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Media, migration and displacement in the Middle East and North Africa

An explorative study



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01 Introduction

MOROCCO

TUNISIA

LEBANON

ALGERIA

LIBYA

JORDAN



How is daily life in refugee camps covered in the media?

Photos of refugees tapping a message on their smartphones or taking a selfie following their long, treacherous journeys have long been making the rounds on social media. Often these images unleash comments that either mock or criticize refugees. This reveals two major facts surrounding the global refugee situation. It reflects the deep-seated stereotypes of what refugees should look like and a misunderstanding of why they undertook the journey in the first place. It also makes clear that the general public does not grasp the critical role that smartphones play for people on the run. For a refugee or migrant, a smartphone is as important as food, shelter or a lifejacket.

When digging a little bit deeper, it quickly becomes clear that smartphones provide vital services. They offer access to different online platforms that facilitate integration and foster dialogue with host communities. Phones deliver relevant news and information that can reach millions via social media platforms. Local WhatsApp groups inform migrants about their rights and duties and can play a fundamental role in their daily lives. These examples reveal the growing need to become more familiar with 21st-century migrants and refugees across the Middle East and North Africa and to understand their use of digital media as well as the news and information they rely on to stay informed.

When looking into these topics, a few questions arise: Who has access to reliable information and how do they access it? How best can humanitarian actors and media development practitioners communicate with their target communities? What are the most efficient tools and strategies?

To answer these and other questions on the topic, DW Akademie commissioned field studies in the following six Middle Eastern and Northern African countries in 2019/20: Lebanon, Jordan, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. The initiative to carry out these studies stems from DW Akademie's long-standing experience in the MENA region and the identified need to understand the singularities regarding the communication challenges posed by migration and displacement.

The following research questions underpinned the study:

1. How does the national media represent the topics of migration and displacement? Are the voices of migrants and refugees heard in mainstream media?
2. What are the communication tools and strategies of important stakeholders in the field of migration and displacement in each of the six countries?
3. How do migrants and refugees access information and how do they communicate within their communities and the host societies?
4. Are migrant and refugee communities able to access information necessary to making informed decisions? What information do they seek?
5. What are the existing media development initiatives in each country?

Methodology

For this study, DW Akademie cooperated with local researchers located in each of the six countries working individually or in teams. Their various profiles – among them were researchers, journalists and development practitioners – meant that we were able to include a variety of perspectives in our findings. Inevitably, it also led to research reports that are varied in format, style and thematic focus. This allowed us to address the individual circumstances in each country. To ensure cohesion, DW Akademie developed methodological guidelines for the studies in coordination with the research teams, including interview questions and instructions for the focus group discussions. After prior desk research into the study's topic, we developed clear research questions based on the interests and needs of media development practitioners working in the field. For each of the six countries, researchers and DW Akademie determined the most important target groups to include in the research (refugee and/or migrant communities) and the most relevant stakeholders to be interviewed. After conducting expert interviews with a variety of stakeholders – development practitioners, officials, community representatives, media professionals and academics – the research teams then organized focus group discussions with members of the target groups. Due to the relatively short research period, large geographical region and varied target groups, the study remained explorative.

Several of the researchers encountered considerable challenges when doing the interviews in the field: In Lebanon, an uprising was unfolding coupled with a deep economic crisis; Libya faced a renewed period of fighting and intense conflict; Algeria was marked by a popular movement demanding political reforms. In these cases, the safety of the research teams, the interviewed stakeholders and focus-group participants had to take precedent over strict methodological outlines.

Mixed Migration in the Middle East and North Africa

The Middle East and North Africa, a region with a long history of migration, is today shaped by complex and mixed migration patterns. Forced migration and internal displacements are the result of ongoing and protracted conflicts in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Libya among others. To date, more than 5.5 million Syrian refugees have been displaced and are now hosted across the

region, mostly in neighboring countries such as Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. Due to their geographic proximity to Europe, countries in North Africa play a triple role in the process of migration and escape: countries of destination – mainly for persons coming from Sub-Saharan countries – of transit and of emigration. The first pattern might be related to the EU strategy of border externalization, a topic not addressed in this study. It is worth mentioning that this region hosts the two countries with the highest ratio of refugees per capita in the world: Lebanon followed by Jordan.

Based on the research findings, we can divide the six countries into three different groups with regards to national policies towards migrants and refugees. First, there are the countries with a clear national strategy protecting migrant and refugee rights. The countries belonging to this group are Morocco and Algeria. This positive analysis must be taken with a pinch of salt since a deep gap has been reported between what is written in the national strategies and what is done in practice. Second, there are countries with a clear national strategy of not protecting migrant and refugee rights. This is the case for Lebanon and for Jordan with the exception of registered Syrian refugees. Third, there are countries without any national strategy towards migrants and refugees. Libya and Tunisia belong to this group.

Media, migration and displacement

Regarding media coverage of migrants and refugees, all country reports pointed out the same observation: media coverage of migrants and refugees is extremely negative, sensationalist, judgmental and subjective. Very often their only focus is on irregular migration. The language used is frequently described as racist and they feature both a lack of journalistic ethics and any basic understanding of the topic. Nevertheless, some interviewees in Jordan stated that hate speech has decreased and that the awareness of refugee rights has improved. Some interviewees in Jordan and Libya mentioned smaller community radio stations producing more appropriate and fact-based content.

In every country assessed, social media plays a vital role for migrants and refugees, mainly WhatsApp and Facebook. However, their importance decreases in the case of migrants and refugees who are staying in a transit country and preparing to continue their journey to their country of destination. In this case, it was unanimously asserted that face-to-face is the most important means of communication. Hotlines and SMS services provided by UNCHR and IOM, the two main international players for refugees and migrants, were also mentioned. Some interviewees did mention a lack of confidence in the information distributed through these channels as well as a fear of sharing their telephone number in order to access them. In almost all cases, the interviewees added face-to-face communication to help confirm information obtained from digital sources.

Data security

Protection of personal data is pivotal for persons migrating or fleeing a country. Once again, the picture drawn of this topic on the ground is startling. We can differentiate two main groups. The first group is composed of Morocco and Tunisia which both have legal framework for the protection for personal data. Whether or not they are realistically applied is another question. The second group is composed of Algeria, Libya, Jordan and Lebanon which do not have any legal instrument targeting the protection of migrants' and refugees' personal data. Regular leaks, as well as the fear being persecuted by security forces, have been reported. Interviewees added that these leaks have also occurred within international organizations like UNCHR.

Heike Thee, Project Manager, Deutsche Welle Akademie

02 Lebanon



Bekaa Valley

LEBANON

Beirut



Young journalists in Lebanon's refugee camps report for the online community platform Campji

Summary Lebanon

This summary is based on the study “Media, Migration and Refuge in the Middle East and North Africa: An explorative study for DW Akademie, Lebanon” conducted by researcher **Firas Talhouk** between December 2019 and March 2020.

Introduction

In Lebanon, the two main refugee communities are Palestinians and Syrians. Lebanon has the highest ratio of refugees per capita in the world. The Lebanese residency policy is very restrictive, making obtaining or even maintaining legal status for refugees very difficult. This exposes migrants and refugees to a high risk of exploitation and restricts their access to basic services.

Lebanon is also a destination country for migrant workers who are subject to the Kafala (sponsorship) system. Migrant domestic workers seeking justice often face legal obstacles and inadequate investigations. Finally, the restrictive visa system often leads to forced deportation or even imprisonment.

Key conclusions

Migrants and refugees are not informed about their rights and obligations. Though UNHCR and its communication channels are some of the main sources of information for refugee and migrant communities, many have expressed resentment towards UNHCR referring to their “inhumane” treatment. Accordingly, they put more trust into information they get from a member of their own communities.

Interviewees pointed out that they would prefer to actively use communication channels in order to transmit their needs rather than passively receiving information through them.

Lebanese media outlets mainly deliver only judgemental and subjective reports on refugees and migrants in Lebanon. Especially during the Syrian refugee crisis, Lebanese television stations used racist language when addressing Syrian refugees.

