

## Monthly Migration Movements

### Migration journeys to Indonesia

#### May 2018

#### Introduction

The Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi) in Asia region aims at gathering data on regional mixed migration flows. Data is currently collected in Afghanistan as well as with Afghans on the move toward the East and West and analysis are produced monthly. The purpose is to increase knowledge about drivers of movement and protection risks faced by Afghans on the move.

This report is focused on how Afghans migrate to Indonesia; the routes that are used and the role of smugglers in facilitation of the migration. Based on the findings, Afghans commonly use an established route to reach Indonesia from Afghanistan. However, one also finds secondary movements mainly from Iran and Pakistan. Most of the movements are facilitated by the help of smugglers, mainly providing safe border crossings and documents.

The findings are based on a sample size of 44 interviews with Afghans interviewed in Indonesia during April 2018. The data is collected in two locations (Jakarta and Bogor) where Afghans are concentrated.

The Afghans interviewed for the report are largely single and married Hazara men coming from urban areas in Afghanistan. Half of them have completed secondary or high school level education and left Afghanistan while they worked in the service industry, were students or unemployed. Most of them are originating from the provinces Ghazni and Wardak (40% and 20% respectively). The majority report that they left Afghanistan due to violence, general insecurity or lack of rights.

#### Routes to Indonesia

Most all journeys to Indonesia start from Afghanistan as travel documents (passports and visas) are not available in other countries. Those in Iran and Pakistan often only have an Amayesh card, which prevents them from travelling even within Iran or Pakistan, and thus travel to Afghanistan to obtain a passport before onwards migration.

The route used by Afghans to reach Indonesia seems to be a well-established route. Compared to the land-based western routes via Iran and Turkey, Afghans often travel East starting with a legal visa to India. The possibility for Afghans to obtain

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#### Introduction to the Mixed Migration Centre

4Mi is a core activity for the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC), which has been established in February 2018. It brings together various existing regional initiatives – hosted or led by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) – engaged in data collection, research, analysis and policy development on mixed migration issues into a new global network of mixed migration expertise. The MMC focuses on five core regions: Eastern Africa & Yemen, North Africa & Southern Mediterranean, West Africa, Middle East & Eastern Mediterranean and Asia. The 30 staff members of MMC are based in Geneva and Copenhagen and in its regional hubs Amman, Dakar, Nairobi, Tunis and Kabul, where it works in close cooperation with regional partners, stakeholders and donors. To read more about MMC please look at: [Introduction to Mixed Migration Centre.pdf](#)

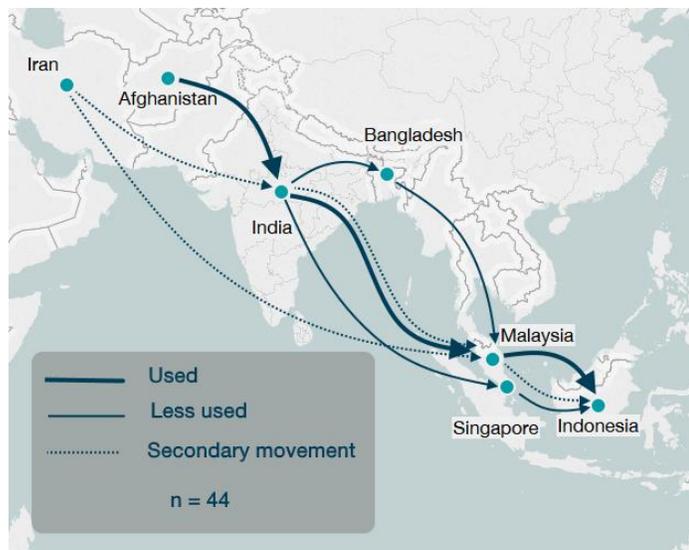
an Indian visa is relatively easy and free of charge making India a perfect transit country towards further east. Based on information from the 4Mi monitors, many Afghans have already make contacts with smugglers in India before leaving Afghanistan to plan their onwards journey while others find smugglers upon arrival with the help of ethnic and cultural networks.

Among the present sample, most respondents (36 people) arrived in India by air and where smuggled by sea to Malaysia and onwards to Indonesia. One of the respondents had a stop in Bangladesh and then continued to Malaysia. 6 people traveled to Singapore and from there to Indonesia.

Among the interviewees, there were 4 cases of secondary movement; one from Pakistan which first went to Afghanistan and from there followed the traditional route to India,

Malaysia and Indonesia. The three people who travelled from Iran went straight to India or Malaysia and then continued their journey to Indonesia (see: Map 1).

Map 1. Routes



The choice of route is largely dependent on the smuggler with limited agency for the migrants and refugees themselves. As in the previous 4Mi report focused on Indonesia (August 2017), few protection incidents are reported on the route compared to people travelling towards west; this is very likely because part of the journey is on air.

In many cases, the journey is not straight to Indonesia and people have long stops in various locations for different purposes, such as looking for money, because they have been detained by the police or the borders are closed. Among the sample, 33 respondents mentioned having to break their journey on the route, mainly in India and almost all of them because they were looking for/contacting smugglers to organize the next stretch of the journey. 4 respondents reported that they were abandoned by smugglers and 1 was waiting for his/her family to send money to be able continue the journey.

### The role of smugglers in facilitating the journey

In general, it is difficult, in most cases impossible, for Afghans to migrate to Indonesia without the help of smuggling networks. While many travel to India legally, there is no regular path from India to Indonesia nor directly from Kabul.

