

About IOM

Overview

Established in 1951, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration and works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners.

IOM works to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration to promote international cooperation on migration issues, to assist in the search for practical solutions to migration problems and to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including refugees and internally displaced people.

IOM works in the four broad areas of migration management:

- Migration and development
- Facilitating migration
- Regulating migration
- Forced migration.

IOM activities that cut across these areas include the promotion of international migration law, policy debate and guidance, protection of migrants' rights, migration health and the gender dimension of migration.

The Relationship between IOM and the United Nations

On 25 July 2016, Member States of the United Nations (UN), through the General Assembly (GA), unanimously adopted a resolution (A/RES/70/296) approving the Agreement to make IOM a Related Organization of the UN. This followed an earlier agreement on the same text by the IOM Member States on the occasion of a special IOM Council on 30 June 2016. The agreement was signed by the IOM Director General and the UN Secretary General on 19 September 2016, in the margins of the UNGA High-Level Summit on Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants.

The Agreement formalizes IOM's entry into the UN system as a related organization, in order to strengthen cooperation and enhance IOM and the UN's ability to fulfill respective mandates in the interest of migrants and Member States. Through this, the UN recognizes IOM as an indispensable actor in the field of human mobility. This includes the protection of migrants and displaced people in migration-affected communities, as well as in areas of refugee resettlement and voluntary returns, and incorporates migration in country development plans.

Being part of the UN system as a related organization means that IOM has agreed to work with the UN and the other organizations of the UN system in harmony with the purposes and principles contained in Articles 1 and 2 of the Charter of the United Nations of 1945, which serve as guiding objectives for all (e.g. for international peace and security, equal rights and self-determination of peoples, international cooperation to solve international problems, respect for human rights, etc.) while remaining a fully separate and independent organization.

Who is a Migrant?

Migrant is an umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally-defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students.

IOM's view, as stated in its [Migration Governance Framework \(MiGOF\)](#), is that a migration system promotes migration and human mobility that is humane and orderly and benefits migrants and society:

When it:

- (i) Adheres to international standards and fulfils migrants' rights;
- (ii) Formulates policy using evidence and a "whole-of government" approach;

(iii) Engages with partners to address migration and related issues;

As it seeks to:

- (i) Advance the socioeconomic well-being of migrants and society;
- (ii) Effectively address the mobility dimensions of crises;
- (iii) Ensure that migration takes place in a safe, orderly and dignified manner.

IOM Strategic Plan (2024-2028)

The [IOM Strategic Plan \(2024-2028\)](#) outlines the Organization's strategic approach to delivering on the promise of safe, orderly and regular migration while supporting people in the most vulnerable situations across the world. The plan – which will guide the Organization's activities through 2028 – was developed after extensive internal consultations, including with migrants themselves, as well as dialogue with Member States, with other partners and other UN agencies.

The plan sets out three overarching goals:

- Saving lives and protecting people on the move, a core function of IOM's broad and global humanitarian work.
- Driving solutions to displacement, with IOM combining its data and expertise to proactively address crises before they get wider and more expensive.
- Facilitating pathways for regular migration, which will help migration become safer and more orderly and dismantle the incentives for smuggling, trafficking, exploitation and abuse.

In line with the Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF), the Emergency Manual primarily covers IOM's efforts towards Objectives 1 and 2 but speaks to key principles and cross-cutting priorities that apply to the entire Organization.

Achievements and progress made towards IOM's mandate in the past year is showcased in the [IOM Annual Report 2023](#).

Description

Organization Structure

Following the appointment of the new IOM Director General Amy Pope in 2023, a whole-of-organization functional review occurred from 2023-2024 to ensure greater coherence between global and country level priorities through structural reforms at all levels, ensuring that regional and country offices are resources and equipped to pursue corporate priorities.

This resulted in the following organizational structure of IOM:

- **A global network of Country Offices (COs)** and sub-offices, which implement a wide range of projects addressing specific migration needs. These offices keep abreast of and analyze migration issues and emerging trends in the country in order to develop appropriate responses and contribute to regional strategy and planning. On the basis of the regional strategies, these offices develop a country strategy and a national plan of action in coordination and consultation with their respective Regional Office. Country Offices are financed predominantly by the projects implemented in the respective locations.
- **Six Regional Offices (ROs)**, which formulate regional strategies and plans of action and provide programmatic and administrative support to the countries within their regions. These Regional Offices are in Dakar, Senegal; Nairobi, Kenya; Cairo, Egypt; Panama City, Panama; Bangkok, Thailand; Vienna, Austria. The DHRR RTS entry provides additional information on country coverage by each Regional Office.
- **Two sub-regional offices (SROs)** in Brussels, Belgium, and Pretoria, South Africa, which provide administrative and financial oversight and support to missions in the sub-region. The SROs provide dedicated support to small missions and maintain decentralized thematic roles, reporting to the respective Regional Directors.

- **Two global offices (GOs)** in Brussels, Belgium, and Washington D.C., USA. These offices build strong partnerships and relationships and fundraise on behalf of missions worldwide, as well as support missions with implementation, liaison and partnerships. Their role is to ensure effective liaison, coordination and resource mobilization, and provision of strategic and operational guidance to IOM country offices.
- **Seven COs for partnership and advocacy (COPAs)** that ensure effective fundraising and liaison with donors and resource mobilization. The COPAs support the development of funding policies, establish priorities and procedures, and prepare proposals and develop fundraising strategies and mechanisms. The COPAs are located in Ottawa, Canada; London, UK; Copenhagen, Denmark; Berlin, Germany; Seoul, Republic of Korea; Tokyo, Japan; and Canberra, Australia.
- **Two administrative centers**, which provide core support in the areas of IT and administrative services to IOM's network of offices. These offices are located in Panama City, Panama and Manila, Philippines.

