

LEGAL IMMIGRANTS, ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS, AND CRIME IN EUROPE

Prepared for: International Criminal Police Organization, ConnectMUN 2011
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SUMMARY OF TOPIC

Overview

For this topic, we will be discussing about the growing problem with cyber warfare as it affects various nations and other organizations and what Interpol's role should be to possibly prevent or combat against this growing illegal activity.

Vocabulary

In order to properly understand this topic, it is imperative you know these definitions:

Immigrant- A person who leaves one country to settle permanently in another.¹

Illegal Immigrant/Alien- a foreigner who has entered or resides in a country unlawfully or without the country's authorization.²

Asylum Seeker- a person who, from fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, social group, or political opinion, has crossed an international frontier into a country in which he or she hopes to be granted refugee status³

Refugee- a person who flees for refuge or safety, especially to a foreign country, as in time of political upheaval, war, etc.⁴

Smuggler- to import or export (goods) secretly, in violation of the law, especially without payment of legal duty.⁵

European Union- an association of European nations formed in 1993 for the purpose of achieving political and economic integration.⁶

Introduction

The process of immigration is by no means, a new invention. Humans, for centuries, have been migrating from one place to another. What has changed, however, is the process that one must go through in order to immigrate to a new country. Nowadays, for a person to be eligible to move to a certain nation, they

must go through a lengthy application and meet the specific requirements of that country. In order to avoid this wait and possible rejection by the nation, more and more people are trying to immigrate to rich countries by illegal means (i.e. smuggling). For most people, the decision to move is based on push (reasons for leaving a country) and pull factors (reasons to live in a certain country). Push factors include political and economic turmoil in one's own country, war, and sometimes even genocide (i.e. Rwanda). Possibility of wealth, a fresh start, and a place where you are free from persecution are all pull factors. Recently, a growing number of people from Northern Africa, Iraq, and Eastern Europe are trying to immigrate illegally to wealthier Western European nations. Due to the political unrest caused by a wave of revolutions in North Africa, the ongoing war effort in Iraq, and the poverty and crime plaguing countries in Eastern Europe, people from these regions have been migrating in mass numbers. These asylum seekers, however, end up facing far worse situations and are a part a wave of increased crime and social disorder.

Schengen Agreement

On June 14, 1985 the Schengen Agreement was signed by Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany. This agreement, along with the Convention implementing it, was the basis for the borderless zone known as the Schengen Area. Basically, this means countries part of this agreement act like one big nation, where borders within this area are abolished and external borders are reinforced. Through the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty, the European Union incorporated this agreement into its own legal framework. However, not all nations in the EU are a part of this zone (i.e. the United Kingdom) and not all countries part of this agreement are in the European Union (i.e. Norway). The Schengen Area is now made up of 25 countries, covering a population of over 400 million people and an area of 4,312,099 square kilometers⁷. The advantages of this sort of agreement are that it allows free trade and movement to exist within the region, police officers from one Schengen nation can pursue criminals into another Schengen country, and criminals can be extradited/ transferred faster. However, at the same time, this can be a huge disadvantage because if illegal immigrants can cross over just one of the borders, they too can move freely within any country in the Schengen Area.

Although, this zone has a central computer known as the Schengen Information System (SIS) which collects information from national police forces on an array of different things (i.e. drug smuggling rings, wanted people, etc.), it cannot completely stop the flood of illegal immigrants getting across the borders. This is why, illegal aliens who are smuggled to Italy can soon find themselves living in France or even Belgium. Furthermore, even though all countries are (supposedly) harmonized in how they issue visas and protect their borders, not all them agree with what to do with asylum seekers. While smaller countries are more willing to help, bigger/ more powerful countries are less lenient on these sorts of people.

Smugglers

In the modern age, borders are not only guarded by patrols and fences, but now governments also rely on the use technology to keep away illegal aliens and drug traffickers. Due to this, people who are trying to run away from their homes in search of better lives have only one option; resort to being snuck into the country with the help of smugglers. With the large number of people wanting to migrate to wealthier countries, human smuggling groups have become powerful, organized, international rings. Smugglers use land, air, and water to transport their passengers to new homes. These trips range in time from a few weeks to sometimes even years. Along the way, a lot of these migrants die to the stress of travel and some are thrown overboard from ships when smugglers are trying to evade authorities. However, once these illegal immigrants arrive in their new homes, their problems, in some cases, only become worse.

