From Strategy to Action: Implementing the Route-Based Approach

July 2025 Edition

We are pleased to share UNHCR update offering key highlights from July 2025 on the implementation of the route-based approach. This issue showcases progress across regions through dialogue with States and other stakeholders, policy engagement, operational responses, inter-agency collaboration, and capacity-building efforts to better address the challenges of mixed and onward movements of refugees and migrants. This update forms part of our ongoing efforts to inform stakeholders and partners of developments, opportunities and issues on priority mixed movements routes. UNHCR collaborates closely with States, IOM, UN agencies, refugee-led organizations, civil society and other stakeholders on the operationalization of the route-based approach.

Feel free to share this update with interested colleagues and encourage them to subscribe using the link at the bottom of the page. If you no longer wish to receive these updates, you can unsubscribe at any time using the link below:

- Unsubscribe

Key Engagement with States

- **Global Stocktaking Exercise on Route-Based Related GRF Pledges**

On 7 July, UNHCR hosted the Stocktaking Event on Scaling Up Responses on Alternatives to Detention, Protection at Sea, and Trafficking. With opening remarks from the UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, the event featured a high-level panel including the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, the Parliamentary Assembly of the

Council of Europe's Rapporteur on Saving Migrants' Lives at Sea, and the Global Detention Project, alongside States, UN agencies, and NGOs. Participants exchanged good practices, mobilized new commitments, and reinforced the importance of cohesive, route-based strategies to advance the GCR's objectives.

- **Bridging Gaps on Missing Migrants and Refugees**

From 9–10 July, UNHCR participated in the Rabat Process thematic meeting, "Bridging the Gaps: Advancing Cooperation on Missing Migrants," in Banjul, The Gambia. The event brought together over 100 participants from 27 countries, alongside key regional mechanisms, special rapporteurs, and international organizations such as ICRC, IOM, Interpol, ICMPD, and Euromed Rights. Discussions underscored the urgent need to expand route-based activities in underserved contexts, including The Gambia and Guinea, where significant gaps persist despite ongoing mixed movement challenges.

- **Regional Priorities Agreed under the Chile Declaration and Plan of Action**

On 17–18 July, the first meeting of the Monitoring Mechanisms for the Implementation of the Chile Declaration and Plan of Action took place. Governments agreed on 15 regional priorities for 2025–2027 to guide collective efforts under the GCR. Priorities include identification, assistance, and referrals at borders in transit countries; support mechanisms for returnees with protection needs; asylum system strengthening and regional cooperation; and inclusive socio-economic policies to promote stability in host countries.

Key Engagement with NGOs and RLOs

- **From Consultation to Collaboration with NGOs and RLOs**

On 29 July in Geneva, UNHCR, IOM, and ICVA co-hosted the second NGO consultation, focused on Pillar One (Entry and Admission). UNHCR and IOM jointly presented the imperative and key principles of protection-sensitive entry systems, followed by rich exchanges on good practices, challenges, and ways to collaborate with NGOs.
Further dialogue with NGOs were organized by DIP with key actors, including Save the Children to deepen collaboration on child protection in mixed movement contexts and capitalize on a longstanding partnership; IFRC to explore alignment between IFRC's humanitarian service points and UNHCR's multi-purpose hubs, ensuring complementarity and avoiding duplication; and Refugee-Led Organizations to introduce the route-based approach and discuss how their direct engagement can strengthen its implementation, with refugees and asylum seekers at its center.

