Balancing Acts

Policy Frameworks for Migrant Return and Reintegration

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Executive Summary

The policies and practices of returning migrants to their countries of origin are some of the most contentious in migration policy. Foremost among their many stakeholders are migrants themselves, but in both origin and destination countries, choices about how, when, and under what conditions to effect returns implicate many elements of national interests. Reconciling these diverse interests in both international cooperation and domestic policy is difficult and complex—particularly when return is compulsory—but necessary. In this endeavor, reintegration assistance provided by development cooperation contributes to balanced policies.

Migrant returns take place along a spectrum ranging from wholly voluntary, at times even solicited by countries of origin, to compulsory or physically forced. The ways in which returns are carried out vary widely, from individualized legal proceedings with due process and reintegration support, to coercive mass returns with no legal or humanitarian safeguards. Data on the scale of returns, especially compulsory, are limited and uneven. In recent years, however, the Dominican Republic, Iran, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia have each returned hundreds of thousands of migrants, ranging from long-term residents and laborers to recognized refugees, at times following harassment, extortion, or detention by authorities. Meanwhile, the hundreds of thousands removed annually from the United States have some semblance of due process, even if flawed, but virtually no reintegration assistance. The smaller numbers of migrants returned from the European Union generally go through often-lengthy legal proceedings and are more likely than other returnees to have access to return and reintegration assistance.

Though a relatively small share of the world's returning migrants currently receives reintegration assistance, this type of support can add positive incentives for return and promote conditions that make reintegration into countries and communities of origin more sustainable. The programs that provide this type of support usually take the form of cash or in-kind

assistance to individuals for a limited time. But even where reintegration programs do exist, their impact is often limited by several factors, including their narrow focus on getting returning migrants into the labor market, their aim to meet individual needs rather than to effect structural or community-level change, and their short timeframes. Few programs include robust monitoring and evaluation, making it difficult to learn the lessons of either success or failure. Some promising new approaches are taking hold, however, which extend program timelines, engage the private sector, and support the reintegration efforts of civil-society organizations, including some organized by returning migrants themselves.

Where countries have cooperated on returns, this has generally been done bilaterally between destination and origin countries, though such efforts have often been stymied by the opposing interests of the two parties. Though long viewed as too sensitive for broader international debate, the topic of returns has now been taken up at the global level. In July 2018, 191 states agreed on the final text of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration, which includes a compromise on return, readmission, and reintegration that recognizes the priorities of both origin and destination countries. Once the compact is adopted in December 2018, implementing these commitments on return will be extremely challenging. There is an important role for development cooperation in addressing and ameliorating the conditions in countries of origin that motivate people to migrate and that discourage return, including issues related to infrastructure, access to health and education, rule of law, and the robustness of public institutions—goals that are closely aligned with development assistance more generally.

Because returns have implication for many policy areas and facets of society, destination countries should imbed returns policy in a broad view of national interest, one that takes into account concerns beyond domestic politics and the enforcement of national immigration laws. They can find common ground with origin countries on the desire for a balanced policy framework that is grounded in law, respects human rights, promotes sustainable reintegration, and supports both development and security. National policies governing the return of migrants should be clear and firm, but they should be applied flexibly and humanely, in a spirit of international cooperation to achieve safe, orderly, and regular migration.

I. Introduction

One of the most contentious actions states undertake in their efforts to manage migration flows is returning migrants to their countries of origin against their will. The migrants in question may be asylum seekers whose applications have been rejected, irregular immigrants who crossed borders without legal authorization, immigrants who overstayed or otherwise violated the terms of their visas, or even registered refugees.[1] Return has profound personal consequences for these individual migrants and their families, but it also has critical financial, humanitarian, security, and development implications for their countries of origin—some of which are positive, others negative.[2] In this context, development cooperation is increasingly used to help tip the balance toward positive outcomes by providing assistance to help migrants reintegrate in a sustainable manner, as well as to provide incentives for migrants to abandon their resistance to return.[3]

Beyond the personal, national, and bilateral levels, migrant return and reintegration have become a core element of the international policy debate. In July 2018, after intense negotiations, 191 states agreed on the text of a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration at the United Nations. One of the 23 objectives of this framework for international cooperation on migration is for states to "cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration."[4]

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The return of migrants who have no legal right to stay in a country is the sovereign right of national governments and a legitimate—even necessary—means of managing migration, but it also has critical financial, humanitarian, security, and development implications for origin countries. In the past, some countries have implemented returns in a way that recognizes competing priorities, such as the capacity of origin countries to absorb returning migrants, the negative development impacts of lost remittances, the humanitarian case for family unity, migrants' length of stay and degree of integration in the destination country, and the dangers they would face upon return to their homelands. Indeed, the 2008 European Returns Directive says: "According to the general principles of EU law, decisions taken under this directive should be adopted on a case-by-case basis, and based on objective criteria, implying that consideration should go beyond the mere fact of an illegal stay."[5]

Since 2015, the space for such mitigating factors seems to have shrunk, as returns of unauthorized migrants have become a top policy priority for many migrant-receiving countries. The difficulty in carrying out returns has in some cases come to dominate relations between countries of origin and destination, to the extent that other policy concerns, including development assistance, political stability, trade relations, and security cooperation, are subordinated to cooperation on returns.

This policy brief examines the policies, practices, and contextual factors that make returns—and particularly compulsory returns—such a difficult issue for international cooperation. It begins by offering a conceptual framework for thinking about returns along a spectrum of voluntariness and from several policy perspectives. Next, it looks at the scale and practice of compulsory returns, with a focus on current trends. The brief then considers the critical role reintegration assistance can play in increasing the development benefits of large-scale returns and mitigating shocks to often-fragile communities of origin. Finally, it takes stock of international cooperation on compulsory returns—a complex challenge due to the differing interests of destination and origin countries.

II.   A Conceptual Framework: Degrees of Voluntariness

It is impossible to speak of an average return migration pathway.[6] Migrants may be compelled to move back to their countries of origin for a range of reasons, and with varying levels of pressure from host governments and societies. Many migrants make the decision to return autonomously, seeing it as the final step in their migration journeys, and some are able to take advantage of return incentives or reintegration assistance. Others choose return as the best out of a poor set of options—for example, if they were unable to find their footing in the destination country and face poverty and marginalization as a result. But many migrants and refugees are compelled to leave or put under great pressure to do so—to the point that some returns billed as "voluntary" are voluntary only in the technical sense that they are chosen as the last alternative to forcible removal or indefinite detention.[7]

In reality, return takes place across a spectrum of voluntariness. The nature of the pressure (or lack thereof) has critical implications for migrants' ability to contribute to the development of the societies to which they return, and the types of support they will need to do so. Along this spectrum, from voluntary to involuntary movement, at least six bands can be identified (see Figure 1).[8]

Figure 1. The Return Spectrum

> ### *Solicited*
> Not only voluntary for migrants, but solicited by the origin country. Countries such as China, Ecuador, Ireland, Paraguay, and South Korea have policies to court emigrants and members of the diaspora, especially the high skilled / potential investors.