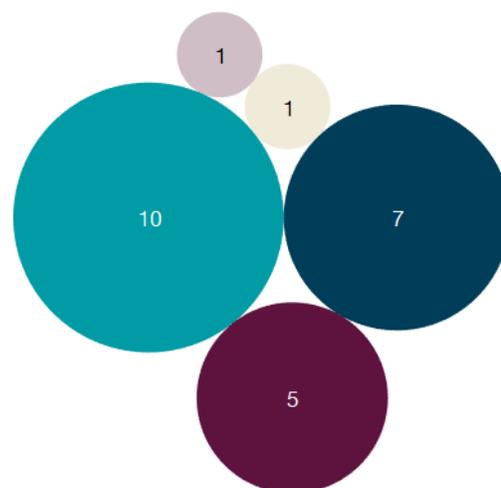
The current data shows that not only smugglers but also travel agencies are involved in facilitating the journeys. As graph 1 shows, 10 of the respondents describe their smuggler as professional while 7 identify the smuggler as a travel agent. Based on anecdotal information from the 4Mi monitors, these

agencies are facilitating the journeys by providing documents (mainly passport and visa) and assisting the migrants with getting in contact with other smugglers in transit countries.

Graph 1.

### How do you describe your smuggler

n = 44



- Professional smuggler
- Travel agent
- Refused
- Government Official
- Informal/ad hoc smuggler

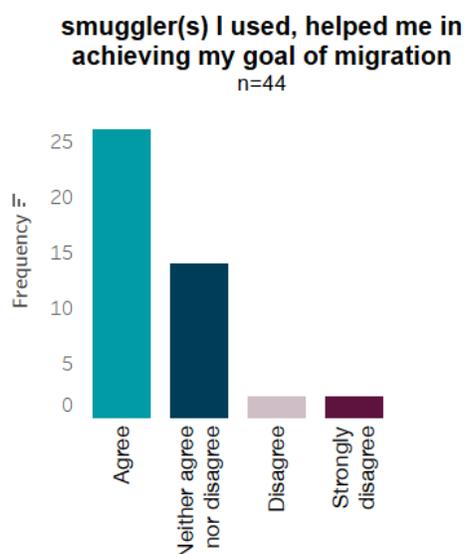
Afghan refugees and migrants benefit from either one smuggler or a smuggling network along the route and contact them personally (in 13 cases) or by the help of friends and family (10 cases). The main service provided by the smugglers is crossing borders, usually from India to Malaysia and Indonesia by sea. Provision of travel documents is the other service mentioned by interviewees provided by smugglers. The documents are mostly used for air travels or crossing borders.

Contrary to what is documented on the western route, it seems from the 4Mi data that smugglers facilitating journeys towards East inform the Afghan refugees and migrants about the conditions and challenges on routes. 9 interviewees mentioned that they were intentionally misled by the smugglers, while others believe that they were not intentionally misled about the journey. Among those who did feel misled, issues were related to conditions on route (3 cases), costs (2 cases) and regulations in Indonesia (4 cases). On the western route, in the same period and among 4Mi respondents in Germany and Greece, only two people out of 22 respondents felt that they were not misled by their smugglers while the rest reported that they felt they were intentionally misled mainly about conditions on route, costs, and safety/security along the route.

According to 4Mi monitors, this may be due to two reasons: (1) since the route to Indonesia is a well-established route for irregular migration many migrants already know the condition on the route; (2) The smugglers provide adequate information to gain a good reputation among Afghans and thus potentially more clients in the future. This makes sense as many smugglers are finding their clients through ethnic and cultural networks.

In addition, as shown in Graph 2, more than half of the interviewees agree that the smuggler(s) they used helped them in achieving their goal of migration, while only few disagree.

Graph 2.



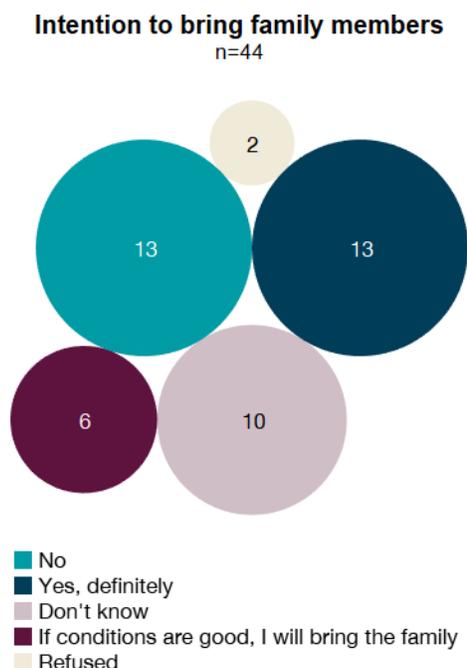
### Onward movements and intentions at destination

For most Afghans coming to Indonesia, the country is a transit country where they apply for asylum and wait for resettlement to a third country, which may take years. As previously reported, Australia is surprisingly still the preferred destination among 4Mi interviewees despite the country's tightening asylum procedures recent years.<sup>1</sup> Canada and the USA are other preferred destinations by 4Mi respondents.

The majority of the 4Mi interviewees report that they intend to stay permanently at their destination country. There is an equal split between people who report that they have definite plans to eventually bring their family members to the country and those who have no plan to bring family. 6 respondents

will decide pending conditions (see graph 3). 29 respondents are sure or see it very likely that they will find a job (semi-skilled or manual labour) within the first 6 months of arrival at their destination country.

Graph 3.



<sup>1</sup> For more details, please see: 'Afghan displacement summary: migration to Indonesia', August 2017, available at: <http://www.regionalmms.org/index.php/other-regions/central-south-west-asia>