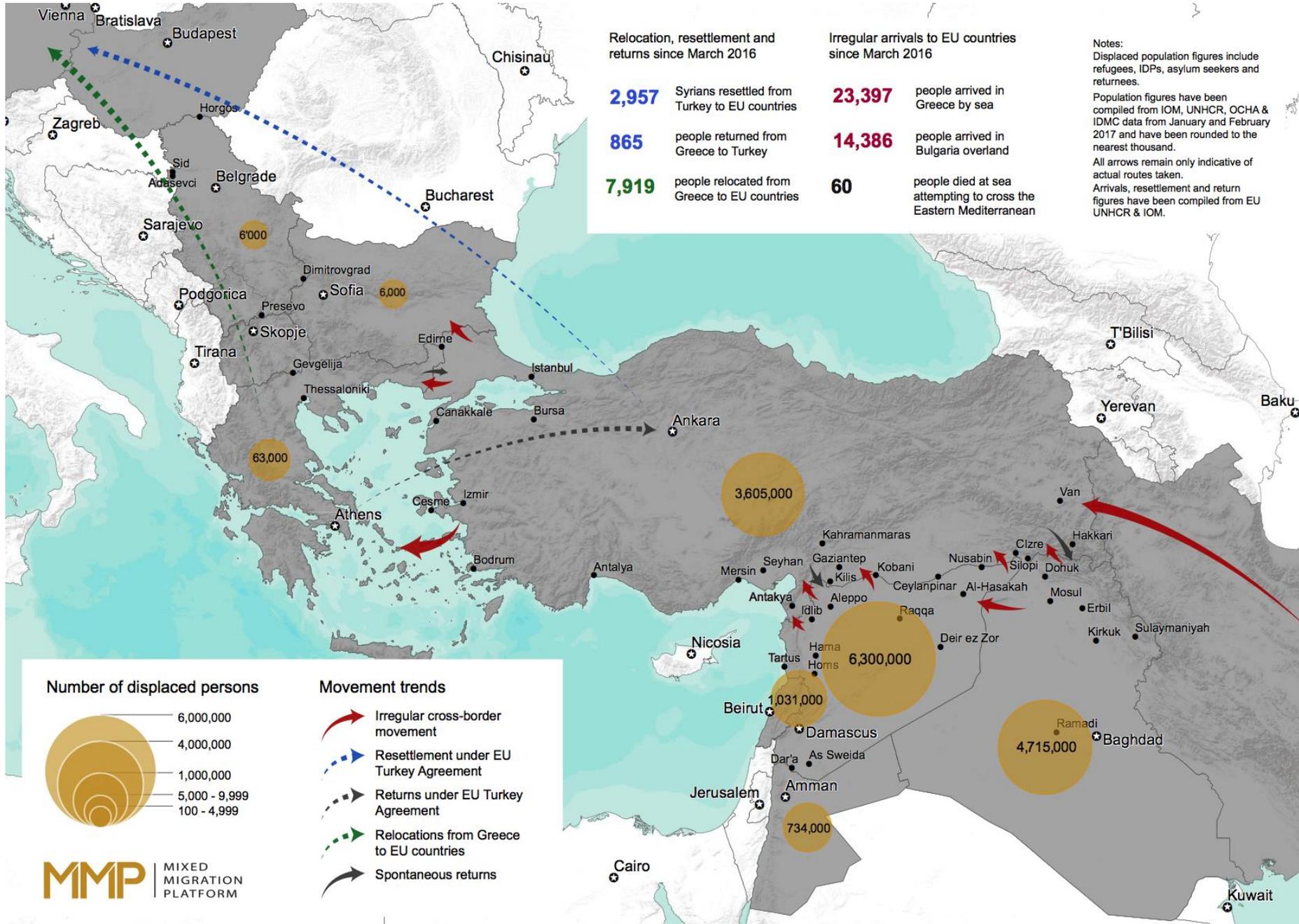
Increasing areas of Syria experience relative peace and stability and the expansion of reconstruction activities in areas of relative stability feed a growing hope that the end to the Syrian conflict is in sight. Large-scale voluntary, incentivised, and forced returns see more than 100,000 people move to areas perceived as relatively safe, although largely destroyed, where public services are absent or minimal. The additional health and protection risks significantly increases the vulnerability of returnees.

Scenario 5: Increased movement into Turkey



Turkey opens its borders to receive a sudden arrival of 50,000–150,000 people displaced by a major conflict event in the region. After initial reception and screening in temporary facilities at the border, the majority of arrivals are relocated to existing camps throughout Turkey, increasing pressure on some services. Those remaining in the host community lack access to basic services, especially schooling and healthcare.

CURRENT DISPLACEMENT SITUATION IN EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST



INTRODUCTION

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Although large-scale displacement within Iraq and Syria continued in 2016, movement through and from the Middle East of people displaced by conflict fell significantly compared to 2015. This was due primarily to political determination to prevent cross-border movement, rather than any changes in the root causes of displacement.

The drivers and patterns of movement through the Middle East are too numerous to capture here; this report focuses on the movement of refugees and other migrants through Greece and Turkey. These scenarios consider how future policy decisions, primarily by the EU and Turkey, combined with other relevant variables, could affect movement in the region, specifically through Greece and Turkey, over the coming six months, and the potential humanitarian consequences.

As is clear from the range of scenarios that could occur, each involving varying degrees and directions of movement, there is an urgent need to address the negative reasons for displacement rather than continue to restrict movement, a policy that is unable to afford protection the most desperate.