- **Americas: Regional NGO Consultation Advances Protection and Coordination**

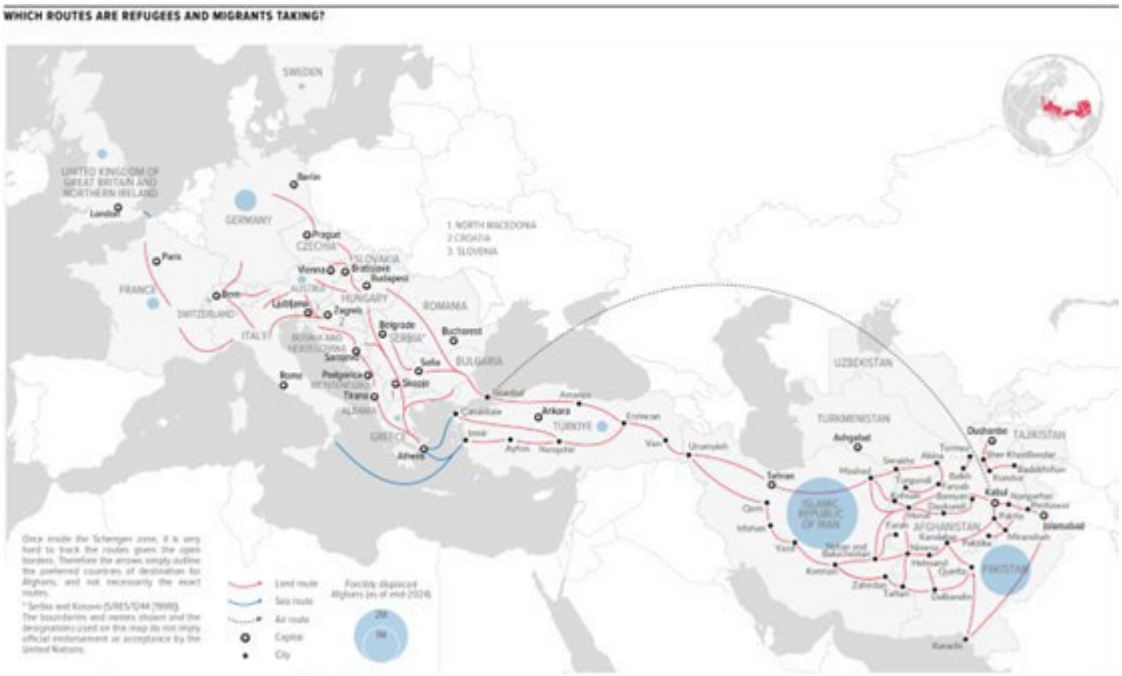
On the reginal level, the Americas held its second Regional NGO Consultation on the route based approach on 15 July, following the first in June. Discussions addressed protection in the context of return, internal displacement, and localization. Recommendations emphasized harmonizing regulations for returned populations to secure documentation and legal identity, and building favorable environments for protection through rights-based narratives coordinated efforts between States, organizations, and UNHCR. The outcomes will support the development of stronger coordination mechanisms to address refugee and migrant needs across all phases of displacement and migration.

Research, Data and Guidance

- **New Analysis on Movements from Southwest Asia to Europe**

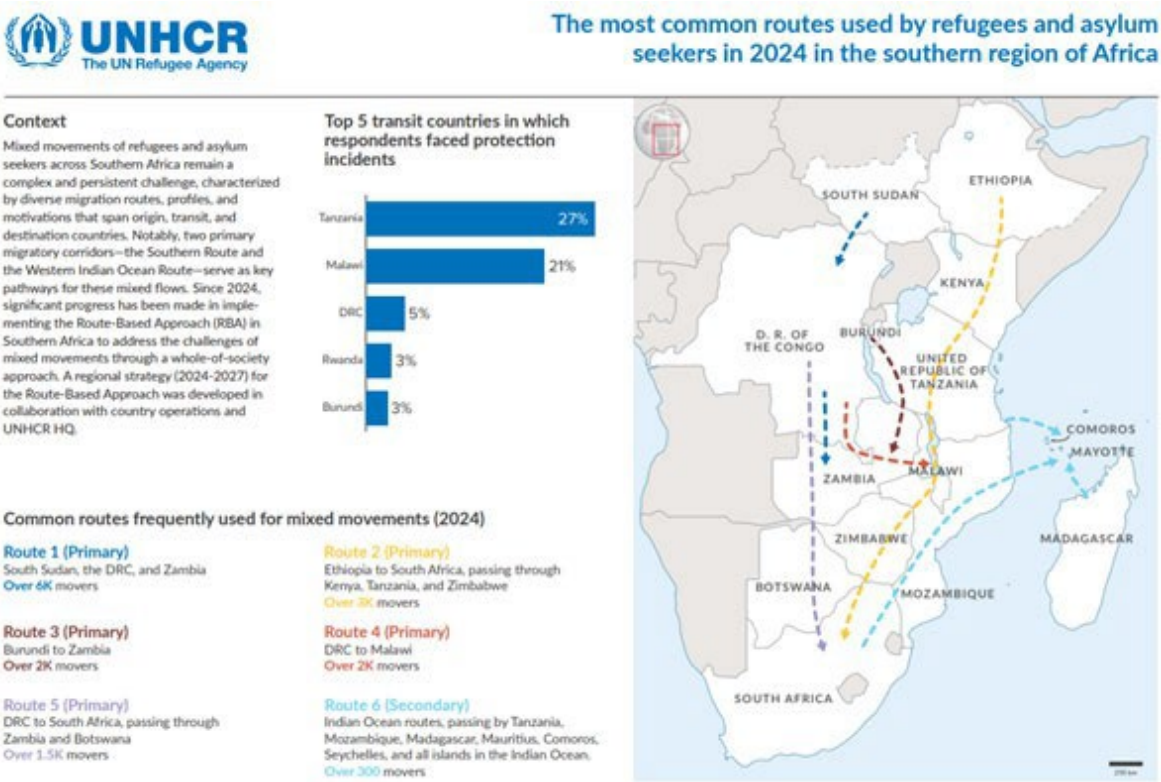
UNHCR's Regional Bureaus for Asia and the Pacific and for Europe, in collaboration with the SSAR Support Platform under the Chairmanship of the Netherlands, published a joint