> ### *Voluntary*
> Migrants return voluntarily, but without invitation from the country of origin. Reasons include: retirement, reunification with family, belief that origin-country conditions have improved, and having achieved their migration goal (e.g., acquiring a skill or financial savings).

> ### *Reluctant*
> Migrants have not lost the legal right to remain, and return is voluntary but reluctant. Factors may include: inhospitable political / social climate in the destination country, inability to bring family to join them, difficulty achieving goals, and homesickness.

> ### *Pressured*
> Migrants are strongly pressured by their destination countries to depart, with some offering voluntary returnees a limited-time cash payment. This often happens in times of economic crisis and high unemployment.

> ### *Obliged*
> Migrants do not have the right to remain in the destination country and are ordered to leave. Those who comply may receive return and reintegration assistance, while those who do not face legal sanctions.

> ### *Forced*
> Migrants who are legally required to leave the destination country but have avoided doing so are physically detained and forcibly deported.

The final two categories in Figure 1, obliged and forced return, can be collectively described as "compulsory return." In both cases, migrants are legally required to leave the destination country and face penalties if they do not do so. These types of return are the most politically sensitive, both domestically and internationally, and thus are the focus of this policy brief.

III. A Policy Framework: Multiple and Conflicting Priorities

The policy framework for return migration is complex; in fact, there are many policy frameworks in this domain, which intersect and sometimes conflict. When considering returns, policymakers need to consider and reconcile at least six different ways of approaching returns.

- *A rule of law framework.* International law acknowledges that states have the sovereign right to determine who enters and stays in their territory, for how long, and under what conditions. However, it also places important constraints on the exercise of this power, prohibiting the refoulement[9] of refugees or victims of torture (or those under threat of it), requiring states to protect the rights of the child, and so forth. The rule of law is one of the most often invoked policy frameworks for returns, as governments—particularly

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department or ministries charged with immigration enforcement—make the case that domestic immigration laws are meaningless if the laws prohibiting unauthorized entry or stay are not enforced by, among other things, returning unauthorized migrants.

- *A humanitarian framework.* States often agree to extend temporary or even permanent leave to remain to people from countries suffering from natural disasters or violent conflict, in the early stages of postconflict recovery, or other circumstances that make return difficult. The granting of exceptions to the obligation to return is usually regarded as discretionary, although migrants in such circumstances are treated as refugees by some state authorities (in which case, nonrefoulement is not discretionary) but not by others.

- *A development framework.* A development approach requires that returns be calibrated to take account of the ability of the origin country to absorb returnees. Large-scale return should also be weighed against the developmental effects of the loss of remittance income (which makes up a large share of the GDP of many developing countries) and the loss of other kinds of diaspora support.

- *A reintegration framework.* Related to the development approach described above, a reintegration framework pairs returns with financial or other forms of assistance to reinforce the positive potential of return, for migrants as well as for their origin countries and the communities in which they settle.

- *A security and stability framework.* Compulsory returns on a large scale may exacerbate the frustrations of segments of the population, which can lead to public disorder or upset delicate communal balances. They can also reinforce criminal networks when, as is often the case, destination countries prioritize the return of immigrants who are convicted criminals. Close coordination with the authorities of the country of origin should be a high priority for destination countries when security and stability are at stake. Destination countries may adjust the timeframe for returns, or even conclude that the return of certain groups should not be pursued, particularly if social tensions rather than criminality are the main risk factors.

- *A political framework.* Political factors are the most salient for many if not most countries on both ends of the return journey. Governments in destination countries often believe that their political credibility in the eyes of their citizens depends on their ability to return unauthorized migrants. Meanwhile, many governments in countries of origin believe with equal conviction that their legitimacy can be badly eroded if they are perceived as working against the interests of their citizens abroad—or even "selling them out" in exchange for development assistance, which may be slow to be felt at the community or household level.

Reconciling these different policy frameworks is a complex and difficult undertaking for policymakers. It requires whole-of-government collaboration to identify where the sum of national interest lies. Interior ministries and justice departments are likely to give priority to rule of law, whereas ministries of development cooperation will emphasize the development and reintegration frameworks, and foreign and defense ministries will likely put security and stability first. Their political masters may think first of the political implications of return policies and practices. Viewing return migration through a single policy lens risks producing unwelcome, unintended consequences both domestically and in partner countries.

IV. The Scale and Practice of Compulsory Returns

Comprehensive global data on return migration is not available, as many returns go unrecorded and some are done outside of any formal procedures. Moreover, it is impossible to get an accurate measure of how many returns fall under each category in the return spectrum. Some migrants, anticipating a return order, leave the destination country before the order is issued and therefore are not recorded as compulsory returns. Others, having received an order to leave, disappear into the shadows and cannot be accounted for, whether they leave or stay without authorization.

Some countries do, of course, record as accurately as possible the numbers of people who comply with removal orders or are forcibly removed. But even where such statistics exist, it may be necessary to piece together multiple sources to achieve a more complete picture.[10] For example, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) reports initiating 226,000 removals in fiscal year 2017.[11] This does not, however include all migrants compelled to leave the United States; those apprehended near the U.S. border and processed by the Border Patrol for expedited removal are not included in ICE statistics, which count removals from the interior of the country and some (but not all) at the border. It is also important to note that a count of orders of removal does not equate to the number of returns. The European Commission reports that between 400,000 and 500,000 foreign nationals are ordered to leave the European Union each year, but that only about 40 percent of these migrants—fewer than 200,000—actually return.[12] Increasing the return rate has become a major policy goal for European politicians seeking to reinforce their control over migration and allay public concerns, as well as to deter prospective migrants without legitimate protection claims from traveling to Europe to claim asylum.