SCENARIOS FOR FEBRUARY–JULY 2017

These scenarios are not attempts to predict the future. Rather they are a description of situations that *could* occur in the coming six months, and are designed to highlight possible impacts and humanitarian consequences. The aim is to support strategic planning, create awareness, and promote preparedness activities for those responding to this crisis. See the Methodology section for more information on how these scenarios were developed.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

Five scenarios are summarised on page 2. Pages 6 to 10 provide more detail on the scenarios, including potential humanitarian consequences. Page 11 lists four factors that could compound the humanitarian consequences of any of the scenarios: terrorist attacks; the Turkish and Greek economic situation; cuts to humanitarian funding; and a natural disaster in Turkey. Annex A on pages 13 to 15 list trigger events that, should they occur, could lead towards the situations described in the scenarios

Terminology: throughout the report the term ‘refugees and other migrants’ is used to include all persons in mixed migration flows (this may include asylum seekers, trafficked persons, refugees, migrants, and other people on the move). Any reference to specific groups is consistent with the original source.

CURRENT SITUATION

Migration from the Middle East to Europe has undergone a major shift recent years. Over one million refugees and other migrants arrived in Europe by sea in 2015 – the majority from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan, crossing from Turkey to the Greek islands. In addition, overland migration from Turkey’s northwestern borders to Bulgaria and Greece, and onwards to northern Europe also increased significantly (MEDMIG 12/2016).

Following the dramatic increase in the numbers of refugees and other migrants in 2015, European states progressively tightened their borders and instituted policies aimed at reducing cross-border migration. In addition to the construction of border fences by Turkey and individual EU states, the EU and Turkey reached an agreement in March 2016 to slow migration from Turkey under which (EU 18/01/2016):

- a) asylum seekers arriving via Turkey whose claims are rejected in Greece would be returned to Turkey (865 migrants have been returned as of late January 2017), and
- b) for every Syrian returned to Turkey, another Syrian would be resettled in the EU (2,957 Syrians have been resettled as of late January 2017) (EU 26/01/2017)
- c) once irregular crossings between Turkey and the EU end or have been substantially reduced, a Voluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme would be activated (negotiations are ongoing) (EU 26/09/2016)
- d) the EU pledged to provide financial aid for refugee response in Turkey (so far €2.12 has been committed: €850m for humanitarian response, of which €517 has been contracted and €337m disbursed, and €1.3bn for non-humanitarian assistance, of which €940m has been contracted and €411m disbursed as of 3 January 2017) (EU 09/01/2017)
- e) Turkey EU membership bid talks are re-energised, (in November, a non-binding vote in the European Parliament urged governments to end talks over Turkish EU membership because of concerns about Turkey’s handling of the July coup)] (The Guardian 25/11/2016), and
- f) the process of lifting visa requirements for Turkish citizens to the Schengen area is accelerated (this continue to be delayed due to Turkey’s failure to meet the conditions including narrowing down of Turkey’s anti-terrorism laws) (Reuters 06/09/2016)

Since the implementation of the agreement and border closures in the western Balkans in early 2016, the number of asylum-seekers arriving in Greece has fallen significantly: the monthly average number of arrivals in Greece by sea was 96% lower between May and December 2016, than in the same months in 2015. In January 2017, an average of 40 people a day arrived in Greece from Turkey by land or sea. Syrians (47%), Afghans (24%), and Iraqis (15%) constitute the largest groups of arrivals in Greece (UNHCR 01/02/2017, UNHCR 03/02/2017, UNHCR 22/01/2017, WSJ 26/01/2016).

Migration from the Middle East to the United States: Possible restrictions on immigration to the US, currently the world's top resettlement country, include a 120-day suspension of all refugee admissions from Iraq and an indefinite banning of all Syrian refugees. As many of those who wish to resettle currently apply to the US, a ban may increase the number of people seeking to move to Europe.

Syria and neighbouring countries: 6.3 million Syrians are internally displaced. It has become increasingly difficult for Syrians to seek asylum in neighbouring countries. Jordan, which hosts 650,000 Syrian refugees, closed its border to Syria in early 2016. An estimated 1.5 million Syrian refugees are in Lebanon, but access to the country is now severely restricted. Lebanon stopped registering new Syrian refugees in May 2015, meaning many of the 1.5 million are unregistered. Iraq hosts 230,000 Syrians in addition to 3 million IDPs, and Syrians' access to asylum has been tightened since 2015 (OCHA 01/12/2016, ECHO 05/2016, 01/2017, NYT 21/06/2017, Iraq 3RP 2017-18).

Some 24,000 Syrians are reported have returned to Jarabulus in northern Syria since September, an area under the control of Turkish and Free Syrian Army forces. Returnees in existing zones in Azaz and Jarabulus face severe protection threats, including the presence of armed groups in camps and nearby conflict, as well as high WASH and shelter needs. (AA 12/01/2017, MEE 23/01/2017, Guardian 12/04/2016, Middle East Eye 06/09/2016).

Additional displacement within Syria is likely as Government forces have been pushing northeast towards Islamic State- controlled Al Bab since they retook Aleppo, while the Turkish operation Euphrates Shield is approaching Al Bab from the north. There is an increasing threat of government offensives in opposition-controlled areas to the west of Aleppo, and in Idlib province, which host large IDP populations, including those recently displaced from eastern Aleppo. Government, Russian and US-coalition airstrikes continue, particularly against IS-held targets. Ground offensives against in these areas remain poised, but limited (Al Jazeera 03/02/2017, ISW 02/02/2017, Al Monitor 05/01/2017, Carnegie Europe 19/01/2017, ISW 02/02/2017).