report on 25 July: A Panoramic/Route-Based Approach – Refugees and Migrants from Southwest Asia to Europe. The report details trends in movements from Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan via Turkey and the Eastern Mediterranean, highlighting profiles, drivers, risks, and onward movements, and underscoring the value of a protection-sensitive route-based approach from origin to destination (see here)



- **Mapping Mixed Movement Routes in Southern Africa**

UNHCR Southern Africa Bureau mapped the main routes used by more than 14,500 registered refugees and asylum seekers engaged in mixed movements along the Southern Route and Western Indian Ocean Route.
The mapping provides evidence and data on the main mixed movements routes across the region with key countries thus enabling strategic and targeted programmes and actions by States, UNHCR, IOM and other stakeholders. For further details see here.



- **Guidance on Route-Based Approach to Multi-Purpose Hubs**

In July, UNHCR finalized the Guidance on the Route-Based Approach to Multi-Purpose Hubs, along with a summary of minimum operational requirements. These resources aim to support UNHCR staff and partners in planning, establishing, and scaling up Hubs along key mixed movement routes. They clarify core functions, partnership models, and practical modalities for delivering protection and solutions-oriented services (see here and here).

- **Strengthening Hubs in the Americas through Community Participation**

In the Americas, UNHCR, IOM and UNICEF presented regionally tailored guidance under the Quito Process on integrating community approaches into Hub design and operations, ensuring participation of refugees and migrants in these interventions.

Operational Progress

- **Joint Planning for the West Africa Atlantic Route**

UNHCR and IOM in West and Central Africa are developing joint costed plans for route-based activities at the country level in Niger, Chad, Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, and other countries along the West Africa Atlantic Route. A regional workshop with governments and partners is planned for later this year to review progress and address needs in responding to mixed movements.

- **Refocusing Regional Responses to Refugees and Migrants in the Americas**

Following a sharp drop in funding in early 2025, R4V carried out a regional reprioritization exercise to safeguard core activities in line with the Global Humanitarian Overview. The revised plan prioritizes lifesaving protection, essential services, and stabilization efforts for the most vulnerable, including those in irregular situations, in transit, or at risk of violence and exclusion.

- **Joint Efforts to Address Mixed Movements in Yemen's Coastal Areas**

In Yemen, UNHCR launched its first dedicated partnership on mixed movements with a local NGO in 2025 to strengthen monitoring, referrals, and support for people on the move along key coastal areas. In July, the partnership carried out an awareness campaign in Aden with refugees and migrants, together with local authorities, to highlight the dangers of irregular onward movements and to reinforce referral pathways through the Aden-based Mixed Movements Working Group.

Acknowledging support for the Route-Based Approach

UNHCR extends its sincere appreciation to donor governments and partners who already contributed to the implementation of the route-based approach. Their support enables concrete protection- and solutions-focused programming along key mixed movement routes.

This email was sent by: The Division of International Protection (DIP)
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

For questions and comments please contact:
Valerie Svobodova, Chief of Asylum and Migration Section, DIP Policy and Law Service
e-mail: svobodov@unhcr.org ; ams-dips@unhcr.org

If you would like to contribute updates or initiatives to be featured in future editions, please reach out to us at the above contacts.

Subscribe | Unsubscribe | Privacy Policy