Returns have also become a priority for other governments, some of which have taken action on an even larger scale. Pakistan and Iran, two countries that each host more than 2 million Afghan nationals, drove the largest compulsory returns in 2016 and 2017.[13] Returnees included both registered refugees and migrants categorized in official statistics as "undocumented," many of whom had lived in their host country for decades. In 2016, Pakistan returned 370,000 registered refugees and 250,000 undocumented migrants to Afghanistan.[14] In the same year, Iran returned 2,300 registered refugees and 440,000 undocumented Afghans.[15] The year after, in 2017, 98,000 Afghans were returned from Pakistan and 460,000 from Iran. A Pakistani government program to register 1 million Afghans as legal residents, launched in July 2017, may have contributed to the diminished returns from the country, though official pressure on migrants to return and threat of deportation have since been revived.[16]

Large-scale compulsory returns have taken place in other regions as well. Mass deportations from the Dominican Republic to Haiti began in 2015, following the Dominican Supreme Court's withdrawal of citizenship from 200,000 Dominicans of Haitian descent.[17] Those unable to complete the arduous procedure to re-register with Dominican authorities, many of whom became stateless,[18] as well as some of the estimated 750,000 Haitian citizens living in the country at the time[19] faced increased pressure to return or outright expulsion.[20] Meanwhile, in the Middle East, some 160,000 Ethiopian workers were expelled from Saudi Arabia in 2013–14; another crackdown began in 2017.[21] And the government of Israel approved plans in November 2017 to deport 40,000 African refugees and asylum seekers, the majority from Eritrea and a substantial minority from Sudan. Plans to send those unable to return to their countries of origin to a third country were struck down by the Israeli High Court, and the broader deportation plan was on hold at the time of writing.[22]

The only worldwide comparative data on returns are relatively narrow, covering only registered refugees. Such returns peaked at 3 million in 1994, and while they are currently well below this level, they rose rapidly from 125,000 in 2014 to 550,000 in 2016.[23] Recent growth in

these figures is almost entirely driven by returns from Pakistan to Afghanistan, Chad to Sudan, and Kenya to Somalia, which together made up 82 percent of returns of registered refugees in 2016 (see Table 1). While an interesting window into one type of return, these data do not come close to capturing the full landscape of compulsory return. The majority of people facing compulsory return are not refugees; in fact, refugees are legally, if not always practically, protected from compulsory return by international refugee law. In addition, some of the refugees who return to their countries of origin do so voluntarily, either because conditions there have improved or because those in the host country are too difficult.

Throughout the world, the vast majority of returns, including those of registered refugees and the compulsory return of other migrants, occur on a regional rather than a global scale. In each of the top return corridors listed in Table 1, the countries of origin and destination are located in the same region. Similarly, in 2015 and 2016, the top three countries of return from the European Union following an order to leave were other European states: Albania, Kosovo, and Ukraine. The largest numbers of returns from the United States were also of migrants from the Americas, specifically those from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.[24] This reflects regional migration patterns more generally, and the greater ease of returning people, often in groups, to nearby countries. Additionally, in some cases the destination and origin countries have multifaceted relationships that facilitate negotiations on returns.

The ways in which compulsory returns are carried out vary enormously. Migrants compelled to return from Western Europe and North America will routinely have gone through an individual-

Table 1. Top Ten Countries of Return, by Number of Registered Refugees Returned, 2014–16

Country	2014	2015	2016	Top Corridor in 2016 (Share of Flows to Return Country)
Afghanistan	17,820	61,379	383,945	Pakistan-Afghanistan (99.3%)
Sudan	13,139	39,494	37,210	Chad-Sudan (100.0%)
Somalia	2,487	32,344	36,126	Kenya-Somalia (93.5%)
Central African Republic (CAR)	0	21,632	34,401	DRC-CAR (45.1%)
Côte d'Ivoire	12,362	12,222	19,544	Liberia-Côte d'Ivoire (97.6%)
Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)	25,150	8,536	13,217	South Sudan-DRC (99.7%)
Mali	20,961	4,088	9,757	Burkina Faso-Mali (35.6%)
Rwanda	5,787	5,054	6,102	DRC-Rwanda (99.4%)
Iraq	10,908	5,921	153	Iran-Iraq (83.7%)
Angola	14,284	4,639	0	---

Notes: The table includes the ten countries with the highest number of combined total refugee returnees for 2014 through 2016. Countries are listed in order of the number of registered refugees returned in 2016.
Source: Authors' compilation of data from UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "Population Statistics—Population Type (Returned Refugees)" (database, accessed November 20, 2017), http://popstats. unhcr.org/en/time_series.

ized procedure to determine their eligibility to remain. However, critics assert that the rights of migrants to due process are often violated, particularly in the United States; this is the case where translation of legal proceedings is lacking, migrants do not have access to legal counsel, detention is overused, and procedures are rushed and do not adequately take into account individual circumstances.[25]

In other regions, compulsory returns often lack even minimal safeguards. Coercion has played a key role in prompting a large number of Afghans to return to Afghanistan in recent years. Particularly in Pakistan, Afghans have faced police extortion, arbitrary detention, and increased policing of border traffic.[26] Most notably, Pakistani authorities have pushed Afghans to leave the country by putting their legal status in limbo. In December 2015, the government stopped reissuing Proof of Registration documents to Afghans, but extended their expiration deadline many times, most recently through September 2018.[27] If the extensions are permitted finally to expire, all Afghans in Pakistan will be left without legal status or rights and become subject to deportation.[28] The Dominican Republic's withdrawal of status from residents of Haitian descent was also followed by coercive actions such as police raids, some of them violent.[29] And Ethiopian returnees from Saudi Arabia have reported being abused and held in inhumane conditions pending deportation.[30]

Consistent, predictable, and lawful return processes with due process, carried out humanely are far from the norm in practice today. International cooperation is needed to assist countries that unwillingly host large, mixed populations of refugees and unauthorized migrants in meeting recognized minimum standards and establishing good practices of return—which all host countries should be prepared to implement.

V. Reintegration Assistance

Reintegration following return is a process of adaptation on the part of both returnees and the communities in which they settle, and it involves economic, social, cultural, and human-security dimensions. It rarely unfolds in a straight line, more often involving periods of success followed by acute setbacks.[31] Under the right conditions, and with the proper support, returnees may play an important role in the development of the countries to which they return through their skills, entrepreneurship, and in some cases, resources and networks from abroad. However, if migrants, communities of return, and countries of origin are unprepared, they may not be able to take advantage of returns, and local infrastructure may suffer under the burden of increased demand.

Successful reintegration does not preclude the possibility of remigration but may encourage individuals who do decide to migrate again to do so through regular channels, such as labor-migration schemes designed to fill skills gaps in destination countries. Conversely, the absence of remigration does not always equate to successful reintegration, since many returnees may aspire to leave again but lack the means to do so.[32]

A. What Types of Reintegration Assistance Exist?

A relatively small proportion of migrants who are required to return to their countries of origin receive cash or in-kind assistance to help them reintegrate upon arriving, usually conditional upon their cooperation during the return process. The programs that deliver such assistance are known as assisted voluntary return (AVR) or assisted voluntary return and reintegration (AVRR) programs.[33] They are typically available for voluntary returnees, including those whose legal status in the host country has not yet expired but who agree to leave.[34] In this context, the line between voluntary and compulsory can be a fine one. While this brief focuses on migrants facing compulsory return, examining AVR programs can shed light on the elements of successful and sustainable reintegration.