Turkey: As of late January 2017, 865 migrants had been returned from Greece to Turkey under the March 2016 EU–Turkey agreement, while 2,957 Syrians had been resettled from Turkey to EU member states. The number of refugees and asylum-seekers in Turkey has reached over 3 million; the vast majority (2.8 million) are Syrian. Syrians in Turkey are granted temporary protection status under Turkish asylum law, and have since January 2016 been eligible for work permits. Non-Syrians whose asylum applications are approved receive conditional refugee status, either leading to subsidiary protection status or resettlement in a third country. However, the average waiting time for a first asylum interview is eight years. Additionally, an unknown number of unregistered migrants, likely hundreds of thousands, live in Turkey without access to social support systems. Limited access to education and livelihood opportunities remain key concerns (EU 26/01/2017, UNHCR 12/01/2016, MEDMIG 12/2016).

Turkey closed its borders with Syria in early 2015, only admitting those in immediate need of healthcare, and limited entry to Syrians entering via third countries in January 2016. However, according to the Turkish government, around 1,000 people cross into Turkish territory daily from Syria, Iraq, and Iran (mainly Afghans). In addition, an estimated 500,000 Kurds are internally displaced in southeast Turkey as a result of conflict between Turkish authorities and Kurdish armed groups (The Conversation 03/01/2017, Amnesty International 12/12/2016).

Greece: According to Greek government figures, more than 60,000 asylum-seekers are currently in Greece; most humanitarian agencies estimate a caseload of around 40,000. Around 15,500 people are living on the Greek islands, where camps are overcrowded and many are in tents that do not offer adequate protection against the weather. Lack of trust between government agencies and international actors inhibits coordination and prevents effective response. Asylum-seekers report lack of structured systems for educational activities and limited access to livelihood opportunities as main concerns. Since 2015, 7,971 people have been relocated from Greece to European countries – about 12% of the total agreed under the relocation scheme (IOM 29/12/2016, WSJ 26/01/2017, UNHCR 27/01/2017, AP 06/01/2017).

Western Balkans: Irregular movements from Greece to the western Balkans continue, but at a significantly lower rate than in 2015. As of December 2016, almost 6,000 refugees and other migrants were in camps in Serbia, and 5,600 in Bulgaria, although actual numbers are likely to be higher. More than 1,000 people are estimated to be residing outside government-run camps in Serbia, in an effort to avoid registration. Camps in both countries are overcrowded with limited access to services, and human rights abuses are reported along the western Balkans route. An average of 100 people attempt to cross the Serbia–Hungary border daily, with the vast majority sent back to Serbia (UNHCR 15/01/2017, 23/12/2016, IOM 29/12/2016).

Afghanistan: The EU-Afghanistan agreement on readmissions of Afghans from EU member states, and decisions by Pakistan and Iran has led to an increase in deportations and spontaneous returns of Afghans to Afghanistan, despite ongoing insecurity and limited reintegration prospects. Nevertheless, large numbers of Afghans and Iraqis continue to flee their countries seeking refuge in Europe or Turkey. (Guardian 03/10/2016, IOM 17/12/2016).

Mediterranean sea crossings: While sea crossings from Turkey to Greece have significantly decreased since March 2016, 2016 saw an increase in people using the Central (from Libya to Italy) and Western (from Morocco to Spain) Mediterranean routes to reach Europe. However, only a very small percentage of arrivals come from Middle Eastern countries, with the majority from West Africa and Eritrea (IOM 29/12/2016, UNHCR 03/02/2016).

SCENARIOS

Scenario 1 Continued restricted migration



While internal displacement in Syria continues, the number of people leaving Syria remains very low due to neighbouring countries' borders being closed. The number of refugees and other migrants from Afghanistan, Iraq, and other countries entering Turkey remains steady. Relatively low numbers of asylum-seekers continue to enter Greece both by land and sea while fewer leave Greece due to the slow processing of asylum applications. Although the irregular onward movement of people assisted by smugglers continues, primarily via the western Balkan route, the overall asylum-seeker population in Greece continues to rise slowly.

Possible triggers/assumptions

Some or all of the following occur:

- The EU–Turkey deal continues to be valued by both sides and function at a working-level
- The conflict within Syria continues but does not reach a level that forces Turkey to open its border to significant numbers of Syrians
- EU member states fail to increase the rate of relocation or resettlement of asylum-seekers
- There are no sustained direct attacks on IDPs residing just inside the Syrian border

Estimated additional caseload

Northern Syria border: up to 150,000 IDPs.

Greece: up to 15,000 people.

Western Balkan countries: up to 5,000 additional people stranded.

Geographic areas of most concern

Northern Syria border, Greece, Western Balkan countries.

Impact

The situation at already overcrowded reception centres on Greek islands is exacerbated by the continued arrival of new asylum-seekers, which, although low, exceeds movement off the islands. Rising tensions between host communities, asylum-seekers, and humanitarian staff result in targeted attacks on asylum-seekers and NGO staff.

Growing overcrowding on the islands and longer processing times result in increased numbers of asylum-seekers moving irregularly along the Balkan or other, more dangerous, routes, out of reach of humanitarian actors.

In Turkey, increased EU funding improves access to services, especially health and education, for Syrians residing in camps and those within host communities. However, tensions between Turkish host communities and Syrians rise in some areas as the Social Safety Net Mechanism is rolled out, strengthening perceptions that Syrians are being prioritised ahead of the host population.

Tight border restrictions and displacement caused by sporadic fighting in Syria result in growing concentrations of IDPs along the Syria–Turkey border. Reliance on smugglers to leave Syria and move to western Europe increases. Routes become more dangerous and more difficult for older and disabled people.

Humanitarian consequences

The humanitarian situation of asylum-seekers on Greek islands deteriorates. Health, WASH, and shelter needs grow in the overcrowded sites. More migrants are exposed to trafficking and abuse, especially women and children. Protection needs increase on the Greek islands and for increasing numbers of people using smugglers.

Livelihood opportunities for asylum-seekers trapped in Greece or countries along the western Balkan route are further eroded.

Significant humanitarian needs remain for IDPs trapped along the border in Syria who are unable to seek asylum and adequate protection.

Operational constraints

INGO operations in Turkey remain constrained by the registration process and restrictions on work permits, although working relations between international humanitarian actors and Turkish authorities improve.

Access to recently displaced people within Syria remains extremely limited due to continued insecurity. On the Greek islands, security issues and a reticence to engage with state-run detention centres constrain INGO operations.

Scenario 2 Number of asylum-seekers in Greece falls



The overall number of asylum-seekers in Greece falls significantly due to a combination of three main factors: a) EU member states honour their commitment to relocate the 66,400 asylum-seekers from Greece that arrived before March 2016; b) Greece increases the number of people to whom it grants asylum and integrates; and c) the EU increases the speed of resettlement from Turkey, which results in a reduction of people resorting to irregular methods of travel to Europe, reducing the rate of new arrivals to Greece. At the same time, increasing numbers of Syrians residing in Turkey gain access to employment.

Possible triggers

Some or all of the following occur:

- The EU-Turkey deal continues to be valued by both sides and function at a working-level
- Increased media attention on plight of asylum-seekers and length of status determination process
- EU support and fund the expansion of the current asylum process expediting the admissibility procedure, family reunification procedure, and asylum process
- Greece initiates an policy to integrate asylum-seekers in Greece, supported by the EU
- Improved coordination between humanitarian actors and the Greek authorities and civil society
- Increased numbers of returns to Turkey
- Threat of collapse of EU-Turkey deal induces stronger EU member state commitment to the relocation process
- EU member states accept increased numbers of relocated asylum-seekers
- Large reduction in numbers of refugees and other migrants entering the EU via the central and western Mediterranean routes (success of the migration partnership frameworks/Frontex)

- Increased numbers of non-Syrians in Greece become admissible for their asylum claims to be processed
- Turkey substantially increases the number of Syrian families (to around 300,000) to whom it grants citizenship
- EU countries increase the number of resettlements from Turkey
- Irregular movement of asylum-seekers from Greece to Italy increases substantially
- There continue to be no returns to Greece under the Dublin agreement

Estimated caseload

Greece: reduces to 20,000 people, mainly non-Syrians.

Geographic areas of most concern

Pockets of mainland Greece.

Impact

Conditions improve for asylum-seekers living on Greek islands as overcrowding is reduced. The increased eligibility criteria and shorter processing times reduces the time asylum-seekers spend in camps on the Greek islands and mainland, and reduce the number of people seeking alternative, irregular, means to move to western European countries. Some EU member states do not provide adequate support services to resettled refugees, and integration becomes a critical issue. Countries accepting relocated Syrians also reduce their intake of Syrians resettled from other third countries proportionally.

As the number of people in need falls and the 'crisis' is seen to be over, international NGOs cease or substantially reduce operations in Greece and humanitarian funding to Greece reduces.

Humanitarian consequences

Those not relocated, primarily non-Syrians, become more vulnerable as humanitarian agencies reduce operations. Those relocated to EU countries with inadequate support services struggle to integrate and have livelihoods and psychosocial support needs.

Operational constraints

Tensions and insecurity in sites on the Greek islands, and targeted attacks by host communities on NGO staff on Greek islands constrain operations.

Reduced humanitarian funding and NGO presence, both in Greece and receiving countries with inadequate support services, limit operational capacity.

Humanitarian staff lack appropriate language skills to support the remaining population in need, as many are non-Arabic speakers from Afghanistan and the KR-I.

Scenario 3 Number of asylum-seekers in Greece increases



Growing impatience with the EU at the lack of progress towards visa-free travel, combined with a need to gain domestic support prior to the referendum, results in Turkey relaxing the restrictions that had prevented asylum-seekers from travelling to Greece. Although the majority of asylum-seekers are content to remain in Turkey, a significant number take advantage of the opportunity travel to Europe, including many who had requested asylum in the US. As a result the number of people arriving in Greece increases significantly. Meanwhile Albania, FYRoMacedonia and Bulgaria continue to severely restrict entry and onward movement of asylum-seekers resulting in a swift increase in numbers of people trapped in Greece both in government facilities and host community. As EU funding for Turkey is already largely committed for the next six months, there is little impact on the humanitarian situation in Turkey.