The most common source of information mentioned by the interviewees was face-to-face conversation.

I don't like using my phone a lot. I have plenty of chores to do around the camp and the tent. I only have time to listen to representatives of organizations when they visit us or ask us to visit them at their centers [...].

Awatef, Syrian refugee

The second source of information was social media platforms, mainly WhatsApp and Facebook. The main access point to these apps were personal smartphones.

My camp is far away from any organization. I can't often join meetings away from my camp and representatives of organizations don't reach us because we are so far away. But WhatsApp and Facebook reach us. We have WiFi in the camp. Each five tents pay a shared fee for one WiFi modem. This way everyone has internet. I get information from other reliable groups on WhatsApp, like the group that asked me to join this focus group. I also go on many Facebook pages. The UNHCR Facebook page is very useful to know when they are going to give us winter aid.

Aa'la, Syrian refugee and head of camp

Migrant domestic workers mentioned TV as their main source of information since they are often denied access to the internet.

Interviews showed that refugees and migrants in Lebanon generally do not have any knowledge about data security. As a result, the phone numbers of migrants and refugees are often sold in bulk to scammers who then try to trick those who are desperately trying to leave the country.

Recommendations

According to researcher Firas Talhouk, those interviewed were often uninformed about their rights and obligations as a refugee or migrant. A fundamental improvement of communication regarding these topics should be the priority for this target group. Interviewees preferred to claim ownership when it comes to such communication and expressed a desire to become active players and to receive training in order to do so. In addition, the interviewees asked for alternative, interactive ways of communication that boost their personal involvement.

Refugees and migrants alike expressed much more confidence in a person from their own community than a representative of a responsible organisation. Therefore, the empowerment of community members to assume the role of bridge-builder between persons belonging to their community and external players and institutions should be one of the main priorities. A general resentment towards official organizations like UNHCR was expressed. A more predominant role for community members or other intermediaries could be a way to improve the relationship with official organizations.

03 Jordan

● Mafrq

◎ Amman

JORDAN



Zaatari refugee camp close to Jordan's northern border with Syria

Summary Jordan

This summary is based on the study “Media, Migration and Refuge in the Middle East and North Africa: An explorative study for DW Akademie, Jordan” conducted by researcher **Philip Madanat** between December 2019 and March 2020.

Introduction

Jordan is a country with a long history of receiving persons fleeing regional conflicts starting with Palestinians in 1948, Iraqis in 1990 and 2003 and Syrians starting in 2011. Today, Jordan is the world's second country in terms of refugees per capita after Lebanon. Regarding information flow and access to relief services, refugee camps are the best places to stay informed as long as they are not located in a rural area.

Many refugees desire to bring family members to Jordan. Those who have family members living in third countries, refugees often wish to move there. Except for registered Syrians, refugees in Jordan often struggle to guarantee their right to residence and access to healthcare.

The lack of reliable information, language barriers and discrimination are the main obstacles they must overcome upon their arrival leading to high levels of social exclusion. Once families are registered, they have the right to send their children to school. However, in certain cases, parents do not send their children to school because they fear further discrimination. Refugees are sometimes subject to expulsion to their home country for security reasons. Those who choose to return to Syria are given a grace period to go back to Jordan.

Key findings

Social exclusion and lack of reliable media access are major issues for all refugees in Jordan. The main hindrance for social inclusion is the lack of a work permit without which refugees face rejection or exploitative terms of employment.

Regarding traditional media, television, especially pan-Arab stations and some Syrian opposition channels but also national and international news, is frequently watched especially when they report on Syrian refugees. According to interviewees, Syrian refugees are under-represented in coverage of their issues. The programs of a few community-based radio stations constitute exceptions to this observation.

Social media, especially Facebook (Messenger) and WhatsApp, is cited as an important source for local news and communication. This includes the communication with community members as well as communication with refugee organization like UNHCR. In addition, SMS services and hotlines are frequently

provided. Some refugees hesitate to share their telephone number because of bad experience with security authorities. UNHCR also offers face-to-face communication in its community centres. Refugees sometimes tend to visit personally to verify information. Among the international organizations, UNCHR has the best reputation. But when it comes to data security, some interviewees reported occasional leaks.

