

Forum:	General Assembly 3 (GA3)
Issue:	The issue of reintegrating irregular migrants into their countries of origin
Student Officer:	Kyra Mahindru
Position:	Chair

Introduction

Irregular migration has become one of the most significant challenges in today's interconnected world, affecting both countries of destination and countries of origin. While governments often focus on managing irregular entry and residence, less attention is given to what happens when these individuals return home. The reintegration of irregular migrants into their countries of origin is a multidimensional process, involving not only the physical return but also economic stability, social acceptance, and psychological well-being. This issue is particularly complex because reintegration intersects with questions of human rights, state sovereignty, and sustainable development. On one hand, host countries seek effective return mechanisms to uphold their immigration laws. On the other, countries of origin must create conditions that prevent unemployment, marginalization, or renewed irregular migration among returnees. However, many reintegration programs are short-term, underfunded, or unevenly implemented, which further complicates successful reintegration. Therefore, the central ideas to be discussed include: the global context of reintegration, challenges in sustainable reintegration, and policy frameworks and international cooperation. Addressing these dimensions is essential to break the cycle of irregular migration and promote stability for both returnees and their communities.

Definition of Key Terms

Irregular Migrants

The movement of persons to a new place of residence or transit that occurs outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit, or receiving countries.¹ It refers to individuals who enter, reside, or work in a country without legal authorization such as overstaying a visa, crossing borders without documentation, or failing to meet the legal

¹ "Irregular Migration." *Migration Data Portal*, 2022.
www.migrationdataportal.org/handbooks/chapter-4-introduction-key-concepts-and-definitions/irregular-migration.

requirements of the destination country to enter, remain, or engage in economic activity.²

Returning migrant:

a person who returns to their country of citizenship after having been an international migrant (whether short-term or long-term) in another country, and who intends to remain in their own country.³

Voluntary Return

Voluntary return occurs when a migrant freely chooses to leave, often supported by host states or IOM programs ⁴

Expulsion

A formal act or conduct attributable to a State by which a non-national is compelled to leave the territory of that State. Terminology on expulsion and deportation varies, but generally expulsion refers to the legal order to leave a State, while removal or deportation refers to its enforcement if not done voluntarily.⁵

Country of Origin

In the migration context, a country of nationality or of former habitual residence of a person or group of persons who have migrated abroad, irrespective of whether they migrate regularly or irregularly.⁶

Country of Destination

In the migration context, a country that is the destination for a person or a group of persons who have migrated, irrespective of whether they migrate regularly or irregularly.⁷

Reintegration

Reintegration – A process which enables individuals to re-establish the economic, social and psychosocial relationships needed to maintain life, livelihood and dignity and inclusion in civic life. The various components of reintegration can be described as follows.

Social reintegration

Social reintegration implies the access by a returning migrant to public services and

² "Irregular Migration." *Migration Data Portal*, 2022, www.migrationdataportal.org/handbooks/chapter-4-introduction-key-concepts-and-definitions/irregular-migration.

³ Latek, Marta. *Briefing Reintegration of Returning Migrants*. 2017.

⁴ Latek, Marta. *Briefing Reintegration of Returning Migrants*. 2017.

⁵ International Organization for Migration. "Key Migration Terms." *International Organization for Migration*, IOM, www.iom.int/key-migration-terms.

⁶ International Organization for Migration. "Key Migration Terms." *International Organization for Migration*, IOM, www.iom.int/key-migration-terms.

⁷ International Organization for Migration. "Key Migration Terms." *International Organization for Migration*, IOM, www.iom.int/key-migration-terms.

infrastructures in his or her country of origin, including access to health, education, housing, justice and social protection schemes.

Psychological reintegration

Psychosocial reintegration is the reinsertion of a returning migrant into personal support networks (friends, relatives, neighbours) and civil society structures (associations, self-help groups and other organizations). This also includes the re-engagement with the values, mores, way of living, language, moral principles, ideology, and traditions of the country of origin's society.

Economic reintegration

The process by which a returning migrant re-enters the economic life of his or her country of origin and is able to sustain a livelihood.⁸

Readmission Agreements

Bilateral or multilateral treaties between states that outline the procedures for returning irregular migrants to their countries of origin.⁹

Non-Refoulement

The principle of non-refoulement is a core protection in international human rights law. It bars States from returning individuals to situations where they face a real risk of irreparable harm such as persecution, torture, or other serious human rights violations. Under international law, it is explicitly enshrined in the Convention against Torture (CAT) and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED).¹⁰

Background Information

Global context of reintegration.

The issue of reintegration of irregular immigrants is the process of supporting individuals who return to their country of origin, whether through legal or illegal channels. The problem of reintegration extends beyond physical return, encompassing issues such as economic, social, and financial support. This process ensures those returning to their

⁸ International Organization for Migration. "Key Migration Terms." *International Organization for Migration*, IOM, www.iom.int/key-migration-terms.

⁹ International Organization for Migration. "Key Migration Terms." *International Organization for Migration*, IOM, www.iom.int/key-migration-terms.