Possible triggers

Some or all of the following occur:

- Rise of right-wing parties in Europe triggers the cessation of visa waiver talks
- EU officially suspends deal as a result of unacceptable human rights abuses, the introduction of the death-sentence, or forced returns of migrants to conflict areas
- Public opinion, or pressure from other EU institutions, demand major changes to the deal that are unacceptable to Turkey
- Turkey concludes that a visa waiver agreement is unachievable or too slow
- Internal conflict within Turkey results in it no longer being considered a safe country for refugees
- Turkey relaxes entry restrictions for Syrians fleeing Syria due to escalating conflict
- An actual or perceived lack of popular support for the Constitutional Referendum in Turkey results in a reduction in state support to immigrants and a relaxation in measures preventing asylum-seekers transiting to Greece
- Improved security in Turkey results in a relaxation of the freedom of movement controls in Turkey
- Smuggler networks are able to increase capacity

- A high impact (i.e. L3) natural disaster in Turkey diverts state attention, capacity and resources reducing services to asylum-seekers and other migrants

Estimated additional caseload

Up to 150,000 people.

Geographic areas of most concern

Greek islands, possibly including ones not hosting migrants, Balkan countries.

Impact

The humanitarian caseload in Greece, especially on the islands, increases far beyond the capacity of the existing infrastructure and government services. This further undermines Greece's political stability which, in turn, hampers humanitarian response. Relations between international actors and the government deteriorate.

Temporary facilities are set up during the establishment of additional detention centres on the mainland. The admissibility, family reunification, and asylum processes are overwhelmed, and processing times increase dramatically. This means people have to move to the mainland before completing the admissibility process.

The rise in the asylum-seeker population on the islands and in some mainland locations, combined with increased anti-immigrant sentiment, leads to conflict between host communities and asylum-seekers and/or INGOs. Overcrowding and longer processing times result in more asylum-seekers moving irregularly along the Balkan or other, more dangerous, routes, beyond the reach of humanitarian actors. EU member states reinforce Greece's borders and increase returns of asylum-seekers moving irregularly.

In Turkey, the prospect of a drop in EU funding to Turkey weakens NGO assistance to the most vulnerable (especially Afghans and Iraqis with limited protection) and threatens health and education services to Syrians.

Humanitarian consequences

Lack of adequate shelter and sanitation, especially on the Greek islands, pose serious health risks, while protection needs increase for those in severely overcrowded facilities and those travelling irregularly. Violent incidents and protests involving asylum seekers faced with long delays on the island worsen the protection environment.

Operational constraints

The reluctance of international humanitarian organisations to work in detention centres, and targeted attacks on NGO staff, especially on the Greek islands, constrains operations. Many international NGOs are unable to scale up operations swiftly in Greece. Donor fatigue may also limit available funding. Humanitarian actors remain severely restricted in accessing people of concern along the Western Balkans route.

Scenario 4 Increased returns to Syria



The limited ceasefire agreements in Syria become more robust and international peace negotiations gain momentum. More areas become relatively stable. Turkey continues reconstruction activities in areas under its control in northern Syria, and international commitment to reconstruction grows. Combined with a reduction in services in at least some of the neighbouring refugee-hosting countries, refugees' hopes of peace result in large-scale returns – voluntary, incentivised and forced – from neighbouring countries and within Syria. In excess of 100,000 people move to areas perceived as relatively safe, although largely destroyed, where public services are absent or minimal and where insecurity prevents operations by international humanitarian organisations.

Possible triggers

Some or all of the following occur:

- Russia, Turkey, and Iran monitoring body successfully enforces the ceasefire
- Areas of active conflict within Syria reduce significantly
- Significant steps are taken towards negotiation of a peace agreement
- International funding moves from refugee support to (anticipated) reconstruction activities
- An actual or perceived lack of popular support for the Constitutional Referendum in Turkey resulting in a reduction in state support to immigrants and increased facilitated returns to Syria
- One or more neighbouring refugee-hosting country reduces services to / further restricts the rights of refugees
- Areas of relative safety and reconstruction activities increase inside Syria
- Conflict escalates in a neighbouring country
- A high impact (i.e. L3) natural disaster in Turkey diverts state attention, capacity and resources reducing services to asylum-seekers and other migrants

Estimated additional caseload: In excess of 100,000 refugees returning to Syria, in addition to returning internally displaced people.

Geographic areas of most concern

Northern areas of Syria that are declared safe by Turkey. Border areas neighbouring Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq.

Impact

Syrians returning from neighbouring countries face reduced access to humanitarian assistance and have no option to leave Syria if conditions are inadequate or unsafe. Exposure to UXO and ERW increases, particularly in areas previously controlled by Islamic State, while the risks of recruitment to residual armed groups and potential re-ignition of conflict in areas of return grow.

Local markets are reinvigorated and increasing access helps lower prices for staple foods, although some returnees lack capital for even their basic needs. Syrian authorities and civil society organisations are stretched in areas of high return and services such as schools and healthcare are inadequate.

However, increasing returns and hope of an end to the conflict shifts the humanitarian focus towards reconstruction in Syria. Demographic re-engineering prevents some inter-community tensions by separating hostile social groups, but tensions rise in overlapping areas. Competing claims to land between residents and returnees create housing, land and property disputes, which add to local conflict.

Humanitarian consequences

The vulnerability of returnees increases significantly as they are exposed to additional health and protection risks. As returnees focus on meeting their basic shelter and food needs and restarting livelihoods, poor WASH facilities increase the risk of disease and children do not attend school. Returnees to Syria remain at risk of renewed conflict. Meanwhile the vulnerability of those remaining in countries neighbouring Syria may increase as services are reduced or authorities enforce returns.

