

MirreM Data Collection

TÜRKIYE

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Instructions:

Reflecting on your deskwork and fieldwork, please provide a brief snapshot (1 – 3 pages in total) of the overall picture of irregular migration data in your country. For each question, please address stocks, flows and indicators (or indicate N/A).

Questions:

1. What is your overall assessment of the quality of irregular migration data in your country?

Sources of irregular migration data in Turkey are scattered. All of these sources are produced by governmental organisations. The existing civilian sources of irregular migration data are also produced from the information received from these sources.

There is almost no clarification on the methods and techniques used by the organisations publishing irregular data. It is also difficult to say that different sources have a common terminology.

In this respect, we do not have enough information to make any assessment of the quality of irregular migration data. This lack of information can be considered an important deficiency regarding the quality of the data.

2. How is irregular migration data generally used in policymaking?

It can be said that irregular migration data in Turkey is generally used for political purposes and to give a message to society. In the 2018 local elections, the issue of migration turned into a political instrument like never before. For the first time, an anti-immigrant party was founded and gained a decisive position in the 2022 general elections. This situation caused the ruling party, which has been in government for more than 20 years, to reduce its already weak integration policies and focus on combating irregular migration. Especially in the last two years, it is clear that the government has devoted special attention to the issue of irregular migration. This can be considered to be closely related to the upcoming local elections.

In this context, regular weekly briefings are organised by the Directorate of Migration Management under the Ministry of Interior. These posts, which are generally made through social media accounts and fed with visual video content, include information such as how many irregular migrants have been caught, how many foreign nationals have been deported, and how many migrant smugglers have been caught. It is also noteworthy that the Minister of Interior shares similar information in almost every speech. It is considered that the main

purpose of these posts is to weaken the hand of the opposition parties that try to turn anti-immigrant sentiments and irregular mobility of migrants, especially from Syria and Afghanistan, into a political lever.

As a part of this, information on irregular migration is provided to the public in order to convey the message that the necessary actions are being taken to combat irregular migration. In Turkey, especially in social media, serious disinformation against migrants and forced migrants in need of special protection, such as Syrians, is tried to be eliminated through various platforms. The main axis of the information is on prevention at the border, apprehension and deportation from the country.

In this regard, close cooperation is carried out, especially with international organisations. Institutions such as ICMPD, IOM and UNHCR make significant contributions to capacity building and support programmes in the fight against irregular migration.

3. How did you go about the data collection process?

Data on irregular migration are published by various governmental institutions at different times and periods. The Directorate General of Migration Management under the Ministry of Interior was established in 2013 (Directorate General of Migration Management until 2021) and the General Directorate of Security used to publish this information. After this date, the Directorate of Migration Management (PMM) started to publish it. This information comes to PMM from different institutions. The General Directorate of Security, Land Forces Command, and Gendarmerie General Command publish irregular migration data in their respective areas of responsibility and these are periodically announced by the PMM as total numbers.

By comparing the total numbers announced with the numbers published by other institutions on their own pages, irregular migration data were collected in various categories.

PMM generally announces statistics on migration on the first day of every week. However, other institutions have different periods for releasing statistics (the data release periods of these institutions are given in detail in the main report).

As AYBU-GPM, the statistics, collected by a data monitoring and evaluation working group established in the centre for the last three years, have been shared within the scope of this project. While some of these data are published weekly and some daily, some data are removed from the relevant source after a while. Therefore, at the end of a long-term monitoring and data collection process, irregular migration data could be collected in detail.

4. Were there any specific difficulties you experienced during this process? How did you address them?

The most important difficulty encountered during the data collection process was related to the fact that the various sources publishing data did not provide a detailed methodology on

their data collection methods. It was very difficult to identify the intersections of the data with the mandates of other organisations and therefore whether there was duplication. another source of this difficulty was related to the terminology used. The extent to which the terminology used by the institutions was covered and excluded was another source of difficulty.

Requests to various organisations for more detailed information were left unanswered and directed to open sources.

5. What were the main gaps in the evidence base (i.e., unmet user needs) that emerged during your data collection process?

The most important gaps encountered in the data collection processes were in issues related to terminology and methodology. It was difficult to determine the boundaries of the concepts used and the differences between the concepts used by one organization and those used by another. Additionally, it was not possible to obtain a detailed methodology on how the data were collected.

Another difficulty was the deficiencies in the data published by PMM. PMM generally provides information about the top ten nationalities in the statistics it publishes periodically. Therefore, it has become difficult to follow up the information of a nationality whose irregular statistics are among the top ten in a period.

6. Were there any meetings with producers or users of irregular migration estimates and indicators that you were unable to secure, but sense that endeavouring to do so in future may be worthwhile? If so, please provide contact information for this person/entity and explain why you think such detail would be helpful.

We had the opportunity once to meet with the General Director of Irregular Migration (at PMM) during the period of the study. When we said that we specifically needed detailed origin country information of detached irregular migrants, we received an answer that this information could be shared with the initiative of the PMM president.

7. Please point to an example of good practice estimating irregular migration and/or making use of estimates of irregular migration in policy-making that you came across. Why did you select this example? You can answer the question about good practice in estimating irregular migration and using these estimates in policy-making as follows: