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A T T H E K O Ç U N I V E R S I T Y**

M i R e K o c R e s e a r c h P r o j e c t s 2 0 0 5 - 2 0 0 6

***A Survey on African Migrants and Asylum Seekers in
Istanbul***

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Abstract

In the past 25 years, several thousand people from various African countries have legally or illegally entered Turkey, usually en route to Western Europe either as asylum seekers or economic migrants. But this phenomenon has largely escaped scholarly attention save some journalistic accounts. The purpose of this project is to (a) draw a demographic profile of African migrants in Istanbul, (b) locate their migration patterns within the framework of population flows between Africa and Western Europe, and (c) investigate the cultural practices that arise as a result of the encounter between African migrants and Turkish citizens.

This research will yield findings that will (a) enrich the Turkish scholarship on a very significant phenomenon, transit migration, (b) provide useful information for the UNHCR's office in Turkey and other authorities regarding their activities targeting African asylum seekers, and (c) make a critical contribution to the scholarly literature on the African Diaspora.

To attain these goals, we will undertake a survey with 133 men and women from different countries and ethnic groups. We will conduct in-depth interviews with about 50 of them. Additionally, Turkish law enforcement authorities, UNHCR and IOM officials, and relevant NGO representatives will also be interviewed.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
EU	European Union
HRA	Human Rights Association
ICMC	International Catholic
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IIMP	Istanbul Interparish Migrants' Programme
IOM	International Organization of Migration
MLSS	Ministry of Labor and Social Security
MOI	Ministry of Interior
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
RLAP	Refugee Legal Aid Program
TB	Tuberculosis
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia
USA	United States of America

1. Introduction

In the past decade or so, an increasing number of Africans have arrived in Turkey as transit migrants or asylum seekers. Although they enter Turkey from various points, the majority of them live in Istanbul. The objective of this report is to describe the demographic characteristics of African migrants, their reasons for and patterns of migration, as well as their living conditions and problems in Istanbul.¹ As there are no previous studies on Africans in Turkey, one of the aims of this report is to open up a field for studying African migration rather than reaching conclusions.

The report is based on the findings of the research we conducted from February 2005 to 2006 in Istanbul, which included a survey of 133 Africans, in-depth interviews with a number of them, as well as interviews with elite informants in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Turkish police in Istanbul and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office in Ankara.²

The major findings of our research in synopsis are the following: (i) The increase in the numbers of Africans who arrive in Turkey for transit and asylum seeking and the mode of their stay here should be assessed within the framework of Turkey's bid for accession to the European Union (EU); (ii) Africans in Istanbul should not be considered as a homogeneous group; (iii) there are migrants from West, East and Central Africa in Istanbul and their motivations for migration are diverse, (iv) there are both men and women, and families with children among them, (v) irregular migration³ and asylum seeking are intertwined processes

¹ Our research focused on migrants from Sub-Saharan African countries plus Mauritania, but we also present some data about North African migrants in Turkey in this report.

² We would like to thank MiReKoc (Migration Research Program at Koç University) for a grant in 2005 which funded this research. We are also grateful to Harun Ercan for data entry and the construction of tables; Gaspard Bizimana, Adem Siyaad Omar and Ishmael Gasle for help with conducting the survey, and the latter two also for interpreting from Somali; and Şefika Kumral for assistance with library research and transcription of some interviews.

³ Irregular migration refers to the movements of people who, owing to illegal entry or the expiry of their visas, lack legal status in a transit or host country (IOM, 2005).

whose goal is often reaching Western Europe; (vi) however, the difficulty of getting into Europe prolongs Africans' stay in Turkey, leading them to engage in a variety of survival strategies; (vii) among them, especially asylum seekers have poor living conditions; (viii) this is related to the paucity of income earning opportunities, and of social aid and services targeting them as well as the weakness of asylum seekers' social networks.

An important conclusion we draw is that “transit” migration is not so transitory for many of the people going through it. Although the majority of the migrants have the goal of reaching Europe, their “transit” puts them in an indeterminate state in terms of their livelihoods. Consequently, African migrants and asylum applicants seek to make a living through informal income earning opportunities alongside Turkish citizens who also operate in the city's large informal economy. As Turkey prepares to harmonize its migration regime with that of the EU, humanitarian and social needs of migrants and asylum seekers need to be addressed. However, given Turkey's limited resources, methods of burden sharing between Turkey and the EU should be devised.

2. Literature Review

2.1 International Migration in a Globalizing World

The increasing volume and changing patterns of international migration have marked the last several decades and are likely to be one of the major social phenomena shaping the world in the twenty-first century. Although international migration has been a significant force since the nineteenth century in the course of European settlement and colonization of many regions of the world, the emerging patterns of migration in the last quarter of the twentieth century are considered to be different from those of previous periods.

Nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were marked mostly by European immigration to “white settler” countries, whereas the post World War II period was

characterized by labor migration from non-European regions into Western Europe, North America, and to some extent, Australia. The directions and pull-push patterns of these waves of migration were determined to a great extent initially by European colonization and, in the post-war period, by the requirements of capital accumulation (that is, industrialization) in the core regions of the world (Portes and Börözc, 1989; Massey et al., 1993).

Since the 1970s, transformations in the world economy such as economic crisis and declining industrial employment in the core and the impact of the debt crisis and changing economic structures in many peripheral countries brought about major changes in migratory trends. Emerging patterns and types of international migration were also bolstered by political turmoil, and ethnic and internal wars in the Middle East, Africa, Central Asia and Eastern Europe. Regular labor migration to Western Europe declined. But illegal migration and flows of asylum seekers and refugees gained pace from Sub-Saharan and North Africa, from Southwest Asia (Middle East) and Central Asia, and from Eastern Europe towards the European Union (IOM, 2005).

As asylum seekers and illegal economic migrants flocked at the doors of the European Union during the 1980s and 1990s, Southern Europe (Spain, Portugal, Greece and Italy) became a transit route for migrants from Asia and Africa. Human smugglers started to organize illegal migration as the profits from clandestine passages through dangerous land and sea routes rose in tandem with the risks of such operations (Wallace and Stola, 2001). Alarmed by this wave and being in the process of stronger regional integration, the European Union countries sought to tighten their asylum regulations and border controls (Castles and Miller, 1998). In 1991, the Maastricht Treaty established European citizenship, and in 1995, the notion of Schengen Citizenship was introduced. The objective of the emerging “Fortress Europe” was to keep out non-Europeans while making it easier for Europeans to move freely within the EU.

Against the background of the changes just mentioned, the emerging patterns of people's cross-border movements since the 1970s have been marked by the (i) globalization, (ii) differentiation, (iii) feminization, and (iv) politicization of migration (Castles and Miller, 1998).

(i) In the first place, intra-regional migration has been on the rise compared to south-to-north migration. Cases in point are flows of people within cultural regions in Africa (previously divided by colonial rule), from the Horn of Africa to the Middle East, from the Mediterranean Basin to Western Europe and from North Africa and South Asia to the Gulf region (IOM, 2000). (ii) Secondly, illegal and transit migration, refugee flows, waves of asylum seekers and temporary contract labor migration are on the rise compared to legal labor migration and legal immigration, which used to be more characteristic of the postwar period. This is a result of Western Europe's and North America's tightening immigration and asylum rules, the nature of demand for migrant labor in the Gulf Arab region, as well as push factors such as economic collapse and internal war in sub-Saharan Africa and Eastern Europe. Transit migration refers to the movement of third country nationals who target Western Europe. Transit migrants spend an indefinite time in transit countries until they gain illegal entry into the West. Such flows are often intertwined with asylum seeking and are organized by criminal rings (Stola, 2001: 80). As such, the differentiation of types and direction of migratory flows since the 1980s has fuelled the creation of a "migration industry," with illicit aspects such as human smuggling⁴ and trafficking.⁵ (iii) Until the 1980s, men constituted the majority of migrants. Since then, about half of international migrants have become women, as a result of the growing demand for domestic labor and other low-end service sector jobs in core

⁴ Human smuggling is defined as "the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident" (UN, 2000a).

⁵ Trafficking in persons refers to the "recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation" (UN, 2000b).

countries as well as among the middle classes of middle income countries. Migrant women's jobs are often characterized by strict labor contracts, few worker rights, but relatively higher wages, making their remittances to their home countries an important source of foreign currency earnings (Parrenas, 2000). (iv) Domestic and international political upheavals and power plays form a backdrop to many of these new patterns of population movements. For instance, the Iran-Iraq War and the first Gulf War led to the termination of the labor contracts of migrants from some Arab countries, whereas these wars (as well as the Iranian Revolution and repression by the Saddam Regime in Iraq) precipitated significant refugee flows originating from the region (Castles and Miller, 1998). Anti-immigration political currents in Western Europe and the USA have also shaped and reshaped the kinds and directions of flows of people; for instance, illegal migration, human smuggling and asylum seeking are reactions to restrictions to entry into the EU.

In this regard, the creation of literal buffer zones on the eastern borders of the EU is a telling example. It has been argued that a "buffer zone" was "politically and socially constructed" between Western and Eastern Europe during the 1990s running through Hungary, the Ukraine and Belarus (Wallace, 2001). "Buffer zone" countries entered into readmission⁶ agreements with each other under political pressure from the EU and invested into policing their borders more effectively in order to stem transit and illegal migration (Stola, 2001: 83). This would thus curb illegal entries into "Fortress Europe" not only by limiting the number of people who are able to enter into the buffer zone, but more importantly, by also enforcing that a buffer country would readmit an illegal migrant if she/he escapes into and then is caught by a bordering EU nation.

Buffer countries respected the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees and became "safe third countries" for asylum seekers while their applications for refugee status were

⁶ Readmission agreement refers to an agreement which addresses procedures for one state to return aliens in an irregular situation to their home state or a state through which they passed en route to the state which seeks to return them (IOM, 2005).

considered by the UNHCR. It is thought that during the Yugoslavian refugee crisis in the early 1990s, most refugees ended up in Hungary and other buffer countries rather than in the EU. Thus, Central European countries acted as a “safe sieve” that distinguished between bona fide and false claims for asylum (Stola, 2001: 85). It may be argued that the buffer zone has been expanded farther east after the accession of countries such as Hungary and Poland into the European Union. A case in point may be Albania, which has recently accepted the Geneva Convention in full, thus agreeing to accept refugees (Peshkopia, 2005).

2.2 Refugee Flows and Asylum Seeking

In the twentieth century, there have been several major flows of refugees. The first two took place in the context of the two world wars and were thus limited mostly to Europe. The signing of the Geneva Convention on Refugees in 1951 followed the displacements of WW II. The third wave started with the Partition in the Indian subcontinent in the 1940s with millions of refugees in both Pakistan and India. Since then, there have been massive refugee movements everywhere in the non-western world, the most notable being Palestinians in the Middle East, Ethiopian and Eritreans in the Horn of Africa, Afghans in Central Asia, Salvadorans in Central America, and Rwandans and Burundians in Central Africa (Castles and Miller, 1998). The global refugee population increased from 2.4 million in 1975 to 10.5 million in 1985 and nearly 15 million in 1990. Since 1995, the number of refugees has decreased while the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has sharply risen (Castles, 2003). While in 1982, 1.2 million IDPs were counted in 11 countries; today an estimated 25 million IDPs live uprooted in 49 countries (IDMC, 2005). The fall in the number of “convention refugees” (see below) since the 1990s and the rise in the number of IDPs is attributed to the “non-arrival regime” established by western countries, whose objective is to contain refugees in or near their areas of origin. A result of this is that increasing numbers of

people fall prey to human smugglers as the only way to reach countries where they can make asylum applications (Castles, 2003).

It has been argued that these flows arise out of two main historical processes; namely, the formation of new states, and confrontation over the social order in a given state. Wars of national liberation, nation-building processes, inequalities in access to power and resources among different groups in a multi-ethnic society, revolutionary processes leading to generalized violence all lead to refugee movements (Zolberg, 1989; Keely, 1996). The overwhelming majority of refugee flows has originated in postcolonial countries in the twentieth century, and the overwhelming majority of them have stayed within the developing world, often within their own regions (Wood, 1994). Put differently, the western world has shared only a small portion of the burden of refugee flows, although aftereffects of European colonization and political and military interventions by western states (as well as the Soviet Union) have often triggered the events that led to refugee movements in the first place.

The 1951 “Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees” defined a refugee as anyone who “as a result of events which occurred prior to 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.” In 1967, the “Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees” expanded the scope of the meaning of refugee enshrined in the 1951 document both spatially and temporally to include anyone in the world and not just Europeans (Hyndman, 2000). It has been argued that the status of “convention refugees” is granted on politically outdated and Eurocentric criteria enshrined in the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Protocol. To be more specific, refugee status is

granted to those persons whose civil and political liberties are abrogated. But this definition does not include a broader understanding of violation of socio-economic human rights or threats based on generalized violence rather than specific threats towards individuals (Hyndman, 2000). In this sense, the 1969 Organization for African Unity (OAU) “Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa” broadened the scope of the definition of refugees (and was binding for its members) as not only those fleeing individual persecution, but also people who escape situations of generalized violence such as internal wars (*ibid.*: 13).

Since the 1990s, at the behest of UNHCR’s principle donors, many of which are also the traditional resettlement countries that now wish to lessen their responsibilities, refugee protection in safe countries is systematically eroding, while *refoulement*⁷ reemerges through the back door, and repatriation into unstable “home” countries becomes an option (Barnett, 2001; Goodwin-Gill, 2001; Koser, 2001). In this context, some argue that UNHCR’s original mandate is being transformed from an agency providing protection to refugees in safe countries to one providing humanitarian assistance to displaced groups *in situ* (Hyndman, 2000; Loescher, 2001). Meanwhile, the “camp” model of provision of humanitarian services by the UNHCR to refugees in Africa has also come under criticism by social scientists (e.g. Harrell-Bond, 1986; see also Hyndman, 2000).

Although humanitarian policies are increasingly important in a world where refugee flows and internal displacement are constant problems, these practices also carry a number of problems in their train. Anthropologists working on forced migration emphasize that international agencies create new forms of knowledge and new categories in the course of handling the problems of asylum seekers (Harrell-Bond, 2002). For instance, international agencies operate on well-defined categories based on which they dispense with humanitarian

⁷ *Refoulement* is the return by a state or an individual to the territory of another state in which his/her life or liberty would be threatened, or s/he may be persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion; or would run the risk of torture (IOM, 2005).

aid and decide on resettlement in safe countries (Sorensen, forthcoming). Such subject categories also objectify target populations by assuming that their characteristics, needs and wants are homogeneous regardless of nationality, ethnicity and reason for migration (Malkki, 1995). Of particular concern for us in this paper is the definition of vulnerability, which restricts access to assistance, and of the “refugee,” which restricts eligibility for international protection. For this reason, hundreds of thousands of people in Africa escaping ethnic violence or economic ravages brought about by war are not eligible to become “convention refugees.” And so, the UNHCR and international humanitarian agencies serve them in camps in surrounding countries where they are *de facto* refugees – so-called “mandate refugees”⁸ and have little right to participate in the life of the society to which they have escaped.

By 2005, there were 9.2 million refugees around the world; according to the UNHCR, this constituted a 4 percent decline from the previous year and it was the lowest figure of refugees in 25 years (UNHCR, 2005) (see Table 2.1). The ten largest origins of refugee populations in 2004 were Afghanistan, Sudan, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia, Palestine, Vietnam, Liberia, Iraq and Azerbaijan (see Table 2.2). In 2004, the ten countries that generated the largest flows of refugees were Sudan, DRC, Somalia, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Burundi, Liberia, Central African Republic, Rwanda and the Russian Federation (see Table 2.3). In addition, there were about 839,000 asylum seekers, those people who apply for “asylum” – the right to be recognized as bona fide refugees and receive legal protection when they seek sanctuary in another country. Reportedly, the number of new asylum seekers in the western world dropped to its lowest level in 16 years as of 2004 (UNHCR, 2005). As is clear from Table 2.4, 34 percent (3,120,223) of all refugees in the world (9,236,521) were from African countries as of the end of 2004. Tables 2.2 and 2.3 also

⁸ A mandate refugee is a person who qualifies for UNHCR protection regardless of whether the country he/she is a party to the 1951 Convention or the 1967 protocol and regardless of whether that country recognizes him/her as a refugee (IOM, 2005).

show that most African refugees are clustered in the countries surrounding their country of origin.