If conflict outside Syria is the cause of the returns, those trapped in insecure areas will have priority protection needs.

Operational constraints

Continuing insecurity in Syria prevents INGO access to returnees, while the lack of partner organisations for INGOs and absence of funding mechanisms for Syrian civil society organisations restricts international support for returns. Even when the security situation improves sufficiently to permit access, the INGO registration process in Syria delays the deployment of many international NGOs. Lack of trust between Syrian authorities and INGOs hampers coordination.

Scenario 5 Increased movement into Turkey



Major conflict in KR-I, Lebanon, or Syria, close to the Turkish border, precipitates movement of 50,000–150,000 Syrians towards Turkey. Given the scale and direct threat to life, Turkey opens its borders to receive them. Following initial screening, the majority are moved to the existing camps, while others remain among the host community. At the same time, conflict in Afghanistan causes large numbers of people, many having been forcibly returned from Iran or Pakistan, to seek refuge in Turkey among the Afghan diaspora.

Possible triggers

Some or all of the following occur:

- Large-scale conflict in Lebanon results in mass exodus of Syrians by sea to Turkey and back to Syria
- Major conflict erupts in northern Syria and spreads towards the Turkish border
- Increased insecurity in the Euphrates basin forces Syrians and Iraqis from Al Hasakeh to enter Turkey
- Reduction / cessation of international humanitarian organisation operations in a refugee-hosting country
- Internal political or security issues divert resources from Turkish border control operations
- Conflict in Afghanistan sparked by the rapid rise in forced returns precipitates a large-scale movement of refugees through Iran to Turkey

Estimated additional caseload

Up to 150,000 people.

Geographic areas of most concern

Southern Turkish border towns, camps in Turkey, and existing Afghan communities across Turkey.

Impact

A rapid increase in arrivals at points of entry to Turkey and areas hosting significant numbers of Syrians or Afghans results in a rise in violence between the host population and asylum-seekers. State and local authorities increase general security measures further restricting freedom of movement for asylum seekers and other migrants. While a small proportion of new arrivals attempt to reach Greece, the majority remain in Turkey.

The pressure on camp services, schools for Syrians and healthcare services increases. The caseload of unregistered migrants living outside camps increases.

Humanitarian consequences

New arrivals in host communities lack access to basic services, especially schooling and healthcare, as they lack funds and Turkish state support.

The relatively rapid growth in camp populations results in overcrowding, exacerbating shelter, WASH, and health needs in the short-term, before the response re-organises.

Enhanced security screening at border entry points delays new arrivals' access to humanitarian support.

Operational constraints

The extensive registration process for INGOs in Turkey, including extending mandates to new geographic areas, hinders INGO access to new arrivals. Security constraints along the Turkish border hamper operations both within Turkey and cross-border to Syria.

COMPOUNDING FACTORS

The following developments can occur in parallel to any of the above scenarios and have the potential to significantly change the humanitarian situation.

Terrorist attack

A terrorist attack attributed (at least by media) to refugees or migrants in Greece would harden anti-immigrant sentiment and possibly increase support for the Golden Dawn far right party. Such a shift in public opinion could result in increased restrictions on asylum-seekers such as increased measures to prevent people leaving the Greek islands unofficially and increased numbers of people in detention centres.

A large-scale, highly visible, attack in Turkey would likely result in further restriction of movement within Turkey. If attributed to asylum-seekers or immigrants it may fuel anti-immigrant sentiment; while attribution to the Kurdish population may inflame tensions in the southeast, which have been growing since 2015. An attack might also impact tourism, especially if in a major tourist site such as Istanbul, which would further impact the economy.

The increased anti-immigrant sentiment following an attack in Turkey or an EU member state country would play into the hands of the far-right movement, putting more pressure on EU member states to reduce the number of relocation and resettlement places being made available.

Turkish and Greek economies

A continued downturn in the Turkish economy would likely lead to increased use of informal, low-skilled Syrian labour as employers seek to reduce costs. This in turn would fuel resentment felt by many young unemployed Turks towards asylum-seekers, contributing to a worsening protection environment for Syrians in host communities.

A failure by Greece to renegotiate its EU loan repayments may lead to early elections and consequent political instability together with the possibility of increased restrictions on immigrants and delays in the asylum process.

Funding cuts

While funding from EU countries is assured for the duration of these scenarios, there is a possibility that the US may drastically reduce its funding. This would specifically

impact UNHCR and WFP operations in the region, although it would not significantly impact WFP operations in Turkey, which are largely funded by the EU. Operations elsewhere may begin to be scaled down.

Natural disaster in Turkey

A high impact (i.e. level 3) natural disaster such as an earthquake in Turkey would negatively impact the economy and divert government resources both during the emergency relief and reconstruction phases during which priorities for Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) would change. As a result, services to the current camps may reduce significantly. If a major natural disaster affects an area with a high proportion of Syrians or asylum-seekers, it could incentivise returns to countries of origin or onward movement from Turkey. Secondary displacement within Turkey would lead to an increase in vulnerability, particularly shelter, livelihood, and education needs.

HOW SCENARIOS CAN BE USED

Scenarios are a set of different ways in which a situation may develop. The aim of scenario building is not to try and accurately predict the future but rather to understand the range of possible futures and then select a few that result in distinct situations with, usually, differing humanitarian outcomes that can:

- Support strategic planning for agencies and NGOs.
- Identify assumptions underlying anticipated needs and related interventions.
- Enhance the adaptability and design of detailed assessments.
- Influence monitoring and surveillance systems.
- Create awareness, provide early warning, and promote preparedness activities among stakeholders.