Media coverage of refugee issues has been decreasing and often fluctuates. Representatives of media and international organizations claimed that hate speech is decreasing and awareness about the refugee rights is improving. Despite this, some interviewees highlighted that they would not raise their voice as a refugee because they do not have the feeling that doing so would improve their situation and because they would fear to be expelled by the government.

One of the problems facing Syrian migrants has been the lack of access to reliable and useful information. Most Syrian refugees have no idea where to go and who to talk to in order to resolve basic humanitarian issues.

Daoud Kuttab, Director of Community Media Network

Recommendations

Researcher Philip Madanat suggests that media development projects be adapted for refugees according to their specific needs: housing (in or outside a refugee camp), nationality, and political and social difficulties on the ground. Projects could be developed to support online community radio stations, build up mobile application development and introduce data security training. Madanat underlines the importance of including peace building and conflict resolution into media projects designed for refugees who plan to resettle or return to their countries.

Madanat points out that refugees need user-friendly digital applications that facilitate information access and a greater awareness of their rights and responsibilities, work opportunities, training and networking options. He believes that public-private sector partnerships can be effective when dealing with homogeneous groups (i.e., university students). In general, Madanat appeals for designing a "plan-B" in consultation with participants involved in project activities so as to react more easily to context changes that may occur.

04

Libya

● Tripoli

LIBYA



Summary Libya

This summary is based on the study “Media, Migration and Refuge in the Middle East and North Africa: An explorative study for DW Akademie, Libya” conducted by the researchers **Zuhair Abusrewil** and **Moutaz Ali** between December 2019 and February 2020.

Introduction

Once the gateway to Africa, Libya is now a gateway to Europe. This paradigm shift has taken place during the power vacuum that followed the end of the reign of Muammar Gaddafi. Refugees coming from Egypt, Sudan, Niger and Chad now use Libya as a transit country to Europe. In addition, resident migrants started to leave Libya because of its unstable economic situation and governmental corruption regarding the issuing residency and work permits.

Through all political developments since the revolution, the issue of immigration has been abandoned and priority given to internal conflicts as well as the financial and economic crisis. The leadership gap between the Gadhafi regime and the new government is the main reason for the deterioration of all facilities aimed at migrants and refugees. This also explains why foreign organizations play the main role in protecting, handling and informing migrants and refugees in Libya.

Key findings

2018 was marked by a very high emigration and the escalation of clashes around Tripoli. This caused the fall of the Libyan dinar and consequently more migrants left the country for Europe or returned to their home countries. As migrants had a considerable high share in the labor force, their leaving caused a price inflation of about 300%.

International organizations oversee almost everything related to the issue of immigration. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is considered one of the most effective organizations, followed by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Despite their important roles, they face some criticism from local stakeholders. The lack of comprehensive information concerning migrant and refugee rights is the main reason for this.

Except for a couple of smaller media outlets, local media in Libya does not pay much attention to migrant and refugee issues. Libyan Cloud News Agency (LCNA) is one of the exceptions as it has set up a specialized section on migration issues in the country.

Sources of information vary according to individual parameters like economic status, nationality and educational background. Location and living situation also affects access to information

as media infrastructure and means of communication vary across the country.

All along the way, we depend highly on communicating with relatives and friends either by phone or Facebook to ask about the situations in the next point of the trip, including safety and how to live.

Muna, 30 years old, female refugee from Somalia

Most of the key stakeholders in the field of forced migration said that the best way to communicate with the migrant and refugee community is on a face-to-face basis and the second-best way is through social media, mainly Facebook Messenger.

Many migrants and refugees are active on social media platforms. Although international organizations do not have special training on data security, they always request migrants' consent before using videos, photos and their stories and often decide not to use people's information in external media products.