2.3 Transit and Irregular Migration Through Turkey

The prevalent patterns of migration to and from Turkey fit into the changing types and patterns of migratory movements explained in section 2.1 above. Turkey has constituted a major component of the labor migration system in Europe since the 1960s, especially through the guest worker system. Although West European countries stopped labor recruitment during the 1970s, Turkish migration to Germany, France, Austria, Sweden, Switzerland and the Netherlands has continued through family unification since then (e.g. Faist, 2000). Types of Turkish migration to Europe diversified after 1980. In the wake of the military coup in 1980, a strong wave of asylum seekers knocked at the doors of Western Europe, while that flow continued during the 1990s in the course of the Kurdish conflict.

Simultaneously, illegal migration to European Union countries gained pace, often organized by human smugglers. It has been argued that economic migration and the asylum movement were intertwined during the 1990s, as some asylum seekers were not bona fide refugees but illegal economic migrants (Sirkeci, 2003). Directions of population movements were also altered. From a major sending country during the postwar decades, Turkey has been transformed to both a sending and a receiving country in the past two and a half decades. This has been a result of manifold factors, including political changes (the Iranian revolution, the Gulf War, the collapse of the Soviet Union and political oppression of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria) and economic distress (the collapse of socialist economies) in the surrounding regions as well as political and economic turmoil in far reaching areas (civil wars and economic collapse in Africa, war in Afghanistan, etc.). Situated in a geographical area that provides both land and sea routes from the Middle East and North Africa towards Western Europe, Turkey has especially been home to waves of transit migration and illegal labor

migration as well as movements of asylum seekers (İçduygu, 2000 and 2003). Such illegal flows are often organized by human smugglers (İçduygu and Toktaş, 2002).

Illegal labor migration mostly concerns people from former Soviet republics plus Romania. Among them, the majority are probably women, who find informal employment in domestic services or as sex workers (Keogh, 2004; Ünal, 2004). There is also some trafficking of Eastern European women as sex workers that takes place through Turkey (Erder and Kaşka, 2003). Migrants transiting through Turkey with a view to reaching the European Union are more diverse as to their origins, encompassing people from Africa as well as South Asia. Likewise, asylum seekers arriving in Turkey are also diverse in terms of their origins, although the greatest numbers have come from two countries, Iran and Iraq. The Revolution in Iran and the Iran-Iraq war triggered large waves of refugees through Turkish borders during the 1980s (İçduygu, 2000). Iraq's repression of Kurds and the first Gulf War precipitated two large influxes of refugees in 1988 and 1991 (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997). In 1990, about 300,000 thousand ethnic Turks arrived from Bulgaria during a campaign against the Turkish minority by the communist regime; although some of them have returned since then, the majority settled in Turkey, and was subsequently granted citizenship (Vasileva, 1992). A group of Afghan refugees arrived during the 1980s, and during the 1990s, there were relatively small refugee inflows from Bosnia, Kosovo and Chechnya.

As we explain in this report, since the mid-1990s, the number of Africans arriving in Turkey as irregular migrants or asylum seekers have been on the rise. However, there are no scholarly studies of current African migration to Turkey. The only scholarly information comes from studies on transit migration (IOM, 1995; İçduygu 2000 and 2003) and refugee flows (Frantz 2003). There are also several descriptive or journalistic accounts of the experiences of African migrants in Istanbul (Yaghmaian, 2003; Çalkıvık, 2003; Öcal, 2005; Ekberzade, 2006).

Turkey is a signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Protocol; but it has maintained a “geographical reservation” to the 1967 Protocol. Thus, it has only accepted as “convention refugees” Europeans; namely, people from the Soviet Union and other Soviet bloc countries in Eastern Europe (Kirişçi, 1996). The resettlement of Turks from Bulgaria as citizens was made possible under Turkey’s citizenship and resettlement laws dating from the 1930s. These laws limit immigration into Turkey to persons of Turkish ethnicity and Muslims who were culturally part of the Ottoman heritage (Çağaptay, 2002). However, since the early 1990s, Turkey gives temporary asylum to non-western persons who have pending asylum applications at UNHCR’s office in Turkey (Kirişçi, 2002). Temporary asylum is implemented through a government regulation dated 1994, and revised twice in 1999 and 2006 (*Resmi Gazete*, 1994, 1999 and 2006). It may be argued that the catalyst for this change was the influx of Iraqi Kurds to Turkey during the first Gulf War.⁹ The humanitarian aspect of that incident led Turkey to take steps to ensure non-*refoulement* for non-Western people who sought refuge within Turkish borders.

In addition to that development, Turkey has been under the impact of the changes in asylum and migration policy to its west, namely in the European Union. The EU accepted Turkey’s candidacy for accession at the Helsinki Summit in 1999, and then Turkey accepted a National Programme for Adoption of the EU *Acquis Communautaire* in 2001. The National Programme includes measures to be taken such as more effective patrolling of borders to stem illegal entries, altering its visa policy in order to discourage transit and irregular migrants, creating reception centers for asylum seekers, and eventually lifting the geographical limitation to the Geneva treaties (İçduygu, 2003). Turkey has also entered into readmission agreements with a number of origin and destination countries including Syria and Greece

⁹ When the Iraqi army advanced on the Kurdish region in March 1991, over a million people fled their homes towards the Iranian and Turkish borders. Although Turkey decided to keep its borders shut, partly in an effort to prevent a renewal of the refugee crisis in 1988 after the chemical bombing of Halabja, it could not resist the waves of displaced Kurds who were gathering in the mountains. Later on, US troops entered Northern Iraq and created a “safe haven” into which the Kurdish refugees were repatriated (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1997).

since 2000. Although the lifting of the geographical reservation will probably be postponed until later in the accession negotiations between Turkey and the EU, it will eventually open the way for more non-European refugees to stay in Turkey (*ibid.*).

2.4 African International Migration

Nearly half of Sub-Saharan Africa's¹⁰ overall population (more than 300 million people) lives below the poverty line (UNDP, 2003), constituting the most significant push factor for the mobility of people in search of livelihoods. Sub-Saharan Africa is considered to contain the most mobile population in the world. In 2000, there were an estimated 16.3 million migrants in Sub-Saharan Africa, making up 9 percent of the global stock of migrants (IOM, 2005).

Migration flows originating in Sub-Saharan Africa display the following patterns (see also Appendix D): internal and cross-border migration; movements towards regions of relative prosperity; transit migration through North Africa towards Europe; clandestine and irregular migration towards Europe, sometimes involving trafficking in persons; and increased feminization of migration (IOM, 2005). Among these, irregular migration flows to and through the Maghreb (North Africa) merits some attention due to its relevance to transit migration of Africans to/through Turkey. Although Sub-Saharan populations' movement towards the Maghreb is a long-standing historical phenomenon, since the 1980s, this migratory flow has been on the rise. In the recent years, about 65,000 to 80,000 Sub-Saharan Africans are estimated to arrive annually to the region (IOM, 2005). The reasons for this intensifying flow are numerous: the Maghreb stands out as a more prosperous region where informal work can be found in some of the countries in comparison to West and Central Africa where conflict, political instability, desertification and economic hardship render life difficult; also, as Western European countries combat irregular migration and discourage

¹⁰ Sub-Saharan Africa excludes Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya and Mauritania.

flows of asylum seekers, Sub-Saharan transit and irregular migration to Europe through the Maghreb has increased. Especially Libya (which adopted a Pan-African policy that turned it into a destination country in the past five years), Tunisia and Morocco are the significant receivers of irregular and transit migration from Sub-Saharan Africa (IOM, 2005).

Today, international migration from Africa is motivated by various reasons, two of which are of paramount concern: (i) firstly, economic collapse and poverty in many countries trigger population movements in search of survival and economic betterment (Adepoju, 2000); and (ii) secondly, ethnic conflict and state failure lead to internal displacement and refugee flows (Jamal, 2003) (see Appendix II). In both contexts, human smuggling and trafficking are great concerns (Adepoju, 2005). Migrants are sometimes deceived into paying large sums of money for clandestine passage to South European countries often to be dumped somewhere along the Turkish or North African coasts. Even when migrants apply for first asylum or refugee status in the countries where they arrive, they face an uphill battle. The European Union, in line with policies that sustain the so-called “Fortress Europe,” de-emphasizes granting protection, refugee status and resettlement to asylum seekers, while it actively pursues the non-arrival of potential asylum seekers into European soil. As part and parcel of these policies, it promotes protection and humanitarian aid for asylum seekers and refugees in other African countries without seeking political solutions to conflicts which created the refugee flows in the first place. Hence, Africa today is faced with “protracted refugee situations” (Jamal, 2003) and camps full of refugees living in uncertain conditions (Hughes, 2003). More frequently nowadays, refugee repatriation is suggested as a possible solution, without paying enough attention to the voluntary-ness of such return (Kindiki, 2005). Somalis, as one of the largest groups of refugees originating from Africa in the past decade, are at the center of these debates and have the most precarious situation. As is known, there is no operational state in Somalia and different parts of the land are ruled by competing

clans (see Appendix 2). Hundreds of thousands of Somalis have fled the country and been placed in refugee camps primarily in neighboring Kenya (Hyndman, 2000) and Yemen (Hughes, 2003). For this reason, it is not surprising that Somalis constitute the majority of African asylum seekers in Turkey.

3. Research Design

3.1 Research Questions

There are no studies that particularly focus on the flow of Africans into Turkey. We undertook this research in order to shed light on this understudied phenomenon. Although Africans are not as numerous as some other groups who illegally enter and/or stay in Turkey, their presence is indicative of certain pressing issues in international and forced migration. First, Africans constitute one of the most significant refugee populations in the world today, and secondly, they constitute a significant group of irregular migrants in Europe. Given Turkey's geographical location at the crossroads of land and sea routes between the Middle East, North Africa and Europe, the relative ease of legal or illegal entry into the country as well as the weakness of regulations against undocumented migrants, the number of Africans arriving in Turkey as migrants and asylum seekers increased considerably by the turn of this decade.

As we wanted to lay the groundwork for further research on this phenomenon, the questions that motivated our research were the following: (1) What are the similarities and differences between the flows of African asylum seekers and irregular migrants? In this respect, we wanted to learn who the African migrants in Turkey are, why they have left their countries, what their final destinations are, what methods they have used to enter Turkey, how long they have been staying in Turkey, how much longer they plan to do so, and, if they are asylum seekers, what their reasons for seeking refuge are.

(2) Another set of questions pertain to the living conditions of Africans in Istanbul. How do Africans survive while staying in Istanbul? To what extent irregular economic migrants' and asylum seekers' living conditions are differentiated? To answer these questions, we collected information on such issues as their survival strategies and income earning activities in Istanbul, the available forms of social assistance and Africans' perceptions of how they are treated by Turkish law enforcement officers and Turkish citizens.

(3) We also want to describe the legal parameters of Africans' presence in Istanbul. How has the Turkish asylum regime been changing in the past few years? Are African and other illegal migrants tolerated or not? We sought to answer these questions within the framework of Turkey's changing perspective on asylum and irregular migration during the EU integration process.

3.2 Methodology

3.2.1 Research Methods

The research for this report was based on a review of secondary sources as well as fieldwork. We examined relevant reports by the International Organization of Migration (IOM), the UNHCR, and the scholarly literatures on African migration and refugees, and on transit migration and asylum seeking through Turkey.

The fieldwork consisted of a survey with 133 Africans in Istanbul; in-depth interviews with 21 African migrants (7 women and 3 men from Somalia; one Sierra Leonean, two Senegalese, three Ghanaian, three Nigerian, one Rwandan and one Sudanese men); and interviews with the representatives and workers of several NGOs and church organizations in Istanbul that cater to asylum seekers and migrants; representatives of the UNHCR Office in Ankara, and officers at the Foreigners, Borders and Asylum Department of the General Directorate of Security (hereafter, Foreigners' Police) in Istanbul.

The sample for the survey is not a probabilistic one, as this was impossible to do among an undocumented, floating population. However, we sought to reach members of different nationalities, both men and women, and both asylum seekers and illegal migrants. The weight of persons from each country of origin in the sample is unfortunately not representative of our estimations of the actual size of each group, because there were difficulties in reaching West Africans, who were more reluctant to speak about their situation. This may be expected since many of them are irregular migrants and mistrustful of researchers, whereas asylum seekers – who are more likely to be from East Africa – are often legally registered in Turkey and are somewhat more used to being “interviewed.” Two Somalis and one Rwandan helped us to fill out the survey questionnaire. All three men had some experience interpreting for and working with NGOs that cater to African migrants and asylum seekers in Istanbul.

The Somalis – both registered asylum applicants – also assisted in interpreting from Somali into English during the interviews, and their presence facilitated a degree of trust between the researchers and the informants. The interviews with Africans were conducted mostly in English and some in Somali, and were based on open-ended questions. Most of the interviews with Africans, and non-participant observation of their social activities was carried out by Kelly T. Brewer. The data on the questionnaires was entered into MS Excel and SPSS by a work study student at Koç University, who also helped with constructing the tables.

We should note that both the interviews and the survey had some drawbacks in terms of the quality of information, owing to the fact that some of our questions pertained to the illegal aspects of Africans’ presence here, and some to their reasons for asylum seeking. As we will argue in this report, asylum seeking and irregular migration are intertwined processes, and personal testimonies may not always be truthful. Conducting a number of interviews

helped us gain at least some degree of insight into the overall situation so as to assess the truthfulness of the information, however, vague areas remained.

Kelly T. Brewer attended various church services, football games, and charity activities where Africans gathered. He also visited several establishments (cafes) operated by Africans. Non-participant observation in these venues enriched our knowledge of Africans' life in Istanbul. Kelly T. Brewer and Deniz Yüksek conducted the interviews with institutions in English with the exception that Yüksek interviewed the police in Turkish.

3.2.2 Plan of the Report

In section 4 of this report, we examine the findings of our fieldwork on African migrants and asylum seekers in Istanbul. Section 4.1 draws on interviews with representatives of institutions as well as secondary literature to define the parameters of Africans' presence in Turkey in terms of procedures for asylum seeking, access to social and humanitarian aid, law enforcement, and Turkey's migration and asylum regimes, which will soon be transformed due to the impact of EU accession negotiations.

In section 4.2, Africans' demographic characteristics and social problems are examined based on the survey. Here, their reasons and methods for traveling to Turkey, their length of stay, reasons for asylum seeking, plans for further migration, income earning activities while in Turkey, sources of income, major problems in Istanbul, access to social and humanitarian aid, etc. are discussed.

A description of the lives of African migrants and would-be refugees is offered in section 4.3 based on non-participant observation and interviews. Here, we focus at once on the transient nature of Africans' lives and on how the difficulty of passage into Europe prolongs that transient state. Faith-based community building, informal entrepreneurship, playing football, marriages within the group or with Turkish citizens are various aspects of the efforts of many African migrants in Istanbul to build their lives.

In the Conclusion, we discuss ways of improving the living conditions of especially African asylum seekers and prospects for illegal African migration in light of the legal responsibilities Turkey will undertake as part of adopting the *Acquis Communautaire*.

4. African Migrants in Istanbul: A Demographic Profile

4.1 Framework of Africans' Presence: Asylum, Illegality And Charity

The legal framework of Africans' presence in Turkey is governed by the law on passports, the law on legal residence, the law on the movements of foreigners, government regulations on asylum as well as Turkey's rights and obligations under international law. Here, we first briefly overview the regulations on asylum. Then, based on interviews with the police and UNHCR, we discuss the particular situation of African asylum seekers as well as irregular African migrants. Finally, we describe the types of social services and aid available to them in Istanbul.

African migrants in Istanbul may be asylum applicants/refugees, short term visitors with valid visas, irregular migrants who have illegally entered Turkey, or who have legally entered but overstayed their visas, or legal aliens married to Turkish citizens. There are also many African university students in Turkey, especially in Ankara, staying on student visas, but our fieldwork did not concern them. Our survey included 45 people who legally entered Turkey (most of whom later overstayed their visas), 86 people who entered illegally and 2 who did not specify their legal status. 63 respondents had made asylum applications. Among the interviewees, there were asylum seekers as well as irregular/transit migrants. In addition, a couple of male interviewees had legal residence in Turkey based on marriage to Turkish citizens.

4.1.1 The Asylum Process

In 1994, the Turkish government adopted a regulation on asylum applications by individuals and groups. This regulation stipulated that asylum seekers who have legally or illegally entered Turkey can file an asylum application in a governorship within five days of their arrival (*Resmi Gazete*, 1994). After the initial interview with the asylum seeker, until his/her application is accepted by the authorities, he/she would be kept under detention. Once the application is accepted, the applicant would be issued a residence permit which allows him/her to freely reside in Turkey. The regulation says that the Ministry of Interior (MOI), in cooperation with the UNHCR and the IOM, would decide whether to accept or reject an individual's application to become a refugee. If a person's refugee application is rejected, then he/she would be deported. An amendment to the regulation in 1999 extended the period of application to 10 days. It also allowed individuals to petition a rejection of their application to obtain refugee status within 15 days (*Resmi Gazete*, 1999). A new amendment in January 2006 further modified this regulation in favor of the asylum applicants. Now, there is no time limit as to when a foreigner who has entered Turkey can apply for asylum. The regulation says that a person who applies for asylum would be hosted in a reception center or may freely reside in a place to be determined by the MOI. Then, a person whose asylum application is accepted may stay in a reception center or may freely reside in a place to be determined by the MOI while his application for refugee status is considered. A person whose application for refugee status is rejected twice would be notified that he or she needs to leave Turkey (*Resmi Gazete*, 2006).

Significant in the last modification of the regulation is the mention of "reception centers." As part of the National Programme, Turkey has promised to set up reception centers for incoming asylum seekers; however officials say that it may take at least several years for this project to materialize. Currently, there is only one reception center in Turkey, in the

Central Anatolian province of Yozgat, which is reserved for asylum applicants who are sick or infirm. We do not know of Africans currently staying there, and police officials concede that many asylum applicants do not prefer to stay there. Another significant change in the amended regulation is the requirement for asylum applicants to have “free residence” (i.e., not in a reception center) in places to be determined by the MOI. Authorities have introduced this requirement so that asylum seekers would register with the police and remain in designated provincial centers¹¹ instead of Istanbul. Only a limited number of Africans have registered in some of those cities so far. Among the asylum applicants who answered our survey, only 5 reported to have registered in Eskişehir and Kayseri. Furthermore, even if they have registered in a different province, the Africans we surveyed and interviewed preferred to stay in Istanbul. They say that it is difficult to survive in these provincial places because of the lack of informal income earning opportunities, because they do not have communities there and also because the locals are not welcoming towards them. A police officer acknowledged that there is at least one province where the local population complained about the presence of asylum seekers, but he did not specify the province or the targeted nationality.

Once a person’s application for asylum is rejected twice, the Foreigners’ Police notify this person that his or her residence permit has expired and that he or she needs to leave the country in 15 days. However, police officials say that this is only a notification; deportation of rejected asylum seekers is not pursued. It is difficult to determine the whereabouts of such persons, and such a pursuit would be costly in terms of labor and time. In their words, such individuals become “tolerated foreigners.” Rejected asylum applicants could only be deported if they were caught during a routine check of papers (ID, passport, visa), a procedure that is occasionally carried out in places known to host irregular migrants (such as certain bars, cafes and clubs in certain districts). Such identity checks do not specifically target Africans; in fact

¹¹ These provinces are Afyon, Aksaray, Amasya, Bilecik, Burdur, Çankırı, Çorum, Eskişehir, Isparta, Karaman, Kastamonu, Kayseri, Kırıkkale, Kırşehir, Konya, Kütahya, Nevşehir, Niğde, Sivas, Tokat and Yozgat.

they are more likely to target irregular migrants from Romania and former Soviet republics, who constitute a much larger group of undocumented migrants in Istanbul.

Among African asylum applicants, the majority of whom are Somalis, the main form of entry into Turkey is illegal (see section 4.2 below). It is plausible to argue that, for some African asylum applicants, asylum seeking and irregular migration are intertwined, not only on the way to Turkey, but also, in the event that their refugee applications are rejected. Data provided by the Foreigners' Police supports this argument. For instance, the number of apprehensions of persons from Somalia is much higher than the number of Somalis who have applied for asylum in Turkey (Tables 4.1 and 4.2).¹² This may mean that only a fraction of the Somalis who illegally enter Turkey end up applying for asylum, which suggests the enmeshing of irregular migration and refugee flows.¹³ Our survey also indicates that African asylum seekers remain in Turkey long after their cases get a final rejection from the UNHCR (see section 4.2). In addition, our interviews suggest that, once an asylum seeker's application is rejected, he or she may attempt to illegally cross into Greece, and if his/her effort is unsuccessful, continue to stay in Turkey illegally.

How does the asylum process work in Turkey? The International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), an international NGO, UNHCR's Office in Ankara, and the Turkish police cooperate in processing asylum applications. Once a person applies to Turkish authorities, he or she is interviewed by the police and then the UNHCR or (ICMC in Istanbul) is notified about this person. In Istanbul, ICMC makes the pre-interview preparations. Funded by the UNHCR, ICMC acts as a liaison between applicants and the UNHCR. UNHCR then registers this person as an asylum applicant and the Turkish police give him/her a "residence

¹² The total of new applications, pending cases and closed cases of Somali asylum seekers was 839 by the end of 2005 according to UNHCR figures (Table 4.1); whereas 8,512 Somalis were apprehended for illegal entry/exit/stay between 1995 and 2005 according to figures provided by the Foreigners' Police (Table 4.3).

¹³ However, the number of Somalis apprehended for illegal entry/exit and visa violations may not be accurate since authorities say that some Africans falsely declare themselves as Somalis, and some Somalis may have been apprehended more than once.

permit for asylum applicants.” UNHCR then invites this person for an interview in Ankara and reaches a decision on each application sometime after the interview. If the decision is negative, the applicant can ask for reconsideration of his/her case and may subsequently be interviewed again. If he or she is rejected for a second time, then the residence permit is rescinded within 15 days.

The active caseload of the UNHCR office in Ankara consists of Iranians, Iraqis, Africans and small numbers of people from other nationalities. The Iraqis’ applications were stalled in 2003 in the wake of the American occupation of Iraq and the regime change in that country. Currently, most of the Iraqis are Chaldean Christians, and most of the Iranians belong to the Bahai community. As Table 4.1 shows, Somalis are the largest African group with asylum applications. According to information we obtained from UNHCR officials, 42 percent of the active caseload of Somali asylum seekers in Turkey in 2005 was women. Table 4.2 indicates the number of recognized refugees in Turkey as of the end of 2005; it should be noted that these are “mandate refugees,” not “convention refugees.”¹⁴ According to figures we obtained from UNHCR officials, in 2002, 73 percent of Iraqi asylum seekers, 38 percent of Iranians and 35 percent of “others” (including Africans) were recognized. In 2003, 79 percent of Iranian applicants and 45 percent of “others” were recognized. In 2004, 75 percent of Iranians and 31 percent of “others” were recognized (no figures for Iraqis were available for these years because of the freeze on their applications). UNHCR officials say that the recognition rate for Somalis (included in “others”) is lower than for Iranians because there is a high rate of applications which are not credible. Often, Somalis do not have identification. Besides, some non-Somali persons also apply for asylum claiming to be Somalis. All of these factors make it difficult to get credible statements and information on an applicant’s identity. It is for these reasons also that it may take longer for a Somali (or other African) application

¹⁴ Clearly, in Turkey, all refugees except those coming from European countries would be mandate refugees rather than convention refugees because of Turkey’s geographical reservation to the 1967 Protocol.

to be processed than for someone from another nationality. In general, an African asylum seeker's application process lasts a couple of years.

UNHCR officials say that they look into both "subjective" and "objective" conditions in determining African applicants' status; that is, not only threats of individual persecution (subjective factors) – the ground for refugee status determination based on the Geneva Convention – but also objective factors such as generalized violence in the region where the person comes from are taken into account.

Once a person is recognized as refugee, then he or she is referred for resettlement. UNHCR has separate departments handling status recognition and resettlement. Recognized refugees in Turkey may be resettled in the USA, Canada and Australia, and in some cases, in some European countries. ICMC's office in Istanbul processes the resettlement of refugees in the US. This office is an "Oversees Processing Entity" for the US government's Refugee Resettlement Program and covers Turkey, Lebanon, Yemen, Pakistan and Kuwait. ICMC officers say that most of the refugees resettled through their office in the last few years were Iranian Bahais. They also say that the resettlement of Iranian refugees takes place much faster compared to Somalis.

According to UNHCR officials, the slowness of the pace of Africans' resettlement stems from the fact that resettlement is an entirely different process than recognition; and in this case, traditional resettlement countries' criteria for accepting refugees into their land are important, not the refugee recognition criteria. Therefore, for instance, after the attacks in the US on September 11, 2001, resettlement has slowed down. This is conceded by both the ICMC staff and UNHCR officials. Resettlement countries' admission criteria regarding security is now stricter, with the result that the process is much slower especially for refugees who do not have identification (i.e., Somalis) and more generally for Muslim men.

While status recognition is decided only based on convention criteria, resettlement decisions take into account the preexistence of refugee communities from a given country of origin in a receiving country as well as vulnerability. In general, unaccompanied women and children are considered vulnerable and their resettlement process can be prioritized and expedited on that basis.

However, the interviews for status determination may also be expedited for unaccompanied women and children. This sometimes gives rise to an interesting situation, according to the UNHCR officials we interviewed. They explained that sometimes the husband of a woman who initially declared herself as unaccompanied would subsequently appear after her interview. So, while the woman would get an individual recognition interview; sometime later, her husband would get a “derivative status” interview. UNHCR officials were of the opinion that human smugglers may be advising women to declare themselves as “unaccompanied” so that they are eligible to be considered vulnerable. However, our survey indicates that many Somali and Ethiopian women indeed traveled alone to Turkey.

Therefore, it may be argued that somewhat of a gender and generation bias may exist in refugee resettlement, and perhaps also in status determination to some extent, although UNHCR officials denied that. While women and children are seen by international agencies as the paradigmatic refugees in their vulnerability (Malkki, 1995), adult African men may be viewed with suspicion on the grounds that they may have been combatants, drug smugglers, or worse yet, Islamic terrorists. This, alongside other reasons, might partially explain why fewer African asylum seekers in Turkey are referred for resettlement compared to Iranians and Iraqis.

There has been for some time a UNHCR training program for Turkish police, and currently, it is run by the ICMC with UNHCR funding. The training, which targets the

Foreigners' Police, involves methods of identifying asylum seekers, interviewing them and recognizing vulnerabilities. UNHCR officials point out that training should also be provided to police officers at reception centers in the regions where potential asylum seekers enter the country. UNHCR officials say that the Turkish Foreigners' Police's approach towards asylum seekers has improved over the years. The police register asylum seekers regardless of country of origin and availability of identity documents. One problematic practice used to be that Turkish police was unwilling to register a person's asylum application if he or she had been staying in Turkey for a long time without documents, arguing that these were "abusive" claims by irregular migrants.¹⁵ The January 2006 government regulation in effect solves this problem by removing the 10-day limit for filing an asylum application after arriving in the country (*Resmi Gazete*, 2006).

4.1.2 Irregular Migrants

In this section, we turn our attention to irregular African migrants in Istanbul, who arrive here in the hope of going further west, but often have to live in the city for several years. NGO representatives and officials we interviewed estimate the number of irregular African migrants in Istanbul to be between 4,000 and 6,000. NGO workers say that this number increases in winters and drops during the summer months, when Africans travel to the Aegean coast to search for clandestine passage to Greece by boat. Since it is difficult to get into Western Europe illegally and because many people are unable to return to their countries (because of economic reasons or for lack of safety), irregular migrants and rejected asylum seekers often spend several years in Turkey. Thus, the duration of their "transit" becomes prolonged. However, the reverse is also possible. Since the living conditions of many a

¹⁵ Turkish Foreigners' Police's opinions about the "abusive" claims must be based on the large discrepancy between the number of apprehended illegal migrants from a particular country and the number who apply for asylum.

migrant in Istanbul are dismal, some people keep making dangerous attempts to cross into Europe.¹⁶

Turkey has a relatively liberal visa system for travelers. Citizens of former Soviet republics and Eastern European countries can obtain tourist visas upon entry to Turkey, and some Turkic republics have visa exemptions for 90-day stays. Irregular migrants from those countries overstay their visas or legal duration of stay and find informal or illegal employment in Turkey. If they are caught or when they want to leave Turkey, they have to pay a fine in proportion to the length of their unauthorized stay; however, they are allowed to reenter Turkey once during the year in which they overstayed their visa.

In the case of Africans, visa regulations were quite liberal until recently. According to police officers, citizens of many Sub-Saharan countries used to be able to receive 15-day visas for a business meeting or for inquiring about employment by a football club or regular tourist visas upon applying to a Turkish consulate in their country or one which is authorized in their country. In their opinion, the majority of irregular African migrants (not the asylum seekers) currently residing in Istanbul are such persons who arrived legally and then overstayed the duration of their visas. Our survey also indicates that among non-asylum seeking migrants, most of whom are from West African countries, the main form of entry is legal (see section 4.2 below).

Compared to Eastern European irregular migrants, African migrants' movements to and from Turkey appear less circular, that is, most of them do not exit and reenter Turkey over the course of a year. However, there may be an exception to this in the case of traders from West Africa, particularly some Nigerians, Senegalese and Ghanaians, who appear to enter and exit Turkey to carry on their informal suitcase trade (see section 4.3 below). The difference between the patterns of Eastern European irregular migrants' and Africans'

¹⁶ As an NGO worker explained to us, if a migrant cannot find housing in the cold months of the winter, he or she might risk harsh weather conditions and pay a human smuggler to be taken to Greece or Italy.

movements may stem from several reasons: often, Africans' objective is to secure transit on to Western Europe, not employment in Turkey; and besides, Turkey has tightened its visa regime in an effort to curb irregular migration, as part of its obligations towards the EU. At the beginning of 2005, the Turkish visa regime for 48 Sub-Saharan African countries was changed. Since then, the applications of persons from those countries need to be approved by the MOI before a Turkish consulate can issue visas (*Zaman*, 2005). Moreover, Turkey cancelled tourist visa exemptions to Kenya and South Africa in 2003 (*Resmi Gazete*, 2003a). Police officers said that, since the visa regime change, the number of irregular African migrants who arrive with valid visas and then overstay the duration of their visas has declined.

Overall, the number of irregular African migrants in Turkey is only a fraction of irregular migration from other countries, most notably former Soviet republics and Romania. The numbers of people apprehended by Turkish police for “illegal entry and exit, illegal stay, and visa and residence permit violations” between 1995 and 2005 give us an indication – however imperfect – of this. Only about 6 percent (35,101) of the total number of people detained for the mentioned reasons (580,139) were from African countries (including North Africa) (Table 4.3). When the annual figures of the people detained for illegal migration are examined, one can see that apprehensions of some countries' nationals (e.g. Nigeria and South Africa) increased significantly until 2002-2003, but then dropped in the last two years. This may have resulted from the impact of the change in visa regulations for Sub-Saharan countries. But at the same time, detentions of Somalis and Mauritians increased in the past several years, suggesting an increase in the inflows of people from these countries, which must be related to ongoing political turmoil in those regions.

It is difficult for foreigners to obtain work permits in Turkey although this procedure was somewhat liberalized in 2003. According to the Law on Work Permits for Foreigners (no.

4817), foreigners can apply for a work permit to the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MLSS) if they have a job offer from a Turkish employer. After four years of legally working and residing in Turkey, they can apply for an extension of the work permit without having a certain employer hiring them, and after eight years, the work permit can be indefinitely extended (*Resmi Gazete*, 2003b). The law obviously is concerned with legal employment and would in theory apply to those persons who enter Turkey on valid visas and then seek employment. However, given that labor migrants in Turkey can often only find jobs in low-skill and low-wage sectors where informal employment is already prevalent, the law has so far not benefited irregular migrants from Eastern Europe, or for that matter, those from African countries. In any case, African irregular migrants often do not work in the same sectors as, say, Moldovans and people from other former Soviet republics (with the possible exception of Ethiopian women working in domestic labor). As we discuss in the following sections, the kinds of income earning activities to which Africans resort or have access are quite different than those for Eastern Europeans, and may be quite erratic and not enough to live on.

Another issue is the criminalization of irregular migration. In this regard, interesting issues emerge from data provided by Istanbul Foreigners' Police Bureau pertaining to criminal charges against Africans in Istanbul, although this data should be interpreted with caution given that we do not have comparable data for migrants from other countries and we cannot assess the reliability of this information (Table 4.4).¹⁷ First, the data confirms that Somalis mostly enter illegally.¹⁸ Secondly, people from North and West African countries are involved in illegal entry/exit and visa violations. Thirdly, arrests under the heading of forgery are high among North Africans (Tunisians, Moroccans, Algerians) plus Nigerians and

¹⁷ Although our report is concentrated on Sub-Saharan Africa, the police data also includes information on North Africans.

¹⁸ However, this data might be misleading because officials we interviewed said that sometimes Africans from other countries falsely claim to be Somalis hoping to apply for asylum later on.

Congolese. Forgery, together with fraud, may refer to apprehensions for carrying falsified travel documents, but could also suggest arrests for supplying transit migrants with forged visas and passports. This would mean that some African nationals are involved in the “illegal migration industry” in Turkey. On the other hand, only four African persons (one Sudanese, Egyptian, Somali and Tunisian each) were arrested for “human smuggling” since 2001. Our Somali interviewees reported having paid several hundred up to a thousand dollars at each stage of clandestine passage from Africa into Turkey. But in general, interviewees did not provide information about the particulars of their illegal entry into Turkey. Also, respondents to the survey did not answer the questions on whether and how much they paid human smugglers for getting passage into Turkey.

What does the data on criminal offenses by Africans suggest? Irregular migration inevitably leads people into legal gray zones, precisely because their entry into the territory of another country is criminalized by definition and the legal scope of their activities within that territory are severely restricted.¹⁹ Therefore, African migrants’ very presence in Turkey as well as various strategies they employ to acquire cash to live on or in order to travel to Europe may lead to their involvement with criminal activities.

If an irregular migrant is apprehended for crimes, he or she would be deported; if he or she is in legal status, the person would be deported after imprisonment (if he or she is convicted and sentenced for a particular crime). However, as we discussed in the previous section, deportation is not effectively implemented. Until recently, a person would be taken to a border and expected to leave the country. In the past couple of years, Turkey has started to pay for the travel expenses of foreigners who are deported because of undocumented status.

In an incident in 2001, between 250 and 300 people, citizens of 11 African countries, were picked up by police in several neighborhoods of Istanbul on July 7, detained for several

¹⁹ For a parallel argument regarding human trafficking, see Munck (2005).

days and dumped on the border with Greece in İpsala, Edirne. For several days, the group, which included two people with UNHCR protection, was tossed between Greek authorities who refused entry and Turkish authorities who did not allow them to return. Eventually, they were allowed to come back to Istanbul, but in the meantime, three people reportedly died, one woman had a miscarriage and several women claimed being raped (HRA, 2001; UNHCR, 2001). During this incident, which took place a few months before the Readmission Protocol between Turkey and Greece was signed in November 2001, both sides claimed that the persons had first passed through the other's territory. This incident also highlighted the particular vulnerability of Africans to police harassment. Their physical distinctiveness and visibility in Istanbul allowed the police to round them up indiscriminately. Turkey reportedly continues to deport irregular Africans, but UNHCR officials said an en-masse deportation effort at the scale of the 2001 incident has not reoccurred.

Based on the discussion in this section, it may be argued that irregular African migrants' presence in Istanbul is "tolerated" by authorities, but they may be more at risk of being deported compared to other groups because of their physical distinctiveness.

4.1.3 Humanitarian and Social Aid

NGOs, police and the UNHCR are unanimous in saying that in terms of social and humanitarian aid, African asylum seekers are worse off than other groups. This is related to the fact that they lack strong social networks in Turkey; they are denied access to Turkish institutions; and aid provided by NGOs or others is meager.

The conditions of asylum seekers' stay in Turkey is defined in the relevant government regulations (particularly, *Resmi Gazete*, 1994). Asylum seekers and refugees do not have work permits. Groups who enter Turkish borders and seek refuge en masse are supposed to undergo periodic health checks and receive medical care in state hospitals;

however, the government regulations do not address the health care needs of individual asylum applicants. There is a vague mention of refugee children's eligibility for primary education in one of the government regulations (*Resmi Gazete*, 1994); but this is not implemented in practice. In general, asylum seekers and refugees do not have access to education for their children in Turkish schools. In Istanbul, Caritas, a Catholic aid organization, runs a school program for Iraqi Christian asylum seekers' children. ICMC also has had a small program for the education of non-European migrant and asylum seeker children in recent years, but attendance by African migrants' children appears to be low based on the information ICMC provides on its web site (ICMC, not dated).

Recognized refugees are eligible to receive health care paid for by the UNHCR. Registered asylum seekers can receive medical care only in case of emergencies in a couple of designated hospitals in Istanbul to be paid for by the UNHCR. In Istanbul, ICMC is the contact point for arranging these services for asylum applicants. Tuberculosis patients can receive free medication at government-run TB clinics (*Veremle Savaş Dispanserleri*); but at least in one prior case in which a Congolese man had a treatment-resistant variant of TB, his need for expensive medication was rejected by a hospital. ICMC also provides psychological counseling to asylum seekers when they first apply for registration.

When a person files for asylum for the first time, UNHCR provides a one-time cash assistance. Recognized refugees receive a small monthly payment from UNHCR (about USD 100 per person). Other than these, cash assistance to asylum seekers and refugees is virtually non-existent.

The Istanbul Interparish Migrants' Programme (IIMP) provides emergency healthcare, food, clothing, blankets and small travel allowances for both economic migrants and asylum seekers, and it has recently started a voluntary repatriation program. IIMP workers say that their major clients are Africans. However, since their budget, contributed by several churches

in Istanbul, is very small, they can only help vulnerable groups. Therefore, they prioritize women and children. Beside the IIMP, individual churches also have small programs. For instance, a Greek Orthodox Church provides free lunch on Saturdays to economic migrants and asylum seekers. The Dutch Union Church runs a weekly program for mothers and children. In addition, a new NGO, the Refugee Legal Aid Program (RLAP), assists asylum seekers with writing their applications and appeal letters to UNHCR. It is noteworthy that these programs are mostly run by Europeans and North Americans.²⁰ We may also note that these NGOs mostly operate on the goodwill of their volunteers and workers and are not well staffed and funded.

There is almost no Turkish social aid or charity for which asylum seekers are eligible. Our survey and interviews show that they take advantage of the free dinners provided by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality during the month of Ramadan, and those who have residence permits are eligible to receive food donations given by district municipalities during Ramadan. In interviews, some people also reported receiving food and clothing donations by Turkish citizens, but there is no organized manner in which this is done.

By NGOs' own admission, social aid and services available to Africans are extremely limited and far from meeting the demand. Because of the limited amount of resources and donations, the IIMP, for instance, prioritizes "vulnerable" groups as the target of food aid, cash assistance and medical aid. In line with international humanitarian practice, women with children, and men and women in need of emergency medical assistance are defined as "vulnerable." As we argued in section 2.2 above, defining vulnerability for purposes of humanitarian policy automatically excludes some people at the same time that it includes some others (Sorensen, forthcoming). Indeed, as some aid workers acknowledged, while there is no doubt about the vulnerability of a Somali woman with many children, a single male

²⁰ However, RLAP is currently coming under the direct administrative control of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, a national NGO.

asylum seeker could be equally vulnerable under certain circumstances. In fact, “aid for migrants” excludes the majority of migrants for two reasons: the majority of asylum seekers and migrants are males and furthermore the majority of all “migrants” are irregular migrants, not asylum seekers. Hence, the practice of prioritizing vulnerable groups for assistance has a built-in bias against males and non-asylum seekers.²¹

Overall, we may argue that social aid and services for African migrants and asylum seekers in Istanbul operate as a charity flowing from Europeans to people from poor countries, whereas Turkish civil society and Turkish government agencies are barely involved.

4.1.4 Social Networks

African asylum seekers also lack resourceful social networks which could provide them with any kind of help. This contrasts with the situation of Iranian and Iraqi asylum seekers and refugees in Turkey. Especially Iranians (Muslims and Bahais alike), because of their history of asylum seeking since the early 1980s, have communities in Turkey and in Europe. Iraqi Chaldeans are also reportedly a more resourceful group in terms of their social networks as well as in terms of the availability of faith-based humanitarian and social aid through Caritas’s office in Istanbul. In addition, NGO workers point out that Iranians and Iraqis are financially much better off here compared to Somalis, Sudanese and Ethiopians. It should further be mentioned that Somalis often do not have any ties back at home – another point of contrast with Iraqis and Iranians.

The lack of social and humanitarian aid and the dearth of social networks may make African asylum seekers especially vulnerable to hunger and disease, but also to abuse. A recently published journalistic account of the experiences of two Somali and Ethiopian

²¹ The hope of receiving some assistance may constitute one of the reasons why some people make “abusive” applications for asylum.

asylum seekers in Istanbul tells about how an evangelical proselytizing church in Kadıköy provided help to these (and apparently other) refugee women in return for conversion and church attendance (Ekberzade, 2006). The relationship between proselytizing churches and foreign migrants would constitute a fruitful area to expand on in future studies of migration and asylum seeking in Turkey.

The situation of African irregular economic migrants is somewhat different than the asylum seekers. West Africans, such as Ghanaians and Nigerians, appear to have stronger social networks in Istanbul as well as networks spanning Istanbul and their countries. One nexus of such social networks is church. Some of the Ghanaians and Nigerians we interviewed said they regularly attended church here. Two of the churches we visited were evangelical churches headquartered in North America, whose branches in Istanbul served foreigners and Turkish nationals. Africans attended the English-language service; therefore most of the attendees were other West Africans. Another nexus of social networks is football, and Nigerians have been at the forefront of organizing an “African Cup” in Istanbul, an event that brings together the nationals of various African countries. We have observed that there is an overlap between people who attend church services and who go to football games, suggesting that there is not much differentiation in the social networks of West Africans.

The West Africans we interviewed and those who responded to the survey have active ties with their families back at home. Some reported that their families send them money. Furthermore, some Nigerians and Ghanaians also have business ties with home, in the form of informal importation of goods and exportation of Turkish apparel products. 64 percent of the respondents who answered our survey, mostly West Africans, reported having contact with their families in their countries through telephone and e-mail. This contrasts with asylum seekers from East and Central Africa and Mauritania who mostly reported having no or little

contact with relatives. In response to the question about why they did not have contact, especially Somalis said that they had no family left behind.

It must be conceded that we might have been able to observe only the positive aspects of Africans' social networks during our research, although participation in a certain social group can also have negative consequences for a person. Especially women may become vulnerable to personal harm through exposure to individuals or groups engaged in criminality. We were told by several NGO workers that there have been incidents in which African women were sexually exploited by human smugglers or other migrants. In a similar vein, Ekberzade's book (2006) also tells about the vulnerability of a Somali asylum seeker woman in the face of offers of money in exchange for sexual favors by irregular migrants from another African country. An NGO volunteer worker told us the particulars of one Ethiopian and one Eritrean female asylum seeker's experiences in Istanbul. Both of these women were obliged to offer sexual favors to their housemates from two West African countries, and they were both impregnated by these men. What needs to be emphasized here is that it is extremely difficult for an asylum seeker or irregular migrant to file complaints against such abusers. NGOs that provide aid for asylum seekers and migrants are the only places where they can complain about such incidents and ask for help.

4.2 The Survey

The respondents to the survey²² were from 11 different nationalities, Somalis (53) and Nigerians (21) being the largest groups.²³ The other respondents were from Ghana, Congo,

²² The variations in the number of "total" answers to each question in the tables in this sub-section stem from the fact that some questions were left unanswered by some of the respondents.

²³ We also asked respondents to ethnically identify themselves. Among the Somalis, persons belonging to the Ashraaf, Reer-Hamaar and Jareer clans were predominant. Among the Nigerians, Ibos and Yorubas constituted the majority. Among Ethiopians, Oromos and Tigres were significant. Mauritians and Sudanese in our sample were mostly "blacks."

Democratic Republic of Congo,²⁴ Mauritania, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Burundi, Sudan and Djibouti.²⁵ 78 were men and 55 were women. Somalis contained the largest group of women (30) (Table 4.5). The breakdown of age groups among the respondents were as follows: 41 persons were between 25 and 30; 36 were between 19 and 24; and 33 were between 31 and 40. There were 10 people below the age of 19 and 11 people above 40. The majority of the respondents were single (48 men and 27 women). Half of the female respondents (27) were married, divorced or widowed (Table 4.6). The educational level of men was much higher than women. About 42 percent of the women were illiterate and about 9 percent were merely literate. In contrast, about 29 percent of men had high school degrees and about 13 percent had higher education. Among women, the majority of whom were Somalis, there were many widows and the level of education was low (Table 4.7).

We asked the survey respondents how they/their families made a living in their country. 31.6 percent said their parents were small business owners; 21.8 percent said they were workers; 18.8 percent said they were government employees; 13.5 percent said they were farmers; 6 percent said they were merchants; and 2.3 percent reported having no income. Among the 6 percent who marked “other,” several indicated that their parents were killed. Although we did not ask about rural/urban backgrounds, the answers to this question may suggest that the majority of the migrants must have come from cities. We also asked what the respondent’s own occupation prior to migration was. 24.8 percent said they were students; 18.8 percent said they had small businesses; 14.3 percent said they were athletes or football players; 10.5 percent said they were workers; 9 percent said they were farmers; and 6 percent reported themselves as merchants. The high ratio of those who marked “other” (15.8 percent)

²⁴ In the tables, the responses by citizens of both Congo and D.R. Congo are captured under the heading of Congo, although almost all of them were from DRC.

²⁵ The responses by 6 Sudanese and 2 Djiboutian respondents are shown under the title of “other” under “country of origin.”

stemmed from women's answers as having no job; nevertheless there were also women who reported being traders.

4.2.1 Migration Process

West African respondents mostly cited economic difficulties as the reason why they left their countries, whereas Somalis predominantly cited threats against their security²⁶ (Table 4.8). 64.3 percent and 77.8 percent of Nigerians and Ghanaians respectively cited economic difficulties as their reason for migrating. 66.7 percent of Somalis said an attack against their family prompted their decision to leave. A further 30 percent cited other threats and increasing violence. 27.3 percent of Congolese marked increasing economic difficulties as the cause of their decision to leave the country; and 63.7 percent of them cited violence and security threats. Except 14.3 percent of Mauritians who said they left the country because of economic difficulties, the rest of them cited threats and attacks against their family. Ethiopians cited both economic reasons (57.1 percent) and security threats (42.9 percent) as the causes of their migration, whereas Eritreans only marked security related options to this question. Sudanese and Djiboutians ("other" in the nationalities) also mostly marked economic difficulties. The mixed responses to this question by members of many nationalities can be interpreted as supporting our argument in this report that asylum seeking and economically motivated irregular migration are intertwined. However, it should be kept in mind that, most often, generalized violence and economic collapse are also correlated. As we discussed in section 2.2, the current legal definition of refugees and asylum seekers does not match the extant conditions in refugee-sending areas where armed conflict, poverty and human rights violations are entangled (Hyndman, 2000).

Among the respondents, 34 percent entered Turkey on valid visas and passports and 66 percent entered illegally. Almost all Nigerians, Congolese and Kenyans had entered

²⁶ More than one option could be marked in response to this question.

legally, whereas almost all Somalis, Mauritians, Eritreans, Ethiopians entered illegally (Table 4.9). 44 Somali respondents said they traveled to Turkey by boat, 3 on foot, and 5 reported having come on foot and by boat. Only one Somali flew into Turkey. All 21 Nigerians arrived in Turkey by airplane. And so did all 9 Congolese and 5 Kenyans. Mauritians mostly came by boat; and Ethiopians traveled on foot through the land border (Table 4.10).

Nearly half of the Somalis could not remember through what border they entered Turkey; but those who reported a place cited Istanbul, Izmir, Hatay, Van, the land border with Greece (Edirne) and the Iraqi border as their points of entry. All Nigerians, Congolese, Kenyans and Burundians entered the country through Istanbul's airport. Most of the Eritreans and Ethiopians entered through Syria into the Hatay province (Table 4.11).

The reasons why the respondents chose to come to Turkey demonstrates a stark fact: many human smugglers promise illegal migrants that they would take them to a European Union country, and then abandon them off the coasts of Turkey. In response to the question "why did you come to Turkey and not some other country?"²⁷ 40.8 percent of the respondents marked "I was deceived that I would be taken to Greece but was left in Turkey" (Table 4.12).²⁸ 79.6 percent of Somali respondents marked this answer as well as 77.8 percent of Mauritians and 57.1 percent of Eritreans. 31.3 percent of the respondents said they came to Turkey because they had friends here. Half or more of the Nigerians, Ghanaians, Congolese, Ethiopians, Kenyans and Burundians marked this option. A total of 11.6 percent of the respondents expressed the opinion that it was easy to enter Turkey legally or illegally, and easy to move on to Europe via Turkey. A couple of Nigerians said they came to Turkey to

²⁷ Respondents could mark more than one option in answering this question.

²⁸ We were told by officials at both the Foreigners' Police Bureau in Istanbul and the UNHCR office that on several occasions African asylum seekers testified that the Greek coast guard steered their boats away from the Greek coast into Turkish territorial waters. Although these officials said that it is not possible to verify such claims, news and video footage showing Greek authorities leaving illegal migrants in Turkish territorial waters in the Aegean have recently appeared in the Turkish media (e.g. *Radikal*, 2006a and 2006b).

find jobs as football players.²⁹ Although no Ghanaians marked this option in the survey, our interview with one Ghanaian man indicates that finding employment in a Turkish football team was what motivated him to travel to Turkey. 8.8 percent said they came to Turkey for “other” reasons, their explanations for which included various economic factors as well as plans to pursue higher education in Turkey.

The duration of stay in Turkey exhibited some variation across different nationalities. 28 people had arrived in Istanbul during the preceding three months before they answered the questionnaire. 55 had been here for three months up to one year. 29 had been staying in Turkey for one year to three years, and 17 had been here for more than three years. Nearly 80 percent of the Somalis have been here for up to one year, whereas the majority of Nigerians and Ghanaians have lived in Istanbul for more than a year (Table 4.13). This pattern is in line with our observation that West African migrants have been here for some time as irregular economic migrants, whereas the inflow of Somali asylum seekers is ongoing.

An indicator of irregular migration was the duration of expiry of visas. We asked those respondents who entered Turkey legally but who were now in irregular condition when their visas expired (Table 4.14). 35.5 percent of those who answered this question said it has been 1 to 3 years since their Turkish visa expired. 25.8 percent said it has been 3 months to one year. And 22.6 percent of the respondents’ visas had expired more than 3 years ago. Almost half of those who overstayed their visas were Nigerians. Next came Ghanaians and Congolese.

Respondents did not have a clear idea about how much longer they would stay in Turkey. 64.7 percent said they had no plan about when to leave, 19.3 percent said they would

²⁹ Several Burundians marked “to play football professionally” in their answers. This unlikely answer may be due to their misunderstanding of the question. After they arrived in Turkey and applied for asylum, they may have thought that playing football was a possibility, rather than having based their migration decision on this. Indeed, our interview with a young Sierra Leonean man gives a similar impression. Having entered Turkey illegally and then having applied for asylum, this 20 year-old man said the only thing he could do for a living was to play football.

stay until they attained their goals, 9.2 percent said they would remain here until they found a chance for clandestine passage to Europe, and 6.7 percent said they were waiting for the UNHCR's decision on their application. In response to the question "What would you do if you fail to cross the border into Europe?" 35.2 percent of the respondents said they would somehow continue to stay in Turkey, 22.5 percent expressed the intention to go back to their countries and 24 percent had no idea.

Those who entered Turkey legally said they would leave Turkey by air travel; whereas those who entered illegally said they would seek to find passage through Turkey's land borders (68.2 percent) or wait for UNHCR resettlement (18.8 percent); and 11.8 percent said they would not leave Turkey (Table 4.15).

The responses to the question "What country do you want to go to from Turkey?" demonstrate that many African migrants hope to reach Western Europe through Turkey, but that some of them have other plans such as going back or staying in Turkey. 23 persons specified Greece and 22 specified Western Europe (45.9 percent of all responses) to this open-ended question. While 21.4 percent (21 persons) said they wanted to stay in Turkey, 11.2 percent (11 persons) expressed a wish to go back to their country (Table 4.16). The breakdown of the responses according to nationalities shows some interesting patterns. 70.5 percent of Nigerians said they wanted to go to Western Europe or Greece and 23.5 percent said they planned to go back home. Likewise, 80 percent of Ghanaians expressed a wish to go to Western Europe or Greece, and 20 percent wanted to return home. Somalis were most confused about this question: around 30 percent said they did not know, around 38 percent said they wouldn't leave Turkey, almost 19 percent answered Western Europe or Greece, 5.4 percent said they would wait for the UNHCR decision, and another 5.4 percent wanted to return home.

63 respondents said they had made asylum applications and 64 had not. 43 Somalis had made applications, whereas 9 had not, which might be due to the fact that they had just arrived in the country. Less than half of all of the Congolese, Mauritians, Eritreans and Ethiopians had asylum applications, as opposed to all Burundians (Table 4.17). This may be an indication that irregular migration and asylum seeking are intertwined for those countries' nationals, but it also may reflect the fact that not all regions or ethnic/religious groups in a country are affected by civil war or persecution (e.g. Eritrea, Ethiopia and Mauritania).

There was a link between the reasons for migrating/ leaving one's country and whether one has made an asylum application. 35 people who said they left their country because of a security threat, a persecution threat, an attack against them or because of violence applied for asylum in Turkey, whereas 15 people who cited similar reasons for migrating did not. 35 people, who cited economic difficulties or other reasons for why they decided to migrate, had not made asylum applications (Table 4.18).

4.2.2 Life in Istanbul: Social Interactions

In this section, we examine African migrants' life experience in Istanbul in terms of their interactions with each other and with Turkish citizens and authorities.

The majority of the respondents to the survey lived in the derelict neighborhoods of the Beyoğlu District (Tarlabaşı and Dolapdere) (38.2 percent) and in the neighborhoods of Kumkapı and Aksaray (48.1 percent), which are attraction points for irregular migrants from various regions. There were others who lived in the Şişli district and other neighborhoods. African migrants mostly live with their compatriots in Istanbul. 42.4 percent of the respondents said they shared apartments or rental rooms with others from their country, 16.2 percent lived with their co-ethnics and 19.2 percent lived with their co-religionists (some respondents gave multiple answers, therefore these percentages overlap). 12.2 percent lived

with their family members. Only 5.2 percent lived with Africans from other countries, and 2.2 percent lived with non-African migrants (Table 4.19).

Another indicator of in-group social interaction is church-going. In our sample, 73 people described themselves as Muslims and 55 persons as Christians. Among the Christians, 61.5 percent said they went to church in Istanbul, and among Muslims, 40.3 percent said they went to mosque. Among the church-goers, 46.9 percent said their church was frequented by other Africans; 18.8 percent said the regular attendees consisted of non-African foreigners; and 25 percent said the regular attendees consisted of Turkish citizens (Table 4.20). Indeed, two evangelical churches that we attended had mixed West African following. These churches had Turkish language mass at a different time on Sundays, suggesting that some Africans might attend the services where Turks are present. Among the mosque-going Muslim migrants, all said that the worshippers were Turks. So, attending worshipping services fosters a West African community, whereas attending mosque may possibly foster greater interaction between Muslim migrants and Turkish citizens. However, we cannot make a generalization, since not all Muslims (mostly Somalis in our sample), and in any case, only men pray in the mosque.

Although social interaction among Africans across different nationalities is not very high, respondents' opinion about their relations with other Africans was overall positive. Whereas 36.5 percent said they had no problems with other Africans and 38.8 percent said they had good relations, only 1.2 percent said their relations were bad. While 5.9 percent had no opinion yet because of recent arrival, 15.3 said they had no relations to other Africans (Table 4.21).

In parallel fashion, respondents' opinions on their relationship with Turkish citizens were overall not negative. 35.6 percent said they had no problem with Turks, 28.8 percent said they had good relations, whereas only 4.8 percent said their relationship to Turks was

bad. 26 percent reported having no relation with Turkish citizens, which may be partly because of having arrived in Istanbul very recently (Table 4.22).

A related question in the survey was on the greatest problems that African migrants face in Istanbul. “Discrimination” was cited as a problem in only 4.7 percent of the responses to that question and “ill treatment by neighbors” was cited in only 0.4 percent of them (see Table 4.28 in section 4.2.3 below). However, the low report of “discrimination” might be misleading because of the wording of this option in the question. During the interviews, people’s perceptions about others’ treatment of them became apparent in their accounts of personal experiences and anecdotes, rather than through abstract concepts such as “discrimination.” Perhaps confirming this observation, 29.5 of the respondents mentioned “ill treatment by strangers” as a problem although they did not mention discrimination (see Table 4.28 below).

One of the reasons why respondents did not have much interaction with Africans from other nationalities, let alone Turkish citizens, may have to do with language barriers. Only 26.5 percent spoke English, 13 percent spoke Arabic and 11.4 percent spoke French. 47 percent spoke various native languages.³⁰ Regarding the weakness of their interactions with Turkish citizens, African migrants’ weak Turkish language skills might be a hindrance. Only 13 people rated their knowledge of Turkish to be “quite well,” 18 said they knew some Turkish, 41 knew very little Turkish and 55 did not speak Turkish at all. The great majority of those who said they spoke some Turkish or knew Turkish well (20 out of 31) had been staying in Turkey for more than a year.

Encounters with the police constitute perhaps the most important aspect of irregular African migrants’ and asylum seekers’ interactions with Turkish society. We asked the survey respondents if and how many times they were stopped by the police and asked for their

³⁰ More than one option could be ticked for this answer. Our survey was conducted with the help of two assistants speaking English, Arabic and Somali and another one who spoke French and English.

identity documents, and if they were ever detained by the police. We also asked their opinions about police treatment of African migrants. Overall, complaints about ill treatment by the police were not palpable.

81 persons said they were never stopped by the police. Among the 43 who answered “yes,” 33 said they were stopped more than three times (Table 4.23). Among the people who answered the question on detentions, 87 people said they were never detained by the police whereas 40 said they were detained once (Table 4.24). But there may have been some inaccuracy in the response to this question for two reasons. First, the question did not specify whether the detention was at the point of illegal entry into Turkey or during one’s stay in Istanbul. We know that many Somalis are initially detained and then they apply for asylum. Secondly, some people might have given a false negative answer to this question.

72 people who responded to the question “do you think Turkish police treats Africans differently than other migrants?” answered in the negative while 20 said “yes” and 33 said they did not have an opinion.³¹ The largest group who thought police treatment towards them was poor were Nigerians (6 people), but more Nigerians thought that police treatment towards them was no different (12 people) (Table 4.25). Regarding the question on the greatest problems of African migrants in Istanbul, only 1.7 percent of the respondents cited “ill treatment by police” (See Table 4.28 in section 4.2.3 below).

We also asked those respondents who have been in Turkey for more than one year their assessment of the changes in the police’s treatment of Africans. 82.4 percent of the respondents said police treatment has improved considerably, 5.9 percent said it has not changed, and 5.9 percent said it has worsened. Those respondents who marked “other” cited discrimination and mistreatment against them (5.9 percent).

³¹ Although the wording of the question did not specify in what way police treatment was different, in face-to-face surveying, we explained that it meant negative treatment.

4.2.3 Life in Istanbul: Problems

In this section, we discuss the problems that Africans face in Istanbul in terms of income earning, social aid, housing and health.

We asked the respondents how they provided for themselves financially (Table 4.26).³² The largest number of responses was “I do odd jobs” (31.3 percent). 16 percent of the respondents said they had no source of income. 13 percent said they “worked for wages in a factory/workshop/firm,” 10.7 percent said they sold goods, 6.9 percent said they received money from charities. Some said they borrowed money from friends (6.1 percent), some of their families sent for them (5.3 percent). Among the 6.1 percent of the respondents who marked “other” in answering this question, some mentioned that they were living on money which they brought with them to Turkey, and a couple mentioned working for NGOs.³³ Among Somalis, the largest group said they had no source of income; among Nigerians and Ghanaians, doing odd jobs was more common. Nigerians and Ghanaians also reported selling goods, which may mean peddling goods on the street, or trading in goods. Mauritians likewise reported doing odd jobs and selling goods most commonly. Ethiopians reported working for wages more than any other group; this stems from the fact that some women worked in domestic service. Several people (Somalis, a Sudanese and a Djiboutian) said they begged for money. Begging for money was also reported by a couple of newcomer asylum seekers we interviewed. However, we should note based on our interviews that Africans mostly beg for money from other Africans.

There are only a handful of places where asylum seekers and migrants can ask for social aid. We asked the survey respondents if they had applied for and received any aid

³² More than one option could be selected in answering this question.

³³ We know that a few people work as interpreters and volunteers at RLAP and IIMP. Also, several people could have marked “other” in order to conceal illicit forms of income earning.

(Table 4.27).³⁴ 22.2 percent said they never applied for any aid. There were some Somalis who never applied for aid (18.8 percent), a finding that seems surprising at first, since Somali asylum seekers most often get into contact with NGOs soon after they arrive in Turkey. The fact that there were newcomers among the respondents may explain this finding. Nigerians and Ghanaians were the least likely to have sought financial assistance, with 48.3 percent and 36.4 percent, respectively. The largest group among all respondents, 34.5 percent, said they had applied for aid to IIMP, which provides emergency medical care, blankets, food, etc. to both migrants and asylum seekers. 17 percent had applied to the Refugee Legal Aid Program (RLAP). 14.9 percent said they asked for financial assistance from UNHCR and 6.2 percent from ICMC. Although respondents reported the last two (UNHCR and ICMC) separately, in fact, ICMC dispenses UNHCR financial assistance to asylum seekers and refugees.³⁵ Only 3.6 percent of the respondents received aid from independent churches (not part of the IIMP), and several asked Turkish charities for help.

The greatest problem faced by the respondents was financial. In answer to the question “what are your greatest problems in Istanbul?” about 42 percent of the respondents pointed out “lack of income”³⁶ (Table 4.28). As mentioned in the previous section, the second most cited problem was “ill treatment by strangers” (29.5 percent) and the third most mentioned problem was housing (9.8 percent). Discrimination came fourth with 4.7 percent and “hunger” was cited in 3.8 percent of the responses. Those people who marked “other” in response to this question cited their health problems, psychological problems and feelings of hopelessness. An interesting finding is that the ratio of people who highlighted lack of incomes as their greatest problem did not show much variance across different nationalities.

³⁴ Respondents were allowed to select more than one option in answering this question.

³⁵ We report the answers to this question, although there is some inconsistency in the responses. Some Nigerians and Ghanaians marked UNHCR and ICMC as institutions to which they applied for aid, although UNHCR and ICMC obviously do not provide any aid to economic migrants; and no Nigerians and Ghanaians in our sample reported having applied for asylum.

³⁶ Respondents could choose more than one option in answering this question.

This appears to be in contrast to our observation that West Africans are somewhat better off than asylum seeking East Africans (see section 4.3 below). We may explain this finding by saying that there is a generalized perception of lowness of incomes among Africans, although there is variation between different national groups in terms of living standards.

We inquired about the health problems of the respondents. Among 118 who answered the question about whether they had serious health problems, 101 answered in the negative. 5 people reported having tuberculosis, 2 people had diabetes, 2 had heart disease and 2 had epilepsy. 6 people who marked “other” reported psychological depression and various infections. We also asked if they ever got sick in Istanbul and if they received medical attention. 46 people reported that they received medical care for their illnesses. 21 of these said the IIMP provided/paid for the medical care; 13 people said they paid for it themselves; 7 said the UNHCR or ICMC covered their hospital bill; 3 people borrowed money from their friends; and 2 received medical care at Turkish tuberculosis clinics (*Verem Savaş Dispanseri*).

Although not too many people reported having chronic diseases, we should draw attention to the existence of tuberculosis among migrants and asylum seekers. Given that many migrants, especially asylum seekers, live in crowded apartments, there is a danger that the roommates of persons infected with TB can contract the disease. This danger may be especially serious because many asylum seekers do not have proper nutrition and may have no other recourse than to live in damp places without proper heating during the colder months. Although screening for TB is available at Turkish tuberculosis clinics, there has been at least one case in the past when a certain hospital refused treatment of a multi-drug resistant TB patient because of the high cost of the medication. An NGO worker told us the details of this Congolese man’s case, who was repatriated in 2004 when he received a “contagion-free” document. His illness was not diagnosed on time and then he initially received a wrong

medical treatment, while living in very poor conditions with several other men from his country.

A significant problem for irregular migrants and asylum seekers who have children is access to education. People who do not have legal residency in Turkey are unable to send their school-age children to primary school, although there is a vague mention of education for asylum seekers' and refugees' children in the relevant government regulations. Among the respondents to the survey, 14 people said they had children in Istanbul. 5 of them were able to send their kids to a school program run by a church; while 8 said their children received no schooling here. One person's child was too young to go to school.

In concluding this section, we may describe the respondents' opinions of their living conditions in Istanbul. Among the 82 persons who answered the question on this, 44 said their living conditions in Istanbul were "better in terms of personal security," 20 said their living conditions here were about the same as in their country. 7 people said they were better off in Istanbul economically, but 8 said they were economically worse off. And 3 said their conditions in Istanbul were worse than in their country in terms of personal security. We asked the respondents if they would like to go back to their countries. Only 18 answered this question positively, and they were from West Africa. Among them, 10 said they would like to do so because their life was much harder here than before. One said it was impossible to cross into Europe. Two said they were not able to make enough money here to send back home. And two said the economic conditions back in their country were improving. Among "other" reasons for wanting to go back, plans for crossing into Europe, but returning home in case this plan did not materialize, were expressed. So, although few people wanted to go back, those who did were apparently disappointed with what they found in Turkey, or hopeless about prospects for getting into Europe.

4.3 A View of African Migrants' Lives in Istanbul

4.3.1 Social Interactions among Africans and their Living Conditions

In August 2005, the annual “African Football Cup” took place in a football field in the neighborhood of Kurtuluş. The Nigerian team won the final game against Guinea to the loud cheers of their fans. Although most of the spectators were Africans, the turnout of Turkish citizens was high. The teams had been preparing for this tournament in fields in Kurtuluş, Dolapdere, Tarlabası and Hacıhüsrev for some time. Many West Africans play football in Istanbul regularly, as some of them have come to Turkey in the hope of getting into a second or third division Turkish team. This was one of the few social events in which Africans from diverse countries (and not just West Africans) came together in Istanbul. Football is also a medium through which Turkish citizens and Africans can interact with each other, as Turks and Africans often play against each other. Apart from that, the only social venues where young Turkish citizens and African migrants socialize with each other are a couple of reggae clubs in Beyoğlu.

It may be argued that Africans from the east and the west of the continent do not intermingle and form strong social bonds with each other in Istanbul. This may have various reasons which would be applicable to irregular migrants and asylum seekers from other regions of the world. There are cultural and ethnic differences and even animosities, and there is often a language barrier. For instance, Congolese are said to be an insular group, because they are Francophone. In general, English language skills of persons are weak if they do not come from countries where English is not an official language.

Among the asylum seekers, persons from the same country often share apartments, interact with each other and help each other out to the extent that this is possible. For instance, several Somalis and a Sierra Leonean man we interviewed mentioned that when they first arrived in Istanbul, they were taken in by their fellow countrymen and not charged money for

rent for several months. However, since nobody is resourceful enough, the offer of a free place ends after a while.

Asylum seekers from Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea mostly live in the Galata neighborhood of the Beyoğlu district and in the Kumkapı and Aksaray neighborhoods. Some asylum seekers live in the Aşağı Laleli neighborhood of Eminönü district, not far from Aksaray. Buildings are older and more derelict in Galata, but not much better in Aksaray and Laleli. Often, more than ten people share an apartment, and several people share a room. In interviews, we were told that persons who share a room or apartment might have to take turns to sleep due to the lack of space. These apartments usually lack heating; people use electric space heaters, and small electric ranges or small LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) tubes for cooking. Several persons said that their apartments were damp and infested with insects. West Africans are more likely to live in the Tarlabaşı neighborhood of Beyoğlu, and many Somalis also live there. The apartments and rental rooms in Tarlabaşı are also derelict. Certain parts of Tarlabaşı are distinct because many West Africans live there, and there are some stores that cater to them. For instance, international telephone call centers are a gathering place for West Africans.

Some of the interviewees complained about the prejudicial attitudes of Turkish citizens towards them. For instance, a complaint expressed by those who have lived here for several years was that landlords were hesitant to rent apartments. However, a Nigerian and a Sudanese said, once their current landlords got to know them, those prejudices were removed. In addition, some complained that the word “African migrant” was associated with “illegal migration.” During the African football cup in summer 2005, Nigerians expressed the hope that this event would give a positive picture of Africans to the Turkish society. But the event was hardly covered in the Turkish press. In general, it may be argued that Istanbul’s citizens

know very little about African migrants and the conditions and reasons that brought them here.

4.3.2 Survival Strategies and Income Earning

The interviewees, like the survey respondents, complained of the dearth of income earning opportunities. West Africans were also aware of the difficulty – and hence did not have much expectation – of finding employment, given that the Turkish citizens in the areas where they lived were also jobless and poor. There appears to be a difference between West African irregular migrants and East African asylum seekers in terms of how they survive in Istanbul. Although this difference is not a sharp line, it may be argued that economically motivated irregular/transit migrants engage in some kind of income generating activity and therefore are better off, whereas asylum seekers lead a barren existence in Istanbul based on marginal survival activities.³⁷

West Africans are more likely to be engaged in some kind of “trade” compared to East Africans in Istanbul. Some ethnic groups in Nigeria, Ghana and Senegal have traditionally been long distance traders (Diouf, 2000; Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1997). In the face of economic collapse and civil strife, people from Central African countries such as Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo have started to engage in informal trade between their countries and Western Europe in the past two decades (MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga, 2000). In Istanbul, too, it is possible to see various commercial activities by West Africans, as well as Congolese. We interviewed two young Senegalese men who peddled goods in street markets. Their wares were not African “souvenirs” but small trinkets that Turkish peddlers also sold. A Ghanaian man we interviewed said he went back and forth between his country and Turkey in order to buy and sell goods.

³⁷ Here, the term “survival strategy” refers to activities targeting income maximization (working, begging, peddling, etc.) as well as those targeting the minimization of expenditures (sharing crowded apartments, staying hungry, etc.) (for instance see, Gonzalez Arriagada, 2000 and Gonzalez De La Rocha, 1994).

Indeed, such “suitcase trade,” that is, informal exports from Turkey to various African countries, is a significant form of commercial activity. Three men, a Ghanaian, a Nigerian and a Senegalese, told us that they assisted their compatriots who came to Istanbul for “suitcase trade.” Sometimes, they would send a batch of clothes from Istanbul to someone who made an order back at home. Apparently, some Congolese irregular migrants also engage in such small-scale “suitcase trade” (Öcal, 2005). In fact, suitcase traders from various African countries regularly come to Turkey to buy clothing, and their business is centered in the Beyazıt and Laleli neighborhoods, which have long been the center of informal exports to former Soviet republics, Eastern Europe and North Africa. Our interviews indicate that the suitcase trade to Africa is sometimes intertwined with irregular migration, since some of the traders overstay their visas in Istanbul.³⁸

There are several small shops operated by Africans in Istanbul. In Tarlabası, we visited a restaurant, Lady V’s, operated by a Nigerian woman, situated in an apartment on the second floor of an old building. The restaurant offered Nigerian food and also some imported items for personal care. In Tarlabası, several Nigerian men sell/rent African movie videos, music tapes and CDs, which are brought to Turkey by Nigerian traders. In Laleli, a small store operated as an “African café” where some imported food items were on sale. All of these establishments appeared to be informal.

There are a few formal establishments operated by Africans as well. The easiest way to have a legal business for a foreigner is to be married to a Turkish citizen and to have obtained a residence and work permit in this way. Some people can earn a residence and work permit in Turkey after graduating from a Turkish university and finding employment.³⁹ A

³⁸ This observation is in line with the findings of earlier research on the informal “shuttle trade” between Turkey and former Soviet republics: in that case, poorer shuttle traders switched back and forth between working illegally as Russian speaking salespersons in Laleli and shuttling goods to their countries (Yükseker, 2004).

³⁹ Student visas for foreigners do not permit them to work in Turkey; and graduation from a Turkish university does not entitle foreigners to work permits, either; but if they find legal employment, several years later the residence and work permits can become indefinite.

Sudanese man we interviewed operated a music club in Beyoğlu frequented by Africans, Turkish citizens and European expatriates alike. Two Nigerians we interviewed who were married to Turkish citizens also said that they had small trading businesses in Istanbul. Based on the accounts of the interviewees, other African-operated cafes existed a few years ago, indicating high turnover in such entrepreneurial activities.

Some African migrants and asylum seekers find informal work in Istanbul, but for sub-minimum wages. In Tarlabası, Aksaray, Kumkapı, Galata and Laleli, Africans' neighbors are poor Turkish citizens, often the Roma or internally displaced Kurds, or sometimes both. These neighborhoods, although centrally located, in general lack opportunities for regular income earning. Therefore, the income earning activities that Africans engage in are not unique to them, but exist in a continuum of coping strategies in which the poor inhabitants of those areas are involved. Below, we describe some cash generating activities that were reported by asylum seekers and East Africans.

Several Eritrean and Ethiopian women who answered our survey reported working as domestic laborers in private homes. These women entered Turkey illegally through the Syrian border and had previously been working in Lebanon in domestic services. There is also evidence that members of evangelical churches who help African asylum seekers may employ them as domestic help (Ekberzade, 2006).

Some East and West Africans work informally in workshops especially in lighting fittings and garment production in the back streets of the Beyoğlu district. Their reported monthly wages are lower than the legal minimum. We also heard complaints that employers sometimes simply do not pay, knowing that an undocumented migrant cannot report such an incident to Turkish authorities. In Kumkapı, some Africans said they worked at the wholesale fish market for the equivalent of a few dollars a day.

Odd jobs such as cleaning or carrying boxes for storeowners are called *çabuk çabuk* by African migrants in Istanbul. Meaning “do it quickly” or “hurry up” in Turkish, *çabuk çabuk* refers to doing some work for food or for a little cash. From the perspective of the “employer,” this is something that needs to be done quickly. But from the Africans’ perspective, *çabuk çabuk* has a double connotation. On the one hand, it means that some Turks order them around. On the other, *çabuk çabuk* is literally a fleeting experience that fails to provide for their daily needs.

Some of the survey respondents reported some survival strategies that are unique in highlighting the extreme precariousness of their living conditions in Istanbul. Some newly-arrived young male asylum seekers mentioned begging for cash to buy food from other Africans. Some said they “worked for food” or worked for an employer who provided shelter but no wages. Indeed, some newcomer asylum seekers report hunger (“Sometimes I do not eat for 2-3 days”) and lack of shelter (“I have been sleeping on the street”) as their greatest problems in Istanbul. Under these conditions, the life of African asylum seekers in Istanbul becomes stripped down to a bare existence, where even food and shelter are precarious “amenities.”

Finally, it appears that some Africans in Istanbul may be involved in the forged visa/passport business, although our survey and interviews did not give us any information about this. However, the observations of some NGO volunteers as well as the Foreigners’ Police crime statistics mentioned in section 4.1 suggest that some Africans are involved in the document forging/human smuggling business.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ According to the Turkish Criminal Code, making false visas and passports would be offenses under the titles of fraud and forgery, the categories listed in Table 4.4.

4.4 Discussion

Turkish filmmaker Berke Baş's documentary "Transit" [In Transit] (2004) portrays the lives of three migrant families in Istanbul in the first half of this decade: one Iraqi Christian and one Iraqi Kurdish family who sought asylum in Turkey as well as a young Nigerian couple. The Nigerian man and woman had arrived in Turkey as transit migrants separately, but after a few attempts, were both unable to achieve clandestine passage into Western Europe. As the director followed the lives of the Nigerian couple over a year, Rosaline and Jonathan accepted that their stay here was not as "temporary" as they had hoped it to be. They got married in an evangelical church in Istanbul and were trying to improve the poor conditions of their life in Istanbul's Tarlabaşı neighborhood. Watching the film leaves one with the thought that, not only for the Nigerian couple, but also for the Iraqi Christian family who were resettled in Canada after several years' wait, "transit migration" was not so much about "transiting" Istanbul as it was about seeking to create a meaningful life in this city.

Our objective in this report was to provide a broad overview of the various ways in which African migrants and asylum seekers create a life in Istanbul. More than being merely statistics on irregular migration and refugee flows, Africans in Istanbul actively struggle to make a living, build communities, provide for their basic needs and shape the patterns of their journeys. But in this process, they come across many hurdles.

The findings of our research raise questions for further research on irregular migration through Turkey in general and Africans' lives in Istanbul in particular, rather than provide definitive answers. Future research on the following issues would supplement the findings of this study and provide a better picture of the flows of people from Africa to/through Turkey: the organization of irregular migration by human smugglers and other migration

entrepreneurs; the patterns of trade between West Africa and Turkey and the relation between informal trade and irregular migration; community building by Africans in Istanbul, especially the role of evangelical churches; and the patterns of social interaction between Turkish citizens and African migrants.

5. Conclusion

As we argued above, irregular migration and asylum seekers' flows from Africa through Istanbul are not temporary or "transitory" phenomena. These processes affect migrants' lives in profound ways. As such, irregular migration also affects Turkish society. NGO representatives, police officers and the migrants themselves point out that the Africans in Istanbul have important problems. From a humanitarian perspective, the most urgent problems are access to healthcare for all asylum seekers, and access to education and decent housing. From a socio-economic perspective, all asylum seekers and irregular migrants complain that they cannot work legally.

As Turkey gradually harmonizes its asylum and migration regime with that of the EU, it fears that the number of irregular migrants and asylum seekers would increase. For the reasons that we explained in section 2.1, EU's anti-immigration and anti-asylum policies have already increased the flows of irregular migrants and refugees in surrounding regions such as Eastern Europe, Turkey and North Africa. In this sense, this fear is not unfounded. Recalling the experience of Central and Eastern European countries on their way to integration with the EU, one may claim that Turkey could become a "ditch" for irregular migrants and asylum seekers as they struggle to enter "Fortress Europe." Indeed, recent news about Greece's reported misuse of (or failure to implement) the readmission protocol raises concern in this regard.⁴¹ Therefore, as Turkey harmonizes its immigration and asylum regime with the EU,

⁴¹ According to the Turkish coast guard command, Greek coast guard boats steered illegal migrants' boats into Turkish waters in two incidents in July 2004 and May 2006 in violation of both humanitarian principles and the readmission protocol (*Radikal*, 2006a). More recently in September 2006, six illegal migrants were drowned in

the increasing humanitarian and financial burden should be shared rather than turning Turkey into a buffer for unwanted illegal migrants.

However, when we examine the numbers of apprehended irregular migrants (which must constitute only a small portion of the total number irregular migrants in Turkey) and asylum seekers in Turkey in the last decade, three observations emerge: irregular African migrants constitute a very small group compared to irregular migrants from former Soviet republics; the number of asylum seekers (African and other) makes up only a small proportion of all irregular migrants; and African asylum seekers constitute a minority of all asylum applications. With these facts in mind, it may be argued that adopting policies that would address the humanitarian needs and human rights of asylum seekers and irregular migrants are unlikely to significantly increase the flow of migrants from Africa to Turkey.

Therefore, Turkey should take steps to provide access to healthcare, housing and education for the African asylum seeking population. It should also consider policies for granting work permits to asylum applicants and refugees and simplify the application for work permits by migrants.

Turkey plans to create reception centers for asylum seekers and refugees as part of its National Programme. On the one hand, the establishment of reception centers should be hastened. But on the other, allowing asylum seekers and refugees to work, and letting them reside freely in an integrated manner with the society, may yield more humane results. This may also be more efficient and cost-effective. Indeed, the reluctance of asylum seekers even to register in “satellite cities” and police officers’ own admission that refugees (not necessarily Africans) do not prefer to stay in the only existing reception center (in Yozgat) indicate the difficulty of implementing “camp-style” solutions to address the humanitarian needs of this group.

an incident in which the surviving illegal migrants accused Greek authorities’ for having dumped them in the sea off Izmir (*Radikal*, 2006b).

On the other hand, Turkish civil society should also assume a role in providing humanitarian and social assistance to migrants and asylum seekers. Although under-funded, we observed that the existing NGOs catering to asylum seekers (mainly Africans) played a vital role in helping these people adjust to the new realities of their lives in Turkey. Given that the number of asylum seekers is not overwhelming, if domestic NGOs also became involved, social and humanitarian assistance would become more widely available.