Return assistance, at its most basic, pays for the returnees' transportation and reception in the country of origin, and perhaps the first few days of food and shelter. Reintegration assistance is more expansive and serves the dual purposes of encouraging migrants to return voluntarily and increasing the stability of return—both from the perspective of the returnees and the receiving communities.

Several countries engage the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to implement their AVRR programs (IOM does not participate in involuntary returns). IOM has nearly 40 years of experience with AVRR and in 2016 supported the returns of more than 98,000 persons, 83 percent of whom had been living in Europe.[35] The various programs implemented by IOM offer returnees individualized support through counselling on reintegration and/or business plans and either cash or in-kind support upon their arrival (sometimes both). One critical aspect of IOM AVRR programs is that every program is different, which has the advantage of adaptation for the local context but creates difficulties in coordination and evaluation.[36] In this implementer role, IOM provides different levels and kinds of support based on donor government decisions. In some instances, people returning to a single country or community from various destinations may receive different return packages (or none at all), which can generate resentment among those with lesser benefits.

One particularly robust program operated by the IOM is the European Reintegration Network (ERIN) Specific Action Program. Between June 2016 and May 2017, this program provided reintegration support for migrants returning to seven countries, having left one of 17 EU and European Free Trade Area Member States. This program goes beyond most AVRR offerings by providing individualized assistance to pay for initial rent costs, job placement and vocational training, and wage subsidies, as well as offering referrals for legal, psychosocial, and educational support services.[37]

Keenly aware that cash-based reintegration assistance may act as a "pull factor" for some potential migrants, some governments offer different forms of support for returnees from countries in close proximity. For instance, Germany does not provide return/reintegration assistance to nationals of Western Balkan countries though its Reintegration and Emigration Program for Asylum Seekers in Germany (REAG) or Government Assisted Repatriation Program (GARP).[38] Instead, it has a separate set of programs directed at this region that are structural in nature, promoting training and job placement, and that are accessible for all citizens, not just returnees.[39]

Destination-country assistance for reintegration is largely a European phenomenon; most returnees from the United States get little more from the U.S. government than a bus ticket and a snack when they reach their country of origin. Increasing returns from the United States[40] and the prospect of temporary protection programs coming to an end have put pressure on Mexico and Central American countries to begin building up their infrastructure to receive and reintegrate returning nationals.[41] Yet even the most robust reintegration efforts funded by European donors have failed to achieve broad or sustainable success across large returnee populations. Several key challenges have hindered this success, many of them related to inadequate funding.

B.   Challenge 1: Narrow Reach and Scope

Reintegration programs commonly aim to promote quick insertion into local labor markets. This may be done through training and network-building activities or help for returnees to establish their own businesses. The hope is that returnees quickly attain self-sufficiency and contribute to the society to which they have returned. However, only a fraction of migrants who return receive such support, meaning that these programs may help a few people to land on their feet while the vast majority are left to fend for

themselves. Given the wide divergence in design and implementation of programs, monitoring and evaluation has proven to be a formidable challenge. The resulting lack of hard evidence of what program elements work best, coupled with funding constraints, means that even the most efficient programs are rarely scaled up to reach a larger proportion of returnees.

Even in communities where reintegration support exists, returnees are frequently unaware of them. According to a 2015 survey of Central American migrants in the United States, only one in four knew of the existence of return and reintegration programs in their home country.[42] And in a 2013 study of returnees to Albania, more than one-quarter of respondents had no knowledge of the Migration Counters that had been set up to help returnees, and nearly 20 percent believed they did not exist.[43] Being able to find and access such resources can be especially important for migrants subject to compulsory return, some of whom may be reluctant to contact their old social or professional networks due to feelings of shame.

An additional factor that limits the impact of reintegration programs is that many focus narrowly on economic integration as the measure of success. There is a growing realization among practitioners that social and psychological factors may be equally important in determining the outcome of return, especially as these factors interact with gender norms.[44] Other social dynamics that can limit the success of reintegration, and thus ought to be addressed in a comprehensive approach to return, include intracommunal tensions that can give rise to feelings of vulnerability and the stigma attached to compulsory return as a failure.

Even within the narrow focus on labor-market outcomes, there may be limits to what training and employment supports can achieve. Given how weak the labor markets in many major countries of origin are, returnees receiving reintegration assistance often opt to develop their own businesses. In 2016, 84 percent of the beneficiaries of IOM-implemented AVRR programs who were given the opportunity to start a small business chose to do so, but 65 percent of

those said the IOM funding was insufficient.[45] To cope with this shortcoming, returnees may pool resources with relatives, friends, or others to put their business ideas into action.[46] Nonetheless, many of these small businesses fail: returnees may not have business experience, and many go into overcrowded sectors (such as small retail shops, taxi or rickshaw services, food carts, or hairdressing) where productivity is low and profit margins are razor thin. New approaches that encourage returnees to join or create producer cooperatives, for example, might be able to overcome some of the networking and critical-mass obstacles that face individual small entrepreneurs.

C.   Challenge 2: Failure to Address Structural Issues

While return and reintegration programs may provide much-needed individualized support to returnees, broader structural and governance issues may still limit their impact. These may be the same issues that motivated migrants to leave their home countries in the first place, and they often constrain development and livelihood opportunities for returnees and nonmigrants alike. This argues for a close alignment of return/reintegration assistance with broader development assistance and with the development priorities of origin countries.[47] IOM and other actors that implement reintegration programs are urging donors to fund community-level interventions and have called for increased coherence across AVRR programs.[48] The EU Trust Fund for Africa, which aims to counter some of the drivers of irregular migration, is likely to provide more funding for community-based approaches to reintegration. Even with increased funding, however, implementers will have to contend with a challenge common to such programs: it is difficult to pursue a community approach when returning migrants are dispersed across many locations, rather than clustering in a few communities.

Structural issues pose perhaps the broadest challenges when migrants return to countries in which the reasons for their departure have not changed significantly. Poverty and lack

of economic opportunity, violent conflict of a criminal or political nature, loss of access to land and property, corruption, and inadequate social services and physical infrastructure make it more difficult for communities to (re-)absorb returnees. Where this is the case, communities often need major assistance to build up the infrastructure, services, and governance systems that would enable them to accommodate an influx of returnees. Governments, however, may have other priorities, especially where armed conflict is ongoing.

The situation in Nangrahar, Afghanistan, illustrates well the multidimensional nature of these challenges: the arrival of more than half a million returnees in 2016 overwhelmed local infrastructure and distorted the local economy, to the detriment of all residents. In just one year, the number of high school students in the province doubled, day laborers increased six fold, the time required to commute across town quadrupled, and land values were driven up by 1,000 percent.[49] The acute population increase effectively drove up competition and clogged up infrastructure, thus decreasing living standards for returnees and long-term residents alike, breeding resentment against the new arrivals, and fostering more widespread aspirations to migrate.