IOM's Role

There are mobility dimensions to most crises and IOM provides comprehensive responses to at-risk populations and communities all throughout a crisis, whether it is part of preparedness/prevention, response and/or recovery. The Department of Humanitarian Response and Recovery (DHRR) oversees IOM's crisis-related activities, and all of those associated with emergencies. The [Migration Crisis Operational Framework](#) (MCOF), which falls under Objective 2 of MiGOF and provides operational guidance to deliver on the three objectives of the IOM Strategic Plan, defines IOM's engagement in crisis and outlines its sectoral engagement at various points of a crisis. MCOF anchors the wide range of DHRR policies, frameworks and strategies that are central to emergency response, helps bridge IOM's humanitarian and development approaches, and helps IOM to transition its humanitarian programming towards its recovery work.

As reported in the [IOM Operating in Crisis - 2023 Annual Report](#), in 2023, IOM responded reached 31.6 million people across 168 countries with humanitarian response and recovery programming with an allocation of USD 2.5 billion.

Who Can Help You?

Regional Offices

The DHRR RTS: The Regional Thematic Specialist (RTS) is DHRR's technical focal point based in each Regional Office. They work in close coordination with DHRR in Headquarters to ensure maximum and effective support to COs responding to emergencies. In the event that additional guidance or information on any aspect of emergency operations, COs should approach the DHRR RTS for support.

Headquarters

The Department of Humanitarian Response and Recovery (DHRR) coordinates IOM's participation in humanitarian responses and provides migration services in emergencies to address the needs of individuals and uprooted communities, thereby contributing to their protection. The Department provides technical support to efforts in the field, particularly in responding to forced migration and mass population movements, including protracted internal and cross-border displacement and refugee situations. It provides strategic policy and operational recommendations, guidance on project development and implementation, and inter-agency coordination. This contributes to improving the conditions of crisis-affected populations and leads to life-saving interventions.

DHRR is made up of three divisions, the Director's Office and the Cash-Based Interventions (CBI) Unit.

The **Director's Office** coordinates among the divisions in the development of principled approaches and strategic documents, provides oversight of cross-divisional initiatives, and ensures IOM's crisis-related priorities are aptly reflected in internal and external systems and processes. The Director's Office is composed of the following units/areas of work:

- DHRR Administration
- Humanitarian Policy
- SG's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement

- Reintegration and Drivers of Migration and Displacement
- Policy and Strategic Coordination
- Information Management
- Department Support
- Global Projects

The **Preparedness and Climate Change Action (PCCA) Division** develops and facilitates initiatives that go beyond response to displacement and elevate preparedness and disaster risk reduction (DRR)/climate change action (CCA) to a step change in how risks are understood, identified and addressed. Preparedness actions including the institutionalization of early warning systems and anticipatory action while strengthening IOM and state capacities to mitigate and respond effectively to the human mobility dimensions of crisis. PCCA establishes surge staffing that addresses the demands of emergency responses with the deployment roster and standby partnership programme. The division also mainstreams and scales up IOM, states and communities' capacities to reduce disaster risk by resilience building, multi-hazard preparedness, community-based DRR and operationalization of climate adaptation actions.

The **Peace and Recovery Division** supports crisis-affected populations in their attempts to recover, co-exist peacefully, build resilience and ultimately drive solutions to displacement, in support of the second priority objective of the Strategic Plan. The Division at HQ plans an enabling role, principally focused on strengthening country offices' capacities, funding, resources and partnerships to drive solutions to displacement and other forms of crisis related to human mobility. The team's work is guided by four core principles:

1. Facilitate transition away from crisis and lay foundations for development.
2. Apply conflict sensitivity.
3. Promote participation and empowerment.
4. Support state-led solutions.

The division is composed of the following workstreams:

- Community Stabilization
- Recovery and Resilience
- Conflict Sensitivity
- Violence and Conflict Prevention
- Transitional Justice
- Electoral Support

The **Humanitarian Operations Division** is the institutional focal point for response to sudden onset and protracted crises. The division provides technical expertise, coordination, operational support and policy guidance on emergency response planning, implementation and monitoring in line with IOM's Humanitarian Policy, Principles for Humanitarian Action and the normative and policy work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). The Humanitarian Operations team also engages with and coordinates Level 3 (L3) and system-wide "scale-up" responses when the gravity of a humanitarian situation calls for the rapid mobilization of capacities and resources. The division is composed of the following units/areas of work:

- Humanitarian Support
- Crisis Coordination
- Displacement Management (CCCM)
- Shelter and Settlements
- Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

The **Cash-Based Interventions (CBI) Unit** leads efforts to increase, coordinate and standardize the use of CBI as a modality to deliver assistance across the Organization.

Links

- [IOM Website](#)
- [DHRR Communication Site \(INTERNAL\)](#)

References and Tools

- [Operating in Crisis - 2023 Annual Report](#)
- [Agreement Concerning the Relationship between the UN and IOM](#)
- [Accord sur les relations entre l'ONU et l'OIM](#)
- [Acuerdo de Relación entre las Naciones Unidas y la Organización Internacional para las Migraciones](#)
- [اتفاق بشأن العلاقة بين الأمم المتحدة والمنظمة الدولية للهجرة](#)
- [IOM and the UN System FAQs](#)

Other Entries in this Topic

- [Migration Crisis Operational Framework \(MCOF\)](#)
- [Migration Governance Framework \(MiGOF\)](#)
- [MICIC Guidelines](#)

Contacts

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