TABLES

TABLE 2.1: ESTIMATED NUMBER OF REFUGEES			
Year	Refugees	Year	Refugees
1980	8,446,000	1993	16,306,000
1981	9,706,000	1994	15,754,000
1982	10,310,000	1995	14,896,000
1983	10,610,000	1996	13,357,000
1984	10,717,000	1997	12,015,000
1985	11,851,000	1998	11,481,000
1986	12,620,000	1999	11,687,000
1987	13,114,000	2000	12,130,000
1988	14,331,000	2001	12,117,000
1989	14,716,000	2002	10,594,000
1990	17,378,000	2003	9,680,000
1991	16,837,000	2004	9,237,000
1992	17,818,000		

Source: UNHCR, 2005

TABLE 2.2: ORIGIN OF MAJOR REFUGEE POPULATIONS IN 2004		
Country of Origin	Main Countries of Asylum	Total
Afghanistan	Pakistan / Iran / Germany / Netherlands / United Kingdom	2,084,900
Sudan	Chad / Uganda / Ethiopia / Kenya / D.R. Congo / Central African Rep.	730,600
Burundi	Tanzania / D.R. Congo / Rwanda / South Africa / Canada	485,800
Democratic Rep. Congo	Tanzania / Zambia / Congo / Burundi / Rwanda	462,200
Somalia	Kenya / Yemen / United Kingdom / USA / Djibouti	389,300
Palestinians	Saudi Arabia / Egypt / Iraq / Libya / Algeria	350,600
Viet Nam	China / Germany / USA / France / Switzerland	349,800
Liberia	Guinea / Côte d'Ivoire / Sierra Leone / Ghana / USA	335,500
Iraq	Iran / Germany / Netherlands / United Kingdom / Sweden	311,800
Azerbaijan	Armenia / Germany / USA / Netherlands	250,500
Source: UNHCR, 2005		

TABLE 2.3: MAJOR REFUGEE ARRIVALS IN 2004

Origin	Main Countries of Asylum	Total
Sudan	Chad / Uganda / Kenya	146,900
D.R. Congo	Burundi / Rwanda / Zambia / Uganda	38,100
Somalia	Yemen / Kenya	19,100
Iraq	Syria	12,000
Côte d'Ivoire	Liberia / Mali	5,900
Burundi	Rwanda / Tanzania	4,200
Liberia	Sierra Leone / Côte d'Ivoire / Guinea	3,700
Central African Rep.	Chad	500
Rwanda	Malawi / D.R. Congo	500
Russian Federation	Azerbaijan	500

Source: UNHCR, 2005

TABLE 2.4: AFRICAN REFUGEES (End of 2004)			
Country	Total population	Country	Total population
Algeria	10,691	Libya	1,720
Belize	9	Mali	483
Benin	309	Mauritania	31,131
Botswana	6	Morocco	1,319
Burundi	485,764	Mozambique	104
Cameroon	7,629	Niger	689
Central African Rep.	31,069	Nigeria	23,888
Chad	52,663	Rwanda	63,808
Congo	28,152	Senegal	8,332
D.R. Congo	462,203	Sierra Leone	41,801
Djibouti	495	Somalia	389,272
Egypt	5,376	South Africa	272
Eritrea	131,119	Sudan	730,612
Ethiopia	63,105	Swaziland	14
Gambia	684	Togo	10,819
Ghana	14,767	Tunisia	2,518
Guinea	4,782	Zimbabwe	9,568
Kenya	3,847	Western Sahara	165,729
Lesotho	7	TOTAL	3,120,223
Liberia	335,467	GRAND TOTAL	9,236,521

Source: UNHCR, 2005

TABLE 4.1: INDIVIDUAL ASYLUM APPLICATIONS AND REFUGEE STATUS DETERMINATION IN TURKEY (2005)

Country	Pending Begin Year	Applied During Year	Decisions During the Year– Accepted	Decisions During the Year- Rejected	Otherwise Closed	Pending End Year
Congo	0	1	0	0	0	1
Burundi	3	5	3	0	1	4
D.R. Congo	14	12	2	1	7	16
Eritrea	17	18	6	1	12	16
Ethiopia	23	32	2	3	19	31
Ivory Coast	0	1	0	0	0	1
Liberia	5	2	5	0	2	5
Mauritania	0	14	0	0	1	13
Nigeria	7	8	0	2	8	5
Sierra Leone	0	0	0	0	0	0
Somalia	214	473	82	16	152	437
Sudan	39	76	6	4	35	70
Rwanda	0	1	0	0	1	0
Total, African C.	322	643	106	27	238	599
Grand Total*	3929	3914	1368	377	2874	4969

Source: UNHCR Office, Ankara.

* Grand total includes Iran, Iraq and other countries.

TABLE 4.2: REFUGEE POPULATION IN TURKEY BY LEGAL STATUS AND TYPE OF RECOGNITION (End of 2005)

Country of Origin	Legal Status		Type of Recognition	
	UNHCR Mandate	Total	Indiv. Recogn.	Total
Burundi	3	3	3	3
D.R. Congo	2	2	2	2
Eritrea	4	4	4	4
Ethiopia	3	3	3	3
Mauritania	7	7	7	7
Rwanda	1	1	1	1
Sierra Leone	1	1	1	1
Somalia	66	66	66	66
Sudan	7	7	7	7
Tunisia	1	1	1	1
Total	95			
Grand Total*	2342	2399	2342	2399

Source: UNHCR Office, Ankara.

* Grand total includes Iran, Iraq and other countries.

TABLE 4.3: BREAKDOWN BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN OF APPREHENSIONS FOR ILLEGAL MIGRATION (1995-2005)*

AFRICAN COUNTRIES	Algeria	2857	Ghana	401	Rwanda	480
	Belize	6	Guinea	123	Senegal	548
	Benin	6	Kenya	224	Sierra Leone	940
	Botswana	2	Lesotho	1	Somalia	8512
	Burundi	149	Liberia	211	South Africa	952
	Cameroon	124	Libya	574	Sudan	735
	C. African Republic	39	Mali	42	Swaziland	18
	Chad	56	Mauritania	6598	Togo	8
	Djibouti	1	Morocco	4625	Tunisia	1789
	Egypt	1602	Mozambique	3	Zaire	10
	Eritrea	145	Niger	345	Zimbabwe	21
	Ethiopia	477	Nigeria	2049	West Sahara	4
	Gambia	159	Congo	265		
Total, African Countries						35,101
SELECTED COUNTRIES	Afghanistan	64922	India	4044	Poland	929
	Albania	4424	Iraq	107712	Romania	21519
	Azerbaijan	10618	Iran	24248	Russia	16892
	Bangladesh	17389	Kazakhstan	2445	Serbia and Montenegro	3666
	Belarus	1161	Kyrgyzstan	1698	Syria	6906
	Bulgaria	9846	Latvia	149	Tajikistan	285
	China	3513	Lithuania	290	Ukraine	17224
	Armenia	3723	Macedonia	1853	Unknown Country of Origin	13801
	Georgia	16445	Moldova	51434		
Total						407,136
Grand Total						580,139

* Data provided by the Foreigners' Police. "Grand Total" includes all apprehensions from all countries, including "Selected Countries" and "African Countries."

TABLE 4.4: AFRICANS APPREHENDED FOR SELECTED CRIMINAL OFFENSES*

Country of Origin	Visa Violations	Illegal Entry/exit	Forgery	Human Smuggling	Fraud
Africa	0	22	1	0	0
Burundi	0	4	1	0	0
Algeria	35	43	54	0	1
Eritrea	0	4	7	0	0
Ethiopia	1	47	2	0	0
Morocco	49	66	93	0	6
Gambia	10	6	1	0	0
Ghana	15	51	10	0	0
So. Africa	1	6	14	0	0
Cameroon	2	1	6	0	2
Kenya	9	4	15	0	0
Congo	6	10	28	0	0
Liberia	0	5	1	0	4
Libya	1	1	8	0	0
Egypt	12	187	18	1	0
Mauritania	0	180	6	0	0
Nigeria	89	84	53	0	24
Rwanda	0	16	0	0	0
Senegal	22	50	11	0	5
SierraLeone	0	37	10	0	0
Somalia	1	637	15	1	7
Sudan	6	27	3	1	0
Tanzania	6	27	8	0	0
Tunisia	31	21	100	1	2
TOTAL	301	1543	473	4	53

* Data provided by the Foreigners' Police.

TABLE 4.5: GENDER BREAKDOWN OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

	Somalia	Nigeria	Ghana	Congo	Mauritania	Eritrea	Ethiopia	Kenya	Burundi	Other	Total
Male	24	16	6	5	6	2	3	3	6	7	78
Female	30	5	0	5	1	5	6	2	0	1	55
Total	54	21	6	10	7	7	9	5	6	8	133

TABLE 4.6: MARITAL STATUS OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO GENDER

	Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Total
Male	48	25	1	1	75
Female	27	10	3	14	54
Total	75	35	4	15	129

TABLE 4.7: GENDER BREAKDOWN OF EDUCATION

	Illiterate	Able to read and write	Elementary school	Middle school	High school	University	Total
Male	10	3	12	19	22	10	76
	13.2%	3.9%	15.8%	25.0%	28.9%	13.2%	100%
Female	23	5	12	5	6	4	55
	41.8%	9.1%	21.8%	9.1%	10.9%	7.3%	100%
Total	33	8	24	24	28	14	131
	25.2%	6.1%	18.3%	18.3%	21.4%	10.7%	100%

TABLE 4.8: "WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO LEAVE YOUR COUNTRY?"

	A Threat Against My/My Family's Security	An Attack Against Me/My Family	Increasing Violence Where I Lived	Persecution / Threat of Persecution Against Me/My Family	Increasing economic Difficulties	Other
Somalia	13.3%	66.7%	10.0%	6.7%	3.3%	
Nigeria		3.6%	7.1%	7.1%	64.3%	17.9%
Ghana			22.2%		77.8%	
Congo		9.1%	36.4%	18.2%	27.3%	9.1%
Mauritania	57.1%	28.6%			14.3%	
Eritrea	33.3%	33.3%		33.3%		
Ethiopia	28.6%	14.3%			57.1%	
Kenya			25.0%		75.0%	
Burundi	50.0%	50.0%				
Other				25.0%	75.0%	
Total	12.8%	26.6%	11.0%	7.3%	36.7%	5.5%

TABLE 4.9: LEGAL STATUS IN TURKEY BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN			
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	LEGAL ENTRY	ILLEGAL ENTRY	TOTAL
Somalia	1	52	53
	2%	98%	1
Nigeria	20	1	21
	95%	5%	1
Ghana	4	2	6
	67%	33%	1
Congo	9	0	9
	100%	0%	1
Mauritania	0	7	7
	0%	100%	1
Eritrea	1	6	7
	14%	86%	1
Ethiopia	1	8	9
	11%	89%	1
Kenya	5	0	5
	100%	0%	1
Burundi	2	4	6
	33%	67%	1
Other	2	6	8
	25%	75%	1
Total	45	86	131
	34%	66%	1

TABLE 4.10: METHOD OF ENTRY INTO TURKEY BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

	Somalia	Nigeria	Ghana	Congo	Mauritania	Eritrea	Ethiopia	Kenya	Burundi	Other	Total
Airplane	1	21	4	9	0	1	1	5	2	2	46
	2.17%	45.65%	8.70%	19.57%	0 %	2.17%	2.17%	10.87%	4.35%	4.35%	100%
By boat	44	0	0	0	6	3	2	0	1	2	58
	75.86%	0 %	0 %	0 %	10.34%	5.17%	3.45%	0 %	1.72%	3.45%	100%
On foot	3	0	2	0	1	1	6	0	0	3	16
	18.75%	0 %	12.50%	0 %	6.25%	6.25%	37.50%	0 %	0 %	18.75%	100%
On foot and by boat	5	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	0	10
	50.00%	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	20.00%	0 %	0 %	30.00%	0 %	100%
Total	53	21	6	9	7	7	9	5	6	7	130
Total Percentage	40.77%	16.15%	4.62%	6.92%	5.38%	5.38%	6.92%	3.85%	4.62%	5.38%	100%

TABLE 4.11: PROVINCE OR BORDER OF ENTRY INTO TURKEY							
Country of Origin	Istanbul	Izmir	Hatay / Syria	Don't Remember	Greece	Van &Iraq	Total
Somalia	9	2	2	20	7	2	42
Nigeria	16	0	0	0	0	0	16
Ghana	4	0	2	0	0	0	6
Congo	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
Mauritania	3	2	0	1	0	0	6
Eritrea	1	0	3	0	0	1	5
Ethiopia	1	0	6	1	0	0	8
Kenya	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Burundi	3	0	0	1	0	0	4
Other	2	1	3	0	0	0	6
Total	47	5	16	23	7	3	101

TABLE 4.12: "WHY DID YOU COME TO TURKEY AND NOT SOME OTHER COUNTRY?"

Country of Origin	I Had Friends Who Had Come to Turkey	I Had Relatives Who Had Come to Turkey	Turkey's Borders Are Easy to Enter	It is Easy to Get a Visa to Turkey	I Heard I Could Apply to the UNHCR in Turkey	It is Easy to Enter Europe via Turkey	It is Easy/cheap to get an illegal visa/passport in Turkey	To Play Football Professionally	I was deceived that I would be taken to Greece but Left in Turkey	Other
Somalia	3.7%	1.9%				3.7%			79.6%	11.1%
Nigeria	53.6%	3.6%	3.6%	7.1%		10.7%		3.6%	3.6%	14.3%
Ghana	62.5%			12.5%		25.0%				
Congo	53.8%	23.1%		7.7%		7.7%				7.7%
Mauritania				11.1%	11.1%				77.8%	
Eritrea	28.6%	14.3%							57.1%	
Ethiopia	77.8%					11.1%	11.1%			
Kenya	50.0%	16.7%							16.7%	16.7%
Burundi	50.0%				16.7%			16.7%		16.7%
Other	28.6%					14.3%			57.1%	
Total	31.3%	4.8%	0.7%	3.4%	1.4%	6.8%	0.7%	1.4%	40.8%	8.8%

TABLE 4.13: DURATION OF STAY IN TURKEY						
Country of Origin	0-10 Days	11 Days – 90 Days	3 Months- 12 Months	1 Year- 3 Years	More than 3 Years	TOTAL
Somalia	7	7	27	11	1	53
Nigeria	0	4	4	7	6	21
Ghana	0	0	1	3	2	6
Congo	0	1	2	4	2	9
Mauritania	0	1	6	0	0	7
Eritrea	0	1	4	2	0	7
Ethiopia	0	1	3	1	4	9
Kenya	0	0	4	0	0	4
Burundi	0	5	1	0	0	6
Other	0	1	3	1	2	7
Total	7	21	55	29	17	129

TABLE 4.14: "WHEN DID YOUR VISA EXPIRE?"					
Country of Origin	0-90 days ago	3-12 months ago	1-3 years ago	More than 3 years ago	Total
Nigeria	3	3	6	3	15
Ghana	0	0	1	3	4
Congo	0	3	2	0	5
Mauritania	1	0	0	0	1
Eritrea	0	1	0	0	1
Ethiopia	0	1	1	0	2
Kenya	1	0	0	0	1
Burundi	0	0	1	1	2
Other	5	8	11	7	31
Total Percentage	16.1%	25.8%	35.5%	22.6%	100%

TABLE 4.15: "HOW DO YOU PLAN TO LEAVE TURKEY?"					
Form of Entry into Turkey	Air travel	Through the land border	Refugee resettlement by UNHCR	Won't leave Turkey	Total
Legal	45	0	0	0	45
Illegal	1	58	16	10	85
TOTAL	46	58	16	10	130

TABLE 4.16: “TO WHAT COUNTRY DO YOU WANT TO GO?”

Country of Origin	Don't Know	I won't Leave	Greece	Western Europe	Other	I'll Wait for UNHCR Decision	Back to my Country	TOTAL
Somalia	11	14	6	1	1	2	2	37
Nigeria	0	0	3	9	1	0	4	17
Ghana	0	0	2	2	0	0	1	5
Congo	2	1	2	3	0	0	1	9
Mauritania	1	3	0	2	0	0	0	6
Eritrea	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	5
Ethiopia	0	0	4	1	1	0	1	7
Kenya	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	3
Burundi	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	3
Other	0	1	4	0	0	0	1	6
TOTAL	16	21	23	22	3	2	11	98

TABLE 4.17: ASYLUM APPLICATIONS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Country of Origin	ASYLUM APPLICATION		
	No	Yes	Total
Somalia	9	43	52
Nigeria	19	0	19
Ghana	6	0	6
Congo	6	2	8
Mauritania	4	3	7
Eritrea	4	3	7
Ethiopia	6	3	9
Kenya	4	1	5
Burundi	0	6	6
Other	6	2	8
TOTAL	64	63	127

TABLE 4.18: REASON OF MIGRATION AND ITS RELATION TO ASYLUM APPLICATIONS

Reasons of Migration	Asylum Application		Total
	No	Yes	
A Threat against Me / My Family's Security	5	8	13
An Attack against Me/ My Family	6	19	25
Increasing Violence Where I Lived	2	4	6
Persecution/ Threat of Persecution against My Family/ Me	2	4	6
Increasing Economic Difficulties	33	0	33
Other Reasons	2	0	2
TOTAL	50	35	85

TABLE 4.19: YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE PEOPLE YOU LIVE WITH

Relationship	Percent
None	0.9
My family members	12.2
People from the same country	42.4
People from the same ethnic group	16.2
People from the same religious group	19.2
Africans from another country	5.2
Non-African migrants	2.2
Turkish citizens	0.4
Other	1.3
Total	100.0

TABLE 4.20: "WHO ARE THE OTHER WORSHIPPERS IN THE CHURCH/MOSQUE WHEREE YOU ATTEND WORSHIPPING SERVICES?"