For more information on how to build scenarios, please see the ACAPS Technical Brief on Scenario Development.

METHODOLOGY

These scenarios were developed at the end of January and beginning of February 2017, during two one-day workshops in Brussels and Turkey, and informed by various bilateral meetings with organisations unable to attend the workshops. Staff from 23 organisations in Brussels, Greece and Turkey including donors, UN agencies, NGOs and the Red Cross contributed to these scenarios through participation in one or more of the workshops or bilateral meetings.

At the first workshop, in Brussels, the many variables that could cause change in the migrant situation were mapped and the following key factors identified:

- Turkish politics – both domestic and foreign.
- EU politics – both within and between member states and within and between EU institutions.
- EU policy on the central and western Mediterranean migration routes.
- Conflict in the region.
- The operational space and politics in Greece, as well as EU relations with Greece

- Humanitarian funding.
- Ease of movement of asylum-seekers through Balkan countries.
- Asylum-seeker acceptance, assistance, and integration models, especially in Turkey.

By making assumptions as to how these variables might plausibly change, five scenarios were identified. These scenarios were then expanded during the second workshop in Turkey and the major impacts of each scenario and their humanitarian consequences identified.

These scenarios are not considered mutually exclusive; their elements can unfold simultaneously, or one scenario can be part of, or lead to, another scenario.

A list of individual triggers is given on pages 13 - 15. It should be noted that a combination, but not necessarily all, of the triggers are required to reach a scenario.

LIMITATIONS

Scenarios can seem to oversimplify an issue, as the analysis balances details against broader assumptions. But scenario-building is not an end in itself. It is a process for generating new ideas that should in turn lead to actual changes in project design or decision-making.

Due to time constraints it was not possible to visit or consult individuals in all affected countries.

These scenarios focus primarily on the movement through Greece and Turkey. It should be noted that the relative impact of each scenario on other countries would differ significantly.

THANK YOU

ACAPS would like to thank all organisations that provided input to these scenarios, especially the UN, NGOs, Red Cross, and donors who attended the workshops in Antakya and Brussels as well as those who contributed via bilateral meetings.

For additional information or to comment please email analysis@acaps.org.

SCENARIO TRIGGERS

Scenario 1 = Continued restricted migration
 Scenario 2 = Number of asylum-seekers in Greece reduces
 Scenario 3 = Number of asylum-seekers in Greece increases

Scenario 4 = Increased returns to Syria
 Scenario 5 = Increased movement into Turkey
 Compounding factors = CF

Scenario 1: Migration to Turkey is likely to remain relatively stable if:

The EU–Turkey deal continues to be valued by both sides and function at a working level

The conflict within Syria continues but does not reach a level that prompts Turkey to open its border to significant numbers of Syrians

EU member states do not increase the rate of relocation or resettlement of asylum-seekers

There are no sustained direct attacks on IDPs residing just inside the Syrian border

Background information

Steady progress on EU–Turkey Statement, but challenges acknowledged (EU 08/12/2016). As of January, solid progress reported on EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey (EU 12/01/2017).

As of mid-2016, over 100,000 Syrians were reported to be stranded at the Turkey border (Politico 10/10/2016).

Scenario 2: The population stranded in Greece is likely to decrease significantly if:

The EU–Turkey deal continues to be valued by both sides and function at a working-level

Greece establishes a system to effectively integrate significant numbers of asylum-seekers, reducing numbers on the mainland and islands

Media attention increases on the plight of asylum-seekers and length of status determination process

The EU supports and funds the expansion of the current asylum process, expediting admissibility, family reunification, and asylum processes

Greece initiates a policy to integrate asylum-seekers in Greece, supported by the EU

Improved coordination between humanitarian actors and the Greek authorities and civil society

Increased returns of refugees and other migrants to Turkey

The threat of the EU–Turkey deal collapsing induces stronger EU member state commitment to the relocation process

EU member states accept increased numbers of relocated asylum-seekers

Large reduction in the number of refugees and other migrants entering the EU via the Central and Western Mediterranean routes (success of the migration partnership frameworks/Frontex)

Steady progress on EU–Turkey Statement, but challenges acknowledged (EU 08/12/2016). As of January, solid progress reported on EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey (EU 12/01/2017).

2,986 people were granted asylum in Greece in 2016. Despite efforts to increase the rate of processing, 25,142 asylum applications were pending as of 30 November (Greek Reporter 29/12/2016).

Coordination has been hampered by a lack of trust (Ekathimerini 09/12/2017).

Only 865 returns have been made since March 2016, but EU and Greek leaders aim to increase the rate of return. (EU 26/01/2017)

Obstacles to the relocation process are reported as being gradually lifted (EU 08/12/2016).

7,563 relocations from Greece to European countries since 2015—only about 12% of target (UNHCR 27/01/2017).

EU agreement on Malta Declaration on 3 February 2017 to support Libya and its neighbours manage migration, building on Valletta Action Plan and Migration Partnership Frameworks with Niger, Nigeria, Mali, Senegal, and Ethiopia (EU 03/02/2017).

Turkey substantially increases the number of Syrian families to whom it grants citizenship

President Erdogan re-iterated mid-2016 commitment to grant exceptional citizenship to qualified Syrians who pass a security screening (Al Jazeera 07/01/2017).