Solving large, long-term problems such as infrastructure capacity may be beyond the scope of reintegration programs. However, strategic interventions can and should align reintegration projects with the needs of the entire community and, indeed, the larger region or country as a whole. Donor development agencies are increasingly attempting to do so. One example is the Jobs Create Prospects program run by the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) in northern Iraq, where development funding addresses critical infrastructure needs such as roads, schools, and water-systems repair. Between 2016 and 2017, the program provided short-term employment to more than 30,000 returnees and host-community members, whose earnings could then be invested in the local economy.[50] Not only does this type of program provide employment, it also helps create the

necessary conditions for the region to absorb and benefit from the contributions of returnees.

D.   Challenge 3: Short Timeframes

Some return assistance amounts to little more than minimal reception services—a phone call, a drink or snack, passage home—and perhaps a briefing on one's legal rights and how to access the public services available to all citizens. Reintegration requires longer-term support and considerably more resources, and many countries of either origin or destination are unable or unwilling to provide this level of assistance.

Even the major, donor-funded AVRR programs primarily consist of short-term reintegration packages that provide assistance for a brief initial period but stop short of supporting returnees for more than several months or a year. When the support package runs out, returnees may again face the conditions that spurred their original migration. Or they may find themselves unsure of where to turn for additional assistance.[51] A number of AVRR programs attempt to improve returnees' prospects for durable reintegration through business development, job training, and placement services, but participants have noted in evaluations that the biggest weakness of these programs is often the lack of follow-up that could improve longer-term outcomes.[52]

The Beautiful Kosovo Phase II Program, an infrastructure initiative operated by IOM, demonstrated that even broader initiatives aimed at community development may be successful in generating employment in the short-term, but leave beneficiaries without durable livelihood solutions.[53] This program employed one of the key principles to sustain success: allowing the local community to define and "own" the project. From 2013 to 2016, municipal employment centers recruited returnees and locals to work on infrastructure projects structured around municipal priorities. The program initially surpassed expectations by implementing 29 projects and creating 1,750 new jobs. But less than

80 of the jobs turned into long-term positions; the infrastructure projects were temporary, and once completed they did not spur any new work without international aid.[54]

Compared to individualized reintegration assistance and large short-term infrastructure projects, training programs—and particularly those linked to private-sector employment opportunities—may fare better in terms of providing durable solutions. However, without thorough evaluation, which almost all of these programs lack, it is difficult to know whether such initiatives can be sustained without continuing foreign aid. Development agencies have more experience than migration agencies with this type of program assessment, having had to make similar judgements about their own projects, and may be able to offer valuable expertise. This points to the importance of taking a whole-of-government approach to reintegration policy design and implementation.

E.   Promising Trends

In light of the limitations of scope, contextual barriers, and longevity that have plagued reintegration assistance programs, some have begun to test ways to provide more long-term, comprehensive support. The Returning to New Opportunities program run by the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), for example, offers counselling to people considering leaving Germany voluntarily. Personnel known as "reintegration scouts" put potential returnees in touch with reintegration projects supported by German development cooperation in their countries of origin, which may include vocational training, support for entrepreneurship, information about job opportunities, contacts with migration advice centers, and more. These services are available to local residents as well as returning migrants. For returnees, the advice centers provide an early point of contact with origin-country services and form a link between predeparture counselling in Germany and postarrival reintegration programs—not only the Returning to New Opportunities program

but also REAG and GARP, and the Start-Up Cash Plus program funded by the German Federal Ministry of the Interior. The centers operate in the Western Balkans, Tunisia, Morocco, Ghana, and Senegal. In recent years, BMZ has also scaled up investments in various development projects with links to reintegration programs in recognition of the potential synergies between the two.[55]

Engagement with the private sector also holds great potential for reintegration programming. In northern Iraq, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) partnered with truck manufacturer Scania, the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and education company Education First (EF) to establish the Swedish Academy for Training. The academy, which trains unemployed youth and returning migrants in mechanics, computing, and English, feeds directly into employment opportunities at Scania.[56] Judging from short-term evaluation results, this program seemed to prepare its beneficiaries for sustainable reintegration. Among the trainees, unemployment fell from 58 to 34 percent, and full-time employment increased from 8 to 30 percent. SIDA played a key role in financing the program and negotiating political obstacles to its implementation; these are areas where development actors have considerable experience and expertise, and it is unclear whether the endeavor could have succeeded without SIDA's leading role. Similar arrangements, in which development agencies guide reintegration efforts in cooperation with private companies, may prove effective in other countries where conditions are nearly ripe for private investment.

Some of the best examples of privately led sustainability can be found in projects that are generated and carried out collectively by migrants themselves. The members of the groups that develop such projects often share a common place of origin. Moroccan returnees from France established electrification projects to sustain small businesses and producer cooperatives in the rural region between the Atlas Mountain ranges. Turkish returnees from Germany established a workers' cooperative wallpaper factory,

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while migrants returning to Slovenia created a hydraulic equipment factory.[57] And in Mexico City, deportees from the United States formed Deportados Unidos en la Lucha in 2016—a community organization to receive new arrivals and offer them initial shelter and orientation to the city. With a loan from the municipal government, the organization has begun to produce "Deportados" brand clothing, which helps to pay for the organization's activities and creates livelihoods for some of its members.[58]

Although many discussions of reintegration programming focus on the actions of governments, these examples illustrate how vital nongovernmental actors can be to such efforts. Sustainable reintegration requires the cooperation, participation, and partnerships of a broad range of stakeholders, including migrants, civil-society organizations, employers, and local authorities, particularly in countries of origin.[59]

Civil-society programs are often better known by returning migrants than are government programs because they have well-established ties within migrant and origin communities. There are good examples of collaboration between government and civil society. For example, the Casa del Migrante in Guatemala provides reception services at a government center for adult migrants returned overland from Mexico as well as emergency shelter for those in need. Another civil-society organization in the country, Te Coonecta, helps returnees find and qualify for jobs in Guatemala City.[60] The broad networks of civil-society organizations and the trust they enjoy among migrants can help government programs reach more returnees and tailor services more effectively to their needs.

Unfortunately, data on how migrants experience return and on the viability of reintegration are remarkably thin. Few reintegration programs have been systematically evaluated or follow up with their participants for more than a short period. More rigorous evaluation is therefore necessary if program designers are to truly learn from past experience.

VI. International Cooperation on Returns

Consultation and cooperation between countries of destination and origin are more the exception than the rule when it comes to returns. This is of particular concern when destination countries prioritize the return of criminals. Although there seems to be some shift toward greater cooperation, for example in the 2016 EU-Afghan agreement, returns are still largely something that is done *to* countries of origin.[61] Cooperation is vital to successful return and reintegration, as it allows the countries and communities to which migrants return to plan for their arrival, preparing both infrastructure and residents for an influx of newcomers.