¹⁰ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *The Principle of Non-Refoulement under International Human Rights Law*. 2018.

original countries will live a stable life. Since 1979, the International Organization of Migration (IOM) has assisted 1.7 million people in reintegration through its [Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration \(AVRR\) program](#). Nonetheless, in 2020, despite the global transportation restrictions caused by COVID-19, over [24,000 migrants](#) were still supported in their return, the figure increased to [42,000 by 2021](#). The progress of reintegration encompasses various areas, including counselling, financial aid, job training, psychological assistance, and other community projects that enhance each person's skills and abilities for a more stable financial and daily life.

Challenges in Sustainable Reintegration.

While these complex returning programs remain widespread and successful, it remains difficult in many contexts. People returned to their country face economic obstacles such as high unemployment, limited access to opportunities. Additionally, the IOM has explained the fact that such issues are often faced by female migrants, in particular, who encounter [gender barriers](#)/ stigmas, reduced access to training, and heightened psychological challenges. Other barriers include legal or bureaucratic hurdles, for example, the absence of identification and legal documents. Nonetheless, reintegration problems are complicated and challenging in regions like fragile or conflicted states such as [Afghanistan](#) where weak governance or instability hinders their long-term stability, posing a challenge to sustainable reintegration. Such challenges heighten problems for reintegration policies that address personal or structural conditions in other countries of origin.

Policy Frameworks and International Cooperation

The international community has established a policy framework to guide return and other reintegration efforts. Research by other organizations, such as the [OECD](#), stresses that successful reintegration requires other gender sensitive programming, case management, institutional partnerships, or other monitoring systems. Nonetheless other [UN led initiatives such as SDG 10.7](#) revolves around the global cooperation of reintegration or migration. However, in many other regions, including the European Union, [only a fraction of returns and transport orders are enforced](#), reflecting further issues such as the complexity of forced returns.

Major Countries and Organisations Involved

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

The IOM is the leading international organization supporting reintegration worldwide

through different initiatives. Through its Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programmes, IOM operates in more than 170 countries, providing counseling, financial assistance, training, and other community-based reintegration projects. [In 2021 alone, the IOM supported over 26.4 million people](#) and their reintegration activities globally.

Germany

Germany is one of the major parties involved in this issue, especially in the EU. Through programmes such as the “Returning to New Opportunities”, Germany funds training and other business start-up grants for migrants returning to the country of origin in countries like Nigeria, Ghana, or Afghanistan. [The German government](#) works closely with other international organizations, such as the IOM, to ensure that the returns are sustainable and voluntary, with economic opportunities in home countries.

European Union (EU)

The European Union plays a vital role by [funding and coordinating reintegration](#) programmes across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Through programmes like the EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration, the European Union partners with IOM and local governments to provide financial, technical, and institutional support. EU states such as Germany, Italy, France, and Spain implement their own reintegration projects, often helping specific regions with high irregular migration rates.

United States of America (USA)

The United States is a major actor in the process of reintegration, particularly seen in the recent (2025) trump administration, particularly in relation to Latin America. Each year, [thousands of migrants are deported from the U.S](#) to Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, creating significant reintegration problems and posing challenges to other countries of origin.

Viable Solutions

Strengthening Reintegration Support Systems

One of the most widely proposed solutions for such an issue is to expand the reintegration programmes that address the economic, social, and psychological needs all at the same time. Through addressing the economic problems, further access to credits or job opportunities, while aiming to decrease the amount of unemployment, are essential questions that require immediate solutions for more effective reintegration. Through this

method, countries could strengthen their own reintegration support systems, making the reintegration more sustainable.

Enhancing International Cooperation and Partnership.

Because migration is such a critical cross-border issue, reintegration requires close coordination between other host countries, countries of origin, and international organizations. Close international cooperation or partnership through channels like the United Nations or IOM is critical for safe and dignified reintegration. Expanding other programmes are essential, such as the AVRR program, which ensures further effectiveness. On the other hand, the Global Compact for Migration provides a framework that countries can use to realign their reintegration policies with

Addressing the Root Causes of Irregular Migration

Long-term root causes need to be addressed to ensure that other initiatives are successful for a more long-term effect. The acts of reintegration have two methods: deportation or voluntary return. These activities include tackling poverty, unemployment, or political instability. These causes are critical for effectiveness in combating more migrants to their country of origin.

Bibliography

Migration Joint Initiative. Migration Joint Initiative. International Organization for Migration, <https://www.migrationjointinitiative.org/>. Accessed 24 Sept. 2025.

International Organization for Migration (IOM). Infosheet AVRR. IOM, https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/country/EEA/infosheet_avrr.pdf . Accessed 24 Sept. 2025.

Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD). PFP / PPD 5714. GFMD, <https://www.gfmd.org/pfp/ppd/5714>. Accessed 25 Sept. 2025.

Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD). PFP / PPD 5714. GFMD, <https://www.gfmd.org/pfp/ppd/5714>. Accessed 19 Sept. 2025.

The White House. Realigning the United States Refugee Admissions Program. The White House, 20 Jan. 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/realigning-the-united-states-refugee-admissions-program/>. Accessed 19 Sept. 2025.

International Organization for Migration. "Key Migration Terms." *International Organization for Migration*, IOM, www.iom.int/key-migration-terms .

"Irregular Migration." *Migration Data Portal*, 2022, www.migrationdataportal.org/handbooks/chapter-4-introduction-key-concepts-and-definitions/irregular-migration.

Latek, Marta. *Briefing Reintegration of Returning Migrants*. 2017.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *The Principle of Non-Refoulement under International Human Rights Law*. 2018.