

Stakes and consequences of (not) defining international migrants and international migrant workers in several Arab states

International migrant



**UN
DEFINITION**

“Any person who **changes his or her country of usual residence**. [...]”

UNDESA 1998, Recommendations on Statistics of International Migration, Revision 1.



**ARAB
STATES
DEFINITION**

No official definition

Arab states

Citizenship is inherited from father (dominant *jus sanguinis*)

Naturalisation is exceptional (no birth right)

Very notions of immigration and immigrant are not recognized

Migrants: temporary sojourners; duration of stay linked to that of employment contract (GCC: labelled “guests”-*wafidin*)

De facto: International migrants are foreign nationals, Labelled “non-nationals” in statistics, as opposed to nationals of destination country (citizens)

Migrants and second-generation foreign residents need a sponsor (*kafeel*): at risk of expulsion

Locally-born children of migrants are considered migrants themselves, although they never crossed border: “invisibilisation” of second- and third-generations

Significant discrepancy between numbers of foreign nationals and foreign-born individuals (migrants). For example: **Kuwait, Dec. 2021**

- Non-Kuwaitis: 2.9 million
- International migrants (born outside Kuwait): 2.3 million

Source: PACI

International migrant worker



**ILO
DEFINITION**

“[...] International migrants who, during a specified reference period, were in the labour force of the country of their usual residence, either in employment or in unemployment [...]”.

* Guidelines concerning statistics of international labour migration, 20th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) 2018.



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Residency linked to employment

Migrants are temporary sojourners; duration of stay linked to that of employment contract

De facto: International migrants workers are employed foreign nationals

Risk of losing residency if loss of employment

No / limited rights to unemployment insurance, or obstacles put to receiving compensation in case of job loss

Some countries: no data on unemployed foreign workers, and consequently, on the labour force (labour force=employed+unemployed workers)