	<i>RELIGION</i>			TOTAL
	MUSLIM	CHRISTIAN	OTHER	
PEOPLE FROM MY COUNTRY			100.0%	2.0%
OTHER AFRICANS		46.9%		29.4%
FOREIGNERS WHO ARE NOT AFRICANS		18.8%		11.8%
TURKISH CITIZENS	100.0%	25.0%		51.0%
ALL OF THEM		9.4%		5.9%

TABLE 4.21: "HOW ARE YOUR RELATIONS WITH AFRICANS IN ISTANBUL?"

	No. of persons	Percent
No Relation	13	15.3
Not Bad / No Problem	31	36.5
Very Good	33	38.8
Bad	1	1.2
Don't Know Yet	5	5.9
Total	85	100

TABLE 4.22: "HOW ARE YOUR RELATIONS WITH TURKISH CITIZENS?"

	No. of persons	Percent
No Relation	27	26.0
Not Bad / No Problem	37	35.6
Very Good	30	28.8
Bad	5	4.8
Don't Know Yet	5	4.8
Total	104	100.0

TABLE 4.23: ENCOUNTERS WITH POLICE		
“WERE YOU EVER STOPPED BY POLICE?”	No. of persons	Percent
No	81	65.3
Yes	43	34.7
Total	124	100.0
“HOW MANY TIMES WERE YOU STOPPED?”	No. of persons	Percent
Once	2	4.7
Twice	7	16.3
Three Times	1	2.3
Four Times	3	7.0
Five Times	1	2.3
Several Times	14	32.6
Many Times	15	34.9
Total	43	100.0

TABLE 4.24: "WERE YOU EVER DETAINED BY POLICE?"

Country Of Origin	No	Yes, once	Total
Somalia	40	11	51
Nigeria	15	6	21
Ghana	3	3	6
Congo	6	3	9
Mauritania	5	2	7
Eritrea	3	3	6
Ethiopia	3	5	8
Kenya	4	1	5
Burundi	4	2	6
Other	4	4	8
Total	87	40	127

TABLE 4.25: "DO YOU THINK TURKISH POLICE TREATS AFRICANS DIFFERENTLY THAN OTHER MIGRANTS?"

Country of Origin	No	Yes	Don't know	Total
Somalia	25	4	19	48
Nigeria	12	6	3	21
Ghana	4	2	0	6
Congo	6	1	2	9
Mauritania	3	0	4	7
Eritrea	5	0	2	7
Ethiopia	3	3	3	9
Kenya	5	0	0	5
Burundi	2	3	0	5
Other	7	1	0	8
Total	72	20	33	125

TABLE 4.26: "HOW DO YOU PROVIDE FOR YOURSELF FINANCIALLY?"										
Country of Origin	I work work wages	I do odd jobs	I sell goods	My family sends money	I receive money from UNHCR	I receive money from charity	I borrow money from friends	I beg for money	I have no source of income	Other
Somalia	7.7%	23.1%		7.7%	3.8%	7.7%	13.5%	1.9%	32.7%	1.9%
Nigeria	9.5%	33.3%	38.1%	4.8%		4.8%			4.8%	4.8%
Ghana	33.3%	50.0%	16.7%							
Congo		30.0%	10.0%		20.0%				10.0%	30.0%
Mauritania		57.1%	42.9%							
Eritrea	14.3%	42.9%				14.3%				28.6%
Ethiopia	66.7%	11.1%		11.1%					11.1%	
Kenya	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%						20.0%
Burundi		33.3%				33.3%	16.7%		16.7%	
Other	12.5%	62.5%				12.5%		12.5%		
TOTAL	13.0%	31.3%	10.7%	5.3%	3.1%	6.9%	6.1%	1.5%	16.0%	6.1%

TABLE 4.27: FINANCIAL AID APPLICATIONS								
Country of Origin	Never Applied	ICMC	RLAP	IIMP	UNHCR	A church	Turkish Charity	Other
Somalia	18.8%	8.8%	18.8%	31.3%	21.3%			1.3%
Nigeria	48.3%	6.9%	3.4%	24.1%	6.9%	10.3%		
Ghana	36.4%			36.4%	9.1%	18.2%		
Congo	22.2%	11.1%	11.1%	55.6%				
Mauritania		7.1%	42.9%	42.9%	7.1%			
Eritrea	30.0%		20.0%	30.0%	20.0%			
Ethiopia	13.3%		13.3%	46.7%	26.7%			
Kenya	12.5%			50.0%	12.5%	12.5%	12.5%	
Burundi		12.5%	50.0%	25.0%		12.5%		
Other	20.0%		20.0%	40.0%	10.0%			10.0%
TOTAL	22.2%	6.2%	17.0%	34.5%	14.9%	3.6%	0.5%	1.0%

TABLE 4.28: “WHAT ARE YOUR GREATEST PROBLEMS IN ISTANBUL?”

Country of Origin	Lack of Income	Discrimination	Ill treatment by Police	Ill Treatment by Neighbours	Ill Treatment by Strangers	Housing	Hunger	Other
Somalia	45.3%	7.4%	1.1%		27.4%	8.4%	3.2%	7.4%
Nigeria	38.9%	11.1%			22.2%	16.7%	5.6%	5.6%
Ghana	45.5%				36.4%	9.1%		9.1%
Congo	40.0%				26.7%	6.7%	6.7%	20.0%
Mauritania	35.7%				50.0%	14.3%		
Eritrea	41.7%				33.3%	8.3%		16.7%
Ethiopia	35.3%		5.9%	5.9%	29.4%		11.8%	11.8%
Kenya	30.0%				40.0%	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%
Burundi	36.4%		9.1%		45.5%	9.1%		
Other	53.8%		7.7%		15.4%	15.4%		7.7%
Total %	41.9%	4.7%	1.7%	0.4%	29.5%	9.8%	3.8%	8.1%

APPENDIX I: REFUGEE FLOWS AND INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN AFRICA*

<p>East Africa and the Horn of Africa: Environmental disasters and ethnic, border and guerilla wars in the Horn of Africa (Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia and southern Sudan) led to massive flows of refugees and IDPs during the 1980s and 1990s.</p>
<p>Central Africa: Refugee flows and internal displacement reached a climax during the mid-1990s in the wake of the genocide in Rwanda and the civil war in Burundi. Turmoil in the Republic of Congo and the civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (previously Zaire) starting in 1997 further fuelled refugee and IDP flows. Although civil strife and warfare in the region abated after that, recently tensions have been rising between the DRC and Rwanda.</p>
<p>West Africa: Since 1989, the region covering Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Ivory Coast has experienced rebellions, civil wars and military uprisings, uprooting millions of people.</p>
<p>Southern Africa: Wars of independence and liberation struggles in Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and South Africa (against Apartheid) have led to refugee flows in the past several decades.</p>

*Adopted from IOM, 2005.

APPENDIX II: POLITICAL CONDITIONS THAT CREATE REFUGEE FLOWS IN SELECTED AFRICAN COUNTRIES *

SOMALIA	<p>The ethnic composition of the country: Somali 85 percent, Bantu and other non-Somali 15 percent (including 30,000 Arabs). Majority are Sunni Muslims with a Christian minority. Mohamed Siad Barre's regime was overthrown in January 1991 which led to civil war, turmoil, and anarchy. Because of the ongoing fighting, UN initiated a peacekeeping operation (United Nations Operation in Somalia – UNOSOM II) in 1993. A Transitional Federal Assembly was formed in 2004 and now, a transitional federal government is in force. There are an estimated 400,000 IDPs due to civil war since 1988, clan-based competition for resources; 5,000 IDPs due to the December 2004 tsunami; and 389,272 refugees.</p>
MAURITANIA	<p>The ethnic composition of the country: mixed Maur/black 40 percent, Moor 30 percent, black 30 percent. Population is Muslim. President Taya was ousted by a bloodless coup in August 2005. Colonel Ely Ould Mohamed Vall, leader of the coup, is the chief of state. Mauritania is an autocratic state, and ethnic tensions between the black population and different Moor (Arab-Berber) communities continue, resulting in the displacement of blacks.</p>
SUDAN	<p>Ethnic composition: black 52 percent, Arab 39 percent, Beja 6 percent, foreigners 2 percent, other 1 percent. Religious composition: Sunni Muslim 70 percent (in north), indigenous beliefs 25 percent, Christian 5 percent (mostly in south and Khartoum). Military regimes favoring Islamic-oriented governments representing the Arab population have dominated national politics vis-à-vis blacks with indigenous beliefs and the Christian blacks. There have been two civil wars in its history, the second one beginning in 1983. This and famine resulted in more than 4 million IDPs, and approximately 2 million people died in two decades. In January 2005, the Naivasha Peace Treaty granted the southern rebels autonomy for six years. In another conflict in the western region of Darfur in 2003 more than 200,000 people were killed and nearly 2 million displaced; and since late 2005, peacekeeping troops struggle for stabilization. Field Marshal Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir is the president since October 1993. There are 110,927 refugees in Eritrea; 5,023 in Chad; 7,983 in Uganda; 14,812 in Ethiopia. Besides, there are between 5,300,000 to 6,200,000 IDPs due to the internal conflict since the 1980s and ongoing genocide. Refugees and displaced people are principally non-Arab populations, those residing in the South and West (Darfur).</p>
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO	<p>There are more than 200 African ethnic groups in DR Congo whose majority are Bantu (the four largest tribes - Mongo, Luba, Kongo (Bantu), and the Mangbetu-Azande (Hamitic) constitute nearly half of the population. Religious composition is: Roman Catholic 50 percent, Protestant 20 percent, Kimbanguist 10 percent, Muslim 10 percent, other syncretic sects and indigenous beliefs 10 percent.</p> <p>In 1997, the Mobutu regime in Zaire was overthrown by a rebellion led by Laurent Kabila, after a period of ethnic conflict and civil war. The new regime, named Democratic Republic of Congo was challenged by a rebellion backed by Rwanda and Uganda. In October 2002, the new president Joseph Kabila was successful in negotiating the withdrawal of Rwandan forces occupying eastern DRC. A transitional government was set up in July 2003.</p> <p>There are 5,277 refugees in Republic of Congo; 11,816 in Rwanda; 18,953 in Uganda; 19,400 in Burundi; 45,226 in Sudan; and 98,383 in Angola. There were an estimated 1,664,000 displaced people since the end of 2005; and 1,680,100 were reported to have returned home from the end of 2004 to the end of 2005. Main reason of displacement was fighting between government forces and rebels since the mid-1990s (The number of the displaced reached 3.4 million in 2003 as its peak, most of them in the east.)</p>

ETHIOPIA	<p>Ethnic composition is: Oromo 40 percent, Amhara and Tigre 32 percent, Sidamo 9 percent, Shankella 6 percent, Somali 6 percent, Afar 4 percent, Gurage 2 percent, other 1 percent Religious composition is: Muslim 45 percent-50 percent, Ethiopian Orthodox 35 percent-40 percent, animist 12 percent, other 3 percent-8 percent.</p> <p>The socialist regime which was destroyed by coups, insurrections, drought, and massive refugee problems, was ultimately overthrown in 1991 by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). Current president is Girma Woldegiorgis. In late 1990s, a war with Eritrea due to border problems broke out. In December 2000, a peace treaty was signed but final demarcation of the boundary is now suspended.</p> <p>According to UNHCR figures, the number of refugees originating from the country is 63,105. There is an estimated 150,000 to 265,000 IDPs due to the war with Eritrea (1998-2000) and ethnic conflict in Gambela (most of them are in Tigray and Gambela Provinces).</p>
ERITREA	<p>Ethnic composition is: Tigrinya 50 percent, Tigre and Kunama 40 percent, Afar 4 percent, Saho (Red Sea coast dwellers) 3 percent, other 3 percent Religions in the country are Muslim, Coptic Christian, Roman Catholic and Protestant.</p> <p>Ethiopia's control over Eritrea (as a province) ended with the defeat of government forces by rebellion forces (1991) and a subsequent referendum approving independence (1993). Isaias Afwerki is the president. A border war with Ethiopia broke out in 1998 and ended under UN patronage in 2000. Demarcation of borders not finalized due to Ethiopian objections. The war damaged Eritrea's economy.</p> <p>There are approximately 50,000 IDPs due to the war with Ethiopia (1998-2000); and an estimated 131,000 refugees.</p>
CONGO	<p>Ethnic composition: Kongo 48 percent, Sangha 20 percent, M'Bochi 12 percent, Teke 17 percent, Europeans and other 3 percent Religious composition: Christian 50 percent, animist 48 percent, Muslim 2 percent</p> <p>Marxist regime ended in 1992 with democratic elections. Previous Marxist President Denis Sassou-Nguesso came to office after a brief civil war leading to ethnic and political conflict. Peace agreement with Southern rebel groups was finalized in March 2003, but peace is fragile.</p> <p>There are 28,152 refugees originating from the country, posing a great humanitarian crisis. The number of IDPs are estimated to be between 100,000 and 147,000, displaced primarily by multiple civil wars since 1992. Majority of them are of Lari origin.</p>
BURUNDI	<p>Ethnic composition in the country: Hutu (Bantu) 85 percent, Tutsi (Hamitic) 14 percent, Twa (Pygmy) 1 percent, Europeans 3,000, South Asians 2,000.</p> <p>Religious composition: Christian 67 percent (Roman Catholic 62 percent, Protestant 5 percent), indigenous beliefs 23 percent, Muslim 10 percent.</p> <p>In 1993, elected President Ndadaye was assassinated, which triggered ethnic conflict between Hutu and Tutsi factions. Nearly 300,000 people were killed; hundreds of thousands of were internally displaced or became refugees. With the help of international negotiation, an agreement between the Tutsi government and the Hutu rebels in 2003 led to the transition process. 2005 witnessed improvement in political stability and a peace settlement in Burundi. Although the country is now at peace, sporadic conflicts between Burundi's armed forces the remaining rebel groups continue.</p> <p>There are an estimated 117,000 IDPs in the country (half of them clustered in the northern and central provinces - Gitega, Musinga, Ngozi, Kayanza and Kirundo) mainly due to the psychology of "flee or be killed," violence used by the armed forces, and political or economical aims. There are 485,764 refugees.</p>

SIERRA LEONE	<p>Ethnic composition in the country is: 20 native African tribes 90 percent (Temne 30 percent, Mende 30 percent, other 30 percent), Creole (Krio) 10 percent (descendants of freed Jamaican slaves who were settled in the Freetown area in the late-18th century), refugees from Liberia's recent civil war, small numbers of Europeans, Lebanese, Pakistanis, and Indians</p> <p>Religious composition is: Muslim 60 percent, indigenous beliefs 30 percent, Christian 10 percent</p> <p>A decade of civil war that ended in 2002 resulted in the killing of tens of thousands of people and displacement of at least 2 million people. Government is gradually establishing stability, having the assistance of the civilian UN office in the country. The president is Ahmad Tejan Kabbah since 1996.</p> <p>According to UNHCR 2005 figures there are 41,801 refugees originating from the country.</p>
LIBERIA	<p>Ethnic composition of Liberia is as follows: indigenous African tribes 95 percent (including Kpelle, Bassa, Gio, Kru, Grebo, Mano, Krahn, Gola, Gbandi, Loma, Kissi, Vai, Dei, Bella, Mandingo, and Mende), Americo-Liberians 2.5 percent (descendants of immigrants from the US who had been slaves), Congo People 2.5 percent (descendants of immigrants from the Caribbean who had been slaves). People adhering to indigenous beliefs are 40 percent, Christians are 40 percent, and Muslims make up 20 percent of the population.</p> <p>National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) initiated an insurrection against the government which led to a 14 year civil war and ended with a peace agreement signed in 2003. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf became the president in 2005 elections, following the rule by a transitional government. A major peacekeeping mission initiated by UN in 2003 was extended in 2005. There are 13,941 refugees in Sierra Leone; and 12,408 in Cote d'Ivoire. There have been 464,000 IDPs, displaced primarily because of the insecurity arising from the civil war, whose number is 15,000 at the moment. Although the peace agreement initiated optimism (nearly 300,000 refugees received assistance packages for return), continuing civil unrest worsens the situation.</p>

* Compiled from CIA-The World Factbook (<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>) and IDMC - Country Reports (<http://www.internal-displacement.org/>).

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