Exploitation of Illegal Immigrants

The problem with using smuggling rings to enter a country is that the smuggler end up taking advantage of the people they are transporting. Due to the cost it takes to smuggle someone into a new country, many immigrants become heavily indebted to the smugglers and as a result are forced to work as prostitutes, laborers, and even as slaves. Even in the unlikely event that one of these immigrants has the means to pay the human traffickers, they are still forced into a life of slavery. Moreover, because these people are illegal immigrants, they have no rights in their new homes. This means they cannot get the help of police officers against the smugglers for fear of deportation. In the luckiest of circumstances, these people are capture by authorities and put up in migrant detention centers while their claim for refugee status is approved. Even then the future is bleak, as these centers are often overcrowded and the governments are slow to react, as well as the fact that they do not know how to communicate in the native tongue of the regions they are in.

Increased Crime and Social Unrest

As mentioned above, due to the fact that illegal immigrants do not have any rights within their new home countries and because they are in debt to human traffickers, these people are forced into a life of crime. Areas home to illegal aliens become plagued with prostitution, theft, and other crimes. Furthermore, some businesses knowingly give jobs to illegal immigrants because they know that these groups will work longer hours for a fraction of what they are supposed to be paid. This, itself can cause increased social disorder within nations where illegal immigrants begin to steal away jobs from the citizens of a country.

PAST ACTION

European Union

In general most countries in the European Union are trying to improve their border security. This is done by improving the technology used for security, stricter border checks, communication with neighboring countries as well as the nations here these migrants come from in the first place. The EU as a whole has also given Frontex (its border control agency) more power in the form of increased border guards to react to potential crises. Through these actions, some countries (i.e. Italy and Spain) have shown a decline in the number of people trying to migrate illegally to their country. However, not all nations are having the same results, countries such as Greece have had an influx of illegal migrants asking for asylum. As for the illegal aliens already within the Schengen Area most countries will either try to ignore the problem or try their best to deport them.

Interpol

Interpol's role in combating against illegal immigration consists of the investigation and arrest of criminal networks such as these smuggling rings. The International Criminal Police Organization works diligently towards catching human traffickers, however, this task is further complicated because for smugglers to be convicted, it must be proven that there was an exchange in money involved. Furthermore, Interpol is actively monitoring migrant situations (such as the smuggling of Iraqis) and as a result provides support wherever needed.

framework where such

BLOC POSITIONS

Overview

Almost all countries openly oppose human trafficking, however, some governments are blamed for turning a blind eye to smuggling and sometimes of even endorsing this form of illegal activity. This is where the 'blame game' ensues and countries instead of working towards a solution begin to point fingers at one another. The majority of countries also have a policy of repatriating (sending back) illegal immigrants even though these people left their homes to avoid some kind trouble within the country. Moreover, those put into migrant detention centers are faced with overcrowded facilities and language barriers

Factions within Europe

Due to the Schengen Agreement, most Western countries in Europe work together to combat against illegal immigration and the problems that it causes. At the same

time, Eastern Europe is a hotbed for crime and many people are emigrating from there to wealthier nation on the continent. Further turmoil within Europe is caused by countries blaming each other for the problems. In particular countries like Turkey have been said to be ignoring past agreements (to repatriate illegal immigrants) and ignoring the problem as a whole. Moreover, southern European Union member states want northern countries to contribute more into the effort to prevent illegal immigration. Their logic for this is based upon the fact that most illegal immigrants are trying to get to the wealthier (northern) nations such as Germany.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1) Should Interpol improve effects to stop illegal human trafficking?
- 2) What efforts would be effective for combating against this form of illegal activities?
- 3) What can Interpol do to prevent the exploitation of illegal aliens?
- 4) What are possible long and short-term goals that can be achieved by Interpol?

RECOMMENDED SOURCES

<http://www.interpol.int/Public/THB/PeopleSmuggling/Default.asp>

This webpage shows Interpol's view on Human Trafficking incidents and what it is trying to do to stop them.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/theneweuropa/wk22.htm>

An in depth account of both the positives and the negatives of the Schengen Agreement

http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/policies/borders/borders_schengen_en.htm

This webpage explains how the Schengen Agreement came to pass and how the system works.

<http://en.wikipedia.org>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>

Wikipedia and BBC are helpful resources that provide numerous articles on different topics.

OTHER SOURCES

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_trafficking

<http://www.riegas.gr/research-areas/greek-studies/423.html>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-14901941>

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