

## **Migrants, Displaced People, and Refugees**

- Migrants, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees face particular risks, as they may be confined to camps and settlements, or living in urban areas with overcrowding, poor sanitation, and overstretched or inaccessible health services. Those confined in immigration detention centres and other places where migrants and refugees are deprived of their liberty are particularly at risk.
- Migrants and refugees often face obstacles in accessing health care, including language and cultural barriers, costs, lack of access to information, discrimination and xenophobia. Migrants in an irregular situation can be unable or unwilling to access health care or provide information on their health status because they fear or risk detention, deportation or penalties as a result of their immigration status.
- States should take specific actions to include migrants, IDPs and refugees in national COVID-19 prevention and response. This should include ensuring equal access to information, testing, and health care for all migrants, IDPs and refugees, regardless of their status, as well as firewalls to separate immigration enforcement activities from the ability of migrants and refugees to access health, food distribution, and other essential services.
- International support is urgently needed to help host countries step up services – for migrants, IDPs, refugees and for local communities – and to include them, in national prevention and response arrangements. Failure to do so will endanger the health of all – and risk heightening hostility and stigma. Specific steps should also be taken to counter hostility and xenophobia directed at migrants, IDPs or refugees.
- It is also vital that any tightening of border controls, travel restrictions or limitations on freedom of movement do not prevent people who may be fleeing from war or persecution, or who may otherwise be entitled to protection under human rights law, from accessing safety and protection. States should consider releasing migrants from immigration detention and temporarily suspending forced returns as a way to protect migrants, migration staff, and society as a whole.
- View [COVID-19 and the Human Rights of Migrants: Guidance \(PDF\)](#)