Traditionally, international cooperation on compulsory returns has been arranged through bilateral readmission agreements between countries of destination and origin. At the heart of such agreements is, typically, a tradeoff between something the destination country wants (for the origin country to accept and indeed facilitate the return of its nationals) and something the origin country wants (e.g., more visas for its nationals or more development assistance, ideally with fewer strings attached). Some bilateral readmission agreements work smoothly, but most are fraught with tension—reflecting the competing interests of the governments.

Governments of destination countries, particularly in the industrialized North, have come to view the return of unauthorized migrants as a central pillar of effective migration and asylum policy. As policymakers and politicians from these countries see it, unauthorized entry and stay make a mockery of the rule of law, undermine popular support for legal immigration and a generous asylum policy, and weaken public confidence in the general competence of government. For two years running, in 2015 and 2016, respondents to the well-regarded Eurobarometer surveys identified immigration

as the most important issue facing the European Union—coinciding with the peak of the Mediterranean migration crisis.[62] In 2017, it was second only to terrorism. Concern about uncontrolled immigration has been a major source of fuel for right-wing populism on both sides of the Atlantic, forcing parties from across the political spectrum to address the very real concerns associated with unauthorized migration.[63]

Policymakers and politicians from countries of origin, by contrast, are under both economic and political pressure *not* to facilitate the compulsory return of their nationals. In many such countries, migrant remittances keep many families from falling into poverty and are a crucial source of foreign exchange earnings (which help to support the balance of payments and sovereign credit ratings). Migration also serves as a safety valve for the discontent associated with low or uneven economic growth and high unemployment. People see it as the duty of governments to protect the interests of their citizens, and among residents of origin countries, facilitating return is commonly perceived as contrary to those interests. Even significant increases in official development assistance can rarely compensate origin-country officials for the economic and political risks of appearing to cooperate on returns. Meanwhile, countries of destination are reluctant to open wide legal migration channels in exchange for returns, lest that be seen as added competition for local jobs and resources.[64]

This destination-country insistence and origin-country reluctance can make for difficult and sometimes less than forthright discussions around return. Amid the renewed push by European officials to secure the return of irregular migrants, many have expressed deep frustration over noncompliance with the terms of painstakingly negotiated readmission agreements (see Box 1).

Box 1. The Norway-Ethiopia Readmission Agreement

Norway reached an agreement with Ethiopia in January 2012, by which Ethiopia promised to accept the return of nationals residing without authorization in Norway (the main group being some 700 rejected asylum seekers). It was to be "a closely coordinated, phased, dignified, and humane process … with respect primarily to voluntary return and the importance of safe and dignified return and sustainable reintegration." For its part, Ethiopia was obligated to issue travel documents for those designated for return. Norway made heavy financial commitments to the program, amounting to approximately USD 12,600 per returnee, divided between the Ethiopian government office overseeing returns, an up-front payment to returnees, and continuing integration assistance. But almost two years later, no migrants had been deported under the terms of the agreement and only 54 had returned voluntarily. These disappointing results were attributed to a lack of commitment on the part of the Ethiopian government. Additional rounds of negotiation took place in 2016, when Ethiopian authorities agreed to accept involuntary returns, and again in January 2018, when the Norwegian Migration and Integration Minister went to Ethiopia to seek ways to expedite return processes. With a change of government in Ethiopia in April 2018, it remains to be seen whether these steps will translate to increased returns.

Sources: Catherine Eide, "How to Understand the Outcomes of Migration Policy? A Study of the Return Agreement between Ethiopia and Norway" (working paper, University of Oxford, International Migration Institute, Oxford, October 2013), www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2013/wp-2013-106-eide_return_agreement_norway_ethiopia/; Norway Today, "800 Ethiopians May Be Forcibly Returned to Ethiopia," Norway Today, February 22, 2016, http://norwaytoday.info/news/ethiopia-opens-forcibly-returned-from-norway/; Samuel Getachew, "Norwegian Minister in Addis to Discuss Immigration," The Reporter Ethiopia, January 13, 2018, www.thereporterethiopia.com/article/norwegian-minister-addis-discuss-immigration.

Balancing Acts: Policy Frameworks for Migrant Return and Reintegration

A. Return and Reintegration Negotiations at the Global Level

Return migration has been a central point of discussions and negotiations at the global level as well since at least 2015, when migration was included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. By committing themselves to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the heart of the agenda, UN Member States pledged to work towards "safe, orderly, regular, and responsible migration" (Target 10.7). "Orderly" migration was understood to be migration that occurs legally, according to the rules established by receiving states, constrained by their obligations under international law. Return migration was not explicitly mentioned in the SDGs but was understood, by the major destination countries at least, as a central component of orderly migration.

The migration crises of 2015 provided the impetus for a summit meeting at the UN General Assembly in September 2016 on large movements of migrants and refugees. The wide-ranging New York Declaration adopted by consensus at the summit set out a series of commitments, one of which elaborated obligations surrounding return and readmission. It echoed SDG Target 10.7 in its approach to returns, urging countries to cooperate to ensure that migrants without authorization to remain could be returned to their countries of origin or nationality in a safe, orderly, and dignified manner; in accordance with international law, human rights law, and nonrefoulement; and with consideration for the best interests of the child and due process. It also noted that "cooperation on return and readmission forms an important element of international cooperation on migration."[65] Looking ahead, the New York Declaration articulated states' commitment to negotiate a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration.

The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Peter D. Sutherland, had taken up the issue in a report to the Secretary-General that was extensively discussed in advance of the summit. As he summed it up, "[r]eturn is an integral part of a functioning migration system, but the way it is currently handled is often detrimental to both migrants and relations among states. Whether people are returning voluntarily, either on their own initiative or with state assistance, or are being forcibly removed, their human rights must be respected. Reintegration programmes should be aligned with national and local development strategies and the needs of the communities to which migrants return."[66] Among his recommendations on how to ensure orderly migration (including returns), he called on states to "start a dialogue among countries of origin, transit, and destination on return practices and standards, with a view to establishing a common understanding and, ultimately, shared principles to govern cooperation on return and reintegration in all world regions."[67] He recommended that states use IOM, the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), and the regional consultative processes to conduct this dialogue.

These recommendations were taken up at the 10th meeting of the GFMD, in 2017, when return migration was on the agenda. One of the meeting's roundtables considered ways to enhance and realize the development potential of migrants who return to their countries voluntarily. While the session did not address the development consequences of compulsory return, it did suggest this subject be taken up in a future GFMD meeting. The background paper for the roundtable noted that "[a]n important nexus exists between the readiness of host countries to welcome migrants and the readiness of countries of origin to readmit forcibly returned migrants."[68] In this agenda item, the GFMD again showed its capacity to advance the discussion of sensitive topics of great concern to participating states without confrontation.