EU countries increase the number of resettlements from Turkey

2,957 Syrians have been resettled since the EU-Turkey Statement (EU 26/01/2017).

Irregular movement of asylum-seekers from Greece to Italy increases substantially

Crossings are rare though thought to be increasing (EBLNews 04/02/2017).

There continue to be no returns to Greece under the Dublin agreement

Greece's asylum system remains inadequate despite funding and recommendations for improvement that would permit Dublin returns (EU 08/12/2016).

Increased numbers of non-Syrians in Greece become admissible for the processing of their asylum claims

Afghans, Iraqis, and Iranians face particularly long asylum processes (The Wire 28/01/2017).

Scenario 3: The population stranded in Greece is likely to increase significantly if:

A rise in support for right-wing parties in Europe triggers the cessation of visa waiver talks

Schengen visa liberalisation for Turkish nationals is unpopular in France and the Netherlands, where right-wing parties could make electoral gains in early 2017 (Heinrich Boell Stiftung 24/12/2016).

The EU officially suspends the deal as a result of unacceptable human rights abuses, the introduction of the death sentence, or forced returns of migrants to conflict areas

Concerns have been raised about the human rights situation in Turkey and its safety as a third country for returning refugees and other migrants (HRW 14/11/2016).

Public opinion, or pressure from other EU institutions, demand major changes to the deal that are unacceptable to Turkey

The EU Ombudsman has called on the European Commission to carry out deeper assessment of the impact of the EU-Turkey statement on human rights of refugees and migrants returned to Turkey (Médiateur Européen 19/01/2017).

Turkey concludes that a visa waiver agreement is unachievable, or the process is too slow

Progress towards visa liberalisation has stalled due to disagreements about Turkey's anti-terror law (Heinrich Boell Stiftung 24/12/2016).

Internal conflict within Turkey results in it no longer being considered a safe country for refugees

Opinion is currently divided as to whether the conflict in SE Turkey makes Turkey unsafe for returning refugees (AEDH 05/2016).

Turkey relaxes entry restrictions for Syrians fleeing Syria due to escalating conflict

Displacement is growing in Idlib and Aleppo governorates (Al Monitor 29/12/2016).

Actual or perceived lack of popular support for the Constitutional Referendum in Turkey results in a reduction in state support to immigrants and a relaxation in measures preventing asylum-seekers transiting to Greece

Improved security in Turkey results in the relaxation of freedom of movement controls in Turkey

Syrians in Turkey are confined to the province in which they are registered. In January this state of emergency was extended for a further three months (AIDA 2015, WSJ 04/01/2017).

Smuggler networks are able to increase capacity

Smuggling operations along migration routes in the Middle East and Europe have proven capable of adapting to changes in the policy environment. Operations in Greece are reportedly growing after a lull following the closure of the Balkan route in early 2016 (Al Jazeera 04/02/2017, DW 14/12/2016).

A high impact (i.e. L3) natural disaster in Turkey diverts state attention, capacity, and resources, reducing services to asylum-seekers and other migrants

AFAD is the Turkish agency responsible for both refugee camp management and natural disaster relief (AFAD 2017).

Scenario 4: Migration to Syria is likely to increase significantly if:

Russia, Turkey and Iran trilateral monitoring body successfully enforces the ceasefire

Areas of active conflict within Syria reduce significantly

Significant steps are taken towards negotiation of a peace agreement

International funding moves from refugee support to (anticipated) reconstruction activities

Actual or perceived lack of popular support for the Constitutional Referendum in Turkey results in a reduction in state support to immigrants and an increase in facilitated returns to Syria

One or more neighbouring refugee-hosting countries reduces services to / further restricts the rights of refugees

Areas of relative safety and reconstruction activities increase inside Syria

Conflict escalates in neighbouring country

A high impact (i.e.L3) natural disaster in Turkey diverts state attention, capacity, and resources, reducing services to asylum-seekers and other migrants

Frequent local violations continue, although there has been a decrease in violence in areas affected by December 2016 ceasefire. UN-led peace talks are scheduled to take place in Geneva in late February (Reuters 31/01/2017).

In Iraq, a change in immigration laws in 2016 reduced Syrians' access to asylum, while Lebanon's decision to stop registration of new Syrian refugees in May 2015 means many are left unregistered, without access to support systems (Iraq 3RP 2017, Al Jazeera 22/01/2016).

Turkish military are already carrying out reconstruction in Jarablus and plan to start in Azaz.

Scenario 5: Migration to Turkey is likely to increase significantly if:

Large-scale conflict in Lebanon results in mass exodus of Syrians by sea to Turkey and back to Syria

Major conflict erupts in northern Syria and spreads towards the Turkish border

Increased insecurity in the Euphrates basin forces Syrians and Iraqis from Al Hasakeh to enter Turkey

International humanitarian organisation operations cease or decrease in a refugee-hosting country

Internal political or security issues divert resources from Turkish border control operations

Conflict in Afghanistan sparked by the rapid rise in forced returns precipitates a large-scale movement of refugees through Iran to Turkey

In 2016, more than 650,000 undocumented Afghans returned or were deported to Afghanistan from Iran (410,000) and Pakistan (240,000). An additional 370,000 registered Afghan refugees in Pakistan have returned under a voluntary repatriation mechanism (UNHCR 03/02/2017, IOM 31/12/2016).