



International cooperation among countries in combating irregular migration

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Abstract: Irregular migration poses serious challenges to national security, economic stability, and human rights across the world. No single country can effectively manage or combat irregular migration on its own. This article explores how countries engage in international cooperation to address irregular migration through legal frameworks, bilateral and multilateral agreements, and collaboration with international organizations. The study emphasizes the importance of shared responsibility and coordinated action in promoting safe, orderly, and legal migration worldwide and also this article analyzes the international cooperation of the Republic of Uzbekistan in combating irregular migration, the existing legal frameworks, and ongoing measures. Particular attention is paid to regional and global cooperation mechanisms, bilateral and multilateral agreements, as well as cooperation with international organizations.

Keywords: Irregular migration, international cooperation, global security, migration law, international agreements.

Introduction: It should be noted that in the last decade, international migration, especially illegal migration, has become one of the pressing issues on a global scale. This situation directly impacts the internal security of states, their economic stability, and the protection of human rights. Accordingly, to effectively combat illegal migration, states need to enhance cooperation, and improve international and regional legal mechanisms. Irregular migration has emerged as a pressing global issue, affecting both countries of origin and destination. It involves the unauthorized movement of individuals across borders, often in violation of immigration laws and regulations. This phenomenon is driven by conflict, poverty, climate change, and inequality, making it a

complex challenge requiring international collaboration. Given the transnational nature of irregular migration, international cooperation has become a cornerstone in developing effective and human migration policies.

1. Legal and Institutional Foundations of International Cooperation

Countries cooperate on irregular migration based on both binding international treaties and non-binding frameworks. Key instruments include:

The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, providing protection for asylum seekers.

The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000), particularly the Palermo Protocol, targeting human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (2018), the first intergovernmental agreement covering all aspects of international migration.

These instruments emphasize shared responsibility, human rights, and state sovereignty.

2. Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements

Many countries have entered into bilateral labor migration agreements, return and readmission treaties, and regional frameworks. Examples include: EU–Turkey Agreement (2016): Turkey agreed to prevent irregular crossings into Europe in exchange for financial aid and visa liberalization. The Bali Process (Asia-Pacific): A regional forum addressing people smuggling and human trafficking. African Union Migration Policy Framework: Encourages member states to harmonize migration policies and border management systems. Such agreements support coordinated border control, information exchange, and return mechanisms.

3. Role of International Organizations

Several global organizations facilitate cooperation:

International Organization for Migration (IOM): Supports governments in managing migration and reintegration. UNHCR: Protects refugees and advocates for their rights in international forums. INTERPOL and UNODC: Help countries combat human trafficking networks and criminal groups behind irregular migration. These organizations offer technical assistance, data sharing, capacity building, and humanitarian aid.

4. Challenges in International Cooperation

Despite progress, countries face numerous challenges, including:

Divergent national interests: Countries may prioritize security, economic, or humanitarian concerns differently.

Lack of enforcement mechanisms: Many agreements are non-binding, limiting accountability.

Limited data and transparency: Weak coordination hampers real-time responses and policymaking.

Human rights concerns: Some cooperation agreements may result in migrants being returned to unsafe conditions.

Addressing these requires trust, consistent political will, and adherence to international law. At this point, we will now address the international cooperation of the Republic of Uzbekistan in combating illegal migration.

Uzbekistan's International Cooperation in Combating Irregular Migration

It should be noted that, The sharp increase in global migration flows and the growing risks associated with irregular migration have emphasized the need for enhanced intergovernmental cooperation. The Republic of Uzbekistan has become an active participant in this global process by engaging in international initiatives aimed at managing migration and countering illegal migration.

1. Legal Foundations for Combating Irregular Migration in Uzbekistan.

The legal framework of Uzbekistan for countering irregular migration is based on the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Law "On Citizenship of the Republic of Uzbekistan," the Code of Administrative Responsibility, and the Criminal Code. Notably: Article 223 of the Criminal Code criminalizes unlawful border crossing and facilitation of illegal entry or exit. The Law "On External Migration of the Population" (No. ORQ-719), adopted on September 15, 2021, defines the state's migration policy and serves as a significant legal instrument. These legal norms are being harmonized with Uzbekistan's international obligations and are continuously improved.

2. International Treaties and Uzbekistan's Commitments

Uzbekistan is a party to key international treaties, including: The 1990 UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. The 2000 UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Palermo Protocol on human trafficking. Declarations and cooperation programs within regional organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In 2018, Uzbekistan endorsed the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, which reflects the

country's commitment to conducting migration policy based on human rights and security principles.

3. Practical Cooperation with International Organizations

Uzbekistan collaborates actively with international organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNDP, the European Union, OSCE, and UNODC on a variety of initiatives: Capacity-building and technical support projects for migration management. Regional monitoring and data exchange on human trafficking. Assistance and reintegration programs for returning migrants. For instance, from 2020 to 2023, several reintegration projects were implemented jointly with IOM to support returning migrants through legal, social, and psychological services.

4. Regional Cooperation: The Central Asian Experience

Uzbekistan is also engaged in regional partnerships to tackle irregular migration, including: The 2006 "Central Asian Declaration on Combating Human Trafficking." The 2022 international conference in Samarkand on regional migration security. Bilateral agreements with Kazakhstan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, and other key migration partner countries for regulating labor migration and addressing irregular flows. These mechanisms provide a foundation for joint border management, law enforcement cooperation, and policy harmonization.

CONCLUSION

Combating irregular migration has become one of the most pressing issues in contemporary international relations, and its effective solution is only possible through interstate cooperation. Analytical findings demonstrate that while numerous legal mechanisms—both universal and regional—have been developed to prevent and regulate irregular migration, their full and consistent implementation requires more robust coordination among states.

The Republic of Uzbekistan's foreign policy in this field—particularly its cooperation with international and regional organizations such as the United Nations, CIS, SCO, and OSCE—demonstrates a systematic approach to combating irregular migration. The signing of intergovernmental agreements and memoranda, as well as the harmonization of national legislation with international standards, reflects the country's commitment to collective action.

In conclusion, strengthening international legal cooperation between states, enhancing information exchange, conducting joint operations, implementing reintegration programs, and aligning socio-economic

development strategies are essential measures to mitigate the negative consequences of irregular migration. These actions serve as crucial tools for ensuring global security and protecting human rights.

Recommendations

Irregular migration is a shared global challenge that cannot be solved in isolation. Countries must strengthen international cooperation through:

Greater adherence to existing legal frameworks and standards;

Increased regional dialogue and joint operations;

Strengthening humanitarian responses to protect vulnerable migrants;

Promoting development and addressing root causes in countries of origin.

International cooperation should balance national sovereignty with global solidarity to ensure migration governance that is both effective and humane. And also, Uzbekistan has developed a robust legal, institutional, and organizational framework for international cooperation in combating irregular migration. However, several areas require further attention: Integration with global migration statistics and monitoring systems; Strengthening supervision mechanisms in line with international standards; Expanding the involvement of local and international NGOs in migration-related programs. Given Uzbekistan's increasing role in regional and global security, deepening international cooperation in this field remains a strategic priority.

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