Meanwhile, negotiations for the Global Compact for Migration had begun, and it quickly became clear that making a strong statement on return, including the obligation of states to readmit their returning nationals, was a top priority—indeed, an absolutely necessary ingredient—for many destination countries. Nearly two years after the New York Declaration, 191 UN Member States agreed to the final draft of the Compact

in July 2018. In Objective 21 of the Compact, states agreed to "cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration." In addition to a full statement of states' commitment, the text contains a detailed menu of actions from which states agreed to draw in implementing Objective 21 (see Box 2).

Box 2.   Objective 21 of the Global Compact for Migration

Objective 21 of the Global Compact represents a productive compromise among the priorities of origin and destination countries on return, readmission, and reintegration. It begins with an elaboration of what it means to cooperate in each of these three policy areas:

> We commit to facilitate and cooperate for safe, human rights-based and dignified return and to guarantee due process, individual assessment and effective remedy, by upholding the prohibition of collective expulsion and of returning migrants when there is a real and foreseeable risk of death, torture, and other cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment or punishment, or other irreparable harm, in accordance with our obligations under international human rights law. We further commit to ensure that our nationals are duly received and readmitted, in full respect for the human right to return to one's own country and the obligation of states to readmit their own nationals. We also commit to create conducive conditions for personal safety, economic empowerment, inclusion and social cohesion in communities, in order to ensure that reintegration of migrants upon return to their countries of origin is sustainable.

The list of nine actions from which states will draw to realize their commitments are a combination of 1) procedural commitments, 2) guarantees of protection and humane treatment of migrants, and 3) programmatic interventions.

The first, procedural category includes:

- developing and implementing "cooperation frameworks and agreements" on safe and dignified return,

- cooperating to establish the identity of nationals and issue travel documents to them prior to return, and

- providing consular assistance to prepare migrants for return and to foster contacts between consular and other officials from origin and destination countries.

Actions in the second, rights-related category comprise:

- due process guarantees (including individual assessment and allowing all legal remedies to be exhausted before compulsory return) and assurance that return of unauthorized migrants will be safe and dignified,

- setting up or reinforcing national monitoring mechanisms to recommend ways to strengthen accountability for migrants' rights after they return,

- ensuring that the best interests of the child are determinative in return and readmission processes involving children, which involves issues such as family unity and the quality of reception, care, and integration arrangements for returned children, and

- guaranteeing that migrants who take part in voluntary return programs do so on the basis of free, prior, and informed consent.

Box 2.   Objective 21 of the Global Compact for Migration (cont.)

Finally, the actions in the third category consist of establishing programs to:

- provide migrants equal access to services, protections, and economic opportunities so they can reintegrate in and contribute to society, and

- address the needs of communities of return by making them a part of national and local development plans, budgets, and infrastructure needs assessments.

Objective 21 incorporates the priorities of both origin and destination countries—for fair and humane treatment of their nationals along with help in reintegration and for responsible readmission policies, respectively. Perhaps even more important than the details of the menu of actions is the symbolic importance of an agreement on this most contentious issue. The treatment of returns in the Global Compact for Migration demonstrates a will to cooperate across competing interests and to find common ground. All parties get something they want; none gets everything it wants. If states deliver on their commitments in this arena, all will be better off.

Source: UN General Assembly, "Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration: Intergovernmentally Negotiated and Agreed Outcome," July 13, 2018, www.un.org/pga/72/wp-content/uploads/sites/51/2018/07/180713_Agreed-Outcome_Global-Compact-for-Migration.pdf.

B.   A Broader View of National Interests

For increased international cooperation on compulsory as well as voluntary returns to flourish, policymakers must recognize that there are certain preconditions for successful return and sustainable reintegration. At the top of the list is a basic level of physical security. Without that, and a conducive socioeconomic environment, return and reintegration assistance is unlikely to produce durable settlement. A secure and stable environment includes access to resources, adequate infrastructure, health care and education, and institutions capable of enforcing respect for basic rights. These conditions are, of course, among the basic objectives of development assistance and pertain to the whole of society. They cannot be achieved for returnees in isolation. Violent conflict, whether political or criminal, affects the whole of society and all development prospects negatively. That reality renders the compulsory return of people to manifestly unsafe countries such as Afghanistan, El Salvador, and Somalia highly problematic.

Development cooperation can play an important role in returns, both voluntary and compulsory, by designing and operating sustainable reintegration programs—the focus of two of the recommended actions in Objective 21 of the Global Compact. These two points cover both the needs of the individual returnees and the needs of the communities to which they return. Objective 21 does not, however, address the needs of the origin country overall, or the potentially devastating effects of large-scale returns—destabilization of the national balance of payments following a loss of remittances; increased household poverty, with negative ripple effects across the economy; and a rise in political tensions. Such negative impacts have been well documented and should be taken seriously as policymakers debate the implementation of Objective 21 of the Global Compact (see Box 3).

Box 3.   High Stakes in Prospective Returns to Gambia

The case of Gambia offers an example of the potential dangers of returns if they are guided by a narrow policy framework and are implemented without effective reintegration support. In 2017, Gambia shook off, peacefully, 22 years of repressive authoritarian government and destructive economic policies. It entered a hopeful new political era. For the several years prior to the change, this country of only 2 million people had been the fifth largest source of unauthorized migrants crossing the Mediterranean in the hopes of reaching Europe.

With political repression ended, many receiving countries now expect Gambian migrants to return home, and some believe it is legitimate to require them to do so. But there has been no economic transformation, yet, to match the political change. Gambia has a 38 percent unemployment rate, and 22 percent of its GDP comes from migrants' remittances. Already, there is unrest among the mostly young, mostly male migrants who have returned voluntarily from Libya, where they experienced terrible conditions. They are frustrated by the lack of reintegration assistance and the inability of the new government to rapidly improve economic prospects in the country. And while the EU Trust Fund for Africa has set aside funds for transitional assistance, it has pledged only 11 million euros, to be disbursed over 4 years—a tiny sum relative to the needs for rebuilding the country.

Whose interest would be served by returning migrants to Gambia? Most migrants do not feel it is in their interests as individuals. The new Gambian government welcomes the return of its citizens, but clearly has a great deal to lose should significant numbers arrive before the economy has recovered. Destination-country policymakers may view the return of migrants to Gambia as a political opportunity, but their interests in the realms of development and security are unlikely to be served by contributing to the failure of a young democracy in a strategically important region.

Source: Franziska Zanker and Judith Altrogge, *The Politics of Migration in the Gambia* (Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany: Arnold-Bergstraesser-Institut, 2017), www.arnold-bergstraesser.de/sites/default/files/gambian_migration_politics_zankeraltrogge.pdf.