Recommendations

Based on the research done for this study, Zuhair Abusrewil and Moutaz Ali recommend the following projects:

Multilingual coffeeshops: This recommendation is based on the success of similar projects in Egypt. It offers migrants and refugees the chance to get in touch with each other and with members of the host community. The coffeeshop seems ideal because of its intimate, casual atmosphere.

Cross-border journalistic projects: These should be multilingual and gather journalists from different countries affected by migration. This would allow to tackle same challenges from different angles. Concrete actions that could emerge from them could be:

- Radio broadcasts in languages other than Arabic and English
- Multilingual informational accounts on social media platforms
- Smartphone apps that provide information in various languages
- Short SMS messages sent by communications companies to phones entering Libyan territory to link migrants and refugees with available resources
- Street signs showing the contact details of international organizations
- Awareness-raising among local media outlets about the challenges migrants and refugees face
- Training for local journalists as well as talented migrants and refugees to create multilingual media content concerning migration issues

05
Tunisia

© Tunis

● Sfax

TUNISIA



Summary Tunisia

This summary is based on the study “Media, Migration and Refuge in the Middle East and North Africa: An explorative study for DW Akademie, Tunisia” conducted by researcher **Ahmed Rafrafi** between December 2019 and March 2020.

Introduction

Tunisia has a long history as a host country for migrants and refugees. Nowadays, it is slowly moving from a transit country for refugees and migrants heading towards Europe to a country of destination. This paradigm shift is based on employment possibilities, high-quality public education and comparably lower costs of living. Tunisia has also adopted visa exemptions for a growing number of different nationalities. Nevertheless, when it comes to younger migrants, Tunisia remains a transit country to Europe. In addition to this, Tunisia hosts about one million Libyans who are not officially classified as migrants (since 2014).

According to the Tunisian National Statistical Institute, in 2018 about 65,000 migrants were officially registered mainly from Ivory Coast, Mali, Senegal and Nigeria. The management of migrants and refugees coming to Tunisia is for the most part handled by international institutions such as UNHCR or IOM. Simultaneously, clear public policies from state institutions dealing with refugees and migrants do not exist.

Key findings

There are two major types of migrants and refugees to Tunisia: The first type sees post-revolutionary Tunisia as a country of high and unlimited freedom, a heaven for escaping dictatorships and a new hope for many Africans. The second type, which constitutes the majority, considers Tunisia an essential step before resorting to Europe.

Jamila Ksiksi, Member of Tunisia’s Parliament and activist for refugee and migrant rights

The different types of migrants and refugees in Tunisia and their varying intentions makes it almost impossible to gather an exact number. IOM immigration consultant Touré Blamassi summarized three main ways of entry to Tunisia: flights, entrance from Libya after crossing other African countries and the entry by force of those persons caught by Tunisian authorities when they attempt to leave for Europe from Libyan territories. The easiest entrance – by plane – does not mean that remaining in Tunisia is easy as well.

Once they arrive at Carthage Airport, they are taken to the villas of wealthy families, where they serve as domestic workers. The employer confiscates these migrants' passports to ensure that they do not escape and forces them to work unpaid for months because traffickers receive their first six months' wages in advance without telling the concerned person. At that point, the trafficker's phone number stops working and the victim has no recourse.

Christina, 28-year-old Ivorian

When it comes to media coverage of migrant and refugee issues, a confusion of concepts regarding their different statuses can be observed. Media also does not play a role in putting pressure on political decisionmakers to preserve the dignity of migrants and refugees in Tunisia. In addition, dialogue platforms have not been explored as a way to assist the effective settling of migrants. These observations may explain the shallow, occasional media coverage of refugee and migrant issues on the one hand and biased and sensationalist reporting styles on the other hand.

Refugees and migrants entering Tunisia mainly receive information about the journey and migration situation through other refugees and migrants by direct contact or phone calls. Social media is also used. According to the Constitution, all persons staying in Tunisia benefit from the protection of personal data. Whether the culture of protecting personal data is also practiced is another question.