VII. Conclusions and Recommendations

Increasingly, return and reintegration programming is being funded out of development budgets rather than the budgets of migration authorities. As discussed above, a compelling case can be made for the alignment of return and reintegration assistance with development cooperation—but the two should not be equated. They operate in different policy frameworks that are not necessarily contradictory, but that do need to be consciously coordinated to ensure that the policy goals of one approach do not undermine the goals of the other. Development cooperation can, and in some instances does, play a part

in shaping reintegration assistance around the development needs of the countries and communities to which migrants return. Rigorous, continuous evaluation of reintegration programs should be carried out to allow policymakers to understand what program types and elements actually contributing to development goals.

Three additional changes can contribute to a more constructive dialogue between countries of origin and destination on the subject of returns:

- renewed commitment to reintegration assistance that is long term, broad in scope, and development oriented, developed in real cooperation with countries of origin;

- a broader view of national interests on the part of destination countries, in which return policy is based not only on rule-of-law and political considerations but also gives appropriate weight to development, humanitarian, and stability/security interests; and

- a general lowering of the temperature around compulsory returns of migrants who are unauthorized to enter or remain in a destination country. Politicians in both countries of origin and destination would do well to acknowledge each other's interests and communicate to their constituents a more nuanced picture of the complexities of return and reintegration policies.

Return migration involves a great many stakeholders at the individual, community, national, and regional levels—and now, with the Global Compact for Migration, at the international level. All involved have a stake in developing a system that operates in a framework of law (both domestic and international), is respectful of human rights, conducive to sustainable reintegration, politically feasible, and supportive of development and security. Achieving this will require a strong commitment to communication, cooperation, and compromise. It will also require flexibility. Return migration, especially compulsory returns, should operate in accordance with strict rules, flexibly applied, to make possible a system in which migration is not only safe, orderly, and regular but also humane.

All involved have a stake in developing a system that operates in a framework of law (both domestic and international), is respectful of human rights, conducive to sustainable reintegration, politically feasible, and supportive of development and security.

Endnotes

1 The UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees includes a cessation clause that can be invoked when the circumstances that created the need for international protection have changed fundamentally and durably. In some cases, however, refugees such as those from Afghanistan and Somalia have been expelled from or left host countries having found conditions there impossibly difficult.

2 The degree to which return is truly voluntary seems to be correlated with positive reintegration outcomes, according to the limited research available on postreturn outcomes. See, for example, Marieke van Houte and Tine Davids, "Moving Back or Moving Forward? Return Migration, Development, and Peace-Building," *New Diversities* 16, no. 2 (2014): 71–86.

3 Some policy discussions describe compulsory returns as "voluntary" if a person who is required to return does so before deportation.

4 United Nations, "Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration: Intergovernmentally Negotiated and Agreed Outcome," July 13, 2018, www.un.org/pga/72/wp-content/uploads/sites/51/2018/07/180713_Agreed-Outcome_Global-Compact-for-Migration.pdf.

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7 In some cases, return incentives are offered to asylum seekers who are not under a legal order to return but are considered unlikely to be granted asylum. For example, the Reintegration and Emigration Program for Asylum Seekers in Germany (REAG) and the Government Assisted Repatriation Program (GARP), administered by International Organization for Migration (IOM) on behalf of the German government, offers return assistance and start-up cash to several categories of protection beneficiaries in Germany, including asylum seekers who agree to withdraw their applications. See IOM, "REAG/GARP Program 2017, Project 'Nationwide Financial Assistance to Voluntary Returnees'" (fact sheet, IOM, Geneva, July 2017), www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/Downloads/Infothek/Rueckkehr/reaggarp-informationsblatt-englisch.pdf?__blob=publicationFile; German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), "Notes on the Start-Up Cash Plus Form 'Waiver and Declaration of Withdrawal of Asylum Application'" (question and answer document, BAMF, Nuremberg, n.d.), www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/EN/Downloads/Infothek/Rueckkehr/starthilfeplus-verzichtserklaerung-erlauterungen.pdf?__blob=publicationFile.

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9 Refoulement is the forcible return of refugees or asylum seekers to a country in which they may face persecution.

10 Additional data may come from agencies that assist people who are compelled to return.

11 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), *Fiscal Year 2017 ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations Report* (Washington, DC: ICE, 2017), www.ice.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Report/2017/iceEndOfYearFY2017.pdf.

12 European Commission, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, "Return and Readmission," updated April 19, 2018, https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/irregular-migration-return-policy/return-readmission_en.

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31 The W Curve Model endorsed by IOM is an example of a return trajectory with high and low points from predeparture through roughly a year after return. See Samuel Hall and IOM, *Setting Standards for an Integrated Approach to Reintegration: Summary Report* (Geneva: IOM, 2017), www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our_work/DMM/AVRR/IOM_SAMUEL_HALL_MEASURE_REPORT%202017.pdf.

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33 Some countries have stopped using the term "voluntary" to describe what are, in fact, mostly compulsory returns, and simply refer to "assisted returns."

34 For instance, Germany's REAG/GARP program, administered by IOM, is available for asylum seekers whose applications have not already been rejected, registered refugees, other foreigners granted the right to remain on German territory for humanitarian or political reasons, and victims of trafficking and/or forced prostitution. See IOM, "REAG/GARP Program 2017."

35 IOM, *Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration: 2016 Key Highlights* (Geneva: IOM, 2017), 20, www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our_work/DMM/AVRR/AVRR-2016-Key-Highlights.pdf.

36 Samuel Hall and IOM, *Setting Standards for an Integrated Approach to Reintegration*.

37 European Reintegration Network (ERIN), "ERIN Specific Action Program: Afghanistan" (briefing note, ERIN, n.d.), https://milo.bamf.de/milop/livelink.exe/fetch/2000/13826954/13826960/13826985/16618667/ERIN_-_Afghanistan_-_Briefing_Notes%2C_english.pdf?nodeid=18400453&vernum=-2. This program was in operation from June 2014 to May 2017.

38 IOM, "REAG/GARP Program 2017."

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43 Gjergji Filipi, Emira Galanxhi, Majlinda Nesturi, and Teuta Grazhdani, *Return Migration and Reintegration in Albania 2013* (Tirana: Republic of Albania Institute of Statistics and IOM, 2014), 51, www.albania.iom.int/publications/reports/Return%20Migration%20and%20Reintegration%20in%20Albania%202013.pdf.

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45 IOM, *Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration*, 53.

46 ERIN, "ERIN Specific Action Program: Afghanistan," 6.

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The Migration Policy Institute (MPI) is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit think tank dedicated to the study of the movement of people worldwide. The Institute provides analysis, development, and evaluation of migration and refugee policies at the local, national, and international levels. It aims to meet the rising demand for pragmatic responses to the challenges and opportunities that migration presents in an ever more integrated world.

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