Recommendations

According to the researcher Ahmed Rafrafi, migrants’ and refugees’ access to reliable information could be improved by supporting international organizations and civil society associations, their initiatives and local partnerships. Media representatives need training in order to report on migrants and refugees in an appropriate, professional way. Strengthening and building up networks of media professionals that work on informing public opinion about migrant and refugee issues could be an efficient way to diminish stereotypes and reduce fake news. Awareness campaigns could sensitize the broader Tunisian society on the issue of refugees and migration, especially exploitation and human rights violations. Data security and confidentiality training of entities handling migration and refugee issues in Tunisia is also seen as potentially beneficial.

06 Algeria

● Oran

◎ Algiers

● Tindouf

ALGERIA



Smartphones play a critical role in the lives of refugees and migrants

Summary Algeria

This summary is based on the study “Réfugiés, migrations et médias en Algérie. Rapport de situation” (Media, Migration and Refuge in the Middle East and North Africa: An explorative study for DW Akademie, Algeria) conducted by researcher **Nawel Guellal** between January and March 2020.

Introduction

After the popular “Hirak” uprising and the multiplication of tensions with neighboring countries threatening national security, Algerian politics has been reduced to an approach that puts security on the top of its agenda. Simultaneously, migration flows to Algeria remain high even though official interdiction to publish exact figures masks its details.

Key findings

For its numerous migrants and refugees, Algeria has gradually shifted from a transit country to a country of destination. This is particularly true for Sub-Saharan migrants who mainly come from West and Central Africa. According to the International Organization for Migrants (IOM), about 500 irregular migrants enter Algeria each day. Their smartphones are their main source of information and Facebook and WhatsApp their first choice for communication. Public Algerian media discourse about migrants and refugees is extremely negative. All too often they are called criminals or delinquents. In May 2018, Algerian activists organized a petition stating “We are all migrants”. It was supported by about 80 national and international civil society organizations. Its main goal was to denounce the racist declarations of former Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia regarding Sub-Saharan migrants.

There is no public or private structure in Algeria protecting migrants’ and refugees’ data.

We are doing nothing regarding communication; they contact us directly. The question is much too sensitive. We are talking here about irregular migrants. We cannot go out seeking for them, they come to see us. After that, we hang up different information here in our office. This is the maximum we do. We are quite well known among migrant communities.

Père Jan, NGO “Rencontre et développement [Encounter and development], Alger

Nevertheless, Algeria has ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families in 2004. However, the decision sought to strengthen rights of the Algerian diaspora and not the rights of foreigners staying in Algeria.

Recommendations

According to researcher Nawel Guellal, cooperation with governmental institutions would be advantageous in order to make use of their figures and research. Such a cooperation would also improve the work of the NGOs that are working primarily with migrants and refugees. This could lead to the needs of migrants and refugees in Algeria being analyzed much more precisely and the development of tools to observe the flow of migrants. Finally, the publication of official figures could help increase the number of media reports based on facts instead of resentment.

The conduction of workshops and specified trainings for media representatives and NGOs could also raise the number of fact-based reports on refugees and migrants and act as a platform for transmitting journalistic know-how. Trained journalists would then be able to treat the topic of migrants and refugees in a way that counterbalances hate speech, questions official political discourse and allows objective reporting.

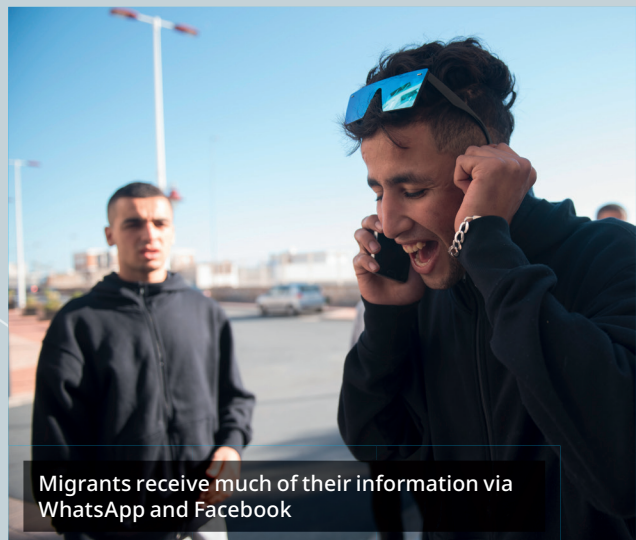
There are Facebook groups where the propositions of smugglers offering their services without mentioning their costs are published. Potential migrants could be protected from fraud if those smugglers were denounced. The production of podcasts telling anonymized stories of refugee experiences could be another communication channel to share stories and offer key insights to potential migrants.

All activities for migrants and refugees in Algeria should be organized in cooperation with NGOs and local associations working on the ground. Because of the different institutional challenges, it is also important to build up the capacities of all actors involved in media projects targeting migrant and refugee communities. This could be realized with trainings on the production of related media content. Other topics for their trainings could be how to find local partners or how to get funds and necessary resources in order to fulfill their missions.

07 Morocco

● Rabat
● Casablanca

MOROCCO



Migrants receive much of their information via WhatsApp and Facebook

Summary Morocco

This summary is based on the study "l'Etude sur le refuge, la migration et les médias. Maroc (Media, Migration and Refuge in the Middle East and North Africa: An explorative study for DW Akademie, Morocco) conducted by researcher and journalist **Salaheddine Lemaizi** in January and February 2020.

Introduction

Morocco's geographic position as a European border country in the heart of the migratory route of the western Mediterranean explains its triple role in the process migration. Morocco is a transit country, mainly for persons whose immigration status has not yet been confirmed, an emigration country and a destination country for labor migration. In addition to this, Morocco has partnered with the European Union as part of its border externalization program meaning that Morocco now plays the role of a buffer state.

Key findings

Irregular migration remains the focus of politics and media attention even though Morocco plays a much more diversified role in the migration and refuge process. In 2014, Morocco established the National Strategy for Immigration and Asylum. It aims for "social, economic and cultural integration of migration populations with confirmed immigration status." Despite this strategy, there has been a return to treating migration in terms of national security.

Migrants and refugees are invisible in Moroccan media. This could be because of animosity towards migrants or because of language barriers and a lack of interest for migratory issues.

Migrants have little access to information about their migratory routes and the risks related to irregular migration.

The person who organized my journey to Morocco told me that traveling to Spain would be quite easy. Once I arrived in Morocco, I felt betrayed because of the lack of information. I am now stuck in Morocco, penniless.

Migrant woman, Rabat

Migrants receive much of their information via WhatsApp and Facebook since information spread by migrant NGOs is poor and not well organized. Migrants and refugees are in high need of diversified communication. On the other hand, priority is given to information on basic services as well as the promotion of multi-cultural exchange.

We do not manage yet to deliver precise information on certain topics important for the community. We must deal with the multiplication of channels that jams up the main messages.

Associative actor for the migrant community, Rabat

The issue of data privacy is relatively new in Morocco. Nevertheless, Morocco has a National Control Commission for the Protection of Personal Data (CNDP) but migrants and refugees are frequently unfamiliar with their data protection rights.

Migrants don't really have much choice and have to give their private data to associations or international organizations, especially if they need access to certain basic services.

Male migrant, Rabat

Recommendations

The recommendations made by researcher Salaheddine Lemaizi are based on a correction to the current approach. Instead of asking the media on the spot to deliver information about migrants and refugees, it would be much more efficient to reinforce the communication capacities of migrant and refugee organizations. In this way, Moroccan media and public opinion can more easily be accessed to end the isolation of migrants and refugees from the media and to make civil society organizations gain the necessary technical equipment allowing them to communicate without intermediates. This approach does not signify that traditional media should be neglected but that cooperation with them should be intensified. Consequently, recommendations can be split into three main workstreams. The first consists of strengthening the communication capacities of migrant and refugee organizations. The second one should be the training of journalists working for traditional media on the topic migration and refugee issues. The third aims to reinforce the support for high quality productions of journalists working on this topic. This support should include trainings tailored according to the specific needs around covering migrants and refugee issues as well as assigning financial funds or excellence awards for journalists working on this topic. The main goal of all of these measures should be to tackle existing stereotypes and to promote cultural diversity.

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